

Juan Coronado

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SPEAKERS

Juan Coronado, Eleonora Anedda

E Eleonora Anedda 00:04
Today is the 18th of August, 2021. My name is Eleonora Anedda. I am working as an oral historian for the Institute for Diversity and Civic Life. I am in Sardinia, Italy on a Zoom call with Juan. Juan would you like to introduce yourself and tell me where you're joining this call from?

J Juan Coronado 00:25
I am Juan David Coronado. I am in Bristol, Connecticut.

E Eleonora Anedda 00:33
Perfect. Thank you. Just to start, would you like to tell me a little bit about your childhood?

J Juan Coronado 00:41
Sure, yes. I grew up in the 1980s and 90s in deep South Texas, a part of the state that they call the Río Grande Valley. Grew up in a town of Edinburg, Texas. It is close to about seventeen, eighteen miles from the US-Mexico border. Happens to be one of the most impoverished places in the country. It's a heavily Mexican-American region. It's deep, deep south Texas, and that's where I grew up. My first language is Spanish. I didn't learn English until I entered grade school. In that region, Spanish is almost necessary to live your day-

to-day life.

E

Eleonora Anedda 01:57

Do you go back often? Do you know if it is still like that?

J

Juan Coronado 02:01

The Río Grande Valley is one of the fastest growing areas in the country. We used to say back in the day that it took a while for modernity to hit us. Because it's one of the fastest growing areas in the country, I think the world has caught along, and unfortunately it has become a heavily commercialized area. Now every time I go back it's wickedly larger and larger. You see the incoming corporations and whatnot. But yeah, it is still heavily Latino. I said Mexican-American earlier because that was usually the folks that were around, Mexican and Mexican-American. Now we see more folks from Central America. But we also see folks from all over the country. We see folks from all over coming in. It is still heavily Latino. We're still probably, I would say, about ninety, ninety-three percent Latino, still incredibly Hispanic area, but a little different. And yeah, I still go back. I try to go back and anywhere between three and four times a year.

E

Eleonora Anedda 03:34

That's wonderful. What would a typical day for you as a kid be like in Río Grande Valley?

J

Juan Coronado 03:47

In the Río Grande, typically it was, during the school year, you get up, go to school, come back, play around in the neighborhood for a little bit, get your homework done, and get back to it. I was fortunate, both my parents had your year-round jobs. What that meant in our family and in our social-economic status level, was that we didn't have to go looking for summer work like many other families down there. Historically speaking, the Río Grande Valley has been an agricultural area. What people did for a living, they work seasonal crops in the area from about late September, October, through May. Then because of the heat, there weren't any jobs in the area, agricultural jobs in the area, so a lot of people had to migrate. They had to migrate during the summer months, go look for crops north of the valley, because the only place South is Mexico, right? They would migrate, and a lot of my family, my tíos, my tías, they would migrate to West Texas. West Texas was where people found summer work, and others out of state, Colorado, Michigan, Indiana, you name it. But for my family, they would go to West Texas.

J

Juan Coronado 05:34

Like I said, my parents had year round work, so this meant for us that we didn't have to do that. My mother ran a daycare. My father was a custodian, a janitor at the high school. They had year-round work. But when I was a little boy, my father did migrate. He worked cotton. He had worked cotton for a good part of his life, but fortunately, when I was a kid, he found a year round job, and this meant that we didn't have to migrate. They did take us out to the farm one year to work cucumber, and they told us, "Hey, if you don't do good in school, this is what you're going to be doing all summer." I think relatively speaking, I did have a pleasant childhood in the sense that because of their situation, I didn't have to go out working the fields. But there was always something to do around the house and definitely didn't avoid the hard work.

E

Eleonora Anedda 07:01

Do you have a big family? Do you have brothers and sisters?

J

Juan Coronado 07:05

I only have an older sister. She's five years older than me. Like I was telling you earlier, she was you're visiting. She's an educator herself, so she has a summers off.

E

Eleonora Anedda 07:19

You all have holidays in the summer. Did you go to middle school and high school in Río Grande Valley?

J

Juan Coronado 07:40

I did. I attended my K through 12, and my bachelor's degree was all done down there in the Río Grande Valley. Yeah, middle school, high school, I spent all those years down there in Edinburg.

E

Eleonora Anedda 08:07

And what did you study when you went to university?

J

Juan Coronado 08:12

I wanted to be a teacher. Middle School and high school, I attended a magnet school

called Teacher Academy. Teacher Academy specialized in students who wanted to become educators, and I wanted to be an educator. I studied social studies. At that time, they wanted history teachers to have a background in political science and economics because at the high school level in Texas, the last year they teach [two courses], one in government and one in economics. They wanted to produce teachers that could teach government, economics, and history. Social studies, world geography, history. I studied social studies in college.

E

Eleonora Anedda 09:18

What attracted you to the profession of the educator?

J

Juan Coronado 09:30

I think being around teachers. Like I said, the Río Grande Valley is a highly impoverished area, and due to my social-economics as well, I had never been around that many type of professionals. I think I'd been around teachers the most. I had been around good teachers, and that was something that I thought I could do, and something that I admired. I always had a passion for history. Growing up in that part of Texas, seeing the contributions of Mexican-Americans and Latinos, of indigenous folks, of African-American folks, we saw that outside our schools. We saw it in the community, we saw it in the outer realm of society, but we didn't see it in our school system. As soon as you got to school, it was a White man's history. This was something that was very discouraging, because, you saw the importance of Mexican people, Mexican-American people, indigenous people, African-American people, but as soon as you got to school, it was a very, very White man's history, right? As a kid, you start thinking, right, like, "Hey, you mean to tell me that all the contributions of other people do not matter? It's only this White man story?" My community had a lot to do with me becoming interested in history and wanting to gain more knowledge and to pass that on. It really had to do with where I was growing up and all that.

E

Eleonora Anedda 11:58

What you said reminded me of this student feedback that I read, an end of semester reflection in one of Summer Cherland's classes. The student asked himself, "Why is White history a core subject, but minority history an elective? What you said is along those lines. But before moving on to the topic of this interview, I wanted to know a little bit more about your relationship with Texas. For example, do you define yourself as a Texan?"

J

Juan Coronado 12:45

I'm a Tejano. This is interesting. People have this conception of what a Texan is, right? Unfortunately, a lot of this is political right. In my lifetime, there's a lot of negativity connected politically with Texas. Usually people think, "You're Texan, you must be a right-winger, you must love guns, you must have a horse, this or that." Texans are diverse if you think about it. It's such a huge state. South Texas, the region I come from, is very democratic. It's on the border. It's very Mexican, very Mexican-American. I tell people, "If you really want to know Texas, you have to divide it in several regions." You have South Texas, it's very Mexican, Mexican-American. We don't even associate with San Antonio. San Antonio is considered South Texas, but it's 250 miles from the border. San Antonio is one of most beautiful cities in the country, so don't get me wrong. I'm not hating on San Antonio, but they're not South Texas. San Antonio is incredible. Also, it has a very different feel from Austin. Austin is the state's capital, and Austin is incredible. They like to identify as a San Francisco of Texas. But they're very different. It has an incredibly different feel from Houston or from Dallas.

J

Juan Coronado 14:56

Then you go to East Texas. East Texas is somewhat Southern. You had a lot of Southern folks who settled there initially, and they brought their traditions with them. So the barbecue you're gonna get in East Texas is very pork-based. Very different from the brisket that you're going to find in Austin. So culturally Texas is an animal. There's so many different parts of it. And I haven't even gotten to El Paso and those areas. El Paso is on a whole totally different - they're on their own time. They're on Mountain Time as opposed to the rest of the state. So Texas has a different feel. Once you get out of state, you're like, "Yeah, where are you from?" "Yeah, I'm from Texas." I don't know if that makes me a Texan, because I'm from el valle. I'm from the Río Grande Valley. But yeah, I tell people, "Yeah, I am from Texas." I don't know what that means. Like I just finished saying, Texas is so different. And it's changing, right? So the last election, it's turning purple. Yeah, there's so many components to that. I try to explain to people, "Yeah, I am a Tejano."

E

Eleonora Anedda 16:26

Has your relationship with Texas changed since you were little and now?

J

Juan Coronado 16:35

Absolutely. When I was little, those of us who were Spanish speakers were not considered Texans. We weren't considered Americans. My elementary [school] was very segregated

along those lines. If you were Mexican-American, you were an American. You were American. But those who had a rich Mexican Latino culture, we were just regarded as Mexican kids. We're Spanish speaking. We were Mexican kids. I think that's something that Texas has been negotiating for a while. What makes you a Texan? What makes you a Tejano? I don't think Texas has really [reconciled] that treatment of their Mexican culture. The 80s were rough in regards to race relations. You had those people that clearly thought that the only way to become accepted was through assimilation and a level of acculturation that went on to assimilation. I think that's something that Texans have really tried to reconcile over the years. I think you see that evident in the culture in Texas where today, you go to some of these highly concentrated areas, the San Antonios, the Austins, that they're really trying to negotiate some of the some of this heritage, because you know the history of Texas, that it was Mexico at one point, that it was part of New Spain, and it also has a strong indigenous history. So yeah, the times are definitely changing.

E

Eleonora Anedda 19:12

What was it like to be with your peers when you were younger, in school, or just when you were out and about? Because earlier you said that you had to know Spanish to exist in the Río Grande Valley, but then when you got to school, that was suddenly a White space. I'm assuming that's because of the teachers and the school system in general. So what was it like? Can you paint a picture of what it was like to come from a Mexican family when you were living your life in the Río Grande Valley.

J

Juan Coronado 20:12

Sure. It just didn't come from the school system. For Mexican-American people in the 1980s and 90s - you really need to understand the Mexican-American people to really have a good grasp on what was happening here. The Mexican-American generation, and this is the World War Two generation, the Mexican-American generation, Mario T. Garcia identified them as the World War Two folks. These were the men and women who were out there serving in World War Two. Women, too. You had a huge number of Latina women, Mexican-American women working in the defense industry. Some of them were themselves in the service. In defense in the defense industry, on these various plants in the country. That contributed to a larger society.

J

Juan Coronado 21:32

For the men out there fighting the Nazis, fighting Imperial Japan, they came with a whole different mentality. They came with a different mentality that, hey, they had the capacity to serve their country, and they began to demand equality at all levels, right? They began

to demand equality at the home front. They began to demand equality in their jobs in society. They no longer wanted to be at the back of the bus, right? They wanted to send their kids to better schools. They wanted to be able to attend better universities. This is the mindset that this generation had, that they wanted full-blown equity, equality, you name it, right? So this transcended in the culture. And this was their thinking, "Why are we being discriminated? Well, we speak with an accent." So what did some of these folks do? Well, they said, "You know what? We're no longer going to teach our children Spanish, because they grew up knowing two languages, and they're not dominant in either language, so they're facing discrimination. So we're only going to teach them English." Was it the right decision? I don't think so. But that was their mindset. Their mindset was, "We don't want our kids being discriminated. We want a better life."

J

Juan Coronado 23:21

Their logic was that we're being discriminated because of our Mexicanness, or because of our latinidad. That was taking lightly the racism, right? That's kind of finding an excuse for racists. That was the Texas that I grew up with, that the only way you're going to move up in society is through assimilation. That's what the Mexican-American generation firmly believed, that we need to assimilate, so we could no longer be discriminated. At the end of the day, they may have taken the racism of the opposition a little lightly. The nationalism that exists in this country, regardless. That was the Texas that I grew up with, where there was clearly an assimilationist attitude in the populace. Where people felt that we need to embrace American culture. We need to embrace the English language. We need to embrace American sports. As a child, that's what it was. How do you define yourself as an American? Well, you have command of the English language, and you embrace their sports. American football, American basketball, American baseball. That was what my childhood was like.

J

Juan Coronado 24:59

There was a clear negotiation of being accepted and wanting to be accepted, yet you go back to your neighborhoods, your colonias, your barrios, and it's Spanish speaking. You still have a passion for the language, the people, the culture, the foods. That was a constant negotiation. I was still being penalised for speaking in Spanish going through middle school. Some of the school teachers would not allow us to speak Spanish in class. This was something that I was getting in trouble for going into eighth grade. I think that paints you a picture of society at that time, and of course, it passed on to you as a kid, because as a kid, what do you know? You think you know what's important to you, but you also feel pressure from your peers on, "Okay, well, I want to be accepted. I want to be a part of this group that is important." So, yeah, that's something that I definitely dealt with

as a student.

E

Eleonora Anedda 26:39

What would you do as a kid or a teenager to assimilate with American culture?

J

Juan Coronado 26:57

Well, I always did great in school. I think I always did really good in school, even though I do have an accent, I had command of the English language. I embraced the sports, I was always a decent athlete going through elementary school. And of course, being in touch with the popular culture at the time. Knowing what is happening in the sports world, knowing what's happening in pop culture, the music. But I think by the end of my elementary years, I was more into Mexican Tejano music at that time. That music spoke more to me than then the American music. It was a constant battle with me, what to really embrace.

E

Eleonora Anedda 28:09

Thank you for sharing that. I can feel this battle that you're talking about. To move a little to the 9/11 side of this interview, I wanted to ask you if you remember anything about that day, if you remember where you were, what are the memories that are most vivid in your mind?

J

Juan Coronado 28:46

I do. When 9/11 happened, I was in college, but I'm gonna preface where I'm going with this. I was in high school when a thought came to me, and this is the late 90s. I guess I have always been a student of history, and in the late 90s, I felt that the country had not had a struggle that united the country like it had during World War Two or whatnot. I always felt that the country had some type of lacking unity. Unfortunately, it came under 9/11. I was a sophomore in college. I remember the day. It was a Tuesday morning, and I had a 9:10 badminton class that morning. I remember it because I was on my way to badminton. I don't know if you know the sport, but I was in this class, and I took off that morning. I remember seeing what was happening on the television. I was like, "Damn, did this just happen?" It looked really unreal. I couldn't believe it. "What is happening? Is this real? Is this a trailer to a movie? What is it?"



Juan Coronado 30:39

I get to the college campus, and I run into my buddy. We both had a class around the same time, Eloy Lopez, and he goes, "Man, did you see what just happened?" I go, "Yeah, man, I just saw that." And his next words to me - I could remember this like it was yesterday - he goes, "Man, somebody is about to get blown the fuck up." That's what Eloy told me. He's like, "Man, shit's about to get real." We had students from mostly the Valley, but we had students from across the country, and we had professors from across the country. I think at least one or two of my classes were cancelled. I think I had a professor who had family connections to New York City, and they didn't know about what was going on with some of their family members.



Juan Coronado 31:43

For the next few days, if you remember those days, it was different. Because you turned on the television, and even with cable, all the networks went to their parent network. There was only about three or four different channels on an eighty channel lineup. Even MTV, those types of channels, they weren't showing MTV. They were showing what the parent company was showing. Like I said, there may have been three, maybe four - it was all the same stuff. Each channel had the same lineup. It was the same news. CBS wasn't CBS. Channel Four in the Valley, which at the time was the big station, I want to say Viacom is their parent station. It was whatever Viacom was broadcasting. So you couldn't watch your TV shows. You're watching the parent company of CBS, the parent company of ABC, the parent company of NBC or Fox, and that was it. People were glued to the coverage. That's all we could access on the television was not just only the big networks, the big parents of the networks were wanting us to watch. That was all we could watch, and we were glued. Back in my day there, we had cable. There's MTV, TBS TNT, all these stations, even the Country Music station. I'm not gonna take a guess on who the parent company was, but all these stations that should have had material were broadcasting the news. That's all we could watch for probably about a week or so was just the news on what had happened during these terrorist attacks. So yeah, I remember that.



Eleonora Anedda 34:19

You said you were in college. [Has] 9/11 changed any aspect of your life?



Juan Coronado 34:39

9/11 had an immense impact on my life. It wasn't just because of what happened that day. I think the reaction to what happened was the biggest of impact. I began to see the world

in larger terms. I was devastated that day on what had happened to the towers in New York and the attack on the Pentagon and the other plane that went down. But I think, slowly, I began to see why this happened, and I really began to be critical of the country's reaction to it. That unity that I had longed for in high school that I said, "Hey, the country needs to be united." Like I said, it united under the wrong reason, and it took focus on all the wrong enemies. This project is so relevant and in terms of what's happening in Afghanistan today. After nearly a twenty-year war, we're seeing the troop withdrawal from Afghanistan, and this is what I was experiencing then. Why is there a war being targeted in Afghanistan and Iraq? This is not the way to go at this. We're talking about an occupation of a couple of countries with no end in sight.

J

Juan Coronado 36:38

I think the reaction had the biggest impact on me. I was still a young kid. How old was I? I was eighteen years old. Yeah, I was eighteen years old. I was still going to church at the time, and George W. Bush is a Methodist, and I went to a Methodist Church, and I grew up Methodist. Every Sunday the pastor would end the mass the same way. "God bless America, God bless our troops." In me, I thought, "Well, no, what about the Iraqi people? Why not, 'God bless the Iraqi people who are losing so many lives because of this war?'" 9/11 really turned me off of religion. It made me realize that there's more to this world than my life at this moment. I need to become more educated on the world itself. I began to really question aspects of my life and really see the bigger picture on this planet.

J

Juan Coronado 38:16

I think 9/11 pushed me definitely more and more into academia and wanting to seek that knowledge. Of course, for other men of my generation, that pushed them into the military. I have some buddies who went off to either Iraq or Afghanistan, and I'm fortunate that it didn't do that to me. It changed my life in that sense. It changed my life on the border. Immediately following that, growing up on the border, it made our lives a little bit more complicated. We couldn't cross and come back to the United States with that facility that we used to. Inspections became more rigorous. And of course, this applied to planes. The foiled attack on England, maybe around 2006, 2007, further complicated this. 9/11, we began to see the borders becoming much more militarized or policed. Our lifestyle changed a little bit in the fact that coming back from Mexico, which we used to do, some folks on a daily, some folks on a weekly basis, was not as easy as it once was. 9/11 is definitely one of the reasons for that happening.

E

Eleonora Anedda 40:22

I have a clear memory of 9/11. But for example, I don't remember a time where people could walk you through the gate at the airport, and there was no security. I don't remember any of that. Could you describe for an audience like me or someone young how life at the border changed? If you wanted to cross from before 9/11 and after, what were the differences?

J

Juan Coronado 40:58

On the border, the inspections just became a little bit more intense. To be honest with you, as a kid and growing up, before 9/11, before a lot of this militarized mentality, all you really had to say - the border agent would ask you, "Are you an American citizen?" It was all answering. You'd answer, "Yeah, I'm an American citizen." At that point, they may or may not ask for ID. There's plenty of times in my youth where they didn't even ask for ID, they just simply asked you, "Hey, are you a citizen?" "Yeah, we're citizens." "Okay, go ahead, cross." That's how easy it was. That's how easy it was. Maybe sometimes they didn't even ask you whether you're a citizen. Sometimes they'd ask you, "Hey, what are you bringing back?" And that was it. That was the question you got at the border. "Hey, what are you bringing back?" "Well, I'm bringing back some tacos," or "I got some medication," whatever it was. If you're bringing back liquor or cigarettes, "Hey, don't forget to pay the tax." And that's how simple it was back then.

J

Juan Coronado 42:25

Then 9/11 happens, and then the big one was that foiled attack on England and that's when really flying changed, because even after 9/11, you could still carry on water. I remember that, because I used to carry on a bottle of water. But after that foiled attack on England, that's when you could no longer bring any liquids with you. Like you said, you could walk people up to their gate not a problem. We used to do that. Just go check out the airport for no reason, because, hey, you're sixteen, seventeen now, you're driving, you want to go different places. But the border was to me really interesting, and 9/11 brought a deeper inspection to folks coming in the country. Yeah, some border agents were still lax about the whole situation, but we could see longer lines after that, where it would take, if you're in a vehicle, thirty minutes to an hour, you're talking about two hour long wait times, just across the border now. I think that was one of the big things down in South Texas.

J

Juan Coronado 43:50

And you gotta understand how dependent both sides of the border are with each other. I think the pandemic here has clearly exposed that. Typically in South Texas, on a weekend, you go down to the major shopping centers, the malls, the outlet malls, the downtown

areas, the people shopping there, growing up, were south of the border. On a typical day at La Plaza Mall in McAllen, Texas. The majority of the shoppers were folks from Tamaulipas, from Nuevo Leon, coming across to do their shopping. The pandemic has no longer allowed many of the folks to come over. 9/11 made it a little bit harder for those folks to come across. They still did. It made us hard to go across too, because you go to a lot of those border towns, and it'll be full of American tourists. American travelers doing their shopping and doing their medical or dental visits, whatnot. It definitely did impact that flow of traffic.

E

Eleonora Anedda 45:17

I want to go back a little bit to something you said earlier. You said you experienced this fracture with the Methodist Church after 9/11. I was wondering if you could speak a bit more about that.

J

Juan Coronado 45:38

I was still a firm believer, and I became a nonbeliever at that point. I really looked at the political influence on religion, and I stopped believing. I saw this political support being unwarranted, and I really began to question my religious upbringing. I really began to question the role of religion on people's lives, at least on my life. Yeah, I stopped attending church, and I stopped believing. I firmly believe that this was a way to further - and it goes back to the previous conversation we had earlier, this process of assimilation and acculturation, and I stopped believing. I stopped attending church. I saw it as just another another means of trying to assimilate and acculturate people. I gave up my previous religious beliefs at that point in my life.

E

Eleonora Anedda 47:19

Thank you for sharing that. How do you feel about 9/11 today? How has your life changed twenty years later? This year is the twentieth anniversary, if we can call it "anniversary."

J

Juan Coronado 47:44

I think we're at the point where we were twenty years ago, where many of us believe that this was not the right war, that this was not the right move. No. I think we're back at square one if you think about it. The Taliban is in control again of Afghanistan, that's where they were twenty years ago. Nada cambió. Nothing changed really, other than all the lives lost. I don't particularly care about money, but all the money that was lost as well.

The Afghan people are in a worse place than they were twenty years ago. Clearly, they had to decide what side they wanted to be on, and they bet on the wrong horse. They bet on the wrong horse, and that horse got tired and got out of there. These poor Afghans are in a war situation, because they sided with the wrong horse, and now they're having to pay a toll for that. What a waste, right? And people would be offended by this because of the sacrifice of the men and women, but seriously, they should have never been committed to a war that wasn't going anywhere.

J

Juan Coronado 49:19

That's the really the unfortunate aspect of all this is that they were led the wrong way. And you do see the effects of being in these prolonged wars. It comes at a price for the country, because even if you want to say, "Well, the war doesn't impact me," yeah, it does. It impacts us as a people. First of all, it normalizes these violent behaviors. It normalizes the occupations of a foreign country. it normalizes this extended hand that the United States has had for a very long time. These Imperial notions of, "Okay, we need to dictate how other people live their lives." But it impacted a vast generation of Americans that were exposed to these violent behaviors. People who were trying to piece their lives together after, whether they served, whether they had a family member who served or who was killed. It definitely does impact us. And that's only half of it, because militarily, it's not just US forces that were there. We're looking at these contract workers. "Contract" quote, unquote. These mercenaries. Because it's not just troops, it's these private military folks that also serve, and we never know the real number behind those folks who were private contractors. So yeah, it has really changed our current society.

J

Juan Coronado 51:31

After 9/11, we were so paranoid of the next terrorist attack. In South Texas, about four days after, there was damage done to Queen Isabella Causeway that connects Port Isabel, Texas to South Padre Island, Texas. A boat took out the causeway causing significant damage in the middle of the night. That damaged this highway, causing it to collapse. And in exchange, a couple of cars went off the highway in the middle of the night, and I want to say a couple of people died. But we were so paranoid that this was the next terrorist attack, and it took a few days to figure out what was the root of this. It so happened to be that, I want to say, a boat that should not have been traveling through those waters ended up causing the damage, but we were so paranoid that, "Hey, this war on terrorism is in our backyard now." So I think it really had that impact on us, where we were now living under fear.

J

Juan Coronado 52:56

Of course, this had something to do with 9/11, but it also had to do with the nation's reaction to 9/11. That's why it's important to have a good leader at the helm. George W. Bush, from my home state, he was clearly not the best leader at this moment. People were praising him, and people were praising people like Rudy Giuliani for being the mayor of New York City at the time, but these clearly were not the best leaders. I don't think we're at the point to realize that as a society. Society has not been as critical on these folks, because at that time, Rudy Giuliani became America's mayor. It was all a positive reaction. George W. Bush, even though he was clearly not the winner of the 2000 election, was now being praised. He was very much legitimized by the occurrences here on 9/11. I gave him a fair shake, but he was not the person to be leading the country through what was happening. He was a very poor leader. I think the previous administration really made him look like a better leader, but George W. Bush was not a good leader, and we could definitely see that now.

E

Eleonora Anedda 54:55

I have one last question before stopping the recording, but I wanted to ask you first if there's anything you'd like to share that I haven't asked you about, but that you feel is important to share here in this context, or something that maybe you already talked about, but that you'd like to explore a little bit more?

J

Juan Coronado 55:42

Definitely, that there were many young men, my generation, my age - like I said, I was already on my second year of college. But for the young men and women who were either getting out of high school at that time, or were about to get out of high school, this really motivated that generation to enlist in the military. And it's unfortunate, because I'm still from the belief that you don't commit troops unless it's absolutely necessary to commit troops. Unfortunately, there was a lot of good lives lost because of 9/11. That's clearly looking at it from an American perspective, but what does that do when you look at it from an Iraqi perspective, and an Afghani perspective? What Iraq and Afghanistan have lost because of these unnecessary wars is brutal. It's nuts. And where are we now truly as a society, are we even better? It's really unfortunate.

E

Eleonora Anedda 57:25

Thank you for this reflection. The last question that I have, I guess it's a bit similar. This interview is going to be archived, and it's hopefully going to preserve for a long time. For that reason, I was wondering if there's anything that

you'd like to say to someone who is going to listen to this interview in ten, twenty, fifty years from now.



Juan Coronado 58:04

Visit the Río Grande Valley. The Valley is not what it was when I was a kid, it wasn't what it was when I was a teenager, but it's a beautiful place. Crossing that border, man, it was beautiful as a kid. It still is. It's still beautiful. I still cross the border every time I go down to South Texas, I still cross the border. But the nostalgia of yesterday irks me. It was a beautiful place back then, and it still is, right. Crossing that border is just - you would dread it sometimes, how these border agents would flex. I think 9/11 gave them a reason to be how they are, but that border was just such an amazing experience, where you get to be in a different place momentarily, and then you come back to your reality. But yeah, visit the Río Grande Valley. Visit the border towns of Nuevo Progreso and Río Bravo. I'm not going to say Reynosa, because Reynosa is a whole different story right now with the drug war going on. But yeah, these were places of my childhood that I treasure.



Eleonora Anedda 1:00:01

Thank you for sharing that. Is there anything else you'd like to say?



Juan Coronado 1:00:07

No, it's a great project, and I wish you some successful oral histories, and keep up the great work.



Eleonora Anedda 1:00:17

Thank you. Well, I will go ahead and stop the recording.