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**Oral History Interview with Lenge Hong**  
**Crossing Borders, Bridging Generations, 2011.019.014**

**Interview conducted by Jen Chau at the narrator's home on January 19th, 2012 in  
Manhattan, New York.**

JEN CHAU: OK, today is January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012, and I'm Jen Chau from the Brooklyn Historical Society. We're here in the narrator's apartment on East 14<sup>th</sup> Street in Manhattan, New York. And this interview is part of the Crossing Borders Bridging Generations Oral History Project. Now, if you would please introduce yourself.

LENGE HONG: Uh, my name is Lenge Hong. Uh, I -- I'm originally from Florida, from Miami. And I'm 45 years old. (laughter) You know?

JEN CHAU: Great.

LENGE HONG: Uh, and describe my specific background? My -- well, my father is from southern China. Uh, a village, uh, not far from, uh, what is now called Guangzhou. And my mother is from Glasgow. And they met in Florida. (laughter) And, uh...

JEN CHAU: And just so we have it on record, what is your date of birth?

LENGE HONG: [Date redacted for privacy]

JEN CHAU: OK. Can you start by telling me a little bit about where you're from?

LENGE HONG: Uh, well, I'm from Miami, uh, not the -- not Miami Beach, but the swampy suburbs of Miami. Uh, I guess what's called Metro-Dade County now. And while I -- when I was growing up there, that area underwent this enormous change from being a sort of sleepy little swampy southern suburb, to be very much this kind of raucous Caribbean city. Not, uh -- not a huge Asian population there. And it went from being largely, uh, white southern to being largely Cuban in the course of the time that I was growing up. And, uh, actually, where I -- where I grew up was about a half an hour from the, uh, the entrance to Everglades National Park, which is why it was so swampy. And, within that area, there's also the Miccosukee Indian Reservation. And when I was a kid, and it was a very, uh, almost rural area, um, the only people that I saw that I felt like I looked like were the occasional Miccosukee Indians that would -- that which I'd see at a, uh, strip mall or something. And that was the kind of -- it was kind of funny that that

was my most identifiable group of people. (laughter) And they often would sort of mistake me for, um, for a Miccosukee as well. Uh, yeah, it was also -- there was -- and then later on, as the city became more and more Cuban, I kind of would blend in with the Cuban population as well. And I spoke a little bit of Spanish. So, uh, and my best friend was Cuban, blonde, and green-eyed, and people would speak English to her, and Spanish to me. (laughter) But, uh, it's -- it's a strange place, Miami. (laughter) Um, multicultural, but in a sort of limited way. Um, and quite conservative socially. That didn't change.

JEN CHAU: Can you say more about what you mean about limited, when you say it was limited.

LENGE HONG: Well, there was -- at least where I was growing up, um, there really were almost only two ethnic groups. There were, uh -- there were Cubans, and then there were white southern Caucasians, who pretty much just -- you know, who -- who didn't identify as anything but American, and often southern. So you had -- and most of the Cubans were people who had -- in fact, most of my friends who were Cuban, had all been born, uh, in Cuba, and come over when they were young. Uh, so there was a huge number of immigrants, but all from sort of one area. And a smattering of people from the islands, but not very many where I was, it was also somewhat segregated. [5:00] I know there's a large -- there's a large Haitian community in Miami, but it was, at the time, very self-contained, and nobody really went out of their own little enclaves very much. So there weren't -- almost all of the Chinese people that we knew were related to me. (laughter) They were like my father's brothers, and sisters, and their families. And a few other people that he knew. My father had a restaurant. And pretty much everyone that I knew -- and most -- a lot of people who worked for him were his family members. And then other people that he'd known from the previous restaurants that he no longer worked in. So it all -- what -- what I knew of an Asian community was all sort of centered around his restaurant. And that's -- there were -- and it was an interesting group of people, the sort of life -- lifetime restaurant people, which is its own kind of breed to...

JEN CHAU: So, how did you feel growing up, as you described it -- described it to me, how did you feel growing up in that kind of a community?

LENGE HONG: Well, I didn't -- I think I knew -- I knew one other, you know, multi-racial family, and it was my father's best friend, uh, and his wife, and their kids. And my father's best friend was, uh, Chinese ancestry, born and raised in Georgia, and he married a Caucasian woman. And, uh, their kids were the only multi-racial kids I knew. And I have a sister, she was -- she was seven years younger than me, so there was a good amount of time where I was kind of like an only child. And so there wasn't -- there wasn't any -- you didn't -- you didn't use the term multi-racial, you didn't use, uh, it didn't exist. Um, it wasn't -- I mean, and the weird thing being, my first role model in that sense, and this is so nerdy and demented, but it was Mr. Spock, you know? (laughter) Um, you know, just, there was no -- being -- being of mixed race just wasn't on the radar. Um, there were occasional -- there were occasional -- in the movies, there was an actress named Nancy Kwan. Um, I think the actress France Nuyen was also mixed. But, you know, very few and far between. And, so, I felt sort of odd, uh, in that sense. Because also, my father worked in a restaurant, he owned a restaurant, so he was not really present very much. So I spent the vast majority of my time with my mother and my grandmother. My mother being Scottish, my grandmother is Scots-Irish. And, uh -- and two of the whitest women you will ever see. So, people would tell me, oh, she looks just like you, you know, tell my mother that I look just like her. And I didn't see it until I was probably a teenager, because I was like, how can I possibly look like her? She's blonde, and I have black hair, I'm brown, she's really pale. So, I sort of, you know, had these, I guess I had the same kind of adoption fantasies that lots of little kids have, except I kind of felt like mine were perhaps a bit -- a bit more, um, feasible. (laughter) But, um, yeah, it was -- it was strange. And I don't think, um, I don't think most of the kids I went to school with really knew what to think either. So I got -- I got a lot of, uh, I got called chink, and I -- the Japanese stuff too, because they didn't know the difference. (laughter) Um, which is crazy, when I think about it now. But kids will light on anything. Um, because I didn't actually look, [10:00] I think, particularly Asian either. And then, my -- my cousins, of whom there were quite a lot. You know, next to them, I was the big white kid. So, uh, there was just a very strong sense of not being one thing or the other. And it's interesting, because I don't think my sister had quite the

same, uh, experience. And I don't know if that's our personalities, or if that's just the difference seven or eight years made in people's attitudes changing. Or she just cared a lot less about what people thought, and I did. (laughter)

JEN CHAU: Have you talked about identity a lot with your sister?

LENGE HONG: Actually, no. And I -- and I kind of wondered why we hadn't. We didn't really discuss that kind of thing until she was a teenager and I was in my early 20's, and we went to China for the first time. My -- my parents, and she and I went on a three week, uh, tour, with a group. Um, because at the time, it was difficult to travel, uh, without, sort of official minders. I think you could do that a lot easier now. But then, you know, every town we went to, there was a party official that joined our group, and what we saw was very tightly controlled. But it wasn't the first time I'd been to Hong Kong. My sister -- well, my sister had been too, but she was too young at that point to remember. And that does not -- did not prepare us for China in 1988, pre-Tiananmen Square China. And it was, uh, like going to another planet in a lot of ways. And it was the first time I -- my sister, like, I realized that she had had some similar experiences, and, uh, and feeling different, because she never really talked about it very much. Um, as far as I know, she didn't get any, uh, any sort of teasing. Like, uh, but I didn't even think she'd thought about it at all. And, um, and even we still really hadn't talked about it that much. She did say -- she did say that, uh, she'd had the same experience as me, where getting -- we got stared at a lot growing up. (laughter) And, I always interpreted it as being, oh, there's something wrong with me, that's why you're staring at me. And, it turned out my sister had that same, uh, sense. And she'd come to the same conclusion. And, of course, we both realized later on, it wasn't that we were freakish or anything, that we were just different. And then, I think the only other time we really mentioned it was when we were in Hawaii, in late 2000 -- 2000-2001, something like that. And we were sitting in the Honolulu Airport, waiting for a flight to some place else. Oh, to the big island, we were waiting. And we just looked -- looked around, and I said, look at this, we blend in here. (laughter) And it was the strangest feeling. It was the only place I'd ever felt like that. (laughter) And, uh, and she was like oh my god, yeah, you're right. Um,

but she doesn't, uh -- I don't think she thinks about it as much as I do. It'll be interesting when I tell her I'm doing this project, and see what she thinks of it. (laughter)

JEN CHAU: I want to go back to -- to your childhood, and your comment that there was really no language, you know, people didn't say multi-racial.

LENGE HONG: Right.

JEN CHAU: Were there conversations that were had, and if so, what did they look like?

LENGE HONG: I -- I would ask my mother because, [15:00] well, I think anybody -- anybody who's mixed has had the question what are you? Um, and I would say to my mom, like, I -- what am I? What do I say? Uh, and she had said -- she said, you are Eurasian. (laughter) My mother's very British. You're Eurasian. And I would say I'm Eurasian, and of course, nobody would know what the hell I was -- I meant by that. Um, and yeah, when I was a kid, actually, the term Oriental was pretty -- was still used, and not, uh, not intended in a pejorative way, it was simply the term that they used. Um, but when I would say Eurasian, still nobody would know what I was talking about. (laughter) So I would go I'm half Chinese, and half Scottish. (laughter) Which I actually still do. I went through it, through stages in my life of different emotional reactions to that question, what are you, as a little kid. I was just, well, I've got to tell people, they need to know. Then I was kind of like, why do you want to know? (laughter) You know? And now, I'm like, ah, well, it's understandable, I suppose, you're curious. And I guess that's just a symptom of getting older, you pick your battles a little bit more. (laughter) Yeah, I doubt -- there weren't -- there wasn't much vocabulary then, no. I envy kids -- mixed kids I see now, especially ones growing up in a place like New York. Um, because actually, this -- strangely enough, this building has at least four that I can think of off the top of my head, mixed Asian/Caucasian couples with kids. And nobody looks twice at them! And it -- I just can't -- how lucky they are. (laughter) That you have this rich heritage without the sort of baggage that my generation, and probably earlier ones had. And I had it easy, really. Um, certainly Asian and Caucasian mixes don't get as much crap as African-American and Caucasian kids do. Um, and where I haven't -- where I've never been entirely -- I've always -- I actually never felt unaccepted by my mother's family, um, or by -- I've maybe encountered two

or three truly -- people who truly treated me differently, or disliked me, because of my race or races. Um, there's been less acceptance from my father's family. But I think part of that also comes from the fact that I don't speak Chinese. I think if I -- if I could speak it, it would've made a big difference.

JEN CHAU: How did it feel to be in your dad's Chinese restaurant?

LENGE HONG: I'd say I have, actually, really, really pleasant memories of the restaurant. And there was always a little bit of underlying resentment, because it was the thing that, uh, took the vast majority of his time, and kind of kept him away, uh, from us. But there was also, um, especially in the kitchen, a really, kind of, warm pleasant feeling. It was, uh, I -- I remember, uh, several of his brothers were also chefs. And I remember them, you know, doing the prep work, uh, before they opened, because they only opened from four to ten, just for dinner. Which, when I think about it, I'm like, wow, that's pretty amazing, given the hours that restaurants keep in New York City now. But I remember, there were sounds, and -- that are still really evocative, sort of, the sound of the choy doh hitting these huge thick cutting [20:00] boards that were, like, kind of cross-sections of trees. They were these big round things about 10-12 inches thick. And I still, sort of, one of my prized things in my kitchen here is an old, uh, choy doh that I think was the same one that we had in our house growing up. My father, because he got new one, he sharpened up the old one. So it's, you know, the blade is dark and stained, and it's really worn, and it's -- I love it. You know, the sound of that, those blades hitting those cutting boards. And occasionally, somebody would sing, which was kind of neat. I didn't know what he was saying. I'm so used to hearing Cantonese and not knowing what it means. But it's oddly familiar, even though it's not. What did I say? It's a familiar comforting form of alienation. (laughter) Um, and these enormous woks, and the steam, and you know, when you're a little kid, that's all -- that's all very, sort of, awe-inspiring. And, uh -- and it was kind of fun too, because I was -- I was the -- the -- my father's the oldest son. So I was the oldest son's oldest child. And, uh, there was a certain status in that. Um, so, you know, I'd come in and be like, the boss' daughter. And I worked -- I worked in there for a couple of summers. But I think, uh, I think that, you know, like a lot of -- like a lot of immigrants, uh, my father's whole goal was that my sister and I would never



have to work in a restaurant. (laughter) And, but there was -- you know, there was some -- there were some pleasant memories associated with that. There was a lot of hard work done in that place. There, uh, this is -- there was something that I ended up writing about this years and years later. When I was a little kid, um, I'm trying to get to sleep, and I found sometimes, if I lay with my head a certain way on the pillow, I would hear this kind of soft rhythmic, kind of, crunching. It was like, chh, chh, chh. And, my mother and grandmother were very into psychic phenomena and stuff, (laughter) so I grew up, like, accepting all of that as -- as -- as fact. So I'm hearing this noise, and I'm like, what is that? And I was probably five or six years old. I came to the conclusion that what I was hearing was the sound of the cleavers in my father's restaurant, um, sort of being psychically transmitted between him to me. Um, and I really, you know, it was a nice -- a nice, uh, sensation. And it wasn't until -- and I kind of forgot about it, and it wasn't until years later, as an adult, that I suddenly managed to shift myself in bed one night, and hear that sound again, and I went oh my god, that's my own heart. (laughter) You know? That's my pulse hitting the pillow in just the right way, that it's moving the fabric ever so slightly. But when I was a little kid, with the sort of magical realist sensibility, that was what I thought it was, I thought it was the cleavers in my father's restaurant.

JEN CHAU: Can you tell me a little bit more about your relationship to your parents?

LENGE HONG: Hmm. (pause) Well, I'll start with my father. Um, he's -- (laughter) for the most of my life, uh, my -- my father was a -- seemed sort of a distant figure, because he wasn't present, uh, a lot of the time. [25:00] I would see him, maybe, once a week. Um, or maybe, you know, if I stayed up really late on, uh, in the summer, you know, I'd see him when he came home, or something like that. And also, because I was a very verbal, uh, English-speaking kid, and he, to this day, doesn't really speak terribly good English. And he's also, I think, not a very verbal person in any language. (laughter) He's very reticent. He, uh, grew up in occupied China, which is not a nice place to grow up. And he came to the States when he was 13, in 1949. Just before Mao, uh, sort of solidified his power and stopped all emigration. And he had -- so he was already, you know, a survivor of this really traumatic war time period. And he came to the States with one suitcase, which is the one heirloom I desperately want, uh, is this one -- like, it's

made of cardboard with leather coating it. It's such a -- a flimsy little, uh, suitcase. But he came with this one suitcase, uh, intending to go to school here, and he was -- I think he spent one semester at a public school in LA. And he was a -- he was a, uh, a paper son. The only way he got into the States was to be adopted by his mother's brother. So, his -- his name, uh, our name, Hong, is not the name he grew up with, the family's name is Lo. And after about a semester, uh, his family in China were imprisoned, because they were -- they were not rich people, but they had land, which means they had tenants. And one of the things that -- that Mao, uh, decreed when he came to power was that landlords have to pay all of the back rent to their tenants. And of course, nobody keeps that stuffed in their mattress. So they were like, well, pay up or we execute you. And so my father went to San Francisco, and found a relative, and we have an endless supply of relatives. (laughter) Some -- someone went up there, who was wealthy, and he took out an enormous private loan, sent that money back to ransom his family. And then in -- in the manner of his generation and his culture, dropped out of school, and went to work, and proceeded to pay that loan back. Uh, and do nothing else. You know, like, we are very laissez-faire about loans, you know, loans are something, you know, they're in the background, and you kind of toss a little money toward them every month, but you don't stop living your life, but with the way he looked at it, it was -- uh, this debt had to be repaid, and nothing else was going to happen until that happened. Uh, so he started working in restaurants in San Francisco. Because he'd say -- he told me once, you know, he said, at the time, there were two things you could do if you were Chinese, you could work in a restaurant, or you can work in the laundry, and he decided he wanted -- he would rather be in a restaurant. Uh, and as it turns out, he had, uh, a talent for cooking. And not surprisingly, for somebody who, uh, knows what hunger is like, he's also somewhat food-obsessed. So -- so anyway, it took him -- I know it took him almost 20 years to pay that money back. So that's the kind of person he is, very stoic, very pragmatic, uh, seen a lot of terrible things, and has soldiered on through it. And kind of, you know, built up a lot of armor along the way. And compared to the rest of his family, he's certainly the most Americanized of all of his brothers and sisters. [30:00] Or I should say the most Westernized. But compared to your average Westerner, he's still

very, very Chinese, very old Chinese. So, he was very -- I don't know, oh dear. I know he loved me very much, and his way of showing that was to work his ass off, (laughter) and make sure that we've never wanted for anything. Ah, you came prepared! (laughter)

JEN CHAU: Yeah.

LENGE HONG: Um, make sure that we never wanted for anything. And never had to, like, he put us through college, we didn't have to take out loans for college. I did for grad school, but that was later. And, uh, we had, uh, even now, I mean, I know that in my liberal arts folly, um, even if I was completely, um, went completely bankrupt, I know I'm not going to end up on the street, and that's entirely because of him. Uh, he's -- and it's -- and it's -- there's a -- there's a real sense of obligation there, because he, in effect, kind of mortgaged his life to pay for ours. Um, and I, you know, I'm always aware of that. (laughter) My -- and my parents had, uh, a fairly tempestuous relationship, and I found out many years later that another reason he wasn't present a lot of the time was because my mother kind of tried to keep him, uh, almost -- almost kind of freeze him out. I think she -- I think she wanted me to herself. Uh, my sister, to a lesser extent. But, because I was sort of the only child for a long time, it all got focused on me. So, when my parents finally got divorced, I was 35 or 36 at the time. And witnessing -- he was always very stern, real tight about stuff. And after they got divorced, I witnessed this incredible change in him. And realized, uh, I think both of them, but especially in him, where I realized, sort of, how much of his, sort of, unpleasant behavior had just been from being unhappy. Uh, and stressed. And he's now, good god, I'm not entirely sure how old he is, because he doesn't really have a birth certificate, he's roughly 78, 79. Uh, he's remarried now, and much, I think he just is so much a happier person. And I have more of a relationship with him now than I ever have in my life. And it's a little, you know, it will never be the Western ideal of a mother -- a father -- ah, a father-daughter relationship. There, you know, there are things I simply cannot discuss with him, just he doesn't relate, and vice versa, and I think there are things about me and my, sort of, emotional life that he just is absolutely flummoxed by. But, we -- we talk now. And he's much more of a -- much more demonstrative, and, uh, sort of emotionally open than he ever was before. And I think it's also he's gotten to an age where he's just like ah, the

hell with it. (laughter) You know, it doesn't matter anymore, I'm going to do what I want, which is nice, because he never did that in his life. And then maybe the last 10 years, he's finally started to [35:00] enjoy, uh, his money, and enjoy his life, do things -- and he never spent anything himself. He never did anything for pleasure. Uh, and I just found out a few months ago, he's bought himself both an iPad, and an I -- and an iPhone, you know? (laughter) Yeah, it's -- it's wonderful to see that change in him. It's wonderful at this age, to finally feel like I have a real relationship with him. Uh, my mother, (laughter) uh, it's interesting, because it's almost, uh, I don't want to say, it's not a zero sum game, but it's also, uh, follow my relationship with her, has followed, uh, a sort of reverse arc to that. But I'm also happier with that. Um, because when I was -- when I was little, and my mother is very, very emotional, and very, uh, emotionally needy. And so, it all got focused on me. And, so I was her constant companion through it all. So she's prone to depression, and so I was her constant companion through a lot of that too. And there were lots of very cute pictures of me, because I was little bit of a dress up doll for her, and there were all of these little -- like, there's one in like a kimono, a full kimono. (laughter) And little, you know, those little brocade pajamas, you know, that, like, you get in Chinatown. Um, and in personality, uh, I have to say, we are fairly similar, um, in both -- in both the good and bad things, so, uh, I think that's also why she gravitated toward me more than my sister. Um, so it was a very, like, when I was younger, I didn't quite realize, I think it was too close, and, um, getting away from Florida, going to school in England for a year, which was sort of where I was able to make the break. (laughter) Um, because actually, I graduated from high school at 16, and so neither of them wanted me out of their sight for a couple of more years, so I was still at home. So finally, I was like, I'm -- I have a chance to study abroad, and of course, education is never going to be turned down, so that was -- that's actually how I managed to leave both times, was -- the excuse was education. (laughter) Um, that first little bit of a break, going to Britain, and then coming back, and then, uh, six months later, coming up to New York. And I've pretty much been here ever since. Um, as the years went on, gradually getting a little more distance, and realizing that there was too much, either -- it was too close, and too, uh, what would be the word, perhaps too intimate. And actually,

again, when my parents got divorced, um, they both -- well, they both, really, it was not nice. Um, because my mother met someone else, and left my dad for this guy, and so it was very dramatic, and -- and unpleasant. And they both kind of fell apart, and they both called me. And then once they got -- they had -- the divorce was final, and the man that my mother left my father for is Balinese, and so they moved back to Bali. Uh, and they live there now. And I often say this, that my relationship with my mother has never been better than when she's moved to the other side of the planet. (laughter) It just may -- that -- that physical distance sort of enforced [40:00] the distance that I needed. And I think, also, she's happier. So she's not so needy to me. She's got what she needs in her every day life, so she's not searching for it, and turning to -- to her kids for it, or whatever. So, that's been a positive thing as well. The divorce was not fun, but ultimately, it was good for her. Uh, but like I said, my mother, uh, married, uh, a Balinese man, and my father ended up remarrying a woman that he met in China, who, uh -- well, after the divorce, he started to go back, uh, to China, you know, every six months or so. And he met this woman who, I think, was -- she was managing, maybe, the dining room of the hotel he was staying in, or something like that. And they're -- they're extremely well matched in ways that my mother and he never were. And I think partly, they share this formative experience of having grown up in poverty, and knowing -- knowing what it is to be hungry. Uh, and so they, you know, they are really well matched, and it's kind of funny too, both of my parents remarried people who were younger than me. So, um, but my father married somebody very different, and my mother actually married someone who, in many ways, reminds us a lot of my dad. My sister has commented on this as well. Um, but he's more emotionally open. So I don't know, if this goes on the internet -- (laughter) luckily, she's not that internet savvy. Um, but yeah, there's -- we're -- we're close, but we've learned the value of distance, I think, in both -- both my mother and my father.

JEN CHAU: And where's your father living right now?

LENGE HONG: He's in, uh, Orlando.

JEN CHAU: OK.

LENGE HONG: He likes Florida. The other -- well, he actually -- he spent -- he went from San Francisco, to Chicago, which, from the way he describes it, is like the ninth circle of hell, and down to Florida. And I think because he's from southern China, and basically, the weather is exactly the same as southern Florida. And he really can't take the cold. So, yeah, he's going to stay in Florida. He doesn't come here for that reason, he would be so miserable right now. (laughter) Yeah, he's -- he's in Florida.

JEN CHAU: And what is your relationship like with your sister?

LENGE HONG: Again, we're -- I wouldn't -- I would say we're close, but not, um, not in a sort of calling each other every day kind of close, we don't really talk that often. Um, because our -- our lives are so different, she's -- uh, she lives out in New Jersey, she teaches second and third grade. Um, she was -- she was always much more, I think, like, sort of -- a sort of normal person. Where, like, she would -- you know, she got, sort of, uniformly good grades, and she was good at sports, and she was a cheerleader, and, uh, I would -- I would say one of the popular kids. Um, did her college in four years, got married at 24, is still married to the same guy. Uh, sort of a much more normal trajectory. Where, I've -- I went to film school, and you know, took six years to finish my undergrad, and I had this other degree, and I got married quite late, and I got divorced. Um, so we're very different personalities. And a lot of the time, [45:00] when we do talk, it -- it has to do with discussing our parents one way or another. Um, especially my mother. But, because she's coming to visit, or we're concerned about something she's doing, or whatever. Um, and she's sort of like my dad, in that she's a bit more pragmatic, and less, sort of, emotionally, volatile, where I'm kind of emotionally all over the place. (laughter) So, yeah, I do kind of wish we were -- uh, I wish we saw each other more often. But, the way our lives are, it's amazing, one hour train ride out to New Jersey, actually ends up being quite difficult to fit in. But we do see each other now and then.

JEN CHAU: So can you tell me about your move to New York, your eventual move to New York?

LENGE HONG: Uh, well, I had -- I had started, uh, how far back can I go on this? I -- I started going to, uh, a film school in Miami, and it dawned on me, by the time I got back

from my junior year in Britain, I realized that I was going to graduate, knowing, really, very little about filmmaking, because kind of a -- the value of film school is in how well-equipped it is. Because you really only -- the only way to learn is by doing it. And they had -- they had three cameras, I remember this, they had three cameras for the whole school. One flatbed editing, uh, machine, and I think one or two moviola uprights, which, when you're working with 16 millimeter, we shot film back then, uh, is really a horrible thing to use, it will eat more of your film than -- than, you know, allow you to watch. So, I, sort of, sat down with my dad, um, and made this proposal that I apply to NYU. Because NYU film school was not the juggernaut that it is now, but it was still known as being one of the two best film schools in the country, the other being USC. And a proposition for better education, my father was not going to say no to that. So he actually was the one that brought me up here. In the middle of winter, and it was right after an enormous blizzard, and he was so miserable. Um, and we ended up, uh, staying with my -- or actually, his cousin, but she's of an older generation than him, so we called her his aunt. Uh, she used to own, like, the funeral home in Chinatown, the Wah Wing Sang Funeral Home in Chinatown. And so she was sort of well known in the community. She's a trip, she's totally cool. Um, and I stayed with her. And so actually my first experience of New York City was Chinatown in -- in, after a blizzard. Um, and coming here was a big shock. Um, not just from where I -- from Florida, but the pre -- six months previous to my arriving here, I had been living in a town in Scotland that, I think, maybe had 10,000 people at most. Uh, so it was a big -- big, big shock, and I had been very sheltered. But sort of, once I got, uh, sort of used to, um, the level of caution that you had to have on the street, then this was in 1987, this was [50:00] after Bernie Goetz (sic) had shot those guys on the subway, but before the trial. So it was that kind -- it was that New York. Once I kind of got used to the, sort of, level of danger, and learned how to, kind of, take care of myself, uh, it was very liberating. Um, and really, delightful to be in a place that was so diverse. Um, where I really -- I'm -- I take great pleasure in blending in. Um, I guess it seemed like I felt like I stood out so much growing up, so some place where I can blend in, and it just delights me. And here, nobody gave me a second glance, you know, I was dull. Uh, and -- and also, I -- here, people are just -- it

didn't matter what I was being mistaken for, because I pretty much get mistaken for stuff, almost -- very rarely do people immediately guess that I'm part Asian, um, depending on where I am, I mean, in Britain, they think I'm Italian, or Greek, or something, or South Asian. In California, they thought I was Hawaiian, Mexican. In Miami, they think I'm Cuban, up here, I got Puerto Rican and Italian a lot. But it was -- it was really nice to see, sort of, such a mixed group of people. And -- and actually, this was the first place I had, uh, I made a friend who was Asian-American. I had never actually even gotten to know anyone that well. And he's also, uh, didn't speak Chinese. (laughter) And, um, his -- one of his student films, actually, um, a story about a guy, the dilemma that a -- a American born Chinese guy who doesn't speak Chinese has when his uncle's last words to him are he thinks in Chinese, and he doesn't know what to do. Um, and he writes for hip hop magazines. (laughter) So, yeah, it was -- it was very liberating coming here. I think that's why a lot of people come here, they want to reinvent themselves, or find something out about themselves that they couldn't where they were. Start over.

JEN CHAU: Can you tell me more about living in Chinatown?

LENGE HONG: Well, I wasn't there for very long. Uh, at the time, it kind of freaked me out. It was also right around the Chinese New Year. (laughter) Um, in a funeral home. Uh, so it was a little strange. And I wanted very much to sort of get on -- get out on my own again, you know, so I got into the door, and I was quite happy. It was only a couple of days. Uh, a Chinese funeral home is -- is a little creepy, you know? (laughter) At least that one was, because that one was old. It was old, and it was old school. Uh, and my aunt lived above it, so it was a little creepy. And we actually -- my friend, uh, my friend from film school who is Asian-American, we shot part of his student film in that funeral home, which was also a very interesting experience. (laughter) For him, and me, there was a certain level of familiarity, but for the rest of the crew, they were totally freaked out. Um, but everybody was really sweet. And by then, her whole staff was quite elderly, and, uh, possibly had a little too much exposure to formaldehyde, but they were -- they were very sweet.

JEN CHAU: Can you tell me a little bit about your experience meeting this friend, your first Asian-American friend?



LENGE HONG: Oh, you know, it's -- and it so rarely -- it was so rarely an issue. Um, he was one -- actually, several people who transferred in -- we all transferred in, uh, so we started [55:00] in January, and so we had our own little orientation, so we all kind of knew each other, and we all started the required classes at the same time. And he was one of them. He was from -- he grew up in Boston. Yeah. And his parents were Taiwanese. Uh, academics, I think. So it was a very, very different background than my -- my father's family. But he didn't speak, uh, Chinese either. And he's always been much more, sort of, into, uh hip hop culture, and he started DJing when we got out of -- out of film school. And we just sort of gradually got to know each other, working on crews together and stuff. And he's a very understated quiet guy. But, like, once you -- once you get to know him, he had -- he had a very good sense of humor, it would just be very dry. And I think the first -- the first time there was any acknowledgement that there was sort of anything culturally, you know, similar, we were, I think, working on my film, and we were in my apartment, and I stubbed my toe, or dropped something on my foot or something, and I went "Ei yah!" And he just looked at me and went oh yeah! (laughter) Oh, it was just -- it was just very funny. But, you know, there -- there was -- we both had very little sense of -- we didn't feel Asian as much as we felt Western. So, uh, he ended up staying with me for a month or so after we graduated, because we were all -- we're all graduated from film school, many of us were unemployed. Uh, he stayed with me, like, stayed in my living room, set up a futon in my living room. Uh, he had started DJing at that point, and I would come in, and he would have his headphones on, be sitting on his futon, quietly scratching to himself. (laughter) You know? Um, doing, you know, just -- I don't know, I think he had, like, nothing but records, turntables, and his futon. Um, but yeah, there was -- there was much more -- I think much more of the film school experience that we had in common. Kind of the way I was with my sister, not much acknowledged.

JEN CHAU: I want to talk a little bit about your thoughts about mixed heritage identity now.

LENGE HONG: Now. It's interesting, because I've seen it go from being something freakish, or, uh, I think it was -- started freakish, then it went to this archetype of the sort of tormented half breed, which I told a friend of mine, who was -- who was a cinema

studies major, I said, if I ever was insane enough to get a cinema studies degree on top of everything else, like, that my thesis would totally have been the figure of the half-breed of film and television in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Because, uh, the one thing that drove me nuts was that they always die. (laughter) Always! Um, up into -- there was some character on "Deep Space Nine" in the mid-'90s, predictably died. Even Spock died, but by popular demand, they brought him back. But there was always this -- with women, especially, if they were -- uh, they were considered sexually desirable, but they weren't the girl you married, they were the hot blooded mistress, you know? Um, *The World of Suzie Wong*. What's that movie with Jennifer Jones as the -- literally, the hot blooded half-breed, um, that the brothers fight over. Um, and the male ones were always sort of tragic. Um, and it's been -- which can give you a little bit of a complex, you know? (laughter) But it's -- [1:00:00] it's been interesting to see that change to, uh, where I've actually heard people say it's very fashionable to be mixed now, it's like -- like -- like we had a choice. Um, there was -- oh, there was something on -- it was so funny *Absolutely Fabulous*, the new ones, they just came out with, where, uh, the daughter who's, you know, this very philanthropic kind of kid, she come back from doing aid work in Africa, and she's pregnant. And her mother, who is a self-absorbed, horrible woman, is horrified that she's going to be a grandmother, oh my god, she has another baby in the house with her. And when she finds out that the father of the baby is black, suddenly, she's thrilled, because she's like, a mixed race baby, it's the ultimate fashion accessory! (laughter) And she loves this idea of being able to parade around London with this mixed race baby. Um, still not the most desirable image, but better than the doomed, you know, half-breed. Um, and like -- a friend of mine who was raising her daughter in this neighborhood, uh, had told me her daughter was one of the few kids in her class in school who wasn't mixed. And I was like wow, that must be interesting. (laughter) To where she's like, I'm only one thing. I was like boy, that -- I don't -- I can't imagine that. And it's kind of neat. And it's not, uh, you know, there's still -- and also, well, -- I mean, living in New York, we're a little bit spoiled. I guess if I go to other parts of the country, there's still -- there's still some curiosity that you're not entirely sure is just curiosity. But, it may also be that I'm a little older, and a little more relaxed now, and it doesn't bother me as much,

and it's just kind of like, if you're genuinely curious, sure, why not. And, again, I've been lucky, I've gotten very few really negative reactions. (pause) I never thought I would see so many celebrities, who not only were mixed, but described themselves as mixed, which I find really refreshing. Um, and I never thought I would see a mixed race president. Because I know, like, you know, he's commonly referred to as the first black president, and I'm like, hey, he's the first mixed race president. And -- and not just mixed, but very much multi-cultural. I mean, this guy grew up in Hawaii, and Indonesia, and then Chicago. (laughter) And I mean, that was one of the things that was so exciting, when he was elected, it was like, he's got more of a -- uh, a diverse cultural outlook than anyone who has ever been at that level of government in this country ever. And so many, you know, it's almost gotten, uh, gotten -- become commonplace to have these movie stars and stuff who are mixed.). But my sister and I call them halvesies. Um, so I'll tell you, there is a little sense of somebody like Keanu Reeves or the Tilly sisters -- yeah, they're one of mine; they're one of my people. ). (laughter) ) I have a friend who, she was actually my roommate's daughter, and I met her when she was three years old. And she is half-Scottish, and half, like, Afro-Caribbean. And it was -- it was great seeing her, and her mother asked me a few times, you know, how do -- how -- how old were you when you realized [1:05:00] that you weren't exactly the same as your mother, because she sort of wanted to know how to deal with it. And, uh, so she's always been, sort of, very dear to my heart too, that girl who is now in her late 20's, no, mid 20's excuse me. Mid 20's, and, uh a singer in London. And very proudly describes herself as mixed. Um, which is -- which is wonderful to me. Because there -- there was very much, uh, I think around my -- my age and earlier, this sense that you had to pick one. And -- and especially, I think, if you were -- if you were mixed black and white. And you -- and pretty much, most of the time, you didn't have an option which one you were going to pick. Um, where I think, with me, it was a little bit different, because I'm not immediately peggable as one or the other, um, so I mean, maybe I've been a little bit more aware of that. But people would -- kids would find out when I was little, I guess from my name. I always wondered what it would be like if my name -- like, if my mom had been the Asian one, and my dad had been the Caucasian one, and my name had been

like Janet Jones, you know? (laughter) How different that would've been. Because, you know, my sister -- I went through a period when I was a little kid, when I desperately wanted to be called Janet, and my sister, did the same, my sister's name is Lei-Han, She went through a period of roughly the same age where she wanted to be called Julie. Of course, we both outgrew it. But, um, I always wondered what that -- if you're not immediately identifiable, except by the name. The kids would then say, you know, are you Chinese or Japanese? Well, I'm certainly not Japanese, I don't know, I'm not Chinese either. I'm not, you know -- here, try and explain that to six year olds, it doesn't work. (laughter)

JEN CHAU: Can you talk a little bit about the negative reactions you have gotten, that you mentioned, a couple of times.

LENGE HONG: Probably, well, when I was -- when I was little in elementary school, that was the most -- and kids would, you know, kids would watch, like, World War II movies, um, on TV. And then, use all of the sort of terrible things they would call Japanese people in these movies. (laughter) Um, and call them, you know, like I said, I got called chink, I got called Japoon, I don't know where that came -- where that one's from. I'd get the eye thing, you know, when you're pulling your eyes up. I got that a lot, which was so bizarre, because if my name had been Janet Jones, they probably wouldn't have, but, um, you know, and I got into some fights over that kind of stuff. But interestingly, being little boys, uh, that's like a prelude to becoming friends. You get into fights with little boys, and then eventually, then you start playing together, you know? (laughter) The girls never gave me any stick for my race, they found other things to, um, go after me for, and I just avoided them. Uh, so I ended up being quite the tomboygrowing up. . Um, and I think -- but I had one boyfriend, one serious boyfriend whose mother did not approve of me at all. Um, I didn't like her either, so. (laughter) And her, you know, and her son was mortified by her, actually. She kept -- she kept saying, well -- and she -- she'd said this, you know, I had never heard it before, the, sort of stereotypical thing about a Chinese laundry, you know, "no tickie, no shirtie." This is so old, thankfully, I think it's fallen out of -- out of use. Um, but, you know, she was older than the average mother of, uh, our generation [1:10:00] as well. So she, you know -- but, she took great

delight in telling me this, you know, it was kind of like, OK. Um, but that really -- that hasn't been -- I mean occasional, I've gotten strange -- I've gotten stared at way more by Chinese people. (laughter) Um, we were an object of fascination in China when we went to China. And sometimes, I had -- I had one woman walk -- because I -- I'm sure you're aware that staring is not a taboo in Chinese culture, neither is shoving. Um, but, uh, I've had, like, an old woman in Shanghai just walk up to me, like, looking at me, like, what the hell? Um, and I was -- I was so hot, I could barely think, so I was like (laughter) whatever. One of the -- one of the funnier ones was when we were -- they controlled us so tightly, that we weren't able to sort of walk around loose in towns much, but when we got down to the south, in Guilin, uh, we were able to go into town on our own. So my -- we were walking through these very -- it was an old part of the town, and very narrow, windy streets. And little businesses, sometimes just an apothecary or something would just have, like, his poster up, and then all of these little bags and pots of stuff. That kind of very informal kind of market thing. So my sister and I were walking about 20 feet ahead of my parents. And I would kind of freak people out when we were in China, because I was wearing clothes I'd bought there. Um, shoes and everything. So, and at the time, I had dyed my hair jet black. And I had a couple of people I had turned around, jump. (laughter) You know, because they thought I was just uncommonly tall, but then they were like, oh. (laughter) So we were walking, and I saw these people who were -- had this machine, this, like, hand crank machine, that you fed tobacco leaves into, I don't know how they did those. And it was spitting rolled cigarettes out the other end, just cranking it. It was like a pasta machine, but it was making cigarettes. And so my sister and I were stopping going look at that, that's really interesting. And the people making the cigarettes were looking at us, going oh, what's this? And then my parents came around the corner, and they all went, ah! That's what's going on! (laughter) Um, yeah, because also, I should say, my sister and I both very much look like my mother, except we have my father's color. So, when you see the four of us, you know, you're like, all right, this makes sense. Um, there's just -- there haven't been that many truly negative experiences, I've been very lucky that way. Oh, and one thing that pissed me off, I remember, (laughter) and actually, this has happened a few times, and it's not, you know,

it's not terrible, or scary, it's just annoying. Uh, is occasionally meeting a man who evinces absolutely no interest in me, until he finds out I'm half Chinese, and then he's like really fascinated. And I'm just like, dude, could you be more obvious? (laughter) Clearly, there's nothing about me that interests you except some mysterious thing you think might be travelling with the Asian blood. I suspect that kind of thing is a common experience, you know? (laughter) Um, and again, it's not getting beaten up, it's irritating. But It's nothing more than that.

JEN CHAU: When you talked a little bit about the kind of perceptions of mixed people, and how that has changed over time, kind of, from tragic to cool, how do you make sense of that change?

LENGE HONG: I think just more exposure. Maybe, I think it probably started with people ever so slightly younger [1:15:00] than my parents, um, I guess I've got to hand it to the Boomers, you know? (laughter) Um, it started -- started having interracial -- more interracial marriages, and more children, and it just became more and more, uh, people were more and more exposed to it. Um, and -- and having -- and been open-minded, and culturally open-minded enough to not to raise their kids saying you are this, not that. Letting them know that it's OK to be both, or neither. Um, and then they project that. Standards of beauty have relaxed somewhat. Not entirely, but they've expanded a bit. I remember, I was a kid in the last heyday of the blonde. You had to be blonde, you know! (laughter) You had to be Farrah Fawcett, you know? (laughter) And things like, someone like Princess Leia was such a revelation -- a brunette? Who didn't fall down when she was running away from stuff, you know? (laughter) Even that was, for people my age, for girls my age, that was a departure. Um, goodness, I sound old! (laughter) Yeah, there was a -- and I mean, I don't -- I think there's, perhaps, a little too much emphasis on role models, in terms of oh, everybody setting an example, but it is -- it is valuable to know you're not the only one of your kind, whatever you think your kind is at that moment, whether it's a brunette, or someone who is mixed, or gay, or whatever. Um, to just know you're not alone, and it's OK. I mean, in some ways, it may have been easier for my sister, because I was around. Um, I hope. (laughter)

JEN CHAU: And what would you say the misperceptions are today?

LENGE HONG: Hmm, hmm. Uh, that they're all attractive. (laughter) Again, that's like one of those things where somebody says, oh, it's such a beautiful combination. You're not going to go, like, no, shut up, you know? But, it's kind of like ah, well, not always. (laughter) You know? Um, you know, that's interesting, I hadn't really thought about that that much. Because this -- whatever the stereotype now, doesn't really extend much beyond, sort of, cool, attractive Benneton ad, model, kind of thing. Um, and Kip [Fulbeck] said something really interesting at his talk at [MOCA], which is that you get a group of mixed race people together in the room, and for about 10 minutes they're like -- hush. (laughter) Silence. Kip Fulbeck said something really interesting at his talk at MOMA. MOMA -- MOCA, MOCA, uh, where he said if you get a group of mixed race people together in a room for about 10 minutes, they're like, oh yeah, that happened to me too, that happened to me. And I was having that experience in the room while he was talking. You know, and then he said after about 10 minutes, it kind of dies out because then you're kind of like well, we actually are all really different, and we do have these sort of weird little experiences in common, but then, once you get past that, there's such a diversity of experience. Um, I've never gotten past that first 10 minutes, because I've still haven't met that many, uh, mixed race people. Oddly enough, where I work now, at one point, we had -- there were three of us who were mixed Asian and Caucasian, and one who's Caucasian, African, and Native American. And I realized, this is sort of the highest concentration of mixed race people I have ever been around, who weren't related to me in some way. [1:20:00] Um, and actually, if you sort of looked at the four of us, it was an incredibly diverse experience there. Um, which is why I was curious about starting to go to these events, and maybe try to attend, like, a [Loving] Day celebration or something like that, just to get more of a sense of the community, because it's still quite new to me. And especially my -- I mean, my generation is still not as visible, because I guess we're just not as big. I mean, they could start a chapter of Swirl in this building, you know? (laughter) It's amazing. It's neat.

JEN CHAU: It is, it's definitely different. How did you feel in 2000, when the US Census gave the option to check more than one race?

LENGE HONG: Oh, that was awesome! (laughter) That was -- that was -- that was a solution to something I had been complaining about for years. (laughter) Um, to where I was, you know, because I remember when I was, uh, when I was very small, and I would encounter those, my mother would say check white, and I was like, but that's not accurate. Um, so I started checking other, which is sort of annoying. Um, and I pretty much stuck with checking other -- I was kind of stubborn with that because I was -- I'll be damned if I'm going to pick one or the other. So yeah, it was pretty cool, when, uh, when they instituted that. And I still have a small measure of satisfaction every time I encounter a form where I have to -- I have the option of checking that.

JEN CHAU: Can you tell me a little bit about your connection to Brooklyn?

LENGE HONG: Let's see, I -- the first time I lived in Brooklyn, I was still in college, I was in -- I was living in Clinton Hill with some -- two roommates. We were all, sort of, refugees from the NYU dorms. NYU did not have a small city of dorms like they do now, they were just nowhere near that size. And we were kind of an interesting little United Nations, and I had one roommate who was Sicilian, from Sicily, and the other was Filipino, from Long Island. (laughter) And we were living in a largely African-American neighborhood, um, where I got mistaken for Puerto Rican constantly. And, uh, it had this really -- it -- it was right when -- ah, the -- either, you want to call it, the gentrification, or revitalization of that area was just starting. It's almost unrecognizable now when I go there. Uh, this was on Washington Avenue between Fulton and Atlantic. Uh, and again, it was kind of -- it was interesting, because I felt, uh, I felt like I could blend in. I was sort of blending in under somewhat of a mistaken identity, but I didn't attract any attention, which was kind of nice. Uh, and then I came back -- I came back here because the -- we had to give up that apartment, and I can't remember why now. And then I lived there again in '99, on, sort of, the other side of the -- the Bed-Stuy side of Clinton Hill. And, uh, which was rougher, you know, scarier. But again, if I dressed the right way, I could not attract attention. Uh, but I kind of realized that maybe this was, perhaps, not the safest neighborhood when my mother said she wanted to come visit, and I realized no way. (laughter) No way. Um, that's not going to work, aside from the fact that the apartment was falling apart. Um, but I see -- I mean, I see Brooklyn has changed



so much since -- since the first time, [1:25:00] since I first got here, and then watched every neighborhood change, and I find myself more and more kind of -- I'm probably going to be moving there again in the next few years. (laughter) Because -- for economic reasons, but it's -- there's -- there's so much there now. Um, and all of my close friends have now moved out there. And I'm actually working with photographs, old photographs of Brooklyn where I work now, and seeing what downtown Bushwick used to look like. It looked like Park Slope it was beautiful. Apparently, it all went down in a fire in the '30s. It's a fascinating [world]. (pause) And yeah, I'm probably going to end up out there in the next couple of years. (laughter) I'm sort of fascinated with Bushwick. And, um, I like to be in Manhattan, because I felt like I was right in the middle of everything, and I was close to work, but the only other borough that I ever wanted to live in was Brooklyn. Now, Brooklyn is made more for living in, it's not so much -- like, Manhattan is so much work-oriented, and business-oriented, and wealth-oriented. And Brooklyn was built for families, Brooklyn was built to live in.

JEN CHAU: Can you tell me a little bit about what you do?

LENGE HONG: Uh, now, in my latest incarnation, uh, I am a library cataloguer, but I work in what's called the Special Collections Library, which is the thing I'm interested in, so, uh, I've done archival work and rare book cataloguing. And right now, I'm working with, uh, a project that's digitizing photographs and glass plate negatives, and other -- and -- and I think I had gelatin silver negatives, and acetate negatives, that are difficult to access physically. So, digitizing them and putting them online, a lot of this stuff, nobody's really seen. Some of the glass plate negatives are -- are cracked, and very delicate. Um, so we're digitizing those, and then I'm inputting all of the metadata to make this stuff accessible, uh, online. And, there's a -- there's a sort of, in -- in the information science world, digitization is kind of the -- the sexy thing right now. Uh, and sometimes it's overdone, but these things -- this is great, because this is the only way that these things are really going to be seen, because they can't really be handled very much. And it largely has to do with the history of New York City. Uh, and there's one huge collection that is going to take me forever, and I've put it aside for a while and did a few other small ones, and went back, and, uh, and that someone who lived in -- he lived in

Bushwick actually, uh, he was a German immigrant, and he became fascinated with the history of New York, and he -- and the architecture, and he went around photographing all of these old buildings in the '20s and '30s, just before they were torn down. Uh, so he had documented all of these, uh, and these areas, uh, that are often unrecognizable now. Places that look rural, parts of -- parts of, like, [Grave's End], and, uh, [Denton's] Park, parts of Bushwick looked rural. It was extraordinary. So that's a fun -- (laughter) that's what I do now. (laughter)

JEN CHAU: And I'm curious about something that you said earlier, that mixed heritage [1:30:00] identity, or race, is something that you think about a lot.

LENGE HONG: Mmhmm.

JEN CHAU: Is it something that you -- I guess tell me -- tell me a little bit more about that.

LENGE HONG: What's funny, is I -- in one way, I think about it a lot, and in another way, I don't think about it at all. Um, it's just so integral to my experience that, uh, I don't think about it anymore, because it just informs everything. Because I remember somebody saying, like, uh, talking about -- what is it like to be in a -- in an interracial relationship. And I was like, well, unless I date somebody who's half Chinese and half Scottish, every relationship I'm in is an interracial relationship. Um, so I don't even think about it. (laughter) You know, I just kind of take it for granted. Um, and then there's also a cul -- the cultural aspect of that, for me, is more important. Um, and I guess that's a luxury of living at the time I'm living. Um, that my -- well, my mother being from Scotland, I actually am culturally very British in the way I was raised. That is, in some ways, a far bigger influence on -- certainly on my life now. Um, when I was a kid, the racial aspect was more, uh, prominent. I know -- yeah, I do often wonder if my sister thinks about it at all, or if it's just me. (laughter) Um, but it's sort of something that once you've grown up with it, it's so -- it's so completely -- so completely part of everything, it's almost not an issue anymore, in a strange sort of way. Like -- like, my -- it's like my name, the bane of my existence growing up. Um, but I can't imagine being called something someone else is called now. Um, because actually, my name is not even a proper (laughter) -- uh, a proper Chinese name. It's actually, like, a pet name. So, you're not going to meet any -- or very rarely, are you going to find someone in China,

who is called this as -- as their actual name. Um, so it's -- it's everything and it's nothing.

JEN CHAU: And before we wrap up, I'm curious to hear what you think the future holds.

LENGE HONG: Mmm. Everybody says we're all going to be one great beige, you know, planet. (laughter) I think we're going to be a long, long way from that, because -- simply because people just don't move around that much. Um, but I think there -- there is going to -- there is this -- and it sort of -- there is this sort of new ethnic group that is the indeterminants. (laughter) You know, the mixtures, and the ones who are synthesizing, and I think that's wonderful. Um, and there's something -- there's something wonderful about having -- preserving a culture in its purest state, but there's also something very wonderful about what can come from mixtures. And, um, so on one hand, there's a country like Iceland that, I think, rightly so, is trying to preserve their language, and their culture. But at the same time, these fantastic things come from the intersection of these cultures. And I've had my -- I certainly think my life is very -- much richer for having been exposed to two different cultures, or really -- well, actually four. (laughter) For having been, both, Scottish and Chinese, and then growing up in a city of immigrants, uh, where there were both Americans and Cubans, and there were multiple languages being spoken. And a window [1:35:00] into so many different ways of life, and ways of looking at things. And I'll tell you, that can only be positive. There's some friction that comes from it, but ultimately, it's a good thing.

JEN CHAU: And that's a great note to end on.

LENGE HONG: (laughter)

JEN CHAU: Thank you so much for sharing your story with us.

LENGE HONG: Thank you, thank you.

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