

The Fight in the Fields

8:31 - We lived in tents that didn't have a floor, just dirt—mud, I would say. And we went cold and hungry during winter because there was no work. We survived by going out on the ditch banks picking mustard greens and my brothers would go out getting fish from the canals. (Jessie de la Cruz)

10:11 - It was awful, it was really bad, because we had never worked for anyone else. We never lived out of our home. When we came to California, we were lucky, we got a tent. Most of the time, we were living under a tree with just a canvas on top of us, and sometimes a car. (Unknown)

Regarding the bracero workers

15:24 - They would tell us they were ill, their stomach was upset or something. But they still had to work, because if they complained they said “okay, you go to work, or you go back to Mexico.” The labor contractor would tell them this. (Jessie de la Cruz)

Meeting Fred Ross

17:52 – Somehow Cesar heard he was coming and thought it was gonna be another anthropologist from Stanford or San Jose State coming down to ask Mexicans why they had so many babies and ate tortillas and beans. And he wanted to have nothing to do with another study. So he told Helen to tell this guy, Ross, that he wasn't home. (Fred Ross Jr.)

18:12 - And finally about the third time I said, “ah let's talk to him—he's very insistent, and wants to talk to us. Let's see what he has to sell us.” That's what we said. (Richard Chavez)

18:23 – So when my dad began to paint the picture of how you build power, Cesar told me and many others later that a light went off in his mind—wow, it's so simple. You could really bring about significant change by organizing. (Fred Ross Jr.)

24:34 - Among all the work I did in the fields, the short-handled hoe was the worst. Even right now, I can't sit up straight. I have to sit leaning to one side or to a certain angle so that my back can rest, because the short-handle was very bad. (Unknown)

24:49 – When you wanted to go to the bathroom, there weren't any bathrooms. So you felt very embarrassed. You held it as long as you could, and then you went, and you were embarrassed. (Jessica Govea Thorburne)

24:57 – The supervisors would tell us the Filipinos are doing more than you then they'd tell them that the Mexicans are doing more. And the same with the Anglos, to trick us and push the people. (Teofilo Garcia)

26:55 - Every year, they saw year after year after year that nothing ever changed, no matter how hard they tried, no matter what they did, nothing ever changed—it was like the same thing. So then, in the midst of this reality, Cesar and the National Farm Workers Association comes along to organize farm workers so that they can change the situation themselves. (Chris Hartmire, California Migrant Ministry)

29:54 – They said “we’ll go on strike.” So we told them “you will suffer a lot of hardship—maybe you’ll get hungry, maybe you’re gonna lose your car, maybe you’re gonna lose your house.” But they said they don’t care. They feel like they are not being treated fairly by their employers, so they were gonna strike. (Larry Itliong: AWOC)

31:30 – First we had our own meeting, to decide whether we would strike or not. I always remember Helen, and tell this story about Helen, because when we got to Helen, of course Cesar was worried about what she would think because of all the kids. And when we got to Helen she said, “well, what are we? Aren’t we a union?” (Dolores Huerta)

33:36 – But it became like a brotherhood, right. I think for the first time in the history of this country—the Filipino workers and the Mexican workers—which had always been segregated. The Filipinos in their own camp, the Mexicans in their own camp. This strike brought us together. We had the Filipino hall open for the strikers and we ate Filipino food and Mexican food. (Gilbert Padilla, UFW Treasurer)

35:10 – Once the Delano strike started, everything was extremely intense, because you had picketing starting every morning at 4:00 in the morning, that went on all day. We couldn’t take any time off at all, because things were happening every moment. (Dolores Huerta)

36:08 – Every labor guy knows that when we’re talking about recognition, you’re really talking about the guts of the union. We’re not talking striking for a wage increase or for a pension fund. We’re striking for the very elemental things of labor. (Cesar Chavez)

36:21 – I think that the growers and those people that hire workers are opposed to a union because, especially the UFW, because it’s Mexicans. I have seen so much racism out here, if it had been an Anglo leader, we would have gotten everything. (Jessie de la Cruz)

37:10 - Part of it had to do with race, part of it had to do with the fact that we were messing with their land and part of it had to do with the fact that you had self-made, self-reliant people who had built things on their own. And they were damned if anybody, no matter what race were going to tell them how to run things on their own. (Jerry Cohen, UFW General Counsel)

41:39 – The ranchers and contractors treated us like slaves and we had to fight to organize, but now with violence, because he said, “I don’t want violence in my movement. No one in my movement can use violence.” (Adelina Gurrola)

46:36 – The El Campesino started right on the picket line in the heat of moment. And we had the songs, and the actors, which we performed on top of flat bed trucks and on top of panel trucks in order to be seen. (clips of drama) 47:36 – they were the theatre, they were the audience and the were actors, and there was no distinction, and I didn’t want a distinction and it turns out that the use of theatre in this very direct way was a educational device and proved to be very useful. (Luis Valdez)

49:36 (Discussion between Leroy Galyen, Kern county Sheriff and Robert Kennedy) (Sheriff) Well, if I have reason to believe that there is going to be a riot started and somebody tells me that

there's going to be trouble if you don't stop them, then it's my duty to stop them. Kennedy: So then you go out arrest them? Sheriff: Oh, absolutely. Kennedy: And who told you that they're gonna riot? Sheriff: The men right out in the field said that if you don't get 'em out of here, we're gonna cut their hearts out. So, rather than let 'em get cut, you remove the cause. Kennedy: This is a most interesting concept. That you suddenly hear talk about the fact that somebody makes a report about somebody going to get out of order, perhaps violate the law—go in and arrest them, and they haven't violated the law. How can you go arrest somebody if they haven't violated the law? Sheriff: They're ready to violate the law, in other words. Kennedy: Can I suggest in the luncheon period of time that the Sheriff and the DA read the constitution of the United States. (Ends: 50:46)

9:44 - I really resented an attitude that I observed among many people who were not supporting the boycott, certainly not all of them, that "oh well, these are Mexicans, they are used to stoop labor, they are used to poverty. They are fortunate they are working in this country," not fully seeing the need for their support. These people were helping to put food on our tables—the basic need of life. I didn't feel these people should suffer needlessly or live in often horrendous situations, conditions, in order to feed us grapes. (Dorothy Coyle, Boycott supporter)

Stopped at 1:12:10 – may want to consider parts about Chavez's fast and/or the ending of the grape boycott.

1:12:30 – The immediate response from the other growers was dismay and chagrin and concern that perhaps the union was going to take over, but to my pleasant surprise, and it was very unexpected, we found that 6 or 8 of the major chain stores and produce houses in Canada began calling us wanting our grapes and our brand, because we had the union bag. (Lionel Steinberg, Coachella grape grower)

1:17:23 – The Salinas growers saw what was happening in the grape boycott, they had been dealing in their sheds and packing houses with the teamsters union and they thought if they could sign a contract with the teamster union, it would forestall Cesar from trying to come in and take over that industry. (Daryl Arnold, Salinas Lettuce Grower)

1:18:09 – The farm workers in Salinas were already organized before we got there. They had been quietly and patiently organizing for several years. They had been waiting for the grape strike to get over, because they wanted a union too. 1:18:37 – And they were so angry that the teamsters had come in and signed these rotten contracts giving them about a nickel an hour raise over five years, that they were just chopping at the bit to take action. (Fred Ross, Jr.)

1:19:19:06 – We looked at him like he was like god—we would do anything. We would go out to fields, there maybe growers who were armed with guns or rifles, but that didn't bother us. We felt like here was a man who instilled a lot of courage. (Al Rojas, UFW Organizer)

1:21:54 - There's a section in the injunction that orders us to tell people not to boycott, and people has been thrown into jail until he orders the end of the boycott of Bud Antle Lettuce. (?)

1:33:01 – At about 1:15 on August 14, Naji Difula, an Arab member of our union was shot, and then the police dragged him on the ground and left him. All summer long, police have used excessive force. They have beaten women over the heads and then they've lied to the press and said the women have attacked them, they've beaten young children over the heads and then said the children attacked them, and now they have killed one of our Arab brothers. (Jerry Cohen)