

2016
München
Elvis
33 Jahre
geb. in Lagos
Nigeria



Growing up in Nigeria, school and work

Elvis is my name. And I was born in 1984. March 19th, that's my birthday. And growing up was not very easy, but I grew up anyway. I was born in Lagos, but I grew up in Benin. It's southwest actually. First, it was initially the capital city of Nigeria. I grew up my childhood all in Benin. I went to school about just basic four and then, that's when school for me stopped officially. And I started working very early. I sold a few stuffs. And then I signed up for - there's a place where I work as a secretary. A little bit. And I earned a bit of money. And then of course during that period I had some extra hours. I payed for tuition where I learned how to speak English. Of course English is a basic official language. And I wanted to be able to express myself since I can't study to be a doctor, an engineer. Or something. And after that, I stopped. It seemed at that time it was better to work in a bakery. What was very hard. Was very, very. And the time was terrible. But the pay was a bit ok but not fair compared with the labour. I also signed again for another school to improve my speaking-ability. Which I'm still improving. I'm trying to be better in English or so. And I worked there for a while. And kept going to these ...

Opening two kiosks and selling cloths

And after that I got some extra money and I opened two kiosks to sell cloths. T-shirts, Hosen, all that. And those were the things I did for the last few years before I got into trouble with some very hostile people. These people were, they are like outlaws. Yeah. They are actually ... none of ... they are not officials of the government, but they demand to be giving loyalties. You pay them money. They are really bad guys these people. They are also connected with the politicians an ... they are really, really bad people. They have weapons and even some security personnel part of them. Like they have, they have their people, everywhere. And business is not as ... business is sometimes a bit down, sometimes a bit up. Sometimes it's just really frustrating. And business is down and you need to pay some bills. And money is not coming and these people comes. And they ask, if you don't pay, they do just what they feel like. They can get you stuffs, they can tell you you're not working, you are not selling that day. They can even assault you. So they can do really lot of things. It was around February. I thought I got enough of it. You don't want to work, you just want to feed off people just because you are strong and you have ... all kinds of weapons. And if you go to the police station and report you have a top guy who is their friend or member. So, they are like above the law. And so it was really getting to me grudgingly. Initially I was saying like, ok, like everybody try to do. Try to keep quiet. And try to pay alone and try as much as possible to get money ready so when they come you just give it to them.

And then it became too much!

And then it became too much. Became too much. I was having personal stress in my life. Because, in the society we live in you have to be strong. You don't also think about just yourself. You also have your family. Who also is looking up, to you. Even if they don't say: „You have to do something for us!“ I should be able to at least assist to help. Because we're all in this together ... to make it easier for all of us.

And business was down. I had bills to pay and of course to help my parents to make it a bit easier. They have spend too much time in .. in .. in shits. So I should be able to help a little. So there was too much stress. But you have to find your way a bit.

They actually wanted me to be a part of them

I got fed up. I challenged them. Like: „You don't have to do this.“ The first time. And then ... it didn't end well. I went to look for police station and I reported. And .. it was a wrong move. I found out it was a wrong ... I shouldn't just have ... I should

have just look for money and give it to them and then continue life. Because it's, it's, it's a hard life. You need to continue and be harder ... each moment. Each time. And somehow it's came to my mind that ... they actually also wanted me to be a part of them. To do this. And it was totally a contrast to what I grew up with my views of life. I don't believe I have to oppress someone. To live by or live off someone. I should be able to fight. And I can help also instead of feeding off someone. Putting pressure if they like it or not. Because I'm powerful. And, I don't know what they saw in me. Also. And they wanted me, several times, they had to call me. Like I have to meet them up somewhere. And of course ... I refused. It was not easy to take this decision. But it was ... because I knew if I, if I, if I go, I can't, I can't guarantee, ok, how it will end to be part of them. And knowing their history. If you oppose them, and you are strong. So many shit has happened. Like - there was a guy who, who I would say, I think he wanted to be a hero. And something happened to him, it was terrible. His hand was chopped off and then dropped off in the school gates. Everybody knew what happened and everybody knew why that happened. And you have to escape for your life.

This is your life on the line

And on this fateful day, I think it was around February anything, march. So. They came again. I was really messed up. I was, they was smashing my head and all that. And they came. There was physical assault. Getting me slapped and all that. And I had a bottle, I picked it up and ... poom! One of the leaders and then - gosh! A moment of anger and madness for me. I did that and - gosh! What have you done! - This is your life on the line. I have to run.

And I didn't go home immediately. I, because I know what that means. They would definitely start looking for me. I went to a friends place and then I tried to call - what's happening, what's the solution. They said: „Wherever you are, remain where you are. Don't come out, they are looking for you!“

I had to change cities

It's, it's sorry ... Ehm, and then. I had to move to my cousins place. This point, it was not easy. This is not easy. That changed a lot of things in my life. Yes, I didn't have the best of life but I.. I ... I liked my quiet life. A bit easy going and - yeah - fight every day. But I lost that. And that meant a lot to me.

From that day I was at my cousins place I had to go to ... I had to change cities. I moved to Lagos and where I was I think - within a weak I would say. It was God that saved me.

It is not like in Germany where each house has a toilet inside the building, some houses in Lagos seem like to be very old-modern. Where the toilet is outside the building, just behind them. You have to go out.

I was in my shorts, thinking of what to do in my life and all that. I went to the toilet and then I heard noises. The guys were looking for me. How did they know? How did they know that I was here? It was crazy. They are so connected. Like, they are very, very much connected. And that – I left. It was crazy, it was really, really crazy. But I managed to get ...to change again. I managed to get a Abuja. That's where I met someone who helped me. Like: „I'm in big shit. My life is really crazy.“ If they can find me in a week in Lagos. Like in a different city. Where can I go, go really ...?

And at that point I had a little savings. And I told, see, this is what I have. This is my life, really, really. He said, ok, I could help you. I can help you. I just hope it works. And then I was really each day, afraid, what's gonna happen next. Are they gonna find me?

Do you wanna stay or stay alive?

Yes, I personally, I've always believed. Death is a constant. It will happen. But how it happens you can also sometimes determine. I don't want my head cut, shot, like cut off. If I die, I can die whenever but not someone pick me up and then do what they wanna do... a painful death. I don't want that. I was living, each moment is the next moment. When I get caught.

And he came with the papers. All the information really is not right. Really not right. But I had no choice. This was my life. What was in my mind was: Get off! So initially I said - the year is not correct. So he said: You wanna stay, do you wanna stay alive or not? Or you do this? ...

So it was a hard decision. And I took it and I got myself. I got myself. He just told me: "You will meet this person there and they put you in a plane and then you're off." And: „This is who you are, ok, you have a picture!“ And I said: „Ok! This is it!“

Coming to Europe

And then I did it. I got to ... to Italy. I have heard a lot off stuff about Italy. Really, sincerely. I don't really have a lot of faith for their security system. Because I heard a lot of that also those bad guys come. Because they also have a lot of Africans from my place who are there, we hear a lot of things. And sometimes I even watched some videos here in Deutschland about what they do in Italy. Where they assault each other, these bad guys. So I wasn't ever, ever planning to be there.

So I got there, ok, this is it. And then. What else should I do? I landed in Rome. I need to go away where I have faith in the system and Deutschland was it. I spent like 3 hours in Rome. And I said ok, and also hearing that Germany is a bit open to people now. I trust the security system. I have not heard this scandal stuff happening there. And then the train was to Köln.

I spent like almost two weeks in Köln. About 25th of July I came to Munich, München. There was a Nigerian guy I met there. He helped me get ticket. Because at this point I was like all alone. Like, basically. What should I do with my life now? Yes I felt safe, warm. Then what should I do with my life? Food is necessary. I need to get proper shelter. I had, I had, money with me. Little money with me anyway. I got a hotel like two days. And during that days where like ... moving around the city. Get a place. Just trying to get a place. It was not very funny.

June ought to be summer. But it was not very nice like home. It was a bit cold. It was a funny warm. Cause living in very warm climate. They told me, which ought to be summer. But it's not summer like temperature which it gets in the evening – we call it cold! It was crazy.

Seeking asylum

And then I met this Nigerian: „You see, I'm really in a mess!“ Because I saw him and like: yeah, Nigeria, yes! He looked cool, he looked calm. A bit, so I spoke with him. This is the situation. He said: „Ok, you can actually seek asylum.“ That was the first time I heard about asylum. And then he told me: „It will be safer for me and safer for you, you go to seek for asylum.“ And then he got me tickets. I got to München. And I said: ok fine! It feels like: Whatever comes, pick it. If it's good – fine! If it's bad – try live with it and accept it! I don't know anything. At this point. You say me, tell me: Go there! It's safer for you. Oh! Oh, I'll run there. Sometimes when you are in a situation, you don't ask questions. You say: ok! Ok!

And then at Hauptbahnhof and then ... like I'm looking for ... And there was a bus. Usually they say: „Get into this bus! When the bus final stop you go there and tell them: You wanna seek asylum“. Ok. Right. I was there. Looking around. It's funny to be in a new, strange place. You don't have the language, lot of things, and then. And finally 25th of July I was at Bayernkaserne. Yes, I can't forget. Of course I know the name now. But then, then, then it was problem. Just stay alive! That was the idea. Stay alive! Whatever way, stay alive! Sometimes it gets hard. Sometimes you get new exciting experiences. I was there, and then they took me from one place to another. „You have to do this. My name and this and this and all that“. They did all that. They took me to a room, with several guys in the room. And then they said: „There's your bed!“

That's how the story started. And it has been another entire story all in Deutschland.

Before I came to Germany I didn't know so much. But we all knew Hitler. It was a name that everybody knew. We went to, even when you are joking on the streets sometimes in Nigeria, when somebody is bad: Hitler. Adolf! That guy is Hitler. That's what we know: That he was a German and in worldwar he did bad things. But only generalise bad things. And then when it's about strong cars: German cars. Like my Dad actually liked Volkswagen. That Beetle. They call it Beetle, the old one. He loved it. He won't trade it for anything. We know German cars are very strong. We know BMW, so we knew it was a strong, strong nation. Military-wise. That military, strong cars, strong military, good, very hard people. That's what basically we knew. So coming to Germany now: Strong military, you feel secured. So nobody would just get me and.

Coming here, from the first registration point. Ok! Yes, first of all from the HBF, putting me in the bus. Ok fine, It was great to know that someone could speak at least English. Then they put me in the bus. And then I got there. They kept me ... it was fair. Coming from the background which I just passed through. And all that. This was like very friendly for me. Even if someone just say: „Go there!“ That was friendly for me! That was friendly enough for me. Because at that point I was, I was, would say I was really traumatized. My family, my friends, everything, my quiet life. Everything just like (pffff). I had this pain.

Now I feel safe

I wouldn't say it's, it's gone but I would say it's a bit better now. Because you know I'm safe. I feel safe, It's a different side of the history now. Because I should start doing something with my life. I'm looking for an opportunity to. It's difficult also. But difficulty now is different from the difficulty I had back then.

It was a fair, a fair reception for me. But I would have loved it, if there was someone, would have at that point can give us an introduction to the country. This is what you do, this is what you don't do. This is our history. This is who we are really. It was not very easy coming to getting to know this. And then you go somewhere they expect you to know it already. Especially when they call you for something. The officials come. They expect that you should know it. Well, I'm just coming. Beside I didn't plan to be here. It was never in my mind. If you ask me in 2016, maybe January, February. Like you'll be in Deutschland. I say: Come on, it's not even in my plan! Yeah, it's not so sweet here, but, uh – it's ok, fine for me. So now I am here. You should be able to know that I'm just coming. I didn't plan this. If you plan for something, you can have some basic information. Maybe start learning the language. That's the basic things. Not when you are forced to be somewhere. But I managed to integrate gradually. And then I met Serena and

that really, really helped a lot. Personally, well, we are friends now. An angel with a heart of fine gold, she and her family.

In Bayernkaserne I was moved 3 times. Within. And then I was moved to Lotte-Brandt-Straße. Moved there. And then from there I was just moved once. And then I was moved to Moosburg. Moosburg is a quiet, it's a village. It's ok! It's ok. You are basically by yourself. We have a basic room, split into two. Then two people here, two people there. But it's fairly better than a lot of other places. You cook your own meal. And you try to enjoy it as much as possible. I'm now with a Nigerian in my room and then there are two Somalian guys. The Somalians are more nice, maybe because they have a different kind of way.

Most of my friends are in Munich. Serena, her family. The family, entirely, they are my friends. An amazing Equatorian, who's also here and the wife is German, amazing people.

Feeling like home

Life - I dream to have a quiet life again and now I feel connected here because now I feel like a new family with the Widmanns especially, Widmanns. And my friends. Here I'm beginning to feel like - yeah, like home. For me home is not a place, it's a feeling. I don't know how to articulate this now. This sense of... I don't have to be afraid to go a particular way. And be able to be allowed – I would say – to feel totally welcome. And be able to do something in my life. Personally I would like to be... follow my school. Go to school. I'm fascinated to be a computer analyst. Computer work, to design. And then I also like theatre. And then of course having family and feel like home. Quiet, quiet life. Yeah. In a sense of I'm relaxed!