

Interviewee: Kate Rafey
Interviewer: Trevor Delp and Joshua White
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Abstract: Kate Rafey was born in 1986, in Swampscott, Massachusetts. Moving to the city of Worcester around 2004, Kate, then eighteen years old, would go on to attend Clark University, where she would focus her studies on English and Theatre Art until her graduation in 2009. During her time at Clark, and in the years immediately following her graduation, Kate would devote herself to travel and work. During her first semester away at college, Kate would join a study abroad program in England and Luxembourg. After graduation, Kate moved around a lot, living in Easton, Quincy, and Boston, Massachusetts, before finally returning to the Main South area of Worcester with her fiancé in 2013. Today, she describes the move as a positive one. Having already lived in the Main South area as a student in the early 2000s, Kate states that she feels more a part of the community. She has found her “family” in Worcester, stating, “I think the world of the city. There is a lot to do and see.” In this interview, Kate discusses her life, concentrating primarily on her time directly prior to and after her graduation, and the work she now does as director of development at Music Worcester. She discusses some of the struggles she has encountered but also the ultimate joy her work has brought, not only to her own life but, she hopes, to the city of Worcester too. She emphasizes her wish to see her department continue to gain more attention in the area, feeling that it could do a lot of good. She also talks about the city itself, and the community as a whole. She believes that Worcester really has a lot to offer, but not a lot of people realize that and therefore the city often gets pushed aside, and she hopes in the future this will no longer be the case.

JW: What is your full name including both maiden name and married name if applicable?

KR: Kate Olivia Rafey.

JW: When were you born?

KR: June 26, 1986.

JW: Have you ever been married?

KR: No.

JW: Do you have any children?

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KR: No.

JW: What cultural, ethnic, excuse me, ethnicities do you identify with, family background?

KR: Caucasian [laughs] pretty much what we are [laughs].

TD: Any section of the world in particular?

KR: Mostly probably like Russia, Poland, Latvia, Eastern-European Jew [laughs].

JW: Could you tell us about your parents?

KR: Both born in raised in Swampscott [Massachusetts] which is also where I am from. My father retired maybe about 10 years ago, he had his own business, he was a headhunter for semiconductor engineers and my mom tried to be an actress in New York City [New York] for a while and then came back home and met my dad. My dad was married before he met my mom and has two kids from a previous marriage.

JW: Were either one of them from the area or where were they from?

KR: They were. We were all Swampscott [Massachusetts], born and raised [laugh] yeah.

JW: So, Swampscott obviously, have you ever lived anywhere else besides Swampscott and Worcester [Massachusetts]?

KR: I did a study abroad program first semester in college in England and then after college I moved to Easton [Massachusetts] and worked at Stonehill College for two years and the second year I lived in Quincy [Massachusetts] for that and then I lived in western Massachusetts. I pretty much lived all over Mass and then I lived in Boston [Massachusetts] for two years.

TD: When you went to England, where did you go and what did you study?

KR: So I studied at Clark University, I studied English and Theatre Arts and I had a semester internship program and worked in a children's theatre.

TD: And when you went to Easton, what were you doing there?

KR: I did Americorps for two years and was at Stonehill College working in their community engagement office.

JW: Just going to skip over the neighborhood since we have talked about where you are from.

KR: Yeah, sure

JW: If you were born in Worcester when did you arrive - we understand you are not born there but when did you arrive? You said college around that time.

KR: Yup, so 2004-2009, I may have written 2008 on something, because Clark has a fifth year free master's program, so I did that and then that ended in 2009 and then I came back and was working here in 2013 and then moved in probably like June of 2014 I was commuting back and forth from Boston to Worcester for a short time.

JW: About how old were you?

KR: When I first moved here?

JW: Yes

KR: 18

JW: 18?

KR: [Pause] Yeah

JW: [Pause] Where... Where in the city did you live, did you live on campus? or did you live outside, like around the city with friends?

KR: Yeah, so I've always lived in the Main South area, so first it was living on campus and then off campus apartments, but still really close to Clark's campus and then when I moved back and relocated in 2014 I moved back to Main South.

JW: What..What was that like living off campus? Was that like your initial kind of what you wanted to do - did you have friends here or anything like that?

KR: [Pause] Initially I lived with friends who were still doing their master's as well or finishing up school and it did not feel much different from living in the dorms. Just because it was so close to campus and I had lived in campus style apartments anyways so it just kind of felt like I was already still on campus, but then when I moved back even though it was the same neighborhood it felt pretty different. It felt like I was living in a community as opposed to a dorm space. I am trying to think what else about that. But it still felt like home, like I do not know what it would be like to live anywhere else in Worcester, I feel really tied to Main South [laughs].

TD: And so you still live there now?

KR: Yeah, same apartment that I moved into in 2014 so we have been there over two years now.

TD: Perfect.

JW: And so do - there is no family in the area to this day or have you had any family that have [pause] come here or?

KR: I have a found family if that makes sense, so, not like related family, but friends that are practically family, yeah, and they also live in the area.

JW: And so did you meet them at school or?

KR: My senior year of college, yeah.

JW: [pause] And you, do you live in the city right now?

KR: Yeah

JW: Where about?

KR: Yeah, Hollywood St. which is in Main South.

JW: Okay, alright.

TD: [pause] What challenges do you think the city faces, like as Worcester [Massachusetts]?

KR: It has got a reputation that I do not think it deserves.

TD: Okay.

KR: That is a huge part of why I still live here and why I think a lot of people in the arts, at least are still trying to show that Worcester has so much to give but people think that especially if you do not live in Worcester you do not know that it has got so much going on and I feel like when people are not from the area and they say like, "Oh where are you from?" and I say, "Oh I am from Worcester." They do not understand why I would want to live here, but there is a lot of really good food, there is a lot to do, [pause] yeah I think the world of the city.

JW: Now when you say reputation, would you say it has a bad reputation as someplace that is maybe boring or dangerous, I mean, I live in the area myself and just Main Street alone, especially farther down in the other direction it gets, it gets to be a little bit shadier so what would you say the reputation is more?

KR: I think that there is a reputation of danger which I think is [pause] well where I live unwarranted, I don't know about other parts of the city, but I think where I live is a safe place to

live. I think maybe boring is also—I think people do not realize that there is lots to do here. They do not realize the best food in the whole world is in this city, I do not know why anyone would go to Boston to eat when they could just like go to Worcester to eat. There are movie theaters, there are a lot of places to shop, there is a lot of local food and local vendors and artists and there is like a million theaters. We work in all the venues in Worcester I do not know if any at Assumption but we work at Holy Cross, we work at Hanover [Theater], we work obviously at Mechanics Hall so there is a lot to do and see.

TD: Is there anything that you would want to change about the city? Kind of a broad question.

JW: Maybe like how you-how people see it?

KR: Yeah [pause] I think people just immediately write it off, maybe, because we are so close to Boston and we are so close to Western Massachusetts where there is also lots going on and we are not far from Providence too. So maybe some type of touristy changes or marketing changes in that way for the city might be nice. [Pause] [Softly] What else would I change? Maybe a little bit—I do not know much about politics, I should not speak about politics but I know pretty much everyone I voted for last November was not elected.. so [laughs]. Some new ideas, some new faces I think would be nice.

JW: Have you seen over time—has it's reputation changed at all, I mean, what you guys do here as what you has what you started out thinking it was and then has it changed even a little bit or?

KR: Yeah. I think there is a lot more, well since I was in college there's a lot more restaurants. I feel like I know more at least about the arts community there may have been. I know Music Worcester has been around a very long time so I know that, I just did not personally know about it, so there might have been this stuff happening before I just do not know if it was because I was so isolated in school and did not get out much, or off campus that much that may have something to do with it, but there was an article in the *Boston Globe*, like maybe three months ago at this point, about how everyone should—Worcester is apparently up and coming and there's so many great restaurants and I put it on Facebook and was like, "What have I been saying for years!" So I think more people are realizing maybe, and it is cheaper to live in than Boston and there is a college life. I do not know what you guys do but there is a lot to do in the city if you're ...

JW: Yeah, yeah there are a lot of colleges and you know it is the second largest city in Massachusetts.

KR: Yeah and maybe even in New England.

TD: Believe it or not... Are there any distinct characteristics you think that make up Worcester? [Pauses] Like any core pieces I guess.

KR: I know that the Turtle Boy Statue is an icon, I think there is a lot of great diners that's something that I feel like—think of as a symbol to a certain extent, [pauses] different festivals like the Start on the Street Festival, Start at the Station, I actually do not know if that is still going on, different ways the community comes together. Like there is the Italian Festival recently, I think that was over the summer maybe like August.

JW: As far as community or society how would you say women-what is their general role in Worcester [Massachusetts] like how do you think their experiences are?

KR: [Pauses] I guess I can only speak for myself, I think that mostly maybe—I think that there is—I do not see it as a Worcester issue. I feel like it is probably everywhere that women have a certain—raised or living with certain circumstances. I think that in some of the people I have met in the community who are prominent and like white and male and older maybe see other people who are white and male and older easier than they see or acknowledge people who, I mean I'm 30 years old but I look like I'm 18 years old and so [laughs] so I think that that is a problem for me in terms of being taken seriously sometimes. I think that there's an issue of not seeing women in the workplace or in the community as relevant in terms of opinion as much. I was thinking about the election last year there were not as many women running so I do not know how much representation there is. Although there is a woman superintendent in Worcester and that is really exciting and she is like a rock star. So you know there is that kind of element too that there are really strong women in the community. Tina Zlody who works at Clark now and runs Start on the Street, you know, she is really strong example of a strong women in Worcester who is known and has an interesting backstory and is from here, I think her mother was a professor at Holy Cross or something. Yeah I do not see a lot of organizations or people representing women maybe the way that I would like. There is the Women in Development [pauses] Organization I guess you could say, gathering, and they—I do development work. I am a fundraiser and I am not necessarily as excited for those meetings as I want to be, some of it is leadership, some of it is programming, so I would love to see more women focused activities, I know there was some kind of event last year that I went to, I did not get to stay for very long because I had some meetings, but it was at the DCU Center and it was like, "Women"—I do not remember, but it was really cool and there were different breakout sessions for women to attend, there were different speakers not from the area who came in and were talking about just general law of attraction, trying to take care of yourself. Stuff like that.

TD: And so would you want to see more of that-that kind of women development in Worcester?

KR: If it was run in a way that I think made an impact, yes. I am still trying to figure out what the purpose or how Women in Development can be run in a more effective way and in a way that is actually going to make everyone in the community stronger at fundraising. I think fundraising is a field that is very women dominated for whatever reason. I guess I would like to see more but I do not know how I would like to see it function. And we talk a lot in this office about not women, but how there are just so many nonprofits now. Like the Worcester Chorus for example, they have been around for over 100 years, they are great, we support them. I guess years and

years ago, maybe even like 50, 60 years ago there was a fight between someone in the Worcester Chorus and so they left and like created their own chorus and I think that is Master Singers and you know what? I mean there are all these little pop-ups and we all do such similar work and like even next door there is Worcester Chamber Music Society and they are great but we bring chamber music in too, so it is like all these little offshoots and we are all fighting for programming and really similar stuff and so there is less money to go around in the pot. And so I would not want to see an organization for women just to have an organization for women, I would want it to have a mission that I would care about or believe in.

JW: Something that would not take away from the things that are already there.

KR: Yeah, exactly.

JW: So getting back to education, we have already gone over attending schools, you said England, Clark in Worcester [Massachusetts]. As far as after graduation what was your formal education like, what got you into Worcester Music?

KR: Yeah, so I was working at Clark for two and a half years, as a fundraiser for their annual fund and just was looking for something new and I had an arts background. It kind of happened on the fundraising path just because I needed a job and so it was like out of Maslow's Hierarchy. Just needed to take care of those basic things so I needed a job. So then I decided that I liked fundraising, but that I missed the arts and then this opportunity sort of presented itself from a professor that I had stayed in touch with from Clark that was on the board here and so she contacted me. So does that answer your question? I feel like I did not answer your question. [laughs]

JW: Kind of-just what got you interested in just music itself when you were going to school or before.

KR: Oh, okay so-

JW: Had you always had like an interest or?

KR: Yeah! So not specifically in the music that we do here. I do not know if you did any research ahead of time, but we are the premier presenter of music in central Massachusetts of all kinds of genres. We had Patty LuPone who is a Broadway star two weeks ago, we have Joshua Bell who is a like a rock star violinist, coming in three weeks I guess and so we bring in these classical music, jazz musicians to come and perform at different various stages in Worcester. And that is the mission that has been the mission for years. It started off as the Worcester Music Festival in 1858 which was just like one week in the summer and everyone would put on their Sunday best overnight and come and then it kind of I do not want to say it ended, but just got combined with some other things and now it is Music Worcester. Anyway, so I grew up, my mother, I think I said was an actress, and so she got me into musical theatre and so my whole life

I have been really into theatre and musicals and so that is kind of how some stuff began and then I would do my own research on music, I am engaged to a musician who is a Gypsy jazz guitarist, so I think that music has always been a part of my life. When I was living in London [England] I did not really travel as much as other people did. I did not go to Spain or take the weekend trips to Ireland. I would just spend my time in theatre or not even theatre, just seeing different artists perform.

JW: So before coming to Worcester did you have any other kind of jobs with this kind of background or as far as a first job, what kind of got your foot in the door?

KR: With music, I was a stage manager all five years of college, so that was kind of my in for working backstage I guess. I worked for an off Broadway theatre company. I lived—I forgot to mention I lived in New York for six weeks one summer and worked for an off Broadway theatre company—not necessarily music, that was a straight play. And then kind of was doing community work, I got really into—I was coming out of college right when Obama was elected so thinking about how can I help my country and my world and so that is why I went into Americorps and did not do as much theatre then. And then kind of got off track doing some other community work and worked at a college working with students, so I was sort of steering away I guess from the arts aspect of my life and that is why when I heard about this job it was so enticing to me because I knew I could kind of return to that a little bit.

JW: So you heard from that—from your professor you said at school.

KR: Yes, she was a Shakespeare professor, she is probably the person that actually got me involved with this, yeah I have a feeling, she is retired now but she is, Virginia Vaughan, she is fantastic. And so she would have me—I was very involved and she could remember that from college that I was just very involved with the Shakespeare classes and that I actually—she had some kind of book that she was publishing and she needed to—she had a conference put together for it, an international conference in Luxembourg, because Clark has a center in Luxembourg. And so yeah it is pretty cool.

JW: Wow that is pretty fancy,

KR: Yeah! Someone left money many, many years ago. It's like a summer four-week program where you can take one class and travel and live in Luxembourg. And I did not do that program, but I did do this three-day conference. She asked me to be the conference [assistant] that came along for the trip. So I did not really get to do much, just took a lot of notes [laughs]. But the food, I remember the food in Luxembourg being very good.

JW: So as far as your work here did you start off with this job or did you start off with an entry level job and work your way up to where you are now?

KR: It was not that linear I guess. So I graduated did my master's then did two years of Americorps then went and worked in western Massachusetts working with students for a year, then moved to Boston and worked for a domestic violence shelter for a year and then got the job at Clark which was entry level, annual fund, fundraising.

JW: Okay, and so what do you do now? As far as what does your job entail, what kind of like—what is your position? What is your role?

KR: Yes, so I am director of development, and so that means that I oversee anything with fundraising. So I write annual appeal letters, I do all the email solicitations, I meet with donors and ask them for money, I do all of our database inputting of grants or any donations that come in, I plan events that raise money, or thank donors like donor thank you dinners. I help with smaller campaigns that are related to annual fund like I was just on the phone earlier with someone and we're trying to have them raise money to have the Messiah, recorded by Charter TV, and Messiah with the Handel's Messiah, I do not know if you are familiar with it, it is this piece of music that has been around for many years and the Worcester Chorus has been performing it in Mechanic Hall for many, many years and so we want to record that and that is going to cost us. So just trying to raise—that's obviously not, that is a small portion of what our normal budget is for fundraising so like working on these little campaigns. I also oversee our volunteers during our concerts, so making sure that they are ushering and helping people and trained well, I am working on that for next week. If either of you are looking for volunteer opportunities, let me know! Yeah, that kind of stuff.

JW: So, as far as its meaning to you, you obviously get like a, how do I put it...

TD: Fulfillment?

JW: Yeah better fulfillment from its volunteer work, you were talking earlier about how you felt like Worcester sometimes gets a bad reputation and you know it needs to be you know encouraged and one of the things you can work to kind of spread the word kind of is through the arts so how has it meant to you like that? Has it been rewarding?

KR: Yes, so my second day here which was in March because I have not been here all that long, I was the—the Jerusalem City Orchestra came and performed and that was just like absolutely amazing, it was like I cannot believe I get to work for a place that just puts these—just for the heck of it And we brought Chick Corea and Bella Fleck here and we bring ballets and it has been fun for me because I get to see a lot of the art scene that comes through and I get to be a part of things a little bit more in the community that I was not otherwise a part of. I thought I was because Clark is—maybe Assumption does this too, but I feel Clark really strives to be like, “We are in the community we do not have gates, we are connected,” but I feel a little more connected now that I do not work there. I am just learning about other non-profits in the area and it is just very rewarding for me because I did not realize how much music was missing from my life too

even if it was not the same kind of music that I had been used to. That just means that someone is here [laughs].

TD: Earlier you talked a little bit about how with all the new non-profits kind of popping up over Worcester it is definitely more competitive for funding, has that been frustrating being the head of fundraising?

KR: It totally is. Yeah and the thing is everyone deserves, you know that is the problem, that we all deserve it [laughs]. I do not know the extent because I have only been here, I do not know—I cannot do math, but it is probably about eight or nine months at this point so I have not seen the extent to which it is going to be an issue. But I still know that we are getting—that we still have a lot of support in terms of foundations and individual contributions. We received—this made news in Boston so maybe you guys heard about it too, but the McDonough Foundation, if that sounds familiar, if you are familiar with the art museum at all so there are about five to ten organizations that received a substantial amount of money from the McDonough Foundation, this woman, who has been connected to Worcester for many many many years, her family started Flexcon in Spencer [Massachusetts] and so she is just of an age where she might pass within the next ten years, I do not know, so she started to give away her wealth, and so we were one of the recipients that received that—the [Worcester] Art Museum was, maybe the Ecotarium, Tower Hill definitely was, but we received DCCL dollars for our endowment for that. So and that is just us, other people probably received more, so even though we are small and a lot of people do not know about us, the key people know about us and still have us on their list. So that has been—we are very tapped into old Worcester I would say.

JW: And as far as just competing has it been kind of difficult, like stressful at all for you personally or?

KR: I do not know if I worry so much about the competition in fact I do not think about it all that often. I think more like how am I going to write this grant that is going to be—that is going to do us justice, that is going to help us. Most of the time when you write grants, you do not get anything [laughs], especially if it is a new grant, but we know that the Worcester Arts Council is going to give us something. We do not know what, but we do know that we will get something from them.

JW: So it is kind of like a maybe but hopefully, but..

KR: Right and then there are the organizations that just have us down and we know we are going to get a certain amount from them every year and then there is the Music Drive is us which is Ernie Boch's foundation, that is one of the newer places for us, it is a new place so maybe we will get it, maybe we will not. You apply anyway just so they hear your name.

JW: Anything to kind of, you know, put yourselves out there hopefully you will get an answer back.

KR: Yeah, and even if it is no then you apply next year and see what happens.

JW: What do you think have been the pros and cons, just based on your career versus maybe not social life but just free time I guess maybe, have there been any effects, do you find yourself working here a lot or?

KR: [Pauses] So say more about what you mean?

JW: So you said when you went to England and also Luxembourg you were doing a lot of work you were not really able to catch the sites. So on a personal level, you know, you enjoy the work but has there any, has there been any—a point where maybe you wished you had more free time or?

KR: So this job I would say is probably the best work-life balance job I have ever had. I work the amount of hours I am supposed to work and then I go home! [Laughs] I kind of have a very outside life of work. I am also a part-time yoga instructor so in my spare time I am very busy, but it is good busy. It is like thinking about balance and thinking about taking care of yourself [laughs] and health and benefits and stuff like that.

JW: So no regrets?

KR: No regrets, no.

TD: Do you do that in Worcester?

KR: Yes

TD: Oh awesome.

KR: Well I take classes in Worcester I do not actually teach at the moment in a studio in Worcester. I do that in the surrounding area Grafton [Massachusetts] and Clinton [Massachusetts].

TD: Okay. And this is kind of parlaying into what you just talked about but do you feel-so you do not have children?

KR: No.

TD: Engaged you said?

KR: Yes.

TD: A lot of what we have talked about in class is kind of like, yourself as a perfect example, women breaking out of that cliché, staying at home mold and having a full-time job, do you know what I mean? Being the full-time breadwinner for the family so to speak. Have you found that to be a struggle in a relationship? Have you been able to balance it with your partner, if you could explain a little there about what you think.

KR: I think we both, we both, do not want, have not thought about kids. It is not a thing we are interested in really. He is always traveling for work and I just am too busy and not interested really I guess [laughs]. So I do not know if it has necessarily been a challenge because it is not even something that we talk about, I would say finding things like I just decided today, I've been here a certain amount of time, I have not taken any vacation days, [laughs] so I just realized maybe I should think about that. So, putting that into the forefront I think is important to do and to consider and I guess making time to travel, making time to see the person you are with, that can be more challenging I think for us.

TD: And if your-with your fiancé traveling a lot, have you found that to be challenging to then kind of [pauses] balance house upkeep with your work, you know all of the little things that add up, just balancing those with work and the yoga and everything else?

KR: Oh totally. Our house is a mess [laughing].

JW: How did you guys meet? Well first off congratulations.

KR: Oh thank you. It was a while ago, but we met in Boston. We lived on the same block, so yeah.

JW: Does he do like similar work?

KR: Well no, he is like full time musician, on the road, teaching lessons or being in Boston or yeah that kind of thing, or promoting himself, weddings, a lot of weddings, yeah.

JW: So [laughs] we spoke of this a little bit earlier just when you were talking about things going on around Worcester, would you consider yourself active politically, I know you said during the last election you noticed that there were not as many women running and you know some of the people that you did vote for did not get elected so do you try to get as involved as you can in politics?

KR: No, not even a little bit. [laughs]

JW: Not a little bit? [laughs]

KR: I think part of—actually part of my yoga training has taught me that if anything is going to be too much of a stressor—like I try to not even think about the election right now, I try not to, I

know I sound ignorant. I just read one little article in the morning that gives me the highlights and then kind of just stay away from politics I guess, it would have to be a really big reason that I would get involved.

JW: As far as religion you said earlier, you are Jewish?

KR: Yes.

JW: Russian Jewish.. Is that both sides of the family?

KR: Yes. Yes.

JW: Both Sides.

TD: This is a little broader out of the sense of those questions we have just asked but, throughout your time, you can say in just Worcester if you want, were even-yeah actually since Clark were there any decisions you regretted making, are there any you wish you pursued further, just that kind of thing?

KR: I wish that I had auditioned for the improv troop at Clark my freshman year and I never did.

JW: What is that?

KR: The PeePodSquad which was-it is what they are called [laughs], like improvisation, theater stuff where they get up and they—it is kind of like Whose Line is it Anyway if that show is not too old for you [laughing].

TD: I know what you are talking about.

KR: Okay cool, I wish I had done that and I did not do that.

JW: Why did you not do it?

KR: I was totally—there was a girl on my floor who said she was going to audition and she totally freaked me out and she did, she got in and now she's doing theatre full time now, so good for her I wish I had not been such a [____?]

JW: The next set is about health, you are very young, 30 you said?

KR: Yes

JW: So obviously health is not really like an issue, it has not really impacted your life?

KR: Actually, I have an autoimmune disease and that is strongly impacted my life the past six years or so I suppose, so I do not travel as much for that reason. It is why I do yoga a lot because I try to destress and that keeps me healthier, and that has absolutely impacted my life.

TD: Would you feel comfortable saying when you became aware you had this autoimmune disease?

KR: 2010

TD: Okay and when you found that out is that-when did you start doing the yoga, around that time?

KR: So on a full-time basis just last year. But on a part time basis I have been working out steadily for like three or four years because it helps.

TD: And so when you found out about this was there any life changing decisions you made at that moment? Was it like schedule changing? Routine changing?

KR: Eating habits, dietary restrictions, that sort of thing has definitely been a huge part.

JW: And the yoga too.

KR: Yeah the yoga helps a lot.

JW: As far as in Worcester or surrounding areas what have your experiences been like with finding health care and you know health-how do I put this-help me out here, medical treatment I guess maybe? Is it like that?

KR Yeah, I have not had any issues. So my brother in law—my sister lives in Wayland [Massachusetts] if you are not familiar it is by Framingham. And so her husband he works at UMASS Medical in Worcester [Massachusetts] so he commutes and so he's helped me find some doctors, and basically I have never had an issue. I have had the same health insurance I have had when I was at Clark and it has been fine, but I think that not having health insurance would be an issue then I think that would be a lot of trouble.

JW: As far as your engagement, how has, how has that maybe affected your relationship or was that already kind of known?

KR It was known.

JW: There was no...

KR Yes

TD: Just kind of an odd question especially since you do not have children but like whose health are you responsible for besides your own? Like are either of your parents still around? Are you helping take care of them? Your fiance's parents? Like that kind of thing.

KR Sure, well his parents live in Wisconsin so we do not really—they visit fairly often because his sister is also out here. My parents I do not really—I am not really responsible for their health, they are, despite being in their 60's and 70's are in pretty good shape except my dad has some back issues so I have helped with like getting him when he goes for surgeries, help with some driving. We have a cat, I am responsible for her health, making sure that she is well fed and has fresh water and that kind of thing [laughs].

JW: First pet or?

KR Since I was a kid yeah. [laughs]

TD: Yeah and so, is there anything you wanted to tell us when we came in?

JW: Anything specifically besides..

TD: We have a few more but just like to give you some time to flush out anything you wanted to?

KR Well, umm, so the audience for these recordings or is there an audience for these recordings?

JW: So basically what it is, is when it gets sent to the Radcliffe Institute over at Harvard University[Massachusetts] it goes onto a kind of bigger broader database and they store it and catalogue it and it is kind of put there for people to reference for projects, for research, so it goes on and it—I think it has been going on since the 1990's I think so...

KR That's awesome

JW: It is quite wide-spread, there is a lot of people so...

KR Given that I guess I do not have any... sorry [laughing].

JW: Were you expecting to be contacted? I mean you had said-when you got the letter you had not really understood really why you had been nominated but then..

KR Yeah, I still do not know who did it, that is all [laughs]. I mean I'm guessing it is my old professor, just because she has put me up for a lot, she has me speaking at Clark in a couple weeks and you know she got me this job, I just feel like she's, I would not be surprised. But I thought it sounded like a great opportunity to, I do not know, just to [pause] I heard about the

project so that was kind of cool to be considered for it and kind of flattering, but I was not sure if it was exactly questions just about feminism or growing up in Worcester [Massachusetts] you know I did not know what the key.

TD: Is there anything you want to go on about that—about feminism, because I guess that was as you were growing up the movement, and ask you were in college...

KR [laughs] Which movement are you talking about from the 1960's? [laughs]

TD: No, we can post it a little bit obviously with your age but when you were in college was when it was really growing.

KR Sure, At Clark there was definitely like a large group of feminist women, even if you were not in that group everyone still, everyone still, I do not know what it is like at Assumption, but at Clark it is like, you are as liberal as you can possibly be at any time [laughs] Anything less than you are like considered and outsider. So I think that definitely impacted me a little bit there, I was involved very briefly with Choices, on campus, I do not know if there is something like this at Assumption. I have no idea, I do not know much about Assumption to be honest, but it was like a program where you could come to this room and in someone's room, not like a dorm room, but in a dorm and you could come and get information about safe sex and sexual health and get some condoms if you needed them so that kind of thing, I helped out with that a little bit. I always regretted—oh another regret—not being in the *Vagina Monologues* because I always thought that was really cool.

JW: What was that?

KR Oh you are not familiar with them.

JW: [laughs] No

KR Oh! Eve Ensler, she is this writer, she is actually—Dylan McDermott if you know that actor, she is his step-mother or adopted mother or something like that. Anyway she does sort of something like what you are doing right now, she would go and she would interview women and ask them questions and have them tell their stories and then she would perform these monologues. About feminism and stuff like that.

JW: Kind of use it like a script?

KR Yeah, its awesome! There is a lot of documentary theatre out there if this is something you guys think is cool.

JW: Would the student be the ones that were acting it out or?

KR Yeah, so she did it as a one-woman show in the 1990's and then colleges all over the world do it, and as part of the V-Day movement in February and it is a fundraiser for domestic violence awareness.

JW: Oh wow. So.. what was I going to ask.. As far as going forward, maybe just in this career field in Worcester in general school since you went to school in the area, what would you-what would be a message for women-as far as maybe involvement, you said you wish you maybe got more involved do you think that's something that you try to encourage.

KR I do not necessarily think this is a women thing, I just wish that I had lived more without fear growing up and in college. Not being so worried about what other people were going to think. So just encouraging more women to just do what they want to do and not be worried about what would happen if they fail-my concern was always failing [laughs].

TD: That transitions perfectly into the next question of how would you define success? It can be right now, it can be down the road, and has that changed for you over the years?

KR Totally changed. Especially in the past couple years. Ever since I started doing the yoga training, I really got into yoga, not even the training I think that I always thought success was you need a good job. Or not even you need a good job, but you need to know your purpose and have purpose and be always doing that [laughs]. Which is not a bad thing I guess and to be able to financially support yourself, not necessarily making millions, but enough to get by and put some away in case something happens to your car. A little sensitive to the car thing today because I found out I need to put some money into my car today, anyway...

TD: Oh I am sorry.

KR ... [Laughs] Oh it is okay and I think now I feel more like who cares, we may just always be engaged, we may never get married, and that is okay. Like success is not like having a family it is whatever you think success is or should be to you. So for me I always wanted to get certified to be a yoga teacher and I did so I am good, I hit that goal. So now I am kind of like, "Oh what now," [laughs] but that is really—that is it all about what your needs are and not comparing yourself to other people and their success and what success means to them and so I guess for me it is just being thankful and happy for what I do have as opposed to what I wish I had done or what I wish I had.

TD: Okay. And then on kind of like the flip side, when things are not as picture perfect, have you found ways especially living more independently to cope with that, is there anything in particular that you have found that will help you get through a rough time. I know this is a very personal question so feel free if you would like to-

KR No it is basically just a boring answer, just do a lot of yoga. It is not even—I do not know how much you guys know about yoga or even if you have ever done it before, but it is not just a

physical practice. There is a meditation aspect to it. Even though I was raised Jewish I identify heavily. It's the spirituality of meditation and Buddhist mindfulness practice, just because it answers something that no religion has ever answered for me before, which is just to connect with yourself a little bit and not necessarily to care about—just doing good deeds for the world and not putting it in—I guess for me it was always you need to go synagogue, you need to do these things, you need to, and not putting those needs as just something you should work on for yourself. So being more gentle with yourself. So if I go home tonight and I do not do all my dishes I will not beat myself up and think I am a horrible person because I did not do all of my dishes. I will just try and do better tomorrow.

TD: At what age do you think you started first feeling that way or getting into the real Buddhism side of meditation?

KR [pause] Maybe a year ago.

TD: A year ago, okay.

KR Maybe a little more than a year ago.

TD: Okay and do you think that is something that you are going to continue to grow into?

KR I think so, yeah, probably not, I think I am maybe moving at a slower speed than I would like which I need to also remind myself that that is okay. But I think it is something that is down the line, in the cards. Pretty hardcore, yeah.

JW: As far as your future where would you want to be, where do you see yourself a couple years down the road?

KR Yeah, I am trying to figure that out now because our lease is up in June. [laughs] So we are trying to think about that, I have only been here for however long, not a year, it will not be a year until March and I would like to stay here three to five years. Maybe not living here, maybe not living directly in Worcester but working at Music Worcester and living in one of the little towns or still here, I do not know. But I would see in like three to five years probably maybe we would move to Wisconsin where Jack is from. I have always lived in Massachusetts and would like to see what it is like to not live in Massachusetts.

JW: Farther out west maybe?

KR Yeah, exactly.

TD: And so, kind of a broad question. Now that we are looking to tell a fuller story of the history of women, than kind of what has been recorded in history books in the past you know because

only until recently has the women's side of history really been started to be included into most things. Is there anything that you feel we should be sure to include in this?

KR Oh I like that question, I wish I had a good response for it.

TD: Take your time, we are in no rush.

KR Well I like the personal accounts, I would say that and I do not know who lists people on this survey or how you find people or if you are looking for supplemental people but.

TD: Oh we are. That is the next question, is there anyone you recommend we talk to?

KR Oh! I could definitely think about that, but I would say more people color, more people who identify as queer, more people are possibly living with some kind of disability, just because I feel like those stories are really not told often enough so. And in terms of people is there any kind of- do they just have to be living in Worcester [Massachusetts]? Or is there.

TD: So women..

JW: So any kind of experiences or history with Worcester.

KR Oh okay I definitely have people, do you want me to email them or just list them now?

JW: Maybe afterwards we could jot them down.

KR Okay!

TD: Yeah so is there anything else you want to tell us about yourself and or the impact Worcester has had on you?

KR Well I hope you come see something that Music Worcester offers, let me know if you want tickets we have student rates. [laughs]

JW: I used to come here a lot with my grandfather so...

KR Oh really! That is so nice.

JW: I mean, he is still around, just not in the area so.

KR Sure. At Mechanics Hall you would see stuff?

JW: Yup.

KR I bet you saw a lot of music theatre then.

JW: Yup

KR Nice that is awesome.

JW: There used to be a building across the street, Paul Revere Insurance, my dad and grandfather were kind of involved in that so when I used to come and see them at work it would be just across the street you know so.

KR Oh nice! What did you see?

JW: I do not actually remember. But I do remember coming here a lot. I used to walk into the main section and just kind of walk around and sometimes something would be going on and we would kind of like sneak in and check it out.

KR Well there is some, well the lobby probably looks the same unfortunately, I personally think it is too old looking, but I do not know the last time you were here was, but I know within the past ten years they have added some portraits of women in Mechanics Hall.

JW: I heard that on the radio.

KR Oh okay so Clara Barton is up there now and I do not remember anyone else but they are all up there, there are four of them up there. I do not know what they did with the other paintings that were there, I think one of the paintings belongs to someone who established the hall so that may have been some drama there, but that might be a story worth following, how all of those portraits got there.

TD: Yeah and to kind of transition to that are there any women, they do not have to be from Worcester, if they are then that is awesome, but that you kind of looked up to or you have always thought of as an exemplary figure for other women?

KR Oh that is interesting.

TD: Kind of a big question so take your time.

KR: Well, when I was at the height of my feminist peak which was probably post-college and doing Americorps, I read a lot of—what is her name now? She is from the 1960's, she wrote *Sister Outsider*, the woman who wrote *Sister Outsider* [laughs]. you guys can look it up on your own time [Audre Lorde]. She is great and it is going to really bother me. She is a fantastic writer, essayist and poet. I really like Courtney [Martin]—so sad I cannot believe I cannot remember these names.. I can tell you the names of the books, this woman wrote a book called, *Do it Anyway*. She is fantastic and the title comes from the Mother Theresa poem about people are

bad, but love them anyway, that that really nice poem that's what that is from and it is different essays about work people are doing all over the country to make the world a better place. That was a great book. I cannot remember a single book right now that is so embarrassing.

TD: Do not worry, it happens. As soon as you need to remember you cannot.

KR: Yeah, but the woman who wrote *Sister Outsider*, she is fantastic.

TD: You spoke a little bit about your professor at Clark, who sounded like she was a pretty big influence on your life, is there anything you would want to tell us about her? Influence she had on you, stuff about her, anything like that.

KR: I feel like I got to know her a lot better, even in the past several months working here. Her name is Virginia Vaughan.

TD: Can you spell that?

KR: Yeah so Virginia like the state, but people call her Ginger and Vaughan is V-A-U-G-H-A-N, I would be shocked if she has not done this yet because she has lived in Worcester for many, many years and she is very distinguished, she has lots of publications, lots of publications. And so she, I do not know if she has ever like—I'm sure she has written about Shakespeare and women and she has encouraged whenever I would take a class with her you know, "Look at the way Shakespeare is talking with these women or using these women or what kind of characters are these women," so I think that she definitely fits the feminist category. She is in the Worcester Chorus so I know she loves to sing and she is on the Worcester Music Board, I think. I could tell she is not afraid to speak her mind ever, in a meeting I go to I am always so impressed, it is very similar to how she was as a professor encouraging people to speak up but also that she is living her own principles is pretty cool. Yeah I have had a lot of really amazing feminist friends that have inspired me, yeah a lot. One of them, she might be good for this. Her name is Nuance N-U-A-N-C-E Bryant B-R-Y-A-N-T and she moved here, I do not know when... 2005,2006 maybe. Her husband lives in the area and went to Worcester Polytechnic Institute, that is how she got connected and she is real strong and has taught me a lot about feminism and definitely lives here and actually also has an autoimmune disease that has impacted her life even more than mine. And so I had these really wonderful friends in my life that have influenced me and kind of taught me a little bit more about feminism than I am privilege to, not just like how you're oppressed, but how you have privilege. What other professors did I have? Oh I had this other professor in college Valerie Sperling. She was in the history and government department so if you guys are—you can do that Consortium thing. I do not know if you guys still do that, but like Russia and Russia Revolutions and I took a class with that was Revolutions and Political Violence that was excellent and she would always look at how woman in the world were not just now, but back then were involved with revolution. Which I found was fascinating and I took and I also, my freshman year I took a class with her called, oh my gosh, it had an awesome name, Political Science Fiction [laughs] and so we would always read these novels—which is why I decided I

wanted to be an English major—that were all like sci-fi, but had all these political elements to them, like the *Handmaid's Tale* and so that was also like a good introduction to feminism.

TD: So on a personal level, how would you define feminism?

KR It would be equality of men and women and everyone in between.

TD: Okay, awesome. And what do you feel, this does not have to be just for women in Worcester or anything, do you feel that Worcester has been an inclusive place for women in the workplace? Do you know people that have struggled, have you found-what has been through friend's family or whatever general opinion of how equality has come through Worcester?

KR So I have not heard of anyone not finding work because of their gender, but little things of work place stuff I heard about. Like one time someone mentioned, not here, a friend of mine recently, mentioned, I said it was cold in my office, that it was the summer and I was freezing because the A/C [Air Conditioning] was on and there is no way to turn it off here and I mentioned it to her. And she was like, "Our office is really cold too because men can walk around in blazers all day but women are in these dresses and the temperature is controlled because of women." And I was like, "Whoa, I never thought of that before that is really interesting," so that was one opinion.

TD: Yeah, okay. Awesome. Is there anything you recommend we check out in Worcester just as a closing question?

KR Well all of the restaurants. If you have not tried any of the niche restaurants like, Bocado or Mezcal those are great. We have lots of great shows, check out our site, let me know if you want to see anything I will comp you. What else do I like to do. I like going to Elm Park, Tower Hill is beautiful, yeah, yeah, it is cool you grew up here and decided to go to school here.

JW: Well it is that and well I do ROTC so we do a lot of runs around those areas so I am always seeing it at sunrise.

KR You can run around Tower Hill?

JW: Well that is the one with the big ol' castle right?

KR Oh no that is Bancroft.

JW: Okay never mind. [laughing]

KR Because Tower Hill is technically in Boylston [Massachusetts], I was going to say that is amazing that they let you run around. In order to look at it as a wedding venue I had to pay 30 dollars you know what I mean so I was just surprised. But the Bancroft Tower is really nice too.

The Art Museum is amazing, yeah I feel like there is nowhere else you can go to an art museum quite like that in a city quite like this unless you want to go all the way to Boston. I would check out all the restaurants in Main South too they have a lot of great stuff if you like vegan food, there is a place called Chick-Pea that is fairly new. I like Vietnamese food, all the Vietnamese food restaurants around Main-Park Ave those are all really good. Annie's Court Brunch, I feel like, yeah, I would just, I feel like Assumption is set back I do not know that area as well, come this way.

TD: Alright. Thank you very much.

KR: Yeah! It was very nice to meet you both, do you need anything else from me?