

Christine Udeani

Interviewed by Angelina Udeani
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Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

Transcribed by Angelina Udeani

[Angelina Udeani]: The date is October 3, 2022. My name is Angelina Udeani, and I am conducting an interview over Zoom with my mother, Christine Udeani. This interview is conducted over first generation American citizens that have moved to South Texas, specifically Corpus Christi. Before the interview starts, I would like to ask if I have your consent to post this recording. This relates to all materials from the interview, such as the recording of the interview, a written transcript of the recording, and any reproductions or digital representations of the interview, as well as the recording being submitted to Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Mary and Jeff Bell Library for school related work.

[Christine Udeani]: Yes, you do.

[Angelina]: Okay, so where are you natively from?

[Christine]: I'm from—Udi is a small town in Nigeria, and Nigeria is in West Africa.

[Angelina]: Okay, and growing up what was life like in Nigeria?

[Christine]: When I think about growing up in Nigeria, I can think about like a lot of community involvement. Of course as a child I'm going to think about you know, playing and you know gathering with friends, Nigeria was kind of like a community type like, very involved in a community type of environment place, and like you know friends gather, neighbors gather, you know we come together after school. Whether we're coming together to play or read books, or you know study or you know gather at a friend's home to watch a new video that's out there. We always did everything with our friends, neighbors and you know, things like that. People sort of like looked out for each other. When I think of it, like my parents would discipline my friends and my friends' parents would discipline us or even a straight out neighbor that's not even a friend. If they saw me doing something that wasn't right, they were going to correct me, or bring me home to my parents and report me. So, it was like, a community where everybody took care of each other. I remember that we had like fresh fruit right off the tree like you could walk right into a neighbor's home and we could say, "Oh let's go pick oranges. Our neighbor has oranges in their backyard." And then we'll go there and then we'll pick oranges or mangos or—and we came as like you know like the whole neighborhood. Not you know one person or two people. As long as you didn't make a mess you know must people didn't really mind, and we did have eh—like fruit in our backyard or veggies or stuff like that too, so I just think about like you know you think about the freshness of the food because everything was organic. You think about like the you know very strong community. You think about like we're very—Nigerians take education very seriously, so there's really like a lot of things where parents step up to like you

know teach us in their garages or like you know, just stuff like that, or we'll have like you know study groups that's just made up of you know, your neighbors. You don't even have to be in the same class, just a group of kids come together and will study, or one person would want to teach something, or it could be like Christmas 'cause Nigeria is very religious. We split in three, I think like the Yoruba people, we have Yoruba people, Alsar, and then Igbo and I'm from Igbo. Igbos are typically very Christian, and we are known to have come from a Jewish origin, so we have like a lot of like Christianity. So, you have like during the Christmas time we'd have like festivals set up by our schools and we'd walk and sing Christmas carols holding candles and—I just think of Nigeria as a very, very festive you know like growing up was very festive. Very—parents are very involved in what you're doing, so are other grownups in your life. We had aunties everybody's an auntie. Everybody that you talk to, or your parents talk to is your aunt or your uncle, and you know just. I think it was just like really like very like community-oriented type of growing up, and I'm done with the question.

[Angelina]: What was the initial reasoning for moving to Texas?

[Christine]: Well, I met your dad and we got married and he moved out here, so I moved with him, so. We actually moved out to Illinois then moved onto Texas.

[Angelina]: Do you feel like it was the right move to come here, or do you wish you went elsewhere?

[Christine]: I like Texas. I like Texas a lot and yes compared to Illinois I think it was the right move to you know come to Texas, and there's certain reasons I like Texas. First of all, the weather is very similar to the weather I had growing up. People are friendly and are peaceful and yeah. They have good schools which is something I take into consideration given that I have children, and what else? There's a lot of community involvement here if you seek it as well.

[Angelina]: Upon coming to Texas do you feel like the area was welcoming?

[Christine]: Coming to Texas, yes, I feel the area was welcoming, but you had to like seek out the welcome. The people were friendly. When you run into people in the stores people are friendly, and people are helpful. Given that I had lived in Illinois I felt that Texas was warmer than living in Illinois, but it's still very different than if you lived in Nigeria where everybody is in your business. So, yes, coming to Texas I think it was you know, the right decision, and I would say that for multiple reasons. I grew up in an area where you know there's a lot of people a lot of friends. You can get up and walk to your neighbor's door and knock at it and ask for sugar, or you know ask or, if you get stalled down the road people are going to stop their cars and help you, you know. People push a car do whatever to get you restarted you know, jstart. People come like you know they make food, and they feel they made too much, and they would walk over and say: "Hey I made too much food here's a tray for you" and stuff you know and vice versa, so I grew up in a place where people were like you know, very into each other. So, in Illinois I felt a strong lack of that like you know you had to make—We had a neighborhood group and that was the only social activity that I was involved in in Illinois. And what we did was once a month we get together in somebody's home and we play Poccino, and that's like a card game and everybody brought a little a tray of something you know to share, but we did that

once a month, you know? So, I really looked forward to that, but that was really all the social activity that we did in Illinois but coming to Texas the first thing I was introduced to was the New Neighbor's League, and. I joined the New Neighbor's League and there were so many little groups in the New Neighbor's League, and so I was able to you know, couples dining out. Get to meet new, other couples that just wanted to socialize. We had VINO BRIO which was wine tasting. We had like a beach group that just went out to the beach for exercise. We had like you know so many different activities, so I got to meet a lot of Texans really early, moving to Texas. And I went onto the Rotary Club and get really involved in you know doing things for the community and you know stuff like that. So, I really did get to get into the—how do I say? Into the community early in, early coming into Texas, and get to meet a lot of people and get to know a lot of people and get to form a little family away from you know, home. I found out that my neighbors are typically like the neighbors I have, not all of them, but you know, one or two are neighbors are like the neighbors you'd have back home in Nigeria. I have neighbors that would knock at my door and say, "Hey I made this for you!" Or, you know, you're going out to work and then we stop and gossip a little so, and then the food is reasonable fresh, you know, as I'd say. Like I think that's a big deal today, is finding like organic, fresh fruits that are not too expensive. Like where I came from in Nigeria it was free, it was basically. The cheapest food you'd get was the organic foods, but here in Texas the, that's the most expensive food you're going to get, and you know you worry about what's in your meat, and you know, the quality of the dried foods in boxes and stuff like that. Whereas, in Nigeria it's all fresh and you know coming straight from gardens and straight—it's almost like from the garden to your table. You know, even though you buy it in the market, like, you know. We have a lot of like farmer's markets where you know, you know you're just getting what they just grew, so. That's important to me because I have, I have family and I'm very health conscious, and you know, there's a lot of activity in schools for children. I actually, was bothered about how much time, you know, kids spend in school, initially, and then come home to continue homework into midnight. So, they never really get enough time to get out and go play with friends it's just like, especially in the middle and high school. It's like work, work, work, work, work, work, work, and you know. The next thing they're off again to work, so it's just like the weekends is like when you have time to take the kids somewhere or to you know. Friends are friends they meet in school they don't really make friends at home, and things like that. They don't play outside. They play in their backyards, but, you know, when I said play outside like in Nigeria like we played on the streets. Like it's literally the whole community gets together, and we walk together, and we do things together, like you know. Our parents didn't worry when we opened the front door and ran out, but here, parents worry. When you open your front door and run out. Things have changed a little in Nigeria. I know now like you know, the past five years, and due to politics, we've been having like more terrorism in the country, but when I grew up things like that didn't exist, so.

[Angelina]: Do you have a story you'd like to share about your first time being in South Texas?

[Christine]: Yes! Yes, actually. You know, how I knew I came to the right place was I was walking behind like you know, actually I'll share two short stories. I was—I came into the gas station, and I parked my car, and I was walking behind this gentleman, and trying to get into the gas station, and he steps aside and opens the door for me, and I walked, and I said, "Thank you." And honestly, because I was coming from Illinois and I'm not trying to say anything bad about Illinois, but that door would've slammed in my face, you know, so I had gotten used to people

just walking and you know if you're walking behind them, you let the door shut, and then you open the door for yourself, living in Illinois for about 13 years, but in Texas people open the door for you.

[Christine]: But in Texas people open the door for you. I—my friend drove her car into the little pav—covert, and everybody in the children's school, I was with her actually then, everybody in the school came and helped her lift the car. She didn't have to call her insurance company. There were just like men that were just driving by, and they all parked their cars, and they came out and helped her lift her car out of the covert, and she kept going. And yeah! You know stuff like that made me feel like I came to the right place. And I had another story, didn't I?

[Angelina]: Yes.

[Christine]: Let's see. I actually forgot the second story I wanted to tell.

[Angelina]: That's okay. While being in Corpus do you ever feel homesick? Like wishing you were back in Nigeria?

[Christine]: Not really because you know when I left Nigeria I had parents, and all my siblings are, you know, live all over the world, so I have siblings in Canada. I have one sibling in Canada. I have one in London. I have three, I have three here, and you know we're not close together. So, it's like one's in California, one is in Chicago, the other is in Maryland, and I'm here in Texas. So, there's really you know like feeling homesick. Typically, it will be like you want to go home to your family, but my family's everywhere and my parents have moved on to—we lost my mother, and we've lost my dad so. Yeah, sometimes I crave the food from back home, but you can find it here and the friends from back home are you know, have gone, and everybody's gone, so it's not the same. It's not the same way it used to be when I was growing up, so I think because of that I don't feel homesick. And then you know life here is extremely busy, so you don't really have time to stop and, and think or smell the roses unless you're going on vacation. Yeah, I remember home, but I don't feel like homesick.

[Angelina]: So, if you had the chance to you wouldn't go back home you would stay?

[Christine]: If I had the chance to, and my kids were all grown up I would go back home. I find it to be a lot more of a relaxed environment, and we still have that community, and you know. There's still like a lot to do for people back in Africa, and it's like a much—I think easier, more relaxed, living. And that's why I think that's where I'll be retiring when I get older.

[Angelina]: Can you elaborate?

[Christine]: Yes! Yes, definitely, in Nigeria we have like you know. There's a lot of culture that you kind of like miss, and part of it is just like, you know, I mean the, the dances, the music. Still the being able to drive you know out to a friend's home, knock on the door and join them for you know—and just walk right into their home. Or somebody—people coming out to visit you on set days like you know? You could wake up on a Sunday and you have like twelve families in your home in the morning so. You know that you know easy type of going life, is something that I still crave. There're a lot of children, you know, like I said, Nigeria is like a community where

learning is a big deal and there's so much, I'd like to be able to be involved in. In the teaching of children and helping them, you know move onto the next, stages of their lives. There's, you know, there are little villages in Nigeria that I'd love to visit, and, you know see if I can help set up women's centers. Both for healthcare and you know stuff like that. There's still a lot to be done in Nigeria and at the same time you know there's—I love the food. It's just amazing, and it's like all, everything's so fresh and everything's organic. We have so many different, dishes I'd love to try again or, you know there's a fruit, it's like all kinds of fruit and then it—there's that, you know. It's not a country life, but you know there's something about nature. When you wake up in the morning to the crowing of like a cock, like, you know a cock is crowing in the morning at 5:00 a.m. Does the same every single morning. You hear one cock crow and then the next one will crow, and you're living in a big city, and you know, but there's—so that natural life that's all around you, and beautiful trees like, you know, the freshness of the air, and you know stuff like that. So, yeah. I would love to retire to Nigeria.

[Angelina]: Okay. Well, in South Texas they have some ideologies that are a little different with what you grew up with. Kind of stuff like—they learn a little more to being conservative, and then appreciation towards guns. How does that compare to what you grew up with in Nigeria as a kid?

[Christine]: In Nigeria we have guns, but we didn't really hunt with guns. We didn't like the people in Texas. They have guns because I think many people love sporting, you know, gun sporting. And some people may keep guns to protect themselves, but that's like a political issue. In Nigeria, politically we're not allowed to have guns, period. We don't have gun rights, but I think some people can. I don't know what the process is. Not many people are interested in guns, and what they use the guns for is when somebody dies. I think, you know, there's so many shots that are released in the air, and I mean, you know, and then also on New Year's Day. Everybody's in the house just like you have the fireworks here and all what not. New Year's Day it's really, at midnight you're going to hear people screaming the Happy New Year. You're going to hear guns going off into the air, and that's—I don't know if they use guns for everything— anything else. Right now, we have like, a political issue that we have in Nigeria is a bunch of al Qaeda. I think that's what it was. The terrorist group that came from outside of Nigeria due to, I think the last president had, um, was afraid he was going to be unseated, and he brought in trucks and trucks of al Qaeda with all kinds of weapons. And they were dropped in the middle of, they were dropped in the middle of Nigeria, and they've just gone around terrorizing the whole country, and there was no arrangements made for how they would be, you know, removed if the president didn't win his political post, and he won the post and didn't do anything about the al Qaeda so. We do have a lot of terrorists in Nigeria, but we still don't have like, you know individual gun rights, so nobody carries guns. Nobody really talks about guns we just are protected by our police, and yeah, so. Gun rights is something that Nigeria should be considering at this point, so even though it's like a different ideology from where I come from, I think it's something that is good because I think if people could protect themselves then we wouldn't have terrorists showing up and just, you know shooting down a city or village or just shooting people at, you know any whim without them having any way to protect themselves, you know.

[Angelina]: Okay, so you would be in favor of them in South Texas?

[Christine]: Yeah, I think people have a right to bear guns. I think that's something that's in the Constitution that is— that made sense. I don't think— I think people should have a right to owning their own guns, but I think people should be screened thoroughly before being given a gun, and people that have mental illness should not be given a gun, and people should know or— indicate the reason for buying a gun. Like you know if I want to go and shoot down a school, I should not be given a gun, or allowed to just walk into a store and pick up a gun just because I'm 21 years old. I think there should be stricter, like people should have guns, but you know, getting access should be a little stricter, so, yep. A lot stricter, not a little stricter, a lot stricter.

[Angelina]: Okay, so between life in Nigeria and life in South Texas, what are some of the differences you've noticed, like major differences?

[Christine]: Major differences are—life in South Texas. You can literally decide to live on your own, and nobody would ask about you, or check in on you if you—so you have to make an effort to have this social life. There is, there is social life out there. Number two is I find that Texas is very, very like it's a political state, so there's a lot of politics that goes on in Texas, and in Nigeria it is political, but it's not like, you know, that intense, you know. It's not, it's not so intense like you can have different views and still be friends, and you know stuff like that and yeah. What else? The food in Texas is very different, I think. Because we have a lot of Mexican food which I enjoy, and there's—but there's very little—there's a lot of American food, you know. So, it's American food and Mexican food would be the, the big ones here. There's Italian food, but I don't see like, you know, like you know, like, the staple—like if you went around the United States and other places, like you know, there's more Italian food available to you. Here in Texas, it's probably just very few places. I don't see food from other countries. In Nigeria, but, yeah you do find global foods. You're able to taste different things, and it's not too far, you know. I'm thinking of Corpus Christi, I should think more of Texas because in Texas, yeah there's a lot of global food. You can taste, you know, we've gone to like a bunch of different restaurants and tried a bunch of different people's foods. You meet lots of different people in Texas. In Nigeria it's more like very—would I say, it's more like American food, or Western food, not American food. There's Western food, but the bulk would be African food, and there's also like Indian food, and Chinese restaurants, so. When I went to a Chinese restaurant in Nigeria it had like a like, you know it was like Chinese, like you know how Taco Bell is Mexican food made the American way? Yeah, when I went to a Chinese restaurant in Nigeria it was like Chinese food made the African way. Like you know, it wasn't like authentic Chinese food. It's like Chinese food with too much pepper, or you know, made with a little palm oil or you know. You could, like you know, you get noodles and it's stir fried like jello rice. So, there's like, like a hint of like African food in everything, but I think that Indian restaurants I've been to in Nigeria are more authentic. Apart from food because that's all I'm talking about. Apart from food there's a big difference in globality, like in Nigeria, you see Africans, and then there's a lot of white people like in Lagos.

I know, but yeah. A lot of Nigerians intermarry, so you're going to see like a lot of mixed people, and African people. And then also we have a lot of Indians that come from Nigeria. It could be like second generation or third generation, but we have like a lot of Indians from like, you know that like migrated their parents or grandparents migrated to Africa. We have a lot of

Americans that migrate to certain parts of Nigeria, so. Like Victoria Island is heavily white, or you know and stuff like that, but here you see people like everywhere it's not like you have to go to Victoria Island to see certain people, like you know. You know there's—I don't know. I don't see so many races like I see here, in the United States. It's either mixed, you know mixed races or black races and then Indians are heavy in all of Africa, so that's what we get to see. Then few Europeans and Westerns, you know stuff like that. Now going on to—I've talked about food; I've talked about race. Now the other thing is the development of the states. Most cities in the United States are just it's, you know, roads are a given and stuff like that. In Nigeria in some parts, you know we have very good development and a lot of paths. We don't have very good development because our country has been known to have government, and you know steal the money rather than put it back to you, so there's a lot of corruption in Nigeria. The police are corrupt in Nigeria, and you know stuff like you don't see in America like cops stopping you and saying, "What are you carrying? What are you carrying? What do you have in your car?" Like you know? And then "What are you carrying" is hint hint for give me money, like you know. Then you pull out a thousand dollars, five hundred dollars, five hundred naira, a thousand naira, two thousand naira, and you give to them, and they say, "Bye ma'am you can go. Merry Christmas! Bye-bye!" You know so, we have a lot of that like you know, like corrupt people that are supposed to be taking care of the country, but it's like they divert the monies. Corruption is a given because even an eighteen-year-old that's driving, or a fourteen-year-old, or a fifteen, or a sixteen-year-old that's driving knows that when they see the cops and they say, "What are you carrying?" They're going to put their hands in their pocket and give them money and the cops are going to say, "Okay, bye! Have a good day!" You know, and stuff like that so. We also have like not too much security, so we have security people. Armed robbery is now like a big thing in Nigeria. Didn't quite used to be when I was younger. Kidnap is a big deal in Nigeria now. Didn't quite used to be when I was younger. People are kidnapped for like trafficking, organs, and all whatnot. You can be in this country. There is trafficking in this country, but you can trust that you are going to be in your house. Your child can go to the mailbox and come back, and you know. Walk up the bus stop. Once in a while you'll hear that somebody was kidnapped. It's not like you're afraid every single day that something's going to happen to you, so I think that's the big difference, is in security right now, and corruption has always been a thing. And what else? Yeah, foods are different, you know we have more global foods here in the United States. Then in Nigeria is like specific countries of people or races, and not so intermixed, you know. So yeah, I think that's what I can think of. Sure, if I thought a little harder, I'll think of more things.

[Angelina]: That's okay. We talked about the differences, but what are some of the similarities between Nigeria and south Texas, but more specifically Corpus Christi?

[Christine]: Okay. So, I'd say the similarities are there are beautiful, good schools, really good schools in Nigeria. Children are the same as they are here. They're as spoiled as they are here as they are in Nigeria. People have access to all kinds of electronics and kids are glued on games and all what not. Contrarily to what people believe, people have amazingly good homes in Nigeria. Actually, the standard of living might be higher there, sometimes. Depending on wealth, I guess. Most people are—the average Nigerian is comfortable in their homes, and even though like if you give like a comparison on the income, you know it might have a GDP, but given what resources that you have available there your money might have a better buying power just right there in Nigeria. Like you know if you brought it out elsewhere of course it's devalued and you

can't do much, but right there in Nigeria money can do a lot. Similarities, I think people do the same things, have the same needs. I mean people get up and they go to the shopping mall, and they shop, and you know. There's a lot of globalization, so you know. People travel back and forth. Outside of the country and back into the country. A lot of people don't kind of like in South Texas when you come to Corpus Christi see people that say they've lived in Corpus all their lives, and they've not gone anywhere. Same as people—there are people in Nigeria I've met that have lived in Nigeria all their lives, and they have not gone anywhere. They don't plan to. We have probably the same major religions. Which is, we have Christianity, we have Muslim, but then we also have traditional, traditional religions. Where people are atheists and don't believe in God, and they worship like all forms of things like, you know. Here I see it as, you know naturalists' people that, you know worship like you know the sky and the earth. The earth, sky, and what do you call it? Water. I think? I don't know if Nigerians worship water, but I know they believe there's a god of sky and a god of the land. Also, religions are I guess primitive now. There's like one-third of Nigeria is Christian. One-third, a good one-third is Muslim, and maybe another one-third may be traditionalists, so. People speak English in Nigeria, but that's because of colonization, but they also speak other languages. Their own dialect, but you're going to walk into Nigeria and you're going to be able to communicate with most people because they will understand you if you're speaking English. The accents are very different. We travel by cars, and we fly by planes. Transportation is basically pretty much the same. I should have mentioned when I was talking about the differences that internal transportation is done by keke which is more like what you'll find in China. Where people enter this tiny little buses that are just made to transport people back and forth, you know, and yeah what else? We have taps, we have water, we do not have good electrical sources. Government provided electricity, but most people use generators in Nigeria. What else? Yeah. Food is usually organic, and we do the same things where hygiene is a big deal. Hygiene is a big deal in Nigeria, so you're going to see in the suttens, in the cities people wash their feets multiple times, and you know stuff like that. Use hand sanitizer and stuff. We have hospitals, but the hospitals are not as good as the hospitals in South Texas. And it's interesting because most of the doctors that I have run into, many of the doctors are Nigerian doctors, but in Nigeria it's not about knowing the skill it's about having the equipment to do what—and the medicines to do what can be done, so the hospital system is very different. Most people come out here when they have terminal illness or go to other countries to treat their illnesses. What else? What else? We—

[Angelina]: It's okay if that's all.

[Christine]: Okay. I was going to talk about style.

[Angelina]: No, you can keep going.

[Christine]: I was going to say we actually follow the same, you know we read the same magazines, so people kind of like style themselves the same as you'd see here. Like you know long hair, you know, but we do still have traditional ways of dressing, so. I think that's a global thing in every country people still follow whatever is happening in Hollywood as, you know the model for style, but they still have their traditional clothes and traditional outfits.

[Angelina]: Okay, and then South Texas does have seasonal disasters such as hurricanes, so how do you manage when those natural disasters come?

[Angelina]: We just do what the people in South Texas do. I remember when we moved here the first year that we moved here in 2010. The very week we moved here there was a hurricane that was supposed to be landing in Corpus Christi ended up landing in Brownsville, I believe? But when that hurricane was coming because we were coming from Illinois and there was no such thing as hurricanes in Illinois, and there's nothing like a hurricane in Nigeria. I don't think anyone would survive a hurricane in Nigeria, but well at least from the part where I come from. Never heard of hurricanes. We're not quite close to the ocean either, so yeah. The tip of Nigeria is—well not the tip, but the baseline which is around where the Yoruba people are from would go into the ocean, but most of Nigeria is really, really inland. So, we didn't have hurricanes. We had—harmattan would be the worst disaster that would come across, and it was just a dry season and sometimes there's a whirlwind that would—which is like a hurricane, but on dry land or dry sand, and it would just move around. And it wasn't powerful normally not powerful enough to lift up huge things. It could lift up like a chair if it's really, really strong or something, but it moves fast. It moves just like the hurricane does from the ocean and just keeps going. You know, but that would be the only natural disaster that I ever encountered growing up. A chair being lifted in the air, so coming here I was really scared of hurricanes. I was like really panicked the first year, so. I notice, like, you know I was shouting “Do we need to board up? Do we need to do this? Do we need to get out of here?” I was telling dad, my husband, your dad, that we need to move to a safer city and come back when everything was fine, and he said, “No, I have to work. I work in a hospital. We don't run from natural disasters.” So, I'm like “Oh, okay.” So, but then when I talked to one of the neighbors, and I noticed that he was going surfing. He had all his surfboards and was going to surf the hurricane water. I said, “What kind of madness is this?” And I asked him, and he said, “Oh it's just gonna pass and land somewhere else.” I said, “How do you know that?” He said, “Because that's what all the hurricanes do. They don't land in Corpus Christi.” I'm like, “Oh okay.” So, I think that relaxed me. And I just watched the locals and because they weren't panicked, I wasn't—I guess my panic died down, and for the next few hurricanes it was saying the hurricane would come. They'd say, “Oh it's gonna come to Corpus Christi.” It was deviated downward somewhere else. I guess except for Hurricane Harvey.

[Angelina]: How did you manage through Hurricane Harvey?

[Christine]: Hurricane Harvey was different because now I was feeling like a local and I think we were—we'd lived in Corpus Christi for seven years, and nothing had happened. We had maybe like three hurricane—three to four hurricane threats, and they all went and landed somewhere else, so Hurricane Harvey, I guess. When I realized that the locals were all gone, I was still like, you know, oh Hurricane Harvey is coming, and I think we were one of the last people to leave Corpus Christi at that point because I went into the store to buy water. I wasn't piling stuff up or anything and there was no water, and there were all the torch lights were gone, and you know batteries were gone. Just, you know things for—survival stuff you know, so. I called George, and then I didn't use to turn on the TV, and then I turned on the TV, and there was a hold up of people leaving Corpus, San Antonio, the I-37 was a hold up. Okay? I'm like “What?” Okay, so here I am all comfortable, and the locals are gone? And I thought I was doing what the locals did, so I guess I panicked at the last minute, and I got—I called dad, and he had

said that at the hospital they were split in shifts, and he was the shift that was allowed to leave and come back. Okay, so we all packed up what we could. Packed up our dog and took our cars with we couldn't take our boat. We left the boat in the place it was parked, and we just drove off to. We had thought about going to San Antonio, but I looked, and it showed that the flood index was going to be high, and everybody seemed to be running to Houston, but when I looked it seemed like the flood was going to be high, so I checked Austin it didn't seem like it was too high, so I said, "Let's go to Austin." And so, we drove all the way to Austin, and we went to the right place because the hurricane went—it followed another route. I don't think it hit; I don't think it hit San Antonio as much as it did, it didn't even hit Corpus Christi as much as we expected. It went and it devastated Rockport, and some other city. I can't remember which city, and then it traveled. I guess coming in from Galveston or, so Houston was completely flooded. Houston was completely underwater, so all people from Corpus Christi that ran to Houston were trapped, so we were in Austin. Things died down and we just drove back. We came home and not much happened. We lost a few roof tiles, but we had expected a surge of twenty-one feet from the ocean, which was what? Five minutes from our home? If you walked, if you walked to the ocean, it was five minutes from the home, and if you drove out to the ocean it was, like closer, like what two minutes? One minute? So, we moved inland because of that actually, and what else? Yeah, but we didn't suffer much devastation. Our boat was turned upside down. We picked it up it wasn't destroyed, and we had some leaking and there was no electricity, and ten minutes after we came in the lights went on, so. We didn't suffer much with Harvey, but we were pretty scared, and we did run, you know we did evacuate like everybody else did.

[Angelina]: Did you—

[Christine]: Like almost everybody else, not everybody evacuated.

[Angelina]: Did you have any friends that suffered through Harvey?

[Christine]: Did we have any friends?

[Angelina]: Yes.

[Christine]: That suffered through Harvey? Yeah! I did. She lived in Rockport, and her home was completely—it's a brand new three million home that she built, and it was completely destroyed. It was messed up by Harvey. It had like a lot of issues that she had a very hard time collecting insurance. She had I think military insurance, and her husband was in the military, but she had a very hard time getting back—getting insurance to fix her home. Even though her home was completely covered, and yeah. She suffered through Harvey, and what else? Let's see. I had a friend that lost her job because there was a hospital—I can't remember where. I think it's in the Rockport area too. Corpus Christi Medical—it's not Corpus Christi Medical Center it was a Corpus Christi hospital. I can't remember it's like going towards, going towards Rockport, but you get off right before. There was a hospital that was lifted by the hurricane and put down and in as much as the structures look as normal, but because it had been lifted, and I don't know how it was lifted, but that's what they say. The whole structure became unusable, so she lost her job as the director of that hospital, and yeah. Those were probably the only two friends that actually suffered complete devastation plus there was a home down the street from where we were that

was completely burnt to the ground. Nothing else happened to any other home, but that home was burned. Like it disappeared. It was a beautiful blue home on the island, and it completely disappeared, so. All we could see was ashes.

[Angelina]: Nigeria does have its seasonal weather; would you be able to describe what monsoon season is?

[Christine]: Sorry?

[Angelina]: Would you be—

[Christine]: Monsoon season?

[Angelina]: Yes.

[Christine]: One quick second here. Monsoon season has a lot to do with winds, and let's see. It's—what we get is a lot of rain, but where I am from in Nigeria we didn't—I don't think we were, we had much of that, but you know it's like heavy parental rains that just, you know just keep coming down like, you know, yeah. It could cause a lot of flooding. Most Nigerians aren't—I don't think many people are equipped to deal with flooding because when flooding comes it's like, the water needs to go somewhere, but it's just like, you know nonstop, you know for us. Okay? And I think that's what we use to, that's what it would be, but we didn't have monsoon season. Where I'm from in Nigeria, which is the east of Nigeria, we had rainy season, you know. We have a rainy season, dry season, and we had yeah. We had rainy, dry season, and harmattan which is dry and windy.

[Angelina]: Okay. Well upon moving to South Texas expect there to be a lot of culture associate with Hispanics?

[Christine]: Yes, because I kind of like knew that I believe Texas used to be—Texas borders Mexico, and parts of Texas used to be Mexico. Yeah, I kind of like believed there was going to be that.

[Angelina]: What are your thoughts on some of the traditions such as Dia de los Muertos?

[Christine]: It's very different what from I grew up knowing religiously. I did feel that that is it Santa Muerte?

[Angelina]: Yes.

[Christine]: I believe that, yeah. I did feel like she, she kind of like had that same resemblance as Virgin Mary, and she did hold a son in some of the pictures I saw, but she was a skeleton, a person type thing, so without you know—I don't know. So, I think coming from, coming from Nigeria we had like religions like, you know Christianity. Like I said before, Muslim. And then we had traditional religions, so for that will fall into like a traditional religion, you know, and most of the traditional religions were, was, were cultish, and were avoided, so. I never really got

to know that religion better. It was to me like what would be a traditional that if I were growing up, I would avoid. We have a different perception as to the death; you know traditionally in Nigeria. Like when you're dead. When people die, they don't really die they move on to—they become your ancestors, and they're kind of like elders, and people go and they talk to them, and consult with them. Supposedly. And I think in the Mexican religion they would, you know I think it was more like, they held up a flame to their dead, so whereas in our religion only the elder could talk to the dead, or consult with them per se. Everybody, we basically buried our dead and let them rest in peace, you know, and we did believe strong in our dead resting in peace, so. Yes, we do remember them, and pray for them, you know, but it's more of in a religious way like, you know. You know in Catholicism where you'd say, you know venerate somebody's soul, or say "May they rest in peace. May this person and this person continue to rest in peace." You know stuff like that. It wasn't really like, like something where we came together and called up all the dead, you know. Well I don't—I can't say what is done because like I said, I didn't delve in to know what is done. It's just—I just probably avoided it like I would avoid like other traditional religions, or as I would avoid something that is cultish. And I'm not saying it's a cult, but I am Catholic and Christian, and religiously we do look at other religions, like that as cultish. I believe.

[Angelina]: Okay. Do you feel like there are any aspects of Hispanic culture that you do relate to?

[Christine]: Yeah.

[Angelina]: Such as?

[Christine]: I think so. I think so. I believe, like, you know, like we do. Hispanics use food as a family and comfort thing. You know, they gather their families, and they share, and we do that also in Nigeria. It's like we gather our families, and we cook together, and it's like a good, you know time to, you know share, share and care. Like you know? So, yeah. That definitely—I also find, I find that most of the Hispanic people for some reason when I moved here. I found the people to be—they reminded me of people back home. You know, I was building a store and I would stop and talk with my—the person that was doing the construction, and we would share stories and it just reminded me of, you know like the same stories that we would tell, you know back home. And also, the relaxed way, you know kind of like relaxed persons that I met. The same relaxed way they would be wanting to know about you. You wanted to tell them a little bit more, like you know? As compared to I'd say mainstream Americans where most things where you don't know somebody, that person's a stranger and you don't want to share. Back home we had that thing where you could share with a stranger, you could talk with a stranger, you could eat with a stranger, and I felt the same, you know, I felt that—the Mexicans I met were the same way. Mexican Americans I met were the same way. You know, you could sit down, and you could just talk about nothing forever and laugh over nothing, like you know? So, even though you're a stranger.

[Angelina]: Well, before you go are there any last words you'd like to share about your experience in South Texas?

[Christine]: Yes! Let's see. I really like South Texas. It's a very warm, you know, friendly place. I've been around so many different places, as you knew I grew up in England, and I have traveled. I travel a lot, I still do, and there's just a warmth and politeness and caring to the people that the people of Texas show, and they do it so naturally. You know? And there's also a care that people have for their community here that I didn't—I haven't quite experienced in other places. I'm sure there are places that have that, you know. Have a deep feeling for their community, but I personally haven't lived long enough in many places to see that. I usually like, you know going to Austin—if you met like a local Austin, somebody from Austin. There's that warmth, but then if you met somebody that migrated into Austin then there's that, you know, it's like being in any other part of the United States. Texas is different because they, you know I feel like I'm—a lot of things are wholesome, you know people have values, and Nigeria is like that. People have values, like you know. They, whether it's wrong or right, they believe in something, and they stand by what they believe, and you can feel that here in Texas. South Texas. I think.

[Angelina]: Well, thank you so much for giving me the chance to interview you about your history on Nigeria and how it pertains to Texas.

[Christine]: Thank you.

[Angelina]: You're welcome. Bye-bye!

[Christine]: Bye, thanks!