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00:37:20

A: Tell me who you are, what your name is, and how you are relate to DR. Gill

C:37:25 Okay, my name is Collin Sam. I am Dr. Gill's nephew. That is, my mother and Dr. Gill are brother and sister.

A:37:35 So, when you talked to me the other night you were telling me about your childhood and how its different from most [Garifuna/Carib Children]. Tell me about that.

C: 37:47Okay well, first of all we were not born here in Sandy Bay or Greggs**. My mom is from Sandy Bay, my dad... grew up in Sandy Bay as well. But we were all born in Kingstown. So we grew up in Kingstown, and lived in Kingstown for a good portion of our lives.

A: 38:11You were telling me that school, how your school is different. Tell me about it...

C: 38:17Its pretty different because I went to Kingstown proprietary school, and at that time, it wasn't an elitist school, but it was a school that had a lot of success. And had a common entrance which is an exam that would take a student from primary to secondary school. So it was a school that had a lot of big shots as well. We were exposed...We went to that primal school, and from that primary school I went to grammar school which is also the top boy secondary school, probably the most prestigious secondary school in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

A: 38:52So would you say your childhood is different from most of the...

C: 38:56 From Sandy Bay I would say that, I would think so yes, because in the 80's (I was born in 1980). when I was born there wasn't electricity here in Sandy Bay, so we were exposed to a lot of the, what we call normal was probably not so normal here in Sandy Bay, we had electricity, we had running water, a television and a VCR and so forth. That wasn't very typical in Sandy Bay back in the 80's. So yes, our childhood, my childhood., would have been particularly different. We didn't have to go to the farm. A lot of children in the 90's/80's, would have had to go to a farm to work in the morning or in the evening, tie up the animals, the sheep, or the goat, or cattle, what ever it may be. But in our case, because we were living in Kingstown, the capital, it was very different.

A: 39:55 So where did you get your education...two questions; where did you get your education and if you've experienced any discrimination yourself? [then you can annotate if you have one...]

C: 40:12 Education as in primary, secondary, tertiary? [A:Graduate]

Okay well the primary, Kingstown Proprietary School, then I went to St. Vincent Gramary School which is a secondary school. Then I went to the community college, The Grenadines Community College, and I obtained a scholarship and I went to Cuba where I pursued my Bachelors in math education and my Masters in educational sciences. I think in terms of having been discriminated against as a Carib, I don't feel that that would have been meeted-out-to-me-a-lot*** for the mere fact that I wasn't seen as someone from north of the Dry river, I wasn't seen as coming from Sandy

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Bay because I grew up in Long-Cain-Garden, I went to the primary school and to the secondary school, where all of my friends were not from the country area either. Being discriminated against because of my ethnicity, I, it would have been meeted-out-to me. However when I, when they talk about the Caribs being cannibals, I was never ashamed of what my heritage was as a Garifuna or a Carib, so I was always very vocal, and whenever instances when they would say that the Caribs were cannibal and stuff, I would talk out against it, because obviously I don't think we were cannibals and so forth. As well as, I had kinda a hot tongue, so I was one who used probably racial slurs, saying that I didn't come over in a boat jam packed like sardines, this is mine, I was here first. You know in retrospect it was probably not the best thing to say, but it was more of a defense mechanism,

42:18 even though I was proud of my heritage, probably to make myself feel even better, about myself as a Garifuna or a Carib. Because they are coming and they want to say that we are cannibals or that our girls, they light, that they could get any Carib girls that they want, that we aren't intelligent people. I guess we had to, well I had to, probably push myself even more to prove. Ya know? But that was even more of me because I was with the "in" crowd or whatever it may be. So that was my way of dealing with something probably like that.

A: 42:50

So, you mentioned that you are from here. Can you elaborate on that? What do you mean by that?

C: 42:56 Meaning that, the Caribs, if you trace history back, they probably weren't the original inhabitants, but Christopher Columbus and the Europeans met the Caribs here. So this was ours, you understand? As well as the Garifuna people, because St. Vincent was you could probably say the hub where the free slaves were thriving, and the Garifuna race was propagated, it is a race that is original to St. Vincent. And having that heritage as well I can say this in mind. So that's what I mean when I say; I am from here.

A: 43:41 Okay, my other question is do you speak Garifuna? Do you identify yourself as a Kalinago, a Carib, a Garifuna?

There's some confusion over the name...

C:44:00

True, I guess I would probably more identify with the Garifuna more than the Carib. I think the Carib is more of pure race, of being indigenous, the Indian, of the aborigines of this world. I'm not pure, in the sense that I'm not pure Carib, there is some Negro blood, which is the niche of the Garifuna people, the Negro and the Carib. So I would more identify with Garifuna than the Kalinago or the Caribs. Although I look more Kalinago than Garifuna. But I would more identify with the Garifuna.

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A: 44:48 Thank you. Is it important for you to, first of all, did you grow up with the Garifuna traditions, the music the dance, the language?

C: 45:00 No, no we... A: after you answer that question, explain whether its important for you to reconnect with that part of your culture or not?

C: 45:13 Alright, did we grow up with what was probably called cultural aspects of the Garifuna life? No. We only knew that we were Garifuna or Carib. What customs were, what the traditions were...no. That would probably be like a dream. We grew up typical middle-income families, very western...what the customs were and what the traditions were...no. No remnants of language. We know that the language exists.

45:56 But I guess because of what the colonialists did; they forbid the language and the customs and so forth. And my family having moved out of Sandy Bay and Greggs in 1979, when Soufriere erupted, I wasn't even born as of yet. Obviously the traditions, what could be deemed traditions, the ring games, quadrille dancing and so forth, those were not brought down to us. At all, at all, at all. Now the necessity to reconnect is there,

46:29 I think when you listen to the Garifuna people in Honduras, and Belize, and even in NY and NJ where they are dispersed, and you become aware of the wealth of knowledge that we don't have the wealth of culture and tradition... that we, the Garifuna people in St. Vincent, we don't have. I think its a travesty because they consider St. Vincent the mother land, and it would make sense that these customs and these traditions be still kept here. And unfortunately we don't have anything, at all, at all, at all...So its imperative that there is some reconnect.

A: 47:15 Are you making any personal efforts to reconnect?

C: 47:19 In all honesty, no, I think that I am pretty lazy when it comes to that part, ashamedly so. I know my dad, in the early 90's, he made that effort to reconnect. We've actually had some Garifuna young men stay by us in 1992-3, at our home. He would have made that connection, and he would have been making that effort. But unfortunately, and sadly so, my own personal, I have not made any kind of effort, sadly so. Would I want to? Yes. Were I given the opportunity and a jump start, I probably would run with it. The thing is that I would not know where to start. In the sense that I have a lot of questions, and I am, I want to learn a lot more, but where to start? How to start?

A: 48:20 What kind of questions?

C: 48:23 The language, the culture, what kind of progress these folks would have made outside. I mean they were exiled from St. Vincent, and I understand they would have made a lot of progress in education and so forth. And as an educator myself, those type of questions are what I'd like to ask myself.

A: 48:42 So when the Hondurans, lately they've come back, have you been able to interact with any of them?

C: 48:51 No. last year, some of them were here. And they were running a workshop, but I had to travel....and when I came back, it was probably selfish, I was doing a lot of work on my property, so that was taking my effort.

A: 49:12 I don't know that that's selfish. I think, you know, part of the issue is that it takes a lot of effort, you have to kinda like absorb it, and it has to come...it takes time to do that [yeah]. So perhaps your awareness more recent in a way....

C: 49:36 True, I think so...I think now that my dad is back home...I know he is very impassioned about Garifuna life, and the Garifuna people and so forth, and I think that with him I could probably get the jump start that I need to probably reconnect with the Garifuna people in Belize or Honduras, because I speak Spanish fluently. So conversing with someone from Honduras would not be an issue.

A: 50:07 Is there anything else you want to say?...We were also talking about, at the dinner table, about whether you really think it will happen here at Sandy Bay, that the culture will reconnect. Or is that like a pipe dream really?

C: 50:24 I mean it's not expensive to dream, I think that the American culture, the North American culture has filtered so much into the fabric of our society, an appreciation and a wanting to revive what is Garifuna culture and so forth.....would be, I wouldn't say impossible, it would be difficult. It would be a task tedious, it would be hard. The focus of a lot of the young people is not so much, what is indigenous to St. Vincent, or what is unique to St. Vincent, its more, what is the fad and the fashion of North America. Not to throw hot water on our people,

51:09 but I think that's what our reality dictates. What is culture, sometimes it's very difficult to get somebody to appreciate even the national anthem here in St. Vincent, to appreciate the flag, and those are national symbols. No to even go further to bring that to a Garifuna culture, I know that there are people who, there are groups that are interested, that would try to propel that sort of thing. But I could hope. I would want to hope that there are few of us who would want to see some sort of resurrection or revitalizing of what is Garifuna culture and tradition here. Because it's none existent, you understand, it's not here, we don't have it. So if they could come and they could teach us it. Like last year, they were here they were teaching about the drumming, some of the food, and the language.

51:59 That was down in town, that was down in Kingstown, I don't know if they came out to the country side to the Garifuna community, I'm not certain. If I say yes, I'd be telling a lie. But if it can be done, and you get the young people involved, and you make it interesting, I think that we can go places.

A:52:18 Very well said, perfect, I think I/ you nailed it. Thank you.