Birthday Dinners

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“Birthday Dinners”

Calendar Custom/Tradition

Informant:
Nicole Baldwin was born and raised in Riverton, Utah. She is an undergraduate student majoring in Journalism with an emphasis in Public Relations. In her free time, Nicole likes to hammock, watch movies, bake, and chill with friends. She also really likes dogs and motorcycles. Nicole’s favorite holiday is Christmas because she loves her family, the snow, drinking hot cocoa, and the cheesy Christmas movies.

Context:
I did this interview with Nicole over the phone and she had just woken up from a nap. The noise level was very quiet with a faint interruption from my roommates once or twice. The feeling was very relaxed and comfortable because Nicole and I were roommates last year at Snow College and we talk to each other every few weeks. The following piece of folklore was in the response to my question about whether or not she had any holiday or family traditions. Nicole explained that her family has a special way to celebrate birthdays.

Text:
“We have kind of a tradition for birthdays. My family growing up we did either a party or dinner, meaning we got to choose whichever we wanted. Like out to dinner with just you and the parents. Um…most of my birthdays I remember going out to eat. As the years have gone on, I don’t really like throwing parties cuz they just don’t turn out well…or something horrible happens or it’s just a disaster in general. I really liked going out to eat. It was time alone with my parents and twin sister. Natalie and I had to agree on a place since we did birthday dinners together. I bet we went other places, but I just remember Sizzler the most.”

Texture:
Because she had just woken up from a nap and was still tired when we did the interview, Nicole had a hard time remembering some of the specifics about her traditions. This resulted in a lot of um’s, like’s, statements about not remembering or being able to think of it, and long pauses illustrated by ellipses. Nicole also talks really fast as her normal speed, so she had a lot of little interjections about details to add in here and there for clarity. It was kind of funny because she talked fast but also had really long pauses that are illustrated with ellipses, and it was an
interesting combination. Nicole’s voice was tired and not very energetic, at least not the way she normally sounds. Her tone had a sort of disgusted/wary tone when she mentioned why she doesn’t like to have parties. There was also a fondness in her tone as she talked about spending time with her family in a one-on-one setting. We have been roommates and friends since last year, so the interview was very informal and casual in telling her story. Nicole has a strong bond with her family and lives a very family-centered life because it is one of the most important things to her.

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