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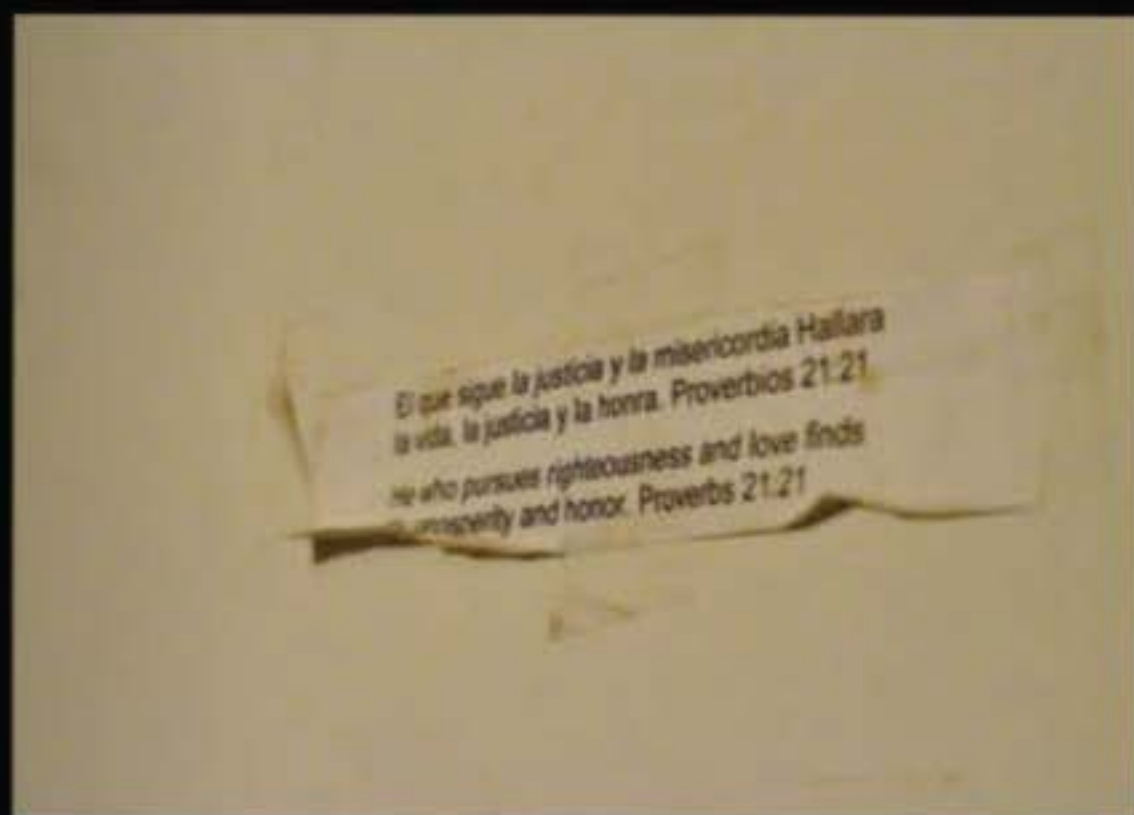
Te digo desde niño yo ya veía, sentía la injusticia.



I tell you, since I was a kid I saw and felt injustice.



En ese tiempo me dolía ver los niños que a veces ni tenían que vestir, ni que comer. Y eso me movía, me motivaba a buscar la manera de luchar, protestar. Y hago eso hasta ahorita.



In that time it hurt me to see the children, who at times didn't have clothes or food to eat. That motivated me to find a way to fight and protest, even up until now.



Mi nombre es Misael Rojas.
Tengo 60 años y soy de
Veracruz, México.

My name is Misael Rojas. I
am 60 years old and I am
from Veracruz, Mexico.

Trabajábamos, sembrábamos, cosechábamos, y guardábamos para cuando ya no se podía sembrar. Así fui creciendo con ese mismo ritmo de vida. Y viendo las diferencias de lo que es ser pobre y lo que es un rico. Yo veía que no estaba bien.

Luego mi papá nos mandaba a trabajar y el sueldo en ese tiempo era de 10 pesos al día. Entonces yo como tenía 12 años me daban 4 pesos. Y yo trabajaba igual que los grandes, o sea que se me hizo injusto no? O sea, yo hacía lo mismo o a veces más. Decidí mejor dejar todo y buscar algo mejor.

Yo deje a mi familia porque yo no me sentía bien en el rancho.

We worked, planted seeds, harvested crops, and saved them for when the farming season was over. And seeing the experiences of what it was to be poor and what it was to be rich... I saw that it wasn't right.

Later my father would send us to work and at the time the pay rate was 10 pesos a day. Because I was 12 years old they only gave me 4 pesos. I worked as much as the older people, and it was unjust. I did the same work or sometimes more. I decided it would be better to leave everything and look for something better.

I left my family because I didn't feel good being at the ranch.



Cuando yo me fui para México, fue cuando falleció mi mamá. Entonces ya no sentía mucho del estar ahí.

Llegue en la tarde y ya había fallecido.

Ella falleció de 34 años y precisamente falleció cuando dio luz a mi hermano. A mi me dolía mucho entonces a parte de la razón porque falleció por no tener medios para movernos de ahí. Por ejemplo un carro para movernos a la ciudad para que la atendieran.

Yo amaba mucho a mi mamá. Era mi ángel de la guardia, como quien dice, verdad? A mi lo que me molestaba era eso... la injusticia, verdad? Por como vivíamos en la pobreza y no podía hacer nada.

Bueno mi relación con ella era... pues puedo decir de mucho amor, verdad?

When I left for Mexico City, that's when my mother passed away. I no longer felt okay being there.

I arrived in the afternoon and she had already passed.

She was 34 years old when she died. And she died giving birth to my brother. It hurt me a lot in part because she died because of lack of resources and the means to move us from there. For example a car to go to the city so that they could have taken care of her.

I loved my mother very much. She was my guardian angel, as some may say. What bothered me was that... the injustice, right? How we lived in poverty and we couldn't do anything about it.

My relationship with her was one of love. You know?

Cuando yo regrese de México, como a los 22, 23, llegue al rancho con mi papá. Me acuerdo que me mandó ha llamar a mi y mis hermanos porque estaba enfermo.

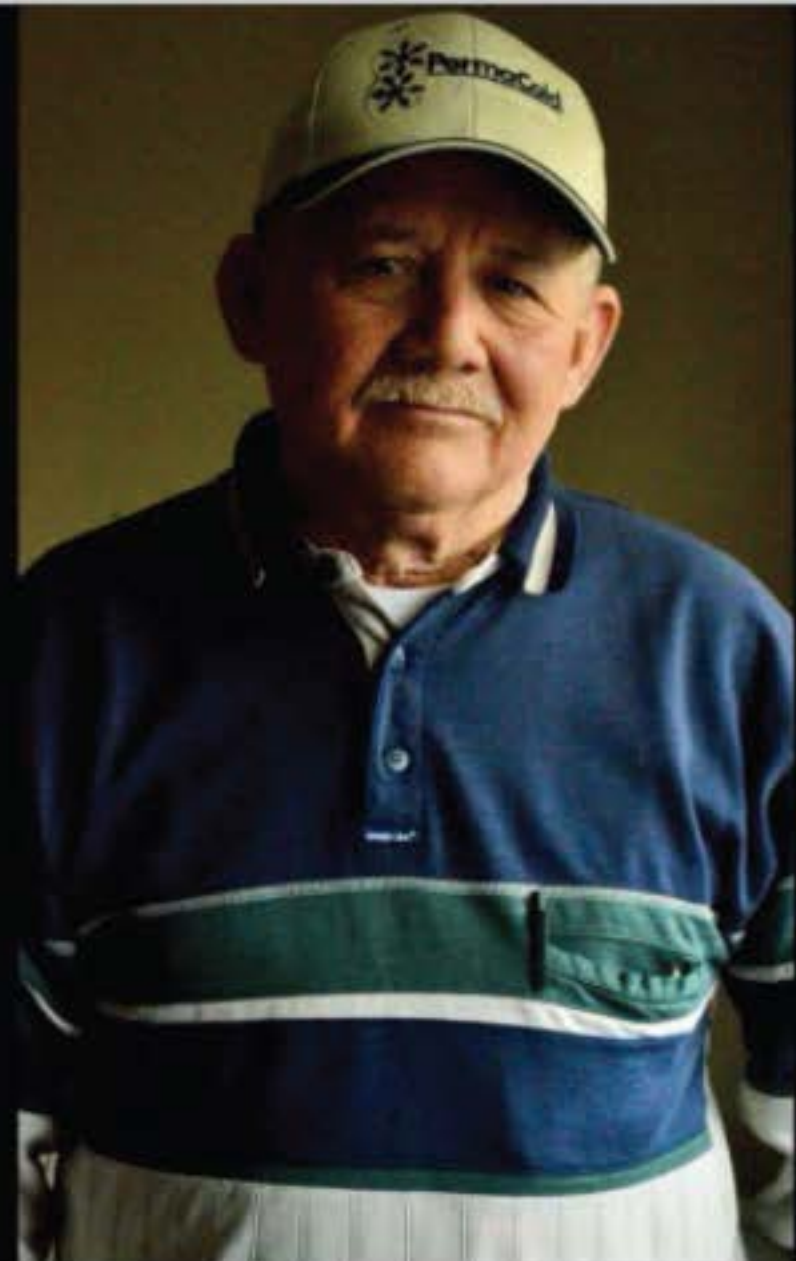
Mi papá era el líder de ese grupo de campesinos que lucharon por unas tierras. Cuando mi papá falleció se hizo la reunión, dijeron entre todo el grupo de campesinos, que eran como 50, acordaron de que yo siguiera como líder porque yo tenía todo los papeles del movimiento porque los tenía mi papá.

Yo creo que yo lo tenía en la sangre porque desde niño yo veía lo que estaba bien y lo que no. Lo justo y lo injusto.

When I returned from Mexico City, at the age of 22, 23, I went back to my home with my father because I remember that he had called for me and my brothers because he was sick.

My father was the leader of this group of farmers who fought for some land. When my dad died they had a meeting and they decided amongst themselves, there were about 50, that I would become the leader because I had all of the documents from the movement because my father had had them.

I think that I had it in my blood because since my childhood I saw what was good and what wasn't. The just and the unjust.





La constitución de México dice que tenemos el derecho a una casa y a un trabajo. Entonces nosotros luchábamos allá porque hay mucha miseria en México.

Y el movimiento no era una organización o algo, era nomas un grupo de campesinos luchando por unas tierras. Y pues como te digo, en el taller que tenía en Veracruz ahí mismo me fueron ha agarrar los federales. De ahí me apresaron y ya traían a mi sobrino, y lo traían del rancho y nos metieron a la cárcel por andar peleando por tierras para los campesinos.

The Mexican constitution says that we have a right to a house and to a job. So we, that was why we were fighting over there because there is a lot of misery in Mexico.

The movement wasn't an organization, it was only a group of farmers fighting for land. And how do I tell you, in the workshop I had in Veracruz, right there is were the federal agents got me. They arrested me and they brought my nephew, who they brought from the ranch, and they put us in jail for fighting for land on behalf of the farmers.



Al momento senti temor porque iban como en tres camionetas con puro judicial, con armas, y me rodearon el taller y me dicen, "Misael Rojas, no?" "Pues si, yo soy" y "Queda detenido." Si senti temor en ese momento. Cuando vi que ya venia mi sobrino en la camionetas que traian ellos, pues ya no senti mucho temor porque ya eramos dos.

In that moment I felt fear because there were three trucks of police with guns, and they surrounded the workshop and they told me, "Misael Rojas, no?" "Well yes, that's me" and "You're under arrest." Yes I felt fear at that moment. When I saw my nephew in the trucks, there wasn't as much fear because there were two of us.

Y tuvimos nueve días porque como te digo eran como 50 como 45 campesinos y la mayoría trajeron a sus familias del rancho. Y cerraron las calles aledañas a la cárcel. Entonces el gobierno tenía un diálogo con los que estaban afuera que era un sacerdote en la iglesia y otro señor que había andado mucho con mi papá también. Y presionaron al gobierno de esa manera cerrando las avenidas principales de la ciudad en el centro.

Entonces como a los nueve días nada más nos dijeron, "Estás disculpado."

We were there 9 days because there were about 50 or 45 farmers, the majority who had brought their family from the ranch. They closed all of the streets around the prison. So then the government spoke with those who were outside, who were a priest from the church and another man who had worked with my father. And they pressured the government by closing the streets of the city.

And so after 9 days they only said to us, "You've been excused."





Yo luchaba allá buscando el bienestar de todo de la familia, de muchas familias. Aquí el movimiento también es para el bienestar de muchas familias, que yo a lo mejor no las conozco. Pero, con la ayuda de Dios, yo pienso que lo poco que hagamos en este movimiento se va a beneficiar muchas familias o están beneficiando ya.

Si ganamos algo, y eso me recuerda mucho porque aquí también estamos luchando. Tal vez no es lo mismo. Aquí no estamos peleando tierra, verdad? Pero estamos luchando por un derecho que es lo mismo de allá también.

I fought there looking to help better the lives of my family, of many families. Here the movement is also for the betterment of many families, who I probably don't even know the majority of. But with help from God, I think that the little bit that we do in this movement will help these families benefit or who are already benefiting from a better life.

We won something and that reminds me of the movement here because we are fighting as well. Maybe not for the same thing. Here we aren't fighting for land, right? But we are fighting for a right which is the same as in Veracruz.

El "robo de salario" ya me había pasado a los dos años de estar aquí y no sabía yo que había una organización para que te ayudara. Y cuando sufrí eso, se me vino a la mente ir a PCUN. Yo ya había oído de PCUN, pero yo ni sabía que eran, ni quienes eran, ni nada. Y yo le dije al patrón, o sea con el que trabajaba yo, "Voy a ir a PCUN, si no me pagas." Entonces, tal vez yo buscaba resolver el problema de mi pago en un momento porque yo no sabía nada del movimiento de PCUN. Yo no sabía cual era su fin.

Yo hable con Javier y me ayudo, resolvimos el problema, y ya me platico cual era la función de PCUN, como se formo, y cual es el motivo de que existe. Entonces a mi me removió en mi ser. Y bueno puedo participar, o sea, ahí esta el chance.

My wage theft had happened about 2 years after I arrived to Oregon. I didn't know that there was an organization to help you or support you. When I suffered from wage theft I thought about going to PCUN. I had heard of them but I had no idea what they were or who they were. Nothing. And I had said to my boss, the one who I had worked for, "I'm going to go to PCUN if you don't pay me." So, perhaps I was looking to find the solution to my problem with my pay during that moment, because I didn't know anything about the PCUN movement. I didn't know what its end would be.

I spoke with Javier, he helped me, we solved the problem, and he told me the function of PCUN, what it was, how it was formed, what its motive is for existing. That moved me again. And I can participate and the chance is there.



Eso es lo que es similar al movimiento que estuve en Veracruz, lo que viví y en lo que hoy me tiene aquí el movimiento de PCUN.

Yo sé que no voy hacer yo solo pero unidos lo podemos hacer. Y ese es el motivo que estoy en la lucha todavía.

And that is what is similar to the movement which I was a part of in Veracruz, what I lived and what today has me here as part of the PCUN movement.

I know that I can't do it alone, but united we can achieve something. It is that motivation that has made me part of the fight today.

Yo, a mi mamá, no la puedo olvidar. Para mi ahorita, llega el día de Mayo y yo lloro. Aunque me digas, "Oye pero si ya estas grande." En verdad yo lloro.

Lloro porque, la primera pregunta es como estuviera yo si no se hubiera muerto. Pienso que mi vida hubiera sido otra, y la de mi familia, o sea, mis hermanos, teniendo otra manera de vivir.

Y duele, y pues ahora si que me da la nostalgia en ese momento y en parte si me motiva el sufrimiento ese de haber sido huérfano de mi infancia, o sea de joven. Y la vida que viví en ese tiempo era mucho sufrir. O sea, eso a mi me motiva más.

For me, my mother, I can never forget her. On Mother's Day in May I cry. Even if you tell me, "But you're all grown up." Seriously, I cry.

I cry because the first question is how would have things been had she not died. I think about how my life would have been different, and that of my family and of my siblings. Having a different way of life.

And it hurts, and well now I feel the nostalgia. In part the suffering of being an orphan from a young age motivates me. The life that I lived during that time, all of it, I suffered a lot. That is what motivates me even more.

Muchas Gracias:

Misael Rojas

Javier Lara

PCUN y sus miembros

Thank you to:

Misael Rojas

Javier Lara

PCUN and its members

