

Filipino-American Historical Society of Hawai'i  
Oral History Project  
Interview #2

**PETE TAGALOG (PT)**

**Interview Conducted By:  
Melinda Tria Kerkvliet (MK)**

September 15, 2008  
Waipahu, O'ahu

PT: OK, I find out the reason why we really did good in organizing, really it's for the old people...we took care exactly what they need. Fix up the house, electrician, plumbing and the financial thing, sometimes fix the car and take care of the kids. We got good program like that.

MK: Uh-huh.

PT: All that, planning together, you know.

MK: Did you do that here [Makibaka Village] also when you transferred?

PT: Over here, only a little bit. We still brought some over here but, as you know, as members dying out already, then it 'came less and less, but it doesn't seem to continue that one. But even though we talk about clean the yard, it doesn't talk about the old people. But, actually, can you repeat it? People all strangers already, stranger to makibaka. But that one was strong in Ota Camp.

MK: Nora<sup>1</sup> said that Johnny [Dombrique] just died?

PT: Yeah.

MK: Let's talk about him. What did he do? What do you think, what kind of person was he?

PT: Johnny...at first he was telling me, he was married to a Hawaiian before. He was about...I would say he was in his 30s, late 30s, 40s. He was an alcoholic.

MK: He was? Johnny?

---

<sup>1</sup> Nora Gozon Tagalog, Pete's wife [editor's note]

PT: Lots of people hang on, he's plenty money. He invited people all the time.

MK: Why did he have lots of money? Was he retired?

PT: He worked, had a good job. He worked for the Hickam Field.<sup>2</sup> He do maintenance work.

MK: OK.

PT: And then he was single, too.

MK: He was single?

PT: Yeah, I mean single-divorce.

MK: No children? He was living alone?

PT: I think her, only one. They have one and that one kid stay Mainland now. She come visit here, every year. Good.

MK. Uh-huh. So he was drinking, before the struggle.

PT: Yeah, he got rid of that. He moved to Ota Camp, he moved with Pate.<sup>3</sup> Remember that one, murdered in our place?

MK: Pate, who is Pate?

PT: He was another Steering Committee guy, too. He was living with him.

MK: Ah.

PT: And then all the other guys used to hang around with him because he got money, like that. Then after that, I don't know what happened. He got his wife...went to the Philippines and went to get married.

MK: Ah, this is Manang Pacing.

PT: Pacing. She was young. That changed Johnny. He changed. All of a sudden, he worked...started working. He work every day even though he was alcoholic, but the wife was handling all the money.

MK: OK.

---

<sup>2</sup> Hickam Air Force Base [editor's note].

<sup>3</sup> Patricio (Pate) Niebre [editor's note].

PT: He just work, work, work. And at the same time he work, he goes other places. People hire him to do plumbing -- not in Ota Camp.

MK: Outside.

PT: Yeah. So he do lot of things, too, people inside Ota Camp -- free-kine services.

MK: Free?

PT: Yeah. We became good friends, I used to go out with him all the time, we live right close.

MK: This is before the struggle?

PT: Before the struggle. I used to pass out drunk.

MK: Ah, you were drinking with him also! [laughter]

PT: Yeah. Then he come my house. Him and the wife come service my kitchen, plumbing...and then drop me in the floor already and my wife's bawling me. So that's how close we were.

MK: Oh.

PT: But when the struggle started already, he was one of the key guys there that made the Ilokanos understand the struggle -- him and the one guy named Pate, the one I mentioned.

MK: Pate, yeah.

PT: He hated me; he never like me.

MK: Pate?

PT: Yeah.

MK: What's his full name?

PT: Patricio Niebre. At the time of the struggle, he was about seventy-three, I think.

MK: Seventy-three already?

PT: Yeah.

MK: You said that Pate was killed? How come, what happened?

PT: We moved out already from Ota Camp.

MK: You were here [Makibaka Village] already.

PT: Yeah. He the one, he volunteer to take over the whole camp and pick up and spot all the new-kine cut lumber, he would pile them.

MK: Which one, the lumber.

PT: Lumber from old Ota Camp. And that lumber we can start building sidewalk front, meeting place, all kinds of lumber. But he was there all by himself. Then somebody, one of the resident's son over there -- because he want one car so that...wahine like that -- instead of asking for borrow the car, the guy knock down, struck Pate. Killed him, took the car.

MK: So what happened, was he arrested?

PT: Everybody looking for him, all over the island. Eventually arrested. The family moved out...really shamed.

MK: Did Pate have a family?

PT: No.

MK: Single.

PT: He was planning to go to the Philippines and get married, too. He got house, everything all good already, so he decided pick up wife...not pick up, but find a wife.

MK: Was he Ilokano also?

PT: Ilokano. Johnny and Pate, they not only living close, but they really close like brothers. He used to take his kids driving all over the place -- stores, like that -- they really close. Every time they got cook-out, potluck, every week, Pate is always there. They got all kine occasion. And I used to go there. [laughs]

MK: Good food.

PT: What you call that, red pork?

MK: Ah...

PT: Sweet one.

MK: Tocino?

PT: Yeah. Pate, Patricio like that. That's why we got arthritis. [laughs]

MK: What kind of work did he do before...Pate?

PT: He's carpenter.

MK: Carpenter.

PT: He work overseas. All his life working overseas.

MK: No wife, no children?

PT: No...no more.

MK: What happened?

PT: He had one wife in the Philippines, and he never go back. They not divorced but since he stay here he says, "I'm divorced already." Johnny [Dombrique] is the quiet one.

MK: He is quiet.

PT: Quiet, but when he sit down and start talking -- not wild -- but when he talk, everybody listen. Everybody listen.

MK: Ah. Uh-huh.

PT: He's the main one. Because he the one got all the Ilokanos inside, in the Ota camp.

MK: He was the one.

PT: Yeah. Everyone respects him. On Johnny, I know who I can get. And Pate, I know he hated me. Everybody no like me.

MK: Why is that? Why?

PT: Because I'm Visayan.

MK: Because you're Visayan? [laughs]

PT: That's true, you know. He tell me.

MK: He told you.

PT: I'm Visayan, and I'm a good-timer, da kine only joke around kine. I was joking, not serious. And I was, what you call that, always telling good fun...joking.

MK: Who, you?

PT: No, Visayan.

MK: Visayan.

PT: And lazy.

MK: That's what they thought.

PT: That's da kine, they tell me that. Then I gave Pate responsibility to take the whole maintenance, and that was hard, too. I found out later he told Johnny that, "You are honest one," and even Ilokano, when they got organizations, something corrupt every time. But he said, with me-kine, "he'll follow me all over the place." I'd bring him Kaua'i.

MK: Pate?

PT: Yeah, all them.

MK: And Johnny.

PT: And the things that I talk to some Ilokanos over there, and he was there. He said [to Ilokanos], "He the one honest."

MK: He said?

PT: Yeah. So when he found that I was like that, he said I don't look at money, I never did see the money. But Pate, I don't know, I think the many hours sitting down with him in his house, I'd walk to his house, just talk to him, plenty hours. And then I start to think, you know, Johnny, I got the whole family and some people outside. Pate, I got all the outside, you know the one, all the gamblers, the single men.

MK: Oh, uh-huh.

PT: Yeah. I got all that one. And then with Johnny and him together, you got them all. And then the one guy the judge...

MK: The judge.

PT: De la Cruz, that one, solid. He's the comedy, even talk to the State guys [politicians] in Ilokano.

MK: What did he do before?

PT: He work in a golf course.

MK: He was?

PT: Yes. He operate...cut grass, water, that kine. And in Ota Camp, all he doing collect metal.

MK: Collect metal? Recycling?

PT: He sell them. He cut them up and sell them. He's good in that kine. But I made him Steering Committee. He powerful, very powerful because he can act. Like scolding somebody, you know, but that's not him so he can put up a mean lot on these guys. He do a good job. He get people shamed. That's why I called him the "judge."

MK: So Johnny was in the Steering Committee for a long time?

PT: Johnny, I think he do all kinds of work like electrical, plumbing. But Johnny is more...I mean...people look at Johnny more for his...what's that, now...respect.

MK: Respect.

PT: Respect. They really respect him.

MK: Because...

PT: All the single men and even the alcoholic one. When Johnny talk, they shut up.

MK: Why is that? Why?

PT: I think he's the one that brought everybody over here. I mean I think they call that "utang na loob."

MK: Utang na loob, yeah.

PT: Yeah.

MK: So he got married, the young, Pacing. Then they brought the relatives of Pacing?

PT: Her family and Johnny's family.

MK: How many?

PT: Johnny get one brother, one, two, three...three nephew, and three more brothers. These people all respected and well-known outside.

MK: Did they live here in Ota Camp?

PT: The early time -- and then give them 1 to 2 year -- they find house outside. Five years time, they own their own home. So, Johnny, Pate Niebre and the Judge, they were the key guys.

MK: The three of them.

PT: Three of them...all Ilokanos. The kind of Ilokanos we have knowledge of Ota Camp, they live like that, they know the culture, not too much the plantation one but pretty close though.

MK: What about women? No women in the Steering Committee?

PT: The women in the Steering Committee was Nora Bautista, is Ilokano, local, and then come Nora [Gozon Tagalog] These two guys are young too, yeah?

MK: Yes.

PT: And that one [Nora] from Philippine. So it's good. Two women got good understanding of Hawaiian and Filipino.

MK: Uh-huh.

PT: They don't talk too much but when they talk, not too much, mostly like Nora, the two Nora...they with women's group, all the housewives. The housewives...they was, like you know, in the late 40s, early 40s, and Nora, the two Noras together with them.

MK: The young ones.

PT. Yeah. Guiding them, you know, how they gotta run the women, what kind of stuff they can do.

MK: Uh-huh.

PT: Meantime, I only stay, I only stay, I only sit down. [laughter] I don't know why I do that. Sometimes I thinking I don't trust the two girls, they may say the wrong thing, but I don't make noise.

Then Johnny's sister-in-law, she said, I question then about this thing, maybe I shouldn't, she said, "It's good that you stay there because then everything what we say, you going to know. You hear that one, we feel good,



because you're not saying anything about that. If something no good, you would say 'no good', yeah?"

MK: Uh-huh.

PT: So they feel comfortable running the organization that way. Sometime I can't be bothered, but the two Nora they stay with them all the time, especially when I gotta to talk to them but sometimes I gotta to go Waimanalo, Chinatown.

MK: Uh-huh, big issues.

PT: Very big group: Chinatown...and Waimanalo...and Kauai.

MK: Uh-huh. You went to Kauai too? Ah, in the early struggle, there was a lawyer who helped you a lot.

PT: Yeah, Herbert Takahashi.

MK: Uh-huh, what did he do?

PT: At first, you know, when we first started this organization, I went to legal aid. And they gave us all and...I respect lawyer, you know, but I was thinking...you heard of Reynaldo Bicoy?

MK: I know the name.

PT: Normally Filipinos, when they hire lawyer, they went to a lawyer to do anything. And me, I was thinking, I hope I can get that thing because the lawyer that came...haole... I forget his name.

MK: From the Legal Aid?

PT: From Legal Aid. I really instruct him, the lawyer, but he did many things mistake.

MK: Like what? Example?

PT: Now, we stay in the meeting, and the meeting was in one place, in one garage, all dirt and you got da kine -- walking stone. Go to the house and then you got the meeting just about started already.

And this lawyer came...oh, I feel good the lawyer came. Then he carries his book, he walk like a lawyer, then he sat down right on the cement stone. Dirty that stone. I feel shame he do that. No, no. We give him chair. Then I

tell myself, "Why did he do that? Is he telling us, proving something to us?" Me, I don't know...I don't know too much about lawyers. And then, that's the first mistake.

The second mistake when we was planning all the demonstration. Second mistake, this is something he said, "Maybe we should study more before we go into this demonstration." And I said, "I don't know, we wait how many months already, how many weeks, we're using the same words all the time, so we got to stop, we got to talk to the government."

Of course, he didn't want. But the government is our father, he's the father, we are his kids, now something wrong with the kids, you got to go to the father. So that's why we got to go to the State. "OK," he agreed. The funny thing is that Kokua Hawaii them...Dagdagan, never agree to the demonstration,

MK: Did not agree?

PT: Never agree to the demonstration.

MK: Why?

PT: I think just how the lawyer think -- they want know more before we go.

MK: Study more.

PT: Like, what for? What kind of results we're looking for? That kind.

MK: OK. [laughs]

PT: But, we need someone to tell us something, so we can work on that. Government tell us something, work on that. Right now no more words, nothing coming in and we're telling them, we don't want to talk to press until -- one month already -- we no want to talk to press. Then finally, I talk to the people in meeting and I said, "We go demonstrate," and they all like go! They all like go but then some of the old ones said, "Oh, they're not gonna put us in jail?"

MK: Uh-huh.

PT: Some say, "Why you go ahead, you go, better at least we got

house." [laughter] Any kind...all kinds of reaction coming out.

MK: Uh-huh.

PT: So I felt strong...so we went. So we went on John's birthday...the governor's. That was his birthday.

MK: Burns.

PT: We all sang "Happy Birthday," too, before we go demonstrate.

MK: Uh-huh.

PT: Funny da kine stuff we do, yeah? And then, and yet, we say happy birthday by the house, where governor staying, then we walk across the street. With bolo knife, head bands, everything.

MK: Bolo knife?

PT: Yeah. We make bolo knife with the cardboard.

MK: Ah, cardboard.

PT: Wrap them up in tin foil. Look like knife, you know.

MK: Yeah.

PT: Some carry over there; some hold them like that...

MK: Why did you think...who was thinking about that?

PT: Filipino.

MK: Filipino.

PT: Just to let them know...and had the head band too, "makibaka."

MK: Makibaka.

PT: Just to make one good advertisement that we Filipino.

MK: Uh-huh.

PT: We all Filipino. In fact we had nobody else inside there, but only Filipino.

MK: So was the...the lawyer came, the Legal Aid lawyer?

PT: The haole one.

MK: Yes, the haole one.

PT: He came. We never go down there yet, we ready for go across the street, go to the State Capitol. The lawyer said, "I can fix up you talk to Yoshinaga, the Japanese senate, I mean the money-kine, yeah Pete?" But me, I thinking, after the demonstration, yeah? Then after that, when we demonstrate, just before I come out with the talk myself, he tell me go see Yoshinaga.

MK: Oh.

PT: I said, "No...I never see him." [lawyer]"I told him you come in about 5 to 10 minutes." "No, I like talk first." I know when you go see somebody, cutting down the fire already, yeah?

MK: OK.

PT: I just rather talk. Give my speech, then we can all finish, go up there. Judge and I also talking with Governor Burns.

MK: What did you say? He talked about what?

PT: He talked about the rabbit -- you see eating all the fruits in the garden.

MK: What? That has nothing to do with the issue.

PT: Yeah, and you know, De la Cruz, he said, "Sir, we are not rabbits, we don't bother nobody nothing." [laughter] Yeah, I saw him talking like that. When I tell him, "Stop it," he look at me, "Oh, why, I did something wrong?" [laughter]

Then after we finish, we force the governor to meet us another time. Maybe after that, he got sick. But when we went home, the next day we all meet -- the support group, the board, some of the members...and, then, we make criticisms.

And, then, before the criticisms start, that haole lawyer right in front said...he blamed me for something that I should have seen..."I made an appointment, out of courtesy"...I should see Yoshinaga. "We miss one good"...what you call that?

MK: Opportunity.

PT: Yeah. Right after I explained to him, "You know something, it's just like, you know, I like smoke my cigarette all the time but you're telling me to smoke my cigarette and no put fire. No more fire, no more taste, da kine." That's the way I talk, I talk about that cigarette. Then I tell him, "Hey, I'm all burning up inside there, trying to talk about our demonstration." But I scared and really worried and scared, too, I got to talk...and then I tell him, "Shit you."

MK: You said!?

PT: Then you know Joy Ann [support group] explained to him, "You know, what Pete said, you are supposed to be acting as a lawyer, you advise him what things are good, what things are bad. If bad, let him know but don't tell him what to do. Because...what he is doing, everybody was back behind him, residents, everybody back the demonstration and you were trying to cut him off."

Somebody said, "Pete, find a new lawyer." Then Joy Ann came back and said, "Ota Camp...they don't need you as a lawyer!"

MK: Said that in public? In the meeting?

PT: Yeah. "They don't need you for a lawyer, if you like that."

MK: Oh, wow.

PT: "I don't need lawyer."

MK: You said?

PT: Yeah. Because why see somebody [Yoshinaga] -- I don't know that somebody. I know he was powerful man, powerful guy, he was the chairman for Finance or something. I don't know. We never had lawyer already. We don't need them. I never ask for another one. So we never had lawyer for about one and a half month. You know, I forget his name...he's a lawyer now, he was in support group.

MK: Herb?

PT: Brian Taniguchi.

MK: Brian Taniguchi, OK.

PT: Yeah. He the one contacted Herb Takahashi.

MK: He was the one, ah.

PT: Yeah, so he come over here. "Go talk to Pete." He talk to me. We talk.

MK: What did you talk about?

PT: He's a lawyer. He like to represent us but got to wait, they don't know if they can take us. Whatever he can do, he will help us. He never really commit himself.

I said, "OK." So then. "I let you know when I come."  
"OK." And then every week meeting, plenty meeting, and I notice Herb Takahashi stay there.

MK: Oh, he came.

PT: And then after Saturday meeting, University of Hawaii had takeover one building.

MK: The Bachman Hall.

PT: And I was in there.

MK: You were.

PT: I was in there, and I met Herb over there. "Oh," he said, "how come you over here?" "Oh, I don't know nothing." So I sit down, I don't think I like this kind of group, you know. They swear.

MK: Ethnic Studies rally?

PT: They swear like hell. [laughter] And they talking...and then after that, "Lockup, lockup...hey, I gotta go home." [laughter] But at least I went there. It was interesting, I got to meet all guys who was in Kalama Valley struggle.

They like run movies in our camp...I don't. People can handle that [police conflicts during Kalama valley struggle]. Not in Ota Camp. Some place else, whoever like go...go.

MK: They go there.

PT: Yeah. Plenty stuff I don't allow, because even me, I don't

see good.

MK: So what happened to Herb?

PT: Yeah, then he kept coming and, then, finally about after almost two months, he told Brian that he go come represent us. I said, "Why he took that long?" Then he [Brian] said, "He found out that nobody controlling you." That's what he said.

MK: Really? Ah.

PT: Yeah. He said no more Kokua Hawaii controlling Ota Camp, any other group...nobody. That's why he came.

MK: Very good.

PT: So I said, "Oh, OK, I don't understand but now I do." But that's good, too, because Thompson...

MK: Pete

PT: Thompson, he was from Kokua Hawaii, Joy Ann, all them, they...

MK: Very strong group?

PT: Yeah, they try tell us what can be done.

"Hey, we're not that kind struggle, we still eviction struggle, let's take care of this one first." And, then, they make meeting every time. I said, "How come you guys meeting, what you guys doing? I don't think people like you coming here; I don't like it, too."

Kokua Hawaii was too radical for us already.

MK: So, what did you tell them?

PT: Just tell them we don't like that kind of meeting, not in our place. Then, they said they gonna assign two...three guys to Ota Camp.

MK: Assign to Ota Camp.

PT: To Ota Camp. I said, "It's up to you guys, but they gotta behave, get rules, get plenty of women, yeah? One of them always talking story to Nora, and Nora grandfather -- blah blah, blah -- they don't like. That guy, we knock him off.

Either kick him out or stop what he's doing. And he stopped what he's doing. But after that, no more problem.

MK: So Herb Takahashi advised you good?

PT: He did good. Mostly he was telling me, what you call that, about the people. He said, "You're OK, you're strong with the people." "Well, I'm one of the guys gonna kick out, too."

So he came, and he came all he way. He came about three years.

MK: Three years.

PT: Three years. He hang around the first year. Then we move to the place; he just hang around once in a while. I mean the 5th year, he hang around. The 4th year help us with plenty forms.

[Switches to attempt to talk to Ota Camp's landlord]. We tell one wahine, "We like to talk to Rex Blackburn." "Why?" "Well, how come they accusing we owe them rent?" He [Blackburn] stay in the office, hiding in the office. He don't like come out.

And then finally I said we go wait for a little while more. After that we gonna knock his door. So we go outside, plug up all the hallway, and then all of a sudden I looking, "Who these guys?" They get armored hat, armored...and they walking funny. (laughs) "Look at those guys, what they doing?" What do you call that? Riot squad?

MK: Yeah.

PT: Gee, taking the hallway, pushing everybody in front. Huh, I don't understand. All we like...talk to the guy, how come like that?

We talk to somebody and somebody said they will call up Herb Takahashi office. And then one of the head, one of the boss call me up, talk to me...he talk to the policemen, then talk to me. He said, "You know what, you guys go out now and I'll go tell Herb to figure out, have a meeting."

That's all, oh, the riot squad, just like carrying guns.

MK: So what happened to the riot squad? They left?



PT: After we left, then they left. We go down and then we go, you know that, what that place that across?

MK: Capitol?

PT: The clock building, the one that watch, Aloha Tower.

MK: Aloha Tower, yeah.

PT: We all there, everybody eating.

MK: You brought food?

PT: Oh yeah, plenty. Everybody eating.

MK: What about transportation? How did you go?

PT: Everybody.

MK: Had a car.

PT: Everybody had a car. That was good though, you know what I mean. It was more planned than State Capitol one [previous demonstration] because I the one go in first.

From Aloha Tower I walk by myself with one guy, and then when I go inside there, I look, nobody around, no more policemen then I told the guy, "OK, come, come." The guy go out the road, nobody in the road. "Come on." All showed up, all the kids, all coming out from the bushes. Wow! Big! They gonna get scared. That's why they got scared from that one.

MK: Ah, that's why they called the riot...

PT: The security guard saw that one and they run. And called Blackburn. The security guard was nice, smiling. [laughter] Supposed to be secret, nobody know nothing. But we no more plan to plug up the building. That's why they have riot squad. We plug up the elevator, hallway.

MK: Was it a secret? It's in the newspaper.

PT: Newspaper?

MK: Yeah, I saw it. I saw a...you were talking.

PT: I got picture on that one.

MK: Yeah, there was a picture. I think Leon Dagdagan was

there. I saw one picture.

PT: I was talking to somebody, a wahine in a desk.

MK: This one? [shows the news clipping, Honolulu Star Bulletin, 25 August 1972]

PT: This one, yeah.

MK: So the press was there. That's you?

PT: Yeah, this one.

MK: That's you, yeah? Where's Johnny [Dombrique]?

PT: Right there. Johnny. Dagdagan. Bautista.

MK: This is Bautista. Where is Nora [Bautista?] Still here?

PT: They divorced.

MK: They divorced. Is he still here, the husband, Richard?

PT: Yeah, Richard.

MK: And so when you moved here [Makibaka Village], how did you decide, what families should get the house, you know? The planning, the transfer, how did you decide that?

PT: I met the Steering Committee. We finally chose where we want to stay. So, Johnny, he took the big house, four bedroom...he said, "I like my house on that end."

And then my brother, five bedroom -- "Where you like your house?" "I like it there." Pate like it there. Now the only reason why Pate like it there, is to keep an eye on the ground, keep an eye on everything. And Johnny, he looking for party all the time, nice place for party.

MK: For party. [laughs]

PT: Yeah, for party. Easy for him to get plenty. Most of his friends and relatives, can find help any time. I'm the only one never have housing, so I stay with Nora.

MK: So, how did the other people choose? After the Steering Committee, the other residents decided to pick where they wanted to stay? No raffle? Sometimes they have raffle.

PT: The good guys, I gave them their choice. Mostly the board

is over here...this side [where Pete and Nora's home is situated].

And all along side the roads, the more cultural guys, the guys that plant kalamungay. When you're coming [to Makibaka Village], you turn right, you go up, plenty of kalamungay.

The guys in the back, all of them, no good for nothing guys, until today. [laughs] The worst one, no more house, termites eat them already. [laughter]

MK: So the cultural guys, they planted vegetables.

PT: Yeah.

MK: Who are they?

PT: When you're coming up there, the Bautista old man...then get the Johnny brother...he plant also. Then after that the hard head guys...I don't know too much. [laughter] And way in the corner, as you go up there, come down here, that's my niece.

MK: Your niece?

PT: But she died already. The family took over. Somebody was living in the car and he ask me, he need a house. I don't know, I find out he is really living in a car. And... [remembers another lady] she died already, she was good in the struggle, she said, "I like help my daughter." I said "OK." Then I saw her daughter.

MK: What's the name?

PT: Garcia.

MK: First name?

PT: Angie Garcia. They got nothing about Ota Camp, but they need house. Because some people, when we made the house already [for Makibaka Village], some people we take out Ota Camp because they got money, plenty money and they don't never let us know. They just move the telephone, "That's OK you can use the same phone." But they make us think they're still in Ota Camp. You know what I mean?

MK: So how did you find out? The Steering Committee look?

- PT: No, the Ilokano guy, they know, but they no like squeal. But when they found out, they happy, they like them get out, too.
- MK: So you kicked out some families, and then you got some to come?
- PT: Yeah.
- MK: So you have a Garcia family here.
- PT: Family, yeah. The son, he left the house to this kids, he moved to Mokuleia...something like that. But the kids they love the house.
- MK: Yeah, there's a big construction there.
- PT: Yeah. Oh, that's not Ota Camp. We get only 31 houses, but now only 30. One house, flat, I noticed. [laughter]
- MK: But when you came here, you started another demonstration for mortgage. Remember that big one. You were trying to assume the mortgage, and the City was raising it.
- PT: Yeah, yeah. You know the tenth year here, you got this option to buy, yeah, OK. When the City...I don't know if lied anything about us...that I'm a crook, or something like that...and then get some other people they meet there, go to the bar and talk about Ota Camp, me and Ujimori.
- MK: Ujimori, the developer.
- PT: Son of developer. So they all together and talk that we are doing something wrong.
- So Ujimori wanted us, if something was wrong, if something wrong with me then, "I [Ujimori] gonna take over this place."
- Wait a minute, now we cannot get the option. If we cannot get the option, the City said, "I'll give it to you [Ujimori]."
- Now the City can make more money with developer than us. They want to exchange this place to one place over there. "That's OK, we'll send you another village."
- MK: Transfer, move again?

PT: "Move to one house and you can buy them, but you gotta qualify." Oh, bullshit. We got house here already -- everybody qualify already -- why should we move to one place we don't know if we qualify? What a swap! Funny kind that swap. So we never bother with that one.

But Ujimori one, he, already...he wanted us out. So he said -- and I don't know where all this money came -- like 86,000 dollars Ota Camp owe, because they not up to date with their rent. We got our receipts show...all there. We paid the State.

MK: You paid.

PT: Yeah.

MK: Family by family, or as a whole?

PT: One.

MK: One?

PT: Yeah. Then you know when we paid the house rent, every house gotta pay about 94 dollars a month.

MK: And someone was collecting? Somebody collecting?

PT: No, the Makibaka took the whole thing.

MK: Ok.

PT: Everybody paid that one. But then we make the people pay 94 plus, 133 dollars, so we add 39 dollars more. That go for tax, insurance -- we put that in the bank. We put that in the bank, this one here the 94 dollars each house, we pay to the State.

"How much you pay rent?" "133." "You know your house rent supposed to be 94 dollars?" "I don't know Makibaka say I pay 133." "Who do you give your rent to?" "Tagalog." That's what Ujimori know, that we got money in the bank. And Ujimori was saying that whatever maintenance money from each one, it's for him. I say, "What for?" We get that money, it's not for him, it's for tax. And then he said, "You get all 86,000." Oh, them fight like hell. We call Legal Aid again. And then when we got Legal Aid, for two years, and even Legal Aid think that we owe money.

MK: Really?

PT: We have to struggle the Legal Aid lawyer, we get one Chinese guy, and the Japanese guy came -- the father was the president of the university. You remember him? Japanese guy.

MK: Japanese? I know you went to get George Cooper.

PT: No. George Cooper, he came for, because we never get them finalized with the Legal Aid. So George Cooper we just used him go talk to the State. Just talk.

MK: But before him, there was a Japanese guy?

PT: Fight with Ujimori -- George Cooper...only with the State.

MK: In Legal Aid, you had two...you had the Chinese guy and a Japanese guy.

PT: Yeah. What's the president name?

MK: Matsuda?

PT: Yeah. Matsuda's son. He really smart guy but, and the other guy...Chinese guy...

MK: Mar-Chun, I think it's in there. (shows clipping, Honolulu Advertiser, 14 March 1985]

PT: But he, too, said that we owe the State. But I struggled with him, "How can, how can, we've been paying that way from the beginning, same thing, how come we owe?" Finally he caught on because, you know Richardson, was giving him lot of question.

MK: Who is Richardson?

PT: Richardson, the one head of the Legal Aid, the wahine.

MK: The wahine, OK.

PT: "Now I know what you're saying." But he come out of that, Legal Aid shut his lips, he no can talk.

MK: Ah. Because Ujimori was suing you -- the Ota Camp -- for not paying...and the Legal Aid, I think turned around and sued...

PT: He found out that for real we don't owe that much. So he

got mad and quit [Legal Aid]. He quit, I told him, "Work with us." All you do just listen to what he [Ujimori] say; they may not tell us everything. So he did that. We paid altogether about five grand.

MK: For him.

PT: Yeah, but he was good. He did a good job.

MK: Who you paid? Ujimori? Matsuda?

PT: No, the other one, the Chinese guy. [Craig Mar-Chun, attorney]

MK: You paid, that's Legal Aid though.

PT: He quit Legal Aid.

MK: Oh, he quit Legal Aid and then...became your lawyer.

PT: He never have job already. He said, "You hire me, as soon as this is pau, I go home." Go home to Sacramento.

MK: So, he was the one who helped you.

PT: Yeah. He helped me, all the information he get, but cannot talk. Cannot talk in court, nothing.

MK: Cannot talk, why?

PT: The board shut his lip. What do you call that, when they get something wrong, they get something, you know when the lawyer do something illegal...

MK: They debar you?

PT: No, just almost like that.

MK: They cannot talk.

PT: Suspend them.

MK: Suspend.

PT: So he cannot talk already. Nothing. But he can work as a lawyer for us and get all the information, everything. And he do some writing.

MK: So he might have some of the records.

PT: He got all that. He took it all.

MK: He took it all. Yeah, we should, I'll look for him. I think there's a 1985 [clipping] here. I saw his name, Mar-Chun.

PT: See this one here...five and...

MK: Seven and one-half per cent.

PT: Five and one-half per cent Marvin said. But because of the guys here, Richard Bautista, all these other guys, they scared, huh, they said "Ah, give him more so that they don't cut out."

MK: Ah...

PT: Yeah, but then Matsuda told us...not Matsuda...but Herbert Takahashi...

MK: Oh, Takahashi was helping too.

PT: Only I call him.

MK: OK. For advice.

PT: Tell me: "You shouldn't have paid the seven and one-half, you should just go, stay five and one-half. You guys stay in legal ground."

MK: But...

PK: Well, we got really coward guys. [MK laughs]

MK: Because you're here already, you don't want to lose it.

PK: Yeah. You know why, they're scared they kick out. There wasn't the old Ota Camp here, these guys. They just caved in. They worry about kick out, what about us?

Only the two guys. The two guys, I don't know, they get good job. It's not that the people listening to them; it's more the two lawyers listening to them. You got two lawyers listening to them and the people hear that, "Oh the two lawyers listening to them, then it must be OK."

MK: That's the Legal Aid attorney there [clipping] Craig Mar-Chun.

PT: Craig Mar-Chun.



MK: Craig Mar-Chun. So he helped you all the way.

PT: Yeah, until finished.

MK: Until finished. Good. So he is in the Mainland now?

PK: Sacramento.

MK: I have to write him.

PK: He come sometime, you know.

MK: It would be good to get records from him.

PK: The legal kind? All the legal...he got them.

MK: And Herb Takahashi should have records too?

PT: I don't think Herb holding.

MK: No records, but this one [Mar-Chun] has.

PT: Craig and the other one...Cooper.

MK: You think he has too?

PT: Lots of them, legal stuff.

MK: Because that's good background.

[intermission]

PT: I said, Ota Camp goal is get one publicity a month. That would really be good, at least one. And at one time, it was going like that. Small kind. Really be good because get hard head people outside.

How many times guystell me, "Ota Camp, you fighting a losing battle." But I never hear what other people telling me. And then after that, "Eh, you know what, Pete, the first time I hear lot of negative stuff that you guys I don't think you can make it," and then after that "they get hard-headed those guys, keep going, you know."

By and by they say, "Eh I think get hope, this one." Pretty soon -- boom -- all the thing in the front page. That's the one I thinking, if you get one -- you can educate people, it show that you fighting all the time.

MK: That's why you have lots of reports in the paper.

PT: And, then, for organizer, we use the same method in Waimanalo. We help the Filipino, go organize They all can fix their house. We are talking about cultural-kine. Lifestyle. Strong, you know.

MK: Going back to Cooper, the lawyer, how did you get him involved?

PT: He the one, when we went to Kauai, he was the one show us around.

MK: George Cooper.

PT: Yeah. He was living Kauai at that time.

MK: He was an activist there? He was a lawyer there?

PT: After Kauai, then he come here.

MK: He wrote one book with Gavan Daws.

PT: Yeah, I got that.

MK: It's called *Land and Power in Hawaii*.

PT: Yeah.

MK: Good book. Mentioned you, Ota Camp.

PT: Yeah, he gave me one. I met them in UH. I used to go up to their house. They really nice.

[intermission]

MK: So he [Herb Takahashi] volunteered for paper work, no charge.

PT: Yeah, nothing.

MK: Wow, pretty good. Right now, where is he? Still in Honolulu? George Cooper.

PT: No, the other one.

MK: The other one.

PT: Takahashi.

MK: Herb Takahashi. Right now he's a lawyer.

PT: Yeah, ever since he work with us, he never take any new

clients, you know. He no take clients. He get plenty, they all union -- the nurse, ILWU, all the union.

MK: Ok. Do you still see him?

[Intermission]

PT: I wish I can remember more clearly, but before, you know, that I was talk to the support, almost toward the end already, I talk deep with them about Ota Camp. Then one Japanese girl she thought I was one Marxist.

"What are you talking about?" She said, "I thought communism, Marxism you read." I said, "I don't know." She said, "You talk good about Marxism." I said, "I don't know what the hell is that." [MK laughs]

But then I notice that if you stay with that people, you will be thinking like that. I can understand some of the stuff between about Marxism and Lenin but I cannot [voice unclear] because what, way below that?

MK: Some people talk about socialism -- when you are for the people, for the good of the people. That's it, yeah? That's better.

PT: Yeah, in with them.

MK: That's right. And for equality? I think you mentioned sometime ago about class, social class. Some rich people cannot understand what poor people are doing. They cannot come out and help.

PT: I read one book, the Filipino one, what is that now, the...peasant one, yeah?

MK: The Hukbalahap? Huk rebellion? Who, Ben? [Kerkvliet]

PT: I think so. About, I think I forget the name already. I think Ben wrote that...you and Ben.

MK: Ben. I did the book on Pablo Manlapit, and Ben did the book on the Huk peasant rebellion.

PT: OK. I read about other stuff about the Filipino -- the people-kine, yeah? That's how I find out.

MK: The rich people are really top there. But many people are fighting still. There are many good groups.

PT: But what I mean to say mostly...that if you get one revolution, gonna be one mean one. Gotta go. Plenty da kine, what do you call those...those who run for politics they own plenty of land. They talking about, "Ah, I gonna take some land from there but..."

MK: Yeah. Too greedy.

PT: Yeah, I know, too hard. That's why I was thinking Filipino gonna be real hard but I think...just with like my mother said, "We got cook rice...no...cook banana with bagoong, ginamos and rice...that's all we bring to school."

MK: Your mother.

PT: Yeah, my mother said. Oh, poor like that. I look back to that. That was long time ago, my mother. Over there, still poor, yeah! My mother said the only guys kind of rich [you can tell] by what they eat.

Like my mother...all she eat was fish, and then, but mostly get plenty of fish. But when she died, her hair still good. Never turned white, you know. My mother, long black, and strong. And she's one strong lady, too. My mother all she eat, cook banana, fish...no more pork.

MK: You remember, what province?

PT: Cebu, ah...no...no...Bantayan.

MK: Cebu? Bantayan island? The town of Bantayan in Cebu.

PT: Yeah, Bantayan. And my father, Siloan, Cebu.

MK: Also Cebu. They met here?

PT: Yeah, they met over here. My mother, you know they never got married, they just stayed together.

MK: Yeah.

PT: My mother pick one guy named Samson.

MK: How old was your mom when she came here?

PT: I think she was about 31, 32.

MK: Alone? Did she come alone or with, did she come by herself?

PT: No, no you no can come by yourself, you gotta fake for

coming.

MK: Oh fix. OK.

PT: I don't know but he came with that Samson guy.

MK: Uh-huh.

PT: But you see, get everybody on the street, come down.

MK: Like your partner.

PT: Yeah.

MK: Pares-pares.

PT: But the problem, the guy she pick up.--a gambler. Got hard time with him. And then every time he like gambling, he take my mother money. My mother wash clothes, working...

MK: Where?

PT: Right in plantation, Waipahu. Every time she wash, I gotta go with her, I was small. I gotta go with her deliver all the clothes. Oh my mother work hard. Even da kine, no more washing machine, boil the clothes, get palo-palo [beat the clothes], and then you gotta rinse about two times, from there to there, and then iron...

MK: Work hard.

PT: Hard. And then, so my mother got mad. The guy [Samson] always asking money. And then, I don't know, my mother run. And what happened, my mother run to one of the clients, that's my father. [laughter] My father look like...you know the actor, Robert Ryan...that's how, his body like that. Strong...not big body but slim.

MK: He was working in the plantation too?

PT: The mill. And he hates this kind of Filipino -- my father. Call them cock-sucker [MK laughs], they play with the boss. I told you my father, you know when cook molasses, you work by himself, about three, four guys, rather than in the field. In the field that's where the cock-suckers work.

MK: But hard, hard work in the field.

PT: Cut...

MK: Cut cane, then hapai ko. That's hard.

PT: Any kine. I guess everybody like go ahead.

MK: When did your father come?

PT: I think he came in '31, '32.

MK: He was young?

PT: When he came here he was 31 years old. He born 1900.

MK: He was born 1900. Ah...

PT: Yeah. My father, with me now, both of them was 36 years old, I think. I have my sister and I have one brother. The first one, my brother, belong to the Samson, another guy.

MK: The one that...your mother's partner.

PT: Yeah. [father got sick, died of cancer] Then I was thinking, maybe can get social security go to my mother, cannot. That's when I found out they never been married.

MK: Ah, not registered.

PT: Hard.

MK: So, what's your father's name, full name?

PT: Marcos.

MK: Marcos Tagalog. And your mother?

PT: My mother, Juanita.

MK: Juanita?

PT: Juanita Juamuan.

MK: Juamuan.

PT: That's my middle name.

MK: OK. Spell it.

PT: J-U-A-M-U-A-N.

MK: That's a different name.

PT: All through my life it was H-O-M-A-W-A-N...Homawan. Then when I go pick up my birth certificate, the lady told me "Your name over there." They show me. "That's how my name?" Juamuan. That's why I took that one.

MK: When were you born, Pete? Date of birth?

PT: March the 2nd.

MK: March the 2nd...what year?

PT: '32.

MK: 1932

PT: Yeah.

MK: Were you born here in Waipahu? Hospital or at home?

PT: No, no more hospital. My mother no like male touch her, that's what she said. "I don't like," she said, "in the Philippines only women touch women."

MK: The midwife. So you were born at home? With a midwife.

PT: Yeah.

MK: And then where did you go to school?

PT: I went, I dropped out nine.

MK: Where did you go? Waipahu?

PT: Waipahu High School.

MK: Waipahu High School.

PT: I dropped out nine, but I never like.

MK: Why?

PT: I never like because...you know when I was going elementary school, all I was learning mostly, "Jane, see Jane, see Jane run," that kine...and then...Hawaiian words.

MK: Singing?

PT: That's all. And what we learn...I never learn Hawaiian. I never learn, nothing. Just extra time for us stay in the school. Before I went high school, I was about 6th grade,

that's when I learned my times table. I get this man you see, and he teach me times table, he teach me how to add...and until today I never forget. He put a long line of numbers over there, then he go, "Eh, eh, don't go too fast." Then he teach me that. And then somehow, because when you know that one, and you know multiplication, you get to master multiplication -- that's how I know.

I don't know English; they don't teach. They had the English Standards class...only all haoles, haole and...oh, they can talk good.

And they get catechism, we never really had good education and by the time we go high school, I should maybe think better the time I should try to start learn something but with all that elementary school, by the time I go high school, I get bored.

MK: Bored, uh-huh.

PT: I get bored. I don't know nothing.

MK: So, what did you do in high school?

PT: Gamble.

MK: You gambled?

PT: High school.

MK: High school? What kind?

PT: Not after high school. In high school, I gambled. Mostly all Filipino guys gamble.

MK: What kind? Cards?

PT: Dice...mostly dice. Cast, throw, take them all. All da kine...dollar-dollar kine.

MK: Who were your friends in high school?

PT: Mostly all Filipinos.

MK: All Filipinos? Local born?

PT: Oh, I get some...I get the Japanese-kine, but the Japanese-kine different. They, as soon as they pau high school, they get business already. The business waiting for them.



But us guys, different.

MK: Filipino guys?

PT: Mix, looking for job. Me, I had two kind of job. Because my thinking not so good, I keep all those job. Pearl Harbor, I keep library, I keep Schofield...

MK: What did you do there? Did you take a test?

PT: Apply. Get physical test.

MK: So did you finish high school?

PT: I never finish.

MK: You dropped out.

PT: No, but when I got one accident when I was working, refrigeration that kine, when I had accident...

MK: How old was you?

PT: Ah...1968, I think 1966, right in the '70s, I decided to go college but...

MK: Community college?

PT: No, for finish my high school.

MK: Ah, you went back?

PT: Yeah, I went back to...what's that?

MK: Certificate?

PT: Yeah. So I was there for four months, I got...then I go college. Getting good but I kind feel, you know when get tense-kine study. I taking drug, oh, plenty drug.

MK: How come?

PT: Doctor-kine. Pain...whiplash...from accident. I don't know. '66...'50...I was eighteen, and '60...twenty-three, twenty-two.

MK: Married?

PT: Yeah. Married with kids.

MK: Very young. With Sally?

PT: Yeah. Very young, I don't know why we got married. She never got pregnant. But I have good kids. They all got respect, you know the Filipino...

MK: Yeah. Is Sally from here...local?

PT: Waialua.

MK: Waialua. She was born there?

PT: Born there. When I met her she talk like one haole.

MK: Really?

PT: Haole accent, too. [laughs] She hanging all the time with haole, Portuguese, Puerto Rican, haole. They live in a camp, rent-kine of camp.

MK: So was it difficult part for Sally when you were starting the struggle, when you were very busy? She had to take care of...

PT: Yeah. She had to take care...

MK: How many, four?

PT: Six

MK: Six. That's hard.

PT: Same time, you know, when I go out, not out in the camp but when I going community, Sally used to come. And I ask her certain kind of help.

Mostly like when I first went school at UH, she said, "Why you like study?" "I like study, what the hell, you know, what the hell I did." "Where?" "Ota Camp" [laughter] I like know now. Before I don't like question. That's why I go.

MK: That's right.

PT: Now I like know why.

MK: Yeah, reflect back.

PT: Yeah. But then I find out, you know, even in college, I no can understand.

MK: So, six kids and Sally. And what about money? How did you

feed the children?

PT: Money...I was under welfare.

MK: Under welfare.

PT: Yeah, I was industrial [compensation]. And then before, only industrial take care of you, only that we have that one for my school...and then gotta go welfare.

MK: Uh-huh. Six children, that's hard.

PT: My kids...they noticed, work hard, too. We gotta buy things with food stamps. And then I tell them, I don't know, I was trying to decide whether I gonna find one job -- I can find -- and then there's Ota Camp thing. I know if I can find work, I cannot do Ota Camp...no can.

MK: Yeah. So how old were the children in 1972, '73, '74 -- six children?

PT: My oldest one is 1958.

MK: '58 born.

PT: Yeah. He was about twelve?

MK: Wow, very young. '58 plus '68 is ten.

PT: When the struggle started, he was twelve, I think.

MK: And then the next one.

PT: Then we came out here [Makibaka Village] my boy was high school.

MK: Already.

PT: Sixteen, yeah.

MK: So when you were doing the struggle first in 1972 some of the children were very small...your children.

PT: Oh, yeah. [counts the years] When we started the struggle...

MK: The youngest one was born already? The number 6, one.

PT: I think the youngest one, maybe five or six.

MK: Years old?

PT: Yeah. How I remember -- she was riding a bicycle. Ota Camp here. She just learned how to ride a bicycle. She may be six, seven. And the rest is nine, twelve -- they was all small. So easy for control them. Pretty small.

MK: How many boys and girls?

PT: Only one. Five girls.

MK: So the boy is the one who was twelve years old.

PT: Yeah, now fifty.

MK: Fifty. Where is he?

PT: Big Island.

MK: Working there?

PT: They're all good. I can say that all the time. They carry that respect, you know. They respect all the people. Even my brother, too. His kids carry the respect...Filipino-kine.

MK: And when did you and Nora get married? You got divorced, yeah, with Sally?

PT: Yeah. We, two, before we got married, lived together for ten years. We had the kids already.