

**Story Corps/Interview Project
Interview Transcript**

Interviewer : Nadeen Nabil

Narrator: Craig Wishart

Date: 20/2/2012

Place: Narrator's office at The American
University of Cairo

College: The American University in Cairo

Professor: Kim Fox

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About the narrator Craig Wishart :

Dr Craig Wishart is a 47 -year- old American professor. He was born in New York City on April 4,2012. He is an assistant professor of Business of management at the American University in Cairo.

*In some parts of the interview, he talks about SCAF, the Supreme Council of Armed Forces.

20/2/2012

Persons Present : Nadeen Nabil
 Craig Wishart

Nabil: This is an interview with Professor Craig Wishart. Can you please introduce yourself?

Wishart: Ah, yes, Dr. Craig Wishart, guess your question is about demographics, I'm 47 years old, from the United States. I was born actually in New York city, and I've been a professor in North Carolina (inaudible), and now here I'm a (inaudible) assistant professor of Business of Management. I teach International Business, Organizational Behavior, and courses like that.

Nabil: So, how long have you been in Egypt?

Wishart: End of August, so about 6 months, a little over 6 months.

Nabil: 6 months, so that's after the revolution.

Wishart: Exactly after the revolution. So I don't have any experience prior to the revolution, but I came because of the revolution.

Nabil: I was going to ask you, whether, weren't you afraid to come after the revolution, and all the safety concerns maybe?

Wishart: No, no, that's exactly what's drew me here, well not the safety concerns, but wanting to be in a place where there are such social-political issues that were possibly to make a difference. And yeah, I kind of was excited about the potential hazard of walking in the streets (laughter). I did as an American I thought that given the US contribution to the injustice of this country, that being an American would make me a target. But I think I wanted to make a difference, make it over, compensate for what the country has done wrong.

Nabil: So you are here to compensate! To, for Egyptians to experience from you, have experience from you.

Wishart: Yeah, maybe maybe to see that I am making, could make a, to do something good in the new social economy of what this place becomes.

Nabil: Didn't your parents, or your friends or anyone warn you about the situation in Egypt, and told you not to come ?

Wishart : Ah, yes ! My parents were concerned, and I lot of people thought I was somewhat crazy, and when Steve Everheart who was my contact, my only American contact here to university was blown up in Baghdad two weeks, three weeks before I departed, it actually that made me pause for a moment (laughter). It was a tragic tale of loss, but ("Ummm") it's more important to – some fight are worth their risk, and I think they understood that I needed to be here, to try to make that difference. That's it, be safe.

Nabil: So you never hesitated?

Wishart: Not really, no. I mean that what part of the draw. ("Umm, oh part of it") largely part of the draw because I was looking into South Africa. I've been through out Sub-Saharan Africa, a lot of countries that were far far far more precarious or dangerous than here. I was in the middle of a civil, in the middle of a civil war in Kenya just two years ago, and also in Rwanda and Burundi. When that was happening I had just arrived, and Kenya as well, and was moving around various parts of Africa. So, comparatively, this isn't -this is actually not that bad.

Nabil: Have you ever been to Arab countries?

Wihart: No.

Nabil: Have you been acquainted with the culture?

Wihart: Not at, not at all. That's what also made it exciting, because I've never really been to North Africa –or any. I've been to a Muslim country

which was Bangladesh, and that was my exposure to-the country with (inaudible) faith, but no I've never been to an Arab country before.

Nabil: The media in the US, how does it talk about Egypt? Does it talk about it as if it is total chaos-and like crimes everywhere- or what do you think ?

Wishart: Yeah. The US media is not good about anything. It's a country, it's a country that feeds on sensationalism and fear. And their portrayal –from what my parents have indicated currently - is that Egypt is absolute chaos. Their portrayal of any Islamists group is that they are radically fanatical extremists, and they should be feared. All of this part of the world according to the western media that is US western media is portraying it with great injustice, terrible things that they are meeting out, just to perpetuate fear, perpetuate fear to the US citizens so we take core political positions against this part of the world. That's the same thing that SCAF [Supreme Council of the Armed Forces] is doing in their own way using fear to manipulate the people, media and our government is doing the same thing in the United States.

Nabil: So you thought from you experience in Egypt-you think that the media is over reacting or exaggerating –the situation is more safe that it is ?

Wishart: I don't know that it's more safe. I do think that a lot of this is being manipulated by people in positions of power, and that the violence that is escalating is not random - that it is happening in ways that have been potentially pre-calculated or premeditated and maybe not. That's what I witnessed in other parts of the world that are less industrialized, lesser economically developed countries, they have been (inaudible) by people in position of power to create violence to instigate fear, instigate violence for fear, for the sake of fear and control. I wouldn't be surprised what's happening here have no proof of it, but I wouldn't be surprised.

Nabil: Would you encourage your family

Wishart: to come to Egypt?

Nabil: yeah

Wishart : (laughter)

Nabil: I'm talking about children, females, males

Wishart: ("Ummm")

Nabil : Tough question?

Wishart: Well no actually, bringing my colleagues of mine in here I don't see really it to be a problem, as long as you- as I told my family and my friends –the demonstrations are localized in Tahrir Sq, with largely, usually on a Friday (laughter). You simply don't go there on a Friday. You fly in the airport, you avoid the hot spots where the stuff is happening, which I don't feel like I belong there to begin with .It's not my fight, not my country, it's not my place to be involved .So when demonstrations are taking place, it is I think my responsibility to avoid them, and I can easily do that with any expat, yet because of how they portray what's going on here, no one is coming to Cairo. Two people in fact that I'm trying to bring in for some executive training programs, they have not been permitted to go because of this, the portrayal of the, what's happening.

Nabil: What about the stealing of the cars, and the crimes, and not necessarily dealing with Tahrir Sq or the protests, have you heard of that ?

Wishart: Very much. Crimes, they are petty thievery, people being mugged on the streets, cars disappearing, that's happening in Maadi where I live which has happened for the first time. I know that this is because not been the case in Cairo for a long, for a very long time, but compared to the United States, compared to New York City, compared to my own backyard in my homeland, the level of crime here is nothing, compared to some of the big cities, Washington DC, a thousand times more dangerous than walking in

the streets of Cairo. I mean it was a killing capital of the United States, that shifted down to the Florida, the southern tip of Florida, where the organized crime is taking so strong. But, I've seen comparatively Cairo to be a safe place.

Nabil: Finally, I would like to ask you, have you ever thought of leaving Egypt, after the current situation?

Wishart: Leaving!?? No. No only if I got kicked out. It may be due –politically that they don't want particularly Americans or expats in the country would be the only reason I why I'd leave. You know whether it is an Islamist brotherhood or whatever sanctions they impose and change the culture that's makes it hospitable for Americans and I will guess I will have to, but otherwise no, I don't. I find this an exciting town, and this will work out, I believe I have hope for the future, and I want to see.

Nabil: Well, very glad to hear that.

Wishart: (laughter)

Nabil : Finally I would like to thank you professor for your time.

Wishart : Thank you.

Nabil: Thank you.

Wishart: Bye bye.

Nabil: Bye.