

## Text 1

NPR's A. Martinez speaks with author Anthony Christian Ocampo about his book *Brown and Gay in LA: The Lives of Immigrant Sons* (2022).

National Public Radio (NPR)

# Anthony Christian Ocampo's latest book is *Brown and Gay in LA*

### Transcript:

**OCAMPO:** If there's one thing that unites children of immigrants, this second-generation group, it's that they know very much from a young age that their parents sacrificed a lot to be here. They moved to a different country – they may not have known anyone – they might have started down and out when they arrived in the United States and then sort of fought their way to a middle-class existence.

5 And I think that because they're aware of these trials and tribulations<sup>1</sup> that their immigrant parents went through, they feel a need to honor that by being their best selves – doing well in school, going to college, getting a good job, potentially supporting them. And I think part of that narrative is also making sure that they can start a family in the way their parents had envisioned<sup>2</sup> it. There's one story that I open the book with, this young man named Franklin Flores. He's a college student. He embodies<sup>3</sup>  
10 an immigrant parent's American dream. He's doing well in school. He was going to go to grad school<sup>4</sup>. But he told me quite often in our conversation, "I'm afraid that me being gay is going to somehow ruin my parents' dreams for us in this country".

**MARTÍNEZ (HOST):** And how often does that happen where parents completely see their own children in a different light after that announcement happens?

15 **OCAMPO:** So I interviewed over 60 young men of Mexican, Filipino, Salvadoran descent, and out of all of them, all but two had experiences coming out that were very difficult. Their parents denied it, rejected them, reacted in ways that were not very supportive, citing *the Bible* as a reason why they can't be gay. And some took them to therapy. Some even took them to conversion therapy<sup>5</sup>. And I think that those were difficult moments because for these young men that finally come to terms with  
20 being gay, that should be a liberating moment. That's an exciting moment. And so to have the people

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<sup>1</sup> *trials and tribulations*: hårde prøvelser

<sup>2</sup> forestillet sig

<sup>3</sup> er indbegrebet af

<sup>4</sup> *grad school*: graduate school, studier efter bachelor-eksamen

<sup>5</sup> *conversion therapy*: omvendelsesterapi

that you would expect would support you most react in the opposite way – it was really traumatic for a lot of folks.

**MARTÍNEZ:** Now, this book in a lot of ways is almost autobiographical for you because you were 22 when you came out to your family. There was one thing in this book that the guy we mentioned  
25 before, Franklin Flores, told you that stood out to me. Can you read what he told you?

**OCAMPO:** Yeah. He said, “I want to have a closer relationship to my mom”. And this was when he was thinking about coming out. He said, “I think there are parts of me I won’t be able to understand until I come out, until I can have conversations with my mom about her relationships or where I can open up  
30 to my mom about what the meaning of love is or how you know that you’re in love. When I can have those conversations with my mom, I think I will better understand my own history.”

**MARTÍNEZ:** So I’m going to throw that question to you then. What were you able to understand better about your own history and about your family once you finally came out?

**OCAMPO:** I’m pausing because it’s bringing me back to that moment 20 years ago, but I think one of the things that I learned is that parents love their kids, and even if they don’t have the language to  
35 express that love, I think my parents found ways to try to relate to me. I remember when I went through my first breakup with someone significant, and there were moments when my mom tried to relate her own dating history to my experience. And, you know, even though she’s not joining PFLAG<sup>6</sup>, which is, like, that organization for parents of gay kids, it really meant a lot that she was willing to share her own story of her first heartbreak. And I think that even if it was a difficult experience for me  
40 to go through that, the silver lining<sup>7</sup> was that I learned a lot more about who my mom was before she was my mom.

(2022)

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<sup>6</sup> Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

<sup>7</sup> *the silver lining*: lyspunktet