

Eder Deleon
HIST 428N
Prof Castillo
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Interview transcript Eder and Ismar

Eder Deleon (ED)
Ismar Deleon (ID)

ED: 0:00 Ok First Question um what's your first name?¹

ID: 0:05 Ismar Martin Deleon

ED: 0:08 How long has it been since you been in the United States since you first migrated from Guatemala?

ID: 0:16- I come on United States on 1981 and say again.. I can't not say no more. What what do I have say right now

ED: 0:36- Where are you from?²

ID: 0:44- I'm from Guatemala and I'm born in Guatemala in 1963 and I came to America in 1981 and I'm happy right now. But what is your question another question right now?

ED: 1:11- Ok as a child how was your life growing up how was school, friends, and family?

ID: 1:26- Um My life with my family was real beautiful because I have a lot of memories when I was seven years I love to play futbol³ or soccer like they say here in the United States. At the age of seven I liked to go to school and spend time with my friends, but what I liked the most was play soccer I wanted to be a professional player but under the circumstances I couldn't do it.⁴ And about school I honestly

¹The interview was originally done in Spanish. The interviewee felt more comfortable being asked the questions in Spanish and answering the questions in Spanish. Due to lack for good Spanish spelling and grammar I had to transcribe the interview in English translating the words myself from Spanish to English.

² The first questions were asked in English and Ismar did his best to answer the questions but I saw he was struggling so I asked the rest of the questions in Spanish so that he would answer in Spanish this made the interview flow smoother.

³ I wrote the Spanish word for soccer (futbol) in Spanish because he made a point to say that Americans are the only ones that can futbol soccer.

⁴ Soccer is by far the most popular sport in Guatemala. Joseph L Arbena, "Meaning and Joy in Latin American Sports," *International Review for the Sociology of Sports*, (March, 2000) 83-89. In the town Ismar is from the local team is called

liked going I also wanted to be like we say a professional as in have a career.⁵ But my family was too big. There was my mom and dad. They had eight children. And I was the third oldest in the family and the only guy. I mean there are two men and six women and two men. But the circumstances in our countries are different as a male you have to work and you have to help your parents and I'm grateful to them for the little that they were able to do and a lot for making me a good person and I feel very happy.⁶ My childhood was a good time because there was a lot to do in Guatemala where we lived there was a lot of space and my childhood was really precious and well I had friends and I was pretty popular.⁷ By... to the people over there I was a very helpful and ready person I helped out with everything and honestly I lived my childhood really happy and people really liked me because they knew me and also since the age of seven and forward I became really well known I didn't have much but I was really liked by the people in my town.

ED: 5:40- You said that you had to work in that time what type of work did you do and what was your first job as a child what did you work in until you came to the United States?

ID: 5:57- Well in my town of Salcaja⁸ that's the name of the town where I was born. There my dad well my dad and my mom had shops to make native looms.⁹ Its clothes that a lot of indigenous people in Guatemala use. So we worked over there because there was a large need for labor so a lot of us did this. I felt really happy helping my mom and dad. All the time some of us did one thing and other siblings tried to help more.¹⁰ But all the time I was the closest to my mom to make all types of

America. The major team is Xelaju M.C. which is located in the city of Xelaju which is a ten to fifteen minute drive from his town.

⁵ When he mentions being a professional he is talking about someone that has a college degree and has a career.

⁶ Ismar's parents actually had nine children two of them died after a little after they were born. His oldest sister was just his half sister his mother had a daughter in a previous relationship before marrying his father.

⁷ To this day Ismar still sends money and gifts during the holidays to the people in his town. He is the president of a group that focuses on raising money to help his town. Most of the people in the group are people that migrated from the same town as him.

⁸ Salcaja is located in the department of Quetzaltenango Guatemala. The different departments in Guatemala would be like the different States in the United States.

⁹ In Salcaja there are a lot of people that work in this field. They call it cortes. What Ismar did was prepare the fabric used his mother or grandmother would actually make the designs of the clothes.

¹⁰ A lot of families had multiple children in this time. They believed that the more children they had the better because they would be able to help out around the house when they were older. They did not believe in protection during sexual intercourse because it was frowned upon in the Catholic religion. Fr William

looks so that would be a way that we could make money. We really needed to labor to make the design and I really learned a lot. I was really happy doing this type of work. Like we say an opportunity presented itself one day when I was 16 years old my dad ask me if I wanted to.... My dad had already migrated here¹¹ and he asked me if I wanted to come to the United States and honestly I didn't want to come but my dad needed more help so because of that I traveled as a 16 year old with 6 month to the United States.

ED: 8:24- You said during your childhood you really like to play soccer a lot. Was that your social like when ever you had free time did you play soccer? How was soccer life in Guatemala?

ID: 8:42- Well in Guatemala the form that people work and how people could enjoy what people wanted to do or go play with classmates or friends. Well I tried to... I was a really active person I had my grandma... normally I woke up at 4 in the morning to work so that later I could have free time. I mean from 1 in the afternoon we started to play soccer and I tried to work when I didn't go to school I tried to work from 4 in the morning from 4 in the morning until 1 in the afternoon.¹² After 1 in the afternoon the activities started which was soccer and I enjoyed it a lot and I loved it. I said I wanted to be a professional when I was in Guatemala but I think that my life in Guatemala was really beautiful and I think many years have past and I still remember a lot of things from back home.

ED: 10:26- Trying to balance work, school, and soccer was it hard to balance the three things with your family friends work because you really like to play soccer?

ID 10:44- I don't think it was hard because I believe in life when someone loves something and that person wants to do it well it possible I don't think there are obstacles that can stop you. I... if someone wants to do this or that you have to get up early and be a really responsible person so you can do what you want to do. And sometimes you cant accomplish every goal you set out but you have to enjoy life and give thanks to god for what he gives you because without the power of god I don't think anything will be possible.¹³

Saunders, "Church Teaching on Contraception (part 1)" *Catholic Education Resource Center*, (2003).

¹¹ He meant that his father was already living in the United States. He was living in Silver Spring MD at the time most people from Guatemala when they say they are from Washington DC they mean anywhere in the DMV

¹² He lived down the street from a soccer field and also played for many of the local teams growing up.

¹³ Ismar is a Catholic his town of Salcaja currently has three different catholic churches. Catholicism has been the biggest religion in Latin America since colonization in the grow up as a child it was still the main religion Robert Sean Makin, "In Word and Deed: Assessing the Strength of Progressive Catholicism in Latin America, 1960-1970s," *Oxford Journals*, (May, 2007), 216-242.

ED: 11:53- In that time working in Guatemala how was the pay compared to what you thought you should be making?

ID: 12:07- In that period normally the truth is what was economically... Well normally we... I think I never really knew what I should be earning because we weren't use to receiving or living with a salary.¹⁴ Where we lived there was no way to have a salary because everything you worked for and earned was for your family. We did have some stuff and in that time we were happy. I didn't think of earning a salary I helped my mom and dad but salary was something we didn't have.

ED: 13:23 Ok you said that at the age of 16 your father had migrated to the United States and was working, you being the oldest son were you the first option of your fathers to come to the United States or was there another plan?

ID: 13:51 The truth is I was the head of the family also I wasn't the first person they choose to come to the United States. But... Well I was in school when my oldest sister was chosen to come to the United States. Like we say sometimes without thinking my dad sent the money to Guatemala so that my sister could travel to the United States¹⁵ were he was and I was suppose to stay in Guatemala as the head of the family and watch out for the rest of my sister there. My dad really wanted to bring my older sister here but like we say my dad asked my sister if she wanted to come to the US? She said yes so he sent some money to Guatemala so she could travel here but then she didn't want to or regretted her decision to come to here and the money was already in Guatemala. I knew that if money stayed over there we could invest it but my dad would get upset. Finally what happened was that one day my dad asked me since the money was in Guatemala he said Martin do you want to come here.¹⁶ So I knew that the money was there for me to come to the United States. So I said if you want me to go then I'll go. I knew that my dad needed help or support or someone to be with him.¹⁷ That's when I decided to come to the US.

ED: 16:40- You said that you came in 1981. I know that in that time Guatemala was in the middle of a Civil War the Government vs the Guerilla army. Did the civil war have an impact on you coming to the United States?

¹⁴ Guatemala like much of central America has been plagued with foreign influences that have hurt their economies. When countries like the United States get involved in Latin American governments they are harming them more the helping. Altha J Cravey, "Spatiality, sweatshops and solidarity in Guatemala," *Social and Cultural Geography*, (December, 2002), 383-401.

¹⁵ His father had sent money so that his sister could come to the United States illegally using a coyote or human smuggler.

¹⁶ He would also probably have to come to the United States illegally.

¹⁷ At the time there were no other people from Salcaja in the DMV area his father was living with two of his cousins.

ID: 17:02- The truth is that well... I'm from the department of Quezaltenago were I was born is Salcaja thanks to god in Quezaltenago there wasn't really thanks to god we didn't live through what a lot of people in Guatemala lived through. Because even though the department wasn't that safe we didn't have the chance or well we didn't have conflict with the Government or the Guerilla army.¹⁸ The truth is my town was really protective. There wasn't fear well there was fear and a lot of things happened in fact my mom sometimes she panicked after hearing news that we heard in that time in Guatemala the truth is anyone that heard all the news of what was going on you would live in fear of events that happened and things that the government and the guerilla army did in Guatemala. One well the town that we lived in was in control and my childhood well I think we lived it well.

ED: 19:01- So ultimately the finally decision of you coming to the United States was your choice?

ID: 19:12- Yes. Well like I was saying before I knew that my family needed a way or a form to progress in my country family wise, which is what I wanted for my family.¹⁹ My decision was I think to support my family my dad, mom, and siblings so I came to the United States.

ED: 19:59- How did you come to the United States?

ID: 20:03- What do you mean?

ED: 20:08- Did you come to the US with your papers or without you papers?

ID: 20:14- no honestly like we say I went... My dad told me that he hoped I could get a Visa²⁰ to travel to the US. So we applied we went to the embassy of the US. I tired to see if I could get a visa so I could travel to the US on a plane which is one way that you can travel to the US without having to go through a lot on the way here like traveling on land through Mexico. So I got to the US embassy and I submitted my

¹⁸ Guatemala was involved in a civil war for 36 years. Some say that it was started before 1960. Many believe that it started after a military coup that removed the president in 1954. "Rubiana Chamarbagwala, The human capital consequences of civil war: Evidence from Guatemala," *Journal of Development Economics*, (October 2010), 41-61.

¹⁹ They needed a way to earn more money and even though they had to pay to get over here they would end up making that money fast and earn more in a few months.

²⁰ He wanted a work Visa so that he could come work in the United States for a few months or years. The people that did get this Visa rarely went back on time. Also a large part of Latin American economy depended on money being sent from the United States. Carlos Aguiar de Medeiros, "Financial dependency and growth cycles in Latin American countries," *Journal of Post Keynesian Economics*, (2008) 79-99.

application so I could get a visa so I could travel to the US and so I could be with my dad and I could help him and my mom and my siblings.

ED: 21:40 Where you able to get the visa to travel to the US?

ID: 21:43- The truth is when I got to the US embassy I submitted my application and they denied me. So I called... after I went to the capital of Guatemala. They interviewed me and they told I couldn't get the visa to travel to the US. So I told my dad they didn't want to give me a visa to travel to the US. So he told me that if I was brave enough and if I could handle going through land?²¹ I would have to go through Mexico past the boarder or Guatemala into Mexico and then from Mexico into the US. The truth is that I think I told my dad if this means I can help you, mom, and my sibling you can count on me 100%. Because it is for my family, I told my dad you my mom, and all my siblings come first.

ED: 23:11 So like they say... did you know what to expect traveling through land? Also did you dad help you prepare? Also how did your dad travel to the US?

ID: 23:32- Well my dad he also came to the US on land like me. He told me well some events that he had gone through. He told me that you aren't going to go through everything I went through but everyone goes through something different. But I knew that 100% that with love and the love my family had I believed and believing in god anything is possible.²² So thanks to good we are here.

ED: 24:32- So traveling on land in that time did you have any fears that something would happen and you wouldn't be able to make it to the US?

ID: 24:44- In that time well I didn't have fear I just didn't have it. I knew and I saw movies in Guatemala. Sometimes I think movies lie a lot about what they say. So fear I never had it. I think that with the love of god you shouldn't fear anything. If you are doing bad things then you might have fear. With the will of moving your family forward you will never have fear. If you are acting in the best interest of you family I think that we have a god that will help us.²³

ED: 26:11- So when you came to the US what part of the US did you come to live with your dad?

²¹ They mean come over illegally like they say in Spanish "mojado".

²² This process can take several days. They have to seek into Mexico and the through the boarder between Mexico and the US. There are many people have died coming to the US through land. In fact one of Ismar's cousins disappeared while traveling into the US he was never found.

²³ Family was really important to him he left everyone he knew to go to a different country to help his family.

ID: 26:17- Well leaving Guatemala I pass to the district then to Tijuana, from Tijuana to San Diego from San Diego to LA.²⁴ Thanks to god like I say my dad knew someone in LA the same person that he knew received me when I got there. So when I came here to where my dad was I felt really happy to see him again because I think it was one year and six months since I had seen him. I felt really happy when I saw him the day I got here.

ED: 27:23- Did your dad meet you in LA? Where did your dad live in that time?

ID: 27:28- No, when I came here a lady in LA received me. My dad lived here in Washington, Washington DC. So he went to meet me in the airport in in Baltimore²⁵.

ED: 27:54- When you traveled here to the US what did you think of the US? How was it different than Guatemala? What was your first impression of the country?

ID: 28:10- Well when I arrived here in the US I got to LA it was really nice everything was beautiful and different from what is our Guatemala. There were really nice houses like you were in a movie. I'm not saying that my country is that my country is no good ok. I can't think of the words but its really different because well in Guatemala the agriculture is a beauty.²⁶ Well that's what I lived when I was there. When I got here to the LA everything was really nice and natural like Guatemala. When I got here to Maryland I arrived at the airport here in Baltimore. I saw everything and it was winter the whole place was winter. I got to the airport a really nice airport. My dad was with one of his friends and they went to pick me up. When I saw him I felt like that happiest child in the world.²⁷ We left the airport when I got outside it was freezing there was snow and to me that was horrible because I saw how the environment was dead trees, fallen tress, broken branches, I asked myself is my dad really living here? There's no life here. But what was going is that it was winter. In Guatemala we only have two seasons, which is winter and summer right. But normally in our country we know that winter it rains a lot. Summer its hot but still there is a lot of trees and nature that is well... when I came here I thought the trees were burnt or killed by the winter. I asked myself where did I come to?²⁸ I

²⁴ This was the way the coyote took him when he was traveling illegally to the US.

²⁵He traveled from LA to Baltimore one an airplane if you are travel within the state you do not need a passport.

²⁶ Throughout the interview I could tell that Ismar wanted to say a lot of things but could not find the words for what he wanted to say which is what I think led him to repeating things throughout the interview.

²⁷ Even though he was young through out the interview you could tell that he believed he was a man but here the joy he felt when he remembered this he saw himself as a child at the time.

²⁸ Salcaja is close to the equator but is located 2,500 meters above sea level. This causes the town to be warm/hot during the day and cold during the nights but not as cold as Maryland weather.

thought it was weird. But I was still happy because I was reunited with my dad. At the same time I felt sad because I left my mom and siblings and one as a young adult you have school, sports, and I knew that here things would be different. I didn't even know the language. But I knew that I came to this country to work and to help my dad and mom.

ED: 32:14 In what month did you come to the US?

ID: 32:16 I entered arrived December 31 here in Baltimore. My dad lived in Washington.

ED: 32:29- when you came how long did it take you to get use to living here in a different country with a different language? Was the language hard to understand?

ID: 32:52- The language was hard for me. Honestly well... over time I understood what I got myself into but at the moment there was a lot of opportunities. One day I told my dad... look I wasn't to go to school. He knew and I did too that there wouldn't be an opportunities because we were in a different country but I think that we didn't have enough information about the country. I told my dad I want to go to school but he told me I couldn't because I had 7 sibling in Guatemala and I needed to help him work so that we could maintain the whole family you see.²⁹ So to me there wasn't a single problem for me to work.

ED: 34:36- In that time was it hard to find work being an immigrant and not understanding the language?

ID: 34:44- Well I think in that time it wasn't that hard. But the problem was... well when I left my country I think I had a lot of obstacles I had to face. One was the language 100% it was a factor you didn't understand what people were saying. In that time there weren't a lot of people that spoke Spanish here.³⁰

(Pause dog crying) 35:38

ID: 35: 39- I don't think there wasn't a way... the obstacle was the language like I was saying before a factor that affect me a bit was that I came really young. Honestly I came here as a child if I went somewhere to look for a job the first thing they asked me is if I graduated high school here in the US? They told me I had to go to school

²⁹ Ismar said he liked to go to school but there was not a good education system Guatemala he learned some English but he never stuck Megan McAdams, "Improving Education System in Guatemala is the Only Answer to Violent Crime," Council on Hemispheric Affairs (2012).

³⁰ Immigrants that did not know the language had to settle for poor paying jobs that did not offer many advancement opportunities. Lisa Flores, "A Qualitative Inquiry of Latino Immigrants Work Experiences in the Midwest" *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, (2011).

because they couldn't hire me. But after I think it took me two months to find a job not because I couldn't do the jobs but I think Americans looked at me as a child and that was a big factor in me not finding a job. But after everything was different.

ED: 37:07- When you came what were first jobs?

ID: 37:10- Well to start my first job was like we say was in a carwash to clean cars.³¹ But well I think any one that likes to work can find somewhere to work. Like my grandma use to say look son grab a broom wherever you go you can eat with this if you clean with a broom you can work. I wasn't embarrassed to go work in a car wash and I think as long as your working with love nothing should be embarrassing to someone.³² I didn't think that in my country because there were opportunities for people. Well I had to travel here and that's what I did when I first came here.

ED: 38:28- What other jobs did you have in the first couple years that you lived in the US?

ID: 38:36- Well after I like repeat I had a baby face like we say after the car wash I started working in different buildings as maintenance cleaning of office I worked there for awhile until³³... well we stayed working with my dad we worked hard.

ED: 39:21- in that time after you came did you make friends were you to play soccer again what did you do to enjoy yourself?

ID: 39:36- Honestly talking about sports like we say it was difficult for me because it was hard to make friendships and friends. Soccer I wasn't able to play in that time because all I had was my dad and two aunts my dad's cousins. But they were older so what was my youth and sports I wasn't able to enjoy it until after 7 years that I was here.³⁴ In between that period I went back to Guatemala and there I was able to play again and I was happy I could play again after spending time with my dad.

ED: 41:07 You said that you returned to Guatemala how much time were you here in the US until you returned to Guatemala?

³¹ Throughout the interview he says "like we say" but he never really says a saying it is just a phrase he likes to use.

³² He mentions that he was not embarrassed to take these lower level jobs and he stayed at these jobs for a long time as a bus boy, dish washer, cleaner, car washer etc. for a long time.

³³ At this point he was 17 years old

³⁴ During this time the United States population of Latinos was around 6% this meant the Ismar did not have many chances to make friendships with Latinos and soccer was not popular with Americans at the time Social Science Data Analysis Network, "Race and Ethnicity Selection, 1980-2000," Census 2000.

http://www.censusscope.org/us/chart_race.html (accessed April 5, 2014)

ID: 41:17- I was here in the US 4 years. In the time I helped my dad also I was able to help my dad bring my younger siblings.³⁵ After four year I returned to Guatemala because my siblings were already here. So I returned to Guatemala for good. But opportunities didn't happen... well I left I stay six months in Guatemala but I came back because my dad had brought my younger siblings and they were able to go to school and graduate high school... well when I left they hadn't finished high school yet after six months.³⁶ My dad call me and told me I he needed me to come back because he was the only one working and paying the bills. Since he was the only one working I think it was tough on him it didn't effect me that he asked me to come back because my mom and dad were the most important thing to my siblings too. I think being the man of the house it was my duty to help him. Thanks to god I helped him and I feel good about it.

ED: 43:20- In what year was it that you left and returned to the US?

ID: 43:23- I left to Guatemala in 86 and I returned by the end of 87.

ED: 43:39- when your returned the second time did you came through land again?

ID: 43:46- That's right I came again through land. I also had gotten married over there. I had a daughter that was 2 months old and that's when I came back.

ED: 44:06 You said that you got married and had a daughter in Guatemala were they also part of the reason that you came back to the US?

ID: 44:28- Well yes..

(Pause dog barking) 44:30

ED: 44:45 So you came back because of your wife and daughter how did you feel when you came back?

ID: 44:47- Well when I came back for the second time I knew I had to help my dad and for my family I had my wife and daughter I had in Guatemala. I had to see how my family could more forward.³⁷ I told my dad I was only coming for 2 years max 2 years and a half and I'm going back. I also told my wife I would only be here for 2 years 2 and half years. I' am going to help my dad we are going to do what we have to do that's why I came back.

³⁵ His younger siblings did not have to travel here illegally his father was able to get them their green cards. But Ismar was not able to get the green card because by that time he was already over the age of 18.

³⁶ The amount of time that Ismar said he was in Guatemala was wrong he was there longer but made a mistake during the interview.

³⁷ There was not a lot of work in Guatemala he built a house in Guatemala at the time but was unable to finish it because he ran out of money.

ED: 45:48- You said that you came back when you came back were you able to find a job? Did you know what to expect since you had been here before?

ID: 46:03 The truth is when I came back we had made a decision I spoke with my wife I told her I was leaving for 2 years I was going to come here help my dad and mom and I'll be back here in Guatemala. But then an opportunity presented itself when I came and employer asked if I wanted to work with him and he could sponsor me so I could get my residents.³⁸ Well that happened I told my wife and I knew that it would be 3-4 years for the process to be complete. But one never well.... My wife said it was fine and we will see what happens only time will tell. So we started to see what we needed to do my employer sponsored me. Thanks to him I was able to get my residents to be safe here in the US with out having to see were I can work. It's pretty hard. I think that as long as you like to work nothing is impossible.

ED: 48:05- You said in order to get you residency it would take 3-4 years. Was is 3-4 years until you saw you wife and daughter again?

ID: 48:18- Well the truth is no in fact I left my wife and daughter when I left my daughter was two months two months and a half. One day in fact time past and she... my wife told me if it was possible for me to go over there with you. I told her to me there no problem for you to come but if you come we will see what we can do here. But in fact she told me look... well I had a sister in Guatemala the oldest and (wife) she told that she was going to leave my daughter with my sister. Well that's when I told her look if you come you both have to come if not no one came if my daughter didn't come they she couldn't travel here. So my mom supported my wife a lot and she told my wife to come so they both came. They came here thanks to god they were both healthy.³⁹ To me I felt what a complete family felt like and I was filled with joy that my whole family was with me. I think that I was good.

ED: 50:36- How old was your daughter when she came?

ID: 50:44 Well my daughter was one year with one month when I was able to see my wife and daughter ok here in Maryland. I felt happy that they were here complete I

³⁸ Employers were able to sponsor immigrants and work with immigration to get them and their family their green cards. Official Website of the Department of Homeland Security. "Green Card Through A Job, US Citizenship and Immigration Services, <http://www.uscis.gov/green-card/green-card-through-job> (accessed April 17, 2014).

³⁹ Just like him his wife and daughter came here illegally even though they were working on getting them their green card. Ismar's mother was worried that rumors would start about him or his wife cheating so it was best that she came. They also did not believe it would take 3-4 years they felt the process would take a lot longer.

felt really happy. I was happy with what god had presented me. I think that a wife and a daughter is an amazing I think it's a complete family.

ED: 51:34- In that time having a job and your family being here did you think that you guys would stay here or did you still think that you would return to Guatemala?

ID: 51:48- Well the truth is I though since we had... well since we had the chance to get the residency and as long as the employer sponsored me. In order for me to work... well someone with a job you wont lack a roof food for the family.⁴⁰ I knew that I was protected by my employer, and my family as well. I felt happy that I was able to reach that and I was able to be here in a country that isn't mines. The US is no different you see we are all American because whether we are central south or North American we are American!⁴¹ Well that my way of think. Well in fact if we go to El Salvador Honduras Costa Rica Panama we are all the same color. I think American we are all central southern or northern we are the same.

ED 53:46- So with you papers and you wife being here did you guy plan on making your family bigger here in the US?

ID: 54:00- Yes well in fact after working and my wife and daughter came I had a son. My son was born here followed by my second and third daughter. I felt that I was happier because my family became complete. I think that the day the residency went through and we were able to travel here and there with out fear of immigration getting us I felt really happy.⁴² I was really grateful to the US like we say it's a country well sometime you need a residency or citizenship so that you can be here and express how you feel. Well I didn't have that chance but I give thanks to god that I was a hard worker. We didn't come here to the US to cause problems we came here to work and progress in the country. We work and with love because we like to work. Being here or in my country I would've done the same thing and worked. I feel really happy being here.

ED: 56:12- How long did you work for that employer until you and your wife and daughter finally got the residency?

ID: 56:22- I worked for that company for 11 years. In fact after nine years of working for that company is got my residency.⁴³ I was working with them and I always give them thanks because I have a family. I give thanks to them and god or

⁴⁰ Family was huge for Ismar and he believed that hard work and dedications would pay off.

⁴¹ Did not think that there was a difference between the countries in the Americas that they were all even

⁴² they did not get their green cards until 1995 in fact his fourth child was not born until after the got their green cards.

⁴³ When an employer sponsored an immigrant the had an agreed amount of years that the worker had to work for them after they received the green card

god and to them because I can... well they supported me my wife daughter that I brought from Guatemala because we were able to live with out fear that immigration could do this or that. Also because I liked to work.

ED: 57:39- You had two kids here before you got your residency in that time did your wife and you have any fears that you guys would be sent back to Guatemala did you guys have a plan for your children if that happened?

ID: 58:01- Yes well in fact I always had fear that immigration would get my wife. Also we had fear of the police because they are people that work for the country and keep the country safe. I always had fear that something would happen. Thanks to god nothing happen to us. In fact until we got a residency we were able to say we could breath easy.⁴⁴ You could also see what you could do in the future.

ED: 59:10- What year were you finally able to travel to Guate on a plane with your papers knowing you could return to the US whenever you wanted?

ID: 59:26- Ok yes in the year 1995 was the first time we could travel to Guatemala without that fear that they could stop you at the airport. You could go see the people that were over there (Guatemala) friends grandparents, uncles. You could also go see were use to live. You are always thinking about how people are doing over there friends grandparents everyone that was over there.⁴⁵ Like I said before I was always really friendly to everyone over there and I was really liked in my town. A lot of time has past now and they are always calling Martin Martin also my children tell me "dad why does everyone here know you" I think if everyone knows me its not because I'm bad its because I tell them its because of the good and I liked to help and make friendships over there. I was always open to anyone whether they were young old in fact to me an older person deserves the respect and care and friendship that you could present to them. One has to give and show the education friendship to your people you see.

ED: 1:01:53 Having you papers and work did you get use to leaving here in the US? What were your living conditions did you have a house or an apartment?

ID: 1:02:15 Well yes at first in those times it was hard for someone who didn't have a social security to buy any property. In fact in order to rent an apartment was hard as well. You needed a person that had papers to fill out papers to rent an apartment. Thanks to god there was people that helped us but there were also people that abused because they a right... they felt superior to others that didn't have how do I

⁴⁴ Deportation is a huge issue for many illegally immigrates which children that are born in the US Kalina Brabeck, "The Impact of Detention and Deportation on Latino Immigrant Children and Families: A Quantitative Exploration," *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, (August 2010) 341-361.

⁴⁵ This part of the interview I could see a change in his tone he was happier talking about this subject.

say this that didn't have a way to rent an apartment you see. There was a lot of people that went through stuff like that. At least I didn't have that problem but like I say I had a lot of friendships and they helped me and we still the same like we say in my country "with or without" I believe like I said before south north Caribbean and central we are the same.

ED: 1:04:24- How many kids did you have?

ID: 1:04:33- In my family my oldest was born in Guatemala after we had 3 children born here in the US and they like we say are North American. I feel really happy having them here. The love and support I've had with them has been really good. I've tried so that they can remember how I am there mother and grandparents are.⁴⁶ I think like we say I feel really happy really happy.

ED: 1:05:38 You said you got your residency and had three children here after did you and you wife plan to go back to Guatemala with your children or did you want them to grow here in the US?

ID: 1:05:56- Well look my way of think um... the most important thing to me is that my children become professionals have a career here in the US so they can fend for themselves.⁴⁷ Well I think me taking them back to Guatemala will be difficult. But I want to work so they have a career here and fend for themselves but also I don't want that one day they ask were is Guatemala? No never that! I would never allow that. In the first place I'm Guatemalteco! They need to know were their dad and grandparents and what their grandpa and dad lived through. I know that this country offers a lot of opportunities that's why I was saying I want them to be professional and fend for themselves. Without saying... they have to know were they came from! It's a small country but they have to know so that if one day someone asked them where you from they don't say we are from here (US) that way people see where you are from. I tell them in fact I've taken them back to my country so that they know were their parents came from that's what I've been trying to show them. Now if one day I want to take them that will be different because they have they make their own decision now I cant tell them I'm going to take you because they aren't children anymore.⁴⁸ I think that they have to know how to adjust in life and become wiser you need experience to do something for our community because we are humans and we have to work for everyone and give your best. Sometimes like we say you cant give what you want but if you can then you do the favor if not say no I cant because you cant be lying to people that trust you. But sometime you

⁴⁶ He wants his children to remember were he came from. He does not want them to lose the culture that many Latino Children lose when living the US

⁴⁷ He wants all his children to get a degree and a college so that they can support themselves and he will not have to stay to help.

⁴⁸ Currently he has four children that are 25, 23, 21, and 18. One of them is married and has a child. The other three are currently going to differen colleges and universities.

can and sometimes you cant. So when you can you can and when you cant you have to say no.

ED: 1:10:11 Its been 32-33 years since you first came to the US in that time did you think you would accomplish everything you have in the US?

ID: 1:10:31- Honestly I think like I said before I give thanks to this country the US for giving me my wife my children I feel really happy with what I have and with what I've done! Like I say all the time if we work and are good people where ever you are you can more forward.⁴⁹ The only thing is in my thinking is I didn't finish school but yes I give thanks to god because he give me power to become a man to do what I've done and work. That what I think. I tell my children I didn't have the chance to go to school I work hard because I have to and my children have had role models. I expect my children not to have to work as hard as me that's why I stress to them to study hard so that they would have to work as much as me.⁵⁰ I want them to work if they want to but it would be in a different form. It would be in a more professional job compared to what I've done. No job is embarrassing here but sometimes people don't have to work as hard so that they could have what they want. School is the most important thing! You have to make decision to what you want. I think that right now I'm successful and I'm happy about it!

ED: 1:13:32- Since you got your residency have you thought about becoming a US citizen?

ID: 1:13:50 Well yes in fact it was actually hard to accept saying look I want to be a US citizen. For me it was a strong word because you would renounce your country. I was a little confused. Honestly I didn't want to do it but one day I started thinking well lets see if we can become citizens of the US. Thanks to god I was able to do it not because I wanted to renounce my country I also don't want to say I didn't want to be a US citizen. But like I say for the good of my children and family I said well we are going to be able to do it. I was a little indecisive. I was able to do it and I feel good.⁵¹

ED: 1:15:49 Since you became a US citizen how have you felt? Has it been easier being here in the US?

⁴⁹ Ismar is a big believer in Karma. Believes that if you are good, good things will come to you.

⁵⁰ What he means is that he works as a painter and there is a lot of labor evolved in this line of work his wife works as a house cleaner. He was his children to have a career were they can sit in desk and not have to do so much labor.

⁵¹ He took the citizenship test three times finally passing the third time after saying that it would be his last time taking it since the cost was expensive. Official Website of the Department of Homeland Security, "Apply for Citizenship," <http://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/learners/apply-citizenship>, (accessed May, 01 2014)

ID: 1:16:01- Honestly no I think that in which, ever form if you're a resident or citizen well right now I don't know I have my family and we are all good we haven't had a need to do anything major. Now that the elections happen we were able to vote and do what the Americans do not give their votes so that they see that we are here and show that we can do what Americans do. That's what we need to do. But yes it helped me and I feel good.⁵²

ED: 1:17:11- Since you've become a citizen have you been more involved politically? Have you been more aware of political issues?

ID: 1:17:23- Well in reality yes. There's a lot of stuff people need in the community and people need to be voiced.⁵³ I think that we have to say if there are needs in the community or for the country we have to say them. It will help everyone my family and the Latin community that is here to say were are present.

ED: 1:18:04- Now that you are a citizen is finding a job easier?

ID 1:18:12- Well I believe that to find a job well... I haven't had the need to go out looking for work. Like I said before I worked for that company that gave me my residency I worked for them 11 years. Now since I left not because I wanted to leave them but because of the need of health insurance for my children I had to leave them not because I was mad at them but I needed to protect my family and health. I needed to give my children what they needed. So I have to change jobs and in this new job I've been working for them 16 years and I feel good there. I've worked well I went there because they gave me health insurance to me that was really important because someone with four children needs to take their children to the doctors or hospital incase of an emergency. Yes it helped me that's my job I was also working in a restaurant. Like I said thanks to god I like to work and that has help me more forward with my children. In this country someone with four children without health insurance it can be really difficult thanks to god I say were I'm working now I've been there 16 years and I haven't need to look for another job. But right now with my age I think it will be hard for any one of 50 years to find a job somewhere new. But I think if they employ more until I'm 60 it will be a blessing if not god will decided what happens and as long as your working you can more forward right.

ED: 1:21:22 What time of job do you have right now?

ID: 1:21:26 well right now I'm working um I have a job that I paint and repairs. Im working in one place doing that I've been there for 16 years. I feel and I don't have anything to say to them. If one day a better opportunity comes up I would have to

⁵² One of the few changes he saw was being able to vote. He felt American after voting and being about to put his imput.

⁵³ He has always been big in helping his community that's why he helps in Guatemala. Now he feel that he needs to help all Latinos that cannot vote.

check it out. You can have security in one place but one day they can get mad at you. They can get or something can happen and what can someone do just look for another job.

ED: 1:22:20- Is that the only job you have right now?

ID: 1:22:22- Well right now I have that job. I also have a small company like we say a small company were I work in painting and putting in tiles and that help me a lot to support my family.⁵⁴ I think that if one day at my job there is no more work then I think I would have to make a bigger company or find a way to support my family and more forward keep working and making money to maintain your lifestyle.

ED: 1:23:11- Now you said your children are older now and going to school to become professionals and find a career. What do you want to do now do you want to go back to Guatemala or are you going to stay here?

ID: 1:23:41- Well honestly that's a way that we think all the time like I tell my wife and children one day if god lets us we want to return to Guatemala right.⁵⁵ But also if my children need my help and want us to stay here they we are here to help them and stay with them until they need us. If they don't need us then when I retire I want to go rest... well we wont be able to work no more well at least we don't want to be a burden on them. If they have their children and need are help then we always be there. We say now that we are going back Guatemala or going somewhere to live a more calm life. But I think that if there a need for them to have us here then we have to stay with them and we will. If not and they have careers and can have what they want and not have to deal with us then... that's why we are doing what we are doing in helping them right now when we can because if they don't study then it will be harder for them just like it was for us. It wasn't hard because we don't like to work but we didn't have the opportunity to go to school and knowledge of the language, which is an important factor for someone here in the US. But yes we want our children to be professionals and do something so us as parents feel pride and say that these are my children. That's what one has to do not tell them to do this or that. The most important thing for me and my wife is that they become professionals and have a career after the university. I want to people say this is Mr. Martins son or this is the daughter of Mr. Martin and Mrs. Ilisa that sounds so beautiful. If they can do that one well at least for me I would be the happiest man I would be so proud.

⁵⁴ He actually owned half the company at first he teamed up with a friend and the named the company Walter and Martin Painting. They would later break the company in half and he renamed his company Deleon Painting. He still works with Walter on big jobs but decided the split would be best for both.

⁵⁵ He Has built two houses in Guatemala so he and his wife can go retire he even build a store in one so that they could work if they wanted to. With his family growing having a grandson and another one on the way he feels it will be difficult to leave

ED: 1:27:08- Being an immigrant that came in 81 that got his residency and citizenship here in the US having a job a house a house in Guatemala how do you think the life of an immigrant has changed since 1981 compared to an immigrant that comes now?

ID: 1:27:08- Well you see I think that now it's really hard because before like since I lived here right. In fact when I came we went to any restaurant and could ask for any to eat because we didn't know how to order it.⁵⁶ Now it's different now if people come from our countries there's a lot of ways and they have made it easier to go to a restaurant. In fact now if you go to like a McDonald you don't have to say give me a hamburger with cheese now you can just say give me a number 1 that really easy to say. When I came it was harder you would go in to a McDonald and say give me this but you couldn't say what you wanted if you could say Big Mac then you could get it if not then you didn't eat. Now that's now the case now its easier were you go there are people that well now people speak more languages French Spanish Italian it helps everyone that comes to north America but before it was a little hard to go somewhere to ask for something to eat you had to left in fact I went through a hard situation the first day or a week after I had been working someone told me... well like I said before I liked having friendships and one lady of color told me he told me "what go you want to eat?" he told me in English and I didn't know what he said at that time I mean how would i. in my country we had an English class but the English we spoke over there well we knew that they read it to us in the book but they would read it one time and never again and that was that. The English class past and you didn't learn anything. But now it's different for the people that are coming. Before like I said in order to get and apartment it was hard now it's now. Now someone comes from our country and they come to find a place to live were this is and that there's a lot of stuff for them. It's really different but also very hard because it's hard to find work. Before it wasn't too hard. The times are changing and it's hard for an employer to hire a person without legal status because they have to protect themselves. But I think there a lot of things that help and a lot of things that hurt immigrants too.⁵⁷

ED: 1:31:52- My last question is as an immigrant are you happy with the life you have lived here in the US being an immigrant from Guatemala?

ID: 1:32:10- Yes I'm happy I'm happy because like I said before I have a family four children a wife a mother in law that have been my support. I'm thankful to this country like I say because of the work and everything it has given me. Like you aid

⁵⁶ As mention before in the 80's there was not a large population of Latinos so language was a problem now they have signs everywhere in both Spanish and English.

⁵⁷ There has been a lot of immigration laws passed after 9/11 that have made the lives of immigrates a lot harder and there are even more defenses on the boarder to stop illegally immigrants Charles G. Blake, "The New Immigration Rules," *The Modern Law Review*, 743-744.

before I have a house four children and I have given them what I think is good for them. Like I say until they tell me look dad this is all the help I need. But I think I have taught my children for them to love their parents and everyone. Also to respect everyone older than them I tell them that if one day my siblings can help them if one day they are going down the wrong road or if one day someone tells them something about my siblings or something that they should make a conclusion and come up with a solution. They can ask their uncles questions but I want them to listen first before acting. First you have to listen to act. One important thing is the respect to your elders and everyone else. There are people that can teach you things you are not born knowing everything you have to respect and act that's what's I say. If some doesn't listen or act you have to listen then act you. I feel happy with my four children and sometime you have tell them what's good and bad so they know. And not to lack respect. I say to respect old people I'm still young right but when I'm older ill still show respect. I hope they care and love their parents like I say good or bad we are here in this life. If it wasn't for our parents we wouldn't be here. Suffer or enjoying life like I say I think I feel really good with everything whether it is a lot or a little. I think my children should feel good like I say until they are professionals with a title to fend for themselves and no one is ordering them around until that day I will say I've made it!

ED: 1:36:58 Thank you