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Belton, Frank Interview 2

Bronx African American History Project
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Mark Naison: Our second interview with Frank Belton. The first interview focused on his childhood and youth in Morrisania, and this interview is going to focus on his return to The Bronx after graduating college and particularly how Morrisania and the surrounding neighborhood changed from the neighborhood you grew up in. What year did you leave for Morgan State?

Frank Belton: I left in January of 1960 and I graduated from Morgan and got my degree in June of 1965.

MN: When you left for Morgan, did you feel that there were changes in the neighborhood that were making it start to deteriorate?

FB: Not that much. Not that much. The real change started taking place towards the late 60s, early 70s in the Morrisania area.

MN: So you didn't feel like when you left it was a neighborhood going down the tubes?

FB: No, there was a radical change I would say within five to seven years.

MN: When you went to Morgan State, did you have every intention of returning to The Bronx, or you thought you might settle in Baltimore?

FB: No, I thought I would return to The Bronx, and New York City. Me staying in Baltimore, that was not my [laughter] Baltimore, I don't even want to get into that.

MN: Okay, we'll leave that for another project, the Baltimore Project. Okay, were you coming back during the summers?

FB: I was coming back, but usually summer employment took me other places okay.

MN: What were some of the jobs you were doing during the summer?

FB: Well my church had a resident camp, St. Augustine's, had a resident camp up in Revita, New York. And I went up there two summers, while I was still at Morgan and worked in their summer camp.

MN: Was this a summer youth camp, or was this a church, or were older people - -

FB: No, no, it was a youth camp.

MN: So when did St. Augustine's create this camp?

FB: Let me see, back in, I believe they started it, Reverend Hawkings, Reverend Boeing, and his brother in law Mr. Thompson, Leroy Thompson. I think it was 1955, 56. They were little chicken coupes and what not. And then in 1957, they built a couple of cabins you know.

MN: Now where was this, in the Catskills or - -

FB: Yeah, the northern part of the Catskills, just south of, about twenty miles south of Albany - -

MN: Wow

FB: In Green County, in Green County.

Bob: Was that Camp [inaudible]?

FB: Yeah, that was Camp [inaudible].

MN: When you were growing up, had you gone to summer camps? Had you gone to Minisink or any of the others?

FB: Went to camp, but it wasn't [laughter]. Like I said, when I lived in Michigan, and the house burned down in 47, my father went back up in the spring of 48 and built a little shack. And we went there every summer the day after school closed, since it was cheap

for him because he worked for New York Central Railroad and was able to get free transportation for us, and we spent our summers in Michigan, at least I did up until the summer of 1954.

MN: Now when you were working at the St. Augustine's camp, how many children would they have up there for a summer?

FB: When I first went there in 58, the summer of 58, it started off with about 60 kids, and each year, it got progressively larger. The last time I was up there was the summer of 66 and they had 125 kids up there.

MN: And were these all children of members of the congregation?

FB: No, kids came from city wide around. Some from, a couple of kids came from Jersey. In fact I remember the great football player, Jim Brown, his daughter was up there in the summer of 66.

MN: What other summer jobs did you have?

FB: I was a messenger, Rapid Messenger Service [laughs].

MN: Was that bicycle or foot?

FB: Foot, foot, foot, foot, foot. Then I worked, well let's see, the 41st Precinct had a day care and I worked in there summer 62. Summer 63 I worked as an elevator operator down in the New York Times building down on 43rd Street. And summer of 54 [64] I stayed in Baltimore, in summer school, and worked in a hospital as an orderly and that was the extent.

MN: And when you came back to New York, did you go directly into the graduate program at NYU?

FB: Well it was so funny [laughs]. I did some house work for some of the professors down at Morgan.

MN: When you say house work, you mean construction?

FB: No, house work meaning either washing windows, a little painting, scrubbing floors, you know. And in fact, the head of my department, his wife had hired me and I used to wash her floors and windows and what have you, and whatever she needed done. So one day in the evening, I was outside doing something with his boat, Dr. Birkard, and his wife was saying “Belton, what are you going to do now that you’ve graduated?” I said well I was thinking about going to grad school, either Michigan State University or Indiana and take a degree in guidance counseling. She said “wow, you know, maybe when you get back up in New York, do you remember Dr. Bergercliffe?” I said yeah, I took a course from him. He was up at NYU at their school of Ed. She said “well when you get up there you should get in touch with him because he has a program that you might want to get involved in”. So when I came back home, I called his office and this guy Ronald Broome answered the phone and I said I’m a recent graduate from Morgan State and I was told to get in touch with Dr. Bergercliffe because he was involved in a special program down there. He said, “wow, are you from New York?” I said yeah, I went to Morris High School. He said “Wow, I need to talk to you. Why don’t you come down here?” So I went down and within about a half an hour, Ron drove a, similar to what you are doing now, found out I was a graduate of Morgan, I mean if Morris High School, a general course student, and half of the students in the projects were from Morris and the other half were from Benjamin Franklin High School, Project Apex. So he hired me as a

graduate assistant. I stayed there for a year, worked as a graduate assistant in the project.

It was so funny, Ron Broome was working on his P.H.D. at NYU and I remember about 5 or 6 years later I was down, usually once or twice a year I go down to Morgan and just sashay around the campus, and I was going into the cafeteria, and this guy was coming out and he looked at me and I looked at hi and said Ron Broome what you doing down here. He said "I'm working down here. I'm a professor down here in the school of med." I said ain't this a - - what a coincidence. And just to show you how things worked out and turned out, but after I left NYU, I went to work as a group worker for Jewish wives. I went down here on Tremont and Southern Boulevard.

MN: Oh I know that, they closed that place.

FB: Yeah, years ago they closed that place. They closed it back in 69. But you know once the Jewish population moved out, they take their services. Yeah, I worked there for about two years, the old East Bronx, YMHA, that used to be the old Ellsmere Theater and they made it into the Y. And they did a beautiful job and for years it was boarded up. People wanted to buy it, but the federation of the Ys wanted too much money for that building and people weren't able to you know, because it was ideal for a community center, it had a built in daycare center there.

MN: It's still boarded up there.

FB: Yeah, but the people went in and vandalized it to death. It was right next to St. Thomas Aquinas Church there.

MN: When the Claremont Houses opened in 65, I think that's when they were built, around that time?

FB: 64, 64.

MN: Okay, when they were built, were people optimistic about this, or by that time was public housing starting to get a bad reputation?

FB: It depends on the neighborhood in reference to public housing. In some neighborhoods, it was ideal. In other neighborhoods, it turned out to be an eye sore.

MN: What was the reputation of Claremont when it first opened?

FB: Claremont had a nice reputation. The housing authority, they had some strict rules and regulations at one time, they kind of casted them to the side, especially about pets, having pets. You couldn't have a dog at one time in public housing. If you had a prison record or jail conviction you couldn't live in public housing. And like I said, they had to get rid of those policies because probably half of the population from the 60s or early 70s would have been evicted from public housing. Claremont Houses was the largest low income housing development in New York City and if not, in the country. They had something like close to 4,200 units, apartment units, which is somewhere in the neighborhood of close to 20,000 people. And I was associated with from roughly when I started working in Claremont in October of 1969, I was a second year social work student at NYU and I was working there part time, to July of 84, when I left there - -

MN: When you left there in 69, had things in The Bronx started to deteriorate visible?

FB: That process was beginning to really become visible and the deterioration, the fires and what not, - -

MN: What were the things, okay, you were back in town in 60 - - were you living at your parents house on Chizzone Street at that time or you had your own place?

FB: No, I had my own place which was about five blocks from there, I lived on Teller Avenue on 168th Street, so I used to walk the hill because my parents had lived on Chizzone Street, just off of Jennings Street, 169th Street, Lionel Place, so I used to walk from 169th Street I used to walk up Jennings Street, cross 169th Street, take 169th Street up to Teller Avenue and hey, I was home. So I used to pass Claremont maybe 3 or 4 times a week. I remember people used to, it was this lady who lived in Fulton Terrace, she always used to say “you know they’re looking for an executive director at Claremont”. They don’t want me. Well, low and behold, I was working there part time and I had just graduated from NYU and I had accepted a job up at Stamford Connecticut as a community organizer at this West Side community center. They wanted to really get into the community and begin to really integrate their, provide their services to an integrated community. It still was a large white community, but heavily, not heavily, but there was a Black population, there was a small Hispanic population, a Mexican population, so they wanted to really do a heavy job integrating. Low and behold, I had already submitted my letter of resignation at Claremont. I think June 30th was my last day there of [inaudible] and low and behold I remember one day I was standing at the door and the chairman of the board rushed in. He was, I could see he was mad, he had business on his mind. And a few minutes later, he come walking out with a bunch of ledgers under his arm. I found out the next day that the executive director at that time there had embezzled a large sum of money from Claremont. So I’m sitting home one morning, this was about a day later because I had just resigned so and I was looking to going up to Connecticut and Bill Hopkins, who was the chairman of the board asked me would I come over to the center. I

said, yeah, I'll be over there in a little while. They told me what had happened, Jim Cook had [inaudible] with a lot of money and what not, and the agency was in bad shape financially and I remember when I walked into the board room which was also the executive director's office, my good friend Monty Gray, this guy Ederige Hill, and Bill Hopkins all hunched over and "Well Frank, the reason we called you over is we were wondering if you would serve as interim director here at the center because Jim Cook is no longer here". I said yeah okay. It was sad because I think it was some where in the neighborhood of about \$150,000 he [inaudible] with, well, he embezzled. And I did my best to hold the center together.

MN: Were you dealing mostly with children in the center or adults also?

FB: Mostly we had a youth population that we served, and the Claremont neighborhood also had two day care centers they operated. They ran a housing program, a small drug counseling program which was needed in that neighborhood at that time.

MN: So even in 69 and 70 there was a big drug problem?

FB: yeah.

MN: Heroin?

FB: At that time, it was just coming down reaching the teenage population, which was beginning to get heavily involved in the drugs, the hardcore drugs, and we had a little small program there that attempted to counsel those teenage drug addicts, but heroin was a big thing.

MN: And was it a big thing back on Chizzone Street where your family was living?

FB: Well, not so much on Chizzone Street, but the Morrisania community itself.

MN: In the Morrisania community, heroin was pretty big at that time?

FB: Yeah.

MN: And what about where you lived on Teller Avenue?

FB: On Teller Avenue, not really, but the basic, there wasn't that many, most of it was private homes on Teller Avenue. Where I lived, it was a school across the street, PS 53, and then where I lived was 1230, that was one corner. And down at the other corner there was another building, what was it 1270, 1280. In those 2 apartment houses on the block, the rest were private houses. But the surrounding community had.

Anonymous Voice: I want to ask a question about, Claremont was low income housing?

FB: Yes.

AV: So in order to get in there, the family income had to be below a certain level theoretically?

FB: Yeah.

AV: Now at the same time they constructed that, they constructed the Butler Houses was it?

FB: it looked like that was [inaudible] changes going on. You had three parts to Claremont Village. You had the Morrisania houses, you had the Butler Houses, and you had Webster Houses.

MN: And they were all low income?

FB: They were all low income.

AV: They were side by side by side.

FB: Yea, yeah, they stretched from 168th Street between Third Avenue and Webster Avenue, Third Avenue on the East and Webster Avenue on the West, 168th Street being the South border to 171st Street, the northern boarder.

AV: The distinction now, Butler Houses, was that middle income?

FB: No, they were all low income.

AV: They were all low income?

FB: Yeah, you had three low income projects back to back.

AV: Was there any, did they all get along? Or was there any - -

FB: They all got along. Only I guess, although there was Claremont, Butler, Webster Houses, they all made up Claremont Village.

AV: Claremont Village.

MN: So it was one - -

FB: One big low income development really.

AV: Was the educational support and the community services adequate for that volume of 20,000 people in that are?

FB: No way. No way. So the services that were there were just kind of holding on?

FB: yeah, just holding on. Whatever services were there, the Claremont Neighbors tried [caughs] of course that was one agency that had a lot of problems. Even though Claremont Neighborhood Center was a community center built into that development in Claremont, oh that's right, Claremont Village incorporated all three buildings, although you had the Lewis Morris Houses, that's where I was. Lewis Morris Houses, Butler

Houses, and the Webster Houses. all three of those made up the Claremont Village. And each one of them had a separate management office.

MN: Did your particular program serve all three? We attempted to serve all three in the Claremont Village plus the surrounding neighborhoods.

MN: So you had people out - -

FB: Yes, yes.

MN: Now you have this very large underserved population. Do you think that the families who even moved in there were moved in were more trouble than the normal population in public housing at that time? Or not necessarily. You obviously got to know a lot of the kids. Were a majority of the kids you dealt with from single parent families?

FB: Yes, yes, in Claremont Village, close to 70 percent at the time I was there, 70 percent of the families in Claremont Village were single family, single parent homes.

MN: And this is true in 1970?

FB: Yeah, around 1970, 70 yeah.

MN: Wow. Because I did all of these interviews with people from Patterson and maybe 10percent were single parent families in 1950 when it opened.

AV: That was a different model. When they were trying to make up for housing that was not available in The Bronx, or adequate housing. Moving to the Projects was kind of an ideal thing because people got, in their heads, they thought they were getting better services.

MN: With Claremont, did people mostly come from The Bronx or they came from all over the city?

FB: They came, most of them came from The Bronx, but also different parts of the city. Housing authority offered you an apartment, and you better take it.

MN: Did you find the parents of the kids you were working with helpful and cooperative when you started working there?

FB: In some situations yeah, and others, no. There was a - parents, many of them were on welfare, not all of them, many – there was an attitude hey, do what you can for my child, but don't bother me. And this is the same attitude that filtered over to the public school system, the public school systems in the surrounding neighborhoods. Right there in Claremont Village, we had 1,2,3,4,5,6, five elementary schools and one intermediate school. And We used to, it was easy for us to maintain our tutorial programs because we were able to offer our services to the schools and we would make referrals to the center. At one time we had like 150 kids in our after school tutorial program alone.

MN: You had mentioned in the last interview that the atmosphere in the schools was starting to really change from when you were in school.

FB: Yeah, they had changed already, yeah.

MN: And can you describe that again, what you saw?

FB: As I said before one of the changes with the school system took place roughly about the mid 60s and on. The so called, quote unquote Black Power image came about. Black kids began to assert themselves. Not being smart, but they asserted themselves. A lot of teachers, good teachers who taught in those schools decided hey they weren't going to

deal with the situation changes in attitudes, the mixture of attitudes that came about many of the youngsters, and they moved on. And what happened, those schools in order to maintain a [inaudible] had to take first and second year teachers coming in. Of course a lot of these teachers were scared and even a lot of the teachers took on a different attitude about themselves.

AV: You had two strikes in the late sixties where they closed down the school system and it was about community control. So that was an influence on how the schools, everybody was fighting for control of the schools because like you said, they weren't adequately addressing the issues.

FB: Yeah, that's when, I remember back in ah, 2 things simultaneously took place there. The UFT really began to assert themselves as a union, I think the union had just been formed and they were really exerting pressure for changes or what not, and also at that time, 68, 69, a strong movement, it became a fact, the state told the city that you would get more tax dollars come from the state instead of having one separate district, school district, is to break them up, broaden into 32 school districts.

MN: Decentralization.

FB: Decentralization, okay.

AV: Then you had the community progress centers, which were local - -

FB: Political, anti-poverty programs.

MN: Now what was your perception of the anti poverty programs?

FB: I don't want to tell you.

MN: Honestly [laughter].

AV: When you talked about the difficulty with the misappropriation of funds, that was pretty typical in some of the anti-poverty programs.

FB: Whoever got it, they controlled the pot.

AV: They sit there and address the needs - -

FB: The issues and all the problems - - MN: So there was a lot of corruption in the anti-poverty programs?

FB: Yeah, you know, people got their hands, they had sticky hands, but I was just reading, I served on one of those boards, and Reverend Hine's son was chairman of the board back at that time that I served from 1952 to, no I'm sorry, 1972 to about 78, 79, no 78 yeah. Because as soon as Ed Koch became mayor, he decided to do away with all this community board stuff and anti poverty programs and what have so, so I served about 6 years.

MN: Were you at all involved in local politics or working with, you know - -

FB: This was, serving on the community board was one. I worked with some of the local politicians in the neighborhood, trying to bring additional programs. I served on the local community board which was the outgrowth, the so called decentralization, when they did away with the anti poverty programs, they brought in these so called local - -

MN: Community planning board?

FB: Yeah, the planning boards yeah, exactly, and I served on that, the Morrisania, which was the district three planning board. It was kind of out growth [caughs] under the [inaudible] of the borough president. They controlled the planning boards.

MN: Now all of this is happening politically and it's almost like the grounds are shifting under your feet because the schools are falling apart, you got the drug problem, you got fires - -

FB: Well the drug problem has been there.

MN: The drug problem was something that was there?

FB: Yeah.

MN: But the school issue, was that connected to a more general erosion of adult authority or it was very particular to the schools?

FB: Let me just say this, the school system, it came to light how bad the school system was around 67, 68, when they had the big school strikes and what not, it really came out. It really came out in terms of how bad the schools were. My feelings were schools were bad when I was going there back in the 1950s and they've gotten progressively bad since. Even today I see it's a [inaudible] situation, but there's blame, not only on the school, the system itself, but also the strong erosion of the families. When I was growing up, parents valued education. They might not have had a good education themselves, but they wanted their kids to have a sound education and I know my father used to tell me go to school and be good [laughs] and I was good. One day, my uncle asked me if I was good in school today. I said yeah uncle, I was good in school today. I was good in doing my work, I was good in fighting, I was good in cursing out the teachers. But basically, there was a certain respect, and teachers, you respect your teachers. Even though most of them were white, they didn't take no crap, any of them. They'd fight you.

AV: Mr. Lawson at Junior High School 40.

FB: Mr. Lawson took over my class.

AV: Mr. Lawson was the first Black male teacher that was in our community. And he lived in our community. Mr. Lawson would visit your home if you didn't behave. He was not afraid, he didn't leave the area at three o'clock.

FB: He worked in the after school program in 99. We had I think 2 teachers Mr. Lawson and Ms. Booker - -

AV: She lived right across the street from the school.

FB: She lived right across the street. Then as, I think Jim left in 53 because I was a year behind him. It was this lady Ms. Peterson, and her family lived in 741 Jennings Street because her sister Sylvia Peterson was in my class and had a couple of younger brothers and sisters and older brothers and sisters, and she been teaching at PS 40 back around 1953. And she grew up on Jennings Street which as I told you was a nice block to run through [laughter].

AV: A lot of musicians came out of that block.

FB: Yeah.

AV: A lot of Doo-Wop.

FB: Yeah a lot of Doo-Wop guys came out of that block. Like I said, Jennings Street between Prospect Avenue and Union Avenue had a reputation. Had some bad dudes come out of that block. Some nice guys too! And I mentioned there was another teacher that lived on that block, she taught at Morris. I forgot her first name, but her last name was Hanson and she had a brother who became a minister, Gettus Hanson, they all went to St. Aug. I'm quite sure they knew your brothers and sisters.

AV: Right.

MN: Now when you started at Claremont, and in that whole area, were fathers a factor in the lives of kids?

FB: No, like I said, 70 percent of the families living in Claremont Village were single family homes. In many situations, the father was nowhere to be found, and I'm sure that it's even more prevalent today.

MN: What happened to the men?

FB: You have to understand this too, the mentality of government back in the 40s, 50s, and 60s, you couldn't get welfare if the father was in the house, so a lot of fathers used to quietly disappear. If the social welfare investigator came around, you made sure you close were hidden and your presence was not in the house. At that time too, dope was on the continuous rise, so that took away a lot of men, a lot of fathers ended up in jail and also there were children who were born out of wedlock. And I think this was one of the problems that came in the 40s and 50s and some parts in the 60s, there was a family structure there but I think between the welfare system and the drug system and the criminal system eroded the black family. And the Hispanic family too.

AV: Would you say that the workers in the community centers and the after school centers, the people who were performing social work like duties, kind of took the place of some of the fathers?

FB: Tried to take the - - right - -

AV: And athletic coaches?

FB: And this was really heavy in Claremont. Some people couldn't understand it.

You're executive director. How did you get involved with your business? I said, I see it as part of my job to work with these youngsters and also provide insight and motivation for my staff to get involved with these youngsters. If I can do it, then you surely can do it.

MN: Did you feel that your direct involvement made a big difference?

FB: It made a big difference for a lot of kids. I'm still meeting some of them. In fact, I was at a funeral back in January for one of the former board members of Claremont and some of the, in fact, the two secretaries that I had, since we weren't a rich agency, I had to spend the money I made wisely, so I hired these two sisters to be my secretaries. They worked part time, in fact, they graduated from, what's that, it took the place of - -

AV: Secretarial School?

FB: Yeah, it took the place of the Secretarial School, that's 33rd Street and Park Avenue, the new one, Central Commercial.

AV: Central Commercial. Near Norman Thomas.

FB: Yeah, and they were fabulous. I even helped them get into college. What you call em got accepted to, the older sister, Vanessa, no Vanessa was the youngest one, Arlene, get into Syracuse. And I found out they were offered a partial scholarship and the family couldn't, the father had just moved back in the house and they couldn't afford the difference so she ended up going to Albany. And the younger sister followed her there. I think the good thing, let me just say this, although low income housing had a negative image, a lot of good people lived in these houses, a lot of good people came out of these

developments. I dare to say, the twelve years I was at Claremont neighborhood centers, I helped a lot of kids from the development itself get into college with scholarships. You don't here about these good kids, only the negative kids that came out. And those negative kids that came out of Claremont, they made headlines city wide.

MN: So you had some big time drug people coming out of there?

FB: Hoodlums, thugs. Okay. Thugs!

MN: Did the thugs respect you?

FB: Oh they respected me in Claremont because I remember when I came back to Claremont center, it was a prayer day when I left Claremont center between 1972 and 1974, I came back in 1974. There was a prayer day where Claremont neighborhood center, the life expectancy, or the longevity of the executive director coming to Claremont center, anywhere from 18 months to 2 years. They had no stability in terms of leadership in that agency until I came back there in 19, after the Jim Cook, there were 2 other people, Ms. Blackman, she stayed about 18 months and then Ms. Joyce Nelson, she stayed and she stayed about 2 years, she came from the state and she wanted to retire and she had to go back and make up something like ten months in order to I guess have the full 20 year benefit [burps]. I was called in and I got sick and tired, I was at the Urban League, I was borough director of the New York Urban League in The Bronx and - -

MN: Where was that office located?

FB: That office was located down on Willis Avenue and 148th Street.

MN: So you were in the hub?

FB: Yeah, and I heard that they were looking for a director and I ran to a good friend of mine Gary Calnick. Jimmy did you know Gary Calnick, Calnick.

AV (Jimmy): Yeah.

FB: He lived on Boston Road. Gary ran into me. He said Frank, they're looking for a director at Claremont. I said what happened to Ms. Nelson. Oh, She's got to leave. I said yeah, I would consider coming back there. So we set up a meeting. I went to the board meeting, of course I was interim director there for about six months during the embezzlement period, I remember one of the questions asked of me was why didn't you stay when you were - - I said to be honest with you, I had no experience being executive director or dealing with embezzlement. I had no experience, I had no experience in fund raising, but I had learned quickly in the past four years in terms of fund raising and working for South Yonkers Youth Counsel, working with the Urban League, and I said I picked up quick and I wanted to try my hand in terms of being executive director and not working under somebody. And I had seen all of the errors down at some of the other places and I learned not to do them. And Claremont was no bed of roses when I took over there. They were about a hundred and fifty to two hundred fifty thousand dollars indebt. And people were screaming for their money and what not and the staff was [inaudible] - -

AV (Jimmy): Was it entirely state funded or city funded, or was it a combination of the two?

FB: At that time it was mostly some foundation grants and city money. Most of it was city money. Even the city was beginning to pull back - -

MN: And how big was your staff?

FB: Total staff at that time was about 48 - -

MN: Wow.

FB: Including the daycare centers and what not, and it was in disarray. I remember right after I got there, I got a phone bill in and the phone bill was like \$600 and it had like \$200 worth of long distance calls. I said come on, this can't be. People doing very little work, and yet we have \$600 worth of telephone calls. I said no way. I called the telephone company up and I asked them, what is the lowest basic rate I can get? With four phones, right now you have like nine - -

[END OF SIDE A OF TAPE]

[BEGINNING OF SIDE B]

FB: And she said okay. I said because it was no way I could maintain this, \$600 a month makes no sense. I went around to each office and I snatched out phones. I snatched them out, there was a phone in my office, a phone in the book keeper's office, a phone downstairs in the program office, and there was another phone with two other staff people. People getting excited, I said no way, look at that bill. What is close to \$200 worth of long distance phone calls? We are in The Bronx and I was seeing calls to Louisiana, North Carolina, no, no way, I'm not going to raise funds for this. You get mad all you want okay, but I am the director here now and I am cutting the losses. If you want to make a phone call, if it is business, if it is part of the services we are offering, then you go in there and ask Ms. Walker to use her phone, or you come in my office and use my phone. It ain't going to be letting your friends use phones and this and that okay,

no way. Okay. And that was the first line I drew. And some staff got mad at me and I said get mad because you ain't bringing a dime into this agency. Then we had, Xerox, we owed Xerox Corporation about close to \$5,000 but I remember when I was an interim director back in 1970, July 1970, I sent Xerox a letter stating that they had to [inaudible], and we are behind, we know we have an outstanding bill with Xerox, I would advise you, please come and remove your copy machine, and they didn't do it. So they were sending me this, I think, Xerox, when I, they sent me another letter back in I think August of 74, and going through the papers, I pulled out the letter that I had sent them back in July of 1970. And I sent them another letter. I said hold up, back up. I sent you a letter back in July advising you to take out your machine because we were a thousand dollars in debt to you and there was no way we were going to be able to pay you at that time. So I told them, I sent them this letter, I said you did not, under my advisement, you did not remove your copy machine, but I'll tell you this, I suggest that you turn this \$3,700 outstanding bill into a grant for my neighborhood center, and let it go. [laughter]

AV (Jimmy): Creative administration. [laughter]

FB: Yeah, yeah.

MN: Now did any of your staff end up having to leave, was there much turnover?

FB: Some left, [laughter] some left, some left, some left, I terminated a couple of people okay.

MN: Were you ultimately able to get a hard working and efficient and honest staff?

FB: Very much so, within three years. The other thing, the agency had lost its tax exempt status, they lost some of their foundation grants, they never had a sound outside

auditor to come in to audit their books. I was able within three years to turn that whole mess around at Claremont Neighborhood centers. I worked with the New York City Youth Board, New York City Housing Authority, [inaudible] agency got a grant, a yearly grant because we operated a community center in their facility, which was rent free, that was the good thing about working out of a community center in Housing, everything was, no electricity, no electric bill, no heat, everything was gratis through New York City, plus we got a grant. We not only got a cash grant which amounted to about forty-eight thousand dollars a year, but we also had about six thousand dollars in supply vouchers, which was recreational supplies and janitorial supplies, which we were able to put down on. But I think during that time, between 1976, I developed high blood pressure [laughter]. But within three years, we were able to get a lawyer, David Poe Wadell, down in Wall Street; they were able to work with the Internal Revenue Service to get that whole, we had owed back taxes - -

MN: Yeah I know all about that.

FB: Yeah, and there were able to work with the I.R.S. where we were able to pay just the principle and - -

MN: Right, and take the interest off.

FB: Yeah, and I think they made it almost about \$20,000 - \$25,000 in penalties and interest alone and it boiled down to where I had to pay \$12,000. There was, what happened, Jim Cook, he had to make restitution and the plan was the agency would get two-thirds, and the bank would get the other third and at that time, Bankers Trust was the bank that [caughs] that was at fault for cashing those checks.

MN: When you were working at the center and clearly your program was a tremendous force in the life of the kids. Were the hustlers and the thugs a very visible sort of alternative that the kids gravitated to? Were kids torn between what you were doing and the underground economy?

FB: When I went back there as executive director, I made it very clear to some known folks that I would appreciate it if they kept their action outside this community center, this community center is a neutral center [caughs] because even back in 1972 when I was still a part time worker there, there was a heavy gang warfare and let it be known that they used to hold Pow Wows with some of the gang leaders and let it be known that Claremont is a neutral center.

MN: So what, you had the Black Spades and The Savage Skulls, - -

AV (Jimmy): The Ghetto Brothers.

FB: It was a couple of other little gangs back there and they acknowledged that so whatever took place took place outside the community center.

MN: So you created a safe haven.

FB: Yeah.

AV: That wasn't there before?

FB: Huh?

AV: That wasn't there before you got there?

FB: What?

AV: You're telling me that the gangs - -

FB: Not really, not really.

AV: I'd be very surprised if you actually went in there and told gangs that they couldn't go in the community center.

FB: Well no, no, no, no, I didn't tell them that they couldn't go in the community center. I politely told them that "hey, we are here to serve the community, okay, we welcome to work with you, but we don't want any gang activity in the center." And I said I wish I could get an agreement with all of you, all the gangs, that you will not carry on inside the center, and they agreed.

AV: In the center, what kind of activities did you do besides do things to help kids after school, what type of activities did you - - ?

FB: Well, one of the, I found out education was a means, and I used to tell the kids, means of moving ahead, getting ahead, being able to be productive with your life. I said all you have to do is go outside and look on the corner. I said look on the corner, what do you see on the corners out here. What do you see on the, right in front of this building? I used to use that as an example with them. If you want to be like that, if you want to be like them, go, don't waste my time, don't waste the staff's time. Go outside and mingle with the thugs, the drug addicts, and what have you if you don't want any help. And many of the kids came into the center looking for that. In fact, they used to frown on some of the thugs hanging out in front of the center.

MN: Now when you talked about the corner, were there a lot of people out there?

FB: Yeah, that's there hang out.

MN: Now was that there when you were growing up or was there something different?

FB: It became more prevalent I believe in the 60s and 70, you would find your dope pushers, your low-lifes, just hanging out.

MN: When you were growing up, you didn't have that in that kind of way?

AV (Jimmy): Well a couple of things happened as I recall. When the anti-poverty programs came into existence and you had the Summer Youth Employment Program, Kids had money to spend, so they could spend that money on something that was productive, or something that was non-productive, so they could take that money and buy drugs. They weren't necessarily drug addicts, but they were in the introductory stage of being able to have a little happiness on the weekends with the money that they had earned from some of the places. Some of the anti-poverty programs had stipends where the kids got two or three dollars a week just for participating. They could go outside and do that so and the community centers - -

FB: And I think that, also a part of that anti-poverty, we had another program that came along, I forgot the name of that program, it will come back to me, but the anti-poverty programs became a big part of the quote unquote ghetto communities as part of Johnson's - -

MN: War on Poverty?

FB: War on Poverty, ant they used to - -

AV (Jimmy): [inaudible]

FB: Something like that. The Wart on Poverty, and they through money out. In fact, the forerunners, there were three programs, the forerunners of the so called Anti-poverty

programs in our neighborhood. We had three, the federal government poured a lot of money into it. {inaudible] in Harlem. You had, what is that program, Bedstuy - -

MN: Bedstuy Restoration

FB: No, no, - -

AV (Jimmy): Well that wasn't, that was private.

FB: That was private, that was started by the Kennedys. What was that big, it was in Bedstuy, Bedstuy Community Corporation. Then You had the Lower East Side, it was a program - -

MN: Mobilization for Youths?

FB: Mobilization for Youths, yeah.

MN: One of the questions I have, do you think more kids got out of, were able to get out of the neighborhood or improve themselves when you were growing up than in the seventies? There was more upward mobility in Morrisania in the forties and in the fifties?

FB: Let me just say this, when Jimmy and I were coming up, they didn't have that many community based programs, oh no. We made it because we had some built in motivation and confidence in ourselves to make it.

AV (Jimmy): There were after school, there were the cub scouts and the boy scouts and the cadets - -

MN: And also the after school programs.

AV (Jimmy): And some of the church programs down at St. Aug and what not, but those were the after school things to do, but as the economy changed and you had more one

family, one parent families, and you had less supervision of the kids, so they were on their own to outside influences, and that could either be positive or it could be negative okay.

FB: And there were some instances, there were some of us who you know, I used to live in St. Aug. If it wasn't 99 community center, it was St. Aug, those two places - -

MN: right, so you had two community centers you moved back and forth between?

FB: Yes. And I think, especially at 99, some of the staff people there were teachers that we had, that taught at either the elementary or junior high school level, like Mr. Lawson, Mr. Tibbs, there's another guy, Mr. Churchill, Mr. Greenberg - -

AV (Jimmy): Was he the music teacher? Was he the music teacher from 40?

FB: Yeah

AV (Jimmy): That's the guy who gave Jimmy Owens his first horn.

MN: Really?

AV (Jimmy): Yeah.

MN: Now were there teachers, you are talking about some legendary teachers when you were growing up. Were there teachers like that in the seventies that your kids mentioned?

FB: No, no, no. Slowly but surely, the board of Ed did away with the after school programs so these teachers lost that, they didn't have that additional outlet for additional money, plus back then they were making more money that say they were back in the forties, back in the fifties. In the fifties, I think a beginning teacher in New York started off making \$3,800 - -

MN: So they needed to work in the after school?

FB: Yeah.

MN: Now to switch subjects, were any of the Hip-Hop programs taking place in your community center?

FB: What do you mean Hip-Hop?

AV (Jimmy): That's a contemporary term [laughter]

MN: Now what did they call it back in, you know they had these parties when they had the turn tables and all that?

AV (Jimmy): We grew up in the era from what was it, Rock and Roll was in the fifties, and then in the sixties, I guess it continued, - -

MN: And then the soul and funk and - -

AV (Jimmy): And Rhythm & Blues.

MN: But by the late seventies, were they starting to have - -

FB: What do you call your discos, or - -

AV (Jimmy): Salsa

FB: Salsa - -

MN: But Hip-Hop is you know, guys like - -

FB: That's a term, that's a nineties term, late eighties, nineties term.

MN: So what did they call, they had parties at you community centers in the seventies?

Yeah, dances, Rock and Roll - -

AV: Hip-Hop at that time was still underground so much that it wouldn't have major play at community center hosted events like that.

AV (Jimmy): You had band stand and you had Soul Train and that kind of music, but you didn't have soul.

MN: Now did you see the impact of the music leaving the schools? Were there a lot of kids that dealt with or played with musical instruments or was that something that - -?

AV (Jimmy): That got lost.

FB: That got lost, especially with your budget cuts back in the seventies and what not you know - -

AV (Jimmy): Some of the poverty programs has money for bands, marching bands, but they were few and far between.

MN: But you didn't have kids coming up playing instruments in the Claremont Houses?

FB: No, no, no,

MN: Now what about the - -

FB: The only thing, the only thing, beginning to take place in the late sixties and the seventies were your different African dance groups.

AV (Jimmy): A search for culture, roots.

FB: We had the Five Points Cultural Arts Program utilizing Claremont neighborhood centers. A guy named Lee Thompson, for yeas, utilized the Claremont neighborhood centers as his home base for his African dance groups.

MN: And that attracted kids from the community?

FB: Yeah. And just on Claremont, once again just let me state again, Claremont neighborhood centers not only served Claremont Village, but also the surrounding neighborhoods and we had a pretty good reputation as a descent center after I had got

there and changed things around, it had a good gym program, basketball teams, a girls track team. I tried to develop a boys track team, but I never found the person that had the proper mentality to develop a boys track team. But you know, between the political structure, the education, I got to meet several school administrators and provide our services to the various schools and what not. It became a very good community center. In fact, I hate to say it but, I was the first director to serve more than two years there.

MN: Now do you think that things got started, they clearly went down from the late sixties to the mid seventies. Did things start to get better in the late seventies and early eighties?

FB: What do you mean things?

MN: Well, I mean, not so much, the program is obviously, the schools and the living conditions and the atmosphere in the community. Did things move in a positive direction after the mid seventies?

FB: No, things began to look, after all the national hype put on The South Bronx and what not, and they began to come in and develop new housing, and instead of it becoming a waste land oasis, that was gone with the input and the development of new housing and what not, especially - -

AV (Jimmy): Charlotte Street.

FB: Charlotte Street.

MN: And then you had Bathgate Avenue and {inaudible} Park

FB: Right. There's something there.

AV (Jimmy): I got a cramp.

FB: Hunts Point housing development, which was headed by Father Gigante, that whole area, like

AV (Jimmy): Banana Kelly.

FB: Banana Kelly, and he like engulfed Banana Kelly, that whole Hunts Point, Southern Boulevard, that 163rd Street area, Father G. as they used to call him, I think yeah, he was a councilman for four years, and I think in that four years, he made enough, or he met enough people as a preacher in some places such as the federal government and what not, because the only reason he only served four years was because the pope came out with an edict, no priest is allowed to become an elected official, but he spent the four years wisely. And he re-developed that whole area, Hunts Point, 163rd Street, Southern Boulevard Area, it was unbelievable. And I remember the Village Voice came out with an article, I think it was about 1991, 92, and they had an interview with him and they questioned him because he owned a farm and a couple of condos and this and that. I thought you took a vow of poverty. He said, no, not me. But he was one of the very few people in The Bronx that was able to re-develop that whole Area of The Bronx without a whole lot of how should I say, criminal activity being involved, although he included the Five Families of New York City on part of the action.

AV: But wasn't there some controversy about, well the fact that well, Gigante was an Italian extract, he was with the with the Hispanic displacement and because of the displacement of the Black families who lived in that area. They were being, when Gigante's organization moved in to restore housing and what not, all those buildings had to be emptied, and they replaced by Latino families. And there was some resentment

because there was a loss of a Black power base, a political power base in The Bronx. The politicians, Black politicians clearly didn't do their job in this.

FB: But clearly though - -

AV (Jimmy): He did a good job.

FB: Yeah, that area was known as a Hispanic area, in fact, it was part of what you call it's area at one time - -

MN: Valez?

FB: Valez.

AV (Jimmy): Valez, Ramone Valez.

FB: Yeah, he kind of - -

AV (Jimmy): Valez was like neighbors - -

MN: Now did you have any contact with Genoveve Brooks, of the Mid Bronx Desperados?

FB: Yeah, when she became, I knew Jennifer. But she was in housing development and she was a little farther east, Boston road, Southern Boulevard, 174th Street, down on that area, I knew her. I got to know her better when she was Deputy Borough President.

MN: So um - -

FB: We had Gloria Davis, Gloria Davis the Assemblywoman.

MN: Is Wendall Foster in?

FB: Wendall Foster was the councilman. What's his name, the state senator? Gallagher, Joe Gallagher.

AV (Jimmy): Joe Gallagher.

FB: Joe Gallagher [inaudible] [laughter].

MN: Did a lot of people in Claremont vote? Or were the people politically active?

FB: You had your certain people who were politically active, they voted. I remember I went along with Gloria Davis back in 82. I ran with her, she was up for re-election, I ran with her for male district leader. And there were three of us running for that position, and there were only a hundred votes separated the three of us.

MN: Now this was out of the Jackson democratic club?

FB: That was out of the Jackson Democratic Club. You had an independent and you had a republican running.

MN: Did you know Leroy Archibald during those days?

FB: Well Archibald was part of Gloria Davis' immediate - -

MN: Circle?

FB: Yeah.

MN: And these are his posters?

FB: Yeah. Yeah.

MN: Now he worked at the Morrisania Youth Organization for a while?

FB: Yeah, Archy worked there, he worked for the Veterans Affairs, Archy had a couple of jobs.

MN: He had a football program also.

FB: Yeah.

MN: Now when you left in 84, were you feeling that things were getting better there or were things starting to deteriorate?

FB: In Claremont Village?

MN: Yeah, in Claremont.

FB: Things were getting a little bit better. What had happened, H.U.D. came in and poured in some money to do a little fix up. I think it was somewhere around ten million dollars. And I blasted out, blasted New York City Housing Authorities, you know they didn't like it and I told them hey, later, I don't care what you say, what you did was wrong. You did not listen to some of the things with the people. You would listen to some things, but you wouldn't listen to everything. Your thing is to keep certain folks happy. You come in here and build all of these dog gone basketball courts. We don't need no basketball courts. We need some educational programs, some work and job training programs. You come in here and build some basketball courts. I shot them down.

MN: So they came in and they used the money to build basketball courts?

FB: Yes.

AV (Jimmy): It was pacification, to keep the kids happy during the summers.

FB: The other thing, housing, what housing finally did, they took, and built two little community center, on in The Butler Houses and on in The Webster Houses, I guess to kind of pacify the people over there. But there were nothing but, I'm sorry, they took a couple of [inaudible] rooms or storage rooms as they would call them and turned them into little community centers. They had the nerve to contact me and say well Frank, you know Claremont neighborhood centers sponsored these things. I said sure, so I presented the budget to him, for each community center and little things, you get to run some small

little recreational programs and some tutorial programs and small family counseling programs out of the little, you know, nothing major. Oh so this is nice Frank, but we don't have any money and we kind of thought – I said no way, I'm going to take my little meager money I'm trying to stretch around the world, and y'all can't give me something, I said no way. And this was the same thing with New York City, with child development. I got a call one day "Oh Frank, we want Claremont neighborhood centers, they would like to sponsor it". I said sure, if you are willing to give us 15 percent of their operating budget as administrative costs, "Oh no, we thought" I said no, we don't [inaudible] free programs through New York City. And I stopped, I stopped. I remember back in 1980 that's when they were coming back with the evening after school programs and the New York City Youth Board was going to provide the money. An I sent a proposal down there worth about a hundred and forty six thousand dollars to run an afternoon and evening program five days a week, and I remember Mrs. Johnson who was the consultant for the New York City, for our area, for my agency called, "Oh Frank [inaudible] water." I think it was something like sixty-seven thousand dollars. "And could you come down here so we can start the paper work tomorrow and this and that". I said heck with coming down there tomorrow. I said we are going to discuss it. I got down there the next day, it went from \$67,000 to \$37,000. I said what happened. Overnight I lose thirty, [laughter]. I laughed at her, I said Mrs. Johnson, no, I'm not going to do it. I'm putting my foot down. I'm not going to run any half hearted program the city wants to fund. I'm not going to do it. They expect you to take this little money, and put your own money, and it was very difficult and still is today for Black agencies to

raise money through the foundation. It's just difficult. We don't get money like some of those big agencies downtown get money from the foundations. Here in The Bronx, we have a dreary, I think at the time I was at Claremont, I probably got only 3 foundations grants and [inaudible] time.

MN: Was Claremont Village more African American than Latino in population, would you say?

FB: Yes, it was . In Claremont neighborhood centers, the population was heavy Afro, but we also served some Hispanics too. Go ahead Mark.

AV (Mark): I was going to ask, did you see a [inaudible] in teenage pregnancy?

FB: Oh yeah, at that time, we had a program - -

AV (Jimmy): Tip Program?

FB: Tip that was in the other houses. tip neighborhood center.

AV (Jimmy): They had a parenting program for males.

FB: Yeah, teenage fathers. We had a teenage pregnancy program [inaudible] we did individual counseling but we also did a school thing with various high schools and junior high schools, throughout the Morris, South Bronx Community. And that was funded through, in fact, I helped write the [inaudible] Gloria Davis, it came through her office okay, and the teenage pregnancy program. We served all totaled, on a yearly basis about 5,000 kids, from actually going to the high schools, and offering counseling sessions, not only groups, but individuals, we had them come to, individuals, who wanted them to come to the center for counseling and what not. We also had referral sources for them to go further in their pregnancy for females.

AV (Mark): Did you see a rise when you started, a rise in the problem?

FB: Yeah, I'd seen, right there in Claremont Village, a twelve year old and a thirteen year old become pregnant. And I remember the 13 year old, no the 12 year old, she was on the track team and I remember Fernanda Harris was the track coach, she is now assistant principal at one of the local elementary schools right there in Claremont Village. And she came to me and she cried "what can I do?" I said, Fernanda, go up there and talk to the mother, I knew the mother but I – I said wont you talk to the mother and see what can be done. Fernanda came back and she was swelled up with tears crying, she said Mr. Belton, I couldn't believe, I couldn't believe her, she just broke me up. I said what happened Fernanda? Here her daughter is 12 going on 13 and she had the nerve to tell Fernanda, well I'm going to plan a baby shower for her, as if she was condoning her 12 year old daughter to become pregnant, but that lady, her apartment was like Grand Central Station. She had 2 older daughters and they had babies by 2 or 3 other guys and what not. This was kind of village wide in some situations.

MN: Did you go visit a lot of apartments when you were working there?

FB: No, I didn't have, only a couple of board members or if I was providing some individual counseling to a family with a home visit or what not, but in some situations, the homes were terribly messed up. It was just like people developed an I don't care attitude, a mentality, quote unquote "F" it, I don't care.

MN: Now in a lot of other cities in the country, they have been knocking down the big public housing projects, much more than in New York.

FB: In New York, they haven't knocked down any.

MN: They just knocked one down in Brooklyn for the first time.

FB: Where was that?

MN: On Saratoga Avenue. The first time I've ever seen it in New York, a small one.

FB: Okay, a small one.

MN: Do you think that they should do that? Do you think that a place like Claremont now is more destructive in terms of its impact and the people and providing a place [inaudible] for the 20,000 people that live there.

FB: It could be very destructive, but you have to understand the mentality of the people in government. The government offers in many situations, a band-aid solution. It's so funny that Claremont Village was split up into three levels. I think the Morris Houses, Lewis Morris Houses was state funded. I think, no, the Lewis Morris Houses were federally funded, the Webster Houses was state funded, and Butler I think was City funded. You could see which side of the track got most of the money when that big federal H.U.D. money came down in 1981, 82, in terms of the rehabbing of it, the fixing of the Claremont Village.

MN: Was there a lot of doubling up of families when you were there? Two three families together living in apartments.

FB: No, that didn't take place there.

MN: From what I here there's a lot of that going on.

FB: Oh, it's going on - -

MN: Now?

FB: Now it is, - -

MN: But it wasn't then?

FB: Not then.

AV (Jimmy): Wasn't that usually a pattern of immigrant families where - -

FB: but you didn't have that many immigrant families moving into that immediate neighborhood at that time.

MN: At that time right.

FB: I remember years ago when I was coming along, the Hispanic community doubled up, Blacks doubled up, those who were moving from down South up South [laughter] and they had to double up for a certain time until they were able to get on their feet. And the people from the Caribbean's, just until they get on their feet. This was normal, I think for part of the early eighties, people doubled up because of a shortage of housing, I mean, blatant housing shortage here in New York. What you were saying, that was a small, they couldn't do that. What they did in St. Louis, a couple of other places - -

MN: Chicago - -

FB: Chicago too - -

MN: And Newark.

MN: And Newark, okay, they couldn't do that in New York City because where are you going to put the people. And there was a question at one time of turning some of those housing developments into coops, which hasn't taken place.

AV (Jimmy): Also some of them have been privatized. They sold them off to private agencies to manage the same complex and it hasn't worked like that. In Mt. Vernon they tried it like that.

FB: Yeah, New York compared to other places is a different beast, it's a whole different beast than any of the other cities and towns around the country. It's just the mentality, those people between Washington and New York, they put up these monstrosities, eye sores which they became, but they didn't also provide the built in services that were needed for the families that you are putting in these low income houses. In some of the white neighborhoods, they did it, but in a lot of the Black and Hispanic neighborhoods and the lower east side, in some of the developments down there they did, but as they moved north, east and west, they didn't do it. I can't understand how they could build a community center in northeast Bronx and they just now found money to build a gymnasium at the Edenwall Houses.

AV (Jimmy): [inaudible]

FB: Huh?

AV (Jimmy): It's over [inaudible]

FB: Yeah, okay. They just finally built a gymnasium and this is the kind of mentality that's happening here in New York City. You don't have the go through services. You think about it after the structure is up, what are we going to do now? And then it's too late because then you can't get anymore money to provide the basic services that need to be provided for the clientele that are living in these houses. It hasn't been done and I don't think it ever will be done because people do not listen. And I get the so called political people, they don't listen, in terms of, oh go ahead.

AV (Mark): Well I was going to say back to what Dr. Naison asked you before about voting, it doesn't seem like you have a high percentage of people that vote in any of these

housing projects in New York and I believe if something like that came out where you would have a higher percentage of voters, then the politicians would be forced because of the issues in the neighborhood, but that's not the case, there are not a lot of minorities coming out to vote in November.

FB: When they did come out, they voted for the same person. And I guess that we found out that these turn key, I call them turn key politicians, don't do nothing for the basic constituency. They talk a good game, and they have a very good habit of personalizing what they do. I, I, I, I think sometimes they are going to choke themselves on I, I, I, I did this. Where? Show me, but people are not sophisticated enough and [inaudible] to challenge the so called political elected official. And that's why every two years, they are re-elected. And they do not make demands like in your white neighborhoods. they demand, but in the Black and Latino.

MN: We are running out of tape, so I want to give you a chance to sum up this whole experience, in terms of what you feel your biggest accomplishments were in that whole period in Claremont and then what's happened since you left.

FB: Since I left Claremont, the good thing is that the person that was one year between the time I left and the new director coming on when it was kind of dormant, people, and these were educated people, did not think about the constituency there in that neighborhood. Most of the people sitting on that board did not live in the neighborhood at the time. I think one or two people on that board lived in the neighborhood. The rest lived outside. And they went ahead and hired somebody who was not a social worker, who did not have a degree, never ran a community center in his life, but they hired him to

become executive director. And I told a few people that and I said you know you are very dishonest. You hire a person, don't know what the hell running a neighborhood center is. And what they did then, I understood now fully what had happened before and hiring executive directors, at hiring the director for a social; services agency such as Claremont, they don't know nothing. They did not have the vested interest of the community people, or the constituency. This person, all he did was draw down a check and make life miserable for the staff. I came back in, got me some community folks and came over there on night and took over their board meeting, and ousted that director and had an interim who was a worker I hired, Ms. Spivey, as interim director - -

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[END OF TAPE]