

CONCHA C-V.
Declaration of ~~Concepcion~~ Villegas

CONCHA - C.V.

1. My name is ~~Concepcion~~ Villegas. I am Sammy Lopez's mother. The first thing I learned as a child was that life isn't about happiness, good times and dreams for the future. Life is about working as hard as you can every day just so you can survive. My life was nothing but work, pain, worrying and suffering. Most of my days were just a search for the strength to keep going. I never had hopes and dreams to pull me through hard times. The only thing this world has ever really given me is my faith in God, and I'm thankful for it. Without my faith, I wouldn't have survived to be here today.

2. I was born on November 3, 1932, in Fabens, Texas, a small town on the Rio Grande about 30 miles from El Paso. I was the sixth of sixteen children my parents had together, but only twelve of us lived to be adults. The other four were born dead or died as babies.

3. My parents were Jose Villegas and Concepcion Gonzales. They were born in Mexico, and they lived as Mexicans, even after they crossed the border to live in Texas. They were both poor and they came here because staying alive was a little easier for poor people in Texas than it was in Mexico. My parents walked from Mexico to Texas with only the clothes they wore and the things they could carry.

4. My mother was born in 1908. She came to the United States when she was about ten years old. Mexico was dangerous back then, especially for poor people like my parents. In Mexico in those years, there was no law. My father used to tell me stories of how people stole their neighbors' daughters or killed each other all the time. We had these stories in my own family. My mother's father was killed, and no one did anything about it. After my mother's father was killed, my mother's mother decided that she wouldn't be safe in their town

with two small daughters – my mother and her little sister Cruz. She packed up a few things and walked hundreds of miles with my mother and my aunt Cruz until they reached the border. There were a lot of other Mexicans in Fabens, so the three of them decided to stay there.

5. Since they didn't speak any English and they didn't have the help of a man, staying alive was a battle all day long. My mother never had the chance to go to school. As a young girl, she had to earn money so that she, her mother, and my aunt Cruz could afford to pay their room and board. Work was survival for my mother's family. During her childhood, my mother earned money by cleaning houses, washing clothes, and by working in the cotton fields around Fabens. Later on, I did the same things as a little girl.

6. My father was born in 1902, and he came to this country when he was about sixteen years old. As a boy, he was taken by soldiers fighting in the Mexican Revolution, and they made him work as their cook. When he got older, he ran away, but he worried he'd be killed if they ever found him, so he thought he would be safer in the United States. That's how he ended up in Fabens. To survive, he worked in the cotton fields, just like most of the other Mexicans in Fabens. My father married my mother when he was about 21 and she was about 15.

7. I've been a farm worker, and I know from experience that farm work is about the hardest work there is. And cotton is one of the worst kinds of farm work. It bends your back, the cotton plants cut your hands and arms all day long, and you only get paid by the amount you pick. To make just a little bit of money, you have to keep working and not think about how tired you are and how much your hands and arms hurt from the cotton.

8. In those years, it was hard for a Mexican man like my father to find any work besides working the crops in the fields. The railroad gave some jobs to Mexicans, but most of the jobs in Fabens were in the cotton fields. When I was a girl, my father was lucky enough to get one of the railroad jobs. He knew how bad the other choices for Mexican men were, and

once he got his job with the railroad, he worked hard to keep the job. Before he died a few years ago, my father was proud of saying that he worked for the railroad until he retired.

9. My earliest memories are of living in an area called Sierra Blanca. It was a camp near Fabens made up of a bunch of old shacks where all the railroad's Mexican workers and their families lived. We didn't have water or lights or bathrooms or heat, and it was cold there in the winter.

10. When I was about six years old, we moved from Sierra Blanca to Fabens and lived in a house my father built in his spare time from work. Me and my brothers and sisters all grew up in the house in Fabens. The house had only two bedrooms and a kitchen and no gas, telephone, electricity, or running water. Still, it was so much better than Sierra Blanca because it was a real house in a neighborhood with other houses, not a shack in a labor camp. It was a big change to go from the labor camp to a town with stores, and schools, and other people. The house was small, but we loved it because it was ours, and later, my father added two more rooms on to the back as our family grew.

11. The house also had a yard with lots of dogs running around and space for chickens, pigs, and the other animals we raised and ate so we could survive. My father grew chilies, melons, pickles, grapes and corn in the yard for the family to eat. To us, the garden was life, because my father didn't earn much money, especially not as much as the Americans who worked for the railroad. My father was careful with all the plants, and he taught us that the things we grew kept us alive. Every day he was out there after work, watering the plants and making sure the leaves were clean of bugs. This wasn't his hobby. He had to do this so that we could survive.

12. My father was a sweet, loving man. He loved to smile and laugh and have a good time, especially when he was out drinking. When he was home, he always had a smile

for us. I knew my father loved my brothers, sisters, and me.

13. My mother was different. She was a hard woman. She also stayed busy all the time working in the cotton fields, taking care of twelve children, making sure they were fed and clean and dressed right, making sure our house was clean, making sure we didn't ever waste any clothes, scraps of fabric, food, bones, bottles, jars, or anything else that we might be able to eat or use. My mother had no time for fun and games or jokes. She was always serious. I don't remember her laughing or smiling. She wasn't a mother like you see on television. She never sat down with us to talk or to see how we were feeling. She didn't pat us on the head, hug us or say sweet things to us. She never had a smile for us. She made sure that all twelve of us had the most important things – food, clothes, and a home. After that was done, she didn't tell us she loved us, give us hugs, or ask us about our hopes and dreams. She was so busy working to keep our family fed that she never had time to teach us about hopes and dreams. The most important thing I learned from her was to keep on working to stay alive.

14. Rules and chores were important to my mother. Every day, me and my brothers and sisters had to line up so she could look at us. We had to make sure we were clean, that our hair was neat and combed and braided right, that our clothes were clean with no wrinkles or holes, and that our shoes were clean and shined. If there was anything out of place, a piece of hair or a hole in a sock, she whipped us with a belt. My mother had so many rules, it was hard to follow them all. She always found something wrong with what we did. Almost every day, she whipped my brothers and sisters and me with a belt for one thing or another. When we tried to run away from her, she hit us even more. I still tried to run away from my mother when she tried to whip me. My sisters didn't seem as afraid of my mother when she got angry. They always said I should just let her hit me, but I was too afraid of my mother to let her hit me. If I could stay away from my mother until my father got home, she told him to hit me.

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My father had a soft spot in his heart for all of us. He punished us and hit us because he had to do it to make my mother happy. He never hit us as hard as my mother did.

15. We never had money for doctors. When someone got sick or had an emergency, we tried to take care of it ourselves and we prayed for help from God. My mother lost four of her sixteen babies, including my twin sister Julia. Whatever it was that made Julia sick also got to me: I was born with a problem with my legs. We never went to a doctor to find out what it was, but the problem was so bad I didn't walk until I was four years old. Instead of walking, I sat up and pulled my body with my hands and arms across the floor. Since we couldn't go to a doctor, my father rubbed my legs with the lining from the inside of egg shells and buried my legs in the hot sand to help make my legs stronger.

16. I was helpless when I couldn't walk. Once, a neighbor's dog attacked me. I sat there and covered my face while it kept biting me on my hands, arms, legs, and feet. I thought the dog was going to kill me. I was so scared, I couldn't even scream. Today, I still have scars on my left leg from this attack. When my father got home, he got his gun and shot the dog.

17. Learning to walk was important. Walking was part of survival for our family back then. We didn't have a car, so we walked wherever we needed to go. Me and my sisters and brothers walked to school, then home, and to our jobs in the cotton fields each day. There was no one to drive us in a car, so we had to walk, even if it was a hundred degrees, raining or snowing. Without walking, I couldn't help my family earn any money. And even with the little bit I did earn, we barely had enough to stay alive.

18. My parents were born Mexican. They lived in this country for over eighty years, but they lived as Mexicans and raised my brothers, sisters, and me as Mexicans. We weren't part of this country. In the eighty years she spent in the United States, my mother never

learned English at all. Even though me and my brothers and sisters were born here in the United States, we weren't considered Americans. The schoolteachers, farm owners, and rich people were all white. To them we were just Mexicans. Everyone in our neighborhood was considered Mexican, whether they were born in the United States or in Mexico.

19. Even the schools treated us like we weren't real Americans. We weren't allowed to go to the school for the white kids. We went to a Mexican-only school, and even though there weren't many black kids, they had to go to a separate school too.

20. School was hard for me. The first time I ever heard more than a little bit of English was when I started school. The teacher talked in English only, and I didn't understand. I wanted to learn, but I couldn't tell the teacher because she didn't let us talk Spanish.

21. When I started to learn a little English, I wasn't allowed to talk it at home because it made my mother angry. I didn't want my mother to hit me, so I tried not to talk English. I worried a lot about what to say and what language to say it in. I tried to say as little as possible, especially when my mother or any Americans could hear me. When I got older I did learn English, but it always felt like Americans' language, not mine. Today, I'm still more comfortable talking Spanish.

22. It was always hard for my family to stay alive. I started working and going to school around the same time. Every day, me and my brothers and sisters went home right after school to change into our work clothes. Then we went to the fields, and we picked cotton until the sun went down. The work was hard, hot, dirty, and it hurt. We tried to hide ourselves from the sun and the heat by wearing rags and hats, but it didn't work. It was just too hot in the fields. We wrapped our hands and arms in rags and sometimes gloves so the cotton plants didn't cut us. That didn't work either. Our legs, arms, and hands were always cut and

scarred from the cotton plants. If we forgot our gloves or something to cover our head, my mother pulled our ears and yelled at us.

23. When no adults could hear us, we talked about how horrible cotton work was and how much the cuts and scratches hurt our arms. It didn't matter what we said. We still had work every day. For us, working was the difference between living and dying.

24. Staying alive was hard work when I was a girl. But it was better than life as an adult. The last fifty-seven years have been pure misery and pain. When I was seventeen, things changed forever in my life. As a child, it was a struggle to survive, but at least I was with my brothers and sisters every day. I was with my family working together to stay alive. When I grew up, surviving was even more difficult, and I didn't have my family anymore. I had nothing. Since my childhood, life has been one long, hopeless fight to stay alive and hide all the pain. It has been nothing but pain and hurt, year after year.

25. When I was seventeen, I became pregnant after I was attacked and raped by a friend of my parents. His name was Jesus Vasquez. Jesus's mother was my mother's godmother. He was like an uncle to me. He was about thirty-five years old at the time, and he came to my high school one day. He told the school people that I had to go home right away because my mother had been hurt. I went with Jesus in his car, but didn't drive to my house. When I asked Jesus where he was taking me, he yelled at me and told me to shut up. He took me out to the cemetery. Then he tied me up like an animal and raped me. I was a very young girl and a virgin, and I didn't know about sex when Jesus Vasquez violated me in this horrible way.

26. I didn't tell anyone what happened. I felt ashamed. I thought I did something wrong and I needed to keep it secret from everyone, even my sisters. I had no one to talk to. I didn't know the facts of life, and I was frightened, confused about men, and worried about what was happening to my body. I had started throwing up in the mornings, and when my

mother finally caught me, she told me I was pregnant. I was shocked. I didn't know I could be pregnant without being married. My mother was very angry when she learned I was pregnant. She hit me over and over with a belt. She said I was a stupid, selfish girl, and that I would bring God's punishment to our family.

27. When I learned I was pregnant, I thought I should marry Jesus because he was the father of my baby. My mother told me I could not marry him, because he was too close to our family. I asked Jesus to help take care of our baby. He said he would, but it was a lie. The man never helped with even a penny or a visit.

28. Once I started looking pregnant, my mother made me quit school. She also started making me stay in the back room all day until my father came home from work. She only let me out when I had to use the bathroom. I was so afraid and alone. I had been attacked and violated, I was pregnant, out of school, and locked in a small room by myself. I was afraid and worried and confused. Finally, I told my father about how my mother kept me locked up in the daytime. My father said that none of it was my fault, and he told her not to shut me in the back room anymore. My mother was a strong woman, but she was also very traditional, and she obeyed what my father said because he was the man of the house.

29. On November 9, 1950, my baby was born. It was a boy, and I decided to call him Roberto. I don't remember much more about the day because they gave me a lot of medicine when I gave birth.

30. After Roberto was born, my mother told me I had to work to support him. She took control of Roberto like he was her own baby. She even told the neighbors that he was her son. She preferred to lie than admit that I had a baby out of marriage.

31. In 1951, while Roberto was still just an infant, my mother made me move to Phoenix, Arizona, where her sister Cruz Madrid lived. I wanted to take Roberto, but she said I

was too young and irresponsible to care for a child. She made me leave my baby behind with her when I moved to Arizona. After I left, she raised him as her own son. I was supposed to send money to help my parents raise Roberto, but after I moved to Phoenix, I had nothing. I was so poor I could barely feed myself, and I never had any extra money to send home for Roberto. Life in Phoenix was a hopeless, lonely struggle. After a while, I made myself stop thinking about Roberto and the rest of my family back in Texas. It hurt me too much to keep those memories.

32. I didn't see Roberto again until I visited Fabens about 10 years later. He had a lot of questions. He wanted to know who he was and who his parents were. I wish he didn't have to suffer with all this. Even if Roberto was confused and unhappy, I was glad to know that at least he had food and a house to live in. I could never hope for more than that for myself or for any of my sons.

33. Moving to Phoenix was sad and lonely. My brothers and sisters were my best friends, and I didn't know how to live without them. When I moved away from my family, I felt like I didn't know who I was anymore. I was without roots.

34. When I got to Phoenix, I first stayed with my Aunt Cruz. Her family was also very poor, so I had to work to support myself. I worked in the fields in Glendale and West Phoenix where the farmers used to grow vegetables. In Phoenix farmwork was harder because the weather was hotter than it was in Texas. We started work at four in the morning and tried to do as much as we could before the sun came up.

35. I worked in the crops that the braceros told me to. Usually, it was green onions, broccoli, cabbage, lettuce or carrots. I spent all day every day bent over the rows of vegetables, pulling or cutting and throwing the vegetables into boxes or into the trailers of trucks as they moved through the fields. With the green onions and the carrots, my job was to pick

them and bunch them together with rubber bands. Then I'd put them together in a sack or a box. Cabbage was the most work because it was the heaviest. Working in the broccoli fields was the dirtiest work. Broccoli likes wet soil so the farm owners had us keep the plants and the ground soaked with water. We worked in rubber boots to keep our feet out of the water and the pesticides, but the boots were slippery and I fell into the mud and the chemicals many times every day. I was always covered in dirt from the mud that dried on me. Sometimes I was so tired I just wanted to lay in the mud and cry. Every time I fell, I made myself get right back up and keep working, no matter how sad, tired, or sore I was. I was only eighteen, but I knew the only way to survive was to work as hard as I could. I needed every penny I could get.

36. Every evening, airplanes flew over and sprayed pesticides on the crops we worked on. When we returned to work the next day, we could always see a white powder on the ground and on the plants we worked with. To try to keep it off our skin, we wore long rubber gloves. It was hot, sweaty and uncomfortable working in rubber gloves. We didn't wear anything on our mouths or noses to keep from breathing the dust.

37. There were no bathrooms near the fields. It was hard to find a private place to go when we needed to. After a while, I just stopped worrying if anyone saw. Working and staying alive were more important. The farm owners usually placed barrels of water next to the fields, but we had to bring our own scoops to get a quick taste of water from the barrels.

38. I was paid once a week for most vegetables and at the end of each day for carrots and onions. I earned about ten dollars a week. With the money I earned, I was eventually able to rent a small place of my own and move out of Aunt Cruz' home.

39. The driver for the farming company I worked for was a man named Arcadio Lopez. Everyone called him Lopez, so I did too. Lopez picked workers up from different places in Phoenix and drove us out to the fields at four or five in the morning. Then he

drove us back to town about three or four in the afternoon. One day, Lopez said he would drop me off right at my front door so I wouldn't have to walk home. This was strange. He didn't offer to give anyone else a ride home. I felt uncomfortable saying no, so I told him where I lived and he drove me home. After he found out where I lived, he dropped me off in front of my building almost every day. Then one day, Lopez came to my door and told me he needed to stay with me for a while. I didn't want him in my apartment, but I didn't know how to say no to him. I was just a young girl living in a strange new place where I had no friends. Where I grew up, women listened to men, and strange men didn't move into your house. I didn't know how to get rid of Lopez when he moved in to my apartment. I just hoped he would leave on his own. For the next twenty years, I kept hoping he would leave. In that time, Lopez became a violent drunk who did nothing but take advantage of me, force me to have sex with him, get me pregnant, beat me, and scare the life out of my children.

40. Lopez was so violent, mean and drunk all the time that I couldn't have a normal life. He beat me and my boys so much over the years that I was sure he would kill us. It was a nightmare, and there was nothing I could do but pray for him to leave. For me, it was a life with no room for happiness, love, kindness, or peace. The only things I had with Lopez were fear, beatings, poverty, hopelessness, and more and more sons. I was a prisoner.

41. It was hard for me to pay my rent and buy my food with only the ten dollars I earned each week. When he first moved in, Lopez brought home a little money for the rent. That helped. But I didn't want Lopez living with me. He forced me to have sex with him. I hated it. When I tried to refuse, he beat me and made me do it anyway. Lopez saw other women, and I was glad, because I thought it meant he wouldn't make me have sex with him anymore. But I was wrong about that.

42. After Lopez lived with me a few months, I got pregnant. When I found

out I was going to have Lopez's baby, I just wanted to cry. I felt so hopeless. It hurt to know I was going to have a child from another man who forced me and took advantage of me. Lopez didn't care for me. He didn't want to make a life together or be friends with me. The only thing I ever learned about Lopez's life was that he came from Tombstone, Arizona. We lived together twenty years, and that man never told me another thing about himself. Lopez barely even spoke to me, except to yell, curse, and ask where his dinner was.

43. I didn't want a family, especially not with a man who forced himself into my home, but there was nothing I could do about it. I didn't know how to make Lopez leave. As long he lived there, I knew he would force me to have sex with him, and we would have more babies. Between 1954 and 1966, I had eight sons with that dangerous, violent drunk. For all those years, I cried and wished there was something I could do for a better life.

44. When Lopez moved into my apartment, I didn't know he was such a bad drunk. Lopez drank day and night. He drank so much he couldn't control his own body. Sometimes he got so drunk he peed and threw up on himself. Sometimes he even soiled his own pants.

45. Lopez almost always drank cheap wine, but if he found some other kind of alcohol, he drank that too. I think he did drugs also, but I don't know what kind. A few times, he didn't drink for a day. Then he stayed drunk all day for two or three weeks straight. I never knew what to expect, except for one thing – Lopez never took care of his responsibilities, no matter how many sons we had. Lopez worked less every year, and he always spent his money on wine instead of on our little boys. That man gave me not even one penny for the kids or the house. Living with a drunk like Lopez was a punishment no one deserves. The only good thing about Lopez's drinking was that he didn't make me have sex when he was drunk.

46. I had no help or money from Lopez. Every day I worked to pay my rent

and keep my boys fed. It got harder with each son I had. Lopez didn't give me money for the house, for the boys or for the food. He only came home to eat, get clean clothes, yell at us, hit us, and keep us in fear. Then he left. Sometimes he was gone for weeks or months at a time, and we prayed that he was gone for good. Then he came back, and he was the same again – mad, drunk, and violent.

47. Steve and the other boys were happy when their dad was gone. But I couldn't be happy because I always felt in my stomach that something bad was about to happen. Sammy was the same. He was never happy. He worried all the time that Lopez was going to come back and hurt us. Lopez used to say he was going to kill us all, and Sammy believed it.

48. Of all my boys, Sammy was most afraid of Lopez. Sammy was always by the window looking out for Lopez. He sat there waiting, even when Lopez was gone for days. And when Lopez came, Sammy jumped up, started crying, and told me to run. He said, "Run, mama! Go to the neighbors! The man is coming! Run now, mama!" Sammy was the only one of my boys who was so afraid like this.

49. Sammy was so afraid that he couldn't even sleep like the other boys. He yelled and screamed in his sleep. Sammy sleepwalked a lot too. I tried to check him at night. A lot of times he wasn't in bed. I found him rolled up like a little ball in the corner of the kitchen, sweating and shaking. His eyes were open, but he didn't say anything back when I talked to him. He looked at me, and it was like he didn't even know me. Sometimes in the middle of the night, Sammy got up and ran out the door like someone was chasing him. His brothers had to run after him and carry him home. Sammy never remembered this the next day. None of my other boys did this.

50. I worried about Sammy. His worries and his sleeping problems were eating him up. I took him to a lady in our neighborhood who knew how to cure people of

problems like this. She was called a “curandera.” She told me to take Sammy to church and ask the priest to bless him. I did this, but Sammy kept having nightmares and sleepwalking.

51. Sammy also got a lot of nosebleeds as a little boy. The curandera told me to light a match and put it out in a glass of water. Then I was supposed to make Sammy drink the water. I did, but it didn’t stop his nosebleeds.

52. Another thing that was strange about Sammy was how neat he was as a little boy. He always had to have a place to put his books and his pencils and his papers. His clothes had to be ^{HUNG-C.V}folded a certain way and put in the right place, too. If one of his brothers moved a pencil or a sock, Sammy knew. When his things weren’t the way he wanted them, Sammy got upset. He got a sad a face. He stopped what he was doing, and he went and moved his pencils, papers, and clothes back the way he wanted them. With so many brothers, Sammy had to fix his things all the time.

53. Lopez drank more and hit the boys and me more as time went on. When he got home from work he did not say anything nice to the children or me; he just demanded his dinner. He ate, put on clean clothes that I had washed and ironed for him, and then he went out drinking. If he came home, he smelled like wine and throw up. Sometimes he was too drunk to make it back into our apartment. Many times, I woke up in the morning and saw him passed out in the yard with pee and throw up all over him.

54. Sometimes Lopez couldn’t think right. He screamed at me and said crazy things, like I was having an affair with a Shamrock Milk deliveryman. We didn’t even have a milkman because we never had enough money for fresh milk. We always had the cheap powdered milk. Another time, while Lopez was hitting me, I grabbed a two-by-four and hit him on his nose. He walked outside and the boys locked the door behind him so he couldn’t get in. Then Lopez reached in the bathroom window, grabbed a bottle of bleach and drank it until he got

sick. Other times he injured his hands and arms hitting the boys, the walls, or me. He didn't do anything to fix his wounds. He just stopped hitting us, sat there, and watched himself bleed.

55. Lopez also got angry, hit me, and called me filthy names in front of my little boys if I didn't have money for his beer and wine. Lopez's drinking always had us ready to be attacked. Anything could happen at any time, even if we hadn't seen Lopez for weeks. The rest of my boys could be happy, but me and Sammy never could have a nice Sunday afternoon at home. We worried that Lopez could come home at any time and beat us bloody or pass out in his own throw up. When he was gone, me and Sammy never relaxed. I worried, and Sammy sat by the window, watching out for his father coming home. When Lopez was gone, Sammy just cried and worried about what would happen when Lopez came back. Sammy never got away from his fear and his worries.

56. All the boys were afraid of Lopez. He called them bad names and hit them for no reason. Sometimes, he got angry and yelled. But other times, Lopez said nothing and just beat them without any warning. When our oldest boy Junior was about four years old, we lived in some shacks for workers on the Arena Ranch in Tolleson. One night, Junior grabbed at Lopez's leg while Lopez was boiling some water over a fire outside. Lopez didn't say a word. He just poured the boiling water on Junior. Junior had burns all over his body.

57. Lopez also attacked me. I was always careful around him because he hit me without saying anything first. He often threatened me with his work knife. It was a ten-inch blade that he carried around with him. When he came home, I noticed right away if he was carrying his knife. I was ready to run whenever he reached for it. Usually, Lopez hit me with his fists and pushed me into walls and knocked me on the floor and kicked me. When they saw Lopez coming home, the boys cried and begged me to lock him out. After a while, I always let him in. The longer I kept him out, the more windows he broke. Sometimes, he broke windows

with his hands, and when I saw him bleeding, I worried about making him even madder. I worried about what he might do to my boys and me when he got inside. I was afraid of the man. I had to let him in.

58. In many of the places where we lived, our neighbors knew how dangerous Lopez was. They called the police on Lopez when he got rough with me. Once while we were still living in Glendale, Lopez was beating me up really badly. He kept hitting me with his fists, and he wouldn't stop. He was yelling at me, calling me names, and saying he was going to kill me. I believed him. I hit him with a stick to protect myself, and fortunately the police came and arrested him. They made a report called a Peace Bond, and then they put Lopez in jail for six months. Putting Lopez in jail didn't help the boys or me. Things were always the same as soon as he came back.

59. After the first few years, Lopez never brought any money home to help pay the bills. Lopez was just another mouth to feed. Our home was just a place where he came when he wanted to eat, clean himself up, and hit us. The only thing Lopez ever brought to the house was his drinking, his anger, and his attacks on the boys and me.

60. Since Lopez spent all his money on wine, I had to go out to make money so me and the boys could survive. Over the years, I did everything from farm labor to janitor work and office cleaning to stocking at Yellow Front stores. I worked days and nights for many years, and if I had time, I stopped at home between jobs to try to do something for the boys. I couldn't afford a babysitter to watch the boys while I worked, but sometimes the neighbors came over to check on them. I let the older boys take care of the younger boys.

61. I made a little extra money by ironing clothes for my neighbors and landlords at night. Sometimes I ironed for five hours a night and didn't even have time to sleep before going to work again the next morning. It wasn't much money, maybe forty or fifty

dollars a week, but it was worth it. Without the money I got for ironing, me and my boys wouldn't have made it. We were so poor we needed every penny I could earn.

62. I cleaned offices for many years. Usually, I started working after 6 p.m. and worked until three in the morning. In 1972, I got a good job stocking at Yellow Front Stores. After I started working at Yellow Front, we got our first telephone at home. I couldn't pay the bills to keep it working all the time. Having a telephone was a big step up, even if it didn't always work. My shift at Yellow Front was usually from 5 a.m. until 3 p.m. Even with my regular job at Yellow Front, I couldn't afford to stop my other work. During those years I also cleaned offices several nights a week from 6 p.m. until 3 a.m. I still took all the ironing work I could get too.

63. It was a lot of work, but what choice did I have? I had eight sons to take care of and no one to help me buy their food and pay the rent. I was all alone in the world. Even with all the work I did, we barely survived. Our neighbors, the schools, and the church sometimes helped us with food when we couldn't afford any.

64. It was just as hard to keep a roof over our heads as it was to eat. We moved all the time when my boys were growing up. Sometimes we had to move because we were evicted. Other times we moved because I found a cheaper or a nicer house.

65. We moved around all the time when my sons were little. We stayed mostly at the Arena Ranch in Tolleson until Steve was born in 1958. The ranch workers all lived in shacks that the owners had built. The shacks were just basic little buildings to keep you out of the weather. We didn't have a stove, bathrooms, or running water inside. I cooked all our meals outside over a fire, and I washed our clothes in a metal tub. I usually had to make the fires myself and carry all the water for drinking and washing. Life was hard work on the ranch. The worst thing at the ranch was the scorpions. ^{WE SLEPT ON THE FLOOR. C.V.} Every morning when we woke up, scorpions were all

^{floor i.e. ↓}
over the ~~ground~~, and they hid in the outhouse all day. I was lucky none of the boys ever got stung.

66. From the Arena Ranch, we moved to different apartments in Glendale. They were small one-bedroom places, but each had a bathroom and a kitchen. Life was so much easier when I didn't have to carry all our drinking and cleaning water or make a fire to cook for my boys. In Glendale, we even had electricity, but we still couldn't afford a telephone. One of our places in Glendale was on Palmaire and 59th Avenue. We stayed there for a few years, and then moved to an apartment a few blocks away on 59th Avenue because it had two bedrooms.

67. When my oldest son Junior was about ten years old, we lived in the apartment on 59th Avenue. He was playing with his brother Eddie, and he got hit in the eye with a sharp object. I was at work. When I came home, I heard Junior crying, and when I tried to figure out why, I saw that poor Junior's eye was punctured. It was so bad that his eye lost a lot of fluid. I didn't know what to do. I used my neighbor's phone to call Lopez at work. He said he couldn't leave work, and he hung up. I didn't have any money for the hospital. I didn't have a car, and I didn't know how to use the buses. In those days, I always felt afraid and alone. I didn't know my way around, and I was scared of getting lost. Usually, I only left the house when someone came to pick me up to take me to work or to the store for food. All I could do was wait for Lopez to come home. Junior's eye never healed after that. I haven't seen him for several years, but the last time I did, he was still wearing sunglasses to cover it up.

68. I didn't like being in that apartment after Junior's eye injury, so we moved to Hadley Street and 19th Avenue in Phoenix after that. It was an apartment in a building owned by a nice Jewish lady. She gave me laundry and ironing work for a little extra money. The apartment only had one bedroom, and I had Junior, Eddie, Pancho, Steve, Jimmy, Sammy, Joe, and George was on the way, so the kids had to take turns sleeping on the floor and the couch.

Back in those days, apartments came with furniture, so it was easy for us to move from one place to the next. We just packed up all our clothes and other things into boxes and sacks, and we took it with us to the next place. We never even had to make two trips.

69. I liked our new neighborhood in Phoenix. There was a corner store right next door to us and our neighbors were friendly to us. The neighbors also kept ducks, goats, and chickens. When a chicken came near my door, I took it inside, killed it, and we had it for dinner. I didn't like to take anything from my neighbors, but they all had more than we did. When I could get a good, healthy meal like that for my sons, I had to do it.

70. We stayed in this little apartment for a couple years. Then we moved to a little house down the street on Hadley. It had three small bedrooms, a living room, and a kitchen. This was the nicest house we ever had, but it was too hard to afford the rent, so we had to move after less than a year there. Then we moved to Grant and 20th Avenue. This was a little house with two small bedrooms. We lived there for a few years, and then we stayed in another house across the street on Grant for a few more years.

71. One time, we got evicted and locked out of our apartment. I told the boys to grab our stuff, and we carried it with us, out onto the streets looking for somewhere to sleep. It broke my heart to hear my boys crying and afraid. Sammy was the most afraid. He kept asking me where we were going to sleep and what was going to happen. I didn't have any answers. We carried our stuff to a park nearby to sleep there for the night.

72. By 1970, Lopez was staying away for longer periods of time. Sometimes he called from California or Oregon and told me to send him money. I always did what he told me to do, but I hoped he wouldn't come back. I got pregnant again one time when he came home. I cried when I found out. It was hard enough for me to keep the house together for eight boys. How was I going to do it with nine? I had so many worries and questions going through

my head all the time, but everything changed when the baby was born. It was girl.

73. After eight sons, it was such a surprise to have a daughter. My boys were all happy too. Little Baby Gloria made our home nicer. My sons acted so sweet with her. They even made sure that no one got rough or loud in the house. They just loved Baby Gloria. Sammy especially liked to take care of her and get her bottles. He took care of her like a mother.

74. But Gloria was a sick baby. She was had a deformed arm that had a sack of extra skin. I had to make special clothes because we couldn't put her arm in regular clothes. She had a lot of pain from this condition. She cried a lot, and she had high fevers. She was in and out of the hospital a lot during the first few months of her life. She died when she was only ten months old.

75. It was a shock when Gloria died. My boys loved her so much. They just couldn't believe their little baby sister was gone. I think life might have been different for all my sons if Gloria had lived. Having her really changed all the boys, and it hurt them to lose her. That little baby girl was like magic to us. When we lost her we knew that nothing good could ever happen for us. We were never the same after Gloria died.

76. After Gloria died, Lopez left for good. He went out like he always did, but we never heard from him again. Today I still don't know if he's alive or dead. I think he must be dead by now, because no one can drink like that man did and live for long. We were all glad Lopez was gone, but me and Sammy were always scared Lopez would come back, even years after the last time we saw him. For many years, Sammy asked me if Lopez was gone for good.

77. Running the house, buying the food, and paying the rent wasn't any different after Lopez left. He never helped with any of that stuff anyway. Surviving was just as hard with Lopez gone, but at least he wasn't around to beat us up, scare us, get drunk, and curse

at us.

78. When my boys were growing up, I had to spend so much time working that I wasn't at home enough to take care of all the cooking and the cleaning. I had help from my son Junior. He was the man of the house, even as a little boy. Junior made sure the other boys went to school and did their chores when they got home. Junior was in charge of the house.

79. Being responsible for seven younger brothers was a big job. Little boys always like to skip their chores, make a mess, and play, so Junior had to be strict with his little brothers. My other sons called Junior "Wolf," because they were scared of him. I was glad he could make his brothers behave. I ~~need~~ ^{NEEDED C.V} his help so I could work to keep the boys fed. When Junior got older, he helped me with money too. He dropped out of his first year of high school, and he got a full-time job at the newspaper to help me with the bills. Pancho and Eddie left school and got jobs, too.

80. Over the years, my boys started spending more time out of the house with their neighborhood friends and their girlfriends. Pancho moved out of our house in about 1976 when he was about nineteen. He moved in with his girlfriend Joanna, and they got married soon after that. Right after that, Junior moved out, and got married too.

81. It was hard for me when Junior left. There was no one to make sure the other boys went to school, cleaned up, did their chores, and stayed out of trouble. It was too much for me to do by myself, and I just kept working to pay the rent and the food. I thought the most important thing was to take care of the house and earn money because I knew me and my boys wouldn't survive if I didn't make sure we had our food and rent. Getting food for my boys was more important than making sure Sammy and the younger boys stayed in school.

82. I always worried about my boys getting into trouble when they were growing up. We lived in the poorest part of Phoenix. The streets were filled with crime, drugs

and other dangers. I couldn't do anything to protect my sons when I was out working, so I just hoped they stayed away from all the dangers in the streets. I always told them to be good before I went off to work.

83. In about 1977, we moved to West Melvin Street and 26th Avenue. This was a big house that had several apartments in it. Since Junior and Pancho had moved out and Steve and Eddie spent a lot of time with friends, I only had Jimmy, Sammy, Joe, and George left with me.

84. When we lived on Melvin Street, Steve started to get into trouble with the law. The first time he got in trouble, he robbed a store with the Servin brothers. The police tracked them down to our place on Melvin and broke into our apartment with machine guns. The police tore our house apart when they were searching it.

85. After Lopez left for good, the women I worked with brought me to a dancing place that played old Mexican songs. A man came up to me and told me not to dance with anyone but him. Later, me and my friends left and went to another dancing place, but the man followed us. When we got to the second place, he told me his name was Pedro Santibenez, and he made sure I didn't dance with anyone else.

86. Soon after that, Pedro moved in with me and the boys. Sammy was about ten or eleven years old at the time. Joe was seven then, and he liked to sleep in my bed. When Pedro moved in, Joe hated him. He didn't want anyone else to sleep in my bed, and he told Pedro to go to his own house. Pedro didn't pay any attention to him.

87. After Pedro moved in with us, he told me about his family in Mexico. He is married to a woman in Mexico, and they have eight children. Some of his kids came to live with us after he moved in with us. Pedro brought his kids to stay with me and my boys many times.

88. I still live in southwest Phoenix after more than 30 years. I know the neighborhood, and I feel comfortable here. Most people here are Mexican like me, and they speak Spanish. I always shop at the same grocery store, and I don't have to go out anywhere besides that very often.

89. I still have some of my sons around to give me a little help when I need it. Pancho has been living with me off and on for the last few years because he and his wife Joanna are divorced. They have split up many times, but they keep getting back together when Joanna decides she wants some more of Pancho's money. I tell him not to go back to her, but he always runs to her every time she calls, even now. She even had an affair with Pancho's brother Steve. It broke Pancho's heart, but he still goes back to her whenever she wants him.

90. Steve has been living with me off and on for the last few years too. Even though I always warned him and told him to be good, Steve has always been in a lot of trouble with the law. He spent about twenty years in prison. He was doing okay for a few months, but he's been back to jail a few times in the last few years.

91. Steve has a drug problem. When he was staying with me last time, he was always lying and acting suspicious. He was getting welfare money from the state, and he was working too. But he never had any money. He always had to borrow money from his brothers and me. Steve was taking money from me without asking. He even took my VCR and sold it. Sometimes, he disappeared for a couple days at a time. When he was home, he was always sneaking out to the corner where they sell drugs. When he came home from there, he always went straight to the bathroom, and I heard him making hard sniffing noises from his nose.

92. For a while Steve and Pancho were both staying with me. Pancho was sad and angry about Steve's affair with Joanna, and they couldn't get along with each other. Finally Pancho decided to get his own apartment, but he could only afford it for a month or two. His

child support payments were too much, and he had to move back with me. I was worried about Pancho coming back to my house with Steve here, but Steve went back to jail, so it wasn't a problem.

93. Right now, Eddie is living nearby. He works for a contractor, and he stays in a trailer in the yard where his boss keeps all the machines. It's good to see Eddie holding down a job. For many years, Eddie worked at little jobs that paid him at the end of the day. Then he spent all the money on beer, and he drank until he passed out. For a long time, Eddie's drinking was so bad that he was homeless. He slept on the streets, and he only came around every few months to borrow money from me. Eddie still drinks every day. Sometimes he gets so drunk he can't even walk, but he's kept the same job for over a year now. He still comes to see me every day because I make his ^{LUNCH - C.V.} ~~lunch~~ and do his laundry. He's doing better than he's ever done before.

94. Jimmy lives nearby with his wife and two daughters. His wife is Philipina. I don't get along with her. She gets mad when Jimmy gives me a ride, when he does a favor for me, or gives me a little money. I went over to a party at their house a few years ago, and she didn't even speak to me. I knew she didn't want me in her house, and I've never gone back or seen her since. Jimmy doesn't invite me over to his house because of his wife, and it hurts my feelings that he can treat me this way. I never see him anymore.

95. I haven't seen Junior in many years. One of the last times I saw him, he was over here with his wife, and they refused to eat with me because my silverware wasn't nice enough for them. Junior has made a lot of money since he got married. But he doesn't come around to see his brothers and me. It's like he wants to forget about us. He has fancy cars, and a nice house on the north side of Phoenix, and he's never even invited me to come see it. Once when I was having trouble paying my rent, he offered to let me stay in an apartment in a house

he owned. He told me he would charge me several hundred dollars a month to stay there. I said no. Junior has been in fights with his brothers about money too. He and Pancho don't speak anymore because of some money that Pancho borrowed. The same thing happened between Junior and Jimmy. Everything is about money with Junior. He doesn't talk to me or to any of his brothers anymore. But he does talk to some of my family back in Texas. He told them that he's thinking of changing his name so that me and his brothers can never find him again.

96. When Sammy was arrested, I was living here in Phoenix. His lawyers never asked me to speak at any of his trials. If they asked me, I would have testified at his trial. I love Sammy very much. I just wish I could have protected him from the people who hurt him, especially his father. I didn't know how to do that. Everything was just so hopeless in our lives. There were no answers for us.

97. I know how to read, but reading is difficult for me. For that reason, this statement was read to me. I understand what is in the statement, and it is all true.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States and Arizona that the foregoing is true and correct. Signed in Phoenix, Arizona this 11 day of FEB, 2006.

Concha Villegas
Concepcion Villegas
CONCHA C.V