

GROWING UP IN SOUTH CENTRAL

Lupe Romero profiled by **Malcolm Clayborne, Laura Duran, & Mariana Padilla**

Lupe Romero was born Guadalajara, Jalisco Mexico on January 16, 1986. Lupe migrated to the United States with his family when he was two years old. Lupe's parents started off in Maywood and worked their way up to South Central while Lupe and his siblings were growing up. Lupe only remembers living at 82nd and San Pedro. He saw a lot of gang violence in his neighborhood to the point it wasn't safe at certain hours but his brothers made him feel like he was protected.

Lupe at first grew up in a one bedroom apartment with a living room. In the one bedroom apartment, he lived with three families. Everyone tried to sleep where they could. He was taught that family always comes first. He felt it was a happy environment in his neighborhood when he saw kids playing in the street. He used to hang out with 50 plus people and he used to play with them and with his brothers, so he had a fun childhood. The only problem was gang violence. It came to a point where his parents ended up moving because they didn't want him or his siblings to join a gang. Lupe saw his older brother as a role model, him and his other brother followed in his footsteps of not joining gangs and staying in school.

In the book *South Central Dreams*, the authors Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo & Manuel Pastor states, "As for Black-Brown relations, the first wave of Latino immigrants generally had limited contact with African Americans" and "Latino contact with African American neighbors are not today confined to only fleeting magnified moments but now also involve more regular, sustained institutional contact."

Lupe thinks South Central's greatest strengths are the people he said " Oh, I see African Americans on one side, I see Hispanics and another side No, you can see that it's United now. Back then, and we can see the separation, separation between Latinos and African Americans, because you can feel that the, it was kinda like, back then you could feel the tension between Latinos and Hispanics or Latinos and African Americans. Now, it seems a little different. I think the times have changed."

When Lupe sees South Central, he sees unity within different races. He doesn't see as many gang members around anymore as he used to--that people are starting to get tired and there is less action. When Lupe was sixteen years old he went to Locke High School which was a good experience for him. He did very well while he was in High School he got all straight A's. He was very into sports and the sports he did were football, track and field, and weight training. His main sport was football. He really liked sports because he felt there was unity. Sports were the only thing that kept him busy. When people think of someone who grew up somewhere where there's a lot of violence and gangs they will end up in the wrong path but Lupe didn't.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Malcolm Clayborne



My name is Malcolm Clayborne I am 16 years old and was born July 30th, 2006. My family came to South Central 50+ years ago from Mississippi. My granny had eight kids to raise and she wanted a better living environment so she came to Los Angeles. She moved around from house to house all over until she finally settled and her

kids got older and moved out. I have been in South Central for 16 years. My interviewee expressed how he was a student athlete to the core and managed to balance sports and straight A's stood out to me. I can relate to being a student athlete and growing up in an environment with gang violence. I learned perseverance from Lupe's story and how strong he is.

South Central greatest strengths to me are how the community is able to come together and the culture being expressed in different areas. I hope South Central stays strong and gets stronger and doesn't become more oppressed than it already is. I hope that I can become successful and give back to my community.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Laura Duran



I am Laura Duran. My family came to South Central about 15+ years ago, we moved from an apartment and my grandparents bought the house we currently live in now. Something that stood out to me was that Lupe played so many sports and on top of that kept his good grades. I can relate to when he said that the neighborhood he lived in

wasn't safe at certain hours, I've lived in neighborhoods like where it's just dangerous to be outside at night. I agree with what Lupe said that South Central's biggest strength is its unity, I see it a lot. We support each in many different ways, helping local stores, donating things that are needed. I hope that South Central keeps becoming a better place, and doesn't stop supporting its community. I hope that I can find my passion. My plan for now is to maybe go to college and study criminal justice and become a 911 dispatcher.

Mariana Padilla

My name is Mariana Padilla and I have been in South Central almost all my life. I was born and grew up in Lincoln Heights. Then we moved to South Central when I was 9 years old and I have lived here ever since. I hope South Central gets better. I hope I get out of South Central and move back to Lincoln Heights and go to college. My plans are going to college and getting a job.
