

Community Archives Center Tacoma Community House Oral History Interviews Transcript

Saleh, Habib T. Interview date: 05/11/2022.

Dindria: [00:01](#) All right. Thank you so much

Habib T Saleh: [00:02](#) Yeah, thank you.

Dindria: [00:04](#) All right. I am going to ask the questions and then you are going to speak to, to Michael,

Habib T Saleh: [00:10](#) You, if you need the information special from me, I give you.

Dindria: [00:15](#) Yes. Your story. Yeah.

Habib T Saleh: [00:16](#) Uhhuh, they are not all the story. Uh, what my job, what I am doing. Sure. I am retired. I am, uh, work electric engineering. My job. I am work.

Dindria: [00:37](#) Um, so we may, I don't know if you've started already. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. I hope so. Yeah.

Habib T Saleh: [00:42](#) I am starting work at 25 years and retired after my country. Not good. I come here. Immigration.

Dindria: [00:54](#) Where is your home country?

Habib T Saleh: [00:56](#) Iraq.

Dindria: [00:57](#) Iraq. Okay.

Habib T Saleh: [00:58](#) Iraq. Saddam Hussein

Dindria: [01:00](#) Yes. So you came here when he was-

Habib T Saleh: [01:04](#) I'm retired and I come here. Yeah. Uh, immigration with my ex-wife. Okay. I work in Seattle with two company. The first company give me certificate. Good. Very good. About my job. Yeah. And, uh, he make a party in Christmas and give me, uh, extra pay one month

Dindria: [01:33](#) The bonus.

Habib T Saleh: [01:34](#) Yes. Yes. Next year I go with another company because give me, uh, apartment free. Yes. And give me, uh, the party.

Dindria: [01:52](#) Yeah.

Habib T Saleh: [01:55](#) I upset.

Dindria: [01:56](#) Yeah.

Habib T Saleh: [01:58](#) Pay me. Uh, pay one month certificate. I have two certificates in my home. Now. Anyway, after this, I go to the jail. Uh, give me the judge with the police. With all this line in the jail. Put it me 26 years.

Dindria: [02:25](#) Yeah, Mm.

Habib T Saleh: [02:27](#) I go, the government drops three years.

Dindria: [02:32](#) Okay.

Habib T Saleh: [02:33](#) Drops

Dindria: [02:34](#) Good.

Habib T Saleh: [02:35](#) 23 years go.

Dindria: [02:39](#) Yes.

Habib T Saleh: [02:40](#) To now under watch in the home with my wife home, not apartment.

Dindria: [02:46](#) Right. Right.

Habib T Saleh: [02:48](#) And

Habib T Saleh: [02:50](#) I have, I am, think about Seattle. Not have any area tourism. Only the space needle. Yeah. And this is very important story. And this mountain on the what his name? The Mount Rainier. Mount Rainier. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And you have restaurant not good. Mm-hmm. <laugh> and the area not from tourism. I see French. I see Switzerland. I go to French. Yes. Six month training about electric, my job. Yes. And I see a lot Switzerland. Very beautiful area. He have restaurant, he have from tourism. Here in Seattle. I not see something from tourism.

Mm. I have idea before I talk about my idea, I see the rush hour between West Seattle and Seattle in the morning. Two hour on the bridge. Whoa. That's terrible. Very terrible. Between Everett and Seattle. And between Tacoma and Seattle. Rush hour. Yes. Making the I5 high, but not enough. I have idea about this. Second thing, you go to downtown Seattle between 9 and 10 o'clock in the morning. The parking garage, all is full parking garage. Hmm. Full. Yes. And the meter in the street full! <laugh>. Okay. This is second one. You go in midday, noon, all the restaurant food. McDonald's. Long line <laugh>. Oh, it's the same time. <laugh>. I have my project about rush hour: take it away. Oh yes. From west Seattle to Seattle.

Habib T Saleh: [05:33](#)

And rush hour and uh, between, uh, Everett and Tacoma, to Seattle and restaurant, always fix it by my project. Your project. Yeah. The project need money. Yes. Need money. I do not know how many the company can make it. I make it no trash in the restaurant. No trash in the parking garage. And no trash about the bridge between West Seattle and Seattle. I not need talk with the people. What this my project, very important. And this is from tourism. Not only fix this, all this from tourism. People come to Washington. He have [inaudible] Look now he make this, uh, from people go to this wheel. Ferris wheel. People sitting. Yeah. The Ferris wheel. Yes. Where? Put it here. I put it one another area. I broke this. People not go to this. And tourism, he see all the Seattle under he look.

Habib T Saleh: [07:11](#)

But with who? I talk, can I fix it? This can I have money? Yeah. Lotto come to me. <laugh> The lotto. Yeah. Yeah. I make it. And, uh, Rainier. The second one, Rainier. The second Rainyard? The mountain on Rainier. Yes. Yes. This is more tourism uh, Mr. Trump. He come to Washington one time about needs, see the business, but he not understand about something. I talk what I am talking about. Oh yes. I see. I take this restaurant, I make it different. Not inside, not only, but the people go tourism not by uh, uh, go by car and, uh, dark and it not clean and, uh, expensive. I need make it cheap. Can people come and you put in the car, not in the restaurant. Put it down parking garage and tele free can go. Yes. Yeah. I talk about my, this project, but another project I not talk with you what I am doing. <laugh>.

Habib T Saleh: [08:41](#) Yeah. Already. Yes. I need people understand may interview the transportation. In Seattle. Because transportation not sometimes think but different. I see. Make the highway I5, the this bigger. Bigger. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. But this is not fix it. No, it didn't. I took two word fixing this two word not [inaudible]. Mm. The I5. That's incredible. Yes. Two word. Make this, this, but yeah, I am, I do not know what this people think. One time I'm in the jail, one facility because I go everywhere. Transfer me, go here four year and come, go here. I see one time leak running. Yes. The sky. Yeah. Leak. This is two, three years leak every winter. Mm. Why not fix it? Tell me my boss sergeant. Tell me this is need a lot of money. How many? Tell me? 10,000. Oh, I fix it. \$500. It tell me this is not your job. Go, go <laugh>.

Dindria: [10:25](#) You were trying to improve it while you were in there.

Habib T Saleh: [10:25](#) I am, uh, work in the building in the past. Fix any electric, anything in the building, uh, apartment, uh, company. Right. From management. Yeah. Yeah. I work with him. Uh, he have a problem. One building in downtown Seattle. Not, uh, electric sometimes go out. And he have maintenance a lot not understand where the problem <laugh>. I go fix it 10 minute, woo. And uh, yes, I am my job. So good work. Sub-station high voltage, low voltage. Right. Maintenance, uh, protection and sub-station in my country. And I work with Siemens, with General Electric, with chap. Uh, his name, uh, CE Japanese. Oh, okay. I don't know. CE. Yeah. CE from, uh, phone. Oh, okay. In Japanese. Okay. Yeah. And uh, I am work with the company Belgium, about, uh, and the British with uh, and the substation. You have protection. Mm-hmm. You have relays. Right. I know about this.

Dindria: [12:06](#) Oh, that's great

Habib T Saleh: [12:07](#) Yes. Yes. And my job wiring, I make book in the jail and I show to the, um, CUS in the jail. Yeah. To my river. And uh, the book from wiring. I need open the class and the jail, uh, teach the people can release. He have job. Oh, that's great. Not make trouble. Yes. With the safety.

Dindria: [12:39](#) Right. Learn a trade

Habib T Saleh: [12:40](#) Tell me. No, no. Yeah. No, no, no. They said no. I talk about my project, about rush hour talk. Okay. And don't make anything. Yeah. But the police understand. Yeah. The project very important. In Seattle, the Rainier. Restaurant. Put it, uh, in two face. This restaurant from tourism, from restaurant. Yeah. I see.

Dindria: [13:13](#) Yeah. It connects.

Habib T Saleh: [13:14](#) Yeah. I see you with your children, with your family. And the weekend you need relax, eating food, clean and not expensive. Good area sitting. You see. Oh, you very happy need this here? No. In Washington. No, this is go, uh, the food expensive and the area rush hour. Where you need put the, in the weekend where you put the car, you not understand where you put it. Yeah. Rush. Yeah. I'm not good. Yeah. This is,

Dindria: [14:04](#) It's, it's a problem.

Habib T Saleh: [14:05](#) Yes. I make it different. Yeah. Not this, because I see in Europe, Switzerland, I go by Telephric,

Dindria: [14:17](#) Huh?

Habib T Saleh: [14:18](#) Yes. To restaurant and the tribe, the mountain.

Dindria: [14:22](#) Oh, I see. Yeah.

Habib T Saleh: [14:24](#) Yes. And the restaurant, I not see restaurant. This in Washington. No, we don't that look this Turkish. Mm. Turkey. Yeah. Yeah. I go teleferik. Two time I go the first I go another one to the mountain, the cloud come to me,

Dindria: [14:45](#) <laugh>

Habib T Saleh: [14:45](#) Very high.

Dindria: [14:47](#) Wow.

Habib T Saleh: [14:47](#) And go. Yeah, go the mountain. Very high. Bring for you food, fire here. Meat, salad, bread with my children. He make barbecue. And eat to bread, to Pepsi, to salad.

Dindria: [15:11](#) When you were going up to the mountain.

Habib T Saleh: [15:13](#) Yes. In the mountain. The cloud come to you. Yeah. The cloud very high.

Dindria: [15:18](#) That's amazing.

Habib T Saleh: [15:19](#) Fruit. Anything and cheap.

Dindria: [15:22](#) Hmm. It's a great idea.

Habib T Saleh: [15:24](#) Yes. Here, I not see this. Never. Anyway, I talk this can you know, you know, I know it

Dindria: [15:32](#) Well. I love your thank you ideas. Thank you for sharing your ideas with us. Thank you. Um, I wanted to ask a couple questions. Um, when did you come to the United States? To Tacoma, Washington. So how did you get to Tacoma, Washington?

Habib T Saleh: [15:54](#) In, uh, uh, usa. I come in March 93. But the day, I forget.

Dindria: [16:04](#) Yeah, that's okay. <laugh>. Yeah. Where? Um, and then

Habib T Saleh: [16:09](#) Where this,

Dindria: [16:10](#) It was right here.

Habib T Saleh: [16:11](#) No, I come in United States.

Dindria: [16:14](#) Yes. The same thing. Tacoma, I say is United States.

Habib T Saleh: [16:23](#) In March. M a c h

Dindria: [16:28](#) Uhhuh <affirmative>.

Habib T Saleh: [16:30](#) March, 1993. In Seattle.

Dindria: [16:40](#) Yes. You can say in Seattle. Yeah. It's close. It's okay. Yeah, no worries. Um, what is your favorite food?

Habib T Saleh: [17:11](#) Oh, favorite food? Uh, the

Dindria: [17:23](#) Ah,

Habib T Saleh: [17:24](#) Barbecue. And this is America, not America Barbecue.

Dindria: [17:30](#) Oh okay.

Habib T Saleh: [17:30](#) From Middle East. Different. Ah. Oh, I can make it here. Then I will come running. What you do? Doing? I make sand for him. <laugh> barbecue. Different.

Dindria: [17:44](#) Maybe He loved it. He wanted one too.

Habib T Saleh: [17:47](#) Yes but the, the Barbecue America Barbecue. Yeah. I make it different.

Dindria: [17:53](#) It is

Habib T Saleh: [17:54](#) This one from Middle East.

Dindria: [17:57](#) Okay.

Habib T Saleh: [17:58](#) Another one

Dindria: [17:59](#) Put barbecue from Middle East or put Middle East

Habib T Saleh: [18:03](#) From,

Dindria: [18:04](#) Yeah. F r o m. You got it.

Habib T Saleh: [18:09](#) He his name Kabab.

Dindria: [18:11](#) Yes. Kabab. Yeah, exactly. From, so you could put um, m e and kebab. Yeah. From Iraq.

Habib T Saleh: [18:23](#) This is Kabab. This is one the barbecue. I am chef. Yeah. Different. Yes. Uh, I am learned in the tv, in the jail. Oh,

Dindria: [18:44](#) Right. Yeah. Excellent.

Habib T Saleh: [18:46](#) Yeah. And, uh, another barbecue. Can you go to your home? Put in the meat in the morning, some vinegar, some water, some spice.

Dindria: [18:59](#) Yeah.

Habib T Saleh: [19:00](#) And the bowl.

Dindria: [19:01](#) Oh, okay.

Habib T Saleh: [19:02](#) Yes. And this is, uh, with the iron, uh, grinding.

Dindria: [19:13](#) Okay.

Habib T Saleh: [19:14](#) Grounding.

Dindria: [19:15](#) You have to grind it. Yeah.

Habib T Saleh: [19:17](#) Okay. Make it small. Small. Oh, okay. Yeah. With the green pepper.

Dindria: [19:23](#) Oh, yes. You wanna grind the vegetable and the spices.

Habib T Saleh: [19:26](#) Yes. With the curry, curry.

Dindria: [19:30](#) Curry. With the Carrot? No, curry.

Habib T Saleh: [19:33](#) Curry,

Dindria: [19:33](#) Curry. Okay. Yeah.

Habib T Saleh: [19:34](#) Thank you.

Dindria: [19:35](#) C

Habib T Saleh: [19:37](#) C u r r y

Dindria: [19:39](#) Right. C u r r y.

Habib T Saleh: [19:41](#) Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah. This curry. Yeah. All this spice. Put it, you drink wine. Put it some wine. Yeah.

Dindria: [19:49](#) No problem.

Habib T Saleh: [19:50](#) Yes. No, but I'm not drinking. No. No. But people like it. He make it good. Yeah. Uh, make it, uh, the meat. Soft. Soft. Yeah. Make it put it in the morning, in the fridge there. Afternoon. Take it from this stuff. Yes. Put it on the barbecue.

Dindria: [20:11](#) Wow. Look at that. You just gave me a recipe. Yeah. Right here. Yeah. Yeah. I'm so hungry now. I mean, but oh,

Habib T Saleh: [20:20](#) I go to college dam. I have one. Electric Engineering. He work on the substation. Yeah. And after this one doctor, dentist in this area with my wife took it me talk with my wife, come to my home.

Dindria: [20:45](#) Okay.

Habib T Saleh: [20:46](#) I go to her home. But, uh, surprise for she, I am with my wife, the doctor, with his, uh, wife. In the home. Surprise for she, for me. I see. Not ready for us make, uh, dinner.

Dindria: [21:08](#) Oh, <laugh>.

Habib T Saleh: [21:10](#) Yeah, I talk with she. I make something easy and, uh, not cheap. Uh, expensive. Cheap. Tell me what you doing, what you need doing. I talk dinner for everybody. Four people.

Dindria: [21:27](#) Yes.

Habib T Saleh: [21:29](#) What do you need? I need two potatoes, uh, two eggs and the spice. And this, she showed to me the kitchen. I talk with she and my wife. You take the skin from potatoes, Uhhuh, <affirmative>. You and you and I go make it grinding the potatoes.

Dindria: [21:55](#) Yes. Make it small.

Habib T Saleh: [21:58](#) Uh, my bowl. I put it one spoon. This for you. I need teach you. Yes. You're tea. Make it one potatoes. One eggs. Make it two sandwich.

Dindria: [22:12](#) Oh my goodness. Yes. Like a potato sandwich

Habib T Saleh: [22:15](#) Yeah. One potato's big. Yes. One eggs and some, uh, flour.

Dindria: [22:22](#) Yeah.

Habib T Saleh: [22:23](#) One tablespoon flour

Dindria: [22:24](#) Okay. Yeah, just a little bit.

Habib T Saleh: [22:27](#) And curry and salt. All this grinding and some onion and grinding

Dindria: [22:34](#) With this. Okay. oni- onion. Onion. Yeah. Yes.

Habib T Saleh: [22:40](#) Some. No,

Dindria: [22:41](#) Just a little bit. Yeah. Okay.

Habib T Saleh: [22:43](#) Mix it all this and make it two hamburger and the fryer with the oil. Olive oil.

Dindria: [22:51](#) Okay.

Habib T Saleh: [22:52](#) Olive oil.

Dindria: [22:53](#) That sounds delicious.

Habib T Saleh: [22:54](#) Oh,

Dindria: [22:55](#) So, and then you put the egg on top.

Habib T Saleh: [22:57](#) Mix it.

Dindria: [22:58](#) Oh, mix the egg with it.

Habib T Saleh: [23:00](#) All this,

Dindria: [23:00](#) Mix it. It's like a potato cake.

Habib T Saleh: [23:03](#) Exactly.

Dindria: [23:04](#) Okay. Exactly.

Habib T Saleh: [23:05](#) Oh, mix it and make it two hamburger. Yeah. Put it in the bread. Two separate with tomato. With anything. Same hamburger. With what you like.

Dindria: [23:19](#) Yeah. Whatever you like on the hamburger

Habib T Saleh: [23:20](#) Yeah. And eating.

Dindria: [23:22](#) Oh,

Habib T Saleh: [23:22](#) This is cheap.

Dindria: [23:24](#) It is.

Habib T Saleh: [23:25](#) And yeah. <laugh>,

Dindria: [23:27](#) You need to have a cooking show. Yeah. This is Well, <laugh>. Yeah. I am going to leave the rest of the questions because you shared so much of your story. I appreciate you.

Habib T Saleh: [23:38](#) Yeah, yeah.

Dindria: [23:39](#) Thank you. Thank you so

Habib T Saleh: [23:40](#) Much. But this my rush hour. I need you, the transportation. Make interview with me. Can, uh,

Dindria: [23:40](#) I don't know if I can do that.

Habib T Saleh: [23:40](#) Yeah. Anyway.

Dindria: [23:40](#) But we are going to share this Yeah. On the internet. Oh. So people can listen to it. Uh, okay

Habib T Saleh: [23:40](#) Yeah. Thank you. So maybe you will get an interview. Yeah. Thank you. <laugh>. I take this with me. Yes. That's yours. Thank you, <laugh>. Yeah. Anyway.