

ORAL HISTORY LAB (OHL)

University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez

Oral History Interview with Anonymous Narrator

PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with a narrator who chose to remain anonymous. The interviewer also chose to remain anonymous. The interview was conducted on April 11, 2023. This interview is part of coursework done by students at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez.

Readers are asked to bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose.

Note: Since the narrator and the interviewer chose to remain anonymous, the speakers will be identified in the transcript as follows:

- Narrator - N
- Interviewer - I

Any mentions of the names of the narrator and the interviewer in the transcribed text have been replaced with the word "Anonymou" placed in brackets. Also, segments of the text may have been redacted to protect anonymity. Notes placed in brackets indicate where segments have been redacted.

Oral History Assignment

Interviewer: Anonymou

Narrator: Anonymou

Date: April 11, 2023

Location: University of Mayaguez Puerto Rico

[00:00:00] I: Hello my name is [Anonymou] and today we're gonna be interviewing a student from the University of Mayaguez; here in the biology building the time is 12:30 and this is for my oral history assignment. We are gonna be talking a little bit about her and her story, but

before that, we are gonna lay some ground on questions so we can get to know her a little bit better. So starting off, what is your full name?

[00:00:35] N: My full name is [Anonymous].

[Brief redacted segment]

[00:00:48] I: Where were you born and raised?

[00:00:50] N: I was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico and raised in Yauco, Puerto Rico.

[00:00:55] I: What are you studying and what year are you in?

[00:00:59] N: I'm studying psychology and I'm in my second year.

[00:01:02] I: Is it hard?

[00:01:03] N: Yeah.

[00:01:04] I: But what's the hardest class you have in your...

[00:01:09] N: Psychology (laughs*)

[00:01:09] I: Psychology? (disbelief*)

[00:01:10] N: Yeah.

[00:01:11] I: Have you ever visited other countries?

[00:01:15] N: (Short silence*)... United States

[00:01:16] I: United States, where?

[00:01:17] N: A lot of places, Florida..

[00:01:21] I: Vacation? Visiting family?

[00:01:23] N: Yeah, yeah

[00:01:24] I: Do you play any sports?

[00:01:26] N: I used to, Volleyball and Basketball

[00:01:29] I: Were you good?

[00:01:30] N: Yeah

[00:01:32] I: (Looks suspicious*) Were you really good?

[00:01:33] N: Basketball not so much, Volleyball sort of.

[00:01:38] I: Do you like it here? The university, the people, professors, environment?

[00:01:43] N: No not at all (laughs*)

[00:01:44] I: No? Why not?

[00:01:45] N: Laughs*. I mean, I like it. I like all my partners, my classmates and everything but, like some sort of professors I don't like them because they're too rough on students. Even though they have to be like pro students, they are not. The classes are sort of difficult, but I understand that that's how it's supposed to be...

[00:02:07] I: Supposed to be difficult.

[00:02:08] N: Yeah it's supposed to be.

[00:02:14] I: Have you made any new friends since being here?

[00:02:15] N: Yes, since first year, I used to drive to college, but now that I live here, I made more friends, because I can spare my time to meet people.

[00:02:29] I: What are your favorite pastimes?

[00:02:31] N: Reading, sleeping and eating.

[00:02:29] I: What's your favorite book or manga?

[00:02:38] N: No, I just like to read romantic books.

[00:02:44] I: OK, what's your favorite romantic book?

[00:02:46] N: No i'm not gonna say, laughs*

[00:02:51] I: Final question before we actually start the interview, what are you expecting of this interview?

[00:02:59] N: I guess what I'm expecting about this interview is for you to get to know me better and my background.

[00:03:06] I: So now we are actually going to start the interview, she's gonna tell us a story about food? What is it? food or something happened to you, a justice social system yeah yeah something like that. OK, did you ever experience a social issue revolving around food or music?

[00:03:36] N: Around music no, but I around food yes. Two stuff happened to me while I was in the United States, one was in a fast food restaurant and the other one was in a restaurant. I was in a restaurant with my mother and a black lady, she was a police officer, and we were asking for directions for the place we wanted to go eat. We were asking all the people that were around us there were white people, people of color, and we asked her, but and she didn't answer our question she just ignored us, and we like kept asking like politely, but it's some sort of point she just screams back at us and seem like she didn't know, and she didn't want to answer or question. And second one was when I was in the bathroom at a fast food, and there was a person of color in the bathroom stall and I remember that I was leaving the bathroom stall but I knew that the person was leaving the bathroom stall the same time that I was but the person just stayed with the door like partially open because I was white I guess and I felt like a discrimination from both parts.

[00:05:00] I: So how did these experiences make you feel?

[00:05:05] N: It made me feel discriminated, and made me feel humiliated at some point. Because I believe that these day there is supposed to be more acceptance from society, with people of color, and the majority of people on the law, and they should respect the law, and respect everyone, even though, like were different, so I felt like really bad discomfort.

[00:05:34] I: Why do you think it happened to you and your mother?

[00:05:40] N: I don't know, I think it was because like people nowadays like I said there's supposed to be acceptance in society but I guess it's because like the majority of the people they're not completely like 100% accepting people of color or a different culture or a different place and I think that there's still an injustice in that area

[00:06:07] I: Do you think you could've avoided the situation?

[00:06:15] N: I mean I wanted to avoid the situation because I remember my mother she wanted to she wanted to keep asking the question because she was like a police officer so but, I some sort of way I knew that like something was like wrong because I could sense everybody was looking at us and on so I just wanted to leave the place because like I could understand that it was a person of color and im white she's black and like probably the area that I was I was in like accepted for us to be there I guess and yeah and I wanted to avoid that.

[00:06:50] I: Did the police officer know that you were actually like latino, hispanic?

[00:06:57] N: Yeah we entered the place and we were talking in Spanish and right afterwards we asked her the question.

[00:07:05] I: So even though she probably did know that you were a minority like her and she still was disrespectful because of your skin color?

[00:07:15] N: Yeah my skin color and my race where am I crazy

[00:07:22] I: What do you think you would have done or said differentl?

[00:07:28] N: I don't know I think I wouldn't have said anything honestly.

[00:07:34] I: No comeback? "Like hey what the hell?"

[00:07:38] N: No, no come back.

[00:07:39] I: Well it is kind of difficult because she is a police officer, anything you say, you are always going to be at the wrong because she is a police officer.

[00:07:48] N: Siempre están en tu contra (They are always against you)

[00:07:50] I: Yeah, they're always gonna be “oh the police officer is right, you're wrong.

[00:07:53] N: Yeah exactly.

[00:07:59] I: What do you think you should have done in this situation that you didn't do?

[00:08:06] N: I guess, like, I mean, i wasn't the one who was talking, it was my mother, but, i guess i would have ask politely, or I would have ask a different thing, probably if i used the sentence my mother used, i would change the sentence so i could sound more polite, probably felt offended or didn't feel comfortable, but in some way i knew she didn't feel comfortable, so i just was gonna leave it, but like you know, so i don't... in really not sure.

[00:08:44] I: Have you ever talked to anyone about this other than me?

[00:08:47] N: No, I have not

[00:08:51] I: Not even your mother? You didn't like to discuss it afterwards, like “Hey I think she was a little bit...?”

[00:08:58] N: No

PT. 2

[00:00:00] I: So we talked about the first story revolving around a police officer. You said you had a second story, a one that happened in a bathroom in a restaurant? Fast food? Ok.

[00:00:18] N: So the second story is about a black woman that I was in the bathroom stall

[00:00:26] I: Oh my god, you have no good experience with black people.

[00:00:30] N: No I don't and never. I was in the bathroom stall. I was using the bathroom as I normally do, like everybody do. I went when I went outside I heard the lock to the door that was in the bathroom stall right beside me, I knew the woman was getting out of the bathroom, I was like I went to wash my hands and I was like OK let me... if she has to wash her hands, I will

leave her... to give her... I will give her the washing thing... so she can wash her hands first and I'll just wait, but I noticed that she didn't come out. I was like, that's weird, but I felt like someone was staring at me, I was like that's weird, I just kept washing my hands when I went to the dryer I looked, because I was curious, because I didn't hear any sound like I didn't hear that the bathroom door it was right there that the bathroom was really tiny so when I looked I saw that a black woman that was looking at me through the through the through the door the bathroom door and I felt like intimidated because like I was like I'm just using the bathroom I don't know why at the judgment or the why she wouldn't come out. She was done so when I left the door I left I left the bathroom I partially left the door open so I could see if she was coming out right off right after I left the bathroom she came out.

[00:01:57] I: So she was staring you down waiting for you to leave?

[00:02:00] N: Yeah, like that...

[00:01:57] I: Wow that's weird, maybe maybe she felt uncomfortable

[00:02:08] N: With me? Probably

[00:02:08] I: Not cause it was you, it could've been with anybody. Like maybe she has like a social problem

[00:02:15] N: Yeah, it could be, it could be, honestly

[00:02:17] I: Or she is shy.

[00:02:19] N: When I went to the table I told my parents, but it was weird because in the fast food there were white people, black people, there were people of color, so I was like why? So I could understand why she felt uncomfortable.

[00:02:41] I: Was she an older woman or young?

[00:02:19] N: Yeah, she was like in her 30s

[00:02:49] I: That's not old.

[00:02:19] N: Mid 30s

[00:02:52] I: Mid 30s? I'm still young. I'm gonna guess and say it made you feel uncomfortable?

[00:03:00] N: Yeah it made me feel... intimidated.

[00:03:03] I: Intimated?

[00:03:05] N: Like I felt a little bit of racism in the area, but I could be understable if she felt uncomfortable with me.

[00:03:14] I: I think it is because you're really... like you're whiter than the average latino

[00:03:16] N: Than average white.

[00:03:20] I: Like normal puertoricans are not as white.

[00:03:34] N: Yes I am yeah, i'm like paper white, people tend to tell me that i look more american than puertorican.

[00:03:32] I: Are you parents... like are you half/ half or are they both pure..

[00:03:37] N: My mom is half american.

[00:03:39] I: Oh, probably got that half from your mom, is your dad white or?

[00:03:48] N: No.

[00:03:39] I: Is he black? Light skin?

[00:03:51] N: He's light skin, but they are both puertoricans, like my step dad and my dad, they're both full full puertorrican, so my mom is half puertorrican but she's like new yorkrican, so my mom you can see that like american accent

[00:04:44] I: Why do you think that happened to you? Just unlucky again?

[00:04:46] N: I don't know, I think like...

[00:04:18] I: Was it because you were alone?

[00:04:20] N: Probably, i was a child, i was like 10 probably

[00:04:31] I: Could you have avoided that situation?

[00:04:37] N: I think i...

[00:04:40] I: Holding it in? Laughs*

[00:04:11] N: I don't know Smiles*I didn't notice when I went into the bathroom that she was in the bathroom, so I wouldn't have avoided it because I was just using the bathroom for my own purposes. I don't think there is an actual reason why I like to hold my necessities to like... for her to feel comfortable, because it is a public bathroom. Why would I?

[00:05:06] I: She probably couldn't hold it in so...

[00:05:08] N: I mean she... i don't know, oh my god she is holding it in, she is gonna use the bathroom, but i heard the toilet flush, i knew she was done.

[00:05:19] I: Would you have said something? If you felt uncomfortable, why didn't you say anything? Like” hey do you have a problem with me or something?”

[00:05:28] N: I would sound rude what i'm gonna say, but honestly it was because I was young and she was a person of color, mayoralty of the people right now, like you don't know who will actually have racism.

[00:05:45] I: Should have said something in Spanish “ ey tienes un problema? (do you have a problem?)

[00:05:49] N: No, I think if I would have said something in Spanish it would be worst been worse.

[00:05:52] I: Yeah probably.

[00:05:54] N: Yeah, entonces ella lo tiene contra los latinos (she would have been against latinos).

[00:06:02] I: Well I think that concludes the interview, I have some close up questions. What did you think of the interview?

[00:06:13] N: I think it was a good interview, because i have never been asked these type of questions, surrounding injustice or something like racism, or how it felt during, x o y situations (xy situations).

[00:06:29] I: Were my questions too hard or should I have added more or less questions?

[00:06:37] N: Ok so your questions weren't hard, so it was like normal questions, like a normal conversation with another human being and I think yes you should have added more questions because it's an open topic.

[00:06:50] I: What questions do you think you would have added? And if you do add them you can answer them.

[00:06:58] N: Laughs*Ok so i think i would have added, what qualities do both situations represent, what do they have in common? And answering that question, both of them have injustice, because it represents a discomfort in a human being, it could happen to anybody but I don't think it should happen on a normal basis, so it's an injustice topic. Another question I would have asked, if i was you, i think it would have been, what do i think is injustice, discomfort or how i feel about those types of situations, not just me in general.

[00:07:56] I: Your personal view of what you think those concepts are.

[00:08:05] N: So um, I think it's when a human being, like just a normal human being, does something on a normal basis and for whatever situation, so whatever situation... I think I said that twice.

[00:08:28] I: Yeah, you said situation twice.

[00:08:29] N: So... whatever, i think it may represent, those feelings like those bad feelings, those negative feelings, when someone is just having a normal life, when someone is having a normal life you know, just doing what they normally do in a daily basis and another person like comes in to the story or whatever, or the plot, how ever you wanna say it, and wants to arrange in their way the life of the other person and thats where it creates those negative vibes, those negative feelings, negative emotions and that what it clearly represents division. That is why there is a lot of division in society. Whether it be color, religion, or life or what you believe, stuff like that.

[00:09:32] I: Nice, nice definition, I think we are gonna end it there and thank you. I'm gonna state my name, my name is [Anonymous] and my narrator...

[00:09:45] N: [Anonymous]

[00:09:48] I: Thank you for the chance to get to know you a little bit better and the story that you h]gave us today.

[00:09:53] N: It was a pleasure.

[00:09:56] I: And yeah.

End of Transcript PT.1 & PT.2