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**University California San Diego**  
**History of the Chicano Movement**  
**Committee on Chicano Rights**

**INTERVIEWEE:** Baca, Herman  
**INTERVIEWER:** Patino, Jimmy, Historian, UCSD  
**DATE:** [14 August 2006]  
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[2 TAPES – 120 Minutes]

**BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 4, SESSION 3.**

**BACA:** We started, you know, talking about La Raza Unida and we started, you know, conversing with other activists. As a matter of fact, that's when I first met Armando Navarro.

**PATINO:** Okay.

**BACA:** There was, like I said, there was a lot of traveling, a lot of communications. (Patino: Right. Right.) People singing off the same sheet of music. And, there was a lot of conventions. I remember 1970 journeying up to Ontario, I guess it was, and there was a La Raza Unida convention. Armando had been in MAPA also. (Patino: Okay.) And, there was a lot of disagreement within MAPA. Once again, most people, even though they had been, even though MAPA had come out of dissention with, or dissatisfaction with the Democratic Party, MAPA came about because 1958 there was an individual by the name of Hank Lopez, if my memory serves me right, and I think he ran for state, I think, controller. I forget. But, he ran for a statewide office, okay? And, the same thing that we encountered in Pete Chacon's campaign, Bert Corona, Edward Quevedo, and Ed Roybal that organized MAPA encounter with the Democratic Party, you know, this in-house mindset that, you know, "You guys ain't got no business here and you guys don't register." You know, blah, blah, blah. And, what I remember



about Hank Lopez, if my memory serves me right that was the name, and I remember reading that he had a speaking problem. He used to mumble or he used to stutter, or I don't know what it was. But, I remember that he said that he put marbles in his mouth. That's how he overcame it. (Patino: Hmm.) But anyway, that dissatisfaction was the reason why MAPA was created. (Patino: Right.) And, MAPA is an organization that has never gotten its just dues, because in my opinion it was very, very instrumental in a lot of things, like the farm workers. There was an historic meeting between César Chávez, and Governor Pat Brown. And, of course, you know, I mean agribusiness is very, very powerful force in the state of California. And, even getting a meeting with the governor was, you know, something politically spectacular. (Patino: Yeah.) So, and it created a lot of awareness, you know. And, to me like I told you, coming from New Mexico I had seen it. I, you know, I mean like I told you I saw a U.S. Senator, the guy lived eight miles up the road. My grandmother used to talk about it, that they used to go visit him. I mean, you know, he's the guy down the street, Chávez, you know. The Chávezes the Bacas, you know, I mean those are names that have been there since the 1600s, you know. So. So, it was sort of an unusual thing, you know, why that didn't exist here in California. And, a lot of the people in MAPA were from New Mexico. (Patino: Hmm.) You know, they were manitos, you know. Manitas. But anyway, but that's why MAPA came about. But, so there was a lot of discussion about dissatisfaction with the Democratic Party. The Republican Party didn't even, I mean it was like, (Patino: Yeah.) they ain't even in the radar screen. [Laugh] We already know they're a bunch of no good SOBs, you know. (Patino: Yeah.) They don't care, you know, I mean we don't give them our vote and, you know, the hell with them. (Patino: Yeah.) But, the Democratic Party was a little bit different. The Democratic Party was something that most of our people identified with. So that, that was the issue. Like I said, the old saying, "Our people



put the Democratic Party first. The Democratic Party always put our people last." (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, there was a concerted effort to point that out, dramatize that to our people. "That we've given away something valuable and you get nothing, (Patino: Yeah.) and you have gotten nothing in return." So, La Raza Unida was a concept, like I said, that, whose time had come, because of the activism. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) It was a necessary tool at the time. And, we took a little bit different approach than most of the organizing efforts throughout the Southwest or Aztlán, you know. The Texas wing of La Raza Unida Party, they believed that they had the numbers, and which they did, and especially in the rural areas of south Texas. So, and they had won. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) They had been able to tap into that dissatisfaction and convert it into a powerful organizing tool at the ballot box. So, they had that perspective that, "Well, we're the majority. Why shouldn't we take over?" (Patino: Right.) Who could argue against that? That was the essence of self-determination. Corky and the people from the crusade they were of the opinion that there were bigger issues that were not going to be resolved by plugging into this two-headed monster with the same hand. And, that ultimately caused, those two perspectives ultimately caused a lot of division. Our perspective here was we should get that mandate. In other words, "Let the people decide," but based on a consensus and a mandate. (Patino: Right.) So we established a figure of 10,000. "If you're serious as an organizer, well then let's see you produce some fruit here." (Patino: Right.) See because the statewide effort at the time was, I think, 68,000, one percent in order to qualify as a registered, legitimate recognized party. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Now, if we couldn't do that with three million people, 65,000, you know, well, what are we talking about? See, but that wasn't, now once again the context of the time. I mean, I talk to people now that were involved back then and like I tell them, "You know what? I think if we would have had guns we probably would have shot each



other. And, the question is, 'For what?' I mean, what were we fighting over, a concept?" You know, it was your concept versus my concept. You know, it was like, "My dad's bigger than your dad," kind of thing, you know. "My dad can hit harder than your dad," you know. But, there was really nothing there. Nothing had been built. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, like I said that caused a lot of division. That caused a lot of splitting the atoms. So, I was always of the opinion that it don't matter what politics you're in. You need a mandate. You need a consensus [Laugh] or you're just talking about what you think? (Patino: Yeah.) And, who cares what you think? [Laugh] That's not political, you know, it's an abstract. It's wishful thinking. So, we established that we were going to set a goal of 10,000. And, like I said, "Things aren't always as simple, like I tell people with the immigration issue. "Things are not as simple as you think they are. A little bit more difficult than what you see before you. There's a lot of hidden things." So, but we registered anywhere from three to four thousand people. Okay? (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, don't forget you were talking about basically converting Catholics to bullyism, [Laugh] you know. When it came to talking about, you know, "Hey, we're getting away from the Democratic Party." I mean, this is what they had been (Patino: Right.) breastfed on. You know, "Hey, Franklin Roosevelt man, you know, he gave us some food, man. Hey, he gave us a job. What are you talking about? He's for the poor people." That was so solidly ingrained. And, but nonetheless, you know, we kind of, based on that kind of sidestepped those two perspectives that existed. And, but we started and, you know, I remember that concepts, the concept it caught like wildfire, the concept of La Raza Unida. I mean, 1970 we journeyed, I think around eight of us, to El Paso, to the national La Raza Unida convention. (Patino: Right.) I mean, there was people from all over the nation, [Laugh] but there was no party, you know. I mean, there was a concept, an idea of a party, but there was nothing that you could put your hands on, nothing that you



could say there's a building where the party's at. (Patino: Yeah.) You know, it was, there was some elective offices in Texas and, you know, there was a lot of concepts floating around, but nonetheless it got I'd say a good thousand people at the convention in El Paso. That focused the attention of the whole nation on this effort.

**PATINO:** That was in '70, that convention?

**BACA:** About 1970 or '71. I think it's like '71. (Patino: Yeah.) So, I'll end it there. So.

[Recording stopped]

**PATINO:** So, yeah, you're still, La Raza Unida, you're still in MAPA, and tell me how, how Casa Justicia got started.

**BACA:** Yeah, Casa Justicia, like I stated somewhere along the line, (Patino: Uh huh.) when Bert Corona came down, I told you about we were working on La Raza Unida, the first newsletter that we were going to publish. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And back then, you know, you had to type stuff out on the typewriter and if you made a mistake you had to go back and correct that part and paste it in. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And so, we were working on that and Bert and Chole Alatorre parachuted in around seven, seven thirty, and you know they came in and says, "You know, what are you guys doing?" "Ah, you know, we're working on this newsletter." And, Bert Corona was the national organizer for La Raza Unida. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So anyway, we talk a little bit and like I said we had Aztec printing on one side and on the other side was Casa Justicia. And, you know, Casa Justicia was really, from what I remember, a headquarters for MAPA and the Ad Hoc Committee. Now, La Raza Unida, you know, co-jointly with Aztec Printing Company. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And next door I think some of the people that, like Carlos, and Norma, Gloria Jean, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Roger, I think Augie, they had, they were working for Vista, if I remember right. So, all those things were going on, but like I



said the main emphasis was on La Raza Unida at the time. So, Bert came in and we talked a little while. Then he asked me if he could talk to be next door at Casa Justicia. So everybody else stayed at Aztec Printing where they were laying out the newsletter, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) working on getting the newsletter out. And, Bert and myself went next door and he told me, he said, "You know, we've got to get on this immigration issue." And, you know, the context of the time was, was that immigration was very low priority. And, I remember in my mind saying, you know, "Are you out of your mind? You know, what's this got to do with us, you know?" (Patino: Yeah.) The attitude or the sentiments, I guess, in the community were very, very much like what you hear from, today from the right wing and from the Minutemen, you know. That was the mentality. "What's it got to do with us?" And, you know, "They're breaking the law," and, you know, blah, blah, blah.

**PATINO:** Taking jobs?

**BACA:** That was the political inastuteness. That was, you know, nobody had ever talked about it really. So, I remember Bert saying that, "This is an issue that's going to be with us until the Year 2000." And I said, "Well, we're working on La Raza Unida, man." Bert says, "Yeah, well this is going to affect everything that we're working on." And, out of respect for Bert and his political astuteness, his political history, I listened. And, to be honest with you I didn't, I didn't know anything about immigration. I didn't know a damn thing about immigration. (Patino: Hmm.) And, but I did know once again that cause and effect that when we used to go out and try to register people that that issue would come up. (Patino: Right.) You know, there would be families where some of the family members would be citizens. Others were trying to get their documents or had their documents, and others had no documents. So, there was a reluctance to get involved, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) to register to vote, to register to get registered to vote. And



so, you know, we had already had a little bit of that happen. So, what he was saying was resonating, you know, with some of our, you know, experiences. Don't forget, we had just been involved about a year, year and a half. So, Bert already had a Casa de... the Hermandad Mexicana up there in L.A. and there had been other chapters. (Patino: Right.) So we, we kind of just plugged in, you know, to that effort and the concept was very, very simple, to try to get people that were undocumented or had immigration problems into membership organizations so they could address, you know, the issue that was affecting them and their families. So, we used to have a Board of Directors that was made up of undocumented. And, of course, I became the chairperson of the Board, you know, because someone had, someone had to speak to, publicly on those issues that were starting to crop up. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, one thing I remember was was that immigration 1970-71 was just like a little ant hill of an issue. (Patino: Hmm.) Very little interest. Very little concern. It was just starting to percolate. And, but it started percolating rapidly. I remember, like I stated before, one of the issues that we had already been involved with was that Duffy Memorandum. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Duffy was the San Diego County sheriff who had instructed taxicab drivers that his department used to license to call in a special code if they thought that the passengers were "illegals." And, I remember the Memorandum that he had issued was brought to me by this guy Ernie Azhocar, who was a Trustee, and who was the Mexican-American liaison for Assembly Waddie Deddeh. And, he brought it over and, you know, we read the Memorandum. He said, because he told me, "Look Herman, look what this guy's putting out." And the Memorandum said that, you know, when they picked up a suspected illegal alien that they were to call this special code and then the sheriffs would stop the car and they would make that determination. And, the way that they were supposed to determine when to call in was based on dress and mannerism. That's what the



Memorandum said. That's how they're going to determine. So, of course, what happened was was that the taxicab drivers, not knowing anything about immigration, and being under the threat of a penalty, weren't picking up any Mexicanos, any persons of Mexican ancestry. So, we started getting complaints from the community that taxicabs were just ignoring them, not, not picking them up.

**PATINO:** So, you got involved in that issue.

**BACA:** We got . . .

**PATINO:** Not because it was part of immigration, but because there was, (Baca: Yeah. It . . .) they weren't picking any Mexicanos up.

**BACA:** Yeah. It was affecting the community.

**PATINO:** Right.

**BACA:** So, you know, it was that cause and effect that I was talking about that was surfacing or percolating real fast. So, we had a press conference and, you know, landblasted the sheriff's department. You know, the basic argument was was that they had no business enforcing federal immigration laws. That was a federal matter. They weren't enforcing custom laws. They weren't enforcing federal income tax laws. And if it was, this was being aimed strictly and directly at our community and it was affecting our community. So, like all law enforcement institutions and, or any institution they arrogantly chose to discount the complaint saying, you know, it was a problem and, you know, using all the usual, you know, "They were stealing jobs, getting on welfare, medical, hospitals, costing the county money," blah, blah, blah. So, we relentlessly went after Duffy. I mean, pickets, demonstrations. I remember, and once again the context of the time, I remember for some unknown reason, don't ask me if I came up with it or somebody came up with it, or somebody suggested it, or what have you, but I remember getting



on the phone one night and saying, "We're going to have a picket tomorrow in front of the county jail, the San Diego county jail. Spread the word." And, the next day -- and I told them it was on the Duffy Memorandum. And, I remember getting down, and of course the media was alerted, and we just went right to the front doors of the San Diego county jail. And, I remember getting there and there was all these people, you know. There was like 500 people. And, I remember the police on top of the building surrounding -- you know where the county jail is at, right, downtown?

**PATINO:** Yeah.

**BACA:** Smack down center of, you know, San Diego. (Patino: Yeah.) And, I remember this captain coming up and telling me, "Mr. Baca, you know," blah, blah, blah, "keep the, you know, don't block the," "Yeah, yeah, yeah, we already know about that." He said, "If you have any problems, you know, just let me know." I said, "Okay, no problem." So, we're going round and round, news media, you know, is filming and interviewing, and blah, blah, blah. And, I remember this individual came up to me and said, "Hey Herman," he said, "that guy, that policeman over there is harassing us." I said, "Which one?" And, I guess it was one of my bad hair days or something, because I went up there and I said, "Hey, you SOB." He said, "What?" I said, "Yeah, you. What are you doing harassing our people?" "Hey, you can't talk to me like that." I said, "Go to hell." And, so we get, he's getting in my face. I'm getting in his face. And, that made the front page of the evening *Tribune* that night. But anyway, this captain runs over and he says, "Hey, what's the problem?" I said, "I don't know. Ask your knucklehead friend over here." I said, "He's harassing our people." He said, "Hey, he can't talk to me like that." "Ah, go to hell," I said. So the captain, I guess, was wise enough he said, "Get out of here." He told that individual. I don't even remember if he was uniform or undercover, right. The guy



looked like, "What?" [Laugh] He said, "Get out of here," he told him. So, he said, "Hey," I says, "No problem." I said, "You know, everybody's moving, you know, nobody's blocking anything." So, he said, "Well, if you have any problems, you know, give me a call." I said, "I certainly will." So, you know, I thought about that picket many times, about those times, and this times. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) I don't think if I paid people \$500 that I would, that we would get 500 people. I don't think you could get, even if you paid \$500 you wouldn't get 500 people out there in front of the jail.

**PATINO:** How did you get the people out?

**BACA:** It was just that one phone call.

**PATINO:** "Spread the word"?

**BACA:** "Spread the word." (Patino: Right.) So, there was a high level of political consensus. There must, you know, there was an understanding. There was an anger. Because, you know, I mean these guys were around the rooftops, surrounding the whole jail was rifles, and, you know, cop cars. And, "Hey, do what you got to do."

**PATINO:** Yeah. What year was that around, about '70, '71?

**BACA:** Seventy-two I would say, '72. So, during that period we relentlessly went after Duffy. I remember press conferences, everywhere he showed up we would show up. After a year he relented and an article came out in the *San Diego Union*, and of course they had gone out and asked the various police departments if they enforced federal immigration laws, because Duffy had put out a press release relenting, or you know, backtracking on his position saying exactly what we had been saying all along. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) That that was a federal issue, that was a federal matter, it was federal law enforcement and no one, not even the FBI had the right to enforce federal immigration laws other than Immigration. (Patino: Hmm.) So, they went



around and did this interview and, of all the police chiefs throughout San Diego County and they all agreed, except for the San Diego Police Department. Chief of police was a guy named Ray Hoobler. He said they were going to enforce immigration laws, you know, wherever they came across "illegals." [Recording paused] And, we went after him with a . . .

**END SIDE 1 (A), TAPE 4, SESSION 3**

**BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 5, SESSION 3. [Counter Reset]**

**BACA:** Be involved that the people themselves had to want it. (Patino: Right.) And, we always had a saying, "If the CCR's going to survive it's because there's a need and people want it. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, if it doesn't survive then it shouldn't survive because the people didn't want it, the community didn't want it." So, that was always the principle. So, it was always a loose type of, even when it was a structured kind of group to allow people to come in and express their grievances or file their grievances, and then the committee basically, what was done was we had a Board of Directors and then membership. And, you know, our membership was reserved for those people that were politically active and were political activists. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And then of course there was other people like always just like what you saw during the archived celebration that assisted our efforts, you know, helped out in whatever, being an unfunded type organization, whether it was, you know, passing out leaflets or pulling security, or whatever had to be done. So, I remember, during the Luis "Tato" Rivera issue there was a lot of activism, there was a lot of effort going on every night. And I don't know if I went through this already, but we used to meet about every day and sometimes, remember I'm still running a print shop supposedly. (Patino: Right.) All this time supposedly I'm running a print shop. So, you know, I'd jump from the printing press to dealing with people that came in, and the media, you know, issues that came up, and what have you. So, but I remember we used to meet a lot. We



used to meet everyday, as a matter of fact. At the beginning it was probably fifty, seventy-five people. During the Luis "Tato" Rivera issue, believe it or not you're talking about 1975, 1976, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) the Committee raised in the neighborhood of \$20,000 from straight community contributions. That was a lot of money back then.

**PATINO:** Donations?

**BACA:** Just donations. We had, we used to have tardeadas. The bands (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) used to help us out. There used to be a very popular nightclub here in National City, the Club 21. And, the owner, the owner was an Anglo gentleman that was more Chicano than a lot of Chicanos, and he had great love for the Mexican people, for the Mexican culture, and he always empathized with what we were doing, and he would allow us to use the Club 21 that everyone was very, very familiar with in the community, you know. They used to have dances there and other functions. But, he used to allow us to, you know, have tardeadas there Sundays, mainly on Sundays when it was his off day. So, we used to raise money there, at speaking engagements. I used to do speaking engagements. And, all of this went to, you know, to trying to organize and politicize and carry out the recall. I don't know if you remember, but I told you that out of the Luis "Tato" Rivera issue came the recall of all the mayor and the city council. And, so there was an effort at the time. We understood, as we got into it, that the registered number of voters was not there. (Patino: Right.) And, of course, there was a lot of, there was a lot of opposition, you know. It was a controversial type case. People were conditioned that, you know, this was an individual that some way somehow brought it upon himself. People that, you know, were system type people. So, in a way the community, politically anyway, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) was polarized, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) very polarized. Some people, I mean we were hitting hard. I mean, we were expressing the wrong emotions of a community that had been abused and



discriminated against for many, many years. And, you know, of course there was a lot of fear, and especially in the older generation. I remember, I remember that the City Council, there was one City Council person of Mexican ancestry, Louie Camacho, and I remember that that first march that I told you where we walked out of the church, right after, two or three days after Tato had been murdered, you know, by the NCPD, that, and we went to the city hall. And, I remember asking Louie Camacho that, you know, what was his position? Because he was there, supposedly, representing the Chicano community. And, I remember him telling me, "My hands are tied." And around a week, two weeks later, he came out and said to people and if we didn't like it to "Go back to Mexico." That was his response. (Patino: Wow.) You know, so. [To son] Mark can you get me a glass please?

So, you know, there was a lot of older conservatives, I would say fearful type people, and most of the people that were out there trying to correct this injustice (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) were young people, were of a different generation and a different thinking. And, that money that we raised, you know, went to the expenses of just keeping the effort going on. We understood the, like I was saying, that there was no, that there was very, very few persons of Mexican ancestry, very, very few Chicanos that registered to vote. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, we started an intensive voter registration drive, and we used to pay \$1 for every person that was registered, that the registrars registered then. And, so people used to go out every night get fifty, seventy-five, perhaps a hundred people would be at the shop and they would go out. And I remember afterwards, we used to have an old, we used to have an old refrigerator there at the old shop. I'm talking about the 1837 Highland Avenue shop, and it was always full of beer. It was always full of beer, you know. Every night people would come and that's how we used to end the evening or the night. Sit around and talk, drinking beer. And, I remember there's, there was a little



Chicano restaurant on McKinley, well it was more like Cleveland, I guess, 18<sup>th</sup> and Cleveland. It's Reuben Rubio's, Rueben and Connie Rubio's Little Mexico. And, I remember he used to bring us trays, I mean like a hundred and fifty rolled tacos, and, you know, I remember he, the people commenting that they were real greasy, real, real greasy, so that everybody used to eat them and after a while, you know, people started calling them "the sliders." That's what they were, sliders, because they were so greasy, you know. But, people used to come in and it was an education for a lot of people. They would tell their stories when they would go door to door. And, how people would react. Some people would welcome them. Some people would slam the doors on their faces. Some people would accuse them of being communists, you know. [Laugh]

**PATINO:** To register to vote?

**BACA:** Yeah, to register to vote, you know. And, so a lot of the money went towards that and just maintaining, you know, the office, the office there at 1837. And, you know, there was a lot, there was a lot of expenses, you know, from what I remember. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You know, there was always, you know, leaflets, flyers, (Patino: Right.) like I said, paying people. You know, I mean a dollar, you know, so people used for gas money and what have you. I mean, they weren't getting rich on the registration drive. But, it was a way to help out, you know, people that had to expend monies. That little place, Little Mexico restaurant, we had a large, large number of meetings at that place. People are coming, you know, from L.A., from Riverside. I remember Juan [Peña][120], the leader of La Raza Unida from New Mexico, coming down, Bert Corona came down, you know. People were interested because police brutality had always been an issue in our community. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And here you had a full-blown community organizing effort, not a reacting but acting, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) especially in the political arena. So, we started out recalling the mayor and the entire City



Council, but as time went on we found out that the only people we could recall were the people that were coming up for election. (Patino: Oh, okay.) So the mayor and, out of the five three were only eligible. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, we had like three issues going. We had, number one, organizing or training the troops, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) telling them what they had to do as far as registering people, what steps they had to take, and then we were in a political campaign (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) and, you know, of the recall. And, of course, everything in between, such as the legalities, there was a lot of legalities, you know. There was a lot of can and can't do as far as, you know, what the people that signed the petitions or the recall petitions that were being circulated. So, we were registering people. We were signing recall petitions, and we had a political campaign going on, you know. And, plus everything around it, the news media, the people coming in, what have you. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, believe it or not this went on for a year, basically a year. It cost us \$25,000. And, don't forget, if you look in the archives there was two other issues we were fighting besides that one. (Patino: Right.) You know, immigration was still going on. (Patino: Right. Right.) So . . .

**PATINO:** Within that year did they ever release the name of the officer?

**BACA:** Oh yeah. Yeah. That . . . the officer's name was finally released when the district attorney filed charges against him, which caused another uproar in the established community. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Out there they charge a policeman for shooting a Mexican. I used to have an old saying that, "If you're a policeman and you want a vacation, and if you're a policeman in National City, shoot a Mexican," you know. You get a paid vacation. (Patino: Yeah.) That's what it came down to.

**PATINO:** Leave without pay?

**BACA:** Yeah. They put you on administrative leaved with pay.



**PATINO:** With pay?

**BACA:** And so, we had to get candidates. We then, like I said, had to go out and campaign for the candidates.

**PATINO:** These were candidates to replace the people you're trying recall?

**BACA:** To replace the, you know, one, (Patino: Right.) the people that are being recalled. So, and we, we were facing a deadline. Remember Tato Rivera got shot and murdered on October 12, 1975. We had those two marches, which the last one being October 29, 1975. So, we had from November until the end of December to do what I'm telling you as far as getting the recall petitions in. Okay? (Patino: Right.) For an election that was going to be held in June. But the, the petition, not, yeah the petition, the, of registered voters had to be in before December 31.

(Patino: Hmm.) So, that's why we used to meet every night. That's why, you know, trying to get that number. I remember December 31, that's when we turned in the petitions and we all got to the shop around five o'clock in the morning. And, I remember it was cold. Everybody was drinking coffee and drinking doughnuts, and we had this one guy that was popping cans of beers open, you know, you know freezing weather there. And, I remember we started making sure that we had the required numbers. And I said, "Hey, you know, we need a few more, you know."

And somebody saw this, I'm sure the guy was a local drunk or something, went out and registered the guy and had him sign the recall petition. [Laugh] Some other people went out, you know, and started scrambling to get the required number. And, I remember we went down to city hall, and of course there was massive media, and a massive number of people because a lot of people had been working and had been involved with the petitions. And, we got down to city hall, went in there, turned in the petitions and that was New Years Eve night. So, I remember that after working all those days and hours that we had a party that night, like around a



hundred, hundred and twenty-five people at this individual's home. And, that's how the year ended, 1975. And so, you asked me what the D.A., I mean the officer's name. From what I recall the D.A. came out and charged him. And, I forget exactly what the charge was, but it wasn't murder. It was some, deadly force or something. I forget. (Patino: Right.) And they, they named the officer and it was Craig Short. And, Craig Short had shot and killed another individual just, I think, nine months before he shot Luis "Tato" Rivera. And, that was an Anglo that he had shot. And like I had stated to you before, from what I recall, there had been seven shootings just within a one-year period. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, there was something definitely wrong with the NCPD. So, the charges wound up being dismissed. Which, you know, and this individual was left on the police force and on the community to terrorize the community. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You know, matter of fact, his own fellow officers used to have a nickname for him, "Trigger." "Trigger." Like "happy trigger finger," you know. (Patino: Yeah.) And, unfortunately he moved up the ranks, which shows the mentality of the political structure and the so-called representatives in a predominately Chicano town. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, what I'll tell you that I've always said that National City, it's not a city, that it's a plantation. That sort of dramatized, you know, the condition, the political-social condition for Chicanos who lived here, you know, as far as their relationship with the city government (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) and the various departments that existed here, and still exist to this very, very day, you know.

**PATINO:** It was majority Chicano back then?

**BACA:** Yeah. It was, basically. Yeah. I would say maybe, if it wasn't fifty percent it was fast approaching the fifty percent mark. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, there was, there was anger when the charges got dismissed. It kind of invigorated people to go out for the political campaign. And, we got whipped when the, in the election, you know. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) The political



machine here was just too entrenched, too powerful. And, I think we probably garnished maybe twenty-five percent of the vote, you know. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So.

**PATINO:** For recall you needed over half?

**BACA:** Well, you had to, yeah, win outright, you know, fifty plus one, you know, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) against that particular individual that the candidates were running. (Patino: Right.) So, that happened and then after that, you know, there was a lot of problems, you know, as far as, or not problems but obstacles (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) in regards to, you know, city clerk, with the political establishment, you know, political harassment, people getting stopped. People, you know, just (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) being jacked up on various charges.

**PATINO:** And for participating in that movement for Rivera?

**BACA:** Yeah. [Laugh] (Patino: Right.) For registering people to vote, like you said. And, after the election, yeah because if you look at the recall petition it was a grievance of many issues. The rezoning issue of Old Town National City, the lack of recreation facilities for young people, you know, the police. Just a large number. You'd have to look at the recall petition, which was really pretty astute [Laugh] for an organization that, you know, that was volunteer and grassroots and nonfunded. So, Greg Short finally resigned with probably ninety percent of his pay from the city of National City just last year, 2005.

**PATINO:** He resigned last year?

**BACA:** Yeah. Resigned last year. And, this was after, believe it or not, after the so-called minority majority, the mayor and City Council had voted to promote him to acting chief of police.

**PATINO:** Oh wow.



**BACA:** I remember, you know, reading that and, like I stated in my letter to them, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) that this was the ultimate insult to this community. And, I remember one councilman in particular that had partaken, that had been active, as a matter of fact had been a candidate not for the city council seat but for one of the other positions. There was also some trustee school board candidates. Luis Natividad, asking him the same question that I asked Louie Camacho in 1975. "What is your position?" And, I quoted what Louie Camacho had stated, that his hands were tied. And, he never responded. But, after that letter they rescinded the nomination. So, but the damage, you know, once again the attitude that has always existed here, and now by so-called minorities, one again surfaced, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) you know, puppets, in my opinion, political puppets. (Patino: Right.) So, that was the conclusion.

[Recording paused]

Activity, you know, a lot of communications. Once again it was like you were on a, on a snow sleigh coming down the mountain, you know, and you were just on it. You just couldn't stop it if you wanted to stop it. So, I remember Rosalio Munoz, who was one of the prime organizers, he was the student body president of UCLA at the time and refused to be inducted into the draft and they charged him, you know. (Patino: Right.) And, I remember talking to him a few times. But, I remember one particular time we were going to Indio, Brawley, or somewhere and they had the La Marcha de la Reconquista and they were walking from I think from Mexico to Sacramento. And, I remember it was hot. It was like August, July, somewhere around there. And, we're in that air-conditioned car, and we're drinking beer of course in the car, you know, going to this MAPA meeting. And . . . [Talking to dog] Hey, hey! No. Excuse me. Turn that thing off. I need to go to bathroom. [Recording paused] We were up there in the mountains somewhere and they were walking in that heat and I remember we pulled over and we



said, "Hi," and they asked me where we were going, and we told them we were going. We wished them luck and I didn't see Rosalio again until the actual August 29 moratorium, 1970. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, I remember getting there to East L.A.. I think there were . . . there was four of us in one car and probably, you know, there was probably a couple hundred people from San Diego. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) I mean, and I remember getting there early in the morning. And man, I started seeing all these Mexicans just coming out of the sides of the streets. And, "Wow." I had never seen that many Mexicanos gathered, you know, for a march. They just kept coming and coming. I remember it was hot. It was very, very hot. So anyway, we finally start marching, we're marching, people along the way we look and some would jump in. [Laugh] I remember that scene where that young couple comes out of the church, you know, they're getting married. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And anyway, we finally get into the park and maybe it was four and a half, five miles, I forget. Like I said, it was hot. So, I remember we sat down and all I remember was we come in like this. There was a chain link fence and it made like an L. So. And, on this side was where the stage was at, which if I'm not mistaken it was a truck. And, you know, the music was there, and speakers, and people just kept coming in. And somebody said, "Hey, go buy some beer man." Like I told you, we were serious about our beer. [Laughter] So, we went into this liquor store. As a matter of fact it was Roger and myself. We got a six-pack of beer. And, I mean, that little liquor store was jammed. And I noticed that, you know, people were passing out beer, you know, up on the side because there was too many people. The teller couldn't tell it was going out. And, anyway, we paid for our beer, we walked out, and I remember when we walked out I think it was Whittier Boulevard, because the store was in like to our left and then when we come out you had to walk a little bit and go back and take a right. And, I remember turning to Roger saying, "Hey, look at all those cop cars over



there. What's going on?" Anyway, we didn't think anything about it, but I did notice there was a bunch of cop cars, and policemen in riot gear. I said, "What's going on?" So anyway, we went back, sat down, probably had half a beer, and then all of a sudden, I mean, like I said there was so many people crammed into that little area . . . we hear a commotion in the direction where we had come from. Like I said, we must have been like around [\_\_\_?\_\_\_][383] yards, maybe. And, we hear the commotion and I remember one of the guys jumped up on that chain link fence and he says, "Hey. Hey, there's cops over there, man. Something's going on." And, all of a sudden, you know, like I said he's still up there on the chain link fence looking and he says, "Hey, the cops are moving in." And so, we kind of went up a little bit to observe and we could see security, the Brown Berets and others, you know, trying to say, "Hey, everything's under control. Everything's under control." And then next thing they're just running over them, man. They're just clubbing them down. And then all of a sudden, I'll never forget it, people started throwing stuff. You know, the word kind of, "The cops are, you know, the cops are beating up the people, man." And, I just remember I guess the word got down there man and the next thing I remember is things started flying, man, bottles, cans, trash cans. I mean, at one time it was like the sun got blocked out there was so much stuff being hurtled that way. (Patino: Yeah.) So they, they came in and then all of a sudden they, they veer off to the right, because there was like a side street, if I'm not mistaken. They all congregate there and the people are, like I said, in the direction of the stage, and stuff is going on. The, you know, some cops are moving in. People are throwing stuff at them. I remember guys would just go up there and throw one punch, just one punch, and then they used to club them down, bop, bop, bop, bop, bop. And, people throwing stuff. We're throwing stuff. And I noticed, I noticed that "They're lining up." I said, "What are they waiting for?" And I'm looking and there's all this chaos going on, people



running, people getting clubbed, you know. You'd go up so far and then you have no sense.

"Hey, they got clubs. [Laugh] They got shields. They got guns, you know." (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, the guy that I told you that we had talked to about joining MAPA, his name was Chris Carlo, that was his name. He was a big man, I remember. [Laugh] I remember he went up there, boom, boom, boom, and then I remember he came, as he came back the other way man he was moving like he was a hundred yard, hundred-yard dash sprinter man. [Laugh] And so, I always remember, I says, you know I says, you know, "It's ironic," I says, "and I guess that even if there's a couple of thousand of us, you know, they're pushing us back." And one time we'd push them back but, but I mean it was like they would just go back so far. It wasn't like we were running them off. It was just like they were, you know, you can only go so far because there was so many, you know, lining up. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And then I said, "How come there's a thousand of them, there's only 800 of them, you know, they're dictating, you know?" And, but they kept lining up. I couldn't figure out why they were lining up. But, finally I figured it out. They were waiting for the wind to fire the tear gas. So, you know, I guess they were just waiting for the wind to be blowing in the right direction. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, you're talking maybe, man I don't know, maybe forty-five minutes, an hour, of going back and forth. A couple of times we pushed them back. We pushed them back. And then all of a sudden man I remember I was, I was right there, like I said, the fence was like an L and I was right at the, at the end of that fence, probably around ten feet in, and I saw this canister fall. Well, I had never seen tear gas in my life, you know. And, I remember it fell and then a few seconds later, poof, it just exploded. I'll tell you one thing, man, that thing made you cry uncle like in three seconds. (Patino: Yeah.) And, I remember some people were actually picking it up and throwing it back. But, you know, most people, including myself, I remember it just, man oh man, it made you say "uncle." So,



they started, now they have their bearing and they just started moving in, and boom, laying down. Behind where the stage was at there was a street. I'm assuming it's a dead end street because I remember it went back into Whittier, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) which is maybe, not, maybe a hundred feet, two hundred feet. And I remember the houses there, willingly or unwillingly, I mean, people would just run up there and they'd get in the hose and get that tear gas out of their eyes. And, cops are moving in. People are throwing stuff at them. And, I remember trying to, "Where's so and so?" you know, trying to, you know, gather all our people, because I'll be honest with you we didn't know where we were at. (Patino: Yeah.) We left our cars four and a half miles back and we didn't know what direction we came or anything. So, we're trying to, I'm trying to get everybody together. "Hey, did so and so," you know, and blah, blah, blah, and "let's stick together, you know. Don't, you know, just stay together, you know. If, you know, if somebody goes out looking for somebody, you know, we'll be heading down this way." But, I remember coming out Whittier Boulevard, to Whittier Boulevard, and as I came out I remember a cop car was going by and I kid you not, half a block that car was completely demolished from the rocks, the trashcans, the sticks. Completely demolished. And, you know, I mean these guys are coming closer, you know, they're coming out of that way we had left. And we started walking down Whittier Boulevard. And like I said, we don't know where we're at. So, we're walking and people are running, and people are, you know, scattering, and people are yelling, and people are screaming. Chaos. And then all of a sudden we see undercover cops coming out of the sides of the streets with guns drawn. So, you know, it's like, "Well, which way do you go?" So luckily for us this guy in a flatbed truck, I think, or a truck, I don't know what kind of truck, came by and he says, "You guys need a ride?" Shit, before he even, before we answered him we were in the back of his truck. (Patino: Yeah.) [Laugh] Everybody jumped in.



So, we went back and ironically where the march had started wasn't too far from the sheriff's department, so they were bringing the buses, the busloads of people that had gotten arrested, (Patino: Oh sure.) and booking them there. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, we get our car and Bert had told me that we were going to meet at the MAPA office afterwards on Pico Boulevard. So, we went down there and, you know, people from all over were at the MAPA headquarters. So I remember, you're talking like from four thirty, five o'clock now in the afternoon. So I remember around -- our candidate for governor, Ricardo Romo, he had gotten hit. He had a bandage on his head. He had gotten hit with a, with something, and he was bleeding, right. So, I remember Bert Corona telling him, because we're in the back room, and Bert telling him, "Remember, you were hit by a police canister. Remember that." [Laughter] He says, "The media's going to be here in a while. So, don't forget that." [Laugh] Then so they had the press conference and Bert and Abe are whaling away on the cops, you know, the police riot, that the cops had rioted against the Mexican community who were legitimately protesting, exercising their First Amendment rights, and blah, blah, blah. So, we must have left there around six thirty, seven o'clock. And, I remember when we left we got on, we got off Atlantic and got on Five, and I looked back to East L.A. and I saw the smoke (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) coming out of there. So, we must have got home around nine, nine thirty and there was a message from, I think it was Channel 10, asking if they could come down and do an interview on what had happened. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) [Tape distortion][573] Channel 10. And, Carlos Legrete was there. You know Carlos?

**PATINO:** No.

**BACA:** Yeah, Carlos used to go to the United Farm Workers. (Patino: Okay.) So, they interviewed us and, you know, we said it was a police riot, you know. (Patino: Uhm-hmm. Uhm-hmm.) "This is typical of the treatment of, you know, Chicanos just trying to exercise



basic rights." So, I remember after that then things changed. There was a lot of fear. (Patino: Yeah.) There was a lot of fear. There was a lot of confrontation, too, up in L.A. There was also a lot of reaction, both internally and externally, you know. And, but in a way things changed, you know, a lot for the Chicano Movement. A lot of people got out. A lot of people took different routes, accepted routes, and then others I guess without any common sense, some people would say, kept doing what they were doing, you know.

**PATINO:** Yeah.

**BACA:** I mean, so . . .

**PATINO:** That's '70 then, right?

**BACA:** That's 1970. Yeah. (Patino: Right.) And like I said, after that that's when the whole thing started La Raza Unida, what have you, so. (Patino: Yeah.) But, it was a defining moment, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) in the history of our, of the Chicano Movement, you know, and of our people of course.

**PATINO:** Right. Right.

So, immigration it, you know, became like the issue that wouldn't let you rest in peace.

**END SIDE 1, TAPE 5, SESSION 3.**

**BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 5, SESSION 3.**

**BACA:** Every which way you turned immigration was there in the community. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Even if you were against immigration. [Tape paused]

**PATINO:** Okay.

**BACA:** Yeah. So everybody, like I said, started getting into it. The social services, the church, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) the police, the, even the Immigration started getting politically savvy, or media savvy. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Started giving tours of the infamous soccer field over here in



[Laugh] Tijuana, you know. Reporters would go down to the soccer field and, or the helicopter ride that the Immigration used to provide them, and then they would come over, then they would come over to the shop to get the opposing view. [Laugh] And, you know, it's like I always used to tell them, I said, "Oh, so you got your brainwashing tour, huh?" "What do you mean?" "Well, the soccer field and the helicopter ride or the ride along?" And, you know, they're, by that time I had most of the answers to all of their questions because I've heard them so many times. (Patino: Yeah.) I remember . . . I remember one time this reporter, the '80s, called me from the *New York Times*, and where he got my number I don't know, but he said, "Mr. Baca," he said, "you know," we're talking and he said, "Hey, let me ask you a question." He says, "Are things better now than they were when you first started in '68?" I said, "They're worse." He said, "What do you mean man?" He says, "You guys got U.S. senators, you have congressmen, you have national organizations?" I said, "Well yeah, then why are you calling me then? Why don't you talk to them?" [Laugh] I said, "Don't answer it." I says, "I know why you ain't calling them." I said, "Because you know what I know." I said, "Their names might as well be Jones, Smith, Jackson." I said, "Because they're you're representatives, not ours. That's why you're calling me." I said, "I bet you don't even know where National City is at?" [Laugh] So, it was the same with Immigration, you know. It's, you know, I said, "You know what?" I says, "Enforcement is just like exploitation. You see it's just the ramification of a policy." (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) I says, "You know," and I always used to tell them, I said, "You look like you're an educated person. You look like someone who's read a little bit about history." I says, I says, "You must understand that immigration is a system. The thing you're talking about is a system." I says, and, I says, "And, you're believing all this malarkey these guys are giving you?" I says, "You think they want to get rid of illegal immigration?" I said, "That's their bread basket man."



[Laugh] I says, so I says, "So, what does that got to do with the issue?" And then we used to get into the issue. "Well, what's the issue?" I said, "Well, it's not immigration." I says, "It's labor." I said, "You're exploiting labor. The United States is exploiting labor. That's policy." I said, "Do you know what the secondary labor second to the U.S. economy is? You know the garment industry, the agribusiness, hotels, the motels, the whole live-in maid situation here along the border?" I says, you know I says, "That's just like slavery. And sure you have ramifications. You've got a lot of ramification. You think the old slaves weren't teed off when the new slaves came in and threatened their, their little privileges that they had, whatever they were?" I said, "You think poor whites weren't affected?" you know. "Hey, the reason you don't have a job is because the slaves are taking them.' That sounds ridiculous now doesn't it? But, that's what they were told, along with a whole bunch of other myths." (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So I says, so I said, "You know, the immigration issue is, you know, part and partial of an international historical social, economic, and political factors, you know. Now, if you want to talk about, we'll talk about it. But, if you want to talk about that tour they gave you, why don't you just leave?"

[Laugh] And, you know, so immigration was like, like I said it resonated because it, and I guess, I guess because of the geography. I mean, I used to talk to Japanese reporters, a reporter from Brazil, Germany, [Laugh] the Dallas Morning News, from Mexico. Forget it man. Some of those guys I got to know on a first-name basis, you know. (Patino: Yeah.) I used to call the guys up, and I don't know if you ever dealt with the Mexican media, but [Laugh] I'd tell them one thing and they says, you know, I'd tell them we're going to have a meeting, you know, and we'd have a meeting here locally and then they'd call me up on the phone and says, "Hey, how's your meeting going?" I said, "Good. Around fifty people, you know, and we're talking about this."

"No. No. Yo pienso que hay como... cinco mil." Huh? [Laughter] You know, and so, but the



real focus I think for us and for the immigration issue was '77 when the Klan came down, (Patino: Yeah.) the KKK. And, what happened there was the INS got a, gave David Duke (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Grand Dragon, Grand Lizard or whatever the hell he is, of the "Ka Ka Klowns," [Laugh] a tour. And, I remember, I forget what offshoot of the communist party they found out about it and they went down there and they got into a confrontation and started throwing rocks. So, the next day it appeared. And, of course they didn't have the roots or the presence in the community, so people started calling us up (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) about the issue. You know, I mean, boom. It was like, "Hey, what the hell's going on here?" And, you know, we got together and, we got together and we started to organize, you know, to deal with the issue. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) We – [Dogs Barking] Como se dice?. I mean we were getting calls from all over. [To another person.] Hey Joe.

**JOHN:** Want a cold one?

**BACA:** Not here.

**JOHN:** Not here?

**PATINO:** How are you doing?

**JOHN:** How you doing?

**BACA:** This is my brother-in-law John right here. We just went into the history. [Laugh]  
[Recording paused]

What happened was, was, I mean we started, because we had been involved with the immigration issue and, you know, we were from the Chicano community, of course. That was the most affected community. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) We started getting calls from all over. I mean, literally from all over, black groups because of the KKK, (Patino: Right.) and progressive groups, white groups, Jewish groups. If you go look at the Klan file you'll see letters from all



over. And the media? Forget it. And, we got calls from – constant. Constant. Twenty-four hours, you know, calls, at the shop and everywhere. Wherever we were. Meetings and, you know, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) what have you, and said, "Okay, what are we going to do?" So, we had to respond. And, we decided to have a press conference, which we held at the old Chicano Federation, with all the groups, you know. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, that's the video that you see in the archives, you know, basically stating that, "Any action by these terrorist, racist groups will be met in-kind, will, you know, bring a response from our community." I think it was the day after, a couple of days after that, is when my house (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) got hit. I was getting up and I mean I must have left the house five, five-thirty in the morning, you know, when it was dark, to get to the shop. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, of course, we were meeting there and we were getting ready for, after the press conference we decided to have a demonstration at the border. And ironically, to, at the time we were fighting the Carter Immigration Plan. We zeroed in on the Carter Immigration Plan. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Our political position was, "We already got, we already said what we got to say about the Klan or white supremacist groups," you know. "They touch one Mexican, you know, they can expect the same response from our community." (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) But, the real culprit is the policy that has brought on this "ramification." Another symptom of the problem. So, we decided we were going to have a march so, you know, we were planning for that, and now you're talking about a week and a half time to put this thing together logistically, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) and what have you, and dealing with the media, and dealing with everything else. And we, I remember leaving in the morning to the shop and then when around eight thirty or so my wife called me up and says, "Hey, somebody graffitied our house." I says, "What do you mean graffitied our house?" "Yeah," she says. "You know, the usual. 'Go back to Mexico wetbacks.' you know, 'beaners'." I don't even



know what the hell was on there. So, you know, I came down and of course by, you know, that time there was a whole bunch of people at the shop. So, we came down and checked it out and I said, "Whoa, man," I says – oh and then my kids, my older kids, Nick and Mark, somebody stopped them, you know, over here on First. So, they were going to school over here. So, they got stopped like around Seventh or Eighth by some strange man asking them, you know, something about me. (Patino: Hmm.) So, all of that I said, "No. No. No." I says, "I can't do, I can't," because I mean, if I was leaving at five I was wasn't getting home until eleven, midnight, (Patino: Right.) every day. I says, "And, we're just getting into it right now, you know, as far as this march and what have you." And of course, there's going to be more media and everything else. So, I told my wife I said, "You know what?" I says, "I'm going to send you out of town, you and the kids." I said, "You know," I says, "I don't know what's going to happen." I said, "But I can't be worrying about you guys while I'm over there." (Patino: Uhm-hmm. Uhm-hmm.) So, I sent them to my, to her sister's home up there in L.A. (Patino: Yeah.) And then I remember the guys said, "No, you know, these guys ain't playing around and neither are we." So, they decided, they decided to pull guard duty at my house, you know, after we got home. So, I remember there used to be like around eight, ten guys, you know, with rifles [Laugh] outside my house and they used to go around the perimeters and what have you, and I remember after two or three days nobody's getting no sleep, right, and we're working, and somebody said, "You know what, man? Why don't we just take Herman over to this guy's house? Nobody even, I don't even know where he lives at." He says, "We can go out and get a good night's sleep." He says, "Yeah. Let's do that, man." (Patino: Yeah.) So, the Klan march I remember I think Corky, Corky Gonzalez called and he said, "Hey Herman," he says, "I was reading about what's going on down there." He says, "You know, I want to know if I could come down or we could come



down and help you guys out?" "Hey, we'd be more than honored for you, if you came down."

So, funny thing about that period of time was that the month before we had men on the immigration issue, on the Carter Immigration Plan, José Angel Gutierrez, Armando Navarro, Raul Ruiz, Rudy Acuña, a whole bunch of people in Ontario, and we decided that something had to be done nationally, (Patino: Right.) and that we were going to organize an immigration conference to address the system's attacks that were manifested in the Carter Immigration Plan. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, we met over there and we decided, "Okay, let's get together and, you know, try and get as many people together." So, we left with that understanding and then José Angel Gutierrez took off and the next thing we know is he had allied himself with the SWP, Socialist Workers Party. Now, we had had some problems with the SWP down here, and them trying to come in and assist us by trying to impose their political agenda on us, on our community you know. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, we saw that as a violation of our self-determination. So, we put out a declaration kicking them out of our community. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So then José did that. So, most of the people that we were working with from California were in agreement. Corky had also, in the crusade in Denver had also had some problems on the same issue. (Patino: Right.) So, what happened was at the time there was an effort by José and the SWP, that had a national network, which is the reason why I'm sure José plugged into them, to you know get this conference going. And, there was a lot of division. There was a lot of dissention and disagreement over the role of the SWP and what was seen as a Chicano issue. And so anyway, so we had been meeting up and down California to try to get our own thing going back to what we had envisioned and we met for a couple months but never got off the ground. You know, there was too much, there was too much division for whatever reason. The resources weren't there. The personnel wasn't there. But we, we attempted to put this thing



together to address the Carter Immigration Plan. It never came about. So, ironically while all this thing is going back and forth within our own, within the Movement, I think it was Dia de la Raza that the Klan got the little tour. (Patino: Yeah.) Then all of a sudden [Laugh] everything shifted from San Antonio [sound] to San Diego. And, what happened was they had a conference.

**PATINO:** The one in San Antonio right?

**BACA:** Uhm-hmm. And, they got around a thousand people. And, we had our march there. Corky Gonzalez was here. Bert Corona was here. Abe Tapia was here. Raul Ruiz was here. So, there was a division. There was a division on how best to address (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) the immigration issue in our community. But without a doubt that, geography had a lot to do with it, you know, the San Diego and Tijuana.

**PATINO:** Uhm-hmm. Was the division ideological or was it just . . .

**BACA:** It was ideological. And . . .

**PATINO:** I mean, or just because of the alliance with the group that you all had problems with?

**BACA:** Well, you know, that made it ideological, you know, because (Patino: Right.) most, most of here saw it as, like I said, people infringing on our right to self-determine. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, of course, that included other people, like Bert Corona, and Corky. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And then on the other side you had some of the other groups that, you know, "We got to do, you know, what we can, you know, with what we got," and blah, blah, blah. So, but that, that without a doubt is what crystallized, and even as you can see to today. I've always said, "Whatever happens with immigration is first going to happen in San Diego, policy wise, and then it's going to happen somewhere else later." And, it's always been true. (Patino: Uhm-hmm. Yeah.) So, the Klan march was kind of like what put the CCR on the national map, you might



say. (Patino: Yeah.) And, we used to put out little pamphlets, you know. And like I said, we were always a grassroots organization, you know, and just community funds and community volunteers. So, in a way we look at the CCR and it was always a volunteer type organization, you know, and our philosophy was, "Hey, if it exists it's because there's a need. And, if it don't exist it's because people don't need it or don't want it, and maybe that's the way it should be."

(Patino: Hmm.) I mean, you know, we never . . .

**PATINO:** So, the main focus was never solely immigration?

**BACA:** No.

**PATINO:** It was just whatever the community needed?

**BACA:** Whatever people brought in. You know, we dealt with everything from, like I said, zoning issues, to educational issues, kids getting thrown out of school, police brutality, immigration, of course. Politics.

**PATINO:** And one of the other things it dealt with was the Rivera case, like you told me? And, I find it interesting that the kids went to you before, you know, when you barely knew about it?

**BACA:** See, we, the Luis "Tato" Rivera issue was, like I said, I had just gotten home from a Casa conference in L.A., that Sunday night. So, when I got up that Monday morning, as a matter of fact it was October 12<sup>th</sup> again. It was October 12, if I'm not mistaken, or it was – no, it had to be October 13<sup>th</sup>, because he got shot Saturday after midnight.

**PATINO:** Uhm-hmm. In 1975, right?

**BACA:** In 1975. And, like I said my usual habit was is I get up, I get the newspaper and get a cup of coffee, and I was reading the paper. I says, "Hey." And, one of the things that we had done as MAPA was, most of us being from Old Town, was we had a, we'd try to get the kids organized into a teen post. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) When we were kids in Old Town there was a



place called the Casa de Salud, and it was a two-story building, and it had a gym, basketball court on the top, and then the bottom used to have some little pool tables, and in the back there as a boxing ring. So, we used to hang out over there. It wasn't very much, but it got us off the street, you know. (Patino: Right.) And, 1970-71 they tore it down. So, the kids had nothing to do, except get in trouble. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And since most of us had gotten in trouble, you know, we attempted to see if something couldn't be done to get these kids a recreational center, like the one we had, because they had torn it down. And I remember, I remember going to the city council meeting as a MAPA representative in nineteen, it had to be 1970, to raise the issue. And, we had a couple of pickets and demonstrations to show the need and what have you, and some of the problems that we're still talking about today, about the policy discrepancies toward the residents and especially poor people. And, I always remember Mayor Kyle Morgan telling me, "We ain't got no time or no money for those type of things." That was 1970. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) How long ago was that, thirty-six years ago? And, those kids still don't have anything there. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, I knew most of those kids, you know. I remember my wife, we got married in, what was it, '74, and I remember the, I remember one time the kids come over and one of them was stabbed. Now, you know, my wife's looking at it like, "What the heck's going on?" you know. And, so I knew most of the kids so, and ironically a lot of the kids that you, a lot of the kids that you saw pulling security at the Archive (Patino: Uh huh.) were some of those kids [Laugh] that are now men now.

**PATINO:** You just knew them from the shop, being in the neighborhood?

**BACA:** Well, I knew them, you know, I knew them from Old Town and I knew them from working together, and I knew, you know. So, I knew Tato. I, you know, as a matter of fact, this guy Ernie Azhocar one time called me up and, before he got killed, and he said, "Hey Herman,"



he says, "I need your help." I said, "Well, about what?" He says, "The police department called." I said, "Oh shit." I said, "What's going on?" He says, "They're looking for some kids and they're holed up at this house over there on Wilson Avenue in Old Town." He said, "They don't want no problems. They just want to get them out of there, you know." So, I remember going down there and there was a standoff and we got them out. (Patino: Yeah.) So, you know, and I knew them from, you know, just, you know, along with the other kids, you know. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, I got up in the morning and picked up the newspaper and then I saw his name. I said, "Damn," I said, "What happened here?" And then, the National City police, I've always said that National City, first of all, is not a city. It's a plantation. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And secondly, that National City doesn't have a police department. It's got an occupying force. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, that's basically their mentality. It's always been their mentality. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You know, keep the Mexicans in line, you know. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, there have been a lot of problems, a lot of complaints before Tato got shot and there had been even before that systematically. (Patino: Right. Right.) But, I think before Tato had got killed there had been like seven shootings, fatal shootings, from the NCPD. Even the newspapers were, you know, editorializing about it. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And so, when this happened it was like, you know, "Enough is enough." So, I read about that, got up, and I said, "Hey . . ." At that time, because you've got to go back to the context of the time. A lot of people had left, the people that we started out with. They would leave . . .

**PATINO:** The CCR?

**BACA:** With MAPA, La Raza Unida. (Patino: Yeah.) We're talking about '75 still, okay?

(Patino: Yeah.) So, we're still the Ad Hoc Committee. But, a lot of people from MAPA, La Raza Unida, you know, they had plugged in, into the system. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) I left MAPA



because of that. I, people intentionally, or unintentionally I would say, you know, rationalizing. (Patino: Right.) You know, "I'm going to get a job and I'm going to do it to save poor people, to help poor people." [Laugh] And, I started seeing that game, which I called the "poverty pimp game," which has not endeared me to a lot of people because they didn't like being slandered, I guess. [Laugh] What they think is slandered, which I see as the truth. (Patino: Yeah.) But, you know, I started seeing the poverty pimp game was not only taking away, but that people were actually walking into a situation where they were just surrendering all of their values and then whatever they said was just BS, you know. I mean, they were, they were plugged into a situation that, you know, they were totally controlled. And that this, this of course was affecting the Movement. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, when the Luis "Tato" Rivera issue happened basically it was Carlos Vasquez and myself (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) that were holding the fort, you might say, with people coming in and out, you know. But, the old-time, the, those that, you know, that were there, you know, for the long run it was just basically him and I. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) I mean, he was this, it was like those movie scenes you see where they show the desert and what have you and all it is is a painting. (Patino: Yeah.) So, basically everyone had left and when Luis "Tato" Rivera happened, it was a little bit like that thing I told you about the Klan issue, the San Antonio/San Diego thing. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Boom! [Clap] All the focus came here. (Patino: Came here?) People came out of the woodwork. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) I told you, I got there that morning. Seventy-five kids were there. "You've got to say something. You've got to do something." I said, "No, I ain't going to do nothing until the parents request or ask." So, now that's a Monday morning, okay? He got shot like Sunday a.m., like at 12:30, (Patino: Yeah.) and so that day was like a hectic day and people just came out of the, just like it was a dam had burst uphill and there was, the water just came downhill. It's simple as that. (Patino: Hmm.) I mean,



people I hadn't seen for a long time. People that said, "Hey, you know," what have you. So, that afternoon there must have been like around, phew, a hundred, hundred and fifty people at the, around the shop, "Hey, what are going to do?" So, I said, well, my thing was and always has been that, like I told you before, you have to have a mandate. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Don't matter if it's even two persons, but it's a mandate. You're not doing it because that's your opinion or that's your feeling, then it becomes an "I" thing instead of a "we" thing. (Patino: Yeah.) So I said, "No." I says, "Let's call a community meeting, you know, and see what the community wants to do, see what people want to do."

**PATINO:** Did the parents support you too?

**BACA:** Oh, and like I told you they, after I told the kids that they were there within the hour (Patino: Yeah.) at the shop, you know, the father and the uncle, the daughters. So, we were going to call a community meeting. So, I printed up some flyers, the kids passed them out, people took them. I called the news media. We had a community meeting at St. Anthony's church and jam-packed. And so, it's now a Tuesday. The next day is a Tuesday. So, we were there and somebody said, "Hey, the city council's meeting right now. Why don't we go?" See, because they wouldn't release the officer's name. (Patino: Right. Right.) So, somebody said, "Let's go demand that they tell us who shot Tato Rivera in the back." "Let's go." So, just like [\_\_\_\_hidalgo][1078] walking out of the church we all [Laugh] walked down. It was, what was it, Coolidge, Harding, and we went down to Thirteenth and took a right. Tato Rivera got shot on 13<sup>th</sup> and right before Roosevelt, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) so we stopped at the house, because there was still the bullet hole. He got shot with a .357 magnum, you know. It went through him and hit the house, the little house right there in the alley. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, we stopped there for a minute. Then we went down there and there must have been 600 of us. So, went to the city



council and they kind of "Ah!" you know, "Where'd they all come from?" [Laugh] So, all the kids, we just packed that place, man. The kids were behind the city councilmen. They were just surrounded, you know. So I says, so I got up there and told them we demanded to know who shot Luis "Tato" Rivera. "Well, we can't divulge that." "Well, you better divulge it, because this isn't going to go away," you know. So, I said, "Let's go back." So, I remember, I remember at the meeting there was this old school friend of mine who was, had developed into one of San Diego's prime [Laugh] "druggists."

**PATINO:** Street pharmacist?

**BACA:** Yeah. Street pharmacist. And, he was yelling, "You f'ing pigs," and "white racists." He was going on and on. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, anyway we were walking back and he comes up to me and he says, "Hey Herman," he says, "I hope I didn't mess up, man." He said, "I didn't mean to, you know, mess things up back there." I said, "Don't worry about it man." [Laugh] I said, "Don't worry about it." He says, he said, "Well, you know," he says, "what can I do to help man?" I said, "Look man," I said, "when we get back to the church hall," I said, "I want you to go way in the back," and I says, I says, "I'm going to ask, I'm going to make an appeal for people to help us out with some money. Now, you get back there and you figure out how much money you're going to give us, okay?" [Laugh] So anyway, we went back. He gave us \$500. (Patino: Yeah.) And, that night I think we raised like around \$3,000, I mean, just saying, "What are you going to do?" you know. So anyway, we got like around \$3,000 and then people said, "Well, what are we going to do?" "Okay, well you know, we've got to demand that we want to know who shot him and we've got to demand that he be prosecuted for murder." And I says, "Let me get a little bit more input and let me see what's available." So, I called for another meeting, not at the church hall but at the old MAAC center. I said, "Okay, well you



know they don't want to divulge," you know. And, there was always the old thing about the Civil Rights Commission, the violation of civil rights. "Let's do this. Let's do that." So, we're at this meeting and somebody says, "You know what, this is a political issue. Those guys could have given us the name of that officer. And really, they're the ones that are responsible for him getting shot, you know. That's their police department. They're supposed to be controlling it." (Patino: Right.) So everybody says, "Yeah." He said, and he says, "Why don't we recall them?" "Recall them?" So, everybody voted to recall the entire city council. He says, "If you don't divulge who shot Luis "Tato" Rivera by October 29<sup>th</sup>," I remember the date, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) "we're going to recall everyone of you." So, you're talking probably around October 15 when that happened. So, I printed up some more flyers. "We're going to have a community meeting and demonstration march at city hall, you know, and hear our demands. If not, we're going to recall." So, we printed up flyers and believe it or not we got 2,000 people. Two thousand people marched out of that church hall. And, we went down there and, you know, they wouldn't give up his name. "Okay. We'll recall." (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) [Recording paused]

**PATINO:** Okay, October 14, 2006.

**BACA:** October or August?

**PATINO:** August.

**BACA:** Two months ahead?

**PATINO:** Fourteenth. Yeah. Last time we ended talking about the Rivera case. Tell me a little bit about how the Committee for Chicano Rights came into being. Was that one of the first cases that it took?

**BACA:** Well, you know, the Committee on Chicano Rights was an offshoot of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chicano Rights. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) But basically what happened was the Tato



Rivera issue is that it transformed from a coalition, organizational coalition, (Patino: Right.) to a membership group. And, the reason was, was like I stated to you that the Monday after they had shot and killed Tato Rivera large numbers of community people showed up at the shop. If I remember right, about the only people that – because a lot of people had left and gone onto other things, social services careers, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) educational careers and what have you. So, in other words the doors had opened and a lot of people had left. So basically who was at the shop at Casa Justicia and Aztec Printing, was Carlos Vasquez and myself. (Patino: Right.) So, when the Luis "Tato" Rivera issue came on it was like a second wave from the first wave. The first wave had kind of dwindled down to a trickle and the Luis "Tato" Rivera issue kind of rejuvenated the organization and the organizational efforts. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, so people started showing up and people started asking (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) "How do we join the Ad Hoc Committee?" And, that was usually the first question. And, the second question is, "What does 'Ad Hoc' mean?" I says, "Temporary. It's supposed to be a temporary committee." (Patino: Right.) So, the people that had come in and were working on the effort started thinking about, "Why don't we structure ourselves and, you know, set up a membership organization?"

**END SIDE 2, TAPE 5, SESSION 3.**

**END INTERVIEW.**