

Basic Detail Report

Title Interview with Bubly

Date 12 March 2026

Medium born digital audio file

Description .1 Audio file of interview with Bubly. He was interviewed by

Emmanuel Gezahegne Mitikie on March 12, 2026 in Hartford, Connecticut. .2

Audio file of interview with Bubly. He was interviewed by Emmanuel Gezahegne

Mitikie on March 29, 2026 in Hartford, Connecticut. Bubly was interviewed as

part of the Connecticut Museum of Culture and History's Community History

Project discussing moments of change in his life. .1 Bubly briefly introduces

himself, mentioning his origins in Babylon, Iraq, his age, and his current status

as a student in Hartford, Connecticut. Bubly recounts his early years in Iraq, his

first experiences with travel, and his love for exploring new areas. He describes

his journey to Germany for school, a gap year filled with travel, and subsequent

moves to the US for college. Bubly reflects on the value of local exploration

versus international travel, noting how familiarity with one's own country can

surpass that of locals. He discusses prejudices between cities, the importance of

learning about nearby places, and draws parallels between travel and

pilgrimage. The spiritual and transformative aspects of journeying, whether for

religious or personal reasons, are explored, emphasizing the significance of the

journey itself rather than the destination. Bubly identifies his bike trip from

Germany to Iraq as the most significant change in his life. He describes the

motivations behind the journey, including the unique opportunity presented by

Basic Detail Report

his residency status during Covid, and the sense of responsibility to undertake

the trip. The experience provided profound insights into geography, culture, and

his own identity, marking a clear before-and-after in his personal development.

Bubly reflects on the constructed nature of borders, the intimacy of

experiencing distances physically, and the gradual transitions between

landscapes and cultures. He discusses how the journey's difficulty parallels

pilgrimage, and how the physical challenge fosters appreciation, awareness,

and a deeper connection to the places and people encountered. The journey

fostered a deeper empathy and tolerance for others, as he witnessed diverse

ways of life and recognized the influence of environment on people's

perspectives and behaviors. Bubly shares his observations on cultural

differences and similarities across Iraq, Germany, and the US. He notes that

people are fundamentally similar in their desires and ways of life, but highlights

differences in social categorization and friendship dynamics. The conversation

shifts to Bubly's passion for coffee. He explains his love for coffee's taste, the

anticipation it brings, and its role in fostering community and conversation. The

interviewer connects this to the pace of life in the US versus Germany, with

Bubly noting the faster, more pressured environment in the US and the value of

slowing down to appreciate experiences and connections. Bubly compares the

impact of his international school experience in Germany with his travels. He

distinguishes between logical learning and emotional internalization, stating

that school taught him tolerance intellectually, while travel allowed him to

deeply empathize and imagine life from others' perspectives. This openness to

Basic Detail Report

possibilities enhances creativity and understanding in all aspects of life. Bubly

provides examples of shared spaces in Iraq and Germany, such as street-side

gatherings, cafes, riversides, plazas, and lakes. He emphasizes the importance of

accessible, open spaces for fostering community and social interaction,

contrasting these environments with Hartford, where such spaces are less

prevalent and often have financial barriers. Bubly discusses his academic life at

Trinity College, noting the mental separation between the college and the city of

Hartford. He describes the privilege and isolation of the campus, the lack of

integration with the city, and how this affects his sense of community and

belonging. The experience has made him miss more livable, interconnected

places where diverse people can easily interact. He identifies structural barriers,

such as legal restrictions and differences in opportunity, that hinder integration

between international and domestic students. Bubly reflects on his evolving

sense of home, acknowledging that while Iraq remains his cultural and

emotional anchor, his relationship with home has become more complex due to

his global experiences. He describes how caring for people and places outside

Iraq has broadened his perspective, but his definition of home has become

sharper, rooted in cultural belonging and responsibility. As the interview

concludes, Bubly reflects on his future aspirations, expressing a desire to

continue traveling, contribute to Iraq, and build businesses that ground him in

his home country. He acknowledges the privilege and responsibility of his

experiences and shares a message to his future self, urging him to retain the

openness and imagination of childhood. .2 Bubly begins by reflecting on how

Basic Detail Report

travel has been a source of mental clarity, direction, and self-discovery. He describes an innate urge to explore new places. This desire to see new things and meet new people has been a consistent motivator, shaping his approach to life and learning. The discussion shifts to the decision to leave Iraq at age 17 to study in Germany. Bubly explains his attraction to the International Baccalaureate program and the opportunity to expand his world by meeting people from diverse backgrounds. Upon arriving in Germany in 2018, he faced difficulties related to prejudice and assumptions about Iraqis, especially in the context of the recent refugee crisis. Bubly describes experiencing imposter syndrome, feeling less capable than peers from other countries, and the need to challenge both external stereotypes and internalized beliefs. The school environment, with its international mix and supportive staff, provided space for growth and adaptation, but the process of overcoming assumptions was ongoing and complex. Bubly compares the necessity of having clearly defined opinions in Germany and the US with the more fluid and open-ended approach in Iraq. He recounts a pivotal experience applying for a leadership program in Canada, which helped him realize that his sense of inferiority was unfounded. This internal transformation led to greater confidence and the ability to more effectively challenge stereotypes and assumptions in others, highlighting the importance of self-acceptance in navigating cross-cultural environments. The conversation shifts to Bubly's ambitious bike trip from Germany to Iraq, undertaken during a gap year. He discussed the initial lack of a fixed timeline, the challenges of securing visas with an Iraqi passport, and how the COVID-19

Basic Detail Report

pandemic unexpectedly enabled the journey by extending his German

residency. The decision to embark on the trip was driven by a sense of

opportunity and personal responsibility, with the pandemic's disruptions

providing the final push to set out. Bubly describes the practical aspects of the

bike trip, including minimal pre-planning, daily navigation, and the freedom of

camping. He relied on a mix of camping, staying with friends, couchsurfing, and

the hospitality of strangers. Food and money were managed through a tight

budget and a fundraising campaign, with support from his school community.

The journey was physically demanding, especially in the first month, but

became more manageable over time. Despite the challenges, Bubly never felt

lonely, finding excitement and rejuvenation in the constant movement and new

experiences. Bubly recounts the countries traversed—Germany, France, Czech

Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, and finally

Iraq—highlighting the fluidity of plans due to COVID-19 and border closures.

Bubly met many wonderful people on his trip. Memorable border-crossing

experiences included skepticism from officials, especially with an Iraqi passport,

as well as humorous or challenging interactions. The approach to Iraq was

marked by surprise and curiosity from border guards, culminating in a warm and

memorable welcome upon arrival in his home country. The interview concludes

with reflections on the transformative nature of the journey, likening it to a

pilgrimage that fundamentally changed Bubly's sense of self and understanding

of the world. The slow pace of travel by bicycle fostered a deeper appreciation of

distance, culture, and the interconnectedness of places. The experience

Basic Detail Report

provided insights into societal development, empathy, and the importance of

the journey itself, not just the destination. Bubly expresses a desire to undertake

another such journey in the future.

Dimensions Duration: 1 Hours, 40 Minutes