

As part of our History Keepers Clubs Project, Oscar Rivera and I teamed up to be interviewed by Mike Gilliam for a show called, A Slice of New York. Oscar picked me up and we headed to their studio which is directly across the street from Oscar's second favorite building in New York City... the Empire State Building. I also found out Oscar's favorite building is the Chrysler Building on 42nd Street and Lexington Avenue in an area of the city called, the Turtle Bay neighborhood.

The minute I met Mike, he seemed very familiar to me, and he said, you look very familiar to me as if he had read my mind since I had the same notion. We both thought about it for a short minute, and then Mike quickly decided it would come to us, and we began preparing for our interview. Makeup! Oscar sat in a chair and a woman named Luz started doing his makeup and making him look pretty for the camera... or should I say handsome, as a sweet woman named Laura took pictures of everything that was going on.



Once the interview started, Mike asked us both the same question... why did we write our books? Oscar spoke about the things that inspired him to write his photojournalistic story, as he took himself back, and his mind conjured and turned himself into a teenager. As he spoke what he rendered was as poetic as it was reminiscent of the best and most beautiful stories of his youth, and I shared his powerful sentiments, as I too was transported to the days of our youth through the power of his words.

When it was my turn to answer the same question, I can't recall a time when I gave a more profoundly beautiful response to the same question. I know it was inspired by Oscar's response, as he brought out the best in me, and that in itself is a beautiful thing, and proved we are an extension of one another.

The questions kept coming, as did the detailed responses that came from us both, as though we were in sync with a barrage of memories brought on by nostalgia and love for that which was left behind, but always with us. We both took pride in the facts we presented with fondness of genuine appreciation and love for our cultural upbringing, which brought out the best in us, and Mike who referred to us both as Wise Men forged in the heart of the South Bronx.



Mike Gilliam and producer Linda Simidian

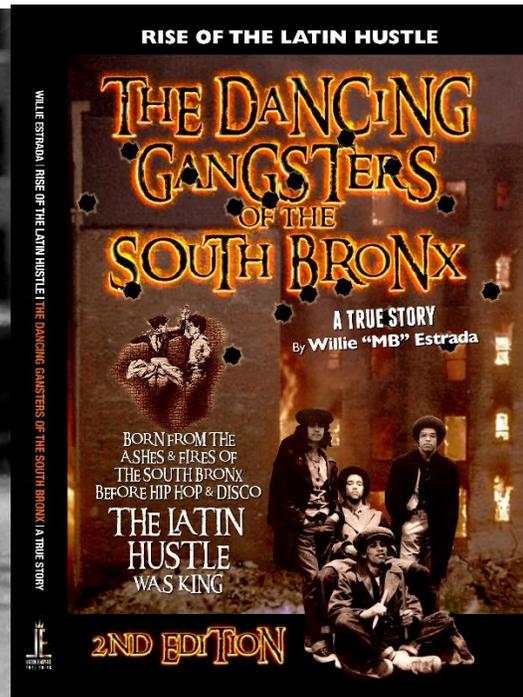
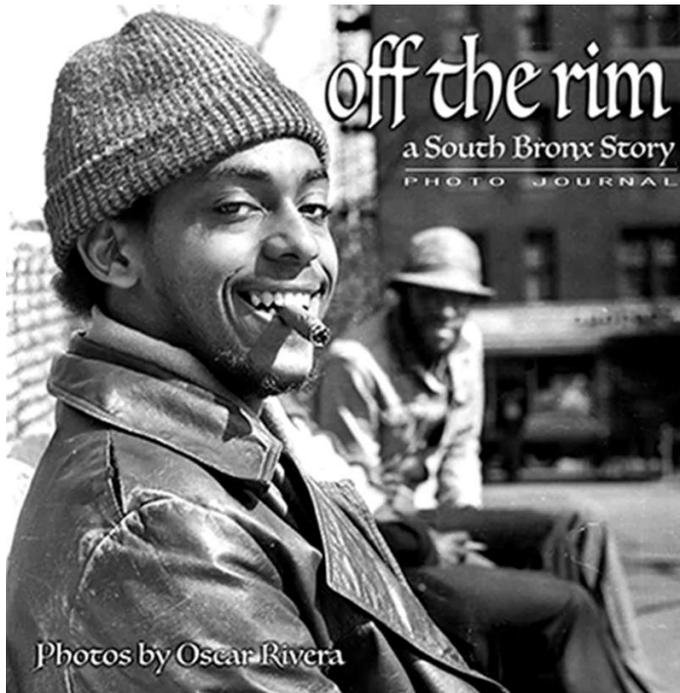
At the end of the interview, Mike and Linda were both very pleased with the job both Oscar and I did on the interview, which had been put together at the last minute because the Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson could not make it. They both said we were great substitutes and couldn't have done a better job had we been paid, I begged to differ with a smile on my face. Just kidding of course, at least for the latter part, but at the end of the day, it was a great honor to sit side by side with my old friend Oscar and speak eloquently about the days of our youth, when we were the Lords of all creation, on the mean streets of the South Bronx, as it burned down all around us, and the gang rumbles in the park were replaced with Football on any given Sunday!



By Willie Estrada - The History Keepers Club

Book: Off The Rim
Author: Oscar Rivera
can be purchased at: offtherimthebook.com
<http://www.oscarsart.com>
cell: 646-334-0682

Book: The Dancing Gangsters of the South Bronx
Author: Willie Estrada
can be purchased at www.thedancinggangsters.com
by clicking on the picture of the book
Email: wilestrada424@gmail.com



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