

#3 INTERVIEW OF BLACK STUDENTS ENROLLED AT WASHINGTON AND LEE

1. *Have you decided upon a college major?*

Yes, history.

2. *(If the answer to question 1 is no, skip #7.) What is your grade point average (GPA) in your major field?*

2.3

3. *What type of degree are you working toward at Washington and Lee?*

BA

4. *What is the occupation or profession you want to enter upon finishing your education?*

I haven't decided.

5. *Do you plan on working toward an advanced degree at some time after finishing your undergraduate program?*

Yes. I would consider getting a Masters or PhD in History.

6. *While growing up, did you attend or were you personally active in church?*

Yes, I was Baptist.

Give the denomination, and the type of church activities in which you participated.

Summer Bible school, Sunday School, softball, youth deacon, janitorial work, everything you can imagine

How would you characterize your church involvement in Lexington?

Nothing.

7. *How would you compare your level of participation in extra-curricular activities in high school and at Washington and Lee?*

The same, I just don't play sports here.

So what other things?

Clubs, community service, working.

So except for sports, you were active in other ways and you are now active in service things, working, and social clubs.

8. *How did you learn about Washington and Lee University?*

Through a counselor at an after-school program. We were doing pre-college programs and the last application I filled out was for W&L because they still had a --the deadline wasn't over with and I was on the wait list for other programs. I applied here. That was the first I learned of it.

So you applied here before you did Summer Scholars?

No, that was when I first learned of it, when I did Summer Scholars. That was winter of my junior year of high school. That was the first I learned of the school.

The after school program--

Like we do pre-college programs every summer with this program. I was filling out applications for a summer program after my junior year--

So the pre-college program let you know about summer programs at colleges? OK.

This one, since I'd been wait listed on two others and I was waiting for them, the deadline was still good. So I went ahead and applied here and I was accepted. That was Summer Scholars.

9. *To what extent were you assisted during the admissions process by an alumnus of Washington and Lee?*

I guess to a decent extent. When I wasn't interested in the school anymore, the alums called and talked about maybe I should come and visit, see the campus again at a different time. Maybe go to one of the classes. This was winter of my senior year.

10. *Did you visit the campus before you matriculated as a student?*

If yes, under what circumstances?

Summer scholars program and the Prospective Student Weekend.

Please describe your reactions to this campus visit.

Summer Scholars was ok, but with the fact that we weren't getting credit for the work we were doing, the interest and motivation to do the work was decreased. Though you're interested in the work, you're not giving 100% because it's just an experience, it's not something that's going to determine college credit or anything. It's just literally an experience completely unrepresentative of the school.

Could you tell that at the time?

Yeah, just by the way the students--there were 90 students, 10 of them were black. There was one black counselor. Just in the way the students played off---that was almost 10% of the population was black. There were a couple of other minorities. There were probably 15% minorities in the program which is completely different from what the school is really like.

And you knew that?

You could get a feel of it. When we first got here, it wasn't something that was noticeable until the first night that we sat around and talked. You had the black students talking. Then you had some of the white students coming over to talk. As soon as they did that, I talked with the counselor immediately afterwards. I pretty much figured how the school is broken down.

You could tell from the reaction of the black student counselor? Is that what you're saying?

So you sort of vibed it?

Yes, so I wasn't here a week when I first learned of the school. I won't say that I knew exactly what was expected here or what to see here, but I had probably more of a feeling than the majority of the students who come either to Summer Scholars or to the school itself. And the Prospective Weekend, that gave me another side that the school had a high alcohol rate. I was late getting here. My luggage was lost. The person who was hosting me, the first thing he asked me to do if I wanted to go drinking. When I told him no, he was like, well, I'm gonna go hang out with these guys and drink.

So did he leave you?

Yeah.

Was this a black student.

Uh-huh.

So what did you do then?

Kind of just hung out by myself. There was a forum that night, so I went and talked to some other black students. They had a sit down chat at the Chavis House--continuously, I was here three days. During the entire three days, except when I had a dinner or lunch with the university, every black student told me not to come here. The black student that I met when I came, theyd. It's not like I came and I knew that if these guys came to school next year we would be great friends. We were very intelligent and you could sense that. We were all concerned about our grades and what we did, but as far as anything else, I knew were very different. There were four of us that came that weekend.

Four black prospectives?

Yes. It was a minority weekend but only 4 black kids that came and of the 4, I think every one of us was told at least sometime during the weekend not to come here by the black students. The white students pretty much told us that if we did come here, we'd better prepare ourselves for racism.

Really, even the white students said that? What were the reasons the black students gave for not coming here?

The disproportionate numbers of minority students, the racial tension, differences in culture, differences in social activities, lack of black Greeks. Some of them complained about not being understood by their professors because they were different. They felt that just because they were black, they..... something pretty much warned that this might not happen, but this has happened in the past. Don't be surprised if it does happen.

Later on there will be opportunities, and I want to encourage you later on. This is not the place to talk about your experiences as a student yet. We want to get a pretty clear and specific feel of what people mean when they say racism. That word comes up and it means different things to different people. In order to be most useful, we need to know more exactly what you mean by that. You're saying that even the white kids told you to be prepared for racism. What do you think they meant?

That you would be ridiculed, that there are certain places that you would be denied entrance into because you're a black person.

Did they say that specifically or did they just say racism?

There are a couple of fraternities that various white students told me that I wouldn't want to interact with to any degree because acceptance wouldn't be there nor would treatment as human being...like KKK marching in the neighborhood...just kind of alert--these are people who will not like you. It's best for you to just stay away from them, because they're not accepting of people as people. They still see people as color. They have organizations where they have events that show how much they dislike people of different races.

What kind of events?

Shitkickers Ball, Old South, those kinds of things. This is what people told me about before I came.

So it sounds like both of your prior experiences, Summer Scholars and Prospectives Weekend, you had negative reactions. Any positive reactions? I'm not begging you to say anything positive, by the way. I just want to be sure to get the whole picture.

They were Summer Scholars, different regions and people with similar thoughts and ideas on things they wanted to do, how they wanted to accomplish it. Similar to myself. As far as the campus weekend. If I based my coming to school just on that weekend, I wouldn't

have come here. There was that little light coming on in your head saying this isn't the place for you. The only positive thing that I can recall from that besides having some of the counselors talk to me was having a couple of the ladies in the Coop talk to me, remember me. That's the extent of it.

Did you participate in any of the social stuff as a prospective?

No. I was in training. As soon as I left here, I was going to a competition. It was very business oriented. That's what I was looking for. I just saw the people playing too much, partying. I wasn't here two hours before everyone was heading out to go party. That's pretty much the climate the entire weekend that I was here. Which isn't bad or anything. At the time it wasn't something that I cared to do. Everyone seemed to be more concerned about partying than anything else.

More concerned about partying than being with you--just the priority list of party if you wanted to, or if you didn't want to, they would go the party.

10a. *Was W&L your...*
my second choice

10b. *About how many other colleges did you apply to?...*
four (?)

10c. *How many other colleges accepted you?*

three

11. *What made you decide to attend Washington and Lee?*

It's a different place--small school. I thought that despite my experiences, you meet more people, you get more people who are more like you. I thought there were only 1600 students. That was close to my high school was in number. Racially, the ratios are different. I guess the understanding would be the same because of the level of higher education.

The understanding of what would be the same?

Like at my high school, though there were problems with racism, but to the extent it never got to a fight and that type of stuff. More name calling, the people were pretty quick, friendships were more important than someone disliking because of race and I figured that would be the same here. I went to school with kids who were super wealthy, kids who were middle, I mean the entire socio-economic hierarchy. I didn't think it would be too different here. Financially it was better. I didn't have to take loans out to come my first year.

You were offered more here than at the other choices?

Location, close to D.C. and North Carolina. I had family here. No one else in my family had gone here. The reputation of the school. By the time I came here, I had met one person who was a student at my high school who was a sophomore here. And I met another person once I elected to come here. Pretty much, I didn't think that this school would be as challenging outside of the classroom environment like it was for the first year. There was more stress than I anticipated, the things I encountered my first year were totally different.....assumed in coming to the school here. All of the things. There is only so much research you can do on Washington and Lee before coming. So with that--the positives and negatives--more on the positive than the negative. I only put so much status to the here say I had heard, because I hadn't really encountered any of the

things that these people had told me about, so it was like “maybe this happened to you, but it won’t happen to me” type reaction to it.

Were there other factors you considered in making the decision?

12. *Once you decided to enroll at W&L, what was the reaction of friends and relatives?*
They had never heard of it. That’s pretty much it. They were like, great, you’re going to college. You’re going to Virginia. That was it. No one in my family had ever heard of it. None of my friends had ever heard of it. Maybe 5 of my friends had heard of the school. They were just more happy for me to go to college than anything.

Were there negative images about W&L that made you think seriously about not coming?
Oh, yeah. The size was ideal--there were only 1600 kids here. The community was small. You don’t have any clubs. There’s no mall. The number of schools are limited. Nightclubs--places to go for people between 18 and 25, there wasn’t any. An overwhelming white population, which is something, though I went to a predominantly white school, I lived in a predominantly black neighborhood. It took me a while to see that there was almost a split in the way people lived here for a while. Then I realized that it wasn’t. It didn’t really seem that this school and the community were connected. Those type of things.

13. *Once you were enrolled, did you find the University to be as you had expected?*
Yes. I saw the racism from the moment I came here. Though I had talked with my future roommate once on the telephone before coming here, there was just the look on his face when I came to the door that let me know that it was going to be a very rough year.

That was as a freshman?

As a freshman. Just from that meeting, “nigger” being spray painted on the walls, having friends walk down the street with a white student, the white students call him “nigger lover” or being turned down for drinks at a fraternity party, being turned away from a party. Having everyone in my hall have confederate flags up. The naked women, black women, on walls. Just that type stuff.

So you’re saying it was the same as you expected. You expected that?

I expected some dumb people, ignorant people, people who aren’t prepared for someone who is different. I didn’t expect it to be to the extent that it was, but I did expect to see some things that were bad, but they were far greater than I expected them to be.

If the school differed from the way it seemed when you first heard about it or visited the campus, please describe how it differed.

With the number ratio, that was different. As a summer scholar, I saw black students...do more things together. As a freshman, I literally could count the....between a black student and a student from another racial minority....swimming class. I had more people in my swimming class than I’ve had in any other. More blacks than I’ve had in any other class that I’ve taken here.

Just sort of by accident?

It seemed by accident until I talked to other kids. Every year they tell me the same thing. Swimming is the only class that they have that ---

14. *Please describe what you consider to be your greatest challenge at Washington and Lee. How have you dealt with it?*

Just my personal negativity. I guess my level of liberalism is almost the same as when I first came here. I really didn't care much about races when I came. People were people. Once I came here I instantly became more pro-black--more radical. I guess my greatest challenge was pretty much getting over that aspect of my life to where everything is done despite black people. Everyone was against blacks. Everything that happened was because I was black.

You mean that was your assumption for a while?

Yeah, whole confederacy and all that stuff. I won't say that I'm pro-confederacy. I'm pro-people who have a respect for it. The confederacy has two different meanings just like pro-black has two meanings.

Why don't you describe it?

Like when I came here, the first encounter I had with the confederacy was my roommate putting a confederate flag in my room. In battling with that, it was more symbolism to him to an idea as opposed to a struggle. He envisioned confederacy as whites fighting for white pride and anyone who was not white, did not associate to anything that deals with the south.

Did he discuss that openly?

Yes.

A white supremacy kind of thing--is that what you're saying?

Literally, he told me--this was when we were freshmen. We've since become friends. When we were freshmen, on one occasion we had an argument and he told me that if I disliked the confederacy so much I should have never come to school here. So that was pretty much the negative aspect of the confederacy that I saw. White supremacy, keeping one people down, as opposed to the way that other people I respect. I can also see the confederacy as a sign of struggle, people who wanted to be free, people who wanted to have their voices heard, people who felt they were being oppressed. It doesn't matter if they were white or whatever. In that sense, the confederate flag can be seen just like the black fist or the....that blacks wear or the dreadlocks or whatever. It's a sign that we're united by the fact that we're from the southern states and we want to be respected as southerners as opposed to the south as inferior to the north. So in that sense, as I've gotten older, it's like people who respect the south for those reasons, if you have a confederate flag, it's just like me walking around with my black fist. As opposed to when I first came here, once I got to that level, it's become a lot easier because--just because a person is an SAE or KA, which are supposedly the most racist fraternities on campus, according to what people say, I've found people who literally fit both molds and just like, if you look at the black students on campus, you'll find black students who fit both molds..

In what sense do the black students fit both molds?

You have the pro-black students, say like myself. I look at myself now as being very concerned about the situation of African people all over the world as well as here. If you have a link to African heritage, then you need to understand..., you need to respect it, you need to practice it, you need to be.....in it, because it's something that you can't deny. That's what I believe now. I won't say that every student here that's black feels the same way. I think a lot more kids feel that it's an obstacle because---maybe when they get older they might change. When I told people that I was coming here, they were like.....got a minority scholarship. That's probably how they feel, that black is a symbol of advantages, rather unequal.

So somebody might resent it?

Right. You have that, you have the people who are from the West Indies and Caribbean Islands who, unlike students from the United States, they consider themselves in the national sense. I

think that students from the US, you have more of a split. You have kids who are considered black (by themselves), ...African American. They have the idea that because they were born here their lives are instantly made as equal as everyone else's as opposed to myself. I still think that though somewhere, someone in my family was African, somewhere someone was another race--there are so many races that can comprise that....there is no sense of nationalism, because I have no nation to call my own. It's not like the United States is a horrible place, it's just the idea that you really aren't of this place. I find other people here, they're looking for a place where they can go where they're represented as opposed to being another number, being another race. I don't know if that makes sense.

I don't quite have it straight in my head though. People who are thinking African American are one way and people who are thinking black are another way.

I would say other students here who I would consider African American, they would be more assimilators.

You're saying you're like that?

No.

So you think of yourself as black?

Yes, just because I can't go to Africa and live in any African society where I would be considered an African. I would be considered a person of African descent. In America, I won't be considered an American, I'll be considered a person who was born in America. Maybe that's being naive....but for whatever reason, that's how I feel. That I've never truly been accepted in the country and I've never truly been accepted by blacks or whites or Indians or Hispanics, you know because I'm a piece of each. So there's really, in a racial sense, no one race that I can adhere to, nor can I do it in a national sense, nor can I do it in an ethnic sense. Because my culture is more diverse than a lot of other people are. Say with kids who grew up, that would....the West Indian kids whose family has since moved here, there's a difference sense of heritage that they believe in and the kids who are considered African American, they're more "we're a part of the society, we can get whatever we want, we are treated like everyone else. Racism is dead."

You know kids here that are like that?

Oh yeah. People who I would consider naive because they're the kids who don't see what I would consider obvious signs that people are different, and they treat you differently, as opposed to me seeing another person. Though I consider myself black, I consider every person ...use black as a description and that's it. I don't think African American as a description is more.....

It sounds like you're describing the black group as those who see themselves as alienated by the society.

Right.

But it also sounds like you're saying that you think of yourself as black, at the same time that you think of yourself as a person who isn't one particular race but a--so the blackness aspect is the alienation aspect?

Right. Just because it's what's seen. As soon as the brown skin is detected, that's where all the stereotypes come from and all of the "you must be this or you must be that or you must believe in this." Well, no I don't. I just happen to be black. Based on what people see as black as opposed to--there's no one here who knows my actual racial breakdown. With that, there's no one culture that I can disrespect because I'm made of so many cultures. My level of respect is very high. But the people who fall into the same category as myself, I think they feel the same way. They're

just trying to ... themselves, but they're constantly being categorized. I feel most comfortable with black because it's in a sense a label, if you have the slightest hint of African in you, then you're considered black no matter how white your skin or whatever....

You said that your greatest challenge was your own negativity which sort of overcame you when you encountered the degree of difficulty with rejection because of your race. It sounds like what you were saying was that you overcame that by beginning to appreciate other people's positions more broadly than you did at first. And yet you are also saying that you maintain your perception of alienation from the way you were treated.

It's kind of hard to get out of it, just coming in I feel I never really saw it--where people think that oh, if you're white--if I was white, and there was a white person that came up to me, that white person was obviously going to shake my hand. Well no, that's not the case.

You never saw that?

The black students just never talked to me because of the fact I was black. White students never talked to me because I was black and they could have learned something from me. I learned that it don't matter who you are. If people don't feel like talking to you, they don't feel like talking to you. This sort of people are afraid of you for various reasons.

It's their thing.

That's like the challenge that I won't consider myself a racist or a highly prejudiced person. I dislike hate, I dislike people who.....respect to me--whether that person be black, white, whatever, then I'm gonna try to teach them. If they choose not to listen, then I'm not willing to talk anymore. But I've found that black students aren't friendly to black students, and white students aren't friendly to white students.

All the time?

All the time. ...Two white students who are two different dressing levels will walk right by each other and will sneer their noses just as quickly as a white student will walk by a black person and do it or an Indian student. What I thought was just something solely being placed towards the black students was completely wrong; it's anyone who's different for any reason. That was by far the hugest challenge to get over, not everything was just straight up racism, negativity, insecurity, the whole list of things that I don't think people notice. Regardless of their race, they don't realize how ignorant the people they pass on a day to day basis --continue to speak to people (!) out of tradition or (2) the fact that you like to speak to people. You can speak or wave your hand, you'll still be spoken at. It don't matter is you're black, white or what. You just have ignorance on all levels. Some people would do that no matter what.

Has it also been your experience that there are some people who do interact, no matter who they are?

Right.

In a nutshell, how you have dealt with it is to..

just watch more people, pay more attention to what people do, what they say. I'm less quick to talk to people now than I was when I first came just because the way I felt when I first came was that the worst racist.....or the hidden racist, the person who was racist around their friends and not around me. So I guess in a way I've alleviated that, the racist or the ignorant person, I don't talk to anyone. I'll speak to anyone who speaks to me and if I see you, I'll give you some sign of acknowledgment. But as far as talking to people, conversing with them, I don't do it nearly as much anymore. Just because I hate getting angry about stupidity and I'm less angry now than I ever was, just because once I would get in conversations with people and they would make me

angry because of their stupidity. I wasn't responding just to their stupidity. It's like how can you not see this reason, you know from various people, multiracial or whatnot. That's how I've dealt with the speaking tradition. There are people who are inviting and there are people who aren't and it's not because you're black or because you're white, it's just something about you, something about your nature. I think as you get older, a lot of people tend to figure it out. I won't say everyone does. It's something that what you can tell just looking at a person. *So you're saying that you did two things. You observed people to learn and learned more about different styles of personality. But you also pulled back into yourself more to protect yourself more.*

Right, to protect myself and just--I've noticed you just tend to speak to people out of being nice and you end up getting prepared for conversation. Just nothing happens. It's kind of like starting your car up and then you just turn it right back off and it doesn't go anywhere. That's what a lot of people do. They say "Hi, how are you doing?" Before you can say "hi" back they're already gone. You're like, if they were truly interested in conversation, they would have stayed a sec. I don't care if you are late for class. Something more than that. So I just literally don't talk nearly as much. I don't say anything to people unless there's something to be said to them. That way I don't get angry. I'm happier more and people who choose to talk to me do and those who don't, they don't interact with me. And if they're curious, anyone who knows me, they'll tell you, I'll talk to anyone. It's just you have to want to talk.

15. *How has your academic performance at Washington and Lee compared with your performance in high school?*

I guess what professors would say here, out of all my professors, if they were looking at my grades when I was in high school versus my grades here, they would say that my performance has gotten worse. I would differ. I would say my understanding has increased. My knowledge has increased. I care less about grades now than I did when I was younger. It was more of a competition thing as opposed to learning. And now, though I might get a D in a class, I'm probably more intelligent about the subject matter than my peers as well as my professors in some cases. Because I'll take the information to another level for myself to understand. Grade-wise, I had a 4.2 in high school, I have a 2.5 here. If anything I would say that high school is more challenging to me, because there was someone constantly testing my mind. They tell you that you're not being scholarly or you're not working to your capabilities but they're not getting you to do it. High school wasfor me. The work literally was more challenging, the way you were tested.

What was the difference?

When they ask you a question, when they ask you to explain it on your views or if you agreed with them or disagreed with them, they graded you on how you responded as opposed to a lot of the professors here are more subjective than my high school teachers were. I think I was allowed to think more when I was in high school. Here too many classes that I've had, I've been compared to other students and how I respond to information. I don't think they're testing me compared to other kids. That's like taking the SAT. You're not really interested in what I know. You want to know what I know compared to this person. With that, we have the same books, but I don't believe we're going to get the same information out of it. You say I have a D if I can recite the book back to you and tell you everything about it and also tell you where my mind went when I read it. I think that's a higher level of understanding than someone who can sit in a class

and memorize everything but not tell you what they actually read. I feel that way in a lot of my classes, that if I have a different way of getting to an answer, I'm penalized for it as opposed to saying "Wow! How did you do that?" I've seen that throughout my four years here. I've seen myself as being penalized more for having a shorter approach to getting to an answer.

What do you mean?

Say, like in a math class. To the teacher, he'll teach you 7 steps. I can do it in 2. He's grading me on being able to show him that I can do it in 7 steps. I'll tell him I can do this in 2 and get the same answer with less work. It's just--there's just a way to respond to it. What they take in your head...it's already an answer, you don't have to work it out. Well, the same thing goes when the question is there. You might have an answer there but..that answer might be what's in the book. I'm reading it, I can respond only to that answer but a lot of times there are two answers to a lot of the questions they ask you. I'm confused as to what to answer, how to answer it because there's not one way I see an answer to it. Too many of my professors have told me yes. My mind sees something different. If I'm gonna get an F on this, where I'm seeing this information and I'm responding to it. If you look into it, I'm listing the pages or whatever and if it's right there. How can I be penalized for it? I still haven't figured out that question yet.

They aren't able to see it the way you see it?

Right.

You started to say, the professors say, well yes. What do you mean when they say, well, yes?

I've actually talked with some professors. They'll say "Yeah, that's right but I don't like the way you got to it." They'll say that my response is right. They might argue with my perception as well as who I got to the conclusion. But they're not giving me credit on the fact that it doesn't take me nearly as much to get to that conclusion. Though I can....one page of information, I just don't choose to use the information exactly like everyone else. There are other reasons that you read before that you react on that I've already thought about, that has nothing to do with that page, it's just my mind's already on that answer and I'm penalized because I answered it for something that's supposedly later knowledge. I can't explain to them how I know it.

You're putting the information together differently?

Right.

Are you saying--in the beginning of answering this question you said you're comfortable with your development intellectually.

I just don't like the way I'm being graded.

I see. In high school you were graded in a way that graded your style highly and now you're graded in a way that--

Compared to everyone else. In high school it was more individual where here it's more collective grading. I don't care for it, because every student is different. I can understand it if it was in a math class or science class where you're looking for one answer and one answer only. In some classes they actually grade you on your answers and not your process getting to the answer, but the majority of my classes it's "Do you see this information like everyone?" More times than not, I don't.

16. *What academic resources have you used at Washington and Lee?*

Undergraduate library, computer facilities, one or two study groups, couple of lectures, language lab, professors, study skills--everything except the writing center and tutors.

You did the study skills courses.

Right. I did that with one of the deans.

When I read the question, you started laughing. Why was that?

My mind went directly to the library...first choice. I don't really think helps you. I think it's great, but.....

Do you have suggestions for the development of these or other facilities?

Not really. I really don't use any of this very regularly. I've been...professors, ... liking them or them liking me, we're trying to get an understanding going. Everything else--I don't like study groups, I don't like tutors, I don't like the writing center.

Are there ways that you don't like them that would be useful for people to hear?

I really couldn't tell you. Every student is different. The areas I feel that I'm strong in I just wouldn't know how to offer a suggestion to it.

We'd be interested if you did have something specific to say.

17. *What factors contribute or contributed to your selection of a major course of study?*

(Laughter) I was failing science.

Was that a part of it?

Yes. I really interested in science and pre-med. My personal opinion is I thought the science dept. was too interested in weeding kids out as opposed to teaching them. I will still argue that my comprehension of science is still greater than the majority of the students that came or are still here. I was involved in a pre-med program for 4 years of high school and working at a hospital after high school. My understanding of the medical profession is a helluva lot higher than what most students here until they're juniors or seniors and to fail a class where I took science all my years in high school, I don't really think it says much, especially when I can sit down with these professors and tell them exactly what they're asking about. Because when I came here I was sitting in on a microbiology class and I was laughing at the professor. When I was a freshman in high school...I liked history. It's more thinking, less guessing. I still say a lot of the sciences were just guessing. A lot of kids were good at guessing as opposed to anything else, whereas I got a D in biology and chemistry, but every person who studied with me got better grades than I did, because I could explain it to them, I just couldn't answer a multiple choice question.

Most of the tests were multiple choice?

All of the tests were multiple choice. I just can't--that's not my mind. I can't do it.

So science wasn't working and you liked history because it was more thinking.

It was more thinking. You were given more opportunities to explain what you thought. You could apply more information to it--it's more of a collection of information as opposed to the way the sciences were taught. The sciences were taught that sciences were exclusive. Intro level classes actually combined everything else, if you understand it. I don't think they teach the understanding of sciences at intro level classes.

So it was mostly that one thing that wasn't working and the other thing was interesting to you.

18. *Have you changed majors since you have been enrolled at Washington and Lee?*

If yes, please describe that change.

I switched from Biology to History.

19. *If you saw a person or group of persons lying, stealing or cheating would you report it as an honor violation? Please elaborate.*

Lying would be the situation. If someone lies to their girlfriend, no. If someone lies to somebody about...no. That's difficult to deal with, lying, I don't know if it's the truth or not.

The question is if you saw it--if you have no doubt that it's actually happening.

Lying is harder to report. With lying, you don't usually know all the things that are involved in it, because a person might be telling a partial truth or whatever and you don't know all the information. It's hard, because you don't have much to base it on as a person. You saw someone take a wallet or take someone's books or you saw someone cheating on a test, definitely. But lying, it would be harder to show evidence of it, to prove it. It's not tangible, not concrete. You don't know all the information that's being involved with it.

So are you saying you wouldn't feel as secure reporting it.

Right. I wouldn't have my facts completely straight if I were to tell that that person was lying. If I was there for the entire incident, yes. Then I would report it. But if not, that would be hard to do. In all instances, I would choose to talk to that person first and get them to do the honorable thing, to go before the people he'd harmed or whatnot before just turning him in for an honor violation, because I really don't agree with how that's dealt with.

Want to elaborate on that?

I don't think it's right for someone to be investigated without knowing about it. Especially because you don't know the circumstances, you don't know what's all involved. Cheating is definitely different.

In what way?

With stealing, there's just....what's considered stealing that neither myself or those persons or students in general will consider it stealing because that openness that people that people have, if my room's open, just go ahead and take this or whatever. That's kind of rough.

Stealing is rough because there's more of a more fluid interaction about things on campus. Is that what you're saying? So it might not be so clear what's stealing.

Yes. Cheating, yeah. There's really no excuse for it. You can study up until the time you take the test--to write it on your leg or your pants or your hand or anything, there's no excuse for that. That's not being--that would just be outright. If you have the same opportunities for getting the work as everyone else, you should be able to do it. Cheating would definitely be something that would be reported. More clear cut.

Stealing you would report if you were absolutely convinced that it were stealing. Lying, you would report if you were certain. Now when you were first responding to this, you responded very quickly and you said "lying, no." Was that what was coming from your gut that you might not be certain about it or was there something else?

Just that I wouldn't be certain about it.

20. *Do you find Washington and Lee professors easy or difficult to approach?*

Please describe in what way they are easy or difficult.

Some are easy, some are difficult. I think some instantly turn you off as soon as you open your mouth. Definitely some of them treat you as though you were an imbecile. Some treat you as though you know nothing. Some treat you as though they're looking at a test as opposed to all the things that's involved in the test taking. Like say you're going to talk to a professor if you did poorly on a test, looking directly at the results as opposed to how much time you put into it,

what else your life is dealing with. In that sense I think they're very difficult. There's.....professors that you can talk to and you can get understanding, they'll sit there and they'll figure out and they'll reason with you and they'll see where you're coming from. *Some of each.*

Have you been able to establish close working relationships with a member or with members of the W&L faculty?

Yes.

You want to describe what that's like, a close working relationship.

It's the ability to be questioned outside of the class, even in class, where you don't have to sit there and take notes. The professor knows that you understand what's going on as well as knowing that you've read for the class. If they ask you a question, they know you can respond. They'll sit and talk with you after class. They'll invite you to a meal so you can get a greater understanding between the two people, so in instances of a test, if something's not clear, they have a greater understanding of you, then it's easier for them to feel their way through it. If they choose to ask you, they'll be like ok, that's what I thought you...

So that's what a working relationship involves.

Understanding, communication being consistent enough to where you have a feeling about where that person is coming from. You know what they're involved in, you know that they're working, that they do this club, this club, they're from this area.

And you've found several professors that you have that with. Good.

21. *What has been your experience at W&L with regard to social life?*

I don't get involved in that too much now. It ranged from watching people be compulsive drinkers to being rude, disgusting, ungentlemanly. More of what I've seen, what I deal with-- parties are nice, I guess. But they get boring, they get old. They're very immature, they're for kids.

Has that changed over the years?

I never was really involved that much with it. My social grouping was always, after freshman year, I completely....

So you tried it for a while?

Yeah. I never really drank that much, it never appealed to me. By my sophomore year, I had a very small close-knit group and that's pretty much the way I've dealt with it. Several small close-knit groups that I interact with. I seldom get involved with the larger social events.

So your experience at W&L with social life, it sounds like you've created your own social life with small groups.

Right.

How important to you is alcohol at a social event or social engagement?

Not at all. I don't care for it.

How important to you are drugs at a social event?

It's not necessary. Too many people rely on it to be social, to sit around and talk, both alcohol and drugs. But they're totally different people, whether they're sober or they're not sober. Usually their intoxication level ...more social ...They're more willing to be free-spirited as opposed to if you see them, they're smiling and they enjoy everything they see as opposed to when they're intoxicated. I think too many people rely on it.

Has it been happening a lot of the time?

Oh, yeah. I don't think I've ever been to any social event--I would say it...social events I've been to people were intoxicated beyond belief. Both alcohol and drugs. Mock competition--mock con--to gosh, to the football games. The level of intoxication is just unreal. It's disgusting. If you can drink, fine...take prescription drugs. Drinking, it's ok. I'll drink beer, I'll drink wine. Not to the extent that most kids do. Maybe a glass every several days, several weeks. Smoke pot, just continue to. But it's different, say, if I wake up in the morning whereas there are tons of professors students here who will drink coffee or drink a coke or drink orange juice. I might smoke a joint, and the reaction they give is the same that I would. It's something that's done. I mean there would be legal--the effects are the same, it's just like smoking a cigarette early in the morning. It's something that stimulates me, relaxes me, pretty much calms my nerves. It's more--spiritual I guess isn't really the word to say, I guess. It's more of a--it's not recreational, I would say. It's not something I do because I want to become light-hearted or I want to make fun of people or I want to go outside and party. It's something that if I've hard day at work, I'll come home, smoke a joint and just relaxes me. Though people say it's medicinal reasons, that's not why I do it. It's like the same reason why a person would have a single beer every night. It's a relaxing mechanism.

So are you saying that alcohol and drugs at social events aren't that important to you, but you use them in other aspects of your life.

Yeah, social events, I'm more of an observer in those situations. To be intoxicated--to drink--to have a drink, like if I were to use a drug, to have something where I'm not completely, where I can't

walk or can't talk or can't see clearly or remember my name, that's not me anytime. But if I do choose to do it, it's moderation.

Is it common that you would do that at a social event?

Pretty common, in moderation. I guess that's part of--something I saw before I came to school here.

That pattern?

That pattern. Once I got here, it was more prevalent and it almost became, I guess like--guess it was something that people just--not everyone parties the same way. Some people drink until they just pass out. Some people drink--the people I spend my time with, that's pretty much how we are. We're more of the sippers. It's not to get to the highest level of being intoxicated. It's more, let's just sit around and rap, and if this is the form of entertainment that we choose for this night, if that be it, fine.

So in what sense is it more prevalent?

There is an enormous amount of students here who use marijuana. It just goes from person to person. Some people smoke it all day. Some people smoke it just on the weekends. Some people smoke it on special occasions. Some people --- It differs from person to person.

But you find that it's almost always there at a social event?

Yes. One of the two. If alcohol is there, most of the social events I've been to, some form of drugs is somewhere nearby. In a more closed off section where people aren't exposed to the larger public. They're more--something that's more hidden. But it's always there, whether it's marijuana, cocaine, LSD, hallucinogenic mushrooms, pill, Robitussin.

And that's all common at parties?

Very common.

At fraternities and other type of parties?

Every type of party I've been to, every concert, whatnot--people want to have the highest level of fun and at social events, it's a lot different than say just private consumption or more close group situations. The more people, the more intoxicated people want to become, just so they can be less inhibited. Everyone just wants to be at that party level, so you can party all night long.

22. *What experiences, if any, have you had with Greek organizations on campus?
How would you evaluate or describe any experiences you may have had?*

Some were good, some were bad. Name calling, racial name calling.

Like what?

Nigger-lovers, that type of stuff.

*So a white person would be called a nigger lover because--
hanging around with a black student.*

In the Greek context. Greek people doing that?

Greek people doing that. Being turned away from the door in trying to go to parties.

You're talking about your personal experience.

Yes. Having a perspective, a white perspective...when I'm of age. This perspective comes with me and I'm being told that drinks are only for brothers and having an underage student receive a drink.

This is when you are a host and you have a prospective with you?

Right. Then have a law student come in following me who is also black, being turned down for a drink when there are kids who are under 18 being offered drinks.

Is this common that this happens?

Oh yeah, all the time. Yeah, that's something else too. I'm not one to--everyone does something. Whether it's sugar--if you're underage and you're drinking, you need to be in a more controlled environment than you are at a fraternity party. It wasn't even 6 months ago that a 14 year old girl had to be taken to the hospital on Parents Weekend because she was at a frat party and she was obliterated from drinking too much. Her parents were there. That's just not good. If you know that your kids drink, you should be in a place where--you're teaching them a better way to drink or better control or something. They don't need to out in that environment, 14 year olds just getting wasted. That's probably the largest problem I see. They think it's more social than anything--how drunk can you get? How many women can you get with? Or how many guys can you get with or whatever than anything else. That's not really what I'm concerned about. I don't have much money to begin with, definitely wouldn't give it away to one of these organizations. For some people I've seen them change for the better, some people I've seen change for the worse. It's just what they were like when they went into it, what they were interested in and what they learned from the Greek organizations. Say, I guess, my experience this year has been similar to a lot of the Greeks who choose not to be affiliated.

Who eventually choose not?

Right. Though I'm independent and though this hazing has been....the last couple of weeks. I told several people that the minority students haze, it's just not regularly in the same way because the time we spend together.

You haze each other?

Right. We don't beat each other up or anything. It's more verbal, to make people stronger, to whatnot. So I guess in that sense we're very similar and I've moved away from it. I think it's juvenile still.

You moved away from that within the black pattern as well.

You don't have to break people down to build them up. I see that happening too much in both sororities and fraternities, that you're broken down to be built up. Some people, once they get broken, they leave or they're never made the same. The physical side is disgusting.

In what way?

I've seen too many people walking around with bruises that they won't explain. Burns on their necks.

Kids that are pledging?

Uh-huh. Running from fraternity brothers. Hiding out, not answering the telephone. You know, coming back hoarse from screaming all day. Bodies sore.

During pledge times. Other times too?

Actually, now that they've changed the....rush thing, I think it's interesting. I wonder how many kids were hazed last semester, since now they're going through rush this week and they're gonna tear this weekend. I mean, I don't really see it. I think the situation's the same, only the pledge ship is shorter.

What do you mean by hazed last semester?

In my talking with a lot of the various fraternity guys, noone will say we've picked which guys we wanted, but the freshman males as well as women, they had an extra 3 months to deal with it, the whole Greek system. So they went to the parties, they met these guys, they built friendships and they pretty much decided where they wanted to go before this rush week started. Once that was decided, indirect hazing began already. Go do this, you have to do this, you have to do that. I've seen it, and it's by far the funniest thing that people would actually do it. I've sat around people in the houses, drinking a beer, watching a movie and there aren't any cigarettes. Who do you call? You call the freshman pledge. They'll run over to your house.

Are you saying you noticed that this year too?

Oh, yeah.

Let's go back to this--what experiences if any have YOU had with Greek organizations on campus?

I rushed. If my financial situation would have been different, I guess there was a great possibility that I would have joined a group. But I think also I would have depledged quite quickly because it's not--I mean, I party, I drink, I hang out. I don't want to pay \$2000 to do it nor do I want to be forced to hang out with a certain group of people and be forced to like them because we're in the same organization. I think a lot it's very fake. After I decided not to pledge and I finished rush, a lot of these guysthey never spoke to me again. They wouldn't even invite me to their functions. ...going to rush functions, being the only black guy going in there, I could see rushing to one group and I'd be standing there all by myself, and people like, well you gotta talk. I'm like well, you're the ones that want me, I have to see what you have to offer, and if you're not gonna talk to me, then obviously you don't want me here. That was probably the greatest experience for me not to join the Greeks than anything. Or having people say, "we're not racist or whatever, we would love to have you" and though there are no black students there, it's like "why don't you have any black students here now?"--the whole tokenism idea, it wasn't anything I was interested in. Being a part of that fraternity who had one black student in it, that really just never did anything for me. I don't need an organization like that. I think an African-American group system or fraternity would be nice, or sorority because at least that way I would be a part of it. There's a little bit that I'm more associated with, I know more about those Greeks than the

Greeks we have here.

In what way do you know more about them?

Family, friends, neighborhood environment.

You mean you've been associated with those fraternities already in your neighborhood?

Yeah. We have 16 fraternities and I'd heard of 2 of them prior to coming here. But if you asked me anything about the black Greek I could tell you anything about it you want to know. To come here and you don't see any. Like yeah, we have small numbers but we should still be represented. And I think, I'm not saying that blacks -- people who aren't white shouldn't join a white fraternity. It's just you should have an option to associate yourself with people who are more like you. That's why people join Greeks. They want to be in an organization where people have a lot of things in common, share together, and I don't really see.....by joining one of the Greeks here. My relations with the Greeks are pretty good. I have free entry to any house I like.

So when did it happen that you were turned away?

Just during rush, the first couple of weeks.

So after that you weren't turned away from a house and you weren't turned down for drinks?

The turning down for drinks happened mainly through my freshman year just because I was a freshman who wasn't associated with any group, being harassed...was something that I just have to deal with...just something I dealt with.

What changed?

I guess like I indirectly made a name for myself. Just my personality--people knew me. I was decidedly different than everyone else--hairstyle, wardrobe, that type of stuff that people can...that's such and such. I was cool at the time.

They were more comfortable because--

They could recognize me. They knew who I was. If they talked to such and such, they knew they could talk to me. I wouldn't judge them. I would just laugh at them when they did something funny or they were laughing when I did something funny.

So that name calling stuff..

That was pretty much in my first semester. After that I disassociated from everything, the people who were my friends from my class kind of made it easier for me to associate with their different organizations just because they knew me and they liked me. People who are upper class either felt the same way or they, you know, just changed their minds. Whereas me, I'd always interacted with whites. Not all the whites that interact with blacks in some sense. That made it easier for them to hang out with me---for me it was nothing.

Once they got to know you it became easier for them? So did the name calling involve calling white kids who were your friends "nigger lovers", did that shift eventually?

To my face. As far as I know. I've still heard little undercover spot remarks coming from various people, various fraternities.

Second hand reports that someone has said something?

Right. With that, you kind of take it in stride. Not everyone's one way or the other. It's hard, but you just kind of take it with stride.

23. *Evaluate your experiences with regards to athletic teams/athletic facilities/and physical education classes.*

I tried out for the soccer team. That was cool. Just was rusty Athletic facilities, they're not in great shape. They're not bad. The pools are horrible, they're disgusting, filthy. The weight

room is a nice place to go, but it's horrible as well. Ramshackle, old material, rusted, metal being worn to the point where you're afraid to pick it up. You're scared it's going to break while you're using it. Protective coverings over the nautilus machines that are breaking off, they're ripping. There's no one there if you were interested in having someone teach you a new skill. No one's there to do that. Poor ventilation, the music's horrible. Physical education classes, they're ok. I haven't taken that many, but they're ok. I don't think too many people here are physical, too athletic. Athletic team, good guys, but I feel sorry for most of em, just because there's no support for them. No one wants to see them--wants to see a loser. That's the way they look at it, as opposed to people going out there and trying their best to win.

That's the way other students look at it?

Yeah. People will go to a lacrosse game, but no one will show up for a football game or basketball game or a swim meet or a wrestling match. Everyone goes to lacrosse games. I don't know if it's because of the weather or what, but the drinking increases, too. It's amazing. It seems as though...for lacrosse season as they are for football. I don't know why. People are just generally more interested in lacrosse than anything else. Even though we've had national champions in water polo, tennis and everything else, nobody supports them.

Have you attended them?

Oh, yeah. I love it.

You like sports?

I like sports. A lot of them are my friends. I remember when I played, the biggest thrill you had was having someone call your name or just having people cheer for the team. So you look up in the crowd--the best feeling that I have is probably the same thing that a lot of these athletes have. After a game, someone will come up to you--"thanks for coming, thanks for showing up, thanks for supporting us"--and I'll tell em, "Don't thank me. I wanted to see what you were capable of doing and I'll always support you. Just give it your best every time that you're out there, cause I'll always be there. The better you play, the more I'll cheer." It's nice to be actually picked out to where people--actually, pretty sad, too, that persons who play these sports can look in the crowd and know who comes to every game and knows who will support them every time and who will scream for them. It's just a nice feeling. I think they do a good job with limited skills and coaching and facilities. They're pretty cool.

24. *How would you characterize your opportunities for "dating" while enrolled at Washington and Lee?*

Nonexistent. I don't know if that has to do with myself or the people. I think it's, say where race definitely clouds my mind more than anything with dating just because whereas before coming here, I never had a problem dating outside my race. I don't know if I imposed it on myself or not. It's just--you don't go up to a person and say "Would you like to go out? I think you're attractive and would like to get to know you better. The whole climate changed. ...gave all types of excuses, "my family wouldn't approve of it, my friends would not." I thought that was very superficial as well as immature, but you have to understand where people come from. Dating definitely is pretty much nonexistent for me at this campus. They call it hooking up here as opposed to dating. You talk to any of the girls, they will say they're hooking up. There's very few chances for dating and I guess that's how I would sum it up too.

What do they mean?

From the larger description of it, hooking up is when you go to the parties, get drunk and you

take somebody home and you do what you do. The next morning that person's gone and you never talk to them again out of embarrassment or stupidity.

So hooking up is sexual. There's no prearrangement--you don't agree to do it.

They might go on a date or go to a function together, but it's not like "I'm quitting or we've been going out for three weeks and now we've decided that we should go to another extreme." It's more "let's just have sex and let's not mention it again." I choose not to do that.

You said that's the norm here.

It's very scary. I would love to meet somebody here. I don't really feel there's people on the same level....whether you're flirting or not, you know to pass a compliment, people look at you in a suspect way like you're looking for something more. You're at a party and you want to dance, I would say a lot of blacks dance different than a lot of whites. Not everyone does. Just because I'm dancing a certain doesn't mean I want anything from you. I just like to dance. This is a better way of dancing than this way. Dating is pretty.....

What would you like that doesn't happen?

I'd like for people to take a compliment--if you tell someone that you like them from what you see and you're interested in learning more if they'll take that opportunity, that they'll kill some of their biases, their apprehensions. Not everyone's the same. You never know who or what you're gonna like in a person until you've experienced it. You don't have to have sex. I quite enjoy going to dinner and going to movies and going on hikes, sex is by far the last thing I'm interested in when I look at a person. There's so much more feelings I get by being in the presence of a person, one on one conversation stimulates me in a totally different way than a sexual activity ever can. Just because anyone can have sex with anyone they choose. You just can't have meaningful conversation or companionship from anyone, so many people looking over their shoulders wondering who sees you with who or what they think...if I'm with this group I can't be with you...

So they make stuff out of--

at opposed to realizing that your needs and wants are the same, it's just though I might be a different race or I might...this organization. It really make a difference if I'm interested in the same thing and you enjoy my company. Too many people use the bed as their scapegoat, whether they're....or not. I don't think many of them have meaningful experiences before coming to college and I would say a helluva lot haven't had them since they got here. For a good number of the people, I understand why they choose not to be, why they choose not to interact with men or women at all here. Rape, sexual harassment, the high level of drinking.

You mean the fear of rape? fear of date rape?

Yes, the fear of rape, the fear of date rape, fear of being taken advantage of, fear of someone touching them if you don't want to be touched, where you don't want to be touched. By far the one thing that turns me off more than anything is an intoxicated female. Not saying that women can't drink or anything. I think you're putting yourself in a dangerous position, than a guy does. You both might be drunk. No one's going to believe the woman saying no because of whatever circumstances, and I think just with the social environment here, too many women are left in very bad positions. They can't enjoy themselves to the same degree as men do without the same risks. I think that's sad. ...people are very apprehensive about their interactions with various people. I can understand it but at the same time, that's part of getting to know people that--

Are you saying that's part of what has limited your opportunities?

Oh, yeah. Just because if I choose, if you're intoxicated....an entire evening or I know what

you're level of intoxication is. I just choose not to engage with women in those instances. I know I'm not gonna rape anyone. It's just the fear of someone perceiving my actions as being a precursor of something like this. That's another reason I choose not to get involved in the social environment. I think it's too risky, because you're intentions might be different, but with so many people being at that unstable state, just the risk increase.

So you're saying two things, one is that when you do try to make a connection with someone to have conversation and to share dinner or social interaction, they pull back because they're apprehensive. The other thing is that you're apprehensive of being thus perceived when there is intoxication.

Right. I don't think the combination is good.....to express how you feel to a person is more difficult than for other people because whereas, if I tell you I'm interested in you, then I probably have noticed you for a long amount of time. I've talked with you and you obviously formed some type of attraction, so when I tell you something like that it's actually pretty sincere. It's your company, it's nothing else. ... I have no choice but to get to know you.

Are you saying you've experienced people being apprehensive and making the wrong assumption?

Just because I've always been around more women, not to say that I've dated a great number of women. I've always been around more women. If you spend every day for two years with one person all the time, you're either going to be great friends or you'll start liking them. If you tell them "you're always telling me that you would love to find a guy, blah, blah" when I tell you, it's like "oh, no, not you, you're----"

You're what?

Yeah, that's where they stop. You're such and such. OK, that's cool. Don't you think I'd like to date someone too?

So it's been very frustrating?

Yeah, as far as the school goes, I don't think....I think I've only dated one person, two people. Every other person I've dated has gone to another school.

Those opportunities have been there?

Oh, yeah. Less tension, more willing to accept you as who you were, not really that concerned about who people deem appropriate for them.

So when you said your opportunities for dating while enrolled at W&L were nonexistent, you meant within W&L.

Just really don't pursue my interests.

25. *Have you ever considered transferring from Washington and Lee to another college/university?*

Yes.

Why?

Didn't like it here.

When was that in your career?

The first time I tried to withdraw was spring of my freshman year. I actually withdrew my sophomore year, reapplied for admission in what would have been the winter of my junior year.

So why did you consider leaving and leave?

Didn't like the people. I didn't think people were for real. Was fed up with bull shit, basically.

What do you mean? It's ok, I don't care. Be a little more specific so that people know what you

mean.

I just think so many people were phony, that they really weren't concerned about my presence. It was like, oh, great, hi. Like no one cared that I'm here, that I exist, how my feelings are being hurt, what I'm going through to stay here, what I'm going through to get to know you, that I would have been better off in a place where people cared about me, what I was able to contribute to the school, to the social environment, whatnot. I just didn't feel that here. I was just another black face.

You felt like their interaction with you was superficial?

Uh-huh, and I was just tired of dealing with it. I didn't think that professors were giving me a fair opportunity to show what I was capable of doing. Pretty much, the world against me type of feeling, that everything about the university was against me and no one was willing to....for me. I just wanted to be separated from it as quickly as possible.

The faculty wasn't giving you a fair chance to show what you could do. Have you already described that sufficiently?

That's just what I felt--say in those classes where race was indirectly part of the teaching--
Part of the content of the teaching?

Yes. I guess I'd never really experienced it much in high school--you know it wasn't just a black student who talked about black experiences, the black character in a book or something. I just felt that a lot of my classes that the only time I was asked to answer a question was when it dealt with the black perspective and it just ripped at me. Like is that the only thing that I'm good for is to give the black perspective?

So that was an in-class behavior?

In-class behavior. Just because of different experiences in growing up, a lot of the stuff --like politics, was different--philosophy--you know, different social environment type things. They were different in the classroom. I could sense them a little more, because I disagree.

You could sense what?

I just disagreed with so much, with a lot of what was being said. It was nothing I'd ever seen before. Like with politics, a lot of people want to be Democrats or Capitalists. I still don't understand it. It was hard to deal with in a classroom setting. People talking about family values and all this stuff. I'm like, it's hard to learn those cause I don't understand it. What I consider family values, the kids in those classes are appalled by it. I'm here, I had a mother. That's all I grew up with, I mean, so how is this experience not important to this level of study? You're saying that all this is wrong. What are you talking about? I went through a couple of classes like that, with those type of incidents, being black and growing up in single parent family, blah, blah--it literally conflicted with what was being said in the class.

By the professor?

By the professor and to be the person to disagree....the books don't say it.

Don't say what?

Why this occurs or how people should respond in these circumstances. The books never talked about it, but I knew because I'd lived it. Where politics says one thing, being black in a single parent family in a lower class neighborhood says a totally different thing--as well as being white single parent, having to fend for yourself, having all this, totally different from those kids who are white whose parents are divorced, who only knew their mother. Well, they understood where I was coming from, but even to them, no one wanted to listen to them because they weren't part of the mainstream. It was difficult to deal with that in class. Or being the only black student in

every class you take, except swimming.

So it sounds like you're saying two things. One is the student body in the class didn't get it. And the faculty--

If they got it, they never addressed it or they never expounded on it. Though I understood the information, it never applied to me, so whereas the kids in the class, they lived by this, by some code that's written into this book. I'd never lived by it, I'd never seen it before, you know only through reading.

You hadn't seen it in your experience?

Yeah. I only read it. It wasn't something I would leave the classroom with and go home with. It was like, this was only for the classroom. Too many of my classes were like that. It was only stuff that you do in classroom. It wasn't a part of your life. And with that, still it's difficult living two different lives. You lead an academic life that tells you things are one way but you lead your real life where, like no, it's totally different. This isn't the way things are. Whites aren't the only people that are successful. Married families aren't the only people that are successful. I mean, there's tons of things that you just would never get from this book. It's difficult to sit in a class and listen to it, because--I mean, it's not like it's going to change with transferring. That's why I stayed. I realized that later, but going into transferring, there has to be a school that will teach the combination of the two. Reality as opposed to something else within the 1800's. Things have changed, people are different. No two societies are the same. No two races, whatever. What factors influenced me to stay--I mean, those were the things I realized. I made my pros and cons sheet on why I wanted to stay and why I wanted to go. That's what I realized. I could go to a predominantly black school, but the same problems would surface in a predominantly black school as in a white school. Just on a slightly different level. I've been in all black groups--you still get ridiculed for what you look like, how you act, how you dress.

Within the black community?

Yes. So, there really isn't--I really didn't see much of a change because it's predominantly black school as opposed to a predominantly white school.

You did experience that other option for a while?

Yeah. That's just earlier in life and I knew it wouldn't change that drastically in college. You still have filthy rich blacks just like you have filthy rich whites. With that you have a hierarchy, being a new student at any school, whether you're black, white, whatever, you're a new student. Even though I would've been a junior, a new student if I would have transferred. I would have been a new student that would have been alienated again and going through--

So you chose not to go to another place while you were gone for a while?

Yeah, I chose not to be alienated again. Just kind of ride on that wave that I'd established here, because I had a good friend who's now a graduate--we talked one night and literally that's how I felt. To have one person--it wasn't a black person, it was a white person. I loved him. It wasn't because he was white, he was for real. It was like, if you leave, if no one else cares, I will.

That's all I wanted to hear. One person to say "you'll be missed. I will be very sad to have you go." This was upon my applying for readmission. When I wanted to transfer, I had 3 friends who left for similar reasons, white friends, who said they felt the same way--just wasn't from a black viewpoint. It was from a white female viewpoint.

What was it they felt?

They felt alienated from most of the student body. Their experiences led them to believe other things, that they were different than what they were seeing, what they were hearing. They wanted

to be completely disassociated with. I respect them the same way. I wish the connection was still there, we could communicate. But the reasoning behind why they left, I completely agreed with it. Another factor also was the means of transfer. My financial status wasn't one in which I could transfer to another school and have that ready money, which isn't something I fault anyone for, it's just a realization that had I had more money that I probably wouldn't be here. Then again, I probably wouldn't be where I am right now. My level of understanding, my level of success probably would not be the same because it would have been easier for me to go somewhere else as opposed to facing whatever.

So you chose to stay for financial reasons because one friend cared.

I was more adjusted. The adjustment part of my...was just humongous. All the things I was used to and all the people who were used to seeing me, people who, if I needed a place where I could go, would all have to change, going to a new school. Though there were more people I might have known ---a bigger city.

26. *Have you had a paid job on campus (including work-study)?*

Yes.

If so, has this influenced your level of satisfaction at W&L?

Yes. Work study is cool, was fun. Sports information was by far wonderful. Great. Bookstore, good place. Dining hall, great place. Library, great place. Just because you get to see a different side. You get to see how the school works. You get to meet the people and it's a big difference to being a student as opposed to being a student and a worker. You get both sides of what the school's about. I think if anything, the people who work for the university probably know me better than anyone else here does, because they've interacted with me more. I wasn't graded by them. Every type of interaction, though if we went to work, we went to work. If there was any communication outside, it was because it was wanted. It wasn't forced on us. We didn't have to like each other, we chose to. There's just so much more respect for the campus and the history because I worked with the school. Just my knowledge of work has increased.

27. *Would you be willing to recruit other students for Washington and Lee either as a student yourself or as part of an alumni program? Please elaborate.*

I've been doing it since I was a freshman.

Really? Even when you were miserable?

Uh-huh. I came here and I was part of the community and I would tell them the same thing I've always told everybody. If you come here, it's because it's your choice. It's not because of my experience. I would give them...approach when I came. There was very little negative information offered which kind of hurt me coming into the school. Just because--

Really? I thought you said they all said "don't come."

Just like small things. Like no one -- to have someone say "I didn't see any black faces around"--you do. You need someone that tells you that. You do. You need that off-setting person to give you the good along with the bad.

So you'd like to do that?

Yeah, just because it's easier to tell a person how the school is made. You have 1600 kids here versus 17,000 at other schools. You break that 17,000 to its bare minimum, you take everything that this school has and you will build 1600 kids that's exactly like here. That's just something

no one told me when I came here. The larger the school, the less people look at things. There are things that still stand out at you. No one's going to say that there's a high rate of alcoholism at UVA. There's so many kids. No one's going to do surveys. The problems that are there, they're here too. It's just you run into them quicker. I won't say that's completely correct, but it's something to think about. You have 1600 kids, well of course, you're gonna know about each other. You're gonna know more about what's happening around here. You're gonna bump into more people's business. At a school with 17,000, they say Joe Smith, well, there are probably 15 Joe Smiths there, and you're trying to figure who's who. Or the people you come across. Yeah, you might see a student on W&L's campus once every 3 days. You probably won't see someone on a larger campus every 3 months. Those are things-- it's easier to talk to kids. The school isn't horrible. There's certain things you have to realize real quick or you will go crazy. There is this problem, there is this problem, there is that problem. Doesn't mean it's going to stop the whole school. Doesn't mean that's the way the whole school thinks.

What would you tell someone you have to know right away?

Be yourself and just don't let people bother you. It's so easy to do. Like when the black students, they still ask me, "how can you go to school with a confederate flag?" I'm like, well, still difficult. But I don't let it stop me. It's not a hindrance to me anymore. You don't see black students all the time. That's pretty good, because I wouldn't want to talk to them all the time, cause they bore me.

As a group they bore you?

Yeah. Their interest level bores me, their motivation bores me. A lot of these kids would be shocked to hear that--if they've been around black students, they know that black students can be just as apathetic as any other group of students. It doesn't mean that just because there's only 40 of us here that we're gonna be close knit friends. But you'd think that since there were so few there would be a tighter group. Yeah, I believe. But it's not the case.

So that's one of the things people should recognize right away and then they can get past it.

Once you can do it, ok, I'll be as nice as I can. If people don't receive me well, I won't let it bother me. That's just that one black student who doesn't care about what I care about. It doesn't mean all of them do.

Now we ask some background information:

28. *In what geographical location did you grow up:*
Louisiana.

*In what type of **area or community** did you spend most of your growing up years?*
Suburban.

Were you right within the city limits?

Would urban be considered downtown?.....

It was a neighborhood where the houses were close together? Were there yards between the houses?....Then it probably was suburban.

29. *Describe the type of **high school** you attended.*

I guess it would be suburban.

*Predominantly
white*

30 *Please give the kin relationship(s) between you and family members in your home when you were growing up.*

In a sense that it would be described, non-family based. I lived with my mother and 2 half-brothers and 2 half sisters. That was it.

Are they older than you?

All are older.

So you were the 2nd family round.

Yeah, I had a lot of families. I grew up in a very interesting family.

Extended family, you mean?

Extended family. When I was younger, I was with my great grandmother up until pre-school. She was my keeper till pre-school.

During the day or full time?

Yeah, pretty much full time. Then my grandmother kept me up until after kindergarten. Then I stayed with my mom through the rest of my years in school.

Stayed in your mom's house, you mean?

Uh-huh. But I had like what would be considered 2 half brothers and 2 half sisters. I had a different father than my siblings.

31. *What was the highest level of education achieved by your parents, guardians, or others with whom you lived when you were growing up?*

My mother went to 10th grade, my father did two years of college, my oldest brother went to one year of college, my oldest sister went to 6 days of college, my brother after them, he's got his masters, PhD and he's working at a university up north. I have a sister right above me who, she went into the military and now she's working....in northern Virginia.

You said that you lived with your mom, but now you're mentioning your dad. So he was around but not living in the same household? Is that what you're saying?

Not really. I mean I saw him, I knew him. Isolated instances. I acknowledge him more as a father-friend than as a father-dad.

What are the occupations or professions of your parents or guardians?

My mother is a janitor at night with some company and she works for the Air Force during the day as a salesclerk. My father is unemployed. He was a hotel manager/chef.

32. *As compared to other W&L students, how would you characterize your overall social class position (based on parents' education and family income)?*

Lower class.

How do you think this has affected your experience?

It's still I can't completely grasp when I'm around people, talk to people. Though I don't really feel my problems are greater than other people when I listen to people, some of the things they complain about, I really want to just stick my foot up their--mouths. It's very different. There's so much that people have that affects their lives. I can't escape what I grew up in. It's taught me a lot of discipline, more discipline than most people offer me credit for. Our discipline was you

work hard regardless of what, and if I can live but I have dreams. If I don't graduate for whatever reason, at least I know I can bust my tail for the rest of my life and I'll be able to eat and I can provide for a family. Not everyone in my family has a sheet of paper but everyone's doing well to some degree. It's not about what you have on paper, what you're capable of doing. We didn't have much but what we did have we treasured and worked hard for.

So your background has given you that kind of determination. How do you think the difference between your experience and the other W&L students whose experience is different, how does that effect you?

It scares me. There are a lot of kids here who take life too lightly, whereas it took me a long time to get to the point where I wanted to be, peace to all mankind, all humanity. I don't think a lot of other people here have that, even though they have more money and they've had better experiences. It would be wonderful to travel out of the country, out of the state, but it's not something I have access to and so many kids that are capable of doing it, they come back, they're more unintelligent than when they left. They don't understand what they're learning. It's a different culture. You go to become a part of it. You go to learn, to see what these people feel. To see what they're about, to know why they hurt and why they move. Then you come back and say our lives are better. That's great if you notice the difference, but if you choose not to act on it, I don't think you really learned anything.

You mean act on it in a service sense?

Yeah. Say, a lot of kids, there are very few kids that I know who, when they leave this country & go someplace else, they offer everything they have to help people. Most people come back and complain. They just spend money like there's no tomorrow, which isn't like I don't spend money. It's just there's a big difference--the money that I spend is the money that I earn as opposed to the money --say, here take \$5000 and go travel with it. Or even at this school. A lot of kids here work but they don't have to and their parents literally tell them they should work. My mom has to call me occasionally and say, hey, send me a couple of dollars. It definitely--it makes me feel more bitter towards people a lot, just because I can't get over what I'm doing here and I see their problems and understand them. It's just, there's so much else that is so much more important to me than, though I love my family immensely, if I the access that a lot of kids do, I would see my family all the time. My family is within me. Though they hate it, they understand that's just a part--

They hate it that you can't see them?

Yeah. Kids here will ask you "why don't you----?" I'd love to but I have to content with what I have and what I'm given. I don't have that luxury to do this or that or have this or that. It's not to be bitter, but it's just. I have to humble myself as a result of it. When you're around this environment, it's very easy to get caught up in it, very easy. You spend a lot more money than you're able to do just because you want to be a part of it.

So you found yourself doing that and had to pull yourself back?

Oh, yeah. Just because it's friends and it's hard for them to understand it.

You don't want sympathy?

I don't want sympathy. And that's what I felt once I did a lot of these things that people were doing. Don't sympathize with me.

33. *In general how do you think about yourself first at Washington and Lee --
as a member of a particular racial/ethnic/national/gender group, or*

as a student?

Wow! I guess myself as a racial group, but I would like to be thought of as a student first and not as a black student.

So you're saying you think of yourself as a black person. Is that what you mean?

Right.

That's really interesting. Your first reaction when you think of yourself--you would like to be thought of just as a..

Just as a person. I'm a student first. It just so happens that I'm black. Every time I look in a mirror, it's the first thing--but I would prefer to be considered as a person first. If I could wear a mask all day long---I'm a black person first, and then a student. It's not that you have students that consider themselves black students like myself--
(maybe lost something here?--new tape)

34. *How homogeneous do you believe black students are on this campus? In answering please consider racial identification, political perspective, and/or social class position.*

you have kids who consider themselves African American students here, as far as the racial identification as well as the students who consider themselves as Jamaican, Trinidadian, whatever. Political perspectives, definitely different too. ...militant and radical--

You were considered that way?

Yeah. Some people still say I am, but I desire racial equality for all people, and I really can't see myself being a fighter for massive interests right off. I believe in humanity but I think it's difficult to deal with humanity as opposed to dealing with one group. Then again, a lot of people would differ with it. Hopefully it would be the case that at some point all humanity would be looked out for, but in looking out for blacks, hopefully I can look out for humanity. The problems that this group of people experience--they're not just experienced by us. I just happen to be a part of that. This happens to all of these people and there aren't a lot of people here who see that. A lot of these kids consider themselves very politically minded, but I don't think they are. I don't think... what politics mean. A lot of them say they vote. They go and do all of this...and do their absentee votes, and whatnot. I'm like, great, but what are you doing? Are actively a part of stuff? I've told them why I don't vote. The reason I don't vote, I'm not in a position--I'm actively a part of stuff--but I'm not in a position where my allegiance to any one place gives me that leeway to completely work toward developing something. Though I live here, I spend all my time here, I'm not considered a resident, you. I would love to make things better here, but when I leave where does that voting power go? Where I live, for my home, I don't vote there either just because I'm never there. I don't know anything that's happening, just what I read about in the paper. And to give a vote when I'm not there, I don't see how I'm helping anyone. That's from a political perspective, affirmative action and all this type of thing. Social class position, oh yeah. I would say the majority of the students here that are black or middle class or upper middle class--

So are you saying that most of them are fairly homogeneous but some of you are not? Or are you saying that there's a lot of diversity?

I guess that the majority of them are homogeneous. I would say 30 of the students are homogeneous, very similar. The other 10 (or 5 maybe 35 to 5) they aren't. There aren't many

kids here who are directly in a position that I am. There are some kids who have a single parent, higher economic basis but they experienced a lot of the stuff that I did in the single parent. But the money was there or the racial identification for some of the kids, they were higher class. I don't see the majority of the students here being homogeneous, at least...

35. *How similar or different do you believe blacks and whites are on this campus? Consider the same categories that are mentioned in number 34 above and add any other factors that you deem important.*

Very similar. Both of them want to be accepted. Both of them want to excel. Both groups want to be recognized for who they are from their past. They're different just because how our paths have led to the present... Say a lot of the black still complain about some of the stuff the whites dominate on campus. There are more organizations for the whites still. With the ratio, like the 97 to 3 or 93 to 3 percentages, 93% white, 3% black. Obviously there's going to be a disproportion of where the powers and advantages here. That's the biggest difference. Not to say that all the white students feel that that's the way the power make-up should be. It's just something that exists and I don't think collectively--definitely don't think the black students care for that much. They want the power to be split up more. They want to see more black students here. I wouldn't say that most of the white students would want that, to see more black students here.

So the black students are different in the sense that they would want more diversity and the white students would not want more diversity. So let's consider these three things--racial identification, are you saying there's a strong separate racial identification?

Yeah, there's a strong sep. racial identification.

What about political perspective? Do you think the white group---

I don't think they're homogeneous on that either.

But we're talking now about the difference between blacks and whites. Do you think the white political perspective is one thing and the black is another or do you think they're fairly similar?

I think they're separate. They're different. The whites are more conservative here than blacks are. Social class position, definitely different. Not to say numberwise--that's where we get into the ratio thing again. I really can't get out of it. There's a good number of white students I believe here who, they might not be in the poverty level or the lower economic class, but they fall a great distance from where a lot of the whites are here. They feel it and try to compensate for it like I used to. That's very difficult. You see that on campus, the socio-economic differences among the white students. Like my first reference to similarities and differences, I think the blacks and whites here are very similar in how they act. When you really get down to it, outside of color and maybe some cultural differences, I see both groups the same--if there were 800 black students and 800 white students here, you can definitely see a lot more.

See what?

The similarities--

in style, you mean?

In style, just like a lot of black students don't communicate, a lot of white students don't communicate to each other. They will pass each other off, they won't speak to each other. They won't invite them to a meal. They won't contact them if something interesting happens. You see the same thing. The whites are just as mean to each other as they are to other racial groups here, faculty, community people. The blacks do it too - the blacks are just as ignorant to each other

and other students here, the community, as the white students are. In that sense, they're very similar.

Interesting.

36. *Do you believe the size of the black student enrollment at Washington and Lee is adequate or inadequate?*

Inadequate. Disgusting. I think for the school to say that they're making these great attempts at increasing student diversity. I think they're doing a horrible job of it. To have the statistics--you send out 70 acceptance, and you only receive 20 people back who decide to come to school here. I don't think you're putting forth that much of an effort to get those other 60 students. If you were, they would be here. You would have a higher percentage of them coming.

So you think the efforts at recruitment are inadequate?

Oh, yeah. Pretty bad. Kids want to see something more than a party and athletics. They want to come and see what the school is really about.

Are you talking specifically about Prospective Weekend?

Yeah - and just other times they come. They come at such off-set weekends that they really don't get a chance to get involved with the students to get something more. And just with the fact that you have only 40 black students here now. They're being really naive, I think, to think they're really gonna get 50 students one year, when they only see 40. It would be great to have 90 black students here, but you know, if you have a small population, you're gonna continue to have a small population. You're not gonna bring that big shift unless you just go out hard-core to get them. I just learned that VMI has 80 black students, and I'm like, yeah. I think there are about 1600 students too, 1800, something like that. I'm like, yeah, they have more, they see the numbers, they see the black students, they see each other on television, they play sports. It's like, yeah, it's a military school but there are other black faces that I can interact with. But here, just like those black who come, we're stopping you because you're the only black person we've bumped into. That's pretty bad, as opposed to -- I think the worst stat at the school is the fact that there are more black employees here than there are black students. They don't shy away from hiring black workers....black students.

So you're saying they would have to make a much more concerted effort, all out effort.

Do you believe the number of black professors is adequate or inadequate?

Completely inadequate. Right now, currently, 1997, there are 3 black professors at this university in undergrad. One in history, one in politics, one in geology and yeah, that's pretty sad, pretty disgusting. I think it's really difficult to tell people you're looking for diversity and your racial make-up is that small. There are more Asian professors here than there are black professors. That's pretty rough.

Do you believe the number of black administrators is adequate or inadequate?

That's even worse than the professors. There's only one black administrator.

Explain in what way you think it's inadequate, aside from just the numbers.

Outside of the numbers, the students just don't feel comfortable, because there's one person that they're looking to to help them out. It's just like with anything. If you just have one person, well, that one person might not have the same views as you do and though they might be black, they might not agree with you and they might not completely stand with you when you have a problem. The one black administrator we have, I would say 3/4 of the black students don't care for her, because they feel that she doesn't fight for the students. Her position is a good position.

She works hard for the students. It's just there's only so much she can budge either way, because she's not just here to help the black students. She's here to help the minority students. Though she might be black, there's only so much she can do. If there were more administrators, then there are more things that people can relate to and they would feel more comfortable...more resources. Like faculty members, the professors, if there's only 3 black professors, well, that's only 3 departments they can deal with. There are kids here in more departments than that. They need people in that department who might have an understanding of what this kid is going through or what they experience when they're coming through this department--that understanding. Maybe they don't understand this--to be able to talk. Ebonics is pretty big right now and though it might sound weird, it's that communication that you can have. Not to say that blacks can't communicate with whites, but it's that communication that calmness, you know. To see a familiar face makes you feel more relaxed that this person is gonna pay more attention to you. With inadequate numbers, people choose not to talk to faculty members and administrators, because they don't feel they're interested in that. They don't feel that they're actually working for them--

Has that been your experience?

As far as faculty members go. It would be nice to have black professors, but it just so happens they're really not in the department that I look to. As far as administrators, don't we have differences? I understand the position that person is in--understand how much they work--

Our black administrator?

Right. I understand how much they sacrifice themselves for the black students. I understand it because I pay attention to it and I notice it. I know that it has to be very difficult to be your own person here, to do that. It's very grueling. A lot of other students don't see that. They just look at the fact that that person is black and that's it, as opposed to other administrators. They can't be biased towards just the black students. They have to look out for the interests of the university. If the interest of the university at that time does not look to assist the black students--there's only so much that person can do, because their job comes in jeopardy, their reputation comes in jeopardy. There's so much more that's involved in that. You can't put that type of stress on that person, on our black administrator. I think, contrary to what a lot of students believe and what they see, she's done an excellent. The adjustment she's made here, the accomplishments she's made.

And you said before that you thought that would be a more effective position if there were other black administrators. She's sort of back-up.

When we had a black administrator in admissions, I could say there was a decisive shift in the application pool. People were more interested. Now that there isn't a black person, as far as the minorities are concerned, they're not that interested in seeing a white person recruit them. That's not to be negative or anything. People want to see familiar faces. They want to see people who know what they're probably going through and if they don't see it, they're not gonna be that quick to just turn themselves to people who aren't of their race.

You said that about faculty and feeling like you could turn to the faculty. I do understand what you've said, but why that is--that you need to feel that there's someone who will understand your whole set of experiences without a lot of explanation. And then I said "Has that been your experience?" So it's been your experience that you felt a lack of someone with a similar enough background to understand you.

I found a couple of professors here, not many--just people. Of the 3 black professors out there, I

only know one of them, what I consider a working relationship. I've talked with one of the others in the geology department--very interesting person. I feel, say with the person I'm in closer relationship with, I like him. But he's like to me what the black administrator is to a lot of the other students. I don't always feel that interest is there--his level of experience is different than mine. A lot of times there is that disagreeing moment, whereas he might choose one way of doing things, I might see it in another. It's not horrible, it's just because he's black, it doesn't mean that he's gonna agree with everything I believe in. That's where the more people you have-

The more black people--

you don't have to turn to just one person because of the fact that they're black and they've had this experience, blah, blah, blah. You actually have a choice. Of my white professor, well yeah, I know which ones I would go talk to about one thing as opposed to another.

And do you?

Oh, yeah. Just there's a level of understanding. But with the black professors here, there's only been two black professors that I've known that have been here more than 2 years. Of those 2, one I've talked with and the other, I knew. The other one I knew, he's no longer here. He actually seemed to be someone who I would look to more for assistance, but he's no longer here, so I gear my assistance towards someone else, who can do the same amount of work. It's just we have differences in how we should go about doing it, what's best for me, which isn't bad--he sees it different. His level of accomplishments is great, we're 2 different people. That's a case in point, where race doesn't mean that you're gonna think alike, that you're gonna want the same things in life.

But you're saying that it would be helpful to have a bigger pool to support you. And also to understand you, because they have similar backgrounds.

37. *Should the university offer activities designed to bring new black students together?*

No

If not, why not?

I don't think the university should do it. I could be reading the question wrong. I think it will be nice to have new activities. But I don't think it should be under the leadership of the university just because, it's kind of like affirmative action. You're working to get people who aren't directly associated with that group to help you to solve your problems. I think it's something the black students need to do....the faculty members, the administrators need to do, as opposed to the university itself, because I don't think the people would appreciate it as much.

The incoming black students?

Right.

Has the Chavis House played a role in your life at W&L? Please describe.

Oh, yeah. It's the only place that I feel comfortable, completely comfortable. Whenever I feel the chips are down, I can always rely on the people there, always have a place to crash, television to watch, place to eat, to cook.

So it's a real safe haven for you? And you've used it a lot?

Oh, yeah. All the years I've been here, I've directly or indirectly lived there.

Has the Minority Student Association played a role in your life at W&L? Please describe.

Very much. The role's changed quite a bit now that I've gotten older, because the things that I disliked as a freshman and sophomore, I'm starting to see them again, the disunity within the

association. Like I was saying, we have that split of the black idea and with....minority....I would never consider myself a minority, but a lot of kids, they feed off it, they use it to hold themselves back as opposed of being proud of who they are and what they stand for.

Like a victim position.

Uh-huh. And I don't really think that a lot of kids who are associated with the organization really know the power that they have within themselves and with the organization, if they would unite. More things could be accomplished through the organization, more things could be done for the community, for the university if they worked together. We had a meeting just tonight and I laughed because noone--the sheets were going, asked for fund raising, community activities. People were so slow to respond, but as soon as the question about when the next party was going to be and if we should hire a DJ or do it ourselves, everyone responded. I'm like, this is ridiculous. You will speak out more on who should play music at a party that you do about anything else. That's the down side of the organization. I just think....of the group. Right now there's 2 seniors actively involved in it and quite a few juniors and quite a few sophomores, a few freshmen. I don't think they understand how important this group is to us. This is my NAACP just because I've seen a lot of things happen as a result of it. It's one of the ways that I saw that was easiest to reach new students that were considered minorities, black or whatnot. It's actually nice now to see Indian students....as well as an active white member as opposed to a white person who actually wants to work with the organization. In that sense, I like it. If that's what we do, that's a part of the awareness that we're supposed to bring where people work together to make things happen. I don't think we do that. It would be nice. ...I've grown immensely as a result of it.

Because of what aspect of it, do you think?

It's actually billed as a social or extra-curricular group. It does have a sense of a governing body. We constantly look to perform various actions on campus, to work with various groups on campus, probably more so than a lot of other groups.

To give you a unique perspective, you mean?

Oh, yeah. People are interested in working with us. They want us to help them. They want us to participate in their different functions. If we abuse it, then we're never gonna move forward, because if we can't offer our assistance and support different groups, they're not gonna support us.

Support what kind of different groups?

Those groups that are looking to work towards minority awareness, those groups who are interested.

Which ones are?

Peer counselors, IFC, EC--

So they approach you in order to help them enrich the minority experience.

It's very important. I don't think a lot of the kids-- I'm considered an old head, you know. I think it's typical of young people to listen to people who are older. They don't want to listen....I stop talking because I know no one's listening to me. It's just, I'm the only person who can tell them where we can go with it, but no one wants to listen. That's the sad part of it. But if we could combine together, the organization would be as useful to the new students as it was to me when I first came. It helped me build an identity.

I'm intrigued that you said it might be more empowered by a different name rather than looking at it as a coalition of people of whom there aren't enough. Interesting.

Exactly.

38. *Do you believe that it is important that courses in the humanities/social sciences include recognition or study of works by persons of color?*

Yes. The world isn't only white. There are masses out there who don't consider themselves white. We don't look at their views, their understanding. We become very short-sighted. I myself, my level of understanding hasn't come from just European culture, European ideas. A lot of the stuff I read, I already have a comprehension or an understanding that's greater and it's not because of me learning from whites. It's me learning from other people of color, and myself. Humanities is very important, because you can't teach humanities to a person. You can teach about a person. Humanity comes from within. If you don't treat yourself as a human, if you don't treat others as a human, then you'll never come to understand what they're about. Social sciences, the same way. You can't be a person for people if you don't understand that people are different, there's so much that makes them so unique.

So that's why you would want to have exposure of things from various cultures.

Various cultures, various persons of color.

If you think works by persons of color should be included do you think the recognition was adequate, inadequate, or excessive? Please explain.

Here?

Yeah.

Inadequate. There are a lot of works I've read I could have told that to the class myself. It's very hard to read a book when a white person's telling me how life is for a black person. It's very hard to read a book about South Africa when it's all coming from a white perspective. It's not that I'm race biased or anything. You wouldn't have a black person talking about life in Ireland. An Irish person would be appalled. That black person would never experience life as an Irishman. That's the way I feel. The work is very inadequate. I don't read enough books by blacks unless it's in a black class. There isn't a literature class here that's offered where there's more than one black author that's used to describe literature or poetry classes or art classes. You're not taught that, whether they're Indian or whatnot. That's not something you're taught. You have to take a special class to learn about these people. I think that's short-sighted. There are more people--if this American study--there are more people in America who have done things than Europeans. We should have access to it. The recognition definitely isn't there. American culture is more than what the Pilgrims brought over. I won't get into that. Very inadequate.

39. *How would you characterize the climate in the classroom for you [as a black student]?*

Very cold. I don't talk much in class anymore, because I don't think a lot of the kids. It's that whole sense of people looking at me when it's something about black and that's when I talk least. I'd rather talk about the other things. I want to take the different perspective.

So it's cold based on the other students' reaction to you? Meaning sort of cold shoulder, not interested in your opinions.

When I correct them, say in instances of black information or just information in general, they look down upon me or give me that sneering look which really doesn't bother me at all. It's just that sneer, whereas I have an understanding of this. I don't have to talk about it, I don't have to flip through my book to tell you. You're just wrong. Or I'll question them. I think a lot of kids get very upset--say in my South African classes or even in my classes about Indian history, a lot

of the kids become very outraged when you question them, when you question their beliefs and you question their thoughts. We might read the same books, but their ideas of what revolution means is very different than mine. They live in a country which believes in revolution but they can't understand it when it comes to another country or culture. In that sense, it's very difficult to communicate your ideas because they're so closed minded. They don't understand the parallels between the two.

So your experience is that you've had very different kinds of perceptions and no one has wanted to hear them?

For the most part. Unless we're talking one on one, which happens very--

This particular one is talking about in the classroom.

Very few kids in the classroom question me once I get on a viewpoint, which I would love to. I would love to explain my ideas further. A lot of times you can't do that unless you're questioned.

But no one does that. It makes me feel pretty bad, because I have as much knowledge that I want to share with people as anyone else. I can't always reach it just from talking. You have to question. You have to make me think for a second. A lot of kids just don't do that. As a black student, that's very challenging. A lot of kids are waiting for me to make that slip, to make things sound as though blacks are different.

So you feel like you're much more on the spot than other people are.

I can sense the kids ready to pounce on me as soon as I make a statement about blackness or whatever.

Has that happened that they do pounce on you?

Uh-huh, which I'm always prepared for. I don't look for it, but if that's the only way I can get engaged in conversation, to get them to understand my point, that's fine. It's just, it's kind of difficult, because they're not giving me that same level of respect. They're not giving me that same opportunity to say that, yeah, you actually do know your information.

You're speaking so far entirely in terms of other students' reactions to you. What about in terms of your interaction with the professor?

I don't care for that much either.

You don't care for the climate in the classroom in relation to the professors? Be real specific so that people will know what you mean.

Say a lot of my classes, I actually, though I could be completely wrong, I actually feel that a lot of professors are indirectly holding--they disguise their biases towards blacks, say talking about welfare or just dealing with those subjects, politics. Whereas I might feel that they're being biased towards blacks in a negative way, the other kids might not see that. To me, it makes me angry.

Angry that people don't see it?

No, angry that the professor would say it. I've sat in many a class where the professor has made me quite upset by the comments they've made about blacks in a very general way. It's really no way to get out of that. Like I was in a class not long ago where I had a professor, he asked the question "How many people's families were immigrants that came to New York?" For me, that's very difficult to sit in a classroom--it's just difficult. The climate, the level of the questions, they never really address me or never really address the Indians, you know. That type of bias is really hard to deal with, because it's very--I've literally felt that I was being overlooked.

Do you think it was unconscious?

I think it was very conscious. Even when he did try...make mention, it was very short, very brief, and very slave-oriented. That hurt very much. I've been in those situations--sociology, psychology, whatnot, where those type of statements were made, inferiority in mind, all that kind of stuff, whatnot.

Inferiority of the black mind? Seriously?

Uh-huh.

As associating in a sociology class that the black mind is inferior. Not just a reference to the fact that some people think that.

That's my belief. Absorbing the information, I could be wrong. You could ask some other student who might feel totally different.

Who might feel that that's not what the professor said?

To me, people talk. You interpret things differently. That's what I saw in his conversation. It's very difficult to sit in that kind of classroom setting when that's going on. As soon as I become angry, I'm no longer a student. I'm not rationally thinking about the information anymore. You've angered me and there's no way I can respond to it. It's in a lot of my classes, that's the way I feel.

Why is it there's no way you can respond to it?

A lot of times it's difficult to separate the anger from the response. You want to be able to respond in a rational way. The emotion is too great at that time. Class is very cool.

Cool, not in a positive sense.

If you have encountered 'problems in the classroom, how have you dealt with those difficulties?

Most of them, the majority of them, I kind of keep to myself where I make notes about the comments of other students. As soon as someone gets my head going in a negative way, I'll just write paragraphs of how I feel.

While you're there in class?

Right. That's usually how I respond to it. Very seldomly do I verbally respond, because the emotional feedback is pretty difficult. It's easier for me to write it out.

I notice that when you're talking about this, you're swallowing, like your feelings are right there right now. You're feeling that anger right now?

Yeah.

It happened enough that it's a big impression that lives inside you right now.

That's one of the things that I still--I try--if anything, this school in that sense has made me very - -when talking about race, it's made me very uneasy because my mind opens up to all the experiences that I've had here. Now I'm thinking of the experiences and it makes, you know, you think about it and you relive it. I can see those things happening and it makes me feel very uneasy because the level of anger I had then is not completely here now, but I can feel it.

That's really important to have on record.

It's difficult. These seminar classes, they call them, I think those are the worst. I don't think-- what they call seminar--

Why is that?

Out of all the seminars I've been in, I really have had very few where the focus of the seminar was having the people to respond to what they read and to expound on it or to respond to other students questions or comments. It's still more lecture oriented. I would think a seminar would

be the opportunity to go to the higher level of...a bunch of educated people sitting around discussing their differences and stuff, the things that they agree on, but I don't find that in a lot of my classes. I'm usually the only person fighting for my beliefs or my thoughts and what I've picked up in the reading. Though I think it would be really nice to have someone's support, I don't look for it.

You'd just like to have the free exchange of ideas?

Yes. If you adamantly try to get me to understand your point and take the time out to listen to where I'm coming from with mine, just like you can, I can find background information to support me. It's just, I just want you to listen.

So where does the shortcoming come from?

Because that doesn't happen.

But why? Because the students aren't willing to participate that way, because it's not run effectively?

It's usually not run effectively. Instead of having a professor be the mediator, still in that lecture role. When that comes about, when those types of situations arise, I literally feel it being looked over and jump to something else.

The professor redirects it.

To something else. I don't talk, don't respond. That's usually what happens. As the years progress, I've gotten really, I would hear it a lot, and I'll just make my personal notes and write it to myself just because as soon as I would get to that point, just speaking, the direction has shifted and by that time, once the level of questioning would shift--I don't know if I'm so angry that I don't want to respond to it anymore or in order to maintain that student mold or something, try to stay with a rational student, I just shy away from it.

Do you mean in terms of being able to maintain the possibility of learning something or do you mean in terms of behaving in the prescribed appropriate manner?

Yeah, in the prescribed appropriate manner.

So you need to keep your stick together.

Yeah, otherwise the emotional overplay will be difficult at some times. Difficult for me to respond.

Sounds like it would be easy for you to respond if you wanted to take the strings off and just blast.

It's very easy to respond, but it's difficult to be the listener.

You might just want to let go and let everybody have it.

The majority of time, I stop and take a deep breath--see how they respond, to see if anyone's going to attack the thing I was going to attack. And if they don't, then I will speak. But I tried not to let my responses, my emotions and all the things going on inside of me just lash out. I try to calm it down a little bit, to where when I respond it's less anger and more intellect, the two are definitely together.

The anger comes from--

sometimes it's from a general question, a comment made in the class, question by a professor, question by a student or a comment made by both or even just reading a lot of the material that we have for class--just anger to it. You read about so much--certain things before you get anger. After a while, you're like, why are you making me read this? How much more of this do you want me to hear about? If anything, I'm being forced to dislike whites more than anything else, because they're constantly giving me this information that makes me feel this way. I sit in a

class, and I'm just dying--I mean, like why are you making me do this? Why are you making me take my mind here? I can't deal with it. I want to be nice, but you're constantly showing me all these instances where blacks and whites have been in conflict. How do you think you're going to build racial equality among these two races when you're constantly showing this information where one group was trying to be nice and sincere and the other group just completely exploited them. It's just hard to be open minded a lot of times when that happens. Here's evidence. How much more do you want me to tell you that whites are horrible. Well, that's not how I feel, but if I make a general statement--that's what you expect me to say. But that's where I don't want my anger to come out, where I make that type of oversight.

So the anger comes from the content of the material?

Uh-huh. Mixed in with experience, this here, this comment.

Insensitive comments by students and professors. And then you also mentioned professors deliberately redirecting the conversation away from controversial things.

40. *What is the role of the Office of Minority Student Affairs?*

Basically, it's one place you go to gripe about stuff. Like a guidance counselor of sorts. Your back's up against the wall, that's where you go to really just kind of unload your problems and not all of its race oriented. It's just--when I have a problem that's overwhelming, it's the only place I'll go. I can't see myself talking to any other deans about anything. There's that security, that openness. I really don't believe in confidentiality anymore. I don't think it exists anymore.

You don't believe that it's possible?

No. I don't think it's possible at all. But at least when I go there, even though I don't believe in it, I don't feel that I'm holding anything back. I can be as explicit as I want to about what's bothering me. If it were to come back, it's not something that I'm ashamed of because know that's how I felt. All I want is someone that I can talk with.

You feel like you can there more than elsewhere?

That I can get my mind settled a little bit and I just don't feel that way in other departments over there.

So that's the major role. Anything else.

Financial assistance, minority loans. They helped me with a loan last year. That was very helpful. Advisors, when we want speakers. There is more assistance coming from this office than any other office on campus. Leadership. I could be completely wrong, but I actually feel as though more is accomplished through the office when you directly deal with it as opposed to being sent to it by way of someone else. It's very important.

What do you mean when you say "advisors"?

Organizations--Advisors to MSA, one other organization, maybe International Club. Advisor might mean--that's where I got my study courses from. Conferences, dealing with conferences. Selecting conferences to attend.

Like the Leadership Conferences?

Those type of things. As far as help goes, I think there's been more assistance coming from this office than any other single office on campus, just because I'm more---

How can the role of this Office be improved?

Have more people, more minorities affiliated with it probably.

More minorities affiliated with it at what level?

She deals with all the minorities on campus, and that's really difficult, I know, such a big stretch. Having more people to help her with the various groups, spread the time out--to really focus on the different needs on campus. It's different dealing with an international student than an Asian-American. With that, it's hard communicating sometimes--really seeing what they're trying to get accomplished. There are minor setbacks, but it's not really something I think that can just be straight up and....it's like, oh you need this and you need that. It's more, if the office were taken more seriously by the campus--

How could that happen?

Just more people become active. Women's Forum, the Jewish students, Gay & Lesbian Assn. Like when I think of minority...they still fall in my head, because they're not a part of the majority of the campus. To have all these students come through this office, it would break that stigma that this is the black students' office. With it, you gain more support, because more people are willing to look to you for assistance. Bridges can be closed off. People can walk over them now because there are more people being helped through the office....

You mean if they expanded the range?

Yes.

41. *From whom do you receive the greatest emotional support on campus? Do not use name(s), but please describe the person(s) in terms of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, and position (i.e. fellow student, faculty member, administrator, staff member). If appropriate, include more than one individual and describe the type of situations in which the person provides emotional support (i.e. personal, family, religious, etc.)*

I'm really very selfish. There's really no one person on campus that I've looked to more than myself. I'm a very internal--my anger, my fears, my stress, whatever. There's people that I can talk with, but there's really no one person that, if something's bothering me that I go to.

Is there anyone from whom you receive emotional support?

There's a young Greek lady, she's a senior here.

Greek in the sense that she's from Greece?

Uh-huh. Student--we were roommates at one time, really good person. Can usually talk with, co-workers at one time. Just that level of understanding, personal, easy to talk with, family life, not really the same, far from the same but I understand being in a family where you're really not a part of the family. She was adopted. So she's part of a family that she's really not a part of--I understand that. Religious, yes. She has a high level of religion, so do I. But neither of us are really church-goers. To be honest, that's really it. Just because there may be two or three people that, if something's bothering me right then and there, if they ask me a question, I might respond to it. But there's really no other person that I would talk to about anything else that's happening.

That you'd voluntarily talk to or turn to?

Yes.

What percentage of your friends are black, what white, and what international?

42. *Have you experienced any discriminatory behavior on campus directed against yourself? What form did that behavior take (written remarks including graffiti, spoken remarks, physical assault, discriminatory treatment).*

Graffiti, spray painted "nigger" on the wall.

This is specifically directed against yourself.

Oh, against myself. Spoken remarks, yeah. If you didn't like the confederacy, you can leave this school. You stupid nigger type of stuff. Pretty much stuff along those lines, more people have told me that they fear me.....than anything else. They just tell me that they're scared of me.

So that's not necessarily discriminatory.

Yeah.

So remarks and graffiti, which may or may not be--

Discriminatory treatment--really can't answer it, because I don't--a lot of the stuff I can't say if it was because of race or just because the people didn't like me. It's one of those things, so maybe-

That's a rotten distinction to have to make, isn't it?

That's pretty much how I feel. I'm actually trying my best not to think to racism, the reasoning. But there are some things that I think was just straight racism.

Hey, if they're calling you a stupid nigger, that's straightforward.

I've been turned down for different things, not given entrance to different places, been asked to show my card, security asked me who I was, that type of stuff.

Tell me about security.

Walking across campus, having security ask you "Do you go to school here?", you ask security to let you into a place, they give you all types of flak, like "we can't do this" or blah, blah--or if you call them to give you a ride or something, they're not too quick to do it.

What makes you think that's different from the way they treat the white people?

I don't really know.

You don't know if it's discriminatory, but you do know that you object to it.

Yes.

Review it. They're late to help you, they give you trouble when you need assistance from them and they question whether you're a student.

Uh-huh, that questioning was a long time ago. I don't really know why I would notice it, that it happened.

Who was responsible for that behavior?

Individual students, Greeks--

Greeks as a group? See they're mentioned here --if a whole group acted against you, that would be a different situation than individuals who've been in a group situation but it wasn't the group acting

One Greek group--response was--when I was a freshman, I was rushing the house, one of the presidents of an organization, he was like, I like this guy, we should let him in, even though he didn't rush our house officially, I like him. Let him in. A couple of the guys there made the comment, it was agreed upon that they would never be in a fraternity with a nigger in it.

Someone else told you that this went on?

Yes. This was when it was time to select who they wanted for certain fraternity. So that was--

So that was a unilateral group behavior?

Yeah. Discriminatory treatment, a lot of it I can't just say yes or no. What I would consider discriminatory treatment from a faculty member, I don't know if it's because I'm a bad student or because I'm black or because I don't express my thoughts or anything like that. Would I consider it to be discriminatory treatment? Yes. It's....compared to them, maybe not. But what I thought it was, yes.

Did it have racial content?

(No answer)

Leaving aside behavior, do you sense racial tensions on campus beyond what exists in the larger society?

No, I won't say it's any worse or much better.

You're saying it's about the same?

Yes.

43. *Aside from the Honor System do you believe that the student Executive Committee, the Student Conduct Committee or other University judicial committees treat black and white students equally fairly?*

I really don't know. I only know of two black students who have left here because of honor violations. Both of them were suspect.---real sketchy terms under which they left.

The case itself was suspect?

Yeah, the case itself. One case I would consider outright race oriented. The other, no. One was just, my belief, was just straight up race oriented. The other was the person in the wrong place at the wrong time. In a way, I do feel that there's a bias, but there haven't been enough cases to where I would say that it's something that's recurring because I know a whole lot more kids who've gotten honor violations than I do blacks. I don't really think there is a bias towards blacks in these situations. There's just only one example that I know of that I would say was race oriented.

And you weren't convinced. But were you sitting in there? Did you hear all the details?

Yeah, I knew everything about it. As opposed to this person leaving, under the terms they did, I know a lot more whites who've been brought up on various grievances or whatnot, they still manage to get through. They might have eventually been expelled. People knew that they were breaking rules, but no one did anything. For instance you have this black student who supposedly did this and they didn't and they're no longer a student here.

So you're saying there's one case that suspicious to you, but that you really don't know--don't have enough information. OK.

44. *Do you believe that the honor system is applied in an even-handed way to black and white students?*

Pretty much.

What would your hesitation be?

There's been more cases of white students coming up on honor violations than I know of black students--it's really kind of hard to say if it was even-handed. Not to say the black students are better. There's just more cases.

45. *How would you evaluate student publications (i.e. the Ring-tum Phi, the Trident, etc.), the student radio and television stations with regards to opportunities for black students to participate.*

Great. Very accessible.

How would you evaluate them with regard to their treatment of news about black students?

Poorly done. There really is very little news about students in general, but as far as black students, the only time there's any news about black students is when blacks and whites get in an

argument or there's letters being sent from one person to another. Or there's response made to an article.

If a black student wanted to write about MSA activities, they would publish it, right? It's not like anyone's resisting the coverage of black students. It's just not done.

Right. Just not done.

46. *Do you feel that black students at Washington and Lee today have problems that are basically different from, or basically similar to those of whites? Please describe in what way you feel they are different or similar.*

Some different, some the same. You have some black kids who are sad they didn't get in a fraternity, like you have some whites who are sad that they didn't. Greeks, social groups, all that stuff. Different--just so I've made friendship. I think there's more level of choices for white students here, for who they want to be friends with, whatnot. In one sense, if whites want to be friends with another white student, there's more access than for black students, but if a white wants to be a friend with anyone, that's the same for black students. Does that make sense?

Yeah. If a black student experience that white people are open to being friends with them. So in that sense it's similar.

I would say the problems are pretty much the same for both groups.

*47. Sex Male

*48. Age? 22

*49. Year in college? Senior

*50. Cumulative grade point average [as of Fall 1996]? 2.239

*51. How do you identify yourself in terms of nationality? American

52. How do you identify yourself in terms of race?
Black.

53. *Are there additional comments you wish to make about any aspects of Washington and Lee?*

It's not for every black student. Like I tell any person, it would be nice to have more black students, but at the same time, I don't know if I would really like it, to have a larger percentage. For me, my experiences, they would have been different if there were more black students here. I don't think they really would have been more beneficial. My skin wouldn't have toughened up as much, my mind wouldn't have opened up as much, just because a lot of the stuff I learned here I had to learn by myself. For me that may be better, but that's not the same for everyone. In a sense, the school could be altered just because it's bad enough with the white students accusing blacks coming here through Affirmative Action, those type of things.

You hear that a lot?

Yeah. I think if you increased the black population, instead of the students trying to understand

and get to know the black students and see what type of people they are, whatever, they'll be so hindered by the fact that there are more black students here under non-merit reasons than anything else. I really wouldn't want to see that.

Like a two-edged sword.

I think it would be--

the increased resentment would take away--

I think too the student body would be shocked if more than half the black students here pay for all or part of their education, I think they would be very shocked to know that. They can pay something.

White people are assuming that they're not paying when they really are?

I think a lot of them do. It's not a stereotype. When I first came--to actually hear it, that there was a black, just one black student at the time, that I had known to pay their full tuition. It made me go "wow"--but then I wised up. There people who actually know of this school. They come from all over the country. There are people who actually--not all blacks are poor. Literally, something I have to wake myself up to. I'm sure if I have to wake myself up to it, there are lots of whites who are unaware of it as well. That there are more people here who can pay for their education than they're aware of. Maybe it's not just W&L they could pay for. They could pay for other schools, too. All in all, I don't think I would have gotten the same level of experiences had I not stayed here or come. For the good as well as the bad, it's my experiences. I don't love them all, but I am what I am. I hope that my level of success continues now that I'm more aware of what's happening around me, and though my level of thought is one way and not everyone is there with me. You're gonna have to continue to struggle and fight, even though you feel that you shouldn't have to do it anymore.

And you've gotten to that point haven't you?

I'm literally torn between days of wanting to become a part of the struggle, the revolution, versus just kinda sitting back and just completely disappearing from all existence and just living my life only in my family.

Which revolution specifically?

Continuing the fight for equality and the observance of everyone as equal and to try to get everyone away from this whole capitalist mentality, that you need this and you need that, sell people stuff that they don't need that you just--if everyone worked toward one common goal, then we can be a better society and completely change the way the government is run. There's so many things that are possible to work for and just part of me feels that there's no way I can escape any of it, because I've been here.

Here at W&L?

Not just at W&L, but I've gotten a higher education and I know more of what's happening and if I choose not to act on it, then I'm no better than the people who are oppressing all the people who are suffering right now. But there's so much that we as Americans have to deal with, I mean, that I don't think we should have a president, why should there be one person set aside to receive more money and benefits than the rest of the people? Those type of things. It's not towards blacks, it's towards the people of this country. Why does a fifth of the population have x amount of money and then you have 20% of the population in poverty? We have government for hundreds of years now and they still haven't solved this problem. If anything, it's getting worse. It's not a black person or a white person.

Relate that to W&L.

Well, it's here that I learned it. It took me the patience to realize that there are still people here who believe that--that money is the way to rule the world, money is the way to power, money is the way to get ahead. Whatever you do here is to prepare yourself to make money. I feel differently. I came here to educate myself, to learn more about myself, to learn more about people. To do all that, I want to make money less now than I did when I came here. I think that money can do for me and my family, but the things you have to sacrifice in order to make it--this school has definitely told me that it's not worth it.

You see people sacrificing?

Oh yeah, constantly. For reasons that I consider good and reasons that I consider bad, for names, for reputation, for families, to help their families out on a continuing, a great line of excellence. Let's say with money too. I've seen so many kids come into this school because of money and not because of what they're capable of doing or because they really want to. They have no other option.

So what is it they're sacrificing?

Nothing really. Those kids aren't versus the kids whose family, who are highly involved in industry or whatnot and they want to continue and they want to help people.

So the W&L experience reinforced in some way your commitment to make a difference, to do service.

And at the same time it also gave me, you know how people say that minorities and whatever are apathetic towards education and towards working. In a way....understand why.

Why?

Because it's not natural, I don't feel. That struggle, that thing some people--there are just some things they don't care about. They don't care about a VCR or they don't care about a television, they don't care about traveling across the world. They just want to eat every day. They just want a place to sleep.

That struggle is not natural?

Yeah. That's my conscience. There's so much that I've experienced, but I could safely say that I have a place to sleep every night and I care more about that than I do about making multimillions. It would be nice, I guess, but if I can be happy in a rag-tag house that keeps me warm and a place to eat every night.

Happy with the.....

Then I would be fine...luxuries...I might have had that thought in my head when I came to college, but now that I've been here, I've experienced poverty. I'm still experiencing it. It's just, I know what it's like to be around money as well. Being around money, I can say that a helluva lot more people are sad that I've noticed who have money than people who don't. That's not something you'd pick up until you're around it. I won't say W&L is the place that breeds it or anything. It's here. It's definitely at other schools, but I came here and all of my greater experiences have been indirectly through this university. Some of them directly. I can hate it for the rest of my life or I can love it, like anything. Maybe it was a mistake that I made, but through this mistake I've learned a lot.

Why write it off? That's a lot of years of your life. Might as well make something of it. Anything else?

One of these questions here, like how can you ease the tension? There's a lot of ways that the tension here can be eased. But I don't think the people here want to.

Really? All of them? Blacks and whites?

A lot. Just because they don't--you know how they say--a message like a drive-by in a black neighborhood really isn't much until it happens ...in a white neighborhood, not an epidemic. A lot of stuff here just hasn't reached epidemic status. There's so much that they just don't recognize.

Who's the "they" in that sentence?

Everyone. There's so much that the whites don't recognize about what's happening amongst the whites, the blacks don't know what's happening amongst the blacks. No one really knows what everyone's about and what everyone's looking for. They don't even know what they're looking for in themselves. With all of that confusion happening, there's no one really looking to solve any problems. They're just so confused and everyone's running around with their head cut off. Some people start that way, some people leave that way, but that's why with that question, I really don't see a true cure happening, just because--there are people who know what's happening, but those are the people no one wants to listen to. The people who are perpetuating the problems, making the problems even worse, because they're refusing to look at it. That's why it's hard to take.

And that's what you mean when you say "I don't think they really want to"?

Yeah. They don't want to look at it. Everyone wants to run from anger.

Because it's uncomfortable?

Exactly. There's so many people here that I know like that. That's what I was saying. I could easily run from it, in this by myself. Or I could face the reality. It won't be better unless we deal with it. That's the way I see this school.

Thank you very much.