Madeline Ramos Oral Histories BONUS Draft 1 20241008 — Original

Office of Legacy Management
BONUS Oral History Project
Interview of Madeline Ramos
July 16, 2024
Interviewer: Scott Snider

SCOTT SNIDER: This an oral history interview conducted on July 16, 2024 by the Department of Energy Office of Legacy Management. My name is Scott Snider, S-C-O-T-T S-N-I-D-E-R. I will be conducting the interview today. And to start, Madeline, could you please tell me your full name and spell it?

MADELINE RAMOS: *Mi nombre es Madeline Ramos. M-A-D-E-L-I-N-E R-A-M-O-S.*

SNIDER: Uh — to start off with, just tell me a little bit about your early life — uh — and your background — uh — and your involvement with the BONUS site and also with PREPA.

RAMOS: It's okay.

INTERPRETER: *Vamos a hablar un poquito, entonces, ahora sobre su vida — eh — y cómo usted estuvo involucrada con el proyecto de BONUS.* [00:01:00] *Y danos también un poquito de trasfondo de su vida profesional, personal.*

RAMOS: Okay*. Como dije, mi nombre es Madeline Ramos. Yo nací y me crie en Rincón. Así que desde bien niña conocía de la planta de BONUS.* So, *es parte de nuestra vida. El BONUS es parte de nuestra vida. A los ocho o nueve años, yo era niña escucha. Y nos llevaron a una visita a BONUS. Mientras BONUS duraba, nos llevaron de niñas escucha a ver la planta BONUS. Y fue algo bien impresionante, no entendíamos qué era lo que pasaba allí. Pero sí toda la vida hemos estado con BONUS ahí. Es parte de la cultura de este pueblo. Eh — yo estudié química en el Colegio de Mayagüez. Luego de eso, me mudé a Estados Unidos. Trabajé en diferentes — eh — trabajos en el área de protección ambiental. Hasta que terminé en Puerto Rico nuevamente en la Autoridad de Energía Eléctrica, también en el área de protección ambiental.* [00:02:00] *Ahí es donde vuelvo a estar en contacto directo con BONUS, en mi último trabajo, que fue la gerente del Departamento de Calidad de Aire, en la Autoridad de Energía Eléctrica. Y era — y yo era la gerente de esa área y también en esa área, pues, atendíamos los problemas de BONUS, el mantenimiento, los monitoreos y los informes. Era el grupo mío que los atendía. Y así es que empecé en Rincón con BONUS y terminé en San Juan, en la Autoridad de Energía Eléctrica con BONUS. Este, todo — parece que toda mi vida siempre BONUS ha estado ahí.*

INTERPRETER: Okay, so BONUS has been part of her life forever. She was born and raised here in Rincón, so she has known BONUS throughout her life. She was — uh — a Girl Scout, and when she was eight or nine years old they took her to visit to the BONUS site, and she didn't really understand what was going on, but it was a very interesting [00:03:00] and — uh — impactful visit. She studied

chemistry in the Mayagüez campus of the University of Puerto Rico, and then she went to work for the United States. She had different jobs in environmental protection. And then she came back to Puerto Rico, worked for PREPA, precisely with environmental protection. She was in charge of the air quality. She was a manager for air quality. And so she was working on the BONUS project. She was dealing with any problems, monitoring — um — reports that had to be handled with BONUS. So she feels that BONUS has been always a part of her life.

SNIDER: And staying with that theme — uh — your part — what is the impact or what has been the impact of the BONUS site on (inaudible)?

INTERPRETER: *Así que usted es una persona local. Es una persona que tiene comunidad. Eh — siguiendo con el tema que empezamos de su conversación. Así que, ¿cuál ha sido el impacto de* [00:04:00] *este espacio, de este lugar, BONUS, en la comunidad?*

RAMOS: *En la comunidad — eh — lo primero es que hay — todavía hay mucha desinformación con respecto a BONUS. Todavía hay mucha gente en Rincón y en los pueblos cerca de Rincón que creen que hay contaminación en BONUS y que si uno se acerca a BONUS, pues se va a enfermar, se va a contaminar. Hay mucho cáncer en Rincón. Eh — hubo un tiempo donde nosotros le dábamos permiso al* Fish and Wildlife Service *para volar a la Isla de Desecheo, hacer unos, un proyecto de control de plagas. Y tenían que volar un helicóptero y la gente pensaba que estábamos llevando desperdicios nucleares a la Isla de Desecheo. Eh — las generaciones nuevas yo entiendo que saben mucho menos de lo que es BONUS. Cuando nos, cuando yo estaba en Energía Eléctrica, venían grupos a visitar BONUS y les dábamos presentaciones. Eso, pues, se detuvo por la falta de personal.* [00:05:00] *Pero sí ellos siempre que venían, pues: "¿Por qué la cerraron?", "¿Aquí hay contaminación?", "¿Nos podemos enfermar estando aquí?". Y siempre, siempre esas preguntas son las mismas preguntas de siempre.*

INTERPRETER: So, in terms of the community, there's a lot of disinformation that's part of the impact. And not only in the local Rincón community, but also in the municipalities nearby. They believe that there's pollution, that there's contamination, that you can get sick. That there is — uh — cancer — uh — incidence of cancer (inaudible). And they used to have Fish and Wildlife come here and then — uh — visit Desecheo Island to — uh — do some work and some tests that had nothing to do with — um — pollution in, in BONUS, but people thought that they were taking nuclear material over there to dispose of it. And she believes that the new generations know even less about [00:06:00] BONUS. Because before they used to have visits from people to go over there, but now they don't have the visits, that was discontinued. So — um — you know, they still believe in this issue of pollution, so there's a lot of disinformation, and more now that there are no visits to the site. They always ask about pollution.

RAMOS: Yeah, (inaudible).

SNIDER: Staying with that — uh — with the theme of that — uh — can you describe — uh — in your experience — um — the cleanup remediation efforts — uh — that you're aware of — uh — with the site — uh — from your perspective?

INTERPRETER: *Desde su perspectiva y habiendo tenido esa experiencia, usted nos puede describir los procesos de limpieza de BONUS, cómo se llevó a cabo y qué pasó.*

RAMOS: *Yo no estaba ahí en ese momento, en esa área específica. Pero sí he leído los documentos. Lo que más me impresionó del — de BONUS es que después que operó BONUS, se cerró BONUS,* [00:07:00] *se deco— inmediatamente, empezó la decomisación de BONUS, que no se esperaron 10 años, 5 años, 10 años para empezar la decomisación. Inmediatamente que se decidió — eh — parar la operación de BONUS, se le avisó al gobierno federal, se le pidió que comenzara la decomisación, porque los combustibles nucleares pertenecen al gobierno federal. Y eso se empezó, BONUS terminó operación en el 68, en el 69 al 70, ya rápido comenzó la decomisación. Eso fue algo que a mí me impresionó. Me gustó mucho. De que se tomó una acción bien rápida. Y que así, pues, uno tiene documentación para enseñar a la gen—, a las personas que quieren saber un poco más allá. Porque alguna gente, pues, solamente información general, pero hay otras personas que son — eh — pueden ser ingenieros, científicos que quieren un poco de información más allá. Y, personalmente, yo trabajaba en el área de los monitoreos.* [00:08:00] *Porque la gente piensa — BONUS está cerrado, pero BONUS no está abandonado. Porque en BONUS hacemos — eh — monitoreo cada tres meses, y ahí no se falla nunca. Obviamente, a menos que venga una tormenta y nos atrasemos, pero eso se informa. Son monitoreos trimestrales y hay un monitoreo anual que lo hace un contratista privado. Nosotros decidimos que lo hiciera un contratista privado para que la gente no dijera: "Ah, pero tú eres el que está haciendo los trabajos todo el tiempo y no, no voy a creer en tus resultados".* So, *anualmente, se contrata a una persona que viene. Y todas las personas que están haciendo los trabajos ahí están certificadas para hacer esos monitoreos. No es que tampoco cualquiera puede ir así allí a hacer un monitoreo. Así que, de verdad, habiendo trabajado allí, habiendo visto el trabajo, me siento cómoda y me siento orgullosa de la manera que s— que BONUS nunca se ha abandonado. Está cerrada, pero no está abandonada. Hasta el día de hoy. Hay menos dinero. Hay menos personal. Pero los monitoreos que hay que hacer* [00:09:00] *eso nunca se ha fallado.*

INTERPRETER: So, it's very important for her. She mentioned that she wasn't — uh — a part of the project when it was being — uh — decommissioned. It was very impressive. She has seen the documents, though, and it's very impressive — uh — for her to know how fast the facility was dealt with, after it was closed. They didn't wait five or ten years to decommission. Uh — it was closed in '68, and then '69 and '70 they already started with the decommission. And because the nuclear fuel that is there is part — is owned by the federal government, so they took charge of that, and it was impressive to have that fast action. Uh — and it's good to have that information in those documents, because sometimes people have general questions. But a lot of times there are engineers or scientists that come with more, you know, profound questions about all of the processes, and the — there's documents there. [00:10:00] It's important, really important to understand that BONUS was closed but not abandoned. And that is a big deal.

SNIDER: It's true.

INTERPRETER: Uh — it's important because they do the monitoring every three months, and then they have — uh — an independent contractor that comes every year from the private sector that was assigned for this project, so that nobody could say, "Well, you're the, you know, you're the same people that are doing this, are doing the other — um — inspections, so it's not valid." You know, they do have that, and that team has certified personnel. So having worked in this project makes her proud, because they have less money and less staff, but it's never been abandoned. It's closed but not abandoned.

SNIDER: Yes, yes. Uh — and this was really just to the best, best of your knowledge —

RAMOS: Mm-hmm.

SNIDER: — Uh — if you, uh... What was the transfer between Environmental Management to the [00:11:00] Department of Energy Legacy Management like?

INTERPRETER: *¿Cómo fue esa transferencia que se hizo de la facilidad entre — eh — Manejo Ambiental, o la agencia encargada, y la Agencia de Manejo de Legados?*

RAMOS: *Hay,* I couldn't — *yo, en realidad, no estaba ahí, no estaba en esa posición. Sí, lo único que sé es que, por ejemplo, en BONUS tenían dentro de la estructura de BONUS había un edific— un salón con todos los documentos históricos. Había cientos de cajas de documentos históricos ahí dentro. Terminamos llevándonoslos para la oficina central en Santurce. Y eso se le dio a* Legacy Management. *Y ellos — eh — determinaron que habían como 394 cajas de documentos. De eso, ellos determinaron que había — el 17 por ciento de esos documentos eran históricos. Ellos tomaron esos documentos históricos, los escanearon y nos enviaron, y enviaron copias* [00:12:00] *a Energía Eléctrica. Yo sé que están allí, pero yo nunca los he visto, porque ya yo no trabajaba con Energía Eléctrica. Pero — uh — cómo fue la transición, pues, en realidad, no, no estaba en esa posición en ese momento como para decirlo. Pero —*

INTERPRETER: So—

RAMOS: *— pero, al menos, en el tiempo que yo he estado allí, pues, siempre ha sido una comunicación fácil con ellos. No ha sido que esta gente son bien difícil, o no se puede bregar con ellos. Este, siempre ha sido una comunicación cordial y fácil y el Departamento de Energía nos visita cada dos o tres — cada cuatr— de tres a cuatro años, ellos hacen una inspección. Y nosotros siempre estábamos ahí.*

INTERPRETER: So, she doesn't know a lot about the details, because she wasn't privy to them.

SNIDER: Yeah.

INTERPRETER: She wasn't part of that part. She can say that it's been an easy communication between the parts, that it's —

SNIDER: Yeah, yeah.

INTERPRETER: — never been a difficult process. They had, in the middle of the BONUS [00:13:00] site, they had a room that was filled with boxes with historic documents. There were some 394 boxes that were transferred in Santurce to the main offices of PREPA, and — uh — they let the — uh — Legacy Management know about these boxes. They decided — they took the position that they revised and they decided that 17% of all of those boxes and all of those documents were historic documents, and they scanned them. And — uh — they're — uh — they're in — they sent them to PREPA. She has never seen them, but she knows that they're — that they're there. And they feel that the relationship with Department of Energy, that kind of communication, it has been good. Every three or four years they also have inspections, and they keep that communication going.

SNIDER: And expanding on the relationship with [00:14:00] PREPA and the DOE — uh — could you describe the relationship and how that changed — uh — over the years that — uh — that you were there?

RAMOS: Well, us — *Mientr— estaba, a ver, voy a decirles en español. Mientras yo estaba allá, la relación nunca cambió, en el sentido — cambiaron los, las personas que venían del Departamento de Energía cambiaron. Algunas personas cambiaban, pero la relación nunca cambió. Siempre fue una relación bien cordial. Podíamos hacerle preguntas. Eh — podíamos — eh — pedirle información adicional de qué hacer con alguna situación que se nos presentaba. Ellos siempre estaban ahí, porque todo se le informaba a ellos. Cualquier, este, situación en BONUS hay que informarla y ellos siempre bastante rápido nos contestaban. Eh — nos hacían buenas recomendaciones cuando venían, porque nos inspeccionaban y era todo a base de recomendaciones. Ellos miraban la planta por dentro, por fuera y nos recomendaban.* [00:15:00] *Nosotros — eh — veíamos las recomendaciones y siempre corregíamos todo lo que ellos nos — eh — nos solicitaban. Así que, al menos de mi parte, yo nunca, nunca puedo decir que fue una mala comunicación, que no fueron, que no nos ayudaron, que no estaban — eh — dispuestos a nada. Que no estaban, como se dice*, available, *ahí — presente.* So, *es que siempre fue una buena comunicación y podíamos contar con ellos. Eran — mi experiencia co— era que podíamos contar con ellos.*

INTERPRETER: So, she has not — uh — noticed any change whatsoever in the relationship with the Department of Energy, as long as she was there. The people from the Department of Energy were always available, present. The communication was cordial. They were open to answering any questions, to providing additional informations. If there were situations or reports, they could count on the Department of Energy to provide assistance. They provided recommendations, because [00:16:00] everything that they did was based on recommendations on the Department — uh — from the Department of Energy, so they would take the corrective actions and deal whatever had to be dealt with, according to those recommendations. So she cannot say that at any point there was bad

communication, or they weren't available or helpful. On the contrary, they felt that they could count on them always, and they were always present.

SNIDER: Yeah — uh — so a very positive interaction.

RAMOS: Yeah, yeah — when I was there. And I was, I was present for the last inspection.

INTERPRETER: *En español.*

RAMOS: *Uh — este, estaba presente para la — yo — ya yo no trabajaba con Energía Eléctrica. Ahora estoy con un contratista privado. Pero ellos me llamaron para la última inspección del gobierno federal, este, yo estuve allí presente y algunas de las personas eran las mismas y ya los conocía. Eh — y lo mismo. Eh — mi impresión fue la misma.*

INTERPRETER: So — um — she's no longer working with PREPA. She has — uh — been part of [00:17:00] a private contracting — uh — situation. But she was called for the last inspection, and she met the same people. They were (inaudible). So her experience was the same as always. It was a good experience.

SNIDER: Good. Thanks. — From your perspective — uh — what was the significance for not just the Rincón community but for Puerto Rico to have the first nuclear power plant in Latin America right here?

INTERPRETER: *¿Cómo usted entiende o cuál fue el significado desde su perspectiva para, no solamente Rincón, sino para Puerto Rico, tener la primera planta nuclear o primer reactor nuclear en toda Latinoamérica?*

RAMOS: *Eh — bueno, por una — eh — en esos tiempos, cuando BONUS empezó yo tenía tres años, cuando empezó la construcción de BONUS. Pero era una tecnología nueva.* [00:18:00] *Y eso — ahora una planta nuclear, pues, cualquiera la construye, pero en esos momentos era una tecnología nueva que se estaba probando en Puerto Rico. Y quizás mucha gente no le da esa importancia, pero yo sí. Como científica, estudié química, le doy — el hecho de que vinieron científicos de 41 países a Rincón a ver la operación de BONUS. Eso nos tiene que llenar a nosotros de orgullo, como rincueños y como puertorriqueños, de que pudimos aportar al desarrollo de la, de la, de la energía nuclear. Porque no solamente la energía nuclear se desarrolló, se empezó a desarrollar para, para crear energía, para generar energía, sino para la medicina, para la exploración espacial, para muchas otras áreas, que era lo que quería el presidente Eisenhower. Porque él decía: "No puede ser que vamos a usar la energía nuclear sino para matarnos. Vamos a usarla — vamos a buscar y estudiar maneras de usarla para algo útil". Entonces, Puerto Rico fue parte de* [00:19:00] *ese proyecto que se llamaba Átomos para la Paz. De ahí salió la BONUS.*

INTERPRETER: So, at the time construction started she was just three years old, and, uh — but she feels very proud that this was new technology that was being tested here — uh — as, at least for her,

that was something that was important. She was not only — uh — it was not only important for her as coming from Rincón, but also because she's Puerto Rican. She's very proud that 41 countries sent scientists here to see the BONUS operation, and that's a source of pride. And so she feels that we contributed to nuclear energy, and not just for electricity — uh — providing that type of energy, but for the use of — in medicine, in space — uh — and in other areas, because, as Eisenhower said, this is not just to kill ourselves, [00:20:00] but it's for positive things. It was called for — it was called Atoms For Peace. So she has that sense of really significance and importance of that.

SNIDER: Yes. So, as we talked while you arrived, (inaudible) you walked here, five minutes away.

RAMOS: Yes.

SNIDER: So, from your perspective, just describe Rincón — uh — the people, the community here — uh — the environment — uh — and just what it means to you, and also what the BONUS facility means to the community as a whole.

INTERPRETER: *Eh — usted vive aquí cerquita. Usted nació y ha pasado tanto tiempo de su vida aquí. Así que por favor describa el pueblo de Rincón, las personas de la comunidad, el ambiente y qué ha significado — eh —* [00:21:00] *la facilidad de BONUS para la comunidad de aquí.*

RAMOS: Okay. *Eh — Rincón es un pueblo bien pequeño. Cuando yo me crie aquí, habían hasta pocos carros. Nosotras caminábamos de — a para la escuela unas distancias que yo se las enseño a mis amistades, no lo pueden creer que nosotros caminábamos tanta distancia. Eh — siempre fue un pueblo pequeño, un pueblo seguro de vivir. No teníamos la preocupación de que — de asaltos, de nada. Con el tiempo se fue desarrollando BONUS y las playas de Rincón han contribuido mucho al desarrollo de BONUS — uh — de Rincón, por el* surfing. *Se comenzó en los 60 con las playas de Rincón, se usaron para competencias de* surfing. *Y ahí vinieron muchos americanos específicamente. Y algunos de ellos se quedaron a vivir en Rincón. Nunca se fueron. Otros se fueron y seguían viniendo a Rincón, tenían casa. Inclusive, mi prima se casó con uno de esos* [00:22:00] de esos *— este — de esos* surfers. *Después de como 30 años, él llegó a Rincón de nuevo y se casó con ella. Y poco a poco, Rincón se fue desarrollando y ahora, de acuerdo al censo, Rincón tiene 15,000 habitantes. Pero yo entiendo que en Rincón hay m— hay a veces más turistas en Rincón que habitantes. Porque uno se tira a la calle y lo que ve son turistas, turistas. Que es bueno para el desarrollo de Rincón. Pero ha cambiado mucho la — eh — y hay mucho americano que vive en Rincón ya. No solamente que van y vienen, sino que viven en Rincón, que son parte de Rincón, que han aportado mucho al desarrollo de Rincón. Especialmente a la protección del ambiente del Rincón. Ellos siempre han estado ahí al frente. Y en el sentido de BONUS, yo entiendo que una vez BONUS fue un museo, que era que lo teníamos en Energía Eléctrica. Nunca se pudo abrir a la comunidad, porque nunca tuvimos personal aquí en, en Rincón, en Aguadilla, en Mayagüez.* [00:23:00] *Un sitio cerca que se pudiera — eh — venir. Siempre se abría por, ¿cómo se dice? Por cita. Usted quería visitar — uh — BONUS, tenía que hacer una cita y nosotros veníamos de San Juan. Pero ahora — eh — a veces nosotros estábamos en BONUS trabajando y mucha gente se acercaba a decir que si podían entrar, que si podían verlo. Y teníamos que decirle que*

no a toda esa gente que, en realidad, querían verlo. Eh — y yo entiendo que el desarrollo de BONUS — eh — promueve que vuelva a abrirse BONUS como un museo. Porque hay mucha gente ya de otros sitios que quieren saber, que quieren ver. Y no se lo podemos enseñar. Eh — todavía si usted llama, lo pueden abrir y hac— y darle una, una charla. Pero si— el problema es que ya Energía Eléctrica no es lo que era y, entonces, no hay suficiente personal para hacer ese trabajo.

INTERPRETER: So Rincón is a small town, and when she was growing up [00:24:00] there were few cars, so she would walk to school a long, long distance. And when she tells people how far she used to walk people can't believe it. There was barely any crime here, so — uh — it was — it's a beautiful little town. It's changed, of course, and it's developed — um — not only because of BONUS but also since we started having surfing competitions in the '60s, and there were a lot of people that came from the United States. They ran and they stayed here, or they would — uh — continue visiting constantly. She even has a cousin that married a surfer afterward.

SNIDER: (inaudible)

RAMOS: After that 30 years. (Laughter.)

SNIDER: After 30 years!

INTERPRETER: After 30 years. They got married. So they have — you know, it continues to develop. It continues to develop. They have some 15,000 residents, according to the census, but in reality, she thinks that they have more — uh — tourists now that they have — that they have residents. [00:25:00] And that's good, because tourism is important for the development, of course, of the town, and — uh — the people that have stayed here have contributed to the environmental protection — uh — of the area. In terms of BONUS, it — they used to have a museum there, but it never really open to the public, because they have no personnel. So if you wanted to visit BONUS, you have to — uh — have an appointment. You had to call and make an appointment. And so people from San Juan would come all the way here to let you into the facility and have the appointment — um — but even sometimes when they were working in a facility, people would peek in and go, like, "Can I come in?" And they would have to say no, because it wasn't probably done, although you can still call for an appointment and would be — and would be here. But she believes that having a museum there would be also important to the development of the town, 'cause it would be a positive for it. Of course, PREPA is not what it used to be, so if they [00:26:00] didn't have personnel then, they have even less now. It's not the same situation, so that's what (inaudible). But she thinks that it would be positive (inaudible).

SNIDER: Is there anything from your years of experience, in particular, like a particular memory — uh — while you were working for PREPA facility you'd like to share?

INTERPRETER: *¿Algo que quiera compartir, algún recuerdo — importante en los años de que usted estuvo trabajando con PREPA, que estuvo conectada a BONUS?*

RAMOS: *Bueno, lo más que me impresionó fue lo que mencioné ahorita, la visita del* Fish and Wildlife. *Lo voy a explicar un poco mejor. Ellos tenían un programa de — de control de plagas, en el Desecheo. Y cada dos, tres años nos pedían autorización para usar a BONUS como un — como un* headquarters. *Ahí tenían todos sus equipos, venía un helicóptero pequeño, montaban toda la — el equipo de control de plagas y llevaban al Desecheo para controlar las plagas, ratones,* [00:27:00] *que se comían los huevos de los — de los pájaros y todo. Y un día yo estaba aquí en una reunión con el alcalde y otras personas de la comunidad y alguien dijo que estaban llevando desperdicios nucleares a la Isla del Desecheo. Y a mí me cogió de sorpresa. Yo no sabía ni qué contestar, porque yo no sabía nada. Eh — entonces llamé a un compañero de trabajo y le dije: "Mismel", y él dijo: "Ah sí, ya yo qué es eso". Y él ya me explicó lo que estaba pasando. Yo lo expliqué en la reunión. Eh — no sé si la gente me creyeron. Porque la gente son bien incrédula y siempre hay teorías de conspiración. Y entonces, en ese momento, pues nos comprometimos con el alcalde de avisarle cada vez que viniera* Fish and Wildlife, *de avisarle por escrito. Y que si él quería, pues, que llevara — este — que visitara o enviara a una persona que viera qué era lo que le estábamos diciendo. Pero eso es lo más — siempre me recuerdo. Me tomó por sorpresa, porque era una reunión de la comunidad con el alcalde. Y que alguien diga eso, y yo no sabía cómo contestarla.* [00:28:00] (Laughter.)

INTERPRETER: So, she mentioned before how people would have this notion that there was an inquiry of debris that was being taken from — uh — from BONUS to the island of Desecheo, and she wants to explain a little bit more. It was because Fish and Wildlife would step — come here, and they were doing some work with plagues, specifically rats, in the island of Desecheo, and they would ask to use the — uh — BONUS area as a staging and headquarters area, and then move their equipment to Desecheo Island to be able to deal with the rats, because they eat the eggs for the birds and stuff like that. So it would happen every two or three years, and at one point there was a community meeting with the mayor, and somebody said, "Oh, you know, we saw people there, and they're moving nuclear debris to Desecheo Island." And she was surprised, she was like, what are they talking about, you know? And [00:29:00] she didn't even know what to answer. So she called somebody, and — a colleague, and the colleague said, "No, this is what's going on," and she explained the whole thing, "This is Fish and Wildlife. They're going to the island of Desecheo, and they're — you know, they're doing this." And so she told people in the meeting with the mayor, "This is what's going on." She doesn't know if people believed her or not, because obviously we have conspiracy theories going on.

SNIDER: Right.

INTERPRETER: So she doesn't know if they believed her when she gave the explanation. But then they talked to the mayor and they said, "You know what? When this is going to happen, when we're going to have Fish and Wildlife here, we will send you a letter formally informing you that this is going to be — we're going to be using BONUS as a headquarters to move them, the equipment to Desecheo when they're doing the (inaudible) — um — so that if you want to send somebody to monitor, to see what's going on so that you can do it..." So that was the most — the thing that she [00:30:00]

remembers the most, because it was community meeting, it was the mayor. Somebody came out saying that, and she at the meeting was like, what do I say?

RAMOS: (Laughter.)

INTERPRETER: But then, you know, she relayed the information, so that's sort of the memory that she keeps.

RAMOS: (Laughter.)

SNIDER: Awesome. Well, we appreciate your time. Do you have any other stories or any other things you'd like to share?

RAMOS: Uh — not really.

SNIDER: You're done?

RAMOS: Yeah.

SNIDER: Colleagues, any other questions?

INTERPRETER: (inaudible).

RAMOS: Okay.

SNIDER: Call it a wrap.

BREAK IN VIDEO

RAMOS: They were afraid, so they wanted two dogs. And those dogs, they lived there. Alan lived there ten years and Lola lived there 12 years.

SNIDER: Uh-huh.

RAMOS: And she died last year and everybody knew Lola.

SNIDER: Yeah.

RAMOS: And it's posted all over Facebook that Lola was — had disappeared and then that she died, and there is a — she's buried there. There is a cross there and everything with their name tag. Uh... [00:31:00] (Laughter.)

SNIDER: And this is at the site?

RAMOS: At the site.

SNIDER: Okay.

RAMOS: It's — she's right there. Let me see if I have a picture. *Lola, todo el mundo conocía a esa perra.*

SNIDER: Well, we're going to the site — uh — on Thursday — I think (inaudible), we spoke on the phone — on Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., and we're going to do a short walking tour, and this will be for video purposes. Uh — would you like to j— I asked (inaudible) join us —

RAMOS: Yeah, yes.

SNIDER: — and you said you would.

RAMOS: Yes.

SNIDER: Yes, you could meet us there at nine o'clock.

RAMOS: Nine o'clock?

SNIDER: And would you be able to show us that? That would be fantastic.

RAMOS: Yeah. (Laughter.) "BONUS Eternal Princess."

SNIDER: What? Sorry, I couldn't...

RAMOS: BONUS Eternal Princess.

SNIDER: BONUS Eternal Princess.

RAMOS: That's — that was Lola. I'm gonna show you pictures of her. *Eh — todo el mundo estaba llorando, porque los americanos de* — you know, the Americans that lived in Rincón, they visit a lot of that — that beach, [00:32:00] Domes Beach. And used to go take food — she was overweight, to the point of no return, because every — she her nametag said, "Bo— Lola, Queen of Everything." And then the banner says, "I live here, be kind to me." So, everybody would take her food, and she was so — we had to post not to bring food to her because she was so overweight, 'cause everybody would feed her.

SNIDER: (inaudible).

RAMOS: Yeah, she was the best. She was the best. There's pictures everywhere of her. Even when the — uh — inspectors came, she went inside the dome, she — she — she had access to every place.

SNIDER: That's amazing.

RAMOS: (Laughter.)

SNIDER: Yeah, what happened to Alan?

RAMOS: Alan was — uh — he was attacked by other dogs.

SNIDER: Oh.

RAMOS: 'Cause they lived outside. They go out to the beach and everything.

SNIDER: Feral.

RAMOS: And there were some pit bulls around and they attacked him. We took him to the vet and everything, but it was too late.

SNIDER: Yeah.

RAMOS: And Lola was — she died, she had a heartworm. [00:33:00] So, we took her to the vet, and people would pay for her vet and everything.

SNIDER: Yeah.

RAMOS: People I didn't know. People. Random people paid for her vet. But one time people from San Juan came to a meeting, they went into a room, and she would go into every room. She went into the room. After they left, they locked the room and they forgot to take her out.

SNIDER: Wow.

RAMOS: It was the worst.

SNIDER: Oh.

RAMOS: 'Cause we were looking for her, it was posted everywhere, Facebook everywhere. And she was there.

END OF AUDIO FILE