

Fernanda Diaz transcript

- Speaker 2: [00:00:03](#) And so today is November fifth and we are located in Bishop Hall doing an interview for my honors thesis research title of the Latino South Race and racialization. Um, so to start off, are you 18 years or older?
- Speaker 1: [00:00:19](#) Yes. Twenty one.
- Speaker 2: [00:00:22](#) And um, can you say and spell your first and last name for the record?
- Speaker 1: [00:00:26](#) Maria Fernanda Diaz
- Speaker 2: Where did you grow up?
- Speaker 1: So I'm from Gloster, Mississippi. I wasn't born there, I was born in McAllen, Texas, but we moved to Mississippi when I was eight months old. So I claim Mississippi. I am from Mississippi. Gloster, Mississippi is like a 900 population. It's very tiny. So I very much was sheltered, grew up not very much community. Um, we did have like one community, it was to our church, so we built a friendship through that. Um, and it wasn't until we started school that we started to kind of socialize more, but my mom, I don't know if like when to stop. I'm really good at like keep talking. Okay, Gotcha. Okay. So because of the, um, kind of socialization, what happened was my mom started a restaurant back in 2001 and I think then I was like five fact check. And so I grew up in the restaurant as a Mexican restaurant. I grew up in that restaurant helping my mom, so it kind of kept us busy so we really didn't have time to socialize outside of. Once we got older, we did dance piano, I did cheer and so like my socializing was in school, but after school I came home and worked with my mom.
- Speaker 2: [00:02:47](#) Perfect. I'm going to ask where is Gloster? What is it near?
- Speaker 1: [00:02:55](#) Okay. So Gloster is in Amite County. It's the fourth district of Mississippi. I found that out because I voted today. Happy Tuesday. Um, and so it's the fourth district of Mississippi. It's in the corner. It's not the coast, it's inland. Um, if you were to bring in Louisiana, we're about an hour from baton rouge. I'm the southwest. Yes. Southwest. So from Oxford you take 55 down. Um, and then you take

highway 24 and it southwest from Jackson for in front of half. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

And what other places have you lived in?

Speaker 1:

Well, I am. It's always been Gloster. Um, I think if you could say when I first, when we first moved to Gloster, we were in the city limits, but then we started out in a rented house and then it wasn't until I was 13 that my family officially bought a house because the first house they tried to buy got sold to us rotten, um, because of the ignorance because we were second generation Americans and they kind of saw the opportunity to sell them that rotted house because in theory the house was rebuilt, um, and noted to be 25 years old. But what was 25 years old was the brick that surrounded the 100 year old wooden house. So that got messy real fast. When my mom, they didn't like carpet. So they tried to rip up the carpet and there they discovered the rotted wood in Florida and you can't live in that. And then slowly they took out more pieces of the wood and there was no floor. It was beams on the floor. And I remember that being a lot of my early childhood, just that house because that house, one area was livable. We would have our Christmas there, but besides that we lived in a camper that we had to buy because of this rotted house and they went through the whole court process. My mom she was a very intelligent woman. She went to our town hall and found the house where it was a picture of it a hundred years ago and it can't be 25 years old if it's on a school, like a geo map of 100 years ago.

Speaker 1:

[00:05:30](#)

So when to court won the case with that money, they were able to pay off the lawyers. And um, we started the mall. My mom started the business, I'm rented the house. My Dad got his first job because we were, we were in the camper and my dad wanted to see a boxing match. And my mom was like, okay, well let's see what we can do to get this boxing so it doesn't work this way. But they didn't know. And they asked the cable man. They asked could we get cable for one day to watch this match? And the man said, yeah, why not? So he connected the cable and he asked my family what did they do, what, um, what, what, what did they do? And he offered my dad a job. Um, when we first move to Mississippi, it was because of a job. We were in Mcallen, Texas when I was eight months old at eight months old. My Dad had a first cousin in Mississippi.

It was planting trees and so that was my dad's first job and that's why Gloucester, it was our first beginning in the United States and my dad took the opportunity to work with his cousin and um, yeah, that's how we ended up in Gloster. But then the situation in that working environment is not a working environment. It's the exploitation of workers and it's not livable. My, our family didn't grow because the chemicals for the planning or too strong and the families that we're trying to have families were coming out with missing fingers and just not healthy children. So my mom got scared and didn't want to have more kids after me because my dad started working there. So when we came to Mississippi, the family kind of stopped because in the working conditions they couldn't continue to have more kids. So that affected our family tree? No, she didn't. She, it was just my dad and she worked. Um, she just was at that point I think taking care of my sister and I and because it was my dad's first cousin would stay close to the wife of my dad's first cousin, but just relationship wise and you know how family goes, like one person's good at something. It became to where like my mom's cooking, she opens, she owns a restaurant, her cook is pretty bomb. So this lady discontinued liking her because of this level of, you know, back then like woman cooking mit, like basic household stuff. So there was that competition. So distance. And then my dad quit that job. We tried to buy a house. It was rotted, came back, regroup camper, met this man, gave my dad his first job, through cable. He's still same cable company and still works there. Have used to be bell cell and then like net sell and I think now it was trust cable and I think now now it's trust cable. So he's been there for like three different names and ages and we're like that. And then so yeah, money wasn't sufficient with the cable jobs and my mom opened the restaurant with the restaurant. We started building income with the income. You're good Mexican food. It's in Gloucester and it's a pretty big hype where we're from all the way to like Jackson because people were always coming in and telling us, hey, we heard about this place and it used to be very traditional chiller and the whole whole Shebang. I remember like having to mix the eggs and make them fluffy and they had to be perfect, but because the culture differences, it wasn't selling because um, they just didn't know what it was. And, and that's okay. Like it's, it's a difference. We were in south Mississippi. I mean, it's all right. And so my mom accommodated to what they wanted and our best sellers get

this. Our shrimp and steak and hamburgers. Literally, we've been motivated, the, I'm not motivated but changed the menu to where we have a side that says on the Mexican side, so it's kind of turned into this like cross cultural thing and there's um, oh, so for starters, Mexican loaded fries never in my life when you probably see that in Mexico, it's Cajun fries with steak, cheese, onions and grilled steak. And you can get shrimp on there, you can get crazy. And so, yeah. So like I tell you, it's just been a cultural mix and my mom instead of being stubborn and wanting to keep them anyhow it is, it's been modified and now we have an official on the Mexican side. And so back to the original thing, like age of 13, week finally got her house back in town. And um, yeah. So I don't know where the next question can lead to here.

Speaker 2:

So why Ole Miss?

Speaker 1:

I guess because my mom heard that ole miss was the best school you can send your kids to college and that is why I'm here because it is the best and it has proven to be. So there's a lot of people that they don't like almost, but it's, it's like either you like it or you just didn't fit into it and that's why you don't like it. Like there's no real reason why no one doesn't like Gomez. I think it's more of like the ones that couldn't make it don't like it. And that's okay with me. Like I like it, but that's why I will miss because my mom heard that that's the best school to go to in Mississippi.

Speaker 1:

[00:11:38](#)

Honestly, no, not until I got here. Did I realize because my name, you look it up, Maria Fernandez vs. it's 100 percent Hispanic, like there's some culture going on. So like from the minute it's just how I was raised. I was raised first and foremost loved by and a daughter of the king. That's our member. My mom always telling me that. So from the beginning that was instilled the religious side of who I am and my identity. Um, second came like feminine femininity. I don't know how to say it properly. Femininity. I remember one time I, the bread man that delivers to my mom for the restaurant, he said he delivered the message that I was playing football, um, with like the rest of my class, boy did I get in trouble that day. And so like basically it was just very traditional upbringing from my mom's side of like what a woman should be like and how she should carry herself.

Speaker 1: [00:12:46](#) So then it came in, but what I think I got from my Hispanic heritage, if you will, is the food, the language especially because I would spend summers with my grandmother from the second grade to the fifth grade the whole summer so I could learn Spanish. I learned Spanish first, so it was always there. It was important. It was to be embraced, but it wasn't something to set me apart. And I think that's really important of how my sister and I grew up. It was never something to be of a conflict. It wasn't like because you're Hispanic you have to defend yourself. It was more something where we embraced it. Like that was just who we were and if anything added value to my sister and I as individuals because we had a second language or first language, second being Spanish. I mean English, what we learned.

Speaker 1: [00:13:42](#) But it becomes your first because that's what spoken here. Um, the language. I still go down Jackson Avenue listening to my. I'm like, what'd you call it? It's my favorite. Um, but it was never. I think I will tell you though, uh, the first time I realized that I was different was I private school all my life because the public school wasn't good where we're from, it's just no. And um, my mom to scare it was a scare tactic basically if a public school versus private because I'm, I really don't, I don't, that's a whole nother topic. Maybe it'll come up again, but I'm. So it was like I was, I think five and we went to my friend's house and she asked me, she is um, she goes, why are you brown? And I was just like, I, I didn't answer my best friend. She was like, just like, what are you saying?

Speaker 1: [00:14:47](#) Like just go, go to your room or whatever, but she was like two or three, I think she was three and my friend and I were six years old and she was three. So I realized then that there was a difference but it wasn't in my own home that the difference was um, presented. It was once you go out and you start seeing how other people see people's differences. So yeah, at the university I, it is 100 percent what you think, like it's your experience is what you make it because just because of how I was raised, I've never seen it as like, because I'm Hispanic, I can't do this or because I'm Hispanic, I can do this. Um, I know I went to a basketball game one time and I met a friend through my Spanish class, but he had Hispanic friend and the Hispanic for him when he saw me, he tried immediately to like start talking about, oh, this and that.

Speaker 1: [00:15:57](#) And being Hispanic and like it's so hard and the people. And I'm like, what are you talking about? Like it, I think it's, I think it's just the attitude that you start with, if you have a defensive attitude, you will be met with defense on the other side too. So it's all about how you present yourself and just from my upbringing, I never saw it as like because if, until you look in the mirror are you fully aware of what you're looking at? And I see people through when we get all religious on you, but I see people literally through how we're told to see each other as souls, as children of God. So I don't see you as what your outer is, I see you from how you talk, what you present yourself and I will accommodate to you of how you're speaking to me. I won't be rude, but I'll just continue our conversation. So it's 100 percent how you present yourself to what is happening. So.

Speaker 1: [00:17:06](#) Gotcha. So I'm a junior, so my third year risk management insurance, um, double major managerial finance. We'll find out after next semester if I keep that double major. Um, I am treasurer. This is my second year for the core team of CCM. Of the Catholic campus ministry, so at St John's evangelist, our church and then our ministers, a vd Diana Costa, also Hispanic and I'm just noting, just done another. And so I'm on the core team. Second year as treasurer, I'm with rebels for life. My freshman year I was the secretary. Sophomore year I was the um, which vice president this year. I'm the president. I'm in five now. That does not buy better. It's all these Greek letters are mixed me up, but it's, I'm guessing game of edify. Maybe it's the, um, it's more like a community donation drive one. I'm, I'm an Alpha Kappa Psi, the business fraternity and that focuses on basically preparing us for the professional world. Um, recently I joined gamma iota sigma. It's a, an insurance group, so that's basically setting us up so we can speak with, um, they host lunch. And so that's a big thing that they bring in companies. We talked to them for like future connections. So basically like they set you up with the opportunity to meet people that can hire you later. Like when companies. Yeah. And then I think that's the last one. Yeah, that's it.

Speaker 1: [00:18:54](#) Important aspects of your life right now to find the most important aspects. Like what do you mean? Like what do I find important right now? Right now you got me at a great time. It's been a rollercoaster ride with my faith life in college. Um, because of all the different things you can get

into in college, you really start to know yourself and I'm at a point where I'm trying to decide in the Catholic church or the Catholic religion, they call your vocation and your vocation is basically how in your life are you going to walk and grow with God and in what you're doing? And this happened to me last year. I thought there had to be like an either or either your career or your growth and spiritual life. And it happened again this year because just October we really need a break before Thanksgiving break for whoever's listening and in charge of that we need a break.

- Speaker 1: [00:20:01](#) So I'll tell you, it was rough for me and I was talking to my priest about it and he was saying that that's not how it's supposed to be. Like your career is supposed to be able to let you do what your ultimate call as a human is to love and serve God and it's not an either or like that's the lies that you hear, like your calling should be able to reach that goal too and it's not like you don't have to go. It can be in like small things that you do. It's like just a conversation with someone or hearing them or just being the light and sharing the knowledge that you know and understanding of your relationship with God and I think that's huge right now for me is getting the balance of my spiritual vocation and prayer life and meeting that with my career that I hope to get from Ole miss. So it's like falling. Finding the balance and being in peace.
- Speaker 2: [00:20:58](#) I'm going to get more into questions about race. So Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity as two different concepts. What is your ethnicity?
- Speaker 1: [00:21:11](#) You say? It's like when they start trying to divide everything. I'm like, can you define that? So could you give me like, just so I know I'm picking the right thing, can you give me or we could even google it, like what is like race ethnicity?
- Speaker 2: [00:21:27](#) Okay. What I'm trying to figure out what to see.
- Speaker 1: [00:21:32](#) Could you give me then maybe like how if I were to fill it on and reform, what are my options, race options and then ethnicity,
- Speaker 2: [00:21:40](#) would it be like black, white, Asian, and then within the, within the parentheses of white and black, I don't know if you've ever seen this. They'll say non Hispanic, Latino

- Speaker 1: [00:21:53](#) ethnicity part.
- Speaker 2: [00:21:54](#) No, that's right. And then ethnicity, would it be like, um, basically Hispanic, Latino or Hispanic? Latino and race would be black, white, both nonsensical Latino. Um, Asian. Um, and then other basically. So like I said, there's no right or wrong answer. What I'm really trying to figure out this question is do people consider a separate race? What, what, when, if you're filling out a form and they were like, what is your ethnicity? What do you normally say? Or if somebody asks, what is your ethnicity, what do you normally say?
- Speaker 1: [00:22:31](#) I've looked this up because it makes me mad, not mad, but I don't get why they do this because white, non Hispanic, Hispanic, black, Hispanic, non Hispanic, us, Hispanics, we got a great. We're a happy medium. We were not why people love us. Black people love us because we are in between and. But that's not how it should be. Like I am Hispanic, like it's not an in between, but it's not its own thing either. It's, it's, it's aggravating because it's like, okay, so I'm white, Hispanic, not Hispanic because there's a difference. Apparently I've. This is why I've looked it up and I think it's more aggravating that until the government system quit seeing it as an issue, it's going to continue being an issue as long as there's still these senses as were. And the thing is, if we're going to go into how this started, like when, especially in the United States, in my town, Louisiana, there's a prison called Angola prison.
- Speaker 1: [00:23:45](#) Angola is a country in Africa. The place was called Angola because of the plantation that this is how wrong it is. The plantation is called Angola plantation because of the area in which they brought out the people from Africa to exploit them and work them as slaves. So therefore we now have the Angola prison. Okay? So when you get into where you take the people from their country to exploit them and use them for your own means to an end is when you're starting to get into the whole human rights. And again, that's a loaded conversation. But until our government discontinues as seeing individuals as this, we're not advancing. Because
- Speaker 1: [00:24:38](#) if you think about how the United States started, we needed workers. So they got people from Africa, they brought them here. Okay? You're still seeing a individual as a means to an end. What you can get out of them. You're us

census bear. I sound ignorant when I try to read US Census Bureau. Um, that is, that's like still. And I know why they do senses and they try to see the demographics and that goes into what we're learning in insurance. Like how much they charged geographically. Like everything affects everything. But because they kept doing that, it's still picking up people in sensitive areas as to what do you identify yourself as? And that's just. I mean, let me read the question again. What is your ethnicity? I mean, I'm Hispanic. My family came from Mexico. My parents are from Guadalajara, Mexico. My Mom's from Finland. My Dad's from San Miguel. Okay. And I was raised private school. I was, I guess.

Speaker 1:

[00:25:49](#)

Well my sister and I, we actually talked about this a semester if you want to think about it and I guess I'm being made to think about it right now for the sake of research people respected my family and my sister and I in our town because first we did not let ourselves get advantage because it's small, small place. There's only one real estate agent whom, which we took to court. So that's how you get your name known in a small town. Um, further than that, my family started a business. They were respectable. They didn't get anybody's business as long as you don't mess with our family. We attended private school because we had the means to afford it. Our very first private school, my mom taught Spanish, my mom didn't know that if you taught Spanish, your kids get to go for free to school. They were charging my mom too for my sister and I had to go to school because they didn't let her into that little detail. So still using my mom services? No, no, no. My bad. Recap what it is. You get paid and your children can attend for free. They weren't paying my mom at all teaching Spanish, teaching Spanish. She was teaching high school level Spanish. So basically using her for what she knew. So

Speaker 1:

[00:27:22](#)

anyway, we left that school and my mom started her own business, made income for our family and the way we held ourselves and the way my mom required my sister and I to hold ourselves is how we got respect in the school that we went to the private school we went to, um, the organizations we went to because we behaved ourselves in that manner. They didn't, we didn't. Okay. Another one we had didn't hang out with the other Hispanic families around, um, but because we weren't allowed to even go out, like I said, we were very sheltered. We were in school

church activities, but then we came home and worked. We didn't give people the chance to make an idea of us and what quote Unquote Hispanic people are because we represented ourselves in a respectful manner and my mom raised us that way. Um, so to go into the white, Hispanic or not Hispanic, if you want to think about it, fine.

- Speaker 1: [00:28:33](#) We went to private school. We associated with white people. We were seen as white people. Someone even told my mom, my mom has a lot lighter skinned than I am. I'm like, uh, oh, this is what maybelline says. I mean, covergirl, covergirl says I'm out. Um, but my mom is more of a wider complexion. When she tans, she gets read, she doesn't Tan. And I always thought that was funny because I don't look like my mom in that way. I look like my dad because he's more darker skinned. Um, whew. Okay. Can feels. But I don't think I'm an emotional person. It wasn't expecting this to happen.
- Speaker 3: [00:29:37](#) Take your time, take your time.
- Speaker 2: [00:29:40](#) Does this does happen with students I'm interviewing. They really realize, you know, it hits you.
- Speaker 1: [00:29:52](#) I guess that's why we have research. So I guess that's my answer. We were kind of made to fit in. Yeah. We were made to fit into what was the usual around because it wasn't until college that I really learned what the day of the dead was like even to embrace like the music. I guess.
- Speaker 2: [00:30:35](#) Is there a reason why we're getting sad now? We're just getting emotional. Wouldn't say Sarah just getting emotional. Just thinking about.
- Speaker 1: [00:30:44](#) Because it's not welcomed. Like it really isn't. It's not because it's not the usual way of doing things because of, I guess what you call the south. But I don't think about it until I think about it like right now. Um, but it's, it's the whole idealization of what you're supposed to be. And I definitely think my family bought into that. Um, and, but that's, that's the thing. The United States was founded by pilgrims and it's wrong to say that there's one certain way and one
- Speaker 1: [00:31:39](#) that one certain way and if not, you're considered outcasts or you're considered your own ethnic group. And I think in

college I realized that I was more so sheltered and required, not required, but like in efforts to survive, um, how mean people can be you conform to the norm. And, and I've made Hispanic friends here in college. Um, you know, his, his, uh, Nelsey. I met her in my accounting class. You, Brittany even I met you in Spanish. Um, it wasn't until I came to college that I really made Hispanic friends because I could, because I lived in a dorm, I met an apartment. I don't go home to the usual seeing that home, but also like, that's not my parents fault because the Hispanics that were in Gloucester, it's just not the life. My, it's not Hispanic, it's not, it's not Mexican culture. So my parents didn't want us to relate with that.

Speaker 1: [00:32:59](#) So in where I'm from, the Hispanic culture is Hispanic and I hate to say it, but it's Hispanic ghetto because they like art. You are a US census, black or white, you choose and that was the culture where I was from, you were black or you acted as the idealization of what white private school is and that's what I came to be and it wasn't until I came to college. And now that you talk about it, do you realize what situation you're in? Um, so, and like that's the thing though, I understand like you get your politicians and you get your government officials and there is a way to act professional, but there's a way to act as a human and respect each other's cultures and differences to come together for the good of each other in that using each other. Based on those differences

Speaker 2: [00:34:12](#) and um, the business that you talked about that your dad used to work for it, the tree planting company, was that a job or company then? Mostly Hispanic people in foster. Your 400 percent. Is that company still in Gloucester today or are there agriculture jobs that still kind of circulate around? Gloucester is mainly, I guess pushed forward by a Hispanic workforce or.

Speaker 1: [00:34:39](#) Yes, because what it is, my parents are here legally. We are 100 percent legal, but that's not the same situation for every family that's in that business. Um, and it's, and you know, here's the horrible thing, the man in charge is Hispanic, so Hispanic people exploiting Hispanic people. So it's, it's the idea that people don't respect people and the what is to be human. And, and like I just said, it's Hispanic man guarding this. My mom had to translate one time a man got bit by a snake and he, what they do is they make a trip, it lasts

about a week. They go up to the forest and they're literally camping out and they're not allowed to come back until like a week. And then it's like a week full of work. Come back one day's rest to see your family go back for weeks, day of work.

Speaker 1: [00:35:40](#) And this man got bit by a snake. And um, I don't remember if it was a broken, no, it was a broken ankle was broken. It wasn't a snake, it was broken ankle and my mom was asked to translate for him that his ankle was broken the night before when in reality that ankle had been broken for three days and untreated. But because of our situation and the fact that that was the only way we were making income, my mom had to try and she doesn't forget it. She's to this day and talks about it had to translate what they asked. But I was in, I was at the dollar store and I think I was in the seventh grade maybe. And I saw the truck that is for that company. And I remember just like my mom telling me all the stories. And here we go again. Once I started, it's hard to stop. We're going to push through. Okay. I saw the workers come out. I felt so bad because my family was there and it's horrible that people still treat people so inhumanely because their situation. And I was like, I was really young so I couldn't see how my dad, like, it literally stains their skin and blue right

Speaker 1: [00:37:25](#) from the chemical that they use and this group of workers came out from the trucks that they were working with or whatever, ticket, like some snacks or something from the dollar store. And I remember I was standing behind the line and the man went to pay and like their skin was literally blew from the chemicals. But. And that's what burns me up when they say that illegals are coming to take jobs. No people don't take jobs, people are offered jobs because they want basically free labor. Asked my mom who didn't get paid for teaching Spanish because they want cheap labor. These jobs are offered, the ones that their family succeeds and we can get an education and become successful people from other countries. That's not Canada because Canadians are white. So no one ever talks about the Canadians. But because of the caravan from Guatemala, Guatemala, that they're about right now that are even making campaigns for stop the train vote Republican. What the hell is that? I understand. I understand maybe they need to do a judicial review of the anyway, but my point is we don't take jobs. People don't take jobs, people are offered jobs, people are

recruited, people are interviewed. There's no such thing as taking jobs. Um, lost my train of thought here. But yeah, no, it's, it's messed up completely out of your parent's nationality. I'm 100 percent Mexican people asked me, what are you Mexican? Um, if asked if. Okay. And that's the thing, like

Speaker 1: [00:39:32](#) I should know better

Speaker 1: [00:39:34](#) if asked differences, race, ethnicity, nationality. It's just like, I don't care. Like if someone asked me, I'm Hispanic, my family's from Mexico. I don't say I say it how it is because that's what we are. And so like, it's kind of aggravating to me that I don't know the difference. Like nationality, what do you mean the country, if people asked me where you're from and we get that a lot. I'm like, where are you from? Gloucester? No, no, no, where are you from? And I'm like, okay, my, my parents are from Mexico, but I was born and raised here. Where are you from? Where did, where did y'all learn? Because as far as I know the Indians were here first. We all came and settled, but you can't. That's where you, you answered ignorance, people with peace and you, you understand what they are asking you, so you choose to not answer in a mean way and I just told them my family is from Mexico, but yeah, so I, I wouldn't asked. I know what they mean and sometimes I make a joke about it now I'm like, you want to know like where I'm from or we want to know where I'm really from, so I try to approach it with humor and a piece of heart that sometimes they're just ignorant and then you can't fix stupid sometimes and I've honestly, unless I'm filling out something I haven't been asked, it's more of like, where are you from

Speaker 1: [00:41:20](#) racially?

Speaker 1: [00:41:25](#) I mean I am what I am. I'm not white. I'm not black. I'm Mexican. I'm the culture. I'm my parent's perseverance to make it in the United States. Like I'm not white, I'm not black. I am Mexican and the culture and love and food that comes from that. I'm not gonna sit here and say I'm white, Hispanic, like, get off, like, no, I say I'm a Latina and if you want to go into that, I think we're going to answer. No, I don't have any black descendants. They're all Mexican or my mom's side actually did a, I'm one of those ancestry and it was like Spaniard because that's where the wider

completion comes from. Um, it's like the Spaniard side and my dad, they're all brown. They're all from Mexico. I don't know. Um, but as far as I know, there's no like, afro black mix, but I just, I've never said that out loud. That's the first time I've ever said that out loud, but because I don't know, our family just chose not to really look into it. So yeah.

- Speaker 2: [00:42:48](#) Is there a reason why you prefer the term Latino?
- Speaker 1: [00:42:51](#) Um, because instead of sate Hispanic, I can give you my Spanish Latina and then that's another conversation. Oh, you speak Spanish. I'm Latina to me seems more powerful than Hispanic.
- Speaker 3: [00:43:10](#) Um,
- Speaker 1: [00:43:12](#) that's. I like, I just, I feel like there's a power to say Latina versus Hispanic because it's acknowledging that I am a woman, my descendants are from Mexico and I have that extra oomph to my person. So.
- Speaker 2: [00:43:30](#) And um, so studies show that the population is growing in the United States. How do you think this will affect the way race and race relations are viewed in the country?
- Speaker 1: [00:43:39](#) We're going to get better food and pretty brown babies. I had a friend come up to me at the circle. Um, she said, oh, guess what? I have a boyfriend now. And I'm like, oh, really? And she had, she said, he's Hispanic. I said, of course we're the most lovable, awesome variety there is. Of course he's Hispanic. I said, just don't tell me his name is one, just give me a little more variety. Um, I think it's a beautiful thing that there's an expansion of culture because the south has, you know, southern comfort food. But if you take in the culture of dance, the music, the soul, I know we have blues, Mississippi, God love it, but mean if you bring in the culture, the peer culture, that's where you get a love of what a culture is when people aren't trying to be what they're not when you don't have, because white people, you have quote unquote trashy white people, you have Class II white people, there's all kinds of people in every culture and it just depends on what you choose to embrace, I think.
- Speaker 1: [00:45:02](#) And with these, with the expansion of the Hispanic culture coming slash, if it's even coming up, it just depends on how people choose to see it and what light they want to see the

university. Um, Spanish classes I made sure I got into Spanish courses, um, because I wanted to incorporate Spanish speaking into my week because I don't get to even my sister and I, we don't speak Spanish together because it's not strong. So we, it's almost like a discomfort because we don't know how to pronounce it that well and that sad. Um, so yeah, I incorporate Spanish classes, um, those that do know Spanish, I'll talk to them in Spanish sometimes. Um, what number were we on? Second read through it again? 17, 16, 17. Okay. Um, last. So Latin party. I'm just go into events that the Spanish groups host and funny. Hi.

Speaker 1: [00:46:24](#) Didn't want to join the last oh, group because that's where I think we go wrong when you try to set yourselves apart and make groups. So I myself just didn't want to do that. I attended events but I didn't want to. I try to go to Guffey. Um, but I think I just kept walking. I thought I grew up. I think I just kept walking and that's like I said, freshman, sophomore year I was still living in the idea of private school and I didn't want to set myself apart by joining a group like that. Um, because when you form groups is when you have the opportunity to start seeing differences and I guess I was still blind to it. Um, so keeping in the culture, Spanish classes, learning a lot. They have a great faculty and staff that teach us about the Latin American culture and I've learned so much through taking Spanish classes. So I think that's a main way how I've incorporated my culture as a student classes. And um, what were some challenges you face as a university in and aspire as a Latina? Um, challenges?

Speaker 1: [00:47:49](#) I think maybe the biggest challenge are individuals that are close minded. Um, that's always been a challenge. Close mindedness. I think that's, that's it because because of how I think about who I am, I don't really face too many challenges because I don't come at it defensively. I'm more open ended to what people present, but I've had, especially my freshman year, just people that I knew to not try to talk to them because they didn't want to speak to me because of how I looked or the color of my skin. So if anything, just individuals but you're gonna have that everywhere. We just have the opportunity to meet a lot of individuals are age in college, so it is harder because I'm just, you can tell like whenever people just don't, like the discrimination is almost very evident but funny now that we're getting older, all of our people from church, all of our friends have found

someone Hispanic and my sister and I were the only Hispanic people at our church, the only two girls and they tried to date us before, but we were always like school first.

Speaker 1: [00:49:07](#) We're not dating yet and I think it's funny how like all the teams have ran half Hispanic girlfriends slash fiances now. Um, so it's like, I think my sister and I were definitely like a breakthrough in because we were successful in our schools. My sister was Valedictorian. I was seven out of 29. But because I don't know, I liked to have fun. I like to be social and school was first, but I definitely didn't stress out as much as my sister did. But I got like prom queen. I was class president. I'm class favorites a lot I'll most likely to succeed. Voted, I was voted here, we got a new headmaster my senior year and they called and asked if one person could get so many awards and um, my Spanish teacher slash year book later I was in your book, told him that if my name slash the person's name was on the award, they were to receive the award to not try and take away what they were rightfully voted for.

Speaker 1: [00:50:26](#) And the next day I realized that that person was me and I got awarded hall of fame even for my high school. And yeah, it was because all the upbringings of how my mom and dad raised us to be respected, respect people because you want to be respected and a lot of people don't learn that in college you see how many people don't learn that and you're just faced with each individual that you come across. But that's where you choose how you manage the conversation because you can easily just walk away and say, I'm not participating in this [inaudible]. You don't have to be anywhere. You don't want to be. So, um, yeah,

Speaker 2: [00:51:16](#) your race or your ethnicity and your identity. If so, how do you typically respond to these questions?

Speaker 1: [00:51:22](#) Um, like I mentioned earlier now with the sense of humor for a little while, I think my sophomore year I'm aggravated, but then I kind of like found the positive. People are curious because I'm different. They want to know where I'm from. They want to know because people tell me that I don't look Mexican. When you first met me, did you think I look Mexican?

Speaker 2: [00:51:47](#) I can't say that she looked Mexican because you can't look at somebody and know what their nationality is that you

were Latina. I could just say, oh, because I am like, he or she is Hispanic or Latino or whatever. Like I can't look at you and say she's Mexican. You couldn't be from growing up.

Speaker 1: [00:52:05](#) All right. So you knew something was going on. Yeah, I a lot of times though I get that I look like I'm from the Philippines so I'm just like, no, Mexico. Um, so yeah, it's definitely, if it sparks curiosity in people because of where we are geographically because there's not that many Hispanics. So how I see it, people want to know people are curious and that's your, that's your time, that's your highlight moment to be the light, be the quote unquote good Hispanic of what you want. Each individual represents their culture and I choose to represent mine with dignity, respect, and I tried, I need to be more knowledgeable slash am learning how to correctly answer these questions. Um, so I answer them to the best of my ability first with humor, like give me a guess or do you think I'm from? So I asked them first, where do you think? And I let them kind of. So I kind of make a game out of it, like you tell me first and then I go into like the details of where I'm from and our story and how we're here. So with humor, lightheartedness, and a piece of heart that I am a daughter of a king,

Speaker 2: [00:53:30](#) she mentioned that some people think you're from the Philippines because the Philippines was colonized by Spain. So the standards were there, there were native people there. So we kind of, there's a connection. So a lot of people, I've heard people have Filipinos like the Hispanics of Asia, they were like rolling by saying for theory long time. So there's some Spanish influence in their culture and the way they look. So. And have you ever experienced any assumptions or stereotypes or anything like that because of your race?

Speaker 1: [00:54:08](#) Oh, for sure. You see people and it's like that first five second judgment. Well, I have gotten many first five second judgment because I'm 14. I'm a very petite Hispanic Latina walking around here in big city of Oxford. Um, and until you say yes ma'am. Yes sir. Thank you. All. Have your polite inquiries do then they see you in another light. Literally I have so many times seeing after I speak, then do their faces soft and then do they invite in conversation, but until their prejudices and judgments go away, are they open

to experience a conversation with Maddie for men? So yeah, for sure. Assumptions every day. I'm just just being what I am. But like a day you, I sometimes forget until I looked down at my hands and I'm like, oh, I got a new tan line here. And Oh my favorite is when I see a super, super tanned girl with blonde blonde hair.

- Speaker 1: [00:55:25](#) I'm like, whew, thank goodness I don't need to get a spray tan. Like they want. People want the tanned skin. They want the long eyelashes, the bold brows that you and I both rock, they want the bold lips, thej Lo booty, the, they want everything that we are without being what we are. And you can't have that. Sorry. So yeah. And with these features of like eyebrows or like whatever, like then it's like, oh, I wish I had your brows or something. But yeah, assumptions until a conversation that started and you meeting of minds is what a conversation is. Then do you get the respect that you give?
- Speaker 2: [00:56:15](#) Yes.
- Speaker 1: [00:56:17](#) Si. Senorita. I learned at home for Spanish. And then, um, after learning Spanish I think I don't, I can't give you an exact day or year, but I learned Spanish and then my mom invested in a phonics program. Um, and she basically hired a babysitter. She was our babysitter because my mom started the business. Okay. So I was five. I started the business. I was five. My mom needed a babysitter for us. She found a great student that she was teaching at the school and she gave my, um, my mom gave her a job and she taught us phonics so that we wouldn't have an accent like Sophia but Ghana. And I really wish I did sometimes I even one time youtube, how to have a Spanish accent. It was an epic fail. I, it didn't stick and I at one time had a country accent while I lived in Gloucester, Mississippi.
- Speaker 1: [00:57:22](#) But because I'm not around the country, folk have econ nation, my country accent has gone away. I have this, I don't think I have one anymore, but because I'm in, I'm able to enunciate my words, how I read them and how I learned through this phonics program when I was younger. So I have lost my country accent because I'm not around it. I'm also, like I said earlier, I spent my summers with my grandmother, um, the whole summer and basically learn Spanish or don't speak because no one knew English and I remember we would come back and my sister and I would

be speaking Spanish. Oh my gosh, we don't remember a Spanish. I mean, we don't remember English. Um, yeah, yeah, that's it.

Speaker 2: [00:58:10](#) That's how I learned Spanish and English to Spanish. Your first language. Yeah. Yeah. And um, how important is the ability to speak Spanish to the Latino culture?

Speaker 1: [00:58:22](#) So in my life and myself

Speaker 2: [00:58:23](#) speaking for the Latino culture, what have I seen her have you seen feel personally? Not necessarily speaking for it gets

Speaker 1: [00:58:35](#) very important. If you add, that's an asset to a person. You even get paid more if you're bilingual. It's something that should not be hidden. If your parents have the ability to speak Spanish, it is a shame the students that I have met that come from a Hispanic or Latino background and they don't speak Spanish. I actually met a Colombian this summer and he was very enthusiastic about the fact that I spoke Spanish and he went on and on about his mom spoke Spanish and we talked one time and his dad actually, um, left for business and when he came back, the daughter was speaking Spanish. The Dad was infuriated that the daughter learned Spanish because he couldn't communicate with his daughter and he for for fade, for forbid forbidden for, for boat, I think it's for bone. He for bug the mother to teach the youngest son Spanish.

Speaker 1: [00:59:41](#) So the youngest son does not know Spanish, the daughter and the mother do and they weren't allowed to learn Spanish. But here's the sad thing, when they go to go visit Colombia, the son cannot speak with his family and it is a huge disadvantage that if you know a language, you do not embrace it because it's a difference. We thrive in differences and I think people are more scared of differences than they are accepting, but it's no one freaks out if someone's speaking French at the store. Everyone starts turning heads. If you're speaking Arabic, if you're speaking in Spanish, oh, they're talking about me. Um, people are more scared of what they don't know. Then embracing the differences and it starts with families. If that's important. If you're from another culture and you don't speak about these differences, especially how you're going to raise your kids, that's where problems start with

families because with families, you raised the kids, the kids turn into adults, the adults go into the world.

Speaker 1: [01:00:50](#) You don't start from where it begins. We're not going to fix anything. So I think it's important to speak Spanish if you have it or whatever language you speak. Learning University population, first of all, they let you run out the lyric and have the last. So biggest event, um, they allow you to do within reason. Your party. I'm the university allows groups. The university permits Gfi. The slowness to meet the university has no restrictions. As long as you meet policy, it's open, it is open and caters to whatever you want to do here. And there is no. No because of your ethnicity race. There's not one unless you make a no, because of the way in which you approach the individuals that you're seeking permission for. If they see that this is disruptive, it's not for the good. You don't have a good light for what you're trying to do.

Speaker 1: [01:02:05](#) Again, you're going to be denied. But as long as it's like to build community, it's how does the university and community cater. It's a community. How are you presenting your culture? What do you want from your community to serve you? And I think it does a pretty good job. And then how do you feel the university and the community omit the Latino population? Um, I didn't do recruitment, but I can probably guarantee you there's a lot that goes in that in the Sorority, fraternity life of Ole Miss. I am a bystander to that because I did not brush in anything. Um, I think that's where you start making your divisions with the idealized image that you want your group to portray. So if said individual doesn't meet the criteria that the group wants, that's when you get your chances to be omitted from a group because there's criteria, there's qualifications in this idea of what you want and that even goes into. But I've heard so much stuff. I just fit. I've heard so much stuff from like sororities, like not letting a girl in because her instagram isn't. What's the word? It's um, when you make your instagram a certain theme, it's whatever. If you're instagram isn't good enough, you're not pretty enough. You don't look this way. Your family doesn't make this much income. You get admitted when you start making

Speaker 1: [01:03:56](#) how, how can I phrase my thought? You start getting omitted whenever you start looking to fit in to the group that is formed. Once you try to start making your way into

a group where you don't belong because they see an idea of what they want their group. That's when you get admitted, and I'm sorry, but there are differences. There are people that form groups compared to what they want to socialize with and that's where you get these fraternities and Greek associations because they want to socialize with a certain status of money, look and that just money look and where you come from. So they make groups and that's where they cast you out. How do you view race in the US, the south and here in Oxford in the US as a country as a whole, depends on our leaders right now. Um, we have a lot of prejudices that will only grow if it doesn't stop. I, I see it heading south. I'm fast just because of the campaigns that I've seen the campaigns. Uh, I, you know, what I would've liked. I liked to say I'm Republican because it's a conservative viewpoint in religious standards, but I can't tell you I voted for trump because

Speaker 1:

[01:05:35](#)

I had to sit in economics class 2015 my junior year of high school with the teacher that didn't teach us but showed us campaigns of Donald Trump of make America great again. Build a wall and keep illegals out to where my professor, my teacher told me that illegals come here to scrub toilets and in which I said, my family is a family of immigrants. I did not appreciate you saying that we come here to scrub toilets because never in my life has my family or me scrub the toilet. And that was a huge issue because as a junior in high school, having to stand up for what my family came here for terrible. Um, 2015 only got worse because said person got elected. Now we have campaigns have stopped the caravan. But I mean like, come on, um, race in the south. That just goes back to my initial response. It depends how you represent yourself, what you want to be seen as the respect you give. And in Oxford I've only been treated fairly. I can say in, um, Oxford, I pay with the same green money. I welcome when I come in, I say thank you. When I leave very respectable because I come, I worked with the public so I know what it is to deal with the public. Working with the public, with my mom's restaurant, very experienced in the public. Um, so Oxford as a community, I don't see an issue the US, it needs some help right now.

Speaker 2:

[01:07:25](#)

Number 26 because I already asked that question. I just have not gotten an edited my question earlier. What are some challenges you face? But um, are there any other points or topics that you discuss that I didn't ask you?

- Speaker 1: [01:07:38](#) Um, I guess it's more like inner reflection points of whenever I decide to if I am made for them family life. If I decide to like what from here, if I decide to make a family,
- Speaker 1: [01:08:01](#) am I going to be more embracive with my own culture? Because besides food and the language and music, I was not immersed in my own Mexican culture. So it's just kind like me as an adult, where am I going to choose to enlighten the kids that will one day become adults and what am I going to bring to this country? So I think that's just more of a self reflection. I think we can all ask ourselves that. What's the, what's the tomorrow? Are we all building? So I think that covers it. Okay. What I think about is most sad is like my coming, that the reason why we're all here is because we were all seeking something that our country wasn't able to give us. My family came here because the government in Mexico, you can't make a living, so they came here for a living.
- Speaker 1: [01:09:00](#) They're very first program in this game for religious freedom. If we all asked everyone, why are you here? I think everyone should be able to answer why their family and where do they start because there is such thing as white privilege because along the line they forgot what brought them here, what their family brought them here for. And we can all go back and trace back. Use Ancestry.com if you want to, but we can all trace back. We did not all start here in the United States and we all need to come together and build a better United States and that is all.