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Interview with Nermin Peimanović (FA 1137)

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Project name: Bosnia Project
Field ID and name: KFP2016IYB_0008_BBsr0001
Interviewee: Nermin Peimanovic
Interviewer/Recordist: Brent Bjorkman
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Location: Western Kentucky University Campus
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Transcribing Conventions:

Use of square brackets [] indicates a note from the transcriber.
Use of parentheses () indicates a conversational aside.
Use of dash - indicates an interruption of thought or conversation.
Use of ellipses ... indicates a discontinued thought.
Use of quotations “ ” indicates reported speech.
Use of *italics* indicates emphasis.
Use of underline indicates movie, magazine, newspaper, or book titles.
Names of interviewee and interviewer are abbreviated by first and last initial letters.
Time is recorded in time elapsed by the convention [hours:minutes:seconds].

[00:00:00]

BB: It's February 24, 2016 and I'm here with uh Nermin Peimanovic, Peimanovic, um and we're just uh doing some follow-up interview, uh getting ready for um some granting. And, you know, we talked about, this is, you know, our tentative uh title of the exhibit is called "The Things We Carry with Us," and, you know, one of the things I found was interesting, and I don't, I don't think it, it carried across too well in our last recording was, you know, people, what they brought with them and what they went back to kind of find or what they found when they went back. And there was a story when, when you did go back, can you tell me a little bit about, you know, um you lived here and then maybe the date you went back, and maybe that story about returning to the house?

NP: Yeah, so, so my family and, and I went first time, for the first time went back to Bosnia in 2006, actually July of 2006, and on our trip we wanted to go back to our, our old house uh that was, that has been destroyed uh during the war, and see, you know, what, what is it like, you know? What's, what's left of it. Uh, that would be first time for, for my brother, my mother, and myself to see it, my, my dad saw it in 2004, two, yeah, two years prior, but that was our first time since 1992 to go back and actually see the house. So when we went over there, um, I vaguely remembered, you know, an explosion, three explosions before in, in uh in front of the house, and when we got over there you could still see some scars in the ground. And also my mother, uh, she used to have flowers all on the path uh to the house, and actually when we went back uh there's trees grown in our front yard, but flowers are still blooming, and they were, you know, she, she shock- kind of shock- started kind of crying, and uh, uh, you know, telling that story how she, you know, how she kind of put the seeds for these flowers and they're still here almost, you know, fifteen, fifteen years ago. So when we got inside, um the house has been burned during the war, it was not destroyed but it was intentionally burned, uh and all the stuff uh, you know, inside that we had was, were destroyed. Um, during the war while we were still there, uh in order for us to be more protected, my dad actually dig um, essentially a whole, if it- um under the house, and covered it with a lot of dirt and, and, and um woods, so that we can get under it and when the shelling was happening uh we would be safer. So um my brother and I were really young at that age, uh I was four years old and he was ten, ten year old baby, um so all, all the things we would be there for, you know, almost all day, from, from the morning all the way to the night, and my mom will bring all our stuff in, in there, um in, into that just hole in the ground so that we, you know, we, we can have it, don't have to get out and expose ourselves to being shot and, and killed. So when we got back um I intentionally wanted to go and see what, what's left, because that's the only area um that you could still recognize some stuff from fire and didn't burn all, all the way. So when I got in there uh first thing I pulled were two sandals, and those sandals, one for my brother and one, and, and one for me. So I kind of took them out and, and, uh I, I took picture of it, and my mom goes, you know, "I bought those here," and, you know, told me story where she, she bought it and what she had to do to buy all of these, and it, it was just kind of touching to see that they are still there and, and something that, you know, I had, and now it's been, been destroyed. And also today I was showing you picture from my brother finding his baby uh clothing, uh that was touched by fire but not burned, so it, it, it was really, you know, emotional for us to see that uh being, still being there. Um, in our kitchen um, you know, since we had to leave in such a hurry, all the dishes were left uh that we had, and when you go back now you still see some of the dishes, they're burnt but they're still there. So it, it's just a lot of emotions and it's probably the hardest, hardest day that we had when we went back, to see the life we started being destroyed, and now you're coming back to see what, what you, what you left. And the speed that we had to leave our home at that time, you know, uh it,

it's not something that you pick up your stuff and, you know, you, you plan your trip. It's one where you wake up and you realize if you don't leave in the next, you know, ten, twenty minutes, you'll be killed. So we left all of that and, you know, coming back to see that what we remember has been destroyed already, it really takes your emotions to a high level. And as you can see now. [00:05:59]

BB: Yeah. Well I apprec-

NP: Uh mother had, were lilies, and actually lily is a symbol on Bosnian flag dating back to the Middle Ages, so it, it's interesting just again make that comparison that that's the only flower that was still blooming there, and during the conflict the lilies were, you know, on, on the Bosnian flag. So it, it's just, just interesting to see it, but.

BB: Yeah, and I think you had a- so we were talking about things that we remember or things that are touched on for our lives, and, and you brought these um, I would call them socks, but what is, what is the Bosnian name for them?

NP: We uh, we call them uh [in Bosnian] which is basically wool socks. Um, and the reason why is because they're made of uh sheep wool and they are handmade, actually my grandmother made them uh for me, um, you know, it, a- a lot of Bosnian population that lived, you know that didn't live in cities, lived in villages, that's what would they do. To keep sheep clean they would, you know, uh cut off all the wool during the win- win- uh summer months, and actually weave it, and then uh, usually um women would, during the winter months when there's no nothing to do in the fields, um make these socks from, from the wool that they had. Uh so, it's nothing [unclear] but in, in what, what has been mentioned, they, the reason she got it for me is, you know, uh my feet were always cold and she told me, she told me uh I had a bad um, or low blood circulation and she's gonna fix it. So that's why she made it for me, and believe me, first time I, I wear them, um I didn't have cold feet at all. [slight laugh] So, you know, it's uh, and I, I still, I still wear them from time to time, when it's really cold outside.

BB: Nice. You can chime in when you want to. [speaking to Virginia]

VS: Uh huh, okay.

BB: [clears throat] And this was for your son, right?

NP: Yeah, so second-

BB: What, what are we looking at?

NP: So second uh second item is, is uh a fez, um, and it, it's a traditional kind of Bosnian hat that, that's been there for, for centuries, actually, the Ottoman Empire, Ottomans actually brought it to Bosnian in 16th Century and it's been there ever since. Um, you don't see it much now, and um used to be really active and a part of daily, uh daily wear, until about 1940's, and after the Second World War where, you know, a lot of Communist and, and uh took over the whole Yugoslavia, these were really not there anymore. Um, they kind of phased out, but, you know, keep try- trying to keep uh my children to remember where I came from and our family, where they came from. Um, my mom brought this from Bosnia, from uh Sarajevo, and uh from actually Bašćaršija, which is where all of these are made. Um, and I, I just wanted to bring him so, you know, one time when he grows up and has all these pictures when he was little, you know, he will, he will see this and this picture and remember that, you know, that he cannot buy this, that this came directly from Bosnia, and, you know, kind of just remind him where his parents come from, and, and, and his, what his heritage is. [00:10:06]

VS: Today, what- there are special occasions where you wear this? Or?

NP: Yeah, if, if we um, usually when, when there's a traditional folklore dance, all the guys would wear this, and um, girls would have something similar but it would not show as this the guys' would. So every, every time of occasion where something has to do with tradition, keeping the tradition and doing traditional dance, these would be uh, these would be worn then, mainly used, yes.

VS: Um, can you describe the outfit that goes with it?

NP: Uh.

VS: That may be hard.

NP: It's a little bit difficult to describe the outfit because I, I don't even really know what everything is called. Um-

BB: The vest?

NP: It, it is, it is a vest and it's, it's a, you know, kind of khaki pants too, but um, the vest usually has some decorations on it, and it's usually hand decorated. Um, and you, you'll see guys who do the like traditional uh gathering and dance, their vests will be different from time to time. Also they, they get um instead of the belts, well now they wear a belt, but what they usually do it back old days, they just had like a scarf instead of the belt that they would,

they would wear. Um, along with the vest there's als- als- also uh button shirt that's usually a part of it, so.

VS: Cool. So that probably [unclear]

BB: Nice.

NP: I'll show you pictures, you'll, you'll see it. I, I brought pictures here so that, from, from the convention so you can, you can see everything.

VS: Well I remember seeing a picture of your son too, he looked adorable.

NP: Yeah.

VS: Did you see that?

BB: Yeah, with him with that on.

VS: Um, returning to the socks, um do- are they still made today? Or is it harder because there isn't-

NP: They're not here. Um, my mom [slight laugh] knows how to make them, but she really don't want to do it. Um, my wife doesn't know how to make them, and know if she ever will, [slight laugh] I believe. Back in Bosnia, they are still made, um, especially in, in regions where it's not really economically developed, and outside cities, especially on, on, you know, villages and so forth, uh these are really, really common. Um, you know, what happens, winters in Bosnia are really, really strong, and there is al- always about three feet of snow. So in, in areas where, you know, you had to go out daily and um keep up with your uh cows, and, and sheep, and so forth, usually on villages, um, people in some parts are not, don't have that much of footwear, um that's suited for, for winter. So these actually become really good protection when they go outside, um and they are really, you know, widely used. Um, but in cities, not, not so often, they are more practical in villages.

VS: Hmm.

BB: Nice.

NP: Really warm. [slight laugh]

VS: I was gonna say, any time there is a snow day here you probably pull them out. [laughs]

BB: If you ever like wear them too much they're not pretty. They're well, pretty well taken care of.

NP: I, I don't, because we don't get a lot of snow, but usually when I was home when the, that uh snowed in, that's what I did. And um, I, I don't usually, maybe, you know, three or four times during a year.

BB: Yeah.

NP: But um.

BB: Circulation just gets not good then?

NP: Yeah, yeah. I don't feel cold in my feet after I wear these so.

BB: Oh I bet. [speaking to Virginia]

VS: That's all I have. Thank-

[00:14:35 Track End]