

Rita-Louise Montour '13  
Dartmouth College Oral History Program  
Dartmouth Community and Dartmouth's World  
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AL-JABER: My name is Laala Al-Jaber. I'm at Rauner Library. Today is Tuesday, February 5th, 2013. I'm here with Rita-Louise Montour, who's a '13.

So can we start off by going over your life prior to coming to Dartmouth?

MONTOUR: Oh, yeah. Okay, so I've had a really—I guess not a different life, but, like everyone's had a different life. But I moved a lot. I think I'd been to eleven different schools before I went to high school and that was due to my parents. I'm Native American, and I was born in Montreal, and then I lived there for three years, until I was three, in Kahnawake, which is the reserve we lived at. And then my father got a good job opportunity down in Boulder, Colorado, so we moved down there. And then my parents got divorced, and I went with my mother down to New Mexico, and my two other sisters stayed with my father, and I would go up and visit sometimes. And it was about, I think, a seven-hour drive, so my parents would meet halfway and then exchange me, and then I'd go back.

So from that, I've gotten really good at being in cars, and I can read and fall asleep instantly if I want. [Laughs.] It's good practice. But I think between that, I moved in between Santa Fe and Boulder just a ton of times, because my dad got sick with colon cancer, so then we moved back up so I could be closer to him. And he passed away when I was 11, and that was I think in fifth grade? And then I think I went to middle school, and that school got shut down and re-incorporated with another one, so then I had to move to a different school. And it was just a lot of movement. There were a lot of half years, and it was just kind of weird.

So I kind of feel like I don't have a [firm] sense of home necessarily because it's, like—my mother—I remember [when we moved] when I was younger, it was always a problem. Like, she'd be, we're moving, and I'd be really

upset. I didn't want to be moving again. And then eventually it got to a point where I'd be in my room and whatever, like, reading. I don't know, watching TV. And she'd come in, and be like, "We're moving." And I'd be "Okay, where are we going now?" Because it just became something that happened.

I think from that, I've gotten really good at making friends, but I don't really know how to necessarily try to keep friends because they've always been kind of this—oh, they shift out; they change. So when I went to high school, I was there at a boarding school for four years, so I really, really, really enjoyed that because it was a home base. Like, I got really attached to everyone there, and you lived with all your friends—like, just forever. And my class was of 30 kids, so I got really close to everyone in the grade, and I really enjoyed that.

And I started dating a guy there, and we dated for two years? And I got really attached to *his* family because he was a day student, and we would always go to his house on the weekends, and he was going to come to university in the States because that was his goal. But I never really had those kind of thoughts, being *Oh, I'm gonna go to university*. Like, I was—because in Quebec you graduate in grade 11, go to CEGEP, and then after that you can go to university. So it was a weird two-year professional program kind of thing. So I was just planning on maybe doing that.

AL-JABER: Do you specialize in those two years?

MONTOUR: Yeah. Like, you kind of pick a more firm track. Like, it's science or social sciences or —you know, kind of just like you kind of keeping going down [one] and then in other ones, you can do more computer science and stuff. And so I was going to go to a CEGEP, and then probably live around and live in my town and stuff, because I didn't really have firm plans.

But I ended up staying for another year at my private boarding school because they were a private boarding school, so they offered grade 12, which most Quebec high schools don't do. And I had a friend whose mother was the guidance counselor and was like "Oh you're a smart Native

American. We could get you into some really good schools, down in the States.” And I was Uhhh...like, I didn’t really want to meet with her. It was going to be too much work. *I don’t even know—why would I go to university?*

And then my friend kept pushing me. She’s, like, “Come on! Mom really, really wants to meet with you. C’mon, c’mon!” So I was, “Okay. I’ll meet with her. Fine.” And so we went, and she was like,—yeah, she was just telling me about “it’s a great opportunity,” and I was, like, “Okay that sounds cool,” you know. And she was, like—she said, “Okay, we’ll take you down to one,” because my boarding school’s only two hours away from here. It’s right on the border of Quebec to Vermont, so I was, like, “Okay.”

So we drove down here, and she just literally just showed me the Dartmouth campus, and I was, like, “Are all American colleges like this? This is beautiful!” Like, you know? I was just imagining every college campus is like this.

AL-JABER: Did you get here in the summer, though?

MONTOUR: Yeah, it was, like—yeah, it was beautiful. [Laughs.] I was just, like, *What is going on?* Like, everyone was running around. I was, like, *Oh, my God, this is how you imagine college,* right? And she was, like, “Yeah, there’s tons of schools that are like this.” And I was, like, “Oh, but they seem so big, you know?” Because my school had 180 students, and that was, like grades 7 through 12, so all the grades were really, really small.

And so I was, “Okay, I guess we can try.” And oh, my God, if I had known how much work it was going to be to apply to all the schools, I probably wouldn’t have, because all the essays and the common apps. And everyone had been studying for the SATs way before me, and I was laughing at them because they were all in those extra classes and taking APs. And I was, like, “Ha-ha-ha, losers, I get to go play on the basketball court!” [Laughs.] And then it was, like, “Well, you have to take the SATs in a month. Have fun.”

So I had to, like,—I think I studied with a couple of friends, and I had no idea what I was doing, and then I went into the

test. [Laughs.] It was just so stressful! But I guess my scores were okay because I got in, right?

But I think my—I remember I was still dating the guy, and he was applying to a ton of schools, and he hadn't been hearing back from them, but I heard back [chuckles] from all my schools, so he was getting kind of upset, because I think one day I picked up one of the envelopes, and I was, like—it was Stanford, and I was, like, "I got into Stanford!" I was so excited. And he was, like "Congratulations." Because the best one he got into at that point was Brigham Young or something. And I was, like, "It'll be fine. You'll hear back from your other schools, too," because he was a head prefect and was really smart, too, so it was, like, "You're not gonna have any trouble. Don't worry." But I was, like, *Okay, I should stop bragging.* [Laughs.] But he got into Harvard, so he's fine now. He's off there.

But I think I really wanted to come to Dartmouth because it was the only campus that I actually ended up seeing, and they took me down for the Native Fly-in Program that they have here, and I was, like, *Everyone is so nice*, and they wanted to be your friend, and the classes were small. And, like—I don't know, it was just close to everything, so I wanted to stay around in the area.

And I think I was choosing between Dartmouth, Stanford and Colgate, and my guidance counselor said, "Why are you even looking at Colgate? Push that away." [Laughs.] I was, like, "It sounds nice there. I don't know." But Stanford was going to be too far away, so I—and because I was talking to my mother about it, and she was, like, "You're still young. You know you can get a car, and drive home. You won't have to pay for your flights and everything," because my dad passed away and left us some money, so my mom doesn't have much. She spent it all—like, you know, supporting me and my three sisters. And my two sisters are kind of like delinquents, so she has to deal with a lot. So it's really, like—I'm kind of supporting myself through what my dad has left me.

And so I have to pay for my phone, I have to pay for my car and you know, everything is kind of like—she's, like, "It's just gonna be so much easier on you going here because you

won't have to pay for your flights and everything to get back home, and you have much more of a supportive base."

And I'm really glad that I stayed around here because it's, like,—I stayed in contact with my old boyfriend, and I got to be with his family a lot, who kind of became a second family for me. And that's just kind of what led up to choosing Dartmouth. It was just a bunch of good people around me pushing me towards good things.

AL-JABER: So what would you have done if you didn't come to Dartmouth? Because it seems like it happened all so suddenly.

MONTOUR: It did. I was going to go—there were two CEGEPs that I think I got into, and I was going to go to the better one. That was Marianopolis, because I couldn't decide what I liked in high school, so they were the only CEGEP that offered arts *and* science program, so instead of just sciences or the arts. You know, they had a combined program. So it was, like, *Oh, it's like high school but more in depth*. So I was going to go do that and then probably just live on the reserve and get married. [Laughs.]

So I don't know, it's really weird that—I am a senior, and I have no idea what I'm going to do, because I've never really had a plan per se.

AL-JABER: Well, what's your major?

MONTOUR: I'm a bio major. And that came about by a fluke as well, because I came here, and I was, like, *Luckily it's a liberal arts; you don't have to choose your major right away*. So I went around, and I took classes in every department—like, every single department. And I think I took—in the fall, I took a class called Bio 2, which is human biology but basic. And it's designed for non-majors. And I was, like, *This is so cool. Oh, my God. Like, all these cool details about the body. That's awesome*.

And I think—I took a couple of other bio classes, and I was, like,—I had fun in all the other classes, and they were interesting, but none of them were, like, *Yeah, I wanna learn that material*. So I was, like, *I guess I'll have to be a bio*

*major. I don't know what else to choose. So I chose that, and I probably shouldn't have because it's full of pre-med kids, and they are really scary, and my grades aren't that great. [Chuckles.]*

AL-JABER: Well, you're graduating now.

MONTOUR: Yeah, yeah, so I don't have to worry about that. But it's still I'm worried about trying to find a job, because it's, like—you know, you look at everything, and they're requesting your transcript, and I'm, like,—my transcript isn't stellar. So it's, like,—you know. I don't know. I'm just worried about what's going to happen afterwards because all my senior friends are getting jobs.

AL-JABER: But you've applied to certain jobs.

MONTOUR: No. The thing is, I don't even know where I want to go because I'm pretty sure I don't want to go home because after experiencing here and then going back home in the winter—like, it's,—and even talking to my mother, it's very stagnant in town. You know, it's you know who you know, and everyone just gossips, and there's nothing really to do. And because I didn't grow up there I don't have, like, family ties and the friendships growing up and everything.

So I know two guys who are my friends, because they're the sons of my mother's best friend. That's how I know them. And one is basically super bored right now. Like, all he does is play video games at home. And they're 25, you know? And then the other guy is at university right now in Lennoxville. It's a college, I think. And so he's graduating. He's a theater guy. I don't know what he's doing. So it's just there's nothing really at home.

AL-JABER: Are you the first person out of your sisters to go to college?

MONTOUR: My eldest sister went to college. She was doing a nursing program at Ottawa U., but she didn't make it all the way through.

AL-JABER: So can you talk to me about your experience coming into Dartmouth and how you sort of integrated into the community?

MONTOUR: I lucked out. I had a really good roommate, and I had a really, really, really good UGA. Like, I'm still *best friends*—I'm best friends with my UGA. She's a '12, and I think she—she's one of those girls who came in and was shy and didn't really know how to make friends, and then she got a boyfriend, so she just kind of hung out with him all the time. And luckily, he kind of had a friends group, so they all played Dungeons and Dragons together.

So, because she was the UGA, they needed another person to play with them, so she's, like, "Oh, I'll blitz out to my floor kids. Maybe someone will wanna play." And I'm a huge nerd. Like, these earrings are from a video game. And so I was, like, *That sounds sick. Like, I wanna try that.* And so I blitzed her back. I was, like, "Yeah I wanna play," and she's, like, "Okay, great. I didn't know anyone was gonna blitz back."

So I went, and I met her friends, and it was cool because they were—I was a freshman and they were all upperclassmen. Like, it was a '12—I think there was three '11s in the group, and then there was a '10. And so I got a connection in that sense, so it felt a lot more stable immediately because I became friends with upperclassmen who are less focused on partying and more focused on, like,—you know hanging out because they've been through their freshman party years.

And so that was really helpful to have as a base, because Friday nights is, like,—none of them were part of the Greek system. Like, they were all Comp Sci, math majors, so they didn't go out, so it was "We're gonna watch *Up* and sit in the house, and we're gonna play video games and play board games." And it was just, like,—and do puzzles and just go eat. And it was just what I needed. You know, because that's what I was more used to in high school. It was just living with friends, you know, and doing stuff and not focused on drinking.

AL-JABER: But when you first came in—like, Greek culture is huge here. Did you ever think of ever joining a sorority or—

MONTOUR: I'm actually in a sorority.

AL-JABER: Oh, you are.

MONTOUR: Yeah. I joined I think—so it's me and my freshman roommate, who are still really good friends, who joined the group. I eventually dragged her with me. I was, like, "You have to come play Dungeons and Dragons with me. It's so much fun." She was, like, "Okay." And so now we're all friends with this huge group, right? And we still all e-mail each other. We have a Google group that we blitz out to all the time.

But we would go out and party and try to hang out because we both joined the rugby team as well. I played in high school, so I was, like, *Oh maybe a sport will be fun, too*, because I knew it would be a good way to meet people and stay active.

And so we would go out and hang out with the other freshman girls who we met through rugby. It was fun. You know it's you got to be able—you know, it was all crowded and sweaty and you got kind of hot, and you really didn't know anyone, and you just kind of stood in the corner, and everyone—everyone knew you were a freshman because it's so clear when you see them walking around you. "Yep, that's a freshman right there." [Laughs.] And you're trying to blend in, but—

Now, when I look, I'm, it's so obvious. Like, it must have been so obvious. Like, all my upperclassmen friends, whenever me and my friend, Melissa, would say anything, they would always be, like, "Freshmen!" And we'd be, like, "What? We didn't say anything!" But we did. We totally did. [Laughs.]

AL-JABER: So when did you join the sorority? Was that immediately after you came?

MONTOUR: Here, you have to wait a year, so you can't join freshman year, and rush happens sophomore year, which is actually really good because then everyone gets to make their friends and they kind of find out what they want to do before they just immediately get sucked into a house, you know?

AL-JABER: Mm-hm.

MONTOUR: So that was nice. And my friend Melissa actually chose not to rush when the recruitment process started. And I was, like, *Well, maybe I want to. I really like meeting people.* So I was, like, *It shouldn't be that bad.* And I really like talking to people. And it seems like maybe—I'm, like, *If I don't like it after the first day you can drop.* So I was just, like, *If it's not a thing for me, then whatever. I'll just drop.*

So I went through, and it's a process. It's only four or five days, but it's long because I think—there's eight girl houses, so you have to go visit them all and talk with them for I think—like, parties are thirty minutes or an hour or something? So it's you go and you're just talking to girl after girl after girl after girl and girl. And it's just exhausting.

But when I was going through the process—because I wasn't really, like, *I have to join a house! I have to join a house!* I wasn't worried about impressing them. And when they asked me questions, I just would just answer honestly. And they're, like, "Well, what do you do on campus?" And I was, like, "Oh well, I play Dungeons and Dragons." And it's just if they weren't into that, I was, like, *They're not gonna be into me because that's a huge part of me.* I really like—I feel like saying Dungeons and Dragons as something that people can immediately know of what it is. So was just, like, *If you can't accept that, then, like I don't want to be in your house anyway, you know?*

And so there were a couple of houses that you know, you get invited back and stuff, so there were some that invited me back. And one of them—like, they really loved it. They just, like, they just totally loved that you were into something weird and were really yourself.

And that's the sorority I ended up joining because every girl I talked to felt like they were already my friends. And everyone was just so uniquely themselves that I was, like, *This is great. Like, this is great. This is not what I imagined a sorority was going to be.*

AL-JABER: What first motivated you to join one?

MONTOUR: Well, we had—like, everyone was going through rush, so it was just kind of something everyone did. And I was, like,—it seems like a process that you can get to know a lot of people through. So I was, like,—I like meeting people, so I was, like, *Why not? Like, see how it goes.*

AL-JABER: Are you active in the Native American community on campus?

MONTOUR: I think I came—they had orientation week for that. And I came, and I didn't really seem to mesh with a lot of the people. But I've met a lot of NADs now—like, later, through other things. And I'm I don't know, I really love talking to them and, like,—it's enjoyable. But I kind of wish I had gotten more involved with that. But I also feel like they're—it's still the reserve mindset sometimes and that's why they're drawn to each other, and that's why I feel kind of drawn, but that's why I feel kind of out of it, too, because I understand the reserve, but I don't really feel necessarily a part of the reserve.

So I would feel weird. Like, I would almost feel like a poser going in, being, like, "Yeah, I'm from the reserve and I'm Native," but I didn't grow up in the same mindset because I grew up in Boulder and Santa Fe and stuff.

AL-JABER: I see. And how do you juggle all these different roles that you have on campus, and how do you keep ties with all these different communities that you're a part of?

MONTOUR: Just say hi and just go if I can. It's not that I have really strong roles in a lot of these places, you know? Like, I just feel like I'm kind of a person to add some social lubrication, you know? Like, there's people who are, like, "I am the pillar of this community " and stuff. And it's like, "I'm a member." So I don't feel like I necessarily am struggling. And if it's—like, if I don't have time, then, you know, I have, like—I have my list of priorities of things that I want to do.

Because we have sorority meetings every Wednesday. You go and they have announcements and you get drunk and hang out with everyone. And they're a lot of fun, but sometimes I'm tired and I don't want to go, so I don't, you know.

AL-JABER: So has your sense of community changed over time?

MONTOUR: I mean, the thing is it was really hard sophomore year because, like—or junior year because a lot of people ended up graduating and all my '11 friends and everyone, so it was just like—I think it was just me and Michelle and Melissa.

And it was weird because I was off some terms and I didn't see her that often, and it's just—it was weird not having that base of, like, Oh, what is everyone doing this Friday night? And it was hard to fill in times, you know?

AL-JABER: Mm-hm.

MONTOUR: Because it's like I realized I wasn't necessarily involved in a lot of programs, and I didn't have a job. And so when I would text people, "Hey, let's go for a ride," and everyone would be like, "Oh, I'm sorry. I have this. Oh, sorry. I have this," you know?

AL-JABER: Mm-hm.

MONTOUR: And I feel like this term—I'm really enjoying this term because I'm working two jobs, and I have my classes, and meetings, and I feel like things are, like, really filled in nicely. And I'm living off campus, which I enjoy so much because we can cook, and it's like coming home.

AL-JABER: So it seems as though your community is very malleable. Is that something that you intentionally worked towards or it just happened naturally?

MONTOUR: I think that's probably how I feel comfortable because I used to like fluidity and moving and being able to change things, so it's, like, Oh, if I want to go here, then I go here, and if I want to be here, I can be here. I honestly— like, you know, you're supposed to be self-discovering yourself and being, like, *Yes, this is the core of me*. But I don't know. Like, people are always, like, "Yeah, I really like—you know, I'm a loner, and I like being inside and recharging and watching movies and stuff." Sometimes I love doing that. But other times, I love being in a crowd and talking to everyone, so I

don't know if I've discovered myself other than I like to change.

AL-JABER: Have there been times—well, do you feel like an insider at Dartmouth?

MONTOUR: You mean like part of the Dartmouth community?

AL-JABER: Yes.

MONTOUR: I think so. But maybe more part of the community of the people I know, you know? Like, I see '16s and '15s, and I don't know them, you know? So that's kind of unfortunate. And I know they probably want to get to know us, but throughout the years you get such different levels of experience that it's sometimes hard to talk to them, you know? Because they're in such a different space.

I remember sophomore year, in the fall—because I hadn't really partied that much as a freshman. When I joined the house, it was, like, *Oh, my God! Like, everyone gets to party all the time.* I got so drunk all the time. It was like I was doing freshman year in sophomore fall. [Chuckles.] Which probably wasn't a good idea for all my classes, but it was enjoyable, I suppose. [Laughs.]

AL-JABER: But have there been times where you felt like an outsider?

MONTOUR: Definitely. I mean it's hard sometimes when you're surrounded by these people who are also driven and knowing and planning and very, very A-type people, you know, who have their life planned out. I feel weird trying to say that I'm one of them when everyone seems to be going places and I don't really know where to take myself.

AL-JABER: So how would you define the broader Dartmouth community? Does it include administrators, parents? How do you see it? And has it changed over time?

MONTOUR: Oh, I don't know if I ever tried to think about—I guess when I think of the Dartmouth community, I first thought students. Like, it was purely students only and people who directly interact with students. Like, I'm thinking—there's a guy

named Josiah, who interacts with the UGAs. He's kind of like their upper level, so it's probably that's as far as it got.

But now that I'm, like—I've been working and stuff, I realize there's so many other people who—like, everyone who works here now. So I think of all the staff and students and I don't know, everyone who's involved with Dartmouth and I guess everyone who has to deal with the Dartmouth students, you know, too, because they're impacted by stuff that the administration does and then the stuff, like students do.

AL-JABER: Just backtracking a little, you're part of a sorority, and so what do you make of all this criticism lodged against the Greek culture at Dartmouth?

MONTOUR: I mean, it's so hard because there's so many things wrong with the Greek system, but there's so many great things that it's hard to say condemn it because— there are definitely times even in my own sorority that I'm, like, *What are we doing? I don't feel great about this.* But then there are other times that I wouldn't want to join any other sorority than the one I'm in because even, like,—the first—so when rush goes through, when you're going through it, you're, like, *Oh! These girls are just talking to me for ten minutes. Like, what can they know about me? How can they judge, like, "Yes, we want her; she's great"?*

And so I was, like,—it was almost easier for me to be judged when I was rushing rather than me going through and being on the other side. Like, that was really, really hard for me to deal with, having all these girls come up and talk to me. Like, I really want to be in your house. They didn't say things like that, but you could, you could tell when they were talking to you. "Yeah, tell me what's great." And you're kind of like, "Oh!" Like, "Just talk to me." You know, like, "I want to get to know you. Don't try to impress me." Because it's weird; it made me feel uncomfortable.

But when we actually went through the—so you go through all the parties, and then how my sorority works is you have, like,—we put up pictures of the girls, like their Facebook pictures, so we can remember who they are. And everyone

talks, and says positive things and maybe some negative things.

And I was really worried about how the process was going to go. I was, like, *This is terrible. This is like a shit ton of girls sitting in their room, looking at a picture of a girl and judging her. What is this? What am I doing right now?* I was having so many problems!

But the way everyone handled themselves just amazed me. You know, they said only positive things. And negative things was, like, “I only had this one experience with her” or, you know, there was nothing really, like, “I can’t say anything, but if you guys like her, let’s bring her back,” you know? It was just really, really respectful.

And so that was the best way I think it could have happened, in a sense, because I don’t—I haven’t really thought about how to necessarily make rush better, because it’s hard that when you have, like,—there’s hierarchies already in place. Like, which ones are the cool houses? So, like—Sorry, I totally forgot the question.

AL-JABER: What do you make of the criticism of the Greek culture?

MONTOUR: I mean, it’s necessary sometimes to jar things and to be—and my sorority—like, we don’t really haze people, even before anything happened—well, when I was rushing, I guess it was like—when we got a bid, we were all taken to the basement, and we were all blindfolded, and we had to hold hands with each other, and they were giving us all beers. And they were, like, “Drink the beer!” And it was, like, “Only if you want to!” [Laughs.] So they were, like, “Seriously, guys. Like, if you don’t wanna drink it, just hold it. It’s fine. But you just have to hold the can.” You know, it was, like, *Okay.*

So I never felt pressured to drink or do anything I didn’t want to do because it was fun. It was like being able to be part of everyone. Like, we have to—we wear “flair.” Like, on the first day, when you get your bid or whatever, they tack a big door: “Welcome to,” like, whatever. Like, “Love your bids.” And then they leave a bag of clothes that you have to wear. And

it's silly hats. And you've seen people wear the furry, weird outfits—

AL-JABER: Mm-hm.

MONTOUR: —like neon things and leopard print and ridiculous outfits. That was so much fun, because I got to wear it, and then everyone in my sorority recognized me, and I was able to say hi to everyone and recognize who was in my class. And it helped me connect more with everyone. So I enjoyed that process. But I can't imagine, like swimming in puke pools, having fun. I can't imagine that being a good experience. So the criticism is necessary for some, and it sucks that other people have to suffer for it, but—you know.

AL-JABER: It seems as though the fraternities get a lot more flak than the sororities at Dartmouth.

MONTOUR: I think that's probably fair because I don't think girls would really do that to other girls. [Laughs.] I feel I like there's—boys probably have more problems in their hazing, but we definitely have more problems in our recruitment process, because I feel like girls are probably a lot more judgmental than boys are. So I feel like in the rush process, if you say something wrong or maybe someone doesn't like what you're wearing or you have a weird outfit on, I feel like you could get judged very easily on that, more so in the girl process than the man.

AL-JABER: And you're part of the Dartmouth women's rugby team.

MONTOUR: I used to be. I was there for a year, I quit, and then I joined again.

AL-JABER: You joined again recently?

MONTOUR: For junior year, and then—I'm a senior, so now—

AL-JABER: So are you still in touch with the community you established there?

MONTOUR: I wish I was, but they're all kind of—they're kind of busy, you know? And they—it's a very, very strong individualist kind of group of women. I feel like it takes a certain mentality,

obviously, to be like, “Yes! I wanna go play rugby and get hit and tackle people in the mud,” you know? And so those women are all very tough and strong. But I’m really friendly with all of them when I see them, and I wouldn’t necessarily say we hang out, so I guess not. I’m not really.

AL-JABER: Why did you quit, though?

MONTOUR: I think after freshman year, I felt like I had better things to do with my time, and I was kind of being, *Oh, I don’t really wanna go to practice. I don’t wanna see these people*, blah, blah, blah. I felt like they were, like, “Oh, I want to go do this” or “I want to go do that.” But I had to go to practice instead, so I wasn’t really enjoying. It felt like a much more time sink than something I wanted, you know? And everyone was getting involved with different things, and I was, like, *There are other things that I can get involved with that I would rather explore*, because I had played rugby in high school for four years. So, granted, the community is much different from high school to college, because you come into drinking age, as opposed to in high school, when you’re not. And so I was, like, *Oh, I don’t know. I don’t really wanna explore this much further*, so I stopped.

And then I think sophomore year was a lot of fun, but I realized I kind of missed being active, and I missed being with the team and having another sense of community in that way, because we always would go to dinner after practice. You know, things were just kind of like auto-planned for you, which is an enjoyable sense, being like, *Oh, this time’s filled, this time’s filled, so I have to do my homework at this slot*, as opposed to, like, *I have all evening*, and then 10 p.m. rolls by and I’m, like, *Shit!*

But I think junior year, I played in fall, and I had a good time. And then I was off in the winter? And then we had spring tour and I had a very terrible time, so that’s why I quit because I decided—there were three parts of rugby; the coach, the team and the game, and if you only like one out of the three, is it really worth it?

AL-JABER: And so what other things do you do around campus?

MONTOUR: I feel like I'm more focused into school and my job and my friends, so I'm in the sorority and I have my boyfriend, and then I have my off-campus house, and we always do tons of fun things. And it's freed up my time to go do random things. Like, I think last—was it last week or something? I just went to a concert in Boston, and it was a Tuesday night, and it was, "Sorry, guys, later," you know? And I enjoy being able to explore a lot more.

So I'm excited that I'm a senior because I don't have to sit there and—like, I was taking a test just light night for my molecular bio class, and I was sitting there, and I was writing everything down, and I was, like, *I can't think! I can't think! I can't think!* And I stopped for a moment, and I looked around, and I was, like, *We have been sitting in this room for two and a half hours doing this test, and I'm still sitting here, writing this test.* And I was looking around, and I was, like, *What are we doing? We could be doing much more important things.*

I don't know. Like, you have those weird moments where you are like, *I want to be able to change something. Why are we all just wasting our brain power, writing on this piece of paper?* But I was, like, *I don't have time to think like that. I have to go back to the test.*

AL-JABER: And just to move on to a slightly different topic, there has been some unrest on campus with all these racial incidents.

MONTOUR: Mmm.

AL-JABER: Have you reflected on that, and what are your thoughts on it?

MONTOUR: I have been reflecting on it, but it's more in a much more personal sense, because I think just working here and indexing *The D*, I have to read every article, which has been actually really helpful and eye opening to what is going on, on campus, because otherwise I only hear it from when people are talking because I don't pursue information on my own. So reading all of those responses and how it's morphing and everything just made me think about—

I identify as a Native American, and I understand different—you know, being in a racial body, but I feel like a lot of people look at me, and they don't think I'm Native, so they view me as white. So it's weird that I have kind of like a weird sense of self, that it's—like, I'll catch myself referring to the fact that I'm white, even though I know I'm not, because it's, like—I don't know.

And then there was one weird article that was talking—I think it was an opinion piece about how the Greek system just tends to privilege white, private-school people, like in getting bids. And they listed the stats, and I was, like, *Oh, my God. I never thought about that.* And I was just thinking about, like, in my sorority. We take people who are very—you know, like I said, very themselves and very involved and everything. And that tends to be people who have been able to explore a lot and understand a lot of different things. So I feel like if you have more “cool” stories, you're going to be “cooler.”

So people who go to private boarding schools, who have money to go skiing, have money to go on adventures to Thailand, they're going to have cooler stories and going to be, like, quote unquote cooler. So knowing that—even though I've come from a small community where there is poverty and teen births and weird stuff like that, my parents made sure I was really well provided for. And because my elder sisters—my mother learned that public school and stuff like—because I'm the youngest, I definitely got the benefit of all the mistakes that my sisters have made, so I didn't make them, or I wasn't allowed to make them, you know? And my mother made sure I went to the “good” private schools in Santa Fe. She made sure that I was in good communities and stuff, because she learned the hard way with my other sisters, who are still having problems.

AL-JABER: Going back to how you define the Dartmouth community, do you think that its isolated nature affects it, I guess?

MONTOUR: Right. I mean, we always talk about the Dartmouth bubble, and I believe that's a really real thing. Like, there are articles that are—People read *The New York Times* and everything, but it becomes very much Dartmouth focused, that this is the center of the world and this is everything that's going on. And

it's hard when—it's one of those things—like, we're all so busy. We all have so many things to do that when someone is, like, "There's this really great cause that we should support," and you're, like, "I don't have time. I have a test tomorrow and a paper due," and "I'm gonna have to apply for jobs, you know. I just don't have time for that." And then you want to sleep. So the fact that we're so busy and so involved here stops us from being involved elsewhere. So, I guess, yeah, it does affect it.

AL-JABER: And how has Dartmouth changed you as a person? Have you had time to reflect on that not that you're a senior?

MONTOUR: Mmm. No, I definitely have not had time for that, but it's probably definitely changed me for the better. Like, I was definitely outgoing and able to talk to people, but I think I was a little bit more bitter about it. I remember freshman year being, like, *Oh, I'm so good at talking to people and making friends*. That's because I've never had a sense of home. And now it's like—going through here and hearing so many other people's stories and knowing everyone comes from such amazingly different backgrounds that it's, like, *Oh, just because you think your life was so hard, it wasn't*. It's been a really, really positive experience, and I'm glad I was able to come, and I've had such wonderful people and such wonderful sets of circumstances that have brought me this far. You know, I'd really like to thank everyone for helping me.

AL-JABER: I think we've covered everything, but is there something that you would like to add or something that you think I did not ask you?

MONTOUR: No. I don't know. I mean, just, like, Dartmouth is great, and Dartmouth sucks. You know, there's always so many different things that you could just easily talk about. But that's my story. [Laughs.]

AL-JABER: Okay, I'm turning it off.

MONTOUR: All right.

**[End of interview.]**