

Haiti Project

Summary of Structure for Segment 4

The sections listed below describe specific topic areas to be covered in segment 4. The edited program will weave the sections together in a visually lyrical and stylistic video.

| Section | Description | Visuals/Sounds Elements | Length |
|---------|---|--|----------|
| 1 | <u>History</u> The 1950's - Duvalier comes to power - Regime of Terror - Duvalier's relationship with America - Professional exodus/brain drain | Archival photos and video from the period. Voice-over narration and period Haitian music | 3 ½ mins |
| 2 | <u>Personal Essay</u> Personal Journey - Hebert Peck Sr. goes into exile - Personal cost and cost to family/friends/community | Personal archive (photos and video). Voice-over narration and real sound (from footage). | 1 ½ mins |
| 3 | <u>History</u> Transnationalism - Supporting Haiti from abroad - Haitian/American economic and political relations | Interviews/observations with scholars and transnationals in-the-field | 4 mins |
| 4 | <u>Personal Essay</u> Personal Journey - continues - Hebert Peck Jr. goes returns home for father's burial and meditates on his personal Haitian-American connection. | Personal archive (photos and video). Voice-over narration and real sound (from footage). | 2 mins |
| | | TRT | 11 mins |

Preliminary Script (and possible Voice Over)

Items in red require fact-checking with scholars

Section 1 - History

In 1957 a new leadership comes into place. After turbulent elections and with the support of the army, Francois Duvalier becomes the x^{th(?)} President of Haiti. Duvalier was a physician by trade, thus the nickname, "Papa Doc".

On 25 may 1964, he states: "I am not ambitious, I am a revolutionary" before declaring himself "president-for life" - a title he passes-on to his 19 year old son, "Baby Doc" Duvalier, upon his death in 1971.

Papa-Doc ruled Haiti with brute force and terror. The devastation his brand of despotism brings to the Haitian people is devastating. According to some statistics, during the fourteen years of his dictatorship, between 20,000 and 60,000 Haitians are murdered by the Ton-Ton Macoutes – Papa Doc's private commandos of death, which he created to terrify the nation and execute his opponents.

The Un reports that during the Duvaliers' regime – a period lasting from 1957-1986, 500,000 people died from the consequences of malnutrition lack of water and diseases.

One-fifth of the population fled abroad for political or economic exile. It is estimated that 80% of Haitians employed in professional fields left Haiti under the Duvalier regime, ushering a new era of Haitian exodus. The ramifications of this fleeing to technology and research, education and health care cannot be over-estimated. Many of the current problems faced by Haiti today can be traced back to the monstrous policies of Duvalier.

Nearly 1 ½ million – from a total population of 7 millions inhabitants currently live outside the country. It is difficult to give a correct account of the number of boat who perished in the seas between Haiti and Florida.

Section 2 – Personal Journey

My father was one of the professionals who left the country. A place he cherished and lived in until the age of 40. It is where he started his family and worked in Haiti's once sound agricultural trade.

One day, after having spent some time in jail for what Duvalier described as, *inciting farmers to turn against the regime*, he decided to go into exile to the Belgian Congo. He spent 30 years working in various African countries – helping them with their development – unable to do so for his land of birth.

His dream, and that of many Haitian exiles, was always to come back and help. He was able to come back eventually, in his seventies... In the meantime while he was absent for his parents' passing and from his friends lives. Worst of all, he was never able to take his bride back to Haiti. She rest here in a New Jersey cemetery.

As a rule, even Haitians in exile kept from openly criticizing the regime for fear of retaliation against their families back in Haiti. The regime labeled their opponents "kamokens" or communists, and by association, their families were systematically massacred after having been tortured or raped.

Section 3 - History

But my Dad's story is not unique for the period, nor is it unique for the one we live in now. Thousands of Haitians fled their country for better political and economic conditions elsewhere. They fled to Africa, Europe, Asia and America... hoping to find temporary asylum, a place to weather the storm. Some were just swept away by the storm.

Others created a new life style, a *transnational* life style. This also is not unique.

- What is transnational life?
- What are some examples?
- What is the yearly \$ contribution to Haiti? And to America?
- How much does this \$ actually contribute to Haiti 's economic stability? And survival?
- Which professions flourish?
- Are these professions (the ones creating this \$ to send to Haiti) creating a professional void in Haiti when these professionals practice abroad? – Further de-stabilizing the infrastructure.
- I would like to mention something about Haitian-Americans contributions as well. Though some of them may never want to return to live in Haiti, they feel a responsibility to help the country survive and grow.

Section 4 – Personal Journey

My father died in 2001. He wanted to die in his country and be buried in his hometown of Port-a-Piment. At the burial mass his cousin said: *Although he lived far and across the globe, his heart was here*".

Me, I live in America. I am an American of Haitian decent. I also would like to create a connection with my birth country.

The morning after his burial, walking on the beach, I was seeking such a connection. Something, which would create an invisible bond between the past and the present, something symbolic to link our disconnected family across the ocean and mountains – from the south of Haiti to the South of New Jersey.

Today, I bury it, here where my mother lies in America.