

Interview with
DONALD RAMOS FERNANDEZ

August 4, 2023

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DONALD RAMOS FERNANDEZ

Donald Estuerdo Ramos Fernandez was interviewed by Caitlinn Grimm on August 4, 2023, in St. George, Washington County, Utah. He related his experiences as a Latino in St. George. Cameron Nielsen also participated.

CG: Today is August 4th. This is Caitlinn Grimm, and we are interviewing Donald Ramos today, and Cameron Nielsen is the recorder. We're at Utah Tech University Library.

So Donald, can you please state and spell your full name?

DR: Okay. My full name is Donald, D - O - N - A - L - D, Estuerdo, E - S - T - U - E - R - D - O. My first last name is Ramos, R - A - M - O - S. My second last name is Fernandez, F - E - R - N - A - N - D - E - Z, Fernandez. So we have two names and two last names.

CG: What languages do you speak?

DR: Well, I speak Spanish, and I'm trying to speak English. [Laughter]

CG: Yes, thank you. And where were you born?

DR: I was born in Guatemala, so I am originally from Guatemala. This is the country. Some people don't know where Guatemala is located, and some people ask and say, "Oh, Guatemala's in Africa, or in the ocean Pacific?" I say, "No. Guatemala's in Central America. Only Mexico [divides] Guatemala and [the] United States." So I was born in a [town]. The name is Mazatenango. Mazatenango, Suchitepéquez. It is in the south of Guatemala, close to the ocean.

CG: Can you tell me about your childhood and family?

DR: Yes. So like I said before, I am from, originally, a little town. The name is San Antonio. My childhood is normal, like normal people that grew up in Latin America. So I came from good parents. Also, my mother is a nurse in Guatemala. She is retired now'. And my father's – he's a professor. He teach[es] – he loves teach[ing] in elementary school, especially. And I [grew up] in a little town. I [walked] to school. That was in the '80s. [Laughter] That was a little more safe in this country at this time. And [it was] normal, so I was happy. I have seven siblings. With me, we were eight [children]. And yes, I loved my childhood. So like normal kids, I had pets, like dogs and cats. And I played a lot of soccer. Soccer is in my blood. [Laughter] I [watched cartoons a lot growing up]. In this time there is no internet, so there is only one or two channels on the TV. At a specific hour, you need to turn on the TV to see the special cartoon if you like it. So yeah. So I don't know if I need to extend more about my childhood –

CG: No, that's great.

DR: – or whatever you want. So I can talk more, a lot. And, uh, so about the food, so in Latin America, we eat a lot of tortillas, beans, and rice. And yeah. So [I] was happy. That was a happy childhood. So I am so grateful. My two parents are still alive. My siblings, too, are still alive. So I haven't lost any brothers or sisters. That was good. So I hear of stories that [are] hard [about] siblings, brothers and sisters pass away, or parents, or the mother or the father. But I [was blessed to live] together with my parents, and I was so happy to live in Guatemala in my childhood. My school, elementary school. So, yeah.

CG: Can you tell me about school?

DR: Yeah, school. In Guatemala, in Latin America, there's a government school and private school. So I attended a government school, because that's free. [Laughter] It was free. Like I said before, so I walked like, uh, maybe a mile to my house to the school, but that was a safe place. [I had classes] in math, grammar, and history. I love history. That was maybe my [favorite subject. I had] homework assignments. And like I said before, in this time, there's no internet. So we need to go to the library and [get] some books, and so forth. [We played] soccer, and sometimes we played basketball. I wasn't good in basketball. Maybe in other sports, but I only play a lot of soccer. And yeah. So that was a divided [school], because [I studied in a boy's only] elementary school.

CG: Oh, okay.

DR: Yes. Only [boys], and no girls. When I started, we [called it] 'básico' – but here in the United States, it'd be maybe seventh grade, seventh and eighth grade – that was mixed [a school for boys and girls].

CG: Okay.

DR: Yeah. So I was taking classes with girls. In my family, [we were taught] to be respectful with girls, because in my family, we are four boys and four girls, so I had four sisters. So I know how to be very polite with attractive girls. And also, I [have been a member] of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints all my life. And I grew up in the church. I am strong in the church, with my parents and my family. My parents showed us how to respect everybody, every person, to be respectful.

CG: Thank you. Did you play soccer for the school, or just outside of school?

DR: Yeah. So the school in Guatemala, it started at seven in the morning. It finished at noon, or sometimes at one after noon. But after [I returned] to my house and [had] lunch, I'd play [soccer for] three or four hours outside my house. And when I was like six or seven years old, one of my neighbors was a coach, and he told me, he said, "Oh, you are a good [player]. I want to have a team. You want to come to my team?" "Yes, this is my dream, to be on a team." And that's when I started to play with a club in soccer. And, well, I don't want to say, like, I was the best in my country or the best in my state, but I can say I was a good player in soccer, like, after this coach [helped train] me. [We won soccer

games] in the town, the state, and almost in the country...

CG: Cool. How was high school? Did you do high school?

DR: Yes. High school is like – uh, in Latin America, it's a little different. In high school, we can choose a career in Guatemala. So in high school, I took [the pathway to] be teacher. And I started taking classes to be a teacher in high school. That was good. I liked it. I love to teach. For this reason, I say, like, "Oh, I have a whiteboard, so I can ... [draw on it], I can show my story with a picture." But now it's – also, I took some classes here – well, it was Dixie State University. Now it's Utah Tech – for being a Spanish teacher. But now, it's very different to teach this new generation. Yeah. My generation was more, like, with papers, and whiteboards, and everything. Now it's more computers and [the] internet. And it's very different, how to teach now. Yeah. But that was my high school. So I had beautiful memories with my classmates in high school. Also, we continued to be friends through the years, my high school friends.

CG: That's great. Did you do any extracurriculars other than your club soccer, or – like theater? Did you attend dances?

DR: Well, in high school, actually, ...we [had a] festival in theater. And yeah, so I was in drama, dancing, everything. And I have some medals for being the best in theater and dancing, too. Yeah. But that was a long time ago. [Laughter] Now I am old [laughter].

CG: [Laughter]. So you mentioned you were a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Can you describe some of your favorite religious or cultural traditions you grew up with?

DR: Oh, yeah. So, like, a member of the church, so we loved to be family. Families was the [focal] point in our religion. And we serve missions. We prepared in our childhood [to serve a] mission. And that was one of the strongest points in our religion, is to serve in missions for [the young men]. And girls are invited to serve in mission, too, like in service in community, in service in our neighborhood, our family, and respect God, respect the Sabbath day, and respect other religions. Because now, I live in Utah it's different. So the church is very strong in Utah. But not all the world is like Utah. It's different. Like in my school, it was a huge school, but I was maybe – there was, what, my brothers and other friends. Maybe in four or five hundred people, we have only ten or fifteen members in this school. So the other kids are good kids. They [belong to other] religions, but those are good kids... Utah is different, totally different... [What I like] most ... in my church is that families are forever. Yeah. And I love this one, my family.

CG: Did you have cultural traditions you grew up with, like festivals or like community events?

DR: Yeah. So Latinos have a lot of traditionals. Some traditions in the world, when you are out of this tradition, you can see if it's a good tradition or it's not a good tradition.

CG: [Chuckles]

DR: But like I say, in my country, my family, we are very respectful. When we're [having] breakfast, lunch, and dinner, we pray before we start to eat. And this is the tradition from Guatemala. After you finish, to finish your lunch or your breakfast, you always say, "Muchas gracias" It's like saying, "Thank you so much for the lunch." To your mom or dad, or ... [whoever prepared the food]. And the people answer, "Buen provecho." That means, "You're welcome." That's a good tradition. And this is my tradition, and I teach my kids to start this tradition here in [the] United States. And also, we pray wherever we are. Sometimes we are in the restaurants or in another house, and we pray [to] be grateful for the food, for the day. So this is a good tradition in my family. I continue with this tradition. Yeah.

And another tradition is ... in Latin America ... [is that the families are really close]. So I [have lived] for almost fourteen years in United States, but I call my parents every other day, or sometimes every day, to see how [my parents are, how my family is]. I talk with my brothers, with my sisters, also with my parents. And I am [really] close [with them]. I am so sad sometimes when I hear [people say] here, like, "Oh, I don't know how my mom [is doing]," or, "I don't know where my brother is. I have [gone] two or three years [without talking to] my brother or my sister." ... I don't know how this is possible, because I try to talk with my parents every day. This is a tradition. Sometimes, like I said, a tradition, when we have some hard days or hard times – for example, when one of my brothers is sick or one of my parents is sick, we say, "Okay. Tonight, at eight o'clock, we are going to be together on cell phones or on a video call, and we [will] pray together." So all [of my family is connected, even] if I'm here in the United States, one of my brothers is traveling to Brazil, or my [family is] in Guatemala. [During] these hours, we're connecting, and we pray [together]. So we're still together. It doesn't matter if I'm out of Latin America – and this is a tradition. So we continue to be together.

Another tradition is, I am – so I have my wife. I have my kids now. But I [will] continue to respect my parents. When I need help, [or have a] hard decision in my life, I always talk with my parents. I say, "Dad, Mom, I need to do this one. What is your [opinion]?" So I ask my father or my mother if they support or not support my ideas. So this is a tradition. Because I know some families that say, "Oh, no, I don't talk with my parents. It's my life. It's my life." No disrespect, but this is my tradition. I continue to respect my parents [our elders].

And about festivals, well, [laughter] the first tradition I saw [that's] different here was Christmas.

CG: Okay. Can you describe that?

DR: Yeah. For example, in Latin America, Christmas [starts on] Christmas Eve. So we [are all gathered] together, and we prepare a [lot of] food and presents. And when it's midnight, like it's Christmas, really it's Christmas, we start to eat and open the presents, the gift. And we dance. And always at midnight, we give you a huge hug, say, "Merry

Christmas,” with your parents, and your family, or your friends, or your neighbor, whatever people. And also, we wear new clothing for Christmas.

CG: Okay.

DR: Yeah. Like, my wife said, “Why new clothing for Christmas?” But when I’m coming here, yeah, so we wear new clothing. But you wear new pajamas. [Laughter] The tradition is pajamas. They say, wow, that one’s different. And here, the tradition is Christmas in the morning. Santa Claus, the kids are, like, “Ah, it’s Christmas! Where’s the present?” So that was different. That was the traditional difference. Sorry, I am boring you?

CG: Oh, no, that’s great.

DR: Okay. [Laughter] I talk a lot.

CG: It’s great.

CN: This is really interesting.

CG: Yeah. We can jump ahead a little bit, but what have you – you talked about it a little bit. Sorry. What have you changed since childhood or coming here?

DR: What changed?

CG: Yeah.

DR: Okay. So that was a good question. Good, very good question. So do you know, when I’m coming here, first we need to translate everything that is Spanish to English. To process in your brain, it’s a little slow sometimes. So could, you know, [snaps fingers] to be spontaneous, so you need to translate everything. Your life starts a little [slower than] normal. When I came here to the United States, I love the United States. It’s a beautiful country. Now it’s my country. And I love this country. I love Utah. This is my country. This is my state now. And I respect the laws and respect the people. Do you know how blessed you are to live here in the United States? Sometimes, do you know? Really, do you know?

CG: I’m sure I don’t really understand, yeah.

DR: Sometimes when the people [have] never been out [of] the United States –. Some people say, “Yes, I’m traveling to this country.” But traveling, it’s different than living in a [different] country. But we have a lot of blessings in the United States. Like I said, in my childhood, I was so happy. I had nothing, but we’re happy. I was happy with only one ball, a plastic ball. Like, I played with a plastic ball. And I was happy all day with my friends and everything.

When I come here to United States, the first difference is, I learn about, “This is my space.” I hear the first time, “This is my space.” What does it mean, “This is my space”? My space means you’re there, I’m here. Please don’t bother me. Don’t ask me. Don’t say hi to me. You are you; I am me. In Latin America, every time we saw a new person, we come and be friendly. We shake their hands, and we have a hug. “Hey, what’s your name?” And we have a kiss. Always, we have a kiss. I come here in United States, and, “No, that’s my space. Don’t touch me.” Okay. Okay. So that is okay. That was a little different to me, because that’s make me more like – I can say one word. I feel like I was more friendly in my country, that I’m more friendly than United States, because for the rules in United States. But now I understand what’s the rule in United States. But when I come for the first time, I don’t understand this one. I trying to shake the hands of every person, but my wife said, “No, no, no. It’s different.” Why it’s different? Because every person has the space. Every person has the time. So for some reason in United States, time is very valuable. Time costs money in United States. In Latin America, we have time. Like, I remember when I back to my country to visit my family and my friends, I never need to call. “Hey, could you – are you available this afternoon or tomorrow to have some lunch with you?” No, never. We only, “Hey,” [knocks on table] knock the door, “I’m here!”

CG: [Laughter]

DR: “Hey, where is the party?” “Oh, come on. It’s time [for] breakfast. Come on.” You have breakfast. But here in the United States, we need to be scheduled all the time. And I understand now, because you’re trying to reschedule for me for this interview. I was so busy. So busy. I said, like, “Oh, yes. Now I understand.” But when I come for the first time, I don’t understand this one, your life. If you have some day to visit another country, I don’t say only Latin America, schedule times, it’s not like here, or Germany, or another country. So we spend time with friends. We spend time with friends. And I miss this one, spending time with friends and with neighbors. So that’s the difference. I don’t know if I answered your question.

CG: Oh, yeah, that’s great.

DR: Okay.

CG: So, what brought you to St. George?

DR: Why am I here in St. George?

CG: Yeah.

DR: Okay. That’s a good story. That’s a good story. Some people ask me, “Why are you here in the United States,” before why I am here in St. George? This is my story. I am not saying every story is the same, every story is different, but this is my story. And I married ... my wife in Guatemala. I was taking classes in university, and I never [thought] that I would come here to live in the United States. That wasn’t in my plans. So we [were]

married, ... had a wonderful life. And my first daughter, Khayla, was born in Guatemala. And, well, a perfect life. I'm married. I have a daughter. I had a good [job]. Everything is okay.

But one day, my wife and I [felt] like we needed to move to the United States. And I said, "Maybe this is not for me, because I don't speak English and I need to in order to live in the United States." But my wife had the same feeling. We needed to move to the United States. But one day in a special building, that we call temples, I felt, and my wife felt, too, a strong spirit tell us that we need to come to the United States, because it's a better opportunity for my kids, and stronger country, a more safe country. And, well, I said, "This comes from the Lord." When Heavenly Father or Jesus Christ say something, we need to [obey]. And I talked with my wife. My wife said, "Yes, we need to go to the United States." Now it's better for our daughter. Maybe, if we have more kids, it's more opportunity for our kids than in Latin America.

So we came to live in Idaho, in Emmett. And in [those] days, like I respect the laws in the United States, I applied for my residence, and my residence was very fast. Like, in a few months I got my green card. But really? [Laughter] Idaho was very cold for me. It got a lot of snow. I am not [built] for the cold. I love heat. I love heat. And I [told] my wife, "Well, I don't know if I can live [laughter] here in Idaho for the rest of my life. We need to find another place to live for me, for work, for everything." And my wife said, okay, so we can move to Salt Lake City in Utah. But I said, "Well, Salt Lake City's a beautiful city, but [laughter] it's still too snowy and it's got a lot of cold." And one of my cousins – I have a cousin in Los Angeles, L.A. He invited me to L.A. I liked L.A., but it's a big city, a huge city ... My wife and I, we prayed again if it's okay to move [from] Idaho to L.A. And we felt like it's not okay [to go to] L.A., for my kids.

And this day, one of my friends come to visit here in St. George their family. And he call me. He say, "Hey, where are you? I'm here in United States. You?" "Yeah, me, too. Where you are now?" "I'm in St. George, Utah." "St. George?" I heard of St. George [from a church movie]. There was a beautiful miracle here in St. George. That President Snow have a beautiful miracle for the tithings here in St. George. I do not know if you are LDS, but this is a wonderful story. I said, "Yes, I remember this movie in St. George." But my friend say, "St. George, now it's very hot here." "Oh, my. I love hot!" "No, yeah, now it's hot here." That was in this day, in August. And I say, "How big is the city?" "No, the city is small. It's not a big city." "And it's still in Utah? Wow." "Yeah." So it's Utah, no cold, no snow, it's not a big city. Well, it sounds good for me. And I told my wife. I say, "Hey my friend lives in St. George." "Let's move to St. George?" And we prayed. And this is the crazy thing. We [moved] with nothing. I [had] a Honda car, two kids, my [daughter] Khayla, who was born in Guatemala, and my second is a boy, Rhylan. He was born in Idaho. Only with my car, my wife, my two kids, I left Idaho to come to St. George. No place to live. No work. No family. Only with hope. Hope to find a place to live with my family, and with the guidance of our Heavenly Father. And I remember [emotional] these days. I come here, and I fall in love to St. George. And I say, "This is the place for my family, for my wife, and for my kids." The first day was hard, because I lived – when this, my friend, in our house, believe it or not, we lived – we are

homeless in my family. And like a father, I pray to my Heavenly Father. I say, "Father, you told me this is the city that I need to live with my family, and I'm here. Show me the way, how I can progress in this city." And so, I ... started to work in landscaping. Those were hard times. But Heavenly Father blessed me to live in the United States and to live here in Utah. And now we are here in St. George. And I love St. George. Good place for me, a nice place.

CG: Thank you for telling us that story. So you were in landscaping when you first got here, because that's the job you could find?

DR: Yes.

CG: Can you tell me about your work now?

DR: Yeah. So I started to work in landscaping here in St. George. It's very hard, because the earth here, it has a lot of stone, it's a desert. So it's very different [from] where I grew up. In Guatemala, you drop the seed, and the seeds grow in the lawn, because it's raining. It's spring all the time in Guatemala. But here, wow. To work outside, out of the house, you had to do something that's hard. So I started to work in landscaping, but that was different [for me], because in my country, I [had worked] office [jobs my whole life]. [Laughter] In an office. But now I need to work with – you know how landscaping, and construction are. That was very different.

And one day, I said to my wife, I can't work ... like this [anymore]. It's less money, and it's very hard. And my wife said, "Yes." So I quit this work, and we prayed with my wife. And you are going to see in all my story the hand of the Heavenly Father to guide my family, in all my story, because this is true. So we prayed with my wife, and [on that] day, when I quit the job, we had an appointment with my kids for the dentist, in children's dental. And we went with my wife. I was so sad, because I [did] not have work, but my wife [had made an] appointment with my kids. But we, with my wife, all the time we're talking in Spanish. She has blonde hair. She is American. But she speaks very well in Spanish. When we're having this appointment, all the time in the office we're talking in Spanish, and English, too, but more in Spanish, but English, too. When we finished this appointment with my kids, [as we were leaving] the office, one beautiful lady, an angel for us, came to say, "Hey, [are] you looking for work?" to my wife. My wife said, "No." "Are you interested [in] working?" Remember, I did not have work. And my wife said, "Well, we need work. So, yeah." "You can. If you want to, you can work with them, with us in this beautiful office." And my wife said, "Okay, thank you. So [do] I need to talk with someone?" "No. I am the owner of this office. I offer the work for you, because you speak Spanish, and I need someone like you, that speaks English and Spanish." So it was a blessing for us. And my wife started to work in dental office. I extended my answer for you, or that was okay?

CG: It's good. Yeah.

CN: Please keep going.

DR: Okay. [Laughter] And well, I can talk a lot. [Laughter] But short story: one day, after this time, one of my friends said, “Why are you not taking classes in Dixie State University?” “Oh, this is expensive.” I came to see how I needed to pay for in Dixie, and he said, “Well, you can take ESL classes to learn more English in Dixie.” But that was so expensive for me. But I prayed with Heavenly Father, and the answer [I received was,] “I will provide for you.” And I applied to take classes in Dixie. Yeah. I started taking classes in Dixie. Now it’s Utah Tech. That was in 2014, almost ten years ago, right? When I started taking classes here, I met another friend you interviewed before, Christian. He is from Colombia. He is a good friend. He is my brother. He is my partner. And he came [from] Colombia to take [English] classes. He said, “We can apply here for work in Dixie.” “How?” “I don’t know. We can apply. Let’s go to find [snaps fingers] papers and apply.” We come here, all the campus, apply for all the [jobs]. He applied before to me. I applied for custodial, working here in Dixie. And custodial hire us. We started to work in the custodial [department] here in Dixie. So we worked in Dixie and we studied in Dixie. [Laughter] So that is my story. I started taking classes in Dixie. I work in Dixie. And Dixie gave me the opportunity to graduate after taking seven years, because I took two years in ESL and almost four or five years in the career of Spanish, to be a Spanish teacher. So I love Dixie. I have a lot to give to Dixie. For this reason, I’m here, because Dixie gave me a lot of good things to me, and my family, too.

CG: So, are you still working for the university, or did you move on to something else?

DR: Well, when I graduated Dixie – But that was hard. So everything good is hard, because I took classes in the morning in Dixie. I have a family [and] I was living in Hurricane. So I [came] here from Hurricane, take my classes, back [to Hurricane] to pick up my kids, and take care of my kids. First, I start at three o’clock working in custodial, and we finish at midnight. After the schedule changed, we started at five o’clock and finished at two in the morning. Can you believe it? After two in the morning, I need to start my assignments for my classes. So I remember this day was hard, because sometimes I only sleep two hours per day, for months, for years. And I remember. So sometimes – well, not sometimes. Like three times, I was very sick, because the doctor say, “You need to sleep more.” But I can’t. How can I? I come to my house two in the morning, start my classes, and do my assignments. And my kids wake up at five, six in the morning. My wife needs to go to work. My wife took classes, too, in dental hygiene, because she was working in the dental [field], but she said, “Well, I can take classes as a dental hygienist.” This was thanks to Dixie State University. It was possible that I could take classes and my wife took her classes at the same time. So after I graduate, because of the hard time, I say, “Well, that was wonderful for me. It was a beautiful opportunity. But now I need to give the opportunity to another person to work and take classes.” So yeah. So I no [longer] work ... for Dixie or for Utah Tech. [Laughter]

CG: So what are you doing now?

DR: Yeah. A good question. Remember I told you before, like when I was married with my wife, I took classes in university in my country. So I am an attorney. I am [a law]

graduate in my country.... I came here to the United States. There are a lot of people who need it, Guatemalan people living in the United States. So I work online in my house for my country. Yeah. This gave me the opportunity to stay with my kids and work in my house. Well, yeah. This is like I saw right now. And yes, sometimes I – like last year, I was a teacher, paraprofessional in one school. And, yeah, so if there are more opportunities to service. Now in what soccer season, I am referee here. I love soccer. I am still soccer – no more playing, because I am old, but I am referee. [Laughter] Yeah. So busy life.

CG: Thank you. So we're gonna switch gears a little bit with the questions, but what has your experience been with the broader St. George community?

DR: Okay. Like I say, I love St. George. It's a good place for me. Maybe for me, it's a little – I can say, more easy, like another person, than other Latinos, because all my life, I [have been a member] of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints. I understand our culture in the church, and here in St. George, the church is strong. There are a lot of members of the church. Like, there [are] neighbors. And for adapting, to me, it's far more easy. Some people say the culture in St. George is very cold. Some people [are] not friendly. But now I am part of St. George. And I can say there are good people here, nice people. I love [it]. But people say, "No, but there's no friendly." [Laughter] ... Living in another town, another city, it's dangerous. I know you understand. So, I prefer clean cities, safe neighbors, like a city when it's dangerous and another class of life. So obviously, there [are] some people [who] are more friendly than other peoples, definitely, in every – in this world, [???this is it???]. But I need to be friendly, too. Like people say, "Well, you – I need friendly people, but how are you? You are friendly. You are okay." So my experience in St. George is okay. It's nice, wonderful. And it's not [the] same [as] my childhood, when I was super happy [and carefree]. Obviously, kids don't have a lot of responsibilities now.

CG: [Chuckles]

DR: Yeah? But I can say this is my story. I am so grateful for these people here in St. George, and I love St. George.

CG: What are your thoughts on the Latino/Hispanic community here?

DR: Okay. That's a good point. Like I say, maybe my case is different, but that's my life. It's my story. For some Latinos, it's hard to live here. But they don't know. They don't [know] how beautiful, how [many opportunities] they have to live here, because some Latinos – you can think about this one. Latinos coming here don't speak English, working ten or twelve hours per day, [working under] the sun, in construction, Monday to Sunday, no holidays, no families, because Latinos are alone here. So how is this life? It's hard. When you live this life, believe it or not, you are not happy. You are not happy. And people sometimes feel like they are only machine, not human. They [get] up at five in the morning, [go] back to the house [at] eight in the night, every day, through day to day to day, months to months, years to years, and time pass[es]. The people feel like they

are machines. They are not happy. So, for this person, I feel sorry. It is hard.

And most of these people come from one country. Because there [are] more people in this country, the other people that are coming from other countries are minor. I don't know about sometimes – like I can say, “Who is better in the work?” But the work is [the] same. And this is for the men. For the women, they clean houses. Cleaning houses is [the] same. All the night, all the day, it is the same. So maybe for the person like me and Christian and others that are taking classes, changed our life here in the United States. I can say that sometimes, some person hear my voice or read my story, take the [opportunity] to come to take classes and speak English. Come to university. This changes life. But I am so grateful to have this opportunity in my life, but there [are] many people, thousands of people outside, they don't have these opportunities. These change life.

CG: Thank you. How would you describe your relationship with white Americans?

DR: Okay. First, one, my wife is white. [Laughter] And I love my wife. She is white. Obviously, there [are] several differences between white and, – I don't say – Brown, or another. There is some difference. But there is a difference when you find a Latino that grew up in Latin America, come to the United States, because sometimes you are like my daughter. She is the same, like my color, but she is American. She is white [laughter]. And she's cool and she's current. And my wife, she is white, but in her heart, she is like me. She's like Latina. So we have different perspectives sometimes. I love, I really love, the American culture, because you are – for example, if you say, “We are going to start at eight or ten o'clock,” we start at this time.

CG: [Chuckles]

DR: We are punctual. I love [it]. I love this one. I love [it]. Some people, some Latinos, don't like it. You say ten o'clock; they come in at 10:20, 10:30. That is the difference, because here in the United States, time is money, but [people] think, “Oh, no, so we have time,” in other countries. But here, we need to respect [each other]. And this has the difference. I love your program. Every time you are planning, you are planning. That's good. But sometimes I [see], like when you're planning, if sometimes the plan is not perfect, I can say – maybe I'm wrong, but I saw in these years, you are not able to – how do you say improvisar?

CG: Improvise.

DR: Improvise.

CG: Yes.

DR: So your culture, you [find it hard to] improvise. You are more like, “No. This is this one. And then we need to follow this one.” If there is something that is not, [you are] frustrated, you're frustrated. For us –, “Oh, it's not? Okay. Tomorrow. It's okay. No

worries.” So I can say this is different. Yeah. And sometimes it’s good to be planning everything, but planning sometimes makes the people more stressful. More stressful. You need to be punctual, and you need to say this one. At this time, we need to do this one. At this time, we need to do this one. So it’s okay, because that is good. But when you’re extremely perfectionist, I can see people don’t live happily. Yeah. Yeah. So that is like I see the difference. But I love, like I say, Americans, like, good people. [Laughter] This country is strong. One of the best countries in the world for the culture, for the people, for this reason. So we need to learn more about you and you about us. This is my thinking. Yeah.

CG: Have you experienced racist or prejudiced behavior here?

DR: Like racism, do you mean?

CG: Yeah.

DR: Well, like I said, some people say, “No, the people [here are] very racist.” In every country, there’s racist people. Every country. Like I can say, in this country, Latinos, the major people [are] from one country, and the other countries are minor people. So the majority of people say, “No, you are no good.” They say, “No, we are good. You are no good.” So in every country, you can find racism. It depends on the person, not the culture, not the countries. Yeah. When I worked here at Dixie, a lot of people loved me. I love a lot of people. But some people say, “No, Donald, I don’t like how it’s done on his day.” But I never hear people don’t love me because I am Latino. It is because – I don’t know. Some people say, like, “I love this class of people.” Some people say, “No, he talks a lot,” or, “he smiles a lot,” or, “he dances.” I don’t know. I don’t dance. I don’t talk a lot. So it’s different. So my answer is, I love people from the United States. I am married with an [laughter] American. Some of my kids are Americans. Yeah. But I love America, yeah.

CG: How has the area changed since you’ve been here, like the St. George area?

DR: In [the] St. George area? I don’t know. Seems to be – my life, there [are] a lot of opportunities here. In St. George, for me, it’s a perfect city. St. George is strong for me. There’s no snow. [Laughter] The heat is only [for] three months. Yeah? And people say, “No, St. George is very hot.” Only three months. But in the cities [in Idaho], it’s five months with snow. So I prefer three months, and the rest of the year is perfect for me. We have a freeway. We have everything here. It’s a small city. It’s not a big city. So if I need any things, we have a small airport, but we have [Las] Vegas, two hours. In five hours, we have Salt Lake City. So I don’t know. [Laughter] I love St. George. I like this. For me, it’s perfect. For me, it’s perfect.

CG: Yeah? Have you noticed it grow or get smaller, the Latino/Hispanic community getting larger?

DR: Yeah.

CG: Yeah?

DR: I saw that. When I came here fourteen years ago, obviously, there was less traffic than now. I remember. So we lived for all these years in Hurricane. And I remember when I came from Hurricane to here, there was less traffic, not too many cars. And the last four or maybe five years, the city's [been] growing a lot. A lot comes through from everywhere. And there [are] a lot of Latinos here now. More from California, I think so, and Arizona. It's growing. That's okay. That's not okay, sometimes. I am a little [afraid for] St. George, for the water, because we live in the desert. I don't know if you can see, but now more people, we need more water, and we need more resources for water. But everybody is welcome here, so – but this is my personal opinion. My personal opinion. This is me. When I come here from Vegas or Idaho, I saw a big sign that says, "Welcome to Utah." You saw this sign? I love those signs. Welcome to Utah. But I love the second statement, "[Life Elevated]." Did you read this one?

CG: I don't know that one. Yeah.

DR: It says, "Welcome to Utah. [Life Elevated]." For me, that's me. I am welcome to come here to St. George, Utah, but I need to live [an elevated] life, respectful life. That is for me, my personal opinion. So everybody is welcome to Utah, but follow the rules, live [an elevated] life.

CG: Do you have any questions before our last one?

DR: Yeah, please ask me questions.

CN: Do you want to ask about children growing up here in St. George, or we could go into more family matters like that, or –

CG: I mean, would you like to talk more about your family here, and –

DR: My family here? Yeah, sure. In St. George, like I said, fourteen years ago we left Idaho to come here to St. George. We don't have family here in St. George. No cousin, no aunts, no grandpas, nobody lived here in St. George. So my wife and I – for the part of my wife, we are alone. The part of my family, I am alone, [laughter] too, the only one in the United States. But my first daughter, she was born in Guatemala. My second boy, he was born in Idaho. I have four kids. My third and my fourth are girls. They were born here in St. George. This is the best place to raise kids, for me, because it's very safe. We have a safe place here, streets and neighbors. It's not perfect, obviously. Nobody's perfect. [No] place is perfect. But my kids love to live in St. George, Utah. Three months [of the summer are very hot]. We're taking summer classes and swimming classes. It's perfect for classes. We have lakes. We lived close to some lakes in Hurricane. We went to the lakes. And my kids play soccer and are in soccer clubs. [Soccer's] growing here – I love it. The Schools [are] very good schools. Now, because I was a paraprofessional in one school, I know we have some problems now in the schools with different ideologies. I

know. But I [still] love [it]. Raising kids here is very good. I hope that one day, my kids are going to take classes in Utah Tech, but they may want to go to apply for other universities. I don't know. So [laughter] yeah. Yeah.

CG: Anything else?

CN: Nothing comes to mind.

CG: Is there anything else you would like to tell us that we haven't asked you about before our last question?

DR: Well, I don't know.

CG: Okay. Then our last question is, what would you like people to know about yourself or your community?

DR: Okay. [About] me, it's like there is one thing that's strong that I [felt prompted] to say. If you believe in God, in the Heavenly Father, he is real. And he loves us, and he forgives us. When you live his commandments, his commandment is for progress, and this is a part of my life. I follow my Heavenly Father. I'm trying to be a good person. I am not perfect. But I'm trying to pray to my Heavenly Father. And for this reason, I am here, because I follow my Heavenly Father. And for about my community, St. George is a good place, a nice place. All of Utah is a good place. But I remember, "Welcome to Utah, []." You need to live [by] the rules and the commandments to progress. I am here. I'm trying every single day to live very [well] and follow the rules.

CG: Okay. Well, if that's it, then we'll stop the recording. [Inaudible.] Thank you.

DR: Thank you.

[END OF RECORDING. END OF INTERVIEW.]