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Oral history interview with Alfonso Vélez Iturrino and Carmen L. Candelario Lugo, March 13, 2022

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ORAL HISTORY LAB (OHL)

University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez

Oral History Interview with Alfonso Vélez Iturrino and Carmen L. Candelario Lugo

PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview of Alfonso Vélez Iturrino and Carmen L. Candelario Lugo conducted by Estefanía Y. Martínez Vélez on March 13, 2022. This interview is part of coursework 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.

INGL3238 Creative Writing / Spring 2022

Professor Ricia Chansky

Oral History Project

Translated Transcript of Interview

Interviewer: Estefanía Y. Martínez Vélez

Narrators: Alfonso Vélez Iturrino and Carmen L. Candelario Lugo

Date of Interview: March 13, 2022

Place of Interview: Barrio Carreras, Añasco Puerto Rico

Transcribed by: Estefanía Y. Martínez Vélez

Estefanía [0:00:02]

How are you?

Alfonso [0:00:05]:

We are fine, thank God, very well.

Carmen [0:00:08]:

I'm fine, Fanny, thank the Lord

Estefanía [0:00:14]:

What are their names and their ages?

Carmen [0:00:22:00]:

My name is Carmen Lydia Candelario. I was born in Añasco, Puerto Rico and I am 77 years old.

Alfonso [0:00:34]:

My name is Alfonso Vélez Iturrino. I was born in Añasco, in the Miraflores neighborhood, on September 30, 1939.

Estefanía [00:00:56]:

To clarify, they are my grandparents and I call them Api and Awita, I will refer to them that way during the interview, so they have the context. You guys are together since Covid, you've always been together since all this has happened, right?

Carmen [0:01:14]:

Always, always, forever.

Estefanía [0:01:19]:

You guys didn't have to go anywhere else since the pandemic started, you always stayed here, right?

Carmen [0:01:25]:

We always stay here; thank God and I have never had to go for a Covid test; I haven't had Covid and I hope I don't get it.

Alfonso [0:01:38]:

And I took the Covid test because they had to do a cataract operation on my left eye and, for that reason, I took the Covid test. That is precisely a year ago and I have never had Covid, thank God.

Estefanía [0:01:58]:

But are you okay now?

Alfonso [0:02:00]

Thank God and I got the three vaccines.

Estefanía: [0:02:04]:

That's the important thing and everyone here is vaccinated and we're keeping our distance from each other. Also, we see each other weekly and now we are in the Carreras neighborhood, in the town of Añasco, in their house, the one where I grew up and in my parents' house. We are here and we are going to talk about several things; First and foremost, we're going to talk about your experiences in Hurricane George. But I want to hear from you before that. Right now, what you guys do, right now you're retired, right?

Alfonso [0:03:00]:

From work, yes. Well, I'm still working. I work on the radio and more, at Christmas time, I work on music; but I work on the radio in a program that I am the producer; every Saturday, from 1:00 to 4:00 on a station in Aguadilla, Waba 850, four hours of programming.

Estefanía [0:03:24]:

Oh, well, you're used to talking a lot.

Alfonso [0:03:27]:

Not so much, you know. (laughs)

Estefanía [0:03:32]:

Not so much. And Awita, what are you doing now?

Carmen [0:03:36]:

I am retired from the government. I was a nurse for 30 years and now, well, I'm a housewife; waiting for you, my grandchildren and my daughter, and my husband, and everything in the house, and everyone who needs my help, to help them, if I can. (Filing nails, sound).

Estefanía [0:04:00]:

And how have they been with this pandemic, what did you do in those months that they had to be locked up, forced?

Alfonso [0:04:09]:

Well, the same, locked up. Of course, between then and there we went out, all the time with the masks. I did an activity this year, 2021. I went to the radio station. I carry many things to protect myself and my companions. Lots of booze, lots of napkins, and I clean the doorknobs. And, well, I clean the chair, the microphone and when we are here, Dida and I, my wife, always fighting, but we are fine, thank God.

Estefanía [0:04:46]:

And you've never gotten sick, right?

Carmen [0:04:49]:

Well, we have ailments, like everyone else, thank God; but from Covid, no. But we have our ailments, our... We take our medications because we take care of ourselves, we go to the doctors. Every time we feel anything, we make an appointment, we go to the doctors. We are (coughing) constantly, tending to our health, because we still love each other very much.

Estefanía [0:05:19]:

That's what's important. And you're already vaccinated, right?

Carmen [0:05:25]:

Yes, I have my two vaccines, plus the booster.

Estefanía [0:05:29]:

And you too, right?

Alfonso [0:05:31]:

Me too, and the flu vaccine too; It does not fail me, annually.

Estefanía [0:05:39]:

And haven't you done anything to have fun, being locked up in the house, haven't you seen, watch television, do they do something?

Carmen [0:05:47]:

Yes, I watch a lot of television. Well, you see, I check my cell phone because I have some little games that amuse me, but to distract my mind. I sew sometimes. I really like the fabric; but for now, I'm not doing it. But it's mostly watching TV.

Estefanía [0:06:13]:

And why don't you knit anymore?

Carmen [0:06:15]:

Because I don't have the muse, as they say, she's not inspired to start knitting.

Estefanía [0:06:25]:

Oh well

Carmen [0:06:27]:

It will be more later.

Estefanía [0:06:28]:

And you, Api?

Alfonso [0:06:30]

Well, as I said, with the radio program, behind the announcements, behind the discs of the program for Saturday, to have at least 32 songs. Scrutinize them on the computer, on the collection discs that I have on the mini discs, on the cassettes, on the LPs. And I spend the day locked up in the music room, but more time I spend with the cloth on the bus. The cloth on the bus, too, that works. (Laugh).

Estefanía [0:07:01]:

Ah, well, the important thing is that you guys are and have been fine all this time, now that the Covid thing has calmed down, but well, you never know.

Carmen [0:07:10]:

No, this pain... this disease, this virus, because this is not a disease, this virus is here to stay, like all the other viruses that have arrived like influenza. We must protect ourselves. We must be aware of the masks, not be involved in all the parties there are because the crowd is what brings more, as it is, the disease, catching the virus.

Estefanía [0:07:47]:

Yeah

Carmen [0:07:49]:

And because of that, we have to protect ourselves.

Estefanía [0:07:54]:

Okay. And... But now I want to know about you, from before. How you guys grew up, where you met. Of course, anything that you don't want to say, that you feel uncomfortable with, obviously, you don't have to say. But it's to know how you grew up, how you met and... everything.

Alfonso [0:08:19]:

Well, look at that, I grew up almost alone. Well, he had brothers...

Estefanía [0:08:28]:

Ah.

Alfonso [0:08:29]:

Since I was 12 years old, when my mom left for New York, well, well, I grew up working on other people's farms, well, people think I'm a farmer, well, no. I am a worker of the farms, of agriculture, of the field.

Estefanía [0:08:48]:

Ah.

Alfonso [0:08:49]:

And then, I worked to get by, I worked to survive, to look for the ball of 'pega'o', for 12 years now. I helped my brothers, even with that, I even helped the older ones. And there, I went to New York, when I was 18 and a half years old on... on April 16, 1958. I was 18 years old, and I went to a field, it was called a small town, gosh, and I went to work in the onion fields, from the time it was planted, until that onion was too big to take it out, until we put it in the sacks. And there, I returned to the city. Not to say that I never saw the city. And I went to a restaurant to wash dishes and later I was boss boy, I cleaned tables. Eh, the fact is that for 12 years now, even with that, when I was 13 years old, I didn't stop working, nor have I stopped yet.

Estefanía [0:09:53]:

And did you go back to Puerto Rico?

Alfonso [0:09:55]

Yes, I came back in the... I came back when I was seven years old. When I was seven years old, I went back there again, and I was there again. I was there for a year and then I went with Dida, who is my wife and then, well, we had a year there and we came back here again. And what did I return to? To work again.

Estefanía [0:10:14]:

Wow! And you, Awita?

Carmen [0:10:15]:

Well, I was born and raised in the Miraflores neighborhood of Añasco. I was born, that is, I grew up with my parents. It wasn't... It was a hard life: I had to wash in the river, I had to roast coffee at that time. I had to cook. I studied, I was studying, but even though I was studying up to the fourth year, here in Añasco, I had to go and do those tasks. Saturdays and Sundays were for doing those chores: washing, ironing, cooking, and helping my mom because at that time it was compulsory because if not, well, they were on top of it, they gave you one, because parents were stricter. Uh... but, within my childhood, I had a normal life at that time, normal at that time, but... (silence) I suffered a lot too, I suffered a lot, but I grew up with both parents. Mommy was always sick. Since she was little, since I met her, she was always sick until she died young, because she died young, at 51 years old. So, no, uh, it was easy, but not that easy.

Estefanía [0:11:58]:

And do you have siblings? Tell me, what was your relationship with your family like, how did you grow up?

Carmen [0:12:11]

Well, I have two siblings. I have a brother, I'm the oldest of the three, the second is a boy and the youngest, um, what... I grew up more with my brother because when my sister was born, I was already 11 years old. And when my sister was 11 years old, I already got married. So, I grew up more with my brother. I have a nice relationship with her, but the relationship is more with my brother, despite that. But we are always, but we always look for each other. We have never, ever fought. Always, whatever situation arises, the three of us are united.

Estefanía [0:13:07]

Oh.

Alfonso [0:13:08]

Well, I said that when, when I was 12 years old, my brothers and I were left alone, one 15, the other 14, I was 12; my other brother, 10, another brother, 6. We grew up together, but the two eldest were always away from home, they came late, they went out to wander around the fields and I settled down, always working at home, yes, cooking at home, yes, cooking with firewood, yes... I washed clothes for certain friends of mine, in the fields by the river, and I charged them three cents, five cents. And I, well, cooked with firewood. I was the one who went to look for firewood in the mountains. I was the one milking the cow. I was the slave of the house. I don't know why, but it was the slave. Of course, now, my two, my three brothers, those two older ones are with daddy God and the one younger than me, the one who was 10 years old, when my mom left, because she also passed away a couple of years ago. And the youngest, who was 6, well, he lives in Tampa, Florida and uh... we're like this. Those who remain, him and me, nothing more. There is a sister who is younger than my mother, when she went to New York with her, because she lives in a small town, in Barranquitas. Because the other sister that my mother took, who were two, also died when she was 26 years old.

Estefanía [0:14:46]:

Well, it was a good life... it was a very strong youth, right? Would you say that this was the normal youth of Puerto Ricans at that time?

Carmen [0:14:56]:

That was youth, huh, for me, it was normal youth. There was a lot of respect. It is not seen, what was seen, well, of course, there was not what there is, eh modernization, but yes, respect always prevailed, always. And we played with each other, with the neighbors, if there was a neighbor nearby because the neighbor nearby was about a kilometer away, you could be, it wasn't that one was in the houses either, no. But, yes, we could, we had, at least, I can say that I had a fairly normal childhood, as I told you just now.

Estefanía [0:15:50]:

And you too, Api? Was it a normal childhood?

Alfonso [0:15:32]:

It was normal. For me, it was very difficult, but it was normal. We, uh, in my house we didn't have a television. There was a little radio, eh (laughs) to' charred and then the little radio worked with a battery that lasted six months and cost \$8. The battery would go away, eh, someone would come to town, eh, someone would give us two or three pesos, they would credit it to us and if there was no battery, to buy the battery, well, we were also without a radio in the countryside. No radio, no television, so we had a bad time in terms of music. Without, to eat, well, sometimes, also, we didn't eat. And when I went out to work, in the cane fields, when I was 14 years old, with a permit, when I was 14 years old, sometimes I worked eight hours in the cane fields, without eating. Hey, I sucked cane, I sucked 'china', hey, I drank water from the river and if not, well, someone brought us food in a lunch box and, sometimes, they gave me four grains of rice in the lid of the lunch box. They brought him a can of cold, black coffee, and they gave me pal de... an 'oncita' and when he returned home, sometimes he returned home at 6:00 or at half past five because the farm was far away, not we had, there was no food. Sometimes my dad didn't have time because he worked too, cooking. But look, eating mangoes, sucking on Chinese, eating malanga from the river, the kind that is sometimes called Chinese malanga, with firewood and grain breads, 'lerenes' and bananas and all those little things, well, we survived, with butter pig, that one, because my dad, every time a pig was killed, they sent him, they sold him the pig's head for 50 cents. Without him asking for it, the man came to the house with the memory of the piglet (he laughs). And then, he cooked it with firewood and that butter, he kept it. And four slices of corduroy with a little butter, it's not too bad to say (he laughs).

Estefanía [0:18:01]:

Well, you did a lot. At home, they helped their parents a lot, they had to be hard-working people and that never gave them time to educate yourselves? I mean, did you go to school in your youth?

Carmen [0:18:14]:

It used to be that it was mandatory to work, do housework, help parents. They were mandatory, they forced one. Yes, I did go to school, as I told you, I studied until the fourth year, but when I got home, I got home from school, I had to do the housework, the schoolwork plus the housework. I had to cook, I had to wash, sweep, wash floors because that was not a time for mopping because the house was made of wood, and you had to pour water on it. It was washing with a broom, and I lived in a high-rise house, high-rise where the water had to be brought up for nothing, upstairs to the house because there was no water and the house's sink was outside of, of, in a window outside and there you had to scrub, clean, do everything right because if you didn't kill them... My mom was very demanding and if not, she would throw everything back, I had to do it again if there was something wrong. And then I went to study one more year, at the

Mayagüez Vocational School and I studied a year of practical nursing, which, at least, was what my thirty years unwrapped for me to be able to work. My first job was at the Bella Vista Hospital, after I graduated from, as a practical nurse and from there, I went down. I was in Bella Vista for about five years and then I started at the Mayagüez Medical Center, which is where I started privately... through a plan called ADT and the doctor I worked with tried to make me permanent. He got me the job and I spent thirty years working at the Mayagüez Medical Center. And 23 years ago, I retired, thank God.

Estefanía [0:20:35]:

Yeah. And you, Api, did you study at school?

Alfonso [0:20:38]:

She said senior year, but what I studied was until fourth grade. Eh, it was difficult for me because the school was far down a bumpy road, that's what they call it, which was more about animals, about horses and that. When I came to put on some Champions that they told him, that they are sneakers now, that didn't cost even forty cents, but I didn't get used to them, but I went without socks, without anything, with those Champions and I came to school with the Champion and in the afternoon, I brought them in my hand. But they were, um... That was a couple of months, I always went barefoot to the 'Corcovada' of Añasco, from Miraflores neighborhood over there on that slope and I always came sick to my stomach because the milk they gave at school hurt me. But I go back and say, thank God, I survived, I'm still living, thank God. more years.

Estefanía [0:21:40]:

Let's hope so, with God's favor. But, well, let's think that you, eventually, developed, let's think that, when you were my age, 19, 20, already at that age you want to start a career in something. Awita, you told me that you studied at Vocational, that you studied nursing. You started in the Hospital, in which hospital?

Carmen [0:22:06]:

Bella Vista, from Mayagüez.

Estefanía [0:22:28]:

And that's where you developed?

Carmen [0:22:10]:

That's where I started to develop. Well, I started to get by when I started studying in Mayagüez because I was from a 'barrio'. As I told you, from there I had to go live in Mayagüez, in a relative's house for a year and, for a year and a half, I was in what I studied. My parents paid them for me to be there. The eldest would come home from school and put me to cook, I also helped my cousins with chores because they were also relatives of us. And from there, when I finished studying, I started working fast. They left me in Bella Vista working because I did my internship right there and right there, I got a job. And I was there for five years.

Estefanía [0:23:00]:

And eventually, you left for...

Carmen [0:23:02]:

And after...

Estefanía [0:23:03]:

To the Medical Center.

Carmen [0:23:05]:

And after I got married, I was working in Bella Vista, and I married your grandfather and, we got a little house in Mayagüez. We stayed there to live. We lived until our first child was born and then we came to live in Añasco and it was in Añasco that, well, I had to leave my job and then I went to the Medical Center, as I told you. I got a job, eh, I bought it, as one says, because jobs used to be bought and I started in Mayagüez, at the Medical Center, and I stayed there until I was thirty years old.

Estefanía [0:23:56]:

Ah, well, you're already a nurse, with years of experience. And Api, what was your career?
(Laughing).

Alfonso [0:24:02]:

Api, your career that we haven't talked about. Hey, people say I'm famous, but I say no. (laughs). However, when I went to New York to wash dishes, I always listened to music there. Here, no, here I didn't have a radio and then, I noticed that there were many singers there, that there are many still alive, that I could do the same as them. And it occurred to me to go to study at a music school called International Television Arts and what I studied was singing, but I had singing in my blood and, then, it occurred to me to record an album, once, in the 1961, with some famous musicians who were in New York and he carried the record carrying it, very heavy, because it was a heavy record, eh a 78 revolution, he took it to the stores and people liked it; I took it to the radio and the announcers liked it, and then, well, that record is still there, that song is still 61 years old and they ask me for it on the radio in the program that I have. From there to here, I got on track and looked for a person who liked the album who was a producer of Coamo and I wrote some songs, he recorded an album for me, he did the production for me and the three or four songs on the albums I recorded were successful in New York. But I sang in the halls for a trifle and if I didn't go, I felt great there. I went to sing there to places and sang for free. But I had something very peculiar that, yesterday in Aguadilla they told me, a friend of mine, who is a client of mine, from my radio program, tells me that he has never seen a person who dresses more beautiful than me.

Estefanía [0:26:02]:

Yes? (laughing).

Alfonso [0:26:03]:

He tells me: 'Look, I haven't seen - a merchant- look, I haven't seen anyone who dresses more beautifully than you, Alfonso Vélez'.

Estefanía [0:26:10]:

(Laughs)

Alfonso [0:26:11]:

So, well, I dressed well there. I ordered, already progressing, to make suits; I had relatives who worked in suit factories, and they got me cheap suits. I gave him the number, the number was 37, from the suit, and he was always well dressed. I was going to work, to wash dishes in a restaurant and I was wearing a scarf, well dressed. I had a hairspray to store, uh, the clothes and when I left at 4:00, at the time I left, it took me more than half an hour to change at the baseman and I would go out there like, like the owner of the restaurant and that helped me a lot. And thank God, well, I'm still making music, I haven't gotten rich from music, but I've lived and I'm satisfied with what I've done and I've worked at Banco Popular in music; I have sung with famous singers; I have sung on television; I have sung on television programs, the 'Bayaney' program; I have sung in the program that Gallito from Manatí had; a program that Wilkins, from Mayagüez, brought me. I have recorded discs with the Sony company; I have recorded with orchestras. There have been places where El Gran Combo sings and they know that I am there and they have taken me to sing with them, which... Thank God and I still want to make a recording. In this year we reach a thousand, in 2022.

Estefanía [0:27:39]:

Oh waoh! And during all of that, since Awita was a nurse and you were developing in music, at that time was that the time you met, when you were already making your careers or had already made them? In which year, at what age did you meet as such?

Carmen [0:28:04]:

We've known each other all our lives because we were born in the same place, we lived close, close; we were... practically close. And then, well, we have known each other all our lives. Already since we were 11 years old, already like eh, ah, already like we liked each other and all that life we have been waiting for each other until we became boyfriends. Mommy didn't love us... Mommy didn't love him because he was very poor.

Estefanía [0:28:34]:

Oh wow.

Carmen [0:28:35]:

...and she said that he was a player...

Estefanía [0:28:40]:

(laughs).

Carmen [0:28:41]:

But thank God, we got married, we came home in 1965.

Estefanía [0:28:51]:

And how old were you at that time?

Carmen [0:28:53]:

In 1965 I was 21 years old and Api was... (thinking).

Alfonso [0:29:00]:

Carmen [0:29:01]:

26 years old, 26. And we procreated our two children, well and... already now, on September 25 of this year, we are going to celebrate 57 years of marriage.

Estefanía [0:29:21]:

Yeah

Carmen [0:29:22]:

In ups and downs, but we have maintained; but that of having known each other, all our lives.

Estefanía [0:29:29]:

Oh, well; but for the time that you had a very important person in my life, Mami. By that time, you lived, you lived here in Añasco all your life, right?

Api [0:29:47]:

Yes, but after a while, after the marriage, we lived in Mayagüez for some time, near the Bella Vista Hospital, what they called the 'Liceo', we stayed there for a while, yes. We didn't have a very good time because we rented a baseman where Dida's parents lived upstairs and a small room behind in the baseman and there was a man there, the one who rented us the room, but he was ninety-something and it was difficult to sleep and be next to those roosters and loads of cats also because he had cats for a tube and seven keys.

Estefanía [0:30:34]:

Wow!

Alfonso [0:30:35]:

But with sacrifice, but even with that, we are happy. There are times when, it must be said because, jokingly and seriously, we are very happy, marriages are like that; sometimes we are as if it were Russia and Ukraine (laughing).

Estefanía [0:30:42]:

I know. (River). No, but you eventually went back to Añasco and bought a house in Brisas, right?

Carmen [0:30:52]:

No, no. We returned to Añasco because my parents also moved to Añasco and we came and rented a house in Añasco too. First, we lived with them for a while and then we rented a house. We rented a house, we lived in a rented house for about two years and then we bought Brisas's house.

Estefanía [0:31:22]:

And by that time, Mami was already a big girl, wasn't she, or...?

Carmen [0:32:26]:

No. No. No. Your mother, um, was born while we were living in a rented house and when we

went to Brisas, your mother already had... (stops, thinking) ...had like...

Alfonso [0:31:45]:

Like four years. (Energetic).

Carmen [0:31:46]:

Two or three...

Alfonso [0:31:47]:

About four, because we went to Brisas in '74.

Carmen [0:31:54]:

In '74, I was four years old. Your mom was four years old.

Estefanía [0:31:54]:

And... by then, did you stay in that house until...?

Carmen [0:32:00]:

Twenty-eight years old. We lived 28 years in that house.

Estefanía [0:32:04]:

Oh well.

Carmen [0:32:05]:

If it hadn't been for the storm, for the storms that there were, this one that... Eloísa, first, let it be...

Alfonso [0:32:16]:

And then George.

Carmen [0:32:17]:

There was another one, but it didn't hurt us so much, but Eloísa, yes, the water got in a little bit, up to the balcony; but George was the one who destroyed us, which is why I wanted to get out of there.

Estefanía [0:32:22]:

And speaking of George, before this hurricane happened, did you ever, for the time of your life, ever must go through a, a storm like this, any such destruction that a hurricane or, or storm, has caused, never?

Alfonso [0:32:53]:

Well, for my time, yes, because if I'm not mistaken, in the fifties, we hadn't gotten married yet...

Estefanía [0:33:01]:

Aha.

Alfonso [0:33:02]:

Me, we lived through the Santa Clara hurricane...

Carmen [0:33:07]:

Oh yeah.

Alfonso [0:33:08]:

Santa Clara, in the Miraflores neighborhood and this one in Eloísa wasn't, what's it called, welcoming, let's say, it was strong. But, George's, we nearly drowned inside the house because the Río Grande de Añasco already seemed like a sea and the river is far away, and a large 1984 car, owned by Carmen Lydia, entered the urbanization that we had, and the river, even being in the urbanization, the river took him, it took him quite far.

Estefanía [0:33:40]:

Aha.

Alfonso [0:33:41]:

And so, we got the ladies, the men, tied with ropes from one sidewalk to another, we climbed and put a ladder on a tall bus and from there we climbed the ladder and from the ladder to the roof of my house. brother, who lived next to me because the river entered there and that was extremely dangerous. Eh, if it's not for the neighbors, we drowned inside the feeling and the water because the water rose about two and a half feet, 30 inches, and we couldn't walk inside the house.

Estefanía [0:34:18]:

and...

Alfonso [0:34:19]:

They didn't open the doors either.

Estefanía [0:34:22]:

Wow, but before George happened to you, it didn't happen like Maria who called, not that they called, but they announced it, right, and everyone kind of had in their minds that a hurricane was going to happen. In Georges, did they ever announce it, did they warn you, did they tell you that it was going to be a category four hurricane, if I'm not mistaken?

Alfonso [0:34:50]:

Yes, yes. That was announced, what happens is that the people who are unbelievers, did not believe that it would happen, at least, us. We are talking about us because the Río Grande de Añasco entered the urbanization.

Estefanía [0:35:04]:

Aha.

Alfonso [0:35:05]:

It went through the Pozo Hondo neighborhood, but there are places that didn't have as much

effect, no, no.

Estefanía [0:35:11]:
Yeah

Alfonso [0:35:12]:

But, for that urbanization, yes, the river entered there.

Estefanía [0:35:16]:

And, so, the hurricane entered the neighborhood and, but a hurricane had never passed for that urbanization that happened like that or you already had in mind that perhaps the urbanization was in a place that you entered, that was filled with a lot of water, but that was the first time something like this happened?

Carmen [0:35:35]:

No, for Eloísa, who came first, there the water also arrived, but the water did not enter the house, it reached the balcony, but inside the house, no. Well, we believed that this was never going to happen, and we stayed for the other, believing that the water was not going to enter and it is not known that it was worse than what we expected.

Estefanía [0:36:04]:

And tell me, did that happen during the day or at night?

Carmen [0:36:07]:

No, at night.

Estefanía [0:36:10]:

So, the hurricane started and you guys, well, sat there and thought and...

Alfonso [0:36:17]:

We were sleeping.

Estefanía [0:36:18]:

And that was where the neighbors let you know that the neighborhood was flooding?

Alfonso [0:36:24]:

Yes.

Estefanía [0:36:26]:

And there, what was your escape plan, what did you think, who were you with? Because by that time, Mami was no longer there, right? There?

Alfonso [0:36:38]:

Yes, she was with us.

Carmen [0:36:39]:

No.

Alfonso [0:36:39]:

No, no, no.

Estefanía [0:36:40]:

No?

Carmen [0:36:41]:

Your mother was already married and was just married, and she was at her mother-in-law's house. We were with my son, may he rest in peace, (his voice breaks a little) and his wife, at home, that night. But we were waiting, but since nothing came and we were already falling asleep, at 3:00 in the morning, around 2:00 in the morning, we went to bed. All in the same room. We threw mats on the floor and slept in the same room and around 3:00 in the morning, at half past three, the neighbors were knocking on our doors, yelling at us, yelling to get out, to get out, that we were drowning. So, that's where the odyssey of not being able to open the doors began. They are pulling from the outside and we also from the inside also trying to open it. Thank God that it was possible to open it and we came out with the water almost up to our necks, as the saying goes, from inside the house.

Estefanía [0:37:49]:

And after they left their house, they, they joined the neighbors, no, and they tried to find a place that isn't so full of water, that they couldn't drown, right?

Alfonso [0:38:02]:

Well, as I told you just now, we went up the stairs, the ladies first, we went up to the roof, the ladies first and then we, to the roof of my brother's house who lived there, he was a neighbor of mine.

Estefanía [0:38:19]:

And what was in that house that you felt protected?

Carmen [0:38:22]:

But it was on the roof...

Alfonso [0:38:24]:

It was on the roof of the house.

Carmen [0:38:25]:

It was the little roof, it was because it was the bathroom, the little bathroom of the house, because it was only made of cement because the wind had already blown away the house, the wood; what was left was the ceiling of, of, what was left was the little cement room of the bathroom, it was nothing more. And there we protected ourselves, but from then on, we got off, we went back down when it cleared up a bit, they took us down from there and moved us to the other side of the street because there were a lot of boys, there were, I mean, a lot of boys, there

was a lot more , the adults who were young adults, passed us with ropes, tied us up and passed us with ropes to the other side.

Estefanía [0:39:14]:

And all this happened at around three, four in the morning?

Carmen [0:39:17]:

That was already like from 7:00 to 8:00 in the morning.

Estefanía [0:39:20]:

Wow.

Carmen [0:39:22]:

Take one out to get out of all that rain, all that water that was around, that was flooded everywhere to get out on the road.

Estefanía [0:39:37]:

And I imagine that it took a long time for the water to leave the neighborhood and how long and what did you do when the water left? You guys had to stay somewhere else, I imagine.

Alfonso [0:39:49]:

We stayed over there, in the same house because the river, as it rushes in as they say, also goes down lightly.

Estefanía [0:39:58]:

Aha.

Alfonso [0:40:00]:

And then, well, the odyssey afterwards was to clean up and throw away because we lost everything for the effects. Important papers, the stove, the refrigerator, the furniture, many things were lost, even good shoes because later I washed them and put them in the sun and left them in the sun for so long that the sun split them. (Laughing). But, from there we got the habit that, every time the river rose, we got sick of the nerves. When there was something, when big storms were announced...

Estefanía [0:40:31]:

Yeah

Alfonso [0:40:32]:

And even with that, those who live there still go through Cain's until, when he had announced some storm, what if the river, what if this, we were already nervous.

Estefanía [0:40:43]:

No, I imagine that the whole neighborhood lost, everyone basically lost everything.

Alfonso [0:40:51]:

Most of them lost everything, yes.

Estefanía [0:40:53]:

Really?

Alfonso [0:40:54]:

That's correct.

Estefanía [0:40:56]:

And this happened in Brisas, you never found out that in another part of Añasco that happened very strongly or was it just more than in that neighborhood? Did you guys never find out?

Alfonso [0:41:07]:

No, in the Espino neighborhood, also on the 109, there yes, the river entered. It entered many places, in Pozo Hondo, which is more or less close there. In the cemetery, a cemetery assistant drowned, who was called Irai; He wanted to cross the ravine... the river was already on the road, and it passed by and took him away, and they found him three days later. So, there was, there was a lot of damage.

Estefanía [0:41:34]:

And Ma, and Mami when that happened, was she scared?

Alfonso [0:41:42]:

He was scared, yes.

Carmen [0:41:42]:

How could she not be scared! No, she couldn't call us because at that time there were no cell phones...

Estefanía [0:41:49]:

That was in '98, right?

Carmen [0:41:51]:

Yeah... That was in '98, yes. There were no cell phones, but I went to the little house where she was living. We spent about a week there sleeping on the floor because she didn't have a bed either, or did we have a bed; only her bed; we slept on the floor there in her house. But, well, we stayed until we could clean the house; to buy our things again, little by little, because everything, everything, everything was lost, everything, everything, everything was lost, everything. There was nothing left, no furniture left, no fridge left, no stove left; well, nothing, nothing, nothing; absolutely nothing. We had to start from scratch again; but thank God, we cleaned the house, we bought everything, and we continued, we continued struggling.

Estefanía [0:42:50]:

And eventually, when that happened, I imagine that you had a plan, I mean when these things happen, you can't do everything alone, so, the government, the mayor never offered help, never...?

Alfonso [0:43:09]:

No, I don't, I don't think they gave us help; I don't remember. Eh, to make matters worse, if that word fits there, to make matters worse, when we went to live there, we, uh, me, they wanted to kick me out of the house because that house belonged to the government, and we bought it almost free...

Estefanía [0:43:31]:

Aha.

Alfonso [0:43:32]:

And it was 30 years that still on this date, now today, on the 22nd, there are people who live there who still haven't been able to pay it, they owe it. To make matters worse, they wanted to kick us out of the house because I didn't qualify, us, because I had made a lot of money on this album that I made in 1973, they told him, the title is La luz, but the people he knows him by 'El Fúa' and because I was famous they wanted to get us out of the house for bravado and 'jaquetonerías' of, to say it, mine and fighting and fighting and scrutinizing everywhere, well, then we managed to get them to leave us there.

Estefanía [0:44:10]:

Wow!

Alfonso [0:44:11]:

But the government agencies and, mainly, the chief who was from Mayagüez, wanted to completely remove us from the house because we, that house was for poor people, eh, for, for, low cost and we, well, Alfonso Vélez was famous, he earned, he had money and they couldn't live there, we didn't qualify for the house.

Estefanía [0:44:34]:

So, basically, all those stories that, since María, that many people couldn't receive help, that's not something from Puerto Rico today, but rather, since '98, you have had the experience, where basically, the neither the mayor nor the government have been able to help them.

Carmen [0:44:51]:

No.

Estefanía [0:44:52]:

After such a catastrophic event.

Carmen [0:44:54]:

Yes, the mayor passed by distributing, after Mari... after George, the mayor passed by distributing food and little bags that they gave out and he didn't want to give us because we didn't qualify, because we had money for that, to buy food, but one of the neighbors, I don't remember which one, told him: 'No, you, if that's for everyone, you have to give it to everyone.' And they gave us a little bag, one of the least they had, they gave us a little bag with a little package of rice, I remember like now, some sausages and, what do I know, a pot of sauce and some cookies. That was all they gave us, while others were filled with the full purchase, they gave us that, but it

was because one of the neighbors told him that they had to, that, that he had to give us. So, we didn't have water either and one day I went to get water from the Castle, that's what the Castle already existed for and, and since I went with one of my comp, uh, uh, my co-workers and the one who distributed the water, he distributed the water, he was a cousin of mine, he didn't want to give me water, because I wasn't in her party, according to her. He gave the water to the other girl and to me, he didn't give me. It didn't hit me. So, my, uh, my partner went to her and said: 'But you can't do that. That's for everyone.' So, she gave her one and she gave it to me, but they didn't want us, the government has never wanted to help us at all.

Estefanía [0:46:42]:

So, basically, that thing about aid, about how difficult it has been to recover after a hurricane, it's not something new since María, but it's been happening for years.

Carmen [0:46:53]:

Aha.

Alfonso [0:46:54]:

And you're talking about the Georges, if I'm not mistaken it was in 1998.

Estefanía [0:46:59]:

Aha.

Alfonso

But, the previous one that was Eloísa, was, or something like that, a lot of people died in that one, here in this area because on the highway that the Añasco bridge is on, that, over there is Mayagüez, a lot of people died because they were there, what is it called, trapped in it, from the bridge to the area where the airport is and many of them managed to cross. There were people who, after five or six days, found them alive, but buried in the pothole, from the body up, alive, and even a relative of ours died, who got into a truck. He worked in the Municipality, he wanted

to enter, eh, César was called, and he died there, but many died there, in that place. And yet, the one from, the Georges, I don't know if some died, the one from Georges, however, entered Brisas, which was dangerous for us. But, in that of Eloísa many people died right there, in number 2; Yes.

Estefanía [0:48:00]:

So, Puerto Rico has already had a lot of catastrophic ca... (Laughing nervously) hurricanes, that Maria is not the only one, basically. And you tell me that, basically, you couldn't receive any help anywhere, well, how could you do it for, what did you do after, what was your plan, basically, after the hurricane?

Alfonso [0:48:22]:

No, we continue working. Me, me, after Hurricane Georges, I already had, in the recording I made in 1973, in 1974, in a little square, in the Plaza de Añasco, a business 23 and a half feet wide by 21 feet long. There was a friend of mine who had a little business, a record business, and then he entrusted it to me. I had to sign at the Municipality. He gave me a job because, as Dida said right now, because of the issue of politics, but I fell into that business and I was there for 24

years, Añasco Record Shop which, precisely, after Georges, I gave it to my son-in-law, that business. But, well, with that business, I survived; I was looking for the ball of glue; I was able to leave that house. The house depreciated when George because that was in '74 when they gave it to me, but I put a lot of money into the house, in loans and things; eh, I was looking for the ball of 'pega'o' in the public car. I had a boy who worked in the business, and we did the Brisas house, but when George came in...

Estefanía [0:49:37]:

Aha.

Alfonso [0:49:38]:

But everything I spent on the house was lost because when George came in, the house depreciated in full. Nobody wanted it and I sold it almost as a gift.

Estefanía [0:49:46]:

Wow.

Alfonso [0:49:48]:

With that sale, well, we made this one here. I, with loans and little things, uh, struggling and the case was with the sale of the business, and I had an accident once in Mayagüez, in the, in Mayagüez, that my arm was broken in pieces, that I fell from a roof of a vocational...

Estefanía [0:50:08]:

Aha.

Alfonso [0:50:09]:

And there they gave me something for a lawsuit. Dida had an accident because of a chauffeur's car, and they gave her some money that was \$5,000 more.

Estefanía [0:50:18]:

Aha.

Alfonso [0:50:19]:

And those, those, the demand of the two, well, at that time it was as if it were \$100 thousand dollars now.

Estefanía [0:50:25]:

Yeah

Alfonso [0:50:27]:

And we take advantage of them, we use them for the house and this, thank God, is what we have, with all those sacrifices that, because after I sold the business, then I sold the business in '98, which was the hurricane, but then I went to the radio, on May 15, 1998. And then, well, I'm still on the radio. That program, that program helps me because my social security is very little because in the sugar cane plantations, what I earned was a couple of pesos a week and what social security paid is some five or six dollars and then, well, the social security is very little. But, with social security and with the radio program that has been going on for 23 and a half

years and Dida who retired and all those little things, well, we built this house, thank God.

Estefanía [0:51:20]:

Well, that they were able to progress in their lives, despite the circumstances, but that many times, perhaps it was luck or because, obviously, it was necessary, one point, to have the help of the government, but well, we must continue forward.

Carmen [0:51:35]:

But thank God, we don't owe anyone anything. We don't owe the government anything, on the contrary, the government owes us because it never gave us what, uh, this, we were supposed to qualify for, but we're alive and well and we don't owe it; our little house belongs to us, which is also yours...

Estefanía [0:52:00]:

(Laughs)

Carmen [0:52:01]:

In the morning and we are happy within that situation. We're fine, thank God.

Estefanía [0:52:11]:

Hey and, thanks to God, you have been able to live all these experiences and you also went through María who, I also went through that hurricane. But, for you, compared to George, María was not such a strong experience.

Carmen [0:52:26]:

Nothing. For María, me, it was not, for María, for me, it was as if it had been any windstorm that passed by because, thank God, nothing happened to us. I felt safe, I felt happy, I mean happy, no, because you can't say you feel... but I felt safe. The only thing was that we had four, almost six months without electricity, but like me all my life in the countryside, we were without electricity. I came to have light when I was 20 years old, in the countryside; so, we had a good time. And thanks to my neighbor, because we have some neighbors, too good, but especially, I have one who threw us quickly, quickly, he threw one at us, he turned on his power plant, he threw us like...

Alfonso [0:53:16]:

An extension.

Carmen [0:53:17]:

An extension, we lit our freezer and the candles and, as they say, the lamps, well. And like me, all my life I've had a small fluid gas stove, that's where I cooked.

Estefanía [0:53:38]:

Hey, but at that time, in '98, there was electricity...

Carmen [0:53:39]:

Well, sure.

Estefanía [0:53:42]:

But did it take long for the light to come back on when it happened?

Carmen [0:53:44]:

No

Alfonso [0:53:45]:

After Hurricane Maria we were without electricity for 78 days.

Estefanía [0:53:48]:

And with George?

Carmen [0:53:49]:

No, with George we had a week without electricity.

Estefanía [0:53:51]:

Wow!

Carmen [0:53:52]:

But it came faster, faster.

Estefanía [0:53:54]:

And, with, water?

Carmen [0:53:56]:

The water too, the water came light too. Wine lighter than now.

Estefanía: [0:54:02]:

I mean, Maria's problem was that everyone was left without electricity.

Carmen [0:54:06]:

Yes, everyone. For Maria it was worst because it was disastrous; María was more disastrous. For, the one who didn't have a house, well, of course, a little ranch and house, totally lost it. But we, as we have the houses, thank God, they are well built, just like yours and many, like those of your grandparents, also, your other grandparents, well, nothing happened. But we only suffer the ravages of light and water, nothing more.

Alfonso [0:54:36]:

It's that in this place, at least in the western area, in Añasco, here, it didn't do as much damage as in other places.

Carmen [0:54:43]:

No.

Alfonso [0:54:44]:

Not as in, eh, as I was saying, Adjuntas, in Utuado and in some places, here, less damage. They said that Añasco had less damage than in those other towns that I mentioned just now.

Carmen [0:54:57]:

Because what happens is that this Hurricane Maria entered through Yabucoa. That's where my brother lives, you, and that's where everything was a total loss. Nothing happened to my brother's house because it is also a comfortable house, a well-made house. But, they also had to go out there, live for about six months, because they did, in Yabucoa it took a year for the light to arrive.

Estefanía [0:55:23]:

Wow.

Alfonso [0:55:24]:

At least, in the place where they live.

Carmen [0:55:25]:

Where he lives.

Estefanía [0:55:26]:

Yes, it all depends on the site.

Alfonso [0:55:29]:

Here, well, for water, which was a bit sacrificed, well, sometimes they distributed water in the Espino neighborhood, but I, in my little bus, well, poured empty gallons for us there, well, even with that I have and there is a group over there where a lot of people go from Mayagüez, from Las Marías, from Añasco, from many places, to look for water there in that place and, then, well, I went to look for water there. Ah, 25, 30 to 35 gallons, I filled them up and had water to sustain us for five or six days. Even today we do. I, sometimes, take my clean gallons and take them there. In order not to spend a lot of time there, I take them clean from here.

Estefanía [0:56:14]:

Aha.

Alfonso [0:56:16]:

And right now, we have fresh water there, you, you, who lived here for a couple of years, you and your older brother, eh Tito, us, that water was almost what we used to support them. You fascinate them... What's more, the one you're drinking is from over there.

Estefanía [0:56:34]:

(Laugh).

Alfonso [0:56:36]:

That water is from there.

Estefanía [0:56:38]:

That they knew how to maintain themselves and, at least, Hurricane María was not as strong and

basically as traumatic as George. And hey, speaking of which, when María passed by, did they ever find out what happened in Brisas, if Brisas also flooded again? Did it flood again?

Alfonso [0:56:58]:

Yeah but, not as much as George.

Estefanía [0:57:00]:

Oh well.

Alfonso [0:57:02]:

No. But, but uh, I notice that, from the hurricane to here, uh, a lot of people, uh in Puerto Rico, in our country it has done a lot of damage, uh, there are many nervous patients, that if many ...

Estefanía [0:57:16]:

Yeah

Alfonso [0:57:17]:

Because the hurricane, the tremors, the pandemic, now the war, the, the people are fine, very nervous. Me, me, including me. I haven't slept well for almost a year because of that, what if the pandemic, what if this, what if that, what if they come right now, right now a month... as my father used to say, 'right now' they mention the hurricanes again.

Estefanía [0:57:39]:

Yeah

Api [0:57:40]:

...from Hurricane María for the house, from the tremors and that, it has done us a lot of damage, a lot, a lot. I include myself there.

Estefanía [0:57:48]:

But, if another hurricane happens again, you like, you feel safe, you feel that nothing as strong as George is going to happen. With María they could see that, no, it was strong, but it wasn't as strong and no, and basically, they didn't lose their house or anything, that if one happens again in the next few years or this year, one never knows what, do you feel prepared more, since you have that experience or are you still scared?

Alfonso [0:58:24]:

For me, it still scares me, yes.

Carmen [0:58:26]:

No... Let me tell you, no one is prepared for inclement weather, no one, no one. As much as one wants to get over it, as much as one wants to say 'I'm fine', no, no one is well because, perhaps one does not suffer, but the one next to one is suffering for one reason or another, but, no, no one is prepared for, pa, for inclement weather, no one. Whoever tells me that he is not scared eh, eh, eh, let's say, is a liar because the inclement weather is very strong. It's very traumatic.

Estefanía [0:59:09]:

Yeah

Carmen [0:59:10]:
They are traumatic.

Estefanía [0:59:11]:

And... Aha.

Alfonso [0:59:13]:

It's that every time, for me, you see, they mention an earthquake, 'no, that there was an earthquake in Guánica, that if this, that if a magnitude six-something tremor, whatever, in Mexico that there was, that if this, well, and at, at the second, the tremor began in me, in my knees, in my hands.

Estefanía [0:59:31]:

(Laughs)

Alfonso [0:59:32]:

The second and this (laughs), because I'm terrified of earthquakes, but even more so if they happen at night, but to date, I'm still surviving, thank God.

Estefanía [0:59:44]:

Uhm. And, since you have already been through many hurricanes and everything, what do you think, what would you advise or would you like to happen in the future, what do you want the government or Puerto Rico to do so that future generations do not happen again? don't go back to what you went through with those hurricanes? What do you want to happen, what do you do so that all that does not happen again?

(Silence).

Alfonso [1:00:21]:

Well, I would say that they need, us and our people, they need, yes, more help from the government. The government doesn't give much either, what gives is the government over there, Uncle Sam...

Estefanía [1:00:33]:

(Laugh).

Alfonso [1:00:34]:

Is the one that gives aid, that when they arrive here, \$2 million arrives and they don't give, I don't know where they go, but we need, um, the help of the government, eh, and sometimes, they arrive late because we are talking now Right here, if I'm not mistaken, almost four years have passed since Hurricane Maria...

Estefanía [1:00:53]:

Let's go for five now.

Alfonso [1:00:54]:

There are still people out there who say that they have blue awnings.

Estefanía [1:00:57]:

Yeah

Alfonso [1:00:58]:

They say, because I don't see that one of those blue awnings lasts four years, but it's still there, still. I don't know why there are people still with blue awnings after four years if, however, wherever you look for them, some help came here and they need financial help and physical labor.

Estefanía [1:01:21]:

Yeah

Carmen [1:01:22]:

And have better planning. See where one is going to build the home that one wants for life, if they are going to stay here in Puerto Rico, that it be durable, that it not be a yes, a flood-prone place, because all of that must be sought today ; look for safe places and a good, ah, good planning, a good structure, that the base of that house be a structure that can have what, that does not give in to an, an atmospheric event for one to be a little calmer.

Alfonso [1:02:07]:

That's correct. Do not give permits to make constructions, houses and, well, constructions in places that are prone to flooding, dangerous that yes, I know, what is it called, that the land sinks. Hey, don't go too far because here where we are, a hundred feet down that road there is a creek below.

Estefanía [1:02:31]:

Yeah

Alfonso [1:02:32]:

Ok, if they give permission for that or what they say, I don't know, I didn't live here, there was one, a lagoon of 'malanguilla'. In other words, those houses that are on the right, most of them sold the lots to the people who filled them in and, but there it is subject to flooding anyway, it is not subject to flooding, but it is dangerous because, as I explained to you, right there, to a hundred feet, there's a creek down there. Okay. It's not supposed to, this, they didn't sell it to build houses in this place.

Estefanía [1:03:04]:

That everything depends on, on the construction, on the, on the site and, well, unfortunately, one has to prepare oneself more and not depend on the government and, or anything.

Alfonso [1:03:17]:

It's that it's permissions, you have to get permissions through a tube and seven keys.

Estefanía [1:03:21]:

(Laughs)

Alfonso [1:03:22]:

And there are times here that one has to obtain permits for a business or something, eh, at the last moment, when they give you the permit, one is already tired of waiting and they don't open the business.

Estefanía [1:03:33]:

And do you think that this will ever change or that perhaps everything will continue like this?

Alfonso [1:03:40]:

I hope it changes. Hopefully. As a politician who died recently used to say, 'Blessed man, don't let me die without seeing statehood.'

Estefanía [1:03:55]

(Laughs)

Alfonso [1:04:00]

Well, (laughing) 'don't let me die and let me see that change'; that change that we need because the truth is that the bureaucracy here is killing us Puerto Ricans. Here the bureaucracy, the, the nepotism, the cronyism, the advice, the, well, that's all, there goes all the little that this country produces, in interests and things, that is, in contributions paid by those of us who work, that goes all in bureaucracy. So, there is no more than, every little while, that if they increased the water, that if they increased the light, that if they increased that, that if they increased this. Now the Puerto Rican's pocket doesn't give, it doesn't give, legally, it doesn't give. Yesterday, I went to buy a little pot of juice, a can of juice for my wife, Carmen Lydia, and a month ago I was so satisfied; yesterday the box had increased \$2. But why? If gasoline is supposed to increase, not so much, because they said that gasoline was still here, but they take advantage, they take advantage of the poor, of the citizen, of the one who files forms and pays contributions because the one who has money, does not care.

Estefanía [1:05:10]

And your Awita, do you think he's going to make a change?

Carmen [1:05:14]:

(With resignation). Let's hope in God. Let's hope in God and in the minds of politicians. That's it. Because if they continue the same, if we continue as we are, a government in one way, a government in another, no, I don't expect much change, but let us hope in God, that God put his hand and that there are privileged minds that say 'we are going to try to, to help the citizen so that he does not spend so much work.

Estefanía [1:05:46]:

Yes, that what is important is not politics or parties, but rather human life, right?

Carmen [1:05:50]:

Sure.

Estefanía [1:05:52]:

Therefore...

Carmen [1:05:53]:

At least you... at least, we are going, as one says, we are in decline. What we did, what, what, we had to do, we already did; but yes, I am worried about you, my daughter's well-being, my son-in-law's well-being too because, imagine, there are four people that I am with... I suffer for them and, and I would not want you to go through all that we have gone through U.S. No, never, never. I would like you to live a normal life, a quiet life. And it's never perfect because life isn't perfect, but at least, that they know how to get along, that they know how to say 'wow, I don't have so many obstacles, but... And may God, well, may God enlighten the minds of the, of those who are in, in high places...

Alfonso [1:06:55]:

In power.

Carmen [1:06:56]:

And you can go forward which is the most I want, in the name of God.

Alfonso [1:07:03]:

So, we ask Papa God with great faith.

Estefanía [1:07:08]:

Well, thanks for telling me about my expe... your experiences. I imagine it was pretty rough. I was also a victim of Maria, but well; You have to keep going forward and not look back at what already happened. Have a positive future. Look at it in such a positive way.

Carmen [1:07:23]:

Exactly. Be positive. Be strong. One cannot let oneself fall. Move forward. Always with God forward. Strong and with faith. Faith is what saves.

Estefanía [1:07:48]:

Well, nothing. I hope you have a nice day because it's still early and well, I see you (laughs) literally, tomorrow, this week. I hope you are well and bless you.

Carmen [1:08:04]:

Thank you, honey. God bless you. I love you with all my heart.

Alfonso [1:08:09]:

God bless you and pray to God that the bananas I ate are good for

me. (All three laugh.) [1:08:13]:

Estefanía [1:08:15]:

Oh yeah.