

## Interview with Reuben Moguel

For HUM 2504: Introduction to American Studies, Prof. Emily Satterwhite, Fall 2010

Occupation: Assistant Equipment Manager, Cassel Coliseum, Virginia Tech

Time and Place: October 19, 2010, 10:00 am-10:24 am, Cassel Coliseum, Blacksburg

Interviewer: Mackenzie Hanley, Junior Interdisciplinary Studies major from Parkton, Maryland

RM= Reuben Moguel

MH= Mackenzie Hanley

MH: Okay so.. Could you please tell me your name and if you don't mind, your age.

RM: Oh um.. Reuben Moguel and I am 33 years old.

MH: Okay, and then the title of your job, who you work for, and how long you have been working here.

RM: Ohh lets see here, I am assistant equipment manager, I work for Lester Carlin, head equipment manager and this is my third season here at Virginia Tech

MH: Cool, alright so describe your family life, like where you were born.. how many siblings, how life was growing up.

(hahahahaha)

RM: Um, my family life was a little bit interesting, I was born in Chicago Illinois and my parents are from Belize which is in Central America

MH: Oh cool

RM: We lived in Chicago and then we moved to Alabama, my Dad's job moved there, which the area we lived in was near a military base so you have a lot of Germans and Koreans, you have a lot of internationals, it's a small community but its a lot of variety there as far as international people and stuff like that. So growing up it was a little bit different seeing that the school I went to was predominately white. Uh, and then I had I guess a hand full of black friends that um and I kind of fit in the middle because I wasn't white but I didn't sound like the other black kids. SO I was kind of in the middle so it's hard to fit in with both sides.

MH: With both

RM: Plus I have a funny last name and no one could pronounce it so they are like where are you from something is wrong with you.

(Laughter)

RM: So yea um but it was interesting growing up with parents that are from another country you assume a lot of different responsibilities such as the language barrier unparticular to where they speak English but it's a British broken English so they sound as if they are from England uh and nobody in England has a Creole sound to it so no body knew what they were talking about. And they I would have friends that would come over and then my parents would say " oh how are you doing?" and they would say what are your parents saying and I would say they just asked how you are doing. So literally my mom could say she could say oh you are very stupid and you know they are like oh yea (under breath: shaking their heads)

MH: Ha-ha that's funny

RM: So it was always interesting, it was always interesting

MH: That's funny. So you have a sister you said?

RM: Yea yea I have actually I have 3 brothers and 5 sisters

MH: Oh my gosh

RM: Yea, so uh one I have my brother William and then my sister Lauren and then that's by my mom and dad. And in my dad's previous marriage are all the other kids

MH: So where do you fit in age wise like are you...

RM: Uh I'm the youngest boy and my sister Lauren is the youngest girl so we are really close

MH: You are really close.. that's awesome. So was your dad in the military when you were growing up or what did they do for...?

RM: Um my dad worked for a company called Hinges Incorporated, they make door hinges, so the hinges on the door his company most likely probably made those (points to office door) yea so he would make all different types of hinges and stuff so he did that and um my mom she worked at Wal- Mart so those were the two main jobs but they had secondary jobs like we did a lot of cleaning so uh we would clean houses or work on the military base cleaning the offices and barracks so...

MH: Cool

RM: Yea they were always working growing up, now looking back I know before my mom died and then my dad he always says that if they could do it over again they wouldn't want to work as many jobs and they would spend more time with us but at the time they didn't realize how important it was, they were trying...

MH: Trying to make the best for you guys, that's awesome. Alright so tell me about your job, what do you like? Not like?

RM: Uhh... this job... Uh (hahah) what I like, I get the most um satisfaction out of figuring problems out so whether its between coaches or if a player comes in and they don't understand how something is being done, I get the most satisfaction out of saying "okay what would you do in this situation, how would you do it, and here is what we can do to fix it" I enjoy that stuff, uh the basic job responsibilities are very umm mundane. Uh its not, there's not a lot of brain activity that goes into this job, so that's why I get problems because I become stale and not really motivated but I become motivated when a coach comes in hey we have this problem with such and such a player and how do we do this, okay this is what you should probably do and stuff like that or if I have friends that work here and they come in and talk and may be going through something and we talk it out stuff like that. That's where I get my satisfaction.

MH: Yeah other than that it is just pretty standard...

RM: Other than that it is uh you know it goes in cycles um there are different ordering times where you order things so you have to stay on top of that and then um budget stuff that you have to stay on top of and um but other than that its not that difficult.

MH: (laughter) Um do you like working with the athletes? Does it ever get frustrating or they cant find stuff or lose things like me haha

RM: Um no um no haha working with athletes I enjoy that so I have worked with athletes at every level so before doing this I was working in Chicago with the Bears so I have worked with all different types of athletes so there isn't too much happens that I haven't experience or seen. So um working with athletes is great they're definitely different there is so much that makes athletes different than regular students. Not just from the sport but its all the habitual things that come into athletics. So the dynamics are completely

different at every level. And now that I work with Olympic sports dealing with women versus just football is completely different. So yea I have five sisters but you know getting female athletes to understand there is pretty much nothing you can say that I haven't experienced with my sisters. So you know so its different but it is interesting though, very interesting.

MH: Alright, going on that what is the craziest thing that has ever happened here at work and did it change the way you thought about your job?

RM: Umm... at work here or...? Um craziest thing, I will say probably the craziest thing that has happened is when I was working in Chicago uh there was uh one of their O-lineman, he wanted uh he wanted something, he came to the equipment room and wanted something and the equipment manager wouldn't give it to him so then the guy just destroyed the whole equipment room (laughter) he starts trashing... throwing things everywhere and then walks out.

MH: Oh my God!

RM: Walks out... its so crazy... he walks out and then the head equipment guy comes in and says what happened and we are explaining to him the situation and then the guy who he got into the confrontation with uh he starts degrading him just talking to him as if he is his son and it was just the most bizarre thing ever. It was very funny because I wasn't the one who had to deal with it but I had never seen anything like that because this is a grown man.

MH: Yeah, acting like he is a child.

RM: Yeah I mean it was pretty uh that stands out. Id have to think of something here that happened, there's not too much that happens here

MH: (laughing) People don't throw things around the equipment room?

RM: I mean, here it would probably, it wouldn't be something that was me and a player it would probably be something with me and a coach.

MH: Yea

RM: like something like where you are like did that just happen? I have at least three things in my head right now that have happened with coaches to where I'm just like did that just happen? I mean you know its just crazy stuff

MH: Yeah just confrontation....

RM: Yeah confrontation is um that's something that I have learned dealing with confrontation, I am a big communicator I like communicating but dealing with confrontation and learning how other people deal with confrontation, cause I know how I handle it but they handle it differently and so they don't always act the way they want when they see how I handle it so... I don't know if that makes sense.

MH: No it does, it definitely does.

RM: So my way of handling confrontation is just sitting here listening to them make their point or whatever and then coming back and saying something versus...

MH: A yelling match...

RM: Yeah I don't do that so its very hard for people to get that one because I'm a quiet person so they think that either something is wrong or you know what is wrong with Reuben, does he just not talk to anybody. No I'm just a quiet person...

MH: Yea

RM: But they don't get that so...

MH: Yeah, alright so dealing with all of that do you think you are well compensated for the amount of work you do...

RM: (laughing really hard) No way there is no way possible. There is no way possible dealing with the amount of things that uh that we deal with. There is no way that we are equally compensated for that, its just not... and its uh kind of a shame because you deal with so much.

MH: Yeah and you guys do so much

RM: Uh that you think that it would be it's pretty well paid position but we are uh kind of behind, Virginia Tech is kind of behind as far as paying people in this realm as far as in athletics compared to sister institutions within the ACC.

MH: That's interesting.

RM: It's kind of disheartening

MH: Yeah it is that makes me sad for you guys. Um do you get along with your coworkers like is it more professional or like do you guys like hang out outside of work or...

RM: Uhhh everybody gets along um but there are obviously some people that I have more of a history with that I hang out with more um there are some other but we all get along we all want the same thing, more money. But uh we all get along and we work well if someone needs help we help them or whatever, if someone goes out of town can you cover this one, sure that's no problem.

MH: That's good. So I know said that like dealing with coaches and everything is hard but like what is the most difficult thing about your job and then on the other side of that what's the most rewarding thing?

RM: Uhhh lets see. Ill start with the most rewarding. The most rewarding thing is when a player says thank you. Uh that's pretty nice because a lot of times people don't say anything so when someone says oh thank you Reuben for doing that, that is great, that's good so. The most difficult thing, the most difficult thing would be umm the lack of respect that we get in this position not only from athletes but from administration. So the lack of respect that they don't really, not that they don't respect us as human beings but they don't respect how difficult the job is.

MH: And all the work you do...

RM: Right, so sometimes tend to think that oh anybody can come in and do this. Well not so much because there is so much that you have to deal with, not anybody can handle.

MH: Yeah, all of it. So what would you, what advice would you give someone who wants to go into your line of work and would you recommend it? You can be honest.

RM: Advice.. um.. the advice would be to get as much experience as you can doing the job to really decide if you want to do the job. Which I guess is the same for anything but particularly this because once you, this is a situation to where once you start doing this type of work it is very hard to make a transition to something else even if you want to. For instance, I enjoy this job, I don't love it I enjoy it but I would rather make a transition to academic support or um football, football operations, something like that. But once you get into this, once you are pigeon-holed into this type of work the perception of other people is like oh this guy he only knows how to do laundry and stuff he doesn't know how to do anything else which in essence you know the person could so um that would be my advice. And what was the other thing?

MH: Would you recommend it?

RM: Um yea yea I would recommend it. I would recommend it because working in this job gets you opportunities that other jobs wouldn't necessarily get you. Say you work with football you get the opportunity to travel for free uh to see all the other cities. You experience those types of things but you also have the opportunity, you have the training room... you get services over there where if you weren't working here you'd have to pay for those services. So there are a lot of benefits to this job

MH: Yeah...

RM: ...so there are more benefits than non- benefits but the negative things out weigh the benefits because the negative things are so heavy as far as the pay and the time that you're here so its kind of hard to... you are always going back and forth and struggling with it too.

MH: Aww, that makes me sad.

RM: I know...

MH: Um how does your work effect your family life or life at home?

RM: Um well seeing that I am single and I'm not married like it doesn't effect me because I can stay here as long as I need to and not have a wife and kid at home that want to see me. If you do have a wife and kid than it effects it greatly because um each of us have like four sports that were in charge of. So those seasons all run together so each season has a fall and a spring so that's time that youll be away from your family. You already have the 8 hour work day but there are games then you have to work those games and you have to be here so that's more time, so yea...

MH: It's really time consuming

RM: Oh yeah, so you have to have someone that understands how athletics work to put up with that. Either that or hire a bunch of people that can handle the stuff for you.

MH: So that you can have time at home?

RM: Yeah

MH: Yeah, um have you always wanted to do this or what was like, what did you want to be when you were little or growing up?

RM: Mmm. I didn't always want to this, I still don't want to to this...

MH: (laughter)

RM: Umm but when I started undergrad this guy that I met he told me that, he brought it up "hey do you want to want to be an equipment manager? It pays for school." So my initial response was yea if I can get my school paid for... then so that was the reason why I wanted to go into it because it paid for school so yeah undergrad it paid for almost all of my school.

MH: That's awesome

RM: Right, so I went from that to uh I was in graduate school at a community counseling program. So um I was doing that and then um I got an opportunity to do an internship with the Indianapolis Colts so I did that and that led to a season internship with the Bears.

MH: Oh sweet!

RM: So, working in this has provided me with opportunities that otherwise I wouldn't have gotten.

MH: Yeah

RM: But in the same sense doing all of this work with just equipment has hindered me into making a transition into the things I want to do because I don't have enough

experience. Even though I have the education, that's not always the criteria they are looking for...

MH: Yeah, outside experience.

RM: So, so in that sense its kind of a handicap to doing other things. But yea I would recommend it because you are learning. I recommend anything that your gonna have and experience to learn something about yourself or how to work.

MH: Yeah, going off of that, what do you like to do outside of work like what are your hobbies or like things you are interested in?

RM: Most of my time is spent either looking for a place to vacation, I'm big on travel, um and then the rest of my time is either spent hanging out with friends or you know watching movies or um or helping my dad or my sister. So that's pretty much it, um I don't do too much else. I read a lot, go to Barnes and Noble and hang out...

MH: Go to the coffee shop ha ha

RM: (laughs) Yea that's pretty much it. That's pretty much all I do. But traveling is a big thing, I work to travel so...

MH: You've been a lot of cool places? Like where's the best place you've ever been?

RM: Um the best place ive been is probably Thailand. That's probably the best place.

MH: Oh my gosh that's awesome.

RM: Rome um or Italy is very expensive so I probably wont be going back there. Same for um Venice its really expensive so... and then umm Portugal is great, yea yea its very nice. Portugal is a trip I decided to go on, I was looking for a place to go on vacation and couldn't decide. I read an article on CNN and this guy had just gotten back and talked about it so then I was like...

MH: Gotta go yea..

RM: So then I just decided to go there two weeks out, so then, it was great, I met a lot of great people but Thailand is probably the best. And then Belize, obviously my parents are from there so I went there...

MH: So you go there a lot?

RM: No I don't go there a lot, its not that expensive uh the exchange rate is 2 to 1 uh but um I don't go there a lot because I feel like I could go there anytime. Yea so it's not really that big of a deal.

MH: You want to look at other places then before...

RM: Yea yea most of the other places Im always looking throughout Europe. Somewhere over there but definitely Thailand is probably the best.

MH: I'm jealous, I want to go. Alright um so in class we are discussing the American Dream and like what it means to have that dream and the different ideas of what it is. So what does it mean to you, and do you think it is achievable in today's society?

RM: The American Dream, um, what it means to me right?

MH: Yea

RM: I think um I think the American Dream is probably the same as when it was 25- 30 years ago. I don't think it's, I don't think it's to be rich I think its just to be success. So I think that would depend on your definition of success, so I know for my parents their American Dream was to make sure that their kids were taken care of and have the opportunity to go to college. So to them...

MH: They achieved it.

RM: Yea you know they achieved it. So I would think that it's the same in general terms as far as just succeeding and making a better life for your kids. Um what was the second part of that?

MH: Um, do you think its achievable in today's society?

RM: Achievable. Ah, um that's kind of tough. I think it is achievable but I think it takes much more work to achieve it. Simply because of the amount of people that are lving here now, the amount of things that are going on as far as with the economy, with education. There are so many other external factors that are going into it, I think it makes it that much more challenging uh to achieve it. But definitely possibly but...

MH: Hard?

RM: Yea, I would say its definitely harder I think.

MH: Yea, definitely. Final question, where do you see yourself in 5 to 10 years from now?

RM: 5 to 10 years from now you know this is, I have probably heard that question in every interview that I have ever.. they like to ask that question. It is a very difficult question because um when you are younger its very easy to see yourself to be able to map out and say "Oh well I want to this and this and this." Well the thing is once you get older you don't realize that life happens. So something comes in and says oh well you want to do this ok well this going to happen here, and then you say oh crap

MH: (laughing)

RM: You know like I can't believe that just happened what do I do now. So 5 to 10 years... I don't even know where I am going to be at the end of this year so I like to look at it as... and I tell this to people in interviews... I say well I don't know what I'm going to be but here is what I'd like to be doing or I can see myself doing because I don't like to pass up on opportunities. So, lets say if I say that you know I want to go to A to B in five to ten years. Well what about next year if someone says well you can bypass B and go to C and do this. Well okay, I will do that so its uh it's a very difficult question, it's a very open question because there are so many different things. But what I would like to be doing is a variety of things. Either maybe teaching at the college level or working in football operations or working in player development. Uh something where I'm dealing with students or athletes... uh one of those things so whatever's out there...

MH: However it gets you there...

RM: Yea, however I get there than that's fine. I'm not necessarily you know family or wife or something like that.. that doesn't rank very high on my list... if it happens than yea of course it would be great but its not something that I dedicate a lot of time to as far as thinking about it. Which is kind of hard because all of my friends are married, ive been in all of their weddings and stuff and that kind of a thing but sometimes it does come about and you cant help it but a lot of my time is figuring out ok this job I need to find a way to transition from this job to another job.

MH: (pause, some silence)

RM: So that's the best answer I can give you for that.

MH: Good, that was a good one! Alright...