

Noor Bulle

## Part of My Life's Hardship

### Chapter One (Leaving Somalia)

What I write and remember makes me cry. I can see the images as if these things were happening right now. I remember that my mom started to go to school in the refugee camp. She went every day. She wanted to get an education; she did that for our family. She came from Somalia and had been denied an education. She wanted me to go, but I would not go. I had other things on my mind. In America, I got my mind together and really realized the beauty of education. I got very passionate about getting educated.

Sometimes people, even my friends, make fun of the way I speak. They make fun of my accent. In a way, this is nothing new. Back in my home country, in my native language, I had a funny accent and other kids would make fun of it. I quickly learned that if I got mad at them, they continued to make fun of me. Soon, I laughed it off, and eventually I lost that speech problem I had in my native language. This is why, here in America, I just laugh when kids make fun of my accented English.

In college, sometimes I marvel at this world I am living in. I am a full time college student, and often I look around and realize that no one knows my story. I am fully dedicated to my education, even though it takes much more work for me to complete the assignments. I work very hard here, much harder than my American classmates, and I am at a disadvantage. English is my second language; even education is a new idea to me. No one knows how I got here, why I am here; they see me here, but they don't know my life story, my life's struggles.

I have seen a lot of unjust, miserable, and terrible things in my twenty years. I have lived in three countries: Somalia, Kenya, and America. I lived for twelve years in two different refugee camps, Dadaab and Kakuma. I set out to live on my own at the age of eleven. I started my own business in the refugee camp at the age of eleven or twelve. I have always been extremely independent. I have always had a good mind for figuring things out. I always have been a problem-solver. I knew if I worked hard and put my mind to something, that I could make a difference. I was always a hard worker. I was a survivor. I was not an academic kid because living in the refugee camps I didn't have the opportunity. It wasn't the environment for being a student, but I knew if I survived and made it through, that I would get an education. I was a very mature kid in many ways; I always approached life in a very adult-like way. I was always a very serious kid. When I wanted to start my own store, my mom laughed at me. I was serious. I knew that I had the drive and the desire to make something of myself. I often thought to myself, if I can survive this refugee camp, I could survive anywhere.

Somalia has been in a civil war for over a decade. There have been so many complications in the country. In 1991 the functioning government, which was a dictatorship, was overthrown by a group of warlords. They thought the government wasn't fair. The displacement of the government began a civil war. Since then Somalia has been a place of instability that has resulted in the deaths of many civilians and forced others to flee to other countries to seek refuge and became refugees. We were one of the luckiest families that had escaped and reached one of the neighboring countries safely, because many people died on the road for many reasons just trying to escape the violence. Some people died of starvation or thirst. Some were eaten by wild animals

(hyena, leopards or lions). Some were too weak to take the long walk and others died while trying to help others.

In the mad chaos of the civil war, everyone was just trying to escape. People were leaving their villages and there was no other choice for them. There was no time to make decisions; families just got separated by the violence. Many people had to leave their children or other family members behind. People were just running anywhere to escape the bullets. If you happened to have your kids with you when you fled, you were lucky. Many people just ran for themselves without their kids. Many of these people reunited with their children many years later in the refugee camps.

All of our stuff was taken from us. We had nothing but the things we could carry. We were going from one village to another village. My grandfather was with us, and he was very, very old. He refused to go with us to the next village. He said he was too old to go with us. At this point, our stuff was gone, so we were going to the next village, where we heard it was safer. We were on the road, walking with many other Somali-Bantu. Then we came upon a group of bandits. One guy was in the road, but the other bandits were surrounding us in the bush. This one guy stopped our family. He was checking the hair of each person; you could tell from the kind of hair if a person was Somali-Somali or Somali-Bantu. He was arguing with our family. He was arguing with us. Our family looked Somali-Somali, and they were asking which tribe we were in. We were Somali-Bantu, but we looked Somali-Somali, especially my brother and grandmother looked Somali-Somali. These Somali-Somali bandits were of a certain clan and would kill other Somali-Somalis from other clans. They asked us which tribe we were in, and he said he would kill us if we did not say. My grandmother was arguing with him, saying, "If you

want to kill us, go ahead and kill us. We are telling you the truth; we are Bantus.” After he was done arguing, he released my grandmother ahead and said, “Don’t look back.” He also sent some of the kids ahead with the same instructions, “Don’t look back.” My mom and I were the last in line. There was a house next to the road that was destroyed from bullets and a raid, so the house was mostly in ruins. He told us to follow him behind the house. He was planning to rape my mom. I was crying and crying and holding onto my mother. The man had a gun, but I wasn’t afraid of the gun. I didn’t really understand what a gun was. I just thought he was the police. I didn’t understand what was happening, but I understood the tone of his voice, the threatening tone. He said that I could cry all I wanted, but he was still going to rape her. He made her set down the things she was carrying. Then he told her to take her clothes off. I continued crying. Then my mom lied to him saying that she had a disease, Jippta. When he heard that, he stepped away from her. Then, since we were free to go on our way, my mom asked him to help her lift these heavy baskets onto her head to carry them, but he ran away. He didn’t even look back.

I was only three years old at the time, but I remember this story. When I asked my mom about it years later, in America, she couldn’t believe I remembered it. I didn’t realize until years later that this guy was going to rape my mom. I remember to this day what this man looked like, even the way he walked, the shirt and the pants he wore. To this day, I remember that. My mom couldn’t believe it; she asked if I had heard the story from my siblings, but I didn’t. None of my siblings even remember this story.

When the civil war was raging, we fled into the fields. We didn’t have weapons to fight back. We built hiding places in the fields, using the corn stalks and hid until the bullets stopped. Then things got worse and even the hiding places were unsafe. People

were throwing hand grenades and bombing the hiding places, so there was no safe place at that point. During that time, many people decided to escape. Our family decided to follow them as they walked out of this place. We decided that if we had to die, at least we'd die with the other people who were like us.

For many months we walked during the night. Because I was only four years old at this time, my father would carry me, but then he would become too tired, and I would walk for awhile until he rested. Every day, someone would climb a tall tree to get a view of the surrounding area and see what might be ahead. After we spent many months walking, someone spotted the lights in the distance. It was a red light on the top of a tall tower or building, which indicated the border of Kenya, but it was still very far away.

When we arrived at the border, there were Kenyan police who started checking us. They looked in our pockets and took our money if they found any. They took the knives that we always carried for both protection and for cutting or peeling fruits. They were very scary. They scared us to death. They were very serious with us, until they realized that we were running from war, that we were seeking refuge. Once they understood that we were not dangerous, that we had nothing, they took us to an area away from the border crossing check-point. There they brought us a big bucket full of cooked rice and beans and they let us eat there. None of us spoke Swahili, so we communicated through signs, facial expressions, and gestures. My uncle was one of the oldest in our group, and he was trying to help by being as friendly and as brave as he could be. When the police first approached my uncle, they grabbed the knife that he kept in a sheath at his belt. He didn't fight back or get angry. He even offered the sheath so that they wouldn't cut themselves on his knife. He calmed them down by being generous and not aggressive.

He kept smiling to them, even when they took his home-made knife that he'd just made (a skill he learned from his father), and he became like a leader. He gained some trust with the police, who realized he was a good guy, who was just trying to help his people. They let sleep outside there for the night. They were still not entirely sure if they could trust us.

The police reported to the Kenyan authorities that we were there at the border crossing. We stayed at the check-point for two or three weeks, while the officials tried to figure out what to do. The police kept a watch over us, and even protected us. The UNHRC finally arrived in Land-Rovers. When the UN workers arrived, they were dressed so fancy and clean, and they talked on walkie-talkies. There were six white Land-Rovers all together. And we were sitting down on the ground like orphans, very dirty from months without showers or bathing. We'd been wearing the same clothes for months. I remember being so impressed with these people. I thought they were so rich. I wanted to be like them. At the same time, I was very scared of these people. I thought they were going to burn us. The way they were talking in Swahili and I couldn't understand, and they looked so serious made me very scared. Since I was very young, I was thinking about the stories my mother used to tell me to keep me out of trouble. She used to tell me scary stories about cannibals, and I thought these workers looked like the people in her stories. They were big and strong and looked so different from us; we were all skinny, starving, and nearly dying. I thought this was the end of the day for me.

They loaded us into a lorry. Some people stood and some sat. As we traveled down the road, dust came into the lorry. There was so much dust we couldn't open our eyes. Our faces were covered with the dust. It was a long journey. Some people got

motion sickness. The road was bad, very bumpy. Even if you sat on the floor of the lorry, you bounced like a ball as the vehicle went over the ruts. We didn't know where we were going. Even the adults did not know where we were headed. They kept driving without giving us breaks.

They took us to a place in the middle of nowhere in the bush. They had construction workers who cut down the trees and they tried to make a level area where people could stay. They left us in this place with the workers. The drivers went away and came back and brought us some food. This was a nameless place. It was a wasteland, a barren place – flat, dusty, and stony. There were terrible dust storms. These dust devils would come through and grab anything loose. The dust storms would take down the people's shelters and anything that wasn't tied down. Eventually, we named this place "Dagaley" after we'd been there a long time. Dageley meant rocky place. We were the very first people, so they were making the refugee camp for us. The first day that we arrived there, there were not many families, maybe fifty people. Some were whole families, and some were parts of families. They had been separated from their relatives.

When we arrived, many of the other Somali refugees who were with us were sick from the long walk out of Somalia. They had swollen legs from walking and swollen bellies from starvation. The UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees) tried to help these people, but some of them died. As we walked out of Somalia, we kept waiting for them because they were sickly. We didn't leave anybody behind as we journeyed out of Somalia. We moved as a group. We tried to carry the sick ones. It was really hard because even the ones who were carrying were not well or strong and they were barely able to walk themselves. Some people died on the way, and people tried to

bury them, or at least hide them from the animals that might find and eat the dead bodies.

After we spent a few days in this newly cleared area and we got a little rest, my father heard that another group of Somali-Bantu refugees were walking our way. He and a few other guys went to help this next group of refugees. They took some water to them. My father found this family who were related to us, and they had red eyes and were tired and exhausted. One boy was my age, four or five years old, and my father carried him on his back for about twenty miles to reach the place where we were settled. This boy was my uncle. In our families, there are many children. For example, in my family, my oldest sister is 25 and she has a son who is eight years old. My youngest sibling is seven, so my sister is the aunt but she is one year younger than her nephew. Many people in America are confused when I say that this boy, who is the same age as I am, is my uncle.

The (UNHCR) United Nations High Commission for Refugees built a refugee camp for us. We were the first refugee settlers in that particular new camp. They built this camp because they knew that more and more refugees would be coming and they could expand the camp. Without the help of UNHCR, none of us will be alive at this time. The UN hired people to cook food for us for a few months. The food the employees cooked, it wasn't a food that they cook in your house; they cook the food in a basement that the UN built to feed the refugees. When the employees finished cooking the food, the refugees lined up like an army and served us like students. Sometimes the food they give to the people is not enough, so as a young kid I went back in the line to get more food. Then one of the employees caught me and said, "Didn't I serve you a few minutes ago?" I said, "Yes, but it wasn't enough for me". The man threw me out of the line and said, "You got what you were supposed to get." Although I got thrown out, I didn't move

far away from the food. I stayed nearby until everyone finished. I waited, hoping that I might eventually get some food. Those employees weren't part of the UN; they were refugees like us. The employees didn't get paid by the UN but they were taking extra food for their family, which is the reason I got thrown from the line. If there was any food left over, the employees got it.

After a few months, there were many more refugees, so they needed a new system to get food to everyone. Then they set up a supply store, which was locked and secured and was made with barbed wire. No one could get in. The UN lorries would bring in food to the supply place. Every fifteen days, families could go get their food from the UN storeroom. They measured out the food. Per person, they would give you one kilo of porridge, one kilo of maize, one kilo of flour, and one kilo of beans (if you were lucky), and one cup of oil. This was for fifteen days. It was much better if you were in a family because you could combine your food together and make it last longer, but if you were single, it was terrible. You needed to be resourceful to find ways to supplement this food. You had to find ways to get milk, meat, and any vegetables or spices. There were small businesses in the refugee camp where you could buy some of these things.

We slept outside, but after many months with no house to sleep, people started building their own roofs, which were not solid, but it's also better than sleeping outside. They kept out the sun but not the rain. A lot of us were crowded together under the one roof. The UN decided to give us plastic bags to put on the roof so that when it start raining we would have at least a dry space to sleep. The plastic bag that they gave to us didn't last long because of the sun. Most of the time temperature was 100 degree more on the refugee camp. People were doing everything they could to protect their plastic on the

house. The sun would eat away the plastic bags. My dad used to cut grass and my brother and I used to help put the grass on top of the house. The grass would protect the plastic from the sun. At this time I weighted 80 pounds, so I was the one who was on top of the house and organizing the grass. My father and brother would throw the grass up to me, and I would be on the roof fixing the house. If you were heavy and you climbed on top on of that house, you will destroy the whole house because the house is not strong enough to hold bigger guys. The UN started to bring more refugees on the camp, which made it harder and harder to get resources.

We lived in this refugee camp for eight years, all the time waiting to find out if we would get to immigrate to the United States. During those eight years, they kept saying that we would get to immigrate to the United States. They would take our fingerprints and say not to lose our cards because if you lost your card, you couldn't get another card. They would think that you sold your card to someone else. You had to hold onto this card for your identity. You couldn't leave the country without this card. All during these eight years, we thought we would soon go to America.

## Chapter Two (Jobs)

In the Refugee Camps there aren't really much jobs for older people, so we kids had to struggle and find ways to support ourselves. Many of my friends worked in market restaurants cleaning dishes and sweeping the restaurants. Sometimes the manager or the supervisor would yell at them very badly also insulting and swearing at them. I went with one of my friends one day to see what they did and how they were treated at the job. What I saw didn't really satisfy me. There were too many dishes to wash and the job did not pay well. That was too much for me. The overseers there didn't also seem to appreciate the hard work all those kids were doing for them. The kids were only fed with food reminders from customers. I thought this was horrible. I had to come up with another way of earning something either food or money.

In Kenya in the camps life was very difficult for us because there weren't jobs that people could do to support themselves. In the camps where we settled or lived for over a decade the average number of a single family consisted of six. In a family like this, each individual has a responsibility especially if you are old enough to work or do something. I wasn't old enough to work like my dad would, but I had to do something to help us. There wasn't much of a choice for me, but I thought of making soccer balls using dirty plastic bags and torn clothes or scraps from the tailor. To make the soccer balls, you need a lot of plastic bags put together. You start small and build the plastic ball by melting plastic together until it becomes solid. It takes a long time, but by using a fire, you can make a bigger and harder ball. It takes five to six hours to make the plastic ball. Then it takes another five or six hours to make the cloth covering. You sew the covering

by hand with needle and thread. You have to put three or four layers of cloth

Collecting used plastics was very embarrassing to certain teenage boys because sometime ladies would insult you and old people would curse you for doing that. They would do this because the plastic bags were dirty and had to be washed with water and dried in the sun. They thought I was crazy for picking up the trash. I couldn't understand why older people would curse such an innocent child trying to help his family and himself. I thought some people were just jealous the fact that we were doing that and some of them couldn't make something for themselves because they were too old. Ladies would insult us because they thought we could do a better job. I think they were right on that, but the fact is that there were no jobs available for us at the time. Many teenage boys joined me and some of them quit very quickly because it was embarrassing for them, but for those of us who didn't feel embarrassed did it for a longer period of time. After making about sixteen of these balls, I started selling them to other kids. The minimal amount I sold them for was ten shillings unless a kid didn't have enough. These really supported many of us in many ways. We were able to buy good clothes for ourselves, eat good food (not reminders from customers) as well as helped our family little bit. It wasn't a job that satisfied all of us or supported all of us successfully, but it was really better than nothing. We struggle a lot and many people cursed us a lot, but we at least made some money to support ourselves. I thought this was a great success because we were only kids.

There were so many children in the camp and we used to play together, playing with the soccer ball that we made ourselves. Selling these balls is how I used to help support our family. I used to make many good soccer balls and sell them. Then I gave

the money to my parents so they could spend it on food for us. It wasn't help, but it was really better than nothing. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and other aid agencies used to help us. The UN gave us some food every fifteen days such as maize, wheat flour, beans as well as oil. These elements weren't really enough.

In the Somali-Bantu society, the men would build the houses with bricks or with sticks and the women would plaster the outside. These were the roles. Back in Somalia, this was how it worked. The plaster was made with cow dung and mud together. The women would go and gather these materials. My dad and some other guys were the builders, and my mom and some other women did the plasterwork. The women had to walk and walk to gather the materials from wherever the cows had been. Both of these jobs were a lot of work. In the refugee camp, these were some job skills that my family and other Somali-Bantu people brought with them. In the refugee camp, my father and mother could apply these building skills to make a little money in the camp. These were hard physical jobs. We had little kids in our family and they would cry out in hunger, and my mom had to work to earn a little money to bring more food to our family.

My mother's hands were cracked and cut. Her hands were blistered and callused. The palms of her hands were dry and had hundreds of little cuts. It was very hard work. What the women would do is gather the dry dirt from the ground and cow dung and mix it with water. The women had to walk a long way to gather the cow dung and the dirt. The house owners did not want the women to dig holes to get the dirt close to the house because then there would be holes in their yard, so the women had to walk long distances to gather these materials, and then, because they didn't have wheelbarrows, they had to

carry this on their backs. The women would use sacks – the kind that flour or sugar came in – and they'd fill these with the dirt and cow dung. Then they'd secure the sack with rope and then carry these bundles on their backs with a rope tied around their forehead. This was very intense work. This mixture had to be mixed with water, and the water was also a long way from the location of the building. To get the water, the women had to go to the central water station. At this station, you asked to ask the watchman if you could get some water. You either must beg the watchman or bribe him with some money. Then you could fill the buckets from one of the four spigots at this sink. The watchmen controlled the water because water was a limited resource. Also, the watchman was necessary because if he were not there, some kids would pollute the water by spitting in it or wasting the water. The watchman was a good job at the refugee job. There were only certain times that you could go and get water. Each section of the camp had a water source, but it was still a long walk. Women would carry metal buckets to get water; often the women would each carry three of these metal buckets. The women would carry one on top of their head and one in each hand as they walked back from the sink.

Once they had the dirt, dung, and water, the women would make the plaster. They made this mixture directly at the site. They mixed the material very fast, and then they spread the plaster with their hands. If it were a brick house, they would smooth their hands along the walls. If it was a stick house, it was much harder. The women used their hands to rub this plaster into the house, and their hands would get cut on sharp sticks and sometimes on pieces of glass that were in the dirt. It was a painful job, but the women were glad to have these jobs because they needed the money, and if they did not want this job, many other people would be glad to take it. My mom did this job to help the family.

My dad was doing carpentry at this time. My older brother was in school at this time.

As I grew, I joined a team of hunters. The rules the team had were very difficult and strict. They didn't care if you were young or old. Everybody had to follow the same guidelines as the other person would. One of the rules that I found very scary was to run after hyenas or other wild animals that would attack us. The leader warned us to chase the wild animals before they chased us. If we let them attack us, we had a better chance that we would get eaten.

There were sixteen or eighteen members in our hunting group, depending on who showed up when it was time to go hunting. We'd take some water and some food. We'd carry nets and tools for hunting, like knives, sticks, clubs. Each group had two captains who led the group. We'd go into the bush and set up these nets with stakes, similar to a volley ball net but taller. The net was about seven feet tall. Then the hunters would form a circle to surround the animals. The hunters would shout and make the animals panic and run. Then the hunters on the other side would shout when they would see the animals. All the different hunters' shouting would send the animals to the net. As soon as the animals hit the net, the hunter would kill them but then quickly return to his spot to keep all the areas covered. It was very important to keep all areas covered so the animals didn't escape. I learned the hard way.

The first time I joined the team of hunters, we went into the forest and we saw these animals called antelope. There were three: a mother, a father, and a baby. The father was not scared of anything. I was yelling and losing my voice and he still didn't stop charging. I did everything I could to stop his attack and to send him towards the net, but he continued. When they have a baby, these animals are not scared of anything.

Finally, he came to me, so I threw my body into a tree to hide. Then the animals passed by. The other hunters on the team saw that the animals passed me in my position. All the kids were accusing me because I let the animals go by. The two captains were there and they got sticks and put me in the middle and started beating me with sticks until I was on the ground and bleeding. They chased me, and I fell down. I got up and ran again and jumped into a thicket. It was especially scary because we were six or eight hours' journey from home. Then they stopped chasing me, but I was in the bushes bleeding and swollen with bruises and gashes. Finally the captains left me and said, "Let's go hunt." Then the other kids started picking on me and calling me names. After that, I rejoined them, and later that day, we got one ibex but he wasn't as fine as the other ones. That day we went back home late at night almost eleven at night. It was very dangerous to travel this late at night because of hyenas and bandits. We all went to the captains' house to divide up the meat and then we'd each head home to our own houses. That was especially dangerous because we were carrying meat and it was nighttime and the animals, especially the hyenas, could smell the meat and they might chase you. The refugee camp also had strict rules, and I wasn't supposed to be out of the gate after eight thirty, so I had to go the long way around to the other gate, which was a longer journey and scary. Once I was home, I didn't tell my parents about the captains beating me up. It was dark and we didn't have good lights, so my mother couldn't see the blood, cuts, and bruises. I took a shower and the blood was coming out of my cuts. It was a very painful shower, and I didn't want my mom to see what was going on. Also, the bushes that I jumped into were very sharp and I got many cuts from these as well. That night it was so painful to sleep. My body was throbbing with the pain. The pain was pulsing everywhere. The next time the hunters

went, I joined them.

One day while we were hunting in the bush, it was around twelve o'clock, in the middle of the day. It was a very hot day, probably a hundred degrees. We were walking and looking for antelope to hunt. We came upon some people in the bush. They came out of nowhere. We saw a few guys and then more came out of the bush. They surrounded us. There were a dozen of them, all with guns. We were unarmed. We had our hunting tools but no guns.

These bandits had homes in the trees. The trees in the bush are quite strong. The bandits would weave the branches together to make platforms in the trees and they'd weave grasses to make hammocks in the trees. From the ground, looking up, you can't see that these platforms are there at all.

They tried to scare us. They asked us if we had cigarettes. They asked us if we had *mirra* (khat), which is a plant from Ethiopia and is now all over Africa. It's a legal drug in Africa; people chew it. They suck all the juice from the leaves. People keep the leaves in their cheek and chew it for many hours. This drug keeps people awake and keeps hunger away. It gives people excitement and feelings of power. Some people get very over-excited. Some people get very talkative and start telling stories about all the things they've been through. So, these bush people asked us if we had mirra, but we said no. They started scaring us. They said, "You think you own this ground? Why are you hunting in here?"

We said, "We're just hunting here because we don't have enough food at home. We need this food to survive. The government is not giving us enough. We aren't getting enough, so we're hunting here."

The bush men started calling us a disrespectful name. They called us “Uggi.” This was a way of putting us down. Uggi means we were lower class, like calling a man, a boy.

These men with guns were older than we were, probably in their thirties. Our group was mostly teen-agers and young adults.

After they tried to scare us and checked our pockets for things to take, they realized we had nothing. The one guy said, “These people are *gaijo* (which means starving people).” He said this disrespectfully, like we were worth nothing.

They decided we would cook for them. One of them went to go hunt, while they made us cook some rice.

Very quickly, the hunter got a deer and called to two of our guys, “Uggi, come help carry this deer.” We’d been hunting all day and had only three small antelopes, and this guy very quickly had killed a big deer.

These bandits were hitting us and kicking us, quite severely.

These bandits made us cook this animal and they ate the meal right in front of us and would not give us any.

After the meal, they said, “Don’t ever come back here again. When you go home, you can tell anyone we’re here. Even, tell the police. We are not afraid of anyone.”

Finally, they let us go, but we didn’t keep hunting. Some guys were badly hurt from being beaten by the bandits. We went home directly, and some guys told their families. I didn’t tell my family because that’s just how I am. I don’t tell my family when bad things happen to me. Other people told their families or their wives, so my mom

heard from other people what had happened.

About three days later, some of these bandits came into the refugee camp to buy mirra and milk. We recognized them right away, but we knew we couldn't do anything about what they had done. They had lots of money. They were buying lots of mirra. One way these men get all this money was killing giraffe (which is an illegal thing to do), and they hung the meat in the trees to dry it. They dry it for three to five days, and then they take the dried meat into the camps and sell it at night. It's very expensive. The police knew the bandits were selling giraffe meat, but they couldn't do anything about it. The people who buy the meat are the ones who sometimes get caught, but the bandits don't get caught. The police go to people's homes and check to see if they have giraffe meat. If they caught people with giraffe meat, the police would beat you badly and take you to the jail until someone pays the police to release you. We knew money talks. If we went to the police, we would not be heard or believed. These people had money and guns. We didn't want any trouble for our families. If we told the police about these bandits, they might return in the night and kill our families. It wasn't worth the risk. We decided to keep quiet. It would be too dangerous to say anything.

After going hunting many times with this group, we had a day off, and we went to play soccer in the afternoon as the sun was going down because it was cooler then. My brother and I were there to play soccer. As we dividing up to make two teams, people were joking around and telling stories. One of kids from the hunting group, started to tell the story of how I was beaten for letting the animals go and how I ran into the bushes and fell down. He was telling this story to put me down, and my brother was there and had not heard this story because I had kept it a secret. After he heard this story, he didn't say anything. We played the game, but I could tell from his facial expression that he was kind of upset that I had not told my family this story. When we came home, my brother told my father and mother this story. My father was very angry, and he said, "You are not anymore."