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Langsdale Library
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The University of Baltimore is launching a two-year investigation called “Baltimore’68: Riots and Rebirth,” a project centered around the events that followed the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and their effects on the development of our city. UB administration and faculty members in the law school and in the undergraduate departments of history and community studies are planning a series of projects and events to commemorate the 40th anniversary of this pivotal event. We are currently working with the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History, The Jewish Museum of Maryland, Maryland Public Television and the Enoch Pratt Free Libraries to pursue funding for projects that may include conferences, a website and a library traveling exhibit.

Your potential participation in an oral history project would contribute to the very foundation of this project – the memories of Baltimoreans who lived through the riots and saw the changes that came about in response to them. Your life story can fill in the limited knowledge we learn from newspaper accounts and the television footage.

If you choose to participate in the project you would be interviewed by students from the University of Baltimore. They will ask you questions, but your memories will determine the direction of the interviews.

If you agree to serve as an oral history informant in this project, you will meet with a team of undergraduate students. The students will take a still photograph of you. In addition, if you have a photo of yourself in or around 1968, we would greatly appreciate it if we could borrow it, scan it, and return it. We would reserve the rights to reproduce those photos and use them on the website, conferences, exhibit or publications.

The students may conduct the interviews at a location of your choice, or you may meet them at the University of Baltimore Langsdale Library for your interviews. During the interviews, your recollections will be recorded in two forms: audio and video. The students will be responsible for operating the equipment. You can expect the interviews to last for a minimum of 30 minutes each.

Sometimes talking about events that occurred decades ago will unearth forgotten memories. Undoubtedly, some of those remembrances will be negative. We greatly appreciate your willingness to take the risk of exploring a potentially painful past so that your life experiences will be recorded.

After the interviews the students will transcribe your oral history. They will provide you with a copy of the transcription for your review before the transcription is published. The transcription, video and audio records will be archived in the Langsdale Library Special Collections and will be accessible to the public. Your name will be attached to these documents. The University of Baltimore may use your image and/or your words in any future documentaries, exhibits, conferences or publications. Participants in the oral history project agree to waive their confidentiality.

If at any time you are uncomfortable with participation in the study, you are free to drop out. Participation is strictly voluntary. While your participation is requested and highly valued, you are free to decide whether or not to continue participation at all times. You may decline to have your name published with your reminiscences

If you have any questions about this project, please feel free to contact me at 410-837-5296. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth M. Nix, Ph.D.
Visiting Assistant Professor
History and Community Studies
The University of Baltimore

I have read and understand the information provided above, and consent to participate in the study. I have also been given a copy of the informed consent for my records.

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7 Feb '08

Interview with Jewell Chambers
February 7, 2008; University of Baltimore
Interviewers: Duane Howard and John Schwallenberg
Transcribers: Duane Howard and Nora Feinstein

Schwallenberg: For the record could you state your full name?

Chambers: My name is Jewell Chambers.

Schwallenberg: Thank you. And what was your situation life-wise in 1968?

Chambers: At the time we're speaking of, in 1968, I was a reporter for *The Baltimore Afro American News Paper*. I had started work in September and I would leave *The Afro* in May and go to the U.S. Office of Education, the Federal Office of Education. But, if one only works one year, I couldn't have picked a better year in which to be a reporter. Because even though I was new, the staff at *The Afro* was so small that you don't stay called a "cub [reporter]" until they're sure you can read and write.

Schwallenberg: All right. About how old were you at this time?

Chambers: Twenty-five. Twenty-five

Schwallenberg: And where did you...Where did you live and work...well I know where you worked, but where did you live at the time?

Chambers: I was living in Northwest Baltimore. I lived on Mt. Holly Street, just off of Garrison Boulevard, so I was in the Garrison Boulevard, you know, Garrison [Boulevard] and Liberty Heights area.

Schwallenberg: During that time where did you do most of your shopping?

Chambers: In 1968, I shopped downtown. My favorite store was Hutzler's because... This is an interesting sidebar, I hadn't thought about that. I had had... yeah, I had had a charge account at Hutzler's for about four years. So, Hutzler's was my favorite store, in fact... Because at that point the department stores were good; [for example, stores at] Mondawmin, places like... I had a godmother who liked good clothes so I knew about some things, like The French Shop.

Schwallerberg: Where was The French Shop located?

Chambers: On Charles Street.

Schwallerberg: Oh, okay.

Chambers: On Charles Street, right next door to...about three blocks down from you [University of Baltimore]. Yeah, there were a number of special clothing stores and most of those stores had been...had accepted—we were “colored” then—colored clients. Because they realized who came in there was going to be just as [makes a gesture signifying wealth/class] and had money.

Schwallerberg: So by that time most of the restrictions and things like that had broken down on shopping and things for black folks?

Chambers: Oh yeah, because...

Schwallerberg: Mmmhmm.

Chambers: See I had been, actually I was arrested in 1960 for sitting-in at the beginning of...that's the first year of... and [I] was a part of C.I.G., Civic Interest Group and then [I] had been a part at Morgan [State University] in 1962 when Morgan took over North...the Northwood Shopping Center because here was a school and here was this shopping center; you had Hochschild's [Hochschild Kohn's department store] that had a tea room in which you couldn't

eat, you had a theater that ran “B” films [second run films], the Northwood Theater, to which you couldn’t go. So we stocked...we stacked the jails and desegregated the place and that was a totally student movement. And I had been involved in all of that prior to ‘68.

Schwallerberg: Now where did you do grocery shopping, at the “mom and pop” stores or...?

Chambers: No. I was still living home so I didn’t do grocery shopping. But I had to pick my mother up because I was driving and basically she shopped at the food markets at Mondawmin. At that time there were two of them, there was a Pantry Pride and a Food Fair on either side. It’s one of the pieces they are rebuilding. One was the old Stop, Shop & Save that they tore out. The other one was where any number of variety stores were—but they were two food markets. And... She still went downtown to Lexington Market and Mr. Leonard Lentz, Lentz, to get her meats.

Schwallerberg: Before the riots or civil disturbances happened what kinds of interactions did you have with people of other races than your own?

Chambers: Well, because I was working for a newspaper I interacted professionally, you know I would inter.... I might have to interview or get stories from somebody white as well as somebody black even though I was working for a black newspaper. Socially? No. I had two [white] friends from school—I’m a Morgan graduate—and had two friends, one who went on to get his...no Steve was gone by then. He was in school. And then another friend, who had actually been my roommate, had moved on to...was at the University of Delaware so I didn’t see them that much, so basically not that much.

Schwallerberg: So your roommate was white...or...?

Chambers: Uh huh [nods ‘yes’].

Schwallerberg: Oh, okay.

Chambers: In 1962 at Morgan State University...

Howard: At Morgan...wow...

Chambers: She was the only homegrown white living in the dorm. And the reason that I have to say “homegrown” is there were another group of white students, about three, but they were Greek. I mean, Greek from the Aegean.

Schwallerberg: Wow.

Chambers: Interesting little bits, right?

Schwallerberg: Yeah, very interesting...Prior to...Well...When you did the...sit-ins and things of that nature were...did white people partake in those sit-ins very much?

Chambers: To some extent, it depended. Actually, though, if you look at it...when you think about it with the first group, when I was working with the Civic Interest Group, one of our biggest supporters was a guy named Augie Meier, whom you’d probably know as Dr. August Meier, who has written several seminal books on black-white relationships. I think he just recently died, August Meier. But at that time he was a professor of history at Morgan State University, which wasn’t Morgan State University it was Morgan State College because it doesn’t become a university until ’75 or ’76.

Schwallerberg: Did he spell it [his last name] M-A-Y...?

Chambers: M-E-I...E-I.

Schwallerberg: Okay.

Chambers: M-E-I-E-R.

Scwallenberg: Okay. M-E-I-E-R. Okay.

Chambers: Mmhhh.

Schwallenberg: How would you describe the racial mood in the city before all this went on, before the riots and all the...civil disturbances?

Chambers: Well, if you think about it, the idea of riot by 1968 was not new. Because by this time you had gone through... [riots in] Detroit [1967 and] Watts [1965]. I would say that things were... Tense is not the word that I want to use. I think a better thing was the idea was that things are changing, times they are a changing. It's a cliché but I think that's where it is; that if we keep on going we are changing the status [of racial relations]. One thing that...so, as I said, any number of the overt measures of segregation had been lifted. I.e. shopping, i.e. movies, i.e. to some extent, restaurants. I mean, restaurants are very important. There were several...one I can't... I have to think to remember the name, that closed rather than integrate. But that was earlier, there were others...The larger restaurants, the more expensive ones, would take your money. Now, I remember I was with a friend who was a reporter and we were over on the East Side in Bohoville. Do you know what I mean by Bohoville? Do I need to describe Bohoville? It was where you had a number of people from Bohemia, white folks of Eastern Europe persuasion—Highlandtown and that neighborhood. And we got run out of a couple of places, small, where we went in to get a little drink and...a sandwich or a hot...you know, that kind of thing. But these... You were definitely not wanted. And [my friend] would grab me [and say], "Come on Jewell. Shut your mouth before we both get hit upside the head." But we were being...we were seeing how far we could go.

Howard: Sure. Testing the boundaries.

Chambers: Yeah.

Schwallerberg: Did you...Did you ever go out in the county for any restaurants, was it different out there or the same?

Chambers: At that point the county was the county and the city was the city. And the city was, in 1968, the city, Baltimore City, was the heart of the region. If you think about it at that point, what was our population? One point five [million people]?

Schwallerberg: It was definitely close to a million, at least.

Chambers: One point two? No, it would have had to have been more than a million because...ten years ago it was nine hundred and sixty [thousand], so it would have been well over a million.

Schwallerberg: Right, right.

Chambers: So, Baltimore was really the heart of the area. Towson was there but you only went to Towson if you had people... In other words, it was no need to go to the county. Museums? The city. Movies? The city. Theaters such as we had? City. Symphony? City. So that if you looked at it for all of those kinds of cultural things—restaurants? City. You know, you're going to come into the city. So, the city was really the center far more than the county.

Schwallerberg: What was the mood right around the time of the riots, like a month, the weeks prior to? How would you describe the racial mood?

Chambers: Well, let me see what else you had going on in 1968...Um...Oh, see, you had to remember 1968 was an election year and in 1968 you are beginning to get the growth of...you're just beginning to get the growth of the anti-war demonstrations. I don't think at the time of King's assassination that Lyndon Johnson had said he would not run again. I don't think, yes he had. I'm not sure, because somewhere in there Johnson's going to say he's not running. Bobby [Kennedy] begins to run. Bobby...He [Johnson] must have said it because King was assassinated

in April and Bobby is assassinated in May, Bobby Kennedy.

Schwallerberg: Mmmhmm.

Howard: Okay.

Chambers: So those two come together. So, you have a lot of people who are interested in [the election], “Hey, Hey, Hey Bobby Kennedy, Bobby Kennedy, Bobby Kennedy.” And as I said, things were to my, you know, to my memory things were...not calm, but things were changing. Everything was stirred up anyhow. But, to say that things were stirred up does not say that it’s tense and tight. What you would...what you’d been dealing with particularly since the Voter Registration Act [1965] has been just this thing of, “Hey, we’re getting a vote.” You’re beginning to see people elected. This [1968 Presidential election] is really going to be the big election because you see civil... Voting Rights Act is ‘65, so this is... didn’t make too much of a difference in ‘66, but ‘68— this is going to be it. So you’re interested in not only what happening; who’s running in Baltimore, but who’s going to run throughout the South.

Schwallerberg: What do you remember about the assassination of Dr. King?

Chambers: What do you mean what do I remember? Where was I?

Schwallerberg: Take your...Take us back to that time.

Chambers: All right, it was a...the assassination...

Howard: Where were you when you heard it?

Chambers: [I was] in the food store. I’m trying... Let me go back...One, two, three...Sunday, Saturday, Friday, Thursday... it was Thursday, it was a Thursday. And by the way I did not go reading off old things and all of that before I came here.

Howard: Sure.

Chambers: Because I wanted to deal from what I remembered.

Howard: Yes.

Chambers: I had a girlfriend who was sick, no let me start at the beginning. As a reporter, my week was Sunday to Thursday and normally I would have had enough time so that by the time I finished my stories...because basically we put... the paper went to bed on Thursday because it came out on Friday.

Howard: Mmhmm.

Chambers: I was off and I had a girlfriend who was sick and I had taken her mother shopping— food shopping— at Mondawmin [Mall]. And the notice went through that King had been shot. And of course I went home to listen to the radio and listen to the television and... find out what had happened. I'm trying to remember if I had already heard his "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech or if they begin to run that as for the first time—whatever. That's when they came out...when they began to play the [speech], "I've been to the mountaintop, I may not be there with you..." And of course that just sent cold chills down you and then all the visuals, the images of them out pointing...

Howard: The balcony...

Chambers: On the balcony, yeah. And then the question was, you know, "What's going to happen?" And that was Thursday and by Friday there was a riot in D.C. And the reason that I am very well aware of the fact that there was a riot in D.C.—remember I said that I went to work for the Office of Education. *The Afro* didn't pay that well.

Howard: Mmhmm.

Chambers: ...And I wanted to go back into education. So...I had taken an exam and was a management intern. I did not realize people didn't pass that test too readily. So...

Howard: Tough test?

Chambers: Huh?

Howard: Was it was a tough test?

Chambers: Yeah it's one of those where you take the standard test to enter the Federal Government at a Grade Five, then this is an option and if you pass it then they call you in for interviews and if you pass that...Then you went in...Well, I never realized I was walking black gold. Because the federal government is looking for qualified blacks and here is somebody who just came through the test without points, no affirmative action, you know, hey they kind of had to figure out I was black because they didn't have pictures. But you could figure that out because I was graduated from Morgan State. So anyhow, to make a long story short, I was interviewing on Fridays at various and sundry agencies. And on this Friday I had two interviews, one at the...one at the Office of Education, which is in Southwest. The second one was at USIA, which was where I really wanted to go, which was up on the 1700 block of Pennsylvania Avenue.

Well, when Washington [D.C.] started burning, they let... the [Federal] Government said, "Go out, dismissed." And even though they were only half as many cars on the road as they are now, it was an absolute gridlock. And what... 'Cause I walked from 400 Maryland Avenue which is basically around Seventh [Avenue] and D [Street] up to seventeen hundred block of Pennsylvania Avenue; I walked up. And it was astonishing because all of these people moving, cars tied up, and in D.C. intersections jam very easily— it was silent. What was so surprising was the silence 'cause what everybody wanted to do was get the hell out of Dodge. So when I got up...when I got up there, I got greeted with great disdain, "What did I come up there for, didn't I know the agency was closed? Didn't I know D.C. was in riot station?" Yes, but I had an

interview, so... Well there was nobody there, okay. So now I have to walk back to Fourth [Street] & Independence [Avenue] Southwest. I wouldn't... You know it's funny, I had no trouble doing that walk. I put my sneakers back on and walked. When I come down Seventh Street I can look up Seventh Street—Seventh, this is Seventh [Street] Northwest— So I go up, I walked I walked a long ways up Seventh Street and there were burning buildings. And then the fire truck came up; they had chicken wire. Over at that point some fire engines were open where they... Yeah, they had chicken wire over... And I very quickly found out why they had chicken wire over it. 'Cause I walked all the way up around... up to about H [Avenue] and further. 'Cause they were throwing rocks and bottles and it suddenly dawned on me, "Whoops, let me go stand on the other side of the street, to stand with the throwers rather than the throwees."

So I went over and... oh, then I found a telephone call... phone, and tried to call *The Washington Afro* and told them, "Hey I'm in the middle of all this and I've got a ... did you..." [And they said,] "Sorry, we've gone to bed." All right. So I got back in my car and came on back to Baltimore. Baltimore was fairly quiet, fairly quiet. But evidently they were beginning to make moves as to what they were going to do. Saturday the trouble started and they started burning. First reports were on Gay Street in East Baltimore and then it's moving. And it's also moving west, this is Saturday. And at some point I'm off. A co-worker of mine, Roger Nisley (sp?), was covering City Desk and he wanted me to come down and cover the desk so he could go out in the street. And when I talked to my editor, editor said, "Stay home and leave that white boy in the building." Oh, Nisley (sp?) was white. He does not need to be running the street. So then the announcement comes through: ...The police aren't dealing with it. The National Guard is... forming. And either Saturday or Sunday, we were under martial law, which we'd be under for the next week or so. So the first thing... General George Gelston... and on Sunday when I went to work they had been told the first thing we had to do was to report to Fifth Regiment Armory and get press passes. And in the meantime, the situation intensified.

And that's when they called in the regular Army out of... I'm not going to try and give you a number... but the eighty-something [regiment] out of Fort Benning—eighty-fifth, eighty-seventh—eight-fifth or eighty seventh.

Schwallenberg: Eighty-second?

Chambers: Eighty-something. So they were up and they bivouacked them in Druid Hill Park. So that's my initial reaction. But my initial reaction was, "Oh my God, what's about to happen?" Because then by the next day, you knew that other places were going off. It was as though if you hadn't rioted before, this is the last slap... in the face. And then you began to hear...it didn't take long to begin to hear the whole bunch of conspiracy theories because...One of them was the federal government... that the killing of King was from the Federal Government, CIA, you know, take your choice. But the whole thing, and this I picked up you know, picked up really, really fast, because as long as King was fighting for civil rights and just let us desegregate this place that was all right. But he had definitely taken an anti-Vietnam [stance]. He was one of the first blacks to take an anti-Vietnam stance. And, you know, people focused on his being in Tennessee, in Memphis [at the time of his death]. But they forget that what he was really working on was a Poor People's March that was going to bring god-zillion poor people, not just black poor people, but poor people to the grounds of Washington—to that whole strip between the Capitol and the Monument. So all of this is going around and when you are working for a newspaper, you know, you hear more, you see more, you find more little pieces of...well, I don't mean little pieces of paper but you see more and you hear more. So that was all a part of the background.

Schwallerberg: What were your personal thoughts about the conspiracies and things like that?

Chambers: Oh at that point, oh I love conspiracy...I love conspiracy theories because I was well into the whole thing about John F. Kennedy's death having been a conspiracy. My favorite was J. Edgar Hoover. 'Cause anything, I could put J. Edgar Hoover, he's a bad man. He was a really, really bad man. So anything, that, you know... So, did I...Did I think it was a conspiracy? Uh huh... because they captured him [James Earl Ray, King's assassin] too fast. And to the day he died, you know, he never divulged his...James Earl Ray, I'm talking about, never divulged, really, what had truly motivated him and how he had done it. As I say, I like conspiracy theories.

Schwallerberg: Did a lot of people think things similar to you, people you had associated with?

Chambers: Over time or then [in 1968]?

Schwallerberg: Then, especially.

Chambers: Well, it was all brewing then. It's going to...it would brew more in the coming months. See, because, remember you don't have too much longer before Bobby Kennedy is, the next month Bobby Kennedy is killed and then you can spill theories all over the place because there's all this, all of this. But that...no. That is not on April [1968], but that is certainly going to be one of the aftermaths of it.

Schwallerberg: Now, you had said that you watched a little on television about the riots and things, how would you classify the coverage? Was it balanced, was it exploitive, how would you classify the coverage?

Chambers: 1968... Well, you have to remember that I'm a child of Walter Cronkite and Walter Cronkite began with news videos. So from the beginnings of the Civil Rights [movement] on, all through begin with Montgomery [Bus Boycott, 1955-1965]. In Montgomery... There was press coverage of Montgomery. Certainly what's been happening in the...with the Civil Rights, all of that's a part of a visual history. So riots, yes. If you are going to show a riot you are going to show burning buildings and you are going to show people stealing and running. At that particular point in time I didn't...I didn't evaluate it. Because people made more than one [argument] that proved true. That's really what it was. So when I saw it, I didn't say that this was one sided. I didn't say that this was trying to put black people in a bad point. 'Cause I think that most people...there's a line that says, "If it bleeds, it leads," and that is...that's not new. So if it bleeds it leads, if it burns it leads and if I'm visual, burning is a strong visual image. So I did not particularly look at it as necessarily biased in one way or the other. I think that in later when we look at it in a perspective, the bias comes in because you say, "Well, I can always find people...pictures of black people doing bad, and if they are not black then they're Latino now." But I don't find the pictures of people doing good. But then again good... is going to be below the fold of [the front page of] a newspaper. It's not going to be up here.

Schwallerberg: What was your impressions of the neighborhoods that were affected by the disturbances?

Chambers: What do you mean what were my impressions?

Schwallerberg: Like, was it...was there a lot of damage, physical damage? How were people acting?

Chambers: It depends on where you were. Day one, Sunday, we went down and we got our credentials. I was the only woman on City Desk. So I went home and...and this seems funny but that, back in the day, I wore dresses and stockings to work everyday. So I went home and I changed my clothes. And I even remember what I had on. I had on corduroy pants. I had on penny loafers, wool socks, and a multi-striped sweater, and a shirt—a button-down shirt. You know, Oxford cloth. It was... I was together.

Howard: Right.

Chambers: The thing about that was my press [pass] would fit in my back pocket. My notebook would fit in my back pocket and I could carry my pass and my keys and I didn't have to have a pocketbook, so I'm good to go everywhere.

And I just started riding around wherever I heard I went. I saw one place down on Division Street. And they had broken into a warehouse and I was seeing some of the same things now that I had seen in D.C. You know, people taking stuff. And then when you watch people carry stuff some of it is really, really funny. I mean...because... remember, television sets came in...eight-foot [boxes]. Somebody...getting somebody to help him put in on their shoulders so he can go up the street with an eight-foot television. And then here are these two ladies and each of them, they had... this tussle but then they decided there was one for each. So they go up with armchairs, you know, you just stand there and you watch because the thing was, "I'm going to get something."

One of the most interesting vignettes though— this one has stuck with me forever—was I was up on Thomas Avenue just below North [Avenue] but between North [Avenue] and Baker [Street], the black section—middle, lower-middle class. And on one corner there is a corner bar and they had already trashed it. So I'm in there and there's this guy... black guy telling people what's here and what you can take but there's nothing here unless you want variation on...name a real...Thunderbird. The good stuff is gone.

Howard: Right, top shelf.

Chambers: And then he's sitting there and he's saying, "And don't be lighting...don't be lighting no matches, don't be lighting no matches 'cause I live upstairs. So take whatever is here, only thing here is cheap...but don't be lighting." And I remember the words, "Don't be lighting no matches 'cause I live upstairs." And he probably saved it...they didn't light any matches.

Then I went across the street and that was a corner store; it was a mom and pop store. It had been...well, they had done a job: there were corn flakes and flour all over the floor, you know, stuff all over the floor. But what got me, these...these...this is the thing that sticks with me—there was this older woman and she was doing her shopping. And she was very careful in what she wanted and what got me was that she got...you could buy butter if you...in the mom and pop stores to this day. You do not have to buy a pound of butter, you know, you can buy a stick. And she fished around and somewhere found two sticks of margarine—two sticks, not a whole pound. But she was doing her shopping and was taking exactly what she would have shopped for. It was weird. At one point I [said], "Don't you want a big box of cereal?" [And the woman responded,] "Oh no, dear." She didn't want a big box of cereal. And then I went along...oh yeah. 'Cause I was told, "Observe, but don't get too close when you're going to get yourself hurt." And these guys had broken into the back of a larger store on Fulton Avenue. I'm all...I'm still in West Baltimore. I stayed out of East Baltimore because East Baltimore had kind of subsided, but that's where they had beaten up some people. The key is nobody got killed. And...they had gone in the back and they had gone in the meat locker and the guy had a Cadillac. And they are loading sides of meat...it was somebody's Cadillac! And they pulled them out fast and once they had gotten the meat and stuff, they stood there and yelled, "Y'all can go in now."

And then other people went in. I'm standing in the middle of it. 'Cause if you are in the middle of 'em, nobody's going to say anything to you. And I didn't have go in but it was quite, it was interesting.

Schwallerberg: Do you feel like there...with the crowds doing these things there was animosity towards the store owners, or they were just trying to get what they could get, or?

Chambers: All of the above. All of the above. If you looked at them, and if you...my experiences are going to be primarily West Side. Any human experience, any human reason for...that is good for the getting worked. There are those who had animosity toward the food bank. I'm sure there was somebody who said that if I do it then I could get rid of my "book," you know. Do you know what my "book" is? That's...so many of these...Most of...At this point in time you also have to remember that this is before the Koreans, so most of the shopkeepers were Jews. And they tended to have a better relationship with the community around them than the Koreans ever did. Ever did. I think a part of it...because originally...originally... most of them had been there forever. Originally they had started out living there. The other thing was, and I think this is very important, most of the places, they spoke English. And coming from Europe, customs were not as weird and strange as it would be being Korean. So, and then, you know, people getting over you, people, you know, you just...getting over you, call somebody a bad name, that may be racist. But on the other hand you get to know [them]. So this is your community. I can also make money by running a book. Most of them ran the books honestly. And because one of the other things I saw, I had grown up on 2400 block of Francis Street, which is where Francis Street dead-ends into Whitelock [Street] right off of North Avenue. So there's a grocery store there and I can tell some stories about being a kid in that store because his grandmother used to work and she would always scream at you. So you'd come in and turn your soda bottles out, take your two cents, come in the front door, and go out the side door on Whitelock Street. The old soda things were big things with ice in them and then the bottles were beside it. So you would come in the front door and go out the back door and you'd take two more bottles. So then tomorrow you'd come back and you'd get another nickel. Kids are bad.

But that store went up in flames. I believe they saw the drugstore on the corner of North

[Avenue] and Druid Hill [Avenue] go up. There were lots of places burned; lots of places burned and most of them did not reopen. So, did they burn them out of spite? I don't know, I don't...I don't know. I have a hard time sorting out what I knew then and what I know now. I think it's the same kind of thing, the same kind of mood...and this is an opposition that I think is a meaningful one that made white people lynch black people, that crowd mentality once it gets going was the same thing that made black people burn. It's that crowd mentality which is a very human reaction, not necessarily a positive one, but a very human reaction. So once we get going...uh huh. You know, that's why you have "Soul Brother," all the signs. And basically if you were in the neighborhood, you knew who the black storeowners were. Nobody...you didn't need a sign to tell 'em but, you know... But I think a lot of it was just that mentality, "Once it's done let's toss the matches." I don't think people stopped to think, "How are we reacting?" You know, "I'm gonna get the brother back." I don't know. I don't think you ever...I don't think people in a group stopped to think...stopped to think that much. I think if it's one thing that characterizes group reactions, it's a total lack of thought.

Schwallenberg: Could you...thirty years from now people are going to be researching and maybe using this for research. Could you describe briefly what the "book" was? When you were talking about a "book," that the storeowners kept a "book." Could you just describe that?

Chambers: Oh sure, yeah. The book. It was a little notebook and it was a credit—it was basically the ability to buy food on credit. People got paid by the week. You asked an earlier question that I think is very pertinent. You asked, "Where did I shop?" And I said my mother shopped. There were lots of people who didn't. We're moving more and more into bigger food stores but that depended on your money. Now, if your money is short you may go here [to a supermarket] when you have money. When you run short you're going to go down the street to John's, to Milton's, and [say], "I need a half a pound of hamburger." My favorite is a quarter pound of ham bologna and a quarter pound of cheese and a half a loaf of bread. 'Cause at that time loaves of bread came in cellophane...almost cellophane, with a string in the middle. 'Cause they used to bake them down on... right where I lived, right where I went to school—the corner of Laurens [Street] and Carey [Street].

Howard: I can smell it now.

Chambers: Yes. Yes. Custer's [Bakery]? Was it Custer's?

Howard: Sure.

Chambers: Yeah. 'Cause you had the Custer's...the bread bakery on that side and the cake bakery right next to my school, because I went to school at [P.S.] 112. I mean— I'm Baltimore born.

Howard: Sure.

Chambers: And you could buy half a loaf of bread, put it on your book...if you want fifteen, twenty. Then at the end of the week [you'd ask], "How much do I owe you?" Pay you off or pay what I'm gonna pay. And the book ran and it kept people afloat, so that was "the book." And as I said, most of them were honest with the book and most of the people paid it because they realized it worked to your advantage. But if I owe you five dollars and if your book gets burned up—and I'm sure that they are... just like the woman who was shopping. I am sure that when that store burned up, there were people and when he [the owner/shopkeeper] showed up...there were some people who when they found him went in and paid him his money. As much as there were people who went like, stuffed their fingers in their nose.

So if you look at it thirty years from now, even if you look at it thirty years ago, what you still need to realize is at that time Baltimore was a segregated town. And the segregation having grown up in it; was there. It wasn't in your face every minute of the day. You lived in a colored neighborhood, you went to a colored school, you had colored teachers, you went to a colored church; the pastor was colored, everybody else in that school, in that church. So when you went downtown, you had to deal with white people and how they reacted again ran the gamut. I can remember going downtown to shop. In some stores people were very nasty and in other stores they were very pleasant. But it was...I think it didn't hit you in the face the way it would have if

when I...when you go to school you gotta deal with white teachers calling you a “nigger.” Saying, “Uh uh [makes a disapproving sound].” Our teachers said, “Be the best you can: this is what you must do and what you can do.”

And Baltimore was kind of weird too. In that it did not spend the same for black education, colored education as it did [for whites], but it didn’t...it wasn’t Alabama. So that if programs came to the schools there would be one somewhere in some black schools, and you might have four of them in white schools. Case in point: when I tell people I went to pre-kindergarten they are amazed. And when I tell them I went to pre-kindergarten in a public school they are dumbfounded ‘cause this is the forties. But what it was is they had started...the city had started pre-kindergartens so that women could go to work during the war. And one of those programs was at [P.S.] 112, so that we went...we started school [at] age three, all day. ‘Cause then when you went to kindergarten, you didn’t know what to do with yourself ‘cause now you’re in school for a half day. But you’ve already spent two years in a school program, in a segregated school, in a segregated city south of the Mason-Dixon Line.

Howard: An advantage...

Chambers: So it’s an advantage...I’m not, I am in no ways apologizing—you had nasty bus drivers, you did not see black people. You didn’t see black people driving busses. Milk was delivered by either Cloverland Dairy or Greenspring [Dairy]; there were no black milkmen. Bread...believe it or not, you could get bread from Rice’s Bakery and the Louisiana Ring [Cake] delivered [by] whites. Even the Good Humor man was white, you know?

Howard: Okay.

Chambers: So that’s what’s all around you but you...I don’t... I can’t remember my mother arguing against that. She argued more about what was happening at Social Security where she worked. But even with that the thirty years she was...in the thirty years she was there, she sure saw people move from clerks to higher positions.

Howard: Let me backtrack for a minute.

Chambers: I'm sorry.

Howard: You're okay! You're fine. You're doing great! I just wanted to get back to the media aspect that you talked about earlier. Could you describe the assignment process of how the editors handed out the assignments during the riots...?

Chambers: To me?

Howard: ...As a reporter. I mean...you said... You mentioned that you didn't go in right away and that...

Chambers: Oh no, because I was off.

Howard: Okay.

Chambers: That was my day off.

Howard: So when the riots started there was no call in to say, "Come on in and let's cover the stories."

Chambers: Uh uh.

Howard: And you said that you...later on went in to do the roving...

Chambers: When I went in...on Sunday. We went in on Sunday, went down, got my...I'm trying to think roughly how many reporters there would have been from *The Afro*, two or three. I'll tell you who you need to interview. You know George Collins?

Howard: George? I think he's on the list. I believe the name is on the list.

Chambers: He should be.

Howard: Okay.

Chambers: ...If he isn't... 'Cause he was City Editor [of *The Afro*].

Howard: Okay.

Chambers: And he can tell you more about how he assigned people and what he assigned. I got to rove but that may have been because I was the least...

Howard: Experience-wise.

Chambers: Yeah.

Howard: Okay.

Chambers: But I think George can handle that better than I can 'cause I don't really know.

Howard: Okay. That's fine. I just wanted to...I didn't want to miss that point. And also I was wondering, as you were covering the stories, how did you...well, could you describe you're not being able to get caught up in what was going on and report the action as you saw it?

Chambers: Well, no. I could write. I wrote but... Number one, you don't want to write something that somebody is going to come back and sue the paper for. So you wrote... I wish I had gotten to the morgue so I could have...I just wanted...I had started a... As I said, I only worked one year. I had started a scrapbook but somehow I stopped it. It got to be old hat at Christmas after I played Mrs. Santa to "Rockin' Robin." And I didn't have it. And I wanted to go

back to the morgue, and I may still do that. I may go back to the morgue to see if I can pull what I did write.

Howard: Okay. I just wanted to cover that aspect of the media part.

Chambers: Yeah.

Howard: I didn't...

Chambers: Oh, no... But...

Howard: Because you have some...some access as a reporter that the regular public wouldn't have, so I was just wondering.

Chambers: Well, mine... mine was basically...I think that more than anything I was doing the "On-the-street" stuff rather than the, "What's the man saying and what's the governor saying?"

Howard: Right. Sure.

Chambers: I was doing the street. That's the... That's the bottom of the pile stuff. I was doing the street stuff.

Howard: And I also wanted to get a feel of *The Afro*'s way of reporting as opposed to the other reporters that we've heard about from the other papers. Was it different? Was it the same way you covered?

Chambers: The other thing that I can say about that is that basically everybody *The Afro* had on the street was black and everybody *The [Baltimore] Sun* and *The News American* had on the street was white.

Howard: Okay. Okay.

Chambers: Because when I had applied for the job in September, you have to remember that I don't...I think that *The Sun*...one of those had just announced that they would hire a Negro. This is 1968.

Howard: That's important.

Chambers: Yeah, because I had an interview. I remember that I had an interview. You know, you want a job as a reporter, call the newspaper and say I want a job as a reporter. So I called and I had two interviews. I had, you know, *The Afro* was first and what they had me do was call...I had to call... Who'd I call? Gloria Richardson. And write a story. And that was on Tuesday and the story ran [on Sunday]. So I called Miss Larson, told her she'd hired me or she owed me some money for writing.

Howard: Either one, okay.

Chambers: She told me I had a job and basically that I was a smart ass.

Schwallerberg: Okay.

Chambers: I didn't disagree with her because that wasn't the first time that somebody had told me that, nor was it going to be the last.

Howard: [*Laughter*] But it got the results.

Chambers: Sometimes it worked, sometimes it didn't. But I can't... I think that you would need to talk to somebody like... I'm trying to think... Where Nisley (sp?) is. Roger Nisley is not dead. He's still around; I don't know whether he's still in Baltimore. I would start with George Collins 'cause George has a wonderful memory.

Schwallenberg: Channel Two. Susan White from Channel Two was a woman reporter for Channel Two. I don't know if you remember. She said Channel Two had a lot of trepidation about sending a woman out into the [impacted areas]... during the riot times. Did you get that sense at all?

Chambers: Oh yeah, George—remember George [Collins]? Well, George had sent this fellow Al out with me at first and then I kind of lost him because I was happy wandering around on my own. Because as long as I was in West Baltimore...it's not that I knew anybody, you know, knew people...But I was secure and I ended up...Because at one point, I ran into some...I mean, I have these memories my memories are just being twenty-five years old and being on the streets.

Howard: Right.

Chambers: And I ran into a black homicide detective whom I knew. And he told me, "Oh, there was a murder over on...." Somebody had just killed somebody over on Preston Street. So I go zipping over there. It was a lot easier then, there was no...you know, you didn't have police lines when somebody killed somebody. The lady was in the house. I walked right in the house with all this blood in the stairway, all this blood, she standing there—little lady. [I asked,] "Why did you kill him?" [And she said,] "He hit me once too often."

Howard: This wasn't during the riots?

Chambers: Mmmhmm.

Howard: Really?

Chambers: So life went on.

Howard: Oh, okay.

Chambers: Life went on. But then, that was Sunday, then by Monday and Tuesday... 'Cause then it really tapered off. By Tuesday we are all but done. But the next day was funny because George [Collins] said that he did not want me running the streets. So I had to go down to...I could go down to the West Baltimore Command Post and figure out what was going on there. Well, the West Baltimore Command Post was down at Lafayette Market on Pennsylvania Avenue. Oh yeah! Somewhere in there, one of those days, I went to court. 'Cause that was interesting because a part...one of the issues was who could arrest people. And so now you've got... This is when the soldiers, you know, the soldiers were out, well how could the soldiers arrest people? Or could they not arrest them? And if... They were supposed to, I believe, hand them over to a policeman to be arrested. A whole bunch of folks got turned in. And I think they had set up court in the basement of the Municipal Building. And it was... on one hand, simply because of the people, it was an absolute madhouse 'cause they were bringing in people down by school bus-full. So you had a madhouse. And people had [identification] papers; people didn't have papers, and this... The interesting thing is I think the majority of the people, unless they were there for actually stealing, if they were just there for violation of curfew they were in and out the door. I mean, just in and out the door. If somebody said they were stealing and they hadn't been caught with the stuff on them and the police didn't have...they were in and out of the door. If they got caught, you know, then you were subject to a little more justice, heavy-handed justice or just justice, forget heavy-handed. But the basic thing was, I think that the courts were sensible and what you wanted to do was get people off the streets. So if you got 'em off, you got them out— by the time they walk home, busses aren't running and nobody can get 'em 'cause it's curfew they're going to have to walk home. Or you've done what you want to do, which is...which is sensible, which is [to] stop the possibility of something happening. Because the one thing I do remember is that Gelston very clearly said that he would not issue ammunition to the National Guard. Because by this time there had been incidences where National Guards would just kill people and he said that it wasn't going to happen in Baltimore.

So they didn't have any ammunition. In fact one of the scariest things that happened to me during that whole thing happened on Sunday night. 'Cause I was coming back home, as I said I lived on Mount Olive Street off Garrison Boulevard. Oh yes. And I drove a blue Mustang.

Howard: Mmm. Styling. [*Laughter*]

Chambers: Oh yeah! Oh yeah, I mean how do you think I can remember that I had on penny loafers and wool socks forty years later? Make no bones about it. But anyhow I'm coming up, came on up McCullough Street through the park. The fun thing about that was, and you gotta be kind of kiddie to do this and enjoy it. I ran every red light, you know. Just went...

Schwallenberg: Sure.

Chambers: ...Through. Got up to Walbrook Junction. Walbrook Junction was a little staging point for the National Guard. So I slowed down very nicely and here come these two little National Guard boys. They weren't... They weren't at all... You know, [they were] white. White.

Howard: Okay.

Chambers: And this one goes, "Why are you out?" So I tell him that I'm a reporter and he has something smart to say. 'Cause I don't think he had seen too many... you know, my thing is he's from the wilds of Baltimore County someplace. Oh, you know, he wants my identification. Well my identification is here. So I'm driving and so what do I have to do? Oh, the car has stopped but I have to go [gestures reaching into her back pocket to retrieve identification]. When I did this [repeats gesture], he jammed the bayonet in the window. Scared the absolute...out of me. And I think, I think he...what it is... was... and what I can now see in retrospect is you can see how people get shot so fast. Because when I went like this [gestures again], he figured I'm going for a weapon. What I'm doing is to go into my back pocket. But where he is he can't tell whether I'm going down into the seat. He doesn't have ammunition. So he jams the bayonet. Of course, he didn't try to cut me with it...he just...it's in front of me, scared me. I never did tell my mother that. And it's...and I'm stupid enough to get irate. I also know he didn't have any bullets, wasn't supposed to have any bullets, anyway. So I told him to get this... "Get that goddamned [thing] out of my face, I'm getting you identification." And, I think we were both scared of each other.

Howard: Sure.

Chambers: I was just loud. And [he said], “Well give it here.” So when he said, “Alright, are you really a reporter?” [And I said], “Uh-huh.” [He said], “Alright.” [In a high, girly voice] “Thank you, officer” [*Laughter*]. So then I went home. But you talk about somebody really peeing in their pants right then and there. ‘Cause ooh, that was scary. That was the scariest thing of the whole thing because that’s how people get killed.

Howard: Sure.

Chambers: That’s how people get killed.

Schwallerberg: Was the... Did you see the National Guard where you lived at all? Did they come up that far?

Chambers: No, I saw them at...as I said the National Guard...the nearest National Guard was at Walbrook Junction. Now, I am above Gwynns Falls, between Gwynns Falls and Liberty Heights. There may have been some up on Liberty Heights [Avenue]. But basically North Avenue was roughly [the border]... There were not, there was not too much in West Baltimore above North [Avenue]. It wasn’t anywhere above North Avenue.

Schwallerberg: What was the mood in your area that you lived of your neighbors and people around there, what were they thinking about what was going on?

Chambers: People are crazy, some people are crazy. They’re crazy. What’s going on? They got to...The older folks were all, you know, “Hey, you’re burning up where you have to live.” That hit in from adults a lot faster than from other people. But when you’re... you’re talking about the reaction to the riots? [People thought it was] wrong. This is wrong, this is not what you should do. This doesn’t prove anything, it just doesn’t prove anything. My grandmother [said], “Well, if

white people wanted to think we were crazy animals, there are some of us who are acting like it now.” So I think what you did was you got a range of responses. I can tell you what my downstairs neighbors said, I can tell you what my grandmother said. That’s a small but representative [group]...but it’s not that kind of thing as it’s a sample. I think many thought that it was wrong. It was wrong, you’re not proving anything and in the long run you are going to hurt yourself.

And the one thing you have to remember that during it all...is Bascom, Reverend [Marion] Bascom on your list? Have you talked to him?

Howard and Schwallenberg: Yes.

Chambers: You can’t do anything without talking to him because he can tell you stories and he was fantastically active. Tommy D’[Alesandro] was mayor, right? Tommy [D’Alesandro] III was mayor.

Howard: Yeah.

Chambers: Yeah. He was...Bascom and the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, but particularly Bascom. ‘Cause he had been there since [the picketing on July 4, 1963 at] Gwynn Oak [Park—which was a segregated amusement park in Baltimore] and you had the ministers out. Sidebar—which is one thing that I have noticed in forty years: the power of the church has diminished. And the big ministers, and you have to remember that Douglas [Memorial Community Church] is always... if you live in Baltimore, Douglas is a big, black church. Union [Baptist Church], Bethel [African Methodist Episcopal Church] were then far more interested in what was happening to their community than they were to building temples in their honor.

Howard: You anticipated our next questions.

Chambers: What?

Howard: About the growth and the change since then.

Chambers: Oh, go ahead.

Howard: You're okay! You're doing great!

Chambers: Well that's...that's one of the...the churches were the staging points. The first place was, you couldn't fire...They were firing-proof staging points for many reasons, the easiest one is ministers are basically economically independent. You can fire teachers, you can fire government workers, but you can't fire the minister. If his church doesn't support him he's got some other job somewhere else that's going to support him. But somewhere along the way some of the churches got tired and decided we need to go back and just deal with our middle-class folk. There's a question you haven't asked, and that's the...anything in there on class status among black folks in the riots.

Schwallerberg: You're free to elaborate.

Howard: Yes.

Chambers: Basically... Well, no. I'm just pulling that out 'cause it just came to my head.

Schwallerberg: Right.

Chambers: Am I talking too much?

Schwallerberg: No! No, no, no.

Howard: This is your story. You have the whole floor the whole time.

Chambers: Well, I can talk.

Howard: I mean, we have the parameters but if you want to fill in, that's great.

Chambers: Well, no...I'm thinking. Because these are some things I wish you'd bounce off of some other people. Because when I have the whole issue of class and what you have gotten me thinking about it when...you know...I'm putting pieces together about where did I live, where did I shop, you know that whole thing. That... I'm implicitly saying something about class.

I think that the question becomes, "Who rioted?" Well, I don't know, but my sense is... I'm not going to say that there weren't people who were out there getting their little "gimme." But that basically your middle class population—by whatever...whatever that means, see I'll leave that up for you to describe.

Howard: Sure, sure.

Chambers: ...[The black middle class] was not the basic rioter. Now, they may have been the ones to buy stuff because after the riots, stuff was selling. A half gallon of...1968, what was I drinking then? J&B, five bucks, 'cause somebody had gotten into a liquor and wanted to sell it. I didn't buy, if I hadn't been living with my mother I probably would have. [*Laughter*] But there was...there was something else that happened 'cause I had fun. The second night they made me go down, you know, I had to stay around there. So then I had...that's the night I had the one story I never wrote... 'cause I got tired of just sitting around so I went out with the police... which I wasn't supposed to... be in a cop car but I was. And then when somebody [came close, I] put the helmet on and slide down [in the seat], you know, put a riot helmet on and...so...

So, [I] just would say, "We're patrolling, I'm just going out on patrol in a police car." And then there was this group of sergeants from Fort Bragg and they are getting ready to go on patrol. And they're looking at this map. You know, because they're doing this with the map [makes gesture of turning something around] cause they don't know anything, and like I said, I didn't have anything to do. So I told them...which was true, that I had gone to school in that area because I went to [P.S.] 112, which was at Calhoun [Street] and Laurens Street...which meant I knew all...I had been there for like eighteen or sixteen years... 'cause I didn't...so I know the

whole area. So I go...I had nothing better to do than hop in the jeep and go out riding with three fully armed sergeants from Fort Bragg. And we are riding and they have...now they had men stationed on the corners. So as they went by, they had to pass out these dry packs of sandwiches and stuff. But we stopped in the liquor store and found some little bottles of wine... So, you when we passed by the sandwiches they didn't know about it. Half-pints [of wine]—not supposed to say that. But then...

Howard: Okay. [*Laughter*]

Chambers: It was the truth! So we were riding down Carey Street, the block of Carey [Street] between Preston [Street] and...Laurens [Street]. Three story houses... and it was weird, 'cause all the lights [were on] on the bottom [floors], you could see lights on the third floor. And this... somebody yells out, "You all right, sister? Have they arrested you?" So I said, "No, no brother. I'm fine. I'm fine. I'm with them voluntarily." I said, "Lord..." But it was a really... That was, you know...that was fun. That was fun.

Schwallerberg: How did your life change after this? [How did your] life and your activities [change] after the events?

Chambers: I changed... Well, there's this huge change because as I said I was interviewing for a job. And in May of 1968 I went to work for the Office of Education. So that change was in the work, anyhow. So it...but the change was not...was neither caused by nor directly related to the riots.

Schwallerberg: Did the riots change your life in any way... the...afterward... the aftermath of the riots...your relationships with other races, anything like that, that you can trace from that [the riots]?

Chambers: No. My life changed because when I went to Washington, when I became a management intern... In my little class at the U.S. Office of Education, I was the only female and

I was the only black. Moving to D.C., even though it was only thirty miles down the road, a lot of my friends were people I had met from work, people around my own age, so a lot of my friends... I had a large number of white friends as well as a large number of black friends from people that I had known. The fascinating thing, though, is that they did not necessarily go together and I could have fun with both. So most of the changes that occurred... Of course, you know, we talked about it and we got into arguments about what it had meant as a whole, the riots. Whether they were good, whether they were bad... Often...you know... My point always was... I think it was both. It was bad because there were poor...particularly when you looked at D.C., Baltimore didn't burn as badly as D.C. There were a few pieces in D.C. that were twenty years before they got back on their feet. As I said, the Baltimore [riot] was less destructive and you had a city and a state government that were more proactive in terms of your rebirth and rebuilding.

Schwallenberg: Did you... There was a time right after the riots that [Governor Spiro T.] Agnew addressed the leadership in the black community. Were you...did you hear anything about that, did you cover that at all?

Chambers: No. That was... I think that's late May or June [of 1968]. I was gone [from the staff of *The Afro*]. 'Cause I remember, after May, I'm not there. But he was disdainful of everybody and he had no reason to be disdainful of everybody because black folks had put him in office. Or really Joseph [George] P. Mahoney had put him in office yelling, "Your home is your castle, [protect it]." [Mahoney was Democratic candidate for Governor of Maryland in 1966]. Because there had not been a Republican Governor since Theodore McKeldin [1951-1959] and there would not be another one until [Robert] Ehrlich. And if Kathleen Kennedy [Townsend, Democratic candidate for Governor of Maryland in 2002] hadn't been so stupid, there wouldn't have been Ehrlich

Schwallenberg: How do you think Baltimore itself has changed since the riots?

Chambers: I left in '68 and I didn't come back until '84, so sixteen years. Unfortunately, I think I have seen a lot more changes since I have been back, since '84, than happened during the years

that I was gone. And that's...that's not a good thing. I don't believe... there's one question that I ask all the time. If you recall, well, I taught and then I didn't want to teach. So I said I wanted to be a reporter which is how I got a job and I wrote. And then I went back into education at the federal level. And somewhere in that period of time, public schools lost the interest or the information to educate the children. Because... It's a damn shame. The kids can not, they don't read. I was teaching at Morgan, teaching English and Humanities. They can follow words, but the idea of reading, getting what it says, not just reading to find the answer, I don't know.

To my mind, the other thing is that if you look at it there are some changes that are what's happening in the country. One is the loss of a production base, manufacturing, whatever it is. Where do people work? 'Cause if you can't... If you don't work, what happens? I mean, you look at small things. Forty years ago there were two bakeries on that...in that block of Laurens Street that sold bread throughout the city, cakes throughout the city. Bread and cakes are still baked. Bread is local, bread and cakes are going to be local. They are not coming in from California. Where are the bakeries? Or are they so automated that they don't need people. That's a very, very small thing. But if you... That's part of the problem. Where do people work? How do we educate people? And then the worst thing, the absolute worst thing is this change in young people. That to be educated is to be white. And that goes against the grain of every black person who's probably over the age of forty, because education is a way to succeed and get ahead. It may make you better than me, it may not. But it will give you some skills.

But the idea that to be educated and to be smart is to be white is scary, is scary. And if you take it even further, I think you begin to get into issues of who benefited from the rebirth. What I begin to see now, as I'm looking from now is there's a group of Baltimoreans who are just as bad-off today as their grandparents...would they be their grandparents...forty years ago, in fairly absolute terms. Of course, you know, you may have more money but things are absolute. That's scary. Because they are now what the entire city is pretty much identified as being because if you look at Baltimore today, it's like there's the ghetto... And then there's Canton and then you've got a little pocket. The fascinating thing is, by and large, wherever there's a whole bunch of black folks, its all ghetto. But [Former Mayor] Kurt Schmoke lives in Ashburton and there's none of that... And that's scary. That's scary. We are prone, so prone to look at that. The police react accordingly. Police had to come to my house, I forgot why. First thing he said when he

walked in the door, “What a lovely house.” Because I live on Lafayette Avenue in the you know, you want me to give you the... “For the neighborhood, what a lovely house.” [So I said,] “Thank you.” But implicit in that statement was, “What’s it doing in this... I would never expect it in this neighborhood.” That is far more pleasant than we need to be. Any questions about, “What did you think? What did it [do]?”... We are too busy quantifying and drawing assumptions. Not necessarily...stereotypical in a sense but you really draw assumptions and we do it at all levels. And it’s scary, it’s really scary. And it doesn’t speak to an opportunity for goodwill, for positive. In a negative sense, I could say I would not be twenty-five today for all my money. That’s an awful indictment, isn’t it? Anything else about the riot?

Schwallenberg: Anything else that you can think of? Ok, well I thank you for your time today.

Chambers: You’re welcome.