

GR29A: The adventures of an Arab maigadi in Lagos

AJ traps a thief (0-3:31)

AJ overpowers a deranged person (3:31-5:32)

AJ, a Nigerian Arab, stands up to an Italian (5:32-7:36)

AJ escapes with his life by a hair (7:36- 10:31)

AJ works for a Yoruba and gets rewarded for a good deed by getting fired (11.02-12:42)

<K> Kabir, <AB> Abubakr Mohammad, <AJ> Ahamad Jidda, <AL> Allamin

<AB> šaalook keef keef

‘How did they hire you?’

<AJ> šaalooni da, ana gaayid, mašeet al xidime xalaas gaalo tuxuttu kula bəkəṛəpha, di, šeel haná xadimí

‘How they hired me. I was around and I went to work, then they say, when you put a person (in a job) he assumes it (properly). This is the assumption of my work.’

<AB> yoo

‘yoo’

<AJ> aa (0.19)

‘aa’ (0:19)

<AB> ha akuṛuba da, dugut kaṛabt al le šába kan šóqol ke al, at təsawwú ke da gábul ke waššafó leek, dugo mašeet gaṛad taxadim, walla, xalaas tawwa kula, xidime hi kan inta aarifa , aw xalaas dahadda worook bəkaan bas wa gaad taxadim walla waššafook ke fooga (0.34)

‘ Now you took the, like if there is something, you did that they explained to you before (you begin working), then you went and began working, or, previously as well, it was ork that you knew, and then they showed you the place and you began working or they explained¹ you about it’ (0:34)

<AJ> waṣooni

‘They advised me.’

<AB> gaalo leek keef

‘What did they tell you.’

<AJ> gaal l xidime kan taxadim da, áfkur le xidimtak, naadum bəjí, biššeršer xidimta kula maafi, inta ya təkəalum, yaa tusuruk, ya tədaawus, da cat baramó leí dugo mašeet karabta, wəy? (0.52)

‘He said the work, if you work, take care about your work. A person comes and interferes in his work ?², that doesn’t work. Don’t be disputatious, don’t steal, don’t fight. All of this they told me

¹ I. e. if he hadn’t engaged in that type of work, they would have explained to him how to do it, whereas if he had previously been working at the same type of job there would be no need to explain.

² *aššaršar* ‘put out in the sun’ or ‘sell a lot’. The AJ’s usage is not clear to consultants.

then I went and took it (the job).’ (0:52)

<AB> min karabta da, šúqol ke inta ke farraak ke fiiha šunu walla šóqol ke bileen ille, aazaak ke wa ma tidawwura ke wa mašeet bayyanta walla kan tɔdawwur tuguul leəm ke fi walla maafi (1.02)

‘Since you took the job, is there something that pleased you in particular, or something that really bothered you and you didn’t like and so you went and complained³ or something you wanted to tell them, or not?’ (1:02)

<AJ> kan šabáh min an naas al gaadiin naxadum jamí da naadim da maani ma xallaani, hu mu miwaššila al manaja, mu miwaššal everitin, xalaas dadda da ja, baggeet xalaas mašeet daamaani daamaani ma xallaani banši barakkuba foog al manaja wəy

‘From like the people I was working with, I wouldn’t he wouldn’t allow me (to report anything). So then this guy would come, I went out and left and he bothered me and bothered me and didn’t let me go and present it to the manager, yep.’

<AB> ha min badeet da, keef šóqol ke, inta ke fi fi l leel da walla sarraag ke jaak walla, ke tarəṭṭa walla mašeet daawastu walla ke, fi walla maafi (1.24)

‘And since you began, how was it. You are there in the middle of the night, did a thief come to you or did you scare him away or did you go and you all fought or what. Was it something like that?’ (1:24)

<AJ> as saraag ja, as sarraag

‘The thief came, the thief came.’

<AB> tuwaššifa leena da, mi wassuf ke tuwaššuf katiir ke bas, taarif bədooru kalaam bas ma šóqol aaxar

‘Describe it to us. Nt just explaining, you should explain a lot. You know he just wants speaking, nothing else.’⁴

<AJ> same, as sarraag da jaana, mašá daxál, fi l fuṛaaw, daxilta fi l fuṛáw di,⁵ ragád bas mašeena allammeena fooga, yamta lammeena fooga bas jábad as sakkiin dedda geed leena daaxal, gaal leena ana ma baxaram, kan naam daxál foog-í

‘Good. The thief came to us, he went and got inside, among the hides. He entered among these hides. He lay down and we went and surrounded him. But when we surrounded him, he grabbed a knife and stayed inside. He told us, I’m not going out, if a person comes for me.’

<K> táharis leek fuṛáw hine naas walla (1.49)

‘Were you guarding the hides belonging to people or what?’ (1:49)

<AJ> mahaaris al kompani bas, bəkaan al kompani kula fuṛáw fi

‘Company guards. The company premises were filled up with hides.’

³ *Bayyan-t-a* ‘you made it clear’, here interpreted as ‘complain’, as that is what AJ would have laid bare.

⁴ To reassure AJ that the conversation is not for personal information.

⁵ *daxilta fi l fuṛáw di*, ‘His entering among the skins’. The speaker is noticeable in using more verbal noun constructions than is usual. The F demonstrative *di* here agrees with *daxila* and is not deflected plural of *fuṛaww*.

<K> fiha fráw, zeen

‘There were hides in it. Right.’

<AJ> aaha, xalaas gaal leena ke, ana be sakkiini kaal ma baxarum leeku min al fuṛáw deela, aaa taxaram ma baxarum min al fəṛaww deela, yo ma taxaram seyi aaha, yawa, kan ma taxaram da niseyyi kef dugó daliil nuduxul fooga, ha ana gul loəm ke, ana báduxulu fooga, amma kan be ana ke ana xaayif ana báduxul kan daxal ana biktulni intu ma tifzauuni, di bas ana xaayf minna ay, intu kan tisowwu fiini, ha gaal aḷaa, kan inta daxál ke dugooni kan šifná manaḷak⁶ be sakkiin da aniina ma nigdar níduxul, yo kan ma tigdar tədxul da ana bagiif qášim ad darb hineeni, intu amšu le pooliis xabburuuəm (2.21)

‘Ya. So okay he told us, I’ve got my knife. I’ll never go out to you from among these hides. “Ya you’ll come out.” “No I won’t come out from these hides.” “Okay, you really won’t come out?” “Ya.”⁷ “Right. If you don’t come out, what will we do to enter inside?” And I said to them,⁸ “I’ll enter inside it. But me personally, I am afraid. I am afraid if I entered he’d kill me and you guys won’t save me.” This is what I was afraid of.” If you guys do that.” And they said, “No” (they won’t save him). If you enter then if we saw him overpower you with a knife, we won’t be able to get in.” “So, if you aren’t able to enter, I’ll stand at the doorway right here. You guys go to the police and inform them.” (2:21)

<K> intu kam awaan da

‘How many were you then?’

<AJ> aniina xamsa

‘We were five.’

<K> jaaku fi l leel walla nahaar

‘Did they come to you at night or in the daytime?’

<AJ> jaana fi l leel amma arabi da ana waahid bas fi lubbuhum

‘They came to us at night but as far as Arabs go, I was the only one among them.’

<K> yoo

‘Okay’

<AJ> aaha ha jaana fi l leel, haw daxál, mašeena ligiiná

‘Ya he came to us in the night, and he entered and we went and we found him.’

<K> al faḷḷalo da šunu min nafara

‘The others (guards) were which tribe?’

<AJ> alfaḷḷalo da hawsa haw borno

‘The rest were Hausa and Kanuri.’

<K> yoo

⁶ The sense here is the thief overpowers AJ.

⁷ The aaha ‘yes’ affirms the correctness of the negative proposition, as is common in the languages of the region.

⁸ His fellow guards.

‘Right’

<AJ> aaha

‘ya’

<K> zeen (2.37)

‘good’

<AJ> a xalaas, fi šúqul da mašëena xabbarna leena naadum mašá xabbar al fooliis jo, al fooliis da salló amta salló be sakkiina kula kařapha fi iida, xalaas ha gaal, našadó gaal inta soqolak da šunu, ha gaal ha wey ana da s sarraag ha jiiit, amma kan naadim ke, tawa daxál foogí da baktula, wəyi (2.53)

‘So, about this matter we went and informed a person and he went and informed the police and they came. The police got him out. When they got him out with his he was clutching his knife in his hand. Then he said, they asked him and said, “you, what is your business here?” And he said, “Ya I’m a thief and I came, but if any person, should he try to enter I’ll kill him.” Ya. (2:53)

<K> qassad hu da sarraag

‘He admitted he was the thief.’

<AJ> Ƴassad gaal hu sarraag gal kan naam daxál foogí baktula

‘He admitted it and said he was a thief. “If anyone should enter me I’ll kill him.”

<K> ha keef lígi jarra leya waahid minnuku walla ma [Y1] sábab

‘And did he get a chance to slash one of you or wasn’t it necessary?’

<AJ> ma bijí [Y2] sey maafi naadum daxál fooga seyi

‘He didn’t come out and nobody entered on him.’

<K> yo

‘Got you.’

<AJ> maafi naam daxál fooga kula, [Y1] xalaas (3.03)

‘There wasn’t a person who entered at all. Period.’ (3:03)

<K> ha mine sallá [Y2]

‘So who got him out?’

<AJ> haa hu da waddó le l hakuuma, gade aniina ma šifná

‘So that one they sent him to the police and we didn’t seem him again.’

<K> aa min daaxəl da sallá mine

‘And inside there who got him out?’

<AJ> min daaxal da sal⁹ poliis sallata

‘Inside, the police got him out.’

⁹ A false start on *sallata*.

<K> aa, yoo, ha irfo leya keef hu da,¹⁰ naadum be sakkiina fi iida (3.13)
 ‘Okay, And how did they know (how to handle) him, a person with a knife in his hand?’ (3:13)

<AJ> mašó gaal walla axarim walla niharbiik
 ‘They went and said, “Come out or we’ll shoot you”

<K> yoo
 ‘got you’

<AJ> dedda xalaas deda xarám
 ‘Then that was it, he came out.’

<K> jo leya be šunu hu da
 ‘What did they come for him with?’

<AJ> jo leya be watiir, jiiip
 ‘They came for him in a jeep.’

<K> daxalo leya be šunu
 ‘They entered with what?’

<AJ> daxalo leya fi daaxal fi l kampani bas
 ‘They entered onto him inside the company.’

<K> indum fi iittəm šunu (3.22)
 ‘What did they have in their hands?’ (3:22)

<AJ> indum bunduk fi iithum mana
 ‘They had guns in their hands of course.’

<K> yoo gaalo le kan ma taxaram kan
 ‘Okay and they told him if you don’t come out ...

<AJ> kan ma taxaram xalaas aniina dugut nuḍurbak, ha wəi?,
 ‘If you don’t come out now we’ll shoot you.’

<K> zeen, xalaas xaaf
 ‘Good, so he got afraid in the end.’

<AJ> xalaas xaaf (3.30)
 ‘He got afraid.’ (3:30)

<K> ráma sekkiina
 ‘He threw down his knife?’

¹⁰ *Irif* used in sense of how they knew how to handle the situation.

<AJ> dedda ráma sakkiina
 ‘Then he threw down his knife.’

<K> zeen
 ‘good.’

<AJ> gade aniina gaadiin, kula xalaas waaid mən wara mən qaadi bas jaana, jaana bas dadda gaal leena intu l gaadiin cat dambulaatku ke, wəi, aniina dumbulaanna da keef xala?¹¹ aniina tineeni, xalaas, aniina aráb da aniina tineeni, wa hawsa tineeni, wa ?yaal borno tineeni, xalaas bas ja bas, humma al arbaa gaaydiin foog al get aniina gaadiin hineen ya waraani l arba tineen gaadiin yawaraa qaadi, min ja bas xalaas dada gaal, intu gaaydiin cat dambulaatku ke dambulaanna aha, yamta dambulaanna haadi da, assanaana nijik, hu ye jaay wa aniina kula jiina maašiin leya, dada šaal rafiigi d’aaka ramá fald’a, wəi? (4.06)

‘So another time we were there again and someone behind us from over there approached us. He came to us and told us, “You all sitting there, you’re all a bunch of assholes”. “Ya, we’re a bunch of assholes, so how do you call us assholes and there are two of us? So we were two Arabs and two Hausa and two Borno youths. And just this one comes. The four were sitting on the gate and we were sitting here just behind the four, two sitting behind there. As soon as he came he said, “You sitting there all of you are assholes”. “So since we are just shit, we’re coming to you.” He was coming from over there and we were like going towards him. Then he lifted up my friend there and threw him down. Yep.’ (4:06)

<K> hu da gaalo leeku be šunu al kalaam
 ‘So what language did he tell you this in?’

<AJ> gaalo leena be kalaam al, be kalaam al hawsa
 ‘They told us the, the Hausa language.’

<K> yoo
 ‘Got ya.’

<AJ> wəi?,
 ‘Right.’

<K> šunu kula min tilgaaha leeku hine
 ‘Everything happens to you here.’

<AJ> gaal leena ke, **yece yece maygaadi duk damburo banku šeeegu, ay ni naa zo wajen ku ne ay**
 ‘He said to us, **All guards are your father’s penis,¹² bastards**, I’ve come to your place.’

<K> di kilimt al gaalha (4.21)
 ‘That’s the words he said.’ (4:21)

¹¹ Probably a version of the discourse marker *xalaas*.

¹² He abuses a private part of the father, which is an extreme form of insult, akin to ‘fuck your father’. (I would like to thank Prof. Muhammad Munkaila of Maiduguri University for discussion of the Hausa in this text.)

<AJ> di kilimt al gaalha
 ‘This is what he said.’

<K> inta kan irifta ka hi da ma ja leeku le xeer (4:24)
 ‘So you knew he didn’t come to you in good will. (4:24)

<AJ> aa ma jaana le xeer, **to kaa zo mee kina neema, ya ce naa zo**, jiiyku le duwaas bas kaway, **dan burooba šeeegu, a?a to kai me irin ka, ya ce kai da kata mee zaka tambaine haka d’in.** (4:36) xalaas dada dada lamma dedda lamma leena, xalaas dadda lamma rafiigi da šaal rafiigi bap ramá, ana yam jiiit maaši leya kula, kərəp ana bea cakkeenaaha, caakkinna di, ayi ayi fi l bikaan da, an našaraa, ille nguwaa yaabsa kar bas, kayya kayya, ana šilta rameeta
 ‘No he didn’t come with good will. **What did you come looking for. He said, I’ve come I’ve come to you to you looking for a fight. “You sons of a penis, bastards.” “A?a what sort of person are you.” He said, (What right have) you just to ask me such a thing? (4:36)** So then then he engaged, engaged with us, Then he grabbed my friend and carried him and bap threw him down. I came at him as well. He and I went at it, our fighting. Hey hey, in the place, the European, nothing but pure wrestling. Whoosh boom, I carried him and threw him down.’

<K> hayy (4.53)
 ‘Wow’ (4:53)

<AJ> wəi, aaha ana rameeta, yam rameeta fi l bəkaan da, xalaas gammeena gal nərəbḥəḍ’a, xalaas ana gammeet badugg fiha xalaas dada, al helma xarám jaani, gaal ley ya tuktul leena naadim, fi lubb kompani, xalaa xallna nixárəma barra ?aadi dugó, ya təxarrumú barra, aa xalaas, fi šóqol da xalaas dada karreená le ana karreeta burr ke xarramná barra, xarramná xalaas deda, amta bagga marra waay tamma d’uula da gaal leena gaal dambulaakku¹³ intu cat, ana kan mašəet xalluuku minní, wi, xalleená irawwa
 ‘Yep I threw him down. When I threw him down at the place, we got together and said “we’ll tie him”. So I started beating him then the headman came out and came to me and said, “don’t kill a person in the middle of the company.” We should better go outside there. Don’t¹⁴ take him outside. So okay, then¹⁵ we dragged him, I dragged him bumpety and we put him outside. When he had left completely and that was finished he got up and said to us, “You assholes all of you. I’m leaving. Get away from me and we let him go home.’

<K> hu mašood’un walla be agəla ke fi šoofak da
 ‘Was he crazy or sane, in your opinion?’

<AJ> kaal ana ma irif ley šay kula, wala irifta hu da da mašood’un wala irifta hu da be iimaana, wəy ha wala irifta sarraag kula aa (5.25)
 ‘I didn’t have any idea. I didn’t know if he was crazy or sane or even whether he was a thief.’ (5:25)

<K> kulu ma sawweetu leye šey xalleetú máša bas

¹³ *Dambulaaya* ‘anus, asshole’ is an insult in which a hand with five separated fingers are held up to display to the person one is insulting.

¹⁴ Probably a mistake.

¹⁵ *Fi šuqul da* lit. ‘in this thing’, a discourse filler used frequently by AJ.

'You didn't do anything to him to just let him go?'

<AJ> xalleená máša bas

'We just let him go.'

<K> yo zeen

'Ok good.'

<AJ> aa yes

'Yes.'

<AB> ha inta, gábul ke da, bala hi di ke da xidime ke xadamta da fi walla maafi

'And you, before that, other than this, did you work or not?'

<AJ> xadám

'I worked.'

<AB> tašaabiya hi di ke

'Did it resemble this one?'

<AJ> gabúl kula xadám, gabul kula

'Before I worked, before that as well.'

<AB> tuwaşşufaha leena

'Describe it to us.'

<K> bəwaşşufa leeku mana

'He'll describe it to us of course.'

<AB> waşşuf leena minn al xidime ke gábul ke, hádar le tukuřba hi di ke da, al xidime ke sawweeta walla kan hineen walla kan hajəre kula, tugdar tuwaşşif leena minha ke šiya ke a (5.49)
'Tell us about the previous work, up till when you took this one, the work you did, whether here or elsewhere. Can you explain to us about here a little bit?' (5:49)

<AJ> xadam gaadi, fi kostiin, qaadi fi legos, simiis sey

'I worked there, in the Customs area, there in Lagos. You got me?'

<AB> wəi (5.57)

'ya' (5:57)

<AJ> xaadəm qaadi, qaadi fi kostiin da, an gaa?id bas, masaarg ašara tineen jooni, xalaas yam jooni da, gaalo leyí ke inta šəqəlak da inta raagid hineen da, keef margadak da keef keef da, gum and'i leena faam išəriin, fam iširiin indí maafi, amšu l leela jaay taalu, xalaas al leela jaay jo, yamta jo šilta fam iširiin da ad'd'eet loəm xalaas mašó, gaalo xalaas inte gade ma nilammisak, (6:19) yo ma tilammisuuni aha,
xalaas gade kula yoom waahid an raagid be, be saadiqtí raagdiin bas xalaas, an naşsaari foog bas gaal leí inta be mine raagidiin fi l bəkaan da, ana gul laa ana be mařtí, ha gaal inta be martak, yalla axaram min beetí aguul leya ke ana ma baxaram, gul la inta jaabook min hejəre amma ana

wald an najeriya, ille ambaakir minnaşabah naşıifa fi l oofis ana ma baxarum, fi šúqul da xalaas, cat fi kostiin bas fa

‘I worked there, there in Customs. I was just sitting. Twelve thieves came to me. So when they came to me, they said to me, what’s up with you, you’re just lying around here. How is it you’re sleeping (here)?¹⁶ Get up and give us twenty pounds (naira). “I don’t have twenty pounds”. Leave and come back here at night. So at night they came back. When they came I took out twenty pounds and gave it to them and they went away. They said okay, you we won’t bother again. (6:19) “So you won’t bother me?” “No”.

‘So again one day I was lying with my (female) friend, just sleeping. The white guy upstairs¹⁷ said to me, “Who are you sleeping with in this place?” I said to him I was with my wife. “So you and your wife? Let’s go, leave my house.” I say to him, “I won’t leave”. I said to him, “They brought you from far away but I’m a child of Nigeria. Till tomorrow in the office I’ll see him, and I won’t leave.” All of this was just in Customs.’¹⁸

<AB> mm (6.42)

‘mm’ (6.42)

<AJ> xalaas fi šúqul way da talfan, ambaakir minnaşabá naadooni fi l ofis qaadi, xalaas amta naadooni fi l ofis qaadi da, xalaas dadda hu manaja naşadni, gaal inta dugut saaʔinna saaʔa di, keef inta tiʔeer an naşsaara fi lubb beeta, gul la beʔeera, gul laa teerif ana arabi amma arabi hana najeriya, hu da da itaaliya ja min itaaliya qaadi, ya hu ja min itaalya da bas, ana be martí raagdiin fi l beet fald’a ma raagid ley foog gusuur fald’a fi beetí fald’a bas da bugum bəxarrimni da, keef keef bəxarrimni da ana kaal ma baqassitta, hu n naadum manajaana da britiř min britiř hu (7.13) ‘So regarding this matter he telephoned. Early the next day they called me to the office there. ‘When they had called me to the office, then the manager asked me, he said, You now at this time, how can you insult a white guy right inside his house?’ I said, “I will insult him”. I told him, “You know I’m an Arab but an Arab of Nigeria. This guy is an Italian who came from Italy there. He just came from Italy. I and my wife were sleeping in the house downstairs, not lying down on & in my house, just downstairs and he gets up and kicks me out. How can he kick me out? I don’t agree at all to it.” This man, our manager is British from Britain.’ (7:13)

<AB> mm

‘mm’

<AJ> xalaas hu gaal leí ke, yo da kalaam, aha, yo a xalaas, inta timiř gade kula taxadim fi l xidime di bas, albarra leena ana bea catta, xalaas, gaal leí ke, mařtak gede kan jibta da, amiř raggitha fi boyskota inta axadim, səmiis seeni, xalaas fi řey da gade kula mařeet, baxadim fiiha komponi, baxadim fi itaalya, fi itaalya

‘So he told me, this is the situation. Ya, so you go and return and work in the job. So he warned us, me and him both. He told me, “Your wife, if he brings her again, go and let her sleep in the boy’s quarters while you work. Did you get it?” So from this I went again, I was working in an

¹⁶ *Margad-ak keef*. Roughly, ‘How is it the fact of your sleeping in a place that isn’t a place for sleeping’. I.e. he needs to be allowed to sleep there.

¹⁷ *Foog* here ‘upstairs’.

¹⁸ This episode and the previous one when his group was attacked by a deranged person took place in Customs area, a different place from the hides’ warehouse incident.

Italian company, Italian.’

<AB> mm (7.38)

‘mm’ (7:38)

<AJ> baxadim foog ad darb hana, ad darb al maaši le alaba da, mugaabil al bariki hana fooliis, xalaas fi l bakaan da kula gaayd baxadim kula, kula al masaarge joona, aniina cattina raagdiin da, kattalo minnina naas arəbaa, ana kula raagəd maaəm bas, ana kan alla sadda ašiiri minəm, kitelittəm minnina arba attawwago kaare ke ma ligó šey, xalaas xaramo dallaatəm, [Y1] maašiin mašó

‘I was working on the road , on the road going to Alaba,¹⁹ opposite the police barracks. So I was working in that place as well, and again the thieves came to us. We were all sleeping. They killed four of us. I was sleeping with them as well and Allah just spared me from them. Killing four of us and they looked for goods and didn’t find a thing. So they went on their way, they went away.’

<K> hu da šoqol [Y2] inta ma šaafook walla (8.00)

‘In that thing you they didn’t see you or what?’ (8:00)

<AJ> ana da ille cat raagdiin jamí alla sadda ašiiri bas kaway, ana kula kan gade ma gammeet
‘Me, everyone was sleeping together and God simply spared me. Me I didn’t move at all.’

<K> yam tašiif bidaawəso fiəm kan

‘When you saw them fighting with them.’

<AJ> šuf bədaawusu fiəm ana gade ma gammeet, xalaas

‘I saw them fighting with them and I didn’t move again, that’s it.’

<K> kattaloəm be šunu hu da

‘What did they kill them with?’

<AJ> kattaloəm be addaadi bas, ille al addá hi di bas kattaloəm ba, yom gammeet da xalaas, yamta šift an masaariga xaramo da, yamta gammeet da ana kula min al daṃ da ma banšaaf xalaas marra waahid ke bas

‘They just killed them cutlasses. Only with a cutlass. This is what they killed them with. When I got up, I saw that the thieves had left. When I got up I was all covered with blood so that I couldn’t be seen at all.’

<K> ad dam lad’axak inta kula

‘The blood smeared you all over.’

<AJ> cat lad’axanni ana kula (8.21)

‘It smeared me all over.’ (8:21)

<K> mm

‘mm’

¹⁹ Alaba is on the way to Badagary and the border with Benin.

<AJ> xalaas, yam gammeet da, gadé fi šey da xalaas ...
 ‘So when I got up, there was something else ...’

<K> hu da sawwa leəm keef, jo kaway kunni waahid ke bas leya waahid walla, humma kula [Y1]
 gammo bədaawusu
 ‘This thing how did they do it? Did they just come and each one just (took) one or they all came
 and fought everyone else?’

<AJ> aniina, [Y2] aniina cat gaadiin foog al geet da bas cat
 ‘We, we were all staying on the gate, all of us.’

<K> waaʔiin
 ‘awake’

<AJ> nisaaniin, dugó jo kabbasoona, saʔa waade hiil l leel, xalaas jo kabbasoona, kabsuttum
 leena di, gide da, ana bigiit naadum ma gammeet amma, rabb al alamiin kula sadda ašiiri, saai da
 ana kula mi šabá aloom, ana kula saad da ana kula naašid le jildí²⁰, ay (8.46)
 ‘Sleeping. Then they came and grabbed us. One o’clock at night. So they came and grabbed us,
 their snatching us, again, I was a person who didn’t get up, but God saved me. At this time I
 wasn’t like today. I also had protective charms.’ (8:46)

<K> zeen
 ‘good’

<AJ> ana kula yoom addá da al geedat da foogí amma rabb al alamiin sadda ašiiri
 ‘Me that day the cutlass was right over me, but God saved me.’

<K> iyo
 ‘right’

<AJ> fi šəgəli xalaas gammeet
 ‘In that situation I got up.’

<K> al addá di keef šabaaha
 ‘How did this cutlass look?’

<AJ> al addá al waahide tul di bas, injin al tugd’aha di bas
 ‘Just the one cutlass (that we all know), the type that is cut (fashioned by a company, a
 commercial cutlass vs. by a local blacksmith).’

<K> yo
 ‘ok’

<AJ> haa

²⁰ *naašid le jildí* AJ refers to protective charms, either Koranic verses tied in leather (*warag* see IM80) or herbal medicine. For protection against thieves, attacks and other violent activities, *warag* are said to be more effective, though AJ does not specify the type. The magic protection is termed *hijaab*.

‘uhaa’

<K> ša sakkiin (9.00)

‘Like a knife’ (9:00)

<AJ> šaa sakkiin, haa, sakkiin ma bəguul leya sakkiin bas

‘Like a knife, ya, and, (like) a knife but they don’t call it a knife.’

<K> zeen zeen zeen

‘Good good’

<AJ> aniina kan nəguul sakkiin bas, ha an naas waadiin ka bəguulu addá, wəi

‘We might call it a knife, but other people call it „addá”, yep.’

<K> wəi hine an naas kula buguuluuha

‘Ya here people just call it.’

<AJ> xalaas, fi šuqul da, gammeet, nad’d’et al kompani mašet le kompani jambəna ke, xalaas
gul loəm gummu taalu

‘So, returning to this thing, I got up and jumped over the company (fence) and went to the company next to us. So I sold them to come.’

<K> aa (9.14)

‘aa’ (9:14)

<AJ> towwa al yaal doola kattalooħəm

‘‘Just now these youngsters they killed them.’’

<K> awaan da humma šaafook walla šaafook an naas dool da

‘At that time did they see you or not, those guys (the neighbors)?’

<AJ> an naas šaafona amma ma bəgdaru bəjuuna aha

‘The people saw us, but they couldn’t come to us.’

<K> aa awaan tunud’ kula šaafook

‘When you were jumping they saw you.’

<AJ> awan banud’ da kula šafooni

‘When I was jumping they saw me.’

<K> ambeenaatku [Y1] leeku šuqul

‘Did you have anything separating (between) you?’

<AJ> xalaas ambeenaanna da [Y2] dirdir bas dirdir ambeenaanna

‘Between us was just a wall, a wall only between us.’

<K> zeen zeen (9.27)

‘Good, good’ (9:27)

<AJ> xalaas, yamta nad'd'eet mašeet leəm xabbartuhum, humma bəsawwu sabʔa, jiina ana foog fu guddaama, d'aradna al masaarge ke da, ana ma badəri minum da, humma raddo mən gafaay ana kan jaari guddaamhum

'Then, when I jumped over and went to them and informed them, they were seven. We came, me at the lead, and we chased away the thieves. I had no idea who they²¹ were. They returned behind me, and I was running in front of them.'

<K> humma as saraariig

'Those thieves.'

<AJ> aʔ humma al yaal al maʔay dool da al bəsow maʔay dool da,

'No those youths who were with me who were doing it with me.'

<K> wəi wəi

'yep yep'

<AJ> mašeena qaadi bəkaan da bigí, wasí ke bas, bas bəkaan faraká wasiye ke bas

'We went there, the place was wide, a wide square.'

<K> ma leya bakaan bəllabbad fiya da (9.44)

'There was no place to hide in.' (9:44)

<AJ> ma leya bəkaan ballabbad fiya da, humma masaarge min qaadi amta šaafooni ana jaayi maaši da, humma šatto min ad darub da raggado, šafo naas dool raddo min gafaana ana kan foog gubaa an naar

'There wasn't a place to hide. Those thieves from afar when they saw me coming towards them, they dispersed from the road and lay down. Then they saw those people (his guards) behind us returned, while me, a light was shining on me.'

<K> šaafook inta wahadak bas (9.52)

'They just saw you alone' (9:52)

<AJ> wahadí ana xad'd'eet foog dahár an naar ma šiftuhum, xalaas, yamta xad'd'eet foog al masaarge ke yamta bašiif doola ke doola ke kan naasí fi gafaayí naadim kula maafi

'Alone. And I was (blinded) in a spotlight and didn't see them. So when I was right upon the thieves,²² I saw that those were coming (from one direction) and those (from another) and there wasn't anyone (of my helpers) behind me.'

<K> aha

'aha'

<AJ> xalaas ana gul šəqəlí hu da, dedda dedda tabooni, ha gulna ke beəm gammeena, jaariin ke jaariin ke jaariin ke da yamta rijileey kula albarrad'an xalaas min tiit da

²¹ The guards from the neighboring company. Note that K had to ask who AJ was talking about here.

²² *Xad'd'ee-t foog al masaarge* Lit. 'I placed on the thieves', meaning 'I was upon the thieves'.

‘So I said, so that’s what’s happened, then they followed me. And that was it; we started at it.²³ We kept on running and running and running until my feet were became raw on their soles.’

<K> dada humma taabinnak inta (10.08)
‘So they were following you.’ (10:08)

<AJ> d’aradooni aná, burudd deela cat alfassaxan ana kula, min al koltá ke alfassaxan xalaas ke bas
‘They chased me. My feet were worn thin, from the tarred road they were blistered.’

<K> mm, ma leek ni?ille
‘mm, you didn’t have any shoes.’

<AJ> ma ley ni?ille, niileey baddatan kan ma baddadan ma bagdar basubúkə̀m buktuluuni, xalaas fi l bə̀kaan da mašeet, xalaas yamta mašeena, ligiina minnasaba, ad dorokto jaana, intu šunu aše da da kalaam, da al kalaam, da l kalaam, an naas šaalo waddooəm la ašbiti, ana, ambaakirta xalaas al xidime xalleeta minni
‘I didn’t have shoes. My shoes got thrown off. If they hadn’t I wouldn’t have been able to outrun them and they’d have killed me. So I went to that place (of his work). When we had gone there, in the morning we found the director had come to us. “You guys what is this matter?” It was like this and like this. They took the people and sent them to hospital. Me, the next day I quit the job.’

<K> abeeta minnak (10.31)
‘You refused it.’ (10.31)

<AJ> abeeta minni, xalaas marra waahid ke bas gul leəm al xidime da ana kaal ma baxadimha, xalaas fi šey da, gide kula baxadim leya fi kompani, al kompani da
‘I refused it. So one time I said to them, this work I’m not doing it at all. So if this is how things are, I’ll work for a company, the company again.’²⁴

<K> hi di xalleeta wa [Y1] mašeet dawwar balaaha
‘This one you left and went and looked for another one.’²⁵

<AJ> hi di kula xalleeta [Y2], aa dawwar balaaha
‘This one I left and I looked for another one.’

<K> nzeen
‘Good’

<AJ> al kompani da mašeet, gaal ley bə̀šuuluuni fiiya?, gaalo təkaf, təkaf, təkaf al goorá brayf (10.50)
‘I went to this company. He told me they’d hire me in it. They said, you’ll pay, you’ll pay the

²³ *ha gulna ke beəm gammeena* Lit. ‘And we said, so we’ve gotten up with them’. The sense is, the expression introduces the abrupt start of a dramatic episode, in this case, the thieves chasing AJ down the road. The person marking in this idiom is open, e.g. *gaal-an ke bee-hin gamm-an* ‘Now they’ve (F) started in at it with them.F’.

²⁴ *al kompani da* The pragmatics of the definite article and demonstrative need investigation.

²⁵ *balaaha* Lit. ‘without it’. See below.

kola nut, bribe.’ (10:50)

<K> taathum taathum goorooya zeen
‘You give them give them the kola nut, good.’

<AJ> aha, be l ingliš guul leha brayvf, been aniina kan nuguul goorá
‘Ya in English they call it a bribe. We call it the kola nut.’²⁶

<AJ> xalaas gul loəm ana ma bakaffi l goorá di kaamil, yo al goorá ma təkaffa da, aʔa yo xalaas
yamta ma təkaffa da, ámiš ma nišiilak mašeet le yorubaay šaalni
‘So I said to them, I won’t pay the kola nut at all. “O, so you won’t pay the kola nut?” “No”.
“Okay then, since you won’t pay it, go away we won’t take you. I went to a Yoruba and he took
me.’

<K> bala šai ke
‘Without anything like.’

<AJ> bala tuuga bala aha
‘Without T²⁷ with, yes’

<K> bala goorooya
‘Without a kola nut.’

<AJ> hu šaalni da, xalaas gaayd baxadim fooga, baxadim fooga ke baxadim fooga tammeet arbaa
šahár, axút hiil mar̄ta di, magajiite di
‘He took me, and I was working for him, working for him, working. For four months. The sister
of his wife, her older sister.’

<K> wəi (11.14)
‘Ya’ (11:14)

<AJ> hi kula gaade maaəm, treez²⁸ leeəm fi ʔyaalhum da, al mariise laamminna fi bəkaan al
bəkaanat, al bəkaan al al baranda aniina nuguulu laha baranda amma, humma buguulu laha
galaškook
‘She was also staying with them. She was raising their children for them. Alcohol was stocked at
the place, the place of the veranda. We we call it a veranda, but they call it a “galashook”.

<K> aha
‘Aha’

<AJ> xalaas, fi š šúqul da gaadiin ke, xalaas dada ille, tusurug fi mariise šiya šiya, aha, kalwe
tineen, aha, kałwa tałaata, kalwa tineen, kałwa tałaata, ha xalaas təwaddí le l foliis teša tisse
jambəna ke, xalaas fi šúqul da, aa

²⁶ *kaffa goorá* ‘pay a kola nut’ can range between a tip for having done work for someone to a bribe, e.g. for being given a job. This is a customary way of asking for a favor, tip, bribe throughout most or all of Nigeria.

²⁷ *Tuuga*, unidentified word.

²⁸ *Rayyas* ‘look after’.

‘So, things were like that, then, just she began stealing the alcohol little by little. Ya. One usinnesbottle, two, ya, three bottles, two bottles, three bottles. And she’d send it to police station 9 next to us. So that’s where things were.’

<K> tabii?a leum walla tad’d’a [Y1] lehum saakit
‘It was their custom to give it to them for free?’

<AJ> tabí loəm [Y2]
‘She’d sell to them.’

<K> zeen (11.37)
‘Good’ (11:37)

<AJ> al maṛá al hajje minnasabá tiji tɔguul ley inta šúqul da miné šaala, ana da l xaddaami bašiil keefkeef da, naadim bišiil tineen tałaata da mine, ana l mariise kula ma bašrab da keef keef da, xalaas gaal kaal ke šuqulak da ma bukuun ke ke, xalaas yamta yoom waad ligiit al maṛá di kaṛabtaha

‘The wife the Hajje comes early and says to me, you, this thing, who carried it off? “Me the servant how could I take it?” “A person takes two or three who’s that.” “I don’t drink alcohol at all, so how could that be?” So then, “Absolutely this racket of yours won’t do.” Then one day I found the woman (stealing) and I grabbed her.’

<K> mm (11.50)
‘mm’ (11:50)

<AJ> yamta kaṛabtaha da, d’alleeta foog mašeet
‘When I grabbed here I led her upstairs.’

<K> meriise šaabbinha fi šunu
‘The alcohol was stored in what?’

<AJ> saabbinna laha fi karatiin
‘They had loaded it in cartons.’

<K> yoo, zeen
‘Okay, good.’

<AJ> aha cat saabbinna laha fi karatiin bas
‘Ya, all they stored in cartons.’

<K> nzeen (11.58)
‘good’ (11:58)

<AJ> xalaas, fi šúqul da yamta, mašeet le l maṛá gul laha da, hi gaala ley inta keefkeef tuguul ley ke axtí saragat da, ha gul laha ana baguula, gaal la a?a ma tuguula a?a baguula ma tuguula, aa kan inta gul tuguula da ana basillak, aa gulta, ana ana kan gulti tisilliini da walla inti šiltiinii, yo al haaj haadi šaalni (12.13)

‘Okay, this matter, when I went to the wife I told her, and she said, “How can you tell me my

sister stole?” And I told her, “That’s what I’m saying”. She said, “No, don’t say it.” “I’m saying it.” “Don’t say it.” “If you said you’re going to say it, I’ll fire you.” “No, I said it.” “Me, if you said you’re firing me, are you the one who hired me? The Hajj is the one who hired me.” (12:13)

<K> mhm
,Mhm‘

<AJ> yo al haaj haadi šaalak, yo xalaas kan al haaji šaalak da kay da, dugut bas ana basillak, fi šuqúl da xalaas al haaj nazál, gaal hu da maala hu da malá inte be haajje, ana gul la dawa hu hajje da kalaam da kalaam, da kalaam, ha gul la kan an naadum bəsurug ugupki inti al haajje, ha uguh al hajji kan mine kula ana bakurɓa

“So the Hajj is the one who hired you? If the Hajj is the one who hired you, now I’m just the one who is firing you.” Amidst all this the Hajj came down. He said, “What’s all this between you and the Hajje?” I said to him, “Look here Hajj it’s like this and like this.” And I said to him, “If there’s a person other than you Hajje, and other than the Hajj²⁹ no matter who, I’ll arrest him’

<K> mhm (12.26)
,mhm’ (12:26)

<AJ> kan ɓassatti bea da ɓassatti, kan ma qassatti bea da kaffiini ana kula wald najeeriya kan mašeet ween kula balga xidime , xalaas, fi šey da xalaas, kaffanni faamí talatiin, aa saa d’aaka, saa d’aaka faam, faam, sittiin fi šahár, kaffanni aha faam talaatiin bas

“If you agree to that, if you agree, if you don’t agree with it, pay me. I’m a child of Nigeria and if I go I’ll find work anywhere.” So in the end, she paid me thirty pounds, at that time a pound, pound, sixty pounds in a month. She paid me just thirty pounds.’

<K> nuşş aš šahár (12.42)
,Half a month.’ (12:42)

<AJ> nuss aš šahár, xalaas şabbeeta fi jiiŋí mašeet, mašeet ale šaal watiira da, mašeet šabatni qaadi, gaal leí ke, inta šəqəlak da taal amiš axadam, ley, gul lea la?, inta maak aagib kalaam al mará ana ma baxadam maʔaak gidé

‘Half a month. So I put it in my pocket and left. I went and he took his car, I went he followed me there. He told me, you, this matter, come go and work for me.³⁰ I told him, “No. You can’t prevail against the word of your wife, so I won’t work for you again.”

²⁹ I.e. the two owners of the business.

³⁰ I.e. the husband asks AJ to return to his old job.