

*Below is the full text of an e-mail exchange between Dr. Rodolfo Acuña and KGUN9 News director Forrest Carr. For ease of reading, Carr's questions are highlighted in yellow. The non-highlighted portions are Dr. Acuña's responses.*

-----Original Message-----

From: Rudy Saves [mailto:hchsc003@csun.edu]

Sent: Monday, June 21, 2010 12:50 PM

To: Forrest Carr

Subject: Re: Your e-mail

Dear Professor Acuña:

Thank you for copying us on your article, "Preserving My Memories." We have some follow-up questions for you.

1. In the cover portion of your letter, you state, "I came back from Arizona questioning whether all the sacrifice in getting Chicanas/os into journalism was worth the sacrifice if what I encountered is typical." Based on your earlier blog entry criticizing KGUN9 reporter Steve Nuñez, the fact that you copied this article specifically to Steve Nuñez, the fact that you criticized KGUN9 in both the article and the blog posting, and the fact that Nuñez was the only Chicano KGUN9 reporter who interviewed you, a fair reading of this statement is that you are holding Mr. Nuñez up as an example of a failed Chicano journalist. Is that the case? If so, would you elaborate on that point a bit more? Do you feel Mr. Nuñez has failed as a journalist, as a Chicano, or both?

I have been a teacher for 50 years. I have trained teachers and a goodly number of journalists. One of my former students was Frank Del Olmo, a Pulitzer winning journalist. For a decade and a half, I was contracted as a columnist for the Los Angeles Herald Examiner, the Los Angeles Times and La Opinion, circulation of the latter daily is 150,000. I find your question not so much irritating but sophomoric. I criticized the bloggers for their flawed epistemology. They are uninformed to say the least. I believe that Mr. Nuñez should have been the one to address these questions to me. The remarks were made to Dr. Felix Gutiérrez. He is a Professor of Journalism and Communication in the University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication and he was the former Senior Vice President of the Freedom Forum and the Newseum. I believe that he qualifies as a journalist, and not just as a Chicano journalist. I have known him for some 45 years.

When I arrived at CSUN there were 50 students of Mexican extraction at the college--today there are over 10,000 Latinos. There was not one student in teacher training and journalism only had one Mexican American student. Changes were made because we pressured the university to change. Most white professors were against the heavy recruiting of minorities. I found this to be the situation at the University of Arizona where the only Mexican students were the children of the Sonoran ruling elite. I would say that Mr. Nuñez is the beneficiary of the lobbying of people such as myself, Felix Gutiérrez and Frank Del Olmo--the latter two founded the California Chicano News Media Association.

Up until my Arizona experience, I expected Chicano students who graduated as medical doctors to be good doctors, good lawyers, good teachers, and good

journalists. Being a Chicano should have made them knowledgeable of Latino community. I do not believe that knowledge can be compartmentalized, as you are apparently attempting to do. I have found white reporters who are great reporters because they don't compartmentalize their knowledge. Mr. Craig and Mr. Nuñez do not happen to be among them.

2. It also seems to us that the above comment could be taken as racist. Did you mean it that way? If not, can you be more specific about why you felt the need to mention Mr. Nuñez' racial background as part of your criticism?

This is a good example of your attempting to twist the meaning of words. There is an old, but relevant book, written by Stuart Chase, The Tyranny of Words. I would recommend that you read it. It is impossible to communicate with someone who does not have a basic reading knowledge. I was specifically referring to Mr. Nuñez who one would expect to be conversant with the Mexican American community and at least have a bare minimum knowledge of the Tucson community that he is covering. I am certain that some cognizance of this community was required when you hire him.

3. In sitting down to interview you, Mr. Nuñez thought he made it clear that his main focus of the interview would be to get you to respond to criticisms directed at you by Tom Horne. Is that not your recollection?

The interview went beyond this focus. For the most part he interrogated me on the meaning of occupied after I had already given him a cogent answer. I asked Mr. Nuñez if he had queried Mr. Horne as to where he got his definitions of "occupied" and what he based his assumptions on. For the most part, journalists are not theorist and deal with established facts. From my conversations with Nuñez and Craig, and now you, it does not appear that you know the difference. I am a historian by training. I have published over 21 volumes, two of them by the University of Arizona Press, which is refereed publishing house. A historian bases his or her conclusions on documents, that is what I thought we shared with journalists--apparently not

4. After your earlier blog posting consisting of an open letter to Mr. Nuñez in which you sharply criticized him and also went on to raise other issues well outside the scope of our interview with you (such as the matter of Tom Horne's service record), I posted a comment on the blog containing the entire script of his story, and inviting you to contact us with any corrections, retractions or clarifications. I further invited you to write an open letter to KGUN9 Viewers, if you so desired, elaborating on your criticism of our story. I have not heard from you. Did you see that blog posting? Do you have any interest in responding? For your reference, here is the URL to that blog posting in case you need it (my comment was the last one posted).

<http://mexmigration.blogspot.com/2010/06/rodolfo-f-acuna-responds-to-fox-news.html>

You just brought up Horne's war record. Don't forget the context. Horne has questioned my patriotism. I am a Korean War veteran--volunteered draft and gave up my student deferment. There is nothing in his record that shows that he served. One would have expected the news media to have checked this out. It is hypocritical and bad reporting on your part. Look how long it took to uncover that he went bankrupt and no one knows the full extent of that incident. As far as I know, no one has verified his claim that he marched with Martin Luther King. If you would like, you may reprint these answers but without editing them. I really do not have the time to play charades, I have another book at the editorial stage with Rutgers University Press, another university publisher. It is doubtful whether your xenophobic bloggers would understand anyone above the level of Rush Limbaugh.

5. Would you be open to a follow-up interview on these matters by telephone?

No, I would rather not. The students refused to give Nuñez an interview because at their young ages they know a set up.

Respectfully,

Dr. Rodolfo F. Acuña  
Professor Emeritus  
California State University Northridge