

Interview

George: What is your name, present address, year of birth, birthplace, marital status, year of marriage, and place of birth?

Adrian: My name is Adrian Vargas, present address [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was born February 22, 1951, married; this is my second marriage and was married April 11, 1987, was born in El Paso, Texas.

George: How many years did you live in the house where you were born?

Adrian: Lets see, I live ^{at} there, well where I was born, where my parents were living at, at that time was their first little house in Juarez. I was raised in Juarez. I was born in El Paso but I was from Juarez, Mexico, and just a little background on that, that's a little something people on the border used to do sometimes, is go have their kids on the U.S. side so if they ever wanted to immigrate, get legal residence they have a bases for it because their kids were born on the U.S. side. So my parents were, my mom, was a green carder. She worked at the Farah pant factory when we were kids. Anyway, we didn't live all that long in the first house where I was born. My family, my parents ran into some hard times for a while, so we moved to my grandmother's house in Juarez, the same place. And I lived there for my, pretty much for my first five or six years, then we migrated to Mexico City where my dad found work down there. Lived down there for about two years. Then moved back to Juarez to my grandmother's house for about another year or two. Then we moved to Tijuana.

George: What did your father do for a living when you lived in Mexico City?

Adrian: He had a little furniture business, him and one of my mom's uncles put their money together and they were selling furniture in Juarez. The business didn't go that well, a lot of people in Juarez would go across and buy their furniture. More modern looking in the United States so they didn't do that well. Then he, when he moved to Mexico, he was there awhile before we joined up with him. He was selling calculators, calculating machines not the electronic but the old

mechanical machines. But he was doing that, we moved to Tijuana where my parents, both my parents, got work in San Diego. They were green carders there, also. My dad worked at the Sands Hotel in San Diego dish washing and busboying and that sort of thing and my mother worked as a maid at a another hotel, the Kings Inn it was called. Then we moved to San Diego, where I entered the third grade. When I entered the third grade I was living in San Diego.

George: What kind of impact did these moves have on your family?

Adrian: Well, the first couple of moves, when we were real small from what I recall wasn't that bad, but when, well my father when he went to Mexico City we were without my father for a period of time before we joined up with him there. Then when they decided to move to Tijuana, I was in first grade in Juarez and my whole family went except me I stayed with my grandmother in Juarez to finish the first grade. Then before second grade started I went to Tijuana. It was my first airplane ride by myself. They just put me on a plane flew, down to San Diego airport and picked me up there. So some of it was being away, when my family moved either my dad was gone or my family wasn't there my bothers and sisters were not there. I'm the oldest in the family, so I would miss them a lot. Then when I got into school, you know I made friends in school and stuff and when I had to leave it was kind of like not really knowing who I was going to mess around with or what it was going to be like. It was a very strange experience. Then when we moved to San Diego, then that was the culture shock, because in Tijuana even though we were on the border in Juarez and Tijuana, we stuck to ourselves and didn't really go into San Diego that much even though my parents were from the U.S. side. So we had to start, my sister was in second grade I was in third grade and my younger sister I think hadn't started school yet, but the language changed and different customs. But the primary thing was the language barrier, and I think we adapted pretty quickly after awhile but at first it was hard because your in third grade and your expected to know some much in English already and your trying to learn the language and at the same time do the ABC's and the three "R's" reading, writing and arithmetic. But I'll say one thing though, the schools in Mexico were more advance in math than up here in the United States at least in California. I knew how to divide and multiply by three numbers in second grade and when I started the third grade everybody was just learning two's and three's tables. So I whizzed through that but

writing was different as spelling and reading, it was kind of tough at first.

George: You kind of went into my next question. How many brothers and sisters do you have?

Adrian: I think with the previous question, just one other move that took place was when my father moved up here to look for work here in the Santa Clara Valley. Again we were without our father for a period of time and then we followed him up. So, being away from your father and your family sometimes that was also a rough time. So, I have two sisters one brother. My brother is the youngest in the family and Lily is next to me and Sue is the third born, I am the oldest in the family .

George: What's your brother's name?

Adrian: Gustavo.

George: What do they, your brother and sisters do for a living?

Adrian: My sister Lily, who's next in line to me, she is basically a housewife. Her husband owns a janitorial business and she stays home. She has three kids. She is very involved with her kids and church and that sort of thing. So, she keeps real busy even though she doesn't work. My sister Sue, the third born, she works for AT&T in supply warehouse, they supply the technicians that go out and set up phones. My brother just finished law school at UCLA last year, took the bar in July he's waiting to hear how he did, he'll know after Thanksgiving, just in time for Christmas. So he is doing odd jobs here and there right now just to pay the rent and stuff, but his goal of course is to get into a law practice.

George: Between your brothers and sisters, including yourself, what is the highest education degree among them?

Adrian: Well, my brother's, the law school I would say. I got a masters in theater arts at UC Davis, but I think the law degree is the higher level of education. That is three years worth of post graduate.

George: Did anybody besides you and your brother go to college.

Adrian: No, my sisters they have a lot of real good -- they both have real good heads on their shoulders. They're smart of enough to go to college but it just didn't work out that way. They got into working all the time, raising a family. My sister Sue, the one that works at AT&T, she is taking class at junior college. To have more options, and move on in the department where she is at, she has a lot of sonority. She has been there since she was very young. She is seeing the writing on the wall as far as getting into other types of work.

George: Did your parents work?

Adrian: Yes.

George: How did they make a living?

Adrian: They are both retired. My mother when we moved up here to Santa Clara Valley got into electronics assembly right away. My father got into electronic assembly also, but eventually he took night class at Foothill college. At that time we were living in Mountain View and eventually he got enough training to get a job as a draftsman. They both ended up working for Hewlett-Packard in Palo Alto. My mother in the electronics production line and my father as a draftsman. They retired about four or five years ago. When we were kids we lived in a rented home. When we all moved out my parents saved enough money, and at that time found a nice little two bedroom house in Mountain View so they bought it and eventually though when they retired, it was my father's idea, was that they were not really going to be able to survive very well financially after retirement because of the cost of living in the area. So they decide to buy a house in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico and they moved down there. My father, after being down there for a couple of years had an illness so they had to come back and they've been here since December although my mom went back about two months ago. He's still here getting some treatment, but he is on his way back also. That's an interesting story because they never became U.S. citizens they always wanted to maintain their Mexican nationality. But even after working hard all those years and raising us, they still didn't have enough, social security just wasn't going to provide for them, scrimping and scrapping -- although they did hold on to their health insurance through Hewlett-Packard, so they get medical and health insurance from Hewlett-Packard. But their retirement money was like a \$15,000 shot, one time deal. That's another move in our family that has impacted on us because, first of all my mother is not very

happy that, that is happening because she is away from her children and her grandchildren and that sort of thing. She understands the economics practicality of it, but she, it is not the ideal situation for her. My father does not feel an affinity towards the children as much as my mother does, he is more practical oriented in terms of how we are going to live our golden years out. Down there, with their social security, they bought the house cash for \$35,000, after they sold their house up here they just bought the other house down there and they can travel around and stuff like that. But we have a dilemma, all of us, my brother and sisters because my father got ill a lot sooner than we had expected. That situation is still up in the air right now. He is going back but he needs additional treatment and eventually they will have to come back. His Hewlett-Packard health insurance only covers up to \$2,000 outside of the U.S. and they don't take medi-cal down there. For medical reasons they have to come back up here, that is kind of a dilemma right now, the whole thing, as your parents get older they have taken care of when you were young you have to take care of them when they get older but with the distances and the health problems and the finances and all that it creates a dilemma. So, that is what we are dealing with right now.

George: How tough is it for your parent to travel back and forth?

Adrian: They would come once a year. Since they moved down there they come once a year. They came once for Christmas and stayed a month or two. Then this last time they stayed quite a long time, my father was actually in the hospital getting treatment. My mother went back with the idea of fixing the house up down there and putting it on the market and then coming back up here to move up here. Now they are starting to talk about staying down there again, so it is up in the air right now and that is kind of a dilemma for us children.

George: What organizations did they participate with?

Adrian: My parents.

George: Yes, your parents.

Adrian: You mean community organizations.

George: Yes, or any other type of organizations.

Adrian: They were not involved per se. They belonged to a Mexican club, social club, but that was just for social reasons, they go on outings to Tahoe or have a party at someone's house or have a New Years party and that sort of thing. That was basically it. When I started getting involved with the Chicano Movement they supported me, they supported the ideas. They were becoming aware of all that was taking place. Even though they were not directly involved in any activism they understood and supported what I was doing.

George: You said both your parents worked. Who looked after the children?

Adrian: Me. I'll tell you what though. In the last phase I did, but my sister and I, I should say because she helped too, she is only a year younger. But when we were in Tijuana my grandmother, my mother's mother, came to Tijuana and she would take care of us while our parents were both at work in San Diego. Then when we moved to San Diego my grandmother came along and she watched us. When we moved up here to North View in Santa Clara Valley my grandmother went back to Juarez. Pretty much myself and my sister Lily took care of ourselves and my younger sister and younger brother. They would send us off to school, we would be in school all day. We would come home and we'd just hang around in the house and entertain ourselves in which ever way, watch TV or whatever. My parents would get home by six and my mom would cook dinner and that would be that. I had an interesting incident when we lived in Tijuana, we would go to school, there was one time period my grandmother had to go back to Juarez. So, they had a lady taking care of my younger brother and sister, but my parents would take us to our school in the morning. They go over to San Diego to work and they make us wait under La Plaza de Torros in San Diego until five or five thirty. Whenever they got off work they would pick us up there, and one day they forgot about us. We were waiting there just waiting and waiting until about eight or nine and it was getting dark and we're just look at headlights and there is nobody stopping for us. I was about seven or eight and my sister was just seven. It was pretty bold in those days to be out there by yourself as a kid. Finally, this car full of nuns pulled over and asked us what we were doing there at that hour of night just standing there, there was no bullfight that night. So, we told them that they must of forgotten about us, they took us home, gave us a ride home, we were real worried, papa y mama van a pasar and we are not going to be there, were going to be in trouble, they're going to think somebody

kidnapped us or what, so they get home we run out, my sister and I, the door "estamos aqui buenos y sanos no se preocupan." My parents looked at each other, 'que esta haciendo, estamos esperandonos. ¡Ay! Dios mio. They had actually gone out, my dad got a raise or something and they had gone out to a night club or something and they had completely forgotten about us. That was a interesting experience when we were kids down there in Tijuana. Tijuana was a rough town, it's rougher than Juarez but we were pretty bold. Other times we would take the bus, the school was across town it wasn't near, the schools over there weren't like in your neighborhood like here. They would have one school per so many square miles and if you lived in the fringes of that school area you had to travel a long way by bus. So, my sister and I -- they didn't have school buses that picked you up they had public transit, so we hopped on the public transit with all these other people in there, get off, so it was an interesting experience.

George: Briefly describe were your brothers and sisters went to elementary school and high school?

Adrian: Myself and brother and sisters, right!

George: Yes.

Adrian: Well, I went to grammar school in Juarez, grammar school in; do you want the name of the school?

George: Only if it is in this area.

Adrian: Oh, when we moved to this valley, this county, I went to Castro elementary school, then I went to Issac Newton gram Junior High School, then I went to Los Altos High School. That was an interesting thing because we were one of a handful of Mexicans at Los Altos High School. In those days the school district was named Mountain View-Los Altos High School district but they put the district line right on this side of town, it's all white middle class, upper middle class kids and on this side of town it was all Mexicans and lower class white kids. We lived right on the district line behind a bowling alley right off of the El Camino and in grammar school and in high school it was a mixed population of kids, blacks, not that many blacks but mostly Mexicans, Anglos, Chinos and Japones. It was pretty mixed. I don't know if you know Mountain View but it's a pretty mix community there. Then when we went to high school

that was another culture shock, because naturally when we were growing up a lot of our friends were Chicano and Mexicanos and stuff like that. And then when we had to go to school we broke ties with all our friends that went to Mountain View High School and then we went to Los Altos, then there was a big rivalry between those schools. We were kind of torn at the beginning. My sister Sue, she refused to go to Los Altos High School. Somehow or another she made up a phony address and she went to Mountain View. She did not want to deal with being only one of a handful of Mexicans at that high school. It was real upper upper not just middle-class lily white high school, they thought they were doing something real progressive when they decided to bus in three blacks from Ravens school. Ravens was a high school in East Palo Alto. That was the big event when I was going to high school there. So, naturally those three guys and us few Mexicans would always hang around with each other. I made friends amongst non-minority students too, but I didn't quite fit the mold. There was a lot of status on clothes, cars, houses, horses and looks. It was a real snobby school. Within the framework of the school there was the rebellious ones, I was kind of like amongst that group. I just didn't fit the mold. When I was a freshmen I got into sports but after awhile, I went to work after school. So, I couldn't do sports. All of us, we worked during our high school years that's how we basically bought our clothes and fed ourselves during school and all that, and on some occasions had to loan money to my parents for them to pay certain bills. So, we didn't fit the mold at all in high school, but that is were most of us went. My sister Sue didn't. She refused to give up her friends and her allegiance.

George: The rest of your sisters and brother went to the same school?

Adrian: Basically up here, the same schools except for my sister who went to Mountain View High School instead of Los Altos High School. Lily next to me she went to Los Altos High School and my younger brother went to Los Altos High School.

George: You mentioned where you brother went to college, where did you go to college?

Adrian: I went to San José State. That's another interesting experience, ending up at a college was a surprise for me, because even though I went to school I did the basic ed thing in high school.

I was never really prepped to go to college in the sense of encouragement from my parents or a counselor at school plotting college as a goal or something like that. I think in my junior year in high school that's when the counselor supposedly sat down with each student and helped them prepare their goals for entry into the new world. I didn't have the greatest grade point average. I did good in some subjects and not so good in others. I had like a C+/B- G.P.A. and when I saw the counselor what they recommended to me was to join the service like the Air Force or the Army to pick up a skill or a trade and on my own I said I think I want to go to college. Since I was working, I worked at a warehouse as a shipping clerk but I had other responsibilities they would give to me, so I was thinking business management in my head not from school but from work. I saw what other people were doing and thought I could do stuff like this and they told me I wouldn't be able to do that. Well, I said I could take courses at the J.C., figure out what I want to do from there and they were saying you should get into the armed services pick up a good technical skill and all that. Well, when I was trying to decide what to do, and I was really unsure. My mother had a friend who's son got into San José State through the E.O.P. program the very first year they had it. I went the second year they had it, I think it was the second year but she told my mom and my mom told me about it. My parents never really calculated college in terms of their finances for us. So, that was another factor, finances. Anyway, she found out, she told me about it, then I went to the counselors and said look here is a program, the Educational Opportunity Program, they have special admissions, they provide financial aid that's what I want to do. She still said, she didn't think I was college material. So, I said the hell with you. I went and applied, I got letters of recommendation from instructors and from my bosses from work, did my application, did my autobiography and all that and I was accepted. Going to college changed my out look on life and just opened up all different types of things for me.

George: So, what year were you accepted to college?

Adrian: I started in September of 1969. My brother went to San José State also. He went in and out of college for a couple of years. He took off to Alaska for a couple of years went back took some more classes, worked and eventually got his B.A. in speech, communications and right after that he went to UCLA law school.

George: How did you and your brother finance your way through college?

Adrian: Well, I had work study at that time I don't know if they still have it now a days. It's like a part-time job that the financial aid program at the college would pay your way and you get assigned to a nonprofit business like the school. I worked at MACSA when I was going through that program and at an elementary school. Grants that we got back in those days and loans, low interest loans, National Student Defense Loans, that's how I did it. My brother did pretty much loans and he worked during the summer. He didn't work during the school year. Our parents never had the resources to pay for our college education. They would loan us money here and there when things were pretty tight at different points in time but they never specifically saved X amount of dollars to send one years worth of tuition or whatever for one of us. They just didn't make that kind of money.

George: Where you ever in the military?

Adrian: No. That's another interesting story. I had to sign up for the draft and stuff and the Vietnam war was going on and I had a friend that had come back in a coffin. I was really against the war. When the anti-war movement started I back it up all the way and I had even considered, you know a lot a people were going to Canada, I had considered if I got drafted that I jam down to Mexico. I was just not going to go. My number came up and I had a student deferment which kept me from going once I got to college. If I hadn't gone to college who knows were I would have ended up.

George: What were you doing in 1965?

Adrian: In 65 well lets see, that I was a freshmen or sophomore in high school. Just going to school hanging out with friends getting into cars, starting to drive. Becoming aware of civil rights and that whole thing. Obviously, at my school nobody did anything associated with civil rights or social change or anything like that it just didn't happen. Their ^{HE MEANS} was a couple of people, they were really chastised, the football team would come after them with baseball bats, it was really bad. I was never really that vocal about my opinions, although in my English classes when we were asked to do essays or write a poem

or a sonnet I always did it with that type of bent into it. I would write ant-war stuff or anti-racists stuff. So, I would do it that way. I was disconnected from a direct involvement back in that time. I have heard about the farmworkers and the grape boycott but we were pretty isolated where we were at.

George: What would you say your main concern was at that time?

Adrian: My main concern, passing through school, working-making money, buying my clothes it was pretty basic. Where I am going to get my first car, and all that stuff as far as my main concern. Even though I expressed some development of social awareness in my English classes it still was not my primary concern.

George: At this time, roughly what was your activities in artistic, social or political groups?

Adrian: None. Like I say myself and what I was involved with started when I got to college. Which was 1969. One thing that was concerning me that I should mention, it was something I knew was a big problem and I knew it was affecting my family, as far as me doing anything only thing I could do was just keep working and pay for my own expenses and stuff. My father as I told you he took ill when he was in Mexico, he has had a history of mental illness. He first got that sick, went into depression right around that time back then they didn't really know that much about that particular type of mental illness. They use to use electro shock on people, and that's what they did to him. They took him to Agnew hospital and he was there for about six months to nine months. They did electro shock on him, and again my father was away from our family. For a different type of reason. My brother and sisters did not see my father for almost a year. I saw him twice, my mom took me to the hospital, and the first time he asked my mom "quien es este muchacho contigo", he didn't recognize me. Electro shock just put people in such a fog, that they just didn't remember things about their lives. That had a big impact on me. The reason why he went into depression and got effected by this, is that he had a job injury when he was an assembler, and it messed up his back. The company doctors told him there was nothing wrong with him, and told him to get back to work. He actually had, like a slipped disc. To make a long story short, they didn't allow him, they told him they were not going to have him to work there any longer, because there was no reason for him not to work. So, he lost the job, we had to get welfare, he just went into depression, because it's a real big thing in Mexico, your the man and your not providing for your family. It's a really destructive type of thing that happens to you. Some people get violent, some people go crazy, drink all the rest of their life, and some people go into an emotional depression which is what happened to him. So, he had both the back injury plus the

depression. As far as the doctors were concern once he got into Agnew hospital that was the primary thing. Even after he left the hospital, he still had the back problems, he couldn't do certain kind of work. That's how he got back into school to learn drafting, because he could no longer do heavy lifting. Eventually, they sued, Beckman industries was the name of the company, and they won the suit, back then it was \$10,000 to \$15,000 somewhere around that figure. That basically paid for some of the doctor bills that were accumulated. Now a days you can sue for mental aguish, and that's what happened to him, but they didn't have that kind of exposure. So anyway that was a concern, because there was a lot of instability and financial during that period of time! Then school and friends and adventure to a degree was a scapegoat to some of that.

George: Lets move this time period up a few years. In the late '60's, 1970 were you active in social or political groups.

Adrian: Well, prior to starting in fall of 69 the actually school year, the EOP had a summer program sort of like an orientation program. A lot of the people, the students, the tutors and the instructors in that program were people who had been actively involved in the community and walkouts and the Fiesta de las Rosas. I had heard of Fiesta de Las Rosas, I had heard about the walkouts but I didn't give it that much thought. Once you got to San José State they would give you all the history and the background and what the political objectives were and what the social issue was and all that. It just opened up my mind to what was going on as it related to me as a Chicano at that time. Plus, I went to , the summer of 69 my sister Lily and I went to Mexico to visit our relatives. Just my immediate family is up here and the rest of our relatives are in Mexico. So, we went down there and we were just exposed to a lot of the history and the culture that you don't get when your small in school. There was a real big sense of pride, because for so many years people had given you the idea that being a Mexican is bad, your stupid, your lazy, being a Mexican had a very négative connotation back then. We turned every thing around. We started talking about Mexicanismo, our Chicanismo with pride and knowledge in our history, and the progressive role Mexicans have played in world history, the Mexican revolution, the cultural movement, the muralist and the music the musicians came out with from Mexico. All of that became part of an explosion of awareness from that experience from going to Mexico from the civil rights that was happening in general and specifically from the other students and professors at San José State and all of

them that were involved and had been involved with the civil rights movement and issues locally here in San José. That exposed me to myself, my history and my background. That was the summer of 69 or the fall, the whole year of 69, and one of the things that happen, it was called Teatro del Bano back then which was the predecessor to Teatro de la Gente and they did an acto a couple of actos there at our orientation program. It was just a mind' blower, my God. Mexicans, Chicanos on stage acting, making people laugh. Talking politics, history, and social issues and this and that. I realized then how powerful theater and media of acting and performing was, so I got attached to wanting to do that type of thing. Eventually, I did it when some members of the group, Teatro del Bano, left and started Teatro de la Gente. I was one of the original members of Teatro de la Gente that was 1970. Like I told you, our thing didn't really bloom until the mid 1970's, artistically. The whole time I was a student at San José State, we had Teatro de la Gente and we performed for rallies, political rallies, social rallies, fund raisers and just a lot of different places. We went to Cinco de Mayo programs through the Bay Area and performed there for those programs. We were the only group pretty much in the Bay Area. A lot of the other colleges tapped into us to go do performances at their programs. From there a couple of us, that were in the group, thought about it and said if we're really going to do this right we should study more about theater. We started majoring in drama theater. At that time, Teatro Campesino was around and what we were doing, it was like we were breaking ice. The drama departments and the arts departments were just blown away by us and at the same time didn't know how to relate to us, and at the same time wanted us to be a part of their thing, because it was dynamic at that time. We took advantage of that, for example I did my senior thesis on doing the publicity for this Festival in 1973, the International Chicano Theater Festival. There wasn't to many foundations or bases for them to evaluate me on what I've done, because it was the first time something like this has ever happened here. You had to present and support your thesis within a group of professors, and we were in a position to enlighten them to some degree. That was the early period during the college years.

George: Do you have any scrapbooks, photos or news clippings from this period?

Adrian: Yes, I have quite a bit. If you want later on we can thumb through some of it, it's not all organized. We can save that for another day.

George: Do you recall the walkouts at Roosevelt Junior high School and at San José State College?

Adrian: I recall the ones at San José State, heard about it on the news saw it on TV, and then a couple of months later, as I said, was introduced to a lot of people who were involved in the walkouts. I didn't hear to much about the walkouts at Roosevelt, I found out about them but as far as hearing about them as it happened, I wasn't aware about that.

George: Do you know what incidents led up to the walkouts?

Adrian: As far as the San José State one it was primarily a demonstration to show that higher education needs for Chicanos were not being addressed by the university. Their was lack of Chicano staff, programs and relents of curriculum material related to the history, the discoveries and the cultural aspects. That's what I remember about the walkout at San José State. It was a protest, and a demonstration to bring attention to that, and basically the educational needs of Chicanos were not being addressed, you had the high drop out rates and all that. The Roosevelt walkouts, I remember hearing and talking about that, but at this time I can't remember the specific issue, its been awhile. It didn't get recorded in the recess of my brain.

George: Do you recall La Fiestas de las Rosas?

Adrian: Yes. I was not there, I saw it on TV. What I remember about it, after it happen, it was basically, it was a parade that glamorized the Spanish Conquistadores or the Indio. People just rebelled against that image, and used that as a theme to celebrate when there was so many things going on that needed to be focused on as far as Chicano or Mexicano was concerned. I have pretty good friends or I knew of people who were involved in that, that give me all the history. Somebody filmed it, and I remember seeing film clips from it. At the time that it happen, that I saw it on TV it was just

another one of those things, that made me say to myself, "shit's happening". There is stuff going on around here, the riots, the assassination of Martin Luther King, Kennedy and all these things, the strike in San Francisco, the take overs at universities by students, the anti-war, there was just a lot of stuff going on. It's like tearing down the Berlin wall, it was that exciting what was going on, there was a lot of stuff happening. When I came to San José State I learned about all these things that had happen, and it breaks me.

George: Were you involved in the Chicano Movement at San José State?

Adrian: San José State! Yes. The teatro was part of the movement at San José State. For one semester I was co-chair of MECHA, when it became MECHA after, at first it was called MASC then it became MECHA, after it became MECHA I was co-chair person. For one semester, I think it was, I was elected. We did a lot of things, back then one of the biggest involvement we had as students back then was the grape boycott, support for the Farmworkers Movement a lot of picketing at the Safeway stores and Lucky stores and all that, and rallies and marches. Then there was the anti-war stuff with the Chicano bent to it, because at that time we became aware that there was a disproportional amount of Chicanos that were actually dying in the Vietnam war. We were something like eight percent of the population and about 20 to 25 percent of the dead in Vietnam were Chicanos. That was a big issue back then, ending the draft was a big issue. Then, the general condition of education for Chicano youth, we had a big program at Spartan Stadium that brought in high school and junior high school students from all over the schools to hear the program and hear speakers talk about education and educational needs, to expose them to higher education, expose them to their Chicanismo, their culture, their history and that went on for a couple of years. College students involved in the high schools, doing different things. Personally, I also participate with community alert portal. I don't know if you heard of that? We use to monitor the police on the east side. We would listen to the police radio and wherever police were sent in different numbers of squad cars and stuff to a party or a gathering or something, back then police were beating up on la raza pretty bad. We would meet them there in our little cars with our little ham radios, CB radios and we get out tape

recorders and cameras and start taking pictures and all that, it worked. They knew we were out there and keeping an eye on them and it reduced the number of police brutality incidents and that type of thing.

George: was there ever any major conflict between the community patrol and the police?

Adrian: Yea! Yea! They didn't like us at all, they didn't like us one bit. On one occasion at Hellyer park they did arrest somebody, I don't remember who the person was, they did arrest one of our people. I wasn't there that particular day, but they did arrest one of our people and confiscated their camera and their tape recorder. They didn't like us at all. Then there started to be some reform to take place in the police department and eventually CAP just started to phase out. It was still around after I stopped being involved with it, because I got more involved with teatro.

George: When you were with MECHA, in your opinion was it liberal, functional and did it involve other students?

Adrian: Yes, at different points in time. It brought together different students with different points of view who didn't necessarily have the same points of view of how to approach an issue or anything like that. There was an effort to make it real democratic, get input from everybody. One of the biggest things it did with all the other groups on campus was the educational pilgrimage to Sacramento. There were a lot of students that went, and back then I think the count was 1200 or 1500, by 1972 or '73 I think we ended up with 1200 or 1500 Chicanos at San José State, I am not sure of the total. MECHA did do some consciousness raising of some students. We challenged the Spartan Daily, they had printed an advertisement for the Spartan Bookstore with a Mexican sitting under a cactus tree with a sombrero, the next day all the Spartan Daily newspapers were in the fountain.

George: Was that the Frito Bandido?

Adrian: Yea, Frito Bandido, we challenged the newspaper to make some changes and they started to make some changes. So, we did a lot of consciousness raising in the classrooms, challenging the traditional perceptions that people had of us. And lending support to

community issues, a lot of different things that were going on around there.

George: The Spartan Daily newspapers in the fountain, was that an organized thing or something that just happened?

Adrian: Well, it was something everybody did but it was kind of organized, it was like we had to get these guys back. We stormed the Spartan Daily office, we had people hanging out windows and doors, it was just hundreds of people at the Spartan Daily office, and making certain demands to be met, so they would change their ignorance or their attitudes and racism.

George: Who were the individuals that were most actively involved in the Chicano Student Movement?

Adrian: Well, I remember people I use to look up towards and identify with, and identified them as leaders in the movement, there was Juan Oliveres, Antonio Chavez, Art Lopez, Juan Antu, Juan Najera, Lily Chavez, Liz Martinez, Rosa Maria Gomez, Gable Reyes was around then, Pete Michelle -- there was a lot.

George: Alright, have you ever heard of the Mexican American Youth Organization?

Adrian: Yes.

George: Or any other organizations at the high school level?

Adrian: Well, there was the CSU, the Chicano Student Unions, and when I was working at MACSA under the work study program, part of my project was to identify the Chicano leaders in high schools to help them focus on their Chicano Student Unions to help make them strong.

George: Do you know what the Mexican American Youth Organization did.

Adrian: Yea. Well, you mean locally?

George: Locally or nationally.

Adrian: Locally or nationally, in Tejas they did a voter registration drive and they -- the Raza Unida campaign there -- that was successful, that was a one week thing. Here locally there was information, education that the CSU and the MAYO clubs were giving out, the draft, civil right, higher education and just cultural awareness and cultural pride programs at the high school level. We got thrown out of a couple of high schools as college students to rally people to be against the draft, so we had that experience. It was different in the early stages, that's the way it was then. In the later stages or middle stages there was a little more legitimacy about it.

George: Were you aware of the Chicano EOP at San José State?

Adrian: Yea, my counselor wasn't, and I wasn't at first but that is how I got into college.

George: Next question, what happen in 1968? Were you aware of the Economic Opportunities Commission of Santa Clara County?

Adrian: What happened in 1968? In general?

George: Yea, just in general.

Adrian: The Olympics in Mexico City, that was a big thing where students movement down there were demonstrating then they got shot by the authorities and also John Carlos and Jimmy Smit when they clinched the black power fist. The walkouts I think were that year. I can not remember a specific event in '68 but I was aware of the different campaigns that the farmworkers union were undertaking. Tijerina, the thing in New Mexico with Tijerina was that in '68 or was that in '67?

George: That was, I don't recall but that was the late '60's.

Adrian : Yea, I remember that too. This is all stuff that was happening, I was still in high school then. So, that is what I remember as far as stuff happening.

George: Were you aware of the EOC?

Adrian: Yes, I was, its been so long that I don't remember specifically what they were doing, but there was a lot of community involvement.

George: Do you know about the consent decree for Chicano sheriffs?

Adrian: I don't remember that particular issue that much, I know that there was something going on, but as I said I was still in high school then, I wasn't specifically aware of that.

George: Were you aware of United People Arriba?

Adrian: Yea.

George: Were you affiliated with it or were any of your friends?

Adrian: I supported some of the things they did, some of the demonstrations some protests they had. As a student I went there and supported picket lines they had here and there and at construction sites and that sort of thing. I think UPA was directly involved in starting CAP, Community Alert Patrol.

George: Did you know what UPA's goals or objectives were?

Adrian: Well, to get people unified around the issues that were relevant to the conditions of Chicanos here in Santa Clara Valley, mainly in San José. They dealt with everything from housing to police brutality to job discrimination.

George: Was there a paranoia about government surveillance of individuals affiliated with any of these organizations?

Adrian: Yea, some of it was well founded, so it just wasn't paranoia. Like in CAP some of the police knew the people by name and they would get harassed in other places other than when they were on duty. I myself after 1973, after Nixon went to China and opened up relations with them, the Chinese government started inviting different groups of people from United States society to go to China and see what it was like -- become aware what the Chinese were all about. I was chosen to go to China by one of the friendship associates they had here, so they submitted my name, I went with a delegation, there was eighteen of us, all student delegation. I was there a month, it was great all expenses paid. We traveled to

different parts of China. We didn't just see one part, anyway the trip was great and really enlightening to see what they are doing over there. But when I got back, I hadn't been back for more than two weeks and the FBI came to see me. They saw me two different times. I've talked to friends or people who knew about this kind of stuff, and they said you don't have to talk to them, just don't lie to them. Don't tell them something that is not true then they can get you for, I'm not exactly sure, lying to an F.B.I. agent or something like that. They came around and said they wanted to know about my trip and what I saw and who I talked with and who else went. At that time we had just opened up the Centro Cultural, cultural center, with the teatro and the artists. We had a gallery a little performance space there were musicians and writers involved and we were in the middle of campaigning to get funds from the city Fine Arts Commission. They had never funded a Chicano group before; we were in the middle of negotiating that -- submitting proposals, and excreting our political muscle and rational to why they should start funding Chicano groups, because they never funded a minority group before. The F.B.I. actually came down and said, we know that your organization (because I was the director of the cultural center) we know you are in the process of obtaining funds, city funds and if you cooperate with us we can put a good word in for your organization. If you don't cooperative with us we can't give you any guarantee that you are going to have any advantages. Twice they came in a one month period, the same two guys came, and I told them I didn't have anything to talk to them about and I didn't have anything to say to them, I asked them please not to come down to the Cultural Center, because everybody else that was there really got paranoid. They knew the F.B.I. was watching what we were doing, they were watching what we were doing, it created some paranoia for people, but like I said it was not without foundation. I don't know to what every else degree some of that went on, but I know that personally it happened to me and what we were doing at the Cultural Center.

George: Were there any repercussions?

Adrian: In this particular case with the F.B.I. it's kind of hard to say, because we did get money from the Fine Arts Commission. I did not cooperative with them and we got a lot less then what we asked for, so you can say we got a token amount. So it is hard to say weather they may have influenced that. I know that I have a friend who was with the Black Berets Sal Canderia who was in La Fiestas de

Las Rosas and I think it was at that demonstration or another demonstration I can't remember which one it was, but he was actually put in Agnews, was it Agnews or Vacaville I can't remember which one but he was arrested then he was put into a mental type of institution for speaking Spanish incoherently; that is what they said. For people they had it in for they really went out and made life difficult for them. I think when the F.B.I. comes down to your Cultural Center and you got people involved in that public, community and all that, you get scared and they don't want to stay involved or they're going to be more cautious about what song they sing next or what image to put on a painting or what kind of play they are going to do. It's one of those things, basically we were not scared, because we knew to some extent what our rights were. Personally, I was feeling responsible for other people around me feeling paranoid, because I had gone to China and somehow or other that was making other people feel uncomfortable because the F.B.I. had come around, not the fact that I had gone to China. Everybody was glad for me about that, and I brought back slides and I would show them to people and stuff like that, but they have affected some people, made some people paranoid and feel somewhat uncomfortable about being involved in our center. I think to some degree that happened.

George: So what happened when the F.B.I. came to the cultural center, did they say anything, did they interrogate anybody?

Adrian: They just talked to me. I didn't let them put me aside, that was the thing though, see I did tell them to come into my office or lets go sit in the corner. I was right there in public. We had a gallery, there was people looking at the paintings and the art work that was there, and I just told them I really don't have anything to say to you, I don't have to talk to you and I don't needed to talk to you and they just kept prying and prying and I said I'm sorry but I really don't have to talk to you, excuse me but I have a program to do. Second time around the same thing.

George: How many times did they come around?

Adrian: They came twice.

George: Twice!

Adrian: Yes. Then seven years later I went to Cuba. That's another story.

George: The next question has to do with MAPA and what do you know about the conception of MAPA or the direction of it?

Adrian: I don't know too much about, I don't recall too much about it's beginning but I know the years I was involved in the community MAPA did play a big role. Doing voter registration, supporting political candidates that MAPA felt were responsive to the needs of the Chicano community and they took different stands on different types of political issues such as immigration and that sort of thing.

George: Were you part of MAPA?

Adrian: I belonged to MAPA but I have not been involved for about four years, so I'm not sure what they're doing now. I did attend, the last thing I did with them, is I did attend the National Convention they had in San José, I can't recall what year it was, it was before the '84 election I think it was.

George: How about the Mexican American Community Services Association?

Adrian: That one I know much more about because I worked with it. As I understand the agency was founded to focus attention to the social, economic, educational needs of Mexican Americans in the community. Through the course of time they had different types of programs. Including everything from community advocates to educational programs, employment and training programs. I was involved in a large art project which was at the same time a senior citizens gathering place and nutrition program plus cultural activities and a youth program-all for the resides in the area in south San José area. At one time they also put on the Cinco de Mayo and dieciseis de Septiembre parade and program they used to do it, then the G.I. Forum took it over they used to do that also.

George: Do you know what year they stopped doing that?

Adrian: Maybe '81 or '82 I can't recall exactly but it was around then. I also worked with MACSA when I was at San José State under the work study program. I was involved with the youth program. It was a large art project, I was the program coordinator. I ran all the

different levels of activities there, supervised staff and did proposal writing to get money into the project through the arts council and that sort of thing.

George: Do you recall any local newspapers or newsletters that were published during this period?

Adrian: Yea, I remember La Palabra that was one magazine that was put out and there was another one called El Manchete and Bronce I think was the other one. I had a couple of things that I wrote that was published in La Palabra a poem or two and an essay during that time.

George: Roughly, do you recall what year these issues were published?

Adrian: Lets see it must of been around 1970-71. I'll have to look through my stuff I'm not sure if I have any of those issues still with me but I know somebody who does because they called me up the other day and they were reminiscing and reading through it and they saw my article, my poem that I had written so they called me up and told me about it. I said I don't think I have a copy of that magazine anymore maybe I can get a copy.

George: Why did you actually submit anything to be published?

Adrian: They were looking for people to submit material poems, essays, and that sort of thing and I felt like contributing to it. I knew the people who put the magazine together, they were close friends of mine. I was aware and involved in pulling together some of the resources for the issues to get published. We use to work out of MACSA on 13th street that's when I was involved with it. I was working as a student, working work study at MACSA with the youth program, youth outreach program and I was also involved with La Palabra getting it published and printed. More as a resource person I wasn't editing or running the presses, I did a little bit of work in the darkroom with photographs but it was mostly just contributing writings.

George: One more question dealing with La Palabra, what kind of readership did you have was it large, small or was it concentrated?

Adrian: What do you mean by concentrated?

George: Was it just only San José State students?

Adrian: Yes, well San José community, it was not a very broadly published, widely published magazine but there was enough there to distribute to different community centers and to people that were very active in the community.

George: What was your involvement with the Farmworkers Movement, such as did you march?

Adrian: Yes, I did a number of things as a student. At San José State I was part of the boycott support committee. We did a lot of picketing at Safeways and Luckys, organized rallies at different locations different places, different times. With the teatro we did a number of performances as benefits for the farmworkers. We participated a major concert that Joan Baez sang at, a couple of other people sang, at Spartan Stadium we performed and at rallies, at that sort of thing for the farmworkers we would perform on flat bed trucks and little stages that sort of thing. In the summer of 1970, myself and a couple of guys, friends, we were on our way to Mexico and we stopped in Colcala where they were having a big strike and issues. There the teamsters were trying to take over the representation of the union and it was just a real big issue that was going on down there. We stayed there for a week or two, it was about ten days with the campesinos and got up at 4:30 in the morning went to the picket lines out in the fields. Trying to get workers to walk out of the fields and organizing name files and cards and all that stuff. Coming face to face with teamster goons, it was very interesting it was very adventuress at the time, just had our principles and thought we could do whatever we could stand to fulfill our principles and ideas that is what we did. The farmworkers union had a number of major marches, I recall one in Modesto in support of the boycott against Gallo. Another one in Salinas with the lettuce harvesters and there was fifty sixty thousand people at each one of those and we performed at both with the theater company. Well, we marched with the people with our guitarras and singing along and then we performed on stage as part of the program.

George: When you performed on stage, what kind of performance did you give? Was it tense release or was it a message type of performance?

Adrian: Well it was a little of both, we did what is call actos, short twenty to thirty minute skits. They would show the the patron, the grower, the teamster goon, and the campesino and his wife, la familia, we had kids in the group too, so we had the whole family on stage. A lot of it was just a display of how the campesinos were out there trying to get their message across to other campesinos, the general public, and a chance to make fun of the patrón. Ridicule the patrón and what he stood for and just a charactery of the patrón. So in that way people got a sense of humor and release into the whole thing. And then a lot of music , songs that came out of the Farmworkers Movement, like Reagan General, De Colores, The Picket Sign, Corrido de Ceaser Chavez, just a lot of different songs that different people along the way wrote, but chronicled in song and verse the struggle of the farmworker. A lot of these songs people out in the audience were familiar with, and one thing we use to do when we sang De Colores that was like the national hymn of the Farmworkers Movement, we ask everybody to link arms and sing along so everybody would swing back and forth singing De Colores. It was a great feeling, it really was, it was just a really neat experience to be on stage and have fifty thousand people singing De Colores all at the same time, amazing experience.

George: It seems like it would have that touch of fear dealing with the teamsters, just thinking out loud it's something you believe in and really want to do it, but you know something could happen.

Adrian: Yea, that was there in back of people's minds. That wasn't the driving force or emotion that we really worked on, it was much more positive, more proud, powerful, constructive type of emotion that people had at those rallies. It was just a tremendous amount of support the farmworkers union were able to get in the course of their struggle.

George: Did you attend any meetings of the Migrant Ministry?

Adrian: No, I know some people that were in the Migrant Ministry, but I wasn't involved with that.

George: Have you heard of the Chicano Teacher's Association?

Adrian: Yes.

George: What was their function or role?

Adrian: Well, they were, I'm not sure if they're still around, I remember when I became aware of them, they were pushing for bilingual, bi-cultural education. They were supporting each other in terms of resources, curriculum, moral support, strengthening in numbers, support in terms of Chicano teachers teaching other young Chicanos with their particular types of strategies they used, and fending resistance that might come from school administrators. Supporting each other in terms of tenure and longevity I guess in the educational system. Fighting prejudice and racism within the educational institutions.

George: Next question, what was the Associated Chicano Professors?

Adrian: They were involved in establishing and strengthening Chicano programs at San José State. They were involved with the MAGS program creating curriculum and education in the classroom that had relevance to Chicanos or about Chicanos. I can't recall exactly to what extent they were involved, but I think to some degree they were also involved in the development of Social Work. Mainly I remember them spearheading the MAGS program.

George: Lastly, dealing with educational teachers associations, the Association of Mexican American Educators.

Adrian: They were like the Chicano Teachers' Association, basically. From what I can recall one group was in one period of time and another group was in another period of time. Is that right?

George: Yes, that's the way I think it was.

Adrian: So, basically they had the same goals but they were on at different times, and I think AMAE, I think the association was state wide. I think that is the one that became state wide.

George: Have you ever heard of the Model Cities?

Adrian: Yes, Model Cities was a program set up throughout the United States. In different urban locations, that came about as a result of all the Civil Rights efforts, and legislation and political response from like President Johnson who said the War on Poverty type of thing. Here locally the focus, they had resources to help

develop improvements in the Chicano community, the barrios. I think there was some employment and training involved, and support of minority businesses and improvement of neighborhoods. That is what I recall from it.

George: Did you participate in it?

Adrian: No I didn't at that time. Most of the people that were involved, there in Model Cities, were people who had been around for a long time in the community and they were older. They were people with families and at that time not that many of the college students were involved in that. Some of the professors and other people they would have input or they were involved in some way. A lot of us at San José State saw that program too much as a band-aid approach to social problems that existed in the community. It had the, kind of represented in a way the system, because it was federally funded type of program. To some of us we thought it was too official, too bureaucratic to really make the changes that were needed in the community. So a lot of us stayed away from that, we had more grandiose ideas at that time.

George: Would you say most of the people who were involved were older and more established?

Adrian: Yea, more established had been around and a lot of students at San José State were not from San José per se. While a lot of people established roots here, I think most students associated themselves with students involved in issues including community issues but didn't really plug into stuff that was already going on before you had the influence of the student movement, Chicano Student Movement. Model Cities started and based itself in the mid '60's I think it was, and most of us that gone in as students didn't really associate with that too much. Although I'm sure Mister Carrasco did, which is not negative or positive that was the way some people were approaching it.

George: Did you know anybody personally who was involved?

Adrian: I had gotten to know people that were involved in it. They had like neighborhood meetings off and on here and there and I had attended some of them. I wanted to be informed and that sort of thing. A lot of times we had programs at the college that we wanted the community to come and see. Like we had Semana Chicana at San

José State which was like the Cinco de Mayo. Before the Cinco de Mayo was made into an Anglo-Chicano thing we use to have Semana Chicana at San José State. We'd put on teatro, folklorico, mariachi, speakers, we had Tijerina one time, Corky Gonzales another time, Ceaser Chavez and that sort of thing. We wanted to go out into the community and have the community come to the college to see the programs, have that become a educational experience but also expose them to the college itself. Bring their kids to the college, their young kids, older kids whatever, and let them know we are here now and this is the type of thing were trying to do here.

George: What led to the creation of EOP, MAGS, and the School of Social Work?

Adrian: Well, basically they had a number of different people that had identified the low status of Chicanos in higher education. This happened throughout the state. Different places had walkouts, different kinds of protests, sit ins all this and that. There was pressure brought upon college administration to establish special admission programs for Chicanos and minorities. I told you before I probably wouldn't ended up in college if it had not been for that program, just for a lot of different reasons. MAGS was created to offer educational experience to Chicanos and non-Chicanos about the Chicano community, Chicano culture, different aspects of the Chicano experience, community organizing, different types of subjects and topics that MAGS dealt with. Also MAGS was seen as one way of giving a masters degree for the study of Mexican American issues and culture, at that time they felt something like that was really needed. From there Chicanos would get into the community or other colleges or into business and that sort of thing, with the ability to develop issues and create awareness about the Chicanos and that sort of thing. The School of Social work that one was generated again through a lot of pressure seeing that the university was lacking in addressing certain needs of the Chicano and minority communities. The fact that well-trained social workers were needed in the community at different levels, at community agencies, at the county level, head of county government level. Other issues that were being raised was that people that could work with mental health issues of the Chicano community. Having practitioner that were bilingual, bi-cultural, identify with culture, could be aware and sensitive of culture so they could take all of that into consideration and be able to effectively treat that sort of situation. Also, to develop the administrative capabilities of people involved in social work so they

could get out there and run programs, write grants, do statistical research, develop action plans and that sort of thing, studies and surveys and all of that. It had a little bit different bend than the MAGS program but they were both addressing the needs of the Chicano community.

George: What was the response from administration?

Adrian: Well, that was a double edge sword. Pressure that came to bare on administration forced them to have these programs. Anytime they could they put a feather in their cap and say we have these programs here. There was always something happening where administration was phasing out the autonomy, for example of MAGS, phasing out the autonomy of EOP, Chicano EOP, cut back on funds available, not tenuring professors. So, there was a lot of different things, morbidos that the college did that had those program moving forward, but at the same time being cut back or being pressured to reduced the levels of what they were offering.

George: What was the response from the overall student body at San José State?

Adrian: Overall or the Chicano students?

George: Overall.

Adrian: Overall, I think most students in those days accepted the existence of those program as something that was necessary. There was your usual red-necks, racist, prejudice people that didn't feel those types of programs should be around but you had non-Chicano students enrolled in MAGS classes and School of Social Work classes. I believe at some point it was required for graduation that a class on ethnic studies be taken. I think in those days we didn't see to much backlash for the general student population. I didn't think there was that much of a backlash. I think there was a backlash sometimes with student body government, when it came to appropriating funds for student activities. Like when we asked for money do the Semana Chicana they would always try say there wasn't any money around or we could only give so much, then they turn around and fund Joe Blow's fraternity to do some kind of thing and all of a sudden there was money for that. There was struggle that was going on with student body, Associated Student Body Government. In most classes I was in, I got the feeling that, yes non-Chicanos felt somewhat

threatened by Chicanos and Blacks demanding their rights and rights to programs that were related to their history and their culture, but I was not that outspoken. I don't recall any major incidents that came out of the general student body. The Spartan Daily is another story, but I don't think the Spartan Daily necessarily reflected the whole student body. They did have their problems.

George: You said that you didn't feel the Spartan Daily was representative of the general student population. In your opinion, what was the reason for that, lack of representation of the student population or was there only a select few who got to be on the Spartan Daily?

Adrian: Yea, and I think the Spartan Daily was like another institution in the college. The general picture of institutions in general in society at that time was that they were prejudice. They had ways, institutional to keep minorities from participating fully in the process. As an institution just like the real newspapers outside the community they had their problems. They were still giving erroneous notions of what Chicanos were about. Ignorance, just out and out ignorance. Insulting a whole community with what they would print up or what graphic they would use. You can call it ignorance in some respects or you can call it reinforcement of prejudicial attitudes that all these people had, and in the journalism world is highly competitive. So, you have people at the Spartan Daily trying to get the best bi-line, and just being ignorant and insensitive to the needs of the Chicano and the minority population.

George: Can you give some specific examples?

Adrian: Yea, sure they had Frito Bandido one time then they had announcement for the bookstore, I think it was the bookstore or some bookstore I don't know if it was Roberts or the campus bookstore, but something to the effect don't get caught taking a siesta buy your books now or something like that. They showed the Mexican under the cactus with the sombrero. There was some reaction to the demonstrations or the protest or organized rallies that Chicanos and Blacks and minorities put together at that time. Because they were in a different world, they didn't see the need for social change. Eventually, we broke through some of that, but they were in their little ivory towers most of the time.

George: Would you say that is probably the same for Student Body Government?

Adrian: Yea, yea.

George: From your perception what was the impact of the Chicano Movement on the local Chicano and non-Chicano communities?

Adrian: The local Chicano and non-Chicano community?

George: Yes.

Adrian: You mean the Chicano Movement at San José State or just the Chicano Movement in general?

George: Just the San José area.

Adrian: The San José area, from the stand point that I was involved as a student in the student movement, in the teatro, and work with a community agency at that time, I think we made an impact on youth. We educated youth why the need to resist the draft, we got youth thinking about going to college, got youth thinking about thinking about social issues, having pride in their cultural ancestry, and the accomplishments of Chicano people. Like I said when we went out into the community, brought the community into the college I think we had a pretty big impact there, because we would bring in thousands of people into the college. When I organized the Teatro Festival in 1973, there again we had 800 people there every night watching theater groups, Chicano theater groups from all over the United States and groups from Mexico and other parts of Latin America. There was a big cultural explosion in teatro where as there hadn't been a Chicano tradition of theater in the United States. There is a strong theater tradition in Mexico but it hadn't established itself here, we exposed the community to that art form. Something they hadn't been exposed to with positive images of themselves instead of whatever the television or the movies would come out with, so we exposed that art form to the community. Other things brought pressure on the police to be more cautious of possibly being involved in a police brutality issues. They were being watched by the community and we were not going to tolerate anything like that. There was a big issue with Judge Jargon, I don't know if you been exposed to that but he made a very racist comment and actually said that maybe Hitler was right, your type of people maybe should be

done away with, and we took him off, we demonstrated and demonstrated and again ignorance, or racist or prejudicial people in the institutions of justice had to look over their shoulders a little bit. Some of what we were doing at that time, during that time late 60's early '70's, addition to making young people aware of the draft, why they should resist the draft, we also organized Chicano communities against the Vietnam War. You had the Moratorium in LA, large demonstration put on by anti-war groups; in San Francisco where Chicanos in art community mobilized art people to attend those demonstrations. I attended one in San Francisco where there was almost half a million people and a lot a Chicanos from San José went up there. I guess those were the main things. There were economic issues but not that many solutions economically to the the economic conditions in the barrios. Some of that is still going on as far as, now you have groups like PACK that are associated with the churches and different agencies. There they're trying to do something directly with City Hall and those places that might have some power to generate resources and commitment to improving the neighborhood and that sort of thing. That's about it in a nutshell, there's just a lot that was going on but I know we just don't have that much time to get into all that.

George: During this time the late '60's early '70's was there any allegiance with other minority groups?

Adrian: At San José State there was. There was a, I think it was called the Progressive Coalition made up of Chicanos, Blacks and Asians who ran candidates for office in the general Student Body Government who ran on issues that we all identified with fighting racism in the institution, maintaining and establishing relevance of the education that was taking place, so that it was sensitive and relevant to the needs of the minority people. That's were my exposure mainly was at, was that knowing all the different phases and supporting and organizing phases of what make up the Progressive Student Coalition. I don't recall too many alliances in the community with other minorities. The Black community wasn't really established in one section of the city yet, and it was very small. So I don't recall that many issues that we were in line with a direct involvement of the Blacks in the community. More recent I think there is more of that going on with the fight against drugs in the different neighborhoods, different barrios and that sort of thing. Back then the opportunity did really present itself too much, but there was some of that in the college.

George: Getting back to the impact of the Chicano Movement, how were the institutions impacted such as the Church?

Adrian: I think there was, because of the fact so many Chicanos were members of various Catholic Churches here in San José, and in some areas like in the Garden District you had a very progressive priest, Father Morearty. The Church became one organization tool or organization form of Chicanos being involved. We saw more Chicano priests, Latino priests coming about. Services, mass services in Spanish, Mexican music as part of the choir. In general I think the Church in this city played a progressive role with farmworkers and other issues that involved and still is with PACK and all those groups. I think the other area where we made a major impact was on the TV and other forms of mass media. Which resulted in many more people, Chicano people, minority people, being trained and going into work in places like channel eleven, channel thirty six, the Mercury and becoming, starting to see some Chicano images, positive Chicano images on TV as newscasters, community program host, TV programs local community TV programs that had relevance to the Chicano community. There was En La Comunidad was one. They had different names in the course of the last twenty years, but we saw that change taking place and that was big impact.

George: You mentioned there were newscasters and television hosts can you name some of these people?

Adrian: Ok, there was Roger Flores who was a student at San José State, had a talk show, I don't think he work for channel eleven they just put him in there because we demanded it and ran a little program for awhile. Then Rigo Chacon came around, Mario de Castillo, more recent Yolanda Pades and then you had different newscasters Roberta Gonzales and Rick Chavez on sports. We got a little bit in there here and there. On channel thirty six you got people like Roy Alvilla. In the newspapers Ernesto Remero was one, started opening up community access to the newspapers. So, events taking place in the Chicano community could be publicized in the newspapers and coverage of Chicano Latino happenings. Laura Villagran I believe is the person that is there now too. Those are some of the people.

George: Did the Chicano Movement have a big impact on the local city government?

Adrian: Very big. Where I work the county administers state funds for employment and training programs and some of the agencies who receive this money are Chicano run, pretty much Chicano run agencies but of course the money is going to the general public. But the involvement in electoral politics is another impact. Working with and supporting candidates for local government, as part of their agenda addressing the needs of the Chicano community. Supporting those candidates, of course running our own candidates like what we have now with Ron Gonzalez and Blanca Alvarado. Seeing more affirmative action employment of Chicanos and Chicanas in the government. Just actual employment of our gente has really been impacted, creating affirmative action programs. Creating affirmative action programs in terms of the contracting process that the city and county get into for road improvement, constructing different things where Chicanos have an opportunity to bid for those types of contracts, have the government agencies establish certain percentage of those contracts that must be given out to minority businesses. In the process of hiring more Chicanos like with county and the Department of Social Services much more attention by that department being put on the needs of the Chicano community. Mental Health Department the same thing much more attention being addressed to the needs of the mental health issues of the Chicano community, because you have Chicanos in there, Chicano professionals that are addressing these things, and again forcing institution, government institutions to change, adapt, start addressing some of those things.

George: What was the impact on the educational institutions?

Adrian: Well, I think that is one of the biggest ones. Although, there is a lot that has change institutionally in terms of the educational system but not enough has been done, because we still have a high drop out rate of Chicanos in elementary and secondary schools, but certainly more avenues have open up for Chicanos to get into higher education. We had the whole desegregation issue that was spearheaded by the Chicano community in the San José Unified School District. After years of court battle, eventually what started in the 1970's was eventually implemented in the 1980's. Much more Chicanos going into teaching profession, thereby strengthening programs like by bilingual education, creating those programs,

creating programs that are relevant to the educational needs of Chicano young people. The opportunity, like I had, to teach at a college or university teach a subject that is directly relevant to the cultural and the issues of the Chicano community. That was teatro of course, where I actually was able to, in those communities where I taught start their own theater groups as an off-shoot of my classes. I would give them all the knowledge and information, technique, ways to things, so after the class was gone, after a year or two they would still be able to have their own theater group in the community. That worked, that worked real well. I started one in Santa Rosa, Sonoma State College, one at Salinas, Hartnell, UC Davis, and the one here Teatro de La Gente and of course that same process took place throughout the state where Chicanos that got their education in college and developed skills, technical skills to do theater and establish groups in the varies communities. Like, there was something like five or six Chicano theater groups in LA alone and up and down the state and just all over, Sacramento, San Juaquin Valley, Fresno. That I think had a lot of impact, because it allowed the continuing development of issues in the community to be acted out on stage and continued the development of Chicanos, the audience being able to look at Chicanos on stage and identify with what they're doing, saying or acting and establish positive role models and strengthen communication.

George: What kind of impact did your involvement in college have on your family?

Adrian: Well, that's an interesting story. My family, my first family which is my brother and sisters and my parents, I think they basically saw my involvement at San José State as a student in the Chicano Movement in a real positive way. My sister Sue when she was in high school was involved in MECHA. My sister Lily got into social work with the county, she did later drop out because it was just too depressing for her. I think overall it had a positive impact on our family, because for a long time growing up as kids with my parents there was always that down trodden feeling or attitude about being Mexican in the United States. I think the Chicano Movement uplifted people as a whole, made them prouder of who they were or what they were. In the case of my mom, somebody did their doctorate thesis and part of their research was interviewing my mother as an electronics worker. There was some impact there, both ways, in terms of providing the background and history for the person that was working on their PhD and then my mother, feeling

like all these years I actually have been doing something that other people are interested, because I'm a Mexican working in the United States. I'm married now, this is my second marriage, but I met my first wife at San José State. We were both in the theater group. Later on my continued involvement with teatro became a friction point in that relationship. Because it required touring, it required long hours, rehearsals and that sort of thing. That alone with other different things that happened in our relationship, eventually we split up. I did have a son by her. For a time in term of that family it was fractionalized. I'm not specifically blaming it on the Chicano Movement but it was just one of those things that happened in that time period that you get so engrossed and impassioned in what you were doing that family, family life wasn't as important. Of course, we were very young back then, we got married a little too early. It's not that it wasn't as important, because familia was important but it's just that the routine of a domestic life clashed with the time and the energy that was required to do things at least in the teatro as part of the Chicano Movement. Now I'm into my second marriage, I met my current wife also in teatro but she was from a group in LA, and she actually organized a performance for us down there. I knew her for years but we didn't really become involved with each other, until she came up to study library science here at San José State. Her participation as a bilingual specialist librarian that is one of the direct results of the Chicano Movement right there. She works at the Biblioteca Latino-Americana. Another product of the Chicano Movement, that Biblioteca, that branch library has a mural in the front which was painted by us, by the people at our center, it's still there. So, a lot of my involvement and the involvement of other people in the movement has repercussions all the way up to today. My wife getting into library school, if there had not been a movement around I don't if she would have gotten in, because now they need bilingual librarians. Now schools are like for Chicanos to get into library science. They give the bilingual specialist test of the city about twice a year, they can't get enough Chicanos to get into the library. Chicanos are using the libraries more now. The education level and interest in reading is higher, so you need more librarians. With my son who is now fourteen, since he was a child I have tried to instill in him some of the ideals of justice, some of the ideals of fairness, of respect, the importance of education, having a positive attitude and communication with the rest of his family, in terms of dealing with problems that may be coming up that he needs support on and that whole thing. Communication effort within the family, all that is a result of some of my involvement in the movement. So, my

involvement personally in the movement has had an impact on my life good and bad, mostly good, I'll say eighty percent good and it has also impacted indirectly the types of jobs both my wife and I have where we're both working in areas that are results of people coming about and demanding social changes. Now we're both in the institutions which is a real switch, because if I look back ten years ago and I looked at me back then and thought that I'll be working for the county I'd think I was crazy. There is a maturing process as far as taking a real hard look at reality and seeing some of the limits of your idealism, like financial and economically, family limits and I got to the point after a number of years where I had to pull myself out of being involved with the theater to see how we're going to be able to provide for my family in the long run. A lot of people made that decision way before I did, you know what I'm saying. I kept going with it for a long time until 1983, 1983 was our last performance in Teatro de La Gente. There is another theater group now Teatro de Vision and I have done things with them since, but it's not directing, it's not writing, just acting something I can handle with my schedule and my energy level and my family obligations. With the theater group I was administrator, director of the center, I was artistic director of the theater group, I acted in, I played music in it, I wrote for it, it was just all engrossing, you just lived it every minute of your life. Anyway that is how its impacted.

George: Let me ask you this, when you were going to college and you were involved with all these activities, were you parents supportive?

Adrian: Oh yea, they were. My mother more so than my dad. My mother really liked me being in the theater group, because when she was young she was also in a theater group. My father, he didn't complain about it he was always, he was doing what I did eventually, looking down the road seeing what, how I was going to be able to have a stable financial situation and all that. He was concerned, he was a little bit concerned about it, that my ideals had taken over my practical side, but as far as my involvement in general they were supportive. I couldn't ask for more than what they did, they were understanding and supportive.

George: Let me ask you this, your first wife was she supportive?

Adrian: At the beginning, down the line a little bit it got kind of hairy. I don't blame my ex-wife, because she started to thinking about the same things I started to thinking about a couple of years

ago. Just like stability, how are you going to establish stability, and time for your family. Just other things that she was ready for that I wasn't ready for, that I couldn't be ready for at that time. Fortunately, now both my wife and I are ready for each other and we're starting to progress along and once in awhile when we have time we go to community functions or programs we're interested in and we're still supportive in that way. As I said I do things, somethings with the local Chicano theater group, the new one that's around. By the way its made up of former Teatro de La Gente members. I would like to document some of the history of that Teatro and maybe teach at one of the colleges, a class and work with it in that way. I think what your doing here with professor Carrasco's class and your involvement, I think it's very important, and I'm excited about gathering all the material together and donating what is appropriate to the Chicano Library, because I think it should be documented, like I said people invested all their life at that time in what they were doing, and some people still do.

Teatro de La Gente

Supplement

to

Mexican American Studies 205

George: The first question that I have is why was Teatro de La Gente founded, what was the purpose if there was one, in other words I'm trying to get to the creation of it?

Adrian: Teatro de La Gente was started in the spring of 1970. A number of students from San José State and in the San José community had been part of another teatro which was Teatro del Bano that was directed by Danny Valdez, Luis's brother. Basically a number of different people that were involved in Teatro del Bano decide to concentrate more locally. Teatro del Bano at that time was touring through different parts of California and the country. We felt we need a group that would still do what Teatro del Bano was doing nationally but also focus in on local productions and develop a local audience in San José. That was the spring of 1970. At the beginning we performed a lot at various colleges and schools in the area. We did support performances for the farmworkers and some of their issues around the boycott and the strikes they were dealing with and performed like I said at schools and colleges. The purpose, like I said, was to focus in on the local community, develop a local audience for teatro and try to work with local issues that would be reflected in the actos and the performances that were presented.

George: Would say that, when you say local issues is it political, social consciousness?

Adrian: yea, social issues that were taking place in the community. They may have been broad based issues like the farmworkers struggles but we gave it our local flavor of what was taking place here and we also focused in on education. Some of what was happening back in those times, with the issues of drugs and we did a lot of music as well. We performed La Cancion de Movimiento Chicano. A lot of music that was coming out, it was being composed, and words, lyrics that reflected the social changes that were taking place at that time. So, we did a lot of that, also music and that sort of thing.

George: For your performances, was it a free performance or did you charge admission?

Adrian: Right, at the beginning they were all free performances. In some instances if we performed at a college, lets say we went to San José City College or Ohlone College or some place like that, they pay

us to perform but the performance would be free for the audience that was there. In other instances we performed for no fee at all and the audience was charged no admission fee. This was the philosophy of Teatro de La Gente being as for the people of the people by the people and we did a lot of performances in parks, community centers, churches, mostly as I said, free admission for the public in general.

George: That kind of answered my other question. Why the name Teatro de La Gente, and you just touched on it. When you did get paid, like when you went to a university, most of what was earned was that toward....?

Adrian: We didn't make any money individually. Everything was put back in the kitty to expand our props and customs and provide transportation to and from performances, buying instruments and that whole thing.

George: What kind of background did the actors and actresses have? The reason I'm asking about background, because in the book it said in 1977 auditions were held.

Adrian: Right, there was the early period of Teatro de La Gente which to me commentated in about 1974 and in 1975-76 we organized Centro Cultural de La Gente. We were intent on trying to get some of the Fine Arts Commission and Cultural Arts Council monies from the state and the city that was available that have never gone to Hispanic artist. And we were also intent on getting funding from the then CETA program which funded people to work in non-profit agencies. We basically became a full time theater company at that time. So, the early period we didn't make money off of it and in the middle period, when we started getting the funds coming in, we did employ staff and when we held auditions we basically, aside from formally auditioning people who were already in the group to become full time members, we also put out a word throughout the state, to other teatros for other individuals who might want to do this type of work full time. So, we had responses from elsewhere in the state. We did get people to come up and be part of the group. A significant number from Teatro Espiritu de Aztlan in Fullerton and there was also another person from Teatro del Bano in LA, and those types of groups.

George: Next question it didn't say much about it from what I read and you don't have to answer it if you don't want to, but it mentioned that you and Manuel Martinez started the organization, and it just says that in 1975 you took over full time, the question is whatever happened to Manuel Martinez?

Adrian: Manuel was a very significant part of the teatro in its early stages. He was our best comic and one of the best musicians. We spearheaded when we started Teatro de La Gente, although Teatro de La Gente as a group just kind of came together with a bunch of people. We were assigned or given or volunteered the responsibility of coordinating the groups efforts. After we graduated from San José State we both went to UC Davis to work on our masters in theater and both of us felt we didn't like living where we were at, in the Woodland and Davis area. So, we actually moved back to San José and we were commuting to school two or three times a week. We were in a graduate program, so it wasn't every single day, but we would be commuting. Then as time went on, I kind of started assuming more responsibility and even though I think Manuel was still the main creative force in the group. I started leaning towards directing and administration and he was leaning towards writing and music. After a period of time I think he just felt it was time to move on and do something else and we were all very sad by the fact he left, but he went on to work for the transportation agency, the county mass transit, and that is where he's at right now. And he was very involved in the union movement through his work there and he has always stayed connected with teatros and the movement and that sort of thing. So, after he left I assumed most of the role, and this was not only just that I assumed the role, but this was kind of like a mandate from the people in the group that they wanted me to take that type of role or strengthen the role I had taken. Through out the course, the middle period of the teatro when we were a full time company, even though I was administrative director and artistic director we decided the major goals and the major projects of the group as a whole. So, that we considered ourselves a collective, even though, at one point it seemed that everybody could just do everything, but it didn't work out that way. You had to have a division of labor and that's how that type of division of labor was created. I also, took on the role of playwriting, because that's the main thing I studied in college as far as teatro, theater was concerned. And the group, we would decide on a project, the type of play that we wanted to do. We would research it, do improvisations around it and then we would discuss scenarios and based on the

discussions of the scenarios and the improvisations that the group did, then I went back and scripted and came out with a script, then the group would review the script, then we would make additional changes where the group felt that we needed to change this or that and then it was staged. We went into rehearsals, I look at it from the audience viewpoint actually doing the directing and the actual formal staging of it, but at every step of the way, we regroup as a group and evaluate everything that we were doing and sometimes I'd disagree with the group as a whole and they'd disagree with me but for the most part we had a pretty good sense of balance and harmony with the group. We even lived together, two or three different households but everybody, all members of the group living in the different households, so we did our groceries together, we washed our clothes together, we ate together. There was a really, really good high spirit of camaraderie in the group and then of course when we went on tour we would be on the road for two months with each other.

Anytime you live that close to people there's bound to be a little bit of a difference here and there. I think we accomplished quite a bit as a group when we were operating that way. I think that was from 1976 to about 1979. For about a three to four year period we were a full time theater company and we employed, at different points in time, about 10 and 15 people that worked full time. Then there were other people that were part of the group that were like a support group. Some involved in the plays, in the production but not necessarily working full time with the group. Then all of us at the same time were members of the Centro Cultural de La Gente, which involved visual artists, and musicians, other musicians, non-teatro musicians. Musicians that were developing the Latin fusion, salsa, salsa rock, music like that, contemporary Chicano-Latino music. There was that time period where everything, there was an explosion of cultural expression that was taking place at the Centro Cultural, and you have many posters, many graphic works, paintings, musical arrangements, compositions just a lot of different things that were generated out of the Centro Cultural. As teatro staff we not only did our teatro work but we also supported the work of the artist when they had an exhibit. We would get in there and mount the works, we had like a gallery plus a little theater space. In some instants we would do joint activities. When we toured throughout the Santa Clara Valley schools we had a little children's program that involved both the teatro and the music. Musica es cultura was the name of the component that did the music. So, we did some joint things together. What was the question?

George: That's fine, the question that we started off with was what happened to Manuel Martinez?

Adrian: Well, getting back to that I think that, like I said he was the teatro conceptions and a big part of its spirit at the beginning was Manuel Martinez. I just wanted to make sure that's known and that's there. We're friends and there's no animosity or anything between us, we're fine and I think that should be understood, because you don't know what people think when people are together, and then when one person splits, they think there has been friction or something like that, but it wasn't that sort of thing. It was time for him to move on, and he basically wanted to take the step I haven't been able to take yet, which was focus on family. That's where he went.

George: One reason I wanted to ask that question, because I read through the book, and it kind of gave the impression that maybe there was something that happened.

Adrian: No, not really.

George: Ok, I just wanted to get that straight. You said you did some playwriting yourself, you wrote some plays, can you name some of the plays that you were involved with?

Adrian: Sure, we did different kinds, the teatro that we did took different kinds of forms. Some were full length plays with music and I wrote one on my own, El Quetzal, and I co-authored El Hombre que se Convertio en Perro with the group. That was a collective process that we went through. Then we did things like corridos and actos, El Corrido de Juan Endrogado is a corrido I wrote the lyrics for, corrido is not a song although the play is based on song and music but it's a song type of play with a lot of music and a lot of rhythm and rhyme in the language that's what we call corridos. I did one of those, an acto that we were pretty well known for La Migra. That was originally scripted by Manuel Martinez and eventually with time as we worked on the piece I put my little two cents in there, so that was a collaborative piece that I worked on with that. Now, that does not sound like, well I'm talking about the period between 1975 to 1979. It doesn't look like that many plays were done but what needs to be kept in mind is that we were one of three Chicano theater groups in the United States who actually got out and besides doing local performances also toured nation wide and into Mexico.

So, we did one play that was in our repertoire for a year and a half, a year and a half we were doing the same play over and over in different localities. El Quetzal was around for about a year. So, aside from the other material we did, we did some material from Teatro Campesino's acto book, we did some of that work too. In 1976, I think we produced La Cantata de Santa Marie de Kiki which an Argentine director by the name of Emberto Martinez directed. The music was done by the group La Kila Palu from Chile and its a narrative through song of a miner strike that took place in Chile in 1908. Emberto Martinez came to the United States, hooked up with us and we had him direct this play that was done and it was very interesting, because Emberto work with cannery workers and Chilean refugees plus members of the Chicano community, students and that sort of thing, people that were in our group, and put everybody together and there must of been 35 to 40 people in that production and it toured throughout the bay area. So that's another production we did, aside from the ones that I work on and that I wrote or collaborated in, those are I think important to mention as well, because it was very significant work. Basically doing theater with people who didn't have any theater background at all, but had a lot of experience in life and could translate a lot of the emotions and a lot of the actions that were required and working with Emberto who was able to operate with a theater language that everybody could understand. There was some very big significant strides that were made by that production, because we not only wanted to be Teatro de La Gente to be theater of the people, by the people, for the people and being full time and being paid at times, you would get away from that notion of having just the general public being involved in your productions, besides having paid or maybe trained or actors with experience from other groups and from Teatro de La Gente. Actually have people right off the street, right off the canneries, refugees from Chile get into doing theater. So, that was a big important thing that we felt about that, that's why we did La Cantata. All along the time that we were producing plays, we were also conducting workshops, classes in teatro for the community in general. Sometimes it was formally done through the centro, sometimes it was formally done through me teaching at a JC or a college, but I try to think back about how many people have been in Teatro de La Gente and I can't remember everybody but I think probably maybe as many as 300 or 400 people have been in Teatro de La Gente since it started. The faces changed a lot at the beginning, then when we were a full time group it got stabilized with people that were in the group but at the same time we were associated with

people whom we were giving classes for and doing things like La Cantata. So, there has been just a lot of people that went through Teatro de La Gente, and that makes me feel real good, because for that time period we set ourselves a goal to be Teatro de La Gente, we really did become Teatro de La Gente in San José and then when we toured throughout the southwest, because we had the involvement from people in the community in the teatro and we were performing plays and obras that related to peoples daily experience of being Chicano or Latinos. I feel real good about that, we also wanted to strive for that and I think we really got to that point.

George: It sound like you did. You said you use to do research for plays that you wrote. Basic question is what type of research did you do, library research or something like that?

Adrian: Well the research took varies forms. We may have studied a play like El Hombre que se Convertio en Perro, originally it was a little fifteen minute play that was a part of a collection of plays by Oswaldo Rangun who is an Argentine playwright. We took that playlet and studied it and of course we studied it in Spanish. Then we did it and modified it to be bilingual and then we took it and said ok, different scenes were the progression of this man who's going to turn into a dog because of the social conditions that are around him that get him to that point. It's a very symbolic play but we were into symbolism we like that a lot. So, we researched various scenarios, possibilities of scenes that took place. Then the research went into improvisation where we actually set up the situation and let the actors go with it, whatever came off the top of their heads within the framework of objectives by each of the characters to be reached in that scene. It's like a little, well a scenario is like an outline of a scene and then we just let the actors work with it. That was all recorded, that was all noted and then after some of that for each scene that would take place and discussion that would be generated around that, I would then go back and actually script some dialog, based on some of what, both on some of what the content of the dialog was in that scene and also what the conflict in that was suppose to be. Where the dramatic action was in that scene. So, that's the type of research that was done for that particular type of play. When I worked on El Quetzal, that particular play was about a young Chicano who had been framed and had gone to prison behind a drug bust, but he had been set up. So, he has done time in prison and the play starts with him getting out of prison and coming back to the barrio and seeing all the changes that have been taking place and

stuff. So, we had to research our own barrio lingo, our own barrio characters, we had to exchange ideas about what this particular mama would be like, explore what that mama would sound like, would be like and that sort of thing, what the local drug pusher be like how would he talk, what words would he say and we took a lot from our own experiences as being Chicanos and growing up in various experiences that we had. We drew from that to explore on stage, because we had only ourselves to study from and for, nobody had actually written books about Chicano drama types or comedy types or that whole thing. So, we had to explore our own sense of drama, our own sense of comedy and a lot of that was done through improvisation and we also researched other directors. I studied other directors and the works that they had done. I was a big fan of Bertolt Brecht who was a German playwright and a lot of our staging aspects we were able to draw from some of his works, because he was political theater in Germany right before the Nazis. We drew from that, we drew from the experiences of the Teatro Campesino. We studied acting methods both Brechten and Stanislavsky. Stanislavsky is, I guess you would say the father of modern acting. He is a Russian or was a Russian actor and director and we studied the quote, unquote, method of acting under his conception of what acting should be like. So, we drew from different things from different places. Musically we explored indigenous music from Mexico, researched some of that. We researched music from, popular music from Chile, from Argentina, from Bolivia. In our repertoire we had a song from just about every country in Latin America. We did a lot of research that way too. There was one other play that I wrote that was actually turned into a video film. San José State School of Social Work has a copy of that, that was on child abuse, it was a play about child abuse. In that process I researched actual child abuse cases. I interviewed social workers who work with children that are abused and their families. Tried to get an idea of how to show the warning signs, that show in a family the potential for child abuse and look at that whole thing. That was another type of research that was done, actually researching the subject matter, trying to get a feel for what that is and then put in on stage in some way.

George: Altogether since the start of Teatro de La Gente until the end of it, I'm sure there is no possible way you can give an exact number but about how many plays would you say the theater group has done from beginning to end?

Adrian: You want to pause the tape so I can count them all. I want to be close to the actual number just out of curiosity for myself, because I never added it up in that sense myself. So, I would have to tally things up but it was a significant number for what we were doing and the resources that we had to do it with. Like I said we did one play for a year and a half, but we were it doing in different places, so for a lot of people it's the first time they've ever seen it. This is another interesting thing, once a year generally, this was true until about 1980 I think, once a year we would have the Chicano Theater Festival at some place. We had it in San José in 1973, in 1974 it was in Mexico, in 1975 it was in San Antonio, Tejas and in San Diego, Santa Barbara. We would gear up the beginning of our year, in the winter months we would do our research, we would start developing our play and in the spring we would tour it, then we would do our summer work, basically workshops or do some more local performances then we would tour the fall again, the same play and then we would go all the way around until the next summer which was generally when the festival took place. The performances at the festivals were like the high point of that play's performances. This was a really important concept that Luis Valdez developed was to have a national association of all Chicano teatros and to have an annual festival where they can see each other perform, perform in each others communities, have workshops, learn from each other, acting techniques, production techniques all of that. That was I think a big part of the movement, Teatro Movement and we played a significant part in that. Like I said we hosted the festival in 1973 and then again in 1976. In 1976 the festival instead of going to one place, it was held in five different cities and the teatros went to each others communities. Some went to Seattle, some went to Denver, some came to San José, some went to Los Angeles and that was another interesting one.

George: During the first type you were involved, we briefly touched on this before but what kind of impact would you say it had on your family?

Adrian: Well, on my wife and my son, family or myself and on my parents which or both?

George: Both, that's what I'm looking for.

Adrian: I think with my parents, with my bother and my sisters I think they were excited about what I was doing. But my parents, my

mother to some degree was excited, I would say to a significant degree she was excited about what I was involved in, but my father did see the practicality of it. His feeling was that it was not a trade or an industrial skill or a profession per se, and to some extent he was right and but I think, and this goes for theater in general in the United States. People who enjoy doing that work make a lot of sacrifices to be able to do that work. He in particular didn't always understand that but it didn't go much beyond that. I think that some people in the community came to know my parents because of the work I was doing. I don't know that I mentioned it but somebody actually did their, because I would talk about my parents here and there and I have a friend who did their PhD on the Chicana women and the Labor market over a period of years. My mother was one of the people that was interviewed as an electronics worker. To some degree her connection with people who were interested in writing and doing research on Chicanos in the labor market that was something that came out of that. They would go see my performances and feel good about going to see the group as a whole and about my involvement and as far as that they enjoyed what we were doing. As far as my personal relationships its kind of a, well there were a lot of variables involved in that right at the time when I was graduating from San José State and the Cultural Center we were beginning to form that and at the same time I had gone to UC Davis to work on my masters and at the same time I got married. At that time we were both enamored with each other and she was in the theater group and I was in the theater group and we would go places, it was very ideal type of affair, youthful affair that was taking place. As time went on I solidified my goal and my direction of what I wanted to do at least in my twenties, if I didn't know beyond that, but wanted to do Chicano theater that's what I wanted to do. Both because of the money and time involved, and the travel, being away and just that sort of thing and living together with other people. A lot of difficulties with that particular relationship that I had then and then at the same time, or around the same time I had my first born child. That created a lot of stresses also, again because of being gone, working late at nights, early in the morning, touring, eventually we split up and she actually went to work with another teatro down in Santa Barbara. So, ever so often I would go down to Santa Barbara and visit my boy and that sort of thing, then she came back up here and I was able to see more of my boy and actually raise him. Eventually, with both got joint custody of him and since he's been going to school he's been with her part of the time and with me part of the time. As far as my son is concern, he has gotten

a kick out of me being involved in teatro, it was a lot of people that, people in teatro had really strong feelings for each other and there was always sense of amor in everything that was done. With him, with other little kids growing up, teatro kids as we called them, those teatro squiggles there just always, he was always cared for, if I wasn't there somebody was caring for him. He had an extended family to some degree back then and I think that's carried over, he's now in high school and we have a very very good relationship. I have no problems at all with my boy. At some point the bonds that came between him and I just happened. Even though I may have still been very engrossed in what I was doing with the teatro, I always made time and always tried to give my son the sense of what the world was about and what was taking place and this and that. As far as that's concerned I feel that has been a positive towards, as it relates to the relationship to my son. Now I got married again, I married a beautiful person who I met through another teatro in Fullerton, Teatro Espiritu de Aztlan everybody came up from Espiritu de Aztlan except she, she stayed back there but she would sponsor us and have us perform in a community center that she was an outreach worker for. We just stayed in touch with each other for a long time. We didn't actually enter into a relationship of any sort until she came up here to study for her masters in library science, then we hooked up and we've been together ever since. You think about fate sometime, because for awhile in 1979-80 the funding started getting cut back and I was still full time but I had to work with a group that was not full time. It was community based again and there was limits to some of that. Even though I felt good about that work it did seem like it was at the peck of what we were doing when we were all working together full time. So, for a time there I was very disappointed. I went through burn out and didn't have a relationship with anybody for a long time. I was really trying to figure out what the heck my life was all about at that point. Fortunately, my experience with teatro came through for me again, and I'm married to my wife who I met through another teatro and we're doing fine. She's employed as a librarian with the Biblioteca Latino-Americana and I work for the county and I'm still doing socially relevant work which was important to me. I wasn't in teatro just or primarily to be on stage or be a showmen or something like that. My primary interest was doing what I could to maintain and develop the cultural arts of the Hispanic community and that to me was a socially relevant thing to be doing. I always felt I needed to be connected with doing some kind of work that was in some way or another helping people out socially. That's where I worked with

MACSA and with the Housing Service Center as a tenant-landlord counselor and other agencies I work with in the community. Where I'm at right now I really owe a lot of it to my wife and to friends that were looking out for me for the movement and kept me in mind when job opportunities came up. I still had to perform, I still had to take the exams, interview, pass the oral examinations and everything, but people were looking out for me. If I hadn't had those people I don't know what I would be doing right now to tell you the truth. What's taking place right now is good for me, its real good what's taking place. It's nice to look back on everything that was done and find that people like José Carrasco want to spend time and energy in collecting some of this information. Because it was a little cachó of history, it was a little jump of history there that's important to our gente, that took place and it shouldn't be forgotten. I can't say that I'll never do teatro again, I'm interested in going to see plays. I like to go see plays. I've done some theater work with other theater companies and the new company that's in town, Teatro Vision but is not the great engrossing all encompassing obsession that it once was, I can't really say what changed it for me aside from getting a little older and trying to find out how life is going to be for the rest of your time in existence and how to make that the best you can make it and maintain your happiness and your corazon together with that.

George: What kind of impact would you say Teatro de La Gente had on the Chicano community?

Adrian: Well, I know that it impacted it in a lot of different ways. In areas where we performed where there was an issue taking place, some kind of social conflict or political thing that was happening, we would come in and perform and sing our songs and it would just be a tremendous uplifting, spiritual uplifting for people that were part of that, whatever movement it was, a rally or a university or a school or it was just Cinco de Mayo time and everybody is out there trying to feel good about being Chicano and everything. We would be part of that reinforcement I think we touched people on the consciousness level and touched people at the corazon level. We did something that only a cultural art form can do, you couldn't have done this with newspapers, you couldn't have done this with, to some extent some of it can be done with TV and films now but at that time TV and films was so inaccessible to us that we just had to do live theater. We help to rally people to strengthen them with the issues they were struggling with and all the way to, well we performed once in a little

pueblito in Nuevo Mexico. When we performed we had little kids and abuelitas, everybody at that performance, it was pouring rain there was a thunder storm and we got there about, the performance was supposed to be at seven or eight, we got there at four to set up our stage and everything. It was in a gymnasium at a high school, there was nothing around the high school except the high school. This was the most remote high school I'd ever seen. It started pouring and pouring and pouring and the audience didn't come, they told us the roads were washed out and we were getting ready to pack up and leave and all of a sudden all these buses llenos de lodo and all gunked up and everything, they actually brought the people in, found some way to bring the people in to see the show. They went through a lot of sacrifice to come and see us. After we did the performance we'd traditionally sit down with the audience in front of the stage and ask them if they have any questions on the play, if they have any constructive criticism or anything they didn't understand or anything they would want to add to the play and we found out that this was the first live theater performance period, that most of those people had ever seen in their lives. We're talking about abuelitas who had never seen a live stage play before, ever. To that extent its another way that we impacted. We were doing this whether we knew it or not, whether we liked it or not we were doing it. Other places where we performed like the prisons, we performed for Chicanos that were in prisons. You really felt the tension that's in a place like that but you could also feel the release that people would get after we did a performance. In different environments it did different things for different people. Like I said, we strengthened the spirit of people struggling to deal with issues or people were not specifically struggling to deal with an issue at that moment just the reinforcement of the cultura. Hearing the music, talking the language, doing the jesters, showing the characters, just a reinforcement of our cultura and our cultural expression. Much the same way that murals do that, much the same way corridos do that.

George: Can you name, you said that there were three other theater companies that were around, can you just briefly name them?

Adrian: Ok, first of all let me say that when we hosted the festival in San José, the Teatro Festival in San José, we counted about fifty Chicano theater groups through out the United States of the ones that responded to or came to the festival or that wrote and said they couldn't make it but sent material or something like that. Right around there about 1973 to 1975-76 you had a lot of groups all over

the place. Eventually, the three groups that emerged to become professional Chicano theater companies, by professional I mean with paid actors, intensive training and techniques, total dedication to the work, the three companies that emerged was first Teatro Campesino which started it all, Teatro del Esperanza from Santa Barbara who are still doing things to this day and Teatro de La Gente. We did are last production, a play called Painting and that was performed at the Montgomery theater. That was again after 1980 when the group wasn't full time anymore. We went through another metamorphosis, another group of people, of faces and the play was written and directed by a person named David Espinoza. He is a person that had heard of Teatro de La Gente but had been going to school at UCLA. When he came back up, he is from San José, he wanted to hook up with us because he had this play he had written. As part of the process and desire to expose both the audience to plays that Chicanos were writing about and allow the artist's work to be produced and performed, that production took place and that was our last one I believe it was in 1982. So, we went through the phases of being a student grassroots community teatro to being a professional to being a community based teatro once again but with many more resources to utilize to do the productions. So, that it looked like professional productions even though it was grassroots people from the community. We had the technique the ability and the time to train people to perform well on stage, and we did that and then we gave them a play to do it with and we gave them a director to stage it or a writer to write it and then it was done. Eventually, it just faded away, I did not have the energy to continue with it and people who were part of that last production really were aligned to the production itself not some much keeping the group going. So, understandably, nobody tried to say hey you've got to keep the group going and to some degree that is the responsibility I had held and tried to maintained but things were changing in my life as well. I could no longer be satisfied with the type of, how can I say, we had grown to a point where I didn't have the same energy level to do the same high quality stuff that has always been expected of us to do and we always expected it of ourselves. We had always wanted to do high quality teatro whether it was grassroots, community based, professional, semi-professional whatever, it had to be really good high quality. I felt with the resources that were no longer there at the end and with the lack of the same kind of energy that I once had towards it, it just kind of dissipated. We had our last, during the last period we were under the umbrella of MACSA, we still wanted to be connected with the community, the Centro was no longer around.

The Centro went first the teatro stayed, maintained itself and we hooked up with MACSA to keep a tie to the community and we were always generating, continue to generate fine arts proposals and grants that came in from MACSA. So, eventually after I left MACSA and the teatro dissipated, MACSA changed the focus from performing cultural arts to visual cultural arts and they had a number of very nice exhibits, with fine arts money. I originally got in for Teatro. It continued but they no longer do cultural arts type of work. Its groups like Ballet Folkloricos, and Teatro Vision, the Mariachis in general, street musicians, cantina musicians and all those, they are continuing to maintain the cultura. Teatro, theater in general is a form of art that requires a lot of organization. It is not just like, even though musicians can get together and play complex things on their instruments they don't have to have all this other stuff going on like sets, costumes and make-up and choreography and all of this other sort of thing. That is the type of energy that we gave and that was required and that we gave for a long time. Eventually that dissipated.

George: Now in what ways, if any are you connected with theater?

Adrian: Well, like I said I have done some work with Teatro Vision and I have done some work with City Lights theater company, which is not a Chicano group, it's just a progressive community based alternative theater, I've done some work with them in the last two years. Those have been the two groups I've associated with from an acting and promotional standpoint. In this point in time I'm not look to do any teatro per se for probably a couple of years, because I just have other priorities that I have in mind. Eventually though, I would like to have the time and the patience and the focus to do some more playwriting, but I'm not in any hurry because from 1970 to 1982-83 that's all I ever did. So, when I feel like taking a breather it's just not a breather for a month or two, its like I'm going to take a long breather. Que me dure asta cuando sea, that's were I'm at right now, but I do have the project in mind to get all that stuff together, all the archives from the teatro get in some sort of organized disorganized fashion and get that over to the Chicano Resource Library, because I think it's really rich material that would be good for the library. So, I'm working on that a little at a time.

George: Looking back on your life in theater would you say you have any regrets?

Adrian: Overall, I would have to say no. There were ups and downs both in terms of personal relationships, financial hardships and that sort of thing, but I have no regrets. I did that in a period in my life when I had the type of energy and the ability to do that, so I'm really glad for what I did and like I said I probably would not be here right now talking to you if I had not been in teatro because I don't know where I would be.

George: Could you list the names of five persons that were instrumentally involved in the activities of this period?

Adrian: Well I'm going to mention people that were involved in the teatro and in the centro. In the teatro of course Manuel Martinez, and his wife Connie, Ed Robledo was also one of the original members and he has come and gone at various times to be with the group and he directed the last play that Teatro Vision did which I was in and he is still very involved with that even though he is a grammar school teacher now, but he was involved with the San Francisco mime troop for a long time. From the artist stand point I would say Mary Jane Solis Robledo as an artist, she is now a member of the San José Fine Arts Commission, she was able to take all of her activism and her art to a place where now she can impact on the monies that go to Chicano and Hispanic arts activities. That is Mary Jane Solis Robledo who happens to be Ed Robledo's ex-wife. Elisa Gonzalez is another person instrumental in the teatro. She spearheads Teatro Vision. She's still involved in doing that work. She came and went at different times but she's back again doing Teatro Vision. I'm going to mention a few more people, because I haven't mention them, David Termenal who was a real excellent actor, a real comic genius that the Teatro de La Gente was able to have for a long time. He's also with Teatro Vision now and his wife Irene she was the organizer of the back stage stuff that went on. We could not have done it with out her. José Luis Valenzuela who now directs the I think it's the LA Actor Theater who is very well know in LA now he's doing theater there. I should mention Esteban Cerrvantes who was the director of the music component of the centro and Jaime Valades who was also a San José State graduate and he was involved for a long time with Flora Comunidad community murals project and art gallery at the centro. Those are some, like I said there have been hundreds of people that have come through the teatro and centro and those are the ones that stand out because they stuck with it. They were part of the beginning and stuck with it as long as they did, so it's note worthy to mention them.

George: Now can you name five people who were involved at San José State in the student activity, student movement?

Adrian: Sure, people that I remember Juan Oliveres you've probably heard that name come up, Maria Fuentes, there are just so many. Antonio Chavez who has been vary influential still in my life. He was there one year higher than I, but he works for the county now and we still are really good friends. How many is that?

George: I count three.

Adrian: Ramon Martinez he was one of the coordinators of the United Farmworkers Boycott Committee, and Mauro Chavez he is another person I have a real high regard for, we went to school together.

George: Well!

Adrian: That was a mouth full.

George: Well, that's it. Thank you for your time.