

*Latina Women Organizing Immigrant Workers:
Conversations with UNITY Housecleaners Cooperative*

by Drucilla Cornell

The issue of unpaid wages and does compensation grow to pay a notice every, his year when Linda Chavez is
no longer, the secretary of Labor Secretary - Bush's Commission - is disclosed, Ms. Chavez had not
negotiated with her - she described her relationship as one of cooperation not employment, her non-union status, and when she

O r o e n s co e e go oge her nd essen y d o , p for of h , they ned ,he genc es ,o
gree o do- Frs , they o d on y ch rge ,he eg fee- econ d , they o d n , p ce o en n o s , h , p d ess
h n , he n ge- h rd , they o d req re , h , o h , he or er nd , he e p oyer , o s gn con r c , h , se
o , the or ng cond , ons nd ges- E erylone o d s gn nd , he do es c or er o d h e copy of , he
gree en- , o d e , he frs , e , h , here o d c y e h nd e on h , do es c or ers res pposed , o
e do ng-

n y 99 e nched , he c p gn- , or ng , h , he s ppor of or nd co n , y nd re go s es
h , e h e ro nd , he s nd fer o , n ne on hs ere e oge f e of , he s genc es on , he s nd , h , e
r , g e d o s gn , he s e en of prnc pes y press r ng , he - , e d d , h s y phone c s e , er c p gns
s c y y press r ng , he genc es , hro gh s rrog e c en s- , e o d , e peop e , o ch rch n co n , y
gro p , h , s ppor ed s nd h e , he r e e , ers or e phone c s or send f es s y ng on , h re fro
yo r gency n , yo d here , o , he s e en of prnc pes- he ch rch or org n z , on o d e se s y e
e o r e ers fo r , ho s nd , hree h ndred or ff y e ers , h , they sho d no h re fro yo n - Long
s nd CAN , he Long s nd Progress e Co , on nd sor s of gro ps ro nd Long s nd he ped s p , h ,
press re on , he genc es”

he res s of , he c p gn ere ed- One d ff c y s , h , enforce en s eco ng f , e o - One so , on , o
h , p ro e s , o , r n , o , he - he pro e s h nded o er , o , he Dep r en of L or nd , he A ,orney ener - he
response of o h , he Dep r en of L or nd , he A ,orney ener ere d s ppo n ng- he o her de s f yo c nno e , he
o n , he d d fferen y” , her , h n , ry , o org n ze co pe , e gency , he , or p ce Pro , ec se o , ro for co oper , e , h ,
o d sho , h , ho sec e n ng co d e d gn f ed or- And so , he h sory of N Y eg n-

n ce N Y s , r e cooper , e r nn ng , he org n z , on n o es of , he e ers n , or dec s on ng processes-
A e ers h e , o ser e , e s n one co e e , h , es , he Cooper , e r n- h s , hese o en or s ho sec e ners nd
s c e e ers of , he Cooper , e- he ho e po n s , h , they con ro , he cond , ons of , he r or - N nn es on , he o her h nd
re con ro ed y , he r or nd ndeed so e es s , ec ed , o , he h s of , he r oss-

n ser es of ee ng s s er nd f n er e ed Mo n c D z , he d n s r , e s s s n , o N Y her o her
Zo odr g ez nd , he r co e g e M-E-A-

Interview with Zoila Rodriguez

Q: Zo ho d d yo co e , o , h s co n , ry
Z.R. o d d co e , h s co n , ry e een eg (she laughs) nd of h d , o go , hro gh orders , here ere so n y
peop e co ng , e ere c y , h , e co d ge s , o co e , o , h s co n , ry- No n 9 , s , he frs , e , h , c e s
n e ch nge s den- hen c e , ce nd en ho e nd ed , here fo , en ye rs- c e c for e ye r nd h f nd en
c ho e- And no e h e , en ye rs ng n Ne Yor - No , h s seen h rd , o ge o , ne fe- For os of , he peop e
s seen e , er fe- For s s h rd for so n y re sons-

Q: n E dor yo ere se cre ry-
Z.R. Yes-

Q: h , d d yo or s hen yo f rs c e here
Z.R. o se eeper nd y s , er-

Q: h , ere , he ho rs
Z.R. - Fro - - o yo no h e er ho rs nd ee ends- h d go- s dr er for , he ds so
h d , o go hene er , they ere ge , ng off fro , he p ry for , he s e s ry-

Q: o , they p d yo s ry- No o er e-
Z.R. Ne er-

Q: D d , hey g e yo c , on , e
Z.R. hey d d- One ee -

Q: Did they pay you for the collection?

Z.R. Yes, they did.

Q: How do you describe your experience working in the "military"?

Z.R. It's very hard to describe, although I think the people were going to sponsor me. They did find the papers, too, and I described them.

his one- hey ys, ry, o A er c n ze s ch s, hey c n , ne er, he ess , s s , h rd or d co n ry- o e n , don ,
no h , o d do o er, here- o d pro y e good secre ry ec se no o h ng ges ,

Q: o d d yo eco e secre ry

MD: s c y sn c no free, r n ng schoo nd , s s c, r n ng schoo fro , ony Broo - , oo , e co rse , no
o er on hs- And, hey re free f yo h e o nco ef y so , he, e nd s , o nco ef y
pp ed for , h y fr end- he ro gh e, here nd, hey s ed , s e ny o her schoo for y green c rd nd , o d, he h d
os , nd , s co ng, h , h d, o ppy for no her one nd , s co ng- And s ed for, hree on hs nd, he fo r h on h
en y nd hen ne se es er s red, hey re zed, h , h d s d ed se es er , ho , proof of green c rd nd, hey ns s ed
hey needed , for, he ne , se es er- co dn , go c ec se d dn , h e , - o h on y e rned fe h ngs- e n
h, e er d d e rn , z ng , no nd s e rn ng , s , ng, he ed c / ss s nce co rse nd on y e rned, he
off ce s s- d dn , ge , o, he ed c p r ec se of y eg s , s- h , s ys no s ce for e ery, h ng espec y for
schoo ec se e n , c n see, he r po n f yo , re no go ng, o e here fore er hy o d, hey g e yo free schoo B , f
here s y, h , - h , he go ern en or, he s e co d he p , e n h e een here, e e ye rs- h , s co n s s e
ng here- g ess, hey sho d ge, he po n, h , no go ng ny here nd, h , no h e f y here- o don , no h ,
he so , on e , s , ng for eg res dence nd for ny, h ng, o h ppen-

Q: Mon c ho do yo e , h, he n ey o , he poss y of yo r e ng depor ed nd yo r d gh er s c , zen of, he
- - nd no of E dor no e ng o ed, o go , h yo

MD: , ry no , o h n o , h , ec se hen do , re y sc res e ec se h , h ppens s , h , o d ge depor ed nd
o d e n E dor nd o d pro y e good one y o er, here , y d gh er o d e ef here ec se she s no
c , zen of E dor nd she o dn , re y e ccept ed ec se she s h f Afr c n A er c n nd, he co n ry d scr n ed
g ns o her r ces espec y, he d r r ces- e n , hey o e gr nos, h , re h e A er c ns- Once yo re , e , d r er nd
e en f yo re dor n yo re no ny, h ng- o d on , *(she answers the phone.)*

Q: D d yo nd yo r o her, ry, o e , oge her nd h , s, he ne gh orhood here yo r o her ed s ho se eeper nd
n nny e

MD: he ed n h , e e e s os y e sh ne gh orhood nd e n ds ge c rs hen, hey , rn s , een so , s
dd ec ss r ch ne gh orhood- o sn , re y en h s s c o , o ng n o h , nd of ne gh orhood ec se , e n ,
s good nd e ery, h ng , d dn , h e, he s e f n nc c gro nd, hey d d- o s oo ed , s, he ho se eeper s d gh er
ec se sn , r sed, h , y- No, h , h n , s d , sn , r sed, h , y nd s yo ng , h , e- And n E
dor sn , ho se eeper s d gh er s n off ce or er s d gh er nd for e , s g ch nge , s g ch nge
nd here s g d fference e een e nd, he o her ds- My o her ren ed roo fro peop e e ers of ch rch , h , e
h d e n os y P er o c n nd c ne gh orhood here en , o schoo - hese peop e nd of, oo e n s, he r d gh er
yo no , hey ere ys re , h , y o her s on, he phone os of, e nd, red, o e s cose, o e s she co d e
fro d s nce- he d, ry, o co e , o, he ho se on nd ys nd Mond ys- o h , s o r ng, oge her, e- And , s e h s
for ny ye rs n e c y, red, o o e n, oge her hen se gh een- se gh een nd , ho gh co d r e, he or d
And d dn , need y o her, hen- o , d dn , org h , - derg - 5 Ed, re r d - 9 5 sh h D 5 y - s - 5

Q: And d d yo r o her e e her or p ce ,h ny enef

M.E.A. ... s or ng o h , the f c o r y n d , h , he o en of , he Cooper , e- ... e een or ng , o ye rs here- n o her or ds
s or ng ee ends , the Cooper , e- ... rd ys- Bec se e h e , he ee ngs here on nd y nd en , o , he f c o r y
Mond y , hro gh Fr d y- , e ee here on nd y once on h- On nd y c e , o , he or shops-

Q: , h , de yo co e , o , he Cooper , e

M.E.A.: , oo co rse on or rghs- , hen , oo , , hen s r ed y or , the f c o r y , oo he p ng , he o her o en or ers
, o e rn , he r r gh s , h , e h d , o co p n o , the n on for , he , o no , re , s , he y , hey d d- , e ere ye ed , p n sh-
sh." y , he oss- Bec se e o d s h , hy he de s f o , orders , h , ere ery he y- , e o d f n , he orders ,
e c ed , here sho d e n , o p c p , hose , h , ere ery he y- And , h , s , hen , he oss o d se , h , nd of- d r y
ng ge Yo see- , e the o en p c ed p , he o es nd e org n zed , he - For e p e , here s , h s shee , h s of
orders , h , h d , o e , en o , perf es ed c ne- h , e er , he c en h d ordered nd e h d , o p c , h , p- And of , h ,
s , oo he y ec se , here o d e p o s nd p ns

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