Transcript – Meghan Kallman, class of 2016, Ph.D.

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Interviewer: Amanda Knox, Pembroke Center Assistant Archivist
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Amanda Knox: Good morning. My name is Amanda Knox. I'm the Assistant Archivist at the Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women at Brown University. Today is January 20 2022. It is 9:30 in the morning, and I am here with another Brown University alum who is interested in sharing her story with us today. Welcome.

Meghan Kallman: Thank you so much. My name is Meghan Kallman. I am a Brown alum. I got my PhD in 2016 from the Sociology Department. Currently, I'm teaching in the IE MBA the joint MBA program, and I've been on the faculty there, gosh, for five years now.

AK: Fantastic. Thank you so much for taking the time to join me today. I know that you're super busy, particularly at this time of the year. So you have a really interesting story that I first picked up in the Brown alumni monthly. But before we get to that part [1:00], I'd like to start from the beginning, if you don't mind, if you would like to share any kind of personal background about where or how you grew up, what your parents did, where you went to school, things you were interested — topics like that.

MK: Yeah, sure. I was raised in New Hampshire — in southwest New Hampshire. I was born there. I am a product of a blended family. A family has been blended a couple of times. So we're a big family. And we've had stepsiblings here, there and everywhere. And most of my siblings are sort of within my age group. I graduated from ConVal Regional High School which at the time that I graduated, had about 900 kids and covered nine towns. So it's pretty — it gives you an idea of how rural the area up there is. And, you know, I graduated high school. I worked in the Dominican Republic for a little while [2:00], as an interpreter and as a teacher of English, and I did a couple of random odd jobs. I went to college, I graduated from Smith College in 2005.

With degrees in Sociology and Painting. And I had, you know, again, as a young person, I had a number of different jobs. I worked as an environmental educator at a sail trainer aboard the Schooner *SoundWaters* in the Long Island Sound. I worked for Amnesty International, I actually was supposed to move to New Orleans with my then-boyfriend, I had a job lined up down there. And so did he and the weekend that we were supposed to drive down there Katrina hit — which obviously, you know, really, really, really hurt the city and the region tremendously. And so I never lived in New Orleans, although I had planned to. I, you know, I worked for Amnesty International Washington DC for a little while, and then moved to Bolivia for a few years. And I was working in an environmental nonprofit, a tri-national, environmental nonprofit. [3:00] And then later an arts based organization for a couple of years. I came back, I got a master's degree at the University of Chicago. I came back. I was working in Boston, I had an illness in my immediate family, so I needed to be within striking distance of home. And, I came down to Rhode Island in 2010, to start my doctoral degree in the Sociology department and, and I lived for a year in Providence, and then I moved up to Pawtucket and I have been here ever since.

AK: So, going back a little bit, what made you decide to want to go to Smith?

MK: Um, I'm trying to remember what the sort of cause — the decision making and the consequence are a little bit blurred for me right now. But I will say that Smith was transformational. It was, you know, it's a women's school, it still identifies as a women's school. There are non-binary students and trans men [4:00] who are also in school. And I think as of recently, also trans women are admitted, but it strongly identifies as a women's school and a feminist space. And it was amazing. It was like one of those things where you look — like nothing about the world is different, but everything about the world is different. This is an environment entirely designed around the needs and flourishing of women. And, and so that was an incredible eye-opener for me, and it was a really good fit at that time in my life. I credit that space with a lot of like — both confidence building but also imagination building — like what could the world look like if we designed it around the needs and wants of women? And the needs and wants of people who have historically not had worlds designed around them right? This includes people who have been marginalized by race, by class, by gender and gender identity, by religion, anything right? So it was [5:00] my experience of being in a space that was so fully

inclusive towards — sort of gender inclusive, and in a way that just sort of blew my mind. And again, it was, it wasn't like you walk onto campus and like there's trumpets playing, it's just that, like, everything is just different enough to give you a sense — to give me a sense of — what I, what I live with, or what I don't have when I'm out in the world in a different way. And, and so again, I'm not — I don't actually fully recall my decision making process around going there. It had something to do with that. But I do remember, you know, and have felt ever since that it was a really, really strong and good choice for me at that time. It doesn't, it doesn't suit everyone, obviously. But it changed my life, changed my sense of what the world could be, changed my sense of power of agency, my sort of analysis of how a lot of this stuff worked. And it was really, really useful [6:00] at that time in my life.

AK: And what kind of spawned your interest or desire in traveling so much across the world?

MK: Well, I grew up in a pretty hardscrabble place. Like rural New Hampshire is, it's interesting politically, it's not — at the time that I was growing up, it was not as — it wasn't super conservative, in a political sense. But it was a bit conservative in a cultural sense. And, you know, opportunities were somewhat limited. You know, we weren't super proximate to a big city, there was rural poverty looks very different from urban poverty. You know, it's hidden in the woods, for the most part, right? And so the understanding of what you could be as a young woman, we're sort of contoured by that. And, you know, I remember, yeah, for various reasons, including [7:00] sort of the geographical constrictions and some of the economic situations that my family faced, wanting to be out right away, right? Like feeling that the world was big and interesting. And really just knowing that if I stayed where I was, my opportunities to be my full self were going to be limited by that context. And again, that's not true for everybody. But it was certainly true for me. And, and so I got up and got out as soon as I could. And I, you know, I don't, I don't say this to sound disparaging. But I do say this to sound to describe that, I think, I think places are about fit. And sometimes fit is also about where you are and your life. You know, and I went to, you know, a decent public regional high school, as I described. It was very small, but the size itself will give you a sense maybe of what was sort of available to young people at that time. [8:00] And I knew that I wanted something different. And so, my sort of

orienting principle was: Go check it out, and figure it out along the way. And I, you know, so I follow up my nose, really.

AK: So having done that, what advice would you give to a young person who's currently in that position where they're in a restrictive space, and they want to get out and explore all these opportunities? Like, what is the one piece of advice you would give that person to go ahead and do those things.

MK: You know, I think it's important, everybody's space is restrictive, right? Whether you grow up in the middle of New York City, or in the middle of rural New Hampshire, that is your context. And perspective is so important. And so for somebody who grows up in a context very different from the one that I grew up in, context is still important and perspective is still important. So I actually think it's important for everybody to challenge themselves to come into contact with new ideas. That doesn't necessarily have to happen, you know, 5000 miles away from where you were born, though it can. [9:00] But I think it can happen by going to different parts of town, right? By going to places within your own community that, for whatever reason, you don't go right. But I do think that that is crucial. I think, you know, that travel is one of the easiest ways to do that, which I think is, you know, why we have reams of travel logs and, and stuff like that. But, I think the other thing that travel does and can do is help us turn a sort of critical — and by which I don't mean necessarily negative, but interrogative — eye towards our own context, right? What do you learn about yourself, and how you were raised in your values and where you are sort of in the ecology of social relationships by going outside that, right? And that perspective is important because it can help us see the realities that shape our own lives that we can't see when we're in it. And again, [10:00] it doesn't mean you have to move to Bolivia. do that, right? It can mean you leave Rhode Island, it can mean you move to a different part of town, any of these things, right. But that I think is really helpful. And I think that it is healthy for most of us to do that, through whatever version either makes sense or is possible. So that I mean, that is advice that I would give, sometimes that means going away to college. Sometimes that means taking a road trip for the summer, sometimes that means getting a job in a, you know, part of your community where you wouldn't have worked before, whatever it is right? And again, I think it's important to note that these things are contoured by access. That you know, and access.

sometimes it's controlled by money, and sometimes by age, and sometimes by race and gender, and usually a mix of all of that stuff, right? So like not everybody can pick up and do, you know, whatever they wanted to do. But perspective is attainable, I think for all of us in different ways, depending on how we go about it.

AK: What were some of the biggest [11:00] takeaways that you have from doing that travel before coming to Brown?

MK: I mean, I was always working, for one. And, you know, I come from a family of very modest means. We spent a number of years of our childhood without stable housing. And that was a — we can get to that later. But that's been a huge driver of why I go after affordable housing is one of my big political issues. Because, you know, I spent a couple years of my childhood in a camper van, living there. And that's not something that I think anybody should live through, unless it's an active decision on their part. But I think there's a few things, right? So one of them was that I was always working. And, you know, all of these sort of little, little side hustles or small jobs or whatever it was, and I think that that helped me… The economic realities of my life made [12:00], try going. I'm trying to think of how to say this. When you work somewhere, right? Whether that's DC or Boston, or Bolivia, there's a different sort of pattern of responsibilities to your days, which is something that taught me a lot, right? It put me in contact with, you know, one of my, you know, the guardian of my godchildren. I, you know, I have a handful of godchildren who are children of sisters who I worked with, at age 18, or something like that, right? And in those working relationships are relationships that have lasted for 20 years of my life. I've watched their children grow up, I've had them stay with me for different points of time like these — So I guess what I'm saying is that, I think for me — and I'm not, I'm not spreading any universalisms here. But, for me, the fact of always having to earn my living wherever I was, was very grounding [13:00] and helped me make friends, frankly, right? Like, you know, coworkers, like, you know, we're all trying to make a living. So we were relying on each other. We were keeping each other company; we were troubleshooting whatever issues we were troubleshooting, and those things — [Coughing]. Excuse me. You know, they really helped forge relationships. In my experience, or in my life, relationships get stronger through the actual doing of stuff — including having fun, but certainly not limited to having fun,

right? Like you have to sort of test those relationships and build them over the course of something. And for me, that has often come with this sort of struggle to figure out how I'm going to earn a living. And, you know — so I've lost track of the initial question, but I, but I guess I would say making friends is so important. And it has been so important to me, and I guess [14:00] I'm fortunate in that it comes pretty easily to me. I always used to laugh at my paternal grandfather and his sister because they were like, always embarrassing me because they would like, go up and talk to anybody on the street. And they would make friends with anybody within 30 seconds. And as a little kid, I would cringe and it's like, "Oh, God, you're approaching this person." And now I do the same thing. And so, you know, that's humbling, because you see pieces of your family kind of come through to you without your consent. But, it's in retrospect that I've realized what a big gift that is, right? And I think they taught me a little bit of how to do that. And I think I come by a little bit of it naturally, although I would have been hard pressed to admit that at age 14. And so, for me, friendships have been the most important thing in my life. And I feel incredibly blessed to have had as many as I have. And those are things that I invest in and that I care about. And so I see, you know, [15:00] the — Like, I think this would have happened travel or no travel, but I mean friendships, relationships, human relationships, human community, for most of us is what makes life worth living. And are what helps us find our purpose and helps us check our own crazy stories, and helps us get our head out of the sand when required, and picks us up, and parties with us, and plays with us, and celebrates with us, right? And so I think that when I think about the most beautiful parts of moving around a lot for 10 years, I think about the people, most of whom are still in my life in some way — not people that I see every day, because I live far from a lot of them. But that is something that I really prioritize. And it's something that I feel very fortunate to have to have been able to just sort of live out and live through. So I guess that's loosely connected to this question of moving around. But it is what stands out to me. [16:00]

AK: So after having all of these experiences, what made you decide to pursue a PhD, and to do that at Brown?

MK: So that's kind of a funny story. I — as much as I love Smith, I was really itching to be out of college. And so I graduated in two years, and I just kind of cracked the crank through. Part of

it was that I had been living on my own and sort of self sustaining for quite a while. So it was hard to kind of go back into the traditional on-campus undergraduate environment where you were, you know, living in a dorm and all that kind of stuff. So I struggled with that. As I said, I got a master's degree at the University of Chicago. And I — So first, you know, I didn't really want to go to school, I sort of kicked and screamed with myself and you know, ultimately decided, you know, if I want to do any work that feels like the work that I want to do, I'm going to need a credential. So I went to college. [17:00] A couple years later, I was like, "Well, gee, if I want to do this other work that I want to do, I might need another credential." So I went to grad school. But as I was in grad school, I had started to reflect on the work that I had been doing over the course of the, you know, 10 years or something since I left home — most of which was with nonprofit organizations, or community based organizations. And the question that I kept returning to is: There are so many smart people in these groups, like, why are we still stuck in all of these problems, right? Problems around resource allocation, problems around community development, problems around environmental crises — like, what's going on here? And, you know, I came of age in the late '90s, early 2000s. Right, so this was a very different time. It was post-9/11. In fact, I was 17, just about to be 18 on 9/11. But we did not have the sort of structural, historical critique that young people [18:00] are teaching themselves and being taught today — like that wasn't part of education in the 90s, right? Like, this was like, a very atomistic understanding of what the world is where it comes from, like, social movements were not visible, right? Like the anti-war movements that I participated in were my first experience of going to a protest and the first experience I had of anybody that I knew going to a protest. You know, my parents have never been to a protest. It was like —one, sort of out of the zeitgeist —but kind of specifically out of their experience. And so like I understood that the world was sort of governed by mechanisms that I didn't understand. And, again, I think part of that was the era in which I came of age,when there was not a collective conversation about what drives social processes, right? The news was not covering these things in the same way. But I kept having these questions about what's driving this social process, right, like so. So if my first degree was all about credentialing. [19:00] The subsequent two were like, what's going on here? There are, you know, tons of really engaged people committed to living in a world that is less painful — like what what is, what's happening here? And so I guess I understood on some level, that I needed a more expansive, structural, sort of historical take on stuff. Specifically, that question was

provoked by my work in nonprofits, right? And specifically, environmental nonprofits, but again, I came of age in a time where they were like, "You could solve climate change by changing your light bulb, and recycling!" Which is obviously farcical. And we know now that this was a like, specific campaign run by a couple of fossil fuel companies to really drive that consumer-focused narrative — but the consumer-focused narrative was well aligned with the sort of cultural discourse at the time. So I knew that there was something there that I needed to understand. So I went back and I got a master's degree and — then I got into it, right? And this surprised me because I was like, "No, I don't want to, you know, [20:00] I just want to get out of school. I want to like, you know, be applied in the world, I want to apply my knowledge." The funny thing now is that I soapbox consistently about this ridiculous — in my view — division between theory and practice. Like, I think that's an absolutely nonsensical juxtaposition. Because without theory, practice risks being aimless and misdirected, and self referential, and not reflective. And without practice, theory gets to be insular and not useful, right? So you need both, like any good social movement has space for reflection. And again, you look at historically, a lot of that is sort of grounded in religious traditions which build in space for reflection — you can do it any way you want. But this sort of theory-practice divide is ridiculous, in my view, utterly ridiculous. That said, I strongly — I sat strongly on the practice side of it, before I started, sort of going back to school and spending more time in reflection. [21:00] And so I got my Master's degree. And, as I said, my father got sick pretty badly. And I came back to New England to be close and just sort of quarterback whatever needed to happen there. And then I really wanted — I found myself just like really desirous of thinking, writing more about this. And so I went for my PhD. Brown was a really great fit. I remember someone calling it "a brilliant and active small department" and being like, "you should check that out." And I did. And, and, you know, my interests at the time that I came in, which are more or less my interests today are organizations in management, as well as development or community development, and political sociology. All of these things were well represented. You know, and here I was. So that's kind of what got me there. What surprised me still further [22:00] was that, by the time I was a year or so in, I was like, "Oh, I could see myself working in this environment." But I will say that, you know, in my subsequent career, I am both a faculty — a research faculty — as well as a senator. So I will say that I do the theory-practice thing. I like — I endeavor to actually live that. But I think that university spaces are really precious. And, and we can talk about that in a little bit. But, I also found at Brown,

some recognition, which certainly didn't exist at the University of Chicago, that practice was important. And, you know, there are some institutions within our institution that are developed, you know, to support that — like the Watson Institute, for instance. And so, you know, there are a lot of things that felt like a good fit — intellectually as well as sort of community based. And I'm a New Englander at heart. [23:00] Like I really — you know, despite having been gone for a decade — this part of the world really feels like home, like I feel in my bones, and I would not be anywhere else.

AK: Do you have some, like high point memories or low point memories of your time at Brown?

MK: I mean, I think I had a very, in some ways, like a very privileged run of it. I had had outside funding for the whole time, which at the doctoral level makes a big difference, because it means that you're not working for anybody, you're not TAing or doing anything, you're working only on your own project. So that enables me to put my head down, follow my own intellectual nose, which seems to be the theme as I'm noticing, and, you know, study what I was interested in. And travel for data collection conferences, to the extent that I could [24:00] on a relatively — you know — it was undergrad school budget, but I still had a lot of opportunities there. And so I think — I mean, I don't think that that is a really typical grad student experience, to be funded fully your whole time. And I was — so part of that was because, you know, I had some good, some good feedback. And people were, you know, like, "take a look at my grants." And then I kind of got on a roll and so I felt really supported there. The other thing, I had a fit in my program where there were like, five to eight people who were like good intellectual advisors. And doctoral programs tend to work less well when you only have one person who could — who's interested or knows anything about your project. And I had a lot of people in that department. And so that felt really good. You know — and I don't know if it still works this way — but we'd sort of entered as a cohort. My cohort also started as, I think eleven women and one man [25:00] and we lost a few people on the way in. We ended at nine women and one man. So we were like, heavily, heavily, heavily women, which I do think changed the vibe of that, right? There's like, there's some demographic shifts that are occurring within the academy. And certainly that was reflected in my cohort. Again, I'm still in contact with almost, almost all — I think all of them — everybody who graduated anyway. And, and so there were, you know, my

cohort was very international, there's people from all over the world, we, you know, we forged the kind of bond that you need to forge in your first couple years of school. Interesting, like interesting people. And I think too, and I will say this, now, having worked in a public university, without nearly as many resources, it's really important as a grad school student to be well supported, right? Like, when I wanted to go to a conference, there was like five different pots of money I could apply for — and I could figure it out, right? [26:00] Patch it together. And you know, there's some paperwork and a headache, and you sleep in a hostel with 20 other people, but it's like — you can make it work. And the U.S. system just doesn't have that kind of money. And it really, really matters. So, so, you know, my historical materialism is showing up a little bit here. But you know, I think it's, I think it's farcical to pretend that that doesn't matter. The amount of support that we can give people at a place like Brown versus that we can give people at a place like UMass Boston really matters. And, you know, so I had six years where all I had to do was, collect some good data, write some good papers, write a really good dissertation — and I was able to do that, because I had uninterrupted time and the financial resources to not have to do anything else. I did choose to do other things, because that's sort of my nature, but I didn't have to. And as a consequence, when I went on the job market, you know, I had a bunch of publications, and, you know, a couple awards, and — you know, whatever it was, a bunch of grants. And [27:00] students who don't do their degrees and programs that have that degree of resources — y'know, while I was writing papers, they're waiting tables, right? Or whatever else they're doing, or they're picking up some other side jobs, because they have to. And so it —you know, I knew that being in there, but now teaching in a very different context has brought that into much clearer focus for me, that we sort of track scholars to succeed and fail based on the resources that we allocate to them. There are obviously exceptions, but when you look at the patterns, right, who is enabled to produce a lot of work? It's the people who you fund to do that full time. And so, you know, I was the recipient of that. I'm incredibly grateful for it. It launched me very well, it also has made me reflect on the structure of funding in higher ed in ways that — you know, in critical ways. And, you know, so that was a time of, you know, tremendous, tremendous and well supported learning for me. And I will [28:00] say too, so as in grad school, (this happened by a kind of a funny environment, but like, excuse me a funny circumstance) my, my cat got out one day and ran across the street and ran up up this humongous tree of a neighbor, who was like, kitty corner from me. And so I banged on his door, and I was like, "Hey, my cat's

up your tree. Do you mind if I put a ladder up and go get the cat?" And he was like, a little bit nervous because he didn't want me to fall off the ladder and you know, break my leg and sue him. But anyway, I meet the neighbor this way, I get the cat out of the tree. And a couple days later, he comes by and he's like, "Didn't you say you're a sociologist?" And I said, "Yeah," and I was, I think I was writing that year, I had come back from fieldwork, I'm pretty sure. And I was just home writing my dissertation. And he was like, do you have at least a Master's degree? And I said, Yeah, I'm finishing my PhD. And he was like, "Well, I need a sociologist to teach in the state prison. And I need someone to teach, you know, Intro to Sociology," and whatever the other class was, Globalization or something like that. [29:00] He was, like, very interested. And it had never occurred to me to teach sociology in the state prison before, but I was like, "Why not?" And it was one of those sort of moments that I won't say fundamentally altered the course of my career, but it definitely changed my orientation about a lot of things, including teaching. So that was the beginning of six years of teaching at the Rhode Island State Prison through the Community College of Rhode Island. There was a special education grant basically, that funds people for getting associate's degrees, they do get their GED, and then they get their associate's degrees. And so I wound up teaching introductory sociology, as well as a class on globalization. And I ultimately taught for two different programs by the time I had finished teaching there. And this I did during my final year — I'm getting my chronology mixed up, but I think it was my final year throughout my postdoc [30:00] By last couple years I don't remember anyway, it was six years in total. So somehow that spans like the end of graduate school through the first year of my program, my full time job taught me a huge amount about teaching. Most of the folks who wound up in introductory sociology, like, had no idea what sociology was, they were just signed up for a class, right? There's a waitlist a mile long to get into any class towards an associate's degree at the ACI. And so my neighbor was at the time that education coordinator, and he was just like, trying to get people through to get their requirements. And so they would land in my class and be like, "What the heck is this?" Except they wouldn't say it that way. And we had a great time. Like, sociology, I think, is a language that is particularly useful to —I think it's, I think it's very useful. And I, you know, I think I'm a pretty, pretty strong evangelist for sociology anyway. But I think sociology is particularly useful to incarcerated students. [31:00] Because it has — it's a way of thinking about and analyzing dynamics that they're already thinking about and analyzing, right? You know, it only takes — like, when you're screwed by

the system, you know, there's a system, right? Sociology has some language that offers a way to think about that system, and sort of the historical origins of that system. And what I wound up finding was like, that they, the students in those classes, were capable of huge, like, tremendous intellectual achievements, they would read stuff that, you know, I didn't read until grad school, I remember had a student who read *The Great Transformation* by Karl Polanyi in a week, and understood the whole thing, right. And some of that has to do with the fact that they're locked up. You know, they have lots and lots of time to dedicate to their homework. Obviously, the fact that I was a young woman, I think was, you know — at least it wasn't, it wasn't not present, right? Like they — so there was, they want people wanting to impress me and whatever else. But [32:00] it taught me a lot about teaching, right? And about what would help students succeed, I learned a lot about confidence in there, especially relative to Brown undergrads. I had taught a couple times at Brown, special sessions, or a couple of classes myself there. And, you know, what struck me really when comparing Brown undergrads or even Brown masters students in the MBA program, is that confidence takes you a long way, right? If you believe that you can do the thing, then you're much more likely to try the thing. And when you try the thing, you know that there's at least a chance that you're going to succeed at it, but like believing that you are capable of doing complex theory, whatever it is, writing a paper, makes you more likely to do that in most cases. And I remember being really sort of interested to watch the development of confidence in my students, and it worked really differently for male and female students in the prison, partly because [33:00] the population of people that we incarcerate is pretty different by gender, right? Almost all women who are locked up are trauma survivors. Most of them have, like pretty severe trauma. And, and, you know, I think prisons are not — are inhumane, and we shouldn't have them. But I also notice that there are really dramatic gender differences in how people respond to the prison environment. And so, for different reasons, I think that the men were — they were very engaged, and they were more able to sort of come into a classroom environment, like kind of ready to think and ready to rumble. And I think, you know, the women typically had dropped out of school at an earlier age, they typically had higher levels of trauma, which obviously, affects all kinds of things, including how we process information. And so, you know — and I, through that, through that work, [34:00] I wound up starting up and running for a couple of years, a program called the Prison Op-Ed Project, along with Bob Plane and Steve Ahlquist. Steve Ahlquist, now of Uprise RI, but at the time he and Bob Plane were both working

for Rhode Island Future. What happened was I had students write, just like, I call them think pieces, they were just like weekly reflections. The idea was to get them writing, especially since they had relatively little experience writing for the most part, and they didn't have computers or typewriters, all this stuff was on hand. And I remember one student he handed in an article earlier, excuse me, he handed in a thick piece and when I read it, I just put a little note, I said, this sounds like a really interesting op ed. And then the next week, he gave it back to me and he was like, So what do I have to do to turn this into an op-ed? So I shopped it around for him a little bit, just to like, you know, see and Rhode Island picked it up. And I gave it to you know, and I and they published it. [35:00] And I remember going back to class and handing him his published op-ed. And just like watching his face change it was it was, — it was like a really remarkable moment, I've only had a couple of moments where you could like sort of see life changing on somebody's face, it was very cool. And, and then he got really into it, he wrote like a couple of them. And so then some other students started getting into it. And then we formed this kind of formal partnership — "formal in quotes"— whereby the editors of Rhode Island Future would come in and talk a little bit about op eds, and sort of the history of media. The prison was obviously on board with it. And, and ultimately, I wound up giving a TEDx talk in Providence about that. And it was, it was very, it was very interesting about how it was, I mean, it again, sort of taught me a lot about the process of teaching. But also, I think writing for public consumption is really, really important. One, because voice is important. And you know, incarcerated students are not a voice that winds up in the media very frequently. So I think it's important for that reason. But I think it's also really important for [36:00] students, all of us community members, right, to learn how to speak in some way for the public. To take ownership for what we mean, to say it clearly, to bring our truth, and you know, sometimes that creates a shit show, and sometimes it just changes people's minds. And sometimes you just need to get it off your chest — all of those things are good reasons to, or good reasons to, to write for public consumption. And, you know, there's some generational patterns in who and how people write, and, certainly, there's some class things that go into it. And so it, I think, really was a motivating factor for a lot of students. And I don't — I mean, I'm sure I have a number somewhere of like, how many — ultimately, this went on for a couple years, excuse me — how many students ultimately publish something, but it was, it was quite a few. For a while we were running like one a week. And, and, you know, in during that time, [37:00] some of the connections that I'd

made at Brown, even though I was a postdoc at one point, like people would come in, and they talk a little bit like they'd be guest speakers. They would talk about their research, sometimes I would assign something that they were reading. I remember we had a state rep come in once or twice. We had Senator Sheldon Whitehouse come in once or twice. So, you know, I was committed to trying to bring in resources to support learning beyond the textbook, because, you know, the like, the ACI library doesn't, you know — it's not like the Rock. And because there's no internet or no computers, it's like, you can't find information online. And so, you know, like, what, what could we do? How could we sort of stimulate some hands-on interaction, some learning? And, you know, there's a lot of research that shows that adult learners need to apply stuff [38:00] to their own lives, because we've all had lives. So like, you know, that's how we internalize stuff. So. So I learned a lot about teaching in that environment. I wound up writing two peer reviewed articles that my students sort of collaborated with me on, in the sense that, you know, they agreed to sit for interviews anonymously but we talked a lot about learning, in sort of prior to prison environments, and then in, in prison classrooms specifically. So those two things I published over the course of the last few years, it took, you know, and, and so I learned a lot about teaching in that environment. I was, you know, teaching in the IE MBA program at the same time. So it's like a really kind of fascinating juxtaposition of students as well. And, you know, the IE MBA program is incredibly international — the program is delivered in English, students write in English, but they bring their experiences from all over the world. And just like such an incredible range, and now my students at UMass Boston, also about half of them are international, so also an incredible range. Much less well resourced in a lot of ways; even the students who have financial support from us, you know, are living on shoestrings. And they tend to be a little bit older. So some of them have kids, we have students who come part time in our doctoral and master's programs, which is not something that Brown was doing, at least not when I was there. And so, you know, somehow over the course of the last 10 years, I have wound up teaching at the secondary, excuse me, the post secondary level in like this huge array of environments. I taught at RISD. I taught Brown undergrads, I taught Brown grad students, and I still teach Brown MBA students. And in the prison. And at UMass. And like the whole range has, I think, really challenged me to grow. And also made it really clear that the same strategies don't work for every group of students, right? Like teaching is contextual. [40:00] And the things that work for the MBA students, for instance, don't always work for my advanced doctoral

students and vice versa. Like, you know, it's different. Because we all bring our histories and our identities and our expectations into the classroom. And, and those are not uniform.

AK: So, you were living in Pawtucket so deeply ingrained in so many different elements of the community. What made you decide: "I'm going to go a step further and become a senator?"

MK: Well, I'll tell you what made me run for City Council, which is actually the thing — somebody knocked on my door running for an office. And I was not impressed by this person. They asked me what I cared about, and I gave them an answer. And they looked at me like I had three heads. And I remember closing the door and thinking, [41:00] like, "If that is the standard, I can meet that standard. I can exceed that standard." And, and, you know, I had been working with some community organizing groups in Rhode Island, Providence — one in Pawtucket — for the previous couple of years, right, just like, learning a little bit how policy goes. And I will say that I was never, like a politics junkie, as a young person. I obviously read the news. But I was never like, the campaign manager or, you know, I didn't, you know — I think I phonebanked for Cicilini a couple of times, but like — [Cough] excuse me — and definitely for Obama in Chicago that year that he won. But like, the political election, the electoral process, like never — I didn't like, get off on it. But I started to look at it and you know, think about who was or wasn't represented on the City Council specifically. There were very few women at the time that I ran; there were two, I was one of two, for most of my tenure, there was a year when I was only one [42:00] of one. And, you know, feeling like Pawtucket has an incredible community that is both immigrant and migrant, right? So people who are not born in this city. And it's also really important to have people who are born here. But I was, you know, not seeing a voice that represented me and my commitment to place, also my trajectory, also my values, frankly. And so that's what — that's what got me to run the first time. So I ran against an incumbent in 2016. And then I did, I did two years, two years there. And, you know, council work is kind of interesting, because it's a mix of policy and constituent services. But also those two things are intertwined, right. So constituent services, again, are like, typically patterned in most places by access and wealth, right. So everything [43:00] from which street gets plowed first, whose garbage can get picked up to like, where the potholes are all of that stuff, right? There are questions of access embedded into everything. And so I think when I ran for city

council, I was thinking a lot about municipal policy. But one of the things that I learned really quickly was the source of this question of constituent services encompasses access in ways that I, you know, like really got, I mean, I just like I was able to put words around that, you know. Because I had known it in the sense that, you know, when I went to City Hall, I didn't feel unwelcome but I guess I wouldn't say I felt welcome either. And if I'm having that experience, like as an educated white person who speaks English as her first language, like, what, what other experiences are being had by members of our community, and so constituent services became a place where, like, I really started to think seriously about, like, what's happening and, [44:00] how it's happening and how it's communicated. And those things. So then, in the summer of 2020, as I said, there was the former senator had vacated that seat and it was just very obviously time, right, like I think partly because of my training to I am state level policies interesting. Like very it's, like, inherently interesting to me. It also aligns with my training as a sociologist. You know, the state level is a level where, especially because we're an island is small, we do things on a state level that other places do sometimes as on a city level, but it doesn't make sense for us to legislate some things on city levels when there's, you know, fewer than 2 million of us in a state, you know, 62 miles across. And so that instantly, you know, felt like a good fit and, and now, a year and a half in, still feels like a very good fit, partly because of what I just described. But also because this is all you know, the pandemic [45:00] has exposed all kinds of things that are at the breaking point. And like we knew they were close to the breaking point. And a lot of us — I guess I would say there is a political incentive to, you know, put one's fingers in one's ear. And I don't mean that by just politicians. I mean, that's why society in general, like, you know, unless it's at the breaking point, most, most inclinations are to ignore it. We cannot ignore all of these things, right? And so I was watching, I was on the council, when the pandemic hit. You know, I remember, there was like a milk distribution line early, early in the pandemic, when a lot of folks were losing their jobs or being laid off. There were 1000 more people than there were gallons of milk to hand out, at the very beginning of that pandemic. And it was just like, this is, you know, like — everything is broken open, like, we need to do this well, now. And I really think that the government is one of the few things [46:00] that we need. We cannot solve all of these problems without government, right?. And by all of these problems, I mean, COVID response, climate change, affordable housing, right? Like, we can't do that, unless we have really good government that is really active and really participating in those problems. You know,

governments are the only entities, for instance, that can hand out ARPA money, right? But governments are also the only entities that can enforce anti discrimination laws, for instance, governments are the only organizations that can coordinate the delivery of vaccines across the entire country. So we need to have governments that are sensitive, that are responsive, that are working really hard, that are on call, and that have their thumb on the pulse of — or their finger on the pulse of, of what communities are experiencing. And so, for a variety of reasons, it felt like a right fit at the right time. I was in a race with a [47:00] three way primary, which I came out handily in the front. And then there was no Republican running in the general. And so — yeah so September of 2020 was like, the big race. And then the general, you know, I was on a post, there were, like, small write-ins. But I, you know, I used that time between September and November to really do some relationship building among my various constituencies. You know, I'm a labor progressive. I'm on the executive committee of the Union at UMass Boston. That is, you know — so I'm one of the few progressives that have very broad labor support in my chamber. And there's a handful of us, but not that many. And so I was like, I spent that time really trying to build relationships, both between me and all of my constituencies and all the advocacy groups, but also sort of help those groups build relationships with each other where they didn't already exist. The first year in office was full-on pandemic. [48:00] We met at Rhode Island College. I didn't even go into my office at the Statehouse until like, April of last year, April of 2021. But we started, yeah, we started in early January. We did the whole session there. And then, like, committee meetings were remote, it was super hard to, like, get a sense of who everyone was like, there were staff people who I see their names pop up on email, but I'd never seen their faces and and so we were all sort of making it up as we went along. Like, you know, how we asked for bills. And you know, somebody wasn't there to sign on to the bill, like how on earth do we get it to them? Like what, you know, what's this? What's this DocuSign business? Like all of that kind of stuff, right? Everybody was, like, really stressed, from their accounts, and were scrambling to figure out how it would work. I mean, it was my first time so I had no basis for comparison. I will say, though, that starting this session at the Statehouse where everybody's in one place is so much easier. But we had a you know, we had a very, [49:00] very effective first session. My incoming freshman class was big. You know, and last year was one for the books. We passed a lot of stuff really early on, including a big raise to the Minimum Wage, the Act on Climate bill, which is a legally binding emissions reduction bill. My big bill last year was

a conveyance tax. Basically it's a tax on high end property sales, which then the money goes into a pot to build affordable housing. We hadn't had that before. So that was a big one for me. And I had a bunch of housing bills last session, some non discrimination bills, and I have a steady commission on justice reinvestment for the women's prison — for reasons that I hope are clear, after a long conversation about the prison. But — so that was a very, very intense year. I was teaching two graduate classes online at the same time [50:00] and trying to sort of learn the ropes. And we were still in a pandemic. And I, you know — it stands out as one of the more intense — right? Like, I'm coming up for tenure, my tenure file is under review right now. So I was like, trying to finish a new book with a colleague. I mean, like it was, it was a lot. Last spring was a lot. But somehow made it through and I, and, you know, like learning about the political process in this way, I think, you know. It challenges me and it's good and healthy for me to be doing things that I'm not good at all the time, because that keeps me alive intellectually. But also, we got a lot of problems to solve, right? And so it's great, we had a great session, no more resting on our laurels. We got a lot more to do, right? And so, starting this session, I feel like I have a little bit of a better understanding, like how things are supposed to go under normal circumstances. And, you know, I feel very fortunate to be in a chamber that is, [51:00] last year, it was half women for the first time in history. Former Senator Golden went to DC to join the Biden administration. And her replacement is a wonderful, wonderful human, not a woman. So we are no longer half women, but still still a really great guy with good political values and has so far been a pleasure to work with. But it's interesting to be in politics at this time, right? Like I was, my first day was two days before the insurrection three days before the insurrection last year. There was a lot going on.

AK: Well, so can I just interject and ask quickly: when you were first entering City Council in 2016, our national political environment was zesty, shall we say? So I suppose you don't have anything to compare it to. But how was that kind of impacting the way that you were campaigning or thinking about the future? [52:00]

MK: That's — So I will offer a story by, like, way of illustration. And I actually compared notes about this with Congressman Cicilline once and he was like, "This happens to me, too." So I remember during the Brett Kavanaugh hearings, every time something really scary was

happening at the federal level, I would get this, like, burbling up of mostly complaints from people who are presumably feeling kind of helpless, and sort of honing in on what they wanted to control, or what they felt like they could control. And so I remember during the Brett Kavanaugh hearings, you know, there was sexual assault that was covered in the news daily with like, zero sensitivity. So you had women all over the country being sort of re-traumatized by watching this whole thing go down. Not to mention the sort of blocking of the Obama nominee. Like, there was so much that went into that. And during that time, I got like, 30 calls in a week about people complaining about their neighbors, which is really unusual. And their parking spot, and somebody didn't bring the trash out, [53:00] and it smells like fish, and someone's dog won't stop barking — like little stuff, right? You know, and generally speaking, like you get some of those things right? But I started to think about it, I was like, what is happening here? And my best guess, my theory is that when we feel powerless, because there's something so unfathomable and so unacceptable going on at a level where we do not feel that we can make a difference, we do sort of grasp for the things that we feel like we can control. And so I had said this to Congressman Cicillini and he was like, "You know, that makes a lot of sense, like my office gets sort of like waves too. And they tend to sort of loosely track onto whatever disaster is occurring at the federal level." So I think, you know, one of the things that the Trump administration laid bare to, I will say, very specifically, the white middle class, is that like, you can't set it and forget it on democracy. Like that doesn't work. [54:00] And the white middle class had been, I think, thinking that they could do that. Because the white middle class occupies a position of, you know, relative economic stability and racial privilege. And, you know, like, "Yeah, mostly I vote and you know, sometimes I go to a school committee meeting or whatever, but most importantly, maybe my kids aren't even public school, whatever." And like it is an active sport, and we have, you know, adages about democracy. I don't know, and I can't even remember what they are. But they're, like, they're participatory. It's a participatory thing. And that participation cannot be limited to electoral politics, however many times a year. I can't remember how many times I've had to say to people, like, in Rhode Island, there's basically no general elections. Right? All of the meaningful elections are in primaries, because it's all Democrats against Democrats. You know, in my case, I've never had a general election. I don't think. [55:00] I mean, I had a couple of write-ins. So the level of political education, I think really needs to get higher. And you can't fault individual people for that, right? We have

systematically defunded civics over the course of 30 years. So you know, and there are forces at play that are doing that intentionally. And this is the outcome. And this is the outcome that was desired at that time. But it does mean that we need to take responsibility for educating ourselves, educating our kids, participating, changing those levels of education in schools, right?? Sort of working it into our institutions, you know? Seeking out new sources, voting on the regular. Part of my job is to communicate in a really regular way so that people understand what's going on. You know, when I was on the council, and now still, I write on the council, it was like one email a month. Now it's a little bit more frequent. And it was just like a big blast. And it was hard, because I didn't have everybody's email addresses, because at that time, you couldn't get that. So I would just sort of collect it. But I would be, like: "So here's some policy stuff. [56:00] This is what I'm working on from, like, a legislative perspective on the council. And here's some quality of life issues. And here's some service issues. And here's some, you know, something I'm watching, keeping an eye on at the state level." And that, you know, the readership of that was and remains pretty high, which tells me that, like, people are looking for sources to help them make sense of all of these processes — because there are multiple processes and there's a lot of inside baseball. And so, you know, I think that moment in time was a moment when people were starting to — think everybody, but particularly the wake up call for the white middle class — like, recognize that their participation needed to be consistent. And that, you know, there was a lot of like, "I never thought it could happen here." And it's like, this is happening here, right? Like, it happens here. For people all the time, who maybe don't have the same experience [57:00] as you, right? Like, yeah, again, I occupy a sort of funny place. Like, I have tons of privilege at this point in my life, right. I occupy a powerful position within the state, I have a terminal degree, I have a job, I have a house, I'm white, I speak English as a first language. I'm also one of the people for whom the institutions worked as they should, right? I got a public education, that effectively launched me into a whole bunch of other things. And, you know, I was able to make use of things like scholarships to, you know, attain my version of the American dream. And there's, you know, racism worked into that. There's also sexism worked into that. And so I guess this is to say that, that I have a sort of funny relationship with myself around questions of class and access. Because it was not guaranteed to me [58:00] that that's where I was going to wind up. And that is where I've wound up. And the reality is I could lose all my money, but I still have cultural and educational capital, that is probably going to be really difficult, if not

impossible to lose in my life. And so I, I don't take those things for granted. Because I didn't come up with the understanding that they were always going to be there for me. And I think that we are at a reckoning, where collectively, we all, you know, our understanding to different levels, some some communities never took those things for granted, some sort of did, and some did entirely. But I think we're all looking at this from our different vantage points being like, "No, this is fragile, right? This is fragile, and it requires our participation, it requires our support." And that is, I think, true of electoral politics. But I also think that it's true of community based advocacy. And those two things have to talk to each other, they have to talk to each other. I think it is [59:00] — in an environment that is democratically governed, like the one that we live in, you know, communities — this is sort of the same theory practice divide, right? Like you can't have one without another. Community based organizing, that does not talk to the structures that shape our lives in a meaningful way, I think, falls short. And political power, as we know, that does not talk to the community is farcical, right? So all of those things — and Rhode Island is amazing. Like we're small. Everybody knows everybody. There is no reason why we can't be out front on all of this stuff, climate crisis, included, right? We don't emit as much as New York, but we live near the water and we sure as heck have a horse in the race, right? And there is no reason why we can't have our grid be totally clean by 2030. There's no reason why we can't educate everyone in our state for free if we want to in our public institutions. There you know, there is no reason why we can't have a living wage in this community. There is no reason why we can't have a tech structure that is much fairer than ours currently is. [1:00:00] Like, we are small; we can do this. We all know each other's levels of trust, you know, because we all know each other. Like it makes it tractable in a way that is not true for other places that are either much more geographically dispersed. We're an incredibly diverse community across any number of dimensions, right? Linguistically, racially, country of origin, experience, educatio — like all of these things. The data says, like. those make good problem solving teams: teams that are diverse. And again, I mean, diverse across a lot of dimensions. Teams that are diverse make better decisions, because we're considering the possible effects on many different communities. Rhode Island can do that, right? And we already are. And I'm, you know, I'm, on my better days, I'm really excited to be a part of that. And I forgot what the question was.

AK: No, this is fantastic. I know, we're running up on time a little bit. So I just have a couple of more questions for you, if you don't mind. [1:01:00]. If you have time for it, what was it like entering the state level, in the wake of the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol?

MK: I remember. We, I mean, we had — our senate president took that very seriously. And he, you know, they were, we were not meeting at the State House again. And part of you know, all of that was due to COVID. But I think it made him feel a little bit better that we weren't there for our meeting, we were in a different place than the House. And so there was, you know — had anyone wanted to storm our capital, they would have had to go to two different places to find each chamber and the State House was not either of them. So there was a little bit of kind of like, some questions about physical security. I think those questions, you know, they're obviously incredibly important. But I think, to me, [1:02:00] like how do you govern, when people have such divergent opinions about what makes fact, right? And this is — I say that with a little bit of hesitation, because people have had divergent experiences of life forever and whoever usually has the loudest story and shouts the loudest has been the one to write history. But I do think there's something qualitatively different about things like vaccine science and climate science. And, you know, vote counting. And so like, to me, the larger challenge is like, how do we create a narrative and a conversation that has on-ramps for people? That has on-ramps for all members of our community to participate in sort of the creation of a shared imaginary, which we clearly don't have? Right? And again, shared imaginaries aren't without their problems [1:03:00], because they, you know, tend to reflect the interests of the most powerful. But I think this is like the political question that we need to solve. And, in this moment of time and in this moment of like, global populism, both leftist and rightist and climate crisis, what is it? What is it that we are doing together? And if we don't have an answer to that, you know, like, God help us because it's going to be very, very difficult to either legislate or organize our way out of anything. And so I think it was a scary moment from a sort of, like, physical attempted coup perspective. But it was also like, it clearly outlined to me the challenges that we are facing as a political community, where the same power structures that have governed for a long time are like not cutting it. People are calling BS on that. But again, we know from a lot of data about right wing populism specifically that people feel abandoned by elites and by institutions that tend to turn into sort of punching downward right? Punching on immigrants, women, you know, that's the way right

wing populism goes. [1:04:00] Left wing populism tends to punch up a little bit more like bad institutions and oligarchies and things like that. But it comes from a similar place of a feeling abandoned by institutions, of like not feeling included. So the question is, what are we going to do to make our institutions inclusive to ensure well being and flourishing? To educate people properly, to feed them properly, to not have a third of our people of childbearing years looking at the world saying, "Climate change is making me reconsider having children." There is data on that too, right? Like it is a terrifying prospect for lots of people. Like we need to offer something better. And, you know, I think that the big lesson for me out of that, or, I mean — it's sort of like I wouldn't say I hadn't seen that coming, but like, I knew this was a problem. But that put that problem into very, very clear relief, like, how is it that we build a shared vision [1:05:00] of what a community is and can be and how do we reflect that in our institutions? How do we make those institutions inclusive? And then what does that actually look like in practice? Right? Because it's one thing to talk about it. And then when the rubber meets the road, like, you know, sometimes there's just choices between sort of bad choices and awful choices. Like, you know, how do we do that work?

AK: Well, I don't want to take any more of your time. So for the last few minutes that we have, I just want to offer you a space to share anything else that you would like to get into the historical record, into the Pembroke Center Oral History Project before we close today.

MK: I guess I have two things that I have been thinking about that are — neither of them are like points that I want to drive home. They're just sort of things that I'm considering, which might be interesting to like, look at 50 years. The first is the role of communication. [1:06:00] And I have been thinking about the way that transparency operates in political, academic worlds in the age of the internet. And, like, social media and the Internet are tremendously helpful in some ways, because they move information and move information very quickly. You can stream things, you can access things, etc. But partly because of that overload of information, we have a tendency towards — we are seeing people tending towards, like looking for analyses that sort of fit their worldview, right? And there's, you know, data on this, there's like a, you know, there's a famous article in The New York Times a couple years ago called "Red Feed, Blue Feed." But I think one of the things that's happening right now is that the political analyses — people are depending

more on political analysis, because there is so much information [Cough.] to sift through. [1:07:00] You can go right to the source, but nobody has enough time to go right to the source of everything that they care about, right? So the media has always had this function. But I think we are in a different moment of thinking about, like, what accountability means. I mean, we saw this play out with Facebook, for instance, this year. But I mean, it happens on political Twitter, too, right? Like, what does accountability mean, everybody's got a hot take. Like, in some ways, it's incredibly democratic. And you know, the world is flat kind of thing — and, like, energizing. But in other ways, right, falsehoods circulate very quickly. Rumors circulate very quickly. And, you know, analyses that are, for whatever reason, deeply flawed, can also circulate very quickly. So like, what is it? This is one of the sort of problem solving things that I think as a culture we need to be doing and probably actually as a global society, because, you know, again, it's linked to legal responsibilities of media companies, etc. But like, what — and, you know, again, I'm not a journalist. But I have noticed that journalism is [1:08:00] in this time of flux right now. And then sort of being a politician has been an interesting — it's been an interesting sort of way to experience that journalism being in flux. And again, I say this from the perspective of like, working with small journalistic organizations to publish incarcerated students' op eds, because the bigger ones wouldn't give me the time of day. Like, you know, I get that, right? Like, there's, there are questions of voice, there's questions of synthesis, like, how do we access this stuff? How do people sustain themselves? Where does money come into it? Like all of that stuff? So one, I think that is incredibly consequential for organizing, for democracy, for like everything really. And the second thing is that I do think — maybe I don't even want to generalize this. I guess I want to say that, like, my political identity is deeply shaped by being a woman. I strongly identify as a woman. I have identified as a cis person, cis woman, my entire life, and it has made an incredible — like I, you know. [1:09:00] This is the thing with identity, right? Like, you can't, you can't take that apart. But I think that has also been a really precious sort of governing perspective for me, because I am in the gender minority. And I do really see an environment where different norms, culturally, are starting to emerge, and I'm really pleased to be part of it. I was at a Senate function recently, and I looked around the table that I was sitting at, and all of the Senators were women and all the men at the table were husbands. Which was really interesting, right? Like that, you know, again, like I'm not arguing that every chamber needs to be all women. But I am saying that like, those are moments when you see the world changing. And I

get excited that I get to be part of that and learn from it and participate in it. And, and, you know, it gives me a lot of excitement to see like, what the kids who are, you know, 15 years younger than me, [1:10:00] right? Next Gen Z. Like, you know, I'm at the point where I'm just enough older than them that they are starting to become adults. And I'm starting to be able to sort of watch how they handle things that's different than the way that my generation did. And it's just really exciting, right? And so I guess I will, I will end by quoting the great Rebecca Solnit, which is that, like, she has this idea of hope. People ask me all the time, like, am I hopeful? I must be a real optimist if I'm, like, doing this work. My response is like "Bullshit." Like, first of all, people use that you must be an optimist to either sort of dismiss you or to absolve themselves of doing anything, right? So Rebecca Solnit has put words around this perfectly. She says, like, you know, hope is active. Optimists think that everything is going to be fine and they don't have to do anything. And pessimists think that we're all screwed, and they're too cool for school, and they don't have to do anything, right? Both of these poles excuse themselves from action. And hope is [1:11:00] the sort of attitude that lives in that unstuck middle place where what we do matters. We don't know how it's going to matter. We don't know when it's going to matter. And it does not necessarily mean that the outcome that we want will emerge. But hope, hope is that belief that what we do is consequential, and that we have a moral obligation to do that thing, right? And to do it to the best of our ability. So by that definition, I definitely am hopeful.

AK: That is a really beautiful place to end. Thank you so much for the work you're doing and for giving me so much of your time today. I really appreciate it.

MK: Absolutely. Will you send it to me when it's up and all that stuff?

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