

Terry Gosa: *Two Wheelings*

Michael Nobel Kline: My name is.

Terry Gosa: My name is Terry Lamont Gosa. And I was born June 3, 1953, in Wheeling, West Virginia at the old North Wheeling Hospital. Which is really interesting because there were only two hospitals at that time. There was Ohio Valley and -- Don't kick me in the knee! That's all right. Where was I?

Carrie Nobel Kline: Two hospitals.

MNK??? Ohio. Two hospitals. Ohio Valley.

(005) TG: Okay, there was two hospitals. There was Ohio Valley Hospital and -- You're not anxious about this are you? There was two hospitals. There was Ohio Valley Medical Center, and there was North Wheeling Hospital. My mother was a teenage mother. In fact, my mom was 18 when I was born. And at that time, in 1953, if you didn't have medical insurance, you had to go to Ohio Valley Hospital. So what my mom did -- She got some friends of hers together who knew a man in Pennsylvania who was a coal miner. And at that time it was really common for them to switch medical cards. So if someone was going to have a baby and you wanted to have the baby at a fairly decent hospital, you get one of your friends to get one of their friends who was a coal miner to send their medical card down. And then your, your mom can go in the hospital and have the baby. The only down side of that is that you ended up getting that man's name. And so the man's card who my mom used, his name was Marshall Gosa. And so that's how I became Terry Lamont Gosa. And that was on June 3, 1953. So --

(020) ????: ...

MNK: Running.

CNK: Do you know who he was?

TG: Marshall Gosa? He was a coal miner, and he lived in Coatsburg, Pennsylvania. And when I

was about, oh, 23 or 24, a friend of mine contacted me. And he said, "You know, you really need to go and see Marshall Gosa and see some of the other Gosas. Even though you're not related to any of them, you should go meet them," you know. And I said, "You know, that's a great idea." And we had all got ready to go, planned to go on a Sunday, and he called me that Friday. And he said Marshall Gosa had died. And so I never got the opportunity to meet Marshall. I didn't go to the funeral. I never got to meet his wife, his family, his kids. Even though the only thing I have of his is his last name.

MNK: That's good. Could you talk a little bit about a, some of your earliest memories of the neighborhood where you grew up?

(034) TG: Oh, yeah, sure.

MNK: Some of your blood relatives.

TG: Well, let's see. When I was six years old -- I have a older sister Henya. Let me just tell you a little bit about my immediate family. I have a older sister Henya. I have a younger brother Ricky. My mom's name is Ruth. And lady that raised us, her name was Marie Terry. My mom was a single parent. And so she lived with her friend. I can't think of her, what her friend's name was. But Marie and John Terry used to baby sit kids in the neighborhood. And when I was six, my sister Henya was ten and my brother Ricky was five. My mom took us to the Terrys like she did all the time. You know, she was always taking us, dropping us off at the baby sitters and -- That time, most of the black women in Wheeling were domestics as they were across the country. Well, this particular day --

(047) It was the week before Christmas, I remember. And we all packed up and went to Mrs. Terry's. Mrs. Terry was about 65 years old, and her husband John was probably 66. Well, my mom left us there. And I can remember her telling us, she said, "I'll be right back." Well, she never came back. And she abandoned me, my sister and my younger brother Ricky. But we were really fortunate because the Terrys were really great people. Their hearts were probably a lot bigger than that strawberry. And they took us in. Now if you can imagine two people in their sixties taking in a ten year old girl, a six year old boy and a five year old boy. All with different names. But anyway, they took us in, and they loved us and raised us just like they were -- And you know it's interesting -- I can never -- People

have asked me this, they say, "Well, did they ever like, complain?" I can never remember them saying, "Boy, I wish your mom would come back." Or I can -- I

(059) didn't even know they were old till I got older. You know, because they used to run and play with us and do everything that, you know -- And I can remember like when I got about 10 or 11 -- They were domestics too. Marie was a cook, and John was a gardener. And when I got old enough to go with them to work, you know, they would work -- They did housekeeping jobs in the Woodsdale section of Wheeling. And we would go into these homes, and I was old enough then to do some of the heavy scrubbing and some of the lifting and stuff. So they would take me with them when they went to work in the evenings. And I

(067) can remember standing up here on Chapline Street catching the bus and going out there and doing that. And I can remember Marie Terry would always say, "Now look, when you go into these white people's houses, what you got to remember is number one, don't eat anything because they counted every cookie, every donut, every piece of candy. Don't drink anything because they've marked all the pop bottles, all the liquor bottles to see if you'll steal. And most importantly, they leave money laying around to see if you'll take it. Like they'll leave a dollar here, a penny here or whatever. Don't take anything." In other words, "Don't eat anything, don't drink anything, and don't take anything no matter what you see. And for God's sake, don't beat up any of their kids! If one of their kids hits you just, you know, come get me or something," you know. And I didn't have any problem with the eating stuff. And I didn't have any problem with drinking the liquor. And I didn't have any problem with taking the money. But I had a hell of a time taking them beatings from those little kids. And that's basically what they were too. Beatings. But I did that for, oh God, up until, up until I got about 13 or 14. And that's when they would stop taking the boys. Because inevitably what would happen is you would go in people's houses to work. A lot of these people had daughters, and it was okay to have a -- I know this later, you know. It's like looking back. I always wondered why they wouldn't let you go

(083) after you, after you got a certain age. The reason was is they didn't want you looking at their daughters. And so when you got about 14 or 15, you aren't allowed to go any more. And you either had to be real young or real old! You couldn't be anybody in the middle. But

-- I'm trying to think. One of the families that they worked for was the Ogden family who owns the local newspaper here. The other family that they worked for owned Stone & Thomas, and I can't think of their names. The Jones family. They lived out in Romney, 14 Romney Road. I still remember that. They had just built this new house, and it was at the end of the block. And -- In fact, I've got some pictures of -- We used to dress up at Easter time, and they would -- All the domestic help would always celebrate holidays at the people's houses that you worked for. So Easter they dressed us all up, and we'd go and spend Easter with them. And if it was Christmas, we'd all dress up and go, you know -- And then after they'd give their family gifts, then they would always give the domestics gifts too.

MNK: The Nuttings, the Nuttings did that?

(096) TG: I don't remember the Nuttings doing that! But I remember the Jones doing that. I can't -- I don't remember the Nuttings doing that. I think they may have given them something. They brought it and gave it to us. But I can remember going and getting Christmas trees too. And sometimes if they didn't like the tree they had, they would give us that, and they could go get another one. Can I drink this?

MNK: Yes.

TG: Okay.

MNK: So, where was -- Where was it your family lived?

(101) TG: Oh, we lived at 1045 Lane C which is about two blocks that way from here. Sears and Roebucks was on the corner. And -- On this corner. And Eddie's Chinese Laundry was on the, on the other corner. And the alley was in the middle. All the lanes around here are alleys. And we lived at 1045. We lived on the bottom. Right next door to us was the M and B Lounge which was like the neighborhood bar. Okay, and there was the Chinese laundry mat, Eddies. And him and his wife had like 20 kids at least. And I can remember she put the babies on her back, and they'd be -- Everything was done by hand by them. Washing the clothes and ironing the shirts and all that. They had at least 20 kids. So it was this Chinese family, it was us! There was the M and B Lounge, and then right up the -- Then, then it was the A & P, there was Beckers Hardware. I'm just walking you up the alley.

(116)

There was Friebenhausers, and then it was the Pythian Building. And then right across from the Pythian was Firestone. And then right next to that was the Wheeling Window Company. And then it was a big apartment building, but they later tore it down. That's where we used to play baseball and stuff. And Firestones -- I remember when we were little, we used to go up Firestones and watch them change the tires. We thought that was just the biggest thing. And they'd come out and say, "Get away from there. Get away. You kids are going to get hurt." We used to go there. Then we used to run errands at the A & P all the time for people. People were always asking you to go to the store. You know, that's what I remember about that. You know, playing baseball in the alley and going to the store for people. If you saw someone and one of the first things that we would ask them is 'you want me to go to the store for you.' And they'd say 'no!' Or they'd say 'yeah, you can go to the store.' But that's where I lived. That was -- We -- I don't know if you're familiar with Wheeling, but Wheeling is north, east, south and west Wheeling. Well, North Wheeling starts at the YWCA at 10th Street. It goes from there up to 1st Street. From the YWCA to the Center Wheeling Bridge is East Wheeling. And so where you're at today, the Wharf and downtown district, all that is East Wheeling. We lived across the street from the Y. So what that meant is that I couldn't -- When I got ready to play little league baseball, I couldn't play with the East Wheeling Pirates, which was where all the black kids were playing, because I lived across the boundary line. I had to play in North Wheeling. So I had to play with a team called the North Wheeling Yankees. And their practice field was all the way up in North Park. I don't know if you're familiar with that, but it's about a two mile walk. So when I got ready to play little league baseball, I remember going down to -- Is this boring you? I mean I --

MNK: No.

(137)

TG: I remember going down for tryouts because I went to Catholic school. And of course the school I went to was right down here on 14th Street. Cathedral Grade School. And all the kids that went to Cathedral lived in East Wheeling. Well, of course then everyone played for the East Wheeling Pirates. Well, I went to Cathedral, but I didn't live in East Wheeling. So I had to play for the North Wheeling Yankees. And I can remember walking all the way

up to -- Because all the kids who played for North Wheeling Yankees, they all went to Blessed Trinity and all the schools, Washington. All the schools that were in North Wheeling. I was really out of my -- I was like from another planet because these people had never -- Besides being the only black kid, they had never seen anybody, you know, that probably could really play the game! Which was a double, you know, double shock to them. But -- The place was called Wool Tank Field. And at that time Wheeling had these old, old water tanks. And so what they did was they built a baseball field around them. And so if you can imagine this baseball field with these three big water tanks in the outfield. And they had a ground rule -- I can't remember now what it was. If the ball hit

(152) the tank, it was like a double or something. I can't remember now what it was, but -- So I had to walk all the way up there to play little league baseball. And it was really interesting because they didn't put me as a competitor with all the kids that I lived with, you know. And I said, "Oh boy --" And so I can remember I couldn't, I wouldn't wear my uniform to the games. I wore my regular clothes, and I would just roll my uniform up. Just the top that said Yankees across it, and I'd wear the bottoms. Then I'd walk, you know. Then when I got up close to the field, I'd put my shirt on! Nobody'd see I played for the North Wheeling Yankees. But I tell you, that was interesting. The other thing that was interesting about that time was that I was born in North Wheeling Hospital, I had told you. And Marie Terry was a Baptist, but for some reason -- I think it was because she was a domestic, and she had worked at so many people's houses. She really believed in an education, and she thought that education was so, so, so important. For that reason, I think, I went to Cathedral rather than go to the public school. Now here was a woman who was in her sixties. She's a Baptist, and she's got these three kids and she sends them to Catholic school. That makes absolutely no sense at all, but she saw the importance of that, you know. She liked, she liked the idea of the uniforms. She said, "The Catholic kids look so nice in those uniforms," you know. They look like they're doing something or going somewhere or something. And we had to wear these little bow ties. You've seen these --

(170) She just thought that was something. So now I'm really an odd ball right. I'm going to, I'm going to the Catholic school. I'm playing with the North Wheeling Yankees. And then on

the weekends I'm working, you know. I'm going with Marie and John and working in these houses. And that's -- I think about that a lot because I think my early childhood I was so much separated from the community, you know. I played little league baseball with a white baseball team. I went to a white school. And then on the weekends I didn't associate much with the community because I was working. I think that may have given -- I'm like analyzing myself now. One of the reasons when I got older, 18 and 19, I wanted to connect so much with the community was because I had no connection with them growing up, you know. The few, the few friends that I did have were mostly white people. And I did not probably develop a black friendship until I was, till I became friends with Tayvan. And I was probably 17, 18 years old. And so even though I lived in the community, I was educated outside of it. My friends were outside of it and my recreation, my work,

(189) everything was outside of the community. Which is -- In a small town like that you wouldn't think that that would be, that that would happen, but that's what happened to me. The other thing too is by not having, not having real live parents here, I had no connection to the adult community. So people would see me walking around and there was nothing for them to say, "Well, who is that?" Because they didn't know my father, and neither did I. And they didn't know -- Only thing they knew was that here was these kids that were being raised by these old baby sitters. And so I didn't have any -- My father wasn't out bowling with the guys and drinking beer after work saying, 'that's my boy playing for the North Wheeling Yankees.' So I did not have a connection. I went to Catholic church. I had no connection with the black churches. I'm just trying to get you to understand why I was so disconnected. So I had no connection with the church. I didn't go to Macedonia on Sunday. I didn't sing in the choir. I was an altar boy. I mean, I had no, no connection with the traditional community whatsoever. Can I drink this? Wait a minute, before I --

????: You had no connection?

(204) TG: Yeah, I really didn't. I didn't have any connection with the community and -- So I didn't understand a lot of the things that were going on. A lot of things that were being talked about in the black households in the '60s when I was growing up, I did not hear because John and Marie Terry did not talk about those things, you know. They were, my God, they

were approaching their 70s, and they had both come from the south. And Marie had come from, I think, Alabama. And John, I found out later, had served 25 years in the Ohio State Penitentiary for slitting a man's throat. And so he wanted to have no connection with the ... Other people's problems were their problems. He didn't want to have anything to do with that. And Marie was just this big hearted woman who wanted to, you know, who loved everybody, you know. And said -- I can still remember her saying there are some good white people, you just have to overlook the bad ones. The good ones will shine through. So a lot of things that were happening as I was growing up in the '60s, I was just oblivious to them because there was no -- They didn't talk about them at St. Joseph's Cathedral. They didn't talk about in -- Marie and John didn't talk about them, you know. I mean you didn't go to work in somebody's house and then talk about the Civil Rights Movement. Or you didn't talk about those things, you know. You were there to work and make it as pleasant as possible. And the other thing too is that the people you worked for were real paternalistic, you know. They would ask you your opinion, but it had better agree with theirs or -- Because your job was at stake, and it was not a -- You know I can remember them telling me, you know, 'don't do anything because if you do something, they will fire you.' You know, 'don't fight back, don't cause any waves and agree with anything they say.' If they like the Pittsburgh Pirates, you like the Pittsburgh Pirates, you know. So there was this feeling that, in the environment that I grew up in, that everything was all right. The reason that everything was all right is because we've made it all right, you know. And so I was just really disconnected from the community. I know that now. so when '63, '64, '65 -- I can remember when John Kennedy was killed because John Kennedy was a Catholic. And I can remember the nuns telling us 'get down on your knees and pray because things are really going to turn bad now.' And I can, I can remember that. I was a -- At that time -- Let's see, '63, that would have made me seven. I would have been 10 or 11, something like that. Twelve. But I was a pretty devout Catholic, you know. I believed everything because that's the only thing I knew, you know. And I

(224)

(246)

was a young altar boy. I served mass every morning. So I was in church every day. Seven days a week. I, I lived in church practically. Priests like me, you know, because I was -- I

can remember them saying 'boy, he really looks nice when you put that white cassock --'

They used to put a white cassock on me. You know what a cassock is? And they used to put a white -- And then during certain times of the year, they'd put a red one on me. And they -
- And I would always lead the procession, and Marie would scrub me up in the morning and send me, you know. And they just thought I was just too much, you know. Ten or 11 year old black kid leading the procession. At that time in the arch diocese, Wheeling was still an arch diocese which meant we had an arch bishop. His name was

(257) John Swint. And Bishop Swint just thought I was just too much, you know. He just -- There weren't -- He didn't need two black altar boys, he only needed one, you know. It just turned out I happened to be that one. I, I -- They taught me Latin. I spoke Latin for a lot of years when I was growing up. Probably knew as much about Catholicism as most priests walking around. I used to go into the arch bishop's den and read the books, and he would talk to me about Catholicism and how John the XXIII felt about -- You know, when they put out Vatican II and all this. I look back now and here's the arch bishop talking to this 12 year old black kid about Vatican II, and did I think it was a right move and this whole idea of trying to liberalize the church and all that kind of stuff. I can remember sitting there and him asking me about -- The church at that time still banned books. You know, like this reading list that you could read. Movies you could see and couldn't see. They were a sin if you went to see certain movies. I can remember the arch bishop asking me, "Did you read any of these books?" "No, no!" "Did you see that movie? What did you think?" Of course he would never go to anything like that because he didn't have time, you know. At that time, the diocese went from New York to the lower part of Virginia. I mean it was a big diocese. New York City was closer to some parishes than the arch diocese at that time.

(277) And it was centered right here in Wheeling. So I just -- Everything in my world was pretty much okay, you know. I mean, you know, I was an altar boy. I had received an altar boy award. I was on a first-name basis with, you know -- I didn't mean I call him by his first name, he called me by mine. And so I was on a first-name basis with the arch bishop, and that carried a certain weight, I guess, you know.

MNK: Did it get you in the skating rink?

(284) TG: Well, I -- Let me tell you -- I didn't -- There was no reason for me to go there. Monday nights -- I'm trying to think what we did on Monday nights. Wasn't going skating. I think we may have been cleaning somewhere. But there was no -- I don't -- There was no -- I mean it wasn't an issue, I mean. You know --

MNK: Pretty sheltered.

(289) TG: Yeah. Well, I operated in a different world. And I don't want to make too much of that, but -- Let's see. So eighth grade graduation -- I graduated from the eighth grade. And at that time you went to high school in the ninth. And at that time the Catholic high school was overcrowded, and so they kept us in the same building in our grade school. This is the first time that I had ever mixed with other kids from other parishes. You know, I had always been a Cathedral, and I always stayed a Cathedral. But now by going to high school kids come from St. Michaels' Parish, the St. Joan of Arc and, you know, different areas. This is the first time I ever heard the word nigger, was when I began to mix with these other kids outside of being an altar boy. I had been to different things with the bishop,

(302) but nobody was going to, you know, dare say anything with the bishop around. But this is the first time I had ever mixed with other kids, and I was in the ninth grade. When I was in the ninth grade, it was the first time I heard the word nigger. And I didn't know what they were talking about. And this one kid showed me -- He had a picture of a seal. It was a -- I'll never forget this. It was a black seal, like a sea lion, like a seal like. And he had a ball on its nose. And he was -- I think he was from St. Mikes. It doesn't really matter what parish, but he said, "That's what you look like." He said, "You look like a seal. You look like a seal bouncing a ball on your nose." No, he said, "Why don't you bounce that

(311) ball on your nose." And I remember going home and -- I just didn't understand. And I remember talking to Marie Terry about it. And then that's when she began to explain to me that that was something that not nice -- That was something that white people who weren't very nice called you. And that for me not to worry about that just as long as I stayed around nice white people. Well, fortunately there's not that many to go around. And -- But it didn't really do anything. I didn't have a negative reaction to it. And still don't to this day because of that. Because it -- Whatever that was I knew I wasn't that seal. And I knew

that I didn't bounce balls on my nose. So I didn't identify with that, you know. I mean that -- It was not shown to me as being a person. It was shown to me as being a seal. So the word has never been a, a button of mine to push because it never has meant anything to me. ... That was my a --

MNK: Say that again.

(324) TG: The transition from the eighth grade to the ninth grade and mixing with people outside of my parish and outside of my, my you know, was really my coming out. It was my coming out into the world. Because now I had to intermingle with people that I didn't know and didn't know me. You know, by being the only -- There was only four black kids in the whole school, you know. I mean so everybody knew us. Certainly everybody knew that black altar boy. But I never associated that. I mean, so I was known by everybody. Although I didn't know them, they knew me. And everyone knew my name. And when I went to ninth grade, I was still the only black kid in the class, in all my classes. In 1967 when I went to Wheeling Central, there were about 500 kids in that school. And out of those 500, there were probably only, I'm guessing, if there was six blacks. That includes my sister, you know, who was a couple years ahead of me. And she only went to her sophomore year then she transferred and went to Wheeling High School. Her experience was probably quite different than mine. I continued to be a, to be an altar boy up until, I think, my junior year in high school. And I can't remember to this day why I stopped I

(345) really can't remember. I may have had a bad experience with the -- The priests were changing fast at that time. And remembering too that if you got the Cathedral Parish assignment that was a big deal because you were at the seat of all power. If you got an assignment down at Welch, West Virginia, you were being punished. So all the priests wanted to come to the Cathedral, you know. So if you were a Cathedral priest, whether you were the rector or say mass in the bishop's church is a big deal because that's where his chair is, you know. And so -- I don't know why -- I don't know why I stopped. Maybe it was just -- I don't know, I was 16 and I was kind of getting interested in girls, you know. That's another whole story, I won't go into that. But -- Because I wasn't in the position -- I

(358) kept trying to remember what Marie Terry had said, you know. Said, "Don't -- It's okay,

but like don't, don't drink, don't eat the food, don't drink the --" And so I saw everything in that context, you know. There was just certain things you didn't do, you know. And people have asked me since then -- They've said, "Gee, you around all those white women and you never dated!" I said, "No." Because I saw it in that same context as liquor, food and, you know, wrestling with Junior! You know, that kind of stuff! Oh, boy, I'll tell you!

(368) Well, anyway I think it was my sophomore, junior year. That's when I met Tayvan. And there was an organization that was just getting started in Wheeling. It was called the Afro Set. It's called the Afro Set. Black Nationalist Party for Self Defense. And it was a organization that had been started in Cleveland by a man named Harwell Jones who had changed his name to Harwell X. And someone from Wheeling had went to Cleveland and attended one of the meetings and decided that Wheeling would be a good time, a good place to start a chapter. This was in 1969. Of course out in California you had the Black Panther Party, and you had all these things going on. And this guy came to Wheeling. He was a Wheeling native, and he started it. And that's when I ran into Tayvan. I can remember walking down the street. And I saw these black guys marching with these black uniforms on, these big boots and these berets. And I didn't -- I thought, 'who are,' you know -- The only uniform I knew about was a cassock and a white shirt and a tie. And I thought, 'who are them people.' And so I started talking to Tayvan. He started telling me, you know. He said, he said, "If you went to public school, you'd know all these things!" I said, "Well, there's no way for me to know, you're going to have to tell me." So he started telling me, you know. He said, he said, "White people are discriminating against us." I said, "They are?" He said, "Yeah." He said, "Employment, education --" And all the things that he named, none of those things I could identify. I was like, that's news to me because I haven't seen any of that, you know. He said, "That's why you need to go to public school.

(395) You can see these things at public school!" So he started telling me about the organization. Well, I became interested. I think what interested me was the structure, you know. Because he talked about how they had a prime minister and these different ministers -- Like a minister of information and a minister of defense and -- See, that clicked for me because I understood the arch bishop, the auxiliary bishop, the rector, the secretary general.

All these titles around the arch diocese. So when he started talking to me about titles and hierarchy, I understood that, you know. I said, "Who does that?" And he said, "Oh, the minister of information." I said, "Oh yeah, that's kind of like the secretary," you know. So that kind of got me interested. And I went to a meeting, and that was the first time I sat down. And he said, "You got to play this record for you." He said, "You listen to this record, and it will give you all the answers." And I said, "Okay." The record was

(411) *Malcolm X Message to the Grass Roots*. It was a speech Malcolm gave in Cleveland, Ohio, I think, in '65. And I listened to that, and I was just intrigued by this. First time I had ever heard anybody talk like that. The roughness of his voice, the strongness of what he was saying, you know. I had come from a background where everyone spoke real soft and everything was kind of like, you know, we'll get around to it. But this guy was really mad. And he was mad about something that -- It affected him, but it affected other people too.

And he -- The other thing that intrigued me too about that was he talked as if he knew that the people he was talking to didn't really understand. It wasn't that they agreed or
(421) disagreed. It was like what he was saying they did not understand. And that clicked for me because I could remember the priest talking all the time about how the parishioners really don't understand Catholicism. They don't take the time to read the catechism. They don't take time to say the novenas. They don't, you know, they don't understand the sacraments. They don't understand what we're trying to say. And because they don't understand, they suffer. And that made sense to me because that's what Malcolm was saying. He said, "The reason that black people in this country suffer is because they don't understand." And I understood that because I had heard the priest say that all the time. If

(432) the parishioners would learn to speak Latin. If they would learn to -- In other words, if they would do what we tell them, everything would be all right and they would find kingdom and serenity and satisfaction and all that kind of stuff. So when I heard Malcolm talking, it was just like listening to John Swint. Because he had said the same thing, you know. And the reason that we were suffering was because we weren't doing the things that we needed to do to make things better, you know. The reason that the church wasn't prospering the way it should be because people weren't kicking in their money. And

Malcolm was saying that the reason that black people weren't getting ahead is because white people weren't giving them jobs. And John Swint used to say that the reason that you have so much problem in so many of these families is because instead of bringing their paychecks home, the guys were sitting at bars drinking. Malcolm was saying the same thing. And so that really clicked for me, and I really understood. So what I did, I listened to that record and then I began to read everything I could about that movement, that, you know, that separatist movement, that having a separate thing. Because I had been raised in an environment that was separate. Malcolm was talking about separation, being apart from. In order to prosper you have to be apart from the larger society. And that to me was Catholicism. Catholicism was apart, separate from the larger society. And -- Because I had heard the jokes about, you know, fish eaters and rattling rosary beads and

(460) that kind of stuff because the priest would tell them, you know. And it -- And when Malcolm was talking about how larger society was making fun of blacks through Hollywood and through the movie industry, I understood what he was talking about because we had suffered the same thing. So I started reading everything I could, but -- But it was like I had to keep it a secret too because I still couldn't be walking around, you know, carrying this material because I still had to go to school every day. But it had an affect on me and -- It's around my junior year. I was about 17. And I was talking to people. And what I found frustrating was that people I was talking to wasn't reading the books. They had listened to the, to the record, but they hadn't read the books. And it was the same thing that the bishop had said, "Most of the people that you're going to run into, Terry, they come to church on Sunday, but they don't read the books." And so I found that the more I, the more I read, the more comfortable I became with the subject. So I started reading Malcolm, Marcus Garby. It was really fascinating what Marcus Garby's movement because here was a guy in the '20s who was able to put together an organization without radio, without television, you know, and all the things that we take for granted, you know. People sanctioned ... saying, 'yeah, it's a good thing to do.' He was able to do that strictly by just

(483) the power of the word, you know, of one convert at a time. And Malcolm used to talk about that and the Nation of Islam. If we could get one convert at a time. And that's what the

bishop used to say all the time. He said, "We don't want a thousand people in here, Terry. We just want one convert at a time." And when he would come out into the church, he would look around and if it was filled, it was filled. If it wasn't it wasn't. But that's what we were always looking for, one convert at a time. And Malcolm said if we could find one convert at a time, then we could create that movement. And that movement then would raise the consciousness of the people. So I really identified with that. Because my own

(497) consciousness was being raised, you know. But I wasn't angry, you know. He was angry. I wasn't angry. And so a lot of the things that -- The violence that was happening, you know, the killings and stuff -- I didn't understand that. It didn't seem to me that -- I hadn't put together the ideology with the actual revolution. I just thought, you know, you raise your consciousness and then you go on, you know. It isn't like you have to go out and then actually do something. And I wanted to read and understand, but I didn't want to do anything! I didn't want to get arrested. I didn't want to go to jail, you know. I just wanted to be kind of like, you know -- I didn't want to suffer. I know that now, but I didn't know that then. And I couldn't understand why people in the movement were involved in like petty crimes, you know, like shop lifting and drinking and smoking and getting

(512) arrested. That didn't seem to be, have anything to do with the movement. And identified that by -- That's just like sinning, you know. You're sinning against the movement because if they were doing what Malcolm was saying, they wouldn't be drinking or smoking or getting arrested on Fridays and Saturdays and saying, you know, that 'the establishment has violated all my rights and where's my lawyer.' I had a lot of problems with that. So I think I retreated more to the reading because the people who were in the movement hadn't done any of that. At least that I could see, you know, since they had made a conversion. Was a lot of stuff going on in Wheeling at the time. There was a lot of protest about jobs and employment. And people were tired of being domestics, and they wanted jobs besides entry-level jobs in the steel mills. And they wanted better housing. And urban renewal was coming along, and they wanted to be guaranteed that their houses wouldn't be tore down. And if they were, they could move into other places, you know.

(534) That was going on. But I wasn't really involved in that at that time. I was still like reading

and trying to understand. I don't know what I was trying to understand. I was just -- There was so much to read. And then I started reading W. E. B. Du Bois. I started reading a lot of his stuff. He was an educated black man who went to Harvard, you know. He wasn't from the streets like Malcolm. He didn't have that anger, you know. He was kind of like 'well, we'll sit down and have a meeting and everyone will understand and when we get up from the table, you go and do what you have to do and she'll go do what she has to do, and then we'll meet back here next week and we'll see what happened.' But there's still this anger. And the people that I was involved with, they were still angry. And I remember when I got my first Black Nationalist uniform. And I took it home and Marie Terry said, "That's going to get you in a lot of trouble." That's all she said, you know. And I put the uniform on, put the tam on, you know. I walked out, you know, and

(555) now I was accepted by the community. People knew who I was, you know. And whenever there was something going on, they'd always say 'let Terry talk. He's a good talker. He'll be the spokesman.' You know, whenever there was like media, something -- "Let Terry talk." And I'd always end up talking. Most of the time talked too much, you know. I remember when we went to city council, and they said 'let Terry talk.' They said, "Who's the spokesman?" And everybody said, "Terry's the spokesman!" So I didn't know, find this out till later, they taped it. And I'm at city council talking about, you know, black unemployment and we want jobs and we demand dignity and our rights are being trampled, you know. And the bishop is like, "Terry, none of that stuff has ever happened to you!" I didn't find out later that what they did, they immediately took that tape and showed it to him. Said, 'here's your little, here's your star altar boy down at Wheeling council with a Black Nationalist uniform on raising hell at city council!' Which was really something! Can I drink some of this?

MNK: Yeah. Sure.

CNK: ...

(578) TG: Said, here's your, you know, here's your altar boy, you know. Raised this -- I don't know what they said to him, you know. But I know they showed it to him. But he never said anything. I think he didn't say anything, looking back now, was because he deep, deep,

deep down inside he knew, you know, that that social activism, that all the stuff I had been reading, you know. That one of the things the church teaches is that if you see an injustice then to do nothing about it, it is a sin. I mean, so he knew that I was going to connect the injustices whether they were happening to me or not. With the larger society. And it's just a natural path to go. I mean it's a -- I know that now, and I'm sure he did, you know. I mean he probably would have been surprised if I wasn't down at city council, you know, with a black uniform on pounding on the table! But -- So anyway, that's how I got involved with the Afro Set. When they would do things that were probably borderline, they never invited me. Because that wasn't my role. They made me -- I was the minister of education, minister of information and all this stuff. So my role was quite different

(605) than some of the other ones. When we would travel like to Cleveland or Columbus, they always let me talk. They said, "Let Terry talk." And I would talk to the other members from other cities, you know. Then I got to be friends with Harwell X who was the prime minister of Cleveland. And he immediately took a liking to me. I did him too. This was the first black man that I had ever met that had more than one woman at a time. He had -- He was -- I don't know if he was a polygamist. A polygamist is when you're married. I don't know what it is when you have more than one woman, but -- A philander or something. A womanizer or something. But this was the first man that I had ever met -- Because I had always been around celibate priests. And this was the first man that I had ever met that had like four or five women. And they were always sitting there, you know. And they all knew about each other, which I found really fascinating! They weren't, you know, fighting or anything, you know. And so it was -- A lot of things happened to me my

(629) junior year, you know. I saw a lot of different -- But of course, when you read different things, you say different things. So what I was saying was changing because what I was thinking was changing. And I didn't know that then, I know it now. And a lot of people that I had been friends with, I wasn't that friendly with them any more. They didn't seem to be that friendly to me. And I was starting to say things that -- We used to hang out at a place called Joe's Grill. And we started talking about race or jobs or something. I would start talking about, you know, the topics of the day, you know. Black unemployment and

how we were denied opportunity and advancement. And of course, the white kids I went to school with, they were like 'well you don't know anything about that because you've never been denied anything,' you know. I mean, 'what are you talking about,' you know. And I said, "Well, I'm talking about my people." They said, "Well, who are your people?" And I said, "Well --" They said, "Oh, all those strangers, we're not your people." I said, "Whoa." I can remember this like it was yesterday. They said, "Well, who are your people? Is your people the people that are the same color you are, or your people the people that you grew up with? You grew up with us, and now you're telling us that we're not your people. That these other people who you don't know, who in all likelihood don't really like you. They don't share your education. And you don't share their suffering. How can they be your people?" And that kind of perplexed me for a while. And I can remember that. And the guy's name was Gary Nau. And he was from an Irish Catholic family like most of the people were. The Ferellis, the Naus, the -- And so he was confronting me with that. He said, "You know, Terry," he said, "You used to come to our house and eat. You don't come any more. You used to kind of like hang around, you know, and watch television and we'd go do stuff. You don't do that any more, you know. You used to read the stuff that we read. Now you're reading different stuff. And you don't seem as funny and the things you used to laugh about, you don't laugh about any more." Well, what was happening was inside my head was changing, you know. And I didn't realize it at the time. And these guys that I had been friends with all my life, they were very -- They were very -- They were mad at me because I was like part of their family. And now I had these new friends, and I didn't want to be their -- They saw it as I didn't want to be their friends anymore, you know. And when everybody would talk about the, the white establishment or white supremacy or the white power structure, and they would always say, "Well, we're white, and we don't do any of that stuff to you." And it was, it was quite a dilemma for me. It was

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almost like I had to -- I was black, but I really wasn't, you know. I was -- What I really was was a middle class Italian! That's what I really was! But I didn't know that then. And, you know, if you can imagine a middle class Italian in a Black Nationalist uniform, that's, that's what I was. Reading Garby and Du Bois and knowing, being able to speak fluent Latin, you

know. I mean I was too much, I think, for myself! I think about that now, you know, and think, 'oh, ... I didn't have a nervous breakdown!' You know what I mean? Can you imagine going to a therapist -- I mean, I don't know where to start, you know. Don't know whether to start with the Catholicism or slavery or where you start!

(713) But I was changing. You know, that's the way I was changing. I was being affected by what I was reading. And I was traveling around. I was talking to other movement people. I was starting to go to church less and less. I was starting to stop reading a lot of the materials that I was reading. And stopped doing a lot of things, you know. And these middle class Italian women would see me on the street in that black uniform and go "Terry?" I can still remember Mrs. Cardulla. You know I had a, had a white godfather. My godfather was Joe Cardulla; he was white. And I ran into him one day. I was down

(729) here. We were protesting something, and I had -- If you can imagine, I had this black uniform on --

(side 2) TG: Cardulla. And he was very surprised to see me. Not only was he surprised to see me, he was surprised to see me in that, in that outfit. Because I -- You know, I had this big stack of literature, you know, because we were -- I know what it was. Downtown Wheeling Associates was a local business group. And we were protesting. It was like a boycott, you know. Don't shop at these stores because they don't hire blacks. So I'm standing down there on the corner with this uniform on handing out these facts that I had gotten from the library from the census. And how many blacks had worked at some of these stores and, (008) you know, and all that kind of stuff. And how the money was going out of the community and how they, how the Downtown Wheeling Associates wasn't reinvesting in the community. And I put a lot of work into it. One of the things that I had learned from the church was how to research. Hanging around the diocese and being in the library and I knew, you know, how to tap sources for stuff, you know. If you wanted to find out something, I knew where to go. I mean I knew how to go to the county courthouse and find different things, you know. I knew you had to go where the information was. So I had all kinds of information. My facts were right. So I gave him one of these handouts and he looked at it and went, "Yeah," he said, "but what about you?" He said, "What's happening to

you?" I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Look at you." Well, I hadn't looked at myself in a long time. He said, "Go over there in that mirror and look at yourself." There was a shoe store over here -- I don't know if it was M. H. and N., not M. H. and N., but Hanover Shoes. And they -- It was one of these ones you walk in off the street and they had the big mirrors, you know, so you could see your feet. Well, the mirror's your whole length of your body. I walked over and I looked at myself. I had big afro, had this tam stuck to the side, had this big button on, had a big fist that said 'black power,' had this armful of literature. And this uniform on. And he said, "Look at you." He had his arm around me, he said, "This is not the -- This is not the Terry we all know and love." He said, "I -- What's happening to you?" And I felt really bad, you know, I really did because he -- His family had been so, you know -- I mean they were like my family. He was like my father, you know. And I felt really bad, you know, because this transformation had

(030) only taken maybe less than a year. From one school, you know -- From once school let out till the next spring I went from -- It was unbelievable. I mean it's like a -- It's like a caterpillar to a butterfly. And I hadn't really looked at myself like that in a long, you know -- I was -- These people in this organization were depending on me, you know, to write that stuff and do stuff and be a part of that and I -- I hadn't even thought about that. It was happening so fast and things were happening because I was making them happen, you know. I was always on the other members, you know, just do something every day. You don't have to do something big, but every day you should do something for the revolution. If it's, it's nothing but get up in the morning and decide not to drink that day, you know, don't -- Or go visit your mother. But if you do something every day, then pretty soon you'll have a revolution. And that's what Garby used to tell his people all the time, you know. And of course I didn't know then, but I know now that what he was talking about was the same thing that the church teaches. Is that it will be within here. What will change will not be the outside world, but it will be you that will change. And I had really changed, and I, I didn't know that. Okay, I think that's a good place to stop I think. Yeah, I think that's --

?????: Great. That's wonderful.

?????: Where did you stop?

(048) TG: I stop. I standing on the corner talking to Joe Cardulla, Joe Cardulla, my godfather.
MNK: Makes him go in the shoe store and look in the mirror, and he says, "Look at yourself."
CNK: ... big afro ...
TG: Yeah, yeah we're in the Afro Set, yeah.
MNK: Beautiful.
TG: Well, thank you. I'm --