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ENGLISH



ENGLISH

in **EVERYDAY LIFE**

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—from real-life speakers

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- Recognize slang and idiomatic expressions

Stephen E. Brown and Ceil Lucas



ENGLISH

in EVERYDAY LIFE

Stephen E. Brown and Ceil Lucas



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INTRODUCTION

English in Everyday Life consists of eighty-four interview segments with everyday people, not actors, speaking English in the United States. The interviews are organized into ten chapters. Each chapter focuses on a different aspect of everyday life, from the family and the home to free time, sports, food, and the use of language. The goal in using an interview format was to elicit natural speech and to allow the speakers to express themselves as freely and naturally as possible. In these interviews, you will hear the vocabulary and sentence structures that real speakers use to talk about their everyday lives.

Because we wanted to provide learners of English with natural models of spoken English in the United States, those being interviewed did not memorize or rehearse their remarks. You will meet people of all ages and nationalities, from all walks of life: a policeman, a nurse, accountants, a paramedic, students, teachers, a librarian, a mechanic, a government worker, an IT professional, a travel agent, a sign language interpreter, musicians, and others.

Each chapter includes the complete transcript of each interview segment as well as definitions of vocabulary words, idioms, and constructions whose meanings or cultural references may not be immediately obvious to a nonnative English speaker. You will find questions and exercises at the end of each chapter that are relevant to both the text of the interview and your own personal

experiences. We recommend that you consult a comprehensive American English dictionary in conjunction with the use of the DVD and workbook.

ABOUT THE TRANSCRIPTS

What you will hear on the DVD and see in the transcripts are examples of actual speech. Our goal is to provide examples of English as it is spoken by a wide range of people in the United States today. You will hear speakers from many states—Maryland, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Arkansas, Illinois, Maine, Minnesota, and Michigan—as well as speakers from Canada, India, Guyana, England, New Zealand, Cameroon, Egypt, and Spain. Also, you will hear one speaker whose speech has many features of what is known as African-American Vernacular English (AAVE). So you will hear English spoken with many different accents. You will also see a deaf user of American Sign Language (ASL) with her interpreter.

You will notice that while all of the speakers are fluent, they sometimes use what some consider nonstandard or even ungrammatical forms of English. And you will see that not only do the nonnative speakers use these forms but native speakers of American English frequently use them as well. Some of these speakers are very fluent users of varieties of English used in other countries, such as India, varieties that have been referred to as “World Englishes” and that differ from American or British English in very systematic and nonrandom ways.

You will notice that when people speak, it is not at all like a newscast being read by an anchorperson on the evening news or like the written language that you might see in textbooks. You will see that people don’t always speak in complete sentences—they hesitate; they interrupt themselves; they correct themselves; they start one sentence, give it up, and go on with another one. While

the speakers clearly knew that they were being filmed, what you see and hear is, for the most part, very natural speech. Our goal was to reflect this naturalness in the transcripts. Interjections and discourse markers such as *um*, *uh*, or *er* appear throughout the interviews and are transcribed exactly as they are spoken. Sometimes people talk at the same time, which is indicated in the transcripts by brackets around the simultaneous speech.

The transcripts also reflect the use of many customary and idiomatic constructions found in American English: *take it up a notch*, *so-and-so*, *such and such*, *like*, *y'know*, *c'mon*, *gonna*, *wanna*, and many others. Notes explaining such constructions appear at the end of each chapter.

It is our hope that you will find these materials innovative and useful for learning English as it is used in America today.

HOW TO USE THESE MATERIALS IN THE CLASSROOM

The DVD and workbook of *English in Everyday Life* have been designed for use in any classroom, laboratory, or home setting. These materials, which are suitable for high school classes, university courses, and adult education programs, can be used as the second semester of an elementary course.

The way that language is used by speakers in these materials can serve as the basis both for in-class discussions and for homework assignments.

The DVD and the workbook provide eighty-four segments, which should be used as follows:

1. Select the segment to be used and simply *listen* to it, *before* reading the transcript of the segment. The student can do this on his or her own or as part of a class activity.

2. After listening to the segment, *read* and *discuss* the transcript carefully, making sure that all of the vocabulary words and structures are understood.
3. Then, *listen* to the segment again, this time using the transcript. Students may want to listen to the segment several times at this point.
4. In the classroom, answer and discuss the questions about both the segment and the students' experiences. And, of course, these questions and exercises can be assigned for homework.

Outlining a Course by DVD Segment

The instructor can decide how many segments to cover per week. Eighty-four DVD segments allow you to use the DVD and the workbook for an entire academic year. And the flexibility of the materials allows you to pick and choose the order in which to present the material. Each segment on the DVD is numbered on the menu and in the text so that you can pick exactly which one you want to focus on.

Sample Lesson Plan: One Week

First Day: Listen to the selected segments perhaps two or three times in class (do not read the transcript at this point).

Second Day: Read the transcripts out loud, making sure that the students understand all of the grammatical constructions, vocabulary words, and cultural references.

Third Day: Listen to the segments again, first without the transcript and then with the transcript.

Fourth Day: Discuss the transcript and the DVD segment and answer the questions pertaining to the segment. Assign as homework the questions and exercises that pertain to the students.

Fifth Day: Go over the questions and exercises pertaining to the students. Ask them to read their answers aloud, and have the class ask additional questions.

The DVD segments and their transcripts can very easily be supplemented with materials that relate to the topic of the segment. For example, the segments on Food can be supplemented with menus or recipes. The important thing is to be creative and to get the students involved.

Additional Activities

1. Ask the students to summarize in writing and also aloud what is said in a given segment.
2. Ask the students to write the question that leads to the speaker's response. Also, ask them to write additional questions to be asked.
3. Have the students interview one another on the topic of the segment in front of the class:
 - Help the students write their interview questions.
 - If possible, record these interviews on audiotape or miniDV. Listen to or view the interviews and discuss them as a group.
 - Have the students transcribe these interviews, complete with hesitations, self-corrections, and so forth. Make copies of the transcript for the other students. The teacher may review the transcript but should make corrections only to errors in transcription—in other words, if the speaker uses a nonstandard form and the student transcribes it accurately, you should not note it as an error. This is a good opportunity to point out the differences between spoken language and written language.

- Have the students write questions about their transcripts, similar to the ones in the text.
- Have the students record an interview with a native or fluent speaker, based on one of the DVD topics, and follow the same procedures just listed. Help the students prepare their questions, review the transcripts, and share them with the class. Also, ask the students to write questions to accompany their transcripts.

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LIFE IN AMERICA



In this chapter, interviewees talk about various aspects of life in the United States and how life in the United States may differ from life in their countries of origin.

1. DRIVING ACROSS AMERICA

MAN: I have driven throughout most of the country. Um, so, there's, you know, the speed limits, well, it's fifty-five, uh, there're . . . Do you know how the ro—, the roads—by the way, this is fascinating—do you know how the road

systems are laid out in the, in the U.S.? Do you know that? They're laid out, uh, if you, if you know locally where we are here, um, 95 is the main route. Ninety-five goes from the northern tip of Maine down to the southern tip of Florida, which is the entire **Eastern Seaboard**. If-if the, if the country were a rectangle, which it pretty much is, the, all **interstates** ending in odd numbers—95, 85, 75, 65, 55, going all the way up to I-5—I-5 runs the northern tip of Washington to the southern tip of [California].

WOMAN:

[San Diego.]

MAN: All-all the way down the West Coast, so you have the, you know, 95 'n 5 to 95 and going West Coast, you have, uh, 10, which runs through Texas and all the way across there to the northern tip, which is 100, I think, and that runs through North Dakota, so, uh, a college friend of mine, on our first venture out, decided we were, we live on, sorta in the middle, which happens to be 70, it's not quite 50 but a little bit farther north and 70 runs all the way across from, you know, Maryland all the way to California, um, and, uh, we decided we were going to do 70 on 70—miles per hour, that is—80 on 80, 90 on 90, and 100 on 100! And we did it. So we-we were cruisin' across country in that manner and I've been th—, I c—, I would say I've been through at least half of the states. And if you drive through Kansas, the first five miles is pretty much exactly the same as the next five hundred-plus miles that you have got to travel to get across it. It's a very long state.

2. WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT AMERICA?

WOMAN: It was the most interesting thing to me, the **change of the seasons**. I think that is just absolutely . . .

'**cause** I guess as I grew up with just one season. In fact, I shouldn't say one—two seasons: we have the wet season and the rainy season. But it's summer all year-round. And I just love especially fall. I'm a fall person. I just love, I love to see the colors, the trees when they, oh, turn those beautiful colors—that's really, that's what I like about . . . And what I like, too, television, ooh, I'm a television nut. I look at television all the time. And in Guyana, we don't see the kind of programs that you have here, so . . .

INTERVIEWER: So what do you watch?

WOMAN: I like crime stories and, like "Law and Order" and, in fact, I watch all "Criminal Intent," all of those "Law and Orders."

INTERVIEWER: And what else?

WOMAN: I like game shows, too. I love "Jeopardy"; I love "Jeopardy." Uh, yeah, game shows and "Law and Order," those are my, crime stories, I like things like that.

Well, as I mentioned, the seasons. We don't have spring, summer, autumn, winter. We have summer all year-round.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

WOMAN: Um, another thing, the traffic here. You just have to contend here with cars and maybe couple bicycles. But in Guyana, you've got to contend with not only the cars, pedestrians, bicyclists, we—most people ride a bicycle in Guyana, they—they don't drive, they ride a bicycle. And there's also something we call a donkey cart, which is something like a **flat-bed truck**, but instead of bein' pulled by a-a car like in front, it's pulled by a donkey. And they're also, they also have the right of way, too, on the streets, too. So that's-that's something; every time I go home, I keep wondering, "How did I ever drive in Guyana

before?” because I know for sure I can’t drive there now, so . . .

3. AN ISLAND IN MAINE

WOMAN: Taiwanese, both parents are from Taiwan, came to the States for graduate school, uh, and then decided to stay both for political reasons and for career reasons. Um, uh, my parents came through, their Ellis Island was Kansas, uh, Univer[sity of Kansas] at Lawrence.

INTERVIEWER: [Kansas.]

WOMAN: Middle of, middle of the country, that was, I guess they were pulling a lot of Taiwanese students at that time so they came through there for their graduate school and then a job opportunity opened in Maine so that’s-that’s how the family ended up being the only Taiwanese family within a hundred-mile radius in Maine.

INTERVIEWER: When did your parents come to the U.S.?

WOMAN: Um, in the ’60s, the early ’60s.

INTERVIEWER: So how was life—have they talked about how life was different there versus life here in the U.S.—have they told you much about that or commented on that or . . . ?

WOMAN: I think it wasn’t so much how life, there—there were some aspects of life that were different in the U.S. versus in Taiwan, but I think a lot of the quality of life that we had or a lot of the specifics of, uh, our lifestyle had to do with living on an island in Maine as opposed to so much being in the U.S. I don’t, I wouldn’t, I’m old enough now that I think I didn’t have a typical **upbring-**
ing, I didn’t live in a typical American town. It was just

so much smaller but at the same time it was inundated every summer by millions of tourists from all over the world, so we-we lived in a sort of interesting balance between being a super-super isolated small town, middle of nowhere, no traffic lights on the entire island existence, and then having this center of, uh, the **spotlight** world destination for vacationers, um, which is an interesting mix. It was, the island is sort of split into two. I lived on what they called the quiet side of the island, the western side, so that wasn't developed as a tourist destination until the last decade. Um, the eastern side is where Bar Harbor is, all these sort of big tourist areas so that was, that's always been a big tourist destination since, you know, from the last century in the 1800s. Um, so we could always in some sense retreat back to our quiet side of the island, and it-it wasn't crazy the whole summer, thanks to that. But y-you could still feel a palpable difference between the way that life was in the summer and the way that it was in the rest of the year.

INTERVIEWER: Did you enjoy living on the quieter side?

WOMAN: I did. I'm glad I lived on the quiet side. It's a little bit crazy with all the tourists.

4. WEST VS. EAST

[Note: in this segment, you hear the voice of the interviewer asking a question and then the voice of the sign language interpreter, seated on the right, who is interpreting for the deaf woman, on the left, who is using **American Sign Language (ASL)**.]

INTERVIEWER: So, you've lived—I mean, you've really lived in the West—in California and in Oregon. So how is living in the East different from living in the West?

WOMAN: Right, yes, that's a good question. The West—one thing about the West that's—that's really nice is the-the outdoors. It's, uh, it's nice to be with people who enjoy going out and doing things in nature like I do. But in the East, uh, there's so much cultural diversity, I'm able to meet so many different kinds of people. There's a lot of history here, museums, things of that nature that are really nice. And if I miss the West, I can always just fly over there and spend some time there again.

5. CANADA VS. THE U.S.

WOMAN: Well, there's work. You know, to be totally honest, that's **one of the reason** I stayed here. . . .

INTERVIEWER: Oh really?

WOMAN: Is, uh, the market—especially like in the Baltimore-Washington, and the entire like **Northeast corridor**—there's just so much work for musicians, for artists, and especially this area here because there are so many like big or middle-sized cities that all want an orchestra, and that they all want arts happening in their town, so, I mean, it's, basically, one of the-the **running gag** we have among **musician** is like, you really have to **suck on your instrument** to not find work in the Washington-Baltimore area. Really, it's like, you know. And so basically, that's, uh, the main difference for me—it's that I can, like, thrive here and make a living playing the violin, which is something I would have had a very, very, very difficult time doing in Montreal, especially since I left when I was so young and never built up . . .

INTERVIEWER: Uh-hmm.

WOMAN: . . . contacts and relationships up there.

MAN: Yeah, it-it makes me think of a funny story. Um, just the American perception of artists and musicians, um. If you go to Europe or even Canada, uh, you know, and-and you tell somebody—random person that you meet on the street—“Oh, I’m a musician,” they say, “Oh, that’s great!” And in-in the United States oftentimes, you meet somebody on the street and you tell them that you’re a musician and they say, “Oh, well, what’s your **day job**?”

A funny story: I was playing a quintet—a brass quintet job, uh, this is back when I lived in Oregon—we were playing at a fund-raiser for the, uh, the Oregon Republican Party and we were playing, you know, patriotic songs and stuff like that, and we had a short break, um, in between our-our performance, and a woman who was sitting near the front, uh, took me aside and said, “Oh, that-that man over there playing the tuba, what-what’s his name?” I said, “Well, his name’s Richard Frazier.” And she says, “Well, what-what does he do?” I said, “Uh, he plays the tuba.” And she said, “Oh, well, can-can you make a living playing the tuba?” And I said, “No, ma’am. I can only make a living playing the French horn.” But that’s-that’s the perception.

WOMAN: Yeah, I had a similar story happening to me actually not far from here, in Hagerstown. We were playing, I was playing Maryland Symphony one week and there was a donor reception after the concert and, you know, I’m chatting there with patrons and like, I guess, guild members and, you know, other people that were attending the reception and one lady comes up to me and she’s like, “You know, you look so good on stage and, like, you look like you’re very, very good violinist and wh-where did you go to school, how did you get so good?” And, you know, I tell her, well, you know, my entire, like, musical education: went to Peabody, took, you know, private instruction, did bachelor, master’s degree with a great

violin teacher, practiced ten hours a day for ten years, and-and, you know, got a bachelor's and a master's in music, and she's like, "Wow, that's great. So what do you do?" I'm like, "Well, that's what I do. I got my education in music and I play the violin." She's like, "You don't do **maths**, you didn't do science?" Like, "No." It's like, "But you can't do that! What-what-what do you mean, you-you don't do maths? You have to take maths. What's your job?" And she just would not understand that my education, my job was music and that, you know, I didn't do maths and I could still earn a living without having done maths and science, which was, at the time, very fascinating that somebody would not accept the answer that, "I'm a musician." Which is something that would never have happened to me in Montreal.

6. LIVING IN WASHINGTON

MAN: Uh, well, this is a, is a very urban environment. Um, I'm finding things from my own perspective because the United States is not urban—it's actually rural, most of it—but my, from my own perspective, this is a very much more built-up area and, um, and in that regard it's-it's different to what my-my childhood was.

INTERVIEWER: What other places have you visited in the United States or lived in the United States?

MAN: Uh, very little. It's all, it's all been here, really, in Washington.

INTERVIEWER: Oh yeah?

MAN: Yeah, it's all, it's all been, uh, my interest is-is politics and what shapes the course of countries and why people do what they do and why civilizations behave

the way that they do. So this is, if you were interested in looking at that, this has got to be an interesting place in that, in that way.

7. COMING FROM SPAIN

WOMAN: Well, I think that, uh, at that time—and this was twenty years ago—um, I think that I, uh, at first I thought that, like, the family structure was very different 'cause, of course, uh, I grew up in a country where family structures are very tight and every-everything centers around the family and that has changed, too, in Spain—but you know, at my time, eh, divorce wasn't even allowed, so when I came here, that's one of the things that struck me as different from-from Spain, that the family structure was very different, was more, uh, um, well, most people I-I met had parents who-who were divorced or, and then remarried and had stepbrothers and -sisters or half-brothers and half-sisters and that was—I mean, in Spain, you never. I mean, that was such an abstract concept, something that you heard about in movies, right? Of course, now that's normal in Spain, too. So I think that's one of the things that struck me.

INTERVIEWER: What do you like about life in America?

WOMAN: Uh, well, I-I like the academic atmosphere here. Um, uh, since I teach at a university, I think I-I benefit a lot from the **academic atmosphere**. There's a lot, there's a lot of resources, uh, easy access to grants, money, even though, of course, we complain all the time, you know, that there's not enough money, not enough support, but, of course, if you compare, uh, the situation here to the situation in other countries in-in Europe, there's a lot more resources here for-for research, and, um, also I like

the flexibility, the fact that, uh, people are just so free to move around. They get tired of their job, whatever, no problem—they just move to another place, uh, start another job, and I like that kind of flexibility, whereas I think in Europe in general people are more, uh, the mentality is, “OK, once you buy your house, that’s where you die.” You don’t really move around that much.

8. TIME IN EGYPT AND AMERICA

I usually, I go in the morning. Uh, I get a lot of phone calls from **the student**. Uh, if somebody has a problem with, in any class or has a problem with a professor or has a problem in his own life, he can talk to me about it and I can explain to him what he has to do and I always let him know about the time between here and over there. Over here, the time is very, very valuable. You have to make sure, if you have a class at two o’clock, you have to be there at two o’clock exactly. If you make it five minutes before, it’s OK, but do not late one more minute than the time. And back home, timing is not, no value for the times. If you have a class at two, you show up two-fifteen, at two-thirty, it’s OK. But over here, when you do that, meaning you **underestimate** the professor and he will get really upset with you. So I always focus about the time because the value here, timing here is money and back home, time is, you know, we have a lot free times.

Well, the life in America is the best. America, I consider it, uh, one of the best places in the earth. I’ve been traveling a lot before I came to the States. I’ve been in England, I’ve been in France, I’ve been in Switzerland, I’ve been in Greece, I’ve been in Turkey, Czechoslovakia, Yugo-Yugoslavia—I’ve been traveling a lot before I come to the States. And United States one of the best because the economy is very strong and you have a lot of jobs

everywhere so that is very, very important in America. Back home, unemployment is almost 25 to 50 percent. It's very hard to get a nice decent job, and if you get a nice decent job, doesn't pay you enough money to make you live really well, so, but always go back. Home is home. Always, whatever home it is, it's the best place for myself and for anybody else, but America is the best.

9. AMERICAN MEMORIES

MAN: Well, I-I grew up in England. Uh, I was born down on the south sea coast, so if you know England, right down here, maybe a hundred miles from London, uh, in a little town called Poole, *P-o-o-l-e*. Uh, and I lived in southern England until I was about twelve years old. My, uh, my father was a-a war hero in World War II in-in India, so my memories are more related to-to that. And, uh, when I was about twelve years old, my father decided that he wanted to experience the American dream, which I called the **make a buck** myth, because the myth was that we never had much money. So we arrived in New York City, came on a boat, uh, about as old as the *Titanic*, but more successful, and, uh, lived in the Bronx. So some of my earliest American memories, uh, were hot dogs, uh, the Statue of Liberty, and American kids saying, "Hey, Slimy Limey, when are you going to learn to speak English?" So English—and timing is everything because this was few years before the Beatles—and if I had only come to America after the Beatles, I would have been **cool**. Instead, I was the **geek** who couldn't speak English. Uh, well, at that age, you know, you do what your parents want you to do, so we moved to Florida, and I went to high school in Florida.

INTERVIEWER: Where in Florida?

MAN: Uh, Pompano Beach. Home of the **Bean Pickers**. This is a time when Florida had little tourists—uh, you could literally go right to the beach. Now it's all condos for miles behind the beaches, uh. So I grew up, kind of grew up there. Kind of important to me is, when I arrived in New York, I was an English kid who had never seen a **person of color** in his life—1950s England was not a **segregated society**; there were not people of color living in England. Today it's very different. So I arrive in New York City and I lived in a boys' orphanage for a year, and all of the kids in the orphanage were black and Hispanic, Puerto Rican, African-Americans, and—very powerful experience—I mean, coming from England, living in the Bronx. When I went to Florida—**racially segregated**. The railroad tracks literally divided the town. S-so those, the juxtaposition of those three experiences probably are the most important experiences in my life in terms of what I believe in.

10. COMING FROM INDIA

MAN: Uh, now when I go back for vacation to India, I see what's-what's the difference-different. I-I find everybody working in a **slow motion**. You know, you see the slow-motion movie, the hand goes slowly, but, uh, and I-I see my brothers, uh, they take life little easy. They wake up in the morning and, uh, there's a lot of help around. Somebody comes to do the dishes, somebody comes to do the laundry, and somebody else is doing the ironing, and they don't have to do anything. My, but, my brother says he's very busy—I see him doing nothing. He just-just-just goes; he doesn't even drive his own car, and, uh, his, I mean, his wife doesn't even iron the clothes. It's just waiting. He just goes for the shower; somebody comes, takes

out his clothes; he changes, of course; and, uh, he goes to job. There are people who take care of the job. He's, just says, "Yes" and "No." People come to him, "Uh, this is OK?" "Yeah, OK." "Is this fine?" "OK." Accountant come and says that. He's not a big businessman—he's probably does half of the turnover that I do here—but he-he's like a king. And, uh, when I come back here, from the time I land U.S. airport, I have to pull my own bag, I have to drive my own car, I have to come home, pull my bags, take it myself in, and empty them myself. I have to do my own laundry, I have to wash, I have to clean the house myself. My, when my father came, he saw me cleaning the house, with the bathrooms. He said, "You, I thought this was America." I said, "Yeah, this is America. That's why I do it. You don't do it in India." He has never cleaned the bathroom. Somebody else does it for him. So life in India, now when I see, is like a luxury life. They think that I'm-I, since I have a little more money than them, so I'm-I have more luxury life, but unless you come and live here, uh, you realize it's-it's like super speed versus slow motion.

Doesn't give you time to think—that's good thing about, uh, life in America. When you-you grow old, you don't start, you never think you're old because you don't have time to think. And, uh, whatever you have, you have, what you don't have, you have no time to think, so time, lack of time is a blessing, in a sense. And, uh, of course I like, uh, if you, if you are enthusiastic and if your body allows you to work hard, you can open any kind of business; you don't have too much of bureaucracy, not too much of red tape, you can start business pretty quick, and, uh, of course, uh, you have liabilities, you have to work hard to do that but, uh. Yeah, you don't have to run over a period of one year, uh, like, uh, many other countries, like in India. America is very, very easy. I mean, I can just simply walk into a bank and show my good credit

and take a loan for anything. I mean, I can buy a house, virtually nothing in my pocket. I can say I'm a homeowner and back home in India, I need to have at least 80 percent, so, uh, I mean, there are a lot of good things. I mean, I like, uh, I like to drive, I like to go for, uh, vacation on-on, the driving. Good roads, I don't have to worry too much about it, cars are pretty good. Even if I have the best car in India, I can't drive at the speed I drive here. So there are a lot, a lot of good things. I mean, I, once I get used to, now I think now I am used to here, I cannot go back and, uh, have the slow-motion life anymore.

INTERVIEWER: Interesting.

11. CHANGING TIMES

Oh, oh, that's-that's a loaded question, you know that—seriously loaded. There was a time when-when I was growing up that, uh—and I sound like a **geezer** here—but there was a time where, you know, you didn't lock your door, um, I never had a key to my house. Those times, those-those-those ways still are out in **the West**. Uh, it-it's less gentle than it used to be and let's say, I'm not, don't even get me into why this-this could have happened.

12. SMALL-TOWN LIFE

That's an interesting subject there. I-I remember a time, we never locked our doors, uh, and I lived in a town, little town of Laurel for a while, and I think even back then, we never locked our doors 'cause nobody, you didn't have to worry about anybody **breaking into** your house or doing anything. And on the farm we never, we'd go away for a weekend and never lock a door. And you didn't worry. As



a kid, I remember at age six or seven, hitchhiking down the road during World War II. We'd go to Fort Meade to use the swimming pool. And we didn't think anything about **hitchhiking**, and you didn't worry about some **dude** picking you up and molesting you or anything like that, just, you just didn't hear about it back then. And then over the years, you just see where they, pretty soon everybody locks their doors, they got three or four locks on their doors, they, their kids can't go out and play in the yard, uh, like they could back in my day, and, uh, the parents just have to watch them every minute.

DEFINITIONS

academic atmosphere: The setting or state that contributes to and fosters academia—education, study, teaching, learning, research, and the exchange of ideas and information.

American Sign Language (ASL): A form of manual communication used by deaf and hard of hearing people in

the United States. ASL is an autonomous linguistic system structurally independent from English. It is different from sign languages used in other countries, such as Italian Sign Language or Japanese Sign Language.

Bean Pickers: Manual laborers who harvested beans by hand; in this case, the name of the sports team at the school the speaker attended.

breaking into (break in): To enter illegally, usually by force.

'cause: Short for *because*.

change of the seasons: The transition of the year from spring to summer to fall (autumn) to winter.

cool: A slang expression that means to be desired or desirable, to be with it, to be in vogue, or to be happening.

day job: The primary job by which a person supports himself or herself while attempting to start, pursue, or establish another career. This term is used frequently with reference to musicians, artists, actors, and entertainers, who often work at night.

dude: A slang term for a man or a boy.

Eastern Seaboard: The eastern portion of the United States along the Atlantic Ocean.

flat-bed truck: A truck that has a flat and open back area for carrying cargo.

geek: An awkward person who doesn't fit in. It can also mean a person who possesses a lot of specialized knowledge in a particular field, such as a "computer geek."

geezer: A slang term for an old person.

hitchhiking: Standing or walking along a roadside asking for a ride from people driving by.

interstates: Refers to the major highway system of the United States.

make a buck: To earn money or make a profit.

maths (math): The field of study of numbers and calculation.

musician: Usually *musicians*.

Northeast corridor: The states in the northeastern portion of the United States.

one of the reason: Usually “one of the reasons.”

person of color: A person not of the Caucasian race; a nonwhite person.

racially segregated: Separated on the basis of race.

running gag: A joke, funny story, or tale that is told frequently.

segregated society: A society in which the races live largely separated from one another.

slow motion: Moving at less than normal speed.

spotlight: In this context, the center of the focus of attention.

the student: The speaker probably means *students*.

suck on your instrument (usually, to suck at something): To not be very good or skilled at playing one’s instrument.

underestimate: The speaker probably means *disrespect*.

upbringing: The guided or directed growth of a child by his or her parents or guardian into adulthood.

the West: The western United States.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. List what these speakers like about life in the United States.
2. Which speakers have had experiences in the United States similar to yours and why?
3. Which speakers have had experiences most different from yours and why?
4. Describe where you have lived in the United States.
5. What do you like about life in the United States?
6. What is the most difficult thing about living in the United States?
7. Identify three words or phrases in this chapter that are new to you, and write a sentence with each one.

THE FAMILY



In this chapter, interviewees talk about life in their families.

1. A FAMILY IN MARYLAND

MAN: Family. I've been married to my wife for about seventeen, eighteen years. We married young, at the age of twenty-one and twenty-two. And we initially, for years, did not want children. We did a lot of traveling to a number of different countries, and finally, uh, somewhere around thirty-two, thirty-three, I looked at my wife

and said, “Well, you’re not getting any younger, so if we **wanna** do this, we better go ahead and start working on this.” And so we made a decision to have children, and I have a daughter, Caitlin Cherie, who is **four and a half years old, going on fifty**. She’s also fluent in **American Sign Language**. In fact, from **day one** in the delivery room, I remember signing to her because I wanted to make this imprint on her brain, this language imprint for visual language, and so, uh, we have a special bond not just because she was my first daughter but also through American Sign Language. Um, it’s amazing to me, not coming from a deaf family, to see how language develops in a child who does not use, does not have deafness in the family. But she, uh, uses American Sign Language very, pretty fluently, and we have deaf people in our lives all the time, and so that’s been a big help for her. She came, uh, to a program after moving to this area at Gallaudet University called the, um, Child Development Center, and in that program—it’s a day care center where they have, uh, parents with deaf children attending the day care center, the teachers are occasionally deaf and it’s just a really nice environment. And so she was in that program for about a year and a half. And so that’s my daughter Caitlin. I-I love my daughter; I’m so in love with her. Uh, I also have a son who’s nine months old; his name is Levi Joseph. And, we are bonding and having fun, and he is at nine months, he’s speaking several words, and he has about four-four or five signs. So at this point, living in the area, it’s, uh, my wife and two children, a girl and a boy.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have siblings?

MAN: I have, uh, four siblings. I have, uh, an older sister, two younger sisters, and a younger brother. And, uh, they’re all in New Jersey, uh, right now. We’ve recently convinced my mom to move to this area, to the Baltimore, Maryland–D.C. area, so she should be moving

down shortly, uh, once her house is sold. But my siblings, uh, remain in New Jersey with the exception of my brother, who I've convinced to go to the University of Maryland, and so he's, uh, just started there in **grad school** at the University of Maryland.

2. ITALIAN ROOTS

Well, the Sardegna side, my m—, I should say, my mother's side and my father's side. Let me start with my father's side, which is also from Sardegna, but my grandfather was a merchant marine traveling the world and had a friend in Detroit and ended his **merchant marine** tour and stayed in Detroit. So, uh, and, uh, but went back to Italy, married someone, brought her back, and then had three boys. My dad's the youngest, and they were born, uh, in the States, and my, one of my uncles fought in World War II, my oldest uncle, you know, uh, he actually fought, I think, partially in Italy, which is kind of interesting, um, and, and then, you know, they mixed in, one of my aunts is Polish and, you know, kind of indicative of the Detroit area, the sort of mix that's there.

My mom's side is a much more complicated side, and my mom is also from Sardegna, but part of her family is from Padova and, uh, Vicenza, the Veneto area, and then one of my great-grandfathers was from Rome, and, uh, was a judge who was sent to Sardegna. So, um, which is kind of interesting, given that there's not a lot of movement, um, in or out of, um, Sardegna. So I have second cousins in Padova, I have, uh, great-uncles in Padova, I have family in Sardegna, family in Vicenza, so it's-it's in that, it's, that's kind of split. And I must have family in Rome, but I don't know, it's just, uh, my mother's never told me, you know, about that.

I have two sisters and one brother. I'm the oldest. Um, and they're all in Michigan. Um, they're also very technical, um. My brother is, has a master's in fluid dynamics—he's an engineer. And, um, one of my sisters was a math major, and, computer science, did artificial intelligence. Uh, another sister was, or is, uh, an engineer. I mean she's not—she's at home with the kids now. So, very, um, technical. Although most of us like to read a lot, which, um, is not always—you don't always see a very technical—and like-liking to read a little bit. So . . .

3. A FAMILY SABBATICAL

I had a great experience when I was a kid. Um, my parents were university professors as well, and when I was a young boy, my father got a **sabbatical leave** and so took the whole family to Europe for a year, uh, during his sabbatical leave, and we traveled all around Western Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and in the process, we visited, uh, not only the great cities of Europe but lots of the, uh, ancient sites, and so I was, I was exposed to archaeological sites from ancient Rome, Greece, Egypt, uh, throughout the Mediterranean area. And as a little kid, I was just fascinated by all of this and, uh, just, uh, drew up as much ancient history and-and culture as I possibly could at the time and came back fascinated with the study of **antiquities**. And so when I was a kid, I started reading, uh, ancient history and the ancient authors in translation and then later on, took up ancient languages.

4. CHANGING FAMILIES

Gosh, when I first came to the United States: one black-and-white TV about this big, uh. Both my parents worked, so in that sense, I didn't go through a period where my mother didn't work and that kind of 1950s, 1960s sort of thing. I'd have to say that parents are a whole lot busier today than my parents. I mean, when work ended, work ended. And today, with e-mail and, uh, electronic communication, work doesn't really have the kind of boundaries.

5. SIBLINGS

So, I'm one of six. Um, in my family, it-it's three girls and then three boys. And I'm the middle girl. So I have an older sister, and she is a mother of four girls herself, uh, in Minnesota, um, and then I'm here in D.C. And then my younger sister is, uh, back in Minnesota. She is an attorney-editor at West Thompson Publishing, and she has a daughter who will be a year in April. Um, so it's very, it's interesting because my older sister is more a stay-at-home mom. She-she does, like, work in a preschool or whatever, but she doesn't have like a full profession, um, and, but she's like an experienced mom because she's the mother of four daughters, but I actually find myself have more in common with my younger sister, who's just this new mom because she has this other component of working full-time, and so we have a lot more in common in the mothering aspect because of that, I think. Which is, that's interesting to me. Then, um, so Kathy, myself, Lisa, then Tom is the oldest son and he is, he lives in, uh, Minnesota as well. He works for an, he-he's a financial accountant in an agricultural company. Um, sort of the

funny fact about him is he's on a **curling** team, which many people don't know about, but he actually plays it and it's very fun to watch, but not a lot of people know about it. Uh, then, my, the middle boy Jim is, he lives in Arlington, Virginia, actually, and he works for, uh, Wells Fargo and he does, sort of, he has this **hybrid** position where he does banking stuff, but he watches the legislative agenda on **the Hill**, and he sort of does the liaison between the banking aspect of that and the legislation. Um, and then the youngest, Patrick, is in Florida, and he is a wine consultant, um, at a Total Wine—it's a company—and he, so people come to him and say, "I'm making whatever for dinner, what kind of wine would you recommend?" And so he does that kind of education, so. He's in Florida now. I forgot **'cause** he moved recently. I had him back in Minnesota still 'cause he just graduated from college. I **gotta** remember that he's a **full-fledged** adult now.

6. FAMILY IN NEW ZEALAND

MAN: He was, he was a photographer and had to, uh, travel a lot in his work. And, uh, and, my, I have a sister, and she has a-a large family of-of four children now and, uh, as a matter of fact, every year, I would travel, um, or my family would travel—I have a little family: I-I have a wife and son—we would travel to, uh, to New Zealand just about every year to see them, and, uh, usually it was in the wintertime because summer holidays here is the winter there, you see, it's the opposite way **'round** so we would end up in the kind of bleak season. Um, but, uh, but my sister and I, uh, y-you know, swap each other's, uh, children's interests and, um, my fam—, my mother and father now are very elderly, and they're, my mother is

now in her mid-eight—, late-late eighties now so, um, it was very quick, but they are.

INTERVIEWER: Since your-your sister lives, still lives in New Zealand and you live here, what's it like when the two families get together, living in vastly, somewhat vastly different cultures?

MAN: Yes, although it's not vastly different. It's not vastly. There are, um, the interesting thing is that when we come here, the **Kiwis** come here, they expect the Americans to be the same. They expect them to have the same ideas and the same goals and the same attitudes to life, and it's misleadingly not true. So it appears to be more similar than it is. So, somebody coming here would think it was the same, but it isn't. When we get together, um, and we've, I've been fortunate enough, every one of her children has visited here and stayed with me, so I've been able to introduce to them what it's like to live and visit, uh, well, at least in Washington, D.C.

Yes, well, um, the interesting thing about Gallipoli in the First World War was that most people's grandfather fought it, you know what I mean. On my mother's side, all of my-my grandfather's brothers fought at Gallipoli, you know. It was a, it was something that, um, that captured the whole generation that were sent off—and mostly volunteered, by the way—sent off to fight, um, a disastrous invasion, disastrous invasion of Turkey. Winston Churchill's idea, by the way, uh, to do that. And um, the casualties, so—and I recently gave the lecture about Iwo Jima because they're very similar in terms of campaigns—but, um, to give you an example of things that don't usually happen in wars or in battles, for the New Zealanders, for example, the-the casualties nearly equaled the numbers deployed, so that is nearly 100 percent casualty rate, that, which is almost unheard of in battles but, uh, and my grandfather was-was wounded

there and he had a lot to say about it. Not to me because the war estranged a lot of families and, uh, and, uh, I didn't really know I had a grandfather until I was twenty. And-and so I was about his age when he went. And then I met him and then [we talked about it, so].

INTERVIEWER: [Why did it estrange families?]

MAN: Because people were changed by it, as they are today in-in wars, all over the world. War changes you. War, uh, alters your understanding, um, with the suffering, the loss, the, uh, the stress. Human relationships alter, people are changed by it, and I'm only speaking in-in a general way. I don't really know—I mean, relationships break up, OK, as well, but there was such a lot of-of people having difficulties, a lot of young people. And there is a picture I have of my grandfather and he's there, a very young man from a young country, and he's dressed in his new uniform and it's 1915 and he's just about to be thrown into the most dreadful, uh, of all experiences and have his friends die and have his, in-in-in terrible circumstances,

[so].

INTERVIEWER: [Was it the trauma] of that that took a long time for him to discuss it with you?

MAN: Uh, no, no, I don't think so. Um, some people talk about their war experiences and some do not. Um, I think, I think most do not. But that wasn't the reason. It was because, it was a small family reason that he had forged another life and he had another family. And so it wasn't, uh, anyway, he had another life. And so I-I really didn't know much about him until later. I knew my-my relatives on-on my other side, on my mother's side of the family, who-who'd fought at Gallipoli, too, but as I said, it was such a common thing, there were so many, uh, so many sent off to fight in that.



7. MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS

My mother was one of ten children, so already that meant that she just had a lot more, a lot less attention from her parents and a lot more, um, a lot more people that she had to answer to. Uh, she also came from a very traditional Taiwanese household that all the children did what the father told them to do, and they were very, very well versed in what their duties were, what their responsibilities were, and they—they did those things, they—they did those duties as they were expected. Um, I grew up in this country. I'd say that I'm American before anything, and I—I think that with that comes a certain attitude about how you define your own destiny—you make your own decisions—and this was always a source of friction growing up, on top of the normal friction that you have between say, adolescents and—and parents. I think we had some extra ones that came along, um, from the cultural aspects of it. But I've, the older I get, the more I'm struck by the similarities that we also had. She just had a lot of the same kind of reactions to the world that I've had,

and, uh, I didn't recognize them when I was younger. But I think that her, the way that she approaches life—that “Well, you know, whatever happens, happens, and you sort of **just roll with it** and try to make the best of it”—that's sort of how I've approached life, too, and that's—that's colored the way that I've lived my life, and so when I look at some of the, um, stories that she tells of when she was growing up, I think, “Huh, that's the same reaction that I would have had,” or, “That's the same thing that I would have done.” Um, so, despite the big cultural differences that we had and the-the time differences—you know, she had, she lived fifty years earlier than me—um, there's actually a surprising amount of parallels between us, probably just because I'm her daughter and she's my mother.

8. FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS

WOMAN: Uh, I was born in Evanston, Illinois, which is a suburb of Chicago, and I grew up in the Chicago area, um, all the way through high school. Um, my mother was from the Chicago area, my father was from the South, but when he married my mother, they moved to Chicago and that's where my roots are.

INTERVIEWER: Where in the South was your [father from]?

WOMAN: [My father] was born in Arkansas, um, in a little town in the north-eastern corner of Arkansas called Rector. It's hardly **a dot on the map** but sort of across the river from Memphis, Tennessee.

INTERVIEWER: You ever been there or . . . ?

WOMAN: I have been there, yes. Um, when I was little . . . my father was from a very large family; he was the oldest of nine children, and they all married and had children of their own and on and on and on. And when I was little, um, I think the first time was when I was about six, we went to Arkansas several summers when there was a very large family reunion. Um, my mother had been an only child, and, uh, her mother was an only child, too, so there were very few relatives on my mother's side, and the first time I went to one of these family reunions in Arkansas with all of these people who were related to me, I was astonished. I had no idea that—that I had these many, that many people that were actually related to me. So it was, it was quite an eye-opening experience.

But I must say that, uh, having an actor as a father is a very different sort of family setting from what most children have. I didn't have a father who went to work five days a week, **nine-to-five**, was home all the time on the weekends. Um, when you're an actor, you're a little bit itinerant, and sometimes you may be working a lot, sometimes you may not be working very much. Uh, of course, these actors frequently are working at night, so my father would be home during the day and rather, and working in the evenings. It makes for a very different sort of life experience and growing up experience. But it was also because of that, uh, unpredictability, I guess, um, for me and also for my brother and sister—there were three of us—um, acting was not the sort of lifestyle or career that any of us wanted to pursue. I think all of us

grew up . . .
INTERVIEWER: [It kind of turned] you off from . . .

WOMAN: Yeah, kind of had the-the idea that it would be much better to have something that had more security attached to it, compared with the glamour, if you will, of being an actor. But it was a wonderful—as a kid growing

up—it was a wonderful thing because, um, we met lots of interesting people, acting friends of my father and my mother, um, who were also very down-to-earth people as well but, you know, celebrities and the like, that was kind of fun. But . . .

INTERVIEWER: Did you get to see him perform?

WOMAN: Yes, I did, and that was the most fun thing of all. Um, it's—it's a real unusual experience when one, you have a certain image of your parents, you see them around the house all the time, and then suddenly to see one's father or mother appearing on the **Broadway** stage or in a theater, uh, in costume and saying very different sorts of lines and speeches, uh, is-is really an amazing experience. And I was very, very proud of him for everything that he did.

DEFINITIONS

American Sign Language (ASL): A form of manual communication used by deaf and hard of hearing people in the United States. ASL is an autonomous linguistic system structurally independent from English. It is different from sign languages used in other countries, such as Italian Sign Language or Japanese Sign Language.

antiquities: Ancient civilizations and their remnants, ruins, and history.

Broadway: A major street in New York City, New York, that is synonymous with live theater and is the major theater district of the city.

'cause: Short for *because*.

curling: A team sport similar to bocce and shuffleboard that is played on ice with large granite stones and brooms

in which the object is to get your team's "stone" as close as possible to the target while preventing your opponent from doing the same.

day one: The very first day or beginning of an event or period of time.

a dot on the map: A very small town or location.

four and a half years old, going on fifty: An expression that means the speaker's daughter is four and half years old chronologically but exhibits the maturity or mentality of a much older person.

full-fledged: Complete, total, entitled to all the benefits and responsibilities.

gotta: Common verbal utterance of *got to*, which means the same as *have to*.

grad school (graduate school): The collegiate educational level after the first four years of college (baccalaureate) during which a person usually pursues an advanced degree.

the Hill: An expression that refers to the area around the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, D.C., where the members of Congress (Senate and House of Representatives) and their staffs work. It is the center of the legislative branch of the U.S. federal government.

hybrid: An object or entity that has a mixture or combination of characteristics taken from other things.

just roll with it: An expression that means "to accept a situation or circumstance as it arises and deal with it or adjust to it."

Kiwis: A slang term referring to people from New Zealand, derived from the kiwi bird, which is native to New Zealand.

merchant marine: A nation's publicly or privately owned commercial sailing fleet.

nine-to-five: This term refers to the typical hours that most people work during a five-day workweek, 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. It is often used to refer to a typical, five-day workweek job.

'round: Short for *around*.

sabbatical leave: At academic institutions, a leave of absence granted to faculty members every seven years, during which they can pursue other interests or activities.

wanna: Want to.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Describe your family. How are the families of these speakers like your family?
2. What kind of work do/did your parents do?
3. How has your family life changed since coming to America?
4. For which speaker do children play a large role? How does that compare to your family or to when you were growing up?
5. What memories do these speakers have of their families?
6. Identify three words or phrases in this chapter that are new to you, and write a sentence with each one.

THE HOME



In this chapter, interviewees talk about their homes.

1. ROW HOUSES

WOMAN: OK, I live in a little **Victorian house**, and, uh, as you walk in, there's a little entrance, and then there's a-a living room and a kitchen—there's an arc and the kitchen is right there, so the kitchen and the living room are together. And then there's a stairway, and upstairs there

are two bedrooms and one **full bathroom**, and it also has a little patio.

INTERVIEWER: And what's—what's your favorite room in the house and why?

WOMAN: Um, I think my favori-favorite room is the living room because it's one of these little Victorian houses so it has a-a—one of those windows, um, I don't remember the name of it . . . um, a-a **bay window**—it has a bay window, and, uh, and it's, uh, in, but you can, the stairway, it's very, it's one of those old stairways, so and it's—it's beautiful, and it's right there in the middle of the living room and so you can see the-the stairway and the, it's very light and it's also, we painted the walls yellow, which is a color I like, so and it's comfortable, it's got a nice comfortable couch, and I have my music, uh, stereo there so I can sit and listen to my music.

2. A LOG HOUSE

MAN: It's a log house that my **late** wife and I built ourselves, and I also have a three-car log garage that I, that my present wife and I built ourselves. And, uh . . .

INTERVIEWER: How did you decide on that type of house?

MAN: Always wanted a log house. So, bought a kit and built it.

INTERVIEWER: How long did it take you to build it?

MAN: Started in April, uh, and had it **under roof** by August of that year, and then it took from August of that year till the following June to get it **finished out** on the inside, enough to move into it. It was actually, took lon-

ger to do the inside than it did to put the logs up. Logs were the easiest part of it. And I had never built anything of that magnitude. I mean, I was a carpenter's helper and, uh, a bricklayer's apprentice and all that business, but I'd never done anything like that. But, uh, the book they give you with the kit pretty much **lays it right out**, and if you had any problems, you called the company and they had an engineer pull out a set of your drawings and you had a set, and you'd tell him what page to go to and he would look at it and say, "What's your problem?" And you'd say, "Well, here's where I'm having a problem." And they would tell you what to do.

Well, when you walk through the front door, the first thing you're going to see is a staircase right in front of you that goes up to the loft, and it's, uh, a **cathedral ceiling**. And off to the right is the living room, which is a sunken living room, it goes down into the, by the fireplace with, um—I want to call it flagstone, like western Maryland stone—big fireplace. And then the kitchen's off from that. And then, the rest of it—you know, bathrooms and bedrooms and that kind of thing. Upstairs is the, in the loft, is where we watch TV and that kind of stuff. And then my radio room is in the back . . . corner.

INTERVIEWER: So what's your favorite room in the house?

MAN: My radio room. That's where I have all my stuff!

INTERVIEWER: Yeah?

MAN: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Tell us about why that's your favorite room.

MAN: Well, I can sit in there and work radio—talk to people all over the world on the radio and do different things.

3. WALKING THROUGH THE HOUSE

MAN: OK, now that the renovation is done, it's easier to visualize, but if you walk in my-my front door—we live in a-a town, and the reason I chose the town is because it has a lot, it has lots of trees and it probably reminded me of New Jersey. It's an older town, not too old but, um. Trees. So, there, I have about, a lot of trees on my property. Once you come inside the house, um, into the foyer area, to the left is a living room. Um, beyond the living room is a dining room area. Um, through the dining room, we have a kitchen area that we just finished renovating. We spent about a year and a half without cabinets because we had our cabinets, uh, custom-made and the cabinetmaker assured me that it would only take a few months, so I was zealous and took them off the wall, and it took a lot longer to get them done, and so the kitchen is just, uh, to the right of the dining room. Beyond that, we have a-a back porch with, uh, looking out into a yard area.

The c—, the porch is enclosed, which is nice especially in the spring, uh, summer, and fall. Just off the kitchen, uh, to the left—to the right, rather—we have a family room that has a fireplace. Um, as well, off the kitchen, there's a **mudroom**, where we have a washer and dryer, uh, and a **pantry**, and we have a basement that also, uh, you can enter, uh, from the, or through the kitchen that's, um, recently been refinished and has a new bathroom put down in the basement and a pretty big rec room, recreation room and family area in the basement. Upstairs we have four bedrooms. If you come in the front door just to the right before you go into, uh, the family room, there're stairs that lead to the second floor, and on the second floor, to our right, I guess to the right, is the

master bedroom—it’s just a bedroom with a-a private bathroom, **master bath**—and to the left, we have three bedrooms: my daughter’s room, uh, bathroom that used to be my daughter’s bathroom, and she’s still saying, “It’s my bathroom!” but now it’s their bathroom, it’s the kids’ bathroom, uh, and also, we have, uh, my son’s bedroom, as well as an office, a pretty large office that my wife and I share.

INTERVIEWER: What’s your favorite room in the house and why?

MAN: I would say my favorite room in the house is the living room, and it’s probably the, my favorite room because of the co—, the color, for one—it’s a very warm color, it’s, uh, almost a watermelon-peach type of color, and so it’s just very calming when you’re in the living room—uh, doesn’t receive a lot of traffic, so it’s always pristinely organized and-and kept, uh, nice and the piano is also in the living room, and so I have tons of music that, uh, that’s hidden in the, not hidden but it’s hidden in a cube, an oversize cube, and so all music is inside there, categorized, and I just enjoy, I enjoy the living room, it’s-it’s an open space, um, very calming and great music comes out of the room.

4. A FAVORITE ROOM

Um, well, as I-I said earlier, I read a lot and I have a very comfortable reading place in my living room, very **comfy** chair right by the window, has good light, and I can play some music if I want to. Um, it’s-it’s a very comforting place to come home to and enjoy just the-the solitude of a good book or two or three good books.

5. LINCOLN LOGS

WOMAN: But it's **gonna** be a log home, um . . .

MAN: *Cedar* log home.

WOMAN: Cedar.

MAN: Which I apparently have realized in our relationship that I'm the picky one.

WOMAN: Imagine that.

MAN: It's a, it's-it's awesome, it's different from a conventionally stick-built home, which is what they call, you know, what we're in, which is generally $\left[\begin{array}{c} \text{a} \\ \text{Framed} \end{array} \right] \dots$

WOMAN:

MAN: Framed house, with **two-by-fours**, uh, batting, insulat—, type of insulation, and a kind of dry wall that is either painted or texture coated or something like that.

WOMAN: We are not building it ourselves.

MAN: We are not building it ourselves, which many log homes are built by . . .

WOMAN: The homeowner.

MAN: The homeowner and . . .

WOMAN: Like Bob Simpson.

MAN: Like Bob Simpson. And, um, they're, it's a full, y'know, log, which is shaped as sort of like a *D*, and so you have one round edge on the outside and flat edge, and the inside is the flat edge, and that log is your insulation. Um, they put a very narrow strip on top of the log, and then they stack the logs on top very much like what, the traditional Lincoln log.

Drive up the driveway. We're using the back of our home as the front entrance. Uh, where it is in the woods, we wanted it pictured so that when we're in the house and looking out, we wanted to see the woods and not the driveway. If we had turned it around we'd be seeing the driveway. So we would go in our-our, **quote-unquote**, front door, which is, uh, adjoining our dining room. Uh, we would walk around the dining room; to the right of that would be the kitchen, uh, and the kitchen and dining room both open up into a **great room**. On both sides of the house we have a bedroom on each side and a bathroom on each side—a master bathroom. Um . . .

WOMAN: With a wood-burning stove in the great room.

MAN: Wood-burning stove in the center of the great room, pretty much. And, um, uh . . .

WOMAN: A stairway to go to the loft.

MAN: Uh, a stairway to go to the loft, and, uh, step down to go into a theater room.

INTERVIEWER: Now, so, what-what's your favorite room in the house?

MAN: My favorite room would be, of course, the theater room. It will probably be the most expensive room in the house, as well.

WOMAN: It may be his bedroom . . .

MAN: It may be my bedroom—and it may be my *only* room. But . . . it's, uh, it's a, that's, that will be my favorite room. You know, I feel like I'm sort of taking an ownership to it and getting the, uh, everything laid out in it the way I want to. I want to make it more like a movie theater that's in the house—not, like, a theater *room* that's in, with **surround sound** in—that's in everyone's house. I-I've typically like to, I don't know, maybe, go a little bit too far

into the, uh, design phase of that. So, I'm **contracting out** a separate person to do the design, uh, of that room. And he'll also be doing some of the building in there. The walls will have wall treatments in there, there should be maybe either soundboard or some sort of a, um, uh, sound dampener on the walls. Uh, there will be curtains. Most, uh, family rooms that have theater, theater room atmosphere don't have curtains. This should have that. Um, just to give the idea.

WOMAN: There's no windows in that part of the house.

MAN: There'll be no windows in that part of the house. There's only one door, uh . . .

WOMAN: They got to pay admission to get in.

MAN: Right!

WOMAN: I think that's what he . . .

INTERVIEWER: So that, what's it for?

MAN: It-it's to view movies. I-I will also use it—it will have the capability to probably have television, ah, pictured on an over hundred-inch screen. Uh, but, primarily for movies. It will be used as a theater the way a theater is conventionally used. So when you come in, there'll be a quiet swinging door that will open, close behind you. If you come in the middle of a picture, you don't want to talk, you want to be quiet and courteous to other people watching the film. Um, that's sort of . . .

WOMAN: There may be a trapdoor to let them out, down the bottom.

MAN: There will not be any of that.

WOMAN: If they're too loud.

INTERVIEWER: What's your favorite room?

WOMAN: It's probably going to be the kitchen, because I do like to cook. Um, so, I think it's going to be the kitchen.

MAN: Ah, it's definitely the kitchen.

WOMAN: It-it'll have to be the kitchen. I like to eat, too, so.

MAN: I'm going to like the kitchen, too.

WOMAN: Oh, no, you're not.

6. LIVING AT THE DROP ZONE

WOMAN: Our house is a little unusual because we live at an airport, so, uh, you know, we have a, sort of like an apartment attached to the hangar, um. So actually if you came in the front, you would be in, uh, what would be the

[restroom for the-the hangar].

MAN: [Well, this is actually the] front door here.

WOMAN: Yeah, OK, well, go ahead.



MAN: It's a sliding glass door—you come in that door and you're in our living room. That restroom is actually for the people that use the skydiving school in the airport, and we normally keep that door closed and don't come through there except in the wintertime when people's not here and the snow's piled up too deep out there to get in that door. Then to the right of this thousand-square-foot room, there's a small office where I'm trying to start to do most of my work from—I'm trying to get out of my office in town. I wanna sell that building and **disclose** of that. And then, uh, we have a huge bedroom to my left and a nice bathroom back there for ourselves, so it's-it's only about thirteen hundred square feet. It's very small—it's very modest in American standards—but if you go to any European nation and you have a twelve-hundred-square-foot house, you're doing **pretty good**.

WOMAN: On thirty-three acres.

MAN: Yeah, on thirty-three acres of land with your own runway and your four-thousand-square-foot garage with your airplane, your motor home, your two motorcycles, your Corvette, your pickup truck, et cetera, et cetera. Which is very unusual. Most people have a four-thousand-square-foot house and a twelve-hundred-square-foot garage. We have it the other way around 'cause we're never inside living. We're always outside living.

DEFINITIONS

bay window: A kind of window that, instead of being flush with the exterior wall of the house, extends outward, usually with a windowsill large enough to hold objects such as potted plants or for a person to sit.

cathedral ceiling: A high vaulted ceiling similar to that found in a church or cathedral.

comfy: Slang for or shortening of the word *comfortable*.

contracting out: Hiring a contractor to do work.

disclose of: The speaker probably intends to say “dispose of,” which means “to sell [in this case], get rid of, throw away, or relinquish ownership of.”

drop zone: An area or business devoted to skydiving.

finished out: Completed construction.

full bathroom: In American houses, a bathroom that has a sink, toilet, and shower or tub.

gonna: Going to.

great room: A large living room.

late: Deceased, dead.

lays it right out: To explain something or give a clear illustration or presentation of it.

Lincoln logs: A children’s toy consisting of a set of wooden or plastic logs of varying sizes, from which a child could construct various kinds of houses or other structures by interlocking the logs together. The toy is named after Abraham Lincoln, a former President of the United States, who lived in a log home as a child.

log house: A house made of logs. This kind of house had its origin in the time of the original settlement of the United States. The logs were trees that had been cut down, shaped, and fixed together.

master bedroom, master bath: The largest, or main, bedroom or bathroom in a house.

mudroom: A small room where people can remove their dirty or muddy footwear before entering the rest of the house.

pantry: A relatively small closet-type storage room.

pretty good: Very good.

quote-unquote: A phrase that is used to indicate the statement following it is a direct quotation.

row houses: Houses built side by side and attached to the ones next to them.

surround sound: A feature of a stereo or sound system that makes the sound appear to be coming from all directions around the listener.

two-by-fours: Pieces of wood used in construction that are roughly two inches thick and four inches wide of varying lengths.

under roof: Completed to the point that the roof has been put in place.

Victorian house: A style of house similar to those popular during the Victorian era of England.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Which of these speakers has the most unusual home and why?
2. Whose home is most similar to yours and why?
3. Describe the house that you grew up in.
4. Which is your favorite room in the house where you live now and why?
5. How do homes in the United States differ from homes where you grew up and why?
6. Identify three words or phrases in this chapter that are new to you, and write a sentence with each one.

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THE ROLE OF WOMEN



In this chapter, interviewees talk about the sometimes-changing role of women in the United States and in their countries of origin.

1. A GOOD WIFE

My mother, my mother wanted me to be a doctor. I don't have the temp—, really, the temperament for it. She wanted me to be a doctor, but at the same time, a really good wife. And I think my-my mom was kind of just torn in those, you know, in the two ways, and it was this idea that you had—mother, wife—that was, you know, num-

ber one. And she just says, y'know, she wishes things were different when she were, when she was younger 'cause it was a bit harder. My nieces, um, I think my sister didn't have to worry 'cause I think my, the one niece has a **pretty good head-head on her shoulders** and thought it, you know, was an easy class, something that was kind of interesting, you know, like that, but she's pretty focused, and I think-think she won't have that guilt that, you know, my mom certainly had and, you know, I had a little bit of that, you know, being Catholic. That's something you deal with, I think, and also with women, I think there's this, um, so, but I think it's good because there were contemporaries of mine whose, like, their parents didn't want them to be doctors, they wanted them to be nurses, you know. My mom, at least, my par—, and my dad, too, you know, “Well, be a doctor—just be a good wife,” so.

2. OPTIONS

I think that I'm a more, um, I'm more cognizant of my role as a mother. So I-I purposely think about that role and-and our relationship where I think my mom, because of circumstances, it, she was a mother and she was just doing mothering things. I don't think she thought of it more as something that you could, I don't know, plan for or-or perfect in any way. I'm not saying I'm good at it, but I just have thought about it so I did research about thi—, certain things ahead of time, to sort of anticipate things, um, and because of that, I-I don't think I felt as overwhelmed by the, by that role, so I've enjoyed it more, and I think that our relationship has—you know, in the twenty-three months that it's been around—has, i-it's-it's more, it's not as stressed, I don't feel like, I don't feel like, I mean, at twenty-three months, I can't remember what my relationship was like with my mother, but, um, I do

remember as I was older that, you know, it was something that she had to do and, she had, you know, she had to clean the house and we had to get things done and let's move, and there was less, "OK, so what's going on? Tell me what's, what are you, what did you do today?" or whatever, um, where I thi—, I-I have that more with Aida. Um, also my mother had six children, so that reduces the time you can sp—, allocate to one individual, where I don't have that re—, constraint.

I remember, um, my mom went to college, and I remember her telling me that she had the option of either becoming a nurse or becoming a teacher. Um, I never felt that I had those two options. Um, so I think choice is one big difference, um. I-I-I guess there were three roles. I guess you could become a nurse, become a teacher until you became a mother. I think that's sort of how she had it all **laid out**, um, where I never, I never felt that there was just those three options—I think that-that's a big difference.

So I think that's one-one big one is just what are your options for the future, what-what do you want to be. Um, I f—, I feel like that sort of trickles down into all areas of your life. I think if you-you have, if it's very clear you have these three options, then everything gets narrowed down and so you exclude other things because, I mean, what would be the point of pursuing anything else if tho—, if that's where you're headed? Um, I think one significant difference is my access to sports. Um, that is a-a defining, like, characteristic of my background, growing up, and I was always involved in sports, and it really opened doors, like it brought me to a college I never would have dreamed of going to because I didn't even know about it, but they recruited me, so then I went and I was like, "Oh, love this place. Let's go here." Uh, where my mom, although I know she's a tremendously athletic woman, she, they didn't have sports teams when she was in school,

um. And, so I think that is a huge-huge difference, the impact of having that opportunity was just tremendous. Um, and I was, I think I'm a product of that sort of first generation that had, like, access to sports teams from the very beginning. So when I started, like, when I was really young—in kindergarten—it was gymnastics, and that was still the most common sports outlet for young girls. But quickly, the soccer sort of—you know, basketball, volleyball—that started to sort of **trickle down** and they started introducing it like in fourth and fifth grade, that happened right as I was getting to fourth and fifth grade, and so I got, “Oh, well, I like gymnastics a lot, but I like volleyball a lot more,” you know, so, I-I mean, that's, I think has made one of the biggest impacts on my life, in the course of my life.

3. WORKING MOMS

WOMAN: We could actually compare his mother to my mother.

MAN: Right, that's better.

WOMAN: Which is a really good comparison . . .

INTERVIEWER: OK, OK.

WOMAN: Because my mom was a single mom and had to raise three of us on her own limited income, um, and his mom was not, so your mom, [so your mom] . . .

MAN: [My mom, my-] my mom was fortunate enough that she could take time off of work when she had our, us—me and my brother—and raised us primarily while my-my father had started his own business and kept that going to help support the

family. That was the way I think most families did it in that, in that time period. We, um . . .

WOMAN: And then when your mom went back to work, [she only] worked part-time.

MAN: [She only,] she only went back part-time, and she did that to just have the extra **spending money** and, uh . . .

WOMAN: And to feel like she had her own life and independence.

MAN: Right, right, but she didn't feel comfortable managing that **full-time**. Um, nowadays, I really feel like there's a two-income house. You need two incomes to support any household with children. That's sort of the way I feel it is. Uh, I've often said that if I were ever to have children, that I would, uh, I would, at the very, very basic end of it, would not do anything less than provide them what my parents provided me.

4. CHANGING PERSPECTIVES

Boy, that's an interesting subject. Um, well, I think there was a point in time where somebody said that staying home and taking care of your kids was demeaning to a woman, and a lot of them bought into that, and now I think it's sort of going the other way. Some women are saying, "Well, I've been the-the route of, you know, being a corporate lawyer," or whatever, and now they say more women are having ailments that were attributed to men more because they were out in the workforce and they were the high-powered executives. Now the women are, and they're-they're having to put up with these stresses that the men were putting up with. So now they say, "Well, you know, maybe staying home and taking care

of the kids wasn't so bad." So they're, you know, some of 'em are changing, some of 'em aren't. But, uh, who knows who's **gonna** sort that out?

5. BALANCING WORK AND FAMILY

I-I don't know that I balance it that well. I think I kind of **swing back and forth**, um, pouring too much of my energy maybe i-in, more of my energy than is reasonable into my job for a period of time, and then swinging back and being very, very, uh, insistent on spending extra time with my family. So maybe in, I like to think that in the long run, it balances out, but it's true that there are moments when you realize that you've spent all your time on work things and you have hardly seen your family. Um, I-I think that's probably symptomatic of the way that it is for working mothers in the country in general. I-I've-I've, you know, everyone's heard the stories of how it's so much better in more progressive countries, the countries that have more progressive laws for working mothers. It's just, um, it-it's-it's challenging here. I-I think that everyone tries to do their best at it, and my way isn't



the same way as everybody's else's but, um, there's always room for improvement, so it's one of the areas that I'm—I'm still working on, balancing a little bit more equitably.

6. CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

MAN: As I said, I think women work much harder here, and, of course, they have, uh, more rights here. They have freedom of speech. I mean, they—they have more independence here, they have more money here, uh, but, uh, they work too-too much here. I mean, uh, as I said, doing from laundry, housework, house chores, I mean, they are too much. I mean, by the t—, I-I have seen my wife virtually doing nothing in India to doing everything here, so. Women, I mean, of course, she is much more independent, she doesn't have to ask me ever because she does her own job, she has her own money. She can just walk in and buy anything and **trash it** next day. I mean, nobody is going to ask a question why she did that. Lot of independence, I mean, uh, and they see, the women around here have lot of, uh, independence themselves, there's no cultural ba—, uh, barriers, there's no, I mean, the best thing about America is that you've all kind of people from all over the world, they live here together, harmoniously. And, uh, the women back home in India, they are like, uh, men are the head of the family, so if-if my child is born, the certificate will carry my-my name—my son's name—so birth certificate will have my name. But same thing, if it is here, the mother's name will be there, so it's-it's a two different worlds altogether. Women, I think, uh, they work much harder, but I think Indian women here, they're happier because they get something they can never think of in India—independence, yeah.

My mother could never say, uh, anything to my father. Uh, my mother had to pray to God that he says, "Let's go

for a movie.” And, uh, she could not say that, “Oh, we want to go for a movie.” He has to—she had to suggest in a different way, “Oh,” that, “I was talking to that neighbor and, uh, she went for a movie,” so the father has to catch, and if he’s not in a good mood, he will say, “OK, OK, that’s fine.” So she had to pray for him to suggest something so we can, we can get it because he’s the man who decides because he has money. But my wife, I mean, she’s much independent here, and if I say I’m tired, she picks her own car and go. So it’s-it’s like two extremes. But, uh, I think—**by and large** I-I-I feel—there-there is a generation gap, too, of course, and, uh, my wife would not have been like my mother back home if we were in India. She would have been little more independent, but, of course, she is much more independent here because she drives herself, she has her own money, she has, uh, I mean, uh, she has a good job, so there’s a lot of differences.

INTERVIEWER: A lot of differences.

DEFINITIONS

by and large: An expression that means “generally speaking,” “for the most part,” or “in most cases.”

'em: Common shortened pronunciation of *them*.

full-time: Working at a job or a task for all of the time specified or needed to accomplish it. When used in reference to work, it usually means working at a job for forty hours per week.

gonna: Going to.

laid out: Predetermined.

pretty good head on her shoulders: An expression that means “to have good judgment or be a sound or circumspect thinker.”

spending money: Money that can be used for any desired purpose, usually for pleasure, in contrast to money that has to be used for a specific purpose.

swing back and forth: To move or alternate between two different positions or points of view.

trash it: To discard, throw away, or vandalize something.

trickle down: The flow of something from one level or area to another.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. What kinds of changes in women’s roles do these speakers describe?
2. How is the role of women in the United States different from the role of women in other countries?
3. How is the life of your sister or wife different from that of your mother?
4. What do you think explains the changing role of women?
5. How do you expect women’s roles to change in the future?
6. Identify three words or phrases in this chapter that are new to you, and write a sentence with each one.

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