The Sacramento Movimiento Chicano and Mexican American Education
Oral History Project

Esteban Villa

Oral History Memoir

Interviewed by Daisy Montes and Nancy González
May 31, 2014

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and Technitype Transcripts

Q Please state your full name.

[00:00:10]

Villa My full name, Esteban Villa, no middle initial.

Q Please provide your birthdate.

[00:00:21]

Villa My birthdate was August the 3rd, 1930.

Q What is your marital status?

[00:00:26]

Villa Marital status, I was married twice, divorced once.

Q Do you have any children?

[00:00:37]

Villa I have overall ten children, six from my first wife, Evelyn, from Bakersfield, because I was raised Catholic and was supposed to have a lot of children. [laughter] I was, like, twenty-five years old. And then three from Helen, who passed away. She passed about a month ago in May. I had three children with her. And then

with Celia Rodriguez I had one son. So I don't know how you are in math. I think it's about ten children.

Q [laughs] Thank you.

[00:01:25]

Villa We're bad in math, but we know how to multiply. [laughter]

Q Where were you born and raised?

[00:01:35]

Villa Where was I born and raised? I was born in Tulare, California, the San Joaquin Valley, and it was during the 1930s. It was the Depression that was going on at the time. So I was raised there in all the schools. I was born in Tulare, and then all my elementary schooling, we moved to Visalia. I was raised there all the way to first year of high school in Visalia. Then we moved to Bakersfield and I finished growing up there as a teenager, you might say. Dropped out of high school. So that's where I was raised.

Q What did your parents do for a living?

[00:02:38]

Villa They were farmworkers. They were illiterate, they couldn't read or write, so they never read me a bedtime story. [laughter] But farmworkers, good people, migrant, migratory, you know. We did the whole circuit during the summer, so I grew up as an itinerant farmworker.

Q What kind of job did they do, your parents? What kind of job were they doing?

[00:03:24]

Villa What kind of job did I do?

Q Yeah.

[00:03:27]

Villa Well, I picked—you name it, I picked it. [laughter] Cotton, potatoes, walnuts, grapes, a lot of grapes, grapes and just about everything, onions. It was so-called stoop labor, you know; you'd bend your back. But that's the kind of work I did.

I might add that along the line, I was always very creative, even though I wasn't getting any privileged schooling, so right from the beginning I was very artistic. I would do art wherever I could out of the supplies that were there in the fields. One time I was in a play and I designed an Indian costume. I was an Indian, and the other White kids were the cowboys. Anyway, I made this beautiful suit out of these burlap sacks, the potato sacks, and made it real pretty. My teacher says, "You look like the chief. You look better than the chief." [laughter] But anyways, so that's the kind of work I did.

Q How many brothers and sisters do you have?

[00:05:02]

Villa I'm the third one out of eight brothers and sisters, pretty evenly divided boys and girls, and I had one extra half-brother, you might call him. So that was nine. And I'm just about the only one that finished school out of the bunch. Most never even finished high school. We got along really well, brothers and sisters. It was a struggle, it was hard, because the older are supposed to take care of the little ones, so while all other teenagers were going to Paris for the summer, I had to watch my

little brothers and sisters. I was babysitting while my parents worked in the fields. So that was not really good, and threatening, too, because "Esteban, if anything happens to your little sister, you're gonna get it. Get it? Don't let them run out in the street." So I was very responsible as a child. But anyway, it was a good family. We're still together. They live in Bakersfield. I live in Sacramento.

Q Can you please describe your experiences as a child and youth in your family and neighborhood?

[00:06:49]

Villa Well, like I was saying, we were together and yet we were separated because we moved around so much. We didn't have a stable home. We didn't have a permanent address. We slept in backyards and labor camps, and even along the river in Fresno, camping. They call it camping now. That's why I don't go camping. [laughter] I did all that. I did all that.

So it was pretty hard growing up as a family because we would follow the crops. We would put all the *tricas*, they called them, all the *colchones*, these whatever, boxes, on the roof of the car and the little trailer, and off we'd go all the way to Oregon and make a U-turn, come back along the coast to Gonzalez, picking garlic and stuff, and then across Pacheco Pass and back to Bakersfield. So we were very migratory, always moving, always moving. It was hard, because by the time I enrolled in school, I was already behind two weeks, three weeks, and that was hard because I missed a lot, but still I had that perseverance to persist and persevere, regardless of coming in late, not having the adequate school supplies.

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

[00:09:07]

Villa No, I was not. For some reason I didn't qualify. I should have. I missed it. I could have used the experience and the money and ended up entering the master's program, so the criteria, I guess I didn't meet the criteria, and it's too bad, because not to brag or anything, I ended up being one of the most prominent Chicano painters around, and one of the first, too, which the Royal Chicano Air Force started right here in Sacramento.

I was in as a teacher then. We had been teaching high school for almost about eight years at Linden High School near Stockton, and José Montoya, my *compadre* also. We met in college, we two Mexicans in college in those days. I was there first and then I saw him. "Oh, wow! What's your name?"

"My name is José Montoya,"

"Wow! Where are you from, man?"

"I'm from Delano, Fowler."

"No kidding? Wow! There's two of us now." [laughter]

You see how it was a need there for more students attending college. I began to see the discrepancy in enrollment and seeing more Latinos, whether they're Chicanos, Hispanics, South Americans, whatever, in the colleges and universities. And in particularly, women were not enrolled, because they were, in those days, back in the kitchens making their husband happy, having children. They majored in economics, Home Ec, where they taught girls how to make the men happy. [laughter]

And in the kitchen. Then the Women's Lib stepped in and they got rid of that class, first thing. To girls, "We don't need that class." So, no more. And now you're all professionals. [laughter]

Q Could you please explain what a Felito was and what the criteria was? [00:11:59]

Villa Well, it's a fellowship. It's a word—you get fellowships that provided in those days—Steve Arvizu and Dr. Taylor here in Sacramento State University, and they went to it. They went to Washington, D.C. and brought back tons of money to start fellowship grants, money to pay students to finish their higher education. It was not just in Sacramento State University, but almost in the nineteen state universities throughout the state also were doing the same thing.

Then the students got involved with MEChA, Movimiento Estudiantil de Aztlán, and they were certainly part of that Felito chapter and the academia, the universities. So I salute MEChA and all the other programs that that took advantage of this entitlement of a Felito, a Fellow, a fellowship. A Felito, I guess, is the community of little ones, little recipients or first recipients.

Q What was the criteria to be a Felito, like the requirements? [00:13:43]

Villa Well, you had to have a need, and you had to be interested in education, and you had to have an understanding of building, helping to build a manner in which when they graduate from the university, to go out into the community and recruit. The Washington Neighborhood Center was part of it. A lot of beautiful—La Raza Bookstore, Galleria Posada.

And also the high schools, the need for teachers, teachers, lots of teachers, teachers, teachers, teachers, teachers to go and try to connect with a lot of the high school students and even younger than that too. Those are some of the criteria that you would need to get into the program, and not someone who's just there for the money. They say, "Well, I don't speak Spanish."

"Oh, really?

Says, "Yeah, I don't even like Mexican food. And I don't get along with my brothers and sisters because they always speak Spanish and I'll speak in English."

So, you see, those didn't make it. And they didn't want to be a Mexican American Education Project recipient. Those are what we call White people *americanos*. They wanted to be *americanos*, you know, hamburgers, hotdogs, baseball, Girl Scouts, names like Tiffany and Sean. [laughter]

There was this dad who his son graduated and called him and says, "Yeah, Dad, I met a real nice girl. We're married now that I graduated. We have two children, living on the East Coast."

Said, "Good. What did you name them?"

"Well, my boy's name is Sean and the girl's name is Savannah."

And he says, "Well, Sean is okay, that's a good name for a boy, but Sábana is not a good name for a girl." [laughter] You know what a *sávaba* is, don't you? A bedsheet.

Next question.

Q What are your earliest memories of events that attracted you to the Movimiento Chicano?

[00:17:04]

Villa Well, the earliest that I remember, see, I joined the army in 1949 in Bakersfield to escape Bakersfield, get out of town. [laughter] I was, like, eighteen, just about nineteen. So it was peacetime. Then I served in the Pacific, not in the warfront, but with Transportation Division of the army, and we transported all kinds of people, you know, equipment, materials, transporting across the ocean. I felt more like a sailor than a soldier. [laughter]

But when I was discharged in '53, I went back to Bakersfield. Cesar Chavez was there in Delano, in a high school, and he was with a CSO, Community Service Organization, and that attracted me.

Then I went back to school, to finish high school and then finish junior college and then on to a college degree in art education and with a teaching credential. I finished that in '61, started teaching right away.

So my earliest recollection is Cesar Chavez, you know. And there wasn't even the UFW then. He was Community Service Organization, helping people fill out paperwork and stuff like that.

Then the Filipinos started a movement, and the first time I heard *movement*, *movimiento*, and then two weeks later, the Chicanos, Cesar Chavez with all the farmworkers joined the Filipinos striking for better conditions and wages and Social Security and all that that goes with a good living, bathrooms in the fields and water and rest period and first aid, you know, if people passed out from dehydration working in the hot sun.

So that attracted me. I felt there's a need, there's something—see, I felt that we were all indoctrinated by the Catholics to have a lot of children, indoctrinated by the teachers that would just change our Spanish names, no paperwork. "Esteban, that's a hard name to pronounce. "We're going to call you Steve, okay?" "Jesus, you're Jesse," and so forth. And I said, "That's wrong."

And then they would punish me because I spoke Spanish on campus. [demonstrates] "You're an American now. Don't be talking in Spanish." We tried not to. And the irony is that when I enrolled to go to college, they said that I couldn't get in until I took a foreign language. If I had stayed with Spanish, I would have had a foreign language. See what happened there? There's somethin' wrong. At first, they said, "Don't speak Spanish." Then you can't get into college because you don't speak Spanish.

Q Wow.

[00:20:50]

Villa There was somethin' wrong. So those things attracted me to the Chicano Movement, and I said, "I've got to do what I can do as a teacher and professor to correct this and at least inform people of their identity and their language and their culture, a lot of beautiful things that we are about, and to be proud of our identity." We're not foreigners or aliens. If everyone went back to where they came from, where would we go? Where would we go if everybody went back to where they came from, people from England and Germany and Russia? Where would we go? Nowhere. We're already here. We're from here. This is our land. Why should we go? And why are we aliens in our own country?

So those things attracted me. I said, "You know what? There's somethin' wrong with this kind of thinking." And as a teacher and as a professor, I'm going to try to do whatever I can to correct that. *Si algo está chueco*. The picture frame is like that, I'm going to level it up. [laughter] If I have a flat tire, I'm going to fix it in my car. Fix it, fix it, fix it.

So that's what attracted me to the Movimiento, and I hope it does the same for everybody else that is going to graduate from some of these prestigious universities like UC Davis, Yale, Harvard, Stanford, MIT, California College of Arts, where I went, Mills College, and I hope that people catch the ironies of growing up here feeling like we don't belong here. They make us feel very bad, and I don't want young people, children to grow up thinking of themselves like that.

Q So how did the other Mexicans or Mexican Americans react to the term *Chicano* and *Movimiento Chicano*?

[00:23:43]

Villa That's a good question. The word *Chicano*, as far as I know, probably Dr. [Senon] Valadez could probably answer that a lot better, but from what I understand, it comes from an indigenous language like the Meshicas. You know in Mexican restaurants how they use that *ch* sound?

Q Yeah.

[00:24:09]

Villa Xochimilco, Meshica, Meshicano. And early Pachuco is one of the fashion social movements back in the forties, adopted the word. They just used the suffix. Chicano, Meshico, Meshicano. So that's what I get it. Some of the professors

thought Chicano came from the word *chicanery*, and that's not a very pretty word. It means something negative and deceitful. I said, "No, that's not where the word comes from."

So it was very difficult for our parents to accept that, because they associated the word with the Pachuco Movement of the forties, the Zoot Suiters. They were one of the first to start fighting for social change, Pachucos. So it was negative and our parents didn't want us to use the word *Chicano*. "It's a bad word, bad. So don't you tell people you're going to be a Chicano."

"Okay."

But the word stuck and now it's accepted. There was many years where you did not hear newscasters or anybody in radio use the word. The *americanos*, they never used the word *Chicano*. It couldn't come out of their mouth. They'd say "them people," "those people." But you know what? The word *Chicano* is here to stay. In fact, there was a professor that came in here once at Sac State and he tried to get rid of the word, said, "We don't need that word anymore. It's defenseless, it's useless, it's not pretty. We don't have to say the word *Chicano* anymore. We made it already. So we're going to erase the word from this campus."

And MEChA stood up and says, "No, you're not. You're *not* going to get rid of that word. It's part of the history. You might go through changes, but you're not going to erase that word."

Q Why were they considered bad, the term *Chicano*?

[00:27:05]

Villa The teachers here?

Q Yeah, like anywhere.

[00:27:10]

Villa Well, like I say, it was kind of a word that they didn't let surface or use. When I was teaching, pretty much it was not acceptable to use that word, the faculty. Some to this day—because I taught here for twenty-five years—it's still a resistance towards that word. Like I was saying, the newscaster—I'm so happy to hear news even say the word *Chicano*. "Well, the Chicanos were up in the State Capitol today with their signs still protesting for higher wages, Chicano community." It's so nice to hear that word. It finally came out of their *americanos*' mouth, you know. The world didn't come to an end. So we're trying to make the word *Chicano* not just acceptable with a lot of the new generations, but also institutionalize everything that we are talking about here, the Movimiento, the Movement, the language, the culture, the dance, the words, the name Chicano, Chicanas.

For example, things that we did here, like Royal Chicano Air Force, you know, to promote culture, was always with the understanding that it was going to be based on a university level. The Chicano Movement was born not in an alley in Bakersfield or a street in Delano, but the idea was born right here in the universities and colleges across the country. You see what I mean by institutionalization? Out of it we have Ethnic Studies, Chicano Studies, majors, degrees, Ph.D.s, and it's wonderful. Women Studies, there was no Women Studies in those days because they didn't think women were very bright, said, "They don't belong here." And there's still a lot of that sexism around, against women.

So, yeah, it most certainly was given birth on campus, so to speak, and used not just on campus, but also in the civic centers. For example, we asked the City of Sacramento that 2 percent of any public building will go for Chicano art. And they went like this, they said, "Well, we'll see about that. That's a waste of taxpayers' money. We're not going to let that happen." So we won. Right now when a new building is going up, like the new arena, basket[ball], you know, okay, 2 percent out of whatever the total cost is going to go for art. It's only 2 percent, but, listen, that's about $5 million for art, and I hope that I get some of that. [laughter]

Because that's what I mean by we have to not be outside of the laws and rules and regulations of the city. We must be *inclusive*. Otherwise, we really become rebels with a cause. You know, *rebeldes*. We don't want that. We want to be part of the city, we want to be part of the university, we want to be part of the tax system and the Social Security. See, right now, even though I'm retiring, I'm getting a really nice pension and Social Security and other annuities, and living quite good. My paycheck comes out of the wall like this. [demonstrates] ATM. It's amazing. [laughs]

So that's why it's important to make the Chicano Movement not a separate practice, but one that is most certainly connected with the system so that when you youngsters get to retirement, you also will have beautiful benefits by which you can relax and write a book. How did I do it? [laughs] Yes, writing.

Q How old were you when you started painting, when you started drawing?

[00:33:08]

Villa Well, I tell people that I was born an artist. I think I came out with my pencil, looking around when I came out of my mother's womb. "Oh, colors!" [laughter] And the kindergarten teachers and first grade, they saw this in me, you know, and then the more they noticed, the more I liked it. "Oh, Steven, that's a really nice drawing that you did there. Wow! Do you mind if we put it up?"

I said, "No."

It was like a traveler on horseback, because I was very ethnic even then. Before the Movement, I was very ethnic. I looked for everything ethnic. I read books like Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, artists like Goya, Picasso and Velázquez, and Mexican muralists Diego, Siqueiros, Rivera, Orozco, Tomayo. See, I was very ethnic then, and I don't know why that was. It was just something that drove me, something that I said, "You know what? This is where the need needs to be right here, to bring our youth, *juventude*, along with fine language skills and be proud of being Chicano," or Hispanic or Latino. We're all inclusive, *Salvadorenos*, *Nicaraguenses*. You know, to be more inclusive.

So I grew up and that's what saved me. One time in junior high school or maybe a freshman in high school, anyway, a chemistry class, oh, my god, you know. [laughter] You know that chemical table? And math. Oh, my *god*. [laughter] So when they were taking the test, guess what I was doing? I was drawing the laboratory with all the glass things and little flames coming out, and water boiling and bubbles and stuff. [laughs] I said I didn't answer any question because I didn't know how. But the teacher gave me a passing grade and said, "Well, you're a wonderful artist, but you didn't do any of the problems."

"Yeah, I know." [laughter]

So he gave me a passing grade for effort, effort. What if I had not done nothing? [laughter] You see, you've always got to try. Persistence of memory, persistence of, you know—if you don't know the answer, do your best maybe to try to, like I did. I did the drawing, and it was pretty good drawings, you know. [laughs] Maybe that's what the teacher liked. [laughter]

So everybody, my perception that *todos nacimos artistas*, that every human being is born an artist, because that's your first language, right? Little sound [demonstrates], colors, you know, in the crib, red, yellow, and blue colors like a mobile, you know. And food and drink and everything, you know. Also, you give a child some Crayolas, you didn't have to tell them anything; they just go right to it. Even before they can speak. "Oh, that's pretty good, *mija*. Look at what you did. Oh! What is that?"

But somewhere along the way, the teachers take it away from us. "You're no artist. You got to be kidding. You an artist? Ha, ha, ha." And they make fun and make you ashamed, and pretty soon, little by little, the teachers begin to tell you you're not an artist. And I'm sitting here saying that you are, right now. It doesn't just mean being Michelangelo or Mary Cassatt or—what's her name, that was married to Diego Rivera? The woman artist, Frida—

Q Frida Kahlo.

[00:38:00]

Villa Frida Kahlo. Frida Kahlo. Look her up. Amazing artist. She's even more famous than Diego, and he didn't like that. [laughter]

So, yeah, it's my perception that we gave the graduates from all the universities their way, and most of them majored in, like, politics. There they go. "Where are you going?"

"Well, I'm going to Washington, D.C."

"Oh, okay."

"*Y tu*, Roberto, where are you going?"

"I'm going to go work for Enron."

"Oh, wow." You heard about Enron, right? It collapsed.

So here come Roberto and Maria back to Sacramento. I said, "What happened?"

"Well, they went out of business. Now we're back for more education, maybe major in something different."

So what I'm driving at, if you're following me, is that we need to give culture a chance. One side of the brain is science, political science, science, and the other half of the brain is art, a-r-t, art. We need to use both sides of the brain. So if anybody tells you or asks you if you're an artist, say, "No, I'm not." You might as well have a lobotomy. Say, "I don't need that side of the brain because I ain't no artist." That's not good. Why don't we say, "Okay, if I'm not an artist, I'm going to take some art classes. That's what Esteban Villa did." I bet you I've taken about 100 art classes in my lifetime.

Q Wow!

[00:39:59]

Villa Isn't that amazing? So don't say, "Gee, I wish I was an artist." Well, you can be if you want to take art classes. [laughter] You can be anything you want, really. Take the classes. Want to be a writer? Take a lot of writing.

We had Chicano faculty here, *wonderful* organization, you know, the names, the list, Estella Serrano and Olivia Castellanos, you know, lot of beautiful—Joaquin Fernandez in music, and with the ethnic pride, you know. Joaquin taught music here and he would do a classical piano concert. Then I started listening to this. "You know, that sounds like *Adelita*." [demonstrates] But he was doing it like Mozart and Beethoven. [laughter] Says, "Wow! That's interesting. Who wrote that, Mozart?"

"No, I did." [laughter]

So we must be creative, be imaginative, be artistic, back to the question how important is our—yeah. Very, very. Use both sides of the brain, yeah, both, both, because let's say that music is mathematical, that science, 3/4 time, 4/4 time, half note. [demonstrates] Sounds like math. And let's say that music is the art. Music, okay. Now we have a little melody. Then the math, this is a 3/4 time, don't forget. You see, we need both. They go together like this, because if you don't use art, you say, "I don't need my left arm, I'll just put it in my pocket and go through life with my right," you see how ridiculous that is. Can't have that. Got to grow and accept. At least add culture and art. Most of the anthropologists here at Sacramento State use art very heavily. Like Joe Serna, who later became the mayor, he was part of the Movement here, he used art, slides, to teach government, like Goya, he did a lot of paintings of the social strife of his time, armies and all that stuff, war.

Q Did your involvement in the Movimiento Chicano change your personality?

[00:43:21]

Villa Most definitely. It did it in this way. I think that the Chicano involvement changed me personally and gave me, first of all, a sense of identity. I tell people I'm an American by birth, Chicano by choice. That's me. And I hope everybody uses that too. *Por que America es un continente*. It's not just the United States; it's a continent. I'm an American, you're an American, anybody born on this continent is an American by birth, and then you can choose to be either a Mormon or a Chicano, take your choice. [laughter]

That gave me a sense of character which, you know, growing up destitute in the Valley, without any books in the house, you grow up without any personality, personality, and you grow up without any character. Don't ever marry some guy without character. It's like a chicken without feathers. [laughter] You need character. The Chicano Movement needs character. That's what we provided. You need that, you need to build it. It's something that you give yourself. It's not something that you go find in a town. It's something that you build as a student, as an imaginator. Imagination, more important than knowledge. Imagination. We need to understand that. If Albert Einstein was sitting here getting interviewed, too, he would probably give me a high-five because he's the one that said that.

If you go for a job, you're out of school, go look for work, "Okay, Roberto and Maria. You're hired. Just one last question. You can report for work Monday."

Roberto goes, "Okay, I'm ready,"

"Okay, Robert. *Que es mas importante en la vida*? What's more important in life, knowledge or imagination?

"Oh, knowledge."

"Okay, you're not hired."

And Maria says, "Imagination."

"Okay, you're hired."

Why is that? Why is imagination more important than knowledge? So that's kind of like building of character, understanding a culture that is such a beautiful culture. Think about it a minute. I was so ashamed to take tacos to school, I used to go and hide. "Hey, why are you eating there?"

"Tacos."

"Oh he's eating tacos." In those days it was not good to eat that. Shameful, you know.

Now they have Taco Bell, Señor Taco, Taco Deluxe, tacos, you know. Now people get mad if you don't have a salsa bar, say, "What kind of place is this, anyway? There's no *menudo*, there's no *alote*, there's no *chocolate*, there's no *tortillas*." You see how things have changed, and we must continue that change.

Another equation by Einstein, change is constant, equals MC^2. That's what that E stands for, constant change, because change is the only thing that's absolute. And we must put a *caballo*, a *caballito*, you understand, metaphorically speaking, you put a saddle on change and let's ride, along with California Chrome.

So, personality, it gave me that, it gave me a sense of character to build, and out of that, I sit here before you as a retired professor emeritus from Sac State, and a

lot of murals in town that I've left with my classes, hundreds and thousands of silk-screen posters that are here in the university still, and poems, little poetry, song writing. I'm working on my fourth CD. So I'm teaching through music now that I'm retired, play rhythm guitar, sing songs.

My teacher said, "Steven, you're never going to finish high school, you're not going to be an artist, and you're not going to be a teacher and you're not going to be a musician. You're going to make a very good farmworker."

And I said, "Oh, thanks." And I didn't even like farmworking. [laughter]

So I didn't listen to that. I followed my own path, my own journey and if there was no path, I made one to get to where I am. Sometimes you have to make your own *camino*. You have to make your own road to success. Yes. And you do that, make your education a priority, okay? So you've got to graduate with honors, right? That's half the battle. The other half begins when you go to work and put your education into practice, practice. If your ideas don't work, go back. The idea has to work, it has to work. Otherwise, what good is it? What good is a movement *que no hace nada*? It's like a sorority. You know the *americanos*, how they have their little sororities? That's not good. That's not a good movement. It's very clannish. "You don't get in."

So that's what it did for me. It changed my personality, which I felt I didn't even have one before.

Q What role do you believe that Chicanas played in the Movimiento? [00:50:32]

Villa Well, first of all, I don't even like the word *role*. I wasn't a role player, you know, like an actor in the Movement. No. But still try to give some value to that

question, I think that the role, supposedly, that it provided was that it gave us a sense of—how do I want to say; I'm looking for the word—a place, you know, a place where we can provide. I think that it's something that's needed by all students, you know, to volunteer, being a volunteer, friendly and charitable.

I can't tell you how many places I've been invited to where I didn't get paid, you know, to fit into this role in the Movement. And that's okay. I'm more or less a public servant. You know, I was surprised that lawyers and teachers and dentists and doctors and artists and state workers are public servants. I thought a public servant was a waiter or a waitress, you know. That's a public servant. No, lawyers or doctors are public servants, and so are teachers.

So, very important that we have that fulfillment to fill, and everyone has got a part in it. They say that even if every Chicano, Chicana gave two years out of their life, two years to the Movement like Cesar Chavez did and Barack Obama gave two years, can you imagine how much we could do if everybody in Sacramento gave two years after they graduated, for God, country, and family, two years out of your life? Not easy to do. And some people never give two years of their life to anything. That's a bad role. And, you know, two years *se pasa asi*. [snaps fingers] It's not that much, really, you know. You could do it by joining the army, be a farmworker, health provider, a teacher, even, for two years. Those are roles that you can fill, that are beneficial, beneficial. And everyone should have that role, everyone. *Has algo*. *Sirve de algo*. Please do something.

Roberto and Maria still going, "What can I do? I just want to stay home and eat Mom's cooking, let her do my wash." [laughs] No. Two years.

Can you imagine how much power that is if all the Chicanada, for two years, *everybody*, whether they wanted to or not, gave two years of their life? For one person, it's not much. Let's say you live to be as old as I am. I'm already eighty-three, going on eighty-four August 3rd, and I'm still healthy. I can outrun any teenager right now. No medication. And I grew up in a family with tuberculosis, sugar diabetes, which is still around, killing our very own families. That's where I lost most of my brothers and sisters and family, TB, diabetes, my mother included. So we need young doctors to find a cure for that. That would be nice, wouldn't it? Yeah, that's a role.

So we have a lot of work to do. Like President Barack Obama said, we've come a long ways, we've done a lot. Chicano Movement, Mexican American Education Project, CAMP, Ethnic Studies, Women Studies, murals, poetry, posters, graphics, dance, *folklorico*, Southside Park, Washington Neighborhood Center, campuses with murals, high schools with murals. We are an awesome wave. *Onda*, not Honda, but *onda*, wave. [laughs] As big as a tsunami. That's us. That's where we are now. And I hope the coming generations will continue, through technology, continue what we started.

We're not finished yet in this Movement, Chicano Movement. A lot of people think it's over. It's not. Your children's children will—and that's what I mean we need to institutionalize all this, the history, which is what you're doing here by allowing us, while we're still around, to provide what we remember coming up this steep mountain, like this. [demonstrates] My god, if it was any steeper, we'd probably be straight up like that. [demonstrates] It's been hard.

So I hope my work is not abandoned and not just tossed aside. "Eh, that's interesting, Villa, what you did." [laughs] No. We've got to have textbooks. Our values have to be in textbooks and into the schools, textbooks. Somebody's going to write something about all this history. Put all the interviews together, it's going to make a big book, thanks to you.

Next question.

Q So what is your opinion about the Chicanas joining in the Movimiento?

[00:58:26]

Villa Chicanas! Oh, my favorite subject. [laughs] Well, women have come a long ways from being in the kitchen, raising children, okay? And we ourselves in the Royal Chicano Air Force have been accused of sexism. Says, "How come you guys are artists, you're painters and muralists, singers and poets and dancers, have never informed people that women were part of the beginning of this Movement? Why do you leave them out? Why do you leave out women like they didn't do any art or there's no women painters or poets or writers or sculptors or actors, actresses. Why? Why aren't we included?"

One time I went to San Francisco and I had a show with Gabriela L_____ in San Francisco and José Montoya in RCAF, and we were being interviewed and were asked why these women were outside picketing our art exhibit, Chicano art. Said, "What are those women doing out there with them signs, trying to close down our show, asking, 'There's no women in this show that shows the beginning the Art Movement began. Why is there no women painters included?'"

And José said, “Because there weren’t any women around in those days in colleges and doing art.”

[laughs] I said, “Oh my god, José, you can’t say that.”

So I snuck out the side door and went to the bar and had a beer and left José to confront all those women. [laughter] They were upset. And I was afraid to go back to see if they had beaten him up or something, you know, because women were angry, and rightfully so.

So the question is most important, most deservedly. In fact, there was a saying once that women hold up half the sky. Men hold up one half; women hold up the other half, like this. [demonstrates] If the women aren’t there, the sky’s going to fall. Or if it’s all women or all men, it’s still going to fall. So we need to work together, men and women, and not discriminate against women, who I think they do a better job than most men, honestly, especially working in administrative capacities and teachers, you know, wonderful, wonderful.

So, getting back to the idea of using both sides of the brain, let’s say that if we don’t acknowledge women’s role, it’s not going to work. If we don’t acknowledge men’s role, it’s not going to work. We need both to balance, balance ourselves so we can—I remember reading somewhere about “Revive your mind, finish your education, and roam the world with a cultured class.” That’s nice. That would apply to what I think of women in our society today. Again, they must be a part of it all, you know, legislators, assemblywomen. Dolores Huerta won the Presidential Award, remember, along with Angela Davis and Maya Angelou and even some singer from Bakersfield. It wasn’t me. [laughter] But you see what a woman has done? She’s been

by President Barack Obama given such a prestigious declaration, a prize, you know, of good. That's how good women can be. Dolores Huerta, there should be more like her.

Q So what were some of the organizations you were involved in? [01:04:02]

Villa Oh, lots. Growing up, again, in farmworking, San Joaquin Valley, I always believed in unions. You know, unions provide benefits and health and wealth and understanding. I bet you I belonged to eight unions, including the UFW. I work with MEChA and the Felito Program and the Mexican American Education Project, and work alongside CAMP and alongside these organizations.

My proudest is MEChA. I like MEChA. Now, when we were hired, me and José, applied to teach in the art department, and, again, we didn't meet the criteria of the art department, and they didn't understand where we were coming from. We were teaching silk screen. "What are you going to print, t-shirts, Professor Villa? Is that what you're going to have your students do, t-shirts?"

And I said, "I don't know. If that's what they want to do with Dolores Huerta and Cesar."

And the teachers' union and so forth, yeah, I'm most certainly—and I think it's very important that everybody belong to two to three unions, teachers' unions, please. There's a lot of Chicanos that don't want to let the government know how much they earn, because they don't want to pay fees to that organization, like union fees, union dues. "I don't want to pay them money. They're just a bunch of crooks.

What do they doing for me? Nothing." So you see how arrogant that kind of attitude is, and it's not healthy not to belong to.

Anyway, MEChA. So they didn't want to hire me and José, I guess because we were Chicanos. [laughs] And one day we came in and they wouldn't even give us a classroom when we were hired. They said, "By golly, Professor Villa, we don't seem to have a classroom for you to teach your students this first year of your teaching."

"Oh, wow. Okay. Well, you know what? I'll teach my class under that tree in the Quad. I'll teach in the Quad as long as I get my paycheck."

Says, "Well, that's very unusual." [laughs] Outdoor living, teaching.

But Washington Neighborhood Center invited me and José to have our classes inside the Washington Neighborhood Center, so there we go to the *barrio* to teach, because they didn't want us here.

So the way we got hired was not pretty. See, MEChA had a sit-down strike in the hallways of the art department right here, and they said they were blocking the doors to all the other professors. They couldn't get in. Chicano students all sitting there like this [demonstrates], doing their homework, they said, "We're not moving until you hire them two guys over there," meaning me and José. "We're going to sit here until they're hired as faculty in your art department."

And they didn't like that. "Well, we'll see about that." [laughs]

You know how Barack Obama gets hurdles put in front of him all the time. So anyway, thanks to MEChA, we were hired. That's my involvement with organizations, and I hope everybody learns from that, that there's strength in

organization, strength. Don't try to do it by yourself. They'll just run over you like trying to cross a freeway by yourself. [Spanish] *un movimiento* like in Los Angeles, you know. You've seen pictures of that. Hundreds. [laughs] We were there. I even got wounded there, right here [demonstrates], a big ol' cut. And I was wearing a white shirt, so it looked worse than what it was. It was just a cut right here. But it could have been a little closer to my neck. I probably wouldn't be here. So police riots like the kinds you see on TV. Anyway, it looked bad.

All the guys from Sacramento, "What happened to you, Villa? Oh, my god! Are you wounded?" They thought I had a stomach wound.

So it was kind of militant, you know, to get this Movement started. We lost some casualties. Ruben Salazar, one of my favorite writers, was killed in the saloon during those riots, and I think they shut him up because he was writing about Chicano power, and the L.A. publishers didn't like that. He's a good writer. You can look up all his writing. There's a nice big book of his essays and articles he wrote.

So we needed a little bit of *poder*, a little bit of militancy. Like that poster of the woman who's going like this [demonstrates]. You've seen that one. It's got her bandana. "You want some of this?" [laughter]

So those were my involvements, and everyone should be involved, because it's not fair. Like a lot of faculty here that used to march here with students for a salary raise, they were busy, they went to teach their classes, and then when we got the raise, we were sitting in the faculty meeting and they were all happy because they got a raise along with us, but they didn't march or picket. We did the hard work. And it was scary. I ain't kidding you. Yeah, militancy.

Now you have it a little bit easier. Now you're into technology. So, do it, but see, technology is the next *movimiento* for the *vasa,* for the g*ente*, for the *pueblo, la communidad*, for *la causa*, for *la unión*, for *la familia*, for *la gente*, for *la barrio*, technology Chicano style. You know what I mean? All your hashtags and Twitter and twerking should be Chicano style. [laughter] And it's a pretty culture, I must tell you. Please tell you friends, your student friends, and family not to be ashamed of being Mexican or Latino of any kind, because it hinders our progress.

So that's the next *movimiento*, I think, computers. I think they're already out there, that you can do texting and typing in Spanish. Is that correct? There's that little tilde and the double "l" and all those extra letters that we put in. [laughter] It's important, see. So that's what I think.

The idea with studies that I would suggest to future students is you don't have to decide what it is you want to be when you grow up. Just graduate. It's called liberal studies. Different people, "What do you want to be, Roberto, when you grow up?"

"I don't know."

"Maria?"

"I don't know."

"Well, you better hurry up. You're thirty-five years old. You got to decide soon."

"I know, but what can I do?"

No. We got to get rid of that. And liberal studies provides that. You can graduate and fulfill all your state requirements to get your degree, and then when you get out, you decide where you want to go. You can go to wherever you want to go

with your credentials because you did four years of college. So, in other words, *preparacion*. Be prepared.

Me, I knew what I wanted to be: an artist all of the way. No question. Art. You couldn't push me. It would be like trying to push over a big ol' semi-truck by yourself. Ain't gonna turn it over. Not me. So I know and many people know that, teachers, doctors know that. But let's say you're one of the people that don't know. Liberal studies, finish your education, and then whenever you get a job offer, you're prepared and highly qualified to take that job, whatever it is.

How much more do we have to go here?

Q Just a few more questions, a few more.

[01:15:35]

Villa Talk loud. Don't forget. Yell at me.

Q So what significance did the activities or organizations play in the Movimiento Chicano?

[01:16:34]

Villa Can help with promoting it? Well, I think that when I said that art and science go together, that we've given the politicians a chance, and I think that at least now it's time to add *la cultura*, the culture, the other side of the brain, to the political scientists, because they're lacking in imagination, and we need to provide that to make the *movimiento* really keep moving, not just at 65 miles an hour. No. We got to increase our speed.

That's why I'm talking about technology. See, if you wanted to organize a movement, you know, and get the word out, you put it on your computer, and within

seconds it could branch out to millions of people. “Be there at 10:00 a.m.” Tell everybody. Tweet! It goes out. See how fast that is. See, before, we used to print posters, “Be there at 10:00.” See how limited that is? So we need to increase that.

Anyway, if I’m hearing your question, I think that we need types of education that can provide means of self-expression, self-expression. You need to express your feelings, your thoughts, your ideas, your children’s thoughts. And how do you do that How do you do that? And what kind of courses do you take? Well, when I was in art school, I remember one professor that put it this way. He said, “There’s essentially eight means of expression.” Start with painting, okay, art. That’s good. Express all your feelings out, you know. You need photography. You could do photography. You ever do a selfie? You go, “I’m so pretty. I’m going to take a—.” [laughter] Photography, okay, means of self-expression. We had a photographer teacher here, Miguel Blanco, and he was so good, a photographer, expression, you know, covered a lot of the *movimient*o things.

You need poetry, people that know how to spell and write. That’s what Olivia Castellano, professor here, taught, how to write, how to spell.

Dance. Let’s say *ballet folklorico*. Now, there is nothing that really moves me than to watch children learning the *ballet folklorico* at Southside park for Cinco de Mayo. Oh, my gosh, they’re so pretty with all the—oh, they’re into it. Self-expression, dance.

Sculpture, sculpture, designing sculptural art projects for Sacramento where they’re using wood, metal, you know. Relief sculpture, the way they did in Italy,

friezes in the wall with half of the faces, the figures sticking out, sculpture. Murals, that would be nice.

And then there's music and theatre, *teatro.* Our very own Professor Manuel Pickett, he teaches theatre here. He's done a lot of plays. So there's the actors and *teatro*, Luis Valdez, Teatro Campesino, and music with Santana. Little Joe Y La Familia, and Music Express by Mallo [phonetic], which I opened up for him, by the way, with my music at Cesar Chavez Park once a few years back.

And then architecture, which embodies all those means of expression, design *beautiful* buildings.

So let's put it together. See, those are what we should teach the students, share with the students, that forget careers that are mediocre, because there's nothing worse for a Chicano than to be mediocre. You know mediocrity? *Nada*. They don't move, they don't think; they're just there, you know. "What's for dinner?" [laughter] And don't forget I told my students, I told them, "Mediocrity is not a Greek god, Roberto. And denial is not a river in Egypt. Self-denial. And a paradigm is not twenty cents, and a paradox is not two doctors. Look 'em up." [laughter] So we need to be smart, educated, clean with our ideas.

So did you get that? These I've provided for you, eight means of self-expression. Choose one. Me, I like to do them all except architecture. [laughter] Yeah, I'm not good with that, but the others, yes. I write music, I write songs, I play rhythm guitar, and I paint and I draw and I sketch, and I dance. I even go dancing still, the Torch Club, the blues, and visit museums and teach and show children guidance to get to those avenues, careers of self-expression. We need a lot of that,

because if it's going to be 300 million Chicanos in the United States soon. Every one of those needs a means of self-expression, career, okay, whether it's photography or dance or painting or acting, like a lot of beautiful actresses out there. What's her name, Selma Hayek? Does that sound familiar?

Q No.

[01:24:40]

Villa She's a movie actress.

Q Selma Hayek.

[01:24:44]

Villa Yay! [applauds] You see how wonderful she is? She's just an actress, you know, but look what she's doing. So don't select some mediocre career, okay? Don't forget. Mediocrity is not a Greek god. Now, there's a bad word. You thought *Chicano* was a bad word. *Mediocrity* is really bad. You don't *ever* want to practice mediocrity. There are people that live in the Gray Zones. "Do you believe in God?"

"Oh, I guess. I don't know."

"What are you going to be when you grow up?"

"Gee, I don't know. Everything's been done already. What can I do?" That's mediocrity.

"What kind of food you like?"

"Oh, whatever. Leftovers. I don't know." That sounds *awful*, instead of saying, "Give me some *menudo* on Sundays and *guacamole* for dips and *pan dulce*." [laughter] *Huevo rancheros* and *pozole*.

So I'm using music, then, still to this day, even though I'm retired. My first CD was called *Heartaches y Jalapenos*, and one young lady said, "Professor Villa, I've had both. I've had heartaches and jalapenos."

"Oh, okay, that's good." Twelve songs I wrote.

Then my second one was called *Habanero Honey*, twelve songs. Habanero's a chili powder. I put in a jar of honey, say, "Hey, this honey is hot, *picante*!" [laughter]

Then my third one I have right now is called *Holy Mole*. You know *mole*?

Q Mm-hmm.

Villa Chicken and *mole*. So I call it *Holy Mole*. That's three.

And I'm working on my fourth one, twelve new songs, and I don't know yet what I'll call it. Maybe I'll call it *Pozole Paradise*. [laughter] Wow! See, remain ethnic, please. It's a *beautiful* culture, food, dance, music, language, dress, style, fashion, family, lowrider cars that are so good. I should hire lowriders to design our cars in Detroit, with hydraulics that hop like grasshoppers. You've seen the lowriders. They are so beautifully designed. That's imagination.

So, anyway, I hope that kind of addresses a little bit. I wasn't too clear on the question. But, yeah, means of self-expression, let's go get that. Let's do that. And be prepared, no matter. Don't worry too much. Don't say where you're going to go work. You don't have to. You might end up as a teacher and you would have *never* thought you ever would. People might ask you, "Why are you a teacher?"

"I don't know. This guy said that I should teach for two years. And then after that, I can go and be myself."

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

[01:28:34]

Villa Absolutely. It's called altered minds. Getting back again, you know, going back and forth, when they indoctrinated me, they rearranged everything about me, my consciousness. "Don't speak Spanish. Don't eat tacos. Don't be so Mexican. You're in America. Go back where you came from!"

And in those days, I couldn't answer. I wish I had the answer. "Well, I'm already here. This is where I come from. This is a continent in which I was born. A lot of indigenous people are from here."

So, consciousness, the *conciencia*. You mix that with imagination and you will be better prepared, better qualified to express your feelings about how to best keep our fathers of the Movement, let's say, the one that created the earlier organizations, La MAPA and MAYA and MEChA and RCAF and Women Studies, wonderful. So that's altered consciousness. We can think for ourselves. We don't need somebody to tell us, "What are you, anyway, huh? What are you?" You see how threatening that sounds, you know. It's a beautiful culture.

Then also to break down the border between the United States and Mexico. That's a terrible thing. People get killed crossing that, just because they want to come here for work. So I hope diplomats and ambassadors of goodwill can do that. Let's just make everybody an RCAF flier, and we can fly right over the border or under the radar, undetected. People say, "How come RCAF never crashes?" Because we fly

low to the ground, under the radar. There's no room to crash. Might trip, maybe. [laughter] So the border, you know.

Those are really critical issues that future generations face, because it's a better way of doing things, better designs, better health. I hope that somebody finds a cure for diabetes and cancer and all those things, and high blood pressure and stress. When I grew up, I never heard of stress. Did you? People didn't say, "[Spanish] *estresado*." They say, "*Estresado*? What is stress?" [laughs] "High blood pressure? What is all that? We don't understand that."

So we need training, we need practice, and we need to test it to see if it works. Hopefully, it does. And we just want to do whatever we can to make this a better world, not just for Chicano people, but for *everybody*, White Chinese, Korean, doesn't matter, for *everybody*, with global warming and good drinking water and beautiful schools, good teachers. We need good teachers out there. There's too many teachers that are not good, not good, and especially in the elementary schools. I've seen some mean teachers. "Roberto, what's the matter with you, Roberto? Can't you—." Like that.

Poor children go, "I want to go home."

"Stop crying!"

So we've got work to do, got a long ways to go, and everyone has to be a part of it. Otherwise, it's not going to work.

Q So how did these changes impact your personal relationships with family, peers, and significant others?

[01:34:26]

Villa Better. I think that by making education a priority, we can—see, you're accepted according to your skills in this country. You're a good doctor, yes. You're a good lawyer, yes. You're a good everything, yes, yes, accepted now. We've turned that corner of being misaligned, invisible. Sometimes we were even called the invisible minority, because we were so mediocre, kind of quiet. [Spanish], you know. "Obey your teachers and be respectful." And we turned that corner.

Now I have too many former students—for God's sake, that's like thirty years ago—"Professor Villa, I want you to know that the only reason I stayed in college was because of your classes that you taught. All the others were boring, but I liked yours, and that's why I stayed in school."

"Okay, thanks." High-five. [laughter] See, that's nice. That's how we need to be accepted, people that do well, do good, and provide for everybody to make this a better world. Yep. It's the only thing you can take with you when you die, what did you leave behind. [Spanish]. Why were you even here? You didn't plant a tree, you didn't write a poem, you didn't even have a kid? What are you going to leave? Just your ATM card.

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

[01:36:59]

Villa Unresolved. Well, one is that it really bothers me that we are the number-one minority, Mexicans, there's more of us than Blacks or Asians, and yet unresolved is this dropout record among Mexican high school students. That really bothers me a lot. Why is that still—if we're the greatest number, why aren't there

more of us graduating from high school? More, not less. And that has to be dealt with. You need to stop it. It's like a hemorrhage. Apply a tourniquet, stop that dropout. It can be done. If you drop out, you get up and try again. You know why children fall down a lot? So they can get up. [Spanish] A hundred times a day they need their balance. So that's one, and, to me, probably the most crucial to start there and keep them in school.

The hardest thing about college is showing up for class. Interesting, huh? "Oh, I found I wasn't smart enough."

"No. Did you show up?"

"No, I overslept. I wasn't feeling good. My mother needed me at home."

"No."

And there are many others. The list is long. There's lots of work to do.

Q Describe how the Movimiento Chicano impacted community life here in Sacramento or wherever you lived.

[01:39:36]

Villa Well, there's the good and the bad. [laughs] And the good is that the Chicano Movement has contributed to the betterment of a society for everyone. That's a good one, you know. Like Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, RCAF, the teachers, the faculty here, the poets and painters and photographers and dancers and ballets.

The bad news is that we need to, honestly, build our own university, because we don't have one. The Blacks have two, three universities. Why don't we have just one? Someone's got to start that movement. We could call it La Universidad de

Atzlán right here in wherever, Modesto, Fresno. Wouldn't that be nice? Yeah! Full of Chicano power, teachers, chemists, biologists, philosophers, a lot of philosophy, understanding what we're doing, where we're going, and how to best get there. So the bad news, that we don't have that road yet. We need to build it.

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

[01:41:47]

Villa Well, I think that my vision is that—let's say that we were able to build our own schools and universities and colleges. That's where it begins. That's where you teach philosophy and understanding unity and put it into practice, and that's the future. If we leave it up to those *americanos*, they're still not as qualified as we are. So you might get an *americano* like the Spanish teacher Mr. Johnson in Bakersfield. [Spanish in American accent] "My name's Mr. Johnson."

"[Spanish] *espagnol*?" [laughter] Then you get [unclear] always correcting him. Say, "You don't say [Spanish]. You say [Spanish]." [laughter]

So I see it as a bright future coming up. There's a lot of beautiful, beautiful youngsters. I ain't kiddin' you. I myself have a grandson, three generations of artists. He's seven years old. He's a painter and he's had art exhibits, been on TV, [Spanish]. He's about eight now. He's, I think, in the second or third grade. He's seen me paint. And I didn't have to tell him; he just does it, you know. Anyway, he sold one painting for $500 and then another painting for $500.

Q Wow!

[01:44:02]

Villa And then two more for 500 each. I said, "Cameron, how much money have you made painting?"

He said, "Two thousand dollars."

I said, "Oh, okay. Can I borrow some money?" [laughter] Isn't he beautiful? He's a child. He already understands the value of being a painter and selling the work and making money. He's been on TV, interviewed. He's pretty shy, still, but, still, he just does it.

So I see the future, like with Cameron, bright, younger, better, beautiful, more talented, more artistic, and, for goodness sake, a lot better-looking too. No big ears and a big nose that's all out of proportion. Now the children, ever seen how beautiful *la raza* is? I stand in the lobby and they all pass by. Look at all these beautiful girls and beautiful young men going by, handsome, girls are pretty. Things are brighter, things are better, and better thinkers too. For example, if I ever need help with my cell phone or a computer, I call a kid. I call a high school student. "I need help."

"Okay."

[demonstrates] "Fixed."

I said, "Thank you, Roberto." They are so good, good, fast.

Before TV and radio, when I grew up back in the thirties, we didn't have radios and TV and stuff, you know. It was all word-of-mouth teaching. My two aunts would be talking, "Oh, Maria, she said her first words today."

"Really?"

"And she's only seven years old."

"Oh, wow. She's pretty smart." [laughter]

See, now it's faster. Now we have lasers and nanoseconds, even. A nanosecond, you measure the second and measure it back one-millionth of a second. That's pretty small, a nanosecond.

Anyway, we need that, and I see a bright future for the Chicano. Let's do it. Let's not go through denial. It's not a river in Egypt. And stop kidding ourselves. Let's get busy. If one man can do it, me growing up in the Valley like I did, it's amazing, my life's journey going from a farmworker picking grapes and cotton in Bakersfield to a professor emeritus here with thirty-five years of teaching and books of my artwork, many books have published my murals. *Pilots of Atzlán*, have you seen that one yet? I think it's a thirty-minute or hour video, PBS, *Pilots of Atzlán*, about us, the Movimiento. Yes, we're in it. So I'm just one person, so what can another person like myself do? That's a lot. And put it all together and now we've *really* got a big movement going, one that's totally here to stay, no apologies, no explanations. We've not parentheses people. We're not hyphenated, okay?

Q Do you see yourself as staying involved in meeting these challenges, overcoming these challenges that you mentioned before?

[01:49:19]

Villa I'm losing my hearing. I'm sorry.

Q You know how like for the previous question we addressed future challenges for the Chicano community? Would you be interested in the future of staying involved and trying to overcome those challenges?

[01:49:37]

Villa To overcome adversity, shyness?

Q Those challenges.

[01:49:37]

Villa I can't hear. I missed that last question.

Q Do you see yourself as staying involved in meeting the challenges that you previously addressed?

[01:49:58]

Villa Involved?

Q In overcoming the challenges that you had mentioned.

[01:50:03]

Villa Overcoming challenges?

Q Yeah.

[01:50:05]

Villa Yeah. You know, it's still going on, still continues, and we get better at it in overcoming not just challenges, but adversity and a lot of hurdles along our path to a better acceptance into our society in America. I'm doing it through my music. Why am I still teaching when I write my songs? I thought I was through teaching, but, no, I continue. I continue with it, and I hope everybody else, too, even though they're retired, write a book, please, make a movie, plant a tree, write a poem.

[End of interview]