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W: And that's going to be my first question.

I: Okay. The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of the black vote in Florida since 1965, and to investigate the effects of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and also then to look into how effective the vote can be for a minority. In other words, how far the can / vote take a minority and how effective can minority members who get into politics and who are elected—how effective can they be. The first group of questions are just to find out how well the Voting Rights Act of 1965 has helped blacks to take part in Florida politics. What year did you first register to vote?

W: I don't even remember. I'd have to subtract for you. I'd have to subtract twenty-one from thirty-five.

I: Twenty-one from thirty-five?

W: Uh huh.

I: Twenty-one from seventy-five, you mean?

W: Yeah, okay. Twenty-one from seventy-five.

I: Okay. What year were you first eligible to vote?

W: We weren't eligible to vote until we were twenty, I believe. I think that I became registered to vote at twenty-one.  
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I: Okay. So you registered then / year after you were eligible?

W: Right.

I: Okay. Was that here in Eatonville?

W: No, that was in Duval County, Jacksonville, Florida.

I: Uh huh. How long have you lived in Eatonville?

W: I've lived in Eatonville five years.

I: Okay. Did the local registrars, either here or in Jacksonville, ever turn you down when you applied to register?

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W: No, they didn't.

I: Okay. Have voter registration drives been held here in Eatonville?

W: Well, that could be a yes and no, depending on how you would classify a voter registration. I think this past March was the first time any real effort was put toward getting people to register to vote, and the reason that was done is because the incumbents were trying to stay elected, you know, in office. So we put forth more of a voter registration effort then since I've been in Eatonville.

I: What organizations were involved?

W: We had a group called the Young People Pushing for Progress. And ~~then~~ <sup>we</sup> ~~had~~ ~~you have~~ another group called The Citizens for Better Government. So you had two community groups. The Young People Pushing for Progress did get the young vote out which I thought was very good because for the first time in the history of the town of Eatonville, you got more youth involvement in the past election than any other election they've had.

I: Okay. Were there any voter registration drives before last year?

W: Uh uh. Not to my knowledge.

I: Okay. How successful were these drives?

W: I think the drive was very successful.

I: Can you give us some numbers or--

W: I can't give the exact number, you know because--

I: Estimates?

W: Well, I can't even estimate. The only thing I could base my opinion on is, for instance, when I came to Eatonville five years ago after I'd been here a year, I ran for mayor. And we had maybe about 200 people to turn out to vote. Prior to that you never really had any real

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W: motivation in the community as far as getting the vote out. And we've gone, say, from a 200 turnout to a 500 turnout in a registration, you know, in voting.

I: Uh huh.

W: This past election was the first time we got 500 people out to vote when we didn't have a mayor election. We only had commissioners being elected. So I ~~would~~ say that was pretty good. That's over seventy-five percent.

I: Are there any things which prevent the people from registering to vote?<sup>here</sup>

W: No, there's nothing to prevent them from voting. I do feel that a lot of people are unaware of the fact that they can go right at town hall and register because so many people when you've approached them about becoming a registered voter and getting involved, they say, well, I don't want to go way to Orlando and register. Then once you tell them, well, you only have to go as far as town hall. If you get in the car, I'll take you there and I'll take you back home. You know, then, you know, once awareness base is increased in any community, I think you get a better response.

I: Okay. We have a list here of factors that have traditionally impeded people being able to register, particularly preventing blacks from registering. Now this is a unique situation in that this town is all black.

W: Right. Is all black.

I: But, still some of these factors may apply. Could please rate each one of them in terms of either being very important, fairly important, or not important. The first factor is economic dependence on whites. How important do you think this has been?

W: Not very important in Eatonville.

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I: Okay. What about fear of physical violence from whites?

W: Not very important.

I: Okay. Complicated registration forms?

W: Not very important.

I: Not important?

W: Not important because the town clerk--she asks the questions and you answer them for her, and she puts the little X's in and all you have to do is sign your name.

I: Okay. What about poor registration hours. Let's say someone has to work and registration is only conducted when they're working so they can't go register—something like that.

W: I don't see that as being very important, and the reason being town hall is open from 8:00 to 5:00. And if at any time our council, mayor or council sees fit that it should be open on Saturdays for people to register then we have that. We have control of that, too.

I: Is that ever kept open on Saturdays.

W: No, we've never felt the need to keep it open because we were doing very good with the 8:00 to 5:00 hours.

I: Have there ever been nighttime registration—open at night for it.

W: No. No.

I: Okay. So you would say that that is—how important would you say that that last factor is for registration hours?

W: Not very important.

I: Not important or fairly important or—

W: Well, like I say, based on the thing we did in March, you know, leading up to the closing of the books in March, we didn't find any problem with it.

I: Okay. So you say that's not important.

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W: Not important.

I: Okay. What about registration not being held often enough? In other words, the books are not--they're not opened up often enough.

W: Well, the books are open often enough because--like the books are always open up until I think it's ten or fifteen days prior to an election--whatever the state law is on that.

I: Okay. What about the indifference of blacks to voting? In other words, the feeling that it's not worthwhile for them to vote.

W: This is a very fair problem in the black community because you run into the--you get the--you get feedback such as, whether or not I vote they're going to do whatever they want to do. My vote won't count. And then I always come back and say, well, when I was first elected to the city council I won by one vote so that shows that every vote is important. But you're going to always have people who feel that their vote is not important, and regardless to who they put in office you know, that the politicians are going to do whatever they want to do. So that is a problem.

I: Okay. How often is re-registration required?

W: I don't know. After you miss so many--after you miss voting in so many elections, but what the number is I don't know. And I haven't ever missed voting in the elections so I've never been confronted with the problem so I'm not familiar with the answer.

I: Okay. The following group of questions is asked to gather information on the election campaigns of black officials in Florida. Were you able to campaign freely, that is, were you threatened in any way during your campaign?

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W: No, I wasn't threatened any during my campaign. During one campaign I was put in jail. I don't know whether you would consider that a threat or not, but I was put in jail when I ran for mayor of Eatonville on election day. And they put me in jail because they said I was using a mechanical device on a moving vehicle without a permit, but my attorney as well as the PR firm and myself that was handling me had studied the state election laws as well as the city code for the town of Eatonville. And it did state that you needed a permit to attach a mechanical device on a motor vehicle, and I was only using a megaphone that cheerleaders use which is no mechanical device whatsoever. But they did--

I: Just regular shouting out your window?

W: Uh huh. On a moving van. And we were saying like thank you for supporting Earlene Watkins in the election today. Vote for someone who will vote for you. If you haven't gone to the polls and voted, free transportation to and from the polls are right behind you. And then we had this long caravan of cars.

I: Okay.

W: They put us all in jail.

I: So do you consider that to have been interference?

W: I consider interference and harassment, you know. It happened five years ago.

I: Okay. Were you handicapped by a lack of campaign money?

W: I've never had a problem with campaign money.

I: Now how many times have you run. You ran for mayor once five years ago.

W: I've run three times. I ran for mayor and I ran for city council twice.

I: And you've <sup>won</sup> ~~one~~ once--

W: I've won both of my council seats. I'm serving my second term on the

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W: city council.

I: Both of your council-- Okay. How much did you spend in your first mayor campaign?

W: We spent close to \$1,000.00 in that campaign.

I: Okay. And in your first council race?

W: Three hundred dollars.

I: And in your second one?

W: It was three of us running together and I imagine I spent about \$300.00 in the second campaign.

I: Okay. Why did you decide to run for office?

W: I felt that I could do something about the needs in the community.

I wanted to bring about some positive change in Eatonville. I did not like the all black community. I recognized the limited tax <sup>base</sup> space which I've been fighting since, ever since I've been out here of course.

Nothing's been done about it. I feel that Eatonville needs some-- a larger tax <sup>base</sup> space. They need to broaden their tax <sup>base</sup> space. They need some supportive services in the community and none of these things have been done. / other communities all around Eatonville have grown and Eatonville has brought us to a still. This sort of bothered me. I felt that we should apply for federal money in order to do some of the things that need to be done in the town. But of course, this has not been accomplished. So at this point I'm totally frustrated, disgusted, and I doubt if I will run again.

I: To which political organization do you belong? Are you a Democrat or Republican?

W: I'm a Democrat.

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I: Okay. What were, do you think, the two or three most important issues on which you campaigned?

W: Well, each time I've ran--well, the first--

I: Okay, let's say the first time and take it from that.

W: Okay. The first time my whole thing was centered around it's time for a change. It was time out for the horse and buggy machine. I looked at the finances of the city, expenditures versus income. And I really fought against the sanitation department, <sup>because</sup> that department itself has never been self supporting. It sort of been like an eating cancer to the community. I felt like they should have gotten rid of it. You know, contracted that service out. You know, take that money and do something constructive in the community. Okay, the second time I ran I ran for city council. It was--they had it set up like a finance commissioner so I ran for the finance seat. And the slogan then was to watch your money, you know. And when I ran--the second time I used the same thing--she will protect your money.

I: Uh huh.

W: Because once I got in office I did make the community aware of how their money was being spent and what it was being spent for, and you know, started distributing a news-letter for the community being more aware and abreast of what was going on as far as the money was concerned.

I: Uh huh. What about the third time that you ran.

W: The second and third time was the same.

I: The same?

W: Right. The same.

I: You're still on the finance seat?

W: Right.

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I: Okay. Do you think that these issues were/really big problems facing the people here in Eatonville?

W: I do really feel that these were big problems, but my feeling it and then other people not feeling it is something totally different. But based on the number of votes I received, I do feel that there are a lot of people in the community who had the same concept as I did. And that is that the monies have not been used wisely in the town of Eatonville. And we have done too much in house policies as opposed to, you know, policies where we're going to really benefit the community. There's been too much in house fighting.

I: Okay. The next group of questions here are asked to determine some of the conditions which have enabled blacks to win office in Florida. Now, elections in Eatonville are at large, right?

W: Right.

I: How many people are in the district--just population?

W: The last count we had I think it was 2,300. We'd like to say 2,500, but it's more 2,300.

I: Okay. What--well, all of the people in the district are black, right?

W: Right.

I: What percentage of blacks of voting age in Eatonville are registered to vote?

W: ~~I don't know.~~ Um...

I: Would you say half, two-thirds, a third--can you give us a rough?

W: I would feel at least two-thirds.

I: Two-thirds?

W: Uh huh.

I: Okay. What percentage of the people who are registered to vote do

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I: you think actually voted in the elections either for you or your opponents? In each of your elections--say the first time and--

W: I don't remember the first time. Let's go over the last time. The last time the number of people that voted--I would say we got 98 percent of the vote out of the number of people that were registered because we had about 700 registered voters and we got 500 out. So that was pretty good.

I: And then what about the time before that--the first time you ran for the council?

W: The first time I ran for council, I would say fifty percent of the vote turned out.

I: Okay. In the election in which you won office, the first city council--the council seat election, how many opponents did you have?

W: One.

I: And in the second election--the second--

W: One.

I: One again. Okay. What, in each of those elections, what percentage of the total vote did you get?

W: Let's see I had 268 and he had 200.

I: Okay.

W: <sup>had</sup> I ~~got~~ over fifty percent.

I: So 55 or 60?

W: Let's put 60.

I: Sixty. Okay. Was it the same both times about or--

W: No, a little--the first time around I only got one vote more than he got.

I: Okay. How many votes were ~~c~~ --how many votes did you get in that

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I: election?

W: I got 113. He got 112.

I: Okay. In what ways do you think that you have helped the people of Eatonville by holding office?

W: That's a tough one. Can we come back to that one?

I: Well, I'd rather not.

W: You have to follow a certain sequence?

I: Yeah, just--yeah.

W: Well, I would say since I've been in office, we've employed more qualified people in key positions. And I would consider that as being a help. There were certain grants we received since I've been on the council that I'm sure we would not have received had not--

I: Were these federal grants or state grants?

W: Federal grants. We would not have received if I had not been aware of the funds being available and having the expertise to develop the proposals. That's about it.

I: Okay. What, if anything, has prevented you from doing a better job, especially in regard to--well, everyone in your district is black, but as benefiting the people here, what things have kept you from doing more?

W: The--what's the right word--the dissention between the mayor and myself.

I: Okay. Anything else?

W: That's it.

I: Okay. We have a list of factors here that studies have often shown prevent officials-elected officials from doing a better job. And so what I'd like you to do is rate each of these factors as to whether or not it's very important, fairly important, or not important in preventing you from doing your job. The first factor is the office has no real

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I: Authority. In other words, it's like a figurehead position.

W: Now tell me how you want me to rate those again?

I: As being very important, fairly important, or not important in preventing you from doing your job.

W: In Eatonville that's not very important.

I: Okay. What about not enough revenue available?

W: Very important.

I: Okay. What about being unfamiliar with administrative duties?

W: Not very important because I'm familiar with administrative duties.

I: Okay. What about lack of cooperation from whites. Say maybe the county or local sheriff or something like that.

W: Now, it's hard to rate that as not being very--it's hard to rate that in--

I: Has this factor prevented you from doing your job?

W: That factor has not prevented Eatonville, I would say. Do you want me to ad lib on that one?

I: Go right ahead.

W: Okay. Eatonville being unique as it is and it being all black, again, you know, sitting up here and having set out there as a citizen.

Eatonville if we had cooperated with whites more than we have, we would have grown more than we have grown. But their whole thing is to stay all black and I disapprove of that.

I: Okay. What about lack of cooperation from blacks or the people here in Eatonville. Have you had trouble--has that prevented you from doing a better job?

W: Lack of cooperation the mayor and council, you know.

I: What about the rest of the people in the town?

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W: You don't have any lack of cooperation from the rest of the people in the town because the people in the town have sort of a lacadaisy attitude, you know, if you do it's okay and if you don't it's okay. They don't attend council meetings and the only time you get the people to turn out is when it's time to vote. You know, then your council meetings are packed and everyone wants to get on the bandwagon for his or her opponent--candidate.

I: Okay. What about lack of cooperation from state officials?

W: That's--that hasn't been a problem.

I: Okay.

W: 'Cause any state official that I've ever contacted to do anything, they've always been very cooperative.

I: Okay. And the final factor, lack of cooperation from federal officials?

W: I don't see that as a problem either.

I: Okay. Has criticism or lack of support of particularly the people--the voters believing that you're only a token in government and that you really have no real authority--has this prevented you from doing a better job?

W: That's sort of a bad question for Eatonville because we don't have that problem. You know--

I: Well, the lack of say, voter's support. They come out and vote for you but then after that, they don't do anything or they just criticize. Has this been a problem at all?

W: You're not--I haven't gotten criticism from people who supported me. I only get criticized by people who have opposed me, and ~~of course~~, all the things I stand for.

I: Okay. Do you feel that when you go to conferences or when you go to

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I: apply for a grant or whenever you deal with white officials, do you feel that they treat you differently from, say, other officials because you're black? Do they consider you a spokesman for the blacks and does this prevent you from raising other issues?

W: No, I've never had problems communicating with white elected officials.

I: Okay. What services, now in terms of things along the lines of fire protection and health and things of that nature—street paving—what services have you provided the people here in Eatonville that they did not have before you took office?

W: The only one I can partially take credit for is the \$42,000 grant that we received through the Community Development Act, and that money is to be used to upgrade our water systems as far as paving of the streets. Hopefully, when we get some city money next year, we're going to take that money and start paving the streets.

I: Okay. All right. Can you think of any other services that you've been—

W: We got a community service grant and that grant picked up the salary of our librarian and supports our recreation department. And that's about it.

I: Okay. Would you please rate how effective you think you've been in each of the following service areas, either very effective, somewhat effective or not effective. In the area, first, <sup>of</sup> police protection?

W: You mean personally or the council?

I: You personally on the council as a member of the council.

W: Very effective.

I: Okay. And in the areas of streets and roads?

W: Not very effective.

I: In the area of housing?

W: Not very effective.

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I: In the area of welfare?

W: Not very effective.

I: In the area of employment?

W: Well, because of that grant I wrote, I would say very effective because that was able--we were able to keep people on payroll that we would have had to lay off so I would rate that as being very effective.

I: Okay. In the area of parks and recreational facilities?

W: Very effective.

I: Specifically what have you done there?

W: For instance, we just received another grant from the bicentennial which I helped the employees work on. And so we're in the process of developing a mini-park right here on the corner. And again, that goes back to the grant that we received from the Department of Community Affairs where we kept the recreation director, the librarian, and an assistant recreation director on payroll to provide recreation.

I: Okay.

W: Programs for the community as well as through the library we provided remedial and tutorial as well as other things that are involved in a librarian's duties.

I: Okay. How about in the area of water, sewage and garbage?

W: Water, very effective. Sewer and garbage, not very effective.

I: Okay. And in the area of health and hospitals?

W: Not very effective.

I: In the area of education?

W: Not very effective.

I: And finally, in the area of fire protection?

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W: Well, I'm going to say effective.

I: Effective--very effective or somewhat effective?

W: Somewhat effective.

I: Okay. Why do you say somewhat effective?

W: Well, based on--I'm not saying very effective because based on the financial situation that we have now, we had to lay off some of our firemen. And our fire department is understaffed and there are a lot of firefighting equipment that we need which we do not have the money to purchase.

I: Okay. Now you mentioned that you've gotten federal grants for your--for the district here in Eatonville. Could you list some of the more important grants that you've gotten. Could you list the revenue sharing that you've gotten, and could you list some of the amounts?

W: Revenue sharing would not be considered as a grant I got because the--

I: Yeah, that's another federal fund.

W: Yeah, that's something that you're going to automatically get based on populations and in your needs and assessment so one individual could not take credit for, you know, negotiating on revenue sharing. So the only thing I could, you know, take any half of the credit for would be the \$42,000.00 we got from the Community Service Grant, and the Community Development Grant, and the Community Service Grant--I believe that was \$115,000.00. I'm not sure. I think it was \$115--that's been almost--well, it's been two years ago since we got that.

I: Okay. Have you as an elected official as part of a local committee been able to bring industry or retail stores into the area?

W: No. They do not want it.

I: Has there been any growth in the area as far as industry or retail?

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W: No.

I: Why do you think this is?

W: Because Eatonville has made it very clear that they don't want any whites in Eatonville, and that's where the money is. You know, your developers are white and the money is behind the white businessmen and the white power structure. And they do not want it, you know. It has come out publicly, you know, stating they don't want no white folks in here. \_\_\_\_\_.

I: Okay.

W: They don't even want them on the payroll. I almost lost the last election for recommending a city planner who was white.

I: You ~~wouldn't~~ want to elaborate on that one?

W: Well, when we received resumes in looking for a city planner--most resumes now don't have race, creed, or color on them, you know, it's just a resume. So looking at the resumes and knowing what we should look for in a city planner, I selected Charles McKenzie who was really over-qualified for the money that we were offering for the position. And I made a motion that he be appointed city planner. And of course, then, the mayor started jumping up and down and saying, you know, we don't want no white folks working in Eatonville, he wanted a black to have the position. And then I said who do you have in mind? So the guy he had in mind only had a background in drafting. I said we don't need anyone to draw pictures. We just want to plan the city. So two of the other commissioners felt the same as I did so it was a 3-2 vote.

I: So Mr. McKenzie was hired?

W: Mr. McKenzie was hired. Then after a switch <sup>of power</sup> ~~was forged~~, the council--this past March--he's been forced to resign his position.

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I: Have you been able to see that blacks have been or that, let's say-- have you been able to see that local government hiring practices here in Eatonville have been fair either to blacks or whites or to in groups or out groups?

W: Have they been varied?

I: Have they been fair? Have you been able to do anything as far as making the city hiring practices more fair?

W: I was when I had--it was when you had commissioners who were more independent thinkers than what you have now. Because right now I would personally label the other commissioners as being rocking chair commissioners. And they're going to more or less follow suit. They're not going to look at the individual's qualifications or expertise in the area, you know, it's going to be based on favoritism, you're a friend of mine, or you're a friend of one of the other commissioners and that's how you're going to be hired <sup>now</sup> ~~here~~.

I: Okay. How much has federal revenue sharing helped Eatonville?

W: Revenue sharing hasn't--it has helped Eatonville, but it hasn't helped Eatonville like it's helped other communities. In other communities revenue sharing has been spent for capital improvement. Most of our revenue sharing has been used to pick up employees' salaries more so than any capital improvement.

I: Okay. Have there been any black protests, sit-ins, boycotts or riots in Eatonville in the last ten years?

W: Not to my knowledge.

I: Okay. Briefly, what is your opinion of Governor Ruben Askew?

W: Well, I think he's a good <sup>Governor</sup> ~~governer~~. You know, and I always supported him. My \_\_\_\_\_.

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I: Okay. Do you think he's been favorable in attitude and policy toward blacks in Florida?

W: I do.

I: Do you have—are there any other state legislators or senators or congressmen that particularly stand out to you as being either very favorable to blacks or very unfavorable?

W: Now I would say Lou Fry has been very favorable to blacks because any time he's been called on to help with any community project or a city project, he's supported it. I've had the opportunity to work with him in his last campaign. And prior to that I met him when I was working for the YMCA for Central Florida, and whenever we called him he aimed to help us in any effort we had for the YMCA or another community based program that was called Rent-A-Youth. He was always available.

I: Okay. This is a big question. What the thing is partially all about. Do you think that winning and holding office in Florida has been worth the effort?

W: That's a question I'm still asking myself, and unfortunately, I haven't been able to answer it—not holding an office in Florida but holding office in Eatonville. And like I said earlier in the conversation, I am at this point a bit frustrated. I don't know whether it's because I expected sudden change or I wasn't able to really face the fact that I was opposing a very strong machine—a machine that has been in existence for twelve years. And you know, and this is something that I haven't really been able to deal with mentally. So as a result of that, I don't intend to run for office again in Eatonville because

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W: I feel like the community as a whole is sort of taking in the ~~nails~~  
~~approach~~  
~~of court~~ when everything is closing in around us. Everyone is  
progressing—Eatonville isn't progressing, you know. And I see that  
as a problem because of the poor leadership.

I: Okay. You referred to the machine of the last twelve years.

W: Right.

I: And the poor leadership. Do you want to elaborate on that?

W: Well, when I say the machine for the past twelve years, I'm speaking  
of the leader, you know, and that is the mayor. He's been there  
for twelve years and I look at—you know, try to put everything in  
its proper perspective. And if he had just paved one street for each  
year he's been in office, we would have twelve decent streets in  
Eatonville. Everything that has taken place in Eatonville, if you  
go back and do an evaluation of the past twelve years, the only  
thing we have to show for it is the jail which he built, the sewer  
system which was mandatory. So what have you really accomplished?  
And you can't say we didn't do ~~anything~~ <sup>these things</sup> because we didn't have the  
money because other communities or other municipalities improved and  
they didn't have the revenue either. But they went out and made—  
applied themselves properly and they went seeking further funds.  
They applied for funds and they received these funds. And what  
you're hollering, you know, we're all black when they should have  
been capitalizing off the blackness, they did not capitalize off of  
it. And now to sit here and say you're all black and you want to  
stay all black, I think is ignorant. And when you continue to involve  
yourself with this type of leadership I don't see it as being an

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W: asset to an individual because eventually people are going to put you in the same category as they are putting the people you associate with. And you know, Eatonville~~'s~~ had an opportunity to bring industry in. They had an opportunity to bringa/small components plant in.GE wanted to come in and build a small components plant in Eatonville. Charles Clayton presented a beautiful package for the city council and the mayor. They turned it down because he was white. He came with another beautiful idea to annex so many acres of land into the city limits of Eatonville and they told him that you know when you annex the land it could be annexed as proposed by the developer. Once the land got in here from Eaton Springs--that's the development that he wanted to bring in here.kicked out the door. So it's little things like this that I'm finding very frustrating. And I've sat on this city council and I've seen it done continuously. You know, you tell a person, well, they call a building moratorium, for what? Then thirty days later they come back and no real evaluation is done. No real good has come out of it, but then you've got a sewer moratorium on. So ~~is~~ <sup>while</sup> sewer moratorium is on then naturally no one can build. Okay. You go on a ? pollution control board ? put a separate tank in, then you can build. You go through all this red tape and each time you come back, they throw another loophole in it. So when you sit up here and you see all these things happening, and you take off the blinders, you know, you say, hey, you know, is it worth my Tuesday nights twice a month. Is it worth a special meeting? Is it worth me, you know, missing out on a business function or a business appointment or out making some

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W: money when evidently they don't really want to grow. That's the extent of my frustration.

I: Okay. These questions are asked just to compile an overall group profile of black officials. No individual answers area going to be reported. You are a commissioner--finance commissioner?

W: No, let me clarify that now. When I ran for office the first time you had a street or road commissioner, we had a water commissioner, we had a sanitation commissioner, we had a finance commissioner, and a rules and ordinance commissioner. Okay, when I was elected to the council I questioned that because in reviewing the charter, the charter says you have seat numbers one through five so I proposed the question to the city attorney at that time as well as the mayor and other elected officials as to how did we come about, you know, receiving the subtitles. I researched the minutes and I couldn't find, you know, where an ordinance was done, a resolution or anything to that effect. You know, they tell me well, the book that it's recorded in, you know, we've misplaced it. Okay, so everyone was gung ho on these subtitles. Okay, after the last election this past month then the subtitles were done away with. We're all commissioners one, two, three, four, five. So you know, right now your guess is as good as mine as to whether, ok what my .....? I'm commissioner number four. Or depending on which way you want to run numbers.

I: Okay. You were first elected in what year?

W: March of '72.

I: March of '72?

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W: Uh huh.

I: And you take office three days after you're elected, right?

W: Uh uh.

I: No?

W: We take office one day after you're elected.

I: Oh.

W: We have our elections the first Saturday in March and then you come to a work session--well, at that time it was set up--we had the elections the first Saturday in March. We come to a work session that Sunday and we take office that Monday night.

I: Okay. You've run for office in Eatonville three times, right?

W: Right.

I: Okay. Do you mind my asking your age?

W: No, I'm thirty-five years old.

I: Okay. What is your occupation aside from being a commissioner?

W: I work for the YMCA of Central Florida, the Urban Action Department and I have my own janitorial corporation.

I: Okay. What's the level of your education?

W: I have sixty-six and a half hours of college credit. My major was sociology and my minor was in education.

I: Okay. What is the salary your elected position pays?

W: Twelve hundred dollars a year.

I: Were you active in the civil rights movement of the early sixties?

W: No, I was not.

I: What church do you belong to?

W: I belong to St. Lawrence AME Church here in Eatonville.

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I: Where is that. Here in town.

W: Uh huh.

I: And are you an official in the church or do you do anything in the church besides--

W: Nothing. I'm just a member.

I: Okay. Are there any other community organizations or activities that you're involved in?

W: I'm in--not in the community--I'm a member of the Winter Park Democratic Women's Club. I serve on the Muscular Dystrophy Board of Directors. And that's it other than PTA meetings.

I: What was your father's occupation?

W: My father was a cook at the junior college in St. Petersburg. And my mother is a housewife. She's always been a housewife.

I: What effects have running for and holding office had on you and your family--your social life, your interpersonal relationships?

W: It's been quite a strain on my family because I have three children and I'm divorced. I've been divorced now almost three years. And it takes a lot out of the children because of the negative things people, you know, say about me because I am a woman and I am single. And of course, we have the rumor clinics which, you know, I've had to deal with the kids about that. You know, you hear it and you don't hear it. But other than that, you know. The biggest problem you have in Eatonville being an elected officials, being a woman and single you have the rumor clinic which we've overcome that.

I: Okay. Besides--you've stated occupation and your elected office, do you have any other source of income?

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W: No. Uh uh.

I: Okay. What do you think is the biggest detriment to blacks gaining political power in the state of Florida?

W: Say that again?

I: The biggest

End of Side 1

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Beginning of Side 2

I: Okay. Getting into elective office and then after they get into elective office actually being able to do things?

W: Well, I feel once you get into office if there's something you really want to do, you can do it. And then in a sense, you can't do it depending on what your elected position is. And by that I mean, for instance, when you sit on a--if you're a commissioner and you're going one way and the other commissioners are going another way, you become ineffective because you don't have any voting power. It's just your one vote. You know, all you can sort of be is a thorn in everybody's side so that's sort of a hard question for me to really deal with.

I: Do you think there are other--before you get elected in the election process, do you think there are any really big factors that prevent you from getting elected?

W: If we look at county elections it's a problem because in Orange County there still exists quite a bit of, you know, prejudice. And black people don't really turn out to vote as well as they should. And unless you can, you know, get some of the white vote you aren't going to be elected in any of the county elections. And that's about the only way I can answer that one.

I: Okay. The results of this, of course, are totally off the record and will not be published, broadcasted, disseminated; however, there is a project at the University of Florida called the Oral History Project. Now what they're doing is they're collecting tapes and transcripts of elected officials of Florida and other famous people in Florida and saving them for use by scholars and researchers in the libraries.

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I: They're not a matter of public record. Now what they would like to do because in many cases the black elected officials we're talking to in this study are the first group really interviewed since reconstruction. And in many cases they are the first officials in that area since reconstruction. They're interested in--when we're done with these tapes--after we're done with it, in taking the tapes and transcribing them, then what they will do is they will send you a copy of the transcript and you can edit it, change it, delete parts, add parts, clarify, whatever you want to do. And then you can either decide not to release it or you can decide to release parts of it or you can decide to release the whole thing as edited. Would you have any objections to our giving it to them to transcribe and then giving it, you know, back to you and then letting you sign a release on it. Would you have any objections to doing this and do you think you might be willing to eventually release part of it or all of it.

W: I would not have any objections. I would be willing to release all of mine because everything I have said on this tape I have said publicly already. The majority of everything I have said to you on this tape has been printed in the Winter Park Sentinel as well as the Metro News with the Orlando Sentinel. So I would have no second thoughts about releasing mine.

I: Okay. Thank you very much.

End of Side 2