

Raymond Gonzalez interviewed by Una Lynch

Speakers: Raymond Gonzalez; Una Lynch

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Scope and Contents: In this interview, originally recorded over Zoom, Raymond “Ray” Gonzalez speaks with Watsonville is in the Heart team member Una Lynch. Ray talks about his mother, Margaret Sanchez, a Mexican woman who moved from Texas around the country to search for work. He explains how she eventually settled in Salinas, working in agriculture and as a cook in the labor camps. Ray goes on to talk about how his mother met his stepfather, Benito Acosta Nerona, while working in the canneries. Benito immigrated to Watsonville from the Philippines to work as an agricultural laborer. Ray speaks about the hardships his stepfather endured while working in the fields, and he describes the union meetings his parents would host at their family home. Though Ray is not ethnically Filipino, he shares his feelings of respect and pride for the Filipino community in Watsonville that his stepfather passed down to him. Ray also reminisces about being involved in the Filipino Youth Club and the tight knit Filipino and Latino communities while growing up in Watsonville.

Una Lynch 00:01

Okay, so now it is recording. I'm also going to be recording on a secondary device just in case something terrible happens. I wouldn't want to lose the, the interview audio. Okay, great. So now we're going on all ends. And so I'm just going to start by saying, my name is Una Lynch. And today's date is February 6th 2023. I'm here with Ray Gonzalez. And currently I'm in Santa Cruz, California, and Ray is in San Antonio, Texas. So we're doing this interview over Zoom. And thank you so much for agreeing to this, and working with Watsonville is in the Heart. And so I just wanted to start by asking for your full name, and then your date of birth and location of birth.

Raymond Gonzalez 00:56

My name is Raymond Gonzalez, with a Z, Jr. Date of birth is September 13th 1943. I'm a war baby. And I was born in San Antonio, Texas, but raised in Watsonville, California.

Una Lynch 01:13

Nice. That's awesome. So today, we're just going to be—as I was talking to you earlier, we're going to be talking about your family and kind of how your parents came to Watsonville and also about your stepfather in Watsonville and kind of your early life. So maybe we can start with your parents. Maybe you can tell me about your dad first. And a little bit about his, his life and his upbringing.

Raymond Gonzalez 01:39

My dad is Isidro Ramon Gonzalez. He's—they migrated from Monterrey, Mexico where they had a business there, during the Civil War, Pancho Villa and Zapata. And he came to Texas as a little baby. And he went to school and those days fifth grade was the highest grade most, most Hispanics were able to obtain, except for a lucky few. And my father was very—he was an entrepreneur. He always liked to work for himself. So he started an automotive shop. And he had an automotive company in San Antonio. But I didn't know him. I never got—I never knew him until I went to live with him in 1960. He

married my lovely mom, in San Antonio. Margaret Sanchez, and she, they, she already had two girls. My oldest sister is Gloria Dominguez. And my next sister is Marialis Dominguez. And both born in San Antonio, Texas. And when she married my dad, she had my, they had my oldest sister, Dora Gonzalez, and then myself in September. I'm about two years older, and my sister, Dora, has already passed away because of diabetes. But unfortunately, in those days, during the, during the war, they divorced a little after I was born. And my mother was doing farm work. Basically, that was her limit too, because she had a fifth grade education. But, but she, she spoke Spanish better than she did English. And she was, matter of fact, that was her gift when she came to us, when we migrated from Chicago to Salinas, in late 1949. My mother and four kids, four kids, with another family, another Latino family went, we traveled from Chicago all the way to Salinas because that's where the promise of work was for my mom.

Una Lynch 04:24

Was she working as a farm worker in Texas and Chicago also?

Raymond Gonzalez 04:28

Both, both field work and also in the canneries. In the old cannery Road, which is down Salinas Road in Salinas. Typically, it was really difficult for for my mom with four kids, so we all struggled, but luckily she met my stepfather, which is a— he migrated from the Philippines, the west side of the Philippines to San Francisco and from San Francisco, he ended up in Salinas working in the fields. But that wasn't that wasn't it—he wasn't really into field work. He was he was more of a, my, my dad Benito Acosta Nerona was not meant, he was meant more for hospitality. He was a very charming, charismatic man. And as a kid, I remember him coming home from the fields, and his hands would be swollen. I remember him sitting down in the chair in the kitchen, and my mom would be rubbing his hands because they would have to hold up a hoe or knife when they were harvesting the different products in Salinas, and in the Pajaro Valley, and also in Monterey.

Una Lynch 06:11

So then how did your mom and your stepdad meet and eventually get married?

Raymond Gonzalez 06:17

They, they shared this, I remember them sharing the story with me. My mom was, matter of fact, this, this was my mom's room when she got older. She came to live—she wanted to come live in San Antonio, because she wanted to be buried with her mom, in the same cemetery. And this was her room, and my mom shared some of the good stories. I don't remember much because I was just a little kid, matter of fact, I, after I started kindergarten in 1950, and my sister would be born two years later. But they met, my mom and my stepfather, Benito, they were working in the canneries, and he was working as a laborer in the canneries. But it was seasonal work, they work there and then sometimes they have to go work in, in stoop labor, and work hoeing and harvesting, whatever whatever job is— most of the time if you didn't have any work there in Salinas, Watsonville or Monterey, they would go to the fishing canneries in Alaska, or up North somewhere, I think in Washington, but I think mostly was in Alaska.

Raymond Gonzalez 07:32

They met and they dated for about a year. And, I, when I think of my stepfather, what I remember most is that he was young. He was a young man. He was an idealist, you know, when you—when you live—when you live in, in a beautiful country like the Philippines, especially on the West side of the Philippine Islands. It's beautiful weather and it was more of a tourist type area that he lived in. And he wasn't he wasn't a big stature. He wasn't a big man. He was, he was a little shorter than I, than me. But I reflect on his desire to come over to the, what I call, look for his North star here in the States. And he did—luckily he ended up in Salinas and he met my mom because he was the best part of my life. He basically raised me during the 50s. And, and so instead of being raised, being raised by my father, Isidro Ramon, it was Benito Acosta who raised me. And, much of what I know now is because of him, so he gave me a lot of his entrepreneurial desires. Because I ended up, I ended up—hated working in somebody's office. I like working for myself, and I ended up doing that and I did very well because I remember him spending a lot of time with me, telling me about his youth, and his days along the coast, he used to like to swim. So that's what I remember. But I also remember the time that we spent when he was dating my mom, and he would love her—it was difficult for him because he had almost to financially support four other people, my mom and four other people. So, I, you know, that's almost Biblical to a point right? Where he takes on this huge responsibility and that wasn't part of his dream. But he, he fell in love with my mom and you've seen her pictures, she, she could have been a movie star. Easy, very easy. My mom was half German. And her last name was Bull, b-u-l-l. But she was, she was raised by her stepfather. And she ended up with the last name Sanchez. So that's that—but when we, when she passed away, her death certificate said Bull. She, she loved, she loved my step-father. And I remember after my sister was born, my little sister Leilani was born, so much of what we did was family. And he passed that on to me too, because it wasn't—they didn't have a lot of night outs by themselves. Again, my two older sisters, they kind of went on their own way, they were already teenagers. And then me my, my little sister were kind of raised, raised by him. I was. Because in Spanish, we have a word called consentido, which means favorite one. And I was his consentido, because he would share all his frustrations with my mom and my sisters with me.

Raymond Gonzalez 11:42

And, and he, he came to the United States by way of Hawai'i where he worked in the Big Island. And he worked, he did some field work, but most of the time he was, he was very—he had a very charming, bubbly personality. They put him to work in the bar. Because it was a resort, very fancy resort there in Hawai'i, the Big Island. I think I forget the name of the Big Island, Hilo or something like that. And he did bartending. And he fell in love with the bartending hospitality business. He really, really liked that. And so when he came to the United States by—he got on a merchant ship from Hawai'i. And it ended up in Japan. And then from there, it traversed across the Pacific to San Francisco, that's where he ended up. But immediately he came to the Pajaro Valley, because he was, he was looking for, you know, for his dream, and for a good job. So, and, he was successful, both in his work, and also his family life because everywhere we went, he took us everywhere. I remember trips to San Francisco. We used to eat regularly at a restaurant in Watsonville called the Filipino Gardens.

Una Lynch 13:18

Yeah, I've heard about that.

Una Lynch 13:21

That we, we—and when he was upset with Mom, he'd say, okay, let's go get Coke. And we'd take it off and go to Filipino Gardens because they had a—they used to have gambling in the back. And I learned how to eat Chop Suey, and Coca Colas. So that was—I would sit in the front on the counter, and he would go in the back and watch the card games in the back or whatever they did back there. They wouldn't allow me in there. But—

Una Lynch 13:51

It's a secret.

Raymond Gonzalez 13:52

It is. We moved around a lot in Watsonville. There was a, there was—I felt it more, because after I left Watsonville to come to Texas to stay and meet my father, that I, I went from a very friendly community. I went to a very hostile community. There's a difference in cultures. Right? You go from a small community culture where everybody knows everybody, calls you by your first name. And you, and you tend to hang out together. Filipinos and Mexicanos that would—most of them lived, were living in what I call the Second Street. It was a dead end street. And it was an enclave where, although most of the field workers lived in that area, so I grew up with a lot of Filipinos and some Japanese, and one or two black families and, and the white family called Southwell. I forget his name—Jim Southwell. And we still talk, even when—years later I still kept in touch with him. He moved to Fresno, right out of high school he moved to Fresno and we kept in touch and I saw him at the 30th class reunion. Even though I didn't graduate from Watsonville high I was invited to go and most of the kids there thought I was killed in Vietnam because I was that crazy. That guy will end up dead in Vietnam, right? So, and, that's basically the route of my, my love for my dad. There's something, there's something special about, and I shared this with my kids, is that, my dad—I feel like I was selected. This is like if he had a choice to pick his family he said, I pick that family. And he'd take—I'll take that beautiful lady and I'll take her four kids. And, and so I feel like I was selected, he chose us and I always felt that way. He was always talking to me, and sharing his life experiences. And he was telling me that I needed to watch out for this type of people, and this type of people, but—I want to cry. I remember he would take me golfing with him at the country club. It used to be a private country club which is on, I forget the name of the road, Salinas road as it goes Pajaro Valley and it curves and it goes up in the hills. And he used to take me to the country, to the country club there but he—I guess he took me because he wanted to get out of the house and I was an excuse. He's going with me so nothings going to happen, type of thing. And I would play, I had a little golf set with two or three balls in it. And he would, he would take me there and I would play nine holes with him and those days didn't have carts or anything, but you had to walk.

Una Lynch 17:52

Oh, you had to walk around the hole.

Raymond Gonzalez 17:54

So I would end up after nine holes, I would end up at the, at the country club. And I would order—he would, he would order for me, he says, give, give him a tuna fish on toast with chips and a Coke and I would wait till he finished. But that's the type of person he was, he never-he was never selfish, [indiscernible] himself. He always managed to enrich the family. And he used to talk about, he used to talk about the the islands in the Philippines a lot.

Una Lynch 18:31

Yeah, I was curious about that. You said he shared a lot of memories kind of, of his youth are there any in particular that you, that you still remember?

Raymond Gonzalez 18:41

I think what I remember the most is that he—the struggling of the family especially during the war. I think that was huge. He would break down in tears. So, he saw a lot. And, I think that's when he used to get teary eyed, when he was talking about the struggles during the war, during the second world war. So, I—but what I remember a lot about him is all the trips. My sister had to have special surgery on her legs. And I—that's Marialis, the second born, and we used to drive—he had, I think it was a '49 Ford. It was like a station wagon and it had like wood on the side. I think they call them Woody's, it had wood on the side. And he was very proud of his, his used car and he would go there and clean it and he was constantly cleaning the windows. But he would, we would drive to San Francisco with my, my sister would have to go there for special treatment on her, surgery on her legs. She had both her legs. She had to have surgery on both her knees. And he, he used to make that fun. He'd make it a trip, and we would sing along. And you put the radio on and open the windows. I don't think we had air in those days. But everything he did, he used to make it fun. And that's his personality. And I see why he, he was very successful in the hospitality business, in the bartending business. And he wrote a book. And I think—I'm not sure if I sent you a copy of that. It's the very, very first page. It's—the book was for amateur bartenders, and it was about tropical drinks, right, today. And it was 40 pages long, and I don't drink but if I had my druthers, I'd probably make a lot of those drinks. And one of the drinks in the book was, he called it Leilani after his daughter.

Una Lynch 21:14

Yeah, I don't think you sent it to me. But I would love to see it.

Raymond Gonzalez 21:19

Yeah, matter of fact, I have it here. I was going to show it to you. But the—I don't have all of it. My sister. It's still listed in Amazon. But it's no longer published. But my sister wouldn't give it to me. She was afraid I was gonna lose it because her son found it and bought it for his, for his mom, her son, Junior. He's the firstborn, my first nephew born. And they wouldn't let go. But it was 40 pages long. Could you imagine? Somebody from—with just education from the Philippines? Traveling all the way to the United States. That dream, I wish more of these kids had that dream, right? That, that focus to succeed. And I think that's always been part of what drives me too, is I, when I, I have people that I love that even though they were limited financially, they still managed to succeed. And when I—in 1957 I don't remember my dad saying bye to me. Again, my story is coming from someone who was raised by a Filipino, a lovely Filipino man, because my sister was too small, Leilani. And I was just on the phone with her. And I was sharing that I wasn't happy with the pictures. And I sent her a copy of the calendar. And she said, yeah, she said, that doesn't make any sense. Yeah. I don't write, I don't, exactly—I didn't write that—what they did is they took two different narratives that I sent in and somebody down there tried to fuse them together. And it didn't sound very well, but they never gave me a chance to review it and to resubmit. But I was very unhappy that the main picture of my deceased brother-in-law, Leilani's

husband and only husband and her tribe. I think I sent this to you. And I think there's like 15 people in that picture.

Una Lynch 23:49

Yeah, got a lot of kids.

Raymond Gonzalez 23:52

A lot of kids, and all those from Benito Acosta Nerona, and his legacy. And I—oh, thank you. I had—I shared that with my sister earlier when I was talking to her. I said, I said I am sorry, that picture didn't come out. But I said I did send it, that was referring to you, I sent it the lady that's going to interview me on, on Zoom. And I said that, that's the one I wanted it because that, that shows, that's my dad, right? Because he came from a large family. I never got to meet any of his family. But I think that the reason that he didn't talk about his personal family is because, probably because of the struggle they had during the war because they were occupied. So I imagine that he didn't want to remember that. He did remember the swimming, and his time at the sea when he was there. He worked odd jobs and things like that, but he was always, how do I say, he, he did not know how to stand still. And I think that's very typical of Filipinos, they get very focused. And when they, when they want something, right, they, they don't, they stay focused on it and they complete. They don't give up on something they, they finish with it. And I think that was me when I, when I was going to night school, to go to college at Lady the Lake University. I gave up for two years, I said I'm not going to go to school anymore. And I remember him. I said he never gave up. So I did finish it even though I hated having to come home and constantly sit down and read books, right? But, but I got that from him, I didn't get it from my real dad, even though my real dad tried to make up when I came here to live with him. He tried to make up for the suffering that my mom went through with us four kids. But there was another, God sent another man there in Watsonville. And that's my, that's my stepfather, Ben.

Una Lynch 26:21

Yeah, so about your stepfather. I know he maybe, it sounds like didn't share too much about his life in the Philippines. But what would you say you know about it? How long did he live there? Where was he born in the Philippines, where did he live there?

Raymond Gonzalez 26:39

He was born in La Union. I say it in Spanish, La Union Province, in Luna. Little town called Luna. Right along the West part of—it just kind of, Manila is here and kind of North West of Manila. But along the coast, there's a couple of Provinces and they're very well known Provinces. And a lot of the Filipinos that ended up in Watsonville are from that area. So the word got around that life was good in Salinas and Watsonville and Monterey. Even more interesting is how they chose—when he went to Salinas, but then he made his choice of residency. He says that's where I want to live.

Una Lynch 27:34

Really? So he already knew about Watsonville?

Raymond Gonzalez 27:36

Yeah, that's where I want to raise my family. So that's, that's his, his image of home. Yeah, we, and we say Tierra Firme, right? Your firm Earth. That's where he decided to raise his family and my mom and him they moved to, to Watsonville. And again, like I say we, we—typical— the times, then where if you move to a community, you tend to congregate into a certain area. And that was typical of everywhere else in this country. But lucky for us that there was a lot of Filipinos, and Japanese. And I remember telling you that I grew up thinking that I was Filipino.

Una Lynch 28:34

Yeah, I remember you said that.

Raymond Gonzalez 28:35

Because my stepdad was Filipino. And we lived in the Filipino, the Filipino community. My best friend was Freddie Castillo. He's blended. He's half Mexican and half Filipino. We hung around with Filipino kids, full blooded, first generation kids. And the more interesting is that, went to school with a lot of Japanese and Filipinos. And we ate in Filipino restaurants. Like I was telling you, the Filipino Gardens. And I was in a Filipino Youth club. And matter of fact, one of them, one of my high school friends. By the name of Juanita—like my wife—Sulay Wilson.

Una Lynch 29:32

Actually, I've met her, I was at her house last weekend. Yeah.

Raymond Gonzalez 29:36

Yeah. Hope you told her about this.

Una Lynch 29:39

I did! Yeah, I brought you up.

Raymond Gonzalez 29:43

She's the one that found the membership roster for the, I think it was '59 Filipino youth club. She says, Ray , you're number 18 on there. The dues was 10 cents I think. It was a lot of money to me right? So this might, I truly, I believed that I was Filipino, because everything, everything about my life and existence in those days was with the Filipino people, Filipino community. And I tell the story to my kids and my wife that I didn't know I wasn't Filipino. The epiphany came when I was—I went to the movies at the Fox Theater, there on main street in Watsonville. And I got to see the movie called Giant with Rock Hudson and Elizabeth Taylor. And at the end of the movie, there's this character, played by Sal Mineo, and he's a marine and his body has been returned home to the ranch, where they were raised. And in present terms, that ranch is what we call now Colonias, right. It's a little, it's a little segment of, of property. And it's all their workers and laborers live in that little area. And this this, this, this kid in the movie, his movie name was Angel Escobedo, and he's a Marine, he's killed in the Pacific, and they bring him home and, and he's, and I remember seeing that, and I remember, the Texas—the myth of Texas, you know, bigger. And I remember the, the, the National Song of Texas and I remember that I remember the pride in the fact that these kids were Latino. And in that, I remember going home and I remember telling my mom, I said "am I a Mexican?" We didn't talk Spanish in the house, my mother wouldn't want us to talk. And it was always, speak English, speak English, speak English, you know.

And then at school, they used to hit us. They'd punish us if you talk Spanish. You kids don't probably don't remember that but we used to get spanked or punished and put in the back. It's like timeout in the back because you were talking Spanish, right? And that was more prevalent when I was in the third grade with Mrs. Hill. God bless her soul. She was really really mean. But I didn't know, it was, it was like an "aha" moment when I saw this kid, you know Marine. And I had a second thought, again, like I said, an epiphany of that I was a Latino kid. And wondering why I was in love with Filipino girls because they're, they were all gorgeous. I tell my wife that my first love was a Filipino girl by the name of Lanai Tagami. Which, and her family lived just down the road on Beach Street from Watsonville. If you go toward the Monterey Bay, on the left side, their dad had a sharecropper farm there and I—that's where she was raised.

Raymond Gonzalez 33:28

But one thing that I learned about my experience with my step-father, and the Filipino community was the togetherness they had. They have this, this, they're like tethered together, it's like the glue that holds them together, thereby community. And, they were, they always volunteer to do stuff. They always had something to do. And they got involved in their community and their city. And the only thing I didn't know, growing up there, as an adolescent, what I really didn't know was about the incident with the killing of the Filipino farm worker in the 30s. But they never shared that with us. But that, that, that bias that anger was, had sort of faded away. And my dad never spoke of it. I'm sure he knew, right? I'm sure they all knew. But it wasn't something—they didn't dwell on that kind of stuff. When I, when I transferred from high school to Texas, that was, there was still discrimination here. Matter of fact, during the war in Vietnam, blacks could not go to some of the theaters here. They still had to go in, and, and go to the top. It was the smoking area. And that used to anger me being in the military. And knowing that my black brothers in Vietnam and Filipinos, Brown Brothers were getting killed. And this was happening. That kind of hurt me. I was angry for a while. And I guess that's why I became involved with, with the struggle of equity and equal opportunity, because my dad, even though he wasn't political, he was still interested. Ben was still interested in the unions, because they used to have. I know there were union talks, maybe twice, twice a month, there'd be a bunch of people in the kitchen. Right? They come in about 9:30 or 10 o'clock or something like I know, sit around and they'd stay about two hours. And my mom would make them coffee. And serve them Buñuelos, which is a tortilla cooked in, in oil. And they used to, they would talk about the unions and about the pay, stuff like that. So even though my dad was not as active as the other Filipinos, he was a little bit more daring in that, he looked at the injustices of the fieldwork, the fact that there were no porta-potties to use, water fountains, or sick leave, or anything like that, because most of them, most of them, were not employees, they were contract labor. And they didn't have any rights, no rights at all. So if you didn't show up to work, you know, you probably lost your job. So maybe that's why he was gone a lot of times from Watsonville. He had to go away to find work somewhere else, because work up there in Washington was a lot different than what's here because you made more money up there, then he made in Watsonville in the field work. But I always wondered, now that I'm older, I always wonder why he didn't—my dad did not talk about, just the everyday stuff with, other than the fact that he'd, he used to hustle. He was a, he was a hustler. And he would do odd jobs and so what he could for his parents, because they had I think, I remember eight or nine kids. I'm not sure if that was his, all his family. But, so there must have been a lot of mouths to feed in the Philippines. But you can imagine living through that experience, being

occupied, and then moving on, and leaving that behind you. It's kind of hard. That would—it would be hard for anybody.

Una Lynch 38:10

Do you feel like living in occupied Philippines sort of impacted his view of the United States? Or was that still like his dream? I'm curious to hear what his perspective was on that?

Raymond Gonzalez 38:26

That's a good question. Because why would they move? Why would—why would he come here? You know, when we're young, we all tend to be very idealistic. And we can see something always better on the other side of the mountain. And some more than others, because some, a lot of them didn't move beyond the thought of leaving the Philippines. But a lot of them decided to take the risk. So in an essence, he—they were risk takers, not only my dad, but all those that came before him. They took risk. And, and that's part of their personality. And, and, and that's why they weren't very, at first, they weren't very vocal in the way they were treated. That came with understanding the freedom that they have in the United States. They, they, they, they were like this, and then they started looking like this. They got to see everybody else enjoying the fruits of democracy. And then they said, we want some of that. And I think that's what changed. That's why the Filipino community and Watsonville and other communities is very, very strong. And it's a force to reckon with, a lot of these communities. Here, when I came here, in 1960, we were vocal—I noticed they were, they were proactive but they didn't take the risk. They just talked about it over there they were, they were moving beyond talking at the kitchen table. I never shared that with any of my, the first generation Filipino kids but I'm sure that that was part of their, what happened in their homes at night at the kitchen table when, friends of their parents like Juanita and Manzanita Sulay. Yeah, they're, by the way, those two girls were the best looking girls in town. And they lived in, they were, for some reason, they didn't live in that enclave where most of the Latinos were at, and Filipinos. They lived, they actually had a home and they were experiencing the dream of homeownership. And so that, to me, is what middle class is supposed to be about. And so they live just down the street on Main Street, as you go into Freedom Boulevard, they lived in that area, and I remember Juanita, Manzanita their, their mom was very liberal. And they would have a lot of parties. The kids here would go. And Mrs. Sulay was always very welcoming to all of us. And because a lot of kids were blended families. My sister was—Freddie was my best friend. I don't know, have you talked to Freddie Castillo?

Una Lynch 41:52

I haven't personally, I don't know if the project has yet.

Raymond Gonzalez 41:56

Well he's a little bit more shy. And I would love, I would love that he get on the archives, because his father was, was another one of the sharecroppers where they, they've rented the property and they split the proceeds from the sale of the harvest with the owner of the property. I hope he gets, I hope he gets on. He's telling the story because his story is like mine. His mother was from New Mexico. And she married a Filipino. She was like 16 when she married. And so his mom and my mom were best friends. And I have a picture of them. And they're, it's right up there. And, and they're having their beers. So it's funny how their friendship kind of bled over to Freddie and I. So Freddie and I have been friends

since— they were friends in the early 50s. So Freddie and I have been soulmates for all these years. So I hope that he gets interviewed and put in the archives because his daddy was really nice, kind of stern, and stoic, and he was always complaining that we would make a lot of noise so we could watch, we would watch football games on black and white TV sets and we'd yell and his father would come in and [growling noise]. So he would, it was very typical of Filipinos. They would have their, they go to church, a lot of them went to church. Or if they didn't go to church, they made sure that we went to church, you know, you gotta go to church.

Raymond Gonzalez 43:48

So Freddie and I, a lot of the Filipinos there, they went to church. We were raised on the Baltimore Catholic Catechism where the nuns would beat the hell out of you. If you, if you didn't do your homework, and you didn't come prepared for the studies and all that. Every Saturday you had to go to the Catechism in Watsonville, the nuns from Mora High School. I don't know if you're familiar with it. They were the ones that taught the Catechism, Catholic Catechism at St. Patrick's across the street, so that, but my dad just made sure that we went to church and even though he sometimes he couldn't, because he, you know, they work, had to work on Saturdays and sometimes Sundays depending on time of the year. And so they're always, unfortunately, they—if he would have stayed in the field, he would have been used up too soon. And that's what the field will do to you, just cook you. Yeah. And, luckily for them, they started bringing in Braceros. Those are, those laborers from Mexico for six, six months, and they would house them in these camps. And I forgot to tell you, my mom ended up being a cook there. They, she would cook breakfast for them and lunch, and, and dinner. But that was 24/7. That was all the time because those guys gotta eat right? So my dad helped her with that too. So my mom was in charge of the kitchen. I think it was in '54, '55 along San Andreas Road, which is right by the coast by the Academy. There's a good Academy out there. Not far from where Tom Cruise and Kidman used to live, you know, that right?

Una Lynch 45:53

They lived in Watsonville?

Raymond Gonzalez 45:55

They lived in, in, on San Andreas road, you know, by the, by Sunset Beach. And you go, you go down Beach Street, and then you turn right and then you go down San Andreas road, and then you curve and you go by K.O. There's a K.O. trailer park there on the right hand side. Further up as you go into the large wooded trees. Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman had their home there. It was gated real huge. Yeah.

Una Lynch 46:30

What an interesting dichotomy

Raymond Gonzalez 46:31

By brother Freddie—Yes. It's really funny, matter of fact, that some of the people there, when I was, when I was visiting him, there was a condo. And some of the people said yes, we see, we see her at the beach and stuff like that. Not him so much. But yeah, they lived down the street. I won't, I won't tell you this. In my insurance company. One of my insurers was Dukes of Hazzard. You know what I'm talking about right? The blonde guy. They used to do all the driving. I forget his name. You can tell, I'm

gonna be 80 years old. My wife remembers because he sent, he sent me and my staff a Christmas postcard from Hawai'i. He says, wish you were here. Yeah. I forget his name. You remember his name, honey? Oh she closed the door on me.

Una Lynch 47:36

It'll come to you later.

Raymond Gonzalez 47:37

Yeah, it'll come to me. But when I was talking to Juanita Sulay Wilson. And I was writing my thoughts. And I was writing to my sister, and I was telling her it's funny, I was so, I was closer to him than I was with my real dad. And he left a lot of impressions on me, and I basically, there every, every, every part of me is that you need to balance your life, right? Your work, your church, and your family and yourself. You got to have a little time for everybody. And I practice that. So my kids are grown up, my two sons, my—from my first marriage, they got to share a lot of my life with me. Because my dad was that way he just—let's go, we leave right? Or Saturday morning, I'd get up and eat breakfast and he'd be out there cleaning his car polishing and cleaning the windows. And I'd be out there like a little dummy cleaning it too. I knew I was, I was gonna end up going, going with him. But when, when I heard about this archival for Watsonville is in the Heart, I said they are going to get to hear my story. And, and I told that to my little sister, because we were just there in September. Well, that's okay. Because I didn't know him very well. Right? Cuz he didn't raise her like it. So it's funny that that, the curse kind of, my real dad didn't raise me, but somebody else did. So it's kind of almost like a good samaritan. It's almost like the Good Samaritan. Right? You know, God says, don't worry about it, somebody else, I got somebody else that'll do it for me. And same thing with my little sister. Her dad didn't raise her even though she later on in life. She got to know him because she went, she went live with him in Las Vegas.

Raymond Gonzalez 50:08

I always remember when I would come—we used to come to Watsonville every two years. And we would drive because flying was too expensive for us. So we would drive, and two weeks vacation, and on the way back to Texas, we would always stop in Las Vegas, to meet with my dad, introduce him to my kids and my wife. And what I remember most, and this is, this, this, this always stayed with me is that when he would introduce me, he would take, he'd take my wife and I to the casinos because he was a supervisor there. And he would introduce me to some of his staff. And then he would say, I want to introduce you to my son, he would call me his son. Right? I felt proud. He would tell me, he would introduce me to one of his workers, right. And he said, he's from my hometown. He would sponsor a lot of Filipinos. I don't know if you know this, if you go to Las Vegas, you get a, you get a, get to vote absentee. They have an application in Filipino. They have one in Spanish, English and Filipino because the Filipino community in Las Vegas is huge. It's huge. And my dad, when he would introduce me, he would tell me, he, like—I sponsored him. I got him a job here, when they came here, they were working here. And he—everybody there knew my dad, he had a good reputation. And, and that's what, it's important to me, because this archive will kind of solidify that history of my dad, that, even though he didn't stay in Watsonville and the beautiful Pajaro Valley, that he never stopped paying it forward. Because he had friends that he would bring over. And so if you go to Vegas, and you think like, there's a lot of people there that probably knew my dad, he would give them jobs there. And I remember we would be sitting down at the bar or something like that, and somebody would pat him on the back, and

they would say I want you to meet my son and my wife, my daughter in law. And see those are the things that I share with my kids and my little sister, and my nieces and her side of the family. I said, that's, that's your grandfather.

Raymond Gonzalez 52:59

He was a special man. I said, and he was willing to sacrifice his life. To work in the field. That's hard work. I said at night, at the end of summer, even some of the biggest, strongest men that work in the field. Can't last out there one full day because it's so hard. It's very, it's grueling work. And, and to do that, besides maintaining your dream, you know, what you want to do ultimately want to do, and raise a family and to get up, you know, and to get up at five o'clock and have breakfast. My mom and my stepfather didn't remember this, he says, he didn't like my mom to make his lunch. Because she would not make white rice. It had to be mushy, mushy. It had to be soft, right? Because you want it dry when you're at home, because you could mix it with sauces and stuff like that. But when you are out in the field you want to you want it to stick on your fingers and you can eat it. And so he would sometimes, most of the time, he would make his own lunch. But she would, you know take care of him, wash his clothes. But I do remember watching him come home and moaning because stoop labor is very, very hard. Can you imagine being on, being like this? Always crouched and in the sun. And he just a little bit yeah, he's like, you know Arnold Schwarzenegger. But he exemplifies the Filipino and the legacy that they left in Watsonville which is part of my legacy, even though I'm not—I don't have any Filipino blood in me. But that's, that's what I tell my sister's kids, I said you got to be proud. Your, your father, your grandfather's Filipino. I said when you see the Filipino flag, because I got it up here, I got Mexico, United States, and Filipino and another, the only one I don't have up here is Texas. But I have a Filipino flag, a Mexican flag because I'm proud of their heritage, which is my heritage, even though I'm not any blood to him. It's, it's, it was a godsend that my mom met him, it really, he really was.

Raymond Gonzalez 55:40

I hope that my nephews, that tribe that you saw on that picture, they don't forget that those roots that, that he was looking eastward from the Philippines. Right? And he never, he, he never lost that focus to come to this country and have my little sister with my mom, but my mom and I were, she was, she was living with me in—before she passed away. We used to share stories about her marriages because she's married three times. And I asked her why, why did, why, what happened? And she says he wanted, he wanted more. He wasn't satisfied with working in the fields or working in the canneries. He, he was looking beyond that. And he wanted me, she says, he wanted me to go to Vegas. But we already had roots here and the kids are going to school. So it didn't work out for her, but she says she would have gone with him. If it had just been him and her she would have gone with him. Now. I remember her crying a lot. That's what I do remember, that was in '57. Because all of a sudden I come home and he's gone. I didn't get to see him anymore.

Una Lynch 57:15

Oh really? He just sort of disappeared.

Raymond Gonzalez 57:19

Yeah, so that's what I, that's what I said. He never got me my dog. He promised to get me a dog. It's selfish of me right? Hey, he, he bought me a bike. I had a Schwinn bicycle, a red one. And because he

used to talk, he had like a tricycle I think when he was small. And he says I want to get you that bike because I remember seeing it at Ford's, which is Ford's department store downtown. And he ended up getting me a red Schwinn bike. And I was still waiting for the dog but he never got me the dog and one of the reasons I assume is because we moved around too much. Landlords didn't want dogs on their property, they're afraid. We get a pit bull and you go out and kill somebody. Maybe sued or something.

Una Lynch 58:13

Where were all the different places that you lived in in the Watsonville area, or the Pajaro Valley?

Raymond Gonzalez 58:18

I—most of the places that we lived were in the enclave, which is Second Street, first street along the levee. I want to use—it's from lower Main Street, from Beach Street, lower Main Street, West. And that whole enclave is where, we call it our gente, our people live, right. And again, that's very typical. There, not so much discrimination as it was here when I got here. Here in San Antonio, back then, it was discrimination. They could call it anything else. But it was discrimination. And, and there was a little bit different. People just felt more comfortable living in those areas. But Second Street was huge because we moved around on Second Street. And we moved there was a on—all the names of the streets have changed. So they're not all the same. There was a grocery store called Janie Sells Grocery Store. And I used to stock for her, she would give me—stock cans and stuff like that. And I never got paid because my mom had credit there. So we go by there and they'd take it off my pay, right. And so we lived on Second Street and Beach Street and close to Radcliffe Elementary School. And very seldom we would live beyond lower main and that's what they used to call that, lower Main Street. Yeah, I don't know if you know that. That used to be kind of a red light district. Yeah, it was an open town, right. And that's where all the restaurants were at and the bars. And we lived in Pajaro Valley. By the—I forget the name of the road. The name of the road escapes me but where the restaurant, the railroad restaurant was at, and it was a hang—hang out for the railroad workers after they get out of work to go have coffee there in the morning. Just down the street from there. We lived in a two story house and we lived—but we didn't stay very long because if mom didn't have the rent or dad didn't have the rent, we had to move. Again, like I say, seasonal work. And if it rained, they didn't work. So they didn't get paid. There was no compensation. Fancy word, remuneration for not working you just had to do without. And we also lived around the corner of, it used to be Van Ness St. in the levee where the levee's at, again in that same enclave. And we lived in the Sanchez, Tamale Molino. It's like a Molino where they used to make tamales. And we lived in there, we lived there two or three times because we lived in the basement and the second floor. And in another house, just, just two blocks down when my mom got a full house, but you know, that was the nature of the beast in those days. You know, when you're, initially when you're a single woman with four kids, it went down to three, and then I left and so my mom ended up living with friends. After I left in 1960, she hung around, she would rent little apartments with friends. Further east Watsonville, where Main Street and they go east.

Raymond Gonzalez 1:02:45

Dad, you know dad always used to ask me how's your mom? You tell her I love her. I used to joke around when I was older I said, Daddy, if you loved her, you'd still be with her. He says Your mom was hard to live with. Then I'd go, yeah, no she was tough. My mom was tough. She was very stubborn. You know, she could have been there in Vegas with him. She chose her firm roots there in Watsonville and

Salinas. And she, I think she had a network of friends you know. That's another thing is that when you're in an enclave with similar ethnic groups, you tend to cling together for support and I think that was very prevalent. What she thought about moving with my dad, but he wasn't, he never beat anybody. He was always singing, he loved singing. You'd see him singing in the shower. You know, and one of his favorite songs was Sweet Leilani, after my little sister. You could hear him singing even the neighbors used to hear him, sweet Leilani heavenly flower. So my mom is, so there he goes again, he's gonna want to go drinking. But he likes his—he used to like, not beer so much but he liked, what's the name of the liquor? Scotch. He was a high class drinker.

Una Lynch 1:04:15

Would he go out to places in town?

Raymond Gonzalez 1:04:17

Yes. Yeah, he would. They would have date nights occasionally. But we always knew that there—when they got back they were going to bring takeout, so we would get, probably leftovers from the Philippine Gardens. Because that would be one of their favorite hangouts because everybody knew my mom by her first name there. Because I used to go there. I had a shoeshine business, and I would shine shoes on lower Main Street. Because I had a lot of business there and because the military guys would come in from Fort Ord. And my corner that exclusive corner had exclusive rights to it was in front of the Philippine Gardens.

Una Lynch 1:05:08

Sounds like you had a lot of different like little jobs growing up.

Raymond Gonzalez 1:05:12

I said that's why I'm—I was very good at selling insurance I had. I was the only kid in school, in Watsonville that sold—I delivered the Pajaro, *Pajaronian* newspaper.

Una Lynch 1:05:25

Oh, yeah, the *Daily Pajaronian*?

Raymond Gonzalez 1:05:27

I delivered the *San Jose Mercury*. And I went on a lot of trips to 49ers and Stanford games and I delivered the *San Francisco Chronicle*. So all those, because nobody wanted to deliver newspapers on that side of town. I was, again, lower Main Street all the way down, past Ford. Right around Ford's department store on that side of town all the way to Pajaro. And that was, that was, I used to hate that. My last stop, the last stop in Pajaro Valley was the railroad restaurant where all the railroad guys would hang out after they get off of work. So I would deliver all three newspapers to that guy, because the guy said, the guy just liked me a lot. And I remember that's how I learned how to drink coffee. It would be cold as hell, you know how cold mornings you get out there. And I would have, I would have to go back twice because I—*The San Francisco Chronicle* was really thick, the newspaper. In those days, I'm not sure if it's thick anymore, but, and the *San Jose Mercury* was smaller in the *Pajaronian* was about that big. So I would, when I would deliver it, and I was just a little kid. I think I was—I had just gone into the seventh grade. I think I couldn't work unless I was a certain age anyway. I would go there and just

deliver the newspaper and put two or three newspapers of each on top of the counter. They had a big old counter. It was up to my head I could barely, barely see over and he would, the owner would say want some coffee? Anything warm, it didn't matter. And I said yeah, I'll take some coffee. And well I was too stupid to ask the man, do you have any cream or sugar?

Una Lynch 1:05:57

You're just drinking black coffee as a ten year old?

Raymond Gonzalez 1:07:39

Even in the military, I take my coffee, black. That's the best way to drink it. That's how I grew up. I drink this. But now I just do a little Sweet and Low and put my finger in, and stir it around. But yeah, that's how I learned how to drink black coffee. I never forgot that. And when I when I told him, I was gonna stop dropping the newspapers, he says, I'm gonna miss you. I did it for about a year and a half. He said I'm gonna miss you. And I, I, I convinced my best friend Freddie Castillo he's half Mexican, half Filipino. I said man you're gonna love it, it's a good job. Good job. And he asked me, what are you going to do? I said I'm going to go work for Janie sells over here, she wants me to work in the store. And I said, I don't want to give it to anybody else. If you want it. Yeah, I'll take it. He did it for about five months. And he said you're full of shit, right? It's a lot of work man. Because he lived, he lived actually at the dead end of Second Street, it dead ends right into a field. And so he had to drive from there. And now that whole area on Second Street was where all the tough guys are at. And out of all those tough guys, only three was still alive, still alive. Wow. Freddie never went to jail. I never went to jail. Freddie got his degree. I got my degree. And another kid, his name as I'm trying to think of his name I—anyway, he ended up going to prison. And he got little experience in electricity in prison. And when he got out he started working as an apprentice and he ended up starting his own electrical business. But that—but again, that's the nature of the beast. And a lot of these kids were mixed. But I can't think of all the names the ones that I remember would be Freddie, Freddie stayed and I left and Freddie got to know them all because they would go, Freddie worked in at the Watsonville hospital and beat up or shot or something like that. And he would x-ray them in case they were—broken arms and stuff like that. Yeah. This is—I'm gonna think about my Dad after this conversation because he's the best part of my life.

Raymond Gonzalez 1:10:04

He kinda showed me how to behave like a man, you know, when somebody—and I try to emulate that with my kids, really, my oldest son and my John, John Patrick and Jason Todd. They're very—they have the same personality. They are very bubbly. They're always outgoing. People like them. And so that was a gift for my dad. My real father again was—he wasn't, he wasn't. When you're raised with women, nothing but girls in the house, always hugging and kissing and stuff like that, that, that, that bequeaths that excitement so you end up with it, right? You, you, you see it, then you'll practice it, right? My dad, my dad's bubbly personality. There's no reason to be bitter about anything. And I can imagine that he must've been real bitter, because then it'd be you, you pick up and you disabuse yourself of those roots that you have in the Philippines to come here and then get abused here too. You get abused because you're Filipino, and then you get abused because of the type of stoop labor that you do. You know, when you're on your hands and knees, people don't respect you. And that's something that my dad kind of told me that I need to respect people. Right?

Raymond Gonzalez 1:10:36

And, and I still, I still have, I still, I still maintain that strong desire to not not to wake up in the morning to make enemies wake up in the morning and make another friend. So when I do die, you'll come to my, my wake and say nice things about me. And that's the reason that I respect—like when my dad passed away, I was on active duty with the Texas Air National Guard in, in Utah. I think it's Hill Air Force Base, and my little sister called me, she says brother, Dad passed. Oh, man. And so they're gonna have, they're gonna have a funeral for him right away. And so I went to my commander, and I told him, I said, man, I got to—my dad passed away. He says, what do you want to do, Ray? I said, well I didn't bring any money with me to pay for hotels and all that, but I got enough money to pay for the bus trip. Anyway, I went to, I went to the funeral in Las Vegas, and I said, my goodbyes to him for my sister and me, my mom. I told her how I broke down and started to cry. And so every time that I do go to Vegas, I go to his burial site at the Bunker Memorial. And you—that's how you are, that is a respect that you right? That's the respect that you have for somebody who gave a lot of himself and disconnected from his family in the Philippines. So I have a lot of respect for that when I was in, during the war in Vietnam when I was in the Mariana, Mariana Islands, which is about six hours from the Philippines. I thought of my dad, and I knew that he had—I knew he was looking down because I spent 18 months there, disconnected from my home in Watsonville.

Raymond Gonzalez 1:14:14

But my roots have always been in Watsonville. Even my, even my—I graduated from a local school here, high school, Breckenridge High School. But I only spent two years there and I wasn't really fused or connected to those kids. But a lot of them remind me—after I got a job at the utility company, I was in public relations. So I was doing all the ads in Spanish. And some of this is you don't talk Spanish. No, I never learned how to talk Spanish. But I do now. Right? So I did, I used to do the ads for the utility company here. And I didn't know how to talk Spanish. Can you imagine that? That's the god's truth.

Una Lynch 1:14:56

Yeah, I'm curious. Why do you think, you said in school, like they really didn't want you to speak Spanish, your mom didn't want you to. Why was there sort of a stigma around that?

Raymond Gonzalez 1:15:08

Yeah, the—mom was because, mom shared that with us because she wanted us to do better, you know. The, all the struggle, it should be worth it to me that you do better you, you amplify what I do, son or daughter. But so it was always, but we understood, we understood what she said, what she used to say, right. And she would talk to us in Spanish, but she would refuse to have us talk in English, respond in English. So it was always—there's an old saying that they have and I'm sure it was true of the Filipinos because Fred's father, my best friend, his dad never talked to him in Filipino except when he was pissed off. He would yell, and or when we were working in strawberries as kids before it was—when you were with your family in the strawberries you didn't have to have a certain day you did everybody they're working. The whole damn family was gainfully employed with mom and dad. But here it was a little different. Because here in Texas, they had the same thing. Except here it was more of a corporal punishment. It was a punishment. And the—and I picked that up right away when I transferred. I had two years here in high school. And I noticed the difference. I was raised in a community where it was very loving and caring and hugging. Right. And then you come here, even though they're more

religious, they were more religious, going to church. I'm talking about those that were not Hispanic. You didn't get invited to some of their stuff. Right.

Raymond Gonzalez 1:16:56

And so I learned that there was a deep division in tribalness. There's a lot of tribal, actually more, more than tribalists, nativism. If you know what it means, right? Only this group here, right and tribalism, you can mix them all up, but nativism you can't. And but see, that's the same type of discrimination they had against Filipinos. Right? They couldn't marry white women. Same thing here for Hispanics and whites. And my dad ended up marrying a white woman. The blue eyed blonde hair. I don't remember her last name, but my dad married a lady by the name of Jean. She was—I used to make fun of her, she's from Minnesota. And, but she was a good woman. She took care of him, all the way till he passed away. So they were married. After he divorced my mom, I think he divorced my mom and '46, I think it's '46. And then my mom—my mom took off with us. It wasn't because she wanted to. But in Texas the man gets all the rights. There was no rights for the women in those days. And yeah, she would have lost custody of us, and she didn't want another woman to raise us. Just me and my little sister with my other two sisters. They're from a different, different father.

Raymond Gonzalez 1:18:43

But you know, that's a good question. Why English? Let me give you an example. Let me give you the—there's religious aspects of that. And there's also ideology. Right. And I was a Republican. I joined the Republican Party in '60, after about '69 After I saw the, the beating that wounded amputee soldiers got during the Democratic Convention in Chicago by the local police officers. I don't know if you—you might want to pull this up on YouTube. They beat the hell out of those because they're protesting the war in Vietnam. And it was my party, my mom's party. Right. So why? I mean, these are veterans and I was in the military that time and I said man. I got very discouraged and I went over to the Republican Party, not invited, I went on my own, right. And I noticed that in the 70s, for some reason or other, there was always a call. There was two calls in the membership, because I was the president of the group, the National Hispanic Republicans of San Antonio. And the call was English only. Now imagine that, Latino's asking for English. So, right. And the other was prayer in school.

Una Lynch 1:20:29

Prayer in school, okay.

Raymond Gonzalez 1:20:31

Yeah, those were—they always wanted to make sure that the assembly had those propositions. And I used to tell them, I said, that's kind of, you're kind of being a hypocrite, because when you come in, you say a prayer. Right? And then you turn around and you do the Pledge of Allegiance, because that's always part of the Republican gathering, right? And then you want to pass a resolution to prevent other people from doing the same. You want to pass a resolution to, to not speak English, to speak English only. And then you want to pass the resolution to have a prayer at school and I said, what Bible do you use? But I would never argue, that was never confrontational. When the meetings—after we leave, we go have coffee in a coffee shop. And I would always, I would always ask them, I don't understand it. You got to explain that and me, tell me, teach me like I'm a five year old kinda thing. And they would say, oh I don't know, and I said, I said, you're not making any sense, you, you're being hypocritical. And

I remember one of my friends taught me, he says, Yeah, he says that's contrary to Matthew chapter 23, verse one through five. And I go, what? This guy was, because most of those Republicans guys read the Bible, Very religious, and they beat you up with the Bible verses. And I would say, well, I gotta look that one up and looked it up and he's right. You know, this is off, off the cuff. The very first verse of chapter three, Matthew, that's one of my favorite Bibles, the gospels, was when Jesus is going into the temple, he's taking all the disciples with him. And he's, he's going to show him where to go to pray. And then he's walking in with him. And in the temple, there's always those type of people that say, put your hat on, you got to kneel, you know, it's their rudiments, I think the correct word is. And women had to put their hair, their veil on, you got the sign of the cross, you know, all that kind of stuff. And Jesus Christ says to his disciples, he said, you see those guys there? He says, you do as they tell you to do, but don't do as they do. And so, you, if you're going to discern that, try to analyze what he's saying. He says they're hypocrites. So if you read that, you want to know the meaning of that verse, chapter 23, Gospel of Matthew, verse one through five, very first, right off the bat, boom, we took the parable. And he says, and I'm going, what's he talking about? And I finally realized what he was talking about. Don't be a hypocrite, and I used to tell all the other guys don't be hypocrites. You can't, you can't want to do that yourself and want to prevent somebody else from doing it.

Raymond Gonzalez 1:23:32

And my dad was not a hypocrite, right? He could very easily grope somebody in the Philippines. His girlfriend is hey, come over here. Let's get married. But he thought Spanish rice was better, tasty. That's, that's it. My mom was absolutely gorgeous. You know, and she had that, had that German attitude because she was a half breed like my little sister. And ugh, mom was tough. She was just, my mom knew that she was beautiful. All my sisters are beautiful. But she was, she was, she was tough, but because it would— what I'm trying to say here is my, my, my stepfather, Filipino stepfather had to have something special about him, right? Because she was very attracted to him and she was very in love with him. And you got to be, it might have been the signs of the time there because maybe the economy. And you can survive together with two jobs. I think that might have been also a sign of the times. But a lot of it was about love, because he hung around for a long time. It was anything but love. And he used to tell me, he says I love your mom, when I would see him. And I look at his new wife and I go, yeah, I could tell why. It didn't say that out loud. But I say to myself, I could tell why. He loved my mom. My mom says I loved him. It was after her marriage.

Raymond Gonzalez 1:25:23

She got, I think she got divorced and, I was born '43. So it was three years, but '46 and '46 to '50. She had my little sister in '52. So she had time there to, to sew or, distressed the man it took her a while. I think that. And after she, she divorced my stepdad. She dated but she didn't remarry. [Indiscernible] wait, wait, wait, until you are already in your 60s. She was 88 years old when passed away. You know what was really funny. Margaret, my mom, was in a nursing home. She—this was her room. But she loved smoking. I would tell her, mom, don't smoke. Because one day, one Sunday we got up my wife and I in the other bedroom. And I told my wife I smell smoke and I come in here my mom's going like this.

Una Lynch 1:26:34

Oh my goodness.

Raymond Gonzalez 1:26:35

She had fallen asleep early in the morning. She went to get a coffee, she fell asleep. And she burned the mattress. It was smoke everywhere. And I said what's the matter mom? [inaudible] Don't worry about it. I said I can see, I can see, I can see all your troubles in life, married life. She's as stubborn as hell. So I would tell her—my cousin said don't take away her cigarettes. I said yeah, well you're not going to live in the house that's going to burn down. They said just leave her alone. So we left her alone and then I got her to go outside and smoke. My wife will tell you that. In the backyard, we had a yellow rose, the yellow rose of Texas. And I planted it there. After she passed away I still open up the shades here and I looked out there and she used to admire that rose, a really beautiful rose. It was given to her at her wake at the funeral home by friends that live down the street and I never forgot that. But it finally passed away, here everything dies. You can't have like in California. Like in Santa Cruz everything's green and plant it in the ground and two days later it's popping up like mushrooms. Right, but here everything dies.

Raymond Gonzalez 1:28:04

Outside of me, I was the first one to start landscaping in the backyard. Not everybody does, everybody here. It's sort of the Feng, what do you call that feng shui? Something like that in essence. Everybody wants to you, and if, if, if you ever come to Texas, you'll get to see my backyard, very whimsical. Little area here for my wife's flowers. And all the poppies. We're planting Poppy's on this side. And on this side I got my first granddaughter. I built her a dollhouse but then she got too old and I didn't want it and I turned it into a tool shed. And then I have hedges and then I have all landscaping, the same thing in the front. And it was something that I got from my dad. I still remember going to school and early in the morning. And Japanese, especially the Japanese and the Filipinos, the older generation that was already too old to work in the fields. They're out there hoeing away, or sitting in the front lawn. You can see them sharpening their tools, like they're going to work or something. And I I never forgot and I do it. So it just, it just, it's instilled in you when you see stuff like that. So I believe that, truly believe that a person's personality is a, it's, it's a manifestation of what they see, what they read, and what is seared in their memory about their past. Your family lands, their environment. And that's the way you vote when you vote. That's the way you vote. Right? When you go to, when you go to theater, that's what you look for you look for things that are going to satisfy you personally.

Raymond Gonzalez 1:30:09

And by the way, my wife and I've been married for 30, 38 years now, to my second wife. I sold her homeowner policy. And she harassed me, she sexually harassed me, she kept calling, you know, she didn't come out and say it's, it's true. She kept calling me. She says, I want you to tell me about your homeowner policy. Can you explain that to me again? Again, again, so that's how I met my wife. I sold her homeowner policy. And then we decided to get married. But so I can imagine. She had two daughters. So we have two boys, two daughters. And it was hard to raise women. Girls are tough to raise. When I was raising them, I remember the struggle my stepdad had. He got three girls and then he had one of his own. That's four. But he had to raise these other three girls and two of them temporarily, until they got old enough to leave. And then my, my, my sister, and it's—when I say biblical, what I mean by that is you think about the story of Joseph. Right? And Mary. And he said [inaudible]. And yet you're moved by something that's planted in your heart. Sewed in your heart that person is

meant for you, right? So it was good that my mother wasn't ugly. But it was because he was moved to take on that challenge. And so I think my, my stepdaughters love me more than my kids. I got, I got 10 grandkids, just like my sister. Wow. What a beautiful legacy for my dad. But she doesn't, she doesn't point him to their legacy, some of them don't even know that they're Filipino, probably. Just like I didn't know I was Latino for a while.

Una Lynch 1:32:27

So how did that change for you? When you kind of had that realization that you yourself weren't Filipino? Do you feel like your relationship with the Filipino community in Watsonville changed? Or did you just still feel welcomed? How was that?

Raymond Gonzalez 1:32:41

No, I learned how to appreciate my stepfather more. And it was right about that same time that another Filipino kid full blooded, first generation kid, his name is Tony Ispiritu. He lived in the hood, the neighborhood. And we were on our way to school and some girl liked me. And he liked her. And I was, I didn't know at the time, but I was telling him [inaudible] good looking girl. And then I remember something about a party. And then he turned around, he says you're not Filipino. And I go, what? And I just learned that right. I just learned that it was maybe I think it was probably the end of '57. Right around Christmas time. There might have been some party I was being invited to but he told me that and I said, you know you're right. I'm not. But that doesn't make you—and I remember thinking as myself, but we're friends. How can you say that when I'm your friend now. I don't dislike you. And he was handsome—we were all skinny. I had the story about my dad wasn't about me. It was about my dad, but I had—my story is different. And I don't think my story will get anywhere the—my 15 minutes of fame came when I testified before the, in Austin, at the Austin Capitol before the Senate and Commerce Committee. I was, I was going to be subpoenaed to go there and testify and on legislation for credit scoring the wrongful termination of insurance agents by insurance companies. And it was House Bill 1384. And I was one of the organizers. There was, there was five of us, but one of them didn't want to go to the hearing, because he was afraid he was gonna get terminated by his partner in crime, which is corporations. And I told him, oh hell no. And the reason is, my stepdad did that. Right. When, when he was struggling during the 50s. They were, I know, they were meeting, like, they were like, it was like a quasi insurance group, they were meeting to discuss their demands, right?

Una Lynch 1:35:36

In the union?

Raymond Gonzalez 1:35:37

Yeah. They didn't have a union. But they wanted to start a union. But it was more like venting. Right? You get it out of your system. And I remember them talking about wages, and secondary meetings and stuff like that. But I had the, I had the, I had the same desire not to do that, and, and not to take on All State that I was going to testify before the committee. And I'm on YouTube. And this is outside of what we're doing here. And I'll send you the—after All State lost the lawsuit with my customers, they lost the lawsuit. They got even with the agents, and they said, We're going to get rid of all the agents that are in downtown areas, right? Because we don't want that business. Those houses are too old, the wiring is old. The roofs are falling apart. And so in Buffalo, New York, there was three agents, black agents, that

serviced all of Buffalo, New York, in the center of town, right. They fired them all, so that, that YouTube is about them. But it has to do with my lawsuit. See, after the lawsuit was settled, All State had to refund \$90 million back to people that were injured by the discrimination because of the flaw of credit algorithms. You might want to read up on that. They still do that. It's called redlining but it's a different type of—more sophisticated type of redlining. And so they fired these black agents and then the law firm that took care of my lawsuit call me says, all these agents are calling and crying. And I said well, you need to make a story about it. So he says, that why we're calling you Ray. We're gonna send you a ticket, you fly here and we're gonna film it. So the—it's a huge law firm in Tampa Bay. So I flew down there and I came out in the video, outside of vanity, and bragging about yourself because it—essentially that's what happens when you try to tell your story to people, you know vanity gone amuck. And you say well, no, how do you tell your story without sort of bragging about yourself? Right? It's like bragging about dad and some of the stuff that he does in school and he says [indiscernible] your mom wears his army boots kind of thing. The, the—my proof is the YouTube and that's because these agents that got terminated and they're interviewed by the law firm, because they were going to file another suit against AllState and they wanted to send All State proof in a suit. And I was already, I had already sold my agency from All State. So they were gonna say at All State—and I'm in it, so All State's going to see me so, oh shit. There he is, again, Ray's a pain in the ass. And, the, I come out about nine minutes, it's a nine minute video and I come up there towards the end, it talks about my lawsuit talks about the [indiscernible] lawsuit and how we want it here because they, All State ultimately had to settle out of court. You know why? Because they would have had to come to court here in Bear County, 70% Latinos, and those are the ones that were getting screwed. Because they were using a flawed credit algorithm infused with flawed credit history for the three reporting companies, which is Equifax and those other two Trans American or TransUnion, or something like that. And they would have lost because the jury is, the jurists would have been predominantly Latinos. Yeah man, why are my bills so high? These guys are doing it to me. So they decided to settle out of court. But then they said, we don't want that business downtown San Antonio, because it's what older homes. Old wiring. Old plumbing, old roads, more crime, right? Those are the, it's called redlining. If you look up that word redlining and if you ever talk to Eva Monroe, have you talked to her?

Una Lynch 1:40:24

I think so. Yeah.

Raymond Gonzalez 1:40:25

She did. She, she mentioned it in a post that she did on Facebook. Her dad couldn't get a HUD loan because he was a, he was a veteran for a long time until later because they were redlining, they didn't want you in that neighborhood. So if you chose a house here, it's no we're not, we're not gonna lend you money there. We want you to move over here. And, and so they were, and they were, they were, they had enclaves where they wanted certain people to live. I know that is true in San Antonio, if you come to this town, same thing, all the Mexicans here, blacks on the east side, and then here was predominantly white in this neighborhood. But now it's about 85% Hispanic. Whites are moving further west, because they're, there, they, they, they get spoon fed, the consistently the existential boogeyman is coming to get you. And if it's brown or black, you're in trouble. So they move out of the neighborhood. But really, the white neighbors that are shielded from my community here, we take care of them. You know, there was one lady across the street we used to go to. My gardener, I used to send him over

there to cut her grass, because she couldn't do it. And, and—because that's the way we were raised. That's the traditionalism of Filipinos and by traditional is that we, when we go visit Grandma, it's kiss her on the forehead. You have to genuflect or prostrate yourself on the ground, right? And you say hi Grandma, how are you feeling? Or you don't go visit grandma without taking her some sweet red, or fresh flour tortillas from some fancy place, or a hamburger or a bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken. You just don't do that. So you tend to be very respectful. Very—what's the word? You do not disabuse her of respect that they earn right? You gotta get respect. And I saw a lot of that in the Filipino community really, really, really.

Una Lynch 1:42:52

Yeah. Do you feel like there were any other kind of values that you adopted from the Filipino community in Watsonville?

Raymond Gonzalez 1:42:59

Entrepreneurship. They planted that seed in me. My dad ended up working for a hotel but he was managing the Bally's before it burned, remember the big fire 1980. So he died after that, about six months after that big fire at the Bally's. And he was managing all the bars on the bottom floor and second floor. And then he wrote his book. And so he was doing well, you know. Can you imagine? Pick and shovel, right, and hoeing his hoe every weekend to make sure it's cutting the weeds and he doesn't have to work as hard. And that, those are the things that they leave with you. Those are, those are precious things that they leave with you in the spirit of enjoying. I love my work. It's endearing to me, right? Because it feeds her and the kids, same thing when I was working in the insurance business and I would go home at nine o'clock. I can see my dad or my, my real dad, he's an auto mechanic coming home late because he's doing a special need for a car that he needs to get out of the circuit or my dad working in the fields. And I remember him coming, mostly him, because he would come home and he would leave when it was dark. And they would come home when it was almost dark. And then you could see him sitting there and mom's taking off his shoes. You want to get tears in your eyes, that, that'll kill you. And, and then he knew he had to get up the next day and do the same damn thing again. That, that was tough. That was tough to see that my mom used to always show a lot of affection for him. She didn't get that apparently from her first two husbands. I told my dad that, my real dad, I said, I said Dad, why are we so different? You didn't raise me. That was—and I come from a house with five women. So there was a lot of hugging and kissing and crying, and touching, feeling and always this kind of stuff, right. And I picked that up from my sisters. And so I was always respectful of the rights of women. Right? And, and I remember sharing that with my dad, my real father, paternal dad. And I said, how come? He says, because that's the way we were raised in Monterrey, Mexico, very distant, aloof from a kind of macho thing, right. And when I didn't see that in my stepfather. There was a difference in personalities. You know, one was stoic, right? And kind of distant. But I do remember my real dad crying. And he cried and he says, I'm sorry I wasn't there for you. But when I came over here in September of 1960, he tried to do everything he could. He bought me a car. I didn't come here for a car. But he didn't want me to ride the school bus, because a lot of gangs in those days. And that's—when you asked me about, the question about English only. The—and my dad. Those are the things that are permanently seared in my adolescent memory. They never lost. So that he propagated that seared in my brain, right?

Una Lynch 1:47:10

Definitely. So then when you, you moved in with your, with your biological dad in Texas, was it hard for you to leave Watsonville?

Raymond Gonzalez 1:47:21

It was.

Una Lynch 1:47:21

Were you sad to leave that community behind?

Raymond Gonzalez 1:47:24

Yes, I was. I was. I remember calling Fred 30 times during the, from September to December. I probably talked to him about 30 times. He got tired of me calling him. He, and then he was dating one of my girlfriends. Marianne Rusconi. Fred, crazy Fred, anyway. Yeah. When you—but that, you know, that prepared me for the military because I was gone a year and a half disconnected from family and friends. And I adapted very well, I did. I remember the first day of military life, basic training in the Air Force. I remember, that first night I remember guys crying, you can hear, "bring on the bike, bring in"—I never forgot that. Some guy in the corner way in the corner the barracks open bay, "bring in the bike." So you know, the—he was talking in his sleep. Had a couple of guys go "I miss my mom." We all miss our moms, son. But you gotta grow up someday. I think that, that experience of separation from loved ones, family, community, school. I was on the track team at the time. And by the way, I wasn't the brightest kid, right, I was two fries short of a happy meal. But I was—I was never satisfied. That's why I believe there's no such thing as a bad kid or stupid boy. Is that some of them need a little bit more mentoring and tender loving care. And so when I hear somebody's going, that kid's bad. So you send them over to me and I'll take care of them. Because they need, they need—we're not all the same. We don't have the same abilities to absorb wisdom. We all do it very—some of it, some of it, it—propagated in our system in our thoughts. But it doesn't make any sense to us. You're still trying to make it up. And in school, I was even in college, I was a perfectionist. I was never happy with my paper. You're in college now. And I was just never happy and, and much like my dad, like he realized somewhere in his life working in the fields and stoop labor, in the fishing industry, he realized that he needed to move on beyond the hoeing and harvesting and same with me.

Raymond Gonzalez 1:50:25

I was working for my first job out of the Air Force. I was working for a utility company, I was in public relations. And lucky. I tell my kids it's because my good looks. And it's, oh you know dad had to be born then and I said no, I got just got lucky. And I got, went into the public relations department and then they started putting me on TV. Because I was Spanish, they said you could talk Spanish, can't you? I said, you know it's hard—you know, sometimes people are proud. I said, yeah, I can talk a little bit. So they took me to the studio and they had a script on the teleprompter. Looking at that and I'd go I don't even know what that damn word is. But I ended up, this isn't the accent I still remember it because I had to memorize it. And I didn't think—remember I didn't, we didn't speak Spanish in California. But all my relatives here talks Spanish. So I remember going in, I read it and the producer came out he says, are you having problems with that? I said yeah, what is that? Is that Castilian Spanish? He said yeah. So this is—Hola [speaking in Spanish].

Una Lynch 1:50:25

Oh, my goodness. I can't believe you can still remember that.

Raymond Gonzalez 1:51:22

They put me on a talk show in Spanish.

Una Lynch 1:51:36

Wow.

Raymond Gonzalez 1:52:09

Yeah. And let me give you a word. In Spanish the word for—we got coal plants, gas plants and coal. You know, carbón right. And there's two types of coal, anthracite and the other one is anthracite and I forget the other one. Anyway, I was on the show. And the host is asking if she wants to know about the coal and I said oh man I hope she doesn't ask me about the coal. And I wondered Richard Gonzalez, the San Antonio boy, to answer that question. He says, can you Mr. Gonzalez [Spanish]. Can you tell me about the coal plants? Instead of saying carbon, I said, cabrón, cabrón, which means bastard. And Freddie turns around like that. I remember I go [Spanish]. But he's going to tell you it's carbón which means coal. Right. And, and I didn't realize. And after we left, he said you know what you said and I said no. You said bastard. I said, you kidding me? No, he was my best friend in high school. Matter of fact he got me a job there. When I got discharged from the service. He never, he never, he never forgot. Because when I transferred, I used to tell him about my experience in Watsonville, picking strawberries. Summer, summer jobs for all the kids. We always had to work. There wasn't any time to mope about our happenstance. Right. You never had time to mope about? What was, what was I? You know? And I get after people that think that way. I said, Come on, man. That's yesterday. Think about tomorrow, we think about tomorrow. That won't mean a damn thing. What happened yesterday, so that I used to share that with him. And when I got back from Guam, he was working at the utility company, and says after you get out of the service, I'll get you a job over there, and I did. I went for the interview in February of 1967. And the end of the week, they call me back, says you're hired but I said, but I don't get discharged until October. You're hired. So they waited for me for seven months.

Una Lynch 1:54:48

Wow, they must have really wanted you.

Raymond Gonzalez 1:54:50

But yeah, I got, I got very lucky. And I had—I went into, I went into the electric department.

Raymond Gonzalez 1:55:03

So I learned all about electricity and natural gas and stuff like that. And then they were building the coal plants at the time. And then the public relations guy call me, he said, Hey, radio, you're gonna get interviewed for work. You're going into the public relations department, they want to interview for that job. I said you're kidding! No, you're gonna get an interview. What about the guys ahead of me? They want you because they want your Spanish. But I didn't know. I know some street language. Not Spanish. I did know a little Filipino, a little cussing. My dad taught me a little Flip. And that's what we

used to call each other, Flips. In those days. You were Flip. Yeah everybody called me—they thought I was Filipino. They said, he's Filipino, no, not Filipino. Because there was a lot of light complected Filipinos. Light complected Filipinos. Some Filipinos were married to white women. And they tended to live in a certain part of city, by the river, where the river banks by the levee right there by the high school. And the Sipin's, S-I-P-I-N and they lived in there and his brother Sipin. I forget his first name. He ended up playing for the San Francisco Giants. Baseball player. Yeah. Yep. And, matter of fact, they got tired of him at the Giants, he went to play baseball in Japan. He was playing Japan baseball. We got a lot of important people there.

Raymond Gonzalez 1:56:48

The only thing about me, my importance in Watsonville is I testified before the committee and ended it—and I knew All State was coming after me. I decided to sell my business but then I got— I wasn't not only involved in the lawsuit against AllState, my customers, because I was going to testify if we went to court. When I got involved in the sale of my business, I sold my business to an idiot that stopped paying me on the check. He gave me 185 and 40, let's say 125,000. And then he, he gave me a \$40,000 cashier's check and then he gave me a \$85,000 personal check. Then he stopped payment on the check and said sue me. So I ended up—spent two years citing that. And that was tough. That was tough, but I never gave up. I always remember the struggle getting up in the morning. You see what I'm saying? Those are the, those are the seeds that are planted in your brain. Woe is I? No, no, no, no, no. Don't give me this up. Because I'll get you tomorrow, that kind of attitude.

Una Lynch 1:58:09

Well it definitely seems like your sort of childhood and Watsonville really has influenced a lot of your life kind of following those years. And as we sort of wrap up a little bit, are there any things about kind of that early period of your life in Watsonville that you would like to share?

Raymond Gonzalez 1:58:33

Yeah, the most important one besides what Steinbeck, what—how they would, he described Salinas and Monterey, in the book called *East of Eden*. [Indiscernible] his friends. So many kids are, like the Sulays, the two girls. And there are others but, probably dead already, but Freddie is my best friend, we're still friends. He's up there, right? And I think because at the end of the day, once it gets past the money, it's about friendship. It's about all those friends that you make along the way and become part of your life. I never lost track with my brother. And when I got to divorce, my first wife divorced me. I called Freddie, said I'm having a hard time and he was there in two days. I was living in a shack because I had to support two houses, my beautiful home, 2,500 square feet and the little shack I was living in, you know sleeping on the floor. And he came over. He said let's go buy some dishes. So he bought me a bunch of dishes and then I started to cook for myself. I didn't have all that stuff. But that's, that's what you call friendship. And I'd love to show you this picture. I'll send it to you.

Una Lynch 2:00:11

I would love that, yeah.

Raymond Gonzalez 2:00:12

They're, they would go out and party. You know, when the chicken was away, they'd go out and have a good time. But they worked hard. They raised us, they worked in the cannery sometimes in the field. They deserved that, you know, I never begrudge my mom for drinking beer, and she was a good beer drinker. So was Freddie's mom and Freddie's Mom was short. So like Freddie and I. I used to, I used to—I was his defender in school. Oh, one more thing before you go. The year I left, 1960 it was in February. I was on the track team at Watsonville High. I was taking a shower after the class. And I heard somebody cry and it was Eugene Sipin , the little brother of the big guy that was a baseball player. And he was crying in the shower and a little Japanese guy. I grew up with these kids, right? Eugene was in school with me. Sammy Naghi, the Japanese kid was whipping, with a wet towel, Eugene, you know snapping the back, marks all over him. And I heard Eugene cry and I looked over the side, and we all grew up together. So I was the only one that said okay, I'm going to be your champion today. I'm gonna go kick some butt. And I went over there and I told Sammy, stop it. That's my friend, and so are you, but that's my friend [indiscernible]. And I said Sammy why don't we go fight after school. Well shit, because all his brothers are huge. Sammy Naghi's brothers, they're all wrestlers. You know whatever they call the California wrestling champions. They're all huge, but he's the only short Japanese in his family. And I said I'll fight you after school. So we met after school and I kicked his ass. And Sammy never forgot that. Even though I never graduated from high school in Watsonville because I left. I was invited by Fred, my brother, he says you got to come here. Everybody talks about you.

Una Lynch 2:00:19

Made a big impression.

Raymond Gonzalez 2:02:53

Well, everybody, because I was a, I was the guardian of the community. I was the bully that beat up bullies. And so we were sitting down at the function. I know we're going over two hours. And then I hear somebody tapped me on the head. And it's Sammy Naghi. And he's kind of plastered already, right? And he's, he's got his wife and she says honey, he says you're Ray. I said, yeah. He says, it's funny I want you to know, he says this guy's my champion. He says, he says he never quit because I ran a race, and I think it was Hollister. And I didn't come in last. It was a consolation race for all the bad guys. I Remember, this guy was, this guy was ahead of me and I remember passing him up. But he ended up being last and Sammy never forgot. But he forgot the fight. He forgot that I whipped his butt. But he had it up here. But he was—he didn't remember that part. He just remembered. And I asked him I said, You know that, Eugene Sipin, did he come? Because we all graduated together, right? And then I later found out from Eugene that he didn't go because he did not graduate with us. He had to go to summer school of some sort. And he says he says I graduated a couple of months later after you guys did. I said man I didn't know that Eugene. He said, yeah and Eugene ended up working at the high school as a janitor. All those years that's where he—he's sick now. I went to visit him in September.

Raymond Gonzalez 2:04:34

I had his voice, you know his voicemail. [indiscernible] But he could still talk on the computer, he can still type pretty good, so he still has his thoughts. So he wishes me, you know Merry Christmas and all like that. And I told him, I said, Eugene, you owe me a lunch. I took an ass beating from that guy. As I said, [indiscernible] I never found that if you ever go to see the fight? He says, no, I was afraid. He was

afraid of this kid, he was a bully. So I said, well I beat the school bully up. And then I had to leave town because I was afraid. [indiscernible] When I left, I made a choice. Last minute. I told Fred, I said Fred there's no future here for me. My, my thoughts even though their respect, I respect what my forebears did. My dad and all the Filipinos, the Japanese working in the fields. I don't want to do that. And I don't see myself graduating here and making a success out of life. And that's the reason that I took a risk, right? The risk of moving from the Philippines here. I took a risk there, it was hell, because it was—life here was not the same.

Raymond Gonzalez 2:05:57

I had my dad and my cousins. But that, that wasn't—what helped me is when I joined the Air Force. And I tried to join the Marines with five guys from Breckenridge high school, but two of them had ear problems. And I remember, it was five of us, we're gonna go in a group, a little cluster. And the guy says, we'll take you and you and me. He says, But these two guys, they got problems. He says you need to get your eardrum fixed. In some other guy, something else. Forget what it was. He says you go fix this. And you come back again. And we joked around with it. Yeah, go back so they can kill you guys. That doesn't make any sense. Right? Why would you want to go get fixed? And then come back so you can go to Vietnam and get shot. I said that doesn't make any sense. So when I left Watsonville—

Raymond Gonzalez 2:06:51

[background noise]

Una Lynch 2:07:12

Well, then maybe that's a good place to wrap up with with Alexa's little interjection. But thank you so much for sitting down with me today. And telling me your story and talking about Watsonville and about your family. I really appreciate you taking the time.

Raymond Gonzalez 2:07:34

I'll send you the consent form. And the dates, I'll get the correct dates. It's just going to take me a while. Okay, I got it. Thank you for inviting me to tell my story. It's not my story. It's my dad's story. Because that legacy is gonna live beyond. So when his grandkids and whatever generation, they can go online and see. That's my, that's my grandfather. They can hear a little a little bit about his personal life, not that much, we didn't spend— we only spent seven years together. That's a lifetime for a lot of those guys. Thank you. Thank you. Hey, I can talk all day. Thank you.

Raymond Gonzalez 2:08:28

Tomorrow I'm gonna be, if it doesn't rain, it's supposed to rain. I'm going to be outside planting all those poppies. I got a bunch of poppies.

Una Lynch 2:08:35

Oh, nice.

Raymond Gonzalez 2:08:36

I already got the ground. I had already fixed it. We got the ground ready. But I hadn't put top soil in there. So, but it's been raining. And it's cold. It couldn't even go in the garage and work in the garage. I'm doing a cornhole. You know what a cornhole board is.

Una Lynch 2:08:55

Yeah. Like the game?

Raymond Gonzalez 2:08:57

I made one for the neighbor. White kid. Next door neighbor. And his name is Caden. And I gave it to him and his mom says, man he won't put that thing that down. He calls me neighbor. He says, neighbor gave it to me. He's nine years old. He just went on vacation. They went on some trip somewhere to visit. And he left his—he's got a little Christmas tree.