

NAME: Linda Tran

INTERVIEW: Youth Interview

NAME LIKE TO BE CALLED: Linda

COMPANY: Park Teen Center

HOMELAND: Vietnam

DATE: January, 2007

(WHERE DOES YOUR FAMILY COME FROM?)

Vietnam.

(WHERE SPECIFICALLY IN VIETNAM?)

All sorts of place.

(LIKE WHERE?)

Like (inaud) Saigon, (inaud).

(WHAT LANGUAGES ARE SPOKEN THERE?)

Vietnam, Vietnamese. (smile)

(VIETNAMESE? IS THAT THE MAIN LANGUAGE?)

Yeah.

(IS THAT THE LANGUAGE THAT YOU SPEAK AT HOME?)

Yes.

(IS THAT THE LANGUAGE THAT YOUR PARENTS SPEAK?)

Yes.

(HAVE YOU BEEN TO VIETNAM?)

Yes.

(CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE THERE?)

It was really hot. Like 24/7. And when your birthday comes up they give you a surprise party, then they get some food, like in a restaurant. Then they give you like a actual gold ring, like I like (inaud) one on each finger and three gold bracelets (inaud).

(IS THAT A CULTURAL OCCURRENCE OR IS THAT A FAMILY TRADITION?)

Um, they probably just there for fun.

(JUST FOR FUN)

Cause it's my birthday.

(DO THEY DO THAT FOR EVERYBODY'S BIRTHDAY, CELEBRATED REALLY HUGE LIKE THAT?)

Some, if they're rich.

(UM, WHAT WAS THE, WHAT WAS THE MAIN MEAN OF TRANSPORTATION THERE?)

Huh?

(WHAT WAS THE MAIN MEAN OF TRANSPORTATION THERE?)

What does that mean?

(MEANS HOW DID PEOPLE GET AROUND?)

Motorcycle. And if there's a lot of people then they use their family van.

(SO MOST OF THE TIME THEY DRIVE SMALLER VEHICLES LIKE MOTORCYCLES...)

Yes.

(DID A LOT OF PEOPLE WALK OR IS THERE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION?)

(pause) (BUSSES, TAXIS?)

Yes, taxis.

(LOTS OF TAXIS. IS THERE BUSSES?)

Yeah.

(MAINLY JUST SMALLER VEHICLES LIKE MOTORCYCLES. HOW BIG WAS THE TOWN THAT YOU WERE IN?)

Very big. It's like downtown here in Lincoln.

(WAS IT AS BIG AS LINCOLN?)

It's bigger. A lot bigger.

(A LOT BIGGER THAN LINCOLN)

Lincoln's small.

(COMPARED TO...)

Well, Lincoln is small. (smile)

(200,000 PEOPLE)

Lincoln is small.

(A LOT OF PEOPLE. WHO DID YOU STAY WITH WHEN YOU WERE THERE?)

My grandma. This other one, my mom's side. But I hate her. She's a, she's a crazy woman.

(YOU DON'T LIKE YOUR GRANDMA?)

No. Cause she's mean. I only saw her once.

(WHAT OTHER RELATIVES DO YOU HAVE THERE?)

My uncle, my aunt and my future step-mom.

(YOUR FUTURE STEP-MOM?)

My mommy died.

(UM. I'M SORRY FOR THAT)

Yeah.

(AND YOUR, YOUR DAD IS GETTING RE-MARRIED TO SOMEBODY THERE,
SOMEBODY FROM VIETNAM)

Yeah. But I think he's gonna cancel it.

(REALLY. HAS SHE ALWAYS LIVED THERE?)

Yeah. My dad found another girl in Texas on Internet. And now they're talking and then they saw each other.

(HOW DID HE MEET THE GIRL IN VIETNAM?)

Because she (inaud) with my uncle. She and my uncle friends. And at Nam(?) everyone knows everyone, so...

(SO THAT'S THE WAY THAT THEY MET IS THROUGH YOUR DAD'S BROTHER)

My mom's brother.

(YOUR MOM'S BROTHER. SO DOES YOUR DAD TELL YOU STORIES ABOUT
VIETNAM? WHAT IT WAS LIKE THERE GROWING UP...)

Me and my dad don't talk.

(YOU AND YOUR DAD DON'T TALK)

No.

(VERY MUCH?)

At all.

(DO YOU LIVE WITH YOUR DAD?)

(pause) Yeah.

(DID HE TELL YOU STORIES ABOUT VIETNAM WHEN YOU GUYS DID TALK?)

We never talked. My grandma does.

(YOUR GRANDMA TELLS YOU STORIES)

Yeah.

(ABOUT VIETNAM)

Yes.

(DOES YOUR GRANDMA LIVE HERE?)

She lives with me. (OH) She like a mama.

(SO WHAT STORIES DOES YOUR GRANDMA TELL?)

Stuff that happened at Nam like they eat dog, roach, mouse, and stuff like that. They fry it up and it's all disgusting.

(DOES YOUR GRANDMA STILL EAT THINGS LIKE THAT HERE?)

No. She thinks it's disgusting.

(BUT SHE, THAT'S SOMETHING THAT THEY...)

She did it in Vietnam.

(WHY DID SHE SAY SHE DID IT THERE?)

I don't know. Because the animals at Nam were sanitized and the animals here are on the ground where you find the dirt. (inaud phrase) so...

(SO THINGS ARE A LITTLE CLEANER. DID YOU, WHEN YOU WERE BACK THERE, DID YOU THINK THE COUNTRY WAS REALLY BEAUTIFUL?)

Some, one (inaud) city. And the others is all pale(?) like the dessert.

(ARE MOST OF THE STORIES THAT YOUR GRANDMOTHER TELLS POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE STORIES ABOUT VIETNAM?)

Positive. And could be some negative.

(AND A FEW NEGATIVE?)

Um hum. (yes)

(BUT MAINLY POSITIVE?)

(pause) (BUT MAINLY POSITIVE?)

Um, yes. (YEAH) No, I don't know. Sometimes.

(UM, WELL WHAT NEGATIVE STORIES DOES SHE TELL?)

Um, (pause) I can't think of any right now.

(OK. WELL IF ANY COME BACK TO YOU LET ME KNOW AND WE'LL BE SURE TO GET EM. WHY DOES YOUR GRANDMOTHER... DOES YOUR GRANDMOTHER TALK ABOUT COMING HERE? ABOUT WHY YOU GUYS MOVED HERE?)

No. But she, she wanted to move here. I don't know why. But then she said now that she don't like it in America. She wants to move back to Vietnam. And then our cultural thingy is if someone dies and you were born at Nam or something, that you got, you would rather die at Nam than in America.

(WHY IS THAT?)

Because you get more respect over there when you die over there.

(SO WHY DOES SHE SAY THAT, UH, SHE MOVED HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE?)
Because there was a war in Vietnam.

(THE VIETNAM WAR?)
I don't know.

(WHEN DID SHE MOVE HERE? DO YOU KNOW WHAT YEAR? WHAT TIME PERIOD?)
No. But my sister was already born. My sister was born in 1990, December.

(IN 1990)
And then my brother was born in the Philippines.

(SO IT WAS JUST, IT WAS LIKE 10 YEARS AGO, 16 YEARS AGO?)
I don't know. No.

(SHE WAS BORN IN 1990?)
Oh, my sister, yes. But then my brother was in, my sister lived in Vietnam for like that one year and then they, they moved when my mom got pregnant again for my brother, and that was 1992 in April. And they were in Philippines at the time. So my brother was born in Philippines. (inaud) And then, and then they came here and then they got me.

(AND THAT WAS THE HAPPIEST DAY OF THEIR LIVES.)
(smile) Yeah.

(SO THERE WAS A WAR IN VIETNAM AND THAT'S WHY THEY MOVED AWAY)
I don't know. It's just a guess.

(THAT'S ALL YOUR GRANDMA SAID ABOUT IT)
Yeah. And in Vietnam there is child abuse and you call in on child abuse then nothing is gonna happen to you. Because that's the Vietnam culture where parents get to hit kids.

(SO YOU'RE KINDA GLAD YOU GOT OUT OF THAT TOO, HUH?)
Oh no, I'm still in child abuse. (SMILE)

(HOW MANY PLACES HAVE YOU LIVED IN AMERICA?)
Here? But then we went everywhere.

(YOU VISITED A LOT)
Um hum. (yes)

(BUT YOU HAVE ONLY LIVED HERE?)
I went to Texas, Omaha, um, I went to California, Canada. Uh, I've been to South Dakota. I've been to, um, Minnesota and (pause) I think that's all. Oh, I've been down to Crete too.

(TO CRETE?)

Um hum. (yes) My dad used to work at Farmland.

(OH. DOES YOUR GRANDMOTHER EVER TELL YOU STORIES ABOUT THE EDUCATION SYSTEM?)

Yeah. That you write with your left hand. Then you get hit and they will make you change it.

(WHAT HAND DO YOU WRITE WITH?)

Left.

(SO YOU WOULD HAVE GOT HIT – SMILE)

Yeah.

(WHAT ELSE DOES SHE TELL YOU ABOUT THE EDUCATION?)

And she said that she, it's like heritage school.

(HOW SO?)

Because you have to wear dresses and uniforms and stuff. You can't wear like jeans and stuff. And you have to tie your hair up. And you have to wear long sleeve shirt, even though it's so hot outside.

(HOW, HOW ARE THE TEACHERS ABLE TO DISCIPLINE THE KIDS?)

Um, take a stick and hit them. Call home on their parents. Or call the cops because they're not paying attention.

(THEY CALL THE COPS BECAUSE THEY'RE NOT PAYING ATTENTION?)

(pause) (inaud phrase)

(DID, WHAT STORIES DID SHE TELL YOU ABOUT THE BEHAVIOR OF THE KIDS?)

Um,...

(WERE THEY REALLY WELL BEHAVED AND QUIET?)

Kids, when they are like five or six they have to start working. Like, you know, (inaud). And then like the guys, they have to go out to the field and like detasseling, detassel. Yeah. And then if you're lucky enough, when adults like you, you won't die. When you're not lucky, you'll be really ill(?) like my brother. But he's lucky enough not to die.

(YOUR BROTHER WAS BIT BY A DOG?)

Um hum. (yes) That's probably why I'm sad cause he's (inaud).

(WHAT WAS IT LIKE GOING THROUGH ELL?)

It was fun. We took (inaud) and stuff but then when it got to ELL, when I got out of ELL... I wanted to get out. When I was in ELL I wanted to get out from that. And then when I got out, like it feels really weird. Still (inaud phrase) but it was fun. I thought it

was fun. It was really easy though. I was supposed to be taking ELL because I was working, but then they made me take it anyway.

(DO YOUR PAR-, DOES YOUR DAD OR GRANDMOTHER SPEAK ENGLISH?)

My dad, kinda. He can say "hey, what's up, homie". (SMILE) And he can say a couple more. Like if the teacher calls home and say something, like I'm in trouble or something, my dad is like "yeah, yeah, OK, for sure, whatever".

(DOES HE UNDERSTAND THE ENGLISH?)

He understands it but then some he don't. But they called home on me the other day where they said I'm in trouble and I have to go to ISS and like I didn't go and they made me call home. So then the teacher called and he's like "sure, whatever, do whatever you want".

(AND SO THE LANGUAGE YOU WERE TAUGHT AT HOME IS PRIMARILY VIETNAMESE)

Yes. But I know other language. I know sign language. I know French a little bit. I know Vietnamese, I know English and I know gibberish.

(GIBBERISH)

Yes. Do you know what that is?

(I DON'T.)

OK. It's a language where kids made up and they talk in school. Like the teachers don't understand them, And it's funny cause this teacher's sister asked us what we're saying and we (inaud).

(SO WHEN YOU CAME TO SCHOOL, WHEN YOU STARTED SCHOOL, DID YOU KNOW VERY MUCH ENGLISH?)

I don't remember. I think so.

(YOU THINK YOU KNEW SOME ENGLISH WHEN YOU CAME HERE?)

Well I was born here.

(RIGHT. YOU DIDN'T SPEAK ENGLISH AT HOME)

To my brother and my sister. Cause the kids were talking (inaud).

(SO YOU ALWAYS SPOKE ENGLISH TO YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS.)

Yeah. You want me to (inaud) for you?

(NO, I DON'T. THANK YOU FOR OFFERING. WHAT FAMILY TRADITIONS DOES YOUR FAMILY STILL DO THAT THEY GET FROM VIETNAM?)

How they sit on the toilet. (laugh) I don't do it. (smile)

(NO, THAT'S A TRADITION, THAT'S SOMETHING THAT THEY HAVE DONE. WHAT OTHER TRADITIONS CAN YOU THINK OF?)

Um, how they cook. Yeah.

(HOW THEY COOK?)

Yeah, they cook and then they make the whole house all stinky with stuff.

(SO THE THINGS THAT THEY COOK ARE THE SAME?)

Yeah. That's the best thing my grandma makes is egg rolls.

(THAT'S A BAD THING)

That's a good thing.

(IT'S A GOOD THING. YOU LIKE EGG ROLLS)

Yeah.

(YOU DON'T MIND WHEN THE HOUSE GETS ALL STINKY FOR THOSE)

Yes I do.

(YOU STILL DO. BUT YOU LIKE EM)

Yeah.

(WHAT OTHER FAMILY TRADITIONS?)

Um, all the Vietnamese people know everything of Vietnamese people. Like we know all the Vietnamese people in Lincoln and in Omaha a little bit. And like we all know each other.

(SO YOU'RE STILL A VERY TIGHT KNIT GROUP. IT'S A LOT LIKE VIETNAM WHERE EVERYBODY KNOWS EVERYBODY)

But still my dad thinks it's annoying where our phone, it won't stop ringing. Cause in Vietnam they won't, the phones don't ring that much. So I tell my friends (inaud). And I have friends that trust me.

(I BELIEVE YOU.)

And then my dad has been called a lot too. Then I know everything of the Vietnamese people in this town.

(HAVE YOU EVER HAD TO TRANSLATE FOR FAMILY MEMBERS?)

No, that's my sister's job. I don't do any (inaud) like that.

(BUT YOUR SISTER DOES TRANSLATING)

Um hum. (yes) Sister is smart. She's straight A student at Lincoln High. She's 16 and she got a permit driving. And she's an honor student and she got a scholarship tour(?).

(NICE. YOU TELL HER I SAID CONGRATULATIONS)

And my brother, he's really stupid. He gets like straight Fs instead of A, and oh my

gosh, he does the most disgusting thing. He wipes his, he wipes his butt with his pants instead of toilet paper.

(THAT'S BAD – SMILE)
(inaud)

(YEAH)
That's why I'm so sad.

(SO, UM, IF YOU HAD A....)
Oh...

(NO, GO AHEAD)
Go ahead. But I remember a story that is, what do you call it? (NEGATIVE)Yeah.
(POSITIVE)Yeah, negative.

(NEGATIVE, OK)
In Vietnam, people go to the bathroom sometimes, um, (EXTRA VOICES - TAPE
TURNED OFF)

(SO WHAT WAS THE NEGATIVE STORY)
Oh yeah. In Vietnam when they go to the bathroom, they use their hand to wipe their
butts up. Get all dirty.

(SO IF, WHEN YOU GROW UP WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO BACK TO VIETNAM?)
No. No.

(NO. WHY IS THAT?)
Cause I hate Vietnam. It's so hot, and I hate the people. I have tons of (inaud). Yeah,
it's all sweet to me.

(SO SWEET?)
Like they will always pinch my cheeks and it hurts. (SMILE)

(SO DO YOU GET TO TALK TO YOUR, UM, RELATIVES IN VIETNAM VERY MUCH?)
Um, no. And I'm glad.

(IF...)
Oh.

(GO AHEAD)
(pause) I'm not gonna talk.

(IF THEY WERE MOVING OVER HERE, HOW WOULD, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL
THEM ABOUT BECOMING AMERICAN?)
Huh?

(IF THEY WERE TO ASK YOU "HOW DO I BECOME AMERICAN", WHAT WOULD YOU TELL THEM?)

You go take this test thingy to come, uh, a United States Citizen, and you pass it and you become one. And you get to change your name. And if you don't pass it then you go home, you study, and you do it again next year.

(AND WHAT WOULD YOU TELL THEM ABOUT AMERICAN CULTURE, HOW IT'S DIFFERENT FROM VIETNAMESE BECAUSE...)

You wipe your butt with toilet paper. (OK) And you go to school and it doesn't matter you write your left or right hand. And you can't skip school.

(YOU CAN SKIP SCHOOL IN VIETNAM?)

Some(?) and... Like my dad.

(YOUR DAD SKIPPED SCHOOL?)

That's why he's not in college. It's why he didn't make it to high school. That's why he didn't even make it to middle school. OK. Um...

(DID HE HAVE TO WORK?)

No.

(HE JUST DIDN'T WANTA GO ANYMORE?)

He sold frogs. But he quit now.

(OH, OK)

That's a good thing.

(THAT IS A GOOD THING THAT HE QUIT (SMILE) NOW. OK. SO...)

He quit when he came over here.

(WHAT ELSE WOULD YOU TELL THEM IS GONNA BE DIFFERENT?)

Um, (pause) let me think. (OK) Um, um, oh and you can't hit your kids over here or else you get arrested. Yeah.

(WHERE WOULD YOU TELL THEM THE FUN SPOTS ARE IN LINCOLN?)

Oh. There is no fun spot in Lincoln.

(THERE'S NO FUN SPOTS IN LINCOLN.)

Oh, the mall, there you go.

(THE MALL)

But you can't go to South Pointe, you have to go to Gateway.

(WHY'S THAT?)

Because, Gateway is better and it's inside and South Pointe outside. And Gateway's a

lot better because they have, uh, American Eagle. And they have Nina's Fashions. And it's cheaper.

(WOULD YOU CONSIDER YOUR GRANDMA AMERICAN? AMERICANIZED?)

No.

(WHY NOT?)

Because she didn't pass the test, first of all, and no one can understand my grandma.

(SO BECAUSE SHE STILL SPEAKS VIETNAMESE)

Um hum. (yes) They have different accents.

(DOES SHE WATCH AMERICAN TV?)

No. Well she does if we watch it. But she's asking a lot of questions and it's really annoying. Like "what are they saying, what are they doing..."

(DOES SHE DRESS AMERICAN?)

No, no.

(HOW DOES SHE DRESS?)

She dress the way old people dress.

(DOES SHE DRESS LIKE PEOPLE DRESS IN VIETNAM?)

Yeah. Pretty much.

(HOW IS IT DIFFERENT?)

Because, their shirt is like, it's silk and it's like baggy, it don't stick to them like jeans. And yeah. It's button up shirt.

(SO SHE STILL DRESSES LIKE THEY WOULD BE IN VIETNAM)

Yeah.

(AND YOU DRESS LIKE AMERICAN)

Yeah. But if you're talking about my dad then...

(HOW DOES YOUR DAD DRESS?)

He dress geeky. (GEEKY)

(IS IT MORE AMERICAN GEEKY OR MORE VIETNAMESE GEEKY?)

Both. He will wear his pants like this. (pause) (SMILE) And he wears those..

(LIKE REALLY TIGHT PANTS)

Yes. Gay shoes, and he will wear... He don't match. And then he needs a haircut. His hair is like an afro. It's all (inaud). But (inaud), that's different, my mom dressed cool. She's, uh, choir(?), no she's not, she's a pip(?), no she's not, she's a hottie; there you go.

(JUST HAD TO FIND THE RIGHT WORD)

Yeah.

(WAS THERE ANY RELIGIOUS ASPECTS THAT CAME WITH YOU FROM VIETNAM? DID YOUR GRANDMA CARRY ON RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS?)

Yes. But I don't know what.

(SHE HASN'T PASSED THAT DOWN?)

She just says well our other religion is, our culturally thingy is, um, you're not allowed to date for, till like 18. And they say I can't date till I'm 18. I date anyways. (SMILE) Don't let my parents hear this.

(AND THAT'S A CULTURAL THING?)

Yes.

(DO YOUR COUSINS BACK IN VIETNAM, DO THEY DO THE SAME THING?)

Yes. But my, one of my cousins moved in with me when, when I don't know what age it was, but then he faked his age as 7 so he's like 19 (inaud) but then in the paper he's only 12.

(REALLY?)

Yeah. (HUH) And that's why I get (inaud). (SMILE)

(SO HE WAITED UNTIL HE WAS 18 TO DATE?)

Yes. No.

(NO, BUT HE WAS SUPPOSED TO)

He came over here when we moved here into this horrible place, yeah. Um, and he, the person that lived by us, we knew her forever, but then we hadn't seen her forever until we moved here, and that girl, my cousins met her and then they started dating. And it's their two year anniversary coming up. It's only been one year and nine months. Yeah. But I'm glad that I moved here, here to this place. Cause I met Linda Dewin(?) of course, you know her, and my best buddy, Jose. He's a queer. (inaud).

(WAS THAT GIBBERISH?)

What?)

(WAS THAT LAST PART GIBBERISH? I COULD NOT UNDERSTAND IT)

No.

(WHAT DID YOU SAY?)

I could talk here for... (inaud phrase)

(BUT THEN WE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO, UH, UNDERSTAND ANY OF IT.)

You, you will, it's easy. I just say something right now. Um, (inaud phrase).

(DIDN'T GET IT. DO YOU, DOES SPEAKING ONLY VIETNAMESE AT HOME AFFECT WHO YOU BRING OVER TO YOUR HOUSE, WHAT FRIENDS YOU BRING OVER?)

Um, no. I don't think so. What do you mean?

(UM, WOULD YOU FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE BRINGING ONLY ENGLISH SPEAKERS OVER TO YOUR HOUSE?)

Oh no. (NO) But then when I'm talking on the phone my grandma, I mean like my grandma will tell me to do something and then she'll be talking in Vietnamese and then they'll be like (inaud) and I'm talking to her, and then they're like "what did you say, are you talking to me or someone else". And I'm like "I'm talking to my grandma" and then they started laughing.

(IS IT COOL BEING ABLE TO SPEAK TWO LANGUAGES?)

Five, yes.

(FIVE LANGUAGES, I'M SORRY, FIVE LANGUAGES?)

Yeah. And the other crazy thing I can do is just sing(?) and everyone says no one can do it though, not only my family members.

(HOW DO YOU FEEL THAT OTHER STUDENTS RESPOND TO YOU BEING ABLE TO SPEAK SO MANY LANGUAGES?)

Huh?

(HOW DO YOU FEEL OTHER STUDENTS RESPOND TO YOU?)

What are you talking about?

(FOR BEING ABLE TO SPEAK SO MANY LANGUAGES. POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY?)

Positively.

(WHY, WHY WOULD YOU SAY POSITIVELY?)

I don't know.

(DO OTHER PEOPLE SAY THAT IT'S COOL THAT YOU CAN DO THIS?)

Oh yeah.

(DO THEY LIKE TO LISTEN TO YOU SPEAK ANOTHER... DO THEY ASK YOU ALL THE TIME...)

Yeah.

(...SPEAK ANOTHER LANGUAGE.)

Yeah! Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

(THEY DO?)

Yeah. And I don't do it cause it feels weird. I'll do it, they're like (inaud phrase). Sometimes I'll talk to them and them me, because I don't want other people to hear what I'm saying or know what I'm saying. So I think it's really cool I speak another language because you can talk in another language and no one knows what you're talk- what you're saying to them. So yeah.

(AND OTHER KIDS THINK IT'S COOL THAT YOU CAN SPEAK ANOTHER LANGUAGE)

Yeah. Uh, (inaud) we fight a lot.

(WHY?)

I don't know. It's just the same that we do. It's like (inaud).

(WHEN PEOPLE ASK YOU ABOUT VIETNAM, WHAT DO YOU TELL THEM?)

Um, nothing.

(YOU DON'T TELL THEM ANYTHING ABOUT IT?)

(pause) Why are you staring at me?

(I JUST... SORRY.)

See, that gives me the creeps, people staring at me.

(I APOLOGIZE, I WAS JUST, UM, WAITING FOR A RESPONSE)

You didn't even ask me a question!

(I DID)

What is it?

(IT'S JUST, UH, THE QUESTION ABOUT...)

(inaud) (pause)

(ALRIGHT, I THINK THAT CONCLUDES THE INTERVIEW. THANK YOU LINDA FOR YOUR TIME)

You're welcome.