

**Name of Interviewee:** Mac Duggal  
**Date of Interview:** April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
**Name of Interviewer:** Bill Yeingst  
**Length of Interview:** 75 minutes

BY: Okay, today is Friday April 8<sup>th</sup>. we're here at the National Museum of the American History and we're conducting an oral history with Mac Duggal and would you please introduce yourself and state your name and a little bit about yourself.

MD: My real name is Manmohan Singh Duggal and my friends always called me Mac Duggal, I was born in India in 1960. I come from a very spiritual background where my father, he was extremely loving my... I come from a family of a very, very loving parents which they will all from humility and who ever met them, always thought that they will like love personify, did just... you can just meet them to see love ruling out of them for the people and my father actually was a perfectionist, everything he did was always in perfection. He was a very well known published boy and his one many... academy awards for his poetry and he was also a great author and what was beautiful about him was all his poetry, all his books, there's not a dollar that he kept for himself, every single dollar went to charity. He just gives it all the way. You know, when I was growing up, a little time he used to work for the government of India, he retired as the (unintelligible) secretary of the Government of India and in the lately yes, he took over the (unintelligible) of being spiritually leader, after my grandfather (FOREING NAME) passed away who was a great spiritual leader and the president of World Fellowship of Religions which was is recognized by the United Nations. My father took over that role and he was also the president of World Fellowship of Religion so, they taught meditation to thousand, I would say even millions of people all over the world. So, when I was growing up, meditation was a key part of my upbringing it was an important part to stay connected to you inner self and I think education was really a priority for my father and I remember a small story when I was growing up, when I did not get the grades that he expected in school one day he asked me what I... what have I been spending time on and when I said: "Well I've been listening to the radio to the songs on the radio." The next day when I came back, I saw the radio missing in the house, now remember this is the early sixty's and there was no television in India so the radio was sitting outside the house to be given away and when I asked my dear mother what happened she said: "Well, your father who, he would love to listen to the radio for the news and or the sports, thought that I should concentrate on my studies so he gave up the radio of the house" you know just a small thing. He always taught us to respect (unintelligible) You know, always respect everyone and he was so full of love and both my parents so full of love that I couldn't even tell some of our neighbors felt like I was family when I was 5-6 years old I thought our neighbor was our family, I did not know the difference the whole neighborhood would hang out you know, in our household as family and so, I would like to say a couplet from one of his verses, it's a very popular quote that he said he says: "Love has only a big (unintelligible) It has no end." And he preached it all his life and he always taught me there's nothing more artistic than to love people. You know, and my mother she was a very (unintelligible) she could speak nine different languages, actually she was an exceptional singer as well, she sang in seven different languages and again all the proceeds just went to charity, you know and we were just two brothers, my older brother and (unintelligible) and me and we were fourteen years

apart. So we were almost raised one at a time because he was older than me and I really believe when I was a kid I was pampered by my mom because she was like my best friend and she was the one who would come to our parent teacher conferences and take care of everything and I remember I this thing very vividly that whenever she would come to my school she was very majestic and gorgeous and dressed up immaculately and I would always tell her where the sari, the Indian outfit with a flower in it. You know as a kid so every time she would come to my school she would be wearing the flower sari, so you know people would stop, teachers would stop, students stop... who is this lady? Who is she? you know she was really loving and always had a positive attitude, all her life the only thing we learned is positive and when my father took over as the spiritual leader of course hundreds of thousands of people would come to learn meditation to lots of free of course to connect with to connect with the inner self, to connect to the light and sound, she was always a mother to all. Not just to me. Everybody thought she was like their mother. So I believe they are not physically present both of them now but I have their beautiful murals in the foyer of my house which depicts you know, how powerful they work through their love and respect you know. When I...

BY: Sorry for interrupting, what's the name of the town where you grew up?

MC: I grew up in New Delhi India. It's the capital of India right now and when I was young and I went to one of the best schools in India it was called [FOREING NAME] the Air Force School. Was an air force school and it was an English medium school, which meant that during school hours we had to only speak in English. You know, so naturally English became a second language for me and when I moved here you know, language was not a barrier at all.

BY: Okay. What about... do you have memories of particular food or music or other cultural traditions in your home growing up?

MD: Yes, of course, you know when I was growing up was a tradition mostly to eat at home, so every day my mother would cook food an she told me I was a bit of a fussy eater because I was pampered I would tell her make this for me and make that for me and you know every time I would come home she had all of those things already ready, I don't remember one single time when she would not comply with what we wanted. It was naturally at that time international cuisine was not so popular [unintelligible] were the traditional north Indian food and it was almost home cooked we would go out only once in a while and it was a special treat to go out to a restaurant to eat and things like that, you know.

BY: Was this a diverse community where you grow up or there [unintelligible] and Hindus and others in the community?

MD: Yeah. We used to live in New Delhi so there were a people from all different religions and cultures who lived around us and so what was beautiful was we never thought that there is any difference between any community or any religion, they even realize there was any difference between the people. Everybody lived as one together and that was the feeling and the energy that my parents had put out that you know, everybody is all of the same essence and you never felt any different, didn't even realize people who are from different communities because it was all like one big family you know. I... and I was actually starting my

engineering in India and I wanted to stay back in India all the time but as nobody had done business in my family, I wanted to start my own thing I'd never wanted to work for anyone and actually until today I've never worked for anyone even for one single day of my life. But my father thought it would be a great idea for me to come to the United States to finish my education, so because my older brother had done that and he had found great success he had gone to IAT in Chicago and he was very successful, so I just came to the United States to finish my education because. Actually initially I wanted to back to India but things worked out differently, the opportunities they saw here to grow my inner self, to grow my business and to grow my connections and the fact that my brother was already was living here, had a home here in Chicago, those are the things that made me stay back you know.

BY: Was that difficult decision for you at the time to come here?

MD: Yes it was because I was deeply connected to India, wanted to stay there you know, work there and be with my parents at that time but because you know we would always listen to our father and always do whatever he said so he's thought it would be better for me to come and finish my studies here so the first time when I came here was when my respected father he was on a world tour with my mother and it was really exciting to come here because he was teaching meditation and he was travelling all over the world so I was really excited to come here but when I came a words also a little bit of a culture shock because I thought not only the layouts of the different cities was different than India, even the food and the lifestyle was completely different. I realized how clean and organized America was, the first thing I really realized when I came here was even the traffic rules were followed to the t, to the [unintelligible] detail which was not the case back home in India at that time. And you know I... we came from a middle class family but still feel I had a very privileged childhood. Small jobs, simple jobs like cleaning the dish, doing the vacuum, taking the trash out or the simplest things like even making your own bed what jobs I'd never done before, because we always had a household help. So, was always reminded of this incident where I drank water out of glass and left it on the kitchen counter in my brother's home and it probably stayed there for about that week. About the week later my lovely sister in law you know [unintelligible] who we lovingly call her asked me if I had seen the glass sitting on the counter. I might have gone by that counter ten times a day for about a week and I didn't realize, actually I didn't see it I didn't realize there would be my responsibility to clean and put the glass away, because I'd never done jobs like that so it was a [unintelligible] reminder for me. I think how different life was even in the smallest possible way.

BY: So then you decided to come here for education?

MD: Yeah I came here for finish, to finish my studies and so when my parents actually were leaving [unintelligible] the left me here for the first time I felt, I felt this pain for the... I really remember vividly I felt the strong pain in my chest for the longing to go back to India and I thought I was going to finish my studies and then go back. I really cried that day because I said: "Oh, I want to..." you know because I had only lived in India before that.

BY: Were you go to school at that time?

MD: I been to school to North Central College in Chicago you know and so, when I was here before I started going to school, I really realize that India was a big developing country at that time but I still found there were so many differences between India and America, I thought the working culture was completely different, I thought the way business was done was also different, it was so much structure and rules in America, which was really not the case back home and I realized soon that punctuality was key to success in America so one time I had a meeting at like nine o'clock in the morning and I showed up [unintelligible] a ten o'clock missing the meeting. So I had to learn the basics of the American working right from a scratch.

BY: So you were in University environment at that time and then you finished your education?

MD: So I finished my education. Back here and because I was studying but still living with my brother [FOREING NAME] and my sister [FOREING NAME] and their two children in their home and so soon after that, we started a business, we started the business from the garage of my brother's home. You know, for the reason to keep our expenses low. So we designed imported a beach blanket and some [unintelligible] gowns and dresses and so we just took \$300 dollars and took a boot at the merchandise mart in Chicago and a buyer from one of the most prestigious catalog houses came in as one of the first buyers and she gave us an order almost immediately that give us a big boost you know, and have this is exciting because we were on our way. After that, I feel I had to work extremely hard because I would go from store to store selling dresses. I had to design the dresses; I had to do my own packing and my own shipping of the dresses. But I felt I really enjoyed doing it because had this passion, I had the drive, I had... I felt the stylus energy and nobody was going to stop me, I was going to just give it all I had, it was just determined to do this and so the response was really good the next thing you knew we were showing in New York at one of the shows and a very interesting thing happened that you know, thousands of people go by the [unintelligible]. But I couldn't been looking the other way and could I miss this, but one of the people I knew from my school, she won't [unintelligible] right by the [unintelligible] and I looked at her and she looked at me to what are you doing here and I said: "Well this is my company and I found out she was the buyer for home shopping network." So she loved the product and the next thing we knew we were selling it home shopping network and you know the rest is just history.

BY: What was the name of the company at that point?

MD: Our name of our parent company was Creative Imports and it is still the same company today, the corporation is still called Creative Imports, we've never changed it and our label is called Mag Duggal which has become really popular.

BY: What year did you found the company?

MD: In 1985, 85, 86. It's been about 30 years right now you know.

BY: And when you finished school, what was the name of the community you lived in?

MD: I lived in [unintelligible] which is the western suburb of Chicago. So, that where I started the company with my brother [FOREING NAME] and together we started this company about 30 years ago you know, because I'd also come from a very spiritual background. So, after my father passed very my brother took over the role of the

spiritual master is a spiritual teacher. Also teaches meditation free of cost to people all over the world and I believe all three of them, my respected grandfather, my respected father and my dear brother, they've played a main, main major role in who I am today you know and the basics of their teachings is like truthfulness with determinism, meditation and in the peace. So I feel they've been still all these values really strongly, you know, and no matter how difficult the situation I really believe that I am like deeply connected you know, to those values.

BY: Beyond your brother and his family, where there are other Indians, Americans in the community that you connected with?

MD: Yes, you know because my brother had come here earlier, he had made a lot of friends at that time. So, we actually made a strong group of friends and then we were now you know, I believe you've made friends all over the world and I feel we always get together with them to celebrate all our festivals and you know to keep this culture alive in the us like the holly which is the festival of color, [unintelligible] the festival of light. So I think a lot of these people of the years have become like extended family to us. So it makes it easier you know, to feel like although we've adapted you know, all the American traditions like as our very own like the tradition of Thanksgiving, Fourth of July You know Christmas and Mother's day and Father's day and we love celebrating you know, all these traditions along with our Indian traditions. So that makes it really, really important for us. Like sometimes I feel like to improvise, we like wanted to be a part of Thanksgiving but I'm a vegetarian and so a good part is to eat the turkey. We couldn't [unintelligible] so we improvised on it. We took tofu and you know made a turkey out of our tofu and called *tofurkie* and it's become really popular now we've been enjoying celebrating that tradition for many, many, many years. But as my religion I practice a religion called [unintelligible] is a fairly new religion it's just about 300 years old, now [unintelligible] when India was under turmoil and the sect of Sikhs were created to protect the weak. So the Sikhs are really known for their bravery and Sikhism believes in one higher consciousness, one higher power and also hey preach and believe that everyone is equal and it is the same essence that I see in American values. So as Sikhs we always wear a turban because all of us have long hair, so turban is a sign of respect. It is a responsibility and it promotes equality and that also restores our Sikh identity. When a boy becomes an adult is growing up, somebody respectable from the community ties the turban on their head for the first time it's called a "turban tying ceremony." I was really lucky that my own father was such a well-known spiritual leader and [unintelligible] he tied on my head for the first time so he always believed that he gave me his responsibility. So, to keep connected to our traditions you know we always go back to our sikh temple which we call the [unintelligible] or our meditation centers to learn the meditation everywhere and always try to celebrate all these traditions with a strong network of friends that we have every day.

BY: I noticed your son has a different...

MD: So yes. It's very interesting. You know, because he hasn't had the "turban tying ceremony" yet so he wears the small turban. I'll tell you a good story that happened. We live in a western part of Chicago. So when my son was really young, he was going to high school he... this is one of the largest schools [unintelligible] and it had 4,000 children in the school. He was the only Sikh student going in and so me and my wife were concerned so that he should fit them in. So we went to meet the principal of the school. The principal [unintelligible] was really accommodating, he was so nice and

he understood our concern. He went from school, from his class to class to explain to different people about your [unintelligible] heritage and his tradition and his religion and luckily you [unintelligible] the first, was a good student, he got the student of the month award and so, his picture was everywhere. They even made a video and put it in the school and I really felt that this is one country America where despite you looking different, you have a quality. That's this is a really important thing you know for me. Naturally we go back to India to stay connected to our roots to our extended family and I also feel like I have broad meditation even into my work force because I've kept a slot three o'clock to three twenty, where anybody who wants to sit in silence, we've created a special room where they can sit in silence because I believe we don't necessarily only have to feed the body we also have to feed the soul so in this day and age where everybody works and the high pressure, it's good to stay connected to your inner self.

BY: So the turban, your hair, is a very important connection to your culture heritage. Are their things that women wear or there are a part of their identity that are connections to Sikh culture?

MG: You know, in the Sikh culture there is a [unintelligible] case that they wear so, every Sikh person, you know wears a like... the women don't wear a turban but they all keep long hair, so this was done at that time so that when they was [unintelligible] you know, you could recognized the man from our difference. The Sikhs come with a lot of respect and whenever anybody all over the world sees a Sikh gentleman, they always say he's going to do me [unintelligible], he is good, the protector. He's going to do the right thing. So, imagine if you heard and you're lying down on the ground somebody is coming towards you, this is somebody who has a turban, a Sikh wrapped around their head, they know he is not going to hurt me, here is definitely going to protect me give, me water, give me shelter. So, that was the idea of creating Sikhism it's really, really beautiful. You know, my wife [unintelligible] who we lovingly call her, is also is from another part of cashmere [??] so she lives with the same values as I do you know, and my respecter mother who was a great singer. So, between me, my mother and my wife we've in still all these values even in our children. You know like my mother encourage my children to do music so [FOREING NAME] my daughter has also got a bachelor's degree in Classical Indian Music. She's also put out the Indian cd to her name and [unintelligible] starting to be an entrepreneur, also has a bachelor's degree in table, which is the Indian drums and he is also trained in Indian vocal music. So, I believe all these things keep our children connected to our roots so it's really happy thing and a great thing for us to know that you know, these traditions will carry on through another generation you know, in our children.

BY: Do you see a difference between your parents' generation, your generation and your children. How these things are manifested to they remain largely the same, to be involved and change like your Thanksgiving dinner.

MG: You know, I really feel that their traditions might not have changed, but they have expanded, although I feel that the practice of their tradition might the change. But the values behind the tradition, they stayed the same. For example, I believe like, like today we might not wear Indian traditional clothes every day, we might wear contemporary clothes but we still touch the feet of our eldest to as a sign of respect to them or to take their blessings so, whenever I see my older brother right in this [Unintelligible] for the first time in the day, every day I go and touch his feet and when my son [FOREING NAME] he sees me, he touches my feet so it's a good

feeling to know. So it's like we're taking their blessings and to me personally I feel touching their feet is like saying I'm only equal to the dust[??] of your feet you know. So I believe my children have grown up in you know with the American traditions and we have instructed all the Indian traditions in them and for us me and my wife we have adapted American traditions as well you know. So we love celebrating it as a family and enjoy it because I think America is such a melting part and we meet so many people, I think is the only country where you meet so many people from so many diverse places so many you know, ideas and so many different countries that I think we've really grown a lot culturally and traditionally since we've come to America.

BY: Could you talk a little bit about how you met your wife and your marriage and what that ceremony was like?

MG: Yes, so you know, I really feel that... I got engaged in 1985, okay. So, at that time this was a big tradition of arranged marriages. So all the marriages were arranged by their parents keeping in mind the culture from where people come from, the traditions where they come from, and also their education background and the family status and or... So one day I got a call from my parents, I was in Chicago and my parents and my brother were in India and they told me that they had chosen my wife for me to marry and they had done that because they thought it would be a great idea and she would be a great match for me. So I'll tell you a really interesting story that happened, the next day when I went to my college, I told all my American friends that I have something special to share with you, I have something special to share with you, they got all excited and they all collected in the cafeteria. So, they all were curious to know what is he going to share with me so, when I told them that I had gotten engaged last night, nobody could believe it. They were all excited and then... but they also said they were a little bit surprised and they said: "We did not even know you were dating anyone." And I told them of course I was not dating anyone and that my parents had chosen my wife to be. They couldn't believe it, they really couldn't believe it you had to see the site, some of them fell down from the chairs, and I remember because screaming and collecting more soon you know, they were like a crowd around us. They really couldn't believe that my parents chose the wife for me and I got engaged on the phone. So, I really felt like I stood out, I felt different from them and you know what was a norm in India, was completely [unintelligible] of here and so but I just want to tell you today it's been 30 years and I've been happily married to this moment and have two beautiful children [FOREIGN NAMES] with her and I feel like all my friends from school aren't awe of how beautifully this tradition of arranged marriage is what doubt.

BY: So did you, you went back to India to meet her and her family?

MD: Yeah. So then I went back to India to meet her, I had a very elaborate wedding. There were over 5,000 people at my wedding. People flew from the whole over the world for my wedding and the festivities went on for about a whole week. There's different traditions, different you know, ceremonies that happened and it was really beautiful event and it's very vivid in my memory and I still meet my friends from America, people flew in from Europe, from Australia, everywhere and everybody remembers the wedding, you know. It was really a lot of fun and it's a tradition our culture is all about fabric and color and festival... festivities and lively and it's amazing you know.

BY: So you then, you returned to the United States?

MD: Then I return to United States after that and I lived first with my brother for a few months, my dear brother and his wife Rita, my sister in law and then I bought [unintelligible] my home and then I started my life in my new home over there. You know, I also remember when I started my business in the beginning, I used to make my appointment and go on the road a lot and so when I would go meet the people remember this is the early 80's when I would go meet the people, they would always be a little bit intrigued by my look, specially the turban on my head so I was always start out by explaining who I was, where I was from and so I really realized people were always curious to find out more and they were fascinated by my stories when I would tell them how I was a vegetarian all my life, never even had eggs or meat or fish or anything, they will always interested to find out how beautiful our religion was you know, the basis behind that they're so simple and so powerful and they love the story of my arranged marriage all the time, they were all captivated by all these stories out, I always felt different, I felt proud to be an Indian that so many people were more interested in the stories and after being here for three decades, I just know that so many of them after listening to my stories about the riches of India, about the spiritual [unintelligible] and the tradition. They have gone back to visit India and they've all had a great experience doing that they all loved it you know. So, I think it's America is a place where people from all over the world you know, come in and they unite themselves and they all become one, there is no difference between, you don't even ask where you're from, you just you know, fall in love with somebody and this is a place where you can have this kind of experience it's really very, very interesting. I've always believed that you know it's important to you know, feel and get the sense of how powerful America is to bring all this whole world together. I remember when I was... when my parents left me here and when they were returning back to India, I had this, like I said I had this [unintelligible] pain in my chest with a longing to go back to India and for the next few years, I worked here, I lived here, I got married, I even raised my children here but deep down inside, I felt like I belong to India but the day I really felt American was the day after 09-11-2001, when there was a terrorist, terrorist attack on America and it shook up the whole country. At that time, I felt like my own country was under attack you know, I felt a lot of pressure in my chest. I felt a lot of pain that it was the same pain that I had felt for the longing to go back to India when my parents had left. That was the day I really felt American. That was the time when I realized that not only America was a part of me; I was a part of America. It was like I felt like America is in my system you know. It is I really realized that I was a part of America you know and America was just a part of me it was yeah, it's like you don't realize sometimes to new experience you know and what America has done for all of us is like unbelievable and together we could just do it you know. I also believe that America is such a unique country. I travel a lot all over the world and I feel that the whole world looks up at America. Sometimes we get caught up in the little things you hear on television and you know. It could be personal opinions but I have traveled all over the world every continent I've been to and I feel America is a magnet. I think it attracts people from the richest to the poorest countries. I feel America after living in so many countries investing so many countries; I feel America gives us the freedom, freedom to express our inner feelings. In other places sometimes you do things just under social pressure or you're not free to express yourselves. I believe America brings out this desire, it creates this desire to bring out the best in you. It is very hard to live anywhere else in the world once you live in America. I have friends from all over the world, they come to visit America actually nobody wants to go back. They might go back because they have to, but nobody wants to go back from here. I believe in America you don't have to follow

[unintelligible] when I was growing up in India, a driver expected his son to be a driver you know, a merchant expected to the son to be a merchant here, you can be who you want if you're willing to work for it, I am a good example of what I feel. I went to an Engineering School, everybody in my family you know, only did the job nobody had ever done in the business and but I did not want to work for anyone actually, I never worked for anyone even for one single day but I believe America gave me this opportunity. This country gave me the opportunity to become an entrepreneur. I believe this country doesn't judge you; it always gives you a second chance, which is hard to find anywhere else. I think America runs on a lot of discipline. It gives you equality, it gives you freedom to express yourself and I think with hard work and dedication you get rewarded accordingly. I believe there are no limits to what you can achieve provided you work hard and I really I'm sure and I have experiences that you can dream it anywhere in the world but you can definitely achieve it in the United States of America. You definitely can.

BY: So where did your entrepreneurial spirit come from?

MD: You know, it just came from within; I just wanted to just go and create something on my own. I did not even know what I going to create in the beginning I was just going to carve my own path and just make a mark in because a good part of me is doing the meditations and be comfortable with who I am, the confident in my own skin just very comfortable and I just wanted to give back and you know, all my life my parents taught me it is important to give back, not only to your family but to your society. Not only to your society but to your country. Not only to your country to the whole [unintelligible] so, and I had this energy, I believe if you have a passion you can do anything, I had this energy inside of me and I wasn't getting it stopped I could work twenty two hours and not even feel like I need to sleep, get up and just do it so, I was like feeling in myself in this small body of mind that I was unstoppable like I was just going to do it, if I failed I was... I was just going to keep on going and you know, just create something new like I think I've had the best first experience in America. I'd always heard that this is the land of opportunity. But now, I believe I've experienced it in the last 30 years, starting with little money and just ten dresses from the garage of my brother's house, today it became a multimillion dollar empire and recognized over 32 countries all over the world and soon when we started the business, I started getting known from my embellishments, my flamboyant styles and I believe this is, remember in the early mid 80's, people were intrigued by the mystic of India that I brought with me because I worked extremely, extremely hard and fashion is a relief fast changing industry you know, it changes before you can blink, it keeps you on your toes but we needed, I needed a lot of ... to work with a lot of integrity and a clear vision. It wasn't easy but I gave it all I had. I just was going to keep on giving and but I also believe that what America gave me. America also gave me all it had. It gave me the opportunity; the opportunities that came my way were completely life changing. As today I look that, look back at it in and it's humbling to say that you know, I've been seen on national and international pageant stages. I have dressed hundreds of celebrities all over the world. The designs have been showcased in all walks of life like movies, videos, red carpet events and even occident network had done a reality show where they dedicated the whole episode on me. So, I came to America with nothing in my hand and how could I even have thought of reaching such heights. I really believe if it can happen to me, it can happen to anyone. I feel that this type of success cannot be had, cannot be had anywhere else in the world. It is you know, America that gives you back and it's an interaction with so many different people from all over the world that [unintelligible].

BY: So, when in your role as a businessman, [unintelligible] thinking more as Indian or more as an American? And likewise in your... in with your home and family. I would imagine you more of your cultural background...

MD: You know, I believe I'm really, really proud of my heritage, of my roots because it gives me the security of who I was in a clear vision of who I am today. That has made me the confident successful man I am today. But I also believe at the same time what America has shown me, what America has given to me, it is just unbelievable and so when you look at this man sitting in front of you talking I think it's a good blend of India and America, a good part of you know, both cultures. To me I believe success is a journey, it's really not a destination. It is not just financial gain. I believe success is being in peace with who I am today. To me success is happiness. Success has been people around me succeed you know, like I live by the golden rule where they say treat others like how you want to be treated. Give and don't even expect to get back. Just give and give and give you know. Treat everybody as your equal; it doesn't matter who they're from? What their education background is? How old they are? How young they are? I learned from the younger generation every single time you know. I also feel like success has changed a lot for me, I came to America as a student, just wanted to succeed in my studies. The faith took me to the fashion industry, made me an entrepreneur and started with very little money and now it's become a very large corporation I would stay comparative to what we [unintelligible] and when I was in India, I was just a student, I would just dream about having my business. But my dream became a reality in America. Of course I had to work hard for it, but also I found extraordinary success. Since I've come to America, I think things have been bigger and they have been better and I believe that coming here not only that we are stronger financially but also I have become stronger traditionally and culturally and my wife feels the same and I also believe my children [FOREING NAMES] they have a good sense of diversity you know, and I believe to have this kind of lasting success, he have to connect with them in this so, and you have to be true to yourself and give back, give back to the world. So, we don't know only practices ourselves we also try to preach it to our children. When hurricane Katrina came, my both of my children were only in middle school. So, it took about a month and made small, small things with their own hands and then they held a fundraiser with the raised over \$650 dollars as children and gave back and a few years ago my son [FOREING NAME] he went to visit the country of Belize, he went to visit the U.S. ambassador, [unintelligible] and the ambassador's wife Barbara took [unintelligible] to visit the endangered species rehab center and then [FOREING NAME] got there, he was devastated. It was a hurricane that had destroyed the whole habitat. They were big [unintelligible] was endangered animals locked up in small cages. So him immediately actually called right from that habitat and said: "I want to help" "Of course" we said. You should do it on your own, we will support this cause for you so he spent six months in America going from door to door collecting one or two dollars at a time and it took him six months to collect over \$11,000 dollars and he flew back to Belize and look at the people of America, they did not care where the habitat was, they did not even think it's not in America, it is in another country but they gave and poured out and children or students or you know, elders wherever they poured out this money for him and he took it back to Belize and with which they build a new habitat and what was really interesting was I have a picture of him with the jaguar was licking his third eye, his forehead as a sign of saying thank you to him because [unintelligible] in a cage and that jaguar jumped on top and licked his forehead. But you know this is the kind of thing to go back. Also my gen... the last

three generations my respected grandfather, my respected father, my dear brother, did help set up hundreds of meditation centers all over the world. They're all nonprofit organizations where you can go and meditate you know and connect with your inner self and also my lovely wife she started a nonprofit, not for profit organization which is called your extended family where they provide help to people who are going through a difficult time. They provide food, they provide emotional support and transportation so I think it's a good way to give back. I always feel giving back, gives me a boost to achieve more. Overall I feel I was able to thrive and succeed exceptionally well but I credit all of this like you ask to, you know America or India I credit all of this to America, of course to the people of America and also to the simple thinking and the practice of meditation that my parents taught me all through my life you know. I also believe like contributing to the American experience has been great like I think most of the women in America remember to gowns, their prom gown, and their wedding gown and for the last three decades, I've helped many women have this unforgettable experience and both of these significant moments of their lives. So I'm thrilled that thousands and thousands of women have made me a part of their beautiful milestones and whenever they look back at those moments, I think Mac Duggal will always put a smile on their faces. I would daily read the pageant consultants and celebrities and the most important thing I tell them is I don't sell trends I sell confidence. It's really not about the gown, it's always about the woman in the gown and it's important like I said to give back you know, over the last three decades we must give hundreds of gowns away to the less fortunate and it's a great feeling when you get the feedback from them as to what Mac Duggal means in their lives you know. I believe today hundreds of Americans rely upon what I have built and they gain from its success and I really truly see that my experience, my American experience proves that this land of unlimited opportunity is still alive for those who are willing to work for it. It's unbelievable living here, I think there is no other place like this and it's created by the people of the world, it's not created by one person. It is a feeling of togetherness that you know, it's created. I believe I've made thousands of friends all over the world just because I lived here I can [unintelligible] so many people and I keep on pouring out like my father said: "Give, give, give and somehow when you give, you grow." How it happens? I don't know but the world is like that the energy is like that, always balances out. I just wanted to say a chord from my father's poetry it said it's a beautiful chord it says: "I started alone on this journey of love, filled with faith and zeal. At every step travelers joined me and soon we became a [unintelligible]". So I believe it's a beautiful you know, it's a feel proud that I was able to make an impression in the world of fashion. I also really feel proud that the woman that my parents chose for me and my dear Bubbly and also my dear brother, my elder brother and his lovely wife my sister law Rita, they've all stored by my side in this beautiful journey of life and I also feel blessed that the legacy of Mac Duggal will continue to my children and I [unintelligible].

BY: And what it's your wife's formal name?

MD: Her name is [FOREING NAME] Duggal but because she is always bubbly, we call her bubbly. She's always got this full of energy and she is this amazing person who has stood by my side. All through my life, what is amazing? Is she has never even said no to me for anything in my entire life, not even once and I could be demanding sometimes. But she's always stood by me. So that just shows to me how beautifully you know that arranged marriage system worked out for me. Before at that time taught to first get married and then fall in love. So I believe my parents and my brother was

so wise to choose this perfect match for me, which I probably could have not damaged myself you know. Other today's generation they feel a little differently, they feel like first they need to get married... first they need to fall in love and then get married. But you know, today of course these traditions are approach a little differently but I would definitely let my children you know, choose their own life partners.

BY: But perhaps they'll come to you and your wife and say find me someone.

MD: And we would love to if they come to us to find them, we but love to go back to the old school system and go and find them the perfect match and if they're approve it, that's going to be beautiful. Because I've seen it work so many times in my father's case his wedding was arranged, my older brother his wedding was arranged mine and all of them has really worked out, really, really beautifully.

BY: Whose role is the mother's role or the father's role to find a suitable match?

MG: Actually, the parents do it together because they first research you know, compatibility in the background of the religion and the background of the society, the education level, the intellect and social status so I really believe because I have lived my life like that, that it is a good blend because the person you're marrying comes from a similar feelings, similar background so it makes things easier in this journey of life because the journey of life isn't an adjustment you know, it's like you know four wheels or two wheels you know, going in the same direction so, I think it's a combination of the mother and the father and it could be other relatives in the family, in my case it was also my brother and my sister in law who you know, helped to put this all together you know, I also feel like in the last three decades, there's been a lot of challenges in my life as well when me and my wife moved here we were in her mid-twenty's. So, of course we brought a lot a culture with us, we brought a lot of traditions with us and we also adapted and accepted the ways of the west. But we will be connected... stayed connected to our roots. As our children were growing up it was a big challenge for us to raise them in America, keeping them connected to our traditions and their heritage and yet not taking away from the American culture. So, it was easier said than done. You know my business was very demanding because I had to travel six months in a year. Because it's an international business, the production is done in other countries and be sell all over the world. So I was working like eighteen hours a day, nonstop and of course my wife was involved in the business with me but when we had our children they were born in America we had to make choices. So, of course my wife picked children, we wanted to focus on our children. We worked hard to explain the importance of our heritage to them. So my wife since my daughter was born from that day, never has come to work even for one single day she wanted to dedicate her life to all the children to keep them alive in both cultures. So, everything had to be done twice first explaining in English then in Hindi you know, now today I'm proud to say that both of my children speak fluent Hindi and English and both of them enjoy Indian and American ways of life [unintelligible] as a fashion designer and she has an own collection to her name call Ieena, I-E-E-N-A from Mac Duggal and it's seen in stores all across the world. She's also done a bachelor's in Indian Classical Music and has put out an Indian cd and my son [FOREING NAME] is studying to be an entrepreneur but he's done his bachelors in Tabla which is like the Indian drums but also he's done Indian Classical Vocal Music. He is trained in American-English vocal music. He

plays a saxophone. He plays the guitar, he plays piano, so we did our best to you know, keep the culture alive and I hope that they carried on to another generation. But I also feel like I had a lot of business challenges as well. We started this business in the mid 80's and when our business started it took off almost immediately for the first decade of business went up between 30 – 90% every year. Everything I did was a big hit, even the smallest thing I always felt everything I touched, turned into gold and even the smallest things sold extremely well. But after about a decade suddenly the fashion changed and the beading [unintelligible] I was known was no longer in style anymore and the business started dropping. For the next five years, I had to struggle to keep this business a float. I tried everything I could we design dresses. I would sit up all night thinking what other new things I can do? Everything that came to my mind I tried but it seemed like all efforts were failing. Loans were piling up and everything seemed gloomy at that time. I believe this time everything I touched turned into mud. I couldn't understand it. But the one thing that's very important was I never gave up. I never even for one minute, I couldn't do it I always believed in myself. It was difficult days; there were the toughest days of the business career. But I have regrouped myself. It was a long five years; I practically had to start all over again. You know with new strategies, new ways of thinking and I had to change everything. It took me five long years and slowly the business started to turn around and this time I learned from my mistakes and I really that's why I believe that America always gives you a second chance and doesn't judge you. This time around we became even more successful. So, today it's a daily reminder to me that success should not be taken as granted. You have to always work hard for it and the advice I would give to the future generation is that it is important to dream but to make a dream a reality be must stay grounded. We must believe in ourselves and do everything through to your heart. If you want to succeed you must focus on your passion and give it all you have and sure enough, I believe some door or somebody's door will open up somewhere and show you the light and guide you on your own beautiful path. From what I have seen, no two people in the world have taken the same journey. Everybody has to carve your own path. It is important to keep your traditions alive. I have seen that in my life. They really help you. I would say love your country. Value your freedom. You have it. Remember. Just remember everybody has this energy, this in [unintelligible] inside a few just listen to it carefully this voice will always guide you on the right path. I believe. A loud voice cannot compete with a clear voice even if it is a whisper and then I think just relax, sit back and let the journey unfold beautifully. I think. It is a beautiful country where we live in, I think we've come here from all over the world. This is called a melting part and it really is and you meet people from so many diverse countries, so many diverse traditions and so many different ways of living that it makes it beautiful and strengthen us to continue to expand your inner self, expand your outer self you know, just believe and just go and just do it and give out the peace and give out the love and give out your energy and give it all you have and don't judge anything because you don't know where the person is coming from, just give, give and usually give and I am a good example of this you know, I really want to thank the Smithsonian for taking up this project and I believe they have addressed it so beautifully, I think this is the need of the time. I think this project is a great [unintelligible] and who better than this organization, which can reach millions and millions of people. I think this project will lighten up a new generation to see things differently. To see what America believes in and it will

make people realize what this country has done to unite different faiths, different cultures, different traditions and also to realize how America has given back to the emigrants. Not only what we have given to America, it's good to realize what America has given back to us and I think some Smithsonian done such a great job in this project. It's very close to my heart I love this to share so that people can you know, experience from it, I feel honored to be a part of this program and I hope many can gain from my experience because when I came here, I had no experience in business, I discovered my own path. I made my own systems and I think people can just learn from it. I want to see a beautiful chord that my father has written in his poetry and it says: "What does it matter if I am called a man. In truth, I am the very soul of love. The entire earth is my home and the universe my country." So, it so beautifully said it just sums it all you know, to put it all together.

BY: So, here at the Smithsonian we use objects as pathways to stories about people and their culture. Can you talk a little bit about if you're a member of the Sikh community or that part of the Indian community, what kinds of things would you expect to see here at the Smithsonian?

MG: I think it would be great to see things from different cultures I feel because this is such a large country and people like even myself are getting exposure to different cultures here, it would be great to see things from different culture to understand the meaning behind them. To understand you know, where they coming from like our prestigious turban you know, sometimes people get confused. Actually it's so interesting even last week, somebody stopped me in the [unintelligible] mall in Chicago and said: "Would you mind if I ask you a question and she said, could you explain to me about the turban?" of course because people are ignorant, it is great to know the meaning behind it so, I explain to her you know, the turban is a sign of respect, it is a responsibility that you put on your head to treat people as their equals you know. Of course, it restores the Sikh identity so you can recognize that this in India we call all the Sikhs Sardars but they always call them Sardar G, G is the sign of respect which means that this is the respectable man, he has a sense of responsibility. He is only going to do good for yourself so I would love for them to showcase something like our turban and write a little story behind the what is the meaning of it, just do it, educate the people or to create awareness to them that you know, they can all learn from how beautiful the meaning behind it is, is not just something that you've wrapped around your head. It is a very respectable thing, it's respected all over the world and there is a true meaning behind it. Like that other cultures would have you know, other things and it would be great to you know show those kind of things.

BY: So again. Are there other objects you can think of...speak [unintelligible] for the Sikh identity?

MG: Yes, you know we also carry our sword and the reason to carry that's sword with us was to protect others, so that this sect was made when you go out [unintelligible] and people being torture or they're getting hurt so, that you can protect yourself and then protect that weak of people so that nobody is humbling the weak of people. That was the reason behind it, that would be great for us to be able to port you know a sword in

the Smithsonian. I would be happy to provide you know with a beautiful respectable sword. A traditional from the Sikh culture you know, I think it would also be write an explanation why the sword? What is the meaning behind it? What was the purpose behind it? That's going to really...

BY: Do you receive one as [unintelligible] to passage? At some point in your life or...

MG: Yes. you know, I still have the sword from my respected grandfather [FOREING] I have his actual sword you know, with us because passed down to my father and he passed on to both of our me and my respected brothers and [FOREING] so it's a very [unintelligible] sword and we always keep it you know, with us as a sign of his memory and will passed on to the next generation you know. We're big on keeping our traditional values and I think it's important to save this artifacts so that. We can always connect the story behind them you know. It's always good to have that.

BY: We've covered enough a lot, is there anything else you'd like to add?

**[END OF AUDIO]**

**[75 MINUTES]**