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Socastee Interview, Participant #07, April 12, 2021

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"Flooded Afterlives Project" Interview

Participant ID: 07

Community: Rosewood/Socastee

State: SC

Interviewer: Jasmine Harley & Jeff Bennett

Interview date: 04/12/21 Interview location: Zoom

This protocol for this study was approved by the Coastal Carolina University Institutional Review Board (Approval #2021.102) on March 3, 2021. All subjects gave their informed consent for inclusion before participation in the study.

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Interviewer 2: Okay hi, how are you? I'm Interviewer 2. I'm a first-year graphic design major and we

are here to interview for your flood survivor story and like your say about everything.

Give your piece, if that's okay?

Participant: Okay!

Interviewer 1: Uhm, so I'll start it off. Okay...what area do you live in? Miss Participant?

Participant: Now I live in the Carolina Forest area, but I previously was in the Rosewood community,

and I moved out of that area when my home was flooded in 2018 by the Hurricane

Florence.

Interviewer 1: So, I'm guessing the flooding didn't make you move out. What specific area was that

again? I'm sorry.

Participant: The Rosewood community in Socastee.

Interviewer 1: Socastee? Oh, I stay in Socastee now.

Participant: Oh okay, where did you stay?

Interviewer 1: Ivy-Stone.

Participant: Oh okay, yeah.

Interviewer 1: Okay okay. Interviewer 2, how do you want to do this? You want to go back and forth?

Or do you wanna ask your questions first or you want me to answer mine?

Interviewer 2: Uh, we can go back and forth, but whatever you feel fine with we can just do whatever

you're good with.

Interviewer 1: OK, we'll just follow with each other through the whole thing.

Interviewer 2: Ok, ok yeah.

Interviewer 1: Alright, go ahead.

Interviewer 2: OK, I guess my first question is, do you have any children and if so, how did that like...

How did all this affect them? Like did it affect them hard or you know how was all that?

Participant: OK, I had a college student at the time.

Interviewer 2: Wow.

Participant: She was a junior in college. And she came home the weekend... Just as a visit, but she

ended up staying to help me pack up the house and then, you know, try to pack up the house 'cause of course we didn't get everything out. And then she ended up staying a week after we were displaced, so she actually missed... You know school for a week. I called her university and told them, you know what was going on and you know so they made provisions for her. But at the time she was a... she had a 4.0 GPA and she finished this semester with three A's and two B's, which that was her first. UM, she'd been. She had a 4.0 every semester since her freshman year, so you know, it did have an impact

on her you know, grades and whatnot. On her you know, college experience.

Interviewer 2: Wow, yeah, I could see how that would like affect her, but it seems like she's been, she's

been prevailing. That's, that's really good to hear. Well, yeah, she's graduated now she

graduated uhm?

Participant: Well, yeah, she's graduated now. She graduated Spring of 2020. Ah, but it did affect her,

you know GPA a little bit.

Interviewer 2: Congrats. True.

Interviewer 1: So how did the flooding affect you? Like I know they displace you guys and stuff, so did

you like have to call out of work or...

Participant: Yes, I was out of work for actually. OK the hurricane was, you know I came back

from the hurricane the Sunday, before the actual flood. So I worked... Monday I went to work Monday and because I worked for the hospital Grand Strand Medical Center so we were slow so I was off Tuesday. I went in Wednesday and they sent me home because you know they knew that the flood was going to impact my home. So I when I was I was off Wednesday and you know tried to set up things you know getting prepared. I work Thursday and was off. I took off Friday, Saturday, and Sunday and then I went back to work the following Sunday. Uhm, like October 1st I went, I returned back to work so I actually took a week, week and a half of vacation. My job actually paid for hotel for a

week and a half so the second week that I was in the hotel, I paid for myself. Uhm so yeah, I miss work...and again, you know, like I say, it took. I had to use my savings, you know to and credit cards. We used a lot of credit cards we had to put a lot of things on credit cards as far as the rental truck. My job did give me two fifty dollar gift cards to start with, and then we have we have at my job was called a hope fund and it helped me a lot with displacement. But, like my savings took a hit.

Interviewer 1: Oh man, that's crazy. So you were displaced, did like the state of South Carolina displace

you...or you just?

Participant: My house had twenty-four inches of water in it.

Interviewer 1: Oof.

Participant: Yeah, so I mean I had to leave you know, I had to move. I had to leave because it was

imminent that the flood was gonna come in my house. Now this area had floods several times and it's always come in my yard, but never in my house. So this was the first time out of all the floods that you know it was going to come in my house. So that was new for me, and the state of South Carolina, you know, the county not necessarily the state, the county encouraged us to leave. You know the county provided sandbags, but we found out that the sandbags then stop the flooding waters come in the sandbags are... The sandbags stop the surge, say if it was a hurricane and the surge came, the sandbags to stop that. So it was, a lot of it was a learning, you know experience too. But the South Carolina state of South Carolina really didn't offer anything. And, if you talk to the people

that's there now, they're really still not offering anything.

Interviewer 1: Wow. That is messed up!

Participant: Yeah, it really is.

Interviewer 1: Woah. I- you know, I thought they had set up like programs to like help people with the

displacement.

Participant: No, with FEMA... FEMA came in and FEMA would give you money like a little FEMA gave

me a little money for displacement. You know, like they paid my they give you money for rent and they gave you money for, something else. But, the only way FEMA will help you is that you take out a small Business Association loan. Otherwise, FEMA don't really help you. So that's the point, why I say call FEMA, but FEMA only you have to get help from FEMA. You have to promise that you're going to take out a small Business Association

loan, and I had renter's insurance, but I didn't have flood insurance.

Interviewer 1: Okay, gotcha.

Interviewer 2: Okav.

Interviewer 1: Yeah, I was reading up on like the flood insurance. They said like a lot of people, I don't

know if it was just this area but a lot of people that had the flood insurance like it was no

point in having it because like they didn't help you.

Participant: Right and then they- like they, it wasn't a flash flood. So, it was standing water. So they

you know, people that even had flood insurance because it was deemed standing water and not a flood from a flash flood or from a hurricane. You know it- uhm, you know? It made it worse for people because of course you know it wasn't necessary standing where the water came from north. You know the rain from North Carolina to South Carolina wasn't hit that bad with this flood, so the water came from, you know, a downpour. Not that, but you know a surge from South Carolina being flooded. So yeah, it was. It was. It's a little different.

Interviewer 1: Okay wow that is-

Interviewer 2: That's crazy.

Interviewer 1: No, that's bad like-

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer 1: I'm so sorry you had to go through that.

Participant: Thank you.

Interviewer 2: Yeah.

Participant: And the bad part about it, our elected officials from South Carolina Senator Tim Scott

and Lindsey Graham.

Interviewer 1: Mhmm.

Participant: The only thing they could tell us was and I don't know if they knew people heard them

but they you know out they did come down and they were out talking to people and they were like they'll be a fool if they move back in here, you know that that was the- Most

that- and that was that was Lindsey Graham so. Yeah.

Interviewer 2: Oh wow! What like other government assistance do you think they could have done to

like help you guys more?

Participant: Well. But it 'cause it happened so many times. You know it happened two years prior

with [hurricane] Matthew.

Interviewer 2: Uh, yeah.

Participant: Some of those people have flooded really bad with Matthew and they some of them were just really getting back in their homes. So it happened two years prior with Matthew in

2016. Same thing happened and then happened a year prior in 2015 was the 100 year flood in South Carolina, so some of those people those same people had just rebuild their homes from 2015 to 2016. Some of them were not even finished redoing their homes and then Matthew came and it happened and then two years later the same thing happened. So some of those people which it like I said had not happened to me before. Some of those people you think this would have been their third small Business

Association loan even though the loan is actually low interest rate because I paid off the loan myself and they give you a year to start payments and I paid off the loan, in July of 2019. Then in 2020 I paid off the loan and start making payments in October 2019. I

paid it off from July 2020. Well, I actually only paid \$40 more than the loan. That was only my interest about \$40. So it's a low interest loan, but think about it. These people, if they took out a loan in 2019 and they took out a loan in 2015, I mean 2015 and 2016 they already, you know. You know, you know then a mortgage. They still have that mortgage to pay. They have, you know, we still have to keep home owners insurance, so

it's I think they, they could have offered. You know some assistance with housing. You know when you were displaced. A lot of people really had nowhere to go like I say, I was fortunate. My job helped me, but I feel like the, the state could have did a lot better than what they did, and the county.

Interviewer 1: What was I gonna ask? Oh yeah, so when you said the flooding didn't really- I mean

come into your home until like Hurricane Florence. So with Matthew, I know it brought, I stay at Mullins if you know where that's at so like the in Matthew, Hurricane Florence all

those they brought the water to our city. So, do you like lose power when this

happened?

Participant: OK, with Matthew I lost power, you know. But with Florence, I didn't, you know I didn't

lose power 'cause I didn't stay there, you know once they started coming in my house I was gone. So you know, I didn't lose power or anything but uhm, I did turn off the

power in my house before I left.

Interviewer 1: Right?

Participant: 'cause you know, electric, electricity and water don't mix. So I did turn off the water in

my house before I left and then when I went back in, and you know you have to think it's a good thing. I did turn off the water because the, all my appliances because of the flood, the water in the house, all the appliances have moved to the uh, my refrigerator was tipped over. And all my appliances had moved. You know there was displaced so.

You know, it's something to think about had I left it on.

Interviewer 1: So, I'm pretty sure that that really put like a dent in your wallet because all of your stuff

was probably more than likely ruined with- Like was it a lot of water in your house? Like

was it really high? Or low?

Participant: Yeah it was. I had twenty-four inches in my house.

Interviewer 1: Twenty-four?

Interviewer 2: Oh my God, that's crazy. It's like two feet.

Interviewer 1: That's a big that's a lot. Yeah.

Participant: Yes. But now my girlfriend that lives around the corner and I'm pretty sure you all are

interviewing her. She's a big proponent of everything, and she's the one who's out there really working. Uhm, she had sandbags up to six feet in her house. She, had inside the house, then she had a tarp over like taped around her house. And then she had sandbags up to five feet, and that's how you know, we figure out the sandbags really

didn't work, but she had water up to five feet in her house.

Interviewer 2: How did the like? How did the sandbags work? Or are they like supposed to suck up the,

the water?

Participant: Water yes, but that's what they were hoping you know, it was just one of those things

that the county was trying to. You know, trying to find a way to help people you know and the sandbags would have were supposed to, you know? Suck up the water, but it's no. You know when you think about this. No, it's nothing you can do to stop standing

water.

Interviewer 2: Especially that deep of water, yeah.

Participant: Right?

Interviewer 1: Wow.

Interviewer 2: How do you think? I know you talked about how it affected you like financially, how do

you think after everything went down, how you felt mentally like your, your mental

health or you know?

Participant: I feel like I'm still having PTSD, PTSD now you know when I think about it, because it set

me back so much you know, uhm. You know when you think about I'm now living in a oh and it was very stressful at the time because. Uhm, it was nowhere to we didn't really have a place to live because most of the apartments and it was my plan to go back. You know to go back in there, but most of it, so I wasn't planning on renting. You know, I wanted to rent like a six months, to get a six month lease when it was no six months lease out there. But not only that, it was no place to rent. Uhm everywhere we rent we just rent our last apartment. You know we just rented- and I remember going to, this one apartment complex in Carolina Forest where the manager actually came out and talked to us 'cause they could tell, you know, had got upset about something else, but uhm. And they were telling us, well, I know this one, this one, you know, we were like we're going there next, but that was very stressful. You know, thinking, OK, I'm already in a hotel. You know, I don't wanna have to stay in the hotel and I just felt like I was gonna be one of those people that was gonna be living in those economy suites or something. Because it's kind of, you know, that's where I was, so it was very stressful, you know I'm seeing like you couldn't, we couldn't you can't I've been in my house

twenty years you can't move twenty years of stuff out in a weekend.

Interviewer 1: Right.

Participant: Well you haven't packed or so you know things that like our storage closet. We never

went in 'cause we never thought about it. But all my kids Christmas decorations you all are you all our Christmas ornaments were lost so you know when we went back and saw that, that was stressful. You know things that we thought we were going to take out. You know that, we plan to take out, no, you know so it was I, you know, I still like. I still think about it, I know how blessed I am that you know, uhm. I, you know, I still have my life. You know my family's here, you know we were to say we were able to save our pictures and stuff, but I relate it to having a, five day warning for a fire. You know, so I

feel like you know.

Interviewer 2: True.

Participant: It wasn't as traumatic as a fire, but that's the closest thing that I can relate it to. And

then when I think about how you know, my credit was really good at the time. Now I'm back to just where my credit, you know, because I had to charge up all those credit cards. I had a, SBA loan out so you know that I took a big hit on my credit. You know it

printed it not my credit score down like 130 points.

Interviewer 1: Wow.

Participant: So yeah, 'cause you know I ran. I ran up all my credit cards. I, I had to come and rent

an apartment. I had to take out a SBA loan, you know? So it, I mean, I'm just getting to

the point where I feel like I'm in the recovery stage. You know for like you know it

totally, my monthly budget totally changed 'cause you know I'm paying these credit card bills and also I'm paying and if you signed a lease, what I didn't realize with the SBA. If I signed a six month lease. Uhm, I mean FEMA. If I signed a six month lease, then they would have kept paying my rent to the other place. Like they won't pay both, but because I wasn't I signed a year lease and I wasn't had no really no plans for going back after I signed a year lease. Then they- They didn't pay my rent, so I you know I would have at least had a little help you know. But yeah, it's, I just feel like I'm recovering now.

Interviewer 1: OK. I have a question for you love. So FEMA, do they like reach back out to you to see if you're OK or do they do like do anything like follow up or something like that?

No, but I'm gonna tell you the one thing I left out. So, my house flooded the end of September you know, beginning October. At Christmas time, the Red Cross, you know had my information. You know from FEMA. So the Red Cross sent me money at Christmas time for money that they said they had collected for flood victims. So they sent me, I guess it might have been like \$1200 or something, \$1800 and then in February they sent me some more money. But FEMA no they never did reach back out to

Interviewer 2: Oh wow. Yeah, and like other than other than like FEMA and Red Cross or like. What other programs do you think helped or should have helped in this situation?

Participant: The only other programs help with it was through my job which is called the Hope Fund,

Interviewer 2: OK.

Participant:

Participant: And I've always donated to the Hope Fund myself. It's kinda like my job has their own like United Way you know, for lack of a better word. And I've always encouraged others to donate to the Hope Fund and they, they helped. And they gave me, You know they gave me money, they gave me. You know, they they wanted to make sure their money

was, you know, to make sure that we ate. You know that we 'cause you know they knew we were gonna be eating out a lot, staying in hotel. So they gave me, they gave me a \$500 off the bat grant and then they gave me another grant a little later...They gave me a grant, but their their grants with total like I think \$2000 where the total of their grants that that they had capped off for that. And then, uh, my even my job you know it's not related, but even with COVID they had-through the Hope fund they gave out stuff.

Interviewer 2: Yeah.

Interviewer 1: Yeah, well that's you have really good job.

Interviewer 2: Mm-hmm. They're like a saving grace.

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer 1: Right? Interviewer 2, you have anything else you wanna ask? Or Participant do you have

anything else you want to add on?

Participant: No, uh, it's like I say it is it's you know, it's a little traumatic. Uhm yeah, I felt you know

safe. You know no one, you know I had I felt safe in my home 'cause it, like I say I had been there 20 years and other people had flooded. And you know I had not. But you know, then it happened to me. I think even now if you go on some of the websites, I mean some of the Facebook pages that they have Myrtle- Myrtle Beach rising and the

Rosewood community. If you and I still follow those, you can see that you know those people are still there. They're looking for mitigation where they're looking for the county or the state to, you know, buy out in. And even when they buy out, you still have your—They still have to pay off their mortgage. They only you know. So it's, it's sad all the way around. And this flooding comes from over overpopulation over building in the area. That's where they can track this back to this flood and how they put all these houses up and relocated the waste to the waterway. And so you know it comes back on. You were the people that they put the new houses up. They're not suffering, and so people in that community that are suffering. So I think that you know the United States. I think the if it you know on government national, state, and local could do a better job and county. It could do a better job to support and you know in this and what's going on here 'cause it's, it's really bad.

Interviewer 2: Uh, yeah.

Interviewer 1: Definitely, I definitely agree with that. I feel like they should have like programs set specially because. Like the flooding has been happening like, especially in my little small

town.

Participant: Right.

Interviewer 1: It's been happening since five years ago and it's going to keep happening. It's gonna

keep going to keep having floods and things of that nature, so I do feel like they should

have more programs and like in store for people like us because-

Interviewer 2: Yeah. What other? Sorry, what other things do you think should be put in place for

future floods like the survivors or victims or anyone else suffering from natural disasters?

Participant: ...Uh, I think that you know should be some type of fund. You know, we, we, everybody

thinks of FEMA and they think FEMA is a life saver and it, it really is not. You know like I say, it's very, you know. Stipulations with FEMA or you know it's a lot of government money out there that's being wasted. You know they could at least automatically be given if they know that your house has been flooded or you know you've gone through a natural disaster. You know? You know, that it's you know this is talked about nationwide

then they should give you a benefit benefits card, you know, just to buy food, you know.

Interviewer 2: True.

Participant: They didn't, you know come all you had to, you know some certain things though out

there like people that were feeding or boxes or whatnot. And I never got any of them. 'cause like I say I was blessed. But you know they should be given out to me. Give out gift cards if you show your address. You know you've been talking to the FEMA person. You're the FEMA person, uh? \$200 gift card to Walmart, you know? I mean, people lost essentials. You know, some people really had nobody to help them get this stuff out. They lost essentials so you know, a \$200 gift card to Walmart that the FEMA person could give to the people you know you don't have to have. You know. Like they say, it's a lot of, abuse and a lot of, for lack of a better word, stealing going on with people that are getting it that shouldn't be getting it. But you, you make contact with your FEMA person from the beginning and like the FEMA person is in the neighborhood. You know, like from the time the FEMA person came to the neighborhood the Thursday before the flooding actually really started coming in the houses. So now he knows you have to show him your address, your proof of residency. They go in the house with you, so I feel like the government could hand them, you know, gift cards to help people along the way, but

you know, they don't, you know so. But yeah, it was, it was, it was different. It was a learning experience, I must say.

Interviewer 2: How do you feel you've, you've grown from it? If you don't mind me asking.

Participant: Uhm, let's say I've gone past. I feel like I keep a bigger savings.

Interviewer 2: Yeah.

Participant:

You know I try to keep a bigger savings. That I still, you know, I believe I've always believed in giving back and contributing. You know, took places like United Way to the Hope Fund and it's my coworkers who never listened to me about donating to those type places when they saw the how it helped me, they began to donate. And I guess, I was always sympathetic to people in need. But it made me like open my eyes a little bit more to the person that, that's not really destitute, 'cause I wasn't destitute, but you know, there needs there. There are different needs that need to be met. So you know, or somebody asking you, just being there emotionally. I've learned to be there more emotionally. And you know mentally, for someone. 'cause like I say, you know, you asked me how I handle emotionally. No one ever, no one asked me, "Are you OK?," "Do you need someone to talk to?" You know no one ever offered those services. Now I do know in this, day and time, we're more aware of mental awareness, you know, and PTSD. But you know, no one no one was there to say hey, are you OK? You know no government agency.

Interviewer 2: Mhmm.

I quess I should say I had friends that ask and make sure. But I mean, I've learned to Participant:

look beyond the immediate needs, and you know look, look at the emotional needs.

Interviewer 2: True.

Interviewer 1: Right.

Interviewer 2: Do you feel like, uh, maybe like a government appointed like psychologists or therapists

would have helped in any way?

Participant: Yes, that that you know it's just like they had FEMA. Uh, in the neighborhood, they could

> have had someone you know just to talk to or even they, they set up shop here. All these high schools or elementary schools they could have had. You know people there, for that you know clergyman or you know, just somebody you know saying "Hey". But you never know what I'm situations like this drive people to do or to not do. How many kids were neglected during this time? You know how many even like even now with COVID they know that some of the kids that's the only meal they got during the day, you know so. So you know, try to reach others in other ways, and in other ways I mean

emotionally. You know mentally make sure that they are stable in those ways too.

Interviewer 1: OK, I like that response.

Interviewer 2: Mhmm.

Interviewer 1: I didn't think of that. Uhm, I didn't think of like people like if they would be like have a

what I'm trying to say is like if their mental will be messed up from all this I never

thought of that.

Participant: Right? ... It's, you know, it's a little different. You know you and I know, you know it's

we're learning day by day of all this stuff. But yeah, it's, you know something to think

about.

Interviewer 2: Yeah, you never know anyone psychological standing so someone could be completely

mentally unwell and go through all this trauma and it could completely mess them up.

Participant: Right, you know 'cause I mean if they already have an underlying issue that no one

knows about, you know some type of manic depression. Or you know, bipolar, Schizophrenia or something? And then they go through this. That's gonna bring that mental illness to the forefront. And of course then they trying to take care of everybody. 'cause I'm the person that takes care everybody. You know they, you know they could be

trying to take care of everybody, take care of themselves. You know, and I think

instances like these tragedies are like. These is how we find people suffering from mental illness. You know later on. [talking to background] No. I was talking to my sister. I'm

sorry.

Interviewer 1: No, you're fine!

Interviewer 2: So how do you? How are you now? How, how are things? I know you said it was two

almost three years ago. How do you feel like you've recovered from everything that

happened?

Participant: I recovered well from that. You know, I do I, I feel like you know we're in a good place,

you know. Here in the next month I'll be moving. I'm originally from Atlanta. I'll be moving back to Atlanta in the next month, so you're not so like everything is going on.

You know, well, you know we're good.

Interviewer 2: Man, that's good to hear. Yeah. Well, I'm happy that you found. I guess a silver lining if

that makes sense? uhm, and I guess what the one thing I took from it is to prepare for

the unexpected. You never know what's gonna happen.

Participant: Right? You never know what the unexpected is gonna be. You know it could be anything

you know.

Interviewer 1: Yeah.

Interviewer 2: To give forward, so yeah, thank you for that. Thank you for doing your part.

Participant: That, oh, you're welcome.

Interviewer 1: Yeah. Alright, oh you have anything else to ask Interviewer 2 you can.

Interviewer 2: I don't that was my last question.

Interviewer 1: Alright, well thank you so much Participant for giving us your time today, UM well, you're

welcome. I believe you can get a gift card? I believe our teacher is gonna send it to you

if I'm not mistaken.

Participant: Okay.

Interviewer 1: Well thank you so much. You have a good day.

Participant: Thank you, you too. And what class is this? What was it your class?

Interviewer 1: Women and gender studies. Is that what you're in Interviewer 2 right?

Interviewer 2: We're in I'm in a class called water and women it, but it I think we have just about the

same curriculum, so yeah.

Interviewer 1: Yeah.

Participant: It's about this water and women, yeah, interesting.

Interviewer 1: Thanks.

Interviewer 2: Yes, ma'am.

Participant: And yours is, uhm?

Interviewer 1: Well. It's the same class it was. Oh. I'm just in gender studies. That's the thing. Like the

curriculum for the class, I believe.

Participant: OK, all right well, I appreciate you all contacting me and I'm sorry you know it took us

a...minute to get, you know.

Interviewer 1: It's fine.

Interviewer 2: Yeah, life happens.

Participant: But I'm glad I could help.

Interviewer 1: I wish you luck Participant. Uh, I hope everything falls in place for you too.

Interviewer 2: Yeah. Same, me too.

Participant: Alright, thank you. Thank you. When do you all graduate?

Interviewer 1: I graduate in May.

Participant: Good for you.

Interviewer 1: Ready to go! I'm not about to go back to school. This is my last degree.

Interviewer 2: [laughs]

Participant: That's what my daughter says too, uh, what now? What is? What is your major?

Interviewer 1: Uh, my major in communication. My concentration is journalism and I minored in

business administration.

Participant: Oh OK, uh-huh. Sounds good and you Interviewer 2?

Interviewer 2: I'm actually a first year graphic design student.

Participant: Oh OK, yes. Well, you will do good.

Interviewer 2: Thank you, thank you so much.

Participant: You all are already off to a good start.

Interviewer 2: True, very true.

Interviewer 2: Thank you, thank you!

Interviewer 1: Alright love, you have a good day okay? Yes, thank you for your time alright.

Participant: Thank you, you too. Oh, you're welcome.

Interviewer 1: Bye, bye Interviewer 2!

Participant: Bye.

Interviewer 2: Bye!