

CONSULTANT: Daniel Read  
AGE: 63  
RESIDENCE: Durham, NC  
OCCUPATION: Attorney  
INTERVIEW DATE: July 30, 2016, approx. 10:30 am  
LOCATION: Durham Farmers Market @ Durham Central Park

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*Daniel Reed begins the interview by introducing himself and explaining that he has lived in Durham since 1986. He was in Durham on New Year's Eve, 1999.*

**So take me back to that day. Take a minute to think, and walk me through what you remember about New Year's Eve 1999, turn of the century.**

Well, I just remember we were really worried about what might happen, with all our computers and electronic stuff, and the electronic systems, all of the things that were going to happen. But then at some point, I think we got a bunch of candles, we laid in some food (?), and we just felt like, "Well, whatever happens will be whatever happens, and we'll be in the same boat as everybody else." And actually, I wasn't feeling that well, now that I remember, and I said, "Well, I'll just lie down for a little bit." Famous last words. And of course, my wife was going to go to a party, and she didn't feel good about celebrating the New Year without me, so she came back home, and she laid down on the bed, and we both slept through the millennium, and nothing happened. We were relieved to learn later that the Italian government had basically done the same thing, and said "Eh, whatever happens, we're going to be okay."

**But you do remember taking some preparations?**

Yes, we had some candles; we had extra food. We were sort of just wondering what might happen. I can't really remember what we did...we did something with the computer to back it up or something like that, but we really didn't do much else.

**What were you doing for a living back then?**

Same thing I'm doing today. I'm an attorney. I have my own office downtown.

**Do you remember anything related to Y2K, as far as the law? People making preparations --**

Same thing. You know, most all of my work is done on computer and saved on computer, so I saved everything, and turned everything off, and saved it to a separate hard drive, and all this crap. Then the next day, everything was just the same as before. A lot of worry about nothing. When I was a kid, in elementary school, I do remember this: I thought, you know, "Gosh, in the year 2000, I'll be

47 years old! That's just impossibly far away." And now, here it is 16 years later, and here I am.

**So did the moment have some personal meaning for you? Just because you felt...I remember one gentleman I spoke with this morning said he felt really privileged that he had reached that point.**

It didn't really have so much personal meaning, it was just sort of...My dad died when I was 27, so I think that kind of made me feel like, "Wow, I made it." No, it didn't really have much personal meaning.

**Did life seem like what you thought it would be like? Because with, you know, sci-fi, whenever it was the future back then, it was always [*booming voice*] "the YEAR 2000" was the date that people used when they were depicting the future. Did it seem like you thought it would be?**

I think when I was a kid, I thought there'd be more space travel. You know, people flying around with jetpacks or whatever. But then, as I grew older, I realized that that stuff was not likely to happen in my lifetime. And I guess the thing I feel the worst...I feel really good we haven't had another nuclear war. And that nuclear weapons are...there are fewer nuclear weapons now than when I was a kid. But I guess the biggest thing I feel is just how I'm kind of sad that we as a race have not taken better care of the world, and that the optimism I felt when I was young about the year 2000, my son doesn't feel about the year 2100. Older people are old and depressed because they're going to die pretty soon, and the younger people cheer them up. And it seems like lately, I've been saying, "Come on, Quentin" – who's my son – "we're counting on you, you know?" I'm trying to cheer *him* up. The world is not so depressing as he thinks it is. He's a climate scientist, so he's...

**So it's primarily because of the environment that you think that's the case?**

Yeah.

**Not as much the other cultural things?**

Well, I mean, I think the environment is being degraded quickly. A lot of it has to do with a lot of other issues, like poverty, overpopulation, industrialization, all those things. So it's kind of a lot of things are happening at once. It's not something I'm real happy about.

**So if somebody who was too young to remember 1999 – wasn't even born – asked you, "What was life like in 1999?" What's the first thing that pops into your mind? What would you say?**

Well, the Red Sox still hadn't won the World Series, in my lifetime.

*We both laugh hard.*

That's big, that 's big.

*We talk about the 2003 and 2004 series between the Yankees and Red Sox. I mention that some researchers did a study on people's memories of the 2003 series. This leads into a longer discussion about the Red Sox and Mr. Reed's baseball memories. It is interesting, but beyond the scope of this project.*

**Other than the Red Sox not having won the World Series, you think back then, you think about it now, how would compare 1999 to 2016?**

I kind of feel like I'm getting to be a better person all the time. So I'm still kind of working on myself, trying to sort of live out the ideals of Christianity in my life, and I think that I'm doing that a lot better now than I was in 1999. I have a lot more patience with my children and my wife, and so it's good.

**If you don't mind me asking, what denomination?**

I'm a Quaker.

**Do you remember the occasion being particularly momentous for other people in the Quaker faith back then?**

Not really. Everybody was kind of worried that something horrible would happen, and nothing horrible happened.

**Was it something that they talked about during services much?**

Not really, no.

**I ask because in some denominations, I've found in doing these interviews, it was a big part of their religious experience at the time. And they worked it into a lot of sermons and such.**

Well, I don't know. No, no, well A, we don't have sermons. We have silent worship, so...

**Right.**

No, it was not a big deal.

*I thank Daniel for his time and end the interview.*

