

Maureen and Mike

# Mansfield Library

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

## **Archives and Special Collections**

Mansfield Library, University of Montana

Missoula MT 59812-9936

Email: [library.archives@umontana.edu](mailto:library.archives@umontana.edu)

Telephone: (406) 243-2053

The transcript with its associated audio recording was provided to Archives and Special Collections by the University of Montana COVID-19 Oral History Project.

**Oral History Number: 475-014**

**Interviewee: Kalea Tetsuka**

**Interviewer: Madeline Hagan**

**Date of Interview: June 9, 2020**

**Project: University of Montana COVID-19 Oral History Project**

Madeline Hagan: All right. I'm Madeline Hagan. I am a junior at the University of Montana. I attend the honors college, and I'm a double major and history and philosophy with a minor in African American studies. I am here today interviewing Kalea Tetsuka. Would you please introduce yourself and say your name and how you spell it?

Kalea Tetsuka: Hi, my name is Kalea Tetsuka. K-A-L-E-A- and then T-E-T-S-U-K-A. I'm a junior at the United States Coast Guard Academy and I major in public policy and law.

MH: Wonderful. Can you tell me where you're from?

KT: I'm from Portland, Oregon. I grew up here my whole life, but I live in New London, Connecticut now.

MH: And you go to school at the Coast Guard Academy.

KT: Yes. And just to be clear, none of my views expressed here are reflective of the Coast Guard. They're just mine.

MH: How did you end up at the Coast Guard Academy.

KT: So, I didn't really have a lot of money going into college. It was either the University of Oregon or a military school. My dad would officiate at swim meets and there's this other guy he knew that, you know, was an alumni from there and he suggested this route to me. And so, I went my summer of junior year just to try it out and go on tours and stuff. And they offered me to come back. So, after that I just decided, why not take a chance.

MH: And what are you interested in becoming? Interested in grad school in your future?

KT: So, you have to serve for five years. That's part of the requirement. So, we don't pay for school they pay for school for you. You get your bachelor's degree, but you do have to serve in the Coast Guard for five years. Then after that I will probably...I really want to go to law school. I mean, that's why I decided to do this in the first place, so I won't have a ton of debt for undergrad and then I'll have enough money for grad school. But who knows? I can always go through grad school at the Coast Guard, but you have to become a military lawyer after. So, I'll decide once we get to that point. But that's the general direction at least right now, yeah.

MH: Alright! We're going to switch gears and start talking about coronavirus. When did you first hear about coronavirus? Did you think it was going to be as serious as it turned out to be?

KT: I remember I first heard it in my comparative politics class because we would do, like a world events like section at the beginning of class every day and it was like back in January. The first time I heard it I was like "Oh. It's going to be nothing." It's going to be like...You know, we heard about Ebola, but it never really affected day to day life. Here, at least. And then all of a sudden, every day. Every day they would just be bringing it up and it was during spring break when I realized that it was going to be big. It took at least, like, three months for it to really set in for me, I think.

MH: Yeah. You mentioned Ebola. How has the coverage of coronavirus compared to Ebola epidemic? Do you remember at all about the media?

KT: I remember a little bit. I think it was freshman year of high school because we had a unit in my English class. We read all these books on Ebola, or like pandemics in general. I think it was called *Hot Zone*, that I read. I remember reading that and I was like "oh my god. Why isn't this a big deal?" But then it just never really...The media coverage in America of Ebola just never really took off. There were a couple people here that had it. But after that, I don't remember hearing anything. It is significantly different comparing it to what's happening right now I would say.

MH: So, was there a certain time you remember being surprised or scared at how serious that it had turned out to be?

KT: I think spring break. So, we went on spring break on March sixth, or around then, and like, I remember leaving and we weren't thinking about it at all. But like, all of a sudden, a week in, it just suddenly switched. All these schools were shutting down. I think Harvard was the first one to do so. And we're pretty close to Boston. I have some friends there and they were telling me, "Oh Harvard's shutting down, MIT's shutting down. BU [Boston University]." And then all of a sudden it just, like, took off from there. And the switch...three days later we found out we weren't coming back towards the end of my spring break. I was a little scared for sure. Just, like, flying back and trying to figure out how I'm going to get back home was hard. But I think that was the moment that I was like, "this is definitely going to be something that impacts us for a long time."

MH: So, did you finish the semester at home then?

KT: Yeah, I did. I came back to Portland. I came back to Portland, like mid-March and I've been doing online school ever since.

MH: How was that transition for you?

KT: I actually didn't think it was too bad. So, I'm a humanity major and it was just like a lot of writing paper. And honestly just writing papers [laughs]. Like, I really didn't mind it. My teachers were pretty helpful. So, I didn't think it was the biggest transition for me, compared to me would say my younger sisters.

MH: What was their experience like?

KT: My middle sister is a junior in high school and she does pretty well with school. I think she's doing okay. But my youngest sister, who just finished fifth grade had a really rough time. She's younger. She's only ten years old so just not having a schedule I think really impacted her compared to like, you know, me and my older sibling.

MH: Did they have, like, a regimented online schedule or what was that like?

KT: Even now I really don't know [laughs]. It was like school three times a week or something and they would have projects. But then it seems like she would email the teachers, but they wouldn't be emailing back. Whether it's because, you know, they're just getting too many people trying to talk to them or whatever, but it was hard. It didn't really seem like she would have a schedule. My mom and her would have to make one every day. We have a giant whiteboard and they would write it all out with checkboxes and stuff. So, I don't think, from the school, there was really a schedule laid out for them.

MH: Do you think that technology, social media, news, etcetera, has helped you during this time?

KT: I think it has. I have been looking at social media a lot. I'm sure everyone has during this time with coronavirus and the protests going on. I think it's helped me. I'm staying up to date and it's an easy way to, like, look at something really quick and then research more into it. Whether everyone does that, or not, mmmm I don't know. But I think it's been helpful to me at least.

MH: Yeah. So, you mentioned the protests that are going about the murder of George Floyd by police officers in Minneapolis that are popping up across the country. Have you yourself been involved in outside protests?

KT: Yes. So, I went to one, I want to say it was June fourth, with my sister. We haven't been to too many because my family is slightly at risk. My dad has Crohn's Disease and my younger sister has Type One Diabetes. But my parents did encourage my sister and I to go and I thought it went really well. It was like, earlier in the day. It was a music event. So, they held a fundraiser for George Floyd, like a memorial fund, and we marched downtown with the second one. It was a good thing to go to I though.

MH: Yeah. So, we'll come back to the protests in a second, but can you talk a little bit more about how your experience and your family's experience with coronavirus may differ from the average family with two at risk people in your household?

KT: Yeah, I think the biggest difference is that my family was *very* careful about quarantining. We saw very few people during this time. I don't think my dad has left the house once in the past three weeks. I think the only time he left was to get my mom a birthday present [laughs]. But, yeah. My parents, my dad, is very careful right now. My mom, I think, it affects her work a lot right now. She works at a hospital as part of their team that puts out information on their website and stuff. She says, it's just nuts and she's going crazy at home a little bit. I would say my middle sister, who is a junior, is going absolutely nuts right now. But, just...I think looking at social media, we do see some people hanging out, and we do see people going out and doing fun things and I think it is hard for particularly my younger sisters to see that and know that we can't do that. For good reasons. But I think that's the biggest thing is that we are pretty strict about quarantine.

MH: Have you found information, or has there been any information offered to you and your family about what to do if you're at risk and its involvement with coronavirus?

KT: Not really...I'm sure my mom has some since she does work with the hospital. But I can't really think of anything in particular that has been offered. So yeah, I don't think so.

MH: What other precautions besides quarantine would you say that you take in your daily life?

KT: I mean, of course we're wearing masks every day. Like we don't leave the house without them. That's honestly the biggest one. Like I'm not going out. Like normally if I'm home I'm going out to see friends, I'm going out to do this, do that, but lately it hasn't been that at all. I've seen a few friends that were also quarantining because they have family members at risk, because I trust their judgment. I know that they're careful to protect their own family. But other than that...yeah. It's really just staying at home that's honestly the biggest precaution we're taking.

MH: What do you think when you see people who aren't staying at home and who are pushier about reopening? How does that make you feel?

KT: I mean, I get it. Like for some people it's their livelihood. They're losing business, they're losing, you know, restaurants, they're losing their daily income and I can understand it. I don't take it personally or like as a personal attack on my family or anything, but I trust that hopefully our local government will take care of it and have a plan for reopening. But for the most part I understand it. I just don't agree with it.

MH: What are your hopes for the next couple months with reopening? I know that you won't be in Portland, but your family will be. What do you wish is going to happen?

KT: I hope that it will be gradual, and also not all the counties at once. I would say too, like I just got my hair cut a few days ago, but it was in Lake Oswego not Portland. So, I just hope that it's gradual. I think my parents are worried about what reopening is going to look like and what the number of cases are going to look like. I'm not really sure. I just hope they have a plan.

MH: Yeah. What has you specifically and your family done during quarantine to keep you occupied in the house? You mentioned your sisters going nuts. I think that's a pretty universal experience.

KT: Yes. My youngest sister...It's a lot more screen time if we're honest. I'm sure every parent feels that. You know, just gotta keep them occupied. So, it's a lot more screen time. She rides her bike a lot. My middle sister has been baking like crazy. She made, like, macaroons, we're making crème brûlée, cookies, cupcakes. She's making all that. And she recently...She's on a club swim team so they did start doing, like, workouts on land, not in the water yet. She's occupied with that now at least. A lot of online shopping, or at least just looking. But other than that...I think what helps our family so far is that we spend a majority of the day, like, apart. Like my sister in her room, me in my room, and everyone is apart until like six, or seven at dinner time. And then a lot of the times we'll play, like, cards or Tripoli, or whatever. So, I think that is the thing that's keeping us occupied together, at least it's the most helpful so far.

MH: What has kept you occupied?

KT: School was definitely a huge time occupier. I was doing what felt like kind of a lot of work every day. But now not really much. I'm watching the news a lot. I've been embroidering a lot and that's kind of it. We've been doing...we've been organizing, like, neighborhood things too. So, whenever I go on runs, I saw a couple neighbors have a sack food lunch drives and so we did that. I occupy myself by like, drawing on our whiteboard or putting stuff out there and then putting it in our neighborhood for people to see. I think that's kind of it.

MH: Yeah, that's really interesting. A lot of Portlanders have been displaying things in windows or on the street. What other kinds of displays have you seen either in your neighborhood or across Portland?

KT: Well, honestly not that many. Just because I haven't really been in Portland too much. I mean, like I said, we're staying home. I live in Southwest Portland so it's very suburbs. Like I never know, you know, I guess we're in Portland, but I never know what these kinds of people are going to...what their own views on this are. And so, I haven't really seen too many signs on it. There's a neighbor with like a huge whiteboard out herself where people right, like, thoughts on it. But other than that, related to the protests I haven't seen anything.

MH: Have you seen anything related to coronavirus?

KT: Yes. So that board is about coronavirus. It's like quarantine thoughts, or something, I think is the title. But other than that, I mean, other people were organizing sack food lunch drives that was to Blanchet House, the organization in downtown Portland. But other than that, not really. My neighborhood isn't the most tight knit community I would say. So, I haven't seen two much of anything.

MH: So, back to the protests and you said you've been to a couple marches. What do those protests look like? Like, you mentioned music at the first one, went downtown for the second one. Were social distancing measures upheld?

KT: The first one...So, it was in deep Southeast Portland and it was at a park and the park was tiny. It was really, really small and for the most part, it was like, such a good vibe, I guess, going on there [laughs]. I would say there's music. People were seeing each other for the first time in a while. They were handing out free snacks and cars would honk as they passed. People will get out of cars and donate food, which I thought was great. But social distancing was definitely not upheld there. I would say everyone was wearing masks—almost everyone at least. So, I thought that was good. But it was just such a small park. I don't think social distancing was upheld there. The second one, my sister and I went to Revolution Hall, so like, 13<sup>th</sup> and Stark [Street] and it's like a giant field. For the most part there I thought that people were staying away from each other. I mean, also they have been doing that march every day. So, I think they have a little more practice regarding that too. But social distancing was definitely a lot better there. And just to clarify, my sister and I weren't able to completely march. We stayed for a while, we stayed for like the remarks and they were signing birthday cards that day for Breonna Taylor because it was her 27<sup>th</sup> birthday. As soon as the march was about to start is started *pouring* rain and my sister and I did not bring rain jackets and didn't even have jackets period. We were wearing like T-shirts, so we had to go. And we just ordered Queen of Sheba instead [laughs]. But for the most part...We were there for like an hour and I think people were socially distancing pretty well.

MH: Yeah. You mentioned Queen of Sheba, which is a black owned restaurant in Portland. Have you noticed an uptick in people patronizing black owned businesses and how do you see yourself fitting into that trend?

KT: For sure. So, there was a post going around on social media, though, like all my friends, about black owned businesses' and black owned restaurants to support, and Queen of Sheba was one of them. I used to go a lot in high school, and I was like, "oh my god we should go." My parents don't really know it, but when I got to the restaurant the lady was so busy! When I called, she was like, "we're getting a ton of orders, we're getting a ton of orders right now. Sorry it's going to take an hour." I'm not sure if she, like knew, that her business was being shared through social media a lot. It's a good trend, I think.

KT: And if I'm going to be honest, it does...It's a realization that when I look at those lists, I don't recognize a lot of those names. I think that says something. I would argue a lot of other people

don't either. So, I think that kind of says something about, you know, the representation the black community has and the number of restaurants and businesses they have. When you think of Portland businesses you think of, like, Voodoo Doughnuts and Powell's [Book Store], but those things aren't black owned. So, I think it was kind of an eye opener for me, at least, seeing those posts being shared and stuff. I would like to support more if I was here for longer. I would 100 percent. So, I have a new list of restaurants to try when I come back for winter break.

MH: Yeah. You mentioned social media and posts being shared there, like the list of black owned restaurants. What else has social media helped you with during the protests?

KT: Definitely helped me with spreading like, events, just like locally in Portland. I mean, you're not going to see that on the news like, "oh, what time is the protests," and stuff like that. That's all shared through social media. So, number one I would say that is by far the most helpful—seeing people post where and what time these marches are held and events. I would also argue, just like spreading awareness, you know, ideas and thoughts because a lot of these pretty Instagram visuals you see that sum up an idea or concept in just a few slides that you would need to read a whole article on which I think is important to do afterwards. But it's a good start into giving you some background and giving you something to research afterwards.

MH: What kind of posts are people doing? What platforms are they using the most to organize or spread that kind of information?

KT: So, I've seen a lot of Instagram stories so not necessary like their own post. But it's interesting because I go to school on the East Coast, so I have my Portland friends on one side and then I have my Academy friends on one side. The culture, I think, between the two are just so different. Portland...it's a lot of people arguing to defund the police and arguing about measures that need to be taken. People are a lot more vocal in Portland, I would say, on just what needs to be done, protests that are happening, spreading awareness of police brutality, other killings that have happened in the past. And then, Coast Guard is way more quiet. There are a few people posting a lot of those same things that Portland kids are posting, but it's a lot more silence. And the few posts they have, I would argue, have a much bigger impact if there's a lot of silence.

KT: A lot of the posts are about standing with cops and against racism at the same time, which is something you would never see in Portland. So, it's interesting looking at the divide between the two. And that's mostly Instagram. I've been looking at Twitter a lot, more for, like, comedy, just because looking at what's trending on Twitter...I just think it's so funny. And it's related to the protests. So, it's a bit of comic relief I would say.

MH: Mmhhmm. Yeah. Where do you see yourself fitting in between the East Coast and Portland?

KT: Definitely more in Portland. I would say I have been a little more quiet on social media, but I do stand more with the things people are saying in Portland than on the East Coast just personally I have been more quiet on social media. Because, you know, I don't know a single person in Portland who their parents or relatives are cops. I'm sure there are some, but I don't many personally and back at school a lot of these kids' parents are cops. A lot of them come from law enforcement backgrounds. A lot are Long Island kids so NYPD. I just don't want to step on anyone's toes, I guess. I'm the minority there. I would say my school does mostly try to stay out of politics, but I think I see myself personally aligning more with Portland.

MH: And can you describe a little but about what people are protesting for? We know that they are protesting about the murder of George Floyd, but what is the goal of these protests in your eyes?

KT: The overall general goal I see is just to change the police system. However, I think there's a lot of different ways to do this and I think there's a lot of different things people are arguing for. So recently Minneapolis just came out that they are defunding their police and they are completely changing the system, which I think such an interesting concept and I'm really excited to see what that looks like. But a lot of people are posting "8 Can't Wait" which is, like, different policies that we should implement, but there's controversy around that because people are arguing that those things don't help. So, I think the general goal is just to change the system, but I think how to do that is very different across the board.

MH: How have you seen in the media that protests around the country have differed from your experiences in Portland? Do you notice any discrepancy between protests that are happening in Minneapolis, or Louisville, or other places?

KT: A little bit. A little bit of comedy on Twitter that someone was saying, "oh, I love the different flavors of protests across the country." So, it was showing people in Houston on horses and it was people in New York shouting chants with a lot of cuss words in it. So, I thought that was really interesting to see. Just like kind of funny thing. For the most part, I would say, one of the biggest differences I noticed is that in Portland...Portland is known as the whitest, big city and so I think it's disproportionately a lot of white people protesting. Actually, maybe not disproportionately because the black community in Portland is small. So, I would say the demographics look a lot different. Portland is not a diverse city. So, I think that's one of the biggest differences I've seen so far.

MH: Yeah, for sure. Do you feel any responsibility to do anything other than protest, or post on social media?

KT: For sure. I'm definitely donating money. I'm in a position where I don't pay for school, so I don't have to worry about things like that. My parents both have steady jobs. So, definitely been donating money and signing petitions is so easy, literally just a click of the button. But those are the two things I think that I would say I've been doing mostly.

MH: Have you seen or participated in any creative ways of donations? For example, like paying someone for goods where they donate those goods to charity? Something like that?

KT: Once I bought earrings from a friend, Ava Paul. We went to high school together. She posted on social media that she was selling. I've seen that she was selling earrings for a while and I always thought they were cute, I just never bought them. But she said that she would be donating all the profits to an organization of your choice. I thought that was such a great idea. I ordered two pairs. I decided to go with Black Visions Collective. I just thought it was such a great idea. It was so cute, and I have seen other friends ordering it too. So, I think she's doing a lot of good through that.

MH: How have you found out about where to donate and where have you donated, or have you seen other people donate?

KT: People have been posting on Instagram, like, things in the Portland Community to donate to. And then nationwide. Black Visions Collective was a nationwide organization. And then we did donate to Blanchet House, which is not a specific Black Lives Matter organization, but I do feel like the homeless community in Portland is underrepresented for how large the community is. And also, the factors, like reading statistics on what demographics make up this community I think is helpful. I feel like out of everyone they're being left behind a little bit. But those are the two main ones.

MH: Have you seen anything in the homeless community change because of coronavirus, just observation wise?

KT: A lot more people downtown. I guess, maybe, police are occupied with other things, hopefully. A lot more people downtown. And I do see porta-potties being sent out because I do remember...I was just walking by and I overheard a conversation where these two homeless people were talking that since coronavirus has closed libraries and a lot of restaurants there's not a lot of free public restrooms available for them. So, I think that's the biggest difference I've noticed for sure.

MH: Yes. We've talked a lot about social media and its benefits, maybe some of its downsides. Can you talk a little bit more about the downsides of social media during this time? Either with coronavirus or the Black Lives Matter movement? If any?

KT: I would say, and we're talking about the Black Lives Matter movement, some people, and I've definitely felt it myself before, some people are getting feed fatigue. So, just like too many posts on posts on posts and I think one of the other consequences is a lot of people run in the same circles. So, you're going to see the same post over and over again. And I think that is one of the consequences.

KT: I think seeing other opinions can be hard. At least for me, since I have friends back on the East Coast as well, I think seeing things I'm not used to seeing in Portland is definitely a little bit of a shock sometimes. It makes me have to stop and think about it, and you know, not respond, not do anything about it, just let them be. It is hard. And it's hard seeing people that are different, with different opinions than you. I felt like that did not happen too much in Portland and I don't even think that's always a bad thing. It's different. And it's a little bit hard.

MH: Yeah. Going back to the actual protests. Can you describe the scene? Like, what people were wearing, what kind of signs they were carrying, what did the chants sound like?

KT: I didn't hear too many chants. But there was a lot of "white silence equals violence." I thought I saw that sign all the time. Like, even more so than "Black Lives Matter" I would say. A lot of that. I mean, I thought it was crazy because if you look around, all these people look like they're very different. Different ages, different sizes. Different. I mean these people look like they're from all over Oregon. Like they do not look like your stereotypically...it's not your stereotypical Portland high school kid. Like yes, they are out there, but I saw a mom with a child, like a baby, and, like, older couples. It's just people from all different demographics in Portland. And I thought that was awesome to see. But yeah. Signs were mostly commenting on, I guess, white people's role in police systems and systematic racism and stuff like that.

MH: So, describing the peaceful protests, which have been happening usually earlier in the evening, and then heading towards midnight, there is an increase in police activity that we've seen on the news. What have you seen in the news about that? In the media about that? Portland, specifically. Or you can bring it nationally as well.

KT: I mean media is going to show you a lot of violence. So, people that are choosing to stay out past curfew. And police are using pretty violent tactics against them. I would say all platforms show a very different side of it. So, like your national news, they're going to show like looters and violent protestors. But then you know, I look at, like, Twitter or Tic Tok, or Instagram or whatever, and its more people that are being peaceful and choosing to stay out past midnight, make a statement, and police are attacking them.

KT: I know Portland, at least specifically, I'm not sure if this was at night, but a White Claw, an alcoholic beverage was trending on Twitter because the Portland Police Bureau tweeted a picture of a White Claw, and a can of garbanzo beans and an apple and they were saying that these things were thrown at them last night and all that. And so, people were making fun of them and we trended on Twitter for that [laughs]. I would say Portland Police are no different than any other police in regard to what the tactics they're using on people at night. I mean, even during the day sometimes.

MH: You talked about people from all walks of life coming together. Have you seen anything like that before in person?

KT: Not in my lifetime that I can really think of honestly. It's interesting because my parents, they're from L.A. so they lived—and obviously they're Asian American—in L.A. during the L.A. Riots. And they said it was nothing like this even that was nothing like this, and so yeah. I mean, it's awesome to see. It's awesome to see on all platforms of social media, just like, different groups of people whether it be race or gender or age, just demographics in general. It's really interesting to see. I mean, it's awesome.

MH: Do you see your role as an Asian-American different than a white American in this fight?

KT: I think 100 percent for sure. I mean, before even all this happened, I remember I would be writing papers on like race relations between Asian Americans and black people in America and there is almost no scholarly research on that. And it's because, I mean yes there is some, but honestly there isn't much...Asian Americans tend to be quiet. And I see it in older generations of my family. I'm fourth generation now so we're pretty "Americanized", I guess, but I mean, like I said, my parents lived through those riots and they saw what happened. And so, I think that's partially why they encouraged my sister and I to go to the protests, even if we are at risk because they think it's important. I think the role of Asian Americans is really just to speak up more than ever now, because a lot of past generation have been quiet. Not to distance ourselves from, I guess, whiteness, but to speak out on, you know, what does the model minority myth actually mean, and how does that put down other races, particularly the black community, and a lot of other things to not allow ourselves to be complicit in.

MH: There were a lot of stories in the news about Asian Americans specifically, and Asian immigrants, facing discrimination because of the coronavirus starting in China. Do you have anything to say about that? How did that make you feel seeing that in the media? Did you experience that at all?

KT: Seeing it in the media was hard and it was difficult to watch for sure. Personally, I don't think I experienced it. There were a few instances in, like, grocery stores where people would look at us and, like, tell us to step back a little further. Whether that was racially motivated, I can't say and I'm not going to say it was. Just, there were incidents like that where it did cross my mind. Yes. It was hard, but at the same time I never felt like it affected me personally that badly.

MH: Can you speak to what any other people's experiences on social media were like? Did you see any specific instances that still stick with you in your head?

KT: I don't think so. I'm trying to think. I did have a conversation recently with Milena Ben-Zaken, someone that went to our high school, and she was talking to a black girl who is best friends with her older sister, and she said that her social media experience is hard because she doesn't want to feel like she needs white people specifically to speak up for her. I think that's a very Portland experience for people of color because the city is just not diverse. I mean it is one of the biggest, whitest cities in America. So, I think that's one of the only instances that I can

think of. That conversation did stick out and I've heard things like that in the past before. Not just about social media, but in high school, or in discussions involving race and stuff like that.

MH: What was your experience in high school or middle or elementary school talking about race?

KT: So, I mean, my elementary school had a lot of...it was half Asian kids at least. I mean we spoke Japanese half the day and even in middle school we spoke Japanese a lot. And then once I got to high school we were like the minority. Like the minority. The Japanese Emersion kids were definitely the smaller group. But, as a whole, I've never really felt that different being Asian in Portland. I've never really...There's never been an instance particularly from friends, or from people that were close that I felt different.

KT: I would say the only days that that would maybe happen was Grant [High School] would have events called "Race Forward" where we would talk—they would pause school for an hour or so and talk about race. I thought it was a good idea, and I think it had good intentions. But I do remember these topics being very uncomfortable for me only because...not that people weren't respectful. People were super respectful of everyone's opinions. It was just that I would usually be the only Asian American girl or Asian American period in the class in the top. So, it almost feels more pressure on yourself to say something that matters. And that's different. You almost feel like you're speaking for the Asian American community because you're obviously the only representation in that discussion of 25 kids. So, I think that was definitely a little uncomfortable.

KT: Even now at my school, in college, there are not many Asian American girls and it's definitely a smaller percentage than what it even was in high school. So, I think as I've gotten older, my eyes have opened more and more to feeling different and I don't think that's always a negative either. It's just that being Asian is different than everybody, but you don't feel *that* different because people in Portland try to. Be very conscious of it compared to, like Boston. Oh my *god*, there's so many Asians in Boston and the way you're treated there is very different. So yeah, I would say that it's changed throughout the years and it changes where I am for sure.

MH: Yeah. We've talked briefly about Ebola at the beginning of our conversation and comparing Ebola to coronavirus. I'm wondering, has there been anything else besides Ebola that has been similar to the coronavirus that you remember in your life? Any pandemics? Anything serious like that?

KT: I don't think there has been anything as serious as coronavirus. And everything that I do remember, I think I was too young to fully grasp. I do remember Swine Flu a little bit. I think I remember SARS. I'm not sure. I think that must have been a while ago. It's just like, a lot of things from the past. I don't really remember. I just remember hearing briefly and then it just never came back into conversation. So, there hasn't been anything like this in my lifetime, at least, or that I've heard from other people so, yeah, I don't know.

MH: Yeah, and then connecting to that question, you mentioned your parents experience with the L.A. Riots. Have you seen anything similar to the Black Lives Matter protests that are happening now in your lifetime? It can be about race or it could be about other things.

KT: Yeah for sure. I mean, this is not the first time Black Lives Matter has shown up as a protest. It's happened before. There's you know, been police killings for a long time. I don't think any of them have been as big or widespread as this one though right now, even the L.A. Riots, which I mean I obviously wasn't alive for, but my parents said it wasn't like this. It wasn't nationwide. I mean, yes, L.A. was really reeling from it. But otherwise, they said the rest of the country wasn't like this. This one is way more widespread I would argue.

MH: What do you see happening in the capital right now? Have you seen any news about the protests happening there?

KT: I saw that they painted that street with "Black Lives Matter." I do have a few friends from D.C., like at my school, and I see them posting about the protests going on. Other than that, I haven't heard a ton about the capital. I'm trying to think, but there's nothing that really comes up.

MH: What do you think we can learn from the kind of activism that's coming out of these protests?

KT: Oh, definitely. I mean, we talked about it a lot before, but definitely the power of social media. I mean, this whole thing would have not spread the same way it did unless for social media. I remember when I first saw the video of George Floyd, and you know, it's a hard thing to watch, and I think everyone else felt that way too. So that's why people are coming out and just really utilizing the power that social media can have, and their platform because information and news spread so quickly. How viral videos can go up, especially police officers who are not doing their job right, I would say, is also a lesson that we can take from this.

MH: How do you think that's influenced by the coronavirus? Are there any traits of protestors that are, you know, persevering though a pandemic to still be in the streets? Do you think there's any lessons to be learned from that?

KT: I mean, one of the most different things about these protests you compared to the other ones, I mean everyone's wearing a mask. I also see that there are, I mean, others like my family too. Other people are at risk. So, it's crazy to think that these protests aren't even happening with everyone that could be there. There's a lot of people still at home, supporting in any way they can. So, I don't know. It's just lessons. I'm not really sure.

MH: Is there anything else that you'd like to add or talk about or clear up?

KT: I don't think so.

MH: What are you excited about with the reopening and the different phases?

KT: Well, I will not be around for that. I'm looking forward to, I mean two or three months from now I'll be turning 21 so I'm excited to celebrate my birthday and hopefully things will reopen [laughs]. I will mostly be at school for the next, for the reopening phases. So, I won't get to see all that happen. But I'm sure my sister will update me. She's really excited to go see her boyfriend and go thrift shopping. So, I'm sure those would be similar answers to mine if I could experience that [laughs].

MH: Well, thank you so much for joining Kalea!

KT: Of course. Thank you.

MH: I'm going to stop recording...Let's see.

[End of Interview]