

HIUS 120D Oral History Interview

Interviewer: Robert Chung

Interviewee: Antonio Magallan

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Robert Chung: Alright, we're recording. Hello everyone. My name is Robert Chung. Today is Wednesday, May 12th, 2021, and I'm interviewing Antonio Magallan through Zoom for the UCSD Race and Oral History Project. So Antonio, for the purpose of this project, do you agree to grant the University permission to archive and publish this interview for educational purposes?

Antonio Magallan: Yes, I do.

Robert Chung: Awesome. Alright, so...just to kind of start us off and to give us some background. I just want to ask kind of firstly just introduce yourself to me. Include, you know, name, age, ethnicity, you know school age or level, hometown, and similar you know things.

Antonio Magallan: My name is Antonio Magallan. I'm a sophomore attending Castle Park High School. I was born and raised in San Diego County, specifically Chula Vista city. I'm mixed, half-Hispanic, half-White. I'm fifteen and yeah.

Robert Chung: Fifteen years old and so I assume high school sophomore, you said?

Antonio Magallan: Yeah.

Robert Chung: Ok. Great, so you mentioned within that information that you've been..that you were raised in the San Diego County, specifically in Chula Vista. I'm interested to kind of just hear more about Chula Vista, your hometown, and really just your upbringing, either you know in your early childhood or even just in the recent past? You know, how would you describe your upbringing and maybe in particular, if you can one or two life experiences that have made significant impacts on your personal life?

Antonio Magallan: So, in regards to like my upbringing, like due to the environment, it's been good. There's like little crime, like a few things here and there but it's nothing major. The sunsets are beautiful, like everything just looks nice, just like parks and there's like places to go. Like hang out, eat, and in terms of like events that have happened, that affected me, it has nothing to do with the hometown, but my upbringing. It's..it's been good, but there's like a few bumps. I

moved twice, I think. like just like little moves, like minor movements. I think from an apartment to a house and then my sister, she's a bit older than me, she moved from one apartment to another. But I wasn't around for that. And then I moved schools three times..wait yeah three times. Yeah, three times, I went to three different schools.

Robert Chung: Wow. So you just mentioned that you moved to three different schools. How was...how were those experiences then kind of having to situate and get used to three different school environments and atmosphere? So I mean, were these three schools in the same area or were they kind of all over the place?

Antonio Magallan: Generally the same area...

Robert Chung: Ok, but so like what yeah, if you could like I'd like-- I'd be interested to know how your experience in, maybe not each of the schools, but just your experiences in having to transition between school atmospheres and environments as a young student?

Antonio Magallan: So, for the first one I did kinder and like half of first grade. So I mean it's like as a kid your first impression of school like your first experience those are like what's gonna impact you the most. And then I had to move during that. And then I didn't really like...I didn't understand like why and then all I knew was that I wasn't gonna see the same people again. So like it hurt emotionally a bit. Like I remember crying, like the first week when I went to my new school. But then I got used to it, made new friends. I grew up, and then I left for fifth grade, went to a new school. This was like same this one these two are like the second and third schools are closer to each other than the first and second one were. Yeah I think they actually went to the same camp like sixth-grade camp, so they're like in the same area. That one that transition wasn't that bad cause I was already- I think I was nine when that happened and I'd already like learned to make new friends once, so I was able to do it again. And then, in sixth grade, I went back to the second school. So, I got to see my old friends, and I mean that one wasn't that bad.

Robert Chung: Interesting. Ok. So, it seems like you kind of navigated I think most of the transitions like fairly well, maybe you know that first transition obviously being super young. That must've been you know fairly challenging and difficult.

Antonio Magallan: Yeah.

Robert Chung: Especially, you know as you mentioned it is your first impression of school and all. So I guess kind of adding on to that then, you know maybe little bit more specifically like what would have been your education your experiences in school and education, maybe not like specifically within transition, but just have you enjoyed it? Have you not disliked it? Have you found success or have you been you know challenged or found great difficulty within school?

Antonio Magallan: And you mean like...alright like within school..alright

Robert Chung: So like in the classroom I guess is...

Antonio Magallan: Yeah...no, I've- I don't think I've had difficulty. Like I've been like what one would classify as a good student. I always got along with teachers, kids, I was like an example student, I guess you could say. I think a few times there were some problems but that was like in elementary. So, I'm pretty sure like this one teacher I didn't really like. Just because of the way she handled things, in regards to like-like discipline, I guess. I just felt like it wasn't-- how can I say this? -- oh like not enough actions were taken, that's what I'm trying to say. So, I'm pretty sure that was like I didn't really like her. But academically, I've always done good, I'm still doing good. Right now, I have a 4.0.

Robert Chung: Awesome.

Antonio Magallan: And that's a weighted GPA.

Robert Chung: That's great to hear. you know so maybe...maybe if I could, elaborate on how you've done well. Like what...what are some I guess key things you've done or maybe you know are there people that have aided in your you know educational endeavors, in your --, in finding success in school and such?

Antonio Magallan: Yeah, so some key things: In I believe fourth grade, our schools I don't know if this is every school, we take state exams.

Robert Chung: Mhmmm...

Antonio Magallan: I aced both subjects in fourth grade.

Robert Chung: Wow

Antonio Magallan: And then I did it again seventh grade and eighth grade. But that was only for math in seventh and eighth. Some teachers that helped me, some people that helped me my math teacher in middle school. I got the same teacher both years, she was like awesome.

Robert Chung: Ooooo

Antonio Magallan: Because like you know it's the teachers that students don't like that like actually help because like they make sure you're learning.

Robert Chung: Right.

Antonio Magallan: So she was like..she was awesome.

Robert Chung: That's great to hear. So, I presume that for the most part throughout your life you've enjoyed you know school and the process of education?

Antonio Magallan: Hmmmm yeah. I mean yeah you could say that.

Robert Chung: Ok, what is it? (sighs) maybe are there any outside-of-school factors that have contributed to your success, whether it'd be like family or other friends or just the environment you were situated in? Kind of what we were talking about previously with your hometown and upbringing A part that plays into it?

Antonio Magallan: Yeah, yeah, yeah... don't think friends would have anything to do with it, or not heavily. But family, for sure. My mom's always pushing me because when I do go to college, I'm gonna be a first-generation.

Robert Chung: Oh ok.

Antonio Magallan: So, she wants me to succeed and she's always pushing me to succeed. And like I want to make her proud.

Robert Chung: Yeah.

Antonio Magallan: And cause she came to America at like..for a better life and then she married my dad, and he didn't have like the best life growing up, and he tried to make sure we did. So he wants me to succeed. And like going back to the like the first question, like the upbringings...

Robert Chung: Right.

Antonio Magallan: My dad...he's in the military, so he would be deployed often, so that was kind of hard.

Robert Chung: Oh...so I guess kind of maybe talking about your dad's...about your father being deployed in the military, so...yeah maybe...I'm...I would..have you..so would that mean like as a young child you didn't get to see your father as often? Or what were--

Antonio Magallan: Yeah...that's yeah.

Robert Chung: Hmm..what was..so how was it at home kind of maybe just living with your mother and your sister?

Antonio Magallan: Well, my mom had to like raise us...not completely without my father, but like for the most part without him. Cause he would be gone for like... like months at a time

Robert Chung: Hmmm

Antonio Magallan: So that was hard. I don't really think (inaudible) was really young, like less than five, maybe. So, like I didn't understand at the time. I--and then eventually, like I just didn't even like think about it. Like I'm just like yeah my dad's not here like and that's that. Um, but I mean sometimes we would call him without--that was difficult cause he was in the middle of the ocean. So, like when they would stop somewhere we'd be able to like talk with him.

Robert Chung: Wow. Ok, that's...yeah that's definitely I think a- you know - I think a difficult position or just kind of experience to undergo. But you know, it's hard to kind of get used to that I think at first for sure. So (sighs) I'll bring it back a bit then. So I guess, yeah...let's bring it back to...so let's..yeah we'll keep that information about your parents in mind and maybe somehow we can tie this back to our or my community partner, or your organization that you're involved with you know CVCI [Chula Vista College Institute]. I'd like to pretty much just ask: How did you first get involved with them? Was it parents, was it you know maybe a program that your school was promoting or advertising? What--where did that--how did your involvement originate or spur in CVCI [Chula Vista College Institute]?

Antonio Magallan: My mom. She would like..she doesn't do as much now, but she would always try to get like involved as possible with schools. Like and especially like in elementary, so because--so she would advocate for me because I..as a ..I mean you can't do that much as an elementary school kid.

Robert Chung: Right.

Antonio Magallan: So when I went to my third school, which was Castle Park Elementary..

Robert Chung: Mhmmm

Antonio Magallan: There was a program there called Promise Neighborhood, which like...I was only in it for like one year, so I couldn't really tell you much about it. But it works with kids, and I think like they give them like outdoor opportunities and like...like networking, but like not

really networking, because like they're just kids. But I think they introduced us to CVCI [Chula Vista College Institute].

Robert Chung: Oh...ok.

Antonio Magallan: Or someone talked about it with my mom, and then I got involved, that was in fifth grade.

Robert Chung: Got it, got it, and so..so you've been with CVCI [Chula Vista College Institute] for how long exactly or like an estimate, maybe?

Antonio Magallan: Five to six years.

Robert Chung: Five to six years? Ok. I guess what has been your overall kind of feelings or experience with CVCI [Chula Vista College Institute]? You know, is there any major or "biggest impact" that the-you know--that CVCI [Chula Vista College Institute] has had on your life, you would...that you could recall?

Antonio Magallan: Not necessarily like an impact. But they have given us many opportunities, like they do college campus tours, they go over like vocabulary and just they'll bring in like speakers that talk about like tours-or not tours, sorry-- like the campuses

Robert Chung: Yeah.

Antonio Magallan: And how their college life is, so we get like..we get to learn about it, basically.

Robert Chung: I guess you know what..are there any kind of maybe "life values or skills" that CVCI [Chula Vista College Institute] has been able to help..has been able to help instill or kind of teach you, outside of either the classroom or..or just you know, your life, in general?

Antonio Magallan: Life skills?

Robert Chung: Or just any kind of...any value, skills, you know things that they've taught you, because I imagine being involved with them for such a significant amount of time, there's things that maybe you know..you've learned from them as a student, as an individual kind of thing.

Antonio Magallan: Yeah. I can't think of any right now. But, I'm sure like without me knowing I have gotten them. Just because of like the time I've spent with them. Like, I've just picked up on it.

Robert Chung: Sure.

Antonio Magallan: Like yeah I can't tell you like at the top of my head.

Robert Chung: Yeah, no that is-that is completely fine, Antonio. That's completely fine, don't worry too much about that. so obviously it's been you know..thus far we've seen a lot of kind of ups and downs, I think, in your life, but I think you've come out as a very, you know, strong and capable individual, and I'd like to see you know maybe where you lie, in terms of like the future, or in your future, so are there any kind of hobbies or passions you have that could potentially make for future careers or just you know, what are...what are things that you're interested in or doing right now?

Antonio Magallan: That's-that's hard because I've like talked about my---like with my parents about that. Like I'm not sure what to do when I grow up.

Robert Chung: Ok

Antonio Magallan: Cause like my interests come and go. Like sometimes I'll be interested like in mechanics or engineering. And the next day it's like something like completely different. So I'm still trying to like find that like that one thing that I'm really passionate about.

Robert Chung: Right.

Antonio Magallan: Cause right now it's just all like I mean it's just general stuff and it's just coming and going.

Robert Chung: Hmmm, I guess..so if that's the case, I'm ok with you even just kind of like listing out all the you know things you've been interested in throughout your life. I mean think it does-- you know like this doesn't have to be academic subjects or stringent, you know, one things for careers, but just to kind of give a picture, an illustration of the types of things you're into, past and present.

Antonio Magallan: Yeah, yeah. Construction. I mean, it's hard work but I'll do it. Me and my dad, we've done a few projects, like we built a deck, so that was cool.

Robert Chung: Oh, nice.

Antonio Magallan: Mechanics, like I've said, I've helped my dad here and there with the cars.

Robert Chung: Mhmm

Antonio Magallan: What else? Biology, cause that's like- we have a teacher at our school who like well- he's a biology teacher and he tries to like not like force us to be interested in biology but like he like reminds us that it's an option to take and like a path to take. So that's kind of interesting. And like biochemistry, bioengineering, like anything to do with that, that's been an interest.

Robert Chung: (nods)

Antonio Magallan: And I've also been interested in joining the military, if I mean, if that counts.

Robert Chung: Oooo, ok, yeah for sure.

Antonio Magallan: Because I mean, cause like I said I don't know what I want my career to be.

Robert Chung: Mhmm

Antonio Magallan: So, that's like a safety net, I guess.

Robert Chung: Ok.

Antonio Magallan: And all the perks that come with that. That's..yeah.

Robert Chung: Interesting. It seems like you have a fairly broad array of interests, but I think your kind of -what is--niche interests are within that what is it...mechanics, scientific-oriented fields and disciplines...kind of.

Antonio Magallan: Yeah.

Robert Chung: That's really cool...that's awesome. And I mean you know, you still have a lot of time. You know, you're young, so you know it's...don't feel too rushed about careers. Obviously, we start thinking about it, in like prep for college and all, but you know don't rush the process, just take your time, and you know do the things that you're interested in and that you love, right. So I think we have for the most part covered like the - the kind of broad, general questions, regarding you know your life, your upbringing, your interests, personal experiences, education. I'd like to transition a bit more into our recent times, regarding the COVID pandemic. And so, I guess I'll just ask if how has the pandemic affected you on a personal level, whether it's been you know physically, mentally, you know with school, with your home life, just anything? What has your experience been with the pandemic?

Antonio Magallan: So with COVID, it's like mildly affected me. With school, I've gotten much lazier...

Robert Chung: Hmmm

Antonio Magallan: Because like teachers, they've become more lenient and I mean there's...it's like less strict and less like weight on your shoulders, I guess. So I've become more lazy. I've still maintained my grades, but it's just like the actual like knowledge and the learning aspect of it, I've eased off of that. That's not necessarily good. Physically, with COVID, I think like for the first bit I think I lost a bit of weight, and then I like gained it, and then I've been maintaining that.

Robert Chung: Mhmm

Antonio Magallan: I've tried to workout, but I mean..it's hard, well for me, to get motivated.

Robert Chung: (chuckles)

Antonio Magallan: But I try. Like here and there, I'll do it. Maybe like...like just out of nowhere I'll just be like, you know I'm gonna do it and I do it for like three days, and then I'll stop. And then again I'll do it, so there's that. Mentally, I don't think it's really affected me, cause I'm not like--I'm lucky enough to not have to like worry that much like about how COVID is gonna affect me, like money-wise, health-wise, like in those aspects, so like I'm not--I'm guess I'm not that worried, not that anxious.

Robert Chung: Ok. And then I think home life was the other one that I covered.

Antonio Magallan: Yeah. I got new...I don't know if you call them 'hobbies', but like new interests, I guess.

Robert Chung: Yeah, what ...oh so, and then were those new interests like part of what we discussed earlier on? Or...

Antonio Magallan: No, no that's why I said--like I'm not sure what to call them. It's just stuff that I do I guess, to kill time. It's not necessarily an interest, like a career or something like that.

Robert Chung: Oh, no, no yeah, no...that's fine. If anything, like if I may, I'd like to hear more about these....these interests that you've developed over the pandemic.

Antonio Magallan: Hold on. It's not really--I'm trying to think if I got more than one. For the most part, I went into anime. That's one thing. I started with Avatar, and I was like you know what this is- I don't know if that's considered anime-- but now I actually do watch anime. I watch them in Japanese, but so...something else. I've gotten into....oh! Art a bit. Because I've had a few--I had took this summer academy, it's not summer school.

Robert Chung: Yeah.

Antonio Magallan: Cause I (inaudible) recover credit, it's the summer academy. And you get a stipend at the end of it, so like money.

Robert Chung: Yeah, wow.

Antonio Magallan: I'm gonna take it again this year. But last year and like, it's not only over Summer, there's also like Saturday sessions. Like I think like once every two months or something. And a few of those required arts like arts and crafts like...some of it was like actual painting and then over the summer, we had an actual like art class, like drawing, like sketches and stuff. So I developed an interest in that. So that was pretty cool.

Robert Chung: Awesome. Yeah, no that reminds me of my youth taking art classes as well. I, you know, obviously, I had a lot of help during those classes. It wasn't all me, but that you know those are fun times. I'm sure--that sounds like a great time. So, I mean--and then you've- have you like kept it up, up until say like today on our day of the interview? Have you continued to you know do art, essentially?

Antonio Magallan: No not really. I stopped after the academy a bit. But then like a month ago, I was like I wanted to try like to draw something, and I was just gonna like copy something -- not trace it -- but like...like I'll have a reference of, and I'll try to copy it like that.

Robert Chung: Ok (nods)

Antonio Magallan: But yeah, I haven't really been like sticking with it. I had this really one good piece that I did over the...over the academy. Cause, we had to submit three pieces, and then one of them was like really good. I liked it. It was an eyeball looking through a hole.

Robert Chung: An eyeball looking through a hole? Oooooo

Antonio Magallan: Cause I got this sketchbook and then I tore one of the pages, and then I like I made it seem like the eye was looking through like a crack in the wall or something. So I tore...like it was like 3D basically. Cause the paper was tearing up.

Robert Chung: That's interesting. Wow, I would've loved to see that work. Do you still have it with you or no? I mean, we won't show it on the Zoom- obviously we can't show it on the interview, but like just in general?

Antonio Magallan: Yeah. I'm sure it's here somewhere. I'm not sure, specifically where, but like I don't hang it or anything.

Robert Chung: Yeah, yeah that's cool, though. So, that's great to hear. Yeah so that I'm---it's interesting to hear about your you know kind of your story of you know with art and your youth and you know how I think, essentially the pandemic kind of brought up, maybe in a way, those memories again. But getting back onto about the pandemic, I guess, you may have touched on this, but how have you dealt with the challenges that have been brought on? So, maybe you talked about particular challenges but you know maybe is there a like a day-by-day mindset or kind of just routine or kind of way of thinking that you go about during these rough times?

Antonio Magallan: Way of thinking? I try to stay optimistic. So, like yeah there's days where I like just don't have or do nothing...I see like only the-I'm being pessimistic, I think that's what it is. Or pessimistic. But I just tell myself that like I can get through it. And that it'll be ok. And that I have to make my parents proud and keep doing what I'm doing.

Robert Chung: That's great, that's awesome. Yeah, that's awesome to hear. So and then...I don't want to assume anything, but I presume that you kind of continue this mindset throughout you know-or that you've had this mindset throughout the...over the course of your life, you know just in general? It's not just the pandemic, but outside or...like have you maintained a fairly optimistic outlook on life throughout...your life?

Antonio Magallan: Yeah-it's-yeah I would say. It's gotten like a bit more negative, cause I'm taking harder classes, and I'm like...like...I don't know I just don't really like it. Like I said, I get the A, the A plus, like 4.0, but I just don't really-I'm not motivated to do it. So I'm like, I don't know if I can keep this up.

Robert Chung: Hmm. Are there...are there (sighs)...so given kind of the potential or the possibility of an in-person year, I think, I don't- actually I'm not too sure about like school districts surrounding the SD County, but would you say like that in-person atmosphere, environment, just being able to socialize and be out and about with people like normal, would kind of propel and help your motivation?

Antonio Magallan: Yeah I think so. And..and if it doesn't necessarily like propel it, like you said, it would take my mind off of it. Like off the...like off I guess the- not really the struggle, but the lack of motivation I guess and like the work that I have to do.

Robert Chung: Interesting. Ok. let's see...so we're nearing the end of the interview time but I don't know. Sometime I-I just kept this in my mind from, I think it was the very first question, when you were talking about-when you were introducing yourself. You know, describe to me-you talked about how Chula Vista and San Diego is a nice area, low crime, but you specifically mentioned the things about the sunsets and the parks. And I was wondering if you could just kind of describe to me what you...what you see, what you feel, what are-you know, what are kinds of the things that run through your mind when you look at those-when you see that maybe, on any given day? What are things you think about?

Antonio Magallan: (inaudible) Sorry. When I'm at the park, I think of my dog who passed away, cause I would always walk her there. And I have lots of memories at the park, like riding my bike, and I'd go to school, I would go through the park, like I'd cut through it on my way to my second school. And sometimes, I would go there with friends, like very rarely.

Robert Chung: Hmmm

Antonio Magallan: In terms of the sunset, I don't really think of much. I'm more like, at peace, and I just think of nothing, really. Cause like in the backyard, you can see just like the sunset and then it's like pretty, sometimes. It's like pink and stuff. And it clears my mind.

Robert Chung: Would you say walks to the parks or sunsets have, you know, at least somewhat alleviated like certain stressful experiences of the pandemic? Has it helped maybe during this time? Do they--is there anything that it represents for you?

Antonio Magallan: Not really. I don't really like...like going...like like I'm not passionate about seeing the sunset. Like I wont-like it's not part of my routine, but when I do see it, it's like relaxing and soothing. But the park...I do go there, maybe like once a month, just for a walk or not always with friends. The friends thing is like (inaudible) rarely. I'll go-there's like some places to eat, like by the park, and I'll just go to the park and eat it. But no, I don't think it represents anything.

Robert Chung: I think, regardless of you know if it represented or symbolized anything or not, I think those are still, you know, very astute observations you made about the sunset and the park, about obviously there's you know there's been a bit of--there's a little sadness behind I think the park experience, but I think, regardless, that's you know..it's good to hear how you know I think you've-there's maybe some sort of like thing you can do, with looking at the sunset and the

parks. Just and it's been really, I think, interesting and great to hear your story and experiences with just your upbringing, Chula Vista, being involved with CVCI [Chula Vista College Institute], and dealing with the challenges that have just been so rapidly thrown at us due to COVID and all. Unfortunately, we are kind of nearing the end of our interview time. I'd like to extend a huge THANK YOU to Antonio for agreeing to do this interview. You know it's been..it's been wonderful to be able to talk to you for the past 35 to 40 minutes or so, and hear about your life experiences and stories. So thank you Antonio.

Antonio Magallan: Yes, no problem.

Robert Chung: And yeah, I believe that is it. So, thank you all for listening and have a great day!