

COPYRIGHT / USAGE

Material on this site may be quoted or reproduced for **personal and educational purposes** without prior permission, provided appropriate credit is given. Any commercial use of this material is prohibited without prior permission from The Special Collections Department - Langsdale Library, University of Baltimore. Commercial requests for use of the transcript or related documentation must be submitted in writing to the address below.

When crediting the use of portions from this site or materials within that are copyrighted by us please use the citation: *Used with permission of the University of Baltimore.*

If you have any requests or questions regarding the use of the transcript or supporting documents, please contact us:

Langsdale Library
Special Collections Department
1420 Maryland Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21201-5779
<http://archives.ubalt.edu>

University of Baltimore
1420 N. Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

Dear Mrs. Barbara Alfriend,

The University of Baltimore is launching a two-year investigation called "'68 Riots and Rebirth," a project centered around the events that followed the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 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 television documentary 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 who are currently taking "The New South and Civil Rights." Their work in this course will inform their 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 on three different occasions. On the first meeting, 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 in the documentary, 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.

The general topics for the three interviews will be:

- 1) Your life before 1968
- 2) Your experiences of the events of April 1968
- 3) What you see as changes that came about as a result of the riots

You will be interviewed three times to give you a chance to process the questions and make sure you are giving the fullest narrative possible. 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.

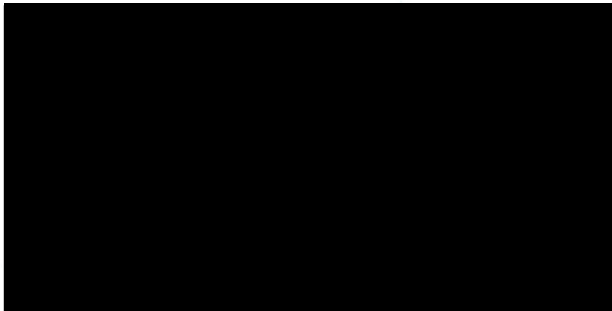
If at any time you are uncomfortable with participation in the study, you are free to drop out. Participation is strictly voluntary. While your participation is requested and highly valued, you are free to decide whether or not to continue participation at all times. You may decline to have your name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



12/8/06
Date

University of Baltimore
1420 N. Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

Dear Mr. Hunter Alfriend,

The University of Baltimore is launching a two-year investigation called "'68 Riots and Rebirth," a project centered around the events that followed the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 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 television documentary 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 who are currently taking "The New South and Civil Rights." Their work in this course will inform their 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 on three different occasions. On the first meeting, 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 in the documentary, 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.

The general topics for the three interviews will be:

- 1) Your life before 1968
- 2) Your experiences of the events of April 1968
- 3) What you see as changes that came about as a result of the riots

You will be interviewed three times to give you a chance to process the questions and make sure you are giving the fullest narrative possible. 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.

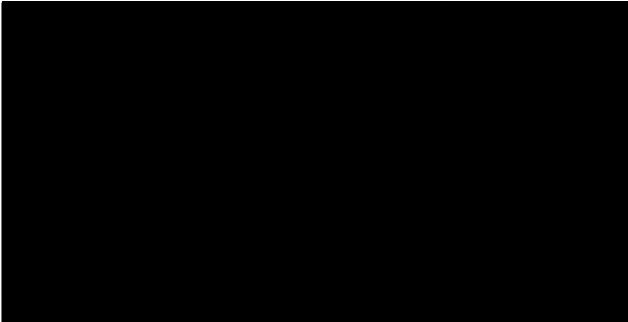
If at any time you are uncomfortable with participation in the study, you are free to drop out. Participation is strictly voluntary. While your participation is requested and highly valued, you are free to decide whether or not to continue participation at all times. You may decline to have your name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


Date 12/08/06

*Interview with Hunter and Barbara Alfriend
December 8, 2006; Roland Park
Interviewers: Paul Gonzalez and Christy Dehenzell
Transcriber: Nora Feinstein*

Gonzalez: Can you guys state your name for me?

Alfriend, B: Yes. I'm Barbara Alfriend.

Alfriend, H: And I'm Hunter Alfriend.

Gonzalez: All right, let me start off the interview by asking what area were you from at the time of the riots?

Alfriend, B: In Baltimore.

Gonzalez: What area in Baltimore?

Alfriend, B: What area? We were in Bolton Hill.

Gonzalez: Bolton Hill?

Alfriend, B: Inner city.

Gonzalez: All right, how old were you both when the riots took place?

Alfriend, B: I was thirty.

Alfriend, H: Which makes me thirty-one.

Gonzalez: And, what level of schooling did you and your parents have?

Alfriend, H: Well, my parents got out of high school. I did too... And I actually went to college for a while, until they wouldn't recognize my double major.

Alfriend, B: Which was blondes and beer. [*Laughter*]

Alfriend, H: "Blondes and beer!" I had a truck with that [bumper sticker].

Alfriend, B: I had only high school.

Gonzalez: What high school?

Alfriend, B: I was up in Buffalo, New York at that point.

Gonzalez: Oh, Buffalo, New York.

Alfriend, H: And I attended numerous schools—Poly [Baltimore Polytechnic Institute], City [Baltimore City College], Boys' Latin.

Gonzalez: Okay, Boys' Latin.

Alfriend, H: ... Numerous schools. I graduated from City.

Gonzalez: Okay. So you were [a student at] both public and private school?

Alfriend, H: Yeah.

Alfriend, B: I was only public.

Gonzalez: Only public? Okay... Were your schools both segregated at the time?

Alfriend, H: Yes.

Gonzalez: They were both segregated?

Alfriend, B: Yes.

Gonzalez: Okay. So it was all whites?

Alfriend, H: So it was 100 percent white.

Gonzalez: 100 percent white?

Alfriend, H: Yeah.

Gonzalez: Okay. What social class was in your neighborhood?

Alfriend, H: Mostly middle.

Gonzalez: It was middle class?

Alfriend, H: Mmhmm.

Gonzalez: You guys both lived in the same neighborhoods, kind of?

Alfriend, H: We lived there...virtually all our lives. So it's...well....

Alfriend, B: You did.

Alfriend, H: Yeah. We were married, got an apartment in Bolton Hill, then bought a small house, then bought a large house. We were living in the large house at the...in 1968.

Gonzalez: So you were married during the time of the riots? How many kids did you have?

Alfriend, H: Five.

Gonzalez: You had five kids by '68?

Alfriend, B: Mmhmm. And my...yeah, the youngest was born in '68.

Gonzalez: Youngest was born in '68. All right

Gonzalez: Was your neighborhood also segregated?
Was it 100 percent white or was it mixed?

Alfriend, H: It was...it was probably 99 percent white.

Gonzalez: Was it hard to find a job, locally?

Alfriend, B: No

Alfriend, H.: Well, not for me anyway.

Gonzalez: Not for you?

Alfriend, H: If I could find a job, anybody could.

Gonzalez: What kind of jobs were available in your neighborhood?

Alfriend, B: In the neighborhood, you said?

Alfriend, H: Virtually none because it...was not much commercial area in the neighborhood. You wound up, you know, working downtown for the most part.

Gonzalez: Where did you work in...? You worked in downtown?

Alfriend, H: Yes.

Gonzalez: Where were you working in '68?

Alfriend, H: Let's see. In '68, the Maryland Trust Company building, Calvert [Street] and Redwood [Street]. I was with a... an insurance brokerage called Poor, Bowen, Bartlett, and Kennedy.

Gonzalez: So you were an insurance broker?

Alfriend, H: Mmhmm.

Gonzalez: Okay... Did you notice any union strikes around the time of the riots?

Alfriend, H: No.

Gonzalez: There was none?

Alfriend, H: None that I was aware of.

Gonzalez: Okay. Was there a lot of class tension?

Alfriend, H: No, none that I was aware of.

Gonzalez: So you're saying in your community it was basically whites. Did you guys ever have any interaction with any other races?

Alfriend, H: Pretty much no...it was, it was a segregated situation. Blacks lived to the east, and to the west, and to the north. And my kids were...our kids were even going at that time to the public school in the area which would be impossible now...yeah.

Gonzalez: And the public school was segregated?

Alfriend, H: Yeah.

Gonzalez: What were your feelings about Martin Luther King?

Alfriend, H: I really didn't have any at the time. Bear in mind, I was working like a dog and raising five kids.

Alfriend, B: Five kids. I didn't either. We didn't have time to...

Alfriend, H: And of course, all you got to do is listen to one of his speeches...and you know, he seemed to us as quite an icon for America, really.

Gonzalez: Was he on the television or was he on the radio a lot?

Alfriend, H: I don't really remember.

Alfriend, B: The television.

Alfriend, H: Well, I've seen the televised speeches numerous times. But I don't know whether that was during the times of the riot or not... 'Cause they played it more and more after his death.

Alfriend, B: Mmhmm. Yes.

Gonzalez: Did you guys ever see on the news how people were reacting in Baltimore towards the preachings of Martin Luther King prior to his death?

Alfriend, H: I didn't.

Gonzalez: The news didn't cover any specific speak-outs of any kind in Baltimore?

Alfriend, H: No.

Gonzalez: Do you believe that a non-violent movement directed by King was beneficial to [the fight for] equal rights?

Alfriend, H: Sure.

Gonzalez: Kay.

Alfriend, H: Who would say no to that?

Gonzalez: Yeah. [*Laughter*]

Alfriend, H: What kind of paranoid psycho would [say no to that]?

Dehenzell: You never know.

Gonzalez: Can you describe your life in the neighborhood at the time of Martin Luther King's death?

Alfriend, H: Yeah, working like a dog, raising five kids.

Alfriend, B: But fun!

Alfriend, H: But fun. A lot of fun. Yeah...It was a very social neighborhood. There were lots of neighbors that we interacted with.

Alfriend, B: Lots of kids at that point.

Alfriend, H: Lots of kids. Yeah, you just kinda' kicked your kid out the front door—he found ten people to play with. It was a very middle class, very easy neighborhood to live in.

Gonzalez: Were you associated with or knew anyone that had any participation in the Civil Rights protests or in the marches?

Alfriend, H: Not then, now I do but not then.

Gonzalez: Okay. And you didn't personally participate in any movements?

Alfriend, H: No.

Alfriend, B: No.

Gonzalez: Did your neighborhood have any reaction to Martin Luther King's murder, negative or positive?

Alfriend, B: Not that we were aware of.

Alfriend, H: None that I recall. It just wasn't a big thing. Yes, the assassination of Kennedy's, of both Kennedy's, really... was, was really important, but the assassination of Martin Luther King was not necessarily so important.

Gonzalez: Yeah

Alfriend, H: ...In our minds, at that time.

Gonzalez: Exactly...

Alfriend, H: Our parents' reaction... We weren't living with them at the time. They were, I think, in Virginia... they're old reconstruction southerners. I wouldn't want to comment on their reaction. [*Laughter*]

Gonzalez: Yeah. Yeah. That wouldn't have been a nice one, probably.

Alfriend, B: No.

Alfriend, H: It was not cosmopolitan.

Gonzalez: How did you feel when the riots took place?

Alfriend, H: Scared.

Gonzalez: Did you let your children go outside at all?

Alfriend, B: There was a curfew.

Alfriend, H: Yeah.

Alfriend, B: So I'm...I'm sure they were out before the curfew 'cause you could only hold these characters in the house so long.

Gonzalez: Why did... What was the time...was it dark for the curfew? Did they make people come in at a certain time?

Alfriend, B: It would start about six [o'clock] I think.

Alfriend, H: Roughly dark. Dawn to dusk.

Gonzalez: And that was enforced by the police?

Alfriend, H: Yeah. Mmhmm.

Gonzalez: Now, what would happen...?

Alfriend, H: But they were awfully busy so it really wasn't enforced as of my...as I recall.

Alfriend, B: I don't either.

Gonzalez: So you couldn't go shopping?

Alfriend, H: Well, nothing was open...

Alfriend, B: No.

Gonzalez: Nothing was open?

Alfriend, H: Yeah.

Gonzalez: And...coming home from work there if...you wouldn't get pulled over just because you were out? It wasn't... you're saying, its not enforced that much?

Alfriend, H: I would try not to work that late... [*Laughter*]

Gonzalez: Yeah, in any way.

Alfriend, H: [I'd say,] "Gotta go, curfew!"

Alfriend, B: None of these late Friday night things.

Gonzalez: How did you feel about the current governor, Spiro T. Agnew and how did you... How did he react to the riots? That would be through television, I'm guessing?

Alfriend, H: My... Yeah, had to... It was through television, of course. He was the elected governor. He had been the Baltimore county chief executive. And I, I think, as I recall, he reacted pretty well. He went to the governor and requested that the National Guard, you know, be alerted.

Alfriend, B: They were.

Alfriend, H: And so forth. And lo and behold they were. That was some of the more interesting times when they were. But I don't, you know, Spiro had his problems with taking envelopes but...he, he acted very reasonably as a governor.

Gonzalez: Did you... Did you have any of the National Guard present or presence...

Alfriend, B: Yes.

Alfriend, H: You betcha. Around the house? Oh, you mean outside the house...

Gonzalez: Yeah.

Alfriend, B: In the neighborhood. Yes.

Alfriend, H: Yeah. Probably the first reaction we had to the troops was actually a... an encampment of the 82nd Airborne [Division] which posted a bunch of battalions on the 1400 block of John Street which is just one block below us.

Gonzalez: Right.

Alfriend, H: North of us. And these troops had...had spent a long time coming to Baltimore. God knows where they'd been. But they'd obviously been up for a long time. And the first thing I saw about them was a 2nd lieutenant who looked like he hadn't slept in a week, along with a battalion of guys having M16's pointing at the roofs. And the rumor had been that there were snipers on the roofs and so that was why they had been doing that, but the snipers on the roofs, if indeed they were, were not in this area at all. They were in the black areas, if they were. I don't even know whether they were or not. But I had to call this 2nd lieutenant down and say, "Hey look, this is a very quiet neighborhood and we're not having any problems... delighted you're here. But if you see anybody don't shoot 'em, its probably one of our friends." [*Laughter*]

Alfriend, B: Or neighbor! They always assumed it was a neighbor.

Alfriend, H: Yeah, and another kind of a funny incident—and that was of course the army itself, the 82nd Airborne [Division]—I was standing in John Street, you know, almost at curfew and this jeep roars around this corner of Lanvale [Street] into John Street and this guy says, "Hey Hunter!" And I said, "Who, who is that?" And it happened to be...

Alfriend, B: George.

Alfriend, H: Someone I'd joined the National Guard with, George Linthicum, who'd stayed in and become an officer. And he said, "You got any booze? You can't find any in this town!" [*Laughter*] Now bear in mind, I'd known George a long time. Um, bu he obviously hadn't had a drink in a long time.

Alfriend, B: Well, he probably wasn't...

Alfriend, H: I've forgotten whether we fed him or not.

Alfriend, B: I'm sure we did.

Alfriend, H: But, no. Other than that, no interaction with the troops.

Gonzalez: They had a ban on all sales of alcohol at that time, didn't they?

Alfriend, H: Oh, sure. Yeah, yeah. And if you were a liquor store operating in Baltimore, you put your chains up and you stood in front with a shotgun or went home.

Gonzalez: Did you witness a lot of people standing in front of the stores, protecting them... with guns?

Alfriend, H: No. Because there weren't that many...

Alfriend, B: Commercial...

Alfriend, H: ...Commercial establishments in Bolton Hill. The big complaint about living in the neighborhood is you gotta get in your car to go to the store. Um, I don't think that's a bad complaint. But there weren't that many. There was one liquor store on McMechen [Street] along with a supermarket. And one of the questions I was asked was, "Was that hurt in the riots?" And [Judge] Tom [Ward] my historian, who was here before

Alfriend, B: Yeah, Betsy [Nix] asked me that.

Alfriend, H: Yeah, Betsy asked us, too. My recollection is no, that there was no damage in the entire neighborhood. The only indication we had of the riots in Bolton Hill, which was probably... The same thing was true of Roland Park or Guilford, any of the white neighborhoods.

Alfriend, B: Oh, yeah.

Alfriend, H: ...Were cars that would drive through and they would...

Alfriend, B: Yelling, “You’re next!”

Alfriend, H: Yeah. “You’re next! We’re coming back tonight to get you!” And they would have black rags flying from the antennas and that was their mark and they were called “do-rags.” Don’t ask me why. But in any event, they would make threatening comments to us as they drove by. But they didn’t drive by slowly. Bear in mind, this is an all-white neighborhood. Now, had they stopped, they might well have run into a serious amount of trouble.

Gonzalez: What do you think the reasoning behind the riots was?

Alfriend, H: Two things: frustration and opportunity. Frustration, of course, that their leader, Martin Luther King had been assassinated and there had been other assassinations that had...didn’t do the equal rights movement any good. There...as I say, that the riots in Los Angeles [Watts, 1965] and that was a big, big deal. And so, we wanted to riot too. And opportunity is a big one. All the stores downtown...most...were completely gutted. Looters just, just took us all for a ride, I’ll tell you. It was a crowd mentality type of thing I think, but it’s also frustration.

Gonzalez: People believe if a lot of people are doing it they’re not gonna get caught, so they run inside.

Alfriend, H: No, they’re not going to get caught. ‘Cause they can look around and there’s 500 of their brothers taking...

Alfriend, B: Running off with a TV set.

Alfriend, H: You need one, too. Right?

Gonzalez: Were the National Guards trying to keep people from looting?

Alfriend, H: They say they were. I can't attest to it personally because, here again, I didn't travel around the city and our neighborhood relatively was quiet. I assume they did.

Alfriend, B: But from where we were in Bolton Hill, which is kind of the high-point of the city almost... We could go on our roof...

Alfriend, H: And we did!

Alfriend, B: And we did...and watched Greenmount Avenue, which is... I don't know how many blocks over. Ten maybe?

Alfriend, H: Well it's a whole... We watched, actually, the whole of South and East Baltimore 'cause it was at night. And it was really spectacular. I mean, sitting there and drinking a National Boh[emian]...only beer I drank in those days.

Alfriend, B: And still do.

Alfriend, H: It's still one of my favorites. And the fires would spring up, you know.

Alfriend, B: You could watch 'em from the roofs.

Alfriend, H: A mile, half-a-mile, two miles away, yeah. And then, black smoke. And it was scary.

Alfriend, B: It was scary.

Gonzalez: Were they setting businesses on fire or just couches and things in the streets?

Alfriend, H: No, they set the businesses on fire.

Alfriend, B: It was scary to watch.

Alfriend, H: Yeah.

Alfriend, B: And we did. It was our only time on the roof.

Gonzalez: Did you guys ever think it was gonna come to your neighborhood?

Alfriend, H: Didn't know.

Alfriend, B: The guy next door left and left... Left us with a gun [*Laughter*]. He and his family and kids packed up and Dick...

Alfriend, H: Dick brought us a... They packed up and went to Roland Park. He took off and left and handed me a shotgun and said, "Hunter you'll take care of the area right?"

Gonzalez: He wanted to protect his house value.

Alfriend, B: Right, Yes.

Alfriend, H: And indeed, I had heard and I asked my historian friend today whether or not it truly happened. But there was a judge, who lived in Bolton Hill, Tom Ward. Everybody knows Tom Ward, that he's sort of a radical...more conservative, I should say. And the rumor was that he had led a group of neighbors around the area armed and they were ready to strike a blow for civility or whatever. I don't know whether that was true or not. The rumor persists today, I'm sure.

Gonzalez: So you didn't actually participate in anything of that sort?

Alfriend, H: No.

Gonzalez: You stayed inside and protected your kids?

Alfriend, H: No, I'm a short guy. Not stupid

Gonzalez: Okay, so... Do you know what streets were affected the most?

Alfriend, H: Sure.

Alfriend, B: Greenmount Avenue.

Alfriend, H: Virtually any thoroughfare going through the black areas, and that would be Greenmount Avenue in the east...

Alfriend, B: Pennsylvania Avenue.

Alfriend, H: Pennsylvania Avenue...

Alfriend, B and H: ...In the west.

Alfriend, H: North? Nah. All kinds of things to the south, but basically surrounding Bolton Hill.

Gonzalez: And was it all publicized on the news, could you see it from...?

Alfriend, H: For the most part, yeah.

Gonzalez: Oh, okay.

Alfriend, B: People were watching the news. You know, I guess we did...

Alfriend, H: Did we have a television? Were we that rich?

Alfriend, B: We must have had one in the house, dear.

Gonzalez: What were neighbors' and people around the area's general reactions to the insertion of the military?

Alfriend, H: You got to remember that we were 100 percent white in the neighborhood. [We said,] "Welcome, brother." [*Laughter*]

Gonzalez: Was the military integrated or was it segregated at that time? The National Guard, that was all over?

Alfriend, H: I don't remember.

Alfriend, B: I don't either.

Alfriend, H: We didn't have that much interaction with them.

Alfriend, B: No, they were there that was, you know they were...

Alfriend, H: I don't remember.

Alfriend, B: Didn't they actually camp out in John Street, not just...or did they go down to the [park]?

Alfriend, H: No, they camped out on John [Street], 1400 block of John Street.

Alfriend, B: Yeah.

Gonzalez: Did your business that you were working at take any precautions to save the business from being ransacked at all? Even though you said it didn't really spread into this neighborhood, was the owner...?

Alfriend, H: Well, I didn't ...Didn't work in the neighborhood. I worked downtown, downtown—in the business section of downtown, not the department store section. The business section was not really affected very much and...

Alfriend, B: They [the rioters] went after the liquor stores and...

Alfriend, H: There were liquor stores and appliance stores...

Alfriend, B: ...The food stores.

Alfriend, H: Food stores, that kind of thing... Toy stores.

Gonzalez: Back to the opportunity.

Alfriend, B and H: Yeah.

Alfriend, H: Opportunity time. An insurance office? Nah.

Gonzalez: There's nothing in there that you'd want.

Alfriend, H: You want old policies?

Alfriend, B: You haven't got anything anybody would want.

Alfriend, H: You know, did the riots affect our business? The insurance business, you betcha!

Gonzalez: Did actually, did people that had businesses ever try to claim losses in insurance and were they granted?

Alfriend, H: Yeah. Sure.

Gonzalez: Did they get granted? 'Cause I heard a lot of people lost stuff overnight.

Alfriend, H: Ah, yeah...well those who had insurance [were granted their claims]. Many people just flat out didn't have it.

Gonzalez: Was that covered under normal insurance?

Alfriend, H: Yes. Mhmm.

Gonzalez: But that's not something extra that people needed to have?

Alfriend, H: Well certainly the insurance industry didn't recognize...

Gonzalez: Riots?

Alfriend, H: ...What was going out but their...their wording in their policies said, "riot and civil commotion."

Gonzalez: Oh, it is in there.

Alfriend, H: It still says that.

Gonzalez: So, basically if you did have it, it was completely 100 percent, you know?

Alfriend, H: If you didn't... If you didn't have insurance, you were in big trouble. And lots of folks didn't carry it. It was expensive, I remember. But those that did [have insurance] got reimbursed by the insurance carriers.

Gonzalez: All right.

Alfriend, H: 'Cause proving your loss is very, very difficult. You know, I mean, if your whole store is...is, you know, burned up to present inventory records to an insurance adjuster...

Alfriend, B: Right, you had six boxes of trains and four cars.

Gonzalez: Exactly.

Alfriend, B: You know...

Gonzalez: As a result of the clash from protestors and the military was there any serious injuries or death?

Alfriend, H: None that I'm aware of. There may have well been.

Gonzalez: There was probably injuries but there probably wasn't death.

Alfriend, H: Yeah, yeah. I don't recall any. No.

Gonzalez: Did the National Guard ever open fire?

Alfriend, H: No.

Gonzalez: Okay. How long did the riots last?

Alfriend, H: Not long. Three, four days.

Gonzalez: Three or four days. And that's the only time that there was ever violence? The other times it was just basically talks for rights?

Alfriend, H: Yeah. Mmhmm.

Dehenzell: But what we do remember, I mean, like...

Alfriend, H: Baltimore was really at the vanguard of civil rights...our school board here in Baltimore City, you know, heard the 1954 [U.S. Supreme Court] decision of Brown vs. Board of Education and pretty much immediately opened up the public schools to black children. No argument, no problem, just did it.

Gonzalez: Now your...your children were in public schools at that time?

Alfriend, H: They were.

Alfriend, B: Yeah. Yes.

Alfriend, H: And regretfully, we had to take 'em out which made my poor old butt work even harder.

Gonzalez: To pay for private school?

Alfriend, B: Yeah. Four in private school at once wasn't fun.

Alfriend, H: Yeah, they... They wound up going to private school. The little local school that we sent them to didn't have enough local children in it to really make it viable.

Alfriend, B: There were still people.

Alfriend, H: I say these are middle class people but a lot of ‘em sent their kids to...

Alfriend, B: Private school.

Alfriend, H: You know, Bryn Mawr [School for Girls], Roland Park [Country School], Gilman [School], and all those expensive private schools.

Gonzalez: Expensive private schools.

Alfriend, H: Yeah.

Alfriend, B: And people still do, of course.

Alfriend, H: And most of the children in this local school then began to come from the Reservoir Hill area just south of Druid Hill Park which was pretty much 100 percent black.

Gonzalez: So then it became integrated, or...?

Alfriend, H: Yeah. That became...integrated. Much more so, and obviously the goal was to, you know, have half [black] and half [white schoolchildren] or something like that...reasonable percentages of both races. But it never happened. It didn't happen all over the country, as a matter of fact. If the school, you know, had one black kid in it one year, you know, ten black kids the next— it was 100 percent segregated the third year.

Alfriend, B: I don't think the tension left for a while 'cause I mean, every...every Summer after that for, I don't know, let's say five years or whatever...

Alfriend, H: Oh yeah...

Alfriend, B: You would... Got really hot in August, you know, for some reason you just started thinking of all these poor people in houses with no air conditioning, probably no fans...you know, they're living on third floors. And you just, when it got really hot... and you really worried about would a riot start again. And I guess that sort of...

Alfriend, H: Did they have a lot of fun in the first one? Did they get a nice TV set? Nah...I dreamt about it a little bit, but it was serious business.

Gonzalez: Are you familiar with Pennsylvania Avenue being really nice before the riots and it kind of changed after the riots, or...?

Alfriend, H: How old do you think we are? [*Laughter*]

Gonzalez: Thirty and thirty-one.

Alfriend, H: No.

Alfriend, B: Right, yeah.

Alfriend, H: Well, nice is a relative term. It [Pennsylvania Avenue] has always been a black thoroughfare: black shops, black theatres...

Alfriend, B: Black people living there.

Alfriend, H: ...Black folks. Now, my historian friend would tell you that that was...the people that frequented those shops and theaters were the highest class of...of blacks, you know, in Baltimore. And that you and I could have walked through there with no problem at all. I grew up in Zone 17— I wouldn't have bet to try anything like that. And Pennsylvania Avenue went downhill pretty bad because all those merchants were burned out.

Gonzalez: Even the black merchants?

Alfriend, H: Oh yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Gonzalez: Was there an incident in [the] Bolton Hill Shopping Center during the riot?

Alfriend, H: Not that I recall. I asked Tom [Ward] that specific question this morning and I don't recall...

Alfriend, B: And he lived closer to it.

Alfriend, H: He lived closer to it than we did.

Gonzalez: Okay. Do you think that the riots instituted change between social classes and ethnicities?

Alfriend, H: Sure, that's a tough one.

Gonzalez: It's probably over time.

Alfriend, H: I... The riots, I don't think they had a damn bit to do with the fact that...that we are becoming, you know, a nation that's not black and white, but brown. I think it would have happened, it is happening. I can remember [when] I first started work downtown. I worked at an all-white place, you know. In my department there were seventy-five people and they were all white. I finished up working in an office in Hunt Valley where there were probably, out of one hundred and thirty folks there, probably thirty of them were black. And you know, nobody said diddle about it— they did the job, they got paid. That's pretty much all there was to it. Did the riots have anything to do with it? Did they force integration? I don't...I don't really think so. I think it would have happened anyway.

Gonzalez: You think it would have happened anyway?

Alfriend, H: Yeah.

Gonzalez: Did you think the change between the classes was instantaneous or was it gradual?

Alfriend, H: Gradual.

Gonzalez: Definitely gradual.

Alfriend, H: And [the change between the classes was] not through yet by a long shot. It isn't over. There is still a lot of racial tension. You know, you get on the light rail! It ain't the boy scouts you're worried about.

Gonzalez: Do you still think that the neighborhood today around here is still segregated by classes, income...ethnicity?

Alfriend, H: Here in Roland Park or in Bolton Hill?

Gonzalez: Roland Park.

Alfriend, H: Roland Park— there are a couple of black folks living here, but not many. And almost none in...in greater Roland Park that I'm aware of anyway. And if you walk into the shopping centers that serve the area you don't see a lot of black folks.

Alfriend, B: You do see some.

Alfriend, H: You do see some but they...they mostly work at [in a] Maryland County... No I... Baltimore is still a segregated city. You take a look at a Baltimore map and you start at the Inner Harbor and go north. You have, you know, Mount Vernon, Bolton Hill,

Charles Village, Homeland, Guilford, Roland Park and then the Greenspring Valley. And that's a swath of white, if you will, for better or worse.

Alfriend, B: With blacks on either side.

Alfriend, H: With blacks on either side, yeah.

Alfriend, B: All the way.

Gonzalez: 'Cause I noticed as I drove in... and I got lost. I went two different ways. It seemed like you would go one block—it would be one type of income and then, like, you turn the next block it'd be a different income. It seemed like races were in, like, they were divided in each little area.

Alfriend, H: Well they are, yeah.

Gonzalez: Yeah.

Alfriend, H: What you thought was right.

Gonzalez: Do you think the... How did the aftermath of the riots affect you?

Alfriend, H: It did not.

Gonzalez: There was... There was nothing?

Alfriend, H: We didn't...you know, there's nothing...nothing else you can do. You can say, "Ha. Boy, I'm glad that's over." That's about what you could do.

Gonzalez: You said you were pregnant during the riots...right?

Alfriend, B: Mmhmm

Alfriend, H: She was, I wasn't. [*Laughter*]

Gonzalez: Hope you weren't.

Alfriend, H: Felt like I could...

Gonzalez: Did this permit [prevent] you from going to the hospital at all?

Alfriend, B: No, I would have had to have a police escort had I gone during the curfew. I couldn't have just driven out to...

Gonzalez: You have to have a police escort to leave during the curfew.

Alfriend, B: Mmhmm. Yes, mmhmm.

Gonzalez: Did a lot of people have to do that?

Alfriend, B: Not that I know of, no. Fortunately I made it 'till after the riots, so...

Gonzalez: What did you have to do in order to get an escort? Did you have to call the police station?

Alfriend, B: Mmhmm.

Gonzalez: And...

Alfriend, H: And they would have come. This is Bolton Hill; it's an area of about 1200 houses. It's not huge, but there's a significant population there...varied in age groups.

Alfriend, B: A lot of people that had been there a long time.

Alfriend, H: A lot of folks have been there a long, long time. But if you were... If you had a problem being pregnant and living in Bolton Hill, you'd have gone down on, you know, get a...

Alfriend, B: A police escort.

Alfriend, H: ...A police escort really quick.

Gonzalez: All right. Why don't you just tell me a little bit about any times you remember specifically from the riots. Go from there.

Alfriend, H: Well we told you about Lieutenant George [Linthicum]...

Alfriend, B: And his needing a drink...

Alfriend, H: ...And his need for a drink, we told you about the 82nd Airborne [Division], encamped in...in John Street.

Alfriend, B: Watching the fires on the roof.

Alfriend, H: Watching the fires on the roof... And in general [we were] not frightened but certainly concerned. I knew we lived in an all white area and...

Alfriend, B: We knew what was on either side.

Alfriend, H: I knew what was on either side, too.

Alfriend, B: Exactly.

Alfriend, H: Everything kind of stopped commercially, you know. I don't think I went to work for a couple of days, but I'm not sure whether that was just, you know, "Oh, I can't go to work!"

Alfriend, B: He needed a day off!

Alfriend, H: I'm not sure of that. But it didn't...it didn't really have any effect on us. There probably are neighborhoods and people you could talk to that would have a different outlook on that...and what was affected. But Baltimore has been... Just generations of town that moved away from the "black problem," every chance they got. There've been books written about the movement away from West Baltimore. West Baltimore was once, you know, 100 percent white...about half Jewish. And as soon as the blockbusting operations began, people left in droves. They moved out to Randallstown and Glen Burnie and Odenton. But you can trace... You talk to anybody who lives now in those areas I just mentioned, in the outskirts, and say, "Where'd your family grow up?" [They'll say,] "Oh well, it was lower Park Heights Avenue or Reisterstown Road...down Monument Street..." Yeah.

Gonzalez: Neighborhoods changed quite a bit over a short period of time.

Alfriend, H: Yeah. Well I don't know about short period of time. What is a short period of time?

Gonzalez: Twenty years?

Alfriend, H: Before World War Two, white neighborhoods and black neighborhoods were just white neighborhoods and black neighborhoods and they stayed that way for generations. After World War Two, the workforces here in the Baltimore area needed, you know, people to build the ships and the airplanes and make the steel and so forth...people came up here in droves. They didn't go home, they stayed. And after

World War Two, the blockbusting began in earnest. And if you were white and lived on a street that was affected, you know, the first thing you thought about was moving.

Gonzalez What is blockbusting? I'm not sure.

Alfriend, H: Oh my gosh!

Gonzalez: Yeah. I'm younger.

Alfriend, H: Okay, probably [blockbusting is] not just a Baltimore term. Any big city, you know, has had this problem. You have a burgeoning black population with virtually no place to go outside of the black boundaries. However, if you lived in a... If he was a white man, woman, [or] family and lived in the areas surrounding these black "encampments," if you will, pretty soon you were offered enough money to get out.

Gonzalez: The black families or the white families?

Alfriend, H: White families would move...[when they were] offered enough money to get out.

Gonzalez: The government?

Alfriend, H: No, no. Through the real estate brokers who...and the black families would pay a fair amount of money to move into to one of these changing neighborhoods.

Gonzalez: Oh. Okay, because of better school districts or better housing, safer?

Alfriend, H: Well, just better everything, you know, the whole nine yards.

Alfriend, B: Less crime, less everything.

Alfriend, H: Yeah, and... But of course, you know, they wound up bringing the crime and the problems with 'em.

Gonzalez: Their children usually are the ones that...

Alfriend, H: Yeah.

Gonzalez: So the family that's trying to make it better for their child actually brings the child who is doing the crimes with them and it just starts over.

Alfriend, H: Yeah. It's a tragic, you know, series of events what happens to a black family in a poor area. It really is. And, I mean, Baltimore is a perfect example of it.

Gonzalez: Do you feel that right now they're trying to revitalize the city? As in...

Alfriend, H: Sure, but I think they've been trying that for a long time.

Gonzalez: I'm familiar with [the] Canton area which is completely redone.

Alfriend, H: Yeah, it's much nicer.

Gonzalez: But a lot of real estate's turning over. I was wondering if they are trying to clean up the city and bring back in the middle and upper classes?

Alfriend, B: Yes.

Alfriend, H: Yeah. But the problem here... that's called gentrification. If you take it near Hampden, right down here, it is a perfect example. It was a white, working class area. And by working class [I mean] everybody worked in the mill. If you had a high school education you were very well educated. But people began here, white people, began to say, "Gee we need a house and I can't live in Bolton Hill, its too expensive.

Roland Park is too expensive. I'll buy a row house in Hampden." And by golly, they did. And by golly, a lot of people have. And I can remember Hampden houses going for ten, fifteen, twenty-thousand bucks. And now they're up to three-hundred and four-hundred [thousand dollars]. The same house!

Gonzalez: Yeah.

Alfriend, H: And the same is also true with Locust Point, Federal Hill, and Canton.

Gonzalez: Oh, it's ridiculous. I was going to move into Federal Hill and I looked at those prices and I said, "No thank you!" [*Laughter*]

Alfriend, B: With those prices, you're not moving!

Alfriend, H: Rob bank first!

Gonzalez: Exactly.

Alfriend, B: Paul's moving to Towson tomorrow.

Gonzalez: Yeah, I'm moving to Towson. I think it's easier on my wallet.

Alfriend, H: Yeah, I... I truly predict that eventually things will work out to the benefit of the city. I think that people living in the suburbs are so disgusted with the traffic and the ticky tack houses that they're bound to come back to gracious living in Baltimore. I really believe that.

Alfriend, B: You do. Truly.

Gonzalez: I think it actually is on that move now, too.

Alfriend, H: Yeah. When you see the Cantons and the Federal Hills and so forth, ah, the Mount Vernons. You can't get a house for less than a half a million [dollars] in Mount Vernon.

Gonzalez: They're trying to completely redo that area. That's where our school [University of Baltimore] is and everything's getting torn down and redone and it's too expensive to move in.

Alfriend, H: Do you like the statue in front of the station?

Gonzalez: The human?

Alfriend, B: Yeah!

Gonzalez: I look at that... our class actually, the class for this class, you look outside and you look at that for about an hour and you're trying to figure out what it really is and...

Dehenzell: I don't understand. I don't understand.

Gonzalez: That's got to be from the people from MICA, the Maryland Institute College of Art. I find it very weird.

Dehenzell: Yeah, I don't understand that.

Alfriend, H: That's typical of what they do.

Alfriend, B: But they say that's what's neat about the sculpture that you're supposed to, you know, react to it.

Dehenzell: You look at it and say, "What is that?"

Gonzalez: I have no reaction because I don't know what it is.

Alfriend, B: And certainly people have them [reactions]!

Alfriend, H: The Municipal Arts Corporation, a Baltimore non-profit, you know, actually paid about 650,000 bucks for that thing.

Gonzalez: Was it through MICA? Do you know?

Alfriend, H: No, absolutely not— MICA had nothing to do with it.

Gonzalez: Or the Peabody institute?

Alfriend, H: No. It was all... it was all the city, to an artist who is unknown to you and me and would be unknown to MICA and Peabody, too.

Gonzalez: Interesting.

Alfriend, H: But you see similar type things like, I mean weird, scratch your head...up Mount Royal Avenue as you go north from your school [University of Baltimore].

Gonzalez: I forgot to say one other thing. Do you think that the big...all the factories pretty much leaving Baltimore caused a lot of people to not find jobs and have to move into lower housing? 'Cause, that was around what? The fifties to the seventies, I'm guessing? It started earlier than the fifties but...

Alfriend, H: Yeah... Well certainly it made poor people out of middle class people and they had to live where the lower class people could live. And that was in areas that were not too attractive. So yes, I do think that the laws of industry, you know, fowled things up for the city as far as that's concerned.

Gonzalez: And you're saying your parents were from Virginia?

Alfriend, H: Yes.

Gonzalez: So you obviously moved down here without them?

Alfriend, H: Yeah... It's a boring story, of course, 'cause it's from me. But Dad worked for an outfit called the Old Bay Line, something you're not familiar with I'm sure. Dave, do you remember it at all?

UNKNOWN LASTNAME—Dave: No. I don't.

Alfriend, H: The Old Bay Line was actually a steamboat—a couple of 'em— that went from Norfolk, [Virginia] to Baltimore every night. Back and forth.

Gonzalez: Bringing back supplies and raw materials?

Alfriend, H: Yeah. It carried passengers, too. We spent a lot of time on it 'cause dad worked for it. And we were taken in by relatives and finally found a house. But they [my parents] didn't... they stayed up here until 1954 and then they left and went back to Virginia.

Gonzalez: And you stayed here?

Alfriend, H: I stayed here. Well, I was having a good time here.

Dave: Double major.

Alfriend, H: I had to work on my studies.

Alfriend, B: Yeah, your blond girlfriend had daddy's black convertible so you were all right.

Gonzalez: Did you go to the same bars that are there... like the districts right now, like the Cantons, the Fells Points, the Federal Hills?

Alfriend, H: No not at all.

Alfriend, B: No.

Alfriend, H: You wouldn't... The only place... Growing up, if you can call it that, there weren't many bars you could go to as you kids do now all over Federal Hill and Fells Point and so forth. There was nothing there.

Gonzalez: Were they scattered, just like on the corners?

Alfriend, H: Yeah, but they weren't... There were no chains.

Alfriend, B: They were very local.

Alfriend, H: Yeah. They weren't popular...very local.

Alfriend, B: You know, you got the local crowd but not...

Alfriend, H: You're familiar with the Mount Royal Tavern, right?

Gonzalez: Yeah.

Alfriend, H: There were a lot of places like the Mount Royal Tavern.

Gonzalez: Just scattered throughout each neighborhood?

Alfriend, H: Scattered through each neighborhood, yeah.

Gonzalez: It's a lot different now.

Alfriend, H: Yeah, there were probably... Mount Royal Tavern is probably the only bar left in Bolton Hill. But there were about fourteen or fifteen of 'em by the end of World War Two.

Gonzalez: Do you think that was because of the World War Two soldiers coming home that they started springing up everywhere?

Dave: They need a drink?

Alfriend, H: Well, urban renewal had a lot to do with it.

Gonzalez: The GI Bill's giving people money to buy...?

Alfriend, H: Well, the urban renewal situation was that they decided to tear down all of the old and black...

Alfriend, B: Run-down...

Alfriend, H: ...Black housing around Bolton Hill. And they did. Where? You had to be pretty familiar with the area, but on each side of Bolton Hill they tore down great swaths of housing and put up other things, some of which were housing, some of which were schools and things like that.

Gonzalez: That was because they needed to have room for people to have families, so they needed to make more housing, are you saying...affordable, quick housing?

Alfriend, H: Yeah, but it was also... The black community termed it “negro removal,” not urban renewal. And in a large sense it was just that.

Gonzalez: Was there a lot of hostilities?

Alfriend, H: Oh a lot. Yeah...very much so.

Gonzalez: I’m surprised anything else didn’t happen; there was only this riot. Was it... was there any other riots?

Alfriend, H: None that I’m aware of.

Alfriend, B: No.

Alfriend, H: No.

Gonzalez: Is there anything else you guys want to add?

Alfriend, H: It was fun growing up in Baltimore. I like my town.

Gonzalez: I like it too. There’s always something to do.

Alfriend, H: Yeah. There’s more to do now than there was, too. Though the riots were an interesting time, I’m glad they’re over. I guess they had some effect on whatever happened, but I’m not sure...not certain about it all. Were we scared? Yeah.

Alfriend, B: But city living was fun in those days. I mean, I’m from Buffalo, you know, so total suburbia. And this thing in Bolton Hill, and he wanted to get an apartment there and I said, “Well, it’s fine until we have kids.” And then of course you need to get out and get green grass. Well, five kids and forty-three years later and we’re still there and I loved every minute of it. I wouldn’t have...

Alfriend, H: Well, the mid-seventies, the neighborhood got together... That's the kind of neighborhood it was, and actually raised the money to buy land and build...

Alfriend, B: In Bolton Hill.

Alfriend, H: A playground, an Olympic size, I mean big Olympic sized pool, tennis courts. That's the Bolton Swim and Tennis Club, which you may have seen if you're in that area at all.

Alfriend, B: At Park Avenue and Dolphin [Street].

Alfriend, H: Just north of the Armory and just west of Sutton Place.

Alfriend, B: Nobody's seen it.

Alfriend, H: Nobody's seen it. It's not advertised. You know, no big signs. But it's a great recreational area and everybody sends their kids down there.

Gonzalez: This wasn't the house you grew up in?

Alfriend, H: Oh no. No.

Alfriend, B: What, the one we're in now?

Gonzalez: Yeah.

Alfriend, B: No.

Gonzalez: How long have you guys been here?

Alfriend, H: Three years.

Gonzalez: Three years?

Alfriend, H: And we sold the Bolton Hill house because it was...you know, the five kids were gone. It was, you know...

Alfriend, B: A lot of up keep.

Alfriend, H: Five bedrooms, three baths, and a hundred and thirty years old. And it was... you know, I was going to retire and I didn't feel like spending a whole lot of money on keeping it up. And we just needed a smaller place and found this one by luck. But an interesting story about the house we were living in. [When] Mother and Dad came to Baltimore and one of the relatives that they stayed with for a summer was the Norris family at 128 West Lanvale Street. And it was the 1930's... summer of 1936.

Alfriend, B: You called your mother.

Alfriend, H: And when we finally bought 128 in 1964, I called Mother in Virginia and said, "Hey! We bought a house, 128 West Lanvale Street." My mother said, "Boy, that's a real back to the womb movement." And so I said, "What do you mean?" She said, "You were conceived in that house!" [*Laughter*]

Gonzalez: Oh my gosh! The same house that you bought?

Alfriend, B: Yeah! The same house.

Alfriend, H: The same house.

Gonzalez: Did your parents own that or they just stayed in that house?

Alfriend, H: No, they just stayed there for six months or so.

Gonzalez: Wow! Coincidental.

Alfriend, H: Yeah, very coincidental. So we have a true attachment to the house and I loved it! It was a nice house.

Gonzalez: Is the neighborhood still [nice]?

Alfriend, B: Oh, yes.

Gonzalez: Five houses...that's got to be an expensive house.

Alfriend, H: Well.

Alfriend, B: Yes.

Gonzalez: I mean five bedrooms.

Alfriend, H: To give you an idea, I paid sixteen thousand bucks for the house in '64. Which was, I thought, a lot of money. Payments for everything, I could afford, we could afford. And I wound up selling it three years ago for three hundred and thirty seven [dollars]. Something like that.

Gonzalez: [That's a] heck of an increase.

Alfriend, B: Yes, right! Good!

Gonzalez: It's a good payoff.

Alfriend, H: It allowed me to pursue my majors more frequently [*Laughter*]. It was an interesting place to live and we liked it.

Alfriend, B: And we loved it.

Alfriend, H: Okay. You all can go down to Federal Hill now [*Laughter*].