

## Interview with a Middle-Aged Male Photographer and Store Owner

K.W. indicates the interviewee

T.R. indicates the Dickinson College interviewer

K.W.: Yeah it was the Soufriere was there you know, you know its been there and uh [1 second pause] you know it was uh, it was like, it was used as a little as a place for an outing trip for some of us as families would picnic at the Soufriere Hills or whatever the case may be and we'll take tourists there. But we never thought anything, it never crossed our minds at any point in time that

T.R.: Uh huh.

K.W.: this thing would erupt.

T.R.: Uh huh.

K.W.: Never. [1 second pause] For me it never, it never crossed my mind. And I'm sure for a, I can speak for a lot of us, you know we never thought about it.

T.R.: Uh huh.

K.W.: Because I mean I guess if it was, if it was in my mind or if I was thinking about it I would never have built a house in Plymouth myself.

T.R.: Yeah.

K.W.: You know, uh, so.

T.R.: Uh huh. And do you think most of the people from Plymouth have moved or have they left the island, migrated away?

K.W.: A lot of them migrated.

T.R.: Uh huh.

K.W.: [2 second pause] A lot of them, because in the early stages of the crisis I mean it was it was pure chaos on the North side based on the fact that [1 second pause] people...people were confused because I mean maybe because of the information they were getting from the scientists and the government and also because a lot of them who wanted to buy lands and maybe even build another house couldn't get lands to buy at that point in time

T.R.: Uh huh.

K.W.: and a lot of us didn't want to move into shelters [2 second pause]

T.R.: Yeah.

K.W.: you know. So um, [car goes by] you know, a lot of them migrated.

T.R.: Uh huh. Did you ever visit any of the shelters or see them kind of first hand?

K.W.: I visited quite a few of the shelters, um, during the early stages of the crisis because I, you know I had to take pictures of them [2 second pause] for the media whatever the case may be and based on the fact that I was documenting this whole thing um I figured it was in my interest also to have stuff like that [car goes by] in my archives so I did visit quite a number of the shelters here.

T.R.: Uh huh. What was your kind of, what was your reaction to those?

K.W.: Well, [3 second pause] I felt sorry for the people who lived in the shelters, because I know [car goes by] I couldn't live like that, not even for [3 second pause] a day,

T.R.: Uh huh.

K.W.: you know. I guess, I guess, if I wasn't fortunate in finding a house to rent or whatever, um I would have probably left the island myself.

T.R.: And so you rented a house when you had to [1 second pause] migrate?

K.W.: Yes oh yes.

T.R.: And where where did you rent houses?

K.W.: Well in Foxes Bay and Salem, St. Peters quite a number of places. [chuckles]

T.R.: Uh huh.

K.W.: Because uh I had to move quite a few times, because, yeah...

T.R.: Ok [1 second pause] and so when you were moving were you moving were you moving in groups or were you moving alone or ...

K.W.: No no no whenever I move I move pretty alone because, you know [car goes by] its just myself

T.R.: Uh huh.

K.W.: So [2 second pause] but I stayed in, uh ah you know I stayed in Plymouth for a while actually, I didn't actually [2 second pause] move out of Plymouth until uh [4 second pause] mid mid mid 97, you know because I still, you know my house was there and its like uh most of my stuff is still there

T.R.: Yeah.

K.W.: Because you know I mean if [3 second pause] if I as I said if I wanted close to the volcano [car goes by] it would be easy for me to do it from Plymouth and you know it was easy access for me so um [large car goes by] it was easy access for me so I stayed there for a while yes I did. I was actually living in Foxes Bay too, but most of my time was still spent in my house in Plymouth.

T.R.: Uh huh, and were there many people left in Plymouth in 97?

K.W.: Uh, just a few, just a handful of us, yes, [chuckle]

T.R.: Many was it older people, or was it just kind of...

K.W.: One or two older people and a few guys my age, yep. Because you know I guess we were like [cars going by, honk] waiting for the last minute. Or maybe we wanted to be the last to move out you know or something.

T.R.: Um hum.

K.W.: You know, it was only a handful of us left.

T.R.: Uh huh. So when you were still there in 97, was it mainly just ash that had hit Plymouth or?

K.W.: A lot of ash, we had some heavy ash falls in Plymouth during those periods. Where um we would have like pumice falling and I mean rocks falling you know heavy ash clouds, where you had like 2 inches of ash on the ground

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K.W.: Yeah it has changed, um [3 second pause] it has changed quite a lot over here on this side, because I remember, um, [2 second pause] I remember in the 80s, early 90s, were very very few homes on the north side of the island, you know.

T.R.: Uh huh.

K.W.: Very little happening over here but now we have huge buildings going up all over the place over here so its, [1 second pause] it's a tremendous change,

T.R.: Uh huh.

K.W.: you know over here for the north people, and also for the people of Montserrat because um [1 second pause], you know, I'm sure in their wildest dreams they never thought that over here would have been this developed, you know.

T.R.: Uh huh.

K.W.: But I guess it happened because [2 second pause] because of the crisis you know and there is no where else to go but the north side of the island so

T.R.: Uh huh.

K.W.: uh you know yes yes it has defiantly changed a lot.

T.R.: Uh huh. Do you think that has changed the way people think of the island or the way people think of the community here?

K.W.: No, I mean everything I think remain the same. I mean, the community is still closely knit, everybody knows everybody and what not so uh, [2 second pause] nothing changes really except or the south side of the island that's destroyed, but the people are still the same people,

T.R.: Uh huh.

K.W.: you know, yeah.

T.R.: Ok.

K.W.: One, one big family, everybody, everybody knows everybody, and uh, you know, and uh, the place is quiet, [car goes by] the people are friendly, um, [3 second pause] so its still the same as usual, nothing changes and you know, in the terms of you know, the people,

T.R.: Uh huh.

K.W.: I think they are still same, we just, right now we have influx of um of people from other islands coming here, like lets say um [honk] Diana, Trinidad, uh Jamaica, and um who moved here to live so um they right now their almost, if we have a population of about 5,000 people I think uh I think half of them might be people from off island as well, but they come here and they fall right in line with the way we live here you know,

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T.R.: So have you visited exactly where your house is in Plymouth when you go down?

K.W.: Yeah, its still there, half of it is buried, but um, you know the top of it is still there and uh [2 second pause] whenever I go in to Plymouth I always go back to my house, but just [2 second pause] for the heck of it not, not that I, not that I'm missing anything or you know feeling sorry for myself, nothing like that. [1 second pause] Just to see it.

T.R.: Just to see. So do you go inside or anything like that?

K.W.: Yeah, I would always roam around, [TR laughs] I'd roam around my house, I'd roam around my mom's house which is just about uh uhhhh 30 meters away from my house, but [2 second pause], you know I'd always roam through both houses when ever I go there.

T.R.: Um hum.

K.W.: Yeah. [2 second pause] And uh, well I would always remember my childhood days there, you know whenever I go there I'd always you know, one of the things I would always remember is my childhood days there. You know, I mean, sort of put a smile on my face, I don't know why, but [chuckle]

T.R.: Uh huh.

K.W.: that happens.

T.R.: Uh hm. Were you able to, I mean you say you go back to your house and things like that, but were you able to get most of your possessions and that kind of thing out?

K.W.: Yeah, yeah I did I did I did salvage a lot of stuff, [car goes by] well I got most of my stuff out [2 second pause] early. Some of the stuff I had to leave it there, based on the fact that there was a shortage of storage space over here on the island, you know and uh you know uh you know everybody was crammed for space [3 second pause] so some of the stuff had to stay there until when I could find [1 second pause] the time

T.R.: More room for it

K.W.: And space for it.

T.R.: Uh huh.

K.W.: You know like uh, whether it was beds, refrigerators, stove, whatever the case maybe. I mean I salvaged those at the last minute actually, because I didn't have any place to put them, but you know all the other items that I could have moved at an early stage I did move them.

T.R.: Uh huh.

K.W.: Even before the government say to move them, [both laugh]

T.R.: Get out fast?

K.W.: But um, you know I moved them, but still I was living there because I wanted to be there.

T.R.: Uh huh. [2 second pause] And so, you said that you had migrated quite a few times over the course of the island, was that because you moved to places that were later evacuated or..

K.W.: Yeah... like Foxes Bay for instance, um I was living there and uh you know [2 second pause], then we had to move because they said it was dangerous to live there and uh so from Foxes Bay I moved to Salem, and then there was a problem and you know they were talking about moving Salem also which was which is a bit further than Foxes Bay and uh you know after the talk came up I decided to moved in to St. Peter's, that's another village further north, [2 second pause] you know, so um, you know, I I had my share of [car goes by] moving as well, I mean its not fun, but you know, [2 second pause, car goes by] you have to do what you have to do.

T.R.: Um hum.

K.W.: You know and, this is my last stop here. [KW laughs]

T.R.: Uh huh.

K.W.: Yeah there is no more moving [TR laughs] to do from this side anyway. [KW laughs]

T.R.: Uh hm. And when were you able to move here?

K.W.: Well, actually, um this place here I um I moved into this place here uh I opened this up [2 second pause] this shop I opened up in 19, late 1997 yeah, because I uh, [3 second pause] you know I had fix the place up,