

BR: This is Breeana Packard, interviewing Scothorne on May 18th, 2022 in Spanaway, Washington and now for the first question. What do you identify as ethnically, and how connected are you to this ethnicity?

SC: I identify as Chinese. What was the second half? I'm so sorry.

BR: How connected are you to this ethnicity?

SC: Connected uhm- I would say decently connected. I don't have a traditional Chinese background or family, but I still identify as Chinese.

BR: How does this ethnicity impact your day to day life?

SC: Um, it-it impacts it quite a bit. Yeah, I can't- I can't tell you how many times like, I hear jokes or comments about me being Chinese or just me being Asian. Like I- for example like this kid came up to me like, "How do you say hello in Asian?" I'm like, that's not a language. It affects it everyday.

BR: Do-do you think people know that China is like in Asia? Like Asia's not- Asia is a continent it's not like one country.

SC: I would hope so.

BR: Not many people do.

SC: Quite a few, yeah, I mean I can't tell you how many times I've like been hanging out with my friends and someone's like "How do you say hello in Mexican?"

BR: Interesting.

SC: It's-it's not just me that gets it's everyone.

BR: Why do you think this impacts you so much- Why do you think it impacts you this way?

SC: That's a good question. I mean, I think it impacts me just 'cause that's how the world is designed. I mean you think-you think of it like from birth we're kind of put into these categories. And we, like even, how do I put this in words? Like ever since I guess animals or whatever, we kind of rank things in our mind if that makes any sense. For example, for friends I have friends that I rank like "Oh I trust this person the best," or whatever and so those-those biases come into play every single day of our lives whether that be humans or just like anywhere I think that's what it affects.

BR: Uh- how does ethnicity race impact those around you?

SC: Um yeah, it effects them a lot. Because, well even if they're white, if I'm with them or- not necessarily me, just any personal colors with them, it affects them 'cause they're either looked at differently or treated differently. I mean even white people race effects them, whether people like wanna start a conversation with them or- I mean it it's gonna affect everyone in the world just 'cause that's-that's how we have designed how we live. I don't necessarily like the way that we we've designed it, but unfortunately that's-that's how it's become.

BR: Have you ever been in like a situation where it's like- you or like another friend of color is like with your entire group where it's you guys are like, the not- Where you guys- there's less of you guys than

like- there's more white people. Has that ever changed like how like if you're going to stores like how people treat you guys?

SC: If I-I think I think it does. If I understand you correctly, you mean like if people- if we're in a group of people and there's a few people of color.

BR: Yeah.

SC: OK, yeah it does. Yes and no. Honestly depends on what store, where we're going, what we're going in for. If we're going in for like simple little items, like candy, I make sure that I don't bring anything with me. I make sure to always keep my hands out of my pockets, unless I'm going for a phone or a wallet. I can't like- and that one, just 'cause we're teenagers, some teenagers do steal, and others, it makes us- people are more skeptical of us just- or at least to me, because I am a person of color and unfortunately in some people's minds, they see us as threats. I don't understand why I'm- it's- it's unfortunate but it does happen. And sometimes we'll get looked at as not delinquents but like troublemakers 'cause we're all hanging out, we're all friends while goofing off. And, but for instance if it was all white kids they might not be or portrayed in that format.

BR: Do you feel like those experiences have like, shaped who you are now as a person?

SC: Definitely. Um, yeah I would, I mean if we're going by like how- how are we shaped as a person, I mean even if it wasn't about race, like there's key milestones in everyone's life that has shaped you as a person. Whether that be you brother said something to you or you sister, whatever, all of these things that have happened in my life it's-it's definitely shaped me just 'cause through the people discriminating me, I can-I know what it's like and it's very hard to describe that feeling. **'Cause there's, it's like always being left out but never knowing why.** And, you're able to relate to more people and you're able to understand why, and how things are happening sometimes. And it-it-it gives you another perspective to bring to the table. Not everyone can bring like, that unfortunate past with them I guess. Of for example, if a younger kid came to me and they were a kid of color, I can understand if they've been discriminated and like, I can answer their questions better if they're then if like they came up to a non-person of color, and they're like "Do you know why this is happening?" Because there's just a little bit more relatability of knowing that you are-you are the minority and so.

BR: I guess this can kinda go into the next question, how did- 'cause there is I know our school in particular, there is a larger population than most of just, not even just races and ethnicities but also gender expression and sexuality, but a huge population of people of color. So how does your school environment react to or interact with the ideas of ethnicity or race?

SC: Yeah, well first off, I do love that our school is so diverse because, again you're met with perspectives it's- only having one type of voice. I mean it's kind of not- not ridiculous but, it's- it's a little sad that you- we're working towards 2022 and you still, it's only like one type of voice. But I mean in the school- can you say that last part?

BR: How does your school environment react to or interact with the ideas of ethnicity or race?

SC: Um, that question the question that you just asked, it's a good question, I just for me I always I don't necessarily like the word react because, just because, not necessarily of the question and not necessarily of you, just because we shouldn't really have to react to race. That's who we are it's how we've always

been. There should be no reaction it just should be just, this simple thing. Um, I mean but I definitely think they're-they're reacting OK, I mean it can always be better. My school personally, is better at trying to like remove, like add in certain classes, like ethnic studies or like other-other classes that provide students with that. It provides students with a more diverse learning, which I love, especially as a person of color, because it seems like whenever we learn history it's always about America's standpoint. And what other country- it's not- kind of what they kind of did wrong, or how they played a part and it's always kind of been about us. And so that's-that's one of the reasons why I love that our school is adding different classes to compensate that, and they listen to students voice to extent. And it's-it's helping, but I definitely think the schools can-can be can be improved just.

BR: So-so you said that sometimes it feels like the school or just in general, people are like- when they try to include race or they try to include different diverse groups, it doesn't feel like they're normalizing it because they feel like it's a special thing to do that. Do you feel like at some point like they might reach that people don't have to purposefully make an intention to include people but like it's just a normal thing they can do without thinking about it?

SC: Yeah, I mean for me looking at it in the eyes of a person of color um, they shouldn't really have to go out of their way to implement these classes. They- it should already have been done, but going-going back to a previous question, it's just like it's fortunately how our system's been set up. And it-it yeah, it's it's very sad for me to sit in a class and not be able to learn about my own history. And I'll look around and it's- some classes it's predominantly white and so they get to learn about their history but I don't get to learn about mine. And I think just simply changing a bit of language, it will help, and what I mean by just changing the language is like- The only great example I know is for, for example LGBTQ+ people, we're starting to shift language of like instead of "Oh hey, who's your boyfriend or who's your girlfriend?" And now we say "Who's your partner or do you have a significant other?" and those little changes like I can't tell you how many times I have been asked "Hey what are you?" Instead of asking "What are you?" you could be like "Hey do you mind me asking your ethnicity?" and just like those simple little things may not mean a lot to you, but they mean a whole lot to us, because it's just it's more respectable and yeah.

BR: So, then why do you think the USA- because you were talking about how like America often just is like "Oh we need to learn about just America and just like, assumes the most Americans are white and so we're going to learn about white history and that kind of stuff. Why do you think the USA is home to so much prejudice and discrimination despite its diversity?"

SC: Um, well I might be mistaken and if I am, I'm very sorry, but I think America is one of my most diverse places, and so think about it of like you have each culture sitting at a table, well at one point they're going to clash.

BR: Yeah.

SC: And that's how everything works. Whether that be about race or whatever, like at any point if you have X amount of voices, they're going to clash, and that's how it's gonna work. Um, and I mean with the United States having that many voices, it's great but it's also it's kind of a double edged sword in a sense. It's definitely due- I would say it's like the people in power. And what I mean by that is, you look at the leaders that we have now, some of them are people of color and some of them are not, but you look at past- it's predominantly white. Well it's let's be honest-

BR: It-it just is white.

SC: Yeah, well let's be honest, white- not necessarily white people- but people in power usually wanna keep their power. And to do that, to keep-to keep yourself in power or at least someone that looks like you in power, you're gonna have to be a bit restrictive, a bit discriminatory. And I wish it wasn't that way, but it unfortunately is and so I- the way- I don't know.

BR: No, yeah, I definitely agree. Because like, you look at like the people who run our country, our senators, our House members, our Presidents, they're all like 60 years and older. So it's not like there are the newer generations who have the most diversity, they're the older generations that have always- like that were- back before civil rights was even thought of. Like, so it's just they've been kept in power and they're still in power and we don't have any- we don't have much people with new mindsets in power. So yeah, I agree. Um, do you think our country, the USA, would benefit if we were to properly represent marginalized groups?

SC: Yeah, definitely. Going- going way- again with the, with the question it shouldn't just be like representation, it should have already been there. And for example, I was having this discussion with my friends in lunch, I like how you, have some groups have this token Asian friend, or token black friend, and and like they kind of treat us like we're the voice of all Asian people, we're the voice of all Hispanics. And that's not the case, and so when you get into representation, it's-it's very, it's very hard to, I don't know, to accept that that you need to have like representation. 'Cause it already should be. You already should be represented.

BR: So then rather than like, the intention of representing groups, like purposely making a character African American or purposely making a character queer, do you think is there any other way you think would be a better way to go about it? If that makes sense?

SC: Yeah, I mean there's definitely the better ways. For example, I just keep thinking about you-you might know this the movie, Mulan?

BR: Yeah.

SC: I fell in love with that movie just because it was the first- one of the first time I turned on my TV and I saw someone that looked like me. And, it was, I always seen someone that that was white or that doesn't even look like me, and so to know like "Hey, I can I can do that, or I-I can become this," was great, because I know a lot of kids or just in general people of color feel a bit left out. Because this society has been ran by white people and, although they've-they've made this country and that's great, they've kind of done it with us yet without. **They've- they've done it with us but excluded us at the same time.** And for me that that it's very frustrating and it's hard to accept.

BR: Yeah 'cause you, like you said previously, like in history it's just all basically just talking about white people. And you know like in all the wars like the US wars, it predominantly just talks about "Oh, these white soldiers," "these American soldiers" and it never talks about like the actual work that people of color had put into this country too, to help build it to what it was, and it's not just predominantly like colonizers and the British people that came over, it's also people that were already in this country or people that were forced to be in this country. Um, so then, how would you personally like to be represented in this country media- or media, sorry.

SC: Um, I'm not quite sure just 'cause, I've never really thought about it. I would- I would say having more voice. I know in the media that social media is, is again kind of like a double edged sword is because it's great for advocating, but it's- it also has its cons. But just, just getting more- more voice and that's one thing that social media does provide, it provides a platform for- it's definitely helped out people of color. Just 'cause it- it gives them a platform, and, I think without social media, that like voice providing a voice aspect of it, equality wouldn't be as far.

BR: How- I don't know if you can answer this question, but with whatever social media you're on, how diverse is what you see? Like whether it be people of color, gender, sexuality that kind of stuff.

SC: I'll be honest when I watch when I'm on my social medias, I just watch for the videos and they're- they're, I mean they're diverse, but they're not. I mean the- the algorithms that are designed for those social medias are designed to keep you watching, so they're gonna want you to watch what you similar. So for example, if I'm watching I don't know only funny videos, it's gonna give me only funny videos. Yeah, so.

BR: This is sorta a new topic, but what systems or institutions do you find to be im- sorry oppressive in your communities?

SC: Schools and criminal justice system. As much as- I don't love school it's OK but school- school can definitely change in the sense of, just going back to the previous question of just having more books or classes about learning, there are about a person- about a person of color's history. And like with the criminal justice system, it was again, it was designed by white people and it was designed for them to succeed and for people of color to not. Yeah, it's, that's very aggravating to know especially 'cause. **It was broken the day it was created.** The day, the day it was created it was broken, it was biased. You- the statistics are showing that most, not most, but some- people of color are more likely to be incarcerated or mistreated by the criminal justice system just due to their skin color, and it shouldn't be like that and that's the unfortunate truth of today's world.

BR: So then, as part of the younger- younger generation, sorry, do you think this will improve anytime soon, or do you think it's like gonna wait until you're much, much older?

SC: I would, I would honestly really, really hope that it improves. Just 'cause, what, **it's been centuries of oppression, I mean we- we've made progress but not. We could have made more,** and I'm not saying that what the civil rights leaders and people that have fought for equality haven't done enough, they have. **It's just, it feels like we take one step forward and then four steps back.** I mean it is still a step forward, but three steps backwards. It's always, very hard to accept the fact that you're not treated equally, 'cause growing up I would like- one of my first days of school I would- I went to school and I went home like "Mom, no one looked at me- or not no one looked at me- no one looked like me. Why?" And my mother- I'm adopted- and so she's white, she couldn't really explain. And just getting changes within the criminal justice system, not I'm not saying change it entirely, I'm just saying it can use work. It- sometimes it feels like the criminal justice system puts more people in jail than it should be. And there are people that- that should be in jail, don't get me wrong, but there's also like little crimes that don't seem like they need to be in jail for years at a time, and that's just because the white people in power didn't want us there. I mean the first police were slave catchers.

BR: Yeah.

SC: And so again, going back to that system, it was broken the- the day it started.

BR: Yeah, it was set out for failure- well not failure but-

SC: For us- for white people to succeed and for people of color to fail.

BR: Yeah.

SC: And that is such a hard thing to accept. To know that even though you are here, you are not wanted. Even though you are human, we're not going to treat you like human beings. It's very upsetting to me, for me to just turn on the TV and not have representation, and not have like- I, for me personally, I have a lot of intersectionality of where I'm not just discriminated because of my race, I'm discriminated 'cause I'm in the LGBT community I'm discriminated because of my gender, and so many other things it's just it's- it's very upsetting to know that you're- you're here and yet people don't want you here.

BR: So then, what do you think would be one of like, the most important and biggest improvements you would want to see personally?

SC: Just- just more equality. Just 'cause, I wouldn't- I wouldn't say representation, because if we had equality we wouldn't need representation. And, I would- I would really like to see this, just whether that be two years from now or 50 years from now, just to see that we actually got closer to equality is- is huge. I mean I'm, I'm 16 years old, and I'm already tired of fighting. I'm tired of fighting and walking into this room and trying to- trying to be respected just for who I am. And yet I can't control that and yet here's this, here's this white straight male that everyone is cool with, but I walk into the room and they're not – (excuse me), simply due to, to my race.

BR: For the final question, do you believe this will actually occur? Or like, if- if feel like it'll inevitably occur at some point in life, but about when do you think it might actually occur?

SC: I don't know, just 'cause I would, I would love for this stuff, and I know that most people of color would love for full equality to happen, but the sad truth is we're probably never gonna get to full equality. It's, it's systematically set up for us not to have equality. And not even like talking about like school systems or criminal justice, I mean we all have preconceived notions that we don't really recognize. For- for example, favorite like favorite colors, we like one thing over the other and so those, those create bias and that's just something that we've- that's always been there and that will always continue to be there. I do think that it can get better, for sure I mean, but I mean look back at the past, it's taken us centuries to get to where we are, and yet we're still not treated equal. I- I personally just can't wrap my mind around it, because I'm the same person as you are, I mean yeah we have different perspectives and different knowledge and whatever, but at the end of the day we're still humans, yet we're not treated as such. It's, don't get me wrong, it's gotten better, but it- it can use improvement and I mean, I would, I would love for there to be full equality, I would love for my children there- or my future children to like be able to experience that, but I mean, it is very very hard, 'cause you- you wanna be, you wanna be treated equal but you're not.

BR: Sorry, I know I said that was the last question, but I really wanted to ask this question now.

SC: Go ahead.

BR: You brought it up, uhm, so what do you think is the most important between equality and equity? Or like what do you think the difference is and which one do you think is better?

SC: I know this is an interview of you asking me questions, but everyone's gonna have a different definition of equity and equality, and so when I talk about equality it means like fairness for each individual whether- no matter who you are. And so, I'm curious about your definition of equity and equality?

BR: So the really rundown version of what- I'm gonna- really simple definition of what I think of equity. It's like, you have this person standing on a ladder, and they're really tall, and then you have this other person who's maybe just standing on the ground. And then you decide, OK, we're gonna make it equal, where you're also gonna give this person a ladder. And you give them a ladder, but maybe it's a smaller ladder- ladder, sorry, and they can't reach. So that would be equality, they both have ladders, they do have ladders that's- that's equal, but equity would be giving the second person a ladder that's tall enough to get them at the same level as the other person.

SC: That's a good definition.

BR: Thank you.

SC: I would say it's a good example, better than what I would have come up with, I- I honestly I don't know, just 'cause if we're all treated- in my mind, the way I see it, if we are all treated fairly there would be no need for equity. Not well, I mean they would but they wouldn't. It's hard to describe my train of thought, if we're all treated fair, no one would the ladder- well I mean if we did all have the ladder, for example, going back to your like thing, like if we- if this person did have the ladder, then wouldn't everyone else. I'm, I uh, I'm not quite sure what my answer would be, just 'cause- I haven't, I'm fortunate enough to not have like extreme stories about racism and discrimination. I mean, don't get me wrong, I do have plenty of stories, uhm, unfortunately, like for example, I'll just give a quick example. Someone thought- I brought a backpack in to a place and I took it off, and someone was like "Oh, Asian kids got a bomb," and it's- it's very, it's very aggravating. Uhm, yeah. I would- I would say, to answer that, I would need more personal experience because I mean, I'm lucky enough to not have these drastic things happen to me, but they have happened to other people, and yeah, I would- I would just need more life experience.

BR: That's very fair, thank you for allowing me to interview you.