

Interview Transcript

Interviewer: Christine Maged Nassif

Interviewee: Sameh Wahba

Date: February 21st 2012

Place: Sameh's home

College: AUC graduate '12

Time: 11.21 mins

Sameh: Hi.

Christine: Can you tell me your name please.

Sameh: My name is Sameh Wahba, umm. I'm 21, I just graduated from AUC, from uhh umm.. major in mass communication, specialization in journalism, umm.. and, yeah, I know what you're supposed to ask so I'm just telling you before you ask me.

Christine: Okay, thank you Sameh. Umm I understand that you've been studying at AUC for six years?

Sameh: That is correct.

Christine: Okay, and why did it take you six years to graduate?

Sameh: Well you know how hard journalism can be... uhh.. no, that's that's not true. umm I've always wanted to be a pilot since I was uh, since I was eight I've always wanted to be a pilot. Umm.. for many reasons, um and when I started, when I started university at the age of 15 I couldn't uh, I couldn't go to aviation school cause the minimum age was 17 at the time. And uh, so I had to do something during those two years, I decided to get uh, to start in my bachelor's degree umm instead of wasting two years of my life doing nothing umm so I went into AUC, I didn't know, I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do there so I started off uh as a business major and then uh economics uh and then ended up in journalism, which was something that I really enjoyed doing. But not as much as flying, so in the middle of umm, in the middle of uh... after two years of of AUC, I left and went to South Africa. And got my pilot's license, my commercial pilot's license there, it took me about uh a year and a half and then I came back to Egypt I got my Egyptian uh commercial license and then my Egyptian airline pilot license and uhm and then went back to AUC to finish off my degree.

Christine: Okay, why why did you choose aviation?

Sameh: Ah, I I've always wanted to be a pilot, my- my dad, my dad uhm.. my dad travels a lot. He umm he's always been traveling a lot since I was young so I think it started off that I wanted to be with my, go wherever my dad went.. uhh.. and, uhh that I would be the pilot and I would fly him there and then I think uh umm it just uhh as I as I

grew older it wasn't only about my dad but I just wanted to fly a lot and I was fascinated by um by airplanes and my parents also took me uhm.. on some of their... on some of their umm trips, though I had been to a lot of countries, so far I've been to 16 countries and it's I just don't get enough of planes and airports and I know that a lot of people really dislike airports and and airplane rides but I really enjoy them and thats exactly what I see myself doing umm for the rest of my life, that's what I wanna do.

Christine: Okay, how was aviation different from AUC? I know it's- it's quite different, but how different was studying this and studying the other?

Sameh: What was really different, umm.. honestly, I have never studied more in my life than during my aviation years in South Africa. Uhmm, They were really hard times, they were very challenging it's uh uh the flying isn't as bad, it's all the theoretical work, it's uh umm a lot of maths, and a lot of physics and umm, it's a lot of- a lot of stuff that you don't even uhmm uhh you don't even need exactly for- to fly a plane, but its just in case something goes wrong. So it was a lot of studying and uhm I don't like, I don't like beating around the bush, I just like getting to the point and uhm there *slight laugh* there was a lot of things that I took that I didn't really need to take uhm so it was a very, it was very challenging uhm whereas in.. at, at AUC you go, you take uh you take a journalism class on how to write or how to uh how uhh how to uh how to interview people or how to do this or that, it's very specific for something that is very specific at the end that you want to become a journalist for example. Umm and it that wasn't the case, umm in aviation and uhhh, it was just a lot of, it was a lot of work, a lot of effort that I had never put in during my school years and during my uh umm university years, I hadn't worked that hard in, yeah I think it was just really tough.

Christine: You say you changed majors a couple of times. Um why did you choose journalism at the end?

Sameh: Well, I think my second best option would have been uh to write. I enjoy writing, umm and after I got into journalism as well I found that I enjoy interviewing people and uhm I wouldn't say I'm- I'm good at it.. uhm but I think it's because I enjoy it um the end product is something that pleases people and sometimes uh professors as well. Uhm which was, which was good for me cause uhhh I- I honestly didn't want to be in- in- in school at the time, I just wanted to work, I just wanted to fly and that's what I've always wanted to do. So it was good to do something I was, I was good at something that I enjoyed, second option isn't always that bad. uhm so yeah, I just, I mean uh-- I think that I think that maybe one day w- uh, I might I might do both

at the same time I might write and fly at the same time or uhm yeah some- something like that.

Christine: Okay, umm has AUC helped you at all in pursuing your dream as a pilot?

Sameh: It's funny you should ask that actually, cause, uhm *cough* I think it was the other way round, I think that aviation helped me uh to get through uhm.. uhh AUC. Because at first, like like I said umm I started AUC at a very young age and I wasn't taking it seriously, there there was, I mean I used to miss classes, and uh I used to- I remember this one time I- I didn't even, I decided not to go to a final and I got an "F" in that class and had to repeat it, uhm so I wasn't- I wasn't serious. In my life I wasn't serious. In my education and.. and uhm all that when I went to, uh when I went to South Africa I had to be serious *laugh* there was no other option, it was, it was either I be serious and finish and finish off what I had always wanted to do and pursue the dream that I always wanted or not to be serious and then go back and do anything else which wasn't what I wanted to do- so I had to be serious, I had sit the long hours and study, I had to uhm I had to get out of my comfort zone and uh and study from different books - which *laugh* I mean I never even bought books for AUC. So this was, that was all very different uhm uh when... when I went back to AUC uhm, I had.. I had left AUC with a with a 2.7 GPA I think uh because I had many "D"s and lots of "C"s and I- I remember I only had one "A" which was theatre, which was *laugh* it required no studying at all. Uhm, uhm, but uh when I went back, my GPA slowly went up because for me life was more serious. And for me I just wanted to get it over with and get it over with best I could. Uhm, So I remember my first semester back I got a 3.4 GPA and then uh I think it was a 3.5 and then I think my last semester was like a 3.8 GPA. Which was something I never ever thought would happen when I was *laugh* 15, when I had first started. But I mean, it was all because of aviation. And all because it changed my mentality and made me more serious in life and how I study and how I uh how I take on life.

Christine: Okay, umm.. any idea of what you're planning to do now with your both degrees?

Sameh: *laugh* Okay, well, uhhh I'd like to say uh that I don't want to work on my journalism for a while and just focus on my flying. uhm, I'm not sure how realistic that is I think I think maybe *sigh* I- I've gotten into the cycle of enjoying journalism a lot and uh and writing and interviewing and just reading a lot and uhm.. I think, I think, I don't think I'll be able to stop that for a while uhmm so, I- I might I might maybe start a serious or uh I don't know maybe, maybe start a blog page or something uhm just to get known and uhm uh so people

can see my work which would make it easier for me to find the job when I do want a job. Uhm.. I might even maybe do a part time journalism job or some freelancing here or there uh but I definitely do want to get into flying straight away. And uh that exactly what uhm I'm, I'm pursuing now and umm and I spend uh, I spend hours a day w- working on that, trying to uh uh keep everything refreshed in uh in my head about flying and um contact.. ub.. I mean I contact lots of people everyday just to um see where the aviation business is going and contact pilots and contact companies and uh uhm try to get interviews and stuff and that's definitely what I wanna that's what I wanna do right now uhm but I w- I won't, I won't, I won't give uhm I won't give up on journalism and I'll continue doing that for sure.

Christine: Okay, thank you Sameh. Uh AUC alumni and pilot by profession. This was Christine Nassif.