

INTERVIEWERS: Yeah um thank you for the opportunity of

NEWLAND: Okay fine, I appreciate you.

INTERVIEWERS: being here with you and knowing about you know your life story.

NEWLAND: I appreciate it.

INTERVIEWERS: We will really appreciate this opportunity so we can share this with future generations. First us just to know um about what you, the things you've done before just in general way. Could you um talk about what was your profession and your job?

NEWLAND: Well I worked for de United States government for thirty-nine years until 1980 when I retired. I worked two years for the Panama Canal commissary, then I worked thirty-seven years with the United States Army.

INTERVIEWERS: Okay. Great. Um, so you've been living here in Panama your whole life?

NEWLAND: No I'm from Colon originally, I came to Panama. I was born in the Canal Zone in Silver city.

INTERVIEWERS: Okay.

NEWLAND: In the Canal zone. And I grew up in Silvercity and I came to Panama first in '42 and started to work. Then I went back to, to Colon in '45 and I came back over here in '47.

INTERVIEWERS: Okay. And how was Colon when you were growing up? How was the city?

NEWLAND: Colon was a nice, beautiful little country, city. I used to call it the Gold Coast with a nice, friendly place very a lot of activities and everything was nice and beautiful. Everybody was nice and friendly and Colon enjoys this. But as time went by things after the World War II and a lot of people lost their jobs, then things just change.

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INTERVIEWERS: And tell me, talk, tell me about your childhood. What was it like? What were your fondest memories of your childhood?

NEWLAND: Of my childhood? Well my childhood was a very beautiful one. I had a lot of fun playing ball, swimming, uh going to dances, uh going to shows and meetin' with people all over, the young people, young person when they grow. I grew up in, from small, I grew up and learned to respect all my neighbors. I learned to respect elders when I was small. And I also learned to, how to share my time with people, I learn to help the poor and needy from when I was small. I got, I learned it from my father, learned how to living for people. And I've continued to do that all through life.

INTERVIEWERS: Okay. Were you most in church while growing up?

NEWLAND: I grew up, I went first to the Catholic church and then I went to the, the Methodist church with my brother, he came from Jamaica and he was here from thirty to thirty three. I went to the Methodist church with him and when he went back to Jamaica then I went back to the Catholic Church with my mother. When I came to Panama, I went to church and then I started to go to the St. Paul's Church from '59. And I've been a member at St. Paul Church from 1959.

INTERVIEWERS: So you were telling me that, that your, your father he taught you a lot of great values.

NEWLAND: Umm hmm.

INTERVIEWERS: Talk, talk, tell me some of those values and the things who your father was...

NEWLAND: My father was a very friendly man. He was a mason. He worked as a mason the Panama Canal. But outside of that everywhere he went everybody told me how much they adored and respected my father because he was always friend with everybody both in Colon and in Panama. Everywhere I turned in Panama, the people said "you are Mr. Newland's son, boy your father, adore your father." He got knocked down in 1960. He got killed by a car when he was *crossing the street*.

INTERVIEWERS: How old were you when, when this happened?

NEWLAND: In '82, I was, let's see 24 to 82, I was about, I was about 38 years old right?

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- INTERVIEWERS: Do you have any brothers or sisters?
- NEWLAND: Oh yeah I got, I got right now I got one brother and three sisters alive. I got one, two, three, three brothers and two sisters died.
- INTERVIEWERS: Can you share any memories you have with them while you were growing up with your brothers and sisters?
- NEWLAND: Well as I said my eldest brother, I never knew him because he went to the States when I was a baby, I never knew him. The other one that was from Jamaica he used to take me around all over. He was a teacher in the Canal Zone and he used to take me all over to the beach, he used to take me all over to the beach and to churches and everything with him. So my family we grew and very close with one another and we grew very, very close even now my sisters and I have my two sisters, my sister my eldest sister died last year July. But the other two sisters they live in Rio Abajo, and Parque Lefevre, we all close to one another. Very, very close. Always one close family.
- INTERVIEWERS: How was school when you were growing up? You went to school in the Canal Zone?
- NEWLAND: I went to school in the Canal Zone and then I went to elementary school in Colon. And after that, I took correspondence courses from the American school and when I worked for the Army, I took a lot of courses human relation, uh personnel, uh accountant, I took a lot of courses in the United States Army. Took a lot of courses, I would say that I used to spend most of my time after hours in the libraries making studies in almost every subject that existed.
- INTERVIEWERS: And then to what, um what was the last grade you completed in school?
- NEWLAND: In the Canal Zone I came out in what they called junior high school 8<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> grade that was junior high. Then I went, came out, I went to school in Colon. I was living in Colo. I was there till, fifth grade and then I stopped and started to work, that was 1940, 1940 I started to work. I was 16 years old when I started to work. Started to work in the commissary because at that time the war was just starting and there was a lot of boom in jobs and those days our parents didn't make any money. They were only working for \$22 and \$25 a month. So, you just have to get out and get a job to help
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yourself and to help them. So most of the young people just started to work when they were at about 15 or 16 years at that time.

INTERVIEWERS: So and were the, the teachers were they how do you say, comprensivos? I mean did they understand the situation...

NEWLAND: In the Canal Zone in the early years the schools teachers were very, very cooperative and very, very close with all the students. Very respective. As I said, we lived in community where everybody respected one another as a family, mostly everybody respected one another family. When you walked the road, you had to respect every other person you met on the road because if not, you were going to be disciplined if you didn't respect them.

INTERVIEWERS: Were your teachers West Indians too?

NEWLAND: Yeah, they were mostly West Indian teachers.

INTERVIEWERS: What happened that, that was there like a different school for people that were not West Indians in those days or were you, were you in the same school?

NEWLAND: No, as I said this was school in the Canal zone and at that time, they all in the old Canal zone years mostly all the people were black people but the other few Latin living there also went to the schools and they came out to learn English in the schools also. In Panama, in Colon now the schools were in Spanish. The school was in Spanish and at that time, it was *out of the way after then* that they bought, bought a secondary school. I believe after I left Colon when they bought...elementary schools up to that time then they bought a *building* after Colon.

INTERVIEWERS: Do you remember about any stories about friends you had from those days that you still have keep in touch with them?

NEWLAND: But as I said before unfortunately most of my friends from my boyhood day, most of them die or they disappeared. I still got two, got two friends in Colon that I call and keep in touch with but most of the others are died out, and don't see them around any more. I had a lot of friends in Colon. I had some friends in Colon in 6<sup>th</sup> street where we used to go to second school in Colon, where *Bolivia* school. And we were very, very, very close. We used to go to the dance. We go to the clubhouse. We go all over the places together. In fact, the first one to die was one that he became a professor up in Abel Bravo. And he died, he was the one first

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person to die and after that his brother died. And after that about six or seven of them from that group died.

INTERVIEWERS: Okay Mr. Earl, so I see that you wrote a book uh here that's called Making My Journey, One of Love, Peace and Brotherhood.

NEWLAND: Uh huh.

INTERVIEWERS: And in parenthesis you have a po-

NEWLAND: A poetic guide.

INTERVIEWERS: A poetic guide.

NEWLAND: A poetic guide. In other words, a book about poems about fifty three poems.

INTERVIEWERS: Okay. Great. So what's your inspiration when you write? What inspires you to write?

NEWLAND: Well, actually writing to me is a gift and it means a gift that really helped me in my jobs on the Canal zone when I worked for them and because I was called a radical, I was called a militant because I was always fighting for justice for all employees. I used to be fighting all about time, I just fought and fought for justice for my fellow employees. I was highly respected by my fellow employees because in the early years when I worked in the Canal Zone for the Army, those they did not any insurance, employees not have any insurance. They weren't making a, didn't have insurance. So any time an employee or a member of his family died, I would go around everywhere I worked and make a collection to help them to bury their family or the dead. So that was the fact that I was always there looking for justice if anything happened, kept them really in touch with me. After I retired I used to meet once a month with them. I used to get them...once a month and help to get together that we could keep in touch with another, well after some *time* you know most of them became older so it just fizzled out but I would say that I used to make it my duty to go to the hospital every week, go over the hospital every week. I used to go once every week and visit all the patients to try to build up the, the reputation, built up their spirit. I did a time where I used to go to Santo Thomas but it was difficult for Santo Thomas because Santo Thomas was visiting hours from 6. And when I got off of work to get there, it was difficult to make the walk around there then to go home. But I used to make it my duty when I leave *Corzal* in the

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evening at 3:30 I reach my by the hospital about 4 and I see go through on visit every patient until about 6:00 before I go, at *Gorgas* hospital. Sometime I spent a lot of time with them. There was one young there, he died Ricardo Saw, and I used to spend a lot, a lot of time. I spent a lot of time with him at my brother's and those things I met a lot of before. I remember once when I was hospitalized and I got up, I was operated, the man was next to me said when people came in the evening they asked why your place was so quiet. And he told them the reason there is he just got operated because when I was moving around I just went to all the patients and kept the place lively. I just liked to keep everybody lively. When I lived in *Vista Hermosa* it was the same thing. Before I came here, I lived in, I lived in La Boca before after I left Colon, I lived in San Miguel for a while and I lived in La Boca and where I go I just made friends with everybody. I became friends with everybody. And over the years, I have people tell me they always respect and me I want to be want to best friends with everybody. I tried my best not to become angry at anybody. I don't have time to get angry.

INTERVIEWERS: So who do you relate all of this experience with, experiences with your poetry? Cause I, I haven't read your book but I like'd to hear to some of it like you're saying this things inspire you and you know built up your spirit to get right on this...

NEWLAND: Well as I said, writing is a gift because most of the ideas that I write is not that I sit down and think, it's ideas that just come to me but outside of that I have also learned to discipline myself as I said to try to live with people. All over the years, I have tried how to keep myself humble. I have learned and disciplined from discipline that the fancy thing the, the fame and the glory and whatnot doesn't mean anything. It's simply, sim-, humble life it's everybody live a nice and happy life. That's how I look at that. But unfortunately, most of us we want to follow the big people and we want a welcome, we want to have wealth and we want to have power and we want to have fame and whatnot. And to me, it doesn't mean anything. We are all human beings and regard of what you of when the time comes, you're just going to die and leave everything back. What you going the best thing you're going to leave behind is the question that people can now be say what boy, he was a beautiful person. He lived a very nice and friendly with us. I remember the case before I got married, the racetrack was out there for further than this one. Yes. And I ride before we got married there. I took her on one night in a bus and the time the bus fare was five cents, and they'd raised it to ten cent, arbitrarily

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risen it to 10 cent' the bus chauffeurs. And when we came out the bus the guy gave me back a dime. So I said what is this? You are supposed to give me back 15 cents change, yeah, yeah, yeah. And he up and hit me in my head, hit me right there in the jaw that I just got operated. So we left. Went by, by the, by the entrance near to, to come across so, a want to know where Panama Viejo is. There the guards are, so I went in there and told me the policeman, told the police look, I went this bus and this man arbitrarily wanted to raise de price and he up me and kick me and pull me, I say wait so I started talking to the police so when he came out, when after wait about two hours the bus came overcrowded with people, I said there he is, run he throw him out of the bus, he said yea., yea, yea. So he tell him about obscenity on the bus. But he said what? I'm here with this young man here for over two hours waiting on you I ain say I don't want to accuse you and you're going to say ....no just him. And after that, that man would pass and he would see me coming up where my good friend was living, *Auricle*, and he would turn, he'd stop and turn all the way back to pick us up, pick us up anywhere I'm going. The bus would be crowded and he'd turn all the way back up and pick me up from, from the incident where I didn't make any accusation. See I've learned all over life that the more you can keep this up and all the problem with people, the happier you can live. That's what I've tried to do all through life, live with people and enjoy life with people.

INTERVIEWERS: So as you've been sending this message through your poetry

NEWLAND: Uh huh.

INTERVIEWERS: to the way you are, what effect have you seen in the community where you've been you know relating with um towards your attitude. Cause not every, everyone is thinking in this way.

NEWLAND: Well as I said fortunately for me, wherever I've lived, I live in La Boca, I live in *Vista Hermosa*, I live in *Balmoral* and most everybody I knew respect and like me. Just like when I lived in *Vista Hermosa*, in fact in 1982 I believe was out and I was ill, I was very ill. And I was surprised and happy to know that even about a year after I got, came out of hospital, people all over told me boy you don't know we pray for you. We couldn't lose you. We just couldn't lost you. We just kept praying for you. We couldn't, and it's almost a year after I got, came out of the hospital. We couldn't lose you. Boy you don't know we pray for you. See this is why I try to *live wit'* everybody. Said the material things in me or not the important things. Living with the people is what

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count. In fact, when you read my, in the book, the first, my goal you read my goal right? My goal'll tell you what it is all about that the, in the biography you see it my goal. And it's what my life it just what I *live by is about my* book.

INTERVIEWERS: So have you seen this values that you talked about reflected in the West Indian community here in Panama? Have you seen people, you remember people here

NEWLAND: Unfortunately, uh it's not what it used to be because in the early years most of our people had values. But say back from the 60's, most of us have lost the values. Most of, and this is what I said; that I, de one dat I gave about I'm sending today, I want to get to thing about the gift of the television about getting the churches to get in the communities because I hold strongly that the most effective way to put values in people is true that all the churches getting together whether Catholic, Evangelical, Baptist, they must all get together and get in all the communities across the country and take out what I call a *Combined* Community Crusade where they can have programs and activities to put values into the young people. Because as I mentioned here from the 50's, most of the mothers are girls 14, 15 years ol' and by the time they reach 18, they 'avin three, four kids. The young boy that has the kids disappear and the kids will live wit deir parents, people and when they have it, they don't, they themselves don't have the values to put into these kids so from the time most of these kids reach 5 years old, violence is a way of life with them. And this is what the countries all over today. From the time most kids reach 5, when they kill, it's like killing a roach or, or a fly cause it doesn't make any difference. They've been growing up from small and they see violence is a way of life. And the most effective place to solve that are truly churches getting together, not one church. The churches must get together. When I say churches, I'm not talking about the minister I'm talking people ,must get in the areas and get different programs where they can put values. Of today all we can hear is *reggae, reggae, reggae*. We cannot program talent programs and different programs in all these communities where we can put values in kids. Today the 99, the 99, 99% of the kids don't go to churches. Most kids don't know anything about churches. The churches must get out in the communities as I said there. The Christ in the Bible is in the highways and the byways 'elping people. But the ministers preach and preach but they got to get out there where the people are to help dem.

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INTERVIEWERS: What role do you think music, music and when I mean music I refer to music that comes from the Caribbean. What role do you think music plays in this...

NEWLAND: Music, music can play as happened one of my other music. Music is very beautiful. Music can play a very important role to people but it depends on what music, what message the music carries. Now when Bob Marley started with the reggae. Bob Marley uh reggae was one of message but today most of the young people dat make reggae is just a bunch of nonsense and a lot of bla blah blah also. Only ruining the kids. Music can play a very important role in getting to people. But it have to be music that 'as a values and unfortunately it does not exist. You watch the television, you find the kids them all the girls are half-naked and the junk they listen to them this make them feel important, only in the long run when they start growing up they find themselves lost. Find themselves lost. See all these things the churches must correct. There's not a group of people, jailing these kids not going to solve the problem. You jailed 50 today and tomorrow 100 more's out there in problem cause they 'ave no value. We need program with values to change them and this must be done through the churches.

INTERVIEWERS: Okay. So going back to um to the music in, in, in the past cause right now you mentioned Bob Marley. Can you remember any other Caribbean musician or West Indian musician here in Panama or in the islands that sent a message to the youth and also if you remember some of the lyrics, would you be willing like to share with us....

NEWLAND: In the early years, in the early years, we had a lot of chorus of the churches and different groups. We had for instance the Twin City Chorus from the Episcopal Church with a fellow Thomas. We had Emily Butcher, she used to have a chorus from I can't remember de name, from the Boca Illumine Chorus. We had the other people like William Morrison, we had Gus Trim they had dance music but the dance music was all clean cut dance music. The music was all nice music. When William Morrison had the jazz and whatnot but you had William Morrow. We had uh Gus Trym all these people but the music was always and the dance was always the tendency you hardly find anything in dose days when you go to dance. Today, any time you hear of the discotheque or whatnot, all you can hear is shooting and killing in almost all the discotheque today. Cause these young people are lacking in guidance and values. They have nobody to guide them. When I was younger we went to go play on the ball diamond, when I was playing ball, you find ball

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in the evening time ‘undreds of people out there watching us play ball. Today you find the kids going and play kick ball or whatnot, they’re carrying beer, they’re carrying beer or they’re bringing drugs and there’s no adult out there to guide ‘em. So they get themselves involved. As I said in my article, another problem we ‘ave is that a lot of kids coming out of school 5:00 and 6:00 in the evening and they’re not getting home until 8:00, 9:00 in the night because the buses not picking them up at dat hour because the buses are coming crowded and these kids allow them just go all over the place and get themself involved in problems all over. So it seems like the gover’ment should get buses to pick them up or get high schools and whatnot in all the communities where they are and also they should get community centers, get community centers in all the areas where the peoples can meet, the adults and the young people can meet and this way they’ll be more under communication and understanding and respect among everybody. But as a rule you go in all the communities and all you see is houses, they don’t see togetherness. You don’t see people meeting their neighbor, no neighborliness like things used to be.

INTERVIEWERS: Was this in the, the West Indian community? Would you see that unity and family?

NEWLAND: Yes in the early year there was West Indian communities with always everybody mix in even in San Miguel in the early years, San Miguel in all these areas you find that all in the evening time you find the neighbors out, everybody out, they’re talking in person and whatnot....some problem but not like it is today. Today nobody want to walk and some, again nobody want to walk....nobody want to walk in, in...because everyday you can hear is just shooting and shooting and all kind of people getting killed just like me, innocent people getting killed Colon. You tell the average man to go to Colon today you *have to be* crazy cause the values all gone.

INTERVIEWERS: So nowadays there’s a relation between being black and if you’re black, you’re bad or you are Maliante or you’re a person that’s in to bad stuff um what, what taking into account what was happening in those days and that kids don’t want to go to church because of many reasons, what suggestions other than, than that into what is going on in the church, doing um I don’t know, I’m going in circles

NEWLAND: No what as I said before, unfortunately we have a misconception of what church is all about. Most people understand that the church

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is to go in the building in the temple and you go there with the Bible and you go Hymn book and you sign and whatnot. Its unfortunate dat the mistake we make. Wehere the ministers preach and whatnot. The church was found to help people to live together, for you to get out in highways and byways and help one another. Christ said it plain. He who does it for the least of my brothers, does it for me. See. And all these kids and problem instead of denouncing them, we supposed to get out and ‘elp them because when they put them in jail, they meet more ‘ardened criminals and they become more ‘ardened criminals themselves whereas if we got in all the communities and get programs, we can get concerts, we can get community programs, we can get talent programs, and not just those too that join in the church, we must get out the doors and the road and attract them in. We’ve got to find ways to win their confidence, win their confidence, then you can talk to them but for you to go and tell de boy or de girl that you must not do this, this wrong, you’re only making self a joker. You must win his confident, you got to do something to win his confidence. A lot of these kids today get up remembering Panama, most of the time people over ‘tirty can’t get the job. So a lot of people our parents don’t have work so the kids are in hungry, they don’t have what to eat and they can’t get medicine so what, what, what’s, what’s the solution to the problem. Go out and rob and kill. We have homes where mother and father leave home from early morning to go and work and there’s nobody to tell the kids what to do so the kids get out de ‘ome and get themselves involved. You in your ‘ome you *tell* your child the best of what he should do. You can advice him in your home. He gets out there, the others going, they’re going to pressure him to do what they want him to do and the fact that he wants to play with them is going to play, going to do what they tell him. And unfortunately most of the time, he’s the one that going to get caught and, a lot of people going to say the parents, but a lot of time it’s not the parents, it’s the community as a whole as I’ve said over and over in fact I’ve got...giving a young lady here for the community here that we’re having a meeting. Letting the people know that the community is not the, the houses. A community is not the houses. The community is the people that living in the area working together, building communication, understanding, fraternity among themselves for the betterment, the welfare and security of the area in which they live. But unfortunately, *most people* understand it. When I tell people about community, they say a community’s a house. Community’s are people that live in the area, living closely together, working closely together, exchanging ideas about the problems they ‘ave, find solutions to the problems to ‘elp one

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another. Unfortunately, we don't do that. When we do that, we'll be able to foster better yet understand among everybody and particularly the young people because as they brought all over by you're going to say oh these kids don't have any respect for the elders but the fac' is that the elders don't have any communication with the young people. And most of them just pass 'em and just criticize them. These not going to solve the problems. We 'ave to get positive ways to solve all these problems.

INTERVIEWERS: Okay how would you classify yourself in terms of identity, cultural identity?

NEWLAND: Cultural identity. Uh in what way? You mean, Ethnic?

INTERVIEWERS: Panamanian yeah...

NEWLAND: I am a Panamanian but above all, I'm a human being. I'm a Panamanian but above all, I'm a human being. As far as I know, as I have in my poem "The Source" I am a child of God and being a child of God makes me understand that I must live and share my life with everybody regardless who we are, whether you're black, white, Panamanian, whoever you are, my duty is to share our life with one another. Because regardless of what country we come from, what color we are, when you cut your skin, you of the same blood, the same human anatomy, when you cut the skin it's the same human anatomy. And regardless what country are in, you are just a human being. And the thing as the book said, we said as Christians love God above all and love of fellow man as we love ourselves. Love is not words. Love is positive deeds. Love is not words. Love is positive deeds. Love means we must get out and help one another, converse with one another, don't turn our back on one another, learn to respect, learn to forgive, these are important, then learn how to forgive. The more you keep 'atred in yourself is the more the worse you live. The more you can learn to forgive and go forward is the happier you can be. But unfortunately, most of us instead of striving for what we call everyday life and what you call brotherhood, we strive following the big people, looking for power and what we believe of power and wealth and fancy things will make us h'appy. I have a poem dere, it called peace of mind. It shows a man that has everything but he's not peace of mind until he found God. When you learn to live with God, you learn to live with everybody. And it's where you get peace of mind. When you get, you find that most cases the people that have, the more they have, the more they want. And they just keep wanting, wanting, wanting and that's all they strive

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for is want. And in the long run, what does it mean? Because we're all going to die like, we're all going to die. We're all going to die and leave all the millions and the this and whatnot; we're all going to leave it behind. You live quite poor and happy, you live a nice beautiful life. Sometime ago, there was a man work with me, a white man work with me and died in seb'enty nine. I believe it was. And I wrote an article about him. And I was surprised, all the Americans in, in the Canal Zone took that article or the impact it had on them, on the General and all was impacted by the *honor*. I was surprised one day when I saw, I was talking to a data program about Martin Luther King and I'm asking the man who gave the speech for a copy of the program and he was telling me I must go up the upstairs office and get it and here this white man said let Mr. Newland have the speech and who it was the Command in General. I was shock because understand said let de boy 'ave de speech, but he said let Mr. Newland have the speech. So I ask *Penny Brown* who was in charge of the program, and I told all of them and she said what you surprised about, every American know you, and who don't know you want to know who you are. Cause all most of my articles are based on values *yeah* most of my articles showing what people have done to build a better life.

INTERVIEWERS: Do you ever have any conflicts at work because of being a West Indian?

NEWLAND: I had conflict, not you know of being West Indian because of being a man that looking for justice for my people. In fact, when I work for the Army, I couldn't be promoted to most of the jobs because the Army's taboo. I was taboo. There was a young, a young woman went to, sent to a personnel office, she called me one day and told me that you are considered the best qualified for the job but you're not getting *an interview*. Another case there was a white woman came to me from the personnel office and she told me she heard all about me and she would like me to come to the personnel office and straighten out the file system because it was in a mess and she would assure me that I would get the job that I'm entitled to. I went and I got transferred dere and when I went dere, everything that de had dey just trow in my lap, beside the file section, the person, the woman and budget say I must do this, I must do that. But what going to hit the straw, there was a woman dat used to take care of the safety and she died and this guy came to me one day and said they would like you to train another man for that position. I said I must train another man for a vacant position that I can fill? I said no way. What they did, abolished

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my job and sent me out because it meant that I was not to be promoted because of the person I was. I was always fighting for justice and said *hate 'em*, you can *hate 'em* but respect 'em. I couldn't get the job I always fighting for justice. I enjoyed myself. I enjoyed myself very much. I remember one day I was in the luncheonette 'avin my lunch, and lunch was about from, from 12 to 1, and I was there almost going to two o'clock, talking to de lunch man, told me to fill out the luncheonette and he looked and said boy you're in trouble. The Cornell I just came up here. You're in trouble. Cornell came and said Mr. Newland sit down. And...and the Cornell I and I sat down there after 3:00 talking before it quitting time. And after that when I went back the following day

INTERVIEWERS: Let's start from the, the part where you

NEWLAND: Yeah you ready?

INTERVIEWERS: Yeah.

NEWLAND: Yeah as I said yeah it was at the luncheonette and after lunch hours and guys they're talking to me said boy you're in trouble. The Colonel just came in. So when the Colonel came, the Colonel said Mr. Newland let's sit down and we started to talk until almost quitting time. So the following day when I went, the guy said who are you? Here it is I said you're in trouble and here this Cornell come here and sit down 'yere whole evening talking so every time everybody come in luncheonette you said boy, dis Newland boy is because he comes here and he and the Cornell sit down like nu'thin. Another day, the other guy, the analyst that wrote down da analyze de job, he ask de administrative *section*, who is that guy? I go to the luncheonette all kind of hours and he's always up there. The man just said leave him alone, he's a jefe he's our boss. He goes and comes as he like. So as I said just the natural gift God gave me helped me along the line that any time anything that others just throw it in my luck to take care of it for dem, and write and whatnot so that really helped me along the line. Again I also worked and I worked in newspaper office. I've been writing the newspaper from about 68 and I was working for the, the I start wit de Pan American, after Torrios took over, decide to send the Pan American weekly to the states. A couple of Pan American sections to the state. So Harrison he was in charge, it was a white fellow, told them he has a right fellow Harris and told them that I got a fellow named Newland, he's the best man. So they got me there and I start to write for the Pan American and then for the

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Republica, I work till it turned Republica and I'm happy to say that for the time I worked here that everybody in newspaper office became a friend. To know everybody became a very good friend because my attitude I just friendly with everybody. When I was there everybody in the office became my friend. So I just live in and find myself 'appy living with people. One of my biggest shock in life was when my son drown and when he drown it was a big thing but then again uh it showed how much people cared cause my son drowned in 1970 at the school picnic, it was, they were about to leave the picnic about 2:00 in evening and one girl said let's have a last dip that was at San Carlos beach, and when they went back he wasn't in the water, he wasn't swimming. And one of his friends started to *struggle* in water, he went and save him, went and save another one and was going back under, the kids told me that they told him no Newland you are tired, you can't race, he's not going to leave his friend and went and he just disappeared. It was a big thing. That was three days before Mother's Day in Panama. In Panama, it's the 8<sup>th</sup> of December and that was the 5<sup>th</sup> of December. And but I remember the burial the same 8<sup>th</sup> of December and boy it was a big because it was five of them that drown. It was a big, big, big funeral from that day there. So but I feel better I mean ups and downs in my life but I've learned to, I've learned it's all about as I go along.

INTERVIEWERS: So...you were married right so

NEWLAND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWERS: how do you meet, how do met your wife?

NEWLAND: Well when I came from Colon I, before I got my I had one child in Colon, and then unfortunate I had to come up here, they sent me a lot man job and I came up here. And as a young man, I follow young people and I met this young lady and eventually got married kids came and we lived together for 46 years.

INTERVIEWERS: What was the culture or background of your spouse, of your wife?

NEWLAND: Well she was more Latin inclined. She was a West Indian but she was more Latin inclined. *Grew up* my kids talking about most of them are more Latin inclined. One of my son, he work in the Sigla charge of de section.

INTERVIEWERS: And did you and your wife encourage your kids to talk English and

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- NEWLAND: I try to English to them. They understand English. My daughter right now is in de Army she works as engineer in de Army. As a supervise engineer in the Army.
- INTERVIEWERS: So how many kids do you have?
- NEWLAND: I've got 3 boys and a daughter. Well 2 daughters and 3 boys.
- INTERVIEWERS: Um and all of them, some of, all of them understand English but only the one that's in the states speaks English?
- NEWLAND: Well they understand but dese days does converse mostly in Spanish.
- INTERVIEWERS: What about grandchildren so you have
- NEWLAND: I've got a lot of them, a lot of grandchildren.
- INTERVIEWERS: Yeah.
- NEWLAND: Yeah.
- INTERVIEWERS: And have they um, did your children pass to them the need of or the importance of speaking English?
- NEWLAND: Well as I said before they learn but as I said they do more conversing in Spanish. They mostly grew up most of 'em Spanish people from *Vista Mosa* where most live around Spanish people and my wife she...Spanish people said they just kept, I kept fighting 'em with English. I took them to St. Paul Church and everything. They understand it though, they understand because here my grandson, he works at the Call Center right now. He ought to talk it but he understand it, understand it.
- INTERVIEWERS: So as your kids were growing up, they starting relating more with, with Spanish kids?
- NEWLAND: Yeah because they grow up more with, more Latin kids all over the place. They talk it in de streets but they more grow up with Latins *there only kids*. They went to school with Latin kids and professionals school and all the school more, more mix it the Latin kids. So unfortunately the most of it kids, West Indian kids in Panama that's how they are. They're more mixed with Latins all over the place. Specially when you live in certain areas Vista
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Hermosa was mostly more Latins in fact cause they tell ‘em that own de homes in *Vista Mosa*. But more Latins in there.

INTERVIEWERS: So how do you think your children define theirselves as West Indian descent or

NEWLAND: Well I be descendents are more Panamanians. But as I said in the long run, whether they are not, the important thing as I said with blacks is not what we taught, the language is not important. The important thing is the lack of an *economy*. We do not have *economic* background and any group, any ethnic group that does not have economic background will never get any respect. As long as you have to depend on all the other people for everything, they’re not going to respect us. We should get an economic background. We should ‘ave certain X amount of people in the government to defend us. Far as I’m concerned we could have at least 12 to 15 black legislatures across Colon, Bocas, focusing on all these different areas to defend us. Not people that go out there with the power, so we must select our people to defend us, defend our problems but unfortunately but up went most of us that like what happen in the United States with civil rights, when most blacks get the opportunity to get to a certain self-sufficiency they really don’t care about your problems or those that are suffering. And that’s my problem. We don’t think about those that are suffering. We only see ourselves and we want to build eminence to people on top and the people on top don’t care about us. So big problem.

INTERVIEWERS: So what are your thoughts on the, the group that was formed with approval of the government named the Cordinacion para la inclusion del laboro.

NEWLAND: Again as I said as far as I’m concerned, it’s nice but as far as I’m concerned any group of people that cannot help themselves, not going to be respected. No government can ‘elp us, ‘ef we don’t ‘elp ourselves. Number one the government or the President can’t give everybody a job because whether blacks they’re up millions of poor Latins and other people that want jobs so he cayn’t go preference and giving the job to blacks. If we get together and pool our resources, we can go all over this country and put up all the different type of business that people love, supermarkets, repair shops, printing shops, and give our people, not giving people jobs but thousands of jobs. You giving them survival. Black people move into *Rio Abajo* and *Pueblo Nuevo* over ‘undred years ago. Today when you go in *Rio Abajo* you saw the kind of factories

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going up and what most black people live is gone in shambles. Big people are just ban them out and *put them practice anything else*. Most *black* people are people that *live* in shambles. And a lot of them have moved out of there cause a lot of people started playing they don't walk, walking any of our street today. They don't like want walk in Rio Abajo they don't want to walk in San Miguel. A places a lot of black people San Juaquin, cause Torrios built those homes in San Juaquina lot of black people living there. And all of these empty places are what you call red zone, just a problematic areas because it just bunch of kids that don't have any guidance of values and most of 'em just involved in problems, always shooting, shooting, shooting all around the place. Uh what they call the place there Corundu all those area, Corundu mostly black because they don't have guidance and the people are supposed to put guidance in them is not helping them. We always depending on the government and other people and they're not, they can't do it. We must 'elp ourself.

INTERVIEWERS: So before the interview, we were talking about an organization that you were thinking about...

NEWLAND: *Yeah for* almost forty years, I got the idea; I got the idea way back from '68 when the, the American government was giving a reduction in force. When they were giving a reduction in force, it started to worry me. I said boy, here it is in '68 my eldest boy, the one that drowned, he was a, he was 15 years old. He died in '70, he was 15 years old. My daughter was only 8 years old. And I said boy if I lose my job what am I going to do? There is no job we are not to get and I just kept and then it came plain to me our problem is that we are total dependent on all the other people for everything. Came plain to me. That's why we're in this condition and the only way we can solve it is to get together and pool our resources. In the early years, we had about 60 black lodges and everybody here and there did the *little thing* what they called secret orders and when they look everybody dress up going to lodge meeting. And they 'avin social dis and dat but probably none, the only thing it give them credit is that they help when somebody died, helped them to bury the dead down there. But outside of that we didn't do anything. Well when you walk around you find a Chinese in do's and everybody out there helping themselves. But all the early black people do, all when you go calling out there even Bocas oh the government *normally* discrimination, they won't give us job, they don't want to give us jobs. Yet we waste more money than all the other people in anything. The black man goes out for pair of shoe, instead of buying a pair of shoe for \$5,

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he's going to buy a pair of shoe for \$20. A good example way back was about '48, there was a fellow came and work with us in *Corozal*, temporary job as a painter. Got a temporary job as a painter and try to even just before quitting time, he came into the office and he said boy I just got twenty 'tree dollas, I going now to hustle twenty five more now to buy me a pair of *Flosheim* to go the fights Sunday night. Going hustle \$25 more to go to the fights Sunday night. Just like the carnival. We surround the place in the kind of environment place, people from Corundu, poor people in surrounding place. People that don't have anything, I said saw it right there on the television last night people going and pawn everything even cars, when they get through dem problem, they don't have to pay anything, it go missin. And this is mostly the blacks.

INTERVIEWERS: So how do you think this mentality came into the community and how do you think we can

NEWLAND: Solve it.

INTERVIEWERS: solve it?

NEWLAND: That's what I'm saying. This as I said this is the thing that happened to us over 300 years ago. When the white man went to Africa and took the blacks out as slaves, he kept the black down over 300 years. You know when they said that they liberated the black from slavery, the blacks just have to depend on the whites for survival but unfortunately in those days the black man did not 'ave the opportunity to get any education to help himself. But within the last 70 years in Panama, we have had the opportunity to get better education all up to de University level. But we just continued depending on the other people and then outside of them we just pattern ourselves that by you having social activities that we are building images and getting respect while the other people only laughing at us. See until we get together and pool our resources not one or two, get our the people to pool our sources and get into the business world to create business and getting into communities to get programs to put values in our young people and get blacks to represent us in government, we are just going to go down more and more every day. No few blacks can solve the problem. We have people in every field today, every field we have profession every field that can meet and be all organized and make studies *about* our problems and have them solve in one, under one umbrella. But unfortunately every day we form more and more and more different groups, all black men do. Every day he

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forming this group this they forming that group, I mean just forming groups and groups and groups. And it's not going anywhere. I remember years ago in the back all 'round the 50's they used to have when they had the trains, they used to have what they call excursion trains and doing trains and whatnot. And whenever these trains boy you see my people the black guys dress up in the suits and the this, you know where they're going, to fights. To fight and to the bars. They're going from Colon to Panama. There was a white guy that works in *Corozal* with me and a train had to pass just where we worked and he used to tell me boy you people wear your money on your back. We wear our money in the bank. He used to keep me that all the time. You people wear your money on your back. We wear; we wear our money in the bank. And up to today it's the same thing. You check all along up and there's not like before because people did not go out as much in de night as before. But every time you look this group is still going up to Panama, having some cultural three hundred five dollars. We're still doing it. When they get through, they make about \$800 and they leave \$3, \$4,000 with the owners. I remember one year a friend of mine he died about a few years ago. He met me one Tuesday and it just on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary class 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary day that Saturday night. And he said boy I was thinking about you, he said you kept writing, or we keep giving our money to these people. When we got through, we gave those Chiney people over \$4,000. That's what we do when we feel up and now you every been to any of those function. You ever been to any of those function? When you go there, the sit up, sit down there, the food they get, the food they get isn't even worth \$5 a plate. And when you look at the bar and the liquor and everything there. I remember one year the class of '61 I believe it was there are the activities at 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and they flopped. I came and they flopped about 2:00 in the morning one of the girls look at me and say what we going to do? I say just got to go and make arrangement wit de Chiney people or you gotta pay them their money. Okay. The following week I came from Colon about 2:30 in the morning and some large other activity there at the same place. When I reach in my, the place of a crowded people in there. I came in and a friend say hey Newland what's happenin. I said hey anything's changed? He looked around, he looked around, said no. He said look over dere, I see de Chiney people, so we sat over there and said my people nice and up there enjoying themselves, I said yeah. The China man in a sweater, there were four at the bar, one with sweater and two with regular shirts. Look over my people, people all dressed up in their fancy suit with all the liquor being around the table. Had about 6 waiters, not one

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black boy was among them so these are the thing we adore. These are what we adore. And it's all been over the years. How is it, how is it keep the other people built up while we keep crippling ourselves.

INTERVIEWERS: So what, what would be a message for the I would say call center generation and I explained this because just what you've been saying I can see your reflecting on my generation, it's true that we have a lot of professionals in every area, but I know many of my friends from West Indian descent that are in call centers even with like big titles, they go to college and they get their title, but they don't get any jobs that will pay them more than \$400, \$300...

NEWLAND: This is what I'm saying because again as I said we don't own anything. And the fact we don't anything we just understand that getting education that we going to get a job. And when we get a job, you learn to show *how long* you own a job because we don't own anything. And my emphasis is that we don't need 'tousands and 'tousands to live. The name of the game is survival. As long as you have a place to sleep and what to eat, you can get your medicine that what life is all about. I'm living 'ere and I tell the truth, if I was living in a room by myself it be just the same to me. I finally bought this place because when I lived in *Vista Hermosa* I didn't want to live in real bad because the condition was going on and I didn't want my daughter to come here living *Vista Hermosa*, that's why I bought here. But I always say that if I have to leave here, I was going to look me a small place to live cause most of my kids grown up and all going by their business now. But all we do, we follow the big people, understanding that wealt' and fame is our big things in life. They don't mean anything. Wealt' and fame doesn't mean anything. Name life is to live humble and to live and share life with everybody. As long as you have what to eat, a place to sleep, your medicine, you just live and share life wit' everybody, 'elp everybody as much as they can. The more you live that way is the 'appier yu' are. More than as I said but more important especially for blacks we must unite all our people and get an economic base cause any group that does not have an economic base will not get any respect. And the way things are going in the next 10 years, every other black child is going out to rob and kill cause he has nothing to get. The people who own the business world don't care about us. See so the solution is for us to get on one umbrella and with that one umbrella we can do everything, we have lawyers that we have, if we have any problems we should have lawyers who get out dere and address our problems, defend our rights but now we have guys out there they got out as lawyers,

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they're not getting, most of them don't have job. But, if all these guys worked together on they would be able to 'elp our people and get a solid little something to 'elp themselves. See. We have people in every field, every field we have people.

*(audio cuts out for almost a minute)*

INTERVIEWERS: The last thing we were talking about oh the, the

NEWLAND: The Calypso guy.

INTERVIEWERS: Yeah um tell me what do you, what have you heard about the...

NEWLAND: Well I tell the truth definitely as I said the way things have been here for the last especially after *the invasion*, most of our people and the activities just faded out after the invasion, the American invasion in '89. There is always a bunch of blacks involved in anything. Most of them, all of them...young people that are...place right now. Before that, we used to have a lot of people in Calypso and we used to have different programs, jazz program and different singing program like Barbara Wilson she died here the other day and these people that were all involved in a lot of nice programs, musical program that we...culture but today most of these are now wiped out. You don't find much of that around, most you can hear is the reggae and whatnot people going as I said to these hotels and whatnot, but you don't hear much musical concerts and whatnot like before. I had a concert one in '87, *Bette* Smith before he died and one in '92 for Barton but you don't find much concerts like before.

INTERVIEWERS: Did you ever get to see the *Mighty Sparrow* perform?

NEWLAND: Let me see I can't recall to tell the truth. I can't recall. Frankly I was more interested in more the what we call cultural type of concerts and thing more like that. More concerts, I would more like concerts where you had people singing certain type you know type, more along that line I was...Calypso type of thing, I wasn't much for that.

INTERVIEWERS: Would you mind telling me your, your birth?

NEWLAND: 24<sup>th</sup> of March, 1924.

INTERVIEWERS: And what was um the last grade of school you completed?

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NEWLAND: As I said uh I went to the Canal Zone school in 8<sup>th</sup> grade but after that I took correspondence courses from the American School and university type courses from the United States Army.

INTERVIEWERS: Is there any other information you want to include that we haven't touched upon in this interview?

NEWLAND: I don't know because usually as I said I be it covered most all my concern that is a question of my concern is the future of the black youth and as I said the only solution to the future is for the blacks today to unite ourselves, pool our resources and get involved economically, socially and politically.

INTERVIEWERS: Okay. And thank you.

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**Duration: 64:08 Minutes**

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