

CASE STUDY 1: ANDERS

Anders (applicant)

Wife (witness)

Examining Officer (EO)

Excerpts of First Instance Interview conducted on 16 September 2013

[At the beginning of the interview, the applicant provides hospital records of the applicant being fitted for a prosthetic leg, dated November 2008. He stated that he forgot to bring the hospital documents when he fled his country and that the documents had been sent recently by family in Routania.]

Interview Excerpt # 1

EO: When was the first time you came to the attention of the authorities?

Applicant: Anyone who works for the Routanian Voice is on a government list. I started working there in 2003. In the beginning I didn't have any trouble but after I wrote an article criticizing the government for lack of educational reform, I started getting harassed.

EO: What do you mean by "harassed"?

Applicant: People were watching my home from time to time. It is accepted that these are government minders. All reporters are subjected to it. A few times, I was followed home from work late at night and once my car was forced off the road. Once I was denied press accreditation for a conference. It was not all the time but it was just enough to make me nervous. I guess that is what they were trying to do --- make me nervous enough to stop my criticism. A lot of reporters in my country start out with good intentions but before long, most are practicing self- censorship.

EO: Tell me about your first detention.

Applicant: That was in 2006 – no, I'm sorry. It was 2007. I wrote about corrupt officials who granted mining licenses without proper environmental assessments. I was taken to the Prison for Men and kept several days. My editor managed to get me freed by promising not to write any more articles about this.

EO: Do you know why he would do that if the paper was such a fierce critic of the government?

Applicant: The government had cut off our supply of news print for several months before my article appeared and the paper was just getting back on its feet. I think the publisher was worried the paper would be shut down and he could not survive. I agree with you that my

newspaper was and is critical of the government but it tried to be constructive too. When you work in a country where freedom of the press is not respected very much, you have to pick your moments – you have to know when to push against the system and when to back off.

[The applicant is then asked about the articles he submitted and describes them in detail. He demonstrates good knowledge about the topics and provides in-depth analysis of the issues facing the country with respect to the plight of women in Routania and religious oppression.]

Interview Excerpt # 2

EO: How did you come to lose your leg?

Applicant: The elections in 2008 were very violent. For the first time in years, the opposition had a strong leader and there was a good chance he could have defeated President Dubai. The Dubai people sent their thugs to break up opposition election rallies to try and intimidate the electorate. The election was won by fraud and afterwards thousands came out on the street demanding a recount. The government responded with force and hundreds of people were killed or injured. Many were arrested.

I was arrested trying to cover one of the demonstrations and taken to the prison where I was beaten with a pipe. My leg became infected but I did not get medical attention in time. I was released and I lost my left leg below the knee. I could have died.

Interview Excerpt # 3

EO: I am almost finished my questions. I want to return to your problems in 2008. My notes indicate that you stated earlier that you were detained and beaten in the prison. Is that correct?

Applicant: That's right.

EO: The statement you gave at registration states that your car was attacked by government thugs who pulled you out of the car and beat you with a pipe. There is no mention of prison on that occasion.

Applicant: They beat me by the side of the road and then they took me to the prison where I was beaten again. I don't know how that got missed in my first interview. My leg was mess. The wound would not heal. Because of the election the international press was still in the country. The authorities let me out of prison because they did not want a dead reporter to explain to the world. By then my leg had turned gangrenous.

Excerpt of Interview with Applicant's Wife

EO: How long have you been married to Anders?

Applicant's wife: Since 2005.

EO: Do you remember the elections of 2008?

Applicant's wife: Of course. Anders was arrested and spent several weeks in prison for his coverage of the way the election was stolen from the people.

EO: Do you remember what happened to him in prison?

Applicant's wife: He has been picked up a few times but if I recall correctly, he was roughed up and detained 2-3 weeks on that occasion.

EO: Did anything else happen to him?

Applicant's wife: Not in prison but that was also the year he lost his leg. It was a hard year for us because we had a new baby to care for too.

EO: How did he lose his leg?

Applicant's wife: After he was released from prison, he was mentally and physically exhausted and my family suggested we go to the farm and relax. My father farms in the Hanover Valley. We went to the farm in July. It was haying season and Anders was helping. It was good for him to be outside in the fresh air doing something completely different from journalism. But there was an accident with the new mechanical hay fork and Anders leg was injured. We rushed him to the hospital but it could not be saved.

Continuation of Interview with Applicant:

EO: I have some more questions about what happened to you in 2008. The medical report you submitted states that you were treated in the hospital in the city of Hanover.

Applicant: Yes. That's near my wife's family's farm. We went there after I was released from prison.

EO: I am trying to understand why you did not seek medical attention in the capital where you were living as soon as you were released.

Applicant: I wanted to get away. I was not in a good frame of mind.

EO: What did you do at the farm?

Applicant: I rested and I helped my father-in-law a bit. It was hay season.

EO: But you said your leg was badly infected.

Applicant: Yes, that's true.

EO: Wouldn't you wife or your father-in-law notice this?

Applicant: I was in a lot of pain but I tried to hide it from them. I did not want to worry them and, at that time, I did not realize how serious it was. I was hoping it would mend on its own.

EO: But surely your wife would have seen the injury to your leg and you indicated earlier that gangrene had set in by the time you were released from prison. I am having difficulty understanding how you managed to hide this injury from your family or that you could do physical labour. Can you explain this to me?

Applicant: [No Response]

EO: During the morning break, I had the hospital report translated and it states you lost your leg as a result of an accident with some farm machinery.. Do you know why the report says this?

Applicant: When I finally went to the doctor for treatment I lied and said it was a farm accident because I did not want any problems. Sometimes doctors don't want to get involved if the problem is political.

EO: Those are all my questions. Do you want to add anything else?

Applicant: I have a young family and I am well known to the authorities for my criticism of the government. I have been mis-treated in the past and if I go back and am put on trial, I am sure I will not get justice and I will be put in prison for many years. Please consider this. I need protection.

CASE STUDY 2: EMER

Emer (Applicant)

Examining Officer (EO)

Excerpts of First Instance Interview conducted on 16 September 2013

Interview Excerpt # 1

EO: Do you have any questions before we start?

Applicant: I don't have any questions but I want to tell you something that is not correct about my trip to Armenia. When I arrived here, the officer at the border asked me if I came through Jupiter and I told him that I did not. But that is not right. I was in Jupiter for about 4 days.

EO: What were you doing in Jupiter?

Applicant: The smuggler took me to an apartment where I waited with other people until it was time to cross the border.

EO: Did you make a refugee claim there?

Applicant: No. Jupiter has very close relations with Routania and I was afraid that I could be sent back. My family paid the smuggler to get us to Armenia.

EO: Can you explain why you did not tell the border guard about being in Jupiter?

Applicant: The smuggler warned me not to mention it or I could be sent back without being allowed to make my refugee claim. I now know that was not true.

EO: OK. Let's move on. What part did religion play in your upbringing?

Applicant: It was very important. Both parents were religious and we attended Thantu services every Saturday. I did not mind going although when I became an adult, I did not attend regularly.

EO: How did you become interested in Christianity?

Applicant: I worked in a furniture store after I finished school. I was in sales. The accountant at the store was a man named Richard. We became friends and I found out that he was Christian. I was curious about Richard's religion because I had never met a Christian before. Everyone I knew belonged to the Thantu religion. Richard was nervous about saying very much at first because that could get him in trouble but eventually he started to tell me about his faith.

EO: What attracted you to Richard's religion?

Applicant: Love. The idea that God loves you. Thantuism is very judgmental. It seems to be mainly about punishment if you break the rules --- and there are a lot of rules in Thantuism! As I learned more and more about Christianity, I felt the spirit of Jesus in my heart and I decided to convert. It was a big step because in my country conversion is illegal.

EO: How did you convert?

Applicant: Richard introduced me to the minister at his church, Pastor John, and I took instruction from him for about 18 month. When he felt I was ready, he baptized me. This was done in secret because it was dangerous for him.

EO: What was Pastor John's last name?

Applicant: I just remember him as Pastor John.

EO: Describe how you were baptized.

Applicant: I went to the church with Richard and we met the Pastor. Pastor John asked me if I accepted Jesus as my Savior and I said that I did. He took some water and blessed it and sprinkled it over my head.

EO: Did anyone else attend?

Applicant: No, just Richard and Pastor John.

EO: Are you sure about that?

Applicant: Yes – Accepting Jesus as my Lord was the most important event in my life. I remember who was there to share this occasion with me.

Interview Excerpt # 2

EO: Emer, you state that you started a home church. Could you tell me about that church?

Applicant: I could not openly attend church services. It would get me and Richard's church in trouble. But over time I met some other converts and we decided to open our own church. Since I lived alone, my home was the obvious choice. We met every Sunday evening. There were 12 to 16 people attending each week.

EO: What activities went on there on Sunday evenings?

Applicant: We read the Bible and prayed.

EO: What prayers did you say?

Applicant: The prayers were in a book that Richard gave me. I did not memorize them.

EO: Do you remember what they were about?

Applicant: They were prayers to thank God for sending his Son to us.

EO: Were there prayers about anything else?

Applicant: Not that I recall.

EO: Did you have a role in the home church?

Applicant: yes, I led a Bible Study.

EO: Describe the Bible Study program.

Applicant: I would select something in the Bible to study. I would read it to the group and we would discuss it.

EO: What did you select?

Applicant: I focused on the stories about Jesus' love.

EO: Tell me those stories.

Applicant: There are so many. It is hard to know where to begin.

EO: Well, tell me your favourite story about Jesus.

Applicant: The one about raising Lazarus from the dead is my favourite. I liked the stories about the miracles that Jesus performed.

EO: What other miracles did Jesus perform?

Applicant: There was one about loaves and fishes. The disciples went to Mary and Martha's house while Jesus was there. Mary and Martha did not have enough food for everyone's dinner so Jesus turned what they had into more bread and fish for the evening meal.

EO: According to the Bible, a multitude of people gathered on the Sea of Galilee to hear Jesus speak and he turned the loaves of bread and the fish into more food so people had enough to eat.

Applicant: Sometimes I get the stories a little confused.

EO: Do you have any other favourite parts of the Bible? Can you tell me about them?

Applicant: The story of Jesus' birth is nice.

Interview Excerpt # 3

EO: I want to ask you a few questions about the baptismal certificate you presented at registration. Could you remind me who baptized you?

Applicant: Pastor John.

EO: The baptismal certificate states that you were baptized by Pastor Luke Marchuk. Who is this person?

Applicant: (long pause before answering) He was from the head office of the church. I think he was senior pastor for the region and Pastor John assisted him.

EO: You stated earlier that only Richard attended the ceremony in addition to you and Pastor John.

Applicant: I forgot about Pastor Luke. He visited the church from head office sometimes. I don't remember him at my baptism.. I don't know why his name is on the certificate. Maybe it is because he was the senior pastor of the region.

EO: According to information I have researched, the church stopped issuing certificates of baptism to converts in 2005. Do you know how you were able to get one in 2007?

Applicant: All I know is that they gave me the certificate on the same day I was baptized. No, wait, I think maybe I got the certificate a few weeks later. I can't remember.

EO: I also note that the stamp at the bottom is irregular and is smudged. Do you know anything about that?

Applicant: (long pause before answering) No, I have nothing to say about that.