

Interviewee: Renee Dyer

Interviewer: Baiza Getabecha

Summary:

Renee's maiden name is White, that name is used by her children. Renee's last name is Dyer from her first marriage. Renee plans on changing back to White following her divorce.

[Consent script, introduction] *So now if you could go into your last name story* Ok my current last name? *Yeah, your current last name your kids last name, just like the last names, what makes your situation more... you know.* Well my last name is Dyer because of marriage, and I changed my last name kinda because that's what you did when you get married. Um, I did think about hyphenating my last name White-Dyer to keep my last name as White because I'm an only child from my dad but now when my divorce goes through tomorrow it will be back to White which is my maiden name, and both of my kids both have my maiden name which is White. Neither one of them carries their dad's last name because they weren't around, um, and they weren't around to sign their birth certificates, and so, and they are also my dad's only grandboys and so they have, they can carry on their last names whenever they get married down the road.

*So I mean, just to clarify, so is there like a relationship to tradition or towards, like, feminism or you know that kind of stuff that...* Um I changed my last name into, for the tradition of, you know, when a woman gets married they change their last name into their husband's name. Um, I did think about in the beginning to do nontraditional way, but I didn't, so, I just kept it as my husband's name.

*What do you think are the effects of these decisions, like on your children, on like... You know choosing this way of following tradition or not following tradition, what do you think the effects are on you or on your children?* Well the effects on me, I, if I had the chance, I would have hyphenated my name added my maiden name to my last name. And then with my kids, you know, if the possibility that their dads were around on their first being [born], I would still choose that they kept my maiden last name as a family tradition because they are the only boys and they can carry on the White [name] down the road. *Ok did you have role models for your decision? Like in family friends or yeah?* Um I mean, my mom, when she was married she changed her last name to her husband's name, um, my grandma changed her last name to my grandpa's last name. So the role models I've had of everybody in my family, have always all kept their husband's last names and didn't keep their last names.

*Do you see like, this affecting, you know like, do you think about how other people would think of you having, you know, of you having made the decisions about your name that you have?* Um, no, I mean, I know that I can't wait and other people can't wait till I get my last name changed from Dyer to White [laughs] Dyer is a name in this town that you shouldn't have [laughs]. Because of that family's... That family's reputation around town, and his reputation around town as well.

*This goes into like, pros and cons, so next question is what did you and your parents hope for in choosing this name? And has it worked?* Um, my mom thought, you know, felt that, well first thought my the marriage wasn't real and was ok with it, or tried to be ok with it at first, and then now would like me to get divorced and now that it's finally happening, she's happy that I'm going back to my maiden name. Me getting rid of the Dyer name. *Ok have there been any unforeseen*

*consequences in like you returning to your name or your kids having your name or whatever?*  
Um no, I'm glad that they do have my maiden name, so that you know, they can carry it on. And if I was to have a, you know, if I did have a girl then her last name being White, then she could change it down the road if she wanted to. *Yeah* So her having that choice of being traditional or not traditional would be, you know, her choice. But having boys unless they turn out gay and they want to keep their mates last name, they'll continue White.

*So what does the name White represent for you?* Um it represents my dad, and my mom, in California my mom was able to write my dad's name on my birth certificate when I was born he didn't have to sign it in California. Whereas in Colorado the dad has to be present and be at the hospital when the baby is born and sign. *Oh huh. So, it represents him in particular? Or like his line, like, your ancestry further beyond him?* It represents my an..., White represents my ancestry um, it probably goes to some portion of Indian that we are possibly. Um, we're Irish too so or German Irish French. So it probably represents some bloodline that we have. All my relatives back in California are all White so its kinda signify I think we are yeah last names [laughs].. I forgot what kinda [aside] you remember what kind of Indian, grampa said we were? We're a little bit of Blackfoot Indian, so it probably has something to do with that. *And is that part of what you think about in wanting to have your name?* Yes, and I shouldn't have changed my name or gotten married in the first place [aside] you're right.

*What kind of reactions have you or your family gotten about you names?* About my name change? *Yeah.* Um, you know, they didn't want me... My mom didn't want me to be married first [background voices ('or second or third'), laughter] Or second, or third, she didn't want me to be married. And, you know, she didn't really say anything about me changing my name, just later on the fact that he... I'm an idiot and you know, I should have gotten divorced a long time ago not two or three years later.

*How effective do you think that your choice is in intervening in women being erased?* Um, well it's 2012 almost 2013 so a lot of women are becoming more independent and will keep their last names. Um, even if they do get married, they will keep their last names to represent their families and keep their tradition going, um. And then there's you know some will change their last names to their husband's names. But it kinda more and more into the future... I think women will start keeping their last names when they get married. *And you think that that will change like the... what do you think that will change?* Just um, giving my name more... not more rights per say but um, being more active being head of household, you know, being, wearing the pants in the family per say. You know, maybe dad being a stay at home dad, challenging that.