

Jacob Garza
Criselda

Transcriptions

Jacob Garza and Criselda interview Daniel Fike. Interview duration 20mins. Date was on 11/6/17 at the family farms office

Jacob Garza: My name is Jacob Garza. I'm here with Daniel Fike at his farm at his office on 1601 sharp road in Edinburg Texas. I'm here to ask him a couple of questions about my chapter conclusion I'll be talking about the highway recursion that might happen here that this farm and about his land ok so first question in what way or from my prior knowledge you said that a highway could be coming through you land is that correct?

Daniel Fike: Correct

Jacob Garza: Okay what's the name of the highway that could be coming through here?

Daniel Fike: Highway 68

Jacob Garza: okay in what way could highway 68 affect your land and if so how bad?

Daniel Fike: well it's supposed to go in right here east of our farm. Most of our land is to the east of our farm. If, it's harder to move equipment over a 6 lane highway that they want to put here. Plus it would take my sister and fathers house

Jacob Garza: and do you have any compromises that could be able to be made with highway 68

Daniel Fike: yes we have asked them to put it on the west side of our farm or go to 493 and put it over there.

Jacob Garza: and what are their responses

Daniel Fike: that's not feasible

Jacob Garza: and why is that

Daniel Fike: over here there is a gas line just north yeah, just north of us and they said it would be too close to that and plus their electrical substation over here just to the west of us and they said there's not enough room. 493 they say it will disturb too many other people, but I don't believe that because if you look at google maps you can count the houses and everything, and it seems like going through here would disturb a lot more people than winding 493 plus they already have the easement over there.

Jacob Garza: Oh, Okay if it does end up going through your land what is the best ways you can minimize it.

Daniel Garza: well like I said, putting it to the west side of our farm over on 493, they also have another route that go down Val Verde that would affect us that bad.

Jacob Garza: what emotional value does your family and you hold for this land.

Daniel Fike: well we have been farming here for over 50 years and it's just our way of life. If they come in and do that than its going to disturb our whole farming operation.

Jacob Garza: does the state or city want this highway?

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Daniel Fike: Not sure, the state, I know it's the, what is it called the R the Rio Grande Valley RMA if the valley or the, it's the Hidalgo county RMA they want to make a loop around Hidalgo county and I know their pushing for it. Edinburg probably is but it's out of their reach city limits so I think they just want push it just because maybe they can annex a lot more land for Edinburg.

Jacob Garza: prior to this have you had any with the state or the city, trying to regulate you or just giving you problems and stuff for your way of life.

Daniel Fike: we, like we used to do vegetables, and they, I think it is more the federal government not the state, but they had put a lot more regulations on what you can do with fresh vegetables and how you're supposed to manage it and there was just some regulations that we couldn't handle so we got out of the vegetable business.

Jacob Garza: so now what do you typically grow

Daniel Fike: corn, sorghum, citrus. Which is citrus is getting bad enough and we don't know we just take out the trees.

Jacob Garza: Have you looked for any help in regards to the highway like as far as a lawyer

Daniel Fike: we have looked into an eminent domain lawyers, I mean we have asked around and they would help us but it's going to cost a lot, nothing to stop they highway because that too expensive, I mean we don't want to run out of money or go out of business trying to pay for them not to do it. And we have been to Austin and we have spoken in front of the, I guess it's the transportation department or whatever it is up there. We have got up in front of them and spoke.

Jacob Garza: have you reached out to any or is there anything as a community that we could do to help, or vice versa or like have you reached out to any community member or like.

Daniel Fike: everybody who is affected we have reached out to

Jacob Garza: what have they said?

Daniel Fike: all we can do is keep righting those letters and tell them to put it somewhere else, and so far that, it's been 3 years now. They said it was going to be going through here already, and they haven't started it, apparently something is working. At least to slow down the process.

Jacob Garza: so how many other farms in the area be affected by this do you know how many

Daniel Fike: Perez farms which is right down the road they would be affected, reverse machineries out on the express way, they were going to take his whole business. And then just families and everybody who's down through this area we have a big spot right here from 107 to Monte Cristo. That I think they just see a lot of farm land that go across. Which typically would be the best place to put something like this so you would want to dislocate a bunch of people. But that's our way of life. And I think there a lot better way for them to do it.

Jacob Garza: how long has the Perez family and the Rivera been here how long have you farmed side by side with them.

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Daniel Fike: well Perez have been here as long as I can remember, he worked for aterhole farms which own that business before he did and I guess...

{Phone rings}

Just as long as I can remember that they have been there. Riviera I think he moved there in the 80's or 90's he's just a little machinery dealership

Jacob Garza: typically who do by equipment from

Daniel Fike: barming new houses or whilley

Jacob Garza: and do you buy used or brand new

Daniel Fike: Both, tractors, the last couple of times we have bought new but we have bought used equipment before.

Jacob Garza: and as far as storage you said you store most of your corn on...

Daniel Fike: as much as we can, we can't store it all here but we do have quite a bit of storage here

Jacob Garza: and what elevator do you usually sell to?

Daniel Fike: Garcia grain, he is in Progeso, Donna, he got a bunch of them around here

Jacob Garza: how hard is it to typically transport, do yall have semis and stuff

Daniel Fike: we call them and they have all that set up they send us out trucks and we fill them up and send them back

Jacob Garza: Awesome! As far as, because I'm doing the conclusion chapter in my thing, so typically for my chapter I have to get everyone else's chapter a kind of just give like a run through, so is there anything you would like to add besides, like to put at the end of the chapter or something like that.

Daniel Fike: I don't know, I don't know what everybody else has said.

Jacob Garza: as far as operations here is it you and your brother that just run most of it.

Daniel Fike: no it's a family operation my uncle, my dad, my two uncles and my dad run it, we are basically farm hands right now but my brother me and my cousin we all contribute a lot and we just recently picked up some more acreage out north of town we formed our own little partnership that were are getting, its going through right now that what I was doing on the computer when you came in we are trying to get our own partnership started just to go along I mean we are not going to separate from the farm , but we want to have our own little thing going

Jacob Garza: and whenever you do form this partnership you going to be working very close with the farm right

Daniel Fike: Yeah

Jacob Garza: Well all proceeds go to the middle or you will have your own

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Daniel Fike: it's probably gonna, we not really sure how its gonna work yet but right now we have our own partnership we are pretty much renting our equipment from this farm to use out on that farm and we are trying to keep them separate but we can help each other out. We have the labor and they have the equipment

Jacob Garza: for future farmers, who well take over the farm after, like for example my family we farm a bunch of land up north in Illinois and my uncles are already in their getting close to their 60's, none of me and my cousins want to start farming anytime soon so, that's the problem their having they don't know who's gonna take over the farm after they can't work anymore do you have any idea who would do that for yall.

Daniel Fike: well my nephews, my brother's boys, seem pretty interested in it but they are 8 and 5 years old right now so who's to say what they are going to want to do in a years so

Jacob Garza: so if they don't decide to do it what would you end up doing?

Daniel Fike: we would probably work on it until till we retire and sell off. I'm pretty sure one of them are gonna what to do something with it, they seem very interested in it but like I said their 5 and 8 years old, did you know what you wanted do when you were eight?

Jacob Garza: No sir.

Daniel Fike: I kind of knew what I wanted to do but who knows things change I think it's too difficult too many roads too much urban development happening around here you just never know what you can do in 20 30 years.

Jacob Garza: what age did you start working on the land?

Daniel Fike: I was running the tractor at about 10 years old maybe a little younger on my dad's lap he would let me drive it round their pictures of me somewhere I don't know I've got old open cab cotton picker ive probably 8,9,10 years old. And I'm running that thing by myself

Jacob Garza: that's crazy I wouldn't be able to

Daniel Fike: I don't know how my dad trusted me that much my kids are getting to be 5 years old. And they aren't no way I would let them run a piece of machinery, maybe I was a little older but I remember being really young.

Jacob Garza: my uncle, the last time I went he put me on a one of those big combines or something like that and was having me drive around one of his silos and I dint know how to work it and almost hit one of them and I was freaking out. And this was last year and I was way older. It scary

Daniel Fike: ive been around it all my life. I mean we didn't have bay sisters when we were real young my dad would take us on the tractor and we go with him that was our day before we went to school or every summer that what we were doing

Jacob Garza: so for other farmers that I can give a paragraph about at the end of my chapter how would you describe the overall business of farming would you describe it as a proper's business or a declining business for people who might want to get into farming or people who are in farming

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Daniel Fike: Its prospers if you're willing to change if you wanna stick to your old ways or do stuff that we done 20 30 years ago with urban development, with new regulations, you just have to change all the time you just can stay the same , you will just phase out. So you have to be willing to change

Jacob Garza: so its and evolving business.

Daniel Fike: yeah it's evolving. Farming it's basically, I mean, it's been the same for ages, it's been the same for ages, you put a seed in the ground you grow it. That's never going to change, but dealing with regulation urban sproll, all of that, you have to be willing to change with it or sell off

Jacob Garza: and that's something you do not wanna do right that like last resort right

Daniel Fike: Yeah that last resort. We wanna, I wanna be doing this till I'm ready to retire, which look at my dad's and uncle you never retire you just kind of, you just kind of keep going you becoming more of a manger when you get older or hopefully are kids will be wanting to take over for us one day.

Jacob Garza: Alright then if their anything you want to add that concludes my interview, anything else you would like to add.

Daniel Fike: no I'm not a big talker if you don't ask me a question I'm not just going to talk

Jacob Garza Yes sir well my name is Jacob Garza once again I'm with the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley and I'm studying a history degree with a minor in kinesiology I'm along with Daniel Fike of Fike farms. He is one of the sons of the original owners and he's a very good farm hand and hopefully he will continue to work as long as he wants to

Daniel Fike: and prosper