R.47. Speaking of Feminism: Today's Activists on the Past, Present, and Future of Feminism

Interview R-0891
Andrea Pino
December 6, 2015

ABSTRACT – Andrea Pino

Interviewee:	Andrea Pino
Interviewer:	Rachel F. Seidman
Interview Date:	December 16, 2015
Location:	Washington, D.C.
Length	Approximately 3 hours 15 minutes

Andrea Pino is co-founder of the national survivor advocacy organization End Rape on Campus. Her work was prominently featured in the film The Hunting Ground, which premiered at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival. In this interview, Pino discusses her family's immigration from Cuba, and growing up in the Little Havana neighborhood of Miami, Florida. She reflects on the difficulties she experienced as an ambitious young woman who did not find much support for her academic goals, and on the balancing act she has to negotiate between embracing her culture and her family while also being critical of some of their beliefs. She describes the immense effort she put into getting to the University of North Carolina, and the profound love she felt for the university despite the fact that her experience as a first generation college student and a Latina was difficult. She recalls her experience of being raped at a party, and her sense of bewilderment and shame because she had been trained in sexual assault awareness techniques. Much of the interview focuses on the work she and friend Annie Clark undertook to sue the University of North Carolina under Title IX for failing to respond appropriately to sexual assaults, and their efforts to support other student activists around the country through their organization End Rape on Campus and another they helped get started, Know Your IX. She reflects on extreme toll that PTSD and the activism with little financial support took on her mind and body. She discusses how she and Clark reached out to Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and helped her understand the issue of sexual assaults on campuses and draft new legislation. She reflects on her relationship to other feminist activists and organizations, and the strengths and weakness of online or hashtag feminist campaigns. Pino muses on what future direction her life will take and how she will continue to seek to make change. This interview was conducted as part of Rachel F. Seidman's research for her book *Speaking of Feminism: Today's Activists on the Past, Present and Future of the U.S. Women's Movement*.

FIELD NOTES – Andrea Pino

(compiled December 16, 2015)

Interviewee:	Andrea Pino
Interviewer:	Rachel F. Seidman
Interview Date:	December 16, 2015
Location:	Interviewee's home, Washington, DC

THE INTERVIEWEE. Andrea Pino is the cofounder of End Rape on Campus.

THE INTERVIEWER. Rachel F. Seidman is an historian and associate director of the Southern Oral History Program.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVIEW. The interview took place in the shared home of Andrea Pino and Annie Clark, with whom Pino collaborated to found and run End Rape on Campus. The two women are extremely close, and Clark was coming and going at points in the interview as she got ready to leave for an appointment. The room was set up for Christmas with a small Christmas tree in the corner, and their dog joined us. There was no coffee table, so the recorder was placed on the couch between us, which lead to some background noise. I moved it to a stool, but she kept kicking it. She talked easily most of the time, although noticeably turned sideways so that she was looking away from me when talking about the assault.

NOTE ON RECORDING. Recorded on a digital zoom recorder.

TRANSCRIPT--ANDREA PINO

Interviewee: ANDREA PINO

Interviewer: Rachel Seidman

Interview Date: December 16, 2015

Location: Washington, D.C.

Length: 03:15:46

START OF RECORDING

Rachel Seidman: This is Rachel Seidman and I am here in Washington D.C. with Andrea Pino. It is December 16, 2015 and we are undertaking an oral history interview for a project currently called #Feminism: Speaking Up And Talking Back in the Digital Age. Andrea, I'm going to ask you to start by telling me about your grandparents and what you remember about them. I don't know if they are still alive.

Andrea Pino: They're all alive.

RS: Can you tell me what they did for a living, do for a living, and where they live?

AP: My grandparents on my mother's side are named Evarista Silva and Antonio Silva. They are from a small town, a port area of Cuba, called Gibara. They came over fifty years ago seeking employment opportunities. My grandmother was sponsored by an aunt that was settled in Miami, I think in the 1950s. She was the first one to leave Cuba on my mother's side. This was before Castro so it was still during Batista. They got married before they left and they were in their early twenties. My grandmother brought him over as well as her four other siblings. She was the oldest of her siblings. She's the only one that's still living despite being the oldest. She's in her eighties.

My grandfather for a living, he painted warships. He said that it was always very odd to be painting Reagan's ships and never really even thinking that the president thought about him. He's been a Democrat his whole life. He raised us to be Democrats, meaning he's always believed that the government should be there for the people. He always instilled in me the desire to be politically active and to call out things that seemed to be unequal and unjust. He's definitely where I got most of my political drive from. Since growing up, he used to tell me, "Nunca, nunca, nunca *paras de luchar*." Never, never, never give up. His dream was always to go to college but he never had the chance to. He wanted to be a nurse, he told me. He said despite what you might have to deal with, always remember that you can do what you set your mind to do.

My mother was their only child. She's currently fifty-six. She also had a dream of going to school, but when starting her associate's degree at Miami-Dade College, she had to drop out when my grandfather had a heart attack. Since then, her life has surrounded my grandparents and us, but very much my grandparents. Even until this day, she is still their primary caregiver. The roles have reversed since she was in her twenties.

On my dad's side, it's a little different. My dad's parents are from La Habana. My grandfather was actually a political prisoner. He was arrested after manifesting against the Cuban government recently under Castro. They are considered refugees. They were considered refugees when they came to the States. My father came when he was four. My uncle was seven. Since then, he's had a hearing disability because he had to be given kind of a black market vaccine to qualify for refugee status before he got to the States. Because of that disability that was developing since he was a child, he struggled in school. So he didn't even make it to college. He

barely finished high school. Since then, he said that he regretted feeling inadequate and he regretted not asking for help when he could have.

On that side of my family, they're much more conservative and I think a lot of it is very much like old Miami. You have Cuban refugees who felt they were forgotten by the then Democratic presidency. Because of that there has been somewhat of a political divide among my family. My mom's side is much more hard-core Democrats. And then my dad's side is much more apathetic conservative Republicans. I ended up a Democrat and I ended up being very politically active. But because of what my dad's been through and my dad's family has been through, I have been skeptical of government efforts to take care of refugees, which nowadays is much more relevant. It's been an interesting conversation among my family about what it means to protect refugees.

That is where I came from. My dad ended up going into sales. He ended up working specifically on flooring tile and countertops, stone, and precious stone. He opened up a business. He lost it during the recession in 2008. And that was right when I was applying to college. My mother, since she wasn't able to finish college, she actually started working for Eastern Airlines. When the company went bankrupt before I was born, she ended up working for U.S. Customs. She's worked in Customs specifically in the Department of Fines and Penalties ever since before I was born. She's hoping to be done very soon. I wish that she would do something different. I know she's miserable in her job.

[Interruption]

RS: So tell me more about your mom. Because she had this father who had these activist ideas and you absorbed a lot of those. Did your mom also?

AP: [Brief interruption] My mom, in a sense, is a victim of a culture that doesn't really prioritize women and women's achievements. It's by no means my grandparents' fault at all. They very much instilled the same desire to chase her dreams that they did to me. But unfortunately she felt as if her sole responsibility was to take care of her family. I really do think a part of her gave up when my grandfather had a heart attack. And I think that's actually why she put so much time and energy into my sister and me; to much of our irritation for a good portion of our life. My mom since day one was always the busy bee right over our shoulder making sure we were doing our homework and studying. Not that it was really needed because my sister and I always had a desire to learn and a desire to read, especially at a very young age. But for her, she wanted to make sure that we knew that she would always be there to help. I think in a sense she's vicariously lived through us and I think that's why it hurts that we're not home right now and we're the first ones to leave home for a long period of time. I think it's gotten to the point where they realize that we're not coming home. We go home for the holidays but we're not going to stay there. In a sense, I think she's happy and she's at peace that we ended up okay. We didn't go the wrong way. For lack of a better way of saying it, we didn't get pregnant, which a lot of people growing up did, at a very young age. We grew up in inner-city Miami. We grew up in Little Havana where a lot of refugees settled. This is the largest Cuba diaspora in the world.

It wasn't easy. It wasn't an easy place to grow up. My house was broken into. The first time when I was ten, it was broken into over four times after that one time. The first time that it happened we did what we're supposed to do. We called the police. We expected them to do the right thing. They didn't find anyone responsible. They didn't even really investigate it. That was the same thing that happened every single time afterwards. That was the first time that I was very much aware that people don't care about people like us that grow up in a poor neighborhood, that

don’t really have anything to provide for the city, that don’t have big businesses that are flourishing.

In many ways, my mom was surviving. My mom is surviving. In a sense, she feels guilty that she’s not more successful than she is. But I think in a way, she’s coming to terms with the fact that my sister and me are happy and successful, and have a college education, is a success. She’s coming to terms with that. At the same time, I feel that the way she has dedicated her life to taking care of my grandparents is also evidence that she can’t really let go of the responsibilities that have been instilled in her, even if they haven’t been directly so. Everyone in my family has encouraged my mother to go back to school. Her friends have gone back to school. Her friends that didn’t drop out, that dropped out or had to take care of kids or had to take care of their parents, they all have college degrees now except her. I think it’s because my grandparents are still alive. My grandfather is eighty-nine. My grandmother is in her early eighties . She feels as if she can’t focus on herself up until that responsibility is over. So I feel for her. I really do.

Growing up I felt very frustrated with her because I felt I didn’t have space to breathe at times. Looking back, it is an element of our culture. We Cuban families are very tight-knit. But I think I’m at this interesting period of just being Cuban-American in general. We are becoming more American. The Cuban part is a little more distant than the American part. There were things that I wanted that I didn’t have. I wanted more freedom. I wanted more ability to move around, to travel, to do things I saw in movies and read in books that I didn’t do because we were focusing so much on our family that we didn’t have time. The milestones that my family found important--my quinceañera, my first communion, my confirmation—very important cultural landmarks were not important to me.

I became very disillusioned with the Catholic Church at a very young age in age, mainly because I was becoming more and more aware of just certain injustices that just wouldn't sit with me anymore. At a very young age, I was very aware of homophobia in the Church. I was very aware of racism. But I think it's when I saw people around me that I care for, that I respected, that were indifferent that I realized that it wasn't really those people. It was what the Church was instilling in us. I think especially my quinceañera was a big turning point in my life because I told my parents that for my quinceañera I didn't want a party. I didn't want a dress. I didn't want people to come and essentially celebrate my purity at fifteen years old. What I wanted was, I wanted tuition money. I wanted that money to go towards my college education because I wanted to get out of there.

It wasn't that I resented my family at all or my culture. I'm very proud of who I am and where I come from. It's that I felt as if there was no option to be my whole self. Until this day I'm trying to figure out if I ever had a space in which I could be my whole self, my political self, my educated self, and my loud-somewhat abrasive-to-other-people self. I do feel that at home I have to code switch. I have to turn off my intellectual side, my educated side. Because right now, I've become my family's teacher. I'm bringing the education I learned outside of home. At the same time, it's recognizing that there are certain things that they are not going to be able to learn. There are certain racist tendencies, classist tendencies, tendencies that I really can only articulate because I have that education, that they're never really going to understand. They're never really going to understand police brutality. They're never really going to understand Islamophobia. They're never really going to understand these things that they haven't been able to articulate because they've been surviving. At the same time, I feel as if when I'm outside of home, no one really understands where I came from. It's definitely been a balance. For my quinceañera

especially, it was the fact the event was really for my mother. It was the fact that for her raising a daughter to be fifteen, raising a daughter to become a woman, was a success for her. That's why I caved in.

At the same time, right after that was when my dad lost his business. There was no money for college, absolutely nothing. I paid most of my college application fees myself through a part-time job I had as a graphic designer. I taught myself graphic design when I was in eighth grade, just for fun--and tutoring other children as well. It was really difficult, it was really difficult paying for college. It was really difficult having my family understand that I was not going to apply to a single school in Miami. The closest school I was applying to was University of Florida, which I was definitely not going to go to. Since I was in sixth grade, I told her that I wanted to go to Yale. The only reason I wanted to go to Yale was because I was obsessed with Gilmore Girls and I wanted to be Rory Gilmore. I knew nothing about Yale. I also knew nothing about most colleges because nobody around me went to top colleges. Most of them that went to college went to community colleges. So the idea of going to Yale, even the idea of leaving home, was just not something that anyone understood. Not to mention that I was twelve or thirteen years old talking about college, and not in this, "I need to go to college to get a degree." It was "I need to go to college because that's who I am. I want to learn and I want to be an academic." I ended up not going to Yale, obviously.

The way I stumbled upon Carolina was through my AP Bio professor, whose brother went to Carolina and was a Covenant Scholar. He said just because of who you are and your activist nature, you would fit at a place called the University of North Carolina, which I knew nothing about. The summer of my junior year I told my parents that for my birthday I wanted to go on a college road trip, which for my dad was cool. "I get to drive my Suburban and we get to

make a vacation out of it," he said. It was really when I stepped foot on Carolina--and it was the first school I stepped foot on-- that I realized I belonged there. It was the first time that I felt that I could be my whole self at a place. No matter how difficult it would be, that experience would be priceless.

RS: I want to come back to that. This AP Bio teacher was someone who connected with you. Were there other teachers or friends that were nurturing this kind of academic passion and drive?

AP: I would say the idea of an academic passion, it's not really understood. People from my area don't have academic passion. Even so, I'm the only person in my block that left for school. I'm one of the only few people I know that left for school, and my little sister as well. I mean it just wasn't heard of. I started my education at a Catholic school. It was a subsidized parochial school. It was subsidized by the Archdiocese. For my family, because there really weren't any schools in my district that were good schools at all, they were paying for parochial school. I feel a little better knowing that Sotomayor also went to parochial school. I will say there are some times I think, "How the hell did I survive that." It was a very conservative school and it was not a good education. There really wasn't anyone that nurtured my academic spirit. It was actually the opposite. People thought I was cocky, an egghead of sorts. It was this whole-- It was really bullying, is what it was. Academia, being good at school, is not a good thing. People literally hated you for it. There were only a few people in my class that had decent grades. But there was something about my being vocal about wanting to learn that didn't sit right with people. People didn't like it.

I felt very alone. I felt very alone in my wanting to learn. There is one moment I feel illustrates best what I had to struggle with. I had a teacher who told me that I couldn't read Harry

Potter until I finished the Bible, the whole Bible. I just couldn't read Harry Potter. And that was the same with any type of reading. We had a mock election in 2004. I was one of two people who hypothetically voted for Kerry if I could. My teacher told me that I was voting for a "homo-loving baby killer." I was young and I was like, "This is insane." But it's very much how a lot of people growing up were. There was no nurturing spirit. I nearly got detention for correcting a teacher who told us that Cuba was part of Central America. No, it's not. It's part of the Caribbean. If you want to say Latin America, sure. Of course, everyone's like, God, Andrea is correcting people again. There is no space for educational development -- until I got to high school when I finally begged my parents to let me transfer schools.

This was when charter schools were trying to open up. I went to an international school, a charter school sponsored by the French, Spanish, and Italian Consulate, called International Studies Charter High School. It was located in the Citibank building in its temporary location in Miracle Mile, Coral Gables, which is a very wealthy area. And it was a completely different experience. There were people from all different backgrounds, all different languages. I grew up bilingual. I speak Spanish and English fluently. And I decided to go into the Italian program, mainly because the French program was too competitive. I was already at a disadvantage because I didn't have the education that a lot of the students had had going into ISCHS. A lot of them went to magnet schools; magnet middle schools and magnet elementary schools. I did not. So I definitely was at a disadvantage going into that school.

But it was at that school that I had probably the most nurturing teachers that I had up until when I got to college. I had an English teacher, her name was Ms. Acosta. She went to Columbia for grad school. She is the first one who insisted that I read for fun in addition to for work. I would finish books very quickly, and then ask for more. She nurtured my love for journalism and

writing, which was really cool. I also had these two really great professors in the Italian portion of my courses. One was Annalisa Katz. She had a Ph.D., and she was brilliant, and she taught Italian literature**.** She was incredible. Even though I entered the school late, I entered the school as a tenth-grader so I already missed the whole first year of Italian, and the class that all the students had taken. Yet she was confident that I would be one of the best students in her class. Then there was Paola Tavarelli who was a Fulbright. She taught history and philosophy. She told me that it would be a waste if I didn't run for political office. So I had some really cool teachers at my high school. But it was not easy. It was not an easy high school. Robert Bilbao, who was the AP Bio teacher, probably the first person who told me that women could be good at science. By no means, am I good at science. I think it was the first time that I felt in a sense holistically supported as best as I could be in an inner-city school in Miami. Even though I was the only one who was really talking about college, you had people who said, "I am more than willing to write you a recommendation letter to go to whatever school you want to go to." It was definitely something I needed.

RS: So you go on this car trip and you step on UNC's campus. What did you see that made you feel so confident right then.

AP: It's something I feel like nobody else understands. I think I met one other student who felt this way. But it was actually the Forest Theater. If you look at my staircase right now in my house, it's a bunch of different books. I call this the books that raised me. It's like when looking at the Forest Theater and I can just see myself watching a rendition of Midsummer Night's Dream, which I've yet to see by the way. I hope somebody does it because it's a perfect place for it.

RS: Do you want to describe the Forest Theater?

AP: The Forest Theater is an outdoor stone theater right across the street from the admissions building. It was one of the first things I saw at Carolina, before I even saw the Old Well. Because I was coming up from Country Club, so I did not see the Old Well before I saw the Forest Theater. I think a lot of it is the trees. Granted, Miami, it's flat. It's tropical. We don't have trees. We have palm trees, which up until recently I thought were native but they're actually imported from Costa Rica. We don't even have palm trees. We have nothing. I always felt very connected to trees. These would be pine trees. Pino is pine tree in Spanish. I have a connection to nature and I feel I'm most myself when I am surrounded by nature.

The first time I visited North Carolina, I was ten. I've been trying to get my parents to move there ever since. It's been unsuccessful, unfortunately. I felt the Forest Theater was a place where I could feel very connected to myself. It actually was throughout college. It was a place where I would go sit and read, sit and do work, sit and write, and feel completely alone but not lonely in a sense. I felt that I was connected to my inner self in a way that I couldn't feel anywhere else on campus. I didn't know that right then, but it was a place where I did most of my thinking. By thinking I mean hard thinking, thinking that I didn't feel I could do anywhere else. But seeing the Forest Theater, I would love to see a play there. Specifically Shakespeare. Of course my parents are like, "What are you talking about? It's like a rock." I'm not like, "It's not just a rock. It's a rock that--It's existential in a way, an existential rock theater. And that was before we started our tour of Carolina. And I just kept staring at it while the tour guide was talking. I eventually had to disconnect from the Forest Theater. In a way I was telling myself, "Don't get your hopes up. Don't fall in love with this theater. You might not get to come here. It's really, really, really difficult to get into Carolina out-of-state." Everyone told me--and that was one of the most disappointing things. I feel that students are told that things are really, really

difficult to kind of toughen them up. At the same time, I feel that I need someone to tell me that you can get in, you'll be great, you'll be fine.

Ironically enough, this was about the same time this whole Abby Fisher case was going on. You better believe I was frustrated. And I was frustrated because when you are a person of color and you're a minority on campus--. Carolina had at the time had less than eleven percent Hispanic students maybe, nah it was way less than that. When you are such a small percentage of the campus population, there's a reason why you don't get into schools like this. I didn't necessarily feel disadvantaged but it was all I knew. All I knew was, I was lucky enough to be smart. I was lucky enough to have parents who supported me. I was one of the lucky ones in a way. At the same time, when you go on these tours and you have people who have taken twenty AP classes, whose parents went to the school, whose parents were doctors and lawyers and politicians, and your parents don't have BA's, you don't feel like you belong there. And that's how I felt when I was visiting Carolina. Speaking to students who Carolina was their dream school but their safety school was Harvard. I was like, "Well, this is not going to be easy." It was very discouraging because I felt like I had nothing going for me. I wasn't playing sports. I hadn't written a novel or saved the "poor starving kids in Africa." Truthfully, that's what I felt everyone was doing. Everyone was saving the "poor children in Africa." They get to go on these tours to go "save people." This is absurd. It speaks volumes to what is expected of children now. You are expected to literally save the world before you get your college education. You're also expected to know what you're doing. And I think that's actually what discouraged me from looking at Yale. We ended up leaving and visiting Yale. It was after visiting North Carolina. It was there that I asked my Yale tour guide if I could do more than one major. They said, "No." I have no idea what I want to do with my life. There is no way that I'm going to do one major and commit

to it for four years. I want to go to a school that's going to allow me to discover what I don't know that I'm interested in. That's what exactly what Carolina became in researching schools that I was applying to.

I also want to say that I took admissions very seriously, and I do mean, *very seriously*. I had an entire binder of all the brochures that I had acquired since I was in middle school. I had two pages per school, including everything about them. Their scores, what students did, what their job possibilities were after. Everything about every single school I was interested in. That's literally what I was doing was instead of caring about boys, and caring about high school, I cared about college. So I brought this binder on every single tour that I did. And a lot of this was, I cared about this so much. My schedule literally throughout most of high school was I would wake up at four in the morning. I would study for the SAT. I would do research on a school that I told myself I would research that day. Then I would brush up on my notes for my classes. I would go to school at six, start school at seven-thirty, literally be in school all the way up until three o'clock. At three o'clock, I would take a bus or walk to the local community college to take my dual enrollment class.

RS: Your what classes?

AP: Dual enrollment classes. I did dual enrollment classes. That's how I made up for not having access to AP classes. My school didn't have AP classes up until my junior year. There were not that many even then. Especially after this tour, where all these people were saying that they were taking 20 AP classes, I'm like, "Well I guess I'm going to have to take more to compete with them." My day did not end until seven o'clock. That's when I went home and did my homework. It was a very--. It was a commitment.

It's something that I feel is invisible. That's because--in a way, to be able to compete in the marathon that is college admissions when you are a person of color, you have to make up for the fact that you don't have shoes. That's how I felt for a very long time. It wasn't about keeping up with people; it was the fact that you don't have shoes throughout most of the race. I felt I didn't have anyone helping me out. So I had to make up for it. By making up for it I had to give up a lot of my teenage years in a way. The last Halloween of high school, I spent applying for scholarships to get in school. That's okay. It definitely paid off, but it was something that was invisible. These are things that you don't get to write about in your application essay or talk about in an interview. These are things that you simply have to do to be able to compete. That is how I felt. I felt what I was struggling with was invisible.

RS: You came on that tour. You applied. How many schools did you end up applying to?

AP: I feel like I'd have to ask my mother. She's the one who still has the--. I think it was ten, maybe. The ones I remember, the ones I cared about, were Wellesley and Carolina. I ended up not applying to the Ivy Leagues. I wasn't really into any of them. The two that I liked the most were Wellesley College and UNC. I got into both of them, which was really great. Because again, they were really competitive schools. What I liked about Wellesley was Hillary Clinton and Madeline Albright went there. Obviously. [Laughter]. You have two pretty incredible people who have done pretty incredible things who went to Wellesley College. They also have a bunch of really cool literature artifacts that I was totally into. They had a whole bunch of Emily Dickenson stuff. I was definitely into that. It was Wellesley, and it was in Boston. The Boston area. It was a beautiful college town. One of the big things is they had trees and they had seasons, which I did not have growing up. So I was really into that idea. It was also

away from home, which was very important to me. I had three basic criteria, not exclusively academics. It had to be around nature. There had to be seasons. It had to be near an airport because I wanted to have the ability to travel. In case I wanted to study abroad or wanted to go home for an emergency of some sort, I would have that option. Wellesley and Carolina definitely met those two requirements. I applied to other schools throughout America. I applied to UMass Amherst. I liked the Amherst area. I applied to the University of Florida.

RS: Were you interested in the all women's aspect of it.

AP: You know, I didn't really care. "Oh, I can never go to an all women's college." I had enough of the bro culture of high school that I didn't care to be around it ever again. It was fine but I think that what really drew me to Carolina is I felt like it was a community that was much more diverse. Even though I still felt like a minority in Carolina. It happens when you're such a small percentage of the population. I felt like there were more people from different backgrounds. And I think my thing too is I didn't want to be the only kid from inner-city that had never been to school. If one thing Carolina definitely provided is a lot of other first generation students. I had a lot of friends who were first generation. I felt less alone in that aspect.

I do think about how life would have been like if I had done Wellesley: what opportunities would I have had, who would I have met, what would I have learned. One of the things that Wellesley was really good at was Italian. They have a really good Italian program, one of the best in the States. That's something that I definitely did sacrifice when I went to Carolina. There wasn't an Italian program that was competitive and would help me kind of fine-tune what I learned in high school. It was the best decision, not to mention Carolina gave me a full ride, which I think was relevant. Unfortunately, it was conditional, which I didn't know at the time because I was alone at the time, my parents didn't really understand. I got the Covenant

Scholarship. I also got a Merit Scholarship through Carolina. My junior year, the BOG cut that funding.

RS: Cut the Merit?

AP: No, they cut the Covenant portion. It wasn't a full ride anymore. Basically, they raised the limit to what parental income--. Sorry they lowered it to what parental income could be to be to qualify for it. They reduced the need-based one. I still had the merit one, which was great. It was not a full ride. It was closer to seventy-five percent, which is still much better than a lot of the opportunities I had at other schools. The thing with Wellesley is that they took a very long time to get back to me aid-wise. Carolina was the first school I got into. After getting to know Carolina, after being accepted, I felt that that's where I wanted to go. Not to mention, it helps that Carolina has the one of the best women's soccer programs in the country--in the world, really. I was really into soccer as well. That was a big draw. I was into sports, and I was into specifically women's sports. Even though I was never going to be good enough to play at UNC, just the idea of going to school with some of the future members of the national women's soccer team was pretty awesome.

There was a lot to it. I really grew to love North Carolina. I loved it since I was a kid. It was kind of a drawing force. It's funny that my sister ended up going to a school in North Carolina. We belong there. I'm waiting for my parents to say, "We're going to move." Then our life will be wonderful. I will say every time Christmas comes along, the fact I have to take that awful flight all the way down to Miami, instead of taking a bus to North Carolina. I'm telling you there are so many costs that could be avoided if we would just all live to North Carolina. That was also a really great thing about going to school too, it was 800 miles away. Like my dad put it, if there was ever an emergency, they could drive up if they wanted to. My parents did

drive me up when I moved into Carolina. I don't know if they could do that I had gone to Wellesley. Wellesley's really far away. And it was nice. It was a great place to go to school.

RS: [Pause] You didn't have a major when you started?

AP: I started with English and Political Science. I ended with English and Political Science. [Laughter] It's funny because I don't know how many times I changed my major, but it was many times. I don't even know what my minor was in. I think it was Italian. As naïve as that was. I ended up--. When I finished my dual enrollment classes--. I graduated high school top of my class. We technically no no valedictorian but I was technically valedictorian. I gave a speech and everything in my high school. We had summa cum laude is what they called it to make more people feel good. I started off struggling, competing with my fellow high school students but I ended up--. I had a 6.5 GPA I guess and a 3.8 I guess on the normal scale. I gave the valedictorian speech. Since I took so many dual enrollment courses since we didn't have AP courses, I think total I took under ten AP's and ten college courses. Carolina gave me credit for maybe three or four of the AP's and all the college classes. I came to Carolina with thirty credits. I was pretty much done with my whole first year.

What's interesting about that is when I got to Carolina and I was through orientation, and the person who was supposed to help us figure out what classes to take. They were like, "You should take this class. You should take this class." I'm like, "I have credit for all these classes. What should I take?" Since I wasn't really sure about what major I wanted to do, I was very confused. I did not know what to do my first semester, because all of the classes that first year you usually take I had already taken. I had credit for my English, credit for my Math, credit for pretty much everything with the exception of one more Math and a Science, which I did not want

to take because I was not ready for an intro-level science course my first semester. I heard they were terrible. They definitely lived up to the rumor.

I was very confused and I was very stressed because I did not know what I was going to do. And I felt that nobody was helping me. Being a first-generation student at Carolina is hard. You have some people who are willing to help you but you're very much on your own. That's very much what life is like when you have to navigate college as a first-generation student and as a student of color. There's nobody helping you out. My parents literally drove me there, did not help me any step of the way. Until this day, my parents have not paid for college and not really been a part of this process. I did everything myself. In a sense, I was the guinea pig. My sister had a much easier time in college. She kind of knew what she was doing. I helped her out and my parents helped pay for her college education. But I did not have any of that help.

I ended up enrolling in just random courses. I ended up enrolling in Poli 150, which is International Politics, which is today one of the worst classes I've taken at Carolina. That was the reason I decided to drop to my major and switch to Journalism. I ended up switching. Like I said I ended up back in the same major, but I did end up switching. I know I switched to Journalism when I was thinking of being in PR, and working on crisis management, which is what I did in high school. In high school, I did a lot of crisis management. I was the student body--not student body, the senior class vice-president. We never did really have a student body president. I did all of my school's graphic design. Every time we had an event, I did all of the promotion. So I was so used to managing my school's image and marketing. The funny thing is I was sixteen or seventeen years old and I designed the school seal, the school logo, most of the school website, all of the school brochures, all of the school's letterheads, all completely free. I didn't charge for

anything. But I did pretty much everything. It's funny when I go back to school and there's the seal that designed etched onto stone on the floor of the campus. That's very much what I did.

I was nominated for this really prestigious award in Miami called the Silver Knight. That's probably a whole oral history on just what Silver Knights have done. But Ivanna was a Silver Knight nominee as well. Ivanna Gonzalez. Pretty much Silver Knight nominees go on to do good things in a way. But I thought I was going to go into that. I thought I would professionalize what I was doing in marketing and maybe work in political marketing; who knows. I switched my major to Journalism and I kept English. My first semester--. I felt this was the theme for my life. I was the only first year in a class of seniors because I didn't realize that four-hundred-level courses meant seniors took them. I liked the course topic. There were going to be the Brontës. I love the Brontës. Why not take all four hundred level English courses. Terrible idea. Terrible idea. But I did end up getting a really good grade in the course.

I was fine, but I definitely did college in a way that was not only unorthodox but also completely insane. I took all of the higher-level major courses my first two years. I ended with all the Gen Eds my last two years. Completely out of the order. But I did ended up going into Journalism the second semester of my first year and then my sophomore year. I was Journalism up until my junior year. I was Journalism and English, and a minor in Political Science. Then I switched to Political Science and English. I ended up with an English minor instead of an English major. That's only because my life took a totally different turn in my sophomore year.

But if one thing still haunts me is that my academics weren't as good as I wanted them to be. I think in a way now, and it's something that I'm processing now through therapy but--. I began developing general anxiety disorder the beginning of my first year. And a lot of that came to put pressure on me to adjust to college. Anxiety tends to manifest in your twenties. It's

actually something that my sister is also currently dealing with in college. I had a hard first semester. I had really terrible experiences with students. I thought this would be my place where I would feel most at home, but you know, within the first few weeks in college, I ended up in a fraternity party completely wasted and completely alone. This wasn't the experience that I usually talk about, but I remember being in a room at the fraternity man and not remembering what happened and thinking that I had had vodka, that it was probably Everclear.

RS: What is Everclear?

AP: Everclear is the theme of most of these assaults. Everclear is a high-level, a high-percentage corn alcohol. It's like ninety percent alcohol. It's a hundred proof. It's incredibly dangerous. So in other words one shot is like four shots. It's terrible. I had had like two of them. I was completely wasted. I think for me--. I never had the desire to go crazy in college. In many ways, I'm an old soul, which has always made me feel kind of alone among people of my age. That changed a little bit in college but it was how I felt at the beginning, especially in high school. I was not really interested in what young women and men were interested in. I had these career aspirations and things that I wanted to do. I was at this party with these friends and they left me behind. And I woke up covered in cuts and bruises in my dorm room.

This was in October of 2010. I couldn't remember what happened. I remember not being able have my shoes or my purse. I went up to my white board and it said "We found you on the side of South Road. Glad you're okay." I thought, "Oh, my God, what happened?" Nobody could figure out what happened to me. I remember when I approached the women that I went to the party with, they told me that they had taken photos of me on the ground, passed out. They said, "We're going to keep these photos in case you forgot how you behaved." I don't talk about this very often because I'm always conflicted and feeling like it was my fault. I felt--which is

how many college women feel when this happens to them. I was thankful at the time that I hadn't been sexually assaulted and that nothing happened to me. At least I thought it didn't. But I think that episode made me feel really inferior and made me feel like I couldn't really be here. I considered for a long time dropping out after--.

RS: So they were using those pictures--.

AP: I don't know if it's they still have them.

RS: They weren't taking them to say if you want to call the police or something we have--.They were saying--.

AP: The thing is I didn't think anything happened to me. I got drunk and they took embarrassing photos of me. My whole thing is, "I guess can't run for office anymore." And I will not lie to you. There's always things that I think about when I think of my activism now. Who's got stuff on me that's going to come out of the woodwork when I become famous in a way. It wasn't damning in a way. It was an eighteen-year girl who was passed out on the side of a road, which I think if anything makes them look bad.

College is not easy. I really feel for college-age women. Women are not nice to other women. I think if anything, this has definitely been a theme. Especially, after coming forward as an activist, I think what hurts more than assault is betrayal. In many ways, betrayal has been a theme in my life, it's been a theme in being betrayed by my teachers in primary and secondary school, being betrayed by my culture that doesn't really understand what I want to do or what my mother wanted to do or what my grandparents wanted to do. It's a culture that sets limits on people like us. Being betrayed by my educational system that wouldn't give me the opportunities to more--in other words, being left by "no-child-left-behind" in many ways. That's exactly--. I'm

a product of Jeb Bush's "no-child-left-behind" Florida. And being betrayed by fellow women, being betrayed by fellow educated women.

I felt like I was at home here. That that first semester was really difficult. I went from a valedictorian to feeling like I had to survive in my classes. Not because of the material--. The material was not really difficult at all. It wasn't difficult at all. A lot of it was balancing this new life and not having anybody helping guide me. I was all on my own. And feeling like I wasn't making the right friends, wasn't knowing how to really study, wasn't taking the right courses. College is very adversarial for people that don't know exactly what they are doing. There was a certain deadline to drop your classes. There was a certain deadline to pick your majors, a certain deadline to figure out what you were going to do. I was surviving. How was I going to make these deadlines if I was surviving? I'm just staying there.

That was one of the first times I felt I had a real in-person experience with betrayal. They made my life really difficult. They told everyone to stop talking to me. They said I was an embarrassment to be around. It was something that was difficult to talk about. It was something that my parents noticed when I went home for Thanksgiving and Christmas. I wasn't really bursting with happiness like they had left me in August. If anything, I came back really strong the next semester. And I had a really good semester. I would say that the best two semesters I had at Carolina were my second semester of my first year and the first semester of my sophomore year. It was where I felt most happy in my raw college experience. And I say this because I stopped being a college student for the second semester of my sophomore year. I'm speaking of these two semesters as kind of this pure, raw, generic college experience and when I felt most connected to just being a normal college student.

RS: So that was second semester in sophomore year that the assault that you talked about before--.

AP: It was actually a semester where I was taking a lot. I had taken a violence prevention class, Women's Studies 290. It was taught by Bob Pleasants. I had taken it the fall of 2012. It was a difficult course. It was a difficult, emotional semester for me. My roommate's mother died of cancer. My friend was diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer. A lot of us were going through very difficult times in my hall that I lived in. This hall called the WELL Hall was in McIver Residence Hall at Carolina in the Kenan community. I had just run for community governor so I was starting up. This is when I decided to come back to political science. But still keep journalism so I was doing political science and journalism with a minor in English. I was like I'm going start doing some activism on campus. I had started working with community government the second semester of my first year and carrying on into my sophomore year. I was with the community government and I was working with Rez Hall Life and working as a community governor and doing a lot of really cool programs on campus. It was when taking the seminar and also working with WELL that I learned anything about sexual violence.

RS: What does WELL mean?

AP: Women Engaged in Leadership--I don't know the other 'L'. I don't remember. It's women's focused --Women Engaged in Learning Leadership. Student Affairs is obsessed with these acronyms and then I feel like no one knows what they mean. That's how I feel a lot of colleges are--. It was what they called "living-learning community" which was a focused residential programs. You had a lot of people who were interested in women's empowerment and leadership. And were kind of focused on women's issues. Actually before I entered college, I was passionate about educational access. I cared about equitable education for students of color.

That's what I cared about. I started caring a little more about women's empowerment and gender issues before my personal experience. Taking this class was really eye-opening because I learned a lot about the intersection of the law and women's issues. It specifically how politicians don't pay attention. I kind of already knew. I mean I was a woman. And obviously I knew what politicians said about us. Granted, I think it's gotten way worse since then. It's gotten more and more visible, maybe because the media are covering, but maybe because it's actually getting worse. A bit of both I think. But it was that semester when I was surrounded by so many women that were being very raw about their experiences that I began really caring about sexual assault and gender-based violence.

I became a peer educator for a bystander intervention program called One Act. It was created by students in this seminar a few years before. I thought I knew everything about sexual violence prevention, and the causes and what it looks like. I was training people. I was a bystander educator. I was training women and men about how to notice to the signs, how to be safe, and how to get resources. I guess in many ways I felt that people like me couldn't get sexual assaulted because ever since that incident my first year, I didn't go out to parties. I didn't get wasted. I didn't do these things because I realized that I really wasn't into the idea of blacking out. One experience is enough for me.

But I had a friend. She was also in residence life with me and she was also a community leader in residence life and she invited me to a party. And it was right around spring break. I had gone to this cool leadership retreat for spring break, the spring of 2012. I had talked about how I really wanted to create this program that talked about the intersections of safety and equity on campus. And I called it FIRE. I forgot what FIRE stood for. But essentially I wanted to develop this model that built on One Act that talked about minority students on campus and how to

empower everyone and look for signs of inequity and lack of safety in our community. And again, that was what I cared about. What I cared about was more minority issues than I cared about specifically focusing on gender-based violence. So this was not the path that I was looking at taking.

It was after coming back from that program that I went to this party with her. And I ended up being sexually assaulted. And actually what's interesting about it is I didn't call it assault for a very long time. It's also something that I'm still currently dealing with. I thought assaults were more violent. I thought that it involved strangers or abusive partners. I wasn't dating anybody, so who was this person? I think it's interesting too. I'm caught in the middle in terms of my assault. It's not exactly someone I knew. I didn't know this person. But it's also not a stranger. It's not a person that's outside of this campus. Essentially, it's a familiar stranger. It's a person that could have been in your classes, a person who is also a student, a person who is part of your community, but a person you do not know directly. And Carolina is a decent-size school. It's a medium-size campus. Of course, there are plenty of people you don't know.

But I think the fact that it happened to me at a party in which I might of known the hosts; I knew someone going in there, not so much a lot of them were also One Act peer educators. They were also student leaders. They were people who should have seen the signs, who should have known that something was going on. In many ways, I thought for a very long time that I must have put myself in a certain place. I must have not seen the signs. I must have been vulnerable in some way. I must have invited it in some way even though I was wearing black jeans and boots. I was very much in winter gear. It was March, after all. I think what happened too was going to that party with my friend I went to, who was completely wasted and was having a hard time--. She was drinking and drinking more. I remember how, after it happened, what I

cared about was making sure that she was okay. And I couldn't find her. I kept calling her and she wouldn't pick up. I was so concerned that something had happened to her.

I remember--. I lived in North Campus. This was further down south. It was nowhere near my hall at all. I remember running home that night. I had significant bleeding, which I didn't really understand why. I was completely out of it. I remember walking by the Old Well and falling and kind of thinking what if my blood tainted those bricks. What if anybody saw anything? What if people saw me in a way and I couldn't explain what happened. Because I didn't know what happened. I remember waking up that morning, the morning after, and literally being in a pool of blood. And it's--. I laugh because I have this cynicism that is so instrumental to the way I cope and the way I just function as a human being. If I can't laugh about societal problems, I cannot cope with them.

I grew up in Little Havana. There were a couple of people around me who were santeros. My grandfather used to always joke if there was ever a dead animal in front of your house, then it must mean somebody was after you. It happened once or twice when somebody dropped off a dead chicken in front our house. My grandfather was convinced that somebody was trying to curse us. Somebody, some witch was after us. He said that the worst thing that could happen is if someone left a goat head in front of you dripping in blood. I would always laugh. I'm like, "Abuelo, no one's going to leave severed goat head in front of our house. What have we done to anybody?" He said, "You never know. You might say something and they might come after you. You don't know who they are. They're hiding in the woodwork." And I'm like, "Okay."

And then literally I'm like, "I guess this is what one of the severed goat heads would look like." It's exactly what it looked like. There's no goat head. There's just lots of blood. Obviously I was panicking, but I was also thinking about my grandfather and the severed goat heads and the

dead chickens. And I was like, “Well, I need to get rid of this now and clean it up before my roommate looks at it because I have no explanation for this amount of blood in my bed.” And I thought, “I have my period.” It must be really heavy. It’s a little early, but it might be that. I remember going to the bathroom and trying to use a tampon and having this searing pain and not being able to understand it. I didn’t start using tampons until well over a year after that time that I tried using the tampon. And I remember not being able to understand what had happened. Who was there that night? Why was I in so much pain? Why did I have bruising and this amount of blood? And I actually literally--. I did not stop bleeding for a few days.

Within a week or so of that incident, I actually ran a half-marathon. Yeah it was terrible. It was the Tobacco Trail half marathon. It was my first half marathon that I had been training for a few months. And I remember finishing the first two or three miles, like excellent timing. Perfectly great. I remember how difficult it was to do the finish the last few miles, not because it was a half-marathon, which in itself is not exactly easy, but because my body didn’t feel the same. It didn’t feel as if I had complete control of it. I didn’t feel as if it was the body that was training for the past few months. I felt like it was a body, a different vessel that was carrying me just because it had to and not because it could. I remember when I finished it, and I was the last one in my group to finish it, and feeling like, “Wow, I ran a half-marathon.” But also feeling like, “Wow, I’m in a lot of pain and I don’t know why.”

I remember reaching out to the friend that was with there that night, and telling her I think something happened, and trying to talk to her, and not getting a response. I didn’t hear from her until--. I didn’t really have a conversation with her until seven months after that happened. It reminded me--. It kind of brought flashbacks of the first time, my first year, when I had lost the friends I was with that night. In retrospect, a friend that’s so terrible that they won’t

listen to you when you're going through something is not really a great friend. At the same time, when you are twenty and your life revolves around your social circles and that community that you've built, it's completely life altering. And even now, with the survivors that I speak to, a lot of them have said that the betrayal of their friends in their community is some of the most difficult moments that they have had to endure.

RS: Did you go to a doctor?

AP: So the way it worked was--. I didn't. I didn't go to a doctor. A lot of it was--. I mean I went for other reasons. I really didn't end up actually--.

[Interruption]

AP: Yes, I didn't go to the doctor. I didn't go to the doctor up until I fractured my ankle in 2013. I guess I felt--.

[Interruption]

AP: I didn't think to do it. One of the things, too, was my fear. I felt if I had to go to the hospital, they would make me press charges. For me, until I was absolutely sure who it was, I wasn't going to do anything. Since the ties with my friend were severed, I felt like I couldn't really be sure. It wasn't until I finally had a conversation to ask her, "Could you at least tell me if this is the correct location and date? Have I gotten the dates right? Did I forget?" She said, "That's the correct date and that's the correct location." That was validating for me for it was a very long time to doubt myself.

[Interruption]

AP: I had a lot of doubt. For a very long time I felt very guilty being part of the movement because--. I didn't intend to be--. I didn't intend to come forward. I didn't intend to do anything. I didn't report anybody. I didn't go through the adjudication process. I didn't go to the

police. I didn't go to the hospital. I didn't do anything that a "good victim" is supposed to do. And I felt very guilty. For a very long time, I felt, "How could a person like me speak about this issue if I didn't do what I was supposed to do?"

It was talking to Annie that made me feel that my experience was valid. That I didn't have to do any of these things. That I didn't have to go the hospital to get a rape kit. I didn't have to the police. I didn't have to tell anyone. What happened was enough. Knowing it was enough. I was able to really get closure. For a long time I felt very guilty, especially after I told my parents. The only reason I actually even told my parents was because I was invited to write a column for *The Daily Tar Heel* that summer. And I made the mistake of staying that summer in Carolina and trying to take an econ class and trying to do an internship. And I definitely should have taken time off instead of doing that.

At the time, I didn't think that this experience would really consume me. But I wrote a column and my mom found it. And it was then that they were going to come to move my sister into college. She was starting at Davidson College in 2012. They came to visit me. It was this whole, "I guess I have to tell them now." I wasn't going to tell them up until I finished college. I figured that they would be hovering over me and saying to drop out because the school is unsafe. Even as difficult as life was at Carolina at the time, I could never see myself leaving, especially against my will. I wasn't afraid of my parents pulling me out. Because my parents weren't paying for college. They technically didn't have anything on me. They were more afraid of losing me as a daughter and losing our relationship than they were of me staying there. Because they have nothing on me. When I told them my mom asked if I was pregnant. She didn't start asking if I was pregnant until well after nine months. I said, "Mom, if I was pregnant, you would know. There was no way for you to not know. I literally would have a child." She was afraid of

what I had picked up, if I had any illnesses. I eventually was tested and was totally fine. What was the most difficult was--. Even though I didn't have any physical scarring, I wasn't the same after it.

That was something that was really hard for my parents, was the fact that I needed to ask for help which I never did. I was the child that never asked for help. I was the child that always had a plan. That's something that hurt my parents, it was the fact that they had to worry about me. I think often, though, of this one speaking engagement that Annie and I did when we were in Kansas and it was for--. It's called the Jana's Campaign. There were two parents whose daughter was murdered, when she was a law student at Kansas. They said, "We never had to worry about Jana. We never had to worry about people like Jana." That's how it was for my parents. They never had to worry about me. They never had to worry about me getting into drugs, getting pregnant, getting arrested. I always was a good kid. And I never had any problems. They weren't ready for it because they never had anything. They didn't have anything they ever had to deal with, with me. They had to learn how to help me when I was twenty. That was something that was very difficult for them. It was difficult for them to recognize that they had to learn how to help me.

I didn't really start showing any symptoms of PTSD until the fall of 2012. I was still very functional. One thing that I am really good at, for better or for worse, is being functional. I can be in the most pain, the most trauma, and the most panicked anxious state, and still appear functional. I think that is actually what makes having a therapist and doctors so difficult. Doctors and therapists do not know what questions to ask. Unlike most clients, I don't have the obvious symptoms that indicate that I might have something I'm dealing with. If one thing that was difficult for me was coming to terms with the fact that I had been sexually assaulted and that the

incident had triggered post-traumatic stress disorder. Going a little further, I'm sure if you have any more questions--

RS: Oh, no. That's fine. You mentioned that it was talking with Annie that helped you enter a different phase. When? How did you--? I know that some of this has been covered in the movie, but not everyone who reads this or sees this will have seen the movie. So tell me about how you and Annie met and how that relationship developed.

AP: Actually I do not think *Hunting Ground* covers it very well. Because it's not exactly something that can be illustrated very well. So Annie was a senior when I was a first year at Carolina. I had been seeing Annie's name since literally my first semester in college. Annie was a name that you saw in emails of past recipients of awards, names of past presenters at conferences. Especially since I was in Political Science—and was interested in these types of spaces. Annie's name came up a lot. She came up as a UN presenter. She came up as a recipient of multiple honors at Carolina. So I had seen her name before. I heard of her work, specifically her work with the violence prevention seminar, and a group called Project Dinah, which I would join. Annie was the co-director, called co-chair, at Project Dinah, a student-run organization. I later also became co-chair of Project Dinah. It was through hearing about Annie's work and seeing her name in publications and her name in different types of presentations that I had learned about Annie. But it wasn't until after my assault that her name and her work became more personal.

After my assault, I ended up wanting to drop my newswriting class for my Journalism major. Because if one thing PTSD has made it very difficult, even though it's been many things, it's been concentration and writing. It's something I'm still working through and trying to figure out how to fix. Unfortunately, Adderall doesn't really fix PTSD. I was having a hard time

producing news stories weekly--not even weekly, more like every other day you have to do material for that course. The course was not difficult. What was difficult was being able to put myself in a place in which I felt I can produce the work. I was ending up wanting to drop the course. I went to the academic advising office. I did a walk-in hours, I didn't have an appointment. I met with this male academic advisor. I said that I wanted to drop and newswriting and another course. The other course was an internship course. I was doing an internship with advising. Ironically enough, my love for--. Not advising, sorry, for admissions. Ironically enough I didn't get over my love for admissions in getting into school and turning it eventually into a job with admissions. I was the youngest intern they'd ever had. I was specializing in graphic design and social media. A course came up--. It was an optional course but I took it because "Why not?" I would end up dropping it because one of the requirements for it was a ten-page paper. I saw there was no way I can be able to finish this paper. Not to mention the course didn't really count toward anything. It just counts as credit hours. I ended up dropping it. I said, "I've been through this incident and it's completely changed my ability to perform as a student."

RS: Did you say incident or sexual assault? Did you tell them--.

AP: I didn't say assault. At the time I wasn't calling it assault. It's something I've been through and it's just made my life really hard. He said, "Medically, you can handle Carolina. Maybe you're being lazy. It's just a ten-page paper." [Sigh] And I think it was just--. Had this person been supportive, had this person not said that; I think I would have told him what it actually was. And I probably would have come to terms with it being an assault so much earlier.

But I feel like I didn't have a positive experience for a very long time. I think also what really hurt about that interaction--. Again like I said earlier, I had this invisible battle that I had to

get through to even get to Carolina. And for someone to tell me that I was just being lazy and couldn't handle Carolina, that was a dagger to the heart, independent of myself. Telling me that I didn't belong was very, very hard to swallow.

I had a breakdown. I ended up dropping this classes that--. It really wasn't through him, it was through somebody else. I ended up going to the Student Union at Carolina. I went to the bathroom. I saw these boxes, these silver boxes that are fixed to the initial wall in the entrance of the woman's restroom in the Student Union, right on your right. It had this little sticker that said if you've been sexually assaulted or if you're a victim of personal violence, consider anonymously reporting. And I was like, "Huh."

I remember getting the paper and taking it into the handicapped restroom. And just was sitting on the toilet, not even going to the bathroom, sitting on the toilet and looking at it and reading it. And pulling out a pen and just starting to cry, and fill it out. I remember looking at the boxes, reading sexual assault, reading rape, reading all these different things, and not really knowing what it was--not really knowing what counted as rape. What was assault? What did that mean? What was my incident? I remember just clicking other because I wasn't sure what my experience was. What does it count as? Is it both? I think it's both--. Not writing anything identifiable, just the last four numbers of my student number, I put it in the box. How many other people like me have been sexually assaulted? And I kept thinking, wow, it's sexual assault. That actually happened to me. It happened to a person like me who was a student leader, who was trained, who should have known the signs, who was raised better.

I think also, it was admitting that I didn't stay a virgin like I was told I was supposed to be as a good Catholic young woman. I was supposed to stay a virgin until marriage. And I think it was also recognizing how many people in my family have been through something like this

and we've never talked about it. And I think I was afraid. And I'm still afraid. That's the reason why I had to push that we talk about it in my family.

My grandparents don't know that I was assaulted, even after *The Hunting Ground*, after all the coverage I've done. Very little of it has been in Spanish, so they've been essentially blissfully ignorant of what happened. I think in many ways, I can't really articulate what happened to me in Spanish even though I'm fluent. There are certain things--. I don't have the words to describe what happened because there's something about your mother tongue that makes things more real, that makes things more vivid. I feel like if I say it in Spanish and articulate it in Spanish, I have to bleed all over again, in a way. That's something I haven't done yet. I haven't had to live it and articulate it in Spanish yet.

It was through anonymously reporting that I googled--. What is this box? Who created this? Why didn't I know about this before? I read the article that was interviewing a then-Senior named Annie Clark, who had created these boxes for students. And I remember looking Annie up and realizing we had a couple of common friends on Facebook, and messaging her. I thought, "Oh good, she's still around. She's in Durham now. She's working as a teacher." And e-mailing her and saying, "You don't know me but we have a couple of common friends and I just wanted to reach out to you about the boxes you've put up in the Union." I didn't say that I used them. I think what's interesting is that I was scared that she would think I was some reporter chasing her after she already graduated. Who wants to see a reporter chasing you after you graduate? You've kind of out lived that already.

But she met with me shortly afterwards and I told her that I used her box. She said the reason she did that was because she had a bad experience. She came forward. She felt as if her experience wasn't valid either. So she wanted to give a space to people that might not know their

attacker and might not feel safe coming forward, or might not know how to articulate their experience. To give them the space to be able to come forward. This is what I tell survivors now: you don't have to come forward on the front page of *The New York Times* to come forward. For me, I would have been happy just quietly coming forward in an anonymous form. That's very much what I thought would be the end of this incident and the end of this work really. I thought that I would anonymously report and just stop.

The only reason that I didn't was because of that summer, the summer of 2012, I was appointed to the Title IX coordinator search committee. It happened to be coincidental. It happened to be that the then student body president, Will Leimenstoll. He had read that I was interested in women's issues only because I happened to be in WELL and I happened to been doing stuff with One Act. That's the only reason he thought I was interested in women's issues. It wasn't like I was a vocal advocate at the time. I also happened to be one of the only students who was there that summer. He said, "I'm going to appoint you to this committee. It's somewhat important but I don't know what it's about." I was like, Title IX. Interesting. Title IX was not something I was thinking about. I literally thought about it as giving women the right to go to school and sports. That's it. I knew nothing else about Title IX. And I was pretty well educated about women's history, but there was simply nothing on Title IX. Even then, even in 2012 there was nothing on Title IX. It was very difficult to be able to find anything on it. Unless you know where to look, which I had to learn where to look.

[Interruption for break]

RS: You were talking about how you reached out to Annie.

AP: Yes. After I reached out to her and we had our first conversation, she was moving to Oregon. She was starting an entry-level position at the University of Oregon, Eugene, where

she was going to be working with Residence Life. It was the first she left North Carolina so it was a big move for her. And I think for me--. When we were working on the--. When I started doing the Title IX committee--which was way more I thought I was signing up for. It involved reviewing over a hundred resumes before I had applied to the position, including a lot of people who had gotten their B.A. who were not much older than I was. I was wondering how they were thinking that they could have this upper level admin position.

RS: Oh, right. That's what we were talking about. You were talking about how you got on this committee--

AP: That's right. Yeah, and that's the reason why I didn't stop talking about sexual assault right after I reported. It was really because of this committee. It was in looking up the description that one of the main things that we were looking for was they were looking for someone who was going to improve the current policy on handling sexual assault. And I was like, "What does sexual assault have to do with Title IX? I'm very confused."

It was then that I stumbled upon the "Dear Colleague Letter" which was released by the Department of Education in 2011. It was pretty recent. It was in reading it that I learned that universities are responsible for adjudicating sexual assault. I was like, "Interesting. I've never heard of this." It made me think a lot about what were we doing. How did I not know about this? How did I not know that I had a right to report to the university, that I had a process independent of the police? I remember I Skyped Annie. She had started her job there. And I remember asking her, "Have you heard about Title IX and its connection to sexual assault?" She said, "Well, I started to do a little research on it when I was looking at UNC's policy." I said, "Interesting. Do you also have concerns about the policy?" She said, "Yes." I said, "Did you know that UNC adjudicates sexual assault through the Honor Court?" She said, "Yes. I've been through some of

the hearings." And I'm like, "This is insane and it's illegal." She's like, "Yes. I had friends who went through the process and nobody was found responsible." And I was like, "I don't think anybody's been found responsible. Ever."

That was the first time I had heard somebody else that had shared the same concerns. When I shared these concerns with the student body president, he told me, "I trust the administrators who wrote this policy." I was like, "I don't know how anybody can get justice when students are deciding what is right." That was interesting. Will, you're talking about someone who is 21, who's in this big leadership position on campus. I wouldn't say it was his fault but there is this blissful ignorance that comes with not challenging the system. What was interesting about Carolina, which is like many schools, Carolina builds you to become a Tar Heel, to follow the Carolina way. You don't think to question the university. You think to question anybody else that attacks the university, but you don't think to question the university and its internal problems. Because questioning it means that part of your identity isn't what you thought it would be.

Annie was the first person I told my story to. She's the first person who said, "You were raped." That for me was a transformative point. Because it was the first time that I was able to say that out loud. There's a difference between assault and rape, and being able to say either of those things. Rape always has this stronger expectation. Rape is reserved for only the most heinous violence. In accepting it and talking about for the first time, I could basically come to terms with what happened, and to be able to translate that into doing something about it. Because I realize that I was like the majority of survivors: the ones who never come forward; the ones who don't really know what to do; the ones who don't think that their incident is terrible enough to come forward about. I realized that I wasn't going to seek any justice for myself. I didn't want

to deal with it. I had no one who was going to help me out to try to find out who it was, why it happened, and what the motive was. What I could do is I could influence how students were educated about this in the future. And I could do something literally directly by helping hire the administrator who would change this policy.

So the fall of 2012, I began taking more Political Science classes and I enrolled in Feminist Political Theory, which was taught by Susan Bickford. There was a TA named Amanda Greg, who was the one who was kind of doing daily instruction. In my class, we were assigned most of Catharine MacKinnon's readings and her work. I read that she had written a legal brief arguing that sexual harassment was a violation of Title IX. I thought, "Interesting." Everything is coming full circle. My classwork is coming full circle. What I'm doing in this committee is coming full circle.

And I want to also stress that this committee was a lot of work. I was the only student on the committee. Most of the members were high-level administrators that had no interaction with students. The committee meetings were during my classes. I had to leave class early or come late to go to these committee meetings. But after realizing that this was a serious issue and that this position was a big deal, I realized I had to go, at any cost I had to go.

That semester I also began my time as an RA. Within three days, I had three different students who had come to me about some type of violence happening to them. This continued to increase and increase and increase throughout my entire time as an RA. During my training--we had about two hours' worth of training around mental health and sexual assault, definitely nothing compared to how much we had about marijuana and alcohol.. I realized that I was in for a ride as an RA because I was open about sexual assault and making an ally of these communities while people were coming to me. And I was not ready for it as a twenty year-old.

I came out as a survivor in October of 2012, actually saying that I was a survivor in a column in *The Daily Tar Heel*. After that, dozens of people came to me. Back to back to back to back to back. And this column I wrote in response to the murder of Faith Hedgepeth, who was a Native-American student at Carolina. Her death was around the six-month mark of my assault. I didn't know at the time, we didn't know at the time, but I suspected that she was sexually assaulted. It was only recently confirmed that she was sexually assaulted, that she was brutally beaten to death by a person that we still don't know. What bothered me was that nobody paid attention to it after it happened. To this day, Faith's murder stills shocks me to my core. And I remember crying hysterically and not feeling safe at all and feeling like I was lucky that I had survived. It was after that I decided that I wanted to be open about my experience so that anybody who was like me, crying by herself quietly in her dorm room, could have someone else to talk to. I decided to work--.

At the time I had just joined Project Dinah. I said that I had an idea for a project. I was going to call the project the Courage Project. Ironically enough--. It's in the house somewhere. It is now back with me. But it was a project that I worked with one of the co-chairs of Project Dinah. Her name was Julia Da Silva. I wanted a particular project that would combine the photos of survivors and those that have been affected by what happened to the person that they loved that might have been sexually assaulted, and for it to be a project that was not sad. That it would be normal people looking the way that they would look out of the context of sexual assault. You would have normal people smiling, laughing, standing with their books, without their books, with their partners, without their partners, surrounded by classmates, surrounded by a game. Anything that would make them look like normal people that you would see, essentially a snapshot of the Carolina student.

The reason I called it the Courage Project is because I have a tattoo. It was the first tattoo I got. And I got it in July of 2012, right after I told my parents. For me, this wrist was particularly important because I remember being grabbed by this wrist, but also because for me when I was at the period where I felt most unsafe and most worthless in a sense, I kept this bracelet on my wrist that was a certain color. It was a way I was grounding myself. I said, "I want something that's permanent so I don't have to keep that bracelet on all the time." So I can swim and run everything. I got this tattoo.

RS: Which says?

AP: It says courage and it has a little female symbol right at the "O". I drew it right before I got the tattoo. And I was going to call it the Courage Project. With Julia, we put out a call for submissions and we had over thirty people who wanted to be part of the project, of all different races and sexualities and gender identities. You had mainly survivors but also people who had been affected by violence. You had partners of survivors, friends of survivors, siblings of survivors. My whole goal was for it to be anyone. It could be anyone who was impacted by violence. The goal of the project was that sexual violence does not define you and that it affects everyone. So the project was sponsored by a couple of different student organizations. But the Student Union gave me space that I had for well over a year. The project was very successful. Everyone around campus had been seeing it because it was in a very high traffic area right in the Student Union. It was often that--.

RS: These were photographs that went on the wall?

AP: Yes. If you actually look at thecourageproject.org. There. That's what the photos, what the gallery used to look like. I have the photos downstairs because unfortunately they don't have space for them right now. We have to petition every semester to have space.

RS: So it wasn't a social media? It was a--.

AP: It was both. There was an online website, thecourageproject.org. There is the online portion, so you have photos. You have all the photos. What is was was photos and small quotes at the bottom. You have someone being like, you know. My mother was assaulted; I was assaulted; I smile because of the strength that they gave me. Things like that where you have--. Everyone has different experiences and they talk about their experience. It was an incredibly powerful project. It really resonated with a lot of people. That's why I feel like things--.

That's when I met the women who I filed the complaint with. I said this since then. The reason why we decided to file a complaint was because of the school--. It just the amount of stories we were getting, not only through the Courage Project, but through my residence and through Landen Gambill. A lot of the survivors haven't really come forward. It's just this theme--. And again, I never had any intention of being the face to anything. In the beginning, it was very much--I was in a place in which I was of sound mind in a way. I felt like I had control. I felt like I was okay. My healing was researching Title IX and researching what it was.

When I came across Catharine MacKinnon's legal brief that she wrote when she was a student at Yale Law School, I learned about *Alexander v. Yale,* which was the first lawsuit that used the framework of sexual harassment being a violation of Title IX. One of the students that she worked with was this woman named Ann Olivarius, who was a senior at Yale. She argued that Yale was not safe for women. This was '78 or '79 that they started doing this and the lawsuit itself was filed in 1980. It was not a successful lawsuit at all. They lost. It was a new framework. It was very difficult to establish culpability. Because at the time, Yale wasn't responsible for sexual harassment. They definitely were responsible for sexual assault. That's because in a sense, it was an occupational hazard for being the first class of women at Yale. No one expected

women to really succeed at a predominately male campus, especially the Ivy Leagues. Of course, it was difficult to prove that Yale was responsible for that climate despite the fact that so many who were accused in that case were employees. But after that, MacKinnon's framework was successful. It was then used in monumental Supreme Court cases. Although most of them were in secondary schools. It later led the Department of Education to establish that sexual harassment was indeed a violation of Title IX.

Now, in terms of sexual assault, we still don't have any Supreme Court cases that have codified sexual assault being responsibility of the university to eradicate. It's ambiguous because what I realized--. This is something that I knew is a shortcoming by many means. Title IX is, first and foremost, a civil rights law. To shoehorn a crime is problematic in many ways. It's something that I have had to cope with as an activist and as a researcher. Are there too many shortcomings with putting sexual assault into Title IX to make it functional? And I don't have the answer to that because it's been too soon since it's been a dialogue. I do believe there are limits, which I knew going into this. Because the problem with Title IX, in terms of sexual assault, is that it is up to the university to determine what sexual assault is. Because what it comes down to, is consent. Unlike harassment in which you have to prove a pattern of behavior that creates a hostile climate, oftentimes with assault it's just one incident.

What I saw with my committee meetings is that UNC had a very hard time determining precisely what a hostile climate was. Because sometimes you had people who came forward and were assaulted once. Sometimes they were harassed once or twice and then it stopped. But it was difficult for the school to gauge what was the educational impact? How many survivors were not going to classes because the school was not appropriately disciplining perpetrators? How many perpetrators were harassing people behind the scenes? How many fraternities and athletes were

committing these crimes but they weren't being connected because they were being viewed as isolated incidents.

And in terms of UNC, UNC is definitely by far not the worst campus in terms of sexual assault. But what I did see in pure basic research is that nobody had been expelled for sexual assault. And when working with Melinda Manning, who was the dean at the time and talking to other administrators and being in these committee meetings, it seemed that nobody had been expelled since I was born. This was all anecdotal. It is difficult for us to get that FOIA granted, because most times schools will argue that it's too identifying for them to release what the sanctions are. But what I knew was that, of all those others I had spoken to and of all the administrators I worked with, never have I heard of a case of someone being expelled.

And I think that was the final straw for me. It was the fact that I had heard from all these students. I had done this project. I had been in this committee. And it seemed as if students were not being prioritized. Survivors were not being prioritized. This was purely an issue of compliance. Then I realized that we could no longer work within the system. I think for me that was a very difficult decision because I loved my school. Since I have gotten to Carolina I've worn the school's seal around my neck. Getting into Carolina is still one of the happiest moments of my life. It was something that I worked so hard for. Everything about the Carolina Way and about the institution's history is something that is so integral to my identity. But I realized if I loved my school, I had to fight to change it.

There's something really scary about being a twenty-year old woman, taking on a two hundred year-old university. And that was the first thing that I told the reporter when I spoke to a reporter and I said, "I'm a twenty-year old taking on a two hundred year-old university. That's not going to be easy." But at the same time, I never wanted to shame UNC. I never wanted UNC

to get in trouble. I simply wanted things to change. But it was when I was told the policy was set in stone, that this is how it had been for decades, that nothing was going to change, I realized that something had to change. So when I was doing this, when I was researching filing a complaint, I couldn't really find any history on this having been done before. And I am sure it had. What I realized was that most of these cases were filed by Jane Does or John Does. And the Department of Education did not release a list of schools that were under investigation. It was actually impossible for us to know how many schools were currently being accused of covering up sexual assault.

The only cases that were really public was the case in Yale in 2011. One of the primary filer's name, Alexandra Brodsky. And I couldn't find a contact for Alexandra. It was after she graduated. So the way I actually got a hold of Alexandra was through a student at Amherst named Dana Bolger. The way I learned about Amherst, there was a student named Angie Epifano who wrote an anonymous op-ed about being assaulted at Amherst and being betrayed. It was the first article I read that talked about institutional responsibility, which I think is the key to this that makes it different from sexual assault as a whole. It's difficult for us to say that we can end sexual assault. Sexual assault has always happened. It's been happening since the dawn of time. It's something that women have always feared, have been taught to fear.

But what's different about this, and this movement specifically, is that we have been able to prove that universities are singlehandedly influencing these cases and are actually covering this up. I don't think it's necessarily with malice. I do think it's a product of what we expect of universities. Essentially, it comes back to the fact that universities are businesses and are trying to sell a product. Admitting that there is sexual violence, admitting that they found people that are responsible means that they have to admit that their product is defective.

This was the first time I had read an article that established that Amherst was a factor in what happened to this young woman. I couldn't get a hold of Angie. Angie had also gone off the map. But I did read an article by this reporter named Richard Perez Peña that talked about Dana Bolger. So I remember tweeting Dana Bolger, saying, hey I've been following what you've been doing, working with Angie and I want to let you know that what's happening at Amherst is also happening at UNC. When I first got a hold of her, she connected me with Alexandra, who she had spoken to before and I said, "I'd like to speak to both of you about possibly filing a complaint." Dana had not filed a complaint. Alexandra had done so with the help of an attorney. She connected us with a couple of people from the National Women's Law Center and other attorneys, but nobody was going to take our case. It was too soon. We wanted to file our complaint before the 180 day statute was over for some of the fellow complainants. I remember just being like, "What if we can't find an attorney?" When it was when going back to MacKinnon's readings that I learned that you don't have to have an attorney. The cool thing about filing a federal complaint is that it is done so--. You simply write your complaint directly to the Department of Education. That's it. It's essentially as close to filing a lawsuit as you can without passing the bar.

In other words, you could be a twenty year-old and take on a two hundred year-old university without legal help. And that's what we decided to do. We decided to--. We weren't going to wait until we find an attorney who will take our case pro bono. We didn't have the income for it. Annie and I decided to look up as much as we could around the case law of Title IX that happened until then, about the cases of the Jane Does and John Does that were not being covered. We were able to put together this framework arguing that sexual assault is a violation of Title IX because no student can feel safe if they are afraid of the fear of sexual assault. That's not

to say that we were pioneers. This had been argued before. It hadn't been done so on such a public scale. But what made us a little different was that we were among the first students who filed a complaint publicly, not anonymously, and without a presentation, which the Yale students had not done. They had done so with an attorney. We said, "What if we would file not as Jane Does but as Annie Clark and Andrea Pino and we were to say that UNC is a microcosm of what's happening around the country?" And we did that. We were, initially, going to file in December of 2012 but we realized that the media weren't going to cover anything that close to the holidays. So we waited until January.

When I said to the committee that sorry, that I was going to file a complaint. We wrote a letter to the DTH and said that I, Andrea Pino, and I, Annie Clark are going to file a federal complaint in January of 2013. Everyone laughed at us. They said, "They're so in over their head. They're trying to make a scare. Who's going to file federal complaint? What even is that?" No one's talked about federal complaints. It's a completely unheard-of-conversation." So nobody was afraid. Everyone was thinking we were going to make it up, that it was us trying to be scary as sensitive student activists.

RS: Who is everyone?

AP: Administrators. It was just students who were like me--.What the hell is this whole complaint thing? Everyone was very confused. What's interesting is that I had meetings with a couple of the higher administrators: Winston Crisp who was the dean of students--he was the vice-chancellor; Jonathan Sauls, the dean of students; and a couple of other high-level administrators. They were promising that they were going to take it seriously and they were going to change their policy. After we said we were going to file the complaint, we never had another meeting with them. I wonder why? But in January--the second week of January--.

RS: They were saying they were going to take it seriously and change their policy before you said what you were going to do?

AP: No. After we said we were going to.

RS: After you said you were going to file a complaint, they said, "We're going to change our policy and take this seriously" but they never had another meeting?

AP: It was in a quiet meeting. It wasn't a public--. It was, "We take this very seriously. We're looking at changing our policies. Andrea, you're part of the committee. You know we're trying to hire someone." I was like, "I'm not confident enough that you are going to change anything."

RS: When was that whole--? I remember there was a whole committee--

AP: --task force.

RS: --task force.

AP: That's way after.

RS: That came later.

AP: That came in April of 2013.

RS: Okay.

AP: That's way after the complaint. This is with a small, little--. What was interesting about this committee is that it was me and the upper-level administrators. I was the only student on there. It was a very inaccessible committee. Which was interesting. I think again, how can you ever fix the policy if you don't bring in who's actually affected? You did not even have any faculty in there. Nobody, it was just high level administrators who were there.

We filed our complaint in January of 2013. We did so with a press release that said that UNC is one of many schools that are struggling with this. In our bigger press conference--we had

a couple of students who came forward--I said, “I’m filing this with Alexandra Brodsky and Dana Bolger and Angie Epifano, and the students who have worked on this issue for years in silence. What was interesting about this was we did not have reporters who really cared. Probably the only national reporter who paid attention since the beginning--. There were two of them. One was Katie Baker, who at the time worked for *Jezebel*, then went on to work for *BuzzFeed*. She was there since the beginning; and Tyler Kingkade, who has written for the *Huffington Post*. They were the only two non-North Carolina focused reporters that really paid attention since the beginning. Jane Stancill, who wrote for *The News and Observer*, she was also one of the first major North Carolina reporters who paid attention.

I think what’s interesting about especially Jane is that she noticed that there was something more than a couple of students: She said, “There’s a lot more to this. We’re treading on new territory.” Before these reporters, the reporter that I worked with the closest was a woman named Caitlin McCabe. Caitlin McCabe was a senior reporter in *The Daily Tar Heel*. I told Caitlin, who at first was covering our initial optimism--. She was covering my comments in the committee. She was covering how I said we were going to file a complaint. Her editor was very hesitant to believe this is actually a story. I told Caitlin, “Caitlin, this is an issue that is going to explode in the next few months.” She’s like, “I believe you. I believe there’s something more to this.” And I said, “This is going to make your career.” She said, “Okay.” That was when I was connecting her--. At the time, the only ones who were going to come public were Annie and me. And then Landen Gambill chose to go public. But there were two other people, one of them being Melinda Manning and another one being another person, another survivor. Melinda was actually never coming forward. What happened was--. When I connected Caitlin to Melinda, Melinda told her everything off the record. Caitlin and I met. We met at this balcony that

overlooks the Bell Tower. It's right above the Daniel Student Stores. It's a quiet place nobody knows about. That's where I would meet Caitlin. I was kind of like her Deep Throat. And I would inform her what was going on. She said, "This is an incredible story. I wish I could tell it all, but I can't, because Melinda's not going to go on the record." I said, "No, but there are survivors who can corroborate her story and corroborate what they've been through." We had no intention of Melinda coming forward at all. What happened was that when the Department of Education released the letter that they had received our complaint, which is what *The Daily Tar Heel* wanted to corroborate, that we had actually filed--. My phone accidentally attached the complaint, which I didn't know.

RS: What do you mean?

AP: What happens is when you forward--which I didn't realize then. This is when I gotten my iphone. When you forward correspondence, there's an option to "Forward All" or "Forward Attachment." And I "Forwarded All." I just didn't realize it. I was trying to get Caitlin to corroborate as soon as possible so it gets in this article. They also didn't tell me that I had done it. So I thought I had forwarded the confirmation from the OCR, but I had forwarded the attachment with the complaint itself.

So the day after we filed the complaint, there was a front page article, saying: "Dean comes out about allegations against the institution," with some very, very damning stuff. It had quotes from Winston Crisp, quotes from Dean Sauls, and things that did not happen to make the university look good. I, of course, literally had the biggest panic of my life. "How the hell do they know this?" It turns out that they had published the complaint without even asking us, although it was never said on record. It was never given to them. It wasn't until--. We had found out because a friend of ours happened to be on the editorial board of the DTH who happened to

have seen it and been like, “What the hell? How did they get this?” The editor of the DTH, whose name is Andy Thomason, I believe that was his name. He had published it despite the fact that I told him, “This is not on the record and this is not for your publication.” He said that information was so newsworthy and so damning to the institution that the public had to know.

To this day, it’s something I have a hard time reconciling with this. It was not given with our consent. It was a technical error. The DTH did not respect that we did not want that information publicized. Luckily enough, none of the survivors’ testimonies were publicized but Melinda Manning’s were. She, at the time, forgave me. I still think about the mistake that I made. If anything, it’s the fact that this was new territory. If I had someone walking me through this, I would have never, ever, forwarded any e-mail to any reporter. I would have copied and pasted it or screenshotted it. But I did not know what I was doing. I was still trying to be a student and trying to make this happen and trying to deal with the immense pressure of having a magnifying glass on you as an activist that’s going against the university. It really impacted Melinda’s life and I hope that she doesn’t still hold it against me. I was a kid. I was twenty. And I was trying to make a difference. If anything, it exploded our case.

After Melinda’s portion was leaked, it was being covered all over North Carolina. We had news crews coming to the South Building. It was incredible. Since Melinda wasn’t commenting, they came for us. That was really why Annie and me began talking. Initially, it wasn’t going to be about us. Initially, we were the two named complainants because nobody else felt safe doing so. And because Melinda wasn’t commenting, Landen began commenting. In a sense, I felt like a big sister to Landen. In many ways, I wish that I would’ve asked the right questions and asked her if she was ready to do this. Because if there is one thing activism has taught me is that not everybody can come forward. One thing *The Rolling Stone* story taught me

is that Jackie was not ready to come forward. It does not mean her story wasn't real. It just means that Jackie wasn't ready. If I would have done it again, I would have made sure Landen knew she had a choice to come forward. It was very hard on her. If Melinda's story did not make the case explode, Landen's did. What made it explode wasn't the story itself, because that happens to a lot of people: the abusive boyfriend who assaults her and the university doesn't treat it seriously. What made it more newsworthy was that this was a new beginning to a movement, which we did not know.

At the time, we did not know this was going to become the movement that it did. Nobody was covering this. What made it something that the news wanted to cover was that her boyfriend retaliated. He filed an honor court complaint against her. It became a huge scandal. All of the internet was talking about it. How the hell could a school accept that a perpetrator was filing a complaint because he "was intimidated" or she was intimidating him? It was at that time that Landen took a step back because it was a lot. I'm glad she took a step back. It became up to Annie and me after that. Melinda was gone. The other complainant wasn't public. Landen essentially dropped out. It was only Annie and me. We said, "I guess, we have to keep talking about this." We believed, we truthfully believed that we were at the precipice of a movement.

It wasn't so long after that we began hearing from other survivors. The first ones we heard from was Hope Brinn and Mia Ferguson, who were two students from Swarthmore who were seeing things happen at Swarthmore. We then heard from Sofie Karasek, who we still work with, who was at Berkeley and said things were happening at Berkeley. We heard from Danielle Dirks and Caroline Heldman at Occidental who were professors who were fighting against climate that was protecting perpetrators at Occidental. We heard from Tucker Reed and Alexa Schwartz at USC in Southern California. They were also hearing the same things. We heard from

Nastassja Schmiedt and Lea Roth at Dartmouth, who were also hearing the same problems. This became repeated across dozens of campuses time and time and time again. And we realized that this was going to be way bigger than we ever imagined.

So what we started to do was we started talking with these survivors and they reached out to us through Twitter, through Facebook, through LinkedIn even, you know, wanting to do what we did. We developed this model of being able to teach survivors how to file complaints. Our whole thing was, you can get a lawyer who can, but the likelihood of you finding a lawyer specializes in Title IX is not a very high possibility. Even today, it's not, not that easy. We can teach you to file a complaint and master the media and do so by yourself, which is exactly what we did. What we did was we taught survivors about Title IX. We taught them about what violations look like, how to ask the hard questions of their campus, and how to talk with media in a way that was going to get them the coverage. Every single one of those cases that we filed at the time were all investigated. Every single one of them got coverage.

This is one of the times when I began to read more refined research on media framing in particular. I worked with a professor named Frank Baumgarter. He was in political science and was also working within journalism as well. I had a theory and his class was called "Framing Public Policies." I had a theory that a movement would happen if we would frame sexual assault as being thematic and not episodic. But to do that, you would have to get survivors to come forward and to use their names instead of being Jane Does. Because one of the problems with sexual assault is that we have a lot of Jane Does. We don't know who is actually being impacted. If we were able to make this thematic and we were able to utilize the media as a tool to connect to each other--. We know the media isn't trained. They aren't trained to connect a story automatically, because they don't cover crime as being thematic, not just terrorism that they do

cover thematically. With sexual assault, they don't cover it thematically. What if we could force them to do so?

RS: For people who haven't taken Baumgartner's class, can you define the difference between episodic and thematic?

AP: Yeah, the terminology is more of a journalism theory--. It's more in the field of journalism. But episodic refers to a news story that is covered as being a single incident. So when you think of a singular shooting--. Actually a perfect example is to think of mass shootings. Mass shootings are framed to be episodical. You have the one lone wolf who kills a lot of people because he's insane. Whereas, we think of thematic, and I'll say it in a negative way, it's the way we see violence perpetuated by Muslims in America. People like to frame all Muslims as being part of an extreme group. They like to frame terrorism as being thematic. In a way, every instance is a theme of this larger conversation. It's been very adversarial to Muslim Americans. Whenever there is one extreme action committed by a Muslim, it's seen as being indicative of all Muslims. Whereas, when you see one mass shooting, you don't see it as being--. You don't see all white men being targeted when there's a white man shooter in many ways.

So with sexual assault, it's often seen as the one case of which a girl possibly put herself in a certain place that made it happen. Whereas if you were to see thematic coverage, the media would have a better grasp that women are targeted on campus. It's not that the girl put herself in a bad place. It's actually, it's a bigger problem beyond that. It's a culture of harassment and a culture of violence that is happening on every college campus. The way this evolved in this movement is that we had to force it. The media were not ready to cover this thematically. They were covering it as my story, as just Annie's story, as just Landen's story, as just a UNC problem. And even before us, they were covering it as a Yale problem, as an Amherst problem.

They weren't looking at this as a problem of campus sexual violence. The way we were going to solve this is if the media were not going to cover our stories collectively, then we were going to force them to do so. So what we started doing, we started connecting survivors across the country. We connected Sofie to Hope, Hope to Tucker, and Alexa, and then back to us. The first major event that we had was actually a press conference in New York, where we had students from USC, Dartmouth, UConn--all these different schools. We all did a public press conference and filed together. So what we did was, we started sending press releases to the media saying that Occidental is filing with Berkeley, is filing with Swarthmore. It became this collective, activist manifestation. Even though they were not physically collective, they were collective virtually. That became much more--. It became really powerful to get the media to cover it that way.

In March of 2013, I heard from Richard Perez Peña who is the reporter that I was referencing earlier who had written the stories about Dana and the stories about Yale. He reached out to me and said, "I've been following your social media posts and there seems to be a movement that's building." I thought, "Of course, there's a movement that's building. It's taken me so long to realize this." He asked, "Is there a serious problem going on in college campuses?" And I said, "Yes, there is because a network has been building to make the media cover this much more holistically." This article, which at the time I did not realize was going to be as big as it was--. It ended up becoming a full section article in the national section of *The New York Times.* It became one of the first thematic news stories around campus sexual violence. It was actually on the front page of *The New York Times* website when I was in my Women's Studies 101 class that semester. I remember clutching at my chest, and being like, "Oh, my God, on the front page of *The New York Times."* It was a photo of me and Annie. I was just--. "Oh, my God,

we made it to the front page of *The New York Times*. It has only been two months since we filed." Since then, it's only gotten more and more and more coverage. It's difficult to say when the tipping point was because I feel we're still at the tipping point. We're still at the point where the issue is still cascading. But. There was something about *The New York Times* article that shifted the framework of the way the media were covering this issue. It went from *The New York Times* to be covered by *Time*, to be covered by MSNBC, to be covered by CNN. It's something that completely exploded after that. So did the calls from survivors who were trying to get a hold of us. So that's kind of the start of that and it's only grown since then.

RS: The work you were doing at that point, was that officially called Know Your IX? Had you started that organizational framework at that point?

AP: Okay so the way--. No. In May of 2013, I had finished my time at Carolina temporarily. My residence hall had been broken into on Easter Sunday. And I began feeling very unsafe at Carolina. They had spray paints on my bulletin boards with phallic symbols, left a knife behind, left fingerprints in the bathroom across the hall from me. And I began feeling very unsafe. I decided I was going to take some time off. I moved up to Oregon to work with Annie. It was then that Alexandra, Dana, Annie, and I began talking about formalizing and creating somewhat of a network. What started it off was a Facebook group that started off with twenty or thirty people. It ended up being a Facebook group with over eight hundred people. At the time Dana and Alex talked about doing a campaign. We talked about what it would be called. We eventually narrowed it down to calling it Know Your IX. It was an idea. And Know Your IX was supposed to be a temporary thing. It was supposed to be a temporary campaign for students to learn their rights. Now Annie and I had been speaking to Sofie and the professors about at Occidental about creating an organization that would formalize supporting students in filing a

complaint. There were these two ideas that were separate. There was the idea of a temporary campaign and the idea of creating a formal organization that would be that middle person to support a survivor. Because I think what we saw, when we filed a complaint was that there wasn't accessible counsel to students who wanted to file a complaint that did not have the monetary resources to do so.

It was that summer that we began getting a huge influx of survivors who were reaching out to us and wanted help with complaints, who wanted help with complaints, and who needed more and more help and needed more and more help. At the time Alexandra and Dana really wanted to finish Know Your IX, we said, "We can't do this right now because we are so overwhelmed with survivors who want direct help." So what we actually ended up doing was Alexandra and Dana went on to finish Know Your IX. We helped with some of the fundraising for it. We raised over another eleven thousand dollars in some crowdsourcing campaigns. But then Annie and I went on to create an organization called End Rape on Campus (EROC). So those are directly two different organizations that we created around the same time. And Know Your IX is focused on more of a campaign educational approach informing students of their rights. Whereas EROC is a direct service organization. We support survivors in finding counsel, finding mental health care, and predominately supporting them and taking action. That's what most of our work comes from. They are two separate organizations. They were created at the same time. They were both fitted to solve this that need that we had. We knew students still did not know what their rights were, and we knew survivors did not know how to get help, so we created these two organizations.

RS: I am interested in the pragmatics of activism, for people in this economy, and with this public media and social media that people are working in--. Where is the funding coming from for EROC?]

AP: Where is the funding coming from? [Laughing]. If one thing activism is lacking, it is accessibility. Activism is not accessible. One of the things that is even most frustrating to me now is that there seems to be a lot of interest in this issue. But there doesn't seem to be a pipeline for funding it. Even for me, my income in 2014 was four thousand dollars for the entire year. I had to basically pay the minimum, the absolute minimum, which is $15, on my student loans. Annie and I shared a five-hundred square foot studio in Oregon. We lived in--. It wasn't even that. It was a house and it was a small studio in the attic of the house. That was the summer that we did--. We started EROC. We started working on Know Your IX. When our lease was up that summer and I was deciding whether to move--come back to UNC and finish my senior year or stay there. I chose to stay there. We ended up moving to a tent for a week a half trying to decide where we were going to go next.

That was actually when Kirby [Dick] and Amy [Ziering] reached out back to us and said "Would you like to more formally work on this documentary." Kirby and Amy reached out to us the first time in February of 2013, when they were touring with their film, *The Invisible War*. One of my residents happened to go to the screening and tell them, "Have you seen what my RA is doing? What Andrea is doing? Have you seen this issue on college campuses?" And they sent me an e-mail and we had a call a few ( ) later, and said, "Are you interested in possibly working on a documentary about campus sexual assaults sometime in the next few years. Which, at the time, I had turned twenty-one. I had no idea what was going on. I was like, "Sure, this sounds like an interesting idea."

Of course, to a theorist like me who works on media framing, what an awesome opportunity to create a documentary. Talk about perfect thematic framing, actually creating a documentary that can be used as a tool to propel the idea of the thematic problem of sexual assault. So of course I said yes. We were in Oregon. We hadn't heard from them in a while. A couple of seeds here and there but it not taken off. Then that summer, Kirby and Amy decided officially that they were going to work on a campus sexual assault documentary. That week and a half or so that we were in the tent in the backyard in Eugene, Oregon, we got a call from Kirby and Amy and they said, "We really want to work on this film. Where will you be in the next few weeks?" I said, "I have no idea where I will be." Annie and I said, "Do you think we could have enough money for a one-way ticket to LA?" I had not been to LA. Why not? We moved--. I was going to take a one-way flight to LA. When we got there, we stayed with a couple of the activists that we had met through our work at Occidental and USC. We eventually worked for Kirby and were able to find a studio, another little five hundred square-foot tiny studio in Korea Town that Annie and I shared. It had a bed that was broken. The bathroom wasn't really working. We stayed there throughout the remainder of 2013. And we weren't getting paid for the film. We were working behind the scenes. We were helping with the research of the film, connecting with survivors. We weren't getting any money for it. And EROC was very much at its beginning. We were working--. It was mainly Danielle Dirks, Annie, me, and Sofie, who were answering dozens of calls of people who need help with complaints but there was no, absolutely no funding for it. We used to work well over twelve hours a day working on these things.

At the time, I was trying to take online classes, to not fall behind at school. I couldn't deal with--. The PTSD just completely took over my life. It wasn't just my assault. It was really more the vicarious trauma of listening to some of these survivors. I didn't have money for

therapy. I was lucky that I had coverage under my mother insurance-wise, but nobody was taking my healthcare. I wasn't going to therapy. I wasn't doing anything. Later that fall, I got really sick. At the time, I was diagnosed with Mono, but it turns out it was a severe Staph infection which they did not diagnose up until five visits to the ER and my having to go home to have my parents help me with paying for it. I couldn't pay for it when I was in LA. I was given Prednisone to help with the inflammation that it was causing. I ended up having medical poisoning because of it. And became severely suicidal for twenty-four hours. I ended up being taken to the psychiatric ward. I wasn't committed but I was taken to the psychiatric ward. It was when I was strapped to the bed when a doctor came in and started talking to me and said, "What's wrong with you? Do you have a history of wanting to take your life?" All those terrible questions that psychiatrists in psychiatric wards ask you. I said this is going to sound crazy but I'm involved in this activist movement that's trying to hold schools accountable. He asked what I was doing it. I said, "I'm in the middle. I'm working on this film. I'm kind of in school but not." And I realized that I had given up everything to the point that I did not have a body that was working for me anymore.

And I think that moment, being in the psychiatric ward completely changed how I was an activist thereafter. I was working literally twenty-four hours a day, if not with the film, it was with survivors. I had given up everything: my education, my life, my body. It was after that I said, "If I'm going to work on this long-term--." It was actually Jaclyn Friedman who came to campus the semester before--. I remember her telling me, "We're going to need you longer than just this time. If you are going to be around, you have to take care of yourself." And I think at the time, I thought, you don't understand. This is a totally different movement than when you first started. But I'm really thankful for that. I remembered that when I was in the psychiatric ward.

When I flew back to LA, I said, “If we’re going to work on this and we’re not going to get any money for it, we’re going to make sure we take care of ourselves.” I would lie if I said it was not hard, because it was. I made absolutely no money. Annie started working at a bakery. We were getting money here and there. I was literally saving the money I had made through my job at admissions and some of the leftover refund checks that I had from school. I had nothing. I had absolutely nothing. It was some of the hardest times of my life.

And these are things you don’t really see in *The Hunting Ground*. What you don’t really see in all the coverage about me is that I gave up everything to become an activist, to dedicate my life to this issue. I think if one thing that I gave up that really haunts me is that I gave up my education. For me it’s been interesting realizing that success isn’t just in a diploma, it’s not just in getting amazing grades, and getting in honor societies. Success comes in many different ways. When I returned to Carolina in January of 2014, I was told I wasn’t going to graduate because I did not have the credits that I thought I had. It was three measly classes. It wasn’t even a whole semester. It was three classes that I had forgotten to take but I couldn’t take when I was gone.

And I came back and life was completely different. People were --. I could hear people were looking at me and being like [whisper], “There’s that girl that’s in that paper. That’s the girl who I heard of.” I wasn’t the student that I used to be. I wasn’t a normal student that could get around and nobody would notice her. People knew me as the girl who took on Carolina. That was something that completely--. When I came back, it was a completely different experience. I think if anything, like I said, I feel like I graduated the spring of 2013. After that, I was no longer the student that I entered school as. I was very much a student in name only. I ended up taking nineteen credit hours that semester. I ended up only finishing sixteen of them or so. I realized that not only was it difficult for me to be a student in terms of student activities. I also couldn’t

really focus on work. I had so many more things that I was focusing on, like the movie. I was filming in between classes. They were filming me--. They filmed me moving back into Carolina. I was living off campus, but I was not telling anybody about the film because I couldn't tell anybody about it. It was this whole secret double life. In many ways I felt I had three lives: I had my life with my parents I was living and the life I had back home; I had my life as an activist, a closeted activist in many ways; and my life as a student. They were three different lives. And it was something that I never felt like my whole self again, which is really difficult for me.

But I ended up not graduating. What I ended up doing was--. Because DTH was still covering what I was doing, I ended up walking. I ended up just walking graduation, going to the political science graduation, going to the Kenan Flagler Stadium graduation but not actually having my degree. Which for me it was really difficult because admitting to my parents I didn't have my degree was a huge deal. I was the first one to do so. I was the first one to make it. I should have had my degree. I should have graduated. Anyone who doesn't graduate is a failure in my head.

At the same time, when I was taking my finals, Annie and I decided to go to D.C. because we had a meeting with the White House. We happened coincidentally just decide to walk to the Capitol and then walk to the Russell Building. We stumbled onto Senator [Kirsten] Gillibrand's office. The office door was open and had this very nice receptionist named Bo and we said we liked to meet with someone to talk about sexual assault. And Bo looked at us like, "Girl, that's not how it works." [Laughter]. He didn't say that, but you could tell he was like, "You must be naive." Then out came Brooke Jamison, who is the legislative director and her name was Allison Kelley at the time before she got married, who is the legislative aide. And they're looking at us like, "You're clearly in college. You're clearly a student. That's clearly still

a twenty-something. So what are you two talking about?" And we started talking to them and their eyes just opened wide. They were like, "What?" We told them how we were two activists, how I had given up everything to work on this issue and my life completely. Our schools weren't paying attention. You could tell they were, "Oh, my God." We talked for forty-five minutes, which is longer than a lot of these scheduled meetings are. In the middle of the hallway in the Russell Building surrounded by marble columns.

A few days later, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand gave a public speech and said, "I'm taking on campus sexual assault." She said these two young women came into my office a few days ago and they told me what was going on. I'm taking on this issue. Since then, we've had an incredible relationship with Kirsten Gillibrand. She talks about us all the time, often without even telling us--. She went on the *Daily Show* and said, "Annie and Andrea changed--made me do this and they're incredibly inspiring." She wrote about us in her book, which she also didn't tell us about. And she said, "These two women came to my office and have inspired me to take on this issue. " She says so with such passion, that I feel like we're like her daughters in many ways. Since then, we worked with her on writing a bill that she introduced to Congress. I think for me, I often say that the year of my senior finals, I was literally in Washington talking to a senator and talking to the White House.

Right after walking graduation, Annie and I took the car and we drove across the country and visited survivors in different states and went to seventeen different states, and went to all these incredible in natural landmarks. In a sense it was this cool cross-country college road trip. We knew there was this time between my time at Carolina—and ending my physical time there--and the beginning of the end of making a film that at some point could be nominated for an Oscar. All of that is in *The Hunting Ground*. All of the footage of us on the road trip is in in *The*

Hunting Ground. It was for the first time that I began realizing that what we were doing was remarkable and it was successful. Although, nobody saw it that way. Nobody saw that what we did was too--that would be anything but two women complaining about their sad experiences. It was seen as something that was just for attention. It wasn't seen as something that was radical. It was something about Kirsten Gillibrand and other activists: the Jaclyn Friedmans, the Emily Mays, the people we've met throughout our work--. And kind of being the same circles, we realized that we were activists, that we were part of this movement, that we were part of history. I think often about that Women Studies 101 class and the the fact that I was in that class when we were on the front page of *The New York Times.* A few months later, students that were taking a class messaged me and said, "I saw you during my lecture today, my Women's Studies 101 lecture, and you're in the PowerPoint slide. We're learning about you. You're part of the curriculum."

This has happened so fast. I will be twenty-four in a few weeks and this all started when I was twenty. It hasn't been that long, it hasn't been that long since my assault. But my life has completely changed. One thing I also think about is that when I put that piece of paper in that box, when I wrote that column, when we filed that complaint, I never thought that I could possibly be going to the Academy Awards. I never thought that I'd be meeting all these incredible activists, be speaking in the Senate, be going to the White House on a regular basis, and living in DC, be running a non-profit before I turn twenty-five without a college degree, if anything. One thing I thought that would happen: I would definitely have a B.A. I have everything else. It's been hard. Because it's been hard to come to terms with the fact that my family doesn't understand what I am doing. They don't see this as success. And I don't blame them. Because they worked so hard for me to get my degree and I don't have it. Granted, I have

an education that is so much more than a B.A., not just in experience but also look what I've been able to research, who I'm connected with, and the professors that have helped shaped my education as an academic. But I don't have a B.A.

RS: Do you think you will get one?

AP: I'm hoping so. I'm literally one class away from a B.A. It's been an incredibly slow process. Carolina is very adversarial to those of us who don't want to stay there, might I add. I don't know if it had anything to do with my filing a complaint. It might. Universities here are very adversarial to students that want to do things that are not up to their curriculum in many ways. There's no credit I can get for internships. There's no credit I can get for anything else. I was going through--. It seemed Carolina was completely restructuring their academics because of the academic scandal and the governor's report. It's been interesting. That's something that says a lot. It was famous white men who never graduated who were successful. But its not--. I didn't drop out because I wanted to. It was not my choice to drop out. I felt so unsafe. I felt this commitment to do this work. That was just strong that I couldn't be a student anymore. It wasn't a choice. That's something I say over and over again. It was not a choice. Sexual assault and surviving sexual assault is not a choice. Oftentimes activism is not a choice. We are doing it because we are surviving and because someone has to do it. That's what I felt my calling was. I have done all this work. I'll be twenty-four and I still don't have my degree. I'm thinking about law school. I want to go to law school but I realize that I have to get my B.A. before I go to law school. It's been an interesting journey.

RS: Looking ahead, you mentioned earlier worrying about those pictures if were you to run for office. Has this experience--. You've been an activist. You're running a non-profit. And

you've seen the role of politicians and making change. Does this give you faith and optimism in the political sphere? What are your thoughts about it?

AP: I really struggled with the thoughts that I had when I was in psychiatric ward about taking care of myself and giving up my body and my life to this work. I also balance it with realizing I've always worked on this issue, I've not worked it in this capacity. I've always cared about education access. Sexual assault is another barrier to educational access. I'm doing exactly what I've been doing since I was in secondary school: fighting for education, fighting for access, and fighting for equity in the classroom. It's just different. I want always to work on gender violence and I want to always work in this issue but I do want my role to evolve. The reason why feminism and activism in this sphere is not accessible is because we don't leave. We stay working on this. We give our lives to this issue. And I think take up space. I don't think it's really anyone's fault. I don't think it's anybody's fault. I don't think Gloria Steinem should retire in any way. I think Gloria Steinem is doing a lot of great work, even now--. There needs to be more mentorship from older feminists to younger feminists. Within this work, I want to see myself as a future mentor for feminists who want to work in this area. I want my role to evolve.

I thought of running for a school board. I thought of focusing more on local activism and local community building. It could be in D.C. It could be anywhere because I can move. I do want to go--. I've often pondered over law school. Specifically a Ph.D. program. I would like to look more at—kind of scholarly activism. I don't want to reduce myself to academia. This is terrible because I love academics and my heroes were academics. One of feminism's problems is that there is a division between what's happening on the ground and what's happening in the classroom. I don't want to only work within academia. I don't think we should have to get a college degree to be an activist in this field. Because I don't have one.

I said this once and felt a little nervous saying so. I was at an event with the Feminist Majority Foundation and Ms. Magazine. I didn't know who Gloria Steinem was until I went to college. Because there were plenty of people in that room who grew up--. They kept saying how they grew up idolizing Gloria Steinem. I was like I literally did not know who she was until I got to college. I didn't grow up an area in which my parents were activists and my neighbors were activists. I was punished for being an activist, not by my family, but by society. It was seen as me being a rebel, as being blasphemous in a way. I think feminism should be available to everyone. It's unfair to say you have to get to college to listen to these theories and to learn about feminism and to learn about your rights and accessibility. I eventually want to go back—and I'll say what I mean by go back. I want to go back to students. I want to back to local communities. We have had clients who were community college students. No one ever talks to them. They don't have women's studies. They don't have anybody who talks about their rights. They don't have anybody reaching them. And I think it's unfortunate to say feminism often does have a short reach. It has a short reach of who it actually reaches.

What I see myself doing is I want people to be educated in rights. I want to work more in access, to not just education, but also the right to an education. Oftentimes, students have a right to education on paper. It doesn't mean they have it. I had to fight really hard to get access to the classes that I needed to get into college. And I want to make that easier for students.

Whether I decide to run for state office—we don't have a state here. But if I decided to move back to a state. I have thought, after law school, running for the school board and looking more at local politics, and then possibly national. I don't know. I don't know what the landscape will look like in the next ten to twenty years. It's difficult to say. Our country is changing. More and more women are running for office, which is great. As much as Gillibrand wants me to be

one of them, as she tells me on a daily basis almost, I do think I want to help empower as many young people as I can before I become inaccessible. Because one of the cons of being a politician is you are inaccessible. As empowering as Gillibrand is, not many people get to have the relationship that I have with her. Which was by pure luck and pure coincidence. There are plenty of people who I am sure admire Kirsten Gillibrand who don't get to have an individual relationship with her in many ways.

Even just my role with *The Hunting Ground*, I know I inspire people without even doing anything. People have heard my story, they've seen the film. They've read what I've written. They've told me that it's because of reading your story that I came forward. And I often think about politics this way. It doesn't mean that I have to individually work with people and individually to empower people. Sometimes your being in this position is enough to inspire someone. For me, it's balancing these options and also thinking, "How much of a normal life will I have?" At the rate that I'm going, I'm never going to have a normal life, which is totally fine.

I think it's interesting because I've made some really cool connections through my activism. One of the people that I communicate often with is Brie Larson, who was an actress who is a favorite for the Best Actress nomination this year. It was really funny because she donated a printer to EROC. It was under a pseudonym, so I didn't even know who she was. We got an e-mail from our agent, saying, "My client, who is a celebrity, is interested in your organization." I was like, this is weird, I wonder who it is. She was like, oh her name is Brie Larson. This is before she was really taking off. Now a lot of women know who she is. They say she's going to become another Jennifer Lawrence. We've been e-mailing since that happened. Every once in a while we talk about what it means to--. She's a celebrity. She's in the industry,

which is a little different. But it's similar to my conversations with Kirsten. When you're public, whatever that may be, whether it's your identity, your experience, or you're in a position in which people look up to you, whether it's negative or positive--. As many positive conversations as I have, I do have plenty negative ones of people who hate me for no good reason. That's how it is. Whether it's on the internet or physically in person, people will not like you because you're speaking the truth. A part of me wants to go to the dog park and not have somebody tell me, "Thank you for what you're doing," which has happened three times. It's not that bad.

The fact that I get stopped on the street has been a weird transition for me. It's people being like, "Thank you, I saw your movie"; "Thank you, I read your article"; "Thank you, I recognized you when you were walking to the coffee shop this morning." It happens in really random locations. It happens in the Metro. It happens when I'm getting groceries. It happens when I'm on a run. I had a person on a bike, saying, "Hey, wait, I want to talk to you." I was at brunch and somebody walked up to me and was like, "Oh, my God, you're so inspiring." Sometimes it's this whole--ugh. I stopped wearing makeup. I started put on hats and doing things to make myself look a little different. It's also even weirder when you are with a friend. And you're like, "Wow. Does this happen that often?" I had a friend who came to visit me, who said, "Do people stop you on the street?" Five minutes later, somebody came and stopped me on the street. It doesn't happen daily. The fact that it happened right after that was hilarious. It's balancing wanting to help as many people as possible but also recognizing the fact that with being public comes a sacrifice of you not being able to return to who you were. For me, I've had to balance. And I guess not just balance but really recognize the fact that I guess I shouldn't be who I used to be. The new me is different but isn't more strong or less strong than I used to be. I like to say that sexual assault doesn't make you stronger. It's a problematic framing of survivors.

Whether it's negative, saying survivors are making it up, or this hyper hero-framing that survivors that come forward are these super heroes that are ready to take on justice all the time. Sometimes we're okay, sometimes we're not, and it's okay to not be okay. It's not my responsibility to be someone's hero all the time. It's been balancing that there's only so much control I have of how I'm perceived. The control I do have is in accepting the fact that I'm different, that I'm this new version of myself.

RS: Are there things that I should have asked you about or things you want to talk about that we haven't covered?

AP: Is there anything you want me to explain more?

RS: Some of the themes that I've been talking with other people about are the role of social media, pro and con--

AP: Did Emily May expand on that?

RS: Yeah.

AP: Love Emily May. Was her baby there?

RS: No. [Laughs]

AP: Had she not had her baby yet?

RS: I talked to her in June.

AP: That's actually when I saw her. And Soraya?

RS: And Soraya and—

AP: Did you write down Angie Epifano?

RS: I wrote down--.

AP: Good luck getting a hold of her.

RS: I'm writing down people--. I wanted you to go back and ask you to spell people's names, because--

AP: Because Angie Epifano would be a great person to--. I don't know how you are going to find her though. She's very much about staying out of--. That's honestly a person who has gotten very little--not respect, but hasn't gotten the coverage she deserves in many ways. She is a rural, Southern drawl, Northern Florida gal. She is raw and she is awesome. She is very forgotten in many ways. Anyways, social media.

RS: Some of what you were talking about was happening at the same time that my students at Duke had gone and Ivana was very involved in--the Who Needs Feminism campaign. Were you aware of that campaign? And a lot of what people were holding up signs about were sexual assault. So I'm interested in your thoughts about those kinds of social media campaigns. And you talked about people tweeting at you and using social media to make connections.

AP: You also have Project Unbreakable, which happened around the same time that women's feminism was happening, which is done with the quotes founded by Grace Brown. I think what's interesting about all this. I do think there are--you look at Who Needs Feminism, you look at Project Unbreakable--. They're kind of larger critiques around sexism and women feeling safe in general. What schools had been doing and are still doing--. Our society as a whole is out there saying, "Well, these terrible things happened, but in our school--. These projects are born out of our school." You think about Who Needs Feminism being born out of Duke and UNC. The fact is that Duke and UNC have plenty of skeletons in their closet. They're willing to be like, "Look these cool projects coming out of their schools, but not willing to be like, "Wow we have a serious problem here." That was when that guy was accused of rape, right? The guy who was student body president. He was accused of rape, wasn't he, around that time?

RS: I don't remember when that--

AP: It didn't take off. God, what was his name? I used to go to Duke all the time, because I used to be afraid at Carolina so I used to go to Duke and go to the Joe Van Gogh coffee shop until they kicked me out of Wi-Fi and then I would leave. But I remember seeing posters about this guy being accused of rape.

RS: That was after--.

AP: It was probably right after. It was before the complaint. It was pretty long ago. With Who Needs Feminism and a lot of modern day social media campaigns, I think what's been difficult has been for social media, hashtag-type feminism to go beyond that hashtag. It just doesn't. It's because there really are two different spheres. There's the, it's kind of difficult to say it but I guess, concrete women's activism and physical feminist activism, protests. I think what's an intersection is--. Black Lives Matters is an interesting intersection because you have hashtag and you have physical activism.

But I think what's been difficult and what makes it a little different is that hashtag activism is kept online until there are physical manifestations, everyday feminism-- Who Needs Feminism is interesting because you have photos. You don't have protests. You don't have protests, you don't have manifestations around it. That's because--. When it comes back to it, it comes back to the fact that people are activating for feminism, which is a dirty word in society. People don't tend to connect feminism with sexual violence, just like they don't connect police brutality with institutional racism with affirmative action. Because again, we tend to frame things episodically. For a very long time, Black Lives Matter was about Mike Brown. Opal and a lot of the other activists of Black Lives Matter have been phenomenal in being able to break that media cycle. When you talk about media activism--. Oh my God, the Black Lives Matter folks are

brilliant. But again there are shortcomings, too. In the Black Lives Matter movement black women tend to not be included in the conversation, despite the fact that Black Lives Matter was created by three black women. It's absurd. But again there are shortcomings. Again with Who Needs Feminism. Who Needs Feminism has not been into the dialogue around campus sexual violence unless it's by activists who also happen to be tweeting about it, or happen to be talking about it. We frame things episodically. We don't think to connect the need for feminism with the existence of a hostile climate on college campuses. We don't think that having classes around feminism and women's equality could be a possible solution to ending inequality on college campuses. We don't think about that. Just like we don't think having classes around race relations and around the existence of slavery and racism in our campus could inform students to not be doing what they're doing on college campuses.

It goes back to academia. Feminism for a very long time was considered to be academic. It was considered to be something kept within predominately white feminist fears that were oftentimes academic, oftentimes not really connected to what was happening in social media. We are at an interesting turning point. We are at the point where hashtag feminism is transiting to the real world. It's connecting real people that are doing real things. One thing, Carry That Weight was phenomenal. When we were working on the complaint with Columbia, one of the major hurdles we had was that the Columbia complaint was happening at a time in which the media was oversaturated with campus sexual assaults. It is still oversaturated, but at the time, people had it with the idea of campus rape. They heard so many awful stories; you really can't care more, which is where we are with mass shootings right now.

Emma's story was new. It's hard to say why Emma's story became viral. I'm sure plenty journalists theorists could go and can say, "What is it about Emma Sulkowicz that made her

viral." Because there were plenty of students who walk around carrying posters, carrying around other things. What is it about the mattress that became viral? And I don't really know. I don't really know because Vanessa's view of magazine cover--. If anything's on a cover, it gets coverage. There was something about Emma Sulkowicz that actually, it literally became viral. And I would say Emma Sulkowicz and the UVA article were the only two major campus stories that have really made it to the fourth wall. Literally everybody in America knows these two cases. But you know it's difficult because there are not--. I can't think of many other stories around feminism and feminist activism that have made it to the fourth wall. Because even *The Hunting Ground*. *The Hunting Ground* is chipping at the fourth wall, but it's not there yet. It's not being talked about by morning shows. It's not being talked about by Hannity and all the crazies that don't cover women's issues. It's not being talked about. Same thing with all--Mike Brown, Freddie Gray. These cases made it past the fourth wall, whereas the dozens, the hundreds of other cases that came before did not. Even Trayvon. Trayvon's case took a while before it made it to the national agenda. Again it's difficult. Think of the mass shootings. There are so many mass shootings. Why is it that certain cases get coverage and others don't?

I think about Who Needs Feminism. I think about Project Unbreakable. I think of other major incredible hashtag campaigns that did not make it to the fourth wall. And I don't know why. This is a new field. There isn't a lot of research on why, why these cases make it there. To Barbara Friedman, who was--. It's funny when journalism professors are like, "Andrea do you know how to get coverage for this?" She's brought me to her class three times and we talk about exactly this, the changing the news landscape. Because what used to be the formula to get news coverage is no longer there.

A good example is *Ellen*. *Ellen* has not covered sexual assault. None of them, not UVA, not nothing. Why is it that majors--. Oprah's covered it. *Ellen* has not touched sexual assaults. The Weinstein Company who owns *The Hunting Ground*, we've had discussions about making it on *Ellen*. She said, "There's no formula for making it on *Ellen.* "*Ellen* will cover a viral cat video. She will not cover a national story." She said she never even covered a mass shooting. The formula for getting coverage and making it to the national agenda, has completely changed in the past five years. So it's difficult to say again. What is the impact of women's activism? What is the impact of hashtags, what is the impact of hashtags in our daily life? It's difficult to say. I'm very much in the lead on this issue, in this movement, and in media coverage. I can tell you it is often easier to make it on *The Daily Show*, to make it on *The Today Show*, and *Good Morning America*, than it is to make it on *Ellen* or to make it on *The New Yorker*. *The New Yorker* will not touch this issue. They published a Harvard—which is ridiculous. They published a Harvard letter from the Harvard Law School, basically trying to debunk *The Hunting Ground*, but they will not publish anything about survivors. I think it's a completely different landscape. Not to mention headlines and the way they are written are totally different. What gets clicked and what does not get clicked. What is viral and what is not viral. This whole concept of being viral to begin with--what does viral mean? I would say Who Needs Feminism was definitely viral. But was it viral to the point that it made it to the national agenda?

RS: Not until the--. I got a call from--. It never made it the national agenda. I got a call from I think it was *Good Morning America*, when the Cats who Don't Need Feminism appeared.

AP: Oh, God. Yes. I remember that. Or the mennonism thing is my favorite.

RS: That was a year or two later.

AP: It's weird right?

RS: When the Cats who Don't Need Feminism came on, that's when--. Then they covered the Women Who Don't Need Feminism without ever talking about Who Needs Feminism. It was amazing.

AP: It's so strange with this whole thing. Even Black Lives Matter is difficult--. I happen to know about Opal and the ones who created Black Lives Matter because I happen to study movements. That's why I know. But when things become viral, you lose control of them. It's difficult to track it back to the class at Duke that made these posters, right? It's difficult to know who the hell is running Black Lives Matter. Who the hell is running it? They definitely have a twitter page, but it's like Anonymous. Who the hell is running Anonymous? Who's doing it? Who's controlling it? I think they are also an interesting thing to study period. Like the operations of Anonymous. Because you have no idea who is running what. When it becomes viral, it is really really really hard to control the messaging.

One of the reasons why we have been successful is because we have been a gradual movement. We haven't gone viral randomly. The research that I'm doing now with Barbara, I'm looking at the impact of reporting after UVA. What I'm looking at is very much the willingness to report sexual assaults--the ability for it to go viral when it's seen as a false claim. It's interesting because the major, major stories on campus sexual assaults in the past ten years have been UVA, Duke Lacrosse and Yardley Love. You talking about these cases that are as episodic as possible. Duke Lacrosse is a national scandal. Everyone was talking about it. It was about these poor boys' lives being ruined as prosecutors are trying to make a career of false claims. "Hello?" That is insane. It's literally a *Law and Order* episode that has come to life. Same thing with UVA. You have this crazy story. That was so violent, which to me is every life. When someone sent me the article, I thought, "This is literally how it is all the time. This reporter is not

breaking any news." This is literally how it's been. Every story is this bad. Meanwhile, you have the Vanderbilt case that is pretty much the exact same thing as the UVA case. You have the four men as well, instead of a fraternity you have a football team. You also have a bottle being used. It's very similar. But even so, the Vanderbilt case has gotten coverage, but nowhere as much coverage as UVA.

If you do a Google analytics survey, you literally look at the spike: UVA---everybody else. Why is that? Why is that? Is it because we're more obsessed with trying to prove that women lie, so we can prove that we don't need feminism, that we don't need equality? Women are actually damning themselves. It's not men's fault at all. Why is that? Why is it that we focus so much on debunking women's issues? I have a book right here. The fall of the ERA--.When you think about Phyllis Schlafly, whatever her name is, talked about lesbians who are trying to get equality and stuff, she used the framing of lesbians trying to take over women's issues. You know it's difficult to say.

Why is it that when movements are at their strongest, the cases that get the most coverage are the ones that bring it back ten to twenty years? It's difficult to say. I don't know when it's going to be the tipping point. I do not know. It could be next week. Next week there could be an incredible groundbreaking article that is going to make every single political candidate talk about campus sexual assault. Every single one of them. Only Hillary has talked about it. And it hasn't been that much. Who knows if Bernie Sanders or, God think of something crazy, somebody like Donald Trump decides to say: I'm a feminist. Then, it's like, "What, you're a feminist?" It becomes a whole conversation. Who knows?

RS: The other thing I wanted to follow up and then wrap up. You talked about the divide between academic feminism and feminism that happens outside the academy.

AP: There's no term I feel. Just other feminists.

RS: How is your movement connecting with people who talk about rape and sexual assault off-campus, not on campuses?

AP: I think if one thing I've learned through activism is that it's very competitive and back to the funding thing. Where does our funding come from? We've had incredible luck to have a lot of people who have--. Most of our money comes from individual members and family foundations. You have family foundations that have had some personal connection. The Jewish community tends to be really passionate about this issue. Don't know really where that comes from, but a lot of Jewish family foundations have been very passionate about this issue. We only have enough money to pay for four salaries right now and a couple of major projects we have been working on. But it's been hard. You have the same people who are applying for the same grants. We haven't even looked into the violence against women's grants. None of the federal grants. We haven't even looked at that yet. That's because unfortunately, you have rape crisis centers, domestic violence shelters, homeless shelters, and LGBTQ service providers are all applying for the *same* grants.

I think it's really hard because when we as student activists make it to the real world and we want to continue doing this work, it's like a business. And it makes us uncomfortable. I always think about Sofie because Sofie is an economist. She says, "Oh, my God. Capitalism. It's going to destroy us all." Really? In many ways, yes. In many ways, if you have to run a business, it's hard. For those of us that are in the field, compared to the ones that are theorists and work in academia, it's still about survival. You know. You still have to teach classes or work so hard you get a tenure position and you get to continue writing about this. If you are a professional activist,

in many ways you have to either be with an organization or have so many speaking engagements, that you can totally support yourself. It takes a lot of to be there.

Money makes me kind of uncomfortable. If I can make enough to pay rent and take care of my dog and eat, I'll be fine. But it's not always easy to get to that point. I think for us, even with making EROC, you had to formalize an organization. You had to go through the whole type of 501(C)3 paperwork. We've had to formalize our work. We have a process of helping survivors. We have to fundraise, which is one of the most uncomfortable things ever. Having to talk to donors and sell your product, your product being activism and your product being advocacy--. You have thousands of organizations across the country that are all doing the exact same thing.

So a lot of it is--. I feel uncomfortable competing. I don't do it intentionally. We try to not take over each other's turf or anything, but even here in D.C. there are a lot of us that are fighting for funding. It's not easy. It's not easy at all. For us as an organization, we are desperate to bring in someone to help us with our intake and our immediate survivor's support. We know that we are going to have to raise a couple of thousands of dollars to be able to bring that person in and pay them a living salary. And that means more fundraising. That means competing with funding that other organizations need. And it's not easy.

If we move to a more liberal society in which our federal government would better support organizations, we might not have to do all this. I just came back from the U.K., where they are planning to defund rape crisis centers. Get this. They want to direct the tampon tax to rape crisis centers. "Wow." We are in a backward society when we are thinking to literally defund a direct service organization for women. It's difficult. A lot of it is the frustration that I've encountered in certain circles with direct service advocates and activists that are working in

the field is that they kind of wish there was more literature on what they are doing. What if we had academia? What if we had federal agencies that were actually looking at how much money is being cut from these programs? About how much money they need? I think if anything, I think we are starving for help. We don't have a marketing director. We don't have crisis firms. We don't have big money behind us. So we're essentially surviving as organizations. We are still providing direct service with little to no money. I know a lot of people--. Very much my friends who are teachers who use a lot their personal funding that they would spend on holiday gifts or spend on food in many ways to give back to the organizations. Like I said, I only made four thousand dollars my first full year with EROC. My income was four thousand dollars. When I went to speak to an accountant earlier this year, he said, "Can you give me back your tax return form." I said, "I didn't get anything back. I didn't pay anything. I was below the poverty wage." That was me being a full-time activist. I often wish that we had more money so we can bring in more people and help more activists become professionals. But I think we are stuck.

Now that I am in this position, I feel bad for being frustrated there wasn't more help for me. I know that everyone in the National Women's Law Center and the Victim Rights Law Center probably has thirty, forty cases. Because they are trying to maximize the little funding they have. It's hard. It's really hard. We are really really overworked. Rape crisis employees are really really overworked. We care about this issue. We need money for therapy. Direct service providers often do not get help. The vicarious trauma from personal experience is overwhelming, suffocating at times. For a very long time I didn't think to get help because I was so busy giving all of myself to this work.

Emily Mays put it this way, "It's really easy to become famous within feminism." You can literally have one tweet, start a hashtag campaign by accident. A good example is Zerlina

Maxwell, literally started a hashtag by accident and it's become viral. Zerlina now tours around the country and talks about rape culture and consent and media. Zerlina Maxwell for a very long time was trying to finish law school and trying to get a job and be normal. And it's not easy. Especially with speaking engagements, it's a strange world. It's a strange world when you've gone to the point where in a few years, you are running an organization and you are giving speaking engagements.

And I felt guilty for a long time charging. I felt guilty wanting a salary from EROC. But also I need to pay rent. I need to pay my medical bill. I need to pay for therapy. When you become a professional advocate, a professional activist, it's kind of that weird thing where you feel, "Did I sacrifice my integrity to get here? Is my getting paid for this work wrong? Is my being paid for this activism inappropriate in any way? Am I taking money away from other organizations?"

There's infighting in every movement. There's competition in every movement. With those of us in the field, there's this need to survive all the time, which is different from academia. And these are things I have only read in very few books. I read a ( ) books about competition among black activists and feminists. It's hard to be able to survive and to be able to build a name for yourself and also be able to navigate that conscious of like, "am I taking up too much space, or am I not giving back enough."

My thing is--. Taxes are always stressful. When I'm doing taxes because I have a salary. I have talked to my accountant about how much money I want to give to certain organizations, and how I want to make sure that I give to as many that I can without breaking the bank and without being unfair. And I think about that. Depending on how much I'll make in the future and how much I can save for law school--. One of the things I never want to forget is that I want to give

back. No matter--. If I become famous or I don't become famous, or if I become a politician, if I don't become a politician, I can't forget where I came from and I can't forget all the organizations that are still fighting day to day.

RS: Just briefly, I wanted to follow up on this trip that you recently took to the U.K. Is this issue, specifically campus sexual assault, becoming a transnational thing?

AP: Yes yes. We have worked with students in Australia, Canada, and the U.K and are building affiliate End Rape on Campus UK, End Rape on Campus Canada, and End Rape on Campus Australia. We've only made it to the U.K. It's actually a higher percentage in the U.K. than it is in the States. It's one in three. There's a little bit of nuance as to what they count as sexual assault. There they count as any unwanted sexual touching, which in my opinion is sexual assault. It's one in three there. I think the problem there is that they actually--.

I can tell you some of the stuff that I was able to research there. They actually had this national report called the Zellick Report that basically dissuaded schools from taking on sexual assault because "it might infringe on due process." Schools are completely removed from the process. They've kind of been encouraged to do a little bit, but they always default to the police and the police do not take cases. It's a serious problem there. One of the problems that we are seeing is exactly what I told the students there. I feel like they are where we were in 2012. There are some cases that are coming forward. There are some students that are writing open letters. There are some small protests. There are some signs. There are some journal articles being published. They're not connecting yet. It is different. Technically, they're one country, but they're not really. Especially, the difference between Northern Ireland and England is huge. In Northern Ireland, you cannot get therapy for a rape trauma syndrome if you don't report to the police. This includes private therapy. You can't get it. And people can't get abortions there. They

have to go to England to do so. This is still part of the U.K. There's a complete disconnect. It's just completely different. Granted, things are pretty different across the fifty states, but this is drastically different. The laws are drastically different. That's not to say it's impossible. I told them, "If you can get students in Texas talking to students in New York, it cannot be more different in those two states."

Australia has been very similar. What's different is that the U.K. and Australia, in particular, have said this is an American problem, which is exactly how they were here. They were saying, "This is just this a Yale problem? This is just this an Amherst problem?" In the next five years, they are at the precipice of a major national conversation. A lot of it is they have a very conservative parliament right now. The Tories have completely taken over, to the point that they don't want to fund rape crisis centers. You've got some students who are getting to the point where they are very upset. I'm hopeful. We are going back in July. I'm hoping we'll be meeting with more students, especially the students in Kings and Edinburgh who are very upset--. They're ready. They don't have a protest culture. It's in our constitution that people are allowed to protest, whereas they say, "Political manifestations aren't really common." I asked when the last major protest you heard of was and she said, "I haven't."

RS: You mentioned that you wish there was more mentoring among, from older feminists to younger feminists. I was talking to Soraya Chemaly yesterday and she was saying she thought there needed to be armies of young feminists mentoring older feminists.

AP: That's so funny.

RS: What is your relationship with the older generation of feminism? What role have you seen them playing? Or can you talk more about the role you wish they were playing?

AP: Honestly, Annie and I are getting to the point where we're part of the big leagues. I think it's a little different for us. We have garnered decent respect from a lot of major activists. When we were students, it was very difficult to get a hold of people. I only got a hold of Jaclyn because she came to campus. She was going to talk to me for a few minutes, which was real nice. Jessica Valenti I e-mailed, too. As Emily Mays was saying, when you've made it to a certain level it's easy to become famous whether it's by choice or not. I was talking to a client yesterday and she said, "I've met you before." I know, I remember you. She said, "Oh my God, you remember me?" That's so sad. That's so sad that it's like a thing. I didn't choose this. I didn't choose to become a celebrity in many ways. I don't think I've made it to the fourth wall. No, a fourth wall celebrity is definitely a celebrity among feminists as I've see. It's very strange but it's something--. It's very strange. It's a weird feeling. In other words, I'm famous for taking on a hard topic, which was weird to think about. I do wish there were more--. A lot of it is where feminists meet.

Conferences are astronomically expensive. It's unacceptable that conferences are so expensive. I am talking four hundred, five hundred, six hundred dollars to go to these conferences where these amazing thought leaders. I mean TED for example. Jesus Christ, it's like three thousand dollars to go to TED. What? How are you ever supposed to connect with these amazing people if you don't get to talk to them? Not to mention a lot of these thought leaders, they teach at Ivy Leagues. You don't see them teaching at community colleges. It's not that at all.

And again, it is and it is not academia's fault. But you shouldn't have to have a J-Store subscription to get to be able to read these incredible pieces of literature. That's where bell hook's philosophy comes from. Right? She likes to make her book accessible. Right? But again

it comes back to what is--having to survive and having to make money to be able to do this work. Right? It's the same way I work. We need a minimum payment that we usually charge for our speaking engagements, but we do a lot of pro bono ones. We usually--. Especially if there is a student group, and they can't pay for anything EROC will be able to front some of the stuff. We have a certain travel fund that we have specifically for pro bono engagements. For example, if we—We went to the U.K., that was technically a pro bono engagement. Although the helped with flights, which was great. We went to four or five colleges and did not charge anything to meet with students. It was not cheap, especially with the pound. But we did so because we wanted to be as accessible as possible. I think a lot of it is like it's making this personal decision to put yourself out there. I love Soraya. Soraya is great. I've learned a lot from Soraya. I've only met Soraya because I happen to be here in D.C. and I happen to have gotten to the point where we run into each other in similar circles. But I wasn't like that when I was student on campus. It is hard. It is really hard to be able to connect those groups.

Even with me now, there are some times when it's hard to get a hold of me--. When I was in the U.K., it was really hard to get a hold of me. I was unable to connect with the world. It seems the old world has no idea of how to deal with wifi. That was impossible. I make it a point to try to answer every single e-mail I get. It's a full-time job to check my Facebook messages, to check my Twitter messages, to check my LinkedIn messages, to see if I missed somebody. Right? It is a full-time job. I don't know if I will be able to do that if I have a family, if I have kids, or if I go to law school. I don't know if I'll be able to do this forever. As of right now, I'm trying to do that. I'm also trying to connect every student that reaches out to me to anyone they would like to connect with, especially student among student.

Some of my best friends have become the activists I've met doing this work. I'm going to two weddings of two survivors in the next few months. We are transitioning. We are becoming adults. We always were. But we're older now. We're getting married and having families and raising kids. It's a different life, but it's always remembering where we came from. I think is what it comes down to. I think of myself and even now, we're not really getting what's going on on campus. I had someone explain to me what Yik Yak was. I had no idea what it was. But also it's putting someone in that vulnerable position. Can you teach me more about this because I want to know about what this is?

Oftentimes, it's like Soraya said about me. So much of what Soraya says I'm encountering now but in a different sphere whether it is the Internet or what I am seeing on campuses. As different as technology is and as different as our society may be, there are still common themes. There's infighting among activists. There's a lack of accessibility among movements whether it be wealth or it be technology or it be just general class boundaries. There is racism. There is homophobia. These things are not really going to go away. They are going to look differently. And I think we have a lot to learn from those that came before us. We have a lot to learn from those that are coming now.

RS: That's great. Thank you.

AP: Sorry if I was long-winded.

RS: No, you were great.

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed by Flo Wolf, March 8, 2016