

AN INTERVIEW WITH CRISTINA ALANO

An Oral History Conducted by Cecilia Winchell

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

Oral History Research Center at UNLV
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University of Nevada Las Vegas

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Oral History Project

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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



“I always have fun for I am a comedian.”

Cristina Alano, born in Pampanga, Philippines, to a middle-class family, remembers a happy childhood filled with playing at Clark Force Air Base and her father's brief career as an action movies actor. After going to college for a banking and finance degree, Cristina briefly worked at a bank before marrying her husband, a non-commissioned officer (NCO) in the U.S. Air Force, and immigrating to the United States. She remembers her parents as the hardest thing to leave behind, although after briefly living in Arizona, she reunited with them in South Dakota at Ellsworth Air Base. Later, she lived in Colorado for seven years before a horrific car crash made

her distrust any amount of snow; the accident and the weather led her to move to Las Vegas, Nevada, in 2003.

In Las Vegas, she worked at Walmart and SCI Electronics before finding work at the Riviera as a cashier; she then landed at McCarran International Airport (now Harry Reid International Airport), where she continues to work as a supervisor at Hudson Group (airport vendors) and as an assistant manager at Brighton Collectibles. In this interview, Alano discusses her work at each job and how she ended up getting involved with Culinary Union 226 in 2016. Since joining the union, she has done everything from being a shop steward to canvassing, recently flying down to Georgia to help campaign for Senator Raphael Warnock. Throughout the interview, she discusses everything from her childhood, favorite foods, Christmas festivals, and her closest family, especially her enduring love for her daughter and granddaughter.

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September 9th, 2022
in Las Vegas, Nevada
Conducted by Cecilia Winchell

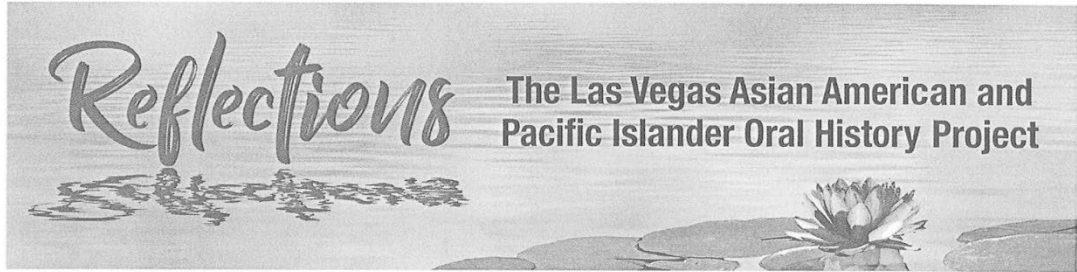
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Alano begins with her childhood in the Philippines and Angeles City, touching on her memories of her grandparents, how her parents met, their family’s status, and what she did for fun. She attributes her fun-loving personality to her father, who performed in Filipino action movies during the 1960s, and the kind of relationship she has with her extended family. During college, Alano studied business and finance because of close family relations and ended up working at a bank until she became married. Her marriage brought her to the United States, first landing in Arizona. While her parents lived in South Dakota for awhile, they eventually moved back to the Philippines where they both passed away from heart attacks, as well as most of Alano’s siblings. She also goes into the importance of her family and how difficult it was to leave them behind.....1-6

While working in Arizona, Alano worked at a Filipino store but was already pregnant and did not become very involved in the community. In 2003, she finally ended up moving to Las Vegas and buying a house soon after to settle down. While here, she briefly worked at Walmart before moving to SCI Electronics. Nowadays, Alano works both as a supervisor at Hudson as well as an assistant manager at Brighton, within Harry Reid International Airport. She has also joined the union and has become very active doing everything from being a shop steward to canvassing. Alano describes what family she currently has here, what holidays they celebrate together, and what kinds of food they cook at home. She also goes into detail about what it was like growing up on Clark Air Base and what a noncommissioned officers’ club is.....6-11

Alano details how she and her husband met, the various air force bases they lived at, and shopping at the base exchange at Nellis Air Force Base. She goes on to describe what working as a cashier at the Riviera was like and her duties at the airport, going into detail about what is easier to sell at what gates and what customers come in shop for. Alano then tells the stories behind some pictures she has, including one on their Christmas decoration traditions and her family visits to the Philippines that she tries to do every year11-16

In further pictures Alano describes her Santo Niño figures, and her daughter’s trajectory from a Hawaiian dancer to being in the military and her current career as a registered nurse in the neonatal intensive care unit. She continues to touch on various topics from her granddaughter to her mother’s adobo and the other foods that she cooks.....16-23



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Cristina Alano 8/26/2022
Signature of Narrator Date

Cecilia Winchell 9/9/2022
Signature of Interviewer Date
Stephanie Evans 9/9/2022

Good morning. Today's date is September 9th, 2022. I'm Cecilia Winchell. I'm here with Stefani Evans and Cristina Alano.

Cristina, will you please spell your first and last name for the record?

C-R-I-S-T-I-N-A. Alano, A-L-A-N-O.

Thank you. To start off, could you tell us about your childhood, where you grew up, your parents, your grandparents, your family, everything like that?

I grew up in the Philippines, and we lived in Angeles City, Pampanga. My grandparents of my mom, they live in Mabalacat, Pampanga, and my dad's in Bamban, Tarlac. I grew up in Angeles City. I went to elementary, high school, to college while we lived in Angeles City. I went to school at Lourdes Elementary School and, also, I went to high school and college. I went to a high school in Angeles University Foundation, but my college, I moved to Holy Angel College. I take BSC, banking and finance.

What did your parents do?

My parents worked in Clark Air Base because we live in Clark. My dad is a manager in a big hotel in Clark, and my mom is only in the house for us.

Do you have any memories of your grandparents?

Yes. I love my grandparents. I'm a spoiled brat. My grandparents, they're so nice to me and all my siblings. They were nice to us. My favorite grandparents are my mom's side. But my dad's side, it's okay because we're so far away from them. They come only once a year or sometimes now. I miss all them.

Do you know how your parents met?

My mom and my dad, they are childhood girlfriend/boyfriend. That's the only thing they always say, "My first boyfriend and my last one." That's my mom and dad.

What was it like growing up there?

In the Philippines, it's nice. We are in the middle: We're not rich; we're not poor. It's nice.

Everything is good.

What did you do for fun?

I always have fun for I am a comedian. My parents always say to me, "Why are you mad?" I say, "I'm not doing nothing." Then I'm just dancing and singing for them. They just, "Okay, okay, no more." I am a comedian to my parents. My dad is a movie actor, so I got it from them.

What kind of movies was he in?

My dad, 1960 plus, I think they're into action, movie something. Joey Marcus is my first cousin. My cousin is a comedian, and so we've got everybody there. Every time they come, I always do a show. I always say, "I am not going home," but all of a sudden, they see me in a show, in a TV show, and they always say they're shocked. "Oh, she went home. Look at her." Every time I come home, they say, "Why you never tell us you go home?" "I just want you guys to be surprised."

Do you have any siblings?

I've got one.

Older or younger?

Youngest one.

Brother or sister?

Brother. But we have eight, but they're all gone, all passed away. My brother was the youngest, and I'm the second one. I am the only one alive now. My three sisters are gone, and three brothers are gone, too. They were young when they're gone, a heart attack.

What do you remember eating during your childhood?

The Filipino chicken. Until now, I still love chicken. Every time my mom cooks a vegetable, I don't like the vegetable. My mom is always, "Okay, but I cook you chicken." That's all I eat.

Why did you decide to go to college for business and finance?

Because I want to work in a bank when I was in high school. They asked me in fourth grade, "What's your plan?" Before, I want to do engineering. When I say, "Oh no, it's boring. I think I want a Bachelor of Science in commerce." Then my aunt, my mom's sister, and my other sister, they work in a bank, and my uncle. "Why don't you just get banking and finance and then hook you up?" I say, "Okay." I worked in a bank, First Visay Bank.

How long did you work there?

I think I only worked there one year because I got married.

How did you meet your husband?

My mother-in-law and my sister were friends, family friends in Clark Air Base because we were on the base site, the NCO, we were dancing, but that's our family friends.

What did you do after you got married?

I just came here. My first stay here, we are in Arizona. My first job, I never forgot, is a Filipino store. I tried to apply in banking and finance, but my husband said, "They only pay you three dollars and twenty-five cents," at that time. My husband said, "You just don't get it." At the Filipino store, they paid me five bucks, better than when I started my career.

What year did you move to the United States?

First, our state is Arizona, my first baby, and then my parents are in South Dakota, and so we moved to South Dakota. Then we met this friend, just like a family friend, and they were in the service. They say, "We're moving to Colorado." I said, "Oh, I want to go with you," because they were like friends. Then my husband and I went there. He is just starting for one month to

get our apartment. Then after that, we lived there almost seven years. Then I got in an accident in Colorado. My car is rolling like this. I think, I go to the house or I go in the ditch, because it's snowing a lot. Then I said, "Oh, well, do or die." I brought my car in the house, but they have a fence and pine tree. They thought I was already dead. The guy in the basement, they just bring already a jacket or blanket if I die. Then they see that I was shocking. The cop said that it's a good thing I went to the house instead of the ditch because the ditch is too deep, and they would never see me at all until the snow come. Then they took me to a hospital for a week. After that I said, "Let's go to Vegas." I don't know nobody. I said, "Let's go to Vegas." That's it. I just fight for my life. I don't want the snow no more.

What year did you move to Arizona from the Philippines?

Because my husband is a U.S. citizen. He petitioned me.

What year was it?

Nineteen ninety.

Where had your husband lived before he was in the Philippines?

Arizona. My mother-in-law and my father-in-law are in the service, Williams Air Force Base.

You said your parents were in South Dakota?

Yes, because they work in a base. At that time, it's Pinatubo, but I never see that, but I'm already here. All the people working in Clark, they got to go to the U.S. My parents went to South Dakota because my sister lives in Ellsworth. Of course, I never see my parents, so I said, "I want to move to South Dakota to see them." By the time I see my parents, they go back to the Philippines, and just me and my sister are boring. I talked to my girlfriend. "Let's go. I'll follow you." I left my sister there, mad at me, but I need to follow my girlfriend. Plus, I don't like the snow no more. But at the time, the snow is worse in Colorado.

Your parents went back to the Philippines?

Yes. That's why they got a heart attack, because they came from snow, and they went to the summer in the Philippines. We just tell them, "Don't go home until December." But parents, they don't listen to you. They want to see the other siblings. Okay, they went home. First, my mom, she is the one that went home; after six months, she went there. The maid said—this is the time they told us—my mom is asking for water, and when the maid came to give her water, my mom was already passed away on the ground. Maybe my mom is hot. Of course, my mom, she doesn't want to just...like this. She just wants to move. She has already a maid in the Philippines, and she doesn't want to, "Oh, you do this," no. She just wants to try to help you. She said she was hanging the clothes outside, and it's hot, and she falls to her side, and they see it. I said, "Why? What happened?" Then they said that the doctors said heart attack, heat attack. Same with my dad. He was playing basketball. He thinks it's cool. All of a sudden, they say they threw the ball, and he is just sitting down like this in the court, and then passed out, that's it. That's how they died, a heart attack.

SE: And your siblings also died that way?

My first one, my brother, the same, all of them. The second one with me, at thirty-two years old, he was just riding a bike to do some exercise outside, and that's it, heart attack. That's why now I'm always scared. All my brothers and sisters all died from a heart attack. It's in our genes, I think. That's why when it's heat, I don't want to go outside. I tell my youngest brother, "Don't go outside. Stay home."

CW: When you moved to the United States, what was hard to leave behind in the Philippines?

Mostly what's hard for me is I missed my parents; that's number one. I miss them always because at the time I don't have a cell phone, only regular home phone. The bills, of course, I was embarrassing my husband because I was always speaking to my parents. Then we have a pay phone. I said, "Where we get a cell phone?" I said, "Nothing. We told people that we don't have a cell phone." Then I paid my bills, almost six hundred, five hundred over these calls at that time, and so that's all I can. But I miss them so much. I only went home, and they're gone. That's really sad for me. I never aged out of them because I am a spoiled brat and their guest, but it's a little bit of sacrifice for your family.

When you worked in Arizona in the Filipino store, what kind of stuff did they sell?

Oriental, our food. That's why I wanted to work with them because it's my first time in America and, of course, I'm shy. Then you know how to speak with them. I was shy. They would say, "Why don't you do this?" I would just do like this. Then when I came here, I am seven months pregnant. It's okay. I enjoyed it.

Was there a big Filipino population in Arizona?

At the time, I never enjoyed it because at the time I am pregnant and I am shy. I can't answer that.

What year did you move to Las Vegas?

Two thousand three.

Where did you live when you first got here?

Royal Apartments, Sahara and Maryland, the back of Smith's, my first apartment. They say, "You cannot buy a house until you are one year in Vegas." But at the time, we had a house in Colorado, and we had to sell the house. Then we said, "We have money to pay for the new house. We've got a house." Then we just paid a penalty for the apartment. But at the time, we

live in Sahara and Hollywood. You need to pick the number before you get a house. At that time, you needed to pick. You can't be just, "I want a house," no. It's hard. Then we got in the Richmond compound. It's hard. I said, "We've never been a year in Las Vegas." The lender said, "You just pay me a one-month penalty." It's supposed to be three months more, but I think we are good. I talked to them and said, "I want a house because we have a lot of stuff in Colorado to bring here." Then I just paid a penalty.

What was your first impression of the city?

Before that when we lived in Arizona, we always came over here. Every holiday, three days to a week, we just go there, and then Laughlin, which is closer. The bridge is Arizona, and this is Laughlin. We always go here. That's why I say, "Oh, I think it's nice here." But I never think about the heat because every time we come over here, it's cool. Then we go to Laughlin and say, "Let's go to Las Vegas." We drove over there and that's it.

What job did you find once you moved here?

I just transferred. I work in Walmart. At Walmart, because I got in an accident, I said, "I don't like it no more." I moved to the Walmart here, but I've had two jobs ever since. I work in electronics company, SCI. SCI had one over here, too. I had two jobs at the same time, two full-time jobs, sixteen hours, because I am by myself. My family is still in Colorado. That's why I enjoy it.

What do you do for work now?

Now I work in the airport as a supervisor in Hudson. Also, I am working at Brighton, assistant manager. For a little bit of sacrifice, I got that, for a little bit of sacrifice. That's why I always tell the youngest now, "You guys go to school. It's better. Not us, we are already old. Before you get our position, you need to be sacrificing." Then we just teach the kids. Sometimes they hire you at

twenty-one years old, twenty. "I don't want to go to school." "You better go." I say, "Hudson pays your school. Take advantage of it." I just give advice because in my experience, it's really hard because you guys here, they're Asian. They are all different countries, but we are all Asian. I'm like your mom, but this is my advice to you guys. Go to school or online, Hudson pay for you. Really? Yes. Please do that.

How did you get involved with the union?

Oh, I love union. I work in Hudson, and Hudson is union. If I knew that before, I already quit Riviera. In Walmart, they don't like you. I work in Riviera. I always had two jobs. I quit in SCI because it's boring because I'm a technician, and my eyes are killing me. I cannot see no more. I say, "No, I don't want no more electronics." Then my girlfriend worked in Riviera, and she hooked me up as a cashier. But the Walmart, they don't like union. If I knew that happened, I'd rather stay at Riviera. Now I work in airport as they told me, "We are union. Do you know what union means?" I said, "Of course, I'm innocent." They say, "Oh, you go to the union, and then you guys pay and get free hospital and free medicine and free doctor, but you pay dues monthly." "What's the monthly for?" I say, "Of course, I will question my HR." "That's your retirement." "Oh, really?" I said, "Okay," and then I just went over here to join it.

How long have you been involved with the Culinary Union?

I've been in since 2016 until now, up to present.

What have you done with the Culinary Union?

I am a shop steward and, also, I am canvassing. During the pandemic, everybody is laid off. We don't have a job at the airport, and so I just stayed home. Nympha called me, "Do you want to work? You'll get your insurance." I said, "Sure. I don't care." That was canvassing. We went to knock all the doors. Because I like my insurance because I am diabetic, I want to keep it. Then

we worked here in canvassing until we won. November, they sent me to Atlanta, Georgia for three months to do canvassing for the senator. I enjoyed the union. I love it.

SE: Was that for Senator Warnock's election?

Correct. Yes, ma'am.

That was in 2020.

Yes, that's an election, yes. I enjoyed staying there. The people one time are so rude, but we just keep knocking. "I don't need you. I'm not from there." "Okay, bye." We just do like that, and we just leave them. We just leave them the brochure. "Okay, thank you. We are from Las Vegas up to the city to work for your senator." Some people are nice, and they give you water, but we are not allowed to do that. We don't want to accept anything because it's a pandemic, and you never know what's in there. Some people ask, "Can we buy you anything?" We say, "No, no, please no."

Plus, we are sacrificing ourselves. You never see your family for Christmas and New Year. I can only see them on FaceTime. I cry to my granddaughter. "I am so sorry, baby, I cannot see you." It's hard for you when you're a grandma, and you know you want to see your kids and my granddaughter. I cry so much. I am in a hotel. What can I do? Then I say, "Okay." Then we went home in January. That's the time we celebrate Christmas.

What family do you currently have in Las Vegas?

I've got my daughter and my granddaughter here.

What kind of holidays does your family celebrate?

Everything. Because I have only one daughter. Everything. Birthday, Christmas, New Year, we have a good time, or sometimes, "Oh, let's all come to the house and be together."

What is your Christmas celebration like?

Oh, nice. I cook a lot. On the twenty-fourth, we open the presents. That's the only thing I do. This year, I miss so much. My house never gets decorated at all because I am not home. When the mom is not around, they don't care. "Oh, my mom is dead." They are really sad when they saw me cry. When I go home, I always celebrate it, and that's it.

What kind of food do you cook?

Filipino. That's it. Egg roll. A lot. Menudo. That's all Filipino.

What is your favorite food?

Pancit.

Have you ever experienced any racially discriminatory acts, or heard from others?

Discrimination, no, because I'm a comedian. If you discriminate me, I'm making fun, so no, no, no.

SE: You grew up on Clark Air Base. How was it growing up on a military base?

Always strict. It's fun. Because you're little kids, it's fun. My dad just says, "Okay." But I have a good time and all this. Base is like American. It's so quiet and nice. That's it. It's fun.

Did you go to school on base?

I went outside because my other brothers are outside, and my mom doesn't want me to go to Clark. They just want me outside Clark. I'm in the city, too. It's a good school. On Saturdays, it's all crazy kids.

You mentioned that your parents met at the NCO club.

No, me and my husband.

Oh, you and your husband met at the NCO club. Tell us about what that is. That's the noncommissioned officers' club, right?

That's a club with dancing. My sister and my mother-in-law are playing bingo, and here I am dancing after the bingo. Then we are dancing at the club, and then my husband came over there asking my mother-in-law—that's what he said—"Mom, I want to meet a lady." At that time, you are skinny, skinny and not sexy. Then I just met him. My mother-in-law introduced me, and my sister said, "Oh, I know the mom." That night, until we go home to our house in Clark, he doesn't want to go home; he wants to marry me. I said, "Excuse me." "I don't want to go home until you come back to U.S." And my mother-in-law, "You better come home. I think you just killed Cristina there. Go home." "No, I want to marry her." My god. I say, "What's wrong with this guy?" But at the time, of course, you're a teenager, and you don't care about the boyfriend. I just enjoy. I said, "Okay, just stay in my house." Then my dad said, "Hey, Alan, go home. Your mom needs you. Go home. Go to your house." But he doesn't want to go home. My husband told me it was first time in love.

How old were you when you met your husband?

I was twenty-seven years old, but at that time I thought I don't want to get married because at that time my life was easy. I am spoiled. Everywhere I've got to make a business. I go to Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore to buy all this stuff to sell in the Philippines, but it's an easy life. I don't want to get married, and then all of a sudden, *boom*, I'm married. That's why life is too short.

That's why my husband said, "Why you marry me?"

Where is Williams Air Force Base in Arizona?

Gilbert.

When you were in South Dakota—

Ellsworth Air Force Base.

And Colorado?

My girlfriend lived in Peterson Air Force Base.

Always Air Force bases.

Yes, because they are all military, and we are the only ones who are not military. That's my daughter. She is just training in the military because all the family is military.

When you came here, did you go to Nellis?

Oh, no. I am the first one before my girlfriend. My girlfriend is still in Colorado. Then when they moved here—that's the one that followed me—that's the time we can go on base, Nellis Air Force Base, and so I'm in the service again.

When you're on the base, do you shop at the BX and the commissary?

I shop with my girlfriend, yes, we do. We've got it good, no tax. Then I teach my girlfriend and said, "Don't buy any food inside the commissary because the food outside is no tax." She is looking at me like this. "Don't buy groceries. Just buy what we need, like detergent. But the food outside, all the Mexicans, they sell. What you pay here, example twenty dollars in beef, you get ten dollars down." "Really?" I teach her how to do it, of course, because in a base there is a tax, a little bit, but the outside, no. "Okay, we go there." Until now, we go to the base BX and just buy anything, but not food.

When you say BX, that's the base exchange, right?

Yes. We call it short, BX.

When you went to the Riviera, what year was that?

Two thousand four.

You were a cashier there?

Cashier.

Tell us what that work is like?

The cashiers are in the booth, and then the people change their coins, at that time, and the promotion. When they put a lot of money in the machine, at that time it's coins, no paper at all, 2004. Then we give them a cup. Especially, the tourists come to us. They play and say, "Oh, I play five dollars." Then just for promotion, I say, "Okay, I give you a cup." Then I ask the people if they won, and I love it when they win. They give me a tip. I always say, "Come on, come on, jump on it." They're like this, and they've got one hundred because they won, and then they give me five dollars. I am so happy. "Thank you. Good luck." That's what I always do. I always say, "Come on, come on, come on." Same thing at Hudson in the airport, people that won, I just do like this, "Come on, come on, come on." Then if they win, I just step over to the side of the store. All of a sudden, this lady is just looking for me. "Where is Cristina?" And my manager says, "She is over there cashing it." "Can you give this twenty dollars?" "For what?" Because we're not allowed tips at the Hudson. "Because I like her. She is so fun." My boss just put it in an envelope and says, "Somebody gave it to you." I'm like, "You won. Thank you." I don't say it loud because I don't want my boss to see. We're not allowed to get tips. We will get in big trouble. You can get fired for that. I don't know why.

At the airport, are you the manager of all the Hudson stores?

No, only supervisor in three stores. Same thing as you say. We are all over. Whoever calls in sick, I'll be there. Whoever is missing people, I'll be there. A, B, C, D, it doesn't matter.

All the gates.

Yes, ma'am.

Now, when you say you're at Brighton also, is that at the airport?

Yes, by A and B. When you go in the entrance, it's on your right side. You can go shopping.

I know that Brighton store well.

See.

It's always open when other stores aren't. It opens early.

Yes. They are open from six until eight.

You're a manager at Brighton as well.

Assistant.

Assistant manager. What's the favorite thing that you sell there?

They are only like charms. When you buy there, they don't have enough time. "Oh, I'm in a rush." "Okay. Which one you like? Las Vegas or what?" "Give me the good one." "Okay, five bucks." They are rushing. But when you are at C and D, it's like a mall, and people have a lot of time. When you go inside TSA, it's a big line. People just say, "Hurry up. I'm rushing. The line..." What you do is suggest the big one. "I think you should get this Las Vegas." They buy the charms. It's only ten dollars. "Las Vegas?" "Yes. I'll pay now." "Okay, ma'am. Go, go, go." Then the people coming in, that's the time you sell a bag because they have a lot of time, or a souvenir. "I have a birthday at ten, my girlfriend's birthday. What do you suggest?" "I think we have only one set." My boss always says, "Crissy, you're good." They ask, what's a good present? "Then we have one set, and it's only three hundred, or another one, two fifty." "I'll get the two fifty. Hurry up. Hurry up." Then we wrap everything. That's it. That's a good thing for that.

People who are arriving have more time, and they spend more money?

Correct. The departure, no. People always say, "I just want a souvenir because I didn't want to go to the Strip. I had no time for that." "Okay, Las Vegas, here."

Tell us about the pictures that you've brought.

This one is in Colorado Springs.



This is you and your husband and your daughter?

Yes, my daughter is little there. That's the one we are at a wedding, my girlfriend, and I am maid of honor, and my daughter.

This is in the Philippines, Christmastime.



Tell us about the decorations.

This is our tradition. Every Christmas, we have what they call *parol*. We put that in our house.

But that's the church because I wanted to see the *parol*. That one they hang in every corner.

What are they made of?

Paper.

Who is in the photograph?

That's my husband, my daughter, and me and my girlfriend in the Philippines.

CW: Have you visited the Philippines since you've moved here?

[Narrator nods].

How often do you go back?

This pandemic, no. This year, I go in December after two years, three years. Every year I go home because I have a house there, my mom's person. I just pay the one person, my neighbor, two hundred dollars once a month to clean the house. I want to see when I go if he's still alive or not. Maybe it's a lot of dust and nothing ever cleaned. That's my concern. But it's okay. He just shows me a video like this. It's good. It's clean.





This one is our family when we come back to the U.S. When you go back to the U.S., everybody wants to go the airport. “I want to go. I want to go.”

SE: What are the dolls?

That's Jesus, Santo Niño. They are Jesus. At that time, you are allowed to bring Jesus here. Now, no more. They think you put something inside. One time I bring one Jesus because my girlfriend wants the same thing as what I had. I bring it, and then they are shaking it. I said, "Excuse me, that's my Jesus. Give it respect." This is when I was in Korea that they shake it and say, "Oh, I'm so sorry, ma'am." "Just send it in x-ray. That's my Jesus." They said, "Oh, I'm so sorry." Then they see it. But now I don't bring it because it may get broke or whatever because it's crystal. But it's big like this.

SE: This is at the airport in the Philippines?

Yes. And this is my daughter in Colorado. She is a dancer, Hawaiian.



Oh, wow.

They make a show for the people at the orphanage in Colorado, and they pay them.

How long has she danced?

Since she was three years old up to whatever age she is now, until we came back here in 2003. The birthday party, they invite them, the groups. Now she is an RN. She is working in Sunrise Hospital in the NICU.

In the neonatal intensive care unit?

Yes, she is the one.

You must be so proud of her.

That's why I taught military. Military too strict. She trained with all the military. I have only one.



This is the one in Colorado. I enjoyed the Miss Colorado Beauty Pageant. If I never get in accident in Colorado, maybe we're still there because I had a lot of good times. We have only three or four hundred Filipinos there, Asian. It's a small thing, but we enjoy our one because it's the same thing.

Another one, my daughter. This is a small church there.

This is in the Philippines?

That's in the Philippines still. See my granddaughter is a cutie.

Your daughter and granddaughter live here, and so you get to see your granddaughter all the time.

Oh, I'm the babysitter. If it is my day off, I say, "Come to me." Yes, this is my granddaughter I show you.

Where does she go to school?

She is only three years old. That's me and my granddaughter. She is spoiled like me, a spoiled brat.

This is your daughter?

Yes.



She is gorgeous.

Thank you.

Your granddaughter looks like you.

Oh, really? She is a comedian, too. She makes a dance to everything.

Did your daughter go to school here?

Yes, at CCSN.

Then she got her degree in nursing, and now she's at Sunrise. Has she been at Sunrise the whole time?

Yes, once she graduated. First, she like it in St. Rose, but a girlfriend pushed her. "Let's go to Sunrise. Everybody is there." She just applied, and she got it. All the crew is over there. When it's your friend, you follow it.

Has she always been in the NICU?

Yes. That's the one. She wants to be a pediatrician. When they interviewed that's what she told me, "I want to be a doctor. I want to be a pediatrician. I want the kids." But I think the director said, "This is good for you," and that's where they put her right away. She never do anything outside other than there. That's a good thing. Then the director said, "You don't need to be a doctor because you already have experience there." She is real tiny, a skinny girl.

You talked about the chicken that your mom used to make.

Fried chicken.

That's what I was going to ask you. How did she prepare it? What was your favorite way?

Fried chicken and adobo. Oh, adobo, the best.

Do you make your mother's adobo?

I love to cook. I'm a cook. At that time when we moved to the new house, 2005, me and my daughter and my husband, we're catering in a fiesta because we're good cooks. We're catering five hundred people in the restaurant. Some people say, "Can I order...?" "Just go to the restaurant. I don't want to do something outside." When we work, I want to be loyal to the people. I don't want to say, "Can I order this out?" No. Go to the restaurant. We make a siopao, steamed bread.

Is it like a bun?

Yes, and white with chicken. Empanada. Also, the *hopia*. It's with beans inside. That is a Filipino special. The catering, they ordered menudo, *kare-kare*, *pancit*, egg roll. Everything that is a Filipino food, we cook. We did it for two years, but I said, "I'm tired. No more." At that time, I still had two jobs, at SCI and Walmart. But we go home and sleep, and my husband is preparing with my daughter. My husband, in December, three o'clock in the morning, we deliver. I am tired. I am just lying like this in the couch. "Wake me up in time to go to work." Then they keep on ordering. "Cristi, I want to order right away." I don't want no more. They are mad at us because I don't want no more. I said, "I'm tired. I need my life. I need the money, of course, but I need my life."

I'd like to switch a little bit. In Atlanta, you were canvassing for Senator Warnock. Did you do anything for the midterm elections, the primaries?

That's what I heard. People over there don't make discrimination because we're union. Trump—they are Republican and Democratic. Then we stay with our Democratic, and so they need help, and so we go there. That's what we do, we're helping them to knock on the door. We do a promotion with the Democratic. That's it.

Thank you so much.

You're very welcome.

CW: Thank you.

Thank you.

[End of recorded interview]