

Devon Garcia Interview Los Angeles June

Ben: You'll talk to me the entire time. First of all, say and spell your name.

Devon: My name? Devon Garcia. D-E-V-O-N G-A-R-C-I-A.

Ben: (mumbling) Ok. Ummm... tell me first of all where you were born, a little bit about your history.

Devon: I was born in Long Beach California and ummm... from there my mom joined the military. She joined the navy and we just been all over the place since then umm... from there we went to Spain uh... after Spain we went to Virginia. After Virginia, we went back to Spain, moved to Maine, then uh... I moved to California, joined the military, came back to California and here I am now.

Ben: Sweet. So your mom... who's Garifuna in your family?

Devon: Uh... everybody pretty much except for my brother and myself. Uh... mom, dad, uncles, aunts, everybody so. I'm the first generation born in the States.

Ben: So, as first generation in the States, you obviously... did you grow up learning Garifuna?

Devon: Not at all. It's just kind a... we pick up on words here and there, but it's just like a language that my mom and you know our family uses, but for our generation it's just English and... I guess they look at it as you know, we're in the States now and we're learning all kinds of other things that have to do with this culture and I mean, it's not like that's not a part of our culture it's just... maybe they want to talk about it and us not understand or... I don't know. It's just, it's just something that... I mean, I'm curious about it and that's why I'm here, I'm trying to learn more about Garifuna culture and I want to learn the language, but I don't know. It's just something that I'm trying to pick up on.

Ben: What motivates you... because obviously you didn't learn it as a kid, what motivates you to want to learn it?

Devon: It's interesting, it's a part of me, so. You know, I definitely want to be able to understand it and be able to speak it in my family one day that would be something to be proud of so.

Ben: Umm... when you say a part of you, can you expand on that?

Devon: Well, literally it's my heritage. My whole family is from Belize and they've been through a lot. You know, coming from a third world country. You know, a lot of their struggles, a lot of their uh... accomplishments, you know, not just to say struggles. So it's a

large part of them and my family means a lot to me so you know, I definitely have to look into it and make sure that I understand it. And you know, make it a part of me.

Ben: What comes, what value for you, comes from understanding?

Devon: Oh man, gettin' deep here. Uh, just self fulfillment, I mean. it brings happiness, it brings peace. Being at peace with myself. Understanding more about me, you know.

Ben: Umm...I want to ask you about media. What types of media do you use and how does that relate to being Garifuna?

Devon: Umm... as far as.

Ben: yeah, I mean are you connecting with people through it are you learning the language through it. Like how does media play a role in your goal to be Garifuna I guess?

Devon: Uh... like um sometimes they have like the gatherings they have, they videotape it. Ummm... music. I've been listening to Garifuna music since I was young. I never knew what they were saying, but yeah. Videos of like the dances, cultural events, music and all that. I've always been exposed to that. It's just been an influence in my life. I've... I've memorized some of the music and I don't know, you know, what I'm saying, but it's a rich sound, it's it's beautiful. It's a beautiful culture.

Ben: And when you're talking, you can just talk to me. Umm... tell me like what (inaudible)

Athena: Like are you connecting with people through the me... like through the internet.

Ben: (random mumblings) yeah, like umm... like as far as Western media, the media from the United States how... do you use a lot of that and how does it influence you?

Devon: Ummm... the internet, I'm definitely on the internet every day. Ummm... like Facebook I have a lot of my family members on there and they're all Garifuna obviously and I communicate with them through that. Uh... as far as you know, the language, they have a lot of websites that translate, you know some of the uh, the language on there. So I look that up and yeah, as far as you know media today, that's what I use to uh, you know incorporate the culture.

Ben: How many people your age, your generation are using media... how many are... well, let me ask you. How many are interested in learning about the Garifuna language like you are?

Devon: Uh.. to be honest I don't see too many, I mean. Umm.. you really have to take it upon yourself I believe. Especially when you get older... like there's so much going on you know, you got school work your finances... its' all... like I've...now that I'm back, like. I just got out of the Air Force. I'm seeing my family and seeing the culture and it's like I have to take it upon myself. This is my choice. This is my decision. My mom can't... I mean, they've

been drilling me on it, you know and my family drills me on it and like now I understand like it's very important, you know to uh... it's very important to you know immerse yourself, to involve yourself. That's what I'm trying to say.

Ben: Umm... so, you're making a change in your life in order to learn, you come here on a Saturday morning. What is your hope for the Garifuna culture twenty years from now?

Devon: To... I don't know, that's a big question right there. Ummm... to live to... I mean, coming from a third world country there's a lot of struggles, you know associated with life and just just be able to come together and umm... I don't know, just continue to be strong and you know making changes like this you know having cultural events, expanding the knowledge... (noise) letting everybody know about the culture and just how beautiful these people are. You know, not many people are familiar with the Garifuna culture and where Belize is on the map, so. I just continue to make these kinds of progression.

Ben: Cool.