

Do I have your consent to record this conversation?

FUCK NO. [laughs] Yes you do.

Okay. [laughs] I hope you know I'm putting that in the transcript. How many colleges did you apply to?

Let me actually think about that one. I applied to Dartmouth ED, right. And then I applied to UMich, Northeastern, and two more. So five? Yeah. I only applied to five.

And your top choice was Dartmouth, obviously. [But] you also had UMich and Northeastern, and those are big schools.

Yeah. I was like – I was not thinking about colleges because I'd never actually visited a college in my life, so I was like, 'I'll just bank on whatever.'

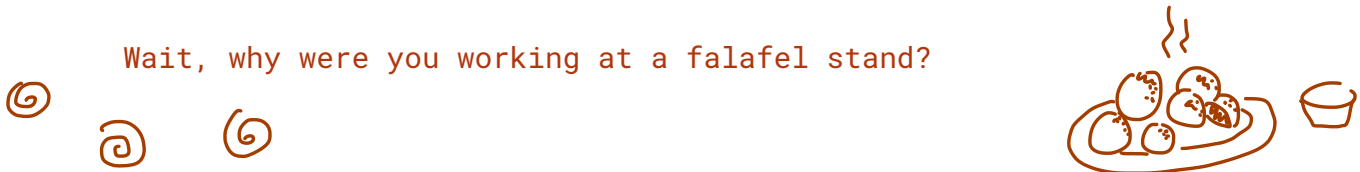
Why'd you choose Dartmouth as your top choice, then?

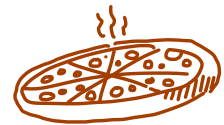
There were a lot of people from my island that went to Dartmouth, and they always said good things about it, so I thought I might as well just apply here. And they had good financial aid, so.

How much did your race or identity factor into your college choices and how did it shape your application?

I didn't think I had much of my identity in there, because it was more about what I liked to do and stuff. But I think living in Hawai'i or being from there did play a part in that. Because I talked mostly about how I enjoyed cooking, but I factored that into how I worked at a farmer's market and stuff. I actually baited the admissions officers by making it seem like I was just some Egyptian kid [laughs] working at a falafel stand, but then I'd put information after saying, 'Oh wait, no I'm actually just like some half Japanese kid who works at a falafel stand in Hawai'i.'

Wait, why were you working at a falafel stand?





So it started in the pandemic, because my dad's coworker used to be a massage therapist. He went to Egypt and [then] he wanted to start a falafel business because he really enjoyed the Egyptian style falafels, so then he just went there. And my dad already had experience with making pizza and stuff, so he posed the idea like, 'Why don't you make the pitas inside your oven and then we can do that there?' So we did that. It used to be a joint business with him and my dad, but then it changed to just our family after the coworker had a kid.

How much do you know about the end of affirmative action and what are your feelings on it? You don't have to take a stance.

I actually don't know anything about it. (Lui was unintentionally one of the funniest interviews I conducted)

[laughs] After you got into college, you were just like, 'no'.

Even before that, I didn't actually think anything about it.

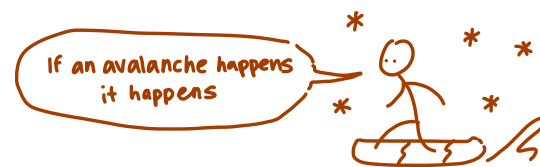
Really?

I don't think race or identity was ever a thought that came into my mind. Just because in Hawai'i it was very... not a problem where I lived. It never really factored into my life or my experiences, I think. To the point where I think about it.

Wait, was it something about the people in Hawai'i?

Well, part of it was that I had friends who are exactly like me. They were also half-Japanese. They also were born in the US. They also moved to Hawai'i at the same exact time. I had people who were like me, so it was never like I was alone. My experience wasn't like, a 'people don't understand me' kind of thing.

So you always felt very secure in your identity.



I think so. I also have like – this is a bad thing to say, but I also have a very fatalistic view, where it's like, 'things just aren't under my control, so I [laughs] might as well not think about it'–

[snorts]

Like, if I get in I get in, and then [if I don't] it's like, 'Oh well.' Then I got in [laughs] so I don't think about it anymore.

Okay. You just submitted your ED application, and you were like, 'I'm not going to think about this.'

Yes.

How many other half Japanese people do you know on campus, then? Because if you grew up with a community, how is it suddenly being where everyone's kind of different?



Well, I know two other people right now. I don't know. I don't really seek them out. Like I'll hang out with them sometimes, but it's not really something that I need in life.

You said you didn't know a lot about affirmative action, so [laughs] I hesitate to ask this next question, but how do you feel about Dartmouth reinstating the standardized testing requirement?

Honestly, I think there's always going to be advantages that people who are well off have. And they'll do anything to have that advantage. So I think – I don't know. It's a very Lui type of answer, but like, there's nothing we can do about it [laughs]. I don't think there's anything we can do about people who are trying their hardest who also have more money than you. Trying to get their kids into better situations. The extracurricular stuff, stuff that isn't standardized tests, can also be changed or manipulated in a way. If you have more access to opportunities, obviously you're going to have better extracurriculars. There's always going to be some kind of thing they'll do, so. I think it doesn't make that much of a difference. I think it just changes the demographic of people who are inherently

good at test taking or stuff like that, but I don't think it is going to have that much of an effect on people who are better off anyways, you know?

Where are you from? You can answer this however you'd like.

I'm from Hawai'i. I'm from Big Island.

What?

Big Island? Like, that's the name of the island. It's the biggest island on the chain, so. It's actually called Hawai'i Island, because the whole kingdom was named after that island. The guy who conquered and unified all the islands was from there, and it was called the kingdom of Hawai'i after that island, and then after the US took over Hawai'i, the name stayed. So it's called the island of Hawai'i, but we basically just call it Big Island.

And did your parents attend college in the US?

No, I'm first gen, so. They did not attend college.

We kind of talked about this, but do you feel your feelings towards your identity – and this doesn't have to be about race – have impacted you in significant ways at Dartmouth?

I think so, yeah. My fall term, I hung around a lot of Asians and stuff, so that was very interesting. It was much more of an identity thing, but this term I've been hanging out with a more diverse group of people. So I think coming here, I felt more Asian, I think?

And now you're backsliding by joining KSA in spring [joke, I'm very excited he's joining Korean Student Association].

I enjoy hanging around the Koreans, though [laughs].

