

1-6-2019

Interview no. 1700

Joshua Rubin

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Recommended Citation

Interview with Joshua Rubin by Yolanda Chávez Leyva, 2019, "Interview no. 1700," Institute of Oral History, University of Texas at El Paso.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee: Joshua Rubin

Interviewer: Yolanda Chávez Leyva

Project: Seeking Refugee

Location: El Paso, TX

Date of Interview: 01/06/2019

Terms of Use: Unrestricted

Transcript No.: 1700

Transcriber: Antonia Taylor.

Summary of Interview:

Joshua Rubin describes his observations of the Tornillo Detention Centers while he was there for three months. Thousands of children from Florida, Houston and Central American were transported Tornillo on charter buses. Rubin was first introduced to the situation when the immigration stories were broadcasted on the television. Rubin decided to drive down to Tornillo and began holding up a sign, outside the center, that stated "Free them". Rubin was arrested by authorities but continued raising the sign to oncoming traffic for hours at a time.

Afterwards, while attending an activist discussion, Rubin was inspired to take direct action and went to the Detention Center to watch the activities that occur from the morning to the late afternoon. Rubin described the charter buses that entered the facility with hundreds of children along with trucks that delivered food, water and supplies. Rubin circled the parameter of the facility and watched the children as they were coming in and out daily. He slowly began communication efforts with the children over time and was able to ask how they were doing and how long they had been there. The detention center had multiple forms of authority inside including the Homeland Security, private security firms, ICE, CVP, and various guards and personnel from Child Protective Services.

At the time at the interview, the tornillo detention center was being emptied and the children were being taken to their families, sponsor families or were possibly taken to other detention centers.

Rubin states his motivation for his observations was “the fact that I’m a Jew and this is a concentration camp....and especially because there were children.”

Length of interview 34 Minutes

Length of Transcript n/a