TRANSCRIPT—RANEY NORWOOD

Interviewer:	RANEY NORWOOD
Interviewee:	Bob Gilgor
Interview Date:	9 January 2001
Location:	Chapel Hill, NC
Length:	2 cassettes; approximately 100 minutes

START TAPE 1, SIDE A

BOB GILGOR: This is January 9th in the year 2001 and this is Bob Gilgor interviewing Raney Norwood at 146 Stansell or nearabouts.

Good morning, Raney.

RANEY NORWOOD: Good morning.

BG: I appreciate your letting me talk with you. The first question is, would you tell me what it was like when you were growing up—it was Carrboro, is that right?

RN: That's right.

BG: --what life was like for you, what your parents were like, what your house was like. Just take it and run with it.

RN: OK. I was raised in Carrboro. My father, he worked at the university as a janitor. My momma was a housemaid for a while for Coach Jim Taylor, the coach of the Carolina football team

We grew up in a big two-story kind of raggedy house on Main Street in Carrboro. I attended a black elementary school. Then I went on to a black high school, which was Lincoln High School. At Lincoln High School, you know, all the teachers and the principal treated the students like we were family members. ( ) but you know they went to church, they attended games with us, they took us on as their kids when our parents weren't there so we had great contact with the teachers, the principal.

In 1966, we were told that we were going into an integrated school. This really tee'd a lot of my classmates and myself off because we were really loving it at Lincoln High School even though we were getting hand-me-downs from Chapel Hill High School, which was a high school. When I mean hand-me-

downs, like the band uniforms, some of the football equipment. Used stuff. But we made the best of it. I remember when I was in the marching band. They gave me a band suit that was way too big. The pants were raggedy. I took it to my mother and she did a lot of work on it. Made it fit, look good. The rest of the band members, their parents did it in time to perform so we could show off.

But getting back to Chapel Hill High School, when we got out of there, it seemed like we lost it all. Because they put us in an environment that we were not used to. And that environment was being around a lot of white people. This is going to sound strange, but speaking for myself, it seemed like we couldn't speak their language. We couldn't live up to the expectations of the teachers there. They were piling up a lot of homework on us that we didn't have the resources and the time to do. A lot of the white kids, they had encyclopedias and dictionaries and stuff in the home. When we got there to do a book report, we had to go to the public library, which is quite a distance from the house. We had very limited time to do that. We got out of the school at three-thirty. Our parents would give us until six or six-thirty just before it gets dark to get back home. So we had to cram just to do a book report.

We had a lot of teachers—let me rephrase that—we had some teachers at the high school that were real prejudiced. I'm not going to call a name, but there was an English teacher, in the class we talked about it a lot because she didn't hide her prejudice, she came out with it.

BG: How did she do that?

RN: Well, for one thing, when we came to class, she would make comments. They weren't hardcore racial comments, but you know. A couple of times she'd call us Teddy Bears, stupid, dumb. She would give assignments—and we know, different assignments from white students. She'd flunk three-quarters of the class at the end of the year—which made the blacks who had to graduate on time to attend summer school. At the time, summer school would cost fifty dollars to get that unit that we needed to graduate. My father was a janitor. That kind of money was like paying out, now, five or six thousand dollars. But he came up with it, because parents back then wanted to see their children graduate.

So we attended summer school. All of us came out with high grades. We had a great teacher. She was white. She had about twenty students. And she took hand-on-hand with each student, teaching us. This was in our junior year. So in our senior year we were pretty prepared when we got back in to school [tape stops].

I guess I stopped where I'd been in summer school. Oh yes, my senior class. The blacks were getting kind of fed up with what was going on in the school. Sometimes we were walking down the hallway and white students would spit on us. They attacked the black female.

A friend of mine, Walter Durham—we called him ( )—and myself, we decided, "Hey, it's time to do something." Nobody listening to us from the office. We came up with the idea that we wanted to start a riot. A lot of riots were going on in the sixties. We were looking at the TV and stuff. This was about the time that Martin Luther King got shot. ( ) and I, I guess we were the main leaders that started this riots. So what we did, we started doing damage to the school. We changed the door's lock. We didn't do no physical harm to the students themselves, but a couple of friends of mine ( ) on the school bus times. But we got the teachers, people in the community, we got their attention.

But a lot of the students, they was in class, didn't realize what was going on. When they did, they fled to the bathroom, they locked themselves in the bathroom. A lot of the white students thought that we was out to get them and try to hurt them. And like I said, we weren't really mad with the students. We were mad with the system. We wanted to the people to listen, to find out what was going on with us.

BG: How long had you planned doing this?

RN: It wasn't no plan. It was just then, coming in to school that morning, sitting there on the radiators, talking amongst ourselves.

BG: Is there something that sparked it?

RN: It was around time—it was a day or two after Martin Luther King got shot. That sort of set it off. I can't sit here thirty-some years later and remember, you know--. We would sit among ourselves and what set it off--. But I guess we were just being fed up by a lot of stuff that was going on.

BG: And when you say you chained the door shut—to the whole building?

RN: All the doors.

BG: All the doors?

RN: All the doors. We're trying to remember where we got the chains and locks from. ( ). I think we went to the shop or somewhere in the area. Some of the doors didn't have locks. We tied the chain and put sticks in the doors.

BG: But there was no physical violence that was part of that—other students?

RN: A couple students got hit. I will not sit here and lie to you. We attacked two or three of the students. One was calling us niggers. One that was spitting, you know. Those that broke lines, you know, like the lunch line. A few of them was attacked, but like I said they was target people.

I had a lot of white friends that I made in those two years. A lot of them were really close friends. One white classmate of mine, as a matter of fact, he wanted to join us and run. But I could not let him do that because we didn't want him to get hurt. A super-nice guy. Nice parents. His brother, all them were nice. But he wanted to run with us. You know, we were like a little gang. ( ) The day after we decided to leave school, eight or nine of went and got three quarts of beer. Got drunk off three quarts of beer. You know, we couldn't drink that stuff back them. But some of the students that saw that made it a big to-do. I guess it was a big thing because it was something that never was done. It was just a handful. I guess about five of us really were acting involved.

BG: How long did you keep the door locked?

RN: Until Mr. McDougle and Mr. R.D. Smith came. And Miss Clemens, which was a black teacher. They came and took control of the building.

BG: What did they say to you?

RN: Oh, Mr. Smith, he came in, he sit with us and told us what we were doing is wrong. We taking something that really didn't belong to us, that there were better ways to go about it. Miss Clemens she came out like a drill sergeant. And she commanded and demanded that it's time to come back to the classroom and I don't put up with this bit. And we loved her because she was a firm, strong teacher and she was the type of teacher she did not look through the glass in black and white. She looked at it, my students, you all are my kids. We had a lot of respect for her. She introduced a lot of fear in us, the way she would speak. Also there was a lot of love.

BG: What did she teach?

RN: Typing.

BG: Were there specific things, other than the way you were treated by some of the white students—the name-calling, the spitting, and the way you were treated by the English teacher—were there other things that you wanted from the school system?

RN: Yes. When we first got to Chapel Hill High School, everything that Lincoln had was taken away from us. They took away the school colors. They took away the mascot. They took away the name of the teams. When we first got to Chapel Hill High it was the Chapel Hill High Wildcats. ( ).

We finally got the school color changed. We had this showcase where we had trophies. No Lincoln trophies. When you came to Chapel Hill, Lincoln, in basketball and football, Lincoln was a name. I mean, it won championship after championship.

Our coach became almost like a doormat. He was an assistant coach.

BG: Coach Peerman?

RN: Coach Peerman. We felt that, with his winning record and the way he looked out for students—he didn't care if you were on the team or not, even the guys that played football and basketball—he really looked out for them. He was more concerned about their grades and where they were going. And being made assistant coach was almost like a slap in the face.

BG: Because of the great tradition of Lincoln High—their winning football teams? Chapel Hill High didn't have that same tradition?

RN: Chapel Hill, they had a nice record. Lincoln High had a superb record. When you go out of town and mention Lincoln, people listen, black and white. When they had games, whites came out to see Lincoln high school, a team beating another team 78 to 0, going un-scored-on all season. Then they got the bad marching band—we used to say "bad-ass" marching band. They had cute little majorettes. We got a drum major high-stepping, putting on a show. ( ) When the band performed, people followed them from the planetarium all the way to Carrboro. You didn't know when they were going to stop, put on a show. Again I go back to the drum major; I mean, this guy could high-step, do a dance. The majorette was trained to dance.

All those were things that we looked forward to because we didn't have too many things to look forward to. When I came to Lincoln, I grew up saying I want to be in this band. I wanted to be on the football team but my parents wouldn't let me be on the team because I got hurt when I was about nine years old. I got shot in the eye with a BB. And they were scared I was going to get hit in the good eye so they wouldn't let me play football. But I did get in the band.

BG: What did you play in the band?

RN: First I was on the drum. But ( ) I was always the tight one to kind of show off. So I went to the cymbals. I tool these cymbals and modified them, where they can spin. And one of the guys taught me to rig them where you could spin them and they would come up.

BG: So tell me some more about some of the things that were bothering you that sparked this riot off.

RN: Well, for me personally, I felt that we had been lied to. They told us that our parents had signed these papers for this merger at the school. They told all the black students there. See, there was this government program on campus called Upward Bound. A lot of the black students coming from a low-income family, this program was designed to teach us to enter into college ( ). We sat there, me and a group of guys, talking, "When we leave here we got to go to Chapel Hill High School. They're taking Lincoln away from us." I'm tee'd off with my parents because they should've asked us, you know. Back then it was hard to question your parents about something. Because they were the word. You didn't ask why or anything. But I got brave and I decided to ask my parents. They did not receive any kind of paper or form or anything talking about the merger. They said it got dumped in their lap, that there would no longer be a Lincoln High School. Chapel Hill and Lincoln would merge in one school located out in the country, we called it. I said "OK, there go the white people, lying to us."

This started building up. Then, back in the '60s, like I said, people were marching on campus. Preston ( ), which was one of the Civil Rights leaders—there were probably a few others on campus.

What really caught my attention was, a group of Black Panthers came in from High Point. And they weren't really recruiting at the time. What they were trying to do was help. So ( ), and another friend of mine named ( ), we decided to just hang out with them, just see what it's all about. When we were just hanging out with them, they taught us a lot. It was not hatred. They were teaching us what was really going on. What I mean by that, they were showing how our black younger kids were being sent to school with no breakfast. They were sitting there with not half of the books they need. So then ( ) and I and ( ) we started selling newspapers for the Panthers. So we became more and more interested. We decided to join up.

And the thing about it back then, when you became a Panther and you came back into the black neighborhood, it was hard for them to accept you because they was afraid. We might have been

troublemakers, we might have been the type to kill police officers. I remember my father said, "Son, you're going to get killed." I said, "Dad, I feel like I'm dead already."

But this was after the high school thing. Going back to what made it spark is, like I said, taking Lincoln away from us. Putting us in an environment that was not friendly. We did not have full support. We saw the coach go down. We saw the principal, Mr. McDougle, which was a strong figure at Lincoln High School, took on the role of being a coffee maker. I don't care how they try to justify, Mr. McDougle was a coffee maker. We went to visit him in his office. His office was way back in a little corner. ( ). It took a lot out of him. ( ). I mean, Mr. McDougle was a strong force for the blacks at the time because we really looked up to him down at Lincoln. You better not be late for class. If you played hooky from school, he going to send someone after you. Looking at that, I guess that;s what sparked--. And as I mentioned, with the assassination of Martin Luther King, it seemed like everything around us was crumbling.

BG: I heard a story from Gloria Register and I think from—that a group of African-American students went to talk to the principal on the day that the protest occurred. They went with a list of things that they wanted changed. And they felt, when they walked out, that none of the changes were going to be made. And she said it was like wildfire spread from there. That's the day that the riot occurred. Do you remember any of that?

RN: It's coming back to me. I remember someone going back to the--. These were the politician-students we called them. We were like the army that go in the back. Like I said, I sit there, talk to ( ) and talk to ( ), some people that were actively involved. We couldn't remember exactly what it was. But now that you mention it, it could have been that. It probably got back to us on the tail end of it—you know, we're off somewhere, breaking into somebody's locker or doing something we weren't supposed to when we heard. That's probably when we took charge. Like I said, we were the ones that really instigated it, the ones that really pushed it. A lot of the black students' ideas were non-violent. They tried to go and negotiate and go through the proper channels and stuff. We always, we didn't want to be the one to wait. If we don't get it, we'll do something.

BG: But what did you do when the doors were locked? Did you break chairs, windows?

RN: We broke chairs. We turned over—the lockers were built into the wall but we damaged those. The doors, kicking them in and stuff. The comrades—I called them—that were outside, we were cutting ( ), mostly doing a lot of disturbing things to the building.

BG: Break windows?

RN: I can't recall breaking windows because there was a huge window and we knew if we get caught there—see, I used to have to wash those windows when I got in trouble. I can't remember the windows being broken. It could have been, but we were mostly just inside doing things. As I said, some students did get beaten, but not bad to where we put them in the hospital. The main thing was just getting people's attention.

BG: What happened after the riots? Did you get suspended? Did people get suspended? And did you make changes in the things that you wanted changed?

RN: Changes were made. We did not get suspended because it was a ( ), "Hey, this is just a little bit. We can do more if you start suspending students." We did not make those threats. But I guess the people felt—Miss Marshbanks was the principal. We now had backing from the other black student body. We got backing from the white student body. OK. Now it's time we sit down with Gloria and them and the rest of the people ( ) what they did, I do not know. ( ) OK, we're going to take on the Chapel Hill Tigers .We're going to take on the school colors. But they couldn't bring in the trophies because ( ) got throwed in the dumpster. And that really hurt us, when we found that out, how they would destroy it. Because it was a trophy going to a lot of homes. A lot of memories behind it. And then, like I said, we met with Mr. Smith, with Miss Clemens.

BG: Was Hilliard Caldwell involved with that?

RN: He was not there. He was not involved directly. But he was the type, he could work the homes away from school. He worked with the students. He was a great inspiration, really explaining to us the need for an education, staying in school. But Hilliard was also the type, "You gotta march with you, you gotta protest, I'll protest with you." ( ) we're going to tear up things, destroy things, but he made us feel that he would back us. At the same time he wanted to keep us from doing things that would get us in trouble.

( ) Graduation night was black and white. We drunk wine together, we drunk beer together. Just before we hit the stage to get our diplomas and stuff, there was this black and white thing. Other thing that tee'd us off that night, we had to wear white gowns and cap. It made us look like blacks had joined the Klan, you know. We're Klan members. That irritated us. I remember that day my mom ( ) when I met with ( ) and other classmates and stuff, we said, "Wait a minute, man. We're not going up there." We wasted beer and wine. Some of us refused to wear the cap. We let it be known after we received our diplomas that, you know, we feel like a bunch of fools, a bunch of Klan, walking up here in this all-white thing. They changed the gown color the next year.

But at the end of our senior year, things started becoming smoother. More people started interacting. There were still a lot of race issues and stuff. But out of the school color. Now we're graduated. Now we're getting into heavier things. We started hanging on campus more, started protest down there more.

BG: But you felt you were at least getting people to listen to you a little bit?

RN: We felt that. We knew that. Changes were coming.

I think the black teachers were beginning to open up a little bit more. I had a white teacher, she was my math teacher, Miss Caroline ( ). She was with us, and I mean she was another person that was deep with us. And as of today, some thirty years later, me and her still got contact. She volunteers at the shelter for the homeless where I work. There were some good times at Chapel Hill High, there were some hurting times at Chapel Hill High. There was a lot of pain at Chapel Hill High. There were a lot of students that were afraid to come to school. Especially those that were forced to go to Chapel Hill High School before Lincoln merged. Some of the stories I heard from them. In a way, I'm glad we wasn't there. The girls were being picked on, spit on, kicked, hit. When I say us I'm talking about the five that hung together. We'd either be dead or in jail. We refused to let that happened.

BG: You mean the students who went to Chapel Hill High before—while it was on Franklin Street?

RN: Right. We don't really even know how that came about, but they were forced to go. They had no choice.

BG: Who forced them?

RN: Listening to some of the students ( ) like, ( ), school board members. I'm not for sure. But you know I talked to a few peoples like ( ). They went and ( ), "Hey, you all got to go in because there's some kind of zoning thing." But that would not hold true because everybody in that area did not go. It's just like, it was a handful that was picked to go.

BG: Let's go back to the summer before the merger of the schools. You had mentioned Upward Bound. Can you tell me more about that?

RN: Upward Bound? OK, let me tell you from my point of view what happened. One Saturday morning, my mom and dad they're getting me up and they got two suitcases packed. They say, "We're taking you to this program." I'm thinking, "Wait a minute. They're sending me out to reformatory school because the attitude and stuff I had." We get in the car. It's raining, I mean it's really raining hard. I'm in the back seat. All the time we're going to ( ), I'm thinking about jumping out of the car and running away. You know. But every light was green. My father didn't stop or nothing. I said, "OK, go in there on campus must be where you go and catch the bus to go to the reformatory." So when we pull in front of ( ), I see the rest of my classmates. At first I don't see nothing but the guys, ( ). I'm thinking, "All of them are going to the reformatory." So we get out. No one knows what it's all about. We check in. All of a sudden, things started looking a little better because here come the girls. You know. ( ) formed to get us in. We go to another building on campus. Mr. William ( ), he was a professor on campus and he was president of Upward Bound. He explained to us that there would be sixty girls and sixty boys, you know, on campus for an eight-to-twelve program. Now, ( ). All we know, we're going to be in these dormitories with these girls and stuff.

So what it turned out to be, though, was to prepare us for college, if there was a subject that we needed to take to get ready for college. They were trying to work in mixing the whites and the blacks together. They were paying us ten dollars a week. All the food and stuff was free. But everything they had on the schedule we had to do, like, getting up at six o'clock in the morning [phone rings; tape stops].

BG: You were saying, getting up at six o'clock in the morning--.

RN: Yes. We had to get up at six. We had to clean up our room. We stayed at Morrison dormitory. We had to make the bed and then you go to breakfast. Even if you didn't want to eat breakfast you had to go anyway. That was no problem because most of the guys, we liked to eat anyway. After that you went to

classes. You had classes until eleven-thirty and then you take your lunch break and then you go back to class. And then about two-thirty into the day you had to go to the swimming pool. That was nice; we liked that part. And then, later on in the evening we had a social hour where we mingle. This went on I think about eight weeks. But we went through there and those that didn't get kicked out, we came prepared to go into the high school and really try to get into college. Because I'm not sure on the number but it was a high number that did and was able to go to college. It was to us a very successful program.

BG: Was this for all the students from Lincoln who went to Upward Bound and who were not going to Chapel Hill, who took this?

RN: No. Why it came about I'm still not sure, but it was not all of us. I was a good number. It was not all from Chapel Hill, too. People came from Pittsboro, Siler City, Hillsborough. I guess it was based on people's income. Those that were interested in getting to college.

BG: Did you have any idea--? Let me put it this was: when did you find out that you were not going to go to Lincoln High School and when did your classmates find out that Lincoln was going to be closed and there was going to be this merger and all the black students would go to the new Chapel Hill High?

RN: We got the word about one or two months before school closing. Around April-May. The word started passing through the school. But then, it was just someone on the planning board, something that hadn't been decided but was just being talked about. When we actually found out we were in Upward Bound. It was during the summer. ( ). That was we found out, no more Lincoln.

BG: So it was just a short time before school started that you found out you were going to the consolidated school, Chapel Hill High School.

RN: Right. My parents, they were absolutely sure. The school was being built. We knew this because we used to hang out there, you know. We heard the dates. We went out there and hung out in the country, as we called it. So we knew the school was being built. But we didn't know they were taking away the other two schools. But when we got the final word was when we were into Upward Bound.

BG: Did you have any preparation from your brothers or sisters, from your parents or the church, or from the school system as to problems that you might face at the new high school and how to deal with them?

RN: None whatsoever. I couldn't get any from my brothers. I got a brother that was older than me but he was always gone. Since I was being the oldest—so my brothers came up first. They didn't prepare us. Nobody in the community. Nobody reach out to us. People didn't even have any kind of sympathy for what they was putting us into. All the preparation that we got was when we go to Chapel Hill High School.

I'll be honest with you: the first three months were hell. Our hands were tied. We took all this abuse. You know, on the school bus, when we got to school. For a long time we thought we just had to take it. If we fought, when we got back home—parents, they didn't see. For my dad and mom, it takes two to tangle. One can't do it by himself, they always say. So we took this abuse and we saw each other taking this abuse. We would be a small number. In one bus there might be four or five blacks; on the other bus, compared to fifteen or twenty whites. It wasn't that we were afraid; we were outnumbered. We wasn't stupid. We got stupid at the end. But then it was, "I don't care no more. I'm a senior. I'm not going to take this." ( ). We didn't have nobody. Even when we turned to someone at the school to talk this thing out—you know, like Mr. Smith—not to be negative, but he would say, "Go back to class and things will get better." ( ) But they didn't know that at night they were being ( ) into us, you know. –when you don't want to go to school. We got to the place where we skipped school and hung out at the pool. But we were falling behind in the classroom.

BG: So if you fought at school, when you came home, even though you were a high school student--?

RN: In a lot of the black families, when you're staying under their roof, if you're sixty-two years old [laughs]. While you're under their roof. In my senior year, I probably didn't get a physical whipping, but they could whip you with their tongues—we called it a tongue-lashing. Sometimes ( ) and get a physical whipping rather than listen to them talk and the punishment—taking away the telephone. Like I said, we was under control. Not like now. The kids, they talk back ( ) even fight their parents. When we were coming up, there was no such thing. What they said, we did. But when we got away from under their roof, then, you know, we can do our thing. When I joined the ( ) I was still staying at home. But I'm grown now, I'm a high school graduate. We'll sit down and talk then, "This is what I want to do. This is what I'm going to do. You can kick me out of the house and make things worse or you accept and believe in what I believe in. Even if you don't believe in it, let me try." So they did. Because when some of the ( )

from out of town, my parents didn't want to feed them, look out for them and stuff. We were just a bunch of young kids trying to get something said and done in the neighborhood.

And our main thing was trying to get a free breakfast program set up over here in Hargraves Center. And Hank Anderson and Fred ( ), they let us, they let us. I mean, there was a lot of people opposed to it. They think we're going to train the kid to pick up rifles and guns and kill people. All we want to see, we want your kid to go school not hungry. We want to make sure he got a winter got if needed. We want to make sure, after school, you've got something to come home to. Because parents were working long hours. But we provided it. I take my hat off to Hank ( ) and Fred ( ), because they went against the system.

BG: When did you set up the breakfast? In what year did that come?

RN: I graduated from high school in 1968? I think it's around 1970, the early parts of '70.

BG: When did the riots occur? Was that '68?

RN: It was in '67. In '66-'67. The riot really was in '67.

BG: And when did the high school open?

RN: '66.

BG: So it was a school after?

RN: Well, it wasn't a school year. You know like you go in the fall of '66?

BG: So it was in the spring of '67?

RN: Wait a minute. No. It was in the spring of '68. That's when it was.

BG: And you set up a breakfast program in '69?

RN: Either '69, either '70.

BG: And how long did that continue?

RN: About six or seven months. What happened, we ran out of money. We ran out of support. We didn't get backing from the community as we thought we was going to get. Still, in some people's minds, we were really gang members, gangsters, people that killed. ( ) national TV. People weren't really educated to what was going on.

BG: You were labeled as troublemakers but what you were trying to do doesn't seem to be the action of a troublemakers; it seemed to be someone who was really concerned about the community.

RN: And when you talk to a lot of the people now, they say, some of the classmates now that knew about us being Black Parents, they almost paint us as heroes. But we were like a lot of the country in other places. But we were dealing in High Point, Chapel Hill, especially UNC campus. Like H. Rap Brown [tape stops].

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

START OF TAPE 1, SIDE B

RN: So you know we got to hang out with guys like that. Those guys were labeled as troublemakers because of the way they spoke. When those guys made speeches, they spoke about violence—see, our thing, you slap me, I'll slap you back.

The great thing, too, during that time, we had Martin Luther King. I was saying to myself, "OK, white people, you all got two choices: Martin Luther King, which is the non-violent way; or us. Now which one do you want to deal with?" That was the attitude that me and ( ) done took. We didn't hate white people. We hated the system. Black Panthers did not hate white people. They hated the system and they hated those who supported the system. But we went behind great leaders. They not only let us hang with them, they taught us a lot, took us on. To say then, ( ) Stokeley Carmichael and H. Rap Brown, Preston ( )—being alive. I still—there's no shame in my game to say this—a lot of people in my job, when they find out I used to be in the Black Panther Party, they want to ask questions. Some of them—I get the feeling that, "He's crazy. He's mean."

Still, I lived the life that I want to help people. Therefore I took on the job at the homeless shelter. The pay wasn't shit. I mean, real low pay. But I wasn't making good money elsewhere. I went there, and they're not going to treat black different from white or white different from black. Everybody was going to get treated the same because they're homeless and need help.

Just the same the Panthers was trying to say, but they were dealing with the blacks. Because we were oppressed people back then. I mean, we had to go in the back door to go to the store but our money was still green. You know. During protests, we were protesting in front of the Colonial Drug Store. There's

a guy sitting there. This lady comes out, standing over him in front of the people, and peed on him. Going down there, you got hit with eggs marching down Franklin Street.

BG: Did any of the whites march with you?

RN: Oh, yes. We had some that marched, some that got involved. Like Revered Seymore. A lot of people don't know that Martin Luther King spent some time in ( ) Seymore's house when he came to Chapel Hill. There's a lot of things that my daughter and my grandchildren need to know. So I'm trying to get all factual. ( ) ready to glorify anything. I want them to see the hard time. Like I told my daughter, I'm not going to sit here and make it sound like everything was sweet and lovely. It was a hard time out there.

I go back to when my father had to walk from ( ) Street to the university. Then he had to walk from ( ) Street to the university when his car broke down. He worked at the university for forty-six years as a janitor. He kept food on our table. He kept clothes on our back. Just one man that really pushed education. I could see him come in in the evening, just bone tired. But he'd get out there, show us how to cut this wood. And then when we did all our chores, like during the summer months, we would take a little time out and go fishing. And we weren't fishing for the sports. We had to have the fish on the table to eat. This went on in a lot of the black community and stuff. But we survived.

BG: Did your father talk about his job at the university as a janitor?

RN: My dad used to tell us—I remember one time he asked me, was I ashamed of the work he did. I said no. He said, "Well let me tell you something. Whatever you do in life, do it damn good. And I'm a damn good janitor." His hallway, man, he used to take us as kids. It used to shine like a mirror, you know, the reflection off it. The professors and stuff, they were real ( ) on my dad, because he gave that extra step. He was not what we call an ass-kisser. But he was the type of person that put their little extra in.

BG: What about your mom?

RN: My mom was sort of like laid back. She was in housekeeping. She worked a while for Coach Taylor. We used to hear around the house, Coach Taylor ( ). My momma was the best person that could use a switch and a belt. I mean, she was good at it. When it came to discipline us and whipping us, ( ) my dad. My dad felt kind of sorry and backed off. Mom, she used to say, "It's going to rain." ( ) and then

when the song came on the radio, we thought it was time to get a whipping. She was a strong figure, though. As a matter of fact, she's still the boss.

BG: So she ran the household?

RN: Right.

BG: Can you tell me a little bit about where you lived, what kind of house it was, whether you had running water, what kind of heat and so forth?

RN: Man, I can describe it just like it was yesterday. I can see it was a big, two-story wood frame house. ( ) wood missing off the side. You came on to a nice big front porch that faced the main street. But you better know how to walk because a lot of the planks were missing. And the way they got missing was, during the winter months, when my brother had to go in and get wood for fire, my parents thought we were going to the wood pile, we were taking the wood off the side of the house and bringing it in and burning it. So outside was ragged. But once you came inside, my parents had some furniture that the people my mom worked for gave her, she kept it sparkling clean.

We had this big wooden table. It wasn't no ( ) or Queen Anne or anything. It was just a big old wooden table. But it could accommodate the whole family, because you had to eat your meals at the same time. There was no coming in at six, or coming in at seven. Lunch, dinner, breakfast: you had to be there.

We heated by wood. Momma cooked by wood. If she wanted to cook a pot of beans she had to start at six o'clock that morning, have it ready by dinner, which started about five or six in the evening. We had the ( ). And you could open all the doors and go all the way around to every room in the house. And each room had a ( ) stove or either a fireplace.

Then we had this upstairs, which we did not visit much because daddy, he did not want us hanging out up there much. He had a lot of little personal things: he kept his guns up there and stuff like that. And he would tell us there were ghosts up there. And there really were because we had big rats in the house and the rats up there seemed like people walking. It did not make us scared of the house but it made us scared to go upstairs. My brother and I ventured up there. There was a lot of treasure up there: big trunks, big wooden frame pictures, ( ), record players, and a lot of nice stuff up there.

Like I said, sometimes we had so many leaks in the house we didn't even worry about it no more because ( ). The bathroom was located on the outside of the house. It was on the porch, but no heat there. We had running water, but no hot water. Didn't have no hot water heater.

Then we moved out to Lincoln Park, name of the subdivision. We were sort of like the Hillbillies. When you turned on the hot water, it scared us, especially me. Getting used to these things. But all the good things went away, like homemade biscuits. In the old house, Momma used to cook homemade biscuits. Fried chicken, it would take about forty-five minutes to an hour to cook in the old house; it cooked too quick in the new house. A lot of love went away because came the time when the family members did not have to really eat together. So a lot of love was lost out of that old house.

BG: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

RN: I got six brothers, no sisters. I had a sister; she died at an early age.

BG: Did you feel poor?

RN: No. If you called me poor, even back then, I couldn't find anywhere for that word to fit into our vocabulary. My brother and I, when we sit down and talk now, we feel rich. It's a strange thing to say. We wore decent clothes. We had what you called school clothes—when you came home from school you had to take them off and hang them up. During the summer months we didn't wear shoes unless we were going to church. The rest of the time we were barefoot. Which is good. To answer the question, no, we didn't ever thing we were poor.

BG: What about the toys that you played with?

RN: A lot of the time we made our toys. We'd take a board and fine us four wheels—we got lucky and find four wheels of the same size—we'd make us a nice wagon, race cars. We'd take a little stick and tie a rag around the top of it and we'd call this a horse. And we'd find another stick shaped like a gun and that would be our little toy gun. A lot of times we made it.

But also, when the Christmas months came around, I cannot figure out today how my father did it—we had some nice toys: bicycles, ( ). With his income. Just after my daddy died, we were cleaning out the house and we found his check stubs. At the university, we found where he was making eleven dollars in two weeks. My brother and I, we were sitting there and trying to find out how much things cost to make a

comparison. We still don't see how he made it. But every Christmas that we can remember, we had nice things under that tree.

BG: How many hours would he work?

RN: He'd go in eight to five, five days a week. When we got older he took another job. He was working at Blue Cross Blue Shield when it was located on Franklin Street as a part-time job. We figured he took that on as our needs and wants grew more.

BG: Did you or your brothers go on to college?

RN: I got two brothers that went to college. I went to Durham Tech. I took a few classes at Central. But I got one brother that he's an engineer now. He started off as an X-ray technician and then he went on and became an engineer.

BG: So you didn't feel poor. Did you feel love?

RN: A lot of love. Neighborhood love. You had love everywhere. Even when my momma went to work, you still had parents. And not just discipline. You get these old ladies that can cook cakes and pies. Across the street you got another neighbor that can took chicken. The whole neighborhood was love. It was one big ( ) thing. When you still went home by yourself, you weren't in a neighborhood by yourself. Every door was open. I can remember a lot of my neighbors, they treated us just like we were their child. In our neighborhood, we were the first ones to get a TV, a big black-and-white TV. Kids came from all over the neighborhood. Our parents let them watch from about three to five. Just a lot of love.

BG: I forgot to ask you about your mother, what kind of hours she worked.

RN: Momma was mostly like a part-time. She might work one or two days a week. The rest of the time she was at home, taking care--.

BG: What about the rest of the African-American community? Did you see much absentee—the things that are bothersome in society now—like the absent father, alcoholism, drugs, physical abuse, beating up women. Can you talk about those things in the community?

RN: Yes. I was in high school before I realized that there were a lot of one-parent families. When we were coming up, both parents were there. One may have died or something. It wasn't like separation and divorce.

I saw a lot of abuse, a whole lot of abuse. I even grew up thinking that in a black family, the husband was supposed to beat the wife. I mean really, physically, keep his wife ( ) obey. I thought that. I didn't just see it on the outside, I saw it also in my household. Like I tell you from the beginning, I'm going to be straight with you, I'm going to shoot straight. My parents, they fought a lot.

But this is the crazy thing. Fridays, it was certain my mom and dad would go to it like Ali and George Foreman. Saturday they were quiet. And the rest of the week, my dad would take mom to work and it was lovely. But when that weekend came, as we grew older, the brother next to me, we were not able to leave town the same time or go out at the same time. One had to stay there and be the referee. And I saw a lot of that in our black neighborhood. They fought but then they can ( ) big knocks on the head--.

BG: So your mother fought back?

RN: Oh, yes. It wasn't like she was fully controlled and all that, but it was there. Whereas physical violence towards the kids, there was not that.

I mean, we got whippings. Like I told you at the beginning, we got whipping on the butt. But this beating on the head or choking, no. Back then, parents, their children were their pride and joy. "We're going to discipline them, but we're going to love them also." We saw the fights among our parents, because when they thought they were putting us to bed, they were loud with the hollering and cussing and stuff.

BG: Was there much alcoholism in the community?

RN: When you say much—people drank, but what I consider alcoholics, it was few. Most households, people drank. Those that would, they were labeled winos and drunks. These were the guys that would get drunk and sleep out in the woods and stuff. Anybody came in the woods where we lived, that was our personal territory. We did not want you there. We let it be known. We made these things we called "bean-shooters" with rubber bands, sling shots as other people called. Bow and arrow we made with tops on it. We were good with ropes. ( ) I found this wino sleeping under the tree on my land and I tied him around the tree and raked leaves and tried to set him on fire. You know, we did crazy things.

BG: What happened when you were about to set him on fire?

RN: Oh, one of the neighbors saw him smoking and put my fire out. He saved the man.

And then another thing we'd like to do. When grownups came close to our territory we'd make them chase us in the woods because we knew they couldn't catch us and stuff. We started digging traps.

We dug deep holes. And they when they fall in this hole, it tickled us to death. But when they reported back to our parents, it's a whole different story.

BG: So would you saw that you were a rebellious child?

RN: I know I was. I woke up every morning, I wanted to break all the rules. If my dad was living, he would tell you. My mom would tell you: I was what she called a "troublesome" child. And I used to love it.

BG: Were your friends the same way?

RN: We had some friends, some were good as gold. Some were. . . like me.

BG: Looking back on what you did at the high school with getting people to look at the issues that were bothering the black students—would you say that your being a rebellious, troublesome child helped you with that?

RN: I really think so. This is something that I grew up with, that I was not afraid to do. I didn't mind stepping forward, doing something, taking on a violent act. It's something that ( ). I'm glad that it didn't go any further because, also, we had made plans to firebomb the school. We wanted to get deep. What we did, we considered a ( ) of what we had planned. We sit there and we were really--. ( ). We listened. We listened to Mr. Smith. We listened to Miss Clemens. We listened to Mr. McDougle. But if something don't happen, that was our next step. And thank god that we didn't have to go there, because we would've went, we would've taken it to another level. The only thing we took to the level ( ) school hours. But I really believe deep down then that, if we were pushed, we would've went there.

Because I remember this other firebombing that was going on when one of my friends got killed on campus by this motorcycle group called The Stormtroopers. They went to court and the charges were dismissed. And we ( ) burning Chapel Hill. They thought that my group, that we were doing the burning. But it wasn't us, we were quieting the people down. Because Northside school got burned. We were sitting in this little restaurant right on the corner of Rosemary and Church Street. We saw people throwing firebombs in the little pharmacy building across the street. And Northside, we go down to the fire, and when we arrived, first thing, they thought that we did it. I mean, we had some blacks cheering us when we came up. And we explained that, "No. It's not our work. Why we want to burn our own neighborhood? It's not proving anything." But a lot of people thought that we did.

BG: Can you talk a little more about the firebombing at Northside? You say that a motorcycle gang killed a friend. What were they circumstances around that?

RN: OK, what happened, they were having an all-night dance on campus at the student union. A group of my friends, we went down on campus to the dance. For some reason I left early—oh, I was chasing this little girl, that's what it was—so I went on home. That morning, my mom woke me and said James Cates, which was a friend, got killed. I said, "No, he was with me. I just left him." I'm thinking, it's just like an hour or something. ( ). Then it came on the news, it made big news on the radio and stuff. ( ). Because James Cates was just ( ) gold. Everybody loved the guy. So we got highly tee'd off. We got together. This was the first time a group that large of blacks was getting together. And we were going to do something.

We waited until trial. They went to trial. Like I said, the charges were dismissed. Blacks were mad now. Some people were having nice peaceful meetings, having marches. It wasn't enough. A lot of younger guys, younger than us, decided to take on a role, "OK, it's time to burn and stuff." They started burning. Chapel Hill was going up in smoke. So we were able to quiet it down, the guys that were with me in high school, we were able to talk to a lot of young guys. ( ). When they went to court, they got active time. I'm not sitting here saying two wrongs make a right, but we were beginning to see how the justice system really works.

But we had leaders. Howard Lee was the mayor. He came forth and he talked to us. But really their hands were tied, there was nothing they could do. They could just protest. But really there was no going to court or ( ).

BG: I take it that was a white motorcycle gang.

RN: Right.

BG: Do you remember the year that that happened?

RN: I'm taking a shot at it, but I believe it was around '72 or '73. I had to get with some of my classmates.

BG: Were there other things that stand out in your mind about growing up in Carrboro?

RN: Yes. For a long time in Carrboro, blacks could not walk past the railroad tracks out in Carrboro at night. I had a friend that was coming from ( ) and a group of whites beat him up real bad, real

bad, put him in the hospital and everything. When we moved to Lincoln Park, I had decided that, hey, I'm going to walk from home. I'm going to take on whatever I have to take on, and I'm going to let them stop me from walking. Things were beginning to change, anyway. It wasn't as bad as it was when my friend got beat up but—you had a side of the track you really had to stay on after dark.

But this went on for a long time. When we went to the high school football games, the stadium was located out in Carrboro. ( ) whatever the park is, out in Carrboro. We just had to walk back as a group. You ran the risk of being attacked by whites.

BG: Do you feel that your parents taught you racial prejudice or racial tolerance?

RN: I feel that, I don't know what you want to call it. Our parents taught us, "You better watch out or the white man is going to get you. The white man is a bugabear." But I couldn't say that my parents were prejudice. They were more cautious of the surroundings. I remember coming home from the grocery store one day with my father. Me and him were walking. I got ready to step off the sidewalk because this white couple were coming down the sidewalk. Then he held my hand, he said, "You don't step off."

Then I remember the story my momma told me about my uncle, her brother. He did not fear white people. As a matter of fact, he almost, like, tried to start something with them. She would tell me about this time, this white man, member of the Klan, and he knew it. He would go in there and make jokes about, "Where's your sheet?" and stuff like that. Another time, my momma was telling me that the police chief was accusing him of running white liquor, bootlegging and stuff. My uncle replied, "Place your order so your wife can have some." I'm really glad I go to know my uncle because there was no fear there. This man, when I talked to white people, black people about him, this was a man with no fear. He was teaching us, "Don't be afraid."

So we were never taught to hate anybody.

BG: Did your parents, your mother or your father, fear for your survival, with your rebelliousness?

RN: All the time. I mean, like I said, I was the kid that drove them crazy. I would stay out late, go to the place where they tell me not to go, and speak my mind, whatever that was on it. ( ). I remember when I was in this real back car wreck. My momma said she felt it before the police even came to the house to tell her I was in the hospital in a real bad car wreck.

She used to tell me, when I leave the house, she used to worry. I used to love to box. A lot of people would start fights amongst us. We would get drunk, swollen lip, you know. But yes, I kept my mom worried.

BG: I want to revisit Lincoln High School for a minute, and the football team. Did the football team get any help from the university?

RN: In my understanding, listening to people, I was told that the university donated a lot of equipment. I was told that they gave time for them to use the field to practice and all. I know that they had access to the "tin can," we used it call it back them. I really feel, just second-hand information, that they received quite a bit of help.

BG: Did any of the UNC football players come down and help out with the coaching?

RN: They came down. I don't whether they were coaching or knocking the hell out of our players. I used to look at them, big giant white boys. Back at the time when there wasn't any black players on the Carolina team. I think they came here, I don't know in what capacity.

BG: Are there any other things that you find stick out in your mind, that you haven't talked about at Lincoln?

RN: I got the teaching back in. Going back to Mr. McDougle, as the principal. Coach Peerman. Like I said they were strict. They were almost like they were second parents and stuff. And if you got in trouble they had what we called the "coal mine." Where they got the coal to keep the furnace going. When you got in trouble, that's where you went. I mean, you got down with your little white tennis on and when you came out you dirty because you're going to shovel that coal. That's one of the ways they disciplined.

Another way was Coach Peerman. He believed in fitness. He would take you to the outer limit zone, a hundred push-ups in the middle of the floor. He had a big palette—he would tell you to bend over and Coach Peerman was a big man. These things stick out. But at the same time, in today's time, they would say, "abuse." To us, it got our attention. I think it kept a lot of us out of jail. I think that's the reason a lot of us a still alive because they cared.

When I used to go down there—I remember one day, my shoulder was hurting, I couldn't shovel no more coal. And Coach Peerman said, "Well, let me get you cleaned up and I'll take you over to the hospital." And I'm thinking, ( ) [phone rings; tape stops].

OK, we're going back to the high school where we're talking about Mr. McDougle. Like I said at the beginning, seeing his office was so small, seeing his only duty was ( ) coffee, also we knew as students that his life was being drawn out of his body, that he had no play. He didn't even really have contact with the students like he had at Lincoln, you know. We could talk to him, but the conversation was all like, Miss Marshbanks stepped out and he got to go do his duty. That's the way we looked at it. When you talk to other students and they seem like they're seeing the same thing, it really makes you begin to think, whether than really happened.

BG: What about the teachers at the new school? Did you feel that you had an adequate number of black teachers at the new Chapel Hill High School?

RN: Absolutely not. I can't even remember the ratio, but there was not that many blacks. But what ( ), they had a lot of good white teachers, too. I can't sit here and say that all the white teachers were bad. As a matter of fact, the good outweighed the bad. My chemistry teacher, Mr. ( ), he was really into his students, black or white. Miss ( ), my English teacher in my junior year, she made sure that we were doing our work and bring it in. It wasn't no thing, just enough to get by. Like Miss ( ), I was telling you about. There was a lot of good teachers and stuff, but not that many blacks.

BG: What were the courses that the black teachers were teaching?

RN: Well, like I said, Miss Clemens she taught typing. I think there was another class but I can't remember. Then, Miss Pope, she taught home economics. Mr. Smith, he taught auto mechanics in shop. My memory escapes me on the black teachers that were there.

BG: What were the things that Principal C.A. McDougle did at Lincoln that made him so loved by the students and the community?

RN: First thing, when you first entered the building in the morning when you came to school. He would greet you at the door. He welcomed you, you know, "Good morning." He stayed there until the late bell rung. Then, when you came into the school, he'd greet you—and this was the ( ) all of us learned—"You're too late for today and too soon for tomorrow. Go back home but be here tomorrow." Also, he'd ask you about your grades and how you're doing, how's your teacher doing. He was genuine with this. He really wanted to know what was going on. He would joke with you, stand there in the hall and joke with you. You better not come to school with your shirttail out or a hat on. The dress code was strict: shirttails

in, no hats in the building. Also, in the classroom, he'd come and sit there. And then when he called you into the office, he'd blow into the mike on the intercom system, and everybody in the school knew you was in trouble. It wasn't like he was calling you into the office to congratulate you on something when he blew into that mike. You were going to be disciplined. Everyone in the whole school, even the teachers, knew you was in trouble. You tried to make that walk to his office as slow as possible. And when you got there, he chewed you out, but like I said it was out of love and he wanted to make sure you were doing the right thing.

BG: You mentioned about dress. Did you have a dress code at Lincoln? Did you have a code about how your hair needed to be done?

RN: You had a C.A. McDougle dress code. It wasn't in writing, it wasn't in black and white. But passing down the line, you knew: hair cut tight, shirttail tucked in. It wasn't like it was a uniform. But everything was neat. He drilled on this.

And also with me, I remember a couple of times I came to school with no lunch money. It seemed like he read me. And he gave me the money. And it wasn't like, you're going to pay me back tomorrow. He gave it to me.

He was a man that loved his students. He was a man that believed in his students. He wanted his students to strive to go further. His son and I became great friends. We were running partners. He was another partner of mine in crime. After Mr. McDougle retired, we used to go over to his house, and he used to ask me, "How's life treating you? How's you job going?" He still cared. And what amazed me, as the years went by, he still remembered his students by name.

Even Mrs. McDougle, I know we have not talked about her, but she was like a mother. She was a teacher. And she was a strong teacher. That's another ( ) a lot of love. Like I said, when her son and I started hanging out, it wasn't like a bad apple turning another apple bad; they gave a lot of respect and I gave it back to them.

BG: You mentioned the teachers caring for you. What about the way you treated the teachers at Lincoln? Did students talk back or was there respect for the teachers?

RN: Well, a few students got out of line, tried to talk back. But it'd take the teachers no time to get us back in line. They had the stick. And I mean, the real stick, corporal punishment. Call it what you want

it, but they had a way of quieting us down. And we had a lot of respect for the teachers, I guess because of the way they carried themselves. They were there to teach us.

Then, you got to look at it on the other hand, they were our parents because we were with them more than we were with our parents. But I mean, when we got home from school at three-thirty, we had contact with our parents until eight o'clock and then we was in bed and then we would go to school. But when you got to school at eight, you were there until three-thirty in contact with the teachers. So they became really substitute parents, the teachers. Friends. We loved them.

BG: I'd like you to contact several things at Lincoln High School and the new high school. You talked about dress, you talked about hair, you talked about how you interacted with the teachers with respect. Was it different at Chapel Hill High School?

RN: A whole lot of different. It came—seemed like the discipline just went away. When we got out to the new high school, we wore our shirttail out; go to the classroom with hats on, caps on; we talked back to the teachers. Ah, man, you could smoke on the school grounds. This was a definite no-no at Lincoln High School. We left the school grounds. At Lincoln, you dared not leave the school grounds. When you were there, you were there for the whole day unless you had a special excuse from your parents. Your parents knew where you were at when you entered the school. When you were not there, playing hooky, your parents knew.

At Chapel Hill High School, that went away. We started smoking and doing anything we wanted. We even got to the place where we started drinking. Coming back on campus, have a beer or two, and go to the classroom. It seemed like no one didn't care. And then we started doing more crazy things at the high school, like blowing up the commode, putting a cherry bomb in the bathroom and blowing that up. We started getting out of control. It was less contact made with our parents at Chapel Hill High School. ( ). I'm not saying that it was the teachers' fault because they had a lot of other students to deal with. Our classroom size grew larger. That took away a lot of personal contact.

BG: What was the ratio of student-to-teacher at the two schools?

RN: I'm going to take a shot at it, but you know. It seemed like at Lincoln, if you had fifteen in the classroom, it was large. Once you get to Chapel Hill High School, you start to get twenty-five, thirty. I could be wrong, but it was a lot larger classes and stuff.

BG: There was another question I wanted to ask you about interaction with your teacher and your parents. If you gave difficulty to a teacher at Lincoln High School [tape stops].

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE B

START OF TAPE 2, SIDE A

RN: Like I said, not only did they call our parents, they come to the house. They sit there in front of you and tell your parents everything that you did. For a long time ( ) we didn't have a telephone. The teacher caught on to all our little tricks; they'd just pin little notes on us. ( ). So teacher started coming to the house.

BG: Were there any other differences between Lincoln and Chapel Hill High School that you remember?

RN: Um, dating. I don't know why I want to throw this in, but when blacks and whites started dating, it was a well-kept secret. You know, because, on the black side, if we saw a black dating a white, he was an Uncle Tom and all that. And the white ( ). It was going on but it was under the table and stuff. At the beginning at Chapel Hill, white students and blacks did not mingle too well together. Other than that it was pretty much the same.

Well, you know, we go back to the lunchroom and stuff. There was separation in the lunchroom, with black heads on what side and white heads on the other. In the hallway, blacks on one side, and whites. I forgot to mention that the librarian at Chapel Hill High School, Miss Peacock, she was another that didn't believe in separation. When you came into the library, she wouldn't let blacks sit on one side and whites on the other. She made you mix. We used to try to skip going to the library because we wanted to sit where we wanted to sit.

BG: Let me ask you another question: you had mentioned earlier that if you had a book report to do, you didn't have any encyclopedia at home, that you had to go to the library but it was a long walk and you didn't have a whole lot of time. What did you have in your home? Did you have magazines? Did you have a newspaper? Were there any books there?

RN: Yes, we had magazines, old magazines, and we had old books. But they was outdated. It was hard to get a book report out of what we had at the house. Like I said, a lot of time back then the requirement was to use the encyclopedia, the dictionary. In the latter part of my senior year, we did get a dictionary. But thank god that later on, my brothers and them, a set of encyclopedias came into the house and my younger brothers were able to take advantage of that.

BG: What about your friends? Did your friends' homes have--?

RN: All of us were alike. I guess that's why we were so close back then because we had to get together and walk to the library. We had to do so many things together because the houses were just about identical—with the income, the work that our parents did. No, they didn't have encyclopedias.

BG: Were there other things that you can remember that stand out in your mind?

RN: My senior prom. That's when blacks and whites really got together on this night. We had this soldier come in from Fort Bragg to hang a big parachute in the gym so it could be decorated and stuff. Blacks and whites, we met that night outside of the building, did our little drinking, spiked up the punch bowl. All of a sudden, this white friend and I decided to tell us to cut the string to hold the parachute up. This other white friend ( ) a little smarter than the rest. He talked, he told what would happen, people would die, suffocate under this parachute. I remember we came so close, black and white, agreeing on cutting it, because the other guy that was so smart, we thought about throwing him under the parachute, too. ( ). We sit around and talk about it now, what could have happened. A lot of people could have got hurt. As I said, we were not out to hurt people. We were out doing crazy things and--. A few people did get hurt, but it was never our intention to go out and hurt people.

BG: Is there anything else that we haven't covered that you'd like to talk about, Raney?

RN: I'd like to go back and dwell on the death of James Cates, the one I told you that got killed by The Stormtroopers. The first time in my life, seeing the black community come together. I still can remember the funeral at St. Joseph's Church. The crowd was so huge, people were standing all outside. The ground was completely filled. It was the biggest funeral as of yet I ever seen. Also, it made people get closer. We had the firebomb issue. We had the riding issue. But it seemed like blacks and whites got a little bit close.

BG: So whites came to the service as well?

RN: Oh, yes. Whites at the service, whites when we were marching. When we held a meeting at the center, they were there. ( ), I met him. We met. A good friend of mine. We almost was in Greensboro when the CWP Five got killed by the Klan out there. We almost was there. I was late. Things like that still stand out. I'm hoping that it get better. We got the Martin Luther King celebration coming up. I began to see the crowd getting larger, began to find more mix into that. But that's it for me.

BG: One other area that I didn't ask you about was the influence of the church on your life. Whether you felt—well, let me just let it go at that.

RN: OK, brought up children, you were made to go to church. There wasn't no choice. I mean, from birth to about seventeen, no choice, you got to go to church. When I turned eighteen, my thing was, "I'm out of here. I'm out of church." Too many people bossing you. In church, all of them old ladies sitting three is your momma. I mean, mess up in church, you're through.

I remember this incident. Like I said, I ( ) getting in trouble. I went to church so regular that I learned the routine. Like passing the money plate. I figure if I sit in the back, about the time that plate gets to me I'm going to be loaded. I could get my movie money from this plate. I did it for about three Sundays, you know, five dollars, six dollars. This old lady, Miss Anna Kay, I love her to death—she gone on now but I love her to death—she kept watching me, I didn't know she was watching me. And boy, she caught me. The lady laid one of the best whippings you ever seen on me. And then she took me to my mom, and then there was another whipping. So when I got of age, ( ), "I'm out of here." So I stayed away from church for quite a while. I started doing wild, crazy things. Then, I don't know what made me decide to go back, but I went back. And enjoyed it.

I spend a lot of time trying to help a lot of kids that hang out on the block. Because they're being mislabeled. A lot of people call them drug dealers, drug users, but it's just a bunch of kids hanging out, communicating with each other. It's their meeting place. They get a lot of bad rap, so I try to hang out with them. Those that want to be in trouble ( ) I try to talk to them out of doing it.

Another person ( ) Revered Eubanks. He used to be the janitor over at the center. He's the minister now. He kept me out of a lot of trouble. I used to love to fight. On Friday night, I used to leave home to fight. One night I was over at the center, fighting. He came, Reverend Eubanks, and broke the fight up. He was talking to me. I looked at him and said, "Old man, don't touch me. You know who I am.

Don't touch me." This man grabbed me. It was like a pair of vice. Pulled me into the center, sit me down in a chair and started preaching to me. You know, about the "good" in me. I don't want to hear that; I want to hear the "bad." So after he finished all this talking and preaching, he said, "Monday morning, we're going to have some concrete trucks coming over here. We're going to pour ( ) concrete, and you're going to be here." I didn't say nothing. After feeling his grip, I said, "I better be cool." But I said to myself on the way out, "This man has got to be crazy. Thinking that Raney is going to get up on Monday, come over here and work for free." For some reason—I still can't understand it today—I was there at eight o'clock. ( ). He almost like a father to me. These things stand out in my life.

BG: Anything else you want to cover, Raney?

RN: That's it, Bob.

BG: That's a great ending. Thank you very much.

RN: You're welcome.

END OF TAPE 2, SIDE A

END OF INTERVIEW