

Interviewee: Marley Ferguson Hautzinger (Child given father's and mother's last names, no hyphen)

Interviewer: Sarah Hautzinger

[Intro, consent] So, I have two last names that aren't hyphenated: Ferguson Hautzinger. And Ferguson is my dad's last name and Hautzinger is my mom's. And my parents gave me both with the idea that I would drop Hautzinger and just use Ferguson. But I haven't done that, and I've used both. As if it were a hyphenated last name. *And so, is that your choice?* I guess, but also it's on my birth certificate. *So, do you remember when you started using both names?* I've always used both names. *So they intended you to drop Hautzinger, and you didn't do that?* Because Ferguson Hautzinger was my name, was my last name that I was used to. That I learned to spell as a little kid. Eighteen letters. *You counted. My full name is 28 letters. And so does that have anything to -- or do you have any attachment to those last names?* Other than them being my last names? I don't know. I guess. *OK. So... can you talk about how that's worked, having a last name situation that's unusual, like with schools and stuff?* I just explain that my parents are a little unusual and not very good at naming people, so... [laughs]. I use it as if it were a hyphenated last name. *And do they ever put the hyphen in, for you?* Generally, yeah. *Do they ever drop Ferguson and use Hautzinger?* I'm not sure. Generally they don't know whether, which one's my father's, or mother's name and they just go with convenience, I guess. And Hautzinger is a bit odd. [Laughs]. *The interviewee just deflated the interviewer's chair.* What was the question?

Why you think they don't drop Ferguson, so usually if you have multiple last names they just use the last one. I think they just treat the whole thing as a whole and drop the one that doesn't fit on their cards. *Can you think of a time this was a problem?* On standardized tests, because it doesn't fit. Oh, and I never write the whole thing out, because it's 18 letters. Oh, I know when it was a problem! When the librarian got really mad at me because I was signing in because I just wrote F-H. And I was trying to print something really quickly.

Other than them being my *last names?* [Sarcastic tone of adolescent speaking to her mother ;)]. I don't know. I guess. *Okay. So... can you talk about how that's worked, having a last name situation that's unusual, like with schools and stuff?* I just explain that my parents are a little unusual and not very good at naming people, so... [laughs] I use it as if it were a hyphenated last name. *And do they ever put the hyphen in, for you?* Generally, yeah. *Do they ever drop Ferguson and use Hautzinger?* I'm not sure. Generally they don't know whether, which one's my father's, or mother's name and they just go with convenience, I guess. And Hautzinger is a bit odd. [laughs] *The interviewee just deflated the interviewer's chair.* [More laughing.] What was the question?

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And she got really mad at me because I didn't fill out my whole last name. And I explained that it was 18 letters and we had this gigantic ordeal in the library. And then I wrote the whole thing out for her. And then as I was leaving she told me, "It's okay if you just want to write F-H."
[Laughs.]

I don't know anybody else that has the space rather than the hyphen. *If you could turn the clock back to the day you were born what advice would you give your parents?* To put in a hyphen. I'll probably end up changing it anyway because I don't like the 18 letters. For the sake of simplicity, it's just confusing without the hyphen. And they claim to have done it the "Latin American" way, but we're not actually in Latin America. *Why do you think it would lead to confusion for your family but not for Latin American or Latino families in the US that have more than one last name?* But those are generally hyphenated, because they've adapted to the *norm* of the United States.

A space is not the norm. *Well yeah, they'll just drop this middle last name. How effective do you think the name that you were given is in terms of creating ways for women to not disappear, when names do not disappear* Well, I think that it has maternal...it involves both of the parents in the naming process, so they're never going to disappear. *Do you think it's a very good long-term solution?* No, it's a terrible long-term solution.

So what do you imagine you saying if and when you were to marry or enter into a long-term union and have kids, what do you imagine doing with your last name, and/or your kids' last name in the future? Making up a new one. *Oh yeah? Yeah. Any ideas about what that would be?* No. *But you like the idea of making up a new one?* Yes. *Do you see any downsides to that?* Well just that you get rid of the lineage part of it, but either way you're losing part of the lineage, no matter what route you take.

And so if you make up your own name, then what if you end up marrying someone with a hyphenated six-syllable last name? Well, we wouldn't hyphenate with two hyphenated last names. *So would you make up a new last name with him or her, or would you wait until your kids were born?* I don't know, I'm not married or having any kids at this time in my life, 'cuz I'm not ready yet. *But you feel that you will make these big decisions probably away from the names you're given.* Probably. But, like I said, you're not carrying around your entire lineage because you have an infinite number of last names, so you're dropping part of your lineage no matter what, and for people that want to trace their ancestry, I guess it's an inconvenience. I think that in this point in time there's just as much documentation on ancestry as there is, it won't be as quite a big of a deal. *What if you decided to wait and try to fit [?] a new family when you got married,*

and then you end up marrying a man who didn't want to change his name? That would be an inconvenience.

Do you think that your generation...your parents didn't want to hyphenate because they both have long last names anyway, and they felt it was creating even more of a mess for the next generation, but a lot of people who have kids with hyphenated names, would say 'they can decide at the time what to do.' Do you think that's fair for your generation, or do you feel like the parents' generation should take more responsibility? I think it's fair for my generation. I think that the argument that...it's irresponsible on the parents' part -- I guess it is, but I think that names are really personal so that their children should be able to figure it out on their own.