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Participants:

NIA WILSON (activist)

LEONEDA INGE (wunc)

ANDRÉ LEON GRAY (artist)

ERIN BREE (Durham activist)

GINGER BRASHER-CUNNINGHAM (pastor)

ELIZABETH HAVICE (UNC Geography)

DARYL ATKINSON (SCSJ)

Length: 01:09:02

Preface

The following conversation was hosted at the Beyu Caffé facilitated by jina valentine, Heather Hart, and Hồng-An Trương. Consent was given by the participants to have their conversation recorded and transcribed.

Readers should keep in mind that they are reading a transcript of the spoken word and are encouraged to refer directly to the original audio if possible as some interactions and utterances may not have been transcribed due to the nature of unscripted group conversations. The views, thoughts, and opinions expressed in the text belong solely to the roundtable participants and do not necessarily reflect the views of Black Lunch Table.

START OF RECORDING

UNKNOWN: Go ahead.

ORGANIZER: Welcome to the Black Lunch Table. Today we are going to ()

GINGER BRASHER-CUNNINGHAM: Daryl, did you speak at DCIA a couple years ago?

DARYL ATKINSON: Me? (laughter) Depends on what you heard.

NIA WILSON: Yes He did.

GBC: I was the President of DCIA and I think I remember that you were there, okay.

ORGANIZER: On the table there is an envelope like this ().

NW: You mean like at one of the lunches?

GBC: ().

NW: ().

Organizer: And there are two people at your table who have been tapped as leaders just to keep the conversation going and to read the questions. The audio will be recorded so please when you start talking, identify yourself first so the transcriber can identify your voice, speak up, it's a pretty good microphone but of course project, so I guess just a little introduction of who we are. This is Jina Valentine () and we are- Jina () in 2005 and Skyping in. Since done it on videochat, with black grad students and at Yestercades place in Chicago for the Black Lives Matter Meeting. This is the first time that we're tackling a subject that's not necessarily visual art, and with integrated tables so this is really exciting for us and we look forward to- to growth.

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NW: No

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ORGANIZER: Yeah we were really looking forward to cross pollinating all these different communities that we are a part of in the area () comfortable () and academia activists, we feel like there are a lot of people who should be in contact with each other.

ORGANIZER: Yeah and I think for me it's awesome just for me to see so many people that I know cross-pollinating across different communities we are involved in, and so this is really cool to have all of these really cool, amazing, smart, interesting and

like really motivated and dedicated people to the movement, all together in one space and have a conversation and to see how it goes. This is not about planning or trying anything have a () that is practical but it's really about archiving our conversations at this moment in time post-Ferguson, or in this post-Ferguson moment, and again across these disciplines and across communities to really see where we're at. So again don't feel like you have to speak, you know with a real intentionality around like well this is what we should do or this is what- what should happened. But really, kind of brainstorming, kind of like this is what I'm feeling right now, and this is where we're at, and this is what I'm doing, and this is what I think we should do. So it should be real casual, and just really again sort of moment to kind of reflect, and have a piece of that moment recorded and- and archived.

ORGANIZER: So thanks again to the Beyu Café, and to UNC (), and to the recorders and once those are turned on, you guys can go ahead and the leaders can take a card out of the- the envelope and start a conversation.

ORGANIZER: Yeah and feel free to- feel free to cause () some things, () wild cards ().

ORGANIZER: Yeah, wild cards are a thing.

ORGANIZER: - and if there are some other issues that come up, () or if any things are being left out of the deck feel free to add it into the box because we are going to ().

NW: So there's a lot of cards here.

UNKNOWN: Yeah.

ORGANIZER: So don't feel like you have to get through them all you might just get through one for the whole day.

NW: Yeah, but did you put them in a priority or are you just putting them in here.

ORGANIZER: No. Yeah, yeah.

NW: Okay, so the group gets to decide what the priority is.

ORGANIZER: Yeah, the group gets to decide what- what's important to discuss or what the priority- if you get through one great, if you get through all of them, two seconds--.

NW: Yeah no way there is a lot- there is a lot of cards here.

UNKNOWN: One word answers.

ORGANIZER: So you can cover two, you can cover one ().

UNKNOWN: I think that's a veggie burger.

NW: So I would like to read the questions, because otherwise I'm going to choose my own priority.

(Laughter)

NW: I'm going to be honest, and that's not real democratic of me, so, so the first one is just you know- just think about it for a minute. The first one is how do we-

ERIN BREE: What if we do the you know, introducing first.

NW: Oh yeah, we could do that, that would make sense.

(Laughter)

NW: I feel- there are a lot of cards--.

EB: We just have to get through it.

NW: --here so I just feel like, I mean yeah. So my name is Nia Wilson. I live here in Durham, I'm a mom, I'm an artist, I'm the executive director of Spirit House, which is a local organization here that does cultural arts and organizing, and I've got the cards.

(Laughter)

ANDRÉ LEON GRAY: That sign, I did the logo for that.

NW: Did you do the logo for that? Well I think we still have 'em, we still use 'em.

UNKNOWN: You run Spirit House?

ELIZABETH HAVICE: How nice.

NW: That's awesome I did not know that, that's my- that's a new piece of history.

GBC: All right. I have this one, Ginger Brashner-Cunningham, I'm the Senior Pastor at Pilgrim, United Church of Christ. Do a lot with social justice section, actually I was the one privileged to officiate a loving- eleven weddings the day we had equal marriage in North Carolina, so I'm sort of varied all over the map, mixture of things, pole dancer.

ALG: My name is André Leon Gray, I'm a visual artist, I'm based in Raleigh, and I've been professionally exhibiting since 1997, and I'm currently in the- area right now showcasing here at the National Museum here in Durham.

UNKNOWN: Congratulations.

ALG: Thanks.

EH: I'm Elizabeth Havice, and I'm a professor in the geography department at UNC, and I guess where my interests intersects professionally is that- we're just trying to connect our department with a lot of the activism happening around campus around Black Lives Matter, just and a lot about how we represent the community on campus

and one of the interesting things for us has been is that the building we are housed in called Saunders Hall and it's named after the founder of the KKK in North Carolina, so we've been doing a lot of organizing around--.

GBC: I'm sorry can you say that one more time?

EH: Our building is called Saunders Hall and it's- it's named after the founder of the KKK in North Carolina.

GBC: I- I thought you said that but I couldn't comprehend that, okay.

EH: Yeah, and so then, over the years there's been a lot of effort try to change the name.

EB: Okay.

EH: And I think with this particular political moment, there's a lot of mobilization and maybe a chance for a renewed discussion--.

EB: Okay.

EH: -about it so we've been active there, and we're thinking about how we are inscribing race and value into the landscape itself.

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EB: My name is Erin Bree, and I live here in Durham.

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EB: I'm a photographer, and I'm in school, and I've been studying systemic trauma, or systemic harm that then manifests as trauma in the education system. I've been working- my background as an educator has primarily been in like after school spaces and also an elementary school, and yeah, I'm excited to be here.

DA: Daryl Atkinson. [pause] Activist who uses the law as one of many tools for social change.

UNKNOWN: Damn.

DA: I work at the Southern Coalition for Social Justice, I lead up our Criminal Justice Reform Board where we focusing on- ending the drug war and mass incarceration, one brick at a time. I'm a formerly incarcerated person I spent almost four years imprisoned in the Alabama Department of Corrections for a first time nonviolent drug crime. So, and I- I don't mean this in any- disrespect but this is not something I study, this is my life. So, I'm glad to be here.

GBC: Now I remember our conversation, my little cousin is in Montgomery Alabama, because I'm from Birmingham and that was- that--

AA: That was our conversation.

UNKNOWN: I knew I was trying to remember but that's what it is.

ORGANIZER: Try to speak up you guys just to ensure the microphone is picking it up.

NW: Okay.

LEONEDA INGE: Hi.

NW: Hi, we just went around and introduced ourselves, so--.

LI: My name is Leoneda Inge, and- [pause] I live in Durham, excited to be here, yes I am. Sorry I'm late.

(Laughter)

LH: Today is a very important day though. I take my oldest, my eldest, my high school senior to the airport. Because he had a flight leaving at one, so we had to kind

of- we- it was just something weird I couldn't leave him by himself because he's going on a college visit, they- they- they're flying him there-

NW: That's wonderful.

LI: -so you have to get up and go to that, so it's kind of dropping your kid off, sending him off to college already before he graduates from high school. So anyway, I don't know if that's what you were saying in your introductions but-

NW: That's fine, that's fine.

LI: (Laughter) Next.

GBC: You can breathe

LI: Okay, okay.

(Laughter)

NW: Got yourself something (), so like I said there's a lot of questions here--.

LI: Oh.

NW: -so I will just read them out, and we can sort of decide which is the first one that we want to tackle. **So, the first one is how do we sustain the Black Lives Matter movement momentum? [pause] Bunch of blanks here.** Discuss the war on drugs as a factor in heightened policing of non-white and poor communities, ding ding ding one of my favorites. Redistricting and new voting laws in NC that disenfranchise poor and blacks. [pause] Okay. Define criminal and what is the purpose of incarceration. (laughter) I'll stop talking about my favorite (laughter). **Artists who co-opt aspects of black culture for personal gain and their silence on these issues. Iggy Azalea.** (Laughter). **I just feel like that was the question directed towards- towards her.** Black male drivers in Durham are 105 percent more likely to be searched after a stop

than their white counterparts. Duram's thirty seven percent black population accounts for eighty percent of total traffic stops. Discuss restorative justice, offenders make amends to offended parties as an alternative to punitive justice. Discuss possibilities of unarmed mediation in our communities, i.e. community watch versus police involvement. I don't know (Laughter). Like facilitators stop making faces. (Laughter) Discuss differences between protests in the mid 20th century versus today. Does decreased vulnerability to violence equal empowerment? [pause] Discuss ways to keep money in black communities in relationship to trends in gentrification. Black Lives Matter should prioritize structural reform over justice for individual families? Implicit unconscious bias, is the- [pause] I don't know what that word is. A priory or custom the norm? How do we cultivate new norms. I don't know the word but I understand custom. [pause]

(Laughter)

()

LI: Another way. () Another tense.

NW: Discuss how decriminalization of minor offenses and how, and discuss how decriminalization of minor offenses would impact local communities. Discuss differences and similarities between your neighborhood and Michael Browns'. Is the US economy dependent upon its prison system?

LI: ()

NW: That's the last one.

EB: Is the US economy dependent-?

NW: Dependent on its prison system

EB: Well that's an easy yes or no question.

NW: There you go, answer yes.

EB: What a question.

NW: I think that's what we're- So, yeah, so those are- those are the questions. I think a lot of them overlap, and I'd love to know what folks feel are priorities. For me it's definitely about the criminalization of people and communities, [pause] and the drug war and how it's all connected. [pause] Anyone else?

UNKNOWN: ().

LI: What was the one about- you said something about- I want to say community gentrification, or something like that?

EB: Yeah. About Mike Brown's neighborhood?

LI: I think it was near that one, but I think it was a little different than that--.

NW: There was one about money and spending money and the--.

LI: Yeah.

EB: How decriminalization of minor offenses would impact people.

NW: No there was after that one after that about- economics and gentrification I think.

EB: Mm hmm.

ALG: It was towards the end.

AA: ()

EB: Discuss the ways to keep money in black communities in relation to trends in gentrification.

LI: That's the one I love. [pause] Thank you. [pause] Those are just things that, you know [pause] I've lived that, ever since I moved to Durham, you know. So maybe I've been here about- over ten years now, [pause] and you know I guess I- I know that when you talk to your parents or grandparents, you know even though we were from a different part- we were originally from a different part. We're originally from Mobile Alabama, when you- grow up in places and whenever I say that they're like you grew up in Alabama, yeah you live in North Carolina and you're really just like what is- there really isn't that- when they're from the Midwest or whatever they look at Alabama like so bad, so awful, and I would just say well. In that part of the deep south, you know- I **guess some black communities had to be strong- you had to be strong, you had to live in- since you lived in a certain area and that means everybody still- shopped where they shopped. It seemed like everyone was some kind of entrepreneur, everybody had something to trade or barter, anyway I saw strength in that, and then even today like one of my sisters still lives there- and you know that's just how you live. I mean it- but shows there's a lot of- I feel strength in the community but- in Durham you don't see that changing a whole lot. So anyway I moved to an area where I was hoping you know, that the strength continues there because there is definitely a very clear- you know historically neighborhood of color near North Carolina Central University like still that area, you know still there are minds growing, you know hopefully new entrepreneurship.** But, [pause] I mean gentrification is moving rampantly through part of Durham, and I'm like oh my goodness I won't be able to live here, because I'm definitely not- I mean I'm not against mixed race neighborhoods but sometimes when I talk to people they don't know what

I'm totally talking about, we're talking about when people purposefully outprice the residents there. I mean like it's different--.

GBC: Yeah.

LI: -for anybody of any race or nationality moving into a neighborhood helping to rebuild and even in some ways. It's this little like prong things that I keep saying I'm going to buy when I go to the flea market in Raleigh, I like to pick up trash, because I was like that's going to be my job. That I was just going to walk up and down my street, picking up trash because that's- when I drive in my street I just want it to look a certain way, and I know there are a lot of college students that park all through there, they throw a lot of trash and garbage trucks zoom by on pickup days and trash- so I was thinking maybe that can be my job. The loose parts you know it's just like- you know, you know I don't know how I'm going to do it but I really want my neighborhood to be strong, and still actually majority of color in some way, but--.

GBC: And everybody has a role.

LI: Everybody has a role, I mean.

NW: Let's see if there are other- anyone else who has anything that they feel strongly about.

ALG: Well- about that topic?

NW: Yeah or any of that topic.

ALG: Well growing up--.

NW: Or any topic.

ALG: -growing up in Raleigh, I noticed as a kid there were more black businesses, like convenience stores, barber shops, especially around Shaw University.

NW: Mm hmm.

ALG: You know I've noticed through the years, the ownership had left like- also a lot of property where I live, basically in the river house I grew up. My mother passed away a few years ago so I inherited the house- so, I'm in the neighborhood where I grew up. So I've seen a lot of changes, and- well I've also noticed a lot of property around it is rental property, so people don't own the houses and if somebody who- let's say rent it somewhere that turn a profit here and get a house you know just down the street where they got other houses, they rent it out to lower income people who are now- these people who are coming in, I think there is an architect down the street, you know and it looks like he is like building his own office in the back. So I've noticed that where- it's changed in that sense where- people who couldn't afford to buy a house anymore they moved out now because they rented the property.

NW: Right.

ALG: At one point the city of Raleigh did something where- they forced people who were sitting on property that was like vacant, to inspect it and- and fix it up, and they sorta kinda created an impetus to change it, and gentrify it in that sense as well--.

NW: Mm hmm.

ALG: -and to bring other people into the community as well so.

NW: Well so I wish there was some kind of rule, because I've driven through part of south, south-west, southeast Raleigh I can't think of the name of the community center, I don't know Raleigh that well.

ALG: ().

NW: I just know there's an area where I see all of these beautifully colored townhouses I'd like to--.

ALG: That's where the projects were--.

NW: Yeah.

ALG: They replaced them it was the () Project I believe, and I kind of remember I was living across the street seeing a- a city street cleaner come by like late at night and I was wondering why are they cleaning up the street now, (laughter) and it turned out somebody from the presidential administration was coming through to- pre- basically it was government property, and I didn't realize this as a kid, until I saw a sign that says 'no trespassing the property is government', and they changed it over all to townhomes, and the stipulation for that is you can't have if anybody in your family has like a- who was a felon and had like a criminal record, so they wouldn't be able move back into these town homes they were building, and the same thing they did with the Heritage Park over by the Mordecai area, same thing, they moved everybody out, so basically moving people out to the suburbs like Nightdale or Windale and that's just the same thing that's happening in Raleigh as well, that's the same kind of thing that's happening like all over the country right now.

LH: But you know how some people say you know, marching and protesting works but I think sometimes changing policy and laws work, you know. I wish that there was some kind of way, that there could be some kind of- municipal legislation I guess per city or whatever, that you now whatever kind of upgrades you're doing to your property you cannot outprice, you want I'm saying like people who live there twenty, thirty years, you cannot out-tax them just because you built a McMansion on the corner,

that's happened through Mount Holloway. She was like oh my goodness, one of my girlfriends, they just were barely able to get a house in the area and they had to move, they needed a property, and they got this nice, they've been fixing this two story house and I think they got it for sixty or seventy thousand dollars fixing it up, and she called me screaming because in just two years, two blocks down the street they are posting a house smaller than theirs for like 250 thousand dollars. I mean she was like oh my god what about the people that live here, I mean just like that quick in just two years and should that even be allowed, like maybe there just was-I guess that's not against the law, but maybe there should be somebody should say, in order to keep- like maybe, you know.

GBC: That's a problem with the condos to affordable housing.

LH: I guess maybe we should not-

NW: Can we talk- about the way that- the way that even that that we're talking about of the you know the way that the- of course it is about policies, but the way that policies are being shaped that actually are displacing people from their neighborhoods and their homes, and they're the vehicles that are being used. I think one of the things that, that I've been talking, that I've been talking about a lot about is how for instance, in order to- to change the neighborhoods so that people are able to come in and purchase up the properties that have been abandoned or dilapidated, you know there- there's this pushed through using the police and the different things to actually just get people out, so gentrification doesn't just happen the way we think it just happens. This idea of oh my god all of a sudden my neighborhood changed is actually not a reality, and so the vehicles that are being used to make that happen are the same vehicles that are being

used across the county and although in this moment, in this Black Lives Matter moment we're talking about things like people being killed by the police, that's one- that's actually only one component and there are many others that we actually never take a look at, around how- how the Durham community in these neighborhoods that may have for instances have looked exactly like Mike Brown's neighborhood, now look like they do in Durham. The last- the last stronghold in Durham is the Hayti area--.

LH: Yeah.

NW: -and you know, I know the people in that neighborhood who have been fighting to retain for that neighborhood for several years and I don't know that they're going to be able to- to do it.

LH: They're too close to downtown.

NW: Well it is so I just anyway, I sort of wanted to sort of put that in the- to mix that conversation up a little bit and talk about how this happens and how you know.

EB: Can you talk a bit more about- about what that community is doing. You know if they're- how they're finding or identifying really specific places to try their protect their community, who are they talking to you know, is it about moving inward and trying to keep the community really vibrant or is it about fighting against developers or public policies or codes, do you have an idea about that?

NW: I mean I don't have a lot of specifics but what I know is that fighting against developers or code, by the time you get to that point it's done, it's done because the developers have already decided that they want that space and it's theirs. So by the time that people realize people- that's why I'm saying what I'm saying about the vehicle that is used to actually get the developers to the point where they're already there when you

might be fighting them, there's all these other things that happened beforehand to clean up this neighborhood and to get rid of the certain population. That often times the people who live in that neighborhood often participated in it because they don't know another way of changing their neighborhood and then the developers come, openly come because they were already there, and so those fights down at the city council meeting when budgets are being approved, that's all- it's done, there is nothing you can do at that point.

GBC: I've said () Center works though for affordable housing, try to make sure that the developers think that, you know affordable housing within the condos, and the building it is in, I mean it is too--.

NW: What is affordable housing though?

GBC: And the affordable housing's much smaller than the rest of the place---

NW: Sliding scale

GBC: It's really it's not equitable at all and it does feel like we're being overrun by money and by choices that are way outside of the people's hands.

DA: I mean for me fundamentally for me it's who are we choosing to invest in.

GBC: Yeah of course.

DA: Because, for those folks who want to develop properties they're given a litany of incentives, to be able to come do that and that's an investment, and we're making a choice, and when I say we I'm speaking collectively right, about you know governmental bodies are making a choice to invest in those folks.

GBC: Right

DA: But imagine if they took those same resources and invested, that same amount of money in those communities--.

GBC: Yeah.

DA: -to give those people what they need, and so fundamentally it's a choice that you don't matter, the people in that neighborhood who are not included, you're not important to us.

GBC: Yes.

DA: You don't have the same kind of value as these folks who are going to come and- You know I know exactly what you're talking about in Raleigh, I- I- the deacon of my church, my church is in Raleigh and I do some of my sick and shuttling business right over there, and I can there this lady, it was Patricia Buffalo before she passed you could see these brightly colored houses like oh that's- that's the new you know because they stand out right?

ALG: Right, right.

DA: And how what used to be a police substation that would park in that vacant at the end you know that big- it almost looks like a big- eighteen wheeler if you will, it was a mobile substation.

ALG: Right, right, right.

DA: That's not there anymore, the more brightly colored homes you get you know?

NW: Right.

ALG: Right.

DA: You don't need that for the white people, you need it for you know the other folk, so fundamentally it's about who matters in this society and who we want to invest in and who has value.

LH: You know and- and- I'd like to talk about gentrification- gentrification in housing is because- and I like mixed gentrification because you know, when you segregate in a certain way you know you can have certain neighborhoods where you know just where to target who you think is a criminal, you know what I'm saying? Once you've created a wall around- and the police know just where to hang out, just where to intimidate, just where to target. It looks like those boys don't look they could just be walking to the store, but I'm just saying when you start I guess moving people out because of bad gentrification, en- enclosing them, you know pushing- you know just where to go. I mean you know- they're right where- I guess crabs in a barrel I mean- and that's where you know and that where crime you know- you know that's not where crime is but it's where you are going to look to find it. So if you're gonna look for something you're going to find it so you see I try to cover my tags before I go when I go, oh I gotta go get my plates renewed. I'm like- I could easily get pulled over and taken, you know what I mean? Oh you know in certain neighborhoods it's easier to sit and look for that, you know and you don't get the benefit of the doubt or whatever.

NW: Well I think- I think a really good example- from what I know of what we're talking about is what happened in the South Side, right? So and that's why I was saying it all happens way before the developers. So, the South Side neighborhood was a working class African American neighborhood where the folks who work at the tobacco warehouses right there. At one point in time that was definitely a vibrant, African

American neighborhood that got- that the city divested or disinvested whatever the word is- decided to stop investing in that community, and so the community ultimately, became this community that seemed to be high crime and you know high unemployment, and a high drug traffic area and all of that. When I moved- I've been there for sixteen years, when I moved here you didn't go to the South Side, you know you didn't go to the South Side but that wasn't because the people, many of the people and the families and some of them are renters but they are still renters from black- black landlords. So it was still black, a neighborhood that was primarily black owned. As the- you know, then there became this moment when somehow somebody wants that property, well we know have American Tobacco, right? So you can walk to the- to the Bulls Stadium, you can walk to American Tobacco, somebody wants that neighborhood, and the people who work, have lived in that neighborhood all their lives because many of the people there are families who have lived there all their lives, families who have lived in that neighborhood for forty, fifty years, sixty years, grew up in that neighborhood. Also want better for their neighborhood because the neighborhood had been disinvested from the city so all these things are happening, so them working together with the developers who now want the neighborhood, ended up taking over that neighborhood right? So then, and then the city does this thing where they're like oh we're going to offer all this job training program to these people who- there are so many issues this neighborhood is dealing with that a job training program is not gonna then lift people up out of poverty. Just because you offer a job training program, and then often in these programs most of these people in the neighborhood, most of them don't make it through. Because they have so many other things to deal with, so there is actually no

real investment in the people in that neighborhood but the city can say but we offered them these things right.

UNKNOWN: ().

RO: And then there- everybody's moved out, people's house are taken away from them through the code, people use the coding to get- people lost their homes when their own neighbors were calling the city to come and check for code violations and that's how they lost their homes. Or the city would offer 5,000 dollars- this is all the dirty stuff that people don't know that's now being recorded, people lost their- their family homes because someone, because one of their neighbors called on them, and then the developers have moved in now the neighborhood is split. Right so on Enterprise Street, on this side of Enterprise is all those new homes that look beautiful it's a white neighborhood they've actually- got their own neighborhood association now, and then on this side of Enterprise are the black folks that are still trying to retain something, which is where the police are still circling, homes are still being taken and it's all- it's all happening right underneath our nose. What this was you know it didn't just happen this was a decision that was made by some of the neighbors, the community members who lived there, in order- because they wanted the neighborhood back that they grew up in and the developers who wanted that to- wanted that space but this kind of- there was never any kind of investment in those people. It was a way- and it takes how many- how many years does that take to do something like that? Thirty? You know--.

LI: Yeah.

RO: -it takes that many years to make a neighborhood go from a vibrant African American neighborhood to now one that has been completely gentrified and most of those people not only don't have jobs, they didn't have the proper education that they needed, they've been in and out of prison so they can't get jobs and all that happened while this disinvestment was happening, that's the way that they stopped investing in this community and so you know, I don't think that there is any such thing as a good gentrification because I believe that it's- it's just about take over, and that people sit and wait for thirty- they have the time to wait--.

LI: Mm hmm.

RO: -and it's actually intentional and it's very strategic and- and while it's happening people are being criminalized, and- and being killed, and the system is using the police force to- to clean it up, not because they care, but because somebody wants that property.

EB: Because they can.

NW: Right because they can, and that what happened to the South Side, it's what's happening to East- because you know, (Laughter) those are my favorite things in the world. (Laughter)

DA: Does anybody, has anybody ever done any reading or research on the origins of police and malicious- and where that even birthed from and the original intent was to protect property owners

NW: Mmm.

DA: Predominantly white property owners, and how property owner rights were elevated over human rights, and we need visual folks, to make sure these other people

feel very safe and secure and their- their acquisition of their property and maintaining of their property and having their stuff right? Police- who have a certain function, and today that function is the same, and what I'm interested in discussing is us really, because it's easy for us to sit around here and intellectualize and eat our lunch and talk about the bad, bad city council and the developers. I think what- what is more challenging is to look at our own complicity in this system, and how- and I'll give you case in point. I'm sure everyone has been, whether it is to DPAC or to a ball game, or to a restaurant right in the area and they- enjoyed their time right? And, every weekend, to ensure that folks like us can enjoy our time there, police department goes and massively sweeps up the homeless population--.

NW: Mmm.

DA: -so we can't be- so we aren't bothered with poor people begging us because they don't have a fair shake and equal opportunity in this country to be able to make it right? So to protect our privilege, so we can watch our ball game, and drink our beers and sit out on the sidewalk at Revolution and have our nice meals, you know? They do this massive sweep of poor folks and they lock 'em up, so they are invisible, they aren't seen, so we don't have to be flustered at all, right while we're enjoying our good time. And that's just one example, but I bet if we did a searching inventory we could find example, after example, after example of how we ourselves, so called left intelligentsia right? Is right complicit in the very stuff that's happening to poor folks and black and brown people in Durham, in Raleigh, and all around the country. So how do we take ownership and stop that? You know because it's easy to point the finger at other folk.

GBC: I appreciate my friends that are in East Durham, who are a couple that've started neighborhood- like gatherings get everyone to bring potluck. Started just by community building back the community after people have been so worn down and wounded and they say you know, this seems like a small thing but it's an amazing thing to help people find a connection where we really could unite together. So I know lots of different people who do just that, their- their role, they do their role and we have to do our role.

LI: Do their--.

But, it's a small thing but it's a something that everybody has to do. Yesterday I was at the state house with a hundred clergy and we almost got arrested.

LI: I heard.

GBC: For trying to take letters to our representatives--.

LI: Yeah.

GBC: -to say here's the deal you know, look at where people are voting. Look at the fact that a family of four can earn 250,000 dollars a year and get a tax cut while a family of four with 25,000 a year will have to pay way more taxes, that's what's sick and it was- it was a horrible experience. We were Christians, we were Jews, and we were Muslims all together there and they tried to arrest all of us at one time. But the people there, are each doing something, they- everybody's got a role.

LH: So, I- I- I got- I make some t-shirts, I know it sounds crazy, lotsa crazy but I (Laughter) I had one of my friends daughters kind of and help me design a t-shirt and- I

could only afford like ten, I bought ten and I literally went up online and uploaded them and I'm even gonna try sell them and then use the money to try and get help like- even just some friends and kids in college are all like what can I do for that. The t-shirt just says you know 'Are you a dream crusher' that's all it says so that's my motto, and it's just asking people a question, I tell my children if somebody looks at your shirt and are like 'what does that mean' it says they're a crusher, they're probably a crusher, and you know they probably don't know it, but if somebody looks at it and says ah, I get it then yeah we gotta get them a t-shirt. So that's a little thing. **But I'm- I'm a journalist, and I always try to think of examples like the smallest example, what can I do to try to change, so a- a story I'm working on now is how- we all know, people talk about how do we help bring up kids in a way of they'll love education and maybe they'll continue on, they maybe won't falter or fall off because you know, you look at a lot of people who are incarcerated you know. They fell off the education wagon somewhere too early and-**

GBC: Or got pushed off.

LH: -they get pushed off, and that's why they have a dream crusher shirt!

DA: Now did they fall off or did the system somehow fail there.

LH: I have two black boys and that's why they have dream crusher shirts, the system failed them and I think I'm doing- I'm working on a story about how the system is failing because you know how they always say to start them off early. I remember when- I talk to my parents who started off- what is it not smart start?

NW: No, head start

LH: Head Start, you know Durham has two Durham public schools, Montessori magnet elementary schools that people fight to get in because it starts at four, that means your child gets to be in kindergarten for two years. Now you can't think a child would get a good start if they can be in kindergarten for two years with the same teacher then you are mistaken because my boys make the lottery to get into one of those two schools. We actually didn't make the lottery- we actually didn't make the lottery we were waitlisted because a lot of people to get in those little slots. Well the problem is now, that as they started renovating- Trinity Park, you know and those houses, you can't even afford to live there now because Watts Elementary School was turned into one of those early pre-K places and you have very wealthy people who are getting their kids for free pretty much- education because they live in walking proximity to that school.

NW: And I was in the fight for this, this is what--.

LH: Yeah so now--.

NW: -again because I want to go back because by the time the decision is made before the community conversation happens--.

LH: Now--.

NW: -because I was in that fight.

LH: But now it- It is a major- it's a major- cause see a lottery- it's county wide, it should be county wide have the rules changed--.

NW: Right.

LH: -the Trinity Park folks will say no we should have the walking- the walking rule-

NW: Right. Right.

LH: There wasn't a walking rule when I applied for that lottery.

NW: Right I was-I lived there too, my son was supposed to get on the school to go to the school across town when we could walk down the street to go to a new school before it became a Montessori magnet school.

LH: Mm hmm.

NW: And so it's again about who matters, who's invested in it and when that fight happened in front of the school board by the time the fight around making it a Montessori school happened it was a done deal.

LH: I know, I am fighting in my-

NW: I sat in my--.

NW: -you know as a journalist just to, all I can do is expose, and the wrong children are benefiting from that education, and that Head Start like- who wants to go- that's my question.

NW: They made that decision I- I--.

LH: They got to change that.

NW: -remember the school board meeting--.

LH: Mm hmm.

NW: -when a woman stood in the school board meeting and said- When all the black and brown families stood in the school board meeting, and were complaining about them doing this, people from EK Pell were complaining about the fact that all the students were then going to overcrowd their school and we were threatened to be thrown out of the school board meeting, and this woman who was pregnant, she wasn't

even a parent, she- her child wasn't even born yet this white woman who lived in Trinity Park and she was pregnant, and she said something about her- not wanting to have to send her future- to send her kids to private school when it was old enough to go to school and Ann Delinger who was the school board president at the time said 'Don't worry I'm going to take care of it.

LH: Really.

EB: Oooo.

NW: -while we were being threatened to be thrown out, our children were in elementary school--.

LH: Yep.

NW: -and there were all these parents that were there, and that was when this decision was being- it was already a done deal and so you- you know, in this moment, after the fact, it was a done deal. They wanted the school, they wanted it in walking distance, they didn't want their children--.

LH: Yeah.

NW: -they didn't want to pay for private school--.

LH: Yeah.

NW: -and so it was taken, and it was taken and so you know I--.

LH: It's too bad now, cause you know- I guess there is some new people school board. There is some policy that is being circulated, I guess they have the numbers to now prove how wrong- what you know, the repercussions of that to really just ---

NW: Yes but in that moment, how many- how many--.

EB: They've always had access.

LH: That's what I'm saying you stop educating with that- what that whole program was set up to do and now they're looking at the numbers and like--.

NW: Well they knew that, so-

LH: And I know--.

EB: But like- like I know like what Daryl was saying about the construction of police and that history like the education system to was established on like kidnapping indigenous kids and bringing them into colonial schools and teaching them English and teaching them European value systems so it's like we're still working with this system that is like established in like- you know colonial genocide and its continuing to happen but it just keeps- the façade of it keeps shifting. And when the façade keeps shifting and it's like we're not like, communities aren't actually able to manifest like structures of better – that are like self-determined, and centered on like values that the community is collectively establishing, like kids aren't ever going to be able to learn in the spaces that like- we hope and wish they could and-[pause] I think part of this conversation to is like the gentrification, when we talk about gentrification like why- it's just like- it's colonization and it just keeps happening and like-

NW: Right, use the real word. The real word right like- the real word is better.

EB: And the privatization too, because suddenly that becomes a private school, that's exactly like--.

LH: Yes and that exactly what happens to the **property value and I'm like**, and you know what's so crazy when I moved here- moved here from Ann Arbor Michigan, and I heard about Morehead Montessori Elementary School and it was just a little bitty raggedy house, none of the house are raggedy now, we were told all of that

neighborhood to has been- but there was this little yellow raggedy two bedroom house that we kinda rent this house because I know Durham has the of .5 mile rule, if you live in .5 miles from this school then you get to go to that school, and then when I went down town they were like not that school honey. You know they were like you have to put your name in a lottery and- we will see but the odds are not good, and I was like I mean we moved here because I thought I could- and then I found out that it wasn't I still put my name in the lottery, then of course like I told you we didn't get in, we were on the waiting list several weeks later because there were just some people who don't show up. But then- why I moved, is because the neighborhood just started changing. It had gotten- I guess more Caucasian--.

(Laughter.)

LH: -a lot more people with little bitty children because they changed the rules, so that they could- they did change it back to the .5 walk rule, that's why Trinity Parks and Watts is now, and I was like you know what, I'm moving, and that's when I moved closer to North Carolina Central City, I said my boys don't need to live in this neighborhood any more. I said they need to see people that not only look like them, kids going to school, big kids going to school. I mean literally I was like I'm moving and I moved. I mean just for that- I was just like I don't want to live near Montessori anymore.

GBC: This is so hard cause I- I lived in a very eclectic neighborhood, I like my eclectic neighborhood, and when we first moved here about seven years ago there was a house that we loved on Fayetteville that we loved and was available for rent and we actually chose not to live there because we didn't want to be seen as people who try to come in and do that, and it was such a hard thing for my sense of- I have always lived in

diverse communities, and you know we tried to find one that didn't just have all white people because I didn't want to invade all black people and it was really a struggle. Maybe it was a kind of like where do you go actually when part of a community, a unique part of a community that you're not you know facilitating this whiteness or you're not infiltrating this community that wants to be- it's hard work.

NW: Not going to fight you there. (Laughter). I have to say even the student body of North Carolina Central has changed, I mean it's more diverse than it was a decade ago.

DA: I- I wanna kind of go back to something you touched on the- public private dichotomy, and- and how we feed into it. So even- and I know and I- I don't say this with any recriminations at all because I have a two and a half year old and when she's of school age I want her to have the best--

NW: Mm hmm.

DA: -possible choice to get the best education. So I get it, I get why people go and participate in the lotteries, I get it they want the best thing for their child. But in many ways that gives life to the ability, the ability to create this kind of second class status, of the good schools, and the bad schools right?

LH: () Yeah.

DA: The private schools, the quasi-private being that they're magnet and we're going to invest in additional resources, and then there's the public schools--.

NW: Mmm hmm.

DP: -and we all know what that is dog whistle language for, right? The public schools, and going back to history once again, one of the institutional public schools

even begin? It was in post reconstruction when black lawmakers had acquired some power and they knew all these free black folks that- had been- it had been made criminal to educate them, they needed to have an education. So let's institute a public education system, and what our- opposition has done very well, they all have a very intentional and disciplined march to delegitimize everything in the public space. The government can't do anything well, public schools is bad, public healthcare is bad, now they even moving to public prisons are bad right? (laughter) Everything that is public is bad, to privatize everything--.

LH: That's scary.

DA: -and- and what does it end up doing it leaves the least of these, right? Who are predominantly African American, Latino, and poor White folks, it leaves them on the lower end of the spectrum where, they're never going to catch up, and that's purposeful, right? So once again I'm going to pivot, our own participation within these structures and systems right, and unless we are either swimming against this stream- stream or trying to disentangle or dismantle these systems we are merely participating and giving them their hegemony even more power.

EB: I agree with that but then like my question is like where is the boundary between like- we're participating in this and like we're being forced. Like when- like what do we consent to and like what are we engaging in because like there- you know there isn't another option?

DA: And- and I think that's an excellent point Erin, but can we create some other options.

EB: Well right and I'm--.

DA: You know what I mean?

EB: Right.

DA: You know is- is- should our energies be focused on trying to internally reform- corrupt systems, or should our efforts be focused on developing our- developing our new systems and structures that work for us. (Laughter)

DA: You know where my vote is!

EB: Yeah, absolutely and so is like- how did like- What like what has to be like cultivated in order to do that and I just like- I think that like harm free zone is a project like that – and like – what () work is doing and you know like push back on like criminalization and just like really like allowing community folks to like engage in deeper- unpacking of like [pause] all the situations and experiences that people have gone through to get to the situation that you know like- they were in some ways that they were in some ways just pushed into. But like how does that happen around- How do we do that around like child care, and youth development, and like healthcare and stuff, and I think we- I don't know. Like it's a big question.

DA: No, it's a huge question I mean, and I don't have- the whole mystic total answer, (laughter) but I'll give one you know historical example of how even the government pulled from community ingenious to institutionalize something, and you were already talking about Head Start. Head Start really was the government biting from the Black Panther Party and their breakfast table.

NW: (Laughter) Yeah, yeah.

DA: That was community based Head Start.

EB: Well and that was what restorative justice is now to and that was fighting back and it's just like-

LH: I don't know what all-

NW: So I'm- well I, I'm sorry I- I had this- I just had this conversation this morning (Laughter) I was posting about this on Facebook.

EB: And last night

NW: So where I'm- where I'm really- something you said and now stands out, it's trying to escape me but this idea, poor people for instance are ever going to make it right? Out of poverty to middle class and I don't want to say this as some like Debbie downer but I mean as a black, right let's say as a black. I'm not talking about individuals or the- the fact that individuals need to you know find work, this and that and maybe change their status in life but as a black, because of capitalism there has to be poor people right, there's going to be poor people so as a community, this idea that we have to keep working, working to get out of it and we'll do whatever we have to do to get out of it--.

EG: And that that's possible.

NW: Right it doesn't- it doesn't make any sense. Privatizing everything also ensures that we have this block of poor people who believe that they have no value or no power, we- because I'm poor and I'm going to continue to say that. I have no power, have no value and- and so our voice doesn't matter and all of these things keep happening to us. We have to find a way to like- [pause] to or- you know I hate- hate to use the word organize because I'm not trying to be a social justice warrior but to- value these people that who are not invested in by the people who have money-

LH: Mmm, but I'm thinking like-

NW: -and who have power because we have equated power to money, to level of education, to-

EB: Maleness

NW: Maleness, yeah.

EB: Right.

NW: We have, this is where we're complicit right? Because we also, in some of us- because we also have that core belief, and so to me like when I look at where I'm complicit that's where I'm like well, why do I value so and so because they have a PhD, or why do I value so and so because they have a good job, when I know that my grandmamma knew all these things that I actually value and then I'm ashamed

DA: It- it works hard- it works hard.

NW: That I'm ashamed to say in public. Right, I can say that for myself but in public I'm ashamed to say that actually I learned from my grandmother, actually I didn't go to college and I'm smart as hell you know, and- and--.

GBC: Some of the best chefs in the world learn that way.

NW: Right, but we don't- so when I think of how I'm complicit in it, I do take a look at what I value and what I can do to shift our values system away from what the people who want to retain power have deemed to be valuable, and that's where the creation of something different that's led by the people who are not invested in matters.

LH: Was that- that- one thing I wanted to you know- I can't take sides either way you know I but from what I get from the Moral Monday Movement but- but in what I get from what you're saying to me it is about moral and like what do you believe in and for

some- for some naïve reason you feel that one person at a time could make someone think a little, because believe me when I moved to Peco off of Fayetteville Street- that many of my friends of color, would never move back to that neighborhood, never. I was like well somebody's got to move there-

EB: Right.

LH: Yeah I said, you know I said you know- I think I can take that neighborhood back guys, you know I think we can- I said because- property values aren't going to go nowhere but up anyway. Why not move, and so it's like, this moral like- when I moved to North Carolina, and my job was in Chapel Hill my father was like 'you're not living in Chapel Hill,' he said 'you have to live in Durham' he says because- he started naming his friends that lived in Durham and he's like and I know the population and the percentage of people of color he was like so you have to move to Durham, and I was also kind of raised that you don't ever, ever send your kids to a school that ends in Christian or Academy.

(Laughter)

LH: You know why? Because they were all started at the same time by people who refused to integrate the school system.

EB: Right, right.

LH: I mean you look at the year that all the academy schools- you know Durham Academy, whatever you can choose with this like it- I'm not saying all of them, but most of them.

EB: There's a trend.

(Laughter)

LH: That's a- So I grew up knowing- you never send- so it's like you rub off one friend at a time, you know like you're not supposed to send your kid to a school that ends with- because they never wanted your- so I don't know what to do about that, I mean how do you make people- think just a little bit, like what goes around comes around like eventually I guess.

DA: So- so I would like to be in the queue- We got to do both a them. We have to try to minimize the harm as much as we can while we are operating in this crappy system while imagining something- and for me--.

NW: Clearly we work together, all the time.

EB: (Laughter)

DA: And for me it's- it's- it is the same issue, right? And King laid it out in his Riverside speech, consumerism, militarism, and racism. We're still dealing with that and malignant capitalism yeah. It's gonna ensure that it's poor and rich, that's how it operates. So until we deconstruct and dismantle that system, we're going to have poor and rich. But I- I do fundamentally disagree with this- this pervading idea of scarcity. That there aren't enough and I gotta hoard, and I gotta get, and I gotta set the rules up so me and my clan can have more, that is a false narrative. We have more than enough, it's just motherfuckers got too much--.

NW: Got it.

DA: -and we got to shift that--.

EB: Yep.

DA: -and we got to reveal these contradictions and win over our brothers and sisters of good will to get them to understand that some people got too much.

LH: That's what I mean, morally you were like ok how can I get people and convince you to- give back.

GBC: If you listen to Dr. Harper there is something that rattles on the Constitution and you may have to help me with that Daryl that our Constitution says, first of all it says that it is Christian to try appeal to the obnoxious- the people who say that they are Christian in the government, they were supposed to care for the widows and the orphans and the disenfranchised, and you will hear him over and over, and over again say just state this, to call those people to attention to say no, you're completely hypocritical if you don't care for these people, and every policy you make, that disenfranchises someday, that changes how you vote, that changes who gets a teacher's aid in their class, that changes the this or that, is hypocritical to who you say you are. [pause] And even--.

ORGANIZERS: Guys we have about () minutes so please could you wrap up your conversations, so if you would like to kind of wrap up your conversations-

GBC: And one more thing that's important to me about those who are formerly incarcerated our faith team, there are about seventeen faith teams in the area different faith communities in the area that have created someone who is formerly incarcerated, walks with them as a- a partner as they're kind of being reintegrated into society. So our church is kind of known for sex offenders, so we have- this is our sixth person who it sex offender, first off all we try to find a place to live, second of all hard time finding a job, thirdly I mean is just- is that the community, their family, everybody leaves them, and so we're just setting up people to reoffend if we don't- Try to be there so our partner texts every morning every afternoon. No triggers- nothing's going on. He has a- has a job

now so cause he has a job they've taken away SNAP and he has to pay child support, barely has a job, lives in a group home so setting him up again, to stay at the very bottom rung of the social and economic ladder is what continues to happen over and over and over again, that's the system I want to change.

EB: It's bad.

DA: I- I would encourage you to- adopt some different language.

GBC: Sure.

DA: When referring to- and it's really wordy but people who are convicted of crimes who are required to be on a registry because that term is so loaded.

GBC: Sure

DA: It creates such a visceral, often times negative response in people, so people ask me all the time, well what kind of language should we use Daryl? People. People who are convicted of crimes, people who've been to prison, people who have to register--.

GBC: Sure.

DA: -but the operative word is people.

GBC: Okay, thank you.

DA: It confirms their humanity you know.

GBC: I will tell him this too because we've had to help him change his language, so we'll all work on changing--.

NW: Right because we are adopting a language that--.

DA: -has been taught.

NW: That has been taught and helps us to not see people as humans, we see them as whatever label we put on them--.

GBC: Sure.

NW: -and imagine having- to walk with that every day, of our lives and many of us don't have to even think about that.

GBC: Right.

NW: Many of us don- don't think twice about it, and then you know my thing is always think about- walk around with that, like that in our- our performance that we do, our collective sum performance as a part in the play where we put a sign over top over the audience member's head and make them sit through the rest of the performance with this--.

DA: Label.

LH: Laughs.

NW: This label, and then at the end ask them what it felt like to have to sit through- to just even sit for an hour with that label as the first thing that people see about you and how does that shift how you want to look and refer to people who have been incarcerated for you know, whose stories are never told.

DA: And this is ain't no fuzzy, hug-a-thug kind of thing right?

LH/NW: Laughter

NW: Hug a thug, I like that.

DA: Historically look at- whenever we wanted to colonize, whenever we wanted to dominate, what was the first thing that took place? We had to demonize that group of people, we had to make them less than, right? Savages, j*gaboos, whatever right? And

you do that through the languages, through the art, through the images that you put forth about a group of people to make them subhuman.

NW: Right.

DA: Then the legal regime comes in, then the militarization and the violence comes in, because you've already debased them to where it's okay to do whatever it is you want to do to them.

NW: Yeah.

DA: So it's really the first battleground right? To affirm humanity, this is a person, this is my brother, this is my sister, and none of my sisters ().

EB: ()

DA: Our actions, you know?

GBC: Our actions. There was a great class, Canada started the program, costa like we have in town- and they took with this whole thing about how the label started with you know- pedophile and the breaking down pedophile, between pedophile and child molester which are actually different things and try to talk about how you continued to break it down further and the upgrade helped those in the room who may have been labeled in such a way, but still the shame of it is so intense that it just brings out the whole () round this process.[pause] And then you start getting yelled at by parents who are liberal and left minded if they know what somebody did it changes their perspective a lot of times too.

NW: And that's all fear based you know, the other thing that we have to really, right.

GBC: And that's why I'm proud of my church for not being fear-based.

NW: Is we have to talk about most of people's interests are, you know- based in like fear of losing, fear of scarcity, fear of harm, it's all- fear based and that's- that's what motivates us, and if we can have that conversation around like, you know how in the end like this conversation I had this morning about- about white people in this moment was really, so what is it that's at stake for you, like let's talk about what's at stake for you, and not what- what I need you to do or because you see this happening to black people, because you are not invested then, because of anything that is at stake for you because of what I'm losing which is not going to be- not sustainable, it's not sustainable so let's talk about it.

DA: Where is your skin in the game?

NW: Right. Let's talk about what your fear is, or what you're afraid of losing or whatever you're afraid of happening and then move from and build a movement from there.

DA: Yep.

NW: You know what's at stake?

GBC: That seems key because- it comes back to the tension that comes out of all these individual actions when your only option is to take care of yourself and your family.

NW: Right.

GBC: There is no social structure to be integrated in it there is no sense of community or even broader structures that.

EB:Where to go.

LH: It's- it's so hard, it's so hard, you should see how I- just what was important about my son getting on that plane today because you know he gotten accepted to a lot of schools. He thinks--.

GBC: That's great.

EB: That's so exciting.

LH: Like plenty of places but the school that- that sent for him you know--.

UNKNOWN: Take that home.

LH: -where he's going to New Orleans is sort of one of our old family schools that's Dillard University in New Orleans and to make my son understand why you almost must go to Dillard he knows it's like- and you know it's hard to put so much pressure on a young kid and I was like- when it's like it's our duty honey, you know, that's what we do-

DA: Mmm hmm.

LH: I mean, I mean it's-and he's never been to New Orleans before, and he's never- and this is a small little Methodist school. You know it's truly in the hood of New Orleans you know, and I'm not sure if it's totally revitalized since Katrina, you know I don't--.

DA: So while we're talking about proud parents-

NW: Is this the baby?

DA: No, that's my daughter, she's at- last year in J School in the University of Missouri.

LH: So you've got a two year old and a twenty year old?

NW: That's a good J School out there.

DA: She is interviewing Merly Evers.

NW: Ohh, look at Merly, how is she? I was--.

EG: Wow how cool is that!

DA: You know that is kind of cool.

EG: Oh my god!

NW: Missouri is a good J School.

DA: So I'm a proud pop.

NW: I know you are!

(Laughter)

LH: I was like- well somebody's got to go back.

DA: She was the age of my two year old, when I went to prison, and I didn't see her until you know she was probably like six, six and a half.

LH: Six and half?

DA: See I persevered through that--.

END OF RECORDING

Transcribed by Skye Allan 6/19-6/26/16

To be copyedited.