

AZÚCAR

ANTONYA SILVA

AUDIO SEQUENCES - ENGLISH TRANSLATION

INTRO / ENTRY SEQUENCE

René – Restaurant/ Guesthouse

»Yes, I had to laugh too, because there was never anyone alone on the street. There were always three or four or five of us on the street. And a buddy of mine from Camagüey (Cuba) always accompanied me, but he was here. And then we were in a restaurant, at that time a restaurant was called “Gaststätte” (guesthouse), that word, “Gaststätte”. And I was there with him and a few other friends of mine. And there was a woman, she drank a lot, a German woman. Maybe she was drinking or something, I have no idea. She came up to him and put her hand on his skin. Because she couldn't believe that he was so black, so dark. I think she thought he had color or something. So I said, "Look at how people are reacting here. Maybe they haven't seen Black people or something." And then when we came in, the Germans looked so strange. And then, every now and then, they said, "Please keep your voice down!" Because we were too loud. We are still loud. The Germans sometimes grumbled. And also with my hair, that was a bit funny. Some women really liked my hair. Because I have curly hair. Long hair and curls. Back then they compared me to Costa Cordalis. Do you know this singer? At that time they said he had hair like Costa Cordalis. But after that I had so many friends, girlfriends, boyfriends, acquaintances, work colleagues and then I got on well with everything. And then my name was very well known in this small but beautiful town, Roßwein.

Mary- Russia

»My parents met in Russia during their studies. And that's also something I'm slowly coming to terms with, German-German history in my own family history. My family is very privileged. It was usually the case that contract workers, Cuban contract workers, that was actually the standard, that they had been in Germany. I don't know very many Cubans who studied and were actually allowed to stay. Especially not many Cubans who went to Russia and then came to Germany in the GDR and were allowed to marry here. So really a very small percentage were allowed to marry, that was not wanted by the regime at all. The regime did not want people to be allowed to marry at all. So those were two things that struck me while I was doing genealogical research, that I saw that my family was very privileged. Firstly, they are both university graduates. Were both also studying abroad. Even for my mother, who is German...studying in Russia was special. That also means that it is connected with a lot of privileges. And then the two of them met and got married here in Germany in the GDR, which was also... That was not the custom. And it was not discussed in our family. It was never discussed. I don't think my family reflects that at all, that they were very privileged in GDR times. And maybe where these privileges came from. This is

a chapter that I would definitely like to research, because I have the feeling that there is a great lack of interest in my family, and I am interested in why there is such a lack of interest. And just because I want to know as well. I want to know... it was just not the custom in the GDR to marry a black man from Cuba and the probability is simply very high that I will find files from the Stasi«.

PART 1:

Mary – You have a feeling but no knowledge

»For example, you have a Santería pearl necklace, and you have only a feeling, but no knowledge.

You have the taste of a mango and that is a feeling, not knowledge. And to have, so to speak, quite a lot of feelings that can't be assigned, but that with you have an attachment. And you can't assign yourself, where does this connectedness come from, why do I react to a certain music? Why do I react to a certain smell? Why do I react to certain colors, shapes and so on.

To remember that this was a part of my father. That it's a part of my family who believe that and where it's part of their life, that matters. And even if I don't understand all the contexts... umm... it just helps me feel connected to the people who are neither physically nor, so neither physically close in the geographical sense nor physically close in the sense of the body is close-by«.

DE (Original in spanisch)

Armando – Sohn der Yemaya

»Nun, um die Wahrheit zu sagen... Wenn ich ehrlich bin, dachte ich, sei ein Sohn von Elegguá. Alle sagten mir, dass ich Elegguás Sohn sei, weil ich mich so benahm. Es machte mich sogar wütend, als man mir sagte, ich sei der Sohn von Yemaya. Denn... es ist etwas... dass man sich in einen Orisha *verliebt*, und er ist weder dein Vater noch deine Mutter, noch ist er dein Orisha... deshalb ist es nicht gut, sich in einen Orisha zu verlieben. Yemaya ist für mich die Größte. Sie ist die Größte. Es gibt mehr Wasser als Land. So ist es. Man sagt, sie ist die Mutter, sie ist die universelle Mutter, so heißt es. Natürlich bin ich stolz darauf, ihr Sohn zu sein«.

EN (original in spanish)

Armando – Son of Yemaya

Well, to tell you the truth.... If I am honest, I thought I was a son of Elegguá. Everyone told me I was Elegguá's son because of the way I acted. It even made me angry when they told me I was Yemaya's son. Because... it is something... to fall in love with an Orisha, and he is neither your father nor your mother, nor is he your Orisha.... So it is not good to fall in love with an Orisha. Yemaya is the greatest for me. She is the greatest. There is more water

than land. That's how it is. They say she is the mother, she is the universal mother, so they say. Of course, I am proud to be her son.

PART 2

René – May 1st

»My first impression was... very very surprising for me. A big surprise. Because, I forgot, back then, that it was May 1st. May 1st, 1982. 7 o'clock and thirty minutes I think. We landed at Schönefeld airport in Berlin. The plane landed at that time. And we transferred, so we drove, from Berlin to Roßwein, this small town of Saxony, there was our accommodation and the institution where we then studied and worked.

And this route from Berlin to Roßwein, there were many small towns and there were many people on the road, with flags and so on. So I said, "Gee, what's going on here?". And after that, I thought for a moment, that was because we came to Germany as Cubans and maybe they were waiting for us. I was 18 years only. And afterwards I realized that I sat down next to a buddy of mine and I said to him, "You, see how people react. And he said, "Hey, René, take a look, too. Many signs: May 1st". A "one", a number and then "May". Mai in German, but in Spanish "Mayo". Then I reacted immediately.

Yes, man, that's May 1st. Because Germany was a socialist country back then, that's why they celebrated. May 1st. Just like here in Cuba«.

PART 3

René – sugar

»Azúcar? When I hear Azúcar, I immediately associate it with Cuba. Because the plantations of sugar, and the brown sugar, they are from Cuba. That was one of our national products, what we exported. At that time, the Cuban economy was very high. There was sugar, rum and tobacco or cigars. Those were the three important products of Cuba. And coffee«.

René – My daughter

»Hurt a lot. Yes. Because... I left my first child here. My daughter. And then, I should normally go back. But, I was then in Cuba and after the three months in the hospital... because I hadn't been in the army yet, the government sent me to Africa, to Angola. To the Angolan war. Yes, and that was a sad and very difficult time of my life. So our goal there was to free the Angolan people from apartheid, from South Africa. And Zaire. Zaire, that's a neighboring country of Angola. And South Africa and Zaire attacked Angola at that time, with the support of USA. And we Cubans, we helped Angola, the Angolan government or the population at all to free themselves from South Africa and Zaire. And also from the

Americans. And we had the sup, -support (*Unterstützung* - this word is always hard for me), from the Soviet Union at that time. And yes. That was our goal. The freedom of Angola.

For myself, my goal was that I survive. And that I come back to Cuba. Because many of my colleagues did not have the same luck as me. Many died there. And yes. That was sad for me. That was very sad, because there I lost so many buddies there. And there I was always, always, always, every hour, every day, thinking about my daughter. Always. The hope that I would see my daughter again. Because for us it was forbidden, from the Cuban side, it was forbidden that we write letters to foreign countries. We were only allowed to send letters to Cuba, but not to other countries. And I didn't write any more letters. Because at that time it was not like today. You couldn't use your cell phone to make a phone call, or to write, or to make a video, or something. Video call or something. It wasn't like that before. No cell phone with you, nothing. Just letters. You write a letter and after a month you get the answer or something. And during that time I couldn't write a letter to my daughter's mother, nothing. And then she thought I was dead, in the war. And she didn't contact me anymore. No letter to Cuba, nothing.

And thank God, in Africa I met a German colleague. They were there through a German company from the GDR. It's called IFA, IFA Kombinat. A company from the GDR.

And these people, the Germans worked there for Germany and were sent there via Germany. And then I got to know them and made good friends. And one of the Germans asked me, "How do you know German so well?". And that's when I told my story, that I was here, I have a daughter and no more contact and so on. And then... we were... Our relationship in Cuba was over and we went back to Cuba, and the Germans went back to Germany, of course. And then the reunification came, the wall broke down. All capitalismo here. And he wrote to me, "René, I know how the situation is in Cuba." And he sent me money, just like that, with the one letter, to help me.

And then after five or six months, he sent me a letter - sorry - he bought my plane ticket so that I could fly back to Germany. Yes, and then I flew to Germany. But everything was capitalismo here. That was a new life for me again, in a new country. Because this Germany... this was a completely different Germany. I landed in Düsseldorf. And at that time I was in Berlin, socialism, GDR. And my new life in Germany, that was capitalismo. My God, big difference. And then yes, I came to Germany. I looked for my daughter, I didn't have any luck. And so the time passed again, without contact with my daughter. And after a few years I wrote to a program. It's called "Missing." Do you know this program, "Missing"? And they found my daughter. And that's when I had contact, just by phone. She called me, we talked. She cried a lot, I cried a lot. Then I said: "My dear daughter, I am here, I am your dad, I am alive, I am not dead. We have to meet and then I can explain everything to you. And she said, "Okay, I'll think about it. And then I will contact you again". And so far nothing«.

Mary – how many Black people

»How many Black people died for this sugar? White gold. In exchange of Black bodies«.

PART 4

René – freedom

»Freedom? Freedom is when you can fly anywhere. For example, on vacation. That you can say everything you want, what you feel. When I can express my feeling, say my opinion. And also when you can say your opinion, that is also freedom. No matter what subject, or about the government, or about politics, that's also freedom. When you go shopping, and buy what you want, that's also freedom. And if you work all year and then say you want to plan your vacation, say I'm going to Jamaica for two weeks, two weeks to Cuba or wherever, that's also freedom«.

Mary – language

»Yes, because it's just not our language, period, end of story. We speak a colonized language. We don't speak the language that our ancestors spoke. And with that, a lot of meanings are lost. Many contexts are lost. And we have, so to speak, only a tiny glimpse of what is actually being said, and most of it we can only sense. Because we simply don't have the language for it, literally don't have the language for it. Because it has simply been taken away from us. How many Afro-Cuban people in Cuba don't speak Spanish, don't speak a colonized language? So all the languages that I speak are colonized languages, that's German, that's Spanish, that's French, that's English. These are all languages, from colonies. And of course, that has been deliberately used to cut the connection among people. And in Cuba, where the majority of the enslaved people, so to speak... The transport routes went quite often via Cuba, or the majority of the enslaved people, they were housed in Cuba, so to speak. They were segregated there. That was tactical, so that people could no longer communicate, could no longer speak a language. If you can no longer speak the language and communicate, then it becomes more difficult to show solidarity. Then it becomes more difficult to find forms of resistance, to break out, to survive. Consequently, it's also so important for me that the word "Azúcar" is not just "Azúcar," but it's really, what person is saying it? And what voice is saying it? And what tonality? That's all information that, broken down, connects to something that should be cut off. But it hasn't been cut. It's still there, but it's very difficult to grasp verbally«.

Yoyo – sugar

»Azúcar is a very positive word that has many meanings. So Azúcar, from the terminology it means sugar, this sweet product. But azúcar is a very positive word. Azúcar, you say Azúcar when you are happy. For example, when you're dancing and you're full of energy, you're full of adrenaline and then you say "Ey, Azúcar!" it's like "woow! Vamos! lets got! Or

if you're at a certain moment at the party when people are sitting down and you're like "Guys, come dance! Azúcar!" It's like "Let's go guys". It's definitely a very positive word that brings a lot of joy. It's the moment when people are really having fun and people are totally open. It's a very important word that was shaped by Celia Cruz«.

DE (Original in spanisch)

Armando - Zucker

»Es kommt darauf an, wie ich es sage. Wenn Du "Zucker" sagst, hängt es davon ab, wie du es sagst. Der Ton, in dem du es sagst, würde es wohl sein. Wenn du "Zucker" so sagst, wie es zum Beispiel Celia Cruz sagt, ist es wie "genießen". *Agua!* [umgangssprachlich für besonders toll], Du weißt schon, so wie "Ja maaan!" oder so ähnlich, verstehst du? Es geht nicht wirklich um Zucker, aber es ist wie ein Ausdruck von "Agua", "genieße es", "los gehts", so etwas in der Art, oder? Das meinen wir. Zucker, es ist wie: wie toll«.

EN (original in spanish)

Armando - sugar

»It depends on how I say it. When you say "sugar", it depends on how you say it. The tone in which you say it would probably be. If you say "sugar" the way Celia Cruz says it, for example, it's like "enjoy". *Agua!* [colloquial for especially great], you know, like "Yes maaan!" or something like that, you know? It's not really about sugar, but it's like an expression of "agua", "enjoy it", "here we go", something like that, right? That's what we mean. Sugar, it's like: how great«.

DE (Original in spanisch)

Naomy – Zucker

»Zucker. Ich sage dieses Wort sehr oft. Zucker. Freude. Positivität. Energie. Süße. Harmonie. Ich liebe dieses Wort. Süß sein. Freundlichkeit. So viele Dinge. Alles positive«.

EN (original in spanish)

Naomy – sugar

»Sugar. I say that word a lot. Sugar. Joy. Positivity. Energy. Sweetness. Harmony. I love that word. To be sweet. Kindness. So many things. Everything positive«.