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Interview with Cheryl Graves

Guadalupe Santoyo

Columbia College Chicago

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1 Guadalupe Santoyo: Ok my name is Guadalupe Santoyo G.U.A.D.A.L.U.P.E S.A.N.T.O.Y.O Can you please
2 tell us your name

3 Cheryl Graves: Cheryl Graves

4 **GS:** Can you spell it?

5 **CG:** Sure, C.H.E.R.Y.L G.R.A.V as an Victor E.S.

6 GS: Ok today's day is December 7 2009, and we are in Cheryl's office located in 3424 South State
7 Chicago, Illinois

8 **GS:** umm Can you ple please tell us your year of birth.

9 **CG:** Oh my god do I have to? {Both laughing} Ok yes. Is 1955

10 **GS:** and place?

11 **CG:** Chicago

12 **GS:** Chicago

13 **GS:** Uhm you were raise here in Chicago

14 **CG:** I was born and raise here, yes

15 **GS:** And what about your father's date and place of birth

16 **CG:** Hum my father was born here in Chicago in 1925

17 GS: And your mom

18 CG: And my mom was born in Huntsville, Alabama in 1924

19 GS: Ok we are going to start

20 GS: Tell me about the city you were born? I mean

21 CG: Chicago

22

23 GS: Yes, your earliersts memories

24 CG: I grew up in what I didn't what was a housing project it was called Princeton Park it was in the far
25 south side of Chicago, hum it was very se it was all black community hum families I went to Charles
26 Ridge Dru school. I was very proud of that because he the person to dis-- first one, either he discover
27 blood plasma or he was the first person to do hearts first black man to do heart surgery, but I was very
28 proud and determine to become a doctor because Charles Ridge Dru was so inspiring to me. Hum I hum
29 went to graham school, high school on the south east side of the city on Bogan high school at that time

30 Bogan was hum, very hum, very much a white ethnic white school, hum with some Latino population,
31 but primarily white and it was my very first experience going to school in anything other than a
32 completely black environment so it was uh little bit of a culture shock particularly since during the first
33 week of school my gym partner who was from Serbia as we were taking off our gym uniforms to transfer
34 back to our street clothes said "OMG! My mother lie to me," I look him the eyes and said what you
35 mean your mother lie to you? My mother said you all have tails. So that was my first week high school
36 I'm thinking oh who are these people, and why am I this school with these crazy people so anyway hum
37 so that was pretty much growing up

38 GS: and how was umm. Tell me like a story with that you spent time with your family how was--

39 CG: Ohh! Growing up was actually great for me. I feel really privilege and grateful for just all the love. I
40 umm grew up I was umm my older umm I just have one sister and she is 4 and half years older than me
41 so she was not that happy to have me around umm I was sort of the tag along sister, but when I was
42 really small I lived with my grandparent during the week and I had an uncle who was a communist who
43 have been black bold for every job he trying to get and so he was always home so he and I just hang out,
44 and I remember one morning my grandmother umm, she sew for people and whenever she had extra
45 material she will sew a dress for me and my doll matching dresses so there is one particularly morning I
46 guess I was about I don't know maybe 3 or 4 and I was out in the hallways primping my pink dress that I
47 thought it was just so beautiful, and there were big mirrors in the hallway of the building and my uncle
48 Bill came out and said Cheryl! You look so pretty, who you looking pretty for? and I name everybody
49 ahh for you, for grandpa, for grandma, for you know everybody and he kept asking me and who else and
50 who else and I uncle Bill I said everybody, and he said no, you forgot to say yourself you are the most
51 important person that you need to look pretty for cuz it doesn't matter really what other people think
52 what matters is how you feel and what you think. And so that was one of my earliest lessons of being
53 confident and self esteem but also Bill taught me a lot about being willing to step outside of this status
54 quote of he was a very much he was very proud communist and he we all turn going out on the street
55 corners and sold the social workers party newspaper and it was interesting because I didn't really know
56 initially what I was because I was said "social worker party newspaper, 5 cent" and people would buy it
57 because it was this little girl right, but then at some point why why is this so different than other
58 newspapers and he began to explain to me what socialism was about an communism was about and try
59 to read for me from -----somebody's books that I couldn't even hold that were so heavy, but he, he
60 what I learned because it was a struggle within my own family because my grandfather was pretty
61 much a capitalism, the insurance man, and he was like the neighborhood go to person if you need it
62 money and he was was his son who was in this to totally you know completely different political head
63 space, but then they were family you know, and so as much as they argue and fought about political
64 stuff Bill was his son and that was it and so I learned about standing up for what your beliefs are no
65 matter how hard it is and no matter what the odds are so

66 GS: and you didn't mention your parents you

67 CG: my parents, my parent well my mother is a teacher well she was a teacher, hum my father worked
68 for the post office so that was a pretty traditional sort of middle class black background humm my father

69 is ph he is not alive now, but he was the sweetest nicest person I ever meet, I ever knew uh. He was a
70 garden, he was a handyman he hum he rose up his ranks in the post office and go to the point where he
71 was actually he wrote contracts and so hum there was a point where there was hum he started out
72 working as um as a postal rail Clark, which meant they drove the trains and they will just put the mail in
73 bags and put them on hucks as the train slow down. When they stop running mail on the post office I
74 mean on the trains all the postal workers the postal rail clerks potentially were going to be fired and so I
75 remember having that group formed his own union and they will have meetings on the basements and I
76 love I will sit on the steps and just listen to these men arguing and fozzing and you know yelling, " they
77 are not going to get rid of us," and then people said we got to have a plan we got to organized and so it
78 was just great and my mother was an active member of the Chicago teacher's union and so you it was
79 pretty much you know you stand up for what you believe in, but you also join with other people because
80 there is strength and you know so they were good people very good people, so I love them my mom
81 still alive she is 85 and she is pretty sick right now, but hum yesterday when I went to visit her she is in a
82 rehab center right now and I hum what did I have hum I had some lipstick and she said "what is that on
83 your lips?! That she can barely you know she is so wiggi you know what is that on your lips- I said mom is
84 lipstick and she said but that is not a good color who you,? What you? Get that off-- guess mom I like it
85 --ok fine whatever you always were an obstinate child, so you know she still as feisty as ever and my
86 sister had bag from Wal-Mart she came in and mom is like Wal-Mart! You are shopping at Wal-Mart?
87 Don't you known better there are anti-union so you know even in her old age she still trying to keep us
88 in-----

89 GS: ummm

90 CG: yeah

91 GS: so what were some of your goals and dreams while you were like in high school/college?

92 CG: In high school I was I will and I mean college early part of college I was very Cleary wanted to be a
93 physician I'm telling you that whole deal of going to Charles Ridger Dru in kindergarten and first grade
94 really, I was so proud that a black man could do that and thought that is what I want to be, plus there
95 was a lot of illness, mental illness and other kinds of illness in my family, so I thought that is what I really
96 need to do and probably up through my junior year of college I was determined that was I going to do
97 and then I had an internship at Howard University hospital in DC [laughs]and the guy who was my
98 supervisor was a sergeant so he invited me to come and you know scrub and be in standing on the
99 surgeries and I fainted both times [laughs] and then I have to took pathology class the same summer
100 and couldn't stand ---the whole idea of blood and bodies I was like oh no! I can't do this! so hum and I
101 thought you know what I don't have to be a physician to help people [laughs] you know there are other
102 kinds of ways so I decided that I really, was really a lot more interested in sort of the consequences of
103 illness how people won't getting access to medical care so I began to think more about community
104 health education and health administration but in a ways that I worked umm one summer during college
105 in a place called Pallet City health center and it was Minneapolis, Minnesota and they had it was a health
106 clinic but it was also you know there was social services that were attached to that so housing services
107 and you know hum job you know helping people get jobs and there were all kinds of it was like a one

108 stop shop looking at health as more like complete wellness so not just don't fix your body, but we can
109 support you in terms in getting good housing and finding a job you and know you know just all kinds so I
110 thought wow and that what good health care is so that became sort of what I wanted to do so when I
111 left college I went I came back I want to college Minnesota I came back home and did a masters in the
112 University of Illinois and hum health care administration and epidemiology but my focus really was how
113 the people in the neighborhood know how to take care of themselves how they began to know how to
114 organized for good health care that is holistic that is what it treats the whole body and not just, and I
115 was really interesting in the impact sort the connection between the mind and the body so how do we
116 heal our whole self so

117 GS: Hum describe the main struggle that you were facing at that time either was

118 CG: In college or

119 GS: Yes

120 CG: Hum college was a challenge because I came out of high school thinking that I was a really good
121 student and I went to a college that was very small predominantly white; although, we had a very
122 politically and socially and uhhh a really good sort of community of people of color hum so you know
123 minorities as we call ourselves back then, but the blacks and Latinos and the Asians who were there and
124 the native Americans who were there we all pretty close and so but classes were hard hum harder than I
125 was expecting them to be and there was a huge focus you got 2 grades in college that so whatever even
126 in bio even in sciences you got a grade for you know the content, but you also got a grade for grammar
127 and how you wrote it and so it was there was this huge emphasis well you need to write well which was
128 different from what I had experienced before anyway, but I think that the bigger issue was just that,
129 you know these white students were so much prepare that I was, and so the realization was that that
130 was happening to me and I really had the opportunity to have a good education what was going to be
131 like for other you know black kids coming thru who nobody was caring if they were able write or not you
132 know and people were trying to just get them to be able to read to the 8th grade level, and you know
133 how they are going to make and it's just raised a lot of questions and it may me really determinant to
134 figured out ok so am not as well educated as they are so what do I to be able to sort make the grade,
135 but then also knowing that it couldn't just be about academics you know, so then so that is sort of
136 college college was difficult but it was interesting because probably it was one of the most important
137 experiences I had because as I been teaching all over the years since then I started doing the same thing
138 cuz I know because I know that you can't write if you can't express yourself then you are not going to do
139 it, it is going to be very hard and so for students just really encouraging them to sort of think about you
140 know how they, not just how smart they are or how smart they aren't, but what they want to do just to
141 let them know that there are certain things that are sort of fundamental for how you moved thru the
142 world and really try to encourage them nurture that so.

143 GS: and -- what were your parents expecting from you? They were like supporting you?

144 CG: They were definitely supporting me, I mean I remember in in high school, hum I guess the end of my
145 junior year I went to the school consular and I say ok so I'm thinking about. I'm trying to figured out

146 what college I want to go to and she look at me and she handed me a sheet of paper and I look at it and
147 I said, so what is that and she said and application to Illinois bill telephone and I'm like excuse me, I
148 came to talk to about college and she said honey, honey, honey you are not gonna make it to college. I
149 said what do you mean I have really good grades, I have a really good class rank, what are you talking
150 about? and she said, pff don't get your hope up to high, she said, just apply even if you think that you
151 gonna go to college, just apply this could be a good back up for you, you know you would work for a
152 telephone company and maybe you can rise up to there. And, so there was an office actually right down
153 the street here, hum 29 and Dearborn it was run by a guy name Salles Pernail, and it was to help black
154 students get into college, so I just to-- I left school that day and took the bus to 29 it was a long way all
155 the way to the south east side hum, and I took the bus and train down to Salles Pernail's office and I
156 walk in and I knock and said somebody told me you could help me, and he said you wanna go to college
157 and I said absolutely, so he said ok fine you would go to college. And so his college recruiters actually
158 came and this is like in the middle of the projects were alive and wealthy so it's right in the middle of ---
159 you know all kinds of college recruiters came and that's really how I got, I went to Caraton College,
160 which is a really small college but a really good college and I went on a science scholarship and I would
161 have no way to even know about that college or much less the scholarships that were available, but this
162 little man in his little joggle office you know down on the basement – and so but my parents hum, they
163 knew about colleges in the south cuz my mother had gone to Kentucky state and my father had gone to
164 a junior college here, so they were and actually during the time I was growing up my father was also
165 when I was in high school he had gone back to school, so he was studying so he would've come home
166 with As and be frustrated that he was working all day, and he was getting As and why we were not
167 getting As, so anyways, but they were so supportive. College and an a an actually everything and their
168 goal was no to dictate what I did, but just that I was doing what I felt it could be really happy doing and
169 doing really well so

170 GS: Ok we are going to start with the anti-apartheid CG: ok

171 GS: umm How did you found out about anti-apartheid CG: hum go ahead GS: um the first the first the
172 first time you found out about it?

173 CG: In high school in high school it was an issue that was a long time ago I mean we learn about not thru
174 school bu we had ah ah black what did we call ourselves The Black United students or something like
175 that, the buzz group, some silly acronym and there were we used to study just sort of on our own cuz
176 they didn't had a black history class and they sort of ignore black history or any other ethnic history, and
177 so we were aware that there were issues of what was going on in South Africa and that people were
178 calling for divestment um and I didn't really get so I just sort of new about that. I mean they were
179 talking about it and then uhm, when I was in college it was also an issue and I think we raise some funds
180 or something, but then it really wasn't until I came back home to Chicago and I can't even remember till
181 what year unfortunately [laughs.] Uhm, but a number of people that I was doing work with umm were
182 involved in sou sou south Africa divestment movement s till trying to address apartheid issue so so I sort
183 of you know learned a little bit about it along the way but really became hum involved once I came back
184 to Chicago actually, actually, after I've gone to law school and started working thru legal assistance
185 foundation so--

186 GS: ok hum, so who influenced you to be part of this movement [phone ringing]

187 CG: hum Prexy Nesbit was one of the people influenced me hum, cuz he came out and talk to all the
188 groups cuz there was a number of union groups that were getting organized. Because when I was in I
189 ended up going to law school, and came back to Chicago did the masters degree left move to Atlanta
190 came back to Chicago and went to law school, and then uhh sort of started to work for the legal
191 assistance foundation and legal assistance attorneys part of the union and so uhm and it was weird cuz
192 they were part of the United auto Workers Union [laughing.] Was the big union that we were like which
193 is sort of weird to be part of auto workers union, but they were very progressive union so I, what is it the
194 National Organization of Legal Services Workers we were sort of part of their union, and so they call the
195 UAW called for had some meetings about apartheid so we would go to those meetings and it was so sort
196 of a --- folks that were so influential so.

197 GS: So why did you became an activist?

198 CG: Ummm cuz it was necessary, cuz there were hum I was going to say cuz it was the right thing to do,
199 and it was the right thing to do because of the horror the things that were happening in South Africa I
200 could not imagine how anybody should sort of ignore that you know anybody could sort if live here in
201 this country particularly have gone, you know, have live thru parts of the civil rights movement hum,
202 and other movements and recognizing that you know if you don't stand what my uncle Bill would say
203 that "if you don't stand up for something," you know they basically, hum he had good saying I don't
204 remember, but I you lay down for anything, but that basically hum you know you as people we are
205 suppose to stand up and acknowledge when things are wrong and do something about it, and so it was
206 just it was a big issue and there were a lot of people involved and I felt like there might be something I
207 can do cuz there was a role I could play so--

208 GS: ok so what group did you joined?

209 CG: It was a group called I was trying to called CIDSa, and I swear I was sitting here trying to figured how
210 it was called I think it mean is think is the coalition for Illinois divestment no in support of divestment for
211 south Africa or something like that, but it was the Illinois divestment group hum and there were soo
212 many incredible people that were part of it I mean it was just inspired to just go to meeting and hear
213 people talk and share and a lot of the attorneys that I worked with were part of it hum so I was so the
214 seeds of the organization was the main organization that I did work thru

215 GS: hum so why? What kind of events? Did you participated in another movements

216 CG: I had hum not as big as that I mean I think that there were other movements that I might when I was
217 in college you know we march and we supported the things that Dr. King did, hum and you know, so I
218 was so active in some of the civil right stuff I was when I say that I was too young to be part of the big
219 big like the big marches, but hum, we even in high school and college we sort of organized around you
220 know like when the whole issue around hum when king came to Chicago around housing issues and so
221 we at our own schools sort of did a sit in, and it was more like information deal so people could
222 understand what was going on there. And hum, mostly there were educational things that I was

223 involved like how you get the word out so people know, but hum I don't I think that this is part of the
224 first thing that I was really really really commit it to in a big major way so--

225 GS: ok, describe me the structure of the organization like how it was organized?

226 CG: hum, it's a good question, what I remember is that hum, I mean with the leader were people who
227 were really active would travel to South Africa so like Prexy and it was Basil Clunnie and hum and hum,
228 I'm sure forgetting some names of people but they were sort of they were the leadership and there
229 were those of us that were part of planning the action, so there were a number of there was a big action
230 around South Africa steel hum and there were that time beginning to build the Thompson Center down
231 town, the state building which is on Grand, Randolph, Dearborn or Clark big ugly monstrosity, but they
232 [laugh] were using South African steel and the steel mills were out on the south side of the city and they
233 were not using Chicago steel you know Illinois steel they were using South Africa steel. So we form hum
234 that was the big deal we eve wore t-shirts that said south Africa steel steals our job, and I remember the
235 chance you know the toy toy, but we march hum around what was going on the Thompson building
236 hum. We also hum had a yearly umm demonstration no it was a year walkathon to raise funds and it
237 was amazing how successful and part of that to was to raise awareness of people so there was hundreds
238 of us that would walk through the neighborhood and you would pick a neighborhood that was sort of
239 your part of your community it would be like a five mile walk, maybe thru the south side of the city and
240 other people did it on the north side and people did it in different neighborhoods actually that was the
241 t-shirt that I was going to bring as a give to you but of course it at home on my dining table [laughs].
242 Anyways [excuse me] but so you ask me about, I just remember the leadership, which was really strong
243 but was very open to everybody's ideas so you just feel like they really provided good leadership and
244 motivation to stay organized and then they were a lot of hum a lot of people that people that some
245 people did communications because it was important to be able to get the word out to the there, were
246 press conferences whenever we try to do something then, we then, and this is how all these this is out
247 of the point, but I remember when we work really hard also hum resolution with the city council to not
248 to not support hum to invest any of the city pension funds and any other kinds of funds or money that
249 will support apartheid in South Africa. So, but they were different people that research different things
250 and the information got out and then people respond but it was a pretty [snap fingers] quick network
251 and communications was really good cuz they said ok we want to be down town at the South African
252 you know embassy consulate and you could get a hundred people down within an hour it was amazing
253 you know cuz that was I mean it was a huge issue and also you felt solidary with people I don't know
254 what to--- but ok anyway there were also nationality so there will be national gatherings and Illinois
255 gatherings and Ora and I which I hope you meet hope she is here before you leave hum actually went
256 around the Midwest talking about it. And I remember this one town we were in Minnesota were there
257 were no black people in the entire town and we went in the middle of the winter [laughs] but his one
258 family in that town was very strong all around and there were white family in the south African
259 divestment issue, and I remember we took my nephews god knows only why 10 and 11 with us in this
260 road trip in the snow to Minnesota. And, I got there thinking what in hell world m I doing here [laughs]
261 you know and we were speaking to this Lutheran church group and ahhh it was the most amazing
262 experience this people were so open because they also were people who would struggle and they knew

263 what it meant you know for money for the big farm and the corporation to come and take their land, so
264 the whole idea that indigenes people you know they were just fighting to get their land back fighting to
265 get back what was theirs and just fighting for fairness. They that came so easily and these people who I
266 thought wouldn't get it at all and they got it in a way that a lot of Chicago's' didn't get, so hum I said ok
267 fine then I can go anywhere to talk about this so [laughs]so we went around the Midwest and gave
268 presentations and we had hum, you know a lot of stories to share and mostly just listen to people share
269 their stories and try to make the connection so--

270 GS: so tell me hum about the first pro uh protest or demonstration that you were involved do you
271 remember?

272 CG: I think the first one was something at the South Africa consulate. I think I remember I remember
273 staying all night making signs cuz we want it to be really affective we wanted to be really affective and
274 hum and I remember being down I think it was on north Michigan and I remember the police on their
275 horses, and hum, you know wondering you know we talk them about it was a peaceful demonstration
276 and just wondered why the police need to be on horses you know were surrounding us. And I remember
277 talking to a police officer saying do you even understand what are we doing here, and he said, "it don't
278 matter to me what you doing he said you get our line, we will kick your ass" and I like[laughs] dam you
279 know cuz I mean I have been like in places where I been tear gas before but that was when there was no
280 conversation, people just like oh you are out here it just this wasn't about apartheid you know, it was a
281 student demonstration around some issues relating to you know integrating schools you know or
282 something and hum, but I just couldn't imagine that this man didn't even chch. How could you don't
283 care about the hundreds and thousands of people that were being gun down on the streets in South
284 Africa? --so anyway other than that it was lots of people and it felt like hum that were a lot of us that
285 were not just care about this issues but that were reallywelling to step up out there and so something
286 about it so and hum I remember that was the first time I ohm sort of had realized that the media was
287 not necessary in our corner I don't know why I kept thinking we are doing the right thing this is the right
288 thing I was pretty not --and It quickly became clear to me that we all need to be very clear about why we
289 were there and what our issues were and the data was to supported that because this was not
290 necessary friends. These were people who what the hell should care about South Africa, you know. We
291 got stuff here and plus those people probably deserved what they got they couldn't run the
292 government anyways, so it's good thing that white folks were doing it for them and so its attitudes they
293 really initially they shock me cuz that is so unfair how do you think that so that is what we think, and we
294 know is right so what the hell are all you doing here and making all this noise, so it was it was pretty eye
295 opened, but it was good because it meant that if yooouuu were serious about it and part of it than you
296 had to be prepared and so phss

297 GS: so how was, describe me your relationship with other activists? like CG: that were part of the anti-
298 apartheid movement? GS: yeah

299 CG: uhmmm, really close, I mean it was it was I think part of why I wanted so be active is because people
300 I admired so much were the four front, but not like they were out there untouchable we were all sitting
301 around making signs together you know [laughing.] Everybody was cooking the food, so we could have

302 pot lot dinners for neighborhood and invited people to come and learn about it hum, and hey were they
303 were these people that were very smart and very committed and, but still very down to earth and very
304 funny and you know they care about people care about –family. So it became almost like an extended
305 family of people so hum and that is what I learned to that as activists you stru you are out there
306 struggling for something but that doesn't mean that you have to be this sort of hard people that cuz I
307 met [hand] some people like that you know like it's all about the politics is all about this you know be
308 out there 10 o'clock on the line with your signs you know and not even with a hello good morning how
309 are you [laughs] you know is like no it really is about and I learn this all over the years is about
310 relationships that is how you keep this kind of struggles together hum cuz the issues are going to be
311 there, but the people would have to come first and so and if cant care about each other how can we
312 care about people in south Africa so--

313 GS: and at this time that you were and activist hum you had a job right CG: yes, yes GS: what where you
314 doing?

315 CG: At that time, I was actually when I started I was in law student umm yes I was a law student and
316 then as it progressed I was was an attorney and I was practicing along with the Legal Assistance
317 Foundation umm and even when I left umm, so yeah at that period of time I was working for legal
318 assistance yeah.

319 GS: and how did manage like the time to do both

320 CG: umm naww very carefully [both laugh] you know now the meetings were at night, on the weekends,
321 umm you know if there was a call like to come and you know be out cuz there was going to be a press
322 conference about something, you know if you had to be in court that morning you might leave court and
323 go to the press conference, you know you just sort of but sweater over your suit have your suit on your
324 car and you just go and go back to court for the next case so [laughing][background beeping sound] ok
325 so umm just no it was very much about feeling that you know the work I was doing was significant and
326 very important to me and this was to end try to really balanced and I mean try to really have my work
327 done but the good thing wasn't working a 9 to 5 hours in a office were had to be so so I had the
328 flexibility to be out and about we definitely used that flexibility to the max so [laughing]

329 GS: what was your reaction to Reagan's election in 1980?

330 CG: Horror! Umm, just very very upset that you know there were going to be some serious setbacks and
331 that the work we are trying to do umm and umm there was a lot of discussion about you know how we
332 change things at the you know cuz the movement was local, but it was also very much a national
333 movement and so was the impact gonna be, and how and you know particularly cuz the economy was
334 not great you know how people wanna think and care about people you know in Africa if people were
335 struggling here umm, but I think we sort of felt like ok that is what we have to do now. So, the reality is
336 we are going to keep doing the same thing, and we need to be more strategic we need to change the
337 strategy we need to go after different people both as targets and but also as terms as creating more
338 allies. So, I think that the focus also shift to some to who have we not reach as ally who we really could

339 who can we change you know who is on the fence or who is here but I think we sort of widen the breath
340 of people we were trying to reach out to so--

341 GS: and how do you feel about Reagan's administration policies? CG: jeje [laughing] GS: towards South
342 Africa?

343 CG: umm I don't think, I think that we uhhh I think when he came to the office we knew that it was going
344 to be bad news umm and I think it was sort of the same thing that I just said that ok so his
345 administration is not going to be supportive of any of these umm, but that doesn't mean that other
346 people aren't and we just have to be smarter or more and more creative, and umm even more diligent,
347 and there are there are spaces where we can maneuver and let's make sure we found those spaces, and
348 I think that also made the national movement a little stronger because we knew it was going to be
349 harder so we sort of needed to sort of get up and get ready for that so--

350 GS: so how was the community participating in the during this anti-apartheid movement? Umm

351 CG: umm ok umm both thru fundraising thru those little pot lots around were you would try to raise
352 funds and the walkathons a lot of people came out for the walkathons and churches got involved there
353 were umm actually there was one church Trinity umm you know church of 95th street that actually put
354 out a banner in front of the church that said free South Africa and other churches were not that obvious
355 about it but they would have you know groups within the church that would work with us umm so it was
356 and the it was and there was a number of churches that I'm trying to think of the names of some of the
357 people umm redocof was is his name umm it was umm I'll come to me as we go hopefully umm but
358 there were a number a lot of church people were actually part of the anti-apartheid local anti but
359 national also here in Chicago there were a lot of churches umm that were active umm and so the
360 churches would raise funds thru the churches and people would participate in the street gatherings and
361 the protest and things so

362 GS: ok tell me a time were someone close to you or even yourself experienced any kind of discrimination
363 or CG: ummhuu GS: that happened to you a lot or not really.

364 CG: umm I mean there were certainly people who thought that you know that we were crazy we were
365 stupid I mean we were out in front of the umm the state of Illinois building and we were doing the
366 whole demonstration around you South Africa steel steals our jobs and I remember this man came up to
367 me and I don't know if he was I think he maybe [beep sound] be south African umm he was a white guy
368 and he said "if you all, what did he said If you people really knew what you were talking about you'll be
369 thanking us for bringing our steel here because umm you know and he didn't said nigger what did he
370 said don't know if he said "blackies" whatever he said he goes the blackies and eventhough when it was
371 predominate white fox working on the steel mills people the blackies and the stupid ass and I can't think
372 of the actual words he used white fox that out there in south east Chicago they don't know any shit
373 about making steel so it wasn't necessary directly totally to me I mean it was the issue but I was just a
374 pol that he said you know you just put that dam sign down cuz you don't know a dam thing what you
375 talking about so it was more him directly about the issue I don't think that I had a lot of discrimination
376 per said directly at me but I do know that umm that the church that I was active at that time umm was

377 really active was a Lutheran church and the higher ups in the church really came to the minister cuz they
378 felt like he was being too vocal and it was gonna drag criticism of some of the whites and our church was
379 all blacks but some of the white Lutheran churches were really a pal that they were talking this issue
380 wrong and like if you wanna take it wrong then you need to be quiet about it because we don't want to
381 lose white parishioners so you know it came up like that but I don't think I experience any direct
382 discrimination because –so

383 GS: Umm describe me a situation where you got scared while participating in these demonstrations.

384 CG: Umm some of the protests where the police were there I mean they were ahh I mean they thought
385 that the whole thing was ridiculous that we were demonstrating and protesting and asking for support
386 for black people in South Africa umm and blacks and colors in South Africa and so their attitude either
387 one from that didn't care to really really hostile and I know that sometimes it'll be a lot of young people
388 out there and we all get angry we will cuz their treatment was you know they will close us in they would
389 be out there with tear gas and treating or tear gas us and they will be sort of see like trying to even sort
390 of get the crowd really sort of get angry and push back against them umm so they were instigating
391 things and I was always afraid that the young people that were there were going to end up getting
392 hurt because you know I was sort of young but you know there were a lot of teenagers and a lot of you
393 know really radical folks that came out there they were ready just take the police on and there were
394 number of times when I felt it came really close to coming a riot and but a riot that the police were
395 really instigating and that was kind of so that was kind of scary but I was I think I was more afraid of
396 what what particularly going to happen to these young I felt I was probably going to take myself out of
397 the trouble I was playing dumb, but I could get out of this but I now that they couldn't; and I didn't know
398 what kind of records was going to create for them you know umm so and there were also a lot of people
399 that decided that they were going to be arrested you know how much they were willing to put
400 themselves on the line and you know when young people decided that always kinda worry me cuz you
401 know I just didn't want I also started question myself how am I not so committed cuz I'm not willing I'm
402 not going to go out there and said arrest me umm I was definitely willing to be active as part of the
403 protest umm but I was worry umm I think I was more worried for other people umm but sometimes the
404 police were very frightening you know so

405 GS: so how being an activist umm impacted your personal life cuz you were an activist you were
406 working, what about your

407 CG: the good thing is that I don't think that I went out with anybody who also wasn't an activist [both
408 laughing] it's like what you don't care about this, what you don't know about that, what, what, what, I
409 was like pruu forget that so and my you know there was a history activism in my family so although you
410 know my parents worried about me personally but they knew it was the right thing to do they holding
411 was you have to be you know don't be in the front line so stay in the middle somewhere [laughing] you
412 know but and because of the work I did at that time and because of all most of attorneys that I work
413 with even if they were not active in it they supported it umm and sort of the larger legal administration
414 for legal assistance so I felt like I was really fortunate because I was in a space [beep] where doing this
415 work was something that people applauded umm and although I think sometimes I sort of step out of

416 the line in terms of how much time I used but and also you know it was true of giving up the I didn't see
417 it as giving up evening and weekends I saw it as being with people who I loved and care about and doing
418 the work that I thought it was really really important so in that sense I was fortunate cuz all sort of
419 seemed to be part of the same thing you know

420 GS: yeah, k, so CG: and I didn't had any kids so that made it easier to GS: yes CG: yes [both laugh]

421 GS: ok tell me about the companies that were involved in the divestment?

422 CG: uhhhh umm GS: like what you remember

423 CG: that's a good question! Ohh! Jesus umm the companies that were involved positively or the
424 companies that we went against?

425 GS: umm

426 CG: or just either way?

427 GS: yeah

428 CG: uhh cuz I don't even remember any companies either way umm I'm trying to think umm cuz I
429 remember demonstrating out in south in front of different people's businesses we will have to come
430 back to that one let me make a little note and I have to come back I'm trying to think about specific
431 companies but I can tell you this that the attitude was just like this is about economics you all trying da
432 you know to really impact our business and this is just funding about money we are not against black
433 people in South Africa that is just not what are we against this is about money and the black people
434 don't operate the money so we are not really concern about them umm and I remember you know just
435 learning about all the issues in the mines and all the issues you know all the different things that are
436 going over people there and really learning just how umm careless not just careless but how oppression
437 works you know that people could just defy it in all kinds of different ways umm and basically people
438 just did not care they just didn't care it was bout money first umm and protecting their investments and
439 protecting the people over there who were making sure that their investments were you know were
440 continually you know going to be good and you know and the people be dam I mean the people were no
441 consequence at all and then that umm to see people sort of to hear people all about you getting their
442 way of their money when I mean kids were being shot at the streets you know mothers being shot on
443 the streets and we had you know lots of times of people gone over and met with you know Mandela and
444 with other people on combat and just shoot stories about it was horrible it was worse than horrible it
445 was totally inhumane and yet the the people who how do I say it I just umm I don't see how you balance
446 that I could see them saying I could see them saying I'm concerned bout my investments but I
447 understand this so I'm trying to figured out but no it was like pssh and universities umm the university
448 the college I went to had some funds in South Africa and I remember us as you know college students
449 you know challenging them and then going back as alumna and challenged them and they did divest
450 their money umm so they were a lot of small victories there were umm and it was also really good when
451 um you know people that were famous stood up and said I mean cuz It was good it was good when

452 people stood up and join but it was good in when they joined in a way that they were one of the people
453 and I guess that is what I think that I really appreciated about that movement is that it wasn't led by a
454 bunch of mockery mugs or you know Hollywood starts but if they were in it they were in it as you know
455 a real one strong voice as part of you know so like a everyday folks around raising their voices but I'll try
456 to think about names but right now I'm in total blank

457 GS: ok so tell more a little more about the campaign, campaign, campaigns against South Africa steel?

458 CG: umm one I think that the way we found out about it was as we they were build we knew that they
459 were build on the building and I think that it was like a blip on the screen nobody had any idea that they
460 were importing what would you import steel from South Africa nobody had a clue that that steel that
461 they were using and then somebody either saw something written in the steel or found out something
462 and tips and you know sort of let us know and that became a huge campaign umm and that is something
463 that people all people could rally around because we are losing jobs at the steel mill right and you are
464 bringing steel from somewhere else that is .. [beep] so locally a lot of people began to rally and so
465 unions more unions began to step up umm so the white ethnic folks from the south west side who
466 worked in those unions were like oh hell no so they can rally cuz it was something that began directly to
467 impact them umm and I think that I learned a lot thru that I learned one that if is not enough to just said
468 you should care about this cuz is a moral issue an ethical issue is a you know is a political issue and this is
469 the right side to be on, but that you we had to be able to drive it home in some very rear ways why
470 people why there was a reason for them to care about this and that was like the very first issue that
471 brought that home because all kinds of people came out to work on that and it also force people of the
472 Chicago political folks to take a look at this and said o no no no this big masses of steel companies I
473 mean cuz steel was running it I mean they were they were struggling to some strength but you know
474 steel companies were stealing they were polluting the air and in Indiana Illinois and the fact that they
475 were gonna lose that nobody can just nobody could justify that so that became a part of campaign that
476 sort of really wide an brought more people into so

477 GS: So you went to South Africa before umm Nelson Mandela's CG: No I went to South Africa in umm I
478 went in 1996 when was Mandela released like in 90 umm GS: 90 CG: 90 what? GS: umm 90 yeah CG: it
479 really so I went before really? I guess I did ok so I went in 96 and then I went in 2001 and 2003 umm so
480 yes I guess I did I'm just discussion I'm really trying to go back umm yeah yeah in 96 we took about 15 of
481 us that we went there were 12 students 12 young people and 3 adults and we went into the town and
482 actually did work umm with the youth with the umm different youth groups hum I'm sort of thinking
483 that cuz that was thinking of some of the conversations we had and that seem like that there were a lot
484 of conversations I mean the students that we took were really excited about umm you know Nelson
485 Mandela and they were really proud about you know who he was and what we did what we run into
486 was that a lot of the color students who were really angry about Nelson Mandela and the ANC and the
487 fact that umm they felt that the the the ANC was waging only to benefit umm black South Africans and
488 not color South Africans and I hadn't expected that and the students hadn't either and umm but there
489 were a number people there that umm not a whole a lot but enough to raised as an issue for us that
490 everybody seem to see their selves as part of the all the people that looked black didn't see themselves
491 as part of that struggle which was a real surprise you know cuz I mean one little black girl stud up and

492 said my "family is very angry with the ANC in South Africa because they are not the color people lose
493 their jobs when the black they over and there would just be a different kind of oppression" and I was
494 like what? That would never been something that you know it was just like a new level of sort of new
495 ones but not just a new one but sort of a level of perspective that we had you know we were not aware
496 of before we went to visit so

497 GS: so you went to um give presentations or

498 CG: well when we went it was about sort of sharing it was a youth group there was the youth from some
499 different places that were trained in different kinds of umm advocacy and health advocacy they were all
500 sort of health advocacy umm around aids and std's and then street law..you know about teaching about
501 what they did here it was to teach young people about their rights their legal rights and so what we
502 went to do it was sort of share the models of political education and advocacy that whatever we were
503 using with young people in South Africa and umm you know that is interesting cuz you think you are
504 going cuz you have a lot to share and they'll listen right [beep] what you learn is that you are really
505 going cuz you have a lot to learn [laugh] you know so it was a huge lesson for all of us about going and
506 listening as much as going and presenting and so we learn a lot about and we also ended up spending
507 time in one particular town where there were about 200 youths who when they came where our little
508 bus drove to this township they were rush out I mean they sort of surrounded our little bus and we
509 thought that they were happy to see us because you know we were just new people coming but they
510 were like please autograph my hand autograph my hand and they thought that all American African
511 Americans particularly youth were part of gangs and what they wanted was for the kids to autograph
512 their arms with the name of the gang that they were part of I was like what? and then we looked
513 around and there was all this graffiti of all the different gangs that there were there and there were
514 things that things like the Kennedy boys I mean so they had taken names of America stuff and turned
515 into gang names it was amazing and so when the kids were like we don't know about gangs we are not
516 active are not active in gangs we don't put gang names in arm and so then it was like ok so then who are
517 you then and why are you here that is the only way we know African American particularly youth is thru
518 the music and thru you know the TV media stuff and its all about so it took us about a week to sort of
519 start to know us as folks not necessary part of that but that had other skills and then we ask them what
520 kind of things they were doing you know they were doing, they had some stuff going on they had a lot of
521 ideas and so we listen more to their ideas and we support them so we created sort of soccer field there
522 and umm it was a group of girls that we set with in organized and they never traveled so we took them
523 major trip from ke town to Dearborn which is a they were never outside of their little community umm
524 and there was a theater group so we lunch this major in 3 weeks so it was sort of join American south
525 African youth theater group created and they produced plays and they did a series of plays and
526 everybody in the neighborhood came and so they were funding in the continue soccer fields so it was
527 sort of more and also the girls were able to continue doing their stuff and then when we got home we
528 sent money back and we kept you know funding food and clothing but also the activities cuz you realize
529 those kids aren't any different from kids right here umm well except that there were differences so
530 anyways

531 GS: ok so back to Mandela what were your thoughts about Mandela's release?

532 CG: ohhh I mean like everybody else in the world will the people I knew In the world I mean my whole
533 family sit around the TV and watch that man walk out of the prison and I was just tears flow OMG it was
534 umm it was very personal it felt like I think that a lot of people felt a lot of like a persona I victory you
535 know that that he had, that he had mant, and for me maintain his principals that he used his time in
536 prison as a time to still be connected to the movement but also to educate people that came in to the
537 prison so the prison community became were there was a lot of you know popular education and
538 political education that was done but also just the man that that man have not been broken down after
539 all the shit he gone thru umm and just stud for something you know stood for not just overcome the
540 odds personality but you know being truly committed to his people than to that whole political agenda
541 and umm never never lose his side of that I mean but just also the kindness and raggedness that he
542 simplified how you do that how you laid in prison how you know stuff that is literally wrong and you not
543 only deal with that but then you bec you still are force to be rock and wood that was just something else
544 that man was something is still something else he really is so

545 GS: so where were you? Did you went

546 CG: I was here in Chicago when he was release umm yeah and then he came to Chicago umm I'm not
547 sure exactly how he actually didn't came to Chicago he went to Detroit Michigan and at that time I was
548 working for a group called Access living which was the disability rights group and we decided that as a
549 group organization we should go we were probably bout um I don't know 35, 40 employees [beep]and
550 mostly there were people with pretty significant disabilities right so we are talking about paraplegics and
551 quadriplegic, people who couldn't walk, people who were deft umm and so we had this caravan you
552 know of disable people that went from Chicago to umm as a Mandela multi-town [laughs] so we went
553 to Detroit and um it was amazing we were in those bleaches we were screaming and yelling and howling
554 and crying but alone the way we had our windows down so we try to play the same music the same time
555 so we can we were all singing and dancing in the cars it was an amazing experience it was amazing it
556 really was it was umm yeah umm uff good memories [laugh] really really good memories so.

557 GS: ok so umm what were your thoughts about the trou, truth and reconciliation commission?

558 CG: umm

559 GS: I think you did like a research right? About it?

560 Yeah and I actually tool a group of students umm when I was working in Access living at Northwestern
561 umm law school and we took we did a research project a group of students actually did and so we went
562 back and actually met people that were part of it and actually got a chance to umm sit in in one of the
563 hearings umm I thought I mean I really I really try to listen because my own opinion I mean became
564 you know is like what are the options here and I don't think I didn't know nearly as much about umm
565 you knew how you transition from from being you know truly oppressed to moving towards position
566 being moving towards and running the government and running in society but not becoming the
567 oppressive you know like how you do that and how do you how do you not forget but used all that pain
568 and that experience as a way as lessons to learn from and to move forward I I was just you know here
569 here from my manage point her a lot of my friends and activists are easy to say Oh no! they should be

570 no, they just need those white folks they just need to be locked up, they need to be put away but I don't
571 even believe that kind of punishment necessarily but for that group of people is like Truth of
572 Reconciliation seemed like an really easy way out and I was initially pretty angry about it and then but
573 then you know sort of begin to sort of research listen to the stories of people who were going thru that
574 process of mother that were just wanted to know you know what did happened to my son you know
575 what did happened to my daughter , you know where are my children's bodies , you know why did you
576 do that? Umm and having a chance to sort of face the person and hear that umm but I remember umm
577 sitting in one of the hearings and it was umm I can't remember his name one of Mandela's' attorneys I
578 have to get you his name but anyways his umm, there've been a number of attacks to his family and one
579 pretty significant attack on his daughter and he the the guy who was one of South African police officer
580 umm was the person had identify himself as the person who what do you call it who been assigned to
581 umm execute the target I mean this is the way this man talk anyway so there was there's been a number
582 of attack to his daughter what I can't think of his name a number of attempts to his attorney also and in
583 each case he sat down with the person you know who I've tried to kill him and they talked about it and
584 each case apart of this went he purposed the person apologized listen it was my job, it was wrong but
585 you know I was really caught up in and you know how do we save our society and I couldn't even began
586 to see the other side but now you know after going through this governmental transitions and just
587 meaning to talk to other people I know that what I did was wrong and I'm asking you to support my
588 amnesty petition .and so what was his name anyway he'll come and he sat in each case he got and sat
589 before the truth and reconciliation at the hearing and had supported those people amnesty petition this
590 here where we were at this man and this south African police officer OMG he must it've been about 6
591 feet and 8 inches tall and weighted about 350pounds he was bout the biggest person I've ever seen in
592 my life and he came in he was in handcuffs and he was like in a green army uniform and he sat on the
593 table and he didn't made eye contact with anybody I mean but it wasn't like he was afraid to look in our
594 way it was like he had this very mean look but he would pass you you know he wouldn't look at you and
595 umm he so they went thru the evidence and the evidence was and they ask him one question and hey
596 asked him so what did you do? I DID MY JOB and he said it and he didn't said it in English so they had to
597 translate it but he was so arrogant and so angry and so umm sort of self-rages you know and then umm
598 he talked about how there was a meeting of the ANC youth and that what is his name? his daughter, the
599 daughter was at the meeting that he told to execute the target and that is what he attempted to do and
600 because he missed because he didn't fulfill his job or assignment that he was punished and he said and
601 people asked him how he felt about it and he said I wish I had fulfill my assignment and so when it came
602 time for so his group and south African attorneys would sit in one side of the table and Jesus Christ it
603 starts with a d but I can't can't reach his name ahh anyways so we were sitting in the other side of the
604 table and then his daughter talked about the terror of having those bullets these guns to fire to the
605 window of the youthly office you know so feeling the bullet wise by her hair and she is ..down an
606 everybody is crying hysterical and you know they thought that they were surrounded they h=just
607 thought they were just going to die and she said you know by god's grace she didn't died and you know
608 and then when he started talking her father umm nelsons Mandela's attorney started talking about it he
609 couldn't hardly get the words he says one thing is to come after me you know I'm out there I'm on the
610 line I'm actively saying what is wrong I'm actively going against t you but my family my children Oh no!
611 and the fact that still thinking still whishing that you have been able to execute her there is no way I can

612 support amnesty and he said and I've been really keep trying you know to sort of work to this and my
613 family he said but no no you don't need to there shouldn't be no amnesty for you and but the that was
614 after we went by their house I was actually with a women who knew the family and that is why I had the
615 chance to do this and you know they just cried and they cried because you know it felt like there is so
616 many people in the south Africa that still they really do wish they were all dead they really do and they
617 real gave them the chance again would come and actually in front of his house and it wasn't this
618 fabulous house you know it was a nice house but there was a little guard stand were man I mean
619 seriously there were still under 24 hour guard because they didn't know if at any point of time even at
620 this point they might not be killed elsewhere we live but I never forget him he said but it was a price the
621 price we had to pay and he said I'll never pay that price again he said because there was no other way to
622 try to get the file and this was not this was not a black south African this was a color south African and
623 so it was interesting that a lot of color in south Africa who were and there were so many whites and
624 there were so many people that were part of this movement umm who really put their life and family's
625 life on the line you know because there was you know person struggle so yeah anyway why I can't
626 remember his name it'll come, he died recently he was a ..Ok I'm ohhloll ok

627 GS: ok so what were some of the differences that you saw in Chicago anti-apartheid movement and
628 South Africa?

629 Umm there were some people in Chicago who I really felt that were willing to put their life on the line
630 umm I mean really put their lives on the line and umm and I umm I think I was the first time it was sort
631 of close and personal with people who were willing to die so see to make sure other people were free
632 you know umm and that had a huge impact I didn't do directly it wasn't so much directly umm that I
633 you know person to person was able to see what was going on in south Africa I heard about it we listen
634 we saw videos we umm you know were able to hear the experiences of people that most the people
635 that went over and came back as or share I think that was obviously a level of intensity in south Africa
636 that it was differently that the intensity in Chicago but I would say that there was some people in
637 Chicago who felt the struggle and lived that struggle and would able to commit as much as the south
638 African were and that as something I mean something that I had as a young person that seen before
639 umm and there is something I don't think I ever forget cuz is how you're willing to put your life on the
640 line for you know at what point that you said you know I'm up for this no matter what happens and that
641 was something that really gave me pause and it was a whole different prospective one thing is to march
642 and one thing is to say maybe they will tear gas maybe they'll arrest us to say maybe they'll kill us and
643 I'm off for that and I had to really think about hat and I mean I think it was a personal it really sent me to
644 a person's journey until where am I willing to put my life for you know so

645 GS: so how has been active in the movement change your life? This is more like reflection

646 CG: yeah yeah I mean I think more are the long life friends that I have umm who are willing who see the
647 south Africa struggle as part as the American's struggle as part of you know the struggle of people you
648 know in eastern Europe, middle east and other parts of the world so I think what is done for me is it's
649 because those people had been so committed to all these struggles that I realized that you know
650 globally there is not that much difference you know the black and brown people around the world are

651 oppressed that that oppression it manifest different ways yet that what happens to the people is pretty
652 much the same it may look different it may sound different but pretty much is the same and that I can't
653 just be about eh civil rights about African American s you know I can't that is not good enough because
654 that is not really what is about what it really is about fundamentally about people's right to live a life
655 with their free of oppression where they have the right to really whatever the potentials are there
656 should have the right t strive for that and achieve that and that money and also realized to that you
657 can't talk about any of that unless you talk about economics umm and lot of time people won't talk
658 about social stuff while you talk bout retribution well or you talk about you know changing the status
659 quote ummm I don't know about that that what people would go different umm I don't know bout give
660 up so I don't know if I want to equalize things and realizing that because I do firmly believe that that not
661 meant that I need to live led a life that reflects that and so you as an attorney part I always knew that
662 the reason why you became an attorney were going to do with some issues that were going on in the
663 south side I just got inspires I got I got pissed off I got really really mad there was this little town call
664 mount bay you Mississippi and I was teaching at a college level Georgia Salem College and we took
665 students down to this little town and to look at the health clinics that were there because a lot of them
666 were going to be working on the south I wanted them to be expose to some of these towns that will
667 gonna be working at and we got down there and the whole town turn down they look like little town
668 but they had a little marching band and came put and welcome the students ...college and afterwards he
669 went to show us the town in a little bus and they had this new housing beautiful brick houses and a
670 since somebody said what is that little house in the back and so sort of his face turned down and he said
671 it's a those are our houses were like our houses those houses are like the bathroom right but this are
672 new houses an the says yeah yeah we got matching brick houses what would you have an outside toilet
673 where you got new construction he said because the city's fathers and the main city wouldn't was bout
674 20 25 miles away something like that maybe not quite that far they wouldn't allowed to lease on the
675 land so they could stand their water pipes so they could hook it up so they could have main they were
676 still using well water and were still using our houses to go to the bathroom we are talking about a brick
677 house like anyone you would see in Chicago and I was horrified like what and he said listen and I said
678 and then because we saw all these little kids with these hugest belly's I mean huge swollen stomachs
679 you know we already heard that part of it it was cuz they didn't had good water and you know we
680 thought it was just a well water issue well it was but it was also that the toilets with all the flies and all
681 the so I sais so this is a this is a not unhealthy issue no this is a legal issue what we need is some legal
682 attorney us that come here and du it their cases and I remember getting on that bus thinking so all my
683 public health background wouldn't change this situation at all that whole think about all we need id a
684 few good lawyers I thought shit so I got back to Atlanta and I was with a friend of mine who lives in
685 Chicago and she said will maybe that is you should do! I mean law oh hell no!! I would never ever
686 lawyers are terrible, lawyers are dishonest, lawyers are this should think about it and so that's how
687 ended up in law school but it just resonated with me that that same issue was part of the same issue of
688 fairness and poverty and all that stuff that was the issue in South Africa that is the issue in you know in
689 different parts of Mexico, in different parts of Latin America and just all over the world and you know so
690 anyways so I guess the bottom line to that is simply that I think is giving me a much more than anything
691 a much more of global perspective about oppression and about people's rights and sort of a willingness

692 to be active in a lot of different kinds of movements that I'm not necessary personally you know directly
693 towards me so if that made any sense at all.

694 **GS:** uhhh yes, ok so what umm what are you most proud of umm regarding your participation in the
695 movement?

696 **CG:** umm I think I most proud of feeling like umm we stuck in it and then we won now winning has
697 different [laughing] kinds of meanings right but you know sometime umm winning was giving them to
698 stop using South Africa steel you know umm finding out that acting on that with a really strategic
699 campaign having lots of different people get involved in that umm and get and stopping that you know I
700 feel like winning was really getting the city getting the city work really hard the consular to pass a
701 resolution bills that they cannot invest the city no longer invest in South Africa you know umm but also I
702 felt really proud about the fact that it was a looong it was not a short campaign you know it last it over a
703 period of years and people stay in it you know it was like lots of people came and when but people
704 stayed in it and it was young people, older people, and disable people and people from different you
705 races and ethnicities and it's like all of us we were very very committed and concern bout the same
706 thing and also the other issues we talked about , debated about we weren't weren't ignoring so that the
707 diversity but the diversity became the strength and a lot of people oh diversity isn't important and what
708 I learned is diversity is essential and is not some kind of token effort for us to make is that I can't
709 necessary reach to the same community you can reach to you know I don't ne I don't speak Spanish and
710 lots of things I can't do but if we are working on it together and you use your strengths and I used my
711 strengths and shit that is a whole a lot more of people we can impact and then [phone singing] if we
712 bring other people with more skills and so diversity became not just sort of at turn to toss around is like
713 that is the only way the only way and so when people talk about you know struggles between black and
714 brown people blacks and Latinos and other folks it's like we need to get to the there's so much common
715 go round I mean there is soo much that is the same we can't win none of us we can't win this battle
716 unless we joined forces so I think I most proud of understanding that and then try that in the other work
717 that I do in justice and the work that I've done in different places really trying to build a bridge around
718 that stuff and recognizing that is essential and fundamental and not just some nice thing for people to
719 do so

720 **GS:** ok you have any regrets? Or something that would you would you done better?

721 **CG:** I think I wouldn't procrastinated as much umm I think that there could've been some roles that I
722 could've play that would've be more effective but I didn't make the time the way I should have umm I
723 don't think I have many regrets I think that I should've learn more had umm [excuse me] umm had use
724 my time differently you know umm but that is just ...

725 **GS:** so why youth? Why working with youth?

726 **CG:** you mean like now? **GS:** yes

727 **CG:** umm cuz there so, you know people said our youth are our future I hate people banding this stuff
728 around except that is truth and that I I honestly feel not only that young people that we've created the

729 world I mean we created world that is not just unhealthy but that is dangers for young people and I
730 actually actually do believe that the only way we are going to be able to change this is to give youth
731 space to speak up and to act and to figured about how to change that umm is almost is not sort of do
732 good or I think on the report they are but I honestly feel like in terms of my own survival in terms of my
733 own survival of this world, this nations and this city that the people who are going to have to step up
734 and make the change need to be as supportive and skills and abilities umm and that used in ways that
735 I'm just learn I'm learning how to listen to young people I'm learning how to really value them and I used
736 to be that and I feel I have the skill you know to represent them in court that I have things I have to
737 teach them I can teach them advocacy I can teach them you know and it was all about what I have to
738 offer right? and now what I'm recognizing is about what we both have to share there is a lot of
739 reciprocity and what I love the most is creating inter-rational spaces were young an adult people come
740 together to work in a project and we see each other as equal team players and that is really what I love
741 because I know I mean some of the class that I represented that have done some really horrible things
742 would not only some of the smarter people were some of the they were some of the the they had so
743 much heart but they been so hurt and so how do you how you provide spaces for people to be able to
744 let that out how we recognized the stress that we all have and then how do we support each other to
745 move both to whatever goals we want to moved to so that's kind of...except that I love young people
746 and I love I love the out-raggedness I love the fact that they are rebellious I love the fact that you know
747 they are trying to figured out and hopefully figuring out means that there is a place for them and their
748 ideas and their skills and their abilities and no that they are going to be ...or somewhere because we
749 hadn't giving them any support that they need so umm but also to know that their future depends on
750 them and also they depend on me so that is sort of the global thing you know that we really need to I
751 really need to I feel like I have to be part of supporting young people and their growth cuz it real I feel
752 totally connected to them so plus I act like a young person a lot of the times to [laughs]

753 **GS:** awesome [laughing]

754 **GS:** so what's your main goal now?

755 **CG:** My main goal now. is about peacemaking umm tomorrow is what we call we call a city wide of
756 healing and there are going to be peacemaking circles probably bout 75 peacemaking circles every
757 community thru much around the city and some just young people at school and some parents in the
758 neighborhood some of the churches some of community organizations some of businesses umm they
759 are going to be in the detention center. Judges are involved, police are involved you know kids who
760 been lock up are involved I mean is just everybody but I mean creating spaces for people that want to
761 build relationships to feel supportive to be able to share the pain that everybody is going thru all the
762 violence in the city and to figured out ways to address umm that are really community driven umm that
763 are community supportive that come that their solutions and ideas comes from the people that has
764 most impact of what's going on and what we do now is a lot of training people to create this be able to
765 facilitate peacemaking servos but umm tomorrow is really special because is about us stepping back as
766 an organization I mean we are going to be out here helping to do it but that will give all those people a
767 chance to stand up and we sort of but the word out and invited a lot of people to come to a big circle
768 and talk about it umm about 45 people should up and said oh hell yeah my church need these my kids

769 need this the school needs this so I go ok fine you all decide what you want to do just let us know we
770 create a website but that information out to if you need people to co facilitate we will help you find
771 them if you need if you trying to figure out what's your circle to do in the circle we put information out
772 there you know we are going to share everybody's information of everybody else so people would have
773 a way to support each other but the bottom line is you do what you think is going to be best in your
774 community but we all this one day we are going to be laminating the power for peacemaking so as a
775 way to address relationships and communities to addressed safety and communities and also to figured
776 out we as people that live in this neighborhoods are willing to come together and address the violence
777 so I want really for that to continue support people on doing that we figured that somewhere between I
778 don't know between like maybe 570 people will be sitting with us tomorrow and that's what I want to
779 do that and really so support community capacity with their own issues umm and also to create safe
780 communities for youth and adults but also o make sure that this systems Chicago public schools and
781 more importantly for me well not more important but the system I want to work the most is the juvenile
782 court system umm most of these kids, half of them don't even go thru that system at all and so how do
783 we create systems in the neighborhoods where people can sit together with kids that committed
784 offences and victims and actually hear what is going on and let these kids be responsible and pick up for
785 what is going on but let's not slam them let's not push them away lets embrace them you know what
786 you think you need to do to make up for the harming cause what does the victim need umm and very
787 often is the same thing people needs to be heard people need to knew that people are heard what
788 happened they need people to witness and acknowledge what happened to them and a lot of the harm
789 that has cost a lot of the times victims are not asking for necessary restitution or whatever what it is I
790 know that is not going to happen again and you are not going to hurt me again tell me what you did it
791 let me try to understand who you are and if we are neighbors let's build a relationship that is going to be
792 a healthy one so not only that you are not going to hurt me but you are going to help protect me or at
793 least this way other people form hurting me to or this happens all the time and some neighborhoods
794 that are actually setting up this centers where people can go if he is around the neighborhood and some
795 schools are setting this peace rooms so if things happen and instead of calling the police and spelled
796 them they are going to try to addressed them thru the school so I've been supporting those kind of so
797 that is what I want to do so.

798 **GS:** ok, so we are done thank you so much!

799 **CG:** we are oh?!!! Lupe you are great!

800 **GS:** awww thanks!

801 **CG:** If I can remember the names of some of these people I will shoot you an e-mail

802 **GS:** ok that be great thank you!