

Narrator: Roque Cufalle

Interviewer: Reilly Todd

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Length of Interview: 00:26:04

RT: Okay today is Tuesday May 22, 2018. My name is Reilly Todd and we are at the Sons and Daughters of Guam Club. Can you state your name and then spell it for me?

RC: Rogue. R-O-Q-U-E.

RT: Okay, and where and when were born?

RC: Uh, I was born in Guam in 1967 in the village of Santa Rita.

RT: Okay, and what are the names of your parents?

RC: My parents' names are Efron and Judy Cufalle.

RT: Awesome. Okay, so you were born in Guam?

RC: Yes.

RT: When did you move to San Diego?

RC: I moved to San Diego in 1982.

RT: 1982.

(Lots of wind and noise was catching onto the microphone, so I asked the interviewee to move his mic closer to his mouth)

RT: So you moved here in 1982, so how old were you?

RC: Uh probably 13 years old.

RT: 13 years old. Did you move here with your parents? Or did you move here by yourself?

RC: No I moved here with my oldest brother.

RT: With your oldest brother. Okay and how old was your oldest brother?

RC: He was one year older than I.

RT: One year older than you...wow. So why did you guys move here?

RC: I came here for-- to go to school.

RT: To go to school. Did you move directly to San Diego or did you just come to the States?

RC: I just moved to San Diego. Well we spent three months in Hawaii and then we moved over here.

RT: Okay, that's really cool. So you've lived in San Diego for the past however many years?

RC: Correct.

RT: Okay, wow. So what was your childhood like over in Guam?

RC: Oh man. (Shakes his head) Rough.

RT: Rough?

RC: Rough!

RT: Okay, do you want to explain that a little bit?

RC: Well you can say we were bullies?

RT: You were bullies?

RC: Pretty much, yeah.

RT: To other kids?

RC: Well, to everybody.

RT: To everybody!?! (Both laugh together). You and your brother?

RC: Yeah, pretty much.

RT: Yeah. So did you go to school at all in Guam until you were 13?

RC: Correct. Uh I left when I was in the 8th grade.

RT: Okay, and did your parents stay in Guam after that?

RC: They stayed in Guam and then came, uh, around 4 months after we came here.

RT: Oh okay, so they came to the States right after you?

RC: Correct.

RT: Okay, so what was it like growing up? What were your parents like?

RC: Well, back here or in Guam?

RT: In Guam.

RC: It was pretty good. Life was easy.

RT: Life was easy?

RC: It's a lot rough out here.

RT: So are you saying its rougher here in the States than what it was in Guam.

RC: Back then, nah.

RT: No?

RC: No. It was pretty much the same. We just wanted to leave the island so we don't get more in trouble.

RT: Yeah (laughs)

RC: Yeah.

RT: Okay. So your parents came here right away. Are they still in San Diego?

RC: My mom is. My Pa passed away probably about six or seven months ago--Oh I mean, years ago.

RT: Years ago, okay. And your brother is he still here in San Diego?

RC: They're--one's in Idaho, one's in Washington, and one's in Michigan. So the only ones here are my two sisters and I.

RT: So your whole family is here in the States?

RC: Here in the states.

RT: Do you have any family still back in Guam?

RC: (Deep sigh) Everybody.

RT: Everyone else is?

RC: Yeah.

RT: Yeah. Okay, so what town did you say you were born in again?

RC: Uh I was born in Santa Rita.

RT: Santa Rita. So what would you, how would you describe it?

RC: The village?

RT: Yeah.

RC: Wow. (Long pause). Not great.

RT: Was it a small village?

RC: Yeah, a small village. It takes you probably about an hour to drive around the whole island.

RT: Hmm okay. I didn't know that. Of Guam it takes about an hour?

RC: Correct.

RT: I did not know that. So do you ever go back to Guam?

RC: Uh I was planning on going this year but who knows?

RT: Who knows? Yeah.

RC: Maybe if I win the lottery! (Starts laughing)

RT: Me too honestly. Okay, so what kind of schooling have you had since you came to the States? You came here for schooling right?

RC: Correct. Um, I took, uh, investigative security about a year. Got a degree, and I don't know I just couldn't follow that...So I just worked for a warehouse for 22 years.

RT: Oh wow. Where at, what warehouse did you work at?

RC: I worked, um, I worked for Beacon for four years and then I moved. I switched to an auction warehouse in National City. I worked there for 18 years--17 years.

RT: Wow, I feel like that is a lot of wear and tear.

RC: A lot of wear and tear on our backs. Yes.

RT: So, you kind of just went to middle school in Guam, came here and tried...

RC: Came here and tried it. Yeah.

RT: So when did you start working then in a warehouse? How old were you?

RC: My first job while here, I worked security when I was about 16.

RT: 16 years old, wow.

RC: I worked for Sycuan Union Reservation. A casino. I worked there.

RT: Okay, wow. Um okay, so how exactly did you get involved with CHE'LU and everything?

RC: With the Guam stuff?

RT: Yeah with the Guam and everything.

RC: Um, when my dad was alive, he was always here. So every time they had a fiesta, he was here. He was one of the head cooks, so I had to be here with him. Which, it's our culture to be there, to help around, to cook, whatever. That's how it is. 05:50

RT: So did you guys live around here? Or how did you find this club? This area?

RC: My dad's brother, cause he stayed out here, he--after he as in the service.

RT: And he would come out here?

RC: And he would, yeah he, well when he came out here, he would take us down here. That's how we met up with the clubs.

RT: Okay. So then you've been coming here since you were a kid?

RC: Correct.

RT: It seems like everyone here is very-- they all know each other right?

RC: Yes. Everybody is, like, you now they're real close. Everybody knows each other cause like, if one village has a fiesta, then the whole village would get together and help that people. That way, in return, they'd do the same thing.

RT: So back in Guam they'd do the same thing?

RC: Same thing.

RT: So there's like a strong sense of community?

RC: Community, yeah, Family. Yes. Back home, if you didn't have nothing to eat, you could go to your neighbors and say "Hey, could I get food?" And they'd do it back and forth, back and forth. Everybody around there helped each other. If there is a

fiesta, every house has a fiesta. So if they're having a fiesta, your neighbors having a fiesta, his neighbor is having a fiesta, you have to go to every house. And they come to every house in their circle. 07:32

Which is pretty big cause, you know. That's why you never can go without food. You never can go hungry.

RT: Yeah, cause everyone's always around you.

RC: Everyone is always around you and back there, back then, everyone is super helpful. But every weekend they'll have barbecues. There's no time off or, you know.

RT: So do you think you knew...you would know most of the people in your village right?

RC: Correct. Everybody knows everybody.

RT: Yeah. It's kind of like a family then I feel.

RC: Correct. More like a family. That's why, if you did something wrong, they're gonna know. Your parents are gonna know! (Both laugh)

RT: Cause everyone tells everyone.

RC: Everyone tell everyone!

RT: Were you a troublemaker as a kid.

RC: Uhh, well. In a sense that you know, jokes! I'm a joker. I like to joke around.

RT: Yeah. Alright, I feel you. So you came to CHE'LU because your dad was here and then you became involved with it, right?

RC: Yeah.

RT: So when did you start actually working with them?

RC: I came back and I started volunteering for the senior lunch. And, from there I just continued doing it.

RT: Yeah. So do you just--you volunteer at the lunches and you also work the grounds here?

RC: I also work the--the landscape and the grounds with two other guys.

RT: So are you here everyday?

RC: Everyday.

RT: Even on the weekends?

RC: Even on the weekends! This is my second house. (Both laugh)

RT: This is your second house?

RC: Yeah.

RT: Well it seems like everyone knows you too, right?

RC: Pretty much.

RT: Does your family come here at all?

RC: They do, they do.

RT: The one's that live in San Diego?

RC: Yeah, that live in San Diego.

RT: And your mom you said still does live here in San Diego?

RC: She is still here in San Diego.

RT: Does she come by at all?

RC: She comes here on like Fridays or any fiesta, she come. She'll be here.

RT: So what fiestas do you guys have? Is it for holidays and things like that?

RC: Um, no. It's like, um, it's more like, um, every village they celebrate their religious saint or whatever. That's what they do. So.

RT: So represented here, there are different people from different villages?

RC: Yeah, different villages.

RT: Okay. And so they kind of have their own ceremonies?

RC: Yeah, right. They have their own. Either if it's a prayer or mass. Whatever comes in here, we're responsible for keeping up the place. So, that's what we do around here.

RT: So they throw them all over in that thing right? (Points over to the large outdoor reception area in the back of the club) All the big parties?

RC: All the big parties, correct. That's the bottom pavilion.

RT: Okay. So how many villages are in Guam? Do you know?

RC: I think I counted...16 I think.

RT: 16?

RC: Yeah.

RT: Are there any people here from your village?

RC: Uh out of the three guys that...

RT: Out of just the people that come and go.

RC: Oh yes, there's a lot. There's a lot.

RT: Are a lot of people here--do they come from Guam? Are there a lot of like second generation?

RC: A lot of them did come from Guam and some of them, uh, were born and raised here.

RT: But more of the older people came from Guam, type of thing.

RC: Correct. Yeah.

RT: Okay, got it. So you said your family is involved, your mom kind of comes. Um, so what is it like, what would you say it is like, being apart of the Guam community in San Diego? Do you think there is a big Guam community? Do you think it is represented well?

RC: It is represented well, but we need is to have everybody represented more, for the, for the next generation we want to keep this place up so that our younger generation can be the next one on the line. Cause if we don't do this and keep the next generation, it's gonna die. [11:33](#)

RT: This place specifically?

RC: This place specifically.

RT: Yeah. Cause it is a lot of the older generation I've noticed that comes here.

RC: Correct, yeah.

RT: So are there any other meeting spots in San Diego that you know of where there's big Guam communities that come together?



RC: Um, they got some I think in LA. There's a lot of Guam, uh, Sons and Daughters of Guam or whatever name they use. There's a lot.

RT: In LA you said?

RC: In LA, or wherever.

RT: That's good.

RC: Cause I've seen there's one in Long Beach, you know? Somewhere else there's like three of them.

RT: Yeah. Can you tell me about the big annual thing that you guys through? You have a big annual, um, festival right? CHE'LU does.

RC: CHE'LU, um. I don't know when was it? I'm pretty sure it's coming up. Um, but whatever goes here, it's big. Whatever village is celebrating whatever, it's huge.

RT: So throwing big parties are kind of a cultural thing?

RC: Are kind of a culture.

RT: Yeah, a lot of food/dancing?

RC: A lot of food. Dancing. You name, we got it.

RT: Yeah? What are some traditional foods that you guys would have?

RC: Well we gotta have rice. (Both laugh) Yeah, uh we got chicken kelaguen, lumpias...

RT: I love lumpia! Okay, and meat is a big part of it.

RC: Meat is a very big part of it. Without the meat there's no rice! (Both laugh) Or there's only rice.

RT: Yeah, that is true. And are there any traditional dances that you guys have?

RC: Um, yeah they do but...I call it hula dancing or whatever. As long as it's nice, to me it's hula dancing.

RT: Yeah yeah! Um, so can you tell what it's like working here. Who else do you work with here?

RC: I work with Henry and Ben.

RT: And they just do the grounds keeping with you?

RC: Correct.

RT: Do they help out with the senior lunches as well?

RC: Uhh, once in a while. But usually don't. They'll be taking care of the yard.

RT: So how did they get involved? Same kind of thing?

RC: Same kind of thing. I'm pretty...yeah. Well, they were both kinda here before, before I came here.

RT: Okay. Um, so do you have any family of your own, wife or kids or anything?

RC: No, no.

RT: So do you occupy a lot of your time here?

RC: Pretty much, pretty much. Yeah. If it's only me, I don't have to pay a lot of bills! (Laughs) I only got my bill, nobody else's bill! (Both laugh)

RT: Do you work at all outside of here?

RC: Uhh...

RT: Or just here?

RC: Here and then, uh, if somebody else needs me to do their, uh, their landscape, I'll do it.

RT: Oh, for like a favor kind of? If people ask you to do it?

RC: Correct.

RT: Okay, got it. Um, so going back to just being in the Guam community in San Diego. Do you feel like it's just a separate thing? Like do you feel like you guys are kind of separate and have your own community? Or do you feel like everyone is very integrated into San Diego? Like are there any hubs of many people who are from Guam? Or do you think it is very integrated into San Diego?

RC: No it's all integrated. Everybody comes. Like I said, if one village is having a fiesta, every village comes to the fiesta.

RT: Okay. So have you ever felt like--you have never felt like you were separate living here at all?

RC: No.

RT: Okay good. So what exactly would you say that CHE'LU has meant to you? Has it brought you closer to your culture? Closer to your home? What would you say it has done for you?

RC: For me, gee I don't know. For me I do my thing. I get close to people. Hey, if people don't want to get close to me, fine with me.

RT: Do you think it has meant a lot to other people here though? Do you think it has been like that one place that everyone can go to?

RC: Yeah, pretty much. Pretty sure it is.

RT: So CHE'LU is separate from the Sons and Daughters Club right?

RC: Correct. But um, I guess now they are being...how you say it? They're coming together? Or they're being just one.

RT: Because some people who come to the club don't even know what CHE'LU is right?

RC: Correct.

RT: Okay. But...

RC: Well, but they know what the meaning is, what CHE'LU means.

RT: What does it mean, I don't know what it means.

RC: CHE'LU means brother, brotherhood, you know?

RT: Oh okay, I didn't know that. So, but then this is where CHE'LU usually meets right?

RC: Correct-- well no this is called the Sons and Daughters.

RT: I know but is this-- like where does CHE'LU ever meet to like come together when they have meetings or things like that?

RC: Now it's here, now it's here.

RT: Where did it used to be? Did you have like another place?

RC: I have no idea.

RT: You have no idea. Okay. Um, is there anything else you have to say about being in San Diego? Do you think that there is a large community in San Diego of Guam people?

RC: Yes, it's large. It would be a lot larger if we had, um, how do you say it? Um, more of a young generation coming in. 17:19

RT: So do you think that like the younger generations being born in the U.S aren't as tied to the culture as the older generations?

RC: They're...they do come, But, what they don't pick up from old generations is, their um, traditions of the Chamorros. You know, the language and everything. So, in order for us to do this and keep it alive, is pass it down, you know?

RT: Do you think the older generations are trying to do that and the younger ones just aren't into it as much?

RC: Yeah. It's not--there's nothing that just motivates them to really come to the club. I mean, I don't know if...for me, I would um...something for the kids to be interested in coming over. You know?

RT: Have like a kids club or do things like that?

RC: Yeah, you know? Even like a, like a dance. Or something like that.

RT: Hmm, to get them more involved. Because basically what you're saying is that you're trying to preserve that culture here in San Diego. So it's kinda like up to the younger generations to do that?

RC: Yeah.

RT: Cause there's not--do you know of many people still coming over from Guam? Are there a lot of people still coming over from Guam to the U.S and San Diego? Or for the most part is it all the older generations came over?

RC: No, there are young generations that come here too. But we're talking about maybe their kids or you know? Like I said, if we don't keep this tradition up, it's gonna die. It's just like any other nationality. If you lose your culture, your traditions, then you lose everything. 19:07

RT: Yeah, so it's going to die here in San Diego is what you're kind of saying?

RC: Yeah, if we don't do something about it.

RT: And you kind of foresee that being an issue by the way the younger generations aren't picking things up?

RC: In a way, I do personally. For me, I see that. And we gotta do something. Or, like I said, we're gonna lose it. And it's not gonna be pretty when we lose that.

RT: Cause then it's just kind of like you're integrated into the American culture and you're not sustaining your own, right?

RC: Right.

RT: And I think that a sense of culture and tradition is really important to the Chamorro community, right?

RC: Very important.

RT: Like bringing over what you had in Guam to San Diego. So that's kind of what your biggest concern is? Getting the youth involved basically?

RC: Yeah. Pretty much.

RT: Well you should start the clubs, the kids clubs!

RC: Me? (Both laugh)

RT: Yeah, you could do it. Be the change!

RC: Remember I was the bully! (Both laugh)

(Microphone fell off of his shirt so we took a second to put it back on and continue the interview)

RC: But yeah, that's what I would really like to see.

RT: Getting the kids involved?

RC: Yeah.

RT: Alright, well is there anything else that you find important here that you'd like to share, like about the Chamorro community and in San Diego?

RC: No.

RT: Just besides trying to get the youth involved?

RC: Yeah.

RT: And really sustaining your culture?

RC: That's why we try to keep this place up. (Looks around the grounds)

RT: Well you're doing a great job!

RC: We want them to have something to look forward to. I mean this is a place where everybody can relax and enjoy themselves. And that's what we want to do. That's--The generations that are here now, that's what we're trying to do. Is try to

make this place for the new generations that's gonna come in and that's gonna take care and you know, keep it up! Cause if they don't take care of this place, we lose it. We lose everything. [21:07](#)

RT: Yeah, and I think that it is really hard to keep that culture. Like my grandmother came from Mexico, and just completely lost her culture cause she was integrated into America and they wanted you to be white and American. So she lost all that really. So then my mom didn't have that and now I don't have that. So we don't have any of the Mexican culture here in America. And then we go back to Mexico and it's...

RC: It's totally different.

RT: It's totally different, yeah. And I wish I had that here, too, to where I could do that.

RC: And that's just it. If, if, the people that are here, they lose that tradition, and they go back home, the people that are from there, that are from back home, will look at them different. Cause like if we go back there, we look at them different because we have changed.

RT: Would they look at you as less Chamorro?

RC: Not me, not me!

RT: Not you, but the younger?

RC: Yeah. As long as, as long as you speak the language you know? "Hey we're good!" But that's not--that's something that you don't want to lose. Your culture, your race, you know what I mean? You don't really want to, like they say, live a white man's--like you say your grandmother lost a lot, and for her that was hard. I know it was hard. Because she couldn't pass that to you, and that's what we want to do, is pass our traditions to the next generation. Cause if we don't pass anything, they got nothing. [22:34](#)

RT: But, being in America, and that's it.

RC: But being in America.

RT: I think especially for other cultures coming to America, it's hard to really sustain that.

RC: Yeah. It's hard, but...

RT: But it's possible.

RC: But it's possible. But you gotta dig in your heart and be proud of who you are, you know what I mean?

RT: Yeah. I think especially for the youth it would be harder because they never saw Guam or they've never seen that culture so they don't really know what to appreciate, you know?

RC: Yeah. Well we do have the, you know, the dances. We got--that are arranged--we got kids that are dancing the traditions. And they're learning our cultural ways. And, which is pretty good and awesome for me because they're learning about our traditions from back then, at home. But they're learning it and we're gonna keep it up, you know what I mean? And pass it along.

RT: It's even learning it and then embracing it and really living it.

RC: Correct. And that's the hardest.

RT: Yeah, that is hard. I don't even have a solution for you. (Both laugh) I don't know!

RC: I'm looking for it! But I'm gonna find it, and I'm gonna pass it.

RT: I mean, I think it's also just, I don't think I would've appreciated my own Mexican heritage until like my age now. I think younger, teenage years, they don't appreciate much anyways, you know?

RC: Right, cause we weren't interested because we were too busy partying!

RT: Yeah, we were busy doing other things so you don't really care that much. But now that I'm getting into my 20s, I wish I had more of a cultural background.

RC: Oh, yeah.

RT: So, you kind of have to find the right generation of which to--you know?

RC: Yeah. And that's why it's good to talk to the older folks, because you learn more from their stories and from your stories. Their stories, and your stories, and theirs... [24:57](#)

RT: They've lived more. They've seen more.

RC: Lived more, seen more. That's why I like to hang around here, cause the stories that I hear around here is just amazing.

RT: Of like coming to America and things like that?

RC: Or things that--when they were back home. Things they did, which you're like, "Dang, were you really rough?" You know? And it surprises me. You got these nice people that, you know the old ones that are real nice, but when they start telling their stories back when they were young, you say, "You? Really?" (Both laugh) And it surprises me, you know?

RT: Yeah, they're different when their back there!

RC: (Laughs) Yeah.

RT: Got it. Well thank you so much for talking to me. I really appreciate it.

RC: You're welcome!