

3-2-1994

Interview no. 845

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Interview with Oscar B. White by Michelle L. Gomilla, 1994, "Interview no. 845," Institute of Oral History, University of Texas at El Paso.

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Chamizal Oral History Project

Oscar B. White
By Michelle L. Gomilla

March 2, 1994

This is an interview with Mr. Oscar White, founding president of the Chamizal Civic Organization. The interview, by Michelle Gomilla, is part of the Chamizal Oral History Project. We are located at Mr. White's home, 7098 Dale Road, El Paso, Texas. Today's date is March 2, 1994.

G: Mr. White, we'll go ahead and start the interview. If you'd please tell us when and where you were born.

W: I was born here in El Paso on March 26, 1922.

G: Where were your parents from?

W: They were from Mexico but they are American citizens. And I lost my father when I was two and a half years old and my mother married Mr. White, who adopted the members of her family. And so that's why my name is Oscar B. White. "B" stands for Bolívar, who was my father's name. And I kept his last name as a middle name because he brought me into the world. And then, of course, [I kept] my stepfather['s last name] because he raised me and educated me.

G: What part of El Paso were you reared in?

W: Mostly in the what you call the central area. That would be what is now Octavia and Missouri. And then [I lived] in east

El Paso around the - I graduated from Beall School. That's on Raynor and Pera. And then we moved to Florence and Myrtle - which is downtown - in an apartment complex. And then we lived on Overland Street. And then I was left alone. And before I went into the service I moved around the Myrtle, Newman area.

After I got back from the service I started working with National Cash Register Company, a job that I held for eighteen years. And then I quit [my job with] them and went on my own and established the Border Cash Register Company, which is at 7098 [Dale Road] in the rear. And I'm still fixing cash registers at this age.

G: Okay. Did you have any family living in the Chamizal area?

W: None at all. None at all. I was [living] approximately a mile or two miles from where the Chamizal area was.

G: Do you remember when the Chamizal Treaty was passed?

W: Yes, I remember. I don't remember the exact year, but I do remember very, very distinctly. And it's very vivid in my mind because of the problems we encountered. And, of course, the government also encountered quite a few problems in implementing the requisites of that act because it was a special law that was passed mostly to protect the residents of that area.

G: So how did you become interested in helping the people that were living in the Chamizal area at the time of the treaty?

W: I was called by one of the residents. The name [of the

person] that I remember as calling me was a lady by [the name of] Lacarra. I believe her name was Elvira Lacarra. And we set up a sort of an appointment as to where we were going to meet to try to organize a group because they were encountering a lot of problems with the government negotiators. And we did establish an organization at Sacred Heart Church at Oregon Street. And the father there provided a room that we could use any time that we wanted to. And that's where we had our [meetings]. It was a school room that was, of course, used during the day. We used it late in the afternoon or on Saturdays and Sundays to have our meetings.

G: Do you remember the name of the father at the church?

W: Father Gafford, yes, Father Gafford. Because there were several times we sat down and had private talks. Because one of the rules that I established when I was appointed or elected president of the organization was that it was not going to be a political organization. And it was during the time that they were getting ready to hold the municipal elections here. And I figured that somebody would try to use the organization as a stepping stone to getting elected. And I wanted to prohibit that because this was a very serious business that we had to conduct. And a gentleman that was running for mayor and a friend of his - both were very close friends of mine - was running for alderman. And they tried to get in there and speak to the people and I practically threw them out of the meeting room. And, of course, it got to

Father Gafford. We had a long talk and then he agreed with me that I had done the right thing.

G: Do you remember the name of the alderman?

W: Yes...Francisco Hernández. He used to own a drug store right across the street from the Thomason General Hospital. And the gentleman that was running for mayor - at that time he was an alderman but he was running for mayor - Mr. Ralph Seitsinger. And he's still alive here in El Paso. So I practically threw them out of the meeting room. And then one of the members went out and talked to them and told them that if they became members that they could attend the meeting. And they tried that method and I threw them out again. (chuckles)

So it was fruitful in that that was the beginning of the implementation of the Chamizal Act. And then after a few meetings I encountered some problems that there were two individuals that they had the intent of embarrassing President [John F.] Kennedy. And that was something that I didn't share with them and that I was only interested in protecting the people and seeing that they were taken care of. And so I could not work with them, but I had the support of most of the members. But, anyway, I felt that it was no use of trying to do something because I knew it was going to be something that was going to take some time and it was going to be something that would require stepping on peoples' toes. And I was not only ready, but prepared, to do it. And I just couldn't do it with those two individuals there.

G: Mrs. Lacarra approached you first?

W: I believe she was the one that called me to establish that organization [Chamizal Civic Organization]. That's the only name that comes to mind as being the first one to contact me.

G: Was she representing a certain area?

W: Yeah. She had one of the best constructed homes in that area. And, of course, she was very much concerned. And then she had a little bit of knowledge in politics. I think that she was the first one to start getting the people organized there.

G: And was she elected to office in the club?

W: No.

G: In the organization?

W: No, no. No, the only one that was elected was myself. And, of course, we took very little notes. It was mostly held in memory because we were just trying to figure out the best way to approach the problem. And, of course, when I saw the problem that I was having I, left them, resigned, and then I rested for about a week.

And then I had a call from a lady by the name of Mrs. Valentin Hernández that lived over here in Cordova [Gardens] and she told me of the problems that they were having there. And this was an area that was not originally involved in the Chamizal, but the government wanted to change that area to Mexico so that they could straighten the flow or the course of the river. And I went to her house, we had the first meeting, and I set some rules and they agreed to them. And we started

working from there on.

G: What type of people were at the meetings? Were they mostly property owners?

W: They were all property owners. Because that's one of the requirements that, you know, that they had to have something in common in order to protect each other and feel the impact of the problem that they were having. And we were very successful because there came a time when I saw that the only way that we could get anything done or improve the situation that was getting out of hand was for someone to go to Washington and to represent the people and talk to somebody that had a little bit of authority in order to correct the injustices. And there were two injustices in [my] mind the way I saw it.

And the only one that was selected to go was myself. And at that time I had a very ongoing business, so I had to hire somebody to take care of my business. And I started trying to negotiate to make arrangements to go to Washington. And the only help that we wanted was somebody to make arrangements as to whom I was supposed to see. That was all. We didn't want any financial support or anything like that.

So nobody would help me until I went to Congressman Richard White's campaign manager. It hasn't been too long that he retired as a judge. He was an attorney. I went to his office and it was on a Friday afternoon. And I took two briefcases full of affidavits and complaints and so on and so

forth. And I took out just two at random and I gave them to him and I told him of the problem that I was having making arrangements to go to Washington. And I asked him to look them over - and he was an attorney - and I told him that if he saw that there was no reason to complain that I'd leave his office, but, on the other hand, if he saw reason for me to go to Washington and try to correct things that I would appreciate it if he would call Congressman Richard White. Immediately he read both of them and then he immediately picked up the phone and called Washington, but because of the time change he was not able to get hold of Congressman White.

I'm pretty sure it was the following Sunday that I had a call from Congressman Richard White in Washington and the first thing he said - I knew him very well because I helped him in his campaigns and I believed in him - and he told me, he said, "Oscar, I understand you're having some trouble coming to Washington." And I said, "Yes." And he said, "Well, tell you what, Monday morning my secretary will call you and she'll give you all the information you need." And I had told the lawyer that the people that I represented had expressed a desire for me to take a wreath of flowers to President Kennedy's grave. So, I guess, the lawyer expressed that to Congressman White. And he told me, he said, "When, the secretary calls you she'll give you the price of the wreath."

And, anyway, Monday morning I had a call real early in

the morning. And, sure enough, the secretary had all the information for me [and told me] that since I wanted to be there on a Sunday, that if I got there on a certain day - it was a Sunday - then the following morning, Monday, that I would meet with Congressman Richard White for, I think, it was an hour, an hour and a half. And then arrangements would be made so I could go and take the wreath of flowers to President Kennedy's grave and then at two o'clock that I would meet with two of the heads - well, they were representatives of the government that had anything to do with the Chamizal Treaty. It was a lawyer that either helped or wrote the law itself and then a former ambassador that also had something to do with writing the law. [I was scheduled to meet with them] at two o'clock. And [she also told me] that I would be accompanied by one of the congressman's administrative assistants. I believe it was Alex González who used to be justice of the peace someplace in Sierra Blanca, [Texas], I believe.

So, sure enough, I got to Washington on Sunday. And I was not very comfortable at the beginning because I had two briefcases full of complaints and affidavits and some pictures and so on and so forth. And I found myself wondering why I was there and thinking that, maybe, I had no business being there. Anyway, I went and had a cup of coffee and came back. And then I started thinking of the people that sent me over there because at one of the meetings the members started contributing ten dollars, twenty dollars, towards the

[purchase of] the plane ticket and they would not let me put a single penny in there of my own money. And we're talking about old people that I knew fifteen dollars was, you know, a burden to them [and] that they needed [the money they contributed] for food. And at that time, I think - I forgot - but it was over three hundred dollars. But I took care of all my expenses and things. I took care of my business. So they gave me a little bit more encouragement as to follow through the following day.

The following day I went to the representative's building there and I went to his office. He met with me and he recorded my conversation with him. And then he was called to [attend a congressional session]. Congress was in session. They called him. So then I stayed with his administrative assistant.

At exactly nine o'clock - oh, by the way, when the secretary called me she said, "We have three wreaths of flowers that are very adequate for what you want to do." She gave me the price of the, cheapest one, the middle one, and then the higher priced one. So I picked the middle one. And she said, "It'll be ready." So, sure enough, at nine o'clock, we go over to the cemetery and I was offered an honor guard. That was the most impressive thing that I have ever [seen]. And that was the first honor guard that had been accorded the congressman because he hadn't been in office very long. I forgot just how long it had been, but it's something that I

will never forget, you know, the Marines and all the ceremonies that go through.

And, I believe, that I had lunch with, Congressman Richard White at the cafeteria there - at the commercial cafeteria - and then at two o'clock we went to another office building, Alex and myself. It was two o'clock. And I met with those two representatives until ten minutes until seven. And I gave them all I had and so on and so forth. And they would ask me questions, but to me it didn't seem like I was getting through to them. But, of course, I didn't know the gentlemen.

And prior to then, I had filed a suit against the federal government that involved a piece of property that belonged to a senior couple, Mr. and Mrs. Meza. Mr. Meza was, I believe about sixty-five years old and she was about sixty-two or sixty-three. They belonged to the [Chamizal Civic] Organization and, of course, we had agreed that nobody was going to sign until everybody was taken care of.

It happened that I had a call one afternoon [from Mrs. Meza at] about four o'clock and she told me that she didn't have any electricity. And I asked her to check her records and see if she had paid the electricity. And she said, "No." She said, "I paid the electricity." So I asked her to take out the bills, you know, while I held the phone. And, sure enough, she was paid up. She didn't owe any money. And she says, "The thing is, there's no meter. There are no wires

from my home to the post, see, to the utility post."

So I called the electric company and I got hold of one of the big shots and I told him that somebody was in trouble - either the electric company or the federal government. And I told him who I was and that I wasn't playing and I said, "If you don't tell me the whole story," I said, "you're the ones that's going to be held liable." So he went and got the records. And the clock at the Meza's home had stopped at 9:15 a.m. They left to go to Juárez to visit some family members and relatives and the clock showed that it stopped at 9:15 a.m.

So, anyway, this representative from the electric company got the records and said that he had been called by the project engineer or supervisor to tell him to remove the electricity service to that home because it belonged to the federal government. And I said, "It doesn't belong to the federal government." But anyway I told him it was - by that time it was about 4:15 or 4:30 p.m. I told him that if the electricity wasn't restored [to the Meza home] before quitting time that I would file a suit against them.

So, sure enough, they went up there and they installed the electricity. But I did file a suit against the federal government. When I went to Washington they asked me to drop the suit and [told me] that they would start negotiating again with the people [that lived in the Chamizal area]. And I didn't promise them that I would drop it or anything like

that, but [during the] meeting with those two gentlemen until at ten minutes until seven, the phone rang and it was one of the relatives of one of the men. And, otherwise, I think we would have stayed a little bit longer.

So I packed up my briefcases. And as I walked out the door, [as I was] standing there for the elevator with the company of Alex and the two gentlemen, [it was then] that I felt that I had to tell them just how I felt, you know. And that was very important to me. And I told them, I said, "I've met with you since two o'clock and until ten minutes until seven and I'm going to tell you how I feel. I feel that I have accomplished nothing for the people that I represent." And they just grinned, you know, and didn't say anything.

So [we] got in the elevator and Alex and I went to the congressman's office. And he was still waiting for us. And he asked me how it went. And I told him, you know, the same thing that I had told [the government representatives]. And he told me, he said, "Oscar, those are diplomats and they don't have poker faces. They will not show you a poker face." And he said, "By the fact that they listened to you as long as they did, it's because they're going to do something." He says, "They're not accustomed to meeting with anybody for more than thirty to forty-five minutes." And, of course, I've never had any contact with a diplomat or anything. So, to me, I still did not believe even the congressman.

And I mentioned to you that I had had lunch that day

with Congressman Richard White. And while having lunch we came across another congressman [named] Henry González from San Antonio and he invited us to have lunch the following day with him. So, anyway after I left - oh, the Congressman White told me just as we were leaving his office. And it was after 7:30 p.m. And he said, "Oscar, give this gentleman five days or give him a week and you'll see some improvements." And, to me, I just couldn't see [any improvements], you know, because they didn't show me that they had digested everything that I told them, you know. So I said, "Well, I still don't believe it." And I left. I said goodbye to him and [I told him], "I'll see you tomorrow." And [I] went back to the hotel.

After I got back to the hotel, I started reflecting on what had gone on and so on and so forth and I became very upset. So I checked with the airlines as to when the next flight [was scheduled] to leave Washington. And I called Congressman Richard White and I told him that I was going to leave that night or the following morning real early. And I told him why and I asked him to apologize to Henry B. González for me. And so I left and came back.

Well, it wasn't five days or a week - I think it was about three days - when I started seeing things change. So as a result, I dropped the lawsuit that I filed against the federal government.

At the beginning I told you that the act - the law - called for a compensation board to be formed by Mr. [Joseph

F.] Friedkin, [Commissioner, International Boundary and Water Commission, U.S. Section], and that board was supposed to be composed of the local citizens. And the purpose of that board was to hear complaints or arguments from affected homeowners that were not getting enough to compensate them for their loss. And [according to the tenets of the Chamizal Treaty], the government could not alter the appraisal price on the property, but that they could consider extra compensation to take care of their extra needs. And the board members were not lawyers. It did not involve [a knowledge of] law or anything like that. But when I went to Washington I brought it to the attention that the board had never been established. And they were very, very upset.

But then one thing that I did notice, that when I mentioned the case of Margarita Sánchez where the negotiator - the government employee - went and told her that she had nothing but junk and that I felt that that was her castle. And they were very, very much upset because of that. And I remember that they told me that they would never - the government - would never stand for that, you know.

G: Let's back up a bit.

W: Yes.

G: Could you elaborate, Mr. White, on the appraisal process because, in reality, these people had no choice. They had to move or be...

W: Yes.

G: ...relocated.

W: That is right.

G: What did the process involve?

W: Well, the process involved a government negotiator going in there to see the homeowner and tell them that their property had been appraised at a certain price.

G: Do you remember what the homes looked like, more or less?

W: Well, they were very humble homes. I would say that they would range in that time at a market value of anywhere from \$5,000 to \$6,000, \$7,000. Something like that.

G: And the homeowners had clear titles to [their homes]?

W: Yes, they had clear titles to them but the process that the negotiators used - and we must remember that, as I told you, that the negotiators, which were the appraisers, they were former real estate salesmen that were used to using a high pressure tactic, you know. And many of the homeowners would sit with them and say, "Well, this is not enough to take care of my needs," and so on and so forth. And the negotiators would make it clear to them that this was the final price. Never did I hear of any negotiators saying, "You have a recourse of going to [a compensation board]." Because remember when I said there was no such compensation board existing.

And on many occasions, from sworn statements from these homeowners, [it was evident] that the negotiator or the interpreter would say, "Well, you're dealing with the federal

government and this is a fixed price. It's not going to change and we would suggest that you get a good lawyer." They were talking to people that had never had occasion to talk to a lawyer. They were scared of courts. And on many occasions - of course, when the negotiator went in there he was already prepared with the the contract of sale. And on many occasions they'd say, "No. There's no way that I can sell this house for that amount. I cannot accept that amount." And then they were told to sign that form to show that they had contacted that person and that they had told them of the price even if they did not accept it. And they did sign without a witness being present or anything like that. And what they were signing, they thought, they were signing just something that would be evidence that they had been contacted, see? And in actuality what they were doing were signing the contract of sale. And they didn't know that.

And I proved - and I was willing to go to court on that - and I proved to the government representative in Washington that those were illegal contracts and they would not hold water in court. And I told him that I would file suit on each one of those. Well, one of the things that they told me, that after things got reorganized, that they told me one of the conditions in me dropping the suit that they would renegotiate with every member of the organization that had signed a contract of sale or an agreement to sell and they would renegotiate from start, you know, as if they had never

contacted them.

So my instructions to the members of the organization were that anytime that a negotiator went to make contact with a homeowner they were assigned - the next house, or the next family to their right or to their left - they were supposed to call me as soon as they saw the negotiator knocking on the door. Then I would take off to be there, see? So we formed a network where I would be there when they went over to negotiate with them.

G: Did the appraisers speak Spanish?

W: Very few, very few. And they depended on the translators. And, like I said, they didn't do any good for the homeowners. In fact, they caused a lot of problems, you know.

G: You had mentioned at one point during our conversation before we started the interview that you had gone in with a flash camera and taken pictures of the home.

W: You see, one of the requirements was that every negotiator when they arrived at the price the government was going to pay this homeowner that they would have comparable properties in other areas of the city to show them [and] that they would be able to buy another piece of property in a better area with better conditions for the price that the government was offering them.

So in order to support their figures and so on and so forth, they would take a proposed property and say, "This is located on such and such a place. It has so many bedrooms, so

many bathrooms" and so on and so forth. And, of course, they would take a picture that would give a good picture of the property, even though it was a side view or a front view and so on and so forth. And then in describing the inside they would describe the flooring, the condition of the walls, if it needed painting, if they had been painted recently, what kind of heating and cooling system it had.

Well, on the affidavits that I had on the people that I was representing, I would take those addresses and a copy of the proposition by the negotiator and I would go and check them. And I would make my own listing as to what was wrong with the house. And I would go and take a snapshot of the conditions of the heaters and all that. And I took that to Washington to prove my point because I felt that, you know, after all, there was the word of a lay person against [the word of] a professional real estate salesman or representative.

G: When the treaty went into effect, how did the people living in the Chamizal area hear about what would happen? Did they read about it in a newspaper or...

W: No. The first thing that happened after the law was enacted, that Senator Ralph Yarborough appointed...

End of Tape One

Side A

Beginning of Tape One

Side B

W: So, as I told you, that Commissioner Friedkin was given the the job of implementing the Chamizal Act in regards to purchasing and clearing the property that was going to be ceded to the Republic of Mexico [and] that, of course, he had all the addresses and all the engineers' maps as to what areas were going to be needed. And they started sending mailings to the people. And they started getting upset in regards to what they were going to do and how they were going to be able to afford a home outside of their own area that they were used to living.

And one of the things that, to me, gave me strength to help them was that when I went to Washington - and every time that it was brought up - [and heard] that a lot of those people should have been prepared because they knew that those properties were in the Chamizal area and they were subject to the Chamizal settlement. And I countered by telling them that, of course, many of those people had never read the deeds, even though in fine print it had on the bottom of the page it had that it was subject to Chamizal settlement - period - but they didn't know what that meant. And I told them that all those people that I represented felt that as long as they lived between the two ports of entry where the

American flags were that they knew that they were in American territory. And that's all that was important to them. And they were going to hold on to their property until, of course, they were able to be compensated properly.

And, of course, a lot of the problems that existed because of the urgency to complete the project - of course, the urgency that the negotiators had of earning more money - that every time that they got through appraising or negotiating for one block, they'd move on to the next one. And, of course, the more expedient that they were in completing the negotiation, the more money they made. But one of the things that I objected to was the fact that we had high pressure salesmen doing the negotiating with these people. And, of course, [I also objected to the fact that many of] them [were] being threatened by some of the negotiators that mentioned that the homeowner better get a good lawyer because they were going to fight the federal government. And we were dealing with people that had very - for the most part - very little education. And when they heard mention of fighting the government they knew that they had no place to go, you know. Who's going to fight the federal government?

G: Were there any offices set up to help the people understand the process of relocation?

W: There were two offices provided for people to go and talk to the negotiators. But the only problem was that Commissioner Friedkin allowed or made arrangements with the remaining real

estate companies to establish an office, supposedly, to inform these effected homeowners. And the real estate people had their offices at the entrance of the two offices. And the government was providing free rent, free heating, cooling, and so on and so forth so the real estate people had it real good.

And as soon as an effected homeowner came in they were approached by a real estate salesman who would ask them their name and so and so forth. And the salesman had all the records of every homeowner in that area. And the real estate people would take turns - one week for each company - to take a crack at whoever entered that office. Then after the homeowner got through talking to the salesman, who would try to convince them to accept the offer that the government made them and told them how well they were being taken care of, in many cases, some of those people became burdened with a heavy debt. And the the real estate salesman would say, "Well, take this home and you'll have a balance of \$4,0000" and so on and so forth. And these were poor people that could not afford an added burden of having a monthly payment to pay.

Then, after the salesman got through with them, the homeowner would go and talk to a government representative in regards to the negotiator's information. And that's where the deals were closed, you know, as to who signed the contract and so on and so forth.

G: Where did most of the Chamizal residents relocate to? Which area? Were there areas specifically set aside?

own personal interest that I'm sure was way ahead of the interests of any other homeowner. And [this was] in contrast to me that I didn't own any property out there. I didn't have any family relatives out there. I was helping the people on a voluntary basis and spending my own money to help them because I felt sorry for them [and] because [with] the lack of education they had they were not prepared to deal with something like this. And I'm talking about ninety, ninety-two percent of the affected homeowners.

One thing that I forgot to mention - and this is why I hold former Congressman Richard White so highly in respect to this particular operation - was that when he called me apparently he [had already] found out that I was incurring a lot of expenses in calling Washington and Austin and all those places. And he said, "There's no use of you paying out of your own pocket. I'll make my office available to you - my local office here in El Paso. All you have to do is call the secretary and ask her to connect you in any place in the United States." And that relieved a lot of my problems in that, you know, I didn't have to hesitate before I picked up the phone to call Washington. For some reason, you know, that I was provided that free service that helped us a lot. And that's why I feel so grateful that he was available to us.

G: I came across the name of Soledad...

W: Oh, yes.

G: ...Aguirre Loya.

she was very far from the motorcade. (chuckles) They were going to make arrangements, you know, just to make sure that nothing happened.

But, like I said, she was harmless. And she thought that a petition would cure things, but she never got involved in my meetings or anything like that. Because I considered dealing with that problem as a very, very serious problem and it proved to be very, very serious. But that's as far as Mrs. Loya got.

G: Were there any other citizen organizations that were operating at the time?

W: No, those two were the only ones.

G: The Chamizal...

W: Those two, [the] Chamizal. People were crying for some help because they were cornered and nobody would help them. All these organizations, like LULAC, [League of United Latin American Citizens] - I used to know one of the founders of the LULAC organization here in El Paso. He said, "Get those people to join the organization so we can help them."

G: What was the name of this gentleman, do you remember?

W: Cannard was his last name, I believe - Adolfo Cannard, Sr. - and he was one of the founders of the LULAC. And I felt that these people needed help right now and they were in no condition to go and pay a membership dues or [an] organization to help them when I was spending my own money to try to help them without them incurring any more expenses.

But, like I said, a lot of things happened that have never gone into the history books. There was a lot of greed - greed among families - because in many cases some of these homeowners had never seen the amount of money that they would see all at once, you know, when they got payment for that home. Because in many cases the property was handed down from grandfather to father to son. And they had no way to deal with money. I heard of some of the homeowners that got their money. Instead of going to buy a nice home, they went and bought a new car and stuff like that. And they got into debt by having to pay the difference in what they had left over after buying the new car. And it was not just one incident, but several. That's one of the things that I made sure that the members of my organization invested the money that they got before they had a chance to spend it.

I had the problem of this lady that I told you that constructed her, what she called, home in her brother's vacant lot that was right adjacent to the boundary line between El Paso and Juárez on the Cordova area. And the property was listed as a vacant lot with no improvement in the county records. And, you know, of course, when the negotiator went to deal with the owner of the property, he accepted \$3,500 for the property. And the lady that was living in the property was offered moving costs by the negotiator. And he told her that she was only entitled to moving costs because all she had there was junk, you know. And I'm pretty sure that he worked

with the federal government - after I got back from Washington - because they were very much concerned because they agreed with me that that was her castle. And I was fortunate in going before the compensation board and obtaining additional money so that she would be taken care of. And we're talking about quite a few months since I had gotten started and since I stood up to the government attorneys that....

There was one attorney - well, he was the head of the legal staff...had respect for me - and we used to sit and discuss the different offers to members of my organization. And he would ask me, "What do you think is fair? What price do you think is fair?" And I always considered myself a very good negotiator. And let me tell you, before I walked out of that office those people were taken care of.

And in this [particular] case where I went before the compensation board, [I recall] that they responded by offering twice the amount. Well, of course, when we got through the government paid a little bit over twice the amount that was originally offered as the fair market value of that property. And I made arrangements with the attorney.

See, the price of the property in the Chamizal was paid by the federal government on one check because they could not go beyond what was considered as a fair market value of the property. But then, on a separate check, they would get the extra compensation to make up for the difference that it would take to place that family in a comparable home in a different

area. And I made arrangements with the government attorney that - oh, by the way, when I found out that the owner of this particular piece of property had signed the bill of sale and agreeing that his sister had no interest in the property and that she would be paid moving costs, I....

When this lady that was involved that was living there called me, I became very, very much concerned because she was going to be thrown out in the street. So I contacted a justice of the peace, a friend of mine - and I can't recall the name right now, but he was a very close friend - and I called him up. And he gave me instructions to write a letter to every title guarantee company in El Paso. He said, "We don't know who's going to handle that property, so we have to have to write to each one of them and send them a certified letter signed by Mrs. Margarita Sánchez." And he dictated the letter. He said, "I assure you that within a week they'll start negotiating with her." She had lived there for, I guess, over fifteen years, which protected her under squatters' rights, you know. And so the letter that the judge dictated to me briefly said that she claimed ownership of the land and improvements on that land at such and such an address and so on and so forth. And, sure enough, within a week the negotiators went over to her to start negotiating with her because, you know, we were going to go to court.

And the judge even provided a lawyer, you know, to take care of her interests without charging. And we almost went to

court on [that issue] there. And I was threatened with a lawsuit because I was involved in it and because the brother got an attorney to represent him. But, anyway, she, after making arrangements with the government attorney she got, that she got, I believe, it was \$3,500, \$3,600, herself.

And through a contact that this judge had I managed to make arrangements for her to buy a piece of property over here on Hacienda Heights with a two percent interest attached to it. The property was abandoned and the people that lived there died. And the son who lived, I think, in Minnesota or someplace, inherited the place. And it still had furniture in it, it still had the water meter, [and] it still had electricity installed, but nobody had lived in there for, I guess, two years. And this lawyer that was handling that estate through the efforts of this judge - and, of course, I also knew the lawyer. And we made arrangements to buy that property. And I made sure that all except, I think, it was \$200 of that amount would be paid on that property. So she ended with a very small balance at two percent interest.

And the house had been abandoned for, I guess, two or three years and it was leaking. I went and got roofing material that I could, you know, as a donation. And what I couldn't get as a donation I bought myself - like the tar and so on and so forth - and I did the repairing on the roof myself. And she was able to move there and she still lives there.

G: That's wonderful.

W: Yes. But that piece of property in that case created quite a few problems in that, like I told you before, that many times I'd be eating on a Sunday and I'd have to leave my plate and go and take care of it. And there were times that my wife didn't want to stand for it and that caused some problems. And since this judge was a very close friend of both of us, you know, [and of] the family, that I talked to the judge and I told him, I said, "This is what's going on and this is what's causing [problems] in my family. And [I also told him], "Since we are a very close knitted family that it [has] started affecting me." And after I talked to him I asked him to accompany me to one of those places - in particular, to this lady's house, Margarita Sánchez - and I said, "I'll let you be the judge. You go in there and you tell me if I'm doing the right thing or if I should just quit and attend to my family." And about two or three days later - it was on a Sunday that he called me up - [and] he said, "Oscar," he said, "I'm going to take you up on that offer." So he met me out there and I took him to this place. And let me tell you, when he walked out of there he said, "You're doing the right thing and if you need any more help with lawyers," he said, "I'll find them for you." And he said, "Don't worry about your wife," he said. And then everything turned out alright, but it was causing family problems and they were not used to it because....

G: How often did you have meetings?

W: I believe it was just about every week, if I remember correctly, at Mrs. Hernández' home. Another thing that is very vivid in my mind in regards to this Margarita Sánchez - and it's the most impressive case that I worked in because it involved, you know, where this lady was going to be thrown out in the street with her family and so on and so forth that - I told you that her brother had gotten an attorney to represent him. His attorney wanted the check to be written out in his client's name, you know, and then he wouldn't turn.... Well, I did not agree with that, neither did the judge that was helping me.

And he dictated another letter to be sent to this lawyer, you know, declining to accept his check, you know, to compensate for her part of the - because the checks were made out in both names, you know, her brother['s name] and also her [name], so that nobody could cash it by himself. Well, the lawyer wanted the checks made out to his client. And when the judge dictated the letter, he told me to get Mrs. Sánchez to sign it and to send it certified.

And when the lawyer got the letter, he called a lawyer that had filed the suit against the federal government helping me out. And he said, "Well, this lawyer is very mad because she is casting a reflection on his checking account." And he said, "She insults him." And here's a letter that was dictated by a judge, you know, and I wrote it, but he didn't

know that I had written it. Anyway, he said, "And this lawyer is going to sue you, too, because you're involved in it." And I said, "Well, that's part of life, you know, go ahead and sue me, you know." (chuckles)

And to make a long story short, when the lawyer that was representing her brother found out that she was not going to do it the way he wanted he said, "Well," he said, "then I'm going to go ahead and file suit in court." And she said, "Go ahead" - you know, that was the instructions that she had from me. But, I believe, it was on a either on a Saturday or Sunday that she called me from Mrs. Hernández' home crying. [She told me] that this lawyer had gone over to her home and said that if she didn't sign it, that he had given instructions to - no, it had to be on a Friday - had given instructions to his secretary that if he didn't call her by four o'clock to go and file the suit against Mrs. Sánchez and Oscar White, you know. And he told her, he said "You're going to lose everything," and so on and so forth. And the lady was crying.

So I told her, I said, "I hope you forgive me for the way that I'm going to talk to you, but I cannot think of any other way that will convince you of what I'm trying to tell you." I said, "You live in that home of yours that is in the condition that it's in. And this lawyer comes from north of Stanton [Street] in the well-to-do areas and all. Why do you think that he comes in there? Just to say hello to Margarita

Sánchez?" I said, "You know the reason that he comes to you is because you're the boss. He cannot cash that check without your signature. And you cannot afford to accept a personal check from the lawyer." I had already checked him. He had [written hot checks]. Since I was in the cash register business, I had a client that had a hot check for \$35 from him that offered to be my witness, [just] in case. And so I knew what I was working with.

So, anyway, the lawyer, told him, he said, "Well," he said, "I'm sorry but," he said, "I'm not going to call my secretary. She's going to file the suit and it's going to involve you and it's going to involve Oscar White." So, like I said, she ran over to another house to call me and I told her, "The reason he's there is because you're the boss. He cannot cash that [check]."

Now, the judge had given me instructions. He said, "Tell her to sign the check with the right hand while she is accepting the money, in cash, with her left hand." And that's the way I told her, you know. I said, "The judge said that you're not supposed" - no, I didn't tell her 'the judge' - [I said] "I'm telling you to...." And the judge even offered to make arrangements with any bank official to get the transaction conducted that way.

The check got lost and I called the - apparently, it had not been received. But since I had very good connections with the government lawyer, that he called Denver from where the

check was issued and he gave me the date when it was issued and so on and so forth. So we knew what we were dealing with.

G: Do you remember the name of the government lawyer?

W: No, I don't remember. And we had so many dealings. Like I said, we used to sit together and he would ask me what I thought was the, you know, the fair price to take care of those people. I don't remember his name, no, but he was a very good person.

But, anyway, when I got through talking to Mrs. Sánchez I asked to talk to Mrs. Hernández. And I said, "You go back" - because the lawyer was waiting, you know, for her. I said, "You go with Mrs. Sánchez and be sure you tell this lawyer" this and this and this. And not only did Mrs. Hernández go with her, but Mr. Hernández accompanied [her]. So they went in there and Mrs. Sánchez told him - she was still crying, but told him the way it was going to be - "You meet me at any bank at nine o'clock and we'll sign this. And I want the money here because I've never had that much money. I want to have the feeling of having that much money, you know." And the lawyer said, "Well," he said, "when I got out of law school, my mother told me" - no, he said, "Well," he said, "I'm sorry, but that's all I'm going to do." He got out the door and slammed the door and went out. And then immediately he came back. He said, "Let me tell you. When I got out of school, my mother said that there were going to be occasion that I would have to swallow insults and all that to help people."

And he said, "I'll meet you at nine o'clock over where there used to be a Southwest National Bank right across the street from the post office downtown. And I'll meet you there at nine o'clock to make the transaction."

Well, to make a long story short, that's the way it happened. She got there - and Mrs. Hernández accompanied her - and she said that the lawyer had his hair all messed up like he had slept on a couch, you know, [and he was] unshaven. And he had gone over there to talk to an official from the bank and the official kept on motioning no or something like that. Finally, the official came with the lawyer to the cashier's cage and asked the cashier to give her what she had coming. And then she signed the check and we got that over with. But that was really something because...

G: She got her money then?

W: She got her money. And, like I said, I made sure that she invested that money. And, like I told you, when I see her out in the grocery store, she goes over and hugs me and kisses me on the cheek and, you know, and she shows her appreciation.

G: You're her hero.

W: Yeah, but she deserved it because she had gone through a lot in her lifetime, you know. She had been abandoned by her husband and she didn't have any, you know, [any other sources of income] other than being a maid or something like that, but she took care of her family and kept them together. And, like I said, she had that one that was mentally ill. He used to go

to a grocery store that was nearby there on Hammett, and he would sweep the floor and they'd pay him. When he had to register for the draft some smart aleck told him, he said, "Hey, you can buy beer. You're already twenty-one."

End of Tape One

Side B

Beginning of Tape Two

Side A

G: Mr White, you've mentioned the name of Mrs. Hernández...

W: Yes...

G: ...several times throughout our interview. Could you elaborate on the role she played with your organization?

W: Well, to me, she played a very important role in that she, if I remember correctly, she was the one that invited me to establish that organization. And she provided her home so that we could meet there. And she was my contact person in dealing with the other people because she had lived there many, many years and she knew just about everybody in the neighborhood. And she was a lot of help to a lot of those people.

I can remember very distinctively a gentleman that was

blind that lived nearby. And, I believe, she brought to my attention that, you know, that he was having a problem in dealing with the fact that he had to sell his home. And he had lost his wife and she died without a will. And there were two sons and a daughter that lived out of town. The daughter lived in California and the two other brothers lived someplace in the east. And the government was trying to negotiate with him. And, of course, he could not sell his home without the consent of the [children]. And I got a lawyer by the name of Paul Andow to help me out without charging. And he prepared what you call a quitclaim deed in order to turn over the property to this old man so he could deal with the federal government. And only the daughter would sign it. And the two sons wanted money. That's where the greed came in within families. And there was a lot of that greed involved in dealing with those people. And, anyway, they wanted the money that they had coming and they would not sign the quitclaim deed.

So I told you that I had built up a lot of respect on the part of the government lawyer [and] that I made arrangements with him at the very last of a lot of things that went [on] in between that. But I was able to convince him that the government should intervene in regards to this property being sold to the federal government and then the money be split up in three or four parts. There wouldn't even be enough to take care of the old man. He would have to go to a nursing home or

something. And the lawyer agreed with me.

And they filed suit in the federal court where they asked the judge to provide that the property would be sold to the federal government, but the federal government would provide another home for him and it would be his until he died. And then it was up to the family to fight with each other. So we took care of him. But before then, of course, he wanted to make provisions that he had someplace to go when he sold that property to the government. Like I said, these people didn't know anything about the law, didn't know anything about wills, or anything like that.

There was an unscrupulous Hispanic real estate salesman that sold him a home over here in Ascarate - a blind man. Now, the blind man, he had lived there for many, many, many years. He knew where the stove was, he knew where the faucet was, and he could prepare his coffee. And then some of the neighbors were good enough to go over there and help him from time to time to clean the house and stuff like that.

But the salesman went and sold him this house over here at Ascarate. And it was a frame house that had two steps. And so he had his social security money saved up. And he gave the salesman his life savings as a down payment on the property because he would not get anything from the government until the transaction was completed with the government. So the salesman told him that that down payment would take care of everything until he received the money from the government.

And it was not true. He ran out of money. He didn't have any money to make the payments so the bank was going to foreclose on him.

So when I found out through the neighbors I went to the bank and I found out who the owner was because they were just signing the loan. And the owner used to have a liquor store on Myrtle near Cotton. And I went and talked to him and told him what the salesman had done.

G: Do you remember the name of the salesman?

W: No. I might remember his name before you go, but I got after the [real estate agent]. And it was a big real estate company that he worked for. So when I I talked to the owner he said, "I haven't seen that property in three years." He said, "I just have other properties. I just turn them over to the real estate firm and they take care of it." So I told him, you know, what they had done to this man. And so I told him, I said, "All I want you to do is accompany me to see this man so you can see, you know, how they hurt him." And, like I said, the bank was already getting ready to foreclose on him.

And so he did accompany me to see the man. Let me tell you, he was really impressed and he asked him if he could provide him with some food and some clothes. And I said, "No." I said, "He's alright." I said, "All I want to do is take care of him getting his money back." He said, "Well," he said, "I tell you what. I'll promise you, he's going to get his very penny that he paid in there, with the exception of

the closing cost that [he paid]. The money that was paid to the salesman, there's no way I can recuperate that." So the man did return this blind man his money back.

And before that, the blind man had gotten one of his nephews to move into the house, you know, so he could protect it for him. He didn't know how to wash or anything like that. So they tried to turn on the gas and the line was corroded so that the gas company wouldn't even turn on the gas, you know. And things like that that were wrong. And it was a frame house and, like I said, with two steps.

This other one was at ground level and he was acquainted with everything, you know. He could walk around there like he could see, you know. I used to go and visit him because, you know, I felt so sorry that he was all alone - except for those people that would go there and help him out - that I would go there very frequently and visit him. And so that was some of the hardships and the problems that I ran across.

G: How did community leaders see you or perceive your role or involvement in the organization?

W: There were some - and I don't remember. Nobody wanted to enter into helping or anything like that because it was a government operation.

G: Federal?

W: Federal government. And you got to stay away from the federal government. And at one point I was labeled as a Communist.

G: By whom?

W: I cannot [recall]. I don't remember. You know, there was a rumor that Oscar White [was a Communist] and - but I'm sure that I was checked by the FBI and there were occasions that I I felt or detected that my phones were bugged. But I had nothing to hide. I was acting as a normal, concerned citizen. And, like I said, my record is open. It's very clean. Some people might not like me, but they respect me. And I don't owe anybody anything. Nobody.

G: So you didn't run into any interference or obstacles...

W: No.

G: ...from the city?

W: No help or opposition, no.

G: From the city government...

W: No, no.

G: ...or county government officials?

W: No help, but no opposition either. They probably thought that I was crazy, you know. Yeah, because, you know. But I go to extremes to prove my point and I don't take anything for granted. When I believe in something - I was taught since I was a kid from my stepfather that we have certain guarantees in our country, but nobody's going to come out and tell you, "Here are your rights on a silver platter." And he always taught me to fight when I thought I was right and anytime that I was proven wrong to apologize and go about my way. And at my age I have never had to apologize and I don't think I will ever, ever will.

G: That's wonderful. How long did you serve as president of the organization?

W: Until every member moved from that area. Because there came a point when we - well, right after I got back from Washington I told them that [in order] to be fair with the federal government and be fair to the people that stood by me that we could not accept any new members, but we were going to see that everyone that was a member was taken care of. And I made sure that everyone was properly taken care of - everyone that belonged to that organization.

G: So to join, they didn't pay any dues?

W: Nothing at all. Nothing at all. In fact, Mrs. Hernández provided the home where we met.

G: And where was her home located?

W: I don't remember the street, but she had a modest home. It was not an expensive home or anything like that.

G: Was it in the Chamizal area?

W: Yeah, it was. Well, actually, it was in the other part in the Cordova Gardens that was not involved in the original Chamizal Treaty. Since they both spoke English and Spanish and that they were able to be there to take up the slack of the time that it took for me to get to there, you know. And she was able to communicate with them. And I was dealing with strangers, you know, that had never been helped. And, you know, many people asked, "Why is this guy helping us?" You know? And that's the problem with the Hispanic people for the

most part that, all of a sudden, here comes a guy that wants to help, you know, and he's not charging anything.

G: And he doesn't live here.

W: And he doesn't live here, see? But I had no personal interest other than to help the people and that I felt sorry for them that they could not defend themselves, see?

G: The meetings were conducted in Spanish?

W: Yes, yes, yes. And, of course, there were things I could not translate, you know, of my communication with the government lawyer and things like that. But, like I said, I, probably made a lot of enemies in the professional field, you know, but to me it didn't matter. I didn't care.

G: Did you ever meet with Commissioner Friedkin?

W: Oh, yeah, several times. Yeah, several.

G: And what was the general tone of [your meetings]?

W: Well, I'm pretty sure that he accepted and recognized the fact that I was trying to protect the interests of those people that could not protect themselves, but I don't think he liked me opposing him. And that's what it was, you know, because when I filed the suit I filed against him and the federal government in federal court. And I knew what I had, you know. And I'm the type of a person that I prepare myself. Anytime that I go to speak up on something or argue something, before I open my mouth I have something to support it in my back pocket in my hip pocket.

G: You do your homework.

W: I do my homework. Let me tell you, I get up anywhere between two thirty and three o'clock every morning. And I'm not an attorney, but because of all my involvement that I learned to [do legal research]. I was taught by a very good Jewish attorney by the name of Bill Murkey how to do legal research. And I have very good working relations with the attorney that represents me where I do all the legal research and then they they take it from there. It prepares me in that I'm able to discuss a case with them and at the same time I save seventy-five, eighty dollars an hour on the work. And I did it for the people that I was representing out there. And I always used it. And I have a stack of court cases that you'd never believe, you know, to support whatever I'm working on.

G: I wanted to ask you about the United Homeowner's Group. If I'm not mistaken, two gentlemen wrote a letter to President [Lyndon B.] Johnson...

W: Uh-huh.

G: ...asking him to postpone a meeting with the Foreign Relations Committee. They planned on holding a hearing...

W: Uh-huh.

G: ...about the Chamizal residents and they sent a letter asking them to change the date of the meeting. Do you remember?

W: I don't remember that. It might have happened after I got through with my end of my work. Because, like I say, I'm - whether it's in politics or some civic endeavor that I get involved in. Once I'm finished with what I'm doing then I

forget about it. I don't expect any compensation. In fact, that's one thing that my wife has brought to my attention that....

You see it a lot in the Hispanic people that they don't show any appreciation for what you do. And I've helped a lot of non-Hispanics because that's where I don't draw any line, you know. I convince myself that I'm needed and I have several criteria that I use in that a person must need the help and be deserving of the help because I cannot help somebody that does not want to help himself. And it's a waste of time. And you find those people, you know, that they need the help, but they don't want to help themselves.

G: That's very true.

W: And I feel that one of the most noticeable compensations that I received was the satisfaction that everybody that I dealt with that was involved in the Chamizal [relocation] was better prepared to move and [became] a better citizen [and were] able to get along with each other. Because I found families that, you know, they didn't go beyond saying hello and they had lived fifteen, twenty years [as neighbors]. And [during the Chamizal relocation], I made them bond closer together because I instilled the need for them to deal with this thing united. Because it was something to protect the little that they had, you know, and that's all they had, you know. And I'm very proud of that. I'm real, real proud of that because they became better citizens. And, after all, if we didn't

accomplish that then we didn't accomplish anything.

G: That's very true.

W: That's the way I feel about it.

G: When did you resign your position as president of the organization?

W: Well, there was no resigning because as soon as the last person moved and I saw that they were taken care of, the only other contact that I have had with them after that was when they needed me for something and I made myself available to them. I intervened and [I also interceded for] some of them when they bought their homes to make sure that they were taken care of.

And something came to mind that involved a property up there in the area that was involved in the Chamizal. There was three ladies...single ladies. They had a little neighborhood grocery store there with three cans of this and four cans of this, but they had there where they lived and, I don't know, if they had a couple of rental apartments there, too. And there was this Hispanic real estate salesman that went over there.

And before I got involved in [this particular situation], before I was called - and I don't remember who called me [and told me] of that problem that [this real estate agent had] sold them a piece of property someplace else, you know. And they regretted buying it before they moved out of there before they got paid. And I went over there and I

started from [the] very [beginning], from, you know, trying to get information. And I started asking questions. And before you know it, you find out exactly what happened. And the salesman, he used to - I don't know how many trips he went over there to convince them, but every time he would take a little bottle of liquor, you know, and - yeah. And so I threatened to file suit against that real estate company. And just before I filed the suit - these three ladies were Mormons.

Then the Mormon lawyer, who was also a Hispanic, took over the case and he called me. He said that, you know, that he was representing them. I didn't want to interfere, you know. So like I told you before I made enemies but, to me, it didn't make any difference. Because the owner of that company, I met him a couple of times and he said, "I'll remember, I'll remember." And he mentioned the ladies' names to me. [I said], "Go ahead, you know." Because he misrepresented the property that he sold to them.

G: Do you remember the name of the gentleman?

W: No, I don't. I believe his last name was González, but I don't remember his first name. At least it doesn't come to mind right now.

But there were a lot of those problems that, I had to deal with that took a little bit of extra effort and, also, cooperation from the people, you know. And because, like for instance, in the case of these three ladies, I said, "Well,

how did you buy it?" [They said], "Oh, he talked us into it."
[And I asked them,] "Well, how did he talk you into it?" You know, these are people that have very little education. And [the ladies told me], "Well, we'd sit down and we'd start discussing this and then, since he would bring a bottle of liquor, then we'd start drinking and before you know it, we'd start laughing." And, all of a sudden, he got them to sign, you know.

But, like I said, I can't say that I enjoyed it because it took a lot of my time and, like I said, I had never had, family problems until, you know, my commitments to them caused a lot of problems here at home, but we got that straightened out. Even Father Gafford got involved in the problem that we had here because...

G: He was the priest at the church where you met in the...

W: Yes, uh-huh. Yes, uh-huh. And he was a very, very, good father and very cooperative. And, like I said, when I threw those two men out of the meeting room, you know, he called me the next day. And I met with him in his office and he said, "They told me." Of course, they didn't tell him the whole truth, you know. And, to me, you know, for me it was easy because I could say, "Well, here's the whole thing and you handle it," or something like that. But I told him just how it happened and he said, "You're right." Because, you know, since he controlled the meeting room that the - and I don't know who it was that actually brought it to his attention, you

know, but I had to keep control of the group, see, because otherwise, you know, it could have been run just the way Mrs. Bush and Mr. Conner wanted it.

G: Who were Mr. Bush and Mr. Conner?

W: Mrs. Bush, Mrs. Bush. Like I said, they were two members of the John Birch Society that had gotten involved in there, but their purpose, like I told you before was to create a feeling that we're giving away land to Mexico. We should not give to Mexico. And who was to blame President Kennedy, you know? And that was not my objective. That was not my objective. But it was quite an experience. It was quite an experience.

But the changes came about when Congressman Richard White made arrangements for me to go to Washington. Because it was just like coming up against a strong wall when you dealt with the people right here. And everybody out there was under the impression that everything was okeydokey, you know, because Commissioner Friedkin would turn in his reports [that indicated], "We bought so many pieces of property and we moved so many people," and so on and so forth. So over there I didn't blame them. I didn't blame the senate. I didn't blame congress, you know. They knew the provisions called for taking care of the people, but it wasn't being done the way [it was supposed to have been done]. And, of course, Mr. Friedkin was relying on his negotiators and they were the ones that....

G: Are you related to Mr. White?

W: No, not at all. No, no.

G: Just the same last name?

W: Yes, just the same last name.

G: Did you attend any type of ceremony that was held to celebrate the passage of the treaty? Was there...

W: I was never invited. I was never asked to come in regards to what was going on. They always picked on Mr. Hinojosa because - by the way, I'm pretty sure that he came out pretty good because he was one of the first ones to move out there and he was always the spokesman as far as trying to convince the people [and say] that, "Oh, you're getting a good deal."

When they had the ceremony over at the Chamizal Park on the Mexican side they had a big wingding [with] a lot of dignitaries and everybody had their name there [on a] reserved seat. And Mrs. Lacarra was the one that invited me. And I went with, I believe, it was Mrs. Lacarra and Mr. Lacarra. But that was the only way that I was able to attend it because I was never considered as part of having anything to do with the Chamizal. Because like I said they probably didn't want me messing around with this.

G: But you did attend the ceremony?

W: Yes, I did attend the ceremony. It was very, very impressive. It was very impressive.

G: Did you meet any people that you can remember vividly?

W: No. I think that because of the security arrangements there, that Mrs. Lacarra and myself left as soon as possible. And,

I think, we said hello to some of the people that we recognized. I think one of them was Mr. Hinojosa and Commissioner Friedkin and, I think, one or two of the lawyers that represented the government.

But let me tell you, those younger lawyers, of course, they were there to represent the government. And it was just through continued discussions with this one lawyer, the head lawyer, that I was able to establish a good working relation[ship] with him. And it was not at the beginning I can tell you that, but he knew that anything that I discussed with him I could back it up anytime.

G: Okay. Would you like...

W: And it was mostly respect that caused a good working relation[ship].

G: Okay. Would you like to add anything else, Mr. White?

W: Well, I can't think of anything else, you know. It would just be a repetition of another case that amounted to the same thing, but, like I said, it was something that brought back respect to the United States of America and because it was something that had been decided by an international court, decided against our country, and it was a commitment that that no other president had been able to accomplish until President Kennedy. And it could be possible that it was because of his religion that he was trusted by Mexico. And, of course, Mexico, they wanted as much as they could get. And I myself, of course, I'm a true American and I'm interested in my

government and in my people. I care nothing about Mexico, you know.

G: Well, I'd like to thank you for the time...

W: You're welcome.

G: ...you've spent with me, Mr. White.

W: Oh, I enjoyed it. It brought back memories from way back and some of them pleasant and some of them not so pleasant. Never the less, it brought back a lot of memories.

G: Okay. Thank you very much.

W: You're welcome.

G: This is the end of the interview.

End of Interview