

Recent immigrant workers in Iowa's meatpacking industry

Archie Green Fellows Project, 2015-2016

Day Day interview, 2016-02-18 : interview conducted by John W. McKerley

Interview ID: afc2015026_02820

Date: February 18, 2016

Duration: 00:54:12

- 00:00:00 Introductions
- 00:00:45 Birth to Burmese refugee parents in Thai refugee camp in 1991
- 00:01:32 Life in Thai refugee camp; schooling and languages learned
- 00:02:13 Father's experience as rebel soldier in Burma; rights abuses by Burmese soldiers
- 00:03:28 Life in refugee camp; reasons for coming to US
- 00:05:13 Parents' work as farmers
- 00:09:00 Illegal work in "Thai City" (Mae Hong Son?) outside refugee camp
- 00:10:37 Parents' reasons for bringing Day Day and his brothers to US
- 00:12:26 Travel to US in June 2009
- 00:13:25 Life in Richmond, Virginia
- 00:15:00 Neighbors in Richmond
- 00:15:36 Help from local church; family's Christianity
- 00:17:33 Difficulties in high school in Richmond
- 00:19:00 Family's recruitment by North Carolina chicken plant manager
- 00:19:33 Reasons for leaving Richmond
- 00:20:30 Brothers spread out across US
- 00:21:40 Father's injury
- 00:22:00 Work in NC chicken plant

00:23:00 Knife skills carry over from experience in refugee camp

00:23:47 Work in NC chicken plant

00:24:00 NC plant workforce

00:25:20 Relationships between workers

00:28:00 Safety conditions; injury

00:30:00 Pay

00:31:20 Becomes translator in plant

00:32:45 Moves to Des Moines

00:34:30 Remittances

00:35:07 Education

00:36:45 Burmese community in Des Moines

00:38:45 Similarities and differences between pork and chicken plant work

00:39:15 Mitchellville plant population

00:39:45 Moves to Waterloo, Iowa, following friends; relatively large Burmese population in Waterloo

00:40:55 Joins union (UFCW Local 431) at Tyson pork plant in Waterloo

00:42:00 Value of equality

00:42:50 Asking questions of union; likes union's "story"

00:43:15 Becomes union steward

00:44:10 Line speed and workplace injuries

00:47:17 Working together across ethnic/racial lines in plant

00:49:09 Finds personal inspiration in story of Martin Luther King, Jr.

00:51:19 Hopes for the future in both US and Burma