

INTERVIEW WITH ISAURA MARTINEZ

TRANSCRIPTION FROM SPANISH TO ENGLISH

Isaura: Good morning, today is May 10, 2017, and we are here in Cicero. My name is Isaura Martinez and we're here having a conversation.

Interviewer: Thank you very much, Isaura. Isaura, where are you from?

Isaura: I am from Mexico, from a municipality, Juventino Rosas, Guanajuato, but from a ranch called Tavera that means, "place of fire."

Interviewer: Mm, how beautiful. So, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Isaura: Well, I really just wanted to have my own family, like any woman.

Interviewer: What else?

Isaura: Well, I wanted to have my own family...I wanted to be able to share with more people what I had because I was born to always...when I had a toy or something I always shared everything with my friends, and I was born to always be charitable, to share with my people.

I wanted to have something of my own so that I could share it with people. Of course, I did not have something of my own at nine, ten years old, but the passion was there in my heart.

Interviewer: Where did that come from? Was that something your family taught you?

Isaura: Well, all this passion that I have towards people, towards supporting people, my grandfather and my great-grandfather, were revolutionaries. They went with Pancho Villa, Emiliano Zapata. Thanks to my grandfather who is now in heaven, they were in the Mexican Revolution there in Guanajuato, the revolution was there in Guanajuato Celaya. I was born in that municipality and my grandfather was the type of person who went and fought to give to the poor and thanks to my grandfather, and thanks to my great-grandfather Gabriel too, the town where I am from, Tavera, has a school, it has a kindergarten, it has a sports field and they made a little park.

In those years, and I'm talking about years and years ago, it was the type of park where they painted the big tires for kids to play in, they made swing sets out of tree logs. They cut them and put the straps in and painted them with Lime (calcium hydroxide) and other colors, and sometimes there was a seesaw made out of little wooden tablets and that was the park, but my childhood was beautiful.

I learned from my grandparents to be in the fight. My dad, Ignacio Martínez, was also very passionate to look after the community and the people. I learned all this from them. In Mexico, I also supported many people in Guanajuato. I worked for three years in a rehabilitation center supporting men who were addicted to alcohol, who were alcoholics. I also supported a church and supported children by helping fundraise for these children. So, the passion I have is in my blood. I come from revolutionary people and I feel very proud of who I am because my great-grandparents. And we still have some photos of my grandfather with Emiliano Carranza, with Zapata, and I am very proud of being Isaura Martinez.

Interviewer: That's amazing. What kind of work did you do here when you came to the U.S?

Isaura: When I arrived here, like anyone else, you don't options, so you knock doors and they don't want to give you work, so I didn't have any other option than to go to the factories to be a temp worker and that's where I was working for six years as a temp worker.

Interviewer: How was the treatment in the factories?

Isaura: Dreadful. Appalling treatment not only to me but to everyone there. The way they shouted, the way they treated us, the way they pressured us to drive production really fast, wage theft, and the [raitero] ride that took \$40 from us to get there, plus all the discrimination they do inside the factories.

Interviewer: What lessons did that work teach you?

Isaura: It taught me to be stronger, you learn from the hardships. From everything that I have lived, good and bad, but above all the worst that I have had to live through, many heavy and sad things, but thanks to that I am strong now. I feel strong wanting to fight and speak up for my rights and to defend myself. And not only for me, but for all the people that I met and worked with. And for my co-workers who are also temp workers.

Interviewer: If you could do anything now, what would you do?

Isaura: Well, I would do something for my own benefit, I would like to have a little business, a company, something small, where I could start something, but also give work to my people, some who already have some injuries and can't find work. I would like to invite them to create a group and start a small business like a little food stand. Well, we say food stand in Mexico, but here it would be a restaurant. But I would invite them and we would form this group and we would work by ourselves in unity and create our own employment, without distinction, without discrimination, with the same salary, and without wage theft haha.

Interviewer: What a beautiful dream. Isaura, what do you think you are most proud of in your life?

Isaura: I feel very proud of my ability to speak, the way I express myself, of being who I am, and I also proud to be a mother.

Interviewer: And today is Mother's Day.

Isaura: And today is Mother's Day, a very special day. We must celebrate it year-round because we're in so many positions as nurses, secretaries, administrators, cooks, we're our kids counselors, we support our husbands. We are so many things as women and sometimes we do not value ourselves because the hardships life throws at us and we've been treated badly and we act like we're not worth anything, but listen up women, we are worth a lot. We are princesses, we are queens, in the home, in your work and wherever you are. You are worth so much because you are a woman and we have to give ourselves value as women and demand respect.

Interviewer: What would you say is your greatest wish for the world?

Isaura: That there's peace, an end to so much war, an end to so much discrimination, so many things that are impoverishing the world, and is impoverishing humanity because we see a lot of discrimination, many injustices. I would like a different change.

Interviewer: Thank you very much, Isaura.

Isaura: Thank you very much.