

Bianca Barnes

Interview Transcription

Thank you for taking part in this very important research.

My name is Bianca Barnes. I am a CI student. As a class project, I and my classmates are collecting the oral histories of those in Ventura County who are affected by the current economic recession. By signing the consent form that I have provided you with earlier, you have agreed to participate in this research and/or you have agreed the audio-recording of this interview to be archived at the CI Broome Library. I would like to assure you that whenever you feel uncomfortable with the interview, you can take a break or you can decide to withdraw your participation in this interview.

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself.

I was born in Ontario California and I'm a sophomore at CI.

2. What do you do for a living, do you have a job?

Yes, I work at Papaya. I am the assistant supervisor; I work there six days out of the week, usually after school.

3. What day do you have off during that week?

Wednesday. That's usually the day when I go hang out with my boyfriend and stuff like that.

4. How many hours do you work a day?

I work six and a half hours.

5. How many days a week do you go to school?

I go to school three days a week, Monday, Wednesday and Thursday.

6. What other jobs did you have before you came and worked at Papaya?

Papaya was my job as soon as I came over from Ontario. When I lived in Ontario, during high school, I worked at Hollister, but that was a part time job. I got like \$30 on each paycheck. It was the perfect job for me being in high school. But when I came out here my sister told me that I need to find a job so that I can pay for my gas and all of my extra expenses like food and eating out. I came down here one day in summer and I walked into Papaya and got a job. I didn't apply, I just walked in, talked to the manager and she said "Okay, come tomorrow and you can sign the papers." I was like okay!

7. What was the reason you came to Camarillo?

It was just to come to school, I don't have any family around here, so it was just something different. I didn't want to be stuck in Ontario because once you're there; you're there forever. I didn't want to be there forever. I've known all of my friends since kindergarten. I've moved around a lot as a kid but I stayed in the same school district. All of those people either go to community college or to Cal State San Bernardino. I wanted something new, to have difference experiences.

8. When you moved here from Ontario, you lived in housing on campus?

Yes, for my first year, I lived in housing, and then with my roommates, we moved out last year.

9. How did you pay for housing when you lived here last year?

Financial aid covered my housing.

10. Who is paying off that financial aid?

I am paying it off; my dad didn't qualify to get the parent plus loan. I had to take both the subsidized and unsubsidized loans and I had to take out my dad's loan too. So last semester, I took out three loans just to pay for housing.

11. Are you still paying those loans off?

For the loans, you pay them off after you get out of school. Six months after you are out of school, you have to start paying off your loans.

12. Are you paying for where you live now?

Yeah, I pay for everything myself. I pay for my insurance, rent for my house, and anything else I want to do. I still have financial aid for school. I had enough grants to cover school and I took out a loan just incase if anything happened to my car, just for extra safety. I have two bank accounts, one account is for my financial aid, and that stays there. If I need anything, like if I'm short for rent, ill take it out of there. Its my backup. For my rent and my car, and monthly insurance which is about \$400 dollars I use the money I make at my job.

13. What was your childhood dream growing up in Ontario?

Every little kid wants to be a firefighter or a doctor, that was me. In 8th grade I figured out that I wanted to help people. That's why I wanted to be a doctor. I wanted to be a psychologist. I'm still trying to figure out exactly what I want to do with it but I want to do something in psychology.

14. Tell me about your family a little bit?

I am the youngest of four, my mom had a marriage before my dad and she had two kids. They are 34 and 31. And I have an older brother who is 23, and I'm 19. My oldest sister didn't live with us, she lived with my aunt. I grew up with my second oldest sister and my brother. Then my second oldest sister went to college when I was 7 years old. Then she had her first child when she was 18, so I became an aunt at age 8. My other sister got married around 28, and had children. So I'm an aunt of four. It was just me and my brother when my sister went to college and then my sister moved in with her husband because they didn't have anywhere to go when I was 8. Then they moved out when I was 9 and got their own place and now they are fine. When I was 10, my mom was diagnosed with cancer and we lived in a house and were doing really well, our family was fine, we were stable. My mom passed away when I was 12. After that it was all down hill, my dad was still mourning over my mom and he didn't move on so me and my brother had to be strong for our dad, when it should be the other way around. Me and my brother watched out for each other but we hated each other. In 8th grade I felt like I was better than him, I was so mean when I was younger. I apologize for that now. In high school we got closer and my dad was getting better, he got a job in 2009 after he was fired from UPS when my mom passed away. Then we got evicted in 2010 and my brother moved in with my sister in Arizona but I moved in with my older sister who lives in Ontario. Without her, I wouldn't be in college because she did a lot for me. She took me to summer school and helped me figure out all of my classes. If it weren't for her I wouldn't be where I am today. I'd probably be at community college.

15. What made you choose to live with that sister instead of the one in Arizona?

I've always been daddy's little girl, and I didn't want to leave him. My brother felt like he was old enough to leave and he wanted to start his own life. I was still in high school and had all my friends and wanted to stay. My whole life is here; I can't just up and leave it. It took awhile for me to get adjusted, but after while, it's easy now. I've dealt with trying to figure out, where am I going to live. I'm really laid back, it will all figure itself out. It comes and it comes and I'll deal with it and after that I'll be a stronger person and that's how I see it.

16. When did your hardships for you personally begin? When you found out that you had to live off campus and completely pay for everything, how did that go? Were you freaking out or did you know it was going to happen at some point?

I knew it was going to happen. My sister told me that if I get enough friends, it's cheaper to live off campus. By my second year I should be established at my job and figure out a way for me and my roommates to live off campus. Me and my roommates fell in love. It was perfect because we all wanted to move off campus and it all worked itself out. So it wasn't like a real shock, we talked about it and it was smarter and it's something I need to do. I saw it coming.

17. What was the most unanticipated part of you moving out and having your own house and paying for everything?

We started out with 6 roommates and now we have 5. When the extra person moved out, our rent went up and I was unprepared for that. That pushed me to save more, because they moved out at the end of the semester when I had no financial aid. This is what I can do with my money, this is what I can't. I need to save half of my money for my first check and I need to save half of my money from my second check from one check I take out 270, from another check I take out 270 and that pays for my insurance and my rent. I had to look at my money and not spend it. I can't trust people as easily as I used to. At first I was mad that she left, but then I realized it will be better without her and we figured it out. Now I just save more money. I'm prepared now.

18. Have you ever gotten close to missing paying rent?

Yeah, I had to call my dad, and my dad doesn't have a lot of money so I felt really bad asking him for help. And he helped me. Another time I had to ask my roommates for help. One of my roommates has more money than the rest of us and so she helped us out and then another one of my roommates helped us out. They know I'm good for it and will pay them back as soon as I can. If I didn't have the roommates I do now, I wouldn't have a house anymore. They helped me a lot, and my dad helped me once. Now I am comfortable and will make rent from now on. We are moving in July, I have enough money for my share of the down payment for another house and I have enough money if anything happened to my car. I have backups for my backups.

19. Do you look at life differently now that you live on your own?

Not really, it opened my eyes to the world and it made me appreciate my sister, I don't know how she does it. She goes to work 9-5 and then she comes home, cooks dinner, and then we eat and then she does laundry. For me, I go to school, then go to work and I'm so tired and just go to bed. Then I don't want to make any dinner so I go to McDonalds and then I freak out because I'm eating too much fast food, I'm going to get fat. So I bought a whole bunch of food but I was too lazy to make it. It made me appreciate more, especially my sister. It was so easy, and now I just appreciate it. I roll with the punches, I don't have enough

money to get healthy food but I have enough money to get something that isn't fast food. I can get microwave rice for like \$3, it's a luxury because its microwavable but its \$3, so three minutes to cook, its fast and then I can leave. When I go shopping its not like this food looks good, it's more like I need something convenient. I don't have a lot of time to prepare meals. I'm either late to work or have to leave school early. So I'm usually late for work.

20. How do you have enough time for free time and having fun?

I don't. Me and my boyfriend hang out after work, around 10pm then he leaves at like 2am, we end up falling asleep at like midnight so we really only hang out for like two hours and then we fall asleep. On the weekends I have a lot more free time, he gets out at 8pm, I get out at 9:30. We have more time. I can't remember the last time we saw a movie. When we first started dating we didn't have difficult classes so we had more time, but this semester we have challenging classes so we just have to be studying and doing homework all the time. So we do homework together a lot. On the weekends we will just sit on the couch and watch TV because we are too lazy to do anything else. All of my roommates work, but I'm the only one that works all the time so sometimes I feel left out, but I understand that its just because I work more than they do. I close everyday so I usually get home around 9:30. But sometimes I get out at 7:30 but on those nights I come back to school for a dance class that I have. So I get home at 9:30 every night.

21. How do you have time to do homework and study for exams?

I come to school early, like for the sociology test on Wednesday, I took the day off. My work schedule is really flexible so if I really need to be at school, I can be at school. My boyfriend and I work together to get our work done. We are both busy so it works out that way.

22. Do you plan on graduating from CSUCI?

Yes, I'm probably going to be a super senior. I am majoring in psychology and minoring in performing arts. I'm still trying to figure out what I want to do with psychology. Because of my units I wont be a junior until my spring semester and so then I wont be a senior until the spring semester after my fourth year. When I work I take 12-14 units. I tried 16 with work once and I almost died. I take 12 and if I go any higher I'm just going to fail, so I keep it at minimum for now until I can get more balanced. It's still hard to balance school and work.

23. Do you have any idea of what you want to do after you graduate?

I want to work with children with autism, but I'm not too sure yet. I think either that or a councilor. I need to think about how I'm going to pay for grad school and what jobs can I get with a psychology degree. I might just do my masters to be a councilor. Because I just want to help people already. And then maybe try to get my doctorate or PHD. Maybe ill be a high school councilor. Something with kids. If I need to keep going with my education, I will.

24. Do you ever feel like your life is out of control?

Most definitely, I'm here and the world is spinning around me. If I'm really stressed out, I forget things. I'm surprised that I brought my license and my purse today. When I forget things my boyfriend gets mad at me and then I just break down and cry. I get stressed but then I think that I can give up, and fail or I can do it, turn it in, and even if I don't get credit I feel better about myself, so that's usually what I do.

25. Is there anyone else who is really helpful through hard times?

I'm still trying to get on good terms with my dad; we are a little rocky sometimes. We don't talk for days but then all of a sudden we talk and its fine. My boyfriend is really helping me. He reminds me to talk to my dad and call my grandma. My family tells me how proud of me they are, about living alone and everything and my boyfriend said that's good and I should keep talking to my family because they make me feel good about myself and they are there for me. And then ill get emotional and start crying.

26. Do you blame anyone for your hardships?

No, I'm done with blaming people. At first I blamed my mom when she passed away, then I blamed my dad for everything that happened after that. But then I realized that it's not his fault for loving her so much. It's all on yourself, if I want to blame someone for my life being hard, its not there fault, its mine. I could always make my life easier. I feel like I grew up too fast, people I know are barely going through the things I went through when I was 10 or 12 right now. I feel like they are lucky, I don't want my kids to have my life.

27. Why did you decide to do this interview when I asked you?

I wanted to help out a fellow students, I know how hard it is to find someone to interview. Everybody's story is different, I felt like I wanted to help.

28. How do you find the strength to get through hard times?

Sometimes I hate my life and want to give up, but at the same time, I can't just give up. So many people have helped me and I have worked so hard that I can't let myself or the people who have helped me down. I can't just give up; I'm doing it to make myself proud and to show people that helped me that what they did isn't just going to waste.

29. Are you hopeful to the future?

Yeah, I think I can do it. If I went through all of that stuff when I was just 12, I think that I can do anything. It's helped me see life as perspective and it's all how I want to see it. If I want to see it positively, I'll see it positively. I try to think of everything positively, if not I'm going to just hate everything. I'm not going to give up. If bad things happen, I will change things around to make them work next time.

30. Is there anything else you want to tell me?

If anything, this is the hand I've been dealt, so I have to deal with it.