

Interview with a 46- year-old Senior Security Aviation Officer

E.S. indicates the interviewee

E.B. indicates the Dickinson College interviewer

K.A. indicates another Dickinson College interviewer

ES: I live presently at Lookout.

EB: At Lookout?

ES: Yes.

EB: And where did you formerly live?

ES: I was formerly living at Windy Hill, that is the Eastern side of the island. But to the volcanic eruption, we had to evacuate.

EB: So, is that nearby Plymouth?

ES: No, Windy Hill is about, say, five miles from the capital.

EB: So, why did you have to evacuate? Was it just from...?

ES: Because the area, the Eastern part is also devastated. So we had to, you know...

EB: How long have you lived at Lookout for?

ES: I've been living there for about...three years now.

' Everybody cannot leave, somebody has to stay and help the rebuilding proces.

To tell the truth, if I had to stay in, what do you call them, them shelters...I would have left, I would have left Montserrat. Because shelter life was very deplorable at times, and people thief and go on other sort of things, so I don't think that I could have coped with shelter life because I visit some of my friends, (hits the camera cord) sorry, living in the shelter and I see how they...cope, and you know, I couldn't do that.

EB: How many...or, how long were they living in the shelters for?

ES: Some people were living in the shelters for up to five years.

EB: Really...

ES: Yea, because now the government is planning on initiative of building more houses so that people can get to...people outside that want to return and Montserratians that, who don't have their home can also get it. Because they have something they call Family Units, some similar like they have down at Defense Forces, they have some like similar down at Gerald's Bottom there; that people living in, so they're trying to get them out and get them into proper housing as well.

EB: And that is what Lookout is like? Is that what they're leaning towards?

ES: Yes, Lookout and the Shimlands(?) area, yea, but Lookout they're doing a phase-free(?) they're doing phase-free(?) to get those people in proper houses.

EB: Okay, and, do you like living at Lookout?

ES: So far, yea. The area is not bad, it's, you know, it's a nice view, you can see Antigua, and it's very windy. It reminds me of where I originally lived in Windy Hill.

EB: Mmhmm.

ES: So you know...And the only problem I have with that is that the houses are a bit too close and we're not accustomed to that from where we...but you know it's a different environment that we have to try and live in separate, you know...

EB: So the people that you live with, or live around in Lookout, they're all, or they were all displaced?

ES: Yes, you have people from the South, you have people from Central, people from Plymouth, and far-East.

EB: So all over...

ES: Yes.

EB: And do they all get along? I mean...

ES: So far, yea. They get along well. It's a sort of mixed society from different community.

EB: ...different neighborhoods...

ES: ...so I was never in shelter and I was living in house all the time. All I moved was between house.

EB: That's fortunate.

ES: Very fortunate. And I got for that here, you know?

EB: And is the application process to get one of those houses very competitive? Is it difficult?

ES: Yes, it take time. And you have to, like, get behind them. You know, because sometime you apply and hear nothing from them and have to ask what is happening and go and negotiate, but during time to rent those houses sold to distributor I had to leave and go on holiday. So, our next friend that was living close to me went and did it on the behalf of me because he said he liked me, he know me as neighbors, so he wanted to...because some of them are two-bedroom house but they're sort of like back to back. Like, one person can livin' on this side and the other person live on this side, but different, you know, apartments that you can move into.

EB: Do families have a harder time trying to find housing because they're larger as opposed to someone living by themselves?

ES: Yes, because they build a lot of single bedroom houses, because it is easier for a single person, like me, and um, families that have five and six [children], or a husband and wife, like that, have to wait until [they build] two or three bedroom houses are built, and that takes a lot longer time.

KA: Ok. Um, I know that um, in speaking with a lot of the um, people around here, just, you know, when we're going out and just seeing the island, that some have expressed a desire to go back to Plymouth or go back to their old homes where they grew up, do you think, I mean, do you also wish that you could, at what, like later on in life, be able to go back to the place where you grew up and just, and build your house there and live there?

ES: That's a good question because I think about it a lot of times. And um, if I should say...No. No, I wouldn't go back to Windy Hill. Although I love it with a passion.

ES: Plymouth was taken by the volcano

ES: It's a government problem is to get houses for the people.