Vietnamese American Oral History Project, UC Irvine

Narrator: ALEXANDER TRAN
Interviewer: Cynthia Nguyen
Date: February 12, 2019; March 14, 2019
Location: Irvine, California
Sub-collection: Vietnamese American Experience Course, Winter 2019
Length of interview: 00:47:53, 00:21:05

Time Log

[Interview #1]

00:00:34    Alex talks about the neighborhood he grew up in and his early childhood experiences
00:01:38    He explains that much of his classmates were also Vietnamese American and talks about his experience at school
00:02:33    He states that there were not any significant issues regarding race at school
00:02:51    He describes learning English and losing the ability to speak his first language, Vietnamese.
00:04:46    He recalls the story of being given an English name
00:05:34    He talks about going to college at UCI in 2002 and also dropping out.
00:06:34    He describes how his parents came to America through connections with the U.S. Embassy in 1975 and how they met in America.
00:07:37    He describes growing up with immigrant parents.
00:09:04    He discusses the presence of traditional Vietnamese culture in his childhood and the significance of Lunar New Year in his family.
00:10:37    He talks about the pressure, growing up as the oldest of his two siblings.
He explains the prominence of religion within his family and the impact that had on himself.

He describes how he developed a negative connotation to his own heritage due to the constant reminder from his parents about the war in Vietnam.

He does not refer to Vietnam as his home and after visiting in 2007, he explains that the resentment of Vietnamese Americans from the people in Vietnam still exists.

He explains how the young Vietnamese people are moving on from the war and how the older generations still hold onto that pain and resentment.

He explains how he came to his jobs as a pharmacy tech and a freelance makeup artist.

He explains how his need for a creative outlet went against the expectations of his parents.

He shows his understanding for why his first generation parents were so against his interest in art.

He describes the difficulty with intergenerational communication.

He describes the soft racism he has encountered with non Asian people.

He explains how he became associated with the Viet Rainbow of Orange County.

He discusses the difficult nature of getting his traditional Asian parents to understand his sexuality and how it caused him to resent his own culture.

He describes how not having his parents’ support and subconsciously being rooted with Catholic religion, he could never accept himself.
00:34:02 He explains how VROC and the LGBT resource center helped him learn how to analyze his own culture and accept his sexuality.

00:35:52 He discusses the struggles it took for his parents to finally accept him.

00:37:25 He explains the significance for Vietnamese Americans to be able to balance both tradition and the openness to different lifestyles.

00:41:08 He explains how his values differed from those of his parents due to influences of school and media.

00:42:50 He discusses his participation within VROC and his appreciation for what they do.

00:46:06 He describes his difficulty with feeling a sense of belonging to a certain identity, but realizes that identity is not singular and can have multiple facets.

[Interview #2]

00:01:01 He recalls a memory of an old crush from the sixth grade and describes how they met again.

00:02:34 He describes how his parents didn't agree with his interest of art at first, but eventually came around, explaining that they care more about his safety and happiness.

00:04:21 He recalls when he began to discover his sexuality and how his parents found out.

00:10:59 He describes the ways in which his parents pushed him to date girls, after finding out he was gay.

00:14:59 He discusses his relationships with his siblings.
He explains how even though he was close with his sister and knew how accepting she was of the gay community, he was still the most afraid to come out to her.

He explains that the sense of "otherness" and being different had been instilled in him by his parents ever since he was a child.