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Rosa Moore: Okay.

Herbert Jones: Okay, Mrs. Moore, you suppose you could give us a little brief biography of you as to where you were born, where you went to school, and, you know, how long you've been in Tampa, and this type of thing?

RM: Okay. I was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee. My parents was Joseph C. Reynolds and my mother was Rosanna Cunningham. We moved from Chattanooga to Paoli—a little town in Pennsylvania called Paoli. That's outside of Philadelphia. Livin' there in Paoli was my great- grandmother, my grandmother, and grandfather. My great grandfather had died before we left Tennessee; he was an Italian. Well, I'll get into that, how he come about.

Well, as a child in Paoli, I went to school in Willistown—that's a little small suburb about three miles from Paoli. The school was segregated. There were kids in it from grade one to grade seven. We weren't allowed to the high school, which was in Berwin, Pennsylvania, five miles away. The teacher we had was named Miss Bright, and she had to teach all grades in that one room. The children that passed from the seventh grade got no other education because there was no opening for them to go, that's how segregated it was.

The faculties that they had for the black people were very poor. No water. No way of cleansing our bodies unless we bought water from the whites. My grandfather decided to do something about this. There was no NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] then to help. So he got all the black people together, which were afraid because they never knew they had any rights, any possibility to better themselves. And my grandfather then went to the white man and begged for a job. This was durin' the Depression era. He was the only black man that fought. He figured if he could get in with these whites then he would stand a chance of bettering our condition

because it was nothin' but a hole in the wall. That's why it's called a "holler." No white male would ever come down there for anything, because the blacks, they had nothing, and they didn't want nothing of them.

Well, after he got in with these whites, which was Quakers—Pennsylvania Quakers—he was given a job driving the Red Cross truck. All right, after that if he went and left us and went to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and we never knew what had happened to him for quite a long time, because we were—he were learning things how to help us. And the white didn't want us to know anything about we could have any sort of freedom. So he were gone for about a month, and when he come back he called all the black people together and he's told them, "There are better ways that we can live without livin' in the gutter. We have no toilets. We have no schoolin' for our children. And," he says, "now is the time to fight."

He left then and went to Philadelphia, to a minister, and he was Reverend Byrd. He's dead now. And he asked him would he come to Paoli and help him to gather these people together. See, they had gotten so much fear of a white man they didn't want to better themselves. So, to show them that it could be done, my grandfather was beaten by the whites, just like the Ku Klux Klan. He was beaten. He was taken away by weeks. He was tied to trees without water, without anything to eat, to stop him from pushin'—to push these children so they could have freedom so they could learn.

After this minister stepped in, we held— Well, we had church, we held it in the open field. This minister had come in and showed us how to get money. We needed money to fight with. Okay. My grandfather—and then that's when my grandmother stepped in— well, she was frightened also. So she began to talk to the women. She figured if she could get to the women to understand their needs better than the man then maybe they would come around. So we formed a march. That was in forty—let's see—forty-nine [1949] we formed the march. And we marched on to the courthouse in Paoli. And we sat there until they came out. And my grandmother stated the needs that she wanted. They said if they'd better where we lived at, we'd have to pay rent. Now mind you, nobody had anything, so what kind of rent could we pay?

Then they wanted to destroy where we lived because they said it was "infected" by rats, by roaches. That anything that could cause that—that we'd be sick. They wanted to burn it down. That's when my grandfather fought again.

Then, forty-eight [1948], they began to come around. Then my grandfather fought for them to get jobs on the Pennsylvania Railroad. Those tracks hadn't even been laid then, not in that area. Then they began— After he got them jobs on the Pennsylvania Railroad, they still were actin' like they were in bondage. They were afraid to talk. If the man didn't pay 'em, they wouldn't go and ask the man. My grandfather had to do that. They would do without food than rather than ask the white man for their pay. And they got plenty of work out of 'em, but they just was afraid to ask for their money.

So my grandfather began to build the town. Gradually he built. And to show these people

that if they weren't afraid, and helped him push these whites, we could be somethin'. Well, gradually, as the years ended in the fifties [1950s] they began to get together. So granddaddy said, "Now we need a church. I fought for your livin', now we need a church, a place to pray."

We built it from scratch. My grandmother sold denim. My great-grandmother made ice cream. She sold ice cream for a nickel a cone or a dime a cone or whatever, a penny, if you couldn't afford a nickel or a dime. And after that we got the money together. The men went to the cement place where they sell bricks and blocks and everything. All right, the cost of cement during that time was twenty-six cents a bag, but you know they went up. They went up so high to prevent us from buying these things to build our church that the men got together and bust rocks from a quarry that was right behind us. They took picks, ax, anything they could bust up this stuff with. And they did—built their church.

The white wasn't satisfied with that. So one night they burned it down to the ground, including the Bibles, the books—well, we had Bibles but we had to copy and give each person a paper because they couldn't read the Bible; even the children couldn't read. How much can you learn in a one room schoolhouse with seven grades in it? Then my grandfather said, "This has got to stop. We have to send those children that are older, we're gonna have to put 'em in high school because we need someone down here can read and write." Now, that's when the big fight came, to put us in Berwin was the only high school they had that was close, other than going to Philadelphia. And that was too far, because that was twenty-two miles and no one had the transportation.

Okay. They took my grandfather away again. And we didn't see him. Well, grandmother prayed and everything, and hoped that he would be brought back. Finally they brought him back and he told us then, he says to his wife—which was Maude Cunningham—he says, "I have made a way for my children to enter high school. Now, they're only gonna accept ten, and there're about two hundred here that needs to enter, but if we get ten in there so they can read these papers that these white people want us to sign, then we'll know where we stand." See, because they were ignorant they were signing their rights away, and they didn't even know it because they had to go by what the white man said. A lot of 'em lost their homes because of that.

Well, five of my grandparents' children went to school. One of them was my mother. Well, after they got into school they couldn't learn high school because they never learnt grammar school. So they was still in behind. They was in a bind. So we hired some teachers. Of course it wouldn't work. They continued on with what they were already teachin' the white. And we didn't know what they were teachin' the white, because we couldn't read.

So my grandfather told everybody to get together, they had another meeting, say, "We're gonna have to hire some teachers and bring them in this community. And we're gonna have to pay them." So everyone was gonna have to go to work and do what they're good at best. And that's what we did. My grandfather planted gardens on property that wasn't even his, but they cleaned it off so they used it. The white man wasn't interested until

after it was cleaned off.

So they had gardens. They had sellin' and whatnot. They made clothes and things to sell to the white in order to bring— But the white never knew that's what we were gonna do. And we brought the teachers in at midnight. That's when we studied, at midnight in the— when no traffic or nobody could know what we was goin' on. We put blankets up at the windows so the light wouldn't shine out. In fact, it wasn't electricity; it was kerosene lamps. They didn't even allow electricity down there. There wasn't nothin' until into fifty-six [1956] or fifty-seven [1957] when electricity was put into those houses.

Now this is really— These people was brought from the South here with my father in this little town. And their fear of white people was—I mean, now to think about it, it was awful. Because, see, my grandfather told me, as a child, he says, "Maria, the white man always thought of us as animals, not as humans, because of our strength and what we could endure. They didn't believe any human could endure the misery and the suffering that we did, so they never classify us as human." See?

HJ: I never heard that terminology.

RM: Now, he told he told me that because only—where he was, a slave himself, they didn't bury, they burned you. They throw your body on a pile of twigs and burn you. And the other slaves had to stay there and see that.

HJ: Okay, you said that these people had come from the South, but your grandfather—

RM: From the— Umm hmm—

HJ: What part?

RM: Augusta [Georgia]. See, that's why I say this go back so far. See, when they brought 'em— See, the suffering—

Let's see now, grandfather came in 1926 to Paoli. Then he sent for Mother two years or three years later, somewhere in there. Then my great-grandmother, we brought her here, but see, there was language barrier which neither one—none of us ever got to understand her, because she was Ethiopian. But she was a beautiful woman. You know, I mean, in her— She had a way of expressing herself, but as far as the language, we could not understand her. Only person that could understand her was my grandmother, as was her mother.

So through her we learned about before the Civil War, how she was captured in Ethiopia and brought over on a ship to the United States. And because of her ignorance to America, because she couldn't understand what the white man said to her she was beaten. She was mistreated. She worked without food. And then when she did get food it was bread. And then she was thrown in a hole with a chain on. They chained her leg—the ankles—they chained the hands at night. And they had to turn 'em loose in the morning.

My grandmother was five years old then. They escaped from that plantation. But at least she got my grandmother away. But it was years before she could get away. And when she did get away, we'd never heard no more of her—or they didn't. The last time— When we did hear of her again, she had got with this Irishman and he had brought her back to the United States. And she told him—well, at least she described to him—the place where she had been and they'd taken her there. That way she found Grand-mom again, which had grown into a young girl. But Grand-mom remembered that was her mother. So she told my grandfather about it. They were on the plantation together—this was before they were married. Well, they weren't never married because they didn't believe in that. Nobody could marry her. Grandmother didn't marry until later, in 1936, but she had had a bunch of children before that.

So they got Grandma then. This was after they had— They hadn't even freed the slaves when they taken— Well, at least they had freedom, but Grand-mom never knew it. They was livin' in such a fear that they didn't know what were their rights. They were livin' like animals. And then my grandfather knew about— Well, he was always a pusher. He knew that they was a way for them to walk away. They may walk into something even worse, but they knew they could leave. But he didn't want to leave those people. And some of 'em had some very rough masters that didn't want 'em to be free, and didn't even tell 'em that they were free.

So Grandfather stole those slaves, these very people I'm talking about in Paoli, he stole them people and hid 'em in a basement. And they searched the plantation for these people, but they never did find these people. So after he showed them that they could follow him, no matter what hardship they come upon they couldn't be any worse than what they already been through. So they left. Most of 'em— He said most of his travels he walked. He walked and begged for jobs. From one bondage into another bondage. Because when they'd get jobs, the people would keep 'em. They would chain 'em. And he had to start the same thing over and over and over again.

He got with two white people, an old man and an old woman. They were real fine people to him. They knew what they had been through, but they couldn't just come right out and give them the kind of help they needed. So they asked him—my grandfather—to bring his people to their plantation and live. And that's how it all began to give him the power to do the things that he did in bringin' them people from Georgia to Pennsylvania. And that happened because the people died—and they gave that to my great-grandfather, a cabin, and it was full of silver, but it was his.

And they killed him, my great-grandfather. They murdered him in front of his family. They said, "No nigger will ever live on a white man's plantation and live off of his riches." It's all in this paper here. So they had to leave there. They chained 'em again and kept 'em in a tin, where they keep tractors on a farm. They put 'em— Well, they were where they have plows for mules, they kept 'em in there for days. Grandpa said some of 'em died. And they had to stand there with the stink. And those that were able, when they came out in the daylight, majority of 'em was blind—includin' my grandfather—from

bein' in the darkness so long; when they came out in the light they was sun-blinded.

So, now you know he had to be a wonderful man after what he did while he was blind.

HJ: So when did you move to Tampa?

RM: I came to Tampa in 1965. And I finished my schoolin' and—I didn't finish, but I started to Bethune-Cookman College. I did two years. I was majorin' in business administration. And I didn't finish. I got married. And I still had my credits, but I just never went back. But I told— After my husband gotten hurt twice and I figured when he gets well again and can be on his own, I believe I'll enter back in college. Because I would like to go back there and teach. You know, still there's segregation. Would you believe it?

Shirley Smith: Umm hmm.

RM: It's still the same way. They don't want 'em to have nothin' no better.

SS: What was Tampa like in sixty-four [1964] when you came here?

RM: No, it was— Yeah. No, I came in sixty-seven [1967].

SS: Sixty-seven [1967]?

RM: Yeah, sixty-seven [1967], 'cause I had two years in Bethune before we were married. Umm hmm. Oh, well, in sixty-seven [1967], it was just as bad as where I had left from. I mean, I knew of prejudice, but I was shocked that I came here and found even more. Because in sixty [1960] up there in Paoli—it took 1960 before the Negroes could spread out.

And right now, the reason why I said that I would tell you about this is because they swindled my grand— See, she says she's eighty-one, but she's older. She doesn't know how old she is because there was no birth certificates in them days. And Grandma, with her Ethiopian descent, couldn't explain to her how old she was. She only thought, you know, by her development into womanhood; that's when she began to 'count, see. So she really don't know. But they have taken property from my grandmother because of her handicap of reading. They built a whole hospital in her backyard.

Jessie Moore: On her property?

RM: Yeah. You walk out her back door and you're in the hospital.

JM: And this was all her property.

RM: See? And that's wrong.

JM: And I went up there—

RM: See, it's in here. See? As the years progressed they charged 'em for where they were livin'. All right. They grew— They had gardens. They worked on the railroad. And they stole their money from 'em and told 'em they were payin' for their property. But they weren't payin' for anything. Because the white man come in and took what they were payin' for. You see?

JM: (inaudible) in black and white.

RM: So they used— After my grandfather died, from a heart attack because he was always goin' night and day. He didn't take time to sleep. When somebody was in need hell go get 'em, it didn't matter what hour of the night. And he died of a heart attack. And, plus, he was blind. And so they come along and they sweet talk my grandmother. I don't know. And when I knew anything, they had her property. It's only two people that holds the mortgage on all of that land where he lived, what he called his (inaudible) is my mother and another man named Burt, and he's dead. That was Reverend Byrd's son, the one we went to Philadelphia to get as our preacher.

Now they've got a hospital in her backyard. Where's her rights? Next they're gonna make her yard a parkin' area. She has a beautiful grocery store. They refuse to sell her products at a discount like other stores. So she couldn't run it. Isn't it a beautiful store? She built apartments over the top. They condemned them. Why? They were just in perfect order as this house I'm sittin' in. In fact, they were the first apartment buildings to have toilets in them. You know some of those houses down there still don't have toilets?

HJ: Were you up north?

RM: Umm hmm. In this little town called Paoli, Pennsylvania. Umm hmm.

JM: There's a lot of things goin' on. A lot of (inaudible).

RM: Okay.

SS: Umm hmm. I know.

RM: My grandfather, they told him before they put Highway 41 through there—you know that was all dirt—swamp, rather. That's why the white man wasn't interested in it, because it was swamp area. But those black people put that—made a little community. And they seen where they were progressin', so they had to slow 'em down. And how they slowin' 'em down? Tell 'em they have to tear it down because they wasn't payin' for it. Now it didn't belong to anybody. It was just a wooden area. One or two houses were sitting there.

Then my grandfather helped build more. And more. And more. Until it became a beautiful community for blacks. And what do they do? They stick a hospital up there.

And it's in one of the worst places. I mean, the idea of a hospital there. Here we need hospitals around in town, they got one where it's only a handful of people. Do you understand what I'm talking about?

JM: It's bigger than the hospital they've got in Florida.

RM: They had to do something to take this property away from the Cunninghams. That town was built by the Cunninghams. And they want to destroy it. Yeah. Everything there is owned by a black man. And most of the property that those people has built an belonged to the Cunninghams. And they couldn't destroy it because we began to get a tight chain together. And they had to fight through us. If we had a messed around and let them come in like they really wanted to we wouldn't have pub (inaudible).

But what puzzled me, what shocked me when I went back, I said, "Grandma, what is this?" I opened the back door and there's the hospital.

She says, "Well, they gave me some money."

And I said, "That doesn't matter Grandma."

JM: They want to build a superhighway.

RM: And you can open the door and you're in the, hospital. Open the front door and you're on 41. So Grandmama say, "Well, I'm a old woman. How much do I need?"

I said, "Grandma, you've got fifty-three grandchildren, and you've got almost thirty-something great-grandchildren and you mean you don't want nothing?"

Yeah. But they did that. In the hospital, a three hundred—no, five hundred bed hospital, in her backyard.

I asked her, I said, "Where do you hang your clothes when you wash 'em?"

"In the basement."

That's unbelievable, but they did it. Because I got family up there. They don't care. They don't want no more. The people pay 'em. They buy Lincolns. What they buy? Lincolns and Cadillacs. They throw money, away.

JM: They don't care nothin' about money too.

RM: They don't care. The white man come in. "Give me this, give me that." They give 'em to 'em because they don't know any better. They don't think about they got children comin' along gonna need this. But they told us— They all got together and say were tired of fightin' the white man. I said, "Well, where would you go after this, after you give up all your rights, where will you go? To the white man? No."

So, what can you do? It's really is—um— It's hurting to see. I mean, if you see what I'm talking about. You've seen 'em. You see what they're doing to that town? They're tearin' it down, all what my grandfather built up, they're tearin' it down.

JM: He had to be a great man. When he planted a garden he planted one row of green—

Side 1 ends; side 2 begins.

HJ: Is it okay if I start?

RM: Oh, sure. However.

JM: The first time I come to Tampa was in 1952. And the black people was trying to get a position like they're tryin' to do now. And it was goin' on the ballot or what Martin Luther [King] was doin', you know, goin' around St. Augustine and different places like that and trying to get the black people to pull together. So after— But I believe that was fifty [1950]—fifty-two [1952]. Probably—yeah, fifty-two [1952]. Or fifty-one [1951], along in there. And then after the people didn't want to, you know, get together and try to help one another so I joined the mob with the muscle.

So after I stayed with them about six or seven years, we tried and left here and went back to Detroit. Come back to Tampa and— We tried here in Tampa, tried to get 'em, but they just wouldn't. The black people just won't stick together, so—

RM: We even formed a—

JM: —I just got out.

RM: My husband and I, we even formed a group of the black people. We tried to get them together.

SS: Here in Tampa?

RM: Umm hmm.

JM: They ain't gonna do nothin'.

HJ: What was the name of it?

SS: What was the name of the group?

HJ: Did you have a name?

RM: No, we were— What were they? We joined 'em later.

JM: Well, there wasn't one. But people who believed in what's right and wanted equal rights. See.

RM: Yeah, but we had a name, the info—

JM: But the people didn't want that.

RM: —law. The Black Citizens—

JM: Yeah, that's what it—

RM: —Law Enforcement.

JM: But see—

RM: We even went down to the police station, don't you remember?

JM: So people— Like I said, the black people, you know, here in Florida—

RM: What we were tryin' to do—we was tryin' to stop this murder. You see?

SS: Tell us about that.

HJ: Yeah, because with the pioneers—your grandfather, your great-grandfather—we want to get your fighting input now.

RM: Yeah. We were trying to stop this murder. Okay. Our boys—our black boys—because of no job situation and hardship—maybe we don't know what sort of family they came out of, but they were trying and they steal something. And the law goes after them. Why kill them? They marksmen. They practice. They could shoot a person in a certain part they body that can stop them without murder. They are all marksmen. That's not necessary, to kill, a person. A running person, a fleeing person, cannot cause you any harm. So why shoot them? There's got to be a better way.

And then what they do? They tell us they suspended them. No. They transfer 'em to another community.

JM: Now look— Look how they—

RM: And we have seen that.

JM: Look how they clean up the—

RM: I have spent eight hours a day for a solid week, 'til they got tired and asked me what did I want, in the police station, listening. I seen black people go in court, be charged with suspended driver's license, \$500. I see a white man go in there with the same charge,

pay cost of court.

JM: Twelve fifty [\$12.50].

RM: That's right, twenty-four dollars. I have even took notes of that. I sent it to the Sentral. They sent they didn't want to start up a bias without more evidence. So I tried to get more people go into the law, not by mouth, go in and see what's going on. Sit in these court rooms.

SS: Do you have any of those papers now?

RM: No I don't. They never returned 'em.

SS: Oh, darn it.

RM: See, because if you don't go to these places, you don't know what's goin' on.

JM: Look what— Wait a minute, I'm trying to (inaudible). Look when they killed that— How was that— When they was— They killed that boy when the church house ground over on (inaudible). What year that was, sixty—

RM: Nine?

JM: Sixty-nine [1969].

RM: Yeah.

JM: I tried to get the black people. The police killed—shot the boy. But they killed the wrong man.

RM: Umm hmm.

JM: On the church house ground there on the corner of Oak [Avenue]—

RM: And I witness it.

JM: —and Central [Avenue]. I tried to get the black—

RM: And I witness it.

JM: —people to go down. But you know what?

RM: They wouldn't help me.

JM: They wouldn't do nothin'.

RM: I saw it alone. But I saw it.

JM: You know what I mean, they wouldn't do nothin'.

RM: But it didn't do any good.

JM: I called the mob in.

RM: They kept pushin' me away.

JM: I called the mob here. They come in—

RM: They wouldn't even let me testify.

JM: —all us come in and try to get the black people to do something.

RM: They said I had prejudice.

JM: (inaudible)

RM: I said, "No, I'm not prejudiced."

JM: What should we do?

HJ: Who wouldn't let you testify?

RM: Malcolm Beard, for one. He told me he didn't need me.

JM: Justified homicide.

RM: And I said, "Why not? I was the eyewitness."

JM: That's what they told her, too. They ruled it justified homicide.

RM: Well we— "If we need you, we call you." I waited and I waited and I told my husband, "I'm gonna call Malcolm B— I'm gonna make appointment. And I'm gonna make it, or keep callin' 'til they give me one."

JM: And then the child— The man they killed, his mother, she went down there, they talked all kind of trash to her.

RM: Umm hmm.

JM: She was a old lady.

RM: I went with her.

SS: Do you know her name?

JM: What... I don't mom... what mom's name is now. I can't think her whole name.

RM: Gary?

JM: Yeah. She still on Twelfth [Street]? Tenth Avenue?

RM: Umm hmm.

JM: And, like I say, we tried to get the black people to—you know, they seen what happened—to go down there and go to the pol—they only wanted justified homicide, and they ain't do no more about it.

RM: But it wasn't true. I mean— See, I was on—

HJ: What was the nature incident? What had happened—

JM: This is what happened.

HJ: —for the policemen to do that?

JM: They claimed a fellow got robbed.

RM: Yeah. Said he was a—

JM: And this boy what did it, they say he done it. But come to find out after they shot the man, that man said, "Well, that ain't the man done it."

RM: No.

JM: They shot the wrong man. So what the police said, justified homicide. So what?

RM: See, this is what happened.

JM: You can't beat the law. Like I said, one or two black people, my word ain't worth two cents.

RM: No.

JM: You know what I mean?

HJ: What was the name of the church that he was shot through, was it St. John?

RM: No.

JM: No, it was on the corner of Oak and—

RM: Central (inaudible).

JM: —Central.

RM: Uh huh, the white building.

JM: The white church over there. The only one.

RM: But—I mean, it's a black church, but the building itself is white.

HJ: Harrington.

JM: That's Harrington?

RM: That's it.

SS: (inaudible).

JM: I was staying at 408 East Oak at the time.

RM: And I was on the corner. And the boy they killed, I had just got through talking to.

SS: Do you remember his name? Know it (inaudible)?

JM: No, I can't. I don't—I forgot his name.

RM: I know his last name was Rayfield, but we always called him Rayfield.

SS: And the mother's name was Gary. You don't know her first name?

RM: I always called her Mom. I never asked her—

JM: That's the only way I've ever knew her.

RM: —because she was old. But everybody 'round in that section know her. And she have a daughter named Emma.

HJ: Did she live on Twelfth Street?

RM: Umm hmm. And I had just—

JM: That's right back over there in by where they—

RM: —got through talkin' to him.

JM: —where they—

RM: And he told me, he says—

JM: —near that street over there where they come through there by the college.

RM: "Maria," he says, "I'm goin' around the corner for a while."

And I said to him, "Rayfield, now you really don't need to be drinkin'. You ought to go home."

He says, "No, I'm gonna go 'round to the bar with Bomb Beaty's and have me a couple of beers."

So I told him okay. So I was standin' on the corner talkin' to a girl we called "Queenie." And I saw the police when they went up there. So I said, "Oh, my goodness, something gonna happen in Bomb Beaty's again." Then all of a sudden I seen this boy runnin'. I said, "My goodness, that's Rayfield." And he cut across by the church. Well, he was blocked. There was nowhere else for him to go. He couldn't even get on the interstate because the fence up there was too high.

JM: It was on the back street.

RM: They shot him in the neck and in the back.

JM: With a magnum.

RM: Umm hmm.

JM: He didn't have to kill the boy.

RM: And he was still—

JM: The second time, that's what killed, was just the second time.

RM: He was up against the church. Where was he goin'? I mean, even the church door wasn't 'round that side. He couldn't go anywhere else. So they shot him. And I mean, I stood there and I looked. Then he got up and got in his car. 'Cause one of 'em followed in the car and then they called some more, the detectives. Then they came.

Then they questioned us. Queenie went in the house and told 'em she didn't want to be involved. I said, "I want to be involved." And he said, "Who are you?" And I told him who I was.

JM: They wanted to put Charles Logan in jail because me and him wanted to (inaudible).

RM: But they gave me such a hard time. I'd give 'em my story and they ask me was I a drinker. I said, "Mister, I never drank in my life. What I'm tellin' you, I'm tellin' you from a true fact of what I saw."

"Well, will you be available for the inquest?"

I said, "Yes, I'll be available." The inquest they had, they didn't call me.

JM: (inaudible)

RM: But I found out about it through the paper and I went down there. And when I went in there I raised so much Cain. I said, "Now, I [was] only one signed them papers to prove that those policemen murdered this man, and you wouldn't have me at the inquest?" They had done transferred the officers. They told me they was suspended.

What we do, we got in the car and we followed them. We went to their homes—

JM: They sure wasn't suspended.

RM: —and we sat all night 'til they went on duty that next morning. And I went back to Malcolm Beard. I took pictures.

JM: And the black people—

RM: And I told 'em—

HJ: Do you have any pictures?

RM: No; see, I was so angry I should have took the pictures back. I throwed 'em on his desk.

HJ: Do you have the negatives?

JM: No.

RM: Umm mmm. 'Cause I took 'em with a Polaroid camera.

JM: But, like I said, the government, you know, it's just—it's so much. See? It's so much. Like I said, here in Tampa, goin' on. Like I said, and his funeral the same way. Okay. The black people, they can see somethin' goin' down, they know it's wrong. All right. They can stop it or either if they don't get involved they could call the officer to stop it. But you know what they'll do? They'll sit back and they'll tell me the next thirty minutes or the next ten minutes. "I don't want to get involved." So if the black people don't stick together and try to do somethin' to better their condition, they gonna still be right there

where the white had 'em from the beginning.

RM: Well, I know that I made 'em quite angry with me—

JM: So it's just very—

RM: —because they've told me I— They said, "Moore, I don't know why you always put yourself out, you're gonna be killed."

I said, "Well, if I get killed for what is right, it doesn't matter. I've gotta die with something."

"Yeah, but we don't want to be hurt."

I said, "Well, look, if we all go down there they will have to start this trial all over again and bring these officers to trial. Now, you were standin' there, the man murdered him. Look, the boy was like this—" I didn't have my camera. He was like this at the church and they shot him. I mean, two times. And then, look here, I said, "Aren't you gonna call an ambulance?" The boy was still livin'.

JM: That might have got that boy—he was about dead

RM: It took thirty minutes to call an ambulance. Thirty minutes. And when the ambulance attendants got there, the police made out they had somethin' they had to get straightened out before they could pick the boy up off the ground.

When they picked him up off the ground, I went to the hospital. They were mad, but I went. I witness it and I followed that boy on through. And he died five minutes after he was in there. Sure did. Know what the doctor said? He bled to death. He would have been a cripple, but one bullet passed through his neck. And the other one hit his spine. But they could have saved his life. But he bled to death on the ground waitin' on an ambulance.

And I asked the people on the corner, I said, "Call the ambulance. You have a phone. I'm not gonna leave here; call an ambulance." Even when his mother got there, she fainted. And the policeman pushed her back.

JM: Sure did.

RM: She told 'em, "That's my son layin' there."

JM: They drug her off (inaudible) four or five of (inaudible).

RM: And he said, "I don't care who he is, you're not goin' beyond this point." And you know what? I went beyond it.

JM: And tell 'em what happened when they—

RM: And I told 'em, I say, "Shoot me, because I'm goin' beyond that point."

JM: Had a marker— (inaudible). Had a come in my house for the night and they want to—

RM: And that's when they sent for our black policemen.

JM: —go down there, you know, to get the colored people to go down there and—

RM: They said, "We need some black policemen in this area, because I think a riot's gonna start."

JM: You know what the black people told us in that community over there?

HJ: What?

RM: How could a riot start with one little old woman, with me?

JM: There were thirty-seven of 'em. "We can't get involved." That's what they told us. "We can't get involved." (inaudible)

HJ: Oh, they would always come to get you?

JM: Yeah, see because—see, me and Arley Youngblood—you probably heard us tell that. He was muscle. So they kicked him out the mob because he believed in the same thing I believed in. But the mob, like I say, it's all right, the muscle is all right, but it's the thing. As long as they could do them things and take money under the table it was all right with 'em.

But see, when they figure when we got out there tryin' to stop all that look what the musclemen did for her. Said, "You all's the only one's that's wrong." And they'd be laughin' and grinnin' in the white people's face.

But, like I said, when we went to "whitey," we went to him for help for our black people. There used to be a commodity grocery—back the older people around didn't have food, like people get disabled because of work. We had trucks, me and Arley Youngblood and James and—

HJ: Was this the soup line?

JM: No, it wasn't a soup line. That was here in Tampa.

HJ: Commodities.

RM: Umm hmm. Yeah, when the old people couldn't get their commodities, they had no

way.

JM: But that happened— That was— That was in 1968; yeah, sixty-eight [1968]. And we'd go down there and put ourself in jeopardy and tell—we'd lie and tell—jeopardy to get groceries, commodities to get around and give them old people. And them old people go down, they wouldn't let them have it. But we had to go there.

The commodities was up there where Arley's bar used to be at. Old Arley's bar used to be at up there. That's where we had to go. We carried the truck up there and four or five of us would go on there, you know, and go around the neighborhood and serve some. They'd give us a slip, we'd go down there and get that stuff and carry it around and give them old people.

RM: Well, you tell 'em about when Mayor [Dick] Greco came and got you to stop the riot up here at Zayer.

SS: Tell us about the riot.

JM: Oh, yeah, they— It was— That was— What that was started about—was just— It was bad, you know. You might have been here when that—I think there was a three year-old boy got shot down; the cops killed him [in] cold blood. They killed the boy tryin' to get over the fence. So that's what popped the riot off. They was mad about that, you know.

I mean the white people, like I say—you take Central Avenue. What was happenin', the black people who was in power, like I said, the guys down there who had money. Like Jones, Moses White, Lee Davis—they runnin' Central. After Pearl McAden killed Charlie Moon, they run Central. Okay.

The white man wouldn't have never come into Central hadn't have been for Lee Davis. Yeah, see. When Lee Davis and them got so—they let the white man come in there. Central went to goin' down and the black people went to (inaudible) there, because the white man was tellin' them what to do. See? And then when it got.. that position, that power, well, it was bad. So the black people got mad—

RM: And destroyed it.

JM: —destroyed—after they shot that boy. So what? What did they have? The white man could come down there and do anything he wanted to do. But the black man—you was black now, you couldn't. And the police that they had on the beat down there is the colored policeman. (inaudible) down there. Well, if they said get off the street, you had to get off the street. You ain't done nothin'. If it was a woman down there, she didn't even much have to be a prostitute. If they said you was a prostitute, you was a prostitute. Now, you understand that's the thing.

But the black people, like I said, they'll sit back, they won't do nothin'. You get out

there— Like, take me. I get out there right now, I go over there, maybe nine or ten and we go around there door to door. We say, "We're tryin' to get some started for the black people; we want to get some help for the black people."

All right, you know what they'll (inaudible) to, "We'll be there. We'll be there."

All right. We go down there. Where we gonna meet at? Maybe four or five might come, six or seven. They comin' to see what we're gonna say, so they can go back to the man and they go sit—when they know what we're gonna do, the white man gonna be there.

See, you take right now, okay, what they call the Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan, all right, he can get on TV, or he can come in Tampa, or he can tell the brother there, or the mayor, "We're gonna march; we're gonna do this here." Okay, that's well and good.

All right. I'm black, I can tell my leaders somethin' or my followers. I said, "Look here, I said we're gonna have a rally tonight; don't you be a certain place." I'm a Black Panther. Okay. When the deal go down they found out about it—some of the blacks found out about it they gonna run down—he's gonna tell Mack (inaudible) or somebody. And you know what's gonna happen to him? They're gonna make a raid. They're gonna put us in jail. But the Ku Klux Klan—with all them, they ain't gonna do nothin' to them.

So that's what we tried to get the black people to understand: stand up for their rights and don't let the people run over 'em. But they won't do that. They'll stand back. If a white man, right now, if he walked in that door, he'd want you to respect him. Why he can't do the same thing for you? See, that's what I can't understand about the black people. See, you take where I come from in California, there was black, white, Italian, Mexicans, Cubans, all us there in California. You know, they had prejudice. You take goin' to Chinatown, they have prejudice in some places. Some places in Chinatown that black people couldn't go and some places you could. But the thing about it, your rights was your rights. But, see, in Florida, it's just bad.

HJ: What part did you play in that sixty-nine [1969] riot that they had? Did they look to you as... for leadership or what?

JM: Yeah, I mean, they figured I had something to do with it, but I didn't. All I was tryin' to do was stop the people, talk to the people. They figured me and Arley and James—they figured the people would follow us. See, because we'd come out of Detroit and we believed in equal rights and we didn't believe in no violence. But the people didn't figure we could stop the people. All right, you see—

Okay, Prefacts bar was on Central when the black peoples burned it. They didn't burn Prefacts bar. You know why they didn't burn the Prefacts bar? Because he come out there and paid 'em. Told 'em, "Don't touch my bar." That wasn't their bar, that was Prefacts bar. But the Negroes, like I say, we couldn't get to the Negroes because they'd gone too far. See, they'd got wild. They was mad. And they was crazy. That's why they wouldn't let the fire truck come in on Central. Now, they could have put Central out, but they wouldn't let

it come down there. They had it blocked.

You know where the police department was? They found out the Negro would stand up and would fight. You know where they were? Over on Tyler [Street] standin' up lookin'. A Jew, now, they had a store on the corner of Central and Cass [Street]. He come runnin' over there tellin' the police, say, "Go over there and stop 'em. Go over there and stop 'em." Know what that police told 'em? Said, "You stop 'em."

But see the white people know right then the Negroes would fight back. See? But, you take the thing Martin Luther King died for, a better way for the black people. But this the thing, if the people don't stand up for what he died for, there wasn't no need of him dyin'. See, that's the whole thing.

RM: They're afraid.

JM: See?

RM: They're afraid of their jobs—

JM: I said if you've got to die—

RM: —their prestige.

JM: The same way about a job. If you go on a job, all right; if you're scared of that there man, I'll tell you what, you ain't got no business on that job. If you figure the man gonna fire, why you come there lookin' for a job? A lot of people talkin' about, "Well, now I can't do this here because the man might fire me." See what I mean? But you don't supposed to be scared.

HJ: (inaudible)

RM: No.

JM: But the black—like I said, the black people will not stand up. You can get out there and fight—

HJ: That's true.

JM: —and fight and fight. You know how I know? I went all down there when they throwed acid in the pool in 1960 on Martin Luther King, down there in St. Augustine. Do you know what the niggers did, down there on Washington Street? They backed up. They run and left us. We went to jail. I stayed in jail. Jacksonville, the big riot down there. What did the black people do? Some of 'em fought, but the majority of 'em—mixin' time, what did they do? "I don't want to get involved."

But like I said, as long as the black people just sit back and see things happenin' and don't

do nothin' about it, we're gonna be on the dole from now on. That's the whole thing. And just like I said, what did Luther King die for? He died for— See, he believed in non-violence. That's is well and good. I believe in non-violence until certain (inaudible). Same way about a dog. You can (inaudible) a dog. The dog will take so much, but he gonna bite. But the black people, they ain't got the guts a dog got. See, they won't start no fight. A dog, you can (inaudible) him up. And the long (inaudible) you keep up and he gonna strike, he gonna bite. But the black man, he ain't gonna do that. Because you can look around here in Tampa and see what's happenin'. Right now—

RM: Umm hmm.

JM: —in Tampa, the poor people ain't got no place to stay. All right, they're tearin' down— The city got smart. They're tearin' down all the buildings, all the old homes. All right, they're puttin' the black people in jeopardy. You know why they're doin' that? They're gettin' 'em out them places. And they holler about, "We're gonna build this. We're gonna build that. We're gonna build this." When the deal go down, the black person, he ain't got nowhere to stay. All right. They put him up against it.

Okay. So you got apartment. You got apartment. You got apartment. She want \$200 a month, \$300 a month. Here you are over there makin' \$100 a week, but you've got somewhere to live; you've got to go to live somewhere with your family. You go there, and maybe you move in. All right, you try pay the rent. Okay, here's a man, he ain't got no education. He's got to make a way for his family. He's got to steal. He's got to do somethin'. 'Cause if you don't, his family is gonna be on the streets, he's gonna be homeless, and they're gonna be mistreated and they're gonna be hounded.

And so, what have they done for the black people they ain't got the sense to see it. Now, you take Alton White, Moses White, what are they doin'? Went to that nigger for a— excuse me for the expression, but I've got say, that's exactly what he is. I went to him for these children to get a park out here—get a swimmin' pool in this park out here.

RM: Umm hmm.

JM: Do you know what he hold me?

RM: And bleachers; seats.

JM: You know what he told me? He said, "You don't need a swimmin' pool." We signed petitions for 'em to get that park out there. I had to beg the people around to put their name on the paper. And he told me they didn't need a swimmin' pool because they were black.

RM: We did that for the restrooms. And that's as far as it went.

JM: You see what I mean?

RM: I mean, they couldn't— They said they didn't want to be involved.

JM: So the people in power—

RM: They didn't have time to get out there.

JM: —the people in power—the colored people in power because they don't help us—

RM: You've got to push for what you want.

JM: —or push. (inaudible) If I was in power—

RM: Nobody around us pushed. Myself, all alone, I can't push.

JM: If I was in power in them places where a lot of them blacks is, and there's a position they might say, well, that black man ain't doin' nothin', but every time I get a chance I'd be pullin', tryin' to get somethin' goin' their way. But nine times out of ten the majority of 'em up there, you know what they think about? They ain't got time. They want to go eat dinner with the white man. If I'm gonna go out an' eat dinner with the white man, be in them big jobs and pos—exeut—thing, well, I'm gonna be sayin' somethin' for my black man up there, but they don't do that. See?

RM: Okay. The people—

JM: Now, look here. Wait a minute.

RM: Umm hmm.

JM: Look at this man over here, he a good man—Dawsey. All right, he's a good man. Every time you turn around it's in the paper about he goin' on these big balls, the president of this and that. But, it's well and good for him doin' all them things, but when he be there, he should try and show them—the president or them executives he be up there with—to do somethin' for the black people.

RM: But they don't.

JM: But, see, they don't do that. And the president that they got in there, Jimmy Carter, he ain't for the little bitty man, he's for the man who got money. When you all seen president in there, he tells the people, "I'm gonna do this, I'm gonna do that." And when the deal go down, he ain't did nothin'. And like he tell the coal people about—they're on that strike—threatened them people. "I'm gonna do this and I'm gonna do that. I'm gonna do this."

We showed him they were just as strong and powerful he was. Of course, he's the president, he can't do them things. See, guerilla people make 'em do that. But actually, that's what the black man got planted in his mind, the white man still believe them kind

of things. Like I said, they got to wake up. If they don't wake up— The next five years— I put it this way, the next five years, you take Ybor City, there won't be a black home in there.

RM: Umm hmm.

SS: How do you feel about black politics here in Tampa?

RM: I think it's run poorly. Very poorly.

JM: Very poorly. You don't believe it's so you go to the library.

RM: The leaders aren't interested in what's going on.

JM: All they want is dollars.

RM: Because—take this park for instance. Okay, most parks you see got a fence around 'em to protect the children from any—

JM: White parks.

RM: —a street that's heavily trafficked. Thirtieth Street is bad. At five o'clock it's dangerous, even for an adult. You know what? We asked them to fence it in to keep the smaller children in. You know what they did? They went around there and put stakes all the way around. What kind of protection you got for your little one? Suppose you let your little one go in the park and you're in the house, what's gonna happen if he runs out on the street? He's gonna be killed. You can look right now and see what they put up. They went to Seminole, out there in that area, and put a whole fence around.

JM: You know why?

RM: It was open.

JM: You know why, don't you?

RM: Why it isn't this here?

JM: You're black.

RM: All right, I signed I don't know how many papers for them to come in and look in this park. I say you need restrooms. You hold games out there, put a restroom out there.

JM: Look how long we've been without that.

RM: Well, where are you gonna— What you gonna use for a toilet? Or, put tables, put chairs. Did they put any chairs? They made one bench to go all the way around. They

hold ball games out there. You have nowhere to sit unless you've got a car you can pull up. Now you can't even do that.

JM: Then you go to that park they've got out there off of Twenty-Second—

RM: Okay.

JM: —where they play them ballgames—

RM: I went around the neighborhood again.

JM: —that they want (inaudible) the Negroes they goes out there, but they don't want 'em out there. You can tell the way—

RM: They told me, "We don't have children. My children grown up." So they're not interested. They told me, "How many little children in this block?"

I said, "It doesn't make any difference. This is a community. There's children from all over. Just because all the ones in this block, they're grown, you mean to tell me—suppose they have children, their children gonna play in the park." And the children would throw a ball and chase it. Where a fence would stop it, they ain't got nothin' to stop the ball; the children gonna run right out on Thirtieth Street and get their ball and get killed. And around here I stopped. I stopped.

Okay. I went on another campaign for the mail delivery. I thought it was ridiculous.

JM: It's two o'clock and our mailman would be here at 3:30.

RM: Do you know the mail used to run 5:30 in the evening, the day's mail?

JM: You know what the people tell me around here?

RM: I went all the way downtown to the postal authorities. They give me the line of 'em that "Well, your postman has so many routes."

JM: And (inaudible)

RM: The same postman that deliver the mail on the street next to us—Lambright [Street]—when he gets through, he pass by this street and the next one—

JM: That was eight o'clock or nine.

RM: —and he goes over in the white section.

JM: That's right.

RM: Around nine o'clock.

JM: We get mail at 4:30 or five.

RM: Oh, it got a little better after I made such a mess.

JM: Three o'clock. That ain't too much better from five to 5:30.

RM: Yeah, it's better than five and six. I went one day at five o'clock and there wasn't no mail. I've went out there one morning to put a letter and the box was full of mail. So the mail had to run after seven o'clock. You see what I mean? These people was satisfied with the mail runnin' that late. But I wasn't satisfied.

JM: They still is.

RM: I think it's terrible that a mailman's got to come through here in the evening for today's mail. You know, when we first moved out here there weren't these many blacks.

Tape 1 ends; tape 2 begins.

JM: He won't think of what he originally need. But see, like I said, a white man, he was fightin' back so hard why he want—in celebration—he's to—the black man wanted the white woman. But the way I look at it, and when I come up in the days, the white people, they was just like they is now, but I didn't want no white woman. You know, it's the same way today. But, you just—you can't go out there and find a hundred men, don't want no white woman. Yeah, but what— And then again, by the time they get that white woman, you know what she's gonna do? She's gonna take him for what he got and she's gone. They ain't nothin' like— Then they gonna sit up there and look foolish at ya. Yeah, man, that woman sure took everything.

Now, look at Isaac Hayes. Look how that white woman got him sellin' everything he got. Look at Sammy Davis Junior, how that woman made carried him down the drain. But, now, if it hadn't been for Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin, told him if he gonna marry a white woman what was gonna happen to him. He'd have probably been dead—if he'd a married a colored woman—he'd probably been dead today. See, he jumped up there and married that black woman he'd been makin' (inaudible) since. But what the black man—he don't realize, he just look one way. "I want me a big all pretty car, I want me a white woman, and I want me some pretty clothes." That's all they lookin' for. But he don't know. He ain't lookin' straight ahead. He got to get old one day.

SS: Mrs. Moore, tell us about the mail route around here.

JM: Oh, he just run.

RM: Oh, (inaudible).

JM: Three o'clock.

RM: But it's— That— Now that's slightly new.

JM: That's early.

RM: That's early. All right, when we first moved here there was very few blacks in the neighborhood. The mailman ran 9:30 to 10:00 o'clock. The more the blacks came in, the more the whites leave out. The mailman got as late as twelve o'clock, then one. But we didn't feel so bad. But when the mailman start runnin' four, five and six o'clock in the evening, that was real bad.

Okay. One woman signed her name on the paper, and that's the lady across there on the corner, Mary Walker and her husband. I took it downtown to the postal authority, and I told them, "Our mail—you found time to deliver the mail in the morning. The street next us was all white; this was all black. You find time to give their mail; their mail run exactly 9:30. The mailman leaves Lambright and goes out Thirtieth, and we don't see him no more until five in the evening. Can you explain to us why there's such a difference in our mail service now?"

"Well, there's been an added route."

I said, "It makes no difference. One added route shouldn't put our mail to arrive at five and six in the evening."

"Well, seems like you're the only one complaining about it."

I said, "No, all my neighbors are complaining about it."

He says, "Well, I don't see you have any signatures here." I didn't have but that one signature. So he says, "Well, I tell you, you go back, you get five hundred more signatures and you come back, maybe we can change the route." That's what he told us.

I come back. Nobody had time. They're workin'. They say, "Well, it wouldn't make no difference if the mail comes at five o'clock. I don't get off from work till six." So you see, the mail, either way it come, early or late, they still be in time for the mail.

Okay. This man next door, he gets benefits from the veterans.

JM: The next one, too.

RM: And the next one, too. All right, and the woman across the street, she's a woman by herself, she gets a check every month, Now, one day we waited for the mailman out there. My husband was injured that time, too; he was gettin' checks. You know when that mailman showed up, it was seven o'clock that evenin'. This man got in his car and ran the mailman down on Hanna and the mailman told him—it was after six o'clock then—he

told him he couldn't give him his mail until he got to his home. The man come back and he waited. It was—

JM: Even if (inaudible).

RM: When he come up that street, it was quarter to seven when he put the mail out. When he come down on that side it was twenty minutes to eight. Now is that kind of service—I mean, the day's mail runnin' that hour of the evening. So they wouldn't help me. So they told me yeah, he did; after I went down there and I kept on goin', he changed it. He started the mailman to comin' no later than 1:30. All right, he did that for about three months and went right back in the same shape

JM: And what make it so bad—

RM: But now, we got a regular mailman, that's the regular—when you see the mail comin' this early, that's a helper.

JM: Right. He's another man on—

RM: Yeah, he a assistant. He's not the regular.

JM: And what make it so bad—you take all up in the white settlement up there now—

RM: Yeah.

JM: —eight o'clock he'd be puttin' that mail up there.

RM: Umm hmm.

JM: But this is the black neighborhood.

RM: This is the white—

JM: Now you just think about that. And they holler about they ain't got no help, and they jumped up there and they paid that million and some dollars for that sortin' thing in the post office [to] sort out the mail. They claimed that was gonna help the mail benefit and now they still can't get the mail out.

RM: And they sure can't.

JM: And so, like I said, the people, they don't— Like I said, they just ain't gonna fight, they ain't gonna, over what's right. And you take the Puerto Rican people, you take the Mexican people and the Indians, them people fought for what they— You know, like I said, Custer come over here and he as much as took their land from 'em. Fought 'im. Look what happened in Wounded Knee, they want to take their land from 'em. Them people put up a fight. But does the black people put up their own fight? They stay up

there, back up. See?

And right now a black person can go about— Look at that man from Busch Gardens, come down and bought that—the real estate man bought the home for him on account of he's a black man. And he didn't know where the house was, he just wanted the house. They bought this house for him. You know them crackers burnt crosses in the man's yard? That was in last week's paper, wasn't it? Burnt crosses on the man's house while he's out there. He's the only black, that be a white neighborhood.

There was a white black woman bought a house from a white woman down there right on the pond, right on Robles Pond down there. They bombed the windows out. Threw a bomb in her house. Just 'cause she bought that house. That black woman bought the house, and that man, from that white woman. And they was the only black—lived right in community with them nice big apartments, them big brick houses. Like I say, it's just one of them things.

But now if the white man, if he want to marry him a black woman or live with him a black woman, he can move in next door over there. The black people don't even much think about it. See what I mean? But now you let a black man—he ain't got to have a white woman to move in their neighborhood, he can just be black and have a black woman and look how much trouble he gets. And like I—let a black man, he still doesn't wake up. You know what I mean? He just sits back and let 'em step on him and—

Same way you go down there to buy a brand new car right now. You can go buy a brand new car. All right. They can see me and my wife, we wanted to buy a brand new Lincoln or Cadillac. The first thing jump in the black man's head, we sellin' dope for the white man. See what I mean? You ain't—the idea of you doin' them things, but then the next thing come up then they put the law—he'll go to messin' with ya.

RM: Umm hmm.

Unknown Voice: I know that's right.

JM: He want to know "What you doin'?" All right. Every time you turn around he's stoppin' you. He's stoppin' you. He's stoppin' you. You ain't doin' nothin', but he's stoppin' you. So what kind of rights has a black man got?

But like I say, a lot of time I wonder what King died for. Was he crazy for dyin' for what was right, or should he have died for the black people or what, you know, and just— Man, that's a tough decision, to just sit down and think about and look at it. This man done fought for everything and he done died and then his movement and everything and then the black people—when he died, the black people, they done died back down.

HJ: I want to ask you somethin'. What do you think about the school system here, like these new tests they done brought up?

JM: Bad. They're bad. Okay. All right. The black children, they go to school. Okay. The little education they give 'em, they do give— All right, say, a school room— Say here's a eighth grade room, it's maybe got twenty-five, thirty, forty head kids in that room. They got one teacher in there. All right. It ain't like when I was goin' to school. When I was goin' to school, the teacher, she wrote what was on the blackboard and she made sure she checked and made sure we learned, and learned how to read and spell and took time. But now the teachers, what they're doin', they lookin' at it all—they're strikin', they want more money. And they write it up on the board. They don't care if you learn or not.

And then they come up with these tests, and how can you pass them tests and you don't even know much how to read and write and nobody taught you? And it's just bad. You know what I mean? It's just one of them things. So when they— Hey you is the tenth grade you is got you had to steal it every way through the little knowledge you had, you had to learn on [your] own and try to better your own self, because the teachers, they ain't gonna take no time with you. See, what they do, they'll write it up there and tell you; they don't try to explain it to you or nothin'.

RM: And another thing. Every family can't afford encyclopedias for their children.

JM: Right. And how can they spell something if a kid don't know them big words like they got on them tests and things? He got a right to flunk.

RM: That's right.

JM: Because he—you know, he ain't even had—

RM: They should have encyclopedias for the access for those unfortunate children that parents can't afford to buy 'em a set. Here's two boys, they come to me and ask me. I said, "Now listen, I've tried to do the best I can to help you." Now the research that he needed to have only could be found in the encyclopedia.

HJ: Yeah.

RM: He had all the Webster's dictionaries. I've got as many dictionaries as I could get. But the type of infor— He didn't want the definition. He wanted a story on it. And like I told him, "Now the best thing that you could do is go to the public library and see if they have encyclopedias on the stories that you need to write an essay on."

So he said, "Well, which library?"

I said, "There's one—there's a colored library right on Nebraska down—" What's the name of that?

JM: Right off of Seventh Avenue and (inaudible).

RM: Yeah. He went there, they didn't even have a set of encyclopedias for the boy to

look through.

JM: Not that kind.

RM: Not—

JM: No. Greek.

RM: Umm hmm. They got those little umm—you know, for a little kindergarten and a smaller group of children.

JM: (inaudible) something, but that is right though.

RM: They don't have a (inaudible).

JM: (inaudible) It's true. You see on the—

RM: See?

JM: They just—

RM: But that's supposed to be for our children.

JM: And this— The people here on the school board, they holler about, "We makin' it better for your children." But do you know what it is? The teachers, they're hollerin' about, "We ain't gettin' enough money." All right. When I was goin' to school the teachers, some of them, wasn't gettin' but \$200 and \$300 a month. And we was learnin'. They took time to teach us and show us.

RM: So we took him to the Sulphur Springs, to the library. That's a white library.

JM: They had it.

RM: They had 'cyclopedias in there all the way around the room.

JM: Now you just think about that. And the blacks, like I said, they just— The schools, it ain't—it's for the black people, they just ain't got it. And then they got them black people up here, when they got in them meetings and things and they holler about NAACP, they gonna back 'em. Yeah, they good about backin' 'em, but the thing about it, they get on them people, but they don't—

RM: They don't follows through.

JM: They don't follow through the thing like they should. Or, like them tests they got. Here's a twelfth grade student, all right, they give him a test, he flunks, they send him back to the sixth grade. He don't right to flunk it.

RM: Umm hmm. That's true.

JM: That's (inaudible) what they learn. He learned it on his own.

RM: These they graduate—

JM: (inaudible)

RM: —last year can't even help these children this year—

JM: Right.

RM: —just because of a slight little change in the way homework or tests are done. These children as if they haven't never even been to school.

JM: Right.

RM: And they done graduated.

JM: And, like I say, it's just that this—

RM: And they can't help their own sister or brother that's gettin' ready to graduate this year. Now you see, are they learnin' or are they just passin' 'em on through?

JM: All right. Look here. Another thing. Look at this metrics they come up with, this metric deal. All right. You take a lot of kids, they done got up there to the tenth grade or the eleventh grade, you bring 'em back down there, and try to teach 'em at the fifth and sixth grade metric. They don't need— What do they know? That's a new thing to 'em. That's a new system.

RM: Umm hmm.

JM: Same way like this little girl across the street. She went to school in Okinawa over there. Now she's about three grades behind, see, because of the way them people taught her and the way these people teach it's a different thing. She's startin' off like in the first grade.

RM: Umm hmm.

JM: See, it's just— And, now, she could read, but she could read them books from there, the way they had it in them books. But here, like you take a first grade book, a third grade book, she can't read it. And then, like I said, the school, the way they got things set up now they holler about children. It ain't the teacher's fault, the children's fault, but it's not, it's the teacher's fault because they don't take time to teach the kids, and then they sittin' up there smokin' cigarettes up there. The school teachers, they're smokin' the cigarettes.

They sittin' over there filin' them fingers. If they do that they got their mind on a party or they goin' to be out tonight with their principal or another teacher or— See what I mean? They don't take time to teach the kids like when I was goin' to school.

So, like I said, man, they just— And the first thing they holler about— The black people go out to the school, "I wonder why my child ain't passin'." He's got a right not to pass.

RM: He don't know nothin'.

JM: He don't know enough to pass. See? And then they sit down there and they get mad and beat the kids or— Oh, you got to get that lesson. If they get there and look at it— Some of the work they do now they did it, and we can't do it.

HJ: I know that's right.

RM: In the lunchrooms the food is garbage.

JM: That's right. And the kids go to school—

RM: And it has the craziest made-up menu you ever seen. And they call this stuff givin' balanced diets? If a balanced diet, why so much starch? Or they give a vegetable and they'll decorate it up. Now, how many black children are used to that? They don't even know what it is. And they're not gonna eat what they don't know.

JM: How many black children gonna eat anchovies?

RM: Or spinach with crumbled, hard cooked egg on top? They'll say, "Yuck." It's vitamins for 'em, but they're not gonna eat it. Give them the whole boiled egg. If they want to crush the thing over the spinach—

JM: Let 'em do it.

RM: —let 'em do their self. All these fancy foods they fixin', they fixin' them for white because the black children don't know what that is.

JM: And another thing about the black—let me tell you about another thing. You see why they're transferrin' all these kids from this school. All right. They've shut down this school there and send their kids over here. Now what they're doin', the white people— now, they think they're smarter than we. They figure if they get the black children far enough out there, so many of 'em goin' off out there into the white neighborhood, if somethin' did come up they'd be ready before the black people could get there. See what I mean? And then they want four or five blacks in this school. They want fifty white over here. Now, why they can't have a school with fifty blacks and four or five whites? See, they want to outnumber the blacks all the way around.

And another thing. Now, you take a school room with all black children in it, they get

more education and learn (inaudible) black person. See, but they'll take time to teach them white children. Now, you take a black teacher right now and put her in the room with a bunch of white children, if he don't know something she's gonna try to show him. But, now, you let it be a room full of black children and see what happens.

RM: And she—

JM: She ain't got time. "Boy, sit down." Or, "Get your lesson." Or, "[I will] send you to the principal's room."

RM: Or, "It's on the board."

JM: Or they'll suspend 'em away from school for ten days. All the kid is tryin' to do is let some attention so you could show him how to do things. But, like I said, the teachers, all they want is money. They hollerin' now they want more money. They want more money. Some of 'em gettin' \$1,200.00, \$1,500.00 a month and all that. But, see, what is the learnin' that—the children? The children ain't learnin' nothin'.

RM: Now, Allen was about— Now, he wants to learn because he wants to be somebody.

JM: Right.

RM: He don't want to come up in the condition his father is.

JM: Right. His father can't read or write.

RM: His father can't read or write and he's doin' labor, bein' underpaid. And he can't make a good livin' for him and his brothers and his mother.

JM: Right.

RM: So he don't want to live like that. All right, he asks us about— But, I don't know. He ain't got time to show Allen—

JM: His mama the same way.

RM: Okay. I told Allen—Allen had some work there. I swear, the the questions he had an that questionnaire. Now, this is what he's gonna be graded on. He didn't have no books to study this. I said, "Well, how could they give you a test when you never read on nothin' like this?"

He said, "Well, that's what it is, Ms. Moore. And the teacher told me to go home and get a dictionary and look it up."

I said, "Well, you looked up all the words, and you couldn't find nothin' but definitions."

He said, "Yes, ma'am."

I said, "Well, look, we gonna go to the library. And that's where you're gonna have to find these answers to these questions." Allen went to the library and look it—down there at that colored library, they might as well close it up.

JM: And he got that card down there. She's got a lifetime card down there. And we looked and looked, that woman—we looked all over.

RM: No. I was gonna get some of the—I was gonna— They allow you three encyclopedias out, if they got 'em. I went down there, they didn't have none. Nothin' pertainin' to this boy's work. No reference of what—nothing, not even on a tape or cassette or nothin'. I said, "Oh, my goodness."

JM: But I'll tell you somethin' else about black people—

RM: We went over here to Sulphur Springs, to the library; they got tape there accesses to the children to use. For those that can't read they have a tape, you know; you sit there and play it, and they get their learnin' there. And they even have stories and things on tape.

JM: Yeah.

RM: All right, we found what Allen needed. Well, Allen went to school with it. I told Allen, "You pick out the most important paragraph you find in this story, and you put it on the paper. Now if I helped you and did it for you, then you won't know."

JM: Right.

RM: So he says, "How long a sentence should I make?"

I said, "Just pick out what is important, that whatever this country manufactures, what is exported, and what is imported. Make it short but important, so that they know that you did study this article."

All right, he did that. He got a 100 on that paper. But they say they wasn't gonna let him keep that, because for the simple reason, Allen wasn't a "A" student.

JM: Right. So, now, what you think about that?

RM: That one time, now because somebody took a interest in helpin' him, he's gonna be slapped down. But I didn't help him. I showed him where it was, and that boy read what it was. And he wrote it in his own handwriting, what he read. And if he ran across a word he didn't understand and I didn't understand it, well, they had another book there that'd give you the definition of what that word meant. Well, I showed him how to do that. He didn't even know how to do that. You know what grade Allen in? Allen in the eighth grade. What happened from the fourth to the eighth that he didn't know that he could go

to other books for reference on words that he didn't understand> So, what'd they do?
They passed him on his age, or—

JM: Right.

RM: —or just got tired of lookin' at Allen and just slipped him on to another group. I said, now that part needs to be looked into. What are we payin' taxes for our children to go to school, and they don't even know they can go to the library and look up words that they don't understand?

JM: But I'll tell you another thing about the black children here—

RM: And they won't fulfill that library. Now, if so many books are out, they have they have the name and the address of these people, send out people to collect those books and bring 'em back to the library. If not, write out a paper, sent it to Washington. Any darn way. Tell 'em books are bein' needed in this library for the children that are goin' to school, so they'll have somewhere to go for. reference. Why go a library and there ain't nothin' in it but maybe a mystery or something like *Roots* or something like that? They don't want that kind of history. They want history where black people fought the war.

JM: Right. That's what I just wanted to say.

RM: There's nothin' in that library tellin' you about there were black— There were black generals that we have never even heard of.

JM: Right. That's what I was gonna tell you. Now wait a minute, babe, look here.

RM: See? It's a lot of black history that will never be printed.

JM: But, look here. Wait a minute, I'm gonna tell you this—

RM: You have to find those from the people that lived it. Or from their ancestors and that has proof of it. And if they have proof, they don't want to put it out where it can be seen. We have great leaders that have lived and died for rights for the slaves back then that we ain't never even heard of.

JM: Right.

RM: When you know anything— Here a man out of a blue sky. Where did he come from? Who is he?

JM: Look here— Tell 'em—

RM: But he'd been here for years.

JM: Another thing here happened to the black people they don't understand. All right.

You take the history they give today, only history you read about is the white man's history.

RM: Umm hmm.

JM: You take, now, the black people back there in (inaudible), when they fought in the Spanish American War. And down here on the Tamiami Trail, do you know a lot of black people, they died. They fought that battle; they fought out there. And the same way about when they had—in the state of Florida when they had two capitals; they had a south Florida capital and a north Florida capital. But you ask a child about that, in school, he can't tell you about that because he didn't read up. He don't learn about it. See, they had a north Florida capital and a south Florida capital.

But then they holler about "research." All right, what can a kid, if he don't know nothin' about that history and you take like St. Augustine, that's the oldest place it is. All right, you ask them about that. The oldest place that is? They don't know about that. You take a place called Chattahoochee, Florida up there. They fought the war up there. I went in some tunnels up there in 1960 where they had ships come in where the soldiers fought with the black soldiers and how they got the ammunition—the stuff across the river on one of them old ferry boats. And one of 'em— It's like I say, and the black people built it. How they got cows and different things...

RM: And bridges.

JM: And the old lady up there called Odelia, she about 103 now. She was livin' up there, year before last I heard from her. A lot of things go on with black people, you know what I mean, just that the kids don't know about it. But all the history they learn about now is in school about the white man.

Same way about the army. When a kid see it on TV it's educational, true enough. When a kid sit down there and look on TV—they showin' a picture, a war picture—the white man he gettin' all the credit, he doin' everything. But they don't bring the black man up; no, he did nothin'. The only time you see a black man on TV or anything, he's a killer, he's admitted a crime, ten or somethin' like that.

But, now and then you see a black man is a star and a good guy. Now, look at *Kojak*¹. All right, now, kids, you can ask them, "Who's your favorite star on TV?" They holler, "Kojak."

end of interview

¹ Police procedural television show, which aired from 1973 to 1978.