

Interviewer : All right, so this will be my interview for Alex Tran for my ethnic studies class for mrcool. Today I have my interview. please introduce yourself.

My name is Phi Tran.

Interviewer: And how long have you lived in the area?

Interviewee: I have lived in Washington state now for like 14 years.

Interviewer: And where did you live?

Interviewee: I lived in California before.

Interviewer: And where in California would it have been?

Interviewee: I grew up in Sacramento.

Interviewer: And would you say that's a place that holds special sentiment towards yourself or holds a special place, either ethnically or personally to you?

Yeah. I have a lot of family still living down there. And, you know, it's a place that I grew up. So, you know, I have a lot of fond memories there.

Interviewer: And you did graduate from California?

Interviewee: of course. Yes. No, I actually graduated from a high school in Washington state, I moved up here in my senior year of high school.

Interviewer: All right, so it seems like you spent most of your schooling in California. Would you say that it was a little bit different from your last year in Washington from your verse 12-11 years in California?

Interviewee: Absolutely I feel like my high school or my kid through eleven was pretty normal school and stuff like that, but when I moved here I did running start my senior year. So I did Community College. For my last year of school.

Interviewer: I'm mainly gonna focus more on the 1st 11 years. How would you describe the experience that you kind of went through or you just lived along with throughout your first eleven years of schooling?

Interviewee: Well, my family and I, we moved around a lot, so. You know, we we spent time in Sacramento. We spent time in San Jose. We spent time in Oakland briefly, and then we ultimately settled down a little bit in Elk Grove. So that's where I actually lived the longest. Um. But I feel like school was pretty normal.

Interviewer: Did you say that you weren't like, ever like put out against or like ostracized in your schooling? Or anything you felt like you just fit in or you know.

Interviewee: So uh, I went to Sheldon High School and that's in Elk Grove. And UM, I would say like. It was pretty diverse. You know, there was a lot of, there was a predominantly white kids, but the Asian and people of color and you know those populations, we are actually it was pretty diverse. So I never really felt. Different.

Interviewer: And you did go to college, correct?

Interviewee: Correct.

Interviewer: Did you ever think that it was just different from schooling in different grade level? So you did go to school in California and Washington briefly, but then to everything feel like it changed when you went to college. Like there's less. Something happening or just a different experience overall?

Interviewee: Yeah, I feel like Community College, so I did Community College before I went to UW and uhm. You know, Community College was nice just because the classes were smaller. I was taking classes that was more geared towards my interests, which was a lot of fun for someone you know in high school, I feel like you're kind of forced to take some classes, while in college you have free range of what you wanna do. Free range of, what kind of classes do you wanna take you know, what your interests are and so uhm, I enjoyed my time in college.

Interviewer: Could you ever describe a point where you felt like? You were like, culturally or identically, you know, at a disadvantage from your peers, either in any through any grade of schooling.

Interviewee: So not in school that I ever felt like that. You know, I was fortunate enough to go to any program that I did actually was very diverse. I would say that when I went into my major um social work, I experienced. I was one of maybe 10 that was a person of color and my class was probably about 100 a 110 people and so. I guess I never really felt. Yes, these people are, you know, the nice part is that we all were there for a common goal. We all had common interests. And that's the reason why we chose that field. But yeah, I guess I did feel like. A little bit different than everyone else. 'cause. Like I said, I was in a group of maybe only like 10 other color people there.

Interviewer: Do you feel like you or those ten people ever were disadvantaged from your more homogeneous part of your class? That felt like maybe degrading or, you know, like? May be disheartening in any way.

Interviewee: You know, I think that that came up. I personally didn't feel like. Like that, but I've heard that other kids were saying that. The colored kids were sticking together and but I don't feel like we did that on purpose. I think it was a matter of we were just comfortable together and so we naturally grouped together, but it wasn't to say that I didn't have friends or I didn't have white friends in my program.

Interviewer: Do you think that you ever experience any discrimination just because of that experience or anything of the such?

Not me personally. I was very fortunate enough to not experience that, but. You know, it's not to say that other people haven't.

Interviewer: I see and do you think ethnically or identically or you know being yourself, you would have maybe gone back and changed. Maybe how things were going that way. 'cause seems like that big homogeneous part of your class didn't really bully you, but they did seem to like, maybe call it out. Which is definitely not OK, but do you think maybe you or your colored the colored group that they were talking about maybe could have gone back done something? To fend themselves or something.

Interviewee: Well, you know, I don't think that we were angry about it, which was nice. You know, it never. They never said, you know, the people who were saying that never said anything like that to us or at least to our faces. But you know, we did kind of feel like I felt like. At least some of the people that I was hanging out with, you know, they did just felt like they didn't belong, you know, like that that the other students just really didn't have the same understanding of being different like we did. And, you know, I hung out in this small group and. You know. I felt like our experiences were just different and. That could have shaped the reasons why we all chose. You know, everyone chooses their degree for a different reason, but I felt like the reasons why they chose like they chose the field may have been a lot different than ours.

Interviewer: And could you ever recall a moment where you would have experienced any sort of discrimination because of race or anything of such?

Interviewee: Oh yeah. So. I used to work for a restaurant, so I used to work in the fast food industry for about a decade or so. And uhm. You know, I have been told before, like, oh, I don't want this person serving my food or I don't want this person touching my food because. Meaning, even though they don't outright say it, you know that it's because he's a man of color. And um. You know I. For a short period of time, I lived in a city that was predominantly white and. You know I. I guess I never really realized that I was a different color until I came to Washington and that's when I really felt how different I was. Like I said before, I'm fortunate to not have ever experienced racism outright to my face. But. I've definitely felt like micro aggressions and. You know, discrimination in other ways.

Interviewer: Do you think this ever like, you know, gave? A sort of reformation in yourself or such? Like you had like an epiphany like "oh so this is how it is" and maybe you could change it somehow through your position?

Interviewee: You know, now working in social work, I am definitely help. You know, I definitely see things differently. right now I'm working at a nonprofit in community mental health and. I think that a lot of people are disadvantaged and this job makes me humble about all the things that I've ever experienced, all the things that I've come from, but. Um, but no, I think I was always proud to have been different than everyone else.

Interviewer: Did you ever like maybe make a new perspective like, you know, to try to. Like maybe you ran into someone of a different ethnicity, and you just like trying to fit into them empathetically. If so did you ever like, why didn't your perspective get through?

Interviewee: Due to discrimination or difference in ethnicity or anything like that or difference in person, you know something that I feel like I've grown a lot, especially with seeing race and how I see people of two different cultures. So my partner we've been married now for three years, but we've been together for ten. They are a white person and I feel like. We have conversations about it. We have conversations about what makes us what's different and what makes us the same and. I try to show her my POV and she tries to show me hers.

Interviewer: Do you think everybody could possibly be positively be impacted by that. If they were trying to... or excuse me if they had seen or done something similar to what have you done with your wife or?

Interviewee: Ask that question again.

Interviewer: I'm sorry. Do you think that people could possibly be more positively impacted by looking through a similar perspective or similar method of communication of looking through someones differences or perspectives such?

Interviewee: Absolutely. I'm a strong advocate for saying, you know, you learn best when you are in someone else's shoes or you can hear their side of the story. So having that experience and being able to talk about our own personal experience is definitely powerful.

Interviewer: Do you see any sort of like traditions that you follow seeing or sorry. Helping out with that sort of method of looking through someone's perspective or such.

Interviewee: You know. I think education plays a big role in it. Um. You know, just getting the seat. What it was like, you know, growing up, we took history classes. That was very quote on quote whitewashed. And then. And then we have, you know, when I went through my social work program, uh, we took classes on how the Native Americans were treated here. And then, you know, during those classes, I also learned how the Asian Americans were treated when they came here. The Mexican Americans, you know, like. I got to learn through other people's stories. Of what their experience is like, we're like here and, you know, through those stories, you're allowed to make connections. You're allowed to see what resonates with you and. To see if. You know, yeah, our experiences may not have been exactly the same, but we have we have similar you could see through things through similar lenses.

Interviewer: And did you think there was any like certain like history books or anything or material in schooling that you made you sort of maybe just converse about? Anything or a certain event in history that sort of just sparked in you?

Interviewee: You know I have, So actually I read a book and in college and I was called the Last Indian War The Nez Pierce story. And it taught me a lot. It taught me a lot about how they were treated and what it was like and you know I just think that it's worth reading another book that I really liked was I forget the name, but uhm. It's something boat, but it was basically a story about how alcoholism really affected the reservation that a Native American man lived on, and how it affected, you know, his family, how it affected him and all of his experiences because. Alcohol was, you know, you read the story of Indians. Or the story of Native Americans. You learn that. You know, part of the history is that alcohol was introduced to kind of course a lot of the Native Americans into doing the things that the Westerners wanted them to do.

Interviewer: Did you ever think this anyway correlated to the way you identify or such? So like being like being of Asian descent. Do you think that maybe change your views on how you see things? Maybe, spark interest in anything of that?

Interviewee: No, not necessarily those books or, you know that history part. But you know, being an Asian American, you definitely hear about. You know what's going, you know, like the Puyallup fairgrounds used to be a Japanese internment camp, and then, you know what Tacoma did with all the Chinese when the Chinese people were still. Uhm, you know a lot of behind the Chinese. Or kick them out and so. Uhm, and, you know, being of Vietnamese descent, you know, like we are products of the Vietnam War. And so, you know, it just. I don't think that it molds a lot of my perspective on things, but it definitely doesn't. You know I it maybe it does affect a little bit of my perspective more than I'd like to think it does. And you know like sometimes I can't help but feel. Bad for people. When I walk around at

the fair or you know when I'm at the fairgrounds, just knowing what this site, this specific site used to be for somebody else, you know, I think that that's a traumatic experience, especially for children that were there.

Interviewer: And do you think that maybe that states such as Washington state should release this? Like in teach this in schools or?

Interviewee: You know, I never went to school I feel. You know, is it not taught? I was always under the impression that it was taught and the history behind it. At the fair fairground, the history behind the internment camps, you know like. I'm not too sure.

Interviewer: So I have learned a little bit about this, so I I did know about Japanese internment camps and such like that and the alcohol for Native Americans and such, but I never really learned about like, the Puyallup fair being. Pretty much in internment camp. It was an internment camp. I wouldn't have known for specifically Japanese Americans. I always thought it was just more like. On top of native grounds. But I never really knew that. So schools don't really try to censor it, they just more try to leave it out 'cause there was more. You know more of a crown on that specific area too. So like Puyallup, your grounds was a native ground, but you never really know that it's a Japanese internment ground as well. So do you think maybe that should change in our schools?

Interviewee: I think that. I think people need to know. I think that when people learn history, it gives us a better chance of not repeating it and. You know, as we're seeing right now, there's a lot of things that are starting to repeat itself and. It's sad.

Interviewer: And I think that could be the end of our little interview here and could you please introduce again self again?

Interviewee: My name is Phi Tran

Interviewer: all right. Thank you. And this was Alex Trans interview. Thank you very much.