

Narrative of Privilege: The Interview Project

Topic: Lower-Middle Class Living

Duration of Audio: 00:32:26

Subject requested not to share audio version of interview.

I will be identified as “MC” and our anonymous interviewee will be identified as “A.”

MC: Do you want to identify yourself for the audience?

A: No.

MC: How are you today?

A: I'm good, how are you?

MC Good. So I'd like to talk about how, in your life - even though you fit the criteria of what's understood to be the best case scenario in society (straight, white, and male) - life has never been handed to you on a silver platter. You've told me that, in your experience, you've never been totally impoverished, but money has been a concern at times. Is this fair to say?

A: Yeah.

MC: And how did this manifest itself in your life? Were you ever denied certain things you thought were reasonable to ask for, such as going out to eat, or getting new toys or clothes?

A: Um, yeah. Yes, that did happen.

MC: I'd like to start with your childhood. Where were you born?

A: I was born in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

MC: Did you grow up there?

A: Yeah, I did.

MC: How long did you live there?

A: Sixteen years.

MC: What was your neighborhood like?

A: I grew up moving a lot so I never, like, stayed in one place. But, it was all around, like, the same area. It was never bad but it wasn't the best.

MC: Did you know your neighbors?

A: Yeah, I did.

MC: Did you feel safe where you grew up?

A: Yeah. Yeah, I did.

MC: Were you close with your parents?

A: Yeah, I was. Not really anymore.

MC: Did you like them? What I mean is, you can love your parents, but you don't have to like them.

A: Yeah, not really.

MC: What about your siblings?

A: Um, yeah my siblings and I are cool.

MC: Did you guys have any traditions you would say are unique to your family?

A: The holidays. We just go to my grandma's house and eat.

MC: Did you have your own room?

A: Yes. Well, now I do but last year I shared with my little brother.

MC: What did you do at home while you were there?

A: I didn't really stay at home too much. I was usually out with my friends doing something.

MC: So you were always looking forward to the next time you got to leave?

A: Not always. Yeah, I would like chill at my house, but I would mostly be gone all day. I'd come back, but yeah the day times I'd mostly be gone.

MC: Who did you look up to as a kid?

A: I didn't really look up to anybody. I don't know I just liked to do my own thing.

MC: How did you do in school? Were you a good student?

A: In middle school I wasn't. Ninth grade, no. Sophomore year I got honor roll. I don't know about this year.

MC: What was your favorite subject?

A: US History. I liked my electives, too, like gym.

MC: Did you like your teachers?

A: Some of them. Mrs. Olson, she was a bitch. No cap, yeah I'm dropping names.

MC: And who were your friends; what kind of people were they?

A: I got all types of friends. I got friends that were honor roll students, I got friends that work, I got friends that... do other stuff. I don't know I'm friends with whoever, as long as they're, like, real.

MC: What kind of people were not your friends?

A: Goofys.

MC: What did you like to do for fun?

A: I liked to get chopped. Play basketball and stuff, go to parties. I don't really go to that many parties anymore.

MC: Did you ever get in trouble?

A: Yeah.

MC: What kind of trouble?

A: Just little shit like school trouble. I got charged with vandalism when I was like 11, or 12.

MC: How did your parents react to you getting in trouble?

A: My mom, she'd get pissed. She'd get pretty mad.

MC: Were you punished?

A: Yeah, I was a disciplined child.

MC: Do you think they were fair about it?

A: I mean, yeah. I think it's good for a kid to be disciplined, but not like overdoing it. I think I might of got it where she was over doing it, but I was always doing like dumb shit. I might have deserved it.

MC: It's my understanding that you started to have experience with drugs, alcohol, and the police staring pretty young. Is that right? Can we talk about that a little bit?

A: Sure.

MC: Okay, so when I say, "experience with drugs," I'm mostly referring to weed. Is that okay?

A: Yeah.

MC: When was the first time you smoked weed?

A: Probably seventh grade, sixth grade.

MC: Do other people you know smoke?

A: Yeah, my friends, some family.

MC: Where did you get it from?

A: I know people.

MC: Do your parents know you smoke?

A: Yeah, they do. They don't care as long as I keep it out the house.

MC: Do you like to?

A: To smoke? Yeah, haha. It helps, you know. It relaxes me.

MC: So you don't think it should be as heavily policed as it is?

A: No, definitely not.

MC: And when did you have your first drink?

A: Like, that actually got me fucked up? That was also around sixth grade. But it wasn't like a hobby then that was just like the first time I did it. I didn't like really get into it until about eighth grade or ninth grade. And not even then. Like I still only drank like once in a while. I do like it, though. I like Hennessy; that's that good shit. I like Tito's, too.

MC: Have any of these ever become an issue, like with abusing them.

A: No, not for me.

MC: For people you know?

A: I mean, I don't know anybody who's like addicted to this shit, no. I know people that smoke a lot, for sure though.

MC: Have you ever been in any legal trouble for either drug possession or use?

A: Yeah, for possession.

MC: What other charges, that you're comfortable with sharing, have you faced?

A: Battery, assaultive behavior, disorderly conduct. That's it. Well, and a lot of traffic violations; I got a lot of traffic tickets.

MC: It's also my understanding that you've taken a charge, or rather charges for people in the past that were not your fault.

A: Yes.

MC: Why?

A: Because I'm not gonna tell on nobody.

MC: Would they do the same for you?

A: I don't know, I don't care. If they don't, it's like, I'm just not rockin' with them anymore. It's whatever.

MC: So, moving forward to the present. Do you still keep in contact with any of your childhood friends?

A: Yeah, I do.

MC: What do you guys do now?

A: I mean I don't even kick it with them that much anymore. I'll still talk to them but I don't really see them. I got good friends I kick it with now, but like my childhood friends, they're not my friends. They're just, like, there.

MC: What do you like to do with your free time now?

A: I just like to chill. I like to watch movies, hang out with my girlfriend. You know my girlfriend?

MC: No, who's that?

A: My Girlfriend? My girlfriend is you.

MC: Do you have a job?

A: I do.

MC: What do you like to spend your money on?

A: I don't really shop. I mean, food? I like to eat food. My car, shoes once in a while. I've been slackin' on my shoes, though.

MC: Are you content with what you're being paid?

A: No.

MC: What would be your dream job?

A: Like a realistic one?

MC: Just your dream job.

A: I want to be a fuckin cartel mob boss. Like El Chapo type shit, Pablo Escobar. I want to be like that, Just makin fat bread. But no, I dont think I'll ever be able to do that. No, I think being a videogame designer would be cool. Or like a big ass CEO. Some type of management. I don't know.

MC: What would you do if you were filthy rich?

A: I would do everything. I would cop cars, with big ass rims. Diamonds, I love diamond watches. It would be so lit.

MC: How's your family today?

A: Good.

MC: Do you think your little brother will have a similar experience to you?

A: No.

MC: Are you going to have a hand in that?

A: Yeah.

MC: Are you protecting him?

A: Somewhat.

MC: What are you protecting him from?

A: Drugs, bad shit. Because when you're sober, it's good. But when you start smoking, especially at such a young age, it brings you downward. You shouldn't be smoking, you should be focusing on school. Because, when you get to highschool you're not gonna know what the fuck is up. Eighth grade is sugar. Sugar! It's sweet. You could do nothing and pass. It was stupid of me because I didn't knwo anything when I got into highschool at that time. You get there and

you're like, "Okay, I want to do good this year," and you can't because you didn't pay attention the last three years.

MC: How do you feel about the way your life has gone so far?

A: I guess I'm blessed to see another day so I can't really complain.

MC: Where do you think your life is going?

A: I don't really know I'm just trying to get money, I'm not really focused on like a specific goal, you know? I do gotta quit weed though.

MC: Are you happy?

A: About quitting weed?

MC: No, just like in general.

A: Yeah, I'm doing okay.

MC: What makes you happy?

A: A lot of things. Um, yeah a lot of things. My girlfriend makes me happy. Shit, fuckin weed makes me happy. Cars, I like cars. I like money. I like food... *Smoothies*. I will get those from McDonald's all day. If it works.

MC: The smoothie machine?

A: Yeah.

MC: What do you hope for in the future?

A: A bright one. Shit, I want to live in a big ass house.

MC: Thank you for your time, and thank you for sharing.

A: Of course, thank you.