

Tidewater Voices Oral History Project
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, Virginia
For Research Purposes Only
Recorded on October 29, 2012

| | Sex, ethnicity, age, city of birth, city of habitation |
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| S1 | M 26 Pittsburgh, PA Norfolk, VA |
| S2 | F 38 Solo, Indonesia Norfolk, VA |

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| <p>S1: ok um we begin recording and now i'm interviewing um [WORDS REMOVED] about his experience living in Norfolk okay <NOISE> so um [WORDS REMOVED] you told me before that <NOISE> you moved here when you're a child can you tell me a little bit about that</p> <p>S2: yea the experience_ uh my first experience i got here_ uh the very first day i got here i remembered that vividly this was my mother who was on the bus_ rode a bus that got from uh Pittsburgh [S1: ok] to here and the first people i saw was my uncle i never seen my uncle before and his family and i was a little guy about knee high to my mother [S1: uh huh] and so my mother took me to a house and uh, when we was gone to the house of course i seen how flat the land was here and i never seen flat lands before [S1: uh huh] cause i was from mountain-ous areas [S1: uh huh] very mountainous and this was vastly different cause i'm like where's the hills and and uh we went to my uncle's house uh nice neighborhood in one side i met my uncle for the first time and he's three daughters [S1: uh huh] and a son and they was like seventeen sixteen you know fourteen thirteen age close age and everybody had greeted me i knew they was family but i had never met that family before [S1: uh huh] that old cause i was like you know four five years old at that time and so uh i met down and uh i stayed the night i i believe there maybe two nights there [S1: uh huh] and then i went to school i got into school and uh the school's uh from from my recollection was excellent we had a lot of recess [S1: uh huh] which is fun also i remembered we had take a nap too [S1: i see] you take a nap uh after you ate cookies</p> <p>S1: ah it's part of school program</p> <p>S2: yea it was part of like [S1: oh fun] w- we ate cookies and then we laid rolled mats out on the floor and then we'll have take a nap in the middle of the day [S1: I see] that's [S1: uh huh that's fun] so uh that and um, the landscape was different too [S1: uh huh] like a lot of the grass I remembered the grass was like uh a whitest color cause it was_ it was turned to fall [S1: uh huh] or turned to winter and it wasn't hot and the grass was just a different color [S1: yea] than I was used to where I was from I remembered you know uh, thinkin about that you know like why all the grass like that here you know and, why all the trees look like there were pine trees i had pine trees where i was from and I was like why all the trees had</p> |
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| (5) | <p>these pointed leaves on [S1: uh huh] I remembered thinkin bout those type of thing so</p> <p>S1: okay um where was the place place that you lived here in Norfolk</p> <p>S2: the first place i lived in [S1: uh huh] was Willoughby [S1: uh huh] yea in Willoughby section by gate four it was called the Merrimack Park [S1: uh huh] it's still there i went over there maybe uh during the summer to see if it still existed and it's still there the Merrimack Park is still there Navy housing [S1: uh huh] housing that look the same two bedrooms might can get three majority of people that lived up there was Navy families [S1: uh huh] and so we moved up there when i was young went to like first grade [S1: uh huh] and uh first grade my friends_ friends there Rudy Larry Rudy was the guy that played kick ball [S1: uh huh] he was like athlete at that time he's in the third grade you know [S1: yea] same year compared to us and i was like kindergarten first grade [S1: uh huh uh huh] and so um you know he was a real good kick ball player and then [WORDS REMOVED] was a guy who's a good friend_ who's in the same grade and same class [WORDS REMOVED]'s class first grade class and uh [WORDS REMOVED] was a talk and tell he'd tell my mother if i did anything [S1: uh huh] you know if i did anything planned he felt like he would tell my mother he would go tell her like literally [S1: uh huh] so by the time i would go home my mother would know, if i did something [S1: uh huh] he's a kid stuff i could do something like break a tree branch something step on some roses <LAUGH> and he would go tell her ooh i gonna tell your mother he would gonna tell her but we stayed friends and stuff it was pretty good Merrimack Park they'd throw parties a lot durin the summer it's like nineteen-eighty [S1: uh huh] nineteen-eighty round that time [S1: uh huh] uh nineteen-seventy-nine they should do a lot of like black parties [S1: ah] like families just come out and you would block the street off and people bring food out [S1: uh huh] and you just turned the music up and party</p> <p>S1: uh huh what it was like the party</p> <p>S2: bunch of kids playin [S1: uh huh] havin fun runnin up and down the street a lot of music you had music playin you went to dance you'd dance with the older adult which adult for me was fourteen or up [S1: okay] so you had like the people that was fourteen you know uh females and males that'll be dancin and they would tell us little beady people hey come on dance with us [S1: uh huh] and you know you would dance and eat hotdogs [S1: uh huh] chips</p> <p>S1: right do they serve as well um food that you remembered from your_from Pittsburgh isn't it?</p> <p>S2: we ate_ we we ate uh we ate, some things like when i was in Pittsburgh uh you know uh, we eat stuff like apples and stuff [S1: uh huh] apples oatmeal um, milk uh, i knew my grandma_ my grandma you know she's had oatmeal cookies a lot too [S1: uh huh] she's about a lot of oatmeal cookies ate a lot of apples i distinctly remembered my grandma would peel apple peelings off and give it</p> |
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to her grandchildren us and we would eat that and um, yea it was_ it was a little different food from here me bein up there just a little difference

S1: i see well you said that a lot of your neighbors are from Navy family [L: uhm] what it was like

S2: it was interestin because a lot of people came from a lot of different places [S1: uh huh] but it wasn't out of the norm from where i came and brought up in you know [S1: uh huh] uh where i was from you know was very interracial so this is not out of the norm where i was at you had a lot of you had a lot of Caucasian [S1: uh huh] Filipino Mexican German Italian people all livin together there and <WATER RUNNING> um, that that really, was was a fun time my own_ my neighbor on the left side i remembered [S1: uh huh] his name was Carl [S1: uh huh] he was Filipino [S1: uh huh] and uh, he was a good guy we hung out a lot and then on the other side it was uh another family they was African American and they had a daughter who's a friend and like i just said a lot of us just played and just had a good old time and just enjoy we still like walked to the fields to where the river is there's a river down by the gate four so we walked over there [S1: uh huh] and uh look at the river throw rocks at the river and catch crabs and stuff cause they had crabs over there [S1: uhm] uh huh

S1: you said that you went back there after

S2: yea i went back there i just drove by and go inside the neighborhood

S1: has it change or has it not changed?

S2: no looks the same the same houses_ the same houses the same street [S1: uh huh] you know uh, the same it's the same those, those th- Navy a lot of Navy houses even when um <DOOR OPEN> i went up further up the coast a lot of it is the same you know like um the d- the the architecture [S1: uh huh uh huh] is the same [S1: i see]

S1: did you see your friends as well

S2: no they long gone that's i wish i could find a guy like [WORDS REMOVED] you know i wish i could find those guys now i did meet one guy [S1: uh huh] uh years later when i was in my twenties um his name was Eric Morehead [S1: uh huh] recently i remembered him cause he had a long last name [WORDS REMOVED] [S1: uh huh] [WORDS REMOVED] was in my first grade class too [S1: uh huh] i remembered him [S1: uh huh] and i met him, like years later the shipyard [S1: uh huh] you know [S1: uh huh] it was interestin cause i didn't recognize the face [S1: yea] i recognized the name [S1: uh huh] i said did you have Ms Townsend he's like yea and Ms Townsend was our first grade teacher [S1: I see] she was uh heavysset lady with long black hair [S1: uh huh] and she's eat a lot of something i don't know what she's eat crackers or something [S1: uh huh] but she's eat a lot of that stuff and if you acted it up, she's had some ruler she's take to govern

S1: ah okay

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| (10) | <p>S2: and then you'd stick your hand out and she would <SMACK> <SMACK> <SMACK> <SMACK></p> <p>S1: ah goodness</p> <p>S2: yea they will do that no more [S1: yea yea] in the country and even then it wouldva been against the law but we end up <LAUGH> you know and she would like you know like uh most of the boys you know boy acted up and stuff and she would give the ruler treatment <LAUGH></p> <p>S1: i see she sounds like a strict teacher</p> <p>S2: she was fun sometime yea [S1: uh huh] she was strict yea she would get you Ms Townsend</p> <p>S1: but that's what makes her memorable right</p> <p>S2: that's what makes her memorable that's true</p> <p>S1: i see [S2: yea] um so how much do you think um, the place has changed like you said that almost everything remains the same but what about you know the people there because you se- you don't see your friends there what about the people there now</p> <p>S2: well when i was passed i didn't see too many people out like it used to be like when i was growin up there you know a lot of people hung outside uh i didn't see comin out particular time of day out there i didn't see a lot more people outside and they looked more vacant [S1: uh huh] you know more vacant the lots wasn't a lot of cars there and i didn't see a lot of people [S1: uh huh] maybe some of the houses might've been vacant you know no one livin in there but uh, yes little little different</p> <p>S1: okay and then after that do you s- did you spend all your childhood there or [S2: no] you moved?</p> <p>S2: we moved uh, out of there in in to Portsmouth_ [S1: uh huh] the city of Portsmouth my mother bought a house and we moved there, i was about nine [S1: uh huh] nine or eight years old [S1: uh huh] we moved there um that was a middle class neighborhood [S1: uh huh] and stayed there [S1: uh huh] at the community for like the rest well she stayed there you know even now she's still within the community s [S1: ah i see] she bought another house a bigger house on the other side of community she stayin within the same section of the city</p> <p>S1: how many siblings do you have by the way</p> <p>S2: i got_ i got, um well from my mother I got my brother and two sisters [S1: i see] um and, my dad I got an older brother and older sister [S1: uh huh] I haven't seen my older brother in in <EXHALE> about twenty years [S1: twenty years] yea he moved to Texas we we wasn't_ we didn't have the same mother [S1: uh huh] and so uh my dad was up there and when i moved here i kinda lost a lot of contact [S1: uh huh] and uh my brother had moved to Texas and i never seen him and i talked to him a few times [S1: uh huh] but i never seen him again [S1: i see] yea</p> <p>S1: is he much older than you</p> <p>S2: see he's four years_ he's four years older than me [S1: oh okay] he's much taller i'm the one the smallest guy in my family my</p> |
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| <p>(15)</p> | <p>brother even my sister's about my height [S1: uh huh] you know my brother_ both my brothers are taller than me you know so i get the short gene [S1: alright]</p> <p>S1: okay i'm i'm going to pause it now first because [WORDS REMOVED] needs to do something <CLICK> [S2: uh huh] okay right so um continuing with the interview so before that you said you need to move here uh, because you need to stay in a place that is closer to the campus [S2: uh huh] okay so how how would you compare the places where you used to live and then here around the campus</p> <p>S2: <LAUGH></p> <p>S1: is that far from what d'you say filthy</p> <p>S2: yea it's totally different [S1: <LAUGH>] i mean uh i had a house and you know and my grass is kept my lounge is nice [S1: uh huh] you know um <NOISE> my house is clean you know um um my neighbors they kept their grass up you have to do this thing so when i you know when i came no roaches no no rodents or stuff like that if there was any time to be any kind of you know any insects they would be gone [S1: uh huh] they would killin them off and so for me to come to these conditions you know it's it's kinda uh life altering [S1: i see] you know because you know i'm dealin with situation where you know fightin insects and you know like the walls are not what i'm used to you know just the apartment itself is not what i'm accustomed to and uh, it's certainly was you know little embarrassin you know because i was like people are sayin me there are no <LAUGH> there is i wouldn't cause they might what you doin man [S1: alright] you know like what you mean why you livin here than there the other place you know so [S1: yea] um that but i just maintain i maintain i maintain and deal with, this because it's a short term thing [S1: uh huh] so, you know it's to survive you got to try to adapt as quick as you can [S1: uh huh right] and having that perspective that this is not you know this is not my thirty year house <NOISE> [S1: you're right right] you know this is someway is a dorm basically so [S1: right] you know just deal with the circumstances but i deal with the the the the uh condition of the place [S1: uh huh] compared to the saving it allowed me to have [S1: yea] cause it allowed me to save a lot of money</p> <p>S1: right right okay um and you told me before that before you go back to school you s- you went back to school you used to work in a shipyard [S2: yea] right that's interesting to know because my dad is also [S2: uh] close to the shipyard he's an engineer so how do you find your experience working there</p> <p>S2: uh well like for instance, the shipyard hires straight out of O-D-U engineers [S1: uh huh] and um as i told you before it do create animosity [S1: uh huh] because you have all the people that know engineering stuff [S1: uh huh] they never went to get a college degree [S1: uh huh] but through out the years all them you know uh uh the government sent an underclass there in order to understand and then do the work of the engineer [S1: uh huh] but</p> |
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they been doin for like twenty years [S1: yea] so what happened is that you have these kids you know twenty-two years old [S1: uh huh] comin straight out of O-D-U [S1: uh huh] you know bein a G-S twelve G-S thirteen you know makin sixty thousand dollars a year and, you know they would comin makin these money these other people been there twenty years and they just now makin the money they like fifty it would create a lot of animosity and and and and sabotage with

S1: sabotage

S2: yea because you know book knowledge is different from experience knowledge [S1: yea] so sometimes you would have situations where yea the engineers would make up these blueprints_ would make up this job description cause that's a blueprint as me bein a worker that's where i get it from and they would make the job description and sometime the job description that they would assign is not feasible [S1: uh huh] with the structure of the the the the the the the the whole they would end in the ship and so you have it because they don't know better [S1: uhm] they would make mistakes costly mistakes [S1: yea] cause sometime i would do the job that they askin cause they tellin me to stay and do it and i'm like this wrong and they would like no the engineer said do it i'm tellin you the engineer is wrong <LAUGH> [S1: right right cause you know better] cause i know better [S1: yea] but the ego of the engineer the fresh fresh rookies when they make it wrong it drags sometimes they wanna see them fail [S1: yea] so they will allow them to do this mistake because once you gotta think if I do this job it's done and it has to be redone [S1: yea] that's more money [S1: I see] it's not my fault because i just_ i'm just followin the blueprints <DESK THUMPING> [S1: yea yea] and i told them these are wrong but i did it anyway okay was not your fault cause you did follow protocol [S1: uh huh] let's go to the engineers why bein you know you can do this and they will know so it would be a funny thing for them to be like you know like yea we got those young kids they think they know it all comin straight out of school when they don't so you would have that happened you know it it it it yea that situation um, what happened w- with me was i just say you know i'm just straight evil guy and i would try follow_ follow and cross my eyes and tees you know make sure that safety <DOOR OPENING> first and foremost thing that [S1: uh huh] you know i did follow and i won't allow that to be um compromised [S1: yea yea]

S1: so how do you find your coworkers what kind of people are they

S2: my coworkers a lot of them male [S1: uh huh] uh, the older ones are vulgar you know [S1: uh huh] they was macho uh uh chauvinistic people [S1: uh huh] well they come from that area anyway because you know America has made advance but it's not so much that man was meant to be the breadwinner and the women stayed at home [S1: uh huh] so a lot of them in the shipyard that's the way you know it was kinda rare in a shipyard man lotsa work in

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the shipyard was hardcore jobs [S1: yea] you know like_ you know like brutal act [S1: uh huh] you know like harsh weather heavy lifting [S1: uh huh] you get hurt see wouldn't find a lot of females in the sixties or eighties seventies but sixties workin there so they was allowed to be carry themselves in a_ in a unbecoming way [S1: uh huh] more so than they would if they was at home and so you would have a lot of like, crazy dialog or outrageous dialog where you S1: what's a crazy dialog
S2: uh you would've just said things out of normal just talkin stuff like, you know like, use a lot of curse words [S1: uh huh] express your point of view like a football team [S1: uh huh] or baseball team [S1: uh huh] they aint nothing well you wouldn't say they're nothin you would like them blank blank blank is blank blank blank [S1: uh huh] and them blank blank blankers is blank and and it was what's the matter and you damn blank blank blanker is blank blank blank and it would was like you dish it and take it [S1: uh huh] and you did it that way but not woman was rare [S1: uh huh] and so when you started having woman workers because a lot of times you know the ratio of women workers could be like you got a seven hundreds [S1: uh huh] a hundred to seven hundreds [S1: uh huh] so you would have a lot of woman workers but when women came around some guys are are are older and they not that easy to change [S1: uh huh] and so you had women around sometime they did not wanna change they way they express themselves to accommodate the one female out of ten guys they felt like it was a problem [S1: yea] so you would have that happened but um, the women there they made sure that uh the male respected them [S1: hm] women made a point make it a point even to this day you know draw a lawsuit really quick [S1: i see] you know uh uh and get get the guy fired guys don't wanna get fired because you know it's government job you know pay range thirty thousands you know it's someone else's house pay got a hundred thousand a year [S1: uh huh] so you been there you wanna be a person that_ wanna be ignorant [S1: yea] and say what you wanna say to a woman and she take a lawsuit out of you [S1: yea] or file charge and you lose your job [S1: uh huh] and this is what you been doin all your adult life you gotta go home and tell your family hey i lost my job because you know i wanted to say reckless thing out of my mouth so i wanted to you know maybe touch somebody which barely barely happened you know like touch behind somebody like touch em_ like you know the touch where where the women had sexual harassment [S1: uh huh] you know i don't want you to treat me like I'm a female [S1: uh huh] you know won't be doin that you know respect me as a worker [S1: uh huh] like you're a worker so yeah that's that's interesting
S1: but the crazy dialog it's it's purposeful right you said that you used that to get you know [S2: you point across] to get your point across
S2: in that environment [S1: uh huh] a lot of a lot of people even even females a lot of people is not college graduates [S1: huh] you

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| <p>(25)</p> | <p>know college graduates you go to four year college you not gonna be workin blue collar in the tank [S1: uhm] with your hands [S1: uhm] you gonna be pushin paper more or less you know [S1: hm] makin blueprints [S1: yea] which a lot of people do come up to [S1: uh huh] but a lot of time not the most vulgarous guy i i've seen a lot of guys passed up promotion be honest with you because they don't wanna go workin in the office and deal with politics [S1: i see] they wanna be vulgar they wanna be hey they wanna be_ bein able to scream down the ship hey [S1: uh huh uh huh] you know you piece of you know <LAUGH> let's go to fuck me hey you said that you know you know [S1: yea] you saw the next person right and all they got they they like that type of environment they know they goin on the office you not gonna be able to do that in the office you know you can't be like hey <FIST THUMPING> you're fired you know so you like [S1: yea yea] excuse me uh can we get together [S1: yea yea] and uh you know [S1: yea] guys_ some guys i said save it guys no i don't wanna be a supervisor or manager and they were livin_ be the same person for years [S1: uh huh] so it's it's interestin thing uh to see that a lot of women get promoted <FINGERS SNAP> so quick [S1: uh huh] because as i said you know they wanna be respected they try all the new phases of the job [S1: uh huh] you know paper work all down to the job itself whereas most guys they don't_ they don't because they really don't need to know the paperwork especially if you done the job for so much_ so many times a ship is a ship it's built_ designed all carries all kind of design the same way so there's really nothin there if you say hey this need to be overhauled this wheel_ this this this this need to be cut out [S1: hm] okay i won't need the paperwork to know_ to do that's for newer people door to the side [S1: uh huh] but yea when an accident happened [S1: yea] and you sit in front of a council you know of captains did you read the paperwork didn't it tell you don't do this [S1: uh huh] guys sit there and they in trouble [S1: yea] cause they didn't read the paperwork [S1: right] so you see a lot of females uh when it come aptitude test they put for a job they would have the qualification a lot of times females would make it a business to take a a extra classes or aptitude class that's up to date especially up to date specification and they would take those so when it's time to get promoted when they lookin at the resume [S1: uh huh] they see all of their stuff [S1: okay] uh huh</p> <p>S1: so how how do you find the, you know the relationship between your male coworkers and female coworkers</p> <p>S2: most of it_ it's it's it's it's it's it's respecting but it's also still in work and private <TECHNICAL NOISE> because a lot of guys do still look at the woman as a woman like they can't do the job or they look at them like i'm gonna get with them [S1: uh huh] you know you happy when tryin to talk with coworkers [S1: yea] but uh ... it wasn't_ it wasn't uh very aggressive [S1: uh huh] out there [S1: uh huh] they know how to do it they know how to do it you still have people out there meet each other and date some people get married</p> |
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workin in the shipyard uh, but more or less a guy has to get what because you always know some guy that have a lawsuit taken out of them [S1: uh huh]

S1: it happens a lot

S2: don't happen uh uh as much as it could because guys know they don't want_ they don't want to be the one labeled at with i had a lawsuit taken out of me and people find out what you did I don't wanna be labeled as that because you would be labeled i mean [S1: yea] people know you're a sexual harasser [S1: uh huh] people know that you're a person that treat women like such and such [S1: uh huh] you know like people know that you try to force not even a woman_ that you try to force people to do jobs against the paperwork [S1: uh huh] you would be labeled as that that person [S1: uh huh] you know so those are some of the pitfalls that that you you better be aware of because uh especially the way them_ the government_ federal government is ran this discrimination stuff especially female workers not bein tolerated in a shipyard it's a federal facility [S1: uh huh] i worked for a private shipyard before that's different [S1: yea] but Nav- Norfolk Navy shipyard is a government facility carry point blank and, um, uh admirals especially the last admiral that they just brought in he does a play that he caught_ he bring a hammer he's a real tough guy [S1: uh huh] the reason why they brought the man was because they got rid of the last admiral because the last admiral that ran the shipyard was lax [S1: right] a lot of accidents were happenin_ a lot of accidents were happenin he was called to Washington the Pentagon [S1: uh huh] and they hadn't let him come back [S1: oh wow] well i'm wrong uh i'm wrong captain okay what happened in the shipyard is that they sent the captain there [S1: uh huh] usually once you do your three or four years there in the shipyard you become an admiral of the Navy [S1: yea] alright that's why i keep sayin admiral cause that's the first time really that it happened that a captain was called back [S1: uh huh] well a lot of these uh people they come they do their their internship per se run in the shipyard [S1: uh huh] once they finish that they become an admiral [S1: i see] and so the previous captain_ he was called back because he was lax and his approach and all these accidents happenin happening in the shipyard people get maimed people falling you know thirty or forty feet down from scaffoldin cause they not wearin the safety equipment [S1: i see] you know women get harassed he wasn't gone until the superintendent of these sh- different departments enough to make them say hey get a hold of your people [S1: uhm] so they took him out and the next person they brought in he was he was he was a guy that tell what he did he was ahead of the guys well he did one time was uh, he dressed himself like a shipyard worker it's no no lie [S1: ah] he dressed himself like a shipyard worker and went to where these guys were smokin at and they would smoke a cigarette and talked trash about the captain and about things bein ran [S1: uh huh] and uh they also had their protection equipment on

(30) [S1: I see] they suspended them [S1: oh] on the spot he called the Marines in he said walk those guys outside the shipyard i'm suspendin them [S1: i see] kinda got his point across he's not playin all no level he's comin down from the office [S1: uh huh uh huh] walked in_ <LAUGH> walked in the regular folk [S1: yea] it wasn't a bunch of chucks [S1: hm] you know it is_ it's interesting [S1: i see] S1: so what about yea um the relationship outside work i mean did you hang out together with them with your coworkers S2: i hung out sometimes with my brother and his people [S1: uh huh] uh like i said i wasn't get across as a teasing ass i wasn't somebody that you know your best best bud [S1: uhm] cause i could piss you off cause i'm goin_ i'm not gonna do somethin that you wanna do if i feel safety is a bull uh my brother my brother worked in a clean environment you had to follow t's and i's when you're in submarine when a lot of things were nuclear so it wasn't like you know you wasn't born to nap you know you had a checklist you got to act and check when you do things [S1: uh huh] so his part of the shipyard uh he didn't have that problem so um when i went to hang out i hang out with his friends [S1: uh huh] or his his his uh it's called gang [S1: okay] this gang that's what they call it gangs you know i hang out with this gang and stuff and that wa- his gang they had a lot more women [S1: hm] because in a submarine where like i said you do have to be_ you do have to have more of this then it carries carries you you could just be anybody work a job not not knowin the blueprint [S1: uh huh] but when you work in a submarine you have to have the the intelligence and the the background [S1: uhm] to know where the part of work is sent you have to write off all paperwork [S1: uhm] so you have a lot more women down there [S1: uh huh] guys wanna_ course guys wanna follow that trend [S1: yea] and be there with the women [S1: yea] but these guys some of these guys didn't have the aptitude to deal with workin in the submarine cause you get questioned these like I said a lot of these guys wanna be vulgar [S1: uh huh] they they wanna be autonomous they don't want you know they don't when you on a ship you you would really seen supervised you get a job, you walk on the ship the ship is so big you get lost no more find [PT: yea] you you would just come out at the end of the day so you kinda autonomous the only thing they wanna know at the end of the day is did you complete the section of the job you said yea the interestin thing is a lot of this job you can know they said take eight hours to do [S1: uh huh] in fact it only take an hour and a half for real [S1: i see] but you would know don't be found_ don't be seen for seven hours so yea you would have guys leave the shipyard you know just disappear [S1: uh huh] you know st- you know you did stuff just make sure the stuff is taken care of you can take care of your stuff by nine o'clock leave til three and then pop up to sign out [S1: yea] and say you did this [S1: uh huh] so it was an autonomous environment that if you had a doc's appointment [S1: uh huh] don't call in sick [S1: uh huh] c'mere check in hey man i got a doctor's

appointment cover for me [S1: uh huh] alright you go to your doctor's appointment [S1: ah] still get paid no one would know if you aint_ your gang would cover your back [S1: yea yea] you know no one would know in a- <LAUGH> there's a time but submarine it wasn't kinda_ it wasn't that tricky like they had cameras and stuff you know it was the nuclear stuff you know you can't just like [S1: yea] leave people would see you comin out off a sub sub is not that big it was like one way in one way out uh carrier you have to ride your way to get in and off the ship [S1: i see] you know it's it's funny S1: but it sounds like uh kind of very dangerous environment S2: it is it is dangerous environment you would get crushed [S1: yea] literally by something you move a lot of heavy ton stuff you move you know you movin uh uh things that weigh you know [S1: uhm] three or four times that's on a_ that's held by ropes and you know move rockin back and forth [S1: uh huh] and sometimes you gotta try to hold that in place you know what i'm sayin is uh you also take a nap on the equipment that weigh tons and tons and it's over top of your head would you you know you're not supposed to be under it but anything can happen in any given time you could be on scaffolding and if it's not correctly made then you would like two stories in the air on the ship and y- you fall through you gone [S1: uh huh] you know your foot fall through and your_ you're supposed to have like this belt on [S1: yea] and you aint got the belt on aaah good night now fact you know not so long ago a guy he was a real macho guy [S1: uh huh] and he was on a stairway that had ice on it and uh snow he wasn't supposed to take the stairway they had it marked off [S1: uh huh] he was supposed to take this other stairway [S1: yea] but that other stairway would took him like you know twenty minutes take this stairway took him ten minutes [S1: uh huh] and he he he was up the chain of command he was the reportin guy he did a lot of inspection he was an inspector_ inspectin job and he didn't wanna do that so what he did was he went up that stair when ice was up [S1: uh huh] and he slipped and he slipped over_ he fell over and back into the dock [S1: oh] to the death [S1: how far is it] yea cause this is where it's no railing and that's why we all where you gone walk up the stairs that don't have no railing that you know it was like <THUMPING SOUND> you know it's like fifty feet below you [S1: uh huh] yea if it's dry and if it's a good day they have a chain a smaller chain [S1: yea] me i didn't that's not <LAUGH> i didn't wanna go that stair don't tell i will look them and no way man i would take this elevator you gotta wait you know fifteen minutes i would take this elevator cause that's what imma do i don't wanna like walkin down those stairs [S1: yea] cause if i slipped i'm done you done [S1: uh huh] you know [S1: yea yea] you had a guy you know that i'm i'm fearless that's the mentality right [S1: yea] and he was one of the guy he he was cause when i met him he was like this real macho big muscles you know [S1: uh huh] macho get in your face <MOCK SOUND> [S1: uh huh] you know he walked up there the ice stair

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| (35) | <p>S1: yea but then again it's fifty feet</p> <p>S2: exactly he didn't_ he was he wasn't he wasn't success- successful to come come home that day but that's the type of stuff that happened if you do not watch yourself [S1: uh huh] even your health you know some guys and and women you know they have health problems [S1: uh huh] cause a lot of time the only thing they doin is just working and eatin there [S1: oh] eatin the you know the fast food type stuff [S1: uh huh] day in and day out [S1: i see] you know they eat lunch there instead of cooking at home in the mornin cause you know they try to beat traffic so they go to McDonald's or you know the some kind of sandwich or breakfast that's not healthy [S1: uh huh] sausages pork sausages everyday you know fast you know pork_ fried food and a lot of people in their fifties now they have a lot of health problem not conscious of you know what they put in the body cause they just tryin to work i understand but you gotta take consideration with what you're_ what you're puttin in your body after twenty years they has to catch up with you yea you could do when you're twenty-five thirty thirty-five [S1: uh huh] you fifty-five years old aaah <NOISE></p> <p>S1: but there are not too many choices out there about the food and stuff</p> <p>S2: it's a choice well you know bring your bagged lunch [S1: aye] well like I said a lot of these people you know g- g- g- g- get out of the high school and if you don't get to college you lookin for some kind of trade where you can make money this is the shipyard area [S1: uh huh] so you not too like nutrition savvy yea you know you know [S1: uh huh] there's a lot of things people are not savvy in [S1: right right exactly] and so you learn your trade you go to work and you provide for your family and and y- you do it day in and day out you know next thing you know you fifty years old and yea now stuff is catching up with you [S1: i see] yea [S1: right]</p> <p>S1: um what about your eureka moment when you decided that's it i'm going back to school i i found that that's very interesting</p> <p>S2: <LAUGH></p> <p>S1: what's because suddenly you just okay that's it</p> <p>S2: yea so i was i was i was July two-thousand-and-nine it was July two-thousand-and-nine <INHALE> and one day i had, to woke up and excuse my French i was like fuck it i'm going to school [S1: uh huh] and i i literally how i got up in bed i remembered i was layin down on the bed [S1: uh huh] and i put my my hands right here beside you know my pillow and this how i got to get up and pu-push myself up for some up my rump in was on my pillow now [S1: uh huh] and my back was against my headboard and i was like fuck it i'm going back to school [S1: uh huh] and i didn't know where it came from</p> <p>S1: uh huh it's just so sudden</p> <p>S2: i'm thirty five years old [S1: uh huh] it came out of nowhere [S1: uh huh] and i was like ... i'm goin_ i'm goin to the community college cause i didn't know what to do [S1: uh huh] so when i went to the</p> |
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(40) community college and i didn't know_ i didn't know i could get in like it was July i didn't know i could be in school by August i kinda didn't know anything i thought you know maybe in January [S1: uh huh] i didn't think it gonna be that fast i like gotta fill out paperwork it's already in July something [S1: right] thirteen i think it was July two-thousand-and-nine i was like you know what's goin on so i went there a lady helped me she was like yea you fill this out what classes would you like to take and i was like w w w who when ah ah ah ah ah ah i take this you know uh she was like fill this out and i came back and she was like you be_ you start classes August twentieth i remembered that cause i'm like August twentieth and it hit me cause literally my life changed [S1: yea] was school involved now my life had changed because i was like <WHISPER> school, you know and and i just i just been i just i just been doin it ever since <INHALE> i been doin ever since and i love every minute of it [S1: uh huh] yea

S1: yea but at the beginning you didn't tell anyone about [S2: no i didn't tell] is it true

S2: i kept it a secret because to be honest Theresa i didn't want_ i didn't_ wasn't sure what i was doin i knew what i was doin was right when i had that eureka moment come to me like it did and for it to be so easy for me to do_ t- t- t- t- take those actions [S1: uh huh] and i really wasn't sure what was really goin on cause it wasn't like a far up plan out you know like six months and prior plan step [S1: yea] i was like i'm just doin it and what i didn't want was somebody to come in and start questioning what i'm doin [S1: uh huh] maybe not intentionally givin me givin_ ask me questions that might be like that might be shakin my confidence they'd ask questions that might do contribute in shakin my confidence like what am i doin [S1: uh huh] so i didn't want that to happen and also i wanted to surprise people [S1: right] you know one one thing is about is back and do it maybe you can do it cause some people think they better than people [S1: uh huh] especially in the environment i came from the shipyard [S1: uh huh] you know what im sayin so, i also wanted to surprise people like take that [S1: uh huh] take that one [S1: yea] you know that's what I'm doin two years later wh- what you mean you go to O-D-U [S1: uh huh] yeaaa that's i felt one time i told a friend of my uncle [S1: yea] he said right [S1: uh huh] i was back in Porthsmouth [S1: yea] i went to Porthsmouth to get a tire changed [S1: uh huh] and so he said yea what you doin i heard you left you not in the city no more this is you know i livin here now this is my uncle back like yea as i'm doin like yea i'm over there <CLAP> workin on my bachelor's you know in finance in O-D-U and i said to him look at me you know because h- h- he takes a second to calculate exactly what i'm sayin [S1: right right] you know like what you mean you in O-D-U [S1: uh huh] let you know that O-D-U i been in this area a long time [S1: uh huh] O-D-U was like just how it is in this area you know you got racism O-D-U was a white school [S1: uh huh] Norfolk State was the black school [S1: uh huh] i ain't know a

lot of people that went to O-D-U i have_ i had black friends that go to school but they didn't choose to go to O-D-U a lot of my friends that went to school went to like University of Virginia [S1: yea] William and Mary University of North Carolina a lot of them didn't opt to go to O-D-U O-D-U was kinda like it was small_ it was much smaller take my words much smaller than it is now [S1: uh huh] when I was comin up like ... <EXHALE> Constant Center hasn't been around for like six or seven years [S1: uh huh] um, that B-A-L hasn't been around that long [S1: right] lots would say it was a small university that was like white only [S1: uh huh] i mean you're here but i'm sayin i'm from the area [S1: yea] so you had Norfolk State up the street [S1: yea] you got here and it was just something nobody like white people you know [S1: hm] not not you know small college [S1: right] you know you be the one of a few who's blacks so you went Norfolk State but uh, people that were my age we would remember that, the people that was goin to college now twenty years old they don't really understand there's a different era [S1: yea] but when i was twenty that's kinda like how you thought [S1: uh huh] you know you went to Norfolk State the traditional historical black college [S1: yea yea] you know boom that's when you go to O-D-U i mean you go to other schools but when you say O-D-U was like white people [S1: um] you know they don't want us there you know type and stuff so when i said that to my uncle i said calculating cause he's like O-D-U you there thirty-five you used to shipyard [S1: uh huh] what're you doin how what when i said you a few years ago_ i said you a year ago you didn't say anythin all i've got in my mind i'm like yea take that [S1: right] you know cause he had doubt me too [S1: uh huh] so uh I take those things into account and and you know um a little bit I got you I got this the one for me attitude [S1: right] you know it's an outlook like i_ like you know you got like thirty grand children you know say i only know two who went [S1: uhm] and when i'm sayin this i'm not sayin that twenty eight never did anything i mean I worked [S1: uh huh] but when you talk about college education completing college_ a four year college education no there was like two of us Roger and Sh- Sh- Shelley [S1: uh huh] cousin Shelley [S1: uh huh] now these two family members were um, they wasn't part of quick family my uncle went to the service [S1: uh huh] right he became successful in the service whatever he did he came back to Pennsylvania but he bought a nice house in another city [S1: yea] so we_ they didn't_ were brought up grow in the shady part of the city Pittsburgh [S1: uh huh] that we did [S1: uh huh] you know like i told you sports or drugs [S1: uh huh] you know you know so, um they didn't really affiliate with us i knew them was cousins but they wasn't like part of the the core family [S1: yea] the core family i was thinkin you know i was sayin this like regular jokes so um they went and so when i look it there i see it and i'm like dang <WHISPER> you know i'm like i got to join the ranks you know the represent cause i got a lot of family members you know i got other family members that i don't wanna see them go to the cycle i

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want them to actually see cause somebody asked the one of my uncles like yea i said no i said i want them go to college but they never touched my life [S1: uh huh] i knew- understood they was livin with_ they wasn't part of the core family like we did i couldn't be sayin i wanna be like them because really when i used to go visit them they wasn't like us the people that really when you say i wanna be like them were the people that really touched your life [S1: uh huh] that really has impact your life they didn't have even though they family [S1: right] i had other family members that had impact on my life and i know i know the the the the the the seriousness of that [S1: uh huh] and there's a lot of family members that i had impact on [S1: uh huh] they younger than me i knew i have impact on them so they see me doin it [S1: right] you know hey don't even take a break when you got out of high school [S1: uh huh] go straight forward [S1: yea] cousin Jemar did it that's uh that's my middle name Jemar you know cousin Jemar did it_ you know cousin Jemar did it he's thirty somethin and it's another thing that gave me motivation cause i'm like people say stuff and i'm like this is empowerment i told you that before it's empowerment i would never wanna see no family member go through what i went through i never want to have children to see me go through what i went through i knew i was makin mistakes when i was like twenty twenty one [S1: hm] i wasn't makin that bad but i knew i wasn't in no position where i can have children [S1: uh huh] i coulda had children didn't opt to do that because as i said you know what boom [S1: uh huh] you know i need a hold on that [S1: uh huh] and i look at this like me doin this not so much like the game in my life as far as like you know me me me it's more or less like i have to show them cause i come from that thirty grandchildren i'm not sayin eh none of these people weren't successful but you know in today twenty first century you gotta have college education if you really wanna succeed in America [S1: yea] you go somewhere else and not have it but as the president said [S1: yea] you know in in in the debate those medium work jobs they gonna stay in China [S1: yea] you would want intelligent people you would want highly trained you know educated [S1: right] people yea so we can play the pipe dream like yea i can get out of high school and be in success <BELL SOUND ONOMATOPOEIA> you're wrong <LAUGH> [S1: uh huh] you gonna make twenty thousand dollars a year or less and where did that get you you pay the rent you pay your car no you pay your two hundred dollars cellphone bill [S1: uh huh] and that's all you gonna have cause twenty thousand dollars a year they still total up to about like uh you know a little more than, what's that a little more than twenty five hundred dollars a month which is about you know nine or ten dollars an hour [S1: uh huh] you know you work per hour yea you would have rent_ rent worth a thousand dollars a month that's half your pay [S1: uh huh] car insurance food that's another half what you get left to pay your cellphone hundreds of dollars a month [S1: right] that's all you can have with twenty

thousand dollars a year [S1: uh] which is not like poverty poverty but i'm sayin you can't have ambitions to go take a family vacation every year [S1: right] you can't you know it's it's not gonna happen S1: yea you can only fulfill like basic needs [S2: yea] yea S2: so you know high school education it will get you some but if you have bigger dreams boom you can do the train route cause that's what like i said train route when you work blue collar job you do four years of apprenticeship [S1: uh huh] but you're not polished you're not professional [S1: yea] you can be vulgar cause you get the skill up in your head [S1: yea] education here if you go to college it kinda it helps polish your mind [S1: uh huh] you know helps polish your mind [S1: right] as i look at that as hey if I did this you can do it <SLAM> do it [S1: uh huh] and i never told you this part one of my greatest ambitions, is leave fund [S1: uh huh] S1: oh great S2: i'm i'm i'm serious this is what prepares me [S1: uh huh] truly [S1: uh huh] you gonna_ i'm gettin the key ingredient to me [S1: uh huh] you know some days i do get up and you know i'm not fully fully fueled [S1: uh huh] i look at pictures of my nieces and nephews and i said damn it i'm gonna make sure that you know that when i die i'm gonna have some money set up for s- for any family member first of all any family member that wants go to college i would make sure there's enough money for them to go to any college i'm not talking about one family member i'm gonna make sure there's enough money where i can support at least five at least five people to go to college per year [S1: uh huh] alright, startin with my family then i want to take it to the inner city kids [S1: yea] and then i want to take it to the international because [S1: uh huh] i- i'm not gonna sit and say let's set up a fund you know here's internationals i know right here in my country i'm livin in_ i'm livin it these people has sufferin that sometimes even when they want a way out they don't have a way out financially [S1: right] and you can't just if you if you just nineteen years old you growin up on your parents' pay [S1: yea] they'd make a sure amount of money they might not get you the the money below scholarship needed you know when you located there so in my mind i say when i'm leavin on this earth [S1: uh huh] i hafta have somethin that is keep on back self that would help empower other people that's so important to me [S1: uh huh] you know right i'm tellin you you know like i'm serious you know like this something that i been do- you know you know you see the tears in my eyes cause it it means a lot to me you know to do this aspect and sad to me to have this uh trial to do cause i wanna make sure you know you know people i don't wanna see people sufferin [S1: uh huh] you know my success in any end if if the day i die you know if i know that i had put_ help put two to ten people that never probably would want to go to college [S1: uh huh] because they don't have the resources [S1: right] that'll make <SLAM> me feel like amountin to somethin [S1: right] not about me makin money i want the money so I can do this [S1: uh huh uh huh] that's so

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important to me i'm just a human bein in a great change of other human beings i'm not that important [S1: uh huh] you know s- s- s- supposed myself to go what's more important is activities that a human bein does that allows another human bein to be greater than him [S1: uh huh] i mean i think that's how it makes you work make you can work for so long she built on it if if if the thing that she created cannot survive she destroys it and makes somethin greater and also i'm lookin at a great change for human beings human beings that become greater than previous human beings
<SNORTING> [S1: uh huh] so i lookin it like that
S1: yea because as what you said before what is success if it's not shared
S2: exactly
S1: uh, okay this gonna be my last question so well you have experienced a lot of things more than I did and then they're all like you know very contrast from one another say you go to like from one extreme to another extreme [S2: hm] i believe it's like a roller coaster ride, how did you find that i mean your life was that like something that your really enjoy or what are you gonna do with that in the future
S2: it's part of who i am it's part of us [S1: uh huh] i'm still raw from raw from the pain and just try to run to the glory [S1: uh huh] but then as i got older i learn to_ i had_ i need the pain for me to understand the glory and i need the glory for me to understand the pain it's it's kinda it's kinda like, when i had the pain i would learn to cherish the glory [S1: uh huh] and i found to do that [S1: uh huh] when i had the glory i would learn to cherish the pain when i finally go to that and learn that you know this is the part of life [S1: uh huh] and it is a roller coaster but this is life is about isolation i mean you know sun rotates [S1: yea] the seasons change you know it comin back but we got to go to these different seasons sometime
<SNORTING> and so human bein is no different from earth or the solar system you know so i lookin at this roller coaster this is supposed to be a roller coaster ride [S1: uh huh] cause one thing that i do i forget that um this another aspect of sayin a man is this [S1: uh huh] you would never know what you're made of unless you go to something hard [S1: uh huh] like the prince or princess has been pampered their whole life they never know what they're made of [S1: uh huh] cause they never been tested [S1: right right] that's that's the thing about dictators why some people don't understand you know like i understand dictators dictators a lot of time are forced in like the harshest condition but their children is not that's why i would make that a lot of children are just stuff that go like even kings and queens sometimes the kings that came to the throne not directly but through some treachery tactics cause he you know [S1: yea] he got there that's why he's successful but their children because they was born into this lavish lifestyle [S1: yea] they never know what they're made of so when they're tested they can handle it [S1: uh huh] you know so, i look at it like i like to go to roller

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coaster ride [S1: uh] because it shows me exactly what im made of [S1: uh huh] i never know what i'm made of if i'm never put through a test i wanna know what i'm made of as a human bein [S1: uh huh] what qualities did God really give me not the one that i make believe in my head yea i'm this this and this and then when something happen i'll say to do he was all the talk and the trash and the word and i got a heart attack he's fowl literally [S1: uh huh] fowl like somebody you know like it it was in a state of shock [S1: uh huh right] and i reacted, but i said think i couldn't react <SNORT> you know one time ... my uh, my mother's house got on fire [S1: uh huh] I was like twenty years old [S1: okay] my brother was there he's fourteen my little sister and and uh, my little two little sisters six and four and this guy he came down and he was like hey man your mom house got on fire [S1: uh huh] and i i remember this that i i stopped thinkin, i shut and i ran the house was_ when i see the house the house was on fire_ the house was on fire smoke was comin out the front door smoke was comin out the windows and i ran straight up in there [S1: uh huh] and i still see this this is how crazy it was Theresa cause i just see this stuff on T-V [S1: uh huh] people were wheezin <COUGH> coughin from smoke and get out of here [S1: yea] literally i couldn't breathe i tried to breathe <CHOKES> i couldn't [S1: right] darn i was like this is real and i got heat from the flame the heat from the flame the smoke i stuck i was like real stuff from T-V and i'm like this is real [S1: yea] and i ran to my single brother where where where your sister at what sister's at he was he was in shock and he was like i don't know [S1: yea] well he said i don't know, this is not an epic moment i was like epic i'm goin back in there [S1: uh huh] and, one of the guys knew me and he was like no man and he grabbed me don't and i ran back into the house and i know how my mother's house was so i thought my sisters in there [S1: yea] and i ran into the house and i felt the heat and the smoke and i wasn't comin out until i got them [S1: uh huh] and i meant i knew that i could die i mean that's how hot and crazy it was there [S1: yea] i ran and i called their names out i didn't hear nothing i went to the room and i didn't see anything i was holdin my breath i didn't feel nothing i ran back out the house <EXHALE> i took a deep breath and i ran back there in again [S1: yea] till the point i couldn't i couldn't take it no more so i ran out luckily my sisters they was outside [S1: yea] but i wasn't finished yet my sisters was cryin and all i could think about where we gonna live [S1: yea] so i just grabbed this this like water hose <LAUGH> and i ran back in the house and i tried to stop the fire till the police_ the firemen came cause i was like where my family my mother my sisters and brothers gonna live [S1: yea] and then all the stuff was all rough i couldn't believe but i was like cause i was a chicken [S1: uh huh] i thought i was a chicken when certain things were happened and i was a chicken [S1: huh] but when that happened i really found out what i was made of like when it really gets real you ain't even gonna think [S1: yea] you know like who you really are [S1: uh huh] when i

did that showed me that, you know, whatever was in me was really in me without me thinkin in me [S1: uh huh] you know i thinkin of this and that that just happened and that was the first thing that i had come up when i said that's when you know you're made up when you could just react [S1: huh] and do somethin you probably said, i wouldn't do [S1: right] what i would do cause sometime you said you would something and you don't do and you would like oh man i really am this type of person [S1: uh huh]

S1: well that's gonna be a very very good chapter in your book the one that you gonna write

S2: uh yea you know i_ livin this experience is so is amazin it's a_ it's an amazing life [S1: uh huh] i wanna continue with it you know i'm thirty eight uh <RUSTLING> i wanna continue on at least an eighty more years you know [S1: uh huh] this first forty is just me getting uh figurin out what's goin on <LAUGH> [S1: <LAUGH>] i don't wanna be like you know is the end comin in [S1: uh huh] sometimes you would think that like middle age is close to the end ah no not for me i think life is just beginning i'm just gettin started

S1: uh huh right yea they say that life begins at forty

S2: for me it does [S1: yea]

S1: okay well that's a very uh, interesting story that i've heard so far and then [S2: then i just can] i i learned a lot seriously i learned a lot

S2: and i just can tell i i i tell some people about this story i'm tellin a lot because i don't wanna think you know like you know like i'm tryin like, you know, be superhero [S1: hm] but that was somethin i'm serious i was i think about it i was scared i mean you tell me that that thing was hot [S1: hm] it was burnin [S1: yea] but, i just did and i was like i said that's when a person knows what they're made of not when they doin a whole bunch of ready ready talk you know [S1: uh huh] or talk and stuff <CHOKES> they want a challenge to rise [S1: right] what happened why you didn't show up or you know you know some guys say or people say like in a relationship some people might say do this this and this it like like a politician family values got a mistress on the side come on man [S1: right] i would never break family values American values i love my wife and children man he got a mistress on the side and you got a baby birth what're you talkin about, you know you're not_ you lied about who you are [S1: yea] what you made of man you know it's crazy [S1: yea]

S1: okay thank you so much for the time and for the many occasions that have been given because hopefully this one works well

S2: yea hey if you need somethin else you know another <TECHNICAL NOISE> topic another segment [S1: uh huh] common life here we can talk about it um ... <RUSTLING> i'm open you know i don't have ... you know too many things that, you know i won't talk about [S1: uh huh] you know i been here you know uh, i'm not gonna tell about the baby situation [S1: uh huh alright] no i won't talk about that on tape you know [S1: yea I get it yea] <LAUGH> but i mean you know there's a lot of topics i woulda i woulda you know

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| | <p>ya'll you know you you might wanna consider askin um you know, you know civil rights people's rights you know whatever i'm uh open so so always come and ask S1: i really appreciate that [S2: yea] thank you so much S2: yea</p> |
|--|--|