

RUTGERS THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH INDER KAPOOR

FOR THE

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INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Shaun Illingworth: This begins an oral history interview with Dr. Inder Kapoor on February ...

Inder Kapoor: 24th.

SI: ... February 24, 2023 with Shaun Illingworth. Thank you very much for joining me, doctor. To begin, can you tell me where and when you were born?

IK: My family lived in a place called Quetta, Balochistan, spelled as Q-U-E-T-T-A. At that time, it was India. Now, it is in Pakistan. This is on the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, there's a tradition in India that most girls, when they were having their child, they went to their parents' place. My mother went to a city called Multan, M-U-L-T-A-N, and I was born on the 9th of September, 1937. I guess after my birth, my mother moved back to Quetta, where my father used to work on the railways. So, that was my start in the world.

Quetta, Balochistan is a dry climate. It's a mountainous area, and there is snowfall and everything else. From there on, that September '37 until 1946, we lived in that part of the world. One thing was different about that part of the world was [that] since winters were pretty harsh, instead of summer vacation for the kids, the vacations used to be in winter, and most families always went to their relatives in the warmer parts of that country. So, that was my start. [Editor's Note: Quetta is located in Balochistan in a mountainous region along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Quetta is at an average elevation of 5,510 feet (1,680 meters) above sea level.]

My first language--the school language, at that time, in that part of the world was Urdu, which is a version of Persian intermixed with the Indian language of Hindi. All my early schooling, we started at the age of five in a temple, and all the kids used to go to a temple and that's where the early classes were. The biggest emphasis in those classes always was oral math. Even now, this is a tradition. That's why Indian people in general are very good in oral math.

In 1946, India was divided--actually, it got divided in 1947--but in 1946, the process started. India got divided into two parts, Pakistan and India, and that's how the British were going to leave. However, in December of 1946, my father came [back to Quetta]. In the meantime, my father had been transferred to Delhi, India into a different government organization, Department of Food, from the railways. So, he was in Delhi, and in December 1946, he came for a month's vacation or something like that.

At that time, the conflict and the riots had begun to start. We were scheduled to go back to join him at the end of December, but we decided that since the instability had started, we didn't want to stay in Quetta, at least my mother decided that. We packed up everything, and at the end of December 1946, we moved to India, Delhi, actually, but we had no place. We had suddenly packed, and so we went and stayed with a relative for a few months until we could find a place to live in Delhi. [Editor's Note: On August 15, 1947, the newly independent Indian subcontinent was partitioned into Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan. Millions of displaced Muslims and Hindus migrated to their newly-formed countries. Over one million migrants were killed in the bloody clashes and riots that ensued. Prior to the partition, there were widespread

riots in 1945 and 1946 that pitted Muslims against Hindus, notably in Bihar, Noakhali and Calcutta.]

However, when we were in Delhi, I had to change my language from Urdu to Hindi. I guess English needed to be taught at the same time. One of the things that, as a child, caught my eye [at] a very early stage was when we had to write a note to the school that we didn't want to come that day--we had to send a note giving reasons--and somehow, my basic nature came out. When I had to write a note, in the end, I had to sign, "Yours Obediently," and that was the British way of subjecting their subjects--that's how we were supposed to sign--and I said to my father, "I'm not their servant. I don't have to sign like that," at the age of ten. My mother said, "This guy's going to be a rebel." My schooling until the eleventh grade was in Delhi.

SI: Before we talk about life in Delhi, tell me a little bit more about your parents' generation and their families, starting with your mother's side. Were they always from that area?

IK: The reason we were in Quetta was because that's where my father's job was. My parents belonged to the city of Multan, and they had their own language. It's called Sindhi. But you went wherever the jobs were. My grandfather--actually, I thought he was my grandfather, but later on, it turned out that he was my great grandfather--he raised my mother. He was an army contractor in Kashmir, and he had a contract for taking mail from Srinagar to Baramulla. All the mail used to go on horseback. There were hardly any roads, or the railroad never [existed] there. Even though they were from that part, the Multan part of Pakistan, they were where they were [in Quetta]. My father's side, they were also from Multan, and most people met their spouses that region. It was always some relative knowing some relative and introducing to each other. Does that answer it?

SI: Yes. Was that a formal arranged marriage or just introducing them?

IK: Oh, it was an arranged marriage. Most marriages in India at that time were arranged. A marriage between relatives, not close relatives, but distant relatives, was quite common. Most people weren't moving around that much, so this was always local. My father was married twice, and his earlier, first wife, they had three children, one son and two daughters. Then, when he got married to my mother, with my mother, he had two sons and a daughter. So, we were a total six. All our schooling started [in] Quetta and, later on, ended up in different parts of the country, mostly in the Delhi area.

SI: Tell me if you have any memories of those first ten years, what that community was like. Your family was Hindu. Were they part of a minority there, or were most people in that area Hindu? Was it a mix of faiths and ethnicities?

IK: In the early years, where we lived was like a colony, all the peoples who were employees of the railways. The Hindus and Muslims were living together intermixed. We used to share each other's festivals, and there was really no difference between the two religions at that time. I think the problems started when the partition business came along, and that wreaked havoc. Until

then, we were all friends and we used to play with each other, visit each other's houses. In my opinion, this tension between Hindus and Muslims was a created problem, not a real problem.

My early memories of those years are going to field hockey games, playing games on the streets, and I also recall, at that time, the first time I saw an airplane in the sky. There were fears of--I think German armies were already in the Middle East, and there was a lot of talk about their coming through Afghanistan into our area. One incident that I distinctly remember was I saw, I guess, a single-engine airplane flying over. We were all wondering whose airplane that is, but my reaction was, "I want to fly in that." As it turned out later, I've done so much flying, I don't feel like flying anymore, even though I've had pilot training too, as a hobby, which I did at the age of late sixties. My son used to say, "Have you got anything left you need to accomplish?" I said, "Yes, I really want to learn how to fly." He said, "Well, you might as well get that desire over. You've done everything else." Those are from my early years. I think it was very fascinating how schools were conducted at that time, and most of it was all oral. [Editor's Note: The reference above to German armies is in regards to German plans early in World War II to occupy Middle Eastern nations with the end goal of invading the southern border of the Soviet Union. This never materialized, due to Allied forces pushing back German advances in North Africa and southeastern Europe. The Persian Corridor was vital to the United States and Great Britain supplying the Soviet Union with Lend-Lease aid through ports and rail lines in Iran.]

SI: You said they were in a temple?

IK: I think first to fourth grade was in the temples. That's what my recollection is. My brother, who was three years older than me, was also in the same place, so that clarified for me why we were going to school in the temple. But, at that time, to us, Hindus and Muslim were not too far different. There was no hatred between the two.

SI: You mentioned that your parents became concerned about the growing violence, the riots. Were you aware of any of that as a child? Was there anything in your area, or would you hear about it on the news or just from your parents?

IK: I'm talking about December 1946. Quetta was in a valley, and there were mountains all around. There were incidents where, I guess, looters used to come down from the mountains, and at night, you could see them carrying lanterns, coming down. They were early stages of raiding, robbery, we should say. So, that's when we decided, "This place is no longer safe and we need to get out of here." We were actually planning to go in the summer to Delhi to join my father, but we decided to go early, which turned out to be a blessing because my family was not affected by the riots of 1947 [that] took place, which we did experience when we were in Delhi. I distinctly remember, we were living on the first floor, and there was a Muslim family on the second floor. My father went and knocked on their door and told them that they should move because it is not safe for them. The guy was so appreciative of the fact that my father was concerned about their welfare. He was the owner of the building. Later on, he told my father, "Why don't you buy this building?" My father said, "We don't have any money." He said,

"Well, we can settle that later on. He can pay me later. We can worry about it later." He was so appreciative.

To me, that's been my case all along. My feelings are that we are born as human beings. We don't decide what our religion is, and so we have to learn how to live like humans. To me, religion does not mean anything. Religion, in my philosophy, is a how are we going to live together as human beings, nothing more than that. It's a philosophy of life. It cannot be rigid. That's how I feel.

SI: Do you know if your parents or other family members had been active in the independence movement or what was happening around the time of the partition?

IK: No, they were not. I will say they were kind of spectators. I mean, they were very happy about getting independence from the British, and as I grew up, I learned why did we have to be subjected to them? We're not their servants. That was my philosophy. Later on, I did learn that the idea of colonialism was we were their market for their finished goods and we were the providers of raw materials, and that's how colonialism works. As I said, I was a rebel from day one.

SI: Tell me a little bit more about what the trip to Delhi was like. Was it difficult to adjust to your new life there?

IK: Yes, because, number one, it took almost three days. I distinctly remember two nights and three days for the train to get from Quetta to Delhi. It was all steam locomotives, belching smoke. During the train journey, all of our clothes used to get kind of blackish dirty because of the soot coming out and there was no such thing as air conditioning. So, you boarded, but as children, it didn't affect us any bit. [laughter]

Once we got to Delhi--actually, we lived in a small town which was kind of a suburb of Delhi, which was Ghaziabad, G-H-A-Z-I-A-B-A-D, because that's where the relative [was] who had a place and was willing to take us in. Taking your relatives in is a very common phenomenon in India and to help them in a time of their need, so we were quite happy. It affected my schooling, because the school I first went to, right after we came back from Quetta, the teaching medium was English, and it was quite a jump for us going from Urdu to English. Later on, when we moved to Delhi, within a few months, I had to switch over to [Hindi]. I think we moved to Delhi in 1948, a year later or so. I had to switch over to a Hindi medium, and then from, I think, ninth grade, I had to go back [to English]. I mean, when I said English medium, we were also taught Hindi, too. We were kind of bilingual. Anything else?

SI: Was there any change in focus in the new schools? Being that this was kind of a rebirth for India, were they trying to push any new classes on Indian history or anything like that, or was it just, as far as you could tell, standard education for that level?

IK: Well, it was just standard. As far as education is concerned, in the ninth grade, people had to decide whether they wanted to go toward science or arts. The process turned out quite strange for me. Since my brother was in arts, I opted to go for arts, too. One of the teachers had a list of students he wanted in science, and so he asked me, "Why have you opted for arts?" I said, "I don't know. That's what my brother is." He says, "Why don't you go ask your parents?" At that time, my mother was a teacher in Delhi. So, I went to her school and I said to her that this teacher wants me to take science, and she had no idea what to do. She asked one of the other teachers, and the other teacher said, "Whoever is trying to ask him to go with science must think good enough of your son, that's why he's asking, so he should go in science." I didn't pick my future career or career path, but I'm grateful that soul put me on a totally new path. Otherwise, I would have continued what my brother was continuing. That's how I got into science. Guidance did not exist, and I'm very grateful to that teacher who picked me.

SI: You mentioned your mother was a teacher at this point. Was that common or uncommon for women to work outside of the home?

IK: Oh, it was very common, and there were no restrictions whatsoever. To the best of my knowledge, Hinduism has never interfered with how you live your life, because, as you know, Hinduism is really not a religion. It's a philosophy of life. I'm glad because I don't want a religion to interfere with how I live my life.

SI: At that time, in the late '40s when you were in Delhi, were you still going to religious services and engaging in religious holidays and that sort of thing?

IK: We used to celebrate our religious holidays, but going to temple was not a prerequisite or not a requirement. So, if you felt like going, you went. If you didn't feel like going, you don't go. Nobody was forcing us to do anything, at least maybe that was my mother's philosophy. Fortunately for me, my mother was pretty well educated, and she was always emphasizing education. She actually got her bachelor's degree at the age of fifty-five, because she always wanted to study, study, study. When she got married, she only had the high school, but she always had a yearning to get more education, whereas my father only had a high school education. He thought that was more than enough; then you go get a job and live. My mother said, "No, education is a key to success in life," and I think she instilled that in us.

SI: It seems like you and your brother and sister went far in your educations.

IK: Pardon me, say that again.

SI: It seems like you and your brother and sister went far in your educations.

IK: Oh, definitely. I'll tell you about my brother a little later as to how things worked out. We were being pushed to get education.

SI: Tell me a little bit about the area you lived at that point. What was the neighborhood like? What would you do for fun? What was a typical day like?

IK: Well, the typical day was you get up, go to school. In the evening, you play a little game of cricket with your friends. I will say it's a middle-class neighborhood, brick, concrete buildings, and there was a park nearby where the kids used to go play. My father was more authoritarian, so we had to be home when he comes home from work. Just one second, hold on.

[RECORDING PAUSED]

SI: You were saying your father wanted you home when he came home from work.

IK: Yes. Many of the Indian parents, especially fathers, in those days, they behaved like kings and the children were like their subjects. We didn't like it, but in order to keep peace, we had no choice. That was not a very uncommon thing. But we always knew that through education we can fulfill our dreams and our wishes, and so that was our driving force. That phase for me was a temporary phase; I was always looking towards what the future holds.

SI: You said, in ninth grade, this decision was made that you would go in the science track. Did that mean that you went to a different school from that point on?

IK: No, it was the same school, and certain areas were marked for science class, rooms which were for science and rooms which were for arts students. They were in the same school. Actually, that school was funded by one of the industrialists, and the school was named after him. After the eleventh grade, we continued further education; you went to colleges. We had to decide which college we wanted to go, what we want for the future, and if you wish, I can talk about how I got into my bachelor degree programs.

SI: Before we get into that, when you were in what we would call high school here, was there any particular interest that you were developing within science, or was it just you were interested in learning any kind of science?

IK: Whatever the curriculum was at that time for science students, that's [what] we were following. I wasn't looking towards any direction. I had interest in engineering at that time, but after high school, whichever college you got admitted into, you got admitted, and then even there, they try us for science or engineering or medical school. The path I eventually picked, I had never even thought about it. Medical school, in order to go to medical school, number one, you had to have very high grades, which I was later unsure that's how it works, but I think one of the key areas was how rich you are and how much money your parents have to get to medical school. Engineering was of interest to me. I think I applied, and I didn't get accepted in the engineering college. So, I was going to be accepted into, I guess, a science school. As I was trying to make up my mind as to what I want to do, a friend of my brother knew of somebody who was going to the agricultural school. That school was [part of the University of Delhi]. He suggested why don't I go to agricultural school? I had no agricultural background, no nothing.

So, I applied to the agricultural school, and I got accepted. That's how I became a student of agriculture. It's a strange way of picking your career, but once you pick your career, you try to make the best of it. [Editor's Note: Delhi University, formerly known as the University of Delhi, is a public university in Delhi, India that was established in 1922.]

SI: Were you involved in outside activities, either hobbies or youth groups, things like that?

IK: No, I was never part of the youth groups. I think one of the groups called RSS, Rashtriya Swayamsevak [Sangh], they were kind of run by certain guys who are like marching you around and I wanted no part of being told what to do, and so I never liked it. I never wanted to join it. It was just a normal existence playing cricket and roaming around with friends. Some of my elders were always doing some stage drama and all that; I'd take part in that. It was an average life. Looking back on it, I would say a routine existence. But was I emotionally unhappy? The answer is no. Inside me, I was happy. I didn't like the way my father was, but I loved the way my mother treated us and inspired us to accomplish something in life. [Editor's Note: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is a Hindu nationalist organization.]

SI: You decided on going to the agricultural school that was part of Delhi University.

IK: Yes.

SI: Okay. Did you live at the university, or did you live at home?

IK: Oh, one of the requirements was to stay in the dormitory, and we really didn't have enough money to keep a kid in the dormitory. One of my sisters took up a job, so that she could help support her brothers to go through college. That bond of gratitude for me with that sister has stayed forever, because why should she go take up a job in a remote part of the country so that she could educate her brothers? It was extremely important to me what she did for me. That's how I was able to get my college [education].

I did very well in that school. I was second in order of merit in the university. Most of my classmates went to graduate school after that. We had no money for us to continue education, and I decided to get a job with the idea that maybe later on, I can accumulate enough money and go to graduate school. I discussed it with my mother, this is an incident that I always remembered, and I said to her, "What's the point of me doing so well in college and not be able to go to graduate school?" She said, "Well, why don't you work for a few years, just gather enough money, and then you can go to graduate school." I said, "Well, in that case, if that's the path we're going to take, I want to go to the United States for graduate school." That's where the thought of ending up in the United States stayed with me forever.

SI: Was there anything in particular that informed you that the United States might be the best place to continue your graduate studies?

IK: It may sound like a strange story. I read a book at that time as part of my college education. The book was *Destructive and Useful Insects* by Metcalf, Flint and Metcalf. I said to myself, "I would like to go to the United States and be a student of Dr. Metcalf," and that was in the back of my mind always. As part of my job, I was in different parts of India, but in the end, I caught the eye of the top guy of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. He put me in a job at one of the training institutes where the guy who was the head at one time was a professor at Kansas State University, and after working with him for a little while, he said to me, "You don't belong here. You need to go to school." What he did was he got in touch with his contacts back there and got me admission at Kansas State University for preservation of food grains. Somehow things didn't work out because they wanted me to first come and prove myself and then they will give me assistantship, but I had no money. So, it didn't work out, but the thought of going to America to study never left my mind. [Editor's Note: Robert Lee Metcalf (1916-1998) was an entomologist, environmental toxicologist and insect chemical ecologist who continued to edit *Destructive and Useful Insects: Their Habits and Control*, which was first co-authored by his father, Clell Lee Metcalf, and Wesley Pillsbury Flint in 1928. Clell Lee Metcalf (1888-1948) was an entomologist and professor at the University of Illinois from 1921 to 1947. Robert L. Metcalf served as a professor at the University of California, Riverside from 1948 to 1968 and then finished his career at the University of Illinois.]

One day, I was reading a paper on the preservation of food grains, and I saw an article by a professor named Dr. Strong. I decided to write to him with an idea that I wanted to do research in such and such area, and I suggested he accept me as his student. He asked me to come, and I got admission in the University of California. When I asked the guy I used to work [with] in India whether I should go to Kansas State University or should I go to the University of California, he said, "You should go to the University of California." Then, I launched the project of how in the world am I going to get enough money to go to the United States, because the promise, even in California, was the same, "You can prove yourself and then we'll give you an assistantship." We started gathering money, but we really didn't have much. In those days, a one-way flight from India to the United States was--a distinct memory--890 dollars for one way. In those days, 890 dollars was a lot of money, plus one semester's tuition and everything.

My brother-in-law, the husband of the sister I talked to you about earlier, said, "You really want to go? Let's figure out one way or the other. We'll find some money and send you." As it turned out, later on, he took money out of his retirement account to send me to the United States. I kiddingly asked them, I said, "What happens if I fail?" He said, "Well, we are poor and will become poorer, but if you win, we all win." So, we gathered enough money for one semester's tuition--out-of-state tuition, in those days, used to be twelve hundred dollars--and airfare and just enough money to survive one semester, and I came to the United States. After one semester, I was given an assistantship.

Somehow, I couldn't get along with this professor. His attitude was, "You're going to do what I want you to do," which I was able to tolerate because I was doing my research area of interest to me. But, finally, I noticed, he had other students, one by one, they were all leaving. One day, he called me in, and he said, "If you don't do what I want you to do, I'm going to use my influence

with my relatives in the State Department and say you are a Communist and get you deported." I didn't know what to do at that time, and I concluded, "I'll never survive with him."

I asked a friend of mine, an older guy from India, "What should I do?" He says, "The only guy who can save you is a professor who is also the vice chancellor of the university. You need to go talk to him." So, I went to his office out of desperation. I didn't know what to do. I was a young kid, kind of lost. I went, and seeing he wasn't in his office, I asked his secretary. She says, "Just wait, he should be coming back soon." He came, and I said to him, "Sir, I want to talk to you." He said, "Well, I'm all talked out for the day." I guess he came back from a meeting, and he must have been pissed off or frustrated. I just got up and left. Suddenly, I hear a guy running towards me. He says, "Hey, I thought you want to talk to me." I said, "You said you were all talked out." He said, "No, no, no, come on in."

I explained to him what was going on. He didn't believe it. All graduate students had advisors, so he went to the graduate student advisor and said, "This is what this boy is saying. Is that true?" The graduate student advisor said, "You know, I have heard stories about this professor. I think what this boy is saying is probably true." He says, "Let me think about it." Later on, I learned, because of the way things developed, he went home and he was madder than hell. This story came to me from his wife later on, because later on in life, she treated me like her son. He said, "We can't bring kids in like this and treat them like this." The next day, he came and he called me. He said, "I'll take you as a student, but I'm thinking of transferring to the University of Illinois." I said, "Sir, if I'm your student and you're going to Illinois, I don't care. I'll go to Illinois." He said, "Okay." I said, "Even if you go to the North Pole, I'll go with you." He always remembered that. But I said to him, "I don't have a chemistry background." He says, "Can't you learn?" I said, "Yes, I can learn." That's how I became his student. This professor was Dr. Metcalf from the book that I had read in 1955. In my case, dreams do come true. [Editor's Note: Robert L. Metcalf joined the faculty at the University of California, Riverside in 1948. He later served as the Vice Chancellor for Research from 1965 to 1968. In 1968, he left to join the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and taught there until he retired in 1987.]

SI: Wow, that is incredible.

IK: It was my destiny to be his student. Later on, after we talk about how I worked with him, he told me I wasn't the most brilliant student he ever had, but I was the best student he ever had because I never forgot my gratitude for what he did for me. He was number one in his field in the world. Even later on, I greatly benefitted from being his student because I never had to look for a job; people came looking for his students. This is my story of how dreams do come true.

SI: When did you first arrive at the University of California?

IK: Oh, that itself is a story. I arrived on--I think it was January 30, 1966. It was either the 30th or 31st, I can't remember. I flew from Tokyo, Japan, landed in LA [Los Angeles], and I was supposed to take a flight from Los Angeles to Riverside, California. Well, I think it was around eight PM, the Japan Airline guy dropped me off. It was a helicopter flight. My professor had

asked me what my flight number was and everything, so I thought he was going to pick me up from the airport in Riverside. I got to the counter of this little itty-bitty helicopter airline, after having flown from Tokyo. The guy looks at me, he says, "Ah, this flight has been cancelled." I said, "What am I supposed to do?" He said [puts hands up in a gesture of, "Not my problem"]. That's where, on the very first day of my arrival in the United States, I experienced both American rudeness, and the next day, American greatness. He said, "Eh, that's not my problem." I didn't know what to do. I said, "When's the next flight?" He says, "Tomorrow morning, five-thirty AM." All he had to do was tell me to go back to Japan Airlines, and they would have put me in a hotel for the night because it was their obligation.

Anyway, I sat at the airport all night, a little bit scared, didn't know what to do, and I wasn't that knowledgeable about the United States. The next morning, I took the flight. We land in the airport, and there's nobody to pick me up. I had figured, you know, if that flight was cancelled, the professor would have figured out I'm coming the next day, next flight. Nobody picked me up. There was this one clerk over there. I said, "How do I get to my dormitory?" He said, "Oh, you have to take a taxi." So, I say to him, "How much does a taxi cost?" because I had a little bit of cash and I had a bank draft. I think he said three dollars or four dollars, I can't remember. I think it was three dollars. I said, "I only have two dollars cash. I have a bank draft." He said, "It's six o'clock; a bank draft is not going to do you any good." He says to me, "It's three dollars." I said, "I just have two dollars." He said, "Okay, we'll call the university police. They'll come and get you." The name of police is pretty scary to a kid, so I was more scared. I said, "What? Are they going to hand me over to police?" There was a gentleman standing nearby. He looked at me, and he says, "Son, where do you come from?" I told him. He said, "You look very tired and sleepy. What's the issue here?" I explained to him that I don't have enough cash to get to my dormitory. He turned to the clerk and said, "How much is the fare?" The clerk told him, so he pulled out, I think, about one or two dollars, whatever I was missing, out of his pocket and gave it to me. He said, "You need sleep. Go and sleep." I said, "How do I pay you back?" He says, "Son, someday, we'll meet again. Go sleep." That was my great experience of starting in the United States. I have never forgotten what he did for me.

SI: You then had this very negative experience with this first professor. How long did it take before he made this threat?

IK: Oh, starting off, it was great. Every once in a while, he'd take me for lunch or dinner and have a good chat. Later on, I figured out, it's my conclusion, I may be wrong, but my conclusion [was] that he thought I was too independent. I was too sure of myself or too cocky, and he wanted to put me down. I'll give you one example. One of the courses I took was "Guided Research." He was the professor of that "Guided Research." When I was starting first semester, I found out, the university had a policy, if you maintained straight "A's," the University of California refunded your out-of-state tuition. Getting twelve hundred dollars back was a big thing for me. At the end of that course with him, one day he called me in, and he said, "Oh, your grade fell. The course you took with me is a 'B'." He said, "Now you don't have to worry about getting your out-of-state tuition refunded," and that shook me up a little bit. As it turned out, later on, I found out that you didn't have to maintain a straight 4.0 average. You had to have a

3.8 average to get your tuition refunded, so I got my tuition refunded. I must have said something to him that I got my tuition refunded. His wanting me not to get my tuition refunded and me showing all that glee of getting it refunded probably turned him off. I think that was the start.

Then, he started finding faults with my work. No matter what I did, it wasn't good enough. Maybe I was a little bit cocky, because my grades were good and I was sure of myself. I had enough self-confidence. Maybe that turned him off, I don't know. Later on, I met him again at one of the conferences, and I felt sorry for him because I know what happened to him after my incident and just put two and two together. What my new professor had done, since he was the vice chancellor, he threatened to pull him in front of the University Senate and have me come and lay charges and told him he had two choices, "Number one, this student transfers over to me with his assistantship," even though the assistantship money belonged to this professor, "Or we're going to have this kid come and press charges. Also, along with the transfer, you will always stay associate professor. You will never become full professor. Two, you will not have any more students in the future." That was his punishment from my new professor. He couldn't tolerate bringing a student all the way from overseas and be treated like that. So, I really felt sorry for him because he could never become full professor, couldn't have students. I didn't say much, I shook hands. But those things, I found out much later. That's what happened because I never knew what happened, because I was so surprised that my new professor had no money and I could become his student and get an assistantship. Your actions, somewhere along the way, you are to pay.

SI: Yes.

IK: He paid his price.

SI: The other students he was trying to strongarm, were they also from overseas, or was it a mixture?

IK: They were all American kids.

SI: Oh, okay.

IK: Actually, one was from his hometown in Mississippi. He brought him, and he left after one or two semesters, I can't remember. The first semester, we were all together, a happy bunch, working hard, and he was the first one to leave. I couldn't figure out why he didn't want to stay, but they didn't reveal to me why. But, later on, I was able to put two and two together.

SI: Can you tell me a little bit about your research at that point, what you were studying?

IK: With the old professor?

SI: Either one, but leading into what you ended up doing.

IK: Mostly, I was doing the coursework, and the exact research project was not fully assigned. The one I had suggested to him from India was really not his field. There was another professor who was in that area of research, and later on in life, I found out that the other professor did do research in what I had suggested. For me, the suggestion of the research was a ticket to get to the United States, get admission, so it worked out for me. I was happy he followed that up.

Not only him, but there were two other students who had left right in my presence. I guess I was naïve; I didn't see the handwriting on the wall. They were American kids. They could see better than I could, because I think I was so very grateful to him for bringing me to the United States. Under those situations, you're kind of blindsided, but as I said, it turned out very good for me.

SI: How soon did Metcalf take you to Illinois? Was it the next semester or further down?

IK: The next semester, yes, during the summer. I think I moved to him in December or so, and we moved in June. Actually, when I was working with him, that's when my research project and the future direction was decided. Just in simple language, my research was on pesticides, which pesticides are biodegradable and which ones are not. The idea was to find out what causes biodegradability. How do you introduce biodegradability in new molecules, and also how do you study using a model ecosystem? What happens to the pesticides that were introduced into the marketplace? We had developed a model ecosystem for studying biodegradability and the fate of pesticides in the environment. That was one, and as part of the study, another study I was doing, what is biodegradable and what is not, and what is essential? What kind of chemical modifications can be made to make a non-biodegradable pesticide into biodegradable? So, you synthesized different analogs [to] see which ones are biodegradable or not, or less toxic and safe in the environment. That's where I said that, at the earliest stage, I said to him, "I don't have chemistry background," and he said, "Can't you learn?" So, I became more a chemist than a biologist.

SI: Was that a relatively new area, this kind of environmentally-concerned science?

IK: At that time, it was totally new.

SI: Okay.

IK: Yes. The model ecosystem for studying biodegradability was my professor's idea. He was given a grant from the Ford Foundation at that time, around 600,000 dollars, for this kind of work. Even though I was myself still a graduate student, as part of that grant, we had four post-docs and twelve graduate students working on these projects, and I was guiding, taking care of work off every one of them, even though I was still a graduate student myself. To my professor, I was guiding all the research. It was a great experience.

SI: How did you adjust to life first in California and then in the Midwest in Illinois? I would imagine it was very different from your homelife.

IK: I did have some ideas about what life in the United States is because, number one, we used to go to the movies and, two, I'll say I was a pretty voracious reader. For me, I had some ideas of what life's like. I became friendly with people in a hurry, and I adjusted quite well. I'll say, I'm a worry-free soul, so for me, adjustment to the U.S. was very, very easy. Culturally, I was quite aware of what life in the U.S. is like, not exactly, but quite. You learn as you go.

SI: You were at Illinois until 1972?

IK: Yes. After I got my Ph.D. in 1970, my professor wanted me to stay on and do post-doc. I really don't think he ever wanted me to leave. He was trying to find me a position in Illinois, so that even though I could have a separate job, I could continue our research collaboration for a long, long time. But the other companies were always after his students, and he told me, I think it was his wife Esther who said, "You've got to let this kid go sometime. He's got to hack it on his own, and if after that, he wants to come back, that's up to him."

American Cyanamid Company, there were two guys who visited once. We used to get a lot of visitors from different companies and different organizations, and we used to make scientific presentations, papers and things. They talked to me over there, and my professor said, "You know, I really don't want you to go, but this company has a job and they want you." I said, "What, New Jersey? I don't want to go." The idea of New Jersey is always coming out of the [Lincoln] Tunnel and seeing all those smokestacks, refineries all along. New Jersey was quite different. [Metcalf said], "If you don't take the offer, at least go for the interview." So, I came for the interview, and they really made me feel they wanted me. So, I came, and it's been a happy arrangement. Things worked out very well. I did well for them; they did well for me. [Editor's Note: American Cyanamid Company was a manufacturing and chemical conglomerate that was in operation from 1907 to 1994, when it merged with American Home Products. It was headquartered in Wayne, New Jersey.]

SI: What was your initial job with the company?

IK: My first job was--they had a new herbicide, and the idea was to find out, as part of the requirement for registration for herbicide, you have to study safety, how is this molecule degraded in animals and the environment? What happens to it? My job was to find out how this new herbicide, which I later on called Prowl, P-R-O-W-L, how is it degraded. My first job was a research assistant, senior research assistant, studying how this degraded, with my chemistry background. Most of the workers over there were dependent on the chemists who synthesized different molecules, supposing how it's going to degrade to what molecules and what will happen to them in the environment. But, in my case, since I was a chemist myself, I didn't depend on other chemists. I could synthesize anything I wanted to myself. This is where my professor had said to me, "Having a chemistry background and being a biologist, we are going to uniquely qualify you to do things, because you are not only going to be a biologist, but you will also be a chemist." He says, "Knowing chemistry is never going to hurt somebody." That was my initial job.

Then, there were two groups. I was part of one. The other group had a molecule; they couldn't figure out how that was getting degraded. Somehow, the guy who was heading it, they lost confidence in him. I really don't know what happened, so they promoted me to group leader and sent me up to head that group. We figured out, it didn't take me long because their approach was not, in my opinion, rational. Every once in a while, when things don't work, you have to go back to fundamentals, and they weren't doing that. So, I very quickly solved their problem for them, and I guided that a few years.

Then, the company decided they wanted to start a new research [group], a new group for the discovery of new molecules. They felt I was uniquely qualified to head that group, so they promoted me to manager of that group, the discovery of new pesticides, and that was my path upwards. Later on, I went to marketing, where my job was to travel to other countries, meet other people, to acquire the technology and products [for] our organization. So, that's where, in the end, I ended up as Vice President of Acquisition and Licensing, where my scientific background and knowledge of chemistry and biology came in very handy. That was my career path for the organization.

SI: Before that, you were doing what might be classified as basic research. Is that right?

IK: Yes.

SI: Looking for the molecules?

IK: Looking for new molecules that will meet a farmer's needs. The chemists were synthesizing them, and we were testing them, biologically testing them. If they look good in the greenhouses and the fields, then we went to the field and [did] global testing all over the world, mostly in the United States, but we had research stations in Brazil and Philippines and Japan, possible markets. So, our job was to do early testing, and then those molecules, if some things were selected and were good enough, then they went to development, where there [was a] two-year toxicology [study] and everything else was done to prove that they're environmentally safe. No agricultural product is sold unless it is found safe. For two years, toxicology studies are a must.

SI: At that point, environmental regulations were not that new, but they were still relatively early on. The Environmental Protection Agency was only maybe ten, fifteen years old.

IK: Yes.

SI: How did that influence your work?

IK: I can say that our objective was to provide farmers with good and safe products. Safety was a concern. It has to be, because even though we were scientists, we knew we had to deal with those products in our life, too. We were quite conscious of the fact that new products we

introduced in the marketplace have to be safe. So, we wanted to make sure that we meet all the requirements and be ethical.

SI: When you were doing the research, was there a lot of pressure from the company to get products that would be brought to market, or were you kind of left to do this kind of exploration of potential products?

IK: We had products that we were testing, and if they weren't considered safe enough. They were not taken any further. At least I never felt any pressure to take shortcuts or try to do things that I was not willing to do. I really didn't feel any pressure.

SI: When you came to American Cyanamid, where did you live?

IK: We lived in Pennington, which, I would say, [is] kind of a suburb of Princeton. We lived in a ranch house. Later on, I bought a farm nearby. We built our own home, and we had a twenty-acre farm. We were doing farming as a hobby. My wife, who is a girl from the city of Bombay, I turned her into a farmer. But, at that time, I'm talking about the 1980s, most people didn't know how to grow Indian vegetables in the United States. We were kind of pioneers in figuring out how to grow them here, and we used to supply Indian vegetables to many stores in New York City. We are still active farmers but not as big as we were in the beginning because we're getting pretty old. [Editor's Note: Bombay has been officially known as Mumbai since 1995, when it was renamed due to its association with British colonialism.]

SI: What were some of the crops that you would raise?

IK: We were raising a crop called bitter melons. In Indian language, it's called karela, K-A-R-E-L-A, a green vegetable called methi, which is fenugreek, F-E-N-U-G-R-E-E-K, luffa squash, chili peppers. We used to grow almost ten thousand chili pepper plants; we used to plant in our fields. I think those were the main crops. We had a guy who was buying everything we could grow, and there was never enough for him. They used to send their truck to our farm to take everything. Later on, I started growing some ornamental plants like jasmine, night jasmine, and plants for transplanting. I'm still doing that just to stay active. Farming can be fun if your livelihood doesn't depend on it.

SI: When did you meet your wife?

IK: I met her in 1970 on a trip to Bombay. We met through a mutual friend, and it was very quick. We took a chance, and things worked out very well. I will say she's well adjusted. She's pretty westernized. Living in Bombay, which is now called Mumbai, she was quite familiar what life would be like in the United States, and she's done well for herself. We are happy. We have two children. My son is a medical doctor with Virtua Group in South Jersey. He's more and more into administration, and right now he's president of all new technologies that are introduced in medical science in Virtua. My daughter is a freelance artist. She followed her dream. She always wanted to be an artist, and her philosophy, her reasoning was, "You followed

your dreams, I'm going to follow my dreams." So, they're free spirits, and I'm glad they are free spirits because in life you want to do what you want to do. We all have one life to live. We want to follow our dreams. I followed mine. They are following theirs.

SI: The farming and raising crops that are native to India, a lot of what I hear from doing interviews with other immigrants from South Asia, when they came to New Jersey in the '70s and '80s, there was really no availability of foods that they were familiar with. It does not really support a vegetarian lifestyle that many want to pursue. Did you find similar issues when you came here, such as things that you were not familiar with or things that you missed?

IK: I don't think I had any adjustments to make. The whole farming idea actually is how things worked out. I had really no plans to do farming, even though my scientific background was agriculture. I'll say it was my destiny in a way. When I was manager, we had a new guy come in as my boss and the vice president. He and I were sitting in a meeting, waiting for other employees to come. He was new to the place, and since there was nobody else, I was doing what I call small talk. I felt obligated to do small talk. What do you say to the new guy? The first thing you say is, "Have you found a place to live?" I asked him, "Have you found a place to live?" and he says, "Yes, I bought this house with a farm." I said, "You know, I've always had an interest in farming." He said, "Next door the farm is available." He said, "Why don't you come in the evening?" He gave me the address. I went, looked at it, so I said, "Yes, I'd like to buy." The guy who was selling it, I walked over to him and said, "How much do you want for this farm?" He said, "Yes, I'm selling it. I just sold forty acres to Jim, and I've got another twenty acres available." I said, "I'll buy." I hadn't talked to my wife or anyone. "How much you want?" He told me a price and I offered him a price, and in two minutes, we shook hands and I had a farm. I asked Jim, "What's growing on this farm?" He says, "Soybeans." I said, "How much money do you make on soybeans?" He said, "We have not figured it out, but I think it's going to be around twenty-five to fifty dollars an acre profit." I said, "That's not good enough for me." He says, "What do you want to do?" I said, "Indian vegetables are not available here. I'm going to figure out how to grow them."

With my scientific background, I knew that Indian vegetables need warm temperatures. How do you make earth warm? Put plastic mulch on it, so that the black mulch is going to make the soil hot. So, I started with him, with his help, because even though I had the background, practical experience is totally different. I figured out how to do the things. In India, those crops get twelve hours of sunlight. Here, they were getting sixteen hours of sunlight, and they were going crazy growing. Then, one day, I took a whole bunch of vegetables I had grown to New York City; I thought maybe I'll explore different stores and see. Every one of them said, "You know how to grow these?" I say, "Yes." We worked out arrangements. On Saturdays, I used to take a truckload to New York, and on Wednesday, they used to send their truck down there. That's how we got into it.

What I did was I put my scientific knowledge to grow crops, which others didn't know, but now almost everybody knows how to get it done. But I still have the advantage that I have contacts and I don't have any middlemen. I'm not doing as much as I was at that time. Now, we do

enough to stay busy, and staying busy is my idea of good health. I say to people, "You go to the gym; you give money. My gym gives me money."

SI: Did you become involved in Indian-American groups when you first came to New Jersey or later on?

IK: Yes, my wife is very fond of an Indian dance called Bhangra. She was involved and locally organized to some extent. I was always very busy with work and then later on my job of traveling all over the world, so I wasn't involved much with local groups. But, for me, traveling all over the world at company expense, I considered myself very fortunate that I got to see the whole world. Whatever parts I haven't seen, after I retired, my son and I love to travel, so he and I together used to go many times on the expeditions with National Geographic. We went to Antarctica, Galapagos Islands. I will say, I have fulfilled all my dreams. I don't think there are very many left. [Editor's Note: Bhangra is a style of dance that originated in the State of Punjab, India.]

SI: Well, that is good. A lot of people cannot say that.

IK: Yes.

SI: Tell me a little bit more when you were doing the marketing. Are there any technologies that you acquired that stand out in your memory or any challenges in that job that stand out?

IK: Yes. Our marketing guys needed new products, because the more products they have to sell, the better they do. As part of my job, I worked extensively in Japan, and I had established very good contacts in Japan, even though during my work, I did not acquire any new products from them. But, later, I found out that I had acquired one, and that was in the development stage and had gotten developed. There was a Japanese company who had two or three products, and they didn't have marketing expertise in the United States. So, I worked out an arrangement where we were marketing their products as part of our portfolio. That is my accomplishment, but I was looking for early stage or new products. So, we had lot of arrangements with many Japanese companies, and we were bringing in their chemicals or early-stage products for testing. That [would] be my accomplishment, to make those contacts and bring them here for the benefit of our company.

SI: In either that role at American Cyanamid or your earlier research role, did you maintain a lot of contact with researchers in academia, particularly Dr. Metcalf?

IK: Oh, I maintained contacts with many people [who were] the academics. Lots of people knew me. As a result, I could cherry-pick future employees from these people because of my background and the knowledge that I have gone to a company and I'm successful over there, and their students, if they come into our organization, number one, they will be well taken care of and guided and they will be able to blossom. I brought many new employees from different

organizations into our company, which was a benefit to us. As I said, I could cherry-pick good students, and they've felt quite confident coming here.

SI: Did you, in your career, have any interaction with the Agriculture School at Rutgers? I am just curious.

IK: Oh, yes. One of my philosophies was to push our employees to go for further education. One guy I had was from China, Taiwan actually, and I worked out arrangements for him with a professor at Rutgers. I can't remember his name now. I think you can probably look up this. The student's name was Dr. Chia Ku, C-H-I-A, last name Ku, K-U. So, I worked out that he became a student of one of the professors at Rutgers, and I guided his research at Cyanamid. He was able to get his Ph.D. from Rutgers. Another student, he wasn't student at that time, he used to work for us. I think he had a master's degree at that time. He was always asking me, "Why doesn't the company do better for me?" I said, "Let me ask you, what are you doing for yourself? How are you trying to better yourself?" One day, he got irritated and he says, "What do you want me to do?" I said, "Go to school." I said, "You have an example in front of you. Show to me what you can do for yourself." So, he did the same thing. He made arrangements with Rutgers, and he went to school. Fortunately for me, my bosses here allowed me to encourage people to make arrangements that they could get flexible time and go to school at the same time. This student's name was Dr. Bob Herrick, H-E-R-R-I-C-K. I don't know whose student he was, because by that time, I was not directly involved, but I was trying to push people to go to school. Actually, that became part of our company's philosophy, too. People who wanted to go, we'd give them flex time, flex hours, in order to go to school. I consider that as my accomplishment, trying to push people to go to school, because I was my own example. If I hadn't gone to school, where would I have been? I worked eight years in India before I went back to school, so I never gave up the idea of going to school. If I could do it, others could do it, too. Education is the key to success in life. This is something people don't realize. Without education, you're not going to get very far.

By the same token, I was instrumental in bringing my brother to this country. He went to school at Southern Illinois University in journalism and he was a professor at Illinois State University. I brought my nephew. I won't say I brought; I will say I facilitated his coming to this country. This nephew is the son of my sister and brother-in-law, who helped me with my life. He went to the Culinary Institute of America, and he's very, very successful. He worked for Hilton's and he was in the Middle East and he's done very well for himself. Those are the examples for me, my brother, my nephew. If it weren't for education, they wouldn't be where they were.

Also, one time, my wife and I were in India. One of my sister's relatives, they were in a small place and she brought one of the boys to go to school. At that time, the computer business was new, so he was quite happy, she's doing it for him. So, I asked him, "How can I help you?" He said, "If I had a computer at home, I can really make progress." A computer at home, in those days, was extremely expensive. On the spot, my wife and I wrote a check for him to get a computer. He is now very successful, and he always says, "How can I thank you?" I say, "Don't thank me. Just help somebody else."

One incident I missed, in order to come to the United States, you need a guy to sponsor, and I had nobody. All my relatives who were well off, they didn't want to do anything. My father's boss--my father said, one day, "He's the only one we can approach." We went to see him when my father told him I wanted to go to the United States. He turned around, and he asked me if I had admission. I said, "Yes, sir, I have an admission at the University of California." He turned around, and he says to my father, "Yes, I'll sponsor him." He had no reason to help me. One day, when I was ready to go, I went and I saw him, and I said to him, "How do I thank you?" He says, "All I want you to do is don't forget your family and take care of them." For me, a guy helping me who had no reason whatsoever to help me became my guiding light in life to help as many people as I can. It has brought me not only inner peace but also inner happiness. My son, he's a medical doctor. He said, "Dad, the reason you have such good health is because you have inner happiness." He says, "Inner happiness stimulates the immune system, so if you're at peace with yourself, you're going to be very happy." That's my experience of life. Help as many people as you can because you have one life to live, you'll be happy. It'll bring you more happiness than you can think.

SI: Wow, that is a wonderful sentiment. Did you have any other issues related to the immigration process? Were there any roadblocks thrown up by the United States government or anything like that?

IK: No, but it was very helpful. Bringing my brother here, there were a lot of roadblocks. I don't know, based on your time or not, I want to tell you how my brother got here.

SI: Yes, absolutely. I have plenty of time.

IK: You see, when I got my brother, my brother got admission at Southern Illinois University. He went to the American embassy in Delhi, and the guy who was the counselor says, "Your brother himself is a student. How in the world is he going to financially support you?" My brother said, "Oh, my brother is very resourceful. We'll manage." He said, "Uh-uh, that's not going to work. If you think your brother is that good, ask him to deposit nine thousand dollars in the bank, which is going to be available only for your use when you get to the United States." Where in the world was I going to find nine thousand dollars? I'm talking about 1970s, early '70s.

At that time, I had one of the people of Indian origin approach me. She had a Ph.D. in chemistry, and she asked whether she could have a job with my professor. We needed chemists, and I said to my professor, "I think she looks good. We should hire her." She was synthesizing molecules for us. One day, her husband asks me, he says, "When is your brother coming?" I explained to him what the roadblock was. He said, "What? Is nine thousand the only issue?" I said, "Yes." He says, "I'll give you nine thousand." I say, "Do you want me to give you something in writing?" He said, "No, I had one look at your face; that's good enough."

I deposited the nine thousand in the bank and sent a letter from the bank to my brother. He went to the embassy, and the counselor says, "I thought you were never going to show up again. Where the hell did your brother get nine thousand dollars from?" My brother says, "Well, I told you my brother is resourceful." He said, "Resourceful, he's a damn crook." [laughter] He said, "I made you a promise; I'm going to live up to it. Go, have yourself a good education."

When things are going to work your way somehow or the other, they do work out. I won't say they were roadblocks; I think they were very good experiences. That counselor lived up to his word. He could have said, "No, I'm not going to give you a visa," but he lived up to his word. For me, it's very important to live up to your word.

One time, I went to buy a tractor from an old fellow, and I asked him, "Do you want me to give you a check for two hundred before you deliver?" He says, "Why, your word is not good enough for you?" The meaning of words became very important in my life. When you say something, live up to it.

SI: Is there any other aspect of your life that you would like to discuss that we have not brought up or anything that we went through quickly that you want to talk more about?

IK: I think we covered very much. If you have any other questions, feel free to call me either now or later on to talk about it. Feel free to call me any time.

SI: The only thing I was curious about was the job you had in India before you came to the United States. That was with the food and agricultural department.

IK: Yes, I think it was called the Ministry of Food. I'm not sure. The job was how to preserve food grains. At that time, India was very short of food because Borlaug inventions of new grain varieties and all that hadn't been discovered. So, USAID [United States Agency for International Development] was teaching us how to preserve food grains. So, we were protecting food grains by using pesticides and fumigants mostly. Even though I was pretty young at that time, the top bosses figured--I was always trying to do innovations on how to do it better. That's where I caught the eye of the top guy. At the age of twenty-one, once I knew how to do all this, he sent me to different places to teach other people how to do things better. I think ten to fifteen percent of food grains in India were going to waste, damage and loss. So, the idea was to preserve them as best as we can. USAID was very helpful to us in teaching us new things. Later on, with the inventions in Mexico of newer varieties, which were very productive, I think Indian agriculture, the face of Indian agriculture, has totally changed. [Editor's Note: Established in 1961, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is a federal agency that provides aid and development assistance to foreign nations. Norman Borlaug, an American biologist and humanitarian, is known as the father of the Green Revolution for his groundbreaking discoveries in high-yield agriculture.]

The bond between the Indian government and the U.S. government [is not] that great, but the bond between the Indian people and the U.S. people is phenomenal. They have a lot of respect

for each other and a lot of love for each other. The people to people interaction is outstanding because of cherished democracy, and a common language is a great asset. Now, India agricultural wise is surplus, and the gratitude to United States will always be there. But, fundamentally, I think the U.S. has always been on the side of India, if not politically, and the people that were, yes. It will always be because these are the two democracies. India doesn't know any other way than democratic principles. If you look at old Indian culture, in every village, there were five people selected who were government, and that was a democratic process. Democracy may not have been the best form of government; it's the next best thing. [laughter] There's nothing better than it.

SI: All right.

IK: One incident I remember.

SI: Oh, sure, go ahead.

IK: When I became a United States citizen, I went to, I guess, an oath ceremony or something. Behind me, there were a whole bunch of people, and they all started crying. I asked one of them, why they are crying? They asked me where was I from, and I was from India. It turned out they were from Eastern European countries who had lived under the Soviet thumb. They say, "You don't understand our happiness at becoming a United States citizen because you come from a country where there was nothing but democracy." That has stayed with me for a long, long time. If you don't have freedom, you have no idea what it is. That has influenced me for quite a long time. I have never forgotten that incident.

SI: It sounds like you have gone back to India. Do you go regularly or just a few times?

IK: Not regularly, but a few times, yes. My experiences are good. Culturally, I would say I don't belong there, because my thinking processes are quite different. I've been in this country for fifty-five, fifty-six years, and it is my country now. In my heart, I will always think fondly of India, but that's not my country. The United States is my country. I have a soft corner for India, but my heart belongs to the U.S. That's how I feel, yes. Going there during winters and stay there for winters, and after one time, we didn't know how to exist there because they have their way of living and we have our ethics and morals here, different ways. I won't say they are emotionally unhappy, but they know how to live in their way. We don't fit in there anymore. We have a warm relationship with our friends and relatives over there, but the country's way of life is not our way of life anymore.

SI: I am also curious, in the time you have been here, have you faced any prejudice either because of your background or because you are an immigrant in general? It does not sound like you had any trouble getting jobs and things like that.

IK: No, my experiences have been extremely good. I was always aware of the fact that the politics at workplaces are everywhere. If I had any bad experiences there, they were extremely

minor. They have not affected me or not made me feel bad. I learned how to deal with them. People say things without thinking at times. One time, I was going to hire somebody, and that boss says to me, "You sure you want to hire an Indian?" [laughter] My boss says, "Do you realize who the hell you're talking to?" He asked me later on, "Were you offended?" I said, "No, this guy's ignorant." You hire the best guy you find. It doesn't matter who the kid is, because if you hire a good guy, he's going to make you look good, too. So, I don't have any bad experiences, I'll say any that stick with me, so no. That way I'm very fortunate.

SI: That is good. Unless there is anything else you want to add, thank you very much.

IK: Yes, later on, if you think of something, just call me.

SI: Yes, if I think of something, or if there is something you want to add, we can either do a follow up, or we can add it to the transcript. This has been great. I really appreciate learning about your life.

IK: I surely enjoyed talking to you, and I wish you the best.

SI: Thank you.

IK: Have a nice day.

SI: All right, you, too. Have a good weekend, bye.

IK: Bye.

-----END OF TRANSCRIPT-----

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