Osgood: YOU MAY RECALL THAT WE TOOK A TRIP LAST WEEK TO ROCHESTER, NEW YORK--"SIGN CITY," WE CALLED IT--A PLACE WHERE THE DEAF LIVE IN SUCH NUMBERS THAT SIGNING IS AMONG THE MOST COMMON OF SIGHTS.

THIS MORNING, MARTHA TEICHNER TAKES US BACK FOR ANOTHER VISIT: NOT TO THE WHOLE CITY THIS TIME, JUST TO ONE REMARKABLE FAMILY.

( bus engine rumbling )

( children shouting excitedly )

Teichner: THIS IS WHAT ARRIVING AT SCHOOL IS LIKE FOR MOST CHILDREN.

THIS IS WHAT IT'S LIKE FOR TEN-YEAR-OLD SCOTT MATCHETT, WHO IS DEAF.

( silence )

IF YOU EXPERIENCE THE WORLD THE WAY HE DOES, PUBLIC SCHOOL CAN BE A BEWILDERING AND INTIMIDATING PLACE.

BUT THAT'S EXACTLY WHY
HIS PARENTS WANT HIM HERE.

THEY KNOW BETTER THAN ANYBODY
THE REALITY HE WILL FACE FOR
THE REST OF HIS LIFE:
BECAUSE THEY'RE DEAF, TOO.

IT WAS THE LAST THING MARY
KAROL MATCHETT EXPECTED.
SHE LOST HER HEARING AT AGE
TWO, THE RESULT OF MENINGITIS.

IT SEEMED A GENETIC
IMPROBABILITY THAT
SCOTT WOULD BE BORN DEAF.

>>Teichner: TWO YEARS LATER,
SCOTT'S SISTER KARA WAS BORN
DEAF; BY THAT TIME, THE
MATCHETTS HAD MOVED ON.
( phone ringing )
THEY HAVE TECHNOLOGY TO THANK
FOR A LIFESTYLE UNKNOWN TO THE
DEAF WHEN DOUG AND MARY KAROL
WERE GROWING UP.

WE'RE USING A FORM OF
CAPTIONING HERE, TOO.
WHENEVER THE MATCHETTS SPEAK,
YOU'LL HEAR THEM, BUT YOU'LL
ALSO SEE WHAT THE DEAF SEE
WHEN THEY WATCH TELEVISION
OR CAPTIONED MOVIES.

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^r

>>Teichner: A LITTLE MORE.
( T.V. volume increasing )
WITH THE SOUND TURNED UP, THE VIBRATIONS COME RIGHT THROUGH THE SPEAKERS AND LITERALLY CAN BE FELT ON EVERY FLAT SURFACE.

IS IT MORE FUN FOR YOUR CHILDREN THAN IT WAS FOR YOU?

>>>Doug: YEAH.
>>>Teichner: I CAN FEEL THE WHOLE MOVIE IN MY BACK! AND IT'S THE SAME THING.

BUT WHAT ALL THIS ADDS UP TO IS MORE THAN JUST BEING ABLE TO GET WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE MOVIES WITHOUT ASKING SOMEBODY.

>>>Teichner: WATCHING HIS CHILDREN ENJOY THEMSELVES, DOUG MATCHETT WILL TELL YOU HOW DECEPTIVE ALL THE FUN AND GAMES ARE. HE REMEMBERS THE PAIN AND ISOLATION OF HIS OWN CHILDHOOD.

>>>Teichner: IT HELPED THAT GROWING UP HE WAS A CHAMPION SWIMMER, BUT PUBLIC SCHOOL WAS LONELY AND HARD FOR HIM.

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>>>Teichner: DOUG MATCHETT WAS EXPECTED TO SPEAK AND LIPREAD EXCLUSIVELY. HE DIDN'T EVEN LEARN SIGN LANGUAGE UNTIL HE WAS 22,
WHEN HE ENROLLED AT THE
NATIONAL TECHNICAL INSTITUTE
FOR THE DEAF, OR N.T.I.D.,
IN ROCHESTER.

>>Teichner: AT THREE, MARY
KAROL WAS SENT AWAY TO A DEAF
SCHOOL WHERE SHE, TOO, WAS
TAUGHT TO SPEAK AND LIPREAD.

SHE LEARNED TO SIGN SECRETLY
FROM HER FRIENDS.
AT EIGHT, SHE TRANSFERRED TO
A LOCAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL, WHERE
SHE WAS THE ONLY DEAF STUDENT
ALL THE WAY THROUGH HIGH
SCHOOL.

>>Mary Karol: DO YOU PLAN TO
WORK NEXT SUMMER?
>>Teichner: COLLEGE AT
N.T.I.D. WAS LIKE A DIFFERENT
UNIVERSE; IT WAS ALSO, AS MARY
KAROL MATCHETT FOUND OUT...

>>Doug: READY TO GO HOME?
>>Teichner: A PLACE WHERE THE
DEAF MEET,

FALL IN LOVE,
AND START FAMILIES.

IT’S WHERE SHE MET DOUG.
HE PROPOSED TO HER ON A
DIVING TRIP, UNDERWATER...

IN SIGN LANGUAGE.

MARY KAROL IS A COUNSELOR
AT N.T.I.D. NOW; DOUG IS A
CIVIL ENGINEER WHO’S RECENTLY
BECOME AN INSURANCE BROKER.

>>Mary Karol: HOW MANY?
>>Kara: FOUR?
>>Mary Karol: FOUR.
SUCCESSFUL PROFESSIONALS, THE MATCHETTS MAKE LIFE FOR THE DEAF LOOK EASY.

( organ music, man singing )

BUT AFTER MORE THAN A YEAR WITH THEM, WE'VE BEGUN TO UNDERSTAND HOW VERY MUCH IT TAKES--EVERY DAY--FOR THE DEAF TO STEP ACROSS THE DIVIDE THAT SEPARATES THEM FROM THE WORLD OF THE HEARING.

WE HAVE ALSO BEGUN TO UNDERSTAND HOW RARELY IT WORKS THE OTHER WAY...

BECAUSE THE MATCHETTS HAVE THEIR OWN EXPERIENCE TO DRAW ON AS THEY ADDRESS WHAT THEY CONSIDER THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE THEY WILL FACE AS PARENTS OF DEAF CHILDREN: CHOOSING SCHOOLS FOR SCOTT AND KARA.

DEAF VERSUS HEARING, WHICH KIND OF SCHOOL IS BETTER? THAT QUESTION REMAINS CONTROVERSIAL.

FOR THE MATCHETTS, THERE IS NO ONE RIGHT ANSWER: ONLY THE DETERMINATION TO GIVE THEIR CHILDREN CHOICES.

YOU CAN'T IMAGINE IT, WHY?
LOOMING OVER EVERY EDUCATION DECISION THE MATCHETTS MAKE FOR THEIR CHILDREN IS A DISTURBING STATISTIC: A DEAF AMERICAN, 18 YEARS OLD, GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL, MAY BE FLUENT IN SIGN LANGUAGE--BUT IS LIKELY TO READ ENGLISH AT THE FOURTH-GRADE LEVEL. DOING BETTER THAN THAT IS THE KEY TO FUNCTIONING SUCCESSFULLY IN THE HEARING WORLD.

WHICH IS WHY, AS TOUGH AS IT WAS FOR THEM IN SCHOOL, THE MATCHETTS DECIDED THEY WOULD SEND THEIR OWN CHILDREN TO--YES--HEARING SCHOOLS.

WHEN WE MET KARA A YEAR AND A HALF AGO, SHE HAD JUST STARTED FIRST GRADE AT COUNCIL ROCK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. (Kara speaking) >>>Teacher: THAT'S RIGHT. WHILE I'M READING IT-- >>>Teichner: BUT FOR HER IT'S NOT "SINK-OR-SWIM-YOU'RE-ON-YOUR-OWN" THE WAY IT WAS FOR HER PARENTS. TODAY BY LAW, STATES MUST PROVIDE SUFFICIENT RESOURCES SO THAT DEAF STUDENTS HAVE FULL ACCESS TO PUBLIC EDUCATION. (everyone singing)

PEANUT, PEANUT BUTTER *

PEANUT, PEANUT BUTTER... ***
KARA HAS AN INTERPRETER WITH HER AT ALL TIMES...

AND A SPEECH PATHOLOGIST.

>>Pathologist: YEAH, THAT'S WHAT HE SAID.

>>Teichner: MORE THAN 60% OF ALL DEAF STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES, LIKE KARA, SPEND PART OR ALL OF THEIR DAY IN PUBLIC SCHOOL CLASSROOMS ALONGSIDE HEARING STUDENTS.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE REST? THAT'S WHERE SCOTT COMES IN.

WHEN WE FIRST MET HIM, HE WAS ENROLLED IN THE ROCHESTER SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF.

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>>Teichner: SCOTT MATCHETT IS SHY; HIS PARENTS FELT THAT, FOR A WHILE, HE NEEDED THE NURTURING ENVIRONMENT OF R.S.D. (ROCHESTER SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF), WHERE AT LEAST HE COULD LEARN IN HIS OWN LANGUAGE.

HERE, DEAF CHILDREN ARE NOT ISOLATED BECAUSE THEY ARE "DIFFERENT," AS THEY WOULD BE IN PUBLIC SCHOOL.

BUT PUBLIC SCHOOL IS WHERE THE MATCHETTS WANTED SCOTT. THEY THINK FACING THE HEARING WORLD IS DAUNTING ENOUGH WITHOUT PUTTING IT OFF.
( multiple conversations )

>>Teichner: THE MATCHETTS ARE CONVINCED THAT WHAT KARA EXPERIENCES IN HER BROWNIE TROOP IS A FAR LESS PAINFUL REHEARSAL FOR SURVIVING IN THE HEARING WORLD.

>>Kara and group speaking simultaneously: MADE NEW FRIENDS--

>>Teichner: PERHAPS BECAUSE IT'S ROCHESTER, THOUGH, THE BROWNIES ARE LEARNING TO SIGN.

( all singing )

MAKE NEW FRIENDS... ***

>>Teichner: BUT FOR KARA, REMEMBER: REALITY IS THIS.

( silence )

>>Teichner: THEY CAN COME HOME TO DEAF CULTURE; IT IS THEIRS ALREADY.

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( Kara laughing and shrieking )

>>Teichner: THE MATCHETTS SEE THEIR CHILDREN'S DEAFNESS IN THE MIRROR OF THEIR OWN LIVES. AND AS THEY SEE LIFE COME FULL CIRCLE, THEY PRAY IT WILL COME AROUND MORE GENTLY THIS TIME.
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