

## **Interview with Pedro (Pete) Romero**

**Interviewer: Emily Raymond**

**Date of Interview: January 29, 2021**

**Length of Interview: 19:03**

**Location of Interview: Recorded over telephone**

**Transcription Completion Date: February 1, 2021**

**Transcriptionist: Emily Raymond**

Emily Raymond (Interviewer): Alright. For the purposes of the tape, my name is Emily Raymond. Today's date is Friday, January 29, 2021, and I am about to call Pete Romero to interview him. [Dial tone]

Pete Romero (Interviewee): Hello?

ER: Hello, Pete. It's Emily.

PR: Hi, Emily! How's it going?

ER: I'm doing well, how are you?

PR: Hey, okay, I just got through stepping in the house; I'm doing some chores.

ER: Is this still a good time?

PR: Uh...yeah. Yeah, it is a good time. Uh, yeah, go – let's go ahead.

ER: Okay.

PR: Okay.

ER: Well, let me introduce myself first. We – we've never met. And I wish we could do it in person, but unfortunately –

PR: Yeah. Hey, you know what, maybe if you want to, maybe next time we get – maybe next time we can get together, and I – I can kind of show you things – things, uh, uh, pictures and – and, uh, you know, maybe there's some things maybe that, uh, maybe nobody has seen, and maybe – maybe you – you might be able to, uh...maybe there's something there that, you know, you might be able to use. But yes, uh, um, you know, it kind of would be kind of nice to, uh, to – to meet in person, but, ah, you know, right now with everything that's going on and all that, it – it's, uh, um...I'm kind of a little, uh, stay-at-home person. I'd rather do things here at home. But do you know what, Emily? If there's a good place that we could meet, where there's not a lot of people...

ER: Would you prefer to do that?

PR: Sure.

ER: Okay. That way, you can bring some of the paintings and the drawings.

PR: Sure, yeah. Sure, yeah, we can do that. Uh...is there, uh, things we can discuss right now?

ER: We can, if you like. I can just start by asking you a few questions.

PR: Okay. Now, so, this is all being recorded, right?

ER: Yes, this is being recorded.

PR: Okay. Oh, okay. Okay, well, um...I'm not gonna say nothing that I shouldn't say, so it's all right. And I guess, what that letter was from, uh, that, uh, uh – is it Noreen?

ER: It's Nora Murphy.

PR: Nora. Nora. Nora. Nora. I always call her Noreen. Nora. Okay. Yeah, so that letter that she sent me, uh, she had me fill it out and, uh, I went ahead with it. So...

ER: Well, that sounds good. We just wanted to make sure we had all of the necessary forms before we did the interview.

PR: Yeah. Could – could you hold on for a second, okay? The – the phone's ringing and I'm on –

ER: Yes, of course.

PR: See, we're expecting a phone call. Just a second. [Background conversation continues until 4:07] Uh, Emily, I was – we're kind of, hoping to hear from the – from the Douglas County Health, to have my wife have her shot taken, and, uh, well, we just kind of hanging around the phone, so...when they call up, so she can get – so she can get, uh, on the list to have that shot taken.

ER: Good, I hope she can.

PR: I – I took my shot at the VA hospital there in Topeka, the first one. I haven't taken the second one, that's in a couple more weeks. That's, uh, that's where I'm kind of at right now.

ER: Well, I hope she can get her shot, too.

PR: Yeah, yeah. It just seems like the ones that need it the most aren't getting it. Like – like me, I – I'm in pretty good health, but, you know, 'cause being that I was a veteran, I got to – I got to go in to get my shot, so...

ER: Oh, excellent. Good.

PR: Yeah. Okay –

ER: Well, one of the things I was going to ask anyway was about your family. During the first interview, I – we didn't find out whether you had a wife or kids, so could you – could you tell me a bit about your family?

PR: Uh, well, yes. Uh, um, I'm married to, uh, uh...my wife is named Anna Marie Romero.

ER: Anna Marie.

PR: Romero.

ER: Alright.

PR: Her maiden name was Perez.

ER: Oh, okay.

PR: Uh, I have two sons, uh...Paul. Paul Romero, who is, uh, 51 years old. He lives in Kansas City. He's a banker in, uh, that UMB Bank in Kansas City.

ER: Oh, good. So, he's close by, so you can visit him.

PR: Yeah, yeah, he's close by. Then I have my son Vince. Vince Romero, who – who is, um, uh...he's married to, uh, Samantha. And, uh...let's see, okay. He – he's got – he's got seven kids.

ER: Seven, my goodness.

PR: Yeah.

ER: You must be proud.

PR: He's got seven kids. And – and, uh, my son Paul has two.

ER: Okay.

PR: Three, three. Three, three.

ER: So, between all of those two, you've got ten grandkids?

PR: Right.

ER: Oh, congratulations. [PR laughs] Do you get to see them pretty often?

PR: Uh, yeah, uh, yeah...I, uh, I try to see 'em as much as I can. Some – sometimes I think I – I can be a nuisance to – to, uh, to my, uh, two boys, 'cause I'm always, you know, calling 'em up and asking 'em about the grandkids and wanting to talk to 'em and...

ER: I don't – I don't think that would be a nuisance. I – I enjoy talking to my grandparents.

PR: Yes.

ER: What do you like to do with your grandkids?

PR: What do I like to do? Oh, I – oh, I – um, they're – they're into sports. They're – they're into sports, uh...uh, baseball, uh, soccer. Football. Um...them are my grandsons. My – my granddaughters, I like to just, you know, um...I like to – to, uh, they're – one of 'em is in ballet, and the other one is, uh, is a real good, uh, uh, street – seamstress.

ER: Oh.

PR: Likes to sew and things like that. Okay, so...I could, uh, my grandkids on – on my – on my son Vince's side – side, they range in age from two to thirteen years old, and they all attend St. John's School.

ER: Oh, my goodness. I have actually never been to St. John's School.

PR: What's that?

ER: I have never been to St. John's School.

PR: Oh, it – it's a nice church. It's really a good church. There's so much, uh, uh...diversity in – in the St. John's Church.

ER: Well, that's refreshing to hear.

PR: Yeah, it's – it's a pretty neat church. We're – me and the wife, we're pretty involved in it. We try to get involved in quite a bit of it. I'm, uh, I'm an usher at, uh, the 4:30 Mass, and, um...I just, yeah, so much of our life centers around the church. I think the church is our second home.

ER: Is it? I'm glad.

PR: Yeah.

ER: My parents are very involved in their church back home. I grew up Baptist.

PR: Right. Yes.

ER: So they are much the same. And so, you grew up Catholic, is that correct?

PR: Right, yeah, I grew up Catholic. And all my life I've been – been around the church. Altar boy, just everything that, uh, everything that – that – that, uh, involved the church, I try to get involved in it.

ER: Excellent. Well, how did you meet your wife?

PR: Uh, well, we – we met, uh, I met my wife through a cousin of hers. Um, I met her – she's from Topeka.

ER: Okay.

PR: I – I met her at a, there was a dance. Uh, we – we all liked to go to the dances. Long time ago, you know, that was one of the things, you know, people went to dances and things like that.

ER: Right.

PR: That's where, uh...that – that is where a lot of our people, uh, used to – used to like to do. They used to like to, on the weekends, maybe, uh, be a dance in Topeka or Ottawa, or you know, just someplace. And we'll all like to go out there and just meet up friends and dance and things like that. Uh, I – I met her in, uh, 1964. Uh, we got married two years later, uh, got married in 1966. Got married at, uh, Lady Guadalupe Church in Topeka.

ER: Oh. That's special. I'm glad for you.

PR: Well, thank you. Thank you.

ER: I – in fact, I think '64, yeah, that was the year that my dad was born.

PR: Oh, oh really? In '64, really?

ER: Yes.

PR: Wow.

ER: It's a small world.

PR: Well, yes. Uh, let's see, uh, '64, so you're – you're, okay. Okay, so your dad is, uh, uh...how old is your dad?

ER: He's – oh, good question. 56, I believe. I'm not very good at math.

PR: 56, okay, okay. Okay.

ER: Yep, 56. That's what it is.

PR: Yeah. Okay. So, Emily, you're – you're, Amy, you're – you're doing school, uh, this is a kind of a school project you're doing?

ER: Well, in part. I'm – right now I am a graduate student at the KU History Department.

PR: Okay.

ER: And about, uh, well, at some point last year, they sent out an e-mail asking if someone would like to help with transcription, with the Watkins History Museum.

PR: Right.

ER: And I – before I started my graduate career, I was a transcriptionist at a doctor's office.

PR: Uh-huh.

ER: So...

PR: Yes.

ER: I said I would love to help, and it is definitely much more interesting than listening to medical cases.

PR: [Laughs] Oh, for sure. For sure, yeah.

ER: I actually get to talk to people.

PR: Right. Yeah. I, um, my – my son works for, uh, a hospital there in Kansas City. He's uh, he's the health, um, administration department.

ER: Oh, very good. I hope he's got his vaccine, then.

PR: No, no, he's not. He – he's, uh, he – he's doing real good. No, he's – so far, he hasn't got nothing, and he's taken shots and things like that, so everything's okay.

ER: Good, I'm glad to hear that. It's – it's incredible what we have available today.

PR: Right, yeah.

ER: What was – what was healthcare like for you? I mean, I imagine we – we've grown in leaps and bounds, but what was it like when you were a kid? What kind of things were available to you, healthcare-wise?

PR: Oh, my – my goodness, Amy, it – it – okay, we – we grew up, uh, in, uh, La Yarda. It's a place, uh, down there by the Santa Fe, uh, by the Santa Fe depot. Uh...um, well, it's, uh...it – it

was – it was pretty tough. It was pretty hard, but – oh, we didn't know it. We, to us it was just – it was just part of, uh, living, uh, where we were living. Um, gosh. Um...

ER: Sure, of course. That was – it was normal for you, when you were growing up.

PR: Yeah. You – you know what? Emily? Amy? Emily or Amy?

ER: It's Emily.

PR: Emily. Okay, Emily. You know, Emily, I – I'd like to get together with you in person.

ER: That would be wonderful.

PR: Would that be okay? And – and I can show you more of what I got.

ER: Yes, I would. Is there a – a place you had in mind? I will happily go wherever you're comfortable.

PR: Well, I – I'd like to get together with you where there's not too many people. Uh, um, how about – can we get into the, uh, Watkins, uh, museum?

ER: That's a good question. I will ask Nora. She would – she would know more about that, having access to it. That would be a good idea, because there wouldn't be too many people around.

PR: No, there wouldn't be too many people. And you know, being that it's part of history that we're going after, this might be a good deal.

ER: That's a good idea, Pete. I will – I will contact Nora, and I'll ask her about availability. How's that?

PR: Yeah, and – and you might mention to Nora that I've been trying to get ahold of her. And her line seems to be busy all the time.

ER: Oh. That's odd. Okay, what I'll do is send her an e-mail. That's usually the way I communicate with her, and –

PR: Right.

ER: I'll let her know you've been trying to get ahold of her. But yes, I'd really like to meet with you in person.

PR: Sure, yeah. That would be better. You know, I got a lot of, uh, I got a lot of transcripts here, and I'd like to show 'em to you and all that. But I – I can't, well, we can't do that over the phone.

ER: Yeah.

PR: But, yeah, I'd like to get together with you.

ER: Okay. And I – we'll both wear masks, and we'll – we'll definitely be safe. So, I will –

PR: Sure.

ER: I'll check with Nora, and see what might be available.

PR: Yeah, check and – and see, see if there's a place where we can – where we can get together.

ER: Okay. That sounds like a good idea, Pete.

PR: Yeah, okay. And I'll bring you – I'll bring you everything that I got, and we can go from there.

ER: Wonderful. I'll look forward to it.

PR: Okay. Emily, uh, I'm – I'm anxious to meet with you, uh, um...I – I think I got an exciting childhood life that I'd like to share with you, and –

ER: I agree.

PR: And maybe with, uh...the people here in Lawrence.

ER: Yes. I – I would like them to know about it as well. So I – I'm looking forward to our meeting.

PR: Sure. I'll be excited to do that, okay?

ER: Okay. I'll give you a call when I've talked to Nora.

PR: Oh, for sure, yeah. Maybe we can make it next week or something like that, someplace.

ER: Yes, that sounds very good.

PR: That sounds great. Okay, Emily?

ER: Alright.

PR: I'm – I'm sorry I can't help you.

ER: No, you – you are being helpful. And we'll talk more in person; it will be easier that way.

PR: Okay, sure. So, is – is it easy for you to, you know, just kind of get away, and –



ER: I teach classes on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

PR: Oh, really?

ER: So usually Tuesdays and Thursdays are – are more open.

PR: Yeah. Oh, hey, that sounds good. Thursdays, yeah.

ER: Okay.

PR: That sounds – what – what building do you teach in?

ER: Well, I'm doing it remotely this semester; I'm an adjunct professor.

PR: Oh, okay.

ER: Yeah.

PR: Oh, okay.

ER: But I have an office on the KU campus.

PR: Sure. Yeah, I – I worked for the – I worked for KU for quite a few years, and I think I know every building on the campus there.

ER: Oh, yeah. You probably know Wescoe Hall, then.

PR: Oh, yeah. I been there a lot of times in Wescoe Hall, yeah.

ER: Yeah, that's where my office is.

PR: Okay, okay, Emily. So, I think we can get together again?

ER: Yes, I would enjoy that.

PR: Okay. I – I'm sorry, like I said, I – I just, I – I had some, uh, grocery shopping and I, uh, I tried to hurry as much as I could so I could get together with you.

ER: That sounds good. And no worries.

PR: I – okay.

ER: Okay. I'll talk with Nora and I'll get back with you, alright?

PR: Yeah, yeah. Okay. Talk to Nora, and you might mention that I tried to get her on – on her – on her cell phone, and, uh, every time I call up, her line seems to be busy.

ER: Okay. I'll send her an e-mail right now.

PR: Okay. Thank you, Emily.

ER: Thank you, Pete. Have a good day.

PR: Okay, bye-bye.

ER: Bye.

**END OF TAPE**