Marcello Tafoya
TCU Civil Rights in Black and Brown Oral History Project
https://crbb.tcu.edu/interviews/interview-with-marcello-tafoya

Part 1 – Background and School Experiences:

TCU: We'll start talking about your background.

Tafoya: Oh.

TCU: Where were you born?

Tafoya: I was born in Lorain, Ohio.

TCU: Okay.

Tafoya: January 16, 1939, before you were a tear in your daddy's eye.

TCU: Did you grow up there?

Tafoya: No, we moved back to Texas where our family originated, which is Georgetown, Texas, just 30 miles north of Austin, and I just came back and I was only seven years old at the time. I was raised in Georgetown.

TCU: What was your family doing in Ohio?

Tafoya: Well, my father moved over there to work at the steel factory, Gloring Steel Factory, and we were all born there.

TCU: The rest of the family was originally from Georgetown?

Tafoya: Yeah. My grandmother, my great-grandmother, everybody. Too many family members.

TCU: How was running in Georgetown back then?

Tafoya: Well, first of all when we got to Georgetown there were three schools: An all white school, an all black school, and Escuelita Mexicanas near the river. My two brothers were already in such a position that they went automatically to the junior high which was a white man's school and I didn't. I ended up in the escuelita near the river and I only went to the first grade believe it or not. All the students were migrant workers so they never could get actually past the first grade because they would go work.

By the time they would come back, go to work, come back and I was stuck with them, too, but then the teacher died which is not a happy occasion but in my sense is that they couldn't find another bilingual teacher. They moved us, there was 42 of us, they moved us to the grammar school which the guys were already like 12 years old and they were cotton pickers so they were big. They wouldn't fit in the little desk so they kept moving

us to the third, fourth, fifth grade and finally they moved us to the high school, which they built a special class for us in junior high.

Out of the 42 kids, 12 of us graduated and stuck it out. But yeah, discrimination was pretty heavy in Georgetown then. In fact, you go there to the courthouse and in the bottom basement they have two water fountains, black and white, and we don't know which one we should drink from. There was a question there, and of course Georgetown has a back history of there's a tree right behind the courthouse. They called it the hanging tree where they used to hang Indians and Mexicans and Blacks and all that stuff. It was pretty bad.

In fact, there was a restaurant there that didn't serve Hispanics or Blacks and then a little town named Round Rock just south of there, there was a beer joint there that had on the door it said, "No women, no Mexicans, no Blacks, no dogs allowed." I mean this is how bad it was at the time. I'm talking back in 1945. That's what occurred there. I was very fortunate that when I got to go to high school I had some good teachers. Southwestern University is there which is the oldest university in the state of Texas, and the wives of the professors were our teachers so we had it pretty good, but at that time it was math and science, not reading and writing. We lost out on all that but math and science, it was tremendous.

https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/background-and-school-experiences-4

Part 2 – Co-Founding La Onda Tejana Part One:

TCU: Do you recall a particular situation in which you were subjected to discriminatory-

Tafoya: Well, me, myself, no. Only because I can speak correct English. Other than that, if I had a Spanish accent, I would have been pulled over and everything like that but no. That was the only advantage, but our people were discriminated many times. In fact, I wanted to be a priest, so I went to Notre Dame for a little while, and they sent me to [inaudible 00:00:32] in Mexico to be a one of several directors of an orphanage. I got sick, came back, then volunteered with people volunteering, went back to Mexico City, spent a year there, and when I got back, I had a choice: either go back to Notre Dame or go into radio.

This guy offered me a radio program. So, the people that went with me said, 'Ah, get the radio program, we'll help pay for it.' And they didn't, so in the meantime I had gotten a job selling insurance. So I had to pay for my own program. I'm one of the co-founders of what they called 'La OndaTejana' which is Mexican music. I helped start it. I was like Little Joe, Quién Familias, [inaudible 00:01:20] Mexican Revolution, and all this, and also some Mexican groups that lived in Texas also because I played their music. At that time, they wouldn't play Tejana music, because all the DJs were from Mexico, and they strictly stuck to that. But I was one of the innovators who started finding these tejana groups that were recording, but they weren't getting played.

TCU: How did you develop this passion for Tejana music?

Tafoya: Well, the reason was every time I heard music in Mexico, it was Castilian correct Spanish and we were taught Tex-Mex which is half english, half Spanish and we would mingle it, but I got very interested because the type of music that the Tejana were producing was similar to the Mexican music, but interpreted our style. At that time, orchestras were created. They were mimicking people like Guy Lombardo, the big bands, so they all were brass bands. They had trumpets and saxophones, a completely different sound, and that really intrigued me because I said, 'Wait.' And then, being taught by my grandmother and my father and everything that we needed to help each other, I started to say well, look: what better can I do is to help these orchestras become very popular and very well known and make a living for their family, which they weren't doing at the time.

They would play at quinceañeras and all but never a big venue. So I said, well we ought to do that. Of course, I got some help from a young lady named Rosita Neles from Segin which was a DJ also, and then she was interested in Tejana, and a girl named Maria Rodriguez which they used to call her 'maruca' in Rosenberg near Houston. We were young. It wasn't one of these things that you depended on the elderly to tell us. We were creating our own, so we were rebels.

In fact, they hated us. In fact, I tried to create kind of like an organization of DJs. I got a letter from one gentleman here that said, 'What you need to do is learn how to speak correct Spanish and not do this.' Hey wait a minute, come on guy. we're in the United States. We're American. we have our own passions. I ignored that so I kept pushing it and pushing it. All of a sudden, some DJs from Lubbock would have dances, Tejana dances. They had a radio station there, so they wanted the music that I had. So was sending music to them, reel to reel, so they started into that también. So like I said I tried to promote it as much as I could for many years.

https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/co-founding-la-onda-tejana-part-one

Part 3 – Co-Founding La Onda Tejana Part Two:

TCU: So in your first job in the radio, which was in Georgetown, how did you open the first spaces for Tejana music or for Spanish language programming?

Tafoya: Well, first of all, I had a tremendous advantage. I started my radio show ... I used to buy my own time, with 30 minutes Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. Then I told them, "Hey. I can't get any advertisers. I need a whole week. And I need an hour. Preferably two." So the guy said, "Okay, I'll give you two hours at the same price." I said, "Hey, fine." So by coming to Austin and coming to the other little towns where we started making dances, and the community would go there and they would listen, and we would mention the radio station, and they became more in tune to what we were doing. So consequently, it started spreading.

But then when I got my TV program, FM started to come into play. Well, our people didn't know what FM was, believe it or not. In the meantime [inaudible 00:01:02], I came to Austin and started a radio show at night on KUT at the University of Texas from 11:00 PM to 1:00 in the morning. And then there was

another station here called KAZZ that this friend of mine that had the record company wanted to buy time. So he said, "Would you do the show?" So I was doing four shows a day, just going back and forth.

So it started spreading very, very fast because of the amount of music out there. And it was like 30 minutes here, an hour here, two hours here. But the people started to learn ... And on my TV show, I had to draw a picture of an FM radio and tell them, "Look, this little switch has to go to FM, and you have to look for the number." So you had to educate, like it or not. Of course, as time went on and people started to hang on to it, man, it started going wild. There was no such thing as a 24-hour [inaudible 00:01:59] station here. Later. Okay. So this is one way it started.

And then of course I had the newspaper [inaudible 00:02:08]. And the reason I started [De Eco en 00:02:11] Musica ... And I had an advertising agency, by the way, so that brought in some money. Was because there was a lot of things happening in Austin that were very radical. Like police would beat Chicanos over the head and run them down and harass them constantly. So I had two young men, Zeke Romo and Bob McKinsey, that said, "Hey, why don't we start a newspaper? We'll do all the work. You just bring in the advertisers and to help pay for it, and we'll do this." They were going at UT at the time. And then I had an office, so they would go there in the middle of the night and type of the stories, and we would by hand lay them out, and then take them to get printed.

TCU: So how did they approach you? How did you meet them?

Tafoya: Well, because they knew who I was. Zeke did because he lived in the barrio. He knew who I was. And he knew I was ... Well, I call myself a radical, but I was the kind of person that outreached to the Chicano community, the Latin-American community. And so they knew about it, so they came to me over here.

https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/co-founding-la-onda-tejana-part-two

Part 4 – Participation in Community Activism:

TCU: Also, I was curious, did you become involved in any activism or civic engagement in Georgetown?

Tafoya: Oh, yes. We had several big things coming up at the City Council and County Commissioners Court, and with my radio, I would fill up the venue. And it got to the point where the community leaders would call me when they had an issue to please, bring your people, and we would fill out the place to the point where they wouldn't even fit inside the building.

But again, the people reacted because they saw what was happening, and because you were honest and straight forward with them. You weren't lying to them. And then we started getting more people to go out and vote, and just the movement started, okay? And then of course, [Raphanita 00:00:46] came in, of course PASO ... I don't know if you ever heard of PASO, and I was one of the original members of PASO. And with the church, of course, we did a lot to get people out to vote here in Austin the same way.

But it took organizations like that, and somebody that had the media that was willing disseminate that to the people, because the other radio stations, the other programs, because they were prominent Mexican, they wouldn't do that because to them, it was just, la musica and all this stuff, and I wasn't. I was more like community, hey, we're living in poverty. And the history here in Austin is that ... you know where I35 is. There was no I35. It was nothing but grass. Between the police station and the hill across the street, there was nothing there all the way to the river. So, what they did was the Mexicanos and the rico lived on Lamar Boulevard believe it or not. Even the Catholic church was there [inaudible 00:01:44] Guadalupe. They moved all of them over to this side, including the church.

So, the people came over here and they bought their little land and their little house and they were very quaint, very community, la raza, here. Once they build I35, everybody going over. They said, "Hey, look at that. I could buy that property and walk to work." So, they started to come in and take over the east side, but they had never noticed us until then. And then, we had our own stores, we had our own restaurants, we had our own pan dulce, we had a tortilleria. We had all these things here on this side. And of course, the Anglo community didn't like tacos and all of a sudden they fell in love with tacos.

And they started coming over and they were so scared of us because we used to have gangs here. We had the Johnny Boys, the Kings Bee, La Lomita, on top of it they all had their own gangs. You being [inaudible 00:02:44] you know what I mean. The gangs were not what people consider a gang. They weren't going out beating people and stealing, but they were protecting their neighborhood. They didn't want people just to come in and take advantage of their neighborhood. So, if you came in, you had to give yourself who you were. You couldn't even date somebody from here. [Spanish 00:03:03]. You can't come and just take our women. You have to seriously be part of us.

https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/participation-in-community-activism

Part 5 – Discrimination in Georgetown and Austin:

Tafoya: ``The difference is in Georgetown we had two barrios. Here we have like four barrios. The same community, the same type of people, the same atmosphere. So there wasn't that big of a deal, although the gentleman that I did a lot of business with sold me his house in northeast Austin before it was inseminated by me, he kind of [inaudible 00:00:27], so I was the only, there were only three main families that lived in my neighborhood, which was Ruben Dramas and Alfonso Ramirez and myself.

So all of a sudden after these many years, all of a sudden it turned around knowing that we twice, three whites living there. But now they're still coming in now and trying to buy out. No, I didn't see any difference because our struggles in Georgetown are the same struggles here, but bigger, ten times bigger. So that's the only difference, but as far as the treatment of La Raja was the same. You got menial cops. You didn't get the big ones.

We didn't have any lawyers and doctors and you have entities started to decide who would get educated, but our school systems here did not educate our children to be prepared to go to college. They had a high school that was very poverty riddled that would teach you how to be a mechanic, how to be a carpenter, how to be a subservient, not be the owner.

The only mistake they made there is that when they became plumbers, they tried to open their own plumbing job. When they were carpenters, they started to open their own business and that's a big mistake they made because that gave the opening for business to be had. Schoolkids could try to train to become business people. Of course, they didn't get the degrees, but they were making a living. Now all of a sudden, the Anglo came in and said: "Hey, you guys are good. They're good carpenters. They're good plumbers. They're good." So they would hire them more than normal, which I thought was good for everybody.

But again, it's not still happening like it needs to, like they would close. We only have one middle school. They moved all the middle schools away. One of the biggest fights that we had here was when they were trying to do this, they would come and take our kids and come to the other side of town to fill their schools up and leave us without any children. So when we fought the school board, that's when we started using the word Chicano, because we wanted to shock them, 'cause they were used to Mexican American, Hispanic, etc. but when they started hearing the word Chicano, and there was the movement with the brown berets, that I helped start it. Well, I helped start it, but another gentleman really took off with it.

I told him I couldn't be a brown beret because I had anemia and I didn't wanna die. You're doomed, you're doomed because you're a brown beret. No, no, no, I support the brown berets, but I'm not a beret myself. The meetings were in my office. Everything came out of my office. I double dipped them just like they did us, except the other way around.

TCU: Okay, so we're willing to come back to this topic.

Tafoya: Okay.

TCU: If you answer one question. I have one question about the process of moving to [inaudible 00:03:24], and your house. Did you feel welcome by the people who were already living there?

Tafoya: I didn't meet my neighbors for ten years. It took me ten years to meet my neighbors. Again, you have to realize I was doing so much, I was hardly at home. My wife was there

with the kids as we were having kids and she would go to the schools, take the kids to school and participate for them. Normally, because I wasn't around there, I was mostly around here and then going back and forth and doing all these radio shows, I never was hanging around in that part of town so this became my town on this side. Otherwise, no. I never got bothered by anybody because again they all heard I was on the radio and they didn't want to cause any problems because I might come back at them with the radio. Media has power, which I didn't know.

https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/discrimination-in-georgetown-and-austin

Part 6 – Latina/o Media to Inform the Community:

TCU: I want to ask about the programming in your radio shows. So you mentioned that you used the programming on the radio and television to inform people and educate. And you also played music. So how did you combine the public affairs with music?

Tafoya: Well just like anybody else in between songs you would mention [Spanish 00:00:20] there's going to be a meeting at such and such a place regarding an issue with this and that. So, and then of course I used a lot of it for teaching the elderly about Social Security, about their income tax, things like that, you know, and who to go to and who to talk to. But only in a conversational way. Never approach them in a way where we were radical at all. It just strictly informative. You know? There's a Pan-American recreation center, you know, there's gonna be a big show tonight, you know, and I'll be MC'ing and so and so will be playing. Come on down. When they did we would sit there and talk to them about hey by the way, we need better streets we need for you to go to city council you know, and talk about that. And you're having trouble, you know, with this and with that and who to go to. So, we were more like an informative group of people.

And funny because when we started the Brown Berets they were the people that were really making a contact with the people bringing all that information to me. In fact, all my Brown Berets, I gave them like one of those throw away cameras and said whatever you see wrong take a picture, bring it to me, I'll develop it, put it in the paper. You know? And this way I mean you're talking about a hundred a hundred fifty Brown Berets out in the street. I mean they gotta see something, you know? I couldn't do it myself. So it was a collaborative thing. In other words, you get the community involved and the community can do a lot for you. When you alienate your community then all of a sudden you get the rebuttal back, you know? But I never did that.

TCU: Did for example your activities in your [inaudible 00:02:03] did they ever damage your relationship with advertisers?

Tafoya: Oh no. Well see again that's coming back to the Echo. Okay, the Echo was so radical that advertisers didn't want to advertise with them. You know? So, but I

said, you know what? I'm gonna create another newspaper called Musica which is nothing but about music. What the artists are doing, where they're at and the advertisers "Oh yeah I'll buy ads on that". So the Musica was supporting the Echo. So again, I did what David done to us many years, I played them in their own game. But that's the way I was able to do that otherwise not like you said.

And then funny in radio it turned the other way around. Where the advertiser wanted the Hispanic business because they knew that they bought in credit or whatever but they were buyers. They were people that were out there that they never reached. Because again, when you play Mexican music yeah some of them will listen to it. But for some reason, I don't know what it was, the Tejano music grabbed our community a lot faster. Because it was something new and it was like their style and they understood it and they wanted to be part of it. You know? Our dances average two thousand people, you know? And in the old days when they would bring a group from Mexico, I mean a hundred a hundred and twenty five people. There weren't that many people from Mexico actually here at the time. Although, their great-great grandfathers were here but then everybody grew up. And then again once you have the assimilation of the youth coming out and going to school they become more Americanized. And so they wanted this different, a difference between the old and the new.

https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/latina-o-media-to-inform-the-community

Part 7 – Tejano Record Labels and What Makes Tejano Music Distinct:

TCU: So, also speaking about music, I think in the late '60s, you had a several labels.

Tafoya: Oh yeah. I had Texas Records, me and [Roy Matano 00:00:11] were partners. Then I helped people like [inaudible 00:00:14] and [inaudible 00:00:16] America and then later on right now, we had two, three other labels too. The idea there was a lot of the groups couldn't find anyone to record them. So, I said, "Look, you pay for the recordings and everything and I'll give you the record and I'll just keep so many for me to distribute." I wasn't in it to make the money. I didn't want to.

Tafoya: My idea was I needed to educate as much as I can and give opportunities to groups to go out and make money, make a living. That's how I worked the labels. It wasn't really a money-making deal, it was more like educating everybody and giving them an opportunity.

TCU: So, also in the same lanes, what was your working relationship with Little Joe and the [familia 00:01:05]?

Tafoya: Oh, it was beautiful. Well it was like anything else, give and take. Joe created an orchestra after his brother, his brother had the orchestra and he died in a car accident, so Joe took over. Of course, Joe was like a lot of tejano groups, they was not too well

accepted, so a friend of mine, Mr. Gonzales and Coleen helped him get his first recording, and then he came down on record and we had some recordings there, and then later on he met Johnny Gonzales, set up a record, started recording with him.

Well because I was in the radio and I was in that style, Johnny Gonzales started a radio show in Dallas. In fact, one of Little Joe's brothers, we call him Padre, and his father, they used to call him La Cantora, he used to come to my radio show and perform live with the guitar. I knew the whole family. It was what they were looking for and hoping to get out of, so yeah, it was a very good relationship.

TCU: In your own words, what makes tejano music different to Mexican music?

Tafoya: Again, the interpretation of the music. You can get a song from Mexico and do it our style, in other words orchestra with, you have brass, which changes the interpretation, it changes the sound, it changes the feeling, because we have a lot of trumpets, a lot of saxophones, and the keyboard and all this, so all it was is the atmosphere you created by having this type of music. Tejano music really is Mexican music in a way. We never had Tejano writers til afterward, til the mid-70s, til our guys started. They said, "oh, we can write our own songs."

Tejano songs are more like country and western to tell a story. They don't talk about drugs, they don't talk about this and that. They're more about love and caring for each other and all this stuff, so there is a difference. And then, how do I say it, the clear sound, the method of delivery of the music was a little bit more soothing and it's not the rock and roll that it was later. There is a difference, believe it or not.

https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/tejano-record-labels-and-what-makes-tejano-music-distinct

Part 8 – Activism among Tejano Artists and Building Tejano Music Media:

TCU: Several artists from the Tejano, from down at Tejana, were also evolving with the community and with activists.

Tafoya: Yeah, of course.

TCU: So, do you recall how this...

Tafoya: They would do it in the dances, like Little Joe. Little Joe was a little bit like Antonio Vilar, you know he would go and talk to the people about issues and things like that so that's the way they did it you know and the community churches needed a band to play for [Spanish 00:00:34] instead of charging them the $2,000 they would charge them $500 only to involve the community, but once they had the community there, they knew about the issues, they would talk about it. Salir y votar, go on a vote and be part of the community. Get involved, otherwise that your gonna get nothing.

SO, they too, were kinda like teachers of ... Because we knew, the people knew it, but they were not inspired to do anything until somebody else told them. No what better

else than an artist to tell you to get involved? And that's the key. And now a days, you see these public service announcements that use a recording artist. The movie stars. The television star. To get that public service. Why? Because they want somebody credible, somebody they recognize, somebody they know to do these things.

TCU: Did the lyrics of the music ever become political?

Tafoya: Oh yeah, yes, sometimes pretty good, pretty good. In fact, I have a CD over [inaudible 00:01:34] and they say, "[Spanish 00:01:38] the eagle is going to wake up, and when they do, there's going to be changes. So wake up eagle, wake up America." Some of the songs were in that trend but not very many. But there was several. And then of course you've got like Little Joe who is [inaudible 00:01:59] west, you know, how it was in West Texas when you went to work. And then las lluvias that passes, it's like the rain that falls down and people start to relate to these things, and they say, "oh, that's right, that does happen that way." So yeah, a lot of the lyrics had a lot of political tones or whatever you want to call it.

TCU: At some point you had TV, radio, print, you had the record labels. How did you start building your...

Tafoya: I don't know, it just came naturally. One thing led to another and to another and to another and I was willing to do it, others wouldn't, didn't want to take the chance, I would. Because again, I think it's hard for me to really say that I was innovative or nothing like that, but a lot of people believed in me, and that's why white man Cactus Pryor is the one that offered me the TV show, because he heard the radio.

He said, "I don't know if you want..."

I said, "don't play with me, you know?"

He said, "no no no, really, in fact next Wednesday's your first show."

"What? I didn't have an idea of television."

He said, "no, no."

I said, "okay, I'll come."

And there was the guy there that, they called him Packard Jack, he was in one of these kiddie shows, he was like one of these old miners, and there was there when I was. I was as nervous as you, I was about ready to have a baby, I mean I was really gone. And he walked up and he said "Marcelo, you're in radio, right?"

I said yeah.

"Well, television is radio but with a picture."

So that calmed me down because I was well I can talk on radio.

https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/activism-among-tejano-artists-and-building-tejano-music-media

Part 9 – Building Tejano Music Media and The Echo Part One:

Tafoya: Then I asked the camera man to take ... You know that little red light on top of the camera? I told him, "Cover those. I don't want to know where the camera is, I don't want to be looking at it, I just want to do my thing, and you all find a shot that you need."

So, that was one way they really helped me to be able to do something like that. Of course, in radio, I used to do something different. I used to put a picture of somebody I knew in front of me, and I would talk to that person. I wouldn't yell at him, I wouldn't scream and, "The top ten, or dah, dah, dah." No, I was talking to somebody, and I think everybody who related to that because I was talking to them. So, that's what made the difference between me and other so called DJs.

TCU: With the prank so The Echo wasn't, by you mentioned, [crosstalk 00:00:55]...

Tafoya: Bob McKinley, yeah.

TCU: What was your involvement with the writing and preparation of the newspaper?

Tafoya: I never... they did all the writing and put it together, and I was just the payee. I paid for it, I took it to get it printed, I wouldn't even read the stories until after I got the paper back. Because I told them, "hey, as long as you stick to the issues of the community, as long as you don't use bad words, as long as you don't put anybody down, good."

And they were in journalism anyway, so they knew the rules of that. And like I said, that to me makes a difference. When you give free hand... again, I would never... my disc jockeys, I never told them what to play, what to say, as long as it wasn't bad words, as long they weren't putting nobody down, you play whatever you want. Whatever your audience... Because there's three of us in this room, we all have a different point of view. We all have a different audience, so you deal with your people.

So that was the way I was able to accomplish what I did with The Echo. Of course there were some misspelled words, but again, at school I never learned anything about reading or writing and all that. Well, I could read, but you understand what I'm saying. So I kinda left that up to them.

TCU: So you mention that you have through The Echo and your other activities in the community, you supported the Brown Berets and had working relations with Gasolina. How did The Echo, how was the relationship with this publication and these publications, was there any collaborations?

Tafoya: Well, they would come to us constantly with whatever, but because we covered them. In other words when they had a rally, or when they had an issue, we would cover them. So we would publicize them. They never came to us and said, "hey I want a writer, or I want this on a start,"... no, no, they would ask us for that.

In fact, a young lady here in town, I met a very strong activist... was one of my writers and I didn't even know until later that she was one of the Brown Berets. That's Susana Almanza. And with Poder Now... but she was one of my original writers, I gave her the option... she said nobody would let her write, so I gave her a segment that she could write whatever she wanted.

I learned later, that she was one of my writers, because again they would submit the stories and Bob would put it all together. And later on, tambien este Ernesto Vaga and [inaudible 00:03:38] had a newspaper that I gave him. We started a newspaper in Lampasas, and so we couldn't keep it going so we gave it to him, he'd been there for 25 years. I think now it might be about 26 years. But so I asked Vaga and he did in Waco, Texas. He was a big Brown Beret when he was here. In fact, he used to sleep in my office and walk the streets.

But he's now doing real well, and again, he does his thing in Waco. Again, you do influence people in where they are and what they do.

TCU: So back then, you weren't publishing here in Austin. So in your view, how did the statesmen treat the Mexican-American community?

Tafoya: Not very well. Not the way a newspaper should. It has to be a very, very big issue before they'll cover it. And even with their new newspaper La Vasa, they cover more people from Mexico than they do us. Unless it's a big issue. Emilio Nevaira died and all of a sudden you got a big article. But otherwise than that, they don't really cover the actual problems that are existing here. And that's a sad thing about it. Because like anything else, journalism should be for the people to the people and whatever.

But at the time, tambien, we had other newspapers. La Fuerza, we had other newspapers published here. But again, most of the articles were Mexico, let's put it like that. They only would cover Tejano when they see us doing our thing, they would come and cover it. Normally they wouldn't, but they were newspaper. They were very good newspaper.

TCU: I also like to ask, did you have any collaboration or communication with other newspapers from East Austin, like The Villager? Or [crosstalk 00:05:34].

Tafoya: No, The Villager came later. Lot of them came afterwards. La Fuerza came after The Echo and a lot of the other newspapers. No, it was all because again, our stories were unique and geared to poverty and issues of our community, moreso than political. The only time we became a little political is when a lot of the politicians came for help, Gonzalo Barrientos, or Richard Moye, all those guys came to us and said help us to the get the vote out.

And as far as the political end, that ended right there. We never really used their issues, just the fact that they're running for office and because we never had Latinos at the City Hall or County or the State, all of a sudden we had a representative. And we used that to our advantage that now we have somebody you can go to, not that they're gonna do nothing for you, but at least you have somebody to go to.

https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/building-tejano-music-media-and-the-echo-part-one

Part 10 – The Echo Part Two:

TCU: Well, did the city itself, did City Hall try to reach out to you?

Tafoya: No. We had no Latinos on City Hall until Trevino got in there and Garcia got in there later on, people like that. No, not really.

We would go to them, yell and scream and holler over issues and a lot of times they didn't even know what was happening over here until we brought it to them.

TCU: Yeah.

Tafoya: So, yeah. That was the whole big protest. I remember one time we had a big issue with them [inaudible 00:00:33] and we marched from east side all the way to the police station and we took over the first floor of the police station.

The police went up the second floor. They didn't bother us. They left us alone, and that was the very first time you saw us carrying rifles and machetes and picks and stuff like that. And, they let us blow our steam and we left and that was it.

Of course, when the KKK came, here we go, we did the same thing. Marched and stuff like that and that's when they really paid attention. That's when the Austin American-Statesman, San Antonio Express, everybody ... All of sudden, you know there's a big thing happening in Austin.

So, yeah. And, then we had [Spanish 00:01:17], I don't know if you ever heard of it, [Spanish 00:01:17] was a movement on the hunt for migrant workers and labor workers and a lady Alessandra Houston came and put us together in San Antonio so we had a big, big march here in [Spanish 00:01:31] at the state capital and asking for help for the migrant workers and people like that. So, that was also the very first time we were being able to mass 20, 30, 40, 50 thousand people.

And, again, the media. They only had one media outlet which was me, newspaper, television and radio. And the other guys ... They wouldn't do it. I mean, I'm sorry to say, they wouldn't go along.

TCU: Yeah. Who was this person that came from Houston?

Tafoya: Maria ... and I can't remember her last name. I know her name was Maria ... and, in fact, she's still there. She has an organization there. Can't remember the last name. I know Maria.

TCU: Okay. Going back to what you said was the role of Diego in the city, in your view, to what extent is talking about poverty gonna sound political?

Tafoya: Well, see everything is political, believe it or not. If you talk about poor housing or not the proper streets that are being paved, or your sewage system, or ability for people to start businesses, getting loans to build a home, we would bring all those issues out. And, yes, it turns out political, believe it or not. But, in essence, it wasn't intended to be political. It was intended to inform them that the issues are here, the problems are here, and if you are truly a political individual, you should pay attention to it. So, that's how it became political. It didn't come up political originally because they didn't want to hear it. They didn't want to know that you were in that condition. Especially somebody else...they have poor people in Austin ...

TCU: Going back a little to the protest you were telling us about, what triggered that protest?

Tafoya: Police brutality.

TCU: Any particular event?

Tafoya: It accumulated as the years go by. You're constantly getting beat up on the street. You're constantly being raided. You have a beer joint and all of a sudden you have 15 cops there throwing people out the door. So, you get to the point, “Wait a minute. [inaudible 00:03:52] Enough is enough. We have to do something about it.” In reality that's what sparked it, the constant constant issue that were occurring, you have to do something about it. Finally, it got to the boiling point and we did.

TCU: In this protest and maybe in other protests, did Anglos and African-American community also participate, or was-

Tafoya: Only one time when we marched to the police station did we get the black berets or what do you call it ... I forget the name ... the African American similar to the brown berets, stepped in. They joined us. But, otherwise than that, they'd never joined us. Although The Echo, for example, one of their black housing projects, the blacks were burning it down, they were throwing feces all over the place, breaking glasses and everything. So, they called us to go cover it. But, they wouldn't let the Austin American-Statesman in or any other newspaper. We were the only ones there actually telling what was happening and the conditions and how they were. In fact, we got a call from the American-Statesman afterwards, saying,

“Can you give us your story?”

“No, it's exclusive, it's ours.”

Because they trust us so much they believed in us, so they called us in. That was the biggest times I think I felt honored to know that I was doing at least the right thing. When somebody other than your own is looking for help ...

https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/the-echo-part-two

Part 11 – The Echo Part Three and the Current State of La Onda Tejana:

TCU: Did things get better after the protest?

Tafoya: Well, yes and no. They turned the tables on them and they started doing it a little more politically. In other words, instead of running into the place they would slowly announce themselves and walk in, give people time to get the hell out. Before, it wasn't that way.

Yeah, the protests did help in that aspect but like anything else, anything you protest find a way to do the same thing but less. Like I say, there is no discrimination as such but there is under the table discrimination that when you do get caught and you do go to court that's when they get you or you do go to the judge and that's where he fines you and sends you to jail and stuff like that.

But not blatantly like they used to do it. That's the only difference. Like anything else that you've heard throughout the U.S. they got these huge fights, once they come back, "Oh but we're going to correct it, we're not going to arrest as many of you this time, we're going to arrest only half." Yeah it does get affect, but it doesn't get 100 percent, it's impossible I think, to get 100 percent.

TCU: And so why did Echo stop?

Tafoya: The number of years and then Zeke left the other places, Bob did and we tried to keep it going as long as we could and after 28 years, others started to come in so we let them do their thing. And of course we started losing Tejano radio, I went to Lubbock and opened another one in Lanpasses and then I went here but it took years, it wasn't overnight but we had lost a lot of the two hour radio shows and things like that. So it was because of that.

Even today I have people ask me when are you going to start a radio show. I don't know, too expensive now.

TCU: So besides the expenses why do you think Tejano radio has disappeared?

Tafoya: Again lack of having the station. Once people from Mexico came and started buying them out, they changed the whole format and the whole thing. In fact if it wasn't for Selena they wouldn't play any Tejano at all, things like that. It's still happening today, they say Tejano's dying but it's on the internet if you look on the internet you'll find a lot. But tell me how many of our people have the internet and then the Chicanitos

they're into rock and other genres, they forget Tejano music. Of course sometimes they have to listen if momma and daddy have old cds and records but otherwise than that they've gone to another venue of music. And then of course like anything else we're getting older and our youth are not keeping up to what we used to do. Of they hear about it, like I said they have their own genres, they have their own music-

https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/the-echo-part-three-and-the-current-state-of-la-onda-tejana

Part 12 – Decline of La Onda Tejana and Community Work:

TCU: Did things get better after the protest?

Tafoya: Well, yes and no. They turned the tables on it and they started doing it a little more politically. In other words, instead of running into the place, they would slowly announce themselves and walk in, give people time to get the hell out, but before, it wasn't that way.

But yeah, the protest did help in that aspect, but like anything else, anything you protest, they'll find a way to do the same thing, but less. Like I said, there is no discrimination as such, but there is under the table discrimination, that when you do get caught and you do go to court, that's when they get you. Or you do go to the judge, and that's when he fines you and sends you to jail and stuff like that. But not blatantly, like they used to do it. That's the only difference.

Like anything else that you've heard throughout the United States, you have these... what they come back at... "Oh, but we're gonna correct it. We're not gonna arrest as many of you this time. We're gonna arrest only half." So yeah, it does get effect, but it doesn't get 100%. It's impossible I think, to get 100%.

TCU: And so why did the cops...

Tafoya: The number of years, and then all of a sudden [Zeke 00:01:26] left the other place, as Bob did, and we tried to keep it going as long as we could, and after 28 years, others started to come in, so we let them do their thing.

And of course, we started losing Tejano Radio. I went to [inaudible 00:01:48] and opened another one in [Lampasa 00:01:49] and one here, but it took years. It wasn't like overnight, but we had lost a lot of the two hour radio shows and things like that.

So it was because of that, and even today I have people that are, "When are you gonna start a radio show? When are you gonna start a radio?" I don't know. Too expensive now.

TCU: So besides the expenses, why do think Tejana Radio has security?

Tafoya: Again, lack of having a station and once of Mexico can start him buying him out, they changed the whole format and the whole thing. In fact, if it wasn't for Selena, they wouldn't play anything at all. Things like that. It's still happening today.

They say Tejana dying, but it's in the internet. If you look in the internet you'll find a lot, but tell me how people have the internet.

And then the Chicanitos are older. They're assimilated into rock and other genre that they forget Tejana music. Course, sometime they have to listen to mom and dad. They had an old CD and record, but otherwise and that, they've gone to another venue of music.

And then, of course, like anything else, we're getting older and are youth are not keeping up to what we used to do. Oh, they hear about it. Like I said, they have their own genre. They have their own music.

https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/decline-of-la-onda-tejana-and-community-work

Part 13 – PASSO, La Fuerza, and Austin Eastside Activists:

TCU: So why did you join PASSO?

Tafoya: Because they had the same idea I had about getting the people out to vote. Their methodology was very unique. Something that hadn't been done before. Where, I don't know if you know how it works, but they would come to the community and get people involved. They used the [thrift's 00:00:25] facilities to have a hall where people would come. What they do is they would call say that the city council was going to be elected. They have four people running. They would call them all in. They would give their little speeches. They would leave. Once they left, we decided amongst all of us to who we're going to vote for. We would go in a block vote. This is the way we elected a lot of people who we believed was going to treat us right. This happened not only for city council, county commissioner but even senators and representatives. We would call them in and put them on a hot chair. This way, by block voting, we had like 400 votes. Then they would take people with them to go vote. It became quite very [inaudible 00:01:13].

The death to me of PASSO was when the people who put it together decided to run for office. Then the community says "Oh, so you were using us." They said, "You wanted to be a senator or representative?" That broke it up. Things like that happened. There is a new organization that I'm supporting [inaudible 00:01:32], but they are LULAC, one of my ex-bomberes he was a supreme commander started Laporsa - he is a minister by the way, most of the these guys being ministers. So right now they have been able to affect city council, county commissioner court, they've been able to help elect who they wanted, [inaudible 00:01:53] which I think we need more of that you know.

TCU: Okay, can you tell us the name of the person who started La Poisa?

Tafoya: Yeah, Gilbert [inaudible 00:02:04]. He's in LULAC, he's a minister.

TCU: Thank you.

Tafoya: Of course, you do realize a lot of the organizations such as [inaudible 00:02:18], their demise was the white man played a game, they gave them jobs. They gave them jobs in colleges and different companies, and once they had to work, they didn't have a time to be running around protesting, because they had to make a living. That was one way they used their means to put us in our place, I would say.

Although, they're still active in their own way. I know you've already talked to Paul [inaudible 00:02:50], which was the leader of the bomberes here in town. People like that, you know. These are the people that you need to talk to. Marfo De Leon, he was a teacher in Elgon, but was also involved here. [inaudible 00:03:14] Hernandez, which very very active in the city here, with the community and the people in these life. These are people who really have affected a lot of stuff. [inaudible 00:03:27]

We have a lot of people like that, that are really interested in the welfare of the community, that are not in there for the money. You can't buy them out either way, they've tried many times, I know. That's the only problem that they have with us. The [inaudible 00:03:52] are not in it for the money, oh I got many offers, be quieter, say something else. I'm social security, I don't need your money, I can barely make it, but I'd love to be a millionaire, but I'm not going to.

Then of course my problem was that I got involved in the SNL's. When they closed down the banks and save the loan, I went down the drain too. The only advantage I had, I didn't kill myself, was that I was a migrant worker at one time. I knew what the [inaudible 00:04:26] beans, and Tortillas, so I didn't need to have steak every day. I knew that I could survive, that's the only reason I didn't do it, otherwise losing, I was worth 4.5 million and walked out of the courthouse with 420 dollars in my pocket. I said, "Well, what the hell, it's only money."

https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/passo-la-fuerza-and-austin-eastside-activists

Part 14 – SER Jobs for Progress and Savings and Loans Crisis:

TCU: Can you tell us a little bit more about your involvement in SER?

Tafoya: Well, okay. When we first started SER ... that was Jobs for Progress We created SER here because the need of housing, the need of community involvement and so that was the extent of everything because once SER started and we started having educational centers and things like that, it started giving our youth an opportunity to advance.

In fact, [Zeke 00:00:34] works for SER in Dallas and he handled law. A lot of the SER had become corrupt and so the state took it over and now individual companies buy SER and they run it like a company instead of controlled by the state or somebody else.

So, yeah. Again ... and SER's still out there doing their thing, you know.

TCU: Okay, in your words what caused the loan crisis? The saving and loan crisis?

Tafoya: Over extension. For example, at that time, the banks would loan you money for just about anything. In fact, they loaned me when I bought my radio station in Lulac. I was going to build what they call a day timer because we were only full time.

So, I walked into the bank and I walked out with $175,000 with my signature and then all of a sudden, they over extended themselves with everybody. Building houses, building condominiums, oil wells and then when the economy hit bottom and nobody could pay their note, guess what? The government came and said, "Hey, you owe us $100,000. We want the money now."

I said, "But look, I'm making payment."

"I don't care, I need the whole money now."

There's no way. So they would turn around and sell what your asking for, for five cents on the dollar to somebody else. You couldn't buy it. They wouldn't let you buy it back and sometimes of course, in one case, I only owed 5,000, they wrote it off but anything beyond $10-$15,000, they wanted now.

So, although I paid one bank over a million and a half dollars and I only owed $144,000, I went to the bank, they said, "No. I can't do it because they're going to close me down next."

So, I came to a bank here, which I paid over 375,000. They went, "No, we're next."

They weren't lying because within six weeks, seven weeks, the name of the bank changed and the government came down pretty hard on everybody. So, that was the main purpose.

https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/ser-jobs-for-progress-and-savings-and-loans-crisis

Part 15 – LULAC's Education, Anti-Discrimination, and Voting Campaigns:

TCU: So as we approach, we are close to what you are doing right now, so you're involved right now with LULAC?

Tafoya: Yes.

TCU: You were a Director right?

Tafoya: Well let's see. I've been with LULAC for over 33 years. I started as just a member and then later a Secretary of the council and then Treasurer of accounts then I created my own council. So I worked my way up and I'm the immediate Deputy State Director which is number two on the roster, state of Texas.

Because LULAC is a national organization, a lot of people don't realize. Each state has their own LULAC, like Texas, Louisiana LULAC, blah, blah, blah. So we handle everything in the state of Texas. So yeah, in fact I just came back yesterday from the Texas convention, Texas LULAC in Laredo. And here of course I was the District Director for district seven then I split district seven and created district 12 and became the Director there, for three years. So I've done.

TCU: So what is the role played by the chapters, by the districts of LULAC that you can-

Tafoya: Well again, it's the same thing. LULAC primarily is discrimination and education. That's our primary goal. Now we're non-partisan as far as political but we do want to get people to get out and vote. We register people to vote, issues that come up in state capitol regarding education we usually go over the discriminatory bill being presented, we go and fight for it or fight against it or fight with it or whatever.

But that's primarily what we do and of course in the community, we try to get kids to get educated and become prominent people. So it's all part of community activity, community welfare and the benefits that we can provide them. I think we should do more and we could be doing more but like anything else, you're only limited to what the community wants and are willing to do. All volunteer by the way.

TCU: When you say you could be doing more, what do you mean?

Tafoya: More involvement with the community, could get more involved in getting the vote out, or going out to vote just simply. And we profess, "Go out to vote and take 10 people with you." If it's your family take them with you. A local election usually gets affected within 400 votes. So can you imagine what we could do if all of us went out to vote. So this is what we're trying to do and the fact that people already feel that they have no effect by going out to vote because they haven't had the success of electing somebody, a good example when Kennedy ran, man people we're going ape and they got him in.

Tafoya: Obama they got him in. People when they believe in somebody, they'll step out. But local elections some people they don't even know whose running and they don't take the time to learn more about them although you said you have social media all that. But our people the majority of our people don't have that. You might think they do, the youth may have it but I'm talking about. And most people that vote are elderly people, not the youth.

Tafoya: If the youth ever waked up, my god, we could run the country literally and seriously because there's a lot of issues out there that could be resolved. So you're limited to people involvement and that's what we need to do and we're trying our best but again we just haven't come up with the right methodology to convince them. Of course I hate to say it but as an older gentleman, I'm talking about many, many years ago. 30 years ago, he said, "I can get you all the votes you want, that's going to be $10,000, I'll have a free barbecue and beer for everybody-

https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/lulac-s-education-anti-discrimination-and-voting-campaigns

Part 16 – LULAC Addressing Voter Suppression:

Tafoya: ... you know. Go vote and bring your little sticker that you voted and you get free barbecue and beer all you want. Yeah, that a get them going but who can afford that kind of money, you know what I'm saying. So, yeah, we are a little ... and we're an unique race, we have our belief, our family belief and things. A lot of people I talk to say no, they're gonna do what they want to do anyway, why should I get involved, and if I do it might affect my job or if I do I may be shunted or whatever. And so they don't want to rock the boat, but in reality they are rocking the boat by doing that, believe it or not.

TCU: Do you think, beyond the things you already mentioned, do you think that our needs [inaudible 00:00:56] problems or legal issues that prevent people from voting or whatever?

Tafoya: Of course, we went to fight for voter I.D. because, you may not believe it, but there are a lot of elderly people that cannot go to the DPS, especially in rural areas where there's only like ten DPS offices. Some people have to go 250 miles to get their [inaudible 00:01:22] then have to pay 35 dollars, I mean, hey come on lets be real. And so that's been a lot of prevention, of course, they're slowly but surely getting over it, but it's not enough, really. That's one of the big ... things that we really fought real hard at the legislator and again, they did what they wanted to do, because they're there.

And then of course I had issues here, because I even brought the justice department here where the polling places supposed to have a bilingual person there. Several of the ones we had here in East Austin, they didn't and brought some people that didn't speak English, US citizens, and they had to wait 45 minutes to two hours before somebody came down. Yet, their daughters were there because, [inaudible 00:02:14] they wouldn't let them help. We volunteered, they wouldn't let us help. And see like right now, if you're an elderly person you can vote from home, you don't need an I.D. but if you don't know how to vote, how to do the process ... we used to be able to go to these peoples houses and help them, not tell them what to vote for but help them in how to vote but they passed a law that you can't.

Now you, as a son, can help your parents but that's it. You can't [inaudible 00:02:45] next door neighbor. So they prevented us from helping more elderly. We used to go to the community centers and help them, but they stopped us from doing that. Yeah, they've been putting obstacles throughout and voting and things like that.

And, of course, the immigration end of it, we have issues where I have attorneys that have thousands and thousands of applications that the government has not even moved on them, and they're sitting on a shelf and yet they filed 30 years ago, 20 years ago, which they should have already been taking care of. But, again, as long as they don't want it, it's not going to happen. No matter how much you yell.

Here we have president Bush, wanted to pass a bill and they even blocked him and he's a republican. And then here Obama tried the same thing and they blocked him. Yeah,

right now the dreamers are in trouble because of the same issues. You are, yes, you were born in the united states, but your parents weren't so what makes you a dreamer?

A young lady that came out and admitted she was a minor. What happened, the other side came back and said, "well she outta give that money back because she's not a citizen."

Hey, the university said, "No, she earned it, she's gonna have it."

https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/lulac-addressing-voter-suppression

Part 17 – The Benefits of Charter Schools and the Value of Education:

Tafoya: A young man ... I'm on the School Bard here of a Charter School and we had our first graduating class. In fact, I helped start the Charter School. I went to the State and argued for the permit and all this. We had our first graduation, the young man, the valedictorian, he sat there and told his story. He was raised from a single mother and he said his dream was that some day the father would come back. He never had a male role model. He says, "I decided that the only way I'm going to do anything for my parents and my siblings is getting educated." He got a full scholarship to UT, you know what I'm saying.

Again, it's ... These are the things that you work for and you try to move forward and this is the way we did it. Out of 76 graduates, all of them got admitted into college and all of them got grants, which I think this is what need to be done. We did it with a Charter School, which normally the normal school can't do it because they can't devote more time for these kids. We had a lady that just was dedicated to get them scholarships and get them into college. The regular school can't do it because they've got too many schools, you know what I'm saying. Because we were a small school we were able to do it.

Again, there is ways of ding it, but you have to sacrifice and you have to do that which is not ordinary.

TCU: Why do you think education is so central?

Tafoya: Again, a long time ago you said get a high school diploma, and you got it made. Well, it's nothing anymore. High school diploma will give you a good dish washing job, but if you want to get into the professional end of it, you need a better education. A better education will open doors, will give you that opportunity to ... Yeah, you might make that $15 an hour or $20 an hour compared to $7.25, but that's a heck of a lot more then we had earned before. Then, you also learn through education, the pitfalls. The do's and the dont's and so you'll be able to avoid those and you can always come back to do what you want.

A good example, when I was the Director of the orphanage in Cuernavaca, Father Lawson had the kids there from the first grade to high school. He would send them to

Mexico City to go to college and get a profession. His policy was, all or nothing. If you had five kids in your house, you brought them all or you wouldn't take none of them. You had siblings there. Young girls with the nuns. You had young boys, your little brothers and sisters 'til you would graduate from college. Become a doctor or a lawyer, whatever. You came back to help them. So, he has lawyers, doctors, the galore. He has over 3,500 kids already, you know. This is the way you do it, you know.

You educate, but the only thing is we need to teach them that they have to come back to the community. A lot of them do, a lot of them don't, but even a percentage of those that do come back, better the community that much better. That's the importance of education to me. I remember my father, died at 90, he only went to the third grade, but that man read every newspaper, every magazine, watched every newscast. He was more informed then a man on the street. Why? Because he knew the need of knowing what's happening around you.

https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/the-benefits-of-charter-schools-and-the-value-of-education

Part 18 – Learning from Multiple Organizations and the Meaning of Community:

TCU: Well, as we prepare to wrap up, one question I had here: So, you know, you have been involved in many different organizations and collaborations with many of the stakeholders. Was there ever a conflict, even of conflicting goals between the different organizations? I don't know, Lula or the Brown Berets or any of the others.

Tafoya: No, because I'll tell you why. I belong to those organizations to know not only what they're doing, what their goals were, or aspirations, or their ideas. And I didn't necessarily take every one of them. I would take what I needed from them and use that. And then I would give them what I needed to them. So by being in different organizations of course had different mentalities and different methodologies, you grab from each one of them and you try to make the best out of them.

So the best out of the Brown Berets, of course there's protesting and marching and yelling and screaming, I would bring to another organization is the ability to protest be it by email or letter or postcard or whatever or telephone calling, compared to getting on the street and marching and yelling and screaming. But in turn, there were other organizations that needed to know that they could go out and yell, scream and march. So by being involved with so many, at one time I was involved with 14 organizations here in town.

So I brought to the table, to my table, a little bit from everybody in giving that opportunity to understand and learn where they're coming from instead of saying 'Oh no, they're no good because they do this,' wait a minute. Wait a minute. Look, you might not agree with this part that they do, but what about this other part? So let's don't just knock them down. Let's work with them, you know?

Even at the state legislature, I work with the Commission on Civil Rights. I work with Texas Commission on Health and Human Services. I work with them because there's things that I can get from them that I can pass on to my community. But if I don't, who's going to do it? You have to have a conduit, a conduit to everything that's happening around and the more involved you get, the more conduit, the more ins and outs. That doesn't mean you have to accept and do everything they say or do. You've got to be your own individual. To me, you're an idiot if you try to do ... I mean, I would be bananas by now. Yeah.

TCU: So what is community to you?

Tafoya: Community is the people that live in an area that provide services, that provide welfare, that provide love, that provide caring, that provide a coexistence of friendship and ability to understand ... all that is community. Community is not just a fact that there is a town there, but it's who is in that town, who makes it up, who keeps it going, who sacrifices and who takes because you have takers in everything. Don't believe that everybody is givers. No.

And I remember one time I was told by I can't remember who, he said don't be like a hoe. You know, when you're hoeing cotton. Be a rake. Bring some and leave some. So, that's been my philosophy all my life. So as long as I'm a rake and I can bring and leave, hey, we can get more things accomplished. But if I'm a hoe and I just take everything for me, what do I leave back for the other people?

https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/learning-from-multiple-organizations-and-the-meaning-of-community

Part 19 – Message to Young Activists:

TCU: Last question, okay? I promise. In all these years that you have been acting in the community [inaudible 00:00:14] in Georgetown, what do you think is the most important thing that you would like to teach young activists?

Tafoya: To be aware. To be aware of why they're doing it, and to be able and willing to give and take, and not just take. See, to me an activist is a person that is very sincere and very believe in what they're going after, but in the meantime they have to realize that there is life, and life has a different meanings to different people and different goals. So if want to be an activist, you're going to have to look at both sides and be willing to give and take, and not just be a person that I want to take, and I don't care about you. I don't care what the consequences are. Wait a minute, no. The consequences are going to come back to you if don't, aren't willing to give and take

But to be a real good activist you need to learn your subject matter too, because, you say "okay, I'm a Chicano." I work with people that call discrimination, and I'll give you a good example. Well a young man, they call me that say, "Hey man, they fired me because I'm a Chicano. Yeah man, I was working at this company, and they fired me cause I'm Chicano." I said, "What happened? Give me the story." He said, "Well man, I took off for three days, and I come back, and I didn't have my job." And I said, "Well, did

you notify them?" "No." "Well did you give a reason? That you were sick?" "No." "Well what do you expect? The man couldn't sit there and wait for you forever. So you discriminated against yourself. It wasn't because you were Chicano. If you would have told them, 'Man, I'm sick. I need to take a leave,' your job would still be there, but because you yourself ignored the rules, you have nobody to blame."

So, again, If you know what you're supposed to do, do it the right way. You'll have nothing to come back. So, to me, that's the essence of being a community leader. You may be able to go and see a situation, say for example, right now, here in Austin, affordable housing. If you're really sincere about affordable housing, you've got to work on a plan to resolve them. I can't go to them, "Hey, you need to give us free housing." Hey, wait a minute, you know what they call us? Where you gonna get the money? Where you gonna do all these things that need to be done? Okay, first of all, what is affordable for us? One guy had a hundred and fifty thousand dollars. I beg your pardon. If you're on a fixed income, there's no way. So in reality, what is affordable? Affordable is their income, where they live, and what is their cost of living? Then you find out, and you work it out.

So, if you want to really be an activist, you learn first. What do you want? How you gonna resolve it? It's easy to complain. Oh, I can complain all day long. I don't like the way the streets are paved. I don't like they make me have a U-turn when I just go ahead and turn. No, no. There's a reason for that.

https://crbb.tcu.edu/clips/message-to-young-activists