

TAPE ARC - 68; TC 2:00:00

**DECISION AT DELANO; 1967; Jack L. Copeland, producer/director;
written by Don Hall; photographed and edited by Fred Roberts**

WORKER'S WIFE (?) talks through fence to picketers:

02:00:35 My children are not safe on the streets with you people here. They have been kicked from behind. And if there were just a few more women like me, you people would have never got in town. It first started they told my husband to quit working, but he's a man, he's got a good mind. I feel sorry for every one of you. Really. I could bleed for you.

02:01:02 TEENAGE BOY PICKETER: ...not just Delano, all, in all the countries of the United States, not just Delano, we're fighting for everybody.

02:01:11 WOMAN: But do you know what I see, young children like you, I get sick to my stomach, to think of what you're gonna be. So my children are going to go to college and be psychiatrists, we'll be rich off of you poor people.

CESAR CHAVEZ at UFW meeting:

02:04:09 CHAVEZ: ...reports that uh, we have a lot of pork and beans, and when we get out of pork and beans, we have a lot of soup. He says that generally we don't have much of anything else, and that was the extent of his report. As you know we're low on food, and we're always trying to get our friends around the state to help us with food, and we'll continue to do the same, and we'll have to uh,

those of you who write to your friends out of the area, always mention food. We can say this: clothing - no; food - si.

CESAR CHAVEZ interviewed:

02:04:50 REPORTER: Cesar, why is the labor movement interested in organizing the agricultural workers here?

02:04:56 CESAR: Well, we've seen that uh, any kind of legislation that is needed it never usually is given to the people, only the people become involved and extract the legislation. We have I think the same problem that the people in the civil rights movement had, or the Negro had for many years. They always gave them token legislation. It wasn't until they really went out and started organizing and created the movement in the South that they, the government came across with meaningful legislation. Similarly here, we are not going to get legislation until the government sees that people are really involved and that they are agitating for it, and making demands. And we are going to make those demands.

2:05:49 CESAR: We don't have a right to petition the government to hold an election to determine whether the workers wish to be represented by whatever union claims to represent them. Coverage under the National Labor Relations act is what made most of the unions as we know them today in America, uh, covered by this law, so it's pretty much the law of the jungle out in the fields at this point.

JACK PANDOL, grower:

02:06:13 PANDOL: These men are extremely happy, if they wouldn't, uh, weren't, they would not be coming here from other states, coming here from Puerto Rico and all over from the state of California to this area for this purpose, for working here. All I can say is that the men have to be the judges of their own, what they want, and these men have chosen this type of work, just like farming. Anybody will tell you the farmer has taken the poorest of economics, but yet this is my choice, so the same with these workers. They have chosen this way of life and if they were not happy they would not be here. We think that we have tried to better their lot by some of the actions that we've done in this area, and by higher wages, which is the highest in the United States, by the way.

BRUNO DISPOTO, grower:

02:06:53 DISPOTO: ...I want to bring out that we furnish complete housing facilities for the men who work for us, and this is a cost that is born by the grower, plus a full time cook, and transportation to and from the job and all utilities. And he is permitted to stay in the camp all year round whether he is working or not, I mean he is working for us, but whether he is working or not, he still maintains his occupancy in the area.

02:07:20 REPORTER: Would you say that most of your workers are making a decent living?

02:07:24 DISPOTO: Well we haven't heard any complaints from the workers stating that they weren't earning a decent living. Our general uh, application of

determining wages in this area has been direct with the workers. Uh, over the past uh five or six years we've had an increase of approximately 40%.

02:07:41 REPORTER: Could you afford to pay higher wages?

02:07:44 DISPOTO: Well when you say afford higher wages, everything of course reflects itself on the market of our sales, and there's no way of determining whether we can guarantee prices comparable to last year or comparable to two years ago, we have to take the market as it comes.

02:08:02 PANDOL: We can not have minimum wage where in Florida for example it's 60 or 70 cents, and we pay a dollar and a half. But if other places are paying equal to what we're paying, California has gone on record, and I for one am not opposed to a national, uniform minimum wage. As long as I have to sell my product and protect it by United States government so that these imports do not interfere with what I'm able to pay.

02:08:27 REPORTER: Then why not agree to secret elections to prove your point once and for all?

02:08:31 DISPOTO: Well, when they consider election, our workers have sought to stay with us, and continue work, without any interest for this outside organizing, and there was never any consideration for an election. And the workers, I mean by their actions, staying with us, have proved this.

EL TEATRO CAMPESINO skit:

02:09:07 VALDEZ as Contratista: You know I work too, yeah... no seriously, let's talk English, no, we're in American, let's talk English. ...I bring an old friend of mine, and old friend of mine, eh? No, no, no, you'll never work for me again. You'll never work for me again. I know you. I know you. Yeah, take his picture, I know him.

02:09:36 PATRONCITO: How are you doing there boy?

02:09:37 CONTRATISTA: Hello Jack, how are you? ... No, please, please, this is my friend, eh? Please. ...Now, he comes to tell you the truth, he comes to tell you the truth about this strike.

02:09:52 PATRONCITO: I come here to tell you the truth, I come here to tell you the truth about the strike. There is no strike. And I brought with me a worker to tell you. Look, I love you all Mexican people, I love you.

02:10:16 PATRONCITO: Look at him, huh, is he a fine specimen? ...Yeah you ought to see the camp where he lives, it's clean, and he gets three meals a day, three squares a day, it's good stuff, whatever I feed them, and besides I love them.... Now you just shut up boy (to audience member) Now you just shut up. Look, let me tall ...I know what's good for you, I know what's good for all you people. That's why I want to tell you right now, that there is no strike... No, there ain't no strike, there ain't never been no strike.

WHITE FARM WORKER WOMAN speaks to press:

02:11:24 Well you cannot put a contract on what nature will provide from one year to the next, we have to take our luck with the grower if we are to make a living and be honest people and not beg for what we get. We have to hold our heads up.

HISPANIC FARM WORKER MAN speaks to press:

02:11:44 REPORTER: Mr. Pina, how much do you earn a year?

02:11:48 PINA: About \$2,500 a year, you know.

02:11:50 REPORTER: Do you have any money in the bank.

02:11:53 PINA: None.

02:11:54 REPORTER: Do you own any property?

02:11:55 PINA: No.

02:11:57 REPORTER: How much education have you had?

02:11:59 PINA: None.

02:12:01 REPORTER: Never been to school?

02:12:02 PINA: Oh, a few years, that's all.

02:12:04 REPORTER: Can you read?

02:12:06 PINA: Not too good, no.

HISPANIC WOMAN FARM WORKER:

02:12:09 REPORTER: How much have you been getting for a days work?

02:12:10 WOMAN: Only \$2.

02:12:13 REPORTER: Two dollars a day?

02:12:14 WOMAN: Yes.

02:12:15 REPORTER: You have a little boy. Would you like him to be a farm worker?

02:12:18 WOMAN: No sir, I'd like him to get the best of his opportunities, get the best he could. Because I've been working all my life in the fields, and I don't think it'd be the best place for him. I'd like for him to get a good education.

02:12:30 REPORTER: Do you think he's going to get a good education?

02:12:32 WOMAN: Well, if I can provide it. If I can make a good living for myself and him, and get him a good schooling, I think maybe I could make it.

02:12:42 REPORTER: Does he have a good chance now for a good education?

02:12:45 WOMAN: Not the way the growers have been doing it, paying too, not paying enough, because as I said I was working 2 cents a vine, and I didn't make enough to pay for his milk. And he's only 3 months old. And so I had to join the strike. That helped, they helped me out, and I think if we win it I could make a little more money and I could give him a good education.

FILIPINO FARM WORKER MAN:

02:13:06 REPORTER: Do you think your employers have been fair with you?

02:13:10 WORKER: Well, in my behalf, yes, but in general not so good.

02:13:18 REPORTER: Do you own any property?

02:13:20 WORKER: Just a car, just a car.

CESAR CHAVEZ interviewed:

02:16:13 Notably the United Auto Workers, Mr. Reuther came here in December and made a very large contribution to us, which amounts to \$5,000 a month which is split between the two unions. And then we're picking up support mostly from individual Locals, and I think as time progresses we see that more and

more of them are getting interested on the strike. Of course our big support still is, and always has been since the beginning from the church groups.

CHURCH MEMBER:

2:16:41 We discussed this, in different organizations in the church, and are quite concerned, some of us are already involved in our own way, in San Jose, with migrant groups. And we knew there were some things that had been collected, and this is why we brought this stuff down. And we also wanted to see the situation.

ROBERT KENNEDY:

02:17:34 ...and we have to do something about it. And it's not just a question of wages, it's a question of housing, its a question of education, it's a question of living conditions, it's a basic question of hope for the future, and that's what this committee is dedicated to try to do something about. We're going to try to improve not just your lives, but more importantly, the lives of your children.

CLIFFORD LOANER, Delano Mayor:

02:19:12 I think one of the fortunate thing is that there has been very little violence, and this is to the credit of all people taking part, both the people striking, the farmers, and the citizens generally. I would say too that we do have an excellent police department, and they have done a very fine job, and they've been neutral and fair to everybody.

Kern County Sheriff testifying before Senate Subcommittee:

02:19:34 SHERIFF: Well, if I have reason to believe that there is going to be a riot started and somebody tells me that there's going to be trouble if you don't stop 'em, then it's my duty to stop 'em.

02:19:43 R. KENNEDY: And then you go out and arrest them?

02:19:45 SHERIFF: Absolutely.

02:19:46 R. KENNEDY: And charge them?

02:19:47 SHERIFF: Charge 'em.

02:19:48 R. KENNEDY: What do you charge them with?

02:19:49 SHERIFF: Well, a violation of, unlawful assembly.

02:19:54 R. KENNEDY: I think that's a most interesting move. Who told you that they were going to riot?

02:19:57 SHERIFF: The men right in the field that they were talking to, say if you don't get 'em out of here we're going to cut their hearts out. So rather than let them get cut, you remove the cause. (smiles) [clamor from audience]

02:20:14 SHERIFF: You don't find no police brutality here. You've had nobody say that we beat anybody. This is not Selma, Alabama...

02:20:23 R. KENNEDY: Senator, could I finish my questioning here? I'm saying this is the most interesting concept I think, [ON CAMERA] suddenly you here talk about, that somebody makes a report about somebody's going to get out of order, perhaps violate the law, and you go in and arrest them and they haven't done anything wrong. How can you go arrest somebody if they haven't violated the law?

02:20:43 SHERIFF: They were ready to violate the law, in other words, [laughter among Senators] ...

02:20:57 R. KENNEDY: Could I suggest that, could I suggest in the interim period of time, in the luncheon period of time, that the Sheriff and the District Attorney read the Constitution of the United States?

JIM DRAKE interviewed by reporter:

02:21:11 REPORTER: What is the attitude of the local church toward this?

02:21:15 DRAKE: Uh, it varies. There's a priest in town who has been close to the workers and is not opposed to the strike, there is a minister in McFarland who is very close to some of the workers and has communicated with them and uh understands what the issue is about. On the other hand, there is a uh, uh, minister in Delano who I just classify as an out and out strike breaker.

REV. EDGAR MANHERZ:

02:21:47 MANHERZ: We feel that the Migrant Ministers out not to be giving their time to organizing labor. We feel that they ought not to be out on the picket line, harassing the good workers, and calling them all sorts of names, and using such language as is contained in Jack London's definition of a strike breaker. Uh, we feel that they should exemplify love, and not hate. We feel that they should help these Latin - American people to speak English, which is a tremendous handicap and barrier for their advancement. We feel that they should give initiative to these strikers to work, and make something of themselves.

02:22:29 DRAKE: The role of the Church is to be the extension of uh, the ministry of Jesus, who is the Christ, and Jesus was about the business of ministering to the poor, and being where the poor were, and he didn't pull back, wherever he got involved with the poor he was very much there.

02:22:45 MANHERZ: Jesus said the poor ye have with ye always, because he knew that right straight down through the centuries there would be a certain percentage of people who are poor because they just don't want to work. And so we wonder just what kind of people these are that are out on strike.

02:23:01 DRAKE: The church doesn't necessarily have to be afraid of uh, conflict or tension, because that's just a part of life, that's part of the world. The reason uh, we're here is because these people happen to be excluded from the most basic legislation that covers other people. They are excluded from NLRB, National Labor Relations Act, they're excluded from Unemployment Insurance, they're excluded from minimum wage, and they only get partial social security. Uh, people who are excluded suffer, and the church is going to be where people suffer, and that's why they've asked me to be here.

02:23:34 REPORTER: Do you think there is any clear cut moral issue involved in this dispute?

02:23:39 MANHERZ: No.

02:23:40 REPORTER: You see there is some good on both sides in this difference?

02:23:49 MANHERZ: Uh, there would have to be or their wouldn't be any issue here at all if there weren't some. We feel though that it is the procedure that uh is the wrong way to meet the needs of these agricultural workers.

02:24:26 DRAKE: There is no such thing as a clear-cut moral issue. Um, there are shades of gray. I wish that it were clear-cut. For instance I've made mistakes since I've been here, and I'm willing to admit them. I think that, however, there is a basic moral issue of whether or not people who organize themselves and come before growers asking for collective bargaining agreements should be recognized. The government agrees with this, however certain lobbyists have been able to keep farm workers excluded from this right. As long as farm workers are excluded from collective bargaining legislation I think it's a moral issue.

