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Persons Present: Sally Bisharat

Maha Fayed

Introduction

Maha Fayed, a Spring 2012 AUC graduate with a major in Integrated Marketing Communications and a minor in Psychology, was born on October 12th, 1989 in a small town called Desouq in Kfr El Sheikh Governorate, Egypt. Maha currently works in two jobs; one as an assistant market representative in Target Sourcing Services in Zamalek and the other job is a Resident Director in the AUC New Campus Dorms where she lives.

In this interview Maha answers questions regarding her academic background and her career. Being an RD in the AUC dorms is a highly demanding job in which she is on call 24/7 in case of emergencies, she also must be ready to deal with any unusual situations that arise in a professional way such as the case of the January 25th Revolution last year which she discusses in the interview. On the other hand, Maha shares the rewards she receives from this job; meeting new people from different backgrounds, being more organized and responsible, or simply gaining the leadership of her own life.

I chose to interview Maha Fayed because she is an eligible representative from the dorms who can share her experiences as an RD and as a resident in the dorms with those who do not know how it feels like to live away from their families and carry the responsibility of other people as well. Maha's job as a Resident Adviser is a very hard profession because it involves the lives of young students who are still developing their sense of responsibility and independence, thus each decision Maha takes or action she makes will affect many lives around her.

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Glossary:

IBT: Internet Based Test

LEAD: Leadership and Development Program

RA: Resident Adviser

RD: Resident Director

ResLife: Residential Life Office

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JRMC 202 Multimedia Writing-First Project

Interview Transcript

Interviewer: Sally Bisharat

Narrator: Maha Fayed

Date: February 12th, 2012

Place: Interviewee home
AUC New Campus Dorms

University: American University in Cairo

Prof.: Kim Fox

Date Completed: February 22nd, 2012

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Bisharat: Today I'm conducting an interview with Maha Fayed, the Resident Director in the AUC dorms. Hi Maha.

Fayed: Hi Sally. How are you?

Bisharat: I'm good. How are you?

Fayed: I'm fine, thank you!

Bisharat: Mm.. Maha can you please mm.. tell us your name, your title, your place of residence and your age please?

Fayed: Mm.. My name is Maha Fayed. I'm currently an On- Campus Resident Director. Mm.. My place of residence mm..is AUC dorms and I am twenty two years old.

Bisharat: Thank you Maha. Mm.. Were you an AUCian? Did you graduate from AUC?

Fayed: Yes. I graduated from AUC in 2012, Spring 2012 mmm.. with a major in Integrated Marketing Communications and minor in Psychology. Mmm.. I graduated as a LEAD student. Mm.. yeah.

Bisharat: What is a LEAD student? Can you explain that?

Fayed: Yea. A LEAD student is like an abbreviation for leadership and development program. It's.. it's a program that rewards mm.. every governorate ahh.. like a girl and a boy from ev.. every governorate the scholarship in AUC, a full scholarship in AUC that grants you four to five

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years of study in a specific major. So I was granted this scholarship mm.. from, in my governorate.

Bisharat: yea wow. What are the.. the requirements for you to be selected?

Fayed: The requirements ahh.. for me to be selected, first I should be graduated from a governmental school. Second of all I should have like different activities that I've.. ah.. that I've participated in while being in the high school itself, such as being ah.. a representative to the school or being in the student union, and third of all you have to be mmm.. like professional in English, not.. like to get certain grade in English and finally you have to pass all the tests and requirements that are required from the LEAD office, which are mm.. to have an initial interview with you and then to have mm.. like an iBT exam to place you in a specific mm.. English profeciency.. fecincy.. proficiency level.

Bisharat: Ok. You mentioned that your major is mass com and you currently eh.. are a graduate of the AUC, so eh.. are you working now?

Fayed: Yes. I'm working currently in mm.. two jobs. First of all I'm working in Zamalek mm in a, in a, in a company called Target. I'm, I'm working there as an ,as an, as an assistant market representative. And the second job which is more of a part time job is being a Resident Director in AUC campus, on- campus dorms.

Bisharat: Ok. Eh.. Can you tell us more about your job as a Resident Director?

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Fayed: Yes sure. Mm.. As a Resident Director mm.. you're supposedly mm.. you're monitoring the RAs; the RA stands for being a Resident Adviser. A Resident Adviser is basically a resident, one of the residents, that supervises a whole unit full of forty girls if you are in the females' side. Being a Resident Adviser is to supervise a unit full of forty girls. You can't imagine the responsibility that mm.. that she, that she works and the pressure that she's under all the time, you know, she's supposedly, she's taking care basically of the unit, of.. of like of the complains. Mmm.. mm.. Being in a constant contact of those residents, knowing their needs, if they have any suggestions. Mmm.. the Resident Adviser also mm.. organize.. organizes like one, at last one activity per semester for residents you know.. to enrich their edutainment senses; the activity has to be like both educational and entertainment. She also supervises mm.. you know.. if, if the girl has a curfew or not. The curfew is like the timing that's set by the resident's parents or guardians. The Resident Adviser also mm.. you know.. check on the, check on the you know on the whole unit, check on the girls mm.. you know she's basically the guardian of the residents in her unit, and the RD is the one who supervise, who supervises all RAs in all units. So this is basically my job.

Bisharat: Wow. So eh.. from what you explained now eh.. it seems like you face a lot of difficulties during your job, is that true? And what kind of difficulties do you face?

Fayed: Yes there are some difficulties and also some you know.. not difficulties, you can.. you can call them challenges, and, or opportunities if you, if you can, because every.. every work has to has its own spices you know. Mmm.. being an RD is.. is.. you don't have a fixed schedule first

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of all. You don't have to work for instant from eight o'clock till five or eight a.m. till five p.m. you're on.. on a, on a call every moment of the day, day and night, so mm.. you're always under ah.. this sense of.. this sense of you're responsible for two hundred and fifty girls you know. This is one thing you.. you're.. you're constantly under pressure, mm. .you.. you have a lot.. a lot of responsibilities. Mmm.. also one of the difficulties is for instance if an RA did not perform her job proper.. properly, you're actually the one who's going to be blamed because the RA is under your supervision and you have to ensure that everything works perfectly. Mm.. so basically you have to create a system from the base to ensure that each RA has to follow this system. Mm.. it's, it's also one of the challenges because this kind of job is not a time.. a full time job; it's a part time job so.. yea.. so those basically are the main ones; being under pressure, being mm.. working in an environment that.. that you feel you have to cons.. construct or build your own system in mm.. being on call all the day ah.. having to.. you have to supervise all the RAs and ensure that work is done professionally and on a high quality level.

Bisharat: Ok. So eh.. Now that you told us that there are some challenges that you face as an RD and as an RA, eh.. what are some of the rewards that you also get from your job?

Fayed: Mm.. being an RD or an RA it's.. it's like you don't.. I don't.. I don't.. I don't see the..the different, the m.. much, there's more difference between being an RA and an RD; being an RA or an RD mm.. you know..you get to meet lots of people from different nationalities, eh.. you get to know eh.. you know.. different cultures and.. and deal with.. with.. with people from different backgrounds, this is.. this is really.. really inspiring. Also, you get to deal with.. with lots of

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experiences and lots of mm.. situations that you don't have an.. you.. you probably don't have an answer for or there's no book actually for.. for every rule and every mm.. situation that you face in this job. So one of the rules.. one of the.. one of the things is that you have to think out of the box, that you have to go crazy and go creative mm.. that you actually utilize your negotiation skills mo.. most of the time and eh.. and that you have to find a way to organize your time perfectly and mm.. [a stop watch goes off, then silence] so this is perfect .

Bisharat: Ok. Mmm.. Can you tell us some of the stories or the.. some of the situations that you faced as an RD and how you dealt with them?

Fayed: (Low laughter) ok. One.. one.. one challenging.. one, one very very situation that.. that we faced last semester in.. in fall 2011 was mm.. was like the three.. or , or three girls were walking from.. from like Downtown from the Meeting point.. Meeting point I'm sorry from Meeting point to.. to here to on campus alone at 12 a.m. .. Ok. They.. they thought that it's ok, the road is like is ah.. full of lights and it's just five minutes' walk from from the.. from the Meeting point to here but they actually discovered that the way is really long.. Ok? So while coming back, there were some workers who work ah.. on the new buildings that are like beside AUC and they started to follow them to AUC.. Ok? On their.. their way. Probably they didn't know that this is the American University in Cairo, they just saw some girls and they just.. started to harass them. Most of the harassment was basically about like words the girls didn't understand because they are.. they were international students. Mmm.. and mm.. and one of them actually started to touch her, so one of the girls started like yelling and screaming and mm..

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luckily she is.. the car that.. that carried the night.. night shift security.. the security night shift or the security men who came.. who comes actually from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. was.. was on her way to campus, and the security saw those girls and they asked them what's wrong and the.. the.. they actually described that those two men.. two men were trying to harass them and one and one caught [caught] actually one of the.. one of.. one of the students' breasts. They caught.. they caught the two men and they called the police. And they called us.. it was around one a.m. so I called two RAs.. I called two RAs.. one.. mm.. to accompany me.. one.. one actually saw.. the two of them came with me and they asked.. the.. the security or the policemen to bring the three residents to.. Mm.. to hear them describe what happened to them exactly because they caught the two men with this ah.. like crime ok? So we went to the girls.. we actually checked how they were doing.. they were in some sort in shock and they went with us and I was basically the translator from English to Arabic ok? And I wrote the report; the report that includes the incident, the full incident and one month later we were.. mm.. we were ah.. like we went to the court ok.. I went to the court with the three gir.. with the three residents who said their.. what they.. what they.. what they.. what they.. what they.. what they ah.. what they experienced already ok? Ah.. it was a nice experience actually, it was a nice experience for the three of us, yet it was really challenging because it's really ah.. it's really annoying that you can see someone who's.. who's.. who's harassed and.. and the anger that was inside the three girls who were harassed, but it was really rewarding that we saw that the two men were caught and there was a fair investigation with both of them and they were in jail. So, this was really, it was a challenging experience for me.

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Bisharat: Wow.. So the men, are they still in jail now or what? What was the verdict eh..?

Fayed: They were charged with harassing the.. the.. the three.. the three residents and luckily the.. the three girls are, that they were caught while harassing the girls so there was a security as a.. as a like as a witness and there was one girl who was a witness for her two.. ah.. two colleagues or two friends because one actually was touched like one.. one of the men touched one of the residents, so now yea they are in jail.

Bisharat: Ok. Maha, I.. learnt that you were on campus during the revolution, so can you tell us your experience as an RD during the situation, especially it's an unusual situation where not many eh.. residents, and not many people have faced such a situation. So, being an RD with the normal responsibilities is a highly demanding job so ah.. how was it being an RD in a very unusual circumstance in which an.. a revolution occurred?

Fayed: ah.. ye as you.. yea as you as you indicated.. as you indicated it was.. it was like a.. it was an incident that happened.. that happens once in a lifetime as you may see. Mmm.. One of the challenges that we faced during the revolution as RDs and RAs was the panic that we saw residents in because as you know.. residents are both international, Arab, Egyptians, they were like.. they were diverse and we had this sort of panic attack between.. between all the residents. So, you know some of the residents, mainly international ones they left.. they left Egypt completely even without packing their stuff because their embassies sent mm.. like emergency planes to.. to take them to their homeland and some residents were transferred to Zamalek. Actually the whole campus or whoever was living on the on campus dorms was transferred to

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Zamalek dorms because ah.. as a security measure the security office saw that it's really recommended.. highly recommended that all residents would be in one place.. one safe place which was at this time Zamalek not on campus because the area around.. around the on campus was.. was like a place where thieves and..and thugs was.. was.. were.. was attacking all the time. So, what I really like so much about being an RD and being a part of the family in the Reslife[an abbreviation for the Residential Life Office in the dorms] is that the Office of Residential Life, they accommodated all the residents who lived in Zamalek on a full board bases; you know.. all the meals, all their requests, if a residence.. if a resident want to call eh.. to call her or his parents internationally, she or he would be.. would be contacting them.. exactly so it was really good how the Reslife stood [stood] with the residents and how mm.. we as a team were trying to.. to calm them down. Yes, we were sitting in front of.. in front of the news all the time but at least we were one family gathered together sharing all mm.. you know.. our feelings about what's happening and trying as a.. as a Reslife family to create indoor activities for these.. for these residents in order to feel that they're actually are in their home, not.. not to feel with panic with all the revolution and with all the you know.. the unusual circumstances of.. of theft and.. and those crimes were occurring while the revolution itself.

Bisharat: Ok. Eh.. during the revolution many students were very mm.. [silence] eh..were very energized and they wanted to go to Tahrir Square so how did you deal with the students who wanted to go to Tahrir because it's their right you can't eh.. you can't stop them from going to Tahrir especially in this time of.. of.. if you want to say making history? So, how did you deal with the students who wanted to go? How did you make sure they're.. they're alright, they're

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safe especially that they're living in the dorms which means they're under your supervision, their parents rely on you to keep them safe. So, did you find any difficulties in managing and controlling the students who are in Zamalek and on campus eh.. in the way they went to Tahrir, the timing, and did you.. did you.. deal with any problems.. security, police clashing with the.. with the residents?

Fayed: Mm.. as you said it's really difficult to control the.. the residents or students because it's yea.. it was like making history, but at the same time we're.. we're trying from one side not to.. not to limit their freedom if they want to go, and from the other side ah.. we actually care a lot about their safety, so what we were actually recommending them is mm.. in.. is that they have to leave their contacts [contact information] and if they're going in a.. they are also recommended to go in a group not alone especially even.. even not during the revolution, even after the revolution they were highly recommended to be in a group, they were highly recommended to.. to write their contact info, we were actually checking on them via phone; that they are safe, that.. that they are on the way to.. to campus mm.. also the procedure that we followed during the revolution was the same ah.. was the same that we followed actually after the revolution. Even if you were a resident in..in.. in the on campus dorms and you were in Tahrir to support whoever in Tahrir and like you want to stay the night at Zamalek.. you were actually free to do so without any extra charges. So, this was also a step that we share our concern about residents' safety and that we ensure that they are perfectly safe and.. and.. and sound and that they.. they would you know.. express their opinion but at the same time be safe.

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Bisharat: Ok. Last thing I want to ask you about Maha is that a lot of AUC students who don't live on campus, they think that living in the dorms is such a boring life and there's nothing to do, so what can you tell them eh.. to encourage them to try living in the dorms or to introduce them to the.. the life the residents on campus live and how much fun they have?

Fayed: Ok. Ah. I'll tell you something; ah.. first of all I joined AUC on a scholarship bases, ok? So I was yes, I was one of the.. of the students who thought at the beginning that living in a dorm would be such a boring experience mm.. that I want to actually mm.. live with my friends and I know just living in the dorms would be such a bad idea, but actually there are many benefits and I would highly recommend anyone who is an undergrad or even a graduate student to join mm.. like the dorms' life or the.. the.. the.. the on campus dorms or the Zamalek dorms' life. Why? You would feel that you're highly ah.. independent; you would actually feel the moment you step in the dorms you have to do your laundry, you have to make your own food or you know.. buy your own food and do it, you would actually meet lots of people with different nationalities, different backgrounds, you would mm.. be the owner of your own life; no one will instruct you, no one will advise you, you will be the one who takes his or her own decisions mm.. you would feel that you have this kind of power that you have to.. you know to pave your own life as you can see. Mm.. what else? That's it, you know in the dorms we do many activities such as.. like RAs work day and night to make perfect activities; edutainment activities, cultural nights, orientations, trips mm.. you know there is a study room, there is [are]computer labs, you know.. you.. you actually we try in the design of the dorms itself we.. we.. mm.. we tried as much as we can to make it as home you know.. to feel that it's.. that it's a joyful experience. [knocking on the

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door] Yes, so mm.. it's.. it's like one in a lifetime experience, actually you know.. many many many friends that I have did not see how much I changed on a personal and professional level, when I lived in the dorms I got like.. my personality just completely changed mm.. because you actually get to know people on a deeper level, you know.. it's just.. you're not.. you're not meeting friends in the class but you're actually living in a community that ah.. you have the ownership in to be like.. to have the full experience.. in it so this was like.. this is.. I personally recommend it to anyone who's going to undergrad or grad.

Bisharat: Ok. Thank you so much Maha. Thank you for your time and ah.. that's it.

Fayed: ah.. you're welcome Sally. Thank you so much.