BLACK BOTTOM

(Woman) It was an area and city very near to the downtown section but very far removed from the downtown section in terms of being isolated economically and geographically. It was home to me. It was a safe place. It was a large area.

(EM) Do you have any idea when it became black bottom?

(Woman) Maybe in the 20's I guess because the influx of black people came, I think most of them came after World War I. Many of them settled on the old west side. My parents were on the old west side and my grandmother was over there. Then the opportunity came to move east of Woodward and they did.

(EM) How would you describe your neighborhood?

(Woman) To begin with, it was a neighborhood of single homes and a number of businesses on corners but they were family businesses. The people who had the businesses were either ethnics like Italians or Germans. A few Germans were there. The black businesses that came in, most of the people were identified with the community. They might not have lived just immediately there but they had family attachments and that kind of thing. I was kind of an intimate relationship. I was on the corner of St. Auben and Chestnut, facing St. Auben. It was a magnificent home. Had a slate roof, it was a double brick construction. It had a cork floor in the kitchen and the bathroom which was very easy on the feet. It had the central vacuuming--you just plug in the

vacuuming in the wall and you vacuumed. It had hot water heat which was very expensive heat. It had stained glass windows. It was a magnificent home. The neighborhood was not consistent. Most of the homes were frame, many of them were two family. A few four family, very few.

People trusted each other, people knew each other. It was safe.

BROWN

(EM) What do you remember doing as a child?

(Woman) We played a lot with the neighborhood children. Basically that's what we did. Then there was a, the YWCA was on St. Auben. that turned into a hospital later when they moved, Dr. Sweet's hospital. We went to neighborhood school. When the students finished Miller, which was called a junior high school at that time. It was converted all the way through the 12th grade so that blacks wouldn't transfer over to Eastern. So we stayed in the same neighborhood. We knew the pattern so we knew that was why. It happened when I was in school, they just extended the grades. We didn't have the facilities that a high school had. We didn't have a swimming pool and that kind of thing. It was inadequate in terms of what was offered.

BROWN.

The Urban League was on Chestnut beyond Orleans and of course they had the camp, Green Pastures camp. I went to camp one year. We did have some community services. We also could walk to get anything we wanted. We had a drug store on the corner. We had a funeral home. My father owned a drug store and the funeral home on the corner next to ours. My father was Dr.

Harrod M. Mullen. He didn't operate the funeral home but he rented it out to people. He rented it out o Charles Diggs. When Mr. Diggs had been in prison for the first time and when he came out, he was trying to get a situation. My father didn't really rent it to him, he just let him be the undertaker. Charlie was a little boy at that time. My father actually didn't operate it, he just got undertakers to stay there. The drug store, he would just hire pharmacists. My father never allowed us to work. There were six children in the family. I could go into the drug store and get a soda or something.

The drug store was very well stocked and it was just two aisles. It was in a building. The drug store was on the corner. The funeral home was next to it. There was a flat upstairs and there was an up and down flat behind it. This was at St. Auben and Maple. Dezon?? was there. It had an iron fence around it. It was a very beautiful building. It was just across the street from Coleman Young's family. They had the cleaners and lived behind it. On the corner was a grocery store, Mike's grocery store. The other grocery store on the other corner was Louie's. We could walk and get almost anything we wanted: bakeries, hardware, cleaners, grocery stores.

(EM) Did you feel that there were areas that you couldn't go to? In the beginning you said that you were isolated. Did you feel that you couldn't go outside of a certain boundary?

(Woman) We didn't venture much from our home territory.

Occasionally we would go to visit friends on the far east side which we called Fisher Street, we called that far east. We had a few families over there that we went to visit. What we called the north end up around Josephine and those streets opened to blacks. Many of the professional people moved up there. We didn't. We stayed there until they tore the house down. You just felt that you knew everyone and that you were safe and that people would look out for you.

(Jenkins) Communities was tight. The street were safe. Everybody lived in the neighborhood. The people owned the stores. The doctors, the policemen on the beat, they would live in the neighborhood. Ben Turpin lived around on Jay. Some lived on MacDougal, some on Clinton. They would hang out on the corner with you. Once they'd get off of work, they'd come out on the corner. If something go wrong or somebody do something, they'd send for the neighborhood police. He'd come down if a man and woman get into an argument in their house, he slaps her around or something like that, they send for the police. Just to quell them down. He goes around and talks to them and settles everything.

JENKINS.

I didn't go to school here in Detroit. I had graduated from school when I came here in 1936. I lived over on Sherman between MacDougal and Ellingwood. I lived across the street from the Deloich's. They were prominent people here. Mr. Deloich was a carpenter and his kids were affiliated with Joe Louis. I saw Joe Louis so many times because he had a '36 Packard that he would come over there and Alonzo would drive him over to Deloich and

he'd play ball with us out there in the middle of the street. I was just about his age at that time. Mary Deloich's brother worked at Packard Motor Car Company and the father was a deacon of the church. I think it was the; it wasn't the church of Our Father at that time. Rev. Cagney had a church over on Hartland and Joseph Campeau. And when Rev. Macgruder had the church over on Madison between Dequinder and St. Auben. They sent him out one time in the middle of the winter and this thing sat on the sidewalk there.

Going to and from work I used to ride the old Fort-Kercheval streetcar which terminated at Lancaster and East Jefferson and come down through Indian Village and Black Bottom and all around, through town and out Fort Street. One spur of it went to the Ford Rouge plant, gate 4 and the other spur went over to Gleason over near Outer Drive in south west Detroit. IN the 1941 I got to be a bus drive on a street car ad I went all over this town. I saw it grow from, they said 8 Mile road was the city limits but it was more like 6 Mile road was the city limit because everything out there was urban beyond 6 Mile road. I remember driving a bus on west 7 Mile road when it was a two lane road. They called the bus the Second Avenue extension line. The big migration hadn't went across 6 Mile road until World War II. Everybody was in the city limits. the Dexter bus terminated at the U of D. The 14th Streetcar turned around at the U of D. When you went out 6 Mile Road, after you crossed Wyoming, you was in the country. You could see nothing but pheasants and rabbits and everything running across the field. The PWA, public works

administration, they paved all those streets back in the early 40's. All those streets that's going north and south. You only had the main thoroughfare that was paved, the other streets were gravel.

When I first started driving the bus, Mount Caramel hospital had just got built. I started driving in 1941. I used to ride the Fort-Kercheval streetcar, Jefferson streetcar, Claremont. Those were streetcars when you had two men conducting. Black Bottom was a busy, hustling, bustling urban area of Detroit. It had all cross index of nationalities lived there. You had the Italians, Germans, Syrians, and the southern hillbillies. Everybody lives next to one another. Nobody bothered nobody. Everybody looked out for people.

I remember the movie theaters on State Street. The Catherine, the Savoy. Park Doors Tavern, Miller's lunch, very affluent, nice small lunchroom there that you could get a meal for 35 cents, 50 cents. That's many a years ago but they were good times. You'd get fried chicken, get a nice steak for 50 cents, complete meal. The Miller's lived in Conant Gardens, it was just him and his wife. You had Parlor Door Tavern there. You had the bowling alley in the basement on Mullet, you had the pool room. Dr. Sweet's office was over there, he and his brothers. That was on Madison and Chene. You had Rev. Master's church, Calvary Baptist church was right there on Joseph Compeau. You had Bristol Funeral Home on Joseph Compeau, Duffield's food. A.G. Wright funeral home was a small funeral home on St. Auben near Clinton. That's where Diggs was once too. Rev. Hartess Coleman was the pilaster of Macedonia Baptist Church.

(EM) How many of the businesses were owned by whites?

(Jenkins) You had a tremendous bunch of business. Integration destroyed all of those mom and pop stores and all the beautiful restaurants. You had so many nice places that you could go to eat. It's nothing left for the young people to see what these role models or what people had back in those days. You had Paradise Valley and you had black business door to door and you had bars and you had hotels. You had lawyers office, you had night clubs, you had entertainment centers, you had after-hours clubs. You had everything you wanted and then whenever . . .we'd go out. . I used to work at Henry's Grill on Harding and Madison. I used to book shows in there. I was everything but the pot washer and security man and booking man. $15-$18 a week was a lot of money then. The people wasn't making but 75 cents an hour at Fords and if you been there long enough, the top you could make out there was 90 cents an hour, $7.20 a day. $6.00 a day was what they made. You got paid every two weeks. You got paid off in cash money.

(Woman) The only thing left is the Eastern Market.

(Jenkins) The Eastern Market was a great place. You go over there and all the stuff that people sell you now, they'd give it to you. I know when Joe Muir had his place started, there on St. Auben and Gratiot, you couldn't go in it but I

enjoyed a lot of that pickerel and walleye and red snapper because we are a group of people that got by on what people thought there was nothing but trash, they threw it out. I was living on Elmwood in 1937. Living between Macomb and Clinton. We used to go over to Joe Muir's restaurant when you had that Zip gas station on the corner of St. Auben and Vernor Highway. The people who parked the cars for Joe Muir's, all they would do was, just filet the fish. they threw all the rest in the trash. All of that meat up there and all of the bone and all the tail. We used to go over there with a dish pan on Friday. If you'd give those guys who was parking cars a quarter, they'd give all that to you. You'd get a dishpan full of fresh pickerel, fresh fish. You'd take it home and clean it up and wash it up and gut that fish and you got a feast.

Jenkins.

(Woman) That was the only place that blacks were not welcome in Black Bottom.

(Jenkins) Senator Diggs broke the color bar at Eastern Market. You know the restaurants inside the market there? They wouldn't serve blacks so he broke that up. That was one of the first civil rights laws that he implicated about that. When I came to Detroit, I'm from North Carolina, from Ashboro. A pretty liberal town but still the laws was what they were and you knew what you could do and you know what you couldn't do. I really couldn't see much the difference in living in North Carolina as living in Detroit. You just had certain places down on Monroe, greasy spoons would serve you. This was on Monroe and Randolph

down to the Family Theater. You had three or four little restaurants that you could go into and get a hot dog or hamburger or sausage or whatever. They would serve you but if you went up in Hudson's or to Frank's Tea Room on Farmer street or any of those places. Even Kresge's on Woodward and State, they didn't serve you. People used to walk in and buy a cup of coffee and they had a little chair to set in with like a little desk, a school desk. Cunningham Drug Store, Kinsel's Drug Stores, you couldn't eat in any of those places. JENKINS

There was Greektown then but very few places that would serve you. Old China Town at Third and Michigan. That used to be a sleazy bar place from the time you crossed Cass, right across from the Book Cadillac Hotel. All them people panhandled, hung out there around those bars and asking you "Can you spare a dime for a cup of coffee?" From Cass to Third, they had a little part of China Town there. We used to go over there some time on Saturday night about 2 o'clock after the joints closed. They'd serve you but you knew that they were reluctant to serve you. Whenever the other white people would come and see some black people in there, they'd hurry and get over in a corner where they wouldn't have to mingle with them.

Do you remember Young's Barbecue over on Mullet and Duboise? That was the original Young's Barbecue. (Edwards says that was Coleman's uncle and the wife). The recipe for the sauce, that man carried that secret to his grave. The fellow that really came up there with Parks, what happened to him? When Young built the place up at Waterloo and Chene, that's Young style barbecue, not

Young's barbecue.

(Woman) That was Young's, he owned it. He moved from Dubois up to Chene. He worked in there.

(Jenkins) I remember the original Young's Barbecue. I remember how he had little kilns built back there with that fire going and that meat on little platters. He used a ladle to reach in there and get it just like the old fashioned Germans used to bake bread years ago in a kiln. I used to stop in there many a night on my way from Henry's, Blue Goose or the Valley.

(Woman) It was Coleman's uncle who owned the barbecue at that time and he wouldn't give away one rib. I went around there many a time with Coleman's sisters and we would just stand there and he would not give them a rib. He never had any children.

(Jenkins) Do you remember the Bagnasco's had film on down there? Do you remember that Sunday that they killed his father? That was the gangsters, that was the Purple Gang.

JENKINS.

(Woman) He was shot and thrown out of a car. It was Italian. It happened because of the Mafia.

(Jenkins) It happened around 1937 or 1938. We were all on St. Auben there around Bookers. We don't ever know what happened. All we know is that they killed the fellow squabbling and left him on the sidewalk. All we heard was the machine guns go

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off. We looked around and when we looked around this big black Lincoln was squirting smoke going towards St. Auben from Vernor Highway. They got up to Vernor Highway and turned right and that was all. The kids ran out of the funeral home with the bags. They put their father in the bags and carried him in the funeral home. The police came. They just always say they came out with a broom and a bucket of water and washed all the blood up and said "Nothing happened. Nothing happened." That's what it was all about. They called it LaFatta and sons. They made different kinds of ice cream, they ran a confectionery. They had a funeral home there right next to Macedonia Baptist church on St. Auben.

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(EM) The purple gang, was that located in Black Bottom?

(Jenkins) The purple gang mostly was the Jewish Gang on the west side. This was the Mafia. The Mafia is mostly Italian. The Bamaritos who had a big confectionery and a big shop out there at Mullett and the park on Joseph Compeau across the street from Duffield elementary school.

(Edwards) I never lived down in Black Bottom. I always lived this side of Black Bottom. When we first came here to Detroit, I'm from Nebraska, my mother brought me here when I was about 5 years old. We stopped on Antionne to find a colored hotel down there, I don't remember the name. Then we found a home. I never lived below Gratiot, ever. We bought a home on Harper that I just sold a couple of years ago. All my family

died and left me. At first we lived on 8 Mile Road. We bought a place on Wyoming and 8 Mile Road. We were the fifth family that moved out there. We had a real good thing going out there. They had lots of churches and a lot of clubs and everything. Young people got together and had a group. We were the fifth family that moved on 8 Mile Road when that area was opened to black people. We lived out there 10 or 15 years and then we moved back in town here. EDWARDS

We lived at Wyoming and 8 Mile Road and I went to Northeastern High School. I had to get up before dawn to get up to 8 Mile Road and get the bus and drive all the way to the east side to Northeastern. Then we moved away from there and bought a home on Harper between Beaubien and Brush Street. When my family all died I moved down on Jefferson. So I'm in the 1700's since 1972. That was one of the first apartment that was rented in River Towers. I'm still there.

(EM) Did you know Black Bottom?

(Edwards) Oh I knew about it. I went over there to the YWCA which was on St. Auben. I always remember the YWCA. That was the Lucy Thurman. (Ms. Nuttall), I worked with her sister at Hudson's. The Nuttall family was very prominent below Gratiot Avenue.

(EM) Tell me about your background.

In the first place, I don't remember what year it was, I was

a commissioner for the city of Detroit. I've been a commissioner for the state of Michigan since 1972.

I was a maid at Hudson's for many years and I used to be in the millinary department. The people who owned Hudson's used to come in and I was real friendly with them and they'd say "How do I look Gwendolyn?" I'd say you look fine or you don't look fine. I was a maid. Normally, the J.L Hudson company put very fair girls on the elevator so when I went down there I got a maid job. I didn't particularly care what job I got so they gave me a maid job. Finally they gave all the dark black people, maids and whatever. All the pretty ones went on the elevator.

(EM) Did anybody ever say that openly or did it just happen?

They didn't tell you that but they said the only opening they had was for maids when I went there. I worked there 25 or 30 years and then I went to Fords. I worked at Ford 25 years. I've been retired almost 25 years.

I was very involved in the union when I went to Ford. I used to be a union representative for Ford. I started there in 1929 I think. I worked there 28 or 29 years. I ~~was a maid at~~ Fords for many years. In the factory I made wrench ???

When they decided that they were going to have a union, I was one of the first ones who was a representative. I didn't get in trouble. What we did, there were five of us that worked in the women's department that were responsible for the Ford Group.

We'd have conferences where we would teach the women what to do and what not to do in the plant. Then we would go all over the plants, every plant that was a Ford plant, we would go and have a conference once a year. We'd take maybe 50-60 women out of the plant and pay them their wages that they would be losing and teach them how to be good unions members. Because women were listening to these people: don't do this and don't do that. We taught them how to be good union members.

Women that come in the plant, sometimes, they'd let the men out talk them. "When they ask you to do that don't do that" you know. We'd tried to tell them that you're working for the company and not working for them. We had the women's conferences every month somewhere in the state. I don't remember how many years I was a union rep. but when I left Fords I wasn't working in the plant, I was still a union rep. I worked for Fords 25 long hard years. ~~Being all over the state is what got me this job I have now. I'm a commissioner for the aging for the state of Michigan.~~ EDWARDS.

(EM) When you wee a maid at Hudson's, what was Hudson's like then?

(Edwards) Hudson's was almost like what it is now. It was a nice place to work. It didn't pay nothing. We may have got paid less than the elevator operators but we had better times, I did at least. Mrs. ~~Woodward~~ WEBBER, the people that owned Hudson's, would come in, and I'd lean on my broom and advise her not to buy that hat or whatever. We got to know them all really well. It

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was fun. The millinery department needed a full time maid to keep things tidy. I kept the floor swept up and dusted off. The millinery department was the whole floor. That was my job, I'd go in and clean the offices in the morning and straighten up and everything. Then all during the day I'd mop and pick things up. I think Bessie (other woman's sister) used to work there too. We had about 60-70 maids on the staff. And about 40-50 elevator operators.

EDWARDS

(Jenkins) They'd be lined up on Grand River and it would form all the way around to Woodward and back. Whenever Hudson's was going to hire elevator operators and maids, they had lines all the way around the building.

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(Edwards) It was a nice place to work. I didn't have to wait long, I got hired right away.

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(Jenkins) They used to line up at Farmer and Grand River and they would go all the way back down Grand River and all the way back down Woodward. All of them would be black because those were the kind of jobs that they would be applying for. What you're looking at then back in those days, when you had a job at Hudson's or Edison or the gas company. Any kind of job you had, you were secure. Those jobs paid maybe $28-35 a week and you had that money coming in all the time. You could do a lot with it couldn't you.

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(Edwards) Sure you could. I bought a house on it.

(EM) Do you have any particular memories of Hudson's or Fords?

(Edwards) I think that probably the reason that I got my job now, commissioner, was for the things that I did at Hudson's for the group that we had. We would have meetings and whatever and I met some people from upstate. We had a group that met periodically and would have people come in from other places to speak to us. I got real buddy-buddy with an official in the state of Michigan so when they got to hiring state commissioners, I was the first commissioner that governor William appointed in 1972. I'm the oldest commissioner on there.

END SIDE A

(Jenkins) What stands out then is that the bus stop is your passion because if you pick them up. . .I became a bus driver mostly for security. It was 1941. I worked at Fords Rouge plant. I started out in the foundry where they put everybody. At that time, you had a certain pattern when you got hired. Other people didn't hire black people, Marshall hired black people. It was a tradition that prominent people could give you a letter to go to Ford Motor Car Company and carry this letter to Marshall and they would hire you. Then they would take X amount of dollars out of your pay to pay for the job. that was the political thing back in the 30's. You could go to Charles Roxboro the lawyer and he would give you a letter. Or you could go

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to the pastor of Second Baptist Church, Bradby. You could go to some of these Ford dealers and buy a car and then they'd give you a letter and you'd go to Fords and get hired. When I got hired, I got hired out of the employment line. I was standing in line out there waiting for the place to open. They'd turn you away and you'd go back and get in line again and go back up again. I was hired before the union ever got into Fords. I remember the Battle of the Overpass when Walter Reuther and all them people was fighting. that was around 1939 or 1940.

(Edwards) Marshall hired me. I got hired in 1929 and worked 25 years.

(Jenkins) when I got hired I went out there, I was rooming but I had quit the bar. The city airport was at Connors and Gratiot. I went to work for Pennsylvania Airlines, the Capital Fleet they called it. They wasn't paying nothing. I think every 5th and 20th, we got about $97. At that time I was rooming with a guy who worked at Fords. I was paying about $3.00 a week for the room. I cooked for myself or I ate in one of the small restaurants around there. I got tired of the airport so I knew what time he went to work in the morning. I was working the midnight shift at the airport. I told them I didn't feel good. I caught the Gratiot bus because the busses at that time came on when the streetcars went off in the evening. I came home and I got home in time to catch a ride to Fords with the fellow I was rooming with. He was driving, he had a car. I think I got out

of the around 6:30 because I think he went to work at 7:00. He put me off at Gate 4 and I had to walk all the way down to Gate 2. It was in January or February 1 and you couldn't make no fire there. Those Dearborn police was riding the horses and the security out there was just like the Gastapo. You had to stand out there and wait until the employment office opened at 9:00. I didn't get in the employment office until 1:00. After they let me in the bullpen then they didn't process us until 1:00. Then they finally carried me over to the foundry and in the small parts. I took examination for the civil service job for the city of Detroit. I worked there until May in 1941 and they called me to come and drive a bus. I didn't quit Fords. I went out there and I had confidence that Marshall would give me a leave of absence because I wanted to be secure. When you get hired on the city, you was on 6 months probation. If anything happened to you, they could just fire you. I wanted to have something to fall back on so I went out there and I told a lie. I told Marshall that my brother was sick in Chicago and I needed to go over there and take care of his barber shop and help run his barber shop. Could I get a 6 months leave of absence. He wouldn't give me 6 months, he gave me 4 months. I went and drove a bus and when that 4 months was about to end I came back and asked him for another 2 months. He wouldn't give me the 2 months. I said well I'll have to gamble now. I had to turn in my badge and everything. I came out all right and passed the probation and started driving a bus.

When I started driving the bus, you only had very few blacks driving the bus at that time and mostly all those were carry over

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from World War I. Most of them worked for the old DUR (Detroit Urban Railway). A lot of those was hired during World War I. It was very prejudice to people that you worked with on the bus line, especially the public that you're confronting out there. You drive up to a corner on the bus and open your doors and they turn their back and say "I don't ride with Niggers". We used to laugh about it. We used to work Dexter and at that time Dexter boulevard was nothing but Jews. The Dexter line was a heavy line. They carried people all day and half of the night. We used to pull up in front of the Fisher Building on the Dexter bus going to Fullerton or Fenkel or the U of D and open the doors and they'd turn their back on you. Me and a guy would holler out "Well you better come on and ride with me. The one behind me is blacker than me."

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Whenever people would get on the bus, the fare was 6 cents. Five cents if you went down, 6 cents if you went on the street car. One penny for a transfer. If you were going across town, the busses don't go downtown, it's 5 cents and if you want a transfer it's 10 cents. People used to get on and we had to make change. They used to take their money and hold it so they wouldn't touch your hand. When you first get hired you're on the extra boat, you didn't hold no run. If a guy didn't make his run in the morning in time, you'd work his run. A lot of times if they give you a run, they'd give you a late show up in the afternoon and you'd get a night run that gets off at 2 o'clock in the morning or 3 o'clock. Then you have a 4 or 5 am show up. They had bunks upstairs where you slept. Those guys didn't want you

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to sleep in those bunks. They had a restaurant there. there was a vacant lot there right behind the terminal there where the streetcars used to turn around. All them Black Legions and Ku Klux Klan, they used to come in. They didn't want us to sit at the lunch counter. If you were at the station you'd ask someone to wake you up at 4:30 if you had a 5 o'clock run. They had places where you could freshen up and come down and get ready to gout on your assignment. When you come downstairs you'd want a cup of coffee or roll or something. Or you might want some bacon and eggs or something. They'd want to have just a little space here for the black people at the counter.

I was working Puritan and Fenkel, breaking in with a guy out there. All out that way was nothing but rednecks. We were going to Grayfield, that was the end of the line. He said "You get off here and go in there and get you something to eat because you said you was hungry and I'll go to the end of the line. You be back here at this stop at such and such a time and I'll pick up back up again". He was my instructor. He holds the run but he's breaking me in. You go into this restaurant and they'd say "We don't serve Niggers in here." I'll never forget right here at John R. and Vernor Highway, used to be a Shell station on the left hand side. We used to come down John R. and do a short turn at Campus Martins when Sam was on the corner. All those buses coming up from the river, they'd be loaded. They can't pick up along Hudson's and Kerns. You had a short turn. You'd fall in behind another bus and you had an empty bus and you'd pick the passengers up. I'll never forget. We used to come down John R. and lay over there just below Vernor Highway which is I-75 now.

1943 not

You went over to the Shell station to use the restroom "No we ain't got no restroom for no Niggers". There were all kind of experiences you had.

JENKINS

(EM) When you were talking about in Highland Park, you said the KKK?

(Jenkins) They were bus drivers. The belonged to the KKK and the Black Legion. The Black Legion was back in the 1930's. They was attacking black people and they was killing people. Wasn't that when Buckley got killed? William Buckley was a commentator on the radio in the old hotel Detroit up there on Woodward Avenue. They used to have a news commentator and he used to broadcast from the hotel then. He would expose anybody and talk about anybody. He just finished his broadcast one time and he walked out and by the time he hit Woodward Avenue, they blew him up. He talked about the Black Legion and all. JENKINS.

There were a lot of experiences you had, I worked during the different riots and everything. In 1943, I was working on Waterloo across VErnor Highway, just east of Elmwood cemetery. I was on vacation. We didn't pay no attention. The old Grand Belt car used to come from Belle Isle and then came up Mt. Elliot. I went out to the little confectionery at night to get my Free Press and get my ice cream and I saw this Randolph streetcar packed with people. That was a typical Sunday afternoon or evening about 9 or 10 o'clock. Everybody leaving the park. It was hot. I didn't pay it no attention. We didn't have a radio on and TV

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hadn't came into being at that time. Monday morning I got up and turned the radio on, the first thing you heard, Rioting in Detroit! I thought what are they talking abut it. Everybody had their radios on then and people was calling people up. I was going out to the north end and I caught the Fort Street car and the guy told me "You be careful when you get off downtown there on Monroe. Those fools down there have paper bags and they got a brick in the paper bag. If you see somebody coming toward you with that bag in their hand swinging, you run away from them because they get right next to you and those white people haul off and hit you upside the head." When the Fort car came off of Clinton onto Gratiot to go around by Sams and go down Monroe, when we turned on Randolph, going around there by the ???, here comes one little black boy coming up Monroe and he was coming by Sams. I bet you there was 200 whites behind him. I said "Oh my God". When I got down to Monroe and Woodward I got off and I walked over in front of Sams to catch the John R. to Oakland bus. The bus driver said "I'm not going up Brush. If you want to go up there you're going to have to go and catch the Oakland and then walk from Hastings down. They done set two busses on fire up Brush this morning. We're going to leave here and go down Woodward to Grand Circus Park and go around Grand Circus Park and hit Adams and hit Cass, then go up Cass to the Boulevard. Then we're going to cut back over at the Boulevard to Brush and go on out." I was going out to Kennelworth and John R. anyway so I just rode the bus up that way. I was going to a friend's house who was a bus driver to, name was Joe Barnes. He lived at 244 Kennelworth. I went up there and then we drove a car up to the

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terminal in Highland Park. We came back down to his house and I said "How am I going to get home. I'm living over on the east side." He said "I'll take you home. We'll go down John R. to the Boulevard and go around the Boulevard and hit McDougal and take you on in." We went up to Owen and Oakland and I saw people get beat. I just couldn't stand it. There were people who were going to work at Chrysler on the Claremont streetcar. When they got off there at Owen and Oakland to transfer to the Oakland streetcar, those guys were beating those guys. Most of them white guys. I went home and said "Gee, this was brutal." Then the next morning the federal troops came and that's where you saw the sights of what happened in 1967. That was a repeat of what happened in 1943. It was tragic to see how they just took everything out of the stores. They took all the canned goods and everything out of the stores. Then it's pitiful that the people that have those stores in the neighborhood, they have to come down and board the stores up with everything and restock them. Then when you get ready to go to the store, you have to go out there and get in line and they open the door and let so many in and lock the door. They wait on you and then open the door and let you out. It's kind of depressing to think that people come back here to the neighborhood and do the same thing.

I saw the same thing happen in the 1967 riot. At that time, I had a partnership in a store at Atkinson and 12th, Bernards of O'Dell's drug store. Me and Carey bought that store from Bernard O'Dell. Then this riot broke out right below us at that after-hours gambling place right next to the Edison and the bank. I

was on 12th Street at 3 o'clock that morning. Everything was just as normal. I closed the store. They were just a block away between Claremont and Atkinson on the west side of the street. That was a political thing because everybody was mad with Cavanaugh and Gerardin, the police commissioner. They was feuding about pay raises and everything. The policemen and the mayor and the city was feuding. When I went home and got into bed and about 7 o'clock my phone rang. My friend had went downtown to buy a racing form. He came back up 12th Street. He lived up on Collingwood. He called me from home and said "You better go and see about the store. They rioting on 12th. Don't go up 12th Street from Euclid. Go up another street and cut in around Claremont." I lived over at Northwestern and Dexter in the same terrace that John Conyers lived in. He had just got elected in 1964, his first term. When I got in my car to leave, Ed Featherstone was just coming up from 12th. He said "Do not go over there. John went over there and they tried to knock him off the car with a brick." I went up La Salle Blvd. I kept looking through every time I crossed one of the through streets. I looked through to see the traffic. I just saw traffic going up 12th. I said "Oh, I'm going up to, can't remember, the street before Hazelwood." I cut through. Everything was just as normal, nothing was happening. The minute I got up to 12th Street and the light turned green and I made a left turn, they had furniture, clothes, shoes, all in the street. This was 7 o'clock in the morning. I think the thing hit at about 4 or 5 o'clock when they raided the place. Those laundromats along there, I saw a guy with a big sledge hammer. He was busting the

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money containers. When I got up around almost to Claremont, everything cleared off and I went up to the store across Claremont to Atkinson. When I gut up there a ??? was standing outside the store. He said "Man look down there. this is awful." There wasn't a police on 12th. They all was over on Woodrow Wilson and 14th. They claimed that they didn't have enough people to go over there. They could have took 2 dozen police and started at Euclid and walked right up 12th street and just started telling guys "OK get off the streets, you got enough." They was going to have to bust one in the head to let them know that they meant business. But they didn't do nothing like that and the people went wild getting what they want, going to pawn shops. That's where they had all the guns at and took all the rings and everything. Then about 10:00 that morning, Jack's Place was right off of Claremont there, they broke in and cleaned it out and set it on fire. Then they called the fire department. When the fire department come on 12th, the police had to come to protect the firemen. That';s when you see the blue shirts and everybody started coming out on 12th. Everybody had been over there for the last six hours, rowdy, getting what they want, going home, calling the people on the north end, calling the people further on the west side, calling the people on the east side and said "Chile you better come over here and get some of this. The police ain't doing nothing." They thought, what the hell, I'm going to go over there if the police ain't doing nothing. That's how the thing spread. I saw it just mushroom.

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(EM) I was told that the police had been told to just go in quietly and instead they just created a problem. . .so that they did incite.

(Jenkins) I think that it could have been avoided and that they didn't do nothing and then it just got worse. They had that Charles Furniture store, they had beautiful furniture in there. That little shopping area at the Boulevard and Grand River, you had Red Robin, Sanders, Cunningham's Drug Store, National Bank of Detroit, you had a whole lot of little stores in there. I used to get off from work and I used to come home and go in the back of Sanders and get me a nice sandwich and a soup for lunch, get me a hot fudge sundae. I used to get up at 3:00 in the morning. I used to have to be at work at 3:45. When I got off in the day I'd just go over there and get me some lunch and come back home and go to bed and go to sleep. They had came in, set the building on fire next to us and spread it to our building and burnt our barber store. I went on home and set on our porch and looked at the people as they threw the first rock through the Charles Furniture Store. Went in there when they had those big long stereos, TV and radio together. They used to have them back in the 60's. I saw a man and woman go in the window and bring that stereo out and sit it on top of their car and the lady held on to it and they took off.

With all the experiences I've had, still I like Detroit because Detroit has been good to me. I enjoy living here. I'm still fighting trying to have some of the nice things that we had. Leave some of ??? if I can live long enough.

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