

Bernard De La Garza, Aug. 2, 2023.mp3

Speaker 1 [00:00:00] Tell us about where we're at right now Bernard. If you can. Make a left right here?

Bernard de la Garza [00:00:03] Yeah, make left right here. So we are at the old stomping grounds. More specifically, we're visiting the, where I lived, when I lived with my brother, off of 14th and I Street. (Make another left here). And so this house, you know, my brother bought this house. I started living with them and sold it. I don't even think we're going to be able to go see the house if the road is closed?

Speaker 1 [00:00:40] Does look closed right now.

Bernard de la Garza [00:00:42] Go this way. No we're going to be able to see it. To the point, right? Is that the house no longer exists. This house was wiped off the face of this Earth because BNSF bought it out and removed and destroyed it. And so this is an empty plot. I think actually, last time I was driving on the freeway, I always look over to that, to the plot, and I think it's storing like the cement cylinders. And uh.

Speaker 1 [00:01:13] When was the last time you drove by that? Do you remember?

Bernard de la Garza [00:01:17] Like off the freeway?

Bernard de la Garza [00:01:19] Yeah.

Bernard de la Garza [00:01:20] I think, like a few days ago.

Speaker 1 [00:01:22] Okay.

Bernard de la Garza [00:01:22] These cylinders are right next to the neighboring property. So when they open their windows, that's what they're seeing. This whole lot and all of this space and these cylinders are closest to the only windows and the only doors and to to a neighboring property. And so we're pulling up now, and it's fenced off but is at the end. And some of these homes are still here. And.

Speaker 1 [00:01:50] I do remember this area. And it's kind of amazing to see now what it's become. Wow. If you want to get out real quick?

Bernard de la Garza [00:02:00] Sure.

Speaker 1 [00:02:02] Imma just gonna park up to this real quick. Like park along this. So we can just leave. You know what I mean?

Bernard de la Garza [00:02:06] Yeah.

Speaker 1 [00:02:06] Just back up real quick. But, if you don't mind me asking, how does it feel to be here right now seeing this?

Bernard de la Garza [00:02:16] It breaks my heart. It's challenging, right? It's It's difficult. I remember when I first saw this home being purchased by BNSF, and it was like abandoned, boarded up, outgrown. It just didn't look like the home that my brother purchased.

Speaker 1 [00:02:37] Going to pause real quick.

Speaker 1 [00:02:40] Yeah. So you're saying like this breaks your heart?

Bernard de la Garza [00:02:44] Yeah. This is definitely heartbreaking to watch this community wiped off the face of the Earth, and I know that sounds dramatic, but that's how I feel seeing this home no longer exist.

Speaker 1 [00:02:59] Well, it's kind of a... that's not far fetched because it's kind of literally the case. I mean, you literally have what do you call this? Like...

Bernard de la Garza [00:03:08] These large industrial cement cylinders are the only way I describe them.

Speaker 1 [00:03:15] Yeah, that's a good description.

Bernard de la Garza [00:03:16] Thank you.

Speaker 1 [00:03:18] I mean, that's that's what we're looking at. I'm assuming this is going to be a part of what BNSF going to be using for, pavement or whatever, whatever this is. And yeah, I mean it's it's crazy. So together it's unbelievable because, I mean, you there's literally property here now.

Bernard de la Garza [00:03:38] And so we are currently on 14th Street, and we are facing north towards the mountains. Right. And so my room was actually the one that we would be looking at, which was on this side of, of the, of the of the city, of the property. It had two palm trees, and I always wanted to hang a hammock there. I never was able to get to do that. But it was really cool because I was able to kind of, like, not have to see the trains outside my window. I felt like that was something I was very lucky for. That wasn't my brothers, who, like, opened the window, bam! Trains. Unless they were, like, parked right there. Right? And so their window was facing east. And if we look east, we're looking at like these train tracks. We're looking at these BNSF trains. Cargo. Yeah. Freight.

Speaker 1 [00:04:38] J.B. Hunt intermodal and crime plastered on them.

Bernard de la Garza [00:04:42] Yes. And so.

Speaker 1 [00:04:44] Slowing down and you know that. That's a common sandwich. You hear that all the time. Like the brakes?

Bernard de la Garza [00:04:50] Yes.

Speaker 1 [00:04:51] They're going down.

Bernard de la Garza [00:04:51] So the brakes screeching all the time I would hear, so BNSF used to like, the I Street no longer exists. Right? That's the cross street. And security would always come through with hug, like blinding lights. And those would wake us up throughout the night. We, so the property line was, I would say, like three yards away from where the trains would sit. So one yard being that, like, gravel. And then I would say two yards being the street. And then the street wasn't very wide. It was, it was, it was a more narrow street. Right. And the next one would be boom, the entrance to the property.

And, you know, that's every day you wake up and that's the first thing you see. And it's it's a reason I'm leaving the house.

Speaker 1 [00:05:49] So the view looking east isn't much different because it's still cargo. It's the the freeway in the backdrop. But what did change is immediately what's in what's in front of us now, which is this plot of land. To your point, there was a street that would turn.

Bernard de la Garza [00:06:06] Yes.

Speaker 1 [00:06:06] And then. Yeah.

Bernard de la Garza [00:06:07] So there was a street, there was sidewalk, there was trees, both on property and on the city. There was like these bushes. It was nice. And now we're looking at like dirt pavement. Gone. Concrete. Gone. Street. The I Street sign gone. I don't know if I Street is going to exist for this portion of the block anymore. But, my brother and I, we would always have friends over. Family over. We hosted people all the time. And so, we were not allowed to park our cars on I Street. We had our park them all right here on 14th.

Speaker 1 [00:06:49] Interesting.

Speaker 1 [00:06:50] Yeah. Super interesting. Very unfortunate because we had hosted people all the time.

Bernard de la Garza [00:06:55] And they also put like a barrier that's no longer here. So we're looking at this little piece of white barrier in the middle. And that would be all across. And now it's not there anymore. And I'm looking for it.

Speaker 1 [00:07:12] That's so unfortunate. You also. So now that, now that the train has gone further south, back to the intermodal yard, we have a shot of San Bernardino High School. You can see the SBHS in the backdrop. That's interesting. And from this point of view, I never noticed that being here before in this area. Was that always the case that you'd be able to see it still right?

Bernard de la Garza [00:07:36] Yeah. Yeah, yeah. We always had a view of SBHS once trains were gone. Yeah.

Speaker 1 [00:07:45] Wow. Let's walk over here. Wow, that's crazy man. Because, yeah, I mean, I've been here a few times, and I remember, I remember even parking in your driveway a few times, I think. Y'all's driveway. (PAUSE/Background noise) We're going to take a photo.

Bernard de la Garza [00:08:28] We used to climb that structure all the time.

Speaker 1 [00:08:30] Which one?

Bernard de la Garza [00:08:31] The light structure right there.

Speaker 1 [00:08:32] Oh this one?

Bernard de la Garza [00:08:34] Yeah. And those fences were up when we were still living here.

Speaker 1 [00:08:52] These right here?

Bernard de la Garza [00:08:52] Yeah. I would, take home. I would drive all the way up and then come here so I could just turn the crank and then park right there.

Speaker 1 [00:09:02] Oh, okay.

Bernard de la Garza [00:09:03] But they got, That property was one of the first to go.

Speaker 1 [00:09:05] That property over where the gate's at?

Bernard de la Garza [00:09:07] Yeah, in between the gates. And those fences came up, and so I didn't know then what I know now, right?

Speaker 1 [00:09:15] Yeah. That's another thing, Bernard, if you don't mind sharing, like. When did you first learn about BNSF and them wanting to expand in this area?

Bernard de la Garza [00:09:33] You know, I didn't understand what was happening when neighboring homes were abandoned, right? Because it was boarded up, overgrown. It was just abandoned. And then, in the following months, it was just big plots of land, and it was like a checkerboard. Every other house was standing, and every other house was a flat plot of land or abandoned home. And I did not understand why until, I would say about 2019. I think that's when I realized, and that's I saw my brother's home abandoned. And that's when I drove by and realized, oh, oh my God, that's, what! Oh my goodness! And a few months later, it was like the rest of them, gone. It was an empty plot of land.

Speaker 1 [00:10:26] And this was, how long ago, like, was this 2020 and 2019? Like when.

Bernard de la Garza [00:10:31] I think this was like February 2020 or February 2021.

Speaker 1 [00:10:35] So right before the pandemic.

Bernard de la Garza [00:10:35] I think so.

Speaker 1 [00:10:38] Yeah.

Bernard de la Garza [00:10:39] Yeah.

Speaker 1 [00:10:41] Yeah. Wow. And like. Okay. So you're saying. You noticed. You just noticed that it was gone?

Bernard de la Garza [00:10:51] Yeah. And these are like, you know, families that we kind of known. We've kind of like, you know, I'm not saying that we were like at each other's house every day 24/7, but we'd always say hi. We'd always, we knew what car should've been in the area. What car wasn't in the area. Hey, I got your package. Let me grab it for you. I don't want to leave it on the street. Like, you know, this was a community. And slowly but surely, it kind of got, you know, removed or wiped.

Speaker 1 [00:11:22] That's what it looks like. It's an encroachment for sure, at the very least. Right?

Bernard de la Garza [00:11:26] Even more so for this, this the, the the homes that still are here.

Speaker 1 [00:11:31] Right.

Bernard de la Garza [00:11:31] Right. Because there's this one who no longer has a street anymore that did when I lived here. One of the homes that was just kind of in the worst like conditions, was purchased, and they fixed it up really nice. And now they have these, like, cylinder, industrial sized concrete, cylinders, like, just facing them.

Speaker 1 [00:12:00] Yeah. What is this for, I wonder? Because I really don't know.

Bernard de la Garza [00:12:03] Yeah, I don't know either. I don't have any understanding. These things are huge.

Speaker 1 [00:12:07] We should find out though, for sure. Right?

Bernard de la Garza [00:12:09] Yeah.

Speaker 1 [00:12:10] At least I, I'm probably going to.

Bernard de la Garza [00:12:12] And so I wonder if the folks that still live here were like, told, hey, we're storing this, right. Or like, hey, we are moving these in. Because we never got the courtesy when we were living here of any kind of actions that were taking place when they built that barrier wall against the train tracks, the, that barrier, we we just woke up one day, and it was there, and it wasn't the day before.

Speaker 1 [00:12:37] Yeah, well, it seems lack of consideration is the pattern here.

Bernard de la Garza [00:12:44] Yes. Lack of consideration, lack of communication. There's a detour sign that's kind of a slap in the face because it's all fenced away. I go.

Speaker 1 [00:12:54] Yeah. Maybe for construction workers, I guess. But.

Bernard de la Garza [00:12:57] Well, I'm not sure.

Speaker 1 [00:13:00] Maybe BNSF workers, but, yeah, I mean.

Bernard de la Garza [00:13:02] And so this was like, where we would walk our dog, where we would, like, run. I remember my brother and I would try to race each other because he's sore, and we're very lucky that a friend of ours lived a few blocks away. So we would just walk over and then walk home because he was so close, and that, that's gone. All that is gone. And it's sad to think that the home is just it lives in the memories. Right. And the stories that I get to tell.

Speaker 1 [00:13:35] How long did you live here?

Bernard de la Garza [00:13:37] So I lived here from the summer of 2015 to the fall of 2017, I believe. My brother bought, purchased the home, I think, in 2012, and I think sold in '19 or '18. I'm not too sure.

Speaker 1 [00:13:57] Yeah. Oh, any. Any other things you want to share? You're Good?

Bernard de la Garza [00:14:06] I'm just heartbroken. I don't know if I could describe the flood of sadness that I'm feeling because this home did so much for my family and now it's empty. Now there's nothing here, and it breaks my heart. I don't have anything.

Speaker 1 [00:14:25] Thanks Bernard.