
GILDA MIRÓS

El Espiritismo de las mujeres puertorriqueñas:
De las extraordinarias pioneras a sus herederas
contemporáneas

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Indexed Interview

Gilda Mirós

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Indexed Interview

Gilda Mirós

Digital Story

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Clara Román-Odio [00:00:00] I am Clara Román-Odio from the project *Spiritism by Puerto Rican Women: From Remarkable Pioneers to Contemporary Heirs*. I am interviewing Mrs. Gilda Mirós, a bastion of Hispanic radio in the United States, a famous actress in Mexican cinema and a practitioner of the spiritist doctrine. Today is August 7, 2019 and we are interviewing Mrs. Mirós via Skype at her residence in Manhattan. Thank you very much for your participation in this project. Could you please tell me your full name and date of birth?

Gilda Mirós [00:00:44] First of all, Dr. Clara, thank you very much. May God take care of you. My given name is Carmen Gilda Santiago Díaz. This is how it appears on the birth certificate, although my mother was Rodríguez Díaz; you already know that they used to put, sometimes confuse, people's last names. So they call me Carmen Gilda Santiago Díaz. I was born on September 20, 1938, so next month I will be eighty-one years old.

Clara Román-Odio [00:01:21] Thinking about family values. What did it mean for you growing up with a spiritist mother?

Gilda Mirós [00:01:32] Clara, it is a joy, it is a blessing. It is a favor that God did to me. I have had a plentiful life thanks to my mother and the Spirits. Although it was not an easy life. But still, I have had a good life, well lived, and well rewarded. Since my mother was a child she was already a medium; but you know that in the past, I did not say that she was a spiritist or a medium, because if I did so people tended to avoid you thinking this was something bad. My mom was born in a very Christian, very Catholic family. Rather fanatical. She went to a nun school. But she saw things from a very young age. Mom grew up very shy, introverted and did not talk about this, did not comment on it, it was hers, her secret, and this grew in strength; I mean, she saw more, she heard more. Everything developed, her faculties, because she had

many faculties.

Gilda Mirós [00:02:51] And she always did charity, she was kind. My mom was like a social worker, that is how they call people like her now, she helped the whole world. I was born in that cradle. My mom always spoke to me about God and the good Spirits that helped us, who were our spiritual family, invisible friends, but very tangible spiritually because they communicated with us.

Gilda Mirós [00:03:20] And I was born in Puerto Rico, but they brought me to New York at the age of eight, in 1946. So I'm Nuyoricana from the Bronx, not from a poor crib but neither a well-off one. And it's interesting because my mom and dad broke up, my dad had a very strong temperament, and my mom was very docile. Before coming here she separated and remarried and came here. So I, my upbringing, was: my mom, my stepfather, my brother and I, the four of us. And my mom always read the gospel in the morning. So, she asked for assistance and guidance; and it was all faith, hope and charity. Faith, Hope, and Charity! That was my upbringing. The Spirits were not strangers. The Spirits were friends who came to visit with us unexpectedly, but sometimes we sat down and it was programmed, because we sat down to ask for guidance because my mom never asked for, or sold what God gave her free of charge, she did not charge. If a person came to her, she gave her good advice: "I have advice for..." And that person followed that advice and got good results from that. So that was me, that was my crib, so that's the answer.

Clara Román-Odio [00:04:52] I would like you to comment a little on the values, the aspirations that Spiritism fostered in you as a woman, as a person, if you can share an example that illustrates it.

Gilda Mirós [00:05:08] Here is the Gospel. I have a Gospel that must be 50 years old. And when I was little, I saw my mother reading a passage from the Gospel, a phrase. I always had the Gospel as a very special thing in my life. I was very shy too. I didn't think I was attractive or very smart. However, the Spirits said to me: "You have a lot to do in this life;" "You have a mission;" and they even told me: "Someday you will be very well known." And it was so strange because, where, how and where?

Gilda Mirós [00:05:53] But, I painted since I was a child, that was my art. I painted, I drew. I studied painting. So my mom would read the newspaper to me in Spanish here in New York and we listened to the radio in Spanish. My mom always cultivated our language. So we were bilingual in the house; I spoke Spanglish, if you want, I put English where I could and my brother as well. But she took me to the Mexican cinema, like all Puerto Ricans and all Latinos, always. I was so happy watching the Mexican movies, like the Hollywood movies, but I was very identified with the language and the Latino culture. It seems that inclination was part of my Spirit already. So, as my mother read the newspaper to me in Spanish and I saw the magazines, I

saw in a magazine that in Mexico they had an acting academy. I was studying painting, and I was going to graduate. I was supposed to go to the university to study illustration. I was very good at that, but when I saw the acting academy in Mexico City it caught my attention and I said to my mom: “I would like to be an actress,” out of the blue, “and I would like to go to Mexico to study.” And my mom said, “Well, I will help you.”

Gilda Mirós [00:07:27] My mom supported me from the first moment. I am speaking in the year 1956 and I was eighteen years old, seventeen years old; and one is sometimes confused at that time with what one wants, but she said: “let’s go.” I worked from a young age because we were taught to work. In other words, after school I used to work in a small store, as everyone did in those years. And I saved my money, because my mom told me so, and I bought little things for me; and my mom had no money but she saved some and went with me to Mexico City in 1957, without knowing anyone there, to take me to an audition at the National Academy of Actors, ANDA, in Mexico City.

Gilda Mirós [00:08:09] Look how my mother was. They inspired her, they said: “help her, help her, she has something to do and it will be like this.” Mommy said, “I will help you.” I mean, she took me to Mexico, she put me in a room and board, you can say, in a serious hotel for ladies. She paid a month and a half, two, barely because she did not have much money. She took me to the audition. She practiced with me at home, she read the audition with me. And they accepted me and that changed my life, Clara, because there I studied diction, the history of theater. That Academy trained me as an artist and I have applied the diction I learned there my whole life, what I had to do. Because I polished myself (if you want to say) an instrument, which was my voice and my diction, that is the instrument.

Gilda Mirós [00:09:15] And now many of the announcers do not even care how they speak, which is my criticism. You have to have respect for the public to communicate. You have to cultivate, you have to know a little about our culture and our history and communicate it. For me, I am very serious in my profession and the Spirits gave me that, seriousness, respect, and love for my neighbor. That is what I learned from my upbringing in the spiritual family.

Clara Román-Odio [00:09:49] What did the Spirits say to you that led you to promote these important values of respect for your neighbor?

Gilda Mirós [00:09:59] They always told me that we are here to learn and to improve. I was familiar with reincarnation. They told me that I lived before, that I was a painter, that I had lived in Argentina, that I have had other incarnations with my brother and my mother.

Gilda Mirós [00:10:17] They told me that we were Spirits within a family long ago; that this was not the first time, and that we got together to work together, to improve ourselves and to help the world, because we had a message of peace, love, and charity. My mom told me: “you

have to do charity.” Charity is done not only with money, it is done with good advice, a good gesture, and with a good action. That was my training and with that I went to Mexico with a Gospel in my suitcase and every morning, Clara, I read a little prayer at least, a line from my Gospel, it was like I was protecting myself and asking the Spirits to enlighten me. And I am hardworking by nature, so I said, “What can I do today to improve?” And I thought, I asked myself, “Have I wasted time? I don’t want to waste time.” I always knew there were many things to do. And my mom was hardworking also and she was honest. My mom was, as I would say, diligent and disciplined. She was not a lazy person. “Do we have to do this today? It is going to be done today then!” That is what I learned and that has paid off for me all my life.

Clara Román-Odio [00:11:45] You have done a lot of social work that has impacted many people, not only through cinema, but social work itself. Could you comment a little on that kind of work and the impact it has had, for those who do not know it?

Gilda Mirós [00:12:02] Sure, sure, I understand. Look, I went to school, they taught me the tools I needed to be an actress. I started as a model, the opportunities presented themselves. I knew it was not accidental. I was presented with an opportunity to model. With Agustín Lara was my first television presentation, as a model. Then, they took me to a forum where Libertad Lamarque was, and I did modeling there. I was surrounded with the cream of the cream of the Mexican cinema of that time. Who was going to tell you later that I was going to interview Libertad Lamarque forty years later?

Gilda Mirós [00:12:41] But this is the thing, every day I saw that paths were opening for me, but as I got up, as my mom taught me, she said to me: “make your bed, do your exercises, do your prayers.” That’s the training, okay? I followed it. From Mexican cinema, where I made many films, God bless, I returned to New York. I needed the family, the warmth of home, because I was alone. Then, I used to go and come back. God allowed me to go to Puerto Rico. I made a movie there. It was a movie where I had to sing and dance, but I didn’t know how to sing or dance, and they trained me and in the scene I am singing and dancing. And look, something very interesting happened to me. In a movie titled *Honeymoon in Puerto Rico*, with the *man*, I have a scene where I have to sing with him on stage. And I was panicking, I said: “How am I going to do this, my goodness?” My mom got up and a Spirit came and showed me how I had to move. I lived that. But before that, the Spirits did the same in the movie *The Salesman of Love*, where I performed in an afro with Tito Rodríguez playing while dancing; and I said “how come I did that?” That is spiritual assistance, absolutely. The shyness and fear were gone and I did it.

Gilda Mirós [00:14:12] Then I ... We all screw up, as they say, we make mistakes. I got married, I got divorced, I got married again, I had a little boy, I broke up with my partner again, anyway. But those were my bad decisions, they were not spiritual and one has to learn things the hard way and we are imperfect, that’s why we are here. We have come back to learn and I recognized that, but then I said: “But how do I correct this?” So, over time, I did this and that,

but look, the radio is a very interesting chapter for me, Clara, and many will benefit from that.

Gilda Mirós [00:14:55] First of all, I did not expect to do television or radio; I was an actress. When Marisol Malaret won Miss Universe in the year 1970, first Miss Universe from Puerto Rico, I was passing through New York making movies here and there. René Anselmo, who later on founded Univision (at that time Univision did not exist, in 1970) told me that he wanted me to be the co-host of his program. Paquito Cordero was the producer there [in Puerto Rico], René Anselmo here [in the U.S.] and that I was to co-host with some other people [with Paquito Cordero]. I say, “very good, perfect.” I did it and, I will briefly tell you, when it was over he said: “I’m going to do a television show called *Sundays in the One* and I want you to be the co-host.” From that came a television program of four-hours long every Sunday, before starting Univision, in the seventies. But the great thing is that I returned with my husband. I had a child and I found out I was pregnant. I told the Mexican-American-Jew man, René Anselmo: “I am sorry, I cannot accept the job because I am pregnant.” He told me: “I don’t care about that, you are going to do it with or without the pregnancy.” And he gave me the job. On TV, I was the first Latina to come out on screen pregnant, doing a four-hour program every Sunday, in addition to co-producing it.

Gilda Mirós [00:16:27] And now, the Smithsonian Museum is delighted with that fact and is doing the exhibition: *Listen to me: The History of Spanish Broadcasting in the United States*. The exhibition has not yet come out; they are preparing it. It will come out next year [2021]. As a very important note that a Latina was doing television while she was pregnant, it is something that has never been seen before. The point was that I worked up to two weeks before giving birth doing the program. This program was very successful.

Gilda Mirós [00:17:08] But how does the radio start, which is where I did more social work, you ask me? At one point I said: “I can’t travel anymore, my children are growing up, now they are very young, my mom is doing me a favor.” My mom took care of my children so I could work. She was the babysitter. She was the one holding my hand at every moment. Otherwise, I could not have had a career. So, I owe my career to her and to the Spirits. And always with my Gospel and always praying and asking the Spirits for guidance.

Gilda Mirós [00:17:44] What happens? At one point I said: “I am not going to be an artist anymore, I am not going to be an actress anymore, I am going to dedicate myself to my children.” And so, I went to look for a job, as everyone does, and they gave me a job in the government of Puerto Rico, in the New York office, as a radio and television specialist. I start my work in New York (listen how God works with us) and then my boss, Torregrossa, says to me: “Gilda, you have to go to the radio station to talk about the Puerto Rican parade, so that they understand how the office of Puerto Rico contributes to the Puerto Rican parade.” I said: “Oh my God! OK.” I didn’t even want to go, I’m telling you the truth. I go there, I enter the building of the WADO radio, which was the most important radio station at that time, in 1972-1973, I run

into the owner and I say to him: “Hey, look, I would like to talk to you sometime,” and he said to me: “make an appointment, I don’t have time now, I will talk to you later.” “OK, great.” They took me to do the interview. When the interview is over, the programmer comes and says to me: “The owner wants to talk to you;” but I tell him: “he told me to make an appointment;” “he wants to talk to you now.” All right. And then he says: “What do you want to tell me?” And I said to him: “Look, so-and-so, (Nelson Laverne was his name) there is not a woman working at this station, nor is there a program directed at women,” me with a big mouth, OK? He says to me: “You are wrong; we have a program called *Woman*.” I said to him: “Really? Who does it?” “A man.” “Ohhh, how interesting!,” I said. The host of that program read the *Vanidades* magazine, I mean that was his show and I was an announcer for *Vanidades*, I want you to know.

Gilda Mirós [00:19:45] Then what happens? “Thank you so much, miss.” Okay, he dispatched me. The next day, they called me and offered me the job of doing a radio show. I said, “This is not a coincidence.” I went to talk with the director of the Puerto Rico office. “Look, they made me an offer to do a radio show and I’m considering it.” He says: “You should not accept it because they can fire you in a week and you will end up without a pension and without a thing.” I go to my mom and say: “Mom, what do you think?” She says to me: “accept it, the Spirits and I know that you will be successful.”

Gilda Mirós [00:20:46] I was not an announcer, I was a commercial announcer, I knew how to do a commercial, OK, but I was not a cabin announcer; staff announcer, and they told me: “you are going to have to do everything a man does, you have to give news, put on records, do everything, controls and everything.” And you know what, Clara? The Spirits helped me and my mom supported me. I was the first female announcer, *staff announcer*, in New York City. Four hours every day. But from there my mom said to me: “Look Gilda, why don’t you read a meditation at the beginning of your program? One little piece, a reflection, because people are very lonely, they need to be spiritual.” And she gave me *Manantiales en el Desierto*. And I go and start my program with a little music or a little reading of *Manantiales*. All of that was a hit. What my mom said that the Spirits [said], Clara, was a hit.

Gilda Mirós [00:21:36] Well, I was with that company for thirteen years because my program grew, it grew. I opened the lines, the first time the lines were opened, I talked to people. We talked about medicine, entertainment, culture and about community. I created a format that did not exist at the time, four hours in four blocks, and it was there where I did the social work you asked me about. A doctor told me: “We have saved four lives today, women who had cancer and did not go to the doctor came to me and we saved them,” she said. I did not take ... this ...it was not an exchange because you know that there is a law that you cannot accept a meal because it is *payola*, if you invite someone and you accept something, that is called *payola*. I did not accept a thing. This came out of my soul, it was my commitment to the Spirits.

Gilda Mirós [00:22:30] I was so successful that they accepted me there, and another company

wanted me to work with them. And the American guy told me that he wanted to do something bigger. “How much do you earn?” I said, “sixty thousand dollars.” He says to me: “I will triple that if you accept today.” I accepted, I left. From there, they called me from Florida: “We are going to do a first national satellite program, it will start in Miami and it will include New York and Los Angeles, four hours live, do you want to do it?” “Yes!” “You have to move to Florida.” Clara, that’s all spiritual. I did not provoke it, I did not seek it, I did not touch it. I had no people, I had no manager. The managers were the Spirits. How am I not going to be thankful to them?

Clara Román-Odio [00:23:27] I wonder, how have you maintained your practice and your spiritist doctrine? Obviously you have done it with your mother, you have done it in your workplace. Have you done something else, another type of study or purely spiritist practice?

Gilda Mirós [00:23:52] Ammm, no. When I developed, I was so busy with my radio and television tasks, because I managed to do a national television program, radio, theater. I did all of that in my career. What happens? When my mom was 85, we were in Florida. My mom was my best friend, my partner, my buddy, I traveled with her. I did programs from Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, and live in New York. That was never done before. I went with an engineer, I connected the phone. It was a week in different countries, my mother came with me. So we went to the theater, we went to Europe, my buddy. When my mom was 85 years old, Clara, she could already feel she was aging. She could not do it anymore. She had diabetes. Then, I decided to retire to take care of her. And I started to dub Mother Angelica, the nun who has a global program. I dubbed her voice in Spanish, for radio and television. But I was at home, taking care of my mom.

Gilda Mirós [00:25:10] My mom got worse. I was with her taking care of her. I took her to the doctor. That made me happy. And we prayed, we always prayed with the Spirits. I found out that my mom had a lot of writing from a young age. She put them in a box, in a drawer, because many people did not believe she had spiritual faculties and she kept quiet about it. She was a poet. My mom painted. My mom was very active. She used to go to the seniors before; before getting sick, she practiced, she helped them. My mom helped people and took them to enroll in the hospital, in schools. She was generous with her time. If an immigrant who did not know English came to her, she would go to school to enroll their children, so that they could go to the hospital, helped them to get credit. My mom did all of that.

Gilda Mirós [00:26:03] So, what happens? She was very active. This painting that I want to show you, if you can see it. She was at the Senior Center and they have art classes. My mom was not a licensed or professional or accredited painter. This piece was made by my mom without having painted before. Look, look at the dimension, look at the colors. This is pure psychography. A Spirit made it through her. She won an award.

Gilda Mirós [00:26:36] Then, it was when I wrote the book about Celia Cruz and Sonora

Matancera, because my mother said to me: “Look Gilda, why don’t you study computers?” We are talking about fifteen years ago, “so you can learn,” she was ahead of her time, although she was eighty years old. “There’s a high school there that is teaching computers to the elderly,” she told me. Clara, I went there and took the classes. I wrote the whole book about Celia Cruz on my computer, with the photos I had from my encounters with Celia, the production of the show of Celia, everything. And, when the book came out, the agents told me: “Nobody will buy this book,” the distributors told me. I did not know that Celia had cancer, I did not know that she was dying. The day she died, all the agents called me and all the books were sold.

Clara Román-Odio [00:27:36] I wanted to ask you, was your mother’s spiritist work associated with the social work she did? Was it always associated?

Gilda Mirós [00:27:51] Exactly, because, how can I say it, when, especially when she came to New York. When my mom came here, like all Latinos, she didn’t speak much English. You have to practice. Whenever she found out that “So-and-so, do you need an apartment?” “I do not know how to do it.” She took them to an apartment. “I don’t know, my children have to go to school,” and she took them to school, to enroll them, to the hospital, to the clinic. My mother did all that work guided by her own intuition, because she was benevolent in nature, without charging people, and with spiritual assistance. Very important.

Clara Román-Odio [00:28:31] You say that you used to pray together. I would like, if possible, to hear a little about how you prayed, how the presence of the Spirits or the communication with the Spirits was manifested in that intimate prayer.

Gilda Mirós [00:28:49] Well, my mom had a spiritual guide. The first guide I found out about was called Yamará. She was a Jamaican. We used to sit in the living room with a glass of water, in the name of God; we used to open with a prayer, you know that this is the routine. My mom used to tell me: “Bring three white carnations, faith, hope and charity.” We bought white carnations every week. And then, we had the session, you can say session, and her guide Yamará communicated with us; later on another spiritual guide joined my mother, when she went to another dimension. Another came by the name of Magdalena and then, at the end, she had another one named Luz. You know that Spirits get whatever name they like. But Yamará had lived with my mother in an incarnation in Jamaica and they worked in botany, according to what she tells us. My mom always liked plants, seedlings, and everything that is botanical. And she told me in a conversation that in the next incarnation she will work with medicines that are all based on botany. That is what she will do when she returns. Because my mom likes healing.

Gilda Mirós [00:30:08] Furthermore, in my book, in one of the passages that were dictated to me, my mother was working in a spiritual hospital. Many human beings when they leave this dimension think that they are still sick. They still wear the “clothing” that they are sick, or the awareness that they are sick, physical, and they arrange them so that they can help themselves to

alleviate such a transition, they tell me. My mom was working in a spiritual hospital in another world. Look how interesting this is! But through those sessions I found out about many past lives of my mother, my brother and mine, that they dictated and we took note. That is why in the first book *Memories of the Spirits and my Mother*, I have many comments on those sessions, plus the pages that my mother started working on, writing at a given moment, and that is when she wrote *My Blue Book*. She wanted to write *My Blue Book* and she started writing it, which was in verse. She had a great love in another life that she always remembered. His name was Gustavo. She did not find the love of her life in this life. As I have not found it either, but it is part of the evolution. And she lived with the memory of that Spirit and that it's in my book.

Gilda Mirós [00:31:42] I'm going to tell you about the ducklings because it's important. We arrived at a site in Weston, Florida. When I was moving to my new house, my mom told me that there is a duck laying eggs, but I was sitting in the car. I say to her: "How can you see that there is a duck over there? I don't see it!" She says to me: "It's over there!" I went there and found the duck, which still didn't have ducklings, it was just the eggs. Look, then I said: "Mom, what a surprise!" She said "yes!" So I said, "Mom, do you know what? I'm going to take photos and you will write the story about the ducklings." My mother always believed in hygiene; "You have to avoid the germs;" "You have to wash your hands." My mother always gave those tips. So when I saw the eggs, the ducklings came out. You can see them here, more or less. And she says to me: "I am going to write a book called *Hortensia and its Happy Ducklings: How Children Can Wash Their Hands*." She drew, I took the photos and she wrote this book. And it was spiritual, because she didn't even know that the ducklings were there. She knew it spiritually, she made the book and after that she could not do anything else. The reason why I am telling you this is because my mom always said: "I have a little suitcase ready, with good deeds, because the moment I leave, that's all you take," Clara, "a little suitcase with its good deeds."

Clara Román-Odio [00:33:22] How nice! In your book *Memory of the Spirits and my Mother*, why did you want to collect and make public the spiritist experience of your mother?

Gilda Mirós [00:33:37] What an interesting question! Because look, I did not know, as an artist, if I should disclose my belief because people do not take it seriously, you know, they misinterpret it, and I did not want to discredit, in any way, not only my reputation, but the reputation of my mother, I wanted to protect her. When I started writing those things, those little pieces of paper that mom had in a little suitcase, already yellowish, I said to myself: "I have to do this, I have to share this with the world; it is important, it is a legacy." Listen, it took me about three years, Clara, because while I was taking care of her for three years, I was writing my book. And you know what? I started developing spiritual dictation, because I know that I received a message and wrote it down. It was no longer me, it was already psychography. I know they were guiding me, and every day I would sit for a little while and the pages would come out. It wasn't me, I was a tool used by the Spirits to communicate that, that's how it was.

Clara Román-Odio [00:34:55] What does this book reveal to us? If you could summarize the legacy of the book.

Gilda Mirós [00:35:02] First, it is in English. You know it is *Memories of the Spirits and My Mother*, *Spirit Messages to my Mother* ; then I wrote *Alas Místicas* , *Mystical Wings* ; and after, the last one is *In Contact with Mom in Spirit* . OK? It reveals that life is eternal, that there will be no death. That we have a vehicle that is the body, a vehicle that looks like a car, that transports you but that it, as I say, wears out with time. But what is inside does not have an age, it is eternal. And we have lived so many lives and that is what we have, that we carry and carry. And that it is your true personality, that being that is within, not what you are living in this moment. And when they called me and asked me to go to a place to make a statement about Spiritism, I said: “First talk, my God!” I said “What am I going to talk about? I don’t know how you talk about Spiritism.” The Spirits told me: “Talk about your cell phone.” I said: “Aha! This is a piece of metal, but this piece of metal receives a frequency from a satellite that comes from another satellite; you don’t see it because the frequency is very fast, you don’t see it when it enters the metal. However, you are receiving the message of a loved one that is replying to you.” I mean, this is the messenger because it received a frequency. So are the Spirits. That is the message.

Gilda Mirós [00:36:45] And my mom is still with me. Today I had a nice meeting with my brother, who is also a medium, Clara. My mom did not get into a trance. My mom did not, how can I tell you? it was natural, it was very soft. She was speaking and “suuup” the Spirit suddenly entered her body and started speaking. You know, because of the message and perhaps by the tone of voice that changes or perhaps the words it uses, that it is another Entity. But there was no physical change, no shouting, no kicking, or anything, because if a mischievous Spirit approached, which you know there are, she would say to him: “you are not allowed here, go to rest and then, when you can speak, you come back.” There was even a spiritual discipline in the meetings. Look, because there are angry Spirits that come and don’t behave well, you behave the way you have behaved your whole life, that’s how you are. OK. What happens? So my brother was speaking to me today at lunch, and said to me: “I have a message for you: you have to write again; the Spirits have a lot to tell you and they want you to continue writing because you stop doing that, you have not written in four years.” So I will start writing today, Clara. Your meeting with me is something spiritual. This is no accident. This is causality. I feel like a girl at Christmas talking to you, because this is going to spread my faith, my life and that of my mother, which is the most important thing in this message. That is what you are going to disseminate. That is the award she deserves.

Clara Román-Odio [00:38:52] Fantastic! This conversation Gilda, I thank you very much. Before finishing the interview, I would like to ask you two things.

Gilda Mirós [00:39:02] Tell me.

Clara Román-Odio [00:39:02] One, if you were born again or in your next life, what would you like to do and why?

Gilda Mirós [00:39:10] Hey, he [my brother] said something interesting to me, my brother said to me... I love New York. Look, this is interesting. When I go and walk in the streets of New York I feel the impact of the energy of New York. I love the islands, I love Florida, but there is a very strong energetic force here. I just won a national award for a documentary I produced, edited, and directed, called *Seniors Finally Say "Me Too,"* I sent you that, I did it with my phone. And my brother, Nel Mirós, says to me: "Do you know, Gilda, what is going on? In your previous life you were male and you were an actor and a producer; and what you are feeling now is part of what you carry with you from that journey, you are now remembering what you learned before, a Spirit that has returned to you recently." So I say, "What would I like to do? First, I need rest." (laughs) When I leave, my brother says to me: "You are not going to pass away soon, you still have a lot to do." I said "OMG!" I still have to finish some things, obviously I have a mission, there are still things that I have not done. According to what they tell me. But then, I want to pause and be in the world of the Spirits, because I think it must be extraordinary. What is seen there, what is heard and what is known about our lives. Now, I will always be an artist. I love art, because when you create, you are in contact with the universe. When you are creating you open your mind and what you call, inspiration enters, which is in Spirit. So, I will either be a painter or a writer or an actress and you will see me again on another level. That is the story.

Clara Román-Odio [00:41:22] So, is there anything I didn't ask you, that you would like to say before this interview is over?

Gilda Mirós [00:41:31] Well, look, there is one interesting thing. I made this book called *A Portrait of Puerto Rico*. My stepfather was a cartoonist for El Vocero in 44, at the time of the war. He drew Cheo, he created Cheo. But then, he came to New York, left him here, and someone else grabbed his name and said he created it. It doesn't matter, those things happen. My brother had a briefcase with his drawings and I took them and published the book. All the cartoons are from Puerto Rico in 1940, I wanted to mention this because it is important. See how the cartoons appeared because people read little and it was all based on graphics, if you want. OK. Here, look here too. Because that's one thing I wanted to mention.

Gilda Mirós [00:42:21] My most recent book is also very important. *From the Mountain We Come: Latin American Icons*. There are 400 pages of interviews with artists all gone to the other world. The only one left is me. What happens? I interviewed them in my programs. I saved the interviews, I transcribed them and it is in English and in Spanish in audio. I'm going to take it to the theater soon, but what I'm doing now is a podcast, which is like online radio, cyber. What happens? My brother says to me: "Look, Gilda, those artists who have left and you are remembering and sharing their lives with the public, thank you, because the people forget;

however, you keep them alive with their interviews.” It is nice to preserve our culture and to educate the youth. And that is what I am doing and with that I am happy and with that we close.

Clara Román-Odio [00:43:38] That is a beautiful program, it is a beautiful project. And many, many, Puerto Ricans like me will thank you for that.

Gilda Mirós [00:43:46] Oh no, no no, no. It is a duty. Look Clara, it is a duty. I would be ungrateful if I did not share what ... you don't know I have. I have an incredibly precious thing in life, of these human beings that came to New York City, without money, without a coat, without speaking English, with a talent and brought joy to the world. That is the best. And they traveled the world with our music. As a communicator, because I am a communicator, that is my calling, if you want, my mission. I transmit and put them on their level, where they deserve to be and they thank me in Spirit. This is the last card, at the moment, so here we are, and whenever you want you can call me and we can do another chapter.

Clara Román-Odio [00:44:39] Well, many, many thanks.

Gilda Mirós [00:44:44] It was wonderful, but I want you to remember Monserrate. She was from Aibonito. She was born in Aibonito. His dad was, as I say, a simple man. Antonio, Don Antonio and his mother Filomena, and she always remembered us and I was grateful. My father, Juan Santiago, native of Corozal. My children Antonio A. Mirós and Kathryn Mirós, borned in New York. I have a granddaughter called Vienna Skye Mirós. So I, on behalf of them and on behalf of my mom, thank you and also the engineer and the world that listened to us. Thank you!

Clara Román-Odio [00:45:14] Thank you!