

Samuel Proctor Oral History Program
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PCM-003

Interviewees: Bonnie Davis Dolan, Karen Dolan-Back, Edward Dolan

Interviewers: Candice Ellis and Amanda Noll

Date: July 1, 2010

CE: It's July 1, 2010. This is Candice Ellis with—

N: Amanda Noll.

CE: --interviewing families from the Panama Canal Zone. If you guys want to introduce yourselves, we'll be interviewing...

BD: Bonnie Davis Dolan.

KD: Karen Dolan-Back.

ED: And Edward Dolan.

CE: You had started telling us that you both were in the Canal Zone, and this is your daughter, so if you want to start with that story, how you guys came to be there...

ED: Well, our story of there begins with Bonnie's family, who came down for the construction of the canal. So, you go ahead.

BD: Well, my grandfather in 1907 was a veteran of the Spanish-American War, and he was hired by President Roosevelt with his job in the Canal Zone as a policeman. He had been writing to my grandmother—she was thirteen—as a pen pal. He was so excited about the job, and thought if he didn't take it right away and go down to Panama, he would lose the job, the position would be filled. So he didn't even tell her, he just went to Panama, and then they started writing

again. I have letters, hundreds of their love letters. He became a policeman and retired as a district police commander, and he lived there with his wife, my grandmother Laura, and they retired in Gamboa. At that time, in the [19]50s, you were able to retire and stay there. They died, and they were buried in the cemetery in Corozál, along with other relatives there as well. Their life was very interesting and their love letters are exciting to read. When I grew up, all my relatives lived there. My mother and father were both born in the Canal Zone; my father was born in Colón in Panama, my mother in the Canal Zone. So, we have six generations that lived there, four generations born there. My great-grandfather on my mother's side, he went down to help in the construction of the canal. So, on my maternal side my grandfather in 1907 was in the police force, and my great-grandfather was in the construction. He was a mason, and he helped build some of the artwork in the administration building.

ED: He was an artistic mason. He was an Irish immigrant, born in Ireland, came over, met his wife Molly, who was an immigrant from Sweden, and they came to Panama.

BD: But going back to my police grandfather, he was on the first police force in the Canal Zone that was developed. My husband closed out, in 1982—he was working as a police lieutenant, and so he was on the last platoon that closed out the canal, the Canal Zone police.

CE: So that's a legacy.

BD: So kind of full-circle. And Karen was born, and I'll let her tell her story...

KD: Well. I wanted to just expand on what the administration building is that your great-grandfather did a lot of the masonry artwork. That was the building where the governor, who was appointed by the President of the United States, that's where the governor's office was. And so it was this very large, beautiful building on the top of the side of a hill that you could see from many different locations, on Ancon Hill. That was kind of the central focal point of the Canal Zone, because that's where the governor's office was, and his living quarters were just around up the street from the administration building.

N: And does that building still exist?

KD: Yes it does.

ED: And it's used by the current administration of Panama's Panama Canal, what they call the Authority of the canal. That's their administration building as well. The building also housed all the bureau directors of the canal. In the Canal Zone, you had the Canal Zone government, which was the administration and authority over the canal, and then you had the Panama Canal Company. The governor of the Canal Zone had to be a general in the Army Corps of the Engineers. When he came to the Canal Zone and took over that position, he took his uniform off, he dropped the title of general and used the title of governor. And he had

absolute authority over the Canal Zone; in other words all laws and everything had to be through his authority in there. That was even the military bases. The Canal Zone police, which was a federal police force, had jurisdiction in the entirety of the Canal Zone, even on the military bases, which at times got to be a thorn in the side of the military commanders, because they're used to having just their base and nobody else, and the Canal Zone police could go on. But the governor would allow the commanders of the military bases to patrol police and administrate their bases in the Canal Zone with his authority, which would get the governor sometimes in trouble, because there was a four-star general down there that ran the south com, and he was only a two-star general. So a four-star general doesn't like a two-star general telling him what to do or granting him the authority to do something. So it got touchy at times for some of the governors; they were in a tight spot. The lieutenant governor of the Canal Zone had to be a colonel in the Army Corps of the Engineers also, and he dropped his title colonel and he was lieutenant-governor. Most of the bureau directors were also in the military, like the port captains were coast guard, the marine bureau was headed by a navy captain. So you had a lot of military that had positions in the canal. The reasons was is the Corps of Engineers kind of like to maintain—because of the canal, the construction and the operation of it, they needed to have the military control of it, but you couldn't have a neutral waterway with a military commander, so that's why they dropped those titles. And they went by governor, lieutenant governor, etcetera. So it was a unique situation.

KD: And the four-star that was in charge of U.S. Southern Command wasn't in charge necessarily of Panama, per se, of the Canal Zone, he was responsible from a military aspect for all of Latin America, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. So even though the headquarters was located within the Canal Zone, that wasn't his governed area as a commander.

BD: Ed was the main bread-winner in the family, but I worked for the military for a while, up in Quarry Heights, and Karen worked for the military.

KD: She worked for US Southern Command, which was the four-star headquarters. When I went back to Panama as an adult, I worked for them as well for thirteen years.

CE: Can you describe what you did?

BD: It was interesting working at Quarry Heights. I was hired as a clerk stenographer and I had two years of college and I was excited. I bought a car, a little convertible. Quarry Heights was a very secure base. It was on top of Ancon Hill, and you could even see the ships going through the canal. But I worked for—J6 was a directorate—and I worked for every branch of service. So they had the navy commander, air force, army... so it was interesting. There were a few battles that went on here and there. It was good experience. Later on I transferred into the transportation branch under the administration of the governor. The name slips me right now. We were under Joe Wood. Anyway, we handled all of the incoming

employees that were hired by the canal, and the ones that were leaving, that decided they didn't want to stay and they wanted to go back to the U.S. And also, every two years you were entitled to travel back to your home of record. The government would pay for your way, your family, so every two years we would take a vacation. During the summer months you packed up your kids and they had charter flights or we had the ship that went for a while, the really nice: *S.S. Cristobal* and the *Ancon*. So there were different ways of traveling back to the States. At first it was by ship and then later on—

KD: It was home-leave, right?

BD: It was home-leave. As a little girl growing up, I had not been to the States or visited the States until I was a teenager. So, I was born in Panama. That was a lot of interesting trips that we made when I was a teenager every two years. Then as a family, when Ed and I were married, we tried to go back every two years. It was a wonderful life. It was like a hidden secret; it's still a paradise. We try to go back every year. I was going to mention that our family is still all connected with the government. Karen has two brothers, one older, and one younger. She was the middle one. The older one works for the Department of Homeland Security, and he works in Washington D.C. Prior to his promotion to Washington D.C., he was transferred to Panama and he worked at the embassy for five years, he was there. He was able to buy a small little beach house. So we still have residence there, through him. I got my *Cédula*, because I was born in Panama, so I am

considered dual-citizenship. Our youngest son right now is in Kuwait: he's in the army, and he's there for a year. Everyone is in the government, and our oldest son is also in the army reserves. Karen's husband is in the army—he's a colonel—so we have a lot of connections still with the government.

ED: And our youngest son?

BD: I said Tim was—

ED: He's in the military; he's over in Kuwait right now.

KD: She said that.

ED: Yeah.

BD: When we were living in the Canal Zone, the only job that was offered to you was through the government. So my first job was at the high school helping with the books and all. And the next job I had was an usherette at the theatre, and I actually was a government employee with my little flashlight, [laughter] telling people to take their feet off the seats, and making popcorn. Then I moved up from there. Eventually I retired from the government after over thirty years of service. I also worked for Department of Homeland Security here in the states when we moved back. At first Customs, and then it became Department of Homeland Security. I think we're passing up a lot of life here, fast-forwarding.

N: Well there's so much to tell.

ED: If we could just go back to the history of how we got there and the families, and the uniqueness of what involved there, was that your first down there was your Grandpa Davis. He went down as a policeman, and eventually was—in 1910, I think—that he went up and married his long pen-pal and brought her down to the Canal Zone, which was still partially jungle and under construction and everything. They didn't talk much about it, but I know it had to be quite a cultural shock to come down to that.

KD: And also, the hospital that I and my brothers were born in, my mother was born in, my aunts, cousins, uncles, my grandmother, is called Gorgas Hospital, and Gorgas Hospital was named after an army colonel who was a scientist, and he was the one who invented the cure for malaria. He was sent there because when the U.S. took over the building of the canal from the French, it was because so many were dying from malaria. They had that big problem, and he invented the cure, so they named this hospital after him. And later on, after the treaty implementation was underway, it became an army hospital, so it was named Gorgas Army Hospital. It's still there today; it's a college, I believe, an institute.

ED: Didn't he actually discover the cure for yellow fever?

KD: Yes.

ED: He initiated a program of cleaning up the still waters around the area and eliminating the larvae in the water. Growing up in the Canal Zone, we had our mosquitoes and bugs, but here in Florida, I have more; [laughter] a lot more.

KD: Like Fort Benning, Georgia.

BD: Well that's because they sprayed the DDT, heavily sprayed, and you have a lot of side-effects from DDT.

ED: It gives you grey hair. [laughter] But anyhow, so, he came down, and you kind of briefed over his history. The canal was like a strip 254 miles wide, and so it was five miles on either side of the center line, and where it deviated from that was the water of the rivers and the lakes that provided the water for the canal. That went out where the water went back up on the lake and the Canal Zone then went one hundred feet from the mean high water mark. So we had a hundred feet beyond that where the water touched it. So that's spread out beyond the five miles. So you had five hundred square miles of land. That was divided in two, so you had two districts: you had the Atlantic, and you had the Pacific. And we commonly referred to those as, the other side. If you lived in Balboa, anybody from Cristóbal lived on the other side, vice-versa, so you'll probably hear that. They were from the "other side".

KD: And those of us that have spouses that are not from there, we just say, when you meet people, no matter what side they say they're from, say you're from the other

side. It's a joke, and a lot of people's spouses do that. I'm from the other side.

[laughter]

ED: Anyhow, so he started out mainly in the Atlantic side, which is also referred to as the North, because the ships going through the canal travel north and south. So a northbound will be going from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic, and southbound would be going to the Pacific, which was also unique. If you look at the map, the bend of the canal—I don't know too many places in the world where you wake up in the morning and look out over the Pacific Ocean and watch the sun rise. To get to the United States, driving, from Balboa—

KD: Which we did. [laughter]

ED: --you had to drive south at first to go north. You're actually heading north but you're physically driving south because of the shape of the land. So it's a unique place like that.

BD: If that doesn't confuse you...[laughter]

E: I think I'm following. So the different sides—that's really interesting. Were there big cultural differences, or was there contention between the different sides?

ED: Yes. You had the Balboa Bulldogs, which was the Pacific side, and you had the Cristobal Tigers, which was the Atlantic side. Cristobal was blue and gold, Balboa was red and white. So we always had the football games. It was big, big.

Talk about contention. And also, each will say their side was the better side. I started out on the Atlantic side, and I remembered when my father got his job to go to the Pacific, he changed his job, he came and he sat us down.

BD: There were nine children in his family.

ED: He sat us down, he says, we're moving to Balboa. I have to go over there because of my job. Now I want you to know when you go over there, you're going to have to wear shoes and a shirt. You can't run around like this anymore. [laughter] And we were all crying. On the Atlantic side, I knew all of the football players in the high school, when I was in kindergarten. I knew all of the football players on the football team, all the baseball players, the basketball players, all the sports. I knew their names, who their girlfriends were, I knew who the cheerleaders were, I knew where all of them lived, and that's the way it was. And I can remember, my older brother and I would be telling my dad, we gotta go to the football, the Tigers are playing tonight! We gotta go to the football game or the basketball game. And, you know, it was a tighter community over there.

KD: It was smaller.

ED: When you went to Balboa, you had your cliques, 'cause then you had Balboa, then you had Diablo, which is another town site, then you had Ancon, and then you had Los Rios, the poor zone, Gamboa, then the military bases. When you got into junior high school and high school, we all went to one school on our side.

And that's where you met everybody in there. Before that, you didn't meet everybody.

BD: We used to ride the train, going back and forth. So once you were in junior high, your parents would let you ride the train, you'd get on with all the other kids—

KD: Or, in my generation, when you were like five, you could ride the train with your friends. [laughter]

E: So it was very safe?

KD: Yes.

BD: Very safe. Plus, my father was a conductor on the train. And he was a well-paid employee; at that time he earned a very good salary. He died from skin cancer, but he worked for the railroad for thirty years.

KD: My older brother used to work with my grandfather on the railroad. The *Miami Herald* actually sent a reporter down to the Canal Zone one time and they did a big article on the *Miami Herald*, it was on the front page, called, The Youngest Conductor in the World. It was my brother and my grandfather, my brother was eight, I think?

BD: Yeah.

KD: And my grandfather and him were hanging out on the side of the train, and he would go and check the bathrooms and take the tickets. So they did this big article on him.

ED: You have to tell the story.

BD: I have to tell the story. Our son, Karen's brother Eddie, as she was talking about, he would be able to walk back and forth from coach to coach, and when you passed over, you were exposed to the elements. You could fall off the train. It was just the iron stairs that came up, so you could hear the linkage of the train moving and you'd go from coach to coach. So Eddie got used to doing that by himself, and when you went to the men's room—it was a co-ed thing—you could actually watch the tracks through the commode. And so as a little boy, eight years old, that was fun. So he would, he would kind of get lost in there. And this one train trip that my father took Eddie on, he couldn't find him, my father couldn't find his grandson.

ED: Derailed.

BD: Oh, the train had derailed. They got the train back on the tracks and they started up again and no grandson. So my father stopped the train and the engineer got off the train and all the baggage people got off the train and passengers, they were looking for Eddie, and all of a sudden Eddie poked his head off the train, and he was like, what's... what's going on? You know, and they said, where have

you been? He was in the bathroom playing with the toilet, watching the action of the
tracks going by.

ED: And throwing toilet paper...[laughter]

BD: Yeah, and here everyone was off the train looking for him, and he was, what are
you doing?

KD: My father was born in White Plains, New York, and went to Panama when he
was two years old. So...I don't know.

E: Are there differing sentiments that you guys just witnessed between people who
are born there, and then people who were born in the States and moved there?

ED: As everywhere you go, when you come in, you work your way into the
community and within the people. You make your own way as your personality,
character, and whatnot. The military were coming and going; it's normally a two-,
three-year tour they're down there. So you will have a people coming into your
life and then you see them and you get to know them and you become friends
and two or three years are gone. Like we're having our fiftieth class reunion this
year and a lot of the people in our class were military, but they're Zonians, it's in
them.

BD: It's in their blood.

ED: This is the highlight of their life, was living in the Canal Zone, being part of it.

KD: A lot of people got out of the military and went back to live there because the lifestyle was so wonderful. You had the best of both worlds.

BD: I have to say, Ed's mother, raising nine children, every kid in the neighborhood was welcome to sit at their table. They had no air-conditioning, and most of us growing up didn't have air-conditioning or television until we were about fourteen, I was fourteen. But his mother, I mean everyone in the neighborhood would love to go to the Dolan's house, and at Christmas time, it wasn't Christmas, because we just put up Christmas lights, there was no snow. There wasn't anything to change to change, you know the weather or anything. But the Dolan house had silhouettes of every family. It was black silhouettes of the whole family, and then it would be, Merry Christmas from the Dolans. And until you saw that, because they lived in a house that was pretty, it was right by the railroad tracks, saw everyone when you drive by, everyone would see their house. So until that came up, then you knew it was Christmas time. Their house was a very warm, friendly... so wherever they moved, they always did well with getting into the community. Ed's father became the fire chief, and I'll let Ed tell: he was very close to the *Bomberos* in Panama, and he provided a lot of the old fire trucks to the Panamanian fire department, and they were very close to a lot of the people in Panama. So are we. But still, we still consider Panama, our hearts are still there. We're happy to live in the U.S., because there's nothing greater, as far as

I'm concerned, but there's nothing greater than being in Panama, either. We've had the best of both.

ED: It's home. That's home, and that's the way we feel.

KD: It's like coming from a small town. My husband grew up in a small town in South Dakota on a farm, and that's how he feels about his hometown, and everybody knows each other, and they're all friends on Facebook. It's a smaller version of it, because his town didn't even have a street light, or a stop sign. They had stop signs but not street lights, traffic lights, they didn't even have any. It was so small. There was one small grocery store. His graduating class had, I think, nineteen kids in it. But it's that same relationship that you have from a small town because in the Canal Zone, you had generation upon generation. My children, one of them was born in Panama, but we left when he was eight months old. They didn't know any of this, but yet when we come to the Panama Canal Zone reunion, which is where we're at now, they immediately feel like this is their family because this is people that know not only me, but know them, know their grandparents, and even though you may have not have personally known the person, you have an instant bond and instant connection, because you're from the same place, your grandparents knew each other, your parents knew each other, and you feel like family. So it's the same small town, even though it was larger in scale, it's like being from a small town here in the United States.

ED: What did Colin tell ya?

KD: My youngest, that's ten, we were preparing to come here, and he said, Mom, how come I wasn't born in Panama? And I said, well because we didn't live there when you were born, and he said, well... you should have made me born in Panama! You are a bad mother! [laughter] He is just teasing, but...

BD: I guess because we were surrounded by Costa Rica and Columbia, and the water, the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean that everyone helped each other out, everyone knew what was happening. It was a very close-knit community whether you were on the Pacific side or the Atlantic side. Coming here I still meet some of my parents' friends, they're still alive, and you spend at the reunions—and we come almost every year that we can, it's a lot of four days of hugging and just going over stories like this. We're just very blessed to have lived there, and we have a lot of Panamanian friends. At first, when the treaty was signed, we were upset because my husband lost his job, the Canal Zone Police closed... Am I jumping ahead? Okay. And so we went through a really difficult transition, you know, leaving there, and never living in the States, and never owning a home... all these things. And Karen was fourteen when we left. It was really difficult for Karen and Eddie to leave their friends, and Tim, behind. In retrospect, and I never thought I would say this, but... [cries] it's been, excuse me, I think really good for Panama. So there's good, and there's bad. We lost our home. But it's been good for the country. And they're getting there. They're not there yet, and we were talking about that this morning, Ed and I, about how they've come a

long way from just a small, undeveloped country, to where now, they've got a canal that they're responsible for, and it's working.

ED: And the canal is a very difficult operation, not just in the moving of the ships and all that: the maintenance on the canal is unbelievable. That is a maintenance nightmare, and for Panamanians to do maintenance, that was a big fear, you know? Because it's not in their culture, and they've done a great job with it. When you talk about maintenance, you're not just talking about the locks themselves. Annually, they have to take gates off, repair them, overhaul them, put them back on, overhaul the chambers. You have to keep constantly dredged the canal because the weight of the land pushes the dirt up, so they're always dredging it. Now they're building the new canal, and even while they're doing this, they still gotta maintain all the vehicles, all the boats, the tugboats, the locks, the docks, everything. It's a huge job, and they're doing a good job at it. When you go down there, the canal looks just like when we had it, exactly the same. The only difference is, the flags on the boat are different.

BD: The area around it is different.

ED: Oh yeah.

BD: They don't have the people to staff and to maintain the grounds and certain things, but like we said, it's working. Have you ever been to the canal? You have to go. [laughter]

E: Yeah, I've been thinking this entire time, I need to go down there.

BD: Well, we'll be your tour guides.

KD: Another thing too, that historically our family has there, is the annual ocean-to-ocean *Cayuco* race, which goes from the Atlantic side to the Pacific side. It's a three-day race. A *Cayuco* is like a large canoe. It's made from a tree, or now I think they make them from different stuff, but years ago... My father was in one of the first races, and my brother and I raced. I raced when I was thirteen and we would get up before school and go out at like four o'clock in the morning and paddle out in the canal and it was still dark and you could see the phosphorus on the water, on the paddles, and we would do this for a good six months before the race. And the goal was to finish the race; we didn't even care about winning so much, because a lot of boats didn't finish, it was that grueling.

BD: It took three days.

KD: Three days. You had escort boats, and you would go from one point to one point and then stay the night and then get up at the crack of dawn and go and do the next leg of the race. Then you would go through the locks and hold onto ropes and then you would lower through the locks in these little wooden boats.

E: Was it two to a boat?

KD: Four people in the boats that were competing. Then they had the bigger boats that were in it for fun, which might have like twenty people.

BD: One was named *Cardiac Arrest*. [laughter]

KD: Which was like older people that just did it for fun. But the competing boats had four people, and there was all-male teams, all-female teams, and then there were co-eds.

BD: You were in Explorers.

KD: I was in the *Follow-Through*.

ED: You had to have joined the scouts, it was the Boy Scouts. Boy Scouts of America were the sponsors of it when the U.S. had the canal. Now they have the Regatta de something where people have continued on. They've formed a paddling club, they call it.

KD: And now they come from all over the world to race. They come from Europe... it's grown tremendously. It's a huge annual race.

E: Do you guys go down for it usually?

BD: We have, yes. Not every year, but it's in April.

ED: When our oldest boy, Eddie, lived down there, was working the embassy, he paddled in it five years in a row. Yeah, five?

BD: He was there for five years, so I think four years, because one year he did–

ED: And he paddled in it once before we left down there. He was in a winning boat then and he never could get in the winning boat. They were always second place, for the four years he was there.

KD: But the boat he was in when we were there as children was on display in Cocoa Beach in a surf shop, because there was another family, the Grimmison family, that still paddles. They go back and paddle it, and I don't know if he purchased the boat or if it's his boat.

ED: It was in a museum.

KD: It's called Cocoa Beach Surf Company or something, and it was on display there actually. The *Due Process* is the name of the boat.

ED: Frank Townsend, he is a professor at the University of Florida, I don't know what department or what not. I think he has his doctorate, he might be Dr. Frank. But anyhow, he wrote a little article for the museum on the *Cayuco* race. He and I did about two races together in the same scout troop, and he's got a little story on there. I have a copy of it in the room but he wrote it. Maybe he'll have a copy you could get from him and see it, and it gives you a little insight into what it was to go through.

BD: The history of it.

N: Yeah, you said you were in the first race?

ED: No, I wasn't in the first, but I was in like the second – I did five races. The first one I was in, was let's see... I won in [19]59. [laughter]

KD: I thought that he said in his story that the first race was in 1959, 'cause he had an [inaudible 27:32]—

ED: No, I think it was [19]56.

KD: Okay.

ED: I don't know if I was in [19]56... I probably might have been, but the last two years I was in our boat came in first, and he wasn't in the boat, which was disappointing, 'cause he tried all that time and they never got it. His father was the scout master, Mr. Red Townsend, and he got us this boat, it was a river *Cayuco*, it was called a ***Paniagua***, which wasn't set low in the water, didn't have much freeboard, but was narrow and fast. We used that. So he painted it fire-engine red, and then he painted in white letters, and the name of the boat was *Cójame Si Puede*, which means catch me if you can. [laughter] He says, now you better win, and we won two years in a row. But I wanted to go back earlier. We were talking about living down there and people coming in and moving out and how did we feel. One thing was, after leaving the canal, when our career ended down there and we had to leave, we came up here. I have always felt different. Now I'm born in the United States, I'm retired from the military, I did four years

active duty in the navy and I did twenty-three years in the reserves, so I'm not isolated from Americans or being around them. But I feel different. I am different. I know I'm different. Since the treaty, we've got the names Zonians, we're Zonians. A Zonian is somebody that was either born and or lived in the Canal Zone, was raised in the Canal Zone. It was a derogatory term at first, used against us. When the treaty went, and prior to the treaty, we got a lot of bad press down there. Congress called us gutless sheep. A lot of derogatory terms were used against us. In the treaty they were saying we lived outlandishly, we abused the Panamanians, they said that we coerced them out of things and we had too many churches in the Canal Zone, we had manicured lawns, and we lived way above the means of all Americans, which we didn't. Our pay was actually less than the standard government employee—

BD: But they gave us a differential for living there, which raised that a little bit.

KD: Well and all the money—the Panama Canal didn't cost U.S. taxpayers one penny. All the money that was made with the Panama Canal went back into the running of the Panama Canal, and paying the employees, and everything that it took to maintain it. And so, it ran itself, kind of.

ED: And plus, it paid back the debt of building it.

BD: The tolls that were brought in by the shipping, by the ships—

KD: Right, right.

ED: And the police, we gave a ticket out for speeding, for parking, whatever. You went into court and you got a fine for whatever crime you had and you paid your fine. Those monies from the tickets and from the fines in court did not go to the Canal Zone government; they went to the U.S. Treasury. We didn't get it. Went up there.

BD: It was a very low crime area. Even though the people in Panama that lived there that were poor, they might look at you and say, oh, you're a rich *gringo*, but they would not kill you. They might steal your money, but you were gonna survive it.

ED: Well that's because the political machine in Panama blamed the U.S. for everything.

BD: I just want to make a comment before I forget. In one of the letters that I was reading over my grandparent's love letters, they were having difficulties. My grandmother was not receiving letters from him, and worrying about him, and she was very young, and it was a romance that really started with the letters, as pen-pals. In one of his letters, he writes, I look so forward to receiving your letters. The women here, the girls here are beautiful, but their skin is too dark for me, so you don't have to worry. [laughter] Their letters are so beautiful just to read, and Karen and I were talking about trying to put together a book based on this love story. I didn't want to forget that. He says certain things in his letters about where he worked, one was Bohio. I've never heard of that town before.

ED: Yeah, well a lot of them are underneath the water now in the canal.

BD: Yeah, a lot of the towns went underwater when they–

ED: They're construction towns.

BD: Construction towns, so when the canal started full-swing, all these towns no longer exist, and a lot of artifacts and things went into the mud, into the water. But there's Gorgona, Bohio...

ED: Empire –

BD: Colibra?

ED: Yeah, Empire.

BD: Empire.

ED: Empire became part of the military ranges they had for artillery ranges, bombing ranges. Empire was a town used in the construction, and then that closed down and we got the major towns on either side of the canal.

BD: Ed's fiftieth class reunion, there's a hundred and twenty people here, and after fifty years, that's a pretty good turn-out. How many were in your high school class?

ED: I don't know.

BD: Maybe two hundred, at the most, you think?

ED: It was over two hundred.

KD: I was just going to go into what it was like growing up there. I had to write kind of a story for a group that I was in with my church, and I kind of started with my childhood. The way that I described it, and I tell friends that are not from Panama, my friends that I met after moving here to the United States, is life growing up there was—like during the summer time, when we didn't come to the States on home leave, we would wake up in the morning, and we would be gone all day. You didn't have to go home to eat lunch, because you could either throw a rock at a mango tree, or take a stick, or climb the tree and get the mango and eat it. You could get avocados or bananas—

ED: Rose apples.

KD: Rose apples, different fruits —

BD: Genips —

KD: Genips were another type of fruit we would eat. And then you'd just go to somebody's hose on the side of their house and drink the water, 'cause the water was some of the best water in the world, in terms of the purity and purification naturally from the Chagres River. Then we would come home at the end of the day when the street lights came on. That's just not my upbringing; my parents went through the same thing, my grandmother used to tell the same story. This was generations that just grew up this way. And so, when we moved to the

United States, it was very different, because you didn't have the securities, the freedom to do that. Just like my father's story about having to wear shoes moving from the Atlantic to the Pacific, well, I grew up running around without shoes too, you know, climbing trees and playing football in the fields and stuff. Then, when we moved to the United States, it was the same thing: nobody went around barefoot. It was kind of the same dynamic, for me, the experience.

BD: I wanted to say that there were two hills that you liked to climb.

KD: Right.

BD: One hill was where the administration building was located, and they used to get the palm fronds from the trees, and—you can tell the story.

KD: Yeah, we would slide down them. We would get the dead palm fronds and get, you know, a whole bunch of us, and almost like a sled, but you know a tree branch.

BD: A high hill/

KD: Yeah and the hill kind of had slopes, so we would all get on it like a train, and we would slide down it. Or, we would get cardboard, or we would even ride our bikes. We would kind of go zigzag down the different levels of the hill, and get daring enough to ride our bikes. There were huge drainage ditches, 'cause in Panama it rains nine months out of the year. So there were drainage ditches

probably six feet deep, maybe deeper, and we used to use those as waterslides. I told my husband now, if my children were doing what I did, I would have been mortified, because the water would come fast and furious down these huge hills, and the only thing at the end of it were these metal bars. And I remember our legs would get stuck in there, and all the kids would be pulling us. There were lines of like twenty and thirty kids, and we would all wait, and we would go sliding down these big drainage ditches. [laughter]

E: Sounds like a dream, that's incredible. When you were fourteen, where did you relocate to in the United States?

KD: We moved to Jacksonville, Florida.

BD: The only reason we moved to Jacksonville, because Ed's father retired from the fire chief position. They moved to Jacksonville because an older son went there. You didn't really know where to go, so you went where you had some family.

N: What year was that in?

BD: That was in 1982.

KD: Then I moved back in 1994 as an adult, and I worked for the army.

BD: Then Karen's older brother was hired by, at the time, U.S. Customs. He worked out west in Arizona for three years, and then they selected him, and transferred him to Panama because he spoke— Karen speaks fluent Spanish, and so does

Eddie, and so he worked there at the embassy for five years under U.S. Customs out of **Shea** Office. Then they transferred him back to D.C. for right now, but there's a possibility he may go back.

KD: We speak Spanish, because we grew up—even though my mother was a secretary at the time, my father was a police officer, we had a maid, we had a gardener, we had a boat, my grandfather had an island. We would go to the beach all the time, so we lived the life. We lived an amazing life. You had access to so many things that here, back in the United States, to be able to have all those things you would have had to be pretty wealthy. But because of the nature of being in Panama and a lot of the local Panamanians that were of the lower income would work as maids or gardeners in the Canal Zone because the Americans paid better than the wealthier Panamanians did. And so the lady that worked for us, Angelica, she was like a second mother. I mean, we still would go back and visit her every time we were there. She was part of our family. We were going to bring her to the United States when we moved, but she had gotten married and had a child, and she was actually torn on whether to come with us. But, her husband was there. There was that closeness and that connection with the people that work for you; they became your family. And so, she didn't speak English and we didn't speak Spanish, and you just taught each other, and you learned how to speak the language.

ED: When we grew up there—

BD: Our maids were Jamaican –

ED: Our maids were of West Indian extraction. The U.S. brought the West Indians to the canal as laborers to build the canal. And they became fantastic employees.

BD: And so you speak the Bajan language.

ED: Yes, yes. And so they wanted to stay, because they were living better than they would in Jamaica or the other islands. So they worked out a treaty with Panama, and Panama allowed them to come in, in fact told them if they stayed, they could opt to become Panamanian citizens. So they came and brought their spouses and children over, and they raised their families there. So doing this, they were on a different wage scale than the U.S. So for additional income, plus those that left the canal and lived in Panama, they would come over and hire on as maids with the employees in the Canal Zone. Our maids were of West Indian extraction.

BD: Give them your accent. They want to hear your accent. [laughter]

ED: We weren't from the islands, you know, with the people there we learned to speak the language, we learned to eat what they eat. For breakfast we don't have pancake, we have bakes, we have bakes with it. And you learn to drink your coffee and put the Carnation canned milk rather than the other milk. You just learned all these mannerisms. In fact, to this day when I go into a store and I'm talking to the person there at the counter and I hear their accent, I know

they're from the islands, and I say, I think I hear the sweetness of the island coming out of your voice. And they look at me, where are you from? [laughter]

BD: I have to add something here. Not only did we learn how to cook Jamaican style foods, Latin foods, we still to this day our favorite foods are *arroz con pollo*, *sancocho*, *empanadas*, we make *empanadas*, *cerviche* we brought here. When we get together as a family, that's the type of food we cook.

KD: Even at home, like my husband, he's not from there, he has been there many times with his career in the military. He makes some of the best *arroz con pollo* in our family. We cook it as a meal in our house all the time; our kids love it. It's just like chili or tacos, I mean it's *arroz con pollo*. It's another staple in our house.

ED: The *empanadas*, this is a little interesting story—we grew up with our *empanadas* in the Canal Zone, and the ones in Panama were a little bit different. We didn't think much of it; an empanada is an empanada. You know what they are; it's like a meat pie. So when we left and we come back to Panama, all of a sudden they didn't have our *empanadas* anymore. They only had the Panamanian style –

KD: The fried ones.

ED: We couldn't find it! What was the problem? Well, I went online and I started researching it and I found out wherever the Jamaicans go, they take the patty with 'em.

KD: Jamaican beef patty.

ED: Ours was a version of the Jamaican beef patty. See, the Jamaican will put the turmeric in it that makes it yellow, are we to do that? And they kind of come square.

KD: And they bake 'em.

ED: Yeah, so we finally figured out that's—and everybody was saying, no this is the real! Nobody was putting the recipe together, because we weren't looking at the Jamaican patty, and that was the Jamaican influence.

KD: But it was so common, like in our school, when I went to junior high school, we ate those. That was the first time we had a cafeteria, because in elementary school you had to take your lunch; we didn't have cafeterias.

BD: You went home.

KD: Well at the junior high school, at the cafeteria, they had machines that had empanadas. Kind of like, you would get a hamburger or maybe a hot dog here in school cafeteria machines, or something. They had the Jamaican beef – the empanadas were in there, and foods like that.

N: That sounds better than American food. [laughter]

KD: So it was just normal food, like a hamburger.

BD: There's also a dish called Johnny Marzetti that originally came from somewhere in the U.S., and there's several families that say, that was my grandmother's recipe. No, that was my grandmother's recipe. So everyone claims that this originated from their family. But it somehow became one of our—when we socialize, someone would bring a dish called Johnny Marzetti, and it's basically meat, like ground round, the white egg noodles, like a spaghetti sauce, olives, and lots of garlic and onions and cheese –

KD: Kind of like a quicker version of lasagna.

BD: Yeah. And Johnny Marzetti, where he was from, or how that name—

KD: His mother is probably the creator of the recipe, or his wife. [laughter]

BD: So it's in all of our cookbooks, Johnny Marzetti. It's not a Latin dish, but it's in the Zonian culture.

ED: As a kid growing up, you would be involved in different sporting and scouting activities. There was a lot of activities for kids, and then, like at the end of the *Cayuco* race you'd have a big dinner. Or, swimming races, you'd have a dinner, and in the baseball season, dinners. Well, the dinners would either be fried fish or be Johnny Marzetti, 'cause you'd make up a batch, and everyone could sit down and do it. Everybody knows Johnny Marzetti, and it's a favorite dish.

BD: You'll hear it throughout your interviews. And coming home when the streetlights came on.

KD: And during the summers that we would stay in Panama in the Canal Zone, I remember my brothers, and everybody who stayed: you're either going home to the states for home leave, or you were staying. So if you were staying, your friends and you would get together and you would sign up through the school system for the summer programs. I did archery, tennis, swimming, gymnastics, kickball, tetherball—

ED: Dodge ball.

KD: Ping pong, dodge ball, square-dancing. You were gone in the morning, you would take your lunch or you would go to the cafeteria or something, whatever for lunch—

BD: Or eat someone else's lunch. [laughter]

KD: Or eat your friend's... but you were gone every day, all day. Parents didn't have to drop you off. They didn't have to stay with you. You would walk and go to the different places where you would take the bus that cost—you could take the expensive bus that was ten cents, which was the big orange old school bus, or you could take the cheaper bus, which was a falling apart jalopy bus that had these dangling bottles and the *chiva* music and stuff, and if you had five cents you would take that bus. That's what we would do during the summer. Now, as a

mother with young children and the summertime comes here, I keep looking for these summer programs, and I live on a military installation in Georgia. It's just—you don't have that dynamic. You have to pay for these programs, you have to take your children, be there with your children, unless you can build enough of a relationship to trust whoever it is you're leaving them with. It's a whole different dynamic raising children now. I'm sure maybe this is just a generational thing, it's probably not just a Canal Zone things, because my husband shares some of the same stories growing up, the freedoms that he had.

BD: You used to walk to the movie theater, they'd walk home at night.

ED: You were in elementary school.

BD: Go to school, walk to school. I was going to say something about feeling special; you were saying you were feeling different.

ED: Yeah.

BD: I think it's because you have, like in our family, you have six generations that lived in a country overseas, and it was a different culture, in a way. There's a slogan, the land divided, the world united, when they built the canal. We had every culture because of all the people that came to build the canal. Every culture in almost in the entire world lived there and the stronger countries, like China, Africa, Spain, those countries were highly—there were a lot of people, so their food and their ways were strong influences on our lives. So we were

introduced to so many wonderful people by living there, and so you do feel different in that way. We're not different than anybody in the U.S. because we all have stories to tell, whether you were from the Canal Zone or not.

KD: And most importantly, our loyalty and our hearts, we are American. We were in the Fourth of July parade every year. It was a very American community within another culture. That's why I say you had the best of both worlds, because you had the pride of being an American. We grew up with American traditions, with American values, just everything that goes along with being American, but we were also exposed to these other cultural influences which were so important in shaping who we became in life.

BD: As a family, one of our home leaves, we decided to drive to the States. Karen was a little thing.

KD: Three.

BD: Three years old. But we packed up, we bought a camper, and we drove from Panama to the U.S., and then we shipped the camper back on the *S.S. Cristobal*, and we came back by ship. You can't do that now without having a lot of firearms with you, and protection. It's the Pan-American Highway, and it's unfortunate 'cause it's so beautiful. Beautiful trip.

KD: We were in the bicentennial parade. It was 1976, which was the two-hundredth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the establishment of America.

My mom and I wore the bonnets and the long dresses, and my dad had the wig and the big long bayonet-type gun. My brothers—we all dressed up, and we had big floats. We had a parade that went from the town of Gamboa, which was halfway between the Atlantic side and the Pacific side. So the parade went from the town of Gamboa all the way down into the town of Balboa, which was right on the city limits of Panama on the Pacific side. It was a huge—I mean I don't know how many—of course, my memory might be a little bit—there were a lot of floats, a lot of people involved.

ED: We drove from Gamboa to Balboa, you didn't walk. [laughter]

KD: We were in a float. Everybody was involved; everybody was a part of it. When I was in Girl Scouts we would march in the parade and there were always parades for every American holiday: Memorial Day, Veteran's Day, Independence Day. Just every American holiday, everybody was out in full-force. There were picnics... we had a tradition every year in January after Christmas holiday. People would go around and collect real Christmas trees, and all the different little townships would have Christmas tree burns. People would come and bring food and drinks and chairs, and the kids would run around and play, and the fire department would monitor it, because they would put all the Christmas trees on the big pile, and they would have this huge Christmas tree bonfire. You looked forward to Christmas, but then you looked forward to the bonfire tree-burn afterwards.

ED: You didn't burn the whole big pile; you'd start off maybe like six trees, and then the families would get trees and they'd come up and they'd throw it on. Somebody would direct them to keep it going.

KD: In the town that my parents live in here in Florida, in DeLand, not too far from where I live, some friends of theirs live on a large piece, twenty acres, piece of land. They started doing this, and people were coming from different parts of the state that grew up in the Canal Zone, and would bring their trees, and they were doing this tree burn. The local fire department came a couple of times to monitor them—

BD: Yeah, they were supposed to notify them.

KD: Right, but then eventually they were told they had to stop it or whatever, 'cause the forest burns. It was too much of a risk. People were coming from four and five hours away to go to this tree burn.

BD: How much time do we have left? Are we running out?

[break in interview]

BD: I would like to add just one thing about coming here. When Joe Wood asks us if we would be part of the interview, I said definitely yes, because to keep this alive and to be able to somehow pass onto other generations what we experienced, it's so unique that living where you could see ships from all over the world

passing through the canal, when you were going to work or going to school or playing outside in your yard. Not that you took it for granted, but it was just part of your life. Being in the *Cayuco* race, they would paddle right next to this navy battleship, or the love boat going through with passengers, or the *Queen Elizabeth*. There they were, these little wooden boats that just would hold four people. They would make the boats and the paddles, and originally you would get an Indian to actually take a big tree log and carve your boat and they would take it and fine-tune it and shave it down. This is how these boats were made.

ED: Well when I went through, the only thing you could repair the boat with was tin and tar. You couldn't wax it. Current ones and when you went through you were able to wax it, you could smooth and finish the hull out.

KD: Now they're made of fiberglass.

ED: Yeah, and they cut most of the wood away and they put canvas and paint the canvas and make it lighter.

BD: One thing that you left out was when you were in the Boy Scouts, you used to go up by the Chagres River, and he would wear the—well now, they call them thongs, like the Indians. You would spend what, weeks up there at a time living in the jungle? Ed was a lifeguard in high school, a very strong swimmer. You spent a lot of time in the jungle.

KD: The last question on here says, how did you interface with the U.S. Military and the Panamanian people, and how important was the Panamanian culture in our life? And we've touched upon that, but I just kind of wanted to bring it full-circle, because most families that ended up in the Canal Zone were there because of the U.S. military in some way, shape, or form. A lot of them went to the country in the military and then either went back to live because they loved it and they worked for the federal government, or whatever those dynamics were. I now am forty-two years old, my husband is a colonel in the U.S. Army, we live on Fort Benning, Georgia, and I have people I live right down the street from...there is another colonel, his father was a four-star general in charge of U.S. Southern Command in Panama. So, the dynamics and the influence of the Canal Zone are still in my daily life; we still talk about it. We talk about his childhood when he was there as a military child living in Panama. There's another lady that's down the street who's the spouse who grew up not in the Canal Zone, but in Panama, and she married a service member and she lives right down the street from me on Fort Benning, Georgia. There's an entire group of military students from the Panamanian police force and military that go to school and they're training with the U.S. Military on Fort Benning, Georgia. So the dynamics are still there and the influence is still there, it's just at a different level. The interface is still there, is what I'm trying to get at.

ED: My father went down Panama Canal in 1942, early. He couldn't get in the military but he was a captain in a volunteer fire department in New York. So he and his brother saw the need for fireman. It was advertised in the Canal Zone, so they applied. They went down there as part of the war effort. They went down in early [19]42. In 1944, my mother, older brother, and I, we went down. And we flew down there in the *China Clipper*. It took us over a month and a half to get down there because the plane would take off, we would be flying to Panama, and then the engine would have problems. They would turn around and go back, because if they got to Panama, they wouldn't be able to get the parts to fix the engine. So anyhow, we eventually made it. Then after the war, my father and his brother decided to stay, and that's how I got down in there. We went down as part of the war effort.

BD: Being down there during the war, too, I can remember the sirens going off. We'd have scares that maybe an unidentified plane would fly near the canal and so we had bomb shelters that our parents would scoop us up out of bed and we'd run to the bomb shelter and stay there for the rest of the night. I can remember, because that was such a frightening thing to experience—

ED: We see all the troops going through the canal, going over, and then you'd see them coming back. You'd see ships coming through that had war damage, like aircraft carriers. The *Franklin* came through, and it was just a mess, a real big mess. My father took my older brother and I out by the beach in Colón, and we

watched a ship go through the breakwater wall, and they had a submarine net and they had a boat that would lower the net, let them out, and there was a minefield. We saw the ship go out, we were sitting there, all of a sudden we heard a big explosion. We were wondering, what's that? And wait a little bit and then there was another explosion, and we saw some boats going, planes took off and everything. A little bit later, that ship came back in; it had holes on both sides. It had been torpedoed just outside. So the war was right outside of us there, and we found out later the plan: Japan was going to bomb the canal. They had submarines bringing planes over to bomb it. We had over five hundred thousand servicemen in the Canal Zone during the war. Every hill had an anti-aircraft gun sight on it. So military was just everywhere. We grew up with the military everywhere.

BD: But you couldn't date them. You were called rat bait when you were in high school. [laughter] If you went to the junior college there, that was acceptable.

KD: It later became acceptable. My generation, a lot of them are military kids. It changed.

ED: She was rat bait!

BD: I hope we didn't bore you.

E: Not at all. This has been fantastic. Thank you guys so much.

BD: If you ever want to hear more stories...

KD: And there's pictures on Facebook. That's what I was going to bring up: I remember somebody posting, I don't remember who, but somebody said, is it just us Zonians or do most people have three or four hundred mutual friends? [laughter] When you click on a friend, you got three or four hundred mutual friends.

E: I'm ready to go.

BD: You would have a great time. We could take you to all the best restaurants. There's one restaurant that's been there since my great-grandfather went down, The Napoli. Everyone, I don't care what Zonian, you ask them their favorite restaurant, they'll tell you the Napoli. He has the old brick oven, still to this day. You go in, the same tables, everything is the same. The pizza, the price is the same. When we used to be going down there as a family, he still has his little restaurant. Now it's kind of a spooky side of town.

KD: He opened up a new one, which is—

BD: He did, yeah, better side, but he still has the old one. One year I went down to work at the embassy for Customs, T.D.Y., temporary duty assignment. Karen came down with her brothers, and they were, we're going to go to The Napoli!

KD: Well, let me paint the picture. Operation Just Cause, which is what went in and took Noriega out of the country kicked off in December 20 of 1989. She's talking about June or July of 1990 that she was down there working, so there were still bomb holes, and the remnants from the war were still very visible.

BD: I went down to help put the office back together because the marines had moved into the embassy and all the U.S. Customs files had been transferred to Miami. They moved them back after the war and they needed personnel down there to help put the office back together. So I was there for forty-five days, and I told my family, now is the time to come down to see Panama, to visit and everything. There were still the military patrolling the Canal Zone, but I want to tell the night that you went to The Napoli. I just heard the story after.

KD: We had just arrived, so what we would typically do, we would get there and go straight to Napoli Pizza, because that was where everybody wanted to go. But now, the area where the original Napoli was in was in a very bad area, a lot of drugs, crack-addicts, streetwalkers. The area had totally changed. It had been bombed and everything else during the war. We still wanted to go there because the restaurant was still open and that's where we grew up going, so we just still felt like we can go there, just don't wear your jewelry. So my sister-in-law—my brother and her were not married yet, this was the trip he was going to propose to her on—she had never been to Panama, had no idea. So we took her there,

and she's mortified just by the nature of the area we're going into, and we're like, oh, it's no big deal! It will be fine. We park the car, there's a whole group of us, and we're going into the restaurant. All of the sudden we hear gunfire. And so, there's a local security guard out on the street corner, and we hear the gunfire and people running. Then there's people that are sitting on the outer, the outside tables of the restaurant, they just get under the table and they're literally grabbing the pizza off the table and eating it under the tables. We go running inside the restaurant; my sister-in-law Carson is going, oh my god! What is this! She's telling my brother, what did you bring me to? I take her and we go into the bathroom and I tell her, get on the toilet, stand up on the toilet so nobody can see your feet. I immediately was thinking if the person comes in then they won't see if they're just looking to shoot people. If we're on the toilet seats, they're not going to see anybody in the stalls. So we're on the toilet seat, standing there, and then, I don't know where the men went or whatever, we just ran into the bathroom. Probably sitting in the restaurant eating. [laughter] So finally we came out and there was no more gunfire. It was a teenager, some young juvenile robbing a taxi, so the security guard was shooting at him. But just shooting out in the open, like the Wild Wild West. That was very different from what growing up was like.

ED: I'll tell you one thing about being a Zonian. You have to experience something that really makes you a Zonian, and that's walking barefoot through the grass

and stepping in a fresh pile of dog dung. If you haven't done that, you haven't lived. [laughter]

KD: Well the other thing is going on the black sand beaches. Literally you'd be walking and it'd be white sand, all of a sudden you come upon black sand. I can remember my friends and I, we literally one time, there were three of us. We didn't have shoes and it was so hot it was burning our feet, and we tried to sit but it was scalding us. We saw a paper plate that was trash and we grabbed the paper plate, and I was the tallest so they climbed – my friends climbed on top of each other, then they got on my back and then I stood on the paper plate, and we would run a little bit, I'm holding them, stand on the paper plate, run a little bit, stand on the paper plate, until we could get to either the water—I don't remember if we went to the water or where we went to—but off the black sand because it was scalding us. [laughter]

BD: One of the things I just want to mention real quick because I know our time is up, but living down there with disturbances in Panama City was a common thing. So you would hear, oh, they're rioting on Balboa Avenue, and that went right in front of the U.S. Embassy. Say okay, well we want to go shopping, or we want to go see our friends, so we'll just stay off Balboa Avenue, because they're rioting over there. That's the way you lived your life. When there were riots over whatever issues that the people in Panama felt there was a lot of–

KD: Anti-American.

BD: One of my good friends lost an eye because he got caught in one of the—they were in a movie, and came out and there were riots. We lived our life off and on with things like that, so you took it seriously, you just stayed away. But it was a common occurrence. Common, I'd say, probably once every six months they would riot over some issue.

ED: But that was mainly in the mid- to late-[19]50s, and that's where all the political influence came in. The politicians would fire up the people.

KD: But even when I lived there as an adult I was Christmas shopping on this one road that was called Avenida Central, and you could get stuff like jeans for a dollar. It was this place where you would get all these deals. All of the sudden, this lady in a store goes, you need to—in Spanish she was telling me to come in here, come in here, and she put me in a dressing room and there was this martyrs group that was marching, it was the anniversary of Just Cause. They were doing a big demonstration coming down this main shopping area. Because I looked American, she was worried and concerned for me so she pulled me into her store and put me in the dressing room until they went on by.

BD: One of our very close friends, we grew up together, their children, our children. Our friend, Candy, was shot and killed right at the invasion when they first went

in. They were driving home late at night. It was 1:00, from a Christmas party, and two people stepped out of the bushes by Albrook Air Force Base, and they shot at the car and she was hit and died almost instantly. There were a lot of other Americans killed as well during that time. It was a sad time for everyone. Panamanians were killed as well.

ED: Karen's husband was one of the airborne troops that jumped in Just Cause.

KD: He was one of the first ones to jump in. He went to work one morning, didn't know, thought he was going to come home for dinner that night, but never came home for dinner. Was on a plane going to Panama. Lots of stories.

E: Thank you guys so much for your time.

N: I wish we had more time to hear all your stories.

Audit-edit by: Jessica Taylor, January 8, 2014