Katie Eisenman

Interview 1

March 28, 2019

1:45 - 2:15pm

I: Interviewer

R: Respondent

On Thursday, March 28, 2019 I met with my first interviewee in the afternoon, at her house, where we discussed childhood experiences and vivid memories the informant revealed to me, in confidence, in which she categorized as traumatic and impactful on her development of the sense of self and identity. The interviewee and I sat side by side in her living room and maintained eye contact throughout the entire conversation which lasted about thirty minutes.

START OF TRANSCRIPTION

I: Thank you for taking the time to meet with me, I really appreciate it.

R: It’s no problem, of course, you know.

I: I plan on discussing events or experiences from your past, specifically your childhood, as well as important factors or events you believe helped shape your sense of self and identity.

R: That sounds fine, I have a lot of memories from my childhood, I guess.

I: How would you describe your household during your early childhood, as best as you can remember, of course.

R: I actually don’t remember anything from too, too far back. I think I blend real memories with imaginative thoughts or dreams I envisioned. I feel like I’ve always done that, but I actually just realized, right now, that like, I do it. I think I really only remember most of my memories in my new house, where I moved to with my family when I was seven years old, or something. I think my favorite memories are about playing softball and my dad coached the team. I think my household though, like, what’d you mean, the feeling? Like how it felt?

I: The feeling, or the environment, whatever you think is important or feel comfortable sharing.

R: I think my house was, like, chill.

(She laughed nervously then paused for a minute.)

R: I mean, it wasn’t always chill, sometimes it was scary and almost empty feeling, even when everyone was like home, in the house.

I: When you say scary, is there a certain memory you are referring to?

R: I don’t know, honestly, there’s not like one, but I guess like, always involving the same things. Like always involving my dad drinking and stuff, you know. I think he might’ve been depressed now that I think about it.

I: Just so I’m understanding correctly, you’re referring to your dad’s drinking as the scary feeling in the house?

R: I mean, yeah, I guess, is that weird? When I think about it now it doesn’t seem that scary, but he wasn’t the same person he was when he was drinking verses, like, when he was sober.

I: Did you ever express those feelings of fear to other family members or peers?

R: I think I was angry a lot, I mean my parents always told me I would throw tantrums and pretend to run away but would actually just hide outside and wait for someone to come get me. But the funny thing is most of the time no one would come get me so eventually I went back inside, haha. I definitely expressed anger I guess.

I: How old were you when the tantrums started? If you can remember.

R: Well I don’t remember anything too, too far back, but most of my memories involve my friends. I didn’t really spend a lot of time at home because it wasn’t a comforting place, even when nothing seemed to be the problem.

I: How would you describe your household if not comforting?

R: One day my dad told me he would build me a treehouse, but he never did. He offered to do a lot of things but I think he just wanted to make us happy. He worked a lot, and my mom seemed kind of money hungry. Maybe it was comforting….actually no, it wasn’t. I think it was just a place to sleep, eat, and change my clothes. I spent a lot of time with my friends, most of my memories are with my friends.

I: Growing up, who did you aspire to be?

R: I watched a lot of television, I think I wanted to work on a movie set, something funny like a comedy or love movie. I always liked to watch movies about love because I never felt like I saw a real-life example of two people in love.

I: Did your parents set expectations for who they thought you should be?

R: I never really felt pressure from my parents I don’t think. They always let me be myself, even when I was behaving poorly, getting in trouble constantly, they thought the consequences were going to teach me a lesson, which I think they did pretty much.

I: Just so I can make sure I’m getting this right, you saw the consequences as lessons learned?

R: I mean, yeah, I guess. I would like skip school for a day or something then get an ISS that’s an in school suspension where you’re basically held there all day and like I didn’t see that as a bad thing really. (laughs)

I: Was other people’s perspective of you, ever factor in to your decision making?

R: Wow, haha, you sounded smart! But what do you mean like what people thought about me?

I: Yes, or however you interpret from their point of view.

R: Like in middle school, no, I don’t think I ever cared or like realized that other people had an opinion of me, even people I didn’t know but everyone literally knows me as “(nickname kept confidential)”.

I: How did that nickname come to be?

R: Cause I was like the class clown I guess, you know. I loved to make people laugh, I still love to make people laugh but I think in like seventh or eighth grade I started doing like annoying or disruptive things during class just so people could have a good laugh. They weren’t like laughing at me, I hope, (laughs) but yeah I mean I guess that’s when I started being reckless at school too, I think I honestly took it too far.

I: What do you mean took it too far?

R: Like, I don’t know, like it started as like making little comments after the teacher talked, like a joke about what they said or something and then I guess it came to a point in time that like I went from funny to weird I guess.

I: Is that how you believe others perceived you? Funny and weird?

R: I mean yeah! (laughs) Obviously!! I’m still weird and I hope I’m funny cause I still like to make people laugh, were just older know, so I guess the jokes changed too (haha).

I: Growing up, were other people’s perceptions of you important to you?

R: Yeah like like yeah, haha, I mean yeah I guess. Everyone thought my brother and I were weird. I mean I started wearing bandanas every single day in like fourth grade to literally senior year of high school because I thought once I stopped wearing it I wouldn’t have a unique thing or like trait about myself.

Methodology Note

I think I should have begun with a different style of questioning and let the participant lead the conversation. I think I assumed too much about who this person was, I let my personal judgement cloud my duty to design an unbiased interview. I noticed extreme reservation when I asked questions that were more personal, which unfortunately made the flow of the conversation difficult and hard to navigate through.

Reflexivity Note

• Discuss your role and how you felt doing the interview?. Did anyone get upset or mad at your interview questions? Did you find yourself talking too much in the interview?

I felt almost pushy asking direct questions, though the participant was never angry or upset, they did give shorter answers to the direct questions asked of them. This made it seem like I was the one talking for most of the interview.

Analysis Note

Looking back, I should have put more thought into the questions I was asking and viewed the interview from the respondent’s point of view. Overall, the interview felt like a quick, but lengthy on-going sentence where neither of us could pinpoint exactly what the other person wanted to hear. I think because of the personal relationship I have with the respondent, that relationship affected the outcome of the interview and the information provided. Next time I plan to interview peers I have no acquaintance with.