

Teodora Martínez interviewed by Paul Nunez

July 30, 2020

Harlem, NY

Paul Nunez: Hi, my name is Paul Nunez and I'm interviewing Tedora Martínez and Knife West 137th Street on July 30th. You give me permission to record is oral history interview

Teodora Martínez: Yes, that's fine

PN: Please fill it as most basic information. Are you willing to share your name?

TM: Teodora Martínez

PN: Occupation?

TM: Correctional officer

PN: Racial identity

TM: Female

PN: No racial death some research on gender identity sexual orientation.

TM: Single

PN: If your female or transgender or something like that, where you from?

TM: I'm from New York.

PN: Tell me the story of how of how you and your family ended up in New York City.

TM: Born and raised in Honduras, but I was raised in New York. So, my mother gave her when she was here in New York.

PN: What was your opinion of police before the protest police brutality begin in May 2020 you have any interesting stories, you're willing to share about encounter you have with the police before May 2020?

TM: Prior to the stuff that was going on with the police. It's hard to I mean if I have my encounters with the NYPD as a young adult me and my sister where you know? had an incident in Libra basically stop by the police about something and it just went wrong. We must get my mother involved in. It was it was it was wrong that we would call the types of bitches and you know. It was scary. It was a scary situation, but it's as being young and not knowing and then you know, if we have enough foreign, you know, my mother was a foreigner. So, she really didn't know about the laws and stuff like that about kids. So, you know put us in a compromising position where we didn't know what to do. But you know prior to me prior to all this happening with the police. I didn't have a good rapport. No, I didn't have the report was always afraid of the police. So, I'm about getting stopped and you know question and things like that. So, me as an adult now, I'm just ending now that I'm officer. It's different. I know what to ask what you thinking about the protest on the way there they handle us as civilians because you know me not you know, sometimes I don't have my badge and sometimes I am you know myself and yeah, I know but still I do, you know their things in the police department that do needs to be changed and I agree with the protest. And I have nothing bad to say about the process things just needs to be changed.

PN: What was your opinion of the protest movements before May 2020 house that opinion changed since May 2014?

TM: Prior to May 2020 before what was my opinion? It's the same things just needs to be changed. I just I always thought that I always felt that way if, but it takes a lot of things to change one person can change it sold the protest. Hopefully, we'll would change a lot of things that's going on within the police department and changed.

PN: Why do you think these protests erupted?

TM: You know the way we're getting treated within the community even in and out of communities like me to get racially profiled, you know, we get treated differently than you know, White people and I don't think it's fair. Everybody should be treated the same if you know if you can arrest for certain situations, I think all aces supposed to be treated equally everybody should be treated equally.

PN: How has the coronavirus change your life?

TM: In so many ways where you know, I do work in a prison so there's no circulation. So of course, you know, the virus said it's very prone to get in... a lot of the officers have gotten the coronavirus and some people died, which is a sad situation. It's just being more cautious now. You must wear your mask, you must wear protection, you know clean your station things like that. So, it's just being more cautious, so I won't come home and get give it to anybody that I love you and I care for assault has changed a lot. about My Views about everything disease wise.

PN: How do you think the coronavirus has impacted these protests?

TM: An impact at the protest because you know protesting meaning that you have to be around a lot of people so, you know you're shouting and yelling you're a you know, you're saying what you fail and you still have to be You still have to be cautious about who you are around because you don't know so that's why you have to wear your protective gear get mad, you know try to wash your hands or have hand sanitizer at all times.

PN: Were you involved at all in the protest since May 27th? If so, how so if not, why not?

TM: No I have not been involved in any protest. That's due to my job and I don't want to have any conflict within my job. So no, I haven't been involved in a protest. But do I agree with the protest and I support the quote protesters? Yes. Would it take for you to get involved in protest? So, the only thing I could do is just like donating to the protesting or see if I can donate or you know. Things like that... donating that's what I can do at this point at this point.

PN: What do you think about the cop's response to protests that begin in May 2020?

TM: Some news that I see... I think I think that the police is trying to salvage what they are trying, you know what you're trying to fix. It's it is what it is with the protesting. So., I see a little change maybe into the it needs to be a big change, but I see a little change.

PN: What do you think about your Mayor's response to protests that began in May 2020?

TM: The mayor, the mayor's, the mayor's views right now in the protesting. I don't think that he has said anything bad about the protesting. I think he from what I see that he supports the protesting, so I don't see I don't see anything wrong with what anything that he's doing up with regarding the protesting. So, he has an okay opinion in my side about the how he's handling the protesting.

PN: What do you think about your Governor's response to protests that began in May 2020?

TM: The governor is doing a great job. Governor Cuomo is doing a great great job. I think he is very informative about what it is that's going on in the world. I think he's very he's doing a great job.

PN: What do you think about Congress' response to protests that began in May 2020?

TM: What can they do and what can I say so I don't have an opinion about what Congress has?

PN: What do you think about President Trump's response to protests that began in May 2020?

TM: That could be another subject, but you know the president response is nothing, so I have no opinion about what the president response is.

PN: How have protest in a contest of the coronavirus ship of the way you think race in America?

TM: Can you repeat that?

PN: How have protest in a contest of the coronavirus shifted the way you think of race in America?

TM: It's mixing because it's like now that you know, we have a president that that you know. Let's keep it real... He's a little racist. So it makes somebody that's not a minority treat the minority differently and I don't like that. So, is it has me feeling uneasy, let's just say.

PN: How'd you like to see the movement resolved?

TM: I would like to see that you know, I think I hope that's a cure for the coronavirus. Hopefully, you know, I hope that in some in, you know, hopefully that the does the police would salvage all the stuff that you know that the protesting everybody is that that's everything. How do you say? Everything has to change I think we need a big change, we need communication; I think. Everyone just needs to communicate and change the way that did thinking in mines of thinking and how they treat each other.

PN: Have any protest has been in your facility?

TM: No, no I haven't had. I work in Rikers Island... so that can't happen.

PN: You think there's another way to get your message out with the protest or without the protest?

TM: And it's nothing has happened. That's why we haven't protesting now because I guess because everybody is frustrated so I don't think this is another way. I think this is right now the only way to protest.

PN: Have people been released from your facility because of the Coronavirus.

TM: Yes, a lot of people have been released. Not all inmates have been released. Like the older inmates have been released just took two for them not so, you know. For their safety and their health. So yes, a lot of people have been released.

PN: Do you think America is doing a great good job handling the coronavirus a little by little but I'm in New York?

TM: It has gotten better. So. Hopefully I'll get better with the numbers going down.

PN: What do you think you can do to change the police?

TM: I think the way the police handled like I said before the way they handle the minorities; they need to change how they handle us minorities, us Hispanics, us Black people, us Mexican... It just doesn't matter what race is just we need to be handled or we need to be treated the same, equally that's what needs to be changed. We need to be treated equally, that's it.

PN: That's good. Thank you for your time.