**Charlie (Intro)**

Every student enrolled in a public high school understands the struggle required in applying. The deadlines, the shadow visits, the essays and interviews. Some of us get into the schools we want, others don’t. In the end, it’s all a sketchy game where we gamble on two schools that we aren’t even sure will look at our applications. I think we spend a lot of time interacting with people who got into the highschool they wanted, but it is rare that we understand what goes on for people who haven’t. What’s rarer, someone who transferred into a school they wanted to attend from one they didn’t. In this interview, I will delve into the experience of someone who did exactly that.

**Charlie**

Hello, I- I am here today with my guest. Would you like to introduce yourself?

**Zeke**

My name is Ezekiel O'Neal Bilhorn. I'm the guest.

**Charlie**

Yes, he is the guest for this interview and um so we're- I'm going to be interviewing him about he- you transferred high schools, right? You went from Clayton to uh Collegiate between freshman and sophomore year, correct?

**Zeke**

Yes.

**Charlie**

OK. So before that, before you, you'd made the process of transferring high schools um… what were your high school choices like, when you were actually applying, what were your high school choices like? What were you looking at, and how did you actually end up at Clayton?

**Zeke**

So my first choice was Metro because I had a couple other friends that were going there and I'd obviously heard nothing but good things about it. It was. The highest ranked public high school in the state and I wanted to go there, but the issue during the application process is that high schools will determine how committed you are to their school based on what is on your application. So you can apply it out to two high schools at a time if they notice if there's a second high school on your application or if Metro isn't your first choice, your application gets voided automatically cause they don't think here as. You know, devoted to that school as some other students. So I only put Metro on my application, and I met all of the requirements to be accepted. But I was waitlisted. There were too many other applicants, and so by the time this school year started, not enough spots opened up and I had to figure out where else to go. So I went to Clayton because my mom works at Wydown middle school in the Clayton school district.

**Charlie**

That's you. So because your mom because your mom worked there is just kind of like a… it's like a freebie, you just get in because your mom works there. OK, and you know you- you went to Clayton for just one year and just how would you describe, like, Clayton in general, like the atmosphere there and things of that nature?

**Zeke**

It's- it's hard to describe, mainly because the majority of time that I spent there was either virtual or half days. Classes were very short and to the point and they had to be in order to make use of the time that they had. Starting online school was-

**Archer**

Hey, you guys see the new Jujutsu Kaisen Trailer?

**Charlie**

Whoa, new Jujutsu Kaisen Trailer?

**Zeke**
Holy f-

**Charlie**

Sorry. Before we were really interrupted by the news of a- of a cool trailer, I was just asking my guest here how he would describe the atmosphere at Clayton High school, and while you're at it, just kind of just how did you feel, like, socially while attending Clayton and making relationships with people.

**Zeke**

I mean, going into online school was a nightmare because every other student at Clayton had moved in there from one of their district middle schools, Wydown being one of them, so quite literally, everyone knew each other except for me. And I’d never been to a traditional public school up to that point, so I had no idea what I was expecting. And I also unknowingly took the hardest available freshman class in honors physics. So I started the year and I was blindsided by the… the amount of work and the difficulty that I had to do. And then I didn't have any friends or relationships to fall back on to help me get through that.

**Charlie**

And then… so I assume that's kind of just the answer to this next question here, like what just what motivated you to transfer schools, just I assume generally that and also was there anything that- that Clayton there, there was that Clayton that was, you know, made you hesitant. Were you, were you at all hesitant to transfer schools and if so like why?

**Zeke**

So, I made the decision to apply pretty early in the school year. I had to. I had to have the application in by October, because transfer spots are very slim, there's not a lot. And so the application process actually went fairly smoothly and I knew I was accepted fairly soon. I didn't make a decision until about May. I ended up forming some relationships at Clayton that I cared about a lot. But there was a lot of turmoil within those relationships, and as things kind of progressively got worse, it cemented my decision to commit to that move to Collegiate.

**Charlie**

And why… you.. you said that you made you had to transfer early in the school year and does that- does that mean that you had to you decided like specifically to transfer to Collegiate or was it just you had to transfer in general very early, just decide that you were leaving?

**Zeke**

I had to apply to Collegiate extremely early in the year, like close to the end of first quarter in October. I had to have my application in and submitted if I wanted a chance. So as soon as I realized how bad things were getting at Clayton, I made that decision to start and submit my application.

**Charlie**

And then was there any other high schools that you were considering transferring to? You chose Collegiate, but was there, were there alternatives that you were thinking about and why- why was Collegiate the one that you decided on?

**Zeke**

When I was in 8th grade applying to high school. Collegiate was the other option I was looking at. Metro was obviously my first choice, but in the same vein, I had heard only good things about Collegiate. It was just a smaller school and had less history, so I was a little more hesitant. But I knew that at Collegiate there were relationships that I'd already formed that I could fall back on to help me get through that time there. I also knew that, it wasn't going to be worth applying to Metro again if I was just going to get waitlisted or turned down, because I knew I needed to be somewhere else other than Clayton, and collegiate was my best chance to leave and also go to a good school with people that I knew and liked.

**Charlie**

Got it, got it. And from you've already kind of gone over this and your other answers, but just from like a technical standpoint like what, what is kind of the process of transferring high schools, you go like you know what by around like when. and then do you have to- what kind of, like, stuff are you submitting? Is it like applying to high school normally or is there extra things that are involved?

**Zeke**

It's- it's really about the same things. It was a little more difficult because I needed letters of recommendation from my teachers at Clayton, who had obviously seen me struggle a lot more than my teachers at my middle school had. And I knew that I needed to show them what I was capable of, for them to recommend me favorably, and so I let school consume my life for that year, basically. Because I wanted to show my teachers and I wanted to show Collegiate that I was a capable and worthwhile student to have, and also getting my middle school transcripts was difficult because I didn't go to that school anymore. I didn't have immediate access to the people that could give me those things, but as far as the actual online application process went, it was almost the exact same.

**Charlie**

And well you made it, your- your at collegiate. You attend Collegiate now and what do you like most about Collegiate now that you've actually been there for nearly two full school years now?

**Zeke**

More so at Collegiate than I ever felt at Clayton. I feel like when, I put effort into a class, I'm rewarded for it, especially in honors physics. When I- when I started that turn around, when I was trying to bring my grades back up, I spent hours rewriting and resubmitting a lab report to have it returned as a D and that was crushing, and I learned how to do work in the way that my teacher wanted, but it was still frustrating to have those moments where I felt like I turned in my best work and it was only good enough for a barely passing grade, whereas at collegiate I feel like I'm aptly rewarded when I do what I think is my best work and.

**Charlie**

Then also kind of the opposite of that here, is there anything about Collegiate that you don't like or you maybe think that Clayton actually did a better job at?

**Zeke**

I think collegiate administration has gone in a poor direction recently. There's been a lot of friction over the- the uniform policy. And I think uniforms are a fine thing. Less common for a public school, but understandable. But the fact that Collegiate doesn't provide that much accessibility to these uniforms, which are expensive and required, it doesn't make me feel proud to be a Collegiate student, which I think is an important part of a school culture.

**Charlie**

OK. And then kind of just as one final question. If you were to do this whole thing over again, starting from whatever point you want in the past, is there anything that you would have done differently? You would have changed, knowing what you know now?

**Zeke**

I guess it depends on where I start from. If I'd started from 8th grade, I'd probably applied to Collegiate immediately. But also I think the relationships that I did end up forming a Clayton resulted in me becoming a much better person than I would have otherwise. I got to meet people that were very different from the people that I was close with during my time in 8th grade. And if I started during my freshman year at Clayton, the different choices I would have made would have been more interpersonal, and if things had gone differently, I might have not even transferred. Initially I was concerned about. You know, losing a connection to my friends at Collegiate, that it being in a different school. But it was reassuring that- that those relationships persisted during my time at Clayton and I also cared a lot about the relationships that I formed at Clayton. So I was for a small amount of time very on the fence about whether or not I would go to Collegiate.

**Charlie**

OK. Well that uh… that concludes all the questions I have for you today. Thank you for your time. And uh… yeah, I guess I have to say the conclusion now.

**Charlie (Conclusion)**

From this, I think what I’ve learned is we often take our enrollment at a school we enjoy for granted. I think it’s safe to say each of us has problems with our school, but in the end it’s the school we chose, and I think deep down every one of us loves it despite its faults. Maybe when we understand that our struggles applying to public high school are not just our own, we can work together to make systemic changes to the system that places us in them. On a deeper level, I think this story highlights just how much decisions we make now affect our futures, whether they be social or academic. The little choices in our lives can spiral into something so much bigger than ourselves, and isn’t that what little history is all about?