

## INTERVIEW OF PEACE NYAHE

INTERVIEWERS: RICK SZUR and JESS HUFFMAN

JULY 2024

**0:00:02.6 Jess Huffman:** Okay, so we're recording. So we are at the Thelma Hulbert Gallery, and we're doing an interview today with Peace Nyahe. We've got interviewers, Ursula Monn and Rick Szur, and I'm Jess Huffman, the project coordinator. The date is Wednesday, 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024. So, we're going to ask Rick to start with the first question for Peace.

**0:00:32.6 Rick Szur:** Hi, Peace. I'm going to start at the beginning, sort of, in a way. When did you arrive in the UK?

0:00:41.5 Peace Nyahe: I arrived in 2018 on 18<sup>th</sup> April.

**0:00:49.9 Rick Szur:** Was it a cold day, or a warm day?

0:00:52.2 Peace Nyahe: It was supposed to be a warm day, but to me it was really cold. Freezing, actually.

**0:01:00.1 Rick Szur:** Where did you come from?

0:01:03.5 Peace Nyahe: I come from Ghana. My home town is called Amedzofe. It is the highest human settlement in Ghana.

**0:01:14.4 Rick Szur:** Oh, really? So it's a mountain?

0:01:17.1 Peace Nyahe: It is on a mountain top, and it gets cold also, so we call it small London, actually.

**0:01:28.5 Rick Szur:** So did you fly to England?

0:01:30.2 Peace Nyahe: Yes, I did, I flew.

**0:01:32.2 Rick Szur: You flew from Ghana?**

0:01:33.8 Peace Nyahe: Ghana to Turkey, and then to England.

**0:01:41.5 Rick Szur: How long did it take to get here?**

0:01:46.5 Peace Nyahe: Let's say, I left home at 10:30, we changed in the morning at 7:00 at Istanbul, and we arrived here 9:30 in the morning.

**0:02:00.7 Rick Szur: So, what brought you to the UK?**

0:02:04.4 Peace Nyahe: I got married to someone around here, and I had to relocate to him here. He's from Romania.

**0:02:14.5 Rick Szur: He lives in...? No.**

0:02:16.2 Peace Nyahe: No. We lived in the North, Cumbria, but he's no longer in England. He's back in Romania.

**0:02:30.0 Rick Szur: I suppose the big question is, what was it like to leave your family and friends and country?**

0:02:38.0 Peace Nyahe: Well, to be honest, I didn't feel it at first, because, to me, it was an exciting thing for me to move from home, actually, but when I got here, it was then I started missing home, because back in the northern part people were not so friendly. Most people - I wouldn't say everybody - most people were not so friendly, so it made me miss home, my kids. I'm like, 'Did I make the right choice of coming here?' and all that, but I got support from this lovely lady. Her name is Sarah, my cousin's wife. She was amazing. She was always supporting me emotionally, physically, and mentally, to be honest. She was lovely. Yes, with her help I was able to go through some things.

**0:03:27.0 Rick Szur: So that was when you were living up in Cumbria?**

0:03:29.4 Peace Nyahe: Cumbria, yes.

**0:03:32.9 Rick Szur: How long did you stay in Cumbria?**

0:03:35.6 Peace Nyahe: About a year.

**0:03:42.6 Rick Szur: You said some of it was difficult living in Cumbria, but what were your feelings about it as a place? It must have been quite different to anything you...**

0:03:56.1 Peace Nyahe: Yes, it's different, like totally different, compared to back home it's more laid back, and more sunny and lovely. It's lovely around here also, but the way that the cold... I arrived here, before wearing bikinis and things, and I was in a jacket. What else? Most people were amazing, to be honest, except when I got a job in this Turkish takeaway, and the people in that takeaway were also not really nice. I felt used, to be honest. I felt used. I didn't know I was being used at that time, because I didn't know much about England. I didn't know much about my rights, and all that, so it was quite difficult, and settling in there was really difficult for me.

**0:04:56.7 Rick Szur: What would you say your expectations were before you came to the UK?**

0:05:02.0 Peace Nyahe: Well, I thought it was heaven, to be honest, because I've never travelled anywhere outside Ghana, so I thought I was coming to a crime-free, or like... Yes, I thought it was heaven, but then when I arrived here, and when I'm listening to the news, there's always stabbing, acid, and all that, and I'm like, 'What, even in England?' Because in Ghana I don't really hear about things like that, like stabbing, and loads of people committing suicide, and all that. So it was like, oh, even here it happens. Then people talk about poverty, and I'm like, I don't get it; why are they talking about poverty? To me, it's not poverty to me, because back home it's worse. So when people talk about poverty here, I'm like, why are they saying it's poverty? You're not starving. You are just hungry. Go and get

some food. But back home, someone is really starving, and you know the person is starving, they don't even get what to eat, but here, I don't think they are starving. They are just hungry.

**0:06:21.1 Rick Szur: So where you lived in Ghana, would you say - it's up in the mountains - it's rural, it's the countryside, sort of thing?**

0:06:30.7 Peace Nyahe: Yes. I grew up there, but then because my mum is a nurse, we - I had my early years back there, but then when I was in high school I came to a bigger city, so we moved from there to another bigger city, so it's not like I lived in my village. I go there occasionally for celebrations and funerals and things, but I didn't live there after I was 16.

**0:07:02.6 Rick Szur: What did you feel was - the cities in Ghana, do they feel safer?**

0:07:10.9 Peace Nyahe: Oh, yes, they did feel safe to me, because I grew up in a residential area. My mum is a nurse, and we lived in the hospital bungalows, so it's not like we lived where most people lived, so for me, it was comfortable and it was okay. The people we made friends with, there's nurses, doctors, and all that, so to be honest, it was okay for me, but life is not easy there, to be honest.

**0:07:40.5 Rick Szur: In Ghana?**

0:07:40.9 Peace Nyahe: In Ghana it's not easy.

**0:07:44.7 Rick Szur: I've got a couple more questions.**

0:07:45.9 Peace Nyahe: Yes, go for it.

**0:07:47.7 Rick Szur: So, obviously, there's a British connection with Ghana, in the sense that it was a colony, wasn't it?**

0:07:55.7 Peace Nyahe: Yes, we were colonised by the British.

**0:08:06.3 Rick Szur: Were you aware growing up of that connection?**

0:08:11.3 Peace Nyahe: Not really. I wasn't, because no one told me stories about what happened, but when we were in school, we do social studies and things, and a little bit of history and things. We know we were colonised by the British and how it happened and all that, but to be honest, I didn't put my mind on stuff like that.

**0:08:30.7 Rick Szur: So it's not something that's particularly talked about. I mean, Ghana is in the Commonwealth and so on, but it's not a part of...**

0:08:39.8 Peace Nyahe: No, it's not.

**0:08:40.3 Rick Szur: Oh, that's interesting. How old were you when you first learnt English? Did you have to learn it, in a sense, or was it spoken quite a bit?**

0:08:52.8 Peace Nyahe: So English, you start from an early age. Most people speak English with their kids the moment they are born, actually, but when you go to school, like from two - because we go to kindergarten, and from there they start speaking English to you.

**0:09:13.6 Rick Szur: Your mother tongue, though, is Guan, is that right?**

0:09:18.1 Peace Nyahe: Yes, it is Guan, Avatime.

**0:09:21.3 Rick Szur: Is that the language your parents would teach you?**

0:09:26.3 Peace Nyahe: Yes, my parents spoke it to me.

**0:09:27.9 Rick Szur: So that was like your first language, is it?**

0:09:30.1 Peace Nyahe: Yes, it was.

**0:09:30.9 Rick Szur: English was second.**

0:09:34.2 Peace Nyahe: Yes. English has really dominated. In my country, it has dominated a lot, so it's not like a second.

**0:09:47.4 Ursula Monn: The other languages you mentioned, were they like tribal variations?**

0:09:54.1 Peace Nyahe: Yes, they were tribal, and we speak 80 languages in Ghana.

**0:10:00.0 Ursula Monn: Eighty?**

0:10:01.0 Peace Nyahe: Yes, 80. There are so many tribes, but I don't speak all.

**0:10:09.6 Jess Huffman: But you speak quite a few.**

0:10:10.4 Peace Nyahe: I speak a few, yes.

**0:10:12.1 Jess Huffman: Which are the tribal languages that you speak?**

0:10:14.4 Peace Nyahe: So I speak Twi, I speak Guan, I speak Avatime, and I speak Ewe, and then English, obviously.

**0:10:21.3 Jess Huffman: Five languages.**

**0:10:23.3 Rick Szur: Now, are they different to Guan, those languages?**

0:10:27.4 Peace Nyahe: Yes, they are.

**0:10:27.7 Rick Szur: What, very?**

0:10:28.5 Peace Nyahe: They are.

**0:10:29.3 Rick Szur: They're not like dialects of them; they're different languages.**

0:10:32.1 Peace Nyahe: Yes, they are all different.

**0:10:34.1 Rick Szur: That's amazing. How did you pick them up?**

0:10:40.0 Peace Nyahe: So in my home town we speak - we have seven towns that speak the same language, and then from there, when we moved to another city, that's also a different language, so I picked it up from there as well. I just keep going on like that, actually.

**0:11:03.1 Ursula Monn: Did you need to learn these languages just to go about your work, for your work, or was it just that you wanted to communicate with people in the...?**

0:11:14.2 Peace Nyahe: Yes, it was just to communicate with people, but there's one that you are meant to do in school, actually. It's like elective languages, so you choose whichever you want to do, and then you do it. I think there are three Ghanian languages that you have to choose in school. You choose one of them and then you do it. You choose whichever you want.

**0:11:42.0 Rick Szur: Which one did you choose, then?**

0:11:43.3 Peace Nyahe: I chose Ewe.

**0:11:46.4 Jess Huffman: What was it about that language that you liked?**

0:11:49.1 Peace Nyahe: It's because I'm from that region, and there's this competition between tribes and things in my country, so it's like when you're from a region, we want to dominate the other region, because most people think, oh we are better than those people, and they also think they are better than the others. So my daughter, because she went to a bigger city - her city that she grew up in is quite bigger than mine, so she chose a different language, because it's her dad's language, so that's how she learnt her dad's language.

**0:12:33.9 Jess Huffman: I was just going to ask a question that takes us back to your first experiences of being in England when you were in Cumbria. I think you touched**

**on this when we spoke before, and it was there that you first experienced racism, which you hadn't experienced anything like that before. Do you mind sharing a little bit of that with us?**

0:12:57.5 Peace Nyahe: Yes, so I was working in this Turkish takeaway, and obviously the man, the owner's brother, was really rude, and he was so unfriendly in the first place, but when it's busy, we are all supposed to serve and all that. So, someone came to buy something, and she saw me, and she was like, 'I don't want her to serve me.' They were like, 'Why?' and it's like, 'Because she's black.' I said, 'What makes you think you're better than I am?' and then she kept quiet. She didn't really say anything. So, since then I was sent to the back to answer the phone calls and maybe do dishes and whatever, because to them, they thought I might send away their customers, and they didn't really pay me much. I had to beg for my wage to be paid before they paid me. I remember one day my cousin's wife had to drive to that place to cause a scene for them to pay me. It was that horrible, and my husband and I, when we go out, they stare a lot. They're like, 'Who are they?' I remember, I walked past someone's lawn, and this guy came out, and he was so scary. He was like, 'You don't walk on my lawn!' I'm like, 'Sorry.' He was like, 'No, not sorry. Don't walk there again.' It was crazy. It was so scary, but then, anyway, it's okay.

**0:14:27.5 Jess Huffman: I guess it's not anything you'd experienced back home.**

0:14:30.2 Peace Nyahe: No, it isn't, because back home - the buildings and things are not like back home. You could just get out of your house and have a chat with your neighbour, and most people, you share the compound with other people. Your kids play together, and all that. You don't have to go to the park to play with other children, and all that, so it's different. No one ever do that you back home.

**0:15:00.3 Jess Huffman: So it felt very territorial here, in terms of the space and who it belonged to.**

0:15:03.1 Peace Nyahe: Yes, very. Very.

**0:15:06.5 Jess Huffman: That's really interesting.**



**0:15:09.9 Rick Szur: Is there immigration in Ghana?**

0:15:14.1 Peace Nyahe: Yes.

**0:15:15.0 Rick Szur: Do you have in Ghana immigrants from other African countries?**

0:15:20.1 Peace Nyahe: Yes, loads. We've got Chinese, Indian, Romanian. We've got a lot, to be honest. I think Chinese are really taking over now, because they've got lots of businesses, and Indian also.

**0:15:36.5 Ursula Monn: How are they received in Ghana? Would you say they are just being made feel welcome?**

0:15:41.1 Peace Nyahe: They are free. Yes, they are free there, to be honest. They are really free. No one is disturbing them. I think most of them are getting married just to stay there. Yes, they are getting married to the native of Ghana just to stay.

**0:15:58.7 Jess Huffman: So you stayed in Cumbria for about a year. What was it that brought you to Honiton?**

0:16:04.7 Peace Nyahe: So I got a job. I got a live-in care job, and I was posted to look after this amazing woman, actually. Then I saw this amazing family that really took me in. They were so friendly, and very accommodating. I've been to other clients before coming to Honiton, but the way they received me was different. It felt like I was back home. I see them like African. I don't see myself different around them at all. So I thought about it. I'm like, why don't I rather stay with this person instead, look after her, be her regular carer, and have fun with her family? So that's where it started, to be honest. The girls in the family, oh, my God, they are so amazing! They are so amazing.

**0:17:05.0 Ursula Monn: Did they introduce you to their friends, and was that, as well, a really easy way to get in, or...?**

0:17:10.2 Peace Nyahe: Yes, they did. They always take me out to visit their friends, with parties, weddings and things. So yes, I've been to most of their friends'. Actually, I know most of their friends now. I am like a family member.

**0:17:28.7 Jess Huffman: I think they've adopted you. You're more like a sister now.**

0:17:30.7 Peace Nyahe: They have. To be honest, they have adopted me. They always say, 'Welcome home,' when I'm back from holiday.

**0:17:45.0 Ursula Monn: In terms of your work here, do you feel you're being welcomed and included, or are there experiences that are more racist?**

0:17:57.5 Peace Nyahe: Do you mean like in Honiton?

**0:17:59.1 Ursula Monn: Yes, in Honiton.**

0:17:59.6 Peace Nyahe: Oh, yes, I feel very included. I feel very welcomed here. I would like to settle here sometime in the future. Even if not now, I would like to own a property and live here sometime.

**0:18:16.3 Ursula Monn: You mentioned about maybe bringing your children, or your teenage children?**

0:18:20.8 Peace Nyahe: Yes, I would love to. Yes, I want to bring them here to settle.

**0:18:26.4 Ursula Monn: How much support are you being given in the process of bringing them over?**

0:18:33.5 Peace Nyahe: None. It's quite difficult with immigration around here. I always say, 'Why is it so easy for people from here to just get into my country, but then it is so difficult for us to come here?' It's something I keep asking until now, and I haven't got answer to. It is really easy for anybody from here to just come, but it's not easy - I think maybe it's because it's a rich country.

**0:19:11.0 Jess Huffman: What has coming here and being able to work in England enabled you to do that you wouldn't have been able to do in Ghana?**

0:19:20.3 Peace Nyahe: Ooh, that's a big one. So, coming to England has really changed my life, to be honest. I was actually a seamstress back at home. I had my little shop where I do my magic and things, but coming here, because the pound is so high, when you convert it into my currency it's quite a huge sum of money, I'm able to build a house for my mum now, and my kids are in better schools. They are in boarding schools, to be honest, and I'm still able to give out to some people. I look after some people, my siblings. When they ask I'm able to give them, but previously, back home, I'm not able to. When they ask me, I just give an excuse, because I didn't have it, but now when they ask, I'm able to do it, which is like I'm lucky to be able to give out.

**0:20:19.0 Jess Huffman: You're the first generation that's lived here in England.**

0:20:22.3 Peace Nyahe: Yes.

**0:20:22.4 Jess Huffman: I know that you've got cousins that live in London and elsewhere.**

0:20:25.2 Peace Nyahe: Yes.

**0:20:26.0 Jess Huffman: But how did your family feel about you coming here?**

0:20:29.4 Peace Nyahe: Oh, my God. So, before I came here, there was this - I don't know if you say it's a war or what - before I came here. So, because I got married, and I knew my husband through one of my cousins that lives here, it became like, 'Oh, why did you have to catch your cousin a man, while your sister is there? Your sister would have been the one to travel,' and all that. If I'd stayed back home, maybe it would have been worse. So when I left, it's better, because I don't get to listen to whatever they have to say again. I hear it on the phone what they say, but I don't have to deal with them. It was some of kind of jealousy

and all that, why did it have to be me that travelled, but they forget that there's something called luck, actually. It was my luck. Anyway, I forgive them.

**0:21:30.5 Jess Huffman: So it enabled you also to have independence from your family, who might have otherwise told you what to do.**

0:21:38.5 Peace Nyahe: Yes.

**0:21:41.1 Ursula Monn: What are the things, when you think back to your childhood in Ghana, what are the things that most stand out for you in terms of - it could be anything, the colours, the music, whatever - what comes to mind?**

0:21:54.1 Peace Nyahe: Oh, the music, yes. The food, the music. Yes, food.

**0:22:00.9 Jess Huffman: Peace is an amazing cook. So tell us about the food in Ghana. What is it that inspired you to grow up to be a cook?**

0:22:10.3 Peace Nyahe: So my mum loved cooking. She loves cooking. She spends the whole time in the kitchen. Especially if there's an occasion, she won't leave the kitchen. She won't dress nicely to go out and do what people are doing. She wants to stay in the kitchen, cook, serve, cook, serve. That's all she does, so maybe I've picked it up from her, because she loves cooking.

**0:22:33.5 Jess Huffman: Tell us about some of the traditional dishes and ingredients from Ghana.**

0:22:37.6 Peace Nyahe: Okay, I'll talk about my home town, because we do celebrate rice festival, and during that festival we make different kinds of snacks out of rice, and we make - there's something, I think you call it pudding - we do a biscuit also out of rice. I don't know how to call them in English, actually. We do quite a lot of variety out of rice, because on that day, most people get married. So there's this tradition that goes on in my mountain of seven towns that speak the same languages. It's called Kusakokor. It means the puberty right. So that puberty right used to be, before age 18, you will be introduced to womanhood, but now,

because things are so costly, it doesn't matter what age you are. People do it at 50, people do it at 30, people do it at whatever. So you just tell your parents that you're ready. Then there's this fabric that has only been designed for the ladies in my home town. Nobody - when you leave those seven towns, you won't find it anywhere else. So those two types of clothes have been designed for those ladies that are in puberty.

0:24:04.4 So, previously, it used to be like when it's your puberty right, they're going to line up all the girls, the growing girls in the market square, and the men will choose from whichever they want, which means I'm grown up now and I'm ready for marriage. Now it's not like that. Most people do their weddings on that day as well. So with puberty right, it only cuts the cost for most people, because the puberty right, even if you do it now or when you die, they are going to do it for you before you'll be buried. So people always say, 'Why not do it while you are alive?' On that day you're going to dress nicely, hold that fabric. It's going to be a three-day occasion. Most start on Thursday to Saturday, and then Sunday is Thanksgiving. Now they put it into like this religious way. It used to be like traditional, but now it's religious. So with that fabric, on the first day you're going to wear the green fabric with your nicely-made African clothes and things, put on loads of beads around your neck, around your arms, and all that, and people are going to sing and dance and take you all around the town, with music and dance and drinking and eating.

0:25:27.5 So most people that are ready to get married, their husbands come out, and then do present the necessary items that are meant for you to bring on your marriage day, because they give you a list. In my home town, when you are ready to get married, they are going to give the man a list of items you have to buy. Yes, like a whole list of items, part one, part two, part three, part four, to I think part seven. Then you have to buy all those things. So when you've finished buying all those things, then you're going to present them. Most of them are for the woman. They came up with that in the sense that most of the things that are for the woman sometimes when you're able to afford those things. When a baby comes, you will not be able to look after the woman properly anymore, so the lady will go back into that luggage and start sewing those things for herself. Then you have to give your in-laws, you have to give your - most people, I have to be honest. So people, because they want to cut their costs, they want to do it with that at once, so you don't have to cook plenty, like on your wedding day you have to cook again. So they do it all at once. I wish you could witness it one day. It's lovely.

0:26:46.2 Then they will take you to maybe the man's house, with music and dance. That is the first day that they are going to take you to the man's house, and then they will take you to the kitchen. They give you a stool, you sit down on the stool, and then you pretend you are cooking, which means it is your territory, and any other woman that comes there, you are allowed to send her away, because you are the woman of the house, and that kitchen is only meant for you, the woman, to cook. The man is supposed to put some money into a calabash. Do you know what a calabash is?

**0:27:23.6 Jess Huffman: Yes.**

0:27:25.3 Peace Nyahe: It's a traditional - now you have glasses and cups - it used to be this - it's just a fruit, but you take out the seeds and things from it, and then it becomes something very open. We used to drink in it, drink water and all sorts of things in it. So you put coins in it with water, and then the eldest person in the family will say some nice things to it, and then they'll pour it on the floor for the woman to pick up the money, which means riches and everything will come your way. So it's the whole tradition and things that happen for four days. It's lovely, amazing.

**0:28:08.4 Rick Szur: Does it happen on a specific date each year?**

0:28:11.7 Peace Nyahe: Every year.

**0:28:12.4 Rick Szur: But on a specific month or...?**

0:28:15.5 Peace Nyahe: So with the rice festival, it happens in October, but most people do theirs also on Easter, so whichever month it comes, or whichever day they do it on Easter, and you see these lovely ladies; many ladies. You ask yourself, 'Are all these people from my village?' and there are so many.

**0:28:37.4 Rick Szur: You say that the ages can be quite different?**

0:28:40.9 Peace Nyahe: Yes. Now it is, but previously, it didn't used to be.

**0:28:45.1 Rick Szur: It would be for young women.**

0:28:46.6 Peace Nyahe: Yes, before you were 18 you were supposed to do that.

**0:28:52.3 Rick Szur: Do women only do it, or girls still do it?**

0:28:56.9 Peace Nyahe: So like me, my daughter, she's 17 now. I'm planning on doing it for her before she's 18, or maybe by 18. My mum is putting it off, but I started buying the items for her, because the mother is supposed to do it for the child.

**0:29:13.8 Rick Szur: Does the child need to have a fiancé already?**

0:29:19.8 Peace Nyahe: No, it doesn't matter. Now it doesn't.

**0:29:23.5 Rick Szur: So it's just a - as you say, puberty [over speaking 0:29:25.7].**

0:29:26.4 Peace Nyahe: Yes.

**0:29:29.0 Rick Szur: How does that link - because one of the questions here was going to be about faith, so the faith that you have in Ghana.**

0:29:38.6 Peace Nyahe: So, previously, with the puberty right, it used to be everything used to be traditional, but now it has become religious, so like the fabrics, on Friday night, that we call bachelor's night, where every young person in that village will come together, drink, eat, and do whatever they want to do, that night is when a pastor is going to bless all those fabrics. They are going to pray over all of them for you. I've got mine. I don't have to use them. So I have to use them any time I'm back home for another person's puberty right. So you see many people holding that same fabric, so if you're not holding it, it means you didn't do it. So you will be buried with that fabric as well. You're going with it.

**0:30:31.0 Rick Szur: So the religion you have there, it's Christian?**

0:30:33.8 Peace Nyahe: Oh, yes, we are Christians.

**0:30:36.0 Rick Szur: These rights are all part of that?**

0:30:38.8 Peace Nyahe: Yes, everything. So we go for Thanksgiving in church on Sunday, with all the ladies lining up, sitting at the same place, with beads all around their necks. It's amazing.

**0:30:53.7 Rick Szur: One of the things I noticed, you did quite a bit of training I think, partly with your mother was it, about sewing?**

0:31:01.0 Peace Nyahe: Oh, yes. So when I was - do you call it college year?

**0:31:04.1 Jess Huffman: Yes.**

0:31:04.7 Peace Nyahe: Yes, so when I was in college, I did clothing and textiles. I was good with needlework and all that back in school, but then I chose to do - because before you go to college you choose which course you're going to do. So I chose to do clothing and textiles, and I realised that I did so well, my grades were so good with clothing and textiles, so I told my mum that I would rather pay for three years to do it, learn it completely. So that's what I did, I learnt it, and then I had my own shop and started sewing for people for money.

**0:31:39.6 Rick Szur: One of the things I was thinking, just to follow on from that, was that you know all these traditions, and you really know so much about them, and I just wondered if you felt that there were any things that you would like to show about your tradition, say, here in Honiton. I don't know if there's any way that you could think, because it's so interesting, so fascinating.**

0:32:03.9 Peace Nyahe: No, I don't have anything here in Honiton.

**0:32:05.8 Jess Huffman: You have made some beautiful clothes for family and friends here.**



0:32:09.7 Peace Nyahe: Oh, yes, I have.

**0:32:11.8 Jess Huffman: In the traditional fabrics, and some of them in the traditional styles.**

0:32:16.6 Peace Nyahe: Yes.

**0:32:18.1 Ursula Monn: Would that be a business idea, maybe, for the future?**

0:32:21.0 Peace Nyahe: Yes.

**0:32:22.6 Ursula Monn: We're hoping.**

0:32:24.0 Peace Nyahe: So when I got here, Burberry - I don't know if you know this company, Burberry - I got an opportunity to work there as a - I went for my interview, I sat by the sewing machine and all that, and then I didn't even get home before they called me and said that I've got the job, but their wage was way, way too small, so I didn't, but then I realised that people have really forgotten about sewing, mending their own things, around here. So I hope in the future, what I want to do, because I love kids as well, so I'm planning on having a space, like it would be childminding, and at the same time me teaching them needlework and all that. It's something I have in mind that I want to do.

**0:33:16.2 Ursula Monn: Would you import beautiful material from Ghana? Would that be part of what you might be able to do?**

0:33:23.4 Peace Nyahe: Yes, if that would be possible. If the shipment and things are not too expensive, it's something I would like to do, because actually I did work for a company back in Ghana, a US-based citizen, that opened this sewing business for only ladies back where I was, and we were making clothes and things. They were shipping to the US, and I have quite a little bit of experience in things like that. Yes, I think I would like to do that. I'm sure if I contact that lady, she might even want to start with me again here, and we'd be doing it together.

**0:34:16.2 Jess Huffman: I was going to go back to asking you a few more questions about festivals and events, because I know you've talked before about the role of music and how - you've been to a wedding here in England - how did it compare to a wedding in Ghana? What's different about them? Because, obviously, religiously, there's lots of similarities, but then it sounds like you also have lots of the traditional elements that are sort of pre-Christian that are part of those.**

0:34:54.7 Peace Nyahe: Yes, we have white wedding, as well, back in Ghana, and then we have our traditional. So you call it engagement here, but for us, it's like a big deal. That engagement day, it's not just you and the man going to put a ring on your finger and that's it, because like I said, there's going to be list of things that the man has to do. We have part one, part two, part three, and all that. So, with the part one, it's like when you're dating, and then you're sure that you want to be together, you are going with drinks to let the parents know that, when they are looking for their child, she's with you. That's like part one. We call it knocking at the door. Yes, we call it knocking. So, from there, when you're really certain that you want to marry the lady, then you go to part two, and then until you get to the engagement day. The engagement day, it's a traditional marriage. So after that, if you do not want to do it then, the white wedding, it's up to you. It is considered marriage in my country.

0:36:04.2 So on the engagement day, you're going to invite all your friends, your family, both close and extended, and there's going to be a lot of people there. That is when they are going to put the ring on your finger. It's going to be like a whole-day occasion. That's with drinks, eating, and the whole thing, so most people prefer to do it together now, so after they put on the engagement ring, they just go and change clothes and come and do their white wedding. They might invite someone from their church, a pastor, to come and bless the wedding ring. From there, then they'll go themselves to sign at the courthouse. So they do it all now together, but previously - most people still do it in the way the engagement day is different from the wedding day, the white wedding day, because most people want to go to the church service and do it; kneel down before the priest and all that. So it varies with everybody.

**0:37:04.5 Jess Huffman: The same way it varies here.**

0:37:06.0 Peace Nyahe: Yes.

**0:37:07.4 Jess Huffman: There's lots of dancing involved.**

0:37:09.5 Peace Nyahe: Oh, yes, there is.

**0:37:09.9 Jess Huffman: I've seen a video.**

0:37:11.2 Peace Nyahe: Loads. Loads of dancing, and now it has become a competition. The engagement has become a competition, what you wear. You see this fabric that we call kente, it's colourful things, and most are expensive. Some are very, very expensive, and if you do not afford it on your wedding day, then they don't know when you're going to afford it. So they have made it a competition, actually. Engagements have become a competition in my home. Then, on the engagement day, around here I notice that the guests bring stuff for the bride and the groom. It happens in my country as well, but then on the engagement day, people that witnessed your engagement, you're supposed to give them something. So it doesn't matter how many people have been on your engagement day, people come out and they do the smile with the photos, people do baskets with the photos, people do buckets with their photos and things, and they give it out and say, 'Thank you for coming. Thank you for coming.' It's crazy.

**0:38:30.9 Jess Huffman: So weddings, it's a big event.**

0:38:33.7 Peace Nyahe: It is a big thing.

**0:38:34.3 Jess Huffman: Yes, and very competitive.**

0:38:36.5 Peace Nyahe: They always tell you it's a once-in-a-lifetime thing, so they want to celebrate and spend.

**0:38:44.0 Ursula Monn: So what happens if you no longer - I mean, if you don't continue the marriage, is there something like divorce?**

0:38:52.3 Peace Nyahe: Oh, yes, people get divorced.

**0:38:53.2 Ursula Monn: How is that marked?**

0:38:57.8 Peace Nyahe: So in my country it's a bit different, because people are so keen about tradition, tradition, so before you leave your marriage, it's a bit difficult to leave your marriage. They will give you examples of how your mum and your granny stayed with their husbands, and all that, so you'll be like... [sighs] You have to respect your husband, no matter what. He's right, he's the head of the family, and all that. Most people are coming out of it bit-by-bit, but it's still there. The man is always right in the house, actually.

**0:39:42.1 Jess Huffman: I was going to ask, because you've touched on it a little bit, and it sounds like - I don't know if this is personal to you, but the roles of women and men in the home are quite distinctive, and maybe you would say traditional.**

0:39:57.9 Peace Nyahe: You mean like chores and things?

**0:39:59.5 Jess Huffman: Yes.**

0:40:01.5 Peace Nyahe: Yes, everybody does something in the house. So, if you're not doing something, then, 'Why aren't you doing anything?' Yes, so boys and girls are thought to do the same thing every time, but previously, women are always doing the house chores and everything, but now when you have your child, you want your child to be able to - they always say, 'If you don't train your child properly, especially boys, how will they treat their wives?' and all that. So they always make sure they are able to cook, they are able to do things for themselves, so they share equal rights in the house. They share the chores, and weekly or daily or whatever. They will say, 'I did the dishes in the morning, so someone is doing it in the evening,' so it's the same.

**0:40:49.6 Jess Huffman: So it's changing with the next generation.**

0:40:51.4 Peace Nyahe: Yes.

**0:40:52.9 Jess Huffman: Can you tell us a little bit about how do your daughter and your son feel about the prospect of moving to England?**

0:41:02.4 Peace Nyahe: Oh, they can't wait. They boy, he's dying to be with me, to be honest, because he has - I don't know if it's learning difficulties or dyslexia - he's not fitting in properly at school and all that, so he's always running home. He always wants to come to stay with me, because I think he feels like he's misunderstood, because recently, when I was home in May, I realised that he finds comfort in music, so he just sits doing nothing, listening to his music. He doesn't want to be bothered, because he feels like when he says something, he's making mistakes or whatever. It's something that I picked up just recently, so I think I want to bring him here, them here, so I can keep an eye on them and know what is going on in their lives, especially him. I want to know what is going on in his life, and how he's living his life. He's not confident anymore.

**0:42:15.9 Jess Huffman: It must have been very hard for you to leave your children behind.**

0:42:19.0 Peace Nyahe: It is, especially now, because when I hear complaints, every time that my son is back home, he's back home every time, and then I call him, and he doesn't have anything to say. He says he's ill. He always [?sign 0:42:31.4] as he has in school saying he's ill, but then he gets home and he's fine, and all that. So I realise that he just gave up on studies. He's not happy at school. There something back in Ghana, the moment the smart kid understands things in class, they just move forward. They don't care about the other one who doesn't understand. So I think he feels left out and all that, so he has given up, and I think he doesn't want to go to school.

**0:43:06.6 Ursula Monn: So would you say learning difficulties are not acknowledged in the school system?**

0:43:11.9 Peace Nyahe: No, they don't get help, because I remember when I was growing up as a little smart kid, to be honest - I was a little, smart, lovely girl - at seven, eight years, I remember that teachers from the senior classes, they come for me to go and to solve some questions in the senior class, and then just to shame the seniors, actually. So I realised that,

oh, things like that, because things like that are happening, they're still happening I'm sure, so they shame the kids and all that. Even if they don't bring adults to them from junior year, or whatever, they still do it, because my son - it's not just the teacher's fault. I don't know what it is, to be honest. I think he inherited it from his mum, because his mum also had the same thing, but then she was good with catering and all that. She was artistic, but my son, I still can't figure out what he really is good at, because he said he wants to do football. He wants me to enrol him in a football academy, but I don't see him finding interest in football.

**0:44:35.7 Jess Huffman: Do you want to just touch on that a little bit, because you adopted your son, didn't you?**

0:44:38.9 Peace Nyahe: Oh, yes. He's been adopted from day one, actually. So his mum was my cousin, from my mother's cousin actually, so my mum raised the mum. Before she had the son, she travelled from the bigger city to come to my mum, because my mum is a nurse, and we lived in the hospital premises, but she was already told that she was going to go through a caesarean, but she had an experience with caesarean with her first child. It was so painful then. They didn't used to numb them or anything, so it was so painful for her. So when she heard she was going to have a caesarean with the second boy, I think she was really panicking and scared and all that, so when she came to my mum, she stayed with us. I was also pregnant at that time. So, she stayed with us for three months before her due time, but because she thought she was going to go through a caesarean, she wasn't going to go into labour before she was taken to the theatre.

0:45:40.3 So my daughter's uncle, who is the daughter and above ours, came to get her from home to go to the theatre, and before she left the theatre she gave me her phone and told me to turn it off, but when I hear that she had given birth to the child, she actually brought this baby formula and things from the city, and asked me to mix a little bit, because she's not going to give the child breast milk, so I should mix it a little bit and bring it to the child after childbirth, and I said, 'Okay.' So the phone was off, and I was ready to send food. I didn't know what she was telling me, actually. So a few minutes later, like half-an-hour, my mum just came home with a baby, and I just said to myself, 'You don't have to bring the child home after childbirth, so why did you bring the child?' and my mum was not talking at all. She just went into the room, gave the baby to me, and she went into the room and she

wasn't saying anything. I went to her, and I was like, 'Why did you bring the child home? Where's sister Evelyn?' Her name is Evelyn. My mum was not talking.

0:46:50.4 So she started making calls, and one of my aunties came. One of my aunties visited the house, and she started crying. She was like, 'Oh, Evelyn. Oh, Evelyn.' I said, 'What's the matter?' because I had the baby in my arms, and she started talking, 'Why won't she stay and look after the child?' and all that. I'm like, 'What are they talking about? She just left here.' But then she died in theatre, maybe because she was so scared, because the doctor said she was like - even though she was given anaesthesia, she was still scared, and the blood was just pumping out of her. They were giving her more and it was still coming out, and all that. So she didn't make it off the theatre table. I was like, 'What are they talking about?' My mum was trying to make phone calls. No call was going through. Then I turned her phone on, and used her phone to make the calls, and calls were going through. So that is when it started, and I had a child even before I had my child.

**0:47:57.2 Jess Huffman: You gave birth to your daughter.**

0:47:58.1 Peace Nyahe: Two months. Yes, I gave birth two months later to my daughter.

**0:48:02.3 Jess Huffman: So you brought them up together.**

0:48:03.8 Peace Nyahe: So people thought they are twins. I let it be like that, because we were in the hospital premises anyway, so it's not like we have a lot of neighbours that know the story, so to them, they think they are twins, and because I actually wanted to tell him when I went home, but because of the problems he's having now, my mum doesn't want me to tell him. It would be another tragic event for in his life, so my mum said I should just let him be like that. So to them, they are twins.

**0:48:38.2 Jess Huffman: How do you communicate with your family when you live so far away?**

0:48:43.0 Peace Nyahe: We do video calls every day.

**0:48:47.3 Jess Huffman: So technology is really important to you.**



0:48:49.0 Peace Nyahe: It is. It is, really.

**0:48:51.6 Jess Huffman: Because you don't make it home very often; maybe once, twice a year, is that right?**

0:48:54.7 Peace Nyahe: No. So I've been in 2021, and then this year, so not every year. That's why I want my kids here.

**0:49:04.0 Jess Huffman: Yes, I understand that.**

**0:49:06.3 Ursula Monn: What would it be if you were to formulate your vision for them growing up - I mean, not growing up - but having the next bit of their life here? What would be your best outcome, dream for them?**

0:49:24.3 Peace Nyahe: I don't want them to want too much in life. I just want them to be comfortable. I just want them to be comfortable, not going after - their happiness [?comes first 0:49:37.4].

**0:49:42.3 Ursula Monn: Is that comfortable in terms of a financial kind of security, or is it emotionally feeling integrated and belonging?**

0:49:50.8 Peace Nyahe: Yes, in everything, actually.

**0:49:56.2 Rick Szur: For yourself, do you have a view that you like England and you'd like to stay here, or do you have a feeling that maybe Ghana is still calling you?**

0:50:09.5 Peace Nyahe: So I've started my life here already. I want to live here until maybe old age, because I can't stay here. It is cold and I'm old. Back in Ghana, on my retirement or whatever, if I live in Ghana, I'll live a better life, to be honest. I think I can afford house helps, I can afford good hospitals and things. I will come here once in a while and all that, but I would prefer to be at home in Ghana, live more comfortably. There will just be people to do the work for me, look after me and all that.



**0:50:51.8 Ursula Monn: Here, what gives you the most profound sense of belonging here?**

0:51:00.6 Peace Nyahe: The Huffmans.

**0:51:02.4 Ursula Monn: The husband?**

0:51:03.3 Peace Nyahe: The Huffmans.

**0:51:04.5 Ursula Monn: Oh, the Huffmans, sorry!**

**0:51:10.1 Jess Huffman: Your English family.**

0:51:12.5 Peace Nyahe: Yes. They make me feel belonged.

**0:51:19.0 Jess Huffman: One of the questions I like to ask everyone when we interview them, is, why do you think it's important to share your story?**

0:51:27.5 Peace Nyahe: It is important, because I would like people to know the kind of experiences they will have when they get into a strange or different country and all that. I want them to understand that they are not alone. They are people somewhere that they might belong to. They might feel belonged and loved.

**0:51:50.6 Jess Huffman: You mentioned luck comes into it sometimes.**

0:51:52.7 Peace Nyahe: Oh, yes, it does. Luck does.

**0:51:56.9 Jess Huffman: So you're glad you didn't leave when you were in Cumbria, and you ended up here in Honiton?**

0:52:01.4 Peace Nyahe: I'm glad I'm in Honiton, actually. I'm glad I'm down South. To be honest, if I hadn't left Cumbria, I would have maybe wanted to go home, because I feel

everybody is the same in this country, but me getting this job and travelling made me understand that it's not everybody that is like that. It's different everywhere.

**0:52:33.1 Jess Huffman: On the final note, is there an object that reminds you of home, or helps to remind you of your identity and where you belong, whether that's in Ghana or in England?**

0:52:48.4 Peace Nyahe: Yes, I watch videos and I receive videos and things from my family about occasions, so sometimes I just look at them, and then I laugh in my head. I just laugh in my head when I watch the videos. Especially with the puberty right and things, I have videos and things, I just watch it. Sometimes if they are doing it, I get video calls, and then I stay all day long on my phone, and dancing and doing all sort of things.

**0:53:16.2 Jess Huffman: So it allows you to almost feel like you're there.**

0:53:18.4 Peace Nyahe: Yes, it does.

**0:53:23.9 Jess Huffman: Do we have any more questions for Peace?**

**0:53:30.8 Ursula Monn: I can't think of anything.**

**0:53:31.9 Jess Huffman: Peace, I think it's been amazing. Thank you so much for sharing your story with us today.**

0:53:37.6 Pease: Thank you.

**0:53:38.0 Jess Huffman: I'm sure all of us will think of more questions as we leave, but we can always come back to you.**

0:53:43.8 Peace Nyahe: Yes, keep them coming.

**0:53:44.8 Jess Huffman: Yes. Thank you.**

0:53:46.3 Peace Nyahe: You're welcome. Thanks for having me. Thank you. Nice to meet you too.

**[END OF TRANSCRIPT]**