

Oral History Kosovo

Narrator: Before getting pregnant, I babysat a child. She was the child, the daughter of a friend, she was six months old. And when she said six months old she called and said, "I have to go work, can you come?" I said, "I'm not used to children this young," I said, "I'm scared." I was scared. "No, I can't trust anyone but you with my child," "Okay," I said, "I will come, just keep in mind that I might not be able to, don't get comfortable that you found someone," I said, "I might not be able to, I might be scared or something," I said, "And I have to leave."

Interviewer: What scared you?

Narrator: She was little, I was scared I might hurt, or I won't know how to feed her, I could choke her. I was scared, this is what I was scared of. But I got used to it immediately. It seemed like a fluffy baby to me, fluffy and small. Even though I only went to babysit her, by nature, I can't just stay in one place. The moment she slept I would clean, I would do something, even though I wasn't obligated to, but I was used to cleaning and not seeing a mess and I would get up. Then I also started doing housework.

Interviewer: How many hours were you there?

Narrator: From 08:00 in the morning to 16:00.

Interviewer: How much did you get paid?

Narrator: 200 euro.

Interviewer: For a month?

Narrator: Yes.

Interviewer: Five days a week.

Narrator: Six, Saturdays also. There were cases when I didn't go on Saturdays. Sometimes they took her to their parents, but mostly yes, Saturdays also. The positive side was that I was used to children. I realized that working with children isn't hard, but it's delicate.

Interviewer: What did you do with the child, I mean when she didn't sleep, what did you do in that free time?

Narrator: She was little, six months old, I sang some songs from when we were little to make her sleep. I gave her food, she had a schedule when to be fed...

Interviewer: Did you create her schedule or her mother?

Narrator: Her mother. I just stuck by those rules. I would prepare the food in the blender, fed her. She was a very good child, she slept when she was supposed to, she had everything on a schedule. She was very correct, wake up, sleep, sleep. I don't know, it wasn't hard for me to deal with her. With the exception of when she was sick, she was sick twice, which is normal. When children are sick, they're more... even as adults, when we're sick we have problems, let alone children.

When she was sick, I called her mother all the time, "What do I give her now, what do I do?" Because I was scared to make any decisions for someone else's child. Maybe she got tired of me calling, but there was nothing else I could do because I was scared. And how can you know, they can be allergic to something or their body might not respond well. But in general, she was a good child. I worked a lot with her, I loved her a lot. I got very attached to her, and she got attached to me, sometimes when her mother came after work, she would stay with me more, didn't go to her mother, she was attached to me.

Until she turned nine months old, when she was nine months old, we started coloring. She would draw some lines, and so on. Just so we would do some activities, I would let her watch television for half an hour, that's what her mother said, half an hour, but she never watched it for half an hour, she would immediately fall asleep. Maybe because she wasn't used to watching television, the moment she started watching it, she would fall asleep. So, I found the method to take her to sleep, *tak* {onomatopoeic} in front of the television (laughs) and she slept. And good, a good job, I learned a lot how to raise a child, I learned a lot.

Interviewer: How long did you babysit her?

Narrator: Until she turned one, six months.

Interviewer: What was the phase where you had to leave the little girl you babysat and had to continue your life like?

Narrator: Actually I quit, they didn't want to take her to kindergarten, they wanted me to look after her. Because I started doing activities with her, I wanted to teach her. I started to teach her to walk and

so on. I spent all my time with her and... but then I got pregnant and I had a pregnancy with problems and I couldn't continue working. The doctors forbid me from working, he said, "You have to stay home." And this was the reason I stopped, because I wouldn't have stopped, as much as I could. It was hard for all of us, for me and for the parent, and for the child.

I tried to stay in contact with her, I see her sometimes even know, she's grown up. But now she doesn't know me like then, it's different now. When I talk to her, she steps back, she is scared, you know, some kind... But it was very hard and I missed her a lot in the beginning *auf* {onomatopoeic}. There were a few times I even cried, when I remembered how she woke up in the morning, what she did, how she looked for me immediately. But when she turned one, they took her to kindergarten, I stopped, couldn't go anymore. It really was hard, luckily I didn't separate from my son, but then I didn't have my own child, it felt like separating from my own child, I was used to her, attached to her.