

Transcript – Justice Gaines, class of 2016

Narrator: Justice Gaines

Interviewer: Sebastian Castro Niculescu

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Track 1

Sebastian Castro Niculescu: Hi, this is Sebastian Castro Niculescu. And today I'm going to be interviewing Justice Gaines for the Pembroke Oral History project. We're in Page-Robinson Hall right now, and the day is December 12th, 2018. Hi, Justice.

Justice Gaines: Hi.

SCN: How are you doing today?

JG: I'm doing all right, a little sleepy, but good. Yeah, excited to be a part of this.

SCN: Awesome. So yeah, just to get started, just the kind of like, early like, where are you from, growing up, like everything kind of like pre-adult life, and what that was like for you.

JG: Yeah. So, I'm initially from New Jersey, Somerset, New Jersey. We call it Franklin.

(laughter) [00:01:00] But my town was really economically racially diverse. My high school, I went to a public high school, it was pretty fun at times, and other things at other times. And growing up, I, you know, I was like, one of those smart kids, I guess, I kept to myself a lot. I was involved with a lot of different activities in school. I was in JROTC. I was in Model United Nations for my whole high school career. And then I also did some theater of the oppressed type work, so specifically around bullying. And so, I was trying to be involved in arts and not as much really any sort of organizing or anything. (laughter) I was just like, sometimes I yelled at people. (laughter) But for the most part, was more [00:02:00] quiet and reserved. And I loved my

town in a lot of ways, because I think I learned a lot from it. Yeah. And I, but you know, it was nice to grow up in a place where I got to see a lot of different people, and know what it was like to be in that space. Also to be like, near the city, or New York City, sorry. And—

SCN: No, I'm from Queens, so like (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

JG: Cool, great, great, so you know. I'm like, I don't know what people think up here anymore. But yeah, so it was good. And it was interesting, right, because I still, like I was in JROTC, but I was very like, not patriotic at all. So I was in, for me, a lot of like my high school career I think about was like, there was a lot of the relationships I had with like, teachers and folks who were supportive and things like that during that time, and also, you know, building friendships and learning what friendship was.

SCN: Yeah. [00:03:00] Yeah, I'm interested, wait, so like when you were doing the kind of like, bullying theater of the oppressed type work, was it like, explicitly like, citing like, theater of the oppressed?

JG: Well yeah. So I don't know if it, we were explicitly using that terminology at that point, but what had happened, it was based on the tenets of theater of the oppressed, and what we had done was, I want to say it was like, my junior year of high school, the program I was a part of, which like, came out of a class. My high school was weird, because we had two different theater programs. We had like the like, the like, the theater program that did the plays for the school, and then we had like the theater class, and that theater teacher, who did her own stuff, usually with our video teacher. And I love her. I like that teacher. Sorry. (laughter) But, it was like, it was two different things, but in the sort of theater class, like Miss Little, she like, developed a, sort of this program that we were able to do where we sent out [00:04:00] a survey to our whole school, essentially. We got a bunch responding back, and it was about bullying. So it was like, figuring out what was going on in our school, sort of surveying our school about what their experiences were with bullying. And then based off of the responses we got in those surveys, national stories, and like, statistics and things, we actually put together like, a multimedia play. And so there was like, some of the national stories were used a lot, but we were also using real words from like,

kids in our school, and like I remember like, sitting in front of a survey and being like oh, we're going to write this into a script. And so, we got to like, write that into scripts, and then perform it. And we performed it at our school, we performed it for our administration, different sects of students. So then we got to travel with it. So, we would like travel around the tri-state area a little bit. And we also went to the Scotland Fringe Festival.

SCN: Oh wow.

JG: Yeah, which was cool. I think everyone from that is removed enough that I can say like, [00:05:00] the Fringe Festival was actually after my freshman year at Brown. And technically, we were supposed to be high school students, so there was like three of us who had like, graduated, but needed to come back. So we like, fudged the numbers a little bit, really. (laughter) Yeah, we're still in high school! While I was not at all in high school. I was like about to start sophomore year. But it was a really nice experience to be able to like, go there and do this work, and like see a lot of different people connect with it. And I honestly believe that was one of the things that got me into Brown in the first place, because I, it was ended up writing a lot about. Because it was like, really formative. Yeah, so it was a great time. And yeah, I also was like, involved with all the theater lighting. One of these days, I want to get back to theater a little bit more heavily. So like, sort of that was my creative outlet a lot was like, through the play, through directing, [00:06:00] through lighting, and all that type of stuff.

SCN: Wow, that was awesome.

JG: Yeah. Sometimes. (laughter)

SCN: So yeah, so like with that, and with your experiences in high school and growing up, what was your perception of Brown when you were applying, or like what was that kind of like, process before, like immediately before like?

JG: Yeah, so I didn't know about Brown until I was in high school. And I actually found out about Brown because my cousin had gone to Summer at Brown, and my mom had a, my mom

like, she went to Summer at Brown two years, I think, and my mom picked her up the first year and was like, “You should check out Brown, I think you would like it, it like, feels kind of like you.” And then, the next summer, I don’t actually remember, I don’t think I’d come to campus at that point, but like she like, basically my mom repeated it. And then, so I was like OK, I’ll look [00:07:00] at Brown. And when I came to visit, I like, I was really feeling it. I was like oh, this atmosphere feels really good, it’s like, you know, it was like, more chill in the way I needed, it was more like, thinking, or like, the thinking of the school, the feeling of the school, was like, felt more home than some other places I had been.

And so, I decided to apply. And I didn’t apply to too many schools, I only applied to about six. But I like, wanted to be here, and I wanted to get into Brown. I’ll admit that I was a very arrogant high schooler, and I had no, I was like, I never thought I wouldn’t get in, so I was like, “It’ll be fine.” Like people were like, “Aren’t you nervous?” And I was like, “No. Like why would I be nervous? I’m great.” (laughter) Yeah, but it like, it worked out, everything worked out, luckily. It was like, the one school that I had submitted the application, like before the deadline. I was like, I [00:08:00] submitted it on Christmas actually. I was like, it was Christmas night, I was like wow, look at me, I’m all done with my applications, this is the first time I’ve had something that early in like, three years. And I like, submitted it, and I was like, we’ll see, we’ll see what happens. Yeah. Wow, I haven’t thought about that in a long time. But, so it was like, cool. And I really did like sort of the feeling of like, I don’t know. It was really like, I came to Brown and I was like, OK, I feel like the students here are like, aware but like, chill. I feel like the work environment doesn’t feel like we’re constantly under this level of stress. Which is something I needed, because I was like, some of the other schools I was choosing, I was like, I would kill everyone. And maybe myself. But like, I was like, that’s not going to happen. I was like, y’all seem, y’all seem, y’all seem tired. And I’m like, tired, but I’m not like, tired.

SCN: Yeah.

JG: But yeah, so I was like, I was looking towards Brown, and [00:09:00] it was funny, because when I came to visit, where like, it’s jumping a little bit ahead, when I moved in, I moved into Keeney, but it was like Keeney right before the current renovations, and right after the old renovations. So it was the last year Keeney was united, where there was no walls.

SCN: Like what year was that?

JG: 2012 to 2013.

SCN: OK.

JG: So there was no dividers between Everett, Archibald, and Jameson. But it was nice. Because when my mom had picked up my cousin, she was like, this was disgusting. She was like, this dorm was disgusting. She was like, I wanted you to go to Brown, but like, I did, I was—when I saw this dorm, I was worried. And so, luckily I didn't get that. But yeah, I made the decision sort of, it was like a big decision for me trying to figure out where I wanted to go, and what that was going to look like, because of like, finances and things like that. And so ultimately, I sort of like [00:10:00] did a lot of like, I'm going to listen to this, my favorite songs, and see how I feel. (laughter) Oh man. I think like, there's like, this one journal I tried to keep my senior year of high school that I just totally failed at. I think like the last thing in there was like, me deciding Brown. But yeah.

SCN: OK, cool. And so yeah, before we get into like the Brown experience, or your Brown experience, what, is there anything else you'd like to mention before then, or think is important to know?

JG: No, if it's important it'll come up. (laughter)

SCN: OK. Fair, fair. Yeah. So started in 2012, you were in Keeney. Like what was the kind of like, process of acclimating to Brown, the students you met, what was that like, early process like?

JG: Yeah, so I was in Keeney, I was in Jameson, second floor. [00:11:00] And it was interesting, I think my first couple of months were kind of rough. Like I didn't know how to transition, I didn't know how to make friends, I was like, very socially anxious, and I think I was reserved at the time. It's hard, sometimes I forget sort of what I was like before college, because I know I've

changed at least in my outward personality, and I like, wasn't really sure who to necessarily be friends with, or like, what being at college meant, and like, what I was supposed to be doing with my own life. And because of the open curriculum, right, I always say, even though like, even though I love choice, I was like, this is like, I hate this. Like, there were so many points, especially that first year, where I was like oh, I wanted choices, hmm. I don't want them anymore, tell me what to do. Like, where am I supposed to go? But I had a good group of friends, like that I met through my unit, [00:12:00] one of, like across the hall neighbors, one of them like literally was the first person I ever met, Manuel Gutierrez. And like, literally had gotten out of the shower as I was moving in, and we were just like, and then we were just friends, and Michael [Brisket?], who is his roommate, we like were able to just like, sort of meet up and be friends, and there was a few other folks in that area that we all just like, were able to talk with. And so, the, I think, were really helpful, like in me sort of getting accustomed to being in a new place, and you know, being on my own, and being in a new city, and learning what that was like. And then as the year, sort of as that first semester went on, it was, I was meeting more and more people, and specifically the Jameson lounge at the time was a place where a lot of folks were gathering, and so there was like, a crew of us that sort of formed who were just there [00:13:00] all the time. To the point where like, even now, like we could like, people still know us as like, the Jameson Lounge, like—

SCN: Oh my God.

JG: —folks, right? Like that's like, Jameson people. And like, I specifically remember there was one night, it was the night of Jessica Brown's birthday, who's like, still a dear friend of mine. And we like, all like, got together for her birthday, we like, sung some songs, we like, just like had a really fun time. And so, specifically like, even that lounge, and like that group of folks, was really, really important to me learning how to like, be a person at college, and really understand who I was, and start to be able to grow into myself. And that first semester was interesting too. There was like a lot of things that happened that I sometimes forget. Like the third day of school, like Obama was having a rally in like, New Hampshire, and the Brown Dems were going, and I was really obsessed with the election and Obama at the time. So I was like, I like emailed all my professors, [00:14:00] like, "I'm so sorry, I'm going to miss class," and

they're like, "OK." Like they did not care. And I was like, what? Like, (laughter) people are like, you'll be fine. And I was like, "Are you sure? It's the third day of class." And they're like, "You'll be fine, trust me." And it was fine. And then, so that was like, funny, because I was still trying to figure out like OK, what's the level of like, professionalism I need to have? Because you know, in high school everyone's taught like, all your teachers are like, well when you get to college it won't be like this. I'm like, y'all lied.

SCN: Yeah.

JG: Y'all just straight up lied. It is so much chillier, for better or worse. And then yeah, there was like, what else? There was a lot of learning that I had to do. I didn't drink until I got to college, so that was like, the first time I was drinking too, so I was learning like oh, how do I like, have casual fun? But I also was kind of pretentious and stuck up, so I was like, "Oh, you throwing up? That's not going to be me. I don't need another one, I'm good." Yeah. I'm not going to say I was never sloppy, because I definitely was. But again, like [00:15:00] it really was sort of that group of friends in Jameson. And they weren't all from Jameson, we had two Perkins foreign exchange students, as we called them at the time, (laughter) when Perkins was still a freshman dorm.

SCN: OK.

JG: But that was the last year Perkins was a freshman year dorm, dang, that was a lot. A lot of lasts that year.

SCN: Wow.

JG: But like, we just sort of hung out and like, really got to know each other, and really got to build. We would like, sit, we would talk, we would like, do work together, we would procrastinate together. We'd watch movies, we would like, when *Pitch Perfect* came out, we did that cup song for like, literally four hours once. We just like, literally sat for four hours and sang every song we can think of to like the, that thing. And it was interesting, because I was really trying to figure out OK, now that I'm in college, what do I want to be? And so, when I started,

like I was involved with the theater project as a stage manager with Cici Matteo, who was a senior at the time, [00:16:00] and who I absolutely love, and who I could have been a much better stage manager for. (laughter) I had no idea what stage managing actually was when I signed up for that gig. So it was funny. But I was like, doing some theater stuff, I was part of Model UN, I was like, thinking about sort of where I was involved, and then by my second semester I realized those weren't things that I wanted to do in the same way anymore. And so that was when I started branching out, and like, figuring out some new stuff, and sort of taking time to think about really who I wanted to be, and not just be an extension of like, my high school career. And so that was like, when I started writing poetry, and like, got a little bit more involved in spoken word through some friends. And Gravediggers Poetry Collective, which I want on the record. (laughter) Which was like, a few folks who had been doing poetry, or slam, on campus, but wanted a space specific to like, [00:17:00] poets of color, and poets who really needed a space to like, work through trauma and things like that. So I joined that, and started writing, and started like, figuring out what classes I wanted to take. Eventually, sort of that moved into like, me taking social, like becoming a sociology concentrator, because I had taken like, a first-year seminar, and I was like sociology, what is this? I was like, oh this is great. (laughter) At least the discipline, and like two of my professors. I won't speak to the whole department now, or in the future. (laughter) But it was good then, and that freshman year seminar was like oh, OK, this is cool. I'm liking this. I enjoyed it by the end. Yeah, (inaudible).

SCN: No, it's perfect to just like, keep on going, yeah.

JG: OK, cool. (laughter)

SCN: Yeah.

JG: Yeah no, freshman year was blissful. Which is very nice. Things sort of [00:18:00] changed a little bit as sophomore year came through. I started spending more time, which this was good. But I like, started spending more time in the Third World Center at the time, which is now the Brown Center for Students of Color. And I was like here for that change. I, at the time, as a freshman, didn't really understand the significance of the change. But I also know I was

concerned about like, sort of how I was feeling. Because I didn't come in through TWTP. And so I didn't really know what the Third World Center meant, and like I was, I had to go through a lot of education myself, of learning sort of what social justice was. And yeah, so like as I started hanging out there more, sort of end of my freshman year, and mostly a lot more of my sophomore year, I developed a nice, like I developed a family there, too, [00:19:00] and learned a lot. Like staff, some of the staff the next, or staff like, the TWTP, that I was at.

And then, you know, my sophomore year, all hell broke loose. (laughter) Because Ray Kelly came to campus. And so, I was just talking with, three of my roommates are now actually like, three years out, two years going on three years out, and me and my roommates were all talking, and then we were all like, "Oh, we were all at the Ray Kelly protest." (inaudible). I was like, "Y'all were there! I didn't even know you then, but you," so it was a really funny moment. But like basically, that happened like, in the middle, yeah, the middle of my third semester. So my sophomore year, the beginning of my sophomore year. And before that, like I had like, I feel like I was aware, you know, I was very liberal, very politically engaged [00:20:00] in the sense of like, I had been following the election really closely, I had been involved with Brown Dems a little bit. Like I knew what national politics looked like. And I was like, involved a little bit in like, local school election politics for my hometown, and so it wasn't really until Brown where I started to see more social justice things, where I started to learn about like, institutional racism more thoroughly, where I started to like, learn about other systems of oppression. It wasn't until my freshman year that I was really introduced to any language around gender, which would become very important. And so, I was really sort of coming into a different sort of political consciousness at the beginning of my freshman year.

And then Ray Kelly, Raymond Kelly was invited to campus under the banner of proactive policing, and I saw it first, and I was like, what the hell? And being from New Jersey, I'm very aware of who he is, and I'm very aware of stop and frisk, I'm very aware of all of the [00:21:00] racism involved with the NYPD. And the fact that like, he really was one of the major proponents of building that. And at the time, it had already been, like stop and frisk had been deemed unconstitutional. And so, I saw this lecture, and I was like, wow. I hope someone does something about that. (laughter) And then like, I think like a week or two later, there was rumblings on campus, and organizing had started to happen around the protests. And so, I like went to some of the planning meetings before the lecture. And it was really cool, because it was

also the first time I saw like, Brown students really engaged with local organizers that wasn't like, local politicians. (laughter) And so, it was like a lot of folks from Providence who were like, talking about like, the problems with this, and what it meant. And like, wanting to do something about it. [00:22:00] And then like, the event happened on a Tuesday, and it was the first moment where I was like, at Brown, you know, involved in an action, and really like, being aware of like, myself, what was happening, and also seeing like what that could do. Like what a direct action could do. And the campus exploded. Like in a way that I haven't seen, I've never heard of before, that I haven't seen since. It was truly, that week changed the trajectory of both my like, college career, my general career, or like, life trajectory, but also I think the trajectory of the campus. And so, it always like, comes back up for me, but it's always like, it was very salient, because there was the protest itself, which you know, end up shutting down the lecture. The university, I think, still [00:23:00] has a great tape of it on their archives, so I feel like it should be released at some point, because you know, I got like, this—I'm jumping ahead. I got punished later on, but I got to see the sky cast, or whatever it's called.

SCN: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

JG: While they were, you know, punishing me. I was like, this is a great video, can I get a copy? They would not let me get a copy. I want a copy, I'm telling that (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). But the actual event happened, and the protests, there was a lead up, like the university knew there was going to be something happening, because we'd been talking with them, there were people who talked with them, either like the day before, and then it was like this massive protest outside of List. It was List 102, the big room.

SCN: Yeah. Yeah.

JG: And there was like, it was like Brown students, folks from Direct Action for Racial Equality, DARE, PrYSM, I think at the time, there was like a lot of folks from different community orgs there. Then we had a chant outside, we had a reenactment [00:24:00] of [CoPAIT?], which was, I'm not exactly sure what it stands for right now, but it was like Coalition for Police Accountability and Institutional Transparency. That was in 2006, back when TPS got armed.

And so that is like a student group that had happened. So we had a reenactment from that. That came from the Center for Students of Colors Resistance [Tour?]. And then, we were in the room, and a lot happened in the room. And a lot happened after the room. And so like, that night, like everything on campus was blowing up. Like every social media, like Facebook was a mess, and everyone just wanted to know what happened, people were mad, people were angry. Like everyone was like, kind of angry for different reasons. Like people were mad it got shut down, and then people were like, there was like me, who was just like stressed about it happening in the first place, and like how it went down, and the next day, there was a community forum [00:25:00] where like, 600 folks from the Brown community, so to speak, showed up. And what had started as an idea from the administration to be a lecture about how we behave at events turned into this forum where a bunch of students of color were just expressing their grievances to the university about the racism on campus. Including a grad student at the time who was profiled getting into that event, getting into the forum, by Christina Paxson's personal security guard.

SCN: Wow.

JG: And so it was just like, this wild moment that really ignited so many different conversations on campus. And as my friend said, like the other night, like broke Brown a little bit. (laughter) Because like, from that point on, for like the next like, three, or next like, two-ish years, two and a half years, like it was just nonstop protests. And so, [00:26:00] that was sort of where I got involved with activism on campus. And a lot of what I think about, when I'm thinking about Brown, is mostly a lot of time organizing, and a lot of time doing activism. And so after that, there was, the next semester, there—Lena Sclove, who was a student at Brown, made—and a friend of mine from other work, had, I think, I don't know how we met. We might have met through, or I don't know how we met. But like, I had also been involved with some stuff freshman year, like Brown Divest Coal a little bit, the very beginnings of that. And some other things. And so, Lena had a press conference about how Brown failed them at, you know, with their case around sexual assault. That ignited another student movement called Imagine Rape Zero. And Imagine Rape Zero was trying to push for changes in policies, trying to create a fund for survivors, [00:27:00] and it sort of expanded on campus really quickly, and in a way that at times was really great, and at times wasn't. But also, right, was very clear, right? Like it wasn't like this was about sexual

assault, it's like no, we're ending rape. And it was based off the Imagine Brown 250 campaign. So I was like, Imagine Brown 250, Imagine Rape Zero. And so, getting involved with that was like oh, OK, I'm here now. So I was like, trying to help with that. And that led, they—Imagine Rape Zero, a protest we did led to the sexual assault task force, it led to some positions over the summer around reviewing the policies. And so I was a part of both of those things. And sort of just ended up not meaning to, but getting really involved with that, that level of activism. And it wasn't that I didn't want to be a part of it, it was more like that wasn't something I was expecting to be [00:28:00] involved in.

SCN: Yeah.

JG: And so it was interesting seeing how that ended up being like oh, I'm now working on a lot of stuff. (laughter) And there was just a lot of other things around like trans inclusivity, and queerness, and like, some workers' rights I tried to help with, when the mail workers were outsourced, I was trying to help organize them. Or like, help them organize to get back in. And we weren't successful, because it was over the—Brown did it over the summer. But there was a lot of other things that happened, and so those were all sort of part of like, my journey of understanding how, what organizing was, and what it meant to be around. I'm rambling, so I'm going to let you redirect me. (laughter)

SCN: OK. Yeah. Fair. But it seems like, yeah, like the way you're describing it, the Ray Kelly protest, and what I've heard from like, [00:29:00] other students, like was a kind of like, big igniting moment for people's own trajectory. But also like, a moment where Brown was faced with this like, huge kind of student crisis, and then started to like, perfect the cogs in its machine around like, the kind of like, freedom of speech narrative that they consistently use now, and like—

JG: Yeah.

SCN: –so yeah, so I’m like, interested both in like, your own politicization, but also the ways that like, you saw Brown kind of like, through each step responding. Or like, kind of like perfecting that technology almost.

JG: Yeah. Yeah. I’ll start with that, and then I’ll go more into politicization. Yes, it was really interesting, because the way Brown responded to the initial protest was awful. And that was part of the reason things got ignited, because it was like, there was a protest, there was a statement, by President Paxton, and no one liked the statement. Like everyone [00:30:00] was really upset about the statement. (laughter) Because it didn’t, right, it didn’t do the thing that you need to do when you’re trying to politically crisis solve, which is like, be pseudo-neutral, but also be very clear. It like, was not clear, and it wasn’t really neutral, and apologized to people way too early without facts. Like it was just, and it was funny, because it was actually very similar to a situation that happened in high school with me, where at a homecoming, there was like, some incident with an alum or someone who was there, and like, police from like, five different surrounding towns got called in, Maced up like, the whole crowd, including like, our own security guards, teachers, parents–

SCN: Oh my God.

JG: –students.

SCN: Yeah.

JG: Arrested like, students and parents, and like, a few other people. And it was just a mess, and like at that point in time, our superintendent at the time released a statement that was God awful. And so I was like, sort of in the moment like, having flashbacks, like really? Like this is how like, this is the– [00:31:00] it was a little bit different, but like, it was, you know, within a similar vein of things. And so, it was interesting, because you saw how Brown reacted to that, and how bad it was in that like, was–it put, definitely the administration. And because President Paxton came in with me, right? So like, her like, she was relatively new, that was only her second year at Brown. And so, it put the new administration very much on edge of like, OK, how are we going

to respond to these things? And also, because right, they didn't have Ruth Simmons anymore, it wasn't like they had a buffer. Like, you know, President Simmons was able to, was a great politician. I always say that. Like I wasn't here for her, but from what I hear, and from what I hear from student activists at the time, she was a very good politician in terms of how she responded to things.

SCN: Yeah.

JG: And so Brown didn't know how to at that point. And so, especially because it was a race issue. And the other thing I [00:32:00] like, am very cognizant of, is that that protest predated the prominence of Black Lives Matter, right? Like, Black Lives Matter was a hashtag, but it wasn't like, a movement yet. And it also predated the conversation around free speech versus, I don't even, social justice? I don't know, whatever it's framed, right? This like free speech on campus. Like it was at the very beginning of that becoming a nationally known catchphrase, right?

SCN: Yeah.

JG: And even that year, later on that year, like the sexual assault work was done, it was like, all of these things were predating it becoming national. And so it was like, we were really like, in uncharted territory with like, how the university would react, and how the students were going to push forward. And so Brown really didn't know what to do, and so they created a committee. (laughter) Because that's what they're used to doing.

SCN: Yeah.

JG: And so as the next couple of years unfolded, [00:33:00] right, there was like, there was all of the sexual assault protests, and so now they also created a committee. And they were trying to learn OK, how do we word things, and how do we get a little bit more neutral? What they really learned was like, OK, how do we become more neutral in our responses, so—because like, the first, that Ray Kelly response was so bad, and so clearly like, dismissive of students, that like no one was like, no one was like, this feels right.

SCN: Yeah.

JG: And then, it was interesting, oh, and then they also, when they punished students for that, they only punished about five of us, and they did it on the low, they did it very quick. It was like, I got an email on a Sunday night at midnight telling me to come in Monday afternoon. It was wild. Yeah. So it was like, and then it was like yeah, so we have to do a hearing type thing. It was like OK, I guess so. But it really gave us no time to strategize or plan. Which was smart, right? Like I was like, OK, [00:34:00] strategic, smart, whatever. I'll give it to you. But it was also when like, we started becoming more aware of what Brown's sort of moves were. And this was also around the time of the strategic plan coming out. It was—oh, another important thing was that the Ray Kelly protest happened the Tuesday right after they announced that we would not be divesting from coal. That previous, I want to say Saturday. And Divest Coal was a major thing the year before. And they had gone through all of the institutional hoops. They had gone through every, like every, they had done demonstrations, but nothing that was like, truly disruptive. And they went through all the hoops of who they were supposed to ask, who they were supposed to get permission for, who they were supposed to like, reach out to, like (inaudible) went to the president, went to the corporation, like all of that, and then they were denied. And so, people were pissed off about that, even people who weren't part of Divest Coal. And then Ray Kelly happened, so there was like a lot happening. And so Brown was really like, "Oh shit, we need to take a step back." Which meant we needed to keep them [00:35:00] on their toes.

And so, like even through the sexual assault activism, the sexual assault task force, there was four students, four undergraduate students on that. And during the second semester of that happening, what happened the first semester? I don't want to get the thing wrong. But I think something happened the first semester with a specific returnee on campus. And then the semester after that, there was another set of students who talked about their cases with the university. And it was Act for RJ, or Money Talks at Brown, is how it came to be known. And basically, there was a student who was drugged and assaulted, and one of the people involved in that case was related to someone on the corporation. And so that became another big hot button issue. And I think it led to like, at that point, one of the largest student protests at the time, [00:36:00] it was like we had 400 students on the Quiet Green, and me, and myself and the other students who

were on the sexual assault task force, were working with the organizers and the survivors who were involved in organizing that. And it was really, truly, a survivor-led movement in that case. And the university didn't know what to do, because they were like, we already have the task force, and we're like, your point? And so, what they were learning was sort of, or what they were seeing was that there wasn't just like, "Oh, students are going to subside once you give them this easy thing." And a lot, and so we had like, you know, the students in the task force as part of the protest, we had the protests going on, and then we had student government, and ECS, [Mahika?] at the time was like, really coming onboard to support.

And so you had like, student government, like institutional student power, and then sort of the [00:37:00] organizing all connected on campus in a way that hadn't been happening recently, right? And so, the administration was like, I don't know. I like honestly, they didn't quite know what to do, they like, talked with us, they like, tried to talk about the demands, but they also didn't want to talk about the demands, and a lot of it ended up being like, legalistic jingo and things that like—I don't think that's the right word. Like, that wasn't really, you know, helpful. But it did make sort of moves in terms of OK, what the policies that came out of the sexual assault task force, how progressive they would be, getting a new director of the Title IX, developing the Title IX office out more. And so there were some institutional changes that we were able to get. And just a better institutional knowledge, I think. I think there was a lot of learning that a lot of the administrators had to do during that time in order to interact with [00:38:00] how students were engaging with them on campus.

And then my senior year, there was the diversity in action inclusion plan. Or diversity inclusion action plan. Which beforehand, there was a lot of protests that first semester of my senior year. I don't really talk about those anymore, because like, I'm still processing a lot of that information two years out. But it was another round of major student protests. And during that time, there was also a student from—a Latino student from Dartmouth got assaulted on campus, which led to a huge issue on like, with what BPS was, and BPS being armed. There was a Black student walkout, in which it was organized—and it was organized by the Black student groups who hadn't been involved in the previous organizing in the past few years, which was really lovely. And so, that was like a much bigger protest, a much bigger directed protest, where like, [00:39:00] names were named about the administrators who were being racist.

And then there was also the two publications from the BDH that came out that were racist, from a particular student. And particularly racist towards indigenous and Native students. And so, indigenous and Native students came out, and then what you saw, which hadn't happened before while I was at Brown, was that Black student groups released a statement, then there was like, Asian students who released a statement, and Latino students released a statement. And so there was all these statements of solidarity that came out in support, Native and indigenous students, around these articles. And there was like, a boycott of the BDH. And people were just like, the BDH—and there was a targeted sort of movement against the BDH, which we had known to be racist, and which had a racist history throughout time at Brown. Like, there was instances, and I want to say like the '80s, '90s, and early [00:40:00] 2000s, about (inaudible) BDH. And so, it was like, and so there was a lot of movement and energy on campus, and the indigenous students ended up being able to mobilize that and use that to get Indigenous Peoples' Day recognized at Brown.

Then there was, you know, the diversity action inclusion plan, and like, a day of action at, not city hall. (laughter) At University Hall. And in Fonts. That was like, really big in scale. How effective, I don't know. But really big in scale. And did lead to changes within the actual document of the diversity in action inclusion plan. I also think it wore out students. And I think what the administration learned was that students would wear themselves out. And to be honest, a lot of it too was they were waiting to see which students graduated. Because really, that [00:41:00] Ray Kelly protest had ignited a lot of folks.

SCN: Yeah. And then that class was going to grad, yeah. OK.

JG: Yeah. And so like, right, because it ignited the sophomores and juniors, I was a sophomore at the time. And the seniors had helped organize it. The freshman, it, from what I've talked with, with my friends who were there, right, a lot of the freshmen were still involved, but it was different to be a freshman during that time on campus than it was to be a junior or a sophomore, a junior or senior, upperclassmen, right? And so the juniors and seniors, we kept organizing throughout all the next, like throughout the rest of our time, because we were like, fired up, we were like oh, this is trash, oh like, what the university is saying isn't real, like there's things we can change, there's things we can do. And really, like after sort of that day of action, a lot of, it

was just a lot of trauma on campus. And it was also, because that was happening during the time that the [00:42:00] protest at U. Mich. was happening. So like, there was a lot of national headlines, and so at that point, that was the year where all of the national headlines caught up to what Brown students had already been organizing around. And so like, a lot of the folks who were getting into organizing at that point were coming off the national wave, but not necessarily recognizing where Brown was. And so I think like after that, from what I've heard since I've left, is that like, it's been quieter. Like I've heard that consistently, it's been quieter. Including from administrators I've talked to, they're like, it's been a quiet few years. And I'm like, that's, I hate that.

SCN: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

JG: I hate it so much. But like, whatever. And so, it's been interesting where they were able to sort of wait that out, and then learn how to respond, and learn how to use the diversity in action inclusion plan. Because now they use it for everything. Whenever there's an issue, "Well we have a diversity in action inclusion plan." Like oh, well this department has diversity in action inclusion plan. Oh, well we're looking at this. Look at our Med School. Like, and so they've been able to really learn well how to redirect, and also how to like, [00:43:00] get students to not want to organize together. Which was something, it's already hard to organize students, I think. But it's been interesting to sort of see like oh, well if we help these students, maybe they won't— if we, what's it called? Diffuse the energy, right? Then if we diffuse all of the energy, or let the energy be directed at Trump, like let the energy be directed at like, the city, like let students be in community organizations who are focused on Providence, which is great, but, and not necessarily Brown, so it's, I've definitely seen that. In terms of my own politicization, sorry.

SCN: No, no, don't apologize.

JG: I think like—no, yeah. It was interesting though, because like for me, I've always like, I've always been, I've always liked to battle authority, because I just think it's a fun time. But it was really Ray Kelly was when I like, really learned, like oh shit, this thing, these are things that are real, and they're affecting people outside of Brown. And so, that was the first part, where

[00:44:00] I was like, being more aware of being in Providence, but also I think I was very selfish in my own head about like, what Brown was, and what I wanted to do. And how I was going to be interacting with the university. And so, I like was, I always have sort of this idea, in terms of being both institutional and disruptive, if that makes sense. And so, sort of my catchphrase was like, they know how to handle a radical Negro, they know how to handle the respect—wow, OK, let me say this again. They know how to handle the radical Negro, they know how to handle the respectable Negro, but they don't know how to handle a Negro who's both. And so I was like, I'm be the Negro who's both. (laughter) And so like, I like, was like, I'll be in institutional spaces, but I'm also going to be outside protesting. Like I'm going to be in your committee, and then I'm going to be outside in five minutes, right? And like, [00:45:00] and for me, that was sort of a movement of OK, how can we be in the room, learn what we need to know, get the information, make the negotiations, and still build the power, build the energy, keep them on their toes, let them know that we're not actually going to let up, or that we're not stupid.

SCN: Yeah.

JG: And for me, those two were very, very important to have both of those things. And so like, I was always trying to figure out how can I help students organize, and also make sure I'm getting the information they need to organize? But then also like, letting the administration know exactly why we're organizing, exactly what we want, and that I know their arguments are stupid, right? Like that I know their arguments aren't true. That I know like the, you know, bullshit legalities you're feeding us have workarounds.

SCN: Yeah.

JG: (laughter) And so, that was really important of sort of seeing how the administrative power worked, and so I learned, I met so many administrators, and like, honestly, like I probably, I had more like, administrator friends than I had professors that like, liked me. [00:46:00] Because I was like, so focused on activism rather than classes. And it, to my detriment, I'll just say that. But it was interesting, sort of learning how to navigate that, and seeing all the different levers of

power in the university. And then using that, and like going back to the BCOC, and I think a really big part, two more personal things that were really important that weren't just part of Brown, but it was like, both Jameson Lounge folks who were my friends, and like the crew I had developed within the Brown Center for Students of Color, were groups of friends who were all like, people of color, depending on the year, varied levels of queerness happening. Like, my freshman year, my group of friends, we knew like, one of us was queer, and then like now it's like oh, there's one straight person left, maybe two. (laughter) And so, both of those groups were places where we didn't agree [00:47:00] on everything.

Two of the—yeah no, two of the best conversations I had freshman year was with people who are still dear to me, like super close friends. One was about affirmative action, where we were all people of color in the room, and we did not agree on affirmative action. Like I was like, you know, very for it, and my friend was like, “I hate affirmative action, I don't think it's great, and like, I don't like that I am doubting why I'm here because of affirmative action.” So we had a huge conversation about that. Another one was like, JROTC being allowed on campus, because—or ROTC being allowed on campus, because I was coming from JROTC, and I was also in the mindset of like, this free speech type thing. Like this free exchange thing, at that point in time. And so we have this huge battle. And so he was, both of these were spaces, or like both of those groups of people were spaces where we can, we all believe in social justice, we all trusted each other, we all trusted in each other to love and care for each other, and we argued like no tomorrow. And like, we were able to like, [00:48:00] get out a lot of that ignorance, but also build together, and also build understanding. But then we were also able to just be bad. Like we said a lot of dumb things. We were able to like, ask the stupid questions. Like, there was like, things that people would say, and we'd be like, “You can't say that.” And like, but we would like, have that conversation. Or we'd be like, “I'm going to say something, and I know I'm not supposed to say it, but I'm going to say it anyway,” and people would be like, “Yeah, right,” and like, it was like, a space where we can really be free to learn and grow and build in a way that other spaces sometimes don't allow you to. And I think particularly at Brown during my time, as the years went on, it got more toxic, what you weren't allowed to say. And so, people get scared of saying things. And then you don't know what people are thinking, and people aren't learning, because they're afraid to say things, but they're not actually learning to what they're not—they're not actually understanding why they don't say things.

And so, having spaces where I could like, be open, honest, problematic, and like, [00:49:00] grow and learn from that, was really, really essential to like, actually understanding how people think, and how to interact with people, and how to grow with people. And like, particularly like, [Larry Bulgeen?] was a really close friend of mine who, right, helped me learn a lot about like, what indigenous activism looked like. And like, what it meant to be on this land, and to be aware of that, and all the spaces I'm in. And (inaudible) said something that I never forgot, about sort of what representation looked like. But also, what inclusion looked like, right? And it was, because a lot of my friends were also activists, right?

SCN: Yeah.

JG: Stanley [Stewart?], [Larry Bulgeen?], Jessica Brown, Manuel Gutierrez, Paige Morris. Like a lot of folks were also activists on campus, like my close friends, and it wasn't—we weren't even involved in the same circles, we just all were friends freshman year, we all kind of divided, and then all of the sudden we were all over the place. And so, it was like, awesome. [00:50:00] (laughter) But it sort of happened unexpectedly, but it also meant a lot of us got tokenized over and over and over again in these spaces. And (inaudible) had told me, right, like for me, like I don't want to be in every room, I want to be know if I'm not in the room, someone is still making sure that these things are being talked about, right? It's like, I don't need to be in every room, I need to make sure like, and speaking now for me, right, like I don't need to be in every room, I just need to make sure that y'all have a good understanding, and y'all aren't leaving Black folks out. That y'all aren't leaving women out. That y'all aren't leaving trans folks out of these conversations, right? Like for me, like that's what inclusion is. It's not we need a representative of every single identity here, it's are you making sure you're thinking through all of the identities that must be represented here? And all of you in the room, right? And so that was something that's really stuck with me, and it was also, right, that process of learning [00:51:00] my own identity was really important to my politicization. I sort of started figuring out I was queer. When I came to Brown, I thought I was straight. (laughter) People like, laughed at me then, but—

SCN: OK, OK.

JG: –but I thought I was straight. And then like, I kind of knew I wasn't, there was something that was always like oh, I'm not part of the queer community at Brown, I feel like I should be, but I don't know why. And so, I started like, when I was writing poetry, I was sort of figuring that out. And I was using poetry to sort of process a lot of feelings. And at first, I came out as like ace and demisexual, or asexual and demisexual. And sort of entered the queer community, and the queer alliance through that, started doing some organizing and awareness building about that. Then through poetry, and through a lot of friends, I had started coming, I learned about gender. And I was learning the language of gender. And I was like, wow, you know, this [00:52:00] fits really well. Freshman year, I had a really lovely conversation with some folks, just about what gender was, and how people felt. But I also was bearing a lot of like, internalized transphobia in particular. Like, I didn't, I was, you know, wary of pronouns, and wary of inclusive language. Like why is this happening? (laughter) Like I don't get it. Two years later, I use the weirdest pronouns in the book. (laughter) But, and so it was like, it was this really sort of long sort of process of being like oh, a lot of this fits. A lot of this is actually what I needed, and like, meeting other trans people and talking to them, I was like wow, I feel like very similar to what you [were?]. And I asked [Maya Martinez?], who was an organizer before me on campus, like my first TWTP, when I was staffing, I asked them, I was like, "So I'm having trouble with pronouns, like can you help?" [00:53:00] And they like, gave me some ideas. And at this time, I was still very skeptical. Like it was just like, I was asking because I was like, well I guess I should learn, like I guess. (laughter) And at that point, it was like, when I was able to start really thinking about myself and figure out who I was.

And my junior year, I officially came out to folks, and at that point I was identifying, I was genderqueer and genderfluid. And starting to sort of play with gender expression a little bit. You know, change my pronouns, using xe/xem/xir at that time. And sort of navigating queerness in a different way. And being a lot more open about learning and being different than I have been. And really like, exploring my like, history and my past, and like, what all of that meant. And so, I was writing a lot about like, what I felt as a kid, what I felt through high school, why it took me so long to figure this out. [00:54:00] Like what it actually meant to not feel like a boy at all, to feel much more close to the feminine, being much closer to womanhood. And it also gave me a much better understanding of what solidarity had to look like. Because at that point, when I

was finally accepting these feelings, and accepting these emotions, I realized oh, cis people are not going to understand this. And I was like, I was like, when I was thinking about who I would tell, or like all that, I was like, this isn't something I can explain in words, that you, if you don't have this experience, like trans people, I can talk with other trans folks, and we can like, we can be like, "Yeah! Hey, oh my God, you're right," right? A cis person would be like, "What?" And I'd be like, this experience of feeling this different, or feeling like a woman even [00:55:00] regardless of what my body looks like today, right? This experience of like, a dysphoria, that's not just like, "Oh I'm trapped," right? Like, is not something I can explain to cis people. And so at that point, I was like, that means that other people have experiences that I cannot understand. Because I know now, like I truly know now that there are experiences that I have that other people won't understand, that means people are having experiences that I won't, and cannot, understand. And that's completely OK.

And like, maybe like a, then my senior year, I'm trying to be aware of time, too, because I'm like, I need to probably go in 20 minutes. But that's my fault, I talk too much. (laughter)

SCN: No worries.

JG: But yeah, and something another person said during my time at Brown was, "I don't need you to understand me, I need you to accept me, [00:56:00] and we can work on understanding later." And that's also really stuck with me. Because that was ultimately what it was. I was realizing around issues of like, economic inequality, right, like I wasn't—I was coming into Brown like, very middle income, like very middle class. And so I wasn't like, I was still very alienated in terms of like, the wealth on campus. Like I didn't understand that, it was very different. But also I didn't understand like, you know, what it meant to be low income, what it meant to truly be poor. Like, what it meant to like, come from that, and then come here. Like I was, that wasn't the same. And so, right? I was not understanding, I was like OK, I need to do some reflections. I need to recognize like, my own like, class privilege, and I need to recognize my own background and how that interacts with both of these things. And that there are people in the city of Providence who are experiencing shit that I never experienced. And that I need to understand and start learning about. When it came, and around [00:57:00] a lot of different issues, it was like OK, you go through something I don't know, so let me help you and go

through that. Like let me help you and like, just listen to what you need me to help you with. And that was, it ended up being something that carried through with a lot of different work I did around like, building like, you know, cross-cultural solidarity and like, solidarity with different groups on campus. The work I do now with the Southeast Asian Organization, even a lot of the sexual assault work I was doing. And so, it was like OK, I need to learn. Like I have a lot to learn, and I have a lot to listen to. And so coming into being like, trans, was essential to understanding what it meant to actually be there for other people.

And so, junior year, I come out, I had a gay, a lovely gay (laughter) senior year, where I was like, [00:58:00] hey! I'm finally like, really exploring and learning about who I was, and what that meant. And forcing people to sort of change their understandings of who I was, too. Because at that point, by the time I came out, I was already like, I already, a lot of people already knew who I was on campus, so it was also like, weird to sort of transition and have to like, move them all to that understanding. Yeah, but it was good. I think like, I still feel very fortunate to have come out and had this space at Brown to learn who I was. And also have the space in Providence to continue learning who I was. Because I think Brown is one of the better places to figure out you're trans. It's by no means perfect, Brown has a whole lot of problems, this isn't praise. (laughter)

SCN: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

JG: It's more just like, there was enough other people here where I had community among students, where I was like OK, I can [00:59:00] see myself with other people, within and with other people. And like, right, and it was funny, because when I came out to my mom, which is a whole other story, which we won't get into. But like, our first, before I came out to her, I was like, introducing her to pronouns. And at this point, she now gets, she like, now uses my friends' pronouns for the most part. But that was like, because literally, every single like, friend group I had, at least one person used they/them pronouns. I was like, you're going to have to get used to this, because most of my friends, I would say I have probably more, like percentage-wise, I have more friends who use they/them pronouns than any other pronouns. So like, you're just going to have to get used to it, because that's my friends.

SCN: Yeah.

JG: So it was like, it was that type of thing where it's like, there were other people who I can have the conversations with, and learn about. And that was really important, and beautiful. And also like, through poetry was able to like, find that out more and build that, as well. [01:00:00]

SCN: Yeah. Yeah, that's really beautiful. If you have a little more time?

JG: Yeah, yeah.

SCN: OK. I just wanted to talk about then like, all of that (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

JG: Yeah! (laughter)

SCN: And then like, what that was like, getting out of Brown, and knowing that like, and we don't have to talk about this, but like, knowing that you ran for city council, like that kind of like, how that all kind of translated then to like, situating yourself in Providence, and not being like, still being a Brown alumni, but not like, a Brown student at the time.

JG: Yeah. So, and I, this is something I still talk about. Like being, I'm from, I'm not from Providence, right? I'm from Brown, right? That's how I got here, and really thinking about what that means to be in Providence now. And my senior, at some point, I think my junior year I had like, the summer before senior year, that was it, I did like an [iProv?] internship with Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless. And I was like, oh this is good, this is incredible work. I like, love this city. [01:01:00] Like being outside of Brown, and being in Providence, was very, very different than being at Brown in Providence, right? Like it's a totally different world. And I had spent the previous summer here, so I'd spent two summers in Prov, and so I was like OK, like I actually like Providence when I'm not at Brown. And I had been involved with some of the different community orgs, either through my involvement there, or like, from friends and things. And so like, I had already like, known people. And so I decided I was going to stay, I like, signed a lease, I didn't have a job. I didn't even know if I was on track to graduate. And I just

signed a lease with some friends who were also like, Brown connected. Like an alum, and a grad student who still lived, but also organized in Providence.

And so, I moved in with them, and then was just kind of here for a summer, kind of organizing. But like, still trying to be involved with things in the city. And then like, one of [01:02:00] those events, like the person I organized with offered me a job doing like, organizing for money, because they were like, "I have a position if you want it." And I was like, "Cool." And then, so that's how I sort of got like, situated within like the activism within the community. And it's been interesting sort of transitioning out of Brown, because I didn't leave Brown on good terms, in my head at least. I still don't necessarily feel great about all of my experiences here, right, I think like I grew a lot, I learned a lot, I'm definitely who I am because I went to Brown. But like, as an institution, this place holds a lot of my trauma. And holds a lot of painful, like pain for me. And so, I think about that, and what it means to now work in the community. And I'm trying to be aware of what my position is within places, and also be aware of like, what it [01:03:00] means to be working towards freedom, what it means to, you know, both have privilege and use it. And also recognize like, challenges that I face and like, skills that I can utilize. And so I work, I was working with Rhode Island Jobs for Justice for about two years, or a year and a half. And then, I now work with Providence Youth Student Movement, I'm on the board of Direct Action for Rights and Equality. And it was interesting because like, PrYSM and DARE were two of the organizations that taught me what organizing was in the first place, right? Like while I was a student at Brown. And so now, sort of working with them, or like working for them, it's been interesting to be in this place now where I'm like oh, you know, I'm now part of the levers of moving things in the city.

And I think for me, what I took when I left Brown, and like, stayed in Providence, was one, that I'm staying on the [01:04:00] East Side. Like regardless of how unaffordable it gets, right? Like, this was the neighborhood that was gentrified by Brown, is still being gentrified by Brown in a different way, where I live is like, Fox Point is historically Cape Verdean and Portuguese, it's almost not at all Cape Verdean anymore, and I'm trying to recognize that, and what that would mean, but also realizing, right, this is gentrification that's now almost set, right? I'd love to reverse it, but it's pretty much set. Where there's active moves to eliminate people in the West End and the East Side, even Olneyville, right? Like, or the West and South Side, like different parts of the city, Broad Street is currently being beautified, right? Like, there's all of the

luxury development that they're trying to do downtown, they've been pushing homeless folks back out of downtown. [01:05:00] They've been eliminating shelter space, right? Like there's an ongoing project to change what Providence looks like. Mount Hope, right, the other side, so like, Mount Hope, towards the north of Brown, is actively being gentrified, and like, has had a lot of politics around that, around developers. And so there's just a move to really push people of color, like Black folks, Southeast Asian folks, Latinx folks, like out of, like, Providence proper, if you want to call it that, right? Like out of the spaces that they were a part of. And so, I've, making a concerted effort to not be part of that, right? To make sure I'm staying where I came in. And I'm not pushing that further.

SCN: Oh yeah.

JG: And so, that's one thing I'm trying to be aware of. And then I'm also thinking about sort of, you know, how do you be both disruptive [01:06:00] and—how do you be effective at disrupting the institution? And does that mean being both in the institution and outside of it at the same time, right? Like those aren't opposites, those aren't contradictory, those are complementary and both necessary, to some degree, right? Like, this is just a metaphor, for the record, right? It's easier to burn a building when you have someone in the inside of the building, right? Like a lot more things are flammable in here than they are outside. Anyway, right? Like, so it's like, (laughter) it's like being able to like, set fire to the rain. No, to like, set fire like, on both sides. And so for me it's like, as I'm thinking about my place in Providence, how do I make sure I'm aware of the skills I have, the privilege I have, my ability to speak, my ability to navigate political institutions, my tolerance for, you know, my tolerance for like, ignorance and for like, backtalk. [01:07:00] Or like, really shady things, right? Like I understand how politicians speak, and I understand backroom deals. Like I understand how that works.

SCN: Yeah.

JG: And if I can tolerate that when I know other people don't want to, don't need to, and shouldn't have to tolerate that, then how can I make sure I can use my like, ability, or my like, my willingness, right, to be in those spaces, to make changes for people who can't. And also, try

to open those spaces up for people, right? And something I was telling students at a workshop the other week was, right, like I always want to make sure I, for folks in authority, you know that I can speak to you really well, like you know that I'm Brown-educated and I can go toe to toe with you in a debate, if you will. But also, I can yell at you and tell you off in a hot second, too. Like I want you to know that I know both of these languages, [01:08:00] because you hearing me talk nicely to you is very much not something that you're going to hear from other people, and I need you to understand that you have to listen to me, regardless of how I'm talking, so that you have to listen to other folks, regardless of how they're talking to you. And so it's, I've been really trying to like, make sure I am creating that space for other people, rather than only keeping it within the sort of ivory tower language. And I'm hoping that the work that I've done and the work I continue to do is building that. And just consistently trying to become a better organizer, trying to learn, trying to listen, and trying to figure out what are the changes that people in the city need, and how do I, as an individual, help support those changes being made? And whatever way that looks like.

SCN: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. I think [01:09:00] that's a really beautiful place to end, if you don't have anything else you would like to mention.

JG: I think I'm good.

SCN: OK.

JG: Yeah, thank you for this. I think like, I'm also like, I would just say I'm very thankful that you're sort of adding these narratives into the Pembroke Archive. I think like, a lot of times, I know a lot of students, a lot of trans students who came through this university, who I found about after, and a lot of trans students who came through this university didn't graduate.

SCN: Yeah.

JG: And so, I also know they've made very important changes to what the school looks like, and also what the conversation, even nationally, looks like. And so, I'm just very thankful that you're like, doing this work.

SCN: Yeah. Of course, and thank you for doing this interview with me. Yeah.

JG: Thank you. Thanks. Let me see if any of my roommates are yelling at me. (laughter)

[01:10:00]

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