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April 14, 2010

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Intro. to American Studies

Reflection Paper

In a world where many people get caught up in their own daily struggles it is a rare opportunity to sit down with someone and try to understand their daily life. This interview project was one of these rare occurrences in which I was able to learn a little bit about a fellow employee whom I always saw and only occasionally talked to. The interview had its high and low points, one particularly interesting story and a controversial topic at its center. I learned a good deal about my interviewee and got a better understanding of some of the things a wage employee thinks about and deals with.

I interviewed Ms. Melinda Krauch, a roamer at West End Market. Personally, the best part of the interview was the fact that the same on-campus dining hall I am employed by employs Ms. Krauch as well. I am working there to help my parents pay for expenses month to month, I only work a couple of days per week and do not take it too seriously. As for Melinda, she is not working to help pay expenses but to pay them all, she is only off a couple of days per week, and she has to take it seriously because her livelihood is at stake.

The fact that many people depend on simple jobs that many young adults like myself take for granted hit me head on during this interview process. The fact that I interviewed someone I work with could have hindered or helped the process and in this case it helped. I was able to appreciate my work and abilities to do this work much more after speaking with Melinda. I am a 19-year-old college student staying in this Valley for a few fleeting years only to come back for visits while this woman will probably stay forever, helping whomever she can, wherever she can. This fact hit me hard and was something that I thought and still think a great deal about, if it was all I got out of the interview, it is enough.

Although Melinda was a great interviewee, there were a few things during the interview that could have gone better, one in particular. Before the recorded part of the session she looked over the questions I had for her so she could make sure there were not any glaringly obvious problems and to get a feel for how the interview was going to go; she was quite nervous. She quickly looked over the questions and asked if

she could have a copy of them for the interview so she could somewhat follow along. I thought this was fine at the time and made her a copy with the intentions of using them as a loose structure but adding and subtracting questions as I needed too. My mistake was in not telling Melinda these plans.

Even though it was the hardest part of the interview, it taught me a very valuable lesson, which is to never assume anything going into an interview process. When we started with the recorded questions she did not want me to stray from what was on the list of questions. Looking back, it seemed like she was intimidated by the fact that it was recorded, she didn't want to mess up so she only wanted to answer those questions that were in front of her. In an interview, the interviewer needs to have some creative leeway and have the ability to shape the interview as it goes, in this case I did not have as much freedom but the interview was still successful and this was the only fallback during the interview.

One glaringly obvious issue that Melinda struggles with daily is health care and a lack of health insurance. During the interview I asked the question, what is something that you would change about your job if you could? Her response was to give everyone health insurance, she said everyone deserves it and nobody should have to go without it. I thought this was interesting and very applicable to the course.

Although, the new healthcare bill was just passed it will still be a while before the policies are fully implemented so for this project I would like to talk about the system that wage workers, like Melinda, have been dealing with for years. According to an article entitled, "A Political Economy Model of Health Insurance Policy," Alena Kimakova states that public health care, in terms of eligibility, in the United States covered 25.3% of the population in 2001 while in other high-income countries the average was 93.2%.

Health insurance has always been a controversial issue and now more than ever the government and the people of the United States are trying to find successful ways to keep everyone healthy. Many other problems we face on a daily basis involve health care as well. This is not a simple problem and does not have a simple solution. People like Melinda Krauch will probably struggle all their lives. The new health care bill that was passed has already gotten numerous different responses and now it is a game of wait and see to find out if it will be a positive change.

The interview experience, as a whole, was very successful and intriguing. There were some ups and downs but in the end I left with a valuable lesson and a greater respect for wage employees and my job.

I got to apply my interview to my own life and also look at the bigger picture, the most worrisome part of Melinda and many other Americans' lives, healthcare.