

Olivia Wilson & Lyla Luciano

Interviewer Marco Luciano, camera Don Bouzek

OW: I was born here in Edmonton January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2001.

LL: I was born in Montreal, Quebec June 17, 2000.

Q: Tell us a bit about your parents.

OW: Both my parents were born in Jamaica. They immigrated here when they were in their teens. My dad is a heavy duty mechanic and he actually had his own business for a while, so he decided to retire in a way. My mom is a nurse.

LL: My parents both immigrated here in their later teens or early 20s, my dad by himself and my mom following her parents, my grandparents. They moved to Montreal first; that's where they started university and their life here in Canada. Then they moved with me, we moved to Toronto and now here in Edmonton. Home is where the family is.

Q: Tell us about school.

OW: I'm a student at the University of Alberta. I've been studying there just for a year now. I'm in the Education program. It's going pretty good so far; I haven't had too many hardships. It's enjoyable.

LL: I am a student at the University of Alberta as well. I am a second year student taking Sociology. It's definitely very different from high school, I would say, having more responsibility, working, schooling, and handling personal life as well. Definitely a different life.

Q: What was high school like for you?

OW: High school was very basic, just basic teaching. It was just a place where you could find yourself, just where you learn to be who you are.

LL: The same high school with Olivia. It's definitely different, part of the growing up part. It's in the middle of still being in your teens and being an adult, right in the middle of trying to figure out where we want to go to university and kind of the path that we want to learn or take.

Q: You were both born here but your parents are from other places – Jamaica and the Philippines. How does having parents born outside Canada affect you culturally, with language and stuff like that?

OW: My parents, moving from Jamaica at a young age, they have adapted very well to Canadian culture. Most of my Jamaican culture and Canadian culture is really just mixed together. I've grown up with both of them in the household. But with them being able to speak their home language and me not able to, there is a cultural difference. I can't really speak the language, so communicating with people from my home would be a little bit different. My parents did try to make it feel like we are a part of a country we didn't grow up in. So we always have our food, we'll always listen to our music. Most of the times my parents will try to teach me and my siblings how to speak our language, but most of the times if we were on our own and we had to communicate with other people in our community with that language, we wouldn't know so much that well.

LL: Growing up, my parents did teach me Tagalog, the Filipino language. Growing up, that was one of the ways of learning the culture. They cooked a lot of food in the house and they really made sure I knew a little bit of my roots. It was still very different, because I'm born here in Canada, but a lot of the family in the Philippines, the life is very different. I would say it's not the same - if I went back to the Philippines and went to visit family, very different - but still trying to connect in some way through whatever I was taught. It's definitely connecting with the community that was around us. Learning through that was how I learned and how home was created: because I'm born here but still having that culture with me.

Q: What was it like for you as women of colour growing up in Canada?

OW: I think it varies between the two of us, because most of our situations or any kinds of issues that we would face in the community are different between the two of us. There are discriminations between both black women and Asian women, but I feel like there would be a different level of it. In Canada there is a subtlety to the discrimination that people of colour would face. But if it's not addressed, then it will go unspoken or it'll be pushed under the rug. Most of the time, regarding my hair, is something that many managers or people in the workplace would see as inappropriate. But what they would consider the best form of appropriate attire is having straight or something that is just the norm of what is considered appropriate hair.

LL: In terms of the difference, definitely there's a big difference in Quebec and then living in Toronto. The demographic is very different, more diverse and multicultural. You can definitely feel and see it. Then moving to Alberta, definitely more conservative of a province, right away feeling that in middle school when I was in grade 7. I definitely felt a little bit out of place, being the only Filipino in French immersion class or in the school of French immersion. It was very different to get used to. When we moved, it was really just, how can I fit into this new environment? And how can I take what I have and what I grew up with all the way in Toronto east coast, and kind of live here in Western Canada in Alberta? It's definitely different, and moving here to Alberta was definitely when I felt that racial difference.

Q: What was your very first job?

OW: My very first job I worked at a retail store called I.W. McCall. I was in grade 12 and was just there for a while.

LL: My very first job was at A&W as a frontline fast food worker.

Q: What was it like, and at what age did you start to work?

OW: I started working there when I was 16 or 17. I just got a job because I wanted to be able to pay for my own expenses. I didn't want to rely on my parents all the time, because I knew at a certain point I would start to be that expensive kid. Mostly the environment was pretty good, it wasn't too harsh. I was comfortable to work there. All I did was really sell clothes. It was just a basic retail job.

Q: Did you work elsewhere after that?

OW: Yes, after that I had a little period where I wasn't working, because nobody was really hiring at that point. But after, I did get another retail job. This location was a lot further. It was at a Mark's Warehouse. I think that was one job I didn't truly like the most, because the safety there wasn't particularly the best. Just the way it was set up, it wasn't that good. After that I also had a short temp job with Disney on Ice, and then I worked at Sephora and a restaurant.

LL: For my very first job I was 16. It was at the A & W. I really didn't have a lot of expectations of, like, I was going to do or what I would do really. I worked there for two years, almost three. It was a very old establishment. The workers were helping me out. There was the training, and it was okay as a first job, though it was very hectic at times. A lot of times I worked late night shifts, not graveyard, but it was just 5 to 10. A lot of the times there were just three of us working at night. It would get really busy, and I'd be doing a drive-through and a frontline at the same time while other workers were cooking or placing orders or whatever it may be. There were only three of us usually. But other than that, it was such an old building and old appliances, old technology. You could tell, it felt like the old school box of taking orders. The reason I left that job was because the establishment closed. The manager or the owner didn't renew the contract, so they just let everybody off with pretty much two weeks' notice. It was kind of sad, because the manager at the place didn't really talk to any of the workers there to tell us that, okay you need to find a job. It was just two weeks' notice and I was out of a job for a couple of months, just trying to find jobs, which was pretty hard. It was pretty hard in between months, because during the time it was seasonal work or holiday work. Right now I do work at a Shoppers for retail. There was another part of the question that I didn't answer.

Q: What was your typical workday, at Mark's and perhaps Sephora?

OW: For Mark's Warehouse, my usual day there was 9 to 5. I was there before openings, because most retail jobs want all the employees in the morning to be there at least 15 minutes before the doors open so they can open tills and clean if it wasn't cleaned the night before. With Mark's Work Warehouse, I had to work on the north side and I was on the south side, so that was one of the problems. Most of my trips would be at least two hours more because of the buses and the inconvenience of the timing of it sometimes. But it was okay to start early in the morning and be able to finish more midday instead of in the evening, because traveling from the north side to the south side would be a little bit more dangerous for me, considering how old I was. The environment, it wasn't so much too dangerous, but they were always short staffed. One employee would have to multitask while others would be having to do other things. I was always on the short end of the stick, so I would always have to be possibly in the men's section and the women's section and probably having to do the boots or shoes or just in between, while having to look for clothes for customers.

The back area wasn't so safe because there would always be things on the floor or there'd be high stacks of clothes that tumble over and it just doesn't make it capable for the employees to maneuver around it. So there was that one thing, but no one could really pay attention or clean it because most of our managers would be in meetings or they actually wouldn't even notice that the clothes were just piling up, or they would overlook it. So most of the employees sometimes do hurt themselves because they don't notice that there is a mess and they just fall, trip, or don't even try to clean it because it's too big of a mess that no one acknowledges.

With my current job now, there's more employees. There doesn't have to be one person doing everything. My position now, I'm inventory, so I'm mostly in the back. I clean, I look after most of the products and make sure that everything is in order and that there's never any products that have expired, because it can be detrimental to the clients that come in to try or test or just look at it. Most of my days I do start in the afternoon because I have school and my courses are just in the morning. So that makes it easier for me to be there in the evening. I just work five

hours, and they're okay with five hours because that's the minimum that you have to work. So that makes it capable for me to still be a student, so I can study and also work.

Q: Did the staff at Mark's ever complain about their concerns?

OW: There wasn't many people that would complain about the situation at Mark's Work Warehouse. Most of them would just quit, because even if they did complain, not most of it would be taken care of right away. I wouldn't blame so much management, I would blame the entire establishment. Mark's Work Warehouse is associated with Canadian Tire and it's like one of the branches of the company's that was never acknowledged too well. Even when I got my scheduling, I wouldn't know I'm on the schedule unless I was actually in the day prior or some days of the month to know that I'd be on next week's schedule or next month's schedule.

Q: What was your day like at A&W and now at Shopper's?

LL: Starting work in high school, it was definitely an adjustment, because of time management. Working at A&W there were times, I'd work weekdays usually, and a lot of the times was going from school. I'd bring all my work stuff with me at school and I'd be going straight to work. I finished school around 3:30 and I started exactly at 5. My school at the time was down south of Edmonton and my workplace was northwest. Usually I'd be going straight to school, change either at school or at work, and just be kind of like a go-go-go situation. A lot of it where I was working was with frontline, so dealing with customers, dealing with drive-through as well, wearing the headset and multitasking with listening with the headset and then dealing with a customer up front. A lot of the work really was go-go-go or kind of quiet, because it was a nightshift. A lot of cleaning – cleaning all the dishes, all the appliances. But there were times too that I had to learn on my own, not really straight from training. Cooking the food, it would be mostly my coworkers and my supervisors that were the ones that were teaching me how to do more stuff, which was working with the fryer or quickly learning how to do some of the sandwiches. Sometimes it was just busy to the point of I had to do multiple roles.

Q: How many workers were on your shift?

LL: During my shift at night, usually for my shift 5 to 10 only three of us.

Q: How many customers would you get at night?

LL: It depends. On a busy day sometimes it would reach maybe \$1,000 or more, and sometimes it would be just really quiet. It would vary really, but there were times that it was just very busy. We'd be opening all the bags of food because we'd either put it in the fryer and open and cook all at the same time.

Q: Did you or your coworkers get into any accident?

LL: A lot of it, working with food, it's the oil spills and the hot appliances that you'd have to work around. A lot were splashes of oil. Sometimes the oil in the fryer would be the worst; it would be quite a few days of not changing the oil in the fryer. You could see that the oil has been reused quite a bit. The appliances as well that we used, you could tell that they're old. Some of them are kind of breaking, but it's still being used because that's really all we had. Dealing with the hot appliances, it was a lot of just old - like hand gloves and trays and layering. Things that were touching the food were regularly changed, but a lot of the trays and everything, usually metal, that we had to use were pretty old.

Q: What kind of training did you get?

LL: There was a little bit of training in the beginning. All the training was videos like work safety training on the videos, but really it's just basic listening and a lot of the times it can go through your head, just in and out, just because it's a quick video that you just have to listen to. I did pay attention to it, of course, but a lot of it, being in the workplace, it's a lot of being in the workplace and really walking around shadowing people. How do you properly bag the food, how do you properly take orders, how do you properly cook the food? A lot of it was more shadowing than watching the video of the safety.

Q: Did you get any training, and was it helpful?

OW: Most of the training I received was pretty helpful. A few of my jobs had hands-on training and others were just videos. They were helpful but it doesn't prep you as much as you'd think for having to deal with customers. It's just basic workplace safety as well as probably what you would do when you do have a situation with a customer. But it doesn't very well prepare you for many of those things that you're going to experience.

Q: Tell me about an incident that happened.

OW: One particular moment was when I was at my second job. It got busy. Like I said, most of the time it was always low staff. It got really busy and there was probably the full store packed with people, and there were probably only three people on the floor and probably one person in the back just in case we make some calls to see if we have a product. Just with me being there, there were multiple people coming along and they asked me questions. I'm in customer services, telling them what we have and don't have. But I did have this one customer that basically wanted to fight me because he thought I was wrong. The online store said we had the product in store, and he thought I was wrong. But most times if the system is slow, it won't update itself online but we'll know that it's not in store. But with that, with the videos they showed us, you kind of walk away or try to calm them down, or just call a manager. But all the things I had done for that one customer didn't seem to work. One way we got them to leave the store was to say, hey, I'll call another store and see if they have it. He didn't even take that as, okay call them – he just left. So that kind of in a weird way diffused the situation. But if he did try to be more physical, I would've been mostly injured, because it was a big guy.

Q: How did that make you feel?

OW: It was surprising. It throws you off your guard. As you're walking in, your first thought is, hey, I'm here to work, and you've got to have a positive attitude. But when someone is fairly aggressive with you just because they can't find a pair of pants, it's very baffling. It should not be someone's first reaction, to be aggressive just because you can't find one pair of pants. That



one experience taught me that you have to not be aggressive with the customer but be more forward and have a stern voice to tell them, no, we don't have the product here, maybe I can suggest something else. You just really have to find other tactics to diffuse the situation.

Q: Can you tell us about the incident regarding your hair?

OW: This was just for one particular interview I had. I did have my hair done in a very traditional way for black women. The manager did ask if it was a hairstyle that I would be wearing the entire time I would be there. I found it fairly odd, because my hair shouldn't be the reason if you are to hire me or not, and it shouldn't impede on how I perform in my workspace. That was just one question that was thrown off-guard to me. Before any other job it wasn't a concern, but this one time it was a problem.

Q: Have you had workplace issues relating to you being women?

OW: No, I haven't experienced any sexual harassment or any kind of assault in any kind of way, because most of the jobs I've had they've been all women.

LL: With the jobs I'm working or have worked at in Arby's, it was a little different, not necessarily with coworkers itself. We were beside a motel. The motel did have some peculiar folks at night. You could tell some were drunk or just not on their usual self. It wasn't, I wouldn't say, direct, but there were tendencies with me and some of the other coworkers. They would say little flirting comments, which in a way we'd just disregard or not entertain most of the time. I wouldn't say full discrimination with the workplace. The one thing is, yes, those particular people who walk in, especially with my work now. At night there are some people who try to come in and try to steal, walk around. That's one of the biggest ones for us in my job right now - is late night there is a little bit less workers. But there's enough that we check all around. It's just sometimes there'll be a group of people that just come in and we have to check all of them or just watch. But a lot of the times it's just disregarding a lot of the comments or making sure they quietly walk out, or try to find a solution to a problem they try to argue about.

Q: Did you ever have a mentor in your workplace?

OW: No, you just figure out how to do things on your own.

LL: I think definitely my manager at A&W is really nice, but working with him - he'd help out and I'd shadow as much as I can and show that I can do the work. But at the same time, the manager really was based on favouritism. A lot of the other coworkers, if he wouldn't get along with them, he'd complain about the other workers not working. The workers that complain about him, they'd be talking about it too. Sometimes it's just complaining about the coworkers and the manager in the whole space but trying to resolve it. If they can't take it, it's really bad and they get another job. A lot of them in the place I worked, they had two jobs already, so they just keep the other job or find a new one.

Q: Have either one of you had a union at your workplace?

LL: I know for A&W, no. For the job that I'm working now, there's nothing that the workers know of. With the big corporations, I don't think so.

OW: No I don't think so as well.

Q: How did you know about your worker rights?

OW: When I first started working, I didn't know my rights as a worker until my second job, until I got to Mark's. And I actually did get told more things that I didn't know, which would've helped a lot more for my first job. Then, as I continued working, I found that there's a lot more things to know as just an employee or part time employee - just different rules that some companies would set that everyone, according to your position, would have to follow or are laws in Alberta and across Canada.

Q: How did you find that out?

OW: Mostly in the first day of training or when they hire you. If they hire you on the spot, they will tell you: this is your rules, this is the law, this is what the company can and can't do because of Canada's limitations; your rights of what you're able to do; if you have problems, where you can go to talk to somebody. They do have some helplines that I can call in my company or even other places I can go to get more information.

LL: Definitely working starting in high school, no, I did not know my rights. For my first job, there wasn't really an explanation to the things I can do, the things I can't do. There wasn't really much, it was just rules of how do you properly do things at work. It wasn't really learning about workers' rights. A lot of it I learned later on, learning what I can't do and what they can't do to me as a worker. A lot of it is listening to some of the other coworkers that I had. They would talk about it and I slowly learned through them. And then I learned by myself or working with a lot of the Filipino workers that would also learn about their rights in the community.

Q: Are you involved in the community?

LL: I definitely would say I'm involved in the community, working a lot with Filipino youth, starting different activities or different events, learning about Filipino immigrant youth that just moved here or Filipino immigrants that are born here and trying to find their roots and identity. Another one of those is that a lot of the youth are workers and they go to school, doing both and learning from our parents or some of the older generation of people who live here, were born here or have moved here as well.

OW: I'm hands-on involved in issues in the community, but most of the time I contribute to certain events that happen. Most of our community, it's not so much that we have a community centre. We meet wherever our leaders want to meet or we would just congregate like at our church that we mostly all go to.

Q: Have you ever considered making changes in the workplace to improve safety?

OW: Most definitely I've thought of making some changes in the workplace. I would mostly focus on the back stock area. The space was very congested so it was very difficult to maneuver around, especially when we got a shipment in and there was a lot of shipment. There was no place to particularly put it. There would be a desk for the person that works in inventory, so I mostly would really stock it in any spot that has nothing. It was very difficult sometimes. I would make sure that there's more space for employees to walk around. The way it's set up is like a one-way traffic lane, so people would always have to move aside just for another person just to move by.

Q: Did you ever talk to your boss about those changes that you had in mind?

OW: Yes, the changes that I would always recommend or say would be good for all employees had been a concern to the manager already, because her space was just as small as the entire space. So it was something that she wanted to have acknowledged. But most times they just want to go through it, because they wouldn't have so much power over the entire building. It's just a property, so if there had to be renovations it would have to come out of someone's budget but we don't know whose.

Q: Did much change?

OW: Not particularly, but I haven't been there so long that I think maybe something may have changed. But I don't think they have been focused on the inventory section.

LL: Definitely a lot of the coworkers and would tell each other some of the things we wanted to have or change, especially our scheduling. It's still very old school, really a booklet of paper that has all of the schedules written down for every person each week. We'd have to go to work and physically check it to see if we were working or not. There's no way to check it online or wherever; we'd have to go to the store. That was one of the biggest ones, other than the fact that we wanted new appliances that worked. It was hard. I did mention a few times in a manner of conversation with my manager asking, why do we still have the old school ways of the technology and the way of doing our schedules and everything? A lot of it is him saying he

wants to change it as well, but nothing really changed during the work. Of course having new appliances, the whole building was just old so we wanted something new. It was hard, because at the end of working there they just demolished the whole building and they didn't renew or have anything to continue with that establishment.

Q: Have you ever felt frustrated and fought back?

OW: Yes and no, at times I felt frustrated. They did know that I was voicing my concern, but they knew that they wouldn't be able to make that big of a change even if multiple people were to recommend it. They wouldn't know where to start with that one big change, even if it was a huge concern.

Q: Did you ever go to someone for support fighting back?

OW: Not particularly. Most of the management wasn't too hostile, so I wouldn't try to fight back. It was just an understanding between employees and management that sometimes some things just can't be done, you just have to suck it up.

LL: Very similar in terms of being pressured. Us coworkers would complain to each other and we'd all agree on the things we'd want to change or the things that should stay or go, or who's the one we can talk to about the changes. But really there wasn't much trying to just bring up a conversation about what can we change or what can we do. If I was in a conversation with my manager, we'd talk a little bit but it would be disregarded.

Q: Why do you think you and your coworkers didn't pursue it?

LL: I think, for one, it was not wanting to have conflict with the manager. There's already some kind of conflict between them – managers not liking supervisors, and vice versa. It was trying to keep it more civil in terms of in the workplace. I'd hear both sides complaining whenever I did work with my manager, which was very rare as well. Another reason why we didn't really talk back was we'd never really get to talk to the manager. A lot of the times when I was working he

was never there. I only worked maybe once or twice a week since I was also doing school. I already felt so busy with doing everything with work and school and extracurricular activities, it kind of just got pushed aside of not thinking about moving forward with pushing the things we wanted to change, or gathering all the workers together to bring up this change.

OW: As Lyla was saying, most of the employees and management just didn't want to have so much friction between the two of them. But most employees wouldn't pursue it because if they wanted change they'd just look for another job where they already had something different or they had something that would actually benefit them than at their previous job.

Q: What does your community involvement offer in terms of your work-life balance?

OW: Your engagement with your community takes away from the stress, because people are actually experiencing the same things you experience. It's very easy to communicate and talk and relieve some stress that you get in your day. Even if we don't meet up together, you can still contact them, so it helps, very much helps.

LL: Working with the Filipino community, I'd say is definitely something more enjoyable and definitely takes thinking about work and school off my mind usually. It's definitely one of the good things. One of the biggest ones is working with Filipinos that have the same kind of mind-set or the same kind of issues that they have at work. A lot of them have experienced or are experiencing similar issues or things that they want to ask. A lot of it too is high school students that just go here and they're doing school. A lot of the high school students are in school but they also need to work or want to work. They want to work to help pay tuition or they want to work to pay for themselves or help out with the family. It's kind of us helping them and them learning as well.

Q: Do you play sports or music?

OW: I have two hobbies. I do enjoy playing piano. I have been trying to learn the guitar but that's a struggle. I've also been trying to sew a little bit more. It was an enjoyable thing for me in high school so I'm trying to get back into that.

LL: I actually have another job of working, very part time and short hours, teaching karate to little kids, as well as working out as a karate martial artist, so definitely time managing everything. I also sing a little and do some guitar. It's me trying to time manage everything together.

Q: How did you two meet?

OW: We met in the beginning of junior high and have been friends since.

LL: I moved here from Toronto and I moved to her junior high. She was one of the first few friends I made here. Then we went to the same high school, and now we go to the same university.

Q: With the cost of university tuition, what's the importance of having your jobs?

LL: Definitely with university tuition and university debt and the fact that university tuition is getting even higher for the next year - I have myself and my friends who are just trying, I know some of my friends in university are trying to find a job. They are sometimes not even getting enough hours or can't even find a job. But it's definitely something that adds onto our plate of not only getting money for housing and go out with friends once in a while, but really it's trying to live off less of our parents - to live less with them and managing everything with all the expenses that just keeps adding on, with debt and tuition.

OW: I'm basically the same. I have two jobs, one to pay for university and one just to have as pocket money. The one job that I do have, they aren't doing so well. It's a restaurant, and most people aren't eating out as much as they would during the summer, because it's cold. It's a struggle to actually get some hours, so I really have to balance the money. If I were to take out a

student loan at this point, I wouldn't be able to really get it, because of everything that's happening with student loans and being able to get scholarships. It's fairly difficult because it's more of a job than having to say, I need help, or I need some student aid. It's particularly difficult for many youth today. It's very difficult.

Q: Have you been keeping up with the news lately regarding our province?

OW: Most of the time I try to stay on top of the news that's happening in Alberta. Mostly I never see so much about what's happening in Alberta particularly, but across Canada.

Q: What do you think about the recent cutbacks and raise in tuition fees?

OW: I think it's an inconvenience for most people, because I've seen that many of the cutbacks are in healthcare, and healthcare you need. As well as there are many teaching positions being taken away or cutbacks there as well. I am studying to become a teacher, so in four years or seven years from now, I don't know if that'll possibly be a career I could continue pursuing. I'll probably have to change that at some point, because there probably won't be openings at all.

LL: Definitely keeping up with news, I try my best I can to be looking through news articles and whatnot. But definitely, as Olivia said, I can start to feel the students frantically trying to get a job or trying to sustain the fact that they have to pay more or they have to find a way to pay more, find a job, find two jobs to work at - to pay for university plus that extra money for themselves to probably pay for their wedding expenses, or whatever it may be. International students have an extra percentage that they have to pay, compared to local students. It's insane, the fact that teachers are being cut back and health services are going down. Everyone's just trying to find a way to sustain themselves or find a way to live, to survive on going to school and everything.

Q: Do you juggle your work shifts with class schedules?



OW: With my schedule, most times you do get availability, so in the morning you'll be open so you can get any time, or evenings are probably open, or you can get a specific time. With most of the jobs I've encountered, they are particularly old school or they're just not up-to-date with different scheduling apps that could be used, or just emailing. That was one of the particular difficulties for one of my jobs – they just didn't want to email it. You had to physically be there to look at your schedule, which was fairly inconvenient for me because that job was on the north side - so I would have to travel from the north side all the way there to actually see. As well, management don't always respect the hours that you give them. For me as a student, I have to go to school and find time to study. If I have to be there from 9 to 5, it's fairly difficult because I can have a 9 a.m. class or a 2:30 class so I wouldn't be able to be there at that time. After class I could study, but maybe I have to go to a second job or I'd have to do something else. It's not always so flexible with most of the jobs.

LL: Working with scheduling, yeah, it's giving them the hours that I'm available to do. Definitely doing school, teaching karate and doing work, it's definitely working with my manager and talking to them about what I can and can't do. One of the most frustrating things was, at my old job, it was a physical hour-sheet of when are you working. I had to go there or I had to call somebody that was going there or working at the time, just to ask, hey can you check my schedule? When am I scheduled for? So that was pretty frustrating. If I had to change shift, that was also pretty frustrating because, sometimes at one point, there's not enough workers at the workplace to be able to just switch shifts. So then it would either be me or the manager. It was really a low option of being able to switch shifts. And the fact that I was at school, they'd call me in the middle of my break in between classes and be, like, hey can you come in to work? I'm like, no, I have school, I can't. So there was a lot of trying to adjust to those hours and situations.

Q: Talk about some of the safety issues involved in getting back and forth to the workplace.

OW: It is a particular problem having to take the bus, because there are sketchy areas of the city. Most of the buses are not in convenient areas; probably you'd have to walk a block to get to the closest bus stop. If you do miss that one bus, it probably doesn't come on time, because in the evening there's not so many people that will be on the bus. So some bus drivers will take

their breaks in that time. If I had to take that particular bus and the bus driver is on his break, he wouldn't move or he'd take his time and I'd probably miss a connecting bus to get home. So it could set back my travel time from two hours to two hours and a half. Or I could just miss one bus entirely and that was the last bus that was running that night, so I'd have to take a taxi or find somewhere that was available for my parents to pick me up. Maybe it was at the transit station, and the closest place that was convenient enough for someone to pick me up would be the mall or just waiting at a gas station.

LL: Going from school to work, definitely - sometimes with me running with my two bags just to catch a train or catch a bus, then I'd be running again just to catch a connecting bus. A lot of the times it's either the bus comes early and I miss it, or the bus comes late and I would be waiting. A lot of the times when I finish, I'm lucky that I do have at the time parents that would pick me up. But there are times I've got to get home somehow, and, if I do miss a bus at night, it would be waiting for an hour if I miss that bus. At the end of the day, we all had to clean all of the appliances. There's three of us that had to clean everything – mop, wash, everything. If we have to finish for the next day, so if we didn't finish I'd maybe miss my bus and it would be an hour wait. So usually it would be a taxi or just wait for another bus to come, or just really finish what we're doing at a high speed and run to the bus stop.

[ END ]