

SANTA CLARA CHURCH

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**MICHELE / JAN 24 2015**

~~The~~ suit is cool and everything ... but what I really wanted to wear today was the *Medium Brown Girl* shirt I bought off Michele about 20 years ago. But I couldn't find it. But I'm wearing it in my heart (BTW...that's women's extra large, in case anyone has a spare).

About 20 years ago, around the time of that t-shirt is when we met – through work actually. It went something like this;

From KQED in San Francisco, I'm Steven Cuevas and this is the California Report...On today's program...*insert tease for upcoming boring news segment here and here...* AND a commentary from writer Michele Serros:

(TAPE) *"When I was younger, I was just like any other American kid who celebrated Mother's Day. I'd wake up at the break of dawn to create a breakfast-in-bed meal for my own mother - a bountiful feast of burnt tortillas, Kern's banana-orange juice and huevos con egg shells."*

When Michele began doing public radio commentaries she'd just published her first book "Chicana Falsa" – the book that would launch her career as a ~~poet, novelist, commentator, sitcom writer~~ and inspiration to several generations of young people like her (and like me);

Mexican American, Latino, Chicano, ~~Chicana~~...growing up with a foot in two cultures, two languages; secretly gritting our teeth through our parents or grandparents TV novellas while anxiously awaiting the latest Brady Brunch re-run. Munching on chicharones while reading books by Judy Blume and John Steinbeck

So back to that commentary of Michele's I teased earlier. In it, she talks about wanting to create a "Motherless Day" for those of us who've lost moms and have a hard time on the actual Mother's Day. Well, <sup>KIND OF RIFFIN</sup> adding to that idea - I think we might also consider creating a *Michele-less Day*. If not that there could be <sup>at the very least</sup> as with Michele's idea "a fellowship...maybe like a 12 Step program"

*"And for Step One we can confess that we are powerless over the extreme loss we feel when we miss our mothers. So this Mother's Day I think I will start such a club and I will round up my other motherless friends and we will treat ourselves to a all-you-can-eat Sunday champagne buffet. Better yet, I will invite all my motherless friends over and I will cook them breakfast. Yes, I will cook them tortillas and scrambled eggs. In bed. Eggshells on the side."*

I'm free tomorrow if anyone wants to host that Sunday champagne buffet. Just a couple other things I'd like to share about Michele. And that's the kind of friend she was.

Just a few months before she passed away, I lost my father. One night while I was sitting by his bed, the week he died, I got a ping on my phone. It was a text from Michele; among the things she said, including <sup>(SEX) - NAME</sup> quoting Ice Cube was this; "My heart is with you. Please reach out any time. Good night and much love" Turns out those would be the last words she'd ever write to me; *Good night and much love*. Facing the unimaginable she had the strength and mindfulness to reach out. I remain humbled ~~beyond words~~ by that and many other kind gestures in the final months of her life. One of her many other friends, Flea, expressed the grief pretty perfectly in a Tweet the week Michele died; he just wrote "Wow. Too much. Love."



With warmth, biting humor, a keen eye for detail (like who can't see and taste those huevos con eggshells?) and sharp but understated social commentary she gave voice to this other ~~CHICANA. - THE OTHER~~ America, often invisible or dismissed. Michele said she wanted to present a different type of life. "A life that truly goes on, but that we don't always see in the mainstream," she said.

It's not surprising that she left TV after just one season with the George Lopez Show. Her situation as she expressed it to me anyway, reminded me of those great old writers like Raymond Chandler and William Faulkner who would go write for Hollywood only to find their true voices straitjacketed and muted. The show's loss would be very much our gain as Michele returned to full-time writing; more commentaries, poems and 2 young adult novels. Some of her final essays are ~~feel~~ among her most raw, gutsy and funny especially when writing of her battle ~~with cancer.~~

Her friend and playwright Luis Alfaro wrote, "Losing an artist is losing language and the unique way in which we hear stories and see ourselves in the world. The immensity of such silence is what I am reeling with right now."

But even in death she continues to push the envelope. Yesterday Antonio told me ~~how when he filled out her death certificate in the area asking for race of the deceased he wrote "Chicana X" like Malcolm X but Chicana...it was Michele's preference....~~

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A few items of business from the estate of Mucha Muchahcha:

Michele's 1996 album "Selected Stories from Chicana Falsa" is being re-released on I-Tunes. And all of her books are available through her website: *WHICH VA CAN FIND AT...*

Also her Give Forward campaign benefiting the Michele Serros

Foundation is active through February 5<sup>th</sup>, a few days before her 49<sup>th</sup> birthday. The money collected will go toward a student scholarship fund.

On Sunday February 8<sup>th</sup> there will be a celebration of Michele's life starting at 4pm at the Los Angeles Theatre Center in downtown L.A. with performances from El Vez and *supplied guests* others. It's free to get in but please donate what you can at the door – that money will help offset Michele's medical expenses.

It is also my privilege to thank on behalf of Antonio for all of their continued love and support: Michele's sister Yvonne, her brother-in-law

Tim, her cousin Debbie and the many family, friends and supporters too *known PARENTS ABEL & MARY LO MAGRANA*  
*& HIS BROTHERS & SISTERS* *countless to name* *ALL DONORS BIG & SMALL &*

Lastly I've been asked to introduce someone very special to Michele, someone responsible for bringing her into this world, nurturing her talents and her ambitions and being a continual source of inspiration; her father George Serros. *ALL THE ARTISTS WHO SHARED LOVE & SUPPORT BY DONATING VALUABLE PIECES OF ART*

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ANOTHER

And speaking of friends...the ~~other~~ thing Michele gave me before she died is a new one - her husband Antonio...through whom I hope to carry on Michele's spirit and this great spirit of friendship. I hope you will do the same.

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