

The Sacramento Movimiento Chicano and Mexican American Education Oral History Project

Antonio Cisneros

Oral History Memoir

Interviewed by Theresa Riviera

August 4, 2023

Unofficial transcript generated by Panopto captioning services; edited by Savannah Mitchell, California State University Library

[00:00:16]

[Background Noise]

[00:00:18]

Riviera Thank you, Tony, for being here today. So this interview will be video and audio-recorded and will be part of the Sacramento Movimiento Chicano and Mexican American Education Project oral history, which will be archived at the Donald and Beverly Gerth Special Collections & University Archives at the California State University Sacramento. Do you agree to the recording?

[00:00:51]

Antonio Cisneros Yes.

[00:00:53]

Riviera Can you, today is August the 4th, 2023. The time is 11:30. The location is Sacramento, California. Could you please say your full name and spell it?

[00:01:11]

Cisneros Anthony Urban Cisneros, C-I-S-N-E-R-O-S. Anthony, A-N-T-H-O-N-Y. Urban, U-R-B-A-N, just like urban renewal.

[00:01:28]

Riviera Thank you. Could you please provide your date of birth with the month, the day, and the year?

[00:01:36]

Cisneros 12-27-1947.

[00:01:38]

Riviera And where were you born?

[00:01:40]

Cisneros I was born in French Camp, California.

[00:01:43]

Riviera Thank you. Where were you raised?

[00:01:47]

Cisneros I was raised in Mexicali and labor camps all up and down California. And it was back and forth type of thing, where you would work in the fields, and you'd go back to Mexico. But I was mostly a border person, de la frontera.

[00:02:16]

Riviera What did your parents do for a living?

[00:02:18]

Cisneros My parent, my mother was a farm labor cook. She was La Dona, she was the best cook in the San Joaquin Valley, and we, she would cook all over the place, all the way from Oregon all the way down to the, to the, to the lower valleys, you know. She was a cook. She was the best.

[00:02:47]

Riviera From Oregon, all the way down.

[00:02:49]

Cisneros Yeah.

[00:02:49]

Riviera Wow.

[00:02:53]

Cisneros She would do it during the times with the Braceros, and when the Bracero era ended, she, she continued working the labor camps as a cook, and for, I guess, US-born farm workers. But it was always in the labor camps, and always, and that was her job.

[00:03:23]

Riviera How many brothers and sisters do you have?

[00:03:25]

Cisneros I have one brother, three sisters.

[00:03:32]

Riviera What was the primary language growing up?

[00:03:35]

Cisneros The primary language was Spanish at first, and then as we got older, it became mostly English, mixed in with a little Spanglish.

[00:03:50]

Riviera Please describe your experiences as a child and youth in your family and your neighborhood.

[00:03:58]

Cisneros I had many neighborhoods. I moved around a lot. I lived in a lot of places. A lot of labor camps that we would spend time with, so as a kid, I grew up in a campo. And then we would go back to Mexico for a while, this, I'm talking about when we were kids. We would go to, back to Mexicali with, where my grandmother lived and stay there for the holidays, [inaudible], then we'd come back out here and begin doing the same thing every year. I lived in Stockton, I lived in Sacramento, and San Jose, and Fresno, and a lot of places where those labor camps was. I went to a lot of those schools in various places. I would go to three schools a year. Even in my high school time, I was still going to three schools, three high schools. You know, Fresno High, you know, Sanger High, and Sobrat High. Wherever those labor camps were, I would, that's where I would be. And being there, I would mostly work a lot in the fields myself. I picked everything from, from, you know, from cotton in Fresno, to strawberries in Oregon, to the [Spanish] by Marysville area, melons in the Salinas Valley. We did all that, so I was pretty good at that, actually. Pretty good farm, farmhand, farm worker. You know, anything to support the family.

[00:05:51]

Riviera Did you or your family experience any discrimination?

[00:05:58]

Cisneros When you were in the campos, you were pretty much among your own people. When you were out of the campos, it was a little bit different. I mean, we have had, in the labor camps, patrones, contractors, who were very, very mean. They would, I remember one Mister Perry from Lathrop who would go out in the fields with a, with a, with a shotgun and a rifle to get people working. And my mother hated him, but she had a, she had to finish the season there. So yeah, there were, there was a, a lot of that, but basically, if you're out in a campo, you're basically working with, with a, with the minorities.

[00:06:59]

Riviera What are your earliest memories of events that attracted you to El Movimiento?

[00:07:06]

Cisneros My mother was probably one of the first persons to sign up with Chavez, as a cook. She still signed up. And this was way back in the 60s. And, and that always stuck in my head. You know, so this idea of, of, of farm rights and, was always, was always a part of me. I

mean, I grew up in it, and, and when I started my career, then I, it was still, it was still there.

[00:07:40]

Riviera How old were you when your mother signed up to be the cook?

[00:07:44]

Cisneros Oh, when she signed up, when she became, wanted to be a cook?

[00:07:49]

Riviera To cook with Cesar Chavez, for the United.

[00:07:52]

Cisneros Oh, she didn't cook for Chavez.

[00:07:53]

Riviera I mean, not, I'm.

[00:07:55]

Cisneros Oh, signed up for the union.

[00:07:57]

Riviera Yes, for the union.

[00:07:57]

Cisneros Oh. I, I can't remember. It was probably around '65, '66, around there.

[00:08:04]

Riviera Okay.

[00:08:04]

Cisneros It's, it was quite a while ago.

[00:08:07]

Riviera Oh.

[00:08:07]

Cisneros It, you're asking a 75-year-old guy to remember stuff, are you kidding?

[00:08:12]

[Laughter].

[00:08:14]

Riviera Okay. How did other Mexican, Mexican Americans, Latinos react to the term Chicana or Chicano?

[00:08:27]

Cisneros I'm a Chicano. Always have been. Of course, they have, today they have Latinx and Hispanic and all of this other stuff, but I've always been a Chicano, and Chicano, to me, meant more than just being, you know, a, a, a Mexican. It meant a political, a political idea. So it, it was more than that, so I always felt I was Chicano. But if somebody asked me, well, what are you? Well, I'm Mexican. You know. Yo, Latinx? I don't even know what that is.

[00:09:06]

Riviera Had you heard of the civil rights movement at that time?

[00:09:14]

Cisneros I was aware of it. I was very young. I, in '69, I mean '66, joined the military, and just to prove how, how ignorant we were at the, when it came to events and things happening, I didn't even know there was a war going on. So the next thing I know, I'm in Vietnam, and I, I spent two tours over there. I thought about staying in, but I didn't because the, in '68 there was the, there was the Tet Offensive, and that kind of changed my mind a little bit. So in '69, I, I finished my tour as a marine in Vietnam. And soon after I went, went into, I went into college, and, and that kind of began to orient me more about the, the Latino movement, the Chicano movement, the student movement, the, you know, the, the human, human rights that were happening all over, all over the country, and the anti-war movement, which I kind of kept quiet, because at that time, you, you didn't want to say you were, you fought in Vietnam. You didn't want to say that. So it became kind of like, you know, forgotten, in my memory. Go ahead.

[00:10:56]

Riviera Were you part of the Mexican American Education Project?

[00:10:59]

Cisneros No. I knew about them. I did, I did a story on them, you know, but I wasn't a part of it.

[00:11:10]

Riviera Did your knowledge of cultural issues influence your involvement and participation in the Movimiento?

[00:11:22]

Cisneros Repeat yourself?

[00:11:23]

Riviera Sure. Did your knowledge of cultural issues influence your involvement and participation in the Movimiento?

[00:11:37]

Cisneros Well, to begin with, let me tell you what my career was. I was a journalist, a photojournalist, later on a manager. I worked in, in, in television, I even worked in newspapers. So a lot of that ideal that you don't want to express is you don't want to be, how would I call it. Exhibit signs of you being on one side or the other. So it was always in my mind and that kind of thing, but I think I, I think what I came here to tell you mostly is about how Latinos in the media became who they are today. You know right now, you have a lot of Latinos working on television, working in the, not so much in, in newspapers, because newspapers are really suffering right now. But on radio and, and in a lot of other places. I mean, you have cable TV, you have, from news and information, which is the important thing that a community needs. You need to know about your health, you need to know about a lot of things that affect, impact you, your life every day. In 1970, there was no such thing. Radio played music and that was it. Television, you had television news, but in the, there was no Latinos that you could see, no issues that were present in the newsrooms. In. And the same thing was in newspapers. The newsrooms were, they had very few Latinos. The newsrooms would not discuss Latino issues. They were not sensitive to it. They were not, they, they were not educated about who that community was, what community was here in Sacramento. So, and 1970, there was a, a lack of information that was going out to Latino community. I mean, we had some, some, I, I used to call them rag sheets, newspapers that the community would make for themselves. So, you know, it's, it's just one of those things that, you know, like an Hispano back then. So there was no, no real information that, that the community was. There was, they wouldn't take about our values, they didn't talk about our anything. And I know that because, when I got into television, or when I got into radio, I mean, newspapers first, in 1972 I met two individuals, two people that I prize. Manuel Valencia and a Coreano named K.W. Lee, who worked for the, at that time, the Sacramento Union, when we had two newspapers in town. And Manny Valencia worked for the, also for the Union at that time. And they wanted to find Latinos to get into the media. And for some reason they, they, they found me, and they encouraged my writing. They encouraged me to go to write in, in, in the newspaper style, and they, and they also encouraged me to take an internship at the Sacramento Bee, which I did for about six months. I came into the Sacramento Bee, I started doing obituaries at first, and then I worked my way up through the crime, you know, and different departments, and to my, I was able, toward the end of my internship to, to do a front page story on, on Latino farmworkers in, around the Sacramento area, and that became a front page story, and it was, it was kind of like a, a little bit of a series. There was two stories attached to it. So that was my first experience working in the, in the mainstay media. And, but I haven't, I didn't complete my, I hadn't completed my, my college education at that time. So I went back to college, finished my, my degree in print journalism, and then somewhere along the road I became interested in, in television news. And then I said okay, let me try, you know, getting a, a degree in

that. So I went to San Jose State, where I picked up a degree in, in, in film and television. So as soon as I left, I went into television, I went into looking for a job, and one of the first jobs was back here to Sacramento. So I started working for Channel 10 as a studio guy, studio cameraman. But I didn't want that. I wanted something else, and in less than a year I was a photojournalist. I was shooting news, I was editing news. And in the process, I was able to do, start doing things on my own over there, because you could take the job, and do the job, and only the job, but if you're interested not just in the technical aspects of television, but in, but in telling stories, and then you have to push yourself to go beyond what the, what you're supposed to do. You have the equipment, it was right there, so why not do a documentary? So the first thing I did, and this was in less than a year, our first documentary dealt with Vietnam. It was called Harvest of Shame. It was done, I went all over the place looking for, for ex-military people, medal of honor winners, you know, all kinds, and a lot of them were Latinos. You know, and I, and I made a point to, to put a face to these people. And I did a documentary, and believe it or not, by the end of the year it won an award. So that gave the people a little bit more confidence in what I was doing, but I was still a photographer. You know, and the following year I did another documentary, Stockton Street Gangs, and which, it was probably one of the first stories, first half-hour documentaries on gangs, not an easy subject to do a documentary on, but I did. You know, and everybody kind of raved about it. You know, I, I didn't quite like it. Then the following, the following story I did, and I'm very proud of this one, it was called A Day in the Life of Labor Camp Number 1. You know I grew up in labor camps. You know I knew a little bit about it, so I, I went out, found a different, found a labor camp over here by Knights Landing, and decided to make a story in the life of the camp. You know, and I took the story from three people, and one was a cook, one was a, the camp cleaner, and the other one was, was one of the workers. And I did a story on, on it, and, and, and it kind of worked into one day. Of course, I did it over two days, and I, I was able to get another shooter to work with me, and I shot the thing, I edited it, I wrote it, or I edited it and put it together, and I called it A Day in the Life of Labor Camp Number 1. And I'm, I was very proud of that, and I was very happy the way it came out, because it also, it, it also won an award. And those early award were important to me, because I needed them to prove to them that, that we could do different things. We could do, you know, for them to have confidence in me, in order for me to continue doing what I was doing. So I, after that I, there was, I had done a total of about 25 to 30 documentaries. I don't even remember their names anymore. You know, but, and so I worked in television. Go ahead and you can, you could ask a question.

[00:21:07]

Riviera No, no, keep talking, I'm enjoying it, because I didn't know this about you.

[00:21:13]

Cisneros Yeah. What's important is that these people, that begin, that got me into this. Manuel Valencia, K.W. Lee, they begin to form a news media association. It was called the Chicano News Media Association. And it was initially began in Los Angeles, and they

were influenced by Ruben Salazar, who was, I don't know if you know him, he was a, he was a, a reporter who was killed in one of the riots in L.A. And he was one of those guys that always pushed on bringing out minority stories in the LA Times. So they, that was their influence, and of course it influenced me too. So we formed this club, this association. The association was to educate and to encourage careers in the media, either print or, or broadcasting. So they, they formed this group, the CCNMA, here in Sacramento. We did banquets, we did workshops, we did a lot of speaking tours, we'd done, we did a lot of that over the years we were there. Because you've got to remember, they were, and Latinos, there were no Latinos in the newsrooms. There was very few reporters, and there was no content that dealt with us. So we knew that, and we needed to change that. We needed to find ways to get our, our news departments to recognize us. So that's what these very early, what I call pioneers in that, because today it's a whole lot different. You see Latinos all over the place. You know, but at that time, there was none. There was none. And it, the impact on our community was even worse. I mean, how would we know about diabetes? We were dying from it. You know? Nobody really talked about it. Political, financial stories, you know, and even sports stories that we, we love, you know? All of that information and news was important to us. We could get it now, I mean, we could, with our phone, you know? With our, you could get, you know, even on Alexa you could get information. So it's important that, for us at that time, that we knew that was a serious problem. Go ahead.

[00:24:16]

Riviera So, your personal impact of the Movimiento?

[00:24:19]

Cisneros I think I told you that already.

[00:24:21]

>> [Laughter].

[00:24:21]

Cisneros That was our Movimiento.

[00:24:24]

Riviera That was yours. And then, the next one is, what role do you believe the Chicanas played in the Movimiento?

[00:24:34]

Cisneros We had a lot of Latinas. Mary Newman, who was working out of the Sacramento Bee, a print reporter, they would, she rose up to become their, their, their chief reporter in Mexico City, which was kind of a prized position. She was great. She was great. I mean, in television, of course you had Betty Vasquez and some other people that were kind of more popular than, than, you know, but our idea was to get our newsrooms to recognize our community. That was our main goal. Marty Gonzales was a very good

reporter. Michael Pare, Armando Bolteo was involved in quite a lot of that. So I just want to put these names out, because I got to recognize them for, for their effort. Mike Castro, Ricardo Pimentel. They were all pioneers in trying to push educating people and putting out scholarships and that kind of thing. You know? They were all very good, very good journalists, and alongside that. Rick Rodriguez became the manager of the Sacramento Bee later on. Manny Valencia, who was my, my, my shiny star, went on to, to, to do a, a, advertising, public affairs. He had offices in D.C., and L.A., and a whole bunch of places. They, they were very successful. But these, these were people that I really look up to.

[00:26:56]

Riviera So [overtalking].

[00:26:56]

Cisneros You know, I, I, we, Chavez, of course, is one of my, my, my inspirations too, but I was in a different world. I was in a different world where we worked at, and how we did our job. Even in the classrooms, we took other classes in tele-journalism, then we [inaudible]. You know? I came into television, and there were only me and a lot of people with kind of, it's a white environment, and quite a few of them had a problem with me. You know? But I, you have to learn to overcome that, to, to prove to them that you're, that you're just as good or even better than them. So, but I enjoyed that. I enjoy the challenges, you know? So as, as a farmworker, I was pretty darn good. As a marine, I almost stayed there for a lifetime, I got the hell out, you know? So doing this, doing your work, and doing things in life, you got to be like that. You know? Go ahead.

[00:28:24]

Riviera So I have a question for you. Can you describe one of the challenges that you had back when you were a reporter and how you overcame it? Just one.

[00:28:37]

Cisneros One of the challenges.

[00:28:39]

Riviera Correct. We want it to be so that the people who listen to this video understand the challenges that were back in the day.

[00:28:49]

Cisneros I would say getting the people working that you work with to believe in the community you represent.

[00:29:02]

Riviera Oh, okay.

[00:29:03]

Cisneros

And by that I mean, every day you had a, had, you had a news meeting, a day where you had to select the stories you were going to go out and do. And every day I made it a point to, to submit something. You know? And something they didn't know. And that was, to me, important, that they know that we, even as a photographer, knew what was happening in this community, and that perhaps it may become a story, because not every, every, every topic you, you bring up becomes a story of the day, but it could be in a week or two, you know? A lot of it had to do with the, I did a lot of special projects, special series. A series is more than one story that, with the same topic. And, and some of those were, for instance, we did a, we did a thing, I did a thing called the Children of Crack Street. And that was one of those things where I went out, I was out in Stockton. I saw a bunch of kids, they saw me with a camera, they came around me, and they started talking about their neighborhood. And they started talking about all of the drugs in the neighborhood. And then they started talking about all the other bad things that were happening. Prostitution, shootings, and that kind of thing. And I pulled out the camera, and they kept talking. And all of a sudden I realized these kids were the children of this crack street, where crack was, at that time, a big deal. And I turned that into a series of stories. They provide a, a reporter with me, and I produce that, put it on the air. It was a three-part story. And then we came back about 10 years later and redid the story. Went back to the kids, found them, interviewed them. They were in prison. I mean, the, the, the, their environment ate them up. Most of them were in, were in jail, and we went to the jails to find them, talk to them. And, but anyway that, that challenge of getting those people to do that, to recognize that there's more than just the daily story. Television is very reactive. They react to just something that happened. Somebody got shot here. Okay, let's go shoot it. Let's go, you know? But they don't see beyond that. They, you know, there's a lot of stories out there that are really important. There are these kids on crack street, Pilgrim Street, it was really Pilgrim Street, that were suffering, that were being involved in all this horrible stuff around them. But they would just, somebody gets shot, then we should shoot and walk out. You know? But getting them to, to understand that there was more to that, you know? It was a challenge. The other thing is, of course, personal. I wanted to become more of a manager. I couldn't at Channel 10, and it took me a few years where I got offered a job from Univision to go over there and, and, and my job was mostly to try to improve their, their quality. They were not a very good lot at that time. They knew very little about journalism. They, they did journalism the old way, where it was very long, very formal, that kind of thing. I tried to change that. Anyway, that, the next couple of years, Univision was probably one of the highest stations that were hot, that were awarded Emmy's and a whole bunch of stuff for their, for their work. And I was, and I was glad of that. But I wanted to become a manager, and when I went over to Univision, I was. I walked in and I, I was involved every day with their, their daily stories. We, we talked about them, we, we said what else we could do with them. You know, and, and again they were very, just a reactive group that would just do what was happening at the moment. So I needed to, to say that. Today, of course, you know, there's so many Latinos. I am, I'm so happy for what's there now. I'm now happy on the content. I mean, they could do better as far as trying to bring out more stories and more, more human interest stories about our community.

You know? But at least they're there in number. It was none back there. 1970? Nada.
You know?

[00:34:56]

Riviera Can you describe how the Movimiento impacted community life here in Sacramento?

[00:35:07]

Cisneros I did a lot of stories about, you know, Chicanos here, about certain events. There was a time, for instance, when they had the Concilio, and it was a horrible time because there was a, there was mismanagement and everything else, and that impacted the Chicano community, I, I felt.

[00:35:32]

Riviera So what did you say the organization was named?

[00:35:37]

Cisneros The Concilio.

[00:35:37]

Riviera The Concilio?

[00:35:38]

Cisneros Sacramento Concilio. And it was at a time where they were fighting with each other, and in fact, what I remember is one of my first stories in, when I was doing print for the Bee, and they sent me out there, and I didn't know what the heck was going on. You know? But the Movimiento, I, sometimes ebbs and flows. You know, you need strong leaders out in the community. You need people that are not afraid, not afraid to talk about what's happening. Right now there's a lot of things happening. Politically it's a mess. You know? We've got this Dodo Trump, you know, who, and we have Republicans that are no longer the nice people. They're, they're pretty much against a lot of the issues that are, that are against, against Latinos, you know? You know, but, you know, there's a lot of things happening right now as far as that.

[00:37:06]

Riviera I think you mentioned some already, but many Movimiento activists have passed on. Can you identify any individual or individuals that you feel had the impact on the Movimiento and describe, explain their sacrifice?

[00:37:26]

Cisneros Well, one of them is my photographer's father. He was, I mean, I knew that guy every day. I knew where he was.

[00:37:35]

Riviera What's his name?

[00:37:36]

Cisneros Jose Montoya. I knew where he was because he would go to the same places. He would sit there and he would write, or he would be etching little stories about every day, and he knew me by name. And it was like a, hola Tony, como estas, you know? That kind of thing. And I, I admired him. He was a guy that just did, you know, what he felt was important. You know, there were, people would think it's just minor, he's just a painter, he's just a poet, you know? Nobody reads poetry anymore, you know? And, not me. For me, he was a great guy. You know? And his partner was, como se llamas, they, the, I forget his name, who just passed away too. I mean, those are the people that are, that I, I, I knew, because I met them on the street, and they were always out in the street. To tell you the truth, you know, we're talking about the street. I'm probably one of the most traveled guys at that time in, in the media, because I'd been all over the United States. You know, for a variety of reasons. A bombing at the Olympic Station in, in Atlanta, the, you know, charter schools which are starting up. Why don't we go to Minnesota, where they have them. You know, all over the United States. I would go to Washington, D.C., twice a year, because we needed to do something on, on the, our, our political people from, from here and see what they were doing. It was a, a number, and as a result, I also, and because they had confidence in me in trying to do, I'm a Vietnam veteran, I had been in warzones. And one of those was, of course, in El Salvador. They sent, they sent me to El Salvador during the war, back in the 80s, and we did a story on, on conflict in, in, in El Salvador. We also went to Nicaragua at that time, when the Sandinistas were fighting the, the, the Contras, and, and Ronald Reagan was trying to fund the, the Contras. We remembered, I was sent there and I was there for a month. A lot of these trips were sponsored by CBS at the time, because they needed a reporter to, a photographer to fill the, the role that their photographer, who was stationed there, had to leave back to the states for a while, for a vacation or whatever. So I did those stories for both our station and for the CBS network. So Haiti, when they revolted, just like today, we've seen in Haiti. Same thing over there. We spent a week there, and that was pretty difficult. I also went to Africa, Rwanda, where there was starvation and death everywhere. You know, it's not one of my favorite areas, but I, I was very proud of the product we, we were able to put together, even after such a very difficult flight and difficult time being there. We did a story on terrorism in Israel. So we were there for about two weeks covering the, the, the issue of terrorism over there. I went to Germany, went to, been to Mexico a whole bunch of times. You know? We had two earthquakes over there, we had the issue, the women of Juarez, when, when they were, when the women were, were being killed and nobody, nobody could find the guys who, who were doing it. We went out there and we did a, a series, a special series on that. Those were stories I, I, I submitted, and I produced a lot of them. You know, with the exception of the Israel story, which was one of my news directors, and we were having constant news directors. It was a, it was Judio who wanted to do a story on, on what was, how Israel, Jerusalem was handling their issue with terrorism, you know? So I traveled quite a bit, you know, back then, and, but after a while I still was interested in,

in, in being in management. Went over to Univision, I enjoyed my time over there. I was doing, I was working with Latinos, all Latinos, and you know, I, one of the things is I, I speak horrible Spanish, but I could write it, and I could, and I could, not write it, but I could, I could read it very good. So I would look at their scripts every day, and I, you know, what's this, what's that? But I, I enjoy that. My career ended when I body starting giving up. My shoulder was having bad, was have, having a bad time. I couldn't do, you know, when you worked for Univision, you do everything. Over there, you shoot, edit, manage, do your budgets, do everything over there, which I liked, but I, I couldn't, I couldn't, I couldn't do the technical part of it anymore. So I decided to, to retire.

[00:44:17]

Riviera We used a term that may not be known by a lot of people, Judio. What does that mean?

[00:44:23]

Cisneros Jew.

[00:44:24]

Riviera Thank you. And when, when did you retire?

[00:44:32]

Cisneros About 20, 28, 20, 2010.

[00:44:41]

Riviera Oh.

[00:44:43]

Cisneros 10. I, I retired, but I started a business, and my son, who is a film director, I have a son who's a film director. He kind of took over it, so I would go out and get state, state contracts, and he would do them. So I said, okay, so I gave him the company. If he uses it, he uses it. If he doesn't, I'm, I'm out of it. You know? But, you know, I, it's, I, I'm more interested, I was more interested in the stories, and telling the stories and content than, than the technical aspect of cameras and, and all this stuff here.

[00:45:32]

Riviera So last question. Looking back at your experience in the Movimiento, are there any issues that were left unresolved?

[00:45:55]

Cisneros You know, there is a lot of issues unresolved, especially for us. We still have a gang problem, we still have a, a, you know, a crime industry. We still have an immigrant problem, and an immigrant problem that, that is not just Mexicanos, but you know, on, people from Honduras, from Nicaragua, from everywhere. Venezuela, and then the, the Caribbean. We have a lot of Haitians and so on. It's very complicated now. Before it was

just Mexicanos crossing the border, you know, and that was it. But now it's just so complicated that, and that affects us. You know? I mean, I, I think that we need to, to, to put our input into them. We don't put our input into it. You know? And I don't know what the answer is on that. I'm still kind of a newsie. I'm, you know, kind of, I listen to a lot of news even now, at 75. So I, thank god that I'm still kicking. We're going to Paris in next month for, for about 20 days.

[00:47:53]

Riviera Yay.

[00:47:53]

Cisneros And I'm worried about, man, are these legs going to hold up?

[00:47:58]

Riviera Okay. Do you see yourself as staying involved in meeting those challenges that you just mentioned, immigration and gangs? Do you see yourself being engaged in those?

[00:48:13]

Cisneros I would love to get involved. I mean, me and my, and my wife, we talk about issues every day. You know, she wants to beat up Donald Trump every, every three, every minute she sees him. You know, but that's, that's not what you do. But it's, you know, it's, it's, we're in, we are aware of all the news. We're a little bit too old to begin to, to start doing. I mean, I could get on a soup line and help some homeless guy, but that's about it, you know? I, I would love to do a lot of things, but I, I don't know if I can have, I can't hear anymore. You know? And my eyesight is not that great. Where is my glasses, by the way? Yeah, [laughter]. And so there's a lot of things I can't do.

[00:49:25]

Riviera John?

[00:49:27]

[Inaudible Speech]

[00:49:33]

Cisneros Oh.

[00:49:33]

Unknown You want me to cut?

[00:49:34]

Riviera Yeah, just cut. Not, not. He has a lot of paper there in reference to articles in [inaudible]. Is there any way that we can give him an opportunity to show them?

[00:49:44]

Cisneros Yeah. Makes.

[00:49:44]

Unknown Or I could take photographs of them.

[00:49:46]

Cisneros Let me, let me see that painting. I just wanted to talk about that for a little bit.

[00:49:51]

Riviera Yeah, talk, talk.

[00:49:52]

Cisneros And this goes back to the early attempts to try to do theater, different theater, because there was the Teatro Campesino.

[00:50:01]

Riviera Well, I'm going to go ahead and say.

[00:50:04]

Cisneros And.

[00:50:04]

Riviera I'm going to say, now, I see you have this picture, can you share?

[00:50:08]

Cisneros Uh huh.

[00:50:08]

Riviera Okay. Ready? Tell me when.

[00:50:15]

Cisneros Is it, do you need to, [tongue clicking].

[00:50:23]

[Inaudible].

[00:50:26]

Cisneros Okay. Yeah.

[00:50:27]

Riviera Well, thank you.

[00:50:28]

Cisneros I had a. Go ahead.

[00:50:30]

Riviera No, thank you, and I understand you wanted to share some of your story [inaudible].

[00:50:34]

Cisneros Uh huh. Yeah. In early 1972, I think it was, my godfather, my nino, was a teacher at Stockton, San Joaquin Delta College, a Spanish teacher. Very popular guy. He was always teaching folklore, and he loved to do theater. And one of the things we did was to, to write a, a play about Latinos in the United States, and you know, and it comes with music. So this was a musical that he did in 1972, and it became one of the most popular plays at that time. Forget about the Teatro Campesino. Of course they had a message. They were, they were fun to watch, but, but this was a whole different ballgame. He brought together the music of, of the era, of the 40s, of the, even, even the 50s, and, and put a, and put a, a group of kids to get, to get them involved, and they loved it. It was one of the most popular plays ever. We took it on the road, and, and it was, at that time it was very good. It was called Recuerdos de Palomar. Now, palomar was, in the San Joaquin Valley, almost every big town. Fresno, San Jose, had a palomar, which was a nightclub or a dance hall. So when you talk about Recuerdos de Palomar, it means the memories of this dance hall, at that time. And at the dance hall, this is what you would see. You would see all of Mexico's popular performers play here. Tongolele, Tona La Negra, [Spanish]. You know, you would see it. So we created that era on the stage. I worked with him. I was one of the, kind of a coproducer with him. We did that, and we also did another play that we wrote and put together. [Rustling] It was called. [Rustling] [Spanish] No, it was [Spanish], and this was one of the, one of the original, I think, you know, you realize at that time they had ethnic feeders. They were trying to do things, and mostly what they did was take the, the plays of the Teatro Campesino and, and performed them. So, but we had, we did a different approach. [Rustling] So, anyway, I cowrote this with him at that time. He was a very talented person, but he passed away, and, and one of the few people that, that would do things different than what was going on.

[00:54:33]

Riviera What was his name again?

[00:54:35]

Cisneros Herberito Ballejo Palto. Picture of me when I was in Nicaragua. Very young. [Rustling] So, anyway, I, I, I, I brought some of this stuff here. [Rustling] So I want to mostly tell this story because it was mostly, it, people just loved it. And they probably remember me more for this than for the 30 years I did, I spent as a journalist. I spent a lot of time overseas, a lot of time traveling. So, you know, it's, it's, it's one of those things that are important. [Coughing]. But I, I'm proud of the fact that I was able to do so many documentaries on subjects that I wanted to do. I'm proud of the fact that, like, like the Vietnam, I'm a Vietnam veteran. I lived in the labor camps, I did Labor Camp Number 1. I

did a lot of documentaries that I really, truly love the subjects. Stockton, City of Immigrants. We did a story on, on, on the Chinese, the Japanese, and the Filipinos. They were immigrants, they, how they came here, up the river, you know, established themselves and so on. Did a story on black unemployment, which I felt was important, because nobody was doing any serious stuff on black outside of, you know, they just killed this guy or whatever. Just doing a lot of stuff that I, that I remember, very remember. But, proud of the guys, Wit Rodriguez, Mike Castro. So anyway, I, you know, I, I truly love the work I did for the time I was doing, doing it, and, and truly admire the people that got me into it. That, that's it. I'm done.

[00:57:22]

Riviera Thank you very much for sharing your experiences in the Chicano and Chicano Movement period.

[00:57:28]

Cisneros That was another Chicano movement, as the other Chicano movement's happening. We tried to cover it as best as we could.

[00:57:37]

Riviera Uh huh.

[00:57:38]

Cisneros You know, but there were other issues that were, that was also important, you know? So.