

1 [Kathryn Fanning] So I act like I'm talking to you and

2 [Abigail Lyons] You can just talk to me, it's fine

3 [Fanning] Oh ok

4 [Lyons] Ok so, thank you so much for agreeing to meet with me today. I am Abigail Lyons

5 and it is, what time is it, 3:28 on October 5th, 2019. I am with Kathryn Fanning in my

6 apartment at the University of Dallas. I want to clarify that I am going to tape and record this

7 interview and it will be uploaded to the UD oral history repository. Is that alright?

8 [Fanning] It is my pleasure.

9 [Lyons] Ok I will also represent this information in writing. Would you like me to use a

10 pseudonym to ensure anonymity?

11 [Fanning] Kathryn Fanning is the perfect pseudonym.

12 [Lyons] Great. Ok, well, let's get started. Ok, so um, what type of education did you receive

13 as a child?

14 [Fanning] As a child, I went through Parochial schools all the way through high school and

15 our nuns were mean, and thank God for that because I was able to use good grammar unlike
many Oklahomans and I also went to a Catholic college, the University of Dallas.

16 [Lyons] Of course

17 [Fanning] And you're familiar with it

18 [Lyons] Yes

19 [Fanning] And I have two other college degrees: one from the University of Arkansas and one
20 from the University of Central Oklahoma which at the time was called Central State.

21 [Lyons] Hm what were those ones?

22[Fanning] Well they were the so-called creative studies

23 [Lyons] Oh

24 [Fanning] and English but my heart lies with the University of Dallas.

25 [Lyons] Ok um so why did you decide to start teaching?

26 [Fanning] Here's the ironic thing. I've taught all my adult life but I got an early start. I was a
27 teacher when I was six years old.

28 [Lyons] What?

29 [Fanning] We didn't have Big Bird and Sesame Street to teach us the ABCs.

30 [Lyons] Right

31 [Fanning] We didn't know the ABCs until we went to first grade. So, what I would do, I was
32 so excited you know and they gave us little pieces of the alphabet. We'd spell it out and we
33 had little slots and we had to, you know, put it in, learn to put cat, dog, and so forth.

34 [Lyons] Right

35 [Fanning] Well, what I did is I went home after school and "Playschool" with my three little
36 brothers.

37 [Lyons] Oh that's cute.

38 [Fanning] So, I don't think they were really interested in it but I would line up folding chairs.

39 I was the teacher so whatever I had learned in first day, I taught them that day. It kind of had

40 a bad backfire because they were all able to read before they entered first grade.

41 [Lyons] Oh

42 [Fanning] And in that day and age, when the other kids didn't even know the alphabet and

43 these kids were reading.

44 [Lyons] Wow

45 [Fanning] It was a problem for the teacher. So, I guess I just had that natural bent to force

46 feed myself on other people.

47 [Lyons] Oh well, it seems like you were pretty good at it since they actually like learned how

48 to read. Yeah wow.

49 [Fanning] Yeah, they did. They learned and its funny because an adult is somebody, they said

50 would you please tutor this child. Well I would feel incompetent but back then in the first

51 grade I felt totally competent.

52 [Lyons] Wow yeah

53 [Fanning] It was and it weren't.

54 [Lyons] Wow

55 [Fanning] But interestingly enough I continued to teach. When I was in high school during

56 the summer I would teach, you know, the Bible Vacation school.

57 [Lyons] Oh yeah

58[Fanning] Things I had little third graders.

59[Lyons] Oh cute.

60[Fanning] And then later on I voluntarily taught no-pay for my children's grade school. I

61taught little creative writing classes and then people started hiring me to do workshops for kids

62across the state of Oklahoma and boy that was an interesting experiment.

63[Lyons] Yeah

64[Fanning] What I found, and I'll just say who they were, Mustang School system in

65Oklahoma.

66[Lyons] Ok

67[Fanning] So, I went to talk to the children about writing and about improving their writing

68style and polishing and revising and the teacher said, 'oh we never edit and do any of that. It

69stifles their creativity'.

70[Lyons] Hm

71[Fanning] And I said, 'Excuse me?'

72[Lyons] Yeah

73[Fanning] 'I teach people to use the right side of your brain. Be creative. Just get it down on

74paper. Don't worry about your grammar and punctuation but you have to-it's like making

75bread- you have to make the dough before you knead it and shape it into form. So, you just

76put it down there and then you use the left side of your brain and start shaping it, polishing it'.

77She didn't do that. She's not teaching them.

78[Lyons] Yeah

79[Fanning] That's like playschool, just let them play and write whatever they want and she
80didn't wanna correct them. It might hurt their feelings. So, I thought thank God I had that
81Catholic school education. We never would have gotten away with that and then one of my
82bad experiences with the kids, Cassidy School, very expensive, your money class. I walked in.
83First thing that happened: a little boy started knocking chairs over, flipping the light switch on
84and off. I had never seen such little hooligans!

85[Lyons] Yeah

86[Fanning] And these were the rich kids.

87[Lyons] Oh goodness.

88[Fanning] So, I finally got them settled down.

89[Lyons] Mhm

90[Fanning] And I said, 'look I'm not a policeman'.

91[Lyons] Mhm

92[Fanning] 'here to try to get you people under control. I'm here to try to help you with your
93writing. How many of you are interested in writing?' I asked. Two kids out of the whole lot of
94them full of kids raised their hands.

95[Lyons] Oh my gosh.

96[Fanning] I thought what have I gotten myself into?

97[Lyons] Yeah

98[Fanning] And what the problem was, the teachers just dumped all their kids on me so they
99could go off, you know, into their smoking porch or, who knows, have a cup of coffee or
100whatever. So, there is nobody there to monitor these kids.

101[Lyons] Yeah yeah

102[Fanning] And they took full advantage of it. So, I finally managed to get control.

103[Lyons] Mhm

104[Fanning] And then afterwards, two little boys came up to help me, 'Mrs. Fanning can we
105help you take your stuff to your car?'

106[Lyons] Aw

107[Fanning] And I looked at them and I said, 'Wait a minute. I don't understand. Why are you
108mannerly and helpful?'

109[Lyons] Yeah

110[Fanning] 'And these other boys were acting crazy?' And they said, 'Oh, we're scholarship
111kids. They're the rich kids.'

112[Lyons] Oh

113[Fanning] And then they told me stories about a little Johnny so and so who has a Porsche in
114his garage. He's not even old enough for a driver's license.

115[Lyons] Oh my gosh.

116[Fanning] And little Billy over here's grandma sends him a couple thousand dollars a month.

117It's not even his birthday.

118[Lyons] Oh my gosh.

119[Fanning] And I thought I'm not sure if people are doing these kids any favors.

120[Lyons] Yeah

121[Fanning] Because they had no manners. So, I never went back to Cassidy. I wasn't going to
122go through that again.

123[Lyons] Yeah, and that was an elementary school?

124[Fanning] Yes

125[Lyons] Ok. Elementary school. So, how did your um post-secondary education, so your UD
126and you said, your uh University of Arkansas and Central Oklahoma, all of those um
127educations prepare you for teaching?

128[Fanning] Well the funny thing of it is when I went to the University of Arkansas, I decided
129I'm gonna be a teacher. I guess I've already been a teacher. I just didn't have any credentials.
130The classes on education were horrendous.

131[Lyons] Hm

132[Fanning] You know, all this turgid double talk.

133[Lyons] Oh my gosh

134[Fanning] You know, instead of plain simple language people could understand. I thought
135this is education? So, I changed and got my degree in English. So, I never got a teaching
136certificate.

137[Lyons] Ok

138[Fanning] But interestingly enough, I started writing for publications for magazines and
139newspapers and did that for a number of years and so then I started teaching classes and
140though I never had a teaching certificate, I taught all across the state, churches, libraries,
141schools, private classes and many of my students just left me in the dust.

142[Lyons] Oh no

143[Fanning] You know, where I had several hundred articles or short stories in publication, one
144of them had more than sixty books in publication.

145[Lyons] Wow

146[Fanning] And those weren't self-published books, I mean those were-

147[Lyons] Yeah

148[Fanning] with major publishers.

149[Lyons] Wow

150[Fanning] So, what I learned was I think it's more fun to try to inspire and encourage other
151people-

152[Lyons] Yeah

153[Fanning] than to do the hard work myself. That was the easy out.

154[Lyons] Ok. So, you kind of mentioned how you were taught with, you know, the nuns and
155the Parochial schools. Did your teaching style differ from that or did you kind of stick to
156that?

157[Fanning] Yes, I was nice. I gave good information and gave encouragement but I didn't
158scare the children. You know, I had, for instance, a principal tell me she was gonna put me in
159the convent basement with the rats and spiders.

160[Lyons] Oh my gosh.

161[Fanning] You know, and make me write something five hundred times. You would of
162thought I'd remember what it is I wrote –

163[Lyons] Yeah

164[Fanning] it five hundred times. So, I had some mean nuns.

165[Lyons] Oh no

166[Fanning] I had some nice ones too of course

167[Lyons] Yeah

168[Fanning] But the difference was they taught us discipline

169[Lyons] Hm

170[Fanning] For instance, there was a line on the floor of the tiles.

171[Lyons] Mhm

172[Fanning] Go out, you know, through the whole hallway of the school and you had to stay on
173that line. No whispering in the hallways. When you went to get a drink of water, needed to
174go to the bathroom, you raise your hand. So, everything's very regimented.

175[Lyons] Mhm

176[Fanning] Discipline, do things the correct way.

177[Lyons] Yeah

178[Fanning] So I value that.

179[Lyons] Right

180[Fanning] Even the mean nuns.

181[Lyons] Ok um, so what were some issues in education that you saw when you were

182teaching?

183[Fanning] What shocked me were the number of adults who could not compete a simple

184sentence. You know, I don't know where they went to school. I'll give you an example.

185One of my students named Debbie. Grammar was horrible. She said, 'we was going to

186town'.

187[Lyons] Hm

188[Fanning] I'd say, 'Debbie, it's we WERE'. I said, 'Think about the last little piggie. We we

189we all the way home. We were starts with "W" "E"'.

190[Lyons] Yeah

191[Fanning] I'd do these silly things and she was one of the worst students as, you know, an

192adult.

193[Lyons] Yeah

194[Fanning] And it's really funny how this all happened.

195[Lyons] Mhm

196[Fanning] She asked me once would I come to, it was someone else, asked me will I come to
197their house and do a free writing workshop. Well, you know, who wants to do that?

198[Lyons] Right

199[Fanning] So, 'cause I always overdid everything and made a lot of photocopies, gathered up
200giveaway books.

201[Lyons] Yeah

202[Fanning] And so forth. But I did it and what I found out later, this Debbie person.

203[Lyons] Mhm

204[Fanning] had prayed to God to send her a writing teacher.

205[Lyons] Oh

206[Fanning] She she told me she put her head down on her typewriter, this was before
207computers, and cried.

208[Lyons] Oh

209[Fanning] Well, she happened to be there in that group and at the time, I was also teaching
210private writing classes

211[Lyons] Mhm

212[Fanning] where I'd help them edit and teach them to improve their style.

213[Lyons] Right

214[Fanning] And she signed up for one of those things.

215[Lyons] Mhm

216[Fanning] And I saw how eager she was to be a 'real writer'.

217[Lyons] Yeah

218[Fanning] And yet she was so totally ignorant.

219[Lyons] Oh my gosh

220[Fanning] So, one day I said, 'Debbie, what grade did you get in English at school?' 'All As'

221I said, 'Debbie, I don't say this to hurt your feeling. You don't deserve As. They lied to you.

222You're a good person. That's why you got the As but you're gonna have to study if you

223really wanna be professional writer'. To her credit she got a style book, grammar book, went

224page by page and she taught herself.

225[Lyons] Wow

226[Fanning] She went to a public school. She didn't have the mean 'ole nuns.

227[Lyons] Yeah

228[Fanning] So, Debbie started selling to magazines.

229[Lyons] Mhm

230[Fanning] And she was a competent writer. She would come to the class and she would say,

231'oh this isn't any good. This is one of the worst things I've ever written' and I'd read it and

232I'd say, 'Debbie, this is good. You're gonna sell this' and she would and here's something I

233learned over all these years, 'bout thirty years in teaching writing classes. This is kind of

234mean of me. I would start off the first class. I'd say, 'how many of you think you're really
235good writers? I mean, you're good' A few hands would go up.

236[Lyons] Yeah

237[Fanning] And I'd say, 'how many of you aren't sure? You hope you are but you feel
238insecure' and then everybody else.

239[Lyons] Yeah

240[Fanning] And I'd look at them. I'd say, 'You're the good writers' because the others are so
241confident. What I'd found out

242[Lyons] Mhm

243[Fanning] is those people would not take constructive criticism,

244[Lyons] Mhm

245[Fanning] So, another one of my little tricks. I'd ask them, 'what do you think you have to
246have as qualities to be a successful writer?' And they'd say, 'talent'. I'd say, 'anything else?'
247'no, talent' And I'd say, 'well, you know, there's some very untalented people on the best-
248seller list

249[Lyons] Yeah

250[Fanning] 'that made millions of dollars' and I said, 'no no no! It's discipline, perseverance.
251You don't give up just because you've gotten a handful of rejection slips

252[Lyons] Yeah

253[Fanning] ‘And the real desire to write, not just talk about it, one of these days I’m gonna
254write a book, but you have to actually sit down and write’. So, I had a wonderful time
255teaching those classes.

256[Lyons] Yeah

257[Fanning] And I really felt more excitement, you know, when they would publish

258[Lyons] Yeah

259[Fanning] than when I had

260[Lyons] Wow

261[Fanning] Still no teaching certificate.

262[Lyons] Yeah

263[Fanning] But I taught at the University of Oklahoma, you know, these were adult classes

264and just adjunct professors, Rose State College, Southern Nazarene, and I took over a

265woman’s class at Central State because she went to Hollywood with her husband. It was Bob

266and Wanda Duncan, and they were film writers.

267[Lyons] Oh ok

268[Fanning] And so she had a big major contract. So, I took her place.

269[Lyons] Wow, cool.

270[Fanning] And, you know, just about every church and library in town.

271[Lyons] Wow

272[Fanning] So, this just proves to people who are education majors: guess what? You don't
273necessarily have

274[Lyons] Yeah

275[Fanning] to have a teaching certificate.

276[Lyons] That's funny. Ok, um, so, are you, do you keep in touch with any issues today in
277education that you find pressing or like are you aware of any?

278[Fanning] What I'm aware of is that people don't care if they're sloppy and you hear it even
279in broadcasters on television using poor grammar.

280[Lyons] Hmm

281[Fanning] One of the ones that bothers me the most, they don't know the difference between
282subjective and the objective case.

283[Lyons] Hmm

284[Fanning] You know, me and Jim went to town. You know, the nuns taught us if it's a double
285subject, get rid of one. You wouldn't say, "me's going to town".

286[Lyons] Yeah

287[Fanning] But that's a very common one, and the other one is he gave the beans to him and I.
288No, he didn't give the beans to I. It's me. You know, and my friends criticized me because I
289talked back to the television. You know, and they make

290[Lyons] Yeah

291[Fanning] a mistake. I correct them. So, I refer to myself as the Captain of the Grammar
292Police and my daughter Kelly is another Captain of the Grammar Police and we passed it
293along to Grace Fanning, my granddaughter, now a senior at the University of Dallas. So, that
294mean old nun streak

295[Lyons] Yeah

296[Fanning] ran through the whole family.

297[Lyons] Wow, so, what was the biggest surprise you found in teaching?

298[Fanning] How stu- ignorant people are. I had to say it. It was just astonishing to me. All my
299life I was surrounded with people far more intelligent than I.

300[Lyons] Hm

301[Fanning] I really had an inferiority complex because my older brother and sister were
302National Merit Scholarship winners.

303[Lyons] Wow

304[Fanning] Straight As. Where I had to struggle.

305[Lyons] Hm

306[Fanning] For instance, what is math? What's arithmetic? It has something to do with
307numbers.

308[Lyons] Yeah

309[Fanning] But I'm not sure. What's geometry? Something about shapes.

310[Lyons] Yeah

311[Fanning] That's kind of my feeling about it. In fact, I deserved Fs in all my math classes and
312I was kind of like Debbie who got the As, you know, because they liked her.

313[Lyons] Hm Yeah

314[Fanning] You know, so, I was kind of the teacher's pet. Sit in the front, raise my hand, be
315sweet and polite.

316[Lyons] Yeah

317[Fanning] Here's how I got away with a D instead of an F in algebra. We all started the class
318off with a prayer at Bishop McGuinness

319[Lyons] Hm

320[Fanning] High School, Oklahoma City, and the teacher was just this little wizened old man
321with a tiny little voice, 'In the name of the Father, and the Son' and everybody's making
322noise, nobody's paying any attention to him.

323[Lyons] Yeah

324[Fanning] So, he pointed to me and I said, ' IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND THE
325SON' and everybody would quiet down and he told me at the end of the year, 'the reason
326why I passed you is I couldn't have gotten control of the class without you'.

327[Lyons] Wow

328[Fanning] Well, I thought, 'eh, whatever it takes'.

329[Lyons] Yeah, so, uh, when did you stop teaching?

330[Fanning] I'm not sure I ever have stopped teaching.

331[Lyons] Ok

332[Fanning] As far as going in to, you know, formal situation with the schools and so forth, I
333stopped teaching when my granddaughter Grace was born, twenty-one years ago, because I
334thought, you know, I'd rather stay home and take care of her while her mom's at work.

335[Lyons] Hm

336[Fanning] So, that was the last time I actually taught classes.

337[Lyons] Right

338[Fanning] But I didn't regret it. It was more fun playing with a baby.

339[Lyons] Yeah, uh so what do you mean that if you say you're not sure if you've every
340stopped teaching? So, what is the kind of teaching you're still doing now?

341[Fanning] Well, you know, I'll look at, I even look at my daughter Kelly's work.

342[Lyons] Mhm

343[Fanning] And where she's a lot smarter than I and she's a better writer and a better editor but
344she still wants to get what I call the cold editorial eye

345[Lyons] Mhm

346[Fanning] where you have somebody else look over your paper.

347[Lyons] Right

348[Fanning] You know, so, she'll show it to me and I'll make some changes or corrections that
349she can either agree with or disagree with. You know, and other people ask me for help with

350things. Some of it, between you and me, I kind of resent because my children were all far
351smarter than I. They never needed my help.

352[Lyons] Ok

353[Fanning] Really truly, with anything and yet I have a sister-in-law who wanted me to
354virtually write her children's papers.

355[Lyons] Oh

356[Fanning] Or, you know, oh and type them and this is back when the typewriter

357[Lyons] Wow

358[Fanning] and I thought, why am I typing up these kid's papers and doing their footnotes?

359[Lyons] Yeah

360[Fanning] And suffering through it when my own children, you know, have already done
361their work.

362[Lyons] Yeah

363[Fanning] And gotten A+ on it but, you know, I never had the courage to tell her not only no
364but heck no.

365[Lyons] Yeah, ok, um, if you could go back, would you change anything as a teacher?

366[Fanning] I don't think I would, but I will tell you the other reason why I got out of the so-
367called education business, not only did I find all the wording and the books turgid

368[Lyons] Mhm

369[Fanning] I was too stupid, you know. How can I teach children arithmetic when I didn't
370know what it was?

371[Lyons] Right

372[Fanning] And I'll give you an example, for many years I would be a substitute teacher

373[Lyons] Mhm

374[Fanning] for John Carroll when Grace was going to school there and it was fine until we got
375to the math part.

376[Lyons] Mhm

377[Fanning] And I would be frank with the kids as a substitute.

378[Lyons] Mhm

379[Fanning] I'd say I didn't learn the old math and I certainly don't understand the new math.

380[Lyons] Hmm

381[Fanning] So, I would say, 'who's the smartest kid in here?' and invariably they would point

382[Lyons] Yeah

383[Fanning] to Logan. I'd say, 'Alright Logan, you get up here and you do the math portion'.

384So, Logan would get up and teach the math. So, that worked out but that's what really kept

385me from going for an education certificate because I had no confidence. If I don't understand

386it, how can I pass it on to kids?

387[Lyons] Right

388[Fanning] But when I was able just to specialize in what I was good at, that was a different
389matter.

390[Lyons] Yeah, so, did you prefer then teaching like at a higher level in that more specialty
391rather than teaching like younger kids kind of everything?

392[Fanning] It's, it's really different. I enjoyed all of it and with children what I tried to teach
393them was to be respectful of the written word, you know. I don't like people who mess up
394books and throw them around and have them all tattered. So, I would go through the whole
395process of writing a book and talk to them about how a writer gets ideas

396[Lyons] Mhm

397[Fanning] and all that he has to go thorough and I got them through every step of the way and
398how he has to write and rewrite

399[Lyons] Mhm

400[Fanning] and he has to find an agent or a publisher

401[Lyons] Yeah

402[Fanning] and then I told them how the editors work and how they have board meetings and
403so, by the time I'm through with them, they realize this is a lengthy process. A lot of people,
404a lot of time, a lot of money is involved. So, when you have this book in your hand, you treat
405it with respect and even the books I consider poorly written still has people's hopes and
406dreams and a lot of work involved.

407[Lyons] Yeah

408[Fanning] So, that was something that I learned.

409[Lyons] Mhm

410[Fanning] You know, to try to teach people to

412[Lyons] Yeah

413[Fanning] pay attention is hard work

414[Lyons] Yeah

415[Fanning] and it's to be appreciated.

416[Lyons] Yeah, so, what is your best teaching story? If you haven't already mentioned it.

417[Fanning] One of the things I liked to do with the little kids

418[Lyons] Yeah

419[Fanning] was I would say, 'Ok look at me'. I wanted to teach them to be observant.

420[Lyons] Mhm

421[Fanning] You know, to body language, clothing, and so forth,

422[Lyons] Right

423[Fanning] So, I would say, 'write a little paragraph or story about me'. Well, back then, I was

424one of God's more stunning creatures, I only weighed one hundred and some pounds and yet

425some of these children were writing about me and calling me fat.

426[Lyons] Oh no

427[Fanning] So, I thought, you know, I could get my feelings hurt.

428[Lyons] Yeah

429[Fanning] If I really cared and I thought mmmm nobody's calling me fat again

430[Lyons] Yeah

431[Fanning] little kids. So, what I did, it was near Halloween

432[Lyons] Mhm

433[Fanning] and I was over in the Yukon schools, so, I took my ugly witch outfit, I have a

434hideous mask, I even scared myself looking in the mirror. So, I took my hat

435[Lyons] Yeah

436[Fanning] cape, the whole thing in a bag. So, I told this group of children

437[Lyons] Mhm

438[Fanning] 'Shh we're having a special guest today. She's dangerous, she's scary, shhh, she's

439in the closet. You've gotta be very quiet. When she comes out, I want you to write a story

440about her. So, I got in the closet and I put on the outfit and I came out saying, *cackles* 'oh

441you tasty little morsels' and the kids were all...

442[Lyons] Oh my gosh.

443[Fanning] and so then, they were writing about the ugly witch

444[Lyons] Yeah

445[Fanning] and that's ok.

446[Lyons] Yeah

447[Fanning] I don't care if they call the ugly witch fat.

448[Lyons] Right

449[Fanning] So, I told them at the end of it, 'Shh'.

450[Lyons] Mhm

451[Fanning] 'Don't tell the other class. We don't want to ruin the surprise for them'. Kids can't

452keep their mouths shut.

453[Lyons] True.

454[Fanning] They were telling. So, by the end of the day, I thought I'm not gonna do it

455anymore.

456[Lyons] Yeah

457[Fanning] Because they already know.

458[Lyons] Mhm

459[Fanning] So, the last class of the day, they said, 'where's the witch? Where's the ugly old

460witch?' So, that was kind of

461[Lyons] Oh my gosh, wow.

462[Fanning] one of my favorite

463[Lyons] Yeah

464[Fanning] things that I did with the kids.

465[Lyons] That's so funny. Ok well, these are almost all the questions I had. Is there anything
466else you would like to add?

467[Fanning] Yes. One thing that I want to mention. I've gotta tell this story.

468[Lyons] Yeah

469[Fanning] Because it has to do with the University of Dallas. Freshman year, of course you
470read the Iliad, the Odyssey

471[Lyons] Mhm

472[Fanning] Beowulf, I mean you know about the tragic flaws of the epic heroes.

473[Lyons] Yes

474[Fanning] I got a nervous stomach. I'm not that smart of a person. I wish I were.

475[Lyons] Hmm

476[Fanning] I could pretend to be but I'm not. It was hard.

477[Lyons] Mhm

478[Fanning] So, I developed nervous stomach. So, my second semester my parents made them
479go to at the time called Central State.

480[Lyons] Mhm

481[Fanning] Where I ended up with a Masters

482[Lyons] Yeah

483[Fanning] many years later. I call it baby school, had a humanities class. The teacher said,
484‘write about anything’. Ah! Lazy person that I am I’ve already read all this.

485[Lyons] Yeah

486[Fanning] All I have to do is just write it and go back

487[Lyons] Mhm

488[Fanning] and get my quotes from this book and that do my footnotes which I did

489[Lyons] Yeah

490[Fanning] and I had all my notes and rough drafts because I’d been accused of plagiarism

491[Lyons] Whoa

492[Fanning] in high school. I would never plagiarize.

493[Lyons] Mhm

494[Fanning] I always wrote better than the rest of them.

495[Lyons] Yeah

496[Fanning] It’s the truth but I learned that lesson, you know, to keep your notes.

497[Lyons] Right

498[Fanning] So, you could prove them, got the paper back, had a big fat F but no corrections.

499So, I asked the teacher, ‘what’s wrong? Why did I get an F?’ and she said, ‘ no college

500freshman has even read those books’. I thought oh my gosh. So, I gave her a piece of my

501mind about the difference between University of Dallas

502[Lyons] Yeah

503[Fanning] and crappy colleges.

504[Lyons] Oh my gosh.

505[Fanning] Went home, got my notes, threw them all over her office in a fit of pique.

506[Lyons] Yeah

507[Fanning] Then the Dean called me into the office a couple days later. I thought oh I'm in

508trouble now because

509[Lyons] Yeah

510[Fanning] I stood up for myself. He gave me back the paper. She had crossed through the F

512and put A+ because I proved that I had written it.

513[Lyons] Right

514[Fanning] She never said a word about it, never apologized.

515[Lyons] Oof

516[Fanning] So, that was one of the first lessons I taught all writing students who wanna write

517for publication. I said, 'You can't take a book and disassemble it

518[Lyons] Mhm

519[Fanning] ' to make it look like you wrote it. So, if you keep your notes and rough drafts, you

520got proof'. So, I had

521[Lyons] Mhm

522[Fanning] at one time files on, you know, several hundred things

523[Lyons] Yeah

524[Fanning] that I had in print and only recently I realized 'Hoarders r us'. So, I'm finally
525throwing away those things.

526[Lyons] Yeah

527[Fanning] But that was a valuable lesson for me to learn and unlike the past I warned other
528people because the University of Dallas is such a superior school

529[Lyons] Yeah

530[Fanning] and it has a real spirit to it.

531[Lyons] Mhm

532[Fanning] I wouldn't bother raising money for the other two colleges that I have degrees

533[Lyons] Mhm

534[Fanning] but my heart is with University of Dallas and though I never went out and became
535rich and used my education in that manner

536[Lyons] Mhm

537[Fanning] you know where it came in really handy?

538[Lyons] Where?

539[Fanning] I'm a volunteer for friends in the library and all year long we sort books according
540to category:

541[Lyons] Mhm

542[Fanning] religion, western, psychology, and so forth.

543[Lyons] Mhm

544[Fanning] It came in handy because guess what? I know the difference between psychology

545and philosophy and many of these people did not.

546[Lyons] Oh

547[Fanning] The other lesson I learned from being a volunteer, having all my been the

548underdog

549[Lyons] Mhm

550[Fanning] because everybody was way smarter than I. Suddenly, I was like a Mensa member

551compared to these people.

552[Lyons] Yeah

553[Fanning] For instance, the inspirational stories: Chicken Soup for the Soul,

554[Lyons] Mhm

555[Fanning] one of the volunteers put that with the cookbooks. Barbara Kingsolver's novel

556Poisonwood Bible,

557[Lyons] Mhm

558[Fanning] somebody put that in religion. So, you know, they can't read

559[Lyons] Yeah

560[Fanning] and I'd look in the regular fiction box and the romance box. It'd be filled with
561mysteries, never mind the cover has letters this big that say thriller or

562[Lyons] Yeah

563[Fanning] or suspense. So, I cut it back to square one: why don't people have any education?

564Can't they read?

565[Lyons] Yeah

566[Fanning] So, that's kind of disheartening

567[Lyons] Yeah

568[Fanning] but anyway I credit all three Catholic education and at the University of Dallas

569once again more Catholic education

570[Lyons] Mhm

571[Fanning] because it was real education.

572[Lyons] Ok well thank you so much!

573[Fanning] My Pleasure!

