

## Changing the System One Lecture at a Time

Gil Zamora, a professor at San Jose State, shares his experience as a retired police officer and sketch artist and what it was like to change the system with how police officers question people in investigations.

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Gil Zamora, a current professor at San Jose State, was a professor at the University of New England during the fall semester where he taught a Forensic Eyewitness class. In this class, Professor Zamora taught his students how to properly interview eyewitnesses, suspects, and victims during investigations.

Through this, he brought in officers to do “interrogations” to the students to show the difference between proper investigations vs inappropriate investigations. Students also learned how to properly conduct these investigations through many practice sessions they held outside of class with people, fake scenarios they’d write as a sort of script, as well as a final in front of the whole class where they conducted an investigation type of scenario.

Professor Zamora was previously employed for the San Jose Police Department in 1985. Zamora was a patrol officer which he says “resonate(s)” with him as he found it “both exciting and rewarding”. It didn't matter if he was “arresting people who were victimizing innocent people, or helping people enhance their neighborhoods; everyday was a new day and each one brought amazing experiences.” says Zamora. However, despite the joy his job brought him, Zamora was involved in an “on-duty vehicle accident” which he says “changed (my) life” and is the reason why he turned to art.

During this time, there was a police sketch artist at the department that was nearing retirement, so Zamora has expressed his interest and the man was able to mentor him for about 2 and a half years before he applied for the job 6 months later. In 1995, Zamora had been appointed the police sketch artist, which also happened to be only the second artist in history for that department.

Professor Zamora was born and raised in Eagle Pass, Texas before his family moved to San Jose California in 1963 where he would grow up for the remainder of his childhood. Despite growing up on the West Coast, Professor Zamora’s wife grew up in Portland, Maine, so now Zamora and his wife travel to Bath, Maine (since 2015) where they have a rental and “stay there for six months at a time (since 2022)” according to Zamora.

