

said, “You should stop asking me that question and you should start asking me what I’m all about, because now I have improved my Spanish and if you really want to know who I am, then” —

So it’s those sorts of things — to be able to reflect. And I know that maybe that’s not possible, but maybe there is that opportunity and really questioning, because I do — and I know that you have said that as it gets transcribed, we will be able to review that and offer some sort of things, but for busy people like me and you, it’s hard to come in and do that. It’s all a little bit easier just to reflect on. So that might be a suggestion.

ROSS: I would also like to add that I didn’t get a chance to ask you a question about why you aren’t proficient in Spanish growing up.

SÁNCHEZ: It’s the racism of the city, of this country, of this world, I guess. So I grew up, and my parents said, You will speak Spanish. And so I, up to age six, that was my first language, and then, going into the school, you know, my name, Graciela, was suddenly starting to change and it became a Gracie and a Grace, and I had to fight. I remember up to age 12, I kept on insisting that my name was Graciela. But as I kept on speaking, people started making fun of me. I knew that it was better to speak English, so I stopped practicing the Spanish and so I just lost the ability to practice. And I know that historically, our people have been washed — their mouths have been washed out with Joy, as in Joy the liquid detergent — and the people have been penalized. I remember being castigated by our principal for speaking Spanish because, you know, it was white people not knowing what we were saying about them and stuff like that. So you lose it and you have to reclaim it and take it on.

ROSS: And it’s painful to be forcibly stripped of your culture.

SÁNCHEZ: Absolutely, and that’s the cultural genocide of this country.

ROSS: Well, thank you, Graciela, for allowing us to do this interview. I thank you on behalf of Loretta Ross, on behalf of Smith College, but especially, on behalf of the Voices of Feminism Project, which I’m urging to be renamed the Voices of Feminisms.

SÁNCHEZ: Great. OK. Thank you.

ROSS: Thank you.

1:00:30

END DVD 6

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