

Krys Boyd: Fire at will!

Megan Zerez: Cool, just introduce yourself and tell me what you do here.

KB: Okay, I'm Krys Boyd, I'm host and managing editor of a daily talk show here at KERA called *Think*. And we broadcast just one hour to just North Texas and then one hour goes, at this point I think to 23 markets in Texas and a couple of markets in Kentucky and Arizona now.

MZ: huh.

KB: Which I think is new since you were with us as an intern and uh, the show is an interview based program and I like to think about it as a show about ideas. I like to talk to people about ideas and information that may challenge what people think they already know.

MZ: So *Think* has been around for a while and like as long as I remember living here, but it kind of happened like around -- I mean, how did you come to host the show?

KB: Well, it was created from the ground up sort of by me and by Jeff Whittington, who was our first executive producer -- senior producer then, and then executive producer. And it was replacing a show that had been in the same time slot before with a host named Glenn Mitchell who had been in this area and then he died -- I think in 2005 -- and they left that slot open for a year and had just kind of fill in people doing some kind of talk show. *Think*, as a product, came into existence, I guess, in the fall of 2006.

MZ: I was just like doing a little bit of background reading before I came here. So this -- 2006 -- that's not the first time you worked at KERA.

KB: (laughs) It is not!

MZ: So you were here at KERA and then there was a brief period of time where you weren't.

KB: I was. So I worked here. I had worked at Yahoo. It looked great on a resume, but it wasn't a great cultural fit for me. But I got to do some things there that actually helped me kind of develop my long form interview skills. But I came here in 2001 to host a nightly talk show -- KERA used to have a nightly talk show -- I think my predecessor, my direct predecessor was a woman named Karen Denare, but I'm not absolutely sure. So I did that show for about a year and then I was on maternity leave with my daughter and the station had some financial problems at the time -- I don't know the source of those -- I just know a significant number of people were laid off. It probably didn't help that I had been gone for a couple of months anyway and they were like, well, we can live without her. I don't really know how the decisions were made, but I was laid off then. And so I decided, as a young mother of two small children that I would stay home for a bit and freelance here and there. I actually did some freelance work producing for KERA at that time. So I always felt, like, it wasn't personal, you know? And I still had held the station in great regard. But I was doing that and then -- I was married at the time -- and my first husband died very suddenly, like in the middle of the night he had a heart attack and he was 31, I was 32, there was no life insurance, there was no money. It was a disaster. It was a disaster

emotionally but I also really needed a job. So Sylvia Komatsu who has been a wonderful mentor for me throughout my career -- I want to say it might have been the next day, or the day after that -- that, uh, that she called me. I think she might have realized that I needed a job. She called me and she said we just got funding to make this documentary for TV, like for PBS, about the Kennedy assassination. The -- you know, it was the 30th anniversary at the time --- and would you be interested in producing it? My earlier background was as a TV reporter. But I had never done anything long form. Like the longest thing I had done was like a special series and I think it took like eight minutes or something -- it was nothing like this. If the job for this documentary had been posted, I wouldn't have applied for it because I wouldn't have thought I would be qualified. But she said we really think you can do it and would you be interested and frankly I really needed the money. You know, I had the mortgage, and childcare and everything so I said I would do it and um, you know, Sylvia always says, oh no, that's not true, but I really think they thought, even if Krys is a disaster and can't really handle it and is a mess that there are enough qualified people around here to kind of pick up the slack. As it turned out, going every day and working on something that was really challenging cause I'd never done it before. It was challenging because I didn't know about -- nothing more than the average person about the Kennedy assassination and having these deadlines to meet. And I think we had like six or seven months between the time I started and completion of documentary, when we had to turn it in. And it was like my salvation because I sat here every day and for eight hours it was so challenging that nothing -- none of the, none of the grief, none of the sorrow, none of the uncertainty from my personal life could creep into those hours of work. And it did turn out well. And I don't want to act like I was the only person working on it, but I didn't fall apart. And I was really proud of what we had made, and it aired nationally on PBS and it you know, I guess it did fine, it was picked up in a lot of places and whatever and got some write-ups in newspapers and magazines. It was amazing and it was this kind of confidence refresh. I mean I think it taught me that producing documentaries is not my ideal job, because it forces me to do things that I don't love doing -- like you have to be really really detail oriented to you know, chasing down thirty year old video tape, or whatever. But what I made was, was good. And so after that, I sort of stayed on at KERA -- so that was just a project-based job, you know, no insurance or whatever. They found things for me to do, like I worked on a news -- like Sunday-morning-TV-news-interview kind of news for a while and some other small projects. I worked on some documentaries for, like helping parents of small children, especially small children from lower income communities learn how to help their kids eat right and kind of exercise enough to prevent childhood obesity. SO I did a number of different kind of short term projects and then eventually I think I was offered a permanent position -- to be entirely honest, and it's probably in my personnel file, but I couldn't tell you what year that was, it was a couple years later. I was doing things here and there, you know, as needed here at KERA, mostly on the television side, when Glenn Mitchell died in 2005. And it was no secret that I was interested in getting back into a hosting thing -- I really love interviews, I love the research and so I threw my hat into the ring. For a year they kind of tried people out and didn't decide right away, which ultimately, was frustrating while I was waiting to find out if I was going to have the job or not but it was probably the right thing to do because the audience had really loved Glenn.

MZ: Yeah.

KB: There was a mourning process for him. And he was, by every account, including my own, he was a rare talent. So it's -- to just jump into someone shoes like that, it's just setting you up for failure. So it was late 2006 when they announced that I would be doing the show and we sort of created Think at that moment. I mean the format was very similar to what Glenn had done in terms of, you know, two hours, three segments you know, where the breaks fall, that sort of thing. But my sensibility is different from what I think his was. Glenn was kind of like the smartest college professor that you ever had -- he just seems to have been born with all that knowledge and I never make any secret of the fact that I work very hard and like I don't know all this stuff, I'm not an expert in anything, but I'm curious and I like to learn about things. That was a really long answer.

MZ: It's ok! It's ok! The more that you talk, I don't have to transcribe my own voice.

KB: (laughs) I totally, totally hear you.

MZ: But it's kind of tricky because like, just like when I would watch you guys in the production room, I'd notice, or I came to notice how different it was when it was you versus when it was a guest interviewer. Like they're all good but I didn't really realize what it took to be Krys Boyd (laughs).

KB: Well, it's very kind of you. It took awhile for me to find my voice. We did a lot of shows early on that I wouldn't do today, not because they were bad but because they don't fulfill my goal for myself and for the show of exploring something people might not have thought about before. So for example, early on we might have done an informative good show about how to prevent breast cancer. It's absolutely the kind of thing that needs to be out there but unless there's really new information or someone has come up with a radically different approach to cancer or whatever, it's probably something that can be done somewhere else and doesn't necessarily need an hour of kind of deep questioning. We don't always, you know, I don't always fulfill my own goal to kind of make the show a kind of novel experience but that's what I strive for.

MZ: Sure. How's the transition for you, especially coming from TV to radio? I mean they're both broadcast, so pretty similar, right? I don't know. Also, it seems like -- before Think, had you done a lot of long form, hour long blocks of interview, other than the documentary?

KB: Just at Yahoo. So my earliest career, I was a reporter and anchor at a local TV station in El Paso where I was from and where I went after college because my parents lived there and I could stay with them for a little bit. I did morning drive radio -- but a very different kind of radio than I do now -- it was like writing top ten -- I mean I did read the news but it was like top ten lists and jokes and that kind of thing. And then my TV experience was a lot of out in the field, like, this high school is burning behind me and the kids are like -- whatever (laughs). But that was really good, I mean it's easy to disrespect like, local TV news, but I have to tell you, I've I never worked harder in my life -- you're running around from one side of the town to the other and sometimes you have one story for six and a completely different story that you're going to have to turn for ten and you learn to work fast and get to the essence of what's important and you learn to be able to function no matter what else is happening -- when that camera goes on and

you're live. And the same thing happens with radio. It doesn't matter what's falling apart, I know that I need to be there and guide the audience through things. It was like six years, like six and a half that I was doing that and I would never want to go back to that schedule, but I feel like it was really good preparation for a career in mostly live radio. In terms of television versus radio, I don't miss a lot about TV in the least. I don't miss being evaluated not just on the basis of my brain but on the basis of my dress size and my hair and my face. I might feel differently and I'm not being self-deprecating to put myself down, it's just a reality: there's a look you need to have to be very successful in television broadcasting and I have never quite had that and it's frustrating when something that doesn't matter is an impediment. I can imagine that for you, as a woman of color you can relate to this, because there are biases that have nothing to do with your ability that exist in the world just based on who you are. I don't want to act like not being pretty enough for TV is the same as being a person of color, but maybe you can see the correlation.

MZ: No, no, I mean, it makes sense. I remember one time you came out of this door and you were like oh my god I had this nightmare that I was back in TV (laughs).

KB: (laughs) I don't remember that but I do have those nightmares occasionally. And it was, you know, it was really fun at the time, I got to have lots of adventures and go running around and whatever. But yeah, I feel like it was a really important step and it's a step that I've moved way past in my life.

MZ: Yeah. I mean just now one thing that I really enjoy is going out and reporting, like in the morning I could be at a farm, in the afternoon I could be at a mosque.

KB: It's great, yeah?

MZ: It's so exciting. But I can imagine that at a certain point I'm going to maybe not want to, you know, get my farm boots on.

KB: I think it depends on who you work for and what they expect of you. What they want you to -- you know, if they want you to sensationalize a story which is where TV was moving by the time I got out of it, that's really demoralizing. If you work for an organization that is like, we just want you to tell the truth, Megan, and we want you to, you know, find something that nobody knows about that they should know about then, I don't know -- I know there are people who are still reporting well into the you know, the end of their careers, and couldn't be happier.

MZ: Sure. I mean, how did you come to, like, get into journalism at all?

KB: That's kind of another huge story (laughs)

MZ: Kind of a big loaded one, right? (laughs)

KB: So I knew I wanted to study -- back in the 80s, it was called "Radio/TV/Film," now I think it's called Media and ... I'm not even sure what the term is, but it incorporates digital media and that sort of thing. But it was "Radio/TV/Film" and I knew I wanted to study that but I didn't have a really direct application of what I wanted to do. I had done some acting in high school, but I

wasn't good enough to be an actress, like I knew that. And I liked to write but I hadn't had a lot of experience like writing scripts or plays or anything like that. So when I was in college, I worked on this comedy show that was completely student run, it was kind of -- it was a send up of the old David Letterman show, it was this late night TV show, where it like, starts with a monologue and he interviews some people and there's some little dumb, jokey, uh, gimmicks that they do and like, whatever. And I was the head writer for that. And it was a lot of like, you know, writing a lot of comedy and jokes and I really liked it. What I ... I didn't know how you found a job like that, I didn't know how you'd take that -- working on a show as head writer in Fort Worth, Texas and you'd go and three years later when you graduate and you find a job. But I kind of put a pin in that and I figured I'd figure it out. And it was really good experience for me because I kind of learned how to fight for my own ideas, because I was like usually the only woman in a room full of men and I'd gone to an all girls school, so I had not been subject to the forces that tell you that if you're a girl, you let anybody know you're smart or you don't -- you can't be in charge of things. That was helpful, but I also needed to learn that the world didn't necessarily operate that way all the time. So that was starting in my freshman year. At the end of my sophomore year, I wanted to do an internship and because I didn't have enough money to like, keep my apartment at college over the summer, when I was interning and not making any money, I went back to El Paso, where my parents lived and stayed with them. And so there were actually three, maybe four TV news stations. And I didn't speak Spanish, so I couldn't go to the Spanish news stations, so I did an internship at the NBC affiliate and it was great. The first day out, I got send with a reporter and a photographer who were doing just a feature story on this men's federal prison that's outside El Paso -- La Tuna Federal Correctional Institution -- and I was so excited because I was like, "Oh, I get to go into this men's prison and what is this going to be like?" And I had this really dumb, really naive idea of what it was going to be like and it was nothing like that. It was orderly -- I couldn't speak to the actual conditions, but what I saw there looked like human beings who are being punished for something, but they're trying to fix their lives. The feature story, I think, was about this broom factory that was in this prison for people to have these jobs. The point of it is, it's just that ... it was such a shock to me that I thought I knew exactly what I was going to find and what I found was a complete surprise. And that was so exciting to me. And the idea that I got to go into this space that most people couldn't access -- because I was just this dumb 19-year-old white girl from El Paso's middle class -- I would never have seen the inside of this place if not for this journalism thing that I was doing. And I thought about this ability to have adventures everyday -- like you mentioned being able to like, go to a farm, go to a mosque, whatever -- learning things about the world while everyone else had to go to this boring job real office somewhere, and I was like *this* is what I want. And I still did some writing for that TV show and kind of remained involved with it as long as it lasted, but I was just absolutely sure that journalism was the thing for me.

MZ: How often do you have these sorts of moments where you're just like, "huh, I was completely wrong" -- do you still have them now?

KB: I seek them out because I really want my brain to stay flexible and I never want to think I'm finished learning about something. I mean I have some values -- moral values and ethical principles that I think maybe relatively fixed but even then, I always want to be questioning myself -- have I thought enough about this, have I considered that -- something that I've thought a lot about in recent years is like trans issues, which just weren't part of my field of vision for a

long time, like a lot of Americans I think. And I realize there've been people all along that have been kind of rendered invisible by the fact that, a lot of people weren't paying attention to their existence and there are people like that...there are ideas like that. There are always discoveries being made and my feeling is that for all of us, learning is like a umm kinda like the...whatever you call those runners on a tank, you know? Like.

MZ: Oh yeah, like the caterpil..I don't even know what they are.

KB: Yeah! You know what I'm talking about. There's a word for it that anybody in the future listening to this is gonna think, "how did she not realize?", but um I just feel like we're always, we should always be moving forward and kind of like, you know, there are things that you're going to hang on to that inform your understanding, but you can't ever...you can't close the book on something new and so, whenever a book comes out that sort of restates something that I've encountered before, I may or may not think it's a good fit but whenever a book is like...like has a completely different novel way of looking at something, even if I disagree with it, and often I do, I want to do that because I want to sort of test my own ideas and expose myself to new ideas and not, not close the door on understanding anything.

MZ: Yeah, and like I know, I mean, people can't, it's unfortunate that the video guy is not gonna be here but like its just amazing how many books you go through just like personally, it's ridiculous. Haha so..

KB: It's, I mean, what a great fringe benefit, right?

MZ: Oh yeah, for sure.

KB: Its, it's really fun and there are people who like are so passionate about these things they're writing about and uh sometimes, you know I think about people I went to school with and now they're CPAs or they're doctors or they're lawyers and they're an expert in something and there's a little part of me that thinks, that would be great to feel like I know a lot about something, Cause I just, I know a little bit about a lot of things, but I think I might get bored if I had to specialize. So I feel very happy and very lucky that um I'm not forced to pick just one thing. I would hate for a thing to become a show about one kind of thing. If it was just about politics, or we're just about science or just about whatever uh philosophy, I think at some point I'd ... I'd want to change.

MZ: Do you feel like that sort of desire to, you know, maybe have a greater breadth of like experiences or or ideas or anything like that? Do you think that translates into your personal life, just like beyond...?

KB: I mean I try to remain open to different ideas in my personal life, but it's funny, I have four children who are ... two are in college now and another one goes to college next year. Which is to say we've been saving my money for a long time to help educate our kids, so I'm not particularly well-traveled. I mean I've been overseas, but I haven't done the kind of traveling that a lot of people do. I wouldn't call myself physically adventurousness necessarily. A lot of my life is kinda lived in my head. I mean I have great friends and that sort of thing but I don't think ... If

I'm a if I'm intellectually adventuresome, I wouldn't call the way I live my life particularly unusual or ... I'm, I'm pretty conventional.

MZ: You know with, I guess, also a part of this whole series, as I understand it, is you know some of the challenges of how it is to be like a woman in journalism and of course, I think everybody is thinking of this sort of work-life balance and how do you get it and how not to completely screw up with it? So I mean in terms of your own experience with it -- especially like going back to that period of time when you are working on that documentary like right after your first husband passed away -- do you think like you still sort of struggle with the balance?

KB: Yeah I've definitely had some kind of post-traumatic growth -- which I really believe in -- but no, I think what you have to do is come to terms with the fact that but balance is impossible. You have ... you make some choices. My children in particular are a huge priority in my life, but work has a huge priority in my life too. And sometimes you can't be in two places at once and you can't even pretend that you're gonna try, and, you know, whatever. There are some things that -- for example, I get invited to speak places and that sort of thing. And I realize that if I'm away ... I limit those, because if I'm away from home in the evenings when I'm doing a lot of my prep work, I'm also away from my family and that sort of thing. But sometimes I say yes, and so my family doesn't have me there. So I'm not ... I'm, I mean I'm on top of what my children are involved in and what's important to them. I'm the maker of appointments to the doctor and that kind of thing, but umm I haven't taken off for every like "cupcake day" in fourth grade and that sort of thing. And my kids are okay with that, and it actually feels like it's important for them. They're all teenagers now and my daughter is actually, my stepdaughter is about to turn twenty. But I see a lot of parents who are still really hyper involved in their children's lives. Like my daughter is on drill team and there's all this drama with some of the the -- it's moms in this case, I'm sure dads are involved in other things -- but um they've really sort of ... taken over. So like, even though this is like a thing that is supposed to help these girls grow and you know, I think that these very smart capable, you know fifteen through eighteen year olds should be allowed to be in charge of the fundraising. And if they screw it up one year then they're not gonna have enough money for something, and if they do great then they're gonna, you know, figure it out and they're gonna grow from this. But it's all sort of, a lot of it is being carefully shepherded by parents who mean really well, but who I think interfere with that opportunity for failure and also for growth and success. Maybe that's a justification, I don't know, sometimes I feel like there are things that I've missed in my childrens' lives sometimes. I think that there are things that if I did ... if I only had me -- I can be just a superpower at work -- but you know, I'm a human being and you wanna, you wanna have both. You want to have family and friends and you want to have a career, so it's more like it's more like ... it's more like a see-saw. It's almost never balanced, but if you can keep you know if you can keep one end from absolutely crashing down and keep the other end from flinging somebody off from the top, then that's a good day, week, month, however you want to define it. But the balance thing, it's funny because no one ever asks men how they balance it all, because the assumption is they're not really expected to. You know a man who -- even today and I've been very fortunate to work with a lot of really enlightened, open-minded men who are not sexist jerks -- but you know, a man today who just works crazy hours is sort of seen as ... he gets a high-five for showing up at school play on Thursday night, you know. Mom, it's like, if she hasn't made the costumes and

attended every performance and bought flowers before the performance, people are wondering like “does she really care about her kids?” So, I just can't ... I guess, because for five years before I remarried I was Mom and Dad and I had to -- it was it was horrible, don't get me wrong -- but it was useful because I was able to dispense with all that. Like I didn't have a choice. I had to work and I had to raise my kids and there was no one helping with either one necessarily, so I had to figure it out and I was able to learn how to say, “I'm so sorry, I can't do that” because I have this commitment or that commitment either to my family, my children, or to work. And that made it really easy for me to prioritize.

MZ: Yeah, today presumably, your husband also helps with...

KB: Yes, he's great and I don't want to, I don't want to give him no credit for things yet. He's one of those enlightened, open-minded men, yeah.

MZ: But I mean hopefully like, he also has to think about this sort of work/life balance too. I mean like, what what, if you don't mind me asking, what does he do?

KB: He is the production manager, which is like an editing function, for a scholarly journal at a religious seminary. So his work, they they put out four of these journals a year and they go out to scholars, evangelical scholars in different parts of the country, in the world, but they have like four deadlines a year and I don't want to minimize the amount of work that takes but he's on a really different time table.

MZ: For sure.

KB: So my deadlines are always daily, they're always urgent, they're kind of ... they're definitely intrusive sometimes with things that we would like to do, you know. There's no ... there's no, him saying on a Tuesday night, “let's go out to dinner and a movie” ‘cause I can't, I can't possibly do that. And I think he would like to do that sometimes. So our ... the rhythm of our work is different but it's ... it's helpful in some ways. You know, he's able to ... if someone has to stay home with the plumber, I have to be on the air at noon and I have to prepare, you know, starting at 8 in the morning and whatever. But he can usually he can usually get away umm, but then there are other things that you know I sort of take care of so ... it's a partnership.

MZ: Right ... it's like a sharing thing. So, I mean, in terms of, now to go like phew way back, how ... did your parents also have to, you know, you were talking a little bit about how your daughter's drill team, like crazy helicopter moms ... you know, were your parents, how were your parents in terms of raising you?

KB: Well, I was born in 1970 and it was just a really different time, but in some ways my parents were unusual. So, my mother was a nurse, she's retired now, she's still alive, but her ... for her work was ... she went back to school after my youngest sister was born to get her nursing degree and work was kind of ... I think she she was good at it and she enjoyed it, but it was a means to an end. It was like, “here's another income.” My dad was in sales and for him, work ... he took pride in his work, but it was mostly about ... he loved work for the camaraderie of the people that he worked with. And of the two of them, it was my father in some ways who was the the

softer touch. My dad was the one who would take the day off and accompany us. You know, I remember in kindergarten, my dad came on a field trip to this petting zoo and you know he was around sort of shepherding seven little five year-olds and uhh, kind of be our chaperone. He'd chaperone a bunch of other things and like much later in life, after he stopped doing the thing that had provided enough money for him to raise a family, he volunteered for years in an elementary school, like helping to teach kindergarten kids. And I ... I learned later on that he had kind of imagined teaching even when he was in undergrad, but it was the kind of work that his own father didn't respect for a man, even though my dad was really good with kids and really patient. I think he could've been a gifted teacher but he wouldn't have made much money and whatever, so he didn't he didn't pursue that. I don't know that he regretted it because he was able to have that experience years later, but I think he would have loved to have started that earlier.

MZ: Yeah, for sure. I mean, so, umm ... I heard, well I read ... so that you were born, I guess, or you spent like your earliest years on the East Coast, then you moved to El Paso. How was that transition for you?

KB: It was ... you know people are always like "Oh my God, I can't even imagine". So I have to be clear, we lived in Long Island, which umm, you know we moved when I was 13, so there was ... I was still too young to like hop on a train and go look at the city with my friends and do something awesome. I was a child -- so we did go into New York occasionally -- like I was taken to see a Broadway show or two. Like, the only time my parents went to the Metropolitan Museum was when there was a Vatican exhibition and they were like, "this is totally worth it, we're gonna see some, some catholic art!" You know, we went now and then but the city wasn't ... it might as well have been 6 hours away instead of 45 minutes or an hour by train. We moved between my 8th grade year and the start of high school, which is a really just fertile time -- like your brain is suddenly ... you hit adolescence and you're having all this brain development and you're just hyper aware of things and you're in this amazing moment of growth. It was the ideal time to make a change and it was definitely a cultural change. Like, everything from the topography of the land, to how people lived, to you know, El Paso is the desert, so nobody, almost nobody has a front lawn. People have like, rocks in the front and some artfully placed cacti, whatever. Just everything was different. But it was really amazing and ... and I think about this all the time, I feel so fortunate to have lived on the border because nothing about immigration from Latin America frightens me. You know, El Paso it goes with ... I think it's like 80 or 85 percent Latino. I am 100 percent white. So my ... my view of people of -- in this case mostly Mexican descent -- is that they can be, you know your ... someone who helps you in the garden or they can be someone who cleans your house. But they can also be your dentist and your mayor and your, you know, physics teacher. So I got a sense of the full potential and humanity and intellectual capacity of people of immigrant backgrounds that I think has been a little harder for people who haven't been raised where they kind of became immersed in that culture. And in a place like El Paso, El Paso is ... it's a really unique place and it's probably maybe ... maybe people in any border community can relate to this, but people really do live back and forth on both sides of the border and people have family on both sides of the border. My first husband was from there, so I have people that I think of as still my family, because I've stayed very close them, who live on the Juarez side, the Mexican side, and the El Paso side and it's just, it's not like nobody can tell the difference, but there's just a lot of kind of fluidity and a lot of people are, you know I think people who live very far north of Mexico are probably

thought of as being like “super American,” in the same way the people who live maybe along the southern border of thought of being really influenced by Mexican culture and it's just kind of an interesting mix up of different cultures.

MZ: Yeah I mean it's really interesting cause, you know, people are always talking about oh, like how to go cover the RGV without being you know, a jerk right? And this is all for journalists who maybe have never set foot like on the border and it's like, you know going to that, you do have to be ... like you have to have these sort of sensibilities and you know, there's certain times where I wish I was like wow ... but sometimes it's just best to leave it to people who are like familiar, you know, with the thing, I think.

KB: Yeah, I would say you could definitely get there if it's something that interests you. I, I am not ... so it's only speaking out of turn here because I haven't done ... I haven't, you know, been an international correspondent or whatever, where you kind of have to get into a place to get the lay of the land, figure out what's happening cover it and go, but I think, I think the people who do it best, who go into places like the Rio Grande Valley or anywhere else, are the people who get there and like the first thing to do is listen and watch. You know, before they try and produce anything. There's not always the luxury of that kind of time but people, the best journalists, period, are the ones who listen. You can't help but think you have a preconceived notion of what a story might be -- and you should have a sense of what a story might be because it's gonna direct your reporting -- but you have to always be open to the fact that what you are expecting is not what you're going to get.

MZ: For sure, for sure. Umm I mean, when you ... when you moved to ... you moved to Dall ...or Fort Worth for, at TCU?

KB: Right, mmmm.

MZ: For college. Have you ever thought about like maybe moving back to El Paso? I mean, why ... what like kept you here in like DFW?

KB: I really love this part of the country that I live in now. So I think of the Dallas radio market is like market five, I think the El Paso media market is maybe ninety-nine. So it will be hard to do the kind of show we do and get the kind of guests we have with an audience that was smaller, just by virtue of the smaller market. So that's part of it, and I like you know I think there are there ... there are an even broader range of kinds of people here, you know. There's a ... there's a South Asian community here, there are just kind of more different kinds of people. My kids have been in schools, not so much in elementary school, but as they moved into middle school and high school, they've been in schools where they have classmates from all over, which I think is really an asset. Umm, and uh, the cost of living is awesomely affordable in El Paso, but I ... I like it here now. And actually much of my family has ended up here, completely by accident. So my my parents moved here about 10 years ago, my dad has died, but my mom is still here, my sister's both live ... one in Fort Worth and one in Dallas, I have good friends here. So if I were to go back the city, it would be as charming as ever, but I wouldn't have quite as many as many people who feel like family

MZ: Yeah you've like set down roots and stuff.

KB: I have, absolutely.

MZ: Yeah I mean, it's kind of like, there are interesting people wherever you go, you know? Yeah, umm so I guess I know like there have been kind of inklings of *Think* going, like, nationwide, right? Umm, you know is that ... you know if and when that happens, umm how ... you know one of the things that I'm kind of trying to work through in my own mind is like, what's the difference between producing like local, you know like in my case, sometimes really hyper-local news vs news for a national audience. What do you think? Is there gonna be any difference in the way that you work?

KB: Well, um, *Think* has only very rarely been a show with a local focus.

MZ: That's true.

KB: We've always looked at things that could be -- in fact when I was a local reporter, they were constantly like, don't take a national story and find out what people think, find a local story that's happening here. But what I'm interested in is always the ideas, so those are usually, if not quite universal -- I like to like toss things around that could be of interest anywhere -- so for example in the state-wide and multi-state hour of *Think*, um, this week, we did a piece about, um, it's funny that the Rio Grande valley came up, about the like soaring rate of diabetic amputations there, um, and, it's, it's specific to that part of the country, but also it also speaks to um, pockets of poverty that exist all over the country, people who can't access health care, who for a lot of complicated reasons, um, are more susceptible to obesity and therefore diabetes, how they get treatment -- that sort of thing, so that, that was not only a Texas story, but it's about much bigger issues, and so I always want that to be the case, and I've always wanted that to be the case. There are some things that we've done over the years that feel pretty "Texas", you know, like I think, um, you know, we've, we've talked about like the state fair and the history of that and that kind of thing, um, maybe in some different kinds of things if not I think program specifically, anyway, we've done things that felt very Texas that now I have to think, I don't know, do people in Yuma Arizona care about that, do people in, you know, Richmond, Kentucky are about that, um, but, uh, I don't think there would be a major difference in the approach we took to the show, the only difference like if we had affiliates in fifty states, would be there might be, there might be a couple of kinds of guests that would be in the realm of possibility for us that aren't now. I've never -- I've interviewed multiple secretaries of state -- but never a sitting secretary of state, like, while they were doing the job. Um, and those are a big get, even for people at the network level and whatever, um, they're, they're just definitely, almost definitely um, hard for us to, to secure at this moment, but I don't know, again, I'm not necessarily drawn to guests because they have cache, I'm drawn to what they have to say, like their ideas and whatever, so some of my favorite guests ever have been people that no one has ever heard of, but they have really interesting information, so, um, you know, this is one of my favorite examples, but years ago we did a whole hour about dirt -- like soil and like how it takes, I forget how long, just hundreds of years to form, you know, six inches of good topsoil, and it's really fragile, and all these different things can affect its fertility, and that kind of thing, and it, the guest was incredibly smart, and in his field, he was one of those people that I'm sure that everyone will be like, oh, my god, that guy

was a rock star, but almost nobody just turning on their radio that afternoon had probably heard of this guy, but it was, um, so exciting to think about this thing that everybody overlooks, that nobody pays much attention to unless you're like, you know, putting down your tomatoes or whatever for the spring, um, so, uh, it's not even like the cache of the guest necessarily, isn't even what I'm pursuing, no.

MZ: Yeah, I mean, huh, I remember one time like, on, I don't even remember what show this was, but we got like a caller that, they were like, why are you talking about New York, this is Texas, you know, I think that was during like the state-wide hour, and I think you know, people, and, I know that this probably you're not gonna like, but like sometimes I remember people being like, oh, you know, like, can you help us get on *Fresh Air* and stuff, and these weird comparisons, like people have an idea of what the show they think it is, and what they think it should be, and it's like, how do you deal with all of that stuff?

KB: Some of it, it's funny about the *Fresh Air* thing, because I've had, I've had people who were on the show that I was you know like occasionally I'll write a little thank-you note after, like you were just amazing, thanks for making the time, whatever, and a lot of people say "thank you, can you get me on *Fresh Air*?" But, I mean, I have no pull with them whatsoever, um, and I understand their, I get it, um, why they want to, you know, they associate that with being a truly national show, um, and think that I might have some insight which I don't, but, um, you know, part of, like, finding my voice has been, I never want to ignore what people think, but I have to, I was given some really good advice um, by someone who's uh, worked on, um, well, it was David Isay, who's done um, *Story Corps*, and he said that you just have to uh, it was, he had been on the show, but we were just chatting afterwards, and he was like, you have to, you have to just kind of um, protect what your vision is for the show. And I don't ever want that to be that I am the queen of all I survey and only my ideas are good, but it's a really good kind of clarifying thing that it's okay to have an idea of what I want the show to be, what I want the voice of the show to be, and by that I don't necessarily even mean my voice, but the sensibility and the way we approach guests and interviews and topics and ideas. And um, because the moment you start, I think you should never isolate yourself from the influence of people's opinions, but the moment you start letting everybody, you know, add salt to the broth, pretty soon you've got something that doesn't --

MZ: You've got wet salt.

KB: You've got wet salt. That's beautiful, I'm going to steal that from you. Yes. Um, and so, uh, I think, you know, I don't want to make everything about being a woman, but I think, you know, you're, many of us are raised, kind of socialized to be uh, obedient and pleasant and, um, and I still wanna be pleasant, I don't necessarily want to be obedient, but, um, you know, part of my job is to clarify what the show should be, and so, just listening to, you know, the person who cuts my hair and you know, the husband of my dentist and whatever, um, those are, it's always good to listen to what they have to say, it doesn't necessarily mean that I have to enact what they think, like they are definitely people who think that a show that happens to be produced in Dallas, Texas should be about what happens in Dallas, Texas. If that were the case, *Think* would never have gone statewide, it would never have gone in multiple states, not that that's a bad thing, but what I'm interested in is not hyper-local stuff, so I'm gonna be at my best when I'm focusing on

things that, that capture my attention and I'm gonna be able I think to best transmit that enthusiasm for learning about these things if I legitimately believe in what I'm doing, and I'm like, legitimately, I'm very lucky because since I get the kind of final approval in the topics we do, um, I'll, we have a great team here, and I trust them implicitly, um, I get to go into things that I think are worth thinking and talking about.

MZ: Yeah, for sure, and I, I mean, I just remember up there, you know, sorting through the books and stuff, like I was really amazed at how much a role that I was able to play, and, you know, in like choosing what gets to, you know, possibly like go on air, which is --

KB: Yeah, I mean, so, I just talked about my responsibility, but I also feel really strongly, and it's a strange, almost sounds like I'm talking out of both sides of my mouth, probably, but, um, I also want to guard against only doing things that instantly fit with my world-view and fit with my experience of the world, so, um, one of the things that you may recall that has been very interesting to me over the past several years at the show, um, is, uh, the issue of identity, as defined by a lot of different things, by race, by gender, by sexual orientation, by national origin, by religion, by whatever, uh, I think identity is one of the key issues of America in the twenty-first century, I think it's one of the things that makes us amazing, and one of the things that makes us a disaster, and, and it's complicated, and we all, um, we all sometimes struggle to understand what it's like to be someone else, so if I, you know, my identity is pretty vanilla, and not that interesting, I was raised by middle-class parents, like the middle of the middle class, which is a place of great privilege, and I recognize that, but, um, you know, I just have a bachelor's degree, um, I was raised in a Catholic household, like every kind of like norm of American culture, uh, I grew up with that advantage, um, but that is, that is just a tiny speck of the American experience, so I want, I love memoirs written by people whose lives are like super different from mine for a variety of reasons like I'm probably least likely to choose a book by someone who reminds me of myself, um, I wanna read about someone else's experience, and ask them about it and um, find the ways that I completely relate to them even though their life looks nothing like mine, and find the ways that um, they will surprise me with something that they, that I've seen as a given that everyone understands, and they say, actually, I see it completely differently. So I wanna, I wanna always like listen to people, like you, who are on the staff and bring a different, um, you know, a different set of experiences to the world, and, um, I, like I love to tell people, I don't know if you remember this, but like I always tell Stephen who is our senior producer now, um, I don't know if this, if this topic really, um, I don't know if I'm that interested, but please convince me, and you know, I don't say that as a challenge, like go ahead, try, I mean, yeah, I can probably be talked into it if you tell me why it's interesting to you, so I want to stay open to that

MZ: Yeah, for sure. Um, and, like I know, well -- Who is in Jeff's office right now, is it --

KB: Nobody.

MZ: Nobody. . . . It's just like, well, his standing desk is still in there, but no one's standing at it?

KB: No one's standing there. For now.

MZ: Yeah. I mean, I know like I remember you told me that you know, he'd, you know, you and him have like worked together, and prod-, you know, thinking up what *Think* was gonna be, and like produced, even like, you told me, uh, like composed the music, and everything,

KB: Yeah, Jeff is, um, multi-talented, and, yeah, he, because there was no real budget for that, he was like, let me take care of this, and he went home, and like, amazingly produced this theme that we're still using twelve years later.

MZ: Yeah, I mean, how, like, on, you know, how is it how have you noticed like the, okay, what am I trying to say here, let's think, uh, how have you noticed the show changing, you know, now like people, you know, there's a bit of like a personnel, sort of team change, and of course like even interns, like there are you know, a new batch every semester or whatever, right, but also like going back to you mentioned briefly about how you know, you were kind of entering TV, as TV was starting to change.

KB: Right,

MZ: Right, and like, journalism as a whole was starting to change too, and of course, like the station was changing, and everyone's like, you know, you are also working with journalists who are, you know, of different generations, and you know, they are having different challenges, so they're, like how is it then to kind of watch all that happen?

KB: It's been really interesting, I mean, we're in a position because I definitely think, I think of myself as a journalist, I think the show is, um, is grounded by journalistic principles, which is to say we want the information to be accurate, and correct, um, I don't want to, I don't want to do an hour of my opinion, um, I mean everybody has a perspective on the world, but I don't want my biases to keep me from considering different kinds of ideas, and that sort of thing, so in that respect, we're a very journalistic program. Um, but, we are not a news analysis show. Um, and that's another thing that has clarified for me in recent years, there is so much of that out there, and a lot of it's brilliantly done, and it's important, um, but there's enough of that, so I want *Think* to be a show where instead of talking about, not that it never comes up, but instead of talking about what Senator so-and-so said, and what the president tweeted and you know, what yesterday's headlines were, I want to step back and say, wait, let's talk for a second about um, you know, uh, how health care has changed in America and why this, for example, the thirty-six billion dollars we spent, um, converting ninety-eight percent of the country, ninety-eight percent of the hospitals in the country to digital health records, why has that not worked the way that we said it would? Um, we could talk about the ins and outs of legislation and who voted for what to make that happen, but I'm much more interested in who made this, what mistakes did they make, what's working, what can be fixed, what was a disaster, I would much rather take several steps back and get perspective on things. I also think a lot of people in this current moment of so much factional political rancor that you know, it used to just be for politics nerds, and now, like everybody has picked a side, and it's like a huge part of how people define themselves in a way that it wasn't even when I started my career twenty-seven years ago. Um, and I think a lot of people are worn out by, you know, they expect, what they expect of news, not so much NPR news but news elsewhere is two opposing viewpoints and one person says, this is what I think, and the other side is stupid, and the other person says, this is what I think and the other side is

immoral, and, and there is no, there's no middle ground between them. I, I want to get to the places where people can say, here's what I believe, and I believe it very passionately, but I understand why the other side is, you know, has this concern, whatever, I love when we can get to those places where people just say, it's complicated, like there is no simple solution, so people I think are worn out, I think new consumers are worn out by the conflict and I think sometimes look for, um, look for the possibility that there's another way to talk about these things, that doesn't require us, like stripping the humanity from everybody who disagrees with us, we did, you know, we did a show I think it might have happened while you were working with us, but it was, um, it was about abortion, which is like a topic that you're, you're pretty much not gonna change anyone's mind, and you're, you know, I didn't want to set up a debate between people who believe in it and people who don't, because that debate's been happening for the better part of fifty years, if not longer, and we still have really strong opinions for, for reasons that are obvious. But when you can talk to people who have, um, been able to stake their position, um, based on kind of different ways of thinking, or you can ask them, like, why is this important to you, you know, we had, um, I can't remember, the, the kinds of people that were brought on to talk about it were maybe not exactly who you'd imagine, and they had just different personal experiences that kind of informed their opinions, and, um, I, I just, I would much rather ask people why do you feel this way, like why are you so sure that this is right and this is wrong, and then ask people on the other side, why are you so sure that this is right and this is wrong, and then just like, I can abide with that, I, you know, I don't feel like it's necessary to take a stand and hang onto it for dear life, no matter what additional evidence comes my way, um, and I'm really comfortable with, um, with a certain level of ambivalence about things because on a subject like abortion, it is complicated, it's complicated, you know, no matter which position you choose, um, you know, I guess I'm also framing it as if there are only two, but, uh, if you're an intelligent person, you have to admit that there are, there are things that make your solution not a perfect solution for every possible individual, and, and that's the thing that interests me, that, the acknowledgement of that, and the turning it over in your head, not necessarily in service to a final answer.

MZ: I mean, going to like, the sort of you don't want to set up a debate, one thing about *Think* that was really surprising to me at first was when I started listening to it, um, is that you have like call-in, like just people, you know, and like, I've, you know, sat behind there and screened those calls, and there are some people!

KB: You've been in the hot seat!

MZ: So, you know, like how, but it it's you know, even as like *Think* grows bigger and bigger, but it's still, like you're still taking calls from people, and a lot of the callers who do call I would imagine are also from Texas, because they're more familiar with it, right, so, I mean, how do you, how do you, that's another thing that always kind of like impressed me, is how you were able to kind of get these people's, you know, just lay-person and incorporate them, and lead them into this sort of conversation.

KB: I have mixed feelings about the calls -- sometimes, we've had some calls that have truly elevated conversations, especially the ones who were calling about something that's emotional, and they bring their own experience to bear, like we did a thing about, um, the Japanese

internment camp that was in Crystal City, Texas, and there was someone who called in who had, like, grown up right next to that and had memories of, you know, these people, and those were like amazing kind of radio gold moments, there are sometimes when people call in, and they've forgotten what they wanted to talk about and they ramble on, and it's, uh, it's a hazard because it's live, most of the time, um, I think it's nice, the calls, um, are a reminder that real people are listening, and that it is not just a conversation for me and my guest, but it's, but I'm, I'm kind of representing lots of different kinds of people, and hearing their voices now and then is a nice reminder of that. You know, there are times I think we've all, we can all feel it when it's like someone's gone on a little too long, and I wanna kind of dive in and just, because they've made their point, and I'm doing it myself, you, you end up saying the same thing three times to make sure that someone understands you, and it's not always easy to be live on the radio for the first time, whatever. Um, but there are definitely times when the calls are a distraction, I, I give myself a lot of, um, a lot of judgment, you know, sometimes we'll have, nine people piled up who want to say things, and I might take one in twenty-five minutes, and other times I feel like, this is something that we can really, you know, it will add something to bring people on and hear these other voices, and, I love, I love listening to different kinds of voices too, I think there's an assumption about the kind of person who listens to public radio in America, and I can tell you, at least based on who calls in, which is not necessarily a perfect subset of who listens, but we hear from all kinds of people, we hear from, we hear from immigrants, we hear from people who do not have a college education. And we hear from people of all different ethnic backgrounds. It's not just like white people making artisanal pickles and you know, whatever. Um, and, uh, and I think that's great. And we hear from, we hear from people across the political spectrum, which I think also might take people by surprise. And I want to, I want to welcome all those voices and let them know, let everyone know that they're part of this community we live in.

KB: Whether you define the community is as North Texas or Texas or you define it as the community of people who are just part of this show. Um, I think that that, you know, introduction of different kinds of voices is, is nice.

MZ: Yeah, for sure. Yeah, I definitely get what you're saying about some people that are just speaking like rambling cause I'm like "ahhhh!"

KB: Like right I think everybody gets that way a little, and I, and I'm thinking about my audience thinking, oh no, who is Christy?

MZ: Who is this person?

KB: And it's not, but I never want to seem dismissive of the callers. Like I, uh, another good piece of advice I got years ago from a woman who at the time was the program director here, Abby Goldstein. She's long since moved on. But, um, she said to me when I was first starting with that evening talk show that I did that also took some live calls. She said, your job is not to provide a great experience for the caller. Your primary job is to provide a great experience for the audience. And so I never, if I can help it, I don't ever want to be rude or dismissive of a caller, but sometimes the caller's need to go on and on is not serving the audience. So I'll find a moment where they take a breath and sort of put them on that the hold button and then kind of move the conversation. Um, and, and I think it's important to model like a certain amount of, of decorum and kindness and

whatever and recognize, uh, someone who seems to be rambling that might seem that way to me because, you know, I get to spend two hours every day deciding what I want to say. And you know, most people don't have experience with this, but, um, yes, they, the, sometimes the calls can, can, can get a little, they can get a little off the hook, but it's also part of, you know, it's a reminder that what we're making, at least at the moment we're making it as is usually live.

MZ: Yeah. Um, so what do you feel like, okay, and this is like, this is just like, we're just jumped in, off over here for, you know, um, what do you think like the next 10 years are going to look like for you? Just even professionally or personally?

KB: That's a good question. I mean, I will definitely want to keep growing and I always hope that I, like, I never feel like the show's finished. Like I knew exactly what I want it to be. I know almost exactly what I wanted to be today. But you know, as I look around and see different issues that seem to be consuming us as a society, I want to make sure that we're, that we're paying attention to those and listening to them. I want to keep reflecting different voices. I want to make sure that we hear a lot from people of color and from immigrants and not only talking about what it's like to be a people of color, a person of color or an immigrant. Like I really feel like it's important to remind people that there are, you know, astrophysicists who, uh, you know, are, are not the sort of white man in a white coat that we were trained to expect. Um, and sometimes you can't, you know, like we try to reflect diversity in the show even when it's not always obvious listening to the radio. It's still important that we hear from these people, you know? Um, so as we move forward, I don't know, I don't, I don't necessarily, I don't necessarily have a plan. I will say that I, I have learned throughout the years what I think my particular strengths are and I'd like to continue working on those. And I'd also like to continue working on some of my weak points and also recognizing what I should just maybe not do because it's not the best thing I can do. So I like, um, I like really intimate conversations about people's real lives, you know, so I, I do a lot of memoirs. I don't want to do only those, but I feel like that's a, that's a thing that I'm good at because I'm just interested. But, um, I don't want to leave out the possibility that there's something else that I might be able to serve the audience doing that I haven't gotten really great at. I mean, you know, there are people who would like every political show to be done and kind of a debate format where you have point counterpoint. Um, I'm not interested in that because what happens is people are so busy looking at scoring a point that they're never listening to each other. If I could have two people sit down and say, I'm going to make my point and then I'm going to really listen to the other side, I would love that, but I haven't found it yet.

MZ: Yeah. Yeah. Um, have you ever found that you've like sort of stagnated in any aspect of your life? That's something that I think a lot of people worry about. Like you, you know, you're talking about like always trying to move forward and stuff like that, but if you ever been at a point where you're just like, oh gosh, like how do I get freed from this mire?

KB: Yeah. I mean, you know, it, what I do is really interesting because the, the rhythm of my days, I mean, it's taken me a while to kind of get a process that works for me, like how I, how I get through the research material and when I do my writing and how I formulate questions and all that, um, took me a while to get to what really works. But now that, that pattern is pretty set, like I occasionally I'll deviate because there's been a last minute change or that sort of thing. But, um, the, so the, the, from day to day, my schedule from eight in the morning, when I start working until

seven or eight at night, when I'm done with research, with dinner in the middle and all that, um, it's, it's pretty similar all the time. But what I'm thinking about is different all the time. So for that reason, I don't worry so much about stagnation, but there's no question that there's a lot of, like there's a lot of of repetition. I, I've, I've tried to eliminate a lot of the things that could distract me from really focusing on the content. So, um, so I'm very comfortable with routine because if I know that, you know, by 10 every morning I've got the next days scripts but not questions written. And then after that a 10, I start writing the questions for that day shows and whatever. That's great. It's a little bit like, um, not to compare myself to Steve Jobs, but like Steve Jobs, it was like, you know what, I don't wear a black turtleneck blue jeans and sneakers every day. That is the rhythm of my day and it allows me to know that I've got the maximum time for the, the thought work of engaging with the content because a lot of, a lot, the only thing that really stresses me out in my work is when I don't feel like I have sufficient time and energy to think about what I'm doing. Like, like, like time for contemplation, whether I'm typing as I contemplate or I'm just reading something, there's, there's no substitute for like deep engagement with the material and, and our, our world is like bullying us so hard and to all these little things that distract us. And um, so Wednesday nights that are at my house, I always cook dinner. My husband cooks a couple of other days of the week. There are a couple of days where we're like, should we grab something or whatever. But anyway, Wednesdays I cook and every once in a while I'll plan something for dinner while I'm still in my, uh, steady working on things and I'll realize I have to get up like 14 times to stir something or whatever. And those days are the worst. So I've learned to like make a lot of one pot dishes that don't require that. But, um, that's what I feel like almost all of us are dealing with in with the, let me check what Twitter has to say. Let me put something on Twitter because it's so important that I tell the world what I think about whatever. And then let me see what everybody thinks about it and how many likes did I get and whatever. And, and uh, I need to know, you know, what's happening on Instagram and I need to keep checking the headlines and um, I feel like it's very important to disengage from that all of us need to, and everybody, everybody acknowledges it and says it and then it becomes impossible. And for me, part of the reason I'm, so I leave the office every day within about an hour after the second show ends and I go home and do my work there because sitting at my desk here, it's hard for me to focus cause I've got this beautiful PC in front of me and I can like engage online when I'm home. I mean I take my iPad with me so I can look things up, but I don't even have it at my side anymore. I usually move it into the kitchen and I just said it to charge or something and I'll physically get up and walk if I need to look something up and then I'll put it back down. Because otherwise it's just too easy to get away from things and get distracted. And then every time that you, the multitasking thing is nonsense. Every time you take your focus from one thing and give it something else, even something minor and stupid, there's that moment where you're getting, okay, where was I on this page and what was I thinking about and what was I, what, what question came to mind? It's gone.

MZ : Yeah. Yeah. You **have** to be killing all the time of re-engaging in that time.

KB: It's like, and you've wasted a lot of time.

MZ: Yeah, for sure. For sure. Um, you know, and I imagine like it's probably less of an issue now that you're, you know, your family, like your kids specifically are like older.

KB: They are pretty self aware for sure, they're doing their own thing, they can drive --

MZ: Yeah, you know, um, but I would imagine like that was probably something pretty difficult. Like when you maybe were like the only like one, you know, keeping it all going forward.

KB: Well, it's interesting because, um, I met the person who would become my husband literally like the week I was about to start think in 2006 and we dated for a couple of years and then we got married and I thought about it like it would have been really hard for me to do the job I have with the schedule I have as a single parent, a very small children, may be impossible. Early on, like before we married, but when I was doing the show, I would, you know, come home, take care of my kids, get them fed, read them baths and whatever, and then I would just work all night and like, not all night, but you know, I would get a bed at 12 or one and um, I'm super glad I don't have to do that now because I like to get to bed at a reasonable hour and I really feel like sleep is very important. Um, it would have been much harder and I think the balance might have been impossible if I'd had to keep up that schedule or continue being kind of a solo parent, I guess. You know, as a, as a parent without another parent in your life, you just, there is no, if you just have to make it happen. But I'm not sure that I could have grown professionally if I had, um, if I'd had to do it myself entirely during the years that they, you know, like they were really little for a while, but once they were in, once they had play practice and soccer practice and stuff happening after school and girl scouts and whatever, it would have been really hard to do that.

MZ: Yeah, yeah, I mean, like my professor isn't like, oh my people I talk to, you know, um, you know, they kind of always harp on this sort of like turning point moment. And it sounds like, you know, for you think and like all these things kind of just this nexus of changes all like around that time.

KB: That's a beautiful way to describe it.

MZ: You know, and this is maybe like less of a relevant thing, but this is something that my mom, at least just thinking about, my mom just recently, my last sibling moved out of the house and she's now, she's also a really busy person and, um, you know, like put so much of her soul into her work and, uh, now she has an empty nest and she didn't think that she would be as like, you know, kind of struck by it. But she is, and I, and I notice that like every day. Um, you know, it sounds like, you know, for you, like the last of your kids are going to be going on to college soon and --

KB: Yeah, my youngest daughter, um, goes to college, not this fall, but next fall. Um, and I, we've kind of been preparing for it. I mean, she's, she's a very busy person herself, so, um, and because she's the baby, we had like one car for that, for three of them to share. And uh, so she's had access like to that car alone this entire school year. Um, and so she's pretty self sufficient and she's, but she's around like she definitely still needs to be interacted with and parented. Um, uh, you know, my husband and I talk about this a lot. Like there's a big part of me that's looking forward to it, um, because they can't finish growing until they leave my house. And as much as I still, you know, and the two that are in college, they're not completely disconnected to the extent that I'm never saying, Hey, what's going on with this or, you know, but it's a different kind of thing. And, um, I think it's just, uh, there's this, I can't think of a good metaphor, but like you can't, you, you can like assemble a frozen pizza in the factory, but it's not done until it leaves the factory and goes to somebody who bakes it. There's, there and they're, they're going to be things that they have to

experience, um, by themselves that will, we'll finish their development. I don't know. I mean, I, I suppose it's possible that when the house is truly empty and there's no uneven here and there and whatever, it will be hard. And of course I missed the two that are, you know, not with us all the time. They still come home for summer. So for now it's not quite that bad, but um, it's, it's a transition. I mean, part of my job as a parent was to make them not need me. And, um, but there is, you have to redefine your role as a parent. You know, what does that, what does that mean? And it's become, I think maybe your mom is experiencing this, being a mother is such an overwhelming aspect of your identity, so intensively for like 18 or 20 or however many years. And then it's like, it's, it becomes like an asterisk. Like, oh, your kids are grown and you're still thinking about them. Like, I think maybe you don't ever stop feeling like their parents and whatever, but you realize like they're adults and they have to handle this. And like it's some things are not your business whether you want them to be or not. And, and they, I think the natural progression of events is that you as a parent, I think miss the kids who move out more than the kids who move out, miss their parents cause they're so excited about like, oh my God,

MZ: Like, "here's the world!"

KB: I'm in college or I'm working. And um, and so it's a different, it's a different kind of adjustment. But you know, my husband and I got married. We used to joke that like we, we married into a 10 year old marriage. You know, our kids were six, seven, eight and nine when we got married. And so we've never had, you know, a couple of awesome, blissful, childfree years to be together. And I think we're both looking forward to kind of growing together and developing aspects of our relationship that has very much been on hold as we've been collaborating. Not always peacefully and not always perfectly on this incredibly challenging project of, of raising four children.

MZ: Yeah, for sure. for sure um, well I think that it's probably good for me. Do you have any things that you'd like to add?

KB: No, I just want to, I mean just on a personal note, like I'm so excited for you like going off to J-school and like it just reflects in your questions. I think you've been really good and they've evoked a lot of interesting things for me to think and talk about. And I think that's very much to your credit. And I'm like, it's these long form interviews are not easy to do and it's not like you, you, I feel like you've just done a really, really good job.

MZ: Oh, thank you, I try.

KB: It shows that you've thought really carefully about these things, you know, cause you didn't ask the kind of standard fair play questions.

MZ: Yeah, I mean it's like I feel like those things, you'll answer them in the course of talking. That's what I always hope for people and I think you know how to string sentences together.

KB: So, I don't know. I hate to see it transcribed because I definitely am not one of those people. You know, sometimes there are people whose transcription of their speech looks like a beautifully written paragraph. And I'm definitely not that I lose my track and I go off in another

direction and I may or may not find my way back. And as someone who interviews people for a living, you'd think that I would've learned this, but I'm not so great at that.

MZ: Yeah, I, I have, I really like, there's a reason why I don't like, I'm not looking forward to transcribing this whole thing because people sound really stupid when you transcribe them.

KB: Can software help? Like are you able to get like a really rough translation, uh, transcription from some kind of voice to text?

MZ: I really want to, uh, I don't know if there's money for that, but, you know, we'll see. So, but anyway, I'm going to stop this real quick.