

## **An American in Norway – 2003**

Narrator: Natalia and her family moved to Norway when she was a teenager. Here she talks about what it was like coming to a new country.

*Reporter: Natalia, you're an American, but you moved to Norway when you were sixteen years old. Is that correct?*

Natalia: That's correct. I began in what was then the ninth grade in Norway.

*Reporter: The ninth grade, so, you came right into lower secondary school?*

Natalia: Yes.

*Reporter: Now, that means, I suppose coming there, that's ... we are now talking right about seven years ago?*

Natalia: Yes. Actually, quite a long time now.

*Reporter: Okay, seven years ago coming over as an American into Norwegian school, you were probably kind of a cool object in that school. Is that true?*

Natalia: Well, actually it's quite a funny story because when I came into my new Norwegian class, I didn't speak Norwegian. And, of course, at that age as a girl you want to be as similar to everyone else as possible. So, I began my studies **very** quickly.

Being an American does, in fact, make you slightly cooler. But my fault ... or flaw was that I had never seen *Melrose Place*, and I had never eaten at McDonalds, because my family, of course, were [sic] health freaks. So, in that fact I have to say I dove there on the popularity points.

*Reporter: So, you weren't that popular as an American, because you weren't American enough. Now, that's strange.*

Natalia: That's the way it is, because Norwegians' picture, or especially young people's picture of America is, in fact, what you see on TV, and who's to blame them? That's the picture they get of America.

*Reporter: So, you are saying that the Norwegian television gives them a false picture, or American television gives them a false picture of Americans?*

Natalia: American television, of course, because that's the series that Norway buys.

*Reporter: So, they're both at fault. The Americans for making the programs and Norwegians*

*for actually showing them here, 'cause it's an unfair picture, you think?*

Natalia: I think all our television would be an unfair picture. I know the Norwegian soap operas give a wrong picture of Norwegians too, I hope.

*Reporter: I hope so too. Okay, but now, seven, eight years down the road as we move into the year two thousand and three, there's been a lot of trouble with America and this war on terrorism. What's it now like to be an American in Norway? Have you noticed any differences?*

Natalia: I quite often get tangled up in discussions which I think Norwegians, of course, like to be able to discuss something and know that they are right. Everyone does.

And ... Then, I think it's very difficult being half American, because human instinct would be to take a side.

Everyone will take a side if it's fighting with your neighbor, or the Middle East conflict. Everyone wants to be able to take a side. And that's very difficult when you come from two places, because you can see both sides.

Quite honestly you can see the positive and the negative. I can see the negative of the way America is handling its politics. I can see the way that Norway is handling **their** politics. So, think ... I feel it's **very** difficult to be of two nationalities. I have to admit quite often. I just don't mention it.

*Reporter: You pretend you're a Norwegian, then?*

Natalia: Absolutely. But my mother is Norwegian. Of course, she's lived in America even longer than I have, of course, 'cause I was born there. And she has a very, very strong passion **for** America. And I think ... I think elder people too have a tendency to wanna take a side.

So, as soon as I mention that, I have a feeling that the American politics aren't going so well, then I am criticized for being anti-American. And that's such a typical example of how people turn it all around, and they want to see it black and white when it really isn't.

*Reporter: Okay, so you... Do you feel like... Typ... Does anybody made you feel uncomfortable here in the last while, because you are an American?*

Natalia: Yes, slightly. I think if I had been a slightly weaker person, I probably would have felt personally wounded. But I can't really take it seriously, because I am an

individual and we are talking about very big states, in the way they act. Of course it's very difficult to take it personal, I have to admit.

*Reporter: Okay, so, what are you gonna be in the rest of your life? Are you gonna be a Norwegian, an American, an American-Norwegian, or a global child?*

Natalia: I think I'm gonna be an American-Norwegian, because I began in America, and I am in Norway now. And I think it's ... I think it's ... I am very proud of having two nationalities, because I think I have lots of possibilities there. I can actually go live in America, and I can live in Norway. And ... I think I should hold on to that.