

ORAL HISTORY INDEX AND SUMMARY

Interview with: Valbona Peci Kadriu

Location: 2/12/15

Location: Manchester

Total duration: 14.01 mins

Interview by Pam Dawes and Salatin Bogujevci and summary by Kelly Bücher:

The interview plays as one recording.

1.	Start time	Finish time	Approximate duration	Brief description
	00.00	14.01	14:01	Valbona talks about how the war affected her family in rural Kosovo, and how she came to Manchester in 1999, pregnant aged 16 years, with her injured husband, Besim, who was medically evacuated from Kosovo by the British Army.
<p>Pen sketch</p> <p>Summary of interview</p>	<p><i>Valbona grew up in a village near Mitrovica in Northern Kosovo, close to the Serb border. She married Besim, an engineering student, when aged sixteen. A few months later she was newly pregnant when Besim was shot by Serb military, receiving a severe facial injury. The day of the attack her home was burnt to the ground, one brother was killed, another injured and four other family members, later found in a mass grave, were kidnapped. Valbona and Besim fled to the hills and survived there until the Liberation. To her surprise, Valbona was invited to accompany her husband to the UK in 1999 when Besim was medically evacuated by the British Army. This was the beginning of a new life in Manchester with Besim, whose face has gradually been re-constructed. Valbona and Besim live in Manchester with their four young daughters who are thriving. Their eldest child plans to become an engineer in the British Army. Valbona is very happily married and says her husband has a very good heart. She has fond memories of her family's beautiful home in the village.</i></p> <p>(00:00)Valbona describes her life before the war in Kosovo in 1999. She met and married her husband, Besim, and things were good for a short time, and then everything changed. Her husband was shot, in the face, one of her brothers was injured, one of her brothers was killed another killed and five of her family were kidnapped found dead, after four years. She says that very, very bad things happened.</p> <p>She describes how your husband was medically evacuated to England where they have been looked after very well. She describes how she has a life her with her husband and they now have four children.</p> <p>(02:50) Valbona describes escaping from the village into the mountain with half of her family on 29th April 1999 when they heard what had happened to her brothers. She describes being with her mother and not her husband.</p> <p>(03:34)She says that this is because the men keep separate from the women because if Serbs found men they killed them, so they tried to run and go far away from the women.</p> <p>She says that her family were killed as there was nowhere for them to go being</p>			

so close to the Serbian border in Northern Mitrovica.

Valbona says that her family house was burnt down on 29th April 1999.

(05:15) She says that she could hear the NATO bombing and when she first saw the French NATO soldiers, she was scared as she thought the Serbian soldiers were still there.

Valbona talks about how her home used to be: a beautiful house with a garden, and how then it was gutted on 29th April 1999. The whole village was beautiful.

She describes being worried every night that she would be killed.

She describes being worried and very shocked when told she would be accompany her injured husband to England, as she didn't know what to expect but that it has been good.

Valbona says that she was 16 years old when she came to England, pregnant, accompanying her severely injured husband, Besim. She says that her husband was taken straight to hospital and she was taken straight to a flat that had been prepared for them.

(09:00) She was then alone in the flat as her husband was having the first of numerous operations to reconstruct his face, the first being 15 hours long.

She says that she came with the Bogujevci family, whose children were also medically evacuated, from Pristina but she didn't see them because they were separated at Manchester airport. They were taken to Altrincham and then to hospital and not Manchester and she didn't know where to find them. She has made contact with them since and they are now friends.

Valbona talks about her feelings about Kosovo now. She likes to visit there but her family and life is in Manchester. She says that her four daughters were born here and tells how they enjoy life in Manchester. She says that it is hard for her and her husband as they have family in Kosovo but they want to live in Manchester.

Valbona talks about her home town Mitrovica still being a dangerous place to go for Albanians in Kosovo as her home was in the North, near the Serbian border.

She talks about having her story and experiences recorded as being important because she wanted to speak out at the time, and did speak to some press at length. She says she always wants to speak but hasn't always had the language or contacts.

Valbona talks about how she has told her husband that he has probably had enough operations now and how she doesn't care how he looks as he has a very good heart. He does want to continue with the facial reconstruction, though.

Valbona thanks the people who have helped them both, especially the hospital staff saying, "they was so nice with all of us."