

Si, Se Puede! The Life of Dolores Huerta
A Podcast Radio Drama

1. Introduction by Mr. Mannal

"South Pasadena Unified School District presents, an Arroyo Vista Elementary School production, Si, Se Puede! The Life of Dolores Huerta, written and produced by Chris Mannal and performed by the students of Mr. Fiedler's/Mrs. Haines'/Gresham's/Reed's 4th grade class."

3. Narrator (Spanish)

"Dolores Huerta es absolutamente intrepida, fisica y emocionalmente. Cesar Chavez."

4. Narrator (English)

"Dolores Huerta is absolutely fearless, physically and emotionally. Cesar Chavez."

6. Title Card Narrator

"Our story begins in Stockton, California 1942, with an example of one woman's kindness and goodwill..."

8. Mother

"Are you sure this woman at the motel will help us Papi? *No tenemos dinero.* We have no money."

9. Daughter

"Tengo tapta hambre... I'm so hungry, we haven't eaten since the morning. My stomach hurts mama, all this walking..."

10. Son

"Yo tambien. Me too. I can't keep walking Papa, *estoy cansado.* I'm tired. Let us sleep in the fields, no one will notice."

11. Niece

"This woman you speak of will not help us Papi, no one ever has. We will have to help ourselves."

12. Father

"Paciencia ninos... Patience children. I have heard from others that this woman Alice Chavez is kind, *ella nos ayudara,* she will help us, have faith."

14. Alice Chavez

"Ah, Buenos Noches..."

15. Father

"*Buenas noches Senora, senorita.* I am Juan Gomez, this is my wife Leticia, my children Yolanda and Miguel, my niece Maria. We are simple farm workers. The local owner refuses to pay us until we have worked for one full month, and while we have been working for three weeks, we have no more money from our last job. *Por favor*, do you have a bed for my wife and children? I will pay you back, it's just--"

16. Alice Chavez

(Interrupting) "Of course Señor. *Tenemos una cama para todos ustedes.* We have a bed for all of you. There is also some food inside. Please come in, *por favor ven en.* You must be starving..."

17. Father

"Ahh bless you Señora Chavez, *gracias...*"

18. Mother

"*Gracias Señora...*"

19. Niece

"Thank you so much!"

20. Son

"God bless you Señora..."

21. Daughter

"*Dios te bendiga.*"

23. Little Dolores

"Mama, they said they had no money. How will they pay you?"

24. Alice Chavez

"*No te preocupes miya.* It's no problem Dolores my sweetheart. Money is not important when you can afford to give."

25. Little Dolores

"But they are strangers, they could be criminals, why should we help them?"

26. Alice Chavez

"Criminals? An empty pocket and hungry stomach does not make you a criminal! Dolores, my mother, your *Abuela* used to say -- When you see that something needs to be done, especially someone needs help, you have to help them. And don't expect any reward for what you've done because what you're doing is a reward in itself. And if you expect a reward, then you take away the grace."

27. Little Dolores

"Yes Mama."

28. Alice Chavez

"*Bueno, mi amor*. Good my love. Now off to bed with you. Tomorrow is school, and you will show them how smart you are, *mi nina apasionada*, my little 'PassionFlower'."

30. Little Dolores

"When I got into high school, it was really segregated. There were the real rich and the real poor. I later realized we were poor too and I got hit with a lot of racial discrimination."

32. Miss Spector

"Dolores -- may I have a word please?"

33. Dolores

"Yes of course Miss Spector."

34. Miss Spector

"This essay you turned in -- did you write it? Yes or no, be truthful."

35. Dolores

"Yes I wrote it. Is there something wrong?"

36. Miss Spector

"Perhaps. It's good. *Too* good, in fact."

37. Dolores

"Too good? I don't understand. You said to try and make every paper different. I worked hard to do that."

38. Miss Spector

"Is that so... I don't believe you. A little brown girl like

yourself, using such big words, it doesn't feel right."

39. Dolores

"Please ma'am, I didn't cheat, that is my essay. I wrote every word of it. I promise."

40. Miss Spector

"I'm not convinced. Because of this, I'll have to give you a 'C' for the final class grade."

41. Dolores

"A 'C'?!? But I've gotten 'A's all year, in all my work!"

42. Miss Spector

"I'm not so sure it was your work. Now move along before I report my suspicions to the Principal. Dismissed!"

44. Little Dolores

"[When I became a teacher myself], I had students who didn't have proper clothing or shoes because of the poor wages their parents made. They were sick because their family had no health insurance. I thought I could do more by organizing [their parents] than by trying to teach their hungry children."

46. Dolores

"Good morning everyone, *buenas dias*. Today we will be starting with mathematics. *Por favor, abra el libro de matematicas*. Please open your math textbook."

48. Dolores

"Can someone tell me how to divide 10 into 2 equal parts?"

50. Dolores

"*Que es la mitad de diez?* How much is half of ten?"

52. Dolores

"Manny/Maria? *Amigo, estas bien?* Friend, are you alright?"

53. Manny/Maria

"*No Maestra, no me siento bien*. Teacher, I don't feel well."

54. Evelyn/Eduardo

"Maestra, Manny worked all night with his papa, his father, in the

fields. He slept outside I think."

55. Dolores

"Evelyn/Eduardo, take Manny to the school nurse."

56. Evelyn/Eduardo

"Yes Maestra."

58. Dolores

"Alejandro/Adela, Jesus/Jacinta -- where are your shoes? *Ha olvidado sus zapatos?* Did you forget your shoes?"

59. Alejandro/Adela

"No Maestra, both our shoes don't fit anymore. We decide not to wear them, they hurt too much."

60. Jesus/Jacinta

"My mama says we have to wait until she can afford it. She have no money right now, so we have no shoes Maestra."

61. Dolores

"Boy and girls, who has eaten today?"

62. Student

"I had a great breakfast this morning! I had eggs, and toast, and some... oh... sorry... I didn't know I was the only one..."

64. Principal

"Good morning Students, good morning Miss Dolores."

65. Dolores

"Good morning. Principal, may I talk to you? Do you have a moment to speak?"

66. Principal

"What is it this time? Don't tell me the children are hungry again..."

67. Dolores

"The children have no shoes sir. Is there some kind of clothing voucher we can give them?"

68. Principal

"This is a school, not a charity. Their parents drink away their money, that is why these people are poor."

69. Dolores

"These people?!? I've been doing some serious thinking sir and I can't do this anymore."

70. Principal

"Can't do what?"

71. Dolores

"Be a teacher here."

72. Principal

"What? You're a fine teacher, the students seem to love you!"

73. Dolores

"That's not the problem sir. I'm in the wrong place. These boys and girls don't need me, their parents do. The parents can barely take care of their children. They need to be organized, to be more aware of their rights."

74. Principal

"Rights? For farm workers? That will never happen..."

75. Dolores

"We will see about that. I'm leaving sir. Immediately."

76. Principal

"Wait a second, you can't just leave me right now!"

77. Dolores

"I'm sorry, but yes I can. Si, puedo. Yes, I can."

78-1. Title Card Narrator

"Dolores' story moved to the State Capital building, Sacramento, California, in the year 1961."

79. Little Dolores

"I knew nothing about lobbying the day before I began it. CSO, Community Service Organization, just sent me [to Sacramento, to lobby the legislature into passing laws for poor people], paying

us [with] nickels and dimes, and said 'You can do it!'"

80. Dolores

"Excuse me Assemblyman, a moment of your time please?"

81. Assemblyman/woman

"Well hello there, what a pretty little thing you are... Are you a reporter?"

82. Dolores

"No sir, I'm with CSO Stockton, and we'd like your support for disability insurance for farm workers, I'm collecting signatures and if you could--"

83. Assemblyman/woman

"--Wait! You're a lobbyist? For farm workers? Not interested! I've got to get to lunch!"

84. Dolores

"Excuse me Senator, a bill for your needed support, Aid for the Blind?"

85. State Senator

"There's enough help already, it can wait! The blind have plenty of money for now..."

86. Dolores

"*Por favor Senor*, a bill for Spanish versions of government documents and ballots, please sign this petition, *gracias...*"

87. Government Aide

"Leave me alone lady! If you have so much time to bother me, why don't you try learning English instead!"

88. Dolores

"Disability assistance?"

89. Lawyer

"No, now out of my way! I don't have time for this!"

90. Dolores

"Removal of citizen requirements for public assistance?"

91. Judge

"Forget about it! There's better things to do than help immigrants!"

92. Dolores

"Resident Aliens eligible for old age pensions?"

93. Chief of Staff

"Never. Going. To. Happen!"

94. Dolores

"At least that's what they told me. And yet, by the end of 1961, I had helped pass 15 bills through the state legislature. Si puedo!"

96. Little Dolores

"I had heard a lot about [Cesar Chavez] from Fred Ross. Cesar this and Cesar that... and he didn't make much of an impression on me. [But I knew] he was a great organizer, [but] he was very unassuming. So one day, he called me over to his house and said...."

97. Cesar Chavez

"... Thank you for coming over, I know how busy you have been Dolores."

98. Dolores

"Cesar, as you know, the work for equality is never really done."

99. Cesar Chavez

"True. I've been thinking on this for a long time... Farm workers in this country will never have a union, never receive a fair wage for their work, unless you and I start it."

100. Dolores

(small cough) then (silence)

101. Cesar Chavez

"...I think it's time we worked together to make it happen. I've spoken to Fred Ross and he gives his blessing."

(pause)

"You're quiet. You're never quiet. Well, what do you think?"

102. Dolores

"What do I think? What took you so long to ask me?"

104. Cesar Chavez

"We will need to start canvassing the Central Valley right away, you take the north half and I'll take the south half."

105. Dolores

"It will not be easy. The amount of farm workers in this state is enormous, and seasonal."

106. Cesar Chavez

"And the power of the growers is backed by the police, the courts, local and state laws, and the money of big corporations, the banks, even the utilities."

107. Dolores

"Then we better get started Amigo..."

109. Narrator 2

"People tend to forget that the 1960s were the sexist dark ages, even in the Chicano movement... but Dolores was already way out in front. She was a woman, a Mexican American, a Chicana, cutting a swath of revolutionary action across the torpidity of the San Joaquin Valley. Artist Luiz Valdez."

111. Dolores (thru megaphone)

"*Usted tiene derechos!* You have rights! You have rights! If we organize, working conditions can be better!"

112. Farmer

"Back to work! Back to work, don't be lazy and don't be fooled! You don't have to listen to her! Do the work or no pay!"

113. Dolores

"The law allows you to take time off for breaks and lunch! *Organizar!* Organize! *Usted tiene derechos!* You have rights!"

114. Farmer

"Hey! You can't do that! They're just Farm Workers! You can't organize them, these people don't have any rights!"

115. Dolores

"Yes they do, yes I can, and yes we can! *Si se puede!* Yes we can!"
(chanting) *Si se puede! Si se puede! Si se puede!*

116. Farmer

"I won't stand for this any longer, you filthy Communist! Remember, you asked for this! Get them off my farm!"

118. Dolores

"Viva La Causa! Viva La Causa! The Struggle! The Struggle!"

120. Narrator

"As brothers [and sisters] in the fight for equality, I extend the hand of fellowship and good will... the fight for equality must be fought [...] in the urban slums, in the sweat shops, [...] and in the fields. Our separate struggles are really one; a struggle for freedom, for dignity, and for humanity. Martin Luther King, Jr."

121. Title Card Narrator

"The struggle continued with the Delano Grape Strike in March of 1966..."

123. United Farm Worker

"There's blood on those grapes!"

124. Protestors (respond)

"There's blood on those grapes!"

125. Dolores

"There's blood on those grapes!"

126. Protestors (respond)

"There's blood on those grapes!"

127. Cesar Chavez

"There's blood on those grapes!"

128. Protestors (respond)

"There's blood on those grapes! There's blood on those grapes! There's blood on those grapes!"

130. Little Dolores

"Growers dehumanize their workers. Why would you refuse to give workers a toilet? Because if you don't give them a toilet then they're not human beings. Why would you allow workers to be sprayed with pesticides? Growers view farmworkers as tools."

132. State Senator

"Order, order. This meeting of the California Congressional Subcommittee on Migrant Labor shall now resume, Ms. Huerta please continue..."

133. Dolores

"Thank you. We are only asking for equal treatment under the law. These growers, together with the local law enforcement, are infringing on our rights to protest peacefully."

134. Assemblyman/Woman

"Sheriff Leroy Gaylen, your response."

135. Leroy Gaylen

"If you want peace little lady, just go back to picking fruit in the fields and this will all go away."

137. Lawyer

"Mr. Kennedy..."

138. Robert Kennedy

"Sheriff Gaylen, can you explain the reason why you arrested so many picketers on the day in question?"

139. Leroy Gaylen

"If I have reason to believe that there's going to be a riot started, and somebody tells me that there's going to be trouble if you don't stop them, then it's my duty to stop them..."

140. Robert Kennedy

"...And then you go out and arrest them?"

141. Leroy Gaylen

"Absolutely."

142. Robert Kennedy

"How can you go arrest somebody if they haven't violated the law?"

143. Leroy Gaylen

"Well, they're ready to violate the law..."

145. Robert Kennedy

"Can I suggest that in the interim period of time, the luncheon period of time, that the Sheriff and the District Attorney read the Constitution of the United States?"

147. Little Dolores

"A couple of weeks ago, I saw a woman in a tomato field during a school day. She had three of her kids out there with her and when she saw me, she starting apologizing. She said, '*I had to take them out of school because we didn't have enough money to buy groceries.*' They're out there every single day, little kids picking tomatoes, with their hands too small to even cover the tomato.... "

149. Farmer

"These negotiations are a bunch of baloney. And this Dolores Huerta lady here is crazy. She's a violent woman, where women, especially Mexican women, are usually peaceful and pleasant. You can't live wrought up like she does and not be crazy."

150. Dolores

"Insulting me will not end our boycott. This negotiation is about the basic rights of the workers you employ. Access to water, to bathrooms, to be able to eat lunch every day without fear of losing their job."

151. Angry Owner

"But we follow the law and we pay the prevailing wages!"

152. Dolores

"The wages are immoral and you know it. You've pulled rifles on us, beat us with boards, even put me in jail for speaking out!"

153. Farm Worker

"Señora, Que dijo el? Que dijo el?"

154. Dolores

"Dijo que paga un buen salario."

155. Farmer

"Hey, what are you telling him? What's going on here?"

156. Dolores

"My speaking to the workers in Spanish is to keep them apprised at

all times of what is going on in this meeting. If you don't like it, *tapate tus oidos.*"

157. Farmer

"I don't even know what that means!"

158. Farm Owner

"Well I for one am ready for this boycott to be over. We lost the PR battle [gentlemen] and we paid for it. Let's all get back to work. Give me that contract, I'm ready to sign."

159. Dolores

"Can we now end this boycott?"

160. Farm Owner

"Yes we can. Si, se puede."

162. Title Card Narrator

"The White House, Washington, D.C., 2012."

163. President Obama

"...This is the highest civilian honor this country can bestow, [the Presidential Medal of Freedom], which is ironic, because nobody sets out to win it... But that's exactly what makes this award so special. Together, the honorees on this stage, [...] have moved us with their words; they have inspired us with their actions. They've enriched our lives and they've changed our lives for the better..."

"Dolores Clara Fernandez Huerta. One of America's great labor and civil rights icons, Dolores [...] has devoted her life to advocating for marginalized communities. Alongside Cesar Chavez, she co-founded the United Farm Workers of America and fought to secure basic rights for migrant workers and their families, helping save thousands from neglect and abuse. Dolores Huerta has never lost faith in the power of community organizing, and through the Dolores Huerta Foundation, she continues to train and mentor new activists to walk the streets into history.

"Sargeant, the medal please."

164. Marine

"Yes sir Mr. President."

166. Dolores

"Thank you... Every moment is an organizing opportunity, every person a potential activist, every minute a chance to change the world. Si, Se Puede!"

THE END