

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 40<sup>th</sup> 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.

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

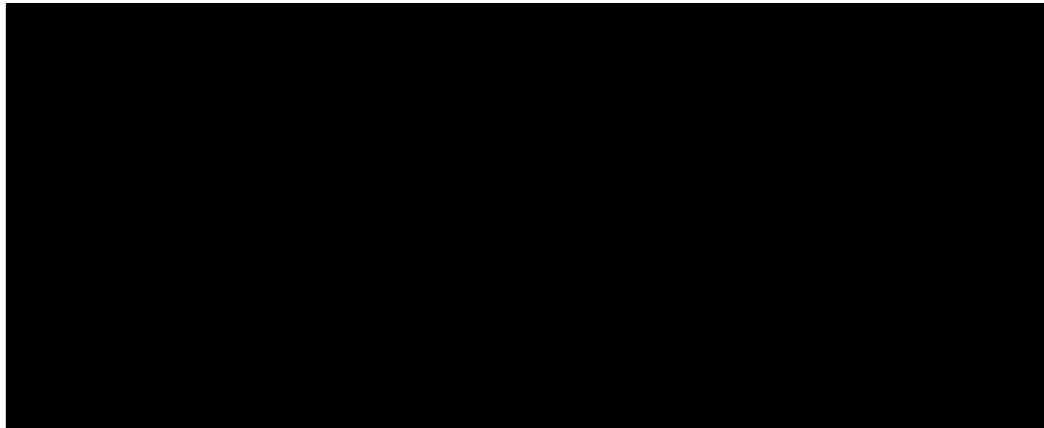
If you have any questions about this project, please feel free to contact me at 410-837-5296. Thank you for your participation.

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.



*Interview with Elsbeth Levy Bothe*

*April 19, 2007*

*Interviewers: Maria Paoletti and Nyasha Chikowore*

*Transcriber: Nicholas Ricks and Nora Feinstein*

**Paoletti:** Sure. So, first of all, could you just state your full name?

**Bothe:** Okay, Elsbeth Levy Bothe, that's my full name.

**Paoletti:** Okay, and in 1968, or the years before and after, about how old were you and where did you... What was your occupation?

**Bothe:** Well, you figure out my age, it was 1927 that I was born, so you can do the subtraction...

**Paoletti:** You were 40 [years old]?

**Chikowore:** 41...

**Paoletti:** Yeah or 41 depending on when your birthday is...

**Bothe:** Well, October...

**Paoletti:** You were 40.

**Bothe:** Yeah...

**Paoletti:** Yes.

**Bothe:** And I had...well I was a delegate to the Maryland Constitutional Convention which was over in the spring of...well there was an election to affirm it and I was very much involved both with revamping the Maryland Constitution, which was a wonderful confab. It went on for several months but then it had to be confirmed in a special election and I was working on the election campaign which... I think the riots ruined the prospects of getting it enacted—it wasn't... Because people were so...well it had a...it was a rather forward-looking document and...people thought it was revolutionary or, you know, it set off people against change of a libertarian type, anyway. So I was very upset about that big impact it had on my work at the time. But immediately I was chairman of the—chairperson you'd say now—of the state ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union] and we had a legal panel which acted on behalf of the many arrested here and I was, so I was physically and mentally and immediately very much impacted by what had to be done. They were hauling in hundreds, thousands of people, didn't give them rights, things like that, off to jail for looting or just being on the streets and violating the curfew. So I was immediately very much involved there and long term...

**Paoletti:** But even though...at time before MLK's [Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.] assassination you were the president of the ACLU?

**Bothe:** Of the state chapter, yeah...

**Paoletti:** Of the state chapter of the ACLU?

**Bothe:** Yeah, and we – I’m not sure if I was president then or just the chairperson of the legal...of the legal committee. We had quite a few volunteer lawyers working on ACLU projects and when the riots occurred we sort of took the initiative and organized lawyers to [assist]... It was quite a mess.

**Paoletti:** And where was it... Where did you live at the time?

**Bothe:** In Bolton Hill, I guess you may or may not be familiar, which is an interesting place to live...

**Paoletti:** I used to live there...

**Bothe:** Oh, well, 1406 Park... In any event, there actually was no rioting or looting or anything like it in the proper parts of Bolton Hill, [but rather] on the fringes. And the National Guard were all over the place: on the doorstep, the white stone steps were full of guards, but nothing actually ever happened there, in the gentrified parts of the area.

**Paoletti:** And where was your...your primary workplace? Where was that located?

**Bothe:** I think it was on Preston Street then... I’m trying...my law office...

**Paoletti:** Oh, on Preston Street...

**Bothe:** I think it was then when... ‘cause it was a good part of the time when we lived in Bolton Hill. It may have been downtown which is where I was later– or I think it was later.

**Paoletti:** Okay. We’re also interested in knowing a little bit about your everyday life at the time – where did you do your shopping, do you remember?

**Bothe:** Yes well I...well for marketing, you say? Food?

**Paoletti:** Food, clothes...

**Bothe:** Well, that was before downtown Baltimore got decimated by... You know, there were all the big retailers—Hutzler’s, Horschold [Kohn] stores—whatnot, everybody shopped downtown, the suburban shopping centers were not much in evidence and...and of course we were close to downtown anyway, in Bolton Hill. But now, unhappily, I... ‘Cause I’m very... I’m a big supporter of the city, you know, I live in the city, but I have to head north instead of south. But then, for instance, there was a...Acme grocery on Eager Street and it was very busy...

**Paoletti:** I’m sorry, did you say Eager Street?

**Bothe:** Eager Street, yeah. Mount Vernon. And, oh, businessmen, lawyers, whatever, they used to shop there when they...before they went home to the suburbs to...they would stop and do their market or their family’s marketing there because they didn’t have the equivalent. Now, I think it may still be there, just a little half neighborhood store, but they were...everybody was...when people from Pikesville, say, would do their...bought their clothes...and did everything downtown. And Towson, too. People...there was nothing much in Towson.

**Paoletti:** Okay. Before the riots and before the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, what sorts of interactions did you have with African Americans?

**Bothe:** Well, I was in Mississippi, you know, in Freedom Summer [of 1964].

**Paoletti:** Uh huh, right.

**Bothe:** So I had a lot of...and I was very involved in the Civil Rights Movement.

**Paoletti:** Mmhmm. And would you...?

**Bothe:** Uh...

**Paoletti:** I'm sorry, go ahead.

**Bothe:** Go ahead. Finish.

**Paoletti:** Would you say that your relationships with African Americans were more on a professional level or friendly?

**Bothe:** I had some... I had some [black] friends, not too many because there wasn't a whole lot [of interracial interaction]. The more or less, I guess you'd call 'em aristocratic blacks; they mingled a lot with people like me. I mean, Bob Watts and Verna Welcome and Vernon Templeton. But they were not the... amongst... Well, the rioters weren't in their kind of life. But it was a...there was an elite black community here— not community, they didn't live in the same places, uh, but they were all... Most of them had graduate degrees: doctors, lawyers, ministers, and what not, who also mingled—but not on as familiar a basis—with whites of the same types.

**Paoletti:** How would you describe the general racial mood in Baltimore before the riots?

**Bothe:** Well, I was dumbfounded with the riots. I thought things were... Of course, Baltimore was pretty good, I mean the schools...

**Paoletti:** I mean in the time preceding...

**Bothe:** ...Integrated after the Brown [v. Board of Education Supreme Court ruling of 1954]...

**Paoletti:** I mean the time before the riots.

**Bothe:** I wouldn't have expected the reaction we had, and other cities...I mean I just wouldn't have seen that happening. And actually, I never perceived it as being anywhere near as upsetting or disastrous as people did. I mean, I was right in the middle of what was happening and what was reported as happening. They arrested everybody in sight and ended up charging practically nobody...

**Paoletti:** Well, I'm sorry, my question was more to describe what it was like in the time period before the riots, like when nobody knew it was going to happen, before MLK was assassinated.

**Bothe:** Well, it certainly was a lot— depending on whether you regarded Baltimore as a Southern city or not— it wasn't volatile, at least... I mean, I was involved in the '64 and '65 [riots]...not here, though. I was in Cambridge, Maryland so... And compared to Mississippi, I wouldn't have expected Baltimore to erupt like this, it was... I mean they weren't good, and they still aren't right, but they weren't volatile or confrontational, at least between people I consorted with and other people.

**Chikowore:** So you could say it wasn't integrated?

**Bothe:** Well, now it still isn't really integrated, I would say. It was a smaller proportion then, what's it around seventy percent black now, and then it was more like forty-five or fifty percent. There were a lot more whites in the city then. And all of the blacks were in the city, I don't think there were any living [in the suburbs]... It was close to the time that the black population went out to Woodlawn or various...primarily Northwest Baltimore County, but...

**Paoletti:** So what do you remember about the actual assassination of Martin Luther King?

**Bothe:** Well, it was one of those signal events all over the country, you know, you couldn't hear about anything else on the radio or...

**Paoletti:** How did you hear about it?

**Bothe:** I guess over the media, of course...yeah, through the media, I guess. It was exploded all over the place. But I knew him very slightly; I didn't know him as... I wasn't his friend or anything. But I'd been in Memphis and I knew just where he was slaughtered. And I've been interested in true crime for... I mean any kind, and, so I followed the case later. I mean, I was very interested in the apprehension of James Earl Ray and whether he did it, which of course I think he positively did. But I followed it later and...I don't know exactly where I was at the moment or... I don't really remember. It was a weekend, or, I think...you would know better than I would...

**Paoletti:** ...I think it was a Thursday actually, yeah...

**Bothe:** ...Well, whenever it was, I certainly, as did almost everywhere else in the country, become aware of it immediately.

**Chikowore:** Do you remember how you felt when you heard the news?

**Bothe:** I was shocked, of course. I mean, he was relatively young and... I didn't think... Oh, Memphis was not that bad a place, I mean, for somebody...course I think it was a one-man job, I never did think it was a big conspiracy. And people could get murdered at any and everywhere. Of course I was shocked. I mean, I was on the March in Washington before that so I felt an affinity toward him as I had the Civil Rights Movement.

**Paoletti:** Okay, and how did you hear about the riots starting the following day?

**Bothe:** Well, the ACLU was sort of alerted the minute there were noises being made, because in the end we became responsible for leading the legal [proceedings]... We had people at all the stationhouses, and on— lawyers mainly. But I think it happened almost right immediately, 'cause when the rioting started it was realized that they were starting everywhere else, you know. That they needed more attention than just a bad day of...on the streets, but... I think the Police Commissioner may have contacted us, or we him, or something, but it was so obvious that there were things we could do. Then, of course, there was a curfew all over the city and we were... Well, I had to travel amongst it, but most people who were out...who weren't out there getting in trouble...but I heard about it very fast. Of course, it was... We didn't have any Internet—at least, only experts did. I'm sure we'd have heard about it a lot faster, been able to communicate a lot better if we had it, but we didn't.

**Chikowore:** So you heard about it from, you said the police?

**Bothe:** Well, it's quite possible – I'm trying to think who was the Police Commissioner then, but I think he was a pretty decent... I don't know, it may have been [Donald] Pomerleau, but we were always

squawking for getting the... Well, I mean, I guess you know enough about the history here, the way [Governor Spiro T.] Agnew was trying to tell the black elite that they were responsible for not reining it in. But we were close to...I mean I... We had some black lawyers on the legal panel. Well, Bob Watts, who was later a colleague on the bench with me, I've known him since...well he got out of law school ahead of me but we've been very good friends for a very long time. And there were very few black lawyers compared to today but... But it, you know, it was one of those things... I mean, there's the Baltimore fire, where did you hear about it if you were here then... You certainly heard about it but you wouldn't...it wasn't something you could figure you knew about unless you were right in the building it started in.

**Paoletti:** What about the riots in other cities?

**Bothe:** Well, it was happening, of course, in all the big cities... Not all of them, I mean, but we were sure it was all part of the same... Well, I don't think there was any understanding or conspiracy, but it all erupted...more or less spontaneously in a lot of big cities. And Baltimore, incidentally, was a bigger...it's probably...the population of the city itself was much larger then than it is today. And, of course, the papers had it all over. The radio...

**Paoletti:** Did you watch the television coverage at all?

**Bothe:** You know, back then as well as today, I'm not a big television watcher. Then, of course, people tuned in to see what was happening. And there were a lot of false reports and... in fact, a lot of reports that Bolton Hill was on fire, which it was not.

**Paoletti:** Oh, reports on TV? That Bolton Hill...

**Bothe:** Well, everybody was panicked...I mean it was very hard to cover something like this because nobody knew where it was coming from or where it was going and small acts of looting, which all took place in the ghetto. There was, as far as I know, no middle or much less, affluent neighborhood was touched. But people thought it was going to happen and were looking for it. And then in Bolton Hill, the part I lived on, Park Avenue around Lafayette [Avenue], people...or National Guardsmen all over the place. You thought something had to happen. And of course, the National Guard armory was just up the street, and very close by were...wasn't that far from Pennsylvania Avenue and all the centers of black activity and... but it never came. But people were on the weary after it. And with a curfew—which was, you would probably know better. I don't know how long it took them to impose the curfew...

**Paoletti:** I'm not sure...

**Bothe:** It wasn't long. And people...anybody went out on the streets during the forbidden hours was subject...was suspect...I mean, suspected of being a rioter or a looter. And so a lot of people just got swept up. Well, when everything quieted down it was nowhere near the event that it seemed it was going to be at the time.

**Paoletti:** In your recollection, what neighborhoods were the most affected?

**Bothe:** Pennsylvania Avenue was the most...and that was the black [area]... Well, I don't think any of them much are left there, but there were some wonderful jazz clubs and a lot of poverty right around there. It was not an affluent area, but it had all the black entertainment and some stores, and Gay Street was another...you know, there's a shopping center there right now. I don't know if you're familiar with it... That was a big center of trouble. But they were all predominantly, if not totally, black and mostly poor areas.

**Paoletti:** So what was it exactly...I'm sorry, you were explaining before, too...what was it exactly that you were...you were doing during the riots?

**Bothe:** Well, we had about...we must have had fifty, sixty lawyers enlisted who...well, they were down at the police stations and over at the jail. It was a terrible mess because a lot of the ones there weren't given a chance to identify themselves or gave fake names, and they had something like five thousand people in the city jail or... Well I do remember the jailer... Shonen, was it Shonen? Real horrible guy was the warden at the Baltimore City Jail and he boasted he could take any number; he wasn't going to stop arrests being made just because there wasn't much room over there. [He said,] "Oh, they can stand on their heads!" And most of them, the big majority of them, got out in due course without any charges. They... I don't think they tried anybody for curfew violating or being in the wrong place or that kind of stuff. But it took quite a...it was...it went on for quite a while.

**Paoletti:** Would you estimate about five thousand arrests?

**Bothe:** I'm sure that was in the press at the time.

**Paoletti:** Mmhmm. Wow.

**Bothe:** So, I'm just...but if my memory serves me there were hundreds of thousands of mostly young people.

**Chikowore:** Do you remember, maybe... 'cause this is from a past interview I did, someone said they had to use what's now the First Mariner Arena to place people who couldn't fit in the jails.

**Bothe:** They did have some outposts, but I'm not sure I remember which ones...and whoever said it was the...

**Paoletti:** The Baltimore Arena, I guess is what it was.

**Bothe:** Well the Baltimore...

**Chikowore:** Yeah, I guess, back then.

**Bothe:** ...Which hadn't been...I'm trying to think what year that was built... The arena wasn't very old then. I... It could be, because it was right conveniently nearby.

**Chikowore:** So did you hear anything about any type of violence that was occurring during the riots?

**Bothe:** Well, there were...you had some cars smashed up or at least dead, and looting of stores... There was... I don't know if you call that violence or not, but injuries to individuals—I hardly remember anything like that. The cops tried to make a big deal out of anybody who talked back at 'em, which they were all doing of course, but as far as anybody even attacking... attacking a policeman, I don't there were any casualties at all, physical wise.

**Chikowore:** And do you remember seeing the National Guard?

**Bothe:** Oh, sure. They were hard to miss.

**Chikowore:** And how did their presence make you feel? Were they in...



**Bothe:** We're talking about the State Guard they sent out, and you know they called in. Oh, joked with them, I did. People like me did. They could be a little annoying...they were perched on our front steps!

**Paoletti:** In Bolton Hill?

**Bothe:** Yeah, and everybody...they were all up and down the block...

**Paoletti:** How did the neighbors feel about that?

**Bothe:** I don't think anybody...well, first of all, they weren't sure they didn't need them for protection, but...which never happened. I mean, none of them ever had to...but I remember, I don't know if you know or know of him, he was quite...He's still alive and he's quite...Leonard Kerpleman was a lawyer, he represented Madalyn Murray [O'Hair] if you know that case [Murray v. Curlett, 1963], the atheist... But anyhow, and Leonard was crazy as...and he lived in the, I think...we were in the 1400 block [of Park Avenue] which was absolutely immune from problems, as it turned out. But he was in the 1700 block, and the further north you got around, closer to North Avenue, the more threatening things seemed. But the house next door to him, which I'm not passing on, had been gutted by fire sometime earlier in the riots... I don't know how the fire started, but it certainly wasn't part of the riots, and he called me about the house next door having been looted. And I made some public statements at the time, I think, about the limitations of the looting and whatnot, which, saying that it wasn't affecting the neighborhoods of the middle-class and up, and he called me and [said,] "Well, they burned the house down next door!" And like an idiot I started arguing with him, and [he said,] "Well I'll come over and burn your house down!" But that's the kind of thing that happened. He's still around, as crazy as ever, got disbarred.

**Paoletti:** So what was the general feeling in your neighborhood, in Bolton Hill?

**Bothe:** Well, people were apprehensive and unhappy about... I mean how it was...it had... I think more damage was wrought in other places in Baltimore, but they didn't have any way of knowing how it was going to work out here. But it really wasn't, as I recall—and of course it's all those years ago—I don't recall when in the...when all was said and done which—How many days did it go on? You would... A few?

**Paoletti:** I'm not sure exactly, but maybe three or four?

**Bothe:** I guess there were remnants of it for a week or so or not, but the big push was right after it started. But we were...I...I mean, you didn't know it was going to end or stop the way it did, so people have, and didn't know in other parts of the country so... But I've never been scared anyway, you know, I'm just not the type. There were little old ladies around my age then, but it...and I think there was a lot of indignation about the way the—maybe not—but they were just sweeping up these ghetto kids and putting them in jail. Our lawyers couldn't reach them. They... I mean their families, of course, didn't know what happened, though they suspected they confined them in the jail, but you couldn't find them. I mean, for...a lot of us spent a few days there because nobody knew who was there or who wasn't. Part of our activities – which weren't legal – was to try and let parents know where their kids were and that kind of stuff.

**Chikowore:** So would you say your life and activities changed?

**Bothe:** Oh, well everybody's... I mean, first of all, I had a pass to go out during the curfew to work on the rioting, but most people were confined to their houses and worried about their possessions. And I don't think there was a lot of fear of physical attack, I mean...

**Paoletti:** But you were very busy yourself...

**Bothe:** I was busy. And it was all very exciting, really. But I don't think people were [concerned about being harmed] physically...it was more property they were worried about. Of course, some cars got smashed and things like that, but it wasn't that much when it all boiled down to... And as I say, it was all in the neighborhoods that some people thought were being demolished anyway, if they didn't live there themselves, that is.

**Paoletti:** So how do you... How do you think Baltimore changed after the riots?

**Bothe:** Well, I say one blow to me and people like me who wanted to revise the Maryland Constitution was a big disappointment 'cause the election was right after [the riots]. It had already of course been set up for quite awhile— but it was right, very fast afterwards, and people just didn't want to do anything, get out of colonial days or... And on the whole, I don't think it, I don't think it helped or hurt race relations—it may have set them back some, but it certainly was negative as far as race relations were concerned. Because [some white] people thought they were being very nice and charitable and considerate of black [people]—white people—and this is what they got for it, you know.

**Paoletti:** Right.

**Bothe:** I didn't want to kill Martin Luther King, was sort of the idea. Even if they didn't like him, then why should people react like this? What's worse, this whole business of riots—it's scary and it's often, unless you're in the French Revolution guillotining everybody or something of that sort, it certainly wasn't a benefit to race relations. It wasn't any wakeup call or anything of that sort that I remember. It probably set things back a ways.

**Paoletti:** What about you personally in your relations of...with people of other races?

**Bothe:** Personally, it didn't affect me any, I mean, I didn't change my views of civil liberties-wise or anything of that sort. And I don't think it...it... On the blue-collar class, I guess it did have a bigger negative reaction among whites.

**Paoletti:** How so?

**Bothe:** Well, we just saw our property threatened. Our people, they didn't like that much in the first place, acting like this. In a way, it sort of verified some people's images of blacks being animals and... [being] beneath them.

**Paoletti:** Did anything in Bolton Hill change?

**Bothe:** No. I don't think anything when it all sifted out, people...of course there were a lot of homeowners and the area was considered a very desirable place to live if you liked the city. But nobody, I don't think anybody much moved out because of it or did anything different. Well, and the neighborhoods were much more segregated than they are now.

**Paoletti:** Do you remember any businesses in particular that were affected?

**Bothe:** Not in the end, no—I don't think any of them were. I mean, in any neighborhood in the long run it wasn't...didn't leave any permanent damage: physical damage or property loss or... There were stores that were cleaned out, but...and they were mainly black ones, owned by blacks in ghetto areas—Ma and Pa corner stores, that sort of thing. I don't recall at any, say, supermarket, such as the one on Eager Street

I mentioned, was raided or looted or anything like that. And I wasn't that familiar with the commercialism on Pennsylvania Avenue, except to go to the nightclubs sometimes. So, I'm not a very exciting person to interview, huh?

**Chikowore:** No it's interesting.

**Paoletti:** It's all relative.

**Bothe:** I'm sure what some of the other people have told you would interest me to know.

**Paoletti:** You can...you can read it actually. There's a website, I can...I could tell you about it.

**Bothe:** Really?

**Paoletti:** Yeah, you can go and...and read them.

**Bothe:** What is it?

**Paoletti:** I don't know if I have the address right here, actually.

**Bothe:** Well, what about...if I knew what to put in I could "google" it.

**Chikowore:** I think if you go to [<http://www.jubalt.edu>], and then you go to the library [web page]?

**Paoletti:** "Libraries," "Special Collections."

**Chikowore:** Yeah, I think so. Is it in "Langsdale" or "Special Collections?"

**Paoletti:** I think you just click on "Libraries" and there's a thing under that says "Special Collections," and then "Oral History," or maybe "Baltimore Riots and Rebirth," if they're... I don't know, either way... Either look for Oral History or the project is called "Baltimore Riots"—"Baltimore '68: Riots and Rebirth."

**Bothe:** "Baltimore...Baltimore '68..." What's the rest of it?

**Paoletti and Chikowore:** "Riots and Rebirth."

**Bothe:** What?

**Paoletti:** "Riots and Rebirth."

**Bothe:** Yeah. Oh, "and Rebirth." How many people have you interviewed? I mean, there are a few of them there now.

**Paoletti:** Yeah, us personally?

**Chikowore:** Six?

**Paoletti:** Six.

**Bothe:** Well, the one's you're familiar with...

**Paoletti:** We've... No, I mean...we, the two of us, have interviewed together maybe about six...five or six, I guess? But... Yeah, all together? But, also the professor who's supervising us, her...she teaches a class called "New South and Civil Rights..."

**Bothe:** What's her name?

**Paoletti:** Dr. Betsy Nix.

**Bothe:** Betsy N...?

**Paoletti:** N-I-X.

**Bothe:** Yeah, okay.

**Paoletti:** And her class...and that class ran in the fall, and her assignment to her students was each to pair up, and each to interview...each pair to interview somebody. So those interviews, the majority of them are already online to read.

**Bothe:** Oh, that's interesting, I'll have to look and see.

**Paoletti:** Yeah, and I mean, there's all sorts of people. There's people who were eight-years-old at the time, there are people who were, you know, working...

**Bothe:** Nobody who was around is young anymore.

**Paoletti:** Right, well they're not... They're not kids, of course, or any... Or you know, like our age, because nobody was born yet. So...

**Bothe:** No, I mean of the ones who are still breathing you can talk to...

**Paoletti:** There's... I mean, yeah there are some people who are...yeah, who were kids at the time.

**Bothe:** Well, they'd be around, more likely...

**Paoletti:** And then...but we actually just interviewed some folks who were about fifty at the time, they're getting...they're almost ninety.

**Bothe:** They're way up there!

**Paoletti:** Yeah but they, you know, still have a pretty good recollection of the...of the events.

**Bothe:** Well they say, "The older you get the more you can remember past things and can't remember what happened yesterday."

**Paoletti:** Right.

**Chikowore:** Right.

**Paoletti:** And then there are, you know, there are some folks...we interviewed some folks today who were grad students. We've interviewed a gentleman who was a college student at Loyola at the time,

nineteen-years-old at the time, and was driving down through the flames into...down what is now [Interstate] 83, you know, down in that area.

**Bothe:** Yeah, well I wasn't there, I don't...

**Paoletti:** Yeah, but down to that area.

**Bothe:** The city was just a very different place, I mean, both from the standpoint of race relations— and almost every city whether it was Northern or Southern, was pretty segregated at that time. And there had been a certain; you know... I think the things like picketing of Ford's Theatre [1951] or the restaurant... The picket lines with the unintegrated ones and all.

**Paoletti:** Mmhmm.

**Bothe:** They had all just, I mean, there was quite a... I don't know if these people were involved with civil rights activity one way or the other before that. But Baltimore was quite a... The city itself was much bigger. Like I was saying, you didn't... You don't go to shop in the cities coming back now...

**Paoletti:** Right, but yeah, it was much more metropolitan...

**Bothe:** It's a long way from...

**Paoletti:** Yeah.

**Bothe:** But...and housing was...I don't think...when the Housing Act gets [passed in 1968]...even after, you couldn't segregate neighborhoods anymore it kept up, it's still there.

**Paoletti:** I wish you could still shop in the city.

**Bothe:** I sure do.

**Paoletti:** I mean, everybody that we've interviewed has said, "Oh yeah, the department stores downtown..."

**Bothe:** Oh, they were great. And that's where they went. They didn't...

**Paoletti:** Right. They're all in shopping malls now.

**Bothe:** I hate shopping malls. I avoid them religiously.

**Paoletti:** You can't find a Hecht's in a city.

**Bothe:** Yeah, I hate to say it, but when that poor school teacher got murdered in the Towson Mall, I don't know, was it a year ago? Two years ago?

**Paoletti:** Awhile ago, yeah.

**Bothe:** Well anyway...have you been to the Towson Mall?

**Paoletti:** It's enormous.

**Bothe:** It's got four hundred [stores].

**Paoletti:** It's enormous.

**Bothe:** Out in Towson

**Paoletti:** It's four floors, yeah.

**Bothe:** Well, and there's parking...I mean, I avoid it—which I can do. But this poor guy got murdered there, a teacher at Boy's Latin, I think, or one of the private schools [St. Paul's School]. And he just went up there at lunch hour to buy something minor, gets out of his car and gets shot. But I must say I smiled a little bit... Just the idea that...

**Paoletti:** Why?

**Bothe:** Those places aren't safe either, right?

**Paoletti:** Right, and that's the whole idea is that it's supposed to be safer.

**Bothe:** Because I... Of course, I've tried a number of city murders and that sort of stuff, so it's... We're not immune, but the county isn't either.

**Paoletti:** Mhmm. Nobody's... Nobody's immune.

**Bothe:** That crime is spreading pretty thoroughly out there.

**Paoletti:** Mhmm. Yeah. I mean, I guess... There's a description from most people that Baltimore was more of a city then. And, I mean, and...