

Narrator: Grace Hernandez (GH)

Interviewer: Juntao Wu (JW)

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JW: Hi, my name is Juntao Wu and today is May 20th of 2024 and I am interviewing Grace Hernandez through a Zoom video call which is being recorded. This is for the Race and Oral History Project at UCSD. I'm here with Grace and I want to start by asking you what are your identities, your background, and just tell me a little bit about yourself.

GH: I am in sixth grade currently attending Coronado Middle School. I am a she/her and I am Latina and I didn't use to go to Coronado Middle School. I used to go to another school and it was. Coronado Middle School was just a bit better than that other school because that school is surrounded by like some bad things.

JW: Can you tell me about your upbringing like how you got here?

GH: It started when my parents were in Mexico and they had three of my siblings there and now they came to America and they gave birth to my brother, me, and my youngest brother in America. We switched from Mexico to America.

JW: Where in America?

GH: In like Barrio Logan.

JW: Barrio Logan. What's it like growing in this Barrio Logan neighborhood?

GH: There are a lot of homeless and sometimes in the night, there's an ice cream truck which is actually not a ice cream truck. It's like a truck that sells bad things to the homeless out on the streets. There's like a lot of homeless around like the neighborhood that's like scary.

JW: Can you explain what the bad things might be?

GH: Sometimes there are people that are like shooting around my apartment and sometimes it's like.. one time a woman got shot in our apartments and I got really scared personally. And I was like I got scared and I like couldn't sleep for a few nights because I was like scared that someone would come in here and start shooting at my family.

JW: How does the lifestyle you have here, how is the lifestyle you have here different than the lifestyle you have in your hometown and what was your hometown?

GH: So I, well my hometown is Cuernavaca at least that's where my parents were born and so it's like different because over there, there is like less part of the sidewalk. It is mostly road, less sidewalk and there's like a lot of uphill and like bumps in the roads. It's kind of trippy over there like over here it's kind of plain and way more sidewalk to walk on. Over there it's like way harder to walk on sidewalk. And over there I feel like it's more crazy because Mexicans almost like party. And in America, people sleep at nine, so like it's kind of different. There's more noise over there than over here in the nights. It's very yeah..

JW: So what hardships have you endured while growing up?

GH: It was hard for me to go out because there were so many like homeless because I was afraid people were going to steal me so I would have to go out with a parent or someone that was old enough so that I would be safe and like I can go to places. Right now, it's a bit better because like the police are telling the homeless to move and sometimes also homeless would get in because they remember because there is a passcode outside of my apartments you have to enter it in. And it's like the homeless would figure out the password

and they come in so now they are like monthly changing the passcode and they are telling us so that we remember because like they don't want the homeless to get in.

JW: That's cool, that's nice to know. So was there any inequalities or injustices you have faced in school or anywhere in your life?

GH: One time someone called me a border hopper. I personally didn't think that wasn't nice and one time to a friend, to my friend, someone, because they are Chinese and someone called him like a ching chong and they like.. sorry. That makes me laugh. They call them a ching chong and they told them, they asked them if they ate dogs and it's kind of like rude and I wanted to like hit that kid but like I couldn't because like I didn't want to be like them like a bully.

JW: It's very common for certain aspects of a minority group's culture to be assimilated into the society's majority group. What aspect of your culture do you want to or hope to steer clear of this cultural assimilation?

GH: I hope that like they won't steal like our food ideas because like I know it's like our food is good of course. Sometimes when they change it they make it differently and doesn't taste how it taste like in Mexico or like when my mom cooks it. It tastes way more different like sometimes in school, they try to make Mexican food but it doesn't taste the same as it how it taste like in Mexico or how my mom cooks it. And like I would like try to tell people that not all Mexicans are bad maybe some are. But like just because we are Mexican doesn't mean we are like all like the same the people.. we are not all bad people. Some of us are good.

JW: I agree with that. Ok thank you so much Grace for sharing your experiences and opening up about your experiences. Thank you.

GH: Yeah you too.