

It's a beacon of light on the top of the hill

Poly is the neighborhood

I went to poly, love it there, everyone in my all my siblings love it there.

I like where I live

Growing up poly was number 1 and still is number 1

So when we landed on the central Long Beach area as the focus of this pod cast project. I was not certain of the types of attitudes that we would come across, not having grown up originally in Long Beach but the Don, our interview scheduling guru got a list of possible interviewees so long that we considered buying another memory stick for the digital recorder. Resorting to our better judgment we interviewed 6 of the 26 individuals the Don had requested. They are different ages and some of different generations, but their stories all share one defining and unintended characteristic, they all attended Long Beach's Poly Technical high school as a result our story became not a portrait of six compartmentalized individuals, but rather the story of six people whose history, experiences and lies intertwine with both polytech high school and each other, for better or for worse.

We start with Deborah and India, her interview was an interesting one. Not only because they are mother and daughter but they went to the same high school, polytech, and are an entire generation apart. Deborah is 46 and India, her daughter, is 18.

Did you go to poly?

Yes.

And did you go to poly?

Yes.

Lets talk about poly.

Back then my school was only three years.

You had four years, right? Four years of high school? (yeah)

They actually went to four years of high school two years after I left. One thing that's funny is when you brought up the labels it didn't matter what we wore went to school. Fashion was not out there like it is now. So we just wore whatever shoes, we actually went to the swapmeet on Saturdays and bought shoes for 4.99. Or a pair of pants or whatever but my oldest son Deion, when he went to Poly, the kids are so different that if they had, 'cause a lot of people would get some knock-offs, his friends would check the label to make sure it was actually that designer or whatever.

They would make a list of a designer who was ugly or (they would make a list).

A list of people who wore fake clothes?

And people who they thought were ugly and would post it. Just anywhere on the wall or that's what the kids did. They would just get a piece of paper and just make this list and they would post things "hey go check it out you know"

There was just such a shortage of young black men. Not that I only want to marry a black man, but it is so hard and there are so few that aren't gay that aren't in jail. You know so I feel like I have to work much harder than I would have in the past if I were growing up in my mom's time. By myself as a young black

woman I feel like I have to be my own bread winner.

Our next section is a collage of three separate interviews. Three slices of life, three separate perspectives. Alex, age 49 who was apparently a ladies man in his high school days, Deion, 25 soft spoken and brief. And Angela age beautiful talks about her 24 years in Long Beach.

Uh, my name is Alex E Ramble. Poly was, I was 4.5 5 blocks away from school and I drove every day. If you walked you weren't going to go pick up any women after practice and uh you weren't going to go visit anybody so you had to have some transportation. I played sports and I was also commissioner of athletics. I think I had on average 2 or 3 girlfriends a year, mostly because of the different sports I played, you had one for each sport. Then you had one for each class you were having trouble in. It was mostly the sister weren't sharp and math, I had to have an asian girl every year for my math class. And one Indian girl one year she was good, I actually really liked her the most.

Name?

Deion Caisson.

Alright, how long have you lived in the neighborhood?

Um, six years.

What would you say kind of defines your neighborhood that and the one your in right now?

I wouldn't say its comfortable.

What do you have any real memorable moments of poly, the school?

Something that happened, but this isn't a good one, but some guy shot himself in the leg at school.

What was that like?

He snuck a gun in on campus and I guess he was playing with it in class and shot himself in the leg.

My name is Angela Rambo, I live on olive avenue. I've been in the general area for 23, 24 years. Fortunately on my street I know all the neighbors everyone will at least wave and say high.

That was my last question, but ok, you say you feel like everyone smiles and is nice and it's a diverse neighborhood, but when you were back at your old high school you said it was sort of like a primarily white. Did you feel less welcome or?

No, no, I was 11 at the time. So it wasn't really anything I really knew other than hearing my parents make comments about not feeling welcome in the neighborhood.

We close our program today with Suhbuey, age 21. A patron of Martin Luther Boulevard and a true believer in Polytech, the school she attended as a student and one day hopes to teach at as a professor.

High my name's Suhbuey and I live in Long Beach, so its pretty much home.

So you've been to here over fifteen years, where were you before?

I was in Oregon.

Whats the difference between the two homes?

Oh, very different. California's more diverse and you can see it you know just walking around California

but in Oregon its mostly Caucasians and beavers.

And beavers ok. That's part of the population, ok.

In my neighborhood, I know there's a lot of kind of tough domestic disputes more. Like over on the corner where that apartment complex is I can hear people fight and then cops come. But then I never hear anything bad, I don't hear any shooting. But its more like arguing.

Just shouting and noise complaints and.

Yeah, that doesn't sound really scary.

Ok, you know, it doesn't sound that bad. So did you go to poly.

Yup, I went to poly, love it there. All my siblings went to poly, my little brother and my little sister are finishing up at poly. I want to teach there when I get older or in the next few years hopefully.

So you never want to leave poly?

Never want to leave, I go there all the time to visit to help out to talk to my old teachers, to get to the students or to, a big part of my life.

So you are a poly sister.

Yeah, they told me Don't go the on Martin Luther King Boulevard you'll get shot. I was like OK.

I walked down Martin Luther King so many times and I've never gotten shot.