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Oral History Interview with Anna Roberts**Crossing Borders, Bridging Generations, 2011.019.056**

**Interview conducted by Alexandra Kelly at the Relay Graduate School of Education on
June 11th, 2013 in Manhattan, New York.**

ALEX KELLY: So, my name is Alex Kelly, and I am interviewing Anna Roberts. And we are sitting here at 40 West 20th Street, New York City. And it is June 11th, 2013. So, Anna, I just want to start out by asking you if you can tell me a little bit about where you come from.

ANNA ROBERTS: OK. Well, I usually, I give a long spiel when people say, "Where are you from?" Because I have lived in lots of places in the United States. I sort of moved around once every four years, from the time I was born. So I was born, upstate New York, and then moved to Hudson, Massachusetts, and like Central Mass, for a couple of years, when I was little. And then to Philadelphia, and then to Larchmont, New York; and then to Gaithersburg, Maryland, where I went to high school. And that is currently where my parents still are. So, as far as, like, from home town, that's that. And as far as from other places, I think my -- I think about where I'm from, as far as, like, my heritage, as much more -- it's very American, actually. And my father is -- his grandparents are from the Virgin Islands. And my mother's grandparents are from Switzerland, but I don't think that they -- I don't think my mom knows much about her grandparents. But my dad has been searching about his parents, because he's come -- his family has come here by way of the slave trade. And so, yeah. So that's where I am. That's me. (laughter) That's where I come from. I know it's a long list. Yeah.

ALEX KELLY: So, what has your father told you about his part of the family?

ANNA ROBERTS: Well, he -- he's actually, in much more recent years, more than before, has been trying to sort of like track down his dad's side of the family. So I give you a -- can I give you a little bit of background about my dad's family, because it's a funny, it's an interesting bunch.

So, my dad was born in Queens. And his father and mother were together for a while, and then when he was nine, they split up. And his father married a white Jewish woman, from the Bronx. And it was sort of like -- I don't know, we like to joke in our family that it was sort of like a sort of like biracial Brady bunch type of situation. In the early, or I guess, like, mid- to late '60s, and they all lived on the lower East Side. And it was my dad and my uncle, his brother, from my grandfather's side of the family. And then his stepmother, but I call her Granny, and her two daughters, and so it was sort of like this melding and meshing of families. And that's his, like, family. That's his family memory.

His mother, he's kept in touch with, but, basically, as far as who I think of as my grandparents, it's like my grandmother, my dad's stepmom, Sunny, and then his father, Al. Or Papa. And so, only much more recently has he begun to sort of like dig into his biological mother's roots, and his father's roots, and what he's come up with is that, they -- yes, they were, I think, mostly on his dad's side of the family, I believe they're from the Virgin Islands, as far as he can gather. And I think that one of -- this is -- it gets complicated, I'm going to have to think about it for a second. But one of his -- so I guess, his -- like, his father -- so my dad's grandfather inherited land that was passed down, and I think -- I don't know exactly how it changed hands, I think that's also part of what he's trying to figure out. But I believe -- I mean, it used to be a plantation, and somehow changed hands and got -- and my great-- or my grandfather, yeah, my great-grandfather ended up owning that land, somehow. But we're not exactly sure. And yeah, and basically, and somehow, they also came over -- it's very unclear, but basically, Virgin Islands, and some sort of exchange of land, in some capacity. And that's -- that's basically the extent, that's the extent of that.

There's some, like, hearsay, about -- so every man in my family, on my father's side, has a middle name Alexander, or Alexandra, or something like that. And it's because, what he's gathered is that, Alexander Hamilton, [5:00] at a certain point, owned land that my father's family and ancestors have, like, were working for him on that land, as slaves.

And there's some -- again, not exactly sure who, or how, or what was going on, but that's sort of the legend. And my brother -- my little brother's middle name is Alexander. Like it's gone through the entire, sort of, family. And I think, yeah. So that's sort of where -- that's sort of where he comes from. But he's trying to piece it together, and I think he's learning a little bit more, as time goes on, but he's not quite sure. Yeah.

ALEX KELLY: Interesting. So he just -- how did he decide to kind of just start looking into it?

ANNA ROBERTS: I think that -- well, this is also -- this is a little bit my speculation about how his life, growing up, was. And a lot about my grandmother, his stepmom, [Sonya?]. She is very hard-headed, strong woman. She actually just celebrated her 90th birthday last Thursday. And she has -- is the kind of person that is very, like, if people, sort of like burn you, she like cuts you off. And so I think that throughout my dad's childhood, because of the disconnect with his mother, because of the fact that his parents split and she left -- and his mother left, and now my -- you know, my Granny, my grandmother is the one that, like, sort of took in the sons. But I think, for a long time, his relationship with his biological mother was, like, kind of stunted. And I think that his father, probably, my grandfather probably wanted, like, that family unit. And so I don't think that until -- yeah, until he grew up -- my dad grew up and moved and did his own thing. And I also think that in much more recent years, like in the last 5 to 10 years, he's just been doing a lot more soul-searching, if you will. So he's made a lot of changes, personally. Like he went from being in - which is pretty big, at least in my opinion, right, that he went from being in, like -- was a Marketing exec at a big New York Advertising agencies, and when we moved to Maryland, he, like, switched that up entirely and started working for the county government and is sort of working and volunteering and he's on the board of -- oh, my goodness, now I'm not going to remember. I think it's -- we can... This is something that we can try and edit in the interview. I think it's like the education trust. Something. I know he's definitely a chairman on the board of something, really, into the NAACP, and like parents -- and the Board of Education in Maryland. He's been getting a lot more involved in the community, and I think that that impulse and change in his life, when he made his career, change, he's been thinking a lot more personally about where he came from.

I also think that it's a lot to do with me and my brother. So, yeah. Like, us growing up, and sort of wondering, like, where are we from? Where did we come from? What's going on? And in response to a lot of questions. Like, in the -- for a while, I think I thought that my family was from, like my dad's side of the family was from Barbados, and it was only until like a couple of years ago that he was like, no, no, no, the Virgin Islands. And I was like, oh, I had no clue. So, yeah. It's just -- it's something that he's much more recently been sort of digging into to find out, after being asked a lot of questions. Yeah.

ALEX KELLY: So, could you talk a little bit about your upbringing and those questions that you and your brother may have had. Any memories about those, along the way. Like the, "Where do I come from?" kinds of questions?

ANNA ROBERTS: Yes. Definitely. So, of all the places that I listed in the beginning, all of the places that I grew up, they were mostly suburban, mostly white neighborhoods. And so, in general, our family looked a lot different than most of the other families that lived in the area. I definitely think that we were probably one of the only mixed families in -- definitely in upstate New York; and definitely Hudson, Massachusetts; and definitely in Larchmont, New York. Not as much in Philly, because we were in the city, and so there was more racial diversity there. And definitely in Maryland, where we are now.

But, basically, I remember, sort of -- I mean, there's a couple of memories, of, like, in -- this was in Larchmont, I remember, because I was around nine when we moved there. And I remember, like, my mom -- so, I was nine, my brother was three, at that point. And so, my mom would like, you know, [10:00] be taking us around, and we definitely got asked a couple of times if, like, she was our babysitter and not our mom, which was interesting. And I think that -- I don't know. But that's a little bit later.

But as far as, like, my upbringing is concerned, I think that my parents did a pretty good job of trying to sort of not even let my brother and I really know that we were -- that we were different than most of the families. Like just treating it as, like, this isn't really

something that should be a shock, or should -- I don't know, that we should be questioning the validity of, or something. So, I think that a lot of times in my -- or a lot of -- I remember specific incidents. And I don't remember it being like an experience, or a sort of veil that covered, or colored like my entire, like, upbringing or childhood, until I got to high school.

Like, I know that, in Hudson, I was 100% the only, like, you know, student of color in my classes in, I guess, where did I -- I went to kindergarten, first grade, then like half of second grade. And, like, I remember being in my second grade class, and being like, "Huh. OK." You know, like, sort of looking around and being like, I'm definitely not white. Because I -- because my mom was white, so I was like, I know I don't look exactly like her, but I'm still -- I don't know. So I definitely knew that.

And then, in second grade -- I spent half of second grade in Hudson, and then the second half in Philly, because my parents wanted to get me into this private, all-girls' school in Philly, because we -- initially, I think we had planned to stay in Philadelphia longer than we actually did. But we were only there for about a year and a half. So half of second grade, for me, all of third grade. And so, for half of -- the second half of second grade, I went to, like the city public school in the neighborhood, before they could get me into this private, all-girls' academy, or whatever, and it was 100% the first time that I had ever been in a class that wasn't, like 99% white. There was one -- I remember there was one white boy in my class, named Paul, and I remember him. He and I, would like -- we used to battle it out for, like, spelling bee winners, and so -- he beat me, I remember that, too. (laughter) Because I had just moved there, and the word was "Pennsylvania," and I didn't know that it had like an extra "i" at the end, like I wasn't -- I didn't -- I was seven, so whatever. But I remember that. I don't know. But yeah.

That was -- it was actually, it was a pretty diverse school. And it was just a completely different experience for me that I had not -- I just had not had that before, at all. And I don't know -- because I was seven years old, like I don't know if I'd necessarily have a

critical perspective of the way I was thinking about it when I was seven. But I certainly noticed a difference than, in, like central Massachusetts, for example.

But then, in third grade, I went to a different school, and suddenly, the composition of the class changed again, and in that school, there were, like -- I think it was eight -- there were two classes in each grade, and eighteen girls in each class. So it was really small. And there was one black girl, that I remember. But I -- it was like I noticed the difference, too, especially because I'd been in this other school in Philly, and I still lived in the same place. We still lived in the same house, and I still, like, went to all the same places. But suddenly, like, it was just completely different, it was a different group of people, and it was a private school that you had to pay a bunch of money to go to, so...

I mean, now, sort of looking back on that, I can tell that, like, I was in a completely different socioeconomic sphere, where, you know, obviously, when I was seven and eight years old, I had no clue that -- I didn't know that existed. And just, like -- yeah, just the school setting and the facilities were completely different. Whereas, like, this public school in the city was, you know, we had like a big, asphalt playground type of deal, with basketball hoops, and like hopscotch and foursquare, or whatever it's called. I don't remember, because Foursquare is, like, now, I don't know, it's an app. But whatever. That -- I don't know, there was a box thing. And the private school was like lush, green grass, and like, you know, red brick buildings with old, sort of, I don't know, like probably now, to me, would look more like a college campus than like an elementary -- than a K through 12.

So, yeah, I think that -- I think that my parents tried to just, like they tried to send me to -- tried to send me and my brother both to like, to good schools, but didn't necessarily, I think -- I think it made sense, as far as, like the trajectory of how I learned about all of this stuff. But didn't necessarily explain the difference to me, obviously, not when I was eight years old. [15:00] But -- maybe not obviously, but not when I was eight.

And then when I went to high school, high school was really -- because my middle school in Larchmont was, like, it was relatively diverse, but not -- but it was still in Westchester County, which is, like, a very wealthy county, and it was still mostly white. But then, when I went to high school, it was a little bit more diverse, racially, and socioeconomically. And it was one of the first times where people specifically would, like, look at me and identify me -- or not identify me, but ask me questions, because they didn't -- they couldn't tell, right?

And so -- I remember this very specifically. I was in, like, gym class, with, I remember in the locker room, you know. And a girl comes up to me, and she was, like, "I really like your hair." And I was like, "OK. What?" And she was like, "You're mixed, right?" And I was like, "What?" I didn't -- I just had never even necessarily identified myself as anything. And she's like, "I'm mixed, too." And she goes, "but my hair doesn't look like yours." And she's like, you know, just you know, taking her hair out, and like showing me, and she's like, "Look, it's, like, it's so much curlier than yours and it's this, and it's that, and the texture is different." And she's just saying this to me like I completely would be on the same wavelength, just because I was also mixed, and I was like, I really had no clue what she was talking about. It was a very -- it was a really interesting experience, and I will always remember that. Her name was Ashley. Like, we're not fr-- I don't know. I don't even know what her last name is anymore. But I remember her very specifically, because it was like, suddenly, she said something to me and, like, put a label on something that I was always like, I'm black and white. I don't know. And I would never -- I never necessarily -- I didn't necessarily put it together, as far as how I was going to present myself to people, until this particular time.

And so then, I got the question a lot of times, like, "What are you?" -- would be the way that it was, sort of, phrased. And I usually answered, like, my dad is black, my mom is white. Or I would say that, because I'd be like, oh, is that what you mean? So here, I'll tell you my, like, racial background. And then, after Ashley said that to me, I was like, OK. I guess I'm mixed. Or I guess I'm biracial. And I sort of started identifying with

that. But I'm not sure. Or saying that, but I don't know if I necessarily started identifying, because I was - I don't know, I was sort of like, well, I really do see myself as sort of like a combination of my parents.

And because we're very -- I mean it's very American. Like if my mom's grandparents, my great-grandparents, who immigrated here from Switzerland, but she has no connection to them, really, and grew up in like middle, mid-Pennsylvania, somewhere, but she knows very little about her heritage, and it wasn't like a language or anything was like passed down and continued with her. And then for my dad, like, coming -- as far as, like, you know, his great-great-grandparents, or whatever, were coming -- came to the US via the slave trade, and, like, don't necessarily have roots in another country. It's very -- I mean, it's pretty classically American, I think, in sort of like an, I don't know, an interesting way that I like to be like, "Oh. Uh." It sort of reveals certain things about being American. (laughter) It's not the -- it's not necessarily like the bootstraps type of story.

So Yeah. I think once I got to high school, and sort of had more people asking me questions, I talked to my parents a little bit about it. But I think the time where I started to be more critical in thinking about my identity and my upbringing and how my parents had sort of pitched all this stuff to me was definitely in college, and I would -- I was taking classes that were like focused on race and identity and history and gender, and you know, thinking about -- I went to Smith. And so, like, thinking about all that stuff. And that was where it was a little bit more solidified.

And I started to think about -- I don't know. I guess I started to think about -- I guess I'm getting into like a second question here, but yeah. I'm thinking -- I started to think a little bit about more how I could use certain, like, racial signifiers and identifiers without necessarily having to feel like a personal connection to that identity, very specifically, because I still feel very much connected to, like, my mom, my dad. I'm the two of them, as far as the way that I look. And the way that I identify, and the way that I see myself,

is, like a whole slew of things that can't be, sort of like, boiled down into like one particular word. And so, if it's helpful, [20:00] if someone asks me, like, what are you or where are you from, or what's your race, or what's this, or any number of questions, I can be, like, "Oh, I'm mixed." And I can say my mom is white and my dad's black. But now it means something a little bit more solidified than how I was thinking about it when I was fourteen in gym class. Yeah.

ALEX KELLY: So that must have been quite a transition, then, going from high school to college, where you were able to develop that critical -- that process. Can you talk a little bit more about that? Any moments when you kind of made that transition, that you remember?

ANNA ROBERTS: Yeah. So. Yeah, college was really interesting. College was good. I think that, initially, going in, I had -- I had an idea about what I wanted to study, and what I wanted to do. And I think that it changed in a very particular way, because I think that I was, sort of searching a little bit more for a history, or a connection to that history that I hadn't necessarily heard a ton about, growing up. And then, once I sort of like showed that interest, I was much more able to like talk to my dad and my mom about it, in, like, in a very intellectual way, but also, like, talking -- I mean, talking about it, because it did really -- related to our family very specifically.

So yeah, it started out, I think I wanted to do, like, psychology and English, and I was like, ah, this is exactly what I want to do. I'm just going to be a writer, and I'm going to study, like, personalities, and I was really excited about it. And then I took a -- and then I took an urban education course. And I took sociology, and all of a sudden, it was like -- *whssst* -- out the window. Like everything that I had thought I was going to do, I was just very -- yeah, I was -- then became much more set on sort of thinking about things sociologically and more anthropologically and really talking about education, but specifically in education, sort of racial disparities, socioeconomic disparities.

And then I started realizing, it's part of the reason why I -- in the questions before, I talked so much about school. Because school -- and here I am, in a grad school of

education. (laughter) So, but I started realizing that my parents were very deliberate about where we moved, and why moved, and how and like, or, I mean, a lot of the why we moved was because my dad was trying to, like, you know, climb the rungs of the marketing world. But the -- where we lived, and where I would -- where my brother and I went to school were, I mean, hand-picked. Like, very, very specific. And I know that, like, we've generally been -- I would consider my family like pretty solidly middle class. Excuse me, upper middle class, at times. And, like, we definitely lived in places -- especially when we were in Larchmont. Like we were renting a house. Because it's Larchmont, New York. It's in Westchester. It's very expensive. But my parents were, like, well, you need to go to Murray Ave, and you need to go to -- or a school in the Larchmont school system. Like we weren't going to go anywhere else, and they had vetted all the options, and figured out where we could go.

And so, I sort of think that starting to study -- I do think that starting to study education, and seeing certain disparities, and realizing that I was totally on like a different rung than a lot of the sort of cities and areas that I was studying, and I'm like reading about this in articles and books, and I was just, like, OK, there's a lot of stuff that I don't know. (laughter) And that was a very good realization. And I think that starting to talk about education led me much -- to be much more interested -- continuing to be interested in education. And also just super interested in history, and American history, very specifically. And I was taking a couple classes on sort of like Civil War era. Taking classes on native populations, and interactions that native populations and black populations had in sort of reconstruction, pre-Civil War, all this stuff, like, era, America, that I had no idea anything about, because they -- those are not the stories that get written about in the history books, for sure.

And so, in doing that, I actually had the experience, and the unique opportunity -- because my father is one of the smartest people that I think I know. He's very well-read, and a smart guy. And I was taking these classes, and I was telling him about the things that I was talking about, and he didn't know [25:00] a lot of the things that I was

suddenly telling him. And this was a really good sort of spur for us to talk about race in a different way than we'd ever talked about it. And I think that it was an interesting stepping stone, because it was sort of like zooming out a lot, and talking about a history of something, you know, in order to sort of then zoom in, and be like, "So, dad... What's going on? Like, how did you feel about -- how do you feel about this? Or how did you feel that you were -- you know, it was 19-- you know, '72, and you were living with your father and your white mother, and probably not a lot of people in your area were, like, living in families like that. And so, how did you feel about this, and either this?" And, like, I don't know, it sort of -- it was -- going through college, and sort of then thinking about race in a way that I hadn't thought about it before, as -- I don't know, it's just interesting that something that's, like, so much bigger than just my family, of course, and then being able to, sort of take that larger lens and then use that to sort of zoom in and talk -- sort of hear a little bit more about what my dad thinks about things, because he's a very critical person. (laughter) So yeah.

ALEX KELLY: Do you remember any of those conversations, specifically?

ANNA ROBERTS: Well, I remember, one of the biggest ones that we had, recently. Or, well, not necessarily recently, but -- now sort of everything has a bit of a racial lens to it. But during the time that -- was it a couple -- I guess a year ago, maybe, when Trayvon Martin was shot. That was, like, my dad was talking about that for a long time, and it was one of these, like, very specific moments, when he was like, OK, here is a perfect, like, really blatant example of how the way that we talk about this stuff is just deeply flawed. Like, as a larger society. And so, it was interesting.

I mean, he was one of those people, like, I'm -- he got really into Facebook. Which was, I don't know, I was in college, so I was like, what are you doing on Facebook? But a lot of people put pictures of, like, themselves in hoodies, and especially my dad. Like as a black man, he's like wearing a hoodie, and this whole thing, and he was, like, do I -- I'm dangerous now, because I'm wearing this thing. And I don't know, it was just a really -- it was very interesting, and compelling to see my dad so affected by something. Because he normally is, like, put together, and doesn't show that he's, like, upset, or doesn't show

that he's -- I mean, he thinks about these things, but he's a very funny, sarcastic person. So he'll make a bunch of jokes, and like, here is a time when he's just like, this is not even remotely OK. That, you know, that in this -- in this system that we have, like it's totally OK to just, like, shoot a kid for no reason, or because you're scared, or because there's this law that says if you feel threatened, then you can act in this particular way. And the way that it happens, in a very racially charged space.

And so, yeah, that was -- that was absolutely a conversation that he and I had, where I got to see a different part of him, where he was just like, OK, this is a very systematic, very deep-rooted problem, and sort of also just -- yeah, just have that connection with him, to really feel our place in that. And so, sort of the protection I think that I felt when I was younger, when we didn't talk about those things, necessarily, and my parents were just like, you are just like everybody else, and you're all good, and it's totally fine, and I was like, totally, yeah. And then, going through college and, like, learning a bunch of these -- learning a ton of new things and talking to him in a different way, like, sort of, it just built -- like built, absolutely, built a connection that I feel like I had with, like being mixed, and being -- yeah, just having -- growing a critical perspective and growing that portion of that connection to my identity in that way. Yeah.

ALEX KELLY: And could you talk about your mom a little bit, and maybe how she took part in those conversations, and what you remember of that?

ANNA ROBERTS: Yeah, definitely. She -- so, my mom is -- so, besides the fact that, like, I look like a combination of my parents, I definitely am a combination of their personalities. And so, my mother is very -- she's very organized, and she's very, like detail-oriented, and she's on-time, [30:00] and she -- but she's also, like, incredibly creative, and she's an artist. And she doesn't like to admit that she's an artist, and so, I hope she hears this, and I'll be like, she's an artist. (laughter) But she is. Like, she used to paint, and she, like, makes jewelry, and she just like does all these things, where she clearly is just, like, expressing some sort of like creative energy that, like, needs to get out.

And her family, I'm not nearly as close with her side of the family as I am with my dad's side of the family. They -- she grew up in York, Pennsylvania, and I'm pretty sure that she lived there her entire life, until she went to college, also in Pennsylvania. Then she was working at Penn State for a while, and she ended up in Rhode Island, where she met my dad. But she was very, like -- she always tells the story, about that she didn't know what a [bigdel?] was until she got to college, because it was like -- York, was just this, like, little, sort of, this little sort of community, where it was very conservative, like lots of -- yeah. Just really, yeah, conservative, and not very open. And her parents, also, weren't super open to other people that weren't like them. And so, her childhood was sort of, the way that she's talked about growing up, was definitely colored by the fact that she always felt kind of out of place.

She has an older sister. And, like, now they're close, and she and her mom are pretty close. But as far as when she was little, like, she was definitely itching to get out. She was trying to figure out how to leave, but didn't necessarily know how to do that, because of the fact that I think that she grew up in such, like a small community. And so, when she went to Rhode Island, and she met my dad, and she -- yeah, like that was just crazy. Because she is, like, you know, this little blonde girl from York, Pennsylvania, and she, like, goes to Rhode Island, and she starts dating, like, a black guy. And her parents, like, they, like, were kind of freaking out about it. Like they were not cool with it at all. And they didn't come to the wedding. Like they really were very against it. I mean, her sister came.

But so, her perspective, as far as these conversations are concerned, is really interesting, because I think that, like, she has love and loyalty to her family, but she knows that, at the time -- I mean, now -- I mean, I talk to my grandmother on my mom's side, and my grandfather has passed away. But, like, the families are now -- everything seems fine, and I don't think that I ever saw that tension or ever knew, really, that that tension existed until much more recently. Probably like within the last, oh, like five or six years. I knew that my grandparents on my mom's side didn't come to my parents' wedding, but I did not -- I --

because everything was OK, as far as the relationship that I have with my grandmother, like, and my aunt, I never really thought anything of it, because I was like, all right, it's cool now. Like, everything's fine. But I think that my -- I think that my mother feels sometimes a little bit, like, conflicted about it, because she knows that this was obviously something that was, like, really, like, you know, painful for her. It was like, her parents not coming to her own wedding. But now she, like, is very close with them, and like wants them to be a part of our lives, and they are. And so I think that, most of the time, she kind of lets -- she kind of like lets my dad, like, take the reins, as far as, like conversations about race and these types of things, and what she does, a lot of times, like we've talked about it -- she'll defend -- she much -- she, sort of like, she comes at it as, like, individual people take their own time to grow and adjust.

And so, as far as, like, talking about my own family's structure, she is very clear on that, where she was like, your grandmother -- she was, like, all right. It took her time. And she -- But my mom also maintains -- she sort of said that, like, when I was born, that's when my grandmother really came around. And my grandfather on my mom's side passed away when I was like three years old. But when I was born, like, both my grandmothers were there, and everything. Whatever. But she basically was saying, like, it was -- that she kind of, like, looked at me as a child, and was like, this is a child. Like, I don't know how my mom -- this is my mom saying, right? She's like, "I don't really know how anyone can look at, like, a little baby and really be prejudiced," or feel that sort of thing, if they want to, like, love their grandchild. And so, that, she said, was really when stuff changed. And like, I mean, I don't remember him. [35:00] I kind of remember what he looks like. But we went and visited my grandparents on my mom's side at least a couple times before my grandfather passed away. And I'm sure that those visits were probably contentious in certain ways. Like I don't know exactly, I have not asked my mother about how those visits were. But I wonder -- I mean, yeah, I kind of wonder if they may have been sort of wrought with a little bit of tension because of that history.

But since then, I mean, my grandmother and my aunt on my mom's side, like, come and stay with us all the time. And they, like, babysit -- they used to babysit me and my brother when we were little, and my parents went away, and stuff like that. I mean, they were like -- it's been -- it's been very good since -- all of the tension happened before we were born. But I don't know. I think that she sort of -- I think she -- yeah. I think she defers to my dad on a lot of it, because I think she feels a little bit like she's sort of been on the outside of that, or, she's been, like, the median point between some points of tension. And yeah. That's what I think. Yeah.

ALEX KELLY: So, what do your parents tell you about their meeting story?

ANNA ROBERTS: Oh, my gosh, they don't tell me anything about it. (laughter) They -- they let it work. Like they were working at AT&T in Rhode Island, I think. Or -- yeah. At AT&T. Like you'll -- I don't -- I actually am not sure. Just that that they met at work, and they started dating. And then they moved, and they worked at a different company together. And it seemed very -- it actually seems very, like transactional to me, sometimes. Where it was like, we met, we went on dates, then he asked her to marry her -- or asked her to marry him, and that was that. I don't know. (laughter) Yeah. I think. I do remember my mom telling me about when she met my dad's family, which was interesting.

Yeah, so as far as, like -- as far as them meeting each other, like, I don't know. They just, they -- *prchh* -- something happened, I'm not sure. And, but -- so my mom, being from York, Pennsylvania, and hadn't had a ton of, like, I don't know, like didn't necessarily feel like world-traveled, or things like that. My dad's side of the family -- my grandmother was a teacher, for, like, 50 years. Everybody went to college. Most like -- my aunt went to Barnard. My dad went to U Chicago, and then he went to Columbia. And my aunt went to Barnard, then Columbia. Everybody -- and she's got an EdD, and like, my other aunt was, like studying to be a doctor, and like, every-- my mom said that going to meet with his family felt like she was in this sort of realm of, like, incredibly educated people, and she was just like out of her element. And that, yeah, just --

And the house. Because the way that they used to live in this house on the Lower East Side -- my dad grew up there -- once my grandmother and grandfather got married, they moved into this house on the Lower East Side that, I think my -- I think my grandmother bought it for, like, \$35,000 in, like, 1930. I don't know if 1930. But like, 1950-something, I don't know. And they had it for 50 years. Like, crazy. You can imagine the price difference. It was, like, insane. And so, they went to that house. And it's like a town house, I think, at that time. I don't know exactly how the apartments were set up, but it was at least, like, two or three floors, and just, like a big staircase, a piano, and, like, wide, exp-- like just not what she was used to. Not what my mother was used to at all.

And so I know that she definitely felt intimidated, a little bit, by my dad's side of the family. And especially because here is my grandmother and grandfather, who were an interracial couple. This was -- I guess, it was maybe, 19-- like '80. They got married in 1980, so I'm thinking they probably met a couple of years before that. So it wasn't, like - - it wasn't the '60s, like when my dad was growing up, or whatever. But I think having my grandmother on my dad's side being as opinionated as she is, and holding grudges the way that she does, and she'll probably -- she'd be mad at me, if I said that, but she does. And her being married to a black man, and she's like, I do what I want. I don't care. And her whole family there supporting that whole -- that situation. And then my mother, who's basically coming by herself, and sort of -- she's sort of like this lone person, like coming into this family that appears [40:00] to be so well-educated, intellectual, and, like, liberal, and open, and all this stuff. And I just think that she probably -- she probably was pretty overwhelmed by that. But yeah, sort of, I think that -- yeah. The whole, like, the merging of families didn't ever really happen, because of that. Yeah.

ALEX KELLY: So, what were your -- what was your parents' wedding like, as they've told you?

ANNA ROBERTS: Well, there's some awesome pictures. But it was at the house on the Lower East Side. And so, my mom's dress was pink. And she still has it, and she had, like a little hat, with a little veil. And, basically, from the pictures and from what I can tell, and from what people have said about it, like it was just -- it was a lovely, beautiful, like, little

ceremony. But it must have been -- as far as -- I don't think my mom wants to -- like, she's nev-- she and I haven't talked about in detail, because I don't think she necessarily wants to go into the fact that only her sister was there.

And so, it's kind of -- yeah, like my dad's family. He's got -- so he's got, like two sisters and a brother, and then, like my -- his sister's husband, and, like a bunch -- I don't know. It's just -- and family friends. And, like bigger, just general bigger family. And the way that my dad's side of the family works, like the family friends sort of feel like -- I don't know. We've got family friends on their side, that like, call, like, their kids my cousins, but we're not actually related. But it feels like everybody -- everyone sticks around for a long time. So, they're like, loud, they're sarcastic. They make fun of everybody, and they're just like a sort of loud, boisterous group. And my mom and her sister are not as much like that. They're a little bit quiet, they're a little bit more subdued. And yeah. So I think that they're wedding was probably a ton of fun and crazy, and, like, having my dad's sisters, like do my mom's hair and her makeup and stuff for her, because I know that's exactly what happened, was probably hilarious. Because they're just, like, they're like the loudest, craziest people ever. In a very -- in a good way. (laughter) But yeah. I think their wedding was definitely an event, and... When my grandmother reflects on it -- like I asked her about it, I don't know, a while ago, and she was like, "It was beautiful." And she really -- she liked it. So that was good.

ALEX KELLY: Nice. I want to hear more about your brother. If you can talk about your brother for a little bit. Tell me about him, as a person, and also a little bit about your relationship, going through all of those transitions in schooling, and talking about it.

ANNA ROBERTS: Definitely. So, my brother is awesome. He is probably, like, one of the coolest 16-year-olds that I know. He is so cool. Right now, he is a rising senior, and he - - in high school. And he is applying to colleges, and doing all that stuff, and he is super-interested in engineering and design -- like product design. And he -- and cinematography and filming, and video production and all this stuff. And he's got, like, a YouTube channel that gets a bunch of hits all the time. And him and his friends are always out, like, filming different videos, and, like, creepy storyboards, and they've got

all these different effects. Like he always post these things on his Facebook, and I'm looking at them, and I'm like, how do you do this? How did you figure this out? He also has been designing watches. And there is a company, which the name -- the name I can't remember. It's like Tokyo something. I don't know what it is. But, you can, like, submit watch designs to them. And he created a watch design that is like a slot machine. So like every time you have to, like, [look?] down to get the number, because it's a slot machine. And you have one that was, like -- it looked like, sort of like a wooden bracelet type of thing, but there were numbers on there. So you had a digital watch. I don't know. He's very -- he's really creative, and he's really, really smart. And actually, I think him and my -- they're coming soon, to, like, look at art schools, because he's definitely -- he was on the engineering track, and was looking at stuff like that, but now I think it's more of a design track, so we'll see. But he's funny. He's got very dry humor. He has a super low voice, and as soon as that changed, I, like, couldn't tell if it was my dad or him answering the phone, if I call home, which was -- which is great. But yeah. And he also -- I think he's got a much better sense of the way that race works than I did when I was his age. [45:00] And, I don't know, just because of social media, and things I've seen that he's, like, posted online, I'm like, "What, Max?" But, yeah. He's just -- he's just a really, really smart kid. And he's going to -- I don't know, he's going to invent something or design something or do something really cool, and just, I don't know. He's got -- he's got time to do that. I can't, like -- can't put too much pressure on him, but he's really awesome.

When we were -- so, we're six years apart. So, growing up, it was always sort of, like, just at the age where, like we don't necessarily connect on, like, interests. When we were really young, I was, like, excited about having a little brother. Initially, I did want a sister, and he knows that. But I was, like, but -- he was awesome. Like we used to just, like, hang out, and like, play games, and he was super into video games. And he still is, but not as much as he was when he was younger, and like we would just hang out in the basement of our house for, like, days, and just play, like racing games and all this stuff. But then, as I got into high school, I definitely was a little bit brattier, and I did not want to hang

out with my, like eight-year-old brother anymore. Or, I did not have time for his friends. And so, throughout high school, and then I went off to college -- and I was in college in Massachusetts, which was like seven, eight hours away from my home in Maryland. And every single summer of college I spent in New York, because I've always -- I just wanted to be here. My -- since my dad's side of the family is here, I always stayed with them. But you know, I just -- I always wanted to be in New York, and I knew I didn't want to be in suburban Maryland, so I left.

And so, right now, we're not as close as I would like to be. But growing up, I think that all of the moves, for me, like, I got used to it. I got used to the moves. But I think that Max had a much easier time adapting, because by the time we got to Maryland, like he was only eight. And so, he then spent, like, two years of elementary school, all of middle school, and like now, most of high school in the same place. And so I think for him, like, the moves were much less jarring. But for me, you know, sort of moving in -- once we moved to Larchmont, that was the place where I sort of was like, all right, I'm cool with this. I'm down. I have really good friends here. I was really excited. And then -- and doing -- and middle school is always weird, just, you know, puberty and adolescence. Middle school is interesting. And so, I think when I was in middle school in Larchmont, I was probably much more preoccupied with myself and figuring out what was going on with me.

And then in high school, like he -- we moved to Maryland, and I was suddenly, like, OK, I'm in high school. Everybody in Maryland, basically -- not everybody, but a much larger trend was sort of -- that everyone had already been in school for the whole time, like had done the elementary school, middle school, all together. And so I'm now all of a sudden inserted. Ninth grade, like, I have to start this whole new process, and I don't know anybody. And so I think that our relationship, as far as the transitions were concerned, like, I was very concerned socially, like what I was going to be doing. Whereas I think because he was younger, it sort of -- it ended up working out a little bit -- I think it's easier to make friends in elementary school than it is in high school.

So I think as far as, like, our relationship, over those transitions, like I think that what my view of it is that I sort of like took a step back from that. And now, I've been trying much more, like after the whole, like high school, college and me just wanting to leave Maryland, and like, being angsty and, like, pissed off at my parents that we moved before high school. I'm, like, trying to get back a little bit more of that relationship with him, because I know that six years is kind of a long time. But -- it was like a long space to be apart. But yeah. I think -- I think he's, like, an awesome kid. And he's like such a baller, and he's going to be awesome at life. And I need to, like, get to know him better than I currently do. So that's kind of, yeah.

ALEX KELLY: So you now live in Brooklyn.

ANNA ROBERTS: No, I live in Harlem now.

ALEX KELLY: In Harlem now.

ANNA ROBERTS: Yeah, yeah.

ALEX KELLY: OK. Can you talk a little bit about your -- have you had any connection to Brooklyn, coming to New York?

ANNA ROBERTS: No, actually. Yeah. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

ALEX KELLY: That's a Lower -- with the Lower East Side --

ANNA ROBERTS: Lower East --

ALEX KELLY: -- is kind of like your initial - your initial draw.

ANNA ROBERTS: Yes. Definitely, Lower East Side. Like, I was actually out to dinner there last night, and I was like, oh my God. [50:00] I really wish I lived here again. But, yeah, the Lower East Side is all of my -- sort of all of my childhood holiday memories, forever. Thanksgiving is like the biggest thing in my family. We're not very religious. We don't really celebrate anything at all. So Thanksgiving is, like, a solid time when everybody can kind of like come together and just, like have a meal. And -- yes. And so, besides the relatively problematic nature of Thanksgiving, as a holiday, yeah, we try to look at it as, everybody from the family needs to show up to one place on this day. And yeah, so sort of, like, all Thanksgivings, all, like Winter holidays. And in the summer, always were spent on the Lower East Side. And my dad grew up there his entire life, basically, besides the short stint in Queens, when he was younger. And the first summer after

college, I lived downtown with my aunt and uncle, and my cousin, and my grandmother. And, yeah, I don't know. What more -- so what more about the Lower East Side? I'm sorry that I don't live in Brooklyn, I know it's Brooklyn Historical Society, but I suppose --

ALEX KELLY: Well, and not even just the Lower East Side, but I guess your initial kind of move, back to New York. If you could talk about that a little bit, and why you decided to make the move. And I know that you said you had a kind of a draw to New York, over the summers for a little while. So why did you decide to come back?

ANNA ROBERTS: Well, so, I think that -- so, always, we -- my family, wherever we moved to, we were always, mostly always in the suburbs. Except for when we were in Philly. But that was only for a year and a half, and I was, like eight years old, so I don't -- I don't know, it was -- it wasn't as big of a connection to that place. But the energy of the city, and sort of the, just the diversity, but in many, many, many senses of that word. So, like, different languages, the way that people are doing a thousand things at once. Like, there's never a boring moment. I mean, sort of your classic, like, oh, ah, I love New York, because of these things. But also, it kind of always felt like -- it was always an exciting trip. So wherever we were coming from. We were, like, driving from Massachusetts, or wherever, to come into the city to see my family. It was always, like, a very thrilling sort of adventure. And I think I just found myself really fascinated with the amount of people and things, and all this stuff going on, and I wanted to be around that and a part of that, because I definitely didn't get it in suburban wherever-we-were-living. And I wanted to be closer that sort of excitement. And, I don't know, sort of it seemed, sort of -- yeah. It just, it seemed, sort of more exciting and cooler and more fun than anything that I've been doing, and wherever the parents and my family were living.

And so, as soon as I was able to -- so, after freshman year of college, I basically was looking at -- I just wanted to figure out if I could do it. I wanted to see if I could live in New York. And my family was still living in the Lower East Side, and there was a basement apartment. And my aunt and uncle said, yeah, you can live down there. And my parents said, if you find a job, you can move there. But if you don't find a job, you

have to come back to Maryland over the summer, because you can't just go there and live there for no reason. You need to make money. And so, I was like, "All right, I'm going to go." So I went, over the weekend, I got a bus ticket and I went over the weekend, and I just like walked around to a bunch of restaurants with my résumé, which had said that I was a camp counselor, and like a cheerleader. And I was like, I'm energetic, and personable, and I have worked around people. Hire me at your restaurant. And somebody did. (laughter)

So I worked at the Bowery bar, on, like, Fourth Street and Bowery, and, like, lived on Second Street, in my family's like little basement apartment. And I had a blast. I had like the most fun that I'd ever had in a summer. I was 18. I didn't have any parents around. I was thrilled. My aunt and uncle usually -- they have a house in the Catskills, and they would go there on the weekends and during the week, because my aunt's a teacher, and my uncle is a photographer [55:00] and director, and he makes his own schedule. And obviously my cousin was out of school. So they would just go up, and I was by myself in this apartment. And I was, you know, I had random shifts at this place, and I didn't have to pay rent. Like, it was a dream. It was beautiful.

And so, after that, that 100% sort of solidified it for me, and I was like, well, I did it then, and I could do it again. And so, the next summer, I basically did the same -- I basically did the same thing every summer for four years. But, well, the second summer, I got an internship, and then the next summer, I was volunteering, teaching SAT prep classes, and also working at a coffee shop, and then this past summer, I was working here. So, yeah. So, I yeah, I just enjoyed being in the city so much. A ton of my friends from school were in the city. In Larchmont -- Larchmont's so close to New York, or close to the city, a lot of my -- my best friend from middle school, like she was in Larchmont, and so I would want to come back and visit her. And just the draw to New York. Middle school, or elementary and middle school in Larchmont being my favorite place that we'd ever lived, because of the people and the friendships that I created during that time. That was definitely a huge draw to the state. And then the family connection to the city, and the

general sort of fascination with the city. And the just incredible -- incredibly fun, and, like, lucky, and privileged experience that I had the first summer after college, being able to work and live, and yeah, that solidified it for me. I knew I wanted to be here for sure.

ALEX KELLY: And I know that you haven't actually lived in Brooklyn, but you've gone into the borough, and probably have friends there.

ANNA ROBERTS: Yes.

ALEX KELLY: Can you just talk a little bit about your -- any kind of Brooklyn connection, and what, maybe even what it felt like the first time you went to Brooklyn.

ANNA ROBERTS: Oh, totally. So, this past year has actually been a super awesome introduction to Brooklyn for me. I honestly have not ventured into Brooklyn nearly as much as I wanted to and should have, beforehand. But this year, two of my really good friends from college moved to Park Slope, and she -- one of my friends, she really wanted to be in Brooklyn. Like, she was down. So she was, like subletting this tiny, tiny little room in Park Slope, like right next to the food co-op, just so that she could be in the neighborhood that she wanted to be in. And then a couple of months ago, her and a friend of mine ended up like getting an apartment there. And so it's just been -- it's been nice, like, going to visit them. And then, people that I work with have had, like, or have -- and live there. Her apartment's nice and I've spent a lot -- I have spent very many, like, full weekends in Brooklyn this year. And sort of around Park Slope, Prospect Heights, like that sort of neighborhood. Those neighborhoods especially. And yeah, I think I didn't necessarily know -- there's just a ton of -- I mean, I don't know, there's just a ton of, like, articles and silly things about like hipsters in Brooklyn and Williamsburg, and like all this stuff. And that was, in college, I think that was my sort of like misconception of all the like rich, historical, awesome stuff that Brooklyn has to offer. And being like, Williamsburg, like I went to Beacon's Closet once, like that was like my experience of Brooklyn before this summer. (laughter) And that was bad.

But my favorite thing, I think, about the whole area, is just, I love, like it doesn't feel -- it feels like its own separate thing to me. Where, like, Manhattan has a particular feel, like here we are, we're in Chelsea, right? And it's like these tall, brick buildings. I mean, not

super tall. In mid-town you go, and there's taller ones. But, like the streets are narrow, and like stuff is sort of -- you're sort of bombarded with things. Like depending on what section you're in. And I don't mind that. But there's something about -- especially my friend's neighborhood in Park Slope that I really, really enjoy. Like wider streets and trees, and, like, it's sort of, more -- it's just, I don't know. More like, individual, not necessarily full of chains and other things. And I think it felt -- I remember going down there once, and one morning, after, like I had stayed over at my friend's house, and we took a walk the next morning. And it just sort of felt like -- *whhhh* -- like you could breathe a little bit more. I don't know how else to describe that. [01:00:00] I don't know, I just really, really enjoy Brooklyn, and I --

Actually, this year, I'm looking -- actually I'm looking at a position that would be in Fort Greene, and so, I'm just -- I'm excited to sort of have an opportunity to learn more about the borough, and go there more often. Because working at a non-profit, you get your nine-to-six, nine-to-seven, -eight. And it takes away a ton of time sometimes from like sort of exploring neighborhoods, and so, yeah. I don't know. I enjoy -- I like Brooklyn a lot now. But I haven't ventured farther out, which I need to do.

ALEX KELLY: Lots of places to go in New York, for sure.

ANNA ROBERTS: Yes, definitely.

ALEX KELLY: So, I'm just thinking about your whole history of transitions and moves, and all of the different places that you've been in your life -- that you've lived, in your life. Can you talk about, kind of, where your next transition is? Where do you see it being?

ANNA ROBERTS: Yeah. Well, I absolutely have, like a fantasy of being able to move back to the Lower East Side. But, so -- I have a couple ideas. And, because the longest I've really ever lived in one place is five years, and that was in Larchmont -- but that was also, it wasn't necessarily independent, because that was with -- that was my parents' house. And so, I really enjoy Harlem, at the moment. I really like living there.

The only other city that I could see myself feasibly going to right now, is actually New Orleans. And I have a friend that lives down there, and she loves it, and I visited her a

couple of times. And every time I go, it just grows on me more and more and more. There's something about, like, there's a slowness. It slows down, and it's very -- it's really nice. And there's also, like a ton of, like, culture and history, and just like sort of an energy down there. Like, I mean -- well, I've been for Mardi Gras. That was exciting. That was last year. But before then, I was there in, like, October. And nothing was really going on that particular weekend, but it's really interesting to be in a place where most people that you talk to just, like, genuinely love the place that they live.

And I think in New York, not for, maybe -- not everybody, but I mean, I just -- people complain about it all the time. Even though you want to live here, and you love living here, like there are just things where you're like, Oh, my God, the subway this morning, whatever. Or that grate smells like this, or something. Like there are just little things about New York that people complain. I saw this Onion article that was hilarious, that was like, "Eight million New Yorkers suddenly realize they hate this city," or something like that. But there's just a different -- I don't know, there's sort of a different vibe in New Orleans of sort of a lot of pride and serious love and roots for that city. Which I think would be interesting.

But I don't know. Now that I'm here -- now that I'm in New York, if I could actually bring myself to make another move, and sort of -- it's definitely been my aspiration to live here, since I can remember. Of all the places that anyone's ever asked me, like, where you want to live when you grow up, or whatever? And I would just be like, I'm going to live in New York. I'm definitely doing that. And, I mean, just the fact that right after college, a lot of people are like, oh, I'm going to spend some time at home, see what's going on. And I immediately was like, nope. I'm moving right now. So yeah, possibly New Orleans. That would be okay. But at the moment, I'm thinking, I guess right now, I'm only ever -- I'm only actually really thinking about a year in advance. That's kind of how I think about things. But yeah, Harlem for now. Could see myself moving to Brooklyn or a different part of Manhattan. Maybe Queens. I don't know. (laughter) Yeah. But I think I want to stay in New York for the next couple years, for

sure. New Orleans would be -- that would be, like a pretty -- that would be like a heavy move. That would be like, I'd need to make a commitment to that. And I don't know if I can. So yeah.

ALEX KELLY: So do you have anything that you want to add to the conversation that I did not ask you about?

ANNA ROBERTS: Oh boy.

ALEX KELLY: Anything that kind of -- maybe as we were talking, you kind of wanted to go back to, or anything that never was brought up.

ANNA ROBERTS: I think -- I mean, I don't know. I think I have -- only if it gets, like, remixed into part of the other conversation we did. I think that part of the reason I was excited [01:05:00] to do this, like contribute to this project, is because I was thinking that -- I was, like, listening to other stories from the website as well. And I was thinking about, like, the fact that, as far as like my heritage is concerned to, like, other countries, or other sort of spaces that are not American, like I don't necessarily have that. But I do think that, like, my family's structure is relatively interesting, for a lot of reasons. And I -- I don't know. I guess I was sort of thinking, just like, well, I don't know, actually. I more have a questions, like I want to know about other families that are kind of structured like mine, where, like, that's sort of what I'm hoping comes out of this meeting. Because I don't really know if I've ever actually -- like, I really haven't met any other people that I'm like well, this sort of like mixed-race Brady Bunch type of deal, where it's like -- I don't know, like puzzle piece of family members, as opposed to like parents, versus, I don't know, sort of like a married -- divorce type of situation. I don't know. I don't really know where I'm going with that. It's sort of -- yeah, I think. I guess that's probably it. That's not really anything to add. I don't know about that piece of it. But, I don't know. I might have to think about it a little.

ALEX KELLY: So it seems like there's like a connection piece. Like a piece of connecting your story to other people's stories.

ANNA ROBERTS: Yeah. Definitely. I wrote a short piece for Smith's alumni quarterly, like two springs ago. And it was about, sort of my racial identity. I don't know, it was like 50 words, or like 700 words. But it posted on their Facebook, and it spurred like a little

mini, like Facebook comment thing. And it was just really interesting, that whole sort of idea of having other people weigh in, and being like, this is really interesting, this was cool, or, like, oh, I thought about this for myself. Sort of having a space to talk, and then suddenly, like, going into other spheres, and then people being able to say, OK, I can relate to this or that, and then other conversations building off of that. And that's something I'm just generally interested in, in life. And so, being able to contribute to something like that is really cool. But yeah, that's part of the reason why I think that this project is awesome, because, like, going through and listening to this oral history, yeah, people can just sort of connect in different ways. I don't know. Maybe hear a story that they wouldn't necessarily hear. Because I don't know -- like I don't know, personally how many people I've told about the structure of my family until they ask, because it doesn't necessarily come up in everyday conversation. And so, yeah, being able to hear other stories, like, about how people's families work, and where they come from and who they are, is -- that's cool. It's like an intimate, interesting thing that you don't necessarily get all the time.

ALEX KELLY: Yeah.

ANNA ROBERTS: That's cool.

ALEX KELLY: And how was it for you, listening to the other stories that you did listen to on the website?

ANNA ROBERTS: It was -- yeah, it was really nice. It was really interesting. Well, it's sort of part of the reason why I -- I was listening, and then I was like, oh, mine is kind of different. And then it was like, I don't know if it necessarily fits, but OK. (laughter) But I thought it was really -- I think it's like a really beautiful opportunity to be able to do that. And I think it's -- I don't know, it's pretty inspiring to sort of go and listen and say, like, OK, well, if people are confident and ready and able to talk about who they are and where they come from and different things about their life, like I want to be able to do that. That would be really cool. Yeah.

ALEX KELLY: Any other questions? Anything that you want to bring up?

ANNA ROBERTS: I don't think so. (pause) No. I think -- the only other thing that I have is, like, the main -- so, like the most -- I think the thing that sticks for me, is sort of like the

family kind of drama surrounding the fact -- like surrounding my parents' marriage, which is very interesting. But I think it also kind of gets into some details that I know that my family wouldn't be, like, too excited if I, like, revealed too many things. But I think that it's an interesting example. And for me, it's like, as a product of their marriage, like, my -- so my family is sort of like mixed in these various ways, where it's like my grandmother is, like, a white Jewish woman, and my grandfather [01:10:00] is a black man. But they didn't have children together. And so, like, my parents are the only ones out of the family that actually, like, got married and had kids together. And me and my brother are the only, like, mixed kids in the family. And most of the rest of the family is white. And so -- and, yeah. So it's sort of this -- I don't know. Like it's sort of an interesting -- I think it's just an interesting -- well, also, my -- now that I think about it, too, my uncle's brother, my uncle's step-brother... So, OK. Wait, I've got to do the family tree thing really quick.

So we've got my grandmother, and my grandfather, and my dad. And then his brother, Scott, who is like my -- also my grandfather's son. Biological son. And then my grandmother, and her two daughters, Laurie and [Kathy?]. And then my aunt Laurie's husband, George. His mother, who was a, like, white German woman. And then his stepfather was a black man. And he had a son, who's my uncle's, like step-brother, I guess, or half-brother, or something. And I'm not exactly sure. I met him recently. And he is also married to -- and so, he's married to a white woman, and his kids are mixed. But we don't really know each other, because that's, like -- I mean, I've met them once, like last year? Two years ago. But we're not super close. But it's like, that's still a family connection, and basically like all -- actually, like pretty much all of the marriages in my family have been sort of like interracial marriages. My dad's brother -- his partner, Mark, is white. They don't have kids, though. And then, my aunt Kathy was once married to a black man, but not anymore. So, I don't know.

That's sort of like the entire family is sort of like that. But then, it is that sort of like, the odd thing is that I hadn't actually really thought about it in that way until I said it out

loud, but the fact that me and my brother are like the only kids -- mixed kids in the family, besides Ben, my uncle George's brother's kids. (laughter) But we don't know them very well, and they live in California. So it's like, that connection, we've sort of always been, like, all right, Anna and Max, like you guys. And you know, my parents, Brian and Janice, and like... I've never felt like -- I don't know.

We talk about race in my family a bunch, because my -- like my grandmother will say stuff, where she'll be like, well, I'm black, we're all black, everybody's black. I don't know. And so, in sort of like an attempt to be as inclusive as possible. And then, like, my aunt and uncle will say to my cousin, who's like -- he's got red hair. And no one else, really, in the family has red hair. So we make fun of him for that, a little bit, but like, they -- like on his college applications, because like the whole family is sort of this mixed bunch. And on his college applications, like my uncle was like, well, you're not really white. And he's like, you come from this family where you've got so many people. He's like, it's not really accurate to just say this, because it's not going to be -- it's not going to reflect, like, the composition of your family and the fact that you've got cousins and uncles and whatever. And like not every-- it's -- the way -- if you look at my aunt, and uncle, and my cousin, and my grandmother -- her mother -- like, you might never assume anything else. You're just like, oh, Italian Jewish family in New York. They live in Harlem now, so I don't know. And I just -- yeah, I think... I don't exactly know how I want to -- what I want to say about that, besides the fact that it is. And that, I don't know, it's an interesting -- it's an interesting combination of people. And yeah. Yeah, I think that's it. Cool.

ALEX KELLY: Well, thank you so much for sharing your story. I'm going to press Stop.

END OF AUDIO FILE