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Oral History Interview with Paul Golin

Crossing Borders, Bridging Generations, 2011.019.052

Interview conducted by Abigail Ettelman at the Brooklyn Historical Society on August 16th, 2013 in Brooklyn Heights, Brooklyn.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, now we're recording. It is August 16th, 2013. My name is Abigail Ettelman. And this is an oral history interview for Crossing Borders, Bridging Generations. We are at the Brooklyn Historical Society on Pierrepont Street, and it's probably about 10:20 in the morning.

PAUL GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: The narrator is Paul Scott Golin, and Yurika Golin, maiden name Mizuno, is going to be joining us later. So, if you could introduce yourself, and then say your birthday, and just give me -- start telling me a childhood memory.

PAUL GOLIN: Sure, my name is Paul Golin. And my birth date is [date redacted for privacy] I was born on Staten Island, New York. And a childhood memory is my first Halloween costume was Bugs Bunny, and something that younger folks may not know is that Halloween costumes back then -- so, this was like 1971 or '2, were just plas-- hard plastic face masks with an elastic band around it. And then, just a plastic smock that you wore over your neck like a little poncho. And that was it. And every -- and they came in a box. And it was exciting, because there was nothing better. And it got incredibly hot inside that mask, because it didn't breathe. So, your breath -- the condensation of your breath would cool in the chin part of the mask, and every so often you'd have to, like, lift it and let the condensation kind of drip out. So, (laughter) that -- I don't know why that's my first childhood memory, but that's what it is.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That was pretty gross. (laughter)

PAUL GOLIN: (laughter) And, you know, I'm sure -- I have a one-year-old now, and I'm sure when he's ready for Halloween, he'll have some kind of advanced costume. But I'll be nostalgic for those old costumes. And there's probably a whole market for them eBay, frankly. I should check that out.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: I definitely remember those, even though I'm not -- I was not born when you were born. I definitely remember having one of those around the house, and them being just so uncomfortable to wear.

PAUL GOLIN: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, we're on Halloween. So, let's talk about your family at Halloween.

PAUL GOLIN: Sure, well, it wasn't really a family celebration. But you want to -- you want me to talk about my family a little bit?

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: What would they be doing?

PAUL GOLIN: Oh, I think because my mom was first-generation American, and really not even born in America -- she came over when she was one -- Halloween was not a holiday that had a tradition in my family. So it, basically, started with me. So, they did not wear a costume. It was just something that I did because it was what's -- what was going on in my neighborhood with other kids. So, it was a way of, I guess, Americanizing, but it wasn't done in that -- in a conscious way. It's simply, OK, this is a holiday. Everyone around it is celebrating it in this way, so we will also.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, where was your mother from?

PAUL GOLIN: My mom was born in a displaced persons camp in Berlin, in 1946. And she was in a displaced persons camp because my grandparents -- her parents -- had survived the Holocaust in Poland. They were from Białystok, Poland, and have, kind of, a terrible survival story, as do all survivors of the Holocaust. And lost all of their family on both sides, and as with many survivors in the displaced persons camp, immediately began a new family, because that was a way to recreate the family that they had lost. And they had had the option of going immediately to Palestine, or get on a waiting list for the US. And my grandmother felt that they had just survived a war, and why would they go to another war zone? So, she wanted to come to the US. So, they had to wait a couple of years in this displaced persons camp. And then, they came over when my mom was one. And then, they had a boy when they were here -- when they got here.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, what was your mother's name?

PAUL GOLIN: My mother's name is Susan.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: [00:05:00] And her brother?

PAUL GOLIN: Alan. And he passed away at the much-too-early age of 52.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Wow.

PAUL GOLIN: Yeah. So, my grandmother actually lost three children -- because she died after him, yeah -- one right when the war was starting; one during the war; and then, one as an adult, years later. So, it was very tough for her.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Did you mom talk a lot about this, when you were young?

PAUL GOLIN: No. My mom never really discussed it. And I don't know how much she knew. My grandmother brought it up pretty frequently, but only very specific things. She didn't speak about it in depth. And at a certain point, I did sit down with her, with a

video camera, and asked her to tell her story, which she did, which I have yet to watch and transcribe. But I still have it. And, you know, hope to get to that, especially now that I have a child. That's something I want to be able to share with him one day.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Absolutely. So, that's all right. So, that's your mother's family. And that's a really intense, amazing history.

PAUL GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, thank you for sharing that. What about your father's side of the family?

PAUL GOLIN: So, my parents split up when I was very young. I don't remember my dad ever even living with us. So, I know him, though. I knew him, and I knew his parents. And his -- my s-- my dad's side of the family came to America in the 1880s from Kiev, Ukraine, in the big wave of Jewish immigration -- the first really big wave of Jewish immigration. And so, in a lot of ways, even though both my parents were Ashkenazi Jewish, theirs was a kind of intermarriage, I always think, because my dad's family was so established already. And his dad -- my grandfather -- owned part of a dry-cleaner business. And they were upper middle class. And my mom's parents got to the US with basically nothing. Both my mom's parents went to work as tailors. They were in the union, and just saved. You know, didn't spend any money on themselves, ever. Saved up, sent their kids to college, and got their family into the upper middle class within one generation. But they, themselves, certainly, were very old-world. And my dad's grandparents were very new world. And so, I don't -- I don't know if that's what led to their breakup or not. Probably not. But I always felt a very big contrast between my sets of grandparents.

So -- and because we're talking about Brooklyn, both of my grandparents lived in Brooklyn when I was growing up. And my dad's parents moved to Florida when I was fairly young. And both my parents grew up in Brooklyn, and met in Brooklyn. And so, you know -- so I don't have a ton of memories. But I -- you know, the memories I have of my dad's side of the family were from my childhood. And so, for example, we had these massive Passover Seders at my grandmother's brother's house -- my dad's mom's brother -- in Westchester. And, you know, I certainly have vivid memories of those. And it was old-school. Like, they took the *Haggadah* -- the Passover Seder book -- and went through it line by line. So, it was like an hour and a half before anybody ate anything, and it was pretty torturous. So -- but, you know... (laughter) So, now, when we do our 20-minute abbreviated Passover Seders, I think back to those long Seders. And it wasn't just that it felt really long because I was a kid. I mean, I would -- they literally went through it line by line.

And so, I have memories of Brooklyn as a child also, particularly of my grandmother -- my mom's mom's house, because once parents split up and I was raised by my mom, she, [00:10:00] at a certain point, wanted to start dating again. So, every Saturday night my sister and I would sleep over my grandmother's house. So, I have pretty vivid memories of those, and my grandmother spoiling us. And just, you know, I believe that she lived on East 55th Street in Flatbush. And so, this was the '70s, and when her neighborhood flipped, she fled. She was part of the massive white flight that took place there, and she moved to Staten Island. And it's something that I think about, actually, because -- in part

because of my work. And in general, I do think about -- and because I'm interracially married I think about the issues of race and that, you know, my family is part of that white-flight legacy of Brooklyn. And it's just -- you know, I'm just conflicted about it. Because it was based on racial fears, no question, but also, you know... And there are, and were, a couple of older Jewish folks who held out and continue to live there, as there are still, to this day. But, you know, it -- my grandmother came from a time and a place. And she was -- suffered as much as anybody ever for -- from a type of hatred -- anti-Semitism. And yet, the -- that -- God, I don't want to say milieu, but that whole environment of racial or ethnic hatred was absorbed by her, because that's just what existed, and that's what she grew up in. And so, she still had it. And so, even though she suffered the worst out of anybody for it, you know, and still lived -- obviously people who died suffered worse, but she survived. She still had it, and she was a product of that society. And so, when one person or two people on her block sold their houses to black families, she was out of there immediately. And, of course, she sold to a black family. Like, that's how entire neighborhoods just flipped. And, you know, should she have been, like principled and remained on the block as the only white, elderly Jew? You know, I can't say that. That was her life, and that's a kind of a big thing to ask. So, when I think about the whole dynamics of white flight, it's just a very complicated situation. And it's easier to sit back and say, "How could that have happened? How could you have let that happen? What was the big deal?" And it's another thing to actually be that person, be from that time, and make the decision that "I'm going to stay."

But, since I'm rambling toward -- rambling on a theme, my stepfather... So, my mom remarried also, when I was still fairly young -- I was in fifth grade when she remarried, and they had been dating already for several years. So, my stepdad came into my life by the time I was in first grade. And he was also born and raised in Brooklyn, but he was almost a decade older than my mom. So, he's very much from a different generation. He was born in '39. His name -- his name is Jack Bender. And he -- it took a really long time before he really became my dad. But now he's absolutely -- you know, he's my dad, even though I call him Jack. So, he is a dentist, and was working -- living in Brooklyn, working in Coney -- Canarsie. And the neighborhood flipped also from all white Jews to black. I believe now there's a lot of folks from the Caribbean. And he stayed. His office -- he stayed in his office. And that -- I don't know. You know, I don't think that was a principled choice either. I think -- I don't know. I haven't spoken to him about why he stayed and not -- and didn't, like, move his practice to Staten Island and serve a bunch of folks who would have probably -- you know, he probably could have made more money that way. But he stayed. [00:15:00] And he's still there today. And I see his interaction with the community there, and he's beloved, I think. You know, from what I see with his patients, they absolutely love him. And he treats everyone as individuals. And I'm proud of that. But also he, then, drives home to his white, Staten Island suburb. So, it is and it isn't a success story, I guess, of racial integration. But he stayed. And the neighborhood flipped. And he became a part of that community. So...

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That is such an amazing story, just the generations that you're able to trace, and in Brooklyn specifically. And the ways that demographics have changed,

and the relationships of your specific family to that. Just one -- I'm going to hammer on about names.

PAUL GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: (laughter) I apologize, because it's the most boring part of the story.

PAUL GOLIN: No, it's fine.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: But, your grandmother who lived in Flatbush and then moved to Staten Island -- what was her name?

PAUL GOLIN: Her name was Esther

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: There we go. And your grandmother on your other side was named...?

PAUL GOLIN: Dorothy Golin.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: And your grandfather on that side was...?

PAUL GOLIN: Irving Golin. And my mom's dad was Ephraim. And I never knew him because he passed when I was maybe two.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Great. That's frustrating. Then he gets here and then...

PAUL GOLIN: Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Stories like that --

PAUL GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- it's never -- never entirely happy.

PAUL GOLIN: Right, right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: But, yes. So, Flatbush and then Staten Island -- did your family have any other connections to specific areas in Brooklyn?

PAUL GOLIN: Well, my dad's parents -- I don't recall where they were. I -- it was in the traditional Jewish neighborhoods of either... I believe my dad went to Midwood High School, so I... Or maybe Tilden -- I know those were the -- those were two pretty heavily Jewish high schools. My mom went to a girls' yeshiva. So, if -- I'm not sure what the other neighborhoods were that my family was in. But my stepdad -- I guess my stepdad was in that same -- those same Jewish neighborhoods also, so... I don't recall where they were.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: And you live, today, in...?

PAUL GOLIN: Hm?

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: You live today...?

PAUL GOLIN: Today I live in Park Slope.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, did you -- obviously you came back from Staten Island. So, how did that happen?

PAUL GOLIN: Well, after Stat-- after growing up on Staten Island, I went to school in Ann Arbor, Michigan. And I came back to -- and I lived with friends on Staten Island for a couple of years after college. And then, I moved into Manhattan, and lived in Manhattan for about 15 years. And when I met my wife, she moved in with me in Manhattan, and it was a studio apartment. And we survived a studio apartment together for nine years, without killing each other. And finally realized we need more space, and Brooklyn was a natural place. And we were thinking about starting a family, and Park Slope has, you know, the reputation of a good place for families. So, that was one place that we looked. And we looked in other neighborhoods of brownstone Brooklyn, but found something in Park Slope that we liked. And so, we've been there three years now.

And we really like it. I miss the -- I miss some of the hustle and bustle of Manhattan, particularly the neighborhood I had been in was Union Square/East Village. And I like walking outside and having tons of people. But my wife appreciates some of the more quiet blocks on Brooklyn -- in Brooklyn than... And I've come to also appreciate that. And being close to Prospect Park is really amazing. So, we're trying to take as much advantage of it as we can.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Do you think you'll stay?

PAUL GOLIN: I'd really like to. I don't want to... You know, I grew up in the suburbs. Staten Island is technically part of New York City, but if you actually go there -- which so few people do -- and drive around, you'll see that it's just houses with backyards, and it could be anywhere in America. You need a car to get anywhere. And it was OK, but in a lot of ways I feel like who I am -- despite growing up on Staten Island, not because I grew up on Staten Island. [00:20:00] And I don't -- I don't miss the suburban lifestyle. And I don't necessarily want to go back to it. And I think Brooklyn is a great combination of neighborhood, family, and slightly suburban in that you do have quiet blocks and trees and parks. But it's still very much city. There are -- there are restaurants two blocks from us that we haven't even tried yet, you know? So, I -- it's a great mix for us. The fact that it's so expensive and increasingly expensive is a challenge for us. So, we're renting now, and I just don't know if we'll ever be able to buy anything. So, to me, that's the main challenge. And that cost-of-living challenge, I think, is a New York City issue, not just a Brooklyn issue. But certainly there have been recent articles about Brooklyn in particular becoming more expensive. But, yeah, I'd love to stay. I think it's an amazing place to raise kids. I think they become smarter because of

the mix and diversity of people that they meet, and the awareness that they have to have of things around them.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Is that question of diversity -- is that important for you in thinking about a place for your child to grow up?

PAUL GOLIN: Yeah, diversity is really important to me. He -- my wife is from Japan, and he looks mixed, I would say. I mean, it's interesting that her Japanese friends and family think he looks American -- quote-unquote, "American." And my friends and family think he looks kind of Japanese. So, I guess people see into him what -- the other. And so, that's something he'll probably have to deal with at times. And I do think that Brooklyn is very racially diverse. I think that Park Slope, actually, is pretty white compared to some other neighborhoods in Brooklyn. I have friends in Fort Greene, which is, I think, just noticeably more diverse. But when we went to look at this apartment in Park Slope, we walked from Union Street to Eighth Street on Fifth Avenue, and passed literally five other white guy/Asian woman couples on that one walk, and just looked at each other and said, "Well, I guess this is our neighborhood," (laughter) because there are so many mixed white-and-Asian couples here. So, we'll see. I'd love to be able to stay in Park Slope. But, you know, we'll see how long we can, and how quickly our landlord increases our rent.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: I think what you say about the expensiveness of Brooklyn is really interesting and totally true, because it really does connect to what you were saying before about white flight.

PAUL GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Because that's people moving in and people being like, "No, excuse me, I'm leaving. I'm," you know, "for x, y, z reason, I can't be here." But increasing the prices, with certain communities who are well-to-do moving in, is another way to change the population in an area.

PAUL GOLIN: Right -- gentrification.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Mm-hmm.

PAUL GOLIN: And because I've got friends who feel victimized by gentrification, I've come to realize that that is a negative word for a lot of people when -- until then, I just thought it was actually neutral or even a positive word. You know, *gentrifying* means you're taking something that's rundown and you're making it beautiful again. But that's in the context of physical structures. And what it actually does to people, though, wasn't really in my thinking of the word until I started to really hear from friends about what it means to them and to their neighborhood. And, yeah, that's a real thing. And, basically, it's just another way to avoid addressing the real challenges head on, like the economic disparity and lack of education, lack of opportunities, and those kind of things. So, instead, you know, we'll turn over neighborhoods. But, then, folks who were in that neighborhood have to go somewhere else. And it just kind of moves the problem away.

And so, I understand that's a real thing. And, frankly, I'm part of it, I have to acknowledge, because I'm living on Eighth Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, which is Park Slope. But it's not Park Slope, Park Slope. It's, you know, 10 years ago, I'm told, you know, it was not a safe part of town, [00:25:00] which is really hard to believe when you're there now. So -- and when I -- when we found the apartment three

years ago, it was totally -- it was the same way it is now. So, we didn't gentrify it, but it had been gentrified. And that's why we moved there, so, you know... And, frankly, I think anywhere we move afterwards is going to be on that border or in the process of gentrifying, or somewhere along that scale. Because I want to live in a nice neighborhood, and I have the economic means to afford the rent. So, you know, I'm part of the problem. I don't have the solution. I think if there was an easy solution we'd already do it, I'd hope. But I'm aware of it, and it's a big challenge.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Is it something you and your wife talk about?

PAUL GOLIN: No. No. I think that these are -- a lot of these issues are completely foreign to her, as someone who was born and raised in Japan, which is one of the most mono-ethnic societies in the world. And so, obviously, as part of an interracial couple, we're aware of it. But we are also the most accepted interracial -- type of interracial couple that there is, I think. You know, white guy/Asian woman is, I think, the least controversial of interracial couples. And so, you know -- but, between that and being in Brooklyn, it's -- we haven't experienced any negativity about it from strangers. You know, I -- and I had already gone through a process with my parents about intermarriage, interracial marriage, years before I met my wife. So, they were primed already. And so, she didn't have to deal with any of that with my parents. My college girlfriend, who was African American, had to deal with it with my parents. And that was an unhappy, unfortunately situation which taught me a lot about race. And I think that, in a lot of ways, my parents -- who I'll call Boomers, even though, as I said, my stepdad is really from a kind of generation in the middle, between the quote-unquote "Greatest Generation," or sometimes they're called the "Silent Generation," and the Boomers -- but

I feel like they were kind of a bridging generation, in that they gave their children messages about judging everybody as individuals and not judging people by color, and so on, and so forth. And yet, you know -- but, if you bring somebody home, it's a different story. And all of a sudden, you know, the brakes start screeching on (laughter) all of that inclusiveness. So, I -- you know, I went through a process with them on it, because I had a black girlfriend. And they claim that the issue was that she wasn't Jewish, but we were able to get to the bottom of it, which is not just that she wasn't Jewish, but also that she was black. And again, I think it was easier that I -- for them, that I married someone who's Asian.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, how did -- when you say you got to the bottom of it, how did they come to terms with it, if they did?

PAUL GOLIN: I don't know how they came to terms with it, because I don't know their own internal process. But I know that, after college, I had an -- before I had found a job, I was living at home. And my college girlfriend and I were in the process of gradually breaking up. But I had -- I invited her to come out to New York from Michigan and stay with us on Staten Island. And my folks said, "Absolutely not," you know? "Not under our roof." And it was hurt-- you know, I felt hurt. And she didn't come out until I had my own place. And we were breaking up anyway, and we ended up breaking up. But a year or two later, my sister -- who is two years younger than me -- brought home her non-Jewish college boyfriend. And he did stay. And, you know, so -- and he's white. He was white. So, a piece of it is the whole being the older sibling, and then the younger sibling doesn't have to fight the same battles. But a piece of it clearly was race and -- because this guy wasn't Jewish either. And that was the catalyst for the conversation

[00:30:00] that we had where they were confronted with it, and -- I think to their credit, on their own -- went through a process of recognizing that this was -- that that was the stumbling block for them.

And, as I said, they are the ones who raised me to actually judge people individually and see women be -- you know, as beautiful regardless of their race. And, like, I wasn't doing that in rebellion of the ideals and attitudes that existed in my household. You know, it wasn't a racist household, and so I rebelled by interracial dating. It was a household that implied, at least, or gave the messages of inclusion to a point. And I went past that point. And I think that that's a fairly common thing, because you look at the statistics now of the rise in interracial intermarriage, and it's very much on the increase. And I think that the Boomers really are this kind of bridging generation of -- we're going to get over racism, but we're not quite there yet. And then, a generation after them are actually acting on the messages that the Boomers felt comfortable with staying, but not necessarily doing.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: It -- that's really interesting, from the stories that you've told.

There's, like, each generation has a different comfort level with difference.

PAUL GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: And you can imagine that the next generation will have even more

--

PAUL GOLIN: Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- considering that your son is mixed.

PAUL GOLIN: Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, we've talked a little bit about the racial side. And I'm interesting to know -- and you've touched on the religious side a little bit, but I'm interesting to know a little bit more about the process. And we're going to have to go back and, like, talk about how you even met your wife.

PAUL GOLIN: OK.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: But right now, why don't we talk a little bit about how, sort of, the process of meeting and then... Actually, yeah, let's just go there. How did you and your wife meet?

PAUL GOLIN: OK, so, we met in a club in Manhattan at 3:00 in the morning. Neither of us are club people, but this is a place called Webster Hall, that was directly across the street from where I lived. So, they would let me in for free, as a kind of bribe not to call the police every weekend when there was incredible noise outside my window until 5:00 in the morning. So, my friend and I would just go there as our neighborhood bar. And she was there because she was in New York learning English, and her English teacher wanted the class to have a real New York experience. But she was under 21, actually. And this teacher helped her get a fake ID to get in. (laughter) So, anyway, we met. I said some cheesy pickup line, which, thankfully, she didn't hear. So, I -- when she said, "What?" I said, "Hi, I'm Paul." And then we went from there. We met one time after that, before she went back to Japan. And then, we didn't communicate for a year. But then, she came back to New York and, at that point, she had an email address. So, we stayed in contact by email. She was always in love with New York, and wanted to be here. So, eventually, after several years of communicating and visiting each other, she

moved here to go to school. She got here two weeks (phone ringtone) -- she got here -- sure.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: There we go.

PAUL GOLIN: So, we met... So, she went back to Japan. We communicated by email and video chat. And she came and visited a bunch of times. I went there. And so, finally, she came to New York to go to school, even though she had done college in Japan. She came here to do college in English. And she got here two weeks before 9/11. So it was like, "Welcome to New York." So, when -- you know, she was going to just stay with me until she could find a place, and then we would date normally. (laughter) But after 9/11, when things were so up in the air, and we were getting along anyway, I just said, "Well, why don't you stay?" And so, we lived together for several years, got married. And that's how we met.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's sort of like you had an interesting, like, old-fashioned courtship. Because it was like you spoke, and then you moved in together. (laughter)

PAUL GOLIN: Yeah, yeah. Right. You know, [00:35:00] it's not that old-fashioned. We were living together for, like, three years before we got engaged. But... And, you know, because you kind of touched on the religious piece, living together or dating longer before marriage is something that, statistically, they've found is more common among interreligious people. So they -- and they don't know why. Whether -- you know, it's not like we were spending so much time working it out. So, I think that there's actually - - that both are representative of other factors. Both the ability, I would say, or the willingness to marry outside of your religion, and the ability or willingness to live together before marriage, I think, are both -- I don't think they're cause-and-effect

related. I think that they're both traits of people who have other beliefs, you know, in common. And so, they're relational. So, I was also aware of that.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So you mentioned that your parents were more OK with her, A, because you worked the issues out before, but also because she is Asian. Is that something that was explicit, or is that just something that you've sort of analyzed from your own...?

PAUL GOLIN: Yeah, they never said that. It's just something that I'm guessing. And, frankly, if she was black, I think that it still would have been easier because of the process that we kind of went through about it. And I think that -- I don't want to down-- completely downplay the Jewish piece, because growing up my mom continually harped on me marrying somebody Jewish. So, that, she actually did talk about. And, you know -- so some might see my interreligious marriage as a rebellion of that. But I would say that I don't feel it's rebellion that my interfaith dating was rebellion either, because it was based on the values that I still got from her. So, she -- so, in fact, you know, right before my bar mitzvah, when I was hating the studying for my bar mitzvah -- so, I was 12 -- and I already knew that I was, at the least, agnostic -- kind of yelled at her, "I don't want to do this. I don't believe in God." And she said, "Well, I don't either, and you're going to do it." And it was really interesting to me because -- and I think I told you this in our pre-interview -- she had -- at that point and for the rest of her career -- had already dedicated herself to working as a Jewish communal professional in the Jewish Community Centers movement. And I knew that being Jewish and being part of the Jewish community was very important to her.

And so, that was kind of an eye-opener when -- to learn that she didn't necessarily buy into the religious piece, but was still dedicated. But that really informed my own Jewish identity, that that can be done. But, to then continue to go on to ask about every woman I mentioned, "Is she Jewish? Is she Jewish?" I mean, even if I was just talking about an actress on a TV show, you know, if it was a name she didn't recognize, that was the question. It didn't jibe, for me, with the other messages that I was getting about treating people as individuals, and so on. So, I don't feel like it was rebellion, necessarily. But I knew that she wasn't going to be happy about me dating somebody who wasn't Jewish. So, that was also a process. And because I married at an older age -- I was 35 -- I think it was much less of an issue, because she had already seen that my Jewish identity was solidified. And so, she knew I was going to raise Jewish children regardless of who I married. And I think she also knew that I couldn't have married... For me, the border was, I was not -- I don't think I could marry somebody who was devoutly religious in any religion. So, if I had [00:40:00] married a Christian who was a believer, I just can't see myself doing that because it's so hard for me to understand that. So, I wouldn't have married somebody who was Orthodox Jewish either, unless I just simply was going to be separated from that part of their lives. Look, my wife is a flight attendant. I hate flying. So, it can be done. But I was looking for somebody who shared a lot of -- a lot of my thinking. And I think that my wife and I do share a lot of our theology, which is not tied to any one established religion.

ABIGAIL ETTelman: So, when you were thinking about -- when you were getting more serious with your future wife --

PAUL GOLIN: Yeah, uh-huh.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: How -- did you talk about faith, and talk about children?

PAUL GOLIN: Yeah. And we -- you know, I explained that I want to raise them Jewish.

And she acknowledged that she doesn't know how much help she would be in that. But we kind of made a deal, because she wants the -- she wants our kids to speak Japanese.

So, the deal was, she would learn about Judaism and I would learn Japanese. And she's probably ahead of the deal, holding up her end of the bargain a little bit better than me.

So, we took a course called *Derekh Torah* from the 92nd Street Y. It was a lengthy -- like, an eight-month course -- it -- kind of an intro-to-Judaism course. And we also took an engaged-couples course for -- to learn about a Jewish wedding, because we had a Jewish wedding in the Reform movement. I know that Orthodox Jews would not accept it as a Jewish wedding, but I believe it was. So, she did learn about it. And I took Japanese-lesson classes that I would give myself an F on, even though they were not graded classes. I'm -- you know, I don't think language is a strong suit for me, and I've struggled with it. But I know a little bit about -- a little bit of Japanese. And I've -- the thing is, I love Japan. I've been there eight times. I love the history. I love the culture. I love all of the food. So, in many ways, I feel a real connection to Japan. It's just not the language piece, and that, to her, is the most important piece.

So, we -- you know, we have a one-year-old. We'll see how it goes. It's obviously way too early to know if we're going to be able to succeed in this or not. But that's another great thing about Brooklyn -- to tie it back to Brooklyn -- is that there are amazing liberal Jewish communities in Brooklyn. And that, if I was in other communities around the country, there would not be the kind of options that I have in Brooklyn, let alone in Park

Slope, where there are two synagogues that -- both of which I would be comfortable joining, and both of which are very different from each other. So, I feel lucky that I'm going to have a nice choice, when I know... Because I work with individuals all around the country who are looking for something like that, and just don't have it in their community.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, could you describe the synagogues that you're -- the ones that you're really attracted to?

PAUL GOLIN: Sure. Congregation Beth Elohim is a massive, two-building synagogue in the old Reform model of being the quote-unquote "*shul* with a pool." They actually have a swimming pool. You know, so they've got -- basically it's like a JCC. It's a Jewish Community Center in one building, and then the other building is this beautiful sanctuary. But I know it -- I know the rabbi -- Rabbi Andy Bachman. And I think he's a cool guy. And we don't align on a lot of issues. But that's OK, because I like him personally, and I think he genuinely cares about people. And I think that the facilities that they have for young people -- for kids -- are topnotch. So, I'm very much drawn to them.

But the other community called *Kolot Chayeinu* is very -- is as liberal as it gets, and so am I. So, I really feel a connection with the rabbi, Ellen Lippmann, on almost every aspect politically. She is openly lesbian, and [00:45:00] has recently come out as interfaith, intermarried, which, to me, is tremendous, and I want to support her with that. But the community itself is kind of -- I don't know, because I haven't seen all of the services. But it feels a little touchy-feely to me -- a little drum-circle-ish. And that's

great for some people, but I'm not -- you know, that's not me. I kind of like the old-school, hardwood benches and big, amazing cathedral-like structures.

So, I'm torn. And right now, I'm not affiliated with either of them, though I make modest donations to them, and I'm in communication with both rabbis. But, at some point, when it's time for [Elliot], my son, to go, I'll -- if we're still in the neighborhood, I'll pick one. And if we're in a different neighborhood, I'll find the right rabbi there. There's a woman named -- there's a rabbi named Heidi Hoover in Ditmas Park. I don't know the name of her congregation, but I've met her a couple of times. She's actually a Jew by choice, and became a rabbi. And I think she's phenomenal also. So, I think that there is incredible stuff going on, Jewish-ly, in Brooklyn right now. And that's great. Right now, we are unaffiliated with any of it. But I'm aware of it, and at some point, we'll get involved.

ABIGAIL ETTelman: When do you think the time -- like you said, that when it's time for Elliot and your family to be a part, what time do you think that is?

PAUL GOLIN: Well, he -- probably within the next year or two or three, because we'll go to things like Tot Shabbat. We'll look for that. And we will -- when Hebrew school starts, certainly. Excuse me. So -- but the first priority will be language, and that means Japanese. So, really, the Japanese piece is going to come before the Jewish piece. And I'm OK with that. And, you know, I think that I want him to feel a connection to Judaism. I think that it's naïve to say he's going to feel the same connection I feel, because that almost never happens from parent to children. You know, it changes. It's continually changing. But I want him to feel some connection to it. And I don't want his

Judaism to just be a blip in the lineage. I would like him to also impart it to his children. But it's a process to figure out what that means when you don't buy into much of the religious aspects of it. I think there's tremendous cultural... And there's a tremendous tradition of passing on wisdom and knowledge. That's the piece that I want to hang on and pass on to...

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Do you think that you'll try to also teach him Hebrew?

PAUL GOLIN: I would love it. And I'm hoping that, because he'll be bilingual, that learning a third language actually will be very easy to him. But, you know, my wife absolutely denies that language is something that your brains are hardwired for. And she just thinks that it's about effort. And I'm different. You know, I disagree with that. I think that there are aptitudes also that are natural. And I often give the example of spatial relations, which I'm really good at, and she's not. So, he may not have a language aptitude. You know, maybe he'll get my spatial relations and my not-great language skills, and then it will be a struggle for him. But I'm hoping he'll get her language skills. And her language skills really are amazing. I will use a slang word that she won't know. She'll ask me for an explanation and I'll give it to her. And then, a week later, she'll use it back to me in the right context, which I think is the hardest thing to do in a second language. So, she's really good at language, and I hope he gets that piece of it. And then, yeah, it would be great. And I'd love to take him to Israel, you know? I've taken my wife to Israel twice -- or, really, she's taken me, because we've flown for free, because she's a flight attendant. But we've enjoyed both trips, and -- which was -- I'm really happy about. Because if she had a negative experience in Israel, it might have soured her on the whole Jewish thing. But she had a really good experience. And I think

there's a lot about Judaism that she does like and admire. But when she said to me, very early on, you know, "If you want me to convert, I will. I just won't feel it." You know, "I won't believe it," I didn't want to make her jump through that [00:50:00] hoop. So, anyway...

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That sounds very reasonable. And when we -- later on, when we're doing the group, *i.e.*, both of you -- interview, then I think we can talk more about that and, like, what went through her mind, and how that made her feel.

PAUL GOLIN: OK.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: And I think that will be really interesting. So, that's not the end of that story.

PAUL GOLIN: OK.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: But, I think we have about 10 minutes before we should probably wrap this part up. So, what I would like to do is what we should have done in the beginning, but I got distracted by all these interesting stories. (laughter) And just sort of go back into the details, and... So, how did you get from Staten Island to Manhattan? So, school, or things like that? You said you went to Michigan.

PAUL GOLIN: Uh-huh, right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: And then, when you -- and then you came back and you hung out with your family -- you didn't hang out you're your family --

PAUL GOLIN: Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- but then you got an apartment. But what were you doing?

PAUL GOLIN: Right. So, I guess, in college, I thought that, after you -- just like you go from high school to college automatically -- which, of course, is not true, but was kind of

made me -- you know, I was made to feel like that's the truth. You know, this is just what you do. I presumed that, after college, you just got -- you were just handed a job. Kind of, I just had no concept of career. (laughter) So, when I got back, I was really lost. I wanted to work in TV or video or entertainment, and really just didn't know how to go about doing that. And I was living at home, and two of my closest friends said -- who were also on Staten Island, and said, "We're getting an apartment. It's a three bedroom. You're moving in with us." And I said, "I don't have a job yet." And they're like, "OK, you're moving in with us, and then you'll get a job, and you'll be able to pay the rent." So, it kind of forced me to -- well, no, it didn't force me to look for a job, because I still had no job. I was doing some temp work. And my friend's dad came by one afternoon at, like, 2:00 p.m., to drop something off for him. And I was playing Sega Genesis in my underwear. And he said, "Paul, do you need a job?" So I said, "Sure." And I went to work for him for a year and a half.

And he -- you know, he was a personal-injury lawyer on Court Street -- so, around the block from where we're having this conversation. Sixteen Court Street was my first job, working for personal-injury lawyers, which, back in the day, a Court Street lawyer was a personal-injury, ambulance-chaser lawyer. Now, they weren't ambulance chasers. They handled mega-million-dollar, major injuries. And I learned a tremendous amount in that year and a half. But one of the things I learned was that I just didn't want to be a lawyer. And so, I quit. At a certain point, it just got -- it was just an unhappy situation, and I left. And I was doing some work for them from home. And a friend hooked me up with somebody, finally, at HBO. And I finally got to work in TV.

And I worked at HBO Studios on 23rd Street, and that's when I was able to move into Manhattan -- was when I started working at HBO Studios, which was a fun job, but it was a -- it was a near-entry-level position, and I was kind of a peon. And, you know, I got to meet some famous people, and get them lunch. You know, so it was -- it was -- it had positives and negatives. And from there, I met someone who was going to a multimedia company. It was a CD-ROM company back in the day, doing edutainment. And this was the first internet bubble, and the company I worked for was called Wanderlust Interactive, and we made a Pink Panther educational game. And it was the first company in what they were calling Silicon Alley to go public. And I was, like, the number-six hire. And within four months, we were up to 50 people, and we had gone public, and we had, quote-unquote, stock options and so on. And then, a year and a half after that, we went bankrupt, shuttered. Everyone got laid off on New Year's Eve.

So, I was out of a job. And my resume -- at the bottom of it -- said that I had done volunteer work at a Jewish Community Center. A headhunter placed me at a Jewish philanthropy of a guy named Michael Steinhardt, who was the -- one of the cofounders of the Birthright Israel trips. So, that was interesting, but not quite the right fit. But it led me to my current employment at the Jewish Outreach Institute, where I've been for the past 13 years, [00:55:00] in various positions. And this is an organization that helps the Jewish community better embrace diversity, particularly interfaith marriage. So, obviously, there was a personal connection for me with the mission of this organization. But we also address other issues of inclusion, like gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender and

multiracial. So, there was also the multiracial component for me, that is relevant. And so, even though it's not TV and video work, it still is very meaningful to me. And, you know, so I'm thrilled to be making a living at something that I find really relevant and meaningful. And so, I was able to stay in Manhattan after moving there for the HBO job. And we did -- we moved to Brooklyn three years ago, to start a family.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's a nice story.

PAUL GOLIN: OK.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, if you're looking at the future, what are you hoping happens?

PAUL GOLIN: World peace. (laughter) We -- I think we're talking about having a second child. I -- you know, I don't feel as settled as I'd like to in most aspects of my life, even though, if I look back on the last 10 years, I've been settled already. But somehow it just doesn't feel that way. My organization re-raises its budget every year. So, you know, working for a nonprofit that doesn't have an endowment is -- that -- and that is small, so it has a startup feel to it, means that, you know, I can't be surprised if something unexpected happens, even though nothing has happened yet. So, I -- you know... And we rent. We don't own. So, I don't feel deep roots yet, even though... You know, what I feel deep roots to is to my family. And, you know, my folks are still on Staten Island, so it's a 20-minute, 25-minute drive for them to our apartment, which is great. My mom just retired, which is perfect timing for us to -- for the free childcare sometimes.

So, you know, I feel very rooted in my family. And as far as where I'll be, five years from now, living or working, I really -- (laughter) you know, I will likely be in the exact same place. But if I'm not, it won't be a huge surprise. But, certainly, having a child

means you start to think longer term. And once he starts in a public-school system, I'm going to want him to stay in that system. Because I know how disruptive it is to move. I moved once as a child, between fourth and fifth grades. And it was disruptive. It wasn't devastating. But, you know, you're the new kid in the middle of a school that, you know, everyone else has been there -- most everyone else has been there since the beginning. It's a -- it's tough to get into that situation. So, ideally, I'd love to still be in Park Slope. Realistically, I might be in Windsor Terrace or Ditmas or Sunset Park, because of the rents. So, I guess that's a long way of saying I have no idea. (laughter)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: No one ever does. But it's always interesting to see what people are, sort of, hoping and focusing on.

PAUL GOLIN: Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: And you're -- Elliot will be fluent in Japanese. (laughter)

PAUL GOLIN: Yeah, oh, that's for sure. And involved in some kind of Jewish community. But, yeah, I mean, I'm 44. I think that there are plenty of 44-year-olds who know, you know, "This is the house I own, and we'll be here till our kids go to college. And I work at a job that I intend to work at until I retire." And they're fixed. And I'm just not fixed in that way yet. But, I'm -- I don't let it overwhelm me. I try not to.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Sounds like a perfect plan. (laughter) OK, well, now, is there anything that you'd like to say specifically about any stories that, you know, either you skipped over and you'd like to go back and fill in, or just important things that you want to focus on that I didn't ask the question for?

PAUL GOLIN: No, I think that the only thing I would say is that [01:00:00] -- well, maybe I'll let Yurika talk about how cool Brooklyn is in Japan. So, that would be a good

question for you to ask her about. But Brooklyn, to a lot of my friends and family all across the US, is still a very relevant place. And I remember when I was in sixth or seventh grade, the teacher asked the class of 30 kids where you were born. And he asked people to put up their hands, and he said -- that's me. And he said, you know, various locations. Then, when he said Brooklyn, almost every hand in the class went up. And when he said Staten Island, I was the only one who raised my hand as actually having been born on Staten Island. Because my folks moved there, like, three years after the Verrazano Bridge was built. I mean, there were still farms on Staten Island at that time. So, all of my friends, growing up, were born in Brooklyn. And then, their folks moved to Staten Island, and had grandparents, have memories of Brooklyn, and so on.

So, you know, it -- there's definitely a nice returning. I know that there's a lot of baggage about the gentrification, but there's a nice kind of full circle about people who are moving back to Brooklyn after being -- they're -- after their family being away two generations, in the same way, you know, I think that's happening on the Lower East Side of Manhattan and so on. Is that there is this historic connection that a lot of people have to Brooklyn, all over the country. And now, a lot of folks are able to return to it.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: All right.

PAUL GOLIN: And Yurika is downstairs.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Great. Well then, I will pause --

(break in audio)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, we are recording again.

YURIKA GOLIN: OK.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: And just -- I'm going to slate the interview, just so that if it gets all messed up again, we know what day it is with everything.

YURIKA GOLIN: Uh-huh.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: And so that this is a clear, separate interview.

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, it is still August --

END OF AUDIO FILE

Oral History Interview with Yurika Golin
Crossing Borders, Bridging Generations, 2011.019.052
Interview conducted by Abigail Ettelman at the Brooklyn Historical Society on August
16th, 2013 in Brooklyn Heights, Brooklyn.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: [00:00:00] -- sixteenth, 2013. I'm still Abigail Ettelman. And this is still for Crossing Borders, Bridging Generations. But right now, I am -- we're still at BHS in Pierrepont Street. And it's about -- what was it? Eleven thirty?

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Eleven thirty in the quote-unquote "morning." And now, I'm with Yurika Golin.

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Whose maiden name was Mizuno?

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: There you go. OK, so, before we start anything, I w was just going to ask you to introduce yourself, even though I just did. And tell me what your birth date was.

YURIKA GOLIN: Uh-huh.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: And then just, you know, a quick, little story you're your childhood.

YURIKA GOLIN: All right. [date redacted for privacy] I was born in Tokyo, Japan. And my parents are also both from Tokyo. And my grandfather -- well, my dad -- grandparents on my dad's side are also from Tokyo. So, we have quite a long history in Tokyo with my ancestors on my dad's side. And my mom's parents -- my mom's grandmother is

from Niigata Prefecture, which is northern part of Japan. They are famous for good rice and sake. (laughter) And I have one brother. He still lives in Tokyo. And both my parents are still in Japan. So, basically, I'm the only one who is in the United States in my family. But I love living in New York, and with my job as a flight attendant, I can go back and forth between here and Japan. So, not that bad. And I love traveling, so...

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, how often do you visit your family?

YURIKA GOLIN: Depends on the season, but before our baby, it was maybe -- well, maybe, like, twice or three times a year, as vacation and also much more as my job.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, when you were growing up, what kind of things did you do in school?

YURIKA GOLIN: We played, like, dodge ball or -- it's called *gomu* [*tan*]. I don't know how to say it in English, but we used, like, a long rubber band, and then jumped and danced on it with music and song. (laughter) Do you have it in here?

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: I don't know. It sounds sort of familiar.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah. All kids in Japan, in my generation, did that. It's called *gomu* [*tan*]. *Gomu* means "rubber band." It's a long -- well, like, your height, basically. And two people stand on the side, and spread the rubber. And then one person jump and dance in a certain way, along with a song.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: It's so interesting.

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: I'm going to have to look that up. So was that -- did you really enjoy doing that?

YURIKA GOLIN: Oh, yes, yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, were you -- did you like sports when you were younger?

YURIKA GOLIN: Oh, yeah. I was in table tennis club, so I played table tennis a lot.

(laughter)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That sounds really fun. (laughter)

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, then, you were doing sports, you were doing that. You had a sib-- you had siblings. Did you have many friends, or were you...?

YURIKA GOLIN: Yes. Yeah, I had many friends. Yeah, I'm still in good contact with them, in Japan. So, whenever I go back there, there are always so many friends that I want to see. But I can't stay that long in Japan, so I can't see everybody I want to see. But it's really nice that there are always somebody that's happy to see me when I go back there.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That is really nice.

YURIKA GOLIN: And some of them still visit New York sometimes. It's not easy for them, but they still do. And it's great.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, when was the first time that you visited the United States?

YURIKA GOLIN: When I was 18. So, 1996, or '8. I forgot which. (laughter)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: What did you think about it?

YURIKA GOLIN: It was just amazing. I always wanted to come to New York, so it was so exciting and just, "Wow." (laughter) I loved it. So, first time when I came to the United States, which was New York, I was like, "Someday I'm going to live here." That was, like... And it happened. It's pretty amazing.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Was your family excited for you, or were they...?

YURIKA GOLIN: They were happy that I'm achieving my dream, but I'm so far, far away from them. So, they're, like, mixed feeling. But they know that I'm enjoying here, so they're happy about that.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's good.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Oh, I had a question, and I totally forgot it. I got distracted.

(laughter) Oh, so, you came here first when you were 18.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Was that -- I don't know much about the Japanese school system --

YURIKA GOLIN: Uh-huh.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- so was that -- did you -- [00:05:00] were you graduated from high school, or...?

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah, that was the first year in college, during summer break. I was here only for three weeks during summer break.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Mm-hmm. Was -- so was it -- were you by yourself?

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah, by myself, to study English.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Wow, that's amazing.

YURIKA GOLIN: It's pretty common, though, for college students in Japan, in my generation. They come -- they go study abroad for, like, a month or so, in the United States, in England, or Australia. They're popular places to study English.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's amazing. That's brave. So, then you went back.

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: And what did you do when you went back?

YURIKA GOLIN: So, I finished community college, two years. And then, after two years in college, I got a job in a trading company in Japan. And I -- while working there, I still wanted to be a flight attendant. So, trying to get a job as a flight attendant in Japan. At the same time, I was still thinking about moving to New York. How can I do that? So, I was working on both at the same time. And after three years of doing that, I just decided, "This is it. I just want to move to New York." (laughter) So, I applied for college in New York, and I got accepted. So, I moved --

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's great.

YURIKA GOLIN: -- to New York on 2001, when I was 23. And that was two weeks before 9/11. Just weird (laughter) timing, but... Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: We will get back to that, because --

YURIKA GOLIN: OK.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- I'm sure you have a lot to say about that. But --

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah, I have...

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- what I forgot to ask you was, when you were still -- oh, one question.

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm?

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: When you were in school, was that in Tokyo?

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: What was the school called.

YURIKA GOLIN: *Aoyama Gakuin* Women's Junior High School, and then Junior College.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Thank you.

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's another thing. I'm going to ask you a lot of names and dates. So, what are your parents' and your brother's names?

YURIKA GOLIN: My dad's name is Kazuyoshi -- K-A-Z-U-Y-O-S-H-I. And my mother's name is Kazuko -- K-A-Z-U-K-O. And my brother's name is Masahiro -- M-A-S-A-H-I-R-O.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Thank you.

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, when you were living with your family --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- still in Tokyo --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- what religion were you practicing, if any?

YURIKA GOLIN: If I have to say, I guess it's Buddhism. But we -- as, like, a typical Japanese, we don't really consider ourselves religious at all. It's just part of our culture to do Buddhist things, just for New Year, or when somebody passed away. But we don't think of ourselves as Buddhist, usually, yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, when you came here --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm?

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- were there things that you were trying to do to stay in contact -- or, not stay in contact, but stay -- to sort of make it feel like home?

YURIKA GOLIN: What do you mean?

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: When you came here --

YURIKA GOLIN: Uh-huh.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- was it sort of -- was there anything with that?

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Like, did you celebrate the New Year here? Did you...?

YURIKA GOLIN: Oh, well, the New Year is the thing that I really miss about Japan, because it's so different here. New Year in Japan is like Thanksgiving here. So, people -- everybody is home from work, and the stores are closed. They just go back home and spend time with family doing nothing -- eating, talking, (laughter) and sleeping a lot. So, it's very different here. And I couldn't really do that here. So, I don't know. So, holy days -- those big holy days, like, I really miss. But when I moved to New York, I lived in East Village. So, there are a lot of Japanese supermarkets, Japanese restaurants. So, food-wise, I was lucky, because I can get whatever -- almost whatever I wanted from Japan.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: It's not like you're living in a small town.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right, yeah. It makes a big difference.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's great.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: And when you're living here now --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm?

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- today, do you make a lot of food from home? Or...?

YURIKA GOLIN: Oh, yes, yes. I still, sometimes, go to Chinatown or East Village to get Japanese ingredient. And I cook Japanese food.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: OK.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, when you say -- you said you moved here. How did you meet Paul?

YURIKA GOLIN: Well, when I first came here when I was 18, my teacher in school had a -- like, an after-school activity, and one of them was to visit New York nightclub. So, I went there with my teacher, with all my classmates. But I was 18 at that time, so I wasn't really allowed to (laughter) go in. But my teacher told me to get fake ID, which I didn't know it was a big deal. (laughter) So, I just followed his instruction. [00:10:00] I got the fake ID. (laughter) I went into the club with all my classmates and teacher. And I met Paul there. And I usually don't go to clubs, so I wasn't comfortable there. And there are so many crazy people. Not crazy, but, like, you know, those people in the club. And I was not happy. (laughter) I wanted to go home, but it was late. It's dangerous to take train at that late time. So, I just stayed -- decided to stay there until morning. And then I -- Paul was there, and he was the only one who speaks normal. (laughter) So, I had a good conversation with him -- just normal conversation with him. And I had breakfast with him. And his friend was there also. And my friend from the class was also there. So, we all had a breakfast together. Yeah, but, like, within the week, I had to go back to Japan. So, that was just... Oh, and after I met him for the first time, we had one date before I go back to Japan. But that was it.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: What did you do on your date?

YURIKA GOLIN: We met in SoHo. He was working in SoHo at the time. So, I visited his office. And we went to Washington Square, and ate in a restaurant in SoHo. And that restaurant is still in business, so we visited, like, a year ago. And it was nice, really. (laughter)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, how long have you two been together?

YURIKA GOLIN: Together? Depends on the definition of *together*, but since I moved here, I immediately started living with him. So, that was 2001. So, it's been -- so, 12 years, living together. Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Wow, that's amazing.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, now let's go back to when you --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- immediately moved here.

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Or, moved here and immediately moved in with him. How did that happen?

YURIKA GOLIN: Well, I wasn't -- you know, I -- it's hard to find an apartment when you're in Japan. So, I decided to move into his place just for a week -- a few weeks, until I find an apartment near my college in Brooklyn. And then, two weeks later, 9/11 happened. So, I was not comfortable living by myself in Brooklyn, where I'm completely unfamiliar with. So, I asked him if I can stay with him longer. And then he said that's fine. So, I stayed longer, stopped -- not looking for an apartment. And then, like, I think three or four months later, he's like, "Just live with me." (laughter) It was just a natural -- you know, I'm like, "Sure." So, we decided to live together instead of finding an apartment.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: You probably saved a lot of money that way. (laughter)

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter) Yeah, definitely.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, you mentioned that you had a college in Brooklyn.

YURIKA GOLIN: Uh-huh.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: What was that?

YURIKA GOLIN: Kingsborough Community College in Brighton Beach.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Mm-hmm. So, what was that like?

YURIKA GOLIN: It was a very different college experience from my college experience in Japan. So, at that time, it was very challenging, not academically, but culturally, to get adjusted with that system. But professors were very nice. And that college is by the water, so they have a private beach. (laughter) So, that was nice. But from East Village to Brighton Beach, taking subway and the local bus from Brighton Beach Station to the college was kind of a pain in the neck.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That does sound kind of annoying.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah, but I was studying tourism, which I loved. So, yeah, academically I -- it was very interesting.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, did you -- like, what kind of things were... You mentioned that it was sort of culturally different. What were the big culture shocks?

YURIKA GOLIN: So, in Japanese school system, usually you just listen to teacher, write down, and memorize. And here, you really need to participate. You have to say something, write report, and make a presentation so often. So, doing that in your second language was not easy. (laughter) And also, to be honest, the student in here -- wasn't mentally matured as I thought. So, to me, they were like 10-year-old kids. Like, they're not focusing in the class. They are just loud and so, (laughter) at first, I couldn't get used to that. So...

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: I've been to college.

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: I know what you mean. (laughter)

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter) Very different --

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: It's terrible.

YURIKA GOLIN: -- from Japanese schools. So, yeah. So, that part I was very -- [00:15:00]
to be honest, a little, "Is this really college?" But after that, I transferred to a four-year college. And that was more academic, and I felt more comfortable that way. But, on the other hand, academically, four-year college was more challenging. So, it's just a different challenge.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: What was the college that you transferred to?

YURIKA GOLIN: Baruch College. It's also part of CUNY.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: All right, so, when you -- what year was that, that you transferred to Baruch?

YURIKA GOLIN: It was 2005, or, no, 2003 -- 2003.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Yeah, so, 2001 to 2003 -- that was a --

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah, two years.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- crazy time in New York.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right. Oh, yes.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: How was it, sort of, moving here and having all of that happen immediately?

YURIKA GOLIN: It was shocking. But thanks to Paul, my husband -- he supported very well, and his family was also really -- they -- his family is really nice, supporting me and

treating me as their own daughter, even before marriage. So, that was really nice. And I felt safe with them.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, when did you meet his family?

YURIKA GOLIN: Good question. (laughter) I don't really remember. Maybe before moving in, or right after moving in -- somewhere around then.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So they were like, "OK, who is this lady who's living with you?" (laughter)

YURIKA GOLIN: But they didn't treat me like, "Oh, who's this?" They were just so welcoming. So, it was so natural. So, I don't really remember (laughter).

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: It just happened?

YURIKA GOLIN: Like, yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's great.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, that was 2003.

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, that's 10 years ago. When did you guys get married?

YURIKA GOLIN: Two thousand and seven, October 2nd.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: (laughter) A fall wedding. That's nice.

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Can you describe it to me?

YURIKA GOLIN: Yes. So, we had a wedding in Temple Emanu-El in Manhattan, along Fifth Avenue and 65th Street. It's a really big synagogue. And before getting married there, I took some Jewish classes to study about Jewish culture, including Jewish

wedding. And so, we got -- we had a wedding at Temple Emanu-El, and a reception near Temple Emanu-El, that -- it's -- the place is called the Harmonie Club. It's on 61st Street, I think. And it was really nice feeling -- like this kind of traditional -- wood, old, historical building. And before the wedding itself, we took a family photo in Central Park. And we got really lucky with the weather. So, it was a really nice experience -- beautiful photos in a beautiful park.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That sounds really nice.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, did your family -- obviously your family came to the wedding.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yes.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, before -- when you told them that you were living with him --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- that you were... And then, eventually, married to him --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- how did your family feel about Paul?

YURIKA GOLIN: Before getting married, my parents visited New York once, and met him.

And, well, even before meeting him, I always told them how he treat me, so they were

very comfortable with Paul and Paul's family. So, they never complained about him.

They never worried about living with him or getting married with him. They knew that

he supports me, so they were comfortable with it. They were just sad that I'm far, far

away. That's it.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's true.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That would be really sad.

YURIKA GOLIN: So, they never complained about marrying a foreigner, a Caucasian, or Jewish. It was just... Yeah, they were just happy that I married happily. (laughter)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's very true.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah. I got really lucky with both parents -- my parents and his parents, yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's great.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: And also, now, you have a baby.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Which is, like, the greatest thing for a parent.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: And for a grandparent. (laughter)

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, how often do they get to see [Elliot]?

YURIKA GOLIN: Well, right after he was born, my brother and Dad visited us. So, they saw him when he was, like, two weeks old. But my mom still works, and she had to take care of her own mother, which is my grandmother. So, she couldn't come. And then, this year, in April, I went to Japan with Paul, my husband, and Elliot, together [00:20:00] to Japan. So, we got to see my own parents, and also my grandmothers -- two of them still alive. So, they got to see Elliot as a great-grandson. That was really nice and emotional, too. And Elliot's birthday is coming in two weeks. And my brother and Dad are coming again. So...

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Is he turning one or two?

YURIKA GOLIN: Yes, he's -- one.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's an exciting birthday.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah, it's going to be a big birthday party, with friends and family. So, I'm really glad that they are coming. Unfortunately, my mom is still working, and taking care of grandmother. So... But we'll send her photos.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Yes.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's a -- that's the good thing about internet, phone.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right, yeah, it makes a huge difference. Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: And, like you said, with your job as a flight attendant --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- you get to go back frequently.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, have Paul and Elliot gone back with you?

YURIKA GOLIN: I'm sorry?

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Have Paul and Elliot gone back to Japan with you, to visit your family?

YURIKA GOLIN: Oh, yes, that's what -- in April, he -- they came with --

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Mm-hmm. Oh, yes.

YURIKA GOLIN: -- my -- with me, so...

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Oh, that's so nice.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah, it was a fun trip.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Baby on the plane for that long? (laughter)

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah, you know what?

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's amazing.

YURIKA GOLIN: It was much better than I thought, actually. He was seven months at that point, so he slept almost through the flight. And the airplane has a bassinet attached to the wall, so he slept (laughter) pretty well there -- snuggly and...

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's so cute. (laughter)

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah. And I know my coworkers on the flight, so they were really nice to us also. So...

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's good.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Another thing that was -- that Paul mentioned --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- that he said I should follow up with you about --

YURIKA GOLIN: Uh-huh.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- is he said that Brooklyn --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- is really cool? (laughter)

YURIKA GOLIN: Oh, yes. (laughter) I mean, New York is cool. And now, you know, after Manhattan, something -- you know, Brooklyn is edgy -- something like not too touristy, so Brooklyn is cool. (laughter)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, when you go back and you talk to them, you'll be like, "Oh yeah, I'm living --

YURIKA GOLIN: Uh-huh.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: “I was living in Manhattan, but now I live in Brooklyn.”

YURIKA GOLIN: Uh-huh. Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Like, are people really jealous? I mean -- (laughter)

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah, they think I’m cool. (laughter) And a lot of my friends watch *Sex and the City*. So, they know that -- Miranda’s story, and it’s...”

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: *Sex and the City* -- very identical. (laughter) That’s really funny.
So, going back to Elliot.

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, how have -- you and Paul have talked about, like --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- how to raise him, right? Like, what --

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: If he’s going to be Jewish, or...?

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah, like a general idea, not detailed. But, yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So -- and your family is -- they’re like, “Well, we weren’t -- we didn’t really consider ourselves religious, so...”

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Was that their reaction?

YURIKA GOLIN: So, they don’t care about religion at all, as long as it’s not like cult or crazy. (laughter) So, I told them that Paul really wants to raise our kids as Jewish. And I told them. They’re like, “Whatever, fine.” (laughter) It’s not like we have restriction in

life. He doesn't, you know, keep kosher or certain things. So, it just hasn't really bothered us.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's true. Is there -- was there anything in your wedding that was sort of different to the -- what you expected your wedding to be like?

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah. The wedding -- Jewish wedding is very different from Japanese wedding. First of all, in Japan, Christian-style wedding is considered cool. (laughter) So, a lot of young couples -- like, my generation, when they have wedding, they usually go to hotel, and there's a priest. I think the priest is real. The priest, and some choir, do the whole wedding in a Christian style. But those couples are not Christian. The percentage of Christian in Japan is really, really small. I think it's like less than 1% or so. So, they just do the Christian wedding. So, they often make fun of Japanese people, that they become Christian only when they get married and during Christmas. (laughter) We celebrate Christmas, not because we're Christian. It's just that fun, cute thing. The same thing with wedding. They're not Christian, but it's cool looking. (laughter) So...

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, what is it that makes it a Christian wedding?

YURIKA GOLIN: They -- so, they have the cross in the hotel chapel.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Mm-hmm.

YURIKA GOLIN: So, they -- a lot of hotels have chapels, not to pray, but for the wedding.

So, they have the big cross -- like, nice decorating. They have -- and that choir -- the atmosphere and the music makes them feel like nice, fancy wedding. (laughter)

[00:25:00] Yeah, OK.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, anything else? (laughter)

YURIKA GOLIN: So, that was the typical wedding in Japan. So, Jewish wedding was different. Like, having *chuppah* -- we never saw that, or breaking the glass. Breaking something in Japan is considered, kind of, unlucky or not a good thing. So, that was very unique. Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Did you -- did the two families talk a lot, saying, like, "This is what this symbolizes"? Or was it sort of like, "We're just going to do this?"

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah, it was kind of too much to explain to my parents. So, we just explained in the general idea. And they -- you know, even with Jewish wedding, they still walk the aisle together. So, some things are similar. So, I didn't go into detail. (laughter) It's just too much.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That makes sense.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Do your parents speak English?

YURIKA GOLIN: My dad speaks a little bit, but not, like -- just general conversation. And my mom doesn't really speak. So, when they visit here, I usually have to translate for them. Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: You get to -- that's good. That means that you get to say -- be like, "No, they didn't say anything."

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: You're like, "Shh, they just said hello."

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Let's go over there.

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter) Right, right, it's -- I mean, I still have a challenge using English, so it's -- at a certain point, it's really (laughter) a pain to translate all the time while having a meal. I can't eat and translate and, you know... But, I mean, they are both nice people -- my parents and his parents. I'm really happy that they have a good relationship.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Sorry.

YURIKA GOLIN: OK.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, yes, now you live in Brooklyn.

YURIKA GOLIN: Uh-huh.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Can you tell me a little bit of -- and Paul said that you were in Park Slope now?

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, can you tell me a little bit about what it was like to move to Manhattan from Tokyo, and now you're living in Brooklyn?

YURIKA GOLIN: I see. When I first moved to East Village, even though I lived in Tokyo, it wasn't like center part of Tokyo. It was kind of a suburb of Tokyo, so it's not like crazy, high buildings, or crazy streets. So, in East Village, it's center of New York. So, it was - in that way, it was busier, more exciting. But I'm -- I mean, like most of houses in Tokyo, it's small. And when I moved into Paul's place, that was a studio in East Village. So, that was also small. But it didn't bother me, because I'm -- I was from a small house anyway. But the energy of the city just blew me away. But after living 10 years, I kind of (laughter) got sick of the craziness. It was in -- near Union Square, NYU students. Always, always things happening -- so busy. So, when you're off, it's fine. But when you're working daily and have to go through all the craziness, it was -- it was too much.

So, when I moved to Brooklyn, Park Slope, that was a really nice balance of the excitement of the city and more relaxed feeling. So, I really like Park Slope right now.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's nice.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: How is it being there with a little baby?

YURIKA GOLIN: It -- it's -- like, everybody knows that Park Slope is a baby town.

(laughter) So, it's a really baby-friendly town, which I love. Because all -- there's nice cafes and restaurants, but they are baby-friendly. So, you don't have to worry about bringing your baby to those nice restaurants. And there are a lot of, like -- not schools, but, like, activities for babies, stores for babies, everything baby. (laughter)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: "Baby town."

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah, it is baby town. I would love to learn how Park Slope became baby town like that. But now, everybody knows: Park Slope, baby town. (laughter)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's very funny. (laughter)

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: What was I going to say? I keep losing my train of thought.

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: I don't know why. Oh, yes, that's what I was going to say. So, with Eliot --

YURIKA GOLIN: [00:30:00] Mm-hmm?

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, how do you think the fact that you guys are raising him Jewish -- how do you think that's going to...? What do you think that's going to mean for you?

YURIKA GOLIN: Right now, he doesn't speak. So, it's easy. It's just the *bris* and stuff. But once he starts going to Hebrew school, he -- I'm sure he's going to start asking questions about Judaism, which I can't answer. So, before that happens, I think I need to get back to (laughter) studying more -- learning more about Jewish culture, so that I feel comfortable talking with him about Judaism with Paul and Elliot. So, yeah, it's -- and also, depending on the denomination of Judaism, like, I have to be Jewish to have Elliot considered as Jewish -- those things. So, I haven't converted yet, but if Paul or Elliot want me to convert, I guess I don't mind converting if it's for their benefit.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: What do you think converting would be like for you?

YURIKA GOLIN: To be honest, it's not a big deal to me. (laughter) It's just like paper -- just things on paper. In my soul, nothing changed. So, you know, if it benefit them, why not? Like, to be honest, I grew up without believing in God -- believing God. I believe in something above -- like, super than human. But doesn't mean a God who tells me to do something, and not to do something. So -- but, as Paul says, Judaism -- their God is not, like, one person telling you to do and not to do something. It's more, like... I don't know. They're like -- Judaism always asks questions. There's no one, simple answer, which is good (laughter) and bad. It's more complicated, but I like that you can -- you have the freedom to think and discuss about it.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Yeah, the --

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: The history of Judaism is really nice, because it means that when you're talking to Elliot --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- you can be like, "Well..."

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Like, "This is what some people think, but not everyone."

YURIKA GOLIN: Right, right. (laughter) Right, right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: "Go ask your father."

YURIKA GOLIN: It's (inaudible) knowing, but it's good that, you know, you can discuss and always question. Yeah, I like that.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: It's probably a good habit for him to get into anyways.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, that's how his Jewish-ness will affect you. But how are you going to try and, sort of, pass along your Japan identity -- Japanese self?

YURIKA GOLIN: Well, right now I'm really making an effort to talk to him in Japanese. I only talk to him in Japanese, when I'm just by myself. And language really affects their culture. To understand one culture, I think it's really important to know the language first. So, I definitely want him to be able to communicate in Japanese. I mean, writing and reading is harder, but at least listening and talking, so that he can communicate with my family and friends in Japanese. So, that's what I'm trying right now. And I try to do holy days cele-- Japanese holy days celebration with him. And there are schools -- Japanese schools for kids in Brooklyn, also. Because the amount of Japanese people living in Brooklyn is increasing, I think, with kids. So, more Japanese people raising kids in Brooklyn -- there are actually a big Japanese community in Brooklyn. So, I try to get involved with them. And, yeah, keep -- let him experience Japanese culture even in Brooklyn. So, right now, we are taking a Japanese music class in our neighborhood, for

Japanese mothers with Japanese babies -- take a class together. We sing traditional Japanese children's songs together, that I learned in school in Japan. So, like, that way, instead of like pushing him studying Japanese, I just want him to experience Japanese culture here and there, naturally.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That sounds like you're doing your best to get, sort of, every aspect.

YURIKA GOLIN: I -- yeah, I really want him to have Japanese identity [00:35:00] also.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Yeah.

YURIKA GOLIN: And I want him to like Japan, yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Especially -- I hadn't even really thought about it, but when you said the talking to your family. You're right, it's so important for him to be able to communicate directly with his grandparents.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right, right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's true.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah, because I've seen Japanese people born here from Japanese parents who don't speak Japanese at all. It's just sad. (laughter) It's not their fault, but, yeah, I think it's sad. So...

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: And there's a lot of people who are not positioned --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- where their parents are Japanese and speak Japanese, and they didn't learn it.

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Like, I know a lot of people who feel -- who are unhappy --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- that they don't know it, because --

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- it's a lot harder, I think --

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- to learn it as an adult.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: At least, it's easier as a kid.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, it's like get them early.

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter) Yeah, I read an article about the critical age -- like baby between six to ten months -- their brain is developing and they can differentiate the different language sounds. That's a critical age for them -- what I heard.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, just like standing over his crib, like, speaking Japanese.

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter) So, yeah, it sounded stupid, but I describe what I'm seeing, what I was doing, everything to him when I was with him, in Japanese.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's great.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah. (laughter) I try.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: And eventually he'll, like, be -- you'll still do it and he'll be, like, five. He's going to be like, "Mom."

YURIKA GOLIN: Right. (laughter)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Like, "What are you doing?"

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: “I know that that’s a bird.”

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter) Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: “Yes, you are getting the (inaudible) down. What’s your problem?” That’s going to be funny. So, in terms of when he gets older --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm?

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- what sort of holidays are you planning to celebrate, do you think?

YURIKA GOLIN: New Year’s, definitely. And for boys, five-year-old is really big thing.

It’s -- May 5th is Children’s Day, and we celebrate boys when they are five. So, that’s a big thing. And also, what else? That’s the -- like, July 7th is called *Tanabata*, and we sing certain songs. And there’s a story about that day. One guy and one woman live in a different stars, and on July 7th, they can only meet once a year on that day. So, that’s kind of romantic. And think about, like, star-- like, they watch stars and the Milky Way, and sing a song. And they put their wish on a sheet of paper, and hang it to...

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: (coughs) Sorry.

YURIKA GOLIN: It’s OK.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: It’s like whenever you’re trying to push a cough down, it just gets worse.

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter) I know exactly how you feel.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: (coughs) That’s OK. OK.

YURIKA GOLIN: It’s OK. So, on July 7th, they sing a song for a special -- that day. And they write a wish to a sheet of paper, and hang it on a bamboo tree. And wish for that wish. And that’s a cute holy day. Not holy day, but, like, a celebration in Japan in

schools. That's what kids do. What else do we have? I can't really think of other big holidays in Japan. Just New Year's is a big thing. And, yeah, in summer also, around this time, it's called *Obon* -- it's from -- I think from August 12th to 15th. That's when people believe that the souls of your ancestor come back to your house. So, we often go to grave and pray for your ancestor, and family get together. And a lot of offices are actually closed during that, too. So, I mean, living in here and celebrating that is not easy. But, again, with internet, we can communicate with our family. And we just tell them about our ancestry, one day. Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's -- that's perfect. Like, that's so -- such a great celebration, because that's going to be a good way to tell him about his --

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- family, because that's not something that just comes up in conversation. (laughter)

YURIKA GOLIN: Right. Yeah, I definitely want to tell him where his ancestors are from. Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: It's like you answered all the questions that I was going to ask you later. (laughter) [00:40:00] Oh, so, speaking of holidays --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm?

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- that you probably didn't have when you were younger --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm?

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: The *bris*.

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: How did that happen? Were you comfortable with it? Did your family know, and were they comfortable with it?

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah, well, before Elliot's *bris*, I'd been to Paul's friend's children's *bris* a few times. So, I knew what to expect. But when it's about your son, (laughter) it was a bigger deal. And I wasn't worried about the surgery part. But the *mohel* was really nice, in explaining to me and everyone who was not familiar with Jewish culture -- so that she explains really well the meaning, what she's doing. So, when I was watching *bris* of somebody else's kids, I -- to be honest, I didn't really care. (laughter) I couldn't really understand. But for my baby, it was really emotional, because she read our grandparents' name. And for somebody who couldn't be there. So, I thought about my parents, my grandparents, my ancestor, and the meaning of having a child, passing generation to generation, and thinking about Paul's family's side. So, his grandmother is a survivor of the Holocaust, and also, you know, my -- our grandparents' generation -- United States and Japan was having a war. But now, we are in a good relationship, and I married American, happily. And my family and his family have a great relationship, having a baby, passing on the generation to generation, our culture. So, having -- getting married -- intermarry, and having children, really helps two or more cultures combine, and keep them in good relationship -- understanding better. So, at the *bris*, it -- thinking about all of those things. And it was really emotional. And I was really happy to have it.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That is such a nice story. (laughter) I can't even tell you. It's really perfect.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, thank you.

YURIKA GOLIN: The *mohel* did the great job. Thanks to her, yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, do you think you'll be able to, in the future, when there are these -- like, if he has a bar mitzvah --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- do you think you'll be able to make these same connections, to be very happy that there...? Not to be very happy, but --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- do you think you'll be able to find meaning in them?

YURIKA GOLIN: Oh, yes, yes. Yeah, so, before bar mitzvah, he needs to go to a Hebrew school, right? And Paul told me how he hated his Hebrew school. (laughter) So, I don't want it to happen to Elliot. So, I don't know how I can do it, but I will try to help him enjoy the Hebrew school before bar mitzvah. And I want to make the bar mitzvah meaningful to him, also. I don't want to just push him to just do it. So, hopefully it's going to be fun for him, and meaningful for him. I don't know how I can help, but I will try. (laughter)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: From the stories that Paul was telling me --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm?

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- it sounded like, you know, what he was struggling with was -- obviously you two should probably talk about it to yourselves, but -- and this is something a lot of people have talked to me about with this project, is that when you're studying for a bar -- a bar mitzvah, you're studying this, but at the same time you might be struggling with his issue of not really believing what you're studying, and you don't know how to handle that.

YURIKA GOLIN: Oh...

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: And so, for a lot of kids, and a lot of parents --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- they're just like -- the parents are just like, "Just do it." And the kids are like, "But why?"

YURIKA GOLIN: Right, right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: so, I mean, the way that you were talking earlier about the history of Judaism is about, like, criticizing and talking about the text --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm. Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- it seems like, if you just continued that --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- and you're just sort of open. You're like, "You know, we don't know." (laughter) Like, "Maybe this is not right," right? Maybe that would be helpful, but...

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter) Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: I mean, every family has to do it differently. Because maybe will Elliot will grow up and be like, "No, this is perfect for me. I love this. So, I'm so happy." Like, you never know. (laughter)

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter) I don't know, but... Well, Paul, as part of his job he's writing a lot of articles about why to be Jewish, why do this, do that. So, I think he can help us, hopefully. (laughter)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's his job. You can take the Japanese stuff. He'll take the Jewish stuff.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: (laughter) That's really interesting. So, I think that this is --
[00:45:00] this is really great. I don't think I have any other questions, because we're
going to have another, like, half an hour to an hour --

YURIKA GOLIN: OK.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- to talk with the two of you. But -- and we have a -- this is about
45 minutes. So...

YURIKA GOLIN: Did you have something about 9/11?

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Yes. (laughter) Thank you. I was going to say, like, "Is there
anything I didn't ask you about?" and that's what I didn't ask you about.

YURIKA GOLIN: OK.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, like -- I mean, we asked you a little -- talked a little bit about,
like, what was it like to be here right after 9/11.

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: But how was it for you and your family, for you to get here and
have this, like, horrific terrorist attack that was -- like, people were always saying like,
"This is the first time there's been an attack on American soil since Pearl Harbor."

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Which, like, that has an interesting connotation with your family
history. So, how was that? (laughter) I'm sure it was great. Everyone was happy.

YURIKA GOLIN: Well, I -- that was the first time that I ever felt that I thought I might die.
Because I wasn't in danger, because -- well, when the attack happened, I was still at
home getting ready to go to school. That was the second day of my school in new

environments. And -- but at the time, we didn't know how serious it was, and subway was still running. So, I was watching the news. But Paul was, "Oh, you're getting late to school. Just go." So, I just took subway. So, I just took subway, and I watched the building burning on top, while I was getting on the bridge for -- by subway. And then, when I finally got to school, people were panicking at school, watching the news at the cafeteria. Scream-- some people screaming, "Oh, we are at war. We're going to die." So, that made me worry that, "Oh, am I dying?" And at that time, the phone didn't work. The cell -- I had a cell phone, but it didn't work. And Paul texted me saying that, "I shouldn't have let you go." (laughter) Text really freaked me out. I thought I will never see him again. So, that made me worry. But, I had a host family in Long Island, and my professor was really nice, and she drove me to the Long Island host family house, because the -- all the bridges to Manhattan was closed at that time. So, I was safe there, and my host family -- she was nice enough to let me stay. But, still, phone wasn't working, so I couldn't call Paul. And I couldn't call Japan. But my friend in Japan kept calling me and calling me and calling me, because it was also a big news in Japan. And she finally was able to reach me, and crying when -- while she was talking to me. And so, I told her to tell my parents that I was OK. And she did that, so that -- so, my parents didn't freak out. So, that was nice. And then -- and the same day, at night, the bridge opened again, so I was able to take train back to Manhattan. And I was so relieved to see Paul again, because I thought I would never see him again. (laughter) So, that was a crazy experience. But, my parents are really calm, in general. So, they never tell me, "Oh, come back to Japan. Fly back to Japan." They didn't say that. So, yeah. And again, I

think they know that Paul and his family support me very well, so they were comfortable that way.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Did you -- did the fact that this happened so soon after you got here --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm?

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- did it change anything about the way you felt about your being here, or your --

YURIKA GOLIN: Not really. At that time, I was still so excited to live in New York. So, yeah, it didn't make me think, "Oh, maybe I should go back to Japan." But the reason why I came to New York to go to college is to study about tourism, so that I can be a flight attendant in New York. And that day changed the whole aviation industry. So, that bothers me a lot, because they laid off a lot of flight attendants. So, I think that that made me -- get a job as a flight attendant harder. But I was still in college anyway. I couldn't work as a flight attendant anyway. So, I just decided to stay in college, and one day... And, years later, that happened. So... (laughter)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: You have a job and --

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- everything worked out.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Wow. Well, thank you for sharing that story. It's --

YURIKA GOLIN: Well, it was -- yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- something.

YURIKA GOLIN: Shocking.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: [00:50:00] I'm -- I mean, I -- everyone has the story of like,
"Where I was --"

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: "-- when I -- when I found out."

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: And, like, that's amazing, that you were so close. That's also --

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- amazing and great that you -- nothing bad happened.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah. And, you know, at that time, they united together. So, that was a
nice thing in that bad situation.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Absolutely.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, is there anything else -- any other stories about Elliot, or about
Paul, or about your life before Elliot and Paul here?

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: I know that you had -- you had one. (laughter) Yeah, like, before,
here, or in Japan? Anything like that? Or...? And, if not, then I guess what I'll just ask
you as my final question is --

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah? OK.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- what do you hope for the future?

YURIKA GOLIN: Peace and a happy place for our children and grandchildren, with all
different culture.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: And for Elliot, specifically, what do you hope for his future?

YURIKA GOLIN: I just want him to enjoy the diversity and take advantage of New York --
so many people from different culture. And I want him to enjoy it peacefully. (laughter)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That sounds nice.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Well, thank you, so much.

YURIKA GOLIN: Thank you.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, now, I'm going to --

(break in audio)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: All right. So, we are recording again. And this is the final part of
our interview today. It is August 16th, 2013. I'm Abigail Ettelman. We're at the
Brooklyn Historical Society on Pierrepont Street. This is for Crossing Borders, Bridging
Generations. And we are with the same two people as before. (laughter) I think that's all
I have to say. Anyways, so, thank you for coming together and spending so much time
talking to me today.

YURIKA GOLIN: Sure.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: It's been a long day already. But -- so, what I would like to do is,
we both -- both of you individually told me the story of how you met. So, now I would
like both of you to talk -- just sort of -- just talk to each other about that meeting, and how
you felt at that point in time. This is not marriage counseling. (laughter)

PAUL GOLIN: Well, I wonder if she told the story the same way that I told it. Did you --
how did you tell it? I said that -- I explained why we were both at Webster Hall.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

PAUL GOLIN: And I said that I said something cheesy to you, that you didn't --

YURIKA GOLIN: Oh, I --

PAUL GOLIN: You didn't hear.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah, I didn't say that.

PAUL GOLIN: So -- OK. And then you said, "What?" And then, I said, "Hi, I'm Paul."

(laughter) And it went from there.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right. I -- yeah, I didn't say that part. But I said --

PAUL GOLIN: "He had a nice voice"?

YURIKA GOLIN: No. (laughter) I mean, yes, that's true. But you were the only normal person that I can have normal conversation there.

PAUL GOLIN: Right.

YURIKA GOLIN: So, I was comfortable talking to you.

PAUL GOLIN: OK.

YURIKA GOLIN: And we had a breakfast with our friends.

PAUL GOLIN: Right, yeah. OK.

ABIGAIL ETTelman: When you met that day, or that night -- early morning, did you think that it would last this long, and that you would have a child together? And that...?
(laughter)

PAUL GOLIN: No. No way.

YURIKA GOLIN: No way. I (laughter) -- no. And they -- what -- to be honest, it wasn't like love at the first sight. It was nice to talk to you, but I wasn't thinking, "Oh, I love him."
(laughter)

PAUL GOLIN: Yeah, I -- it wasn't love at first sight for me, but it was definitely -- I was very attracted to you.

YURIKA GOLIN: That's nice.

ABIGAIL ETTelman: "Intrigued at first sight."

PAUL GOLIN: Yes.

ABIGAIL ETTelman: And so, then, when you continued to talk, after you went back to Japan --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTelman: -- and then you went back to work, when was the point -- actually, maybe it wasn't at that point, but when was the point, in general, when you -- either of you realized that, like, "This is really something real and serious, and this is going to be an important person to me"? It was obviously before you moved here. (laughter)

YURIKA GOLIN: Right, so, after I went back to Japan, after a month, I -- against my expectation, I was still thinking about Paul. So, I wrote him a letter, because at that time, I didn't have an email. And I wrote a letter saying, like, "I'm still thinking about you," or something like that. (laughter) And the only information I had was his -- from his business card. So, I mailed it to his office. And then, he never wrote me back. So, I thought he hated me, because I sent a private letter to his office. And he might be mad, or he hates me, or he forgot about me. (laughter) And then, a year and a half later, I went back to Japan to -- and I went back to New York, to visit my host family, and just to enjoy [00:55:00] New York. And since I was in New York, I decided to call Paul. And he picked up the phone, and he didn't hate me. (laughter) So, we had one date --

PAUL GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

YURIKA GOLIN: -- at that time. And we found out that we still kind of liked each other.

And then, at that point, I had an email, right? So, we started exchanging email and chatting online, and got closer. And my dad, at that time, worked for a Japanese airline, so I had a -- like, free tickets. So, I came to New York, like, three or four times a year. So, we got closer and closer. And a year later, you told me that you loved me for the first time, when he visited me in Japan. And around that time, we got more serious, right?

PAUL GOLIN: Mm-hmm. Yeah. I can't believe it's now in a permanent record, this story. (laughter) You know, I w-- I had been in a long-distance relationship between New York and Michigan, and it was horrible. And I just didn't want to have a long-distance relationship between New York and Japan, because it seemed like the longest possible distance while still both being on the same planet. And so, I didn't reply to the letter, but I kept it. And I looked at it pretty regularly (laughter) too, because I was still thinking about her. But I just felt like it was totally unrealistic. And so -- and I'm -- I still have it somewhere. But --

YURIKA GOLIN: "Somewhere"? (laughter)

PAUL GOLIN: -- I didn't -- (laughter) it's in our apartment. But I didn't reply. And then, when she called, I was extremely excited that she did, and glad that she did. And then -- and then, despite my own rules, we had a long-distance relationship. And it wasn't easy, but, yeah, when I visited her in Japan, it made me realize how strongly I felt for her. So... It's a long time ago already.

YURIKA GOLIN: I know.

PAUL GOLIN: That was... Well, I visited Japan in '98 -- like, New Year's of '98 to '99.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

PAUL GOLIN: We met in '96.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right. So, that was '96.

PAUL GOLIN: Yeah, so...

YURIKA GOLIN: How many years it was?

PAUL GOLIN: It's -- it's --

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Too many.

PAUL GOLIN: Was it six--

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter)

PAUL GOLIN: Sixteen or 17 years already?

YURIKA GOLIN: So, almost half of my life I know him.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Oh, so, how old were you two when -- on that trip to Japan?

YURIKA GOLIN: I was 20.

PAUL GOLIN: You were still only 20?

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah, because it was --

PAUL GOLIN: Wow.

YURIKA GOLIN: -- my first year at work.

PAUL GOLIN: Right. And it means --

YURIKA GOLIN: Wow.

PAUL GOLIN: -- I just turned -- I had turned 30. I went there to --

YURIKA GOLIN: Right, right.

PAUL GOLIN: -- turn 30.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right. Wow. (laughter)

PAUL GOLIN: Yeah, every -- for one month every year, we're 10 years apart.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

PAUL GOLIN: And then -- because my birthday is in December, and hers is in January.

And then -- and then, at her birthday, we're only nine years apart.

YURIKA GOLIN: "Only," yeah. (laughter)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, this is actually a good transition, unless there's anything more you want to say.

PAUL GOLIN: Uh-uh.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: I'm happy that story is on the public record.

PAUL GOLIN: (laughter) Oh, my God.

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: But if you want to take it out, we can take it out.

PAUL GOLIN: It's all right. (laughter)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: We'll talk about that with the release forms. Anyways, my next question that I'd really like for you to talk about really in depth, is you mentioned that you guys have gone to Japan, in this story, and also that you've gone to Israel. So, if you could talk about just the experience of going to Israel and going to Japan -- this place that is... And even -- you can talk about going to Israel, because, obviously, it's not your home country.

PAUL GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: But, just this experience of going into this very meaningful location to both of you, together.

YURIKA GOLIN: Want to start with Japan?

PAUL GOLIN: Yeah, the experience of going to Japan for the first time, for me, was -- it was just pure enjoyable vacation. I had saved up my -- like, at least, I think, a year and a half worth of vacation days. And it was the -- it was -- I took a three-week vacation. I don't think I've taken as long a vacation since. And I did -- I did two weeks in Japan, split with, like, about five days in Thailand. And it was phenomenal, because Japan is an amazing country to visit. And I was blown away, because I had been to Europe and Israel, and Cairo when I was young. And Japan, [01:00:00] in some ways, is more advanced than the US. So, it was the first time I had ever been anywhere where I was shocked that there was a country more advanced than us, in terms of the technology. Their cell phones, at that time, were 10 years ahead of our cell phones. When I walked out of the shower at this ho-- in the hotel I was staying at, it was a wall-to-wall mirror, and right above the -- it was all fogged up from my shower, except right above the sink. It was not at all fogged up, because they had a defogger behind the mirror. And I was thinking to myself, "Why isn't this in existence in every single bathroom in America?" Like, "Why don't we have this technology?" And so, I was -- and of course, the trains are super-efficient. The bullet train is beautiful. The -- there's just -- it's an amazing place to visit.

YURIKA GOLIN: And the toilet. (laughter)

PAUL GOLIN: And, of course, they have, like, the toilets that are --

YURIKA GOLIN: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

PAUL GOLIN: -- that have heated seats and everything.

YURIKA GOLIN: And wash, like...

PAUL GOLIN: And bidets -- yeah.

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

PAUL GOLIN: It's a great country to visit. And I really was into it. I was into the people, and the culture. And then, because I had a friend who was living there already, and Yurika was there, I was having a fun time with them. And I met Yurika's friends, and we hung out on New Year's Eve. And it was definitely an interesting cultural experience, because I didn't speak Japanese. So, we would be out with 12 or 15 people all speaking Japanese, and I'd just be sitting there quietly by myself.

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter)

PAUL GOLIN: And then, someone would turn to me and the conversation would just end -- would stop at the table, because someone had asked me a question in English. So, the only conversation then can be between me and everyone, in English. And I answered the question. And then, everyone goes back to speaking in Japanese -- you know, all the cross-conversations you would expect at a table full of 15 people. (laughter) But every so often, when someone wants to include me, they would talk to me, and then everyone would get q--

END OF AUDIO FILE

Oral History Interview with Paul and Yurika Golin**Crossing Borders, Bridging Generations, 2011.019.052**

Interview conducted by Abigail Ettelman at the Brooklyn Historical Society on August 16th, 2013 in Brooklyn Heights, Brooklyn.

PAUL GOLIN: [00:00] -- going to say that, besides the work I do professionally on intermarriage in the Jewish community and inclusion in the Jewish community, in my spare time I'm also administrator of a Facebook page -- "Jewpanese" -- which is at Facebook.com/JewishJapanese. And it -- I post anything where there's a convergence between Jewish and Japanese. So, for couples like us who are Jewish and Japanese, if there's any news about that, or if there's somebody who is doing something interesting who is a child of a Jewish and a Japanese person, I'll throw that article up there. There's a restaurant that just opened in Williamsburg two weeks ago called Shalom Japan, which has been getting good coverage, including, today, a review in the *Village Voice*.

YURIKA GOLIN: Oh.

PAUL GOLIN: And we absolutely have to go there --

YURIKA GOLIN: Oh, yes.

PAUL GOLIN: -- because all of their dishes are, like, you know, pastrami ramen, and stuff like --

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter) That I would enjoy.

PAUL GOLIN: -- a mix-up of Jewish and Japanese. So, I do it because I'm interested in it, but I'm also hoping that there are... I was just curious to know, are there other Jews and Japanese out there in these kind of families, because that's the kind of family I'd be curious to hang out with, and have [Elliot] meet other kids like him who have a shared

background. So, when you ask about what kind of community we'd like to create, I'd like him to be involved in a Jewish and Japanese community individually, but also, if there's a merged one, you know, for him to be involved in a merged community as well. Recognizing that, in reality, the community he's probably going to be a part of the most, once he's in school, is one of much greater diversity than that, you know? And I think -- I don't know, but I think he will be able to make friends with other kids from mixed backgrounds. And also, he might find other Asian kids that he's comfortable hanging out with, or he might find Jewish kids that he's comfortable hanging out with, or just whomever, you know? I don't know. But I would like him to have that kind of grounding in a community that includes Jews and Japanese. Do you agree?

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah. I just -- it doesn't matter -- Japanese, Jewish, or whatever. I just want him to be comfortable with all different kind of race, culture, with no judgment or discrimination.

PAUL GOLIN: Right. Yeah, I mean, when I think about it, and the -- I think about how many more people of mixed races there are now than there were even 20 years ago, that when he grows up, if he marries somebody, that person might have two heritages also, or more.

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

PAUL GOLIN: And then -- so, their kids are going to have, like, four --

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

PAUL GOLIN: -- heritages or more. And so, the people who have a negative response to that would say, "Well, if you're only one-fourth Jewish or less, then you're not going to have any connection at all." But I don't feel that way. I'm not worried about that. I

think people can have a whole variety of identities and interests, and it doesn't mean you have to have less of one in order to have more of the other.

YURIKA GOLIN: I totally agree.

PAUL GOLIN: So, it just depends on what you're interested in, how you want to spend your time. I mean, I'm as much as a Michigan football fan as I am a Jew.

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter) You think, as strong?

PAUL GOLIN: (laughter) Well, not as much -- not as much. It's not as strong.

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

PAUL GOLIN: But it's certainly -- a big chunk of my identity --

YURIKA GOLIN: Wow.

PAUL GOLIN: -- is connected to Michigan, and to the University of Michigan. And it sounds kind of nuts when I say it out loud, but it is. That's just who it is. And that might change over time. Obviously, if I had to make a choice between one or the other I would choose Judaism and the Jewish community, but I don't have to make that choice. I can be totally Jewish, and I can be a -- totally a Michigan fan. And it doesn't conflict with each other, so I do both, you know? And I hope that that idea of being able to have multiple identities is something that he'll be comfortable with. I'm sure he'll be comfortable with it.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right. And, yeah, the mixed culture within your blood is really a great way to help people understand the [05:00] culture. Because I married Paul, my family and friends are more interested in Judaism -- deeper understanding, more curious. So, when they -- let's say when they read a magazine or newspaper in Japan, before I married him, he -- they -- they're not going to -- interested in article about Israel or Judaism. But

now, they are more curious about Judaism, trying to understand more. So, my mom, actually, sometimes sends me an article in Japanese newspaper about Judaism. So, (laughter) she's more into Judaism than I felt. But, like that -- it's just... So, one couple - - intermarried couple -- that -- their extended family is going to understand the different side of -- the other side of culture more. So, that way, I believe that ignorance will be reduced, and the whole world will go toward more peaceful world, I think.

PAUL GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

YURIKA GOLIN: More personal, like --

PAUL GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

YURIKA GOLIN: -- understanding personally, you know? Try not to fight, or have war, without understanding -- or misunderstanding.

PAUL GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That was really nice. (laughter) Just so you know, you're going to get this audio, so you can play it for him. You'll be like, "This is what we were thinking about."

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, that was very, very interesting. And thank you for sharing your stories and your perspectives. Something else that I'm interested in talking about, and this might be something that's a very short answer, "No." But I'm wondering what the things in your -- (inaudible) but to you, too. I'm wondering about what were the moments in your relationship where there was that, like, culture shock. Like, "Oh, my goodness, I didn't expect this." Even if there -- and that's why I was, like, there might be nothing. There might have been like, "I only expected you." But...

PAUL GOLIN: Can you think of any?

YURIKA GOLIN: Not really.

PAUL GOLIN: I think that there have been times when I was surprised by things. And I don't know if it's just about -- I don't know that I can say it's because it's a cultural thing, or it's just between us as two individuals. But (laughter) the -- you know, this might be a cultural thing. The connection that Yurika has to objects --

YURIKA GOLIN: Oh.

PAUL GOLIN: -- that have faces on them is a sub-- kind of a spiritual one that I think is related to Shintoism, you know, and Japanese religion in some ways. In that, if an object like a stuffed animal has a face on it, she feels like there is some spiritual -- there's something spiritual to it, right? So -- and I was -- I remember I was surprised to hear that, so I was -- I took one of her stuffed animals and started punching it. And she was not happy. I mean, she knew I was making fun of her, but (laughter) I mean, she felt like it -- you know, like there was something there that might be experiencing my punches.

YURIKA GOLIN: I still don't know, is this cultural -- Japanese cultural thing, or a men-and-women thing? What do -- you don't feel anything about stuffed animals?

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: I would have been sad.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yes! Of course, this is a girls thing.

PAUL GOLIN: OK. I don't know.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: I might just be weird. You should go and do a poll about --

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: -- "If I start hitting this stuffed animal..." No, well, it's also, I have a young niece.

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTelman: So I think I'm thinking of her reaction.

YURIKA GOLIN: Oh.

ABIGAIL ETTelman: Like, she would cry.

PAUL GOLIN: Right.

ABIGAIL ETTelman: Because she has that sense of, like, it being a real thing. But --

PAUL GOLIN: Right.

ABIGAIL ETTelman: -- I think that they're...

PAUL GOLIN: Yeah, I mean, I think that -- oh, and also, reincarnation, because I guess for the first years of our relationship, I presumed that, because she didn't go to any organized religion, that she also, like me, had extreme doubts in the stories that all organized religions tell. But, as we talked about it, then she started -- she explained to me that she --

ABIGAIL ETTelman: Just let me (inaudible) from the collar. There you go. It was moving against the...

PAUL GOLIN: Oh. Is that better?

ABIGAIL ETTelman: Yeah, it's perfect.

PAUL GOLIN: That you believe in reincarnation, right?

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

PAUL GOLIN: [10:00] But you don't remember any of your past lives?

YURIKA GOLIN: I don't know. I think I was somebody. But I don't go to, like, a fortune teller and ask about my past life.

PAUL GOLIN: Right.

YURIKA GOLIN: Those I don't believe. But I believe something.

PAUL GOLIN: Right.

YURIKA GOLIN: And, like, I -- you know, like Paul and Elliot or my parents, I love them so much I seriously believe that for my next life, I'm going to be with them again. Maybe in a different relationship, but definitely be together with them. I believe it. But you don't believe that at all.

PAUL GOLIN: No, but I like -- I like the idea. Like, I'm not against it. I just don't feel it, you know? You know, if I think about it deeply, I just --

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

PAUL GOLIN: -- can't believe that that's what really happens. But if I don't... You know, I want to let that go the -- I want to let go of that realism and just, kind of, tell myself that story. You know, I call myself an airplane agnostic, because I don't believe in God until I'm on an airplane.

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter)

PAUL GOLIN: And then I start praying a lot. (laughter) So, anyway, you know -- and I was surprised to learn about that belief of hers, but it doesn't -- it doesn't change -- it's not like I found out, "Oh, and also she believes that Jesus was Messiah." You know, like, it's not -- her belief is not in conflict with me in any way. And, you know -- and I don't think my beliefs are in conflict with having a Jewish household, even though plenty of Jews would disagree and say, "Well, if you don't believe in God, why are you even bothering?" But plenty of other Jews would say that that's not -- that's not really what Judaism is about. Judaism is about how we live our lives in this go around, and how we

relate to other humans, much more than about how we relate to God. So -- and that's why there's room in Judaism for a lot of non-believers like me. So...

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, is that what you'll -- I mean, in the shorter way -- but is that what you'll tell Elliot when he grows up and gets curious about how parents -- how his parents relate their beliefs to each other?

PAUL GOLIN: I don't know. I mean, I don't want to -- I'm not going to lie to him, but I'm also going to say that... I want to expose him to a number of beliefs.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right, right.

PAUL GOLIN: And if he connects with one, that's OK.

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

PAUL GOLIN: But I don't think I can be dishonest. And I had mentioned, in my individual interview, that moment when I was 12 and angry about having to study for my bar mitzvah, and confronting my mom about not believing. And then, when she said, "Well, I don't either," what -- it was so shocking to me. But, yet, somehow, without saying it, she may have been conveying it to me. Because it seems more than just coincidental that I ended up with the same ideas that she had. You know, for me, I don't know -- obviously, I didn't know my great-grandparents on my mom's side, but I knew my grandmother. And she was a survivor of the Holocaust. And so, I don't know what happened before the Holocaust, but I certainly think that the Holocaust kind of killed religion in my family. And I don't think anyone can blame us for that, because you go to synagogue -- you know, like, the High Holidays are coming up in a couple of weeks. And part of it is, well, God rewards the good and punishes the wicked. And how can I sit there and believe that when I know my grandmother, and know that she was not a wicked

person, and she was -- she lost her whole family. That's a punishment. So, how can I sit there and listen to that? And now, there are plenty of rabbis who will give elaborate answers, but I just don't buy it. So, you know, I don't know. I -- like, I'm -- so, I'm not going to turn around and tell Elliot all those stories and say, "Well, you should believe in God." I can't. On the other hand, I work with people who believe in God, and I don't look down on them for that. And in some ways, I'm jealous of them, that they can have that belief. I feel like they have -- that they have a certain strength that comes from that, that I don't have because I just don't believe it. So, if he comes away from Hebrew school saying -- [15:00] you know, believing in God, I'm not going to sit there and say, "Well, that's stupid and you shouldn't." Or, if he believes in reincarnation, that's -- you know, I'm not going to say that... No one can prove or disprove any of it, so it's whatever you believe.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah, I just want to expose him to different beliefs, and make sure that he respect other people's belief, also.

PAUL GOLIN: Right.

YURIKA GOLIN: People can be different, and that's OK. And I want him to learn that.

PAUL GOLIN: Right. It's just the people who try to enforce their beliefs on other people that I really can't stand. (laughter)

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

PAUL GOLIN: And I presume that he will -- he will get that from us, also. (laughter)

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter) Right. So, the culture shock, I was thinking, from you -- it's not a culture shock, but the Christmas was a big thing for me.

PAUL GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

YURIKA GOLIN: So, as I told you earlier, in Japan, Christmas is a big celebration in Japan.

Not because of religion, but as a family getting together, or party, or have fun, or as a sweet memory for children, to believe in Santa. So, as a kid, in Japan, I believed in Santa until I was maybe nine or ten, until my brother exposed... So, in Japan, in the morning of Christmas Day, children find a present from Santa by their bedside. So, I got a present from Santa every year until that year, when my brother -- before Christmas, like a few weeks before Christmas, my brother told that the Santa doesn't exist. It's our parents. And I said, "No, he does -- he exists." And he opened a closet of my parents, (laughter) and -- wrapped gift. And that's when I found that was -- the Santa was my parents. And so disappointed. (laughter) But, like that, a lot of Japanese kids have that kind of experience. But until then, they believe in Santa. And that's a sweet thing for the kid and the parents. So -- and also, I used to have a little Christmas tree at home, and I really loved decorating it every year with my mother. So, nothing religious, but as a sweet family holiday. I -- the Christmas was really important for me. But Paul doesn't take it. He -- so, I wanted to have Christmas tree at home, just to have a sweet memory. And I wanted my child to believe in Santa when he or she was little enough. But it's not for Paul, and Paul totally disagreed, and he said, (laughter) "Christmas tree doesn't belong to Jewish homes. So, no." But I can do whatever I want for Chanukah. So, I compromised. Well, Chanukah is good, but to be honest, the decoration for Chanukah in New York or in the United States, or anywhere around the world, is not as cute as Christmas. (laughter) So, I compromised, and as long as I can put, like, cute -- I can find cute Chanukah, like, candles and decorations, I guess I can give up Christmas tree. But that was the big thing for me. And I still feel a little bit sad about telling Elliot that Santa doesn't come to our

place, especially my friends' kids still believe in Santa. So, if they have conversation, they (laughter) have hard time.

PAUL GOLIN: Well, we have to figure out what the -- there are answers that we can give to Elliot about why Santa doesn't come to our house, without him ruining it for other kids. Like --

YURIKA GOLIN: What's the answer?

PAUL GOLIN: Well, because we don't need Santa's help, because we have eight nights, and they only have one night.

YURIKA GOLIN: Oh. (laughter)

PAUL GOLIN: So, they need a Santa to help them. Like, there's been --

YURIKA GOLIN: Not bad. (laughter)

PAUL GOLIN: People have written about this.

YURIKA GOLIN: OK, OK.

PAUL GOLIN: About how to do it. Because, you know, again, I don't want to lie to him about it. But I also don't want him to be the kid that ruins Christmas --

YURIKA GOLIN: Right, right.

PAUL GOLIN: -- for all the other kids. (laughter) So, it's a delicate thing.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

PAUL GOLIN: And I feel strongly about it, not because I think it's an issue -- like, I don't think that -- I certainly don't think that interfaith families all have to get rid of the Christmas tree. [20:00] And, in fact, I wrote a piece a couple of years ago for *Tablet* magazine, defending interfaith families who are raising Jewish children who have Christmas trees. That it can be done, and it's OK if that's what they want, if all -- you

know, 364 other days of the year they're raising their kids Jewish. But to me, personally, it's just not what I want, because I didn't have it. And I actually felt that there was a power in Jewish-identity building, in not having it, and being different, and being the other, and what that means in terms of character development and so on, in a country that goes so over the top for Christmas. And -- and, I'm totally comfortable with Elliot having a very strong Japanese identity. And I understand that, now, Japan has adopted American Christmas as its own, but Christmas is not Japanese culture. And so, that was the disconnect, I think, when we first discussed it. Because, for you, you grew up with it, and you're Japanese. So, of course, it's part of Japanese culture. But that's (laughter) -- you know, and that's just not how I see Japanese culture. And to me, it's very much Christian culture. And the conflict between Judaism and Christianity is a larger one, that I'm very aware of. And so, that was the issue -- not about you or Japan or anything. So, that -- that's obviously a compromise that I really appreciate you're willing to make. And we're just going to have to go over the top to make Chanukah amazing, so that he feels like he has something special happening for him too.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: In what ways do you think that you'll go over the top to make Chanukah amazing?

PAUL GOLIN: Well, we'll do lots of decorating of --

YURIKA GOLIN: The food.

PAUL GOLIN: Yeah, and good food, and family. You know, the same things that make Christmas amazing --

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

PAUL GOLIN: -- can be amazing for Chanukah. And we'll get a big menorah. And, you know, one of the things my mom does that I really like is, she has a crazy menorah collection. And when we do our family Chanukahs, she'll bring all of the menorahs. And when we light candles, everyone will light their own menorah. So, we'll have, like, 20 menorahs --

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah. (laughter)

PAUL GOLIN: -- going at once. It's, like, a major fire hazard.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah. (laughter)

PAUL GOLIN: But it's fun.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

PAUL GOLIN: And there's all different shapes and sizes.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

PAUL GOLIN: And they have amazing, like, kid-friendly --

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

PAUL GOLIN: -- Disney menorahs now. I mean, there's lot of great stuff out there.

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

PAUL GOLIN: I agree, though, it's never going to match Christmas. It's just not. I mean, the -- only 2% of Americans are Jews, and something like 65 or 70 percent or more are Christian. And the Christmas industry is massive, and everything is focused to that. And, in fact, the -- all the great Christmas songs were written by Jews anyway, because they know that's where the market is. So, I get that. I understand it. I watched all the Christmas animated specials when I was a kid, too. But I did it knowing I was somehow

separate from it. And I think that has advantages and disadvantages. But I want him to have that experience also.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That was a great answer.

PAUL GOLIN: Thanks.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: And if you have any other examples of cross-cultural things, (laughter) that would be good. But, if you don't...

PAUL GOLIN: Yeah, I mean, it's kind of surprising and encouraging that I can't really think of...

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

PAUL GOLIN: I mean, obviously, culture is different there. But I love it. So, I think that people who are not comfortable in different cultures wouldn't be comfortable, but that's them. And I love it. You know, I love... You know, it was -- it felt weird and awkward the first time I went to an *onsen*, which is a Japanese hot spring, which is -- you know, public baths in Japan are very popular. And in the US, generally, you're not bathing naked with 20 other guys. And it was awkward at first, but I read about it beforehand. And it was something I wanted to do. And now I love it. So, it just depends on different people's personalities. But folks who love experiencing other cultures -- that's -- you know, there -- of course, there are differences. But that makes it interesting.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

PAUL GOLIN: So, you know, and the first time that Yurika tried gefilte fish or chopped liver -- you know, those were exciting things. And she likes them. So, it's thrilling that she likes them, just the way it's thrilling for her parents whenever I go over there and we eat out, [25:00] and they make me try, like, the weirdest things, thinking, "For sure

there's no way he's going to eat this." And then, when I like it, you know, they're thrilled. So --

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

PAUL GOLIN: -- you know, we -- whatever the cultural differences are, I think, more often than not, we enjoy them. It's not really a sticking point for us.

YURIKA GOLIN: So, it's not about you, but one big cultural shock when I moved here was the customer service. The quality of customer service in Japan is so good, but I didn't really realize until I moved here. So, when I first came here, talking to people in a deli or little stores, I felt they were so rude to me. And I took it personally, and I was sad. (laughter) But later, I recognized -- realized that it was just New York culture. In the beginning, people are kind of cold. But once you get to know the people, they are friendly and better. But, in general, customer service here (laughter) is terrible to me. And now, I work in airline -- Continental Airlines. Well, they merged with United, so it's now United Airlines. But sometimes my coworker -- they -- the quality of service they provide, to me, it's -- to be honest, it's shameful. Like, because airline service in Japan is so, so high quality, and I was used to it. So, here, it's pretty shocking. (laughter)

PAUL GOLIN: So, she's working to help improve that in United.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

PAUL GOLIN: Because she's working as a trainer at times, and so, she's very aware of customer service, and trying to improve it.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's great. Yeah, that's... I mean, I've been with that customer server that -- with a bad attitude before.

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So I'm always like, "Yeah, I get it." You know, it's --

PAUL GOLIN: Where was that?

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: I was in Kennebunkport, Maine. So, very touristy.

PAUL GOLIN: Uh-huh.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's where I grew up.

PAUL GOLIN: Oh, OK. Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Very touristy. Very -- you're selling, like, T-shirts, and the -- they want you to act like they're the greatest T-shirts ever.

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: And they're not. They're ugly, and they have lobsters on them. But... (laughter) That's a really good point.

PAUL GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: So, I'm, like, echo-y. I wonder if there's a way to, sort of, like -- and I'm thinking about Elliot again, and the ways that -- like, things that you're shocked about are things that he's going to be like, "This is normal to me."

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Because he's going to grow up here.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: I'm just wondering, like, if you think that there's a way to make him look at this place -- New York City, where he's going to grow up -- with, like, very fresh eyes. Or if you think that's even valuable. Like, what do you want for him to have, looking at his world? I know, it's a really weird question.

PAUL GOLIN: Well --

YURIKA GOLIN: What does that mean?

PAUL GOLIN: I mean, should his attitude -- I think the question is, like, should he be shocked by that bad customer service also, when he's going to be -- he's just going to grow up with it, the way I did.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah, so...

PAUL GOLIN: Like, I'm aware of it.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

PAUL GOLIN: But it just rolls off my back, because I'm a New Yorker.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

PAUL GOLIN: And, in fact --

YURIKA GOLIN: That's normal to him.

PAUL GOLIN: When I've -- yeah. When I've traveled in the South, and people are super-friendly. Like a waitress will come over and just, like, start telling you her life story.

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter)

PAUL GOLIN: And I -- like, my stepdad and I -- we were just looking at each other, like, we -- you know, we just want to order. And we -- but we recognized that it's our New Yorker attitude, and that things are just different in different places. So, I think that he'll definitely have a New Yorker attitude if he grows up here.

YURIKA GOLIN: Mm-hmm. Right.

PAUL GOLIN: But I do want him to be aware of the differences in different places. And if he's spending a -- you know, summers in Japan or whatever, he is going to be aware of really high-quality customer service. Because, in Japan, if you work at McDonald's, you are the best McDonald's employee you can be. Like, there's no excuse. You know, you

can't be mad at the world because you work at McDonald's. You simply do your job as best as you can. Otherwise, society looks down on you, and that's the worst thing that --

YURIKA GOLIN: It's just not acceptable.

PAUL GOLIN: -- could happen. Yeah, it just is not accept-- And societal pressure, in Japan, is so strong, which has, again, positives and negatives. And I want him to be aware of that.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

PAUL GOLIN: But he's also going to be outside of that system.

YURIKA GOLIN: I just want to expose him to different culture, different environment -- as many as possible, starting at a young age. See the difference, and, yeah...

PAUL GOLIN: The weird thing to me is, I thought Israelis were like New Yorkers on steroids, in terms of being pushy and aggressive. And I had been warning Yurika about that before we went. And she [30:00] didn't feel that way at all. (laughter)

YURIKA GOLIN: I thought it was same as New Yorkers, or a little bit better.

PAUL GOLIN: So, you know, who knew?

YURIKA GOLIN: (laughter)

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: That's interesting. They shove to the front of lines.

PAUL GOLIN: There are no lines.

ABIGAIL ETTELMAN: Yeah, yeah.

PAUL GOLIN: It's just -- you know, it's just whoever gets the attention of the person next. I've experienced that, and I hate it.

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah.

PAUL GOLIN: But that's the culture, so...

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

ABIGAIL ETTelman: Well --

PAUL GOLIN: Great.

ABIGAIL ETTelman: Is there anything -- as I said before, is there anything that you would like to talk about or tell a story about, either about Elliot or about yourselves, your relationship, your history?

PAUL GOLIN: No, I mean, just one other thought I had on being in an interracial marriage, is that it wasn't, like, a political decision or anything to fall in love and get married with somebody who was outside my race. But -- and it wasn't done for the betterment of humankind or anything like that. It was purely the same personal decision that anybody else makes when they get married. But I do think that there's a great benefit if more and more people marry across racial and even religious lines, which is that societies will exchange understanding. We will lose some things. And some people will feel bad about losing those things. But I think that what you gain is more valuable, because the world is just going to be a more understanding place if we have that not just cross-cultural communication, but actually cross-cultural people.

YURIKA GOLIN: I totally agree. So, I hope more intermarry happen around the world --

PAUL GOLIN: Yeah.

YURIKA GOLIN: -- to understand better.

PAUL GOLIN: Yeah.

YURIKA GOLIN: And not to be afraid to be different.

PAUL GOLIN: Right. I mean -- and even though it's still amazing to me to go to Japan, where everybody is Japanese. It's like 99.9% Japanese.

YURIKA GOLIN: It's changing in big city. More foreigners are coming in, and more accepted now.

PAUL GOLIN: Yeah. That's for sure.

YURIKA GOLIN: Slowly changing.

PAUL GOLIN: Right. But it's exciting to go somewhere, where you are so different --

YURIKA GOLIN: Right, right.

PAUL GOLIN: -- than everybody else.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

PAUL GOLIN: And I'm not saying that, one day, the world will just -- everyone will be the same. That's not what I'm saying.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

PAUL GOLIN: I'm saying I'd like to see even more diversity.

YURIKA GOLIN: Right.

PAUL GOLIN: You know, all different kinds of people, different mixes. You know, what's going to emerge from the mixture is what I'm interested in. Not that we're all going to become this one gray, indistinguished [*sic*] --

YURIKA GOLIN: Yeah, I agree.

PAUL GOLIN: -- mass. Yeah. Great. Well --

ABIGAIL ETTelman: That was a really good note to end on. So, thank you, very much.

PAUL GOLIN: Thank you.

YURIKA GOLIN: Thank you.

PAUL GOLIN: Thank you.

END OF AUDIO FILE

