

Laura Graham: Hello, my name's Laura Graham and I'm here with Zeenat Parmar as part of the 60 Miles by Road or Rail project. Hi, Zeenat.

Zeenat Parmar: Hi, Laura.

Laura Graham: Tell me a little bit about where you were born and grew up.

Zeenat Parmar: I was born in Nairobi, Kenya, and I spent my first 19 years there. And then for about a year and a half I went to live in Eldoret before I moved to Kenya. I was born in a Muslim family. My grandparents had come to Kenya from India before it was partitioned into India and Pakistan. My father and my grandmother were born in Amritsar, and my grandfather came to Kenya for a better life with a friend.

And then after two years he went back to India, Amritsar, and brought my grandmother, my uncle who was older than my father, and my father to Kenya. My father was about three, three-and-a-half when he came to Kenya. He studied in Kenya, and then he had an arranged marriage with my mom. My mom was born in Kenya, again from a Muslim family, and they got married, and I was born a year later in 1946. I was born in 1946 and I spent...

We lived in a, what shall I say, family with my grandparents. We lived with my grandparents. My uncle lived away from us, very close by, but not in the... And my grandfather and my father had a very small business of blacksmiths. They were blacksmiths, but then later on, my father went into teaching. He was always interested in teaching. He was an academic actually, always reading books and things. So he went to teach, and a few years later he got a job teaching metalwork to prisoners. So he worked in the prison service in Kenya for quite a few years.

My mother was just a housewife. She had never been to school, but she taught herself how to read Urdu, but she knew the Quran very well. She had been taught the Quran, and she was very, let's say, quite religious. She read the Quran and read books in Urdu, reading books in Urdu. My grandmother was a teacher as well. My grandmother taught Quran. Little children came to our house and she taught them Quran. Yes, that was her. She taught Quran until quite late in her life and then just left.

My grandfather always had this little business. When my father left, he carried on the blacksmith business, and he passed away when I was 17.

Very loving man. Very, very loving. I was the eldest child in the family, and because he had two sons, he was very fond of me. We had a very close relationship, me being the daughter. That was the first very sad occasion I think in my life when he passed away. I felt very sad.

I went to school when I was... The primary school was mainly for a girls-only Muslim school. It was a religious school. We were taught the curriculum as well as about religion, reading the Quran, our language, Urdu, until I was 13. Then from 13, I went to, it wasn't a government school, it was private. Well, you can't say private. I don't know, but we had to pay fee. We paid fee, and it was called Duchess of Gloucester School. I did my... I forget now what the exam was, but like O Levels when I did that there. That was also a girls-only school.

I've never been to a mixed school. Then when I did my O Levels, then went for two years to a teacher training college, because I always wanted to be a teacher like my father was. That is it. And when he was teaching in prison, the metalwork, he always came home and he was a very family man. Came home and had a cup of tea and things, and then had a little rest. We always started, my brothers and sisters, and he had other pupils come in. He used to give tuitions. He used to do our schoolwork until about eight, half past eight. It was a very regimental household. Everything was on time and things like that.

While he was in prison, he applied for a job in a technical college about 200 miles away in a place called Eldoret. He got that job. While I was in teacher training college, not my grandmother, she didn't want to work, but my parents and my siblings moved to Eldoret, and I stayed at college because it was a boarding college. I stayed there and finished my two years course, and then joined my family in Eldoret.

My grandmother was a very independent woman, very, very independent. She didn't want to move in with my parents, so she stayed in Nairobi in a very big house all by herself. Then because all the rooms were empty, she started having tenants, and she said she didn't want to move there. That is a very strong, very independent woman. Very, very strong. That is how I remember my childhood. I had a very happy childhood. Very, very happy.

My father was always very interested in what we were studying, how we were studying, and what we wanted to do in life. I had a very liberal view and because I wanted to be a teacher and said, yes, if you pass your

exams, you can be. That is how I remember my childhood. My mom was very homely, always cooked delicious food. That's how I remember her. Did a lot of stitching, made all our own clothes, taught all the girls how to knit and sew their own clothes.

She was a very humble lady, very, very mild, very quiet, but very loving, very, very loving. Very different from my grandmother, who was very strong. She was very mild, very meek, but always thinking about others. Always thinking about others. That's it. I have two other sisters and four brothers. But my sisters and I got on very well. The four brothers, also all younger than me, but the youngest brother had polio when he was a year old, and he needed constant care after that. Somebody had to be with him, so there was always a servant, a lady, lalike, who was with him.

He went to a special school while they were in Nairobi, which was run by an Englishman. He got quite... not well medically, but he could sort of feed himself, learn to feed himself, clothe, and take a little care of himself. When they went to Eldoret, my mom did not want him to be taken in as a boarder in that school. She said no, she wanted to take him with him. He passed away when he was 15.

I think my mom was grateful to God because she said she wanted him to be taken care of, because she was worried if she had passed away and he was alive, who would take care of him. So she was, I think actually a bit relieved that he had gone before her.

Laura Graham: How old were you when that happened?

Zeenat Parmar: When that happened? I was in England when I got the news, so I must be in my mid or late 20s, something like that. Yes. Yes, I was in England when I got a phone call saying he had passed away.

Laura Graham: You came from a very big family in terms of siblings.

Zeenat Parmar: Yes. Yes.

Laura Graham: How did you get on with everyone? Were you the same age, could you played together?

Zeenat Parmar: Yes, actually, we brothers and sisters got on quite well. There were squabbles, things. My brothers were all younger. Two of them were quite close to each other, and the elder one. My sister who's younger

than me is, even now, she's very smart, very fashion conscious, very close. When I became a teacher, she said I wasn't smart enough, so she didn't want to walk with me in town, she said. But no, we got on well together.

My sisters, the youngest one, the youngest one, and I finished schooling. The rest of them didn't want to. The sister younger than me didn't want to complete her schooling. In Kenya, you pay the fee, you go to school, and she didn't want to. She was very interested in dressmaking, in cooking. She went to a lady's house to learn those things, and pay, and that was it.

My brother was very much interested in mechanics, motor mechanics, and went to college and did that, and was still a mechanic until he retired. He lives in Canada now, and he enjoyed doing that work. None of us left home like it's the culture here, because that wasn't the culture in Kenya. You all lived until you got married. I left when I came to England, my home. I came to England because, to get married to my husband.

My brother left when he got married, and he and his wife went to live in Nairobi in my grandmother's house. She was there with them. My sister got married and went to Canada. Eventually, all the brothers and sisters had left and my mom and dad were the only ones left in Kenya because they never wanted to come to England or go to Canada. They always wanted to live in England. That's how it was.

Laura Graham: Did they ever return to India at all?

Zeenat Parmar: No, my mother... My father went to Pakistan because when he was... Later in life, I remember he went to Pakistan because India and Pakistan had been partitioned by then and Pakistan was... So we had family there. My grandmother's sister was there and my grandfather's brothers were there, but I've had no contact with them at all. My father went and visited them. I remember I must have been eight, nine when he went and he came back.

My mother never went to Pakistan, never ever went to Pakistan. My grandmother, I don't ever remember her going back to India or Pakistan, but I remember my grandfather going to see his brothers and his nephews there, but we never met them. And he brought his mother, my grandmother... So my great-grandmother, I had met her. He brought her

to Kenya and she lived with us for a few years. I remember a very old lady, very frail, very frail. She lived for a few years and then passed away in Nairobi.

Laura Graham: Do you have many memories of Kenya as a place, and what was it like during that time when you were young?

Zeenat Parmar: Kenya was a beautiful, beautiful place and always open and had lots of space. To me, the sky seemed so high up and always blue, and at night the sky was full of stars. That is something I missed when I came to England. When I came to England, I landed in Manchester in September, and I felt quite claustrophobic because I felt the clouds were so low. And there were so many people, and the buildings were very close together. I felt quite claustrophobic.

Kenya was open places. You could drive, and I'm talking about 60 years ago now, you could drive out of Nairobi 10 miles out and there'll be forests. On a Sunday, we would go, just take a picnic, just take food and a little stove, not even a coal stove, we had no gas, and get into the car. My father would just say, "Just drive out and spend a day out." We children would be running around, take a ball with us or board games. We used to play Ludo a lot. Ludo.

And we would just be sitting and my mom would cook there. We'd take a servant with us and he would light the fire, and we'd cook there, and then come home. Leave about 10:00 in the morning and come back at about 5:00 because we don't have long evenings like we do here. It's a 12-hour day and that's it. That is what I remember. And never feeling cold. That was something else. Never felt cold and never had...

I remember always being in what we would say in our sandals and never having closed shoes, and that's what I missed. I'd never worn socks in my life until I came to England. That was a strange thing, coming here wearing layers and layers of clothes. That was something. And sky being so low. Then the houses in Manchester, you went into a house and you couldn't see the sky, and you never looked up in the sky to see. I don't think I ever saw the stars. I really missed that. I missed that.

Something else I missed, everybody on the streets here was very quiet, minding their own business. You didn't have the children running around or the noise about that. That was something I missed. And never going out at night. When I came here and worked in an office where

there were young girls and they said, "Oh, we went out last night," I didn't know what going out was because I'd never done that. Wherever you went, you went with the family as a family.

Some very different things, strange things I found. Also, not having people coming to your house there in Kenya early morning. Not early morning, but about 9:00, 10:00. People used to, in carts, bring... selling vegetables, come on the street and women would go out and pick. Not having that here, that I found. Just everything was very gloomy. But I think I came at the wrong time in September when everything in Kenya there seemed to be color all around and here everything was grey. Very, very strange. And not knowing anybody.

When I came here, it was only my husband whom I knew. There was nobody else I knew, I could say hello to and see. You couldn't ring your mum because you didn't have a telephone to ring, and the phone boxes didn't do international calls. It was quite... It was very lonely, not quite, very, very lonely, very lonely time to get through. I would go and sit in a church at night. There was a church nearby and it was always open, always open.

I remember going and sitting there because it was very peaceful and it was indoors. I wasn't confident enough to walk on the streets. That was quite scary, very scary at that time. I think the worst thing is not knowing anybody. Not knowing anyone.

Laura Graham: You came to England, you said, to get married. Tell me a bit about that, meeting your husband and moving to England. What year was that as well?

Zeenat Parmar: 1967. I came to England in 1967. When I finished college in Nairobi, my parents had already moved to Eldoret, so I went to live with them in Eldoret. I had passed my teacher training, so went to teach in a primary school and taught a reception school, and there met my husband. My husband was a teacher as well. We had a shared interest. Both of us loved badminton and played badminton. He was very, very good. He was a very good badminton player.

We met him, and just started chatting in school, but as well as at the badminton club. Now looking at it, I think my parents were very liberal-minded, very, very, because in the evenings, I went to this badminton club with my brother and sometimes my dad used to come.

There weren't many girls. There were three, four other girls, and I was one of them. We played and we played with men and played with my brother.

I think I got to know my husband more there, but he is not Muslim, he's Hindu. After about a year... We had never gone out. We only met in the school. I don't know where this idea came from, but I think he said, "Shall we get married?" I said, "You have to come see my parents." Then he introduced me to a friend who had studied in England and had gone back to Eldoret. He gave us the idea. He said, "Why don't you go to England and get married there, because nobody would know about Hindu and Muslims and you wouldn't be outcast, so just go there."

So my husband came to see my father. Obviously, my father was very angry, very, very angry and said, "It can't happen. It can't happen." My husband went away and then my father talked to me and said, "It cannot happen in Kenya. You cannot do this." I said to him, "What if we went to England?" He said, "Okay." But I did not have a passport, and he had to sign the form for me. He said he would only sign it after six months.

My husband was coming to England. He came in April and my father said, "Wait six months. If you still want to go, then I'll sign it." I think he thought after six months it will just fizzle away and she won't go. My parents were very, very good parents. They did not make me feel any different. They did not say, you are outcast, or we won't talk to you or anything. I lived exactly like what I lived before. They were very loving.

But my dad did say that he will not help me financially at all. He said, "I will not help you." I was working, so I had my wages. I started saving up rather than spending them all. I got my ticket, and after six months I said to him, "Yes, I still want to go," and he said, "Okay." He was very kind. He signed my papers and then he said to me, I think it was a bit soft and said, "Would you like to go on holiday with the family to Mombasa or would you like that money?"

I said, "No, I'd like us all to go away on holiday to Mombasa." So the whole family, my mom and dad, my siblings, we all went to Mombasa for about two weeks and had a wonderful time. Then I came back and flew on 5th of September, landed in Manchester, 1967. They never said they are going to not speak to me or anything. I always wrote to them

once a week. My father wrote back to me. Telephone calls were very rare. I never rang them.

I came here and I wasn't 21 yet, so we couldn't get married until I was 21. Three weeks after I was 21, my husband and I, and by that time he had his younger brother come from Eldoret to live with him. I had a friend in Kenya, her sister was here studying in Manchester, so she came home. We went into registry office, got married and came out, and that was it. That's how we started our married life. Then my husband's brother lived with us.

We lived in a flat and really saved up very hard that within about nine months or ten months, we bought our first terraced house. Cost us 1,063 pounds or something like that. Yes. We had very good clerical jobs and saved every little bit we could. In summer, we always walked to work and came back by foot so that we could save. It was one shilling bus fare so that we could save four shillings in a day and have that.

Also, his brother went to college, so we had to pay his fee and he lived with us. Before we bought our new house, his youngest brother, who was only nine, the family sent him over. So we had two brothers, and me and my husband all together living on a... My wage was only about four pounds and 30 pence or something like that, just about four pounds. And his was about six pounds.

Laura Graham: Is that a week or a month?

Zeenat Parmar: A week. A week.

Laura Graham: A week, yeah.

Zeenat Parmar: A week. But then we could feed four of us on one pound 50, saving all the bus fare and everything. Where I worked, I worked in a... My first job in England was sorting out envelopes, which people had posted with their, I think some games or something. We had to sort them in counties. Well, I didn't know the counties. I realized now later on, much later on, that all the ladies who worked there, there were only about 10 or 12 ladies, they were probably retired.

They were much, much older. I was the only youngest one. They were actually very kind, very, very kind ladies. One day one of them took me and said, "This is not a job for you." And took me to the job exchange and said to the lady, "You need to find her another job," because they

did realize I had no language problem. I could speak English. I think they did realize that that was not a job.

From the job exchange, I got a job in one of the catalog companies working in their accounts department where they were all young girls, all young girls working there, and stayed there. They were quite friendly. They weren't... But I couldn't really get into talk because one of them, it took me a long time to realise what Sheffield Wednesday was. She said, "I went to watch Sheffield Wednesday," and I didn't know what she meant because Sheffield is a city and Wednesday the name of the day, and it took me a few weeks to click that it's a football team she's talking about.

Other thing they would talk about, they'd been out with their boyfriends and on a night out and date, which was all very strange. I could understand the words, but didn't know the meaning. I didn't realise what is a lie-in until, again worked it out, that means sleeping in a bit late. Things like that. Even though I spoke English, but I couldn't understand a lot of the language they were talking about, but I had actually no bad experience. They were very, very friendly, very helpful young girls.

Then from there, I started working for British Telecoms because my husband had got a job in British Telecoms. He said to me, "Why don't you apply?" I went for an interview, and got a job working there. Again, a lovely experience, really, really nice experience. Because my first boss, a young lady who was only about 40-ish, said to me, "Can you do overtime?" Yes, Zeenat could do all the overtime she got, worked any hours, came in, worked on Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve because it didn't mean anything to me there.

This young lady, her name was Anne, and she became like a mother to me. She really looked after me, and would ask me had I had a letter from home. She was the lady who when I was so cold, I was so cold, I didn't know you had to wear a vest in winter. Told me, "Go to Marks and Spencer, get some stockings and get some vest." She became a surrogate mother until I left British Telecoms after about eight years. We stayed friends until she passed away only about two years ago.

We always would write to each other at Christmas, send my family photographs, and she would write. She traveled a lot where she had been, sent me a postcard from where I was at, "I saw this and I thought

of you." When she went to India for the first time, she sent me postcards from all around and she said, "I'm thinking about you and this." So we didn't meet for last 30 years, but I thought it was a very loving relationship.

After I didn't get a Christmas card one Christmas from her, and then the following year in about the end of January, February, I got a letter from Wales and I was quite intrigued. It was her niece writing to me and saying, "I thought you'd like to know that Anne has passed away. She was very fond of you and always mentioned you." That was something very loving to me because not having anybody looking after me, I always felt Anne was looking after me telling me little things again.

While working there, there was a young man same age as me, I think, who used to sit opposite me. Now I know he was very racist. At that time, I didn't know about this word and he would really tell me off and very nasty things, really, really racist things. Said, "You should be locked up. You shouldn't be here. Why are you sitting there?" Quite forceful and very frightening. I never told Anne about it because I didn't know you could.

Later on in life, I found out yeah I could have reported him, but he was just one of those things. I look at it that there's some nasty experience, but overall people have been very good. Life has been good in England. Then after I'd been married eight years, I had my daughter and that seemed to settle me that I felt, yes, I'm here now and that's it. Before I had my daughter, my husband's family all came over from Kenya to live in England, and my mother-in-law lived with us.

That was not a good experience because she was a very staunch Hindu, and well, was not happy with me being in the house even though it was my house. She felt it was her son's house and she had more right than me being there. That was actually a very, very horrendous experience.

Laura Graham: How long did she live with you?

Zeenat Parmar: About two-and-a-half years. During that time, now I understand it because she would not be happy if... I am a meat eater and she didn't eat meat. She was a very staunch Hindu. She didn't like when I cooked meat in the house. She had everything separate, separate utensils. But she would not do anything for me. She would say to me, "I have cooked for my sons. You do whatever you want to do with yourself."

My husband felt he could not say anything to his mother, so that was another very difficult period in life. I think my faith, and some people gave me a lot of strength, and I survived and was quite happy. Then in 1971, I think, yes, I forget the date, I think '71. '71. No, '77 because my daughter was born in '76, '77, we decided to move nearer to London because in London I had my uncles and my cousins who I was very close to.

Every time there was a long weekend, I'd catch a coach at 11:00 at night and be in London at 6:00 in the morning, and spend the weekends with them so that I'm away from my mother-in-law and from home. I said to my husband, I'd like to move closer. There was an office, a British Telecom office in Bedford. We thought we'd move somewhere near Bedford.

We came to look for houses in Bedford, but we couldn't afford a house. Then the state agent suggested, "Why don't you move to Rushden?" He knew our budget and said you'd be able to afford a detached house there. We moved to Rushden, and that has been the best decision I think we made. I had my daughter, I stopped working, I was at home and seemed to settle in. Where we moved, our neighbors, a fantastic English couple called Iris and Chick. His name wasn't Chick, his name was Harry. But because their son name was Bird, everybody called him Chick. Lovely, lovely people and made us feel like family. That was a very settling time for me.

My daughter was born, was a year old we came. Then two years later, I had another daughter. I felt life was wonderful. Perfect. When I came into Northamptonshire, I met some ladies in Northampton, in Wellingborough, and we became friends. And they're still my friends. They're like family. Only one of them has passed away, but there's still eight of us and we have known each other for 40 odd years, known our children, families, and they became family, they became my family.

Then my daughters grew up, had very happy childhood in Rushden, went to school there. Then both of them went to university. My elder daughter went to Brighton University and did Finance, degree in Finance. The younger one went to Nottingham Trent and did a master's in Psychology and started work at Middlesex University. While she was there, she did a doctorate and she's not a medical doctor but an academic doctor. The elder one works for a very big bank in Northampton. They live very near me and each of them have two boys.

Life is very good. Yes. When my daughter was... How old was she when I met Linda? I think she was about four, three or four. I met a lady called Linda who was just starting a unit where she had got funding from the home office to set up a unit to teach English to foreign ladies. Because at that time, there was an influx of Ugandan ladies. Ugandan people who came to England. I met Linda by coincidence. Linda and I got on very well. Then I started teaching as a volunteer first and then part-time teaching, and then ended up teaching in an FE college for about 23 years. First teaching English to speak further languages and then English as a foreign language. I was home during the holidays where my girls were, so I had no care issues, and retired about 11 years ago. That's a bit of my life in England.

Laura Graham: What have you been doing in your retirement?

Zeenat Parmar: My retirement. Six months after I retired, my elder daughter had her first child, and it was quite late in life. She was about 34 or 35. I had my first grandson and then my younger daughter had her son. And now, my retirement has been spent with my four grandsons, but they're all in school now. When they were younger, I used to have one each day, every day. The elder one is 11, then 10, nine, and eight. Yeah, so 11-year-old and 9-year-old is eldest daughters, and 10 and eight are the younger daughters.

I used to have them every day, pick them up early morning and take them back. Even, I do that even now. I do that on a Monday for my daughter who lives in Northampton. I pick her boys up. On Wednesday, I don't pick them up, but they walk now, the elder daughters. I go to her house and feed them and take them to football, and that is how. On Mondays, I have my grandsons. I pick them in the afternoon.

Tuesdays, I have a luncheon group. Wednesdays, I go to aqua aerobic class in the morning, and in the afternoon pick my other grandsons for the elder daughter. Thursday, I go to a cheer yoga class in a gurdwara with some friends. Friday, I go to a lovely group called Chai and Chat. My week is all filled. I try and go for a walk every day and meet a lot of people, make lots of friends. That is how my retirement is.

I did a little bit of charity work, went into school to do reading with children, but then I found it was too much for me because I had my grandsons with me. I just did that for about a year and didn't carry on, which I think I would maybe go back again and do a bit of that. My life is

very much revolves around my daughters and my grandsons. It's not because my daughters want me to, it's because I want to be involved with my grandsons. Otherwise, they go to after school club or, you know, other clubs. But no. During school holidays I have them.

Laura Graham: Is your husband still with us?

Zeenat Parmar: Yes, my husband is there, but my husband is going to be 80 in January. Yes, he's going to be 80, but last couple of years he has not been well. When we moved to Northamptonshire, he still worked in Bedford for BT, then was promoted and went to work in London, and then took voluntary redundancy when they first came out in British Telecom, and then bought his own business. And a very surprising choice, I felt, because he's not interested in food, but he bought a coffee shop, a local coffee shop in Northampton, and ran it for about 17 years. And one year won the Best Coffee Shop in Northampton title.

That's very surprising, but he loved it. He absolutely enjoyed running that coffee shop and had two members of staff. I helped him every Saturday for about seven to eight years and then found it was getting too much. My girls, before they went to university, helped him and got paid for it, but I didn't, got paid for it every Saturday. One Saturday, one would help and the following Saturday the other would work there. He unfortunately had to sell it, sell the business because his health.

He found out he had rheumatoid arthritis and that was quite bad, so he could not be on his feet for very long, so had to sell it. After that, he has built up a small property portfolio. He's a very handy man in life, doing, used to spend his time repairs in properties, anything. For last two years he hasn't done anything because his health has really deteriorated and he's got lung health issues. He's mostly at home, just go out a bit. He's independent but can't travel very far, can't do very much. So yes, that's his life from my perspective.

I don't know what he would think of, what his life has been like. But I think my life, I've had a very good life. I'm very thankful to Allah to give me this life and to have my grandsons. Being in England for 58 years now, met some lovely, lovely people. I've had a few quite nasty experiences, but I don't dwell on that because good has outweighed those few incidents you've had. I look at it and like that. Yes, life has been good.

Laura Graham: What do you think the secret is to a happy life?

Zeenat Parmar: I think to be content with what you've got. I don't want anything materialistic in my life. I don't want a new house, new car, new handbag, nothing. I think what I want is my husband and my girls to be healthy, and my grandsons to be healthy, have a loving family, and be kind to people. Material things don't matter to me. I mean, I'm not sentimental of my mother's... My mom gave me... Last time I met her, she gave me a ring she was wearing and she said, "Oh, we might never meet again. This is for you."

It was very touching, but that ring does not mean anything to me. My mother means, her love, the hug I feel sometimes. That ring is with my daughter. I've given it to my elder daughter. Material things actually do not mean anything to me, have never meant anything. I am much happier if somebody were to say to me, "How are you?" Give me a hug. This afternoon I knew where the library was, but when I walked up Abingdon Street, I haven't been here for five, six years, I lost my bearing and I asked the lady and the lady walked me to the library. I thought that was a lovely gesture.

I'll remember that tonight when I think, and thank God when I say my prayers at night saying thank God me meeting lady who I know it may sound silly, but this is what life is to me. I don't buy many clothes. I'm not fashionable, nothing. I wear what I'm comfortable in. I have no desire for exotic holidays. I am very content, and my prayer is I'm happy and my girls are settled. They both got children, they've got families. God would do me a great favor if he would take me today. Yes, so that's me.

Laura Graham: There's so many lovely things that you've shared, so thank you so much for that, Zeenat.

Zeenat Parmar: Thank you for... Yes, life is very good, and I believe that my mum must be looking after me. She's been dead 30 years this year on 31st of October, but she's always with me. She's always there. I think I must have done some good to her to show that she's asking God to look after me, Allah to look after me.

Laura Graham: Thank you so much for your time. It's been lovely to speak to you.

Zeenat Parmar: Yes, it's been lovely talking, thinking. Yes. I have some very good friends, very, very good friends here in Northamptonshire, those ladies I talked about. We help each other out and you always know that you can rely on them.

Laura Graham: Thank you so much.

Zeenat Parmar: You're welcome. Yes.