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History of the Chicano Movement
Committee on Chicano Rights

INTERVIEWEE: Baca, Herman
INTERVIEWER: Patino, Jimmy, Historian, UCSD
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[1 TAPE – 120 Minutes]

BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 13, SESSION 11, TAPE 2. HERMAN BACA.

PATINO: Patino, Mandeville Special Collections Library. Today is September 13, 2006.

Herman Baca. Okay, tell me a little bit about the immigration movement. My understanding in the late '70s and into the '80s mobilized around Carter's policy and then Reagan's similar policy. You guys, you know, had the marches, had the tribunal, and you said that it began to fall apart with amnesty, which was I guess around 1986. Kind of tell me about the dynamics of that.

BACA: Yeah, like I stated in the past interviews, immigration, the so-called immigration issue (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) has always been a very complex issue. Not only for activists but also for the community and our people, you know, because of the limited options that result from a powerless state that exists within our community and of course our people. Like I stated at the beginning, immigration was an issue that had to be injected into the Chicano Movement.

(Patino: Right.) One of the principal persons was, you know, if not the *most* principal person was, that injected that issue in the community, was Bert Corona, you know. For Bert Corona injected it there was a lot of misunderstanding, really a sense of irrelevancy that the issue had nothing to do with us, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) you know. And, so the issue started, started, once it got injected, on that basis of trying to educate, of trying to politicize people why, why it was an

issue or should be an issue of concern to our communities and to our people. (Patino: Uhm-hmm. Uhm-hmm.) And, that even extended into Mexico, you know. Like I stated before, (Patino: Right.) the basic position of at least the Mexican media and the established order was that immigration, that the immigrants that were leaving Mexico were, you know, traitores, you know, "traitors". Traitors to la patria, you know, to their country. And, all the resulting rationales that emanated from that position that there was plenty of jobs in Mexico and, you know, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) that they were just leaving for other reasons that were not very patriotic. And, of course, like I stated in our own community there was a complete disinterest in the issue, or a complete lack of understanding, I would say, based on, a complete lack of understanding of, you know, the, of the issue and how it was, how it had been affected, affecting us, and how it continued to affect us, and how it, as we have seen now continues to affect us unless it was resolved. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So the issue, at least among the activist elements that were trying to bring about change to our community, it took hold basically because of cause and effect. Like I told you, a lot of people were going out and trying to register people, to give you one example, and they were running into this brick wall of people not wanting to register, especially along the border, because of the different status of documentation within the family. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) One person might be a U.S. citizen. The other one's in the process of becoming documented, and others in the family are completely undocumented. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, activists started seeing that this was a systematical means of maintaining fear or control (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) through the use of fear. So, most people's normal human reaction was, "We don't want to get involved. We don't want to draw attention to ourselves." (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You know, the person who was getting documented, their opportunities or their chances of procuring those valuable documents might be impeded. And of course, the ones

without no documents, hey, "They might just come and take them away, take our loved ones away." So, the normal, natural reaction was, "We're not interested. We don't want to get involved. There are no problems." So that, that was the reaction was, "This is something that is affecting what we're attempting to do," to give you that one example. So, we also saw it in the more general term that it was being used to divide and conquer. It was being used to stigmatize us. It was being used to define an issue, another issue that affected our interests as a "law enforcement," you know, type issue, which was the general mentality in all the issues, you know, from youth, to education, to just, you know, how, the treatment of the community, you know, by law enforcement. And that, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) "These were people that should be watched. These were people that should be stopped. These were people that, you know, and they're up to no good." (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So the activist community, because of that reason, because of those, you know, the general reasons of, you know, just society's perception (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) and, you know, defining everything, or defining us in a negative light and defining us as a law enforcement problem rather than a social, or economic, or political problem, you know, started to react by, you know, educating themselves about the issue. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You know, changing the, their old concepts that were very, very right-wing in nature. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, you know, politicizing themselves, seeing that this issue really was a political effort by interests that had long manipulated and exploited our situation, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) our standing in U.S. society to their benefit.

PATINO: Uhm-hmm. Let's backtrack a little bit, because I want, because Corona had been working on that issue since the '30s and '40s and so I want to try to gain a little bit of history of maybe how that issue of immigration came into the '60s and '70s. Corona mentioned that in San

Diego he had worked with Hermandad Mexicana. How were you connected with Hermandad Mexicana?

BACA: See, the Hermandad Mexicana was an internal political organizing effort within the Laborers Union, (Patino: Right.) Local 89. (Patino: Uhm-hmm. Uhm-hmm.) It was used as, very much like some, a body that would organize and run candidates, you know, for the purpose of winning elections within the union. (Patino: Okay.) So, the Hermandad Mexicana back then, versus what exists today, you're talking about basically two different type organizations. (Patino: Hmm. Uhm-hmm.) You know, as a matter of fact, if you look in the documentation, at one time we reorganized the Hermandad Mexicana from its prior goal. Now, you're talking probably in the late '70s (Patino: Oh, okay.) when Bert Corona came down. There was an individual named Albert Usquiano, who was the son of Phil Usquiano, (Patino: Oh, okay.) who was one of the top officers with the Local 89. And so, based on Bert's advice and suggestions, recommendation, we revived it and, you know, like I said at that time the reasons or the purposes were probably more known to Bert than us, because we already had the Committee on Chicano Rights back then. (Patino: Yeah.) And so, it was a complimentary type of effort, you know, once again for, you know, you'd probably have to ask Bert Corona, only you can't, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) the main reasons. But, out of that came the Hermandad Mexicana that we now see in L.A., that he actually led, you know, in the '70s and the '80s, and up to his death. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, yeah, Bert, Bert Corona was a labor organizer. That's what he was. (Patino: Right.) That's what he, that's what he started off as. And, he worked with Ernesto Galarza, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) you know, and with César, and other people trying to eradicate and do away with the old Bracero Program that was causing so much havoc, and . . . to our community and especially to labor. (Patino: Right.) It had been a, the Bracero Program was a program that was legislated by treaty

between Mexico and the U.S. government in 1942 because of the war. Well, the program was such a bonanza for agribusiness that it lasted until 1964, I think, '62 or '64. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, but it was done away, it was finally done away with but other similar, I guess, programs were instituted within the system. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Now, the funny thing about, when you start talking about, because, about immigration and labor, you can see the massive contradiction of those two definitions, you know. The Bracero Program was really a labor program, a foreign importation worker program that, you know, was protected by treaty. And, if you ever read the document it's the most humane document that you'll read concerning the protection of the rights of the workers, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) until you applied it in a racist system. [Laugh] (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And then, just like the ex-INS commissioner, I think his name was Lee G. Williams, who did an interview for a Texas newspaper, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) described it as a "slave program." And, he's right on. It was a slave program. That's his definition. [Laugh] So, but even during the Bracero Program you probably have more people outside of the program than within the program. You have those two factors that I speak about, the manipulation of the "immigration" policy for the purpose of exploiting cheap (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Mexican labor. So, whenever there was any efforts to enforce the "humane" provisions within the treaty, most racist growers, especially in your home state, Texas, [Laugh] (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) would just, you know, would just hire the people outside of the program. (Patino: Right.) You know, I always remember one particular incident where, it was a practice where at the insistence of the growers that had individuals that were demanding that they live up to the, workers within the program that were demanding that the, that they live up to the provisions of the treaty, the growers would simply call the Border Patrol and throw them out. And so, you know, there was really no protection. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) There was no enforcement mechanism. (Patino:

Uhm-hmm.) And, back then there was a number of protests. I won't say "a few." There was a number of protests by the Mexican government, especially about the (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) treatment of Mexicanos in Texas, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) which is unusual from some of the practices or some of the incidents that we've seen, you know, the difference in approaches. The INS, I remember, the Border Patrol they would, you know, for whatever reasons they would pick up Mexican workers and throw them across the border and then they themselves would bring them back in for the growers. They had a name for it, "drying out wets." In other words, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) "drying out wetbacks." (Patino: Yeah.) That's where the INS themselves were basically agents of the growers. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, there was an effort and, to do away with the slave program, and rightfully so. But, I don't know. I'd have to say in my opinion that it was done away for some good reasons but also under the illusion of some bad conclusions. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And what I mean by that is, labor was very, very much against it because they viewed the Mexican worker as an enemy. (Patino: Right.) In other words . . .

PATINO: A strike breaker?

BACA: Yeah, strike breakers. They're depressing wages. In other words, putting the blame on the worker rather than on the system, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) which was the, you know, the nativist and even racist position of the AFL-CIO, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) that basically was very influential with the labor and, well obviously labor [Laugh], and within the liberal Democratic Party. So anyway, the Bracero Program was done away with. But, in actuality it basically created what we now call the "undocumented," (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) or the so-called "illegal alien" issue.

PATINO: It just made it informal?

BACA: They just made it informal.

PATINO: Yeah.

BACA: You know, the key factors of, that were witnessed under the Bracero Program, the manipulation of the so-called immigration policy (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) by the secondary labor secretary of the U.S. economy, agribusiness, hotels, motels, garment industry, live-in maid situation along the border, etcetera, etcetera. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You know, that's basically what resulted from the Bracero Program. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, there was other changes after 1964 and the so-called Immigration Law. I spoke a little bit about, about *passaporte locale*, (Patino: Right.) where the government made it more difficult for families or individuals to immigrate legally, and families to reunify. In other words, the waiting lines were longer. The criteria was a lot stricter, etcetera, etcetera, but on the other hand they started issuing out *passaporte locales*, or the I-172. I don't know. Maybe they're different numbers now, I don't know, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) That allowed people to come in, supposedly, for business reasons or pleasure and then plug into the secondary labor sector of the U.S. economy. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, of course, all the time keeping those workers in "illegal" status, (Patino: Yeah.) that in turn required a law enforcement or a military type solution, which is, you know, another effort to increase the goon squad and make sure that the people never are treated like the rest of the workers. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, the activist community started in the late '70s to comprehend that this was an issue that was affecting our efforts to franchise our community, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) and that some of the other issues that we were attempting to penetrate and deal with, such as education, such as political representation, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) such as the whole attitude of, you know, our standing and how to deal with any problems in our community, whether the youth or what have you, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) being changed from law enforcement to social, economic, political reasons. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So

PATINO: Up to that point, what was you all's relationship with the Hermandad?

BACA: Well, the Hermandad, like I said . . .

PATINO: I mean, they organized undocumented workers, correct?

BACA: They organized the laborers within their union. (Patino: Uhm-hmm. Uhm-hmm.) Okay? Back then I would say, just like the activist perception of the whole immigration issue was, was that it was something that had nothing to do with us. (Patino: Right.) But, the Hermandad, the original Hermandad, like I said it was an in-house (Patino: Right.) lobby-type organization that fielded candidates and elected candidates, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) that basically ran Local 89. It was a very big union. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, like I stated to you, it was one of the, one of the instrumental players in bringing about the election of Assemblyman Peter Chacon.

PATINO: Oh, I see.

BACA: Like I stated when we had met and Pete wanted to run for political office, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) and his idea was that he was going to run for supervisor. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) In other words, he was apolitical. He just knew, as was the sentiment of the time, that there was a need for political, or there was a lack of political representation. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, there was this individual, Phil Usquiano (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) who stated to him that if he was going to run for supervisor that it was going to require a large amount of money that obviously none of us had, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) especially Mr. Chacon. And, why didn't he run for the 79th Assembly District, (Patino: Right.) which was an assembly seat, being that it was 2:1 democratic registration, that it, there was already a minority who was a republican, a China, a Chinese person, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) and that it was a blue-collar working district. And so they were, they were heavily involved as a union in the electoral politics. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) But there was very, like I said, until the middle '70s there was limited discussion of the, of the immigration

issue. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) It wasn't until the Carter, and then the Klan march, and then, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) that the immigration issue really became national, international, (Patino: Right.) in scope. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, the activists, like I said, segment of the community started to be affected, started to understand, started to politicize itself about the so-called immigration issue. And, of course, our conciencia was rising and the demographics were changing, and there was a lot of reaction, I would say, based on those two reasons from the establishment, the system. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) In 1971, if my mind serves me right, the Dixon/Arnett legislation was introduced here in the state of California, in the assembly. Like I stated to you in the past, our position was always that it was a federal matter. We had no problems at the federal level without state or local police. And, Dixon/Arnett was a piece of legislation that was the forerunner of the Rodino Bill. The employer sanction legislation has always been a cornerstone of the "solution" on all of the immigration proposals. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And so, like I had stated to you we had the Duffy Memorandum, which was Sheriff John Duffy's Memorandum and that taxicab drivers report suspected illegal aliens, you know, to the sheriff's department. After that it was the Hoobler Memorandum, Ray Hoobler being the chief of police for City of San Diego. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, you know, along with what was happening at the border, you know, the rapes case that I've talked about, shooting death of two handcuffed individuals, children dying. In other words, it became more and more exposed. So, the issue pro and con from the activist element and from the system was starting to become a major, a major issue for both, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) for both, you know, the U.S. society and those that were trying to change U.S. society, meaning those in the Chicano movement. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, that was sort of the background. As time went on there was almost complete unanimity that as defined, once again by people like Bert Corona, that this, of opposition to those

type of solutions that were being proposed by the system to continue the manipulation under the guise of it being an immigration problem, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) which was really a labor issue, and for the purpose of exploiting cheap Mexican labor, which is true to, you know, in my opinion to this very, very day. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And so, that was one of the things that did exist before the passage of amnesty. Now, amnesty was a concept that we had been advocating from CASA and from the political organizations that I was involved with since the early '70s. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) But, our definition of amnesty that got picked up by the system, you know, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) before the Chicano Movement I don't remember any amnesty (Patino: Yeah.) proposals. So, but our definition of amnesty was completely different (Patino: Right.) than what you witness now. Our definition of amnesty was based on the worker entering into a semi-formal, semi-legal contract with an employer who had hired him who represented U.S. society. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) That that was the basis of the whole issue. That you had supply and demand, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) that you had forces that had manipulated for their own greedy benefit the exploitation of this cheap labor, and the only way to get rid of that, that illegality was to frame it as a contract between U.S. society and the undocumented worker that had, by forces, historical forces, social, economic, and political forces had been forced into this situation where, you know, out of survival, to enter into this sector of the U.S. economy. So, the basis of the amnesty was, number one, that the worker had entered into a semi-formal, semi-legal contract (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) with U.S. society, that it took two to tango, cause and effect, supply and demand. And so, on that basis and on the basis that the minute that person bought a pack of cigarettes or food or [Laugh] whatever, and he paid taxes, that he became a taxpayer. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And so, on the basis of those two factors, being employed and paying taxes it was our position that, "Hey, you know what, let the person step forth and if he's not excludable under

the immigration policy, start the process to procure his documentation and in that manner," -- you know and by what I mean "excluded," if you understand immigration, if you're a communist you cannot come and, you know, that's an excludable, you know, standing. If you're a prostitute, if you're a felon. Back then it was also if you were gay, homosexual, you couldn't, you were excluded. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, there was a list of excludable definitions. And so, if you weren't under any of those, what's the problem? (Patino: Right.) Let the person apply for standing for his legal documentation based on those two factors. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, that was our definition of amnesty. And the, like I stated it was incorporated into the, into the Carter Immigration Plan, a stick-and-carrot approach. That was the carrot. And, the stick, of course, was that they needed the law enforcement to keep people out, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) which, once again, gets us down to, you know, is it immigration or it labor? Can you put a round peg into a square hole, or vice versa? The answer's no. So, consequently you had manipulation going on to continue something that you know is not going to be resolved. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, everyone was in agreement that the, from the left to the right. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) I don't remember any organization being in favor of the proposal to militarize the border or expanding law enforcement type solutions, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) or the foreign importation worker program, or increasing the Border Patrol, or the employer sanctions that most people saw it as a tool to discriminate. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, because they understood. They understood, at least the activists have always understood that employers were not undocumented workers. Employers had money. They had political power. They had economic power. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, they were the ones that were driving the car. [Laugh] (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) They were the ones that manipulated, making the left turns and the right turns. They were manipulating the immigration policy. (Patino: Right.) So, the employer sanctions were just a ruse, or were

viewed as a ruse, you know, continue the, in other words, "Letting the wolf take care of the hen house," type of situation. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, there was unanimity of opposition. You can look at some of the brochures we put out and you can see from left to the right, from the religious to (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) the non-religious that there was almost complete opposition from the Chicano community to the Carter Immigration Plan because of those type of solutions. That's what we had been educated into (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) by people like Bert Corona. And Bert, like I've stated in past interviews, was very, very vocal, was very, very knowledgeable. He had been through those fights and efforts before, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) and like I stated he had even gotten into it with César and the United Farm Workers position that he had always supported, you know, as a worker, as a labor organizer. (Patino: Right.) His criticism was that it was an incorrect political position that was going to not bring about any resolvment for anyone, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) for them or for the other workers that they were calling "illegals." (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, there was complete opposition, like I stated also in past interviews. The whole Klan March was defined to the media and to our community and to U.S. society as a march against the Carter Immigration Plan. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And so, it wasn't until 1986, with the passage of Simpson/Rodino now – yeah -- the Simpson-Rodino immigration legislation (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) a decade later that the immigration and so-called anti-status-quo immigration issue became divided (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) you know. That was because of the passage of amnesty.

PATINO: Uhm-hmm. It was part of that bill.

BACA: Yeah. You hate to say it, but that was the carrot. That was a highlighted carrot, just like Castillo had been a carrot, you know, thrown out to the traditional, (Patino: Right.) the believers, the established organization that there was a serious effort to change the immigration (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) service and the Border Patrol that had basically been a Gestapo

organization to the Mexican people, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) you know. So was amnesty. It was, in my opinion it was a ruse to, the carrot to bring in the big stick, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) to actually maintain what we had been opposing. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) The manipulation of the immigration policy for the purpose of exploiting cheap Mexican labor. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) It hasn't changed.

PATINO: What was their, how did their concept of amnesty, after appropriated, different from you, from you all's?

BACA: Well, you know, first of all their concept of amnesty was defined in the legal sense, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) that, and this was our main political objection, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Their definition was that these people were being forgiven, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) they were being pardoned for their illegal law breaking efforts, and our position was, "Pardoned for what? For being exploited?" You know, it sounded like me the system should have got the amnesty and the Mexican people should have pardoned them, and, you know, put them through the hoops that resulted from the amnesty. So amnesty became, on the one hand, with the limited options available to people in those type of situations a very persuasive carrot that this was going to normalize and this was going to bring them out of the shadows (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) of the fringes of society and protect their rights. Our political position rooted in what we had always stated was, was that, "Hey, wait a minute, let's stop and look at this thing," we says, "you know. We're talking about, you know, getting pardoned. The government has pardoned, usually pardons people that have committed acts against the state or society. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And the question here is, it's a complete misrepresentation, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) and what the people are doing in concurring with that is saying that the system is correct, that they had nothing to do with the slave issue. (Patino: Uhm-hmm. Uhm-hmm.) So, it's like repatriation in reverse.

(Patino: Right.) You know, "You slaves were wrong for coming here, because we say so, we define it as such, and now you got to get papers," and blah, blah, blah, "and you got to pay so much, and you got to wait, and you got to go to these classes, and" dah, dah, dah, and so on and so forth.

PATINO: "And you'll be thankful for it."

BACA: Yeah. And, "You should be thankful for it." Right. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So that, that's what was amnesty and that's what divided the anti-system immigration movement and to great degrees just gutted it. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You know, first of all because, and I hate to say this but it, you know, this is my personal opinion and it's about a person that was my mentor, it's a person that I respected, you know, deeply, because looking overall, you know, in his historical role, you know, he contributed a lot over four decades, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) close to five decades, possibly. But we, the movement lost its principal spokesperson, which was Bert Corona. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You have the spectacle of the person who had taught so many of us that the INS and the Border Patrol were the Gestapo of the Mexican people now taking money (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) from this organization. It didn't make no political sense.

PATINO: Uhm-hmm. Well, how was he taking money from them, to implement the amnesty?

BACA: To implement the amnesty. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You know, other organizations quickly followed. There was so much money to do the paperwork. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And once again, like they say, you know, the road to hell is paved with good intentions, and rationales came into effect. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You know, everybody saw this as a, or rationalized it as this was an effort to educate and politicize and organize the undocumented workers into this immigration organization that was going to deal with all of the other issues, such as education, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) youth problems, political representation that afflicted not only them but the

rest of the people of Mexican ancestry. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, that was the rationale, that there was classes, you know. (Patino: Yeah.) Unfortunately, the classes were on, you know, how to be good U.S. citizens. Not classes, [Laugh] you know, to go out and organize. It was, I guess, I guess it was supposed to happen by osmosis.

PATINO: What was the error in that line of thinking, in your opinion?

BACA: They became hired hands, employed staff with strict rules, laws, regulations. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, you can see there's, there is no organizations. You know, what you saw this last year, or this year I should say, was a reaction to people being classified criminals. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) But, instead of the organization calling for that it came out from, [Laugh] it was a case of the tail wagging the dog kind of situation. (Patino: Right. Right.) So, so amnesty became the predominate project (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) within that issue that had been a foremost priority type issue that affected (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) our entire being. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) I'm talking about "our" being, meaning all persons of Mexican ancestry that this, that instead of addressing the root causes now people were doing the mechanical (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) you know, really rationalizing it, in my opinion, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) just simple rationalization. "We're going to get these people in here and we're going to organize them, we're going to educate them," blah, blah, blah, and, you know, it was a little bit, I would say, like what César was saying in the '70s. "If we just get rid of these people, then we got a clear shot and, you know, it's going to be milk and honey from here on." You know. (Patino: Uhm-hmm. And . . .) See the amnesty, you know, it didn't take into account, number one, you know, [Laugh] what's the reason? I mean, what's the history? What about the other, as we're now seeing, that amnesty took care of two or three million people. Now they're talking about twelve, twenty-five million people, (Patino: Right.) and there's still a hundred million just in Mexico that probably would

want to come here. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, it doesn't deal with any of those conditions.

(Patino: Right.) It doesn't deal with the whole issue of our disenfranchisement, our total disenfranchisement, you know. People are still making rational, rationalizations that, that it's an immigration issue. I was just talking to a woman yesterday. She has got to leave the country. It's like she said, because that's her punishment. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, they might let her in five, ten, fifteen years from now she said. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So she, that means she has to leave her husband. "Or," she says, "maybe they'll let me pay a fine of \$1,000. And, I would rather prefer to pay the fine of \$1,000." Now, that's her individual situation. (Patino: Right.) But what about the systematical problem? What about the poverty in Mexico? What about the poverty in Central America or South America? What about, what happens afterwards? What about the education of those people who got amnesty? Who's going to deal with that, you know? And like I said, I always go back to the same old equation of, you can't have a solution unless you know what the problem is. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) and, if you're going to say it's not a, you know, that Custer is good for the Indian nation, then I don't think you're going to get too good of a solution, you know. So, somebody's still defining, you know, what happened. And so, amnesty became the primary purpose of the "anti-immigrant, anti-definition" of the system. And it, and, you know, it created what I see now as, which was finally finalized in the Congress, the no-sense, no-brainer [Laugh] legislation that came out and said, "Hey, we're not going to say it's criminal activity. You are a criminal and it's a felony." (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Just categorize with the sweep of a pen a whole race of people, with draconian backup measures, fences, you know, punishments, raids, then, of course, this whole institutionalized attitude from U.S. society that has, you know, manifested itself in this one deal in Hazelton, Pennsylvania. Or, and the white supremacist radio talk shows that, you know, at liberty to, you know, run around like

KKK. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Wherever they feel, wherever they see a Mexican, at Home Depot, you know, on the streets, you know, anybody that even say or states that there might be another side to the issue. So that, in my opinion, was the end result, or the most damaging effects of the Simpson/Rodino immigration legislation, because we saw there was no solution, for anyone.

(Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And . . .

PATINO: Actually . . .

BACA: And there's not going to be no solution. [Laugh] There's not going to be no solution. You cannot put a round peg into a square hole. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Sorry. Or vice versa.

PATINO: So, you think at the root of that is the concept within that bill and then within subsequent bills that these people are breaking laws and . . .

BACA: It's rooted in seeing Mexicanos as a "law enforcement, military" problem. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) That's the way any of their problems have to be dealt with.

PATINO: And many people in the immigrant advocate community, in the social movement in the mid '80s, bought into the amnesty idea?

BACA: Oh, you know, that was the rationale.

PATINO: Uhm-hmm. And you . . .

BACA: Not only out of political ignorance, but I would say also out of self-interest. Hey, [Laugh] there was literally millions of dollars, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) you know. It was very similar to what happened with to the Black Movement and the so-called War on Poverty.

(Patino: Uhm-hmm.) It divided the community right down the middle. The War on Poverty, if you look at a historical analysis, it was aimed at the youth. The youth got jobs and their fathers didn't. So, all of a sudden it divided the community. It brought monies in, so it took the activists attention from the institutional root causes, historical causes to (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) "How can

we get some of that money?" So it, basically when you look at it it killed that effort to franchise their community. And, the amnesty, hey, look at it now. What is the definition out there? The best of the worst. Let's go for one of those two options. You've got Bush advocating, what? A Bracero Program. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) That's what it is. [Laugh] Telling everyone to their face that this is a labor issue. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) "We need laborers, you know, but we need exploitable laborers." [Laugh] And then you have the extreme right wing telling the people that these people, at all costs, must be kept out, even if we have to mine the border, fence the border, even if it we have to make every cop. But, anyone that has any historical understanding of the issue understands that ain't nothing going to change except the rules that are going to tighten the manipulation and exploitation of cheap Mexican labor. And once again we, with our growing numbers, are left with "What do we do, because this is affecting us?" (Patino: Uhm-hmm.)

What happened to the marches? (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) I already saw in this week's paper. They only had, what, a thousand people in D.C.? There's a lot of rationales and there's a lot of good intentions, but you know what, it requires more than that. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Because, it gets down to the root cause of franchisement, or our disenfranchisement. We do not have the, first of all, the definition of what the issue is. And, like I told you before, as long as you respond and plug in to the system's definition that it is "immigration," it will get your butt kicked day and night. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Because, there's nothing, you're on the defense. (Patino: Right.)

On the defensive at best and at worst you're completely incapacitated. You cannot rationalize (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) because in a way you're accepting it that law breaking is okay. That's what, you know, that's what you're accepting. (Patino: Right.) "Hey, they violated the sovereignty. They violated the laws of this country." (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) That's what they say. (Patino: Right. Right.) When, [Laugh] if you had a, if you had a different definition and said, "No. No

we didn't. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You guys manipulated the situation to bring in this labor for the purpose and you have historically done it. You're the law breaker."

PATINO: Uhm-hmm. One of the ideas I got from these recent marches was that, "Okay, we're not criminals." (Baca: Right.) was one of the main things. But two, one of the ideas I thought I picked up was, "We have contributed to society and therefore we are part of it." How can that idea be, you know, mobilized into it?

BACA: Back to the original concept, right? (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You're a worker, you're a taxpayer, why shouldn't you be a full member of society, (Patino: Right.) with all the rights? (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) See? That's not the issue. The issue here is our disenfranchisement and our ability to have a say so. And that, in order for us to have a say so that requires power, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) which gets us back to the issue of our disenfranchisement. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) How do you build power? (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You know, you build power by, you know, educating, politicizing, and organizing, you know, either people with money or people with, or people. And, when you have people saying, "Well, you know, I support President Bush's Bracero Program." "Oh, so you support slavery then?" [Laugh] Or, you have people even in our own community saying, "Hey, I agree with Senator Sensenbrenner. We ought to keep them out, you know. They're a drag on society, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) you know. Just bring nothing but problems." You're in a no-win situation, you know. The activist community, because of that amnesty, you know, hasn't recovered. It hasn't recovered. You know, you hate to say it but, you know, look at what's out there. Do an analysis of what's out there. Okay, you have labor unions that have since "changed their position." Good. Very good. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) That's the A side. The B-side is, they're also looking for what? Members. Because of their declining memberships, you know. So, six of one, half a dozen of the other. You've got the

churches. That's good. But, what's wrong with the churches right now? Because of the sex scandals and what have you they also have declined enrollment. So if people join the church, are they going to continue to struggle to "change" (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) or is that their primary objective? (Patino: Yeah.) Look at the people that have pushed paper before the amnesty, 23 million people. Boy, I'll bet you that sounds like a good chunk of change, you know. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Now, is that what is doing it? I don't know. You'd have to ask them. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) But I do know one thing, that you cannot put a round peg into a square hole and until people start defining what their interest is, you're not going to get a solution, because they're manipulating the situation. I mean, you hear those white supremacists. "Hey, I'm not anti-Mexican. I just don't believe anybody should break the law and why should they be waving Mexican flags?" you know. (Patino: Uhm-hmm. Uhm-hmm.) As long as you've got people saying, "I just want my amnesty." "Well, okay, you get your amnesty. Now what, what's going to happen with the other hundred million? It's okay for them to be poor? (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) It's okay for them to be hungry? It's okay for them to be super exploited?" you know.

END SIDE 1, TAPE 13, SESSION 11.

BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 13, SESSION 11. [Counter reset]

BACA: Involves historical factors. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) It involves social factors. It involves political and economic factors. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, those have to be first discussed and then they have to be addressed, (Patino: Right.) and in order for you to get your say so in you need power, rooted in what you're interest is. There's great confusion. Let's be honest about it. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) There's a great confusion within our own community, you know, "What should be done about this issue?" I mean, you can go out in the community and you can hear some of our own people that sound worse than the Minutemen. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Now . . .

PATINO: What's up with that? [Laugh]

BACA: Well, you know, it's a lot of, I would say that's one of the effects of being disenfranchised. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You start listening, because that's all you can listen to is the radio that's not owned by you. So, you start listening to fools like Roger Hedgecrook, you know, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) the Michael Savages, the Rush Limbaughs of the world. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) I mean, hey, that's your, that's their opinion. That's their interest. That's understandable. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) But, where's the alternative to that, based on what's your interests? (Patino: Uhm-hmm. Uhm-hmm.) I mean, how many times do you hear Mexicanos say, "Ah, yeah, keep the Tijuateros out," and then the next side of their mouth to say, "Oh, why do they treat them that way?" [Laugh] (Patino: Yeah.) You know, I said, "Wait a minute. You just, a minute ago you wanted to hang them now you're crying over him?" [Laugh] See, and that's a manifestation of not understanding, you know, what the issue is from your perspective. Like I told you, hey, you know what man, Minutemen, the Minutemen are like those old southerners you see on TV, you know, "The South shall rise again," those green-toothed, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) you know, Southerners. They have their rebel flag and the Confederate flag, and "The South will rise again." You know what? It's understandable. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) It's very emotional. And, it's rooted in something. But, you know what? The South ain't going to rise again. The Union Army they fought now has got nuclear bombs. Sorry. [Laugh] You know, it ain't going to rise again, you know. That's the Minutemen. But, the Minuteman is, they want what existed in the '50s. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) "Sorry. [Laugh] You're the minority now. I don't care how much you say it. It ain't going to change." The people with brains, even though they manipulate a situation, understand that it ain't the '50s. They ain't the majority. Somebody's got to do the work. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) The issue for us is to understand what is our status

going to be? (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You know, how does this issue affect us? What is the solution?

PATINO: Uhm-hmm. Might a major problem within the community be that Chicanos who are citizens have different interests too than Mexicanos who are undocumented?

BACA: Well, I would say they have individual differences on the one hand, but on the other hand (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) there's parallel. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) It's a little bit like we always used to use the tuna and the porpoise. You know what? They're two completely different kind of fishes. One is eaten and the other one's almost a pet type creature, right? (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) The porpoise. Flipper, man. (Patino: Yeah.) [Laugh] And, nobody wants to see Flipper, you know, rubbed out. But you know what? When that net falls down now you got parallel interests because unfortunately I guess the porpoise hang around with the tuna.

PATINO: Uhm-hmm. Uhm-hmm. The net doesn't discriminate?

BACA: So. Yeah, the net doesn't, you know, the, I mean it falls on both of them. So, it's a little bit like that, where you got Chicanos, you've got Mexicanos, and of course there's differences. Of course there's ramifications. And, it's like I told you before, it's a system. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) When the slave system existed here, did anybody think that the old slaves didn't get teed off when they brought in new (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) slaves that were stronger, that were quicker, that were going to live longer? Of course there was ramifications. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Did anybody think that because of the racism that existed that the whites, poor whites weren't affected? As a matter of fact, the plantation owners used to tell the poor whites, "Hey, the reason you ain't got no jobs is because of those slaves." (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) I mean, it sounds ludicrous now that anybody would believe that the reason you don't have a job is because of a slave. [Laugh] What choice did he have? (Patino: Right.) But, people believed it. (Patino:

Uhm-hmm.) You know, it's like, you know, you can draw the parallels. So, of course, of course there's ramifications. I mean, there's ramifications to go all the way around. But like I said, the only thing it resolves is this issue for people that "actually want a solution." Because, in this society the first question you have to ask yourself is, because it is a racist society, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) because it's been afflicted by racist, a racist history, is people might think that "Hey, you know what? We're going to make sure the slaves got good drinking water, you know, healthy drinking water. Or, make sure that they got, you know, stoves in the slave quarters." That might be their solution. [Laugh] You know, but obviously that, that is, I don't think that was the slave's solution or the people who were thinking about ending slavery, you know. (Patino: Right.) And, it's the same with us. What do we want to see? What's our solution? Well, you know, first of all like I said, you can give, you can give amnesty to 23 million undocumented individuals, but like I said there's probably a good anywhere from 100-600 million from here to Peru, you know, (Patino: Yeah.) that probably will want to come here, and you ain't even talking about the rest of the world. So, obviously you're talking about something that's a little bit bigger than just "immigration policy." Now you're talking about international foreign policy, you know. (Patino: Yeah.) I wonder how much of that we have caused, (Patino: Yeah.) you know. You're talking about, like I said, historical factors. You know, like "Who's the illegal alien, pilgrim?" (Patino: Right.) You know, I mean they have defined it to where just like the discovery of America where, [Laugh] you know, where America was lost and Christopher Columbus discovered it, you know, and he thought he was in India. Who was lost? (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You know, it's like, "What do you mean we're illegal aliens?" you know. It's like I told you at the beginning, I mean, even on my Spanish side (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) my family's been in New Mexico since 1598. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Fifteen ninety-eight, that's what, thirty, forty years

before the pilgrims landed in Plymouth Rock? (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Well, so, and Pete Wilson's got the audacity or sense, no sense and no-brainer, got the sense, got the audacity to say that people like me are illegals? [Laugh] I haven't even talked about the indigenous side. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, that's what I mean about disenfranchisement. That's what I mean about your limited options. What do you, how do you respond to those guys? (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Well, first of all, you know, it's like that old saying about a slave doesn't cease to be a slave when they take the chains off him. He ceases to be a slave when he says, "no" in his mind. It's the same thing. "Hey, you know what? For us, I'll define what my interest is based on my history," you know. You can't – illegal, it's a ridiculous term. It's about as ridiculous as "Columbus discovered America." No, no he didn't. He was lost. He thought he was in India. Idiot. You know? So, that's the whole process and that's what we're going through right now. And, you're starting to see the development of situations that in my opinion are not too positive. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Because, you see two horses at work. You got the ingrained powers, the institutions, resisting this massive demographic change, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) and throughout history power never gives up anything without demands. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You've got to take it. That's where power comes in. (Patino: Right.) And, so you're seeing a reaction to this change in demographics. I mean, they're talking about Mexicanos in North Carolina. [Laugh] (Patino: Right.) You know, I mean, the South.

PATINO: New York?

BACA: Yeah. So, what you're starting to see because of that concept of not giving up your privileges, the privilege, never giving up their privileges, the institutionalizing of a situation to a more negative level. What you're starting to see in Escondido and that Pennsylvania town, Ramona, and Riverside, you're starting to see the introduction of apartheid, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.)

you know. If you make it "illegal" to "rent" to a "illegal alien" that becomes a slippery slope, because now you're, you're invoking the power of the state to carry out, you know, laws that are predicated on race. (Patino: Right.) And, it's a slippery slope. What's next, McDonalds selling a hamburger to an illegal alien? Von's selling food, groceries to illegal aliens. (Patino: Right.) You know, I mean who is the illegal alien there?

PATINO: How do you define them?

BACA: Now it's, [Laugh] yeah how do you define them? Other than going through this dragnet of, you know, allowing your agents that enforce the law with guns (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) to use their own discretion based on what, what Duffy once said, "dress and mannerism," back in the '70s. [Laugh] You know, it's at anybody's discretion. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So – let's take a minute break, okay? [Recording paused]

PATINO: Okay. To wrap up amnesty. Did you confront Bert Corona with your concerns about the way things were taking a turn after amnesty?

BACA: Well, I tell you it was more confronted in the manner that basically we went our separate ways, you know. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Politically we just, there was a consensus I guess within the group and myself that, "Just keep moving. Keep moving and just keep doing what we were doing." (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And so, I think . . . around '86 I might have seen Bert maybe once, two, three times at the most. (Patino: Okay.) You know, until his passing, you know. We went to his burial. But, like I said that's my opinion and that was his opinion and (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) you know, history has got to judge, you know, what was done right and what was done wrong. (Patino: Yeah.) That's the only thing I can say. That, you know, the reason that I share this with you is, and with others that will hear this, is because like I stated to you we are a, first of all, a very young people. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) We're only 500 years old,

you know, compared to the Egyptians. We're still crawling around in wet diapers, historically speaking. As far as being politically involved in any mass level here in the United States as conquered people, we're, probably been involved, you know, speaking for myself and others that I've seen, probably forty years. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, I firmly believe that our people and those that will continue have to see and examine and investigate, you know, what was done right, what was done wrong, in order to keep this effort going that will ultimately, hopefully franchise our people to have the social, economic, and political power that is going to be necessary to resolve those issues that affect us. Or, you know, so immigration like I stated before is like a black hole. It's something that none of us have been able to get away from. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) It's something that even when you don't want to deal with it you've got to deal with it. Even if you don't like dealing with it you've still got to deal with it. I always remember, like I told you in a past interview, was Bert telling me that in 1971, somewhere around there, that immigration was going to be an issue that was going to be with us until the Year 2000. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Well, we're now 2006 and I see no end to it, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) you know. I really see no end to it. If it's been going on for the last, what, 155 years, 156 years. It's going to continue to affect us for, I would say, a few more generations until that power is there to, you know, express our interests, our people's interests (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) and resolve it in a manner where that manipulation and that exploitation of that labor is no longer a historical fact. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So I see, like I said, I still hold the position that there has to be amnesty, but unconditional amnesty. Not the amnesty that the system has taught, that paralegal, semi-legal amnesty, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) but an amnesty rooted on the realities, the historical and the present realities of workers being workers, and working and engaging in a contract with U.S. society, and of paying taxes, and of being able to then meet the requirements like anybody else

that comes into this country. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Because that's, that's the reality. You want to go to Mexico? There's certain criteria you've got to meet. You want to go to Russia? There's certain immigration – (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) now that's immigration. But, what we have seen here historically is a labor issue, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) and that has never been addressed, except rhetorically as we saw with the Bracero programs of the 1940s. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, the immigration issue is something that's going to continue to affect us. Unfortunately, negatively, in my, the way I see it, in my opinion, for generations, unless that franchisement and creation of power is forthcoming sooner than I think that it will come about. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So.

PATINO: You mentioned that there are international ramifications. Do you think solutions are international too?

BACA: Have to be. Have to be. I mean, this is a worldwide phenomenon. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) I mean, Europe has the same problem, between the haves and the have-nots. (Patino: Right.) You know, you look at some of the western societies their populations are dwindling, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) but they still want to, going back to that analogy of privileges. The privileged never give up their privileges voluntarily. [Laugh] You know, they want to continue as if they were back in their heydays. It's not. You have a shrinking population worldwide that, you know, consumes most of the world's resources and you have a majority that is in dire poverty, you know, and those are circumstances that have created a peoples, that have resulted in conflicts and in wars, and that's going to continue until that's equalized in some manner or another, which, you know, yeah. So it's, it's international. What you're seeing here is international in scope. And, for us it's historical. For us it's, of course, social. For us, of course, it's political, and it's economical, you know. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, until we understand those factors we're going to be like the proverbial dog chasing its tail, you know, trying to find

out, you know, what's, what is our interest? What, how do we deal with it? How do we define this?

PATINO: Looking back on the Chicano Movement, how did its legacy, how might its legacy contribute to understanding that?

BACA: Well, you know, the Chicano Movement . . . [recording paused] . . . so-called immigration issue, it, for certain, without a doubt, raised the issue to a level of human rights. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Before the Chicano Movement started advocating the issue there was no such thing as human rights. I mean, people, you know, never discussed the issue in terms of, you know, human rights. So, that was one of the contributions that the Chicano Movement made, Movement made concerning the issue. The other one that I see is, like I stated, the whole concept of amnesty. [Laugh] (Patino: Right.) There, I don't remember people talking about amnesty, you know. And like I said, the definitions of amnesty got sort of muddled there as time went on. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, but most of all I think it, one of the significance of the Chicano Movement dealing with the immigration issue is that it brought it to the forefront nationally and internationally where it was no longer a hidden secret, where the churches had to get involved, where the Pope was making declarations, where the president had to react, where, you know, different thinking had to be taken into consideration. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, the jury's still out on a lot of that. I mean, we're not going away. The issue's not going away. The privileged sector of U.S. society is not going away. So, like I said this is an issue that's going to continue to affect and afflict us for, in my opinion, generations, you know, until we get some power.

PATINO: Uhm-hmm. The concept and term "Chicano" I think is something that really came out of the Movement. I have a quote from you from May 1980. You said, "Chicano to me

means change. It was really more of an effort to learn about being Mexicano. It was learning about our history and language. At the same time we needed to make Mexico aware." Do you still believe (Baca: Oh, that's . . .) that's legitimate?

BACA: Yeah. Chicano was change. Like I said, the Chicano Movement was a questions mark. It was never an answer. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You know. Because I firmly believe that the Chicano Movement was based on the principle of self-determination, that the Chicano Movement always concurred that our life lay within our people. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) That's, those answers had to come from our people. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, there was a, if it was a question mark to everyone else there was also a question mark to me, because yes, you had to find out where you came from. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You got to find out what your history was. You've got to find out what you had contributed as a people. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, the effort still remains with all of the unresolved problems that there are question marks, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) and only power can resolve them. So, I would say we not only had to make Mexico aware but we had to make everyone aware, the world aware (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) that we as a people existed. Don't forget, like I've said time and time again, [Laugh] before the Chicano Movement we were known as the silent, the invisible, the forgotten minority. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, we didn't exist to the policy maker, the politicians, the bureaucrats, the institutions. We didn't exist. You know, we were just something, somebody that was out there. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) But, as a group of people we did not exist. I remember in the '70s going to Washington D.C. and congressmen would ask me, "Where are you from?" I said, "From New Mexico." And, they would say, "Well, what part of Mexico is that?" [Laughter] You know, so I mean if it applied to a state can you imagine what it applied to where the people were at? We were non-existent. So, when you look at the efforts of the Chicano Movement, dealing with the

factors or issues that no, no other generation had dealt with. Such as, like I said, identification. And, by "identification" I mean us labeling ourselves, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) that old Jorge to George, that analogy that had always dictated our being in the society. In other words, you go in as Jorge when you went to kindergarten and that afternoon you came out George, and without the institution never asking anyone, your parents, your padrinos, or even yourself, which was a manifestation of our lack of power and our state of being, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) that people could actually say who you were, what you were, what you were going to be, and you had no say so. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) The Chicano Movement, you know, attempted to end that by saying, "No, we're not Latinos. No, we're not Mexican-American. No, we're not whatever you think we are. This is what we are and this is, you know, what we're going to do." So, it declared to U.S. society and to everyone else that there was a distinct group of people that had distinct conditions afflicting them that they were going to deal with, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) and that they were, the effort was rooted in a historical struggle. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, you saw the Chicano Movement produce what no other movement in this conquered territory had ever produced, was a flag. [Laugh] It was a concept of nationhood, a slant. It was an effort to reclaim our history, our language, our culture. So, consequently that energized many individuals to deal with the whole question of land, (Patino: Uhm-hmm. Uhm-hmm.) you know, like the Reis Lopez Tijerina attempted to do in New Mexico. They raised the whole issue. Never resolved the issue, but it raised the whole issue (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) that had long been thrown to the side or buried. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) It was something not to talk about. That once we, Chicanos, were the property owners and not the field hands like we had been degraded into.

PATINO: It's been written that the idea of Aztlán as a driving force of the Chicano Movement was unclear at times, it was, was it a real nation state that could be actually created as a separate

thing? Was it something just to organize the people and work within the existing system in the United States? Was it a, you know, re, you know, becoming a part of the Mexican state? You know, how would you respond to that?

BACA: Aztlán. Aztlán was a state of mind. What Aztlán did was it stated to yourself that you weren't what they said you were, which was a foreigner, a stranger, a "illegal alien" from somewhere else. It stated, with historical pride, that whether there was or there wasn't, whether it was a myth or a reality, that there were people that you came from here way, way, way before, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) before the people who got lost thinking they were in India came. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Aztlán served as a link between two things that were lost. We were also lost. Remember? Some of us actually believe that George Washington was the father of our country, [Laugh] (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) you know. So, we were really lost. Was Aztlán a myth, a reality? Like I stated, it gave you a home, psychologically. It gave you a reason to respond to all those psychological attacks of, you know, of your supposedly inferiority by pointing out that, "We were here first." (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) "If it's so bad, what are you doing here?" Aztlán complimented that effort to seek our history, our culture, and our language, our contributions. So, Aztlán, now, the way it's used by the opposition, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) the reconquista, like I stated in a speech in Riverside right before the, all the big marches, I said, "We have to talk about Aztlán. And I'll tell you that Aztlán, I'll tell you what I've told everyone else, Aztlán, a thousand times about Aztlán, as to what the opposition is talking about politically that is not for me to say. Because, that decision is going to be made by future generations, most likely based on the way they have been treated. So, I understand that right now at this historical juncture that we can't even control blocks within our own cities, let alone the nation of Aztlán. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) But, Aztlán, like I just stated to you, serves other purposes. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) For a

conquered people, for a people made disenfranchised." And like I said, I can't predict the future. I don't know what future generations are going to do, but I do know history and I do know that if the Jewish people could go back to Israel 2000 years later, if the Spanish, I mean if the Moors got kicked out of Spain after 600 years, then what's 150-some years in history? (Patino: Right.) What's going to happen? I don't know what's going to happen. So, that's going to be determined by future generations, and I'm certain on how their people of past generations and they are treated. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So.

PATINO: It seems like one of the most, well one of the biggest contributions the Chicano Movement made and maybe the basis of the social movement is that, is a self-determined historical understanding of, you know, how a community is positioned in society. How is something like that passed out to the next generation, or how was your experience getting it, that information to the community? How did you do that?

BACA: Well, it was passed on to us (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) because of the historical struggle. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, once you get involved in a struggle you understand that it wasn't just there when you got there. It was there before you. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, it comes from an understanding that this is a historical principle that others have fought, and just like you expect, your father expected you to carry on and you expect your children and your children will expect their children to carry on, that (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) it's the same principle, that self-determination is just one of the tools necessary to deal with your state of being, wherever you're at, rooted on, you know, what's been handed to you. So, that's how it was handed, how do, you know, I'm sure it will be handed not by us saying it, but by what we did, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) which is rooted in this documentation here, you know, and that's why I go back to this concept

of, you know, people that read this in the future looking at the documentation and seeing what was done right and what was done wrong, you know.

PATINO: That's a good segue into what were the faults, falters of the Movement?

BACA: Many. Many. I think, don't forget we were just thrown into the stream, so to speak. We were just thrown into the water. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) I know, speaking for myself, I never had any training. I didn't have no prior experiences, you know, dealing with what is now in this documentation. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, I'm certain I speak for a lot of other people that got involved back in the late '60s and the early '70s, you know. We were either reacting or acting to conditions that were exposing us to our reality. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Like I stated in past interviews, most of us were observing the Black Civil Rights Movement. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) We were observing the Youth Movement calling for change. We were observing the Anti-War Movement. We were observing the Native American struggles. We were observing the women struggling. So, we acted or reacted to that, being part and partial of this world. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, the – what was your question now?

PATINO: What were the faults of the Movement?

BACA: So, based on that I would have to say one of our faults was our inexperience. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Our inexperience. We had to "train the army and fight the war at the same time," meaning (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) train ourselves. You know, I . . . [Recording paused] . . . had any formal schooling, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) you know. A lot of the other people that became involved also didn't have "formal" schooling, which might be a blessing in disguise when you look at it, you know. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) We only had our life experiences (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) you know. So, the faults were many. When I look back, I don't know if being young is a fault but, you know, the Movement was youth-orientated. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) It appealed to a

specific generation, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) which could be a fault. [Recording paused] . . . is a phase in your life, you know, and then you start changing and you become old. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, obviously when you're old you don't do things you did when you were young, and vice versa. (Patino: Yeah.) So, that could be viewed as a fault, that, because it was youth-orientated. I remember, I always remember Bert Corona telling me that one of the great faults was that the Movement wasn't based on what existed in our community, which was workers. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, you know, that's, those guys are there 24/7, 365 days out of the year, (Patino: Uhm-hmm. Uhm-hmm.) you know. I mean, their situations might change but they don't change. They have to go to work, you know. They have to deal with the issues of pay, working conditions, you know, whatever a working person has to do to feed their families, pay the rent, blah, blah, blah. So, that could have been a fault. The people grew up and became those other people we're talking about. Obviously, when you look at faults there was, you had, for every action you got reactions. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) One of the biggest faults, ironically, is in asking for change [Laugh] we changed the equation, you know. We asked for students, so we got students. But, the students might have seen things differently. So, our own success was a fault. We wanted "Chicanos" in positions. We got them. Unfortunately, most of those Chicanos that went through those doors that were broken down were forced open. The last thing on their mind was being Chicanos. So, you've got, you've got to see that as one of the faults, that there was no accountable or account mechanism. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) We wanted politicians. We got them. Now unfortunately, not the kind of politicians we thought we were going to get. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) They're politicians that turned out to be non-political, non-accountable. So, I would have to say that our own success probably was a fault. Of course, there was imposed faults from the outside. People were subjected to the power of the system. Like I said, for every

action is a reaction. There's infiltrations. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) There was people who were set up, you know. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) People lost their jobs. People went to jail, lost their liberties. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) People even lost their lives, you know. So, those were faults that were imposed, you know. There was internal faults, you know, divorces, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) you know, loss of friends, you know. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) When you call for change there's always resistance to change. Like that old saying that, "Those who advocate as well as those who resist change," are affected, you know. Change is hard for those who advocate, who advocate and as well as those who resist change. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, you can't have one without the other. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And, change is one of the actions that – and it's sort of ironic because in the universe the only definitive law that there is is change, [Laugh] which is an oxymoron. (Patino: Yeah.) An oxymoron in the sense that how can it be changing if it's definitive? (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, so there was a lot of internal dynamics that were faults, you know. Individuals changed.

PATINO: Uhm-hmm. I know too there was Chicanas critiqued the Movement and that internally there was a gender hierarchy?

BACA: I'm sure. I'm sure there was a lot of faults to go all the way around. (Patino: Uhm-hmm. Uhm-hmm.) You know, and if people want to pick up the ball and run with it, you know, there it is, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) you know. If people think there's a better way, like I said change is difficult for those who advocate it. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You got options. I told you about some of the options where sometimes you might want to go a hundred miles an hour on certain issues and, but you understand that the community can only go five miles an hour. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, you got to decide whether it's an "I" issue or a "we" issue, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) as an organizer, as where you're at at that place in time in history. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.)

See, that's why the Chicano Movement was such an oxymoron type, because like I said it took on institutions without any regards to, initially to the implications. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) It was a little bit like yelling "fire" in a crowded theater, you know, just to wake people up, you know. "Hey, where's it at? Where's it at? What's going on?" you know. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And so, you see this whole process of change that the Movement brought about and you can still see its effects, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) because nobody has created anything else, in my opinion. (Patino: Uhm-hmm. Uhm-hmm.) Hispanic Movement is living off the Chicano Movement. They still utilize all of the rhetoric of our community, the people, and without any force behind it, and without them contributing anything.

PATINO: It seems like underlying a lot of the weaknesses of the Movement is this concept of individualism, which I think is, I mean it's a major tenet of capitalism. It's a major tenet of this culture and U.S. society. How do you battle that?

BACA: You know, I wouldn't, I wouldn't apply that to the Movement, because (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) the Movement always saw its efforts as a "we" effort, you know. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) It was, I think the conversion is is when you went into the "I" mode, which became the Hispanic Movement. (Patino: Right.) You know, don't forget the Chicano Movement was, a lot of newspapers you see here they just came out of, out of peoples own volition, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) out of their own efforts, out of their own finances, you know. It wasn't, "I'm doing this for me. I'm doing it because there's a need." (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) The marches, the demonstrations, you know, kind of romanticized nowadays, but back then there was an element of danger. (Patino: Right.) You know, it wasn't like you were being greeted by, you know, Johnny-Come-Home marching bands, you know. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) People, there was a lot of disagreement. Like I said, when you start taking on institutions that are viewed as untouchable or holy, such as the

Catholic Church, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) you know, some people are going to react differently.

(Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Democratic Party, you know, people have been conditioned for generations to believe that it was, you know, that it was a benefactor, that it was something that had prevented you from starving. I mean, you're going to get resistance. You're going to get a reaction. The military, like I stated to you, that had been viewed as one of the few institutions that U.S. society had ever given a break to Mexicanos. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You were going to get a, and you did get a strong reaction. So, you know, I don't see, I don't see the Movement in that term of individuality. I saw it bound by, even though loose political principles, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) unified by those loose political principles, even though people say, "No, we got to, let's go this way instead of this way." (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) But, people weren't doing it for their own vested interests. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) They were doing it for what they viewed as the common good.

PATINO: Uhm-hmm. I guess, that's what I'm getting at is, how do you recreate that to where people will self-sacrifice in a time where (Baca: Need.) you can go to Wal-Mart and buy, you know, what you need?

BACA: See, you can't. You can't. There's got to be an understanding that there's a need (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) and somebody's got to meet that need, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) for whatever reasons. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You know, it's not something you can just say – see, and when you look at it that "we," that "me-me" generation, that came in with the Hispanic Movement. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You know, I mean they couldn't do and they still can't do anything unless they have a fifty-foot rubber Budweiser image of a can of beer, or a cigarette, pack of cigarettes, or what have you, you know. They, but all the rhetoric is there about the community, and about, you know, "We're making progress," and blah, blah, blah, and this and that. (Patino: Uhm-

hmm.) So, I mean when was the last time you heard the word self-determination, you know? Very rarely do you ever hear that word. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So. There was many faults but there was, I think the one thing the Chicano Movement did was it gave identification to a group of people that had never had to the society that surrounded it, you know. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) That was one of the major accomplishments, aside from, you know, politically being, being without a doubt the most political movement (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) that our people or our conquered people have seen in the last 150-some years, you know. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) And like I said the people, those concepts have not gone away, the concepts from future generation. The issue of Aztlán is not dead. Aztlán is not dead, you know. Because, we don't know what's going to happen. Nationalism is not, as a concept, is not dead, you know. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Our culture is not dead. Our language is not dead, you know. Learning about them, you know, and utilizing them for, as tools, you know, to be a complete human being. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) So, those are all things that, the successes as people. But, the biggest success is, of the Chicano Movement, is that it knocked doors down. You wouldn't be here if that door wouldn't have been opened. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) These faculty members wouldn't be here if those doors wouldn't have been opened, or knocked down, you know. Those politicians wouldn't be there if it wasn't for the concept of the La Raza Unida Party or MAPA, (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) you know. Power never concedes anything without demand. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) It never has and it never will, never did. So, that's one thing nobody can deny. The Chicano Movement knocked those doors down, you know, and gave us presence in society because we demanded it, that we were no longer going to allow people to define us or treat us like the invisible, forgotten, or silent minority, you know. And, people are going to have to determine how to utilize those concepts.

Because like I said, you're starting to see some very, very negative historical developments in U.S. society against our people, you know.

PATINO: Uhm-hmm. Let's kind of wrap up. I just wanted to ask you, how does a kid from Los Lentes, New Mexico come to San Diego and become a leader of the Chicano Movement? Where did you get your information from? How did you, you know, develop the concepts to lead in that way?

BACA: That's a question that I probably can't answer. It's just something that happened.

(Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Just something that happened. I mean, I fell into it, or maybe it was destiny. I have no answer for it. I have always contemplated it myself, you know, because it's taken up over, way over half of my life. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You know, I'm sixty-three and I've been involved thirty-eight out of those sixty-three years. And, that's really a question that I can't answer, you know, as far as the specifics or the mechanical reasons, you know, that one day I woke up and said, "I'm going to join this or that." No, it just happened. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) It just happened. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) You know, and why I kept it up, I don't know, you know. I've always thought about my reasons for doing it. My reason was it was a question of right or wrong. (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Like I told you at the beginning, most people that got involved in the Chicano Movement saw that things were not right, because of the wrongs that were being done to us, especially systematically. And my reasons, looking back, was I just didn't like it. [Laugh] I don't think anybody likes being kicked around or used, abused, and, you know, cast aside. But, my other reason was that if there was anything I could do to prevent it from happening to my children (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) or other children that I was going to make that effort and especially, you know, posterity. That I was going to do everything in my effort to try to prevent that, you know, from what I had experienced, and from what I had read other

generations had experienced. If I could do something about it I was going to try to do it. And, like I said, some things were done right, some things were done wrong, and the only thing I can say is that I personally was sincere in trying to deal with this immense problem or issue, historical issue to the best of my limited abilities, you know. Like I've always stated, the thing that's missing is power and that obviously is going to have to be built or created by future generations. You know, I don't, we don't have power. We have the illusion of power. We have the illusion of inclusion, but we're really not included. [Laugh] (Patino: Uhm-hmm.) Not, it's not a level playing field in this point in our history, as you can see by all the negative issues that affect and afflict our daily lives, you know. So, that's something that's going to have to be left for posterity, you know. For . . .

END SIDE 2, TAPE 13, SESSION 11.

END INTERVIEW.