

Renardo, GreenThumb Harvest Fair, New York
September 18, 2021

Rachel (00:01):

If I look over here, I'm just making sure the sound levels are okay. So Renardo, will you tell me your name, where you grew up, where you live now, who you are? Just give us a little background about yourself.

Renardo (00:14):

Well, my name is Renardo. I was born in [inaudible 00:00:19] Ponce, Puerto Rico. I weigh about 150 pounds. And I'm here in the community garden. When I was young, I planted a tree that was there. It's been there for about 40 years. It's been there, still there. But me, I'm a very outgoing person. I'm a very big-minded person. A very smart person when it comes to politics and things that are going on now in the community. I have very good influence with people.

I'm also a great cook. I'm also a great fighter, not as a profession, but I am. That sums me up, but I'm very passionate about flowers and about earth and the climate. And I'm very passionate about what's going on. A lot of people don't really enjoy or appreciate life. Life is something that surrounds us. It's something that's around us. It's the beauty of the flowers and the butterflies and everything that comes together into one rhythm. People are not the same. People are practically all over the place and they don't go together and they grow separately. That's the difference between climate, earth, and people. Even though that we all work in one planet together. But yeah.

Rachel (01:50):

So this is the question I ask everybody to start, when you think about climate change or global warming, what do you think about and how do you feel?

Renardo (01:59):

Well, I am not afraid. Why am I not afraid? People are trying to mimic weather, trying to do other things with weather. When I think about climate, I think about God. He's the one that controls it. 7 o'clock news, early news can't do that, because he's the one that created it. You could only give me a scientific fact, but what's going to happen will happen. When there's going to be a storm, when there's going to be a tornado, when God sends it. Not that somebody made it, or did it. There's a big difference. It's a very touchy subject with me.

Rachel (02:46):

Why?

Renardo (02:47):

Because I know that people are trying to change climate, do a lot of things with climate and mother earth. Leave her alone, leave her alone. You're taking out all the oil of the earth and you're taking her blood, because that's her blood. All this climate change and everything else is done because of people that don't care. And climate change, it's something you got to prepare for.

Rachel (03:18):

And so how do you feel?

Renardo (03:20):

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I feel okay about it, because it's nothing that could be stopped. It's something that... You cannot stop 5,000 mile winds. You can't stop it. There's no way to stop it. You can only cover it. You can only cover yourself. Water, you drown. If the ocean comes in here, everybody goes. And no fear. Maybe when it happens, maybe a tear or so, but I know where I'm going to go.

Rachel (03:50):

So you garden at Pleasant Village here.

Renardo (03:52):

Yeah. And I lived here in Pleasant Avenue 119 when I grew up here.

Rachel (03:57):

So have you noticed changes in the weather or the seasons?

Renardo (04:00):

Of course. The changes come... Now when the day lasts longer, and the sun goes down later, the flowers tend to shrink up and don't open so often and don't grow so good, because the climate, the way it is, and time, it changes everything. The flowers will shrivel up, but don't bloom. Some will bloom, some won't. There's a very big change.

Rachel (04:00):

When did you start noticing this change?

Renardo (04:43):

As soon as they said that the sun was going to be unloaded, I knew what was going to happen to the earth, because of my reading. My reading, I'm a very bookworm. 350 book here. So I talk to mentors, people in the army, captains and people in high ranks. And I know a lot, sometimes too much for my health, where I cannot talk. Afraid of getting hurt. But climate change is a big thing. People have to prepare for it, but they should not be afraid because what's going to happen is going to happen. And if you feel some sort of way spiritually, well, this is what you're going to pay for all your discretions, because you never paid for your wrong doing.

So if you get COVID-19 and somebody else didn't, maybe your sin is bigger and maybe you needed to get it for you to appreciate life. People don't appreciate life. When it comes to life, people don't appreciate it. People go and die in war for no reason at all. Life has to be taken very much seriously. Instead of greed, more love in the earth and more love to people. Things will change. We don't need segregation. When it comes to me, I would rather have separation, because separation gives us our own land, where we could build our own resources, where we could make our own [inaudible 00:06:28] and we could build our own things for just keeping us slaves for the last 50,000 years. That's why I cannot speak in TV or phone, it's too strong for them to hear because it's the truth. They don't like to hear the truth. They decide to destroy climate, destroy land, not caring at all, because they don't care. I mean, you don't have to make a forest fire and kill 50,000 trees just because you want to build land. Why didn't you just cut the trees down?

Rachel (07:05):

Who taught you how to grow plants? Who taught you how to garden?

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Renardo (07:11):

My mom used to plant all the time. May she rest in peace. She used to plant all the time, and I lived upstate and I did landscaping. I know how to plant. I don't know how to make the fishes tank that you see over there, my friend built that. I used to do stuff for the rich. I used to live in [inaudible 00:07:29], New York, upstate. And I used to do jobs for all the rich. And I used to do the landscaping. I used to plant rose bushes and all kinds of stuff in the backyard. And that was my job for a while, not counting the horse stable job that I had with all these horses that were worth millions of dollars and thousands of dollars, that I had to take care of for the rich.

So yeah, me and earth and animals, it's always been a part of my life, because there's nothing like a dog to cheer your day up. Nothing like your best friend. It's like having a human best friend, but you'll find in between, you have a friend. You got a frenemy, and you got an enemy. You got a frenemy or a friend. Now it's frenemy, or a friend and an enemy at the same time, both. But you try to balance out everything, like everything else balances out. You're supposed to banish your life and your spirit, just like the earth does. But people don't look for their inner peace because they're too busy with what the world is doing.

Rachel (08:34):

So are you planting different things? Are you gardening in a different way because of climate change now than you were 20, 30 years ago?

Renardo (08:41):

No, I'm not planting. I'm in the transition of getting my own place. So when I get to my place, that's where I'm going to do my planting myself. And I know I could be able to know what time I have to give it light, what time I don't, because of the climate change. People, it's not their fault. They see, oh, the sun is out, let's put water. They don't understand that when it's going to grow, the process of the plant is not going to go to its peak because of the climate change. Some will bloom and some won't. And the days will be longer.

And next year it will be another change. And every year, a change, and people don't understand, oh, I guess Haiti gets cold. You've been living here so long, you don't notice that every year the weather's different. So if they're asking, "Why does it get cold?" Or, "Why is it so cold?" when you're living here for so many years. And you don't understand why, because you're not paying attention. There was a time a few years ago, there was hardly any snow. It rained in December. And that's very, very different. When people say, "Why is it hailing? Why is it raining? It's supposed to stop." Well, you don't do your studying and you don't really pay attention to what's going on because you're too busy in other things that are not much interest. TV was a sleeper.

Rachel (10:17):

What did that feel like for you on that year that it didn't snow, it rained? What were the emotions that you felt?

Renardo (10:25):

I said, "Wow."

Rachel (10:27):

What does wow mean? What is wow expressing?

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Renardo (10:30):

I say the climate changing is a powerful thing. It's a very, I'm not going to say scientific. There's nothing scientific about it. It happens. The heat comes up from the earth, it goes up from the ground. It goes up into the sky and makes rain. There's a lot of change, but when that happened, I found it to be very different. That's why I saw, and I started to understand that every year that things are not going to be the same. That climate is going to change in the new year, new beginning. And it's always going to be different. You could either pray for the best. Pray for the best.

You cannot stop timing. You're going to protect yourself on time, cover yourself on time, storms, or whatever. Do what the TV tells you. But the earth has been hurt. She has been destroyed and disrespected. And things will never be the same. And they will always change. They keep bombing the earth, keep doing these things in this foreign lands, where the effect will be for other people, very catastrophes and stuff like that. You're drilling on the floor and it's shaking the ground and houses are falling. And then you want to call it that it was a hurricane. Don't lie to the people when you know that your drilling did it.

This is something that I have to be careful talking about because they're going to want to hurt me. And it's a shame. Don't lie to the people when you was drilling in that big pipe in Puerto Rico, taking all that oil out of there, and it made the earth shake and take all those houses down like that.

Rachel (12:34):

Yeah.

Renardo (12:34):

Leave mother nature alone. Leave her alone. If you're not going to plant in her, don't destroy her. Don't start putting pipes in the ground, not unless you're going to build a building then I understand, but don't destroy life.

Rachel (12:46):

Well, thank you so much. I really appreciate you having this conversation with me. This is a great conversation. It's really interesting to hear all your thoughts.

Renardo (12:46):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Rachel (12:59):

Thank you, really. I have so much.

Renardo (13:01):

You're welcome.

Rachel (13:01):

Yeah.

Renardo (13:01):

Anytime.

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