

# **AN INTERVIEW WITH MARC FRANCO CASIBANG**

An Oral History Conducted by Catherine Mariano

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Reflections: The Las Vegas Asian American and Pacific Islander  
Oral History Project

Oral History Research Center at UNLV  
University Libraries  
University of Nevada Las Vegas

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Oral History Project

University of Nevada Las Vegas, 2020

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The following interview is part of a series of interviews conducted under the auspices of Reflections: The Las Vegas Asian American and Pacific Islanders Oral History Project.

Claytee D. White  
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## PREFACE

“Well, I can’t really call myself American yet. I’m a permanent resident. Even though I have lived here for at least a decade already, I’d still consider myself really Filipino because that’s where my heart feels it should reside and call myself as.”

UNLV nursing student Marc Franco Casibang was born in Cagayan province, Philippines, and, as a child as his parents lived in several international locations before moving to the U.S. The family first immigrated to South Dakota, where Marc remembers no other Filipinos, and then to Maryland before arriving in Las Vegas as a high school sophomore in 2014.

Here, Casibang speaks to the immigrant experience of a child with a language barrier and of assimilation, community, and identity. He talks about stereotypes of Filipinos in health care and the Filipino ethos of getting an education and leaving the country for a better life. He recalls finding comfort in the Las Vegas Filipino community (including extended family), in his Christian faith, and in his goal of becoming a nurse. Casibang takes some time to reflect on his time in Las Vegas, where he sees himself going, and some of the things he finds enjoyment within the Las Vegas community.

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December 5, 2021  
in Las Vegas, Nevada  
Conducted by Catherine Mariano

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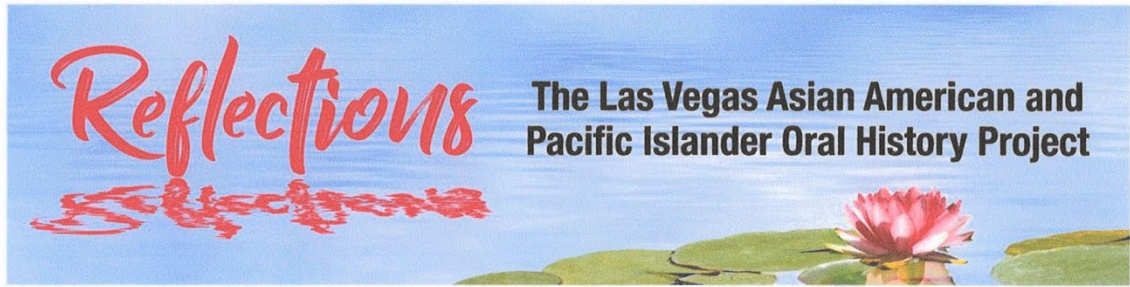
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**[Interview of Marc Franco Casibang conducted by Catherine Mariano on December 5, 2021.]**

**Please state your name.**

My name is Marc Franco Casibang.

**Please tell us about your family and childhood.**

I spent my childhood in the Philippines. My parents were overseas, and we were taken care of by our grandparents, my sister and I. I spent my elementary days in the Philippines. That's pretty much it.

**Do you mind telling us about your life with your grandparents?**

My life with my grandparents...they were really strict, especially with me since I wasn't the best grandson. I wasn't the best student, either. I was pretty much a troublemaker. I didn't care about school. All I did was play until I went here.

**Please tell us about your family's migration story.**

It was all over the place, really, because we had to travel so many places since we didn't live in Manila where the embassy was, and there wasn't much flying around the world because—no, there was, just not where we were at. I remember we had to go to where my parents were at, so in the Middle East. We had to go to Saudi, and we had to go to Abu Dhabi. We went to the Abu Dhabi U.S. Embassy, but we had our medical somewhere in Saudi.

**Do you know what made your family want to come to the U.S.?**

Because there is a narrative that goes around in the Philippines where they all said, "Anywhere is better than the Philippines. You could live abroad and live a better life." That's pretty much the drive. I think what my parents told us, when they were in college studying, it was their plan in the beginning, anyway, since, of course, to give us a better future, my sister and I. They strived to bring us somewhere rather than the Philippines to give us a better life.

**When immigrating to the U.S., was your entire family able to immigrate as a whole, or was it just one person and then the rest followed?**

It was just one person. I remember it was my mom who went to the U.S. first. Then our dad went to pick us up and brought us there.

**When you were in the U.S., did you experience any language barriers?**

Of course I did. Even though we were taught English beforehand, I still didn't speak it as well as the people around me did, especially where we first stayed was South Dakota, so that's a huge culture shock. Of course, there was some Midwest jargon that I didn't even understand, nor even learn about in school in the Philippines. Most of the time, I didn't speak in school. I was an outcast there, really.

**Did you have any expectations of America before you immigrated here?**

Expectations...all I know for sure was what my parents said: That we're going to have a good life here compared to the one that we already have in the Philippines. For other people, I didn't expect much, really, because I didn't care because I felt like I was still going to be the same Marc from Philippines going to America. But I was completely wrong, of course.

**Was it easy to adjust to the cultural differences within America?**

For me, it wasn't. That's why it took me years to get over the language barrier. I remember my most memorable experience when I was new here was every time I go to school, I don't talk at all, only to the teachers when I need help for navigating through the hallways, going to class, asking about the schoolwork and whatnot. But pretty much, it was hard in general because, one, it was in South Dakota; I didn't really fit in with the group of kids there.

**Did you feel any moral obligations to assimilate into American culture, or were you able to find ways to retain your previous way of life and culture?**



I lost my previous way of life because, like I said, I wasn't the best student, I didn't care about school, but when I got here that's all I was able to focus on. I didn't have any friends to play with outside. I didn't have as many games that I played. I guess my obligation was to learn the language. But even though when I did, it's like every hiccup that I make of my words, people would ridicule me for that, especially I had a thick accent, and because of that I just decided I'm not going to talk. But I still learned the language because I need that, of course. That's all I did for my whole years in South Dakota, really.

**As someone who immigrated here as a teenager, were you able to retain the language of your mother country?**

Of course I did, until now. But I remember at one point, for me to learn the language here and the jargon, the Midwestern jargon, I had to stop speaking Tagalog at home, and I had to speak mostly English. That's pretty much my practice. Yes, I had to forget it in a way, but eventually it caught up to me.

**How well did you maintain your relationships with your family and friends in the Philippines? Were social media apps, like Facebook, useful to you?**

Of course it was, Facebook especially because in the Philippines, they use Facebook pretty much all the time. It was easy for me to connect with my old friends and especially my family there although my grandparents were hard to adjust to because sometimes, they can't understand your message, and it was hard for them to use technology in general. But still, there was a way to communicate back home.

**Did you or any close relatives that immigrated to the U.S. experience any racism or discrimination? If yes, then do you think that this is something that can happen in your mother country as well?**

I didn't know anyone other than me because I did, of course. I went to South Dakota first thing, so everyone there was White. Of course, there were kids, and kids get immature. There was a time when I didn't even understand the slurs that they were saying at me because I was new here. If another person is of a different culture and they look different compared to the people there would go to the Philippines, in a way there would be discrimination, but it's not as hard, I'd say, compared to if a Filipino would go here, especially there in South Dakota.

**Considering your experiences here as an immigrant, do you identify yourself as Asian American? Do you feel any different about your nationality as a native Asian that resides in America?**

Well, I can't really call myself American yet. I'm a permanent resident. Even though I have lived here for at least a decade already, I'd still consider myself really Filipino because that's where my heart feels it should reside and call myself as.

**Have you returned to Philippines since immigrating here?**

Yes, I have.

**Was that experience completely different from what you remember about the Philippines, or is possible that you are the one who changed a lot, or have you ever been called an American in an insulting way?**

I don't remember being called *American* when I went there, but it was different. Like I said, I have to speak English at home. I have to...I wouldn't say forget, but I have to focus on the culture here for now so I can get used to the people here and assimilate. But when I went home, I remember it was kind of like...I won't say a revival, but I kind of went back to my old ways, the language and how I used to live back there, not as a troublemaker part, but...

I remember when I got home from Philippines, I started speaking more Tagalog, more of the slang in Tagalog, and even learned the dialect. When I was young, I was broken because I didn't know much. I still spoke Tagalog, but not the dialect, which was Ilocano. When we went back here, I started learning that again. It's ironic. I like to speak to my grandpa. Some people here speak that dialect, but I mostly learned it when I'm here now.

**You've elaborated on your life in South Dakota. Do you mind speaking about your life in Maryland and then about your life in Las Vegas?**

Going back, South Dakota, it was hard for me to find friends and assimilate with the people there and the culture because I was looking for mostly a Filipino group, and South Dakota, there was, but they were mostly a group for my parents. When I moved to Maryland, I met some Filipinos. They didn't speak the language, but they were Filipino by blood and by culture as well. I was able to find my group there. I was able to get comfortable, and then I started breaking out of my shell. I started speaking the language. The people there don't care. They've been there with the accent and the language barriers. I was comfortable enough to get out of my own skin, and I found my circle there. But there is still the American culture that I have to assimilate, and it's easier for me to assimilate with that culture because I'm already good and comfortable with the people I have, and I was more accepting, if you'd say.

Then we moved to Nevada. That's when I found full-speaking Filipinos. Some are even new here, not even a year. I moved here in high school, and I've met some Filipinos that are new to America and new to Las Vegas, Nevada. Of course, I'd be like, "Dang. Lucky." But I can't do much about that. Here, I'd say I got more in touch. By this time, I'm already comfortable with the culture here, the American culture, and I'm also going back to the Filipino culture as well

with the people around me. We'd speak the language. We sometimes related to stories of what we used to do.

**Would you say your transition from Maryland to Las Vegas was fairly smooth, or did you come across any difficulties?**

Moving from Maryland to Las Vegas, I knew there were going to be some sort of diversity with more Filipinos, and I expected that because I remember my first day in high school here, I already met one that spoke fluent Tagalog, and I was able to be even more comfortable. I'd say the transition from Maryland to here in Las Vegas would be smoother.

**Do you remember any of the experiences of your other family members when they moved to Vegas? Were they similar to yours?**

I moved here when I was a kid, and most of the people that I know are grownups. They just moved here. I guess you could say they traveled a bit, and they just worked. I moved here when I was young.

**Can you speak a little bit about your parents' jobs here in Vegas?**

My parents own a home health company. They're both physical therapists, so in the medical field.

**What were some of your first memories here in Vegas? Where did you live when you first arrived?**

When we got here, our grandma, distant grandma, let us live in her house rent free and all that. I believe that's one.

My experience in schooling here in Vegas, like that, I met someone that spoke the language and is really close to the culture, and I was able to go out more. I started being more social compared to how I was in Maryland. I was going out with friends. We would just hang out

more in school and outside of school. Compared to Maryland where I didn't do that really. Most of the people here that I let myself be surrounded with are like-minded individuals and closer to culture.

**Currently in Vegas, do you have a job, or are you currently in education?**

I'm a student right now going into nursing, going into a nursing school.

**Do you mind speaking a little bit about what made you decide that career path?**

Funnily enough, that stereotype where Filipinos, most Filipinos are nurses kind of stuck by me, and, of course, my parents are medical field. I didn't want to get into their physical therapy because the schooling is really long, and why not just go to nursing? My heart's already been to the science/biomedical stuff, anyway. Why don't I just focus on nursing? I didn't mind since I loved studying that kind of field. I guess you could say that stereotype is somewhat true, but it just depends on the person, really. I think personally that nursing would give me a solid career and a better life, and so I chose nursing.

**Were you somehow in any way met with resistance against your career path, or was it just smooth sailing?**

The resistance, as far as I know, is myself because there are sometimes where I'm just not motivated even though I love studying. That's the only thing I'm good at is school. I can ace this exam and that exam, but sometimes I lose motivation. Financially, school is covered. I guess the only resistance was me, but eventually I got over it, and I just focus on that, really.

**Where in Las Vegas have you lived before, and within these neighborhoods were there other people of your ethnic background?**

When we got here in Vegas, we lived in Las Vegas Boulevard, those houses in the middle of nowhere. I didn't go out as much, and as far as I'm concerned, there were as many Filipinos.

Then we got our first house in southwest Las Vegas, and the neighborhood we were in, I didn't see many Filipinos at all, but the other neighborhood, because I remember I used to see people from my school, which was Desert Oasis at that time, walk home, and I'd see them go straight to the second neighborhood. I guess all the Filipinos lived there. I don't know. I wouldn't say. But still, it didn't really matter since I didn't go out as much. I usually was more comfortable just talking to them. We'd just talk about meeting up here and meeting up there.

**How have these neighborhoods changed over time?**

I wouldn't be so sure about it because where we're at, there's been a lot of houses being built, and I still don't know who the people are. I'm still unfamiliar with the people who live there, so I don't know. But I remember the people in the other neighborhood. One of them went back to Philippines just to study. But I wasn't as close to them. I just know them from school and in the circle of friends that I was with.

**Based off your experience of living in the Philippines versus America or Las Vegas, would you say there's a difference in the way you treat your neighbors?**

Yes, because I remember in the Philippines, you're usually close to your neighbors. You even talk to them when they see you. Here, it's just small talk here with the neighbors, and sometimes there's even nothing. I remember in the Philippines, you'd ask the neighbor for help with this, information about family and stuff. Here, we don't do that as much.

**Why do you think that is?**

Mostly because our neighbors aren't Filipino, so they wouldn't know. We did have one neighbor before they moved out; they were Filipino. That neighbor, if they would see us outside, we'd talk a little. It's still small talk, but it's not as deep as the dynamics in Philippine neighborhoods and stuff. But we were close to that neighbor until they moved out. We'd even give them food when

we had gatherings, and they'd invite us to gatherings as well. We'd invite them, they give us food, we give them food, and so on.

**Speaking of gatherings, please tell us about the traditions and festivals that are important to your family.**

It's mostly just Christmas and New Year, really. I remember in the Philippines, every November we'd do the *araw ng mga patay*, which is Day of the Dead. We don't do that here. I wouldn't say I'd do that here as well. I guess it's just respect to the people that passed.

**Why do you think your family doesn't celebrate the same festivals you did in the Philippines here in America?**

Because no one does it here. That's it, really. You don't see people inviting other...even with the blood relatives. Every November, we don't invite each other in November, one or two, to celebrate the passing of so-and-so and respect and so on. We don't do all that stuff, really. Mostly, it's just Christmas and New Year where it's a big celebration and so on.

**Do you think that also has to do with the fact that the graves are in the Philippines?**

Yes, of course. You have to drive how long to the nearest grave? I don't remember a family member that died here. They weren't buried here, not as far as I know. There's none. Even if they live here, they go home and are laid to rest there.

**If it were a possibility, are there any traditions or festivals that you celebrated in the Philippines that you would like to reinstitute here, your life in America?**

None, really. I think the celebrations and the festivals that they did in the Philippines are exclusively theirs, even Independence Day in the Philippines. I don't remember when I was young that they celebrated Independence Day unlike here, the Fourth of July. I remember the

city we lived in, Tuguegarao, we have the festival for the city and about the city, the city's history, and all that. We don't do that here.

**Are there any American festivals or celebrations that you think your family has adopted?**

Yes, Fourth of July. Pretty much, everyone does it. Of course, since we're also having family to guide into the culture, they just thought it was necessary to celebrate that holiday, Fourth of July. It's understandable that we put that into our time to celebrate.

**What are the greatest differences that you find between Las Vegas and other places you have lived, first from a cultural aspect?**

Since I surrounded myself with the same experience, or close enough, and same culture, I guess it's better here for me since it was easier for me to get comfortable in my own skin and go out of my comfort zone and start talking to people more, especially with my group of friends who are mostly Filipinos.

**What about regarding material culture, such as clothing, foods, stores, that kind of thing?**

Material culture here, I'd say, since most of the Filipino millennials here are really into street wear, I guess everyone incorporated that into the Filipino American culture here. But I didn't mind, really. I was really more into casual stuff.

Since I'm from the Philippines, and there are some aspects of the culture that you can't forget, the food. Here in Vegas, there is Jollibee, Filipino fast-food chain. Compared to South Dakota and Maryland, in South Dakota, there was none. Straight up, there was nothing. In Maryland, I remember you'd have to drive out to Virginia or New Jersey to go to the Jollibee. There wasn't even one in New York, so it was a farther drive. I remember the location of that Jollibee was so sketchy. No, not really. I guess it's better here since there's more of that. There are three branches here, and not even just that, the food is such a staple part of the culture, there



is Seafood City where they sell mostly Filipino products, Filipino-made food. The Filipino dishes, they sell. Ingredients just for cooking, I know I can make the culture's food and all that. It's not fresh compared to the Philippines. In the Philippines, if you get food from the market, it's mostly fresh, but here, it's frozen, but it's better than nothing. That's pretty much it.

**How important would you say it is to have a culturally or ethnically specific supermarket to have nearby you, like Seafood City? Do you think that's important?**

Of course it is. The food, you can't just forget about it. It's a staple for every Filipino that lives here. Of course, they're going to know the dish even though it sometimes may not be as good as their cooking, but at least it's connected to the culture, and it's lived.

**Can you speak about differences you've seen between Vegas and other places from a religious or spiritual aspect?**

I didn't see much changes. The only change I can kind of live through is, of course, in the Philippines because everyone there is Roman Catholic. I guess from Philippines, I was a Roman Catholic. When I moved here, we turned into Christianity, so born-again; that's what they call it there. I guess in South Dakota, we didn't see as many cathedrals or a place where the Catholic religion was practiced. We were mostly into a Christian church, same with Maryland. But when we moved here, yes, we still lived Christianity, born-again religion, but we did see some chapels, I guess, in Vegas, like one is Catholic. That's where some old people in my family go, and I don't know if there is a logo, whatsoever.

But I also noticed my friend practices this religion that they also do in the Philippines, which is Iglesia ni Cristo, and that is completely different from Roman Catholic in the Philippines. I know for sure he is a devout INS (sic), they call it here. He is a devout INS (sic). I'd say to him early in the church activities—because when I heard about it, I was surprised

because I was like, dang, they have that here? He informed me, “Yes, there are even other states that practice that religion.” There were times when he invited me to go to one of his Bible studies and meet the people there. But, of course, very un-Christian. I asked my parents about it, and they were like, “No.” I can’t do much about that. But it was surprising that they have that here, yet, also, a little relieved in a way because there is a lot of the Philippine culture here, in terms of religion at least.

### **Can you speak about differences regarding lifestyle?**

When I got here, like I said, it was easier for me to be me. I got out of my shell and got into the Filipino culture and, also, the American culture, so I kind of live with both. But lifestyle-wise, I’d say compared if I was to still live in the Philippines, like I said, I wasn’t the best student. I wasn’t the best kid out there. I was a troublemaker. Lifestyle-wise, I guess it was better here since moving here kind of reformed myself in a way that I started focusing in school and so on. But if I was to live there, I’m pretty sure I’d still have that phase where I reformed myself and focused more on school. Even my troublemaker friends in the Philippines back then were—they’re not graduates, actually. They’re all in school somewhere prolonging their studies and so on. They kind of got their life together, and so did I.

If I was there, I’d say I’d probably do the same path as they did, but still, if I was in school and so on, because here there’s a lot of other stuff outside, like having a lot of good friends, having that social life, really. In the Philippines, what I noticed is that my friends that kind of got their life together, all they did was school, school. There’s a little bit of social life here and there and so on, but it’s mostly for educational purposes. They study. They catch up on studies and all that. They’d compare what they’re studying and so on. Here, I know a lot of

Filipinos here, to be exact, that don't care about school, but it didn't really faze me. I didn't get influenced. I still did my own thing here because it's for a better life later on, anyway.

**Regarding the differences in lifestyles, why do you think there would be a difference in motives for education?**

Motives for education. Well, because here, there's a lot of opportunities here. You can just work and that's it. As soon as you finish high school, you can just work and just be successful in your own way, so there's that. In the Philippines, that narrative is always going to be there, like study hard and live abroad and get a better life. That's always going to be there. It's in everyone's head in there, just like my parents. Even though I saw some old classmates in the Philippines that are thinking about moving whether to Canada or here or in Europe to have a better life, even study more so they can go out. But ironically, once they do that, if they ever get here, they're going to study again, really. Education is more emphasized there because of that promise of a better life if they move out somewhere other than Philippines.

**Why would they have to study again?**

Because I believe it's not credited. I know some people that finished nursing in Philippines, and when they got back here, they studied again, took the NCLEX again. Because of that there are people that just give up and settle for what they have because some, even though their bachelor's degree is in nursing, it's not complete here. One of our uncles, he is a doctor in the Philippines, but when he moved here, his M.D. is equivalent to a bachelor's here, and they said he had to study again. He was like, "Nah, I'll just at least be a nurse and be comfortable with it." They still found their way, anyway. It's not going to change. Wherever you go, it doesn't mean anything. Just because you're here, the degree is lower. You're still a doctor in Philippines. No one is going to take that away from you.

**Lastly, regarding lifestyle, is there anything in the Philippines you wish they did or had here in America?**

I guess the only lifestyle that I wish they had here was heavily emphasizing school, and that's it. Everyone there mostly cares about school, in the Philippines. They mostly care about their studies, finish, and work and just be comfortable in life. But here, there's people that don't really care, and they just raise their arms and just go with the flow of things. Whatever opportunity they take, if it's going to make them comfortable later on, they take because that's the thing: The opportunity is here wherein in the Philippines, there is not much. I guess if only people here...I'm not saying that people here, a lot of Filipinos don't care about school because there are some that dedicate themselves into studying with their school, but there are people that kind of look down. "I don't need a degree," like that mindset. They live that mindset, and they just get comfortable.

**What are a few of the most significant events in the history of your family?**

One was we moved here in America, for sure. I'm going to exclude the life in South Dakota and Maryland because nothing really much happened there. But when we moved here, we got close to distant family, and we got to know them. There is a lot more family than I thought—than we thought, really. I guess you can say our family got comfortable here because they had that business that was able to give us a house, our first house in America, newly built and all that. Pretty much those. You could say that the Filipino culture here is more...I wouldn't say accepted, but it's more wide, you can say, since there's a lot of Filipinos, because that's the comfortable group of people we would rather be with. Yes, our first house.

My baby brother got to grow up here in Las Vegas. There is a lot more family. There is a lot more people like him, or like his parents, I guess, that's really into the culture, those people, those kids.

Also, our grandparents were able to get comfortable here as well; that's one. Sometimes they'd go home. They're old. They're really conservative and into the culture. Las Vegas was the perfect place for them. They're able to go to the grocery that sells Filipino food, Filipino ingredients, Filipino products, and so on. They're able to utilize that and to not get bored here, essentially. Yes, that's one.

**If you hadn't immigrated here to the U.S., how different do you think your life would be?**

It could go two ways, really. One was the reform; I'd fall into school. I'd just do school and so on, and probably eventually go here by myself and all that. I'd be more mature in a way since the people have the same goals to finish their schooling and have a better life. Maybe I'd just stay there, or I'd go overseas as well. I know for sure the nurses' pay in the Philippines aren't that good. That's why a lot of nurses in the Philippines would rather go here where they're paid a lot compared to when they're in the Philippines, so that's one.

The other route, if I didn't move here, I didn't have that reform of myself, I'd fall to the streets. You know what I'm saying? I wouldn't say drugs, but I'd probably be into—saying if my friends also didn't have reform, then I surrounded myself with the people that didn't get their life together, I'd say I'd fall into the streets, get into vices and all that. I wouldn't say as hard as drugs, but maybe in that aspect. I'd fall into alcoholism since a lot of people drink there, especially family. Maybe criminal activities, I guess, since life there is hard, and you have to do everything to make ends meet even if it takes taking another life or stealing, robbing people, and

so on. There's a lot of people in the Philippines that go through that and live that life even right now. It's either those two...

**What should people who have never traveled outside of Las Vegas know about your country's culture and history?**

Since I went there a couple of times already, I'd say Philippines is developing. The capital, Manila, the traffic is so bad. Always keep that in mind, the traffic is horrible. Transportation is horrible. There is a lot of infrastructure being built right now, especially with the administration and the past administration, I guess. It's getting prettier and more welcoming to foreigners; that's one. The tourism is really good. We're preserving the nation's beaches and all that. The attractions, we're preserving all of those.

Maybe for the culture, I guess, everyone is for the family and into the family unlike here because usually Americans would leave their elderly in a nursing home, and they just leave them there to be taken care of. In the Philippines, we don't. We let them live with us and so on. We take care of them.

There is that saying that say that it's more fun in the Philippines. That's the tourism slogan that they say. When you land into the airport, there's that huge banner that says, "It's more fun in the Philippines." The culture, the places to visit.

**How updated would you say you are regarding the politics and situation of the Philippines, and is it intentional?**

It's unintentional because it's mostly my parents that keep track with the politics there because right now, they're going to have a new president. They're going to have an election. They're always talking about the campaigns and so on. They're always talking about the dirty aspects of each politician and all that. But I know for sure my parents are conservative there, so they're

voting for this one conservative guy, and they're against this one. I feel like she is liberal. That's one. She's a liberal. It's the same here with the conservative and the liberal, or Democrat and the Republican feud.

But it's unintentional because even in the dinner table when we eat, after we eat, we'd go through our phones, and we scroll through Facebook because Philippines is the most active nation in Facebook in the whole Southeast Asia, I believe, or whole area. I'm not quite sure. Everything there goes viral, all the news. Everyone gets to look at the news and so on. This political guy is running, and he's doing this, he's done that, his campaign has been this, has been that. But politically in the Philippines, everyone knows that Philippines has been under scrutiny because there's a lot of corruption. There's a lot of greedy people there that try to get into power. They're two-faced and so on. Especially now since I still have contact, and I still keep in touch with my friends there and my family there, millennials, and, of course, they're going to be more on the liberal side, and they are so relentless on their views and why this person is more suitable to taking control of the country and so on. It's just a cycle of arguments between this and that, which one is better, whereas this one is less dirty than the other, and so on.

With me, I'm not as immersed in the political aspect of things in the Philippines, but I just want what's better for the country because I have goals of just going back there at some time, maybe to retire, I guess, and just live there, to vacation and so on. I just want whoever can lead and will take care of my country, make it better, enough to convince me to go back there.

**What do you like most about living in Las Vegas, entertainment, church, family events, employment, et cetera?**

What I like about it is the culture; that's one. I got more into the culture. Entertainment? Yes, there are a lot of ways to keep yourself busy. It just depends on the person, really, because I'm

not the type to go out and have the nightlife, go to clubs, and so on. I'm not the type to gamble, either. But it's Las Vegas. It's the entertainment capital of the world, so I don't see a problem with that. The gambling part, like I said, I'm not a gambler, but it's good, the revenue in those casinos and so on go to better causes, like infrastructure and so on. The church, it's Sin City. It's Sin City, so...but there are still people that have their faith, and they live their faith and so on. It's diverse, I guess you could say. There are a lot of religions here, so it's good, but I'm more confined in the Christianity aspect of religion. What else did you say?

**Entertainment.**

I said that. Church, family...

**Family events.**

Family events, yes, it turns out we had more family here that I didn't even know. We'd have some gatherings here and there. Yes, I just got to have time with my elders, with my cousins, some, but it's not all the time, though. There was a point where every weekend—when we were new here, at least, there was a point where every weekend there was something going on.

**How do you feel about the activity of gambling and the gaming industry?**

The gambling, I feel like it's good because it creates revenue, and the revenue could be put into better things, like infrastructure, maybe for the betterment of the people, and so on. I guess it makes Las Vegas more appealing to they eyes of the people of the world. "Hey, I want to go to Vegas to gamble, go crazy." But it's good, really. I just don't like how sometimes it gets really rowdy. It's starting to get crowded in here, even, but I guess that's just a product of a developing city and a really marketable one, too.

**Do you think COVID has changed the ways that people have viewed Vegas in that way?**



At first because it's really crowded in here, especially with the COVID, everyone enforced the social distancing, the mask mandate, and so on. You know how right now there's the Omicron variant, right? At first, it was the Delta variant. I guess you could say the restrictions went back for a bit, but then people disregarded it, really. You can go around now, and there are still people wearing their masks and not respecting the distancing rules.

**How did you feel when high-ranking U.S. officials called COVID-19 the “Wuhan virus,” the “China virus,” or the “Kung flu?”**

It is racist, yes. I guess because it originated in Asian grounds and got here, everyone—I noticed at that time, too, there was an increase in violence or discrimination against Asians, but I, myself, didn't really experience that. But I saw people in social media, they get called these slurs. They said all these names, these slurs that are really racist and offensive, of course, but you have to also consider that a lot of people that take care of those people are Asians. I don't see why, the point of saying that, really. Of course, it's not good, and there is no point because what are the chances that the nurse that's taking care of you if of Asian descent because you got COVID? You can't really talk down on people like that because you don't know how they're going to get back at you.

**How has the model minority myth affected you or any other Asian stereotypes?**

The stereotypes, some are true, like how Filipinos tend to become nurses, but there's promise in that one. I'm in it, so there's a promise that it's going to give me a better life and so on. Just because it's a stereotype doesn't mean you have to live it. Being a nurse, too, it's not an easy road to walk, and you have to make sacrifices. You have to make all this work, the studying and so on. But the stereotypes, really, it's just there. It's not going to go anywhere. I don't really believe in it. Some, yes. But it doesn't say who I am because I'm not that stereotype.

**Have you seen a change in discriminatory rhetoric or practices against Asian Americans or Pacific Islanders since the pandemic began?**

Since the pandemic began, yes, I did see the increase in the discrimination and the violence against Asians. But as for now, going around social media, there is some, but I feel like it's not as bad, but it's still an unfortunate thing to happen to your fellow Asians and Pacific Islanders. But I remember I was driving on Spring Mountain. There was this group of elderly. I'm pretty sure they were Chinese because the banners they were holding was something—they were speaking out against the discrimination part. It was written in Mandarin, and there was also a translation at the bottom saying that discrimination wasn't fair. They were all against those. I guess I saw people standing up for themselves and for their community and for their people.

**In what ways do you think the Black Lives Matter movement affects Asian or Pacific Islander Americans?**

I know for sure the Black Lives Matter movement, they stand up for the minorities for sure, and that includes the Asians, so they're affected in a way. But I'm not well versed into the Black Lives Matter thing, but at least I know one of their pillars is to stand up for the rights of the minorities whether it be minority groups, the LGBTQ, I guess. I'm not sure. I'm not well versed, but for sure they stand up for the minorities.

**Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are said to be the fastest-growing population group in Southern Nevada. What does that mean to you?**

I guess it's good because that's my circle of people that I'm comfortable with, so it's more people coming in here and all that. I guess you can also say that the more people coming here, they're having a better life, to say the least, and they're more secure, but it depends on the

person, really. Yes, I guess it's good because we have it hard where we were from, and people also have it hard where they're from, and they're all just going here for a better life.

**My last question for you is: Why is it valuable for the university to collect interviews such as yours?**

Like you said, there's a lot of growth of the population of the Pacific Islander/Asian population, and it's also to understand where people are coming from because some may have the backgrounds, but they lived here for most of their lives, and some are fresh from where they're from. I guess it's better to know where they're coming from, their walk of life, and so on.

**[End of recorded interview]**