

Transcript – Galia Siegel, Class of 1989

Narrator: Galia Siegel  
Interviewer: Karen Lamoree  
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Track 1

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Karen Lamoree: This is Karen Lamoree interviewing Galia Siegel, class of 1989. Galia, why don't you tell us a little bit about your work with Project Birth and the Peer Sister program?

Galia Siegel: Sure. Last year in the fall, I took The Black Family, which is an Afro-American Studies class, and one of the projects was to speak to someone in the community about their family and their experiences, and I just happened to be paired up with a man who worked at the Urban League, who basically interested me in what they were doing in there through approach to advocacy and service and for the community. And he -- I asked him what I could offer, as a Brown student, you know, what would be a good thing for me to do, and he hooked me into the Peer Sister program, or actually the Project Birth --

KL: What's this man's name?

GS: His name is Len Anderson. And he works with family issues more. But he told me about [Deosha Hague?], who is the head of Project Birth [01:00] at the Urban League. And Project Birth is a program for pregnant and parenting teens in South Providence, that's the community they serve. And they are an advocacy and service program for these women, which means that first of all, they serve to support the women, who are either pregnancy -- pregnant -- presently pregnant or have already had their children. And they advocate them for in the city, to give them services to make sure that they're getting everything they need, and that they have enough food and, you know, their housing situation is stable. And also, they run a lot of sort of workshops and

-- to deal directly with issues of birth control, of sexuality, of running your home, of parenting. And the third component of the program is all the women who are in Project Birth have to be in an educational program. That means either high school, GED training -- [02:00] some of them are at more of an elementary school level and some of them have to go through literacy training, so it's at various levels depending on the specific need of the woman. And that, in terms of the educational component, is where I got hooked in most immediately, because as a Brown student, that seemed like something really tangible that I could offer, was education. Or was helping with education and tutoring. So what I did was go down there every Wednesday afternoon between, like, 3:00 and 5:30 or something, and whichever one of the -- and the women knew I was there, and whoever came, I tutored. Which turned out really well. I -- what ended up actually happening was that I tutored one woman, a woman named [Lavonia or LaVaughnia]. She just is the one that came sort of repeatedly. I saw a couple of people, one on -- you know, one at a time at various points. [03:00] But she worked -- we just sort of got along, and she came a lot. And so that was good in that I sort of had this relationship with her, but it wasn't good in that she was the only person who I got to see. So then that was in the spring of last year, spring of '87, and I went home for the summer and worked, sort of by chance, at the Washington Urban League on a welfare reform program. And the relationship this has to our -- my situation is that what I did during the summer was go and see how welfare programs in the city work right now, which is basically very randomly, very inefficiently and ineffectively. And one thing I found was that -- or one thing I feel is that one of the reasons these programs tend to have little long-term effect is that [04:00] they have -- no one ever -- there's no sort of personal relationship ever built at any point in this process of delivering these goods, and I thought, and still think, that one way to sort of impact somebody's life, and I don't mean that sort of, you know, impact their life in -- with them having no part in the process, is to have a personal relationship. Because in that way, you can get something from them and they can get something from you. And it seems to me that if my goal is for Lavonia or whoever to have some sort of life change, you know, then that would be a good way to effect it. And what -- so over the summer I sort of mulled over this idea of how this could be accomplished in terms of Project Birth, and came up with the possibility of starting a Peer Sister program, which instead of having me go down [05:00] and just whoever happened to come by I would tutor and have it sort of just be an educational program or a tutoring program, we would -- every woman in Project Birth would be matched up with a Brown woman

who would be a tutor and work on the educational front, because it is really important, and it is something that Brown women can offer. You know, they happen to know algebra and some history and stuff like that. But also, to expand the relationship to more than that, and my whole philosophy that's sort of developed from this is that everyone -- I at Brown and Lavonia in South Providence, has -- you just have a really limited worldview because of what you're exposed to. You just have a way that you sort of think about things and approach them. And whenever two different sort of worldviews can come together, both can be complemented, and I can learn from her and she can learn [06:00] from me, and in that way, for me, that's very important, because I don't want to have a program where I go down to South Providence and, you know, offer my services and do this and that and not realize how much I can learn. And I really think that's true. And, you know, I've learned a lot from Lavonia already. And so how -- I was really lucky, because Deosha, who's the head of Project Birth, was really excited about this and has been really helpful, and we were sort of able to team up and really activate a program fairly quickly and pretty effectively so far. What we did was, I spoke to her about this in in the fall of 1988 -- no, 1987, and we decided that this could really work, that we could get a group of Brown women together, and certainly the women in Project Birth would be really, really [07:00] excited about some sort of tutoring and companionship-type program. And I found the Brown women pretty easily -- I mean, women, people here are real active, and if you offer them an opportunity they'll --

KL: Did you advertise?

GS: Yeah. What happened is that there's a BCO day at the beginning of each school year where people -- all the volunteer programs sort of advertise, you know, there. And I wasn't able to be there because I had somewhere else to be, but I put up a sign saying, you know, "Anyone interested in working with parenting or pregnant or parenting teens, write your name down, I'll get back to you." And about 20 women wrote their names down.

KL: That's great.

GS: Yeah. I was like -- it took me, like, two weeks to find the sign. I thought it was lost. So I find the sign, and, like, 20 -- like, the wh-- all the spaces are taken, and it also happens, like, yes, people here are active, people here are interested. (laughter)

KL: That's great.

GS: Yeah, it was great. And I actually -- it took a while to get the program started, just because I had a lot of things to work through in terms of what I wanted to do, [08:00] and to make sure that, you know, you don't want to -- you don't want to be paternalistic, you don't want to, like --

KL: Condescend, right.

GS: -- be insensitive, yeah. So that took a while to work through, but once we did that, we got about eight Brown women and me, who were -- with Deosha's help, were trained. We did -- Deosha pretty much organized the training sessions, and we did three, one on -- two, basically, working on sensitization issues. You know, who are these women who are in the situation? What are stereotypes of a parenting teen? What -- we talked about, you know, sort of, what's the difference between a teenager and a parenting teenager? And what -- you know, what are these -- what do these women go through? What resources are available to them? We talked to a couple of -- a social worker at Women and Infants, where a lot of them [09:00] get their medical services. Talked to another... like, another case manager, who knows a lot about (inaudible) adolescents. And we did that for two sessions, and we also, on the third one we went and sort of did a tour of South Providence, because a lot, needless to say, people at Brown stay up on the hill.

KL: Of course. It must have been an eye-opener.

GS: Yeah. For a lot of people. It's very close by. South Providence is not that far.

KL: No, no.

GS: So we -- it was very -- I mean, it wasn't sort of -- we didn't -- it was not in-depth. But we just (inaudible) people so they would know where they were going if they were going to meet their peer sister down in South Providence, they would know and not sort of be, "You know, how am I going to get there? Where is it?" And did that, which was fun. And then we had one excellent training on tutoring. There's a woman named Sally [Gab?] who runs South Providence Tutorial who is an amazing lady. [10:00] And she did some tutoring work with us.

KL: [background dialogue inaudible] That's OK.

GS: And we were trained, and that was -- that took place in first semester, so 1987, and this semester, which is [January '80?], we (inaudible) -- we got started and the women got matched up, and we had an initial meeting where all the peer sisters from Brown and all the peer sisters from the Urban League got together and met each other. And it went very well; everyone was very, you know, receptive and excited, and we've been starting to meet. And I -- I haven't -- I knew Lavonia before, the woman who, we decided that we had to be peer sisters. (laughter) We didn't want anyone else. And we've met a couple of times, and I think it'll work out well. I think it's hard -- I mean, I'm not -- I don't know -- I'm not an expert tutor. [11:00] I, you know, sort of have to go by my instincts. That's one thing I'd like to develop in the program, is to strengthen the tutoring component. Because it -- for the -- for Deosha at the Urban League and for me also, you know, it's really -- the reason this program exists is that these women do better in school, that they graduate from high school. And it's very difficult to overcome the urban educational system. (laughter) Not to make judgments, but.

KL: How do these young women come to the Urban League? Do they come on their own or are they referred?

GS: They, well, they -- both. They're in the program voluntarily; they're not mandated by the state at all. But some of them come on their own because they hear about the program by word-of-mouth, and, you know, it is a program. It gives them -- it's a program that's beneficial to them in that it gives them sort of practical goods, like food if they need it, [12:00] clothes for their kids, toys, so it's definitely, you know, good for them. But they have to work hard to get that.

They're required to come to workshops and stuff. But, you know, they're there voluntarily, and some of them are referred by a social worker at Women and Infants, or different, you know, various social workers or families, or -- I think a lot of word-of-mouth. But a lot of the women in the program don't know each other, or didn't know each other previously. But yeah, it seems like they get to know each other quite well.

KL: So the women -- the young women who want to get Brown peer sisters, was that advertised to them, or one-on-one were they told about it?

GS: Actually, that's not clear to me. I don't think it was adver-- I think that Deosha spoke to women that she thought would be receptive to it. One of the problems is that there's many -- there's about 25 women in Project Birth, and as of now, [13:00] only eight peer sisters -- eight Brown women who are involved. So we couldn't offer it to everybody. Hopefully, my -- one of my goals is to expand the program and to find advertising and get people for this semester to be trained so we can offer it as, you know, a larger component of Project Birth. But I think that Deosha spoke to women who she thought would be open to a program like this, who would be willing to put in the effort and stuff. So I don't think that, you know, (inaudible). But I think part of that was just because there weren't enough Brown women.

KL: And what do -- these women get tutoring from the Brown students, and what else do you do when you meet with them? Do you just talk with them?

GS: Yeah. That is -- that's the -- my ideal, is talking with them and also just doing things with them, going shopping, [14:00] playing with the children, just coming up to Brown, showing them, you know, where I live, what I do, going to their homes and, you know, seeing where they live. And but just sort of a lot of -- sort of -- it's hard to -- I never know exactly how -- especially just sort of being friends, and, you know --

KL: Palling around.

GS: -- yeah. And just getting to know each other, and building, you know, a trust and, you know, having sort of a real relationship outside of that. And that's the part that's going to take longer to create, and that's why, you know, I'm glad that I have one more year here after this.

KL: Right.

GS: So that I can really have some sort of long-term relationship, and, you know, trying to find people who are going to be (laughter) freshmen and sophomores -- who are freshmen and sophomores now, who have some time left. But that's what I think I'm really lucky that I got hooked up with the Urban League when I was a sophomore, so I had sort of plenty of time to [15:00] --

KL: To work through it.

GS: Yeah.

KL: And are all of these teenagers, they're black women?

GS: No. A lot of -- the Urban League -- well, South Providence is a predominantly black community, but there's some Hispanic women. It's predominantly black women, but not all black women. There's a couple of white women and (inaudible).

KL: Are these women who are likely to live on their own or to live with their families?

GS: Um, it depends. As far -- depends on the women. A lot of them, though, I think, live on their own. Which for, you know, I think for very few reasons, a lot of them -- one thing we talked about is that their mothers, a lot of them were teen moms. And have -- when their daughters become teen mothers, I think it's really difficult, because they -- you know, it's sort of scary to --

KL: To see your daughter --

GS: Yeah.

KL: -- making [16:00] the mistake that you made.

GS: Yeah, being in the same situation. So I think it creates some tensions at that point in the relationship. Although they definitely maintain contact with the mothers, and the grandmother babysits and does stuff. But again, the grandmother's probably 35 or something. Pretty young grandma. But I think it varies. Lavonia lives on her own. She's 16, and has lived on her own for about a year or two.

KL: That's pretty scary.

GS: Yeah. But she's a good mom. And she -- what's scary about it is that she's living on her own ille-- well, not illegally, but she lives -- unfortunately, if you're younger than 18, you're not supposed to be living on your own.

KL: Right.

GS: Therefore, your landlord is banking on the fact that he doesn't have to be a very good landlord, because you can't report him because you're living there illegally. [17:00]

KL: Rhode Island doesn't have emancipated minor laws?

GS: They could, but not that --

KL: Because I think -- I grew up in New York, and I can remember a friend of mine leaving her parents' home, and she was declared an emancipated minor by the court, which gives you the same rights and privileges as an adult. You have to prove that, you know, you're actually supporting yourself, you know, that you have a job, that, you know, you're not just kind of



hanging out with a bunch of friends on the street corner, you know, that you really have your own apartment.

GS: Huh. I wonder if there is one. As far as I can tell, it's at least available to these women that they -- that they -- in terms of what they're willing to go through with this system. I don't think she's under that, but thank goodness, she is very feisty, is willing to call the code violation people on her landlord. But yup, she -- you know, I -- I think -- but I bet some of them live with their mothers or [18:00] with family.

KL: Are the fathers of their children gone, or are they here, or --?

GS: I think it depends. I actually just -- I didn't know what Lavonia's situation was. She -- the father is around. He's 16 years old and has two children as well.

KL: Oh, my God.

GS: And lives with his grandmother. And apparently is a very good father, works at a furniture warehouse store -- yeah, he's around. I don't know, he -- it's funny that he lives with his grandmother. I mean -- (laughter)

KL: Where is his mother and father?

GS: Yeah. Very --

KL: Do you think a lot of these --

GS: Actually, his mother's in Connecticut.

KL: Do you think a lot of these people who are basically children having children -- do you think that [19:00] it's common for them to grow up in a non-nuclear family -- in other words, they grow up in families without a mom and a dad in one house?

GS: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, especially -- I think that just having it much more dependent on an extended family, on, you know, the grandmother taking care of the children, I know that, for example, Lavonia goes to school, so she needs somebody to babysit for her children, and the woman who does that is the father's sister. And I'd say that was probably pretty common. Which in some ways is good. You know, it provides a much more broad-based support system, because the fact is, it's better for her to go to school, and it's better for the father to work. And, you know, it just happens that I don't know what this woman's situation is -- apparently she's graduated. Ideally she eventually will be able to be paid by the state to be a day care mother. [20:00] But yeah. I think that an extended family is pretty common. And that, it seems to me, is a good -- I read a book by Carol Stack, who wrote *All Our Kin*, an amazing book.

KL: Oh, yeah.

GS: But one thing she says, which seems to hold true, is that this is -- that using the extended family in that way is a real adaptation, a really good sort of -- you're faced with this problem, um, and what are you going to do? And when a real, I think, seems like a pretty healthy alternative has been to rely on all these other people that you have around you, so --

KL: Which is much more common, I think, in ethnic --

GS: Yeah.

KL: -- groups, like Italian families.

GS: Yeah. Yeah.

KL: You know, the grandmother's always around, and --

GS: Right. And I think people tend [21:00] -- for some reason it's looked upon as this enormous anomaly not to have your mother and your father and your two children and that's it. (laughter)  
And anyone else who's in your house is, like, (inaudible) --

KL: Right.

GS: -- I think everyone thinks it's so odd, but it's really -- it doesn't seem that odd.

KL: Depends upon the sub-culture you're in.

GS: Yeah, exactly. It's just the way we're all so independent (inaudible).

KL: So why do you think that the Brown women volunteer for this program?

GS: A lot of, I think -- for different reasons. A lot of them, which sort of took me aback, had had experiences with friends being parenting teens.

KL: Really.

GS: Yeah. People coming from different backgrounds. A couple of -- a one woman from New York City went to -- I don't know where she went to high school, but she, very directly, she had had friends who were in this situation. Another reason, [22:00] I think, is that I think the issue of teen parents has sort of arisen as a really tough issue that has to be confronted. And I think people are looking for -- I don't like to use the word "solutions," because there's a problem and you have to solve it, but, you know, looking for a way --

KL: That's the American way, isn't it?

GS: Yeah. (laughter) Looking for ways to change the cycle. I mean, it's -- you know -- so that Lavonia doesn't end up in a very low-income, entrapping situation. And looking for ways to approach that, and seeing that AFDC and food stamps and X, Y, and Z are not (inaudible) -- are

not particularly useful, for -- or it's good that they provide the money, but they don't take you anywhere. [23:00] And for me, this is a real exercise in one -- you know, does the idea of creating a relationship, does that work? Is that a better alternative? Will that provide for me and for Lavonia a different sort of support mechanism, or a different sort of -- allow for different approaches to problems, or different ways of working out problems? But I think for Brown women, it's, you know, "What can I do? Here's this really -- there's a real issue that we'd like to figure out," and they're all very aware of it and very, sort of -- I think people, they feel a lot of responsibility, in a good way, to contribute to their community.

KL: Are they women -- do you think that in the past have been volunteer people? [24:00] I saw in your bio form that you've, you know, volunteered for a whole bunch of things. Do you think that's common?

GS: A couple of them, I think. All of them showed up at BCO recruitment night, so yeah, I think that they are pretty active people. One of the women, for example, was already active in South Providence Tutorial, and the woman who's her peer sister was the woman -- she was tutoring at South Providence Tutorial. Which was great. It was really sort of hooking in all these good elements and bringing them together, which is one sort of problem I see with the system, is that everything is sort of spread out and nothing is kept together. But yeah, so I do think that they're pretty active people initially.

KL: Do you think they're -- or how about yourself? Do you think there are people involved who are interested in careers in the social service field, and this is something they might want to have [25:00] on their resume kind of thing?

GS: I wouldn't, like -- I don't think it's resume building, but I think it's something that they would like to have the experience of, as sort of something that they can learn from. I certainly hope that for them -- I mean, certainly for me -- I mean, I certainly hope that this is not just something they do in college, that -- I think one -- if the public service center at Brown's going to do anything, it's going to inspire people to take careers in the public service field really seriously, and I think that for a lot of people, it's not something you -- it's not what you do when

you graduate from Brown. You become a professional. Which is fine. You know. But for me, I really hope, hope for myself and hope for them, that they -- you know, right now, my personal (inaudible) were all looking for creative approaches. You know, [26:00] what we have is good, but not quite good enough. And I think that the people are looking for -- you know, it depends. One of the women who is a peer sister is an econ major. You know, some very -- some business-y type thing. And I don't know what she's going to do. You know, a couple other people who are history majors, a lot of, I think, a couple of sort of poli sci, public policy type people.

KL: And what's your major?

GS: I'm public policy. And I hope so, but I don't know, I haven't really talked to them about it. For me, I -- I'm really still very up in the air in terms of what I want to do, but I think that for better or for worse, I think that -- my parents don't see it as so much for the better, but I do feel a positive responsibility [27:00] to look at -- to look at the community that I'm in and hope -- and work with it. I think I -- it's a real -- South Providence is sort of the lowest-income area in Rhode Island, and it's, you know, it's, the situation there, the housing situation is ridiculous. And I think that, you know, we have these -- we have -- through the public service center, we have these incredible resources here, and I feel like I'm just lucky enough to sort of have access to them, so I should in some ways manipulate them to the best way possible, and if that includes sort of using the resources right now to work with Project Birth, then that's great. And I sort of hope to continue to do that. (laughter)

KL: What do you think will happen [28:00] after you graduate?

GS: Hopefully, since I'm going to be here for a year or more to solidify the program, I would love to see it institutionalized. And Deosha would too. She really is very, very happy about this. They've wanted a companionship-type program, and I think for both of us, we just sort of found these two populations that really complement each other. You know, we couldn't do Peer Sisters if we didn't have Project Birth and vice versa.

KL: Do you -- this is to backtrack a little bit -- do you find that some of the young women have stereotypes about black -- uh, Brown students?

GS: What is funny is that they don't know what Brown is. We had this vision -- I had this vision last year that Brown is the center of Providence, and their street's the center of Providence, and that everyone knows what Brown is and everyone sort of -- like, I don't, like -- well, I won't tell you -- you know, I just, like -- well, [29:00] the fact that I go to -- I don't want to sort of advertise the fact that I go to Brown, because I have this image that these people have, that anyone would have a stereotype of these Brown people. But at least Lavonia just didn't know what Brown was. And none of the sort of skeletons attached to Brown, which was great, I think.

KL: That's amazing.

GS: Yeah. And I think it's just, it's just that we have ri-- it's that the students have this really sort of -- I guess what's it called? I don't know, what centric perspective on sort of how things work, and of course it doesn't occur to me that wherever she lives, there's a Main Street. That it's sort of the Main Street. And I don't know what it is. You know, I have a better -- now I have a better idea, which I'm very proud of, that I know where Broad Street is and that I know that Broad Street's a really main street in South Providence. But I don't think they do, because I just -- it's not -- it hasn't been developed as this sort of, "well, we don't need Brown people in..." [30:00] So I haven't found, like, a lot --

KL: That's interesting. That's good for you.

GS: Yeah, it's definitely good for us. That's one thing about going to Brown, is it doesn't have nearly as many tags attached to it as other schools.

KL: Yeah, yeah.

GS: Which I appreciate, when people ask me where I'm going to college. "Brown." "Oh, is that in Rutgers, New York?" "No, it's in Providence."

KL: I had the same thing when I was going to Clark, which is, you know, an excellent small school, and yet you'd say it, and people would know that it was a big psychology school and a big geography school, but they weren't aware that it was, you know, a second-tier level school, and, you know, it costs \$15,000 to go there, so in a way, you know, the people in the know that you want to be in the know, know. But the people that you don't want to kind of put off don't know. So it works out to your advantage, as opposed to going to Harvard/Radcliffe.

GS: Yeah, it's like, "Oh, where do you go to school?" No, so it's great. I found that this summer too. It was like, "Oh, where do you go to college?" "Oh, I go to Brown." "Oh, that's nice."  
(laughter) You know.

KL: That's interesting. [31:00] That's surprising.

GS: Yeah.

KL: Now, let's change gears for a while and talk about the other voluntary work you've done -- it says on your bio form that you worked as an assistant in the St. Albans day care center?

GS: Yeah, I've done a lot of work with kids. That was my sort of -- was something I really enjoyed doing. Kids are great. And that was done during my senior year, and what I did -- I just -- we had a senior project, so we got to graduate a couple, few weeks early. And I went in and worked -- did some work with -- I'm fluent in Spanish, because my mom's from Argentina, so did some sort of Spanish-English teaching.

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GS: OK. So I just -- that was a pretty short -- a short thing, but that was really fun.

KL: And you also worked at the Mount Hope day care center?

GS: Yeah, that was -- I did here, and that also, I pretty much -- I went in and helped out in the classroom and then also did some creative movement work with the kids.

KL: How did you get involved in that, through BCO?

GS: Yes. That was my first interaction with BCO, and Mary Courtney, who is the head of BCO, who is very excellent and has gotten a lot -- facilitated a lot of programs. And (inaudible) said, "Well, if this is what you're going to do, then go do it." And that's essentially what I did, which was great.

KL: OK. And -- OK. And then you also work -- I see you're a Sarah Doyle Center staffer.

GS: Yes. I work a little bit -- I'm not -- I would love to do more Sarah Doyle, if you had more hours in the day, but that for a couple of years just -- the way Sarah Doyle works is basically it's student-run, and other people who man the desk [01:00] and do the administrative stuff are students, and everyone sort of offers a few hours of their week and go in there and -- and it's good to sort of maintain contact with what's going on there. It's a great center. It does a lot. And unfortunately, this semester I've had to take the time off, but hopefully next year I'll be able to do it again. And I've done a little bit of work last year -- I was involved with the political taskforce that they had, and they were real active, effectively active in the Staff 14 campaign, and in -- we did some escorting at the abortion clinic, taking women in -- there's always an antiabortion...

KL: Yeah, Karen Brown came in on Friday.

GS: Oh, (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

KL: We're going to do an oral history with the escort service.

GS: Oh, great.



KL: A whole bunch of them are sitting there at one table and talking about why do we do it? And the terrible things we have to go through when we do it. It was pretty scary, [02:00] some of the things she was telling me.

GS: Yeah. I did that last year. It was [incredibly?] scary. But did some of that, and they were trying -- one thing that started last year, which unfortunately it doesn't seem like it's going to go be as powerful as we wanted, was to do some curricular adjustment in terms of women's studies stuff here, making -- getting some more women's studies courses institutionalized. We got a good start last year, but I think just people are really busy and involved in different things. But I've done -- I think one thing that Brown has definitely afforded me is I came here and I was not a very activist type person. Which is interesting, you know, sort of -- I think that just because there are -- I don't know how different this is from other universities, but just because there are so many people here doing [03:00] so many active things that are really infiltrated through to you, and if it's just never occurred to you to --

KL: Serve or --?

GS: To serve, or to take sort of a cause and really work with it, being here has really sort of opened my eyes and I may have become a lot more politically aware and a lot more community-oriented. I came in as a psych major. (laughter) And -- which has been great, and I really commend Brown --

KL: Do you think it was just a general atmosphere, or did you have a friend that was involved in something, or --?

GS: I think it -- a lot of it's the general atmosphere. A lot of it -- I think one of the questions that you had here was "Who has influenced you the most?" And I really have to say that it's been students who have. One of my best friends here [04:00] has come from New York City and is a real leftist --

KL: What's her name?

GS: Elise (inaudible) -- she's actually away this year. She's terrific. And I -- and she really affected me in a good way, just -- I think that just being with her and spending time with her and when she was -- and talking with her, she's very -- you know, people here are very intellectual, very, very intelligent, which is great. And then also, just seeing what goes on, and all the exciting things that people do. And people in classes who bring in their experiences. And, you know, I really have to say that what I think has influenced me, as far as I'm aware, [05:00] has influenced me the most here in terms of how I've changed are the students. Some of it has been classes, but less in the, I think, the intellectual aspect of, you know, what I read and what I wrote as people's approaches to teaching. The Afro-Am class that I took, the one, The Black Family, Alice Brown Collins is the professor, and she just has this approach to teaching which I think is very different from a lot of professors here, and for me was really effective in terms of changing my view of how to approach urban issues.

KL: Well, what's her method of teaching?

GS: It's not so much her method of teaching, it's just she really -- she's very --

KL: Down-to-earth?

GS: Yeah, she's very down-to-earth. She's very outspoken, mostly. [06:00] She's very opinionated. And she is really active in the black community here, and is very -- I don't think she's very militant; other people do. Just very outspoken, and she really sensitized me to a different approach to things. I had just never met anyone who had her view on things. And I really appreciated that, and I think that -- she's apparently not going to be back, because she, I think, she's not intellectual in the way of writing scholarly articles, but she's very intelligent and very knowledgeable. And I think unfortunately, sometimes at a place like this where we have a very limited way -- view [07:00] of what is scholarly --

KL: Publish or perish.

GS: Yeah. And it's too bad, because at least for me, she's been very, very, very (inaudible) me and what I was interested in, and what was causing the problems -- when, you know, someone says to you, "Well, the reason that there's all this poverty is because x amount of money is going to, you know, build weapons and this and that, and, you know, we have to change education." And so in that way, you know, a couple of courses I've taken have been really important, but mostly just in just seeing how different people work, and how they... approach different issues. And, you know, I definitely -- I came from a very -- I came from a very liberal high school, but it was very -- I would consider pretty mainstream [08:00] (inaudible) what you read -- you read *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, and those are your heroes from the Western world, and, like, being here, you really sort of have a different -- get different exposures, which is what I think is, you know, is what it's all about, which is -- so, you know, it's great as far as I'm concerned.

KL: So why did you take that Afro-Am class?

GS: I (inaudible) very -- (laughter) I don't -- I think that throughout my freshman year, I -- by the end of my freshman year, I somehow realized that I -- somehow in my freshman year I became a lot more politicized. And I don't quite understand why. I think there was a lot of activism that year -- not a lot; very little, actually, but I think... I don't know where along the line I became interested in urban issues. I really -- it's very odd in some ways. But [09:00] by the end of my freshman year, I was just not at all interested in being a psych major anymore, and much more interested in, you know, things like African-American Studies or poli sci type things. And that's the course I took, and -- which is very -- turned out to be very good. (laughter)

KL: Are most of the kids in that class white or black or --?

GS: It's a pretty -- I think it's, like, 70/30, 70% black, 30% white, or 60/40. I've -- Afro-Ams here are pretty, as far as I can tell, the ones I've taken, I would say, you know, 60/40. Maybe predominantly black, but not overwhelmingly so. Although for some people, [10:00] it's the first time they've ever been in a situation where they're not -- for some white students --

KL: Where they're not the majority.

GS: -- the majority, yeah. Which is good. I have been -- I went to a public junior high school in Washington, so that was certainly not the situation there, but it's great that that situation can be -- that -- because I think that, I mean, for me, I looked at it as a really enormous learning experience for x student. And one that you can't get from reading an article. So.

KL: I know some people are afraid if they take an Afro-Am class or a women's studies class and they're not black or if they're not female, then they'll feel that everyone in the class will come to hate them because the class radicalizes people.

GS: Yeah. I think that's true.

KL: Yeah?

GS: Yeah. People -- or that they're afraid that [11:00] -- they're just afraid to be in the minority. They're afraid to be in a situation where they're not feminist and everyone else is feminist, because, you know, for -- they just don't want to. It would be -- I think people -- I think it's very threatening to your status-quo approach.

KL: Do you think those classes do radicalize people?

GS: Um -- (pause) I don't think they --

KL: Or are they already radical before they --

GS: Come in? I think that -- it depends. I think they don't necessarily radical-- it depends what you think radicalizing -- I think what they do is raise your awareness of certain issues, and for me, rate my -- the consequence of my awareness being raised is to become perhaps more radical in my approach to things, or have more sort of scorn for the status quo. (laughter) [12:00] And I think that -- but for other people, I mean, I think it depends sort of what your initial predisposition is. Because I think basically I probably was pretty predisposed to take a more

hopefully radical approach to things, and that unfortunately, you know, that you do get a certain population, there's no -- you know, all those classes are very liberal. A lot of the classes I take, even in political science, just, everyone there, you get a real consensus of opinions because, you know, of what courses people choose. So I think they definitely sort of circle, and it's hard to get at it.

KL: OK, let's really backtrack and go to the beginning of the questions, about your family background. And you said your mom is Argentinian?

GS: Yeah, [13:00] my mom is from Argentina. She grew up in (inaudible). Her family is European, Eastern European, but there was a big immigration to Argentina. And my dad is from Boston, and my mother was -- happened to take a year off from -- she went to university there, and ended up in the University of Kansas, her last choice. She was never -- she wanted to come into the United States and go to New York.

KL: From Argentina to Kansas. (laughter)

GS: Yeah. And she was not very excited at all, but my dad was doing his Master's work. So they met. They were there for a year together and then she returned to Argentina and then he finished his work, his Master's work, I suppose, and then they went down and he found her and they arranged to meet in Argentina and they got married. And so my father is now fluent in Spanish. And they both have [14:00] -- are professionals. My dad is a professor in organic chemistry, and my mother's a linguist. She teaches at the World Bank, and teaches people who are -- economists who are going to go to Latin America and evaluate economic proposals and stuff, and she teaches them Spanish so they can go down and speak. And my dad teaches at George Washington University in DC. And they're very good people. I think that they -- their aspirations are -- they're very family-oriented. They invest a lot in their children, which is, you know, very much appreciated. But I think it's -- especially with an Argentinian background, Argentina is very family-oriented. Jewish -- Argentinian-Jewish community, very family-oriented. [15:00] And I think one thing that's very hard for my mother is that America is not, at least --

KL: Comparatively speaking.

GS: Yeah, definitely. The idea that part of sort of middle-class or upper-middle-class American culture is the children go away to college, she thinks is appalling and very unnecessary, because that's just not done. You go to college and you stay at home.

KL: So did she have trouble when you were applying?

GS: Yeah. I'm actually the younger sister, so she went through it initially with my sister. But I think my mom's very torn, because she's gotten very used to these maybe middle-class aspirations in the United States; she wanted my sister to go to the best college possible, yet that also meant that she went away. So she wanted her to go to the best college possible, like, within x radius. So I think she's very torn between that, you know, wanting us to go to Harvard and wanting us to stay home. And [16:00] -- and I think that's very interesting, and has certainly added sort of a different view on sort of different difficulties that you entail when you go off --

KL: But your dad thought it was OK to go off?

GS: Yeah, it's fine -- I mean, he of course wants us at home, but he's sort of, "Yeah, it's what you do, when you --" of course, when he went to college he happened to stay at home, but he also happened to live in Boston and went to Boston Latin School, and like every other Boston Latin School graduate, went to Harvard and lived at home. (laughter) So it wasn't particularly an issue. But he, yeah -- it wasn't as much of an issue for him.

KL: So was it always assumed that you would go to college?

GS: Yeah, it was definitely very assumed. When I was little I had my little Harvard sweatshirt, (laughter) and didn't realize what Harvard was, but assumed, "Well, if that's where my dad went to school, that's where I'll go to school." And only later real-- yeah. But it was definitely not -- it did not matter. My mom, you know, went back [17:00] when she was older to get her Ph.D., so very much assumed that we were -- and education's very stressed. We all went in DC, the public

schools up to junior high are quite good, but afterwards we sort of got shipped off to private school. And you know, one of my mom's big considerations in terms of our private schooling is where did these institutions get children into college. Which I look back on -- I sort of look back on it scornfully, but it's true, you know?

KL: You want the best for your children.

GS: Yeah. But... and certainly in terms of why I came to col-- looking at these questions, it was sort of funny, because a lot of them, at least then, I wasn't particularly discerning about. [18:00] You know, in some ways I just graduated from high school, and I went to college because that's what was done, which when I looked back on it, I was sort of taken aback. (inaudible)

KL: You get in a track and you just keep rolling along and --

GS: Yeah. Which I've -- but I think I -- it's great that I've -- that then I came to college and all these great things happened, or what I think of as great things happened, and now I look back on those choices and I take much more sort of active decision-making now. But a lot of it at that time is, you know, you go -- in terms of Washington, you go to your private school and you -- and then you go to college, and in some ways you go to the best college that you can, and a lot of that decision is made for you. And I didn't know a lot about Brown before I came here, but --

KL: What other colleges did you apply to?

GS: This is the embarrassing question. I applied to, like, all Ivy League colleges. It's terrible.

KL: I think most people [19:00] do that.

GS: I know, it's so -- but I just was not -- I just -- I didn't even think about it. I applied to Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Brown, and UPenn, Oberlin, Wesleyan, and George Washington. And that's it. (laughter) It wasn't -- and thinking back on it, what's so funny about it is that all these schools are really different. And what I think, you know, anywhere where I would have gone

would have been fine and would have impacted on me differently, and I'm really happy that I came here and --

KL: So why did you choose Brown?

GS: I -- it's -- in some ways it was the place that I got in that was the most well-- in some ways the best college I got into.

KL: Best in terms of academics?

GS: Best in terms of reputation, is what I think.

KL: Reputation? Mm-hmm.

GS: My -- although my parents thought it was too far away. My sister went to UPenn, that was the other sort of [20:00] college that I went to. I didn't want to go there; I don't know why, still. Because Brown was very far -- I was very much of a family child. I think that UPenn's a lot bigger in my head --

KL: Did you visit Brown?

GS: Yeah, I visited for a weekend. Yeah, it was very short. But, yeah, it's -- and everything -- just look at this whole situation; it's so ironic, because it just -- it seems like it turned out so much for the best, and, you know, it's great that I got, you know, (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

KL: Well, I think on some level -- I know when I went to Clark, it was a gut-level feeling. I got into a whole bunch of other schools that actually gave me much more money, you know, Carnegie Mellon and University of Rochester, which are also very good level schools, and I just kind of said no. You know, it was a gut-level thing, that I wanted to go to Clark. And I loved it,



and I was very happy. So I think that's -- when we visit places, that's the kind of reaction that we get that's very difficult [21:00] to explain to parents.

GS: Yeah. I think a lot of mine was also that my sister was -- went to UPenn and she was very involved in the Jewish community there, and when I was a senior in high school that's not where I was at and that's not where I wanted to be. So in some ways I was sort of choosing against that, which left me to Brown as opposed to saying, "Yes, Brown's where I want to go." And all the things that I sort of assumed that I would do is not necessarily what I've done here.

KL: Well, what did you assume you'd do?

GS: Oh, I was going to be a psych major.

KL: Why did you want to be a psych major? Did you want to be a psychiatrist, kind of?

GS: Yeah, I think -- psych is what all good people want to do, I think. (laughter) But the program here's very different; it's very involved in experimental rat type things. And I sort of very quickly got -- I'm really -- I'm very curious as to how much more political this campus is in terms of how I became politicized, whether that was inevitable, whether [22:00] this place really is as political as everyone seems to think it is. Because I don't think it's very political at all at this point, but maybe then I did, you know, or maybe for me at that point it was. But it was, you know, definitely expected that I was going to go to college. But in terms of my possible uses for my education, my parents wanted nothing more for me than to be a lawyer. My sister's going to be a doctor, and they think it's very fun that I have all these good social beliefs and interests, but the way I should channel them is to be a lawyer, because that's the most effective way to do it, and -- and also, I think, one -- we're all in a very lucky position, that we came from a very -- or at least I did -- comfortable financial environment, so now I'm lucky enough to have the option of saying, "Well, no, I don't want to be a lawyer, I'd rather be x social worker." And making that choice [23:00] from a very comfortable position, whereas I understand that my mom and my dad were not -- were very not-middle-class children. My mom, who was in Argentina, was quite poor, and now for her, it's very understandable that she's reached this financially very

comfortable position, and that really is very important to her and makes her happy. And which -- and I can't relate to, and I --

KL: If you've always been secure.

GS: Right, and I tend to sort of pooh-pooh, "well, I don't need money." Well, that's because you've already had it. (laughter) And, you know, and I don't know where that's going to take us. I think there's a whole generation of children like me. And I don't know whether we're actually going to say, "No, I don't need as much money," which I think would be great; I really don't think I do. But then again, I'm 22 or 21, and it -- we'll see. But I think that -- and in terms of the amount of money that my parents are spending for me to go to school here, they think that if what I want to do is be a teacher, [24:00] I shouldn't have spent the money to come to Brown. And that's where I differ from them very drastically.

KL: They view education as a means to getting a good job.

GS: Yeah. This type of \$16,000 education, or \$18,000 education that it's become, of being financially secure, it's very important -- perhaps the most important is that, you know, you -- to be financially secure, because that is the -- that will allow for your happiness. And that may have been true in their case, and that may be true in fact in my case, but I think at this point I'm much more -- you know, I'm going to use my education to do what I want to do, which right now is to correct some inequities that -- but I think that it's just -- I think just between my families, between my parents and me, just the way we grew up is so different [25:00] that it's inevitable. And I think it's very difficult for them to, um -- and to -- because they're the ones -- they're the ones who are providing the funding, so, you know, for me it's much more easy to sort of philosophize about, well, my parents came from this environment and I came from this environment, but then they're the ones who are spending \$20,000 a year, and, you know, not going to the Bahamas every six months or -- so we'll see what happens.

KL: So when you came here your freshman year, did your parents drive you up?

GS: Yes, they did, and it was -- I think -- my recollections of that whole time were everything was sort of -- I felt as little as possible during that whole time, because it was far too painful (laughter) --

KL: To separate?

GS: Yeah. I -- my whole freshman year was clouded by the trauma of not wanting to leave home. It was -- my parents drove me up and we spent the night before I came to college in New London, so I have -- whenever I go through New London, I think, "jeez, this place, [26:00] I don't want to go back." And they came in the morning and they went up to my room and --

KL: What dorm did you live in?

GS: In North Wayland. (inaudible) And my roommate was -- had been there but was not there. So I was frustrated and stressed. And when I real-- and then I was setting up my room and couldn't find the phone jack, and of course I needed to find the phone jack, because I have very - - I have very close friends from high school. So I needed to have the phone jack so I could call my, you know, contact, and I couldn't find it, because I was trying -- and they had computer jacks that looked just like phone jacks. So I was trying to stick it in the (inaudible) and it was very distressing, I couldn't get the phone to work (inaudible). I had sent my card in so my phone would be working the first day I was there, and then I went next door and there were all these people there, you know, college students, and they helped me out. And I thought, "Oh, these people are friendly. These people are nice. I could be friends with people here." [27:00] It was a lot more calm after that.

KL: Was that an all-girls or a coed?

GS: Coed. Coed by room. So there were -- and these people who I actually didn't end up being particularly good friends with, but I think made me just realize that, you know, "I can do this. This is OK." And my parents hung around for a little bit longer, and then we met my roommate, Magali Parisien. And then my parents left, which was, like, they were in the car and on the street

and then my mom burst into tears, and it was really sad. (laughter) But for me it was like, “This is, I just can’t -- let’s do this quickly. If we don’t do it quickly I’m going to break down. They’ll never be able to leave.” So they drove off and there I was, off and alone. I think your survival instincts really kick in -- you know, you just make it, you know, whatever -- I mean, I was shocked [28:00] that I wasn’t destined for tears for the next week. I really -- like, I was so prepared for it to be so traumatic that I think whatever happened was OK. Whoever talked to me was like --

KL: Mm-hmm. Anticlimactic.

GS: Yeah. And so you sort of cling onto whoever you find first. And my roommate was -- she’s very nice. She’s very different from me. So we became friends, and we’re very compatible, but we’re never very close. But became friends with people in my unit very quickly -- I think it tends to happen. And in fact, Elise, one of my very best friends here, and most of my best friends are from my unit. A lot of the people I used to live with. And --

KL: Are you assigned roommates randomly or do you fill out a card?

GS: You fill out a card and you fill out some preferences, but it’s pretty random. Apparently, in case of my dorm, [29:00] there are these -- people were assigned by interest, to a certain extent. You’re all in the same -- they had this thing, I think, called cap courses, where you choose a certain course and that -- the professor’s your adviser. Everyone -- there’s North Wayland and South Wayland. Everyone in North Wayland and South Wayland had chosen or had been assigned -- chosen and assigned -- psych courses as their cap course, either Psych I, which is what I took, or Nature/Nurture, which is this other sort of more interdisciplinary psych course. So all the roommates pretty much were in -- shared these courses together. And they thought that would be sort of a good way of -- they -- and these professors had agreed that they wanted us to be in situation where they thought it would be healthy and good --

KL: Bonding, kind of?

GS: Yeah, and they thought it would be interesting for the course. Of course, Psych I has eight million people in it, so it didn't really matter, but --

KL: So you decide on these courses before you came.

GS: Yeah. [30:00] And I -- I don't think I was very creative (inaudible) -- I put down Psych I, but I could have put down some random interesting course. But I put Psych I, which is a fine course -- Professor [Scheff?] is my adviser. Who's very nice. (inaudible) But yeah, we had chosen all these before, and so Magali and I took Psych I together.

KL: What other courses did you take?

GS: I took -- (inaudible) I took Psych I and History I, with Professor Rohr, who is an incredibly brilliant man. And I took a special themes course, an interdisciplinary course, called Evolution of Human Behavior, which I thought was some kind of psych course, but it turns out it was, like, behaviorism and learning to walk. So I did this whole anthro course. Which was good, it was just, like, it was not what I expected. And I took dance history, because one other thing I do here is I spend a lot of time dancing and doing modern dance. So that was my --

KL: And who taught that? [31:00]

GS: Margaret [Donor?].

KL: Mm-hmm.

GS: And Evolution of Human Behavior is taught by Professor Gould, who is a character. A great, funny man, apparently brilliant researcher, but the most absentminded man -- very sweet man, very absentminded. And so it was very -- looking back on it, I took -- it was not a hard schedule at all, but at the time I was like, "Have to do my psych reading for class," and all of us, we really --

Part 3

KL: This is Karen Lamoree interviewing Galia Siegel, class of 1989, March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1988. Tape two.

GS: I did most of my studying in my room. If things got too noisy or I had to be in the library, I went to the Rock. I didn't go to the Sci Li very often, except when I had psych reading to do.

KL: Are the reserves over there?

GS: The psych reserves are in the Sci Li, and then history reserves are over here. So I -- since I definitely identify myself more as a humanities person, I went to the Rock instead. And I also took dance, because they have theatre arts courses, which I didn't take for credit then, but I do now. Which -- we meet like four days a week. And that was really one thing that I didn't do a lot in high school which I do now, is dance, which is --

KL: Had you started it before you came here?

GS: I danced a little when I was younger. I sort of took modern dance from kindergarten through eighth grade, and then stopped, [01:00] and somehow -- and this is another thing, I don't know quite where it came from -- I decided I was going to come to school and I was going to dance. And of course it was really accessible, because there's a beautiful studio and there's classes every day at 1:00 and at 3:00, and you can take them and they don't cost any money because you've already paid for them. And having nothing to lose, because I wasn't a dancer, I sort of did it and stuck with it.

KL: For fun.

GS: Yeah, and it turns out that sort of ironically, I spent a lot of time with Peer Sisters, but I spend a lot of my time, much more time in the dance studio these days. So everything --

KL: So now that you take dance for credit, how's that graded? Is --

GS: SNC.

KL: I was going to say.

GS: SNC, no, no, no, we don't do -- no ABC's. And I took -- those were my courses. And they were good. They were fun. I think it was good not to -- nothing too hardcore. [02:00] I had one final, which was on the first day of finals period, that semester. It was really incredible. And in fact that happened the second semester too. I had one friend. I had two finals, one during reading period and one the first day of finals. And the next year, second semest-- uh, first semester sophomore year, I had a final on the very last day. It was so terrible. But my first semester -- I think my whole -- I think my freshman year I was pretty traumatized by leaving home. So I was fine, really surprisingly fine, but I hooked up with a few people and sort of created some semblance of a home. I was very attached to people at my high school, who were at various universities around. And --

KL: So the social life in the -- [03:00] does it revolve around -- for you did it revolve around dorms or frats or...?

GS: No frats, never. (laughter) Never happened. With my dorm, friends from my dorm, very -- pretty mellow type of socializing, a lot of just hanging out and... not very much -- no frats at all, ever. People had like dorm parties and -- and very -- sort of meeting people from other dorms (inaudible) your whole freshman year, meeting people.

KL: Right, right.

GS: In various places.

KL: Did -- at that time did you go to Boston, or down to New York, or --?

GS: I went to Boston, but only -- not so much with people from Brown. I met [04:00] people there from other -- from high school. I always -- I was going out with this guy who went to Oberlin from my high school. So that's when I went to Boston (inaudible). All very nice. But I went -- I think -- I didn't go to Boston very often. I went last year like once or twice. Twice I went. It's nice. I don't know why we don't go much more often. But didn't in, in Providence, my freshman year, didn't see Providence at all.

KL: You basically stayed on campus and Thayer Street?

GS: Very restricted, yeah. Yeah. Very, very restricted. That's why I was so -- I felt so great last year when I finally sort of went off the hill and realized that, you know, you could take the bus. I do what people do -- they (inaudible) and then they go right downtown. Like, right where the Woolworth's is. That's sort of as far as you get. And anything to the left or the right of that gets, gets -- and then when your parents come, they take you to dinner at Federal Hill, and you see that at night. (laughter) And it's really incredible. [05:00] So I was really -- I'm still -- it's very much a source of pride that I have sort of expanded my horizons just a little bit. You know, not very much, just a little bit.

KL: So when had you decided that you weren't going to be a psych major? After taking Psych I?

GS: No, I took -- I decided that during -- after my freshman year. By the time I came back for my sophomore year, I didn't know what I was going to do, but certainly -- I think I was thinking about urban studies at that time -- that I was going to be an urban studies major.

KL: Have you taken an urban studies class?

GS: No.

KL: It just seemed like a good idea?



GS: Just seemed -- I was interested in urban issues. The curriculum is really nice. It's very interdisciplinary, get you a lot of choice, a lot of leeway. And that year -- because what I did -- my first semester I took a lot of -- my second semester I took Personality Theory with Professor Hayden, and I took French speaking and writing, which is, [06:00] needless to say, the easiest course I'm taking at this university. (laughter) And I took a comparative literature course. I thought I was being very -- I thought I was going to (inaudible). I took this comparative literature totally out of -- you know, not psych, not history, something different. [Love's Sign in Forms?] of Literature, with Professor Ahearn, which is fun. And history too. So I got to (inaudible) [Rohr?], who is still the most erudite person I think I've ever met.

KL: Is he a good teacher?

GS: Yes, he was brilliant. I was not -- I was not at the point where I could appreciate what he was trying to teach us as much as I think I would now. But he was a good teacher. I mean, there was just no way to escape the (inaudible). And you (inaudible). But I think I wish I'd been a little bit more sophisticated (inaudible). But he was quite good. And by the next year I had entirely shifted my focus. I took [07:00] Black Family and Latin American Politics, which was very -- course with [Whiting?]. And I took Early American Urban History, which was my first sort of venture into some of our urban issues. And I took biology, which was to satisfy my parents, who were dying for me to take science. They wanted me to take science so badly. It was so -- and I actually took it and it was really fun. It was great. I took it SNC. And up to then I took -- every semester I took a course SNC. It was really fun. And I haven't taken any science since then, but it was good. I was glad I took it. And then the second semester I took City Politics, and this was -- my second semester last year I really got involved in my public policy stuff. I took City Politics and Intro to Public Policy and Economics and American Urban History, (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

KL: Wow, you really concentrated. [08:00]

GS: Yeah. That was the one -- it was sort of interesting. I just -- that whole semester I had sort of -- I concentrated, and I haven't done that since then and I wouldn't do it again. It was a little too much.

KL: You'd rather have a more hu-- like a history course thrown in?

GS: Yeah. Yeah --

KL: Or as a break?

GS: -- or just something else, yeah. Because I think I've definitely -- last year, last semester, I reacted completely to that, and took just way-out other courses. So I think you definitely go in cycles. But I think at that point I was just so -- I was so happy, I think, I had found something I was interested in, and sort of so relieved, (laughter) and I figured, "Well, I have to do something." And of course I had no concentration at that point, and so I had to take all these concentration courses if I -- I thought I was going to not be able to graduate. But at that point I had already decided I was going to do my concentration in public policy, which is very -- it's very similar to urban studies. It has a few core courses, and (inaudible) a lot so you just get to choose. Five courses --

KL: So what was the attraction to you of public policy over urban studies?

GS: I think [09:00] that -- I think the core courses, I thought were more what I wanted to be doing. I don't even remember the urban studies core courses, but it's a very -- in some ways urban studies was so loose that I was afraid that you just weren't going to get anything specifically. I don't know what you're supposed to get out of a concentration, but I was afraid I wasn't going to get some specific knowledge. And at that point I had already -- pretty much my freshman year, extracurricularly, I danced. That was pretty much it. I danced and I survived (laughter). But sophomore year I started doing more -- I volunteered at Mount Hope and I became involved in Sarah Doyle -- that's when the Stop 14 stuff began, and the abortion --

KL: Is that why you got involved with Stop 14?

GS: I think a lot of it was just a group of women that I sort of got to know, that Elyse knew. And they went over to Sarah -- they had their introductory meeting [10:00] at Sarah Doyle and I went with them, and that's what happened to be going on, so I think it was mostly, again, a big student -- affected by the students. And I think it was good that Stop 14 was going on, because it gave me something to do, something to become involved in. And that was a really exciting thing that happened at Brown -- I think people got really mobilized for that. Sort of similarly to the abort issue this year. And I also started dancing -- there's a dance company here, Extension. And danced with -- started dancing with them. So I became a lot more involved in extracurriculars then, which was new to me. I had never -- even in high school, did some -- did some stuff, but never, never as a major part of my life. Which I think I thought was very exciting. Never had all these meetings to go to and stuff. And, you know, some would be at 7:00 and some would be at 8:30 and don't worry (laughter) -- a very full schedule. [11:00] It's the first time I ever used a calendar. It was really -- and now I use a calendar all the time. And then my work with the Urban League began second semester, and that also blossomed lots. And I don't know if I entered mine --

KL: Well, that's OK, we'll get around to it. Let's see, what should we do next... Well, let's talk about relations between male and female students. You said that you never go to a frat.

GS: I think I never went to a -- I think the reason I (inaudible) frat is because when I was a freshman I was far too afraid of that whole frat scene, everything I had heard of --

KL: The reputation?

GS: Yeah. I wasn't -- I've never been much of a drinker. So I didn't really -- I don't like beer. So I just thought -- I just couldn't go there and feel so uncomfortable and out of place. And I think that just carried over. I think a lot of people sort of get very set their freshman year [12:00] in sort of what they do. Never went to a frat and never have. I just -- I think I have (inaudible). But I think that that's not so much -- I don't see that as much of a male/female distinction. I just think

that there's a really -- here and I -- there's just a dif-- there's just different communities, people who really do like the frat scene, and that's what they do. And I've seen the way their social life revolves on other people who don't. But it's interesting, because my perception of the relations between male and female students are very -- in terms of academics and classroom stuff, are really equitable. I've had too few female professors, but in terms of the students, I have never -- the only distinction between male and female [13:00] students, which pretty much is across the board, is that in large classes, women talk less. But in terms of treatment by professors, I haven't encountered -- I think it does exist; I just haven't encountered any inequities in terms of what was expected of me and in terms of what men at the college or women at the college expected of each other. Socially, things are -- people are very -- I think it's very individual, but people are very casual and sort of ve-- I think everyone has their stereotypes, and women definitely are not, you know, take the -- get paid for more often, but most people here don't expect to be taken care of as much as it used [14:00] to be (inaudible). Don't expect, you know, if they're in some sort of -- any sort of relationship with a man, whether as friends, it's a lot -- it's fairly equitable.

KL: When you were growing up you were talking about your parents, you know, you would go to college -- was it also said that you'd get married and have kids?

GS: Yes.

KL: And would you work while you did that, or were you --?

GS: Yes, I think I would work. Yeah, I think that was definitely the expectation, and I think that still holds true.

KL: Is that what you expect for yourself?

GS: Yeah, it is. I think when I was younger I was very much a type of child who was interested in getting married at a young age, and it's very ironic, because my sister, I've always thought, was very much more independent than I am. She's 23, and she's getting married. And right now -- and I always thought I would be the one to get married first, and for me, I still have this

expectation, you know, I love children, the idea of having a family is very exciting [15:00] to me, but I think it's going to be something that happens, like, sort of down the line. I mean, who knows when, but I don't expect it with the same immediacy as I did before.

KL: OK, Galia, you were -- let's talk about your best and worst memory that you might have of Brown.

GS: I -- when I (inaudible) that, I -- I think I don't remember specific -- or in terms of specific things, but I think that my best memories are all whenever I was here and I really thought that I felt that I could sort of -- I could do this. I can go to college and be independent and make my choices by myself and feel really sort of energized and -- I guess the word "empowered" is always used, but it's very true. [16:00] Coming here and just sort of realizing that you are the sort of powerful person that can do all these things, and I can go down to the Urban League and make connections there and start a program, and how exciting that is. Or I can decide that I love to just dance, and that's accessible to me, and I've done that, and I think that in terms of my best memories of Brown, that's one thing that I always think about, is, like, just feeling really sort of strong and good about myself and very competent. And conversely, the worst memories always are sort of -- when you just -- when you have less of that faith of yourself and you feel sort of lonely and, "well, I don't know whether I can really --" sort of lost and in the sort of midst of independence, sort of losing that grasp every so often and wondering, wait, you know, I can't do this here. [17:00] What's sort of ironic is that out of these really hard times, the good things tend to come out of them. For me, at least, which is always very positive. But for women, right now, I think this is -- I would venture to say that that's one thing that gets afforded to you at Brown, is that you get sort of to work through that idea of, you know, really feeling empowered and independent and strong, but then getting overwhelmed by that sometimes, and really feeling sort of shaky and wanting to be -- sort of feeling more lonely than powerful. So that's -- and a lot of those come from personal experiences. But [18:00] a lot of them -- in terms of feeling empowered, a lot of things, when you just do things, and you feel good about doing them, that's -- I don't know, I don't have very specific things, but I think that's a really -- that's a very strong impression -- impression of mine, of my experiences.

KL: Do you think that the Sarah Doyle Center serves as a kind of empowering agent, because it gathers women together?

GS: Yeah, I really do. A real sense of strength -- in going in there, you really feel proud of -- I think it makes me feel really proud of being a woman, and you go in there, and all these wonderful, amazing things that women have done and women can do, and really, as far as I'm concerned, really a wonderful women to contribute to the center right now, which I'm sure always has been the case. [19:00] But really thoughtful people. And I think it is very -- a very empowering place.

KL: What do you think the general student perception is of the Sarah Doyle Center?

GS: I -- apparently it's not -- I think people, a lot of people are -- people who don't know anything about the center I think tend to be scared of it. There's very much -- a lot of homophobia, "oh, all the lesbians hang out there, I don't want to walk in there."

KL: On the part of women and men?

GS: And men. I -- for some reason I tend to be very naïve about these things. I just never knew that. And I sort of went to Sarah Doyle, and all this, like, all these paranoias sort of escaped me, and I don't think I'm -- I don't think I'm that good of a person, I just think that didn't occur to me. But I think, yeah, I do think that Sarah Doyle is definitely stereotyped [20:00] as sort of strong and bitchy women who make a lot of noise. And there was this -- the crew team had these shirts made, and they were of this, like, muscular man with these little women sort of at his knees, and Sarah Doyle reacted to it. And not even Sarah Doyle -- a woman who works at Sarah Doyle reacted to it. And I think that's what people associate with Sarah Doyle, is like, "making trouble for us." But other people don't make -- other people who aren't associated with just don't know, just don't have the interest. But I think unfortunately there is -- it's a very militant place, when in fact I don't -- it -- it's very radical, I think it's a very progressive organization that makes a lot of really good demands.

KL: Do you think there's any way that Sarah Doyle Center could change its stereotype so people could become more aware [21:00] of what they really are? Do you think there's a method they could use?

GS: I don't know. It's -- at this time, they're trying to restructure the center, in fact, to try to make it more accessible. It's difficult, because it's important to them, I think, that they maintain their -- not militancy; that they maintain their --

KL: Activism?

GS: Activism, or their very liberal stances. They're very adamant about certain things, and I think it's important that they maintain that, for them and for me too. I think that they try. You know, I think they do outreaches. I bet there -- I mean, I guess there probably are things they can do, but as far as I can tell, they try. You know, they have open houses -- they go, apparently they started doing outreaches in dorms. [22:00]

KL: What is that, an outreach in a dorm? I've heard other groups do that. What happens in an outreach in a dorm?

GS: You go -- you have your freshman unit, and you go into the lounge, and people make a presentation to you. And you're not required to come, but highly advised. You know, there's generally sort of food to lure people in. And people who are trained to do outreaches, who are trained to facilitate and sort of create discussion and be really friendly and, you know, open, present who they are and what they do, what the Sarah Doyle Center does, what services it offers, and very much to try to demystify people's misconceptions. You know, "We're just women, we're not scary, we're not out to bite off men's heads," you know. And ask people -- you know, encourage people to ask questions. And I think a lot of times it just -- I think they're really good. They make people realize, "Well, I saw that woman on the street the other day, and she was -- looked pretty -- didn't look pretty intimidating, and now she -- now I know she works at Sarah Doyle." And, you know, [23:00] that sort of demystifies everyone's ideas of what a feminist is, and -- so they do those. I don't know what else they can do. I -- it seems to me that

they're trying to be, pretty much. But I think it's important for other people to maintain their antagonism towards feminism and towards Sarah Doyle. It's sort of just something that is part of their -- how they function, is to be -- or the way people can sort of get a lot of -- the sort of traditionally (inaudible) and things like that, so it's hard to get past that.

KL: Now, you said you were involved in the Bork -- anti-Bork campaign?

GS: Yeah, at the beginning of this year. It was really great. A couple of women, who actually -- who are from Women's Political Coalition, which is [24:00] the Sarah Doyle political branch, Abby Schuman and another woman, who I don't know her name --

KL: Was it [Ranku?]?

GS: No, not Ranku. Laura [Petrical?] -- were sort of the ones who organized the Block Bork. And they just put up signs, and people from all over campus went, and it was great. People were really active and worked really hard. Worked in the post office, getting people to write letters to their senators; we got, like, so many letters sent. It was great. It was, like, really, lots and lots. And we got -- in a week we got, like, 400 letters or something to the people, senators. And had -- we had a hay forum with different people from the community, which wasn't actually particularly well-attended, but they organized it, which was good. And just worked really hard. Sold buttons to -- and got different -- [25:00] it was a coalition toward getting different people on campus who had interests in being against Bork to work against it and to donate their time. So it was really good. And I think people -- it sounds like people all over the country did that. So I think it was really a sort of resurgence of a grassroots effort and of coalition building and stuff like that, so it was great. It was very good.

KL: Now, what lectures or speeches or performances have you gone to while you've been here at Brown that has stuck in your memory?

GS: One I went to just this past year was to see Jesse Jackson speak. And that was great. It was really -- it was sort of funny, the sales was all filled, and he was late. He was very late, and



everyone was really offended that he was -- but he came and he apologized, and he came with an enormous, like, entourage of all these people who he sort of takes with him wherever he goes. And he has this incredibly busy schedule, which is why he was late -- he was sort of trying to hit all these places, [26:00] and started off and he seemed really tired, but he definitely is an excellent speaker -- warmed up and gave a really rousing speech to Brown students. I think he just makes you really participate in his speeches. And I had never seen him speak before, and I was really -- I was very impressed. I don't necessarily support him in his run for presidency, but I really enjoyed his speech, and it was very exciting for me. There's a lot, a lot, of speaking -- all these things that are going on all the time. I actually recently saw the ethics conference. I saw author Arthur Lyman speak, and he was quite good. I found him a little too -- had a little too much faith in the system for me. (laughter) But -- and I've seen a couple -- [27:00] one thing for me, which I've gone to see are a lot of dance performances -- certainly exciting and fun. And it tends to be in a really small setting, so you can kind of get to talk to the dancers afterwards and stuff, and sort of the most -- definitely the most powerful speech I've been to is the Jackson speech. It was really fun. I saw Carter speak, outside, that was really fun too. He's a good man. I think he'll get favorable revisionist history.

KL: I agree. (laughter) I agree. So what class were you taking this year?

GS: This year, my first semester this year, was -- (inaudible) I took wonderful classes. I took a class on Afro-American playwrights, with George Bass, really wonderful. And I took Politics of Ethnic and Class Conflict, an excellent political science class with Professor Zuckerman. And Political Science Research Methods, which was statistics, which was --

KL: I took that too.

GS: It was not very fun. (laughter) I did not like -- it was sort of fun. I learned a marketable skill, perhaps the only one I will get at Brown. [28:00] I learned to use a computer statistical package program. And I took, like, (inaudible) -- I took Political and Cultural Radicalism in the United States from 1886 to 1917, with a grad student, her name's Sue, which was incredibly fun.

KL: Who taught that?

GS: Michael Topp. It's great. It was this group of, like, 15 Brown students and this professor and we all indulged in our radicalism and read all these gory writings by Emma Goldman and Eugene Debs and the Haymarket rioters and all these -- it was very fun. And I took dance for credit, and that was a great semester, it was really fun. Learned a lot -- I really enjoyed my classes, and this semester I'm taking an ethics course, Ethics in Public Policy, which is quite good, with Professor (inaudible). And Women and Healthcare, which is really fun. It's very -- sort of a small -- all women, and sort of 25 of us, and it's very much of a discussion group, and very good for me, because I'm very un-knowledgeable about [29:00] my own body and its health. And I'm taking a seminar, Problems in American Cities, with Professor Malone, with -- which was called Democracy, the State, and the City, but it's really not that fancy. And then I'm auditing women's history with Mari Jo Buhle, who is absolutely brilliant. She's a really brilliant woman. She is an excellent role model -- really excellent. If there could be more women around like her that would be a great, a great thing.

KL: I'll be lecturing in that class.

GS: You will?

KL: You'll see me again.

GS: Oh, great.

KL: Yeah. (laughter)

GS: Oh, she's brilliant. Really -- I'm actually auditing it, and I'm not getting credit for it, but I go, and -- because I really want to hear her, what she has to say. And this year I've actually become involved with a couple of other things. I did some stuff with BCO for the personal (inaudible) there -- a program coordinator for crisis intervention project, which is like, [30:00] soup kitchens and shelters and stuff, and just sort of a figurehead-y type of thing, and I was sort

of around and was able to counsel people who were involved in volunteer work. And I did some stuff with the student homeless action campaign, which sponsored a sort of teach-in for a semester. And then did some stuff with Student AIDS Taskforce, just because a friend of mine was running it, and learned a lot about AIDS and how to facilitate a discussion about AIDS and stuff. So that's been really -- so that's -- taking little chunks of time, that's really well-spent, and learning little things here and there. So the classes -- I'm really happy with the classes in general.

Part 4

GS: I think it's available if you want it to a certain extent, but counseling --

KL: You have to search it out.

GS: Yeah. I had a Professor Shep, who was my cap -- my Psych I professor. He was my counselor, but -- he was a really nice guy, but the problem was that what you tend to get here is "whatever you want to do is fine." That's the response. Well, "in thinking of these courses, what do you think?" "Well, whatever you want to do is fine." "Oh, well, I was thinking of taking this course SNC and I really don't know -- I don't know whether I want to do SNC or not," it's "Well, whatever you want to do is fine." Which is good, and gives you a lot of decision-making power, but in some ways is sometimes not very helpful. So I sort of opted out of getting counseled first semester. I have a concentration adviser now, which -- he's helped -- he's a really -- all these people are really good people, and in fact he's an excellent [01:00] professor as well -

KL: Who is this?

GS: Professor Shep. But I haven't found the counseling to be -- I think they're having -- they have sort of trouble here finding a balance between counseling you and allowing you to have the choice to do what you want. So I have been pretty independent about choosing my choices. A lot of my choice is sort of word-of-mouth, "Well, what's good this semester? Have you taken, have you shopped around?" And people finding good, great courses. But I think that some people do find a way to get counseling, but I haven't as much. Because I do think there's (inaudible). I told

-- my parents would ask me, "Do you have an academic adviser?" I say, "Yeah, he just tells me to do whatever I want."

KL: So where have you been living since your freshman year?

GS: I lived in North Wayland [02:00] freshman year, and then sophomore year I had an excellent -- I lived in French House, and had an amazingly gorgeous double, beautiful room with a bay window and wood floors. It was incredibly luxurious. It was so beautiful. Really (inaudible).

KL: Do you have to pay extra to live in those?

GS: No. No, it's a language house.

KL: So do you compete to get in it or --?

GS: It was interesting -- usually I think that's the way it is, but my year they just had a lull in who was invi-- and I was supposed to live in Buxton, but my room, the room that Elise and I got assigned, was incredibly small and facing [D-Tap?], which is the football fraternity, which actually they're very nice men, but we didn't want to spend our year listening to their noise. So we moved. Said Don -- I asked [Don Derosha?] if we could move, and he said, "Well, if you can find somewhere to go, just go. Don't bother me." And we found this amazing room, and that was really great. It was nice. It was sort of a cross between going off-campus and living in a dorm. It was a little further away, it's very quiet, [03:00] and worked out really nicely. And this year I'm actually living off-campus on Kean Street, 17 and Kean, in a wonderful little apartment with three other women. We each have single rooms, and we cooked together and go shopping together, and it's a really nice situation. I've been really happy with it.

KL: So I see that you worked at food services.

GS: Yes. I worked there for two semesters -- almost two semesters. Worked in the Ratty one semester and worked at (inaudible) the other semester, sort of to make some money, extra pocket

money. It was fun. I think of people who work there -- we had a real camaraderie, some real nice people. I worked dish line, which was sort of the reputed awful chore of taking people's dirty dishes and dealing with them, but -- and served food in the Ivy Room, which was fun. That was sort of the choice job. And at [Ectec?] I made sandwiches and cooked hamburgers and [04:00] served people French fries and stuff. So did that -- had not been the most dedicated food services worker, but did have the experience of doing that. And opted out of it after second semester last year. Decided that I didn't want to do it anymore.

KL: And you were also a counselor and a creative movement teacher in Washington?

GS: Yes, my summer after my freshman year, I worked at a nice camp. I worked 10 hours a day, but I was working with young children, so it was the easiest 10 hours, and I really enjoyed that. Spent -- only part of that time I spent teaching creative movement; that was really fun. Did some of that -- learned to teach creative movement in high school, got to actually be a teacher, which I discovered how hard it was. (laughter) And that was really fun, a really good summer spent there -- got to spend a lot of time outside, and enjoyed working with the kids. It was fun. [05:00]

KL: OK, well, I think we'll end it here. Do you have anything else that you have written down that you want to say?

GS: No. I think I've talked about a lot. One -- oh, I did say, in terms of Brown developing a sense of sort of roles forming, I thought that Brown personally made me more of a feminist and an activist, and I was really happy about that. Much more aware. And I think if that's one thing that college is going to do for you, I think that's terrific, and all the resources around here definitely enhance that -- Sarah Doyle, and just seeing, even though there is a lack of female faculty, there's a lot of female role models, I find, in the students, even.

KL: Do you think that's important, female role models, in terms of your own development?

GS: Yeah, definitely. You see what you can do, and it would be nice to have more staff but it's great to have [06:00] -- you know, [Bess Wick?] around at the Sarah Doyle Center and Elizabeth

Weed around at Pembroke. And, you know, people will really -- they might not be faculty, but you see that they do really interesting things, but there's a lot of -- and I also think there's a lot of resources for women at Brown, like Women on Call and stuff, which I don't know -- I know about them; I don't know if that means that everyone does, but I think that's really good, and so there is a sense of support. And a lot -- even people like [Toby Simon?], I mean, just really sort of cool women who you think are great and appreciate and you know that they're there. So that's good. But that's about it.

KL: OK, well, thank you, Galia.

GS: Oh, thank you.

KL: OK.

- END -