

CONSULTANTS: Mark Duncan and Angel Johnson  
AGE: 60 and 43  
RESIDENCE: North Carolina  
OCCUPATION: Gun shop owner  
INTERVIEW DATE: July 20, 2016, approx. 10:15 am  
LOCATION: Garden City Pier, Garden City, SC

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*Mark and Angel were standing under an umbrella on the side of the pier, sightseeing, not fishing. After agreeing to the interview, I log their names and ages. Mark looks young for 60, and I compliment him on it.*

Like I said, I'm talking to people about their memories from when it changed from 1999 to the year 2000. Tell me what you remember personally about that night, New Year's Eve 1999.

MD: I remember all the bad things they predicted could happen, but didn't happen.

AJ: With the computers, the whole crashing

Do you remember where you were?

MD: I remember because I slept at my business because I was worried about security.

Really?

MD: Yeah.

Was that a choice, or did you have to –

MD: Yeah, that was a choice. I made that choice. When we heard computers go down and everything, the whole world was gonna change, and my business is a high-security product anyway. So I just thought it would be best to sleep there. If something did happen, I wanted to be there.

So you thought there was a legitimate chance that something could happen?

MD: Yeah, I didn't buy into it a hundred percent, but I didn't want to be the village idiot at the same time. So I slept there, and nothing happened, so [laughs]. That's probably my biggest memory of that time period.

I take it you don't ordinarily sleep in the office, right?

MD: No, no. I sure don't.

Did you do anything else to get ready for it?

MD: Not really. You know, we had our computers checked by so-called experts, and everybody assured us everything would be fine. And it was. But it was worrisome at the time.

Did you have other co-workers with you in the office that night?

MD: No, I was enough. *Angel laughs.*

Do you remember how you felt the next day?

MD: Sleepy, because I didn't sleep good [laughs]. To tell you the truth of it.

[to Angel] How about you? Do you remember much about that night?

AJ: Not quite to that extreme, but I just remember I was at home, went to bed, and I remember just thinking, "Okay, we'll see what happens tomorrow." Woke up and everything of course was just fine. So it's another day.

*Angel sees a shark in the ocean. I joke about a group of paddle-boarders in the water nearby and mention that my brother-in-law saw a shark while paddle-boarding the previous day.*

Now that you've been thinking back on the turn of the last century, 1999 into now, how do you think things have changed since then?

AJ: Worse.

*MD starts to talk, then stops:* Go ahead.

AJ: I was just gonna say, for the worse.

Why do you say that?

AJ: I think morals and values have declined. I think politics isn't about the people anymore. I mean, it just like there's so much more negative.

[to Mark] What about you?

MD: I think the cell phone and the computer technology, the whole world's changed. My whole business runs off of it, and I don't know of many businesses that don't anymore.

So you are doing pretty much the same thing now that you were then?

MD: Yeah. Sure am.

So you've probably seen it change immensely.

MD: Yeah, I mean everything is done on computer now. I sit at a desk and probably accomplish the same thing that I used to be on the phone for hours and hours with. Waiting for phone calls, or trying to return phone calls. Now it's all done on the internet.

So you think things have changed mostly for the good, or the bad?

MD: I guess it's better. I'm more efficient. You know, I can come down here on vacation and bring my computer, and it's just like I'm sitting in my office.

AJ: But then there's the negative: having to come down here and bring your computer.

Never being able to get away.

AJ: Yeah.

MD: You never get away.

I mean, the office is in your pocket.

MD: And your phone follows you everywhere.

I just had to check email before I came up to you all. Had to respond to my boss.  
[laugh]

MD: Yep.

Any other thoughts about that time?

MD: I really can't think of anything. That's just part of the main thing I do remember, is all of the hype of what could have happened, but didn't happen.

Do you remember people thinking the world was really going to end? Not even Y2K, but because it was the new millennium and all that?

MD: Yeah, there were people doing that, and that's why I was concerned enough to sleep at my business.

AJ [to MD]: What about gun sales? Were they up?

MD: Yeah, they were.

*I couldn't hear them clearly and asked them to repeat.*

AJ: Gun sales. We have a gun shop.

MD: That's the business we're in. We sell guns.

Wow. So did you notice some sale changes back then –

MD: Yeah, there was definitely an up-kick in sales right around that time period, leading up to it.

What about the type of guns that people were buying?

MD: You know, the news media always portrays that as everybody's buying AR-15's and semi-automatics, but really when some kind of panic does hit, or some kind of fear thing does hit, it's usually generally across the board, just gun sales increase. Hunting guns, hunting rifles, handguns, shotguns, rifles. It's a cross-section of what we sell.

So now that I know more about your business, it makes perfect sense that you were sleeping in your office that night. [laugh]

MD: Yeah, if the alarms didn't work, I wanted to be there to protect what I owned.

Yeah, absolutely. So you still have the same shop?

MD: Yes, sir.

Other than the technology, how has the business changed from then to now? Or has it changed at all?

MD: It's changed a lot. I mean probably the biggest change is just everyday functions, is the internet. How we use it in every aspect of our business. But the restrictions, and I guess, exactly how we're monitored is much more strict than it had ever been. The ATF audits are strict. They're very thorough. They come in there, and instead of just going through your books quickly, they're usually there for days. They go through every transaction you made since the last time they audited. It's very thorough, which is a positive thing, because if we're doing something wrong, we want to know we're doing something wrong and be able to correct it. But at least in my business, it's much more thorough than it's ever been.

[to AJ] You said that you think with morals and those sorts of things, things have gotten worse since 1999?

AJ: Yeah.

Anything specific that jumps into your mind that makes you say that? Or is technology part of that, with the internet and everything?

AJ: Yeah, I think it's just the internet and the technology, people putting stuff out there anonymously, that they can say anything and there's no retribution for it. There's no consequences. Like on Facebook. I mean, you see people just saying anything that comes to their mind and they never even think about how it's affecting anybody because they're doing it anonymously. And they're by themselves. And they're sharing private thoughts. I don't know, it's just changed everybody's way of thinking.

You couldn't be as anonymous back then.

AJ: Exactly. And you couldn't reach so many people with your thoughts, either. I don't know, it's just the whole generality of it. There's so many different parts of it.

Do you remember sending your first email or getting your first cell phone?

MD: Oh yeah. I sure do. It was a big deal. Now I hate to hear it go off. "Aw, not again."

AJ: Well, we remember the famous words, "You have mail." You know, when you cranked up AO -- when the dial-up finally kicked in and AOL comes on.

And you heard that sound [*I make the screeching sound of a modem*].

AJ: Yeah, and it actually was nice when you heard it then. Now, it's like, "Oh man, I got mail to answer." So now it's more of a negative.

*I thank them for their time and end the interview.*