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Patricia Payne Interview

Mark Naison

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Payne, Patricia

Mark Naison

Patricia Payne Interview Transcription
Interviewers: Dr. Mark Naison
Interviewee: Patricia Payne

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Dr. Mark Naison (MN): This is the 50th interview of the Bronx African American History Project. We are here with Patricia Payne, who is a professor at Monroe College. And we're going to be talking about her experiences growing up in the Patterson houses in the South Bronx. Patricia, when did your family first move to the Bronx?

Patricia Payne (PP): In about 1949.

MN: So they… they moved to the Bronx before they moved into Paterson?

PP: Oh, I'm sorry, no. When we moved to the Bronx, we moved in immediately into the Patterson. We moved from Harlem.

MN: Uh-huh. And where was your family living in Harlem?

PP: Up in… I forget… Washington Heights…

MN: Mhm.

PP: Like, around… they lived on 149th street.

MN: Mhm.

PP: Between Broadway and Amsterdam.

Mhm. And, do you know why they made this move, into the Patterson? Were they living in a fairly crowded place? Was that a motivation, or?

PP: I don't think so. They had a nice apartment, it was in a Brownstone.

MN: Mhm.

PP: And they lived in the lower level and I think they may done it for more room because I believe it was just like a kitchenette.

MN: Right, and uh how many rooms did— was the apartment they moved into?

PP: It was a five-room apartment, three bedrooms.

MN: And uh, how many children did your parents have at that time?

PP: I was an only child

MN: You were an only child! So you grew up in a three-bedroom apartment as an only child.

PP: Well, the reason for that was that my mother's mother—

MN: Mhm.

PP: Um, did domestic work. And she slept in. But they wanted to have a place for her to come when she was not working.

MN: Right. Now, where did she do live in domestic work?

PP: In Manhattan.

MN: In Manhattan, in what neighborhood?

PP: You know, down around West End Avenue—

MN: Mhm.

PP: But I don't know exactly where.

MN: Right. Now, is your family of southern or West Indian—

PP: Southern.

MN: From what state?

PP: South Carolina.

MN: There are so many people from South Carolina in the Bronx. But, did your parents meet in New York or in South Carolina?

PP: In South Carolina. My parents got married very young. My mom was eighteen, my father was nineteen. And I wasn't born until 10 years later.

MN: Right. And what community in South Carolina? Did they come from?

PP: Colombia.

MN: Uh huh. And did you still, did they still have contact with relatives there? So?

PP: Absolutely.

MN: Uh huh. And what sort of work did your father do?

PP: He chauffeured and I think he also… He did mailroom work. My father died when I was eight.

MN: Aww!

PP: So you know, a lot of what— Well, I started to say a lot of what happened back then was fuzzy, but really, I think I remember a lot more than a lot of people do at that time. But he, he did show— He always had, ever since I could remember he always had two jobs.

MN: So he was always working.

PP: He was always working, always had two jobs. But in addition to that, he never graduated from high school. But he completed the 11th grade. And he was smart. And he used to do the taxes for our neighbors. Income tax. And so ever— a lot of people knew my parents.

MN: Right. So he was the tax man.

PP: He was a tax man.

MN: Oh.

PP: And he was also an auxiliary policeman. Out of the Fortieth precinct.

MN: So they had axillary police in the 1950s?

PP: In the 50s, yes!

MN: I didn't know that. Where was the Fortieth precinct located?

PP: On 138th street down by the— On 138th street and Third Avenue.

MN: Now, did your father come from a tradition of people who are active in their community? I mean, this seems like he's an extraordinary, you know, energetic person.

PP: Yeah. Not that I know of, because my father's side of the family… Everybody was still down south. So I never really got to know them well. But he was just that kind of person. He was just a community person, he used to… He used to take the boys in the neighborhood, you know, on day trips and do things with them, and that's just who he was. He really wanted a son!

MN: Did your mother work?

PP: Well, yes and no. In reality… What my mother did was— My mother had only a second-grade education. And she used to work one day a week. Sometimes. And it wasn't for… Most of the time that I can remember she wasn't doing it. But when she did work, she worked one day a week. She did domestic work for Mr. Cole, who also lived down in Manhattan. And when my father died, I don't remember my mother working immediately before that, and definitely not after. But my father died as a result of high blood pressure. He had surgery, which now I think was experimental surgery to relieve the pressure. They had operated on him on his left side, and then they went back and operated on the right side. And the operations were supposed to have been successful. But I remember when I went to see him in the hospital, and they, excuse me, I was only eight. But we have special permission for me to visit him. And when I went to visit him, he was there with no night shirt on, and this was in June, he died in June. And the fans were going because back then, I mean, he died in 1957. So back then, you know, they weren't centrally aired. They didn't have central air. So the fans were going in the room. He had a no bed shirt. He caught pneumonia. And he ultimately died of pneumonia. In spite of their correcting the high blood pressure, he died of pneumonia.

MN: Oh boy. And that was what hospital?

PP: Columbia Presbyterian.

MN: At Columbia, Jesus.

PP: …Presbyterian.

MN: So you were one year old when the family moved into the Paterson houses? What are your first memories of that? Patterson?

PP: I think my first real memories of the Paterson would probably be when I went to kindergarten.

MN: And that was a PS 18.

PP: PS 18 .

MN: Right now, which building were you in?

PP: I was in 291. At that time, we lived in 291 East 143rd Street. And that was where we had the three-bedroom apartment. After my father passed, they transferred us to a two-bedroom apartment into 81 East 143rd.

MN: Now, those are all on the north side. Because the basketball players say “it's our side and the other side.”

PP: Right! That's right.

MN: And then, I just interviewed Ray Hodge, who I think lived in 291.

PP: Right. Ray and I grew up together. And then when my father died, we moved. But, Ray was at every birthday party I ever had. I mean, like he was like a brother.

MN: Wow. Now was academics stressed in your household? Or was this something you picked up on your own?

PP: No, no, I knew that I was supposed to go to college.

MN: And this is from the time you were in elementary school.

PP: From any time I can remember.

MN: Which is interesting, because no one else who I've interviewed has said that. They, you know, Vicky or said, this was something she came upon when she was in high school. But you were given the idea: “You were supposed to go to college.”

PP: That’s right. I was supposed to go to college. And I think it may have been because my

mother never had, you know, an opportunity to get an education. And I guess my father had come so close.

MN: Right.

PP: And, you know, it was just a given that this was what I was supposed to do, that I was supposed to finish school and I was supposed to go to college. And it was that attitude, I think that kept me as straight as an arrow. Because my mother, like when… growing up, a lot of girls in the projects had babies. Okay. Now, my mother, she was like adamant—

MN: Oh, this is interesting, because you're the first person who's mentioned that even in your cohort.

PP: Really? Well, a lot of girls had babies, and they're still in the projects. They're still in the Paterson. They got apartments in the Patterson. You know, got on welfare, got apartments in the Paterson and they're still there.

MN: Now that was part of the, of the group with you and Nathan and Ray and Marilyn.

PP: Not our friends!

MN: But it was in—

PP: But, it was in our age group and in our classes in school and those kinds of things.

MN: Yeah. Now, was PS 18 tracked? So there was a one class, a two class, a three class.

PP: Yes. PS 18 was tracked. And junior high school, JHS 149… Was it 149—? Or 141…

MN: Was that before junior high school?

PP: Yes, they tracked us. Now, the people that you, that I know that you've spoken to so far, were on the academic track. Okay, we were all in the what they now call the "Gifted and Talented" class, or the… In junior high school, I think they called it the, special science class. Or something.

MN: So this has been a self-selection of the people who are in the ones and the twos.

PP: Yes. Exactly.

MN: Okay. So,

PP: I was thinking about that when I heard about the people: Arnold. Marilyn… Marilyn and I went in the same classes from elementary school through junior high school. And then we went to different schools. But um, yeah, AJ and Bess. I'm like, wait a minute, I wonder if they're going to interview any of the other people?

MN: Yeah, well, I think at some point, yeah, that that, you know, when, when we're doing this project, it's all the people became successful professionals, who, you know, who are contacting me, and, you know, and I think that some people, you know, that some people whose lives might not have been, you know, as, as, as marked by mobility should probably also be, you know, drawn in the people who were in the "seven" class. You know, the Patterson experience might not have been so rosy for them.

PP: But you know, you know what's interesting, though… I found that we were tracked. And for many years, I was tricked by that, because I thought I was smart. Because I was in the "Gifted and Talented" class, which I wasn't… In elementary school, I was in class six-one. Okay. Marilyn and I were in six-one, then we went to junior high school. I was in seven-four. And then I went to eight-four, and in eight-four, my homeroom teacher recommended me for the Science Talent class. That's what they called it. And so in the ninth grade, I went into nine-two. Okay, so in the ninth grade, we had to choose high schools. So we all think we're so smart. So we all want to go to the Bronx High School of Science. But I had my homeroom teacher who was also my English teacher. She was a black woman from the Melrose projects. And she was, I guess you would call her a straight shooter, Mrs. Jones. I'll never forget her. She died in recent years. But she was a straight shooter. And she was like, "Look, your reading grade level is not high enough for you to be successful at the Bronx High School of Science. What you need to do is to go to Walton High School." Okay, and I was taken aback, I mean, but the way out, she was right. I mean, she was right. And, excuse me, so I went to Walton, which I am so happy that I did. It was a wonderful experience, you know, I held my own. And, um, the atmosphere was just, you know, a wonderful educational atmosphere. So, that was, I'm glad that I had that kind of guidance from a teacher because my mom couldn't help me in terms of making those kinds of decisions. So that was a good experience for me. But in recent years, since I've been working in education, before I went to Monroe, I was working for an organization, a nonprofit organization called Teaching Matters, Inc. And what we did was teach teachers how to integrate technology into the curriculum, and we exited public schools. So I got to work in lots of schools here in the Bronx. And it was so disheartening for me to see how they still track students. Okay, except now they're not. It's not as obvious as it used to be, but they still track students. But the problem with them tracking with students is that, again, they build that illusion in the student's minds, that they're smarter than the students in the other classes. And of course, it's all kinds of problems because

they don't work as hard as they should. Because they think they're already ahead. And that's a major problem.

MN: Now, do you think the tracking then led to certain kids being stigmatized and demoralized and turned them off school? Or do you think that the teachers really try to work with each group?

PP: Sadly no, because, again, in our classes, there weren't any of those other kids.

MN: Were the other kids mostly from the neighborhood rather than Patterson? Or not necessarily? Was Patterson, Like, the first generation of Paterson kids, a little more academically motivated than the kids who lived in the surrounding houses?

PP: See, I don't know. I really don't. I can't say because a lot of students that were in my tracked class didn't live in the Patterson. They lived in Willis Avenue, Tinton Avenue.

MN: Right, now to go, to go back to Patterson, what was the atmosphere like? When, you know, in the 50s? Was it a very safe, nurturing place?

PP: Yes. Yeah, it was. Because, you know, it seemed, it seemed as though everybody knew everybody. I didn't even realize how real that was until I became a teenager. Because there were lots of people who knew me, who I never knew. Like, Nathan Dukes, one example, his parents knew me. Before I ever knew him. When he and I met, I was about 13. We were in junior high school. And until we met, I never even noticed him before. But, when we saw his parents, they would, his mother was talking about how cute I used to look at my high-top shoes when I was a baby. And so they knew my parents. But then, it started to look like everybody knew everybody, you know, It was amazing. Because the projects were large!

MN: Very large.

PP: The projects were large. But it seemed there was just and I'm not sure, in fact, I'm not even sure how that came to be. How did they get to know each other?

MN: I mean, it's an interesting question. A lot of people say there was just this real sense of optimism about moving into something new that, at that time, there was no stigma about public housing. It was a step up. And do you think that's a fair assessment?

PP: Absolutely. Absolutely. It was clean and it was new. And you know, there were no rats and no roaches and, you know, like some of the houses in the surrounding areas. So, yeah, it was, people were proud to live in their projects.

MN: Yeah. And did people of different ethnic backgrounds get along well, in the projects?

PP: Yes, I can't. I can't really say that I remember any conflicts between races in, in the projects itself. And it was truly multicultural. In fact, up until I was about… It was after my father died, because we had gone away for a long time. Yeah, well, actually, I had gone away with my godparents the following summer, because he died in the summer. The following summer, my godparents took me on vacation with them. And we were gone for about two months. And at that time, my best friend, who was a little German girl, lived in our building. In fact, her father was German and her mother was Irish. Louise Turcher. Louise Turcher and I were best friends. But when I went away for a couple of months, she got a new best friend. Jeanette, who moved in to 81, which is the building I ended up moving to. And Jeanette was a piece of work. So Louise, and I were not close after that anymore because I couldn't deal with Jeanette. But, um, yeah, we had Chinese we had everything in, in, I guess, in most of the buildings, there was a good variety of cultures. And we all got along fine.

MN: How was this reflected in terms of like, music and food?

PP: Well, you know, something I know, I personally, was influenced a lot by the food. I mean, I cook in every language. So, I was influenced by it. Um, as far as the other aspects of the culture. I'm not really sure. I'm not really sure.

MN: Now, when you first moved in, were most of the families, two-parent families?

PP: Oh, yes.

MN: And what sort of jobs did the fathers work at?

PP: Okay, again, I mean, I start to remember from when I was about five. Okay. But you know what, when I think about it, I don't even know what a lot of the fathers did. I mean, I know, you know, I remember one who was a policeman, and then he became a detective, you know, over the years. But, in fact, there were two, we had two neighbors, who were policemen.

MN: Did you see people like leaving, the men, leaving for work at a certain time and then coming back at a certain time?

PP: I never paid attention.

MN: It was the kind of thing you weren't… you know, or if they left were they wearing a jacket and tie, or were they blue collar?

PP: More blue-collar type of situation. Because I mean, I don't recall any neighbors that I know, personally, you know, being teachers or doctors or any of those kinds of things. Some of them grew into those things. But, I don't remember that as a child.

MN: Were most of the mothers stay at home mothers or did some work?

PP: Most of the mothers. As I recall, most of the mothers were stay-at-home mothers. Yeah.

MN: Now, in terms of youth recreation opportunities, what sort of things were available for you, you know, in, in school and community centers, and things of that sort?

PP: Okay. Again, you know, I started to participate in that type of thing toward the latter part of elementary school. So I guess around, actually, not junior high school, not elementary school, around seventh grade. But they had a community center. Well, the projects had a community center. And quite frankly, I'm not sure what went on down there because I never went to… I never participated in anything at the Community Center. But PS18 had a community center. And that was where we used to go. And the boys, they had a basketball team there, and so on and so forth.

MN: And when the boys were playing basketball, what were the girls doing?

PP: Watching them, waiting. (Laughter). Waiting for them to finish.

MN: So there wasn't any, anything comparable going on?

PP: I think. I think they did have other stuff. Like, I can remember. On some occasions, they would have, like, modern dancing, or something for, you know, an hour or so. But that was like, early in the evening. The boys usually play like, later in the evening. So…

MN: Did you become involved in the arts at all in music or visual arts?

PP: No. No, I didn't. I have no talent. I have no talent.

MN: So what were, you know, did you have any sort of hobbies or you know, things outside, either.

PP: I sew.

MN: Oh, you sew, okay.

PP: As a matter of fact, I made my prom outfit, and I meant to bring the picture.

MN: This is a view… It was Ray. You told me then you went on the Staten Island Ferry.

PP: Right. After the prom, We went on a ferry ride. Wow. And then well, we actually went to the Hawaii Kai first.

MN: Oh, I remember that place from high school. Everybody went there!

PP: The prom was at the Americana.

MN: Okay.

PP: So we went to the prom at the Americana hotel. And then there was a whole group of us. Then we went to the Hawaii Kai and we left the Hawaii Kai and went on a ferry ride.

MN: Right.

PP: And we came back from the ferry ride. We went to one of my classmate's home in the Bronx, and at that time it was daylight, in the Bronx. And her mother made breakfast. We had breakfast there. We got back home, I guess about 12 or one that afternoon. While Ray's mother was freaking out!

MN: He said his parents were pretty protective.

PP: Her mother said… (Laughter). Her mother said… She said, "Ray's mother has called here ten times!"

MN: That's hilarious.

PP: But we had a good time.

MN: Yeah. Now do you recall getting involved in you know the early rock and roll and Doo Wop obscene and like the guy singing and dancing?

PP: I wasn't "involved involved," but I mean, I knew about it. Like in fact, I remember that from when I was even little because I had cousins who still lived in Washington Heights who would babysit for my parents. And my, my father was active in the NAACP too. So they would go to NAACP functions and stuff like that. And I had teenage cousins who would babysit me. And, of course, they made friends with some of the boys their age, and they were "Doo-Wopers." So I

was exposed to it in that way. But then, when I became a teenager, Nathan and Vincent and Skippy… He tells me Skippy has a different name now, anyways. But they used to Doo-Wop too!

MN: Yeah, they actually sang for us a little. But, were they half decent?

PP: Yeah, they weren't bad. What do you think?

MN: They weren't Frankie Lymon, but they were… they had a little harmony. Was there a lot of like, little, like dancing parties going on when you were teenagers at people's apartments and stuff?

PP: Yes, yes.

MN: Like Vicky described, she had this crew, the "Sociallettes" that used to throw parties.

PP: I read that in the transcript you sent me.

MN: Did you ever throw parties at your, like, your apartment?

PP: Yes, but mostly occasion parties, not just a party party. Right. But I've been to parties, you know, that people had.

MN: Now going back to this teen pregnancy issue, when did this start to happen in junior high, or in high school?

PP: In junior high.

MN: Really. So there— And was this something that people like were talking about a lot?

PP: When you say talking about you mean, in terms of it being a social and negative social issue,

MN: Or just "Whoa, she's having a baby? What's going on here?"

PP: Yeah, yeah, it was. But then it just started to happen so often and under unlikely circumstances, you know, a lot of people that you never expected to have that happen. To allow that to happen. And it happened.

MN: Now, this is I guess you'd say this is the early 60s or late 50s

PP: I say the early 60s.

MN: Right now did this… You know, when I interviewed Vicki, she also said that the early 60s was when people started to notice heroin coming in.

PP: And you see I noticed that a lot earlier, really. And like I said, I had mentioned I had teenage cousins that would come and babysit me. And that they were friends with boys in the neighborhood. And some of those boys who were older than us, they were, I'd say maybe if I was like five, or if my cousins were like, in their teens. So they may have been like eight to 10 years older than and some of them were doing heroin.

MN: And this is in the 50s?

PP: This was in the 50s. Okay, so some people may not have noticed it until the 60s. But it was there.

MN: Now when you're saying this is there, Were they… Was that making the projects unsafe?

PP: I don't, I don't think so.

MN: They weren't like robbing apartments or jumping people, at this point?

PP: I don't think that it was that widespread at that time. But some of those guys who were fooling around with drugs lived in his building. And this, this is back in the 50s. Like, you know…

MN: Now, when did you start to feel that this world that had been very safe and nurturing was starting to, you know, start to fray a little bit and become either a little more dangerous or that something's wrong here?

PP: I think it was when I was already an adult or already out of school. Because I mean, things I guess were happening around us. But when you're in the middle of it, and everybody knows you, you still kind of feel safe. Because I went to school initially, when I graduated from high school, I went to night school. So I would be coming home at 9-10 o'clock at night walking from the subway, to 138 St. and third Avenue. And I never was really fearful. I wasn't afraid. Okay. And again, I tried to be careful, you know in terms of taking the elevator because that was always something that, you know, was that could be dangerous. And I lived on the ninth floor. So I tried to be careful in terms of who I would get on the elevator with. But it wasn't until I left. And I was about 22. It was when I left… Maybe older. When I left the projects, when I would go back, I didn't feel comfortable.

MN: Now, did your mother stay?

PP: My mother stayed even after I got married. Let's see, I said within a year after I got married, we bought a house on Long Island. And we wanted her to come and stay with us. And she didn't want to leave her friends and you know, her, her life in the Bronx. So she insisted upon staying there. And she stayed there until she died.

MN: Which was…

PP: In 1993.

MN: Wow!

PP: No, 92.

MN: So she stayed all the way until then.

PP: Mhm.

MN: And did she… Was she… Was there any a point in which she felt unsafe or did she always have her friends…

PP: Yeah, she always had her friends and she, she… I mean, when, let's say that she, she didn't let fear stop her from doing what she wanted to do because I know that she must have felt threatened a bit because she had a second lock put on the door.

MN: Were you aware of gangs in the fifties? When you were growing up… as something to be concerned about?

PP: No, I don't recall in the fifties being concerned about them, but I know that there were gangs and you know that, I don't know, that… you may know that in the fifties Patterson bordered with the Italian neighborhood.

MN: Oh yes, I know from Frank, the sandwich shop.

PP: Right, right! That's right.

MN: He told me about—

PP: The Franks Heros— Hero Shop! And there was also a bakery over there but anyway, from

that point on which was about 145th street and Morris Avenue, from there up to the Melrose Projects was all Italian. And, and they used to come to school with us at PS 18. They were in the same school district. But the thing is every year they would have a feast like the San Genarro Feast.

MN: We had that in the little Italian parish in Crown Heights too.

PP: Okay, and we would always, and my mother would always take me and, you know, I would play the games and, and eat all the Italian food and so on and so forth. And every year there would be a gang fight between the Italians and the Patterson and the Melrose.So I think, I think it was a black and white.

MN: And the Melrose kids were mostly black, and the Patterson kids were mostly black. Now, where did the Puerto Rican kids,in Patterson fit in?

PP: Ok. Now, of course, over the years, there were more Puerto Ricans in the Patterson, mostly when we were growing up, like going to junior high school and stuff. I think that most of the Puerto Rican kids were the kids from Willis Avenue and on the, you know, the area that surrounded the school but not the Patterson. But as years progressed, we started to have more Hispanics. But initially, I mean, I'd say like in the fifties, there were, I think a handful of Puerto Ricans, and those Puerto Ricans behaved, I mean, they were with us.

MN: Right, okay. So, they were more black-identified than white-identified. Now, Vicky gave the term “Butarican.”

PP: Right.

MN: So there was a lot of cross-fertilization between the Puerto Rican kids and the black kids.

PP: Yeah, in our generation. And that was, you know, particularly so where a lot of those girls who were having babies with Puerto Rican guys in junior high school.

MN: And these were black girls?

PP: Black girls with Puerto Rican guys or Puerto Rican girls with black guys.

MN: Right, now did these did the girls drop out of school when this happened or they, they, their mothers would take care of the babies and they come back to school?

PP: I would say a lot of them dropped out. A lot of them dropped out and ended up on welfare

now.

MN: So you began to have a welfare generation internally generated of people, young women in Patterson who had babies and ended up going on welfare. Now, was this something that had a stigma attached to it? Were people up, you know, upset about it or, you know, like the older generation, were they gonna…

PP: Were they upset about it? Okay. Upset to the extent that they would talk about it, care about them about it. But, you know, I wonder if they were, they weren't upset enough to do anything about it. Let's put it that way because a lot of the same people who were upset when it happened to other ended up happening to them too. So they weren't upset.

MN: People were not like, you know, really trying to educate the young women about how to keep themselves from getting pregnant. There were no teen pregnancy programs or anything like that. Now, would you say that was something that something that broke, you know, began to change the character of this, you know, basically very cohesive two-parent environment?

PP: Certainly.

MN: Because what's interesting is Vicky mentioned heroin as a corrosive factor but not the, you know, the, the young women having babies. And you think that's just as important?

PP: Absolutely. Absolutely. Because it wasn't incidental. I mean, it was epidemic.

MN: So this was an epidemic. You noticed an epidemic of teen pregnancy. Now, would you see this as a correlation with trackingyou know, a much higher proportion in the lower track than the upper track?

PP: Okay. Yeah, I mean, it took place in both but I would say that those who were in the upper track did go back. Okay. Because I know some personally did go back to school, got the education, and got a college education. Okay. On the other hand, those who were on the lower track, that was their fate.

MN: Now, was there a stigma attached to going on public assistance in that situation?

PP: Well, when you say a stigma for, for the rest, I, I guess for the rest of us, you know, it was, but I don't think that they thought about it or were concerned about it. I never got that impression.

MN: So some of them ended up getting their own apartments in the projects now.

PP: In the projects…

MN: But where were the vacancies coming from? Because, you know, again, I assume there was a waiting list to get in.

PP: No. Well, at some point, there probably was, but remember the people who came there initially were, that was like a stepping stone, right? So they were moving up and moving out, right?

MN: So you had a combination of the, of the, the, you know, the more ambitious or upwardly mobile people moving out and then their apartments being taken by people who, you know, were having babies without husbands or people or even single parent families coming in from the outside.

PP: Right.

MN: Now…

PP: I would say that that started to be very noticeable to me. You know, people coming in from the outside without husbands. I would say, let me see, my father died in '58… We moved in the other building, around 60…I'd say, I personally noticed that around 1960.

MN: That, that, that, you know, that it was for the first time, single parent families from the outside, moving in. Now, do you also remember a time when living in the projects began to carry a slight stigma outside?

PP: Now, see, while I was in the projects, I don't ever remember that I don't ever, it, it's only after I was out of the projects for a few years that I started to recognize that the projects, you know, to other people wasn't a nice place, but by that time, it had become not a nice place.

MN: Now, You know, you've been working in education, you know, and, and know the Bronx schools. Do you think that the kids growing up in your generation had better opportunities than the kids growing up now.

PP: Absolutely. Because the attitudes of teachers were different when we were growing up. Okay. I had teachers who I could honestly say cared about me. You know, who, who helped me.

Sewing was my hobby. Right. I took sewing in the seventh grade with Mrs. Daly , in junior high school and Mrs. Daly had started a sewing club, which was composed of a few of us in the tracked class. And on Wednesdays when other students went to religious instruction, we would go to Mrs Daly's apartment up on Boston road and she would give us advanced sewing classes.

MN: So now, is Mrs Daly an Irish American—

PP: No, she was black.

MN: And she lived on Boston Road and where?

PP: I don't remember exactly. I don't remember exactly, but she wasn't that far from school. She was up by Morris High school.

MN: Okay. Sure. In the Morrisania neighborhood. So you, and, and you don't think that today, so the teachers were really very involved with their students.

PP: Right. But you know what I think? And, and to the credit of teachers today, I think that one reason why they were so involved was because they didn't have that… They had more power to teach than teachers have today.

MN: Now, do you think that's partly because the Children and the parents were more respectful?

PP: I'm, I'm sure that plays, that would play some part in it. But, I mean, even the establishment then was more teacher-friendly. You know, now they have all these programs that teachers have to follow and whether you're a good teacher or not, you don't have an opportunity to show it right, because you have to do it their way.

MN: Yeah. So teachers had more autonomy and you think were treated with more respect by the system as well.

PP: Absolutely. But, teachers also demanded more respect in those days. Like now I go to a public school and sometimes you can't tell the teachers from the students. I mean, they come to school looking anyway and then, and they carry themselves in a way that doesn't elicit respect from students, you know,, they want to be one of the students, but at the same time, they can't help the students when they bring themselves down like that. And, so that's something else when I was going to school, teachers looked like professional people and I always aspired to have a job where I would go to school, dressed up. I mean, go to work, dressed up. You know, it was different, it was a whole different.

MN: Now, now, what about, the, the authority that adults commanded? Is that a difference between then and now?

PP: Absolutely. Are you kidding? You know what I find? Now, I teach at Monroe. Right. And what I find is that I have to win over students, most of them, I mean, there are some who take to you, but for the most part I have to win students over and I think that a lot of that has to do with the lack of respect they have for the adults that they've grown up with. Okay, that they don't trust adults. Okay. And, and I'm talking about, some of them are in their mid-twenties, you know, already. But they, they see what I'm saying is when I was in my mid-twenties, okay, if I went into a classroom and there was a professor who had gray hair, you know, I mean, they, I, I was raised to believe they were entitled to, you know, a level of respect! Nowadays, it's not like that. It's not like that. They use profanity all the time. They just have no respect for their elders. So, I find myself having to win their respect, and the way I win their respect is by really taking an interest in their learning. Okay. And after a while, they get it. But it's so sad because I'm saying, why are they coming here not knowing that they should respect their elders? What are they like at home?

MN: Well, which is an interesting question. And what led to that change? I mean, because were people expected to be respectful for the people next door? You know.

PP: Absolutely. All elders!

MN: Was there much more of an adult presence in people's lives? You know, do you think that was part of the reason that everybody was sort of taking responsibility for everybody else's kids?

PP: And, you know, I think that that came from and this is just, you know, I guess on my part, well, I shouldn't say that because I've studied some courses that would suggest that this might be true. But, I think that it came from that southern situation, you know, in the South where they had the extended family and, and, and that type of thing, that's what I, that's where I think it was generated from.

MN: And so the breakdown came, you think maybe just from acculturation but also, you know, well, you know…

PP: But again, I think this is where the childhood pregnancies, the drugs, all of these things I feel contributed to the breakdown. Okay. Childhood pregnancies. Ok. We're talking about kids having babies, getting their own apartments, and you know, growing up on welfare. Ok. Now, in some cases, their situation, some parents, they think they're grown. So, but in the meantime, they weren't mature enough to really know how to raise kids.

MN: So, right, so this generation of mothers on public young mothers and public assistance…

PP: And kids raising kids!

MN: And kids raising kids begins to erode a respect which would have come in a different family structure. And then the and, but it also seems that a lot of that, you know, a lot of the men are also crashing and burning and, you know, there's, you know, which is another phenomenon.

PP: But let's go back. we talked about kids raising kids. Now, these kids were raising boys too. Ok. Now, so we, we, I'm sure that, that played a part that plays, that has played a part in our men crashing and burning. then there's the drug, there was the drug culture, you know, fathers on crack. Well, I mean, it wasn't crack back then. It wasn't called crack back then. But I'm saying that when kids are brought up in an environment like this where they feel, I guess they, they kind of grow up feeling that their parents don't warrant their respect and that makes them angry. Okay! And now we have angry, young people raising young people, you know. So what do you do with this? I mean, what, what can they do? They can only do the best they can do with what they have to work. So I think that those two things were probably the major causes of the erosion.

MN: Now, do you think there was, were any fathers leave? Was there any correlation between fathers leaving and young girls having kids? You know, kids,

PP: Not that I know of.

MN: So there wasn’t. You didn't see any, any correlation between family troubles in the household and young girls getting pregnant?

PP: No. I… Offhand, I cannot, I can't say that, see, the problem is that there may have been problems going on in the household that I wouldn't have known about none of my personal friends. You know, so it may have, that may have been.

MN: Well, you were mentioning during lunch about your mother's experience of dropping out of school in second grade and actually working with her mother cleaning homes if you could, you know, review that.

PP: Yes. my mother's father, like my father, died when she was young. And, so my grandmother had a lot of children and, so consequently, you know, she had to work. So she used to do domestic work and she needed to take my mother with her, you know, when she was working because the other kids were working also. So my mother would go with her mother to work and my mother would kind of, you know, entertain the children of the lady that my mother was

working.

MN: But what's amazing about this is your mother stopped going to school in second grade. That's right. And that no one protected that and that this, you know, where people don't understand. This is not an unusual thing for African Americans in the South at that time.

PP: Absolutely. That's right. It was not unusual.

MN: So, so she went, you know, she was in second grade at seven years old and she goes, starts to accompany your mother…

PP: My grandmother.

MN: Your grandmother in cleaning homes and does she do that until she gets married or she gets other jobs?

PP: Yeah. No, she did that until, until she got married. Yes.

MN: And what was this something that, what, what did her s— kind of work did her sisters do?

PP: They worked, they did a similar, in fact, back then everybody worked for white people in their homes cleaning. But then at some point, my parents moved to Chicago and so did my aunts. And when they moved to Chicago, I know some of them worked for the Campbell Soup Company. Right.

MN: They got factory jobs.

PP: Right. They got factory jobs.

MN: Now, what level of education did your aunts have?

PP: About the same… They weren't…

MN: So, no one was a high school graduate.

PP: No, no, none of them were high school graduates

MN: And, and, and most of them didn't graduate elementary school.

PP: I would say yes.

MN: So again, I just want to put this on record that you had the whole family of girls who basically quit school and elementary school to do domestic work in the homes of white families.

PP: Right now, the oldest sister and her name was Hadie. She moved to Chicago and she, I think she was the first to go to Chicago. She was quite a bit older than my mom. And, she ended up with a lot of children. She was never able to have children, but she was a family member who would adopt children of other family members who were having problems, and every single child that she raised graduated college.

MN: Wow. Now, did some of your aunts have children out of wedlock? Was that something that happened?

PP: You know what's interesting is, my mother's sister who I used to visit on the weekends regularly, who lived in Washington Heights. She had five children and the four oldest children were by the same man whom she always used his name and it was presumed that they were married and, and they never were.

MN: Now, to, to, to, to segue back to the Patterson houses. You also mentioned how important the numbers were in the Patterson houses. Could you elaborate on that?

PP: Oh yeah. The numbers, that was, that was a culture in, in the Patterson. I mean, there were people in the Patterson who actually ran numbers, but we bought it the Italian neighborhood. So, I mean, you only had to walk two blocks, and there was an, an Italian-run bar where they would be in there, you know, taking numbers. And then in later years, there was a candy store next to the bar where you could go and play numbers, and then you could walk any place up Morris Avenue between the Patterson Houses and the Melrose and you would see number spots.

MN: So they were all over. Now, did you have anybody who went door to door?

PP: Oh, yes. Yes. But usually the the people who, well, if somebody has already mentioned the Clays they would go door to door. But there were a couple of people outside of, who didn't live in the Patterson. I think they lived in a neighborhood but not in the Patterson who would come around and collect the numbers.

MN: Now, this was all a very non-violent enterprise that there was never…

PP: Yeah, I mean, you know, people played numbers, they hit, they got paid, I never knew about any violence associated with it.

MN: And there was a generally good-natured attitude about the whole thing.

PP: Because I, I, I'm smiling because I was thinking about one number runner in particular. I don't even remember what his name was. I think it may have been John, but he was like, you know, he was like a great big teddy bear. He was just, you know, like, always in good spirits and always joking and, and I can remember the time and they would play numbers for like, for three cents, for a nickel, you know, and I can remember one time that I gave my mother a number. Actually,, I played the number, I'll never forget it was, "092." And I hit that number for 15 cents. Ok. I must have been nine. I had the number for 15 cents and, when the number runner came and paid my mother, my mother gave the money to my aunt to take me shopping out in Jersey. And, so we took my money and my aunt's, because they had a car, they, she and her husband took me shopping out in Jersey and I bought my school clothes.

MN: Wow. Now, did many people in the Patterson have cars or that was a fairly unusual thing?

PP: No, I think, you know, when we were early in the Patterson years, a lot of people had cars and, and they had parking on the grounds. Yeah, a lot of people had cars back in the early days.

MN: Now, you also mentioned that the numbers business helped give your mother a source of income.

PP: Right. That's right. we had some number runners in the, in the Patterson and, my mom didn't have an education and when, when my father died in 1957, we pretty much lived off of, of the Social Security, which wasn't a whole lot of money, but in order to supplement our income, mom used to take in ironing and, the people who ran numbers, you know, had the, had the money. So they would often bring their clothes to my mother for her to iron and she would iron them and then they would pick them up.

MN: Now, numbers was, was, was a completely part of the culture accepted, not stigmatized at all. What, what about pimping and prostitution? Was that something visible or was that something that wasn't there in the early days.

PP: It wasn't visible to me.

MN: So that wasn't something, you know, there was nobody there who would be dressed up like, you know, so that wasn't part of your childhood experience at all. Now, on another subject, you know, we were, we were talking about the, which was a greater percentage of the original group, the people who moved up and out or the people who, who, who got stuck and remained.

PP: I think the greater percentage of the original group were people who moved up and out.

MN: And you had also said that by the late sixties there, you, you there were a lot of people in

Patterson who had moved in,

PP: In a bad situation.

MN: In bad situations. Whereas the first group that came in were, you know, they were two-parent families, you know, with a strong work ethic. But by the late sixties, the balance had changed, right?

PP: By the late sixties, I was starting to notice people moving in with lots of children with no partner. And oftentimes, some of those children were already strung out on drugs.

MN: And you would also mentioned, you know, that you at that time was circulating a petition for a tenant patrol?

PP: Right. That's right. I can't remember the specific incident or the series of incidents that prompted me to decide to do that. But I put together a petition for our neighbors to sign to try to force the housing authority to place security personnel in our buildings at night. And, like I said, I don't remember what prompted it, but, and I ended up, I, I actually submitted it and they didn't do anything about it. So what we ended up doing is starting, like a tenant watch in the evening, that went on for, you know, a little while but you know how that type of thing is. And if you don't have somebody who's gonna manage it all the time, then it just kind of fizzles out and that's what happened.

MN: Now, you also mentioned that at a certain point, you began to feel that the housing, the high-rise housing project was not working with the population that had come to be concentrated. When was the point when you began to sort of think that way?

PP: I think it was around the same time, when I put the petition together because my feeling was that in a situation like the projects… Now, let's take the Patterson projects in particular, we had two types of buildings, there was a six-story building and a 13-story building and the, and the buildings were even piled on top of each other. And my feeling was that okay… Let's say that one, let's say that two people in a building, two children in a building start to experiment with drugs. Now, they live in a building that's 13 stories high. There are all these apartments, there are all these other children in the building, they're friends with these children. Now they start to experiment with drugs unless the other children in their group are extremely strong for whatever reason, whether it's, you know, because of their parents or what the situation is, the likelihood of them not joining their friends is slim. So my feeling was that because the projects were so compact that it provided an environment for problems to spread rapidly.

MN: It almost seems like a contagion effect.

PP: Exactly. And that was, that was what it felt like. It felt like when drugs came in that it just became a contagious disease.

MN: So in other words, when drugs come in before, you know, it, it has epidemic proportions. Teen pregnancy comes in, it has epidemic proportions and then before you know, it, you have an environment that's totally different—

PP: That's right.

MN: From what it was. Now, was this also reflected in vandalism of the physical space and, you know, kind of change in the atmosphere in the hallways and the elevators.

PP: Absolutely. Absolutely. Because, well, there were all kinds of nasty things happening, you know, when people got strung out on drugs, they'd be throwing up all over the place and, and it was just, it, it created an unclean environment. But over and above that, when people are high, they do things that they might not ordinarily do, you know? So, graffiti became a problem and breaking into mailboxes for people's checks and so on and so forth. It, it was, it was a serious problem. It was a serious problem, but by the late sixties it was a serious problem.

MN: What, what was the condition of the grounds that, that also was that also affected or did it remain pretty clean and well kept?

PP: Well, I mean, you know, they had, the one good thing about the projects is that they did have a whole maintenance crew. Okay. But, when people spend most of their time on the street, the streets are gonna be dirty. You know, it's not like they can't keep up with all of it, but it did, it started to not be as nice as it used to be. But the other thing is that people also didn't respect the grounds like they did back in the early days, like one of the rules in the project was that you weren't supposed to walk in the grass. Okay. By the late sixties, people didn't follow rules, you know, they just kind of did what they did.

MN: Now, were you, were you also then feeling this is a place I want to leave?

PP: Oh, yeah, I, I mean, I can, I can remember feeling that from, let's say from when I first went to junior high school, I had a plan.

MN: Ok. So, so this is like the early sixties, you're saying my plan is to do Xy and Z and leave.

PP: That's right. That's right.

MN: And do you think that was a fairly common sentiment among your peers? Like we're part of

a group that is going to leave this behind? Do you think this was something…

PP: We never talked about it.

MN: Oh you never talked about it?

PP: We never talked about it. But, it was definitely my goal.

MN: And was this because you had, had always had a plan or because you saw things around you that made you think this is going down?

PP: But you know what I think I was in a, maybe I was in a little bit of a different situation for most of the people that I grew up with. See, I, teachers always liked me. Okay. So they kind of took me under their wing for an example. I told you about Mrs Daly, how we used to go to her apartment. And, and so then, there was another teacher, a young Jewish woman that I had occasion to work with. When I was in the 10th grade. I had just gone to high school the following summer. Right. I was working for the Youth Corps, and they assigned me to a vacation day camp in an elementary school up on University Avenue. And one of the teachers in that program was a young Jewish woman who had recently been married, and she took myself and another student under her wing. And, she took us to her apartment which was on the Grand Concourse and, you know, to show us her apartment and, and, and she had decorated how she had decorated it and create and designed the tiles in the kitchen and so on and so forth. And I was looking around that apartment and I'm like, this is how I'm supposed to live. Okay. And, she showed us her husband's closet where he had about a zillion suits. He was a, salesman. He had about a zillion suits and, like, yeah. And you know what, when I got married, my first living room was in the same colors as her living room: black and white, black, white and red. Yeah. And, and my bedroom too. Green carpet bedroom. Yeah. And I, I never, I never forgot that.

MN: Did the civil rights movement and all the things going on nationally have a big effect on you when you were, you know, in junior high and high school, were you, was that something you were aware of?

PP: Not to the extent that I should have been, I, I didn't really, I didn't really participate.

MN: Was it much part of the sort of atmosphere in, in the community or?

PP: I… I don't think so. I really don't think so. I'm, I'm trying to remember, let's see, in my late teens, I remember that a number of people started to get involved in the Black Panther movement and they would have meetings and I would go to the meetings, you know, just, but I wasn't, I was, like, shallow. I, to be honest, seriously, I was shallow. I really wasn't involved with

anything. And that was another thing that tracking, I think that, that tracking contributed to that, you know, because I came along thinking, well, for one thing, there's so much to talk about. One of the things is that my mother had always thought that I was the most wonderful child in the world. I mean, she didn't, she was married for 10 years before she ever had a child and then her husband died and that was all she had. So she thought it was the most wonderful thing in the world. Okay? And then in school they, they, they had me thinking that I was smart and my mother thought I was cute and smart and in school they had me thinking I was smart and, you know, I, that really worked to my disadvantage. I think, for many years, it was only after I was married that I understood that I wasn't what I thought I was.

MN: Yeah. So you were, you know, clearly, very, very attractive and guys were interested in you and, you know, you got a lot of approval at home. And so…

PP: and so I thought that I was the best that I could be and it wasn't until I got married and my husband used to what I, at the time I thought that he was being verbally abusive. In reality, he was shaking me into reality and it was only since I've been divorced or just before I got divorced, which was about 10 years ago that I came to understand that I had grown up my whole life being shallow, relying on my books and what other people thought about me.

MN: Interesting.

PP: And I mean, that was just such, that was just such a wonderful revelation when I discovered that. And 10 years ago, my whole life changed. I, I wasn't who I am, 10 years ago.

MN: That's an extraordinary story in itself.

PP: I wasn't who I am 10 years ago. My kids, my kids, attest to that.

MN: How many kids do you have?

PP: I have two.

MN: You have two, both daughters?

PP: No, I have a boy. My son is 30. He'll be 31 this year and my daughter is, she'll be 27 in a couple of weeks.

MN: Where did you meet your husband?

PP: At a mutual friend's birthday… Not birthday party. She had a Christmas party. She was, I

used to work with her at “Harper and Roe” Publishers, and she had a Christmas party. the Christmas of 1971. Yeah, that way. And, my husband was there and we met, and we hooked up, and we got married about 11 months later, and then I had my son 11 months later.

MN: Wow. Do you think that was something that was unusual in your cohort. Do you think there are a lot, there were a lot of people who maybe could have done more, or was this something…

PP: Yes, I do. I do. And, and the thing is I see it all the time now I see kids students that I work with or children that I used to see in elementary schools that I worked in. I see the same thing happening to them that they don't know that they have brains that can help them and help... They can, they can be helpful if they use their brains that they could further their situations a lot better than what they're doing. And it's, I don't even know how, you know, I often think, well, if I didn't go through that, what, what would have, where would I be now? But having gone through that, I just feel that I'm so much further ahead. Unfortunately, I think I'm so much further ahead of a lot of people that I know because they, they haven't walked in those shoes, you know, and sometimes I just feel, I feel like, like something's wrong with me because of the way I see the world, you know, which again is very different from the way it was 10 years ago. So, I was thinking about this, well, over the past few days I was saying, well, you know, if somebody asked me, would I have changed it I have to say no, I have to say no because I needed to do that in order to be where I am. And I'm, I'm happy with where I am. I'm happy, I'm happy with who I became.

MN: So, hey, you can't, you can't ask for anything more than that. In, in looking back on this whole Patterson experience. Do you feel you were lucky to be there at that time or, or more ambivalent?

PP: No, I feel that I was lucky to be there at that time. Like I said, you know, I feel that I needed to, to do that in order to be where I am. And at that time growing up, the Patterson wasn't bad. It wasn't that bad. I have to say that there were, as a little girl, even before my father died, kids would bother me. They would tease me. Kids…I guess…

MN: Were you teased for being smart?

PP: Let me see now. I don't think that was it because I would be bothered by boys who were in my class. So I, I don't, no, I don't, I wouldn't say that I was teased for being smart. The thing is that I had two parents. Ok. My father always worked. I can remember at the beginning of each school season that my mother would take me shopping for my clothes for the whole season. Ok. So I always had nice clothes. I had a nice place to live. And, there were some children who were just jealous of that.

MN: And these were kids from outside, the Patterson or inside or both?

PP: Both. And so they would bother me, just bother me in school and threaten to hurt me on my way home. And, you know, like the teacher, what could the teacher do? So I can specifically remember one night, waiting up until my father got home and I was telling him that I wanted to move and I must have been, let me say I was in, I must have been about maybe in the first grade, then, maybe in the first grade. And I remember him trying to calm me down and having my mother take me to school and so on and so on. Because obviously we couldn't just get up and move because I had a bad day. But yeah, so outside of those little, you know, situations, which happened, I'd say I can remember at least two or three of those situations in my early years. growing up in the projects wasn't bad, you know, again until, you know, like the late sixties… started to occur.

MN: Now, you know, going, going back again on this issue, you know, then and now, do you think that we as a society can do better for our kids than we're doing or are we sort of, you know, stuck in a place where you know, just the world economy and everything else is, you know, this isn't gonna get any better.

PP: See, I think we can… My problem is, I don't know exactly how, but I do, I think that not only can we, I think we have to, we have to because at the rate we're going, if we don't do better for our kids… I mean, if you look at where we are now, just think what it's gonna be like if it continues to spiral down. That, that's how I look at it. And, I don't know how to bring about mass change, but all I know is that, you know, I do whatever I can do in my little, in my little world to try to help as many people as I can.

MN: Now, do your students ever when they get to know you talk about these things, talk about families bringing up kids, you know, life in general. You know, in other words, going beyond the, the strictly school stuff.

PP: Yeah. Some of them, some of them do and, and sometimes I like to share a lot with them because they, they don't have a clue. They really don't have a clue about what's out there because they haven't been exposed. So whenever possible, I try to share with them to just give them another perspective about what for an example. Just this week, a few of my present students or past students approached me about the fact that they don't have jobs and could I help them to find a job? So I asked them, you know, did you check the Sunday Times? Because I had checked the Times and I knew there were lots of jobs and so they hadn't. Okay. So I'm like, well, okay, well, what have you been doing? All right. I've been, I went online, I sent those resumes, da, da, da, da, fine. So, this is not something that's foreign to me because I think about this all the time with respect to them. I mean, what's the point of all of this if you can't get out graduate and get yourself a good job? So, I came up with a plan for a workshop where I'm going to teach them how to fish, so to speak. Ok? And what I'm gonna do is teach them skills that they can use that

will allow them to never have to ask anybody to help them find a child care. Ok. So this is like on a small scale, but this is something I can do. Ok. So, I ran it past my boss because I thought it would be a good thing to do it through our department so that when they do find jobs that, you know, it shows that we're helping out our department. So my boss felt that career services might, you know, be offended. But, so she asked me to write it up and, we'll get approvals for it and I intend to do it on next Sunday a week from this Sunday. But so I, I can do what I can do, but I think that I'm only going to help, I'm only going to help the future by being able to help the people who are exposed to me now.

MN: That makes a lot of sense. But, you know, there's not much else you can do. Is there anything else that you haven't said that you want to say? I mean, because this is, you know, like your show, and, you know, we put everything here. This is…

PP: I can't think of anything else right off the top of my head right now.

MN: Well, one of the things is I get just going back to this thing, the peer pressure, you know, you had mentioned that you saw people who really, you thought were, could have really done well who succumbed to peer pressure. Yeah. And how did that operate? Was it mostly with the drugs or it was other things also?

PP: I think a combination of both, a combination of both. I remember young girls who were ahead of me but on the same track who, you know, ended up getting pregnant and throwing their lives away, you know, ended up working instead of going to college and that kind of stuff… But the drugs… That stole a lot of lives, a lot of lives and, okay, I don't know. I, I can't understand it. I can't understand it. I think about guys who, you know, thought that drugs were horrible and that they, you know, they knew the same things that we knew about drugs and now these guys are dead from overdoses, you know, and, and it's like we used to be in the same crowd. We used to talk about it. I can remember one of them saying, you know, they need to, to, to fly a plane over here and just drop a bomb on, on the drug clusters. And what five years later, he OD's!

MN: And you could, you could see the drug clusters. In other words, there was a, you, you, you knew that there were these specific places where the drug, the junkies hung out and, and do that. And this is in this mid, mid and late sixties when you began to notice. And what about the adult men in the projects that the date was by that time the adult men weren't there because the families, the two parent families had moved out.

PP: But, you know, even when the men were there and the two parent families, they weren't that visible, I guess they were working, you know, and, and then when they weren't working, they were probably, you know, in the house resting, but they were, there wasn't a presence of the fathers, the mothers, you know, they would like, you know, come out and sit…

MN: So the fathers were not out controlling the, you know, the neighborhood?

PP: Mhm. the mothers would be out sitting on the bench as well with the kids and stuff. But there wasn't that much of a presence, I mean, you knew people who had fathers, but there wasn't that much of a presence.

MN: Now, did Vietnam take guys out of commission? Was that something you were aware of?

PP: You know, I think that Vietnam sent us back a lot of junkies. That, that is one of the things that I think stands out about that. when you say take a lot of guys…?

MN: That's what I mean, not necessarily being killed but coming back, not able to really, you know, enter families or function.

PP: Right? Yeah, I think it did. I think it did.

MN: Ok. Well, well, thank you very much. This was fantastic.

PP: It was my pleasure.