

Tristan Estrada transcript

- Speaker 1: [00:00](#) We'll go ahead and jump right in. Are you 18 years or older? Okay. And can you state and spell your first and last name for the record?
- Speaker 2: [00:21](#) Tristan Estrada
- Speaker 1: When were you born?
- Speaker 2: January first 1997. I'm a new year's baby.
- Speaker 1: And where are you from and where did you grow up?
- Speaker 2: I was born in Los Angeles, California, but I say I'm from New Albany, Mississippi just because I spent most of my life in the south.
- Speaker 1: [00:44](#) And when did you move from Los Angeles to New Albany?
- Speaker 2: [00:47](#) When I was about nine years old, so I don't know along the year, but I know I was nine years old and I started third grade in new Albany.
- Speaker 1: [00:57](#) And um, have you lived in new Albany, Mississippi? Yes. Yep. And um, what was your family from La to New Albany?
- Speaker 2: [01:08](#) I guess my parents will say God, but um, my dad had a family friend that he grew up with and they moved to Mississippi and they taught my dad how great Mississippi was and how he was. The cost of living was a lot cheaper than it was in California. So my dad decided to come take a look and that he brought all of us there
- Speaker 1: [01:33](#) and um, what brought you to ask for?
- Speaker 2: [01:36](#) So I've always hurting. Oh, miss and state our big bible reading in, in Mississippi. So you hear about it in school. But uh, there was a time when we went back to California was my freshman year of high school and I was in a magnet school there. I was in a business magnet and they used to talk about the almost accounting school and then I was like, oh, like I know that school I used to live a couple of minutes away from it, you know. So then when we moved back to Mississippi, I went to ole miss. I saw the campus and fell in love.
- Speaker 1: [02:07](#) And have you lived in any other place? It's just new Albany in La and in Oxford. Is an important part of your identity? Why or why not?

- Speaker 2: [02:21](#) I think at this point in my life, race has become important because growing up being Hispanic, I knew that it's not a race, it's an ethnicity, so I would never kinda choose sides almost. But I think now that I'm getting older races something huge. Why? Why? Why are the Hispanic people not considered race where they just ethnicity, you know, doing a lot of research and, you know, kind of educated myself on it. I understand the, I guess I understand the reasoning why it's an ethnicity, not a race, but at the same time it kind of makes you feel lower than people who do have a race to categorize themselves.
- Speaker 1: [03:06](#) And when did it start becoming important? When is your race or ethnicity you start becoming important? You said? You know, it has become, but it hasn't always been this house what I'm assuming. So
- Speaker 2: [03:18](#) I think it's become important with interactions with people. Um, I, I've dated out of race and to know that someone didn't see me as equal because I wasn't their race, that's when I kinda got thrown into a, almost like I was like in a numbness of just not understanding why is that such a big, big thing race because I'm not your race, your parents don't set me and that, that just kind of struck me because if we do it based on that I have no race. So what, you know, like who, who do I, where do I fit, you know.
- Speaker 1: [04:03](#) And when did that start happening? When did you start becoming more aware of your identity
- Speaker 2: [04:07](#) in college? In, in, in the university and in not because I guess the university like unfair treatment in the university, but just person a person and in this whole presidential, latest past presidential election, it was a big Hispanic. People were on the spot. Yeah. So to speak. And I think that's when they, I had a kind of kind of put myself like what am I, who am I and how does my culture play into, to Hawaii I am and what I can be calm.
- Speaker 1: [04:42](#) And um, so how has your experience been an old man? So
- Speaker 2: [04:47](#) yeah, I feel like being, I love Ole Miss, I love home has and I don't think I've ever felt unfair treatment by my professors, but I think the biggest problem that I have had adult mess would be people overlooking me for being Hispanic but never treating me less. Just it's not the fact that they treat me less because that hasn't happened, you know, I would lie if I said I felt like they have treated me less, but I think they will just overlook me or just ignore me. So not giving me unfair treatment but not give me treatment at all. So I don't think that's better than unfair treatment, but that's, I guess that's the worst I've experienced. Just being overlooked.

- Speaker 1: [05:37](#) And uh, what is your major classification or something notable that bottleneck that you have on campus?
- Speaker 2: [05:42](#) So I'm a senior accounting major and I'm also a ca community assistant at the University of Mississippi.
- Speaker 1: [05:52](#) And um, how has your, your work been as a ca? You know, you kind of have like a very personal relationship with your residents in comparison to your identity?
- Speaker 2: [06:05](#) Well, I think it actually goes hand in hand because most people in the south, since there's not a huge number of Hispanics in the south when, you know, they go to college, they go to their residence halls and they have a Hispanic, Hispanic ca and most of them don't know anything about the Hispanic culture. So I kind of realize sometimes that I am probably the first Hispanic they have ever spoken to actually conversated with or actually try to get to know and I think it's, I do get to a personal level and I think even even myself sometimes I realize where we're all the same, we just create these constructs to separate ourselves. So yeah, I think that's what the CCA job has helped me, that I get to engage with people who have never engaged with, uh, with a Hispanic before. Cool.
- Speaker 1: [07:01](#) And um, what are the most important aspects are the most important parts of your life right now? And why? Can you repeat that? I'm sorry? What was the most important aspects or the most important thing to you right now?
- Speaker 2: [07:14](#) Family. It's a big important aspect and I think success, it's a big important aspect because I'm the first generation United States citizen and my family and that was the first to be born in United States. So there's all this type of pressure of I have these opportunities at my family. I remember my parents didn't have so I kind of have to succeed for my family, for myself and for the future, for, for, for my, for my, hopefully my kids in the future. So I think that's the biggest thing right now. I can't worry about small things because the big picture I have to sometimes focus on I have to do something of my life just because I have so much more that some people don't have. You know, I'm legal so I have no problems getting scholarships, financial help when it comes to, to the state or the federal government when there are Hispanics, who do I see? I guess something biggest advantages I have compared to people who are not Hispanic. I speak Spanish and English, they don't, failure's not an option almost. I have all these advantages that some people don't have and all this pressure, I just have to do something with my life to help me, my family and the Hispanic community and then the United States as a whole.

- Speaker 1: [08:38](#) And I'm now more into questions about rates. I didn't. Um, so the US Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity as two different concepts. You seem to have a pretty good understanding of that. Um, what is your ethnicity?
- Speaker 2: [08:52](#) Hispanic. Latino? Yeah. That's what I consider myself Hispanic, Latino. I actually, I know there's a whole argument in debates about Hispanic and the word Latino. I actually don't mind either of them. So yeah, that would be my ethnicity.
- Speaker 1: [09:08](#) What are your parent's nationality? Do you identify with their nationality as well?
- Speaker 2: [09:12](#) Oh yeah, definitely. When people ask me, you know, what are you, I'll be like, well, I'm American. Oh, but, but you're Hispanic, so I guess they don't understand. But my parents were Central American. My Dad was born in Nicaragua. My mom was born in Chicago. My Mom, uh, she is Salvadorian and, but my dad, he got his citizenship. So he is an American citizenship, but he is from Nica Ira. Yeah. And do identify with their nationality. Actually, I think that I do, but it's almost as if my parents' generations don't upset me to accept my parents routes. For example, if I talk to my uncles and say, yeah, I'm Central American, they basically, no, you're American because you don't know the life in those countries. You've never been there. So I think that no matter how much I try to identify as what my parent's nationality is or was, they wouldn't accept that.
- Speaker 1: [10:19](#) Is that something that you find disappointing?
- Speaker 2: [10:22](#) Yes, definitely. It goes down to the argument where I thank God for my parents sacrifices of, of making the trek to the United States, but sometimes I know that because I was born here. There's things that I don't know from my culture and sometimes I feel like I was robbed from that and not from my parents, but from the reasons they had to come to the United States and because I don't have that I can fully identify like them because there's a lot of things that I'm missing from my culture that they have or that they have actually experienced and some things that I would like to experience, but I can't. And how do you identify racially and why? Uh, I don't. And then it's always bothered me. I'm test like standardized tests. If I ask you what's your race? I don't. But if I were to pick one I don't consider myself like, and that it's actually been a big thing. Even though I am a United States citizen and even though I am lighter than half the, you know, American citizens, like the black community. I'm not white and white people wouldn't see me as white either. So if I were to actually choose one, I would choose black because I feel like the black community and the Hispanic community have gone through similar situations and struggles in United States

that there would be more accepting if anything than the white community.

Speaker 1: [11:54](#) Is that something that you found? Have you ever had to kind of assimilate to one group or another kind of gravitate toward one group or another? You know, like we're here in the south. Obviously the shows between the light and black communities are kind of

Speaker 2: [12:06](#) pedestal, right? The problem is we always have. We always make everything white versus black and we fail to see that it's overlooking the Hispanic community. We always make it European African, right? Like we act like that's the root of our problems always. And I don't think so. And I think as far as being Hispanic, where would it, where have I been placed? I think just staying true to my culture has helped me a lot. And I think in fact, being Hispanic is the key to ending racial conflict within the white and black community because you can be white and Hispanic and you can be black and Hispanic and I feel we just use the Hispanic to tie you together. You could kind of move away from those racial problems that people might see. So I think being Hispanic has helped me in that regard that I don't have to side because I have both whites and blacks in my community.

Speaker 1: [13:10](#) And um, do you identify as Hispanic or Latino?

Speaker 2: [13:14](#) Both Hispanic, Latino. It really doesn't matter to me. Um, I know Hispanic is more of a, comes from the Spanish and the Latino comes more from French. But I, I, I actually have no problem with, with, with either.

Speaker 1: [13:29](#) And so studies show that the Latino population is growing in the US. How do you think this will affect the way race or race relations in America?

Speaker 2: [13:39](#) Oh, I think you're going to have to start considering Hispanics in the equation now. Especially when it comes to politics, you know, you are going to have to appeal to the Hispanic vote. And I think when it comes to race, you can't overlook the Hispanic, you're gonna have to see it as a race. Nothing a difficulty in that is again, Hispanics are different. I know some people get offended with Hispanic and Latino because it's an attempt from the United States government or the people in power to try to categorize us when in fact you can categorize Hispanics into Hispanic or Latino because in ourselves we have different cultures, different beliefs, different ideology. So I think the word Hispanic and Latino, just a failed attempt to categorize us.

- Speaker 1: [14:37](#) And how do you maintain your Latino culture while being a student here?
- Speaker 2: [14:42](#) That's actually a good one. Me and my brother tried to have a lunch at least once a week together and we'll in Spanish to each other and just kinda keep our, our Spanish, you know, on par to what it should be. But other than that, it's, there's, there's nothing I can do it, you know, you've seen me at some of the Hispanic heritage. I tried to go to at least one event every year to educate myself on it because I think it would be really dumb to, to assume because I'm Hispanic, I know everything but the Hispanic history, you know, I think that's just now be faulty. So I go there to kind of educate myself and things I didn't know and what I don't know would be like the Hispanics in the United States, right. Since I'm the first Hispanic citizen of the United States and my family, I don't know so much about that Hispanic Americans. So I guess trying to go to events like that, but um, but I don't think it's enough.
- Speaker 3: [15:51](#) Yeah.
- Speaker 1: [15:51](#) And what are some challenges you face with the university as a Hispanic student?
- Speaker 3: [15:58](#) Um,
- Speaker 2: [16:01](#) I'll just say the lack of Hispanic students sometimes, and I know this sounds bad, but sometimes you just want to hang out with people similar to you and be able to talk about similar foods that you've had in China and talking in my language, you know, and sometimes I get, I have on me that I am Hispanic, I'm Hispanic, but it comes to the point where if I don't continue to, to surround myself or engage in Hispanic thing, so that, does that take away from me being Hispanic, you know, and I think that's just what was the biggest thing in the university. There's not a lot that I can do to engage myself in my culture.
- Speaker 3: [17:00](#) [inaudible].
- Speaker 1: [17:01](#) And has anyone ever asked you about your race or your ethnicity and how do you typically respond?
- Speaker 2: [17:06](#) Yeah, it's actually my favorite. What are you American? No, Blake, where are you from? The United States? Um, I mean it's just, it's just funny to me. People just don't know how to engage in that type of dialogue. Or another reaction I get is people hesitant and asking me because they don't want to offend me. And I, and I think that's funny also. So, uh, the best way I've actually had an ask that I don't mind. Someone asked me, you know, where your roots from and that was actually the best way

someone who's ever asked me and I them, well, I'm Hispanic, my parents are from Central America because people always went, oh, so you're Mexican? No, Mexicans in nationality. My parents are Central American. So I guess, yeah, those are mainly the first two. The way people try to approach me. What are you or Kinda shy, shy to ask that question.

Speaker 1: [18:11](#) And has anyone ever assumed something about you because of your appearance?

Speaker 2: [18:16](#) Oh yeah. Oh goodness. Yeah. Almost all the time. When you, when I first encounters almost all the time per person counters people, what types of things would they assume Mexicans, the Mexican culture encompass all of Hispanic culture because that's what you see more of in the United States I guess, or best when people just categorize us. Just the way you look right now. So No. So that, that will be it. And it's mainly that Mexican, he's Mexican and then trying to just correct them and let them know, no, I'm American. My parents are Central American. That's where my, my culture is Central American, my roots are Central American, Mexican.

Speaker 1: [19:01](#) Um, and have you ever experienced any like, I guess uncomfortable situations with people where they're are, you know, maybe you say inappropriate things or asking appropriate questions maybe with any of those students who, you know, this is their first account and like you said, with a Hispanic person, anything like that. Anything come to mind?

Speaker 2: [19:18](#) Um, with students? Not really, but with, you know, just engaging in, in Oxford. I have gotten some, some despicable comments from people. One of them which is really funny with this whole rhetoric against the w in the whole rhetoric that the president of United States has come out with, you know, Hispanics had been targeted. And by that I mean just looking Hispanic, you get targeted. And, and I have had some comments that just, just full of ignorance. And I try not to give more than more attention than it needs. Just comments. Like, you know, if I'm speaking Spanish, oh, in the United States we speak English and it's like, well the United States doesn't have an official language so I can speak whatever language actually want, you know, or, or people ask me are you legal or what? When did you come from Mexico? How? That was one that was really funny. So yeah, just despicable comments that I tried to just ignore, but I think sometimes my silence is an insult to, to, to my community because if I don't, if I don't stop it, people will continue using that type of rhetoric until someone house it and tries to educate people.

Speaker 1: [20:38](#) And do you speak Spanish? If. Yes, how did you learn?

- Speaker 2: [20:41](#) I do speak Spanish and my parents I guess hearing them, I don't recall learning Spanish. The only time I can recall learning Spanish will be my mom making me read books and they so happen to be in Spanish and you know, and I read the Bible in Spanish. So it's one way to kind of get practice in reading and writing. So as far as learning, I guess just because my parents will speak it to the house, I just, it just grew with me I guess
- Speaker 1: [21:12](#) Spanish or English.
- Speaker 2: [21:16](#) I actually liked to save alert both of them at the same time. I think when I was born, I guess my parents did speak Spanish to me but. But they also spoke English. So I, I, my parents didn't study the high school here so they didn't know English. So I guess I learned both at the same time that way to kind of make it easier for me.
- Speaker 1: [21:39](#) And how important is the ability to speak Spanish to the Latino culture?
- Speaker 2: [21:44](#) I think it's really important. I think if you lose, honestly, I feel like the thing that ties me, if anything to being Hispanic, Latino is my language and sometimes I have been unfair and I believed that if you have Hispanic roots but you don't speak Spanish, you are not Hispanic. And I know that's a really aggressive way of seeing it, but I, I think that's an important part of being Hispanic to language because you don't think we would be any different than, than people who are white or black in the United States. And, and I think the moment we lose that, you lose that Hispanic culture in you, so to speak.
- Speaker 1: [22:35](#) And um, how does the university occupied in 22 and 23? How does the university and the community both catered to and omit the Latino?
- Speaker 2: [22:44](#) I don't think they cater to it at all. I mean the best attempts will be the Hispanic heritage when they do events, but why? Why only on a certain month. Why am I, why? Why is my coach or limited to a month. My culture has a Hispanic culture, has a huge influence in United States and in United States history, you know, and it's, it's, it's sad that we don't get the credit that we deserve, you know? So I think if anything, that's the only way they cater to it, but I don't think they cater to it enough. And I think they omitted a lot. I think they omitted a lot. I feel like if the university will recruit Hispanic students as much as they recruit black students, you would have a more Hispanic students settlements, you know, they have the most program. If they would do a program like that for Hispanics, you would increase the enrollment of Hispanics. But I think because we only see

things black and white in the United States, that's why I, like I said earlier were just overlooked.

- Speaker 1: [23:51](#) And um, how do you, you raised us in the south and here
- Speaker 2: [23:58](#) I think it's important to know your race, you know, but I don't think you should use that for like identification, you know, and I think right now because we have people identifying, identifying as white, black, Asian, Hispanic, we do it. But I think if it would just say, hey, we're all Americans, it kind of would take away. But knowing you are a white American, she is white American, she is a Hispanic American, you know, but I don't think we should read too much into that.
- Speaker 1: [24:37](#) And how do you perceive the Latino population affecting the idea of race here in the south?
- Speaker 2: [24:43](#) Well, I mean there's a study that a lot of Hispanics are going to be migrating to the south, I don't know, 10 years or five years. It's going to see a huge increase influx of Hispanic people and I think that is going to affect the idea of race in the south. And I think people, there can be such a large amount of people and then not being able to be categorized as a race, you know, it's a huge amount of people. You have a lot of. Again, we have white Hispanics, Black Hispanics, but then we have Mestizo Hispanics. Right. Which will be me, you know, we're, we're basically Spanish mixed with indigenous people of Latin America. So I guess you would have to categorize us as, as a, as a raised if there's so much. So many of us. Excuse me.
- Speaker 1: [25:34](#) And we already talked about challenges. Is there anything else you'd like to talk about or any other points you'd like to discuss that I didn't ask you?
- Speaker 2: [25:44](#) I think people just need to not stereotype Hispanics because
- Speaker 3: [25:53](#) hmm,
- Speaker 2: [25:54](#) in our group being Hispanic, we are different, you know,
- Speaker 2: [26:01](#) and it's difficult to categorize us as Hispanic because some people don't, don't, don't, don't see themselves the same Mexican cuisine and their culture and their music and their holidays are different in Central American food, music, the culture. And I think it's just to try to, to try to categorize in order to understand it is bad. I think if anything, if you want to categorize, if anything you should understand before you start categorizing. And I think the reason for the categorizing broad term of Hispanic Latino was to try to understand, and I think it has been a failure in the United States.