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## Khoule, Manadou

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# **AFRICAN IMMIGRATION RESEARCH PROJET- FORDHAM UNIVERSITY**

**By Karima Zerrou**

**Dr Mark Naison:**

**Today is November 18th 2008 at the Bronx Museum of Arts, we will be interviewing DJ Khoule, whose real name is Mamadou Khoulé and the major interviewer is Karima Zerrou. The interview will be conducted in French.**

**Where in Senegal did you grow up?**

*A Dakariof, dans Dakar proche de l'aéroport,*  
In Dakar, close to the airport

**How old were you when you first came to the United States?**

*20 ans*  
20 years old

**How long ago was that? In which year?**

*C'était en 2000*  
In 2000

**When you were in Dakar were you very involved then music?**

*Oui J'étais le meilleur DJ de mon temps*  
Yes I was the best DJ at the time – the No1 DJ Senegalese at the time

**Your name there was DJ Khoule?**

*DJ khoulé*

**How old were you when you first became interested in music?**

*À l'age de 15 ans*  
At Fifteen years old

**What was the music that you were the most influenced by as a DJ?**

*Tu sais au pays on mélange tout, Hip Hop etc. En boite de nuit on écoute pas trop la musique africaine donc on met surtout les musiques américaines et occidentales etc.*  
Back home we liked to play everything mostly but in the clubs, you can hear a lot of western music hip hop music not too much traditional music

**Who was your favorite hip hop artist when you began?**

*Tupac!!!*

**When did you get your first table to work with (table de mixage)?**

*C'est le foyer des jeunes de mon village qui me l'on donné, j'avais 15 ans*  
The community house gave it to me, when I was fifteen years old

**Is that a community center?**

*Oui c'est en général la que les jeunes se regroupaient pour des activités*  
Yes that's usually what you would have for young people to gather for activities

**What sort of housing did you live it? Public? Privat houses?**

*Les parents achetaient des maisons*  
Parents were buying houses

**The community center was just a place where the young people gathered and there had turn table? Turn table with Vinyl's or Cds?**

*A ce moment en 2000 il n'y avait pas de Cds on a commencé par des audio cassettes*  
In 2000, there were no Cds, and we used to mix with tapes

**And you mixed with vinyl's too? Only tapes? How did you do that?**

*Non je n'avais avec que des cassettes, on avait 2 machines à cassettes une pour écouter une pour balancer*  
No just tapes, I had two set for tapes, one was to listen and the other was to throw down

**Did you have a mixer?**

*No*

**Where did you learn the skill? Anyone taught you?**

*Quand j'étais jeune j'aimais la musique et les gens du foyer m'on donné de quoi mixer pour la communauté*  
When I was young I loved music so the community house wanted to encouraged me and gave me the opportunity because they saw I was passionate

**Did you play a musical instrument?**

*No*

**Did you dance?**

*Yes*

**Were you like a b-boy dancer or a break dancer?**

*J'étais un bon danseur j'ai même gagné des prix pour ça, pour la danse traditionnelle : le fonorat pas de break dancing*  
I was a good dancer; I even won prices for it, but for the traditional dance called Fonorat not break dancing

**Young people dress hip hop style and baggies clothes in Dakar?**

*Oui ça c'est sur, on est plus américain là bas!*  
Yes for sure, in Dakar they are often more American than here

**Did you have MTV in Dakar?**

*On n'avait pas ça ! On avait des amis qui nous envoyés des vidéos*  
No we did not; friends would send videos from the USA

**Did you have family or friends in USA when you were Younger?**

*Oui j'avais des amis!*  
Yes I had friends, connections here

**What was like your first party when you were DJ in Dakar?**

*J'ai organisé des soirées vendredi samedi dimanche et même Mercredi, à notre âge, 15 ans tu ne faisais pas de soirées jusqu'à 4 h du matin. On commençait à 9h et finissais à 2h -3h du mat !*

I was organizing evenings Friday Saturday Sunday and even on Wednesday, not party up till 4 am but short evening till 2ish party because we were young, like 15

**Did your skill come from the music you played or the things you said? Or you mixed better? What made you so good?**

*J'avais tous les sons, et je mixais tout !!! En Afrique on danse tout !*

I had all the new sounds; I would mix them all, in Africa we danced on everything!

**Did you ever rap?**

*Non, j'ai jamais essayé. Mais j'ai managé un groupe de rap à Dakar*

No never, but I managed a rap group in Dakar

**Did you know any of the people who were performing on the Africa underground?**

*J'ai le CD*

I have the CD

**Did you expect to come to united states eventually or you just thought you were going to stay in Dakar?**

*Oh moi mon papa c'est lui qui gérait la sécurité de l'aéroport donc je savais que j'allais sortir.*

Oh yeah my dad was the security of the airport and I knew I was getting out at some point

**Did you have family in NY when you came here?**

*Oui j'ai de la famille ici*

Yes family relative

**And they live in the Bronx?**

*Certains habitaient à Harlem et d'autres dans le Bronx, un peu partout*

Yes in Harlem, in the Bronx, all spread out

**As soon as after you came here did you start DJ?**

*2002*

**So meanwhile what kind of work did you do?**

*Je travaillais dans une compagnie de boutiques qui vendait des trucs*

I worked at a store selling stuff

**Did you graduate from high school in Dakar?**

*Je suis allé jusqu'au lycée mais pas l'université*

I went to high school a little but not to college

**Did you go to the university when you came here?**

*J'ai voulu faire technologie ici mais c'était trop cher*

I wanted to do technology when I came here but it was too expensive

**When you were DJ where was your first DJing job in NY?**

*La plantation est un night club dans le Bronx*

Plantation, a night club in the Bronx

**The plantation is it still there?**

Yes

**Was the crowd all African or was it mixed?**

*Mélangé*

The crowd was mixed

**How big is the plantation?**

*Plus de 250 personnes*

More than 250 persons

**By the way what made you leave Dakar you were doing so well?**

*Je suis venu car j'aimais la musique et à la TV tu vois l'Amérique et tu dis c'est à voir*

I came because I loved music and watching America on TV made really want to see what it was about

**Did you produce mix tape in Senegal?**

*Nan jamais*

No never

**And here?**

*J'ai fais une compilation mélange de musiques africaines et j'ai vendu*

I did an African compilation and I sold it

**Do you sell your compilation? Where could I buy the compilation?**

*Au magasin à la 116ème mais depuis j'en ai plus refais car il n'y a pas d'argent généré*

In store, 116th but it was in 2004, I didn't do again because there is no money there

**Where you were working in the plantation you were working with Cds then?**

Yes

**When you do a party do you bring your own equipment or do you use the equipment of the club?**

*Ca dépend si c'est dans un club j'amène mon laptop ou bien mes cds, mais si c'est dans une place j'amène tout mon matériel*

It depends if it's a club I bring my laptop or my CDs but in a hall I would bring all my equipment

**Do you work with vinyl or Cds?**

Cds

**How do you keep your collection of music up to date how do you get your tracks?**

*J'ai deux ordis et je copie les cds ou je prends sur internet*

I have two computers and I burn cds and download

**Which type of music you most like to play in your sets?**

*A part la musique africaine, j'aime le hip hop, dance, R&b, trip hop...*

Besides African music I like hip hop, dance, R&B, trip hop...

**So you have a show on the radio show "voice of Africa"?**

*Oui de 11 a minuit les mercredis*

Yes from 11pm to Midnight on Wednesdays

**Who is your audience? Are they mostly Senegalese?**

*Oui on parle Wolof*

Yes, mostly Wolof

**Did you DJing in walof when you talk to the people?**

*A la radio y a que les sénégalais qui écoutent c'est une radio sénégalaise, je travaille pour une association sénégalaise c'est pour ça...*

Only Senegalese listeners as it is a Senegalese radio, I do it for the association for American Senegalese

**The association of American Senegalese is they located in the Bronx or in Harlem?**

*Ils ont ici à Harlem*

In Harlem (116th)

Association of Senegalese of America

**Do you or this organization?**

Je travaille à la radio –

I work for them, for the show

**When you do parties? Where are most of your parties now?**

*Chaque trois mois j'organise des soirées, ça dépend, je choisis la salle*

Every three months I organized African parties, I chose the venue

**Senegalese still know your name so they come to your party?**

Yes

**Where are the halls you rent for the parties?**

*Le 31 décembre on a une soirée, 144 and Lennox*

Like this upcoming 31 we have a New Year's Eve party

**What is the name of the club?**

*C'est une salle de basket*

It's a basket-ball hall

**How many people were come in your parties?**

*D'habitude on a de 300 400 500 personnes*

Usually 300, 400 sometimes 500 people

**Do they have food also?**

*Des fois on vend*

Sometimes we do sell yes

**So you promote your own parties? Why not more than every 3 month?**

*Parce que la communauté sénégalaise ne se déplace pas souvent, si tu veux les mobiliser, il ne faut pas trop organiser*

Senegalese don't like to go out all the time so if you want them to come, you can't organize too many

**What about clubs, do you also dj in club?**

*Non j'ai arrêté l'année dernière car ma femme était tombé enceinte*

I was doing a lot of clubs but my wife got pregnant so I stopped for a while

**What did you feel when you first came here? Were you disappointed in the US when you arrived?**

*Oui, je suis déçu plus tu es la, plus tu as de factures à payer, trop de bill à payer, c'est trop cher*

I am disappointed, A lot of bills! The longer you stay here, the more bills you have!!expensive to live rent Electricity, food, etc.

**What about like the worst situation? Was that more difficult than you were expected?**

*Nan c'est pas ça c'est juste que depuis que je suis là je travaille*

No that's not it; it's just that since I have been here I have been working

**The DJ is the supplement your normal work? You could not just be a DJ?**

*Ca dépend, l'argent tu ne sais pas combien tu vas mettre. Comme l'année dernière, je travaillais dans un Bronx, toute l'Afrique se retrouvait la bas tous les week end, « Paris Bercy », 175 Street and Macomb*

It depends, it's unstable you do not know how much you are going to make. Well last year I was working in the Bronx in 175th in Macomb all Africa was there every week end "Paris Bercy"

**Are this mostly People from France speaking Africa or you get Malian Senegalese or including Nigerians etc.?**

*Tous les africains sont la ; Ils veulent que je revienne mais le problème qui se pose dans les boites de nuit, tu y es tout le temps, vendredi samedi dimanche, à partir de 10h tu dois être la bas pour pointer*

All Africans are there. They want me to come back but it's a problem for me because you have to be there all the time, Friday, Saturday, and on Sunday after 10pm you need to be there

**Is there much contact or socialization between Africans and African Americans in the Bronx or do Africans tend to stay in their own community more than socialize with African Americans, Latinos?**

*Bon on est ensemble*

Well, we are together

**Are you in a big apartment building? All communities get only well**

*Yes, yes*

**When your children get to be school aged, what is your sense of the school in the Bronx?**

*Il vient tout juste de naître on y a pas encore penser*

We did not think about this yet as he was just born

**Would you put him in the Bronx school?**

*Ca dépend on verra ce qui est le mieux*

Depends, we will see what the best thing to do is

**Do you see yourself continuing your DJ carrier as you get older or your do see yourself with your family doing other things?**

*Je viens tout juste de commencer, j'ai la vie devant moi*

I feel like I have just started! My entire life is ahead

**Are there Many DJs other than the two of you who are in the Senegalese community?**

*Y en a 2 autres*

2 others

**Do you travel to other cities?**

*Je suis tout le temps dans d'autres états Philadelphia, Ohio, Washington*

I'm often in other States like Philly, Ohio, and DC

**So the Senegalese know DJ Khoule in the US, have you ever gone to Canada?**

*Non j'ai pas de papiers*

No I do not have any papers, I would have liked to

**If you do not have papers you might not come back.....**

**So you have to have a green card to go outside and come back? Does your wife have papers?**

*Oui on s'est marié mais j'ai pas encore fais les démarches. Je ne suis pas encore allé voir un avocat.*

*C'est de l'argent et il faut les payer*

We are married but I did not undertake any steps yet or saw any lawyer because you have to pay him for that

**So is it is the same Problem if you go back to Senegal you might not be able to come back?**

Yes

**How long have you been here already?**

*Je suis la depuis 2000*

Since 2000

**Has your family have ever come to see you?**

*Mon père était là mais ma mère, elle essaye de venir.*

My dad was here but my mum she is trying to come...

**Wow it is like the video "this is my America" .....It's very expensive to get a green card?**

**If you take a lawyer how much you think he will be?**

*On s'est marié il y a à peine un an et plus, donc si je laisse du temps ils ne se diront pas que c'est un mariage arrangé*

We have been married a year and some ago now so I want to wait a little longer so they do not think it is an arranged marriage ...

**We know a Ghanaian who got married 6 times, 6 arranged marriages before he got his green card**

**Have you ever DJ on television?**

*J'ai fait .... mais pas ici, au pays*

I have already done a TV show at home not here though

**If you had the best Senegalese dj and we got this museum for you... How many people do you think you could bring here?**

*Ca dépend de la promotion*

Depends of the promotion

**If they could fit 500 people, you could get 500 people?**

*Bien sur,*

Of course

**This is the perfect location, so I think we should do something with the African Community at the Bronx Museum**

**When I moved here in 1999 there were not so many Africans, but now they are all over the streets**

*Les Africains habitaient à Harlem mais maintenant c'est cher,*

African lived in Harlem but Harlem became so expensive so, they came to the Bronx

**The Bronx is where everybody is living now because people got pushed out of Harlem by the rising rents**



*Moi je payais 1000 dollars dans un petit appartement a Harlem ...*

I was paying 1000 dollars in a small apartment in Harlem but I was told if I was to renew the lease I would pay At least 1300-1400 dollars

**Are there other African families in your building?**

*Oui, il y en a trop meme*

Too many actually

**Is this a tall building?**

*Il y a 6 étages.*

6 floors

**Do you see a life here; do you see yourself staying here?**

*C'est ce que j'ai dit à ma famille au pays*

I was just talking about this with my family back home

**Where is she from, your wife?**

*Sénégal*

*Moi je suis la, Pour l'instant je n'ai pas encore décidé d'y retourner. Si je retourne au pays qu'est ce que je vais faire, ici j'ai l'opportunité de faire DJ et de travailler,*

For now, I am here I do not plan to return. If I go back home, what am I going to do? Here I have the opportunity to DJ and work

**Do you think the schools here are better than there are in Senegal?**

*Ca dépend, les gens qui ont étudié au pays, sont plus fort que ceux d'ici. Au pays tu travailles de 9 a 5 ici on te dit de choisir tes heures*

Depends but seems like people who study back home are more educated than those here. Plus, back home, you go from 9 to 5 whereas here, you chose your own schedule pretty much

**People do not work as hard here?**

*Non c'est pas ça, mais au niveau éducation, ils veulent pas bousculer les gens ici*

Not really but it's just seems that they do want to shake people up here when it comes to schooling

**Back home we had to think outside the box, outside of your lessons**

**Do you think in the job you have worked coming from a better education a background has helped you or the people think ok you differently because you speak different languages ?...**

*Les africains sont polis, On ne vole pas on fait rien*

Africans are very polite .They do not steal nor do anything

**Coz that's the impression that I have talking to people who hire African workers, you are seen as the best labour force even at Fordham all security guards are Africans, in the stores also...**

**Would you see yourself eventually owning a club, or do you see yourself working as a DJ, would you like to own your own club?**

*J'aimerais bien, parce que les sénégalais même si ce n'est pas les soirées il y a les baptêmes, les réceptions, ils n'ont pas de place, ils louent à 2000 dollars !*

Senegalese may not go out all the time but they always have some to celebrate like you have birth, weddings ...they have not enough room they have to rent up to \$2000

**That would be something where you could become a center for the community in the Bronx great!**

**Is Barack Obama becoming president have a special meaning to you as somebody who comes from Africa or he's just another politician?**

*Je l'ai soutenu, J'ai même donné de l'argent pour sa campagne. Ce n'est pas le fait que c'est Obama, c'est un noir cela nous donne de la fierté*

I supported him and even gave him money for his campaign. I am proud because he's black of course

**Before we end is there anything that would you like to say from you're your experience here as people will listen to this or read this?**

*Ce que j'ai appris ici, la bas au pays tu vis avec ta famille, même si tu gagne un peu d'argent tu n'as rien à faire. Ici tu dois travailler pour te nourrir sinon tu seras welfare*

What I have learned here is that back home you live with your family you work, a little money and thats it, here you have to work hard to feed yourself otherwise you are welfare

**You have to work harder here than back home?**

*Yes*

*Si s'était quelque chose à refaire je ne serais pas revenu. C'est une prison sans portes*

Yes, if you had to do all again, I would not come here, I would not have come *it's a jail without doors*

*Si tu ouvre ta boite aux lettres tu ne vois que ce que tu dois payer.*

It's nothing else, here it's all about bills.

**What about credit cards?**

*No just Debit card only*

**Yes because that's what killed a lot of people here**

**A jail without doors? hmm....**

*Yes you are free to go but you will never go*

**The irony is what made the US what it is, if you take them from NY, it will not run the same way**

*Yes because we do the things they would not do*

**Yes this research is showing us all of this through your stories; at least the truth is on record. It was amazing, thank you to both of you**