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Racial Autobiography

I had a normal childhood and I grew up close to my parents. I was made aware of my race at a young age. My mother is Puerto Rican and my father is Colombian and Spaniard. I used to see how other Latinos would interact with each other and I realized that my family didn't act anything like them. It wasn't until I was nine or ten that I realized that people viewed my family and I in a specific way.

Growing up the school that I attended had people of different religions, skintones, and ethnicities. It was a melting pot of all different cultures so as a little girl I was exposed to diversity often. I was aware of the fact that not everyone was Puerto Rican and I honestly didn't care. In my eyes none of that mattered to me and it still doesn't. My teachers did a great job of being inclusive and teaching the students that everyone looks different and that we all come from different places, so I was never confused about any of it.

In the Latino community there is internalized racism, and this is a concern that I have because even though my parents aren't like this. I get comments from family members and from close friends of my family about the fact that my boyfriend isn't Latino. This is such a concern

because who I love is nobody's business and people shouldn't view interracial couples as "bad" or "inappropriate."

One day my dad was driving my younger brother and I to the mall. A gentleman driving an eight-teen wheeler was driving recklessly, to the point where he almost ran us off the road. My father was able to get on the shoulder and drive around him not knowing a cop was nearby watching this entire situation unfold. Instead of pulling over the audacious truck driver he pulls over my father. My father tries his best to explain to the police officer what happened but the police officer starts to make comments about "my kind" and "people like him" then he starts to make comments about my brother who was 4 at the time and about me. His comments made me so upset that I started crying. He issued my father a ticket and my father decided to fight it, it went to trial. The judge ended up siding with my dad after he showed up representing himself. That police officer saw the entire situation and still pulled my dad over and made those comments. That was my earliest memory of race.

This wasn't the only negative experience I've had that was associated with my racial identity. When I was 16 my family and I took a trip to Washington D.C for Easter. There were protesters outside of the Whitehouse telling former President Trump to build the wall and to "get rid" of the "spicks and wetbacks" that are "poisoning the country." These men claimed to be Christians and love the Lord but were spewing hate to every minority that walked by. Every muslim, african-american, hispanic, latino, and jewish person that walked by. My dad and I were able to get a guitarist playing nearby to come closer and put his music on full volume to cast out

what the men were saying and it worked. It broke my heart seeing people who knew Jesus and knew what he stood for speak so much hate to those around them.

In closing there are bad things that I have experienced because I am a Latina, however that doesn't make me ashamed of being one. I love my culture and I love the body God gave me. I feel like as a society we need to do better with how we treat each other and how we speak to one another. As christians we are called by God to be different and to set an example for those around us. Racism is something that everyone should take seriously because it isn't something as simple as a favorite color, this is people's lives.