Interview with Cheryl Graves

Guadalupe Santoyo
Columbia College - Chicago

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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 tell us your name
Cheryl Graves: Cheryl Graves
GS: Can you spell it?
GS: Ok today’s day is December 7 2009, and we are in Cheryl’s office located in 3424 South State Chicago, Illinois
GS: umm Can you please tell us your year of birth.
CG: Oh my god do I have to? {Both laughing} Ok yes. Is 1955
GS: and place?
CG: Chicago
GS: Chicago
GS: Uhm you were raise here in Chicago
CG: I was born and raise here, yes
GS: And what about your father’s date and place of birth
CG: Hum my father was born here in Chicago in 1925
GS: And your mom
CG: And my mom was born in Huntsville, Alabama in 1924
GS: Ok we are going to start
GS: Tell me about the city you were born? I mean
CG: Chicago
GS: Yes, your earliests memories
CG: I grew up in what I didn’t what was a housing project it was called Princeton Park it was in the far south side of Chicago, hum it was very se it was all black community hum families I went to Charles Ridge Dru school. I was very proud of that because he the person to dis-- first one, either he discover blood plasma or he was the first person to do hearts first black man to do heart surgery, but I was very proud and determine to become a doctor because Charles Ridge Dru was so inspiring to me. Hum I hum went to graham school, high school on the south east side of the city on Bogan high school at that time
Bogan was hum, very hum, very much a white ethnic white school, hum with some Latino population, but primarily white and it was my very first experience going to school in anything other than a completely black environment so it was uh little bit of a culture shock particularly since during the first week of school my gym partner who was from Serbia as we were taking off our gym uniforms to transfer back to our street clothes said “OMG! My mother lie to me,” I look him the eyes and said what you mean your mother lie to you? My mother said you all have tails. So that was my first week high school I’m thinking oh who are these people, and why am I this school with these crazy people so anyway hum so that was pretty much growing up

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

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

GS: and you didn’t mention your parents you

CG: my parents, my parent well my mother is a teacher well she was a teacher, hum my father worked for the post office so that was a pretty traditional sort of middle class black background humm my father
is ph he is not alive now, but he was the sweetest nicest person I ever meet, I ever knew uh. He was a

garden, he was a handyman he hum he rose up his ranks in the post office and go to the point where he

was actually he wrote contracts and so um there was a point where there was hum he started out

working as um as a postal rail Clark, which meant they drove the trains and they will just put the mail in

bags and put them on hucks as the train slow down. When they stop running mail on the post office I

mean on the trains all the postal workers the postal rail clerks potentially were going to be fired and so I

remember having that group formed his own union and they will have meetings on the basements and I

love I will sit on the steps and just listen to these men arguing and fozzing and you know yelling, “they

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

was just great and my mother was an active member of the Chicago teacher’s union and so you it was

pretty much you know you stand up for what you believe in, but you also join with other people because

there is strength and you know so they were good people very good people, so I love them my mom

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

rehab center right now and I hum what did I have hum I had some lipstick and she said “what is that on

your lips?!” That she can barely you know she is so wiggi you know what is that on your lips- I said mom is

lipstick and she said but that is not a good color who you,? What you? Get that off-- guess mom I like it

–ok fine whatever you always were an obstinate child, so you know she still as feisty as ever and my

sister had bag from Wal-Mart she came in and mom is like Wal-Mart! You are shopping at Wal-Mart?

Don’t you known better there are anti-union so you know even in her old age she still trying to keep us

in-----

GS: ummm

CG: yeah

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

CG: In high school I was I will and I mean college early part of college I was very Cleary wanted to be a

physician I’m telling you that whole deal of going to Charles Ridger Dru in kindergarten and first grade

really, I was so proud that a black man could do that and thought that is what I want to be, plus there

was a lot of illness, mental illness and other kinds of illness in my family, so I thought that is what I really

need to do and probably up through my junior year of college I was determined that was I going to do

and then I had an internship at Howard University hospital in DC [laughs]and the guy who was my

supervisor was a sergeant so he invited me to come and you know scrub and be in standing on the

surgeries and I fainted both times [laughs] and then I have to took pathology class the same summer

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

thought you know what I don’t have to be a physician to help people [laughs] you know there are other

kinds of ways so I decided that I really, was really a lot more interested in sort of the consequences of

illness how people won’t getting access to medical care so I began to think more about community

health education and health administration but in a ways that I worked umm one summer during college

in a place called Pallet City health center and it was Minneapolis, Minnesota and they had it was a health

clinic but it was also you know there was social services that were attached to that so housing services

and you know hum job you know helping people get jobs and there were all kinds of it was like a one
junior year I went to the school consular and I say ok so I’m thinking about. I’m trying to figured out shop looking at health as more like complete wellness so not just don’t fix your body, but we can support you in terms in getting good housing and finding a job you and know you know just all kinds so I thought wow and that what good health care is so that became sort of what I wanted to do so when I left college I went I came back I want to college Minnesota I came back home and did a masters in the University of Illinois and hum health care administration and epidemiology but my focus really was how the people in the neighborhood know how to take care of themselves how they began to know how to organized for good health care that is holistic that is what it treats the whole body and not just, and I was really interesting in the impact sort the connection between the mind and the body so how do we heal our whole self so

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

CG: In college or

GS: Yes

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

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

CG: They were definitely supporting me, I mean I remember in in high school, hum I guess the end of my junior year I went to the school consular and I say ok so I’m thinking about. I’m trying to figured out
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
I said, so what is that and she said and application to Illinois bill telephone and I’m like excuse me, I
came to talk to about college and she said honey, honey, honey you are not gonna make it to college. I
said what do you mean I have really good grades, I have a really good class rank, what are you talking
about? and she said, pff don’t get your hope up high, she said, just apply even if you think that you
gonna go to college, just apply this could be a good back up for you, you know you would work for a telephone company and maybe you can rise up to there. And, so there was an office actually right down
the street here, hum 29 and Dearborn it was run by a guy name Salles Pernail, and it was to help black
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
the way to the south east side hum, and I took the bus and train down to Salles Pernail’s office and I
walk in and I knock and said somebody told me you could help me, and he said you wanna go to college
and I said absolutely, so he said ok fine you would go to college. And so his college recruiters actually
came and this is like in the middle of the projects were alive and wealthy so it’s right in the middle of ---
you know all kinds of college recruiters came and that’s really how I got, I went to Caraton College,
which is a really small college but a really good college and I went on a science scholarship and I would
have no way to even know about that college or much less the scholarships that were available, but this
little man in his little joggle office you know down on the basement – and so but my parents hum, they
knew about colleges in the south cuz my mother had gone to Kentucky state and my father had gone to
a junior college here, so they were and actually during the time I was growing up my father was also
when I was in high school he had gone back to school, so he was studying so he would’ve come home
with As and be frustrated that he was working all day, and he was getting As and why we were not
getting As, so anyways, but they were so supportive. College and an an actually everything and their
goal was no to dictate what I did, but just that I was doing what I felt it could be really happy doing and
doing really well so

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

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

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

CG: hum Prexy Nesbit was one of the people influenced me hum, cuz he came out and talk to all the

groups cuz there was a number of union groups that were getting organized. Because when I was in I
ended up going to law school, and came back to Chicago did the masters degree left move to Atlanta
came back to Chicago and went to law school, and then uhh sort of started to work for the legal
assistance foundation and legal assistance attorneys part of the union and so uhm and it was weird cuz
they were part of the United auto Workers Union [laughing.] Was the big union that we were like which
is sort of weird to be part of auto workers union, but they were very progressive union so I, what is it the
National Organization of Legal Services Workers we were sort of part of their union, and so they call the
UAW called for had some meetings about apartheid so we would go to those meetings and it was so sort
of a --- folks that were so influential so.

GS: So why did you became an activist?

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

GS: ok so what group did you joined?

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

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

CG: I had hum not as big as that I mean I think that there were other movements that I might when I was
in college you know we march and we supported the things that Dr. King did, hum and you know, so I
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
big like the big marches, but hum, we even in high school and college we sort of organized around you
know like when the whole issue around hum when king came to Chicago around housing issues and so
we at our own schools sort of did a sit in, and it was more like information deal so people could
understand what was going on there. And hum, mostly there were educational things that I was
involved like how you get the word out so people know, but hum I don’t I think that this is part of the
first thing that I was really really really commit it to in a big major way so--
GS: ok, describe me the structure of the organization like how it was organized?
CG: hum, it’s a good question, what I remember is that hum, I mean with the leader were people who
were really active would travel to South Africa so like Prexy and it was Basil Clunnie and hum and hum,
I’m sure forgetting some names of people but they were sort of they were the leadership and there
were those of us that were part of planning the action, so there were a number of there was a big action
around South Africa steel hum and there were that time beginning to build the Thompson Center down
town, the state building which is on Grand, Randolph, Dearborn or Clark big ugly monstrosity, but they
[laugh] were using South African steel and the steel mills were out on the south side of the city and they
were not using Chicago steel you know Illinois steel they were using South Africa steel. So we form hum
that was the big deal we eve wore t-shirts that said south Africa steel steals our job, and I remember the
chance you know the toy toy, but we march hum around what was going on the Thompson building
hum. We also hum had a yearly umm demonstration no it was a year walkathon to raise funds and it
was amazing how successful and part of that to was to raise awareness of people so there was hundreds
of us that would walk through the neighborhood and you would pick a neighborhood that was sort of
your part of your community it would be like a five mile walk, maybe thru the south side of the city and
other people did it on the north side and people did it in different neighborhoods actually that was the
t-shirt that I was going to bring as a give to you but of course it at home on my dining table [laughs].
Anyways [excuse me] but so you ask me about, I just remember the leadership, which was really strong
but was very open to everybody’s ideas so you just feel like they really provided good leadership and
motivation to stay organized and then they were a lot of hum a lot of people that people that some
people did communications because it was important to be able to get the word out to the there, were
press conferences whenever we try to do something then, we then, and this is how all these this is out
of the point, but I remember when we work really hard also hum resolution with the city council to not
to not support hum to invest any of the city pension funds and any other kinds of funds or money that
will support apartheid in South Africa. So, but they were different people that research different things
and the information got out and then people respond but it was a pretty [snap fingers] quick network
and communications was really good cuz they said ok we want to be down town at the South African
you know embassy consulate and you could get a hundred people down within an hour it was amazing
you know that was that I mean it was a huge issue and also you felt solidarity with people I don’t know
what to--- but ok anyway there were also nationality so there will be national gatherings and Illinois
gatherings and Ora and I which I hope you meet hope she is here before you leave hum actually went
around the Midwest talking about it. And I remember this one town we were in Minnesota were there
were no black people in the entire town and we went in the middle of the winter [laughs] but his one
family in that town was very strong all around and there were white family in the south African
divestment issue, and I remember we took my nephews god knows only why 10 and 11 with us in this
road trip in the snow to Minnesota. And, I got there thinking what in hell world m I doing here [laughs]
you know and we were speaking to this Lutheran church group and ahhh it was the most amazing
experience this people were so open because they also were people who would struggle and they knew
what it meant you know for money for the big farm and the corporation to come and take their land, so
the whole idea that indigenes people you know they were just fighting to get their land back fighting to
get back what was theirs and just fighting for fairness. They that came so easily and these people who I
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
fine then I can go anywhere to talk about this so [laughs] so we went around the Midwest and gave
presentations and we had hum, you know a lot of stories to share and mostly just listen to people share
their stories and try to make the connection so--

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

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

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

CG: uhhmmm, really close, I mean it was it was I think part of why I wanted so be active is because people
I admired so much were the four front, but not like they were out there untouchable we were all sitting
around making signs together you know [laughing.] Everybody was cooking the food, so we could have
pot lot dinners for neighborhood and invited people to come and learn about it, and hey were they were these people that were very smart and very committed and, but still very down to earth and very funny and you know they care about people care about—family. So it became almost like an extended family of people so hum and that is what I learned to that as activists you stru you are out there struggling for something but that doesn’t mean that you have to be this sort of hard people that cuz I met [hand] some people like that you know like it’s all about the politics is all about this you know be out there 10 o’clock on the line with your signs you know and not even with a hello good morning how are you [laughs] you know is like no it really is about and I learn this all over the years is about relationships that Is how you keep this kind of struggles together hum cuz the issues are going to be there, but the people would have to come first and so and if cant care about each other how can we care about people in south Africa so--

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

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

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

CG: umm naww very carefully [both laugh] you know now the meetings were at night, on the weekends, umm you know if there was a call like to come and you know be out cuz there was going to be a press conference about something, you know if you had to be in court that morning you might leave court and go to the press conference, you know you just sort of but sweater over your suit have your suit on your car and you just go and go back to court for the next case so [laughing][background beeping sound] ok so umm just no it was very much about feeling that you know the work I was doing was significant and very important to me and this was to end try to really balanced and I mean try to really have my work 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 flexibility to be out and about we definitely used that flexibility to the max so [laughing]

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

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

GS: and how do you feel about Reagan’s administration policies? CG: jeje {laughing} GS: towards South Africa?

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

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

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

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

CG: umm I mean there were certainly people who thought that you know that we were crazy we were stupid I mean we were out in front of the umm the state of Illinois building and we were doing the whole demonstration around you South Africa steel steals our jobs and I remember this man came up to me and I don’t know if he was I think he maybe [beep sound] be south African umm he was a white guy and he said “if you all, what did he said If you people really knew what you were talking about you’ll be thanking us for bringing our steel here because umm you know and he didn’t said nigger what did he said don’t know if he said “blackies” whatever he said he goes the blackies and even though when it was predominate white fox working on the steel mills people the blackies and the stupid ass and I can’t think of the actual words he used white fox that out there in south east Chicago they don’t know any shit about making steel so it wasn’t necessary directly totally to me I mean it was the issue but I was just a pol that he said you know you just put that dam sign down cuz you don’t know a dam thing what you talking about so it was more him directly about the issue I don’t think that I had a lot of discrimination per said directly at me but I do know that umm that the church that I was active at that time umm was
really active was a Lutheran church and the higher ups in the church really came to the minister cuz they felt like he was being to vocal and it was gonna drag criticism of some of the whites and our church was all blacks but some of the white Lutheran churches were really a pal that they were talking this issue wrong and like if you wanna take it wrong then you need to be quiet about it because we don’t want to lose white parishioners so you know it came up like that but I don’t think I experience any direct discrimination because –so

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

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

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

CG: the good thing is that I don’t think that I went out with anybody who also wasn’t an activist [both laughing] it’s like what you don’t care bout this, what you don’t know bout that, what, what , what , I was like pruu forget that so and my you know there was a history activism in my family so although you know my parent s worried about me personally but they knew it was the right thing to do they holding was you have to be you know don’t be in the front line so stay in the middle somewhere [laughing] you know but and because of the work I did at that time and because of all most of attorneys that I work with even if they were not active in it they supported it umm and sort of the larger legal administration for legal assistance so I felt like I was really fortunate because I was in a space [beep] where doing this work was something that people applauded umm and although I think sometimes I sort of step out of
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 it as giving up evening and weekends I saw it as being with people who I loved and care about and doing the work that I thought it was really really important so in that sense I was fortunate cuz all sort of seemed to be part of the same thing you know

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

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

CG: uhhhh umm GS: like what you remember

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

GS: umm

CG: or just either way?

GS: yeah

CG: uhh cuz I don’t even remember any companies either way umm I’m trying to think umm cuz I remember demonstrating out in south in front of different people’s businesses we will have to come back to that one let me make a little note and I have to come back I’m trying to think about specific companies but I can tell you this that the attitude was just like this is about economics you all trying da you know to really impact our business and this is just funding about money we are not against black people in South Africa that is just not what are we against this is about money and the black people don’t operate the money so we are not really concern about them umm and I remember you know just learning about all the issues in the mines and all the issues you know all the different things that are going over people there and really learning just how umm careless not just careless but how oppression works you know that people could just defy it in all kinds of different ways umm and basically people just did not car they just didn’t care it was bout money first umm and protecting their investments and protecting the people over there who were making sure that their investments were you know were continually you know going to be good and you know and the people be dam I mean the people were no consequence at all and then that umm to see people sort of to hear people all about you getting their way of their money when I mean kids were being shot at the streets you know mothers being shot on the streets and we had you know lots of times of people gone over and met with you know Mandela and with other people on combat and just shoot stories about it was horrible it was worse than horrible it was totally inhumane and yet the the people who how do I say it I just umm I don’t see how you balance that I could see them saying I could see them saying I’m concerned bout my investments but I understand this so I’m trying to figured out but no it was like pssh and universities umm the university the college I went to had some funds in South Africa and I remember us as you know college students you know challenging them and then going back as alumna and challenged them and they did divest their money umm so they were a lot of small victories there were umm and it was also really good when um you know people that were famous stood up and said I mean cuz it was good it was good when
people stood up and join but it was good in when they joined in a way that they were one of the people
and I guess that is what I think that I really appreciated about that movement is that it wasn’t led by a
bunch of mockery mugs or you know Hollywood starts but if they were in it they were in it as you know
a real one strong voice as part of you know so like a everyday folks around raising their voices but I’ll try
to think about names but right now I’m in total blank

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

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

GS: So you went to South Africa before umm Nelson Mandela’s CG: No I went to South Africa in umm I
went in 1996 when was Mandela released like in 90 umm GS: 90 CG: 90 what? GS: umm 90 yeah CG: it
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
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
us that we went there were 12 students 12 young people and 3 adults and we went into the town and
actually did work umm with the youth with the umm different youth groups hum I’m sort of thinking
that cuz that was thinking of some of the conversations we had that seem like that there were a lot of
conversations I mean the students that we took were really excited about umm you know Nelson
Mandela and they were really proud about you know who he was and what we did what we run into
was that a lot of the color students who were really angry about Nelson Mandela and the ANC and the
fact that umm they felt that the the the ANC was waging only to benefit umm black South Africans and
not color South Africans and I hadn’t expected that and the students hadn’t either and umm but there
were a number people there that umm not a whole a lot but enough to raised as an issue for us that
everybody seem to see their selves as part of the all the people that looked black didn’t see themselves
as part of that struggle which was a real surprise you know cuz I mean one little black girl stud up and
said my “family is very angry with the ANC in South Africa because they are not the color people lose their jobs when the black they over and there would just be a different kind of oppression” and I was like what? That would never been something that you know it was just like a new level of sort of new ones but not just a new one but sot of a level of perspective that we had you know we were not aware of before we went to visit so

GS: so you went to um give presentations or

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

GS: ok so back to Mandela what were your thoughts about Mandela’s release?
CG: ohh I mean like everybody else in the world will the people I knew In the world I mean my whole family sit around the TV and watch that man walk out of the prison and I was just tears flow OMG it was 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 know that that he had, that he had mant, and for me maintain his principals that he used his time in prison as a time to still be connected to the movement but also to educate people that came in to the prison so the prison community became were there was a lot of you know popular education and political education that was done but also just the man that that man have not been broken down after all the shit he gone thru umm and just stud for something you know stood for not just overcome the odds personality but you know being truly committed to his people than to that whole political agenda and umm never never lose his side of that I mean but just also the kindness and raggedness that he simplified how you do that how you laid in prison how you know stuff that is literally wrong and you not only deal with that but then you bec you still are force to be rock and wood that was just something else that man was something is still something else he really is so

GS: so where were you? Did you went

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

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

CG: umm

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

Yeah and I actually tool a group of students umm when I was working in Access living at Northwestern umm law school and we took we did a research project a group of students actually did and so we went back and actually met people that were part of it and actually got a chance to umm sit in in one of the hearings umm I thought I mean I really I really try to listen because my own opinion I mean became you know is like what are the options here and I don’t think I didn’t know nearly as much about umm you knew how you transition from from being you know truly oppressed to moving towards position being moving towards and running the government and running in society but not becoming the oppressive you know like how you do that and how do you how do you not forget but used all that pain and that experience as a way as lessons to learn from and to move forward I I was just you know here here from my manage point her a lot of my friends and activists are easy to say Oh no! they should be
no, they just need those white folks they just need to be locked up, they need to be put away but I don’t
even believe that kind of punishment necessarily but for that group of people is like Truth of
Reconciliation seemed like an really easy way out and I was initially pretty angry about it and then but
then you know sort of begin to sort of research listen to the stories of people who were going thru that
process of mother that were just wanted to know you know what did happened to my son you know
what did happened to my daughter, you know where are my children’s bodies, you know why did you
do that? Umm and having to sort to sort of face the person and hear that umm but I remember umm
sitting in one of the hearings and it was umm I can’t remember his name one of Mandela’s attorneys I
have to get you his name but anyways his umm, there’ve been a number of attacks to his family and one
pretty significant attack on his daughter and he the the guy who was one of South African police officer
umm was the person had identify himself as the person who what do you call it who been assigned to
umm execute the target I mean this is the way this man talk anyway so there was there’s been a number
of attack to his daughter what I can’t think of his name a number of attempts to his attorney also and in
each case he sat down with the person you know who I’ve tried to kill him and they talked about it and
each case apart of this went he purpose the person apologized listen it was my job, it was wrong but
you know I was really caught up in and you know how do we save our society and I couldn’t even began
to see the other side but now you know after going through this governmental transitions and just
meaning to talk to other people I know that what I did was wrong and I’m asking you to support my
amnesty petition .and so what was his name anyway he’ll come and he sat in each case he got and sat
before the truth and reconciliation at the hearing and had supported those people amnesty petition this
here where we were at this man and this south African police officer OMG he must it’ve been about 6
feet and 8 inches tall and weighted about 350pounds he was bout the biggest person I’ve ever seen in
my life and he came in he was in handcuffs and he was like in a green army uniform and he sat on the
table and he didn’t made eye contact with anybody I mean but it wasn’t like he was afraid to look in our
way it was like he had this very mean look but he would pass you you know he wouldn’t look at you and
umm he so they went thru the evidence and the evidence was and they ask him one question and hey
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
translate it but he was so arrogant and so angry and so umm sort of self-rages you know and then umm
he talked about how there was a meeting of the ANC youth and that what is his name? his daughter, the
daughter was at the meeting that he told to execute the target and that is what he attempted to do and
because he missed because he didn’t fulfill his job or assignment that he was punished and he said and
people asked him how he felt about it and he said I wish I had fulfill my assignment and so when it came
time for so his group and south African attorneys would sit in one side of the table and Jesus Christ it
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
table and then his daughter talked about the terror of having those bullets these guns to fire to the
window of the youthly office you know so feeling the bullet wise by her hair and she is down an
everybody is crying hysterical and you know they thought that they were surrounded they h=just
thought they were just going to die and she said you know by god’s grace she didn’t died and you know
and then when he started talking her father umm nelsons Mandela’s attorney started talking about it he
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
line I’m actively saying what is wrong I’m actively going against t you but my family my children Oh no!
and the fact that still thinking still whishing that you have been able to execute her there is no way I can
support amnesty and he said and I’ve been really keep trying you know to sort of work to this and my
family he said but no no you don’t need to there shouldn’t be no amnesty for you and but the that was
after we went by their house I was actually with a women who knew the family and that is why I had the
chance to do this and you know they just cried and they cried because you know it felt like there is so
many people in the south Africa that still they really do wish they were all dead they really do and they
real gave them the chance again would come and actually in front of his house and it wasn’t this
fabulous house you know it was a nice house but there was a little guard stand were man I mean
seriously there were still under 24 hour guard because they didn’t know if at any point of time even at
this point they might not be killed elsewhere we live but I never forget him he said but it was a price the
price we had to pay and he said I’ll never pay that price again he said because there was no other way to
try to get the file and this was not this was not a black south African this was a color south African and
so it was interesting that a lot of color in south Africa who were and there were so many whites and
there were so many people that were part of this movement umm who really put their life and family’s
life on the line you know because there was you know person struggle so yeah anyway why I can’t
remember his name it’ll come, he died recently he was a ..Ok I’m ohhlll ok
GS: ok so what were some of the differences that you saw in Chicago anti-apartheid movement and
South Africa?
Umm there were some people in Chicago who I really felt that were willing to put their life on the line
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
of close and personal with people who were willing to die so see to make sure other people were free
you know umm and that had a huge impact I didn’t do directly it wasn’t so much directly umm that I
you know person to person was able to see what was going on in south Africa I heard about it we listen
we saw videos we umm you know were able to hear the experiences of people that most the people
that went over and came back as or share I think that was obviously a level of intensity in south Africa
that it was differently that the intensity in Chicago but I would say that there was some people in
Chicago who felt the struggle and lived that struggle and would able to commit as much as the south
African were and that as something I mean something that I had as a young person that seen before
umm and there is something I don’t think I ever forget cuz is how you’re willing to put your life on the
line for you know at what point that you said you know I’m up for this no matter what happens and that
was something that really gave me pause and it was a whole different prospective one thing is to march
and one thing is to say maybe they will tear gas maybe they’ll arrest us to say maybe they’ll kill us and
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
a person’s journey until where am I willing to put my life for you know so
GS: so how has been active in the movement change your life? This is more like reflection
CG: yeah yeah I mean I think more are the long life friends that I have umm who are willing who see the
south Africa struggle as part as the American’s struggle as part of you know the struggle of people you
know in eastern Europe, middle east and other parts of the world so I think what is done for me is it’s
because those people had been so committed to all these struggles that I realized that you know
globally there is not that much difference you know the black and brown people around the world are
Oppressed that that oppression it manifest different ways yet that what happens to the people is pretty much the same it may look different it may sound different but pretty much is the same and that I can’t just be about eh civil rights about African American s you know I can’t that is not good enough because that is not really what is about what it really is about fundamentally about people’s right to live a life with their free of oppression where they have the right to really whatever the potentials are there should have the right t strive for that and achieve that and that money and also realized to that you can’t talk about any of that unless you talk about economics umm and lot of time people won’t talk about social stuff while you talk bout retribution well or you talk about you know changing the status quote ummm I don’t know about that that what people would go different umm I don’t know bout give up so I don’t know if I want to equalize things and realizing that because I do firmly believe that that not meant that I need to live led a life that reflects that and so you as an attorney part I always knew that the reason why you became an attorney were going to do with some issues that were going on in the south side I just got inspires I got I got pissed off I got really really mad there was this little town call mount bay you Mississippi and I was teaching at a college level Georgia Salem College and we took students down to this little town and to look at the health clinics that were there because a lot of them were going to be working on the south I wanted them to be expose to some of these towns that will gonna be working at and we got down there and the whole town turn down they look like little town but they had a little marching band and came put and welcome the students ...college and afterwards he went to show us the town in a little bus and they had this new housing beautiful brick houses and a since somebody said what is that little house in the back and so sort of his face turned down and he said it’s a those are our houses were like our houses those houses are like the bathroom right but this are new houses an the says yeah yeah we got matching brick houses what would you have an outside toilet where you got new construction he said because the city’s fathers and the main city wouldn’t was bout 20 25 miles away something like that maybe not quite that far they wouldn’t allowed to lease on the land so they could stand their water pipes so they could hook it up so they could have main they were still using well water and were still using our houses to go to the bathroom we are talking about a brick house like anyone you would see in Chicago and I was horrified like what and he said listen and I said and then because we saw all these little kids with these hugest belly’s I mean huge swollen stomachs you know we already heard that part of it it was cuz they didn’t had good water and you know we thought it was just a well water issue well it was but it was also that the toilets with all the flies and all 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 attorney us that come here and du it their cases and I remember getting on that bus thinking so all my public health background wouldn’t change this situation at all that whole think about all we need id a few good lawyers I thought shit so I got back to Atlanta and I was with a friend of mine who lives in Chicago and she said will maybe that is you should do! I mean law oh hell no!! I would never ever lawyers are terrible, lawyers are dishonest, lawyers are this should think about it and so that’s how ended up in law school but it just resonated with me that that same issue was part of the same issue of fairness and poverty and all that stuff that was the issue in South Africa that is the issue in you know in different parts of Mexico, in different parts of Latin America and just all over the world and you know so anyways so I guess the bottom line to that is simply that I think is giving me a much more than anything a much more of global perspective about oppression and about people’s rights and sort of a willingness...
to be active in a lot of different kinds of movements that I’m not necessary personally you know directly towards me so if that made any sense at all.

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

CG: umm I think I most proud of feeling like umm we stuck in it and then we won now winning has different [laughing] kinds of meanings right but you know sometime umm winning was giving them to stop using South Africa steel you know umm finding out that acting on that with a really strategic campaign having lots of different people get involved in that umm and get and stopping that you know I feel like winning was really getting the city getting the city work really hard the consular to pass a resolution bills that they cannot invest the city no longer invest in South Africa you know umm but also I felt really proud about the fact that it was a looong it was not a short campaign you know it last it over a period of years and people stay in it you know it was like lots of people came and when but people stayed in it and it was young people, older people, and disable people and people from different you races and ethnicities and it’s like all of us we were very very committed and concern bout the same thing and also the other issues we talked about, debated about we weren’t weren’t ignoring so that the diversity but the diversity became the strength and a lot of people oh diversity isn’t important and what I learned is diversity is essential and is not some kind of token effort for us to make is that I can’t necessary reach to the same community you can reach to you know I don’t ne I don’t speak Spanish and lots of things I can’t do but if we are working on it together and you use your strengths and I used my strengths and shit that is a whole a lot more of people we can impact and then [phone singing] if we bring other people with more skills and so diversity became not just sort of at turn to toss around is like that is the only way the only way and so when people talk about you know struggles between black and brown people blacks and Latinos and other folks it’s like we need to get to the there’s so much common 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 unless we joined forces so I think I most proud of understanding that and then try that in the other work that I do in justice and the work that I’ve done in different places really trying to build a bridge around that stuff and recognizing that is essential and fundamental and not just some nice thing for people to do so

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

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

GS: so why youth? Why working with youth?

CG: you mean like now? GS: yes

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

GS: awesome [laughing]

GS: so what’s your main goal now?

CG: My main goal now. is about peacemaking umm tomorrow is what we call we call a city wide of
healing and there are going to be peacemaking circles probably bout 75 peacemaking circles every
community thru much around the city and some just young people at school and some parents in the
neighborhood some of the churches some of community organizations some of businesses umm they
are going to be in the detention center. Judges are involved, police are involved you know kids who
been lock up are involved I mean is just everybody but I mean creating spaces for people that want to
build relationships to feel supportive to be able to share the pain that everybody is going thru all the
violence in the city and to figured out ways to address umm that are really community driven umm that
are community supportive that come that their solutions and ideas comes from the people that has
most impact of what’s going on and what we do now is a lot of training people to create this be able to
facilitate peacemaking servos but umm tomorrow is really special because is about us stepping back as
an organization I mean we are going to be out here helping to do it but that will give all those people a
chance to stand up and we sort of but the word out and invited a lot of people to come to a big circle
and talk about it umm about 45 people should up and said oh hell yeah my church need these my kids
need this the school needs this so I go ok fine you all decide what you want to do just let us know we create a website but that information out to if you need people to co facilitate we will help you find them if you need if you trying to figure out what's your circle to do in the circle we put information out there you know we are going to share everybody's information of everybody else so people would have a way to support each other but the bottom line is you do what you think is going to be best in your community but we all this one day we are going to be laminating the power for peacemaking so as a way to address relationships and communities to addressed safety and communities and also to figured out we as people that live in this neighborhoods are willing to come together and address the violence so I want really for that to continue support people on doing that we figured that somewhere between I don’t know between like maybe 570 people will be sitting with us tomorrow and that’s what I want to do that and really so support community capacity with their own issues umm and also to create safe communities for youth and adults but also o make sure that this systems Chicago public schools and more importantly for me well not more important but the system I want to work the most is the juvenile court system umm most of these kids, half of them don’t even go thru that system at all and so how do we create systems in the neighborhoods where people can sit together with kids that committed offences and victims and actually hear what is going on and let these kids be responsible and pick up for what is going ion but let’s not slam them let’s not push them away lets embrace them you know what you think you need to do to make up for the harming cause what does the victim need umm and very often is the same thing people needs to be heard people need to knew that people are heard what happened they need people to witness and acknowledge what happened to them and a lot of the harm that has cost a lot of the times victims are not asking for necessary restitution or whatever what it is I know that is not going to happen again and you are not going to hurt me again tell me what you did it let me try to understand who you are and if we are neighbors let’s build a relationship that is going to be a healthy one so not only that you are not going to hurt me but you are going to help protect me or at least this way other people form hurting me to or this happens all the time and some neighborhoods that are actually setting up this centers where people can go if he is around the neighborhood and some schools are setting this peace rooms so if things happen and instead of calling the police and spelled them they are going to try to addressed them thru the school so I’ve been supporting those kind of so that is what I want to do so.

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

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

GS: awww thanks!

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

GS: ok that be great thank you!