



WARNING CONCERNING COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies, other reproductions, and reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be “used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research.” If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction in excess of “fair use,” that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

- Brooklyn Historical Society is not responsible for either determining the copyright status of the material or for securing copyright permission.
- Possession of a reproduction does not constitute permission to use it.
- Permission to use copies other than for private study, scholarship, or research requires the permission of both Brooklyn Historical Society and the copyright holder. For assistance, contact Brooklyn Historical Society at library@brooklynhistory.org.
- Read more about the Brooklyn Historical Society's Reproduction Rights Policy online: http://brooklynhistory.org/library/reproduction.html#Brooklyn_Historical_Society_Reproduction.

GUIDELINES FOR USE

This transcript is hereby made available for research purposes only. These oral history interviews are intimate conversations between two people, both of whom have generously agreed to share these recordings with the Brooklyn Historical Society archives and with researchers. Please listen in the spirit with which these were shared. Researchers will understand that:

1. The Brooklyn Historical Society abides by the General Principles & Best Practices for Oral History as agreed upon by the Oral History Association (2009) and expects that use of this material will be done with respect for these professional ethics.
2. Every oral history relies on the memories, views and opinions of the narrator. Because of the personal nature of oral history, listeners may find some viewpoints or language of the recorded participants to be objectionable. In keeping with its mission of preservation and unfettered access whenever possible, BHS presents these views as recorded.
3. Transcripts created by third parties serve as a guide to the interview and are not considered verbatim. The audio recording should be considered the primary source for each interview. It may contain natural false starts, verbal stumbles, misspeaks, repetitions that are common in conversation, and other passages and phrases omitted from the transcript. This decision was made because BHS gives primacy to the audible voice and also because some researchers do find useful information in these verbal patterns.
4. Unless these verbal patterns are germane to your scholarly work, when quoting from this material researchers are encouraged to correct the grammar and make other modifications maintaining the flavor of the narrator's speech while editing the material for the standards of print.
5. All citations must be attributed to the Brooklyn Historical Society:
 - Kachmar, Anna, Oral history interview with Patricia Carino Pasick, September 1, 2004, Patricia Carino Pasick collection of Johnson Street Filipino-American oral histories, 2013.001.07; Brooklyn Historical Society.

Oral History Interview with Anna Kachmar

Patricia Carino Pasick collection of Johnson Street Filipino-American oral histories,

2013.001

Interview conducted by Patricia Carino Pasick on September 1, 2004 in Holtsville, New York

PASICK: If someone said to you, "say your full name," what would that name be?

A. KACHMAR: Anna Victoria Kachmar.

PASICK: Where did Victoria come from?

A. KACHMAR: That was my middle name.

PASICK: And where were you born?

A. KACHMAR: Brooklyn, New York.

PASICK: Do you remember the street you were born on?

A. KACHMAR: Well I remember it, because I was told. Not that I would remember it. I was told it was 120 Prospect Street.

PASICK: You told me yesterday an interesting story about your mother, that she was ill right after you were born. Can you say that story again, because I think it's extraordinary about how everyone helped take care of you.

A. KACHMAR: We were raised in there. I was born there, and my mother and father both lived there with my grandmother, and her family, daughters, and she had a few boarders, Filipino mostly. When my mother and father were married, they just stayed. But then my mother, when I was born, my mother had very bad toxemia. She carried me for nine months, and after I was born, she became even more ill with kidney infections and they had to remove one of her kidneys. She was-- at that time it was a very serious operation, it was a long recovery. So she had to have that done, and she came home, but couldn't regain her health. So they decided to then send her away to a rehabilitation center. And she was away for almost a year. In the meantime my grandmother, and my two aunts and two uncles took care of me--and my father. And when she came back I was 18 months old, by the time she did come back. So that was, uh--I hadn't known her too well and I remember her telling me

that she felt so terrible because I wouldn't go to her. [laughter] I'd run away and go to one of my aunts...or somebody else [laughter]. I didn't know her!

PASICK: Yeah, you had a different idea about mother.

A. KACHMAR: I know. My father seemed more like my mother so that was funny. She didn't think it was funny. I used to feel so bad, until you got used to me.

PASICK: Well, that's a wonderful survival story about you and your mother.

A. KACHMAR: Yeah.

PASICK: Um, can you say a little bit about, um, the neighborhood where you were born?

A. KACHMAR: Well, I don't remember too much, but it was, uh, a poor section. You know, it wasn't even middle class. I would say it was mostly immigrant families. Italian and Irish, and second generation. First and second generation.

PASICK: Right

A. KACHMAR: 'Cause I remember some of the people, Rita's mother and grandmother living across the street, and some of the neighbors there before, but that's about all I remember about it. And the houses were small, independent structures. You know, two family maybe or one family. They called them parlor floor basements. That's what they were called. You practically lived in the basement; the kitchen was there, and sort of a sitting room. Then you went upstairs to sleep and they had a living room if you wanted to have--they called it the parlor, if you wanted to bring your guests. But that's about all I remember about it. The house didn't have any--it had a backyard, because they used to take pictures in there and all. But the front of it was just the sidewalks, then the house, you know.

PASICK: Was just your family, just your mother and father living there? Who else was living there?

A. KACHMAR: With me?

PASICK: Yeah, early on.

A. KACHMAR: Oh, after they left there, when I was older and my mother was well, and they wanted to get their own place, it was just us. No one else was living with us.

PASICK: Um, can you say where your parents were born?

A. KACHMAR: My mother was born in New York City. I don't know exactly the street but lower downtown part of New York City. And my father was born in Bauan, in the Philippine Islands, Province of Batangas.

PASICK: I've heard a lot of good stories about him. Could you, would you say why you thought your father immigrated, why he left the Philippines?

A. KACHMAR: Well, he joined the American Navy. He had no choice! He had to go, and he had to leave.

PASICK: Do you think he knew where he was headed?

A. KACHMAR: Oh, yes, he knew, because he was gave a wonderful story about how everything was wonderful in America. He would get rich there. [laughter] And you know, peaches and cream compared to the Philippines.

PASICK: Really! Did he use that phrase, "peaches and cream"?

A. KACHMAR: I suppose so. He said, "we believed it!" [laughter]

PASICK: And it was something about money?

A. KACHMAR: He was told he could earn a lot of money in America. But after they did their time in the Navy. He was part of the auxiliary Navy. It wasn't part of the regular Navy and, uh, they were hired mostly to do work as stewards, cooks, and he was a stoker. Shoveling coal for the, uh, yeah, a fireman, to fire the burners. This was his job. So he served his time which he signed up for--I'm not sure, but I don't think it more than two years. If I recall what he used to tell me it couldn't be more than three, because that was the average, but according to what he told me, it was only two. And they discharged him, and he traveled where the ship was going. When he got back to his home port in Norfolk, they discharged him there.

PASICK: Did he ever tell you any stories about what it was like to be on the ship?

A. KACHMAR: He never mentioned much because he said, uh, they were just workers, ya know. They weren't part of anything military. They just did the work.

PASICK: Okay. Well, this is a kind of different, uh, question, um. Can you tell me the first time you encountered the whole idea of race?

A. KACHMAR: Me?

PASICK: Right. When were you first aware of race?

A. KACHMAR: The first time I was aware that I was a little different than other children--not in the streets, because in the neighborhood where we moved on Adams Street, there were Italian, there were Irish, some Puerto Ricans at that time, some Spanish two blocks away. And the kids, we would all play together in the streets. You know, we would play all kind of games. You would always play in the streets those years. We would be out on the streets. No matter who the children were, nobody knows what color they were. Children don't do that, I don't remember. There was just kids, and we'd all play together. But when I went to school, uh, not in kindergarten. I started kindergarten, I can remember my first day. Isn't that strange?

PASICK: No.

A. KACHMAR: I went in, I was sitting in a circle with all the kids and I can just remember sitting in that circle with all the children and we singing like a song. But like in the other grades, you know, um, it wasn't a thing that they singled me out, but they had their own friends, you know what I mean, and there weren't any other friends like me. So a couple of the girls I got friendly with, were just friendly. But there wasn't anybody else that looked like me. They'd all say, "What are you, Nonny?" They didn't know. I'd tell them, I didn't even know myself those days. I didn't say I was from Czechoslovakia. They wouldn't even know. I'd say, "well, I know my father is from the Philippine Islands, but my mother is American, you know. She was born here." So that's all I would know. I didn't know what she was [laughter] until years later.

So, but, that was maybe by the time you're in the fifth grade, sixth grade, somewhere along that line, as you're growing up, you know, but in the younger years the children don't differentiate. They just don't. So you're playing and you're black, or you're whatever you are, but it was around that time, maybe before I graduated from elementary school.

PASICK: That you became aware that other people saw you as different.

A. KACHMAR: Yes.

PASICK: Were there other kids of color, or were you going to school with kids that were brown skinned?

A. KACHMAR: There were a couple of Black children, I remember. But in that area—it was Columbia Heights area—and at that time it was a very nice neighborhood. There were a lot of English, some of the girls had English names. There were a couple of Blacks, but there were some who were very poor. Because of the school district I had to walk quite a distance to go to school there. And I wasn't exactly from that neighborhood, the Flatbush Avenue extension. I had to cross there, because I was from the other side of there.

PASICK: You're talking about elementary school?

A. KACHMAR: Yes, in elementary school. This was Public School 8 on Middaugh Street, near Willow, which is practically on the shore there. Columbia Heights, and the Penny Bridge, if you've heard of them.

PASICK: Willow I've heard of.

A. KACHMAR: Sure, it's all these old brownstone homes; it was a well-to-do neighborhood. So some of the kids who went to this school were—they were middle class anyway. I was from a poorer section, from the other side. [laughter]

PASICK: What do you—in terms of differences, what do you think, when you were in elementary school, was the biggest difference? Was it that you were, in part from a different race, or do you think it was because your family were poorer?

A. KACHMAR: I think it was because my family was poorer. Not that I was—no one paid much attention to the racial part. But---

PASICK: Even the teachers?

A. KACHMAR: No!

PASICK: Did you ever hear comments from teachers?

A. KACHMAR: No, never. Never heard anything. In fact the one teacher in the fifth grade, Miss O'Toole, she sort of liked me, you know. She was a nice Irish woman; she wasn't married. Very pretty, blond hair, I can remember her with the bun and I used to help her. She'd always pick me to help her. After school, she'd take me with her, and she'd say, "let's go have some ice cream." [laughter]. And then I would go home, and she would go home. She was very nice to me, you know. She kind of just brought me along and that was in the fifth

grade. And I can remember--she's the only one I can remember ya know, as being like that. The others were you were in the class, and that's all.

PASICK: Now you're growing up years in elementary school also included having some Filipino-American cousins.

A. KACHMAR: Yes, I had Felix, who was Pet's first husband, and his brother William, and three of us were brought up together, in the house with my grandmother and all.

PASICK: Do you think that made a difference for you, in terms of your self-confidence as someone who was partly different than most of the kids around you?

A. KACHMAR: I don't know if it really made a difference because we were always together, and Rita was always with us. But she never commented on anything and neither did we! [laughter]. We must have made wonderful pair. She was a blond with blue eyes [laughter]-and in the summer we used to up to Soundview, Connecticut. Now I understand it's an artsy colony, you know. But in those days it was just an old beach front. You know, people had these little shacks, and she had a brother who lived in Blackhall, Connecticut. And that was right by Soundview, the beaches. So in the summer we would go up there, and stay, like for the whole month until school.

PASICK: How did it work for you racially up there?

A. KACHMAR: Well, it didn't seem to matter. We used to mingle with the kids there, and we had games, and at the end of the season, they'd have races and games, and I'd always win the swimming races, and they'd give you prizes and things like that. Nobody every commented, really. I can't remember any children commenting. Now, I don't know about adults. You know sometimes they'd look at you a little funny [laughter], especially if I was with my mother and we were riding on a street car or something. They'd give you glances, you know. They didn't know if you were or daughter or what. But my mother, she would just stare right back, and that was it [laughter].

PASICK: You said something to me the other day, about your mother. She actually spoke with you about this racial stuff.

A. KACHMAR: Oh, yeah. She'd say, "you know your father is Filipino, and a lot of people don't think that's very nice," she'd say, "but he's a good man, and he's a good father, and don't

you ever forget it,” she used to tell me ! [laughter] She always said that, so--but I can’t remember any children being mean, but adults would look at you occasionally, you know, but you were a child.

PASICK: Did you ever lose that--did you ever lose that sense that when you are not with Filipinos—

A. KACHMAR: Yes

PASICK: --that people would look at you and wonder? Have you ever lost that sense?

A. KACHMAR: No, but I never thought about it too much. It didn’t seem to matter to me.

PASICK: Yes

A. KACHMAR: I never really, I didn’t care really what—I never did. She’s looking at me, she looking at me [laughter]

PASICK: Even to this today?

A. KACHMAR: Even to this day, I don’t care! If people stare me, let them stare. I really don’t care, I used to say, I don’t care what anybody thinks. It doesn’t bother me. I have enough confidence in myself, for what I am, that I don’t care. I just don’t care! [laughter]. It really doesn’t bother me to know that I’m different. Even my great-grandchildren. It’s in the eyes; that’s dominant feature. They all have my eyes [laughter] and naturally people look at me, and they know there’s something different, just by my eyes. But it never bothered me to that extent.

PASICK: Where you ever confused with other Asian, uh, races?

A. KACHMAR: Oh yeah. They think I’m Chinese, or something like that. I remember be asked, “oh, are you part Chinese, or something like that?” I said, “no.”

PASICK: How did you come to--well, this may have changed over time—how did you think of yourself to yourself? Did you think of yourself as white, as mixed, as Filipino, as Filipino-American?

A. KACHMAR: That’s a hard one.

PASICK: Yeah.

A. KACHMAR: I didn’t think of myself as Filipino, or anything, or white actually. Just that I was born here. People asked me, and well I was born here. I’m American, that’s all.

PASICK: Yeah. And when you had to check on different forms?

A. KACHMAR: Oh, on forms. Well, I would put—what do I put on like censuses and things? I would put mixed: White and Asian.

PASICK: White and Asian.

A. KACHMAR: Yes, I would just put it that way. Slash: White/Asian. That's all. I wouldn't say who was white and who was Asian, just that's it.

PASICK: If there had been a place on the form for you to check Filipino, would you have checked Filipino?

A. KACHMAR: Yes, definitely. I would have.

PASICK: You would have checked Filipino more than white, even though you're--

A. KACHMAR: I know. Yes, I would have because it's mostly through the father. That was an understood condition in those years. Maybe it isn't now, but it was understood that your heritage, your parentage was more through your father than your mother.

PASICK: That's interesting!

A. KACHMAR: Except in the Jewish. The mother is the one who rules that roost. If she's Jewish, her children are Jewish. Like Sheila. She would say, "my children are Jewish because I'm Jewish." [laughter] It's a matriarchal society there, so, but, uh, I never paid too much attention to it really. I just accepted whatever it was. How people felt, they felt. When this principal of the school I worked in as a teacher's aide for nine or ten years, in Canarsie, he was very nice. When he offered me this job, he spoke to me. He said to me, you know he knew what I was because of George and John going to the school, he said, you know your kids are beyond the average. We have to put them in the bright classes because their IQs and everything are above the normal. He said, "they're smart." But he said, people, the way they are you know, people the way they are, are like jealous--it's the only word I can think of. And he said, "I would not advise you to advertise that fact because they can be nasty to you, particularly of your mixed racial qualities" Yeah.

PASICK: Really?

A. KACHMAR: Yeah, he did. And he said—

PASICK: You mean, that the children will be seen as--

A. KACHMAR: I don't know whether, it would be taken out on them, through their children. He said that, you know, maybe, it might --just don't publicize the fact that they're smarter than everybody else in the class. He said, you don't have to because they'll know it. The other kids will know it. [laughter] The other kids always know who the smartest ones are, and the dumbest ones. So, he said, uh—

PASICK: Interesting that he added the racial piece to that.

A. KACHMAR: Yes, there might be repercussions, or jealousies, it would lead to that. He said, but I know what you're capable of. You worked here in the PTA. I know what you can do for this school and now that I'm able to hire somebody, I'm hiring you. So I said, well, thank you and he did. I worked there nine, ten years. I liked it. I used to do all their ordering of books, and keep track of all their supplies, and books. And I liked it, very much. The assistant principle used to say, you need any books? Go to Annie. She'll get it. [laughter]. I used to keep track of every class, their reading levels. It was interesting.

PASICK: How did you handle yourself in some of the more conservative communities, like in the Midwest. Out of New York? How did you handle yourself racially there?

A. KACHMAR: I, we, didn't bother too much with people in the town. We lived in the outskirts by a lake. But he worked, where he worked, people were very nice to us. They didn't make comments, didn't say anything unusual. They figured, oh, well, they're New Yorkers. That's how it is in New York. So they just accepted that maybe. I don't know. Nobody ever commented, and, uh, we went to ceramic classes, and the women there were from the town. And there were some of these Amish women who used to come, and they were very friendly people. Very nice! And nobody ever made any remarks. We used to laugh and joke and have a lot of fun in those classes. And a lot of women from the town went to these classes, and I got to know them, and we used to talk, and would confide. They used to ask me what it was like in New York, and they used to ask me, "well, how do you like it here?" And I said, wherever I am, I make a home, and I accommodate myself. I like it here. I said, I like the place here. It's different, but I can get used to that. I can cope with the thing. I said, I like it. The town is good, people are friendly, why wouldn't I like it?

PASICK: Of all the place you've lived, where would you say you were most comfortable as a Filipino-American?

A. KACHMAR: Where have I lived now? Ohio, Waterbury, Connecticut. I would say Connecticut—Connecticut was more like New York. Nobody said anything there either. I can't recall people commenting there either. I can't recall. Did they ever comment to you? No, never.

PASICK: So, in New York--

A. KACHMAR: In New York, nobody comments. Everybody accepts whatever it is.

PASICK: Right.

JOHN KACHMAR: We used to get invited into people's homes.

A. KACHMAR: They would invite to their homes and everything, parties, weddings. And people used to come to our house, I used to give barbecues.

PASICK: Did you make Filipino food for people?

A. KACHMAR: No, not there I didn't. I just made it for ourselves and the family.

PASICK: Let me switch to another part of the interview, about your parents and their marriage, and your marriage. How did your parents meet?

A. KACHMAR: Well, my father was working in the Navy Yard. My grandmother had this boarding house where some of the Filipinos rented rooms. So I suppose it was through them. When he came up here and got the job as a laborer and they said, Tony, come here. This woman, Mary Riggs; she'll rent the room with some of us. I guess they shared some of the rooms; they didn't each have a room of their own.

PASICK: Sure

A. KACHMAR: And he said, you can stay there. So of course, he met my mother there.

PASICK: Did you ever have a sense that Pio lived there?

A. KACHMAR: No, I don't know if Pio ever lived there--but I think Aunt Catherine--maybe when she came from Philadelphia some time she might have stayed there for a while. She used to have some people she would take care of like that.

PASICK: Women as well as—

A. KACHMAR: Yeah, women. So I don't know really.

PASICK: So they met—

A. KACHMAR: They met that way, of course. They were in the same house, so he was working, he came home, and her daughters were there. Lily--my aunt, she was already going out with Felix's father, Mr. Pacanza. And my father was there, my mother met him, and that was it.

PASICK: Uh, how to ask this question? You know, in the early part of the century, there was very little racial intermarriage.

A. KACHMAR: Oh, yes.

PASICK: Um, how do you understand that your mother married a Filipino? How do you explain to yourself that she was able to do that?

A. KACHMAR: Well, I'll tell you. My grandmother was a broad-minded woman for her time. She was not from the old side, where the old ways are good enough. She accommodated herself to any situation she found herself in. She was that kind of a person! She came here at 16 years old, all by herself, went to work, you know, and brought her mother and her brother, and she had to be that way. So she accepted the Filipinos like anybody else. Anybody who wanted to rent her rooms, she rented to them because they needed a place to stay. They were all working in the Navy Yard or somewhere nearby, and she let them come in. They were good to her! They would do all the cooking for her, they would help her, they would take care of her fires, they would even clean houses. They were good people, she said, hard workers. Which they were. She didn't mind they were Filipino; it didn't bother her what color they were. They paid her the rent! [laughter]. Their money was as good as anybody else's. [laughter]

PASICK: You once told me on the phone that, you were speculating that, that Filipino men made good husbands.

A. KACHMAR: I think so, yeah. They were raised to be very respectful and caring for women. You know, the Spanish influence and all, and they were raised that way, that's all. It carried on, that's all. He was married, and it was his obligation to care for his wife, and me, his child, he couldn't desert me.

PASICK: And he didn't.

A. KACHMAR: So, that's the only thing I can see, there, where he was raised, well, there, everybody is family, when you live in a town like that. Your friends come in, they sleep in your house, they don't even go home [laughter]. They throw another mat on the floor. [laughter] They don't have beds. They sleep on mats he said they used to weave. So if anybody's going to stay, they must put another mat on the floor. [laughter] So it was a thing that they were used that kind of communal type of life, in small towns like Bauan in those years, a little farming village. Not even a town, a village.

PASICK: Do you think of your parents as having a mixed marriage?

A. KACHMAR: No, it doesn't occur to me that it was mixed. They were just married, and that was my mother and father.

PASICK: Were you encouraged to marry someone who was Filipino? - Were you encouraged one way or another?

A. KACHMAR: No, they never even offered anything. When I grew up in high school and we used to meet my friends--dances were very popular then, and you'd meet boys and they'd asked you to go to the movies, or things like that. They never said to me, we don't want you going--unless they didn't like someone. I would always bring someone home to meet them. If a boy didn't want to meet them, I wouldn't bother. But because I looked different, other boys were attracted to that. Because I looked different than the other girls.

PASICK: Oh, really, that's an interesting thing. I've never heard anyone talk about that.

A. KACHMAR: Well, in a class of say twenty kids, boys they'd always want to sit next to me, little things like that.

PASICK: So being Filipino didn't mean being unattractive, but attractive.

A. KACHMAR: Attractive, and different. I was an attraction because I was different from the other girls. They would like to know me, or something. But that's the only thing, yeah. And even—I remember a girl I worked with, later in years. She was from the Midwest and evidently their town was settled with some Asian people, and she said to me—even where we worked, some men would want to take you out and date you and everything. This girl used to say to me, you know, Anna, she said, somehow the men love women like you. They're attracted. In the small town where I came from, we had Asian people living there,

and all the boys used to go crazy for the girls. They wanted to go out with them, they wanted to meet them and they were just very attracted to these Asian girls. They thought they looked very glamorous, whatever, because of the way they were. She said, we girls used to be jealous of that in high school, but that's how they were. So I said, well, I guess they still are. "Look at these guys in here, they're always trying to date you." Yeah, I see. [laughter]

PASICK: How did you do around John's family?

A. KACHMAR: They were very accepting. His mother was wonderful, and his father.

PASICK: So it never came up as a topic?

A. KACHMAR: They never commented, and in fact, it's a funny story. John and I just went out and got married. He was in service, and of course—very easy, we were married in twenty seconds! The place was gonna close and it just went "brrrrt." [laughter] We got the certificate and that was it.

J. KACHMAR: Fifty two seconds.

A. KACHMAR: Fifty two seconds! He timed the ceremony. So, it lasted sixty two years. So I said, who needs all the ceremonies, huh? But anyway, um, when I went over to tell them his mother and father were there and I used to go to visit them when he was away and all, so I said I came special today because I have something special to tell you. So I said, I want you to know that John and I were married. I said, before he went in the service, but we kept it quiet because everyone would want this [unintelligible]

J. KACHMAR: No, I was in the service.

A. KACHMAR: You were in the service, yeah. And I said, the reason that we never had a real wedding because, you know, of that reason. It'd be too much confusion—it's war years, and we just didn't want that. We just wanted to be married. He had to go back, and that was it. So, his mother said, oh. You know, she was glad. She said, well that's good. And his father said—and there was Susie, He says, Susie! Now you don't have to worry! He was the last one home. John is married! [laughter] I guess she used to say to him, when is John getting married? It's his father. He was twenty eight years old. And she used to say, why can't he

find—why? [laughter] So, your father. Susie, he said. John is married. Stop worrying.

[laughter] And I laughed, and his father laughed.

PASICK: Was John your first boyfriend, or did you have—

A. KACHMAR: Well I used to date other boys, but not seriously. Nobody appealed to me like he did. [laughter] But his father was funny, you know, yeah, uh, Susan--

PASICK: Did you ever date any Filipino boys?

A. KACHMAR: I had a friend once, his mother and father, my mother and father knew them. I don't remember his name. Rita also went with another Filipino boy, and we went to the movies, then out for a hot dog, that was it. [laughter] Nothing serious, no.

PASICK: We're about wrapped up, and I have a question. I might predict how you'll answer this, but I might be surprised. Would you recommend intermarriage to young people today?

A. KACHMAR: Definitely. You can like somebody for what they are, if you look beyond the surface. You look at the skin color, or you don't look at this and that, and you look at the person, how they treat you. And if you feel that they're good, and you would be happy with them, I don't see why not. I don't have an objection. It's up to the individual and how they feel about it. I would never say no or yes, or anything. I just wouldn't.

PASICK: So how do you feel about this interview, all these pointed questions I have put to you?

A. KACHMAR: The marriage? It's been fine. We've been happily married. We've had ups and downs.

PASICK: No, I mean the interview.

A. KACHMAR: I've been comfortable with it. And our marriage. How's it been for you?

J. KACHMAR: [inaudible]

A. KACHMAR: Our marriage. For sixty two years. Been a good marriage.

J. KACHMAR: It better be.

A. KACHMAR: [laughter] I'll throw you out. [laughter] Are you done?

J. KACHMAR: Hopefully you have a good marriage if you stay together sixty two years.

A. KACHMAR: And stay together sixty two years. We'd be separated long ago. Right.

PASICK: So is there any question you wish I would have asked you about being a Filipino-American?

A. KACHMAR: No.

PASICK: About—

A. KACHMAR: I think you covered most everything that I can think of. No. You know, it seems strange, but I never thought of myself as mixed race. Isn't that funny?

PASICK: No, not strange at all.

A. KACHMAR: Some people then feel the same way, I guess.

PASICK: Some do and some don't.

A. KACHMAR: Maybe because we had a close knit family. My mother, my father, her immediate family, her sisters, grandmothers, parents, the cousins, Rita and all of them, it was just accepted, we were always very close. Nobody commented, or thought you were different, or didn't belong. And even John's family, no one ever commented, right?

J. KACHMAR: If they hadn't liked you, you would have known it.

A. KACHMAR: Yes, I can tell you: when you're different, and you know you're different, you're more sensitive to other people's feelings. You can tell! I can't even explain it. You can tell in the attitude, or their pulling away, in the attitude somehow. You can tell the ones who will accept you, and the ones that don't want to be bothered with you.

PASICK: How have you handled that over the years?

A. KACHMAR: I just ignored it. If I sense someone who doesn't want to be bothered with me, I just accept it. There are plenty who will! Who needs them? You don't need them. I don't even feel any animosity toward them. I didn't care. It didn't matter in my life.

PASICK: You're saying you got more sensitive to other people. You mean, you got good at picking up the cues?

A. KACHMAR: The vibrations. You just get a kind of sixth sense. You know the people who will look at you, for what you are, and other people who are like, maybe I shouldn't bother with her or something like that. Nothing outward, very subtle things, just maybe not including you in something once or twice. But you become more sensitive to that.

PASICK: Other people I've interviewed have said the same thing.

A. KACHMAR: The same thing, see? So it must be true. You pick up these things more. You become more sensitive too. Not that it bothered—it never bothered me, it truly didn't. I used

to say to myself, it doesn't bother me. It don't. What do I care? I don't need them, you know? [laughter] That's how I always felt. And I still feel that way. I still do. I don't care what other people think or what they say, or what they think about me. I just don't care. It doesn't matter in my life.

PASICK: As somebody who has experienced differences, do you think you're more sensitive to other people that have differences?

A. KACHMAR: Their differences?

PASICK: Yeah, people who are in a minority, or mixed.

A. KACHMAR: Yes, yes. Maybe I'm more sympathetic to their problems or the way they would act. They would react, and say maybe they would feel sensitive about certain things because of the way she is, you know? That's the way she is. But I never felt too sensitive or inferior to anyone. Never. Never. I was always good in school. Always was the top of the class, and I got along fine in the class. I was the valedictorian in high school and all that.

PASICK: I never knew that. That's great. Not surprised. Now here's a question if I might, for your kids—

A. KACHMAR: Yes.

PASICK: Who have some, some features.

A. KACHMAR: Yes.

PASICK: How did you handle it with them? Did you do any preparation with them? Did you talk with them?

A. KACHMAR: Not really, because, you know, um, it just never came up, you know what I mean?

PASICK: Right.

A. KACHMAR: It didn't come up. Especially with John, he all his friends in the neighborhood, it just never came up, you know?

PASICK: Right, you were living in Brooklyn.

A. KACHMAR: His friends were all there, same school, I was working in the school, the kids all knew me. They knew my father, of course, on the block.

PASICK: It just didn't come up.

A. KACHMAR: You know, down the street, the neighbors, all Italians. The one family, John was friends with their daughter and sons, and she said to me, "Listen, don't even put your house on the market. My husband and I want to buy it." Their mother was living there, they wanted to buy it. I knew her from when she was a little girl, playing out in the street. It just never came up, never came up.

PASICK: Okay.