

# Scholar@UPRM

## Oral history interview with Bryan, May 13, 2022

Item Type	Oral history
Publisher	Oral History Lab @UPRM
Download date	2026-06-10 13:14:39
Link to Item	<a href="https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11801/3034">https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11801/3034</a>

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

University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez

### **Oral History Interview with Bryan**

#### **PREFACE**

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview of Bryan conducted by the interviewer on May 13, 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.

### **Interview Transcript**

Interviewer

Interviewee: Bryan

(Start of Interview)

Interviewer: Thank you for being here, what is going to happen is that I am going to be asking you a series of questions and you answer them at your best disposal. Here comes the first question.

Interviewer: Can you describe to me how was your experience for Hurricane Maria?

Bryan: Well look at Hurricane Maria, hey, I was with my family, I saw I live with my mother and my grandmother, for me it was my first experience like that in a hurricane it was strong, and my grandmother has gone through other hurricanes or the hurricane Hugo, who for that then demolished his house and for me it was a new experience, an experience that I never imagined that I would live at such an early age and I think that I have learned a lot from that and basically nothing that was a totally new experience. It made you think about a lot of things like being thankful.

Interviewer: I ask you, what was the most impact on you?

Bryan: I think the most that impacted me was the people, you know the movement that there was in the first days, the trees, the people at the gas stations, long lines, but the most that impacted me was the unity, the neighbors help each other, you know people were more united than ever

before this strong and bad hurricane.

Interviewer: Yes, of course, what was a major challenge for during this Hurricane?

Bryan: I think my biggest challenge was [part of not being able to spend a lot of time with my family because there were trees that blocked the entrances, we could not see our relatives for several weeks, I think the most that affected me to many young people too. It was education that at that time, no. we were months without electricity we did not have classes for a couple of months, there was no electricity.

Interviewer: Yes, if I am not mistaken, we spent almost 3 months without going to school, that was quite a big impact, there were people who went up to 1 year without electricity, yes, it was quite shocking. It was quite a difficult challenge for many.

Interviewer: What did the event of Hurricane Maria mean to you?

Bryan: Eh, I think that since I had already mentioned this event for my unit, you know, although we did not have electricity, although we did not have communication, we did not have internet, I think we went back to that life from before where people were not so attached to social networks and they talked, they understood, they joined, for me that was the most that impacted me, which meant for me on the positive side. On the negative side, I really mean losing a lot of things that we were working on, I mean losing a lot of trees, a lot of people and a lot of structural things. You also understand me, it was something very impressive.

Interviewer: And well, as I see because of the hurricane, there was a lot of disaster, house buildings that fell, bridges even in Yauco, I think a bridge fell, fields, structures, etc. etc. that were destroyed due to this hurricane, now I ask you ...

Interviewer: As a senator, what do you think the government should prioritize in relation to reconstruction efforts?

Bryan: I think that education and electricity infrastructure should be a priority because many students from Maria do not have the same facilities to study, as for example also the students from the southern area due to the earthquakes have been affected frequent puts by Natural disasters. Basically, right now this debate about luma and whether to privatize or not to privatize and I think that the people of Puerto Rico what they need is an effective service, you know whether it is privatized or public and I think it should be the government's priority to bring a consistent service.

Interviewer: That is correct, that is true, hurricanes are something that we will not always be able to anticipate, unfortunately we will not always be able to see it coming, I personally found out the day before, if I am not mistaken, I think it was a Sunday and they had canceled everything

Interviewer: And you, how did you find out or did you already know in advance?

Bryan: I was already aware because there was already Hurricane Irma and I think that by time

the power had gone out and, and I arrived about two days before Maria, so basically I did not have between Irma and Maria I did not have a break for Checking out how look Maria is coming around was like they were like that at the same time and I think it took us all by surprise and that was one of the things that struck me the most that both of them came like this at the same time.

Interviewer: Yes, of course it impacted us all, it was something quite fast, everything happened super-fast. And in question to the services of water, electricity, internet, etc. etc., in your community they arrived fast or late, tell me how was that?

Bryan: Well, look in my community at least the light came for Halloween October 31 you know When we live in San Juan, it does not happen to us like people from other places who were without electricity for up to 6 months, which I cannot complain about. The water was fast, I think that a month had arrived.

Bryan: Well look at Hurricane Maria, hey, I was with my family, I saw I live with my mother and my grandmother, for me it was my first experience like that in a hurricane it was strong, and my grandmother has gone through other hurricanes or the hurricane Hugo, who for that then demolished his house and for me it was a new experience, an experience that I never imagined that I would live at such an early age and I think that I have learned a lot from that and basically nothing that was a totally new experience. It made you think about a lot of things like being thankful.

Interviewer: I ask you, what was the most impact on you?

Bryan: I think the most that impacted me was the people, you know the movement that there was in the first days, the trees, the people at the gas stations, long lines, but the most that impacted me was the unity, the neighbors help each other, you know people were more united than ever before this strong and bad hurricane.

Interviewer: Yes, of course, what was a major challenge for during this Hurricane?

Bryan: I think my biggest challenge was [part of not being able to spend a lot of time with my family because there were trees that blocked the entrances, we could not see our relatives for several weeks, I think the most that affected me to many young people too. It was education that at that time, no. we were months without electricity we did not have classes for a couple of months, there was no electricity.

Interviewer: Yes, if I am not mistaken, we spent almost 3 months without going to school, that was quite a big impact, there were people who went up to 1 year without electricity, yes, it was quite shocking. It was quite a difficult challenge for many.

Interviewer: What did the event of Hurricane Maria mean to you?

Bryan: Eh, I think that since I had already mentioned this event for my unit, you know, although we did not have electricity, although we did not have communication, we did not have internet, I think we went back to that life from before where people were not so attached to social networks

and they talked, they understood, they joined, for me that was the most that impacted me, which meant for me on the positive side. On the negative side, I really mean losing a lot of things that we were working on, I mean losing a lot of trees, a lot of people and a lot of structural things. You also understand me, it was something very impressive.

Interviewer: And well, as I see because of the hurricane, there was a lot of disaster, house buildings that fell, bridges even in Yauco, I think a bridge fell, fields, structures, etc. etc. that were destroyed due to this hurricane, now I ask you ...

Interviewer: As a senator, what do you think the government should prioritize in relation to reconstruction efforts?

Bryan: I think that education and electricity infrastructure should be a priority because many students from Maria do not have the same facilities to study, as for example also the students from the southern area due to the earthquakes have been affected frequent puts by Natural disasters. Basically, right now this debate about luma and whether to privatize or not to privatize and I think that the people of Puerto Rico what they need is an effective service, you know whether it is privatized or public and I think it should be the government's priority to bring a consistent service.

Interviewer: That is correct, that is true, hurricanes are something that we will not always be able to anticipate, unfortunately we will not always be able to see it coming, I personally found out the day before, if I am not mistaken, I think it was a Sunday and they had canceled everything

Interviewer: And you, how did you find out or did you already know in advance?

Bryan: I was already aware because there was already Hurricane Irma and I think that by time the power had gone out and, and I arrived about two days before Maria, so basically I did not have between Irma and Maria I did not have a break for Checking out how look Maria is coming around was like they were like that at the same time and I think it took us all by surprise and that was one of the things that struck me the most that both of them came like this at the same time.

Interviewer: Yes, of course it impacted us all, it was something quite fast, everything happened super-fast. And in question to the services of water, electricity, internet, etc. etc., in your community they arrived fast or late, tell me how was that?

Bryan: Well, look in my community at least the light came for Halloween October 31 you know When we live in San Juan, it does not happen to us like people from other places who were without electricity for up to 6 months, which I cannot complain about. The water was fast, I think that a month had arrived.

Interviewer: Right now, speaking of the economic side of this situation, how do you think affected the economic crisis of the island?

Bryan: I think it affected the most vulnerable area of Puerto Rico's economic system, which is the electric power system. It was already known that this was going to be affected, the electric power authority because the government already had the economic impact caused by the hurricane.

Interviewer: And you, do YOU think that the government worked correctly when it comes to helping those affected?

Bryan: uh, I think there was a lot of deficiency when carrying aid, the Jones law if I'm not mistaken was the one that affected a lot, for example, many boats that wanted to come from other countries, but it was not allowed since this law indicates that only American ships can enter, that was something that affected a lot and that I think the government had to push for something to be done. Also, the handling of the people who died was well impacted because now they tell you that 400 people died and then the number rises to 4000 and they did not know where to put them. That was something very shocking.

Interviewer: Yes, the numbers did not add up, now, what would you have done differently?

Bryan: I think that they would have focused ... at that time the president of some states for that time, Donald Trump, came and he went to Guaynabo, so when you are bringing someone who is going to approve funds for an emergency, you cannot bring it to Guaynabo. He will go to Guaynabo and see that everything will be fine because it is the metropolitan area, an area that is going to recover the fastest, now you would have taken him to the south or to the center of the island, he would have seen that something is happening, This is an emergency and well, the central government of us, I think it would have put more water oases, I think many communities, you know you had to guide to get to the oases and the roads were that you could not even guide and more with the holes here and the clubs that fell, all that ... that would have made it different and the response to electrical energy. It took a long time to bring employees from out there (USA) to come here to work.