

Burgeoning Biraciality:
What it Means to be a Young Mulatto in America Today
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FAMILY AND CHILDHOOD

1. *How did your parents meet, and was there any racial tension between family, friends, or others when they decided to get together?*

My parents actually met at a blues bar in Chicago. My dad was a bouncer, and – just to specify, my dad’s white and my mom’s black – and my mom was there with a date, and it wasn’t going well, so she “went to the bathroom,” and kinda just ran away from him, and went home with my dad that night. It was just a random hookup thing that turned into, “Oh, we’re gonna hang out for a little bit.” It was never meant to go anywhere with me involved or anything like that. But yeah, there was some tension when they started dating, and then my dad brought her back here to Rockport to meet the family and stuff like that, and there was a lot of racial tension and stuff like that. But... Got over that, I guess.

2. *Lenny Kravitz said of his childhood: “I grew up not knowing about race until I... went to school... My parents were the only parents that didn’t match.” (Guthmann) Were you always aware of race when you were growing up, or was there a moment you remember becoming aware?*

I was always kind of aware of it because I was in the city [of Chicago, Illinois], so there were a lot of minorities and everything like that. I was in the inner city too, so it was very apparent – going to school with black kids, lots of Latino kids, a few white kids and stuff, so I was always aware that I was very different. Like, when I would come here for vacation because my dad’s from around here, so we would come here and I was always the black kid. But when I was there, depending on who I was around, I was the white kid, or people would try to come and speak Spanish to me, and I was like “I don’t understand, sorry.” So... I’ve always been aware of [race]. And my cousins on my mom’s side are mulatto too, but they’re a lot darker than me, so they could blend in a lot easier, and I stuck out, because I was the lightest of them.

3. *As time passes and race relations change in America, have the ways others respond to your parents being an interracial couple also changed over the years?*

: Just to put it out there, my parents have never been together. Ever since I was born, they tried to make it work... No. Never married, nothing like that. Actually, my mom didn’t know that she could get pregnant, and, oops! And my daddy didn’t even know I was a thing until I popped out. (*I ask, “Do you get weird looks when people find out your parents are two different races?”*) Oh yeah. All the time. A lot of things – like when I’m walking around with my mom or something like that, they think we’re a couple or

something sometimes. It's really weird. I don't look more like one or the other, I'm a complete mix, so it's just weird sometimes. Very different.

4. How did your parents raise you and your siblings, if you have any, as biracial children; i.e., did they agree on trying to give you the benefit of both cultures, or were you raised in more of one culture than another, or was this perhaps a point of tension between your parents?

Well, my parents never really got along. My dad did a lot of the raising and stuff, because my mom was doing some crazy shit – she was still in her party phase. My dad was the more responsible one growing up. He raised me, but then he would always take me to my grandmother's house, which was my mom's mom, so I grew up there, then at my dad's house, and I grew up with my mom too, so I got a mix of everything. When I was at my dad's house, race wasn't a thing, like, it didn't exist. He was like, "This is how it is – we're family, so it doesn't matter." But like, in the black culture, race is still a very big topic. It's like, "Aw, white people do this, white people do that, niggas this," and stuff like that, so it's very different. But yeah, as far as the household, I got a little bit of everything. Like when I was hanging out with my cousins, it was a lot of hip-hop, talking about basketball, going to get your hair cut at the barber – the barber shop, the setting and stuff, that sort of thing, and when I was with my dad, he was playing his acoustic guitar and stuff like that, all of his hippie friends would come over sometimes. It was just a good balance, I guess.

5. Leona Lewis said this of when she would get teased as a child: "I'd go crying home to Mum and she would say to me, "You're a beautiful girl and you're a part of me and a part of your dad. You don't have to do anything but carry yourself with pride'." (Das) Were there any messages or values your parents instilled in you with regard to your mixed heritage?

Yeah, they were always like, "You have the best of both worlds." They would always tell me that. But, I never really saw that and still don't, because it's one of those things where, when you're going through school and with your peers and stuff like that, you want to feel like you fit in somewhere. You want to be able to fit somewhere where you're not always being pointed out and singled out... And that's impossible for me. I work at a Portuguese restaurant right now, and there are so many people who are just like – I get that question at least once a day, like, "What are you? What is your race, what is your heritage?" Some people speak Portuguese, like, "Are you Brazilian? Are you..." All these things, and I'm just like, "Nope. Nope. Nope." "What *are* you?" Honestly, Irish and Haitian, basically. I get that all the time, and you really want to be able to fit in, but it's not possible, it's really not. And I did get made fun of, especially when I moved here to Rockport, which is like an all-white town, basically. I made up the black population in the school for a while. And so that was a really tough thing, because I always got singled out, because I was always the butt of every black joke, and it's like, you could get mad, but it's you against the entire school, basically, and you either just have to let it go, and just be able to laugh at it – like, I find race and stuff like that kind of amusing now. Just because, if you get angry, you're only hurting yourself, you're only bringing yourself down, because nobody else gives a fuck, to be honest. But you still have to have pride,

you still have to have the sense of, “You know what, I’m still a person, it doesn’t matter.” So yeah, school is fun.

SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

6. *Did you grow up in either an ethnically diverse, or non-ethnically diverse area, and was your school population mirrored by that town or city?*

To begin with, I moved around schools a lot when I was in Chicago. I moved to Massachusetts when I was 12. And while I was there, it was like, custody battles and stuff like that, and my parents were taking me out of this school, putting me in this school that they wanted, and then, “No, no, no, you can’t do that,” bringing me back and forth. And one of the schools I went to was primarily black. We were still at a young, tender age, so it didn’t really matter that much, but you knew there was a difference and stuff like that. People would single me out, like in recess games, I would always be the last picked and stuff like that. The Hispanic people would all pick their people and the black kids would do that same thing. But then in the other school that I went to from like second grade to sixth grade, it was a primarily Hispanic school – Hispanic, and then black, and then only a couple of white people. So I had lots of different friends – I was like the Mecca for people, so I had white friends, black friends, Mexican friends, they all came together... But it was still very interesting, because of the gangs. I was in the inner city, so gangs were a really big thing; gang members, different types, like Latin Kings, Gangsta Disciples, black gangs and Latin gangs... all trying to recruit me, at nine, 10 years old. That’s how early they start. That was the main thing that was like, “Okay, time to get out here.” It was just like, “Mom, dad, this happened, some dude was just like ‘You should do this,’” and they were just like, “No.” That was the only thing they ever saw eye to eye on – that was not a good place for me to grow up. You become a product of your environment at that point, no matter what color you are. So there was that, and again when I moved here, it was just lots of white people, as far as the eye can see. It was crazy. So when I graduated and came here, I was like “Yes! Finally some people who are, you know, not so translucent!” And also, it’s kind of weird, because, I told my mom this when I moved here, I was like, “Mom, I need to be around some colored people. I need to be around, like, ethnic people,” and she was like, “What are you talking about? That’s crazy.” And then she moved here, and she was like, “I totally know what you mean.” It has nothing to do with the color of your skin, it’s just... culturally different... Definitely, big, big culture gap between the two.

7. *Derek Jeter said this about experiencing racism at school: “Kids would say [the N word]; you’d hear it. It would bother you and annoy you, make you feel bad. [But]... It taught me how I didn’t want to be, that I needed to learn about different people as opposed to just judging them.” (ABC News) Did you experience any racism at school, and if so, what was it like for you?*

: Okay, well... The “N” word, we shall say. In the black culture it gets thrown around a lot, like, a shit ton. A lot of kids, just like, every other word – it kind of makes me sick, at this point. But when I first moved to Rockport, I felt the racial tension just because I was the black kid, so that’s what was expected of me, was to be that way. And I was just trying to fit in, I was trying to make friends, I knew no one, so I kinda just followed suit with that, and started to do the whole dressing thug thing and stuff like that. That was

actually the reason I started playing basketball, because people expected me to. So I was like, "Alright, I'll give it a try." It was a really weird time... I just got so confused. People would sing songs and be like, "Nigger," and stuff like that, and I was like, "Wait, wait. You can't do that." And there was a point – because I've been rapping for a while – there was a time when that was a really big part of my vocabulary. I remember one time, freshman year of high school or something like that, me and my boys were all hanging out, and I was like, "You know, you guys are my homies, I feel comfortable with you guys saying that, calling me nigga and stuff like that," and then there reached a point, I forget exactly when it was, where it was just like, anybody who said that, black, white, or anything – it makes my stomach turn a little bit. I don't use that word, I don't like to – I mean, it slips out depending on my mood and stuff like that, for example if I'm drunk with some people, I'm just like "What's up, nigga?" No big deal, but on a daily basis, I never use that word. I don't like other people to, either. I find it now that more white people around me use that word more than black people do. (*I say, "That's a weird thing."*) It's not really, but I mean, to be honest, throughout history, black people have set the trends that white people have caught on to. For instance, the high five: invented by black NBA players, and then white people took it, and then what came after that? Giving daps... white people took that too. And just with music too, throughout history – you obviously know about the history of rock n' roll music; black artists did things, and white artists capitalized on it because they had the white face, and made it popular. Same thing with hip-top. Vanilla Ice... he was like, "Oh wait, I can do this too," and he rose up and became a face of hip-hop.

8. *What is your education experience like now, attending Salem State, which is the second-most diverse school of all 20 Massachusetts state and UMass schools?*

Coming to Salem State was definitely a little bit of a culture shock, but definitely refreshing, but in my experience, I really wasn't accepted by the black people here. It's always been a thing that I've known and what I've noticed. Excuse what I'm about to say, but, "Niggas hate other niggas." They don't, they really don't. It's just a trust thing. Like, I walk down the street, I don't look like I'm full black and stuff like that... every time I walk by people I get grilled, I get people watching me, trying to size me up, and I'm like, "Whatever. I'm me..." I don't gravitate towards people who I feel are putting on a front. A lot of the black kids that I've met here at Salem State were just all like thugged out and stuff like that, trying to be hard, and I'm like, "Dude, you're going to college. You're getting an education, you're doing the right thing. Stop trying to be so hard." That's how I felt – I could have been judging a book by its cover, but they were doing the same to me. They didn't like how I dressed and how I carried myself, so we just never hit it off. Honestly, I didn't have many friends while I was here. It was just a really, really bad time in my life while I was here. (*I say, "From my view, you seemed like you were popular"*.) I stayed in my room a lot. I didn't really socialize all that much. I had a really controlling relationship at the time, so I didn't really go out and make friends that much. I was socially awkward – I felt. But I don't think anyone else really picked up on it. But I gravitated towards the people that gravitated towards me. (*At this point, someone comes up and starts talking with Chris. He eventually asks what Chris is doing, and he says "I'm doing an interview about being mulatto in America." The guy says, "It's struggles." Chris echoes, "Struggles." I find out right after that it is one of*

Chris's cousins, who he hasn't been in touch with for years.)

9. Did you know how diverse Salem State was when you applied to the school, and did that have any sway in your final decision to attend? Do you think schools with a range of diversity are a better thing than a school with less diversity?

Yes, so much better. Because, there are a lot of people who go to these schools, like you and I, who went to all white high schools and all black high schools and stuff like that, and... Getting to know different people with different backgrounds and stuff like that, that's so interesting... Especially, I remember the open mic that was here, the last one that I attended before leaving Salem State, and so many different people, so many different acts, I remember [our mutual friend] got up there and did his "Ruby Tuesdays" song or something, and then Jeremy* got up there and did his freestyle thing, and it was just like, wow, this is really cool... freshman year, the very first open mic with the woman Iyeoka... That was awesome... Everyone was feeling it. It was cool because she was this awesomely powerful black woman onstage, with white guy on the rhythm guitar who was spittin' rap and stuff like that... I saw that and I looked at the crowd and everything, I stood up and I was just goin', I remember that... Everyone was still nervous, but you could see everyone vibin' to it, the cluster of white kids over here, the girls with the Uggs, Northface, stuff like that, then you have the sisters over here just like, "Ayy!" And it was just really cool. That's what I liked about Salem State was the diversity, it was a little bit of everything. It was like a little city.

10. Have you had any difficulty being accepted by certain groups here on campus, or the opposite - being automatically accepted because of your skin color?

(I ask, "Have you ever experienced reverse racism?") Yup. White kids love me. At least at Rockport, where I went, I was automatically cool. I went in there and I didn't even have to try to be like "Hey, what's up," people came up to me and I was automatically the cool kid because I was different. *(I ask, "Did you get that here?")* It goes both ways. Some people feel like I'm really open, but there's a lot of people I'm finding out now who are just really intimidated by me. I just walk down the street or down the hallway, going to class, I'm minding my own business, head held high, like, "Hi. I'm here, whatever." That's my presence. So I guess people are really intimidated by that, or can be. I learned this at New England Institute of Art where I transferred after Salem State, because I had a couple people tell me, after I got to talk to them and know them and stuff, they were just like, "Honestly, I thought you were a huge asshole before I even talked to you and stuff like that," and I was just like, "...Okay." It depends on who you're talking to and stuff. 'Cause I'm a very open, very social person. If I didn't know you, and you were sitting here doing this interview, and I overheard, I'd be like, "What are you guys talking about? This sounds really cool." I don't care.

FRIENDSHIPS/DATING RELATIONSHIPS

11. Throughout your life, have you become friends with people of a variety of different races, or mostly one or two races?

Not many are different, they're mostly white people. *(I ask, "How do you feel about that?")* It doesn't matter to me, but sometimes I'm afraid I'm not embracing a side of me. Culturally, I just feel like I'm abandoning one side. You feel like you're more white, or

something. I guess I am, just because the black culture that I'm used to is a very dangerous, violent, really ignorant side. It's gangbanging and doing crazy shit like that, and I don't want any part of that. That's why I moved out of Chicago. I don't even like going and visiting, even though my family's there. To give you an example, my two younger cousins: completely, completely stereotypical. Dad's black, mom's white, he used to beat her, they're separated now and they have their own families, but dad's not in the picture much, so it's mom who's handling that, but they both live at their grandmother's house, and [one of my female cousin is] four months younger than me, and she already has a three year old kid, and she's not with the father, and that's a big thing, and [another one of my cousins] just turned 19, this is his third time going to jail. It sucks though, because that's the kind of shit, you know? That is the inner city black culture, and it sucks because that's how it is, but I want no part of it, I really don't. So I guess you could say I am embracing the other side more because it is safer, it is more... appealing, bound to be successful, happier, you know? It sucks that it is that way.

12. If you have friends who are also mulatto, do you feel like you relate to or can connect with them in a special way, or do you have different backgrounds and thoughts about race than they do?

No, it's like, that special bond. I have a couple of friends who are mulatto, and we talk about it, and it's so interesting isn't it? It's cool because you finally feel like somebody understands you. You hang out with these people, you love 'em to death, you're really good friends, but until you have that person who looks like you, who understands the differences and stuff like that, it's special. You might not even be that close with them, but you have that connection, so that's awesome, you feel good about it.

13. Oprah Winfrey once said that she wished she could be light-skinned as a young woman, because the light-skinned women were always the ones that were most pursued by black men. Were you ever picked on for being a particular skin tone by any racial group? Do you think there is still a color-tone hierarchy?

I find that throughout the white community, with trying to date people, with girls, I always felt not as good of a candidate to be dated by a white woman as a white guy. For whatever reason, just because they seem more compatible, they look better together, they look like they go together, you know what I'm saying? My girlfriend now is a blonde girl. And when I look at us together, it's like... Something's off, you know? It's kinda weird for me. You get over it, but... Do you know what I'm saying, a little bit? *(I explain that because I've dated almost all white guys, I got used to seeing myself with white guys so it looks normal to me. Then I branch out into why I'm doing this project – to get other perspectives, and that it was hard for me to breach this topic until recently.)* It's hard, it is. It's way more difficult than people think. It's just that feeling of "Where do I belong?" *(I say, "And it's not like you're going to go somewhere where there's just a bunch of mulatto people hanging out.")* No, of course not. There's gonna be a bunch of white people hanging out, a bunch of black people hanging out, with maybe a lighter skinned person, and it all depends too, because you and I have pretty Anglo-Saxon features. But we have the darker skin, so people get confused. You see a group of black people hanging out, and there'll be a lighter skinned person in the group, but they look like they're black, like their facial features make them look black, but it's just their skin tone

that looks off. I have the opposite problem – I have a white nose, white upper lip, and I kinda look more white than I do black no matter what my skin color does, and it confuses you, and it's just like, "Where do I belong?" 'Cause I always get made fun of – not made fun of, but poked fun at in the wintertime, I feel like I'm pasty, like I'm so light, and people are just like "Fuck you, you're so dark still, shut up!" And I'm like, "Are you blind?" It's like, I'm darker than the coffee, whatever. (*I say, "Those little jokes tend to get to me after a while."*) After a little while. See, I make fun of myself, because I'm around white people all the time, so it's just a thing now. I know how to get laughs out of people, like when girls are like, "...I'm gonna go tanning," I'll be like, "I just got the premium package, I'm doing four times next week!" And they just look at me like, "Really?" And I think it's hilarious, but honestly, I started making fun of myself more just so people would stop making fun of me, so I had control over it. And then I started to feel better about it, because if you can't laugh at yourself, what are you doing? Everybody has "faults" or whatever, so you have to start laughing at them, or start crying. And I don't want to do that.

14. Have you dated whites, blacks, mulattos, or entirely different races from yourself? And if you have dated more than one race, how have your experiences differed in accordance to the meshing of both of your respective heritages and cultures?

If we're talking about "real" girlfriends, and not those elementary school holding hands and passing notes things – all white girls. I was with this girl very briefly, and she was half black, half Cuban, and we really connected on – she would cook for me, and it was good stuff 'cause it was all ethnic, Hispanic mixed with like, the soul food and stuff like that. But in my experience, black girls are crazy, just in general. (*I say, "I can't really comment on that because I wasn't really friends with any black girls [up until recently]."*) Yeah, I do little social experiments from time to time, and one of them was when I was in a pretty diverse audio engineering class at the New England Institute of Art. So, a lot of brothers, a lot of white guys and stuff like that all doing different things, but doing the audio. And it was funny because I would come in with my headphones on, hood up, hat, and stuff like that, and when I would talk in class, I would consciously do it differently. Because I remember the accent that I used to have, how people talked in Chicago with the slang and everything. I would go in one class and talk with the dialect that I'm using with you right now, and then at the end of class, the white guys would just comment on me and start chatting with me. The next day, though, I would start talking hood, and then the brothers, the Latin dudes, would come up and talk to me. It was really weird. It had nothing to do with how I was dressed because I wore the same thing every day, but how you talk is really big. It opened my eyes like crazy. Just by the way you talk, because that's a cultural similarity.

15. If you see yourself getting married or having children, do you see yourself most likely marrying a person of a certain race?

To be honest with you, I've never really seen a successful marriage or real relationship, so marriage doesn't seem like a very likely thing for me, but I'll fall in love with whoever. It doesn't matter their race, I'm open to anything. But as far as kids go, I don't know. And also, I have a hyphenated last name because my parents were never together, and I'm the guy, so how would a woman take on my hyphenated last name – Mr. and

Mrs. Fritz-Grice? That just doesn't sound right, to me at least. (*I say, "You can choose to call yourself whatever you want to call yourself."*) But then I feel like it would be picking sides.

SELF-IMAGE

16. *What is it that constitutes being a particular race – is it more cultural and environmental than color-wise, more nurture than nature?*

A lot of people see it as nurture over nature, definitely, because I've heard so many people say "He's the whitest black kid I know," and shit like that, and it's definitely how you were raised, like the culture – the culture definitely more, I think. Because I knew white gangbangers, who, if you would talk to them, you would swear they were black. It all depends, 'cause you can only go so far with just the color of your skin.

17. *Throughout your life, have people ever been surprised when you told them you are mulatto? Did they ever guess any other variety of ethnicities that were wrong?*

Yes, all the time. Like I said before, people think I'm Portuguese, Brazilian, Dominican, Mexican sometimes, depending on if I let my facial hair grow. But once they see the curly, nappy hair, they're like, "Oh, okay. Right." But people are always surprised when I tell people I'm Irish and German, they're like, "No way." When people don't guess and the just straight up ask me, I'm like, "How much time to do you have?" I'm a little bit of everything from the Caribbean Islands, mostly Haitian, and then like 30, 35 percent Irish, a little bit of German, a little bit of Dutch, and Scottish.

18. *Have you ever, or do you feel uncomfortable with either side of your black and white heritage (or in more specific terms of your ethnicity, i.e. Jewish and Haitian)?*

I'm definitely more aware of the differences when I'm around black people. I'm definitely more conscious of the fact that I'm the odd one out, just because I'm used to being around a whole bunch of white people anyway, so it's just different. Not something I'm unwilling to embrace, but it's just different.

19. *Race-wise, do you feel like there might be a side of yourself that is hidden, either subconsciously or on purpose? If so, do you want to reveal it?*

Oh yeah. But I don't know if I want to reveal it, because you know the saying "You can take the boy out the hood, but you can't take the hood out the boy?" You can take someone out of the hood, but you can't take the hood out of them. That's definitely part of me – the ignorant, loud, hood personality, that comes out of me when I'm either really drunk, or I'm pissed off. Like, I don't get mad. I've made myself a very calm person, I just let things go and stuff, because I don't like that side coming out. But it does, and it can, and it will. And it's bad.

20. *Bob Marley said this about being biracial: "Me don't dip on nobody's side. Me don't dip on the black man's side nor the white man's side. Me dip on God's side, the one who create me and cause me to come from black and white." (Lowney) Depending on who you happen to be around (i.e. a certain race or culture of people), does your self-image in terms of your race differ? Or, in your daily life, do you tend not to think about or notice your race?*

When I'm alone is when I notice it most. It's when I'm just in my head, so I'm thinking about it all the time. But yeah... when I get on the phone with my cousins and my family out there... all that stuff gets pulled out, it's really funny. Because whenever I'm around people – my ex-girlfriend used to say it to me all the time – she's like, "You get that accent when you're on the phone, it's really funny how different you sound." And I'm like, "I can't help it," you know? Because you get accustomed to one thing, but I'm really good at adapting. I can adapt in any situation, so if I go into a room full of, let's say, emo people listening to screamo, death metal and shit like that, I can go in there and I can relate, I can talk how I need to. I'm just really good at making people like me and feel comfortable around me. So anywhere I go I can do that.

AMERICAN CULTURE/CURRENT AFFAIRS

21. *Although we are coming up to a presidential election soon, America has now had four years with a mulatto president. What do you think his election and presidency means to American culture, and the often-controversial, often-shifting racial environment of our country?*

I'd rather see Obama in the office again than Mitt Romney, definitely. (*I ask, "Is that for reasons of race?"*) I feel like Obama has been [made into a scapegoat] because of his race, and it's like "Oh yeah, we tried a black president and it didn't work to how we wanted it to, so let's go back to what we know." That's what I feel like people are saying, when they start Obama-bashing about how he hasn't done shit for this country... It definitely goes beyond race at this point with the presidential election... A figurehead is all it is now, it's very similar to the king and queen of England. They're there, and they get all the shit, and they're the ones who do all the talking. They're the front man, but the music's being played by everyone else... The fact that he wasn't assassinated is a great thing, because I was expecting that. I thought he was going to get assassinated as soon as he got up to the podium for the inaugural speech. But it's interesting, because racism is still alive and kicking in this country, whether we want to believe it or not. But we as a culture are definitely taking steps to knock that down. Obama being president is an amazing thing, because that's the ultimate success story. Like, yes, you, black kid in the hood, you can rise above and become president? No one thinks that. No one in the black community expects that of anyone. It's just like rapper, basketball player or something like that, win the lottery. That's how you're going to get out. But being president? No way. So that's a really good success story. Definitely, having our president be a black person – or at least part, definitely has to make people be like, "Oh... Well you're not white, Catholic?" It probably has made people more accepting. I can't say for sure, because all of my friends that I hang out with, they know there's a difference in people, but they're very open, accepting. That's why I surround myself with them. Actually it's really funny, for a Halloween party last night, me and my girl dressed up. Our idea was, she was the schoolteacher and I was the principal. It was awesome. But as soon as I walked in, everyone was like, "Are you Obama?!" 'Cause I just had a white button-up with a nice tie and pants, and they asked automatically. And I had a red tie on too, and I was just like "Ignorant people!" (*Laughing.*)

22. *Do you think that, in America today, it's still necessary to pick either solely black or solely white social groups to be accepted, or is it more complicated?*

People view you however they're gonna view you. People definitely judge other people on the people they surround themselves with, definitely. And, to me it doesn't matter at all. If you connect with people, that's what you do, you just connect with certain people. But if I have black friends or if I have white friends, it doesn't really matter to me. It's just whoever I click with. And I'm not gonna fight for someone's approval, which is what I feel like I've always had to do with black people, which have not been as accepting of me as white people. So I'm just like you know what? I'll just accept it.

23. *When asked about her daughter Nahla's race, Halle Berry said, "I feel like she's black. I'm black and I'm her mother, and I believe in the one-drop theory." (Weiss) Although Halle Berry is technically mulatto, she sees herself and her mixed daughter as black. Does anyone in your family categorize you as one race or another? If you decide to have children, how do you think you would choose to handle your children's races? My children are gonna be mixed because I'm mixed. And depending on who I'm with – I'm a very light-skinned person, and if I end up having children with a white woman, they'll be a quarter black – they gotta know their culture, they gotta know their ethnicity, but again, it's nurture vs. nature: where are they gonna grow up, how are they gonna grow up and everything like that. But, I'm a rapper, that's what I'm gonna do. I love music, and a lot of people who are into music are multicultural, because music is the universal language, so it doesn't matter what color you are, what language you speak, there are gonna be so many different people.*

24. *Lenny Kravitz said this about his parents' relationship: "[My parents] would walk down the street (and) people would spit on them... very disgusting things. My father lost his side of the family 'til I was born." (Guthmann) This memory Lenny related is well within living memory. How far have we come since then?*

Pretty far, because like I said... I'm not that dark, but me and my girlfriend walk down the street all the time, and we turn heads... Good way, bad way, don't know, but guys are checking her out, girls are checking me out, and it's cool, because it's so unorthodox for people still. You see blonde-haired, blue-eyed people walking down the street together all the time and nobody says a thing, and that's just the picturesque thing. I really like it because I feel like I break the mold. I'm throwing a curve into people's perception of what they expect, and I love doing that. So it's good. That's what I'm saying – if me and you walked down the street together, we'd look very similar, we would turn fewer heads. It makes sense... But otherwise it's a little different... It's funny. I like it.

25. *What is the most important thing you feel you have learned about yourself and how you fit into the world as a young American mulatto?*

Honestly, I think that the thing that I've taken from this mostly is just, you can't focus on the differences. If you actually want to be happy, and feel good about yourself, you can't focus on the differences. And if you are with people who do focus on the differences, they're usually knocking you down. Like I said, when I'm here around white people and stuff, I'm usually the black kid. And vice versa, when I go to Chicago, I'm the white kid. I remember being at the barber shop with my uncle, and his son who is full black, and [one of my cousins] is half black but he's a lot darker than me, and they were – all the barbers and stuff – were just making fun of me and stuff like that, like, "Oh, you want to

look like Jason Kid, right?” Like, I was the white kid, even though I’m mixed, they still just saw the differences mostly. And that made me feel uncomfortable because it’s like, “Yeah, okay, can we get over this now?” Because race is a really big thing still in the black community compared to the white, so I think that’s why I haven’t gotten along with black people as much, because race is such a big thing, and I just want to get over it. I am who I am, take it or leave it. I’d say, don’t focus on the differences – we are all people. We are all God’s children.

*Name changed.

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