Overview of the Collection

Repository: The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com

Creator: Griñán, José, 1952-

Title: The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Jose Griñan,

Dates: May 8, 2014

Bulk Dates: 2014

Physical Description: 8 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:59:31).

Abstract: Broadcast journalist Jose Griñan (1952 - ) was the senior morning news anchor on KRIV-TV Fox 26, where he worked from 1993. Grinan was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on May 8, 2014, in Houston, Texas. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.

Identification: A2014_132

Language: The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Broadcast journalist José Griñán was born on July 24, 1952 in Tampa, Florida. His father was a native Cuban; his mother, a first generation Cuban-American. Griñán studied speech and theatre at the University of South Florida, but his interest in broadcasting resulted from his filming and helping to produce documentaries for the U.S. Army.

In 1975, Griñán was hired as a reporter and weekend anchor for KTSM AM-FM-TV in El Paso, Texas. From 1978 to 1982, he worked as a news reporter and anchor for Miami, Florida's WCKT-TV (now WSVN-TV). Griñán worked as a news anchor for the now defunct Satellite News Channel in 1982 and 1983, before
being hired by WTVJ-TV in Miami in 1984, where he stayed until 1990. From 1990 to 1993, he was a correspondent/host for *Crime Watch Tonight*, and served as a freelance correspondent and researcher for CNN, and other broadcast services. In 1991, he anchored and reported for KDFW-TV in Dallas, Texas, and then, in August of 1993, Griñán joined FOX’s KRIV-TV in Houston, Texas, where he is the senior morning news anchor for the 6:00 a.m., 7:00 a.m., 8:00 a.m. and 12 noon newscasts.

Throughout his career, Griñán has covered major events of all types, including floods, hurricanes, the sewer explosion in Guadalajara, Mexico, and the Branch Davidian siege in Waco, Texas, where he was one of the first reporters on the scene. In addition, Griñán has produced a variety of special series reports, and has hosted two public affairs programs for KRIV-TV: “The Black Voice” and “Hola Houston.”

Griñán has been active in the community and has served as a volunteer for the National Kidney Foundation, The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Special Olympics and the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, among others. Griñán is also a board member of the Dive Pirate Foundation, the Houston READ Commission, and Keep Houston Beautiful/Clean City America.

Griñán has been a member of the National Association of Black Journalists since 1978, and maintains membership in the National Association of Hispanic Journalists and the Southwest Alternate Media Project. He is the father of two adult girls.

José Griñán was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on May 8, 2014.

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**Scope and Content**

This life oral history interview with Jose Griñan was conducted by Larry Crowe on May 8, 2014, in Houston, Texas, and was recorded on 8 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Broadcast journalist Jose Griñan (1952 - ) was the senior morning news anchor on KRIV-TV Fox 26, where he worked from 1993.

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**Restrictions**

**Restrictions on Access**
Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

Restrictions on Use

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Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Persons:

Griñán, José, 1952-
Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)
Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Griñán, José, 1952---Interviews

Organizations:
Occupations:

Broadcast Journalist

HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

Preferred Citation


Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 2/5/2020 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).
A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Jose Griñan, Section A2014_132_001_001, TRT: 1:29:18 2014/05/08

Jose Griñán was born on July 24, 1952 in Tampa, Florida to Sylvia Grillo Griñán and Jose Griñán. His maternal grandparents, Amparo Valdez Grillo and Antonio Grillo, lived in Camagüey, Cuba. After immigrating to the United States, they settled in Tampa’s Ybor City. There, they worked as cigar rollers for the cigar manufacturing entrepreneur Vincente Martinez Ybor, who provided employment and affordable housing to Cuban immigrants. After ten years of contracted labor, Griñán’s maternal grandparents received the deed to their home from Ybor. Griñán’s paternal grandparents, Quintin Griñán and Luisa Falero Griñán, lived as free people of color in Remedios, Cuba, where Griñán’s father was born. Griñán’s grandfather was a tailor, and taught the trade to his father. Griñán’s mother frequently visited Cuba with her family, and met Griñán’s father at a black social club in Havana. Griñán also talks about the U.S. occupation of Cuba, and black Cubans’ experiences under the regimes of Fulgencio Batista and Fidel Castro.

Video Oral History Interview with Jose Griñan, Section A2014_132_001_002, TRT: 2:28:36 2014/05/08

Jose Griñán’s paternal grandfather, Quintin Griñán, was a free person of color in Cuba. He was employed by a sugar plantation owner, for whom he recruited laborers from Haiti and the Dominican Republic to cut sugarcane. He later moved his family to Havana, where he worked on a political campaign and opened a tailor shop. Griñán’s father, Jose Griñán, graduated from the University of Havana, and helped run the family’s tailoring business. He met Griñán’s mother, Sylvia Grillo Griñán, at a social club
met Griñan’s mother, Sylvia Grillo Griñan, at a social club in Havana. They married, and his father immigrated to the United States in 1941. He joined Griñan’s maternal family in Tampa, Florida, where he opened a tailor shop. He later brought his family from Cuba to help run the business.

Griñan’s parents both became teachers after attending Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University in Tallahassee. Griñan grew up Tampa, where he attended Meacham Elementary School. At this point, he remembers visiting Cuba as a reporter in 1978.

Jose Griñan began his education the all-black Meacham Elementary School in the Central Park Village section of Tampa, Florida. Both of his parents were teachers, and helped him study on a nightly basis until his teenage years. Griñan went on to attend George Washington Carver Junior High School in Tampa. Around this time, he aspired to become a lawyer like his godfather, Francisco A. Rodriguez, who contributed to the integration of Florida State University in Tallahassee as well as the University of Florida College of Law in Gainesville. In Tampa, Griñan attended Jesuit High School, where he competed in debate competitions through the Florida Forensics League and National Forensic League. He was expelled from Jesuit High School during his junior year, and enrolled at Henry B. Plant High School instead. There, he participated in theater productions, and graduated in 1969. Griñan also talks about his mother’s political activism, and remembers the death of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Jose Griñan attended the University of South Florida in Tampa, Florida, where he majored in speech and theater. He also became involved in the Black Power movement, and traveled to Washington, D.C. to protest against the Vietnam War and police brutality in May of 1970. As a result of leaving school, Griñan was drafted into the U.S. Army. He temporarily stayed in Washington, D.C. to avoid enlistment, but eventually returned to Florida and was sent to basic training in Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. There, he
was nearly assigned to the infantry, but was saved by a black sergeant who spoke on his behalf. Instead, Griñan was sent to study photography at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico, where he learned the fundamentals of film production and cinematography. In 1975, Griñan completed his military service, and was hired at KTSM-TV in El Paso, Texas. He initially worked as a photographer, and later secured the opportunity to become a reporter.

Jose Griñan worked as a photographer and reporter at KTSM-TV in El Paso, Texas. There, he met KTSM Radio host Howard Fox, who invited him to host news segments on the air. Eventually, Griñan was recruited to become the station’s Saturday morning newsman. Then, Griñan returned to Tampa, Florida, where he worked as a radio host on a country music station and as a newscaster at WLCY-TV. After deciding to focus on television broadcasting, Griñan secured a position at WCKT-TV in Miami, Florida in 1978. He covered the Mariel boatlift, in which thousands of Cuban refugees immigrated to Miami in 1980. That year, he also reported on the civil unrest following the acquittal of the police officers who killed Arthur McDuffie. In 1982, Griñan moved to Stamford, Connecticut to work for the ‘Crimewatch Tonight’ program on the Satellite News Channel. After the program ended, he returned to Miami and opened a public relations firm, where he wrote and produced a short film in support of the Miami boycott.

Jose Griñan worked as a reporter on WCKT-TV in Miami, Florida during the height of the drug war. As thousands of Cuban refugees came to Miami around 1980, many of them struggled to find work and became involved in the cocaine trade, resulting in numerous arrests. After Cuban prisoners were threatened with deportation in 1987, the inmates at the Federal Correctional Institution in Oakdale, Louisiana succeeded in taking control of the facility. Griñan helped connect the inmates with Bishop Agustin
Griñan helped connect the inmates with Bishop Agustin Roman, who ultimately negotiated a peaceful settlement. In 1991, Griñan later went to work for KDFW-TV in Dallas, Texas. There, he reported on the Luby’s Cafeteria massacre and the Branch Davidian siege in Waco, Texas. In 1993, Griñan attended a convention of the National Association of Black Journalists in Houston, Texas. With the help of his assistant station manager from KDFW-TV, he secured a position at KRIV-TV, the FOX affiliated station in Houston, Texas.

Video Oral History Interview with Jose Griñan, Section A2014_132_001_007, TRT: 7:32:48 2014/05/08

Jose Griñan secured a position at KRIV-TV in Houston, Texas while attending a National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) convention. He continued working with NABJ throughout his career, and was also a member of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists. He took part in the inaugural convention of UNITY: Journalists for Diversity, which was an alliance between the four major organizations for journalists of color. In 2008, Griñan saved a woman from a burning car that was moments from explosion. He later wrote and reported on the incident for KRIV-TV. That year, he also covered Hurricane Ike, which hit Houston and Galveston, Texas. In 2010, Griñan suffered a stroke, and returned to work after one week of rehabilitation. At this point in the interview, Griñan remembers covering the Rodney King riots in Los Angeles, California, and reflects upon his career as a journalist. He also talks about the aftermath of saving someone’s life, and how individuals respond to tragedy.

Video Oral History Interview with Jose Griñan, Section A2014_132_001_008, TRT: 8:30:56 2014/05/08

Jose Griñan served as a news anchor at KRIV-TV in Houston, Texas for over twenty years. At this point in the interview, Griñan talks about the importance of community relationships for local broadcasters, and describes how he built his reputation in Houston by visiting schools, churches and attending community events. While at KRIV-TV, he hosted his own public affairs programs, ‘Hola Houston’ and ‘The Black Voice,’ and had the opportunity to interview Minister Louis Farrakhan. Griñan describes his hopes and concerns for
the African American community, and talks about the importance of vocational education. He also shares his plans for retirement, and talks about his family, including his two daughters and his wife, Kathryn Griffin Griñan, who operated a counseling service for sex trafficking victims. Griñan concludes the interview by reflecting upon his life, legacy and how he would like to be remembered.