

HHA# 00801

Interviewee: Fraga, Angel with Lupe Fraga

Interview Date: October 25, 2013

**University of Houston
Oral History of Houston Project
*Houston History***

Interviewee: Angel Z. Fraga

Interview Date: October 25, 2013

Place: Houston, Texas

Interviewer: Emily Chambers

Transcriber: Michelle Kokes

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Abstract:

The Felix Fraga Sr. came to Houston over a century ago. His six sons, known as the “Fraga Six,” have gone from poor, humble beginnings to serve their nation and their city in the military, in elected office, on the bench, and in business. Although Angel Z. Fraga served as a municipal court judge and county criminal court judge, this interview focuses on the Fraga family. It details their experiences growing up in Houston, the schools they attended, discrimination they faced, various jobs they held, the brothers’ military service in the Army Navy and Air Force. They also were victims of the TB epidemic that struck Houston in the 1930s. Although, the Fragas lost one family member and others underwent treatment, they did not suffer nearly as some of their neighbors who lost multiple family members. He also discusses life in the Second Ward, businesses there, and neighbors and friends like Ninfa Laurenzo. Angel Fraga passed away in 2014, about a year after this interview was completed.

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
ORAL HISTORY OF HOUSTON PROJECT

Angel Z. Fraga with Lupe Fraga

Interviewed by: **Emily Chambers**
Date: **October 25, 2013**
Transcribed by: **Michelle Kokes**
Location: **Houston, Texas**

EC: So I'm Emily Chambers this is Angel Fraga, Angel Z. Fraga, and we are at 15 Altic Street. I wanted to first ask you about your father and what you know about him. What do you know about your dad, what did he do?

AF: My father came from Mexico during the revolution back in, what is it 1915. He lived in San Luis Potosí, Mexico. As a young man he attended elementary school in Mexico.

EC: He did, he did go to school?

AF: He went to elementary school.

EC: Did he tell you that?

AF: He did. His father was well-to-do rancher. They owned a ranch. His father, I believe my grandmother and grandfather. He studied American history in school, and he was so impressed with the United States that he wanted to come to the United States. He was young then, probably ten maybe twelve years. I mean he was going to school. He had read about General Pershing. If you know General Pershing was a general in the United States when Pancho Villa went to raid New Mexico. I think it's Nogales. Mexico at the time was having a revolutionary war, and when Pancho Villa went into New Mexico he broke the laws. He never should have been there. The President of the United States send Pershing, General Pershing, to go to look for him and he

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looked everywhere, but he couldn't find him because Pancho Villa's friends were hiding him, protecting him because he was their hero during the revolution. So father, during the revolution father's, father lost the land; the government took the land.

EC: The government took the ranch?

AF: They took everything, so they didn't have anything. They confiscated all, so father came to this country when he was a young man. He must have been fourteen or fifteen, he was already grown up. They had already lost the ranch. He came with a brother here. It might have been his younger brother. They crossed Laredo. At the time there was no customs. Anybody could come and cross as you will. And he landed in Baytown, Texas, right down the street here. He had a friend there Mr. Rocha. I believe Mr. Rocha's daughter married Joe.

EC: Bouncy.

AF: Joe and their family. I didn't know they were close friends but evidently from what I heard that father had married Rocha's sister, and they had one child.

EC: Lupe? Is that Lupe?

AF: They had one girl a little girl, an infant, she died real young. She must have had some kind of.

EC: She died when she was nineteen of TB.

AF: How old?

EC: Nineteen.

AF: Nineteen years old? I didn't know that.

EC: Yeah, she died of TB at nineteen.

AF: I thought she died when she was a little baby. We never, I never met her. We didn't even know her.

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EC: You were too young.

AF: The mother, my dad's wife, I think she died real young.

EC: Oh, she died too? The Rocha woman?

AF: She died and my father had to remarry mom.

EC: So they actually got married. So he didn't marry a Rocha daughter and have Lupe with that person, is that what you are saying?

AF: She married...Rocha's daughter had a child named Lupe, the only girl they ever had. I didn't know she was that old. I thought she had died young because Father's, Mrs. Rocha's sister who married dad, died real young so dad remarried. Dad went back to Mexico and brought mother back.

EC: He went back to Mexico and got Grandma?

AF: He got grandma; he went back to marry her. Evidentially he got married here with Mrs. Rocha's daughter.

EC: Okay so...

AF: So they had one daughter and she was nineteen years old. I never... I remember seeing a picture when she was a couple of months old. I didn't know she was that old, but guess....

EC: Maybe. I'll look around.

AF: Look it up. I think your grandma would know.

EC: That's what she told me.

AF: I asked her about it like yesterday. That's how they became friends.

EC: Okay so then, how did Grandpa Fraga know the Zamarrons?

AF: Alright, that's Mother's family.

EC: Yeah, how did he meet her?

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AF: Well, eventually they must have met. They both lived in San Luis.

EC: Okay.

AF: So evidently he knew her before he married this other lady because when he went back to Mexico with the intentions of marrying Zamarron, my mother and that's when they came to the states and that's when they started having all of the children. Joe was born first. Lupe's husband. He was born in '25, '26.

LF: I don't know.

EC: She told me it was either '25 or '26.

AF: Because I know Frank was born in '27, Felix was born in '29, and I was born in '31. We were all born in about two year's difference.

LF: Yeah he was born in about '23.

AF: It had to be.

EC: Alright.

LF: That was the [Fraga] Six?

AF: The years of being born. Let her finish. She asked me a good question. How did father know mother?

EC: Zamarrons.

AF: Evidently they lived in the same towns.

LF: Oh really?

AF: And she was a Zamarron as all my cousins are. That's why I use the middle name Z for her. Oh we got more cousins here than brothers. They have a big family.

EC: The Zamarrons?

AF: That's mother's family.

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LF: Five boys, no?

AF: Tony and Angel.

LF: Not on your mother's side.

AF: Oh yeah, she's got five brothers.

EC: Did you all know them?

LF: Yeah grandma's brothers all were five.

AF: They were named Frank, Thomas; we got their names. José. I think my name was José Angel. Mother never had children from father; she only had six boys, that's us.

EC: Yeah, okay.

AF: She was asking me. How old was Lupe when father?

EC: How old was Lupe when she died from TB?

AF: How old was Lupe, father's first wife had a daughter.

EC: Lupe, I heard she was about nineteen.

LF: No, the daughter was eighteen when she died.

AF: I didn't know that.

LF: She used to take Brown to school. When daddy like kindergarten she used to take him.

AF: Because I saw a picture of dad and her in his arms two or three months old.

LF: Por que Daddy used to say, I don't know, she used date Frank Crab's brother what was his name? Crab's older brother. So she had to be big.

AF: What's his name he's a baseball player.

LF: Yeah, he's a good baseball.

AF: He's a pitcher. What's his name? I know him. I know who you are talking about.

LF: He died in an accident, in a car accident

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AF: Alright how come we never? Because we weren't even born yet.

EC: When was Lupe born?

LF: Who Jim?

AF: No the daughter.

EC: No, the girl Lupe, when do you think she was born?

AF: Yeah what year because I was telling her how father met Rocha.

EC: Bouncy.

AF: How old was Rocha's sister when she married dad?

LF: I don't know anything.

AF: No. See I didn't know they were... until you....

LF: Maria was the one.

AF: Tom told me how Rocha met father, he married her sister and they had one child, one girl, named her Lupe. That's why they named Champ Lupe because he was going to be the last one in the family. Mother always wanted a girl, never had a girl. In fact when I was born they named me after mother because they didn't want to have any more children. Mother said, "Look, we have four boys. Let's quit having anymore." They said, "No let's try again." So Tom was born two years later, and then Champ was born two years later. And he said, "That's it. Let's name him Lupe and that's it. They never had any more children. But she never had a girl. She always wanted to have a girl because father lost the first one, and it's amazing because mom didn't have any sisters and they had four brothers. I've got pictures of all of them.

LF: Yeah so do I. I don't know where is it.

AF: And they are all real tall and they all look like...

LF: White people.

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AF: Uh, huh.

LF: Blondie.

AF: That's why me and Joe are light-completed and the rest are dark because of father.

EC: But why do you think, why are you so light-skinned?

AF: Because of mother.

EC: But why do you think she was so light-skinned? What does that mean?

AF: Because that's a good story.

LF: He'll tell you.

AF: Yeah, but why, because her parents, her mother was real light, my grandma. I've got pictures of her. Grandma and my mother and I we favor each other. You look at pictures, we've got to be related.

EC: Yeah, you and Joe you look similar complexion.

LF: Daddy he was more white than he is.

EC: He was more white?

LF: Real white.

AF: When I was real young, I had red hair.

EC: You what?

AF: And they called me Red for a long time fifteen years old.

EC: You had red hair? Where did that come from?

AF: I'd like to know. Evidentially if you trace the tree back I was told that the family really came from Portugal, from Europe.

LF: I don't know. I don't know anything.

EC: Portugal?

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AF: You know my brother Champ was in Portugal and he went to a town.

LF: Yeah that little town named Fraga. Yes, I remember when he went to war.

EC: Yeah, but Zamarrons weren't Fragas. So do you think they were from Portugal too?

AF: Mom was a Zamarron.

EC: Yeah but you think that's where you got your light complexion from?

AF: From mother yes.

EC: Red hair is just weird.

LF: They weren't from the United States that's all I know.

AF: You know mom and Joe and I and grandma were all light-completed. The rest of them were the same color, dark. And the boys, the boys didn't look like they were fair completed. They looked like they were like...

LF: Aunt Rosie and her mother was light completed.

AF: Yes, her mother is.

LF: She is the only one.

EC: That's true.

AF: Because the father, because of Joe.

EC: That's true. Okay also did your father know English?

AF: Very little. He knew more than mom. Mom never spoke English. Father spoke English because of the work he did.

EC: Okay, he worked for South Pacific.

AF: South Pacific? I thought it was Southern Pacific.

EC: Southern, Southern Pacific. I'm sorry.

AF: The railroad. We have Southern Pacific and Missouri Pacific.

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EC: Okay. Southern Pacific and he built railroads, is that what he did?

AF: Yeah, he worked in the...

LF: Tracks.

AF: No, he had a position on management side. He worked for the company. His job I believe was he had a gang of workers five or ten of them working on the railroad. They were building the railroad laying and tying the rails.

LF: That's where my daddy met him.

AF: Then father was like a paymaster, he kept records, he was like a bookkeeper.

EC: Oh, okay.

AF: The army kind of paymaster. He figured out how many hours this guy worked, how much money does he get paid by the hour. So father would pay the guy off, and he became good friends with him.

LF: Hey listen your daddy had school?

AF: Elementary school.

EC: He said elementary school.

LF: Because he used to keep books, that's the reason. See I didn't know. My daddy didn't have any school.

AF: Daddy was smart but he didn't go to college or high school because he came over here. Mom, I don't think mom ever went to school either.

EC: See, she thought she did have schooling.

LF: Your momma used to say she was a school teacher.

AF: I didn't know that. That's the first time I heard of that.

LF: She said she was a school teacher.

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AF: She must have gone to high school.

LF: I don't know in Mexico.

EC: That doesn't count.

AF: My mother didn't speak English.

EC: No, okay. Now did they know how to read?

AF: Very little.

LF: He used to read the [REDACTED]. (14.57)

AF: We used to speak Spanish in the house every day. Nobody spoke English until we went to school.

EC: Were you allowed to speak Spanish at school?

AF: Spanish in school?

EC: Uh huh (in the affirmative).

AF: We weren't allowed in class but outside we all spoke Spanish. The teachers didn't like it for us to speak in school because they didn't understand us.

EC: Oh, they were all white?

AF: Oh, I had the best teachers in the world. They all were during the Depression that's when they went to school back in the early thirties. A lot of them went to the University of Texas and those teachers, I knew their names and I kept up with them. When I got out of Rusk, I went to Marshall, I thought I could do anything because they gave us a good education.

EC: You went to Rusk Elementary?

AF: All of us, all six of us went to the same teachers. That was a foundation because when I got to junior high and high school, it was easy for me.

LF: And you went to Sam Houston, no?

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AF: We all went to Marshall Junior High. The next step is junior high.

LF: Well how come you went to Sam Houston and Felix went to Jeff Davis?

AF: That's another story.

LF: Well he was a senior.

AF: I wanted to go to Davis but I couldn't because I had a teacher that didn't like me for some reason gave me a bad grade, so I couldn't transfer.

EC: Why didn't they like you?

LF: He graduated from Jeff Davis with Aunt _____???

EC: Oh.

LF: Felix.

AF: I think they went to the prom.

EC: Your sister and Felix went to the prom together?

AF: Oh yeah they were in the same class.

EC: That's funny.

LF: Oh yeah, they were in the same class. They went to prom because she couldn't find a date.

AF: Felix never had a date. Felix was that bad.

LF: He had too many girls.

AF: He was over forty years old when he got married!

EC: Yeah, he was.

AF: When he met...Let her go ahead and finish!

EC: Alright.

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AF: You know it's amazing I always thought the little girl had died when she was not even a year!

EC: Well that's what I don't...

LF: Daddy used to say she used to take him to school.

EC: She could drive then she must have been older. Okay so let's see what did your mother do? Grandma said that your mother didn't do any work, is that true?

AF: No she took care of the house. I never saw her. She worked over at Rusk Settlement.

LF: Volunteered.

AF: Yeah, volunteered because we were going to nursery...not a nursery school a daycare, I guess you call it a daycare center, kindergarten. To get the daycare center you had to pay, I don't know, \$5 or whatever. So mother said, "Look we don't have the money but I'm going to volunteer to work here and you let my boys come here." So all of us went through the Rusk Settlement. I call it a day care center. We didn't go to class. We used to go there and eat. We slept there and about 3:00 mom and I and I guess Tom and...Jim was not even born. Mom would walk back home with us and the same thing the next morning. So when we got older, six years old you start elementary school. I think you call it kindergarten.

EC: Yeah, kindergarten.

AF: I called it a daycare center because I don't remember. We didn't learn how to read or anything. We used to play on the playground, my friends. I was about four, five years old. I had a picture about five of them. Joe **Stakes**. They were here and passed away. His mom. Joe **Stakes** looked like a gringo because.

LF: Yeah they were real white.

AF: Real white, and his name was **Stakes** because of his father; and his mom was Mexican.

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EC: Was his father white?

LF: [REDACTED] (19.10) was Saltus that's all I remember.

AF: Yeah, they lived right over here in our neighborhood. They had a beautiful home.

EC: So when did you start working and doing newspapers?

AF: Who?

EC: You, did you ever sell newspapers?

AF: I started selling newspapers when I was eight or nine years old. Champ started when he was about sex.

LF: Yeah and daddy started too.

AF: Her husband was the best one of all. He knew how to sell papers. And Frank did it just because he had to and Felix and I, well, we did the same thing, but Joe was the best one.

EC: Was it after school, when did you all do it?

AF: Oh, yes. After school and weekends. Weekends was the best because we could sell the Sunday paper. It cost more and you made more money.

LF: And three papers too.

AF: Huh?

LF: *Press, Chronicle, and Post.*

EC: All three?

AF: I sold all three of them. The *Press* cost 3¢ at the time.

LF: Oh really?

AF: And the *Chronicle* and the *Post* was 5¢. Then the *Press* went out of business. The *Chronicle* bought the *Post* when they went broke, so now we only have one newspaper.

EC: Yeah.

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AF: But at that time I think we sold all three of them.

LF: Yeah, so daddy used to sell them.

AF: But Joe was the best one. He tried harder. Frank never did like them but he went along.

Frank was real smart. Frank was real smart.

EC: And he joined the Army at fifteen, the Navy, the Navy at fifteen.

AF: He could have gone to college. His teachers always talked nice about him. Mrs. Dawson used to live...and Frank went into the Navy and every Christmas they would communicate with each other. "You're brother's so nice, he sent me a Christmas card. He sent me a nice letter. I sent him a nice letter." You know Miss Dawson.

LF: You know she lived on Lake... someplace around here.

AF: She must have died she must have lived to be ninety years old.

EC: That was his teacher?

AF: Sixth grade. Whenever you went to Rusk she was the last teacher.

LF: The last teacher.

AF: And all of us went to Rusk and all of us to graduate you have to go to sixth grade. At that time we had six grades, first, second, when you got to sixth ...

EC: You went to junior high.

AF: You go to junior high to start off seven, eight, and nine.

EC: Then you went to high school.

AF: Then you go to college.

EC: So then Frank, he didn't finish high school, right? He didn't go to high school.

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AF: No, Frank. The teachers at Davis liked him so much that they were encourage him to go to school. Frank probably could have gone to Rice, he was that smart. But he wanted to join the Navy so bad that he lied about his age.

EC: I heard that.

AF: And he went over there to the hospital and get mother to sign the paper and mother didn't know what she was signing. She couldn't read, and Frank forced, well not forced her or fooled her, and mom didn't know he was going into the Navy.

EC: Oh my God!

AF: Frank used to weigh about 115 pounds. To get into the Navy you had to weigh about 120. For one week...I was a little younger...but all he ate was bananas.

LF: Bananas. Yeah to gain pounds.

AF: He put in five pounds and he went and weighed himself, "Fraga, 120 1/2, you're in, my friend." They never knew how old he was. He told him. He lied, he said, he must have said eighteen.

EC: Yeah he had to lie to say he was eighteen.

AF: And they never checked him out.

EC: Oh God.

AF: It's a very interesting story. Tom told me that when Frank was in the Navy they found out about his age and they could have kicked him out. They wanted him to be like an officer, he was so good. And they were protecting him, and Frank didn't want to go to school, officer school, because they would have really checked on him and found out, Hey this guy should've never been in the Navy. They could have kicked him out. So the officer was really protecting

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him. You don't want to go to officer school. We won't tell him how old you really are. So he spent thirty years in the Navy.

EC: He was on submarines?

LF: He retired?

AF: He was good at it. He went all over the world.

LF: He enjoyed it.

AF: He was an electrician, very smart. He worked on the radios.

EC: did he do that until he retired?

LF: He retired with the Navy.

AF: He went to work for Champ over at the...

EC: Tejas?

AF: Yes, then he got his own printing company. You know where I did my printing, what do you call that? Quick Mart, where I did my printing.

EC: Fed Ex.

AF: No:

Women: Frank's son named Felix.

AF: No. his name is Nathan.

EC: Nathan?

LF: I thought he was Felix.

AF: No, Nathan works at the printing. What do you call it?

LF: Printing company.

AF: Yes, over here on...

LF: Navigation?

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AF: No. Where I live on Rice University. What was the name of that street?

LF: Oh, I don't know anything.

AF: Greenbriar. Greenbriar and the freeway.

EC: Oh, yeah. I know what you're talking about. Yeah they had a little printing place there.

AF: I buy my stationary from them. Every time I go I talk to them.

LF: Lucy's. When we had the party, he told Lucy.

AF: Right, he came to the party we had.

EC: So that was Frank's printing place?

LF: Children.

AF: Frank had a printing company where Camp was. Champ sold the furniture, and Frank did the printing; and the boys, I mean, the kids learned printing from them. I understand all of them are in the printing business.

LF: I don't know anything.

AF: They all learned printing from their dad. Right now...I know he had a bunch of kids.

LF: They all have twelve.

AF: I said ten but I think they had twelve because I think they had four girls I think. They all learned the printing business from Frank, and Nathan works over there where I buy my printing.

LF: I didn't know.

AF: I think he works Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

EC: So is that Frank's son, Nathan?

LF: Yes.

AF: No, the oldest one is Frank.

LF: Frank.

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EC: Do they all do printing now?

AF: I think Nathan told me they all work for printing companies. They were good at it. They set type.

EC: Oh, okay.

AF: And then they print newspapers.

EC: So Frank had a business on his own and did it go under after he retired?

LF: Everybody had their own business.

AF: No Frank, Frank you know he retired. He was young when he retired. What was it he did after he quit printing? Because he was working.

LF: He stayed home. When he retired he made the printing company and after he quit the printing company he went to work with Champ and...

AF: I thought it was the other way around.

LF: To help him out with something.

AF: I thought he went to work. He had the printing company when he was with Champ because I had my own office upstairs. And he would do my printing; and the politicians I would send him down there to get the printing from Frank, and he would do theirs.

LF: Okay he still had the printing company up here on Telephone Road because daddy...

AF: I think after Frank left, the boys started running the business.

EC: What was it called?

LF: I don't know.

AF: Let's see what was it called? I thought it was Frank Fraga printing. It had his name on it. Oh, Fraga Printing.

EC: Fraga Printing?

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AF: You know if you want to know more about... You know, the boy knows all about it.

EC: Okay, Nathan.

AF: Yeah, he works at. Is it Kwik Kopy?

EC: It's something like that.

AF: I get my printing; I saw him a week ago.

LF: The day I saw him, I didn't even know him.

AF: Yeah, he's a little heavy set.

LF: You know when you grow up everybody goes through.

EC: I know.

LF: The only one I know is Angie.

AF: The girls are really nice. The girls are really different than the boys. The girl that...

LF: Angie

AF: Angie! The favorite one. She really likes me. I gave her a bunch of pictures.

LF: Linda she hardly talks.

AF: Linda, she's the oldest one. Angie kept her weight. Angie is married to the one who takes pictures.

LF: Yeah, he met his son.

AF: That's right, the father.

LF: No, no, not his son. What's his name?

AF: Angie's husband is a photographer. He took all the pictures of Ripley House.

EC: Oh.

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AF: He's got his... Frank's favorite hobby was photography. Frank was so smart on photography. He bought his own camera when he was about ten years old and when he got older he bought a telepoty lenses, so he can take pictures.

LF: He made that big picture.

AF: Oh, he took all of these pictures. All of these are his!

EC: Really?

AF: He was good at it and they blew it up.

LF: There was a small little picture.

EC: I didn't know that.

AF: Oh yes he was very smart. When he was about ten years old I remember he bought his first camera. He paid about \$2, \$3. He raised money to buy a camera and mother would tell him, "Is that all you want to do is take pictures?" "Mom I'll be alright, don't worry about it."

EC: Alright how about Tom?

LF: Did Joe get Callatano's wife? What's his name. The girl. Frank's daughter. They only had one boy; he got his own business too taking pictures.

AF: Alright now she wants to know about Tom. I can talk about Tom all night.

EC: Tom, so what did Tom do?

AF: Tom was really, really smart. I think Tom and Frank were the smartest ones. Tom was so smart that when he went to A&M do you want to start from high school up to A&M or what?

EC: So he went through the same path that you all did you went to Rusk and Marshall?

AF: Marshall and then he went to Davis.

EC: And Davis.

AF: You know I never did tell you why I didn't go to Davis. The teacher.

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LF: You didn't like the teacher.

AF: Let me tell you what happened. The last day I was at Marshall they told me to, come by and pick up your report cards. I said that big deal. Guess what I did? I sent Champ to pick up my card. And they said, "Where's Angel?" "He told me to come and get his card." "You mean he's not coming?" "No, he told me he didn't have to come; he graduated. He's going across the street." He takes the card where it says conduct on the bottom. Conduct is just I had an "S" satisfactory. He's alright I could have gone to Davis. He takes a red pencil and he puts, "U" (unsatisfactory). I go over to Davis and he said, "Your transcript is not here." Brown went with me. Joe my brother wanted to file a lawsuit.

LF: Your grandpa.

EC: He wanted to file a lawsuit?

AF: Yes because I couldn't go to Davis. I said, "Look we don't have the money to file a lawsuit. And if we file a lawsuit we might even lose." At that time it was easy we could have probably won. Forget about it. If they don't want me to come to Davis I can go to some other place. Joe was afraid that Sam Houston was not the best. We had the characters there. The bad guys.

LF: The whole Second Ward.

AF: He said, "Look what happened to these other guys always getting in trouble." Mother said, "Let him go!" Two weeks I lost from school because I had....

EC: Nowhere to go.

AF: So I show up at Sam Houston two weeks late, and I'm already behind and I said, "Now I have to catch up." But he wanted to file a lawsuit. I said, "Brown, forget about it." I said, "Where are we going to get the money to hire a lawyer it's probably going to cost a couple of

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hundred dollars." Not much. "And when do we, we are going to get them mad at us because they already told me they didn't want me there." Anyway the best thing happened I went to the school and they didn't want me. And it turned out to be the best decision that I ever had. I met the best teachers, my best friends.

LF: And you are the only one who became a lawyer!

AF: All my friends said, "Fraga! You know he went to Marshall with us, where is he now? He was supposed to come to Davis with us and play basketball team with us. Oh, no. Fragas on the other side" So when we played Davis we would always beat them.

EC: You played basketball?

AF: We won the champion twice, and Davis never won. I went to Fort Worth to play for the state tournament and Davis...If I had gone to Davis, we wouldn't have won. And all my friends lost track of me because they thought I would wound up with them. I used to get invitations from Jeff Davis Alumni. "Wait a minute you got Felix." I thought, "No I didn't go to Davis. It was Felix who went there." The invitation went to the wrong. "No, you got the name." "You got the wrong man."

EC: Oh my gosh. So did Tom go to Davis?

AF: Yes. Tom was real smart.

LF: Yes, he played basketball.

EC: He did basketball just like you?

LF: All the Fragas did basketball.

AF: Yes, but Tom played baseball,...basketball.

LF: Oh he was a catcher.

AF: He was a catcher.

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EC: Tom was a catcher.

AF: Brown, Joe was a catcher. Joe was good.

EC: But he didn't play on school teams did he?

AF: No, he didn't go to high school. He dropped out at Marshall because he had to help mom. Joe was thirteen, fourteen years old already dropping out of school because he wanted to help mom and dad, and he started selling newspapers. And then we all started selling newspapers.

EC: So then Tom, he finished right? He went all the way.

LF: Yeah he went all the way and...

AF: Tom was real smart. When he went to Davis he had honors. I was surprised when he said he was going to A&M. How are you going to get into A&M? "I got good grades! Look at my grades all A's and B's." And he was good in chemistry at Davis, and he went on to A&M to study chemistry.

EC: He was majored in chemistry.

AF: Yes, he got a degree. I thought it was chemical engineers a lot of difference. He got a degree in chemistry.

EC: So what did he do with his living, what did he do?

LF: He was an army man.

EC: He was Army, he went into the Army?

AF: No, when he was in A&M...

LF: Yeah, he went into the service.

AF: Yeah, but he went to A&M four years.

LF: Yes.

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AF: When he was a freshman, he used to run a movie projector. He worked himself. One thing I liked about Tom, he didn't get no scholarship. He worked through, and he got married when he was real young, remember?

LF: Yeah, he was in college.

AF: I think he was a freshman, and he and his wife moved to A&M and they had a little apartment there with the old barracks that the Army had given them. I went to visit him one time, and Lupe answered the door. "Where's Tom?" "Oh he's working tonight at the theater, drive-in theater." You wouldn't remember. He was good at it.

LF: Just a little country town.

AF: He would work about four or five hours there and come home about midnight. And the first child, Mary Lou, was born at A&M, I think. Was Mary Lou was born there? The other boys were born in France. What's the name of the boy that was born in France, he's got dual citizenship?

LF: Frenchie, Daniel?

AF: No, no, no, the other one. He was born in France and he says, "I'm not going to become an American citizen." I want to be French and...

EC: Dual citizenship.

AF: He played baseball when he was little

LF: It was Daniel.

AF: No it wasn't Daniel. Tom's got so many kids. I remember he played little league baseball when he was in France and I think they came to play the little leaguers from this country, and he was good.

EC: So that was....

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LF: Four boys or five boys, something like that.

AF: So it was twelve so they must have had... You know I lose track of their names.

LF: So do I.

AF: But I can tell who they are. The one that played baseball.

LF: Well they called him Frenchie.

AF: Because he was born in France. I used to visit Tom a lot in Austin. He was always there and he was light-complected. He had small eyes like me.

LF: He looked like **Brendo**. One of the guys. I don't know who.

AF: But I remember he played little league when he was in France and I believe they came to this country to play the Americans.

EC: So Tom was in France for the Army?

AF: Tom was all over the world.

LF: He was a serviceman he went to A&M.

AF: After A&M, if you go to be...

EC: In the corp.

AF: You have to serve three years. And he was in the Air Force. He went to Laredo and he got his wings in Laredo. He learned how to fly.

LF: Yeah he went to visit him in Laredo.

AF: He was taken to San Angelo and then he went to...

LF: All the kids are born in different countries.

EC: Different countries.

AF: Oh, he's been all over the world.

EC: Was he in the Army until he retired?

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AF: In the Air Force.

EC: In the Air Force until he retired?

AF: He put in almost twenty-five years. He was like Frank.

EC: And then he came back and what did he do?

AF: Nothing. He had a business in Austin. He made a lot of money.

LF: Was it a lumber company?

AF: No, no. He and his sons, they'd fix...rebuild houses, apartments. And he did real well.

EC: What was the name of the company?

AF: Fraga and Sons. Everybody named Fraga.

EC: I know!

AF: The boys used to help him. In fact one of the boys.

LF: They still own it.

AF: In fact when I was in Austin and stayed with him two weeks ago. I went to the football game up there. Every time I go to Austin I stay at his house. Oh, he gets mad if I go and I don't call him, and if I don't show up. Tom and I are real close. Tom and I, Felix and I are close but Tom and I are closer because Felix was older than me so I listened to him. Tom was younger than me, so he listened to me. When Tom and I were about, I was eight Tom must have been about six. 1940 we had snow. I've never seen snow in my life. It was snow all over the ground. We lived on McAlpine, and mother says, "School's the most important thing." We got up we went to school, (Tom and I); we got to Rusk School, the damn school was closed. And we didn't know; we didn't have no telephone, and the door was open. Tom and I walked in and it was so cold that they had cut...what do you call it...the maintenance man that threw coal on the fire to keep, he didn't even show up. Tom started crying it was so cold. I said, "Tom quit crying and

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grab that pipe" to keep his hands warm. He wouldn't stop crying. He was younger than me. I said, "What are we going to do." "Let's go back home." "No we don't want to do that because mom will think we missed school." Boy, I'll tell you we got to the door. "What are you doing here?" in Spanish. About 8:30, 9:00. "Mom, calm down. Let me tell you what happened. The school is closed." She grabbed me. "Oh my little angles." She goes over there and makes some hot tea, chocolate for us to keep us warm. "Well, I'll be." That's how much she thinks about school. She thought we had screwed around and didn't go to school.

EC: So your mom thought that education was important?

AF: Very important. To her is was. Now if she was a school teacher I never heard that.

LF: That's what she said, I don't know. I don't even remember where she came from.

AF: She must have been because to her, "Y'all guys are going to school." And if it hadn't been for her, we probably would have wound up like all my friends would, getting in trouble and going to jail.

EC: So you think...

AF: We grew up in the worst neighborhood. Everybody was getting in trouble.

EC: Why didn't y' all get in trouble? Do you think it was because of your mom?

LF: We didn't have no money?

AF: Because....No, another one, we started playing ball.

EC: Sports.

LF: No how come the kids took their own way? People didn't have the money.

AF: Well that's right. I mean you try to survive the best way you could. We had no money.

For a long time we were on subsidies, government. Dad and I used to go to the market and they

gave you a coupon. We'd come back with apples, oranges, bananas.

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LF: Stamps.

AF: Once a month, right after next month you get some more. It was bad, and especially if you didn't have a job.

LF: And then you had to walk.

AF: And then we had no automobile.

EC: You had no automobile, okay.

AF: We rode the bus most of the time.

EC: So then, you think you stayed out of trouble because you played sports.

AF: There we go. I think we survived because of that.

LF: The teachers didn't care at that time. Just like right now with the black people. They didn't care about the Mexican people.

AF: There was a lot of discrimination.

EC: That makes sense.

AF: I remember going to the park over at Settegast.

LF: Kick you out.

AF: They threw rocks at us! "Hey, Mexicans not allowed here!"

EC: Was there ever signs?

AF: No.

EC: You just knew?

AF: No, they thought we were different because we were different color.

LF: They were all white people over here.

EC: The Germans.

LF: Second Ward was the only Mexicans there.

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EC: The Germans.

AF: Do you know who settled in the Second Ward? The Germans they were real smart. They were tell it that Hofheinz's father was born right over here somewhere and that he had gone to Rusk School.

LF: Ms. Clayton used to be the Mayor at that time. Ms. Clayton used to live across the street and she couldn't stand the Mexican people. But Bouncy and David used to go and play putt-putt for her. They were surprised that she was so...

AF: A lot of them accepted you. You know, I never thought I was discriminated against. When I was in college, even in college, they thought I was Anglo.

EC: Well you're so white.

AF: We would go to the restaurant in Richmond, Sugarland, we would sit at the table and there was about four of us roommates and my players with me. I would sit with them, and he would say, "He, look, he looks like them." So rather than ask me they just accepted me. Well he looks white. He came with these white guys. Feed him and let him eat! After they can eat here. But if I had been any darker, they would have run me out of there.

LF: Well they kicked me out a lot of times.

EC: Because you were darker?

LF: Yeah I was dark hair, real dark hair.

AF: I never had problems. I never really experienced discrimination.

LF: he said, "She's my wife." Well then. We walked from the Chevron up there we went to a party and they kicked me out.

AF: It was awful. Felix when Felix was in high school, they called him all kinds of names.

EC: What would they call you back then?

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LF: I forgot.

AF: It was awful.

LF: I was so tired they kicked me out. You know I hate discrimination but I was one of...

AF: You know when I went, when I was thirteen, fourteen years old I had red hair. "Well he's got to be white look at his hair. And look at the way he talks?"

EC: Did you talk really well?

LF: Well he...

AF: Mother told me a story one time when we used to go out and pick cotton in the fields. I must have been what two, three years old because mother used to hold me in her arms.

EC: You used to pick cotton?

AF: Oh yes. Father and Brown picked cotton. They used to go out on the field. We were young then. I must have been not even a year because mom used to say, everybody would go out the field and her and I would stay and wait for them because I wasn't even a year old, I guess. Mom used to tell me that we would get on the tree the shade and.

LF: Yes, and sit there for a long time.

AF: And the bugs would get into my hair and I started crying, and Mom, "Why is my little Angel crying?" She didn't know those goddamn bugs were in my hair! Guess what she would do? She would pick two or three of them. Those bugs were orange or red. She couldn't find them. And she said, "That's why he's crying because those goddamn bugs are in your hair." But when I was at least fifteen they tell me your hair starts changing color because of the sun. Now Brown had, h had light hair.

EC: He had blonde hair?

AF: It was not blonde but it was not black.

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EC: So why did you become a lawyer?

AF: Huh?

EC: Why did you become a lawyer?

AF: Who?

EC: You!

AF: That's a good story! [Laughs.] You know I always said people that something happened in their lives that led them down a certain way. When I was about fourteen years old Felix, no I was thirteen and a half, Felix was fifteen but not sixteen years old. We were playing softball and Felix has always been good. Better than anybody else. We had a team, all Hispanics. We played right over here at Eastwood against the whites. It was at nighttime. Felix was playing with us, and we beat the white team. And they protested.

EC: They protested?

AF: They protested because they said.

LF: They never wanted to lose.

AF: No. Yes, they lost, but the reason they protested because of Felix. They said, "Now you tell me that this guy is fifteen years old and he's not sixteen." And he says, "How can he be that good?" Felix can do anything. When he was twelve, thirteen years old Felix could have played, he was playing with boys twenty years old, he was that good. They would come to the house and pick him up and then bring him back after the game.

EC: Wow!

AF: Everything he did was good.

LF: He tried out for the...what was that team like the Astros? We went to see him in Sinton, Texas?

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AF: He was going to play with the Houston Buffs right here. He went to Sinton when he was in college. Oh they had, for these big companies they give you a little job, a desk for half a day, they pay you big salaries and then in the afternoon all you do is play baseball. The Army does that too; they give you an easy job. Anyway, we had to prove that Felix was not sixteen but that he was fifteen. I asked mom, "Mom, let me have Felix birth certificate." She wouldn't give it to me. She said, "What do you want it for?" "Mom, give me the birth certificate I'll bring it back to you!" We had a hearing over at the downtown. All these big shots wearing ties. I showed up with blue jeans.

EC: Really they had a hearing?

AF: "We're going to have a hearing today to decide the protest of the game." Got to have a hearing. Just like going to court. Mr. Fraga, Angel Fraga here, he's going to present for the... We called them the Navigation Wildcats. "Mr. Fraga do you have proof?" "Yes this is my brother's birth certificate." They look at it, and say, "Yes it's right. He's not going to be sixteen until three months from now so he can play." "Thanks a lot." They let us go. Well the protest didn't hold.

EC: What was your team called?

AF: Navigation Wildcats.

EC: Navigation Wild kids?

AF: Wildcats?

LF: Wildcats.

EC: Wildcats

AF: We used to have a shirt with nothing but NWC. We printed on the damn shirts. We didn't even have uniforms.

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LF: Yeah I remember that. Felix was so good that they couldn't believe, How could this guy be this good. He's got to be overage! "Mom, here's the birth certificate." "Well alright." She didn't want to give it to me. She didn't want to lose it.

EC: That makes sense. So you decided to be a lawyer because of this incident?

AF: Well it had something to do with it. When I was in the Army I had gone to U of H and I had taken a class in law, business law. And people would ask me for advice. "Fraga went to school in Houston and took several classes in law. Go ask him if he can do this." People would ask me. "Can they do this?" One of my friends got court martialed because he went to sleep on his duty. He was from Chicago a good friend of mine. Cook was his name and they were going to court martial him. And he started crying and he said, "I think they are going to probably court martial me, and they are going to kick me out of the Army." I say, "Cook, when Corporal Hancock came to see you were asleep, was anybody with him?" "He was by himself. He got in the Jeep?" "And you were asleep?" "Yeah, I went to asleep. I was tired. I had my rifle with me." Came by and, "Private Cook why are you asleep? You're supposed to be on guard duty here watching the place." Took him back to the base, and he didn't put him in jail he put him...he detained him where he couldn't leave. And he started telling me about it. I said, "Cook don't worry about it." He said, "Hancock, the corporal was by himself" "Nobody was with him?" He said, "No." "Well you might be in good shape." He said, "Why?" "Because he's the only one who saw you asleep." "Yes." "Nobody else?" "No." "Well when you got to that hearing it's going to be your word against his and they're going to want some more proof. What better proof are they going to take a picture of him? Or has somebody seen him?" So they didn't, they let him go. The day I left the Army to come home from Germany it was a holiday, it was right before Thanksgiving. I don't know how Cook did it but he got the Jeep from University of Houston

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the...what do you call it...from the commanding officer, the lieutenant he got a Jeep. They got somebody to drive it. I had my bag. I was waiting. They usually put the servant man on the big truck. I was waiting for the truck to come and pick me up to take me to the station about a half a mile. Cook shows up in a Jeep. "Come on Fraga. This is the old man's Jeep." This is a holiday and nobody's using the Jeep. I said, "What are you..." "I'm taking you to the train station. You're going home and I'm staying here, and you're going home." So he took me to the train station like I was an officer. Only the officers had Jeeps. I never forgot that. He was young. He was real young. He had joined the Army when he was eighteen years old. That's all he did. I don't know if he had family but the Army took care of him. The guy's probably dead by now but he led me to Chicago. He became a good friend of mine because he felt that I really helped him stay in the Army. But he gave me a ride to the airport. "Cook, good-bye. I'm leaving and I hope you do alright and if you want to stay in the Army the rest of your life. It's up to you I'm going home!"

EC: How long were you in the Army?

AF: Two years everybody goes for two years. And then you asked me why I got my GI Bill, and I went to law school. That's the smartest thing I ever did.

EC: The GI Bill helped you get to law school?

LF: Then we went to Austin. Oh it was snowing. When you went and got your tests and everything.

AF: You went? I remember Frank drove us.

LF: Yeah in a little van something. I don't know your daddy went.

AF: No, it was mom, father didn't go. It was mom, Frank. I didn't know you had gone. I remember we had a van. About six people in the car.

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LF: I remember if it was Bouncy or David or just Bouncy.

AF: I remember Frank he drove.

LF: And man it was snowing all the way.

EC: Wait did grandpa go too?

AF: No.

EC: Why did you go?

LF: Well daddy wanted to go.

EC: So grandpa went, my grandpa, Joe. Joe went.

AF: Did he go?

LF: Yes.

AF: Frank drove the truck. Mother went.

EC: Why did y'all all go? Y'all were excited?

LF: Well, of course, the first one in the family.

AF: Let me tell you this. All of the Supreme Court, that's nine of them, they were all white.

We had 1,000 raise your right hand and repeat your name after my name, "I, Angel Fraga, do solemnly swear that I will protect the Constitution. That I will obey the laws of the State of Texas and that I will do my best to be a lawyer. Be honest and...." Thank you, you all may sit down. We go outside and they had like a reception. Mom started crying and the judges come by. "Oh Mrs. Fraga you've got a lawyer now. He's going to be a good man." I said, "Mom quit crying."

LF: She said, "I can't believe it!"

AF: "Quit crying." My best friend he was Hispanic from South Texas his name is Garza,

"Oh, Mrs. Fraga, you've got a good son here. He's going to be a good lawyer." His wife was University of Houston

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Garza. And of course I took mom. And he became a judge in Brownsville became a federal judge. But he and I were real close. I remember that because mom wouldn't stop crying.

LF: She was just crying. I couldn't believe because she was always talking in Spanish and jumping playing basketball. Because I remember her told Daddy, "You know Angel want to become a lawyer. He's crazy!"

AF: That's surprising.

LF: That's what he told about David. David said, "I want to be a lawyer because I'm tired of putting the Mexican down."

AF: You know I didn't know that David went to law school?

LF: You never did?

AF: When you go to law school you have to get some letters. I wrote letters for everybody all my friends. You've got to have three letters. And I found out David was already a first year at South Texas. I said, "When did David get into law school?" "He's been here a year?" I said, "Why didn't he ask me?" "Well, I guess he didn't want you to know that he was going to go to law school." And I was surprised and he turned out to be a good lawyer.

LF: Yeah he said, "I'm tired." You know they push the Mexican people.

AF: I didn't even know he was in law school.

EC: Are you still practicing law?

AF: Oh, yeah, I just came from court.

EC: What do you do? What kind of law?

AF: I do everything just everything. Just about everything.

EC: Do you have a partner?

AF: No, I do it by myself.

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EC: I've been a lawyer for myself for over fifty years. I never did like to work...

LF: Mary used to work for him. They used to have the office right across from Guadalupe church, remember? Mary used to go up there and help you out.

EC: So after law school what did you do? Did you join a firm?

AF: No, I practiced by myself.

EC: So you've always been by yourself?

AF: Oh yes. I could never do it with somebody else. You've got too many problems.

EC: And then you were a judge because you got appointed for a bit, right?

AF: Ten years, yeah.

EC: Ten years you were a judge!

AF: You know when I was on Navigation, remember when mom used to go to church there. Of course you went the office every day. I had some old... some curtains. I used to work at a law firm when I was in law school. The law firm gave me books. They gave me some curtains, and I didn't know how to put them up. They were, you know real colorful. They were maroon and yellow, and my office didn't have any windows but I had an office with a big wall. So mom takes these curtains and goes and puts them on my wall to make them look like a window for decoration. And I kept those curtains for a long time. The law firm where I used to work gave them to me because they put new curtains. When mom died, I had only been there about three or four months. Mary Medina came by and put a wreath on my door. "The Fraga's office is closed. Mom died and he will be at the funeral and this office will be closed for the next couple of days."

Mary Medina went over there and put a wreath a beautiful wreath on my door with a sign of what had happened. Mary Medina was a real good friend of mom's. She was like a second mother to us. Always looking out for us. When she died, I was in Germany! Everybody,

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“Where’s Angel?” Oh, God, went to Germany to visit. “He doesn’t know Mary Medina had died.” Had an accident taking a bath. Fell off, hit her head and went to the hospital, and two days later she’s dead. Weird. And she wasn’t that old at the time.

EC: How long did your mother live? When did she die, what age?

AF: Mother was young, sixty-two years old.

LF: Yeah, she was young.

EC: What year?

LF: Alright. ’60 because Lucy was born.

AF: I’ll tell you what it was ’62 or ’63. You know I took a picture of the marker.

EC: The gravestone.

AF: Yes, Mom and Dad. Dad lived a long time. Dad lived almost twenty, thirty years than Mom.

EC: When did he die what year?

AF: Dad died, oh, you ask me questions... Mom had to die in ’62 because that’s when I had my office.

LF: Yeah, because Lucy was born in 1960 and she was babysitting.

EC: Two years old and she was babysitting? Oh, Angela was babysitting for you. I got you. She babysat Lucy the little bitty one. She was able to do that. She was so young. So why did she die so young, then, if she was so young?

LF: From surgery, no? What did she die of a heart attack?

AF: There’s a story. let me tell you it’s very simple. It was Mom, Dad, Felix, and I lived in San Angelo. Tom was in the Air Force. Jim was at A&M, I believe. Rob had already moved with you. Frank did the same thing. So it was four of us. We had the whole house to ourselves.

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Mom we had a little boy next store that played football. The little boy had a helmet on. He runs at mom, "Ms. Fraga, look I'm a football player" and the little boy hit's mom right in the stomach knocks her down. The little boy gets scared and says, "Ms. Fraga, I'm sorry I knocked you down." So mom said, "I'm going to go to the hospital tomorrow." She told me and Felix. I said, "Mom I'll drive you." "No, no." I thought I had taken her to the hospital in Pasadena. In fact I was I had to be a lawyer then because in '62, yeah, I was working in '62 I had my office. She said, "No, no you go to work." Felix might have taken her, but I didn't. Of course Dad didn't drive. They took her to the hospital in Pasadena. All she had was a simple hernia. Hernia's operation [snaps fingers], you're gone, you're out of there in an hour. They put her in the hospital and while she was in the hospital, she had a heart attack. Too much pressure on her. She died on the operating table. I was in court trying my first case. Nobody knew me but I was with... the other side was Ben Canales. I had an odd looking secretary that used to be my girlfriend. She was an airline stewardess. So she would work for me...part time. She would come and work, maybe answer the phone. They call her, Felix call her. "Where's Angel?" "He's in court?" "What court is he in?" "I don't know but he said he was going to court with Canales, Ben Canales." "Well they knew where Ben Canales was but they didn't know me." We were in court and Ben said, "Angel, your brother Felix called he wants you to call your office." I said, "What happened?" He said, "It's something important." "Why don't you call his office and forget about this case. We'll take care of it later." I called Felix, and Felix answered the phone. "Felix what's wrong?" "It's mom." "What happened to mom?" "She's dead. She died. I couldn't do anything."

LF: I remember Daddy was here and that he called him up. You know he had passed over.

Your daddy was the only one with her.

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AF: Right. You know what? Brown was right there with her and they told Brown. "Mr. Fraga do you want to take your mom's possessions?" (her purse or whatever). Brown takes them, opens the wallet. Mom...

LF: Your picture.

AF: The only picture she had was mine. About six years, a school picture. I said, all of us and the only picture she had was me. About six, seven years old, right there in the front. Brown looked at it. Brown was there at the hospital because I was at the office.

LF: Because your daddy didn't know how to drive.

AF: But Felix told me that she died right after lunch time. About 12:30, 1:00. It was simple. The doctor said we're going to fix your hernia. You'll be going home. Get somebody to pick you up. Mom always had a problem because Joe and Frank were in the war and every morning mom would be praying, praying, praying, and she would go to church every day, every day.

EC: She was scared they would die.

AF: There you go.

LF: That was World War II.

AF: Frank was the one.

LF: So worried he was under the water all his life.

AF: When mom died Frank was on a secret mission in Russia, and he couldn't get the message. He got the message a month later because they were afraid they might intercept the message. So Frank started crying. "I didn't even go home for my mom's funeral."

EC: Do you feel like your mom was a big influence more than your father?

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AF: Oh yes. Mom made all the decision at home. She would decide where we were going to school, what we were going to do. Dad was always working, never told us what to do. Everything went through Mom.

LF: That's the way men were at that time. The woman had to make the decisions.

AF: Oh yeah, because she was always home. She looked at us when we were two, three years old.

EC: Why do you think she had a heart attack? Do you think she already had heart problems?

LF: We never did check our heart at that time?

AF: No, no.

LF: We used to have like right now...

AF: Nobody would expect. Not on the operating table. They said that the heart just stopped beating. They tried to revive her.

LF: They said it was probably her blood pressure.

AF: It was her high blood pressure. You know, I got high blood pressure.

LF: You do? You too skinny!

EC: It doesn't matter! AF: I've had high blood pressure for twenty years.

EC: It just...genetically.

AF: It's in the family.

EC: It's in the family. You can be skinny and have high blood pressure.

AF: Oh no, high blood pressure has nothing to do with your weight. Most fat people it's easy because they eat the wrong food. That's why Mexicans are always fat.

EC: Because you all eat starches all starch.

AF: Tortillas are the worst thing.

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EC: They are so good.

AF: And we all ate tortillas at home. Well you were cooking them. Mom used to cook them.

LF: Oh gosh I'm so glad I don't cook that no more.

AF: Oh, I had high blood pressure for twenty years. I see my doctor. I saw him last week.

Fraga, your medication doing? Yes its doing very good. For a long time I quit taking. I said,

"Why am I taking all these medicines? I don't feel bad." Blood pressure you don't know when

you've got high blood pressure.

LF: I know I've got blood pressure and I'm driving I'm going to see the doctor. You know,

"Let me check your pressure." And it's high. I say, "I'm driving it's with all the cars."

EC: That's why driving.

AF: It's just stress. And I've got a habit of getting mad at myself. I start talking to myself.

"Why am I doing? Why can't I do?" And lucky because I take the medication every morning.

LF: Yeah, so do I.

AF: And it's amazing how it controls it.

EC: Yeah.

AF: And you can't tell because the average person doesn't have high blood pressure will

never know it unless he checks it out.

LF: Daddy used to have blood pressure and he used to do walking, jogging.

AF: Well exercising.

LF: And it went down.

EC: Oh Joe.

LF: He never took pills or nothing like that after that.

EC: So why did your dad die? What did he die of?

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LF: Old I guess?

AF: Dad was almost ninety years old. Dad never been to a hospital, never was sick.

LF: He didn't know what was a headache!

AF: That's the only hospital that he went to when he died. It was too late.

EC: Oh he was in the hospital when he died?

AF: No, we put him in the hospital.

LF: No, he died at Corina's house.

AF: No, let me tell you what happened. He came to he was here for a while wasn't he? Poor

Dad we moved him from here to Frank's.

LF: Oh, he didn't like old Frank's house.

AF: Frank was too strict with him.

LF: My kids used to run in and out and every time David would stop. "You need anything Grandpa?" You know he loved to see that.

AF: Mexican people don't like to put people in a rest home. We had a decision to make. I said, "Why don't we..." Oh no, we don't want to do that to him. Let him go stay with his sons. Because I didn't have any. Felix had just gotten married I believe. So he came here.

LF: No. Felix married to Nellie. No, she didn't want him. That's why he came with us because I remember.

AF: I remember coming to visit him here.

LF: I remember your daddy was here when we came out. Your daddy and I he was eating on the porch on a rainy day with a little plastic bag. I said, "What's wrong." David said, "Felix said that Nellie don't have nothing to do with Grandpa because Grandpa just walk around and everything." He love to walk around the house. He was used to that.

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AF: He is very active.

LF: Okay. So he stayed here. But he passed away with Frank. He had a little cold or something. But they say when old people get ready to die, they get a little cold.

AF: I saw him. When I saw him a week before he died, he had lost weight.

LF: He had no high blood pressure, nothing.

AF: No he never was ill.

LF: Nothing.

AF: He just got old! Somebody said he lied about his age because he was really was it younger or older than ninety-four.

EC: Do you know when he was born. I have three different dates?

AF: I think that's where the problem was. Now the marker he was born some 1890.

EC: It's 1890, and then there's a record that says he was born in 1889.

AF: I think '89 was probably more accurate.

EC: So he was a lot older than your mother.

AF: He was a lot older, and he used to paint his hair. Oh man!

LF: He used to put color?

AF: Oh yes. He didn't want no white hair! When we was living with Felix, I used to visit on San Angelo. "What are you doing, Dad?" I used to pick him up and take him to the baseball game. He painted his hair.

LF: I didn't know.

AF: Look at my hair. I don't paint it. I don't color it.

LF: I never thought that he quit coloring it.

AF: Oh yes, he never wanted to have gray hair.

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LF: He put it real good because you couldn't tell.

AF: He fooled everybody! I would see him. It took like time.

LF: Because I remember... to Bouncy, "What time are you all going to pick me up to go to the game?" Bouncy or David used to go.

AF: Oh, he loved baseball. David was about six, seven years old.

LF: Yeah. He used to get mad. He wanted to be there early so he could have a Coke and a hot dog.

AF: You could go to the baseball game for \$5. It cost \$1 to get in, 50¢ for the parking, beer was 50¢, hot dogs were 25¢. \$5.00 we could all eat together. At the time he was drawing his retirement check.

EC: Grandpa. So wait, so he died ninety years old you think, ninety-two?

LF: I don't know he was old.

AF: Tom thinks he was ninety-four or ninety-five.

EC: Ninety-four or ninety-five?

AF: Tom was very smart. Tom knew a lot about him. See when we were growing up, Mom would go to Mexico every year and guess who went with her? Tom and Champ. Felix and I stayed at the house. We would cook potatoes every day.

LF: Well your daddy used to cook most of the time.

AF: Yeah, but Felix and I didn't know how to cook. Felix and I, we almost burned the damn house. We were having potatoes right there with Mary Medina upstairs. I've never been so scared. We put the pot of potatoes and they blew up. Good thing nobody saw it. But every day potatoes that's all we could cook. That's what I could cook, and Felix didn't know how to cook.

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Mom was gone for about a week, ten days. Guess what she would go visit her family, and do you know Dad never went back to Mexico.

EC: He didn't like. He didn't go back, why?

AF: You know that's another story. At one time I said, "Well maybe Dad did something wrong."

EC: Yeah, he was a criminal.

AF: Or maybe he had a... No. He said the reason was after his father lost the business.

EC: The ranch.

AF: I don't know if he had any other family but I know he came with his brother.

EC: What happened to the brother?

AF: That's another thing. The brother got scared he didn't like this country he went back, stayed in Mexico. Dad said, "No this is where I'm staying." It was. I said, "I don't know why Dad never wanted to go back."

LF: He didn't want to go nowhere your daddy.

AF: Well he was a very private person. But he was very smart, very smart.

EC: You never asked him?

AF: No. Dad never talked to us. Mom would do all the decisions.

LF: The only thing he would do is go to church and go to the movies.

AF: And you know Mom was very religious but Dad, Dad went because of Mom. Dad never went by himself that I remember.

EC: So she would go to Guadalupe.

AF: What?

EC: She would go to Guadalupe every day?

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AF: Oh yes. We all went.

LF: Because we used to live across the street.

AF: We all got baptized, all of us got baptized there. It was, for some reason. Mom would go every year around...after school, when we were out. Felix and I would stay at home.

EC: Who would she visit?

LF: Her brothers.

EC: Okay.

AF: She had a big family.

LF: There were five boys.

EC: Why wouldn't y'all go?

AF: Well we couldn't afford it. I mean they probably spent what I mean they rode a bus up there. And they stayed for about two weeks. It was during the summer, June. Felix and I were in school then. We would take care of the house because Father went to work.

LF: They used to leave at 5:00 in the morning and come back at 6:00 or 8:00.

AF: But you know what I liked... why Father never went bac. I always wondered maybe somebody's looking for him or he's afraid he wouldn't come back. But he never went back. For some reason we never knew. Tom used to be real close to him. You know right before he died, he stayed with Tom somewhere. He flew to Houston to come and visit Dad. He went in there for about an hour and talked to him, and he was so smart he was discussing politics. Richard Nixon. "Oh," Dad said, "Richard Nixon is not a good president. Look what he's done to this country?" "Well, Dad, he's trying." "No, no." I said, "How can he be discussing politics and he's almost going away?" And Tom made a trip just to see him and he died about a week later. He moved over to Frank and he didn't live very long.

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LF: He lived about two days. He had a cold.

EC: He only lived with Frank for two days?

AF: From here he went to Frank.

LF: He went to visit Frank. He didn't want to go because up here I had the five kids. You know, up there he had his own room and it would fit him and close the door.

AF: When Mom died, you know, you would think he gave up hope, but he lived almost twenty, thirty years after mom died.

LF: Yeah, but he used to do a lot of things around the house. He would cook and used to do the yard.

AF: Yes, yes, it kept him busy. Yes, when he was at Felix he would cut the grass. You know the house over there on San Angelo?

EC: What was the address?

AF: Alright I'll tell you what it was.

LF: 50-something.

AF: 59.

EC: Is it still there?

AF: Still there. Let me tell you a good story. I like to build. I build my own. In the back, it had a garage, I built me an apartment. I had a little bar there, a couch. The only thing I didn't have was a bathroom. I had to go inside to use the bathroom when Felix and Nellie were there. When I left there, I moved to an apartment.

LF: No, you came and lived with me.

AF: Yes, but I came here first.

LF: Yes, but they were going to build the apartments where you lived.

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AF: The apartments where I built, Dad moved into it. I guess he didn't like to live inside, but Nellie and Felix wanted to be by themselves, I guess. So he goes into the apartment. He had his own. He had a little stove.

LF: Yeah, kitchen and everything.

AF: And I used to go visit him and take him to the ballgame and bring him back. "How do you like the place, Dad?" "Oh it's good." "The only thing is, we don't have a bathroom. I have to go inside."

LF: He likes privacy.

AF: He was a very private person. I never could get any information. But why he never went back. I would love to find out why he never went back. I guess he felt that he didn't have anything to go back to. Mom had all the family there. They are still alive.

EC: So did his dad die before he moved to the United States, I guess, then?

AF: Yes, he lost his property number one. They took everything. And instead of being well-to-do he was poor, and he didn't have a big family. I understand Dad must have had a brother.

LF: I don't know anything about that. He never did say anything.

AF: I don't think he had as sister. You know. Women in our family. All our family has mostly been men.

EC: Boys.

AF: Mom had four brothers, no sisters. And then she had six sons. The only girl he had passed away. But I didn't know she was that old eighteen or nineteen.

EC: So Brown and Frank both went to TB recovery, right? They went to be quarantined?

AF: Yes I think they did.

EC: That's what Felix told me.

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LF: I can't hear you.

EC: Brown and Felix both had to go to the hospital to be quarantined.

AF: Yes do you know where the hospital was? Right there where I live off of Waugh Dr.

EC: What was it called?

AF: It was called Jeff Davis.

EC: So it was Jeff Davis.

AF: It was Jeff Davis. The hospital.

EC: How long were they there?

AF: Not long.

EC: Oh, okay. Felix told me it was a couple of months.

AF: A couple of, not long. It was like cleaning you up. You know. People on drugs. They dry them up. In a week they were gone.

EC: Felix told me it was like two months.

AF: Well it might have been.

EC: Okay.

AF: I wasn't old enough. Felix and I never went.

EC: Yeah, it was only them two.

AF: Remember the Castro Family?

LF: Oh all that family was there.

AF: Listen to me. The finest...they had....

LF: Two girls.

AF: Two girls, Olivia and Delores. I'll never... I used to go visit them. Felix and I were the

same age. I would go to their house. The father was a baseball player.

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LF: Oh really?

AF: Oh yes. Alfonso was a catcher for our team, and he played with Felix and I. He was good. He played catcher because his father was a catcher for Walter in Southern Select.

LF: I don't know anything about that.

AF: The TB got so bad. I was taking TB shots every week in school. Dad and I used to walk to Jeff Davis Hospital, and they gave me shots.

EC: How old were you?

AF: This family, three of them wiped out in one year.

EC: Oh my God!

AF: Delores died, Olivia died, and Alfonzo died within one year. They put a sign in the area, "Don't come near here because..." Remember Joe Flores, they lived next door. They never caught it. Roy and Emma.

LF: They was a big family. He used to like shotguns and they were like seventeen houses.

EC: All lined up?

LF: I don't... I wonder when the hospital was... this girl and her brother and her...Emma?

AF: Emma was Joe's sister.

LF: No, no, no. She was kind of heavy, younger. She used to clean pecans. Remember there was a little house that Señor [REDACTED] (1:24:04) a business that you clean up the pecans at night time?

AF: Yes I remember that.

LF: She used to work her.

AF: Do you know where the place was on McKee next to the church? They would hire young girls fifteen, sixteen years old. They would take the pecans.

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LF: Yeah, my mother used to work there at night time.

AF: The outside of the pecan and make.

LF: To sell it in a little jar.

AF: What do you put on pecans, the pies have pecans.

EC: Oh, okay.

AF: But they were all young girls and the girls that lived there on McAlpine was a fine looking girl.

LF: Yeah brother.

AF: Yeah, the brother and the father was real strict with her. I don't think she ever married.

She had a loud voice too.

LF: Well, that's the one I'm talking about.

AF: Yes. She was real light-completed.

LF: Yes. Mamie or something like that.

AF: They had a brother. And the pecan company was right next to the church.

LF: Yes.

AF: I remember they were all woman, no men, only girls, and they were all fifteen, sixteen years old.

LF: And at night time from like 6:00 to 10:00.

EC: When did the TB spread happen in what year?

AF: It had to be in the thirties.

LF: In the fifties.

EC: Maybe later too.

AF: I didn't know that Frank and Brown. Felix was older than me.

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EC: That's what Felix told me.

AF: Felix was right because I remember it was right next to the hospital and a lot of our friends would go there and they did keep them long. Like you said...they.

LF: They did go up there but...

AF: ran tests on them.

LF: But I don't know how long they stayed.

AF: I didn't know that Frank and Brownie. I remember where the hospital was.

LF: Right there by Jeff Davis. It's still there. It's a detention ward for kids. David used to work up there when he was a lawyer. He would represent them. They called it the welfare and detention center. It's still there right in the corner off the freeway. I lived on the other side.

LF: He lived there oh, [REDACTED] (1.26.09) girls were there.

AF: I didn't know that Brown and Frank. I must have been...

LF: I didn't know Frank went there.

AF: I didn't know either but a lot of my friends went there.

LF: Of course, when daddy got married they had to go and check his blood or something. That's the reason, and then check my blood. But I said, "Why?" I didn't know why.

AF: Our family never had that problem except for...

EC: Lupe.

AF: They called it a quarantine.

LF: I don't know anything.

AF: It spreads. In one year and there were fourteen, fifteen, sixteen years old and the other ones didn't catch it. Mike, Felix, and John, remember [REDACTED] (1.26.55) and then the father. Now the mother died real young. She must have had cancer. Nice lady.

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LF: Becky used to live around there and Mary Flor.

AF: They didn't get it.

EC: Geez.

AF: But they lived around that corner.

LF: This girl who died she, Consuelo, she got married. It was, Alfonso if they knew brother because Alfonso was [REDACTED] she died at [REDACTED]. (1:27:24) She got married and she didn't live but a couple of months and she died.

AF: The TB was awful.

EC: How long did it last when it spread?

LF: I don't know the cause of it.

AF: I remember going with my father to the hospital, Jeff Davis just to get a shot. And I hate shots. I would start getting dizzy and the nurse would say, "Sit down and get a glass of water. In five minutes you will be able to walk. Thank you." And when I go to the hospital. I don't like to go to the hospital. Every time I go to visit a hospital I have to sit down. I was in the hospital. How long was I, I got knocked out I don't even remember why?

EC: Your car accident?

LF: When you hurt yourself in the bicycle?

EC: How old were you?

AF: That was awful. I was nine years old.

EC: So you were on a bicycle and you got hit by a car right?

AF: No, no. There was three of us walking across the street.

LF: On Navigation/Canal.

AF: No, it was on Franklin.

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LF: On Franklin?

AF: We were going from school to go sell newspapers, three of us, nine years old. I was on the left, my friends were on the right. The truck takes a right turn and knocks us out. The other boys didn't get hurt. They put me in an ambulance and take me. I don't even remember where I was. I remember waking up and I thought I was...Remember I used to go to church to the, what do you call it the classes?

EC: Sunday school?

AF: No where they teach you.

LF: _____? (1.28.57)

AF: There you go. What do you call it in English? You learn Catechism.

EC: Sunday school. Yeah, yeah Sunday school. You learn the Catechism.

AF: There you go! We used to go my friends and I.

LF: Every Sunday!

AF: We used to go my friends and I, we used to go to classes, and you know how the father speaks real...and they thought I was making fun of them because I always had a habit...because the priest would go to Mom and say, "Ms. Fraga, your boy can't go to Catechism class and he started making fun and we can't control him." "Oh shit." Now they told mom. So when I was in the hospital I woke up and mom was there with me. They told me I had been knocked out for about a week, unconscious.

EC: Wow!

AF: I wake up and I notice these people and I notice these people wearing...

LF: The masks.

EC: Oh were they nuns?

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AF: No they were nurses.

EC: Oh they had little hats.

AF: I thought they were nuns. I said, "Mom, where am I? What church am I in?" She said, "Son, you had a bad accident. You're in a hospital. These are not nuns, they are nurses." They look like they were wearing hats.

EC: They had the little habit things.

AF: What do you call them?

EC: Habits.

AF: I said, "Well I'll be damned. I thought I was pinned for life for the way I acted in church." She said, "No you had a bad accident." She said, "Don't wake up you're going to be alright." I think somebody said I was there for about a week.

EC: Did you break anything?

LF: Yeah his head.

EC: Just the head.

AF: Broke my leg.

LF: They had to bring a special doctor from another city or another country.

AF: Dr. Hill was my doctor. I had a skull fracture.

EC: Oh wow.

AF: Awful, they thought I was going to die. Let me tell a good story I never told this. We used to live at 49 McAlpine. The Rice Hotel was at 47.

LF: I don't know anything about this.

AF: We moved from 47 to 49. And guess what happened? They knock on Mom's door and they said, "Mrs. Fraga we've got bad news." (The guy spoke Spanish.) "Your boy just passed

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away in the hospital." She said, "I just saw him yesterday." "Well is this 40." "No next door."

The little boy next door, Nievez, my friend,...

LF: Yes!

AF: ...he had died. And do you know how he died? He had the same accident. He was, remember we used to go to the movies. We used to go across the Navigation bridge where it turns into Canal? You know there was the side, the ramp? We used to have a habit of walking on the ramp. The little boy was on the ramp. The further you go the higher it is. I was in the hospital, and I've been told that Nievez was with two or three other guys and somehow he lost his balance. He lands on his head. So we had the same accident and we live right next door to each other.

EC: But he died from it.

AF: He died. Not even a day or two. And he said, "Well, both of them had skull... and they were the same age." Mom thought she was a heart attack. Maybe that caused [REDACTED]

(1.32.55) He said he died, "No I went to visit him yesterday. The nurses told me he was alright. He's recovering." Then he finally said, "Is this 49?" "No, 49 is next door." He fell off the damn...we used to walk across to go to the movies on Navigation and Canal. We used to walk on the ramp. It's dangerous because cars are coming both ways.

LF: Well I used to walk on the bridge on McKee that bridge. My mother used to say, "Don't do that!" Before I went to school I used to do that.

AF: Everybody did it.

LF: I'm fine!

AF: It was a big deal but on Navigation we had cars coming down.

LF: That was Felix, he said before you go call him up.

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AF: Well when we finish? We've done all the talking.

EC: I just want to ask one more thing.

AF: Oh you know who interviewed me yesterday beautiful about Second Ward? The lady is writing a book.

LF: Yeah you told us.

EC: Who is writing a book?

AF: This lady, Grace Cano, who work with Felix at the college. Anyway, I'm over there and I have all my pictures. "Can we make copies?" "Yes I brought them here to show them to you."

She wanted to know the history of Second Ward. I told her all the story. Where we live, where we went to school. Felix was there last week.

LF: Is it going to come in the paper?

EC: So I want to know where you lived?

LF: 49 McAlpine.

EC: Is that your first house?

AF: No the first house was Santa Rita. It was a, what do you call it?

EC: Duplex?

AF: No, there were twenty houses, two rows of ten. The government built those for rent, low rent houses. Santa Rita was right next to McAlpine. You never know what Santa Rita it's where the lady who makes tortillas used to live.

LF: Oh that's the name of that little place.

EC: What was her last name? Sylvester and Maria's last name?

LF: I don't know I didn't live in that era.

EC: Do you remember the lady who made tortillas?

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AF: Yes, I think they were Vasquez.

LF: Yes, that's right!

EC: So it was Maria Vasquez?

AF: Yes and the lady. They never married. They came from Mexico. I knew the boys.

LF: Was her name Jesse?

AF: Jesusita is not...I guess like Jessica.

LF: Jessica.

EC: So...

AF: The other one she was light-completed. Jesusita was the oldest sister; she was darker.

Antonia.

LF: Antonia the daughter.

AF: No, no Antonia was the younger sister because when I was a lawyer I did some work for her.

LF: Oh they both were sisters?

AF: Yes and remember Poncho?

LF: Yes.

AF: He was always getting in trouble, Frank. I represented him. And then remember the guy Delano, he had a radio. Let me tell you how poor we were.

LF: I didn't know them. I just...

AF: We lived right next door to them. So he would put the radio on the window so we could hear it and I'll never forget it. We used to, the flights, when Joe Lewis was fighting heavyweight and Delano would put the radio where we could hear it. We were next door but because we opened the window. "How's the fight going?" Joe Lewis is boxing 1930, 1939, in New York. I

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didn't even know where New York was. But at the church people would come by and buy a dozen. They cost about five or ten cents for a little pack. And they made them.

EC: And so that was on Santa Rita.

AF: That was Santa Rita. I believe...we lived, I think our number was I think they had number 1 or 2, we had 3 or 4, right next door. Everybody there was Hispanic except one couple. There was a black couple that lived in the middle.

EC: Did y'all talk to her?

AF: What?

EC: Did you talk to the black couple?

AF: Oh let me tell you what. His name was Tom. Tom and his wife they had no children. Tom had a car. The only one.

EC: He had the car.

AF: He had a Model T car. Whenever somebody got sick or wanted a ride. "Tom can we pay for the gas?" "No, no, no. I want to help you guys." Because he might have been retired or whatever, but to own a car in those days. And then for the gas. So I remember him driving us to the hospital. I remember going over here on Navigation to pick up some groceries and he would take us. "Tom let me give you 50¢ or \$1 for gas." "No, no, no."

EC: That was sweet.

AF: After we moved from there we moved to McAlpine. That's where we were.

EC: McAlpine, 49 McAlpine?

AF: No we first lived in 47.

EC: 47.

LF: 47 what?

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EC: McAlpine.

AF: Let me tell you about 47. It was a tenement house where twenty couples or families lived. Two story building, just imagine it, made out of wood. Ten, eleven families on top and the others on the bottom.

LF: An apartment building. Como se llama that apartment?

AF: We called it the Rice Hotel. Everybody said, "Fraga lives at The Rice Hotel." They thought I was living downtown! Oh boy. Two bathrooms let me tell you what. Two on the bottom, two on top. No paper you had to bring your own paper.

LF: Oh God!

AF: And the smell was awful. I hated to live there just because of the bathrooms. I loved to go to school because when I went to school I usually had good food.

LF: And good bathrooms.

AF: And good bathrooms, clean and when I got bathrooms. "Mom I don't want go to." "Son you've got to go to the bathroom. Go take care of it."

EC: So you lived there until you grew up?

AF: No, no. We lived there a couple of years.

EC: And then you went where?

LF: When I married Daddy, Daddy was living there.

AF: No, no, not. I'll tell you where he was living. Then we moved next door to Mary Medina in that apartment.

LF: Yeah, yeah.

AF: Mary Medina had a store downstairs and she rented to Mom upstairs. That's where.

LF: One bedroom.

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EC: 48 McLemore?

AF: It was 49.

AF: Okay when did you get married what year? Brown was already back from the Army.

LF: He lived there.

AF: I know but he was already back.

LF: Oh when I met Daddy after the Army.

AF: Yes but he was still living there.

EC: What year did you all get married?

AF: Yeah that's what year did you get married?

LF: I got married in '48 and he was still living there.

AF: He was still there. Alright.

LF: And then from there he moved where?

AF: Alright we moved to a place right on Reynolds Street.

LF: Oh no.

AF: We weren't there two, three months. You know where Meyers-Spalti is where the big factory is?

LF: Yes, I used to work there.

AF: Oh I was there during the summer.

LF: You did? It shows you how much your Daddy? I mean your brother.

AF: You know what they did? They made furniture. You know how you make furniture? It was owned by Germans. Meyers-Spalti.

LF: The furniture used to go overseas.

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AF: Let me tell you what they did. When you make furniture, of course, you make it out of wood. You have to stain it. My job, we had about five boys. You throw stain on it with a hose. And then you've got to wipe it because if it drips the people will paint it mahogany or like this. If it drips you're going to have to paint it on the bottom. So my job was to take some rags you know, watch, and get that stain so it won't drip because the painter was going to paint it and he didn't want the furniture to look cheap. The furniture's got to be...I was sixteen. I think I worked there two years during the summer. I was getting paid about \$1.10 or something. But I didn't know you worked there.

LF: Well I made the furniture.

AF: You did?

LF: I worked on the third floor?

AF: Up there and they brought it up to us. I worked in the basement.

EC: What was the place called?

AF: Meyers-Spalti it's a German place. M-E-Y-E-R-S dash S-P-A-L-T-I. It's German.

LF: Did you know the owner? He was a bachelor. He was from Mexico City.

AF: I never met him. I was sixteen years old.

LF: Well, I met him; he used to work with me.

AF: But you made furniture there, huh? I was there '40 you must have been there.

LF: I was fifteen and I came out when I was twenty.

AF: I was already in high school. '46 and '47. You were there then?

LF: I was there in the forties.

AF: Early forties. Right after the war?

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LF: No it was in World War... we used to make furniture for the servicemen overseas. We used to make into...

AF: Yeah I didn't know that. The war was '41. I had to work there during '46 and '47.

LF: I worked there since the forties. Yeah I worked there until I got married.

AF: I never knew you worked there. We used to stain the furniture.

LF: We used to only have one hour for lunch.

AF: Yes, you would go and you would clock in 8:00, 5:00 we're gone.

LF: All were Mexican, everybody was Second Ward.

AF: On the weekend you go and pick up your check. Here's Fraga, you got \$25. Thank you.

Now what were you asking me?

EC: Next house after Reynolds Street?

AF: Alright we moved. Two months. I hated that house. I hated that house. Mom didn't like it either. Dad didn't like it either.

EC: Why?

AF: We weren't there two months and guess where we moved to then? Remember, yes, Mary Medina had that house. You know where Ninfa Laurenzo...Mom, Ninfa, and Mary Medina...

LF: Oh, in the little white house. Oh, that was the best house!

EC: Where was it?

AF: Right, the house is still there. Where Ninfa's restaurant is, on the block in the back. Mary Medina owned a house on Saltus. We lived behind her. Now Mary Medina owned that house and rented it to her because I was in high school then. And Tom was still going to high school.

LF: Bouncy was born.

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AF: There you go. Ninfa opened a little taco stand.

LF: Yeah, to start her out, Ninfa when I met her.

AF: Ninfa had a beautiful, it's still a two story house. Two boys and a girl.

LF: No, Ninfa came bachelor. Her daddy had a tortilleria. That's how I met you through your mother.

AF: Ninfa had a.

LF: Yeah, when Ninfa came from the Valley.

AF: She married a Domenic.

LF: But she was not married then.

AF: Domenic is from New York or New Jersey. He met her in the Air Force.

LF: Yes he played baseball or something.

AF: He played baseball for New Jersey. Alright the story I heard, Domenic was stationed in McAllen Air Force base.

LF: I don't know anything.

AF: And he met Ninfa.

LF: How did he marry Ninfa, because she had a sister?

AF: Yeah, Pilar they were twins.

LF: Between somebody and a boy and her daddy and they had that two story house and his daddy opened a tortilleria and when she moved in, your mother invite her to have water at your house. Because they didn't have...because that's when she was still single.

AF: I thought they married when he was in the Army?

LF: Well probably he was in the Army and he came and married her, and she marry when they were having a tortilleria and then her daddy?

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AF: I thought they were married when they came to Houston and opened the tortilleria.

LF: I don't know if she was married. But I know she was single.

AF: Because Ninfa was from McAllen.

LF: Yes.

AF: And Domenic was stationed there and that's how she met him.

LF: Yes. And I don't know if they were married, or if she used to say she was single. I don't know if he was in the Army or not.

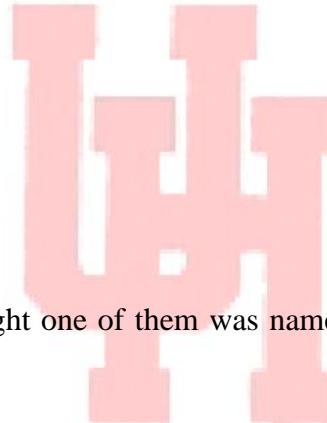
AF: Remember Mom's...what were they Carlos and the two boys came from Mexico? They went to work for Ninfas?

LF: No.

AF: Mom got them a job?

LF: That wasn't their real name.

AF: They lived with us. I thought one of them was named Carlos the other one was named Juan.



LF: That's not their real names. His name was Luis. You know when he came, he went back to Mexico and he came back.

AF: Now how were they related to Mom?

LF: They were her nephews.

AF: Nephews, that's right.

LF: Okay.

AF: And they used to work for Ninfa. Mom got them a job. Guess what their job was?

EC: What?

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AF: They would get up at 4:00 in the morning to make tortillas you've got to have masa. The women would put them in the oven. And that's what Ninfa did for about a year and the boys would always wake up. They had a problem. Remember they didn't like each other. One of them accused the other. We had more problems with them. Mom couldn't control them. I think one of them went back.

LF: Who went back?

AF: Both of them.

LF: Then one came back and had heart surgery.

AF: I didn't know that in the hospital.

LF: Yeah and they needed a witness and then your mama called Daddy and they needed a witness that we knew them. Then his name was Carlo it wasn't Luis.

AF: I said Carlos.

LF: No, no he was running here from Luis or Lewis something like that. When Daddy went up there they had another name. So Daddy said, "No." He said, "Hey you know me." He told them, "I have somebody's social security card."

AF: I remember them calling me from the hospital. I was already a lawyer. He wanted to just call me and say hello to me. He said, "I knew your mom. I am seeing a lawyer now." I thought he wanted me to do something for him. A will or something. He said, "No, I just called to say hello to you." I said, "That's nice. I stayed at your house when you were growing up." But we lived there and that was the best place we lived because Mary owned the house. Tom was still in school. And I believe he was going to A&M and coming back and forth.

LF: Tom was in A&M.

EC: Do you remember the address?

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AF: I remember the address. Mary lived at 2619 Saltus. We lived in the back so you could put that ½ and Ninfa lived in the corner of Navigation. And we were all, Mom and Ninfa and Mary were always getting together and drink coffee and talk to each other and we were fourteen, fifteen years old. And her boys were nine and ten. They both did well. They both got restaurants. And the girl, Mandola owns a restaurant on Dallas. Mandola's restaurant.

LF: It's an Italian.

EC: Wait a minute is that the one that's on Leland?

AF: No, yes! That's the family. That's the small. You ought to go to the one on Dallas. It's called.

LF: One is next to Navigation.

EC: Oh, okay.

LF: That's the girls' boy. The oldest one I don't know what's his name.

AF: Leland is a lot of people from U of H eat there. It's a what do you call it a cafeteria.

EC: Yeah.

LF: I don't know.

AF: I've been there several times. Oh no, the one on Dallas is River Oaks crowd man.

LF: I don't know.

AF: Mandola owns it. That's Phyllis' husbands. He's Italian. He went to Saint Thomas.

EC: So then where did you all live after that? After Saltus, where was the next house?

AF: Well we went from Saltus alright. Next one. Right across the street. Guess who used to live there? Remember Rubio Cisneros?

LF: Yeah that was him! I was thinking about them but I didn't know who there was that family.

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AF: I used to date Red. I went to the prom with her. Mom said...

LF: Your mom was the god parents of somebody.

AF: Mom said, Mom and called her Red, she had red hair. Good friends. Said, "My boy's graduating from high school." She worked it out. I took Red to the prom.

LF: She married a Villarreal. The one was Cesar?

AF: Joe. Went to UT ran track. Anyway they moved out. Rubio they called Brown, Brown because he had brown hair. Red, had red hair and married Villarreal. Aurora, remember Aurora married Sam the policeman?

LF: Yeah?

AF: They all lived in the same house. When they moved out, we took over. I wonder where did they move to? But anyway the place was right on Navigation across the... where we used to live. It was in the middle of the block and when Felix was going to school in...

LF: Lady of the Lake.

AF: Lady of the Lake. He brought his girlfriend with him. We were living there.

LF: Who brought his girlfriend?

AF: Felix.

LF: Oh yeah she stayed with me.

AF: She did? Oh yeah she was going to school with Felix.

LF: Oh yeah she moved from Ecuador or something?

AF: Oh no, no, no; that's his wife. The other lady was from South America.

LF: Yeah she stayed with me.

AF: I didn't know that. I was wondering where she stayed.

LF: Yeah she stayed with me two girls.

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AF: Felix used to take her out. And they were going to San Antonio.

LF: Yeah they were going to San Antonio.

AF: So when they come home I didn't know she stayed here because Felix stayed with us.

EC: So then after that house is that Denver Harbor?

AF: There you go. That's the only house we ever bought. Everything was rented, rented! We didn't have enough money.

EC: So Denver Harbor.

AF: It was San Angelo.

EC: Is that what you called the house?

AF: No that's the address.

EC: Oh what was it?

AF: San Angelo.

EC: Do you remember the numbers?

AF: I'm trying to think. I can get you that information.

EC: Okay.

AF: The house is still there. It's on the corner.

EC: Why was it called Denver Harbor, is that the neighborhood?

AF: Yes.

EC: Okay.

AF: Did we move. We missed this house here.

EC: What house is that?

AF: On...by the park what's the name of the street? We missed this house! What houses do you have there?

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EC: I have Santa Rita.

AF: Alright.

EC: 47 McAlpine, 49 McAlpine, Reynolds Street. Saltus and then we have.

AF: Navigation.

EC: And then we have Denver Harbor.

AF: We missed this one. What's the name of our state, Preston!

EC: Preston.

AF: 3009 Preston!

LF: Felix said to forget about it.

EC: 3009 Preston.

AF: Hey Lupe we missed the other house. Right there where the picture was taken.

EC: Is that before Navigation?

LF: Oh yeah the little white house!

AF: Oh yes, that's where the picture was taken.

EC: Is that before Navigation?

AF: No that's before we went to Denver Harbor.

EC: Okay before.

LF: That was the last one.

AF: We rented all these houses. The only one we bought was this.

EC: Denver Harbor.

AF: San Angelo.

LF: That was a real pretty house.

AF: Oh yeah this one. You know that house is still there.

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LF: Yeah I went the other way through there.

AF: Felix used to have an old car and you could see it parked in the back.

LF: Yeah.

AF: You know Felix is left handed. He couldn't.

LF: He can't even cut the yard.

AF: He used to move. The stick shift is on the right side and he's left handed and he moved.

That old beat up car that he had. I wondered how much he paid for it. Is that it?

EC: That's it.

AF: You got it all! What did Felix say? Oh I'm tired. I'm glad its Friday. I got go to work!

End of interview.

