

FHS Oral History Project – Samir Fkiyi

Description:

Samir Fkiyi was born in Morocco in 1986. After briefly discussing his experiences growing up in Morocco, Samir recounted his decision to leave and emigrate to the United States in 2011. He realized that perceptions in Morocco about Americans—and vice versa—differed from what he observed living in the States. In fact, Samir created a YouTube channel to challenge the cultural stereotypes often associated with Americans and Moroccans, leveraging the dual identity most immigrants possess. Samir worked at Walt Disney World from 2011 to 2015, and explained how that experience facilitated his adjustment to living in the US. After working at Disney, Samir opened his restaurant, Darna Cuisine, and briefly recollected the memories of operating a Moroccan restaurant in Orlando. Additionally, since May 2022, Samir has served as the President of the Moroccan American Cultural Society. He underlined the importance of such a cultural organization for Moroccans specifically and other communities generally in the Central Florida area. Lastly, Samir shared his broader observations living in Orlando.

Transcription:

00;00;00 - 00;00;16

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: This is Sebastian Garcia interviewing Samir Fkiyi on February 9th, 2025, at Audubon Church for the Florida Historical Society Oral History Project. Before we begin, can you please restate your name, your date of birth and where you were born.

00;00;17 - 00;00;28

SAMIR FKIYI: Alright. My name is Samir F-k-i-y-i, which is Samir Fkiyi. I'm from Morocco. And my date of birth is May 6. 1986.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Excellent. Tell me a little bit about your experiences growing up in Morocco.

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SAMIR FKIYI: Alright. Before I start, I would love to thank you very much for the invite. I'm so happy to be here with you, Sebastian. So, I grew up in Morocco, as you said. It was easy, kind of an easy life. It's a little bit different than here. You know, one of the things is you stay with your family until you get married. So less spending money and less money to worry about. And life is very chill and easy there. I think that...

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: What inspired you to study hospitality and culinary at the Institute of the...

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SAMIR FKIYI: H.A.T., so at the *Institut de Technologie Hoteliere et Touristique*, it's a French name. So, I always loved cooking and always had a great—I felt like I wanted to connect with people, and that was a way, you know, to connect with people. That was a job that allowed you to know a lot of people and connect with a lot of people. And, also, like I said, the cooking part of it. And that's what made me go with that career. Also, Morocco had a plan, which they're,

into it now is to have more tourism in Morocco and that was one of the goals is to have a great opportunity after the university.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: When and why did you leave Morocco for the United States?

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SAMIR FKIYI: So I never wanted to leave Morocco. I had plenty of experiences before or offers before I had New Zealand and I had other places like Dubai and other places, but I said no. But it was just my best friend, Amin, who came to me and suggested that we go somewhere because when you finish university or school, you're always thinking that life is changing. Your friend goes away and you're always thinking it's getting harder, and you think that's going to get better if you meet them again, which I don't see him much anyways. But he came to me and he suggested that we go to Dubai, and I was like, nope. My dad got me the New Zealand offer as a cook, and I said no. But then when my friend told me, you know what, we used to have a great life, we used to do a lot of things together, let's go somewhere and make it an experience. And then he suggested Disney. I told him, "I don't know how." I literally did it for my best friend, not for United States. And especially I had no English. I did not speak English at all at that time. So I was like, "are you kidding me?" And he was like, let's just try. So I was literally just giving it a try. And we did, I gave it a try and it worked. The first interview. The second interview. And there we are, 14 years after.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: And what year was that exactly when you arrived here?

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SAMIR FKIYI: I arrived here exactly in March 2011 and actually on 6 March 2011.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Nice. Nice. That was sort of around—Was that right before the Arab Spring in Morocco when you left?

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SAMIR FKIYI: Morocco did not have much on the Arab Spring. It was, I think, in February. But Morocco was not affected much with it. We're the almost only country that was not affected with any of that. Yeah, but everywhere else in our neighborhoods were crazy.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: And what were your initial impressions of the United States? Did your perceptions about the US before coming here change once you got here?

00;04;14 - 00;06;12

SAMIR FKIYI: Yes, definitely. Because when you are in Morocco and you look at movies, it's always different, you know, different in different ways. Different that you think that everyone carries a gun, and everyone does drugs and like, they think about Arabs and Muslims, it's whatever media shows you and you'd be like family were worried at that time, like, what are

you gonna go do there? And they thought that the minute I get here, I'm going to be just clubbing and drinking and whatever. That's what they see in movies as well as I'm going to be the richest guy with a mansion and driving a Lamborghini. And so it was a different, you look at it different than when you come here. Also, they were worried about so many other things the culture, the religion, this and this and that. But then when you come here, and I always teach or preach people that we're all the same. We're all humans, we're all the same. It doesn't matter where you are, you'll be respected for who you are. So when I came here, I figured that, you know, it's different. And I was telling my family that it's not the same. And talking about that also, they were worried that whatever they seen movies, I'm going to be just with ladies and whatever crazy is going to be. But then I found my wife—that she's with us—and we've been together since then, 14 years after. She's a great person. Not what they were thinking. And again, the same way they draw a picture about us in here, they draw a picture about people here in there. And I feel like that's why at first I started doing YouTube videos and stuff to explain to people the difference that, hey, what you see on TV or what you see in movies, it's not what you know in reality. And that's what it is. It's different.

00;06;12 - 00;06;25

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: And you mentioned your YouTube experience. You sort of already mentioned what kind of inspired you to do that. Can you give me an example of a video you produced of explaining these cultural differences?

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SAMIR FKIYI: I did a lot of videos, and one of the videos I did is about what we call it “Islam and other religions.” Cause some people, in my country, like, you have some people here in America, they think that, if you're a Christian or if you're a Muslim, you're the only true religion or you're the only true person, and other people are whatever, you know. And I have one of the things that makes me super mad because people connect politics with religion. So if you talk to somebody randomly in Morocco and you ask him about America, they always confuse America with Americans. They will think like, “Oh, they did the war here. They did the war here. And people are bad.” But if you go, they're visiting, they look at you different. It's like a schizophrenia in a way. But when people like, let's say a hurricane happened here, they start asking God to destroy this and do this to this people and do it. And I'm like, bro, like let politics away. I see the same way because I'm here, I know what's going on here, and I know what's going on there. And when I talk to people that don't know Muslims and they don't know Arabs and they don't know Moroccans, they always look at them as probably terrorists or this or that, and it's not the case. So I try to correct it there, and I try to correct it here. And I let people know that this is a human being like you. There's a lot of people that don't even want the war to be anywhere. There's a lot of people that probably defend your causes, and that's one of the things that I focused about. Also, I was kind of educating people about other things in Morocco. I did some of, I won't say politics, but sometimes I get mad about things that happening, and I express my point of view, but that's what was it mostly. Yeah. I like to open people's eyes on what's going on here, and that we are all one and just treat America or Americans as you treat them when they come visit. Because when you go to Morocco, they will treat you like a king. They won't even care about what religion you have or whatever. Why? Because they see a human being versus when they're talking in social media they kind of mixing Americans with America, with the war, with politics, with so many other things. And that's what I try to explain.

And show them this is different than this. You know, these people don't have anything to do what's going on in politics, especially if there's any war and like, what's going on with Palestine, and they get even angrier and I'm like, bro, like chill.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Absolutely. What's the name of your channel and do you still continue to do videos?

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SAMIR FKIYI: It used to be named *Jihad Touch* [sic], which is it's like you want to say, in Morocco there's 12, if you want to say, states, you know, and the state 13 it talks about the Moroccans abroad because we have a great connection with Morocco and every Moroccan, anywhere we go, we feel that connection that it's getting stronger and stronger. And that's what made me call it district or the State 13 that we still connect to Morocco, that we still belong. And, also, I used to do a lot of subjects about flights and things and connecting people to their routes and how they can keep their culture. But in the meantime, kind of float and connect to what's here. But it used to be called *Jihad Touch* [sic], which is State 13.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Nice. Did you have any difficulty adjusting to life in the US?

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SAMIR FKIYI: Not really. The first time when I was finding out what's going on in here. But other than that, it was good. I was lucky to be a cultural representative at Disney, which helped me a lot as well. I was surrounded by a lot of Moroccans, which gave me time to see other things slowly. Like, I know that sometimes people get that culture shock when you put him somewhere or himself with nobody else. That can be difficult. But the way I came, we kind of start seeing things a little by little, which was amazing. Disney helped a lot with that. And also we were at Disney, so we see people from all over the world like French, Mexicans, Colombians, I will say any other cultural countries. Yeah. So it was easy for me to kind of float in another thing that made it easy also, in Morocco, we have multicultural as well. We have, which I told you before, it's kind of schizophrenia thing. So we have a lot of Jewish in Morocco. We have Christians, we have churches. So I did not see a huge difference in a way other than I was just trying to figure the true America. If you ask me when you were coming, yes, I was coming to a totally different place. But if you ask me when I got here and I'm seeing the difference between TV and reality, it was not really that difficult.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Right. Absolutely. So you mentioned how your friend is really what brought you here? But once you arrived to Orlando, were there any other things about the city that you sort of immediately resonated with?

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SAMIR FKIYI: Like I mentioned, Orlando or Central Florida is great, because of the diversity. So you can see people from all over the world and you can see that everybody is adjusting to everybody. So that made it very, very simple and easy. So the diversity of the city or of Central

Florida, as a whole, made it easy for me. Also my friend came right after me. So, we got here together. So it made it very easy the diversity. And there's a lot of activities and a lot of things to do that makes you kind of learn the culture and become one of these great, you know, a Central Florida community.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Absolutely. From 2011 to 2015, you worked for The Walt Disney Company, as you mentioned before, in several capacities, from a cultural representative to a front desk agent, and even a server. Talk to me about this experience.

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SAMIR FKIYI: It was a very good experience. You know, I felt like I learned a lot from Disney, and, it was really, really great to meet people, like I said, from all over the world to learn a lot about hospitality, because I can tell you, I studied so much. But, when you're there on the field, especially at Disney World, you learn a lot more. And it was amazing. We knew so many people. We became friends with so many people from all over the world. And that alone made me really happy because I love to know different people and learn about other cultures. And that was really a great learning experience. That was definitely amazing.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: And then around 2015, you created Darna Cuisine and became a self-employed restaurant business owner. Talk to me about this experience.

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SAMIR FKIYI: That was a tough one. So Darna cuisine—Darna means home. It's like the cuisine of your home or house. And that was a great experience as well. But it was tough while I was doing it. Great memories. We used to make Moroccan food. And that to me was part of what I love to do, which is cooking, but also sharing the culture. So it was a mixture of both. And also it was home for a lot of Moroccans. They used to come there and enjoy the food and also enjoy people as well. Like, we used to sit and talk and discuss a lot of things. Also, we used to have a lot of people other than Moroccans. And, you know, restaurant business can be tough because it was a tough time. It's tough based on the time you spend in there. It's not easy, but it was great. It was amazing. We had a lot of great times in there, and it was a great experience as well.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: What was it like, being a Moroccan businessman at that time in Orlando?

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SAMIR FKIYI: It's good. It's good. Again, difficult, but it's good. And what we used to do different is we used to do traditional authentic food. And, like I said, it was great. You know, we used to have a lot of outsiders. The businesses next to us, we used to have a lot of fun not only doing business, but also—it was like a family. And there's a Jamaican guy that used to have his place in front of us, Lewis, that I still in contact with till today. We made it like a family. But also, business wise, it was amazing, you know, it was a great experience. Was good to be a self-

employed, you know, and that what helped me to probably never want to work with people again. So since then, I've been doing self-employment. But it was a great experience. It was a great time to share the Moroccan food, but the authentic one. The real one. Because food can be the one that you put on a plate and call it Moroccan food, but it's a small pieces and stuff, and do one that you make home. And also when my mom used to come here, she used to come to the restaurant and cook as well. And I used to have people calling me, Wednesday used to be a day where people tell me what they want to eat, and I get a lot of requests, and we make the food that you're not going to find in restaurants, like, we make *corfisa* [sic]. We make a lot of, I'll tell you the names, but you're not going to probably know them. But it used to be a special day for us as well.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: But no, share with me a couple of the names.

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SAMIR FKIYI: We have a [*list Moroccan dishes in Arabic*] It's the inside of the sheep. And one of the funny things is when we make the head—because in Morocco, we eat the head of the sheep or the cow—when we used to make it and people coming in, and they look at and they give you that look of like, “what you eating!?” But it used to be special. It used to be good. It was good.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: That's awesome. Around this time in 2016, you work towards and eventually earned your real estate license in Florida. What inspired you to essentially start this new career path? Because, yeah, there's some connections between real estate and hospitality, but that's—it's different—so talk to me about that.

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SAMIR FKIYI: I'm going to go back to talk about friends. But in that time I was doing actually the restaurant and I was at Valencia. And then my friend came to me, and he was like, you know, Samir, I see you doing a real estate. He been telling me for almost five years, but I never listen to him. He's always telling me that I see you have a great customer service. The way you talk to people, the way you like to help people, why you don't do real estate? And that's what kind of inspired me. But also, he was talking to my friend, which is the same one, Amin that told me to come here [to the United States] and, Amin jumped in and did it. The minute he did it, we start looking at, you know, he makes good money. He was doing great. And he came in to me and he said, because we were discussing real estate and he was like, you know what, Samir, you spent so much time here. And also at that time I had my daughter. So it was kind of a moment where I needed more time with family and my beautiful wife, she was like, you know what, this restaurant is too much because it used to take so much time from us. It's literally from sometimes six in the morning to whatever. If you're going to go get merchandise and stuff. So she said, you know, we need some time with family and as a Moroccan, I'm just going to speak about myself, we're very family oriented, so family is everything to us. So I decided that we probably going to have to do something. So based on the advice from my friend that my friend went and did it and proved to me that he's making good money, and he has a lot of time in hand that what made me take that decision and switch and [I have] been doing

that since then. So it's really great. And I if anyone love to help people and if anyone loves dealing with people, I always tell them real estate can be a great career.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: From your perspective, how has the real estate landscape in Central Florida as a profession, but also in terms of, you know, the housing market changed in the past nine years?

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SAMIR FKIYI: Huge change. I will say, since Covid, it was crazy, a crazy change. Prices went up. You know, the roller coaster between like, interest rate as well. Interest rate is high to the sky. But in the meantime, the rent is going up, so it's a huge change. A lot of people traveled here and Central Florida—whenever something happens somewhere—people decide to, for some reason, come here. I think the beautiful weather and, also, you know, what we have here, we have so much that we can offer a Central Florida and definitely that probably what brings people in and that always help prices to rise. But as always, I tell people it doesn't matter what's going on, jump in and own your house because that person you're renting from is still buying houses and renting it to people, you know. But yeah, definitely the market has changed so much. The houses that used to be at 140 now at 380 easily. So it is a huge change. And there's a lot of houses being built around. And, you know, Central Florida is growing so much as well. But now the market is a little bit better. Not as nine years ago, but it's definitely better for people to negotiate pricing and to get better deals. A lot of homes now, especially new builds are doing great rates, offering rates, offering closing costs, offering other things. And hopefully things get better for people to jump in and buy their houses sooner or later. It doesn't matter what the price is, doesn't matter what the interest rate is. And one thing that I always advise people is get your house while you can and look at your monthly payment. If you can afford it, jump in and do it. Hopefully the rate will go down later, and you'll be able to refinance and own a house. You know? So that's what it is. The market is changing so much.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Absolutely. In May 2022, you became the president of the Moroccan American Cultural Society. So I have several questions. First, what is the mission of the Moroccan American Cultural Society?

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SAMIR FKIYI: So before I talk about the mission, I'm going to go back to because we used to do a lot before getting the Moroccan American Culture Society of Florida and, that lead to the mission. So basically, like I said before, we're family oriented. So our goal is to get together and kind of connect people together, stay together and do great things together. To be a great community within our bigger community, which is Central Florida community. As a Moroccan, I always love our kids or us to be a great example, because we're here, we're Americans, but we still represent Morocco in different ways. And like I said, we used to help a lot before then, and we used to do a lot of things before then. But that's what lead us to do the organization, because we had situations where we needed a title, we needed an organization because to talk to officials about something or—and I remember the case that pushed us to the it. We had the case that pushed us to do it. And we had events that also pushed us to be as an organization because

we did a lot better as an organization than when we talk as just Samir. So, like I said, our mission is to help people connect. Our mission is to get people to know who we are, to share our culture, to help people that comes from the country to how you call the name to...

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Acclimate, acculturate?

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SAMIR FKIYI: Yes. To acclimate to become one of Central Florida community members. Don't be that ad person that don't know anything or do it differently. And that's what it is. You know, our mission is to melt within this community and help others to do the same thing. But in the meantime, keep that family vibe within us and also share that with other communities.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: And somewhat related. But why is it important for you to be involved and lead this organization?

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SAMIR FKIYI: I found myself in it based on what I used to do. I used to help people. And, you know, when you help one, then you give your number to the other one. And especially with my YouTube channel, like, when it gets to times where the lottery time, I used to help them how to apply and, you know, advise them what to do when you come here and other things. And that's what kind of start having people connecting with me. And that dragged me in into it. So it was just it came like that. And then we were doing so much me and my wife, we help in so many other field and, you know, we said, you know what, we should do it the right way. At least when we talk to people, most of the times we used to spend money out of our pocket, which we still do, but we said, you know what, at least we have to do it the right way by creating a nonprofit that will have a title. [For] example, I called the police department, and I had to call jails, and I had to call for some people, and when you call them as Samir, like, come on, they won't even sometimes give you the information. But as an organization, you kind of trusted, you know, they know who they're talking to. So that made it definitely helpful. So that dragged me into opening the nonprofit.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: The organization's presence suggests that there is an increasing number of Moroccans that have called the United States, but specifically Orlando/Central Florida home. Has it always been that way since you arrived in 2011?

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SAMIR FKIYI: I'm sorry, can you repeat the question? Because I didn't get it.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: That the organizations presence suggests that there there's been an increasing number of Moroccans in this country and specifically in Central Florida. I'm just curious to see how has that changed since you arrived. Have you seen more Moroccans come or...?

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SAMIR FKIYI: I know that a lot of people probably come because of that just based on when we help them with the lottery, or we help them with things they feel like there's someone to count on. Definitely. I know a lot of people that came because of that. But in the meantime, there's a lot of people in other places when they see what we do, as like events as they feel like it's home of Moroccans in a way. So, you know, you always go to other places, you always feel like you need people around you, especially Moroccans were very family oriented. So when they feel that there's someone that they either can meet, or they can be around or there's events. And lately people love our events and a lot of people—I know people come in from Tampa literally last week asking me that they wanted to move down here, and I'm talking just about Tampa because they feel like we do a lot more here than Tampa. I had calls from a lot of other places, so definitely yes, but not I'm not saying thousands or millions, but, you know...

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: But there's been an increase?

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SAMIR FKIYI: Yes, definitely.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: You mentioned earlier sort of this, almost like a dual identity, right, of being an American, but also being still Moroccan. And as a child of immigrants, I also faced that too. I'm curious, how do you—whether it's through this organization or other aspects of your life—how do you navigate that duality?

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SAMIR FKIYI: It's just be you. That's one. And understand that you have that, you know, you you're Moroccan. You're not going to deny that, you know, and that's actually beautiful. But in the meantime, understand that you're in the United States and you live with people that probably don't know who's a Moroccan can be or what can be and just, you know, express yourself, just be yourself and share with people your culture. And that's why we do a lot of activities to get people closer to us in a way. Because if you don't know others or you don't know anything about their cultures, sometimes it's hard to understand them. But when you get to know people and you get closer to them, I think it makes it easy for them to know you better and to understand you better. And at the end of everything, it just makes them to understand that you're no different than them in a way. But how I did navigate that is like I said, I always share it with people, and I cannot forget a great advice that the father of my friend gave me one time. He said, you're going to go to United States. And we have this, that a lot of people, when they come here, they try to become, in a way, 100% Americans in their way, but they forget that America is based on a lot of people and a lot of immigrants anyway, but they try to be the Americans they see on TV, in a way, and they lose their identity, and that makes them probably not doing the right thing. For me, he told me, keep what's great about you, keep what's great about your culture, and learn what's great in there, and just have a beautiful mixture that makes you who you are. And that's basically what I did. I learned a lot of great things here, and I kept who I am as a Moroccan, that came from Morocco, and it's been great, I think.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Yeah, absolutely. Well said. You have lived in Orlando and have been intimately involved in its business and cultural activities. How has Orlando or Central Florida more broadly changed since you've been here?

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SAMIR FKIYI: And in what aspect?

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: In any way you want to take it.

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SAMIR FKIYI: I think the only change that I probably see is like you talked about real estate because I'm more focused on that. Other than that, maybe, since we did the organization, we can see the change, probably because we were not involved that much before in certain things like in festivals, in maybe in other communities that much, but I don't see really a change. But I see new things that we got involved into, and that's been great so far. But not a real change for me.

00;31;17 - 00;31;23

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: From your perspective, what challenges does Orlando, Central Florida face today?

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SAMIR FKIYI: That's a tough question. If we're talking about today, today? Yeah, that's a tough question. I just think what's going on today with, you know, with politics is being difficult. I seen so many great friends, great people, that are mentally challenged. I am seeing America going away from being America in a way. And I'm being honest because like I said before, America is based on diversity, is based on people from different places. And that's what makes America great, is us as community—doesn't matter where we are from. It's just difficult. We're living in difficult days. Hopefully this will change soon. And we go back to our peaceful living as Orlando or as America. But I seen a lot of great things. I seen a lot of leaders, taking it, or making it better. Like when you meet with leaders here, you feel that it's, you know, you feel that we're still good. It's just the time that's going to pass. So that's what it.

00;32;40 - 00;32;54

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: And to that point, in what ways do you think Orlando, Central Florida will change in the next, let's say, 20, 25 years in whatever aspect?

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SAMIR FKIYI: That's a tough question because I'm not sure how Florida will—it's changing every day. There's a lot of improvement there. There's a lot of great things happening, a lot of parks opening. So there is great change are also, being close to, you know, to so many or looking at so many communities and so many programs and so many leaders, we see a lot of changes, like, for example, I'll just give you a small example. We been in an Act award

celebration on Wednesday, that Orange County, help or support. And we seen how they're thinking more of funding, nonprofits and funding a lot of people that help Central Florida's tourism or art and that I think is great and is going to make people do more for Central Florida or for Orlando. So hopefully we'll see great change. I seen it changing, but to give you exactly what's going to happen or is going to change, it's going to be tough. But I'm seeing Orlando every year doing better with the diversity especially. And I'm telling you, that's what's going to make it. That's what makes us already great. And that's why a lot of people love Florida. And that's what made it easy for me when I came here—it's that diversity. So I feel like the more they do with diversity the better we're going to be. And hopefully great change, hopefully great change.

00;34;35 - 00;34;52

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Absolutely. We've already touched on this, but I've asked everyone, in what ways has your Moroccan heritage influence your perspective on life generally? But living here in Central Florida specifically?

00;34;52 - 00;36;11

SAMIR FKIYI: I will say maybe in every aspect. But, like I said, we're family oriented. So, I love meeting with people. I love talking to different people from different cultures and different backgrounds and that helped so much. And that made it already a great journey. And I cannot complain about a day that I lived here in Central Florida. We know great friends, we know great people. And I won't say that we were away from family, but yes, we're away from family. But we have or we [have] chosen a lot of people to become our family in Central Florida and family from different backgrounds and different cultures, which made it really, really great. And I'm thankful for every person I know here in Central Florida. And I'm thankful that they accepted me the way I am as a Moroccan. And actually they expressed that they loved it, but definitely, it helped me a lot, who I am as a Moroccan helped me a lot to connect with people. Definitely.

00;36;12 - 00;36;25

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: If someone's listening to this recording, let's say 50 or 100 years from now, what would you want them to know about your culture and the state of Florida?

00;36;25 - 00;38;14

SAMIR FKIYI: What I want them to know about my culture. I'll start with Florida, the state of Florida. What I want them to know is it's taking a lot of work and a lot of hard work from each one of the people that live in Central Florida to make it where it is now in his time. So it takes dedication. It takes love. It takes so much to make it to where he is now, because I'm sure it's going to be a way better at that time. Doesn't mean that it's bad, it's not bad. It's just going to be improved and it's going to be greater. And what I want him to know about my culture is, Morocco is a very peaceful country that taught us a lot, in that aspect of how to live in peace with others and how to love others and how to appreciate others. And also to appreciate the diversity, as I said, that we have a lot of diversity in Morocco and a lot of things that been actually new to me when I came here, a lot of challenges here that in Morocco we don't have, when it comes to diversity and other things. So, yeah, and I think that's all about it. I'm not going to talk about food and stuff, but because a lot of, we have a lot of food, we have a lot of, great things in our culture. But I'm going to focus on what helps the community, which is

appreciate others and be around others and teamwork. And it doesn't matter who surrounding you, try to work with them to make it better and to make, again, Florida great.

00;38;14 - 00;38;22

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Absolutely. Thank you, Samir. I really appreciate you taking some time out of your day to share a little bit of your life story with me.

00;38;22 - 00;38;26

SAMIR FKIYI: It is a pleasure. Thank you very much. And I hope I did well.

00;38;26 - 00;38;26

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: You did. Absolutely.

00;38;26 - 00;38;27

SAMIR FKIYI: Thank you.