

The Sacramento Movimiento Chicano and Mexican American Education
Oral History Project

Rudy Cuellar

Oral History Memoir

Interviewed by Yovanna Aguilera
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Cuellar Born Auburn, Placer County Hospital. Right now if you say you're from Auburn, they would think you're from well-off people, and when I do say I was born in Auburn, they look at me like, "Oh, you liar." But I was born in Auburn because it was the only county hospital in Placer County. We were from Roseville, so that's the only reason why there. Otherwise, I'm not trying to, you know, [Spanish], as they say. It's just a fact of life, you know. There was no hospitals in Roseville. Roseville was real small in 1950.

Aguilera Please state your full name.

[00:00:47]

Cuellar Rudy Cuellar, Rodolfo Ojeda [phonetic] Cuellar, "Little Rudy," as the family tagged me early on in life, because there was like five Rudys, so I got the "Little Rudy." So that's my gang moniker. [laughs]

Aguilera Can you please provide your birthdate?

[00:01:09]

Cuellar November 23rd, 1950.

Aguilera And your marital status?

[00:01:14]

Cuellar Marital status? Surviving. [Aguilera laughs.] Single.

Aguilera Do you have any children, and if so, how many?

[00:01:23]

Cuellar Yes, I have two daughters. One is Hemma Xochitl [phonetic] Cuellar Rojero [phonetic], and she lives in Texas and she has four kids, so I have four grandkids, and I'm happy as punch with that one. Then I have Perla Shelitla [phonetic]—who's named after a little small city in Mexico—Cuellar, and her last name is Cuellar, and she lives downstairs from me. I don't know if you know about pearls. *Perla* is a pearl. Well, pearls are irritants. They become irritants. They become an irritant to the oyster. A little rock comes in there, gets lodged, and they start putting this little soft stuff around it to keep it from irritating them. Next thing you know, oh, I don't know, three years, four years later, it's a pearl. Some are very valuable, some are thrown out, you know, but pearl's an irritant, like my daughter.

[laughs]

Aguilera If you could tell me, where were you born and raised?

[00:02:29]

Cuellar Earlier I mentioned I was born in Auburn, California at the Placer County Hospital, because that was the only hospital at that time. My parents moved to Roseville from El Paso, and prior to that, my *abuelas* were from Torreón, which is, I think, Sinaloa. Is that correct? I'm not sure. But Torreón, the city of Torreón, which is very beautiful, from what I hear. And my other *abuela* was from Chihuahua. Part of their leaving was the revolution. Their parents left because of the revolution, because

I guess they came from somewhat business family, something like that, and so when they take your business, they take everything. So that might mean your daughters and whomever, but that's another story for another time.

Aguilera So when your parents came, like, what did they do for a living?

[00:03:32]

Cuellar Well, they were young when they came across the border. First they stayed in El Paso, Texas, which, from what I've heard, El Paso, Texas, is the Ellis Island of the Southwest because that's where people were coming in, and that was an entry point. In the old days—and we're talking about when they came in—it was 1910, the revolution. And they were kids, and they lost their father, so they ended up over here in El Paso. El Paso, they stayed there for some years. Then they went from El Paso to Ohio via the train system, because I guess the grandpa had worked in the train industry, so he was able to get a job at Ohio, then to Reno, then to Roseville, and Roseville being a central point as far as the train mechanism of the thirties. By that time, it was the thirties.

Aguilera And how many brothers and sisters do you have?

Cuellar I have only a sister, Sylvia Velia [phonetic] Cuellar, and she is five years older than me.

Aguilera Could you please describe your experiences as a child in your family and neighborhood?

[00:04:51]

Cuellar Okay, so I would say I'm not a farmworker background like a lot of people say, "Well, I came in from—." Our people were working-class. Apparently,

they were lucky enough to always get a job either in Sacramento or in Roseville, but mostly Sacramento or the surrounding area. My mom went to go work for McClellan Air Force probably when I was born—not when I was born, but around 1955, I think I remember, because we moved over there from Roseville to McClellan for a little bit. Then she worked there till about '65, then she got laid off because of the industrial complex was cut back.

My dad worked for the railroad in Roseville, and there was a place called the ice plant. Well, in those days, they didn't have refrigerated transportation. All the trains, they put ice in the ends and the produce in the middle, and then from there, it would be shipped to New York, back East, wherever. So Roseville was a very important hub for vegetation and produce, because this is the Valley. As you well know, agriculture's our number one industry, even surpasses the electronics and stuff like that, and California is the seventh largest economy in the world, which is mind-boggling.

Aguilera Were you a Fellow or Felito during the Mexican American Education Project?

[00:06:28]

Cuellar I was asked that earlier, and I said no, I wasn't. I just drove up at that latter part. I was involved in the arts, and that's how I become affiliated, because if you were anybody or anything as far as Mexicano, Chicano, Latino, whatever, we all gyrated together and hung out. MEChA was very instrumental in bringing in professors like—Senon [Valadez], were you brought in through MEChA? No? No.

But José Montoya and Esteban Villa, they did get in because of MEChA's efforts to bring in more *raza*, as far as teachers and stuff like that.

Aguilera But you did take some classes in anthropology, correct?

[00:07:16]

Cuellar Correct. Sam Rios on the anthropology part. Joaquin Hernandez, who was professor of music, who would put us out, *raza* people, on the side, and we would discuss music, instruments from the pre-Hispanic period, the pre- what was it? During the Aztecs. So at one time, I had all these copies of Aztec instruments and stuff like that. But he did leave me with five cassettes of his piano-playing, which I still have, which survived my house fire, where I lost some artwork.

Aguilera Could you please explain how this perspective has—like from the anthropology classes, has influenced your understanding and participation in the Movimiento Chicano?

[00:08:13]

Cuellar Well, they're both one and the same, right? It depends on how you peel back the tomato, you know. You can either steam it and pull off the skin or you can just eat it raw. That's my analogy. Chicanos and *agricultura* are one the same; it's just a matter of what you want to call yourself, right? I chose to call myself Chicano. Other people will be fine with being tagged as a Hispanic. They'll do fine. They'll get along. There's Latinos and then there's people from South America want no part of any of that. But your question again is?

Aguilera How it influenced your understanding and participation.

[00:09:08]

Cuellar Well, knowing your culture, right? Bottom line. You get to hear things that you never heard about. You find out that Panama was never Panama; it was part of Colombia. You find out about how Brazil became Brazil and the rest of the South America stayed Spanish-speaking because they all went Portuguese, and it was all because the pope at that time says, “Enough of this infighting. You guys will get this land,” which became Brazil, Portuguese-speaking. “Those of you over here will be Spanish-speaking.” And then they broke it up amongst themselves and then they fought amongst themselves, you know, all these wars that have taken place. But us up here, we don’t hear about them.

Aguilera What are your earliest memories of events that attracted you to the Movement?

[00:10:04]

Cuellar My dad. He was very much involved, even though he was a laborer, carman. Carman is like another level of when you go work in the railroad. You start as a laborer, then you go to carman, then you go to supervisor or engineer, refrigeration engineer when they brought in the refrigeration units. Then you needed mechanics of sorts, and they would take—well, he was a carman, so he would repair the boxcars that needed refrigeration.

But he got involved with José Montoya, he got involved with the Farm Worker Union. This was in the sixties. He was always—you know, even though he didn’t have a degree or anything like that, he went and took time off at night when they used to have classes, evening classes, high school classes, and he got his high school diploma, because he came from a pretty rough neighborhood in El Paso. He

survived all that madness and he made it this far. Then when he got here, he married my mom. He was a changed man of sorts. He still had his own quirks, but, yeah, he was involved. He was also a photographer and he got involved.

Once he learned how to write in the night schools, then he began writing articles in the paper about the difference between Mexican American and just being American, and he took a lot of flak from that, the conservative Mexicanos that said, “Hey, that’s nonsense. We’re all Americans.” Yeah, well, if we’re all Americans, why aren’t we treated like Americans equally? And that’s not true. We’re always treated—and this is my feeling—that we’re treated like stepchildren. We don’t get the full—and if you don’t know your rights, then you’re even going to get less. And if you don’t vote, then they got us. They got us. Divide and conquer.

Aguilera Had you heard of the Civil Rights Movement at the time?

[00:12:18]

Cuellar I saw it on TV every night. I saw the Civil Rights Movement, I saw the Vietnam War, I saw the man land on the moon. I saw the student—Democratic Convention, students got whipped and beat down by Chicago cops. Mayor—I can’t remember his name at that time, but he just sent the—he says, “You are not going to stop—.” Because they were anti-war, so they were demonstrating at the Democratic Convention. Democratic Convention was supposed to be—that was McCarthy who was running for nomination of president, but he didn’t get it because Nixon got it, and that’s how the right wing started coming into power, although Eisenhower, in the fifties, was a Republican, but he had different views. He called the military, military arms complex, saying, “These guys are just getting full at the trough,” where pigs go

to eat, because they were right there. They would say, “Hey, we’re fighting communism. Give us more money.” So they became wealthy, you know, stuff like that.

Aguilera Did your involvement in the Movimiento Chicano change you personally?

[00:13:40]

Cuellar Yeah, because you had a mission, you had a purpose. Even though I was an artist, normally we think of artist as, well, those little flakey people, they’re doing nice little pretty drawings and stuff like that. We became the graphic arm of the Chicano Movement, at least here at Sac State, because that’s where—I started off at Roseville High School, ’69, graduated there, ’71, went to Sierra College. It was a real small school, campus. Then from there, I met Juan Cervantes [phonetic], who was my neighbor, and he says, “Let me try and get you in at Sac State.” He got me in at Sac State. I wound up there. I looked at this big campus. I said, “This is nice. This beats anything that I—working at the railroad.” And I started hanging out with this crew of artists, met Senon, met Sam Rios, met Juan Garrio [phonetic], Bill Vega [phonetic] from San Francisco State, Rene Janus [phonetic]. Just constantly there was a flow of people that were meeting up and had the same ideas and same thoughts, same struggle.

So, yeah, it was easy, unlike right now. When I talk to students, some people don’t know anything more than where they’re at right now. I see MEChA is not as strong, is not as united. There’s a lot of factions. There’s a lot of fraternities and sororities, and they spun off and they’re doing their own thing. So there’s a lot of

different factions and not one. Again, when you're not strong—and recently I saw this adaptation, Eddie Olmos [phonetic] was portraying this union leader in Brazil during a period in Brazil where they were killing people that were against the landowners who were trying to put a highway through their property, and these guys became a union. His analogy was “See this little twig? I’ll break it.” Now he takes a whole bunch of twigs and gives this gentleman the whole bunch of twigs. He goes, “Now try and break that.” Well, you can’t break a whole bunch. So, plain to see. But when you’re just one, they’ll snap you, and you have no gain. So that was more or less that.

Aguilera What role do you believe that Chicanas played in the Movimiento?

[00:16:34]

Cuellar Chicanos played?

Aguilera Chicanas.

[00:16:35]

Cuellar Chicanos and Chicanas?

Aguilera Specifically Chicanas.

[00:16:40]

Cuellar Yeah. Chicanas was my mom. Chicanas was my grandma. Chicanas were my *tías*. Chicanas were my daughters, you know. But that’s because I look at it that way. I see it that way. I’ve been around enough outside of Sacramento or Roseville to have seen what people, when they want to say, “Hey, I am Chicano, no doubt about it,” and I look at things differently and I’m positive. I have meaning. I think there is meaning in it, you know. You go down to L.A., and it’s just

overwhelming, you know. I go to talk to somebody at the cash register, I don't know whether to speak [Spanish] or English. I wait for them [laughs] to say something, and then I'll speak whichever one they want to speak.

But Chicanas are very instrumental. If you want to make an omelet, you gotta crack that egg. Can't just have an egg and want an omelet. You have to crack the egg and then you got to put it in there and mix it, make yourself an omelet. Not a scrambled egg; an omelet. [laughs]

Aguilera What did you personally initiate or help initiate in the Movimiento Chicano?

[00:18:04]

Cuellar Well, I was fortunate enough to, as artists, hook up with the RCAF, the Royal Chicano Air Force, right? And I wasn't a—how would you say—I wasn't enlisted. I just saw them. I was in Montoya's classes, I was in Esteban's classes, I got into classes with the other people that are part of the RCAF, and I was younger at that time. I was twenty-one. I was, like you, a baby, you know, if you look at it in those perspectives, and my ears were open, my eyes were open, and I was ready to work, and that's what I was. I was just a worker. I would cut stencils. I knew silkscreen. I learned silkscreen in high school at Roseville. So that was a process they were using. That was a process that José and Esteban learned at Oakland Arts & Crafts. Well, by being able to make posters, you're able to—it's basically a Facebook, but it's a manual process. We would design them, we would print them, we would do all that stuff.

Well, since I knew the process, then I would do José's, I would do Esteban's, I would help "Ishi" [Juanishi Orosco], I would help the other people. There was another guy called Max Garcia. He came out of Otis Art School in L.A. Armando Cid also came from down—very fine schools, you know. So they had the process, different process, of drawing and graphics and stuff like that. So you put all those together and it allowed us to create some really fine prints that belonged to the people, and if they wanted them, they could take them off the wall or they could collect them and later on they tell me, "Hey, I still got your print." And I said, "Wow! I don't even have that print." So that was my introduction. That was my purpose. That was how I fit in.

Then you had Joe Serna, who was a political scientist at Sac State, and he would put us together to work, and we would meet on the weekends, like today, and we'd go to some place and print, oh, a thousand lawn signs. Those are the signs that say "McCarty for Assembly" and we would print those, and then we would distribute them, or whatever needed to do.

Then we would also do security for Cesar Chavez when he—we had no training in security. We wouldn't even know what to do, but we had to sit there all night, watch the cars, make sure nobody was near them. In fact, Jose Serna, Joe Serna, when he did become mayor, first thing he did was say, "Okay, chief of police, I'm taking you out and I'm putting in the man that I want." Well, within a month, two months, mysteriously, his car catches on fire in a nice neighborhood, in Curtis Park in Sacramento. So somebody wanted to send him a message saying, "Be careful who you're messing with." Every union group has some power of some sorts, but when

you put a gun behind that union that monthly goes to training, that's a lot of power and they know a lot of people, good and bad, that will pay back favors.

Aguilera Could you talk a little bit more about, like, your own experiences as security for Cesar Chavez?

[00:21:47]

Cuellar Oh, for Cesar Chavez? Oh, yeah. Well, that was just a thing that allowed us to get into the events, like they would do a fundraiser for Chavez. Santana played. That was at Cal Expo and stuff like that. So we got to do security there. We got in for free. And believe me, we weren't—I mean, I'm clean right now. I mean, I'm dressed reasonably. But in those days, we were ragtag, Levis tore up. I know it's fashionable now, but it wasn't in those days. And long hair, and sometimes we'd wear our military regalia, you know. So there was all kinds of things that were great about it, I guess. Does that answer your question, more or less?

Aguilera Mm-hmm. Was there any more organizations that you were involved in besides the ones you've shared?

[00:22:42]

Cuellar Well, MEChA, and I saw how MEChA—we became really a strong group. We would have meetings on Fridays. Instead of going out and partying and all that, well, that was our party. That allowed us, as students, to come together, meet one another, know who's who and what's what.

But there was one lesson I learned one time, was when two guys wanted the endorsement of MEChA, okay, so they showed up, they spoke on what they were doing, and we said, “Okay, whoever gets the nod, we're going to back that person.”

So Manuel Crado [phonetic] is the person we chose. Robert Hernandez [phonetic] we didn't choose. So what's Robert do? He goes out and he forms another coalition with a women's group, so that split the votes, and the woman who was running the other party, she got elected, which was great, but it just goes to show what—divide and conquer. Even just in small politics like what we were doing, we were exercising our rights and stuff like that, what can happen when you don't stay united and you don't stick to the plan, because we had a plan. Somebody chose to take off and say, "I'm taking my forces over here this way."

Aguilera So could you talk a little bit more about the significance of the activities and the organizations played in the Chicano Movement?

[00:24:27]

Cuellar Well, as artists, we became the printers, the designers. José Montoya was a poet, was a painter. Then we had the other guys that did murals, and they would do murals for the community, positive forces and talking about what's available, imagery that's positive. It wasn't glorification of monetary or anything like that. In fact, that was another thing we did for the Farm Workers Union. We would do their banners and t-shirts and murals for events. So, yeah, we fit in that segment. There was other people that were students. Their duties were to help organize and whatever needed to be done. If it was with the union, there was also picketing, when you would go out in front of Safeways and say, "Don't buy Safeway grapes because they're buying them from Di Maggio or whoever."

I don't know if you saw the Cesar Chavez movie, but it was fantastic. See, there's a perfect example. Cesar Chavez movie, it didn't do well in the box office.

Not enough people went to go see it. I would think there's enough of us to go put that on the top, but how are you going to beat out *Spiderman*? How are you going to beat out *Captain America*? How are you going to beat out some of these other silly movies that we're accustomed to we're mind-framed to go see?

Aguilera Did the Movimiento Chicano raise your consciousness along social, cultural, political lines?

[00:26:22]

Cuellar All the above. [laughs] Yes.

Aguilera How did these changes impact your personal relationships with family, peers, and significant others?

[00:26:31]

Cuellar I had no problems with my parents, because, like I said, my dad was already directing me. He would bring books. He brought the murals from Mexico, a book, little book, and he'd throw those around and I'd read them and I'd look through them. I was very visual, so I'd look at the pictures. He brought in a lot of the—1958, when Cuba was taken over by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara and the rest of the bunch, he brought me a comic book which showed what happened, but I wasn't into it. I wasn't really a reader as I was a picture guy, so I got to see that. But I remember '58, he took me to see the movie with my mom and dad in Sacramento at the Guild Theater, which is now still there, but we went to see *Black Orpheus*, which was the first movie that won Academy Award with an all-black—what is it? All-black—

Aguilera Cast?

[00:27:43]

Cuellar Yeah, cast. Stuff like that.

Aguilera Do you think that affected your art style, or how much would you say it affected your style?

[00:27:52]

Cuellar Well, you know, art style, it's all individual. You have your version of art. Galiciano [phonetic] has his version of art. Senon has his version of art. You like and you don't like, see, and if we're going to be working for the union, then we would have to pick something that was going to be vocal and able to transmit to the people. So some people said we were propagandists, you know. That's a word we've heard. But who isn't? You either say, "This is what art is," like a rose, or you say, "This is art." And our posters were, like, a guitar.

A month ago, I was asked to do an interview on a radio station locally, regarding Cesar Chavez Day, so I talked about the guitar and how the guitar was like a rifle, but it didn't shoot nobody, it didn't hurt anybody, it just put out words that people can either take in and get in, and then they choose, "Oh, yeah, there's some truth in that," you know. And we're not the only ones. Everybody does it. Every culture has used the guitar for social means, social change, you know. The South Americans had the Nuevo C_____, and that was very important. When I mentioned Cuba, they also had a print shop, [unclear] and a bunch of groups, where they used their artists to incorporate posters, and they'd put posters throughout the city, hopefully educating people and telling them there's better things to do than just drinking, because people can drink and they'll drink themselves to death. But look at who has the best advertisements during the Super Bowl: the booze companies.

And when you get busted for drinking and driving, it's going to cost you 10 grand just for starters, and if you can't pay it, then you're going to go do some time. Once you start doing time, you start a little—I guess you're starting to become educated in that world, and sometimes you just say, “Hey, at least I get a free meal, I get free room and board, and I get a bed to sleep on,” and you become accustomed with that. So they build more prisons for you. Simple as that. It's not that they're really wanting to; it's that they have to.

Aguilera Can you please describe some of the impacts that your involvement with the Movimiento Chicano had on your career?

[00:30:53]

Cuellar Well, having done the silkscreen, that was twofold. That was graphic design. When you do a poster, you have to graphically design it, figure out what colors you want, and lay it out. Then on the other hand, you have to print it. Well, the printing of silkscreen isn't exactly the easiest process in the world, but it's inexpensive because it's manual, and you don't need any more than forty bucks, twenty bucks to buy paper, buy ink, and design something. As long as you're good at designing, you can even do one color and that would come out beautiful and it would also send out a message, which the beauty, hopefully, attracts the eye and brings them to read whatever it is that's going to be happening. I look at this, Sacramento City College Nursing. That's what that is. That's a collage of images, and then once the images catch your eye, then you go to reading it, and that's that process.

Aguilera Looking back at your experience in the Movimiento Chicano, are there any issues that were left unresolved?

[00:32:11]

Cuellar I think one big one is, like, what I think Senon's trying to do, is keep it alive. How do you keep it alive? I talk to kids. I say "kids," people your age, perhaps, twenties, thirties, and you ask them about Cesar Chavez and they think you're talking about the boxer Chavez. No joke. You talk about Chavez, and they go, "Well, I don't like that Chavez. He's from Colombia," or wherever he was, right? No, I'm talking about Cesar Chavez, not Chavez over there that just passed away. You know, ignorance. You can go to Harvard and think that way, but hopefully you have a better thought or a better head or more knowledge or more—what is it—civic affairs than some of these people that listen to that music that just talks about "Baby" this, "Baby" that, or go drinking and you're going to get a good-looking girl, you're going to wear nice clothes, and you're going to have a nice car, and all those material things, but do you have any soul? Do you know where you came from? Do you love your parents? Because if you don't love where you came from, you possibly probably don't love your parents, you know. We lose it, you know.

And that was one thing that foremost I attribute to my family, not just my parents, but my all-around family, is that we all hang out on the weekend, because at that time when I was in my—from five to maybe twelve, thirteen, fourteen, that was our life, go hang out with the cousins and, you know, do some good things and do some bad things, try not to do bad things, but, you know. [laughs]

Aguilera Describe how the Movimiento Chicano impacted community life here in Sacramento or where you lived.

[00:34:30]

Cuellar Well, I live downtown Sacramento, and a lot of the programs that we have are no longer here. Senon was asking me about the Puente Program, if I remember some of the people. I do. One of the ladies that worked in that program ended up working at the prison, where I went to go work. I did sixteen years there as a vocational instructor teaching silkscreen. Again, you asked me earlier how did that have an effect on my life. Well, it gave me a skill. The fact that I circulated and met more people, right, that's what we learn in college, is to—what do they call it? Not circulate, but to get to know other people, right? Don't just keep it—yeah, we got to know a lot of people. We got to know the people that Joe Serna knew, were politicians. Sometimes they would give us jobs, sometimes they would help us out in whatever way. You never know when you're going to need their help. And that was one way that I was able to get into that job at the prison, because there was a lot of people that would love that job, you know. You just go teach inmates the process.

But it wasn't just that for me; it was my background already was that were trying to help people how to be better people, you know. You have some issues because you're doing time. Something happened. Either you drank too much or you did drugs and you got stupid and you thought, "Well, in order to keep my drugs, I got to go do something to get it." Mistakes. People have crossroads and they have to make the right decisions. If you don't have a good background, you'll make bad decisions. And they're easy. It's not hard to make a bad decision.

Aguilera What do you see as current or future challenges for the Chicano community?

[00:36:46]

Cuellar Well, what I do see is that no matter what, Chicanos exist. *Aqui estamos y no nos vamos*, right? The other one, we've been coming across that border just like those little butterflies that you see on the posters. It's not going to change. It's inevitable. I was listening to a report about immigrants dying in the Sinaloa desert. Five years ago, the statistics were like fifty people in one year. This past year, it was like two hundred people. That's part of life. You want something, you're going to go get it, one way or the other, and where there's a will, there's a way. So, again, the question?

Aguilera What do you see as current or future challenges for the Chicano community?

[00:37:51]

Cuellar Yeah, the challenge to keep our head above water, know who we are. That's a big thing, you know. A lot of people want to be something else that they're not, so they go do things that will take you away from your family sometimes, will take you away from your ideas, you know. "Yeah, I came in as a student, I was a Chicano. I ended college and I'm now a Republican." [laughs] You know, things like that. That's a big game-changer, right?

Aguilera Do you see yourself as staying involved in meeting these challenges?

[00:38:38]

Cuellar Yes. Every Wednesday I go phone bank for Kevin McCarty, who's running for Assembly. [laughs] And, yeah, I stay active and I do whatever I can to still do the right thing, or as they say, the good fight, because it'll never end. We win

one, we lose two. We win two, we lose one. It's inevitable, and you've got to be on guard all the time.

It's just like I was reading a book out here when I was waiting to come in, and it was walking about recruitment in the military. Well, there's good recruitment, there's bad recruitment, you know. How do you become a good recruit and a bad recruit? Well, here the good recruiter's taught to be a good recruiter, the things he should say, the things that you, as a student, will learn. You're going to learn about interviewing, you're going to learn about how to make people talk. Well, you've got to have something. You can't just sit there and say, "Hey, so what did you do in the war?" Well, I was telling, Senon, man, it is a war. It's a constant war. And any war, it takes a toll on your brain, and sometimes you just get so burned out and you say, "I don't want any more. I'm just going to go home. I'm going to go watch TV. I'm done. I'm not going to fight no more. They can have what they want to have." Then again, the system or some system wins, and we get behind again.

Go ahead.

Aguilera In your opinion, what do you think that we can do to prevent that from happening?

[00:40:26]

Cuellar You're doing it right now. You guys are, you know, gathering information. You'll compile this information. This is what's done by everybody. In fact, there's an Aztec poem that we used for my dad's memorial, right? Three deaths. The first death is when your eyes close and you take your last breath. Second death is when they put you in Mother Earth and they put dirt over it. The third death and the

final death—and I'm kind of condensing this—is when nobody remembers you or knows you. So that would be when nobody knows Chicano, nobody uses Chicano.

But when you go to L.A., everybody's Chicano. [laughs] Not everybody, but, I mean, let's face it, man, there's so many Spanish-speaking people in that city, yet they only have one city councilman, one supervisor, many assemblymen and stuff like that. And then what happens to them? The same thing. When I gave you this little flyer about water and power, that movie talks about water and power, you know. The one brother was a detective. He had power. The other brother was an assemblyman or politician, and he had power. So which powers were stronger? The detective could do some things that nobody would believe, because they work in that realm. The politician could pull some stuff off because nobody knows what happens.

And as you've seen in the paper lately, we had one guy that was arrested for embezzlement, and he was *raza*. An Asian was arrested for mail fraud, buying guns for some heavyweight over there in Chinatown. And another gentleman, African American, didn't even live in his precinct, and he was representing this precinct, and he lied about it. You lie and that's not [laughs]—you're going to be an assemblyman or a congressman very long. So I hope that answered your question.

[End of interview]