

Race and Oral Histories In San Diego, UC San Diego

Interviewer: Omar Elserogy

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TSIA XIONG: I feel totally ummm disagree with the school systems, how they taught us. In fact, they never teach us anything. We have to learn ourself and as a refugee growing up in middle High School, we didn't learn anything but they pass us through. This hopefully that will do well and I didnt really learn what a thesis until I got into second year of college and and I think that really hurts a lot of refugee kids coming in the late 80s, where we came as a political refugee and there aren't any resources available as our teachers available like today. And I think that's a huge disadvantage for thousands and thousands of refugee kids coming to the Central Valley or across America. And I think that's one of the biggest disadvantage so my passion is about to bring social equity and and in public school where I think that there's a large populations enrolled in the school, there must have teacher ratio that reflect that students. The student ratio as well as classes that should be reflected and the training show reflected the teacher as well. And the makeup of teacher, student admins ratio has to reflect it, the people that they actually serve or coming to their school. So that's, thats my whole thing about the last 30 years why I was so passionate about education equity and that's pretty much where like you know I came from and I I got my bachelors degree in Criminal Justice, went to law enforcement but I felt like I could do a little bit more running my own nonprofits. So I've been in nonprofits about 30 years now. I in the last 12 years I've been in Merced created my own nonprofit built from the ground up, and currently Im, before I was the exec director, because we have five organizations or in five counties we merged about three years ago, and we call it Faith in the Valley now so we were after we merged. I was named just the chapter director, but I still run a lot of programs or a moving campaign. So I really hope to mobilize and equip our community members to really stand up for the injustice in our community here.

Omar Elserogy: Definitely. And I-I-I i'm really passionate about what you're doing, doing as well to Reason being is when I was in high school, primarily, I didn't have the proper education system and my parents are immigrant, they're from Egypt, you know, they yeah. My father came to states with \$86 and to wait to fly my mother out, etc, etc.

TSIA XIONG: Yeah.

Omar Elserogy: It's frustrating having to learn about the Roaring 20s, World War One World War two old, over again

TSIA XIONG: Yeah.

Omar Elserogy: And hoping I'm okay with the world, you know, there was a lot to learn after

and I agree with the the second year college learning about thesis.

TSIA XIONG: [laughter] And that hurts a lot, especially in high school they should already teach you how to write complete sentences essay, but I did not know how did high school pass all my friends and us through high school, and was struggling college so so that's something that I can't, I can't comprehend

Omar Elserogy: Yeah

TSIA XIONG: How can you do so well in high school, and yet not doing well in college so, um, yeah that means in high school if you do you put more effort into good behavior, you don't cause any problem teachers usually give you a B or C for good behavior, right. But that's going to hurt us more once we get into college to higher education because that time Professor expecting you to do well, write well, and then again you have to relearn what high school didn't teach you, so that's that's difficult

Omar Elserogy: Exactly. And, and, and correct me if I'm wrong, as well. I'm assuming that well atleast for me when I went to college my first year and I took a English course, a writing course, whatever it had to be for me

TSIA XIONG: Yeah [reaffirming]

Omar Elserogy: to move into the next step. I look at writing like from right now, or maybe the middle of my college years to the very beginning of high school and I noticed that I was not learning anything. Teachers were not breaking anything down just in a writing class itself.

TSIA XIONG: Correct Correct

Omar Elserogy: It just, it baffles me the huge gap that there is in in the way we're teaching students in general, and especially me because my writing was awful and compared to it now I can put some gas together to help me.

TSIA XIONG: Correct Correct

Omar Elserogy: So it is it's frustrating that I

TSIA XIONG: I didn't really learn how to write in the last, I would say about the last 15 years. When I become the directors and I executive director, where I have to learn quickly [finger snaps] right how to write grants, sustainalization. I didn't really learn how to write grants until I developed the organization here. And I have to sustain the organization and that's when I go, wow what am I putting myself into. I've never, nobody ever taught me how to write a grant. I never done it before. And, but I have to survive if I don't survive their organizations are going to close its doors and I think it's going to be on me and I don't want to be that on me. And so I just started learning and thats, that's how I was able to learn quickly overturned, I would say, I learned atleast my 10 years I learned more than in my 30 years in in in there was basically in America or in college.

TSIA XIONG: I have so taught most of the stuff. And if I have questions I usually read a lot of good writing styles. How to do A, B, C, D, how to be persuasive. I'll do that. But you know what college didn't really teach us how to do that now. And that, that's a bummer. Yeah.

Especially being a refugee kids and and being the first son in my family to go through four year college now and it's been really, really challenging, difficult both my parents didn't even have a third grade education because they were farmers and then when they got here both of them already been working at \$3.15 cents and later on both of them are on disabled so and it happened to me as the oldest brother took care of my three three sisters, seven brothers and then going to college at the same time. So I think that's really, really hard and the structure and I after learning, you know a little bit about political, I mean, social movement and everything I realized just in the last five years or six years. I just learned that in our society and the school system aren't meant for us to be successful.

Omar Elserogy: No they're not.

TSIA XIONG: It's already a structural system where they already oppress people of color in such a way where opportunities aren't really going to give it to them to be successful in academia. So that, to me, I just learned that not too long ago and reflecting on my own journey as a high schooler and go to college that's when I learned a wow I never knew that, you know, I just thought going to college or high school just getting a degree and go to work, but you know, after doing some 30 years of social movement and organizing I just really, really realized that in the last six, seven years that wow this structure is the kind of structure that does not allow us to be successful. It's already created and crafted in such a way that puts it out there and I for me I cant comprehend that.

Omar Elserogy: to jump onto what you're saying because of your personal experience. I'm going through that right now.

TSIA XIONG: You are [laughter]

Omar Elserogy: I'm gonna be honest with you, sir.

TSIA XIONG: Yeah yeah

Omar Elserogy: Like my familys very prideful, they're Egyptian. I come from a Muslim

TSIA XIONG: Correct.

Omar Elserogy: Right, all that stuff so education is a big thing.

TSIA XIONG: It is

Omar Elserogy: And I respect education. I respect the whole concept of it and what it does for the entire world and what it does for people and how it can get them out of certain situations, but

TSIA XIONG: Yea

Omar Elserogy: But here in America I feel like it's just a form of capitalism

TSIA XIONG: Yeah

Omar Elserogy: I feel like they're taking my money, I'm not learning anything

TSIA XIONG: Yeah Yea

Omar Elserogy: The parking permits cost \$750 plus just for me to go park somewhere to go get my education? Little, little things.

TSIA XIONG: Yeah. Yeah

TSIA XIONG: Yeah, and I was talking to my friend, when we were in like in college or university. Most of the professors have over 2 to 300 students and they're not gonna have time to sit down with you and say, hey, here's what you need. Here's how I can help you. I remember we call a couple negative experiences where I seek help from the professor. Isn't class over? Now why don't you ask me in class. You know class is already over. I'm sorry, you know. And that, to me, that's a very racial attack on people of color and they never give us like you know say updated progress report and really take the time to say hey you know what many of you guys are coming to this university as a refugee kids and I feel like your writing is not that great. Here's some other resources that can help you. Through that link you to those resources, perhaps it will help you do better in my class. None of that in my four year of university never got, you know, I'm no professional will extend in go beyond the call of duty to said, You know what, I think these students have potential. You know, they're just going to clock in clock out you know when you get a job.

Omar Elserogy: It's not a. It's not a duty but its like some officers too when it comes to police brutality. Its a job to them and there needs to be a bigger picture. And that comes with I think ethical dilemmas and us being totally ethical and That goes back to the capitalism. I don't think capitalism's completely ethical. Back to opinion but then it affects us with our with our taxes and and, furthermore, and Im sure you said in the 80s is when you are you

TSIA XIONG: Yeah 83 yeah

Omar Elserogy: Okay, okay, how old are you, if you don't mind me asking

TSIA XIONG: I came in. I started to seventh grade.

Omar Elserogy: Sounds great. Okay. So you were like nine ten years

TSIA XIONG: yeah about thirteen yeah about twelve or thirteen around there yeah

Omar Elserogy: Okay. All right. And uh well did you only know one language at the time, did you know a little bit of English?

TSIA XIONG: Yeah, I, I've actually I'm in the refugee camp. I actually study partial Thai. So I do speak Thai and Lao and street language. You know, I've gone to first, second, third grade already, but in the refugee kids there's not a set of curriculum. It just basically communication or teaching you to survive out in the world. And as a refugee kids in the refugee camp. Its barbed wires so you can't go outside. So you get shot by Thai soldiers and police. So, so usually you stay within the camp and you go to school where the government provided school for you, but

those schools are just mediocre schools just basically teach you a language thats all

Omar Elserogy: Okay

TSIA XIONG: Nothing really deep but I did speak. Hmong, a little bit of Lao and Thai and then before that. And now I'm very fluent in both hmong and English.

Omar Elserogy: Okay very nice. And then if you don't mind me asking because you got here in 83 and the school system that the camps, provided that the government provided were obviously poor and they because they weren't. It wasn't up to standards. They're just teaching language that didn't really go outside the boundaries, like how an education system should. So when did you really feel like you have you ever felt a part of like a real part of like your community or have you felt outcasted because my father personally, my mother, they are always felt outcasted in a certain way, when it comes to that.

TSIA XIONG: And we were. I mean, when we first got in Stockton, I think bullying was everyday life for me and a lot of my Friends were refugees being bullied by African American by the White folks. I think we dont have a lot of Muslim or Egyptian in in our district, but I think I like the Chinese, Spanish, The Asian. I think we're pretty good I think the minority were pretty good. I think that the one that opress the other African American which black students and white students, they kind of team up. Black and White in the 80s, they're not fighting each other, actually, they're teaming up [crosses fingers] to fight with the rest of the minority. And and growing up we've been targeted every day and we learn quickly as refugee kids that if we go to the bathroom alone when you beat we got beaten up but if we go in two or three people we didn't get beaten up. So we started hanging out together. And when we start hanging together, law enforcement, start calling us what gang, gang banger. And youre talking about a whole bunch of refugee kids just came from the mountain in Laos and Thailand, came here. And you label them as a gangbanger is a gangbanger we don't even have such a language. And to me, that did a huge disservice. And in our populations and providing that equity in schooling. Most of the time parents don't speak the language. So both of you, even though if you end up defending yourself, guess what, you're the one who ended up suspending and and been expelled from school. Not white, not white or black kids because they were able to maneuver the systems and they know how the system. Their parents are well educated. So they're able to navigate that.

TSIA XIONG: But not the new refugee kids or people who just came from Mexico or other, you know, Chinese, who just came here as immigrants. And I think thats thats where a lot of the chaos in the 80s and 90s.

Omar Elserogy: Now, stretching upon that and I appreciate you sharing that information with me. Did anything politically at that time because you know how the crack epidemic in the 80s was very involved the Cold War and it involved other things. Outside sources were "lets talk with education systems, government, TV, propaganda did where they just did you feel like they were just brainwashing the population at that time with information that wasn't really important for the young, the younger generation, if that makes

TSIA XIONG: Yeah you know, when we first came in, you know, social media arent really popular during my time. I think TV. Television is still black and white [laughter] so we don't have a color TV back then until unless you're very rich or something. But its great for consumer, it was still a black and white with 14 inches TV and it's about 50 pounds back.

Yeah, to answer your question, I think, you know, little bit about Vietnam war right, the Vietnam war was very popular. American protested so we looked like Vietnamese, of course. We're Asians so basically everybody just lump us into Asian group, we are Indo China we came from Southeast Asia. So we are part of Indo China, but particularly ethnicity wise we are Hmong. Hmong people actually fought for Americans in the 1962 all the way to 1975 we fought the Vietnam War on behalf of United States trying to defend the country trying to defend communism taking over to to to Laos and then when we got here the mainstream like African American or white don't know that we are their allies and they're going to be lumped into all these asian group and then we've been targeted as Viet Cong. A lot of them during that time Chinese was not very popular. Kung Fu is very racially targeted as Japan called jab town or China man go to a country, tinkle the country, you know, they call a Viet Cong. So all those negative. It's the same thing goes for African Americans with the N word sorry that's that's as bad as that so during that time, regardless what social media or not. Many of us are under the oppression of school systems and social systems. School system didn't know what to do with us. They probably just hire a babysitter, they have they call ESL. I don't know if you know what ESL is, English as a Second Language class. So you go to school, you probably take four period four [raises hand and four fingers] period just ESL class. And then you would take history or math and PE but other than that all ESL, and many of us, they don't know how to deal with us, suddenly in the 83 there's a whole bunch like over 40 to 50 percent of the students were refugee kids. And the school just scramble and to to to see what's going on right. So they don't really know how to deal with us, therefore, they just babysit. And that's where a lot of us fall into the trap of not having proper education. Teachers didn't know what to do with us. They were not trained how to deal with us or teach us, therefore, they lump all the refugee kids into one room and they call ESL. And they graduate and then as a social services, our parents were being targeted as social services in a large line where they go to apply for welfare. At that time, that booklet of food stamps and then we were being racialized said, you know, Asian just have lot of babies and so they could collect food stamps by nationality Asian were hard working people. We don't just go out there and collect foodstamps, in fact, we hate it. We hated government subsidies. We were very dependent independent in our country for generations after generations. Were not dependent on any government subsidy and and that kind of analysis or that kind of narrative really jump into a negative impact in our school system or social systems. Social services, human Services, and then also the judicial system or legal systems. So either way you looked at it, it's a huge, huge chaos. So we lost two generations of hmong to incarcerations in Central Valley here. And statewide they think that African American is the largest and Latino. But if you look at Central Valley, which make up about Fresno to all the way to the Yuba area, we have the largest concentration among refugee kids here and for the last two decades, we have lost more kids to incarcerations. Three times more than African American and two times more than a Latino. So this has erupted the community in such a way where the society plays cards on their hand and they just put everybody we call a school to prison pipeline. We also call it this the mass incarceration of Asian populations and in Stockton, for example, even today, we have like 16 to 18,000 Cambodian pushing came from Cambodia and the Khumbu people They are also being targeted and racialized by law enforcement and home invasion has become prominent in our community gang. So for them, but that's all because of retaliation against bullying from school. And our social networking social norms that has has prompted us to do what we

need to do to survive. I don't know if that makes any sense. But

Omar Elserogy: It does.

TSIA XIONG: That's the 80s yeah but that was not really published like social media today and I would just explain it to my director because there's anti Asian during this time of pandemic all over the world. Right. And New York, London, Paris, Utah. You, you name it. If they call it the Asian virus or a Chinese virus and that there's a lot of hatred towards Asian American, particularly from a white and African American people. You know, they beat the heck out of everybody and my director who happened to be African American says I what do I do what I need to do about it. I said I'm not going to do anything about it because that's where all the concentration of Asian like Seattle, New York, and Paris, and London but actuality, and in Central Valley, there haven't been a lot of cases that I know of but compared to this experience in my experience growing up in the 80s. Today is nothing. You know Today is nothing. Now that's what I told him.

Omar Elserogy: So since let's say since Covid-19 has happened and since this whole pandemic has happened, and it puts a stance on the entire world. And a lot of

Omar Elserogy: People who we call non essential aren't working right now.

Omar Elserogy: What you want to do, what you want to do for the future of education for children, for education itself. Let's just say that, Has the Covid-19 stopped any of your any of your work or have you just found a different way how to go about it.

TSIA XIONG: I think there has been not stop, but I would say actually slow down because it's possible part of the state movement to improve el cap. And I think you know what el cap. This is a local control accountability plans through LCSF, which is about five years ago we pass prop 30 gives millions of Dollars to local school to provide academic support to low income foster youth and an English learners and this every summer in June, the Board of Trustee actually adopted certain programs to a tailor to these populations. And in the last five years, I've been working with school board member and their superintendent. And because of the pandemic. We were not able to meet. We did do a zoom two weeks ago with the board president and couple key school District employee superintendent. But then again, I think it's the governor who suspended el cap and the Board of Education. As the superintendent states, that makes a lot of decisions. So I did say. I would say, yeah, it stops a lot of the things that we are planning for example, were also moving into more Ethnic Studies. Culture and curriculum development which we thought for years ago, the board has approved and passed and put on the catalog. But it's been slow. So I would say the pandemic cuz I'm not totally stopped but has been a challenge for us to really move forward some of the campaign that

Omar Elserogy: I had another question in specific that I really wanted to ask

TSIA XIONG: Sure. (23:53)

Omar Elserogy: I have a whole bunch of stuff. I don't want to ask you all of them. I really highlighted so let me look very quick. [brief pause and silence] So did in the very beginning stages when you were here with your, your family, your guardians, your parents right in the very beginning, and '83 during your

childhood childhood with everything happening and the the difference you felt like the outcastness that you felt, did you feel like that affected your family relationship at all, whether it was positively negatively or just

TSIA XIONG: Yeah, I think, I think impacted a little negative i'd say because my my parents are very culturally culturally driven

Omar Elserogy: Yes,

TSIA XIONG: So I was fighting in school a lot, right, because I was defending myself. I got trouble and I try not to. I'm a reasonably good kid. I never get caused trouble unless I have to defend myself and which I don't initiate a fight, but if you want me to defend myself, I will defend myself. Even though I don't know how to fight. I will defend myself from a six foot black guy, so I am from a small Chinese guy. So I would defend myself from a six foot black guys And even though I they beat the crap out of me I would never now let them in our just disrespect me so I will be beaten up and It really affected my family because my parent was thinking about just leaving me out of the school what they needed to do or should they transfer me to a different school with my aunt and so the whole family move. And then my I was really based on my friends, because I said, all my friends are here I didn't want to move and my parents would say if you don't look at them, they won't beat you up, you know, so if they beat you up, then run away. If they look at you don't look at them back. You know, so always try to be more passive and dont be, you know, think that you're a macho man, and it could solve people's problems. And that's what my parents will, that's where I began to disagree with my parents and I think that's why it really led me to community organizing is because of those Initial injustice, when I encounter personally is that the school was the kids being bullied that really prompted me to, to look at avenues, where I could really help other students ease from their pain so they don't have to go through what I'm going, what we have gone through as a refugee kids. So in terms of negatively impacting our relationship because I would start a retaliation against my parents. I started listening to more of my friends because we're thinking about how we defend ourselves. Then even even changing it because we were growing up as a Christian and always talk about forgiveness and being, being a Christian, we do forgive a lot of, but you know, it don't say anything that we can, that I can't defend myself. Right. And so, so I mean, a lot of us going to church on Sunday, and then we go to school on Monday we got beat up a whole bunch of kids church refugee kids are beaten up at school. And guess what, our parents don't speak the language and then we got suspended and we didn't go to school and the parents say good if you don't have to go to a school that's good, just stay home. So parents didn't know that staying home was a bad thing.

Omar Elserogy: Yeah yeah

TSIA XIONG: You stay home is a good thing. Yeah.

Omar Elserogy: Yeah

TSIA XIONG: To me that's like a relationship and they get an impact in my life.

Omar Elserogy: Yeah, I'm sorry. You have to go through that. Well, hopefully what you're doing with education itself and for the youth is going to change the some of the future youth and their and their upbringing, you know, and its, I think we all have to experience things in our

lives for us to make a major change. Yeah, and I'm really happy. I'm able to talk to you and get to know more.

TSIA XIONG: Sure

Omar Elserogy: Able to dig in to this. I have two more main questions to interview on because I feel like I have a really good idea about you and I want to be able to talk to you again. We can meet up, but the next question we'll go to is [brief pause] On a different note, I'm just gonna be something because I want to just know you as a human being, hobbies. What do you like to do, like, you're like,

TSIA XIONG: Hobbies, Okay. Well, growing up was different. I don't know about right now growing up as a as a you know, working for the community. I usually don't have a lot of hobbies, but I enjoyed our time enjoying the outdoors a lot. Growing up, I loved sports. I love soccer and volleyball anytime I get the chance and when I was growing up in high school and college even after a couple years of college. I still love playing volleyball. Outdoor I go every opportunity, go play sports after that. But once I get older, starting steady with my career, organizing, I wanted to do a lot of self care. So I do a lot of hiking, camping, every summer I have at least a month vacation so I usually see my family for one or two weeks. Camping, hiking, traveling with us in the vicinity of California, you know, not too far because it's so expensive nowadays, so I know I love outdoor camping, hiking, swimming, I just do my job or fly fishing is one of my best hobby. I can do fly fishing all day.

Omar Elserogy: Fly fish? There we go there we go [laughter] I like it.

TSIA XIONG: Yeah I like to do that It's called screen fly fishing down the river. I could do that all day. Yeah.

Omar Elserogy: It's awesome

TSIA XIONG: it's very soothing and therapeutic. Yeah. [laughter]

Omar Elserogy: Yeah I gotta, I gotta do that. I've always wanted to fly fish. I'm jealous.

TSIA XIONG: Yeah, yeah. I'm not good, but I spend time. Yeah. Yeah.

Omar Elserogy: And then you mentioned your family so maybe the final question, I can end off with is what do you, what's your most immediate family currently right now surrounding you when you're doing you're going throughout your career. Now, and trying to change what your youth was to a different, a different upbringing for everybody else. So who's around you?

TSIA XIONG: So, so right now. Well, as a father. I have four children, two teenagers, two little girls five and nine, and my teenagers, so most of my family, immediate family are in Sacramento. That's where I'm originally from and go to school.

TSIA XIONG: All my family relatives are in Sacramento. I'm here alone, but I have, I go to a local church here and they are my family. So I got a lot of support from them. I love organizing and that's why I moved here to to organize because we have a one of the largest Hmong population here in the nation. And in fact, per capita its in Merced here. 10,000 strong here out of a 80,000 population. So that's a huge, huge opportunity that's

why I came here to organize I think it also policy here, but I didn't have a lot of the way that I wanted to. In terms of my immediate family, they are supporting me what I do, and my churches are very supportive and my family's been during this pandemic. I think a lot of people think it's a bad thing, but I think it's a good thing

Omar Elserogy: I'm with you.

TSIA XIONG: I love spending time with my kids especially seeing my daughter, my youngest daughter five years old, riding a bike outside playing in the yard.

Omar Elserogy: Little things. Little things, big things.

TSIA XIONG: Yeah. That helps a lot. That's what life is about and I can never have enough of my children. Yeah.

Omar Elserogy: That's amazing. You seem like a really great, great person, if you don't mind me saying, so I'm pretty happy with what you're doing for the world and stuff like that. Not just me because it starts. It starts with one part of the world, and then it expands. Because it's a cycle. So you should be proud of yourself and

TSIA XIONG: Thank you.

Omar Elserogy: As you're heading into and I truly believe your children are going to have, you know, what every parent wishes for, a better life in America. I'm happy what you're doing for my future children as well.

TSIA XIONG: Thank you. Thank you. I mean, if you look at Martin Luther King, Cesar Chavez and a couple Asian or anything Egyptian their organizer that we learned a lot from their past. And without them we would not be the way we are today for you and I, the opportunities aren't giving to us, you know, and I think that you and I have the ability to really impact work today and impact our future. And if all these things are happening. You're watching my watching. We didn't do anything about it, that's all, that's on us.

Omar Elserogy: And as long as we don't stop talking though in general. People like us

TSIA XIONG: Yeah.

Omar Elserogy: Don't stop talking, the progress can't be stopped. You have to keep talking. Well, people should have disagreements. My father keeps telling me this, you are not going to agree with everybody. I own multiple businesses and not all will not agree with me.

TSIA XIONG: Yeah yeah

Omar Elserogy: But As long as we can stay calm. Figure out a way compromise, make everyone's environment better, the situation better this is unstoppable.

TSIA XIONG: I was like a few weeks ago, two weeks ago, we were gonna I have like five candidate PhD and public health and they can help me do a youth Engagement logic model. And my last words before they graduate and they are doctorate candidacy right and they're all women and they're all women of color. And there's actually two women are Muslim as well. And I told them, You are a PhD candidate, you will be graduating in

May from UC Merced said, and when you graduate. Don't forget the little people like us. Because you are a PhD you're gonna become a public officer, you know, you're going to be working for public health, you're going to become a director one day making sure that you know what you learn in school and what you learn in the community will enhance your decision. Once you get into the door. Don't forget the little people. We fight so hard to make sure that healthcare is a God given right and making sure that healthcare access should be to all human beings and not just for few who could afford it. But so

TSIA XIONG: And and I was really kind of giving them a lecture and they're just smiling because I said there huge allies and yeah hopefully I hope they will carry that with them for the rest of their lives.

Omar Elserogy: Im sure they will

TSIA XIONG: Alot of people you know they are, we call it a whitewash once they finish PhD. They got a good job. Yeah, they could care less what

Omar Elserogy: Dont worry about anyone else.

TSIA XIONG: Yeah, for me and for you to Omar. I think that we live in such a disadvantage that war or in a disadvantage opportunity. Well, we make a little even though we didn't make a big impact. We make small impact. and I think it's better to make small impact because at the end of the day, I think our goal and our purpose in life is to put a smile on other people. And if we don't put a smile on the people and people living in fear people living oppressed and people are, you know, living because they live in uncertainty. That's not the way life should be in America, particularly in America. Right.

Omar Elserogy: Yes

TSIA XIONG: Yes, and and during this pandemic why race to city council and kind of supervisors that America is a land of opportunity. I came from a third world country where hunger is its acceptable every day because we are the poorest country. In America how can you born in one of the most powerful country in the world and yet many people you know you're talking about 20-30 people every night don't have a place to stay and to sleep and more and more 200 people every day are going hungry and your sitting County. So for me, that's unacceptable, and I think that they should answer to, to the people not to me about. For me, that's something that I cannot comprehend and I would just want to make my point that you know as rich as we are right now, how we need to be more humility, we need to be more humble about giving people the needs that they have like affordable housing, healthcare access, proper education, and so forth. And I think those are not given to the people right now, only a few people are benefitting and not the rest.

Omar Elserogy: I know it's because, and I agree with you. Hundred percent. And that goes back to maybe capitalism, specifically in America. And it's something I really want to be able to after this interview to focus on and other patterns are what our government is spending our money on it, versus what we could be spending it on so

TSIA XIONG: Yeah yeah

Omar Elserogy: Like military spending for, for example, were spending X amount of money, you know, you know, it will work for our

TSIA XIONG: Guys.

Omar Elserogy: No one is catching up, and we were far ahead. You know what I mean. So how about we improve the healthcare system. But I agree with you. Hundred percent and I really want to thank you for this, the time you've taken out of your day. And sorry about the communication previously to this, but it was really it was really great speaking to you, and I hope I can speak to you again in the future.

TSIA XIONG: Sure I would love to.

Omar Elserogy: Things you know and I can learn from you, and there's anything I can do. Where I can help you with your nonprofit and your foundations, or any of your focuses because I truly I truly, truly, when I said, so I'm not doing this just for the grade, I agree with what you're doing for the youth and I want to be a part of something like that so

TSIA XIONG: Yeah.

Omar Elserogy: Whatever opportunities come up in the future, if you need a hand or anything like that. small time batch. I got this spring. I would love to help you in the future.

TSIA XIONG: Ok and you're currently at UC San Diego?

Omar Elserogy: UCSD. Yes sir

TSIA XIONG: Oh, that's great

Omar Elserogy: I don't know how I got in there. I'm gonna be honest with you know

TSIA XIONG: My master doctor degree down there, but it's too expensive. So I didn't do it.
Omar Elserogy: I got lucky they paid me this year.

TSIA XIONG: You know, how do you know Dr. Wang.

Omar Elserogy: So I just, um, I, I have four classes to take this quarter. Right. And I just signed up. I Me. Okay, I sign up late all the time for classes. I was like these classes. I don't really want, but I ended loving them right

TSIA XIONG: Yeah yeah

Omar Elserogy: I signed up for her class and I met her. The first day I met all the TA's and stuff like that. And it's a blast. They've been so flexible and like so like understanding

Omar Elserogy: Yeah, like feels like a second family feels like I've met them before, you know, and

TSIA XIONG: Yeah.

Omar Elserogy: She's been amazing too

TSIA XIONG: She's alumni graduate and doctorate in San Diego. So, yeah, yeah. She got her PhD and master down there so okay, yeah. And she's working with me right now were trying to create an ethnic studies for one of the high schools I work with.

Omar Elserogy: Yeah, she told me about that and she was dipping into that and I like I said I really love what you guys are doing because I was absent myself with my culture.

TSIA XIONG: Yeah.

Omar Elserogy: Other cultures, too, because I learned about Vietnam, not through the films they were showing you the history lessons.

TSIA XIONG: Yeah.

Omar Elserogy: like college courses where they talked about Vietnamese American culture. I learned about Asia. I learned about the baby scandals. I learned about everything that they went through man like and it its its its frustrating and

TSIA XIONG: So do you know a little bit about the hmong people then?

Omar Elserogy: Yes, yeah. Because I'm very interested, you know. Yeah. But like I said, if there's anything in the future that I can do to help you with your process. I'd love to help you. So feel now we have each other's email. Now, and it was really great talking to you

TSIA XIONG: Well you got my email. So, you know, just let me know when you need to talk to you. Maybe you have more questions were going to

Omar Elserogy: We can do a touch up or something. Yeah. Perfect. I'd love to. Okay. All right, thank you so much. Great talk.

TSIA XIONG: Okay, yeah.

TSIA XIONG: Bye Bye bye.