

UC Santa Cruz

Oral History Collaborations

Title

Fred "Freddie" Leo Castillo interviewed by Ian Hunte Doyle

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8971f3jv>

Authors

Castillo, Fred

Hunte Doyle, Ian

Publication Date

2023-03-09

Supplemental Material

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8971f3jv#supplemental>

Data Availability

The data associated with this publication are in the supplemental files.

Fred “Freddie” Leo Castillo interviewed by Ian Hunte Doyle

Speakers: Fred “Freddie” Leo Castillo; Ian Hunte Doyle

Date: March 9, 2023

Scope and Contents:

In this interview, originally recorded in person, Freddie Leo Castillo speaks with Watsonville is in the Heart team member Ian Hunte Doyle. Freddie details his father Doroteo Lafer Castillo’s immigration to the United States from the Philippines through Hawai’i, where he worked on the sugarcane plantations until eventually moving to the mainland to work seasonal agricultural jobs. Freddie explains how Doroteo settled in Watsonville and worked as a sharecropper. Freddie remembers growing up in Watsonville, where he and his sister were raised by his father, Doroteo Lafer Castillo. Fred recalls joining the Filipino Youth Club with his childhood friend Raymond “Ray” Gonzalez, who he refers to as his brother. He also describes working in the fields with Ray throughout high school. Fred talks about growing up half-Filipino and half-Mexican, and he explains how his father introduced him to Filipino culture, primarily through food and cooking.

Freddie Leo Castillo 00:00

–the case may be, she was good to me and all that, but it wasn't really the happiest thing because she was older. Now when I think about it, she did not allow me to go out and play or enjoy myself with the rest of the kids in the neighborhood, because she must have been worried about what might happen to me. So I was relegated to being alone all the time. You know, and they would leave, she would leave, and it was another gentleman that would come by, or whatever, I think they were friends, or whatever. But, when I got back from school, the doors were all locked! I had to wait for everybody to come around. I remember that. And it was a tough time, because when I had to go to the bathroom, there was no place to go! That was, it was very difficult. So when my dad finally came to pick me up, it was wonderful. And, we went to– my father had a house on 431 Second Street on the west side of Watsonville. Not the best side, but, nonetheless. But we didn't go there. My father was– became a sh– he left the, he left the crew. My uncle Leon stayed with the crew, my father came and decided to stay here because he needed to be with us, I as– I assume. Because he decided to stay with us, and he became a sharecropper. See, so, he became a sharecropper, and the first place that he had strawberries on was Casserly Road. Those were good years. That was a good time. My sister and I, we ran around the whole property, there was a reservoir, we'd run. We just, you know, we were country kids just running around, having a good time. And, there's a lot of good memories there, from– from, from working around. And mostly it was just play, no work.

Ian Hunte Doyle 01:59

Sounds nice.

Freddie Leo Castillo 02:00

We were there for a few years, I remember that, and there was a small, just a really small pl– small like this, place like this, where we stayed. And, but– and that was before they had TVs. And I remember being there listening to the radio, and, and just being caught up with all of the stuff that would come on

to the radio, see. And, listening to the radios, and the stories on the radios, and things like that, see, so. And the lady down the street, or not down the street, but— few houses down on the camp, they got a TV. Black and white TV. And they allowed us— my sister and I to come down and watch it. I mean, it was a big deal. It was a big deal, see, so. Then I, I— I recall. Then we w— I went to school at Salsipuedes. We went to school at Salsipuedes, and I remember, starting in the second grade, so I was there for the second grade, third grade, and part of the fourth grade. And what do I remember about those days? I remember my dad wanted me to learn the violin. I hated the violin. Because I thought of it as, you know, "guys don't learn the violin!" Not in those days, anyways, see, so— and I'm a young boy. And I recall— don't recall a teacher in the second grade or the third grade, but I do recall the teacher in the fourth grade, Mrs. Tooth. She was really tough, but I think I was a difficult kid, too. I was kind of— a little unruly. What I remember about that was that, I forget what day it was, but we had mandatory catechism. Mandatory. So we would walk out, go across the, the area there, and go into this little building that was off to the side, and the— the nuns would, would— we had a little book and we had to learn these prayers. You know, we were brainwashed. And I wouldn't learn 'em! And they did corporal punishment in those days, so.

Ian Hunte Doyle 04:22

Oh, jeez, yeah.

Freddie Leo Castillo 04:24

You know, what I remember about that was that— and, and, and m— I'm sure she did what, what she needed to do— Sister Bernadette. I remember, I thought she was so pretty. I said, "what a pretty lady!" But I also remember they said, "Fred you didn't—" you d— you know, "you remember the Apostles Creed? You remem—oh, I did not learn it." "Put your hand up." They w— had the paddle, the thing went "pow!" Oh, yeah. Corporal punishment, those days, man. It was normal. It was normal! Yeah, always remember that. Those are the things I remember! [laughs] Those are the things. Then I remember playing on the yard and everything like that, but those things you don't forget. See, the violin, Mrs. Tooth, how tough she was, but I think a lot of that may have been me. You know, when you're young you don't see it as somebody else— a, as, as you, you see it as somebody else. See, so I'm— look at Sister Bernadette, you know, I mean, that was my fault. I should have learned my prayers, but, c'est la vie. We stayed out at that place 'til, I guess we must have moved from Salsipuedes when I was in the fourth grade or so, or after the period, because I started school at Radcliffe. Right here. You from Watsonville? You know where Radcliffe is?

Ian Hunte Doyle 05:45

No, I'm actually from San Francisco.

Freddie Leo Castillo 05:45

San Francisco, okay. Radcliffe is on the other— well, let's see. We're here— you parked in the back, You parked in the back here, okay. So, it's still on the west side a little bit, just a little bit. It's not far from here. Okay, old broken down school. But that's where I ended up going. Fifth grade. Mr. Taylor was my teacher. And that's where I met my buddy, Raymond Gonzales. Now, Raymond Gonzalez, unbeknownst to me at that time, and later, we became very good friends. Very good friends. Later on, I find out that his mother and my mother were very good friends. They would, for want of better— they

would hang around at the bars together, and stuff like that. So, m— she was mama Margaret to me. My mom was gone, so she was mama Margaret. I would go over to his house and she treated me like a son. And then, Ray ended up coming to my place, and hang around, and he was like a son to my dad. My dad was a good guy. I mean, I know that more now than I did then, obviously, because I didn't realize what a big heart he had. I remember my dad, because Ray was over all the time, and he would stay over, and sleep over, and he would eat, and all that. And I remember my dad telling me, a—asking me one time in the kitchen, "Ay, Freddie. That one. He don't have no place to go?" I said, "yeah, dad. Here." And I remember my dad looked at me, and he goes, "okay." [laughing] I mean, that was it. You know, he didn't argue about it or anything like that, he just accepted him, and you know, so he was in and out, in and out, all the time. So, it was the same at, at Ray's house. So he became more of a brother than a brother. More a brother than a brother, I will al— I always, I always remembered that. So, we were together all the time. You know, fifth grade, sixth grade, seventh grade. We got in trouble together. You know, I mean, yeah. I mean, it— l—life was, was good. I mean, didn't have much. You know, I never lacked for food, I never lacked— I never starved to death or anything like that, but I never had a lot of money to go out and do stuff.

Ian Hunte Doyle 06:13

No, I don't think so, no.

Freddie Leo Castillo 06:44

Fire Station is not too far from here, either, okay? The fire station at that time— it was the fire station, and then they had the skating rink right behind it. The skating rink, Ray and I couldn't go, 'cause we couldn't afford it. You know, we just couldn't afford to get the— buy the skates. But we'd go in and, and— and loo— we could look, but we couldn't buy the skates, because Ray had this thing about this one girl that was in there all the time, "let's go in and see! I want to check her out and see if she's here!" and all that stuff. She never liked him. Anyway, upstairs though, was the Boys' Club. But I mean, it was a Boys' Club, but I mean it was just a rat trap, is what it was, you know, it was like— you've seen the movie— Rocky movie?

Freddie Leo Castillo 08:22

So, I remember Ray and I, in order to do something, we had— in order for extra money. Like, when we were at, fifth grade in Radcliffe, we would have to go out and get, or find coupons. Soda bottles, glass bottles. And they came in small and large. And you clean them up and took them, and clean them up, and you'd pick them, and you got three cents for the small ones, and you got five cents for the big ones. That's a lot of money. And we would take them to Spud's Market, which was on Second Street. Spuds was a good guy. He was a short, kind of a ro— rotund kind of guy, little white guy, but he was good to us. All the kids on the street, he was good to us. I don't ever remember him treating us different. You know, it was Spud to us. And Spud would give us some money and we would buy stuff, like that. And I always remember Ray and I would go over to the PV bakery, which is, wh— used to be just down the street. And the PV bakery used to have a place on the front where the, the doughnuts would roll around on the grease and the guy would be flipping them over and making them, but we could never aff— we f— you know, to buy one donut was a lot of m— that's a whole nickel, man. I mean, 'yeah, man, this is a lot of money!' So we would go, and we would buy day-olds. Two for a nickel. Two for a nickel, man, and we— and we, and we had it made, you know, we had it ma— [laughing] But, when you, when you grow up on

the streets, it– well, when we grew up on the streets, we just learned how to get along. They– early in the morning, when we would walk to school, from there, from, from Radcliffe to, we went to, to MacQuiddy. They made us go to MacQuiddy, see. Now, we couldn't understand why then, but now I know is that they, they were starting to try to, to integrate us, you know, because we're primarily all minorities– well, all minorities on this side, and most of the upper people, and the white people and stuff lived on that side. So they were sending us over to MacQuiddy school. And I always remember, the first thing that Ray and I– we got into the classroom, and we said, "the floors are warm!" They– they had warm floors. That's the first thing we noticed, they had warm floors. And that was the one thing we remembered, you know, about that place, it was warmer. And the teacher was Mrs. Cassidy. Very nice lady. Very nice lady. Sh– she was good to us, treated us right– don't remember having any particular problem– we always remember– we never went on that side of town. We didn't have any reason to be there. And if we were on that side of town, they didn't want you on that side of town, you know– they didn't say anything, but you already know. You could feel it. Yeah, you could feel it, you already know. Even now. See, so, we didn't have any reason to be there. See, so– [laughs] MacQuiddy w– then we went from MacQuiddy, went to E.A. Hall. So, we went to E.A. Hall school. That was, that was tough, because on Second Street, on Second Street where I grew up, even Ray– is that, it's a hierarchy. When, when you live in a barrio, or you live in a ghetto, or you live in a, a– wherever you are and there's poor– there's always a hierarchy. And the hierarchy is always built on, you know, it, it's always the– the strongest is, is– is at the top of the class, okay? It's survival of the fittest. So consequently, almost daily, you had to show where you were, which meant you had to fight. See? So you're, you're fighting, or y– arguing or, or you don't fight because you already know this guy's gonna whip you. Because he's whipped you before, and you're not ready for him yet, see. So, so you, y–you have– you find your spot. Now, when that occurred, is that the last guy on the list, that's the guy, so– that's the flunky for the day. So, they just tell 'em– they boss him around, yeah– "go get me a this and that, go do this and do that," you know, stuff like that. And– and if you didn't, you know– you got a beating, you know, I mean, simple as that. And the girls on the street had no sympathy for you if you didn't fight. You had to fight otherwise, man, they just disrespected you completely. I– that's– bottom line. Bottom line. So you didn't have a choice, and– and you know, you– they call it bullying now, man it was bullying then! [laughs] It was bullying then– see, now, you bully somebody and they're going to shoot you. See, so good– little guy, you know, all he has to do is have a gun and he becomes six feet tall, 300 pounds. See what I mean? So, now they don't have any qualms about shooting you and killing you. Then, it was all about j– beating you up. And then, you are– you know, you're the boss, whatever they– Boys'– Boys' Club. You know where the fire station is? Here in Watsonville?

Ian Hunte Doyle 14:48

No, no.

Freddie Leo Castillo 14:48

You never seen the Rocky movie? It's like that. It's a dingy, small, little place. The guys would go in, and, and we would play pool and stuff. And, I remember being in there, and there was a boxing ring, and it was adults that would go in there and box. It was the first time I ever saw a guy in a jock. And I didn't know what it was! And I was, "is that? What the he– what is that?" We, we didn't know what was, you know? We didn't have any idea! [laughing] And these guys were boxing, and g– going on like that, but, the rule in there: no fighting. And I, and– I got in a quarrel with Bobby Roxas. And we started

fighting, and— he kicked— what was his name, now? I gotta think of his name— his name is up on top of the, the— the city recreation place over here. Let's see, what's it— Rodriguez? Imalda Rodriguez and ah, gosh, how can I forget his name? You get old, you'll forget. Anyway, he was a short Greek. And he was a square— he was a short, robust— I remember he grabbed both of us, he dragged us over to the ring. He g— threw us in the ring, and he brought out these gloves that must have been this big, like big pillowcases. And he wrapped it around my hand and his hand— and Bobby's hand, he said, "okay, go ahead." And I remember looking at Bobby, man, I said "I'm gonna ki— I'm gonna kill you b—" you know, we were yelling at each other, cussing at each other, we're swinging these things— man, I was hitting him with these pillows, right? Boom, boom! Can't get hurt, right— boom, boom, boom. We got so tired we couldn't raise our arms up. And I always remember leaning against him, we were spitting at each other, yelling at each other, and then all of a sudden, he started cracking up! We were just lau— and we became— we became very good friends, you know b— even now, he's— his wife died a few years ago, but we still, you know, 'hello—' but, I always remember that.

Freddie Leo Castillo 15:05

Do you know what it was about?

Freddie Leo Castillo 16:20

No, I don't remember. Who knows, man, it could be anything, and— I don't even remember what it was about. I just remember leaning against him, yelling, and then all of a sudden we're laughing, and then, it was— that was it. We were friends. From then on, we were lifelong friends. That's just the way it was, but. That idea of having to fight went over to the seventh grade, E.A. Hall, see. When we went— E.A. Hall, for your information, years ago, is— what would occur is that you went— it was junior high, just like it is now. Seventh and eighth grade. And I remember we would— we were being— you could over there, or we could ride a bus. You could do it, but most of the time we walked, but— they had, y— we had people that came from Mexico that couldn't speak English. And they didn't have bilingual classes, where they— helping you do this and now— right? No, no. So, we had, we had a class for— at that time, the class for the retarded, that's what you'd call it. Class for the retarded. Okay? That's where they put all the non-English speaking people. And they weren't retarded. Ismael Padilla lived on the street, an he was the big dog. He was the one getting— whip everybody. And they put him in there because he couldn't speak English. And he got meaner. And I recall getting off the school bus. I don't know why I rode the school bus that day, but he was on the bus too, yeah, we, we— we got along fine. You know, I mean, I, I didn't mess with him, because he was the big dog. You know, nobody gonna bother with h— Ismael. And I remember getting down off the, off the steps, starting to step down and then Ismael Padilla just slugged me, knocked me on the ground. I rolled around, I had all of these little thistles and things all over me, and all the people were around, and everyth— and I was so embarrassed, see. I w— I didn't think, and I jumped on him. I jumped him, and I hit him, and I punched him. I knocked him down, and I had him down, I was stan— I was on top of— kneeling on top of him, and I was hitting him, and I'm thinking: "I'm whippin'— I'm whippin' ass on Ismael Padilla, I'm a big dog! Man," I'm, I'm thinking "wow! Thi— this is gonna make me something," right! And I remember, he— he was a big guy. Boom, like that! He's flipped me over. I rolled over, and he turned around, wow! Kicked me in the side. Yeah, ki— rolled over and, bang! Hit me on the back of the neck, here. And all I could think of was, "oh man, I'm gonna take a beating now." And he whipped me a couple more times, and then Mr. Todd, the principal saved me, man. Somebody went in and got him! because he was going to whip my— he was really gonna beat

me. But, that carried over. But the thing, the point of the whole thing is, later on, he was venting on me, because they put him someplace where he didn't belong, and everybody was, he felt, was ridiculing him. "Yeah, you're the school—" you know, "you're the smartest one in the dumb class, man!" Hijole! You know? Wow! That— that, you know, that was a real problem. After that, we— we didn't have a problem after that, I mean, Ismael left me alone, and— and, after that, I do not really know what transpired, but I don't recall anything else about Ismael. But, I had the same problem with, you know, Freddy Avila— grew— up the street. And, all these guys, you know, all these guys. I mean, I couldn't walk from my house on Second Street, to Spud's market, buy me a candy bar or something, and get back without the Martinez brothers stepping out of the house and taking it away from me. So you had to s— you know, you ha— you either ate it before you got there, or you you got close, you looked around, and then you ran like crazy to get to the house. That, that was the bottom line. That was the bottom li— it was— it was not easy. It was not easy, it it— yeah. And then the other thing is that, at that time, Ian— do you speak Spanish?

Ian Hunte Doyle 21:31

Very little, no.

Freddie Leo Castillo 21:33

[indiscernible] Just— just English?

Ian Hunte Doyle 21:34

Just a little bit of French.

Freddie Leo Castillo 21:36

A little bit Fr— okay. Pretty much you're— English speaker. All right. At that time, a lot of the guys spoke Spanish and English. And they would talk to me in Spanish, and I would say "I don't understand Spanish," because— because I look more Hispanic than I do— look Asian or Filipino. S— Freddie, "you ashamed of being a Mexican? Huh?" They'd get in a fight. I do not— I mean, that was it, they'd get you in a fight. And I remember, getting in to high school, this jumps a little forward. And I said there must be an easier way to get around this mess, so I took Spanish class! [laughs] "I got to learn a little bit of Spanish, here" [indiscernible] My brother and I, Ray and I, we worked in the field with the Braceros. Bracero program was a really good program. It was a really good program, which— which I feel they should have just continued, but— if you look at the politics of it all, that's what it comes down to. It was a good program, which they— you know, because I remember, I, I couldn't understand a lot of Spanish, but Ray did real good, and we would talk to these guys, and they'd say, "oh, yeah, we," you know, "we get signed up, we come here, we live in the barracks," which, we would go over to the barracks, and we would eat and everything with them. And, they would say, "we're making good money, we're sending it home, making thing— the life better for us over there, and helping all the farmers here, because they need a lot of workers." So, we worked with the Bracero program at that particular time. So, Ray and I had a good job. Now, we wanted to get a good w— you know, every summer, we had to work. Well, we had to work, it wasn't any other— we, w— get money, right? My dad, he worked, but I mean, he didn't just lavish money on it. He didn't have that much to lavish, see? So, we worked. We tried every, every summer— before summer, we tried going into the canneries, and, and all of these places, trying to get these lucrative positions, right? But all of the, all of the guys that had ties to somebody there would get

the job, or all the white guys got the job. So, we always went to the field. And we worked in the celery, and the lettuce, and the strawberry— best job ever had was picking tomatoes. For Loveless and Sons. All the Filipinos worked there, too, see, so— but it was a good job. Paid good, made money. We liked it. And we had a good time!

Ian Hunte Doyle 24:14

Was this while you were in high school?

Freddie Leo Castillo 24:15

Mhm. When we were in high school, mhm. It was good. We picked strawberries too, I mean, my dad had strawberries— I picked strawberries, but I, I picked strawberries for him, obviously. Then I picked strawberries for a man— Kiel. Kiel, Kiel— I forget Kiel's last name, but he hired me and he hired my brother, Ray. And I remember Ray was a terrible strawberry picker. He would pick strawberries w— and I remember Kiel says, "I'm gonna have to let your brother go." [laughs] And I said, "if he goes I go." So he kept us both! [laughing] So he kept us both. So, yeah, it was, it was— it was good.

Freddie Leo Castillo 25:00

High s— E.A. Hall— E.A. Hall is where I learned that I was a pretty good athlete. I excelled at athletics. I did really well. Ray was not a real— real athletic at all. But he excelled at wood works, stuff like that. He really enjoyed that kind of stuff. So, I, I did, I did good at the— and I did good at school. So, when they, when they assigned us in the E.A. Hall, they assigned you as X, Y or Z, you know. X, up here, Y is here, Z is here. Same old poop, you know what I mean? So I was X. Ray was Z, you know. So— and he held that against me forever, even now, man, [unknown], even now! "Yeah, I ended up— but who got a college degree first?" Because he got a college degree. I say, "Yeah, but you got it from some Catholic school. They gave it to you, man!" You know, he went to school in San Antonio. Yeah. Our Lady of the Lake University is where he got— he got it in, in economics. Economics was his major. I said, I said, "you got your degree in economics. You didn't save a damn thing! You said all up here, but never here!" [laughing] Yeah.

Freddie Leo Castillo 26:25

You know, Ian, when you, when you grow up, like we did, when it was— was tougher and harder, and it was tough enough for us, I can't imagine what it must be like in a big city, like San Francisco, you know, where you were really clustered together and, you know. But when you grew up like that, is that, we swore to ourselves, you know what? When our kids grow up, our kids, we don't want them to live like this. So we're gonna go to school and do better, we're gonna make it better for them. Problem is, we went overboard. You treat them too good. You spoil them. You spoil them. A—and, and— and that's what occurs is that there, there has to be a— there has to be a line where— "no, you got to earn it. Y—you got to earn it, you know? Otherwise you don't appreciate it." Which is a big reason, now, I believe, that so many, so many, well— want of a— cultures, like Mexican culture, people. They, they don't appreciate the liberalism, the socialism, helping the immigrants and stuff like that, because they feel like, you know, they feel like they got their hands out, but they're not willing to work, which is not true. But it's what they believe. Because of a few. You know, because of a few, it— it's like, I go out and I do something wrong, then every— every mestizo, Filipino Mexican, like me, "see, I told you, man! They're no good." I worked at the hospital, and I remember this. When Obama was going for President, we had a Black information

manager. Information systems manager. He was a Black guy, Carter. And I remember we went into the break room. And I remember, we were, we were talking politics all the time, and I said, "you gonna vote for Obama? Because he's Black?" He says "no," he says, "I'm not gonna vote for him because he's Black. I want to vote for the guy that is going to do a good job." I said, "okay." I said, "I think he's doing pretty good. I'm gonna— I think I'm gonna vote for him." So later on, everything went on around, like that, you— the— and then Obama got made president and all that. And I remember, I was really dismayed. Because he was too nice. That's where I grew up, right? I mean, these guys are treating you terribly, then you should get in their face! So, I remember Carter was there, and I told Carter, "you know, I'm really upset with, with Obama, man." I said— you know, he's Black, right? I said, "he's too nice!" And I remember Carter set me straight, he said, "Fred. Remember Jackie Wils— Jackie Robinson?" The baseball player, Ja— Jackie—

Ian Hunte Doyle 29:29

I think it's Robinson.

Freddie Leo Castillo 29:31

He said, "he had to take all the grief. Joe Lewis had to take all the grief." He said, "you know why?" He said, "because, if Obama came out, and got in their face, the first thing they would say, 'you see, I told you all the Black people are like that!'"

Ian Hunte Doyle 29:47

Yeah, exactly.

Freddie Leo Castillo 29:48

"You know, yeah!" The same thing they say. "Yeah, they're all the— you know, they want to fight, they want to do this and that!" He said, "no." He said, "he has to speak better. He has to act better. He has to be better. Everything's better. He can't just be him." Which taught me a lesson at that time. I said, "you know what? You're absolutely right." See, and the thing is, is that it only takes one to make the rest of us look bad. See, so you see all these guys on there? They're a small minority of the bad seeds. See, but then they spoil the rest of it for us, and— and there's no t— there's no two ways about it. So consequently, a lot of people feel like these people around there are taking, for no reason, but, man a lot of them are working. Most of— I go to Manuel's restaurant over in Aptos— are you familiar with Manuel's?

Ian Hunte Doyle 30:42

No.

Freddie Leo Castillo 30:44

Man, you gotta get out of this town, man! [laughing] Manuel's restaurant is over, it's over in Aptos. It's on State Park Drive. You live in Santa Cruz?

Ian Hunte Doyle 30:55

Yeah. On the West side.

Freddie Leo Castillo 30:57

You go that way, you take State Park Drive, you go back over towards the ocean, you run over the railroad tracks, you turn left, and right on the corner there is Manuel's. Next to it is this Mediterranean, okay? Go to Manuel's. Now the— why I'm telling you that is that, you go in that restaurant, and there's nothing but Mexicanos working in there. There's a white guy, Pedro, that works in there, th— he's been there, like, forever. Yeah, he speaks Spanish better than a lot of us. But, all those guys have two or three jobs! I mean, they all have two or three jobs! And then, I talked to all of them, they say everybody in the family, they all work. They're all contributing, they're all doing this. Y— sure, you got a few, you got a few of everybody that's like that, and you got a few Blacks, Mexicans, Filipinos, I mean, you got a few that are— that are, you know, are, taking advantage, but, you know what? The majority of them are not like that. Majority of people are hardworking. They want a job. You see these homeless people out here? They, they got a problem. Which you and I could have, see? Some of them have, you know, mental problems? Yes. Some of them just fell on hard luck.

Freddie Leo Castillo 31:30

But many of them that fell on hard luck, they don't want a handout. Just, "leave me alone! I could take care of myself," you know? "I know where the shelter is. I— if I want to go, I'll go! If I want to sleep out here in the street, I will." See, and I don't have a problem with that. See, so. The only thing that I want is that, this is my town, this is where I grew up. Just keep it clean. And keep it sanitized. You know, don't take a crap in the corner out here, you know, whatever. But then again, the city has to do something. We got to, you know, you got to have a toilet and stuff like that for them, you gotta have garbage cans and stuff like that. But, even— even the high school kids I see walking out here! I, I walk around with my dog and some kid out there eating [unknown] and just throws it on the floor, and there's a garbage— and I told him, "there's a garbage can right there!" Man, he looks at me like, "yeah, right there! This is your town, too!" You know, so, I mean— so, you can't just blame it on them. It's, it's— it's an attitude and you got to teach people, you know, stuff like that, see? So— but we don't want the few to make the rest of us look bad, but it's always gonna be like that, Ian. I mean, it was like that when I was a kid, and I— and I see all of these, you know, people that would like to have a wonderful, peaceful, everybody loves each other. That ain't gonna happen. It's not going to happen. I mean, I would like it to happen, don't get me wrong. I would like heaven on, on Earth, but I mean, this isn't gonna happen. There are cruel, mean people out there, see? They're just a few. So consequently, we gotta do something about that. Education is important. But it's not the only thing people can learn without going to school. You know, I mean, they can do— so—

Freddie Leo Castillo 34:24

Zimba, what do you think? Did you eat your food, girl? If you go eat your food, then I'll give you a treat. Th— don't look at me like that! What? That's the deal. Zimba, dead. She wants a treat now. [laughing] Come here. Yeah, go eat your food first! Ah, she's upset now. She said, "I did all that for nothing?" Now, get out of here. [laughs] Zimba, go over there. Come here. Go over there. Come on. Come here. Go, get up there.

Ian Hunte Doyle 35:03

Well—

Freddie Leo Castillo 35:03

Down.

Ian Hunte Doyle 35:05

I'm actually supposed to do a whole intro thing.

Freddie Leo Castillo 35:08

Go right ahead.

Ian Hunte Doyle 35:09

I just have to— well, say, I'm Ian Hunte Doyle, interviewing Fred— Freddie Leo Castillo, and it's, I think it's March 9, right? March 9, Thursday. By now it's 12:43, but, yeah, that's okay. I appreciate all, all that. That was all very interesting.

Freddie Leo Castillo 35:35

There's a lot that I can tell you about myself. There's a whole lot more that goes on, but as far as my, my father— I know, my father was from Laoag. Which is in Northern Luzon. I know that he came from— he, he came from the Philippines when he was sixteen, because my uncle Leon was working in Hawai'i in the sugarcane. So, I believe he was able to come because he would be able to work. I can only assume that, okay? My dad, at that time, told me he came with a couple of friends. So, there were three of them, as I understand, okay? And they came with the, the thought that, "America! It's a land of gold. The streets are paved in gold, and everybody has two televisions. Everybody has two phones. Everybody has cars. I mean, you got it made! America's got it made." That was his thought. So, my dad told me when they landed in Hawai'i, my uncle and them picked them up, and they took them to the sugarcane camp where they were staying. And my dad, he said, "the thing I remember, "he said, is that he went to sleep, and he said, "the sun wasn't even up, and somebody was banging on the d— 'time to get up to go to work!" He said, "in the Philippines, we didn't get up until we want to, because, it's, you know, you're, relaxing!" And I— he said, "no, they're banging on it—" and my uncle says, "hey we have to get up, we go to work—" he says, "we're going to work!" They're sixteen, remember. They never had to work. They went to work. He says, "we come back and it's dark!" [laughs] He said, "I remember I was so tired. I was so tired, I couldn't even take a bath," he said, "I was so tired." He said, they did that for three days. Him and his friends. And he said he was crying to Uncle Leon: "I want to go home." And I remember my dad— uncle Leon told him, "you are home. This is it. This is your life." I can't imagine that.

Ian Hunte Doyle 37:55

Oh, God, that's pretty heavy.

Freddie Leo Castillo 37:56

I, I— I can't— I c— I can't— I can't imagine that myself. To come. And then, not only that, but to face the fact that nobody likes y— most people don't like you. You know, I mean, they don't like you. See, and then, you're sixteen years old, seventeen years old, eighteen years old, nineteen, twenty, twenty-one, you're here and there's no Filipina women! I mean, if you're gay, okay, there's a lot of guys, but in— but most of them, you know, they're looking for a woman, there aren't any! Because they couldn't bring any. So, consequently, they ended up with the old dime-a-dance, and stuff like that, where they've been— be

able to dine, you know, pay for a dance, and then, they're dancing with all of these Caucasian girls and things like that. And, and they, you know, the Filipino man is very charismatic. They got good manners, they know how to talk, they know how– to they know how to dance, they know how to dress, they, they did– my dad, I remember, my dad had this closet. Right here, with these really old suits. Nice Zoots, and I asked my dad, I said, "did you, you, you– you wore these ones, dad? He says, "Freddie. When we were young." He said, "before the Black guy, we were the ones that dressed the best." And he was right. He said, "man, you see all these–" you see all the old pictures of them? They're all dressed sharp, slick, man. "We looked good," he said, "yeah, we number one!" Yeah. But he didn't mean it mean, he was just saying, 'hey, it's a fact.' And they could dance. If you ever get a chance to see them dance formally, formal dancing, not– I mean, not like, like you dance, or I danced when I was a kid. They dance, formal dancing. Man, they are really good! Really good. So, because of that, they had a lot of racial problems. Because they would, you kn– they would be with, with the Caucasian ladies. And then, some of them would marry the Caucasian ladies. And then you'd end up with people like me. Are you– you're half and half too, huh?

Ian Hunte Doyle 40:13

Ah, my mother was half Black.

Freddie Leo Castillo 40:14

–see, so. You're, you're, you know, you– you run into a problem, see, is that "you're not Filipino, but you're not this one. You're that one." [laughs] "You're a," you know, "[indiscernible], you, you are, you're a half blood." [laughs] So, so y– that's the situation that they had. The other problem that they had, because they say, "ah, you Filipino guys, man, they all really cook good." My dad told me, he said, "we have to! There's no women to cook for us!" He said, "and we don't like the white food," he said, "it– it was okay," he said, "but it's– so we have to go out. And we have to buy the stuff we like. They have to find it first. And they have to learn how to cook. That's why they turned out good– be good cooks." They had to! They had to learn how to cook their own stuff, the food that they like, see? Because what they were eating did not agree with them, see? So, the Vietna– Vietnamese, and all the others had the same situations, see? See, so, it was in– interesting that my dad had that.

Freddie Leo Castillo 41:20

And when he went from Hawai'i, after that, I don't know when. This is– this where I lose– I don't know what's going– I know that they left Hawai'i. No– when I say they, I don't know if my uncle came, but he left Hawai'i, and he landed in San Pedro. From San Pedro, as I understand, he joined a Filipino crew. Where they went after that, I'm not sure. See, I'm not sure. Somehow, he ended up in Montana, and ran into my mother. And that was through the, you know, the, the crew was doing this– and they have this route that they followed, to do work. I didn't know what it was, but he ended up in Montana. And that's where he met my mother at a dime-a-dance. And, my dad said, "as soon as I saw her, that's the one I want." So, he says, "I bought all her tickets. I bought them all. And she just dancing with me." And then, she ran off with my dad. She was fourteen. My dad was already in his thirties. I asked my mother, when I saw her, "Mom, you were only fourteen when you left?" And she said, "yeah." "Why?" She says, "because this is where I am, this is where I was going to be. This is where I'm never going to leave. I wanted something else." See? So, and then, so, that's why. That's why. So, I was born, you know, Ian, I have to give you pieces, because I don't know the whole–

Ian Hunte Doyle 43:02

That's perfectly fine.

Freddie Leo Castillo 43:03

– I don't know the whole fabric here, okay?

Ian Hunte Doyle 43:05

That's great.

Freddie Leo Castillo 43:06

I was born in Portland, Oregon. Because they were passing through there, because my dad was working. Don't tell me what he was doing, I think it was a fish cannery or something– with the crew. So, I was born there. Never lived there. We left, you know, we came to Watsonville. This is where, this– this is where I grew up, so this is my home. But that's where I was born, in Portland, Oregon. And then my mom, you know, because she was so young and my dad was gone all the time, it was bright lights, big city. You know, it's– and then she'd run into Margaret, and then we're having a good time and all that, see, so, I mean, she was young, it was okay. I understand. You know, I understand. Never held it, Ian– she's my mom! See, so. But, it– it gave me a clearer picture of what was going on, see?

Freddie Leo Castillo 43:59

My dad continued to be a farmer when we moved back to Second Street. He had different places where he was being a farmer. And, the only other place that I recall is that we had a strawberry farm out on Amesti. And it was very successful, and then, there was some, as I understand, there was some competition from Florida, or someplace south, and the market went bad. And, and we went bankrupt. So, when my dad went bankrupt, he got a job with– in town, working as, as a laborer, primarily with Pete Lucas. Pete Lucas, another Filipino guy, ran a– he had, he had the ability to hire Filipino guys for work in different places, and– that's how I got the job at– we got the job at Loveless and Son, because that– mostly Filipinos working in there, see?

Freddie Leo Castillo 45:01

So, my dad went to work there. And he was a laborer for the rest of the time. He drove a tractor. He was very proud of that, you know. "Tell me, Freddie." You know how they like to make the straight line? "Look that one, huh? [indiscernible] straight!" [laughs] He was very proud of that. He would come home, and then he would take off his goggles. And, and I said, "dad, you look like a raccoon!" [laughs] And I remember my father, he would– he, he– my dad would wear long underwear. Long underwear, all the way up, right? And then he'd wear a pair of Levi's, and a w– wear a, a t-shirt, and a sweatshirt, and a– and a shirt, and a jacket. And then he'd put these coveralls on! So, when he would come home, I remember him, he would come home, he would take off all his clothes, and he was a– he was as white as white. [laughs] I, I, I– from here, down, he was like, like, like this, like you and I, brown, man, he was brown, right? From here. From here to here? He was brown. But from here to the rest of him? Man, he was white! [laughing] I got a kick out of, of kidding him. [laughing] Of how white he was. And I recall – this is funny stuff I'm just telling you – is that, I recall, my dad would come in, and, he would drive in with the pickup after work. And I would see him come in because I'm in the front, you know, in the house.

And then, and then, he wouldn't come in! Maybe, I don't know, a half hour, hour, he j– so, I remember, I go outside and my dad's in the backya– he has a garden, right? So, he's, he's squatting down and I hear him speaking. [mimics indiscernible speech] I said "daddy! Who are you talking– who are you talking to?" And he says, "never mind. This one don't feel so good!" So he's talking to his plant. [laughing] All the other, all the other guys that I grew up with, we all– all half, half Filipinos like me, they all understand. I said "okay!" So, I go back in the house. [laughing] But, he had garlic and onions, and all kinds of stuff. What he would do, like so many of them, he would harvest it, put it in bags, and– and then, he would throw them on the back of the truck, and on the weekend, we would caravan out to different homes. And my dad would exchange the garlic and the onions for– some of the women, what– they would can stuff, so he would trade it, and they would exchange things like that. I remember that.

Freddie Leo Castillo 47:54

I learned a lesson too, I remember, with my father at one place. We went to this one home, and the lady answered the door– Filipino lady. And she invited us in, and my dad said, "no, we will wait here." So, I– normally, we'd go in, and they give us something to eat, and all that kind of stuff, right? Really friendly. But this time my dad said "no." So I don't– I don't know what's going on, so. I asked my dad, "how come we did not go in, daddy?" He says, "the, the husband was not home. We cannot go in." Another lesson, something I didn't understand at the time. But later on, I said, "wow. Wow." Yeah. "He said we can not go in." "Okay. Okay!" You know, I, I didn't understand why. But later on, it became very apparent, right? Like, to you– became very apparent what's going on. So, consequently, another lesson, that I learned from my father, that I later on, I understood what he was trying to say.

Ian Hunte Doyle 49:06

But you kept it with you.

Freddie Leo Castillo 49:08

Right. See, so, that's– that's the kind of thing– man, that– that's the kind of stuff I remember ab– about him, see, so– but because he became bankrupt, he was very, very unwilling to take risks anymore. Because I do recall that the house across the street that belonged to the Higakis was for sale. At that time it was nine thousand dollars, I remember. And that's a lot of money. But it was a two story place, big! And I, and I remember my dad and my uncle were, were talking about it, and they decided against it. W– it would have been a great thing. They, they could do it. But, they decided not to take a chance. Based on the fact that they– things w– had gotten– that was one. And I remember, a ranch was selling for several thousand dollars. But it came with a house, and another house, and a tractor, and acreage, and everything, and my dad really wanted it, but my– he needed my uncle to contribute. And my uncle did– did not want to do that.

Freddie Leo Castillo 50:19

See, so, they, they lost that risk, which you need to do. You're young. You know why? Is because– and I, and I never had that. I never learned that. Had my father taught me, I would have taken more chances and done better. There were opportunities for me to really do well, if you're talking about wealth, to really do well. And I decided not to, because I was never taught to take a chance. I was never taught the fact that, so what? So you lose it. You learn something, you're still young! Start over! When you get old, Ian, you cannot do that. You have to be careful. But, don't be afraid to take a chance.

Yeah! Do— take a chance! [indiscernible] you've got plenty of time, do it again! You know, you know, Macy's went broke seven times before he succeeded. Onassis, you know, Onassis was broke I don't know how many times, I mean, you look at all of these self made guys— self made. Not the ones that are like Trump, you know? I mean, these guys that are silver spooned, you know— self made guy, you know? They all failed before they succeeded. See, so, don't be afraid to take a risk. When you're young, take a risk. Go for it. Yeah. But, when you succeed, if you do really, really well? You do really well? Give back. You know, you see these guys, like Leon Musk, this guy Musk. He got more money— he got more money than God! What're you gonna do with it all? You know, how many steaks can you buy? How many trips can you take? How many airplanes can you have? How big a house can you get? I mean, spread it out! You know, but you don't want to give to this guy because, "ah, he's just a leech. Go to work, get a job." You know, "you must have been bad in your life. That's why God treated you bad, and made you poor." That kind of stuff. You know, I mean, you hear all that kind of stuff, and it's all baloney. You know, I mean, yeah. If, if you succeed and do well, share. Yeah, share. This is— there's— there's some other stuff, I mean, we, we can go over some more— more stuff.

Ian Hunte Doyle 52:50

Yeah, of course. I mean, do you— I know you— I, I think you mentioned when we were talking on the phone, you don't know much about, like, your, your parents marriage, but. Do you have any— well, do you have any idea where it was?

Freddie Leo Castillo 53:05

No.

Ian Hunte Doyle 53:07

Because, you know, I've— so your mother was Mexican, right?

Freddie Leo Castillo 53:10

Correct.

Ian Hunte Doyle 53:11

So, I've heard—

Freddie Leo Castillo 53:13

She was Mexican and French.

Ian Hunte Doyle 53:15

Ah, okay.

Freddie Leo Castillo 53:17

Where did the French come from? That I was told before, and I said "ah, that's baloney." I talked when I went to visit my mother, as an adult, and I met her father, my grandfather. I asked him, "is there any truth to that?" He said, "oh, yeah." And he went— I should've taken notes at that time, but I'm thinkin', you know. Is that— "oh, yeah, your great grandfather came from Lucca in Italy." But when he was— when he was coming here, as I understand, he ended up in Mexico. So, in Mexico— in Mexico, what

happened is that he married a Mexican lady. And the Mexican lady had him, see, and my grandfather married somebody else, and had my mother. So the French was in there someplace. See, so, but I, I— I would like to learn more about that, and I keep saying I'm gonna get on there and do— but I never do. I better do it before I die. See, so, so that I can leave that kind of a history about what occurred.

Freddie Leo Castillo 54:21

But where they were married? I don't know. I do know this. When my mom left and went back to Montana, ran off or whatever, she, she married a fellow that was in, in Mon— Billings, Montana. She ended up in Billings, Montana. And, when I went to the Philippines in seventy-four, to visit my father, because he had gone there to visit— he went back there to visit. He'd never been there in forty-five years, he got his citizenship, he went over there, and then he had a stroke. So, he ended up staying there, so I went to see him to bring him back. So, when I was there, my father told me at that time that they never got a divorce.

Freddie Leo Castillo 55:10

And, I remember when my, when I, I was ready to— I stayed there for a while with him and plans were— my dad, at the very— on the very last day, before we're getting ready, I said, "we're gonna go and everyth—" and my dad said, "No. I'm gonna stay here." He said, here, "I'm a king." Because he had Social Security, and, in the barrio, everybody came to him, if they needed a sponsorship for a child, or they needed something special. My dad got Social Security, so he was like a king, see. "If I go with you," he says, "I'm a burden." Which is— he says, "I, I'm not gonna go. I'm gonna stay. But when you see your mama, you tell her I always loved her."

Freddie Leo Castillo 56:06

Oh, man, you should have seen the fuckin' tears coming out of my eyes, man. When my dad told me that, wow. Wow! That explains to me why my father never married. Because, I remember asking him, when I got older. And not when I was younger, "I never see you bring a woman home, dad." And my— I said, "how come you never got married?" And my dad told me, he said, "I never had one stay. I never had one to marry. Because I could never be sure that they would treat you and your sister good." That's another thing, see? Sacrifice that— he sacrificed that for the— to, to protect us from any possibility. Instead of happy— happiness and companionship. Talk a— y—I mean— y—you talk about— you know how they say, Mexican people are very family oriented, Filipinos are very family or— Blacks are very family oriented, you know that? You don't know that until you experience something like that. My dad sacrificed companionship and happiness with somebody of the other gender, so that he could be sure that we were safe. And loved. Wow! Wow! You try to put yourself in that position, and y— a—and you, you, you, you know, wow! It's tough, man, wow. See, so, that just goes to show you. Is that it— he, he's got to be— if there's a heaven, he's got to be there. He's got to be there. And the other thing too, Ian, is that, you always want to remember is that, there are no perfect people. On this Earth, there is not one single perfect person. I don't care who it is. See? And, and I have the greatest respect for Mother Teresa, but I'm sure, at some point in her life, she made a mistake. But I love her. I, I lo—love, well, the sacrifice she made, see. So, y— that's the one thing you can always count on, is that, whenever you, you screw up, and you will.

Ian Hunte Doyle 58:34

Oh, yeah.

Freddie Leo Castillo 58:34

We all do!

Ian Hunte Doyle 58:35

I have already, I'm sure.

Freddie Leo Castillo 58:36

Yeah, we all do— is that, you got to remember, it's a lesson, in this life. You, you— you know, you look at it, you learn from it, you try to do better, but you'll screw up again. There's no two ways about it, see, and then you chastise yourself, and you fix it, and I— it's a, it's a continuous process. Then you get old, like me, you look back, and you say, man. I sure made a lot of mistakes. But, for me, are you happy enough where you are at this moment? Be truthful! To go through all of that again, to be in this spot. If you can answer that honestly, then you're okay. See, so, at some point in time, you'll remember this, you know, "I remember this guy—"

Ian Hunte Doyle 59:30

I'm sure I will.

Freddie Leo Castillo 59:31

You sit down, and you say, "man, I sure made lot of mistakes, man," you know. Things that you did wrong, things that you're not proud of, things— stuff like that. You know, I mean, there's lots of stuff that occurs, it's life. It, it wasn't supposed to— meant to be easy, you know, I, I— it wasn't— it's not supposed to be easy, that— whoever did it, said "it ain't gonna be easy, man, it's gonna be—" my dad would always say, "Freddie. Remember. Good today, tomorrow, rough road ahead." That's what he would say. "There's rough road ahead." [laughing]

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:00:08

He was not wrong.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:00:09

Yeah. There's a lot of stuff my dad taught me, at that time, that I appreciate now. Well, in, in my older years, see, so—

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:00:19

Yeah, when you're young, you know—

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:00:20

Yeah. If I had known everything— if I had taken everything to heart that he had said before, shit, man I could've ruled the world! See, so, I think most people feel that way, too, see, so. I was lucky. I was lucky. My dad was a good man. You know, I think about it now, my dad was a, was a really good man.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:00:35

I went to the Philippines, I was there for almost three weeks. And I went there simply with the goal of bringing him back to me, and I told you about that. When I was there, man, all I can remember, "man this is hot here! Holy—" man, 'cause it was so hot. I could barely move around. And I— took me a little while to get used to it. I remember waking up at two o'clock in the morning, so I could go sit outside, underneath a tree. It was the coolest time of the day. And I would sit there, just sit there like this, in a chair. I remember thinking the sun's gonna come up. And then, and then the sweat would start pouring down, I wouldn't even be moving! The sweat'd just started pouring down. The sweat pouring down my arm, it would start dripping off my wrist, and I'm thinking, "oh, my God." I remember that.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:00:35

The other thing I remember about the Philippines is that there was no electricity. There was no TV, there was no radio, there was nothing. When we had dinner, I don't know— it started early afternoon and ran off until the night, and we all sat around the table, the little kerosene— you know, the brake fluid cans. They'd have a little wick on them, they have kerosene inside it. We'd have the little lamp, and we'd just sit around and talk— they would talk and I would try to listen. They would explain to me what they're saying and stuff, like— I mean, it was family. It was family. Yeah. I, I mean, that was the whole thing, is, y— dinner was everything. It was your social time, your entertainment time, your family time, it was everything. The— there was nothing else to, to distract you, see.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:00:35

The other thing I recall, is that, since I came from the United States to visit, people would come to the house, just to see me. "He's from America! That one." And they would come looking for sponsorships, you know, they would take me to the school, "this is the school, we want to build this," and stuff like that, see, so. It was good. It took— at that time. That was before they built the roads. At that time, from from Laoag, which was a very crude village— they still hung the meat out, and all that stuff and everything. Now it's a big city. It took us from there, in a Jeepney, took us 30 minutes to get out to the barrio, from— and the barrio was Castillo. That's— it just, kinda, you know, it's a family th— everybody's been living there for who— gosh knows how long, so they're all Castillo, right? So, there, there— there's no law enforcement, they take care of everything. If there's a problem, they got the elders, and everybody, they take care of it. Everybody engages in the planting, and taking care, s— everybody helps each other out. That's all there is to it. I do recall, when I needed to go to town, I wanted to go to town, so, so I— I got the jeepney, we went to the town, and when I was in town— is that I had, I had six or seven guys all around me. And they're all carrying these machetes, you know, because— and I, and I wasn't real— well, obviously! They didn't want me to get kidnapped or anything. So, they're walking around, and these are all of my guards, you know? My guards, around there. [laughing] Okay, yeah! That's the way it was. Very interesting. I remember them— I remember trying to get in there to plant the rice, get in there to plant the rice, and I remember taking— "I gotta go to the bathroom!" "Over there!" So I look over there, and I'm looking for a, a room. "Over there!" So, I walk over there, there's this hole in the ground. You know, I c— I said, "what?" [laughing] I gotta squat down, take a dump! I mean it was really, really different, man for a— you know, I mean, wow. So I'm taking a— I gotta take a shower. "Over there." Same thing, outside. It's hot, though. Covered by bamboo, like this, right? And the water, you, you pull the thing, and the water comes out, you know, a— like a bucket, you know, so I'm getting in, and pour the water— so, I take the shower, right? And I turn around, and this water buffalo— he mu—to me, he had a head this big, right, he's looking over like that— and just scared the living daylights out of me,

man! It just, it really— it scared me, I— just, oh! Yeah, yeah. Jesus. I remember that incident. Yeah. And I r— yeah, it was hot, but everybody was nice. And then, at the evening time, the kids would all come to the house. They would sit down on the outside there, and it was hot, man. And they would sing. They were singing to me, and singing to the rest of us, yeah. And we're all— it was just, it was just really, really nice. Yeah, it was really, really nice. They would dance. And, they would just stare at me. And then, I would say something to them, and they would— like any other kid, they would laugh, and giggle, and stuff like that. Then I'd have to ask my, my uncle Fred, see. "What'd they say?" And then he would tell me, and then— and I would tell him, "tell them this and that," and stuff like that, see, so, yeah. It was a lot of fun. I— and I enjoyed myself there. Except it took me like, eight, nine days, to acclimate myself, it was so, so humid, and sweltering, and hot. But, I, I— I really enjoyed it when I was there. Yeah. My auntie, auntie would— Filing was her name— would say— my uncle Fred, she would say, "what does he want for dinner?" And, and I said, "I don't know. Maybe chicken?" She says, "oh, okay." So she'd go outside and grab a chicken, [mimics snapping its neck] grabbin' 'em by the head, or— you know? [mimics snapping its neck] And then, get him ready. [laughing] Yeah, that was a— so, "oh, okay!" [laughing] And then, they c— they cooked, but it was in a, in a, in a kiln. You know, like, I mean, like the— the making the, in the pizza places? That's how they cooked. Throw the wood in there, and they just stick it in there, and they cook it, and then bring it out, and yeah. It was interesting. Very interesting. Life was good. I mean, I enjoyed it, when I was there. I asked them— I understand you're gonna be— they're gonna be beginning a federal income tax. They didn't have any inco— they, you know, "what's that?" Nothing about government. None of them knew anything about government, see. It's— they're doing what they're gonna do. We're just gonna— here, and we're just surviving. Yeah. See, so, you know— and my dad would say that sometimes, the rebels would come out of the mountains, and come down, and they would feed them, and then they would leave. Rebels? I guess, fighting the government, you know, because, at that time, when I was in the Philippines, Ian, Marcos, they were— they had, they had martial law.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:00:41

Yeah, I mean, could you tell me more about when you went back to the Philippines? Or, I guess, went to the Philippines?

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:00:46

I was there during martial law. I was on Roxas Boulevard, when— I was coming out of the hotel. Because I walked down to the corner, because there was a little breakfast place that I really liked. So I'm walking out, and this army truck, military truck, [mimics truck] comes right up. About four or five of these military guys jump out with these big old guns, they run up the steps of this other hotel, and then I'm watching what's going on, the next thing you know, they're dragging this Chinese guy out of this place, and they threw him in the truck, and then took off. I, my uncle Fred wasn't there, I was— I was by myself at that time. Later on, because there was a TV in the room, I find out this guy was a suspected drug dealer, and they— they executing that evening. During martial law. I mean, I remember traveling from, from Manila to Laoag, when we first got there. We were on the bus. Not a real, modern bus, either, okay? And we had to stop at midnight. Oh no, we— on the way, it's dark, right? The bus stops. I mean, and— highways, they're not like highways here, at that time. There are no lights. I mean, it's so dark, you can't see your hand in front of you. So we're all getting off, and I'm telling my uncle Fred, "what's going on?" He said, "never mind. Follow me." I'm thinking, "oh shit," you know, "we're getting

off. Somebody's gonna shoot us. We've got a problem." So I'm getting off the bus, and I can't even see, and I'm thinking, "Jesus Christ, gonna be a snake or something out there, man!" You know, "gonna get me." So, what it was, it was a pee break! Take a pee, or a dump, or do something, out there. So that was— that— it made me feel better. So we get back on— but at midnight, we had to stop, because there was a curfew. So you stopped, due to the curfew, and on the side of the road, there were tents with food, and, and a, a place to sit down and rest until you can get back on the highway, and I forget what time it was. But there was Americanized food, and then Filipino food. So, I went over with my uncle Fred, and then we— and ate, and all that kind of stuff. Then we got back on the bus, and then we took off, we went back up to Laoag. But I do recall that incident, yeah. That was very disconcerting.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:08:10

Oh, balut, I think?

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:10:09

Balut. Yeah. My uncle Fred said, "you want one?" I said, "no, I'm good. Not me. Not me!" I want— I— Fred, he said— [indiscernible] That reminds me of one incident when I was at home, with my father. He made the fish, right, he grabbed the fish head, he picks it up, and he reached u— [sucking sound] sucks the eyeballs out, and everything like that, right? "Hey, Freddie. This one. Can you do that one?" "Yeah, I can do it!" I picked it up and I go— ah. I put it down. He said, "hmmm!" He tells me, "you don't know the good one!" I said, "no, dad. I'm civilized!" I remember telling him, yeah! "I'm civilized!" Oh, god. [laughing]

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:10:42

W— and I'm telling you, man, when it— since there's no lights, even when I was in the barrio, you step out of the house, and you get out about three feet, it is pitch Black. Unless the moon is out. It is pitch Black. But you never saw so many stars in your life. It's absolutely gorgeous. Gorgeous! I mean, you— I sat down in a chair, I'm looking out, and then— they were right there, you can almost reach out and touch them. It's gorgeous. Yeah. So, that w— that was, you know, that was a good part of that. On the bus, on the way up, everybody's talking, and laughing, and they're selling little things and all that, you know, whoever can sell, then they're selling these— the eggs that they sell. I, I forget— with, with the life fetus inside?

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:12:41

Actually, that reminds me, I mean, what kind of food would your dad cook?

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:12:44

Oh, they— cooked, say well, they have the vegetables, they would have pork, you know, because they had their own pigs, and stuff like that. Chicken, things like that, that they, you know— running it around, and doing all that stuff, so they can grab their chicken, they have some pork, pickled to store it up and everything like that— but mostly a lot of vegetables. Lot of vegetables, uh huh. Because they have it, they, they— they grow it, you know? All the vegetables. So, it— mostly my auntie Filing would cook— my father, when he got there, had a stroke. When I got there, my father was in a wheelchair. And he had already had an amputation on one of his legs. He was not in good shape. The one thing I do recall is that the, the image— the last image I had of my father was him sitting in a wheelchair with a stroke, you

know, half his face down— it— like that. That, I wish I would not have seen. I would prefer to remember my dad as the robust guy that was sitting on, on his shovel, watching the water irrigate the strawberries. And he's got his Copenhagen, in here— and he w— [spitting sound] then he would spit it out, like that, yeah. That's the one I want to remember. But that image stuck with me. But, yeah, that was— they would cook a lot of vegetables. A little bit of meat—

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:14:04

What about— Sorry, what about in Watsonville, like, when your dad—

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:14:08

Oh, he made everything. Dinuguan, adobo. He— he would make a lot of, of— well, we would call it chop suey. Filipino chop suey. You got— the— little bit of pork, and then lots of vegetables, yeah. But he would— [laughs] you'd open the refrigerator, and then look in there, and, I said, "what is this green stuff, dad?" "Ah, that's the good one." I open it up, and I go, "oh my god!" I'm rolling up— it was bile! You know what bile is?

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:14:43

Like, from a—

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:14:44

It's from— it's your liver, it's the stuff that's in your liver, it's— it's what the liver uses— it's the liquid that comes out of the liver, when you eat fat food, the liver, not— gallbladder, I mean. The gallbladder will squeeze it out, so that— it's a detergent. It breaks down fat. That's what he would use— that he— he'd put a spoon of that in his food. God, it was terrible. It— hey, was like, "oh my God!" But bagoong? Bagoong, ah! It's a— it's a smashed up fish, with onions, and stuff in it. Stink— I mean, terrible! But boy, I liked it. Yeah, I told the other guys, they'd say, "oh, yeah, that's a good one. That's a good one. Bagoong." Yeah. You know, my dad— my dad and my uncle would have some really— some stuff. I remember my uncle Leon, he's cooking something like that, he's making this chop suey right? And then I look inside and I said— I said, "uncle Leon, what's that one?" He said, "that's the chicken!" Yeah, but it's the chicken claw, you know? I said, "you've got the chicken," I said, "you've got the chicken claw!" [laughing] He said, it was in the refrigerator, so it was cold. So he wanted to warm it up, so he threw it in, warm it up. [laughing] I tell you, man. These flips did some crazy stuff. [laughing] I'm telling you, man! I come into the kitchen one day. And my dad— and I'm— dad is— has something in the oven. So I open up the oven, and I jump back. And I close it, I said— and I tell my dad, "what the," and he said— and I look at it, it's a pig's head. They had butchered a pig, they cut it. My dad had brought it home, and had set it on the— and was roasting it. God, it was delicious. The cheeks, and it was— wow. It was delicious, man. It was deli— but I mean, sh— because it was, like it was sitting on a plate right there—

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:14:45

Staring right back at you—

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:16:34

Oh, yeah! [laughing] Another funny thing is that, I remember my dad said, he, he went to the store, he came on back, and I remember I was sitting in the living room, and then I hear my dad, "Freddie!" Oh, I

jumped up, and I run inside! He says, "I don't know what happened to the, to the pie, I'm making a pie!" So I look inside, and it, it's a tin pan, but it's empty. I said, "did you put the—" "yeah, I put the pie in there!" I said, so I said, "let me see the bo—" so I look at the bo— and it was a [laughing] it was a chocolate cream pie. So he cooked it, and it all melted away and evaporated! [laughing] I told my dad, "you don't need to cook this one, daddy! You just leave it out until it gets soft!" [laughs] Oh, man, I had some really good stuff, funny guy, so, man. Oh well. C'est la vie.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:16:40

The, the Ph— Philippines was good. When I was leaving the Philippines, I got to the airport, got in there, and they did not allow me to leave at that time. I forget the reason why, but I had to go back to the hotel and stay a couple more days, before I could leave. I forget the reason why. But I do recall that that occurred. But, it wasn't a problem. I was there, I went to the movies, one day. I walked around, 'cause— and I walked in a thea— theaters were beautiful. Because it was where most people get entertainment— they could afford to go. Theaters were beautiful, man. Mahogany, all this wood, shiny, and they were beautiful theaters. It's where I saw Bruce Lee's first movie. Enter the Dragon. That's where I saw it. Enter the Dragon. I said, "wow, man." But, I, I— I remember how beau— stair— spiral staircase, all wood shiny wood, oh, I mean, oh yeah. And I asked my uncle Fred about it, he said, "yeah." He said, "that is the entertainment that most of the Filipinos can afford to go." So, they have a really nice inside. But I reme— I can recall when I was there, because it was the year that Bruce Lee put his movie out, Enter the Dragon.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:19:19

How old were you?

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:19:22

Let's see, that was seventy-four, so how old were we? Thirty-something? Let's see, well, how many years ago was that? Seven— it was seventy-four? How many years ago? So, seventy— probably twenty-five, divided by— fifty years ago? Yeah.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:19:36

Well, I can— I want to go back to your high school days. Because, I think, when I was looking at— so I listened to Juanita Sulay Wilson's— she did an interview about the Filipino Women's Club and the Filipino Youth Club, and I think I saw your name on one of the Filipino Youth Club's—

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:19:56

You're right.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:19:57

—things. So I wanted to ask about that.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:20:00

What do you want to know?

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:20:01

Anything about the, the Filipino Youth Club? Were you in it? [laughs]

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:20:05

Well, I was in the Filipino Youth Club, but I wasn't real active. I was really there, because my brother wanted to be— Ray wanted to be in there, because he was really interested in that same girl that was in the skating rink.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:20:17

Nice.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:20:17

So that's why we were there. Me, I was just kind of there, you know. And, and, and— and talking to all the guys, and the girls, you know, there was Juanita, there was her sister Manzie, and there were [indiscernible] I mean, a—all of the Flips were in there. I mean, all of us mestizos, that all— most of us— we were all there, so we knew each other— so it was a social time, see? And then, they were doing some dancing this kind of s— but I didn't get involved in that, man, you know, because it wasn't cool. For me. It wasn't cool. You know, I mean, 'oh, I'm not gonna do that. I'm gonna do that.' You know, 'if the guys on the street find out that I'm doing that, oh, man, I got a problem.' You know, see, so.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:20:58

But other, other than that, the Fili—com— the, the Filipino Community— Youth Club was just there for me to socialize and meet everybody. I really wasn't active in any of the functions and stuff that they did, really. And I do recall that, primarily, I was there because my brother wanted to be there, and he wanted, he wanted to keep wor— keep hitting on Manzie, man. Yeah, yeah, keep hitting on Manzie, see, so. That was— that was it.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:21:29

Yeah, the, the functions that would occur, really, that had nothing to do with the Filipino Community was— when the Filipino Community itself would be having events that— that would go on that we would go and— my dad, we would go to Salinas, or around here, or we would have functions that— Filipino, I forget his name now, but we would go to his place, and that's where they would have most of the function, because he had a ranch, and they would always buy a pig. And they would always butcher it on the spot. I remember them doing that. But that had nothing to do with the Filipino Youth Club. It was just an offshoot. Like I say, it was just a social thing with the kids. We just— we're Filipinos, so we'll have a club. That was it. But, nothing I can recall, specific, that we did s— special, you know. The only other ones would be those things like I'm telling you about, see, so.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:22:33

Then I would see most— or a lot of them at the barbecues and stuff we would have, see. Because then we would have a chance to go out, and run, and play, and do whatever we can— we could run in and out of the house, and grab some food, and, you know, there was no rules. There was no rule— and then, if you did something wrong, anybody there was able to reprimand you, see, so. But, when they butchered the pig, that was a good thing to watch. Because they would cut the carotid, you know, and then— they would hold the pig, you know, by the ears, and they'd— they'd have the bucket, and one

Filipino would be s— stirring up the blood, and another one would be putting in the vinegar, so it would not coagulate, see? And then, later on, they would be chopping it up and everything, then they'd make the dinugu— dinuguan. Chocolate meat. Make the dinuguan, and then make all the other food, and it would all be spread out on the table, and we would all go eat. It was good, man. Yeah, it was good.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:23:29

I'm getting hungry. [laughs]

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:23:31

But I mean, every— everybody does that, I mean, every culture has that kind of stuff, see? So— but that's what we did. The most fun of that was that— we were on a ranch, we had no limits. We just didn't— had to stay within the ranch, but it was big! So, you know, we could go and play, and do whatever— I remember, man, I would— being all sweaty, and everything— oh yeah— and just having a good time, you know. And, all the rest of the guys would be out there, too, see. So— and that's about all I can tell you about the Filipino Community Cl— I mean, Juanita and them could tell you more, because they're probably more— much more involved than I was, see, so—

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:24:15

Yeah, it's still very good to hear.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:24:17

Yeah.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:24:19

Yeah. Well, I mean—

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:24:21

Let me see the time now— what— what time is it? What time is it?

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:24:23

Let's see here. One thirty-two.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:24:27

Okay, one thirty, alright— that's good, pl— that's good.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:24:29

You want to keep going?

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:24:30

Yeah, I'm fine!

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:24:31

Alright.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:24:32

I got plenty of time.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:24:33

Alright, cool, well, you can just let me know—

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:24:34

My— sh—she's supposed to pick her up at two thirty or so. If she makes it in time. If she doesn't, man, no problem. Yeah.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:24:41

Well, just let me know when you—

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:24:43

Yeah.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:24:43

—and I'll press stop—

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:24:43

No problem. Ask me some more questions!

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:24:45

Yeah. Well, you know. So for me, being mixed myself, you know, it's— it's a—

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:24:52

Is it your mother that's Black?

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:24:53

Yeah.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:24:53

Okay. And your father is?

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:24:55

He's just Irish. White.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:24:57

He's a white guy. Okay, I got it! Alright.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:24:59

Yeah, yeah. But, you know, it's a— it's— you kind of talked about it earlier, but it's— it's a strange thing.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:25:05

Yeah,

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:25:05

I still struggle with my own identity, so, you know. But you seem pretty comfortable in— you know, in your own, so—

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:25:12

I'm, I'm very— I, I never really had a problem being who I am. I experienced— you know, I have experienced discrimination. I— I've experienced not only racial discrimination but economic discrimination. Opportunity discrimination. Athletically, I never had a problem, because I always excelled. So, you know, I, I— there was no discrimination there, you know. I was a good athlete. Want to put you on 'D,' because you want to win. Just like a Black athlete.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:25:53

What did you play?

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:25:53

You know, they may not like you, see, but if you're good, man, they want you, see? Yeah. I played football, basketball, and track.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:26:01

Wow.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:26:02

[indiscernible] basketball. [laughs] I was a, a running back and a, and a cornerback, and then linebacker. I played lightweight, though. We had lightweight teams at that time, see. And, basketball, you know, basketball I was a guard. Yeah. In track, I ran the sprints, because I was fast. Yeah. I was fast, so. So I had— had a good time, you know. And I did really well, see, so— and, and— I had a lot of fun. I— I liked— most of the sports that I liked were sports that were con— football, I loved football. I liked contact football, yeah, man. We had all the— you know, Dickie Tabula, and all these guy— I mean, we were all playing on the same team, and we just loved it, boy, yeah. The football— talking about high school— when I was playing football in high school, and I came in— I went on the field, okay? I went on the field, I got into play, the guy hit me, and I twisted my ankle, and he— and somebody hit me, and I had a bloody nose, okay? So, I, I limped over to the side, they had me on a bench, with ice on my ankle, and my nose was bleeding. And I didn't know— my dad walks down— he, he comes down, and he's got a jacket on me, and I'm sitting here— "how are you?" "I'm good, dad!" He says, "I think I bring you bad luck." That's the only game ever came to. Never came to see me play at anything, and I excelled at everything. I was a good football player, and he didn't s— he didn't see me make my touchdown, he didn't— you know, he never saw me win my medals in track. Never saw— because he believed he brought me bad luck. Wow. See, so he sacrificed all that, because he didn't want to bring me bad luck, now that's his belief! So he sacrificed the opportunity to come see me, because he believed that it was not good. I mean, wow. Yeah, see, so, yeah. It wa— it was good. It was good.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:28:25

Yeah. Well, I'm just wondering, if your dad ever really talked about– did he talk about facing, like, racial discrimination, or anything like that?

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:28:37

Yes.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:28:38

Yeah?

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:28:40

In an indirect way. My dad had lived through the Depression, see? So, my dad asked me a question one day, he says, 'would you have the nerve to go to a re– dress up, put on your best clothes and everything, like, go to a restaurant with your friends, order a meal, and then tell them, when they bring the check, you don't have any money? But you're willing to work.' I said, "no." That was one, he said, "that's what we did. We were hungry!" The other thing my dad said, "when I was in Chicago," he said, "we were twelve guys. One guy working in a restaurant, washing the dishes. And, all of us living in one room. Twelve guys." He said, "that guy, washing the dishes– the food comes through, he was putting the food in a plastic bag or something, to take it back, for the rest of us." He said, "would you do that one? Would you eat that one?" Y–you know, you couldn't've say– well, you gonna be picky? You know, I guess, you can't be picky if you're hungry, right? That kind of thing.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:29:52

The other thing my dad told me is that he left there because he met this white girl that he was spending time with, and she– she took care of him. He didn't have to work. She was working, so he just stayed with her, she was taking care of him. And, he says, "you're lucky I did not marry her!" [laughing] I mean, wow! I, I remember that.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:30:17

And– so, in, in that way– and then, when he was– when he was, you know, like, in Stockton, or– Stockton was really bad for Filipinos, you know, they– they didn't want you around at all, but it was bad in most places, see. All– all of the discrimination always occurred because the– the white guys just were upset because the white girls liked the Filipino guys! Because they were charismatic, and they were, y– friendly, and they were nice, and they danced good– I mean, what can I say? A–and the g– and they didn't have any women, so they were, you know, hitting on them all the time. Can't blame them. So, my dad faced that kind of a situation, where you had to go to a dime-a-dance, because you couldn't just take anybody, or ask anybody out, you had to go to a certain place. Where you're ac–accepted, you know, acceptable. Y–you couldn't just go anywhere. You had to be selective. And careful. So, that– that's the kind of thing that my father had to go through. And, and– he didn't– he said that he rode the rails, I don't know. He rode the rails, but, he said he traveled with the ho– what they called hobos, at that time. You know– you had hobos at that time, he said, but– he said, they picked– he said, they were clean– picked up after themselves, and everything like that, nobody bothered them. Yeah, nobody bothered them, they ride the rails, you know– from one place to the other.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:31:50

And he never had any problems with that at all either, see, so— but, he never told me about a specific incident, specifically, like— like I had, mine's specific, see? When I was going to E.A. Hall School, I was in the seventh grade, and I really became attracted to this Japanese girl. Joanne Yamaguchi. And, she liked me! So, we— and we're kids, right? You know, twelve years old, you know. So, she liked me, and I, I remember, we talked in school, and I knew she liked me, and I liked her, and I— so I walked her home one day. And her father was cutting the hedge. First generation Japanese. I walk her home, and he looks at me, and I knew, right away. He doesn't like me. Because I'm me. The next day, Joanne told me, "I cannot see you anymore." I said, "I know. I understand. I understand." Through all high school, through all th— because I used to see her at Nob Hill, at the grocery store— and I'd see her— Joanne and all the— through all those years, we always had an affinity for each other, but it never crossed the line. You know, we were always friends, and everything, yeah. My only regret there is that before she died, because she, she had, I don't know, a disea— leukemia, or something— that she died. My only regret there was that I never took the time to tell her that I really never forgot her. You know? So, that's one of my regrets. So, that was a direct—

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:33:42

I remember walking— no, I remember going over to the house of Nancy Mor— Borden. White girl, that was in school. I went over to visit her, and I was dressed up in pants, and I w— I was dressed nice. And I remember, we were laughing and talking, and her father was at home. I, I shouldn't have gone in, God— you know. But I didn't know. The father comes home, and, and told me to leave. [laughs] I knew right away, though. It was the same thing with Nancy— Nancy, next day— she didn't even come close to me. See, didn't even come close to me or whatever, like it's— so, I already knew, man, you know, I already knew, yeah, yeah. You know, so, discrimination is, is very real. And it's— it, it's based on— really, it, it— it's based on being completely ignorant. You don't like me, because, the way I look? You don't even know me! You just— you don't like me, because the way I look. You know, I, I mean— or the way I talk. It, it's— it's a very narrow-minded situation, see. Or, we don't want to associate with you, because it doesn't look good to everybody else. You might be okay with me, but what would my friends say? You know what I mean? For example, Joanne, she's Japanese. When I got back to Second street, the girls on the street were just, they were all over me! "What are you, a paddy lover?" Oh, paddy in those days was kind of like a white guy, whi— white— a white person. "What are you, a paddy lover, now? We're not good enough for you?" Oh, man, I— man! Y—oh yeah, see, so— you know— I mean, I was getting it on both sides! See, so— yeah, i—it's, you know, it's a— it's a very comp— it's a complicated, but very ignorant— it's ignorant. It really is, it's ignorant. You may like me, but! They may not like you. Consequently, I better like you. See? So, better not like you. It, it's unfortunate, but, my dad didn't raise me like that.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:36:12

I remember asking my dad— what was, what was the situation? I don't recall, but I remember asking my dad about— oh yeah. That Filipinos seem to be— combination with everybody. Because that was their situation, and my dad, [laughs] my dad tell me, "the Filipino is the joker of the deck." He says, "we will be with anyone. It's okay." So, my dad was non-discriminatory. You know, for the most part— I don't know, maybe he was, but he didn't indicate that, and he never treated anybody like that. But I do recall, something that told me that he, he had a situation where he realized who he was, because— this is when I'm growing up, Ian. "Y—you know that American guy, Fred?" To him, an American guy was a white

guy. "Oh yeah, dad, I know that American guy, yeah, yeah, that one." "No, Freddie, you make sure you go see him tomorrow night wi- [indiscernible]." You know what? It wasn't 'til later in my life that I realized I am a frickin' American! It's true! I didn't realize- when he said American guy- to me, an American guy was a white guy! I didn't realize I was American! [laughing] Isn't that- isn't that g- see what happens to you? See what happens, yeah- I didn't realize that! Wow. So, it was li-little stuff like that- indicated to me that my father knew his place.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:37:59

An incident that occurred to me later on, and now I know why. I'm sleeping in the front room, and I get this 'bang, bang, bang,' in the middle of the night. Okay? I'm in- I'm just a school kid! 'Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang!' And I open- and I look, and, "open the door, open the door!" And it's the freaking police! So I opened the door, and they push me in, and they grab me, and they put handcuffs on me, And I'm a kid! And they said, "why did you do it?" I said, "what are you talking about? What-" you know, I, I'm- I'm a kid, I d-w- I don't know what these guys are talking about! And then just running in the house, you know, nobody asked for- my dad comes out, "what did you do, Freddie?!" He's blaming me! My dad did not interfere. Now I know why. He wasn't a citizen. He'd never gotten a citizenship. He was of the opinion if I say something, or make trouble, they're gonna make trouble for me, you know, so, he couldn't. And I always wondered why he never came to my rescue. Now I know why. See, so- but I remember them dragging me out, holding me up, putting me out- they had this lamp on me, they said, "why did you do it?" "What did I do? What did I do?" They said, "you called this house and you were talking to this lady." "I never call- I didn't call anybody." Now, I always remember who the policemen were. I won't name them now, because, you know. But, nonetheless, they just- they, they were beatin' on me, and beatin' on me, and talkin' to me, and talkin' to me, I finally- "yeah, yeah!" I finally said, "okay, okay, okay." Because I was so tired. So they took me into the- place and put me in a cell. I'm a kid. You, know, okay, I'm a kid.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:39:44

And for what, calling someone?

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:39:46

Supposedly! And I never did it. So, who comes to my rescue? Mama Margaret. Mama Margaret, I c- I hear- and, now, she's not this dainty little lady, you know? She hangs around the bar, and she comes in, you should have heard her, man, I could hear her outside. "You got my kid in this goddamn place!" And, she's yelling at all the policemen, because she knows them! Because they come down to lower Main, and they're hanging out, pullin' all this crap, you know, that policemen are not supposed to do. So, she ju- "let him outta that goddamn cell!" So she came and got me out! That was it. But, the point was, is that, I couldn't understand why my dad didn't do that. Now I know why. 'Cause he couldn't. He, he was worried about wh-what could have- and it could've happened to him, too! Not- it- you know, they could've pulled him in, and done, 'you're not a citizen, and I'm going to send you,' you know, whatever. See, so- my brother Ray had the same situation, but his is a little different. He- there was a little, old, jalopy, that he bought. It was a piece of junk. But he was able to park it next to Pete's garage, 'cause Pete let him park it there. So he was out there working on it- he-it- and he took the hubcaps off, and he's walking down the street, and a policemen comes over, and he- and grabs him, and says "where you steal those?" [laughs] They took him into the jail! Mama Margaret ran down there and

raised hell again, man! [laughing] And told them again! And I, and I— I laughed so hard! I remember when he came outta there— because, he was giving me a hard time! I said, "hey, you jailbird! Now you're joining the rest of us, huh?" [laughing] Oh, man.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:39:46

But, yeah. Yeah, I mean, it exists. And as far as I'm concerned, as old as I am, it's always going to exist. There's never going to be— unfortunately, there's never going to be a d— and right now is a very, very tenuous time. Very tenuous time. There's a race war going on. It's not being fought like the Civil War, but there's a race war going on right now. And it's being fought in Congress, and it's being fought on the streets, with people, with laws, and rules, and things like that. There's a race war going on. Why? Because the other folks don't like what's happening to the demography of the United States. You know what I mean? They don't— they, they— they see it as being— it's being taken over. I, I mean, I, I— I mean, that's, that's the way you see it. And, and, I can understand that, but you know, what, it— it's not bad! It's not bad. Everybody's contributing, everybody wants the same thing, but there is that, that— there is— always will be that small core group that will always want to be fighting the C— you know, the Civil War, 'the South will rise again, the South will rise again.' I mean, you know, 'white is right—' I mean, even, even all— even with the— e-even with the Mexicans, and even with the Filipinos and even with the Blacks, you know? You have these extremists, you know? You know, 'I can't stand these white guys,' 'I can't stand these—' 'I can't stand—' come on, man! I mean, come on. You know, you cut me, I cut you, we all bleed the same. You know— I mean, we all make babies the same. I mean, everything's the same. The only thing is that you look different. You talk different. You have different ideas. Your religion is different. You don't believe in God. You know? I mean— okay. I— I mean, and then, well— as long as there is differences of opinion, there will always be conflict. Consequently, you know, you and I could think differently on different things— we're not going to agree on everything, but the things that we don't agree on, can we compromise? See what I mean?

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:46:09

As long as I don't offend you, or you offend me in some way. But, a lot of those folks can't accept that. They, I, they can't accept that. You know, I eat meat. You don't eat meat. Okay! Well, if I make a meal, and I have meat on the table, but there's vegetables, that okay? So, you know what I mean, y-you see— [indiscernible] it's simplif— it's kind of simplistic, but it gets the point across, do you see what I mean? It is— it, it's, yeah. But it's always— as long as there's differences of opinion, there's always going to be conflict. As long as people cannot agree to disagree. You know, 'ah, okay, we disagree,' I mean, my girlfriend and I will— you know, we have differences of opinion, but we, we settle them by good communication. Yeah, see, so— it's easy. You know, yeah. My son and I, we have differences of opinion, but he wants to argue about everything! You know, he's always right! I s— I say, "you're wrong!" I tell him— I'm boiling an egg, right? Right? I'm boiling an egg, and then I— boil the egg, and I put some salt in it, I said, 'because it makes the shell come off easier.' "Ah, it does not!" I said, "okay!" So I boil the egg, I finish it, I crack it all up, I take it off, and— you know, most people complain, because it all falls apart, they're tearin— mine comes out nice and smooth. And I look at him, and he still d— you know, "ah!" You know— he still doesn't want to agree! You know, see what I mean? s long as there is a difference of opinion, there will always be di— conflict, because you can't agree to disagree, or accept the fact that I'm right, and you're wrong. See, so, unfortunately for you, I, you got a long ways to go,

man. You got– you got a long ways to go! Is– I mean, you must ex– exp– let's see, when you're out– your mom still alive?

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:46:29

No.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:46:30

She's not alive anymore. Your dad?

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:46:33

Yes.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:46:33

Okay.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:46:34

He's– he's kickin'.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:46:34

Your mom– your mom gives you the opportunity to, to mingle with the rest of the Blacks?

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:46:40

No. She wasn't really, you know, she– she was born in New York and, and had a tough childhood, and, you know, wanted to get out of there, and–

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:46:51

I understand.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:46:51

Yeah. So that's, it's been tough for me, because I don't really have any real connection to that. You know, I want to be proud of the fact that– you know, I have–

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:46:59

Yeah. I'm Black, but I don't know anything about my culture, my Blackness.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:47:03

Exactly. And I don't look Black, so, I mean–

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:47:05

Yeah. See, that's tough. That's tough. That'll be up to you to get into that, see, so– see, it's not like that for me, see, you know, I know who I was, and I had the– I had the benefit of both cultures. So I could, you know, see– my son– my, my dad left. My son never really got to know his grandfather. So he went to the Philippines, and when everyone was too young– my daughter knows m– grandpa. But my son grew up kind of spoi– well, not kind of spoiled, spoiled. And, he went to Fran– San Francisc– he went to

school, he was a pretty good student, I r– very effective and very– pretty smart. I used to kid him– well, not kid him, I used to tell him, I said, "man, you know, for being a frickin genius, man, you sure do some dumb ass stuff." Yeah, I'm not kidding. He– really. Man. I said– he went to San Francisco State, did really good, graduated, all that other kind of stuff and everything, he married a girl that was there, a white girl. And he never wanted to have a Mexican girlfriend. I mean, he had a– some relationships, but he never– that– he preferred white. Okay, I, I don't have a problem with that. But, he ended up marrying her and living in Pleasanton all these years and he has slid off he– he, he's– like– forget the name of the fellow that was– he's the fruit that fell off the tree and rolled away from his roots. He thinks he's white! He does, he thinks he's white! He's forgotten who he is. I mean, he's forgotten who he is. So, so my grandsons, it's the same way, they grew up in the same way, they, they even– they look like you, see. They have no idea what's going on, see? So, it, it– at some point in time, hopefully, and with, with my background on everything, if I do my homework, they will at some time become– who am I? You know, who am I? You know? Where do I come from? Stuff like that. You talk about, you know, my son calls– he said, "I'm really having a hard time." I said, "you're having a hard time?" I said, "I had a hard time. But my hard time? It was nothing compared to your grandfather. He had a really hard time, you know? I mean, so don't, don't come whining to me about it, you know, having a hard time." So, knowing, knowing your roots is really important. I'm telling you that so that you'll do that, see, yeah. Knowing your roots and that– it's unfortunate that you were not able to mingle, you know, so that you could– you c– you could thrive in your Blackness, you know what I mean? But, it's not too late. It's not too late. Yeah, see, so. What was your– what was your mom's maiden name?

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:50:29

Brisdell Eva Hunte.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:50:30

Okay, see? Yeah. So you know who– you know who she is, you know? Yeah, you– so you can check out and see. Your dad and your mom, are they both Americans? I mean, w– they were born here?

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:50:41

Yeah.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:50:41

Okay. So, your dad has roots too, see? Yeah.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:50:45

He's talked a little bit more about that, but–

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:50:47

You know that the Irish were considered less– of less value than the Blacks?

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:50:55

Really?

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:50:55

Did you know that at one time?

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:50:57

If they had them up for sale, when they were slaves and all that, huh? The Black was considered more— better than the Irish. Yeah, it's true! You look it up. You look it up. They were considered lowlife. Can you imagine? Yeah, you gotta look that up, I mean, yeah, it's true, yeah, you— you, you look it up, and you s— it's a fact. It's a fact. So you, you— you look it up and see how it goes, so, yeah. What I do, I sit and I, and I study. [laughs]

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:50:57

I knew that they—

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:51:38

There are much worse things to do with your time.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:51:39

I wish I would've done that one better when I was in school!

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:51:44

Make up for lost time.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:51:45

What, Zimba? Did you eat your food? If you ate your food, then I'd give you a treat. Hold on, let me go check, see if she ate her food. Come on. Come on, Zimba, let's go check and see. Let me— let me see. Let me see. Let me see. No. You gotta eat your food, that's the deal! That's the deal. Eat your food. Yeah, you know that already. She understands me, too. Eat your food.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:52:15

I can tell.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:52:16

Eat your food, girl! She just laid down, she's— 'the hell with you!' [laughing]

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:52:26

Well, we are almost at two hours.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:52:29

Okay.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:52:29

Do you want to—

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:52:31

Call it a day.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:52:32

Do you want to— do you have anything else you wanted to talk about? Your dad, Watsonville.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:52:32

Yeah.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:52:32

Okay, sure!

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:52:40

Well, there's a lot of— you know, there's a lot of s—

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:52:44

I mean, I can always come back, and—

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:52:45

Yeah. There's a lot of stuff, you know, I mean, you know, who my dad worked for, you know? You know, stuff like, why he didn't go to church. But he said his prayers every— ah, it's a lot of stuff. Lot of s— yeah.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:53:01

Yeah, I'd be interested.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:53:03

Yeah. I would hear my father, at night. When he went to bed, I'd hear him, in his language, talking. And, and I didn't ask him questions when I was younger, because that was not the right thing to— but when I got older, I was able to ask him, because I was older. And I told him, "what are you doing dad? Way at nighttime, when you're tal— who are talking to?" He says, "I'm saying my prayers." "You don't go to church." He says, "I don't need to go to church to say my prayers." He says— and, my dad did not believe that the church was doing the right thing, because he felt that the church only wanted your money. I have come— you see, I, I was— I was raised a Catholic. But, you know, the Great Spirit gave me the opportunity to think, so, I wonder why, like he did, why there's no woman priests. Why they don't allow contraception. Why, you know, why they don't accept transsexuals, or, or gay people, or, you know, I mean, openly. Why? Why— why, you know, why all of that stuff? I questioned that. And, I have come to my own conclusion— is that the Great Spirit, or God, he didn't do that. The church did that. They made all those rules, all these, you know, these, all of these men. All of these guys, and I'm tired of guys running stuff, and— I am. I voted— I voted for Hillary, I voted for Li— Elizabeth— hey, Elizabeth Warren is my lady. Her and Katie Porter, you put those two together, man, I li— you know, the corporations be trembling. I'm tired of guys running things. Making the rules. I am, I'm tired, I'm tired of it, because they ruined everything— I think women couldn't do any worse, that's for sure! You know, I mean, they couldn't do any worse, but, it— they made all of these rules, and I don't believe— for example, very simple one. Why are they against divorce? If a man is beating his wife, or the other way around, but let's go with the men, if the man is beating his wife and abusing her physically or, or emotionally, why does the church say that she has to stay there and suffer? Because they made that

thing for good, and bad, and all this other— okay— I don't b— I don't believe that a spiritual person would say that you have to tolerate that. I just don't believe that, you see? So consequently, my dad can be religious, and believe in his God, without having to conform to what they were saying. That's my dad's— what I feel is my dad's belief at that time. But he said his prayers every night, and he was a good man. And he— and as far as I know, he was a good man. So, yeah, I, I think he had— I think he was on the right track, you know, see, so— but anyway, that's just my thoughts, yeah. See, so, yeah. But, as you notice, I got Buddha. Yeah. I really believe— I really believe in, in the fact that Buddha was a very wise man. Jesus was a very wise man. Muhammad was a very wise man. You know what I mean? I mean, these were very wise people. Buddha didn't claim to be a god. And so, I mean, the thing is, is— is that I find truth in every religion that I have met, that— that doesn't talk down to others, to other religions, because it's just— they all— come on, they all say the same thing. You know, peace on earth and all that stuff. Yeah. See, so, I mean, you know— but it ain't gonna happen. You would like it to be, so you have to find peace in yourself. You know— you see, so, you want it— you make— you make your own. I'm philosophizing now— you make your own— you make your own happiness, you make your own heaven, whatever you want to call it. And then you extend out a hand. But don't ever let anybody mistake your kindness for weakness. No. Don't ever let any— just because you're kind and you're nice enough. You know, don't ever let anybody, you know, mistake that for being weak. You believe in something, stand up for it. Just know what you're talking about. You know? And— just know what you're talking— not like some of these guys, that— they talk and, you're saying, "where did they get this information, man, out of a Mickey Mouse book?" You know, it's just, some of this stuff that I see, I say, "well, wait a minute." I got a buddy of mine. He sent stuff out, and then I look it up, and I say, "that's not true! As far as I can tell, and I've looked at several different—"

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:58:38

Yeah, exactly.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:58:39

So then, I come back to him, "hey, Bob, where'd you get this?" You know? Doesn't answer me. Yeah, see— you got— I got a buddy of mine, Phil Hones. We got in an argument. He says, "yeah, you Pacific Islanders are all the same." I said, "I'm not a Pacific Islander," I said, "I'm an Asian." "Filipinos are Pacific Islanders." I said "no, that's— they finally categori— categorized us as Asian." "No, no." I said, "Phil, look it up." So I remember, last time, when I saw him, the other time, "did you look it up?" He didn't say anything. I said, "I knew I was right." He's a hardcore man. "I can't stand Pelosi." Why? Give me a reason. [laughing] Okay. It's stuff like that, you know? Yeah— is it the way she looks? The way she talks? Wha— what is it? What's the matter? "She's a woman." Ah, that's what it is! [laughing] Ian, it's a pleasure, okay?

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:59:38

Ah, I really appreciate you, you know, sharing everything with me.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:59:40

It's a pleasure. See, so—

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:59:45

Here, I can end it, you know, see— oh! That's the signal to end, I guess.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:59:49

I guess. It's been a pleasure talking to you.

Ian Hunte Doyle 1:59:52

Yeah, thank you.

Freddie Leo Castillo 1:59:53

If you—