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S. WEBB
CRISTBURG

Terry: Hello, Larry.

B: Just tell us who you are. Get you on tape, do a voice check.
We'll just do a voice check.

S. Sheyanne Webb Christburg.

B: And today is,

S: Wednesday, June 13th. 1990.

T. You pass.

L. Loud and clear, loud and clear.

B: Now how old were you, when Jonathan came?

S. I was about six years old.

B: Six years old. You have a pretty good memory of what life was like for a six-year old in Selma at that time?

S. In Selma at the age of six, life was like ah, livin in a home with a big family, very poor family, Mom and Dad, ; havin to go to work every day to make a living, for --not only themselves, but for the family as a whole. Ah, it was rough, in that it was always a struggle. Not just a struggle for ah, taking care of home, but a struggle with dealing with unjust situations, inequality issues, as related to black and white people.

Bill: Where did your mom and dad work?

S. In a factory; my mom and dad were working together in the same sewing factory.

Bill: What factory?

S: Cleveland Table Company.

B: And where were you living?

S: We were living in George Washington Carver Homes, which is a project area, ah, adjacent to the historic Brown's Chapel AME Church.

B: And ah, how come you--how come you got involved in that whole movement--6 yrs old

S: You know, it was a very situation in that being 6, you know, first question people usually ask is "How could you be so young, getting involved in the civil rights movement?" Well, ah, test to that was being in the type of environment that I grew up in in the George Washington Carver Homes. And having seen somethin very unique take place as I was going to school one day. In front of Brown's Chapel AME Church. And I could remember vividly you know, getting ready to cross the street to go to school, and I saw all of these people standing in front of Brown's Chapel Church, and what really made it so unique for me, and it my attention to it, was the fact that there were black and white people mingling together and, I could remember ah, on this particular day, that there were more ministers, I remember the white collars and the black shirt, and, and, and, this really, ah, I got real inquisitive about this, you know, you got black and white people together, this wasn't happening, in Selma, during this time. And as I began to continue to cross the street, trying to make my way to school, I turned around, and looked again, and I began to see these people move into Brown's Chapel Church, and I was so inquisitive about what I had seen on that particular morning that I just crossed the street back over, and I

followed them in the back of the church, knowing that I was supposed to have gone to school that day. And this is really--was my first opportunity, coming into ah, being with the civil rights movement, as a child.

B: This was when, I take it, when the, ah, people were preparing to march.

S: Sure, this is, this is when they had called upon the ministers, not only through the state of Alabama, but all over the United States. And, ah, ah, they were about to march, with reference to the voter rights, ah, getting people voting in Selma, blacks voting.

B: So, you just came into one of the meetings--

S: Sure, this was a meeting a a particularly a mass meeting on that particular morning.

B: Must have been a march, sometime there, probably, I would think.

S: Perhaps, they marched. Am, I remember, Josiah Williams getting up, speaking about the thousands of blacks who weren't registered in Selma, and even the teachers who weren't registered, and this was my first time hearing about voter registration; however, I did not quite understand what it was all about. Ah, but I also remember him talking about a man by the name of Dr. Martin Luther King; I did not know Dr. Martin Luther King; but the way in which he spoke of this man who would be coming to Selma to help get blacks registered. It brought more thoughts to my mind in terms of who was this man were, who he was, because he had to be such a great person, in terms of the way Josiah Williams spoke of him, and the way that audience responded to him. So this would be my question to my parents, once I had gotten home, and even to my teachers, once had arrived to school that morning. And they spoke so much of this man, as I had left the Church and gotten to school late that morning, I told my teacher why I was late, and she was very concerned about what was happening there, and she was just inquiring about who was there, what they were talking about, and this was my excuse, you know, by the mere fact of me explaining to her what I saw and what I heard. It got my way into school without really being punished. And, and I spoke ah, to her about, who was this man they talked about, Dr. King, and she began to tell me, that shouldn't be important to you, you didn't need to be over in that mess anyway. So, after I had come home that evening from school, I talked to my mom and dad about the same thing, and I also inquired about this man, and they kind of frowned on, not only me being at that particular meeting, but what was about to take place in Selma. And this only aroused my inquisitiveness. I wanted to know more, because my questions weren't really being answered. And, Rachel and I began to talk about what I had experienced that particular morning, and the next thing that I was really interested in, really was meeting Dr. King.

B: Um hum. And when did that take place?

Sheyanne: That took place, ah, some days, or perhaps a week later, because, he had come to town, and I remember the

first night that this meeting had taken place. First of all there was talk of Dr. King coming to town, and they had put out some leaflets, and it was a problem with me goin, I had informed my parents that I wanted to be there, and somehow, I --in spite of what they had told me, I made my way to Brown's Chapel., AME Church. And it wasn't that far from my home, just a few steps away. And ah, and when I had gone into that church that night, I sat in the back of the, of the pews, the same pew that I had sat on the first morning, on my way to school, and, and they talked about this man, and he wasn't on the pulpit, and I was just back, just trying to look and see, you know, which man was Dr. King, and all of a sudden, you know, there was a speaker on the podium, and the people began to stand on their feet and clap their hands, and there was this man stepping in with his entourage of people, and and, it was just this, all of a sudden, excitement, that exuberated in the whole church. And began to stand up, and I said, "This must be Dr. King," you know, and it was just the way in which he approached the pulpit, his eyes were just gleaming, he was smiling, looking among his audience, and then, as he sat down in his seat, the people began to calm down a little more, and, and they began to sing the freedom songs, I began to clap my hands and stamp my feet, it was just a moment of excitement for me, something that I did not quite understand what was happening, but I knew it was something different, I knew it was something unique, and I had finally got to meet that man that they were talking about, and it was a certain type of spirit that wanted me to even get to know him better. And I just couldn't wait to get home and talk to my parents about--you know, me having the opportunity¹ to see this man. And that particular night I remember, there was a lady there, by the name of Margaret Moore, she was one of the teachers who stood out, you know¹ she was one of the first black teachers who stood out, and I was afraid to go home, because I I was there too long, plus I wasn't supposed to be there, and I asdked her to take me home to keep me from being punished, but even again, after me getting home, I began to talk about what I had seen, and having the opportunity to to have seen Dr. King, and it brought so much excitement to me and the way I explained it to my parents, that was an excuse for me not to get a whipping. (all laugh)

B: Now your parents, ah, you actually brought your parents into --

S: Sure, it took a little time. It had gotten to the point where I was a disobedient kid, a regardless of what they told me, I still was determined to be involved, or, to be present at the church when they had meetings. I remember, several meetings, um, I had gone to, and it got to the point where they knew where I was, they weren't gonna come out to get me, but they were always waiting for me to come home. And, there were times when I was spanked for it, orpunished for it., but I overcame that, because the consistency with me being involved, and the determination that was there.

And, the only thing that I can attribute to, me being such a determined kind at that particular time, to be involved with something that I did not quite understand, was after having the opportunity to see Dr. King, and after I saw him, my next point was to meet him personally, and and I remember, that moment, Rachel and I would always usually play out in front of Brown's Chapel Church, and I remember we were out, on this particular day, playing in front of Brown's Chapel Church, and, you know, during that time, you didn't see all the beautiful cars comin through the project area where we lived, and this, this beautiful car, it was a black car, drove up, it was really clean, shining, and it was an unusual car in our neighborhood, and it drew attention to us, and that car drove up in front of Brown's Chapel Church, and there was another pretty car behind it, and after they had driven up in front of Brown's Chapel Church, there were about five people to get out of, it was a big car, and there were about three people to get out of the other car, and then I said to Rachel, "There's Dr. King, there's Dr. King," and we ran toward him, and the other men that were around him, you know, they was kinda close up on him, and they were making their way into the back of Brown's Chapel Church and all I wanted to do was grab his coat-tail, and that's what I did, and he acknowledged us, that particular morning. And as he acknowledged us on his way in, there was one person who was among him, who stated, you know, we could leave now. because they were about to have a meeting of some kind. And Dr. King said to him, "No, let them stay." And ah, and we went on in the meeting with them and we sat down and they began their meeting, and then we left out of the meeting and came back-- we were going in and out. And after this meeting had ended, on this particular morning, Dr. King spoke to us, and he said, "What do you want?" We didn't know what he was saying or what he meant, and he said, "What do you want?" And we just hunched our shoulders. And then he said, when I ask you, when I come back, to Selma, and I ask you what do you want, you reply to me, freedom! And then he said, Now what do you want? And then we said, Freedom! He said, What do you want? And we said, Freedom! And he said, Say it loud, and we said, Freedom!! And then he said, When do you want it, we hunched our shoulders again. He said, when I ask you when, you want it, you say, now! And then he said, what do you want? We said freedom! He said, when do you want it, we said, Now! So he said, remember this when I come back. And, and that particular moment he was leaving

we couldn't wait until he got back, We was just excited about the moment, uh, getting our first personal experience with Dr. King. And, this was something that we took home again, to our parents, about Dr. King having to tell us what we had, ah, what we had experienced that day. And, I remember personally the next mass meeting that I had gone to, I was sitting on the front row, and ah, as usual, you know, for most of meeting, I remember the people would always be singing. And, they would always be praying, and I remember sitting on that front row singing, and trying to catch on the freedom songs, and, and one of my favorites songs had become Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn me Around. And, and I remember Dr. King coming in to this particular meeting, and, and it reflected back for the first time that I saw him make his entry there. As he had come to the pulpit, the people began to stand on their feet again, and pat their hands, and all of a sudden, everybody began to sing this song, My Eyes Have Seen the Glory, Of the coming of the Lord, I didn't know this song, as Dr. King made his way up to the pulpit, I was sitting on the front row, and within 2 minutes, I ended up on the pulpit with Dr. King! And ah, at this particular meeting, Rachel wasn't there, and, and ah, you know, we talked about what had happened on this given night, and there was a march to have taken place in Selma, and this is what he spoke about. That particular night. And I went and I talked to Rachel about it, most times, when I was present, Rachel obeyed her parents, more, than I did; I would always look forward to talking to Rachel about what I had experienced, and I asked Rachel was she gonna march, and she said, "No!." She didn't want to get a whippin', and she asked me was I gonna march, and I told her yes. And we went back and forth, talking about what could possibly happen to me, she was askin me, was always a fearfactor, we would always have conversations about what would possibly happen, in case, I march, participate, or what my parents would do. And, ah, as, as things went on, I did march, and I remember, um, marching to the city to the courthouse, and I remember being taken from the courthouse, by an adult, because some people were being arrested, that day, and I remembered having been brought back home to my parents, and they told my parents it was their responsibility to keep me out of that mess. And, um, I remember another--

B: It was white people that did that?

Sheyanne: Right. I was brought home, by a white by a white, ah, policeman. Um, on the other hand, ah, I remember when ah, I met Jonathan Daniels. During the time that I met Jonathan Daniels, it was a time that we as children, as even as families, living next door to the West, as we were close-knit, that we weren't accustomed to having a relationship with a white person, period. And I remember when Jonathan had come into Selma, and I remember him staying with the West's, and in that most of our activities from house to house--we were living next door to each other-- a lot of my time was spent at the West's home.

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And I remember when Jonathan had come into the West's home, how he took us on as if we were his children, and he exposed us to a lot, during his stay in Selma. And there was always --- you know, things that he would be trying to teach us. And one thing that I remember about him most--well really, there were two things: I used to suck my fingers, I used to have a habit of sucking my two fingers. And, and he was the only person who never had a problem with me sucking my fingers, he would always--when people other people would tease me, he would always say, "Don't bother her, she will grow out of it," You know. And he would always encourage me not to be bothered about it when other people teased me about it because I'm going to grow up, I'm going to be a big girl. And I'm gonna grow out of it. And the other thing that I remember so well about Jonathan was his love for humankind. He always used to take us for rides, you know, we weren't accustomed to going to a lot of places; Jonathan would be that person who would take us different places, he was the first person to take me to Hayneville. It was my first time going to Hayneville. And I remember him going into various homes, talking to different people, and it was always one thing that he tried to teach us and impressed upon us, was to have love for your sisters and brothers. And he wasn't only talking about for your brothers and sisters in your family, your brothers and sisters being black; but black and white. And he always told that even though white people may hate us and do us wrong, still love them. And I remember that the most about him. And this is the way in which he really lived. He was just that kind of person who came into our homes as if he was a part of our family. He was always a joyful person, ah, (BEEP) I can really remember the time when I heard that he had passed. I was confused; it was a moment of shock, and it was a very confusing situation, in that I didn't understand why such a person like Jonathan who had come down to Selma to help black people, and being the type of person that he was, and being the type of person that he was and that he had come into our home, being part of our family, someone would kill him. And, the only thing--you know, it took me some time to really, really understand, and I always reflected on what he had taught us, and that was, to love your sisters and your brothers, and not hate in spite of. And I think that is what really carried me through not only his death, but Dr. King's death, and those others who were footsoldiers for the movement. And ah, I just, you know, right now, when I go back, to the Hayneville area, I often think about Jonathan. Ah, he was just an extraordinary person. Very extraordinary. And he was a person who came into my life at such an early age, and and taught me those things that I could build on, right now, that have helped to motivate me and understand more, about what was happening then, as well as what's happening now.

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TAUGHT US

① 3RD ON MURDER OF J.R.'S DEATH

Larry: Cut. I sneaked in a shot there, Sheyanne, I hope you don't mind.

S: Oh, no, uh, uh.

L: It was the convenient thing to do.

Sheyanne: I hope I'm doing all right, I'm just---

B: You're doing great.

Sheyanne: Huh?

Larry: This is like an extension of the book. Starting to get more insights from a kid's point of view.

Bill: Yeah.

Larry: That's great.

Bill: Now, did he go into your house, as well as the Wests?

Sheyanne: Sure. Sure, you know, during that time, it was like ----- every freedom fighter Rachel and I could get into our homes, and of course her father, Rachel's father, played an intricate role.

B: Alonzo?

S: Alonzo-- would bring in freedom fighters to live in, and then I would be the person to bring the people into my home and I remember the first time that I brought somebody, I didn't even ask my mom, I just told them they could come stay with us. And because of the the intricate role that the West family played in bring people into their home, it only enhanced and motivated and encouraged my family to do so. And all the people that were staying at the West home and my home, we were just interacting together as a family.

L: How close did you live to each other?

S: Right next door, we could step out one door and go right into the other.

L: How did you make contact with these people who; were coming into Selma to let them know that could stay with you guys?

S: Through the mass meetings, you know, every night, at the mass meetings that I would attend, they would announce, you know, those families, or people who don't mind people staying with them, you know, you would just go up to them and ask them-- I went up to people and say, "You need somewhere to stay?" Because some people had their sleeping bags, and some people were just there; you--you you knew those people who had come from other places. And I would come up to them and say, "You like to stay in my house?" and I would actually just take them home with me.

L: I was wondering--you said before, Sheyanne, about --you don't mind, Bill, if I jump in? I have a question about --do here, the way things are structured in the South, it seems to me, like you were saying, just normal, healthy relationships between the races seems almost impossible, or difficult. So how was it when people were coming down, that, didn't have a problem with that? Just, I mean, it must have been, especially for you kids, it must have been great.

Sheyanne: It was--I mean, it really put another picture, it drew another picture for us, as children, because, you know, that is one of the reasons --I would attribute--the main reason why I got so inquisitive, because you know everywhere my mom and dad used to take me, either we had to be on the

black side-- there just wasn't any mixing, at all. TAnd this is really what we were being taught. You know, and when we saw that black and white races coming together, to me that was a very unique picture; and you know, from that first initial -----time that I saw that on my way to school, that was one stage, you know, that was just--there was still barriers there, you know, and I saw this every day. And even in the schools, you know, from my own teachers, I can feel it, and I guess I got more prone to really realizing some things not not quite understanding everything, but realizing things from a picture standpoint, what I was seeing, from that day, and then as I grew into the movement, going to the mass meetings, and began to see whites come from all over the United States, poor whites, middle-class whites, rich whites, then the picture, you know, it came together for me even better. And then as I began to see the changes there and the changes that my parents were going through; because, it took them some time to deal with the movement itself. And I think that I can attribute to that in that I forced it upon them, you know. Ah, with me taking a lead with just disobeying them, and getting involved with going to meetings, and and listening and I think most of all what changed them was when I was bringing people home. And they could just not turn them down. You know, they could not turn them down. And it just got to a point where our whole floor in the living room was crowded, sleeping bags, and we had given up some rooms upstairs, because we were a large family, we had six bedrooms. And then, what even enhanced that more was, we had neighbors who were doing the same thing. And it brought about, not only a better understanding, but a better relationship. So it was, it was, it was a real experience that I don't think nobody could have experienced it, unless you were there, and getting it from a child's standpoint, it was more, it was even more stronger, you know. I just, you know, a lot of times when I'm speaking to people, especially children, about my experience with the civil rights movement, and Dr. Martin Luther King, a lot of times ah, I think they enjoy the emotional standpoint, the way in which I-- You know, I don't confess to be the best speaker, but I speak from within, and I think with them seeing me speaking from an emotional standpoint, to really try to thrust upon them and share with them and try to put a picture there for them, how it was, what it was like and what, what took place. They can feel it, just through me, you know, talking with--and it's what I feel all the time. It's just a natural thing, because it was different, it's unique, you just had to be there, it was a different type of spirit, and I just wish for it today. You know, I see the problems that are existing in our communities, I see the political issues, but there's nothing like it, there's nothing like it, I have not seen that type of spirit, I often get interviewed when they have these commemorations, and these anniversaries, you--there is a spirit, but not that kind of of spirit, that exuberated in

our communities, in that church, with the people who were there, and I think what--who all brought it together were not only the people but the leader. You know, and the philosophies, and the theories, that were taught during that time, because, it could have been a DIS-AS-TER. You know, during that time frame. And even though there were problems with the various organizations with their particular, ah, thinking, on how they felt they should have been handled, --but thank God for Dr. Martin Luther King, things were handled in a non-violent way, and people believed in him, believed in his philosophies, and and they were carried out. And I I, you know, it was just--it is something I will never forget.

B: How unusual is Jonathan in that he stayed? How many others stayed like he stayed?

S: There weren't a lot of ministers who had come to Selma and stayed, as long as Jonathan did. And Jonathan---you know, it was a certain type of spirit, certain type of dedication, and determination, even though I was young, Jonathan Daniels was young, too, during that time, and everything that he shared you could tell it was from his heart, you know, and I think, it was even times when Jonathan needed to leave and he didn't leave, you know!! Jonathan had a mission, and he wanted to accomplish that mission, not only--you know, I I can recall, I can recall, so, so well, Jonathan not only coming to Selma to to be involved in the civil rights movement, but once he had become ah, involved with the movement and getting to know people in the community, and become a part of our families, it was just like, you know, he he was just there to do a mission and before he left he was going to get that mission accomplished, in spite of what he had to do. And you can see it, you can see it, it was a part of him; the time that he spent with us, he did so many things that he didn't have to do; and, ah, I just--he was just extraordinary person.

B: Now what would you say he thought his mission was?

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*SHEYANNE REEB
CHRISTOUR*

Sheyenne: (BEEP BEEP) You know, I think it wasn't necessarily one particular mission. I recall, you know, from a child's standpoint, Jonathan talking to people, sharing the same type of philosophies, things that he shared with us as children. And one is--you know, back during that time, for you to really understand, a lot what was happening, especially when it came to injustices, inequality, violence, black and white, you had to have faith. And you had to have, you know, belief in God. And if you didn't have that, there's no way you can really understand and you could be a part of, and, I think one of Jonathan's mission--it had to be to share with people to have that faith, to keep that faith, and and to love, and another mission could have been --and I know he did this so much, going in the counties, going to people's home to help get people registered to vote--and back during that time there were so many obstacles in dealing with people of that kind. With having to go in homes and try to encourage people, those people who couldn't read, those people who couldn't write, those people who were afraid to lose their jobs, you know. So he had quite a few missions there. And I think that a lot of his missions were (camera noise) accomplished, and I think for --without Jonathan, especially in the county areas, especially in Hayneville, Lowndes County, a lot of those people wouldn't have come to the forefront. And understand a lot about not only voter registration but the love of mankind.

END

B: Um-hum. What was your first demonstration? I wanted to ask you that. And what did you feel?---I remember from the book, one thing that struck me was young people having to face death. When you are six or seven years old, that's-- I read those passages to my classes, and I was kind of struck that anybody --you know, Jonathan had to do that, but he was 26, and I guess everybody had to do it--

S: Everybody, it was--you know, it's like I mentioned before--if you were there, I ever had to be a part of--not a part of, because if you a part of, even if you fear in your heart, you still had that determination. And, having to be involved in the movement, in Selma at that time, anything could possibly happen, you would know this. You would know this. Many times it was expressed. That's why I love the song, Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around. And there was another song, "and before I'll be a slave, I'll be buried in my grave, and go home to my Lord, and be free," and this really how these people felt, this is how we felt, and even though I was young, I had that determination --it was instilled in me through the spirit. And through what I heard, and what I seen. And above all, you know if I had it, the other people that were there had to have it. Because any time that you got on the streets to march, and anytime that you met in in Brown's Chapel Church, you--there were bomb threats, --anything could possibly happen, and as a matter of fact, there were things happening, people were getting killed. James Reeb, another minister.
Bill: Um-hum.

Sheyanne: This was in the process. Other people were getting killed, for the same struggles, right in the city of Selma and across the country. But people still had that determination. And I remember even writing about mine. I wrote my own funeral arrangements--I had that that determination. And it's a very unique thing again --I cannot attribute that feeling, that motivation, and continuing in the struggle, with nothing but the faith of God.

B: one thing that strikes us too is the role of the music--

S: Well, I'll tell you, the role of the music played an important part in the movement. And I think it heightened the spirit the motivation in that faith, with what had to be dealt with, the barriers, and the problems that had to be dealt with. And that's why it was an important part of the agenda. With everything that took place, in the movement in Selma. Everytime there was a mass meeting, people prayed, they prayed and they prayed, they sung, they sung, and they sung. And those songs were not just songs that they just sung and hollered out. Those songs are songs that you felt. And the words in those songs had such great meaning. So they played an important role in the --???) And everytime that people marched, you would hear those same songs, as you marched. So, you know, right now they are important today.

L. We filmed and taped a SNCC meeting at Rolling Chapel at Dartmouth. And it was a whole evening of the civil rights songs. And, it was wonderful, and --

B: So we're going to use some of that. Who was leading that, I forget his name.

L. Watkins.

B: Watkins. I believe his name was. Yeah, he could really sing, that was great.

S. There were so many different song leaders during that time that I remember, ah, Scott Neverkechne(?) he wrote the Berlin Wall; he was here on the pass at this last anniversary.

S: What did you do after Jonathan's death; I mean how did your role in the civil rights movement change after that, or...?

S: I think after Jonathan Daniels' death, ah, it strengthened me; it made me stronger and also it gave me a better understanding of what was really happening. You know, in the movement. It didn't just impress upon me you know, in a short time; it took some for me to just deal with the fact with Jon having to pass under the circumstances, that he passed. I think I could have, ah, I heave dealt with his death much better, you know, and I'm quite sure his family could have too, if it was a , he was in a car accident or something else. But it took a while, and I often think as I continued in the movement, as to why he had to die. Along with those things that he tried to instill in us. To love your brother and sister, in spite of---

B: And later on you went, eventually, I guess, --how old were you, you went to Tuskegee.

S. Sure, I went to Tuskegee Institute.

B: And what year was that, when you started?

S: That was in 1975.

B: 1975. And before that? Like, I'm trying to --because from your book, we don't get much of an idea --

S: Before that, I was at, ah, Selma High School I was the only person out of my family to first go into the integrated system.

B: Uh-huh.

S. Right. So, I did not get the opportunity to go into an all-black Junior High, high school. I went in on the integrated system, when desegregation had to come about. And that was very, very interesting.

B: How did that happen? Could you describe that?

S: Well, first of all, in that I had already had some experiences, and some teachers, with the movement, it helped me out a lot with some of the things that I experienced when I had first gone to Selma High School. I was among, ah, I was the only black in six of my classes. And things were very unfair. Lot of times, because I was still involved in the movement, I would be intimidated, not only by my teachers, but by, you know, the students that were in my class.

B: Cause they were all white.

S: They were all white. Also, ah, I was kicked, I was spat on, several times, I --points were taken from my grades, for various petty reasons. I remember being suspended twice, parents having to take me back, because of me having to march, I remember one I guess unique situation is when I had to get ready to march from Selma to --ah, the poor people's march. And my parents had taken me back to school twice already, and they informed me that if I would march on this march on a school day, I would be suspended, for two weeks, and it could be some other things that could be involved with that. And they informed my parents, and my parents really were on top of me. You know, about staying in school, ah, my grades had dropped, but I was still determined to march, and I marched, and I remember ah, once I had started marching, well, let's back up-- I left a note, on my parents' washer, saying that I had to march--(laughs)--I was just explaining, going into a little more detail (laughs) about why I had to do it and I even put on the note, "Even if I have to get a whipping and will be suspended, I'm willing to do that." I remember, after arriving in Montgomery, at St. Jude's, there was an announcement over the intercom, that, my parents were there, and for me to come to the back of the stage. And I was very scared at that particular time, because I could just see my father's expression. And, I went to the back of the stage, and there my parents were, and their expression really--it just told the story. And they didn't say anything much to me with the exception of, "You got to leave." And I began to cry. For

several reasons--not just being afraid of being whipped, and during this time my daddy was really whipping me; but I was also very disenchanted with the fact of just having to leave. And, as I cried in the back seat of the car on our way home, my parents didn't say much about--midway from Montgomery to Selma; my mom told me that I was suspended from school for two weeks. And they didn't know whether they would be able to get me back into school or not. My father didn't say anything. Got back home, and I was afraid of getting a whipping, and but I didn't that night, and I remember the next morning, my dad saying his first words to me, and that was, "We gonna get you back in school." And at that particular moment, I began to feel that they were coming in my direction. You know, I don't know whether it was what he had said, or how things, how they had dealt with me from that night up until the next morning, and I remember my father and my mom talking to different people, asking how they should deal with the situation, but I was out of school for two weeks, and as a result of that, I did get back in school, but it did , --it was a part of me having to fail. (end of side A)

Keep it in mind, I wanted to be involved with people helping people, and after I had gone to ah, Tuskegee, I decided I wanted to go into political science, so I had a social work and a minor in political science.

B: Just kind of filling out the profile--and then after you graduated --

S: After I graduated I came back to Selma, started working with um, as a probation officer for a while, and then I started school, working on my master's here in Montgomery, and I moved to Montgomery, and I started working with the state here a while, and after I worked with the state, I decided I wanted to go onto my own business, and I opened up a modelling program; started doing fashion shows, and got married, afterhaving gotten married, I --my husband and I opened up a beauty salon, and now I'm working with--I have a modelling program, we have a beauty salon, and I'm working with a youth program, here in the city of Montgomery. And with most of the things that I do with my company, it --ah, requires me to work with many youth all over the city of Montgomery. And I enjoy that.

B: I remember you said something about you go in and give presentations--

Sheyanne: Sure, I do several workshops, I give book presentations, do speaking engagements here locally and abroad-- but I really enjoy working --I work with--I have a part-time job with the state, with the high-risk substance abuse program. In which, i don't have to deal with the drug abuser, but with the children, to prevent them from being on drugs.

B: What do you hope to teach the children, as you tell your story, what is it that you--

S: Well, my, advice, most times, when I end my speeches, I

like to encourage students, one thing, to read. And write. A lot of young people not interested in reading and writing, in most cases, unless they are encouraged by their parents. On the other hand, I believe that once a child began to read and write at an early age, it will heighten their consciousness, not only with what's happening in their communities on a local basis, but all over the world. And my other thing, that I like to give them advice on, is the importance of them getting an education. This is one of the things that Dr. Martin Luther King taught me at an early age, and I used to always hear him speak, about the importance of black people especially getting an education, regardless of how poor you were, and I guess I could attribute that to him, because I came out of a poor family, and I went to one of the most expensive universities in Alabama. But, I think with those two elements, it could really promote or take an individual where they want to go.

B: Larry, do you have any more

L: No, why don't we take a break for a minute.

B: Yeah. Then we might ask you to repeat --one I'd like you to do is to tell the story about Dr. King giving you, what do you want--that's a great--we could film that, and maybe--

L: I did too, Bill, um. (break in recording)

B: On the way down, New York, and DC, and, coming back, --

S: So, you all gonna interview Miss Foster, that's gonna be interesting.

B: That'll be fun, yeah.

S: Yeah, Miss Foster.

Terry: Really great interviews. I haven't met her, he has, he says she's quite interesting.

S: You haven't met Miss Foster? Oh, you, you gonna say the same thing, after you meet her. (laughs) She's something else.

B: I went in the office, and, ah, white woman comes in and registers, and hadn't voted since 1972, and Mrs. Foster says, "You haven't voted since 1972?" Then shoe goes on and gives her a big hassle, "Why didn't you vote?"

S: Oh, she is something else. She'll probably put her jack^{ET} on, you know, with her names, autographs, and stuff. She gonna give you what you need and want. (laughs) She's interesting, she's something.

B: OK, well we're going to ask you about the --King gave you that, ah, "what do you want?" kind of question. If you could do that again. Then we'll ask you one question about Jonathan.

L: My favorite part of your book, I don't know if it happened to you or Rachel--is when after bloody Sunday, one of you is sitting on the porch steps, feeling really down and out, because --it's implied, you just can't trust people any more, and if people are going to behave this way towards each other, then it's a rotten world, and one of you saw Jonathan coming across the lawn, with a suitcase, and he saw you or Rachel sitting there, and said, "What's wrong?" and you said, I don't feel like playing with the other kids.

And he came over and picked one of you up, and started spinning you around, till you started giggling, and got you back into it. "Now, do you feel better?" "Well---" "Now do you feel better?" And that, you know, Jonathan just knew about kids, didn't he?

S: That probably was Rachel but, he had such an impact on you, he was always the type of, ah, --Jonathan was always the type of person who wanted to see you happy. And he did those things to make you happy (BEEP) You know; like with most kids, it was always, you know, during that time anybody that took you to the store, you look up to 'em (laughs) and Jonathan was one, you know, he would take us to the store all the time, buy us candy, buy us bubble gum, buy us ice cream, and when he used to take us riding, he would always stop and ask, "Do we have ice cream today? Who would like ice cream?" And all of us would yell, and-- another thing that was very unique about Jonathan was that he was no stranger to no one. You know, there were a lot of kids living in the project areas, and Jonathan took on everybody, anybody that he saw, that was young, they always drew his attention, you know, he drew his attention to them. And he would just, you know, it was just those moments when he would give that special attention to you, and be concerned about how you felt, you know. And at the same time he was always teaching you something.

B: Now, tell us about the time that he told you about your fingers?

S: Oh, Jonathan-- you know--I always had a problem with people teasing me about sucking my fingers--my mom and dad had tried so many different techniques, in terms of trying to get me to stop, and when I used to be in front of some of my friends, you know, as a kid, and even some adults, they would tease me about sucking my fingers; and Jonathan was the ONLY person who never had a problem with me sucking my fingers; he would always tell me that "You'll grow out of it," he'd say, "Don't let them bother you, you're gonna grow out of it." So I could always be comfortable with sucking my fingers in front of Jonathan.

B,T: (chuckle)

L: That could be the heart of the film. (all laugh) It might change the whole direction of the movie. Still got half a tank here. How'd that happen?

B: Well, we were going to ask you if you could tell us about meeting King. Particularly that point where you really get to meet him and, what do you want now, we want--that story is great. Take your time.

S: Take my time?(BEEP BEEP)

It was always that next moment when we would get the opportunity to meet Dr. King; this man that so many people had spoke of. And I remember Rachel and I one morning playing in front of Brown's Chapel AME Church, and as we were playing there were two beautiful cars that had driven up in front of Brown's Chapel. And this was unusual in our community, and as these cars had driven up, there were

1st of
Rachel

✓
2nd
WRCEL

several men who had gotten out of the cars, and there was this one man that the other men were crowded around, and he began to walk, we began to say, "That must be Dr. King, Rachel," and we walked up to him, and I began to grab his coattail, and he spoke to us with a smile. And as they began to go in the back of the church, we began to follow Dr. King, and one of the men said to us that we could leave now, and he stopped him and say, "No. Let them stay." And that was encouraging for us and it was also exciting and we followed them into the church and they began to have a meeting, and we were in and out of the meeting, because we wanted to make sure we talked with Dr. King again before he had left.

So, we had come back into the meeting as they began to adjourn their meeting; Dr. King began to walk outside, and he began to ask us, what did we want? And we began to hunch our shoulders, because we didn't know what he was talking about. And he asked us again, "What do you want?" And we hunched our shoulders again. And he said, when I ask you what do you want, you reply "Freedom!" So he said, "What do you want?" And we said, "Freedom." And he asked us again, "What do you want?" And we said, "freedom." He said, "Say it louder," we said, "FREEDOM!" And then he said, "When I ask you when do you want it, you say, 'now!'" And he said, "What do you want?" And we said, "FREEDOM!" "When do you want it?" We said, "Now!" And he said, "Now, the next time that I come and I see you I want you to remember that." And this was something very exciting for Rachel and I, because Dr. King had not only taught us something, but he had given us some attention, and the way they had spoken of this man, I knew he had to be a great man, was like a Santa Claus coming to town; and I went home, and I talked to my parents about it, it was even funny to them, and we just couldn't wait to see Dr. Martin Luther King come back to Selma again.

B: Cut. Thank you, great, I think we're done.

L: I hate to go, in a way. Lot of questions, wish we had more time, you know?

S: (She laughs)

L: So you're going to run for mayor?

S: Oh, I'm thinking about it, just thinking--I'm thinking about it. Just the opportunity.

T: Selma needs a good person.

B: Sounds like it needs a healer, you know?

S: (laughs) Needs more than a healer.

B: Somebody to bring it together.

L Well, going to take us a few minutes to break down, here. Well, we decided to spend the rest of our evenings, in ??? in Montgomery.

S: Well, I'm going to be in touch, because I'm interested in getting a copy of that --audio and video of the memorial.

B: I'll make a list of what you want.

L: That's a good idea.

S: I'll need a picture of him, too, you know, the picture, please?

L: Its a nice picture. I didn't mean to tantalize you. (end of tape)