

INTERVIEWEE: Oliver Gross

INTERVIEWER: Claudia Dimanche and Perette Turenne

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Dimanche: Can you please spell your first and last name?

Gross: My name is Oliver Gross. O-L-I-V-E-R G-R-O-S-S.

D: I'll be interviewing you for about fifteen to twenty minutes probably, or maybe less.

My name is Claudia Dimanche.

Turenne: And I'm Perette Turenne.

D: And I'm at Turner Tech right now on March 22, 2002 to interview Mr.--

G: Oliver Gross.

D: Mr. Oliver Gross about his personal life--

G: [laughs]

T: --during the Civil Rights Movement.

D: Yes. [chuckles]

G: Everybody seems to want to know about the Civil Rights movement. I guess most of you young people that have-- don't have an idea at all about civil rights- the rights that you have as being a citizen of these United States, things that you are entitled to providing you be a (cognitive of the fact?). See, you say 'civil rights', you can't have civil rights when you are doing a lot of the things that you shouldn't do. See, you robbing and

thieving and selling drugs and killing people, shooting people, destroying neighborhoods, and doing-- and hanging in the street at night and getting drunk, see that don't give you these kinds of things. They give you that because you are being helpful to your community, you are doing things in your community, you doing (?) in your city, you try to do things that will affect other young peoples in other parts of the country, you see? It's just that simple and like I said, during that time the things that you can do and go and be with now, I didn't have the opportunity. I lived in a segregated era where I lived in an area where there were only certain things that I could do. Certain places I could live, visit, what have you. And take, for instance, when we-- I lived in Coconut Grove- we lived in Coconut Grove- we didn't live in all of Coconut Grove. People who lived in Miami lived in Overtown, downtown Miami, not the whole city of Miami. There are places in Dade County, take for instance the-- Liberty City. Liberty City has always been Northwest Sixty-Second Street and Seventy-First Street, north and south, east and west fifteen-- Twelfth Avenue, Fifteenth Avenue, okay? That's Liberty City. Fifteenth Avenue was a sprawling community that had nightclubs, theaters, barber shops, beauty parlors, whatever-- restaurants, whatever it was you needed, they had the restaurants in all these areas. There on Twelfth Avenue there are some (retainments?) now of a wall, you can see it. Blacks were not allowed- what northwest it is- that was not a place where blacks lived or visited. They had a wall to keep you out of there. That wall ran from Seventy-First Street to Sixty-Second Street and Coconut Grove, Grand Avenue, well, Thomas Avenue, Florida Avenue, Grand, Charles Avenue, well, you know. But Overtown, four theaters- magnificent theaters, places for kids to entertain and enjoy themselves, restaurants, the

Mary Elizabeth Hotel, one of the finest hotels they ever had in Miami at that time- the Mary Elizabeth. The Sawyer family owned it and operated it.

T: Do you remember what high school you attended?

G: Yeah!

T: Was it segregated, like what was it about?

G: It was segregated. We all had segregated high schools. There was only three high schools here in Miami.

T: Which high schools?

G: Three high schools for blacks: Carver High School in Coconut Grove, Booker T. Washington Overtown, Dorsey High School where Dorsey Skill Center is now, that was a high school. Those are the three high schools. There were three black-- three white high schools: Miami High, Edison, and Jackson.

T: Which one did you attend?

G: Carver High School.

T: So, what was it like at that high school, the teachers, the students, everything?

G: Well, there they had first through twelfth grade, you entered there in first grade and you stayed until you finished.

T: [chuckles] That's a long time.

G: Yeah. See, you have middle school and elementary school. Overtown they had Phillis Wheatley and Dunbar, they had two elementary schools to my recollection they had two elementary schools Overtown and they left those elementary schools and they went to Booker T. Washington, you know?

D: In your opinion, can you tell me what did you think when the schools were being integrated together?

G: Well, the integration has not really done anything for us, hasn't done a thing.

T: Why do you say that?

G: It has not played out because the very same thing that we're talking about now has not happened. See, when it-- those schools we had-- I'm not saying that the teachers here at Turner Tech or some other white kid-- teachers don't appreciate blacks, but we had black teachers who understood blacks, we had kids who went to school. See, you gotta go to school. We had kids who-- you gotta go to school. (Kids out there playing?) hooky, you know what I'm saying? Hooky don't go to school, they get on the school bus and get off the school bus-- I never rode a school bus. I never rode a school bus.

T: You walked?

G: I walked to school. And when I was in high school, the kids that came from Goulds, from Perrine and they would come to Carver- to high school- on the bus. They by-passed all the other schools to come to Carver because you couldn't go to no other schools in high school but Carver, Booker Washington, and Dorsey.

T: Did you live far away from your school? Like, was it long distance walk?

G: Well, when I was a young boy, I'd walk five miles. That's when we lived in the country. See, my daddy was a sharecropper, we lived in the country back in a little town called Stapleton, Georgia- southwest Georgia, I guess its five miles from Wrens, forty-two miles from Augusta, nine miles from Louisville, Georgia. It's (in the country?)-- my daddy was a sharecropper and being a sharecropper- farming with someone who owns the property- you farm the land and you share in the profit. But we had to leave because

my father and the lady who owned the farm had a misunderstanding, a disagreement about the amount of money that came to him. And during those times, you didn't talk back to white women and he did. And that night about ten, eleven, I guess, the Ku Klux Klan showed up at my daddy's house and they were people who everybody feared, the Ku Klux Klan, because they was killing blacks, hanging blacks, doing-- raping they-- killing women, they doing everything. They were the most atrocious kind a group of people you ever could run against, the Ku Klux Klan, feared all over the South, some northern people, you know? We got away from that, my daddy went into the Navy, he got out of the Navy, we moved to Miami in '43. I entered school in '43. I was way behind because we had sharecropped. Because my (half a?) cousin who finished college in '51, that's the same year I finished high school, four years before me she finished college. I had missed all this school all the time, and I was twenty-one years old when I finished high school.

D: I'm sorry, can you just stop for a second because [inaudible]

G: [school bell ringing] -- minority, there's-- when you speak in terms of minorities, there's a little of this and a little of that. If you got twenty-five hundred students here at Turner Tech and you got 300 blacks then they are the minority, they're not the majority. You understand what I'm saying? They say, well, like they say Liberty City-- Opa-locka. They say Opa-locka. All of these places ain't Opa-locka. All these places: Opa-locka, Opa-locka, Opa-locka, it's not Opa-locka. Opa-locka (is?) Opa-locka.

T: Alright, so, can you please describe anything else about your family, your grandparents, like, were they racist towards white people, and everything?

G: Racist? See, there-- [chuckles] When we talk about racism, see, we lived in an era when you had to respect and you wasn't allowed to do certain things. It was a no-no to do this or do that. You knew what your place were and you knew what it was you could do. We didn't live with white folks, we didn't go to school with white people, we didn't ride on the bus with white people, we didn't do anything with white people, period. We wasn't in the same jail, we wasn't in the same school. When I went to school at Florida A&M-- well, my grand-daddy, he was a farmer and my daddy was a farmer, we lived on farmers, my uncles and them were farmers, too. And that in itself didn't work out and they got away and my daddy went to Fort Myers working Lee County packing-house and crating oranges and things, my other uncle worked at a fish market, and my mother did house work for white people, you know? And I was going to a black school- a colored school, they didn't say 'black', they said 'colored', they was talking about colored, they called you 'colored', that's alright, 'colored school'- and they had white-- you go to the stores and you couldn't try on clothes. See, now you go down to the different stores and try on clothes, try on shoes, (?), put on the cosmetics, put cologne and stuff on you and sell clothes, and just like nothing happened. But see, during that time when your grand-mama came along, or your great-grandma, it didn't happen, they couldn't try on clothes, they go downtown, they had to put an overdress on- put a dress on top of a gown a robe that you could this dress on you. The other dress couldn't touch your skin. You couldn't put a hat on you. I go down and put on a hat, (check?) lipstick, you couldn't do that. Put on that there-- and they dress you all up and put cologne on you spray cologne on you now. See, now you in a position now where you can really do a lot of things for yourself. (You can't let it fold and let it get by??). You gotta make the most of it. Not only just working the store, you

got desires, have some fella who wants to own a store, own a service station, own an apartment building, own a hotel. See, you in a period now of advantageous life-- in your life you can own almost anything that you wanna do now. You can make a tremendous amount of money now and do a lot of things with it. But you go out and buy pretty cars and-- you buy a lot of stuff that's unnecessary, they ain't gonna do you no good. Ain't no sense you buying a pretty car and can't sell it. What you paid for it? How about a home? You buy a home now for \$300,000 you should be able to get \$400,000 for it. These fellas, you see the athletes, they buy they home for twelve million, they sell it for four million because nobody gonna buy it. They make a hund-- a hundred million dollars, what they own? Nothing in Miami they own. They own hotels? They own any restaurants? Own any nightclubs? Four or five service stations? They own a bank? They're president of a bank? A loaning institution? No! They making that money it's not doing them any good. Then they try to live in a different world, and they world is still the same. The world is still the same. It hasn't changed. If you a football players, football players, basketball players, (you need you?) that's fine, but you needs you a doctor, we need doctors, we need lawyers, (entrepreneurs?) we need young womens who are going out working and making a life of yourself, you can't do it with three or four kids. You can't do it with three or four kids. It's hard enough (?) one. There's nothing wrong with having kids but ain't no sense in having kids and having them out there (?) up and down the road, on the bus, and standing on the corner in the sun. You say, "Well, white people do it", but I ain't talking about them, I (talking?) to you, what you owe yourself because your life ain't gonna improve none no more than what you make it.

T: Were you here during the Liberty City riots?

G: Yeah, McDuffie? Yeah, I was here. [laughs]

T: Can you describe it?

G: Well, I was working at Pan Am at that time and it got so bad, Twenty-Seventh Avenue and Twenty-Second Avenue had a lot of whites that lived north and they was trying to figure out a way how they could get from Pan Am on LeJeune Road, home. So we would get in the car with them, and ride to maybe Seventy-First Street [school bell rings] and Twenty-Seventh Avenue-- or Twenty-Second Avenue and get out. Because see, a long time ago, Twenty-Second Avenue had not always gone all the way through to Opa-locka. It stopped at 135th Street, you had to turn and go to Twenty-Seventh Avenue, it didn't go all the way through. See, Seventeenth Avenue is through there now but Twenty-Second Avenue, you could go that far, it stopped. And see during that time, long time ago, there was no beaches for us. Virginia Beach was the only beach we had. And before that, there was none, we would go to Twenty-Second Avenue. You ain't been by Twenty-Second Avenue in Opa-locka there?

T: Yeah.

G: That-- you know where that bridge is? There's a bridge. You know Rainbow Park is down there, that bridge. Twenty-Second Avenue there's a bridge there then Opa-locka-- that park there, Bunche Park?

T: Yeah, I know what you're talking about.

G: Well, Bunche Park was a center: it had a doctor's office, had a movie theater there, had a beauty parlor there, they had a fish market, it was a center where you could shop, and they built a pool (in the park?) what's good? Nothing. We used to swim in that canal, we used to swim in the canal because there was no place else for us to swim until they

built Virginia Beach and then they had a ferry going over there. See, where we lived-- we as a race of people, we have struggled, it has really been a struggle. I don't know if anybody else could have endured the things that we endured during our lifetime and still standing upright to a certain position. So that's why you young peoples gonna have to make your life means a whole lot, because there are so many people that sacrificed for you to be where you are. You don't realize where you are now, the things that you can do, the money you can make, the places you can live, the place you can visit and travel. See, we-- I couldn't do that, my parent's couldn't do that. We couldn't live anyplace, you can live practically any place you wanna live now, if you got the money, you might pay a little more, but you can live there. And you gotta understand one thing: any one of the two of you young ladies, if you get married and you have a child, make sure that you live someplace where that child can get along with the other kids in the neighborhood because if you don't, it's chaos. See, you can endure. See, the lady or man don't talk to you, it's alright, "I got a job, I'm working, I'm going to my office, I'm going to work." But what's gonna happen to the young boy who can't play with the young boy in the neighborhood. They don't wanna play with him, he ain't got nobody to play with, see? So, that means you gotta start building neighborhoods where we all can live to a certain degree. You making that money, build some homes, build some apartments, build some hotels, build some motels, build some medical center, go to nursing school, go to dental school, be teachers, be lawyers, be whatever it is. We need all that like everybody else. Everybody else got doctors, law-- we need it, too. You don't think we don't need some black lawyers or black (?) teachers? No dentists? Policemen? Firemen? We need everything like everybody else need. But you gotta learn to live together. Ain't no (sitting off the side?)

yourself away from people and saying, "That girl and that boy-- because I don't like that boy, that girl," Who is that girl, who is that boy? Somebody slap you around and beat you up and you come to school the next day and say, "Mr. Gross, I got beat up by that boy." "What boy?" "You know that boy who wear the dreads." You ain't told-- you haven't told me anything, have you? You don't know his name. "That boy kissed me and (?)" Who is that? "I don't know", "That boy put his hand on that boy." No, I need a name. You need to learn people's names. It's important to know peoples names. You can't tell nothing about nobody unless you got a name. In the riot itself, they destroyed the area that they lived in. They burned down the places where they lived. They didn't go Biscayne Boulevard, they didn't go to Miami Beach and destroy them hotels and motels and burn them stores downtown. They burned them stores here in the neighborhood. They say, "Well they cheated us." Well, if the man is cheating you, don't go to his store and shop. Just that simple. You don't have to go to a store--if you figure he's cheating you, don't go to his store. Eventually, he gonna do better or he gonna go out of business. But you flock there and give all your money. These kids come out of school, the man be over there selling ice cream. They won't buy ice cream here, they buy it from the truck. They won't eat in the cafeteria, they on or go out here-- down here somewhere and buy something where that boy is standing there ain't been to school in ten years with his fake gold on and all this gold in his mouth and drug money in their pocket? How long is that gonna last? It ain't gonna last forever. They're gonna either go to jail for life or they gonna get killed, sooner or later. And their mother says, "I don't know, my son, he's a good boy, he doesn't do anything wrong. He's got a Mercedes Benz, he (ain't?) working, he got all these TVs and CDs in there, and all these clothes, and hundred-and-something

dollar tennies and, she got a car--" You crazy? You want me to believe that he's doing all this and you don't know? He ain't got no job, he ain't got no business. Where he make-- where all this money coming from? (He all with?) dreadlock, pants hanging all down his behind, and everybody-- everybody got the pants hanging on the behind don't look like everybody else. Everybody got dreadlocks don't look-- (that guy?) got nice hairs, you know, bring it our sometime, comb it out sometime and put some lipstick and some-- and fix yourself up. Guys: "Who is that?" They don't recognize you sometimes. Because, like, a lot of boys, you know, they think-- I'm just talking about in general, all boys think they got girlfriends, they can't handle the fact-- if you know a young man, and you tell her about him and she says to him, "Hello, how are you, how you doing?" "Oh, man. She crazy about me, boy, she just talking to me--" and she only said hello and how are you doing because you told her he was a nice young fella, that's all. But that riot didn't (prove?). We had a lot of riots. And I worked for Pan Am, they had segregation. I would clean toilets, I'd clean restrooms, I'd clean the cafeteria, but they still had that 'Colored' here, and 'White' there. When I went and finished high school, I went to Carver High School - went to FAMU. White girls at FSU, white boys in University of Florida. See, there were no white boys there at FSU; that was a school for white girls. Oh yeah, FSU was a school for white girls, up until 1953 there was no boys there. See, (you?) say, "What?" Yeah. They had no football team, no baseball team, no basketball team, they had nothing. And that stadium that they use, that was FAMU's stadium, we played most of our games in Doak Campbell Stadium. And FAMU became a university and they had segregation downtown in Tallahassee. I never walked no further than the railroad station, because you couldn't go up to Tennessee-- you been to Tallahassee?

D: No.

G: Well, Tennessee Street is where the school is and we would never went that way, we walked away from there, down the hills, Adams, south Monroe, and up across Twenty-Seven, downtown to Frenchtown. The restaurant was segregated, McCrory's and all them places, (?) no eating places we could eat just like here, no place to eat, and like I was telling the other interviewer, some of these fellas I asked them, "I wonder why you think Burdines never moved." All the Burdines seem to move, they close it down, they go someplace. (One Hundred and Sixtieth Street?) down off south Dade, did you ever notice?

D: Yeah.

G: Burdines downtown has always been right on Flagler and Miami Avenue, right?

T: Yeah.

G: Because that land that it sits on own-- was owned by a blacks- the Stirrup family in Coconut Grove, a pioneer family in Coconut Grove. Stirrup owned that land where Burdines is. They had a 199 year something lease on there. Yeah, and it's right there. There's a few of the Stirrups still living, they get the moneys-- you know, they have the lease and what have you but, there's a lot of homes and things and a lot of teachers here, and peoples who wanna do skills center, Dorsey Skill Center now, Miami Skill Center, you gonna get that certificate, what-- you in TV production?

D: Yes, I'm in TV.

G: Mr. Peterson.

D&T: [speak together] No, Mr. (Garner?)

G: Oh, Mr. Garner(?). You know Mr. Peterson?

T: Yes.

D: Um, we're gonna be going to Mr. Peterson next year.

G: Yeah, okay, well he's a nice-- I've known him-- his mother, they lived in (?)-- in Bunche Park, I've known him. [pauses] But, yeah, you wanna ask me something and I'm gonna get to it. I'm just talking and ya'll need to ask me something else you wanna know. I don't know what it is you want--

D: [laughs]

G: --wanna tell you. Like I said, back to McDuffie riot and they destroyed all the buildings and things where they lived. And they had to be rebuilding. When you talking about rebuilding, where's the money gonna come from? How much change there'll come about with the young people? Are they not-- you know, a lot of drugs now, you gonna find people laying in the streets. When I was a young boy, they didn't have people in the street-- sleeping in the street, that was unheard of. We had a little jail Overtown on Eleventh Terrace where blacks were put (blacks and then?) they-- peoples only chain-ganged (?) white people. They went out and sickled the grass and stuff. And the treatment got so bad- it was inhumane treatment- so the law passed that they was treating them inhumane so they changed the law. So, what good it did? They changed the law where you be-- supposed to being nice to the prisoner, right? That's why they got all the blacks in jail now, they in jail. You go downtown to jail it's full of them. Girls in jail. They say, "Well, I can't get this, I can't get that." Wants and needs are two different things. What you want and what you need. If you need something, you need it for survival, for food, for clothing, for (sleeping?) Want: "I want a Cadillac." You don't need one. "I want a Mercedes Benz." I don't-- I want one, but maybe I don't need one. You need a life where

you can-- a house and lay down in room in a bed and sleep. See they: "Well, there's no air-conditioning here." Well, it ain't always been air-conditioning. Always opened the windows. See, like I said, when I was a young boy my mama and them, we never-- in my neighborhood- we lived in Coconut Grove- we never locked the door. I never had a key. I never had a key to my mama house. Never had a key because I didn't need one because I leave in the morning and go to school, when she left go to work, she just shut the door. I come on there through and open the door, never locked, never was locked. Go to church on Sunday, never locked the house. Never locked-- my dad never locked his car, he just shut the door because people- blacks- didn't take peoples cars. They didn't break into peoples houses. Now they breaking into house-- (house breakers and them because?) these people selling drugs, got tremendous amount of money, they got all these CDs and all these computers, they got everything in there, girls got all these clothes- hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of clothes- and boys got all-- and they, you know, they break in and they get all this stuff and take it. See (? then), it wasn't there. And it come about when- jealousy- when you have something that someone else don't have. You could have the very same thing, too if you working for it. "Some girl she think she better than me." You study-- you go home in the afternoon and study. That's why they got y'all to interview me, because ya'll get your lesson. You don't get your lesson-- you don't see me talking to somebody who ain't get no lesson. (?) in this room-- in the room trying to do something that's different, now. See? You gotta stay ahead of the game. You never better nobody, but you gotta stay ahead of the game. You gotta make them understand that I'm studying because I wanna get ahead. If you and I can help one another, fine. But see, like I said, that riot- McDuffie riot- and the police, they still whooping peoples and beating

people. They'll beat us. They beat us, they don't beat everybody. See, police stops you, you gotta be preventive: "Yes, officer." What he saying? "Yes, officer, can I help you? What have I done wrong?" "Oh, you think you a smart 'n'- so and so." "Uh, is there anything else I can help you with officer?" You gotta talk. See, you gotta get yourself out of the situation. During the time that you're talking, you need to see the name, the badge number, the car number, and the time of day or night. When you go to court, the first thing the judge asks you, "Do you recognize this man?" "Yes, your honor." "What it the name?" "Sam," "Tom," "David," so-and-so, Officer whatever. "Do you know anything else about his badge number," so-and-so-and-so, "His unit he was riding in?" "It was nine o'clock at night." Now you observant so now the judge and everybody in the courtroom, "Hey, you-- you just wasn't sitting there smart talking to the man and cussing the man out and sitting on top of the car and flouncing around and di-- almost like disrobing yourself and--." You know what I mean? You've gotta be about yourself. You gotta be about yourself if you can't do those kinds of things you-- there's no reason for you to do those kinds of things. The black-- when you-- you gotta carry yourself in certain ways. She says, "She thinks she's--." I got two daughters, two grown daughters. (I'm saying?), if you got a fella, you can't live with him and you can't be with him and he disrespecting-- leave him! There's too many other men around town. There's another down the street somewhere. Might not be as good as him, but he's down there. (?) find yourself. You don't have to give your whole life to some joker. Once you done that, then he go get somebody else-- and he get somebody else. And that's what happened to the (riot?). Peoples are ignorant to the fact they say, "Well, they treat us wrong and they won't do this and won't do--". Don't (?) that makes you go to them stores and shop. If the man is--

I tell you what you do one day: you go to a store, one of those stores they got, and you order something and you know by what the price is with your little calculator, you give the man \$20, let's say you know it's \$15.40. "Yes?" Say, "Is my change right? You give me the right change?" He says, "Let me see- no. Oh, I owe-- you owe me another dollar." See? "No, no, no. See, on my calculator here, I know how much I owed you, I just wanted to see if you were gonna try and cheat me." See, you gotta be aware. You gotta count the change. You can't just get it and put it in your pocket. You gotta count it. Always count your money. Always be aware of the money that you've earned or whoever gave it to you gotta be able to take care-- you go to clothing store and you see something there that you like and it cost you more money than to get it, get something else. Don't spend all your money on a pant-suit and you ain't gonna have no more money left. Don't go and get your hair done if it's \$90, you can wait and get it did, you know what I mean? Comb it yourself.

D: Yeah. [laughs]

G: You understand what I'm saying?

D: Yeah, I know what you're saying.

G: Yeah! So, you gotta be aware of that.

D: [laughs]

G: And? Well, you ask me something else. I'm Mr. Talking.

T: I wanted to-- did the Martin Luther King- when he died in 1968- did it affect you?

G: Yes. Because Dr. King was the type of man-- when he got assassinated, it's not only-- it was hurtful to blacks, it was hurtful to everybody because he spoke of-- the things that he spoke about and the changes he brought about, it helped everybody. It helped blacks, it

helped whites, blacks, Puerto Rican, Cub-- I don't care who! To some degree, everybody helped by Dr. King-- got helped by Dr. King. Not (just?) for blacks. There's a lot of white peoples that disenfranchised- they don't have a lot of things, (they wanna help?) There's a lot of Cubans, a lot of Puerto Ricans. You see, (?) some people say, "I'm Haitian.", "I'm Jamaican." You're still black. You know what I mean? If you Haitian, you gotta be nice to me like I be nice to you. If you a Puerto Rican, the same thing. If you Jamaican, you ain't no better than me, I'm no better than you. We all trying to move on through life. I don't have to put any-- people got (?) they put the flag on their cars, some people doing fine. I got one, but I got FAMU flag on my car. That's my school, (?) FAMU flag is fine, keep it on the car day and night. See? But Dr. King helped. And on that marches and things, you had all kinds of peoples in the march. They was firing water hoses at all kinds of people, a lot of white people got killed through integration. (But the ?) when the unspoken words was to speak to a white woman, or look at a white woman, or even touch her-- even put your hand-- come near to try to put your hand on her. It's a unwritten law that you-- that most like instant death. You was dead, you couldn't do that. Feared.

D: So, who's words did you really follow, Dr. Martin Luther King's words instead of Malcolm X or--?

G: Malcolm X had his place in history like Farrakhan had his like everybody else. In an era when the Black Panthers did some things that was good, Dr. King did a lot of things that were good, and a lot of people did things. The NAACP did a lot of things that was good. See, but, what good it is that I do for you when there's no follow-up? See, I-- the thing about it is now you got kids that's not in school. What--wh--what did Dr. King die

for? All the things he fought for and all them peoples and you got a bunch of black kids- I ain't talking about white kids- black kids that don't wanna go to school. They don't want to go to college, they don't want to go to work, they wanna be on welfare. You wanna be able to get you a job and work where you can determine how your life gonna be. You don't want nobody come in your house and telling you what it is you gotta do or what you gotta go, you got a boyfriend he can't come and visit you. You got these food-stamps, you think-- they didn't make food-stamps for us, they made food-stamps for white people. They made food-stamps for retirement. Social security was made for white people, it wasn't made for us. We came along and now we benefiting for it. All this stuff was made for white folks, they ain't made nothing for us. You think that we the only peoples on food-stamps? Social security? All white peoples, they had these union jobs where they worked and they-- daddy work on the job and the brother work on the job, the cousin work on the job, and we couldn't get the job. And when we finally got the job, they didn't wanna bring our cousins, or our uncle to work. Well, they had their cousins, uncles, mamas, and sisters, everybody else working on these jobs. When I started working for Pan Am, you know, they didn't want husbands and wives, it's like the school system, one time they didn't want the husband working at the same school. What you talking about? Why can't your wife work-- why can't a husband's wife work here? Fraternizing. What fraternizing? You work here and-- the values. Some man said, "Well, sexual harassment." Gosh, geez, I gotta be careful, can't say nothing to these ladies. And if you don't say nothing to them, then you got a problem. "He's stuck-up, he don't think he's better than us." You know what I mean?

D: [laughs] Yeah.

G: So, where you gonna go with it? So, but, like I said, there are different elements that did-- a lot of white peoples got killed in the Civil Rights Movement, because they sacrificed they life. A lot of Puerto Ricans, a lot of Cubans, a lot of everybody. See, one thing about the Cubans: in the 1800s-- in 1776 when-- let's go back to George Washington. You gotta read all this stuff. When Cubans- women and men- sold their jewelry and gave it to the United States government so George Washington could pay his soldiers. See, that goes back a long way, you see, when the Cubans came here- per say- in 1960, they went to school at Booker Washington. They didn't go to Miami High, or Miami Jackson, or Edison, they went to Miami High-- they went to-- over there to Booker T. Washington. And a lot of the Cubans graduated from Booker T. Washington. See, when they came here in 1960 out of the airport when they had the Air Force out on the backside of the airport. See? There's a lot of things that were going on here. One time, Mrs. Range tried to get a job that would have turned out to be real good for black womens and men as chambermaids and working hotels, making up beds and working in the cafeteria in the kitchens and everything. "I ain't gonna work and make up no beds with no white people--" But now you go live in a hotel, you paying \$100, \$150 for a room and who makes up the bed? The union peoples makes up the beds. They've have that union. They make more money than anybody else. But the job was first offered to blacks but they didn't wanna take the jobs. See, you gotta take a responsibility of some things that you didn't not do- or we did not do- that's affecting you now, see? And all those people that did things: Dr. King, Rap Brown, the Panthers, and all the other people who-- NAACP and all the stuff that was done, you are living in a time now when you can-- it's a have situation, but you can have something with it. You need a education to

go along with it. See, you just can't have this and have that and not have a education to some degree- read and write. Some kids say they can't pass the FCAT test, you ain't gonna never pass it if you don't take no notes. You go to the classroom and don't take no notes because the FCAT test is made up of things you've had in class. You sitting in class and the teacher put all the stuff on the board, nothing. They give an open-book test, you can't pass because you ain't got no notes. You can't look through a text-book and pass a test, you need your notes to pass the test. The FCAT test is all remembrance. You don't take it when it's free then when it comes time for you to pay the forty-five-- what is it forty-five, \$60 now? You seventeen years old-- when you get seventeen, you pay. Why wait to pay for it when you can take it free? You can take it free now.

T: Yes.

G: But if you wait until you're seventeen, you gonna pay the forty-five-- it might be sixty or \$70 then. Why waste your time? Some say, "Well, I don't want to go to summer school." I'll give you a situation: what would you do if the teachers here volunteered their time for summer school. How would you feel about the teachers? Someone gave me some answers earlier, I'm gonna see how would you feel is the teachers here would volunteer to come to teach summer school this summer without pay?

D: I would feel like the teachers they care about us.

G: Mm-hmm

D: Because they're taking the time from their family, work-- they're not making money, they're just volunteering.

G: Mm-hmm

D: They don't get paid, so I would feel as if they care about me.

G: Mm-hmm

D: Which I already do right now.

G: Mm-hmm

T: Trying their best to see that we are educated.

G: Yeah! Because, see, they got a-- some fella that I had, some fellas there that they couldn't see the scope of it. I tell them, "You mean to sit there and tell me [chuckles] if a teacher came in and taught you summer school this summer without any pay, you don't know how you would feel about it?" See, you-- you're not into the school system now. You give me an answer like that, "I don't know what--" I'm gonna say to you, "Where you been? Where you going?" Something you do-- that you do community work, it's a required, the teacher don't necessarily have to volunteer, they're not gonna get paid but then they say, "Well, I'm not getting paid so then I'm not gonna do anything, I'm gonna stay home." But they go an vol-- if they volunteer-- I'm just saying, you know, they getting paid anyways, some of them gonna get paid. I'm gonna tell you something: somebody's gonna go to summer school because some parents gonna pay. Okay? So, you get a chance to go to summer school with them little three weeks, show up and while you're there, try to get some of those counselors to give you something to OJT and you go down to the counselor, the CAP advisor and see about you-- where you wanna go to school?

D: For college?

G: Yeah.

D: FAMU.

G: Did you find out about the grants they have and what-- you-- I don't know, the lady downstairs, what's her name? Uh, Jewish lady (Mrs. Khan?) downstairs. The CAP leader downstairs, CAP advisor downstairs, on the first floor, down-- around past the principles office?

T: Yes. [inaudible]

G: Yeah, I think her-- (Khans?) or something her name is, white lady. I just can't think of her name right now, I know who she is. But anyway, there gonna be some applications here that's gonna come in from the Gold Coast Chapter, I guess as well as the Miami-Dade Chapter. Each year, we give scholarships to kids who have been accepted to FAMU. You have to write a letter, you have to go through the-- you get the information, you do the information. Last year, we gave away three \$1,000 scholarships because I had one in my name [school bell rings] for a young boy from New Orleans. See, a lot of this stuff is available you gotta know what's available to you because if you don't know, you don't know what's down there. But like I said, those kids over there in agriculture-- FAMU adopted that ag. school over there. You say, "Why all those kids go to FAMU?" Because they got them scholarships, they get twenty-five, \$30,000. Top scholarship is \$50,000. Four years gives you everything, get better scholarships, 3.5 grade point average. You say, "Well, I can't get a three..." All (?) is A's and B's; 3.5 is all A's and B's, you can't have no C's and D's, A's and B's, 3.5, you apply. (?) write a letter up to the reception office, Mr. Adams. See, Ms. (Arches) see (Ms. Arches) down there and Ms.(what you call?) (Posey?), both graduates, FAMU. Stay in (?) office, stay in (Ms. Arches?) talking to him about scholarships. That's where they graduated from.

D: Well, I just--

G: What else?

D: I just wanna thank you for your time.

G: You need to know anything else?

T: No.[chuckles]

D: Not really, because we have a lesson.

T: [talks at the same time] We have a lesson.

G: Yeah, I know. Yeah, I was telling this other kid about the theaters and stuff. Like I said, with them four theaters Overtown and different kinds of activities and all this kind of thing, and the hotels and restaurants, and with the living facilities and everything and the-- over there where Hadley Park is there was no blacks living Railroad Shop. They did a lot of kinds of things--just some places. And one time the whole-- the bus system- the metro bus system- all the drivers was black when Pawley sold it to the county. But now they all (arguing?) between each other and so they get a president that's someone else and we gonna have to learn to-- we can't be envious to the fact to each other, we gives away a lot. We miss a lot of opportunities by not doing what it is that need to be done, see? We don't be even understanding one another. I don't care if you Puerto Rican or-- I don't care if you Jamaican, you Haitian, doesn't make a difference, still the same. They look at you just like they look at me. But you gotta go out and do the things that gonna make you successful. Try very hard and-- so there's trials and errors in this world and we understand that. Try to make less errors in your life and better choices, because the better choice you make is gonna be one that's gonna serve you most. Some fella, some girls that you think you-- that you thinking that they ain't got-- that's just hear-say. That's hear-say. I mean, that doesn't do you any good. Either one of two of them can't do anything

for you, can't do anything for your parents. That's why you gotta study. Find her, she - your friend- you know she gets you a grade, you need to be with her. You good in math and she good in English-- two of you need to be together so she help you with English, you help her with math. You need a girl who good in science. Get four, five of you together, y'all study together. Eventually, you find out you get on that Dean's list. Once you get on that Dean's list, you always gonna be looked at (and graded?) different. A near-ninety for a good students, understanding and respect your students, it's always a ninety. A child who doesn't do that- a near-ninety- ain't gonna never be a ninety. Miss so-and-so say, "She's a nice young lady, she tries real hard." If she that close to a ninety, she's gonna get a ninety. Ninety. Or you gonna get that hundred. You gonna get that job opportunity, you gonna get a chance for an interviews, you get a chance to interview peoples, you gonna get a chance to do a lot of things. Go downtown talk to school board. Go downtown talk to some business where someone get a chance to know you. All these things in your favor providing you put yourself in a position where these things happen. If you don't, your life is to be at a standstill, like standing water. Standing water never moves; running waters always moving, seeking new grounds and new avenues and moving around. Your life needs to be like running water: exciting, debonair, you wake up in the morning full of energy, you've learned something the day before, you wanna explain it, you wanna talk to somebody about it, tell somebody about it, tell the teacher something that you-- an experience that you had, be learning, take on excitements, do a lot of different kinds of things, don't let your life be a type of life that's walking down the same road. In life, you must get off that avenue and go in into another community and see

what someone else is doing. That's what life is all about: learning and knowing about things where you are. You'll be good at that.

D: Yes.

G: Yes.

D: Thank you for coming today.

G: Okay. Thank you. Thank you, young ladies. Alright. Here, let me give ya'll back this.

Y'all done sat there and bugged me all day. (?) put me on TV and something--

D: Watch your step.

G: --had to go down there and talk to (?)--

END OF INTERVIEW