

The University of Texas Arlington

E
185.93
T4
574
2002
no. 5

SIGNIFICANT AFRICAN AMERICAN PUBLIC FIGURES

CENTER FOR MEXICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Interviewee: EVELIO GRILLO

Interviewer: Jose Angel Gutierrez, Ph.D., J.D.

Transcriber: Beatriz Casas-Meza, Jose Angel Gutierrez

Date of Interview: January 30, 2003

Location: Austin, Texas

Page Length: 51

Evelio Grillo

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: We are now recording 1/30/2003 Omni Hotel Downtown Austin for one major purpose and minor one; The major one is to help him along with the autobiographical details. He has published the book *Black Cuban Black American: A Memoir*, Arte Publico Press, 2000. And it stops after he gets released from the army in the mid-Forties so we are going to try to pick up from there.

The minor topic is the most unique for this century, 21st century, because in the 20th century we have some African American leaders talking about negritude. In Africa, Pan Africanism, the Back to Africa Movement, and blackness was the glue ...you add that as a black Cuban, you add the *Hispano*, Cuban dimension and your sub-theme, black Latinos are black. That is a minor theme, which is what we are doing. You have signed the Deed of Gift. The students are going to transcribe this, will make you a copy of this, the video and get that to you in a couple... The transcript probably will take about a month or so, and you will get that and get a disk so that you can edit. So we will not edit, we will simply type what you say, right?

Mr. Evelio Grillo:: Right.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Perhaps we can work on the interpretation made of how unique it is to be a black Cuban and a black American. How did that come about?

Mr. Evelio Grillo:: I was born in Tampa Florida into the Jim Crow society and while we black Cubans had peripheral relationships with white folks. We didn't socialize with them at all. I don't remember a single white child I played with. I don't remember a face. I don't remember a name. We were black. We were Cubans but we were black Cubans. And the society relegated us to membership in the black community. So I grew up in a black community in a Cuban home, in a black neighborhood, in a Cuban home in a black neighborhood and this went on all the time and the black neighborhood was mixed black Cuban and black American neighborhood but the theme was black. So I have a consciousness of a hybrid identity integrated. I got the term hybrid from Arturo Shaumberg did I tell you that?

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Well I sent you the article

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Oh yes, Arturo... Arturo Shaumberg

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Shaumberg

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Shaumberg, was a Puerto Rican and he came to the United States and he became the ...by far the most fertile and substantial source of artifacts and writings about black people. He developed a vast collection and it is a division, the Shaumberg collection, is a division of the NY [New York] public library is not a subsection...is a complete division, is the world's greatest. So when I read that I said ...that's what I am a hybrid. And that is why I flow in and out of Cuban and American, of Cuban American. And most of the time I have a very strong identity as a black American and I am a black American leader in the community. And I was Vice President of the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People]. And I was most of all a significant political leader for 20 years

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Well that is what we want to talk about, in your book. You bring us from childhood to your release from the Army, and then, you decided to go to California in 1945

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No, in 19, more like 1949.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: That's correct, I stand corrected. You begin your Epilogue on page 130 of your book..."In early 1949 after 3 years of graduate study in Latin American history in Columbia I decided to move to California ..."

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: So why did you decide that... why go to California? When you have never been there? When home was in the Northeast with African Americans?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Well that gives me a chance to talk about my mentor, my mentors... two main ones: Dr. Howard Thurman was dean of the Chadwick... Howard University. He was perhaps, he was named one of twelve America's great preachers, you know. And when I went to Washington from Tampa, Florida, in, I was in the tenth grade, my brother knew them already, ...and he had me visit with Mrs. Thurman. And when I showed up at her house it was love at first sight. And from that time forward I have been in effect a member of the Thurman family. So Howard Thurman and Sue Bailey Thurman... his wife encouraged me to come to California. They had already moved to California.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: They had already moved to California, he moved to California to found a Church, Church is still thriving.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Where?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: In San Francisco, it is California the Fellowship Church and Mrs. Thurman and I maintained correspondence all the time from the time I was in the 10th grade and there are some details that I will just elaborate without making a great contribution, let us say simply that she encouraged me to come to California and summarize it all like that.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Now you were married, and had family, no?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes, wife and two children.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: How did they take the decision to move to California?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: That is the first time that question has been asked of me. There was no question that I, would determine where the family would live. My wife had two children, she took care of the babies and as long as I maintained the protector role, where I went she went without any hesitation or problem.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: What were their names, I know that you mentioned them in the book but I forgot for the moment.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: My daughters.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Your children and your wife's name at that time.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: My wife's name was Catherine,

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: With a K,

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No with a C and my daughters name were Elisa,

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: With an E,

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yeah, and Trina.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: With a T

Mr. Evelio Grillo: *Si*, (Yes) and I had two other children after I went to California, Evelio and Antonio.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: From Catherine?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes, all my children are from Catherine.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Is Catherine Puerto Rican or Cuban?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No, no she is Italian.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: She's Italian?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes, She's Italian, so fortuitously, her mother had already moved to California. Fresno so it was convenient for me to, and they were glad to have them, to send my family to Fresno.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: What is that family name, Italian family name?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Patalano,

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Patalano...

Mr. Evelio Grillo: That was Catherine's mother and father, Peter Patalano, and Francesca Patalano. They had already moved to Fresno he had a (too much to tell), and so first we sent the children with the aunt, then the mother, my wife we sent her. And this required gathering of money which we didn't have, and then I gathered the money for my own trip to California when I was... out of the clear blue sky came a money order from Mrs. Billy Thurman with the message; "Come the west needs you".

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: What did she mean by that...did she have a job, or did you have a deal with destiny?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Well, she was a fixer, (chuckle) she dedicated her life to fixing young peoples lives and she fixed mine, she fixed mine. Besides I was a son to her and she was like a mother to me. My mother had been dead for a while, but I became an integral part of their family it symbolized by the fact that I rode in the family car at Howard Thurman's... and maintained throughout the rest of Mrs. Thurman life a very close relationship and in effect took care of her in her late years, she died in '96 and by that time I was sort of, you know how children become the parent, I had become in "loco parentis" and took care of her with her daughters. She had two daughters, but I was a full partner in subelitano, so that she fixed my, she fixed it to come to California, brought me and my family, my eldest daughter and my wife into her home, and kept us there for two months, found my daughter a scholarship to perhaps the outstanding nursing school made sure my wife and I got acclimated. I wanted to go out and find a job, you know, gotta get a job, she said 'you will, you are not ready to look for a job'. 'You don't even know where California is, no, no you need to nightclubbing, that what, so you can see what California is like,' she bought my wife a dress and we went night clubbing, just so we could get acclimated to San Francisco. And then one morning, she said I think it is time

to meet Annie Cloe Watson... she was fixing things. So, I went to visit Annie Cloe Watson with her. Annie Cloe Watson was the Executive of the International Institute of San Francisco, a white haired angel, a seasoned practiced social worker with one of the most significant positions in San Francisco, which is executive of the International Institute where newcomers who speak foreign languages go for guidance and help and support that is what she did. Well I sure was a newcomer, and she and Mrs. Thurman knew each other from boards, mission and Mrs. Thurman hit California, she immediately became a player, because her husband, she and her husband were outstanding leaders in American, black African American life. So she and Mrs. Annie Cloe Watson were black type buddies working on committees so... Annie Cloe Watson heard me tell my story about my four years in the Army and what I did and my education at Columbia and my work, my graduation from Xavier, Xavier University, THE black Catholic college, the only black Catholic college. And then when I finished, she said, then you have a very interesting and very, very sound educational Career, the only problem is that you are not certified in anything yet, but you will find that if you go across the bay to the various school systems that all of them will be eager to grab you because you are not only educated, but you are bilingual and they are desperate for people who speak Spanish. And sure enough that is the way it was. She said if I were to tell you that you have one challenge that you should pay attention to, you should not work for an agency that will not dedicate resources to your development.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Very good advice.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: And I asked her, you know such an agency? Oh she said, 'oh yes, a great agency' she said the Oakland Recreation Department. And I think they would grab you right away. I said, I would be very, very grateful if you could do anything... Oh she said, "I can call them right now." Fixing, you know, the great fix is on, fixing..."Altha I have a young man in my office who I think you would be interested in, he has a very extensive education and he speaks Spanish" and the next thing I knew we were talking about how we got together and Altha was the lady on the other line. She was the general supervisor of program of the Oakland Recreation Department. She was coming to San Francisco the next morning, she was in Oakland and I was in San Francisco, and she invited me to meet her in the lobby of the YWCA where she had a meeting at 10'o'clock

she would arrive at 9 and see me. I arrived at YWCA, by 9 and this vision of hope and belief in people came and sat down and started selling me about the Recreation Department, she didn't ask me about my background, Annie Cloe Watson's word was enough for her to know that she would want me as an employee. So she sat down and started telling me what the Recreation Department was trying to do and how it had an in-service education program and 3 hours a week seminar led by a professor, full professor at the University of California and she said...fixing...fixing. She would, how would they hire me, would hire me in the maximum part time hours and I would then be able to wait for the examination to become a full time regular employee. Anyhow to make a long story short, by the time all that was over and by the time of preliminary probationary period and preliminary orientation period was, by the time we had a preliminary probationary period for me within 2 months Mrs. Bunka, came in...

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Who?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Mrs. Bunka, Altha Sims Bunka...

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Okay, Same lady...

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Same lady, and offered me the position of Resident Director of Alexander Community Center, the Oakland Recreation Department had once had five such community centers with inherited, the community centers tended to be separate agencies, each in their own, you know, but economically wasn't feasible so one by one, they all gave themselves to the Oakland Recreation Department. So the Oakland Recreation Department in effect had 5 community centers. Like settlement houses, each settlement house with a resident director in the building. And I was offered the resident directorship of Alexander Community Center. Just being in Alexander Community center was an inspiration because of the long settlement house tradition. So now it was in the poorest neighborhood and not many recreation directors were interested in living in the poorest neighborhood.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Is that euphemism for black, or euphemism for black and brown? When you say poor neighborhoods Black and Brown?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Oakland? Yes,

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Is Ms. Gertrude Wilson, black, the professor later

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Is Ms. Sims Bunka

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: So Altha and Gertrude were white and these other ladies were black?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No, all the persons involved mentoring me in the recreation department were white.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Okay.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Have I answered the questions?

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Yes, well it is important because up to now I am assuming that you have not encountered that, you had lived in a black world and now you see no Jim Crow or less Jim Crowism.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: In the California area, the bay area?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: That's a very, very informed observation, I had never thought of that. That in effect I depended totally upon black mentors. I never went to anything but a black classroom until I went to Columbia University. Columbia University couldn't give less than a damn about me, you know. In fact a fellow...I was, as a black, I was impertinent to inspire to anything like a degree in Latin American History. So they, they ran roughshod over me.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: You never got a degree in that?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No that would become evident as the story unfolds, because I changed majors.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Okay.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: But there I was with a, an apartment...

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: And running a center...

Mr. Evelio Grillo: ...and running a center,

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Had your family now joined you, you moved everybody there?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Oh yes I had two young daughters; it was easy for us, two young daughters in preschool, as you know, and we were part of the neighborhood.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Minor detail so we can close that chapter, the Thurmon daughters. What were their names?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Olive and Ann

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Are they still alive and living in California.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No, no Ann has died, Olive is in NY.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Okay, well then please continue on the recreation center.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Um, it was the richest possible experience I could've wanted. It was like going to school and having practice having the opportunity to practice. What I was learning every Wednesday morning, we met for 3 hours, the professional staff and under Gertrude Wilson guidance and facilitation, she was THE name in social group work in the country.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: The professor from Berkeley?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes, she wrote the book.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Social Group Study?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Social Group work...

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Right.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: She wrote the book, literally she wrote the book, and she was the professor, the consultant that we had, every Wednesday morning, and then we'd go back to our jobs and our jobs were like field work, you know. So I spent two years in that center and they were very happy years. We were an integral part of the neighborhood. Not you know, I don't want to guild the lily; say that we went to the neighbor's house. No, no we formed a very, very close and loving relationship with the family who lived in the environs. To this day, my Christmas card from the mother of the family, children are all gone and married while that showed growing up, they were the playmates of my children and we have two families like that. We have a baby, they have a baby, we have a baby, they have a baby. That kind of relationship, then we um, shopped at the same mom and pop grocery store, which was exorbitant in price. Things like that and had a generally rich experience and if I started telling you the stories about Alexander Community Center. But I will tell you part of the story because it is significant in my life. I went to school in Columbia to the Latin American History... because on the advice on my mentor, Dr. Howard Thurman you should prepare yourself to be a bridge between Spanish speaking and English speaking. So I applied to Columbia, and so I showed up at Alexandria Community Center and what do I find, half African American and half Mexican Americans. It was so dramatic that I stopped and look and remember

thinking...man we need a lot of integration of blacks and Mexican Americans right here. And I went to work, making and in that center there were different groupings because the black kids were much more sophisticated about social groups and they had the teenage club, but in athletics and in art and in games. It was like that and there were buddies and friends and supporters and I went to work on integrating the Spanish speaking and the black and I had a ball, I had a ball...

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: What are some of the things you did to integrate them?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Well, the things you do to integrate them is to BE. There is nothing magic about the activity. It is magic about the atmosphere and values that are transmitted. That's magic, so if you just assumed that people are going to play together in peace, you know, a little guidance here and little guidance there, a little prohibition, you know you are working with a group in action and there's conflict there's cooperation. If they are involved in doing something together, that's what you do and so what they did together was play baseball. What they did together was do arts and crafts. What they do together is hang around, because that's the one of the main functions of the settlement house...a place to be. So the children would come to the center for games and joy and but also just to hang out. There is more of that going on than anything else, and so they hung out.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: So what you are explaining is, not to be in the sense of an existence but to be in a sense of acting out your identity your culture your heritage your attitudes to get to know one another, is that what you are trying to say?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: You said it, absolutely correct. You are acting out your values. You are acting your beliefs. You're acting out your emotions, how you feel you feel that every one of them is precious and as you expressing this they...become involved in the enterprise of being together so the friendships, my most outstanding. I won't say, 'cuz everybody claims that everybody that has anything to do with me claims them, so I claim them too. Frank Robinson, the great baseball player, he played everyday at my play ground and he had Mexican American buddies and that's the way you integrate, not by, you can't talk about integration, each time you get together you got together how happy we will be...no, no, no you do things and the integration is almost like osmosis you know almost like a flow back and forth feeling and value flooring. That's the way you

integrate and those friendships last. They're still work in the community of Oakland between Mexican American and Blacks. While I was active I was a prime promoter of integration of Mexican American and Blacks, and I had a great deal to do with the founding and the success of the Spanish community geld?

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Well we are going to get there but I want to cover the formal education. As a result of this, you entered the school of Social work, social welfare at the time and you got a masters degree?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: From Berkley?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: By 1953?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Okay. So now you are titled, credentialed, licensed, you are the man in charge and the authority at least there in that area, no?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Oh yes I had very responsible positions and prestige. A prestigious position of Mrs. Bunker...didn't let any grass grow under her feet and as soon as I got my degree I left Alexander Community Center, to get my degree... I need some water,

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: All right, let me turn it off

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Now,

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: wait a minute... we are back on

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes, I was at the point where I was going to begin to tell you that about how I got the John A. Whitney fellowship.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Okay.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: The head of the social group work division at the school of social welfare called me up and said he would like to come see me. And I, I said, "Of course, of course." So he came to see me, by this time, very rich program... I had 17 volunteers, you know the kids would knock on my door, can I volunteer?, can I volunteer?, my place was pulsated with kids and adults loving kids you know the students at the any university have to go out find jobs to do in a volunteer, to get the experience of working with people and with groups teaching them. So they would knock on my door, "I come to... I want to be a volunteer, and by that time word got around "that community center is something

else". And I didn't know what I was doing. I was just being, you know, the seminar began to give me a framework this is magic. And so into this pulsating community walked the head of the department of social group work and told me 'I think you should try to get a fellowship and get a degree in social work'. That seems like impossibility to me, I can't possibly go to school. "Why don't you try, why don't you try, try the John A. Whitney foundation". So I tried the John A. Whitney foundation and out came the director of programming, the opportunity fellowship program designed for minority students of promise and hefty fellowships. I got a \$2500 dollar per year fellowship and that is like being half rich, chuckle. I was able to move out of the center and find myself a house to rent and pay all my tuition fees and I went and I got a fellowship. I got the first opportunity fellowship that had been ever been given out for social work, and I remember the director mumbling "you know we never give out any fellowships in social work I don't see why you should be"...chuckle, he said we'll see...we'll see. So I get a letter in the mail 'you've been awarded a... Well you know he'd being doing his homework. You damn right you'd better give him a fellowship... that center almost shakes you know, with livelihood, so I got my fellowship and I went off. Well let me tell you the thing I am proudest of, is that I took a very bright member of the worst delinquent gang in the community and when I left he had a part time position as a recreation director for the Oakland Recreation Department. And this is significant because when I went to Mrs. Bunker, she you know, "well of course, of course let's that's what we are all about"

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Who was that young man and what was the name of the gang,
Mr. Evelio Grillo: Leland Maes, the gang was named the Rose, they were 15 of them, and 7 of them met violent ends, you know, overdoses. But Leland Maes was very bright and a cut above most of them and he just never had any vision of himself as a recreation director or anything in the helping professions. And when I went to Mrs. Bunker, said I think this young man is as qualified as any of your recreation directors to be a part time director, and she said of course, of course, that's what we all, and so she hired him. So that symbolizes what is possible to develop if you have a helping mission and enough awareness of your own limitations to realize that you are being helped more than anyone
Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: So what happened to Mr. Hayes?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Maes?

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Maes.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I don't really know except that he ended up as an executive of, of a big transportation company called Pacific Intermountain Express and he was some kind of manager. I lost track of and the other one that I am very proud of Ruben Tavernier,

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Tavernier?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Tavernier, this...

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Tavaneir?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: T a v e r n e r, these are Mexican American kids both of them.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Maes and Tavernier?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: unusual surnames.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: They were Mexican, brother.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Okay.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: And Ruben Tavernier ended up with a chain of three beauty shops out of the roses.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: By chance ah, as very young kids, didn't you have some of the later to be panthers running around there?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No, no, no... No.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: This is the 50s now.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes, but I was in West Oakland and that was in East Oakland. West Oakland and East Oakland were almost different worlds. West Oakland was poorer, East Oakland was more affluent but at the same time more of, they moved with greater ease in the society but they were still not being socialized, the children not, they had the problems of poverty, you know single families, no family you know. So what they were more of them and that they were, as I said before, they moved more comfortably in the society in the West Oakland areas.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: What was your impressions and your feelings about now being a graduate student in Berkeley as opposed to being a graduate student in Columbia?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Oh, I suppose that I didn't have knowledge of how to function in the Columbia University environment it was very rarified and my major professor was an out and out bigot.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Who was that?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Frank Tanenbaum, capitalist and slavery.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Chuckle, the imminence in Latin American circles?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yeah, Scholars anyways.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: He was a vigorous virulent bigot and a conceited one at that. And he had been enshrined as Mr. Latin American and wrote capitalism and Slavery. He was a vigorous virulent bigot. So I never, and also wasn't very knowledgeable of how things were, um I wasn't really prepared to be Frank Tatenbaum's student. I had a chance and I wrote a thesis to work with a lower ranked professor who was trying to help me get my masters.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Who was that?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I forget his name, I forget his name.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: All right if it comes back to you just throw it in.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Um, but he was good to me and I thought I wrote a good thesis, but I sent the thesis to Frank Tatenbaum and he never even ...never even wrote me a letter. I wrote a thesis on Uruguayan Social Policy. I don't even know where it is now, but...

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Had you begun to have, I'll say it in Spanish, "inquietude" about discovering all those Africans in Latin America...or it didn't dawn on you yet?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No,

END of TAPE 1

Start Tape 2

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: How do you come back? It's not the same place, you, there's already other people life has gone on for them?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: It was almost ceremonial how the employees would deal, would talk to any elected official because the separation between the elected responsibility and the appointed responsibility received elected officials appointed the city manager, the ones who appointed him there um, were, lines that the elected official couldn't cross and to the extent of the appointed official becoming quite and one city manager got fired by the mayor. He didn't know exactly what happened but he was telling the mayor what he couldn't do, and what the mayor couldn't do and he should've been concentrating on what the mayor could do and what the mayor could do, so he lost his job. So that is a touchy area on how the employees relate to the elected official and how they relate to the appointed official and they are directly in control of the appointed official.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Now in Oakland does the council or the manager appoint the police chief fire chief judges?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: There is certainly consultation with the elected officials but the city manager appoints the chief, fire chief. Now it is inconceivable that the city manager would appoint a chief of police not acceptable to the elected officials. But there is no question that the city managers don't have to appoint anybody that he doesn't believe in. So it is an area of some give and take but, the city manager is very powerful and he only begins to lose power when he loses the confidence of the council.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: By you saying you were the first black in the city managers office, Can I assume that the entire council was white the entire appointed...?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: The entire city staff was white.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Okay, so now you have an awesome responsibility by being the first and ONLY. You were THE black community; you were the Spanish speaking community. Is that a correct thing to say, is that how you were perceived?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Well I don't think, no I don't think I was perceived that way, my function was narrow. It was very, very broad as it carried out, it was narrow too because everybody felt the progress and the ease with which relationships were formed and carried out among the very many agency personnel who had direct responsibility and

control and power with relating to specific families. When I, I wasn't seen as a represented of the blacks in city hall...

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Well let's turn around, how about from the outsiders, you had neighbors, you had people you drank beer with or went dancing with, didn't they ask you to fix things for them?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No, no.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Weren't you the access to city hall?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: NO, no, no, no, no, no, and I would have been slapped down if I had been involved in, advocating. The people who were in charge of what I would have been I would have been, the people who were in charge to whom I would be trying to influence, they were white, and they were very insensitive to the black community and no way, personnel, personnel director was a very powerful person. They had no history of relating to a black person and they didn't see me as a person to whom they owed anything I was in there doing this special job, promoting collaboration and coordination. So, you are in asking that question, you are basing yourself on models where in the situations may be different.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Well, one model that comes to mind is Luis Martin, a Cubano. Black Cubano who was the first black in the white house. He was the access he had a very similar trajectory. I just find it hard to believe that nobody hit you up for a favor from either the black community, 'cuz you are the only one and that you didn't take it upon yourself to kinda make sure there was a number two and a number three.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No, I had no familiarity with that. It's a different; it's a different culture and atmosphere when you are talking about Martin.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Well he calls himself Luis Martin, but it is Luis Martin?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Well he was expected and it was his role. I wasn't expected and it was not my role, and if I had gotten into that role, just like I was the first black in, I would have been the first black out.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Okay, well then how did you leverage this to come to the attention of Governor Brown and the California commission on metropolitan area problems, what did you do?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Because of the success you know, it pulsates throughout the community. This is the way we do things. We work together in the Oakland community. You know, and everybody involved becomes proud of it and that pulsating brings you to the attention of vast number of people. And I also by that time had been, become significant in the political sphere by working very hard in the trenches for the organization. So by becoming a significant political figure and I came to the attention of the governor, you know the governor is the representative in charge. And the governor wanted to pull this commission on metropolitan area problems, which people were learning to, learn that the problems reside in the realm of relationships. And so I had a hand in rationalizing the relationships and participating in that is very satisfying and very productive. You know, people who would spend their lives and contacting their counterparts in other agencies in a non-cooperative and non collaborative. That's very hard, that's very hard to do. And when cooperation and cooperation is being promoted and facilitated and given high priority it becomes less hard, it becomes more, you become more effective so that that builds its own constituency its builds constituency of support. So I ended up on the metropolitan governor's commission of metropolitan area problems and that and at the same time the Ford Foundation became interested in Oakland.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Right, before we get there, were you the only black face in the commission?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yeah

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Did you have meetings across the state?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No, they were mostly in Sacramento.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: All right, did you meet Mexican counterparts the only Mexicans on the, was there a Mexican on commission?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No sir.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: No even from the LA Area?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: The MAPA people, Ed Quevedo, Frank Casado and those people weren't active yet?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: They weren't in it.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: They weren't in it...Humm?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I have no conscientiousness, of a Mexican Ameri...I'll put it that way, they may have been there but I wasn't conscientious of them.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Okay, alright, when did you become aware of the Mexican American Political Association, or does the name Ed Quevedo or Frank Casado mean anything to you?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Oh I met with Ed Quevedo several times.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: That comes later.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yeah, but you see, Ed Quevedo was instrumental in the development of the first inklings of the sense that they could do something organizationally, now they I mean Mexican Americans. It was a vast wasteland, there were whole lots of Mexican Americans and no organization and the Community Service Organization (CSO) became the first that had the resources to do a statewide job of organization. Because they were supported by the Industrials Area Foundation and at the same time, at about the same time the community service organization started developing chapters all over the state. They were stuck with the non-political and non-partisan and so they formed concomitantly MAPA, Mexican American and there they could be frankly political.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Okay, but let's still go back further, the CSO, what you just talked about that, you got involved with that, you hooked up with that, how did that happened?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I, that's very interesting, because it happened, remember I told you that I had one family in the neighborhood with whom I became close, Mexican American family and they had babies and we had babies, they had babies and we had babies and one day, Jimmy came to me and said, we're going to form a chapter of Community Service Organization and you are going to be our (chuckle) you're going to be our (chuckle)...what did he call me...anyhow...oh. Advisor. And so I was the first advisor to the first chapter to the chapter in Oakland that developed of the Community Service Organization and I would meet with them and advise em, advise em, literally give them advise on how to function.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: What was Jimmy's last name?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Delgadillo, he was, he's a great, great, great, great activist very, very humble, very, very modest in his you know, I'm not sure he even finished high school.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: You know one of the things we forgot here, is when were you born?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: 1919

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: What month and date?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: June 4th

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Okay so how old are you now?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I am 83,

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: No, I'm sorry that's what I asked, but I meant how old are you now that you are doing the CSO work (chuckle)?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Oh,

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: We gotta have bench marks.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: How old was I, let's see 1949, 1953, so 19...19 to 53 would be um, 30 37 to 38.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Okay, all right. So what are the things that CSO is doing and who are some of the players?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Um

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Did you meet Alinski, Fred Ross?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I worked for Alinski?

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Where?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: In Oakland and in Union City. I was the ...Alinsky had a very very effective hook. He hired people to be organizers of the CSO, and the one he hired most prominently was Cesar Chavez. And then he hired Herman Gallegos part time, Irelicio Chavez, part time Fred Ross fulltime. So Fred Ross and Chavez, Cesar, and I was one of that group of organizers of the CSO, I was part of Alinski's group.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: You were doing this as a volunteer cause you worked...

Mr. Evelio Grillo: NO, no

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: For the...

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No no he hired me part time, he paid me.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Now this is when? Between what period? We lost track and you haven't mentioned that in what I've read? When was this after college, after the masters before the recreation department before the city manager?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: After the masters, um this would, this would've been in,

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Late 40's?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Early 50's?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No, 53, 54 55.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Okay, all right, well so this is a part time job?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Oh yes, very part time you know.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: What were some of the things you all were doing, the CSO?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Organizing ah, Fred Ross was a genius of organization and he had a method and a process by which he organized. He would have people, gather people in their homes and he would talk about the vision of all we could do and he would go from house to house to house, he would have the house meetings and anyone who volunteered to have a house meeting, he would go to his the house and talk. Then he would form the chapter based on all of these actually direct organization process that he developed that's what he did. It seems hard to explicate because ah what they do is talk, talk, talk talk. Well that's what organizing is all about talking, talking, talking to people and talking to people who are going to talk to people and talking those people who will have talk to people and they will talk to people and they go meet. That's what community organization is about, with the intelligence such as Fred Ross exhibited, Cesar Chavez. Of having them have a process and a method and definable process and method they would go to house meetings and gather whoever they could gather and talk and show the visions of possibilities. If we do this we'll get more there, if we do this, if we do this together we'll get policemen and we'll get schools that's the way the American society, probably any society, but if you're going to get a school, you have to ferment you have to work to get a school if your going to get more nurses more teachers more jobs you have to work, you have to work, it doesn't come from heaven. It comes from, from grass roots application, of the power that's potentially ours and in order to make it ours we have to organize it. And so we go from house to house to house to house to house to house to house organizing and how you organize, you talk to people and you let, you have people talk to each other in the house meeting and then you would blossom into a chapter with Community Service Organization and then they would learn how to get the committees

and the executive committee and what-not together, that's organizing, that's organizing. What they do, they talk, they talk, what they are going to do, they protest or they apply anyhow that is what community Organization.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Did you all do voter registration?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Everything, yes indeed we did voter Registration.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Did California ever have a poll tax?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: So it was relatively easy to register to Vote?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Oh yes, your problem with the registration of voters, is at that time, remember this is a long time ago, was the reluctance of many Mexican not to register because they were afraid of the migra. And you know la migra did some horrible things you know, Some people who were legitimately in this country got worked over, and so there was that (telephone rings),

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Excuse me that's my phone that's too bad should've turned it off. Alright we're back sorry for the interruption, I was asking about voter registration, you were talking about the migra, were elections in California especially Oakland and everywhere at large, at that time?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: It depends on what you mean?

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: No single member districts?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No, we had at large and then we changed it to districts.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: But that's later in 60's?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Alright, well am I correct in assuming that the meetings you went to where the Governor Brown in Sacramento exposed you now to your counterparts or similar types across the state?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yeah, but we weren't on the same page.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Explain that.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Well I was, I was come to think of it, I think I was the minority voice.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Even out of LA there was no blacks or browns or people with white faces talking about black and brown problems?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I'm not, conscious of any. I don't remember any who advocated strongly the minority. I advocated strongly attention to the inclusion of minorities, so that I became finally an irritant and they invited me to do a minority report.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: What were you an irritant about? I mean what were you...

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Because they were talking like most white liberals they were talking way up here and the problem was way down there simple representation. I was advocating for representation and I was saying you aren't doing anything to bring blacks and Hispanics into the flow of activity that culminates in policy. And the guy who was chairman of the commission was a long time democratic party activist, who was like all liberals convinced of his awareness of all the important issues and he wasn't aware of all the important issues and the big issue was representation you gotta get more blacks into positions where they can even talk about policy.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Did Brown have a black face in his administration?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I'm not aware of any, ah let me see...yes, Cecil Poole.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: O O L E, what was he and what did he do?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: He became a judge, he became a judge but he was he was a some kind of confidant to the governor. And he became a judge. His role changed a little bit, but before he became a judge. He was very close to the governor and of course, I'm talking like a northern Californian, which means I'm ignorant about what is going on in southern California.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Did you ever meet Earl Warren?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Earl?

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Earl Warren former governor before Brown?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Oh no, no.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: The one went on to become a Supreme Court justice then Chief Justice?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No, no I know who Earl Warren is, I didn't understand what, whom you meant.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Alright, What was the Ford Foundation doing in being interested in what Brown was doing with this metropolitan area?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: The Ford Foundation had made a determination to develop what is called the great areas project?

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: The great areas or great cities?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Both, they were...

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Oh , Okay.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: They were used interchangeably almost.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Okay.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: And they were trying to find out how to spend the money. They bring to bear upon the society really awareness of how severe and grave were the problems being faced by particularly core cities, where the core had become largely minority.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: You mean the same thing as the current phrase, inner city, by core?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yeah.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: You know if Alinsky had anything to do with this or Brown is the one that brought the forefront issue, cause Alinsky got money from Ford did he not?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: He may have, I don't know, but Alinsky got most of his money from the Industrial Areas Foundation.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Well that's his non-profit.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Oh I see, and they might have gotten the money from Ford, they may have I don't know.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Okay, so who do you meet at Ford and what happens there?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I met the members of the great cities community, which Ford organized and I was part of it. And we traveled to Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Chicago, Washington D.C. We traveled asking the communities; how do you see the problem? How do you see the issue? And so we would go into town and we'd meet with all the font tees, the educational superintendent, the police chief, we would meet that kind of person and their counterparts in all agencies and the director of welfare and elected officials or two. We would hold meetings all day meetings and we would meet to meet with the communities and then we would go back home and then we would travel for the next meeting. So we went to Boston, went back home, to Cleveland, went back home, but we

would meet the same process that Fred Ross, what we do we're talking we're asking questions.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Are you still with the city of Oakland?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes, yes during that period I was I was working fulltime for the city of Oakland.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: And they give you time release time to go do

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes, yes yes

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Now then did you meet other black faces in all these other cities?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes, occasionally, but mostly all white.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Who were some of the notables, some names that stick out in your mind that you met or projects that you saw were intriguing and exciting?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I don't have great recollection of ah, we were discussing...

Tape goes off for 15 second

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: We were asking about your travels meeting black counterparts in other cities...

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Are you ready?

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Yes,

Mr. Evelio Grillo: You know it wasn't, you seem to have a, an idea of how, what will happen if you going into a community and gather to get to the leaders. Well there was no way for the leaders of say black, non governmental agencies or even governmental agencies to come into that meeting, because they weren't in that meeting cause it weren't designed to be in that the meeting because the meeting was designed to be the people in charge of programs and particularly of public programs. Like the public education. the health program, the welfare program, the employment program and all those people were white you see, so there was no way for blacks to get into that discussion because they weren't part of that discussion even in the community itself, would ... So we'd meet with all of these potentates, in each city and I became the questioner of how they worked with each other. How I would ask the question; what is the nature and quality of the relationship between the schools and the police and the schools and the probation department, the schools, and they would come up with little comment. Oh, I oh, we the

schools and the police we are we working very close together. I had lunch with chief so-and-so, superintendent so-and-so, let's see three months ago, and we... everything is hunky dory. I would ask that question over and over in each city you know how you... the welfare department...how you are relating to the health department, how you related, you know, and they would all give this script...oh we had lunch together (chuckle)...slowly the conscientiousness of what I was talking about began to affect. So we had the final meeting after we had visited about ten cities of the Bridge Cities Committee, which is what we were called, and he said well we've gone on visited all of these cities. Now what is it that we found out that informs us? The one person said we found out that it's very desperate. That the police department be helped to become more sensitive ...(sound), it's very important that we promote reading, that we promote great... we got to write about the problem. And on and on and... I didn't say anything and after going around and around, round robin the whole community he said, quote "the most interesting noises I have heard have come from a community we didn't even visit, they've come from Oakland, California and Evelio I want you to know that we would fund any that proposal you wrote. cause I had been talking about the fundamental problem that was affecting seriously all of the damn agencies, they weren't talking (pounding) to each other (pounding) and they weren't planning together they were acting as potentates, so he told them, "so the first grant to a city that came out of the deliberations of a great cities committee went to the community of Oakland".

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Who wrote that proposal?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I had a consultant named, who was professor at the University of California.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Berkley?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes, Dr. Davis Macintyre and I went to him and asked him to help me write this proposal and we paid him. He wrote it, but I inserted most of the form and the content of it', he understood the whole damn thing he was a very knowledgeable man So he didn't have any problem understanding what I was talking about, and he had great facility and putting it into a proposal form.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: So what were you asking for, what were you writing, telling him to write about what did you get the money for? To do what?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: To write a proposal to the Ford Foundation.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: To do what?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: For a program of community development.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Meaning?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: That emphasized, first of all cooperation and collaboration. That was the signature grant that affected the whole country cause it became the big news of the first grant in the great cities series of grants.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Sure and they are all modeled after the first one, because that's how you get the money.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yeah, so...

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: And this is your model that you started working with all the agencies.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Absolutely, and today you cannot submit a program to the Federal government from an agency without spelling out in the proposal how you plan to cooperate and corroborate with the other agencies.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: So did you become an employee of this grant.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes, yes I became the coordinator.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: That changed the relationship between you and the city manager cause now you are Mr. Two thousand dollars, or how much money did you get?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Two million.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Two Million, Mr. Two Million dollars.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Two Million a year.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: That's a lot of money.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: That's a lot of money.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: And you are overseeing it all?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No...the grant was a collaborative, the application was collaborative, collaboratively, done so the school had their statement of what they were going to do and the poli...and the health had it's statement of it was what going to do and the recreation department had it's statement of what it was going to do, all by way serving newcomers to the city of and with the promise that they would do what they were going to do collaborate with each other.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Did you get a raise in salary?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Oh man that's why I left it, no I didn't get a raise, I didn't get a salary commensurate with what I was doing by any means.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: So what was your salary then at the city manager?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: My salary may have been \$12,000 but what they offered me for the coordinating the project was \$14,000.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: And you have a family of four plus the wife by then?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Did you have a car?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yeah, that...

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: What was the first car you bought?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I didn't buy it, it was given to me.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Who gave it to you and what was it?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Father John Duggan.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Duggan, D U G G A N.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: ahem, ...

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Catholic?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yeah, he was kind, he, see remember that I been working on working with ancillaries so I worked with the ancillaries of the community center and one of the ancillaries was the priest who had a program in his church which was in our neighborhood and so to make long story short he had a boxing club and you know, and I would promote the idea that they having a boxing show... was our job to help that boxing show succeed. So all the agencies would help in the program of any one agency., so one day he drove his jeep to my center, knocked on my door asked me to come down, I don't have a lot of time, here, you need that jeep more than I do, so it is yours (Mr. Grillo sounds upset, emotional)

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: So it was a jeep?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: A Jeep.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Well then you eventually bought one to cart your family around, what car did you buy?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I bought a ford station wagon.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: When was that do you remember?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: A long time afterward because I used the jeep a long time.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Okay, so you. What happened, you got paid 14,000 something happened here to disillusion you, get you upset get you angry.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Well no.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Frustrated, something, but you quit.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yeah, (upset).

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: or moved on or whatever word you want to use...

Mr. Evelio Grillo: (upset) Yeah, they weren't paying me enough money God damn it and I needed money and I went out for money.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Who's they?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: The city manager, the city of Oakland wasn't paying me enough money to coordinate the project.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: They could not see or you could not persuade, that you were worth two million bucks?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No, no have you ever worked in public?

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Yes.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: You are really a third class citizen, you know. You almost have to ask permission. You know I didn't see the city manager, an assistant city manager supervised me and told me \$14,000 is what you get for the coordination of a two million dollar program, so it was impossible for me to make it off \$14,000 and senator Allen Cranston, because I was active all this time in the Byron room for campaign structure...

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Whose campaign?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Byron, William Byron Rumford, the first black to be elected to any office in northern Californian. I was very active in his political organization.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Now when did that begin and why did you take that route?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Well I took that route because I am a political animal

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: You weren't always, when this is...electoral this is not just political animal, this is electoral now getting votes, getting elected when did you start this?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I came to California in '49, I had the same assignment any immigrant has getting myself together getting money. So for 4 years I spent getting myself together working at the community center, going to school. When I got out of school and started working as a community relations consultant I showed up at the meeting of the east bay democratic club and began to work with them and became finally the assistant to the field representative, Byron Rumford.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Was that a black entity or white led, the east side democrat?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Oh that was black, black as it could be man and we were blacks on the move. We had on my committee cause, I am the organizer type so I was always getting my committee, I had the first supreme court justice, the first black supreme court justice the second black supreme court justice the first superior court justice who eventually became the mayor the president of a junior, a community college. I had... that was the expression of black political activity and it was given form by a very great political leader named Digi Gibson. I became Digi Gibson's lieutenant and Digi Gibson served Byron Rumford they had it well worked out. Byron took care of the all that's involved in being an assemblyman and a policy man Digi Gibson was involved in the organization and what Digi Gibson said went, now he and Byron were consultants and so then, , oh I learned so much from that man (exclamation...wooo), and so in 1953 when I got my masters, that very year I showed up, I showed up and began to work with Digi Gibson.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Doing what?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Organizing, Organizing and I say over and over, what do you do when you organize you talk and get people together, and you encourage people to come to the meeting and you hold the meeting and you encourage them to express themselves in the meeting. You know there a lot of... it's the understanding that determines the effectiveness but what you do with the understanding is important so it is perfectly possible to actually draw contribution out of a reluctant member of the group by just looking at them with a look of expectancy on your face. Just looking at them, and eventually that attention will encourage him to express things that he never dreamed of expressing that's what organizing is all about. The organizer who understands it, is organizing to empower not to get the power to do, but to empower others to do and it is

such a tremendous...tremendous ...well it's a tremendous satisfaction to know that you can you can make a group sing you know?

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: This is quite interesting because this is another bridge, here you are working at building a black power base, partisan, democrat, yet you work in the non profit, non partisan governmental prohibitive partisan activity arena.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Well I tell you, its not as prohibitive, no sir, you can be an employee of the city of Oakland and run to be mayor.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Well yes because the mayor of Oakland is non-partisan but the east side what ever the name of the group was, that's democrats, black democrats.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: There was no there was no inhibition on political participation.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Okay, well I thought maybe the rules that apply today had origin then. The whole move to make cities non partisan and so on was to break political groups and parties.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yeah but,

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Bosses and clubs...

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No sir.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Okay, all right, well what were you all trying to do as black democrats?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Empower blacks,

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: To do what?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: To get positions, empower blacks to be judges, empower blacks to advocate for what the needs that they believed were unmet in the community. You know whatever it is that you want done by government, you have to give it form and substance. That is what we did. We, Byron Rumford was the key to this, but we struggled our butts off to get somebody appointed to the state board of cosmetology that was a BIG appointment. We struggled to get people appointed, judges, we ah struggled to get peoples programs supported I'm thinking of people now, you know, who were doing things, that's what we did. We were involved in the organization of the power to achieve goals. The goals were appointments, programs, the relief of injustices, the relief of discrimination; bringing war, you know? When the earthquake of 1989 destroyed the freeway that had cut off one section of the black community from a cut off one section of

the black community into two sections of the black community. They rebuilt the freeway. Political power made it possible for that community to insist that the freeway skirt the entire.. and the freeway was not able to split the community again, that's a big achievement.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: How many votes did you all control?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: We controlled enough votes to control the assembly seat.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: About... give us an idea of how many that is then, 10,000, 20,000, 3,000?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Oh no, we, let's see no, I never answered this question before so this first time.. it's been asked of me and I never have been wise enough to have this statistic, but all I can say it was... it was what it took to control an assembly district.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Okay, one of the stereotypes about black politics is that the preacher controls..

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Who?

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Preachers, the churches, the black church, how did you, your group over come that if it was true. The bigger question is how do you, did you then get out the vote, you were in charge of that, to get out the vote how did you do that?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: We worked with the preachers, we respect the preachers, we brought them in, we went to see them and I ended up as a consultant of the preachers. I ended up meeting with the Baptist ministers union of the city of Oakland in a consultative capacity at their meetings.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Now, Is this a black entity or a mixed?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No, it's a not only a black entity but it's an entity ...of the most powerful group of ministers in the city, their whole, all these big black Baptist churches. They are a powerful group of men but we as members of the east men democratic club made sure of our participation in the NAACP, made sure of our relationships with the ministers and when get out the vote time came, the ministers would form the committee that fed the troops who had to do the vote. Getting out the vote, the ministers would take up on themselves the assignment of providing the food to feed the workers who were going to get out the vote. Who would knock on the door so you know this business about cooperation and collaboration is very important and it's most important when there is no

process or instrument thru which it gets expressed and developed. So when you don't have it, it's just as important as when you do have it and the results are predictable, positive results if you collaborate and negative results if you don't. So you work in developing the relationships that makes cooperation possible and we worked at the business of ensuring that the ministers and we were on the same page because the ministers are powerful political force and they make no apology about it. Their delivering the vote is part of what they have to do, now all of that is affected by the different capacities one minister, then another you know. The different values of one minister or other and one minister will have a very, very clear notion that his job is to empower his community to be effective in votes and be effective in the electoral process. The other will be interested primarily in promoting his own power base, so it is not as sentient, is the word, is not as smooth and without bumps as it sounds as I talk about it. It is hard work, it's work that really depends upon the attitude of power development of the person you're working with, not power development for you. So we worked at that, one day they had it at the east bay democratic club and the next day they had it at NAACP.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Well that brings to mind the questions, which pre-dates NAACP or east bay democratic club?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Oh, the NAACP predated it, but the NAACP wasn't as vibrant as ...

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Well they don't do electoral policy they are non partisan ...says so in their charter.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Oh NAACP...yeah I know.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: So no one organization fills all the needs so you had to create another group the east bay democratic club.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Well, the emphasis and assignments are different, the east bay democratic is a frank political club we integrate with the county central democratic committee with the state's democratic central committee. We do all the business of party politics to be present and accounted for when the time comes to effect policy. The NAACP is concerned with issues and with things with which they can function that at least will show the face of nonpartisanship. So if the emphasis are different and their motivations are different and the investment of the individual is different because there is a lot at stake in the democratic. You know, very, very big and important results come out

of that and NAACP, very big and important results come out in the terms of setting of values and the setting of policy about issues not about people.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Were you simply a member or did you rise to leadership position in the NAACP.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I was VP and membership chairman.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Again, you are a very busy guy what's happening in the home front? How is the wife taking all of this and the kids?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Well, she... we had lots of conflict.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Over?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: All kinds of things, but we also had lots of love. And somehow I'd find the time to, for example, while all of this was going on my son got involved in judo.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Which son?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: My youngest son.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Antonio?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Antonio, and he was so excited. All of a sudden his teacher announced that he wouldn't be coming back and my son came home, depressed and I got...

END OF TAPE 2

START TAPE 3

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I was on the you see I 'm thinking of a particular guy who became, I was thinking I forget the names of the woman who became appointed to the division of families and children. She had power, she had a whole army, territory of people and I'm thinking of someone who's appointed to the division of public programs or something like that, he had power, he had lots of ... I didn't have power as expressed in the number of people who reported to me, nobody reported to me.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Why don't I ask you just one question and then we break and you can go have lunch or maybe take a nap something and then we'll resume mid afternoon. I asked you earlier, this ended... you were there 2.5 years, 3 years? I assume you and Eleanor come back to California?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: How do you come back? It's not the same place... you... there's already other people. Life has already gone on for them and there's other players and other things?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I didn't have much problem, and I... you asked me that question before, I am a substantial leader of the Oakland Community.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Well you got your probate thing back, so that's one evidence of that...

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No, the first thing that happened is that before I went to California the controller that succeeded Cranston tried to fire me. Because you know it wasn't, like I do everything. I did that job right, the job hadn't to do with as much as how accurate my figures... about value...where the job had to do was how available and accessible, and responsible I was to the lawyers who were fighting with, and so when, I either got fired or he was about to fire me... the Alameda county lawyers had got me up into, ... "oh now they are not going to do this to us, he's the best thing we have ever had" and the protest went up to Sacramento. Before I knew it one day the assemblyman knocked on my door and came in to my office and told me "do you want to be a probate referee?" "yeah I do" then you're going to be a probate referee. Now that story I've never told, but you are a very good interviewer, you dug it out of me. I didn't pay much attention to the

probate referee in my epilogue because it... people don't understand that and they figure there's something wrong with it, because you get fees from the estates, so I just went on.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Eleanor did come back with you to California?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Oh yes.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: and her daughter... what's her daughters name?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Janice

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: That's her daughter?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes, that's...

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Janice, what?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Ingram...

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Is Eleanor black?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: ...oh yes...oooooh,... whoooooa is she black, she's black, she's very black, but she's also black in heart, you know she's written... she writes beautifully and she's served as a consultant to the Marin County Development which had some kind of tremendous amount of money from... left them by some urbanite and as they tried to figure out what programs to support, Eleanor had a lot to do with that.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: well...

Mr. Evelio Grillo: she's black all the way, she wrote the Family; The BLACK FAMILY,

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: the book?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yeah

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Okay, You wanna stop you said you felt weak?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes, I... I need a break .

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Well I do too. Why don't we reconvene at three, have time to eat.

Continuation Tape 2:

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: You've come back from WA, you got a new wife; you are offered your old probate referee job back...

Mr. Evelio Grillo: the sequence isn't quite like that...

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: All right.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I came back and became a consultant to the Mayor, developing for him a program of integration of agencies. I would hold the meetings and he would come in

say goodbye, hello, you know any elected official would do. But we eventually had 23 agencies meeting in a parliament of agencies and it was after that I was doing that there was no conflict between holding the probate referee job and being consultant to the mayor. I did them both and eventually Mayor Wilson was defeated by Mayor Harris.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: How do you spell that?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Harris, H A R R I S

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Huh, No, May Elihue Harris

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: ELI

Mr. Evelio Grillo: E L I H E U (saying name louder & more pronounced)

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Is female?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No he was a male, Elihue was his name.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: How do you spell it

Mr. Evelio Grillo: ELIHU and despite the fact in the contest between Mayor Wilson as the incumbent and Mayor Harris as the challenger, I supported Mayor Wilson. I went frankly to Mayor Harris, "I'm for you except that Lionel is running and if I separated from ...I divided my loyalty with respect to Lionel it would be scandalous you know. Because we were so identified with each other, I was his confidant you know he would come and talk over... he wouldn't rely upon me "what shall I do" but he would talk whenever he got into a naughty situation he would want to talk to me... talk it out you see. So I couldn't, didn't feel I could violate that kind of confidence and reluctantly I stayed in the Wilson Camp. I thought he had done his job he had done three terms as mayor and he was trying to do a fourth because he didn't,... he wasn't as sure about Elihue.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Is that another African American.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Okay.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: but he won, Elihue won and there are many views of his success, he certainly ...he certainly was more unpredictable than Lionel, but nonetheless I was on very good terms with Elihue. You know Elihue was one of my lieutenants when I ran a "get out the vote" Campaign for Lionel. He actually manned one of the districts, well he was making his political career. He knew what logging duty time with the party, so he

did that gladly and there were no hard, apparently no hard feelings between Elihue and me based upon my support of Lionel Wilson and the Campaign. He eventually asked me if I wanted to be a referee again, and I said yes, "well okay I'll get you the appointment" and he got me reappointed as a referee upon my return from WA.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Oh I thought it was an assemblyman that asked you?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: ...that's right

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Or both.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: He was an assemblyman.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Ah.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: ...who became a mayor

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: All right, same person different titles...

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: All right

Mr. Evelio Grillo: ...and it was in the position of assemblymen that he was able to procure for me the appointment as a referee. Subsequently he ran for mayor and won and was the mayor. He employed me to keep the ministers together; you know to keep the ministers together and behind him. So I, that was my job and I would go on my rounds of visiting ministers and paying them the respects of the mayor and getting them together in a group discussing on what should they do, what they wanted political guidance and I... you know it's not a matter of lecturing, it's a matter of listening and picking up on the cues that the group members give you that you can help them form or make decisions with respect to the course of action they should take and that's what I do. I did that for him, I did the agencies which was a elaborate program called the Mayors Council on Drugs and Crime and I had for Mayor Wilson ...I did the mayors council on drugs and crime and I had 23 agencies as I already explained. You know that it's almost magical if you convene successfully a group because they trust you as convener you know and then you keep your mouth shut (chuckle) miracles happen.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: That's the secret to magic.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yeah you promote, you promote participation you know, well we had to introduce each other, so then I am doing this and I am doing that, I am doing this and I am doing, I'm doing this,.. I'm doing... All of them had their round robin on look how

big (chuckle) getting...about to get course, (chuckle) look how big, look... It is vitally important the work that they're doing you know, they're fooling with lives everyday all of them, all of them. All of them have different perspectives toward the same child, the policeman sees an innocent lawbreaker, the probation officer sees him as someone who...that the teacher sees him as someone needs an education and the recreation people see him as someone who can be help through the informal education process involved in play. You know all of them; all of them see the same person from a different perspective. And they go... when they rush in and try to do whatever their magic is without reference to others. They split the child apart and destroy the family. And that was my conviction, that was my not my conviction my knowledge it's true. I learned that I went to school to be education to understand that the individuals in a group that are forced...formally related to each other though they may not act like it, do not get to (clapping) to bring some kind of order to their service. It is a destruction force in the community, so the agencies all working in the same neighborhood at cross purposes and one in coming at ten clock in the morning another coming two in the afternoon and they don't know what the other one is doing. So that was one of the most satisfying things parliament of agencies that I had (chuckle). How I understood that if I could get them to talk and explain themselves to their peers with whom they were working their peers would get understanding of what they were doing oooh .. So then they would ...and that's as I told you before when the coffee break came, I turned them loose,

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: So you were salaried during this time?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yeah, I was paid. I wasn't salaried I wasn't an employee of the city.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Oh you were a consultant?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I was a consultant.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: You also were a consultant to the subsidiary that trained workers and things for the Spanish-speaking unity council?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: That was an earlier.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Oh.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: ...that was an earlier...

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Oh.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Earlier time.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: That did not continue into the future?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No, Henry Messner actually died and he was succeeded by a someone who couldn't do the job and made a mess of things... Then there was ...succeeded by someone who was a very ...active but he was organizing for himself and so eventually when Aravelo returned from WA she took over.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Again.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: The directorship of the Spanish speaking unity council again and you just (whistle noise) way up and got a 100 million dollar program called... which is actually being implemented, you know which is the how to make a rapid transit stop. The locals and the focus of development of housing and development of business .

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Rapid Transit?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: The Bart System of Rapid transit

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: BART, Bay Area Rapid Transit.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Has a station in the Fruitvale which is where the Spanish speaking ..

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Fluteville?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Fruitvale.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Fruitvale.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Fruitvale and Aravelo has known how to, the point where it is the most vibrant part of the city.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Is she still alive?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: WHOOO, alive and functioning she is a... she is a queen, she is.. has all tiers of people working for her.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: She's still the director?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Oh yes, but as a director she does exactly what she should do. The directors ...is the like the president of the corporation and the president of a corporation is the rain maker who brings in the resources and Arevalo's reputation is so good that she doesn't have problem shaking down the foundations. Oh no, she gets... she's the rainmaker and so therefore she has to have an operations person who runs the programs and to run the PROGRAMS because the number of programs they have is fantastic.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: All right so what happened to you and your life under the Harris administration?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I was, he had helped me become a probate referee again while he was an assemblyman.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Right.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: And even though he had helped me become a probate referee again. I did not visibly support him for mayor.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Right.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Because, that would have been scandalous.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: You already explained that.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Hum?

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: So what did you do under his administration?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Under

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: If anything?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Under Harris' I told you ...I was assigned, my function was to keep the ministers.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: That's all that you did then for a number of years?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Man that's a lot to do. No , NO..

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: No, I don't mean to demean this, I am trying to move forward So what's ...what's next...What did you do next?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Well you know this covers a lot of years (chuckle). I finally left the probate referee in 95.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Why did you leave it?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Well um, it was my time..was up you know, I was pretty old in 95.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Okay.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I was at 95..95 was just

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: seven years ago?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: seven years ago, so I was ...that was uh

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: you were 70 something?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: 78.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: 78.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: so I left it.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Well I guess we also have left Eleanor a long time ago. When did that divorce occur or what happened there?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Oh yes, I divorced Eleanor and married another woman.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: A third time.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes,

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Who, when did you divorce Eleanor?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I divorced Eleanor about 80, 82 or 83.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: And this is how it was...you?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I didn't divorce her she divorced me.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Ah, I was just going to clarify, why did she divorce you?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Well because she was smart enough to do the divorce without retaining a lawyer. cause there is a way you know, you can petition the court to dissolve the marriage. We don't want any ...there's no question of alimony or division of community property you know. We are satisfied, we'll divide the community property and we won't ask you petition the court and you get a divorce so she knew how to do that ...she was a brilliant woman.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: So where is she now?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: She's in Oakland.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Oh never left the area, just left you.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: She lives...she works 4 blocks from where I live her...she has an office... her consulting practice four blocks from where I live and she lives 10 or 12 blocks away.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Okay.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: And we're very nice to each other. I respect her, I respect her tremendously.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: So, when was it that you divorced?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I am trying to figure 76 plus 8 would be

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: 84?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: 84.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: no 82.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: 76 plus 8 ...

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: oh plus 8, 84, I'm sorry your' right 84.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No, 76 plus 6 let's say this is roughly,

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: so 82 okay.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: 82 and time passed, 89 came along and I courted and married another African American black.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Who is this new love?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Lois Watson was her name and we were together five years. We had a beautiful home and about 5 years... at I don't want... some things are privilege... so I don't want to talk about what it is that she did... but I had... I got my fill of her very quickly.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Okay.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: And, again she divorced me and she took all my money and that was all right with me. And I always felt that way because as a general rule, woman have a much harder time economically than men and I knew I could work I will always being doing something, especially in Oakland, and so I... be my guest. And she was my guest she took me for everything...(big laugh) that's all right.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: But that literally is not true, I mean you still have sources of income. She didn't take your pension or your retirement did she?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: She took the house and was a biggee.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: That's substantial.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: That's substantial, and oh yeah I got cleaned out in the settlement, so but it didn't bother me, it didn't bother me at all.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: How did you hook up with Bob Cruz, who recently passed, the one that started this National Hispanic University?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Bob Cruz, Bob Cruz... National Hispanic University began in Oakland and had a substantial development in Oakland. Bob Cruz knew how to function enough to build a university and he brought me in as his consultant to help him gain accreditation for his college.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: How did you help him in that regard?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Oh I developed the connections between the state, and it was a long process but he got it. He eventually got accreditation as a university that was the

objective of having me come. I helped. I met with board every time the board met. I was like the resource person for the board and I could I helped them with the deliberations leading to the decisions that they made. You know, I know how to function as a facilitator of interaction among members of a group and in the development of and the promotion of the decision making process. So I do that as a second nature you know, I don't insert my agenda, I help them develop their agenda, I may point out "it might be good in this direction or it might be go that direction" with your agenda, not my agenda.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: But that is your agenda...to get them to develop an agenda which is part of your greater agenda?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Well I suppose so, I suppose so but it works if you are convinced that you don't know necessarily ...more than anybody and that means that everybody's contribution may have the ...anybody's contribution may have the germ of what is the way, and you help them identify the germ of the way that some member have come up with. You don't make it... your careful not to insert your agenda, you know you can work with six groups and you'll be up a tree if you tried to have your agenda and that's possible and people do it but they don't get the kind of response from the group. They are in effect manipulators and political operatives who get people to do things, well it all depends on what people do. And if a group is doing its agenda, it's legitimate, if the group is doing the facilitators it's not legitimate.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Was this a paid consultant-ship?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Which,

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: The National Hispanic University

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Oh yes, oh yes.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: So you were hiring out to people to use your skills.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: That's right my skills and my contacts.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Who else did you work with?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Not too many more, those were those were um I could've extended myself through a staff that's not what it is, I was ...Eleanor and I formed a company

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: What was that called?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: The Resource Center for Community Institutions, and we hired ourselves out as consultant to agencies trying to achieve program.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: We are recording and we're close to the end of the tape, what is leadership?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: What is leadership? Leadership is the capacity and motivation to help people fulfill their own goals.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: What are the underpinnings of tensions between blacks and browns?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: oh very natural, very natural we got different cultures. We are different cultures, one is a Spanish speaking culture, the other is an English speaking culture. We are in competition from the same crumbs that we get from economic and social structure of(tape is blank ...ran out of tape?)

1/30/2003..

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: we got interrupted on the latter part of your response to the questions of about underpinnings of tensions between blacks and browns and you elaborated on what little we got about how natural that was in how people fight over crumbs and lack of resources when you are not in the position of power and I didn't capture all that... do you wane ...

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes, I said...

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: continue with that...

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes, I said that the tension between African American and Mexican American is no different between the tension between Jews, Irish, and Irish and Germans different cultures make for different patterns of living, and make for different cuisine and makes for different rites of marriage, rites of courtship it makes for many, many differences that makes us essentially different from each other. And if we are going to get along we have to find ways of resolving the tensions, and when that's done. And much of the tension is resolved. Some of the best friends that African American... friends have are Mexican American... some of the best friends that Mexican American have made by African American and it was as an African American that I helped the Mexicans in California and I helped them the way you should help them by developing leadership.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: In the earlier response you made a very important point you said that the minute you see it as natural, the tension dissolves. It helps to dissolve because you act as though it is natural and you will respond to a front for example of a

Mexican against an African as a big deal. You say something that disarms, you don't judge it, that's the conflict resolving method, that's the conflict resolving thing you can... do not assume that everybody is doing what they know best how to do and if you accept them at doing the best they have to do then you approach them in a very disarming manner and when they disarm they are not fighting anymore.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: Next, I asked you which was the most effective African American organization and you said that there were several and you particularly then singled out the Black Negro United Fund you said although that's simply the Negro United Fund., no?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No, No, no, no, no, no that is a different thing the United Negro College Fund.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: All right.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: The Black United Fund is another.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: I understand okay

Mr. Evelio Grillo: What I was naming, the organizations that I thought were effective and they do different things and therefore they are great in their own way. Each one of them, so the NAACP, make no mistake about it NAACP is an important damn organization, a very important... it sets the tone just by being, just by being and so it does fantastic work. The Urban League does fantastic work the Political Action groups do fantastic work um.. and then there are an infinite number of community-based organizations that do very, very good work.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: But I asked you to pick one,

Mr. Evelio Grillo: You asked me to pick the best one?

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: The most effective one,

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I can't because they're effective, they are equally effective with respect to different agenda, different programs.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: All right well in the prior answer you were very eloquent about the importance of the Black College.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: oh yes....

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez: and you said "I went to a black college, every Spanish speaking black I know went to a Black College. Black Colleges made them, hope made

them proud. Black Colleges made a great contribution. There is a difference between a black educated in a black colleges and one in those monstrous over 45000 students ones. The psychology in a Black college and the other is palpable” and then you went on do you want to continue with that...thought?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Um, well I'm always...get a chance, take a chance to continue, to talk about the Black Colleges. I feel very deeply about the black colleges they educated my soul. You know, they were horrible, they were desperate running them, and they were difficult people but their objective was to educate black college age students. And just having the objective was education in itself, and so, besides the fact that some of them are great, great,... Fisk is a great institution, Morehouse is a great institution, very great, Xavier is a... Xavier sends more students to medical school than all the rest of the colleges put together.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez All the rest of the black colleges or colleges' period?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I believe, is with respect to all colleges.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez Earlier you also said in response to that questions that I took notes as fast as I could until I gave up, and we had to go buy another tape I should say we took a cab to buy another tape, (laugh) You said a lot of Spanish speaking people, African, there wasn't a single college for Spanish speaking Africans there were a few colleges for "I can't even read my own writing now" for ...

Mr. Evelio Grillo: They may for Spanish speaking people, to go to college. African Americans with the help of white, always dependent on white benefactors, dependent on black colleges for their soul, those who understood were wrapped up with the Black institution. When I was in college we had many athletes from Panama they were black, all the way black. They were the children of African slaves that came to be educated at Xavier they ran on the track team Spanish speaking Africans...want to add anything to that question

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez I will try to add something because it is very, very important the interplay between Spanish speaking African and Mexican American, is very tenuous and when they're obviously African Americans, when they are African American in the way they look and the way their hair is, they find more comfort among African American in this countries than they do among the Spanish speaking with whom they have

commonality. For example if they are Peruvian they have commonality with the Peruvian whites, if they... some chance if they come in contact with... if they are clearly African. I am not talking about mulattos like me; I'm talking about African Spanish speaking people. Really African, they will find themselves more accepted by African American than they do by their own so-called compatriots. So I am glad to spend some time on this because it is an area that is very blurred and it is very, very difficult condition for Spanish speaking blacks obviously, African. By that I mean they are, no mistaking they are black, they are black and they are marginal among the Spanish speaking groups with which they identify. And their marginal around language with the African Americans but they find as much or more comfort among the African American because of the way they look poses absolutely no conflict or problem. Whereas the way they look poses some kind of conflict or problem within the Spanish-speaking group because there's color graded. The dark Spanish speaking people aren't your elected officials, they aren't the people who are precipitated into leadership, the people who are precipitated into leadership are at least light and most of them are white and most of them are the children of Spaniards. So the myth about how Cubans run Florida, it's a myth it's the children of Spaniards who run Florida and that Spanish... get away with murder cause they get no criticism, nobody mentions those blankety-blank Spaniards who running our state.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez Why don't the black Cubans do that?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Because people are people.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez What does that mean?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: That means that within the Cuban, so call Cuban there are grades of acceptability and the lighter you are the more acceptable you ...because the lighter you... the closer you are to being Spanish and it's the Spanish who have the money and the power and they are they call themselves Cubans, Columbians or they are Spanish, the whiter they are the more Spanish they are. So the myth that we are all Cubans all us Cuban's a myth, it's a myth. There is for one thing, slavery was ended in I think in Cuban way after slavery was ended in the United States. Yeah the really black Cubans don't live in the really good neighborhoods.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez You are talking about the island now?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Hum?

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez You're talking about the island now.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Well there may have been some changes... some, the Castro ...in the opportunity structure, but culturally there's great prejudice against black Spanish speaking so called Cubans.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez Who is the most effective African American leader today?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: In the United States?

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez Or in California, or Oakland how about all three?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I have a great deal of respect for Quami Enfuma, I think he is a brilliant man with an agenda based on the possible. So I consider him a very great leader a very great leader then of course I consider Rangel, Rangel by the way is Spanish speaking, but he doesn't advertise that he's Spanish speaking because his identity is for him as an African American. I think he is a great man a very, very great man operating in the sphere with which we can have a great deal of influence. Notice that Quami Enfuma left congress to be a part of an African based organization. So there's an interplay... there's an interplay between the political and non political leadership among African American and they have the numbers in congress to be a substantial force so you asked me about who is the best leader?

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez Most effective?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Most effective? Quami Enfuma, Rangel, Barbara Lee you know by achieving congressional status, they prove that they had led people you know. so they're very, very great and effective leaders not the most effective I suppose that Martin King's you could've said that man... he's the man who's really the voice of black aspirations. Well I don't think we have anybody who is as known, to the whole world as Martin Luther King was. So they have the niches, niches NAACP niche and the political niche as congressman and the economic niche as entrepreneurs you have very powerful blacks well located in the corporate community as CEOs. So you see, it is difficult to say that in this field in which they are effective...is more important than that field in which somebody else is effective, it is a mosaic.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez What is the most pressing issue facing African Americans today?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Today and forever, economical equality, economic opportunity, now in order for there to become even a possibility, you have to have great social development. They are part and possibly the same thing, both sides of the coin. But as you progress socially for example, integrated acceptance into... Once upon a time I couldn't try on a hat in a white store. That's no longer true and insofar it's no longer true, I have more power cause because rather than having a rejecting attitude towards me as customer, they have to compete for me cause there's lots of dollars in their black communities. So the more the broader the social acceptance and justice, the more likely it is that you will progress economically. We are progressing economically but the great economic progress is not in necessary black institution, the great economic progress is among the general corporate community wherein African Americans are making very, very good... you'd be surprised who is CSO, CEO of some those companies. At the same time there are some who would argue that the gap between those successful economically blacks and the under class is widening, they are leaving them behind. That's really a very, very superficial analysis, the gap between the have and have-nots, is endemic to the human spirit. So you don't see the white millionaires standing on the street counter passing out the dollars to the white people, the gap between the whites haves and have-nots is profound and the chasm the schism is very deep. That's the way human beings function and that's the way you keep chipping that's why you keep chipping at privileged, thru legislation. And if you have a chance and you participate politically and you elect the people who understand and will do something. You can progress economically and socially. When you elect people who are minions of wealth and power; to hell with the people. See? The objective of some administrator is to make the rich and the powerful more richer and more powerful

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez What are your... some of your hobbies?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Dancing.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez That's always been.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yes sir, dancing is very important. Dancing... dancing is food for the soul. You can live in the same apartment building with a family on the 10th floor, fifth floor and pass each other in the elevator every day and never talk to each other. When you get on the dance floor you go out to a strange woman and say may "I have this

dance” and she says okay and off you go, and off you go interacting, talking, finding out who they are, finding out who... and making friends. When I was in the hospital, when I had my operation the cards just came you know, ‘we miss you come back’, ‘do well,’. I meant something to those people, they meant something to me over and above the fact the joy of dancing, the very joy of dancing. It’s you know, that questions arises from our servitude to the puritan ethic wherein which plays of the devil. That’s what the puritans taught. That had no business praying, praying was a waste of time and so that ethic reflects itself in questions like;. What are your hobbies, do your hobbies... were something that you did individually and for personal satisfaction, no. The most valuable play and the most important play and most necessary play, is playing with others and that’s where the values are learned. That’s where the attitudes are formed. That’s where there is an aspect of play that’s relieving of tension that very directly and specifically helps the individual with his emotional. But the aspects of play, that is a socializing influence which is absolutely essential to the most, to the best development of human character and personality. Oh, play. play is a must, and it is not a sin and it’s not a something you are wasting time at when you go out and play whenever you can. No matter how old you are.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez You have a message obviously, several, but you also have a dramatist approach to your eloquence, where did you learn all that?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Well, I told you that you know.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez No you haven’t told us.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I told you separately that I was in a play. Two and three plays every year of my life. All the way through college and all the way through graduate school because I was a member of the American Negro theatre. And I had the most exquisite education a man could’ve wanted. I had great education. My elementary school education was second to none. The nuns came down from Canada with a passion to education black children, and when I arrived at college I was taught by an order of nuns they had a late faculty option. But the founder of this... nun, of this order went to the pope and said that the black people and the Indians really need something and he told her..the pope told her, you found it, you had that vision and she found it. The sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Indians and Colored People that’s the corporate title of this

order of nuns. I can't tell you how personally committed to me as a human being were these nuns. It wasn't a matter of learning. The learning that it was important to learn, it wasn't a matter of learning the skills, it was learning how to be, developing the values of and enjoying the development of the values and being rewarded, being greatly rewarded for being reflective of the values that (these) females were trying to implicate and the problem with me and the Catholic church was with the doctrinaire rigidities. You know...why should, what difference does it make, this hocus pocus dominocus...somebody just elected pope and makes the pronouncement saying that every... all priests should be celibate. That's crazy, that's absolutely plumb raving crazy to try to institute a celibate life. Of course best proof of the pudding is in the eating. Great big news about the Catholic Church now is pedophile priest. Well what the hell are they going to do with this human need and instinct to be intimate with someone that's ordained. You know, ensure the perpetuation of the race, in order... will have intercourse, so that women can get pregnant so that babies can be born. That's the reality of it.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez Well you are bringing up an interesting question? Which is better to have values or to have virtues?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I don't know what virtue is?

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez Well celibacy is promoted as a virtue?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Yeah that's right.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez Ah discipline is promoted as a virtue; well you tell us what is the difference between a value and a virtue.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Well I never dealt with that question, so I'll have to think it out.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez Alright, what countries have you traveled to?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: India

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez Well that's in the other book.

Mr. Evelio Grillo: I haven't traveled to any other country since I have been back and I can't say I've missed it. It would have been very, very helped if I had been able to travel, but I wasn't able to travel. I wasn't able, I had 4 children and a wife, and a job and I went to Hawaii once and that's it.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez You alluded to a surgery, I don't know if that's recent or you've had many surgeries?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez Have you had near death experiences?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: No, never had near death experiences. And my surgery is very recent it took me by completely by surprise

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez So that means you still go dancing now?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Oh yes, I've been dancing..

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez Where do you go dancing in Oakland?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Huh,

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez Where do you go dancing?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Where the dancing you like to do is done.

Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez Where is that?

Mr. Evelio Grillo: Well in Oakland, I go to a place called the Alameda, across from Oakland Eagle Saw and every Friday night there is a gathering of the whole tribe Zydeco and Cajun dances. And and we are a happy.