

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY STUDY ON WHITE PEOPLE

The Reminiscences of

Kathy Baker

INCITE

Columbia University

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## PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Kathy Baker conducted by Whitney Dow on October 3, 2017 This interview is part of the Study on White People.

The reader is asked to bear in mind that s/he is reading a verbatim transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose.

3PM

Session #1 (video)

Interviewee: Kathy Baker

Location: Battle Creek, MI

Interviewer: Whitney Dow

Date: October 3, 2017

Q: First of all, can you tell me your name, what you do, where you're from, and a little about yourself?

Baker: [17:27:09] Okay, my name is Kathy—Kathleen—Kathy Baker. Friends at church call me KB because I had a roommate whose name was Kathy, and when her father called it would be “Do you want to talk to Kathy?” And the answer was yes, so I became KB. So, a lot of people know me that way. Born in Jackson, Michigan. My father was from Battle Creek. We moved back to Battle Creek when I was in second grade, have lived here since. I taught for the local schools for thirty-five and a half years, retired in 2005, and I've been volunteering in an elementary school since then, so almost going on fifty years working with the school system.

Q: That sounds like the best holiday. Like, you retire and then—

Baker: [17:27:57] Go back to full-time volunt—yeah, yeah.

Q: —go back to full-time volunteer.

Baker: [17:28:00] Yeah. So, shortly, I'm going to start seeing kids again in the library, so that will be kind of a fun time again.

Q: And what was the motivation for you? What compelled you to participate in this project?

Baker: [17:28:16] I'm not sure. [laughs] I saw the ad. I think you had it at BC [Battle Creek] Books. And then our pastor at church said, "You know, if you're interested," and for some reason I felt I wanted to do it, and I did. Since then, I have read *Waking Up White in America*. We did that as a summer read. And just finished *The Blood of Emmett Till*, and J. D. [James David] Vance's book, *Hillbilly Elegy*. So, I'm not sure why all those three have come together, but they have.

Q: It sounds like I sent you the reading list for the interview. [laughter] You're going to be, like, the most educated person on the subject of anybody in the room, including us two. So that's—

Baker: [17:29:03] Mostly a coincidence, I'm sure, but just interesting, the sequence of the three, and then this. So, we'll see.

Q: And how did you find the experience, doing the survey?

Baker: [17:29:15] Interesting, because some of those questions I just haven't really thought about, and really where I would put myself on that bar of no opinion, or agree, or disagree. So, it made me think a little—tried to make me think a little bit about where I fit on that. Political questions were interesting. I don't find myself really political, so I'm not sure what the political—how that goes.

Q: Well, I think one of the reasons why we came to Michigan was that it was—this particular county is one of the counties that had voted for Barack Obama twice and flipped to Trump, and there's a lot of interest in how white people in particular voted in the last election, and what was sort of the driving force for how they voted. So, I think that was one of the thought processes around why we—and why you probably saw that stuff on the survey. It's also, as you know from the survey—they cast a huge net, and it's not really clear until there's a lot of data in to sort of understand what's actually there. So, I think that actually all the surv—the surveys are made up of questions that are sort of part of a canon of sociological surveys that you can—they actually are questions—there's, like, thousands of questions, and you pick the questions, and they actually relate to other surveys, as well.

Baker: [17:30:44] Okay. Well, that kind of makes sense on, then, where you're coming from, and how you chose Battle Creek in Michigan and this area. Okay.

Q: So, can you tell me a little about growing up: where you grew up, what the neighborhood was like. Was it diverse? Mixed? Was it—? Just your experience growing up.

Baker: [17:31:05] Okay. I lived in Jackson, Michigan originally. My mother was an educator in the high school. My dad worked for an optical company, and he was hired after he got out of the service, and worked there. Lived two blocks from the school, [laughs] so I couldn't really skip school. I don't remember too much about the neighborhood except that our house was two blocks from school. We had some good friends that we met through church. Basically, I'm

assuming a white neighborhood. I don't have any way to really know, but based on the friends we had. We moved to Battle Creek when I was second grade, moved to the Lakeview area, and within walking distance of elementary school. Neighborhood was white; there was no question about that. I did discover, though, when my dad died in 2010 and I had the deed to the house, that at one time the area had been restricted and no blacks could buy houses there, which I found very interesting, and kind of like, whoa. I can't remember the timeframe on it, but when the subdivision was—or when that area was established, it was coming out of World War II, and so they were building a lot of homes. That was part of it. And I don't know where that came from, but Lakeview was a pull-away from Battle Creek, people that didn't want to live in the city because the population makeup, which was blacks, moved to Lakeview. And so, Lakeview was very much a white suburb; there was no question about that. So, you know, white neighbors, white school. In the high school I went to, which was Lakeview High School, maybe—I can remember one black student when I was in high school there for the four years. So pretty much that whole area, township, was pretty much white, and a lot of pull-aways from the city itself.

Q: And as a young woman, girl and young woman growing up, when did you—do you remember a time when you started to become conscious of your race?

Baker: [17:33:12] No. [laughs] Interestingly enough, I worked—I got hired—I went to Central Michigan University, was hired to teach at a black school. And so, the elementary school that I taught at, and stayed with until it closed in '99, was ninety-five percent black. And no, so I really don't know that I could ever say that I was cognizant that I was white, versus black.

Q: So, take me through that. Even though you taught a school that was ninety-five percent black, you didn't think of yourself as a white teacher in a black school?

Baker: [17:33:52] Not really. I mean, not really. I had students that would—[laughs] I hadn't thought about this story in a long time—I had a student that came to me. The teacher next to me was absent. She had a sub. And the sub was white. And this student [laughs] came over and said, “Miss Baker, Miss Baker, guess what! We've got a sub, and she's white.” And it didn't dawn on me that—and I just remember my reaction was that's kind of interesting that this child would come and tell me that, because I obviously am not black. So, no, I just—I guess I just never thought myself as—of—in that way.

Q: Why do you think that you didn't think of your—that you didn't think about your race?

Baker: [17:34:43] I can't tell ya. [laughs] I can't tell you that.

Q: Can you put my question into your answer?

Baker: [17:34:50] Why did I not identify as being white is a good question, and I don't have a good answer. [laughs] I don't know. And that's not the right answer you want, I know, but I really—I just—I never really have thought about that.

Q: I just—I don't want one answer or another. I'm not looking for—there's definitely no right answer for these questions, but—

Baker: [17:35:19] I know. [laughs] I know.

Q: —there's not—but yeah, so the—but now that you've—has that changed since you've started reading some of these books? And has it changed—? So, there must have been, at some point in your life, if you've read, you know, *Waking Up White*, that you started to think about it. At what point did you start thinking about your own race?

Baker: [17:35:49] Well, *Waking Up White* made you reflect on a whole bunch of things, the book. And so, part of it was the questions they asked are very similar [laughs] to what you're asking. And it makes you go back and look at different aspects of your life. And I really didn't have—don't have a lot of good answers for some of the questions that she asked in her book when she realized some things about herself. She, again, was in a situation where she was working with black—and discovered that it was very different from what she had grown up. So where did—how does that fit with me? I'm not sure, because obviously teaching in an all-black school, I taught with black—I mean, I worked with black adults, and I taught black students. And I'm not sure why I realized that their life was different than mine. Obviously, it was. You know, students that would come to me, and they had experiences that I would never have in my lifetime, just because of how they were raised, and what they had to do. And I remember early on in my career I realized I would probably never survive in a black neighborhood, because they have experiences that make them resilient, and they're survivors, and I don't know if I were put in a situation like that if I would be able to do as well as they did.

So maybe that was some initial part of it, way back then, as a teacher, and realizing what the kids were going through, and what they experienced, and those were not things that I had experienced as a child. It may have started back then; I don't know. But *Waking Up White* certainly made me think—try to think more about that, and the privileges that we have.

Q: Do you think that you've gotten any benefit out of being white?

Baker: [17:37:51] Oh, I know I did. I had to have. You know, there's just—

Q: Put my question—

Baker: [17:37:55] Oh. [laughs] Benefits about being white, yeah, they had to have been there, because some things that other races are challenged on I never was. You just get to do things, and you don't even think twice about it until you hear other people that don't get that opportunity. So, it's one of those things that I really didn't give it a second thought, because I had been in the system and allowed to do things, because I was white, until I had a chance to reflect on other people that were not white, and what they had gone through.

Q: Do you think that you're a bad person for not having thought about it?

Baker: [17:38:43] Am I a bad person [laughs] because I haven't thought about it? Not really. I mean, it's just—I think it's just one of those things that it didn't occur to me that that's how life was for other people. No, I would not call myself a bad person, but I would hope to think that

I'm a little bit more in tuned to what other people are going through, because of reading—and, again, [laughs] the sequence of the three books, don't ask me why. You know, it just made me see other ways that people have experienced life that are not the ways I've experienced life, the discrimination that they've had that I— And maybe I've been discriminated against and just wouldn't recognize it, if—I guess that's possible.

Q: Are there draw—can you identify are there any drawbacks to being white?

Baker: [17:39:39] Are there any drawbacks to being white? Well, sometimes I think we get to do things that we probably shouldn't get to do, and I think sometimes if you have money you get to do things that someone who doesn't have money get to do, and because of being white.

Sometimes I don't think we go through the school of hard knocks like other people do, other races do, other cultures do. And that's not going to be true for every white person, because there are some whites that definitely go through the school of hard knocks, but there are a lot of people that don't experience that, and don't know what it's like to live on a shoestring, or to be one paycheck away from homeless. So yeah, I'm—yeah, there have to be some drawbacks for being white. It can't be just all nice and sweet.

Q: Well, it's funny because the drawbacks that you listed are all negative things that you didn't have to go through.

Baker: [17:40:37] [laughs] Okay.

Q: No, I'm just—it's just interesting that you—

Baker: [17:40:41] Observation, okay.

Q: It's an observation, just thinking that you're putting value on facing adversity. Is that what you're saying? I'm trying to understand—

Baker: [17:40:52] Yes, there is a value to have faced adversities. That is true. I believe that adversities make you stronger. They help you to be a better person. I think you have to go through adversities to find out where you are on things. And yeah, you need to have adversities, not [laughs] in a fun way, but I think it helps you become a better person.

Q: And do you think that your life would have been different if you had been born black?

Baker: [17:41:31] It's hard to know if my life would have been different, just because no two people are ever the same. Even twins don't turn out to be the same. So that's an interesting question. I sometimes feel like parts of me are black, because I like certain kinds of music. [laughs] I love gospel music. I love black music. And I love some of the things that are involved in the black culture. I can't be black, and I can't act black, [laughs] but I love some of the things that they have. So, it's hard to say on that one, whether I— I wouldn't be me, but I would be a black version of me. [laughs] You know, that's interesting. I sometimes feel like I'm a—there's blackness inside of me, just for the things that I like and enjoy.

Q: If somebody said if you walk through that door you'll be changed from white—there's a possibility, a chance you'll be changed from black to white. Would you hesitate to walk through the door? Would you not want to take that chance? Or is it something that wouldn't matter to you?

Baker: [17:42:46] How would I feel if I knew that I could walk through a door and be changed from white to black, right? That's a good question. And I don't know that I have a good answer. I would like to think that it would not affect me, but it would have to affect you. There's no way it couldn't. How, I'm not sure, but it would have to affect you. There's no way you could not not be affected. Would I enjoy it? It's hard to say. It's—yeah. Next question. [laughs] Yeah, I don't—that's interesting. That's interesting.

Q: Do we owe black people something, those of us who live in 2017, because of the institutionalized and government-sponsored racism of our country in the past?

Baker: [17:43:49] In the past. So, do we owe black people help in living their lives is kind of what you're saying. In some ways I think we do, because we have been responsible for some of the ways that they haven't been able to grow. They haven't been able to do some things because of the way that we, the—kind of like the corporate “we”—have held them back. And we have to take responsibility for that, because we have held them back, and I—there's a [laughs] guilt in that that's rightly—we have to accept. So yeah, I think I would agree, that we do need to do that.

Q: What do we need to do?

Baker: [17:44:32] That's a good question, what do we need to do. I was thinking, as—when you call—knew that this was going to happen, one of the things I asked myself a while back, a while—when I was teaching was the question if a black person that was being rude and disrespectful were white, would I feel that they were still being rude and disrespectful if they were white. You know, sometimes the way people come across; do you attribute that to their race? And I don't know. There are some people that I think are just [laughs] that way, and if they were white, they would be that way; if they were black, they would be that way; if they were Asian, Hispanic. It wouldn't make any difference. They'd just be rude, nasty people.

So where is this going with the question that you asked? [laughs] I think we need to make sure that they have opportunities to do all that they should be able to do, that if we're—if we, as white people, are allowed to do, they should be, too. There shouldn't be a factor that keeps them from not being all that they can be. You have black families that are strong families that make sure their kids do right, and are good for—you know, they're good with their families. And then there are other families that there's no leadership in that family. They don't know how to be the mom. They don't know how to be the dad. They don't know how to teach their children. But there are white families that are the same way, too. So how do you help those black families that want to do right, and we've maybe put barriers in their way? Did I answer the question? Probably not.

Q: You did.

Baker: [17:46:13] Probably not.

Q: You totally answered the question.

Baker: [17:46:14] Well, and I'm going to go on [unclear] a little bit more, because I think one of the things that I've discovered is if you don't know how to work the system you're really at a disadvantage, and I've been privileged in the things that I've done that I know I can—I know how to work and get what I need to do what I need to do. But there are a lot of families, black and poor whites, that don't know how to work the system, and we put barriers up to make it really hard for them to do what they need to do, whatever that might be. We kind of—yeah, I think it's not right to do that.

Q: What is something that black people misunderstand about white people?

Baker: [17:47:00] Say the question again for me?

Q: What is something that black people misunderstand about white people? Or even an attribute?

Baker: [17:47:08] What do black people misunderstand about white people? I think—well, I don't know. Authority figures — that they see them as people being in authority, that they don't see them maybe as being equal. I think those are two possibilities. I almost want to say that—say the question again. I need to ponder this more. Keep going.

Q: Well, the question is what do black people misunderstand about white people.

Baker: [17:47:54] So how would I define “misunderstand”? That’s—

Q: Or what don’t they know about white people? What do they—? You know, I don’t know what an answer would be. Maybe it’s that, you know, all white people think they’re better than black people, or all white people are good with money. I don’t know. [laughter] What’s, you know—

Baker: [17:48:19] All right, so what do black people misunderstand—?

Q: Do you ever feel that things are projected on you because of your race by people who are black that aren’t true? Like, oh, you’re the white teacher in school, you must be really rich. Or anything like that?

Baker: [17:48:33] Yeah, black people, projections that black people have on me. I’m white. [laughs] You know, so therefore I probably can’t see things the way they see them. I think that would be something that would be possible, that I can’t understand where they’re coming from because I’m white, and because I probably haven’t experienced some of the things they’ve experienced. I think that would be—which may or may not be true, but I think that would be something that they—especially if they don’t know my background, they might not know if I might’ve had some of those experiences or not. That could be a misunderstanding.

Q: Are you happy you’re white?

Baker: [17:49:18] Am I happy I'm white? I'm not unhappy that I'm white. [laughs] I guess I've never really given it a thought. I'm happy with who I am. I would like to think that if I were black or Asian or Hispanic or whatever, I would still be a happy person. But not [laughs] being in that situation, I can't say that for sure.

Q: Now, I mean, I also wonder, because I ask that question of black people, as well, about this, whether they would change, and people who are virulently, you know, fighting against white supremacy and [unclear]. And over and over it's like, "Absolutely not. I would—despite recognizing the inequality, and the things that—" People understand their identity, like, who they are.

Baker: [17:50:10] Yeah.

Q: So, when you were teaching high school—

Baker: [17:50:24] Elementary school. So, I'm an elementary teacher. Fill you in a little bit on that: I taught second grade. I worked with kids in a Title 1 program, so that was federal money. Worked with some at-risk students. I've done special—I have a master's degree in reading, so I've worked with students in a reading situation. Second grade was my classroom. I did a volunteer mentoring program that brought in community people to work with students, and I was the planner for that. So, my area is little people, K-5, K-5

Q: But little people have families.

Baker: [17:51:02] They do, they do.

Q: And did you interact with the families of your students?

Baker: [17:51:08] I often have said about the parents that I worked with, with my students, they are some of the people that I love the best. I still see some of my parents to this day. They are now grandparents, and I have their grandchildren, or I have—yes, I do. And I had some of the best parents that—and not having any other school to compare with, because I taught in a school that was all black, I don't know what it's like in a white school to know that, but I loved my parents. I loved their support of their kids. I loved how they were connected with their kids. And I loved my kids. I loved working with them, and I still this day when I see them—it's—ninety percent of the time [laughs] they have good memories, although it was not always good, but they have good memories, and they remember our time fondly, and that means a lot to me. Sorry, [laughs] I get choked up, because it is—it's a good memory. And you can edit that if you want to or not, but it's good, because they were neat kids, and—

Q: It makes me—I'm going to have to edit myself, because the idea of having taught for fifty years and you still love it so much is just a wonderful—

Baker: [17:52:18] I love it on good days. On days when kids are in your face and [laughs] don't understand that they're not in charge, and there's a whole society, that's when it's hard. But, you know, when I see my kids, and I get a hug from them, that's worth bunches. [cries]

Q: So, in your interaction with the parents, would you say that there was a black culture? A particular black culture that they identify with?

Baker: [17:52:53] Yeah, there had to have been a black culture, because it was one I was not familiar with. I know when we have lunches and they cooked for us, and we had the sweet potato pie, which is one of my favorite pies to this day, and we had greens, and we had, you know, the things that you associate with the black culture, you know, that was there. The church connection that they had, the family connection they had—they're all very strong. Grandparents that were raising their kids because their own kids were not responsible. I know while I was still at the Lincoln, the school that I was at that closed, I had parents of kids that I had that were raising their grandkids because their own children were not being responsible. And you saw that over and over and over again, that they stepped up. And that was the generations—that was back in the early '70s. I went to Central Michigan University when there were riots going on. Not a clue [laughs] about what was happening. I taught—came back to Battle Creek in '69 when the riots were, you know—all that was happening, and I really didn't connect with the Detroit—you know, they just are having the anniversary of that. Really didn't connect with how that was playing out. The school I was in was all black, and I know that there were some issues at Central High School, which was predominantly black. And I really didn't—didn't really see where I was in that picture, which is probably [laughs] really embarrassing to say, but it really wasn't something I was connecting with. But you know, yeah, there had to be another culture beyond what I had, just because the kids were coming from different families.

Q: Don't you think it's sort of funny that you were so easily identifying all these things, and at the same time the fact that you said at the time you didn't see yourself as white, you didn't see yourself as relating to these things, how can that be, that you can be in the center of this—

Baker: [17:54:56] And not—

Q: —and not see yourself as an actor in the drama?

Baker: [17:55:02] [laughs] So how am I so—? There should be a term for what I am. Blissfully ignorant? I can't tell you that. I can't tell you that. I don't know. Which is not [laughs] what you want to hear, but it's—but I—

Q: Well, I think that it sort of goes back to my question about what do black people not know about white people, is that I think sometimes we are oblivious, and that it's not—what we're doing is not intentional. That word, right? That it is not intentional what we're doing. We're living our lives in kind of an unintentional way, and doing things that people of color think have all these ascribed motivations to, when we're just sometimes not paying attention.

Baker: [17:55:56] I think your word “oblivious” [laughs] was—I'm going to put that on, because I think that's true. I mean, it just wasn't a big deal to me, which probably should've been. You know, I was white in a school that was not white. But I didn't—and obviously I stuck out like a sore thumb because I was white, and every—many of the teachers were black. The kids were black. I mean, there was no sugarcoating that. But it just never—I never got myself in that

position, which probably I should've, but I just didn't. So oblivious, I'm sorry to say, is probably a good word.

Q: So, conversely, if there's a black culture, is there a white culture that you feel connected to?

Baker: [17:56:44] [laughs] That's interesting, because when I think of black culture I think of music; I think of religion, faith; I think of food. But I don't think of that for whites. I mean, what would I say is the white food? [laughs] I don't know, because I don't see that we have—I don't see that we have that identity that same way. And that's a strange thing to say, that—but there has to be a white culture. If there's a black culture there has to be a white culture, but I don't think I can tell you what it is. I mean, there's not a favorite—like, sweet potato pie, that's definitely black. Greens, that's definitely black. For whites? Apple pie? [laughs] I don't know. I don't know. That's an interesting question. But yes, there has to be a culture, because there has to be. There are whites, like there's a Hispanic culture, and there's an Asian culture. There has to be a white culture.

Q: So, it's interesting that you're living in it and not being able to define it.

Baker: [17:57:53] Interesting but true. I just—yeah, I have to be living in it, because I'm white. But how would I define it? Jobs we do? The places we live? The stores that we shop at? The restaurants we go to? It would have to be, but I'm not sure I see that as the culture, but it would have to be. Wouldn't it? [laughs] I'm trying to weasel out of it, and I'm not doing a very good

job, but—see, I’m not even sure I know how to define “culture,” if the truth were known. If you said for me to define it, I’m not sure I would be able to give you an accurate definition.

Q: Have you ever consciously used your race to your advantage?

Baker: [17:58:49] Have I ever used my race consciously to my advantage? I would say right off the hand no, but I’m sure I have, probably—but consciously. [laughs] I’ll probably contradict myself when you ask me another question, but right now I can’t think of consciously using my race.

Q: We’ve talked about a lot of different things. Is there anything—I don’t know if I asked you: what do you think makes you white?

Baker: [17:59:39] What do I think makes me white? Aside from the fact that my skin is not black or tan, [laughs] or Oriental looking, what makes me white? Probably the way I talk, my language. Probably the things that I do, the interests I have. The places I can go to, cities, traveling. What makes me white? [pause] I’m not sure what else I would include in that. Probably everything. How can you exclude things? I haven’t had any barriers to education; that’s not been an issue. My home, that’s not been an issue. I’m financially stable; that’s not an issue. I can choose what I do or don’t want to do; that’s not an issue. What makes me white? Maybe the choices I have, that I can make, that I’m allowed to make.

Q: Is there anything we didn't touch on that you would like to mention, or that this conversation has made you think about and you wanted to just talk [unclear]?

Baker: [18:01:18] When you ask if there's anything else, I would like to think that I've answered your questions. [laughs] I'm not sure that I have, and that makes me feel kind of—

Q: You have completely and honestly and openly, as much as anybody ever has, and I really appreciate you coming in and speaking with us. There's no right answers.

Baker: [18:01:40] I know.

Q: Not having answers to questions is why we're doing this. We don't have answers. You know, we have a lot of questions, and we're trying to sort of unpack how whiteness is constructed, and how white people relate to their white identity and culture—

Baker: [18:01:57] Whiteness.

Q: —and what actually is white culture. And so yeah, so you've answered the questions as well as anybody who's ever sat in that chair.

Baker: [18:02:06] So I passed—no, I didn't pass the test.

Q: You passed the test. You're white. [laughter]

Baker: [18:02:09] No, I didn't pass the test, because there's so much involved in each of us that—[cries] I don't know what other people go through, and what they do, and so there's a guilt on my part for that. Because I don't know what they go through. And so that's part of that whiteness, I think, that I'm not allowed—that I haven't experienced that. And so that's one of those things that I'll never, probably ever, have that experience. And does it make me a bad person? No. But it's just something that I'm not going to be able to—[laughs] this is stupid, but it's not. I think that's just one of the things that probably makes me sad, that I can't experience what other people go through. And I can't control that, because of who I am, and how I've—what I was born into. But that's what it is. [laughs] I'm sorry, but I'm not sorry, because that's just part of it.

Q: You definitely should not be sorry. I mean, I think that these are very confusing conversations to have. I think that we're in a time when a lot of white people are sort of grappling with these questions, if you look at what's happening in Charlottesville and around the country. And people are trying—and I think it's actually a good thing that at least we're grappling. I don't think that—well, if we had answers, we wouldn't be sitting—

Baker: [18:04:03] [laughs] That's true.

Q: —in a storefront in Battle Creek, just, you know—

Baker: [18:04:04] That's true, that's true. Well, I appreciate what you're doing to try to grapple with this issue, because one of your earlier questions was what do whites owe to blacks, and I think it's grappling with this issue. Why is it that whites—why is it whites think that they know better than anybody else? *The Blood of Emmett Till*, oh my gosh. You know, the implications that what whites did to blacks then, and that whole—that idea of superiority, it's just hard to imagine people that feel that way, that they're entitled to be that way. Yeah, so that was powerful. The J. D. Vance, *Elegy of a Hillbilly*, again, another view of white people and how they see themselves, and where they come from, and how they see themselves in context to other whites, blacks, whatever. No, what you're doing is the right thing, because we need to look at why it is that we see things the way we see them. And it's not always right. It's not always right.

Q: True. Well, we're going to take some stills of you now.

Baker: [18:05:32] [laughs] Oh, can I get rid of the tears in my eyes, please? Gracious. Thanks. I'm not sure where that came from, but it's honest.

Q: Look, honesty is the best policy, right? You shouldn't feel [unclear]. A lot of people do sit here and aren't honest, or aren't willing to explore how they really feel. And the last person who sat in that chair was completely unwilling to remotely answer the questions honestly.

Baker: [18:06:04] Really? Okay.

Q: And so, it's nice to meet someone who's willing to do that.

Baker: [18:06:09] [laughs] I tried.

Q: Even to say, “I don’t know” is something—

Baker: [18:06:11] I tried, yeah. Well, you gotta know that you don’t know, because if you don’t know you don’t know, then you can’t make any improvements, and you can’t go anyplace, so—

Q: So just look at me for a second. I’m going to take some photos. [pause] Yeah, just relax.

Baker: [18:06:34] I don’t smile easily, so if you get a good smile—

Q: Keep it?

Baker: [18:06:40] Keep it. [laughs] Keep it. Yeah, keep it.

Q: And now let’s see your serious face.

Baker: [18:06:50] [laughs] That’s all the time.

Q: The dog ate your homework face.

Baker: [18:07:03] [laughs] The dog ate my homework face?

Q: Yeah, when the kids are like, “Eh, the dog ate my homework.”

Baker: [18:07:08] I’ll have to think about that. I didn’t have a dog, so a dog would never eat my homework.

Q: I know, but your students telling you that, what would your—

Baker: [18:07:14] They wouldn’t say that. What would they say? They are so good at thinking on their feet. They could lie in two seconds, and I could never do that. I am not as quick on my feet as my students are when they are telling me a story. I cannot do that. Skill I don’t have.

[laughs]

Q: We have one more shot, so just—I want to just—not a serious face, but just, like, a relaxed—just your regular—[pause] Thank you. That’s great. That’s [unclear] part of the interview—

[END OF INTERVIEW]