11-10-2022

Fogelman, Charles

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Transcriber: Sophia Maier

Sophia Maier (SM): Okay, so if you just want to start by telling me a little bit about your family and how they ended up in the Bronx.

Charles Fogelman (CF): Let me walk you through the pictures on this wall. This is my great grandfather [on my father's side]. He never came over. This is my grandfather. This my father. My father came over in 1902. He was born in 1901. He came over too, he was born abroad. It turns out he was born on Christmas Day 1901, but he always told people he was born in 1902. Told them he was born on January 24. He always told people he was born in New York, in fact, he came over as an infant. My grandfather came over after he was born, but before that my father and his mother came. I have passenger manifests for this. So my grandfather came, then my father and my grandmother. This is my father's mother, after whom I am named. My mother's mother came over in 1899. Her father came over in 1893. Castle Garden, do you know the story of Castle Garden?

SM: No.

CF: Castle Garden was an installation in New York Harbor, which, before Ellis Island, was the big immigration transfer point. It burned with all of his records.

SM: Yes. Wonderful.

CF: But she [Points to maternal grandmother's photo] came through Ellis Island. He [Points to maternal grandfather's photo] came through Castle Garden. They met and married [in Brooklyn]. My aunt was born in 1905. My mother was born in 1908. This is my grandmother's mother, my great grandmother. This picture was taken in the *shtetl*. There are children. She died just before the Nazis came to town. Certainly out of spite, because if you take a close look at her picture, you can see she was a formidable woman of whom everybody was afraid.

SM: Oh, yeah, I could definitely see that.

CF: But you know, my grandmother and my mother, and now my daughter, inherited her fierceness. She died before the Nazis came to town. This kid is my generation. These people were all killed by the Nazis. He [Cousin Mandell Gutfarb], at the point of this picture, had already emigrated to America. And was successful and eventually died in Miami. Anyway, my mother's parents and my father's parents came in the beginning of last century. So my parents grew up in New York City. And this is my parents the year they got married.

SM: And did they grow up in the Bronx as well?

CF: I’m going to tell you how they got here.

SM: I’m listening, I’m listening.

CF: If you don't want the story, I won’t tell you.

SM: No, go ahead. Go ahead.

CF: This car actually is a 1932 Pontiac, it was my father's first car. And my father was a general practitioner, neighborhood doc. And his license plate was MD169, which I got for my daughter as a present for her graduation from medical school. So she's driving around with my father's license plate.

SM: Oh, that's awesome.

CF: It's pretty wonderful.

SM: No, that's really cool. Yeah.

CF: Just as an aside, my grandfather died when my mother was 19, and my grandmother had a Sefer Torah commissioned. And this is an invitation in Yiddish to the celebration of the completion of the Sefer Torah, giving it to the synagogue. My mother grew up behind that store [Refers to photo] in Williamsburg, that's on Myrtle Avenue in Williamsburg. That's my mother and my grandmother and my aunt. I figure that picture is in 1914. My mother looks like she's six, maybe seven. And my mother grew up in that store. She and my aunt used to tell me that they would, for the first five years of their lives they grew up, they slept at night on chairs like this. My grandmother put them back to back and put them to sleep on those chairs. They had an outhouse, so they grew up pretty poor. I mean, I have lots of pictures of her from that time and through high school. Then she went to Hunter College. She was an Honors Biology graduate in 1929. And she asked my grandmother, she said to my grandmother, “I'd like to like to apply to medical school like my friend Celia Kobrisky down the street,”. And my grandmother said, “no, be a teacher,” and nobody disobeyed my grandmother, so my mother became a teacher and then a dean in the New York City public school system. She married a physician. My parents got married in 1932. At that point, my father, who was a cum laude graduate of City College, fought antisemitic quotas to get into medical school — and if you want later, I can show you his medical school graduation pictures. There’s actually a Bronx picture that's relevant. You know why they call them interns and residents?

SM: No.

CF: They were called residents because they lived in the hospital. They were called interns, because they were never permitted to leave the hospital.

SM: They were interned. [Laughs]

CF: This is Lincoln Hospital, which still exists in the Bronx, but not that building.

SM: Okay. Do you mind if I take a picture?

CF: No, I have a jpeg I can send you, if you remind me.

SM: Yeah, I'll ask you.

CF: This is when the South Bronx was still kind of semi-rural. This building was torn down, I guess about 50 years ago. The new Lincoln Hospital is on 149th Street, this was on like 140th street. This is my father. He fought antisemitic quotas to go to medical school. He eventually went to a place called Long Island Medical College, which is the ancestor of Downstate. And he got a residency in the Bronx at Lincoln Hospital. He was in the Bronx. At Hunter College, my mother met his sister, my Aunt Eva, and they became friends for the rest of their lives and my Aunt Eva introduced my parents. At this point, my father was living and working in the Bronx. He was still a resident, they weren't making much money. And then the depression hit and they got married anyway, in 1932. And they moved to the Bronx, because that's where he was working. And around that time — I won't give you a whole lot more to it — around that time, which is before they were married, my grandmother died. My father's mother died. And my grandfather, who was not a nice guy, and who was very — impulsive's not exactly the right word — he did what he wanted.

SM: Yeah.

CF: He moved them all up to the Bronx. He decided the Bronx is a better place to be than Williamsburg, which was where they were living. My father grew up the first eight years of his life on the Lower East Side in a building which no longer exists. It's now the Grand Street houses. It's a public housing project. And my grandfather was in the junk business and did well. When my father was in high school, he went to Dewitt Clinton, when it was in Manhattan. Did you know that Dewitt Clinton started in Manhattan?

SM: I did not.

CF: And you probably don't know that there was a point at which Dewitt Clinton was the rough equivalent of a special entry school. But in fact, the old Dewitt Clinton building is still around, Second Avenue I think, it still says Dewitt Clinton. I don't think — I think he graduated when it was still in Manhattan. But my grandfather moved everybody across the river to Williamsburg. They did well, they had a second floor apartment, which was the whole second floor, and they had a maid who came in. Which, for people 20 years off the boat was —

SM: Not doing bad, that's for sure.

CF: But for reasons which I don't know, he decided that it was time to move to the Bronx and moved to the Grand Concourse. He then, on the spur of the moment, remarried. And my father, who was a doctor, had signed the lease. And then my father's younger sister and younger brother, were just also starting out

in life, and their father said, “Well, I’m marrying this woman, I’m leaving, bye.” Leaving my father holding the rest of the bag. And they were in the Bronx at that time.

SM: Where in the Bronx?

CF: On the Concourse.

SM: Then, my uncle Ben [Fogelman] graduated from City College, went to law school, went to work for the Customs Service where he worked his whole life. My aunt Eva, interesting story. My aunt didn't get married till well into her 40s and was fluent in French and probably worked for the OSS during the Second World War and was also secretary to very famous Rabbi David de Sola Pool.

SM: Yes.

CF: She worked for him for a while. Mysterious kind of thing. And eventually, my father decided it was time to try to start a private practice, and he picked a place way the hell and gone over toward the Throgs Neck Bridge, which, of course, did not exist at the time, nor did the Whitestone Bridge, which was probably being built around the time, it was way out there. And it was an Italian neighborhood. And he thought, well, now they would probably want to have a nice Jewish doctor, which turned out not to be right because there was already an Italian guy there. Eventually — that was on Beach Avenue in the far East Bronx — he decided try a different place. And he started a practice on Elder Avenue, which is in the East Bronx. There's an Elder Avenue stop on the Pelham Bay Line.

SM: Yes.

CF: His office, which was also where I spent the first four years of my life, because there was a phenomenon among Jewish professionals, physicians and dentists, when they were starting a private practice, that they would rent a place for an office and then rent a place that was big enough that they could also live. And the living room served either as a waiting room or the family living room. Which is what happened in the formative years of my life. So he got this office at 1104 Elder Avenue and began to do reasonably well. That was in 1945, before I was born. And then in 1950, we bought a semidetached house five blocks away called Ward Avenue. And that's where I grew up. Just off Bruckner Boulevard in the East Bronx. In the meantime, my mother's sister, my aunt Jennie, who had been living in the Bronx, moved back to Brooklyn with her family. My cousin Steven is six months younger than I am. They had a daughter who died in 1945 of [myocarditis, which may have been secondary to] meningitis, Which is why they came from Brooklyn, where my uncle was teaching, and lived in our building for a while. And then my grandmother, after my cousin Helene died, sat my mother and my aunt down — this is my mother's telling the story — she sat us down and she said — I presume you don't speak Yiddish.

SM: I don't speak Yiddish, no.

CF: Okay. She said to my mother and my aunt, “There are not enough children in this family.” And I was born 10 months later. My cousin Steven was born 16 months later. After he was born, they moved to Brooklyn. There's some pictures here and there which I can show you of us, kind of standard baby boom, in baby carriages in the street and the street is lined with baby carriages.
SM: And what year were you born?

CF: ‘46. So we grew up together, even though he was in Brooklyn. We would go back and forth to Brooklyn all the time. So that's how I came to be a Bronx boy.

SM: Yeah. Awesome. And so tell me a little bit about that neighborhood that you grew up in. What it was like, you know, what kind of people live there, what kind of things you'd like to do.

CF: Other than the sun was always shining?

SM: I mean, if that's, you know, that's part of it. It really is.

CF: It is. Absolutely. My cousin Rita said to me the other day, I was talking to her about this, she said, “Well, of course the sun was always shining, because we all played outside. Nobody stayed in the house. Yeah. And if you're going outside to play, which is when you're having the best time, pretty clearly it's not raining.” Not necessarily true, we did play in the rain. She said, “So it makes some sense that people remember it as sunny. It was wonderful. And I concede it was wonderful. I'm not telling you it wasn’t wonderful. There's also a kind of logical way to understand that.” [Opens folder of documents] I didn’t really go through this stuff in great detail. I have better pictures of this [house] with the girls [Refers to granddaughters]. This is the house in which I grew up. This is a mirror image over here. It's semidetached. We lived on the main floor. We rented out the top floor to other people, but this is where we lived. It was a lower middle-class neighborhood. It was, I would guess about 60 to 70% Jewish, about 20% or more Italian, some, not large, Irish and probably 10% other. There were 17 synagogues in my neighborhood. They were probably only four or five, maybe four, which were designated synagogue buildings. All of the others were either storefronts or the basement of the rabbi's house or somebody's apartment. You brought a gnat in with you.

SM: I know. Sorry.

CF: So the neighborhood felt very Jewish, even though it not exclusively Jewish. I mean, I remember there were blue and white buses that came to pick up the Catholic kids to go to parochial school. And we were always vaguely envious of that, they got to ride a bus to go to school. I mean, in retrospect, I think I had to walk three blocks to get my elementary school.

SM: [Laughs] Yeah.

CF: For the first several years, we had to cross Bruckner Boulevard, which at the time was — this is before the Bruckner Expressway was built — Bruckner Boulevard was the most heavily traveled road in

the country. Has two islands in it. And there was something called Triple A Monitors. The Automobile Association trained and designated older kids, fifth and sixth grade kids, as crossing guards.

SM: Oh my goodness.

CF: Now you pay people to do that sort of thing.

SM: Yeah.

CF: They were kids. And it was sort of — [Checks phone] my daughter is having eight boxes delivered here! How the hell am I going to transport eight boxes [Pause recording]

SM: We were on crossing the Bruckner Boulevard.

CF: And there were occasional stories of great bravery of the crossing guards [saving kids], but that eventually resulted in an overpass being built. Because the way it worked was here's Bruckner Boulevard. The school was over here and this was sparsely populated. But on this side of Bruckner Boulevard, we lived and where everyone else lived, so all the kids have to go across. We came home for lunch every day. So kids went back and forth several times a day. Eventually this overpass was built and it was a big thing in the neighborhood. Wonderful. So we can cross over safely. The AAA monitors were, I think, crestfallen because they —

SM: Lost their position of prestige.

SM: Anyway, but on our side of Bruckner Boulevard, it was a mixture of apartment buildings, almost all six story building, some with elevators and some walkups, and semidetached houses like mine. Many more apartment buildings than semidetached house, but if you went to the neighborhood now the structures are still pretty much there. And that's the way the neighborhood was from one end to the other and one end is roughly where the Bronx River Parkway ends now. Does it mean anything to you when I say that?

SM: Yes, because I've driven in that direction. Yes.

CF: And one end is by Hunts Point.

SM: Okay.

CF: So that's roughly where the neighborhood was. And on the far side of Bruckner Boulevard was where the school was, PS 93. There were some [other] buildings during my childhood, and at the end of elementary school they were beginning to build it up a little bit, but there was a huge expansive open field, which for the first five years after the war — by which I mean the Second World War — was occupied by Quonset huts. Do you know what a Quonset hut is?

SM: No.

CF: Q-U-O-N-S-E-T. You can look it up. Quonset huts were developed as temporary wartime buildings. They were often used in the South Pacific and in other places, but they were repurposed after the war for housing for returning GIs. So that whole area back by the school was, for four or five years, full of returning GIs. And then everybody moved out. And it was empty for a long time. My brother used to go butterfly hunting there. And the very next street parallel to Bruckner Boulevard, my street's perpendicular, the very next street was one of the major shopping streets, it was called Watson Avenue. And it was full of first floor stores. There was a candy store on every corner. Did you read the thing I wrote?

SM: Yes. Wait, I don't know. I didn't, no. I'm sorry. I've been very busy. I apologize.

CF: I sent you a thing about my neighborhood and about candy stores. Read the thing!

SM: I didn't know that. I will, no I will! Before I write anything about it, I certainly will, but I did not have the opportunity.

CF: So there was a candy store on every corner. I can tell you every single store for five, four blocks in either direction. But, you know, its what you would expect. There were two bakeries. There were two liquor stores, two or four barber shops. There were two or three grocery stores. There was a Chinese hand laundry. There was a dry cleaner. There was someplace which called itself "The American Laundry." There were at least two shoemakers. Two pharmacies, one of which on the corner was a place, Jack Nathanson's Pharmacy in the summertime my mother would send me out to have him make us ice cream sandwiches. He would take two wafers, and he would put ice cream between the wafers, and I'd bring the ice cream sandwiches home so we would sit on our stoop. That's what we did because we didn't have air conditioning, we sat on the stoop. So we would have our ice cream sandwiches, people would walk by, we would talk, I would play. You know, in the summer evenings would go on. It was quite wonderful. And then the very next street after that was Westchester Avenue, which is a very busy street, and it's the street on which the Pelham Bay line runs, an elevated train there. And that's where the big supermarket was. That's where the hardware stores were, oh, there were two delis on Watson Avenue. Other delis over there, bigger places. So there was lots of local shopping. Most of the stores were owned by people who lived in neighborhoods or had once lived in a neighborhood but came back and still ran the stores. There were always people around. In the summertime, this was threefold. People just sitting outside, sitting on their stoop, their folding chairs. Marla asked me the other day, "How many kids lived on your block growing up," or whatever. And I got halfway up the block when I had already gotten to 70 kids that I knew. These were from younger than I was to my brother's age, but he was 6 1/2 years older and that was a very common thing. I had lots of friends who had siblings one war duration older. There were kids born in '39, '40, and '41, and then there was almost nobody for three years. And then there was all of us. That was a very common thing. And there were always people around. We were always playing in the street. We played football in the street. You know, city games. I'm sure people told you about ringalevio, three feet all off to Germany, and all those games. We played those games all the time. And a spaldeen was central. You know what a spaldeen is?

SM: Yes.

CF: Have you ever seen a real spaldeen?

SM: I don't believe I have, actually. You have one? I've heard much about the various games that can be played with a spaldeen but I don't know if I've ever actually seen one

CF: *That* is a spaldeen. [Refers to photo]

SM: That's awesome. That's funny. Yeah, no, I definitely haven't but that's cool.

CF: I still have one there, if I remember where I put it. See that designation?

SM: Chips.

CF: Chips. That means you lose the ball everybody chips in on a new one. You had to declare chips, otherwise it was your loss. This ball cost 25 cents in 1960. This very ball — this was a ball from my childhood — about which I wrote an article for The Washington Post magazine. You could probably look it up.

SM: I definitely will.

CF: Once I discovered that they were being manufactured, remanufactured, for a short time, I started giving them to people. And I would always — this is what the article says — I would always start by saying to them what object, when held in the palm of your hand, most immediately and certainly brings you back to your childhood? And people wouldn't guess. And then I would pull out a spaldeen. And everybody would immediately grab it. Do what you just did. Bounce it and play with it. And everybody smiled. And you could just see the years disappear from their faces. Even people who were chronically mentally ill and had terrible lives would smile. Wonderful. Anyway. So we played in the street all the time. [Phone rings] Hi Paul. How large an order is it? Is it going to fit in my car? Okay, okay, good. Thank you. Okay, thanks a lot. [Hangs up phone] And we all felt safe. And we knew where the boundaries were. Go into the next neighborhood, maybe weren't quite as safe. You know, as time went on that became less true because, you know, there's always stories of marauding gangs from other neighborhoods. Maybe. As I said, we all came home for lunch during elementary school. We all came home for lunch during junior high school, through ninth grade I came home for lunch. And the completion of our end of the Bronx River Parkway was a big thing. It was a different sort of road before they fixed it up. That also resulted in the building of a little league field, which was interesting because we played in the schoolyard. We didn't play on grass. And it was a neighborhood full of immigrant kids and kids who were first generation, like me. Most of the mothers stayed home. Mine did not. Once I was born she was on maternity leave for a bunch of years. And then she went back to work in the New York City school system when I was maybe six. And we had a maid who came in every day. We also had two

cars. My father made house calls and had two offices. My father was one of the founders of the HIP, the Health Insurance Plan. It's now maybe called Group Health.

SM: Okay. Yeah, I've heard of that.

CF: But it was the first kind of prepaid cooperative thing. It was designed for city employees, for teachers. My father was among the founders. And his particular medical group, which was in Parkchester, was called the Clinton Medical Group. And I didn't find out until after he died, how it got its name. All these guys had gone to Dewitt Clinton together. These were all immigrant Jewish kids from the Lower East Side who all went to school together, they all went to Dewitt Clinton together, and many of them are in that in that graduation picture from medical school. And these were guys he had known his whole life. And they had gone up through medical school together to become a physicians and created this thing.

SM: That's amazing.

CF: Parkchester was three neighborhoods over. And there was a subway stop on Elder Avenue, which was our gateway to the world. And I traveled the subways by myself when I was nine. Does that tell you what my neighborhood was like?

SM: Yes, absolutely. And so you know, getting to that a little bit. Were there ever any sorts of like racial or religious or ethnic tensions between the groups that lived in the neighborhood or even like when you went to school?

CF: Not that I noticed. I mean, we were always afraid, you know, roving Irish gangs.

SM: Yeah.

CF: But nobody actually saw one. There were non-Jewish kids we played with you know. I mean, I kind of occupied a privileged position because my father was one of the neighborhood docs. But no. I would not at all say it was an unbigoted place, because people talked in disgustingly racist terms about black people and Puerto Rican people. You know, they're referred to non-Jewish people as kind of the other. My mother used to say, talked about this, you know, “she had those big strong big white goyish teeth.”

SM: [Laughs] Yeah.

CF: Every time I would say, “What?” And people tended to stick to themselves, but my father had some friends who were not Jewish. My mother had one friend from college who was not Jewish. But, you know, most of the people she taught, and as I said most of the people my father practiced with, were Jewish. And I was beneficiary of that in the following way. And I was beneficiary of the Depression in this way. Turn that off for a second. *pause in recording* It came time for people taking the test for Science, Stuyvesant High School, Hunter High School. And then they came around and announced who was admitted. I was an SP student, you know SP?

SM: Yes.

CF: So I skipped fourth and eighth grade.

SM: Okay.

CF: So I'm now in ninth grade. I'm not yet bar mitzvah. I'm 12 years old in 9th grade.

SM: Wow.

CF: And they announced people in our SP class who were admitted the High School of Science, five of us. They made us stand up. Okay, that was great, that didn't feel like being terribly singled out. But I get to Science. And first of all, a much larger percentage of my teachers than before were men. And an overwhelming number of them had doctor in front of their name. So these are --- I am probably exaggerating, but I think a third of the teachers at Science when I was there had PhDs. Because these were people who couldn't --- who went to school and to graduate school in the 1930s and couldn't get jobs. But they could get jobs in the New York City Public School system. And then they get into the New York City Public School system and whom do they want to teach? They want to teach the kids who go to Science, right? So I walk into the school, where I have all of these, you know, brilliant, accomplished people. And so I was the beneficiary of that, and I think of that as an extension of whatever it was that went before. And I was very lucky. I mean, I took the subway for over an hour every day, to and from Science, from the East Bronx to the West Bronx. It was one of the most important experiences of my life. As one of my classmates said at our 40th reuinion, he got up and he said, "You know, think of it this way. If we hadn't all gone to Science we would have all gotten beaten up every day."

SM: Yeah.

CF: It's probably true. If I had gone to Monroe, which was my neighborhood school. So the subway was my gateway to the world. And it's how I got to high school. Also when I got to college. I went to college in the Bronx. I went to NYU when it was in the Bronx, which you probably didn't know.

SM: I did know that before we met but only through doing these interviews. So I'm always learning things. Well, then, I guess in relation to school, did you — I mean, I assume, given what you had said that the answer would be yes. But did you feel like you got a good education out of the Bronx public school system?

CF: Absolutely. I try to operate in my life from a stance of gratitude. I am very lucky. I am very lucky to be an American. I'm very lucky to be a New Yorker. I mean, as I said, I spent — you know, I bounced around the city as a kid, you know, I would just get on the train, get off and say, "Oh, what's here?" It was wonderful. I'm not saying there were not untoward incidents sometimes but, fundamentally. And, you know, I wandered into museums, I'd sit there and watch people. But there are many wonderful gifts

New York gave to her children when I was one of them. One was the New York Public Library. I still have my library card from then. When we moved back, I went into the local public library.

SM: Did you try to use your library card?

CF: I said I would like to renew my library card, and they said, Sure, can you show me your old one? And then I produced one, which was on cardboard and which had been typed out, and the woman behind the counter's jaw dropped. [Laughs]

SM: Yeah. Oh my god, wow.

CF: I mean I could show it to you if you want. I still have my first driver's license from 1962. The other great gift besides New York City itself, was the public education. I got a stunning public education. I mean, I got a great education in elementary school, a good education in junior high school. And, you know, when I went to the Bronx High School of Science, it was arguably the best public high school in the county. It may well still be, totally among the best if it's not still the best. And I had a classmate who is now an emeritus professor of astrophysics at Berkeley. And when we — for our 40th reunion, we did a listserv — and after the 40th reunion, he wrote, he said, "You know, I didn't realize this until our reunion. But I have spent my whole life — I went to fine schools, I was a faculty member at fine institutions, and I was member of distinguished professional organizations. It's only now, having spent — at this point it was late Saturday night of the reunion — time at the reunion with everybody sitting around a table I realized two things. One is, what a pleasure it is to be at a table where you don't have to worry if everybody's keeping up. And I realize that I've spent the last 40 or 50 years looking for [and not finding] an environment like that which I last had when I was at the High School of Science." And he's right. I mean, we were just so damned lucky that the place existed. It was just — I mean, we just had a mini reunion two days ago, we had lunch. 24 members of my class showed up. Routinely 200 members of my class come to reunions. And it's 60 years since we graduated from high school. Out of a class of 896. Well, now a quarter are dead. So it's not just to me that it meant something.

SM: Yeah, absolutely.

CF: And although I went to NYU, I went on a scholarship, and it was a good enough experience. I didn't take full advantage. I was 15 when I graduated from high school, what the hell did I know, but that's in the past. I want to share a funny story though, which I often retell at Science gatherings. I had a friend who was one of the real movers in our class — she's gone now, throat cancer because we all smoked when we were in high school — we were sitting around, four or five of us, and she was starting to tell this story about something that happened. Out of my class of 896 kids, 480 went to City College.

SM: Yeah.

CF: And she was telling a story about something that happened at City College, and I was looking at her blankly, and she said, "Don't you remember that Charlie?" I said, "No. Diane, I didn't go to City College." And she looked at me and said, "Yes, you did." I should have, I should have stayed with my

friends. But the point is, they all continued to get a spectacular public education at the City College of New York.

SM: Yeah. Obviously a lot of people that I've spoken to are City College or Hunter or NYU grads, because Hunter and NYU, were in the Bronx, and City College was the spot to be.
CF: Actually NYU was a private college. City and Hunter were free.

SM: Yeah. Okay, awesome. So I think the last thing, in regards to this kind of part of the conversation before we shift gears a little bit, you know, growing up as a man during this period, did you feel like the your expectations —

CF: I was a boy, thank you.

SM: [Laughs] a boy during this period? Yeah, right, 15 years old. Did you feel like the expectations for you were different than like your female peers or anything like that? I mean, I know you had talked about how your grandmother had told your mother to become a teacher.

CF: Oh no. And I often talk to my Science classmates about this. They don't see it quite the way I did, but they see it more the way I did than not. When I got to college, especially when I got to graduate school in middle late 60s and the feminism stuff was really exploding, I was completely baffled. I mean, it never occurred to me that any of the girls I knew, any of the girls I went to the High School of Science with, couldn't do anything they damn well pleased. It absolutely never occurred to me. And I came from a family in which all the women worked, in which all the women had gone to college with one exception. So it just — I mean, I understood that men and women are different and men have privileges in a way that we understand now. I got all that. But the notion that — we used to compete based on, by we I mean the boys, we wanted to go out with the pretty girls. But really, we wanted to go out with the smart girls, which at Science was easy because they were all smart. Yeah, but why wouldn't you want to go out with the smarter girls. It never, ever occurred to me that any of these people I knew were in any way constrained in life. It took me years to begin to accept that that was the case. And the Bronx High School of Science taught me that there are all of these pretty smart, really accomplished girls. And by the way, all the women on the faculty were pretty damn smart too, thank you very much. And so, no, you know, I mean, I grew up with my mother's story about not becoming a physician, but I'll tell you a nice story about that. My daughter is named after my mother. She went to Barnard and she went out to work in the world for a year. She went to work in Newsweek doing something, when Newsweek are still publishing.

SM: Yeah.

CF: She really didn't like it. She was thinking about it, called me up one day. And she said, "What do you think if I told you I wanted to be a nurse." I'm thinking to myself, a nurse? I say, "Why, sweetheart?" "I'm kind of bored and I like taking care of people. You know, I have all these friends who have gone to medical school and find it really interesting." I said, "So they're going to medical school and you want to be a nurse?" "Well, I am still thinking about it." She talked to the mother of a friend of

hers who was Chief of Pediatric Surgery at the University of Denver, who, as Devorah later related this conversation, “Who said to me, ‘What the hell are you talking about?’ She said, ‘I know you. You don't like to take orders from anybody. You can't possibly be a nurse. What, you're afraid you can't get into medical school? You are a magna cum laude graduate of an Ivy League university. You think you couldn't manage medical school? What is the matter with you? If you want to do that, go to medical school.’ Then she calls me back the next week, says, “So I talked to Jessica's mom, and she thinks I should go to medical school. So I think I'm gonna try.” In my head, I'm thinking, she's the one of my kids whom I always thought would be a doctor. But I never said that [out loud].

SM: Of course.

CF: I wouldn’t want to push. But in order to do that, she had to do two years of postbacc[alaureate] work, you take lots of science courses and stuff. And she did her postbacc work at Hunter College. So here she is going to school where my mother went to school and finishing my mother's dream, and my mother's [Hebrew] name was Devorah, and she has my mother's name. She goes full circle.

SM: That's wonderful.

CF: And a related story to that is, I took piano lessons several neighborhoods over in the East Bronx, past the zoo. On Sundays, usually my mother would drive me, this was before I was old enough to go on a bicycle, which was 10 maybe nine, and on very rare occasions my father would take me. This particular day, which I know was 1954, because I know the rest of the story is as follows. My father’s taking me. I don’t know why it's happening, but it's cool. I never saw my father. He died when I was 13, he was always making house calls. I barely saw my father. [Phone rings] [Pause in recording]

CF: My granddaughter is sick. One of them is always sick.

SM: Yeah. Always, kids.

CF: I’m gonna try to leave some time to show you some photographs. This particular Sunday, with my father coming back from my piano lesson, takes a different route back from the piano lesson. Okay, an adventure with my father. He goes two or three blocks up a hill, pulls up to the top of the hill, there's a chain link fence. Pulls up to the chain link fence and stops and says, “Get out of the car.”

SM: Okay, all right.

CF: I get out of the car, go over to the chain link fence and it’s a construction site. And he says, “You see that? You see that hole in the ground?” And he looks at me — remember what I told you previously about my father — he looks at me and he says, “Because of that hole in the ground, they will never be able to prevent a Jewish boy from going to medical school again.” And that hole in the ground became Albert Einstein Medical College, where Devorah went to medical school.

SM: Oh my goodness.

CF: She put both of those stories in her medical school application.

SM: Yeah. Right. I'd be like, you got it, we want you, and a little publicity stuff. Oh, yeah. Oh, my goodness. That's awesome.

CF: So I got a great education. Yeah, great.

SM: So my last question before we talk about why you decided to leave the Bronx is about Jewish life. Tell me a little bit about Jewish life. Was your — did you keep kosher? Speak Yiddish, anything like that?

CF: In the neighborhood, it was in the air that you breathed. A third of the stores closed on Shabbos. Not all of them, not even all the Jewish ones. But as I said, there were all of these *shuls*. And we belonged, as a family we belonged, to the big one in the neighborhood because that's what you did. But my father actually preferred to go to the one two doors down from his office in the basement of a friend. We kept kosher until I was seven when my grandmother died. And then my mother never did after that. I was close to my grandmother who lived with us about half the time and she spoke Yiddish and English to me. But mostly, as in most houses, Yiddish was spoken so the children wouldn't understand. I however decoded it. And my Yiddish was adequate. My mother and my father and my aunts and uncles all spoke Yiddish all the time. And I always knew that when I grew up, I would keep a kosher home and keep Shabbos. We didn't particularly. My father, who was a physician, said I don't have to, I can drive I can do whatever I want. Which was enormously embarrassing to me at the holidays, to drive to one of my cousin's houses. I would hide in the car. And he was right, he did have an exception because he was a physician, but that was to do physician work, not to drive to your relatives.

SM: Not to drive to your cousins. [Laughs]

CF: But, okay. That's why I ended up marrying somebody who's Jewish. Which my not terribly short string of non-Jewish girlfriends often did not believe. Anyway, that's not part of the story you want to hear. There was a particular phenomenon when I was a kid, which does not exist anymore. It's basically been supplanted by day schools and that sort of thing. There were a couple of different kinds of Hebrew schools. One of them which a number of us were subjected to was not as little as a half hour a day. No no. It was two hours a day. And if you also had to practice the piano, which I did, it didn't leave you a whole lot of time for playing. So it was sort of easy to sort of find yourself skipping your two hours every now and then, until a rabbi would call your parents and say, "You know…" So, anyway, for several years, I had a fairly intense supplementary Jewish education which, like most of us, stopped when I became bar mitzvah. My bar mitzvah was characteristic of the time. My birthday's in the summertime. And the way it worked in the non air conditioned Bronx, when people would have run away to the mountains in the summer, was that the last Shabbos of the school year everybody whose birthday was in the first half of the summer would have their bar mitzvah. And on Labor Day weekend, everybody whose birthday was in the second half of the summer would have their bar mitzvah. So on June 20, 1959 five of us were bar mitzvah in our shul, which had no air conditioning, on the 20th of June

which lasted then until two o'clock in the afternoon. But we all did one thing or another [in the service]. So it was very Jewish in my neighborhood. That's the short answer.

SM: Awesome, so yeah, so then when did you end up deciding to leave the Bronx and what were your motivations at the time?

CF: When is easy. When I went to Ann Arbor to go to graduate school. I was 21. I wasn't quite 21 yet. Why was because at some level, I knew I had to get out. Living with my mother and my brother till my brother didn't live with us — there's a long story about my brother which I will not bore you with. If you want to read about it, my wife wrote an article about it in the Washington Post magazine 10 years ago, called "Back When I Was Normal." Look up Fogelman in the Washington Post archives, you get me and her. You'll get those two stories that she wrote in The Washington Post but you'll also get this lead article in the magazine about my brother. But I was a happy kid, and I was not a very well controlled kid. I was captain of the cheerleaders at NYU, which I took as license to be outrageous in other ways. You know, I'm not a regular guy. I push boundaries. I try things and I was hungry for experience. The year I graduated from college — it used to be the NIT was a serious basketball tournament. It wasn't just sort of a secondary thing. And it used to be that the NCAA — which then only had 16 teams — and the NIT competed for the best teams because they would send out bids. And teams would decide which one am I going to. So the NIT was once a very serious tournament. In my senior year — and it was played at Madison Square Garden, which was our home court — our guys decided they didn't want to go to the NCAA's that year, they wanted to do the NIT. So we stayed home. That year was a week long tournament. We played Brigham Young, they beat us. But they brought along with them, these six young women the likes of which I had never seen in my life. They were all 4000 feet tall and either blonde or redhead. And I thought, well. So I befriended them during the course of that [tournament] week, and showed them around town and you know, tried to keep them around. And became actually pretty good friends. One of them, their captain, is still a friend of mine to this day. And that summer, I took a trip around the country on the bus. Trailways had a promotion, which was you can go any place in the country for $99 for a period of 99 days, as long as you didn't pass through your origin or the same place in the same direction twice. So I went all over the country, something I'd always wanted to do. Visited my Mormon friends, it was just wonderful. And once I did that, I thought, I'm not staying, I got to do other stuff. And that's how indirectly I ended up in Ann Arbor. So that's how, when and why.

SM: Yeah, so I guess to kind of wrap it up on that before, yeah, I'd love to look at some more pictures and things. When you look back on your experiences in the Bronx, and you know, leaving and then returning — you're the only person that I've spoken to that ended up moving back, even if it is Riverdale, it still counts.

CF: You bet it does.

SM: Yes, so kind of what emotions and sentiments and memories do you associate with it? And did that draw you back here, besides your family you know being here.

CF: I'm very happy to be home. I never belonged anyplace else. The five years I spent in Ann Arbor were wonderful. And I had a good and interesting and in some ways distinguished career in Washington. Some of which I can't tell you about, sorry. And it was a perfectly lovely place to be. And I'm a deeply patriotic guy, so I love being around that stuff. And I volunteered at the Smithsonian. It was very nice. But not a day went by that I didn't feel like I am such a fucking fish out of water. And that's one reason: Nobody curses.

SM: [Laughs] Yeah.

CF: I mean, it's maddening. I curse and people look at me. Learn to talk. This is how we talked in the East Bronx, this is how I talk. And nobody can take a joke. And everything is about power and what your job is. The people, it's just, you know. Early on, I was doing some consulting for the federal government, and I had to do some paperwork. And this guy said to me, "You have to show this paperwork and you have to take it up to the" — he named somebody in personnel. And I said, "Oh, you mean the Italian girl at the end of the third floor?" And the blood drained from his face. You know, like, I was making some rousingly bigoted statement, and I'm thinking, this is information. This is the way I talk. Yeah, you know, she's an Italian girl — okay, she's a woman, alright — but he thought I was ethnic stereotyping or something. And I'm just thinking, I just want to make sure I have the right person. But that's me, that's the way I grew up, that's how I'm oriented. I think of somebody's ethnicity as information. Yeah. You know, I go over to Little Italy to get fish. I mean, I go over to Belmont Avenue.

SM: Oh yeah, I live on Arthur.

CF: I go into this particular fishmonger I use. Friends of mine, a while back, gave him, you know, a knife and a cutting board and a cleaver so that everything was kosher. So I get fish there. And there's a place which sells kosher pasta, imported from Italy, fresh packed in vacuum nitrogen bags. You talk to people in Washington about understanding people's ethnicity and it's like you're violating something. So, I was glad to be in public service. I worked in ways that mattered, I think. And I was glad to have done that. But I never felt like I belonged. The moment we came back I exhaled. I thought, I know this place. This place feels like familiar. I know how to talk to people here. And Marla is always saying to me, "You know, I had another New York moment today." [Points to picture] That's me and my cousin Steven. It is the place. It is the place that made me. I am profoundly rooted in this place. I can still find my way around the Bronx with my eyes closed. I wouldn't ---

SM: I was gonna say, I wouldn't recommend it but ---

CF: Does that answer your question?

SM: Absolutely. Perfect. Thank you so much. Well, do you have anything you want to add before I end the recording?

CF: As you as you well know, I could go for hours, so unless there's a specific thing that you want to know.

SM: No, that’s perfect.

CF: I’ll show you a couple of things, and then I'll take you back to where you’re going.