

## Oral History Interview: Herman Baca

*The following oral history is an interview with Herman Baca conducted by Erin Mysogland on June 25<sup>th</sup> 2018. This interview was conducted as part of Erin Mysogland's Master's thesis research into Baca's activism, particularly as it related to the policing of Chicanos and migrants. The interview also touches upon Baca's thoughts on present-day societal and political issues.*

**Interviewee:** Baca, Herman

**Interviewer:** Mysogland, Erin (Researcher, Columbia University History Department)

**Date:** June 25, 2018

**Location:** National City, California

**Run time:** 3:07:31

Baca: Today is June 25, 2018.

Mysogland: I'm Erin Mysogland.

Baca: And Herman Baca, president Committee on Chicano Rights, at 14 South Harbison Avenue, National City California. Welcome, to National City.

Mysogland: Thank you.

Baca: Little bit about you.

Mysogland: So, I am a Master's student at Columbia University. I am doing a Master's in International History. So, I am in the summer in between my two years. For my dissertation, I have ended up studying San Diego. I am looking mostly at deportations, and kind of related policing, whether from local police or the Border Patrol and INS, and mostly focusing on how people like yourself responded to police violence and Border Patrol violence in the late 70s and early 80s. So, I have spent a lot of time looking through your collection at UCSD. There is a ton of stuff there, it is really, really amazing and great to have. I have also looked through the Roberto Martinez and the AFSC papers up there. I am trying to look at a time period during which you were both active and see if I can pull out any common threads to understand how activists and community members were kind of talking about and kind of responding to border related violence. I started more wanting to do a general study of migration in the period right before IRCA and then ended up wanting to focus on the San Diego community because I think there is a lot of cool stuff being written, like Jimmy Patiño's book and stuff, but I do think there's a ton more to say. So, that's how I ended up on the topic.

Baca: Without a doubt.

Mysogland: Yeah...

**00:02:01:** Baca: I'm Herman Baca, I'm originally from New Mexico. My family has been here since 1600, it's sort of ironic when people talk about who came and whose coming and who

came before but I have been here in National City since 1952, 53, somewhere around there. I've lived here in National City since 1955, or 56, been on this block here probably sixty years now. I'm seventy-five years of age. I've been involved in Chicano rights since 1968 so fifty years.

Mysogland: Long time.

Baca: Long time. A little bit longer than you've been here.

Mysogland: *[laughs]* A little bit, yeah.

Baca: There's an old saying, the more things change, the more they stay the same. As a matter of fact, I would say things are worse but I think if we are going to talk about the so-called immigration issue, we have to have a context, a historical context. Because it's a historical issue, it's a political issue, it's a social issue, it's an economic issue. And it's an international issue. It just not only affects what you are seeing here in San Diego, the Vietnam of the Southwest, the reason I say the Vietnam of the Southwest is because fifty million people cross that border every year. Both quote legally and under other circumstances. And I think if we're going to talk about the immigration issue, like I said, historically, the issue is rooted in the US-Mexico war that came out of a military venture of Manifest Destiny, that took half of the country of Mexico away from persons of Mexican ancestry. You're talking to one of the persons that remained here after the war. So, in essence, were dealing with a situation that came out of a war and like I always tell students, reporters, 'acamedicians,' whomever, we are conquered people. Outside of the Native Americans, we are the only ethnic group in the United States that is covered by international treaty. If you look at the immigration issue, that's what the white system, political system, labels it and that's why I call it the so-called immigration issue. Maybe there is an immigration problem, but it's not what we're talking about as Chicano activists, or as a community or as a people, historically. What we are talking about are rights, human rights, and our status in this country, our second-class citizenship, status, in the United States. The issue is not immigration. The issue for a hundred-seventy-years has been labor. Now, like I said, there is a mechanical breakdown, issue, problem, with the immigration of people, but what you are talking about here is not immigration, it's labor. It's people who have been enticed to come here and do labor due to them being in a status where they have no rights, and where the labor is highly profitable. The only parallel that I see in American history is to what we have witnessed for a hundred and seventy years in the US Southwest is the slave system. It wasn't slavery, it was just a nice word for cheap labor, free labor. This country is an addicted country, no one can deny that its addicted to drugs, no one can deny that is addicted to pornography, and no one can deny that it has been addicted to free and cheap labor since 1619 when they first brought in the nineteen Afro-American slaves to Jamestown. And, that has been the history of the US economy and labor system in the US. The Chinese were brought in to build the railroads. The Filipinos. The Indians from India. And, of course, the Mexicans that have been in this system since 1848. So, when you look at the height of addiction regarding free and cheap labor. The system has even gone to lengths of exploiting their own, the Irish, the Okies. And, so, we're talking about labor and I think when you put it in the context of it being a quote, law enforcement, military issue, problem, it has always been the case. People that I speak to about today say I've never seen things as bad as in 2018, or since 2016. I says, you know, Chris Rock, the comedian, has a skit that he does where he's talking to the crowd, 'I was watching some films of Dr. Martin

Luther King, they were beating him up, teargassing him, putting dogs on him, hosing him down with fire hoses, I never knew that about that.’ He says, ‘but then I started thinking,’ he says, and he says, ‘I bet you there’s people up in heaven looking down from the 1920s, the 1930s, and the 1940s and they’re probably saying, man, they’ve got it easy.’ If you look at the history of this labor issue, World War One, first Bracero Program. Then, the so-called repatriations, which were really a nice word for ethnic cleansing. And don’t forget, there weren’t that many of us. A million. Million and a half in the 1930s. And then you move into the Bracero Program, because of World War Two. We’re friends, the Good Neighbor Policy, come on in. They needed someone to pick the food, the crops. And then, of course, after the war was a repetition of what happened after World War One with the so-called repatriations then became Operation Wetback. It’s estimated that two million persons were deported and forty-percent of them were US citizens.

Mysogland: Right.

Baca: This whole military, law-enforcement, just another equation for saying legalized violence. The more law enforcement, the more violence, the only thing it does is it ensures that whatever the politicians and the economic interests tell the US population, its bigger. It just gets, quote, worse, but the end result is that, you know, the system keeps perpetrating itself. Nothing that I’ve seen surprises me. When you think about that skit of Chris Rock, you know, something to think about is that the 1930s, there was no Committee on Chicano Rights, there was no MALDEF, there was no ACLU – you were on your own. And that hatred, that racism, that bigotry, that was left over from the US-Mexico war, you know, hey, free license, it’s a license to do whatever you thought was the quote solution to this issue, this issue and this problem, that people kind of new. But all it did was create a revolving door. It never solved it, it never resolved anything. I always state that since 1924 when the US Border Patrol was organized, it was organized at a national level and it was patterned after the Texas Rangers. There is an old Texas Rangers saying that I’ve got Mexican blood, on my boots. The Texas Rangers was basically a private army of the growers and the economic interests in the Southwest, the Arizona Texas Rangers patterned after that. That job went to the only police force that this country has – the US Border Patrol. And their job was exactly like the Texas Rangers, to ensure that persons of Mexican ancestry, and it didn’t matter if you were undocumented, documented, or a US citizen, that those persons never had the same rights, the same working conditions, the same wages as the majority of the population. Like I said, it’s a system. It’s like, yes, we put troops in Mississippi and the problem has been taken care of, but the slave system is still there. That’s the problem. So, from a Chicano perspective, our position has always been that those mechanisms, the US Border Patrol, the INS, they have to be abolished [yeah]. People are now talking about ICE. [*Laughs.*] We’ve been living it since 1924.

Mysogland: Right, I know.

**00:15:58:** Baca: And, everything is suspect. I don’t care if it’s conservative, I don’t care if it’s liberal, I don’t care if it’s Democrat, I don’t care if it’s Republican, its suspect. Why is it suspect? Because everybody is involved within that system. People say, well my grand-pappy never owned no slaves. Yeah, but he sure benefited from it. [Right.] It’s the same here. Folks and hypocritical solutions have caused billions and billions of dollars but they’ve been able to

sell it because everybody makes money off of it...To the people because of their white supremacy ideology and their inherent racism. No when we start talking about history, here's something that's rarely ever told. Malcom X used to say that everyone covered all various aspects of slavery except where they broke the slaves. He says, you know...I lost my train of thought I was looking at the birds over there...

**00:17:48:** Baca: When you start talking about the solutions and you start talking about the historical, this is what I was going to say, the first illegal aliens were European settlers, conquerors, colonists, I don't care how many coats of paint they put over the rust, there is still rust underneath it. That applies even to our history. Historians estimate that when Cortez landed in Mexico, America, that there was between forty to sixty million indigenous persons. After the conquest, due to the wars, due to the slavery, due to the disease, basically the disease, small pox, that population was reduced to three to four million. Now, at that time, if you study ancient history, the Aztecs migrated from, not the US Southwest, but Northern Mexico, which is Utah, New Mexico and they went into the valley of Mexico and so the population was already burgeoning and expanding and there was northward movement back to the original lands that was disrupted by the conquest. So really, it wasn't until 1940, from 1520 to 1940, that Mexico attained its pre-conquest population. So, the analogy of this is the Rio Grande. Sometimes it's slow, sometimes it overflows, and nobody has been able to harness it or stop it. So, what you are seeing is just historical. And is not going to be stopped. It's not going to be stopped. People say that, like I said, the more things change, the more they stay the same. Well, yes and no. Einstein once stated that the only thing definitive in the universe is change. Which is an oxymoron, how can it be definitive if it's change. But like I always say, who am I to argue against Einstein. So, it's the same, it's the same what you're seeing here. People talk, it is what it is. No, it's not what it is. One thing common in history is change. The Jews went back to Israel after two thousand years. The Moors got kicked out of Spain after six hundred years, eight hundred years, whatever number you want to pick. And this is only a hundred and seventy years.

Mysogland: Right, a long ways to go.

**00:21:54:** Baca: So that's not even nothing compared to eight hundred years or two thousand years. So, when you start looking at the issue, one has to wonder, and I'll tell you a story that you already saw, I always tell it. It's been published everywhere. About this Chicano activist and labor organizer, Civil Rights fighter, Bert Corona, who was around since 1935 until 2000 and I think two, I think. Who, you know, was my mentor. And who, I started with him, he was one of the organizers of the Mexican American Political Association along with Edward Roybal and this other guy from Mexico, Hank Quevedo, Enrique Quevedo ... Anyway, in 1972 Bert Corona came to my little business of Aztec Printing and we were working, at that time, and there were no computers, and everything had to be done by hand, and we were laying out the first La Raza Unida newsletter, which was a political effort to establish a political party for persons of Mexican ancestry in the United States. And so, they come in around seven pm and that was Bert's mo. He'd be here, he'd be there, he'd just show up somewhere. So, after the pleasantries were over with, how's so and so, and how's the family, blah, blah, blah, Bert asked me, we have a little social service, in the office, CASA Justicia, House of Justice. So, we go in there, and it was just Bert and myself, everybody was next door. I said 'what's going on Bert.' He says 'Herman, we've got to get on this immigration issue.' And I looked at him, just astonished and in

my mind, I said, 'what's Bert smoking, peyote?' That's how abstract immigration was to the community and even to activists who were involved politically. But, like I said, it was in my mind, I didn't say nothing. Bert had been involved, probably, thirty-five years to my three, four years, and he was my mentor. And, he was my elder. So, I listened to him. And I said, 'Bert, we're working on La Raza Unida newsletter for San Diego County and you're the national organizer, what about that?' He said, 'nope, we've got to get on this immigration issue because it's going to be an issue that will be with us, with our people, until the year 2000.' So, like I said, I listened, and it was very prophetic, because it went from the little anthill to a Mount Everest of an issue just like you see today. The pope was talking about immigration. Jimmy Carter was talking about immigration, the Congress, the Supreme Court, the right-wing, the left-wing, the Democrats, the Republicans, and our own community started waking to what Bert Corona had said. And it did. It was just part of the chain of our history, the weakest part of the chain, I might add, and whatever they got, we were going to get sooner or later. So, when you look at the context, because even amongst our own community there was a lot of confusion, there was a lot of disagreement, and like I always say, you don't know what you don't know. That's the biggest problem today with people that you see talking about the quote immigration issue. And the context that it has been defined under is not immigration. You cannot put a square peg in a round hole or vice-versa. You cannot fix this issue of labor with immigration solutions. Or vice-versa. But, one of the biggest arguments is, we've got a broken immigration system. Not it's not, it's worked for a hundred seventy years and it's been very profitable, I might add. So today when you look at the issue, now you have to ask yourself, the very first words out of Nazi Trump's mouth was not terrorism, was not economics, it was immigrants. And he specifically said what the word really means, there's no immigration issue. It's a code word for Mexican. Everybody understands it. They just think they're being polite, but everybody knows who it is being applied to. So, once again, you have to stop and analyze and think why did Trump say that because, I'll tell you. In 1968 when I started, when I got involved politically. Remember, we are products of our time. None of us were born organizers, or born politicians, or college graduates, or what have you. We were just looking at what was going on, the Afro-American Civil Rights Movement – what's going on over there? What are they talking about? We didn't know. The youth. The anti-war movement. The youth movement. The women's movement. Native Americans. What's going on? You know. And, little by little, you couldn't escape it. You had to look inwards. I remember we used to go, at the beginning, to picket, and help the Afro-American community until we started looking around and said, heck our issues are bigger, because there's more of us here. And we had never really looked inwards, so, getting back to Trump. I want to give you the reason why Trump said that – demographics. Demographics. In 1950, Chicanos, Mexicanos, and Latinos all combined comprised, were one percent out of a hundred and fifty of the US population. By 2050, according to the US census, we're going to be one out of three. Whites in 1950 comprised eighty-nine percent of the US population. Once again, according to the US census, not Herman Baca, by 2050 they are going to be forty-eight percent and old. Their medium age is going to be fifty-five, compared to our twenty-five to twenty-seven. So, back to Donald Trump. Why is immigration the most pressing issue outside of terrorism and the economy to the great great, great, grand children of immigrants? I could understand if Native Americans were saying that, but the great, great, great grand children of immigrants? Once again, code words. Politics is not only a game of power but is a game of interest. What is the interest of fifty three percent of white women for this jackass that is belittling them like it was 1600? What is the interest of white so-called fundamental

Christians who supported, eighty-three percent? Educated on and on and on. People that you would assume have some understanding of, you know, what the foundation supposedly of this country is, what they were taught. So, you know, what is always, like I said, you can put as many coats over rust as you want, the rust is still there. The so-called base is white supremacy, white privilege. There is that old saying in politics that cotton farmers, they don't get together because they love each other, they get together because they grow cotton, that's their interest, and they have natural enemies. The cities that want their waters they use to irrigate, the developers for the cities they want their lands to build, the environmentalists, they want [laughs] to impose regulations on unions and what have you, so that's why they get together, common interests. And this is the common interest that you are seeing under the guise of immigration. So, but, you see, I haven't hear anybody propose they shut the border. You know what, they aren't going to shut the border. You know why they aren't going to shut the border?

Mysogland: Because they need people to come in, they need laborers.

Baca: I'll tell you the real reason, I says. Because you and I and everybody else would starve to death.

Mysogland: Yeah.

**00:35:07:** Baca: Like I always tell people, you think Afro-Americans are going to go to El Centro in the 120 degrees and pick melons and lettuce? San Jose? I don't think so. You think Chicanos are going to go there? Been there done that! You think white kids are going to go there? They probably want a Starbucks on every road. That tomato costs 50 bucks man. So, I was having this argument with this individual [laughs]. We were discussing the Arizona law SB1070, I think it was right? So many, you lose track after a while.

Mysogland: Right.

Baca: And I was telling them, I says, he's calling me a reconquista and I'm calling him a racist, and then finally, I says, 'what are we arguing. He says, 'what do you mean?' I says, 'what I mean is your great grandkids are going to marry Mexicans.' He says, 'what?' I said .... you ain't going to be here. Who else are they going to marry? Martians?' And I says, 'you know what, they going to be eating frijoles, beans, and tacos, and tostadas and menudo and your granddaughters are going to be having quinceñeras. He says, 'f-you Herman, f-you.' I said, 'what are you getting mad at me for? Is it true or not?' I says, 'I understand what you are saying politically,' I says, 'what you and that shrinking group of people like you are saying is you want to go back to the fifties, the good old days. When the blacks, if you were walking on the sidewalk, got off the sidewalk. When all those Mexicans like me were si señor, yes señor, whatever you want.' I said, 'all the women were in the kitchen, all the gays were in in the closet, all the Indians were in the reservation.' I said, 'Let me tell you, no one is going to back to the fifties, you are going to be the minority now.' I says, 'I said look, if you really believe what Sean Hannity and Bill O'Reilly and all those stupid, diarrhea in the mouth disk jockeys tell you, why are don't you close the border man? You could probably do it in fifteen minutes, militarily.' I said, 'you ain't going to do it.' I says, '2 reasons.' He said, 'what are they?' I said, 'well, number one we would probably all starve,' just like I told you. And number two I

said, ‘I think all those congressmen and all those senators and everybody who voted to do that would probably get assassinated.’ I said, ‘oh no no, not by Mexicans. Probably by their wives.’ I says, ‘Billy Bob who gonna cut the lawn? You ain’t never done it. Who going to cook for you? How am I going take care of junior while you and I are out there making ninety, hundred thousand dollars a year? Who going to take care of grandma and grandpa – eh?’ I says, ‘if they didn’t do it. Probably the growers, agribusiness would do it. You want me to give you a contribution – look at that I’m bankrupt.’ I says, ‘the hotels, the motels, the restaurants, the garment industry.’ See, this is something that’s never talked about or ever acknowledged. You know. And as demographics continue to decrease and people get older, well who gonna put money into the social security system? See it’s like, demographics. Demographics is destiny.

Mysogland: Yeah.

**00:39:55:** Baca: I’m sorry, I didn’t make the rules. It’s like look what happened to the Native Americans when the Europeans came here, they were just wiped out. So, when you look at the bogus, and they are bogus, solutions that have been proposed, the so-called comprehensive immigration plans. [Yeah.] What does that mean? I have never been able to get an answer from anyone. Wait a minute, the dumb dumbs in our community – amnesty, of course! The right-wingers. Secure the border! More Border Patrolmen. More power for the local police. And then, you know, on and on about well, you know, we got to get to the root of the problem. Employer sanctions. Never been enforced. Nobody ever asked why. [Right.] Because employers aren’t illegal aliens, they’ve got money and they’ve got power. [Right.] And guess who works for them, the guys who are writing the rules, the laws...Are you sure you don’t want any water?

Mysogland: I’m good, thank you.

**00:41:31:** Baca: And, so look, number one, amnesty. Ok? I first heard the word amnesty, never had ever heard the word amnesty, didn’t know what it meant, from, in the immigration context, the immigrant context, as a saying – from Bert Corona. Bert Corona’s solution was if you have a job and you are working, and obviously you gotta eat, you gotta buy things, and so you’re paying taxes then that should be the condition for being able to step forth, presently its quote, family unification.

Mysogland: Right.

Baca: See, but, look, we had that little CASA Justicia I was telling you about, [yeah] where Bert told me that. We used to do documentation and deal with everything that came with it. Which was everyday problems. My husband hit me, my kid got throw out of jail, my son is in county jail, food stamps, health, and so it wasn’t just immigration. But, anyway, people used to come, seeking help, and I always say, secure the border? And you prove them wrong if you want to. Since 1924 the US Border Patrol has not stopped one Mexican from crossing that border. [Right.] They might have detained him, they might have arrested him, they might have thrown him across twenty times. [Right.] But I met that guy on his twenty-first try in National City, which is twelve, thirteen miles from the border. I never heard one of them ever say, ‘hey Baca, we’re going to get my immigration papers.’ The first question was ‘where can I find a job? You

know anybody that is hiring.’ That’s not immigration. Now, later on, you know, obviously they want to bring their loved ones and obviously they don’t want to be undercover and what have you. See, so, but amnesty, I says, you know, here’s what amnesty states, that it establishes a responsible...ok this is the proposals that they proposed...it establishes a responsible pathway to *earned* citizenship, ok. That includes passing a background check, paying taxes, and a meaningful penalty, learning English, and going to the back of the line up to twenty-four years to the present time. You want to legally immigrate? Behind the folks that want to come here legally. Ok? Now, the dictionary says amnesty is ‘a pardon, extended by the government to a group or class of persons usually for a political offense. The act of a sovereign power officially forgiving certain classes of persons who are subject to trial but have not yet been convicted.’ In other words, you did something against society. You are a criminal. And, like the good Pope, we’re going to forgive you. Ok – what’s the crime? Picking a tomato so you can have a good salad? Picking corn? Picking melon? Maybe paying social security and never getting nothing out of it? You see, no, amnesty, from the Chicano perspective, was look, it’s a labor issue. And that’s not covered under immigration law. Now, it takes two to tango. Somebody does the hiring and somebody gets hired. So, hey, how come everything is aimed at the guy that got hired? And, you really want to punish the grower? How about enforcing labor laws? How about enforcing health and safety laws blah, blah? No, no, you know. We might make the plantation a little bit more humane and give you two drinks of water, you black slaves, but that’s no the issue. The issue was the system. You know, slavery. And here’s the same thing. Now, so that’s false amnesty, ok? Now, they used amnesty in a lot of different ways. The people fleeing from communism, Castro, all they had to do was put their toe on us soil and they got their green cards, they got all the benefits. The Hattians? [*laughs*] They were robbed blind ‘till God won’t have it. And all the people that you’re seeing that the contras, the Chiquita banana corporations that created and supported fascist robber barons politicians...no, this country is reaping what it foreign policy created. The book says, you shall reap what you sow. So that, you know, now, so that’s amnesty.

**00:48:00:** Baca: Now, securing the border, like I said. The Border Patrol ain’t never stopped one Mexican unless they shot him and killed him. You know, they, it converts into this whole judicial process the prisons, the courts, you know. It’s a system, like the prison-industrial complex. Ok? Now, look, you’re looking at 2015 statistics ok?

Mysogland: Ok.

Baca: And this is from a Democratic administration, Obama, like I said no different, it’s a system. [Right.] You can either give one glass of water, or two, or five glasses of water but it’s still the system. He was adding 30,000 additional border patrol agents, 40,000 along the Southwest border with unmanned aircraft, drone surveillance systems that have more than doubled since 2008, the Department of Homeland Security, that, ICE, that many civil libertarians fear is a forerunner of the modern day Gestapo...correct! Supposedly the cost of securing the border, 2015 budget is 29.2 billion dollars with over 58,000 personnel, 60,800...

[*Background talking.*]



**00:50:00:** Baca: Ok, 269 aircraft, 300 water craft, 300 camera towers. And in 2015 they had a fence over 651 miles of the 1,969. Now, since 1986 the US has spent over a hundred and eighty-seven billion, that includes drones that cost a hundred and eighty million dollars. And the question is, is the border more secure?

[*Background talking.*]

**00:51:00:** Baca: But if there is that fear of securing the border [*background talking*]...what about the Canadian border?

Mysogland: Right.

Baca: Twice as far as the Southwestern border, and 3,987 miles. And its only one percent secure and they have apprehended, according to Homeland, more Al-Qaeda, Hezbollah coming into the US from there. So, you know, this is showing, you know, as far as that hypocritical proposal. But its twofold. You get two for one. You stigmatize these people as criminals and you continue the game of what maintains the system which is, no rights. And once you become a law enforcement, it's the only good Indian is a dead Indian.

**00:52:06:** Mysogland: Can I ask you a question related to that border, beefing up border security, rhetoric? Do you think, so during the 70s and 80s time period there is some recent history books out, I'm thinking of like *Undocumented Lives* by Ana Minian, it's a new book in history, and she makes the argument that, yes, it's never going to work because people are going to keep coming, and the US needs laborers and all of that, but she says that the type of migration changes and that rather than going back and forth and having families in Tijuana and working in San Diego, people are more hesitant to do that because they are afraid, I guess, of the violence relating to the Border Patrol. So, there was kind of a change in the 80s towards more, kind of, family for permanent settlement in the US. Do you think that is a legitimate thing that was happening? Or no? Do you think people were going to more how they wanted to move regardless of whatever?

Baca: Regardless.

Mysogland: Yeah.

Baca: I would say, you know it's a migration pattern that's historical. [Right.] You know, I mean, people can talk about foreigners are coming, it's not foreigners, believe me.

Mysogland: Right.

Baca: Our people, you know, lived here, our people brought irrigation here, they tilled the soil, grew the crops, were buried here. [Right.] You know. So, you're back to demographics. Ok, you know, what's going to happen? I'm not a fortune teller. I can only look at history and like Chairman Mao said, politics is war with ballots. And if that don't work, then politics is war with guns. Bullets. You know what? It's, once again, looking at history and parallel issues, problems, manipulations, what have you. That's what happened with the US Civil War. It was

ballots, discussion, disagreement, accepting the outcome the votes and what have you, 'till it got to a point where no more discussions. No more acceptance. And, it went to politics with bullets. You know. With politics, it's war with bullets. Now what's going to happen? Like I said, it started with a war. What the dynamics are fifty, hundred years from now, I don't know. It's, they're not the same as they were in 1850.

Mysogland: For sure.

Baca: So, here's another one that people hardly ever talk about. What if all the action is over there? [Right.] And people start emigrating from here, huh? I mean, that's only human nature. [Right.] You want the best for your children.

Mysogland: Family.

Baca: Your family, yourself. You know, you want better life. You only live once. That's human nature. There's a book out, *Next Hundred Years*, and the guy, as unbelievable as it sounds, says in the next hundred years, Mexico is going to be a super power in the next hundred years. You know, it's got the resources, you know, even though it's been plundered for centuries. It's abundant in resources, you know. The only thing that has never evolved is the infrastructure. You know, that takes time, you know. You know the old saying, poor Mexicans, so far from God but so close to the United States. Or, when the United States catches a cold, we catch pneumonia. See, it's domination of Mexico. See, my position is, like I said, hey, I don't care if somebody got here five minutes ago, if somebody gave them a job they're complicit. And you know what? And that person should have all the rights of a franchised people of that society. Hey, social security. Hey, unemployment. There paying it. Hey, voting, yeah! They're making laws that affect you and your family. You're paying them. So, why not? See, versus, you know this xenophobia. Versus this bigotry versus this racism. You know, that only goes so far. That only goes so far. So, and like I said, they'll never close the border. Why? Because every so-called comprehensive immigration plan has always included, guess what, workers. Workers have never been treated like guest workers. They've been treated like the braceros were treated – slaves. And I always quote Lee G. Williams who administered the Bracero Program. That day to day operation. He stated, this is a quote, 'nothing short of slavery.' A way for big corporate farms to get a cheap labor supply from Mexico under government sponsorship and a money grabbing scheme by the corporate farms and sugar interests. Williams concluded, 'I pray that they don't reinstate this type of program.' You know, Border Patrol stops, you know. During the Bracero Program they used to have a policy of drying out wetbacks. They would arrest them, take them to the border, then parole them back to the same farm. Gee, that sure sounds like slavery under the judicial system. Hey, McCain, who was one of President Obama's gang of eight Democrats, I mean, four Republicans and four Democrats, without a commitment to the legal temporary worker program for high-tech community and agriculture sector, there is no such thing as comprehensive immigration reform. The US Chamber of Commerce spent fifty million dollars in an amnesty campaign to import farm workers. And you see them on TV. Thousands of white Americans, probably Donald Trump's build a wall supporters, pick up workers at Home Depot every day. So, hey, Donald Trump himself hired them. Pete Wilson - the governor of California. Mitt Romney. That white supremacist mouthpiece Lou Dobbs. Oh my god. There was a Homeland Security Regional director, Ms. Loraine Henderson, whose job

was supposedly to prevent illegal immigrants from entering the US, so you know, I don't care how many coats of paint you put on the rust, hey, it's like a sycamore, I don't care. I don't care where you bite, you bit into a peanut. It's the same thing, it's what Lee G. Williams stated, it's a slave quota, plain and simple. There is no enforcement of minimum wage law. There is no enforcement of health and safety, any of the other. La migra, like I told you already, they're plain and simple, they are Gestapo force, just like the Texas rangers. Home, ICE, they, their job is to ensure the longevity and perpetual existence of the labor system that has existed here for a hundred and seventy years. [Right.] So, like I said, you know, there is something you didn't hear about. Hey, it's a complex international, historical, political, social, economic issue. Don't try to narrow it down [*laughs*] to what the vested interests want. You know, there is a need to overhaul the US immigration policy that defines and administers the various categories and numbers of persons who can legally immigrate into the US. It's a broken system where certain categories have to wait up to twenty years to immigrate and half of twelve millions persons issued legal visitors visas are illegal due to their expired visas. See, when you see them breaking into gated communities or wherever, obviously they have to have money if they are visitors. See, ok, there has to be a redefinition of the issues, you know, that are not quote labor or immigration, such as terrorism, that's a military problem. You know. Cartels and drugs, that's a law enforcement and medical problem. Refugees, a foreign policy problem. You want to resolve this problem? Then give what history has taught, the Afro-Americans had to do to get away from slavery, which was rights, standing in this society. What's the difference? I just, last week's paper. A cop was molesting this four-year-old. You saw that?

Mysogland: Yeah I did.

**1:04:30:** Baca: Because the mother was undocumented. The people say, aw that's sad. Yeah that's why police chiefs are, again...look! The police are part of the whole law enforcement mechanism. [Yeah.] Why do you think there is Black Lives Matter? Why do you think everybody, Martin Luther King, Cesar Chavez, anybody who has been politically involved that is the one issue, police brutality...you asked me in that little email that, about National City. National City is my adopted home town and I know National City from growing up, from the schools, the inside of the jail, politically, and National City, in my opinion, is really not a city, it's more like a plantation. Ok? People come here and they don't live here and they take everything out. The only ones that live here are the taskmasters, you know, the politicians, they have to live here, other than that, everybody, seventy percent raza, twenty-five thousand immigrants, and you know, all the vestiges of a colonial situation. Now, you know I don't care how many times you put lipstick on a pig, it's still a pig, right? [*Laughs*] National City, same way. You know, you can't escape history, you can try to correct it, but you can't escape history, and we're all creatures of condition. There is an old saying that change is difficult for those who advocate it as well as for those who resist it. That's usually the common denominator for the conflicts you see all over the world. Here in National City, back in the 50s, the National City police used to get a box of ammunition from the Border Patrol for every Mexican.

Mysogland: Oh, wow.

Baca: That they turned over. And in the 80s, maybe 90s, late 80s, 90s, the dog catcher was used to...

Mysogland: Yeah, I've seen that in the documents.

Baca: I mean, you know, what they say and what the practice is are two completely different things. You know, if it's never changed...

**1:07:45:** Mysogland: Could I ask you a question? Sorry to interrupt you.

Baca: Any question, interrupt any time.

Mysogland: Relating to National City, do you, and this also goes back to what you were saying before about Bert Corona saying we need to take on this immigration issue. Do you think your experience growing up here, or the Chicano community experience in general, experience with National City as this colonial situation with police brutality, do you think noticing the connections between that and the Border Patrol, kind of the police and Border Patrol, is what, did that have role in making you interested in working with the immigration issue? If that makes sense?

Baca: Well like I said, what you are describing is a black hole. [Yeah.] You know, nothing escapes from that black hole. [Yeah.] And we, no matter what our idealistic goals were for quote US born Chicanos, we soon found out that that wasn't the reality. You know, I mean, you knock on a door to register, with the noble goal of registering people to vote, and the husband or wife would say, 'my husband is getting his papers, I'm a US citizen but my mother is undocumented, my grandmother is too, and now my kids are US citizens no, no thank you, we don't want to draw any attention to ourselves.' The police walking down the street, you might not know, hey I'm a US citizen, you got stopped, you got harassed, you got detained, and sometimes arrested. You know, because they didn't like the way you spoke back. So, look, immigration is like, I guess, being in Houston, it's humid, being in San Diego, you're right here, the border is right there. [Yeah.] Busiest crossing border in the world. So, you don't, learning and there's still a learning, education process about what the issue is and it's more manifested in the ignorance in the quote elected, elected represented officials than have come out of the Chicano movement struggle, you see. [Right, right.] They have no understanding of history so consequently they are a-political, as far as the issues that affect who they say they represent and who the established parties say they represent. No, they are employees of the two-party system and the powers that finance those political entities, see? There is no such thing as a Chicano politician. You know why? Because in order to be a politician for a certain group, or interest, you need a mandate, first of all you need a constituency that gives you the money, the mother's milk of politics, and gives you the votes and the people power to get you there who then can in turn make him accountable because he understands, see that doesn't exist in our community. That doesn't exist, we have what we call the illusion of inclusion. See, so you see on the issue, all of these problems just spill over into what is franchised status, what is first class status, you see, it doesn't exist, it hasn't been built. [Yeah.] Like I told you, 1968, in the 1970 census, I think we were seven million Chicanos, Mexicanos and Latinos, and [laughs] people always ask me, hey are things better than they were in 1960, 1970? No they're worse. What? How could you say that? Because you've got congressmen, you've got senators, you've got governors, you've got people in positions of power. How could you say that? I said, because it's an

illusion. I says, those are individuals, I said the masters of our people still are affected by the historical issues and problems that have always afflicted us. So, we have gone from seven million to sixty million, or fifty-five million, in the 2010 census, and the question is, is, how come we're not on the political radar screen? How come this congressman Juan Vargas, he's been there like twenty years? The only time I heard him say anything was when Nancy Pelosi came down here, gee I wonder if she is pulling the strings and he understands, I better say something. You know, look, most of the speakers recently have been of Hispanic. See? And, see to me Hispanic is a yes person, somebody that is accommodating, somebody that is like, if you ever saw the Ten Commandments, Edward G. Robinson, the Jewish prince. [Laughs.] Or like Malcolm X used to say, the house Negro, we say boss, we say boss. See, and the dynamics of all of this is to be understood that people don't understand because we are not on the radar, political screens. I was down, I says, you know, definitions are very important. See when I was a kid, I come from a little town called Los Lentos. 600 people. 99.9% Spanish speaking. That's all I ever heard. So, I go to kindergarten and you would go to school and you were Jorge, that afternoon you came out and you were George. Nobody asked your mom and dad. Nobody asked the person that baptized you. Certainly not you. See that's a Hispanic. My position is, if there is a Hispanic, is there a Her-panic? Or like George Lopez says, do you like the word Hispanic? He says I don't like any word with the word panic in it [laughs]. You know, and politically, everybody, if you look at history, at the TV, everybody is talking about our children. See, I come from a generation that talked the principle of self-determination. If you're the problem, you got to be the solution. Simple. You want to get married? Hey don't expect anybody to support your family, ok? That's your responsibility, that's your obligation. See, and now, we face the worst crisis in our history as a conquered people and where's the collective voice? Oh, don't get me wrong, there's people that work at service centers, there's politicians that get up there. What do they say? What do they propose? [Yeah.] How do they say ouch? [Right.] Donald Trump is evil, he's evil, what does that mean politically? See, it's like this young girl, just so they understand, some of the experiences of trying to educate the community, and speaking at Rosemont College, this young lady asked, she said, 'Mr. Baca can I ask you a question?' 'Sure, that's why I'm here.' 'How is it possible that we are forty percent of the population in San Diego County and we can't elect one supervisor out of five?' I said, 'well, let me explain it this way.' I says, 'let me explain it by asking you a question.' I says, 'if a Mexican, oh matter of fact any group, ethnic group, person, were to walk into a barrio, a neighborhood, bar, a Mexican, Chicano neighborhood, and here in Old Town National City, San Ysidro, Logan Heights, LA, San Jose, Albuquerque, San Antonino, and they walked into that bar and the first Mexican they saw in that bar, they walked up to that person and said hey, your father is nothing but a rapist, a murder, a drug dealer. Do you think he would come alive?' I said, 'I don't think so.' I said 'you see, that's politics.' I says, 'his interest, whatever it was, maybe he loved his dad, maybe he lost his dad, maybe he got offended, he took action to protect his interests. That's politics. But he's only one.' I says, 'and politics is not a game of individuals, it's a game of organized people and organized money.' I says, 'now,' I said 'Donald Trump, he didn't go into a bar, he got up on a microphone and told the whole world that we were rapists, murderers and drug dealers, and what was our reaction? Stupid a-hole. Pendejo. Idiota. What does that mean politically?' I says, 'that don't mean nothing! He's not affected by us.' I said, 'because you need organized people and organized money to impact the game that exists. I says, that's why we can't elect one stupid supervisor or even make the ones we do have accountable.' So, you see, one thing leads to another. You know. And when you're poor and

powerless and disenfranchised. You are going to get the worst of everything, by default. There's not even an equation. It's just default. You're going to get the worst cops. The worst education. The worst of everything. You know. So, the illusion of what has happened is that, oh let's look at the black community. Oprah Winfield [*sic.*], Chris Rock, the basketball players, you know, what have. No, you know what, there's still, you know, it's like two different dimensions, two different worlds. So, like I said, a Bill of Rights. You know, this Bill of Rights was passed in 1979.

**1:20:50:** Mysogland: Is this what I would have seen this in the documents, right? Yeah.

Baca: And I am going to give you a packet of this. But anyway, since were recording it, you know, you're going to hear, it...

Mysogland: Wonderful.

Baca: Somebody in the near future...

Mysogland: I hope so...

Baca: Will hear it. You know, it goes back, every immigrant worker will have the right to establish legal residency by paying a status as wage earner and tax payer. Sounds real simple to me, sounds real simple. But it's not simple, slavery was never simple. It was complex, you know. So, like I said, what's going to happen? What's going to happen? We as a people are on a ship, not of our own making. And I always tell people. The so-called immigration issue is not the only issue that we have. I said, but it's the most highlighted issue that defines us as a people. I says, don't think that the German Jew in 1930 – hey Hitler is not talking about me, my family has been here for six hundred years. Guess where he wound up at? The same line, going to the same shower. I says, so you don't, there's historical principles that have been cast aside or ignored, or people have lost memory of for whatever reasons. There's many reasons. Like the principle of self-determination. Like, I get a lot of young people like you, Chicanos, Chicanas, that are doing their dissertations and I always tell them, I says, 'you know...where you from? Logan Heights. Where your Mom and Dad from? Michoacán, Sonora, somewhere up there.' I says, 'let me ask you a question, I says, what are you doing talking to a guy that barely go out of high school?' They says, 'what do you mean?' I says, 'I am telling you that you will never forget what your Mom and Dad, my generation, and I'm not even talking about Grandpa and your Grandmother had to go through so that you had a chance.' I says, 'don't you ever forget that.' I says, 'and the other thing I says is, remember this, I said, I'm seventy-five, you're probably what, 24, 28? I says, you're going to the University of Santa Barbara that's pretty good. You're the chosen one man.' And I says, 'look, I said whatever you're going to ask me, I don't care if it's immigration, I don't care if its police brutality, education, prison reform, housing, employment, I don't care what it is.' I says, 'remember those issues and those problems were here before you and I were born. They're still here. We're going to talk about them in five minutes, and they're going to be here until certain things are done right.' I says, 'so now you look at, we come from seven million to fifty-five million, I remember we were known back then as the sleeping giant. We were the sleeping giant just waiting to be awakened by something or someone, I don't know. Maybe Zoro was going to come down and save us, I don't know.

Anyway, today I think we have come from the sleeping giant to the comatose giant.' I says, I think we were so successful in breaking doors down that people had chances and opportunities and they went past those doors, I says, I think they made so much money that they came out and I think they bought five or six bottles of tequila and they're politically passed out. Passed out, I says. Not a peep or a squeak, I says, about their interests, about even their future. I says, we're talking about our children. Something sacred. Our children are sacred like they are to most people. That is our future. Those guys, you know, [*laughs*] he's got them caged up. You know, and I understand what is needed, and what is needed hasn't been built so it's not going to be able to be implemented. So, you know, those, to us, it's both an external issue and problem and it's also an internal issue and problem. And, like I said, immigration is part and partial of our daily existence. All those other issues are just as important. And the only solution, like I stated, is we have to be the solution. We have to self-determine our own interests. We have to address those problems and issues and you know, like I said, it's a historical issue and problem. And I always tell these young kids, look, every generation gets the opportunity to pick up the bat and swing at the ball, I says some strike out. Some bunt and get thrown out. I says, some pop out. I says some even get to first base. We never made it with all the runners on the bases. No generation has. I says, there are some generations that never even pick up the bat. Now, which one are you? My generation, I says hey, health problems, age problems, the hour glass is running out, simple as that, our nature. So, what are you going to do, what are you going to do? Now, what is this country going to do? We're all in the ship, like it or not. Whether we even like each other. Were still in the ship. What's going to happen now? I just heard Maxine Waters, today, the Congresswoman, hey go after them just like they did Sandra Sanders. What's her name?

Mysogland: Sanders?

Baca: Yeah, the lying spokesperson.

Mysogland: Oh, Huckabee Sanders, right?

Baca: Yeah, Huckabee, they throw her out the restaurant, that Homeland Security, the audacity, going into a Mexican restaurant.

Mysogland: I know.

Baca: I mean, are you stupid?

Mysogland: I think so. [*Laughs.*]

Baca: Or arrogant, one of the two, I don't know what's worse. But both I would say. And of course, there's on the other side. Now, I don't care if Trump says the sun rises in the East, fifty percent are going to say the West just because he said it. And now how can this issue of immigration, like I said, it's not unbelievable but it's incomprehensible. How could the issue, you guys are fighting over, you're illegal immigrations, you're illegal aliens, and you're trying to make everybody else one. I mean, see, it's, that's what happens when you read Civil War history. It starts off with a discussion, and a disagreement, and Supreme Court decisions and Congress this and Presidential campaigns and – hey, it was war! I mean it was politics, war is

politics and ballots and pretty soon it's...We ain't listening boom boom boom, but here's the dangers, but of course demographics played a big part in the conclusion. See, to me, Billy Bob from the South and Billy Joe from the North got in this big fight, not over slavery, no no, no, it wasn't over slavery, you know it wasn't over slavery, believe me, it was over economics. The expanding industrial North needed, guess what, they needed labor. [Rights.] And think tanks, like Harvard and I don't know if there was an MIT then, but I am sure there was other ones, there is some labor down in the South. Why don't you dislodge it, you know? [Rights.] And of course, the other side says, what they still say, our way of life, our heritage, our culture. So Billy Bob and Billy Joe got to that point where they killed 750,000 of each other, and then under the auspices of freeing the slaves. They freed the slaves, how come Martin Luther King was getting beat up a hundred years later for trying to register to vote? Huh? I says, so, what happened, fifteen, twenty years later, Billy Bob, Billy Joe, family disagreement, plenty of money to be made. You know, you can have your heritage and your way of life, call it something different ok? Just don't call it slavery, ok? Jim Crow, that's a good name, no one understands that one anyway. You see? Now what is happening here with those false solutions, 1865, so that's nineteen, a hundred, what is it almost going on two-hundred years, one hundred fifty years. And it ain't even been resolved. See, but the Afro-American community is going to have demographics [laughs] That's the joker and the deal. So what's going to happen? See – it's a historical issue, over what? Land. Land. Who owns it, who tills it, who does what with it, and what happened. So, you know, I don't think the public discourse is, nobody can win. Can you imagine Trump winning again? All you've got is a bigger fire. I don't think people are going to say, hey I like that guy. No, it's no longer public discourse. You know, now it's gone into major, basic interest of what's what. Are women going to go back to the kitchen? I don't think so. Are gays going to go back to the closet? I don't think so. Are, so all of this changes, you know, that have come about, that you know, that the ultra-rights the states, but basically their issue is power. You know, once we get our hands on the gun, the law enforcement mechanisms, you know, hey you'll see what exactly that Hitler did...that's that commentary that I wrote. It's, see, people don't know what they don't know...

**1:34:50:** Mysogland: Can I ask you a question, sorry to interrupt...

Baca: No, no, anytime you want.

Mysogland: Thank you

Baca: You're supposed to be interviewing me.

Mysogland: Well, you're kind of answering my questions as you talk. With these history references, you obviously highlight the parallels with kind of the Holocaust and slavery and stuff. And earlier, and you talk about the Bracero Program being slavery, and earlier you talked about the 1930s repatriations as they were called and Operation Wetback kind of era. Were these instances of deportations something you also tried to highlight through the CCR or kind of your, because I don't normally see those kind of things referenced, but I was assuming that for people like Bert Corona who lived through the 50s or people who had kind of family that were here, events like those were within people's memory. Was that something you also highlighted in terms of important historical parallels?



**1:35:54:** Baca: Well, like I always tell people. If you want a solution to a historical problem or issue you first have to know what the problem is. [Right.] See, talk to any politician, ask them those questions. They're like the little monkey with the chain, the organ isn't playing, the monkey ain't doing nothing but hanging around. And, and the only way that you can get a historical solution is by reading and understanding history. Malcolm X, the Afro-American revolutionary, stated that a people without a history is like a tree without roots – dead. Anybody can do whatever they want with that tree, you know. Cut the branches off. Use it as firewood. Chop it up, do whatever you want to do with it. Make a boat out of it if you want. See, and that lack of self creates powerlessness. See, I don't care, ninety-eight, ninety-nine percent of the people that you're going to talk to, you really ain't talking to them, they're really not giving you their answers. They're giving you the answers that they read in the *San Diego Union*, saw on Chanel ten, Bill O'Reilly, or listened to Obama or something, but it's not theirs. Because nobody has defined a mechanism to get it to them. You know. Anybody can hear an individual talk about the issue and say very interesting, the next day it is forgotten, it's not like you're everyday going to school. George Washington, was your, fucking with the father of your country, well how come you don't know...See, but, it's like, I always remember this young kid, student, comes into my shop, he was all proud. 'Baca,' he says, 'can ask you a question. I'm going to Harvard, I'm getting an education.' I said, 'are you sure you're not getting schooled?' He said, 'what?' I says, 'schooled.' He said, 'what do you mean?' I said, 'well, what I mean is, if you want to graduate and get that degree, you're going to make more money than ninety percent of your people.' I says, 'you've got to answer one question, or you're not going to pass.' 'What's the question?' 'Who discovered America, come on tell me.' 'Christopher Columbus.' 'Now, you know it's a lie, the professor knows it's a lie, and I know it's a lie, but the real question is why are they having you answer that question. See?' And it's like, I always used to, we used to get reporters from Germany, Japan, England, the *Wall Street Journal*, because back then you had the infamous soccer field. You know, and it was like high drama. People would line up and eat tacos and play soccer on the other side. And the Border Patrol would be and then at night the game would start. So anyway, everybody used to go down there to the infamous soccer field. And, you know, after a while, they would get the tour. The Border Patrol would give them a tour. And after a while they said, you know, trying to be balanced there, who is against them? Those guys over there in National City. So, they would come by, they would stop by, and I would ask did you get the jeep tour or the helicopter tour? 'What do you mean?' You're from the *New York Times*, you got the helicopter tour. You're just from a regular paper, they put you in the jeep so you've got all that dust. They says, 'Let's not talk about that.' See, you know, so, the dynamics started to change about public relations. I don't know if you've run across this in the archives. We used to make monkeys of those guys. It's like shooting fish in the barrel, they were so dumb, you know. You know, like, Gestapo of the Mexican people – ahh. One time, the Border Patrols wives were going to sue me because their kids were calling them Gestapo, the fathers [oh my goodness]. Is it true or not? What are you looking for? And, see, and now the whole definition is, it's so time-tested its almost ridiculous. But they have demonized everyone of Mexican ancestry as a criminal. That's it. That's your selling point. That's your brand. You know, get them out of there. And, I mean, like they can rightfully say, this is red meat, it isn't tough sirloin. Prime rib, I know, hey you know what, but that's the only thing they can sell to the inherent racists and bigots and white supremacists you know, because it's understood, you know. I mean, going back to the only good Indian is a dead Indian. I mean,

you know, same principal. I mean, everybody picks it up, they are the victims, oh no wait a minute, are the victims the illegal aliens that shot their loved ones. They will always be separated. Wait a minute, those are individuals. You know, you've seen a group, you know, hey, is that cop in San Antonio that was molesting that four-year-old little girl – are all police that way? See how you'd like it. Or the Marines that raped some women that were in the newspaper. I says, you have all this human dynamics, interchanges going on, you know, under this system called immigration, that you call immigration. What do you think? Everybody is a saint? They are part of the human race, you know. Like you ain't got no Charlie Mansons? You know, what, people should be, Saint Peter and Paul? Hey, before it was one drop of black blood and, you know, you'd get booted out of office, you know. It sold. And you got to call it what it is, just like what Trump is doing right now is straight of the Nazi handbook. Hitler's handbook. You know, hey, see, people with power are going to have to do something about that. You know, we're just on the train, we're just watching the parade go by. We ain't included in nothing. So why should this be any different? This doesn't mean that we shouldn't get off the train or get educated about our interests, but that doesn't exist. I'm sorry. People don't like to hear that because where they sit is where they stand. You know over here there are seven hundred thousand dollar homes. You're like Trump now, you're not like everybody, you're an individual. Society is not one individual...So, any other questions?

**1:45:27:** Mysogland: Yes. I have a question about, let's see what I want to ask. To me there seems to be a lot of focus on, in the sources, or maybe it's just what interests me, with youth experiences with either police brutality, or victims of Border Patrol violence. I was just listening to your interview with Jimmy Patiño and you kind of highlighted children dying because they are unable to cross the border to get medical care, women being raped by the Border Patrol, young women. Do you think that there was, that youth were particularly vulnerable to this violence, or was that one of your interests in highlighting their experiences or...If that question makes sense...

Baca: Well, like were seeing now, women and children are still the victims, or the majority of the victims, or the highlighted, you know.

Mysogland: I'm trying to figure out if they were kind of the majority or if they were highlighted more because more people would kind of be willing to say, oh well a child is suffering. Would that easier for the public to get on board with saying is horrible?

**1:47:35:** Baca: Remember that the immigration issue, if you look at the Bracero Program, was male.

Mysogland: Yeah, right.

Baca: So consequently, the law enforcement was aimed at, from the 20s to really probably, I would say the 80s, at men. You know, it started to change when, this is one of the side effects of securing the border, you know, saying, people not being able to see their families so they started to bring their families. Just like, they talk about smugglers, they created that situation by not recognizing what the, or manipulating the issue, they recognized it, of course they recognized it, but manipulating the situation to where any form of illegality, criminality, enhances and maintains the system. It's just an off shoot. It's just like prohibition. Hey, there was a demand,

Al Capone provided the supply, supplied it. You know? And yeah, there was crime, yeah there was police shootings, there was all kinds of things that evolved out of that. But the real issue was that amendment. So, you see, cause and effect.

Mysogland: Right, Ok.

Baca: So, women and men, I mean children, you know, I think in a way they seem more of a threat. You know, because now you're talking about structure. Families bring structures, they put roots down, children grow up to be different than what they'd been used to and what have you, so but yeah it's part and partial of that whole bigoted racist mentality, that, I always go back to that, the only good Indian is a dead Indian. That was policy! What's the difference between this? I, we lived next to an Indian reservation and I remember, like I was telling you, ninety-nine percent Spanish speaking. And when I went to school, second, third grade, talking to my friend, right, and all the sudden I feel a hand across my face. I'm, what, eight years old, seven years old, I don't know, and I look up and the teacher is telling me, 'don't you speak Spanish on the school ground.' And people say that's terrible. No, I'll tell you what's terrible, I says, Indian kids that used to come from the reservation, if they spoke their language, they would make them stick out their tongue and prick them with a needle. [Yeah.] That was terrible, I got over the slap. I don't know how many days it takes. So, it's a racist, it's a white supremacist, I always remember this old movie, cowboy and Indian movie, and the military was chasing some Indians over some attack that took place and those two Calvary guys are up in the hills and they go into this cave and there was an Indian with his wife, and a little baby. And of course, they got guns and he got a bow and arrow and then they make him drop it and the wife she's scared and she starts crying. Tears start coming out of her eyes. And one of the white infantry men says hey look at that, she's got a tear in her eye, like she was some kind of animal or something.

Mysogland: Right, of course she does.

**1:51:36:** Baca: Like, no, it was like, hey you only know what you know, to him that was an abstract. [Yeah.] You know, these children, hello, you're talking about children. I says, all you've got to do is switch the personalities and how would you like your child to be in a cage? [Right.] What, I said, Trump you're a no good rotten SOB hey but your child, I mean, he's just starting to get in the ball game, he's innocent. That is the definition of racism. White supremacy. You know, they're not even people. See, I look at this issue the way it's developing. See, we're not even people anymore. We're not, not only on the radar, political radar screen, but we have been demonized, stigmatized as you know, non-humans. That, you know what, just like a criminal. What do you do with a criminal? What does your body do with a bad germ? Fights it. Tries to kill it. Anything goes. [Yeah.] You know, hey. So yeah that's particularly sad and frightening. That thing about women. You know, people say that they're not racist. I saw that you saw it also in *Time Magazine*, that the woman she's being searched, pat down by a man. Where's all the women's groups? How come they're not saying anything? You know, and, go back to that rape that's documented, you know, like I said, everybody is part and partial. When I first got involved I was just as naïve as anybody else, I guess, more naïve probably. And you know, I really thought that, you know, you just had to go register a few people, run some candidates, and everybody could go home, drink beer you know. And you know, like I said about change is difficult for those who advocate it as well as those who resist it.

You know, when I first got involved, I got involved with electoral politics, because you know we really thought that is all you had to do, and so remember the times. In 1970, in the whole California state legislature there was one person of Mexican ancestry in the whole state government. Alex Garcia from east LA. Here in San Diego there was city councilman Louie Camacha from National City. [Yeah, yeah.] I remember we had a tardeada, [yeah] a get together on Sunday, really an endorsing convention, we had never done it, we got the idea from other MAPA chapters. We had it in a church hall near Old Town National City. [Yeah.] We couldn't believe how many politicians came to the endorsing convention. We had governor candidates, the assemblymen, the state senators, the sheriff, the district attorney. Anyway, we endorsed the then, one of the persons running for sheriff, and he won. And then the district attorney, he won. So, I remember they called me up, remember, I was twenty-nine, you know, I had a little monkey suit on. So, they called me up and says, 'we'd like to something with the Mexican American community, you know, what would you guys like to see?' I said, never thought about that, you know. So, I took it back to a couple of the people there, of course older persons that had been involved. So, somebody says why don't we ask them for a Mexican American liaison between their office and the community? I thought it was good – hey great that sounds pretty good. So anyway, to make a long story short, we got two liaisons, one to the sheriff's department and one to the district attorney.

**1:57:07** Mysogland: Is this Sheriff Duffy?

Baca: Duffy. Duffy. So that honeymoon last six months, as you probably already read.

Mysogland: Right.

Baca: But these people haven't heard it so [got to tell them]. So anyway, Ed Miller, the District Attorney, invited me to his victory party in Mission Beach I think. So I'm the only brown face there and he gets up there and he recognizes me as, because they both won 1500 votes out of a 150,000, if this hadn't been for this man and his Mexican American Political Association, I wouldn't have won. They both gave credit. He had an open-door policy, says, 'Herman, any problems just give me a call.' And then Duffy, Duffy actually gave me a jail pass. Like attorneys get [wow]. People calling me up, 'my sons in jail,' I had plenty of business there, free business. So anyway, this woman gets raped. And there was an individual, Alberto Garcia from San Ysidro.

**1:58:30:** Mysogland: Yeah, I wanted to ask you about him. Because I see his name coming up a lot in the documents.

Baca: May he rest in peace, ok?

Mysogland: Yeah.

Baca: So Alberto was the first line person there because he was a notary public because he also was actively involved in documenting cases of violence and brutality, so then he would, you know, because at the time, remember, I'm twenty-nine, we were a very young chapter full of you know what and what and vinegar. So, he's the one that brought that case to us [ok]. So you

know, I went to Ed Miller, I told, oh no, you've got to prosecute this case. And then he started back peddling. And he started saying, 'no that's a federal matter.' No, rape is not a federal matter. And so, hey, like I said, that was the end of that honeymoon. I started, we started going after him, first conferences, demonstrations, what have you. And then of course Duffy, like I said, like that Huckabee. What's her name? Sandra, is it?

Mysogland: Sarah Huckabee.

Baca: Sarah?

Mysogland: Sarah Huckabee Sanders. A long name. *[Laughs.]*

Baca: That must be a terrible job unless you are a damn liar, not unless you like lying.

Mysogland: And it seems like she's ok with that. *[Laughs.]*

**2:01:13:** Baca: So anyway, then Duff, that's it. Like I said, that's what's up to that history, I guess that's what they had been used to dealing with, get in line, I'll tell you when to walk. And so, Duffy put out that memorandum to the taxi cab drivers telling them, call a secret code [right] and my deputies will stop your car and check for documentation based on dress and mannerism. And what happened there was, you know, people from the community started coming to the shop and complaining about, 'hey the taxi cabs aren't picking us up, why?' and I couldn't figure out why. So, this guy, Ernie Asoca, who was the, what did they call it, Community Rep., I guess, Administrative Liaison I guess, for one of the assemblymen. He said, Herman, look at this. And it was that memorandum.

Mysogland: Ok.

Baca: And, like I said, that pass, that jail pass was gone probably in a week. We want after Duffy with a vengeance. Everywhere he was, just like Sandra *[sic.]* Huckabee *[laughs]*, we'd be there. And Ed Miller, same thing. So, he finally rescinded it. Took a year, but he finally rescinded it. Under the cover that the Justice Department had told him that it is a federal matter. As lousy, bad that they exercise it, carry it out, according to the Constitution it is a federal matter. And the argument was hey, if you're doing it for immigration why don't you do it for income tax evasion, customs smuggling, you know. Hey your stupid officer can't even do the job they've got. So, but Ed Miller just flat out refused which goes to show you, not only Ed Miller but I remember we took it to the California attorney general [yeah] and you know what...So when you start talking about even in our own community, hey, that's what people hear. And, they either hear the bad cop like Trump, or the good cop, you know, like some of the liberal congressmen, but the system stays intact. There's no solution and that's what they tell you, that's why I laugh about when I hear Johnny come lately that have never dealt with immigration issues. The only reason you are dealing with it is the congress is trying to put them out on a front to cover their rears, you know, and look good. And what is it? Of course, we have to secure the border, you know, you're showing your stupidity. And what else, we need amnesty, hello, you're saying were criminals? Isn't that what Trump says? *[Yeah.]* What's a crime? See, so why do you keep saying immigration? If you're going to say split it up,

compartmentalize it, but they ain't talking about these guys picking the tomatoes, the lettuce, and the restaurants, and the hotels, and the motels, and what have you. So, there is not going to be no solution. Let me tell you, we're talking about a specific matter, issue, problem that has been here for a hundred and seventy years but like I stated, it's international in scope. Now, different dynamics, ok. But rooted in the same historical context. You know, a bishop friend of mine called one day and he said, 'Herman, what do you think of this immigration issue,' he says. And I'm trying to play it in my head and come up with, you know, because people are always asking me about it. And I said, well, I gave him the thing about if you want a solution you first have to know what the problem is and in order for you to know what the problem is you have to read and understand history. So I says, 'so, let me ask you a question.' I says, 'what would possess a person to leave their home, their family, their little community, pueblo or what is it, barrio, and you start walking, get a bus, or however you are going to get where you're going, which is north? And along the way have to put up with military troops, checkpoints, police shakedowns, cartel trying to shake you down, gangs, and heaven knows what else is on the road.' And I says 'then you get to, where you want to get across, and they have one of the most fortified borders with sensors and night vision and jeeps and drones and I don't know what else. And then you do get across, because that's the real job, just make sure that they know that we're here but they got to get across. They always have.' And I said, 'and then,' I says, 'you're in a place that you've never been and you don't know the language, you don't know the culture, you don't know which way to go, and you're hiding.' I says, 'tell me, why do you think somebody would do something like that?' He says, 'I don't know? How come?' I says, 'ok, let me give you a few reasons, number one how about poverty, you've got to eat, your family's got to eat.' 'Ah,' he says, 'yeah, that's a good one.' I said, 'how about corruption?' I says, 'you know,' he says, 'yeah there is a lot of corruption.' I says, 'and how about lack of opportunity for yourself, your family and especially your children?' 'Yeah,' he says, 'yeah, yeah.' I say 'ok let's stop right there.' I says, 'now,' [buenas tardes] so I says, so I says, 'let me ask this, now how many people in Mexico are affected by those three conditions? Ten million? Thirty million? Fifty million? I says, you know what, I once read a Pew report that stated that something like eighty-two percent would go North if they had the opportunity. I says, but let's not stop there now. Let's go to Central America and then let's not stop there. Let's go to South America. I said, then let's not stop there, let's to go to the Philippines. Then let's go to the other Asian countries and then let's go to Africa. And then the Arab countries. And then let's go to the Eastern poor countries. I says, now, you're talking about billions I says, now, I says, now what you have is an issue between the haves of the world and the have nots that are by the billions. I says, now who are the haves? I says, mainly Western nations. Mainly Western nations that I says, plundered, where those poor people come from, I says, and now have the economic wealth of the world and the political and military might of the world. The power in other words. So the question is, is, you can't stop human nature. I says, survival is first and foremost. I says, so it don't matter they drowned, they are going to drown or starve to death of starvation and see things that they didn't want to see with their families and their children. So, you know, you start shooting them. Hey! Really you are just shooting yourself, you know? Civilized societies cannot exist on that level. And on and on and on. So the real issue is, how is that going to be addressed? And I would add, your church, Mr. Bishop [laughs]. I says, kinda complex isn't it? Kinda complicated isn't it? I says, but that's what you're seeing. That's what you're seeing. A human crisis. And you know what, it's a catch twenty-two. Once again, demographics. Demographics, you know.

**2:11:37:** Mysogland: Can I ask you also another question if you don't mind?

Baca: Sure.

Mysogland: Did you have any relationship with Roberto Martinez? Because I've looked through his papers at UCSD too and I see people like Alberto Garcia are mentioned in both of your collections, as kind of working on the same thing, did you guys ever cooperate or collaborate on anything?

**2:11:58:** [*Background talking.*]

**2:12:22:** Baca: Look the CCR came out of a movement [right] with certain principles. [Right.] Like I stated, self-determination [right] non-funded [yeah], because you know it was always our position that if our people are the problem then they have to be the solution. So consequently, funded agencies were out of that orbit, as far as we were concerned.

Mysogland: That's what I was figuring.

Baca: And, you know, God be with you, do what you got to do, but that's not the solution. You know, and to us, we've seen when we've been out of the equation and resolving issues and problems that are still with us. No matter what was done, no matter what was thrown. I think Roberto was with the Quakers?

Mysogland: Yeah, the American Friends Service Committee, yeah.

Baca: And, you know, like I said, that's nice. That's good.

Mysogland: I thought it was weird because he was also a part of the Chicano Federation, I saw, and sort of through that people who I was seeing mentioned in both your papers. But I figured the kind of, Quaker funded, nonprofit element marked his work as different.

Baca: See, I, we never hindered or we never, but there's certain things that we will not do. And one of those things is turn over our political principles. Let me put it this way, ok? What's the biblical saying – the road to hell is paved with good intentions? [Yeah.] You know, and you know what? You cannot, you cannot be the problem and expect somebody else to come up with the solution. You know, because, like I stated already, politics is a game not only of power but of interest [ok] and we're all shaped by our history, we're all shaped by our culture, we're all shaped by, you know, our language and religion what have you. And that doesn't mean that you're against that. But, you know, but historically, obviously since we're in this situation that we're in, we have been. And like I said, look, I won't deal with anyone that doesn't call for the abolishment of the INS, the Border Patrol, and ICE, you know, that's the litmus test, ok? [Right.] You know, if you never see me again [laughs], never hear me say another word, just remember that. [Right.] We'll never have freedom, we'll never have peace, we'll never have progress as long as those agencies are here. [Right.] Because they were structured and organized to maintain the status quo. [Right.] A hundred and, a hundred and eighty-six billion and people haven't said is it, I mean you aren't even getting a hamburger, you not even getting a

piece of lettuce for what you paid, so what's the reason? There's got to be a reason why this product sells so well even though it doesn't do anything. You know, and it costs a lot of money. That's the questions that's got to be asked. You know, and why not the Canadian border, you know? I mean if you're being transparent and if you're being upfront. I haven't heard one person talk about it. Look, I started to say something where I lost my train of thought, all of these politicians that we have now, the assembly has been run by those Hispanics and Her-panics and you know, eight governors just pulled the troops from the border and I still haven't heard, maybe they did it a couple of hours ago, and I still haven't heard as of this morning anybody call on Master Brown, hey! You and the governor of Mississippi, the armpit of the United States, the most white supremacist, bigoted state are the only ones supporting [I know] this yo-yo called Trump that the whole world is shaking their heads and getting ready to give him a good welcome. Like when he goes to Britain, can you imagine that? [Yeah.] I bet you Trump will never go to East LA. [No, *laughs.*] Huh?

Mysogland: No.

Baca: So, you see, all of those manifestations dramatize themselves as this problem called disenfranchisement, you know, we have an external problem and we have an internal problem. There are a lot of people right here, right around talking about talking with the Border Patrol. Like, huh? Like, they're going to do what you say? Huh? I don't see you with no forty thousand people. See? It's convoluted. Convoluted, you see what they're doing, putting kids away happily, raping women, churches being gone into. You know, like I said, the junkyard dog along the way because of what was happening, you know, got a few manners, no before they used to go into churches. They used to go into schools. And nobody said anything. You know, until people started putting a light on them. It's like the same thing with ICE. You know, like you were talking this morning. What they think is good political practice, now that the elections are coming up, says what, says the base. It's not the base, that's the history that people have got to get rid of if they are going to exist. Hey, osmosis is going to take care of the problem. How, I don't know? But believe me, you know, it's written right there. Who does the work if there ain't nobody to do the work? [Right.] See, 1950, it's a different story. Eighty-nine percent. We're all singing of Eddie Fisher and how much is the doggy in the window. [*Laughs.*] We don't care what anybody says. They have the numbers. But now? You got this schizophrenic thinking, you've got Georgia farmers, peach farmers, we've got nobody to pick our peaches. And racists and deportation busses stating that this is for criminals and rapists, vote for me, you know. Like I said, nothing I can do about it. Hey, I don't have the power, you know, and I tell you what. I'm tired of trying to educate educated bigots. [Yeah.] I always remember Dr. Martin Luther King, that Memphis March where there's ten thousand black men with a sign saying I am a man. They don't know that? And they're educated? A technical society. And they don't know these are kids, children, you know? There's a rationale for everything. Because you know what, it's not a moral game, it's a power game. You know, and greed is what dominates that game. Look, Obama, hey, he deported more Mexicans than any Republican did. What's the excuse there? How come you don't say something about that – you're there representing us? Because maybe you ain't a politician, you are an employee [right], and, you know, everybody can talk about something inside the box but don't go out the box. [Yeah.] See, now, you're a reconquitsa, now you're a radical, now you're a this, now you're a that, what have you, well you know, lump it. That's all I can say. You know, but that's what happening internally and



externally. You know, it's like I tell people, what's going to defeat Trump, in my opinion, is the stock market. If it goes down, he gone. [Yeah.] That's morality, it's money. And it goes up, you better watch out because people, like I said, who said it, don't talk to me about hunger while I'm eating a prime rib buffet, you know, don't ruin my supper. [Laughs.] So like I told you, it's a little more complex.

Mysogland: Yes, for sure.

**2:23:36:** Baca: Let me tell you a story, full of stories because they come back to my head when I'm talking. This young kid comes in and asks about National City so he says, 'Baca I'm going to college, can I ask you a question?' I says, 'yeah. Go ahead.' He says, 'how many white people are there in National City?' I said, 'that's a good question,' I says, 'let me explain it this way...if you lined up a hundred people from National City, ten of them would be white.' He said, 'I don't know that.' He said, 'how many Mexicans are there, then?' I said, 'if we line up that same one hundred, seventy of them are going to be Mexican.' He said, 'I don't know that either.' I said, 'well let me ask you a question – who is the mayor of National City?' He says, 'isn't it a white guy?' I said, 'very good.' I said, 'now let me ask you another question. How many people on city council?' 'I don't know.' I said, 'it's four. How many of them are Mexican?' He said, 'I don't know.' 'Four of them are Mexican.' I said, 'and let me ask you another question.' I said, 'if National City is seventy out of a hundred, and it's the poorest city, I don't know if you know that or not,' he says, 'no.' 'Well it's the poorest city, let me ask you. How come those four Mexicans never say or do anything about National City being the poorest city in San Diego County?' He says, 'I don't know, how come?' 'Well look,' I says, 'you're going to college let me explain it. What the white mayor tells us is that the ten out of the hundred control politically, socially, and economically. I says, and what the four don't say nothing, don't do nothing Mexicans on the city council tell us is that maybe they're not politicians. Maybe they're employees of the ten out of the hundred that have the social and economic and political power.' He says, 'you know what I never thought about that, thanks a lot, man.' 'Wait a minute, don't go yet,' I says, 'one other thing. It's even worse than those things!' He said, 'what's that?' I said, 'you and the seventy out of the hundred.'... 'What do you mean man?' I says, 'well, you live in National City, you told me you're going to college, you don't even know who our mayor is and you didn't even know who the four dumb yo-yo Mexicans who say they represent you, and they are spending you're money are,' and I says, 'and neither, I guess, did the seventy because they never say nothing.' He said, 'well what can I do man?' I said, 'well why don't you go back to college and think about it because it's not that simple, is it?' [Laughs] See, you don't what you don't know. I'm a good example of that, you know, like, I threw some leaflets around for Richard Nixon [laughs].

Mysogland: I saw that, yeah,

Baca: Like I tell people, I says, yeah I did that but you're still a Democrat because you've deported more of your people than anyone else. That's alright, I understand where you're at, some people like the plantation, you know? You know? They like that big hacienda. [Yeah.] You know what? This good little book called *My Parents Never Wanted Me to Ask Them About Slavery*. And it's a little book where they, in the 1920s, they, because the salves were now getting up to, twenty and sixty, that's what, the sixties and seventies, right? [hmm] So, whatever,

Congress sent some college students to interview ex-slaves. And what was interesting is, like anything else, human nature. You got, well, you know, Master Johnson, he wasn't that guy, you know, he bought us a pair of shoes. Then there was Master Smith, he was the devil and his wife was even worse, you know they'd whip us from daylight to night. And then there was even one lady there that said I miss slavery. That was a mind blower and then I started thinking about it, you only know what you know. And then, there was one guy, like reminded me of Malcolm X, he said, he told the young student, oh so you want to interview me, huh? You can interview me but don't tell me about that damn Abraham Lincoln, that he freed us, he didn't free us from nothing. What did he free us from? We didn't have no shoes, we didn't have no clothes, we didn't have no house, we didn't have no job. He says, so don't give me none of that. He said, I bet you get paid and again I ain't getting paid. What do you want to know? So anyway, but the three themes that ran through that whole, all the conversations...Number one was you got caught with a piece of paper, a book, or a pen, pertinence. The second one was, you had to go to church every Sunday and the white minister would tell them, you want to go to heaven? Obey your Master. And the third one was, they all talked about the pattyrollers. You know what a pattyroller is?

Mysogland: No.

**2:31:05:** Baca: Well, when I was a teenager that's what we used to call the white students, patties, you know.

Mysogland: Ok?

Baca: And pattys, so we read the book and what the pattyrollers were, they were like this minute men, the KKK. [Ok.] You know, the plantations used to have country roads [yeah] and in order for you, being on Smith's plantation, to go to Johnson's plantation you had to have a pass. [Right, right.] So, if they caught you, those pattyrollers would patrol [ok], in other words, to make sure that you knew and you stayed in your place. [Right.] Ok? So some of them were deputized. Some of them were just racists looking for, and if they caught you out there, they'd brand you, hang you, you know, shoot you. And even when they just used to come to visit the plantations the salves said they would run out to the woods, because they were feared. And then started thinking about that, you know, stay in your place. Isn't that what that gerry, redlining is all about? Isn't that what all the police problems happen in those areas? The ghettos, the barrios, huh? So you never escape history, you know. And, there's always a rationale. The rationale is to demonize, you know. You know you read history, the poor whites were told by the then press, plantation owners, the politicians, that the reason they were poor was because those enslaved had their jobs, stole their jobs...How absurd is it? But it sold! [Right.] It sold. Like what you're seeing right now, you know? Like I said, I'll add one other thing to that...abolish the Border Patrol, ICE [yeah] and all those draconian agencies...there will never be a solution until the affected people are able to make the laws and policies. And that means those that of us that were left here, Mexico is not going to do it, hasn't done it. And, Mexico is like those four city council people. Going back to the old sayings that we already said. The powers to be are not going to do it. The politicians that represent those interests, since there is no counter interest, are not going to do it. So, you know, plain and simple, the whole labor system has got to go. You know, that's, it's got to go. You know, and I mean, it's really shameful and

insulting. I have not heard no Hispanic caucus come out. It goes to show you, puritan history. 1979, we have that National Immigration Conference. Everyone was singing out that same note because of the Chicano movement. Abolish the INS, Border Patrol. Hey, if people come here, they should have all the rights of any other worker that contributes to society. We've gone from that to, troops, you know, I guess that's pretty close to a declaration of war. Isn't that what the military is for? [Yeah.] To now see, you know, children and women being incarcerated and violated, you know, and nobody knows what goes on in there, just like nobody knows what goes on up in those hills, nobody knows what goes on in those rich people's homes where there's maids, and there's hotels, and there's motels and people that got power, you know. It was happening to actresses, can you imagine people that have got poverty?

Mysogland: Exactly, yeah.

Baca: Fleeing from that, no access to any right, you know. So, you know, it's the only thing different with this is that it has dramatized and pricked the moral conscious of some people [laughs] for how long I don't [right] know how long. So, let me ask you, where are you from?

Mysogland: I grew up in Connecticut, like in the suburbs of New York City and I went to undergrad at Villanova University in Philadelphia...so I've been on the east coast my whole life. So now I'm back at Columbia in New York.

Baca: Ok so you have been out here how long?

Mysogland: I have been here since the start of June and I only have two weeks left. So unfortunately not that long. But I've been having a really good time, it's...

Baca: So let me ask you, who have you interviewed, you don't have give me no names, professors or....

Mysogland: No, who have I interviewed so far? Ok so I haven't interviewed that many people, I spoke with a few people who worked on *Voz Fronteriza*, the newspaper, over the phone...that just worked out schedule wise. And now that I've finished up pretty much looking through your documents I've gotten in contact with Roger and Norma Cazares and I'm going to speak with them hopefully this week or next. And I'm also trying to talk to David Avalos who I think put me in contact with you. He said he wanted to look through his stuff and then hopefully we'll meet up before I go as well. And then professor wise, I was talking to Professor Ortiz a lot at San Diego State...

Baca: Isidro?

Mysogland: Yeah, his chapter in *Chicano San Diego* was sort of my first introduction to your work and then I read Jimmy Patiño's and then I did my own archive stuff. So I spoke with him a lot towards the beginning

Baca: Jimmy?

Mysogland: No

Baca: Isidro.

Mysogland: I haven't reached out to Jimmy yet, I kind of wanted to do my own thing. I've been looking back at his book, I think it's a great resource but I think I'm going to reach out to him now that I've looked at the documents and have talked to you and stuff.

**2:37:50:** Baca: So, let me ask you, what did you think about Jimmy's book?

Mysogland: Um, I liked, I thought, I mean, there's such a wealth of information in your papers and I'm kind of overwhelmed looking at them so the fact that he was able to produce a book from it is really impressive. I listened to his interviews he did with you as well, that are through UCSD, and I thought those were really quite helpful. I liked the book a lot and it was, there was, it seemed like there was a ton of information in there so it was sometimes a bit tricky for me to follow, which organization was which and stuff but overall, I think he did...

Baca: Look, our objective was pretty simple, you know?

Mysogland: Yeah.

Baca: You know? If you're the problem you've got to be the solution.

Mysogland: Right, right.

Baca: See? And, you know, like the old saying, for every action there's a reaction. You know. The system might be crazy but they're not stupid. And you know, you have to remember, you're fighting a two front battle, you're fighting what the system is throwing at you, you know, because I don't care what they say, they're all part of that system. And you know, the old saying is, the rich and the powerful have many options. And they can come in and set up programs. [Right.] They can, you know, hire people. That does work, you know, they can put stuff in your car and even shoot you in the balcony. And then nobody know that it them. See, the poor and powerless have few, if any, options, [yeah] see, and you're talking to people that, you know, are having, it's a struggle to just survive. [Right.] And, when you're in that situation, there's so many problems, there's so many problems.

Mysogland: I know.

Baca: It's like I said, we open up CASA Justicia to do documentation [yeah] and wound up like a social worker, a spiritual advisor, a, you know, counselor. See, because that's the situation that you're in.

Mysogland: That reminded me of a question I wanted to ask you, sorry for interrupting. Do you think the majority of your interaction with kind of recent migrants themselves came through CASA Justica? Or were there, or were they involved with like the CCR as well and stuff? I'm

thinking of, like would they have attended like the protest against the Carter Plan or something like that?

Baca: Well, I would say the majority of people were Chicanos, ok? [Yeah.] In other words, we had the opportunities, I guess, we had the cover, you know. I mean the Afro-American movement, women's movement, you know, so we were able to function more than people that were hiding. Now in CASA Justicia we actually had a board of undocumented people.

Mysogland: Yeah, I read that.

Baca: But they were under the, you know, they were under the cover of CASA, you know, so it wasn't like most people. Now, I'm sure there was a lot of people that came out to the demonstrations and the marches we had. But as individuals, you know what I mean...

Mysogland: Not like announcing...

Baca: Not, I'm not going to draw no attention, don't ask me to the keynote speaker.

Mysogland: Right, that's what I figured.

Baca: So, and like I told you, you can make up your own mind, but I'm just being frank with you about agencies and social services...

Mysogland: No yeah.

Baca: You know, hey, of course those things serve a function because of the problem that's been created. But they're not a solution, they're a band-aid. They're a band-aid. Our organization was created to raise political conscious, [yes] social consciousness [right], get people to act on their own issues and problems as a group, on a history, and learning the history that had been taken away from them. See? You know, it's, they're concepts, ok? [Yeah.] They're concepts that, hey, I didn't expect, look, Doctor King, you don't have to go to Doctor King, go to the Jewish community – hey after losing six million, hey they didn't have to explain anything. You're first a Jew and then wherever you're at. Now, Afro-Americans, hey same thing. They had a history of mutiny, they had, you know, Nat Turner, then they had a history of, you know, resistance, they had, they had Frederick Douglass, you know, and then of course you know, Martin Luther King. You know King, after that whole international issue of decolonizing, you know, and people becoming aware of their histories and you know the injustice and the impact that the colonialism of their countries had, so basically, I think the difference between us and some of the other people [right] that wanted to put water out there for...First of all, they haven't got that many bottles of water. And number two, when you start thinking you can educate your oppressor [laughs] you going to find out real quick you ain't paying them. And agencies serve at the will of whoever funds them.

Mysogland: Right.

Baca: So, it's a game of, like an employee, you know. Dot your i's and cross your t's and make sure you don't get any problems. No, you know, as far as concepts, I think, you're here. [Laughs.] So, people I think are, and it's like I said, it's very complex, so people are looking to say well, what does make up the issue and the problem from the various, you know. Some are willing to admit it, nobody will ever admit this is racist, that they're operating within a racist, bigoted Nazi system, you know. But that's what it is. You know, from this perspective, you know, that's what it is. And what the agencies and, you know, if you're going to use that as an end instead of a means, but how can you? You're signing a contract that gives you a paycheck so now you're economically dependent on, you know, those people for your own survival. [Right.] You know? And some way, somehow, just like the war on poverty, you know, it's ok, poverty is gone. No it's not. That's a rationale, you know, and sometimes you even have to wonder why did they do it? You know? Why did they do it? Maybe that saying is true, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. [Right.] Stupidity, ignorance, I don't know. But I, see, I've been not hired by those folks but I've been on boards, I've even been chairman of some of those projects. What's the old saying? It starts out as a noble cause, turns into a business, and it ends up a scam, you know? The only thing that matters is are you going to fund me next year? So, you know, like I said, it's sort of that Martin Luther King nonviolence Civil Rights Movement and Malcolm X and black determination, you know. It's that sort of dynamics – it's sort of lopsided, you know. And Malcolm X never got nobody a job. He never sent anybody to school blah, blah, blah. Yeah but he gave you something you never had which was self-respect! You know, how do you measure that, see? See, how do you measure that? That people are so willing, you know, now this concepts. I don't see, this concept being germinating, one, two generations, maybe. See, certain things have always been put in motion, the cause and effect. See, you read, you, I'm sure you read Jimmy's book?

Mysogland: Yes, yes, of course.

Baca: So, you see who I got into fights with [right, yes] disagreements with over concepts. How do we progress? And you know what? In my book, hey right is right and wrong is wrong [laughs], and I see it like Malcolm X saw it. Freedom for everybody or freedom for nobody. [Laughs.] Simple, simple concept but it's a just [yeah] concept. No one is better than the other one and why shouldn't people be free? Freedom for everybody and freedom for nobody and that's I guess that's been my, there's not too many people I haven't gotten into it with...

Mysogland: No, but I think that's important.

Baca: You know, it's not for me to say. You ever hear that song, Matthews? [laughs] it's not for me to say...

Mysogland: Alright, well I've taken up a lot of your time, I don't want to take up too much longer.

Baca: Hey, well I put it aside...

Mysogland: Well, you've been enormously helpful I think you answered all the questions...

Baca: If you have some more don't feel shy. I told my wife, hey, I was hesitant to do it for a number of reasons but then I said, look I'm going to do it so hey you know, maybe your paper will be the paper that some MIT or Harvard or Yale person that has a conscious that will read and say yeah there's something not right you know. The whole story is not being told. You know and like I said, I don't understand how the great, great, great, great children of immigrants, the most important outside issue outside of the economy and terrorism would be immigration. And the way they're handling it! You know? [Yeah.] You see, it shows a height of stupidity, ignorance and arrogance that, I mean you can't even comprehend, you know? I mean, and like I said, it's like one of those kind of situations, it's like Mao said. Politics is war, war with ballots [laughs] you know. I didn't write the rules. You know? I says, like people always ask me. What about Aztlán? [Right] I says, I can't even control my own city block – what are you asking me for? That's your fear? But let me tell you something, how you treat this generation is going to determine how they are going to treat you. Isn't that what the good book says? Do unto others as you would like them to do onto you. You shall reap as you sow, you know. And I says, hey, other than that, I says, you're driving the car, enjoy it. Enjoy the drive. I'm sure the Romans probably thought, like the British, the sun will never set on the British Empire – oh yeah? Now you're a joke. But like I said, anything...

**2:53:54:** Mysogland: The last question I would just ask you is, what did you think about Jimmy's book?

Baca: Well, let me answer it this way, this guy asked me, this woman reporter asked me, were you satisfied with the way Jimmy published the issue? And I said, I said, no because he wasn't there. [Yeah]. He wasn't there and consequently you know he's going to see it by...

Mysogland: Right, it's his interpretations and his kind of thoughts about it.

Baca: But like I told Jimmy, you did a good, you did a professional, scholarly, historical job [yeah] in documenting most of the issues. Now there's some things there, because I was there, [laughs] that you know the shoe don't fit on the foot, kind of thing. [Yeah.] And but like I said, that's, but overall, there's a lot of information and the concepts of abolishing the Border Patrol, resistance, struggle, and you know addressing and attempting to find solutions was there and there was that whole generation. And going back to what I told you about agencies and funded agencies and committees and what have you. Hey, you saw what happened with that IRCA, you know it's, we are now getting the byproduct of them dismantling up to – ok 79, so 79 was the National Immigration Conference. [Right.] Everybody was on the same page of, the INS, the Border Patrol have got to go. They're hampering and they're violating human rights, civil rights. It's an agency that was placed there to make sure that we stay in our place, you know. And that's what we're fighting against and then the money came in. [Yeah.] The amnesty money, and hey, you know what, hey it became an I game, instead of a we game. And so the job was never concluded, never finished, it never advanced beyond that. You know, so you got a few people, like those Japanese soldiers that got stranded in the islands and still thinking [laughs] that the war was going on forty years after – see. But like I said, that's one way of looking at it. My way of looking at it is, what you write, what Jimmy wrote, what is in those archives, a smarter generation is going to come along because of the demographic change. And the same problem is going to be there. Why is this still going on? They're going to pick up that bat and they're going

to hit a home run and come all the way around the bases. And they'll say well that wasn't too hard to do, we can do it. See, but that's what I mean by osmosis. [Yeah.] People right now, don't forget, don't forget, 1970 is that not that long ago, historically. [Yeah.] You're talking about, you know, fifty years. Ok? Fifty years. Sixty to eighteen. Fifty years, fifty years. Number one, we didn't have no politicians, there was nothing, nothing, we didn't even exist as a people. We were known as the forgotten, the invisible minority. We didn't exist. Not to the politician, not to the policymakers, not even to ourselves. You know, the Mexican American Political Association – that was as fight to just say we were Mexicans. The conditioning that we had gone through, you know, and don't forget, were just a little puny minority, seven million, one out of a hundred and fifty. And with all those issues. So, there was, I remember a report from San Diego State, out of student enrollment it was sixty-five Spanish surnames, students. That didn't mean Chicanos. Could have been people from Mexico, could have been people from South America, could have been Philippines, it could have even been Spaniards [*laughs*]. Sixty-five. There was no teachers, there was no counselors, there was no principals, there was no PhDs. There was nothing. No politicians, no judges. Attorneys, statistically speaking, nonexistent. Doctors, not existent. So, now, we got literally hundreds of thousands of teachers and students and how come we've got more of our young people in prisons instead of colleges. See? Why you writing that up for? [*Inaudible*]...See, so, like I told you, the system, it's crazy but they're not stupid. [Right.] And this is what they have produced. And that is, that's it's not easy not being enticed when you ain't got nothing, you know. You go to college free? Sign me up! Oh, you mean I can be a politician and everybody will come and call me sir, señor? Don? [*laughs*] see? It's, what is it? Malcolm X used to say that people that were in the movement today have become men of affairs, in other words they got a little piece of the pie and now they don't do it that way. Hey, I know Joe he's good for it, he's not going to...see? That's why there's nothing really collective and I did tell Jimmy Patiño – once you write a book about all of those people and what they did since they were so adamant in their positions, where they at now? Huh? See, it's easier to criticize the person that is pulling the wagon. Where they at? See because that, see, people don't like to talk about those kind of things, you know, like why do we have more of our children in prisons than in colleges? Come on, tell me? I mean, you guys making money, you guys living in nice houses, what? You're not what you say they are, are you? See, and it's like, people always say, oh we going to be the majority. The blacks in South Africa were the majority in South Africa ten to one and that didn't work did it? The Jewish community is not the majority. They just, you've still got Senators. They've got two and they're two percent of the state of California and we're forty percent? Tell me what's wrong with that picture, huh? And like those cotton farmers – hey they know if they don't put their time and money and send someone where the laws, the rules and regulations are being voted on, I says, they will get their water taken away. They will get their land sold to developers. I says, so anyway, the reason I am telling you this [yeah] because it is part and partial of the total problem.

Mysogland: Right.

Baca: You know, I told you immigration that you're looking into [mmm], that's your center piece, is just our most highlighted issue and problem, but it's not the only problem. But it does manifest whatever powerlessness and other issues that are unattended. Like education, [right] education is, but...[*background talking*]...Like I said, the reasons I am telling you this, is that its part and partial of everything else. You know, you cannot just get a solution and happy days are



here again. [Right, right.] It's vice versa, matter of fact. You know some of these other things have to be addressed, before, because that is such, that involves so much interest. Economic interest, political interest, that is going to take a lot, it's going to take a lot to resolve that issue and problem. So, you know, that's why I wanted you to get [thank you] at least an overview of fifty years of involvement.

Mysogland: This has been enormously helpful.

Baca: Something you probably read and were like – he got into an argument with Cesar Chavez? You know, or, hey, wait a minute. Does anyone want cold water? See? And like I said, that doesn't detract from the things that they did, that's what I tell people. It was a in family, in house, disagreement over something all of us were learning about, or trying to get educated on. See, and, you know, like I said, nobody wants a wall, especially me. I'm seventy-five and they haven't been able to do it yet, I don't think it's going to happen. But like I said, the biggest denominator in this whole discussion is demographics. [Right]. Demographics. And what's that going to cause before the dust settles? I don't know, you have two historical forces going in two separate directions and that's history. So you have any other questions down the road, well just give me a call.