Clashes cont. from pg. 1

make an advance toward her. While this behavior is expected (and virtually accepted) from a hard-hat construction worker on a New York City sidewalk, Cofer tells stories of such advances from middle-aged businessmen and many others. Cofer presents these experiences in a very negative light, accurately indicating that the cultural miscommunication is largely the fault of the mistaken Anglo-American male in the story. Men, especially those who are educated and well-acquainted with acceptable behavior toward women in society, should know better than to treat a woman as a sexual object to be sought after rather than as a human being with dignity.

The second problem of traditional Puerto Rican dress is that it conflicts with the standards of traditional professional attire. The flamboyant style of Latin-American women, coupled with their love for excessive jewelry, is not well-received in the professional community. Cofer tells a story of when her teacher asked the class to dress for an interview on career day at her school. Cofer explains how her teacher and peers criticized her and the other Latin-American students in her class for not dressing properly according to Anglo-American standards. This fashion misunderstanding presents problems for Latin American girls. First, the ignorance of what is acceptable professional dress makes it difficult for them to compete with Anglo-American job seekers who know how to dress according to professional standards. Not understanding the standard for professional

presentation of one's self makes it difficult for Latin-American women seeking higher professional positions, even if they are well educated and qualified for the job. Secondly, the fashion issue presented reiterates the issue of men's misinterpreting the signals sent by Latin-American women's dress. The employer will see the display of flamboyant color, tight clothes and exposed skin and dismiss the woman because he or she sees the applicant's suggestive attire as a come-on, or the employer will hire her on the spot for her seemingly brazen flaunt of her body. Whatever the situation, these women will be seen only for the clothes they wear and not for the intellectual contributions that they can make to the community.

Professional dress is largely an area where Latin-American women need to take some cues from the women around them. Even for the properly dressed Anglo-American woman, the workplace is difficult to navigate without experiencing some type of harassment for being a woman. Add flashy clothes and exposed skin to the mix, and the situation is a sexual harassment lawsuit waiting to happen. Latin-American women should consider covering up and toning down the color, not only to advance their careers but also to protect them from the discrimination in the work place that already exists.

However, the issues offered by Cofer in her article do not exhaustively address the clashes between Anglo-American and Latin-American cultures. Perhaps one of the biggest insults to Latino

Star Tech

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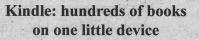
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