

## **ORAL HISTORY LAB (OHL)**

University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez

### **Oral History Interview with Raúl Feliciano Gotay**

#### **PREFACE**

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview of Raúl Feliciano Gotay conducted by Omar A. Cordero Maldonado on March 6, 2022. This interview is part of course work done by students at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez.

Readers are asked to bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose.

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Interviewer: Omar Cordero Maldonado

Interviewee: Raúl Feliciano Gotay

Date: March 6, 2022

Place: Caguas, Puerto Rico

Omar [00:00:01]: This interview is being recorded for the UPR Mayagüez Oral History class special project assigned by Professor Denesiuk, today is March 6, 2022 and we are in Caguas. Good afternoon, what is your full name?

Raúl [00:00: 20]: Raúl Feliciano Gotay

Omar [00:00:23]: How old are you?

Raúl [00:00:23]: Sixty-three (63)

Omar [00:00:27]: Where were you born?

Raúl [00:00:29]: In the town of Juncos, Puerto Rico

Omar [00:00:32]: Did you grow up there?

Raúl [00:00:34]: Yes, I was lived there until 1989 and then I moved to the town of Las Piedras

Omar [00:00:44]: And you currently live in Las Piedras?

Raul [00:00:47]: Yes

Omar [00:00:50]: Are you married or single?

Raúl [00:00:53]: Married

Omar [00:00:56]: For how many years have you been married?

Raúl [00:00:59]: I've been married for 33 years

Omar [00:01:03]: What is your wife's name?

Raúl [00:01:07]: Mrs. Aida Santiago

Omar [00:01:12]: What do you do for a living?

Raúl [00:01:14]: I am a social security pensioner

Omar [00:01:20]: How long have you been pensioned?

Raúl [00:01:23]: For about 20 years old

Omar [00:01:29]: What does your wife do for a living?

Raúl [00:01:31]: She is an evangelical pastor

Omar [00:01:36]: How have you been doing during the pandemic?

Raúl [00:01:39]: Well, the pandemic has been a bit restricting, because you can't move to different places. In the matter of the church, we have not been able to go to the places where we must work with people and during the situation we have remained inside our home, doing the daily needs to avoid contagion

Omar [00:02:18]: Are you and your wife vaccinated?

Raúl [00:02:23]: Yes, we are vaccinated with all 3 vaccines

Omar [00:02:30]: Have any of you been infected with COVID-19?

Raúl [00:02:34]: No, not in the family nucleus

Omar [00:02:37]: Do you have any family members or friends who have been affected by this disease?

Raúl [00:02:45]: I did have a niece that was very affected by COVID

Omar [00:02:53]: How is she at the moment, did it have any permanent effect or did she have a pretty good recovery?

Raúl [00:03:03]: So far she had a very satisfactory recovery, but she went through quite tremendous situations in the hospital because of which, she had a few complications due to breathing problems and that, but she is already at home.

Omar [00:03:27]: How many members are there in your family nucleus, how many live under the same roof?

Raúl [00:03:32]: Two, my wife and I

Omar [00:03:41]: How were you and your wife affected by Hurricane Maria in 2017?

Raúl [00:03:51]: Well, it really affected us a lot, because it destroyed part of the awning, we had some solar panels and it teared them out completely. Our water cistern, that we had just bought, was thrown down the cliff, is still down there, and it affected us a lot because the insurance did not cover any of the issues we had

Omar [00:04:37]: What led you and your wife to install the solar panel system?

Raúl [00:04:43]: Well, the high cost of electricity, because some of the bills were coming very high and we decided to get some information to use solar panels to lower the cost of light and we made the decision, so we rented some solar panels for a period of about 25 years of contract

Omar [00:05:22]: This contract, once the 25 years have passed, will the solar panels be yours or how does it work?

Raúl [00:05:31]: Well, the contract is supposed to end and then the system is ours, but we have had some problems concerning the plan, because we are paying more for electricity now than before. We are paying for the electric power more than we are paying for the panels, we were supposed to be paying 3 to 4 dollars for the connection to the pole and 100 dollars or 115 dollars for the contract of the panels, but automatically we are paying much more now, we are paying one hundred sixty or so for electric power, plus the cost of the panels

Omar [00:06:26]: And why is this happening?

Raúl [00:06:29]: Well, the problem that we found is that every time we call the panels company, they say that the system is working well, but when the electrical power bill comes, it says that the panels are not sending energy for them there. What is supposed to happen, is that during the day the sun produces energy for the house, plus the surplus goes to electrical energy, and at night, since there is no sun, we use the electrical power. The surplus makes the

plan more economic, because it is returned to the electrical power company, but panels are not generating energy for the electrical power company

Omar [00:07:28]: When did you install these panels?

Raúl [00:07:31]: That was about 5 years ago

Omar [00:07:37]: So, it was the same year as the hurricane?

Raúl [00:07:42]: Exactly, around that time we mounted the panels, and the inauguration was that the hurricane took them away.

Omar [00:07:57]: Because of this event, how long were you without power?

Raúl [00:08:04]: We were approximately 11 months without power, a month before the year was up. Then electric power was connected again, and I was so wrapped with the power generator that, even though the power was already set up, and all the poles illuminated the area, I was so wrapped with the plant that the guy from the electrical power company had to come and tell me that the light had arrived, and that I could turn off the plant

Omar [00:08:44]: So the AEE electric power system was the one that arrived after 11 months, and when were the panels reinstalled?

Raúl [00:08:53]: The panels were reinstalled approximately 6 months after the electric power came

Omar [00:09:21]: So, could you say that the installation of these solar panels did not end up providing any benefit?

Raúl [00:09:31]: Well, I think my situation has worsened because now I must make two payments, and each company blames the other. The one with the panels says that everything is fine and the electric power company says that there is no functional service. There was a time when there was high voltage and supposedly, because the microprocessors in the panels, the panels protect themselves and do not send energy to the electrical power company, so, they do not process it, but once that was fixed the whole situation was supposed to improve, but I continue to have the same problem paying the two bills. At a given moment I will have to either keep the electrical company or keep the panels and then everyone will pick up their own and will leave me without power at home

Omar [00:10:50]: And this problem has always been around?

Raúl [00:10:56]: No, the first months there was no problems, I only had to pay the bill of the panels, and electric power company sent us a bill of 3 dollars, but after about 6 or 8 months,

the electrical power company began to send higher bills, and now I am paying much more than before, so I'm still having problems concerning María.

Omar [00:11:39]: Did the solar panels come with any warranty?

Raúl [00:11:46]: Since the panels are on a 25-year contract, if they are damaged at any time or any other event comes, they have to install them for free, that is, they have to replace everything while the contract is on-going and we are waiting to see if at least they process our situation to see if I can at least take a break because the economic situation gets worse every day, because everything goes up except for the employee's salary.

Omar [00:12:28]: Well, Puerto Rico's power fails a lot and there have been recent blackouts, have you been affected by these blackouts?

Raúl [00:12:43]: Well, automatically I receive the blackout completely because I don't have a battery backup, and because of this, the air conditioning started to cause problems. When I filled the contract for the panels, they were going to install some extra panels so that, if I wanted to mount another air conditioner it would work for me, and I would not have to add more panels, but unfortunately I already see that even with the ones I do have, is not covering the voltage, because electrical energy is charging me separately

Omar [00:13:26]: So the solar panel system that you have installed does not have a battery?

Raúl [00:13:32]: No, it came without a battery

Omar [00:13:35]: I had searched the internet and read that there were different types of installation, with battery disconnected from the AEE, with battery selling surplus to AEE and without battery selling surplus. Which one are you in?

Raúl [00:13:58]: I am supposed to be in the one that AEE receives the surplus, I do not know if it is a matter of selling because they did not explain that to me and if they explained it to me I did not understand it, but the house is supposed to use the energy during the day, which would have been activated by the panels. The surplus is what I would use at night and what I will spend if it is less than what the panels have done during the day. If there was a surplus, I assume it would be sold, to electric energy, but from what I see it seems that it is not working because the payment continues to be above 130 dollars. From 3 dollars to 130 is a lot

Omar [00:15:30]: When did you install the panels, did you get oriented about how this solar panel system was going to lower your electricity bill?

Raúl [00:15:43]: That was the purpose. They were going to give us a certain number of panels that were going to generate a certain amount of voltage, to maintain the power of the house. Additionally, they were going to give some extras so that when it was night, that there was no power generation activity, there was no extra expense. They said we were going to pay those 3 dollars for the concept of the electric power pole, because the plants are activated by electric

power and those 3 dollars because would be the ones that would activate the processors, and that if the panels stopped generating, because one day it is cloudy or there was a process that the panels stopped generating, then the electrical power company would charge us for that period of time, but that would be a minimum period, and now supposedly the panels are not generating and they are charging us the full month of electrical power and I do not know what will happen with the panels because one of the two is not working and every time a call is made the first thing they tell me is: everything is working well, here everything is working well. And we're trying to see if we can get someone that explains to us what's really going on.

Omar [00:17:44]: Can you share the name of this solar panel company?

Raúl [00:17:51]: Right now, I don't really remember the name, I don't remember the name and if I tell you a name I'm going to be lying, but I don't remember the name, this was a couple of years ago and I'm trying to... If I remember I'll share it

Omar [00:18:26]: As I understand it, would the extra energy that is produced be lost?

Raúl [00:18:37]: That extra energy is supposed to go through a meter that counts backwards, according to what they told me, that is a meter that is counting backwards and that goes to the electrical power company and they count the voltage that is reaching them and that is the one that they replenish me back at night, which would be the one I would use at night, and the excess they would keep.

Omar [00:19:12]: And that's not what's going on?

Raúl [00:19:13]: No, the electrical power company has already told us three times that the panels are not working, but when we call the panel company, sometimes you have to be on the phone for an hour or two before they answer and the first thing they tell me is, the person who takes the call, that according to them the panels are working perfectly

Omar [00:19:53]: If you had to reconsider or renegotiate the solar energy installation you acquired, what would you put on it and what would you take away and why?

Raúl [00:20:07]: Well I would really stay with the electrical power company because that way I know that when the power goes out, then I automatically am going to run out of light, and when I cannot pay they would cut it off and until I can pay, I will know that I will not have power until that moment and if I do not have power then I do not have to pay it. Automatically, right now I have no power, if the light goes out at home, I must pay the electric power company, because the electric power company charges me anyways, and I also need to pay for the panels anyways, so I am stuck

Omar [00:21:07]: I have seen that solar panels are promoted as a solution for blackouts and hurricanes, because the electrical power of AEE is gone, but since that is solar energy, you would still have light when the hurricane hits, but from what I see that is a lie, right?

Raúl [00:21:37]: What happens is that since I do not have a battery backup, what helps me during the night is the electrical power company, automatically, if the electrical power company goes out, then the microprocessors in the panels do not work and do not generate voltage

Omar [00:22:01]: And how would that battery work? Could one be installed, or how does it work?

Raúl [00:22:07]: Well, you would have to buy a battery, which depending on the one who sells it or the brand because they might be 6000 dollars or up for each battery and it would be an excessive expense, right now would be very difficult for one to get one

Omar [00:22:42]: When it was announced that the hurricane was coming, did you think that the solar panels would withstand the winds?

Raúl [00:22:55]: Well, I assumed they would, because they said that this endures over a hundred or so wind force, so I assumed that they were not going to be taken by the wind. My sister-in-law, who lives three houses below, has more panels than mine and only one was taken by the hurricane. I assume that there was a tornado or something because there were areas of the terrain where the grass looked like if a grass cutter had been passed there, but at ground level.

Omar [00:23:37]: And your sister-in-law, now that you mention that she also has the panels, hasn't she had a problem like that?

Raúl [00:23:46]: I haven't had that conversation directly, but the son-in-law told me that, yes, they are paying an amount of money, but I don't know if they have problems, because they don't have a battery either.

Omar [00:24:08]: And by any chance, is it the same company as yours, if you know?

Raúl [00:24:13]: No, personally I think that's just one company, it seems that there are different distributors, I get the impression that it's just one company though

Omar [00:24:28]: A few minutes ago, you mentioned the cistern, what happened to it?

Raúl [00:24:37]: Because I had my cistern on the roof, the wind seem to have broken the pipe, so emptied because it was thrown down the cliff by the wind

Omar [00:24:53]: So for how long were you without water?

Raúl [00:24:58]: We were approximately around 10 to 11 months without water. There was no light in the town of Las Piedras, and we were that same time without water.

Omar [00:25:17]: And you said the cistern was new, right?

Raul [00:25:21]: Yes, new, and capable of holding 800 gallons

Omar [00:25:24]: And was it completely lost?

Raúl [00:11:39]: No, I still have it on the cliff down there, because I collected the water from the rain and used it for the toilets and for the plants, and to wash the surroundings, thank god the tube in the roof did not break

Omar [00:25:55]: Due to the experience of Hurricane Maria, the lack of electricity and water, what preparations would you make if another hurricane was announced?

Raúl [00:26:09]: The most practical thing would be to have my generator, to have a new water system that is more protected so that the wind does not take it away and to try to protect myself as best as possible with shutter, because the winds were very strong in the area. I live in a high area and in that area we felt very strong winds, the house vibrated every time the wind hit

Omar [00:26:50]: You had also mentioned that the awing was broken by the winds, right?

Raúl [00:26:58]: Yes, it broke the the doors of the closets that were full of our electrical appliances, such as our drying machine, our washing machine, and the heater. I had set up those closet doors, so that the appliances could not be seen from the outside, the wind broke them and damaged all the electrical appliances in the awing

Omar [00:27:31]: And to this day, have you been able to replace those electrical appliances?

Raúl [00:27:38]: Yes, I had to juggle to be able to do it, because every day the economic situation gets worse, but thank God I was able to replace them and have them there so that the Mrs. suffers less

Omar [00:28:00]: And when the awing broke, did water enter your house?

Raúl [00:28:08]: What broke was not the awing, but the doors that covered that area. Because of the water, a fungus took over the roof and walls of the house, the ceiling turned all black, as if a fire had burned the house. I had to wash it, put H7 on it, and brush hard to be able to take it off, and to this day there is still a little on the walls.

Omar [00:29:13]: Well, considering all this damage and loss, how was your experience with insurance after the hurricane?

Raúl [00:29:21]: Well, once we requested the insurance, they arrived at the home and did absolutely nothing, they checked and said that what was in the awing, even if it was indoors, was not covered by the insurance at all, so we did not get anything from the insurance.



Omar [00:29:57]: Did the insurance end up doing nothing? They did not replace anything, nor pay for the damages?

Raúl [00:30:07]: It seems that the person they sent was a completely inept person, because what he said was that what was in the awing, those doors and that equipment, were outside the house where we lived, so everything that was in the awing the insurance did not cover, now yes, he asked me two questions that made me feel a little uncomfortable. My wife is an older person and is 20 years older than me, and the questions he asked concerning that were if we slept together, that was the question that the person who came from the insurance asked, which bothered me and I automatically told him to leave, because it really wasn't necessary for him to come to my house with those questions.

Omar [00:31:09]: Yes, that sounds completely inappropriate

Raul [00:31:13]: Exactly, exactly

Omar [00:31:21]: And really the fact that the awing doesn't count sounds like a pretty dumb excuse, the awing is part of the house.

Raúl [00:31:32]: I have always considered that insurance charges to not pay, that has always been my opinion. My opinion has always been that insurance charges not to pay, there are very few insurances that cover you, what your property is really worth, because you come and buy a vehicle which is around 30 thousand or 35 thousand dollars, they come and you pay an insurance, a full cover, and most will give you a conciliation, but there are others who automatically pay you what suits them, they do not replenish you what your property is worth and everything depreciates, for them everything depreciates, but you have to pay the full insurance. If you buy an old car, and you have an accident or a problem, the price, they will pay is half of what they should. It doesn't matter if it has barely passed any time since the purchase, since it is old it has automatically already depreciated, but you must pay for the full insurance

Omar [00:32:58]: Do you know of anyone else who has been affected by the hurricane who has had similar problems with insurance?

Raúl [00:33:05]: I really couldn't comment on that, because I have not sat down to talk with anyone about this, but I know that there are many people who have gone through more or less the same thing, that insurance never covered them.

Omar [00:33:31]: How did this whole situation affect you two emotionally? Not having electricity, not having water, that the insurance sent someone who did not want to pay and instead looked for a lot of excuses and changed the topics to issues that had nothing to do with the situation. How did this make you two feel?

Raúl [00:33:56]: Well, we had prepared ourselves as much as we could, we had filled a cupboard with food, because we knew that at even if the hurricane was strong or light, it was

going to affect us, because we had already survived through Hurricane Hugo, so we had some experience, although it was nothing compared to Maria, but we were weeks and months without light, without water and with little food for not having prepared. So, for this hurricane we prepared with water, with food and I said, regarding gasoline, that we were going to wait patiently, calmly to not have to be stuck in those long lines

Omar [00:35:06]: Yes, because you needed gasoline for the generator that you mentioned, which, by the way: did you already have the generator before the hurricane, or did you have to get it because of the failure of the solar panels?

Raúl [00:35:20]: No, I already had the generator before the hurricane, because I knew that by not having the battery backup, I would be without electricity during the night as soon as the power went out, so I had my generator and a couple of gallons of gasoline stored. When the situation arrived, we used the generator until we ran out of gasoline and there were around two weeks in which I said: I will live without light because I will not get into those lines that are horrible and tremendous, but we were already prepared to spend a couple of days without needing power

Omar [00:36:23]: Did you encounter any other problems or additional situations during these 11 months without electricity and water?

Raúl [00:36:31]: We had the struggle that the little we had started running out, so we needed to be able to move and start helping and getting helped by relatives, because we barely saw the government in the area, maybe every month they came by with a megaphone and a lot of employees with one or so boxes of water and you could receive the water, but only if you were in your house at the time, because if you were not, even if you were at the neighbor's house and said "I live there", they would not give it to you, so those are situations in which you see that the government does not care even when they know that we are in a need, it was very disastrous that they acted that way. I had a neighbor, that I felt bad for, that lived three houses down, he was person who had just suffered a stroke and the whole town knew him because he is a boy who talks with everyone and since he was not in the house they denied him the box of water and that made me feel bad, honestly if I had not kept my box of water I would have given it to him back, because he needed it more than me, I truly felt bad because they denied water to a boy who was sick and really needed it

Omar [00:38:28]: That sounds horrible.

Raúl [00:38:32]: Yes, it sounds horrible and not only that, a few months later at the base in Ceiba, how many boxes of water did they find thrown there, you understand me? They denied him a box of water, when later they were going to throw them away.

Omar [00:38:50]: And what else was found at this base in Ceiba?

Raúl [00:38:54]: Honestly, I don't know anything else, but the news showed how there were, pallets of water boxes there that were lost and then over time they found more in different warehouses. Many more things came out in the same news and people gave testimony of how many things they left stored and how the people needed them, because they were in the middle of a storm, of a disaster

Omar [00:39:27]: You mentioned that they delivered boxes of water. Did the cistern truck arrive in Las Piedras? I heard people mention this truck

Raúl [00:39:41]: Yes, there were different places where they put some cistern trucks, but only for the one who had the gasoline to move their car, the ones who did not have gasoline to move their cars could not move it, so either they walked or stayed needing it, because it was not something that you could request and they went there to your house. At least for me, the closest place that got the cistern truck was far, I would have almost get to Guardraya, the division of Juncos and Las Piedras, to be able to go to get water and on foot , so it was a bit difficult for me, but as I had already prepared with the cistern on the roof, with the pipe that I had connected from the roof to the cistern, so I had had water to move some things and I also had some water I had stored in a reserve that I had bought before the hurricane hit

Omar [00:41:03]: You had mentioned that your wife was a pastor, right?

Raúl [00:41:10]: Yes, she is a pastor of the evangelical church

Omar [00:41:13]: Because of Hurricane Maria, did the church take any damage?

Raúl [00:41:21]: No, the church did not receive any damage thanks to God, but since there was no power or anything it was not possible to administer the services which we had scheduled, because we had a time that each one was in his home locked up until everything returned being normal.

Omar [00:41:49]: The winds were strong and knocked down trees, did some trees obstruct near where you lived? Were you able to leave the town?

Raúl [00:42:05]: The winds were super strong, they knocked down the poles of the electric wire and many trees obstructed the traffic. There was no exit from the town only for the emergency systems because the police did not allow people who did not have any emergencies on the street. Only emergency services were the ones that could leave for about two continuous weeks because there was a lot of havoc in the streets, like trees and stuff.

Omar [00:43:02]: And how was the process of cleaning these trees? For how long were you unable to leave your house?

Raúl [00:43:10]: Approximately 2 and a half weeks, unless it was an emergency, you were not allowed to leave your house, to avoid the streets getting clogged. So that, if any emergency

arose, the small space that existed would be free, because the movement equipment could not be supplied because it had to be used in different municipalities and they were helping each other, where there was more need for them, there they were using the heavy equipment

Omar [00:43:54]: And did these rains cause some flooding? I remember you said that you live in a high area, but I imagine that when you leave where you live, eventually it is low. Was there any flood or was there any neighbor whose house was flooded?

Raúl [00:44:16]: There were very few flooded areas in Las Piedras, but the 31, that one uses to move through the area, was terrible flooding, that is because it is an area that is very low between Las Piedras and the area of Juncos. In Juncos the water covered even the cars in many areas

Omar [00:44:52]: During the hurricane, did you ever feel afraid that your house was not going to withstand the winds or anything like that?

Raúl [00:45:05]: Truly, now I would say no, but when the dawn arrived and the winds kept hitting the house, that house vibrated as if it were a tuning fork, that shook the house even though the house was completely made of concrete and every time I heard the winds hit the house, I looked at my wife and she was scared, so I tried to keep her calm by playing brave, but those really are circumstances. I lived through Hugo and George, and none can be compared with Maria. I felt really afraid and was thinking about my family. Also, the house was not in the best conditions and those things worried me, they caused me a little fear

Omar [00:46:17]: During the hurricane, did you worry for any of your family members? because, for example, I had no communication with anyone outside my house, for about two months, well maybe one, and some people worried me because I didn't know how they were, and I was interested in knowing how the hurricane affected them. Did you have any experience like that, that you couldn't communicate with a family member and were worried for ANY reason?

Raúl [00:46:54]: Yes, my whole family lives in the Juncos area and I couldn't get there until almost 3 weeks or a month after the hurricane, but I was especially worried for a nephew who is a quadriplegic and I was the whole previous afternoon trying to convince him to come with me to my house, because he lives alone with my sister who has no help of any kind, because she would have to turn on the generator and do everything by herself, because his quadriplegia is total, all he can do is move his head and nothing else, and I was worried because there was no way for one to get there during the hurricane and no one could help her if something happened to my sister during the course of the storm. The fact that no one was going to be able to help my nephew if anything happened to my sister was one of the things that caused me fear

Omar [00:48:12]: And from what you know about the experience of your sister and your nephew, what could you mention that was difficult for them? Did they have any bad experiences, besides the situation that is already bad in itself?

Raúl [00:48:39]: Well, they had wished they had come with me, because in the course of the storm they began to see how the windows tried to break, the doors sought to tear fly off and they had no one there to help them, if anything had happened, then automatically there was no one to help them until the whole event passed, that's one of the things they told me, then they told me: next time I'm going with you because what happened here was not good.

Omar [00:49:18]: When you were finally able to leave your home, what was the first place you went to, did you have to go shopping?

Raúl [00:49:37]: When I was able to leave my home, when I had the opportunity to move, the first place I tried to get to was to my nephew's house, because my sister's health condition is not the best and because her son's condition does not let him have any kind of movement. So, my first concern was to get to where they were, to see how they were, what they needed, because I had the opportunity to move, while they didn't. Thank God my other relatives had also arrived and had acted on the matter, so it made everything a little less traumatic when I got there

Omar [00:50:41]: Was your sister's house, damaged?

Raúl [00:50:48]: No, the house did not suffer damage, but since the house is many years old, it trembled and vibrated a lot, she had trees near which fell near the house and the noise scared them, but everything the house did not suffer damage that had to be fixed

Omar [00:51:28]: Hurricane Irma happened a few weeks before Hurricane Maria, by that time you already had the solar panels, right?

Raúl [00:51:37]: Yes, by the time Irma hit we already had the solar panels and we had the power generator and we had made the preparations for the storm, because we knew that it was going to be a very difficult time, because according to the weather forecasts, we had heard that in the Caribbean Sea the temperatures were quite high and that with the little knowledge I have I knew it is a factor that facilitates hurricanes to be stronger. Specially since we are in the path of storms, so every year, every day I am looking for a way to prepare a little better, because global warming is causing high temperatures, and every time a storm comes it will be stronger, they are going to be very strong, so we know that we must prepare ourselves.

Omar [00:53:12]: Hurricane Irma didn't hit Puerto Rico directly, but did it affect you?

Raúl, [00:53:22]: Yes, here in Puerto Rico we have the problem that as soon as someone sneezes down in Vieques, the power goes out in the whole island. The electricity system is very fragile and truly because we as a country have dedicated the to politicize. Instead, we should dedicate to secure water, power, and food for times like this. But seems like we prefer to not worry about it and instead, only worrying about politics and criticizing each other.

Omar [00:54:17]: Yes. So, the light went out because of Hurricane Irma, and the solar panels worked perfectly during this first hurricane?

Raúl [00:54:32]: Yes, they worked perfectly, there were no problems with it, but since we do not have the battery backup, we did not have light during the night, but other than that there were no problems

Omar [00:54:53]: So, all these problems came after Hurricane Maria took the solar panels?

Raúl [00:55:00]: Yes, all these problems, during and after the hurricane, because they continued and even today there is always one or another sequel of those circumstances, because it was really something terrible. Compared to the other hurricanes that passed through Puerto Rico, George, Hugo, Irma, and other hurricanes that have happened, none, none can compare to how Maria was hit the island of Puerto Rico.

Omar [00:55:39]: So, during Hurricane Maria you had the power generator, do you think that, considering the gasoline prices, that makes the plant a viable option for more than a day or two?

Raúl [00:56:02]: I believe that there should be a good electrical energy infrastructure so that one could avoid using the plant, but seeing the need and the obligation, because there is no other option, a plant

Omar [00:56:26]: When Hurricane Maria hit and you had not been able to leave your house because of the rain and the winds, did you think that the panels were still there, or did you fear the worst, that the panels were gone, which is what sadly happened?

Raúl [00:56:46]: Truly, I'm going to tell you something, I thought the worst, because as we spent the night, every time the wind hit and made the house shake and I heard those noises, I said there is nothing left here, but when I opened the door two days later, because on the third day there were still strong winds in the area of Las Piedras. On the second day, which was already a little quieter, I did not see anything around me, so I assumed that they had brought me more neighbors, because I did not see them as much, with so many trees, foliage, and nature that was around me. When I saw that everything was clean, I said that there were people that I had never seen living here. Now I realize that I did not notice that the panels were missing the first time I went out, because I thought I saw the ironwork that held them still on the roof, but when I decided to climb to the roof, it was then that I realized that even the metal hardware, what held the panels, had been torn it from the root, but I hadn't noticed it, I didn't think that there was going to be so much havoc.

Omar [00:58:30]: Well, finally, considering everything you've told me, if you had to recommend solar panels to someone else, would you, do it?

Raúl [00:58:41]: Honestly, I would tell them to study well the company, what is their background so that they find out all the information, because I do not wish what I am going through at the moment upon anyone else

Omar [00:59:02]: Yes, your situation is horrible, and it is bad that you are going through it. Well, Raul thank you for your time, this hour has taught me a lot and seeing an experience that I also lived from the shoes of another person has opened my eyes more and I must thank you for that. Do I have your permission to share the story?

Raul [00:59:51]: You have my permission to share it

Omar [00:59:56]: Well, that's all thanks for your time, again, and see you.