

Transcript – Lillian Berberian Klanian '57

Narrator: Lillian Berberian Klanian

Interviewer: Michael Gates

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Track 1

Michael Gates: [00:00] – Michael Gates, and I will be interviewing Lillian Berberian Klanian. She attended Pembroke's College for Women, and graduated with the class of 1957. Today's date is May 12, 1988, and the time is 3:30. All right. So you said that you were from – you've lived in Rhode Island your whole life?

Lillian Berberian Klanian: Well, after I got married and moved out and then moved back again.

MG: So, like, you lived in Rhode Island, like, all during your teenage years, and went to high school?

LBK: Oh yes. I was born and brought up in Rhode Island. Providence, Rhode Island.

MG: And now what made you decide to go to Pembroke?

LBK: Because it was a school that I could commute to. I was not allowed to go away to live at school. I wanted to go to URI, [laughter] to be honest with you. And that was out of the question. I had to [01:00] live at home.

MG: So your parents kind of put a limit on you?

LBK: Yes. That was it. Mm-hmm. So, luckily, I got into Brown, Pembroke at the time. Otherwise, I would have ended up at Rhode Island College. It was a little different. [laughter]

MG: So you didn't experience the college life as much, then?

LBK: No. That's why I insisted each one of my children went away to school.

MG: And how many children do you have?

LBK: Four.

MG: [laughter] So you have how many boys [and girls?]?

LBK: I have three girls and a boy. One is [inaudible].

MG: And so they're all in college? Or...

LBK: My oldest one graduated from Wheaton in '85. My second daughter graduated from Boston College in '87. [02:00] She's going to University of Bridgeport Law School right now. Just finished her exams. My son [inaudible]. My son's going into his senior year at Boston College. And my youngest daughter, she was waitlisted at Brown. [laughter]

MG: So do you think you were limited by Pembroke in any way, being a woman [inaudible]?

LBK: Not because it was a women's college. Because I saw no difference. All our courses were with the men, with Brown. Everything took place on the Brown campus. All the courses, the activities. Everything. Unless the people who lived at school [notice it's different?], I didn't notice anything.

MG: Did you have any interaction with the deans? The woman dean?

LBK: Dean Lewis, at the time? [03:00] No, not really.

MG: Because they told us that there was sort of a change. You had Rosemary Pierrel came in 1960.

LBK: Well, see, I wasn't there. My class, the class of '57, yes. Yes I think there was a change when I heard some things happened that time, too. But no, I was never involved in that. We had a very close relationship with – you know, everybody was involved with the college [inaudible] Dean Thomas. Dean Thomas. She was very nice, very personable.

MG: So did you come on campus for any extracurricular activities? Or...

LBK: Well, my day consisted of getting up in the morning. The first year, my brother was a senior while I was a freshman, and we used to drive to school together.

MG: He was at Brown?

LBK: He was at Brown, yes. And we'd go up to school together. And since he was the boy, he had the car, so I ended up taking the bus home. [04:00] [laughter] But after that, I had the car when he graduated and left and went to the service and so forth. And I had the car, so I had a little bit more freedom. I wanted stay in school later, and I meant to take swimming lessons at night. You had to pass a swimming test in order to graduate, [inaudible] modified test. [inaudible] I advanced. [laughter]

MG: It was just because I'm working at a day camp this summer I just wanted to be able to save little kids if it ended up [inaudible] if they needed me to, so... They were telling us that the women had to take four years of physical education?

LBK: Yes.

MG: And the men only, like, one or two semesters?

LBK: Again, I was never aware of that. I knew that we had to take gym. I didn't mind that,

though. We had nice – we had volleyball, tennis. And, you know, we had a choice of what we wanted to take. [inaudible] dancing, [inaudible]. I needed, though. [laughter]

MG: So were your [05:00] four years fulfilling at Pembroke? Or...

LBK: I think so. As far as I'm concerned, I think it was. It would have been a lot better had I lived at school, and been able to take part – I mean, really, I felt like an outsider. And my real association was with the girls, the teenager. And we were just – were lifelong friends. We're still friends today. Even though they're not in the area. Some of them are. Some of my very close friends from the class behind me. But I'm still – you know, we see – as couples, we go out and so forth. Socialize.

MG: [inaudible]

LBK: – in touch with about five of the girls I went to school with. Last year, we came back from our thirtieth – thirty?

MG: Was it a fun time?

LBK: It was nice. Well, we just came to the luncheon, and then we [06:00] walked around campus and went to a few of the forums and so forth. Which was nice.

MG: Has it changed a lot since...

LBK: Well, see, I've been in the area, so I know what's been happening. But the campus is a lot different. It's not as, well, clean as it used to be. I mean, it's a lot –

MG: As Ivy League as it used to be?

LBK: Yes. Yeah. A lot of new buildings. I mean, I've seen a few buildings go down that I was sorry to see.

MG: What were they?

LBK: Well, the little restaurant on the corner. Little luncheonette down on the corner. I think it's Brook Street and Waterman Street, or Lloyd. It's right up on Hope Street now.

MG: They tore it down?

LBK: They tore it down. They put up that big building there is now.

MG: So that really tall one?

LBK: Yes.

MG: Was it at the science library?

LBK: Maybe. The science library or the one next to it.

MG: Thayer [inaudible]

LBK: Yeah. I don't know. It's Brook [inaudible] I think. [07:00] I used to go and get [tape skip] three inches high. [laughter] Delicious, smarmy, and I used to go between classes, buy my sandwiches, sit in the biological sciences library, and wait it was time for friends to come so we'd go to the Gate and [tape skip] –

MG: So the Gate was around then?

LBK: The gate was – oh yes. Yeah. [That's building?] congregated around lunches, and ice creams, and so forth.

MG: Yeah, [this big?].

LBK: It's big today, too? Oh, it is.

MG: At night, there's snack bars that are open. And there's the Gate, and they have sandwiches, and we'll get pizza, and make pizzas there.

LBK: [So really?] [inaudible].

MG: There's ice cream, and they have soda, pop. I'm getting better at some of the terminology from around here.

LBK: New England slang.

MG: And then there's something called the [ec dec?], which is, like, sort of like the McDonald's type thing. It's fast food. They have, like, gyros and [08:00] hamburgers [inaudible]. Which I'm not into very much, so I don't go there very often. But it's a nice meeting place, because now they have beds and they have very comfortable furniture there. So...

LBK: Well, see, when I was at school, I would – dinner time came, I'd go home for dinner. Once a week, usually, we'd get together every so often and go to a Chinese restaurant on – right on Thayer Street there was a restaurant just a few doors down from the Avon Theatre. Avon Theatre was there. Same theater. [tape skip] I had never eaten Thai. That was really something. And the girls always wanted to go [inaudible]. And then I was the one, after I started going, I was the one who would encourage them to go. I [inaudible] Chinese food. So you notice I said "girls."

MG: It's just going out with the girls all the time?

LBK: Yes. Most of the time.

MG: [09:00] Were the fraternities, the men's fraternities, big in –

LBK: Yes, they were. As a matter of fact, I guess I kind of prudish. I was brought up being kind of prudish. I went to one fraternity party. There was a lot of drinking there. And I changed my ways a lot since then. [laughter] But I just didn't think it was the right thing. So I just – you know, I never really went after that anymore. And now, I'm sorry. [laughter] That's why I insisted that my kids go away to school and, you know, learn these different things, and, you know, kind of [take it?]. That was my parents were, you know, ethnic background. I mean, and I had a different upbringing. A lot of the girls here, you know, [were a lot?], you know? Especially the girls from out of state, out of town.

MG: So your parents were more strict?

LBK: Yes.

MG: Didn't let you do as much as you wanted?

LBK: That's why I ended up not going away. [10:00]

MG: Yeah. My parents are – they were, like, pushing out the door. They wanted us to go away because, like, the time where you're going to experience the world. So it's better to be away from home and experience it there.

[overlapping dialogue; inaudible]

MG: A new atmosphere, and a new culture. Because it's – out east, it's a lot different than where I live.

LBK: I'm sure, yeah. But that's why, I wanted my children to go away, but not too far away. So that's why they ended up in Massachusetts. And even though they are there – or, you know, they did go to school there – they felt that it was a rude awakening to them, because we live in East Greenwich, which is a little town with not too much going on. And when they got there, they learned a lot. Their eyes were opened.

MG: I've been told — I've been to two frat parties [inaudible]. And I was kind of — I've never drunk before in my life until only, like, three weeks ago.

LBK: [11:00] What year are you in?

MG: Freshman.

LBK: Oh, you're a freshman? Oh my goodness!

MG: That's the first time I ever drank in my life. I was —

LBK: Just two weeks ago?

MG: Yeah. A couple weeks ago.

LBK: Gee, you held out pretty long.

MG: Yeah.

LBK: I'm proud of you. That's very good. Wish I could say the same for my son. [laughter]

MG: I don't know, I just — because the thing, our family is, my father just, he just went to second — or sophomore year in high school, and then he's dyslexic, and they thought he was an idiot or imbecile.

LBK: Oh, isn't that a shame?

MG: So he dropped out of school because it wasn't fun. He was getting frustrated, because he knew how to do this stuff inside his head, but he couldn't, like, write it down. He could say it, but — so he just quit. And my mom, right now, she's [inaudible] PhD in nursing.



LBK: Isn't that great?

MG: So my dad's, like, putting three people through school right now.

LBK: Oh, gee. That's [12:00] really something.

MG: And he wants us to get [inaudible]. So we could be better, or, like, just –

LBK: That's how it was in my family, too, because, you know, my parents, they were both born in – well, they were both born in Turkey, actually. And they self educated themselves. They came, they went to school up to about the sixth grade while they were here. But my father, after he died, I found some letters that he had written. He was learning English on his own, and he was going – he moved [inaudible].

But when he was in Belgium, he invited his cousins here. And he was writing very formal English, “My dearest,” whatever his name was, I don't know who he was writing to, but it was very, very formal, and this is what he was reading out of the books. So whatever he would read, he would try to translate. And he would copy that, and that's how he learned to speak the language. [13:00] And considering the background that he had, and coming here. My mother had her parents. My father, he lost both his parents during massacres [inside?]. And he had an older brother and sister. Because of [tape cut], further himself a little bit. But everybody helped one another. Everybody worked together and did whatever they could to help brothers and sisters and relatives and so forth. They did, you know, considerably well for themselves. And, you know, very proud of him. Both parents. My mother's still working. She's 78 years old. Family business.

MG: What kind of family business is it?

LBK: Well, they started out with a liquor – grocery store. And then they went into the liquor store, and they have a theater, and adult theater in town.

MG: So did your parents – they wanted you to go to college? [14:00]

LBK: Oh, definitely. Yes. I know that I have a cousin who wanted to go to college, and her mother had passed away. And one of the relatives said to [inaudible] [tape cut] go off? Why does she need any schooling? And he believed her. And my cousin had to end up going to school on her own and supporting herself, and paying her own tuition and so forth. You know, so I just felt very fortunate that I didn't have to do that. Just, you know, [encourage us right along?].

MG: That's good [inaudible].

LBK: Yeah. And I guess [inaudible] background, too. So I have two brothers, an older one, and my younger brother didn't make it into Brown. He's the smartest one of all. [laughter]

MG: Really?

LBK: He went to URI, and then he got his master's at Brown, though. Freebie. Then they gave him a scholarship, and everything else that went along with it. And he's [inaudible].

MG: He's probably happy he got [15:00] to go away.

LBK: Oh, yeah, that's right. And I was happy for him too, because he was able to, you know, go away and live at school. [inaudible]

MG: I'm never going to join a fraternity.

LBK: No. [laughter]

MG: I just stay away from it. So did you participate in any, like, extracurricular activities when you were at Pembroke?

LBK: I belonged to the International Club.

MG: What was that?

LBK: That was a group with a lot of foreigners. We had – I don't know if you still have – I'm sure you have a lot of foreign students. Well, we didn't have as many then, but they were, you know, a few here and there. [Inaudible] any different, from Germany and Japan and China. So just a little get together, and get together every so often, and we'd just [do some?] wine and cheese, just to get to know one another. And then I volunteered at Nickerson House, which is a place where the younger, you know, poorer children go, and do after school activities. [16:00] I had a car, so I used to take a group of the girls down. And we used to spend, I guess, one afternoon there, you know, working with children. But that was about it, I would say. You know, as far as joining clubs and everything Because I was living on campus, and to get up and, you know, go home then come back again wasn't too convenient.

MG: Yeah, that's what my ma did that, too. She went to school and commuted to Wayne State because she's in nursing. [tape cut]

LBK: [inaudible] a lot alike.

MG: [Go away, go away?]. So what did you concentrate in when you –

LBK: My major was sociology. And I did at one time think I was going to go into social work. But really, in the back of my mind, I always wanted to go into teaching, since I was –

MG: So that's what you're doing now?

LBK: – yeah, so that's what I'm doing now. And –

MG: Where are you teaching at?

LBK: At Oakland Beach School in Warwick. Elementary.

MG: Elementary school?

LBK: [inaudible] classroom.

MG: So you like the younger kids?

LBK: Yes. Yeah. The older ones are too big for me. [laughter] [17:00] And too smart, maybe. I don't know. But I'm enjoying it. I substituted for seven years before I was able to get a job, which I did two years ago. It was my second year full time teaching. I taught one after-school. I went to Rhode Island College, because I didn't take education courses. Only one here. Only because I figured it's a waste of money to, you know, take these courses here, and I could go to RIC and get them at such a less expensive price. And I took an intensive course with them one summer, and I [inaudible], which gave me a certificate, emergency certificate, and I was able to go into student teaching. And then teaching [inaudible]. Then I got married, and I left. Then [tape cut] started coming along. And then I was very happy, you know, didn't have to work while I had the kids at home. And it was nice, too, because I don't know how the girls do it today. [18:00] They have the babies, and then they go right back on the job again. And I wouldn't have given up those years. So I really don't feel like I missed out on anything by not going back and being that career woman, you know?

But now, back teaching. As I said, I subbed for seven years. And I didn't – my children, you know, were going to school.

MG: [inaudible] tape recorder. [laughter]

LBK: And here I am, I'm teaching. [laughter]

MG: So you took how many – like, when you had your kids, did you take, like, a lot of years off so you'd be there?

LBK: Yes. Well, I got married in '63, and I didn't go back to teaching until '78-'79, substituting. So I was home, about 15, 16 years.

MG: And that was a willing choice?

LBK: Oh yes, yeah. Oh, do you mean staying home?

MG: Yeah.

LBK: Oh, definitely. Yes. Yeah. [19:00] As I said, I wasn't the career woman type. I wanted to have children, and, you know, enjoy them as they were growing up. Even today, and even my youngest one, she's in high school now, and she would really rather me – you know, that I stay home than be out working.

MG: But you're pretty much going the same hours, like, [inaudible].

LBK: I know. But she gets out a little bit earlier than I do sometimes, you know? Especially in high school. But she's getting over that, now. She's used to the fact. Now she enjoys it. Now she's getting it, because she comes home and now she's got the house to herself.

MG: So you have very close relationships with your children?

LBK: I think so. Not with my oldest one as much. My other three – the oldest one, she's very independent, and she wants to be independent. And she wants you to think that she's very independent. But there are times [20:00] when she's very dependent. [laughter] But I don't know, you know, they talk to me. And when they're at school, I talk to them a couple times a week for a long time. And my son confides in me but my daughters don't, I think. [laughter] At least he pretends to. Yeah. [Now I look at the relationship?]. Then again, I'm maybe closer to them [than their father is?]. He's kind of, you know, not as – I don't know if I should say “interested,” but he's being a man, I guess. [laughter] I don't know.

MG: So you think there's been a lot of, a vast amount of changes in Brown, Brown and Pembroke since you left?

LBK: Well, it has. In regards I guess to the courses that people [21:00] that students are taking today. [tape cut] I understand that they take anything they want to take, just about –

MG: I don't know if that's really true.

LBK: We – maybe it isn't. OK.

MG: They quote-unquote say that that's what they're doing, but you end up saying what your concentration is, and there's specific requirements for that concentration. You have to take those classes. And really, it's not, like, as free as it really appears. But it allows you to take classes you might not have taken otherwise.

LBK: I see. Well, we had to take what we called “distribution courses.” And you'd have to take, I guess, is English, and, you know, certain courses. Like, core courses, I guess [inaudible]. And then you would go ahead, first two years you would take those, and the third year you would major. And I forget how many classes [inaudible]. [22:00] [How many courses?] do you take today? You know, each semester?

MG: I took four first semester and five this semester. You could take –

LBK: Oh. We took four.

MG: You take as few as three or as many as five.

LBK: Oh. I see.

MG: Some people can take six, but they shy away because that's a lot of work.

LBK: Yeah. It sure is. Yeah.

MG: Because they want you to – usually, they tell you to take four because they want you to, you know, experience college life.

LBK: Sure. I agree with them.

MG: [inaudible]

LBK: Yeah.

MG: It's when there's – there's a lot of opportunities here. I think that's why – my sister checked out all the colleges. I was, like, just, like, watched and see what she did. She's – my sister is really intelligent, and she went around all over the country. Because we have family, and she might have an aunt in New York that went to Vassar, and my mom's sister lives there, and my mom's brother lives in Washington, DC. Works at the White House. [23:00] Went to Brown for his master's. My uncle, he lives in Detroit. And so my sister, like, visited them, and visited all the colleges she could around there. She visited New York and visited all the colleges.

LBK: She did all the work for you, then.

MG: She did. She wrote up, like, pages and pages, and put the pluses and minuses in. Built this, like, point system. And Brown ended up having the highest, like, rating. So that's where she wanted to go, so –

LBK: Oh. She must be a bright girl if she got in. You know, you too, you know?

MG: Yeah. She's a physics major.

LBK: Oh. [laughter]

MG: She has yet to get lower than an A here.

LBK: Are you serious?

MG: She's scary. We're like, uh. She's going to Poland next year, abroad, second semester.

LBK: Oh my goodness.

MG: So she's going to take Polish this summer and go over to my aunt's house a lot. Because we're 100% Polish, but my grandpa changed his name. So we [24:00] can talk about our families. My parents know how to speak [tape cut].

LBK: None of you speak it, right?

MG: No.

LBK: That's what happened in our family. My husband and I speak Armenian, and my children are so upset. "Why didn't you teach us?" Well, what happened when we were growing up, grandparents were around, we lived at home. You know, in the area, the ethnic area more or less. But we moved to Massachusetts when we first got married. And we're going to speak Armenian to them? And how are they going to play with their neighbors and their friends, and so forth? You know, so that's why – we just thought they'd always pick it up. I did take them to Armenian school. Three of them graduated from Armenian school. They know how to write, they know how to read, they don't know what they're reading and writing, you know? They can translate the words and stuff. But they don't understand. They've picked a few phrases here and there, but not like they would have liked, you know, [inaudible].

MG: [inaudible] I don't [25:00] [inaudible]. Because you always hear my grandma speaking Polish on the phone to everybody. And then when my dad goes over to my grandma's house, and he sits around and speaks Polish with her. Or they [want?] us to –

LBK: [And when they do that?]. [laughter]



MG: That's when they really speak it.

LBK: That's the good part of it. So, you know, the husband and wife want to speak their own language, then they do, you know? And the children don't know what's going on. [laughter]

MG: Nobody knows what's going on.

LBK: That's – you know? But I think you doing this now, it's nice to know another language if possible.

MG: So did you travel any after you graduated? Did you, like, get away from your parents? Or...

LBK: That's when my kids – how could you – you mean to tell me you lived at home until you got married? This is what my children – I said, “Yes, I did.” Well, after I graduated and, you know, went into teaching, we had a very – a young school where we were, you know, all around our age. You know, everybody would teach, expect [inaudible] modern teacher. So a lot of young people were going into [26:00] teaching at the time. We had a fantastic group of teachers. [tape cut] go up together. We used to go out constantly, you know, Friday nights, Saturday nights. And then we even went on – well, we went to Bermuda. That was my big trip. Went to Bermuda one spring. And we would, you know, go places together, maybe on a weekend or a short vacation for a few days. So I never really [tape cut] because in those days, they didn't fly around like they do today. You have to remember that.

MG: Flying is scary.

LBK: Yeah. It wasn't like it is today. And if people were flying, it wasn't as inexpensive as it is today. So, you know, you're kind of limited. And also in those days, if the girl left home, my goodness, and got an apartment of her own in the same town that her parents lived in, her name was mud. Really. You laugh about that now, but that's just the way it was. And my daughter's living in Massachusetts right now, the one that's graduated. And that could have been understood [27:00] a little bit, because she's out of town, out of the statue.

MG: But in the same city?

LBK: But even that would have been looked down upon. And my mother today is so open-minded, I can't believe that she accepts all these things that are going on. Because there are some people who are in her age group that still think it's terrible, these girls take off and going to – what do you mean, they're [tape cut] schools are out here. You have to get into them. You know? Yeah. So...

MG: So did you meet your husband through teaching? Or...

LBK: Oh, no. I met my husband – [laughter] do I have to put it on here? [laughter] At my – I was – oh, gosh. When I was at school, you know, I was dating a certain person for about three years. And he was not going to school here. And his father had died – [inaudible] my husband, and this guy that I was going out with were fraternity brothers.

MG: They both went to Brown?

LBK: [28:00] No, this is URI.

MG: They went to URI?

LBK: Yeah.

MG: The school you wanted to go to.

LBK: Yeah, just where I wanted to go to. [laughter] And what happened was that my boyfriend's father died, and Pete, my husband, came to the wake, and that's when I met him. Because he was, at the time, going to law school with my cousin Gerald, who went to Brown here with me. And that was just a "Hello, how are you?" And that was it. There was a little breakup between

me and my boyfriend, and Pete came along. And that's how we met. And just same ethnic background and everything, you know? So everybody was happy with what was going on.

MG: Yeah. My parents were [inaudible]. They went to, like, rival schools. And, like, ended up dropping out. He was a few years ahead of my mom, and they met through, like, a youth group dance. [29:00]

LBK: Yeah. Well, same type of thing, because every time I – afterwards, you know, when I go to the different dances, like, that the church would sponsor, I would always see Pete there, and then we'd come up, and be very nice. And, you know, that's how it started. And as I said, he was going to school with my cousin. And I was still going on with this guy and so forth. And finally, the day came. [laughter]

MG: I was going out with this one girl. She's still in high school, she's a senior in high school, and we're about, like, six months apart. I'm a late person, born in the fall. So, could have been either – just coming into college, just coming here. My parents decided to hold me back. And I just broke up with her the other – or she broke up with me just, like, a few weeks ago. So, like –

LBK: Oh. That's kind of hard, huh?

MG: Yeah. But it's hard, because she's back home, and she's going to stay home for college, and it's too far. [30:00] Because this is, like, the time when you pretty much change the most and, like –

LBK: Yes. Exactly. And, you know, you have so much here.

MG: No, I know. It's, like, how I was feeling.

LBK: [It's a shame?].

MG: Like, I missed out on some stuff.

LBK: Yeah. That's – it ties you down.

MG: I'm kind of like mixed about going. I want to go home, but I don't want to stay there that long now. I want to, like, come back.

LBK: You've got the taste of it. Yeah.

MG: Because all your friends up here are – you see them every day. You know, you keep wanting to see them every day.

LBK: They're family. They become family, you know? That's how my son is now. He's going to come home tomorrow, and he's going to California Monday with – he's from [tape cut] a classmate along the way. And then he's going to fly back after a couple of days. He's going to Newport. He's a sailing instructor. [tape cut] He did that last year, too, and enjoyed it very much. Got to settle down one of these days, you know? This is his last year. He'll be a senior next year.

MG: [31:00] What do you mean by settling down? You want him to –

LBK: Oh, no, no, no, no. Just get a regular job or something, or go on to graduate school. Or, you know, he has to grow up a little bit. He's had too much of a good time. I think he went over to the other extreme. [laughter] Though he's a good kid.

MG: So, like, you had to take your core classes here at Brown?

LBK: Yes.

MG: They were, like, English, math, science courses?

LBK: Yes. And they were huge courses. But, you know –

MG: A lot of people?

LBK: Yes, as a matter of fact. Let me see. Alumnae Hall. That's where I took my classics course, classics. [inaudible] And that was [tape cut]. Is this White Hall? No, not White. Manning. Manning. It's where my biology course – and then I think we did that for a class. Because we used to break up into seminars [32:00] once a week, or smaller groups. And that was very good, because here you are sitting with all these people, and you're not even interacting with the professor, and you ask questions. That's a little more [tape cut].

MG: So you had very large classes then?

LBK: We had – yeah. Well, how many people does Alumnae Hall hold? That class, it was full.

MG: It's right above the gate. Or –

LBK: Yes, that's right. And Manning Hall, the same thing. They're all [inaudible]. Have they divided that up now? I happened to peek in there one day, and I saw a class. I don't know. Have they divided the room up [overlapping dialogue]?

MG: No, it's still that big, open room. They have a lot of finals in there.

LBK: Yeah.

MG: For kids. And they have, like, dances and stuff.

LBK: Oh. Dances we used to have at Alumnae Hall.

MG: They're tearing down Marvel Gym

LBK: Yes. Yes. [33:00] That was where a lot of the activity took place. And even the swimming pool was on campus here.

MG: Swim Center?

LBK: Where Leeds is? Leeds Center?

MG: Oh yeah. Yeah.

LBK: All right. They're adding an addition or something. Our alumnae group went there a couple weeks ago, just as a tour, Leeds theatre and so forth. And they've covered over the pool.

MG: Yeah, didn't it used to be in the basement, or something?

LBK: Yes. It was, like, or on ground level or something. I don't know. But they've covered it, and that's where I used to go every Monday night. [laughter] Struggling, trying to pass the swimming test.

MG: Is that – I know they were talking, they were telling us that they had to pass, you had to pass the swimming test because –

LBK: Well, I passed the modified test. [laughter] What did I do? I swam one way, and I was able to float back the other way or something. You know, rather than swimming both ways.

MG: [inaudible] I mean, because really, swimming has nothing to do with any education.

LBK: I know. But I guess they [34:00] just wanted us to be well rounded. That was part of it.

MG: That's interesting.

LBK: I have a friend who – and they even had a beach house. I can't understand, she would just go right to the edge of the pool, and she would go in to it, she'd have to hold on to the side of the pool, and –

MG: That's what my mom does.

LBK: And all she did was kick her feet, and that was it. She held onto the side of the pool, even to kick her feet [is something?]. We had another question we had to take on. Or a couple of others. We had a speech course that we had to take. I don't know if that's – Professor Barnhill. I think he retired last year. People know him around here. But I think he was brand new at the time. And then we also have to take account [tape cut]. Is that required? I don't know.

MG: I have to. Yeah. That's one. They have, like, a couple requirements. They have a writing requirement, so you have to pass a standard of writing.

LBK: Yes. That's what it is.

MG: I'm not a very good writer.

LBK: No, well, I wasn't either. But, you know, [35:00] at least I could pass [tape cut]. You know? [inaudible]

MG: I've taken this English class for a second time. I've never been good in English. I'm just – my high school I went to, I went to De La Salle Collegiate in Detroit. They have one in Providence, I think.

LBK: Oh yes. Yeah.

MG: DSL. And they were really strong in the sciences, in the math, and the social sciences, and the histories. But our English department in high school was not really what it should be. And I took a lot of the English classes. I did well in them, but I, like, have a really hard time writing anything.

LBK: Yeah. I feel the same way about myself, too. Because it was very difficult for me writing papers. The high school I went to, Central High School, I don't know if you've heard about it, but it was, like, the bottom of the barrel. I don't know why. Well, I guess I just followed my brother's footsteps. My brother went to Central, [36:00] so I went – my younger brother ended up going to Classical, which was right next to a top school. It really is.

MG: Is that a private school?

LBK: No it's not, it's a public school. But now, you have to take entrance exams to get in. But a lot of the, like, professional people who live in Rhode Island have attended that school. I don't know why, just, as I said, I just followed in my brother's footsteps. So when I got to Pembroke, I found it very difficult competing with all these brains from all over the country. And, you know, it was very difficult for me. Especially, you know, with the background. But it as a struggle.

MG: I think I found [inaudible]. In English class, you have to – you go through the English class, and it really doesn't matter at what grade you get in the class, but you have to submit two papers. And you have to write an impromptu test at the end. You [submit it and there's an?] English professor. And I had, last semester, I had a teacher that I didn't like [37:00] very much. Because we had – we had to write about topics that I didn't really – I wasn't really –

LBK: Into.

MG: Into. I wasn't – I didn't know very much about it. Because we – we had – our was women's – it was all women's liberation stuff. And I really didn't – I really wasn't in contact with all – we had, like, some really difficult [tape cut] and understanding they were trying to get across. And I couldn't write very knowledgeable papers. I just had a tough time. But this semester, we had a lot easier time, and the teacher seems to help me.

LBK: Well, just learning [inaudible]. That's right, because we didn't have – I came here, the first essay exams that I had, subjective exams, were here. Everything that we had at the high school



were, like, you know, multiple choice, or fill in the blank. And nothing we really had to think too much. That's why, you know [inaudible]. [38:00]

MG: That's what I'm trying to do. Survive. I don't want to take another English class ever again. [laughter] Because I, like, follow in my sister's footsteps all the way.

LBK: When you say that. Yeah.

MG: I came in here wanting to be a physics major. So I took physics first semester. And I didn't have enough math background. Our math, I went up to calculus. I took calculus my senior year in high school, and we didn't go far enough, and I took an advanced physics course here. And I just got in over my head, and I was doing the –

LBK: Didn't you have to pass a test? Like, a proficiency test of some kind?

MG: Yeah, I took an AP exam. It was a calculus based one. And yeah, I got a three out of five on it, which isn't bad.

LBK: Yeah, that's good. Yeah.

MG: And they told me I didn't go in. They had physics three and four, would be [39:00] just, like, introductory physics courses, with people that really hadn't had any real background in physics. And I went up to physics five. And I just didn't have enough calculus. And it wasn't the physics that was hard. it was the math that was hard. And I was like, pulling out my hair, because the teacher expected us to know it, and our whole class didn't know it. And he was like –

LBK: Well, so, you know, in that case, it's the professor's fault. He should have given you some background in that. Now, let me ask you this. Did he know that you were your sister's brother? [laughter]

MG: You know, my sister took an even more advanced one her freshman year.

LBK: No, but they're not comparing you to your sister, I hope, you know?

MG: Oh, no. I don't think they know

LBK: [laughter] Made the connection.

MG: I hope not. But we're going to take – my sister and I are going to take a few classes together, first semester, actually. Just going to –

LBK: Oh, that should be fun.

MG: It will be. Taking a statistics course. We're taking a class called "Women in [40:00] developing and socialist countries." It's a seminar.

LBK: Oh, that should be really interesting.

MG: With two really good professors. One's a sociologist, and one's a psychologist. And they're, like, going to, like, examine the women and stuff like that. So it'll be kind of interesting.

LBK: You have a lot of women's courses, then.

MG: Yeah. They have quite a bit going.

LBK: See, we didn't have anything. Everything was just cut and dry [inaudible].

MG: Were most of the professors male then?

LBK: Oh yes. Although, I did have – I had an English, a female English professor. But most of them were. [inaudible] But I just remember having one English female teacher.

MG: Was there a lot of black students at Brown when you were –

LBK: I remember one in my class. And I don't know [inaudible]. [tape cut] There was nothing like there is today. I don't know the numbers. [41:00] [inaudible]

MG: All right. I have a black roommate that lived with us freshman year. I think it's good that they do that so they don't – because one bad thing I think Brown does is they have a thing called third world transition week. So all the minority, like, the black students, and the Chinese, Japanese, they all come up before us. So they form their, like, little cliques before everybody else comes here. So they sort of, like, have their own group of friends. You know, then before we get there, and it's really difficult to, like, [inaudible].

LBK: See, I don't understand that. There's a program on the educational program, channel the other day, 36 something.

MG: PBS?

LBK: Yeah. And it was all about different cultures, and black students. And my daughter and I were sitting there watching it. And, you know, if they want to integrate, why are they forming their own groups? Why do they have Rites and Reason? [42:00] Is that strictly a black theater they have on campus here?

MG: I'm not sure.

LBK: All right. But everything, they want to be integrated, but they're always segregating themselves. Like, my daughter is – even on BC's campus. She said, "Wherever you go, you know, you want to be friendly. But they all congregate amongst themselves. And that would be it. They have their own groups, they sit together at lunch, they sit together at dinner, and how could you, you know, get them to integrate? And even where she is now, University of Bridgeport, and there are a lot of foreigners there. She says every group has its own little clique.

MG: Excuse me. It's easier for me, because I have a black roommate, so I have a lot of friends that are black now here. But if my roommate wasn't black, I don't think I would have as many friends that are black. Because they do, they form their own little cliques, and they stay. [43:00] It's a shame.

LBK: It's too bad. It is, because they're here, you know, to broaden themselves. Now, my son, who is, you know, the one at BC, right across the hall from him, he has a lot of – I think there are, like, two, three, maybe four basketball players. And they're in and out of each other's rooms like it's nothing. And that's the way it should be. But I think once they get involved in sports, they tend to make friends, you know, more easily with others, rather than stay in a group.

MG: Yeah. Because there's more people.

LBK: Yeah.

MG: Because, like, my roommate joined a black fraternity. And those are – they do some awful things. I mean, they even segregate themselves more by joining a black fraternity, because in order to join the black fraternity, it's like, your – he was – since the beginning of the second semester all the way to spring break, Easter break. So from the beginning of February all the way to April, middle of April, he was [44:00] “on line” they call it, and he was – they dressed up the same, they dressed in army fatigues, and they had dog collars. There's a movie out about it. It's, I think, Spike Lee, and it's something, a movie called *School Daze*. And it's all about black fraternities. And my roommate went through this, and he didn't live in the room for, like, two and a half months.

LBK: Well, you had a room to yourself.

MG: A room to myself. And [tape cut] talk to anybody.

LBK: Oh, is that –

MG: He couldn't talk to me. He could only talk to the people that he was on line with, and then the members of the black fraternity.

LBK: What are they trying to prove by doing that?

MG: I don't know. And then they had to run everywhere. And then if they were all together they had to, like, walk in line. That's what they call it, they're on line. Well, he could talk to me, but, you know, nobody was supposed to know. And he came to [inaudible]. I don't know, just, I wouldn't. And it's like –

LBK: All that time. It's ridiculous. On that program I was talking, I mentioned before, they had – they were talking about fraternities again, [45:00] and how one black boy who had joined a white fraternity, and the blacks all turned their backs on him. They didn't think he [tape cut] himself, and ran a little bit above other people.

MG: There's a number of black guys on our basketball team, that are in white fraternities. And nobody really turns their back. They're more, like, open [inaudible].

LBK: Yeah. And that's the way they should be. I remember when my brother graduated from URI, '67. Yeah, '67. He had – my husband, he was at URI, and graduated in '54. They had one black, and that was [tape cut]. Or you probably don't know. He made a name for himself. [He died?] [tape cut] up there in Washington. But he was nationally known at the time in terms [46:00]. It was accidental or what happened.

MG: He was [inaudible]. It's so funny now how at Brown now, there's, like, so many, like, groups that are protesting this and that, and this and that.

LBK: You know, my youngest daughter. My youngest daughter was waitlisted here. She's [inaudible] wait until [inaudible]. I just brought her to look at the campus, and she's like, "I'm not like those people" you know, that came here. Somebody was speaking on a megaphone, protesting this or that. She said, "I don't do these things." She says, "I don't want to get involved

in anything like this.” I said, “Well, you don’t have to.” I said, “You don’t even have the choice right now.” I said, “When you get accepted, then worry about it.” But this is how it is with her. And she came and she looked at the campus, she said, “Mom, it’s so dirty around here” –

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