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[Begin Tape 4487. Begin Session II.]

CHELSEA ARSENEAULT: Thursday, July twenty-third. It's 11:30. We are at Mr. Haki . . . M.D. Haki Vincent's home here in Mossville off the Coach Williams Road, on the corner of Coach Williams Road and Old Spanish Trail. This is . . .

HAKI VINCENT: Y'all don't mind if I . . .?

ARSENEAULT: No. You can paint while we talk that's . . .

VINCENT: Yeah.

ARSENEAULT: Absolutely fine.

JAMIE DIGILORMO: Do you mind if I took a couple of pictures?

VINCENT: [0:00:26] Feel free.

DIGILORMO: Thank you.

VINCENT: You're home. (Laughs)

DIGILORMO: Thank you. I like that.

ARSENEAULT: And we spoke . . . This is our second interview together. The first one was more of a twenty minute kind of just . . .

VINCENT: Yeah.

ARSENEAULT: Brief conversation. But we want to get a little more in depth today. And get some more thoughts about what it was like growing up and your opinions on things or your views on things or your memories of you know what it was like here in Mossville and growing up when you did. So the first thing we wanted to know is we asked you this last time but just want to make sure. When and where were you born?

VINCENT: [0:01:05] I was raised in Washington , D.C.

ARSENEAULT: Okay.

VINCENT: I was born in Casablanca, Morocco.

ARSENEAULT: Was your dad . . . Was he working there? Or why were you . . . ?

VINCENT: He's been an entrepreneur all his life. Like my grandparents. My family have been entrepreneurs all their life. When they were so called free from slavery that's how we obtained this land, because they got a patent from President Grover Cleveland. And it's another president I don't recall his name right off but my great-grandfather got his from Grover Cleveland. And my grandfather got his from this other president. But they both got a nice portion of land.

ARSENEAULT: What were your grandparents' names?

VINCENT: [0:02:10] Eli. Eli Senior and Eli Junior.

ARSENEAULT: Their last names?

VINCENT: Vincent.

ARSENEAULT: And then on your mother's side?

VINCENT: On my mother's side, Collins.

ARSENEAULT: Were they . . . Did they live in Mossville?

VINCENT: [0:02:24] No. They were out of Virginia.

ARSENEAULT: Okay, but your . . . Eli Senior and Eli Junior lived in Mossville?

VINCENT: Yeah. So where was I?

ARSENEAULT: They got some land from . . .

VINCENT: Oh yeah. They got some land which is patent land.

ARSENEAULT: Okay.

VINCENT: [0:02:48] Both of them got a portion of patent land that they were homesteading during those days. So that's how we came about this land which is called Kampoff Springs. And . . .

ARSENEAULT: Is this the original land?

VINCENT: Yes. They used to have post office here, store, and different things like that here. They used to farm, timber work, all that kind of stuff. But they were always entrepreneurs. My father made history here because before he was out of his teens he built the roller coaster that the community was amazed over. That's how much land they had and what kind of creativity they were working with. You know? So . . .

ARSENEAULT: When was that?

VINCENT: Oh that's back in . . . Like I say he wasn't out of his teens at that time when he

built it. Because before he left here he was around in his twenties he built a house that was not a shotgun house.

ARSENEAULT: It wasn't?

VINCENT: No. It was you know a unique house. That's when he went to Washington and he went to school for construction. Building and that's what we were into.

ARSENEAULT: This is Eli Junior?

VINCENT: [0:04:44] Yeah.

ARSENEAULT: Is that your father? Eli Junior?

VINCENT: Yeah. That was Junior. My father was Simon Vincent. Eli was still here.

ARSENEAULT: Eli was his father?

VINCENT: Yeah.

ARSENEAULT: And then your great-grandfather . . .

VINCENT: Right.

ARSENEAULT: ...is Eli Senior.

VINCENT: Yeah. True.

ARSENEAULT: Okay. Trying to get it all straight.

VINCENT: I have to kind of search my mind sometimes because I was being taught about down here and I was the gofer. You know? They made me. Made sure I would have some history down here and we'd come down here and that's the way it went. But so in Washington that's what we were doing. Building houses. We built I don't know if y'all have checked it out or not but we built Deanwood, which is historical.

ARSENEAULT: [0:05:46] What was it?

VINCENT: Deanwood.

ARSENEAULT: Deanwood.

VINCENT: In Washington D.C. Deanwood. Far northeast Deanwood.

ARSENEAULT: D-E-A-N-W-O-O-D? One word?

VINCENT: Yeah. It was a black community. So that's where I was raised, you know. In a

black community. And only time we saw white faces was when we'd go downtown. Something like that. Or maybe someone come through the community. But so at that time they had an amusement park called Glen Echo in Washington D. C. And that's where everybody used to go to be amused. You know? Ride and whatnot. But they wouldn't let blacks go there. So we built one in Deanwood because we had a street car used to come from downtown Washington all the way out to Maryland. Turn around and go back. So we built this you know amusement park. Now I got to think of the name of it [Suburban Gardens]. But it's all in the paper work on Deanwood. The making of Deanwood.

ARSENEAULT: Yeah, we can look that up.

VINCENT: The history of it. Yeah.

ARSENEAULT: Yeah. So how did your father end up in Africa? In Casablanca? What's that story?

VINCENT: [Pardon]?

ARSENEAULT: [0:07:22] What's that story? Or was it your mother? I don't mean to assume that It was your father and your mother.

VINCENT: Yeah, but a lot of that history is . . . evades me because I didn't learn . . . I was learning more about being the gofer.

ARSENEAULT: Oh, okay.

VINCENT: Learning the trade because he was very strict on you know us learning to be entrepreneurs. That was our key lesson in coming up.

ARSENEAULT: When you say “we,” was it your siblings?

VINCENT: Yeah.

ARSENEAULT: How many siblings?

VINCENT: [0:08:05] Three sisters and let me see . . . Three sister and three brothers.

ARSENEAULT: Okay. Were you the oldest?

VINCENT: No. I got a sister who's still living is the oldest. And I got a half-brother who was around her age who has passed away. Matter of fact, he brought this car here. It was pristine when he came with it but he gave it to somebody to sell for me and that's what happened to it. But he was a half-brother and he was the exact image of my father. Because one day I came home, that's before this road was through here and we had a little gravel road coming around to the gate. And I came in and I saw him standing up there. I had . . . It was like deja vu. Like my father had came back and was standing outside my gate. My half-brother.

ARSENEAULT: Wow.

VINCENT: It blew my mind, I'm telling you. But he was a dental technician. He was going to teach me that, but he passed away before he could. Before I could learn. So alright I was . . . When I was . . . My worst experience coming up was I got robbed by two white cops when I was sixteen. I was driving, going you know to see some honey somewhere and they stopped me and . . .

ARSENEAULT: Oh you were going to see a lady?

VINCENT: [0:09:53] Yeah.

ARSENEAULT: Okay.

VINCENT: And they stopped me and asked me for my driver's license. I gave it to them and they went around a couple of corners and they said, "Follow us." They went around a couple of corners in a dark area. Came back to the car asked me, "How much money you got?" So whatever I had, you know, I took it out and you know, "This how much I got." They took what they wanted.

DIGILORMO: Where was this?

VINCENT: Washington, D.C. Deanwood. They took what they wanted and told me, "Get out

of here. We don't want to see you no more." You know? So for over twenty years I didn't even tell anybody about it because I was in shock. And I knew wouldn't nobody believe me. You know? So I . . .

ARSENEAULT: Was that sort of thing common?

VINCENT: [Pardon]?

ARSENEAULT: Was that sort of thing common for that time?

VINCENT: [0:10:52] Not really. Not that I knew of anyway, because I was mostly home and working. But as far as being out in the street and what not, you know, it was really like country, wasn't out in no street. You know? It was like here. People had chickens and all that stuff right there in Washington. Chickens, horses, gardens, and all that good stuff. So that was, I guess that's a part of what made me what I am today. That one experience. Especially with two white faces and you know you don't see them in Deanwood at that time too much at all.

So I was raised hard like I could . . . I figured out later on that this is the way I was treated being raised. Like when we got . . . When we did something wrong like we'd go down to the creek and swim. We not supposed to do that. And they find out you did it and your daddy come home you got a whipping. And you going to get one before he come home, too. And you got to take your clothes off. I didn't, you know I didn't put it together then but that's nothing but an offshoot of slavery. You know? That's what they were taught. This is how you doing. This is how you break them and raise them and stuff. To me that was torture. You got to go out and

break you a switch off and it can't get no roody-poo. [Laughs] It's got to be you know something that's going to stand up under pressure. You got to break that off clean the leaves off and whatnot, bring it in and wait for your whipping. What that sound like? That ever happen to you? So later on as I you know grew wiser I see where it came from, you know. I said, "Well this is nothing nice." And you know, I also discovered around that time it's economic exploitation under white supremacy. I had to figure that out you know coming out. So I . . .

DIGILORMO: What experiences opened your eyes to that economic exploitation?

VINCENT: [0:13:30] When I . . . When they threatened us to be drafted. That put a bad taste in my mouth. You going to force somebody to go in and fight for what? For who? How? All of that stuff that's got to go through your head, too. And why? Because I was already working for them because coming up in school we had to collect newspapers and whatnot. That was World War II now. We had to collect newspapers and stuff to help the war. Whatever they going to use the papers for, I don't know. But you know, so we collected enough newspapers to buy a jeep. So our school bought a jeep. They brought it to the school and let us see it. Go up to [. . .?] here and whatnot. I said, "Oh."

ARSENEAULT: This is in Washington, D.C.? Did you go to public school there?

VINCENT: [0:14:28] Yeah.

ARSENEAULT: Was it segregated?

VINCENT: It was all black. But you can't say it wasn't segregated because what they were teaching, you know? Was not altogether. I could see that. That's why . . . That's when I figured out, damn they got me in here teaching me not how to think but what to think. This ain't working for me. So my computer shut down. I didn't learn nothing in school. Zero. I couldn't pay attention to that bullshit.

ARSENEAULT: What do you remember about school? What else do you remember about school?

VINCENT: Oh that's another place they used to whip you, too. In school. True. Take a ruler to your hand and whatever. You know? They had different methods to doing you there too. But one thing was no white teachers. No white students. It was all black. Used books. Pages missing.

ARSENEAULT: Are they from the white schools?

VINCENT: [0:15:40] Leftover shit. That's what we would get. So how you really going to learn something anyhow? You know? You don't have all the tools. You missed some of the major tools. So I can see that as being set up to be economic exploitation. Make the rich richer while we stay right where we are. So I think my wisdom must come from my ancestors because when I came down here a lot of old people who are gone now used to tell me, "You just like your grandfather. Your grandfather Eli used to ride a white horse and carry a whip. He would give you the shirt off his back, the food out of his garden and stuff. But don't screw him around. That's why he got that whip." Black or white. Didn't make no difference. So I thank God. You

know? That's one thing that made me realize in school that they are teaching us what to think. We never learned how to think. So the military really started, you know that threat. That bullyness of you got to go and do what we say.

ARSENEAULT: You said you were seventeen . . .

VINCENT: Yeah.

ARSENEAULT: . . . when you decided to join the air force?

VINCENT: [0:17:13] Yeah. And the reason I joined the air force is because I didn't want to go in the army and be shooting and all that grunt stuff and you know.

ARSENEAULT: Did you have to do something special to get in the air force?

VINCENT: Same thing that all the rest of them do. They just want bodies. That they . . .

ARSENEAULT: You didn't have to be in ROTC beforehand?

VINCENT: No.

ARSENEAULT: Where you ever in ROTC or anything?

VINCENT: No. Only thing I was in before that was the Boy Scouts and I learned a lot from the boy scouts. Far as life and camping whatnot.

ARSENEAULT: [0:17:44] Was that segregated, too?

VINCENT: No it was all black. Deanwood was all black. We had a black movie. We had an amusement park. You know, we could ride the street cars to town and back. You know? But you didn't see no white faces out there. Then they started building . . . We were like in the country and the started building projects there around us. You know, they were building houses, too. But started building several projects and things started really changing then. Start seeing more white cops riding through the community and all of this. So they were boosting up the exploitation and the entire . . . They ask people why they run from cops. That sister is probably the same way. She terrified. He got a gun and you the victim. How else can you not be terrified? But so the military was another trip that wasn't right. And what they do is get you in there and terrorize you let you know that you ain't shit. We going to make you over so you'll be right.

ARSENEAULT: What do you remember about boot camp?

VINCENT: [0:19:19] This is it.

ARSENEAULT: This is the . . .?

VINCENT: You ain't shit. You ain't nothing.

ARSENEAULT: That's what they told you in boot camp?

VINCENT: You ain't nobody. We going to make somebody out of you. You know? Because we need this certain tool and we going to make you this certain tool that we need to kill. So that's when I was on the train on the way to boot camp that's when I noticed. I ain't never seen so many white faces in my life together. You know? On the train. So I said, "Uh oh, this is going to be a rough road here." For real. So at the same time now I'm reading about Emmett Till. Y'all know Emmett Till?

DIGILORMO: I think so.

ARSENEAULT: I might know. I'll have her educate me on it.

VINCENT: [0:20:17] Yeah.

DIGILORMO: He was a young man killed in Mississippi during the sixties.

VINCENT: He left Chicago to visit his family in Mississippi. He ended up in the Mississippi River. A big iron wheel tied around his neck.

DIGILORMO: Like fifteen.

VINCENT: Yeah about fifteen years old and the reason they said they did it because he

whistled at a white girl. But the people just . . . They just went to court. I'm concerned it's not long ago. The trial came up, it was not long ago. That's how long, you know.

ARSENEAULT: It took. I'm curious what did they tell you about the Korean conflict before you enlisted? Like what did you know about it?

VINCENT: [0:21:11] Nothing.

ARSENEAULT: They didn't inform y'all what it was about?

VINCENT: Other than it's a war. The Japanese, the Germans, the you know. We trying to keep them from . . . Oh yeah, we used to have air raid war . . . Air raid . . . What did . . .

DIGILORMO: Drills?

VINCENT: Yeah. Where they . . . Matter of fact I got a . . . I got one of the helmets right over there on that green chair right now that we . . . they used to wear. They put a metal helmet on that was a certain color and they'd go around the community making sure everybody got their lights out and everybody in the house because all of the lights in the city going to turn out in case the enemy coming they can't see where we are. Really.

ARSENEAULT: So y'all would practice?

VINCENT: Yeah. They . . . When the siren ring everybody had to turn their lights out and go in the house.

ARSENEAULT: Where would y'all go? Y'all . . . Was there a basement or . . .?

VINCENT: We had an air raid shelter in our house. We would . . .

ARSENEAULT: Did your dad build it?

VINCENT: We built it.

ARSENEAULT: Your family built it?

VINCENT: [0:22:24] Yeah. So we had that. And a lot of people didn't, you know, they just had the house and that's it. But that was one of the . . . trips we used to go through.

ARSENEAULT: How did your dad learn these skills? I'm sorry I'm just curious about . . .

VINCENT: He went to school.

ARSENEAULT: So he went to a trade school here or he went to trade school . . .?

VINCENT: No, in Washington, D.C.

ARSENEAULT: In D.C.?

VINCENT: [0:22:45] Matter of fact . . .

ARSENEAULT: Did he talk about your uncle . . . your grandfather while y'all were there?

VINCENT: Yeah he used to tell me all the time about the main thing he would be talking about is the land we had here. That's the main subject and learning to be an entrepreneur. Those are two key things that came up in our family. We didn't get a lot of hugs and kisses and love and stuff like that. It was tough love that we was raised with. You know?

ARSENEAULT: Was your mom from here?

VINCENT: No, she was from Virginia.

ARSENEAULT: [0:23:25] Did your dad meet her . . .?

VINCENT: Richmond area. He met her in Washington.

ARSENEAULT: Oh okay.

VINCENT: So we wasn't . . . We couldn't run around the street and whatnot. We get in trouble for going in people's yard. Picking apples and pears off the tree without asking. Stealing.

[Laughs] But coming up that's the only kind of, you know, trouble we would get in about breaking the rules at home.

DIGILORMO: So you weren't in Morocco very long then?

VINCENT: [0:24:07] No.

DIGILORMO: And you grew up in D.C. mostly?

VINCENT: No. I was very young when I came here.

DIGILORMO: So you don't . . .

VINCENT: That's why I don't have . . .

DIGILORMO: Many memories of that place?

VINCENT: Yeah, but I have been back, though.

DIGILORMO: Oh you have?

VINCENT: Yeah. Two time, matter of fact. One time when I was in the military because I was in SAC.

ARSENEAULT: What's that?

VINCENT: [0:24:27] Strategic Air Command. Supposed to be the backbone of American defense. So we traveled everywhere all the time. So the first, one of the first major stops we made . . . We had re-fuelers and bombers and all that kind of stuff you know. And when we go on missions all of that be together. Refueling planes in the air and bombers and all that stuff. One of the first places we stopped stayed for let me see, I don't know how long, but England.

ARSENEAULT: Was this the first time being out of the country?

VINCENT: No, I was in other little islands and whatever. We stopped on the way places you know, but yeah. So England was a trip. England . . .

ARSENEAULT: All the white people?

VINCENT: Yeah. It was a lot of Africans there, too, though. But England remind me of . . . Boston remind me of England. I did not like England, I do not like Boston.

ARSENEAULT: Why not?

VINCENT: [0:25:36] It looked Euro. That's why. Feel Euro. Cold, wet all that stuff.

DIGILORMO: Scary?

ARSENEAULT: Bricks?

VINCENT: Yeah. Old like ancient. No. I'm downtown in London, walking, looking you know. Next thing I know this white girl holding my arm. Asking me . . . What was the word she used? Anyway, she was a trick [prostitute].

DIGILORMO: [Laughs] She was asking if you wanted to have a good time?

VINCENT: Yeah. I said, "I don't think so. I'm already having a good time." It's the first time I ever touched a white girl, you know. White girl touched me.

DIGILORMO: Right.

VINCENT: [0:26:31] So I said, "Uh uh. I got a wife. This might . . . Ain't no telling what's up with this." So she said, "Well, I ain't going to charge you. I like you."

ARSENEAULT: Got a special deal.

VINCENT: Yeah. [Laughs] So say. But that's what she was. She was trying to get me. So I said, "Well I ain't doing nothing. I guess I'll hang out with you some." Biggest dose of crabs. [Laughs] And I ain't never had nothing like that. I didn't even know what they were.

DIGILORMO: Off the record. Off the record. [Laughter]

VINCENT: Well y'all . . .

DIGILORMO: That's alright we can take it out.

VINCENT: Y'all know how to deal with it.

DIGILORMO: Yeah, we deal with it. That is funny.

VINCENT: [0:27:30] And so we were about seventy-five miles . . . Our base was about seventy-five miles from London. So she came out to something we were having. A riot broke out up in that sucker because so many white boys were saying, "Yeah, niggers got tails." You know?

DIGILORMO: Right.

VINCENT: And this real.

DIGILORMO: Oh, yeah.

VINCENT: That's what they would tell them to keep the white girls from messing with us you know. Make them more curious or whatever you're trying to do. But yeah. Somebody heard that being said in there. Oh, shit.

DIGILORMO: It was on.

VINCENT: It was on. Yeah. So that was one of my first experiences with that kind of racism shit, you know. Programming.

DIGILORMO: [0:28:27] When say that kind of racism you know you mean like so overt and in your face?

VINCENT: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: Like so obvious rather than . . .

VINCENT: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: More subtle types?

VINCENT: Yeah. True.

ARSENEAULT: [0:28:39] What were some of your main responsibilities?

VINCENT: I was dealing with survival equipment. Parachutes or any kind of survival equipment. I had to . . .

ARSENEAULT: Oh, beetle!

VINCENT: I had to inspect it and any repairs and stuff. So I learned how to sew. Use a sewing machine and stuff like that you know. But I was not a happy camper the whole time I was in there so. . . I was not cooperating. You know? I was just the opposite. I was making all the trouble I could. Bottom line. And any way I could. Because I was pissed. Especially the way they train you. You ain't nothing. You ain't nobody.

DIGILORMO: So give us an example of some trouble you'd make?

VINCENT: [0:29:43] Sabotage. Bottom line.

DIGILORMO: Just any way and any [. . .?]?

VINCENT: I wasn't taught how to do that, I created.

DIGILORMO: I got you.

VINCENT: My ability.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

VINCENT: [0:29:55] So I was . . . My main thing is I'm going to make sure this sucker don't fly so they can drop bombs on people.

DIGILORMO: Right. Wow. That's brave.

VINCENT: Yeah. So and then, you know, they had it in your face too. Racism. All up in your face. So then I got married while I was in there. I met a little honey in Arizona. She was pregnant already and I caught myself falling in love. [Laughs]

ARSENEAULT: She was pregnant with your baby?

VINCENT: No.

DIGILORMO: No, it happens.

VINCENT: [0:30:39] I met . . . Yeah. Well one thing I always have since I been more wiser. I always . . . I'm attracted to pregnant woman. They beautiful to me.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

VINCENT: That nice belly, man. And I want to touch and rub . . . And talk to the baby. So when I did start having them I was spoiling them, I'm telling you.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

VINCENT: Make sure that they get good massages, because I was in the holistic health thing

anyway. I stopped eating flesh and whatnot in sixty-nine and I start feeling better. I was kind of chubby, you know. But the reason I got that way because my ex-wife, well she passed away, she was a good cook and she wouldn't save no leftovers. We throwing these leftovers away. I said, "Oh no. That ain't happening. I'm eating this." So I got up to be about a hundred-ninety pounds at one time. And I did not feel good. You know? So I decided to cut it off. Coming on up to I think we broke up in about sixty-one and look like sixty-eight was right around the corner. But I had more than one job. I was working in the government. I worked on President Kennedy's yacht at the navy yard in Washington D.C. where they shooting up now. At that time you didn't have to even, you know, once they knew you, they didn't search you and all that kind of stuff. But yeah, I'm sitting back there on the president's yacht and say, "This this boat be mine. I paid my dues."

DIGILORMO: [0:32:45] My reparations right here.

VINCENT: Hey and so . . .

ARSENEAULT: Did you ever see the president?

VINCENT: Not up close. But I was at every march they had in Washington, D.C. Everything that's dealing with righteousness. Yeah. So I was all over the place.

DIGILORMO: Now you weren't there when Dr. King went?

VINCENT: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: Wow.

VINCENT: [0:33:10] Yeah. Everything he had, I was there.

DIGILORMO: Wow.

VINCENT: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: That's amazing.

VINCENT: Yeah. Matter of fact I was into it so deep they decided to kill me.

DIGILORMO: [0:33:22] Who? Hoover or the FBI? Or the CIA? Or who?

VINCENT: Hoover.

DIGILORMO: Hoover.

VINCENT: Hoover's crew.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

VINCENT: And you know Watergate took place at that time, and they really found out about

a lot of the corruption and all that. Yeah. What happened was when King got killed, I was on the way to take my aunt and niece back to New York. I was driving them back in their car, and I caught a flight back. But they were in a convenience store using the bathroom or something, and that's when they announced that King had got killed. So when they came out I said, "Y'all didn't hear the news, but King got killed." And we always playing around, joking with each other, and they say "You're joking." I say, "Just listen, you'll hear." Came back on the news, you know. And by the time I got them home and got back on the plane, I could see Washington, D.C. burning from the plane. Smoke. I don't know how many days that stayed there, maybe one or two days. But when I come over D.C., I could see the smoke, I say, "Uh oh. It's on down there now."

[34:41] So I was going to see the sister. Well I was . . . right around the corner from my house. I had drove my motorcycle, and I met her on the street, and we was sitting there talking. Two white cops came up, questioned me about the motorcycle and the tag and my papers and all that. South Africa. I say "I live right there. My house is like right there. So I can go and get the papers you want." Oh, no. They say, "Well you get in and go with us." This how they approach a black man.

DIGILORMO: For some tags on a motorcycle.

VINCENT: Yeah. And I'm not driving it, it's sitting on the side of the road. I'm talking to this sister. So I say, "No, I'm not going with y'all." So we debated back and forth, and it started getting a little heated. They say, "Well you get on the motorcycle and ride it to the precinct." So I say, "Okay." So I pushed it around the corner, walked her home, made sure she got in, then I got on it, took off, stopped at a light. They say, "You know the way to the precinct." I say, "Yeah."

Lays the gun on the seat. So then he said, "Don't try nothing, we're going to be right behind you." I said, "Okay." That was the key right there that I don't need to go with these motherfuckers. See what I'm saying?

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

VINCENT: [0:36:19] They up to no goddamn good. So I went a few blocks and then I decided well this is a good place to turn off right here. Turned off, gunned it, they were right behind me. Went up through the projects I was telling you they built when I was young. I'm talking about before I went two blocks, they were shooting. The shotgun rider had emptied his gun by the time we got halfway. I went and headed back home. By the time we got halfway back to my house he had emptied his gun and got the driver's gun. Shooting the driver's gun. We went all up through the projects. They shooting. They try to run me off the road. Try to hit me with the car and all that stuff. And so on the way down this hill headed towards my house I got shot in the back. Back, right in there. So I felt the blood running down my leg. I said, "Goddamn these mother fuckers done shot me." So I went toward my house and made a big U turn because it was some tracks in front of our house and the school was on the other side of the tracks. I was going too fast to turn in my little street. I went around across the tracks and coming back across the tracks to the house. And I fell off. I hit the tracks and fell off the bike.

So I got up and I was hobbling to my house. And the shotgun rider was running behind me. So I went down in this little area way about four steps and knocking on my brother's door. So he came down and got in front of me. The area way was maybe about this wide. He got in front of me just the door here. Pushed me back against the wall and had his gun. Holding his gun

on me. So I was kicking on the door, you know, calling my brother. So by that time the driver came with a flashlight. It was about maybe 12:30 in . . . Yeah. So when he came down, he shined the flashlight down there. He shot me in the ankle. He shot me . . . Let's see. Where is it? Right there.

DIGILORMO: Wipe your ankle off for you?

VINCENT: [0:38:57] That's where he hit me.

DIGILORMO: Look at that. Made it worse.

VINCENT: Alright. And you already [. . .?]. What you got? I already had this one in the back so when he hit that ankle I fell over like that on the steps. My head was like on the second step. He was kicking me in the head and the one that was in front of me was pistol whipping me and kicking me in the face. By that time my brother opened the door. Say, "What the hell is going on?" And he turned his gun on my brother then. And my other brother came up and the cop that was up on the top of the steps told him, "You can't go down there." He said, "You a goddamn liar. That's my brother you're screwing over." So then all hell broke loose. Rest of the cops came. Ambulance came. They handcuffed me so tight I couldn't even feel the bullets. That's how tight they handcuffed me. So I'm in the ambulance on the way to the hospital and I'm telling the cop, "These cuffs too tight." He just looked at me like I was a black snake.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

VINCENT: [0:40:08] So I told the attendant, you know, "Hey man, feel these cuffs." And the attendant told him, "Loosen them up." So that's when he did it. So got into the hospital on the gurney. Here come a detective in. He, "What's going on?" I said, "You ask your partners what's going on." And he lit a cigarette and stuck it in my mouth. I spit it at him. You know? Nobody asked him for no damn cigarette. I don't even smoke. So the doctor was a young black dude. And the doctor told them they had to go because he had to work on me. And I had three bullets and all of them beat up wounds you know. I woke up. Kwame Nkrumah was dead. I said, "Woah."

DIGILORMO: Wow, you woke up and that's what you learned?

VINCENT: Wow.

DIGILORMO: Wow.

VINCENT: Do you know who Kwame Nkrumah was?

DIGILORMO: Of course I do.

VINCENT: Okay.

DIGILORMO: First African President.

VINCENT: True.

DIGILORMO: [. . .?]

VINCENT: Liberated Ghana.

DIGILORMO: [. . .?]

VINCENT: [0:41:25] That was my idol then.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

VINCENT: True.

ARSENEAULT: We definitely want to talk about your political activism and how you got your political consciousness, but I'm still curious about your time in the military and what you remember about that?

VINCENT: [possibly crying] . . .Was not good.

ARSENEAULT: What it emotional for you? Was that the start of your activism?

DIGILORMO: We can definitely come back to that [. . .?].

VINCENT: It was not good.

ARSENEAULT: Yeah. Is there anything you want to say about it or . . . ?

VINCENT: [0:42:32] As soon as I settle down a minute.

DIGILORMO: Take your time.

VINCENT: Do y'all know what PTSD is?

ARSENEAULT: Oh, with the train.

VINCENT: You think you got it? You think you have PTSD?

DIGILORMO: Can't imagine. I can't imagine seeing what you've been through. So . . .

VINCENT: They used to call it shell shock. What else about the military?

DIGILORMO: Like we said before, this is your interview. You're in charge of it so if you're like, you know I don't want to talk about this then we say hey, we respect that and move on.

ARSENEAULT: Right. Of course.

DIGILORMO: So please don't feel pressured in any way to talk about something [. . .?].

I'm sorry you're still having to deal with it all these years later.

VINCENT: Yeah. And they treating the veterans like it didn't happen. You ask them to prescribe something for you like marijuana. Know what they prescribe? Morphine. Who in the hell need morphine unless you going to commit suicide?

DIGILORMO: [0:44:52] Did they do that to you?

VINCENT: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

VINCENT: I don't use drugs, period. Not even aspirins. But they want to give you some morphine for your pain and whatnot.

DIGILORMO: Seems like in the end that would just cause more pain.

VINCENT: That would cause everything to start shutting down in your body for sure. So who are the real terrorists is what I be looking at. The cops who come through the community trying to terrorize everybody or what? Who are the real terrorists? And from my experiences, the foundation is right there in Washington, DC like they say. The foundation of the axis of evil is right there. They go over in other countries trying to dictate to people. They talk about the Cubans. I was there not long ago. Less than six months . . . seven month ago I was there. Those

are unbelievable people over there and I felt nothing but love over there. I cried like a baby when it was time to leave. For real. They don't lock they doors. That must mean something, huh?

But they don't believe in dealing with the truth here. Deception is what they believe in here. They even got Obama crossed up. I don't think he care nothing about us getting reparations. If he do care he ain't got balls enough to stand up. Because that's supposed to be on the table as we speak. That's what we were fighting for, all of the righteousness is what we were fighting for. A lot of people say, "Oh they burning their own [unclear]. They doing this. They doing that." Well at some point sometimes you got to burn something down to build something better. Or tear it down or do something with it.

DIGILORMO: [0:47:55] Especially if you didn't build it in the first place.

VINCENT: That's what I'm talking about. You don't have a say in it. You didn't have nothing to do with it. But you got to follow the rules of it. No. So I see things getting worse, not better. Especially in the black community. And that's why the young boys are off the hook, because that's all they been taught about wars and whatnot. Video machine. You know? They been programmed really bad. So any other questions or . . . ?

DIGILORMO: I'm going to pause this real quick. Can we just?

ARSENEAULT: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: I just hit that button?

ARSENEAULT: The pause. There's a pause right in the middle. Yeah.

[48:57]

[End Tape 4487. End Session II.]