

**Oral History of June Jeffries**  
**First Interview**  
**October 1, 2018**

This interview is being conducted on behalf of the Oral History Project of The Historical Society of the District of Columbia Circuit. The interviewer is Will Weaver, and the interviewee is June Jeffries. The interview took place at the Alumni Relations Center in the Hotung Building at Georgetown Law School on Monday, October 1, 2018. This is the first interview.

MR. WEAVER: To get started, we're going to kick it off talking about your early life. Tell me about your parents. Where were they from? What did they do?

MS. JEFFRIES: I will say this. I'm going to tell you my full name. My full name is June Marie Jeffries Parker, but I commonly go by June M. Jeffries or June Jeffries. With that, I will say that I am an only child. My mother's name was Bettie Wade Jeffries, and my father was Malcolm Sylvester Jeffries. My mother hails from the Mississippi Delta. She was actually born in the hills of Lexington. By the time she was around 6 or 7, they had moved to the Delta to the area of Belzoni, Mississippi. They pronounce it "Belzona," but it's spelled Belzoni, which is the heart of the Delta. It is the county seat of Humphreys County, about 55 minutes north of Jackson.

My father was born in Farrah in Jasper County, Georgia, in 1914. My mother was born in 1924. He was the fourth of five children, and I do believe that in Georgia, my grandparents were sharecroppers, but some incident occurred in Georgia where the family had to up and move, and they ended up in West Virginia in coal mining, southern West Virginia, where my grandfather then became a coal miner. My father worked in the coal mines for some period of time, and he moved to Detroit in 1934. My mother moved to Detroit in 1944. Those are my parents.

My father never worked in the auto factories, although when I was born, he worked for a company, an auto parts supplier, called Timken Axle, and I know before I started elementary school, he was laid off from that job, and I believe ultimately they moved to Ohio, and he got like a payout. Thereafter, my father went to the Post Office. But I'm skipping ahead.

My father had some relatives in Detroit. I don't know who first came to Detroit, but significantly there were my great uncle and aunt, my Uncle Pat and his wife, Aunt Lessie, and they owned some properties and rooming houses which my father lived in, and he was joined in the rooming house with my mother.

My mother was one of eleven children. She was the seventh child. The third of four girls. All the girls are born six years apart, so the oldest child, the oldest of eleven, was my Aunt Fredericka, then Aunt Sadie, then my mother, then Aunt Ruth. As I said, the family, they were sharecroppers, and they lived outside of Belzoni, sharecropping at a place called Four Mile, which I think Four Mile is only like a mile or two outside of Belzoni, but the land was owned by the Simmons family, which would include Mr. Mark Simmons, as we would call him, and that would be Mark Simmons, Sr. And then subsequently after he died, I recently found out he died in 1939, his son, Mark Simmons, Jr., and I believe Mark Jr. had a brother and sister, Mr. Rory and Ms. Louise. All of them are Simmons. So my granddaddy was a sharecropper there. For reasons

that my son and I never could get my mother to fully explain to us was when she was around 8 years old, she moved into town just a few miles away to live with her great-aunt because she said her great-aunt told her parents let that girl come go to school in town. Why she got to go to school like that and the other ten didn't, we never could get a handle on that. But for reasons are pretty clear, my mother seemed to have been treated I'll say differently and maybe specially, and not in the way that made anybody unhappy or dislike her, but I don't know why she didn't do the things like they did, like pick cotton and stuff. She may have said she picked cotton, but I don't think my mother picked too much cotton ever at any point in her life. So she went to school in Belzoni living with her aunt, and she said that if she wanted to go home, this brings up Mr. Simmons, and I'm going to talk about the Simmons people too, she said if she wanted to go home, she could go up to I guess the town square and Mr. Simmons would be up there doing whatever he did in town, and she'd say, "Mr. Mark, I want to go home." My mother back then was called Pig, and he would say to her, "Well, Pig, you know where my car is. Be there at 5:00." So she said at 5:00 she'd go get in Mr. Mark's big Black car and he'd come and drive her home, and the next day, he would let my granddaddy use the car to drive her back into town.

She went to school in Belzoni through 11<sup>th</sup> grade, but the high school in Belzoni wasn't accredited, or only went to 11<sup>th</sup> grade, or both, and so she then went to live with a family friend in Greenwood, which is

maybe 30 to 40 miles away, and she graduated there from Greenwood Colored High School in 1944.

In adulthood, probably in my 40's if not 50's, I heard about these Rosenwald Schools, and I had never heard about that before, but my mother knew all about them because Julius Rosenwald was connected to Sears Roebuck and was a millionaire, and he had money available to communities in the south for the purpose of building schools for the Black children or maybe they were called "colored" or something else back then. Apparently, to do that, the local community would have to kick in some money. My mother said the white people in Belzoni would not kick in the money for them to have a Rosenwald School in Belzoni. She also said that with regard to her going to school, somebody told my grandmother that the white people, the school board, had money available to be used like she went to Greenwood for education, but I don't think my granddaddy went over there and asked because that would probably have caused problems if you did. So she went to Greenwood.

She finished Greenwood in 1944, and she said she was supposed to go to cosmetology school in Mississippi, but she had an aunt by marriage, my Aunt Phyllis, who used to spend time between Detroit and Mississippi, and when my mother was up in Belzoni or in Greenwood finishing high school, Aunt Phyllis would write her and tell her that she should come to Detroit and get a job because Detroit was a good place for a colored girl with a high school diploma. What happened that summer is my mother

was to go visit Aunt Phyllis for three weeks in Detroit and then she was going to go see a friend they knew, a lady she called Ms. Sally Ann, that's all I knew, in Chicago for a while and then return to Mississippi. But as my mother said when we sold our house in 2008, she said her three-week vacation in Detroit turned into 64 years until we sold the house on Valentine's Day of 2008. So she got to Detroit, and of course World War II was going on, and Detroit is or everybody knows what Detroit used to be, it was this huge industrial place, and there were jobs. She worked at a few jobs before landing her career in grocery stores. I know she had a job working at one of the tire company factories during the war where she said she put a red dot on tires. She had a job first at a laundry, but she was not cut out for laundry work, so that job didn't last too long. Of course the factory jobs for the women ended when the war ended and the men started coming back home because the men got their jobs back and replaced them. She ended up working at the grocery stores, and back then, before I was born, there was I think it was a chain of local grocery stores, C.L. Smith, and somehow somebody put her in touch with some union people, and they were trying to get Black women hired to work in grocery stores, and she ended up being the first Black women to get a job working in a grocery store as a cashier, and that has meaning to me. But she worked in a grocery store as a cashier on the east side of Detroit. I think they called that area Black Bottom. I never really saw it to have any memories of it, but that's where we were back then, and that's how she met my father

because he was a customer, and he would come in and talk to her. He lived, as I said, in my uncle and aunt's house, and we had other family members in the area. My father had a cousin, a woman, and she said the cousin would come and say somebody said to tell you hello and stuff, so my mother and father met through her working at the grocery store.

They lived in the rooming house as I said, over on the east side. We lived on Rivard Street. They lived there, I was born in 1954, in January, until they bought our house in October of 1955. My mother said that my father said they had to get June, that's me, out of the rooming house and into a house of their own. We moved from there to the west side of Detroit to our house at 3311 Glynn Court, which was off of Dexter, between Dexter and Wildemere. When we moved to that neighborhood, it was a very Jewish neighborhood, and we were the second Black family to move in, buying our house from the Rubensteins. When we did that, I think my parents bought a lot of the Rubenstein's stuff, so we bought a lot of their furniture and their china and crystal and silver, and so the china and crystal and silver that we always had at my parents' house was originally the Rubensteins', and when we moved my mother out here, I packed up the china and crystal and silver, and I have it because I like it. It's my plan to pull it out and use it this Thanksgiving.

We moved onto this block in 1955. I started kindergarten in 1959 in January because my birthday is in January, and back then, children could start school either in September or in January, depending upon when

their birthdays were. January classes were always smaller than the people who would graduate school in June because if you started in January, you graduated in January too. People who started in September would graduate in June. January people are always the smaller group. By the time I started elementary school, the Jewish people had pretty much moved out of the area. It didn't take long. They pretty much moved out of the area, and on our block, our block was single-family homes, except that on the end where Dexter is, right on the corner, I guess on the north side, there was a commercial building but it had apartments on the side and above, and then at the other end, there was maybe a four-family flat apartment building, so the only Jewish people and therefore white people remaining in our neighborhood after 1959 were in that apartment building down by Dexter on our block. Those people, they'd sit outside, like you know, you'd have a folding chair, they'd sit outside in the summer, and they were older. We didn't really interact with one another, but they all had their accents, and they were from Eastern Europe, and I'm sure they had come over because of the war and things that had happened there. When I was a kid in Detroit, you had a lot of Polish people, and the older Polish women, they wore babushkas and other things. We had those people on our block, probably even after the riots, into the early 1970s and eventually they were gone. What happened with the Jewish people in Detroit, if I lived on Glynn off of Dexter, you could say they moved out towards Six Mile, and when the Black people got close out there, they

moved toward Seven Mile, and then when the Black people got out there, then they just went out to Southfield and places, so --- following the Jewish people as they moved through Detroit.

We had a Jewish bakery on our corner, Epstein's Bakery. They had very good brownies. I don't eat a lot of sweets, but they had really good brownies, and they had the best onion buns. If I could have one today. And down Dexter, we had Esquire. They had the world's best corned beef sandwiches, and everybody knows that. I wish I could have one today. I don't eat a lot of that, but I would eat that.

I should say something else though because my daddy worked for Timken Axle. Thereafter, my father got a job with the post office, and he started working nights at the post office. My mother was working at the grocery store, which was generally daytime or early evening, and in particular, my father worked nights from the moment he started work at the post office until he died in 1972 because my parents wanted somebody home with me. I ended up being an only child. My mother had a miscarriage a year after I was born, and then when I was six, she had a full-term stillborn boy, so I was the only child. My daddy would go to work. I think the routine was he'd wake up about five or ten minutes after 9:00 p.m. He'd come downstairs, and we'd eat dinner, and then he had a co-worker who would pick him up and ride him to work, and then he'd get home around 7:00 in the morning. We would eat breakfast, and my father would take me to school, and then he'd sleep until maybe around 11:15

and be up until around 5:00 or 5:15. So one of the points I'm making is that I spent a lot of time with my father. In addition to spending a lot of time with my father, my father had, while he was the fourth of five children, by the time I was born, it was only him and his youngest brother, my Uncle Richard, because in the 1930s, back in West Virginia, the older three children had died of tuberculosis. My grandmother died in the 1930s, so then it was really my grandfather, who we called Doc, and my father and my uncle, and they functioned as a unit, and they were all very self-sufficient men, which is one reason why I'm very strong in my feelings that I don't like people who don't have life skills, and that includes men, and I don't like men who don't use their life skills around the house. So cooking, cleaning, taking care of your own children, doing laundry, I like men who can do all of that because my father and my uncle did. My mother did her work too, but it was never that my mother worked full-time and then had to come home and do everything. Life wasn't like that, and in fact, my father, I would call him the better cook of the two only because my father was a more patient cook than my mother. My mother might be more rushed, but it was good. My daddy was the more patient cook. The only thing he didn't like doing was ironing.

So anyway, Uncle Richard lived with us until I was six years old, and even my mother said that my father had said that if he ever got a house of his own, he would get Doc and bring Doc to live with us. So Doc lived with us, and I have some memories of Doc, but he died when I

was three. Like I said, Uncle Richard was with us until I was six. He also lived at that boarding house and took care of me, so those first six years of my life, I was cared for by men a lot, as much as my mother, and she would be at work.

One of the things I liked about my mother's job was she got an hour for lunch, and by car, if she had the car, she could be home in five to ten minutes, so in the middle of her shift during the day, I would be at home, like if it's summer time or not in school, I would be at home, and I'd get to see my mother in the middle of the day and maybe eat lunch with her, and then she'd go back to work. That was a good thing. That was a very good thing. My mother in working at the grocery store, I guess things were kind of different than they are now, she also got to know a lot of her customers and became friends with a lot of her customers, and they had good relations, and then I got to know some of her customers and some good things happened to me because of customers my mother had at the store. C.L. Smith had been bought by National Foods, so she worked at National Foods on the Boulevard, as we call it, but it's West Grand Boulevard, right off of Linwood. West Grand Boulevard, I'll call it a main street. Maybe six blocks down the way was Motown Hitsville, and a little past there was Henry Ford Hospital, a major hospital. We lived right off of Dexter, and part of the Dexter bus rode on West Grand Boulevard. Later, in my high school days, I would ride the Dexter bus some going to or from school, so I could be on the bus and ride past my mother's job,

ride past Motown. Sometimes if I was coming home from school, I'd get off the bus and just go to the store and wait for her to get off work and just walk around the store.

My mother and I, I never grew up grocery shopping like people do grocery shopping now, you make a list and you go and buy stuff for a week or two weeks because my mother worked at a grocery store, she could bring food home every day, or if we were at the store, we might get what we needed, but we weren't just buying like people go grocery shopping. I learned about the grocery store business with my mother, listening to her about the customers, about the way they did things, about the unions, about the jobs, all kinds of things I learned about grocery stores. My mother was always very particular, even when she lived with me, about how they rung up her groceries and how they bagged her groceries, and always checking to make sure they were ringing up the right price, even when it was my groceries and I was paying we would have to go through that.

I was there in Detroit going to school, so my father would take me to school, my father would pick me up from school. That continued into high school, although in junior high school, I rode the bus home a few times, and in high school, I would ride the bus home probably a lot, but he might pick me up too. I rarely rode the bus to school in the morning, although I did do that sometimes. So sometimes along the way, we'd see some of my friends and we might stop and give them a ride. Daddy would

take me to school, and Daddy would bring me home, and he would feed me and whatever, and I'd have to do homework or whatever. Then my mother would come home. Her shifts varied from I think the earliest was maybe 7:00 to 4:00, 8:00 to 5:00, 9:00 to 6:00, 10:00 to 7:00, 11:00 to 8:00, and then 12:00 to 9:00. So I think the shifts that ended 7:00, 8:00, 9:00 were considered night shifts, so during the week, she might have two of the day shifts and two night shifts, but over time, with seniority, she got to have more day shifts and not as many night shifts. But that's how life worked.

My early elementary school, I went to Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School. I think the address was on Linwood, but it really was a three-school campus. Very unique. I don't know any other situation like that in Detroit. It was a three-school campus. My school was built in 1924, and Roosevelt, the elementary school, was in the middle. Durfee, the junior high school, I guess you'd say was on the south side, and then Central, the high school, was on the north side of the campus. In front on Linwood there was a large field, I guess they played football out there, maybe there was a track. There was a big field. Roosevelt was a large two-story kind of Tudor-looking brick building. Starting in kindergarten in 1959, my kindergarten class was on the opposite side of the campus on the LaSalle Street side. My kindergarten teacher, I will tell you, was Ms. Salot, and her kindergarten was unique in that it had its own entrance directly into the kindergarten class, and it had its own fenced-in play area.

There were other kindergartens in the school, but ours was the only room like that, and to this day, I remember what the sandbox with the sand smelled like. I started school at Roosevelt. I went to Roosevelt until I graduated sixth grade there at my neighborhood school. One of the things I would say is our neighborhood, I told you it had become pretty much all Black, was mixed in that we had certainly working people who worked in factories or other jobs, but we had a lot of the Black professionals who lived in the neighborhood, people who were teachers, people who were dentists, people who were doctors, so their kids, we were all going to school together. On the far end, we had kids who were in households where maybe they were on the welfare, but I generally didn't know those children as well. The important thing is that amongst my friends and in my circle of friends, our parents all wanted the same things for us. Amongst my circle of friends, that meant you were going to go to college and do something, and in my household, probably before I was born, it was determined that I would go to college, so that was the focus of my mother with me forever, and I'll call it the focus of my father too, but as my mother said, she orchestrated things, and he carried it out. He followed her instructions.

Roosevelt was a wonderful school. In my entire career with the Detroit Public Schools, I'd say I only had two bad teachers. I had a teacher at Roosevelt, I won't call her name. The teachers would show films, nature films, squirrels in the woods or something, and then you had

film strips, and then boys would be audiovisual people, but she would put on a film or have them do a film strip, and you'd turn the lights off, the door to the classroom had a window, and she'd pull the shade down, the film would be on, and then she'd put her head down on the desk, and we'd be watching the film. But you know, you hear your parents talk, and I can recall hearing my mother say that somebody said she was having marital problems or something. And then I had another teacher at Roosevelt who this day still makes my blood boil, and everybody knows how I feel about her. I'm not going to call her name, everybody knows how I feel about her. Otherwise, all my teachers at Roosevelt were wonderful people. I was always a good student. I always was. So they were very helpful to me in that regard. My mother was always looking for programs and activities, and so teachers would make suggestions or choose me to do things. I was born in Detroit at a great time, and any of my friends will tell you because we say this all the time, we had a great time growing up in Detroit. We had a wonderful experience. We grew up in the heyday of Motown and all kinds of things. Things were really good for us, but like I said, our parents had ideas for us.

One thing that happened when I was at Roosevelt we got a new principal, and her name was E. Lynette Taylor. So this takes you to 1964, 1965. Mrs. Taylor became our principal. She was married to a man named Hobart Taylor who was from Texas originally. President Johnson was President, and Hobart Taylor ultimately went to work for President

Johnson, and they moved to D.C. But they were, I guess you'd call them well-off people, and people who know *Ebony* magazine would know that *Ebony* used to every year have a best dressed list of women, and when I was at Roosevelt, Mrs. Taylor was in *Ebony* magazine for her attire. She wore nice clothes, that's true. Well one thing she did, however this came about, down the street from my mother's job, there was an office for Olivetti typewriters. Olivetti typewriters was down the street, and somehow Mrs. Taylor met people with Olivetti, and she got them to outfit a classroom with typewriters, so for my fifth-grade year, I was in the class where our language arts program was focused around the use of the typewriter, and it was team taught by two teachers, Mrs. Thelma McCrary and Mrs. Cecil McFadden, and this is what we did. Our reading, when we would do our writing, anything we did we would be using the typewriter, but they had to teach us how to type. So I learned how to type when I was in fifth grade, 9 or 10 years old, and I've been typing ever since. So really, I think, Mrs. Taylor was so ahead of the time because now people are using computers and they do all the typing. Kids can't write now because they grow up using keyboards, but we learned to do this. We were on television. There was a man, a guy named Dave something or other, had a local TV show in Detroit. They taped it earlier in the evening, at least they did with us, but it didn't come on until about 1:00 in the morning. Some of us went on his TV show, and we were typing on the TV show.

For sixth grade, I had one semester I was in Mr. Cross's homeroom and class, another semester I was with Dr. Radlow had a group of us called the Critical Thinking Club, so we would have to do things with Dr. Radlow to advance our minds. Mrs. Taylor took a group of us to some program, some operatic program. She was exposing us to different things.

MR. WEAVER: One quick question before we get too far into school, if I could ask just a couple follow-ups about your parents. Your mother seems like a remarkable person. You talked a little about how she was unique in her siblings in that she got to go to school, and I was wondering if you had a hunch as to why that was.

MS. JEFFRIES: My son and I are still trying to figure that out. Still trying to figure that out because none of the rest of them came close to finishing high school. Some of them only went to elementary school. But at least she said she always wanted to do things, and people let her do it. If you asked her why is it that this happened with you, that was always kind of unclear to us. But she said her father would get her the stuff she needed and they're out there sharecropping, so whatever, it worked for me and Rudy. My son is named Rudy. Nobody else complained about her. Everybody got along, all my uncle and aunts. They loved each other, they supported each other, all of that. So I don't know, but that's what happened with my mother. It's kind of curious to us.

MR. WEAVER: It sounds like both your parents worked incredibly hard and worked a lot of different jobs over the years. Did they ever talk to you about a kind of

dream job or some other kind of work that they always wanted to do but weren't able to? Anything like that?

MS. JEFFRIES: Certainly my father never talked about that. I'm pretty sure he didn't want to be a coal miner. I can say that. So he came to Detroit for other opportunities. I don't know why he didn't work in just one of the big three car factories, but like I said, he worked for Timken Axle.

I think my mother, maybe for her it would have been a teacher. But she was born in 1924 in Mississippi and grew up in the Delta, which I want to say this very clearly the Delta was and is still rough. So for her to have done any of the many things that she did by the time she died in 2012 would not have been dreamed for a little Black girl born and raised there during these times.

Here's a story about my mom that makes us laugh. Dillinger was big when she was a kid, and they used to have to walk to school, I guess before she went to Belzoni. So she was afraid of John Dillinger because they got the newspapers or had radios. She was afraid of John Dillinger, so she said you'd be walking down the road and a car comes, she'd be afraid that it was Dillinger going to do something to her, and she jumped in the ditch to hide from Dillinger. So this was a great problem for her, which I pointed out to her, Dillinger was not interested in little pickaninnies in Mississippi, children of sharecroppers. But she said her father talked to her one day and told her he didn't care about people like them, he was robbing banks and stuff, so that was a great comfort to my

mother, but she could tell you all about Dillinger getting set up by the woman in the red dress and all of that. This was a big thing to her. So I lived in Silver Spring for 33 years, and a place that I've been eating at for longer than that now is the Woodside Deli on Georgia Avenue, and they would have all these old pictures in there framed on the wall, but they have a Wanted sign for John Dillinger there, and the reward and everything, so I took a picture of my mother by the sign, and then I took a picture of my little granddaughter and me by that poster earlier this year, because now I can go to the Woodside Deli and see the John Dillinger poster and it makes me feel good because I think about my mother.

So that's what I was saying. Just like she even left Belzoni to go to Greenwood. I think that took a lot of personal fortitude. First she was with her uncle and aunt, and then she's with these other people, so I think she had something in her in that regard.

MR. WEAVER: You mentioned that when she transferred to Greenwood, that was a school that was set up specifically for Black children at the time.

MS. JEFFRIES: Yes. That's the name of it. They were segregated so she went to Greenwood Colored High School.

MR. WEAVER: Have you or your parents traced back your lineage, or how far back have you traced your lineage? It sounds like you've done a lot of that work.

MS. JEFFRIES: I actually first year law school got a job at the National Archives, so this would be 1975, 1976, because for undergrad I went to Wesleyan University. One of my law school classmates was also one of my college

classmates and he was from here, and one day Cliff walked up to me and said that if I was looking for a job, his mother worked at the Archives and they needed somebody and I could go over there and use her name and get a job. So I went over there, I used her name, and I got a job. I do want to say this about that job before I talk about the genealogy. When I was at Wesleyan, I worked in the library, and one of the things I would have to do is this filing kind of thing, so when I graduated from Wesleyan and I had my degree from that high-priced New England university, I said to myself I would never file again. I come down here, I get the job at the Archives working in the Central Research Room, and the first thing they said to me my first day was, oh we're glad you're here. We have a backlog of filing of our research applications. And they gave me a box full of applications, and I had to alphabetize them and file them. I was sitting there saying to myself I cannot believe this is happening to me. I have this degree from that high-priced university, I'm here in law school, and I'm filing all over again. But I wasn't too good to file, and I did it, and I worked there.

People come to the National Archives to do genealogical research big time. They come there for that all the time. In fact, the summer I worked there, the summer of 1976, which is right before Roots came out, you would have thought that every person from Utah, every Mormon from Utah, had come to the National Archives that summer to do their genealogical research. So I did do genealogical research back then, but

really only of my father's family and the Jeffries people. I got back to I believe 1850 and 1860 slave schedules. I found a slave on the schedule who would be the right age and race and sex to be my great-grandfather. The slave schedules did not list you by name. Now essentially there were two slave owners down there, brothers. I believe their names were Edward and Thomas Jeffries, something like that. If you look at the census for Farrah, Jasper County, Georgia, for 1900 and 1880s, whatever, there are a lot of Black people in the census down there who have the last name Jeffries because they took the last name of their slave owners.

A few years back, I was doing some genealogical research on my computer, and I came across a couple of documents, one written by a man named Jeffries, a white guy, who wrote about life in that part of Georgia back, I think, around the 1880s or 1890s. He had researched it, and he talked in there about not just the white families but also Black people. That document was interesting to me, but I subsequently found a will that had been posted online for one of the Jeffries men, and in it, he was giving away his possessions, which included some slaves, he's giving them away to his children. That was a very moving moment that evoked a lot of feelings for me because I'm reading that thinking well these could be my relatives, my ancestors, that he's giving away, and how is it possible that you think you can own people or that you can give people to other people. So that was a very moving moment for me.

One time when my son was maybe 8 or 10, we went down to the Archives and did some further investigation because at the Archives, the census can be released to the public after a 72-year period. So since I had left law school, some other census had become available, and we found some more information. But that's one of the things I would have thought I would have done more of by now having been retired for ten years.

I haven't tried to do my mother's family because my grandfather was an only child, and even though her maiden name is Wade and his name is Wade, she said that that wasn't his name originally, but he had some half-sisters, and he wanted to have the same name. I think she said his name was Nichols or Nicholson, and I've never set about to try to research him and his family, but I do intend to do that.

The last part would be, as I said my daddy is from West Virginia, and then some of those West Virginia people also moved to Detroit, and he was friends with some people. One set of his friends had a brother who ended up living here in Silver Spring. He did a lot of genealogical research, and even though I'd never met Bennie, I heard of Bennie, and one day he sent me a fat envelope. He had researched my family and the Jeffries people, and all the things he had in there were very interesting. Plus he talked about people he knew, and I learned things that I didn't know because I must say that my father and my uncle did not discuss their early years. They didn't talk about their brothers and sisters. They didn't talk about their mother, which I always took to mean it was just a painful

subject to them because they died when they were so young. But, if you asked a question, they would answer the question, but through what Bennie did, I found out a lot more information.

MR. WEAVER: You talked a lot about your mother's family and Mississippi as well, and you mentioned the NewZ2021@ family. Were you going to come back to something about that?

MS. JEFFRIES: Yes. I'm about to meet the daughter of Mr. Mark Simmons, Jr. I, myself, only had one encounter with Mr. Mark, and that's when my grandfather died, and I was 12 in 1966. But through the magic of Facebook, I connected with his daughter. There is a Facebook group called something like Memories of Belzoni, Growing up in Belzoni. I didn't grow up in Belzoni, but I would visit. I joined that group. She posted one day, and I saw her name. So I posted and asked if she's related to these people. She's his daughter. Her name is Ann. Ann is about my age, and she no longer lives in Mississippi, and her father just died earlier this year. He was down there still in Belzoni. We similarly have good feelings for Belzoni, but I need to be very clear. The experience of a 64-year-old white woman from Belzoni is worlds different from a 64-year-old Black woman living or visiting Belzoni. The land they had was called Four Mile. Let's say I'll call Four Mile a plantation. My grandfather sharecropped. Ann recently, a few months ago, told me that there was a group having a Four Mile reunion, and she and her mother and husband are going to be there. So next week I will be going to Mississippi to go to

the Four Mile reunion, and I'm going to meet Ann and meet these other people who were out at Four Mile and continue my Mississippi path and discovery, and I will learn things about Four Mile and everything out there. So I do look forward to that, and that's what I was going to say about the Simmons. Ann, like me, likes sunflowers. Here in Montgomery County, if you go out River Road, out by McKee- Beshers Wildlife Management Area, they have a 30-acre sunflower tract, and so they plant these sunflowers that bloom in July, and I've taken my granddaughter out there. Ann lives in Kansas, and they have sunflowers there, so she posts pictures of sunflowers. One of the things I do as a retiree is I volunteer at Brookside Gardens, particularly with the Wings of Fancy Butterfly Exhibit every year, and I call myself a butterfly semi-professional. Ann is into butterflies too, and she turned me to a Facebook group, Butterfly Enthusiasts, and we take pictures and we post and we do things about butterflies. So I do look forward to meeting Ann, who likes butterflies and sunflowers.

MR. WEAVER: You've written a lot about going back to Belzoni growing up and the role that played in your life. What was it like when you would go back and visit when you were a child? What was there to do for fun? Were there culinary delights that you got to enjoy there that you didn't enjoy in Detroit?

MS. JEFFRIES: We're going to Belzoni. Belzoni, if you look it up in the census, I think now they have less than 3,000 people, but I told you it was the county seat

of Humphries County. When I was a kid, all around it was cotton fields, and Black people picked cotton. There was a town, so by the time I was born, my grandfather lived in town. My mother and I would go to Mississippi every year. We would go by train, and we'd go the last week, sometimes the last two weeks, of August, which, as I tell people, there isn't a hotter time in life to be in Mississippi. Once or twice we did a week at Easter and a week in August. We would take the train. I loved this. This is all part of my Belzoni thing. We would take the train, and so the train would leave out of the Michigan Central Railway Station, which a lot of people know because it's been a symbol of decay in Detroit. Ford Motor Company recently bought it. But we would go there, catch the train to Chicago, leave Detroit 11:00 at night, and the post office facility that my father originally worked in was right next-door kind of, across the street. But we would catch the train at 11:00 at night, go to Chicago and pull in between 3:00 and 4:00, and you're pulling in on the train, it was very quiet at 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning, but you'd go past the Buckingham Fountain, and it would be lit, and the colors. I loved seeing the fountains. We would catch the City of New Orleans, which Arlo Guthrie made famous in song. We would ride the City of New Orleans to Mississippi. It would pull out at 7:00 a.m. or 7:30. We would arrive in Durant, Mississippi around 10:00 at night. If you were going to Mississippi the last week or two of August in the 1950s or 1960s, a whole lot of Black people would be going home to Mississippi, and the train

would be very long. There'd be long lines of people. Granddaddy would come and pick us up in Durant, which was about an hour from Belzoni. He might have my aunt or somebody or cousins and we'd be driving.

My mother was always very conscious of and supportive of the Civil Rights Movement and supportive of the NAACP, and growing up as a kid, I used to have to go to all these NAACP meetings with her, and they were talking about all the things that were going on, and I'd be sitting there reading a book. But anyway, I used to have to go to all of this with my mother, and she sold memberships to the NAACP. We'd eat dinner and would watch and Chet Huntley and David Brinkley so you could see all this stuff happening as you ate food, just like I watched the Vietnam War while I was eating dinner. So you could see people blowing up things or whatever was going on over there as you were eating your meal. So we were always looking at everything, and I always knew what was going on in Mississippi.

I should point out, my father never went to Mississippi with us. My father said many times, he said he wouldn't get caught in Mississippi flying over in a 707 jet. It was a long time ago. He always said that about Mississippi. But he didn't object to us going. And in particular, it was always very good for me. I had a lot of cousins in Detroit. My father's family is very small. When I was born, his family was small. They were old or they were dead. So now it's smaller, older, and more dead. But I had all these people in my mother's family because she's one of eleven.

My Aunt Sadie, who was the second daughter in the family, she and her husband had both been married previously, and they both had kids. I think she had two, and he had five, then they got married, and they had eleven. They had like sixteen kids or something. So they had children around my age; I could go to Mississippi, and in particular, be with them, even though I had cousins in Detroit I could be with.

We would pull into Durant. My mother was born in Lexington, and she had an Aunt Hun who lived in Lexington. My mother would like to stop and see Aunt Hun before we got to Belzoni. And this would be now 11:00 at night. It would be dark. The problem for me was Aunt Hahn didn't have a bathroom. She had an outhouse, and so I would have to experience Aunt Hun's outhouse inevitably on these trips. That was one of the two I'll call unpleasantnesses about the car ride. The other thing was because this is the Civil Rights Era and I knew the things that were going on in Mississippi and you're driving over hills, around curves, and everything, I always believed that we'd get to the top of a hill, we'd go around the curve, we'd make a corner, and we would see a cross burning, and we'd see the KKK people on these rides to Belzoni. And I must say that never happened. I always expected that. Always. We'd get down there, and my grandfather had a house, and he had a couple of houses behind it. He had a screened-in front porch with a swing, and I could swing on that. Of course this is pre-air conditioning, but people had fans. But still, it's 102 degrees in Mississippi. A fan can only do so much

for you. But my cousins, I would eat enough at my grandfather's home just so that I could walk two or three blocks over to Aunt Sadie's house and be with the kids, or maybe some of the kids would come over and get me. Aunt Sadie had a lot of kids, so they always had food, but they would eat biscuits, and Mississippi, they sell something called Alaga syrup, and it was a dark brown, very sweet syrup, and I'd go over there and eat biscuits with the butter and the syrup. Granddaddy, my mother liked fish, and in Mississippi they had a fish – this is before Belzoni became the catfish capital – because the local fish is buffalo, and it's a large fish, and my mother liked that. Granddaddy would get that, and we'd have watermelon. I had a step-grandmother, Miss Rosie, she would cook a lot of food and she made coconut cakes, so people were eating. There was a woman around the corner from my granddaddy who had like a little store, and she sold snow cones. So I would get snow cones with my cousins. My Aunt Sadie and them lived on Church Street. I think her address was 188 Church Street. Next to their house was a vacant lot, and on the other side of the lot was another little house, and the front of it had a store if you're facing it on the right, a little store, and then they had a shoe shop if you're facing it on the left. That was owned and operated by the Mays family. Rufus Mays and his wife Alice Mays. They had three children who were older than me, two daughters and a son, and they were more my older cousins ages. I remember going in their store and buying stage plank cookies, which were these flat rectangular cookies that had a pink

frosting, and the daughters would be there behind the counter. I knew them, but they're older than me. I would see them there. I went downtown into Belzoni, I guess you could say kind of rarely because there was really no reason to go. Until I was in my 40's, I probably was never on the white side of Belzoni, so those white neighborhoods, they were near Aunt Sadie and them, and you could look down the block, but I had no experience with that or with white people. I never ate in a public restaurant, I'll call "public" that anyone can go to, until I was probably in my 40's. My mother did allow me to go to the movies once in Belzoni. The movies were segregated, so we had to sit upstairs. My cousins and I saw a Sinbad movie, an action movie of the time. Now in reality, we had great seats. There wasn't a problem with the seats or anything. You saw really well. But it was the principle of the thing. She let me do that once. My grandfather had a phone, but it didn't have a dial. His number was 453R. If you wanted to make a call, you would pick up the hand thing and the operator would come on and you would tell the operator the number. My mother never allowed me to place a phone call in Belzoni because my grandfather lived alone and had heart trouble, my mother did not want it to be that white woman operator thought that I was not respectful enough, that I was disrespectful, and then she'd be vindictive and they'd snatch my grandfather's phone. So if we were calling daddy, she would make the call, and once they were talking, I could get on the phone and talk, but I was never allowed to place a call.

My mother said the first time she ever had to tell me about racial discrimination I was 4 years old in Belzoni, and we were downtown, and she said that I saw a little kid, a white kid, with an ice cream cone, and I wanted an ice cream cone, but she had to explain to me that I couldn't get one because they didn't sell ice cream to us, because I guess if we all ate from the same ice cream, they would have turned into me! We did that in Belzoni. Some of my older cousins were going to college then, which they went to, which is an HBCU, it was then called Mississippi Valley State in Itta Bena. I did ride over there a few times, and I was very happy to see my cousins on a college campus. The late Marion Barry, mayor of this city, was born in Itta Bena, Mississippi. You didn't travel around and go places because there weren't places for you to go unless you were visiting a relative or going to a church or something. When I was pregnant with my son in 1984, I was going to Detroit for Veterans Day weekend, but right before I went to Detroit, my cousin James, who still lived in Belzoni, he was a schoolteacher, died. He had been on dialysis for almost 16 or 17 years. So everybody in Detroit was going to Mississippi for the funeral, and they were all driving down together. They liked to drive. Well I decided to go to Mississippi too, and I flew from Washington National to Jackson, Mississippi. Whatever airline I went on, Jackson was the third stop, and I paid \$548 for a roundtrip ticket from here to Jackson, which in 1984, I could have gone to California or Europe for the money I paid to go to Jackson, Mississippi. When I went there,

because I have views about Mississippi, I did not then, nor do I now, want to be in a car driving on a highway by myself in Mississippi at night because I don't trust things down there. So I made sure I got in early in the day. I rented a car, and I'm driving the hour up to Belzoni, and as I'm driving, I see a billboard talking about Mississippi State Parks, and I saw that sign, and I'm like now this is interesting. And then I drive some more down the road, and then I saw another billboard about Mississippi State Parks, and I'm like well I've never heard of no parks in Mississippi. This is new. Admittedly I hadn't been there in ten years. So when I got to Belzoni, I said to my cousins, I see these billboards on the road about Mississippi State Parks, but I don't know anything about a state park. As my cousin pointed out to me, she said they have always had parks in Mississippi, but when you were coming, we could not go. So it didn't get talked about. That was a revelation to me, really, the idea that there were parks of Mississippi had never crossed my mind, and in 1984, I was 30 years old.

One of the things my mother and I would do in later years is we would go to Mississippi ever year and because there was so much of the state we had not seen; we would go places. So, for instance, one year we flew to Nashville and rented a car. I read murder mysteries, and one of the books I read took place in Mississippi with this park ranger who was assigned to the Natchez Trace Parkway, which I had never heard of before. So we drove along the parkway in Mississippi, getting off so that

we could go to Tupelo because I wanted to swing by and see Elvis's home. We drove past there and saw Elvis's home, but our ultimate destination at that point was to go over to Oxford, which is the home of the University of Mississippi, commonly known as Ole Miss. Well in 1963, I guess it was, that's when James Meredith was integrating Ole Miss, and we're in Detroit looking at that on the TV and everything and people rioting and all this stuff. I wanted to see what was so special about Ole Miss that they had to riot to keep someone like me out of Ole Miss. We went over there and saw the campus. We spent two nights in Oxford, which is a nice little college town. We ate at a couple of places, cute places, good food, like you could go here someplace. They had a bookstore on the square, a pretty good bookstore. I went in there. We stayed at a hotel for two nights. The young woman behind the desk was a college student there, but she was from Maryland, from Prince Georges County, and I was telling her how Mississippi was different from the way it was when I was a kid. Her response to me what, "It ain't all that different." Which was also true, and I knew as well, but she had been there that long that she already knew that.

The other thing they had in Oxford is Faulkner is from there. His home is something Oaks, something with a tree. I think I went over there and saw Faulkner's home. So we did that. Another time we went to Vicksburg and did the battlefield. One time, we'd never been to the Mississippi gulf coast. This was after Katrina. We went down a few years

later, and we went to Biloxi and Gulfport. I think we stayed in Gulfport. We were at this fairly large like Courtyard by Marriott. They had in the lobby, they had a case with artifacts from the hurricane, and then on their TV, they had a video that you could see hurricane footage. I think the water had come into the lobby almost to the ceiling, like a foot from the ceiling. But they had been able to operate. When we were staying at that hotel, I went out back and got in the hot tub, and as I'm lying there in the hot tub Jacuzzi thing, I said to myself, if this were 1965, they would kill me for doing this. And that was probably ten years ago. My mother has been dead for four years.

We went to restaurants in Gulfport, had good seafood, and all of that. So we endeavored to see Mississippi that we could not see when I was growing up. I will always have very fond feelings for Mississippi, even though it's a rough place.

The other thing is I've been to 44 states and some other places, but I've been to 44 states. Mississippi is the only place where to this day I can say something about going to Mississippi or having been to Mississippi, and people will say I've never wanted to go there, I'll never go there. That is the reaction I get all the time. I said that to someone three weeks ago, and the lady said she didn't want to go there. I think people should go. In fact, I was just up at Harvard for the week, and I was talking to some friends, and I told one of my friends I'm going to put together a trip, and people can go to Mississippi and we'll see a lot of interesting things.

Because there's a lot that's different, but there's a whole lot of stuff that's the same, and if you go to the Delta, now you know Mississippi is the poorest state in the union, you will see things you just don't know still go on. People have no idea how it was, how it is. My own son has only been in Belzoni for three hours, and for three hours, we went to Tennessee one time at my husband's, and we drove down for the day. My mother wanted to go, and she was showing us around. He was maybe 12 or something like that. Anyway, he doesn't want to go to Belzoni. Every time I tell him stuff about it, he says why would you want to go to a place like that. I would like for him to go. I would like for him and his wife and his daughter, who is 2 ½, and we're soon going to have a grandson added to the mix. I would like for them to go and see things, but my daughter-in-law is Jewish, which is white to me, and I told him I don't trust Mississippi, so I told him if we went to Mississippi, I didn't want them in the car together. She and I could be in the car together, and he and my mother could have been in the car together. So my son's response to me, "And why would I want to go to a place like that." So anyway. So now when I'm with him and my little granddaughter, she wants to go on an airplane, and I tell her she can go on a trip with me and we would go to Mississippi. I say that to make my son laugh.

MR. WEAVER: You mentioned a time I think it was 1966 or 1967 after your grandfather died, I believe, that there was a period of time when you stopped going to Belzoni. Can you talk about that a little bit?

MS. JEFFRIES: I will. Two traumatic things happened when I was a kid. Here's the first one. I loved and love *I Love Lucy*, and I remember the day when I was about 6 or 7 years old, it's in the news in the paper that Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz are getting a divorce, and I was tremendously shocked by this. I asked my mother how could it be that they were getting divorced because they were so happy, and she said things you saw on TV were not like that. So that was a childhood trauma, the divorce of Lucy and Desi. I wanted them to get back together until I guess he died first, so that precluded that.

The other thing is we were going because my mother wanted to go home and see her father, but also we had the other relatives, Aunt Sadie Aunt Fredericka and other people down there, and my mother was very close with Aunt Sadie, and she did a lot for the kids, especially the ones going to college, sending them clothes, money, helping them with stuff. And there were kids my age. I had a cousin, Barbara, who – I'm going to talk about this, but it's hard. Barbara was three months to the day younger than I am. She had a sister, Edith, who was born in October of 1955, so she was almost two years younger than me, and then the next oldest child was Sadie Ruth, who was two years older than me. I would be playing with them and doing things with them. So granddaddy died on May 6th, and we went down. Everybody from Detroit went, and I would point out my father went, so this was entirely shocking to me because my daddy always said he wouldn't be caught in Mississippi flying over in a 707 jet.

So we all went down there. Before we left, my uncles and aunts and mother, we're at granddaddy's house talking about who was going to get what, and I will say, and this is true, things got kind of heated between them. The only time in life that I've ever seen such. Okay, so then we leave. We drive back up to Detroit. I have a cousin, Julia, who was ten years older than me. When I was younger, when she was younger, she would come to Detroit some in the summertime and take care of me. So for instance the summer of 1960, we didn't go to Mississippi because my mother was having a baby that August, and Julia came up to help with me. So anyway, on this Sunday night, the phone rang and I was upstairs. I answered the phone, and it was Julia. The only thing she said to me was, she said, "Let me speak to Aunt Bettie." That's all she said. She wasn't like friendly or anything. She just said let me speak to Aunt Bettie. My mother was down in the kitchen. We had a phone on the wall, so I called down, and I told my mother to pick up the phone. So I wanted to be nosy, and I went back to the phone and put my hand over the mouthpiece to listen to what Julia was saying. She said, she was saying, "and this one is dead, and that one is dead, and this one." And my mother was saying, "Are you sure?" And she was going over it again. What had happened was my cousin, Tommy Roy, was 18. He had graduated from high school, and my Uncle Bit, my Aunt's husband, was in the hospital in Jackson, University hospital. Uncle Bit had an enlarged heart, and they had had some of the graduation or a convocation ceremony that Sunday, so then

they drove to Jackson to see Uncle Bit. Coming back from the hospital, driving back, Tommy was driving, and for whatever reasons, ran into a Mack truck head on. So there were six people in the car. Aunt Sadie; Tommy Roy, who is like 18; Clayton Louis, who's probably around 15 or 16; Sadie Ruth, 14; Barbara, 12, and Edith was 9. So six of them in the car, and five of them got killed. The only survivor was Sadie, who was 14. She was in a coma for a couple of months. She had a lot of broken bones. They put pins and rods all in her body. So anyway, we all drove back to Mississippi. Once again, surprising me, my father went. But in my mind, I thought that this was a trick to get us back to Mississippi to talk more about the house and stuff. I told you it their discussions before we left had been heated, so I thought it was a trick. That would be a cruel trick.

I don't know the answer to this. We maybe would have still gone to Mississippi every year to visit Aunt Sadie and everyone, but once that happened, we didn't go back.

The part of that is I tell people I say well you know in order for us to really go anyplace else, because going to Mississippi was our vacation, in order for us to go anyplace else on vacation, my grandfather had to die. But the next year, which would be 1967, we went international, and we went to Montreal because they had Expo '67, one of the last World's Fairs. We went to Montreal. And it's a critical trip in my life. Sadie Ruth came up for the summer, and she went with us. In kind of like an Airbnb

thing, we stayed in the home of a French family. People would rent out rooms. Well Montreal, Quebec, is close to Vermont, so while we were up there, we drove over into Vermont. My mother would say we went to Maine too, but if we had gone to Maine, I would remember that, and I just think she was confused. But anyway, she said we did that, too. We went to Vermont, and we're driving around in Vermont, and we're in some little small town, and it was blue sky, and they had a little town square with a duck pond and ducks in the water, and there was a woman by the side of the road selling roasted corn and a white clapboard church, and I saw that, and I said at that moment, I said this is very quaint. I said it to myself. I said "This is very quaint. I'm going to go to college in New England." So that was 1967, and I was going into 9<sup>th</sup> grade. That was very important, that trip, and that's exactly what did happen because I never varied from that in my mind.

We didn't go back to Mississippi until around 1972 or 1973 – James got a kidney transplant. This is a lesson I learned about life. Before we left Mississippi when my granddaddy died, my mother and Aunt Sadie were talking, and I was standing right next to my mother, and I was looking at Aunt Sadie. Uncle Bit was in the hospital then with his enlarged heart. My Aunt Sadie said to my mother while we were standing there, she said, "I do not think you will see Bit again." Because she thought he was going to die. They all thought he was going to die. Well two weeks later, the person who was dead was Aunt Sadie and the kids.

Uncle Bit died in 1972 or 1973. He lived like another six or seven years after that. So I tell people, I don't predict the future. My mother was living with me, and she had terminal cancer. I still didn't know who was going to die first, because I could have gotten hit by a car and died.

But I was standing there when she said that.

To go to a funeral for multiple people you knew and loved is very hard. I'd say it was an experience. I think at the funeral what I remember is my Uncle Hugh and Aunt Sarah had twin boys, and they must have been a year-and-a-half or two. I remember doing the funeral. I won't say one of the boys was assigned to me, but I remember I was holding him, and everybody had a closed casket, except for Edith, and they had said that she died, and it was a surprise because she didn't have the visible injuries the others had, but it turned out she had internal injuries, and that's why she died.

I want to say this about Edith. Edith was a very beautiful girl. Edith was born with a birth defect. Her right arm ended right at the crook of her elbow, but to her, that was no defect, and she did whatever we did. And like I said, the last time I saw her was in 1965, which would have been right before her ninth birthday. She did whatever we did. She could play baseball and swing the bat. She could put a pen or a pencil in the crook and write with it, and I think she used her left hand too. She did whatever we did. I think she said that the state of Mississippi would give her a prosthetic or something when she was 13, but she told me she did not

want it. She was doing everything the way she wanted to. And I will say this about Edith. She could hit you with that arm, and it would hurt. So that is true.

So that's why we didn't go back as much. My cousin James, who died when I was pregnant with Rudy, he was a schoolteacher at the school, so he taught his brothers and sisters, so he told them they all had to call him Mr. Gray, so that's what they called him. I never called him that. They call him that to this day. We were talking about that earlier in the summer. He was a science teacher, and then he lost his kidneys, and they had a dialysis machine at his house. I remember he said back then that the average life span on dialysis was ten years or something, and he lived sixteen years. He ended up having two transplants that were rejected.

We went down to Mississippi. It was an experience because I was in college. Daddy had died. Maybe it was like 1974 or something. We went to Mississippi because he was going to have a kidney transplant, and I was home from college, so mama and I flew down. We did not take the train. I had started flying by then, so she did. We flew down, and while we were there, we went shopping. We went to some nice ladies' dress store. My mother got all these nice outfits and shoes and a purse. It was a regular store, and the women in there were all white. They took my mother's personal check from out of town, and after we got home from Detroit, the woman wrote my mother a thank you note and told her to come back. Now that was a different kind of Mississippi experience. We

talked about that. They wouldn't have taken your check in Detroit if they didn't know you, but she took the check. That was nice. She got some nice stuff.

MR. WEAVER: I know it's hard to talk about that kind of profound loss, especially when you experience it at a young age, but I was wondering at the time it seems like it was very difficult to cope with, and I was wondering if you thought about at the time when you came back to Detroit, did you think about life differently? Were you thinking about your role in the world in a way that you hadn't before at that point?

MS. JEFFRIES: Not like that, but like I said, the impact of standing there and having Aunt Sadie say I don't think you'll see him again, and then she was the one who died. That certainly was an impact. Here's another thing. It did impact me. The following summer, Sadie Ruth came up for the summer, and she was with us, and she and I talked, and I asked her about it. She said she didn't remember. Well, people with head injury often don't remember. People with trauma may not remember. But what she said is she was asleep in the car when it happened. To this day, for me to just to close my eyes and be in a car with you driving, I have to feel very comfortable with you. So when I was going out with my husband, before we got married, I said to him one day that I could tell that I felt comfortable with him because we were driving somewhere and I took a little nap or closed my eyes or something. So even now, I'm probably a little more relaxed about that, but I still feel that way. She said she didn't

know what happened. I want to stay awake. I don't know that I want to see it coming, though.

The other part in terms of seeing my world differently was like I said, it allowed us to go someplace else. Probably in my mind, like I always felt I was going to college, probably in my mind, I felt I would just be going to the University of Michigan or Michigan State. I also thought that I saw myself living in Detroit. I was always going to be a lawyer. I saw myself living in Detroit, maybe being married to a doctor, being like my friends' families living out in Palmer Woods or someplace and just living a nice life. The idea of not living in Detroit or like I said, going to school in New England, I never considered that. Now some people went to school down South when we were in high school. Some of my friends, for instance, went to Spellman and elsewhere. Based upon my experience going to Mississippi, I had no interest whatsoever in going to school down South. And all the civil rights stuff that happened, that was not an interest to me. Another thing that happened was when I was a kid, a lot of kids in the summertime would maybe go back down South and be with their grandparents or aunts and uncles and work on the family farm or something, that never happened in my house. It certainly was never discussed that I heard of, and I never asked to go. But I think it's very clear to me that my father would not have allowed that, number one. And I really don't think my mother wanted me there without her, because, like I said, she kept a rein on what I could do. I was with my cousins at a gas

station, and I drank out of a white water fountain, and they were trying to get me not to do it, but I didn't understand what they were talking about. I wasn't paying attention. I'm sure Malcolm Jeffries would have shot that down.

My mother said that when she left Mississippi going to Detroit on that trip, she took the bus, but with the way the segregation was, she said she had to stand up from Belzoni to Memphis for the duration, which is a three-hour drive, but it would be longer on the bus. She said from that experience, she got flat feet. She didn't like it. But she said when she hooked up with my father, he had her take the train down South instead of the bus because you didn't have to do that. So that's how she came to take the train. I will say Belzoni is my part of my worldview.

MR. WEAVER: I was going to ask a couple of follow-up questions on that because it was such a time of profound change, both when your mom left Mississippi to go to Detroit, kind of at the end of the Great Migration, and that experience of growing up in this kind of center of culture, the center of a lot of stuff, people moving to Detroit, it was a really important city at the time, and you kind of grow up in that world, but you also go back and experience what things are like in a place that was obviously much different and not as hospitable, especially for you and your family, at the time. I was wondering if you could talk a little bit more about of how you experienced that difference as a child, what the differences between

Detroit and Mississippi just culturally, and how you thought about that growing up.

MS. JEFFRIES: That's a good question. For me as a child, the two places I could only imagine people living were Detroit and Belzoni, and they were worlds apart and different. I had been to some other places. I had been to West Virginia, where daddy was from. I had relatives in Chicago. I had been to Cleveland. But we went to Mississippi. I knew it the most. I tell you where I did not want to live. I did not want to live in New York City because I saw Ralph Kramden and Alice and they were living in that two-room apartment with the kitchen sink in the living area and everything. We all had houses, single-family houses, and we had cars. When I was a kid, we had one car, but as I got older, we had two cars. That was a biggie. I had my own room and everything. When we would go to Mississippi where you had to share space, beds, rooms, whatever. When granddaddy died, or Aunt Sadie and them died and everyone came down, couldn't stay at hotels or anything, we're all double and triple in beds, people sleeping on the floor one bathroom, this whole thing. But at home, I didn't have to do that. We did things more. I always thought it was interesting, my cousins in Belzoni, they always took school pictures, and every year they'd have school pictures, and it would have the year on it. They never did that in Detroit, and I thought that was interesting. Or their high school, they went to an all-Black school, McNair High School, they had a marching band and uniforms. I don't think our high schools had

that, so I thought that was interesting. But we had things they didn't have. It was like I had a more, I will certainly call it, a more free world in Detroit, but you know there are limits to that too because they had de jure discrimination. There were places in Michigan you shouldn't be. We could certainly go down to Hudson's and try on clothes. Even here when I came here for law school at this place, one year I took a class, and I read a book called *Simple Justice* by a man named Richard Kluger. It's about the five cases, *Brown* and the other cases that came on the school desegregation. When you read that and they talk about the D.C. case and about D.C. at the time, you couldn't eat at the lunch counters at People's Drugs or try on clothes at Garfinkel's or Hecht's or different things. White people here of a certain age are always talking about Glen Echo and going out to Glen Echo. You don't hear any Black people talking about that because it was segregated and they couldn't go.

MR. WEAVER: What was Glen Echo?

MS. JEFFRIES: Glen Echo out MacArthur Boulevard, it's an amusement park now. You can go out there now, I think they have a Spanish ballroom, people do contra dancing and stuff and they'll have activities and stuff. People of a certain age, they all went to Glen Echo. Well my people who were here didn't.

So it was different in the opportunities and things that we had. It was a contrast between the two, but I could see people living in Belzoni

because I knew people who lived there. It wasn't my plan to live there, but those were the two places I knew people living in.

MR. WEAVER: For those years that you didn't go

MS. JEFFRIES: I was supposed to say something. You asked about food. Down there in the Delta, for whatever reason, the Black people make and sell hot tamales. That's a big thing down there, and I can remember being a kid in Detroit over on the east side on Oakland Avenue, people on the street were selling hot tamales. So a few years ago, I was in Clarksville, and there's a place that's supposed to have good hot tamales. I went by but it was like 11:30 in the morning, and they wouldn't have them until 3:00 in the afternoon. So another year I went to somebody's tamales in Greenwood, and I got a pan of tamales and took them up to Tennessee with me. But I digress.

MR. WEAVER: This conversation is making me hungry. I was wondering during those years, you mentioned in 1967 you went to Montreal, and that was your first international travel experience. Is that right?

MS. JEFFRIES: International vacation. I grew up in Detroit, and you go to Canada all the time.

MR. WEAVER: Where all did you go, during those years when you didn't go back to Belzoni, did you do any other travel that had an impact on you?

MS. JEFFRIES: We came here the summer of 1970.

MR. WEAVER: To Washington, D.C.?

MS. JEFFRIES: Yes. We came here, and I didn't know I would end up here. We went to Chicago. I was in the Girl Scouts in high school, and we went to Mexico City. Those were I guess the places I went growing up.

MR. WEAVER: What role did religion play in your family's life growing up?

MS. JEFFRIES: My mother grew up Baptist, but when I came along, we went to this church called Unity, which is out of Lee Summit, Missouri. We would go there, my mother and I. My father never went to church. I guess he believed in God, I don't know. I never asked. But anyway, my mother and I would go there on Sundays. We had a good routine, because it was right across the street from Palmer Park in Detroit, which is between Six- and Seven-Mile Road on the west side. So we'd go to church, and it was just an hour, which is good. An hour was good. And then our routine was to go across the street to Palmer Park. They had a pond there, which in the wintertime would freeze over and you could ice skate. They rented ice skates. They had tennis courts, and they had a golf course and stuff. We'd go over there, and there were ducks in the pond. They had a snack bar, and at the snack bar, they sold in a box of cheese tidbits, which is like cheese crackers, oblong-shaped, and you could feed those to the ducks. They had a payphone there, and after church, we would go over there, and my mother would have change, and we would call my grandfather. We could call him from the home phone too, but as I tell my son, long-distance calls, that was a big deal when I was a kid. So we'd call him on Sundays, and then feed the ducks. Or in the wintertime, I would go ice

skating at Palmer Park. I had an accident on my bike when I was eight, and I was in the hospital for five days. I now know I could have died, but I didn't. I had a concussion and knocked my two front teeth out, that they had to put back in. I was in and out of consciousness for 24 hours with a tremendous headache that just thinking about makes my head spin now. I will say that Palmer Park had hot dogs and hamburgers. I had had a hamburger, and they had relish that always fascinated me because it was emerald green. When I was in the emergency room, I saw that relish there, and I was sick with my head swimming. But going to Palmer Park, that was going to church, and church was important to my mother, like you had to go every Sunday, sick or not. Okay, let's not be that rigid.

After I married and moved out here, she returned to the Baptist church, and then when I finished law school – a lot of my friends went to Plymouth Congregation United Church of Christ. I need to talk about the parents of people that I grew up with, and I said our parents had similar ideas, and what happened after elementary school.

MR. WEAVER: You mentioned that you had gone to Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School in Detroit. You talked a little bit about your parents and your kind of social group there, and I was wondering if you would say a little bit more about that. What were your friends like? What were you like? What was that experience in elementary school like?

MS. JEFFRIES: Like I said, we would have a lot of kid whose parents were doctors or teachers or whatever, and I certainly have friends who fall into that

category. What I want to be clear about is when I said Detroit was a great place to grow up, it was great in many regards. Because, for instance, when my parents bought their house, even though I don't remember it and I wasn't participating, they used a Black lawyer to do this. When I was growing up, I went to a Black doctor. I went to Black dentists. When I was at the elementary school, we got a principal. My first principal was white, but then we got a Black woman as our principal, and we had my teachers. I talked about Ms. McFadden and Ms. McCrary. They always looked very professional and looked very nice. Even the teacher I don't like, she always looked professional. Anyway, so my friends' parents were similarly these kinds of people, and so I saw how they carried themselves. I saw them doing leadership things. I went to their houses, and I saw how they lived. I knew the kinds of vacations they took. I knew where they'd gone to college and their sororities or fraternities. I'm seeing these things. And then I would do things with my friends. I'm very close with my friend Denise. We met when we were ten at Roosevelt, and we both were playing the violin. She and my cousin Barbara who died were born on the same day, so Denise is three months to the day younger than I am. Her father was a school administrator, and her mother was a school librarian. Her mother was from Canada. Well growing up in Detroit, a lot of people had cottages in Canada when I was growing up, although they changed the rules, and foreign people can't own property now, but if you had it, you could keep it. So a lot of people

had cottages, and you'd go to Canada. So, for instance, Denise's family, they got a cottage, and she was an only child too, so some weekends when they would go away for the weekend to the cottage, I would go with Denise and her parents to the cottage, and we'd be up there. It was on the Ruscum River and Bell River, maybe an hour outside of Detroit. We'd drive, and we'd go through the tunnel, and I liked going through the tunnel because when you get to the middle, you have the American flag and the Canadian flag. Sometimes there'd be a lot of traffic and it'd be slow. But we'd go to Canada. And then Denise and I could go out at night. We'd walk around in the area, or we'd go out in the daytime and go follow the river some. Her father had a boat. The Ruscum River ran into Lake St. Clair, which bounded Michigan, so if you're leaving Detroit on the east side going to Jefferson, when you get to Grosse Point there is Lake St. Clair. So anyway, he had a boat, and we'd go out in the boat. Denise had a little boat thing called a yak. She and I would go out together, or off the little pier, we'd be jumping in the water and doing our version of swimming and playing. And then some other friends we went to school with, the Millers, they had three daughters, Michelle, Charlotte, and I forget the other daughter's name. Anyway, Mrs. Miller was our Girl Scout leader, which is how I really started going to Canada, so they had a cottage a couple doors down. We'd go over there and be with them. The Millers lived on the back side of Roosevelt on LaSalle, and what everybody knew about them was they had a playhouse in their back yard,

so everybody knew the house with the playhouse. So we'd be up there with them. So I saw all of that.

I have a friend, Jennifer, who she and I went to school from kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, except for 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Jennifer's father was a surgeon, and when we were in junior high school, he went up to the Mayo Clinic for a couple of years, I guess, and did a residency in heart surgery. When he came back, he was a heart surgeon. So all of these people. But even for my friends' parents, who weren't professional like that, they all had the same goal, what they wanted us to do and be, and they're trying to put you in things.

So when it came time to graduate from elementary school, in my circle of friends, we always knew we weren't going to the neighborhood junior high, which was Durfee, right next to there. So we transferred out. In the city of Detroit at that time, they had what they called open schools, so if a school was underpopulated, they published a list. The list came out in the spring, and you could transfer into a school. And, of course, there were some schools that were more popular than others, and people would try to get into. So when we're finishing elementary school, Jennifer, Denise, and I all applied to Chrysler, which was a small elementary school downtown in Lafayette Park, that was really popular. We applied to that school. Well, for some reason, only Denise got in. Now could it be because her father was a deputy superintendent? I don't know. But Jennifer and I didn't. So then we had to find other schools. Anyway, I

ended up going to a school way out west right near Rouge Park, Dixon, which was an elementary school that went to 7<sup>th</sup> grade. And Jennifer ended up going to the school Mettetal off of Seven Mile up near Henry Ford High School. Anyway, the point is a lot of people in our circle transferred out to these schools, not because our parents or we were trying to integrate schools. That had nothing to do with it. But they wanted good schools, and you follow the money, which the white people had the money in their neighborhoods. We went to these schools. Now, of course, I told you my daddy was driving me to school, but that meant my friends their parents couldn't drive them, they're taking the city buses. Okay, that's what we did and how we all came to go to these schools. But I had friends in my school years who, like I said, Denise's father was an assistant deputy superintendent but became a junior high school principal first. I had people who were social workers, or we had friends by the time I went to Mettetal, Anita and Debbie. Their mother, Geraldine Bledsoe Ford, was a judge. One of the first, if not the first, Black woman judge on the Detroit Recorder's Court. Nicki Hood and Emery Hood, their father, Reverend Hood, was minister of Plymouth Congregational, but he got on the City Council. A guy, Horace Sheffield, his father, Horace Sheffield, Sr., was a biggie with the UAW. We had all these examples of people doing things. I always knew that Black people could and did do these things because that's what I was living and seeing.

I will say this now while I'm thinking about it. I said I had 5<sup>th</sup> grade typing with Mrs. McFadden and Mrs. McCrary. Ultimately after I finished law school, I got a job working with Mrs. McFadden's son at a small law firm, and Mrs. McFadden died maybe about ten years ago. I was in contact with her until then. Mrs. McCrary is still alive. She's around 95. I call her Aunt Thelma. Her husband died a couple years ago, so she moved from downtown Detroit out to Bloomfield Hills to be near a daughter, and so she and I talk. We send each other cards. When I go home, Denise and I go see her. We might take her out to lunch, and when I was home most recently, we took her out to lunch. I arranged for a lot of other Roosevelt People to go too, and it was a surprise for her. She thought it was just me and Denise, but there were thirteen of us that had lunch with her. But here's the deal. The letter that I received from Steve Pollak about doing this was something my mother would have appreciated and enjoyed, but my mother is not alive. So I made a copy and I sent it to Mrs. McCrary, and I said "Well, you know, mom's not here so you will appreciate this". So she sent me a very nice congratulations card last week, and it's on my coffee table.

MR. WEAVER: What was her impact when you were a student? How did that relationship begin? It's amazing that you've kept in touch with her after all these years.

MS. JEFFRIES: I'm looking at these women, and like I said, when I was in school, the teachers, the men wore suits and ties. The women teachers, they wore

dresses or they wore suits, or Mrs. McCrary and them, they wore dresses with matching jackets, and they're looking very professional. And they had expectations for us, and so you see them and I at least wanted to be like people I saw. You hear about athletes and entertainers and people like that, or maybe you're reading *Ebony* and they have a nice house. Okay, I want to have a nice house, but I wasn't using them personally as role models. My role models were my parents, neighbors, my friends' parents, my teachers. These people and what they were doing, and they were all encouraging and positive. I'm going to talk about this too at some point because I went to the Detroit public schools, as I said, and I had excellent teachers in the Detroit public schools. I had excellent teachers, both white and Black teachers, who were extremely encouraging and just important in my growth and development, and I appreciate them and the experiences I had with them.

MR. WEAVER: What was your favorite subject in elementary school?

MS. JEFFRIES: I guess I'm going to say Reading, only because I was reading all the time, and my mother says I learned to read because back then, they used to have *What's My Line* on TV, and the people would come on and they'd put on the screen what their occupation was, and the panelists would have to guess. Well if you couldn't read, I didn't know what they did, and sometimes when they were guessing, in the enthusiasm, I might miss what it said. I could be there watching it and call my mother to come in and tell me, but she might get in there too late, and then I didn't know. She said

that really got me to read, and she wanted me to read. So I was always reading, and being an only child, I read a lot because I was by myself a lot. I had to entertain myself a lot. I looked at TV a lot too, which some people don't like TV. I learned a lot from TV. I could be a student and look at TV. That's not an issue for me. And plus, being in Detroit, we also had the Canadian Broadcasting Company, so I looked at the CBC a lot. I particularly liked curling, the sport of curling. I used to watch that. I used to watch hockey night in Canada when I was a kid by myself. I'm not really a sports person, but I would watch, and now my son plays hockey. And wrestling, and they also had local shows. They had a dance show, kind of like American Bandstand, *Swinging Time* with Robin Seymour, and all the Motown people would be on. Yeah, I used to watch a lot of TV. Captain Jolly, Poop Deck Paul. I used to want to go on Milky's Party Time. Milky was a clown, Milky the Clown, and he had a show. He'd do magic tricks, and then he'd have kids come on, and if you won a little competition, he had a big jar, like a bowl, with pennies in it, and you could put your hand in and get a handful of pennies, which I was convinced that if my hand went in, I'd be getting a million dollars. It has occurred to me in adulthood, I never did see any little Black kids on Milky's Party Time. But the magic words, as anybody knows, Twin Pines. Say that to somebody my age in Detroit. They know Twin Pines, Milky the Clown. So anyway, reading, I liked reading.

I have to talk about one of my all-time favorite teachers in life, Thomas Mason, who later became Dr. Mason. I had him in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. So I told you I had the bicycle accident. In the Detroit schools, your first semester of the year was the B, and the second semester was A. So in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, you'd be in 3B and then in 3A. So for 3B, I had Mrs. Mitchell for homeroom, and her room was directly across the hall from Mr. Mason, and the doors have windows in them so you can see in. Mr. Mason would have all this math on the Blackboard, all this math. So the entire 3B, I'm sitting there hoping and praying to God that I would not go to Mr. Mason's class because I'm just looking at this every day, and he has all this math. Whose class do I go to? I go to Mr. Mason's class, and I love Mr. Mason to this day, but he died in 2005. He was fabulous. He did stuff with us. He later tutored me in math. He'd come to the house and tutor me. He was engaged around then to his wife Doris. They subsequently got married and had a couple of kids. I'm still in touch with Doris. Tom died in 2005. He was just the greatest person and such a big influence. And plus reading. He made us in his class, we had to memorize the poem *Invictus*. You may not know this, but back then, people had to know this. "Out of the night that covers me Black as a pit from pole to pole I thank whatever Gods may be for my incomparable soul." And then it ends something like, "I'm the master of my fate, I'm the captain of my soul." Something like that. Anyway, I had to learn that with him, and spelling. We had to do a lot of spelling stuff. I won the

school spelling bee when I was in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and I went to the next level spelling bee. I still have my ink pen from the *Detroit News* and my dictionary I won with my name engraved. I have that.

So those people were very impactful, and the way they carried themselves. Like I said, that was very meaningful and impactful. So now, like I said, for junior high, 7<sup>th</sup> grade, I went to Dixon. I'm going to talk about Dixon. Dixon is out there by Rouge Park. It's like an all-white neighborhood. When I'm at Dixon, I was one of five Black students in the school, and I was the only one in my class. A lot of kids were Polish, their parents were, and they worked in the factories. Whatever they did, they worked in factories. And they were Polish like they had their Polish costumes and they would do Polish dancing, and that was a big thing, and then they're eating the Polish food and all of that.

So this is Dixon, and I'm out there with them. Well, like I said, I've always been smart, so I'm out there with them, they weren't necessarily so. Our homeroom teacher, Mrs. Johnson, liked geography, and she taught that, and she traveled around the world. So we're there in school doing the geography, and she would ask questions, as teachers do, and I, as students would do, would raise my hand. She would say to me, "Put your hand down," number one. She would say to them, "She," talking about me, "is not any smarter than you are. She just reads the book." Well yes it was true I read the book, but I also was smarter than they were. So then we're doing that with them. They weren't the

friendliest people. Nobody was malicious. Nobody certainly didn't do anything physical, they weren't malicious, but they weren't into me, and I was smarter than they were. So, for instance, in school you take some standardized tests, so let's say we took the California test or the Indiana Achievement Test, and the results come in. Well teachers pick kids to do things for them, little tasks. The test results came in, and she had me file the test results. Now, I filed the test results, so I know what they got, and I know what I got, and I was way ahead of them. But she had me file the test results. I didn't need the test results to tell me that, but I saw the test results. So then in the Detroit Public Schools – I liked this – back then in your gym classes, you did a lot of folk dancing, so we'd do square dancing, we did Polish polkas. I liked that. I liked square dancing. Now if somebody would do it with me, I would. And I would dance the polka now, but my husband doesn't. Mexican hat dance. We were doing dances. Our gym teacher was a Black woman. Well here's how they handled dancing back then. It's time to dance and you need a partner, so the boys had to pick a partner. At Dixon Elementary School in my 7<sup>th</sup> grade class, I was the second least popular dance partner for the boys, which would make you wonder who was the first least popular. What made her least popular, and me second? And here's what would happen. When they're out picking their partners, when pickings started getting slim and they thought they were going to be stuck with her, her name was Linda, they'd make a beeline for me because they really didn't want

Linda, but they could tolerate me. Here's the deal. Linda had had a bout with polio, and she walked, but she walked with a slight limp. She was mentally slow. I think she'd been held back a year, so she was older, and she was bigger than almost everybody, and she had a mole with a hair growing out of it. So rather than dance with Linda, they wanted to dance with me. And that was our gym class.

What else did they do? Oh, so I was friends with this one girl, and we traded Christmas presents, which I still have the present she gave me. She gave me a hairbrush set, a brush and a comb, and I have the brush. I used it today. She had an older sister and her mother. Her father was in Herman Keefer Hospital, which was a huge hospital near me in Detroit, which was the tuberculosis hospital. This is mid-1960's, so tuberculosis wasn't as big as it used to be, but her father was in there because I believe he had tuberculosis of the spine, and her mother worked at a diner, which evidently didn't pay all that well. They literally lived in a shack way out there by Rouge Park. So her mother's aunt died. The aunt lived in Pontiac, not far from Detroit, and left them a house. They were going to move to Pontiac, and I invited her home to spend the night with us, and her mother let her come, and she rode home with me and my daddy. That girl must have called her mother five times that night to say how nice my house was, how we had carpeting on the floor, we had a fruit bowl on the dining room table. I don't know what she thought. She lived in a shack,

not me, but she was calling her mother all the time. I still have that brush. That's what I did at Dixon.

So Dixon ended in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, and I had to go to another school, so then I got to Mettetal. Now, when I got to Mettetal, that very first day, for whatever reason when we got out there, and it was far away too, we got there a little late, and when I got up to my classroom that morning, maybe I'm like five or ten minutes late, and they had started. When I walked in that room, there were other Black kids in the room. I don't know, you could say there were five, six, seven in the room, including some people I already knew, and when I walked in the room that day, Patricia Ice was in the class. She said to me when I walked in the door, "Hi June." You don't know what a world of difference going to Mettetal was for me as opposed to being out there at Dixon. Out there at Dixon. So then at Mettetal there was like a busload and a half of us, thirty-nine of us. So that was a good number. We had fun. Now once again, because the Jewish people had moved, they were now around Seven Mile Road, so this was Jewish, a lot of Jewish people up there, so they actually, a lot of kids, would be out for the Jewish holidays, but this is where I got introduced to bagels because they'd be having fundraisers and we'd have bagel sales. So I eat bagels now because of them out there at Mettetal. And that was good. Seventh and eighth grade. I have a teacher from there, Mr. Jones, he's still alive. I hear from him sometimes. I had a Christmas card from him, and somebody on Facebook, we were talking about the teachers. Oh,

because there's a Mettetal group on Facebook, so we've been talking periodically. I'm still in touch with him. And then after I returned to Detroit from law school, one of the teachers at Mettetal, a Black woman, Mrs. Whittington, she had become a lawyer, so I would see her and run into her doing my lawyer things when I was in Detroit. So I had good teachers out there.

Now through the magic of Facebook and the Mettetal junior high school group, I have reestablished contact with my Mettetal locker mate, Pat Labella, and I hadn't seen her since I left Mettetal. She's retired and living in some outpost in Mexico so we're talking on Facebook all the time, and she's called me a couple of times through Facebook. You can make phone calls through Facebook and don't have to pay, so she has called me from Mexico a couple of times. We talk about a lot of the political and legal stuff that's going on and other things.

The summer of 1971 I was in New York City for the summer, right after I graduated high school, and Jim Morrison of the Doors died. Oh my God. Pat Labella loved herself some Jim Morrison and the Doors. I was in Manhattan and the Bronx. I thought "Oh my God, I should find this woman. She's in deep mourning."

MR. WEAVER: What were your kind of big cultural influences? If it wasn't the Doors, what were you listening to? Who were your celebrity idols? Who were you a fan of?

MS. JEFFRIES: Number one – and Detroit is a big musical town. It has been, and even now, but Detroit was always a big musical town. So, of course, I said the heyday of Motown, so you figure the Supremes’ “Baby Love” or something, that’s around 1964, the Temptations, “My Girl,” 1964. I was ten years old, so all that Motown stuff was going on, and you’re hearing about it, or they were on TV with Robin Seymour *Swinging Time*. They would do the Motor Town reviews at the Fox Theatre. My parents didn’t let me go to that. You had that going on. Aretha came out with “Respect.” I was 14 in 1968. That was big. And it was beautiful. It was big, and it was wonderful. Our neighbors across the street, directly in front of us, the Shepards, they had six kids, three boys, three girls, all of them older than me except the baby girl was a year younger than me. Well, their son Vander one year married this woman Sharan, and Sharan was Smokey Robinson’s niece. So when I was 14, Sharan was having her first baby, and they had a baby shower for her at the home of Paul Williams, who was one of the Temptations, and I loved them, so I went with the Shepards to Sharan’s baby shower. Paul wasn’t there, but they had the gold records in front of the fireplace, and they had one of those life-sized photo cutouts of him. I still have the pictures of them now. I posed in front of that. Paul committed suicide later on. That’s sad. Diana Ross went to my high school. When I went to Cass Tech, and I took French from Madame Kron, she had taught Diana Ross, and she had Diana’s graduation picture that she carried around in her wallet then. My

drama teacher in high school, Mr. Bovenshin, he lived in a four-family flat or the like owned by David Ruffin. I thought that was exciting. So you had that going on, but then like I said even though I told you I'm not a sports person, I was looking at hockey, I was looking at curling, I'm going to Canada, I considered them to be my Canadian brothers and sisters. I'm extremely bothered now that you have to have a passport to go to Canada. It bothers me when somebody here talks badly about Trudeau in Canada, I'm very upset about that. I love my Canadian brothers and sisters.

I liked movies. This is good. Sidney Poitier was on a roll in 1967-1968, he did *To Sir with Love*, *In the Heat of the Night*, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*. *In the Heat of the Night*, of course, takes place in Mississippi, and he's taking the train down there, and he leaves on the train. He's in Mississippi dealing with those people. My mother and I went to see *In the Heat of the Night* when it came out. There's a scene in *In the Heat of the Night* that I will say I enjoy this scene, and with DVRs and stuff now you can repeat it. I will look at it three or four times because it's a very meaningful scene in the context of America and what life was like then and can still be. Trying to solve this murder, he and Carrol O'Connor, who's the sheriff in this town, go see the rich white man, Mr. Endicott, who's in his greenhouse with the orchids, and Sidney Poitier is talking to him about the orchids and stuff and then they get around to asking pertinent questions. He asked a question that Mr. Endicott thinks is impertinent, and Endicott slaps Sidney Poitier who

slapped him right back and probably slapped him harder. Now the butler is watching that, and he cringes, the sheriff is like 'oh my,' and Endicott says to the sheriff, "Did you see that? What are you going to do about it?" And the sheriff, Carrol O'Connor says he saw it and he didn't know what he was going to do about it. Oh, for a Black man down there to slap a white guy like that, that's a huge thing. That could have gotten you killed. It didn't get Sidney killed in the movie, but people got killed for stuff like that. So to see somebody fight back that's a very pivotal moment. And then, of course, I like when the movie ends, when he's on the train, and they pan the scene and you see the people working the cotton fields. Because when I was going down there, people worked the fields, and they put on all these clothes because it's all hot and everything. This is a problem I have in life. My girlfriend says I'm in denial, and I told her I don't think I'm in denial, I think they are confused. But here's the problem I have that is never going to be resolved. My cousins would have to pick cotton, so the Summer of 1965, my last summer there, Sadie Ruth was two years older than me, could not hang out with Barbara and Edith and me because she had to go work the fields. She was thirteen, and she had to go work the fields. Then Barbara and Edith get killed. I have posed the question to my friend Loreen, who I said her parents owned the store and the shoe shop, I posed the question to her, whether Barbara and Edith would have had to work the fields when they got older. To which she says there's no question in her mind they would have had to go. And I

told her I don't think that's right, and she says why not. I said I don't feel they would have had to do it. She said well maybe not Edith, but she said they would have found something for Edith to do. I said even with her half an arm, and she said yes, most definitely. She told me if you don't believe me, ask one of their sisters. So I asked Julia or Nancy, one of their older sisters, if they thought Barbara and Edith would have had to work the fields. Their response is the same thing, "yes." But I think they're all confused, and I don't believe them. And I'll never know because they didn't live. But I don't think my cousins would have had to do that. But they seem to think I'm confused or in denial.

MR. WEAVER: You talked a little bit about how Girl Scouts was one of the things that took you up to Canada frequently. When did you get involved in Girl Scouts, and what other extracurricular activities were you doing in elementary and middle school and then on into high school?

MS. JEFFRIES: In elementary school, I was in Girl Scouts, and at one point, my mother was a leader or a co-leader. I think I was kind of jealous when she showed attention to other people. Anyway, Mrs. Miller was our troop leader for a long time. She had Charlotte, Michelle, and another daughter who's name I can't remember. They had the cottage down the way from Denise's family. Out from Detroit, out from Windsor, there's a place called Jack Minor's Bird Sanctuary, and we went up there on field trips. So Jack Minor, these birds come through and they band them or whatever they do, and you can go up there and see all these birds. When I was a kid, the

movie, *The Birds*, came out in 1964. I never saw it as a kid, but I saw those ads on TV, and they scared me. The school kids were running from the birds. And now I've seen it a lot as an adult. I don't really trust birds in large numbers, but I have been back to Jack Minor's because I like going up there. We all liked going to Jack Minor's. That's one of my earliest things, going to Canada. So I would go to Canada.

In high school we did yearly trips to a theatre in Canada. So I did Girl Scouts, I started piano with our neighbor across the street when I was five. When I was eight, my parents bought me a Wurlitzer upright, which is in my living room now. I played piano, and in elementary school, I also started violin. I gave my violin away three years ago to a program that gives instruments to kids who can't afford them. In 7<sup>th</sup> grade you take Home Economics, which I think they should bring back. We had sewing, and I made a jumper, a very simple Simplicity V-neck jumper. Then I got into sewing, and my parents bought me – which was in the top-of-the-line Singer, a Golden Deluxe Touch and Sew sewing machine. For years on Saturdays I would go downtown Detroit to the Singer Sewing Machine shop because they had sewing lessons, and I took sewing lessons from Mrs. Beasley. I entered sewing contests. I won record players and stuff. I sew extremely well. My high school was a city-wide high school with 5,000 students. We had 26 curriculums of which 25 were college prep, but one of the curriculums was called Clothing and Textiles. I took pattern drafting and tailoring. I made wool coats, wool suits. When my

ex-husband – he was my boyfriend then – graduated from Yale, I made him a suit the week after I graduated college because we were going to a wedding. I sew very well. So I did that through high school. My mother let me do a lot of things. I told you she took me ice skating. I would go horseback riding. She'd take me to Canada to go horseback riding, and I had a mishap on a horse, and I guess we kind of stopped going. But I'm surprised because my son said to me recently that he had talked to my mother one time and she said something to him that she didn't take children horseback riding because what had happened with me. I didn't get hurt, though, so it's okay. She wanted me to be exposed to things. So some of my friends were in a club called Jack and Jill, and for instance, one of the girls I went to school with, both her mother and father were doctors, and her mother was a pediatrician, but her specialty was teenagers. She said that was called ephibi-pediatrics, and her mother was a real achiever and stuff and skied and did things, so one time they had a ski trip and I went with them skiing up north, and then I joined the ski club in high school. I went skiing with them, but I fell and hurt my knee, so then I didn't that anymore. I went away the summer of 1970. I went away to Olivette College. They had some summer program for high school students. It's in Michigan, and I was studying some kind of political science stuff. I will say since the age of five, I always knew I was going to be a lawyer because my mother's favorite TV show was *Perry Mason*. So I was always going to be a lawyer. But then in high school, I also

wanted to be a doctor. I wanted to do both. My mother thought I needed to take Latin because doctors needed to know Latin, but I didn't do that.

I know there were some other things. Denise, whose father was a superintendent, they built a new junior high school in Detroit in 1967 or so, and he was the principal. Johnson was President, and they had this money out there, so they had a summer enrichment program. We went a couple of years. Mr. Billups would take me, Denise, and Jennifer with him, and they had all kinds of stuff. We had violins. Denise and I played violin; Jennifer played cello. We had photography, we had art with Mrs. Stevens, we did a lot of things. Here's something. They had a trip one time to a youth hostel up in Michigan to Blue Lake, so I went on the trip. Denise and them didn't go. Denise and her parents were in the Bahamas, and Jennifer didn't go. I went for the weekend. We were all Black kids at the youth hostel on Blue Lake. That Saturday morning, I was at the dock with the older woman, she was white, the caretaker, and she and I were in the canoe, and were going to canoe on the lake. The man who lived on the property next door, he comes running over there. To this day, the single most irate person I've ever encountered, he comes running over there talking about the niggers, niggers, niggers. The niggers this, the niggers that. He and his wife lived in Pontiac, and every weekend they came to Blue Lake to get away from the niggers, and the niggers, niggers, niggers, because we kids were there. He's going to burn the place down because of the niggers. He's up there to get away from the niggers.

From us. And she and I are in the canoe. Well, I think the thing that really got his ire was his wife was sunbathing topless, and some of the boys had rowed by and seen her precious body. So he's all in a tizzy. He's going to burn the place down, and she and I are in the canoe. Now she didn't say anything to him. I didn't say anything to him. And I guess he finished and walked away. She and I went canoeing. We never mentioned it. We just canoed on the lake. But that is the most irate person I've ever encountered because he said he was up there to get away from the niggers, and the niggers this, that, and the other. But that was a fun thing. So what else did I do?

MR. WEAVER: A quick question about that. Was it rare for you to experience or hear that kind of explicit racism in Detroit and in Michigan or anywhere?

MS. JEFFRIES: I certainly had never encountered anyone like that. I hadn't encountered it personally in Mississippi because my mother didn't allow me to be in any kind of situation where anything could have happened because she didn't think I would act in a way that might please people. When I was at Dixon – growing up, for me, immigration, you were still getting people coming from Europe after the war, and Eastern Europeans in Detroit, and then we started getting Arab people coming over, people from the Middle East. But that's what immigration was, and when I was a kid, CARE, the organization that's sending CARE packages for people in Czechoslovakia, so that's what you're seeing. At Dixon, in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, one of my classmates was William Hoffman, and he was from Germany and had moved to

Detroit, and he spoke with a German accent. William Hoffman told me, who was born at Grace Hospital in Detroit, that I should go back to Africa, which I didn't understand that. If anybody should go anywhere, he should have gone back to Germany. But he had said that to me. Otherwise, I hadn't had anything happen.

In Detroit, there is a suburb not so far away, Dearborn. Everybody knows Dearborn was a very racist place headed by their mayor, Orville Hubbard, whose goal in life was to keep Black people out. So like I hardly ever went into Dearborn, and what happened with Dearborn, and this is true, this has been in the papers, they were so busy trying to keep Black people out that all these Arab people started moving in, and then they're waking up at 5:00 a.m. over the loudspeaker praying to Allah, so then they're all upset, their Dearbornites, and I think Dearborn is now like 60% Arab because they were so busy trying to keep us out. Later on, they opened a big shopping center, and I would go out there to Fairlane and then go home.

MR. WEAVER: You mentioned you were a good student, and I assume throughout elementary, middle, and high school, reading and those sorts of things, you're a good student, but did you get into any trouble?

MS. JEFFRIES: I did not get into any trouble, and I didn't get into any trouble in school. My high school was city-wide, and 8 stories, 5,000 students, probably the most I ever did was a lot of people might skip a class and go hang out in

the back hallways or something. I did that some, but I didn't get into any trouble over that.

I'm going to talk about an incident that happened because this is meaningful to me, especially in the context of the time, and I remember this. One of my friends, her mother was a doctor and her father was a doctor. She had a party at her house in high school not far from where I lived, in the basement. They had a finished basement. While we were there, some of the boys got in her father's liquor cabinet, and he found out, which I don't know how, but I imagine she went up and told her father. I imagine she told her father, which is okay. It's their house. Oh, he came downstairs and immediately turned the party out and made people leave, which wasn't a bad thing because I'd gone over in a car with my friends. It wasn't like you were abandoned outside and couldn't do anything. I take that as an example of, for me, someone being a strong parent because he knew what he was going to allow in his house and what he wouldn't allow, and when he found out about it, boom, that was it. There are other stories in the news now. Things are different with some people.

I didn't really get in trouble in school. I ended up in the hospital with the bicycle accident for doing something, which if I was 8, I didn't tell my mother until I was 13 what I was doing because I felt if I told the truth, I'd be in trouble. My parents didn't let me ride my bike in the street. We'd gone to church that day, come home. She was cooking, and I was riding my bike. We had a driveway, which was up an incline. So I

decided to ride my bike with my eyes closed, going down the driveway and turning onto the sidewalk, when I thought I was at the sidewalk, and I did it a couple of times successfully. The last time, I apparently rode into my neighbor's tree and landed with the handlebars in my mouth, and then I got my concussion and knocked my teeth out. I didn't fess up to that for five years because I thought it would make them mad. Now that's probably something I did.

I told you I sewed. In my high school, I was in the honors program, and in our program, you had to take electives from another curriculum, so I took a lot of electives from the performing arts curriculum, which we happened to share a study hall with the PA kids. I was in SA, which is Science and Arts, and they were in PA, and we were in 617 for study hall. I had Mr. White then, and they had Mr. Lucci. So I took a lot of performing arts classes, but not to per se perform, but I did take classes. I knew I wanted to be a lawyer, and I wasn't one for public speaking, so for instance, I myself took public speaking or they had a class called radio speech taught by Mrs. Frances Hamburger. They used to do a lot of radio shows out of Detroit, like the Lone Ranger and stuff, and your voice is your tool, so I took that, and that made you get up and do things, and you had to do exercises and things with those people in performing arts. It was a point to me saying that about them, which is good. Oh, so they would do musicals, so I did costumes one time on the play *Auntie Mame*, and I was the dresser for one of the lead characters. When I was

here at Georgetown, they have a Gilbert & Sullivan Society, and I did some costume work with them. I like show people. I like show people because if they have parties, they do a lot of singing Broadway shows. They always know that stuff. For me, and this is an important thing. I have to say this about Cass Tech. I went to Cass Technical High School, a great school. Many great people went there, famous people. Jack White, he's some kind of musician guy, I'm not into his music, but my son knows, and people know Jack White. When we went to the hockey championship, they played Jack White. Anyway, he went to Cass. Cass was a city-wide high school, and it was college prep. I was there 1968 to 1971 because high schools in Detroit went 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade. I was meeting kids from all over the city, and I learned a lot from that, but the very reason for being there was that you wanted to go to college, so that was the expectation of all the teachers. For instance, a lot of people wanted to be doctors, so people who wanted to be doctors mainly went into a curriculum that was called Chemical Biological, and they're taking all these science classes, or they took my program, Science and Arts, SA, because we took those classes too. It's probably equal number girls and boys, so there are all these girls in there who want to be doctors or maybe go to grad schools and get a PhD in sciences or math to be doctors, and the teachers weren't telling us because we were girls and you couldn't do it. I hear people all the time saying how girls are steered differently or not to do the math and everything, that was the reason we were there. They

weren't telling us we couldn't do it. They were telling us we could. They never tried to encourage a boy over a girl, and I think if you ask any of us who were there at that time, everybody would agree with that. So we didn't have that experience of being in school with people telling you no you can't go to college, no you can't do this. They were helping us get there. Otherwise why would you be at Cass Tech? So I think that's a very influential thing as well. My 10<sup>th</sup> grade geometry teacher, I'm Facebook friends with her. She kind of moved into a retirement place recently. She lived in the suburbs. Not only did we have 5,000 students, but we had some tuition students who came from the suburbs and paid, so her daughter, Willow, was in my class in high school, and they lived in the suburbs.

When I was here at law school, I taught Street Law at Spingarn High School, which I will tell anybody was the single most depressing experience of my life, but I'd never been in a school like that, or really around students like that. It was extremely hard for me to relate and understand. The first day I went up there, going in, a girl was coming out and she was pregnant and she had a t-shirt that said, "Baby," with an arrow pointing down. Throughout the year, all these girls were pregnant or they had babies or they were having other babies. One girl had one baby and she was having another and she's showing me pictures. My friend Denise, I'm talking to her one time on the phone, I said all these girls here have babies, and I don't understand because we didn't have that

when we were in school, and she said when we were in school, they didn't allow the pregnant girls to go to school with us. They had to go to a different school. I don't think I even knew that. I just didn't know anybody in our school was pregnant. I take that back. Two girls were pregnant when I was at Cass. There was a girl, we had swimming together so we'd be in the locker room across from each other. She was a white girl who lived in southwest Detroit with her grandmother. I don't know where her parents were. She and I would talk. She got pregnant and didn't come back to Cass. She was 16, and she had married her boyfriend, but her grandmother didn't know she was married. Senior year I was in a service club. Helen, the president of the club, got pregnant. So maybe it was like March or something and Helen is pregnant. She finished the school year. They're not going to put you out then, but I will say this. The club had a baby shower for her. My mother did not allow me to go. I don't think she wanted to condone that. But I think about that. If anybody needed a gift, Helen probably needed a gift.

Spingarn was so different, and Cass wasn't like that. We did all these things, and it was great.

MR. WEAVER: Did you learn how to drive and get a driver's license when you were in high school?

MS. JEFFRIES: You know I did. I'm from Detroit. June is not a public transportation girl.

MR. WEAVER: What was your first car?

MS. JEFFRIES: My father died sophomore year, and we then had two cars and two people. June thought that meant she'd have a car up there in Connecticut. Wrong. My mother said no. Senior year she let me take the car, and we had a 1967 Ford Fairlane. It was yellow with Black interior. I had that. Coming here for law school was traumatic for me because for some reason I thought I wasn't going to have a car, and when we came to visit, I saw these people in a thunderstorm waiting at bus stops, and I practically became hysterical. I did get hysterical at dinner, because I thought I wasn't going to have a car. But then I did have a car. I had a 1972 Grand Torino. But the first car I bought was when I was working here in 1984, a Ford Cougar. So the single most popular class at that time I'm sure in the Detroit Public Schools was drivers training. To take drivers training, you couldn't sign up until you were 15 and ten months. So I was there that November, two months before my 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, and I signed up. Cass did not have drivers training. I took drivers training at Mumford High School, which if people have seen those movies, *Beverly Hills Cops* with Eddie Murphy, I think he wore a Mumford t-shirt. So people know Mumford for that reason. Anyway, I took drivers training at Mumford, which is so artificial. They had a track on their property, one lane you could go 15 miles per hour, and no other cars. So I get my permit up on Seven Mile my mother and I went to the Secretary of State, and she says to me, do you want to drive home? And I said sure. So I'm on Seven Mile, I drive two or three blocks to Livernois and I turn right. Livernois is a main drag.

They had three lanes this way, three lanes north, and a left-turn lane, and people are driving, three lanes going south. People are driving 35, 40, 45 miles an hour, and I've just been driving 15 miles an hour. After two or three blocks on Livernois, my mother said "Do you want me to drive?" and I said yes. She took over, and that was the last time in life ever, from that point on, I kept up the driving. She went through a phase where she wouldn't drive on the expressways. One night there was some kind of a family event, and she wasn't going to go. My Uncle Larry picked me up, and he had Aunt Betty and the two kids who are younger than me, and he told me to drive. We were going on the east side. So I wasn't going to get on the expressway, but he told me to get on the Lodge, and I'd never driven on the expressway before, and all I was thinking is: "Oh my god, I hope I don't kill this family. What will people say if I do this?" But, hey, he got me on the expressway. I told you I would take the bus sometimes in school. People won't like hearing me say this, but I'm from Detroit. People in Detroit have cars. We don't have the greatest public transportation system. Ask people now. That's a problem for the city. In my point of view, only people without funds and children ride the bus, and I went to school, so I don't have to ride the bus. I have a car. And that's why I have the car, so I don't have to ride the bus. I will ride the subway. The subway started opening up my first year of law school, and then they were doing all this building around and everything, so I will ride the subway. One of my big cases involved the killing of a Metro transit

officer, and so I had a close relationship with Metro people, Metro transit, and through that case, I had some cool experiences with Metro and got to fulfill a couple of life-long things, things that interested me with the subway system. Public bus. When 9/11 happened, I had taken the subway in, and I thought the subways were closed once that happened. I don't know if they were closed or not, but I knew that I was not going underground with terrorism stuff going on. I called my husband to come get me, but when I came out of the building, the thing that really scared me, the FBI is across the street, the field office, they had closed down the street and they were walking around with shotguns and rifles, so I didn't think he could get me, and you couldn't get through on the cell phones. I went inside. I had a gym bag to change clothes, and I'm glad I went inside. My son was in high school. He called me, and then my friend Joann called. Her husband and I had gone to college together. He was a doctor. She said Rick was at Howard Hospital, and if I got up there, I could get home. But I told my son I had changed clothes because it was 11 miles from here to my house, I was going to walk home because I said okay, I'm still not riding a bus. I don't like buses. I can walk home. And I was going to just take my time, because you can stop, go in and eat something, have something to drink, or maybe get somewhere where something happened. But a miracle occurred, and when I came out after changing clothes, my phone did ring, and my husband was near police

headquarters. So I didn't have to walk home. But I wasn't going to ride the bus. I wasn't that desperate on 9/11.

So anyway, in Detroit we all drove, and I have feelings about that. All these people around here, 16-year-old kids driving cars and all this stuff. We all drove and we didn't have problems, but people had rules. And we drove with our friends in the car. I'm not aware of any of my friends having any major accidents or anything with us being young drivers. But I think there are ways you do it, and I tell people, I'd much rather have my kids start driving at 16 than to be 18 and boom, if he's off at college and he's not getting experience with me. Rudy started driving at 16, and I was there with him, and we put in all this time together. Terrifying as it may have been for me, we did that. Drivers training was popular in Detroit Public Schools.

MR. WEAVER: I'm going to ask one more question. Talk a little bit about when you started applying to college where you thought about applying. I know you mentioned you wanted to go to New England from your visit to Vermont when you were in Montreal, but how did all of that transpire?

MS. JEFFRIES: In the summer of 1970, which is the summer before senior year started, I wanted to go to school in New England. I got out the almanac, and it listed colleges and universities by states, so I looked up New England states and picked out some, not all of the colleges. Picked out some and started writing letters. Amongst them, I wrote to Wesleyan. I was also a National Merit Semi-Finalist. We did that in 11<sup>th</sup> grade, so you're

beginning to get inundated with mail from all these schools. One of my friends from Girl Scouts, Sandra, was a year ahead of me. She went to Smith. So I would talk to Sandra. She knew about different schools, so I talked to her. I'm filling this out, I'm doing this, you go to events, whatever. Through Girl Scouts, Mrs. Washington, our leader, was a social worker. She knew some white woman out in the suburbs who had gone to a small women's school in upstate New York, Wells College, in Aurora, New York, and they were looking because at that time, contrary to what Clarence Thomas would say, these schools were looking for Black students because the federal government was making them, not because they were so open and just let you do this. So my mother and father and I went out there. They had something at the women's house, and they were talking about Wells College. Gee, it sounded okay to me, but when we were in the car, my father said you will never go there, and I asked why. He said because they only have seven Black students. I hadn't thought about that part because I had been one of five at Dixon. Anyway, so I'm applying to these schools, and I applied to eight. I did apply to Michigan and Michigan State. Michigan State had some honors program. We went up there and visited those schools. I did it to appease my parents, although I knew it was pointless because I knew I wasn't going. I applied to eight schools, Michigan; Michigan State; Radcliffe, which was Harvard; Wesleyan; Smith; maybe I applied to seven, and I threw in Brown at the end because something happened and somebody said to apply there. So I

got in seven of the eight schools. I did not get into my first choice, which was Radcliffe. Wesleyan was my second choice. I went to the dinner at this private club on top of a building in Detroit, on top of the Buhl building in Detroit. My daddy and I went because my mother was recovering from surgery. They had a dinner for all the people admitted to Brown. They served apple pie with cheddar cheese on top, so when we were going home, I asked my daddy why did they serve apple pie with cheddar cheese on top, and he said because white people eat it that way. We didn't eat lamb. I don't think a lot of Black people eat lamb in general in the South. So I'd heard of lamb but had ever eaten lamb, and I'm in high school, so I ask could we have lamb, and my daddy got a leg of lamb and we cooked it and he got mint jelly, and I said why are we having mint jelly with the lamb, and he said because white people eat mint jelly with the leg of lamb. So we had it one time, and that fulfilled my desire for lamb. And then people were cooking with wine, and I had a recipe that you cooked with wine, and my parents didn't drink. It was a chicken dish, and he got the wine so I could make this dish, except my daddy he got some kind of Manischewitz concord. That is not a cooking wine. We didn't do that again. So that's how I went to Wesleyan. You see my point? My grandfather died, so I could go to Montreal so I could go to Vermont so I could sit there and apply and go to Wesleyan. It was my second choice. They had just gone co-ed, so I was the second incoming co-ed class. They were in Connecticut, and that's what I decided to do.

And I'll say this point and we can talk about stuff later. I said I had been admitted to Brown, and I used to want to be a doctor too, so Brown participated in this program called PREP, which I can't remember what PREP stands for, but it was a program created by this woman Alice Miller. She was Jewish, and her husband was some big surgeon at NYU Medical School, and it was a program for pre-med minority freshmen. NYU had a campus at the time in the Bronx, and they had a six-week summer program at their campus in the Bronx. We took chemistry, math, English, and some other stuff, and they paid us. They paid all of our expenses and gave you a weekly stipend, and so I spent six weeks in New York right after graduating high school, which was extremely significant for my life and things I later went on to do to spend that summer in New York, and I will point out on my first day there I met this guy who then became my college boyfriend, law school boyfriend, husband, and now ex-husband, on that first day in New York. So anyway, we can talk about other things next time.

MR. WEAVER: That sounds great. Thank you.