

Chris: What is your name?

Wilson: Wilson Trabal Figueroa

Chris: And can you spell it for us please.

Wilson: Sure first name Wilson W-I-L-S-O-N, last name Trabal T-R-A-B-A-L hyphen Figueroa F-I-G-U-E-R-O-A.

Chris: Alright, and what is your date of birth?

Wilson: 6/20/1982.

Chris: And where are you from?

Wilson: I am from Añasco, Puerto Rico

Chris: Where are you currently living?

Wilson: In Colchester CT.

Chris: And have you, how long have you lived in Colchester?

Wilson: Now... little over two years.

Chris: OK umm what's your family history in the United states?

Wilson: I believe we are the first. My my mom I think it's the first in our family to move here permanently. So, we didn't have much family here when we got here.

Chris: OK and why Connecticut?

Wilson: Because her sister had had been in Connecticut before.

Chris: Oh! OK.

Wilson: So, she told her that Connecticut was a place that she knew, so she shot for Connecticut

Chris: Alright yeah, I mean it's better than New York City (laughs)

Wilson: I guess so. (Amused)

Chris: Umm yeah what was the actual immigration process like I mean here from Puerto Rico, so you don't have to worry about citizenship but...

Wilson: Right. For us, well the hardest part about coming here was not knowing how to get any you know work, by at least I mean not obviously, not I, I was a child, but my mom not knowing how to get any sort of income or anything so just coming here with a few bucks and trying to find a place to live and then how to integrate into some sort of a you know income generating so she had to go through the process of dealing with the government not knowing how to do that.

Chris: Right

Wilson: Or to get any assistance.

Chris: Yeah, for sure so the the employment was the biggest adjustment?

Wilson: I think for for us yes, I mean the the coming here was pretty standard you know bought a plane ticket. And you know used up all the money that we had to do that (Both Laugh) and then got here.

Both: "yeah yeah."

Chris: and what was the reason that you oh I guess your mother decided to come here and not stay in Puerto Rico?

Wilson: it's a little bit tragic but we, my brother... my brother passed away and she just didn't want to be there anymore so.

Chris: Yeah

Wilson: she thought that she could come here, and we'd have a better life up here.

Chris: Yeah, so you got your own business now so you're doing alright for yourself.

Wilson: That's right that is right yeah it worked out.

Chris: I mean that, that I didn't realize that I'm sorry if that was painful.

Wilson: I appreciate that, but it's fine.

Chris: The, I mean the family history is that really important to you where you come from your family back in Puerto Rico?

Wilson: Oh absolutely, I mean, it I I was I was raised you know you know my my younger years in Puerto Rico as a child so I I I consider it home even though I've been here now the majority of

my life since I came here when I was 11, 12 OK so yeah so I I but yeah the history of Puerto Rico the family in Puerto Rico the values yes they're they're big they're big in my heart yeah.

Chris: Very cool in, in, well, Speaking of that since you've been here most of your life how would you identify yourself like a cultural identification that you apply to yourself.

Wilson: I'm not entirely sure I understand the question.

Chris: Like some people, like they would prefer Latin American, Hispanic or just American your your cultural identification for yourself.

Wilson: Hmm I don't think I've ever really given that too much thought I think, I think of myself as an American I guess I would say Hispanic America

Chris: OK OK.

Wilson: If I had to put a classification on.

Chris: Yeah and we discussed you you do feel connected to that and what ways do you continue to stay connected to your heritage.

Wilson: Well I do, I I actively try my best to continue to speak Spanish on a regular basis I think it's a big deal to try to keep my language it's not easy to do when you're in a culture where mostly everyone that you deal with speaks English on a regular basis right so I I actively try to keep that alive and then you know the visits you know to the to the homeland I guess if you want to call it that.

Chris: Yeah, for sure.

Wilson: You know, to get to just reconnect with it yeah that's how I try to keep, keep it alive.

Chris: Do you think to speak Spanish in the house with your older son.

Wilson: I do not I I was just going to say, I you know if I'm being totally honest I I've done a pretty terrible job (both laugh) at keeping it alive with the family but you know it might sound a little weird but on my own.

Chris: Yeah yeah.

Wilson: I will go through exercises to keep my language.

Chris: Sometimes you have to talk to yourself to an intelligent conversation.

Wilson: I literally do, or at least one that I would understand. (Both laugh)

Chris: And what story in your life is most significant to you, like culturally.

Wilson: culturally... story?

Chris: like a family story or something that a story you were told as a child that... that revolves around your childhood in Puerto Rico.

Wilson: Ohh again another the tough one. Because I didn't give this too much thought. There's so many wonderful things about the family and how you know how everything came about. Story that I can remember the most... would probably be... oh man I don't I don't have one specific.

Chris: That's fine.

Anna: I kind of had a question.

Chris: Sure!

Anna: You talked about the like Puerto Rican values were important to you, what were like what are some of those?

Wilson: So, it's it's a lot like most, I think, most Latin cultures a lot of time with the family like very very very close with the family there's but then again we also grew up in a place where there wasn't a lot of money so there wasn't a lot of entertainment we were each others entertainment.

Chris: Right.

Wilson: So, sitting around a table every day and just talking about the day was a normal thing. You know to the point where it was what you, that's what that was your entertainment you didn't watch anything so that's a value. Appreciating the land was a huge thing too just cultivating things being ready for you know when you live in an island, which Puerto Rico is. There's a lot of natural weather occurrences or that could be pretty bad weather storms or tornadoes or power outages so we we valued having a, a plan or like we always had a plan. You know we talked about like how we were going to deal with this and that and we had water stored and so taking care of what we had and being a family like really really close with that's a value that I I try to I try to bring home now in in in you know in a new way but same same idea.

Chris: Sure. (To anna) good? (She nods.) I don't remember were you, did you serve? are you a veteran?

Wilson: I am not a veteran.

Chris: OK is there anything else about your history, family, heritage that you wanna put on the record for everybody.

Wilson: Well this I don't know that this relates specifically to being Hispanic but if I had to put anything on the record that I would love for the world to remember would be a very strong mother. That went through a very very difficult time getting us to a place where we can do better and she went through a lot and she was a Spanish mom and she had those values that I talked about the land and and the family and love and patience and she went through heck to get us here. And it was not easy to just embark on a journey with absolutely no idea what was on the other side and taking your kids with you to do that. So if anything went on the record it would be Petra Figueroa, my mom.

Chris: OK and how do you how do you spell her name?

Wilson: Petra is a P-E-T-R-A and then her last name Figueroa F-I-G-U-E-R-O-A.

Chris: Awesome, well, thank you for coming today if there's anything else that occurs to you we'll be here until three you also have my number you can just text me or call me I put it on there too I appreciate you coming man thank you very much.

Wilson: No problem! Thank you.