

## ***Multimedia Writing Storycorps/ Interview Project***

### **Interview Transcript**

**Interviewer:** Lama Aboushair

**Narrator:** Nour El Din Abuzeid

**Dates:** 20/02/12

21/02/12

**Place:** My home

26<sup>th</sup>, Ali el Gendy St., Nasr City

**College:** The American University in Cairo

**Prof.:** Dr. Jim Fox

**Date completed:** 21/02/12

**Nour El Din Abuzeid**

Abuzeid was born on the 29<sup>th</sup> of December, 1987 in Giza, Cairo. He has always been living in Nasr City. Still single, he and his older brother still live with their parents, as he has only graduated in the fall of 2010, from the American University in Cairo. He joined various institutions throughout his academic years before college: BBC, Dar el Tarbiah IGCSE. The end of high school for him was in June 2004, when he was only 17 years old. Before enrolling himself at AUC, he joined Modern Science and Art University (MSA) for one year only, his freshman year. He then became a student at the AUC, and pursued his specialization in Mechatronics and Industrial Engineering until he obtained his bachelor degree in the field of Mechanical Engineering a few years later.

Nour Abuzeid is a very energetic and ambitious person. I have known him for a couple of years now, and I can easily say that his eagerness to succeed has made of him a person whose mind is quite easily made up on things, as well as very organized. He was never afraid to register himself in challenging courses, and so immediately, his ability to grasp information was very much noticed. After he graduated, he did not hesitate to pursue some studies in different fields; such as taking the G-mat test, for example, or starting his own career and focusing on it, (and this even though he is currently doing his military service and is on his club's Handball team until this very day.) I very much respect the latter in him, because it shows how ambitious he is, and how much of a successful man he is in the way of becoming. I believe those are the

reasons that helped me make up my mind about the person I was going to interview. Also, I consider those to be quite enough, especially since he has proven my point about how institutions can greatly help shape one's personality, or maybe even alter it into becoming a totally divergent one from that of the beginning. Abuzeid is considered to be a vivid example of my assertion.

**Here is a list of the topics of interest touched on by the narrator:**

- Future plans: Data Translation/transcription Company (Masterpiece Trans,) and engineering career.
- Advantages of having a Bachelor Degree in Engineering and skills gained from being an undergraduate at the American University in Cairo.
- Specific experiences during his years as a student at the university.
- Handball career. (Being a part of the university's handball team = leadership.)
- Notable AUC professor who had an impact on my interviewee's mode of thinking.
- The meaning of Engineering, from the point of view of an AUC graduate.
- Critical thinking: the difference between AUCian engineers and other engineers.

## Glossary

### - People:

- a-** Dr. Lotfi Gaafar: Professor and PhD holder at the American University in Cairo. Mechanical Engineering Faculty. Teaches two courses: Project Management, and Operations Management and Manufacturing.
- b-** The other applicant interviewing for a job at Schlumberger: a Cairo University graduate.

### - Places:

- a-** Schlumberger: Multinational Oil Services Company. Offers all kinds of services needed in the oil extraction process.
- b-** Modern Art Science Academy: College where Abuzeid spent his freshman Year and part of his sophomore year studying Mechanical Engineering from fall 2004 to spring 2006
- c-** Ain Shams and Cairo Universities: Public schools/universities in Cairo.

### - Events:

- a-** Graduation project: Took place at the AUC in Abuzeid's senior year.  
Thesis topic: Parallel plates water desalination.
- b-** Handball Championship while Abuzeid was the leader of the AUC's Handball Team.

**20 February 2011**

**Persons present: Lama Aboushair- I  
Nour El Din Abuzeid- S**

Aboushair: Hello!

Abuzeid: Hello!

Aboushair: How are you?

Abuzeid: I'm good, how are you?

Aboushair: I'm fine. Thank you for accepting to do this interview. It's gonna be a very short one. I hope I'm not gonna consume much of your time.

Abuzeid: Ok.

Aboushair: Ok, let me start first by introducing myself. My name is Lama Aboushair, I am an IMC major, and I'm conducting this interview for class purposes.

Abuzeid: Ok...

Aboushair: For a course project. I'm gonna ask you to introduce yourself: tell me your name, your age, and your area of residence.

Abuzeid: Yea sure. Ok, my name is Nour El Din Abuzeid, I'm 24 years old, I live in Nasr City. Of course it's in Cairo. (Laughter.) And... That's it, for your question.

Aboushair: So, you were at the American University in Cairo, right?

Abuzeid: Yes, I graduated Fall 201, hmm.

Aboushair: Yes, and what was your major?

Abuzeid: I was majoring in Mechanical Engineering.

Aboushair: Ok, so what do you do now, after you've graduated? What's your profession?

ABuzeid: I started my own business with one of my friends. I started a translation company.

Aboushair: Ok, ummm... tell me a little about your future plans.

Abuzeid: For instance, my future plans is to grow up this business...

Aboushair: The translation company.

Abuzeid: The translation company, of course. I want it to be one of the... I want it to be the biggest one actually in the country. That's the very first step. Then, to be a multinational company, so I can get work from different countries abroad.

Aboushair: Yea, but first, what's your company's name?

Abuzeid: My Company's name is Masterpiece Trans.

Aboushair: Okay. Okay, go on.

Abuzeid: Yea, and what else? Of course, it's not only this thing, I want to start my job as an engineer also, so I would like to make both things in parallel: to start this business and grow it up, along with having a job in a multinational company in my career.

Aboushair: Yes of course, that's only fair. So.. But tell me first, what are the services that you offer in this company of yours?

Abuzeid: As I told you it's a translation company so of course the main thing is translation. And beside translation we do Data transcription, which is the good thing about my company actually, or our company. It's the thing that we have that many other translation companies don't offer. Data transcription is simply transferring the audio file to a document file. For example, this interview, we're having an English interview, so for example a client comes, and he wants this interview to be written in Arabic. So, I take this audio file and write it down in Arabic, translate it and write it down. So I offer this service in different languages, from English to Arabic, Arabic to Arabic, from English to English from Arabic to English. And for the translation we do English to Arabic and Arabic to English. And our plan to introduce all the language, languages all over the world. So, we'll start by French, Spanish, German, and it goes on.

Aboushair: And translation is much more time consuming than trans.... No, I mean, transcription is much more time consuming than translation?

Abuzeid: yes, transcription is much more time consuming. And actually it's not, it's not I mean, it's not very profitable. But, as I told you, I'm just starting the company, so I have to choose something to be special about. We have a lot of translation companies here in Egypt, but as I told you before, that most of these companies only offer translation. They don't offer data transcription because it's very time consuming and it's not , it's not profitable.

Aboushair: So that's a plus for you!

Abuzeid: Exactly. So I am trying to win offers through this service. ‘

Aboushair: Yes, that's very smart. But, I remember that you told me that you have a bachelor degree in Engineering. What does this have to do with your field of study?

Abuzeid: Honestly, it has nothing to do with my field of study, of course. But, let me tell you something, let me put it this way: I already have a bachelor degree in mechanical engineering, but that doesn't mean that I have to be an engineer. Engineering is a way of thinking, is a way to solve problems, it is not a profession in my experience... You know..

Aboushair: Not a profession?!

Abuzeid: It is a profession, but it is not that thing. Learning or studying engineering helps you to change your personality, change your way of thinking, to

think in a very different way than others. SO, of course it is a profession, you can work as an engineer. But, again, if you, you can work in any other field, I can work in the management field, I can work in business, in the bank. Anything. If you're engineer, you have the capabilities and skills to adopt yourself in any field, or to any working environment.

Aboushair: Yes. So what other skills did you gain from being a student at the American University in Cairo.

Abuzeid: Other skills? I think there are a lot of skills that I gained. The main ones is the communication skills and the presentation skills. The communication skills, at AUC I had the chance to get to know a variety of people, people from very different backgrounds, people with very different way of thinking, with very different concepts, everything. So I had the chance to study with different kind of people, which elped mem a lot to understand the mentality of different people.

ABoushair: Yes it is very much known that in the American university, we have a lot of nationalities.

Abuzeid: Yes, exactly. I had a friend from America, I had a friend from England, I had a friend from Germany. Everyone with a different way of thinking, and everyone with a different culture.

Aboushair: lit broadens your horizons as well.

Abuzeid: Exactly, exactly. And it helped me a lot as I told you in in in... in this field, in the business, in the translation field. So I can get a company, a German company to do the translation for it. So when I have an interview with this guy, the company I mean the company guy. I can understand his way of thinking. Of course, for the Egyptians, I am used to them, but from the foreigners, AUC gave me an opportunity to deal with people from different background and nationalities.

Aboushair: It's... you learned a type of communication.

Abuzeid: Yes.

Aboushair: So, the Auc, in the Auc you had the chance to enhance your communication skills.

Abuzeid: Yes, sure.

Aboushair: Yes. So, it kinda had given you quite a boost in your career life. What about your personal life then?

Abuzeid: My personal life? What do you mean by my personal life?

Aboushair: You told me that in the AUC you had enhanced your communication and presentation skills... Oh what about your presentations skills by the way, you didn't elaborate on that.

Abuzeid: My presentation skills? Of course, the AUC improved a lot my presentation skills. I will never forget my first presentation at AUC, it was an English course, it was a very bad one actually. (Laughter) I will never forget it. (Laughter) I didn't have any eye contact during the whole presentation, I was very afraid to put...

Aboushair: To focus.. on the people... the...

Abuzeid: Yes, to look at the doctor himself, to look at any sitting...

Aboushair: At the slides.

Abuzeid: I was very confused also about the projector, and the computer, and about gonna say. It was a real mess. I was mumbling a lot during the presentation...

Aboushair: But that was at the very beginning, right?

Abuzeid: It was the very first semester at the AUC. But in the end, my last presentation it was the graduation presentation, it was a very good one in my opinion. My team and I did a very good job, actually, and we did a very good presentation. All of us were talking in a very good way, we're presenting our work with a very powerful presentation, meaning slideshow, I was capable of using my body language to enhance the presentation. I used eye contact; it was in front of 300 student and

professors from AUC. We were capable of answering all the questions. It was a very good one.

Aboushair: So you were totally transformed.

Abuzeid: Yes, yes, and it was very obvious, and you will never believe that I was the same guy. The same guy doing both presentations.

Aboushair: (Laughter) So you owe it to the university.

Abuzeid: Yea of course.

Aboushair: You learned a lot. So, let's get back to my question.

Abuzeid: Which was?

Aboushair: Your personal life. Did you for example join any clubs,, played any type of sports?

Abuzeid: Oh I forgot to tell you that I am a professional handball player, I play handball at the Gezira Club. So I joined the handball team at the AUC.

Aboushair: Ah but you didn't start at the...

Abuzeid: No, I was playing since 1996.

Aboushair: Ahhh okay!

Abuzeid: (Laughter) So I played for the university for 5 years, and in the last year I was a team leader and we won the championship. So it was a very good, I

mean, intangible reward in the end. I really like it a lot. And I didn't win any competition with my team at Gezira Club, but I had the chance to win this title with the university. And I was the leader as I told you, so I was the one who held the cup.

Aboushair: So that's nice, the university had a handball team and you had the chance to win.

Abuzeid: It was very nice, I will never forget this tournament, it was a very nice one actually. And of course, we can add this to the skills that I gained throughout the university: Leadership skills. To be a leader of a team, it is not an easy task to be done. Especially in the match, during the tournament, we have ups and downs so I had to motivate the players, most of the players were younger than me, I had to motivate them, I should be their role model, to them. It was a lot of pressure on me, actually. But, Thank God, I succeeded to win the competition, and to be a good leader in the end.

Aboushair: Talking about leaders, or maybe AUC professors. AUC professors, what about them? Were they of benefit to you? Do you remember any of them in specific or someone who had a special effect on you or something?

Abuzeid: When you said AUC professors, spontaneously there's a doctor who came

up on my mind.

Aboushair: Who's he?

Abuzeid: His name is Doctor Lotfy Gaafar, he told me two 400 level courses, mechanical engineering courses I mean. At AUC.

Aboushair: At your very last year?

Abuzeid: At my very fast year? No, one in the fourth year, and one in the last year. I will never forget this professor, he's the best in my opinion. He had a lot of influence in my life; he had a lot of input in my way of thinking. I learned from him a lot. Actually I learned from him not academic things, I learned from him the way to live, or the way to work.

Aboushair: To think, or process, or..

Abuzeid: He's the one to introduce me.. I mean. Let me put it in this way: he helped me think outside the box. I really understood the meaning of thinking outside the box.

Aboushair: Hmmm.

Abuzeid: So

Aboushair: What did he teach you about engineering in general, for example?

Abuzeid: He taught me about engineering... the thing that I will never.. the quote he said that I will never forget, I'll quote it that "you don't have to work as an

engineer..." I mean "Having a bachelor degree in engineering doesn't mean that you have to work as an engineer." Engineer is a way of thinking, it helps you solve problems and to see problems from different angles. It doesn't mean that you have to work as an engineer in the industry itself. It gives you the skills and capabilities to work in any field, and the capabilities to manage things as well.

Aboushair: A lot... That's true, I've heard this a lot.

Abuzeid: Really?

Aboushair: Yes, I have a lot of engineer friends. (Laughter.)

Comparing yourself to a graduate student with the same bachelor degree but in another University for example, do you think that the opportunity you had to have been put in a university like the AUC, has given you an advantage over others? Or, not?

Abuzeid: Other students from different universities? The most famous universities here in Cairo are Cairo University, and Ain Shams. Definitely, definitely, graduates from these universities are much much better than me if we talked about the technical part. As engineers, they are much better than me. If we went now to fix a car, I won't be able to fix it and he can to fix it and he can understand everything going in the car.

Aboushair: Really?

Abuzueid: Yea, but I don't think this is useful, actually. Because I did once an internship in a very famous company in the oil field, it's a very big one, it's a multinational company. I was introduced there to...

Aboushair: Do you mind saying its name?

Abuzeid: No, no problem. It's called Schlumberger. It is one of the biggest...

Aboushair: Yea, okay. It's pretty much known.

Abuzeid: Yea it is very well known, and it's one of the biggest companies in the oil field. So when I get there, I was introduced to an engineer over there he was graduated from the cairo university, he was graduated from the Cairo University. He was a mechanical engineer as well. He was a very funny guy. (Laughter. )He told me the story to join this company. In the last interview to hire him, the interviewer asked him: "You finished your degree, right?" He told him "Yea, I did!" He asked him then: "Now, you're a mechanical engineer, right?" He told him "Yes." He told him: "Then, forget about all what you studied. Now, you're gonna learn from the scratch. You have done your part to achieve this level and to earn your degree..."

Aboushair: "Let us teach you!"

Abuzeid: Yea, exactly. So, it's not about the material or the thing you're taught, it's...

Aboushair: ... the way of thinking.

Abuzeid: The way of thinking, the soft skills you earn, the soft skills like computer skills and language skills. Other things like interpersonal skills, like I told you the presentation, the communication skills, leadership skills: everything.

Aboushair: Yes. Okay, so... To wrap this up... I just want to know, I'm curious: when you were applying to AUC, did you expect that the university would change your life this much? Because it seems like you have graduated a totally different person.

Abuzeid: I'd be lying to you if I told you that I'd expected that change. Of course, of course anyone of us when applying to AUC, would expect that he's gonna improve his personality, he's gonna gain a lot of knowledge, he's gonna experience a very different life. But, I never expected to transform my way of thinking. I was a completely different person before joining AUC, and I'm really happy of what I have reached, or what I have achieved. And I hope that I would be able to apply all what I learned at AUC in the real life, and to improve myself.

Aboushair: So, if you could go back, you wouldn't change a thing?

Abuzeid: Completely, I will never do it.

Aboushair: You wouldn't. (Laughter.) Okay, thank you, I hope I didn't keep you for long.

Abuzeid: Not at all, you're more than welcome.

Aboushair: Okay.