

## **Karina Rodriguez transcript**

- Speaker 1: [00:00](#) Okay, we're recording now. Are you 18 years or older? Can you state and spell your first and last name for the record?
- Speaker 2: [00:13](#) Yes. Karina Rodriguez-Castillo
- Speaker 1: [00:22](#) When were you born?
- Speaker 2: [00:24](#) I was born December 24th 1998.
- Speaker 1: [00:32](#) And where are you from and where did you grow up?
- Speaker 2: [00:35](#) Okay. Um, I'm from Southaven. I grew up there pretty much my whole life.
- Speaker 1: [00:39](#) And um, what other places have you lived?
- Speaker 2: [00:42](#) I lived in Horn Lake, Mississippi, but it's literally 10 minutes from Southaven, so it's pretty much the same.
- Speaker 1: [00:49](#) And why did you decide to go to school here?
- Speaker 2: [00:54](#) Um, I grew up coming down here just because my dad works here and he commutes every day, so I would occasionally visit with him and I just really liked it, always liked it and it was always like in the back of my hand, um, that, you know, it was a potential option for college and definitely made that choice became clear once they got around to senior year.
- Speaker 1: Is race an important part of your identity? Why or why not?
- Speaker 2: [01:22](#) Yes. Um, so definitely, um, my race and ethnicity, you know, makes me stand out here at Ole Miss, which I really like. Um, I haven't met that many Hispanics. Um, and you know, people are always asked me, oh, so like "what are you" not trying to be rude or anything, you know, they just wonder and um, I mean I, I always think it's cool to share it with them.
- Speaker 1: [01:46](#) And how has your experience been as a student here and living in Oxford?
- Speaker 2: [01:50](#) It's been good. Everyone's really friendly, really nice, which is what really attracted me here to Oxford because

when I toured other universities, I didn't get the same feeling at them compared to the one that I got here in Oxford at Ole miss.

- Speaker 1:            [02:05](#)            What is your major classification and some of your involvement?
- Speaker 2:            [02:11](#)            I'm majoring in bio and I'm minoring in business, which is totally different. Um, I want to go into pediatrics but also want to have that business background just to one day, you know, be able to run my own business. I'm a sophomore and I'm not too involved. Um, I mean I'm in the honors college and I'm an honors ambassador, which has been pretty nice. Um, and I'm in ASB mentor now, which is really cool. I haven't met my mentee yet, but I'm excited for that.
- Speaker 1:            [02:53](#)            Cool. Um, so what are the most important aspects of your life right now and why?
- Speaker 2:            [03:01](#)            My most important aspects are school and my family, which is I guess pretty basic, but this semester has been, it's just been really hard and I've had a lot of things going on and it just really made me realize what's important to me, which is same focus in school and just being grateful for my family.
- Speaker 1:            [03:21](#)            So the US Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity as two different concepts. What is your ethnicity?
- Speaker 2:            [03:30](#)            Okay, this is always really confusing to me. Especially, you know, when there's like a form to fill out. Um, but I would just say my ethnicity is Hispanic.
- Speaker 1:            [03:41](#)            And what are your parent's nationality? Do you identify with their nationality?
- Speaker 2:            [03:46](#)            Okay. So I would say their nationality is Mexican and I would say yes, that I do identify with it.
- Speaker 1:                               And how do you identify racially?
- Speaker 2:                               Okay. I'll also say Hispanic and white. I'm not sure. I mean when I think of race, I feel like just a group of people who have similar characteristics. So I was just opt for Hispanic

versus being more specific as um, for example, like Mexican.

- Speaker 1: [04:25](#) And do you identify as Hispanic or Latina?
- Speaker 2: [04:30](#) I like, I identify as both, but I guess Hispanic.
- Speaker 1: [04:35](#) Studies show that the Latino population is growing in the US. How do you think this will affect the way race or race relations is viewed in this country?
- Speaker 2: [04:56](#) I definitely feel that people are more open to the fact that, you know, different race versus just the, I want to say the major ones, Caucasians and African Americans, um, that the other races are growing. Um, so I was really sad just to see people so inhumane humane to people that are humane just because their migraine to different country. Um, and I definitely have seen a change in the way that people approach it, you know, whether they don't 100 percent agree with migration, at least they're more humane about how they want, you know, the issues to be handled. How do. Yeah. So hopefully people will continue to just be more open and more considerate, just, you know, be more humane with migrants because they're humans.
- Speaker 1: [05:55](#) Um, and how do you maintain your Latino culture while a student here at the university?
- Speaker 2: No, it's kind of hard because there's not really a lot of Hispanics that I, you know, can be friend or just, you know, be with. But I mean, I definitely talked to my parents at least every other day and I pretty much just speak in Spanish with them. Um, I do go home quite often, um, because I only live like an hour away and so I still am able to participate in cultural things just, you know, like the Hispanic parties which are totally different than the American ones and such. Um, and I don't get to travel too often to Mexico, but once I do and that's definitely a totally different life, which I enjoy.
- Speaker 1: [06:50](#) What are some challenges that you've faced at the university?
- Speaker 2: [06:57](#) I mean there's not really anything, any just negative, you know, situations that I've experienced or anything like that. But she's challenging to sometimes just find people you can

relate to her, someone that you can, um, feel understands where you came from or how exactly your family is. And such, um, but everyone was inclusive and friendly. So it's nothing major.

Speaker 1: [07:28](#) Um, has anybody ever inquired about your race or ethnicity and how do you typically respond to these types of questions?

Speaker 2: [07:43](#) Yes, for sure. I mean I usually just say I'm Hispanic, if it's more of a involved conversation or just someone that um, I want to continue talking about with um, I'll, you know, go to, yeah, my parents are from Mexico but I grew up here and such. But if it's something just kinda like quick or whatever I'll just say Hispanic and leave it at that.

Speaker 1: [08:09](#) And have you ever experienced or has anybody ever assumed things about your character because of your race and ethnicity?

Speaker 2: [08:20](#) Yeah, I mean I suppose some people have assumed I'm a foreign exchange student, just, I don't know, just because um, but it's, it's not like they had, you know, bad, intense or anything like that. Um, a lot of people are shocked, I guess that my language is so good or just my accent is so good. Um, yeah. Nothing else really.

Speaker 1: [08:53](#) And do you speak Spanish and how did you learn?

Speaker 2: [08:56](#) So Spanish was my first language, pretty much grew up speaking it. I didn't really learn English besides the very basics until preschool. My parents enrolled me in preschool just so I could, you know, grab onto the English language better once I started kindergarten because once you start kindergarten and they're not gonna sit there and, you know, make sure that your English is good, they're just ready to teach you. Um, and so preschool definitely, um, taught me the majority of my English. Uh, I mean my parents, no English, they know it much better now than when I was a little kid growing up, but they wanted to make sure I learned Spanish first because if they didn't teach it to me, no one else would. And as kids, you know, we grab onto a different language much quicker than once you're older. So I learned how to speak Spanish, then I learned how to speak English and then my mom started teaching me how to read and write it. So I'm fluent in all three aspects.

- Speaker 1: [09:59](#) And how important is the ability to speak Spanish?
- Speaker 2: Um, it's really important to me. Um, I'm really grateful that my parents taught me Spanish not only just to speak a bit to learn it and read it so well. Um, when I do go to Mexico, I mean it people notice, you know, that my Spanish is just a little different or my accent is a little different. My word she is a little different, which, you know, it's Kinda hard to avoid just because I'm growing up in a totally different environment, you know. Um, I think it's really, really important. Some people, some parents don't bother to teach their kids Spanish. It's like a whatever, if they understand it, that's fine, but they need to learn how to speak it and breeding and learn it, at least in my opinion because Spanish, I believe is, I don't know what number, but it's like one of the most growing languages here in the US. Um, I for sure want to teach my kids Spanish, whether my husband knows it or not. My kids need to know Spanish. Um, and it's really, really important to have bilingual people, especially like regardless of, regardless of what field you go into. For example, I want to go into the medical field, which there is a huge lack of interpreters and it's just if you've ever been hospitalized, um, and you don't know English, it's so hard to get an interpreter and it's just really, it's just a great, um, thing to have that second language.
- Speaker 1: And how does the university cater to Latino students?
- Speaker 2: [11:41](#) Um, I mean there's definitely, I think it's Latino awareness. I'm not sure, something Latino month here at Ole Miss. I personally am not very involved in it just because this semester has been a little tough on me, but that's really great that they do that they, you know, try to just get the Latino culture out there more, show different aspects of it. Um, because it's definitely very different. I mean, I'm familiar with the Mexican culture, but Latinos, you know, have a, it's a very, very large umbrella. I want to say I'm a, I know a lot of people were here at Ole miss are majoring or minoring in Spanish. Which is great because they don't just learn the language. They also learn the literature and culture and such.
- Speaker 1: [12:29](#) And how does the university and the community omit the Latino culture or community?

- Speaker 2: [12:36](#) Well, like I said, they do have that month. I'm dedicated to it, but other than that there's not really anything else. There's no other like organizations or clubs that are yearlong as, as far as I'm concerned anyways. Um, know there's like minority groups but nothing really specific to Latinos, like I said.
- Speaker 1: [13:04](#) How do you view race in the United States? In the south and here at Oxford?
- Speaker 2: [13:12](#) Well, like I previously stated, I think, I'm not sure, um, but to me race is just a group of people of similar backgrounds, characteristics or traits. Um, I mean, of course, you know, there's labels to race but people can identify as, you know, part of one race and also part of the other, um, but also here in the south racism, you know, it's still a big issue. So another thing with phrase, it's just stereotypes and I think that really plays a big part into race.
- Speaker 1: [13:52](#) And um, how do you perceive the Latino population affecting the idea of race in this out?
- Speaker 2: [14:00](#) Uh, well, I mean the Latino population is definitely a big part of the south in the US in general and it's definitely growing very, very rapidly, rapidly. Um, so affecting idea of racing. I don't know, I guess it's just adding to, you know, the idea of race that there's just not one or two or three major races. There's different races, there's different cultures, different types of people that we need to learn to interact and accept.
- Speaker 1: [14:37](#) And what type of challenges, this question already, but what type of challenges or have you ever faced any challenges because of your identity?
- Speaker 2: [14:53](#) I think it's maybe similar to the question before, but I'm just basically finding someone who understands exactly like your roots, where you came from. I grew up, um, in an area with a lot of Hispanics. Um, I went to high school with a lot of Hispanics, you know, they always understood what it meant to be Hispanic, what families were like, what your background is and you know, how it's harder to or just not harder, but the different challenges you face as an Hispanic in school outside of school. Um, and that's just not really what I get here. I'm just because, you know, there's not that many Latinos, you just kind of have to explain to people

whenever you know the, some things are harder for you than others or when your family doesn't really understand, you know, what you're going through in college because a lot of people are a lot of Hispanics. Your first year students.

Speaker 1: [15:56](#) And would you mind elaborating on some of the challenges that you face? I know you were saying like in high school you went to a majority Hispanic high school and you all could just relate and understand like what it means to be Hispanic. Would you mind elaborating on that a little bit or like how bad, how you're not seeing that and feeling that here and maybe how it's affecting you as a student?

Speaker 2: [16:22](#) Well I guess the biggest thing with that is people just don't understand your culture. Uh, so you're just excited about like a new song coming out from her favorite, like Hispanic artists or whatever, whatever or something like that. Um, people won't understand. They don't know who that is, you know, let's just see to or whatever. But, um, um, I don't know, I think the biggest thing would be, like I said before, your family or people don't understand how your families are different and how your family's didn't grow up here. They, you know, their parents probably didn't grow up here. And so they're basically learning a whole different culture there. Of course there's universities and colleges, you know, or my parents are from, but um, they didn't get, you know, this high, as high as I'm this higher level of education. Um, so they just have to learn what that's like and how it works and you know, the time and dedication and money that it takes. Um, and I feel like a lot of people are just used to that, like their parents already know how college works already knows the culture here. And for Latino's, that's not always the case. And in high school, you know, I had friends that understood that whereas here it's not as much not I have like one or two friends that could, you know, relate to me.

Speaker 1: [17:45](#) Um, and you said your parents are from Mexico. Can you tell me a story about, you know, moving from Mexico to Mississippi?

Speaker 2: [17:55](#) So my parents stayed there for five years and then got engaged and so when dad moved, not moved but came to, uh, yes. Um, he worked for maybe nine months to a year just to make money to get married and so he would send, you know, whatever he made to a mom and she would like

start planning the wedding and such. So that went on for like nine months to a year. He moved back, um, they got married and then they stayed in Mexico for, I would say three or four months. And then they both came to the US again just so my dad could work to get their own home and such. And according to my mom and my dad, I guess they plan to stay here for a year or two and then they just kind of kept adding like three years and such. Um, and now they've been here since, let's say let's see, for like 21 or 22 years when originally they plan to be here for a year or less. Um, but yeah, they, they just never went back to Mexico. I grew up here. My 11 year old brother grew up here, my seven year old sister grew up here. Um, and when my dad came down here, when he would come back and forth, he would just work for people and now he has his own company. He does like driveways and slabs and just concrete. So I mean it's pretty amazing to me that he went from just coming back and forth, um, just to get money to get married or to get a house to now he learned how to manage and have his own company. So I mean it's a really great opportunity that he had and took and learn how to value.

- Speaker 1: [19:46](#) And you said you identify as Hispanic, so let's say like on forms. What is your race? White, African American, native American or Hispanic. Which one of those boxes would you check?
- Speaker 2: [20:02](#) Hispanic
- Speaker 1: [20:05](#) So do you consider a Hispanic a separate race?
- Speaker 2: [20:19](#) Yes. Um, I mean I don't identify as white or Caucasian or African American or a lot of times it's like, what is it? Pacific islanders or something like that. Um, I don't identify as any of those I identify as Hispanic. And I remember one time Hispanic wasn't on the form and it was like, I don't, I don't know, maybe like Asian, Caucasian, African American, um, and then I want to say the islander one. Um, and then just like other. And also like, what do I put, you know, so I just Kinda went with the Pacific islander one aisle. It's like, I don't know, I panicked. So, I don't know, I think everyone's confused about, you know, race versus, um, versus what is it just ethnicity basically. There's, I, I've googled it before and there's not like a clear, you know, definition.

Speaker 1:

Is there anything else that you want to talk about?

Speaker 2:

I mean, this is really cool, uh, I mean, I'm assuming you really enjoy this and this topic and it's interesting. So I wish you luck in the recording.