

Methodist University Community Oral History Project
Methodist University
Fayetteville, NC

Anonymous 2017 1

Interview Conducted by
John Alan Felton
April 8, 2017
The Lion's Den
Fayetteville, NC, Methodist University

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Anonymous 1

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Descriptive Table of Contents:

- 0:01 -Introductions of FELTON and ANONYMOUS 1
- 0:36-Basic information about her journey to Methodist University, also including her early childhood memories
- 2:15 -First mention of Virginia and what life was like there
- 2:54 -Information on what moving around was like as a child
- 3:15 - talks about her father and eventually her mother for the first time: loves her father but not very close to him; very close to her mother
- 6:27 -First mention of identities and where she belongs in the world: both African American and Puerto Rican
- 7:27 - moving to Texas, where she first saw race in her life; moving from a closed community to a public one
- 9:56 -perceiving race in an academic environment: attending public school, facing racial discrimination in the classroom
- 12:00 -Texas, compared to Virginia, made her feel uncomfortable
- 13:33 -experience was in the academic world
- 14:07 -Describes how Fayetteville and Methodist University differ from her life in Virginia; different experiences of crime
- 15:37 -wanting America to stand for equality, opportunity
- 18:10 -discussion of racial barriers on campus
- 21:10 -police brutality and the n-word, and who can use it and who can't
- 22:55 -experience hearing the n-word on campus, her response to the people who used it
- 24:32 -thoughts on Trayvon Martin: his death brought home how it could happen to her or to her family members
- 28:00 -celebrating the elections of President Obama; her sense that his presidency did not achieve all it could have
- 31:26 -her reaction to President Donald J. Trump: describes being "numb" to it
- 34:20 -describes a segregated campus defined by cliques; possible solutions to the race problem: education is key
- 37:58 -international students and how they are treated differently by professors
- 39:40 -people ignore race in America because acknowledging it would make them uncomfortable

Interview of

ANONYMOUS 1

Interviewed by

JOHN ALAN FELTON

0:01

FELTON: Good evening. this is John Felton conducting an interview about race in America. I am here with [OMITTED], and she's going to introduce herself shortly. We are in the Lion's Den of Methodist University in Fayetteville, North Carolina. [OMITTED], would you like to introduce yourself?

0:21

ANONYMOUS 1: My name is [OMITTED]. I'm a freshman here at Methodist University and I am a Social Work major.

0:28

FELTON: Cool. Very cool. So, can you tell me, like, why you chose your major and what brought you to Methodist University?

0:36

ANONYMOUS 1: Well, the reason that I chose my major is because that I really wanted to help people, and I know that that's something everyone says who wants to become a social worker, but it's just really connecting people with resources to better their own lives. And that was something that really appealed to me. I remember that when I went to a seminar and it was, like, about social work—Social

Work major at another school. And they were just talking about it, and they were talking about how they help people, and the helping process, and how you have to value integrity, confidence, and service; and that really fit me personally. I remember I was crying, 'cause I was just like, "this is my major! This is what I want to do!" So, yeah. And what brought me to Methodist was that they had an exemplary Social Work program and it was a small campus that I felt like I could make my mark on.

1:29

FELTON: Okay great, very cool. So, was there anything in your childhood that, like, when people were asking you when you were growing up—what did you want to be when you grow up? Was social work the first thing that came to your mind, or was there, like, another job that you had interest in?

1:47

ANONYMOUS 1: Okay, when I was really, really little, I wanted to be a doctor. Then that turned into I wanted to be a singer, I wanted to be an actress. I wanted to be a vet very briefly, but then I decided that I was going to help people instead of animals. And then I was searching for a major and my aunt actually suggested social work. And the rest is history.

2:08

FELTON: Cool, cool. So where—where is home to you when you're not at Methodist University?

2:15

ANONYMOUS 1: Virginia. And it's literally—I haven't lived in, like, the whole state, but honestly I would probably consider the whole state my home, because Virginia just has, like, this familiar vibe and whatever. And it's really nice. I feel comfortable there.

2:29

FELTON: Do you mind telling me, like, the city and the county that you live in?

2:32

ANONYMOUS 1: Oh, currently I live in [OMITTED], Virginia, which is about an hour from [OMITTED], and, well, thirty minutes from [OMITTED], an hour from [OMITTED], and—. But my mom is originally from [OMITTED], Virginia.

2:47

FELTON: Okay, cool, cool. So, have you always lived there or did you move around as a child?

2:54

ANONYMOUS 1: I moved around a lot because I'm a military brat, so I've lived in Virginia, Texas, Japan, Hawaii, and briefly in Puerto Rico because that's where my dad's from.

3:07

FELTON: Do you mind telling me a little bit about your father?

3:11

ANONYMOUS 1: Well, my dad—. He's [a] very interesting person, but we—. Actually—this is kinda sad—but we actually get along better—. When I went to college, we started getting along really well and, like, we're a lot closer now. And, honestly, I think I appreciate him a whole lot more. But my dad, he's really—. He grew up on a really poor island. And its main attraction is tourism, but it's still,

regardless, it's just not the America that we think of. And he has that upbringing, and I think it's because of that he wants to give me and my brothers, like, all the opportunities in the world. He wants to make sure he satisfies us materially. And so—but that's good, but [bumps table]—oops—I love him. I love him to death, though, but yeah.

4:05

FELTON: Great.

4:07

ANONYMOUS 1: Even though we're too similar to get along.

4:10

FELTON: And you said—where was he from again?

4:11

ANONYMOUS 1: He's from [OMITTED], Puerto Rico.

4:13

FELTON: Okay, cool.

4:15

ANONYMOUS 1: And my grandma—. I think that was where my grandma—. Yeah, my grandma did live there, but her and my grandad, they both died in Puerto Rico and my grandma got sick and stuff.

4:27

FELTON: So did father join the military kinda as an opportunity in a way to leave Puerto Rico or was that something—or when did he—I guess what I’m trying to ask is when did he come to the United States?

4:40

ANONYMOUS 1: Well, he born—well, he was born—he’s from Puerto Rico. He grew up there—

4:43

FELTON: Oh, okay.

4:44

ANONYMOUS 1: —But he’s from New York. My grandfather actually lived in New York in the 1950s and so I don’t really know. My grandma told me the story of how they met a long time ago but I don’t remember it. But I know that they left New York because one of my uncles got sick.

4:58

FELTON: Okay. Okay, cool. So what about your mom? Could you tell me a little bit about her, maybe?

5:05

ANONYMOUS 1: Yeah, so my mom—as I said—she’s from [OMITTED]. She’s gonna be mad at me for saying that [laughs], but she is. But she has four sib—. Well, her and my dad both have four siblings, and my mom is the middle child. My dad is the youngest, but my mom, she’s the middle child so she’s kind of like—she has that mediating personality because she has her two older sisters and then she has a younger brother and her baby sister, who I’m also really close to—her baby sister, my aunt. And she

grew up in an interesting household. I'll leave that at that: it was very interesting. And she moved around a little bit when she was growing up, but I—. Growing up, I was always closer to her and I don't know why. And we are still close, but I'm trying to learn to be more independent of her, so to speak, because I was just always under her: I wanted to be with her, I wanted to look like her. And I do now, but, yeah, so. But I love my mother. I'd do anything for her.

6:15

FELTON: Very cool. So could you say that your mom and dad and your extended family kind of have molded you into who you are today?

6:27

ANONYMOUS 1: Oh, definitely. Like with my two identities, like, being black, you already have this—not so much of this hierarchical-idea family dynamic, but you have this sort of respect-your-elders-at-all-times-no-matter-what—sort of dynamic. So I've definitely been instilled in that. And then, like, I've never really had a rebellious stage where I would go against what they say, I would always fall in line. And then the funny thing is they would always end up being correct, so. And then, like, with my dad it's the same. It's kind of the same, just, like, respect your elders, but it's also just kind of like family comes first and is always, you know, blood before anything else, so.

7:14

FELTON: So just for clarification: your mom is African American, correct?

7:17

ANONYMOUS 1: Yes.

7:17

FELTON: And you father is—

7:19

ANONYMOUS 1: Hispanic but Puerto Rican.

7:19

FELTON: Hispanic but Puerto Rican. Okay. Very cool. So tell me about—describe to me, like, what your community was when you were growing up, like, from maybe in a specific place that you said that you grew up in or maybe just from Virginia, you decide where you want to kinda tell me, or you can just kinda give me a overall view of where you've lived and how the communities varied from where you've lived.

7:52

ANONYMOUS 1: Well, you know, because I've been in—well, I haven't been—but my dad was in the military, and we moved around with him. So it's kinda like we were always around fellow military people. And that was black, white, Asian, Hispanic, that was everything that you can think of. So growing up, I was always around multi-cultural kids, multi-racial kids, mixed kids, like, not explicitly mixed kids. So I grew up with that. And, like, I wasn't necessarily colorblind, because I remember that there was Black History Month and I was, like, "okay, that's me." But, like, at the same time I also didn't really think to base judgements off of color, growing up. So I think that's really shaped me, because, like, I feel that I can get along with anyone, no matter what. And then living in Japan, especially, I remember that one of my closest friends—her name was [OMITTED]—I wonder what she's doing now,

actually—but her name was [OMITTED], and she was Japanese. So I really just grew up with that and grew up with, like, an appreciation for other cultures, especially because I was living in Japan. And you would see, like, the cherry blossom festival, you would learn about kimonos; and, like, they had a day dedicated to girls and dolls and stuff, and now I know it's actually about spirits and whatnot. But I heard "girls day and dolls," and it was great. But, um, yeah. And Texas was completely different, *completely different* from that. And I lived in Hawaii, as well. And so I learned about, you know, historical—. I've been to Iolani Palace, which was, like, the last monarchy—American monarchy—so. And I learned a lot about Hawaiian history, and I grew, like, a love for the mythology there. And then we moved to Texas, and then Texas is just completely different, completely different, and that was really when I saw race.

9:50

FELTON: How old were you when you moved to Texas?

9:52

ANONYMOUS 1: Ten, I was ten. Because it was 2008.

9:56

FELTON: So, okay, 2008. What were the things that you noticed that were different than coming from the military? You know, I don't want to say necessarily the safe side of the military, where everything was, you know, accepting, and there was more culturally diverse people—. What were [some of the] things that you remember from Texas as a young girl?

10:19

ANONYMOUS 1: I remember that, going—. That was the first school that I went on that was not on a military base. So while it was multi-cultural to an extent, it was more so, like, white kids, black kids, and—excuse me—majority Mexican. Well, I take that back: it was a lot of Latino kids, and then there were some Asians, but not as many. And then I remember—I distinctly remember that, one time, I was in class, and my friend was—she was white—she was cracking this joke, and I was, like, laughing, going along with it, but it was really mean to this one guy who everybody didn't like because he was annoying. But he got up and told the teacher. I was the only one that got in trouble. My friend didn't. So I kind of reflect back on that, 'cause I didn't tell my mom 'cause I didn't want to get in trouble [laughs]. But if I did, that would have been an issue.

11:17

FELTON: Do you think that punishment decision by the teacher was based on race, or do you think you just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time?

11:24

ANONYMOUS 1: I think it was based on race, and I also think it was based on preference. Like, she preferred that student over me, even though I was a good student. I've always been a good student.

11:34

FELTON: That's very interesting to note.

11:37

ANONYMOUS 1: Mm-hmm.

11:38

FELTON: Anything else about, you know, growing up in Texas, or even in Virginia now? What kinds of things do you see that are, you know, that are different? That aren't necessarily in line with the cultural diversity that you experienced earlier in your life?

11:57

ANONYMOUS 1: Well, Virginia—at least the parts of Virginia that I'm at—we kind of have this thing—. Virginia is, like—there are really racist parts, and that's, like, towards Williamsburg and whatnot; and then there's the parts where, those they're the ghettos that my mom is familiar with, and we'll go there. But of course we are cautious and whatnot, but, you know, we're more comfortable there than we are in North Williamsburg or in Charlottesville or Blacksburg, one of those places. So that is certainly interesting. And I remember we went to the Historical Williamsburg—and that's, like, a club where there's colonial reenactors?

12:39

FELTON: Yeah.

12:39

ANONYMOUS 1: Yeah. So, it's like, that was really interesting, 'cause there was, like, Indian—. It was Native American History Month, and, like, there were just a whole lot of white people there, and they were all kind of looking at us, and we were just, like, "okay!" And then my brother is like, really—. He looks like—. You can't really—. He's racially ambiguous. So they were looking at him and then looking at my mom, trying to connect the dots, so it was interesting.

13:05

FELTON: Interesting. Okay. So, I've already asked you kind of about, like, some of your schooling. So you said in your early life you were on schools on military bases, correct?

13:22

ANONYMOUS 1: Mm-hmm.

13:22

FELTON: And then when you moved to Texas, that was your first public school. How did you like public school, and, you know, how did that change as going from, like, elementary school and middle school to high school?

13:34

ANONYMOUS 1: I hated it. After that year, I was home-schooled for up until college.

13:41

FELTON: Excellent. Okay. Not a lot of people can say that they were home-schooled.

13:46

ANONYMOUS 1: And actually made it to college. [Laughs.]

13:48

FELTON: Right, right. Cool. So how does Fayetteville, and Methodist Univer—well, first—excuse me—first Fayetteville compare to back home? How does, like, the community and the environment differ, you know, from that?

14:07

ANONYMOUS 1: Fayetteville is very different from Virginia. It's different from the communities that I'm used to even in Virginia. Because this is a very dangerous area; it's also a predominantly black area. Not saying that they two are synonymous, but that it's different from the predominantly black dangerous areas in Virginia, if that makes sense. And I can't really put into words what it is about it that's so different: it's just, like, the, like, the amount of—. And then another thing that kind of makes sense about it is that this area is huge for drug trafficking—not drug trafficking, *human* trafficking. And Virginia, the dangerous areas, those are more sort of, like, gun violence, gang violence, drug dealing, that sort of thing. So here I have to be especially more cautious, because it's not what I'm fa—not necessarily, like, familiar with, because I grew up on military bases, so I was safe—but, like, it's definitely not the ideal area. I'll just leave it at that.

15:12

FELTON: Okay. So do you enjoy your time here in Fayetteville? Do you think it's a good place to be?

15:21

ANONYMOUS 1: I think they should just build it up a little bit! [Laughs.] But I like downtown Fayetteville, you know, during the day. But, yeah, I like it, I like it here.

15:32

FELTON: Good. Good. So the next thing I want to ask you is, what does America mean to you? And I know that's a big question, but kind of what is, what is America to you? What does that—what should that look like, and what things should be associated with that?

15:49

ANONYMOUS 1: I definitely want—I wish that America actually lived up to its promise that everyone can achieve the American dream. Because I don't feel like—excuse me—especially right now that it does.

16:02

FELTON: And to build on that, what does—what to you is the American dream?

16:09

ANONYMOUS 1: Just to—not necessarily to make something of yourself, but kinda, you can come here, and you're offered, you have equal opportunity of getting a job, getting education, raising your kids, if you choose to have any, in a good home, and you can just exist without that being threatened because you're—. Especially for immigrants: if you're coming from a war-torn country, you're not coming to America because you think that it's a dangerous place. You're coming here because you were sold this idea that it's a safe haven. And it doesn't turn out to be.

16:42

FELTON: Interesting. Okay. So with that being said, how do you feel about people saying either the American dream is dead, the American dream is gone, or peoples that saying immigrants coming here to the United States are just using it for an excuse. What are your views, and what's your point on that?

17:06

ANONYMOUS 1: I kind of think that America is a very self-absorbed nation, just as a whole. And there's actually this joke, it's like, "what do you call someone who speaks only one language? An American." And that language is English, because we're not taught to be culturally competent and accepting of other cultures. We're taught that you have to look like me, you have to talk like me, you have to sound like me, you have to dress like me, and if you don't, you don't belong here. That's kind of like the culture that we have now, and it's really—. It kind of makes me question if the American dream ever existed. Because you have to consider what America was built on.

17:46

FELTON: Interesting. So, using that information and coming back more locally, now, what kinds of things have you seen on specifically Methodist University's campus—. Have you seen any racial barriers or anything—. Have you personally been treated differently because of your race?

18:11

ANONYMOUS 1: It's never—it hasn't been explicitly said. But, well, there were some instances where it was explicitly said. It was, like, implied, almost, because, like, I'm very vocal in classrooms. I'm a very good student. Like, I have a 3.9741 [grade point average]. [Laughs.] And it's—just, people roll their eyes when I speak—typically they're white people—they roll their eyes when I speak, or they, like, get on their phones or just, like, blatantly disregard what I'm saying, and I'm just kind of like, "okay, but, you know, the next test—guess who's gonna get a A and who's not." But, you know, that's not my business. But also, like, in my FYS [First-Year Seminar] class, someone literally got up in front of the class, in talking about their experiences here, and they literally said that they were scared that one of the Muslim

people that go here were attached to ISIS [the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria]. And they were just like, “how crazy would that be?” And it was kind of like it was a joke and something to take light-hearted, and I was just kind of like, that’s the sort of stuff that gets people killed! And, you know, there are these instances where people kind of joke, and you kind of think, like, “Am I your only—”. I ask people, I’m like, “Am I your only black friend? Because that right there is a red flag for me, if so.” [Laughs.] Because it means that other people are seeing everything. ‘Cause I like to try to see the best in people, especially when I don’t know them very well. But, like, then usually that gets disregarded and I become disenchanted with them. Like, “I’m off.” But, yeah, there were instances like that. And then there has also been, like, let me think. There’s also a whole lot of discussion about diversity, because we are a diverse campus, and there’s literally a class on human diversity. And that’s when we talk so candidly about, you know, like, white privilege and does white privilege exist, and, you know, what immigrants’ rights and whatnot? And I remember from that, this guy, to make a point, he had a video up, and it was basically this black guy, and he was just saying, you know, “Not all cops are bad. Not all black people are criminals.” But I was just kind of, like, “Well, that’s a unfair comparison, because you can change your occupation but you can’t change your race.” You could hear a pin drop, because no one had a response to that. So that was just—and it’s so [often?], especially, like, for, not just, like, you know, police brutality, but, like, a lot of issues, people are speaking out of their own ignorance and their realm of comfort. So. And that is very prominent, and it’s more so micro-aggressions than, like, just kind of like people outright saying what they want to say, pretty much. And there’s also the n-word. That’s very prominent, too.

21:06

FELTON: Do you care to explain a little bit more about how you feel on the n-word personally?

21:11

ANONYMOUS 1: I think if you're black, you can say it. But if you're not black, it doesn't belong in your mouth. Because, personally, I just kind of think—. I don't say it, personally. I can count on my fingers how many times I've actually said it in conversation. But "You are—." I don't even want to say it now, but it's like, "You are my n-word—." If you are black, "you are my n-word," you're always gonna be that, because we're stuck in this together. I go down, you go down with me, metaphorically and literally, at this rate. But with, like, other—when other races say it, it just kind of makes me angry, because I'm just, like, you know you're saying a slur, right? And you're saying a slur—you want to say that it's a joke. And it's just, like, okay, well, what if we took—especially when it's non-black people but they're not white, either—but I'm just kind of like, what if we took your word and said—[if] we inserted it in rap songs and whatnot, and made it seem like, you know, it was okay to say? Like, that would be a completely different issue. Y'all wouldn't like that. So I don't know why we should let you have our word when you don't want us to have yours.

22:21

FELTON: So, when you're on campus and you hear not just white people but any other, you know, other groups of people saying the n-word, you kind of said that makes you frustrated. What k—. Like, how do you—. I guess what I'm trying to ask you is, is there more to that reaction than just anger, or is it just primarily just frustration?

22:49

ANONYMOUS 1: Yeah, it's definitely frustration. I actually confronted my suitemates about saying it. And nothing happened: they were just kind of, like, you know, "We're sorry." And one of them, she obviously didn't want to say that she was sorry, but—.

23:04

FELTON: And do you mind—I'm sorry to interrupt you—but do you mind me asking what their race was, your suitemates?

23:10

ANONYMOUS 1: They're white.

23:11

FELTON: Okay.

23:12

ANONYMOUS 1: So they actually—they said it, and I was just, like, "Oh my gosh," because—. And that was, like, the first week of school. So I was freshly out of the house, and I hadn't assimilated to this environment yet, but I just confronted them, and it's kind of funny, because I was like, "Who said 'nigger'?" [Laughs.] And they were just—. They looked shocked, and they looked caught. And I was just like, "Someone said it." And I wasn't gonna do anything, but they were probably scared I was gonna jump 'em or something. But I can't even fight. [Laughs.]

23:43

FELTON: So, wait, and the context that they were using, was it a joke, or were they saying it, you know, was it a—I'm not trying to interrogate you and trying to figure out, you know, who this was and, you know, punish them or, you know, take them to the academic board or things like that. What was the context behind they were using it?

24:02

ANONYMOUS 1: It was a song. And it was just—it came out too easily. So I was just kind of like, I nipped it in the bud. I haven't heard it since.

24:11

FELTON: Excellent. Good. Good. So the next kind of things I want to ask you is more broad, leaving the specifics, you know, of Fayetteville and Methodist University to a national level. So do you remember the day when Trayvon Martin was killed? [Martin, a seventeen-year-old African American boy, was shot by George Zimmerman in Sanford, Florida on February 26, 2012.]

24:32

ANONYMOUS 1: Mm-hmm.

24:33

FELTON: Can you explain to me your reactions to that and how your family and your community reacted with that?

24:43

ANONYMOUS 1: Okay, and this is kind of random, but, like, do you have—I'm, like, gonna talk about really personal stuff. So, like, can I be left anon—. Is it too late for me to be anonymous? I don't know if you can edit this out.

24:55

FELTON: I can't edit this out, unfortunately. [The recording was paused; while the recording was paused, Felton granted the interview subject anonymity. The transcript resumes when the recording was un-paused.] Okay, so.

25:06

ANONYMOUS 1: Go back.

25:07

FELTON: We'll go back a little bit. So, basically, explaining—describe to me the day that Trayvon Martin died and how you reacted to that, and how your family reacted to that.

25:20

ANONYMOUS 1: Well, I remember when the news broke. I was pretty young. I think that was—'cause that happened a while ago, but I remember, I was just kind of like, okay, well, a black kid was killed, that's a common occurrence. But then as it gained more traction and media attention, it turned out to be something so much bigger than it was—well, not bigger than it was in, like, the sense that it was blown out of proportion, but it was just—it got so much attention because there were so many things that were ambiguous and vague and they didn't add up, and then you realize that he had a Arizona Sweet Tea and some Skittles, and he was being stalked and followed and it was done supposedly out of self-defense. And that really opened up this whole conversation. Not necessarily that I was unaware of it, but it became a reality that that could have been me, or that could have been one of my little brothers. And it's scary to think about, and it just kind of seems like, it just kind of seems like that, like, ripped—that, like, completely broke the seal. And my mom started talking candidly more about it. Because she used to try to keep us, not jaded, but she tried to keep us naïve for as long as she could.

She wanted us to be kids. So there was that, but then, you know, she finally—it was finally explained, like, hey, police brutality. And I would see things on the news and on TV—excuse me—and on internet, primarily, and we would talk about it. And she would just kind of say, well, you know, that’s what happened, and it’s just like, and people get away with that. So. And she kind of—to this day, she references to it. She was—like, she’ll see something about how, you know, white people don’t get, like, frisked and followed and stalked at the same rate that black people do. And she’s like, you can do this. They can go and shoot up schools, but someone can’t come home through the corner store with a Arizona Sweet Tea and, you know, Skittles in their hand, you know?

27:42

FELTON: Yeah. It’s a weird reality we live in. Yeah. My next question is, do you remember the day that former President Barack Obama was inaugurated into office, and do you remember the excitement, or what were the feelings behind, you know, him gearing for being elected?

28:15

ANONYMOUS 1: It was great. [Laughs.] It was a party. Oh my gosh. I don’t know if you’ve heard that term, but it was like—. I was in—that was 2008—

28:26

FELTON: Yep. 2008.

28:26

ANONYMOUS 1: That was my first year in Texas. And, you know, it was kind of like, we were popping big bottles, but, like, those bottles with, like, you know, apple cider and whatnot. Because I was only,

like, ten. But, yeah, but I do remember, next day at school, I was sitting around people, and they were talking about President Obama being assassinated. And it wasn't making sense, because I was just kind of like, "why do y'all think so harshly?" And I was, like—. And I had a feeling, but I wanted them to say it. And I was just, like, "Why do y'all not like Barack Obama so much?" And they were just, like, "I don't know." And I was never convinced, because I wasn't stupid, but—. There was something—. In retrospect, there was something that was passed on to their parents, and passed down to them. And maybe it was something that they genuinely didn't know. But just the way they were talking about it, and they were just talking about a graphic nature of how they wanted him to get assassinated. And you know, ten-year-olds, they have their wild imagination, and then, you know, action movies. So they were very dramatic and graphic, and I was just kind of like, "Why would you want—? He literally hasn't done anything. Why would you want him to go through that?" You know?

29:37

FELTON: Mm-hmm. So, did you—what was your reaction when he got reelected in 2012?

29:45

ANONYMOUS 1: There was this picture of Barack Obama's face, photoshopped on 2 Chainz. And it was "2 Termz!" [The photograph is of the rapper 2 Chainz in a characteristic pose, flashing the number two with each hand, but with Obama's face in place of 2 Chainz's.]

29:51

FELTON: Yes. "2 Termz." I remember that. I remember that.

29:55

ANONYMOUS 1: Yes, and I just remember, I was getting my hair done, I was sitting on the floor while my mom was on the couch—she was braiding my hair—and we were just looking at him being inaugurated again, and there was the confetti everywhere. And I just remember him coming out onstage and seeing the Obamas—like, the former First Lady Michelle Obama and Malia and Sasha. It was just a moment. That was, like—“happy is too”—any word that you can think of beyond jovial, it was that. It was just that. It kind of felt like a new era, so to speak.

30:37

FELTON: So if you could say anything to former President Obama, or former First Lady Michelle Obama, what would you say to them?

30:47

ANONYMOUS 1: [Sighs. Laughs.] I would say, “You did what you could. You coulda did better, but you know. Like, a few things you passed I don’t agree with: you really shouldn’t a did that, ‘cause you kind of set the stage for what this mess we got going on now. But, you know, you did good.”

31:07

FELTON: Okay. So, now that former President Obama has left the office and now we are under a new President, President Donald Trump, how did you react to the transition from former President Obama to Donald Trump?

31:28

ANONYMOUS 1: I was numb. I remember—I have a lot of Muslim friends, and mainly my concern was with them. I wasn’t even thinking of myself; I was just checking. Two of my friends called me crying. I

just was texting them, and I stayed up—. I remember, I was here. I was in college, and I stayed up, I stayed up talking to them, and they just vented to me, and I just listened, because that's, you know, all I could do as a friend.

32:01

FELTON: So, do you—with Donald Trump being elected, and—excuse me—President Donald Trump being elected, how do you feel about some of the things that he's said about Muslims, but also about other minorities in America? And do you feel like he is going to act on those words that he's said?

32:33

ANONYMOUS 1: I mean, you want someone to, like, capitalize on freedom of speech. [Laughs.] And, there's not—that's—. I feel very numb to it. He's gonna say what he needs to say, and there's nothing I can do to prevent him from saying those things. As far as acts, I'd like to hope not, that he would act on what he says, because some of it, it's very inflammatory, even though he's kind of—he—I don't think he's apologized for a lot of it. But some of the stuff that he has come out and apologized for. But you know. I don't know. I just feel very numb to a lot of it, and, so, there's like this really disconnect between the whole election—. 'Cause that whole election was just a mess, and the two candidates that we had to pick between, you know, yeah. And that's what I got to say about that.

33:42

FELTON: Okay, great. Great. So, moving forward into what I call or what I talk about as progress, and a positive movement forward, what things that you say and that you think would be—I don't necessarily want to say solutions, but—what kinds of things can students at Methodist University do, or people

around the country do, to become more aware of racism and to, you know, put an end to racism, if you will?

34:20

ANONYMOUS 1: I think that Methodist University's kind of like a prolonged exposure, experiment. And you would kind of think that two ideologies, two nationalities, two different, even, like, educations and stuff would all be—. Like, we have such a diverse campus. And you would all think that would kind of come together and educate and open discussion forums, everything. But you don't really get that. You kind of see everyone just kind of, like, hang out with their own cliques, and hang out with, like, like-minded people. [Sighs.] And that is very sad. And one of my things is, I would just love to end that whole segre—not, it *is* segregation. Like, even my international friends, like, people just say that—. That's segregation, because everyone is just so divided, and there's really no connection between ideologies and people who share those ideologies and whatnot. It kind of makes me—. But my main solution, I think, would be educating. I think if everyone would kind of get educated on issues, and not just, you know, "Well, this ideology was passed on from my dad, and passed on to me," like the way, like, a lot of this is. But [if] you actually look at the hard facts and the hard statistics, like, even just looking past, you know, mainstream news sources, and really going in deep and researching about issues like wage gap, employment, equality, opportunity, like, employment opportunity, equality, poverty, international relations, all of that—if you actually dug through what everything that's being kind of projected and shouted at us, and actually looked into those issues, that we would definitely get a whole lot further than where we are.

36:25

FELTON: Interesting. So that answers that. I'm sure if we've already covered this, but do you feel that students that are minorities, and international students, are treated different here at Methodist University versus, say, another campus or just in public in general, or just overall?

36:58

ANONYMOUS 1: I kind of think that Methodist tries to do its part and, like, cause everyone to kind of come together and integrate. But I do just think that everyone just kind of ignores each other, you know? It's just like, you're kind of different from me in this way, and I'm not even gonna try to interact with you and see where you're coming from. And it's just kind of like, okay, we go our separate ways: you hang out with your people, I hang out with mine. But I do think that, if anything, it would come from, like, professors. 'Cause sometimes professors may import their own political views or whatnot into the classrooms, and then, you know, student relations people just don't talk to one another, so. But that's what I have about that.

37:52

FELTON: So, to kind of build off of that, have you seen professors treat students of minority and students that are internationals differently?

38:03

ANONYMOUS 1: Some professors don't take international students seriously.

38:08

FELTON: Do you care to explain a bit more about that?

38:12

ANONYMOUS 1: There's this constant othering of them, where they're just kind of talking about—. They're trying to be more inclusive, but it's just, their language kind of, like—. Someone may say "American," and then look at the international student in the room and be like, "I don't mean to say 'American,' but that's kind of what we're talking about," or something. And it's this constant "you're not us" sort of thing. Not necessarily "you don't fit in," but it's just like, "you're not in that group." And it's really micro-aggressions, that's really—that's all it is. It's just, like, it's not something that's gonna be explicitly said. Like, they're not gonna say "you're this nationality, so you wouldn't understand what I'm talking about." It's more so like, you know—. And then it's like, international students, they are, from what I've been told, they've been told that they have the Global Perspective, and they don't have the Global Perspective, they have their own personal perspective based on their experiences from their home country, not—they don't represent the whole globe, you know? [It's possible that the interview subject is referring obliquely to Methodist University's requirement that all students take a course that enriches their "Global Perspective."] So that's how that—from what I've been told, because I'm not international—but that's what I've been told that they've been treated like.

39:24

FELTON: Okay. So, coming to a close here, trying to close on a note, here: why do you think people choose to ignore race in America?

39:39

ANONYMOUS 1: They choose to ignore it because it makes them uncomfortable to kind of acknowledge it, and they kind of become aware of their own preferences and biases and ignorance if it's something they have to both acknowledge and respect at the same time. It's easier to ignore it and just—. It's

easier for them to ignore it, because they wouldn't necessarily have to respect it. Like, someone can say a racist comment; someone can retort, "Okay, I'm not racist because I don't see color." That's kind of not how this works! So. But acknowledging race in that sense, it would make them uncomfortable.

40:29

FELTON: So, I think that's all I have to ask you, but I will ask you, is there anything, you know, for the record, that you want to say that I didn't cover? Kind of like this is just a free moment for you to say what you want to say about the subject, or just something that I didn't necessarily cover?

40:52

ANONYMOUS 1: "Something that would like to say." Definitely. I kind of think that in this conversation about minorities in general, we just have to listen to them. You have to kind of step back, acknowledge your own ignor—not you per se, but, you know, just in general. People have to learn to remove themselves from the conversation that they don't need to be in. For instance, if there's a certain race or certain group of people, certain gender, certain sexuality, they're speaking—[if] you're not of that group, shut up. Like, and that goes for myself, too. Like, I'm not speaking for international students, I'm just kind of amplifying their voices. And I try to do that in everything that I do: I just try to amplify the voices of the unheard. Or, not necessarily unheard, but they're all the way in the back, and the stage is all the way in the front. So, yeah, but definitely that's something everyone can benefit from: just kind of learning, like, this isn't about me, so I'ma be quiet and let y'all kind of figure that out. And you have to be an ally. And that's good allyship. And that goes for social work, too, is active listening.

42:10

FELTON: Before I go, here, do you mind explaining to people that didn't understand what an ally is— what is a good ally to you, and what should that be?

42:23

ANONYMOUS 1: A good ally is definitely someone who, like—they want to see the change as well, they want to see that change, but they know where their boundaries are. They're gonna know that, I will never understand this. This is something that, it's unspoken between members of this group. We'll never understand it, but I will take your concerns and I will do my part to help end your oppression. And I think that a good ally amplifies forces and speaks up against casual acts and micro-aggressions, but also knows when to shut up and let other people talk.

43:03

FELTON: Well, very good, very good. Well, I have really enjoyed this conversation with you, [OMITTED]. Yeah, it's been a lot of fun. So I thank you for your time, and I thank you for your input on this issue in America.

43:20

ANONYMOUS 1: Thank you!