

Respondent:

Where I was born, I did not grow up. I was born in Bridgeport, Connecticut. My grandmother lived there but I never lived there. My father was teaching at Lincoln University in the Sociology Department. My mother at that time was a housewife. She had been a social worker and had gone to Talent College and then to University Chicago and for her masters. We were living in rural Pennsylvania. It's not so rural now, but it was very rural back in those days. Then we moved to Atlanta. Dr. Horace Mann Bond had been the President at Lincoln university. When he left, he came down here to Atlanta to become Dean of the School of Education, and probably four or five other families that were at Lincoln university during that time moved to Atlanta. We moved down here in about 1959 to 1960 we were here. I grew up here basically. I grew up in Atlanta and my brother doesn't remember anywhere else, but here, although he was born in Pennsylvania, but he was probably a year and a half when we moved down here.

Interviewer:

How old were you when you ...

Respondent:

I was about seven or eight. Yeah. And at that time the schools were segregated. I went to [inaudible 00:01:39] Elementary School, which was a school that had been the lab school for Atlanta University, but it had reasonably been incorporated into the public school system. It was now a public school. Although many of the same teachers who had taught when it was a private school, still taught there. I was a great place to grow up there. You're right in the middle of the Atlanta University Center. My mother later began teaching in the school of social work here. Both of my parents taught at Atlanta University. We grew up just right down the street from where we're sitting right now on Beckwith Street, in faculty housing down there.

This is a perfect place to grow up in a lot of ways. You grew up, you're shielded from the worst effects of segregation. Because we didn't go on other side down. (laughing) Or if you did, you went over for something like the Alliance Theater on kind of special to planned things. But it was a time of great change, and it was a wonderful time to grow up in Atlanta. It was the time my brother's best friend was Marty King. They were born within a week of each other and they were best friends since nursery school. We knew a lot of families. We went to church with Andrew Young's family and later they moved next door to us. We grew up with the Young's. All of the people that you see as famous people now. They were just neighbors at that time, neighbors and church members. John Lewis, all of the snick people, Julian Mom, and all of the young people that were in snick, they would go off and do brave things and come back and tell us about them the next week.

They're all a little older than me, but they were in the neighborhood and we knew they were doing dangerous, but important things at that time. I participated in the desegregation of the Atlanta public schools during my high school years. First to O'Keefe high school and then to Southwest High School. You're exposed to a lot of things in Atlanta University Center. You got to be that because that was the center of a lot of black cultural life in Atlanta during that period, because things were so segregated and all. We moved out to Valtteri Circle, which is on Cascade Road in 1965, I guess. We were the first blacks on the street that we moved into. We experienced a lot of challenges with the [inaudible 00:04:34]. The only time in my life I ever saw my father with a gun was the night we moved in, because he didn't know what would happen. Our neighbors on the next street had had a crossfire in another area when they moved in, but they didn't do anything more. They blew up our mailbox a couple of times, but they didn't actually do anything to the house.

But it was going to school that it was a rough transition. From your safe cocoon schools you had been in that to go to school with people that didn't want you to be there. You just knew you were better than them and just did your work and get known. Then my junior year in high school, my dad was on sabbatical at UCLA. We lived in Los Angeles for a year and I went to LA High, which is the same high school where they filmed Room 2:22. Actually the year I was there, it was in the process of changing over in Los Angeles. But the year I was there, it was like, one-third black, one-third white, and one-third everybody else, Mexican, Samoan, Asian, every kind of Asian you could think of. It was a very different experience than I had in Atlanta, which was just strictly black and white. While I was out there, some black students came to talk to us about going to college, and they were from the Claremont Colleges. The Claremont Colleges were very much like the Atlanta University Center, except they were rich and white.

I probably didn't notice it was the same five or six black students in all the pictures, but I (laughs) liked the concept of the AAU Center. I didn't want to go here because my parents taught here. I knew a lot of the professors at all of the schools that I had gone to. They had summer programs for students on campus side, then it's spilled into summers. I was ready to do something different, and it was a time of great change. It was the late sixties, it was time of the Black Panthers. It was a time of all kinds of things, we were going on in LA. I looked forward to going back out to California and I went, I applied and went to Pomona for undergraduate school. We came back to Atlanta and for my senior year in high school. Then I went to California to go to college and participated in the startup black studies programs out there, and I got to meet a lot of people that were at the Institute of Black World.

My first, I guess, knowledge of the Institute of Black World came from family connections. Vincent Harding taught at Spelman College. She was one of my dad's colleagues. The first year, the IBW was part of the King Center, and of course we were very close to the King family and all. For the 1969 year, it was one entity. Although there were clearly tensions building up on the direction that the institute would take, but it originally, it was the research arm of the King Center. That lasted most of the year, I guess. Then IBW became an independent research organization, but a lot of the key young black scholars were associated with it. I came back to Atlanta University because Dr. Mack Jones, who you met last night had just founded the PhD program in Political Science here. It was one of two Political Science programs at a historically black colleges and universities. One was at Howard and one was here where the Ford foundation funded the creation of a PhD program to improve the number of blacks in the profession and all.

I came back to Atlanta University, and while I was there, I was involved with the institute as a student. I was a graduate student, but we came to a lot of the seminars that IBW had. This would have been in '70, I graduated in '72. This would have been from September '73, and then they had us. I wasn't formally part of the first, the first Summer Research Symposium I think was in '72. I came to a number of the sessions, but I wasn't formally a part of it. I was formally a part of the one in '74, which was the one that Walter Rapping Land.

It was a formative part of my intellectual development. It was a place where there was cutting edge thought going on. It was a place where there was, as opposed to coming from California, where we had been in the midst of the division that had been heightened between the FBI, between the Panthers and us on the one hand, and which resulted in several people's deaths. But there was a such a big divide between people who were cultural nationalists, or people who were with the Panthers thought selves revolutionary nationalists. It was like never the Twain shall meet. If you're going to be a cultural nationalist and deal with African culture and Fonza, or are you going to be a political nationalist, and there wasn't any room for any in-between in California and that in those days. It was good to come back here to a place where you could intellectually deal with issues of race and class, and institute always had

a more integrated approach to scholarship and activism. Producing scholar and activists were both great thinkers but also doers.

It was a formative part of my intellectual development at that time. During those early years, I was associated with IBW as a student, but not formally working for ABW during that time. I guess around 1975, I got accepted in Sanford's PhD program in Political Science. I went back up to the West Coast and I was there for the next few years. Then of course, a number of the scholars who were associated with IBW came out and spoke to us out there as a Sylvia Wynter eventually came and became Head of the Black Studies Department there. But I was the Program Coordinator for Black Studies. We had Bill Strickland come out and speak, and we had Vincent Harding, and we had a number of folks from Miami, maintained a relationship with ABW folks during that period. Then my mother got sick with cancer. I came back to Atlanta and I never finished my PhD(laughs). Why am I doing it now that I'm retired? (laughs)

In any event, I came back and I actually was originally going to the Black Studies program at Howard University to be a program coordinator there. Al Cologne who was my grad student Valley Gate at Stanford, was going to come to IBW to work on the Black Studies Curriculum Development program. But the two jobs, he had a family, he needed the job that paid more money, and I needed to come back to Atlanta because my mother was getting sick. So we traded jobs, and I came to work with Doug Davidson on the Black Studies Curriculum Development Project. Douglas was the director and I was coordinator of those things. I worked with IBW the next few years as a staff member on the Black Studies Project, on running the bookstore, and just doing whatever. You couldn't do one thing at IBW, you had to do a lot of different things. There weren't many things that had to be done by that time.

We had gone through a period of the intense FBI, and terrorism, and all that. I guess that was earlier in the '70s. But in any event, I came to work at IBW during that time, and I think we did some good work. As the beginning of black studies, and it was maybe IBW had that one of the first conferences on black studies in the early '70s. Then this was a look probably after black studies programs were in there, like the first decade of black studies. Then we could look at what the field was like.

We sent out and asked the heads of different black studies programs and the teachers to send us their fabric of their curriculum, because we wanted to identify a model curriculum for black studies for the country. We had a series of three, we collected all of the syllabus, and then we had a panel for each discipline that reviewed them. Then we had a conference where they were presented, and then we came out with, I guess, three volumes of that were self-published. We were supposed to get a publishing thing, but that was during the time everything was falling apart. So we didn't ever get them fully published, but they were distributed pretty widely around the country to black studies programs. That was pretty much towards the end of IBW, after that major grant, the funding dissipated, it was a great influence on my development. I enjoyed working with academic very much. What questions you got? (laughing)

Interviewer:

But I also just want to just go back and trace some things. You went to Pomona for undergrad and that was in Political Science; was it?

Respondent:

Yeah, it was in Political Science.

Interviewer:

Then you came back to AAU because Dr. Jones had started the PhD program. You were here for a while in the PhD program and then went out to Stanford?

Respondent:

I went out to Stanford to finish the program.

Interviewer:

Then left. I'm not sure if you said why, but it looked on you when your mother got sick, and you came back to Atlanta and then started working with IBW. What were you saying that you had been interacting with them anyway in the early parts?

Respondent:

From my perspective, it was the break centered around the difference between nonviolence as a philosophy and as a tactic for black liberation. The King Center was very wedded to part of to nonviolence as a philosophy, as the way to approach ending segregation and desegregating American society. Although towards the end of his life, Dr. King clearly was dealing with issues of class and all of those things. Actually Vincent was very close to Dr. King, and he was one of his speech writers. He actually wrote most of the speech, Dr. King's very famous speeches delivered at Riverside where he stepped out and opposed the war in Vietnam. Many people think that speech led to his in many ways to his assassination a year later, because King was becoming more dangerous to the powers that be by linking race and class.

Because before that, the Panthers and Snick had come out in opposition to the Vietnam War, but he was the first major leader to do so. Everybody else was pretty much in line with him and Johnson and all. When he came out in opposition to the war in Vietnam, that was a major break. But in terms of the civil rights movement, Mrs. King was concerned about preserving Dr. King's legacy. As a legacy and philosophy, the whole King Center was built to run, teaching non-violence and teaching non-violent approaches. Teaching it as a philosophy and as a living breathing approach to life, and that would bring the country around. The difference between that and folks at IBW, we're not as committed to non-violence as a philosophy, but as a tactic for the struggle at a certain point in time. Of course, supported armed struggle in South Africa, we supported arms struggle in different places, that was it. But we didn't advocate necessarily armed struggle, but we didn't say it would not be necessary yet that it was not within.

That was the key break between ... I don't remember exactly when it happened, but I may at some point, the IBW invited Stokely to come down and speak. The King center, I don't know whether it was so much Mrs. King as the board members at the time, which were some civil rights people and a lot of wealthier white business people were opposed to Stokely coming down, because Stokely of course, had a call for black power. Of course Rap was very much in the Malcolm X tradition and by whatever means necessary. I think that the direction that the King Center wanted research to go in and the direction that IBW was going in were divergent, and that's pretty much what caused the split. From my perspective, I was not on the inside at that time.

As a resident of Atlanta and as a young scholar, I would say that was the break. I don't think that the key leaders of IBW in terms of Vincent, and Bill Strickland, and Bobby Hill were not necessary. Bobby was doing research on Marcus Garvey, and he of course, produced that seminal ten-volume Garvey papers eventually. But that time he was doing research in it. The speakers that IBW brought to Atlanta

would range from Walter Rodney, George Bedford from Jamaica, people from Tanzania. But of course, being very supportive with Southern African Liberation Movements, also supporting civil rights people that were under attack over the years, and that was another part of it. That's my view of what happened.

Interviewer:

Was there a demonstration, someone said there was a demonstration at Morehouse and maybe some of the individuals from IBW supported it, and then there were [crosstalk 00:21:28].

Respondent:

A couple of women. Yeah. (laughing) There was a call for a black university. For the black colleges to redirect their research and studies towards producing a black university, not just producing academically excellent people, but academically excellent people that would be committed to the advancement of African-Americans who would be to produce a generation of scholar activists, and to redirect the curriculum so that you had more, even though there was black studies taught at the AUC center at the time wasn't called black studies. It wasn't the focus of the different departments outside of the Political Science department, which clearly had gotten its own funding. They didn't mess with that.

There was a trustee meeting, I think it was the Morehouse Trustees, it may have been the Atlanta University Center Board. I'm not sure what, in any event, the students, a couple of them were at epidemic and locked up the Board of Trustees, and were demanded that they create a black university. I think Dr. King was on the Board of Trustees at that time. He was one of the people and they prevented them from going to the restroom. I can't remember exactly what it was, but anyway, all the students got expelled and that of course had repercussions, because some of them were associated with IBW. But they coming IBW with plan, it was a group of students. Sam Jackson was one of the students. Sam Jackson, who's now the actor, now he was one of the students that was involved in it. But all of them finished Morehouse eventually, but they were out maybe a year or so before, while they were being rehabilitated, I guess,(laughing).

I don't know what it was. It was a seminal moment because, the Atlanta University produced black scholars, but not necessarily black scholars in black studies at that time. We used great engineers and scientists and doctors, but the call was to redirect the curriculum, and that eventually happens. You had the creation of the Institute for African-American Studies at the LA University that Dr. Richard Long headed up for many, many years before he went out to Emory. Even within the School of Social Work, my mother and the Dean Hill, who was Dean at that time, Dean Genevieve Hill, and some of the younger scholars who were also, some of them were associated with IBW, redirected the curriculum of the social work, to produce social workers who were change agents and more advocates for the poor and for black people at that time they all participated in that.

It did redirect, and I think in many ways some of the curriculum. I know that the university presidents tended to be very conservative and very ... and rightly so to some extent, because they were thinking of their funding basis, and whether or not the Rockefellers would fund something like this. Or whether or not whoever was supporting whichever school on his own, even the Morris Brown was the AME Church. All black colleges were church-based in one way or another. The Clark Lanny university was founded by congregational ministers. Spelman and Morehouse were more associated with like the Baptist Church, and Clark with, I guess was AME church too, not AME, Methodist Church. [inaudible 00:25:58] school. In any event, they were concerned about losing the funding and all that. I don't know that in their hearts, if they had everybody sit down, they could have come to some agreement, but it

was just that at that time, people where things were so polarized that everybody got thrown out of school that wasn't involved in the takeover. That probably also had an effect on the break as well.

Interviewer:

That was 1970? Am I right?

Respondent:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

When did the break actually happen? Was the late 1970, early 71?

Respondent:

Yeah. I would have to look, I actually had a pamphlet that had the formal date for the opening of the institute as independent institution, which I think was in '70, or it might have been January '71. The first thing that the institute did as a public program separate from the King Center.

Interviewer:

Well, let's talk about your time. How long did you stay at IBW? What years?

Respondent:

I was off and on? (laughing).

Interviewer:

I know you ...

Respondent:

I was coming in and out of it. [Crosstalk 00:27:19] As a student I was associated with IBW during the mid-seventies, between '72 to '75 say, and then through working in black studies and all that I was involved while I was at Stanford and all. Then I would be home here in the summers and also we would do things. We did a black film festival here, academic and the first black film festival, I think in the city in 19 ... seems to me it was '79 or '80. Then there was a group of us who formed the Atlanta African Film Society in 1981. We presented black and third world films for the next 20 years. Now there's a plethora of black film festivals around the city, but we did most of the early idea bringing black filmmakers of color to Atlanta. There was a lot of different efforts that were going on that were related.

It's not like it was all at IBW. Things would have gone on at the Hammons House, things with the African Film Society, things with a National Black Arts Festival, which started in the late eighties, that was in '88. But we all flowed from one thing to work with each other on different projects. I would say all of those things were going on. Then after the Black Studies Project, I went into City Government, and I've been in city Government for last 37 years. I've worked primarily in areas of economic development, minority, and female business development, but also in communications and speech writing and that kind of thing. I've worked for the last six mayors in one capacity or another, but you can't do the same thing for each one. You've got to move around if you want to stay. I did that, but I'm also, the other

thing that outside of my public administration stuff is that I've done with the city and done with the cultural community, I'm a photographer.

We didn't have a city photography job when I went into city government, unless you want it to be a crime scene photographer, which I did not. I'm a first to dead bodies, (laughing) but I ended up doing a lot of the photography for the City for most of the time I was there. I was official photographer for the City. That was very exciting thing to do. Well, it was interesting. One of the things that the Black Power Movement was very male oriented in many ways in the late sixties and all, and IBW offered a place where men and women's positions were equally valued. Although the positions when you had the on the scholar side, you had black women scholars, and black men scholars, and they were all doing groundbreaking research in their different fields. We had Stephen Henderson, and the first year, at the beginning they had actual fellows who were associated with, we would do research at the institutions.

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Respondent:

And at the institutions. And then as the funding left, because funding stayed with The King Center. Then the people went out and got jobs at different colleges, but they still continued association with IBW and published through IBW through either little monographs, or we had a publication called IBW Black Worldview, and many of them contributed to that. And all of them contributed financially to IBW, in that now the worker staff, which is the other side from the scholar staff was heavily women. That was kind of always, as I can remember, kind of the office manager [inaudible 00:31:48] was always the treasurer.

Those kinds of positions were... We were funded a lot, a lot of our positions were funded through the CETA program, which existed during that time, where the federal government actually gave money to cities, and they gave money to different organizations to create jobs. And so the folks that worked on the printing press, it was really one or two people at a time, it wasn't a whole lot of... There's never a whole lot of people at IBW, but a lot of people weren't getting paid by IBW. And so, folks like, this guy named Al that ran a printing press at one time. And women ran it, all of us learned how to run it, and all of us learned how to... You all learned how to do all these things, but some people became more skilled at it than other folks. And so there was some... In terms of who was in charge of IBW, it was kind of like always the big three up until, from 70 to 79, it was till late seventies when Howard was in charge. And then...

Interviewer:

Who were the big three?

Respondent:

Vincent, Bobby, and Bill Strickland. Vincent, Bobby Hill and Bill Strickland.

Interviewer:

And then later on...

Respondent:

Then, later on Howard [inaudible 00:33:26] was there until he went up to the shopper. But Pat was a steady force all the way through, Ruth kept him probably from going to jail by doing the books correctly.

We had always had a lot of student volunteers that were doing things, a lot of different research projects and we didn't have the internet back then, so if we wanted to keep tabs on what was going on with things in different cities, you actually had to do research and you had to pull things from the newspapers and pull things from that. And I know we had all kinds of stuff on index cards, on all these different subjects, and students would do the basic research. And Jan Douglas, who taught at the school of social work, she also was associated with IBW, she led a lot of the research into anti-black violence around the country that was going on, and the rise of the right, and the police shootings of blacks, and back in those days even.

I don't know if we kept those index cards, but they were actually very... because that period is probably not indexed anywhere that I'm thinking of, I mean, that was kind of stuff that we were keeping tabs on, and out of that, people would write the papers that we be in the Black Worldview newsletter and all that. And so it was a lot of basic research that folks did. The students that were involved in the summer research symposiums usually went back to their schools in the fall, but a lot of them maintain relationships with IBW, even after they had been in the summer program.

Interesting programs, I'm not even sure where the money came from, whether they came from Ford, or one of the big foundations, but in any event, they were able to bring in the... For the 74, the co-leaders of it overall were, Bill Strickland and Walter Rodney.

And we based a lot of what we did the whole year on Walter Rodney's groundbreaking book, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, and studying that. But every week, a different scholar would come in and do public lectures in the evenings, and then work with the students during the day for that week. We really worked people to death, and they really didn't get any time off because we ate with them and everything, but people... Scholars, from everyone from George Bedford, to Katherine Dunham, to Grace and Jimmy Boggs from Detroit, bringing in the perspective of race in classroom. In the auto workers union, they had just done... What's the name of that book?

Well, the two of them collaborated in kind of a Seminole book that we also used in the study. And, then out of that, the audio tapes from that session, IBW reproduced and sold in packages to black studies programs, so other people around the country could also get access to these lectures. Everything was on little cassette tapes, back in those days. I probably have a set of those in the basement somewhere. But there were... All of the leading scholars of the day would come and speak, and you'd have people from the arts, from economics, political science, sociology, and they would come in and present. And, so it would be not just for the students, but it would also be because of the public lectures. You'd have an audience of people from Atlanta in general that would come to those. So it was exciting, and then you'd get a chance to interact with people that you might've only... You read about, you just had a chance to try to read an article by them.

Well, for me, the most memorable thing about the symposiums was access to Walter, because he was probably, in terms of somebody who came out of an academic environment, but was thoroughly involved with... He had done this series of things, talks with the basic people of Jamaica and *The Groundings with My Brothers*. I think is just out in a new edition. This month, I think it's just out. Being able to have access to Walter and to the people that he worked with very critical. And then, students came from schools all around the country, came down from Amherst, Howard, from [inaudible 00:38:27] center schools. So you got a chance to work with students of different areas. And a number of the students ended up at the AP Political Science Department Program too.

Interviewer:

Ended up going there, and then PhD?

Respondent:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Respondent:

At least for a while, a lot of us came... Some came and stayed, and some came and went.

Interviewer:

Did white students ever come to the symposium?

Respondent:

I don't remember any. There may have been one or two. There were white people that came, I remember a lot of the peace activists would come to the public programs, and people that were participating in peace programs, Heather Gray and folks associated with the American Friends Service Committee, who were doing a lot of good work on peace activities, with Southern Africa.

Interviewer:

Is that the Quaker base?

Respondent:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

The American friends? Okay. I think. Julie still work with them sometimes?

Respondent:

I think she does. Yeah. She does do some stuff. [inaudible 00:39:39]. who was the daughter of Chief Albert Luthuli who founded the AMC. She was one of the Southern regional representatives for the American Friends Service Committee, so she was always very active in connecting us with Southern African activities.

Interviewer:

Were you there that long, or did you-

Respondent:

I left in 83, I went to work at city hall and so I was still around, but I wasn't as around actively. So I would say my employment period with IBW was probably the early eighties, but I got to do a lot of things. I mean the bookstore, we worked with Eric and Jessica Huntley in London who had [inaudible 00:40:32]. And they actually took our publication, I took them actually in the big truck over to London and stayed over there for about a week. And it was called a Black and Radical Book Fair, there was a lot of independent publishers from around the world all met in London and we get some of their books to sell

here, they took our books to sell there, and that was a really interesting thing. Shared a room with Sonia Sanchez then.

Interviewer:

Oh, wow.

Respondent:

It was, because everybody stayed at Eric and Jessica's house.

Interviewer:

Did they own a bookstore?

Respondent:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

What was the name of it? I think I may have been there.

Respondent:

Bogle-L'Ouverture Bookstore. It was later called The Walter Rodney Bookshop, but it was originally called... It was named after Paul Bogle, who was in Tucson, L'Ouverture. Eric Huntley is still alive, I think his wife had passed.

Interviewer:

Maybe a different one because I think-

Respondent:

There were two black bookstores in London at that time.

Interviewer:

Maybe the other one. Because in the other one, the wife was still living, but the husband had passed.

Respondent:

Okay.

Interviewer:

And the wife was white.

Respondent:

Oh, okay. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Did you do other kinds of travel in affiliation with IBW as employee or otherwise?

Respondent:

Just the black studies conferences, things like that, National Council of Black Studies we'd go there, we'd present papers and stuff.

Interviewer:

Where was that?

Respondent:

Where was it?

Interviewer:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Respondent:

It met in different cities-

Interviewer:

The annual conference that would move around?

Respondent:

The annual conference would move around yeah. National Council of Black Studies. So a lot of the people that participated on the Black Studies Project were affiliated with the National Council on Black Studies, and so they would have a conference every year. So we would usually go and present papers and all of that, but I didn't do any international travel or anything like that with IBW. We didn't really have any travel budget, you really had to pay your own way most of the time.

Interviewer:

Many people have said that. It was a labor of love.

Respondent:

It really was a labor of love, you really were kind of employed by... You got a little money from IBW, but everybody had side hustles and side things you were doing to support it. So you would juggle in different jobs at any given time to make things work. And, it's the financial cushion that being with The King Center in the beginning provided, all went away when it became independent. So they had some support from foundations that stayed, but still it was reduced because Atlanta in general was supporting The King Center in terms of the companies here in Atlanta. So the support that they got was support that came on the basis of Vincent's reputation or Bill's or whatever with... And their relationships with funders in the Northeast primarily.

Interviewer:

Yeah. Pat said that they would sort of go out and do lectures and the money from the lectures, they would bring back to put into that, into the Institute. But you also mentioned... You said it was a CETA grant.

Respondent:

Yeah. A lot of people were paid through the CETA programs, [crosstalk 00:43:48] Comprehensive Employment and Training Act is what it was actually called. But the CETA program funded some staff positions for IBW, not the scholar positions, but some of the staff positions were paid through CETA fund.

So it was money that came through the city and went to different non-profit and profit organizations that, at the time...

Interviewer:

Do you feel like the break from The King Center was for the better?

Respondent:

I think for the kind of scholarship and work that IBW was doing, yes. Was it painful? Yes. It was very painful, but it was a philosophical difference, I mean, it was a difference between whether non-violence was a tactic, and whether it was an overarching philosophy that you would adhere to till the end of time. I think recognizing our position in American society, we're 10% of the population, so we are not about to cause a revolution, but that didn't mean that we didn't support people who might've done that. There was, the Republic of New Africa folks, they were based primarily in Alabama and Mississippi. They were trying to form a separate Southern nation really. They were in favor of a separate black nation in the South, in the black belt.

There were people... And so we didn't disaffiliate from people because they might not have necessarily had the same philosophy we had, but we didn't disaffiliate with them, I guess, which is what The King Center would have wanted us to do. To not be associated with Jamil Al-Amin, H. Rap Brown, or not be associated with RNA or something like that, or the Revolutionary Action Movement, which was dedicated to our struggling against the United States, that would not be something that King Center would want to do. But in terms of promoting scholar activism around what was the best course for black people, IBW wanted to look at everything. And a lot of those models included looking at countries that were going through violent revolutions in South Africa, in Cuba, in Grenada, in Diana, in Guinea-Bissau, and Gola, and having relationships with people that were leading liberation struggles in those different areas.

So we didn't disassociate with people who were conducting arms struggle. Non-violence works when you have people with a conscience and it does not work on people without a conscience. There's some people that are... You will have the examples every now and then, somebody like George Wallace, who towards the end of his life will, after having said "Segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever." Will come to the end of his life and have had some kind of transformation into something accepting black people. Or the guy who used to be head of the KU Klux Klan that lived in Stone Mountain, and he later became best friends with Jeff Burris, who was the first black mayor of Stone Mountain. But those are far and few in between. And of course we're seeing right now the whole rise of the alt-right and those are not people you're going to reach through nonviolence necessarily.

It doesn't mean that we're advocating violent overthrow of the government or anything like that. But it does mean we're not excluding that as a possibility I guess. And that made IBW a target of the FBI. There's a whole set of FBI files on everybody associated with IBW, we were targeted by a number of our folks who were involved in programs in Cuba, in the summers, and taking young people to Cuba. And so we were victims of terrorism from far right Cuban extremists in cooperation with the government. It was clearly in cooperation with government because, I mean, there was one period

where... It wasn't all... I mean, nobody... I think a couple of people's cars got messed up, or... I don't know if they were bombed or their tanks were messed up, and I know they broke into IBW several times and stole our equipment and some of the papers.

They had a telephone campaign, which was probably the most nerve wracking of all of them, because they would just call your house all night long and they would call and hang up, call and hang up and you would change your phone number, and they'd have the number two days later. So clearly, somebody in the government was giving the okay for these people to continue doing what they were doing. And I think Howard and Pat had some of the FBI files on that period of time. But it was particularly designed to break up any alliances with Cuba and with taking people over to visit Cuba, that was because they were the anti-Castro terrorists, doing it. So, that was probably... It was the kind of time when you might have a gathering, there would clearly be an FBI person outside in a car, outside the door where you work. You can tell them, because they are all white men in suits. It was not like...

They clearly were not in your neighborhood for any other purpose other than to keep tabs on what was happening. And a lot of it was their own fears about terrorism, things like that. I mean, nobody was overthrowing the country, or clearly Cuba could not overthrow the Southern United States, but they were terrified of it. And Hoover, of course authorized all kinds of activities against the SNCC, against the Panthers, against the Deacons for Defense in Louisiana, just all kinds of disruptive things to... And of course you had some people who were informants, FBI informants, which you could find out years later through researching. But I mean, I was used to that from back when we were doing black studies movements back in the late sixties, because we always had FBI informants during that time.

And a lot of the things that had been fomented between the Black Panthers, and [inaudible 00:51:25] organization, were tensions that were pumped up by agent provocateurs that were FBI informants, basically, who would provoke people into doing things against each other. And so it's just something that... Even in SCLC, there were FBI informants. Mr. Withers, who's a wonderful photographer and was a great chronicler of people in Memphis actually, was paid a hundred dollars a week by the FBI.

Now he had 10 kids and he probably didn't get enough money from taking pictures from black papers to support himself, but he was an FBI informant. I don't know if any of his information led to King's assassination, but he clearly had told them where King was. I mean, I don't know that it was that much of a secret, I mean, if you were in Memphis at that time and you were, Dr. King was staying, there wasn't any place else to stay, but the Lorraine Motel. But in any event, we have had... Anywhere there's been black struggle against the country, you've had... The FBI has tried to infiltrate and have informants and people who would try to disrupt the organization. So you had that.

Interviewer:

Do you feel like there were informants in IBW?

Respondent:

Yes. We pretty much know who it was.

Interviewer:

Okay. Well, you certainly don't have to share that.

Respondent:

They're no longer alive, but it's not... You can figure it out from some of the... FBI will send you copies of stuff, they'll black out people's names, but you can kind of figure out who it is.

Interviewer:

Oh, you can request information?

Respondent:

Yeah, you can request your FBI files. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Oh, interesting.

I never had occasioned to do that, but I didn't realize that that was the thing you could do. Have you ever done it?

Respondent:

I didn't request it for myself, but Howard and Pat got it for IBW.

Interviewer:

What was their files, do you remember? Oh, sorry.

Respondent:

Well, it's just, there'd be reports on activities. You can figure out who was there by how the report sounded. Sometimes it would be the most radical people, rattling people up who were actually informants.

Interviewer:

Do you feel like there were ever informants who intentionally gave them bad information, or were they always sort of just offering information in general? Do you know what I mean?

Were there people who-

Respondent:

Who were a double agent or something?

Interviewer:

Yes.

Respondent:

I have no idea. But all of us had read the [inaudible 00:00:54:14], we knew that... I mean, anytime you're engaged in something that's contrary to what the government wants to do, and really in most of the civil rights movement, that was contrary to what the government wanted black people to do. So, the FBI would always try to infiltrate whatever movements were going on, Hoover hated communists, and he would always associate any kind of black independent thought with being a communist. Some of the people... We associated with people who were communist. I mean, it's not that we were communists,

but we didn't exclude them from participation in activities. And so that, of course is... You just kind of have to expect that, you have to expect... But I mean, you expect that your phones will be tapped and that you just... As long as you're not doing anything that's wrong, they really can't do anything with it. Just have to accept that, that's a fact of life in America. And so, no, you don't trust the FBI, no, they're not working in your interests.

Interviewer:

Do you still feel that way sometimes that you might be under surveillance?

Respondent:

I've worked for black mayors, all of my existence, I think that the government tends to target surveillance of black mayors. Again, if you're not doing anything wrong, you're not necessarily going to get trapped in this, but you have to expect that whatever you do is going to be under scrutiny. And yes, I think, some of the things that were being done to promote minority business development, those were things that... But the FBI now, they concentrate on trapping you on different things, mostly related to your taxes or something like that. But we have these cases in Atlanta of people going to jail for bribery and it's sad, because a large part of the civil rights movement transferred over into the movement for black political empowerment, and the election of Maynard Jackson.

And it's just sad when there's younger people that are not as ethical as Maynard may have been when he was mayor. And so you get the mayor of Baltimore resigning yesterday. It's kind of like you have to expect that if you're a black elected official, you're going to be under scrutiny, so you shouldn't provide them with anything to scrutinize, I'll put it that way. But just because, you get in office and you see the white politicians doing these things, you can't necessarily do it just because they do it. The white politicians, taking money and you can't, because they can do it, if they catch you doing it, they are going to put you away. So you have to just expect that there's more scrutiny on things that happen to black elected officials.

And so, I worked for six mayors, I think there'd be investigations into people in the government during every one of those mayors, even the ones that were very ethical, like Maynard and Shirley. But it kind of comes with the territory. You're doing something that's in opposition to the status quo, and you're going to be scrutinized for it. And so, we don't know what's going to happen with... whether anybody else from the last administration will go to jail, but I mean, we had the mayor go to jail, two mayors ago, Bill Campbell went to jail, after he was mayor. They clearly are trying to get our last mayor, Kasim Reed. While they've gotten some people in his administration, they haven't gotten him at this point.

I don't know what all they have. They have incredible powers of surveillance, and they use it. So, it's an important thing to... Maynard Jackson used to say, "If you're close enough to see the line, you're too close to it." So just kind of have to operate like that.

Pretty much. I mean, I've worked for voter education project for summer, I think, doing voter education around the South and monitoring elections and things like that. But I was trying to decide whether I was going to go back out to Stanford, my mother... Her cancer got worse, so I decided I was going to stay in. Andy Young, I'd worked on his campaign when he was elected mayor, and they had a special project coming up that they wanted me to work on. And of course, I was only going to work there six months.

And so I went to work on a special project, which was the first Dream Jamboree, which was a program to bring... Basically what we did was called up every college that Andy had ever spoken at, and

asked them to send a representative here to have a college fair. And, it was not just colleges, but any kind of post-secondary training, and it was aimed not at seniors, but at high school freshmen and juniors. Because we felt by the time you were senior, if you hadn't taken the right classes, you weren't going to get to go to college. And so if we got people started looking at going to college in the ninth grade, and they developed relationships with some of these college recruiters in the ninth grade, then by the time they were seniors, they were going to be ready to go to college.

And so it was a different kind of program from, everybody has college fairs for people in their senior year. But again, if you haven't taken the right courses, by the time you're a senior, you're not going to go to college. So we had the kind of program, we had some people that could offer people scholarships on the spot, because it would be open to the seniors in the evening. We'd let the seniors come in the evening, but during the day program, we had it, and it was geared towards ninth and 11th grade students. And then we also had people in from different kinds of careers, because everybody's not going to college. So we had one of the first women who was a machinist in a machinist union, and all kinds of non-traditional careers, the opportunities that people could pursue.

But you have to start early if you're going to get there. So I came to work on that program. We overspent our budget basically because we ended up having to pay for the school buses that we hadn't thought... We thought the school system was paying for. In any event. So, Andy said, "Well, we ain't got no money to pay you, so why don't you just come work for me?" I said, "But I already earned this money." They say, "Well, that's all right, just come on and work for us." And, I got a job doing stuff that I enjoyed doing. I was working with Community Development Block Grant program with Programs and Housing and Economic Development. And then I went to The Office of Contract Compliance, which is a minority and female business program. And of course we had all worked on Maynard's campaign when he ran for office too, and his big mantra was "Minority business", and so we were kind of disciples of Maynard. And so that was a perfect place to work-

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [01:02:04]

Respondent:

Disciples of Maynard. That was a perfect place to work. But in city governments, I did that for 10 years and then we had a different mayor. So I went and worked at cultural affairs for a while, and then I came back to the mayor's office and worked in community affairs programs. And then in the mayor's office communications, I did that for about 10 years. And then the last 10 years I spent in the watershed department where we had a huge consent decree that we had to do all of this... We had one of the first federally required consent decrees in the country, and it was a very expensive program that we're going to have to spend billions of dollars to fix the sewers.

And we didn't have a lot of minority and female companies that were qualified, to do that work because underground construction requires different kinds of training than overground, but it's similar, if you can do the kinds of things to put in a residential development, you can get into doing underground construction. So we did a training program for minority and female companies, and I've heard about 500 companies go through it over the first and last 10 years. And it's a really a construction management training class where... But was paired with a financial analysis, the company we'd had outside consultants that would come in and look at their bookkeeping and make sure it was in, show them how to get it in ready for construction accounting standards, which is different from QuickBooks. And that's what I did the last 10 years was run that program.

And then of course I always took pictures too. Yeah. I've had a number of exhibits, I've had a number of several different books of black photographers. And that's what I am working on now is

doing, putting some of my photographs into a book that would be my book that I would do to just mine. I'm in several other people's books, but I'm going to work on my own book on photography and just do some traveling and getting my archives in order. Yeah. I always did that. Well, I've done photography, since I was a kid, I had a Brownie camera, I had an Instamatic, I had a Polaroid. I wasn't really the school photographer type, I never was doing the school pictures or anything like that. But I was do was, taking pictures of just what we were doing, whether it was activist stuff we were doing or parties, anything. I just always took the pictures and so it kind of evolved into what I did, and as you gradually learn, I never really went to school for photography.

It's all through learning by doing, and then working with other photographers, but it's because I was in the mayor's office. I had kind of unprecedented opportunity to photograph all different aspects of Atlanta, from the various things the city was doing, to when Nelson Mandela came here. The Olympics Paralympics, the democratic convention and in ADA. While I wasn't the official city photographer, I did a lot of things that an official city photographer would do. Now they have lots of city photographer positions. I got one for the council and one for the mayor and one for the, this and that. So now there's three or four of them around the city and I consider they're all doing a good job. Yeah.

Interviewer:

So you were doing the job of potentially several photographers, while also doing your own work and mayor's office. How did you gel the love?

Respondent:

I don't know. I just did, you just do, it's just something you do... I love photography, so I always love to do that, and with different mayors I did more photography for like the mayor's office, or maybe I did more photography the last few years. I've been more photography for the watershed department. But even there in the last couple of years, we got younger photographers there, that were doing it. It was fun, it was something... I'd always done photography for like the campaigns and things like that. You just working 20 hours a day, what can I say? But you don't really consider the photography work is just that social documentation. It's continuing on my father's work as a cultural anthropologist.

Interviewer:

Okay. I didn't realize.

Respondent:

In a way.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Respondent:

So my website is called the "photobreo", and so it's telling the stories of our community through photography.

Interviewer:

And you feel like that's an extension of your father's work.

Respondent:

Oh, most definitely.

Interviewer:

[inaudible 01:07:02] I know you mentioned earlier, he was a professor and I'm not sure. I'm not even trying to talk about what he taught, but like tell me more about your father.

Respondent:

Well he taught anthropology and sociology and African studies courses at Atlanta university. And so, he had done his dissertation on Africa, he was always very interested. We always had African students over at the house, my mother had a do drop in policy at Thanksgiving and Christmas and whoever was in town would come. And of course it was also good because in addition to your friends and family and whatever students happen to be in town, like different professors would come and dr. Richard Long, he would come and he would bring maybe James Baldwin one year or Maya Angelo, another year, Romare Bearden another year. So just whatever people happened to be in town, they would end up over our house for dinner. So it was kind of a wonderful experience.

And I just always took pictures at all of these different things. So you have pictures of people sitting around talking around the dinner table or... And I never really considered myself a photographer, when I was doing that kind of photography, the kind of stuff around the house or around what we were doing or where we were. But I also worked a lot with the National Black Arts Festival, so I did a lot of photography for the National Black Arts Festival as well. Through that you got to do all different kinds of cultural groups, dance, theater, visual artists, and the literary folks. So all of these people they come back in your life at different times in different areas, but the Black Arts Festival has been going on for 30 years and I've been working with them off and on over that period. Again, not formally but informally, and so I'll probably do one book on the Black Arts Festival.

We did a little book for their 25th anniversary that had mostly photographs by Jim Alexander, who did the photographs in this room and myself, and we'll do, probably do another one when we get to another anniversary. Yeah. With different activities, not much sports, but at some, going to sports things we did. At that time, we could go to the baseball games where a dollar and we weeks to go to the baseball and soccer games back in those days, my brother played staff soccer. So we did a lot in those things.

Like going to the movies, once we got the movie theaters integrated and we could go, didn't have to sit up in a balcony so we could sit down with everybody else. We used to get discount tickets to the movies on Saturday. I think we could go for like 10 cents when we were kids, it was really cheap to go to the movies. And so we did a lot of inexpensive activities, I guess I'll put it that way. We were not rich, but we were... We thought we were middle class, but we didn't, we'd actually make middle-class money at that. But we had a middle-class mentality, I guess I'll put it that way. And so, I guess those are the main things that we did participated in different school, school activities.

Interviewer:

Did you do like things with the colleges around here? Like to go like homecoming battle of the bands, stuff like that?

Respondent:

Yeah, we'd do that. When I was in high school and stuff like that, we'd always go to the homecoming. They'd have big parade down Hunter street, you'd go to the parades. I remember seeing FAMU came and the marching 100. So, that sort of thing would go on. That participated a lot in political campaigns, my first political campaign was working in Julian Bond's campaign. We were little kids and he was running for the Georgia state legislature, and we used to do knock on people's doors. And those days kids could do that, no you can't do that nowadays, but in those days, kids could work, a group of kids could go and work in neighborhood. We lived on one street, the projects were right next to us, go over there and talk to the people and say, vote for Julian Bond. And he got elected three times before they would seat him, the legislature refused to seat him because SNCC had taken a position on the war in Vietnam and he wouldn't renounce that position. And so he was elected three times before he got seated and-

Interviewer:

But how does that happen? If you won the election?

Respondent:

He won the election, they refused to swear him in. They swore in everybody else, they had everybody stand up except for Mr. Bond. There's a famous picture of him sitting down while all the other legislators have been sworn in. He had to Sue in federal court and eventually it got... It overturned where they had to seat him but that was a lot. So we always had a lot of political activity, different people's races when people were always running for some office here mayor, city council, county commission. That was a lot of what I do, that's politics.

Interviewer:

Well, so politics early.

Respondent:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Were your parents involved? What was it like you and your siblings? Your siblings and your parents?

Respondent:

Well, it's just me and my brother basically, he's younger than I am, but he worked on political campaigns too. Yeah, my parents worked on it, they worked on... My mother was one of the leaders of women for young, when Andy ran for Congress and for the mayor, and of course they were also involved in things for the schools. There was groups of Southwest Atlantans... Southwest Atlantans for progress, I think it was. And that was an interracial group that was working to improve the schools and, and to integrate them peacefully and stuff like that. They participated in that, my mother was involved in a lot of neighborhood, civic organizations and stuff.

Interviewer:

She was also a sociologist, right?

Respondent:

She was a social worker, my father was an anthropologist sociologist. Yeah. Her undergraduate degree was in sociology and her graduate degree was in social work. She went to Talladega College and then to Chicago, and my father went to Wesleyan college in Northeast TD. Where his grandmother really was very good friends with Madam CJ Walker, and his mother died with about a month and a half after he was born out of complications of childbirth. So Madam CJ Walker in her will, she left money for him to go to school. And that's really how he was able to... He was raised by his aunt because his father didn't know anything about taking care of a baby. He brought her home and his aunt and his grandmother raised him, and so. But Madam Walker, supported him, all of her life and after she was gone, it was money for him to go to college. So he went to Wesleyan because Madam CJ Walker.

Interviewer:

That is amazing.

Respondent:

Yeah. He did his master's at Yale and his doctorate at Columbia. It's Alabama. It's Alabama. Well, actually like all my grandparents are, except for one set are from the South and move North... My mother's mother was from Charleston, they were kind of run out of Charleston during reconstruction. They owned property in the middle of town that had been left to them by a white grandfather. His family took the property back... during reconstruction, they just ran black people out, took their land, and all of that. I got a deed to the land, but it doesn't mean anything. So a lot of people that were in their church moved up to Bridgeport, Connecticut, which was another sea town, as another, so the same kind of jobs in Bridgeport as you would have had in Charleston.

The AME Zion, the Walters Memorial AME Zion in Bridgeport, a lot of those people came from Charleston originally. My mother grew up in Bridgeport, and then her father was from Virginia, he had moved up. Again, they all moved up during kind of the age of white terror against black people in the South and moved up North. On my father's side, that family was from the part of Virginia that became West Virginia. And they came up after the civil war, they started fighting with the union army, came up with the regiment that was led by Colonel Lives. And so he came up to work for Colonel Lives and he became his driver and he married a free black woman in New Haven. His family goes back to the Amistad days, so the only one of my grandparents is from the North was married, Julia Jackson. Her family, had descended from the people that would get from the homicides. So yeah, that's it. But both of my parents grew up in Connecticut. My father grew up in the New Haven area, my mother grew up in Bridgeport.

Interviewer:

How did they feel about coming back, coming to the South? Well, maybe not back for them, but back for their, families.

Respondent:

We were part of the early returned to the South movement. In the late fifties, early sixties. And they liked it. Now my uncle he wouldn't come down and visit us down here. When he left the South, he said he was not coming back, and he came back one time and then we had a bad incident while he was here. My father was taking him to the airport, picking him up from the airport, and some white lady ran a stop sign and ran into them. And they got taken to three different little colored hospitals, and they tried to charge my daddy with being responsible for the crime. He had to get a lawyer and everything because

the white woman clearly hadn't run the stop sign and ran into him. But she tried to say they had caused the accident.

So it took my dad about a year to get that settled. But then my uncle said, that's it, I'm not coming back. He went and he never came back again. My parents loved coming back to the South. He loved Atlanta university, when my dad was getting ready to go to Columbia. He had come down here on the train and met with Dr. Dobias. He thought Dobias the great man and so he came down here, to talk to him about what he should do and about his studies and stuff like that. And then he went on and went on to Columbia. It was all kinds of cultural activities going on, and you could be... We didn't have access to the theater downtown, but the Atlanta university center had a theater company, that Dr. Baldwin Bertels led for many years and that Carlton Molette and the students and faculty and regularly Melinda, everybody could be in it. They had a summer children's theater for locale children, and we were in that, we did that. That was a big activity.

So we did that. It was hard to be involved in things at school during the integration period. That was because the years that I was in school was before they really, you couldn't really be... They were just starting to integrate the football teams and just starting to integrate the cheerleaders and things like that. They got black cheerleaders the year after I left I think, at the school. But it was still a good experience going into the schools.

Interviewer:

What made it good?

Respondent:

There were some good white people. So you'll meet, you'll meet them. You had a sense of being on a mission being there, and getting education. Making a way for a younger students to come, by the time my brother came, it was 90% black, in five years they had changed over.

Interviewer:

White plates, a private school?

Respondent:

Yeah. The white kids that have been my age, they let finish school. Kids that were my brother's age, by that time they had moved out to Cobb County across the Chattahoochee somewhere, they had fled the neighborhood. We used to get calls at night about... From realtors saying, "You got to get ready to sell your house, Negroes are moving into your neighborhood." And then we would say, "Well, we are the Negroes and we're here." If you think about that, people getting calls like that night after night. The white families eventually, although on almost all of the streets, there might be one or two white families that stayed, everybody else flipped. They just moved out into Marietta, Cobb County, Douglas County, Clayton County, moved away.

Interviewer:

Oh, wow. It's like, literally like get out white flight that is, Is that How Atlanta became black chocolate city?

Respondent:

Yeah, in many ways it is. It was half and half and it was probably 40% black, went to 70% black by time Lyndon was elected. Now we're back at 50/50, just about.

Interviewer:

What do you think what's changed? Is the city gentrifying.

Respondent:

Definitely, yeah. Gentrification is everywhere. You see all the building, all the condos going up in bucket, all the condos going up, even in Midtown, there just are things that most black people can afford. So there's a lot of gentrification, but even out in my neighborhood, which has been black for the last 40 years, and white families moving into the neighborhood now. And so it's just changing patterns of residential housing, that the old fourth ward, which was historically black area right next to downtown has gentrified extraordinarily. And so almost all of the homeowners now that are moving in are white. Even though they've done great things, a friend of mine runs the historic district development corporation, and they have tried to maintain property that in black hands.

They maintain rental property at affordable rates for people for the last 30 years. But anything that you sell, you don't maintain an interest in. When white people come and offer you \$300,000 for your house, people sell and move out, and then they move out into the country. So Atlanta is changing, I don't know if we may be in our last black mayor. We may have one more, but in the near future, Atlanta is going to be represented by a non-black mayor.

Interviewer:

How do you feel about that? Not only that, but just like the changing demographic of the city?

Respondent:

Well, it's sad... It's sad, I'd like Atlanta to rain, a chocolate city paradise. Really, the psychological effects of being able to live in a city that is majority black and we're black people are running the school system and running the police department and running the... You don't just have police shooting black people in the streets. I remember when we were in college and there were these kids who were supposed to be with the Panthers or something like that, any way they were... I don't know why they were running from the police, they were running from the police, and the police chased them all over to Morris Brown campus. It was like a SWAT squad thing against this and this was right before Maynard became mayor and they just slaughtered those kids.

The biggest effect that black political power has had on Atlanta to me has been mitigating behavior of police, changing them from an occupying force, into a force that's going to mind, that's doing community policing and working with the neighborhoods. To some extent their jobs require that they be a militaristic force, but if your leadership that governs you is saying, "Think before you shoot." Then you will, we still have some shootings, but just not at the level. We were tied with Detroit for the highest police killings of blacks in the late sixties. Black people were just getting shot all the time.

Interviewer:

Yeah. Danny Cheney was talking about that because she worked for the Atlanta voice maybe, and they hadn't done a lot of like investigative writing about the police force. And she was trying to remember all of the levels of corruption, but could not because she was like, there was a white reporter there who I think was just sort of like always finding out new things.

Respondent:

Yeah. He had ties between the police and the Dixie mafia. You had ties between... One of the mayor's brother was in the mafia and this is when we had white mayors. The mafia was not integrated at that time, the mafia, but you had all kinds of things. When Maynard became mayor, they had given a sweetheart contract to the police chief, so he couldn't be fired. And so what made him do was create a department of public safety so that the police chief had to report to a black guy over him. And they basically put him in a desk by a wall, they said to continue to pay him, but he didn't really run the police department. But the first day that that was going into effect, the police in effect did a coup d'etat.

The police held the police building. They wouldn't turn it over to the new black chief and to the public safety commissioner. And they held the police department for... This really is not, you're not going to find it in any of the archives anywhere except in people's memory. But then they basically held the police department for three days. They got rid of a lot of their surveillance files during that time. They didn't let anybody in and then after three days they gave up. But I think the business community leaders convinced them to do that. It really was, if we'd been an African country, they would have said there was a coupe, but they held the police department by force. Then they had to eventually give in what it was... That was one of the biggest struggles, was around police.

Interviewer:

When did this happen? So shortly after-

Respondent:

Shortly after mayor was elected, shortly after Maynard was elected.

Interviewer:

Why did it take the business owners to sort of convince them to give it up?

Respondent:

Somebody had talked to... I don't know who talked to him. I really don't know. I just know that after three days they gave... But a lot of the files were gone by that time they had taken, like they where they had surveillance files on black people. They had taken notes.

Interviewer:

Shocking.

Respondent:

It'll know, parts of Atlanta history, that's not in any of the history books.

Interviewer:

Yeah, how did it feel to live in the city for those three days? Were there police out? You know what I mean? Was the police force still functioning or was it just-

Respondent:

It was functioning, You didn't know? If you didn't work at city hall and you didn't know necessarily that it was happening. It wasn't like they had machine guns out front but if you worked at city hall, you knew

that it was a tremendous test of wills between the mayor and the police chief to see who would be in charge of the city. Atlanta has always been a place that has had a pragmatic business community, and they have always... For it... Going back to the days of the white primary, there used to be a white, up until the forties. Atlanta had a... Black people could couldn't vote, but they couldn't vote. They could vote in a general election, couldn't vote in a primary. because all the candidates were decided in the primary election.

And then when, when the end of the white primary, which I think was 1949, then the business community began an Alliance kind of with the black community, so that you would have a minority of the white community and the black community would unite to vote less racist people into office. I'll put it that way. They were not like, were not candidates that weren't favorite of black community, but they weren't like less dramatics, no they weren't like definitely opposed to the black community.

So that prevailed for maybe 20 years, that kind of philosophy. White people felt Atlanta should be different from Birmingham where white people just tried to maintain control forever through the police oppression and that they wanted to continue to do business. I'm as where the whole, Atlanta's a city, too busy to hate, a philosophy came about, that we're not going to, we're not going to be like Birmingham. And it enabled Atlanta to jumpstart in the fifties, Atlanta, Charlotte, Birmingham, they were all at the same place. The fact that you didn't have that kind of racial, that harsh outside of racial oppression, attracted companies to Atlanta and Atlanta in conjunction with the building a new airport that enabled them having to jump forward economically to where it became the dominant city, in the Southeast.

Interviewer:

This popped into my head just because, just because we've been talking, but I'm interested in what you think, because it sounds like this stuff, there was some sort of a shift late seventies, early eighties, late seventies, early eighties, which is also around the time dealing with child murders. Were you here for those? What was that experience like?

Respondent:

Scary and scary. It was a time when the black community filled under siege. You couldn't let your children go out and play, unless you watched them. In the beginning there were one or two children and it wasn't, you weren't sure exactly what was happening. But at some point it was clear that black children were being targeted and killed. And personally, I don't believe one person did all of them. I think the cases were closed to psychologically heal the community in Atlanta, as opposed to this person committed every crime. But-

Interviewer:

Walter? Walter Williams?

Respondent:

Wayne Williams.

Interviewer:

Wayne Williams.

Respondent:

I do believe he killed some of those people, I don't think he killed all of them. Some of them they're reopening it now, they're going to look at it. Some of those people may have been killed by their family.

There may be child abuse issues or sport or neighbors or somebody like that, particularly the girls. The child murders things seem to be about boys and in sexual exploitation in a lot of ways. That's something that you don't want to admit goes on, but goes on, and people always think about it in terms of girls, but it goes on in terms of boys. And again, it's this thing, when we're talking about somebody being attracted to going to the entertainment industry, Wayne had a studio, he could record people. He could attract people to come in but he didn't kill 28 people, no. He might've killed three or four, he might've killed four or five. I don't know, but I don't think they're going to find, and I don't know.

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:33:04]

Respondent:

I don't know, but I don't think they're going to find. And I don't know that there was clear evidence that a number of those people had been in Wayne's house or car. So I don't know which one ... I know that the two he was convicted of, those guys were actually over 18. But they just closed all the cases just to try to heal the city, I think. But it was traumatic for young people growing up at that time. It was very traumatic because you just couldn't leave kids outside. You couldn't. Mack Jones's daughter, Tayari Jones, her first book is written about that time, *Leaving Atlanta*.

Interviewer:

Yeah, I read it, actually pretty recently [crosstalk 00:00:50]. I did a short article about her cannon and I read it for the first time, which may be why it's on my mind.

Respondent:

And then Toni Cade Bambara did a book, *These Bones Are Not My Child*. James Baldwin did a book. He came down. I mean, there's all kinds of theories of what happened. Some people felt it was a gang initiation. Some people felt it was Klan-related. Some people felt it was Dixie Mafia-related; that it was something to destabilize the government in Atlanta. And a little of all of that is true. A little of all of that is true. I think there was a confluence of bad people doing bad things to our kids to also make the government look bad, that the government can't protect its own children.

Interviewer:

That's a very political scientist response; it's the convergence of all of them.

Respondent:

I don't know, but I think it did fundamentally change the course of scholarship during that period. I think the things that we did with the Black Studies Project, that we did all along in terms of the ... Everybody that was at IBW went on to become a big scholar in their field; you've got Joyce Ladner in sociology. I mean, any number of people became major professors, endowed chairs in different universities, and stuff like that. And to that extent, it went from this small research house at the corner of [Equith 01:35:26] and Chestnut and went out throughout the country and throughout the world. I think the kind of ties it engendered between scholars in America and Africa and the Caribbean might not have existed had they not been a place where all of these people could come together.

Now, I mean, I don't think IBW did everything that we wanted to do, but we did a lot. I mean, there's some things never got done; the television series was going to be a series based on Vincent's book, *The Other American Revolution*. I think they did one or two episodes of that, but it was supposed to go all the way from slavery all the way to the present day. Of course, we would have had a big disagreement about what the present day was. But a lot of things did get started at IBW. And people went on to do amazing things. Howard went on to become head of the [Chamburg 00:03:22]. [Walleen 00:03:27], who was Howard's wife at that time, went on to start an institute in Denver and later took it to Michigan on studying religious traditions in Africas and the Americas. She did a lot of work in Cuba.

Don Edwards kind of at the center of the Cuban controversy, went on to form a social justice organization in Washington that still is doing very good things there. And even those of us that are not doing anything that's necessarily scholarly related, our work is informed by the things we've learned at IBW. So, you have regrets, you think that it could have continued, possibly if, instead of staying as an independent institution, it had attached to a particular university. Of course, none of the universities here at the time were really available to do that. But it's something that could have survived as an institute associated with the university, I think. But that might've meant taking the base out of Atlanta. That's one thing.

The other thing was that I think for a long time, the younger members were trying to establish more of an economic base for it. And I think Vincent and Bill and Bobby thought it was going along just fine as it was, that they would go out and get some money and send it back. But it wasn't really enough to run the center. It was enough to sustain it, but not really to make it grow. And I think that it would've had to go off into some new areas, which I think it could have gone to, at one point. There was a point at which we were really eligible to begin doing some large research projects maybe for the federal government or something like that. But there was a reluctance to take money from the federal government. And there was a reluctance to ... Well, we had had bad experiences with the federal government. This is true. But at the same time, to become a self-sustaining agency, it needed some kind of economic base that we just didn't have at that point in time.

And the publishing that we did, Third World Press has gone on and become that. But of course, the people that ran Third World Press were all working at University of Chicago then, or one of the universities in Chicago. You've got to develop a base apart from that. And then of course, it's spawned a lot of ... The research that it did has gone on. Other people have taken that work and taken it further now. And the other thing is that there are life cycles for organizations, and at some point you just have to give up the ghost. You say, "This one is finished in this format," and you have to go on and do something different.

Interviewer:

Yeah, that's actually a segue to my next question, which was why did it close?

Respondent:

Money, but money and a disagreement on the direction it could go in because to get grants, we would have had to do some different things. And maybe the people that founded it didn't want it to do the ... They had a vision of how it should stay that was kind of static and it needed to grow and move. Because it could have developed, gone on after the Black Studies Project to do some additional ... those kinds of projects, but you had to have ... You had scholars attached to the Institute, but they weren't coming back to Atlanta. And so they were involved with the Institute, but it was not central to what they were doing at the time. And the people that were here that were trying to do different things, you didn't

really have the authority to commit the organization to those things. So in the format it was in, it had lived its purpose and its life cycle was over.

Well, I think the overall perspective, which is a perspective of looking at things through the prisms of both race and class, has certainly informed my work in city government in many ways and my associations with people. I mean, I continue to be friends with most of the people at IBW. Very few of us really fell out permanently or anything like that, that I can think of. I mean, we might've disagreed on certain things at the time, but most of the time, we've remained in fairly close contact over the years and have supported each other in different things that we've done. Did you interview Collette Hopkins?

Interviewer:

I did, by phone, yes.

Respondent:

Okay. Yeah, yeah. She's here in Atlanta. She's one of my close friends here in Atlanta. Yeah, I've known Collette since we were both in college. I'm still in touch with Lynn's kids, with even Pat's son; we're friends on Facebook. Well, Facebook is mostly for older people nowadays, they tell me. Hey, we use Facebook to keep in touch. But I have great respect for all the people that sacrificed to work at IBW because nobody ever got paid what they should have gotten paid to be at a research institute. And they produced some pretty groundbreaking work, the work on education, the work on Black studies, the work on the Black independent school movement. All of those things are kind of building blocks for what future scholars have done, or current scholars have done.

Interviewer:

Thank you. I have some questions about your family [crosstalk 01:43:06] about your parents and your younger brother. Was that your only sibling?

Respondent:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

He's your only sibling.

Respondent:

Yeah, my mother lost two kids in between us, and so she thought she couldn't get pregnant again. And all of a sudden, my brother popped up and made it.

Interviewer:

What's your brother's name?

Respondent:

Mike.

Interviewer:

Mike, interesting. Does he live here?

Respondent:

He lives here, yeah.

Interviewer:

Oh, wonderful.

Respondent:

He runs a construction management company now.

Interviewer:

Very good.

Respondent:

He's an angel investor now in young Black tech firms. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Tell me what an angel investor is. Private donor?

Respondent:

It's somebody that gives people seed money to get their company started, or usually they've started, but to get them to the next level. Yeah.

Interviewer:

That's wonderful. Just people in the area or anybody?

Respondent:

No. Some of these people ... I mean, he likes Black tech firms. So I mean, a couple of his folks are out in the Bay Area. Some are here in Atlanta, but he tries to nurture them. He supports their conferences and stuff like that.

Interviewer:

That's wonderful. Yeah. Do you have a spouse or children?

Respondent:

No. I never got married again. A lot has changed. It's not the same in Atlanta that I grew up, and the same country I grew up in. But we're not at ... Politics is, for me, a defensive maneuver for Black people. We're always going to be 10%, 12% of the population. We're not going to be in control of any given state unless DC becomes a state. We'd have one Black state if we get DC, but I don't know that they're ever going to let DC become a state. But it's something you do to impact the environment as much as you can, given the fact that you were in a majority white, predominantly racist country. And the kind of thrill we had from Obama's victory and all has been tempered by the Trump years.

The Trump years are the rise of the alt right and the rise of hate groups, again; the rise of his promotion of policies that are destroying the earth, his promotion of ... We're in the what you might say

are the late stage capitalism, decline of white cultural supremacy, the people trying to hold on to control. What are the means by which you can maintain control of the state? You can do use voter suppression, you can use voter intimidation, you can use police repression against Blacks. And they're employing all of these things. And they're very well funded by the Koch brothers and others to do so, to decrease the amount of ... Because I mean, if you look at the country, roughly half of the country is progressive and half of the country is reactionary.

And so the key is who can get that last 10% out to vote. And so for Black people, electoral politics, especially on a national level, is not so much about making the country what we want it to be, but making the country a country that will not be oppressing us as severely, and making alliances with those others of goodwill that want to see a progressive country. And getting to that 51% or getting to that ... Which is not 51%, because we had 51% of the vote. You have to have knowledge of the system, you have to know that you have to win these kinds of states so you can get an Electoral College victory, which is what determines who your president is. But those are the kinds of things. We need three or four Senate seats. That's within reach. That's something that we can do.

We have to do it in conjunction with other people. It's mythical that Black people can control their own destiny just through electoral politics. You have to be Auntie Maxine that can work with the other folks in Congress, that's going to work with Nancy Pelosi and is going to work with Chuck Schumer and all those. You have to engage in the rough and tumble of politics. Is it pretty? No. It's messy, it's nasty, but you can get small victories that can add up to larger victories.

And so in the meantime, you're facing incredible repression. You have a governor of Georgia who was the head of the Secretary of State's office that kept voting machines that were clearly flawed and probably hacked by Russians and votes that didn't get counted. And so, yeah, I mean, the person who should be governor of Georgia right now is not because of voter suppression. So you have to fight voter suppression. There's all these things you have to do.

And you have to, in the same process, still energize the Black community to get out and vote because whether you like it or not, the difference between ... Not that Hillary Clinton would have been a savior for Black people, but she would have appointed a different judges. She would've appointed different judges. The fact that none of Obama's judicial picks got through the last two years while they were waiting for Trump, but now while they have control of the Senate, they're pushing right-wing judges through right and left. We've got to get control of the Congress again, fairly defensively, to prevent judges that are going to affect the next generation, the next two to three generations of youth.

And so I'm not a wildly optimistic, but I'm cautiously optimistic that people are tired of what's going on and the disrespect for the earth and the disrespect for people, the racism in the immigration policies and racism in police brutality. And I think we're on the cusp of being able to do some things. Again, this is not a panacea for Black people. Electoral politics will not solve all of our problems, but it will create a more level ground for us to work on. And yeah, we got work to do internally. We've got to strengthen the right things in our community and get rid of the wrong things that we can.

Interviewer:

Say more about that.

Respondent:

Internally, we have to address issues of sexual trafficking, of ethics, of corruption. I mean, I'm not in favor of electing the best Black criminals. I'm not in favor of creating the best Black mafia. I want whatever we're going to do to be something that positively affects the lives of Black people. But you got

to do that with honor and courage and integrity. It's exciting. It's exciting. I mean, I think we see people that are ready for change and that can be galvanized to do some things. Everybody's not moving in the same direction. I think that's good. I think we have people that are willing to be courageous and raise issues. And out of that mix of issues, some good policies can emerge.

There's always the danger that what you do will also stir up the right enough that they'll come out. But I think what we have to concentrate is getting rid of the current administration and getting rid of the radical right-wing policies that are affecting our ... I mean, Trump just reversed the drilling regulations that would prevent disasters in the Gulf. That's insane. I mean, so the oil companies can make another \$10 billion. I mean, we're not trying to take over the oil companies. We're just trying to make them operate responsibly so we don't have an oil spill that kills all of our fish and our farmers and that sort of thing.

So what we have to find is enough issues that we can unite with people around to make a change in the country. I think some of the biggest obstacles, of course, are the tactics employed by the far right to divide people; the use of racism against Black and brown people to create an illusion of white unity. It's just too convenient for the far right to hold up Black and brown people as a boogeyman that are taking your jobs or something like that, when everybody knows it's just not true. And then just trying to get people to recognize ... I mean, Trump has told 10,000 lies since he's been in office. He's told 10,000 lies. And the rest of the Republicans, because they want to maintain control, they're willing to tolerate that.

They'll tolerate his misbehavior with women. They'll tolerate his egocentric whatever he's doing, because he's a distraction that allows them to do the work that they're doing, which is put in the judges that are ... which is to destabilize the departments of the government that they don't like, to destabilize the Environmental Protection Agency, to destabilize the parts of government that helped minority and female businesses reduce regulations so that they can go crazy with no controls on them. And that's what the 1%, the 2%, the 5% want. And they use racism and other things to divide people whose normal interests would be with each other. So you just got to break it down, continue to expose the lies, and find things that people can agree on.

[crosstalk 01:54:04] Oh, what gives me hope? What gives me hope is seeing all these people that are raising hell, seeing the Black Lives Matter movement, seeing the new congresswomen in Congress, seeing young people that are creating organizations for change, seeing young people in the streets against police brutality. Those things give me hope. Seeing that even the celebrities that are held up as distractions to most Black people are beginning to take some positions on things. And so those are good things. There's a lot of bad things going on, but there's a lot of things to give you hope.

You look at organizations, even organizations like the King Center, that are doing things to promote youth empowerment. They run youth empowerment seminars. They're all non-violence based, but that's where we are right now. You see people taking traditional organizations and infusing them with new directions. So those are good things. So there's a lot to be ... You have to see the glass as ... The half empty, half full thing. You always got to see it, to me, as half full. We're moving on the way to getting the full glass. Being depressed about the glass being half empty is just contributing to your own sense of depression and despair. And that's not useful at all. You've got to find the things that unite us and move forward.

Interviewer:

[inaudible 01:55:55]?

Respondent:

I mean, a lot of current pop culture is a distraction to get people not thinking about ways of moving forward, and so you have people who have been ... I mean, a lot of the parts of contemporary culture that glorify violence and glorify exploitation of women and all of that, has very catchy beats and is very danceable to, and all of that sort of thing. But it's just wrong. And so as you begin to have people grow and develop, and even some people that made some music that probably was very problematic in the past, they're not saying those things now. So you have some people that are producing more positive messages. And that's kind of what we need.

The whole glorification of dope and the whole pushing of crack and cocaine into our communities was all designed to suppress Black people, to get Black people on drugs. I mean, you've always had some element of the Black community that has had this hustle to survive. So I mean, that's a given, but the glorification of that to ... I mean you don't need a drug dealer to be your role model. And that's why the emergence of these young Black political activists is great. Even if they're not right all the time, they're going to be right some of the time.

And even if you look at ... Look at what Beyonce's doing with some of her videos. I mean, the incorporation of things about Black colleges, but the deeper message of incorporating parts of African culture, of Southern Black culture into her narratives, which are not always out front, but are subtle. People are looking at these things. If people look at them 10 times, they're going to find 10 kinds of things in them, pulling in the work of Black scholars and pioneering Black filmmakers into what she's doing is changing the paradigm for that kind of music. So it's not it's not all shake your booty music. Not to go all C. Delores Tucker or anything like that, but people are putting messages in the music that I think are causing young people to think, and we're proud of them for that.

Go forth boldly in the struggle for justice and peace. Be rational. Be analytical about the things that can help you move forward. And the things that distract you, throw them away.

No, I mean, IBW was a special institution during a particular part of our lives that I think did a lot to advance scholarship and understanding in our country. I'd love to see a thousand little IBWs coming up all around the country, all around the world, people getting together to think through problems and put their analysis forward. Sometimes your analysis works, sometimes it doesn't, but if you don't put it out there, it can't stand the test of time. But the main thing is to think. IBW taught people critical analysis, critical thinking. Don't always believe what the okie-doke, don't believe what people tell you, don't believe the easy way to go. Think about the hard things, and recognizing that that isn't always a popular position, but that may be the position that moves your community forward.

And my parents used to come to some of the IBW things, too, and some of the-

Interviewer:

Did they?

Respondent:

... public lectures and stuff.

Interviewer:

Oh, wonderful. Are they still living?

Respondent:

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No, they're both deceased now. If they were still here, they'd be in their 90s.

Interviewer:

Oh, really?

Respondent:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Oh, wow.

Respondent:

[inaudible 00:02:01:00]. It was a good thing. My dad, as a sociology student, he didn't always approve of everything that we were doing, but he thought it was good work being done. And he was in favor of it. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Did your brother participate in IBW, as well?

Respondent:

No, he was really too young. And then he went ... Let's see, because I was away at college when he was in high school. So he wasn't really participating in it. He knew the people because we were all social friends. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Cool.

Respondent:

Okay. Well, thank you.

Interviewer:

All right.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [02:01:48]