

# Ramon Marquez Interview

## SPEAKERS

Ramon Marquez, Kelli Lycke, random lady

**Kelli Lycke** 00:00

I'm rolling. Okay, if you would for me in a complete sentence just say your name my name is and tell me what your connection is to Santa Rita.

**Kelli Lycke** 00:05

My name is Ramon Marquez

**Kelli Lycke** 00:06

And What's your connection to Santa Rita

**Ramon Marquez** 00:09

Well, I was born in Santa Rita and I was there until age of 21 When I got married and I moved to Silver City.

**Kelli Lycke** 00:13

and what part of Santa Rita are you from?

**Kelli Lycke** 00:14

Well I'm from, we used to call it Mexican town where the Hispanic people used to live.

**Kelli Lycke** 00:18

And what do you remember about the town?

**Ramon Marquez** 00:19

Everything. Beautiful town. good people real friendly, help each other all the time. And then we had to cope with that discrimination though.

**Kelli Lycke** 00:26

Talk a bit about that.

**Kelli Lycke** 00:27

What was it like?

**Ramon Marquez** 00:29

Well White people had a better chance than us and when I first started school it was segregated. And until I got to the fifth grade, it wasn't until you got to the fifth grade that you could mix up with white people, with white kids. And that's about all I guess.

**Kelli Lycke** 01:14

Okay. How was Mexican town? What was that neighborhood like?

**Ramon Marquez** 01:17

Well, I like it. Yeah, it had all we needed restaurants, church, whatever. And the theater was there. And motel, hotel, cafe. Our country store, little neighborhood stores. It was Okay.

**Kelli Lycke** 01:36

And what would you guys do for fun?

**Ramon Marquez** 01:39

Well, play baseball in the neighborhood. Play one neighborhood against other.

**Kelli Lycke** 01:47

And how would you describe your connection to the other people from Santa Rita?

01:53

oh, 100%. Because we're all a big family, in other words. You know, so we protect each other and we keep you know, keep each other in touch and help each other or whatever we need.

**Kelli Lycke** 02:10

Yeah. What was it like growing up?

02:16

Well, it was okay, but yet, it was kind of sad, like I said because of that discrimination. A lot of people don't even feel them because they were too young or white people never knew a thing, but Hispanic people knew a lot about discrimination. Where we were segregated at the schools and theater, at that restaurant at the hospital. Everything was segregated. Hispanics on one side, Whites on the other.

**Kelli Lycke** 02:43

You had a different theater?

02:45

No. But different seating.

**Kelli Lycke** 02:49

Okay. Do you do you feel like it's still segregated? Do you feel still separated from the white people?

02:55

Not so much anymore? I don't know if it's, well Education, I guess. All the Hispanics have been educated and know know, you have a better chance now than before, back then.

**Kelli Lycke** 03:07

What school did you go to?

**Ramon Marquez** 03:10

Hispanics started the kindergarten through fourth grade in Hill School. And then from fifth grade on up? You went to Sulley school, where the whites started since kindergarten.

**Kelli Lycke** 03:19

Did you get along with the white kids at school? Oh, yeah,

**Ramon Marquez** 03:27

Yeah, when we got up to the to the, to the Sulley school, yeah. I made friends with some people, some white kids. And it wasn't too bad. But until we got up there. It wasn't a kids' fault again it was the teachers or the company that had it segregated. But we got along with each other while we were there.

**Kelli Lycke** 03:47

What do your parents do for a living?

03:49

I'll beg your pardon.

**Kelli Lycke** 03:50

What did your parents do for a living?

03:51

My father worked for the company, for Kennecott. And my mother was a housewife.

**Kelli Lycke** 03:57

What did he do for the company? Do you know?

03:59

Well, he worked for the underground? Kennecott used to have underground mines in Santa Rita. He was a miner all his life.

**Kelli Lycke** 04:10

So and you left at 21 You said

04:13

yeah, when I got married. After that, I moved to Silver City.

**Kelli Lycke** 04:17

Okay. Do you remember? Do you remember when they evacuated the town when they told you you got to get out? Were your parents still live in there? Or

**Ramon Marquez** 04:27

no, no, no. My dad passed away when I was only 11 years old but my mom, we moved her house here to Bayard. It's out here. They were still moving everybody out in like 1957. I don't know when they moved out everyone. But I noticed that about 1957. Of course, not everyone's house could be moved. So they just knocked them down.

**Kelli Lycke** 04:56

I heard there was some people who couldn't afford to move them.

**Ramon Marquez** 04:58

Really? Yeah.

**Kelli Lycke** 05:00

And so they had to sell them for super cheap. 'You know you know people that happen to as well?

**Ramon Marquez** 05:06

Yeah, there was something that happened to them

**Kelli Lycke** 05:10

how did you How do you cope with your loss of home, how do you deal?

**Ramon Marquez** 05:14

with who?

**Kelli Lycke** 05:15

cope with the loss of your hometown

**Ramon Marquez** 05:17

well, we were really sad. It was really really sad because we were you live in there enjoying everything went on went to school together as kids went out in the summer or used to get together go for morning walks up in the hills or in the morning. And you know what? When somebody had a birthday, we would come and sing my mananitas.

**Kelli Lycke** 05:40

Oh, how fun!

**Ramon Marquez** 05:42

five in the morning, get the guitars go and sing mananitas when we were celebrating a birthday. It was a lot of fun really. So when we lost out...

**Kelli Lycke** 05:56

Do you still have some of those traditions? Is one of them. Is that your wife?

**Ramon Marquez** 06:00

No, no, no, It's a white lady

**Kelli Lycke** 06:04

oh yeah, you're right.

**random lady** 06:10

yeah, I'm gonna take your car so that I can go home?

**Ramon Marquez** 06:16

You need to move it?

**random lady** 06:18

Yeah, I was gonna go. Are you done? Or is it

**Kelli Lycke** 06:21

we're not we weren't quite done but we can do it over there. Yes, no problem. Like you know, even even early on that you're facing discrimination?

**Ramon Marquez** 06:32

Oh yeah, there is still some. Not that much, but back in the day, there was a lot of it.

**Kelli Lycke** 06:39

Yeah, when we first moved to Arizona and I told you my my husband is Mexican and it was the stupidest thing but he was born in LA. So you know, his parents speak Spanish but his first language that he learned in school is English. And some guy didn't want to sell him gas he was like No Hablo Espanol, No hablo espanol and that was our first time in Arizona. We were just driving in stopping to get gas and we got refused because...I'd never seen anything like that in my life

**Ramon Marquez** 07:14

There's still a lot of discrimination going on. White people don't feel it, but Hispanics, at least they do. It's not as bad as it was when I was a kid. But God, when I was a kid, when we went to the movies you had to sit on the Hispanic side, whenever it was too full, if there was an empty theater and on the white side you get on that side and all the white folks sitting on that aisle would get up and walk to the other side.

**Kelli Lycke** 07:47

Wow.

**Ramon Marquez** 07:47

Just to avoid you

**Kelli Lycke** 07:51

That felt awful, I'm sure

**Ramon Marquez** 07:53

Oh yeah, I didn't like it that way. I hate to talk about it at all. I'm not prejudiced at all, and I forgive all those guys that did wrong. But, you know what, if you were to go to the, there was a nice restaurant there was a big ol room where you seat a lot of people at the table with maroon drapes and walk in there and then there was a bar. If you was Hispanic even if you had a suit, white, shirt and a tie you had to sit at a stool

**Kelli Lycke** 08:24

huh

**Ramon Marquez** 08:25

And then it was during the war

**Kelli Lycke** 08:27

which war

**Ramon Marquez** 08:28

World War two. I was just a kid. so then a lot of Arkies, Okies, Missourians used to come to Kennecott, huge guys, 4-F didn't--get drafted, I don't know why. Believe me when I tell you, Kelli, he was dealing with change boggle still nerve would it be Burroughs was in one thing all messed up go in there, you could go over there open the drapes to drink coffee and as I was Hispanic, even the older guy with the sweater, neck tie, and white shirt you still have to sit on the on the bar to drink coffee. I hated that.

**Kelli Lycke** 09:11

So there weren't there weren't like separate bars you couldn't just go to your own bar and where people were nicer

**Ramon Marquez** 09:18

No, I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about a bar, like a counter.

**Kelli Lycke** 09:24

Okay,

**Ramon Marquez** 09:25

and a lot of things like that again, like what can we do about it? Yeah, we couldn't back then.

**Kelli Lycke** 09:34

So what what made you decide to move to Silver when you got married?

**Ramon Marquez** 09:37

I don't know, I knew they were going to start moving the houses, and instead of trying to buy a house in Santa Rita, because I living with my mom and my kid brother and my niece. So I decided, as a matter of fact, I came through to Bayard to move the projects and are in our corner later on I moved to Silver City. I went to Silver City in 1963, I go to the doctor there and everything and then my wife lived over there. So I decided to move to Silver City.

**Kelli Lycke 10:13**

okay

**Kelli Lycke 10:23**

for I know that the Santa Rita shrine and the kneeling nun are really important places for Santa Rita she told me why

**Ramon Marquez 10:33**

What to they call it? there's a word for it. People don't know these places like the Kneeling nun. are nearly nine a shrine a showing a move you're about 20 years ago and It's been there forever pretty. What do you call that?

**Kelli Lycke 10:55**

a monolith

**Ramon Marquez 10:56**

something like that. But anyway, everyone remembers Santa Rita by the kneeling nun. We used to go up there kids on Saturday's I went hiking up there. The boyscouts used to make overnight camps over there

**Kelli Lycke 11:12**

overnight camps. Are you comfortable? Okay. Wow. How long does it take to hike up there?

**Ramon Marquez 11:20**

It all depends. When we were kids, maybe one hour. Nowadays, it might take about five hours

**Kelli Lycke 11:28**

well, now have to climb over all the tailings

**Ramon Marquez 11:31**

Oh yeah. no. You can't get up there anymore

**Kelli Lycke 11:33**

Oh, they won't let you up there at all

**Ramon Marquez 11:34**

No. the company took over back over there, the waste dumps there's gonna be a drill on the other side where we used to go up. It was lot easier back in the day, but you're looking at it seventy years ago

**Kelli Lycke** 11:51

were you in the boy scouts?

**Ramon Marquez** 11:52

Yeah, for a while.

**Kelli Lycke** 11:56

Okay, so this is are there any other important places or important events to remember Santa Rita

**Kelli Lycke** 12:03

Not really? Steel Pin Peek we used to go and enjoy watching the trailer in the nighttime there was a lookout for visitors who could sit there and they could see the trains.

**Ramon Marquez** 12:07

until they got a beat, even when it was waste or ore. And it was a beautiful site really to watch the trains that night.

**Kelli Lycke** 12:21

beautiful

**Kelli Lycke** 12:31

I've heard that I've heard the sounds were really beautiful

**Ramon Marquez** 12:36

and Let me see. No, that was about all I get. Okay.

**Kelli Lycke** 12:45

Did you are you have you ever done any of the Born in space reunions?

**Ramon Marquez** 12:49

Oh yeah. Yeah.

**Kelli Lycke** 12:50

How do you feel about those

**Ramon Marquez** 12:51

Well, I liked it. You know when we had those over there in the Phillipines actually, even a lot of white people used to come by and we used to get together or whatever and I went to high school in Hurley because that's where the high school was there..and we used to get along with with white people with the white kids. And not in grade school. gradeschool was worse with the discrimination

**Ramon Marquez** 12:51

when you think it was the adults that made it kind of you said it was it was not the kids it was mostly the teachers and stuff that

**Ramon Marquez** 13:32

Yeah, and then the company. You know considered it was a Kingdom, Kennecott Kingdom. Kennecott had all the big railroads and all the people they were white. So they had the upper hand on us. I'm here thanks to God

**Kelli Lycke** 13:52

yeah, I'm thankful you're here too. Thanks to God because Okay, so this is a is there just anything else that you want to talk about that you would like to tell people about Santa Rita?

**Ramon Marquez** 14:04

No, not really. Like I said we used to go out with a bunch of kids boys and girls morning walks in the summer, mananitas, or whatelse. The church used to have most all of, you know Fiestas and we used to enjoy there. Santa Rita casino, it had a lot of pool tables, come up to the tables to play pool. And that's where they had all of the dances, especially if there was a wedding. I used to enjoy going over there. As kids, we would sit out there and look at through the windows to see the adults marching around or dancing or whatever. Nah nah, what's going on over?

**Kelli Lycke** 14:53

Dog chasing him. Did you see the dog? Ugh. Okay.

**Kelli Lycke** 15:04

That's it then. And I don't think, did we do this? Could you say your name for me one more time in a full sentence

**Ramon Marquez** 15:12

Ramon Marquez.

**Kelli Lycke** 15:14

And you were born and raised in Santa Rita. Thank you. All right. Now we can sit in your car if you want

**Ramon Marquez** 15:21

us to read your room. You're willing to read his General manager's daughter, Carrie Goodrich. She became good good friend with my sister Belia. She saw her Belia, and she said it was "Bella." She started calling her Bella. and all the kids called her Bella

**Kelli Lycke** 15:40

Did she like Bella?

**Ramon Marquez** 15:41

Nothing she could do about it, I guess. Again, anyway, and Carrie used to invite my sister to that big ol house. He was the general manager, by the Santa Rita hospital. On Saturdays go over there with him play. They had a big ol' garden. They wouldn't invite me though.

**Kelli Lycke** 16:02

why not?

**Ramon Marquez** 16:04

it was just girls, I guess. I get a lot a lot of these girls, Hispanic girls, they got the you know, kinda when you call them envidiadas of my sister because they thought she was you know, acting out like she was white. But wasn't her fault. It was Carrie that took a liking to my sister, I don't know why

**Kelli Lycke** 16:30

Yeah.

**Ramon Marquez** 16:31

And Anyway, She was about the only one. The rest, they didn't bother too much with us. There were a couple of guys that were friendly. You know the lady that just pulled out. Her husband was a guy, he passed away a year ago. He was a good friend of mine, her husband. He was a year above me in school. And then there was another word called Troy who was a good friend. And Terry Humble was a lot younger. Or when he started growing up. We are still to this day good Friends.

**Kelli Lycke** 17:08

you guys became friends later, right?

**Ramon Marquez** 17:09

Oh yeah! Because he is about five years younger than me.

**Kelli Lycke** 17:12

Yeah.

**Ramon Marquez** 17:12

But anyway. He relayed some stuff to me. Back to him. Histories of Santa Rita, stuff like that. Oh, he really likes that, Terry.

**Kelli Lycke** 17:21

Yeah.

**Ramon Marquez** 17:22

Yeah, He's a historian.

**Kelli Lycke** 17:24

I read his book.

**Ramon Marquez** 17:25

Oh, yeah?

**Kelli Lycke** 17:27

Yeah, I read his book. And there was this guy, Paul. Paul. I don't know. But he put together a book out of the series that he wrote for the Silver City enterprise memories in Santa Rita

**Ramon Marquez** 17:46

Jones, Paul Jones.

**Kelli Lycke** 17:49

So I've read his stories to

**Ramon Marquez** 17:51

His dad used to be a big forman out here at Kennecott, I think

**Kelli Lycke** 17:54

he used to be a what?

**Ramon Marquez** 17:55

Forman. Jones

**Kelli Lycke** 17:55

Oh yeah.

**Ramon Marquez** 17:58

Yeah.

**Kelli Lycke** 17:59

Yeah.

**Kelli Lycke** 18:04

You said your dad worked on the underground pits. Do you know when they switched from underground to pit mining?

**Ramon Marquez** 18:11

Oh, no, It was always there.

**Ramon Marquez** 18:14

You see that open pit, according to history, they started the open pit in 1910.

**Kelli Lycke** 18:14

Okay,

**Kelli Lycke** 18:19

Okay,

**Ramon Marquez** 18:20

My dad was a kid, but through the years the company had two then underground mines and a lot of guys would rather go to the underground and do the track gang because Hispanics, they had to work track gang or waste dumps nothing else. Nothing else.

**Ramon Marquez** 18:25

The waste dumps is bad for your lungs and stuff right? to work the waste dumps Isn't it bad for your lungs, bad for your health?

**Ramon Marquez** 18:45

yeah, So anyway, my my my dad decided to go to the underground mine and work there instead. he liked it was cool in the summer, warm in the winter.

**Kelli Lycke** 18:55

That's good.

**Ramon Marquez** 18:56

And he was a kid, I understand. He started working with Tyrone 1917. He was just a kid

**Kelli Lycke** 19:04

Wow.

**Ramon Marquez** 19:06

Because his older brother working there and they got him a job. Then he got married in Santa Rita. Then went to work for the company. He worked with the track gang. he didn't like hot summers, cold winters . So he decided to go underground. He worked there until the day he died. He died in 1947. Car accident.

**Kelli Lycke** 19:28

Oh, was he driving? Yeah. How old were you then?

**Ramon Marquez** 19:33

11

**Kelli Lycke** 19:33

Oh, that's tough on a young kid. super tough on a young kid

**Ramon Marquez** 19:36

Yeah, my kid brother was only three.

**Kelli Lycke** 19:40

So your mom was a housewife? How did she manage?

**Ramon Marquez** 19:44

Oh yeah, well. Social security is not much. Barely enough to eat. I don't know when I graduated from high school. My mom wanted to send me to college. I said we couldn't afford it. I would have liked to have gone but I couldn't afford it. So I went to work to help out.

**Kelli Lycke** 20:02

and what did you do for a living?

**Ramon Marquez** 20:04

Well, I worked at the company store.

**Kelli Lycke** 20:07

Oh!

**Ramon Marquez** 20:08

for about five years and I turned on to the open pit truck gang, sampling department and truck driver, college truck driver finally got an apprenticeship in 1966, I believe.

**Kelli Lycke** 20:26

Well you do have a memory

**Ramon Marquez** 20:27

diesel mechanic, left 21 years I was a diesel mechanic and I burn my eyes with some stuff at the job. I had to retire.

**Kelli Lycke** 20:38

how's that? How are your eyes now? Because the sun's oh you're missing an eye. so you really burned your eye

**Ramon Marquez** 20:45

well through the years, I went through a lot of hardship with those, but anyway, They couldn't save my eye. I had an ulser, I think it was an user, the doctor told me. It was from here to Albuquerque, back and and forth, back and forth. but I couldn't save it. About two years we fought it. And that ulser just kept going, going, going, going.

**Kelli Lycke** 21:05

What burned it?

**Ramon Marquez** 21:06

Well, working on a truck, pulling a transmission. And I put all they graphite in my eye. By the time I got to the car wash, ear wash... I mean, eye wash. It burned. So these other guy, we were always trading

out with another guy. It was his turn to drive. They took me home, the next morning when I got up, all I could see was the light of the window on the door.

**Kelli Lycke** 21:32

You didn't go home that day. You didn't go right away.

**Ramon Marquez** 21:35

Well, it was the end of the shift. This guy brought me home. I should have gone to a doctor, but I thought I'd be okay. I was blind for 23 days.

**Kelli Lycke** 21:47

Totally blind?

**Ramon Marquez** 21:49

Yeah.

**Kelli Lycke** 21:49

23 days?

**Ramon Marquez** 21:50

So anyway, Doctor..Doctor Sexton told me "Well, Mr. Marquez you're going to need a cornea transplant" \_\_\_\_\_

**Kelli Lycke** 22:09

Do you have problems with this eye too, or is it?

**Ramon Marquez** 22:12

Can you see that big old scleral contact lens?

**Kelli Lycke** 22:15

Yeah, I do. Yeah. So you pur contact lens in?

**Ramon Marquez** 22:18

They all it a collateral, scleral? Something like that. I got to work on that to get my moist.

**Kelli Lycke** 22:32

and you kept working after that?

**Ramon Marquez** 22:34

Oh, no, no, I retired. I had to retire. Because I couldn't see anything.

**Ramon Marquez** 22:40

And then you know, Nixon, no no...not Nixon, I take that back. Who was the other President, he made it hard enough for people get social security. Ronald Reagan. I fought that Security for two years, and I

was totally blind. And I had to fight, so I'd go down the Las Cruces and back, Los Cruces and back. and after two years I finally got my social security. I'd like to never make it. I don't know what's wrong with these people. I've gone through a lot of hardship. But I'm here.

**Kelli Lycke 23:19**

Yeah. I'm glad you're here. Yeah, as you said, thanks to God, right.

**Ramon Marquez 23:26**

He's the only one that can handle it. Yeah.

**Kelli Lycke 23:28**

Do you guys go to church?

**Ramon Marquez 23:30**

Yeah, I'm a Catholic.

**Kelli Lycke 23:31**

What church do you go to?

**Ramon Marquez 23:32**

St. Vincent

**Kelli Lycke 23:33**

Okay, that's in Silver Right?

**Ramon Marquez 23:36**

There's the Newman Center. St. Francis Newman center. One for the college people I go over there once in a while, but my parish is St. Vincent. It's the number one in town, and that's not only two Catholic churches in Silver City. There's a lot of churches. What's your

**Kelli Lycke 23:58**

um, you know, I didn't grow up religious. I don't really have a religion. I spend a lot of time my partner. He's Catholic. So we go to Catholic church, but I didn't grow up religious. Yeah.

**Ramon Marquez 24:11**

So like one of my boys, he's married this girl, she didn't really have a religion, she said her mom and dad used to go her or there, everywhere.

**Kelli Lycke 24:19**

That's the way we were. I grew up to be truthful. I grew up in a Mormon community. So I used to go to Mormon church, not because it was my mom's faith, but because that's the only church bus that went by my house. So they'd call me and they'd say, Do you want to go to church tomorrow? And I'd be like, I don't know. And they'd be like, we've got cake and I'm like, Alright, pick me up.

**Ramon Marquez** 24:42

I'll be there! So

**Ramon Marquez** 24:42

I'll be there.

**Kelli Lycke** 24:46

and then we for a while we were going to a Baptist church because we had just because that's where my friends would go to church. If they wanted me to go, I go, because that's where, you know you could churches have basketball

**Ramon Marquez** 24:59

You know, nowadays. Churches are popping up like popcorn. Every weekend, there's a different church. I don't know why these young people...well, to each his own, I guess

**Kelli Lycke** 25:10

the one that the town that I grew up in where there's four churches and there's only 300 houses, but there's four churches.

**Ramon Marquez** 25:18

Is that right?

**Kelli Lycke** 25:19

That's it. Are you still comfortable? Yeah. Okay, well I we can if you want to sit back in your car I'll put this away and

**Ramon Marquez** 25:28

yeah