

#8 INTERVIEW OF BLACK STUDENTS ENROLLED AT WASHINGTON AND LEE

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

Yes, Politics.

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

Not off the top of my head. It's better than my overall.

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'd like to be a teacher.

At what level? Do you know?

Middle school or high school.

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

Yes. Masters in Education.

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

If yes, please give the denomination, and the type of church activities in which you participated.

Baptist. Besides going to church there was Youth Group and basically, that was it.

Did the Youth Group meet more than once a week?

No. My involvement in church was fairly limited. I didn't really know too many of the people there. We'd go on trips. Didn't have too many meetings, but we would just go bowling.....

So you moved when you were a teenager and you were in a new church?

No, we moved churches. We didn't move. I have never moved from my actual house. We moved from a church that was further away to one that was closer to home. Easier to go to.

How would you characterize your church involvement in Lexington?

Nil. Did not exist.

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

My activities in high school were a lot more. Basically, due to the fact that I stopped playing football after high school. When I first got here I didn't know too much about any type of band you all had. I play in the jazz band, and then the pep band. I enjoyed pep band much more than I did jazz band, but you all didn't have that. We don't have that here at the school, so that kind of cut out an extra-curricular activity. I used to do that during the basketball games. That was pretty fun. We don't have that here.

Let me back up a second and follow up on question 6 when you said that your involvement in Lexington in church was nil and void. You were laughing. Is there a particular reason?

No. My aunts asked me that. I just--I've enjoyed going to sleep in the morning. It has nothing to do with the town or anything like that. I'm just relaxing on Sunday morning.

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

It's a very interesting story. There is this scholarship in my area that I applied to and I was one of the winners of this scholarship. Among the places that they were giving full scholarships to was Washington and Lee University. I had to choose--the people gave me a second to choose between W&L, a place called Washington College which is up in Maryland (I never heard of that place) or to get a \$10,000 grant for one year. Full scholarship to either one of these two schools or \$10,000 for one year. To me, the \$10,000 was cut out. I had hear about W&L University a day before by a friend of mine who came down here who thought about playing football for here. He was wearing a hat and I asked him about it when I saw him. He was telling me about it. That's the only reason I ever heard of this place. So I decided to go to W&L.

And you said they gave you a second to choose. Do you mean 1/60th of a minute they gave you?
Yeah, I was on the phone, and they said "Well, we kind of have to have your decision now." So I just made my choice. I believe that they've refined the process a little bit better than that, because they do it now in increments. They have information fairs in the fall where some of the schools that they have at this college fair will give full tuition scholarships to students or, in addition to that they still have the same area-wide search for students where they give full scholarships and other awards to students with maybe some of same schools and maybe some different schools. Within that amount of time, there's some time to have a choice. I think this is the second or third year for this entire program. Now it's getting to be much better. It's the price you pay for being new, I guess.

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

None to my knowledge.

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

Yes, that's another interesting story. Well, Angela Allen, that's the person I had contact with the majority of the time. We were trying to arrange a visit, for me to come down. It was during the spring term, because this is when I got accepted. My parents were canceling on this end, and that set Angela Allen back. Then could do it on this time, then couldn't do it on this time. So finally when my parents so finally when my parents thought we had all agreed on a certain day, we came down here only to find the admissions building locked. There was nobody here. I think it was on a Saturday afternoon in the middle of spring term. The campus is basically empty, so we had our own little tour of the place by walking around and seeing what was going on.

Did you get to meet any students or anything?

Met someone in the library. There was a black student working in the library. Talked to this black student and she gave her opinion. Professor DeLaney was passing by, by chance--this is the time just before he left. He discussed things with my parents. I was sitting in the background. My parents like to speak for me all the time. They were having their own little discussion both times. This is all in the span of a whole half an hour or so. But they were talking. My parents had discussions with both of them. I had no questions. That's how I got my knowledge about the school. To me that was kind of insufficient when I look back. I didn't understand.

There's a place a little later that talks about how things are different than you had expected.

Tell me about your reactions to this particular campus visit.

Oh, I thought it was a nice looking place. Anything other than that, there was nothing to really see. I mean, there was one student that my parents stopped. We were trying to figure out what in the world was going on. This guy, he was real helpful. I think he was one of the running backs on the football team. He was a dorm counselor.

Not a black student?

No, he was a junior--I forgot his name. Real helpful guy. He said, he offered--he said "You can stay here, I'll take you to class on Monday and stuff if you really want to stay and everything." So I thought the people around here were pretty nice. I'm not used to anything like that. But I just went with my parents and we came back on Sunday, walked around again, and we left. It looked nice, nice person, talking to people, and that was my impression.

10a. *Was W&L your...*

It was not my first choice, but it became my next choice by default.

Because of the way the scholarship read? Did you have other choices besides your first choice?

My dad got rid of my first choice pretty quickly.

He didn't approve?

No. My biggest plan, I was going to go to Morehouse. I had heard about it, read about it. I got accepted and I was so elated and I showed it to my dad, and because we had talked to the recruiter he said I would end up having to take education classes at Spellman or Clark. My dad says there's no way in the world I would go to a college and then have to take classes at another college. It didn't make sense to him, so he said "No, you're not going." So that kind of cut that out. And then this came about. If I wouldn't have gone here, I would probably have gone to William and Mary.

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

I applied to four schools. Four others. Officially, I did apply, but I didn't really. It was a post--

You applied to four and then this one came up.

Yes.

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

All four.

11. *What made you decide to attend Washington and Lee? You already said the scholarship.*

You might want to think, were there other things?

I really think the fact that I knew my parents had not really saved up money to put into my school and from ever since I could remember, I had been told "Well, you're getting a scholarship, that is what you do." That was my goal all throughout school, to get a scholarship so I can go to school for free. Of the different things that I applied for, this is the scholarship that I got. It was another one, I got turned down.

Morehouse didn't have that scholarship associated with being accepted?

No, they did because my GPA in high school was actually ...I was 15th in my class. But I can't take the SAT to save my life. The guy said that I had to get 1040 or something, 1050, to get a scholarship. I just couldn't get it. So that kind of knocked that scholarship opportunity out. Another one I applied for I didn't get accepted. This one, the one for the area where I live, it was based a lot on your grades, not anything on test scores, your writing ability, and your speaking ability. That's how I got it.

12. *Once you decided to enroll at W&L, what was the reaction of friends and relatives?*

They were kind of excited. The thing is, I don't--this school is not terribly known because it's not a public institution, so no one really knew too much about it. No one said "Watch yourself or

anything like that.” Or “do you know what you’re getting into?” Everybody was pretty excited for the fact that I got the scholarship. But no one really knew enough about W&L to say anything about it.

Were there negative images about W&L that made you think seriously about not coming?
No, I really didn’t know. I found out later, after talking with people, two of the people.... here... didn’t have a positive impression about it. These are two females. I found that out at least in my freshman summer.....

13. *Once you were enrolled, did you find the University to be as you had expected?*

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

It was a lot different than I had expected, because I figured that there wouldn’t be too many blacks. That to me was not the biggest deal. I did not know the degree to which that was the truth. One thing that just blew my mind was the serious southern attitude that I saw all throughout.

All through your four years or all through the school?

Most specifically, my freshman year, because, where I come from, there is none of I’m from the Washington, DC area. Nothing there. Once you go further out, there may be some, but even then it’s just not there

The southern attitude is not there?

Yeah. I had never been exposed to that before. And that really struck me as something to adjust to or deal with or figure out why it’s like that. It’s just totally foreign to me.

Would you describe it to me so that we’re clear about what we mean.

First thing, all the flags. Confederate flags, stars and bars. I had read about it, seen pictures of it and I had never been that close and that exposed to that proliferation, that many of them. I would walk around and there would be one on the door next to me, one across the quad. Everyone you see, you’d go into someone’s room, have one plastered on the wall. I was totally offended by this. I had my own images and I know what I think of all this. I couldn’t understand why anybody in their right mind would post this up and be proud of something like this. It was just everywhere. I could not understand.

Does it mean the same thing to them as it does to you, do you think?

Explicitly, no. But subliminally, I think yes. That’s just me, I don’t know if I can ever get away from that. But yes. I heard other people make all these excuses for some people. “This person’s parents did this, and this person--this is my heritage and all this.” I’m saying “This is just garbage.” Really, it’s just something I can’t comprehend.

That was very offensive to you?

Yeah. I have yet to put my finger on that beyond I just don’t understand it, I don’t want to understand it. That’s all.

Sounds like you think that was a visual statement of their intention to be separate from you or their pride.

That was a visual slap in the face basically. Me, a lot of time being around here, the university as a whole will say to you in so many ways that you really don’t matter. That’s what it says to me, because what I like to pay attention to is a lot of times some students write in the newspapers, not particularly the articles but the editorials, the letters to the editor that people write. I think that really gives you a feeling about where people come from. People will talk exactly how they feel, have no qualms about it. I’m sitting here listening, or reading these things, and I cannot believe the attitudes some people put forth and have no shame in putting anything forth as though this was the truth, the gospel in and of itself. I think someone may have complained about it, you

know. And then the attitude that always comes back is, you know what you're getting into, suck it up. Or this is how it is. If you want to complain, don't come to our school. That's what gets put forth. That's how it is.

You said a while ago that there are many ways that it's said that, I think you meant by the university, that you don't matter. Do you mean individual students or do you mean university administration or do you mean--what do you mean exactly? Organizations?

I think everything W&L is supposed to stand for, including your administration, just everyone as a whole but not anyone specifically, the voice of the majority if that explains it much better. Because the people who win are the people who end up saying that this is the way things are, the way things should go. Nothing else really matters. No one else really.

So the major way that is differed from what you expected was the whole southern attitude.

Southern attitude, other people's attitudes about other things.

Like what?

I remember sitting down, I don't know if this was the first day of school, this was within the first week before any of the freshmen had taken the class. I remember some guy saying "Women had to prove themselves worthy to be here." I heard that. I didn't say anything. I'm not the most vocal person in the world. I was thinking that we all have to prove ourselves to be worthy to be here because we haven't got engraved yet. I haven't purchased books yet, haven't gone to class yet. Everybody has to prove themselves worthy. To put that on a certain group of people was another thing that was foreign to me. These are just things I have not been exposed to at all. That was offensive to me. I couldn't even understand why the majority of us, we stayed silent.

So right away you started wondering why people were silent about offensive things?

No one else disagrees with any. It seems to be preaching to the choir, "Amen, brother--that's right--we agree. I say the same thing. I have the same opinion as you do." To me this is wrong--the worst type of opinion to have.

You mean those prejudicial opinions against groups of people. But you're saying that people don't speak up and say "wait a minute."

Yeah, and when they do, they're shot down quickly. They are often in the minority.

Which minority?

In the minority voicing the opinion. Not being a minority person.

The people who speak up and disagree are few. Anything else about how things were different than you expected?

I thought there was going to be a whole lot more black folks in the number. We had seven black folks in our class, and that was a shock to me. And out of seven, we all didn't speak to each other and that was really sad. Like two spoke to each other.

Why do you think that was?

We all had different personalities. A couple of them played sports. They were already in their sports cliques, so they didn't have--they had found their social niche. They did not need to associate with anything else, with any other black students. Then the fact that some may be shy and not particularly outgoing. That kills the rest.

Cause it's such a small number to start with?

Yes.

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

To look at things strictly academically, I think that somehow I did not feel as prepared schoolwise, not my own personal work ethic or anything like that. I thought that some of the materials may have been a little bit newer to me than they were to some other people who, my

own basic viewpoint of them was that most of the people came from private schools. Private school education is a whole lot different from public school education. I felt that somehow I had a little bit tougher road coming from a public school environment where you have to pay attention to a lot more different things than just --we expect the highest all the time, regardless of.... I think that I was--that's when I felt I had to overcome some of the deficiencies of that.

In terms of skills and content?

Most specifically, in terms of writing papers, which, being a Politics major, is a prime part of what you're going to do. There's some things that we went over in my freshman English class, really no one had ever sat down with me, reviewed my papers and said "This is what's wrong. This is what's good. Why are you using punctuation here like this for this?" Basically, before then everyone looked at my papers and style of writing and said "This is good style. You're very expressive. You know what you're doing. You do your work on time. You turn it in. It's nice, everything." And it wasn't that anything was terribly wrong with it, but it was not up to a college level. We never worked on anything like grammar. Then in my Spanish class. I took 3 years of Spanish, and I was lost in that class.

What level did they put you in?

161, 162. That was some of the hardest stuff I'd ever taken before. In our Spanish class, you had to deal with all types of attitude problems, had to worry about who's going to cut the other teacher today. All this extra stuff. We never spoke Spanish in Spanish class, from day 1, the teacher said 3 years, we're gonna speak Spanish the entire time. Only lady speaking Spanish was the Spanish teacher. Everybody else doing our broken English-Spanish responses back where you would tell you what you meant in English. We did not do Spanish. I do not Spanish, period. When I came here, I thought I made the biggest mistake by answering the questions right. I had messed up mentality. I didn't realize what I was doing at the present time. We took the placement test. I had a bunch of answers blank. But me, I'm looking to pass everything. I went back, guessed to the best of my ability, I don't know how much that hurts. I may have penalized myself by putting myself in the higher thing, because I wanted to do so well all the time.

So you threw yourself in the deep water?

I was lost.

And there was no chance to go back and replace yourself?

I didn't ask. I just took whatever it was and said "I'm gonna deal with it."

Brave man.

I don't know, it was partly silly.

Put your head down and keep going! So that's academically what your greatest challenge was, that you weren't very prepared. Any other level of your greatest challenge that you want to talk about?

I guess dealing with being here and growing up.

Is that two separate things?

No, I think they went hand in hand.

Want to describe what you mean by that?

I think when I came here I was very naive about the way things are supposed to be versus the way things are.

In terms of what?

The way the world works. I think this is an explanation of how the world works. Just being here and seeing that the people that have the money and the interest in the money, seeing people that rule America go to school here. This is their world. I'm operating in their world. I know how to do what I have to do in this world.

From being here and working with the W&L scene.

I don't think there are any experiences that could hurt me any more. I think I've been hurt about this. There's nothing else--no other racial incident that could happen that I don't think I could deal with. I think I have cried enough tears--
literally?

Yes. I felt....this is nothing else. There may be something else new but it's not going to be different. You take what you have. You learn from your experiences and move on. I have grown up....

Discovering how the world works, how hard it really is, taking your knocks. That was like the challenge. Hanging in there and getting tough and realistic was the way to go with it?

To go through it and know that you have your own goals, and regardless of what anybody else over here does, what anybody else tries to put things in your face to make you upset, to make you want to go somewhere else. You ..stand right where you are and do what you want to do and get....

Being real focused.

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

Well, my grades are not that good here compared to high school. I put a positive spin on it. I say that I think I am a better student now. I know that I have worked harder in many of these classes where I have gotten a C (C or B) than I ever did getting A's in high school. That's how I look at it positively. My grade point average is 2.6--not the greatest thing in the world, not the worst thing in the world. I try my best, and there are some things--I got a chance to look over my transcripts. I looked there and I said, you know, I know that's not my area of study. I realize the grades that are real low are collected in one certain area, so that was not meant for me. I did the best that I could.

So you feel good about your performance, even though the numbers don't---

There's nothing else I could physically, mentally do about it. I did what I could do. I did it to the best of my ability. I don't know how that's going to work in the job world, but I did what I could do. I don't have any complaints.

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

Undergraduate library--I used the library a great deal.--every aspect of the library, research, computer labs, everything there. I'm not a science person.

I used the computer facilities--very helpful in printing papers, even though sometimes they didn't work. Writing Center--I have used it a couple of times to something difficult. That was somewhat helpful. I think in the class I was going there for, I don't think I was going to please the professor anyway. It didn't help extremely that much, but they gave me some things to look for when I was writing.

Public lectures on academic subjects--I've gone to the lectures in Lee Chapel before. I saw Pat Robertson. I went to see Ben Chavis a week or so before he lost his job. I say Lonnie (?)-- and Cornel West. Those are all the ones I've gone to.

Language lab--a one time thing.

Visiting professors in their offices--I have visited professors in their offices. Not to the extent of --I don't know professors personally, but if I have a problem in class, I would go and talk with him or her about it. That was very helpful, trying to look out for my best interests....

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

The biggest one would probably be the computer facilities. To get a way to have the printers work the majority of the time. This is more in Gaines. The printers there don't work terribly well. This would probably cost a lot of money, but I think maybe getting more laser printers would help. Other than that, off the top of my head, no.

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

Interest in the particular academic field. I was either going to be a history major or

Starting from before you were here?

Yes. Before I was here, I was going to be a History major. That's what I planned. In a couple of the History classes that I took, I got a C or D. In the Politics class that I took, I believe that I got an A. I figured I was doing much better in Politics, so I went over there.

So interest and success combined. Did you know already when you chose your major that you wanted to teach. Did that have to do with it?

Yes. So it's not money.

Not money? That's for sure, not if you're going to teach public school.

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

If yes, please describe that change.

No, I haven't.

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

Actually, I'm not sure. I'm not a snitch. I don't know --I just put it on that level. I think there are different degrees. I get concerned ...don't pay attention to person A, person B. I guess my answer would be no.

You like to mind your own business and not deal with other people's business?

Yeah.

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

Please describe in what way they are easy or difficult.

Some W&L professors are easy to approach when that is their demeanor in class and, although there may be respect and looking up to a certain professor, it doesn't seem as though the professor is intimidating with his or her style or their approach to the material. People that I've found difficult to approach...get enough courage to go to their office are people that seem to maybe know so much and lord that fact over you. The material may be above your head. That's when I've found it difficult. You don't want to sound stupid talking to this person.

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

No.

Do you want to talk about that? You sound very, very definite.

I don't--I see or hear about other relationships students have with professors, being invited over to their homes, eating dinner with them and their family--I'm not like that. I don't know if it's a personal thing, but I have not seen that here.

You haven't experienced it?

No. I have spoken to professors. There are professors here that I've had their class one time. Every time I see them I would talk to them. We may have a little discussion or something, but

nothing has gone very deep or very personal.

What made the difference with those people that you've heard were having more close interaction?

It may be the personality of the person.

Meaning you or the professor?

Meaning me or the other students. Maybe that's the type of person who is a little bit more into it. I don't go to professors to chit-chat. That's not my thing, to go in there and act as though you are my best friend and go and talk to you on a personal level. I don't do that. If I go into a professor's office, I go in there because I need some help on this paper. I did bad on this test. I need some help with the material. Could you help me in some way. That's it.

Have you had any chance to have a closer relationship with a faculty person in an academic context? Like sometimes people do R.E. Lee or work study, independent study. That just hasn't come up for you?

No.

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

It's been an interesting journey. It's grown just because my freshman year I did not go out. Well 2 times. I think I went out the very first day I got here.

What do you mean by "going out?"

Sitting on the steps, group of guys came out said and said "Do you want to go with us?" We walked over to somebody's house. They were watching football and drinking stuff. It was a sorry game and television, so I left. That was it. It didn't impress me that folks were just sitting around, relaxing, watching television. I don't know why. That was that. So I just left. Plus the people that I went with, I couldn't find them anywhere. They just went on. They were still within the house, but I didn't know that until a day or so later.

Was this a fraternity house you went to?

No, this was in someone's personal house, one of those houses with some catchy nickname. We were there. OK, I didn't know the situation I was in, so I don't know what's going on so I might as well leave.

Any other time during freshman year? You said there were two.

I can't remember. It was probably more than that. I was exaggerating. I went out and I didn't know anybody. I knew the other freshmen I talked to and a few of the upper classmen, black students. Other than that, I did not know anyone else. My social world was in between there and my room. In between—basically there were 5 people that I knew. Between those 5 people, going over to the Chavis House every once in a while and being in my room. That was my social world. I didn't know the fraternity parties. I didn't know too many other white people at all. The people that I got a chance to meet were people who spoke to me when I was sitting outside. I used to sit on the steps at Gilliam and read and my homework and just watch the world go by. The people who spoke to me and asked me what in the world I was doing. I'd tell them I was focused - getting my work done. Those are the same people now that I still talk to. Other than that I really didn't know anybody. I'm not one to talk in class either. At least conversing with people on a personal level. This year may be the first time I had a conversation before class begun with somebody. Most of these classes - before they were seminars - even when they were seminars I sit in the front of the class. I don't know who's behind me, because I'm not worried. I just sit in front of class. I'm paying attention to what the professor says, what the material is. Sometimes I don't even know who's in the class with me, because I have never turned around to see. I just sit there and I'm into my work. That's what I'm here for. One of the biggest things that struck me when I got here, everybody seemed to know each other. Everybody was striking

up friendships mighty quick and I was just, whoa, what's going on? Folks were just hanging with each other tight. I couldn't believe it. I just felt kind of left out with that one. So I was just paying attention to my schoolwork. That was it.

It sounds like you're describing your personal style as different from other people's personal style. Still I think I'd like to get your feedback about your experience. First of all, what was your experience in reaction to the social scene as it is. And second of all, you said your social life grew over the four years. How has that changed?

Each successive year, I've gotten to know more people. I don't have too many problems. If I want to go out, I don't feel uncomfortable going out.

So what kinds of things do you end up doing if you go out with the friends that you've made?

Just go out to these various fraternity parties. Maybe dance a little, have a little fun, I guess. I don't drink, I don't smoke. I'm not into anything like that. I personally feel that hampers things a little bit. At a party, people have the beer hand and the cigarette hand. They dance with one. Most people have the beer hand. If they don't have the beer hand, they're usually not dancing. The cigarette hand is optional. But the beer hand—everybody's drinking and having fun. You feel you don't know what to do with your hands. If you don't have a cup in your hand, you're kind of lost sometimes. It's like an accessory to whatever you're wearing. At times I feel isolated, alienated. I tried to alleviate this a couple of times. I bring my own soda to the party.

They don't have anything available but beer?

No—they do. I'm just now finding out about these things. If I don't drink, then why am I going to go to the bar? But now I've gotten to know more people, I'll go talk to whoever is up at the bar. Then they ask me if I want anything. Sometimes people make mixed drinks and stuff. They use sodas. So I ask for some of that. Then you can be included. I've heard people say "Even if you're not drinking, just hold it in your hand." You'll look like everyone else.

Is that for the purpose of making your self feel comfortable?

No. I can feel comfortable. Since I have never drunk before, I feel comfortable exactly how I am. Just for appearances, to make everyone else seem—"Maybe this guy's just about as drunk as I am, so maybe I can talk to him."

So do you have different experience when you have a drink of some sort in your hand, like people's behavior to you?

No, I can't say that. It's just drunk people are pretty funny. They're just wild people. It's funny to watch. Funny interactions, funny conversations people have with you. Act as though they want to get to know you extra special that day. For those few minutes that they're bugging you, about this close away from your face. It's something.

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

Here I think it's essential. I almost think that you will not have an event if there is not too much alcohol. A lot of people will not show up or they'll say that they're not having fun. I think that Michelle Richardson was talking about this and her having problems with the fact that a lot of people didn't want to come to some of their Friday events. The biggest event that they had was when a group of comedians came this fall and she said she was surprised that the Lenfest was filled up. I was surprised too. Because Fridays is not an alcohol event, people won't show up. Not to say people won't be there, but there won't be a lot of people there at all. When these people go out to parties and things, a lot of people show up. The purpose of showing up is to drink.

Answer the question in terms of how important to YOU is alcohol?

To me it does not matter. Since I'm not drinking, I could care less.

But it sounds like the prevalence of it has affected you. So it's been important to you in the sense that it changes your experience in various events. Is that right?

I'm not sure.

You were describing the party experience with the drink in the hand. So it's at least affected your experience of that particular party scene. There is so much alcohol there.

Yeah, but that's the usual party scene. Basically everywhere. There is a lot more of it here than I have experienced before. It seems like "party" and "drinking alcohol" go hand in hand, where that might not be the case all the time.

How important to you are drugs at a social event?

They're important if they're there, because I don't want to be there.

So you will avoid it. Have you experienced it being around much that you've needed to avoid?

Yes. A lot of people smoke marijuana. I don't. Once again I have not been exposed to all this stuff. I'm not that type of person. It was another new experience, being around people who did.

You mean you weren't exposed to it in high school before W&L?

Yeah. Nothing at all. I was a sheltered child.

So what about here?

A lot of people smoke marijuana. I'd never seen it and noticed a funny smell. A lot of times you don't want to upset somebody else by saying your little spiel or something. You just sit down and be quiet and you deal with it. I've left and tried to figure out what in the world is this person doing? The summer before my junior year I decided, if it was there and I saw it, I don't want to be there. So I remove myself from situations. I don't have to say anything. I'm sitting down there watching the playoffs last year—I just couldn't believe. People were like "Do you want this?" "NO" Then because these people didn't know me, one guy said "Don't worry about him. He doesn't do anything, but he's not gonna say too much. He's fine."

This was one of your W&L friends that knew you already?

Yeah. A lot of people do something and they'll start getting on your case and yelling and screaming. But that's not me. Your business is your business. How you conduct your life is how you conduct your life. Not too much I can do about it. Don't bring it around my stuff. I had a discussion with this guy. He said "How do you feel about me being around you all the time, because you know I always have this stuff on me?" I said "I don't want you in my car." I don't want to get in trouble. The greatest wake-up call was when a lot of these people got arrested last year. I found out that I was in that very house that these people got arrested for a couple of days before they got arrested. I don't want to be around it at all. It's no need for me to get in trouble for something that you did and I have nothing to do about it.

So how did he respond?

The person understood. I'm not trying to come from a position of me being better than you. This is just how I am. If you accept how I am, then you are going to respect exactly—even before this, I asked these guys I'd been hanging out with for a while why I hadn't seen them in a long time. They said "The places we go, we know that you don't want to be there." I understood that. I think a lot of people know how I am. They don't want to expose me to stuff that they know that I don't want.

Do have you seen the use of marijuana pretty prevalent throughout a wide range of social situations at W&L?

No. Seen a lot of brothers use it. Seen a lot of their friends use it, who aren't exactly brothers or anything like that.

You mean they're not necessarily black?

Yeah. Other than that, no. I don't go and search anything out.

Got it. So it might be there but you might not know it?

Yes.

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?*

I have gone to fraternity parties. A lot of times you have somewhat the same music, somewhat the same crowd. It all ends up being the exact same feeling. That's my experience. I did not rush and I did not want to.

Did you feel at all ostracized or did you feel welcome at parties or at houses when you would drop in? Is there anything that came up in relation to that at all?

Until this year I didn't know anyone well enough for them to say "Come on down. We want to see you." So I went with other people who got invited down. So in that aspect there was no ill will there. The worst experience, however, was last year during Halloween. One of my friends got invited out to Zollman's. We went out there, and I believe—I'm not exactly sure which fraternities it was—not the ones that I usually attended. They were all dressed up somewhat funny, some of these costumes. The worst thing in the world were the people who dressed as black people. Yet another thing that I had never seen before except on some type of metro show, from the 30's or something. I had never seen this before in my life. I couldn't believe it. I was upset for the rest of the evening.

Because you felt this was degrading?

Yeah. Yet another offensive thing. Once again people had no problem whatsoever.

It never occurred to them that it was offensive?

No, not at all. That was on a Tues. or Wed. That Sat. we had gone down to one of these fraternities in this Red Square. We went in there. They had a real nice band. There weren't that many people there. ...said "Look at these 2 people. Look at them." They turned around. These people are also in the same thing the night before.

That was the Sat. before the Halloween party at Zollman's?

Yes. I cannot believe this stuff. The audacity of these people to do this. Couldn't understand it. Don't know why it would be fun or interesting or why you would want to do something like that. That was a hurtful experience.

How did you handle it?

I called my parents and said "Look what these crazy folks are doing again." We're at a backward place. That's all I could do.

Talk it out with somebody outside the situation.

I talked to some guy I was with.

You were with one other black person?

Yeah. Two other black people. I was just mad enough. Kept talking to them the whole time, saying "I can't believe this."

Did you stay there?

Just a little bit. I couldn't stay. My friend is a more calm guy. He was just "Don't worry about anything. All this is doing is showing how stupid these people are." He just talked to me for a while. I was fuming, I was just mad. I couldn't stay there.

Any other experiences like that? You spoke about the flags. Are there any other things you need to comment on?

During Parents Weekend we went up to a fraternity party. You could see the shock on a lot of these parents' faces that we were there. Nobody I heard ...too much. It was a very surprising look. There were already black people there. We came in also and we were talking to them. We were all just standing together and you just see people looking. That type of look—I can't explain. You could tell visually that they were concerned.

Because there were black people at the party?

Yeah. I guess it was something that they didn't expect to see.

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

I think that I'm one of the only people that actually goes to most of these games. I'm telling you the truth—and stays for the whole game—especially the football games. After my freshman year (I didn't go to many then) I sat and watched the game. I enjoy watching football. I enjoy watching basketball. I will sit, I will watch the game, I enjoy the game, cheer for the team, complain about the bad calls. I enjoy it. I don't see athletic participation by other students and I think it's pretty pitiful. Football upsets me more than anything else. I just love football. It upsets me to find people coming in the middle of the first quarter, start of the second quarter, then all leaving at halftime. It doesn't matter what the score is—I mean there were a couple of games this year we were winning, they still left. I couldn't believe. Wow, that's sad. To me the football games are 2 things to plenty of W&L students. They are a fashion show and a chance to get drunk. I like to watch football. I sit around, bunch of my friends, we watch football. That was it.

So that's frustrating?

Yeah. The athletic facilities are fine. I can't tell you the problems I had and to me this was the most hurtful thing—one of two most hurtful things that I experienced here. A lot of things happened last year. Last year there were at least 4 incidents where I or someone I was with was questioned in the gym about “Why are you here? Are you a student here?” Once time, I didn't realize these people were having practice in there, the tennis team was playing basketball. We were thinking, we'd just wait til they were finished, so we could go and play next. Didn't realize everything was happening. W&L security guard came in there and he said “Who are you? What year are you?” I told him I was a junior. He said “I haven't seen you here before.” I come here all the time. Did a whole interview type garbage, asking me these questions. Fine, it happens. No problem. A couple of weeks later the exact same security guard, when we are about to start playing basketball, I'm there, me another guy, a guy who graduated last year and someone he was with—came up to me and asked the same group of questions. The exact same man.

Black or white?

This old white guy. The odd thing is, it became apparent at these later incidences, at the same time this was happening they had a bunch of 13, 14 year old kids down at the other end of the gym not getting anything asked. You could tell they were not college students. You don't need to ask me questions. I know what a younger child looks like. They came in there and kept on asking.

Same guy all 4 times?

No, cause this happened twice. I called home and I was distraught. This is garbage. Why do I have to go through this mess? I am a student here just like anybody else. I was through. I called my house and talked to my mother and father. My father understood I was so upset. He called Mike Young. He talked to him. Mike Young called me the next day and he explained exactly. He told the guy that he was wrong, that if I wanted the guy would apologize to me. I said no. He did a good thing. I like Mike Young very much. This guy—I just didn't feel it necessary to have somebody apologize in my face. I don't think it would be terribly genuine. I just said no, that was over. Security was taken care of. Haven't had a problem with security since. So there are gym personnel who come out of the woodwork—I had never seen people appear like magic before in my life. You let a few black people come into the gym, bam, they're there. “Do you go to school here?” They had the audacity to say “Do you have any ID to show me that you go here?” Like “Wait a minute, I don't have to show you anything. If this is supposed to be my word, you supposed to believe me, why in the world do I have to show you that I'm a student?” I don't have pockets. The man said “I'm going to call security.” I said “Please call security. I want you to bring them down here. Please.”

Was he on staff or a custodian?

I guess he was on staff. They just wear these white polo shirts, walk around. They're not exactly coaches, but they work there.

You're sure they're not custodians?

It was a Sunday afternoon. I don't think custodians are going to be there on Sat. or Sun afternoon. So they work at the gym. I don't know if they open it or something. That happened. Then another incident—we had these kids, they run this program here in the summer—Futures Program. We were going to play basketball.

During the summer?

No, during the school year. They came down for a visit. Went to play basketball. Kids came out. They were shooting around. We were just about to start. Man comes over. "Do yall go to school here?" Me, another black student told them "Yes, we go to school here." These kids are here, explained the whole situation. Well, nobody cleared it with me. This is nonsense. This entire thing happened over and over again. It made me look back on some other stuff that happened before which I really didn't pay attention to. I figured out, it's happened before. I remember when we were freshmen. We would play basketball. Man came in there and interrupted the game, said "Do you all go here?" We go here, these are prospective students that might go here. Or another time "do you go here?" I didn't really put 2 and 2 together, not until that moment when it just kept on happening.

So did you speak to anyone like your father spoke to Mike Young before?

No.

Why did you choose not to?

Because I started getting angry and I didn't accept what these people said as the gospel truth. I wasn't going to let them bother me.

What about speaking to someone above them like Mike Walsh, who like Mike Young might have a different take on it? Maybe do something about it?

No. I didn't exactly know who that man was, who these people were. I just decided to just get angry, pissed off for the rest of the time. You're not going to tell me anything. You're going to bother me and not bother them. No. Leave me alone. If you want to call security, call security. I came here to play basketball. Leave me alone.

Was that the last time it happened?

Yeah, in the gym. But there was another interesting security incident during Feb. break. Needed my car jumped, because like an idiot I left it under the snow all this time. Feb. break, there's no one here. We're behind Chi Psi. Called security, say "could you please come and jump my car?" Me and another black student, standing outside in the cold with my hood up. Security mini-van runs right by there, into the parking lot, goes up the stairs to the back of Chi Psi to ask somebody in there who called. He goes, gets back in the car, turns around, is about to roll out of the parking lot. I'm telling you, we're there with my hood up. There's no one else there. He said "Oh, did yall call for a jump?" Oh, my goodness. We had to stop them. I couldn't believe them. Like who in the world else would have called?

Another white security person?

Yes. It just made me so mad.

What about this year?

Nothing too much. In the summer I thought it was pretty funny. I was here as a summer scholars counselor. One time the wind blew my door shut when I was out of my room. My door was locked. This was right before the rest of the counselors came. They had this WPO (?) thing, then a week in between there was only a couple of us still in the dorm. So I called them up and told them I needed somebody to come and unlock my door. The guy on the phone said "Yeah,

right.” So I sat there and waited for a good hour, waiting from somebody to come unlock my door. That didn’t work. So I went down to this girl’s room, who was still there. I said, “Could you please call these people and tell them?” That worked. They came in about 5 minutes. That was terrible.

Then the other time this summer - I think security just had an attitude problem. Some security members had an attitude problem this summer. They didn’t have to deal with anything racial. They just had a problem. Me and this white guy I was working with, we had to go get ice cream for the summer scholars and needed him to open up the D-Hall. He came over and said “It was a girl that called. None of yall called. We need the girls who called so we can open this up.” Well, she called, because she can’t come over right now. He got a call on his radio and walked away. Didn’t even finish the conversation. He just left. What’s going on?

How did you deal with that?

They had a meeting on one of these mornings, people were complaining, the rest of the counselors were also complaining about security and how most of the ones who worked in the daytime and early evening didn’t want to help anything out. We had a discussion with them and tried to solve it there. I just told the head counselor what happened. She sounded surprised too. We didn’t have any problems after that, but I thought that was ridiculous.

I have to ask you-there’s black security people and white security people. Is there a difference in their behavior? Is this a worthwhile question to ask?

The negative experiences I’ve had have been with white security personnel. I don’t know any security personnel at all.

So it may be meaningful and it may not.

What about PE classes?

I’ve had fun. I took weight lifting, tennis (couldn’t play tennis–still can’t play) But I just thought it was fun. I was there with this other guy who couldn’t play tennis either. It was like whoever could finally serve won. We would fault, double fault—we actually had a point there for a second. It was fun. Two no-skill people playing. I had a ball. I took golf. Golf was interesting. I had never done that. In the gym with those whiffle balls–bam, they look real good. We went out to the driving range and I don’t know the physics of golf, but I couldn’t get the ball to go straight to save my life. I was very lucky I was at the end of the line. The ball just went straight to the right. I said how in the world does that happen. I don’t know what’s going on. I was asking teachers. “You’re hitting it wrong.” I had fun.

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

Limited and With black females here on campus, there is not too much relationship between black females and black males on this campus. We’re friends and all, but to go beyond that is really stressful.

So you are friends. There’s not a wall between you in that sense.

No. They run with their crew, we run with our crew a lot. That’s just natural. But we’re just nice friends, hang out sometimes. It’s fine.

What is it about dating that’s different you think?

When that pool is gone basically, white females that pool is kind of gone. Then you’re left–can you travel?

Why do you think dating doesn’t happen between black women and black men?

Because they have VMI (this is my personal opinion). A lot of them are involved with people over at VMI. These are more glamorous people from what I gather. They feel closer to them than to us. We just go to school with them. Apparently that doesn’t mean too much.

So that's just kind of the way it fell out?

Yeah.

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

Why/why not?

Because I was unhappy. I didn't feel comfortable here. I have not had what I thought the typical college experience was supposed to be.

In what way?

I thought college was supposed to be about classroom things, learning. Also thought college was supposed to be fun, meeting people, building lasting relationships for life. You always hear people say "This is my best friend from college." These people, no matter where they live in the country, they always have a great college experience to fall back on. I didn't have it. I wasn't having fun. It was hard academically; it was hard socially. I said "Why would you put yourself through this?"

When was this?

I thought this my freshman year, my sophomore year. It kind of ended after that, beginning my junior year. Even during my junior year at the beginning. The school work, I had my toughest year last year. Class here was kicking my butt. I hit the wall. I didn't know if I was going to be able to go through it. I spend more time in the library the winter semester than I even spent in my room. I would just get up at 6 or 7 in the morning to read for class, go to class all day, come back, get worn out, then stay up til 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning again. This was a cycle. I got sick last year. I hadn't been sick the entire time I'd been here. I just wore myself out. I didn't know if I wanted to go...

So your reasons for thinking about transferring were lack of social life, not having fun plus academics getting so hard. So what factors influenced you to stay?

The money. I didn't think I could get a better deal anywhere else. My grades here were not enough to get me a scholarship anywhere else.

So you just stuck it out in order to get your education?

Yes.

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

Yes. If you count the summer. I worked for Special Programs as a Summer Scholars counselor and enjoyed myself immensely. Now, I'm a checker in the D-Hall and I get free meals. You don't get paid much, but that works out pretty nice.

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

I think the Summer Scholars did more than anything else. Because I got to meet—the people that I worked with, I knew two of them before. Only very "hello, goodbye" that type of thing. Hadn't had a real conversation with them. But I got to know a lot of people. Everybody there was very different, from each other and from me. They all had their own circles within the school. I had never even seen these people before. I got along with them well. They got along with me well. I talk to them now when I see them. We had fun. That was probably one of the better experiences I have had. Getting a chance to know those people. There are different people here and there are good people here.

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.*

No. The only thing I would be willing to do to bring a student here would be to talk to the

student, to tell them what the experience here, from my perspective, is and let them make their own choice. I would not go to some college fair and represent this school—to have to sit up there. To me, if I were listening to me, I would not go here. Why do it if you know that if that was you, you wouldn't have gone here? If they want to entice someone to go here through some other person who enjoyed it or has a very, very positive spin about the whole thing, then do that. Then when they are really considering accepting it—they do this a lot—they bring these students here and have panel discussion and we sit down and talk to them. They ask questions and we tell them what we have gone through, some of the same things we are saying here. You let them make up their own mind. You just set out—this is what to expect, this may happen, this is what it's going to be like. If you think you're going to be a strong enough person to get through everything, then you come on down and try to make your experience a better experience. I cannot see myself at this point in time in my life saying "Go down to W&L, it's going to be great for you."

Do you participate in those panel discussions?

Yes, I have.

Now we ask some background information:

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

Arlington, Virginia

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

Suburban

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

Suburban

It was a large mix of different people from different backgrounds. We had a fourth of the school was white, a fourth of the school was black, a fourth of the school was Hispanic, a fourth of the school was Asian. Then we had a bunch of people from other parts of the world. It was a public school. That's how south Arlington is. You have a lot of immigrants and a lot of people with English as their second language. That's where I've been through school all my life.

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

I was with my mother, father, brother, sister. A lot of times with my grandmother on my mother's side. We visited there a lot with the rest of my aunts and uncles and cousins over there. More than my father's side of the family.

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 dad has a BA from Virginia State and a Masters from George Washington. My mother got her bachelor's degree in 1988 from George Mason. My brother, he went to school before I did. I'm not sure what he has—he's a graduate. Then there's me.

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

My dad is a police sergeant. My mother works for the CIA.

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

Overall, we're in the middle, but compared to students here I think we're lower. These are not corporate type jobs that many other students have. I'm surprised to learn that a lot of people's parents are teachers. But compared to everybody else it's kind of the lower end of the middle.

What you're saying is that your impression is that people here are higher income, but now you're beginning to realize that a lot of people are more towards the middle.

How do you think this has affected your experience?

I don't think I probably know too many rich people around here. I think I tend to get along with people who have somewhat similar social background, economic background, at least by default. Maybe not on purpose but it probably seems that way.

How has that difference affected your experience?

It hasn't affected it positively or negatively.

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?*

First I think of myself as black, next think I think of myself as a black man because I think those are the things that come up first in terms of where you stand. There's no escaping that you're black. I think the experience for a black man is different than it is for a black woman.

In what way?

I think it may be a little bit harder because we do not have a social outlet like I believe that the black women have.

Because of VMI. So it's harder because there's not that other place to have a life. Interesting.

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.*

In some ways black students are very homogeneous, in other ways they are not. In racial identification I don't think blacks are very homogeneous because I believe that some people have convinced themselves—they don't wear they are black on their sleeves. They kind of forget or don't pay attention to it at much. It's not an issue with them. They have been able to assimilate. For a majority of black students, male and female, that's not possible.

So there's some people in terms of racial identification that are not the same. What about these others?

Political perspective—I think it's pretty homogeneous. People kind of believe in the same things in varying degrees, but basically similar. Social class position—that's also pretty homogeneous because a lot of students here come from the same area. A lot of them come from D.C. metropolitan area. Many more come in from Maryland, from Virginia. Some people come from New York also. Pretty much when they get black dudes, they're getting them from the same geographical area. They're not pulling someone out from way out for the majority.

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.*

I think a lot of blacks and whites are very different here just by the outlook. Many students here seem to be having the time of their lives. I don't find that same attitude toward many blacks.

You mean within the black students, they're not having that happy a time?

Yeah. I don't find also that the socio-economic status, many white students have to worry about that as much as many black students. Academically it seems like every time you talk to white students versus black students, the white seem to have an easier time. Just sounds like they're getting the best grades in the world. I'm trying to figure out where the bad grades are coming from. I know I'm not doing great. I can't be the dumbest person in class, please. Cause everybody I talked to (white people) get B's and A's all the time. Somebody ask "Did you get a

C?” “No, I haven’t ever got a C here.” Goodness, I struggle for a C and I know some of the black students I talk to, getting a C is a happy event. Those are the biggest differences I see. A lot of people who work in the D-Hall, they’re pretty similar. I guess they’re coming from the same type background. They really seem like they have to work. Seem to come from a working class background. That’s why it’s easy to get along.

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

I believe it is inadequate. I do not know how you can convince black students to come here beyond saying “Here is money to come here.” I don’t know how this entices anyone to be their choice of university. I don’t know if there’s anything this university can do to do that without changing what this university is.

In what sense?

Of this being the haven for white people. Of being the last refuge for anyone else who is different. A lot of people seem to have the same opinions about things. They have the same conservative views about things. It seems this is the atmosphere this is fostering. It grows. It’s really accepted.

Does that come from the students or from the faculty and administration?

I think it come from #1 the tradition, #2 the faculty. A lot of faculty members are very conservative. They hold these same views. They may not express them explicitly but you can get it. You go up to someone’s office and you see what they have plastered all over their office.

Like what?

I was in Prof. Rush’s office. He has “Rush is right.” All this—

So he’s overtly conservative?

Yeah, you can tell and deal with it.

We’re talking about the university and whether black students should come here and you’re saying that it’s an environment that’s really entrenched.

The professors, the students are third in that line. The students come here and they have their minds made up. This school does not challenge anywhere. You’re funneled along. It all works out. This is the way to believe.

The conservative traditional?

Yeah.

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

I believe it’s very inadequate. That goes along the same lines. I don’t know how you would convince a black professor to teach. I had this test with the visiting professor, Prof. Van Thomas. I took one of his classes. I was telling him I know it’s bad for a student, but probably for a professor it might be on the same equal plane because you don’t have that many. You have one here to begin with and then it would be difficult to stay. If you know from your experience that you’re hearing all these black students not having positive experiences. Then the only person you have to talk to that might share in your experience as a faculty member is just one other person.

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

That’s also inadequate. There were two, now there is one.

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

No.

If not, why not?

I think the black students try. Whoever makes their choices out of that, makes their choices.

There's no need to try to force them to be where they don't want to be. You end up knowing who shows up for this, who shows up for that. Who wants to be included.

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

Yes, it has. I have done many things there. When I first got here, it was the place where I got to meet the older people, the 2 upper class student and 2 law students who were here. They had parties which I went to a couple of times. I go to these people's rooms. I talk to them, chat. People there are friends. I've cooked there, watched television there.

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

That has not played a very large part of my life here at W&L. I'm in the MSA. I didn't even consider going to one of the meetings until last year. It didn't seem as if it did too much for me. I talked to John Brandon (?) the year before I had a class with him. He knew what he wanted to do. Interesting things. They were a larger ... that came in. They were very excited. I was getting along with them. I liked John. I went to meetings, did certain activities. It became a better group because we did something. This year it's back to the same thing. Why do I need to be involved?

Because what's happening isn't particularly interesting or useful to you?

Yes.

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?*

I certainly do.

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

In the classes where the topic was not having anything to do with blacks, some of the classes, literature classes had works by ...Douglas and this other lady, I can't remember her name. That was done very well. If the class had nothing to do with anybody black, it really wasn't mentioned. It was inadequate.

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

The climate is fine for me as a black student. I have not felt singled out. I haven't felt anybody taking exception. Nothing negative happened because I was black. Nothing especially positive was happening because I was black.

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

I would not know because I haven't had much contact with it.

Did you feel a lack of something that could have offered something to you? Is there anything you would like to suggest? How can the role of this Office be improved?

The most imp. thing is having someone available for the students to talk to. Regardless which black student it is, there's going to be a time when they are here when they will be frustrated.

They need somebody to talk to.. To let somebody know I've been here before.

So you think the office maybe should organize something where older black students are available to younger black students?

Sometimes that works itself out by itself just for the simple fact that - it has for me - when I got here there were older people, 2 years older. They had already done some things. I got a chance to talk to them. Now that I am where I am for the past couple of years, I've gotten a chance to talk to freshmen that came in. The role switches. Once my class leaves, they do the same thing. I don't know how far that goes. I don't know how the females are. I haven't had too many diff. discussions with females on a large scale like I have with a lot of guys. I don't know how that's working out on their end and who's going to counsel them. The females were not as together as

the males were when I got here. I don't know if anybody helped them along or if they were just the support group for each other.

Were you aware that the Office of the Dean of Minority Students is available for that?

Not really.

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.)*

It would have to be other black students, in particular black males that I talk to. When I get frustrated, they understand where you're coming from. Everything's going to be alright in the end. This is happening in one on one discussions. "I don't know how to deal with this problem." Then this person would say "Everything turns out."

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

I would say a strong 90% would be black. Not ... international. I guess the rest would be white.

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).*

Who was responsible for that behavior?

No, only what was already described with security and gym personnel.

Leaving aside behavior, do you sense racial tensions on campus beyond what exists in the larger society? No, but I think it's much more concentrated here. This is a very small community. It's all out in the open. No one really seems to have a problem with it. Everybody knows it's there, but nothing's done.

Everybody, meaning every black student?

I think everyone, everyone, all students, all administrators. They know racial tension is there. I guess the school is very fortunate that they don't have a lot of people more angry and more up front about a lot of thing. It could really get terrible. I think things are kept on a level where no one says something to somebody personally. I think it's very general. If there is any conflict, I guess you may have your feeling hurt or something, it's just going to snap. A lot of things that happen to maybe not one or two people, but it happens. It's just all that it is to be here.

Beyond the things that you said about flags and fraternity party costumes.

I don't think anyone has the audacity to walk down the street and call you a nigger or anything like that. I think that would really set a whole lot of things off.

If so, how do you think such tensions could be eased within W&L?

I don't think it could happen. I think that if the white folks that associated with black people, they do so. There are no problems. Everyone gets along. That eases tensions. Other than that, the people are going to have to hold their attitudes. Everybody holding some forum or meeting, let's hold hands. That's not going to work

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 do not know. I have not had experience with that.

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

My guess is no. My personal opinion is that is somebody black were to do something questionable, that would speed their way out of here, whether it be by the Executive Com. or not. I just think that person would say “Why do I want to bother going through this entire process when I probably do not like it here anyway? Might as well leave.” That does not answer this question whatsoever.

No, but it's an interesting response. So what if they went through the honors process, do you think they would be treated fairly?

I don't think so. From what the board is made up of, I don't see any minority representations that would make me say maybe—maybe it's not even having a black person up there, cause that might not do anything either. But having a voice of reason or something that says “we can consider this or that.”

So your feeling about the people who make up the judicial system for the honor system, you don't trust their intuition about these things.

Yes.

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.*

The one I know best about is the radio, because I have been on the radio—a couple of years. I think it offers a great opportunity for people to get a chance to play what they want to hear. The only problem there was was that you have to bring a lot of your own music. Their collection was a little bit questionable. I hadn't heard of these people. I wasn't about to play it on my show. They had the R&B rap section, but just within that section I didn't like some of the stuff they had.. That's just personal. The papers, I've seen black students write papers. I guess if you're a journalism major, that's your thing, I see blacks participate in the J school.

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

The papers themselves are evenhanded. I do believe the editorials get the real opinion, I don't know if it's the majority, but this is my sense of what the majority of the people believe. The papers come down with racist, sexist, homophobic comments time and time again. If you question those things, the response is “Why do you go to school here when you know this is what it is about?”

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.*

The biggest difference is just dealing with the fact that black students are black in a very southern conservative university. Whites just don't have to deal with it. That's the biggest difference that they have to go through. Another thing that I touched on, I don't know if this is a big difference between black students, but I think the public school student who went to a public school, just a regular public school. I'm not talking about a poor public school. I just went to a regular old public school. It wasn't one of these things in the richest neighborhood where you get the money from the community. If you come from a regular old public school, I do think you're at a disadvantage with the people who came from a private school.

And did you bring this up in this context because it's your impression that there are a lot of white people who went to more privileged schools?

Yes.

- *47. Sex Male
- *48. Age? 21
- *49. Year in college? Senior
- *50. Cumulative grade point average [as of Fall 1996]? 2.607
- *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?
No.