

Zoanne Pedford:

My name is Zoanne Pedford. I'm 67. I was born in Los Angeles, California. I don't really have any nicknames. If you call me Zoanne, I know it's somebody from school or family, because I go by Zoe now.

I was born in General Hospital 1953 and lived on the West Side all my life. My grandparents owned a home on 46th Street, a really nice house. When we go back now if we ever drive by, it looks so little. When you're-

Earl Pedford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Zoanne Pedford:

But it had this great big front porch. It was just a nice neighborhood, very mixed, most of the neighbors were. We had a Creole old lady who lived across the street. She was probably a hundred years old, Camille. And she used to pay us pennies to feed her chickens and stuff and those chickens were mean, but anyway.

Neighbors Mexicans on both sides, Black folks everywhere. It was a really mixed neighborhood with Blacks and Mexicans.

1227 West 46th Street.

Apricot pie. We had a huge apricot tree in the backyard, it was huge and it was spread over to the neighbor's yard too. But she said every summer, "If you guys pick the apricots, I'll make the pies." Because my grandmother cooked, she was a gourmet cook at that time.

Anna Davis. We called her Nana.

Alfonso Louis Reed and Merle Justine Reed.

Earl Pedford:

Okay. My name is Earl James Pedford. A long time, they used to call me Junior because my dad's name is Earl, but it's Earl Charles Pedford, so that was a false junior family thing there. Born in Salinas, California, 1953. Basically grew up in LA. I can remember being on 20th and Stanford, downtown Los Angeles. Little small apartment, poor, although we didn't know we were poor because everybody else was so we was just like everybody else. And then we moved to the West Side like, "Whoa, we're out of the ghetto now." One of the first ones to move to that area of 92nd Street [inaudible 00:03:34].

It was an awesome neighborhood when we first moved in because next door was a tribe of Indians in a large complex, there was bunch of them. We played over there all the time. Meadows and fields across the street literally. I mean, it was really a nice area. Mostly white, Indian and a couple Hispanics there. And then after a while, it actually just turned over. One or two staunch white folks that refused to leave the neighborhood, we just grew up with them. I can remember one guy almost running over my foot because we were playing football in the street, that kind of stuff. A couple of houses down, we grew up with this guy. He wasn't as bad as he pretended to be else he would've moved. Then after that, we moved to Pomona at about 16 years old.

I went to 20th Street Elementary off of San Pedro when I was a little, little toddler there. And then when we went to West LA, I went to 92nd Street School, went to [Breed-hard 00:04:50], great city. I did one year at Washington High, which was an awesome school and then I came out to promote. Actually, got shipped out to Pomona myself.

I was living in LA, stepfather mother and rest of the family and I was at that age, could be in trouble at any minute. And I was a gymnast, all kinds of stuff. I could remember one time we would cross the street at the neighbor's house and we had some half Black and Chinese family over there and they were all girls and we have permission to be there. We were like one little pack, my cousin, myself, the three girls.

We were there late one night waiting for the oldest sister to come home and she didn't know anybody was there. And we were sitting back, it was a two story apartment and we all, well, somebody come through, I'm going to do this and somebody does this, you know, kidding around not knowing we were going to have to actually do something here. She would call the cops and they did us one of these and just burst in. We're in the back, not hearing anything. They broke into the house, kicked the door open but the sister was there, so they almost had right. But the minute they got in there, my cousin is a couple of months younger than me, looks like he was a couple of years older but a couple of months younger, he got up and says, "Look, I can explain." And they started whooping his ass before the girls in the house, you know, "On the ground."

So what I did, I bailed out the window, two stories up. I remember seeing the guy in the garage doing like this with the rifle. I hit the ground, somebody came on the steps and I made a little move to grab my little brand new jacket. I remember him going down and I looked at the guns, they were... you know? And she had to scream to tell him, "No! No! Don't! We know them!" And it was about three o'clock in the morning. "Where do you live?" I said "I live across the street."

Took me home, knocked on the door. "Ma'am, is this your son here? Seems to be okay, he just jumped out that two story window. Don't seem to be hurt or anything, but we're just sending them home tonight." My mother just closed the door and she said, "Just one more thing. It's one more thing." And I was in the same group that we were really about to break open the random thing.

It was called Injection to Flow. We won every talent show, this was before the Jackson 5. We were an acapella, we won every talent show there was, we used to open up businesses, night clubs up and down Manchester, Vermont. Our parents had to be there because we were too young. And then that broke me out of the group. I was sent to Pomona and it was terrible. There's no way, I couldn't commute like that.

Zoanne Pedford:

When I was 10 in 1963. So I was there way before him so I was into the Pomona culture. I went to North San Antonio Elementary, Palomares Junior High and then Pomona High.

So the Teenpost was just the neighborhood spot where we went after school and we went on the weekends, they helped you get jobs.

Earl Pedford:

At teen risks, I have to point that out too, we're all at-risk teens at this time.

Zoanne Pedford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). So jobs and my first job was through the Teenpost. I worked for the City of Claremont. I worked in the office, I worked in billing something.

Earl Pedford:

[inaudible 00:08:49].

Zoanne Pedford:

I did the billing on this big, big machine with all these little things on it.

I don't know. I found out later in that a couple of white guys from high school were in love with me at that stage. That's another story but I was treated a little different.

Earl Pedford:

Positively new [crosstalk 00:09:19]-

Zoanne Pedford:

Because I was positive.

Earl Pedford:

Yeah, because she was the little darling.

Zoanne Pedford:

Yeah, I'm like the little darling.

Song leader, I was good.

Earl Pedford:

She's was an athlete. She ran track so-

Zoanne Pedford:

I was an athlete so they couldn't deny me and-

Earl Pedford:

And Her mother was a force to be reckoned with too so it was going to be some shaky dealings that's going to have to deal with her.

Zoanne Pedford:

Her name was Merle Justine Anthony Reed who didn't take no shit from nobody.

Earl Pedford:

Yup.

Zoanne Pedford:

Yup, that was my mother.

Earl Pedford:

[inaudible 00:10:04].

Zoanne Pedford:

Go ahead. [crosstalk 00:10:07] because he was there.

Earl Pedford:

I was over at the house one morning, guy knocks on the door. He's one of the utility guy from the gas company-

Zoeanne Pedford:

Gas.

Earl Pedford:

Something like that. He's coming to turn off the gas. And she was having a conversation with him about this shut down on this gas and he made the mistake of saying, "You people!" Like that, you know what that meant. She busted him in the nose so quick. Pow! I said, "Oh!" and then sic'ed the dogs on him because she had a big old German shepherd named [Talos 00:00:10:43]. "Get him, Talos!" And I'm kind of new to the family, I'm going, "Ooh, Ooh, you don't be messing with mom's like that." But he deserved it. I don't know whatever happened, there was no complaint from the city.

Yeah, well, like I said, lucky-

Zoeanne Pedford:

She punched him in the nose, had his nose bleeding and sic'ed the dog on him-

Earl Pedford:

Sic'ed the dog on him.

Zoeanne Pedford:

And he left. He knew he was wrong.

Earl Pedford:

Yeah.

Zoeanne Pedford:

So I don't know what transpired up to that point, but she socked him.

Earl Pedford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Zoeanne Pedford:

And that was her style, she didn't play. She was the oldest of the Anthony children and I guess-

Earl Pedford:

Probably the smallest too.

Zoeanne Pedford:

Probably was.

Earl Pedford:

Yeah.

Zoanne Pedford:

But she was tough.

Earl Pedford:

And when it came to those racial ties, you might as well get her in the head with a bat because she's not going to stop, the nicest lady until you show that racism; it's instant.

Zoanne Pedford:

And she actually went back to school when we graduated from high school and she went to Cal Poly and she got her degree and she wound up being a counselor at Pomona High.

Earl Pedford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Zoanne Pedford:

But then she died soon after in a car accident where she had been drinking and driving and she didn't make it.

Earl Pedford:

Oh, we partied with her, man. When we made it back several times, we'd go out to the club and party after maybe a show or something.

Zoanne Pedford:

Well, we had this little spot, it was called the Depot and it was-

Earl Pedford:

Claremont.

Zoanne Pedford:

In Claremont and it was an old train and it was a great place to go. The bartender was awesome. We used to go, me and my girlfriend-

Earl Pedford:

Live band.

Zoanne Pedford:

Live band, it was a nice place, it was fun.

Earl Pedford:

I think it's still there.

Zoanne Pedford:

It might be, I don't know.

Earl Pedford:

Well, she was in a... Actually...Wow.

Zoanne Pedford:

The Teenpost.

It was on Orange-

Earl Pedford:

And La Verne. There's a park-

Zoanne Pedford:

Orange Groove and La Verne.

Earl Pedford:

Yup, Ted Greene Park, it was right there.

Zoanne Pedford:

And now it's all Ted Greene Park because they burned the our Teenpost down.

Earl Pedford:

Probably in '70?

Zoanne Pedford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Earl Pedford:

'69, '70.

Zoanne Pedford:

It was '70.

Earl Pedford:

Yeah.

Zoanne Pedford:

Maybe even '71 before we graduated.

Earl Pedford:

It was definitely before.

Zoeanne Pedford:

Yeah?

Earl Pedford:

Yeah because I think I was probably in... Yeah, probably '70-71.

Zoeanne Pedford:

Early '71.

Earl Pedford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Zoeanne Pedford:

Burned our Teenpost down.

There was a gentleman named John [Ousley 00:13:38] and he still lives in the neighborhood today and him and some of his friends from Cal Poly Mt. San got it together. It was all over the place. It was a state thing, it had to have been a state thing because there were Teenposts everywhere.

Earl Pedford:

Right.

Zoeanne Pedford:

We used to travel because that's how I learned how to play softball. Robert Smith he was-

Earl Pedford:

One of the counselors but the coach-

Zoeanne Pedford:

One of the counselors but he was young, he wasn't that much older than us. But a matter of fact, he married my friend Benita [Pruitt 00:14:17], that didn't last long but anyway.

Earl Pedford:

It wasn't his fault.

Zoeanne Pedford:

They taught us how to play softball. We used to go into LA and play and we were not equipped because our pitcher pitched like this. Like she's slow pitching them. And those girls were whizzing that ball through and we were going, "Oh, shit. Smitty, y'all didn't teach us this."

Earl Pedford:

They had to up their game.

Zoeanne Pedford:

But I was quick, I watched her and I timed her and the next thing you know, I'm hitting her, boom, home runs.

Earl Pedford:

Yeah, little Zoe would hit home.

Zoanne Pedford:

I used to bat clean up because I could hit a home run. My father used to come watch my games because he was so proud.

He was a gentle giant. He wouldn't hurt anybody unless you messed with his kids.

Alfonso Louis Reed the second.

Speaker 1:

Okay.

Zoanne Pedford:

His father was the first and they-

Earl Pedford:

[Milway 00:15:23]?

Zoanne Pedford:

Oklahoma. Muskogee, Oklahoma, and he was a gentle giant. The women ruled the roost. My father's people, they were so hoity-toity. You would think that... you know?

Earl Pedford:

Very much so.

Zoanne Pedford:

They were just-

Earl Pedford:

Like you said, hoity-toity.

Zoanne Pedford:

Yeah, hoity-toity. My mother's people were hoity-toity because they came from free people. Now, my father's people, they had Indian on their side.

The Teenpost taught us how to have fun, taught skills.

Earl Pedford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative), you could get your homework done.

Zoanne Pedford:



We learned sports, you could do your homework, we had tutoring, pool table-

Earl Pedford:

You had basketball, pool table.

Zoanne Pedford:

Basketball stuff. And then just our own creativity-

Earl Pedford:

It's just a comradery.

Zoanne Pedford:

Yeah, playing together.

Earl Pedford:

Girls would have a dance group, they would practice there. Any parent could call the Teenpost, they know the kid was there and that kid would answer the phone.

Zoanne Pedford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Earl Pedford:

It's such a [crosstalk 00:16:32].

Zoanne Pedford:

So one thing that the Teenpost did that we used to just really enjoy was they would have a beach party every year. Get a big truck.

Earl Pedford:

It's illegal now to travel like that.

Zoanne Pedford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Pile everybody in and go to the beach. We used to have so much fun, whatever you could think of.

Earl Pedford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Zoanne Pedford:

So when we grew up, I wanted to recreate that. So probably in the eighties-

Earl Pedford:

Mm-mm (negative).

Zoanne Pedford:

Yeah, it was in the eighties.

Earl Pedford:

Mm-mm (negative). we were still in Pomona in the seventies.

Zoanne Pedford:

Oh, okay.

Earl Pedford:

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Zoanne Pedford:

Nina wasn't born.

Earl Pedford:

Nope.

Zoanne Pedford:

Okay. So yeah, in the seventies, that's right because it was me and Alfreda and I said, "Let's let's have a beach party." She said, "Okay." So we planned it and the first year we had maybe 20 people show up.

Earl Pedford:

Maybe 10 because it was just an immediate group.

Zoanne Pedford:

Okay, maybe 10 people.

Earl Pedford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Zoanne Pedford:

Thank you for keep me straight.

Earl Pedford:

I've been around for [crosstalk 00:17:31].

Zoanne Pedford:

Yeah. About 10 people, it was just a few of us but we had a good time. So we said, "Okay, let's do it again." Next year we planned it a little better. We had the food, we upgraded the food, we had steak and lobster-

Earl Pedford:

On the beach.

Zoanne Pedford:

On the beach.

Earl Pedford:

Huntington Beach.

Zoanne Pedford:

The next year, we got up there and we brought our barbecue pit, a big-

Earl Pedford:

Big barrel, they'd never seen that before.

Zoanne Pedford:

Yeah. So they harassed us that second year.

Earl Pedford:

Cops came.

Zoanne Pedford:

[inaudible 00:18:04] can't have that.

Earl Pedford:

Well, they had never seen, we just had to explain ourselves. And we were college-

Zoanne Pedford:

First they told us, "No, you can't have that, you can't do that. No, no." Or this might've been the third year and they told us, "No, you can't do that. You can't have that." And then we said, "Okay," so we packed it up. We couldn't have a generator because we had a generator and all kinds of stuff.

Earl Pedford:

All said and done, they were part of it.

Zoanne Pedford:

So they said we couldn't have it. So then we started putting the stuff away and we were going to try to do it without it. And then they came back and they said, "Chief said you can do it."

Earl Pedford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Zoanne Pedford:

"Really? Okay." So then we had that beach party that year. So then the next year, me and my two girlfriends, Monica and Alfreda, went to the beach the week before, went to the police station and said, "Hi, remember us?"

Earl Pedford:

The guys stay out of it because we knew it was better to politic them with the ladies.

Zoanne Pedford:

We said, "Hi, remember us? We were here last year," and we're telling them we're coming this year. It's going to be probably maybe a hundred people. We're going to have this, this, this and this.

Earl Pedford:

It got up to 200 people.

Zoanne Pedford:

We're going to have a generator because we have music. We're going to have a little thing at night and dah, dah, dah. And they said, "Oh, okay." And then we said, "And then if it's your guys that are on duty, tell them to come over, we have a plate for them."

Earl Pedford:

It was over.

Zoanne Pedford:

Oh man. Came by with the lobster, this might've been the fourth year.

Earl Pedford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Zoanne Pedford:

Fourth year, fifth year because we did it for 20 something years.

Earl Pedford:

Yeah. No kids, first of all.

Zoanne Pedford:

You bought your ticket outside.

Earl Pedford:

We had a band.

Zoanne Pedford:

It was so funny though because we'd say, "Okay, the cut off is this day you could pay." I would find money in the mailbox, "Please, please."

Earl Pedford:

Money in the screen door.

Zoanne Pedford:

We always bought extra meat. We had a deal with a meat market. We bought our meat, they cut it just-

Earl Pedford:

Went to downtown LA for our seafood.

Zoanne Pedford:

We started off with thick steaks and then we found out they cooked too slow. So then we started getting them one inch thick. Every year we got better and better and better. And then one year, we had a DJ and we had lights up and we had a mic and a generator and the whole beach-

Earl Pedford:

And the whole place was lined up with people just sitting and watching us.

Zoanne Pedford:

They weren't part of the beach.

Earl Pedford:

No, they just hung out.

Zoanne Pedford:

We used to sing duet.

Earl Pedford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative), mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1:

Oh my God.

Zoanne Pedford:

We had a friend that had just got out of prison, but he had been out of prison for a minute, but he would get up and do dolomite. Sing the fine [crosstalk 00:20:50]-

Earl Pedford:

Word for word.

Zoanne Pedford:

He could word for word. We miss you Gregory. So he did that and then we had a couple of women get up in they were doing a little skit and they were playing in the sand.

Earl Pedford:

Hilarious stuff.

Zoanne Pedford:

Playing in the sand, next thing you knew, one of them throws a little sand on the one and she throws sand back. Next thing you know, these women are wrestling in the sand.

Earl Pedford:

It was so funny.

Zoanne Pedford:

We died, we died.

Earl Pedford:

The whole crowd just went nuts. And we'd do stuff like tug of wars.

Zoanne Pedford:

Dig a hole. Fill it with ice and water.

Earl Pedford:

First they came to us, "You can't do this." At first they tell us and then they told us, "Okay, you guys can."

Zoanne Pedford:

You guys can do it. And we'd fill it with water, pulling with them-

Earl Pedford:

And we had a rope about this big

Zoanne Pedford:

I went and found 150 foot rope that was this big.

Earl Pedford:

It was amazing.

Speaker 1:

Wow.

Earl Pedford:

People on the beach were just-

Zoanne Pedford:

Just ran, I mean people [crosstalk 00:21:39]-

Earl Pedford:

And they [crosstalk 00:21:39], "Pick a side, pick a side." "Okay, get back there."

Zoanne Pedford:

And we had little kids and they weren't part of our party but they were.

Earl Pedford:

There were on this tug.

Zoanne Pedford:

It was so much fun.

Earl Pedford:

Yeah.

Zoanne Pedford:

But the best part was when we had the officers that were on duty, they get on their little three wheelers and come around, "Dinner ready yet?"

Speaker 1:

Dinner ready yet.

Zoanne Pedford:

One time it was like three-

Earl Pedford:

I might have that picture somewhere.

Zoanne Pedford:

You have to look for it because I think it got misplaced somewhere.

But then all the women in our group, with their little bikinis and they all-

Earl Pedford:

I used to wear a speedo.

Zoanne Pedford:

She said, "Mom send that picture to me. You have that picture of dad in the speedo?"

Earl Pedford:

I think I had a karate class at the time or else you can tell who was in my class, we had to karate body.

First of all, when I first seen the girls up at the Teenpost, they was beating the hell out of a guy.

Zoanne Pedford:

They did terrible things to us.

Earl Pedford:

I didn't know what kind of relationship they had, I was new. I'd come to LA-

Zoanne Pedford:

Our high school, but this guy right here, [Andy Blocker 00:22:52].

Earl Pedford:

Yeah, that one.

Zoanne Pedford:

We was beating him up.

Earl Pedford:

And he had some kind of condition where if you do like this-

Zoanne Pedford:

But they did something vile to us.

Earl Pedford:

Do something like this and his skin would welt up so it looked a lot worse, right? So I'm walking my dog.

Zoanne Pedford:

They probably threw dirty mop water on us or something crazy like that.

Earl Pedford:

They pranked each other. I wasn't a part of the group yet, but I just looked through the window and I seen about three or four of them whooping this dude up. And he wasn't like he was slugging back or nothing, he was trying to cover up the best he could. But what I'd seen of him, he was all whipped up and [crosstalk 00:23:28]-

Zoanne Pedford:

Like they was just really beating him.

Earl Pedford:

[crosstalk 00:23:30] these girls are dangerous. And she was part of the little pack of them and I was going, "Man..."

Zoanne Pedford:

I wasn't beating him like they were though. I might have kicked him a little-



Earl Pedford:

Yeah, Shirley Henson and the rest of them big heavy hitters. They were beating him down

Zoanne Pedford:

That was Shirley Henson and Brenda. Yeah, I had some big friends.

Earl Pedford:

Yeah, they were all big. I said, "Okay, it's nice little group." I didn't live the islands either, that's the part where most of the Black people in the north side lived at. I live on the other side of the tracks. My father had a custom made house. He's military in a wheelchair.

Military, he spoke like six languages.

Zoanne Pedford:

Earl Charles.

Earl Pedford:

Earl Charles Pedford. Very interesting guy. Card sharp, I learned a lot too, my hands were just like him. He was in the streets a lot, helped a lot of people, he's always giving stuff away. Mm-hmm (affirmative), a lot of people knew him for years and never knew he's in a wheelchair because he was in his Cadillac and he was always driving or something. You'd only seen him driving around, that's all you knew. Or you'd seen him in the club, you'd just see him sitting down. He never appeared to be handicapped.

Zoanne Pedford:

But he was funny.

Earl Pedford:

He actually taught me to fight from the chair because he was a prize fighter. He used to train in the military. So from his chair, he could knock you out or break your leg, so he was that kind of guy, very smart.

Military accident, broke his back in the military. A Jeep accident, I think he was the only one who got hurt. I can remember as a child, just growing up with the VA. And then when I moved to Pomona, he had a custom made house, big house, right behind the park and there was dignitaries on my block. I was like, "Oh, okay." They didn't even know I lived over there. I was at school for a couple of months and my father would be in Long Beach and I was very independent at 16. I had my license day one 16. So I ran the house by myself. Well, actually, I had a maid there from Spain. She spoke Spanish, nothing but Spanish, I had to speak Spanish and I spoke quite a bit Spanish as a kid coming up because of my dad. So I would travel back and forth to Long Beach and I'll do what I have to do, do my homework. As long as I did my homework, dad didn't care what I did.

Pretty much, I was in most honor classes. I did pretty well with that. I was very good in math, geometry, trigonometry that kind of stuff. Political science was my major though high school at that time.

I could smell him. The chair, I could smell his chair. And sometimes I could hear his voice. I did you say something? You know, sometimes I sound exactly like his voice, he had the similar baritone voice so that would be freaky sometimes or you'd hear a wheelchair but I was always encouraged. It was

always like, "I got this." When I came in, I was so young, I had to take over his estate and he had drifters always around and people even in his room and Cadillacs and guys.

Around 19, maybe 20.

Zoeanne Pedford:

20.

Earl Pedford:

Maybe 20. And he had gangsters and stuff. I come through the house I say, "You, you, and you got to go." And they know I had a little reputation for being a little mean. They said, "Well, don't mess Pepe's son, little Pepino, he got an attitude." I said, "Yeah, y'all was free riders, go." And I had to kick everybody out.

Okay. Well, like I said, he used to do the gambling shack. He was known to have a lot of money, constantly. You give him \$5 and he'd be making it into five grand. So he was known and the people that he-

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:28:04]

Earl Pedford:

The five grand. So he was known, and the people that he would help in and out of the house, matter of fact, it was one of the persons that he actually had taken into the house off the street to help him out. Guy didn't mean to kill him, but with him being a paraplegic. He just meant to rob him, basically. You know not to approach my old man from the front, because he could stop you from the front. Plus he's packing. Most of the time he had something under the seat.

So the guy hit him in the back of the head, and then him being a paraplegic, he didn't recover from that. He was a victim of crime. They caught the guy. He was lucky to not get killed in the neighborhood. He was lucky to make it to the cops because I would get calls. "Earl, he is here. He's that." I remember there was a neighbor that chased this guy. He was lucky to get back to the cops.

I didn't even want to be a part of that, but my old man was so well liked. He was so well-liked. He was the type of guy that would see some little kid, neighborhood kid on the street with no shoes or something, and the kid would be fully dressed. That kind of guy.

Zoeanne Pedford:

Him and my mother got to be real good friends. They were like-

Earl Pedford:

They were like this, because they can talk around anybody without them knowing what was going on because they are fluent in Spanish. They just loved that. They'd get with each other and just start talking Spanish.

Then when her sister came home from Germany, she was fluent in German. He's, oh, and he just bam in German. Everybody looked. And spoke Mandarin. All that was in his records, when I finally got his record. I was like, whoa. It was six languages.

Zoeanne Pedford:

He was funny.

Earl Pedford:

Yep, he was. He was funny. [crosstalk 00:29:46]

Zoanne Pedford:

He was bald headed and he had a dresser full of wigs.

Earl Pedford:

Yeah. Full of wigs.

Zoanne Pedford:

He would take a wig and just slap it on the top of his head. That would be his hat.

Earl Pedford:

Yeah. He said, "You know what?"

Zoanne Pedford:

"I feel like long hair today."

Earl Pedford:

I feel like... Well.

Zoanne Pedford:

Natural.

Earl Pedford:

What was it? Big old natural... Who, who? It was somebody. Big old natural. He'd get in his Cadillac and be gone. He felt like super fly. Super fly.

Zoanne Pedford:

And it would be crooked.

Earl Pedford:

He was very instrumental in the paraplegic basketball games. He was one of the first ones doing that, because I remember him playing basketball.

Zoanne Pedford:

He looks like DJ in that picture.

Earl Pedford:

He does.

Zoeanne Pedford:

This looks like my grand son.

I mean, you couldn't go anywhere. We had just moved to Pomona and my aunt, Ula, and her seven kids and her husband were visiting. They couldn't leave. They couldn't go back. They couldn't get on the freeway to go home. So they're at our house.

Earl Pedford:

They ended up staying.

Zoeanne Pedford:

Yeah, for a while.

Earl Pedford:

If there wasn't more than three or four of y'all together, you're going to get jacked. It was kind of scary, actually, because I lived close to Vermont and Manchester. A week ago, shit was on fire. Army trucks literally going down 92nd street, tearing up the streets. It was something. I was a little kid. Well, I wasn't that little little of a kid, but I was old enough to be aware that, yeah, you don't be out there. We had to stay home, pretty much.

Zoeanne Pedford:

We just watched it on TV.

Earl Pedford:

Yeah. We had to pretty much stay home. I knew some older guys that are in our neighborhood that was out there ransacking. But a lot of it wasn't looting just for looting's sake, that the public got that perception. No. Folks was retaliating against the whole social system.

Our parents were more restricted because of social norms. Right? The next generation is not as restricted. But then if you really bowl, you can really bust that little bubble and hit it in your own generation, which I think we did because what little black kid learns how to go skiing? I wanted to do those things. I made sure there was no reason. My mom and my dad and my grandma and my folks told me, there's nothing you can't do.

I say... First of all, now this is how we were raised and this is how I raised my kids. First of all, it ain't fair. You don't start out being even. I say for you to get the same look as this little white kid, you got to be way better. I said you can be just as good. You can't say, "Well, I got a C and she's got a C. Why'd they get the job?" She's got to have a C and you've got to have an A+ to get that same consideration. So don't settle for being just okay, I say, because okay don't get you nowhere. Especially being black.

So you got to be a little better, got to be a little smarter. First of all, you definitely can't take any shit. But without being articulate, without having some personal confidence, that what you know you can personally do for yourself, that's hard to achieve. That takes a village of people to do that. Fortunately, I had a village of people coming up. Mostly women, but we had some mentors, which is important.

When it came to the girls, guys already got it made because everybody's wanting them to be tough and you're supposed to be the head of the household. The women, just get married, you're going to be okay. I couldn't accept that norm because of my mother.

I ran a campaign. I was the new guy on campus. I think they voted every year, something like that. Me coming from LA, that was right up my alley. I was like a little parliamentary procedure type of guy. I can peddle things. I've met people and I started putting a big... This dude's campaigning. The other guy, [Dewy Woods 00:34:30], he's the neighborhood's state brother. Everybody knew who he was. He didn't campaign.

Zoanne Pedford:

I forgot about that.

Earl Pedford:

He didn't campaign so he lost. The new guy got it.

Pretty much. Pretty much. I was the new guy on campus. I wasn't what they were used to and outspoken. The counselor used to try to tell me who my friends were because of my grades. They said, "You shouldn't be hanging around those people." I said, "You should be worried about my grades and not worried about who my friends are." Yeah. I said, "Obviously, they're not affecting my grades. That's why I'm here. Not for you to tell me who to socialize with."

It hadn't been around long, the SU. It was more of a social awareness. So I went out of my way to try to find good, positive things to find about happening in our history. I had a book called The Black Bible. I lost it somewhere. I don't know where it is. I would find all kinds of stuff that was in our history that you're not going to get in today's public education, and I would put it in a series of papers.

Then we'd have weekly meetings. I ran a tight meeting. I'm the only one talking in this room. Okay? If you're not paying attention, I get my security to get you out of here. My sergeant of arms, if you'll recall. "Sergeant of arms, could you...?" That's how we ran our BSU. So we were really respected.

Then we were organized with the other schools in Pomona. I went to Southside and I went to-

Zoanne Pedford:

Ganesha.

Earl Pedford:

Ganesha. Made sure I knew who the BSU presidents were there. We organized, then we'd have little events.

That and on campus, too. Or we'd meet in the park. At Ganesha Park or a place that we can socialize. We were a different breed. All black folks don't get along. That's obvious, right? So we made it a point to never in public show adversity with one another. Even though I was just like to sock this fool right here, a place to kick you. But I wouldn't do it in a crowd where there are white folks out and around.

Nobody, as far as black, when they seen a cop car unless you knew who they was. We had Officer [Kelly 00:37:26], I remember.

Zoanne Pedford:

I'd get a ride along with Kelly.

Earl Pedford:

Yeah.

Zoanne Pedford:

We gave him [crosstalk 00:37:30] for. Me and Shirley did the ride along with him, and you can imagine.

Earl Pedford:

Because they were militant girls.

Zoanne Pedford:

Yeah.

Earl Pedford:

They were more militant than I was.

Zoanne Pedford:

How do you ride with these people? These pigs?

Earl Pedford:

These pigs, you would call them.

Zoanne Pedford:

Yeah, probably. How do you feel when you got your knee on somebody, basically?

Earl Pedford:

Same stuff that happened today.

Zoanne Pedford:

Said he was just trying to do his job the best he could and with the situation. He was trying to-

Earl Pedford:

Represent us.

Zoanne Pedford:

Represent, but it was so hard.

Earl Pedford:

It was.

Zoanne Pedford:

The culture.

Earl Pedford:

He was in there for the right reason. Yeah.

Zoanne Pedford:

Yeah.

Earl Pedford:

So we gave him shit, but not really.

Zoanne Pedford:

But we recognized him.

Earl Pedford:

Yeah.

Zoanne Pedford:

That he was in a position.

Earl Pedford:

We had to give him shit because he had a badge.

Zoanne Pedford:

I'm sure.

Earl Pedford:

Well, part of his job... We would see it, yes. Because there you go with the white folks again. There you go, being part of the press. But he did have a function he had to do. [inaudible 00:38:41] our cop.

Zoanne Pedford:

The black Panthers were...

Earl Pedford:

Were alone at the time.

Zoanne Pedford:

Yeah. We just-

Earl Pedford:

That was our praise for cops, as far as black folks go. Especially with the young youth. He ain't nothing but a pig. I used to love just telling them that. Yeah, you guys are just pigs. Oink, oink, oink. We'd do the whole thing. Now they kill you. For the same thing. Yeah, we came up in a pretty educational-

Well, I had a couple of run-ins in LA, but it was superficial. Like I said, jumping out the windows. Most of the time, cops couldn't catch us in LA because we just ran. Literally. We actually would taunt the cops sometimes. We'd walk in little packs going down Beltline. The police would come just to flash on us or something, and we'd do something. Sometimes somebody would throw a rock or something. We little kids, but we know where we are. We're not going to run down the streets. We hitting the fences. We knew every yard where the dogs were and you'd hear us laughing as we hit the gate. Because if

you're a yard behind us, and sometime they try to run. You know the dogs are going to get the next person. It was so funny.

So we used to do that kind of stuff, but it was still just kid stuff. We had one guy, weren't too bright. Actually, he was mentally challenged a little bit, but we take care of the guy. Sure enough, one of these nights, walking in a little pack. Here comes the cops. He said, "I bet you want to throw a rock." At somebody's house window. This fool bust somebody's window out. his window out. Then the chase was on. We just scattered. Everybody's hitting the fence, everybody know exactly where they are. You never seen us up here again. Like little bugs in the grass, you never saw us again. Next thing you know, we're on our porch or something a couple blocks away. We can literally go block to block, to block without ever being seen.

Okay, for me it got serious because I became political. I became the guy that they follow around. Literally followed me everywhere I went, because we did have a couple of the racial riots. When you're known as the president, and they know I had a lot of control, things can happen.

Yeah, '69, '70. Yeah, I was born in [inaudible 00:41:35]. Yeah. I [inaudible 00:41:35].

Zoanne Pedford:

There were more than just one.

Earl Pedford:

There were several in the same year, yeah. I can remember getting... Matter of fact, I was on suspension, wasn't even allowed on campus, during my graduation. I was allowed to graduate.

Pretty much, yeah. I wasn't allowed on campus. It was funny. We're sitting there and about eight cops came over to me. My mother's mother was sitting there, my old man was sitting there. He says, "Congratulations. I didn't really think he was going to make it." My mom says, "Did I just hear him right? What?" I said, "You [inaudible 00:42:24]." They tried to kill me up in here. They didn't think I was going to make it out of high school. Me and Greg, because we was identified as knocking a couple folks out during the riot. It was on. So it was on.

When expelled, they tried to get me to graduate early. No, I'm graduating with my group because I had the grades. But no, I wasn't allowed on campus during my graduation.

Matter of fact, not one person who I remember ever being reprimanded that was white on campus.

Zoanne Pedford:

The traditions at Pomona High was that homecoming always looked wild. So I was the first black homecoming queen, or on the homecoming court, because I didn't get queen. I was just a princess. During that day, when my father came and we were on stage presenting to the school, I wore a white dress. My dad had his suit on he was looking all sharp. That was fine. They were all, oh, they were relieved. Everybody could see it. They were relieved I had on a white dress.

So that night at the football game, we played Gary High. I had people on both sides. When I came with that black velvet dress, my mom just... She orchestrated the whole thing. She decided that-

Earl Pedford:

She was truly militant.



Zoanne Pedford:

Yeah. She decided I was going to wear a black dress. So she got her seamstress friend, Mimi, to make my dress for me and it was gorgeous. I mean, it was just full-skirted and long sleeve, and it had the sparkly around the collar and around the sleeves. It was just elegant. I had his little crown on with my natural. It was spectacular.

Earl was my escort, and we rode in our little car around and around. People were just, the reception. People were standing, cheering. I didn't win, but my dress won.

Earl Pedford:

Yeah. Every black person in that audience felt like they had to be representative of the first time.

Zoanne Pedford:

No, you couldn't get classes. No. I loved it to death. I was a dancer. I tried to get dance classes. Couldn't get in it. You could only get classes that were Swahili.

Earl Pedford:

Black study.

Zoanne Pedford:

Yeah. Those were the only kind of classes you could get.

Earl Pedford:

Yeah, what you going to do with that?

We'd always find there was a distinction between the Africans in the group and then the blacks in the group.

Zoanne Pedford:

Well women, we never had a problem. We always had a place to sleep.

Earl Pedford:

Yeah. Just the guys. Right. They'd take care-

Zoanne Pedford:

They took care of the girls. Jim made sure we were taken care of.

Earl Pedford:

The guys had to fend for it.

Zoanne Pedford:

We're in Stockton.

Earl Pedford:

So, we're in Stockton. These millionaires.

Zoanne Pedford:

Waterfall in the front yard. Yeah.

Earl Pedford:

Waterfalls coming up to their front yard. A lake in the back of their-

Zoanne Pedford:

Little lake in the...

Earl Pedford:

With a boat docked up to their back porch. Rich, rich folks. So they putting us all-

Zoanne Pedford:

This is through the church.

Earl Pedford:

Yeah, through the church. We're raising monies.

Zoanne Pedford:

Whatever.

Earl Pedford:

For any church that would pay us money.

Zoanne Pedford:

We'd show up.

Earl Pedford:

What we were doing-

Zoanne Pedford:

And it was to raise money-

Earl Pedford:

We were supporting the struggle for Zimbabwe.

Zoanne Pedford:

Right.

Earl Pedford:

We could, at \$2500. We getting big cash. We actually did a show that was phenomenal. Anyway, they start. "Okay, he can stay in my house." He's African. "He can stay at my house. He can stay at my house." It gets down to Earl, we ain't got a room for him. It's like, I don't know what he come to say. I'm going to

mention nobody in this house. They'd have one of these big Huey Newton chairs, right? You open the big old door. I said, "I tell you what. I'm going to sleep my ass right in this-"

Zoeanne Pedford:

[crosstalk 00:47:00] antiques.

Earl Pedford:

I'm going to sleep right here in this fucking chair then. Y'all ain't got nowhere for my black ass. You don't need it. I just slept there. "Oh no, you can't sleep there."

Zoeanne Pedford:

"You can't sleep in that chair."

Earl Pedford:

I said, "Why? With the Africans, you got the place for the Africans. But the American blacks, you all can't do shit for the American blacks, huh?" "Well no, that's not it," because I would call you out. They said no. Then I ended up getting put up in this little room that was vacant. Nobody in this big old house.

Zoeanne Pedford:

This is my daughter's room.

Earl Pedford:

I was like, well, it's not like the black is going to come off on the sheet. So it was like, okay, we got passed that night. How you treat black folks in your whole neighborhoods whole different story. So I would always be the one that would raise... Okay, I'll call the scene. I would [inaudible 00:47:47] people out. I would call the scene on that racism immediately.

Then we would have problems with the Africans in the group. Because when I got the lead drum roll and I wasn't African, they went berserk. Jim said, "You can't play like him." I don't care where you're from. Earl's got the role. They quit. Some of them quit.

Zoeanne Pedford:

Take my drum and go.

Earl Pedford:

That's how we got some of the brothers and cousins and friends. We started recruiting ourselves.

Zoeanne Pedford:

My sisters.

Earl Pedford:

They quit because I had the lead drum roll. They were better than us. You guys are diluted Africans, as far as they were concerned. We wasn't real black. They was not ready for me because I had so much to lip for them Africans. I'd get so fed up with them separating the Africans and the blacks. I wouldn't talk English. I wouldn't even talk in English. I'm African there.

Zoanne Pedford:

Pretend. Yeah.

Earl Pedford:

Pretend to be African. It backfired so tough one day.

Zoanne Pedford:

We were at dinner.

Earl Pedford:

Yeah, and I said I was from somewhere. I'm talking real bad broken English and shit.

Zoanne Pedford:

Somebody said, "Oh, well I speak Swahili." He says, "Oh, no, no, no, no, no."

Earl Pedford:

[inaudible 00:49:03] me practice my English with you. I no I can't speak my language for you today. I had a couple of words-

Zoanne Pedford:

It was so funny. I was like... I was like...

Earl Pedford:

It wasn't... [crosstalk 00:49:16].

Zoanne Pedford:

I thought I was going to die. How can you hold that in? Your eyes were popping.

Earl Pedford:

I just didn't want to deal with them. So I'd go African and play like I don't know what the hell everyone's talking about. [inaudible 00:49:27] Pardon? Oh, I just visited [inaudible 00:49:30]. They looked at me. Now what's he going to do? He was so-

Well, it was definitely... You know how you get the sense of freedom, expansion? I'm out here on my own. And I always was kind of independent anyway because I virtually lived by myself when I lived with my old man. But it was just another step. But then when I started, I got approached by one of the counselors there about a newspaper they had, that circulated around. They asked me, was I [inaudible 00:50:17]. I said yes.

It was still just a new experience because it was basically all white environment. So anytime I walked anywhere, I knew there was like 80 people watching me. You always felt like no matter where I went, it was like, from way across the campus. There's one there. that kind of stuff.

Then once I became the SU president, they asked me to do that without building, without an office setting or anything. So pretty much organized that. We used to meet in places we knew. The John Birch Society U, so we didn't have our own type of privacy type of thing.

That didn't go over too good. I led a group of students to the dean's office [inaudible 00:51:21]. That was kind of bold. Just sit there until somebody came and talked to me. They finally, I got audience with him, and they agreed to... There was an office. I got to participate in what kind of chair, a got a big old bad chair. Very nice office.

Then from there, we started organizing the campus. There were so few black people on campus, and I thought there was no reason for everyone of them not to be in my organization. We had aggressively went after people to make sure they knew we were on campus, and you need to be a part of this organization. Yeah. Got 90-plus percent of all the Africa-Americans, that small group that was there at the time. You had some resistance.

Somehow my name popped up, I think it was senior year in high school. Well that was the only year I had there. My name popped up and I was selected to go to black leadership conference in UCLA. Paid. Matter of fact, I think I bought my first car. I had my own from the money that I got out of that program. In that program, they taught us all kind of leadership skills. Actually, as I look back now, I see it as survival skills. They taught me how to organize, they taught me how to interact with the cops knowing that you got that X on your back.

For me, that was especially important because I had that label on me. I was one of the known people the cops were messing with. So they told you, once you identify yourself or you were that person, you'd be sure to take it serious. So I did take it serious. I've always... Even in high school. Here it is, I'm in high school, senior. I couldn't leave without, in town, without having somebody in the car. Either it was her or Flynn or a couple of my friends in the car in case I got stopped. I would get stopped by... I remember one time, a '57 Chevy tried to pull me over. Just threw the thing up on top.

Zoanne Pedford:

I was in the car with him then.

Earl Pedford:

Had a guy, these red little-

Zoanne Pedford:

Fire...

Earl Pedford:

Fire department-

Yeah, we were in the car, her and a girl named Shirley. We was going down Laverne, about to get to Town Avenue back across the street. All of a sudden this red car just pulls over at the light and pulls me over to the curb. "Can I see your driver's license?" He demanded my driver's license. I said, "No." Another thing, they taught us UCLA, know your rights. Okay? Know when you can say no. "No." "Nig, get out of the car." Trying to demand my license. I said, "No. I'll tell you what's going to happen." I say, "Shirley, you all go hit that phone booth. Go call John Osmond." I said, "What's going to happen, I'm going to have about 100 niggers here in about 10 minutes." I said it just like that. They knew I wasn't playing. They got right back in their car, they made a little finger, like pretty much the next time. I said, "Damn girl, we can't go nowhere with you. And ask me, I'll see, what's going to happen. I'm going to go with about a hundred. He in about 10 minutes, just like I said, it just like that. You know, they go, they knew I wasn't playing.

It got right back in their car. We get pulled over everywhere go for nothing." Pull me over to see if my car was below the rim. They'd have to take the tape measure out and see if they can give me a ticket for that. My tailpipes are too loud. Give me a ticket for that. My tinted windows, they give me... If there was an infraction. If not, they would make one up.

Speaker 2:

Okay. Yeah.

Earl Pedford:

Anything, like I said. If I corrected all those issues, they'd make one up. Especially when I got kind of ambushed. Actually, we had the team posts. We used to party from west side, south side, and we'd divide each other's [inaudible 00:55:34], as far as the membership goes. It's on private property. So the cops couldn't really bust us there.

So I phoned ahead, let north side know I'm coming. Had a guy, an ATO, in the back, looking if he can ride shotgun with me. I had my little brother visiting the weekend with me. So me and my '59, I'll be going down. I said, "Man, this damn car right here has been following me to school. He's followed me everywhere I go." He said, "Earl, you're just paranoid." You know what I said? "Watch." So I timed that light-

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:56:04]

Earl Pedford:

You know, I said, "Mmm-mmm (negative.) Watch." I turned that light just so I can make it. And he's two cars back, he'd have to run the light to keep up with me. Sure enough, he ran the light. I'm going downtown and everything. I said, "It's on now." Now, I'm aware of all back streets. That's my in. That's another way they told us to use. They're like, "Get off main traveled roads." You find your way around the neighborhood that gets you from point a to point b. So what you might have five or six extra turns, but you'll be invisible and you won't be stopped.

Made the right turn down Lincoln, and Lincoln Avenue was where all the mansions... and it's a hoity-toity part of [inaudible 00:56:41]. Big houses. Well, they had already had the radio going on me, so when I turned down Lincoln, at the other end of Lincoln, there was already cops coming my way. They pull me over and they start bashing on my window because the window was still up. With the flashlight. They almost broke the window.

I finally get out of the car, close my door. [Suicide 00:57:03] door, they can't do nothing about it. "Why you pulling me over?" See, they was kind of pissed off because the week before we had a little issue with [inaudible 00:57:14], we had a party. A little steak party or something that we had for the neighborhood. They going to come and just roust us up and just cause panic.

Well, the panic tuned back on them. It was the wrong spot. I was in that... They knew I was there. Bricks, everything, just start stoning the cop's car. They had to back out of there, they was pissed off about that. Rolls in the area, they know I had either controlled it, caused it, or whatever the case was. I'm taking the fifth.

I'm sitting on the side of my car. He goes, "So, well for the little brick come out of that house and get your little '59 Chevy." And I just said what they didn't want to hear is, "Well, that house won't be there tomorrow. I'll just burn it up. How about that?" Oh, he's real tough, it pissed him off even more.

Now, they know I had a martial arts background. As a kid, still, martial arts background. And try to coax me into having a fight with them. I'm leaning up against the back car, I said, "Yeah, you badass."

He took off his little belt and stuff. "Yeah, me and you." Pushing the other guy like that, and all that. I'm just thinking to myself, "You must think I'm a fucking fool." I said, "I'll tell you what. We're going to make sure everybody sees this shit." Another thing they told us in that UCLA: if you're in the area and you're secluded, you need to make some noise. You need to open up some people's windows, you need to start making a lot of noise so people will go, "What the hell?"

Exactly what I did. I started making a lot of noise, "Hey! Y'all better check this out!" They'd like, "Oh, that was unexpected." He had my license. He took my license, tore them up like this, threw them at me, and gave me a ticket for a mutilated license. Okay. Pick my little license up, I went straight to the police department. Filed a complaint, paper trail. All this stuff goes by real fast. Little good that it did because... That it do. Because I could see as I left, whatever was in that paperwork, I seen them toss something in the trash. I'm going, "So there's my report."

And then the people at the other end like, "Damn, what you got... What took so long?" I'm going to have to tell them the story. How I almost went to jail or worse. And that was just one of many times.

I guess I have to go all the way back to my grandmother. Did some kind of form of grappling that she knew. She was Choctaw Cherokee Indian. And we used to wrassle her. Or some kind of how. I mean, we couldn't do nothing with her. Like her skin crawled or something, she could do all kind of stuff.

And she was a little woman. She was thin. Maybe about 5' 9", maybe. So kind of tall. But we couldn't handle her. We broke her arm once trying to handle her. She rolled on the fireplace and then popped her arm right here. They got on us, we all mad, but she kind of backed us up. It was her fault, you know. But she was something.

Every woman, girlfriend, everybody I brought to the house to meet her, the first thing she would teach them was how to disable me in case I got out of line. Well, the first thing, she said, "You grab his hand, you flick the fingers back, and just hit both of the knees." And I said, "Okay, Big Mama, she's got it, she's got it!" And yeah, she would show her that.

Speaker 3:

Oh, like this, Big Mama?

Earl Pedford:

Yeah. Yes. So she was that woman. She was... my grandmother had a direct response for any bullying, anything like that. She didn't tolerate it. And if you did let something happen to one of us and you didn't join in, you had to deal with the whole...

In college, when I had to be a little more disciplined because I had a short fuse. I made believers out of the big guys. Because that was something I could really do was fight. That my father kind of taught me from the shoulder, being a fighter back in the 20's and the 30's. Phillip Patterson kind of of a fighter. So I was good from the shoulder, but then from the ground... My grandmother taught us how to flip you, throw you, choke you out, all kind of the stuff on the ground.

And that was just our family thing. I didn't know it was... Well, I mean I thought everybody knew how to do a little bit of something. But, no. We were kind of unique in the fact that we had a grandmother that was rough like that. She died of alcoholism, that was kind of tough.

Interviewer:

That's a hard death.

Earl Pedford:

She would get drunk and almost needed to be handcuffed. You pissed her off, you were in trouble. And she was pretty stern. She was a housekeeper, maid kind of stuff. It wasn't very many jobs for Black women back in the 50's and stuff. And she managed to be a homeowner herself. I mean, we used to visit her house out in Sea Side, California, when we was- as a child. So she was always a force. So that kind of went into my mother, because she was a force. Took us out the ghetto.

I am the first male in my family for seven generations on my mother's side. So I had a tender love for the women, and the respect because I seen what happens to ones that didn't respect either my mother or my grandmother. Wasn't nice. Matter of fact, they arrested my grandmother once. She was just taken for the weekend. You know something. And she living, when she moved down here to LA, she lived in a little ratty hotel/motel type of thing.

She had her drinking buddies and stuff. Well, when she had the grandkids, everybody knew don't mess with [Eva 01:03:18]. Because she got the grandkids. So one of her drunk buddies, we were about to be in the house. About to close the door. And he come up there, "Eva, I want to take them there." She said, "Oh yeah. Bye, bye, bye." And before she could close the door, he reached through there and pinched her here.

She almost killed him. She took that beer bottle and broke that beer bottle off on that fool. He never was working again down there. Just destroyed this guy. She went to jail. Hey, they let her out the next morning. They said there were witnesses. They told him, "You better leave Eva alone." She go, "You knew she got her grandson with her." Mm-hmm (affirmative). She left him a bloody mess.

Yeah. And then my mother was no joke. She's quiet. Both of them were actually kind of quiet. They women of action. You did something to them, there was a penalty.

Speaker 3:

Swift.

Earl Pedford:

Like, not even going to talk to you about it no more. I can remember an occasion... [inaudible 01:04:19] cracked up. We had the parties at the house. I mean, we were little kids, we'd sort of finish the drinks. You know, get the drinks! Wait for the party to die down. And the kids would go in and out. We had one of the few houses back in the day on the West side. And this one lady became belligerent in the living room, started cussing, you know, got the kids running around.

My mother's kind of on the religious side of it. Quiet. She went in there, quietly told this woman, "Marie, I told you about that cussing. And I don't want to hear it no more." That was it, right? 10 minutes later, Marie must have forgot. "MF this, and bitches, [inaudible 01:04:58]. My mother came in with a skillet. And before anybody realized that, she just walked straight from the kitchen and said, "Pow!"

Knocked the smoke off that skillet. Everybody, "Ah!" I said, "Now, kick her out. I already told her not to. We don't have kids." Nobody mess with my mom. Mmm-mmm (negative.) Pow! That skillet right... get her...

Fullerton was different in the fact that, okay, something new. I'm doing something new, I didn't know I was going to be recognized on campus like the first week or so I'm there. I'm not knowing where



all the rooms are, the classes are. Don't have all my classes. I think the first year I did pretty good. I think I at least got to [inaudible 01:05:46] or so. But right after that, when I realized who I was or something, I couldn't get to classes.

Either I was... I started getting arrested a lot. On campus, off campus. Being a [inaudible 01:06:00] president. So it made it hard to get to classes, made it hard to petition classes. The few I did get, it was even hard to finish classes. Kind of hard if you, every weekend you going to be locked up. Every other weekend you just spending dead time waiting to talk to the judge on Monday for nothing. You know, for your alarm going off, you get in your car.

"Breaking and entry, you're getting for that one." That's my car. My driving record was so horrendous they tried to revoke my driver's license because they said, "This guy don't need a driver's license. He's got all this stuff on his record and he's only 19 years old. We can't allow him to drive."

So I was called to the board down there the Motor Vehicle Department of [inaudible 01:06:47]. I had to go get a printout. I hit the ground. And then I had to defend why I deserve a license. And I had to prove it was harassment. Which was kind of easy for me to do because once she started going through... The lady. Once she started going through it... "Wait a minute, this happened in the same... This happened in the same week?" "Yeah."

Interviewer:

Same officers.

Earl Pedford:

"For the same stuff?" Basically. "Okay." And she started seeing these reoccurring things for the same offense, and I would get two days here, three days here. Overnight here. One time I came up missing for, what, nine days? Something like that. I was in a UCLA program. Where's [Earl 01:07:29] at? I was locked up somewhere. They had me portrayed as some kind of militant.

Speaker 3:

It was in the papers.

Earl Pedford:

It was in the newspapers. The Daily Press. I had a tam, one of those tam's on with the glasses and a fatigue shirt. A jacket on. Looked like I was that guy. So what they did, they jumped up charges. I was in the newspaper for fought an officer, pulling a firearm on an officer, and inciting a riot. Something like that. None of it was true.

Interviewer:

Jesus.

Earl Pedford:

It was in the newspaper. When they found out where I was at, and I think UCLA got involved, dad got involved, and they...

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer:

How many have you-

Speaker 3:

And then your mother was asking. We were wondering, "Where's Earl?"

Earl Pedford:

Yeah. And so they put me in a cell by myself. All I did, just went through form exercises. Let them know. Whoever was going to try to put me down going to bear witness to some marks, because I'm not going down easy. So I was going through form exercises. They said, "This dude actually knows what he's doing in there." So that's how that went. That was like the moment.

By the time I get to Fullerton, already lived a full life. At 18 years old, I'd already been through more than most people had been in their lifetime already. Just behind being vocal and an advocate for myself. So I was kind of independent. I was most definitely independent. So when I went to college, I had to catch it. And be that person that's going to be the first one.

So being the first one, yeah. You didn't know what the trail was going to be ahead of you, so I kind of had to make that trail. And then I just surrounded myself with people I trusted, which were very few. I didn't even trust the counselors at the college. And when they bailed me out of prison... not prison, out of Fullerton, I didn't know how the concept of bail went. And you're supposed to pay this and that.

They wanted money from me to pay all that back. I didn't give them shit. I didn't ask to be bailed out. I've been known to spend my time in there. So we had a bad... I didn't trust you now. And I needed somebody to mentor me on campus. Because I was a live wire, but there was nobody there. Even the guy that was there kind of went, "Eh."

So he did approach me to start the program. And then, like I say, I needed a mentor, there was none out there for me. And I don't think he was the guy. At least, I didn't see him as that guy. Nobody that has been an advocate for me as far as a main person. Because I got bailed out once by the school, but that still wasn't an advocacy for Earl, they just bailed me out that time and then wanted me to pay them back. I'm not going to pay you back. I don't have a job, I'm a student. Why did you bail me? So that kind of got me off on the wrong foot there.

We were upstairs partying, dancing, and stuff. I had to use the restroom, I go downstairs and use the restroom. And you can tell this group is a little bit intoxicated, you know the group. And my little buddy was standing down there, a little in Mary. And he wasn't even a student, but he just was our friend. He'd come to party with us. And I see this one guy sitting in the middle of the area there just checking everybody. Talking, seeing the people pass, he just yelling out insults. Kind of big guy.

Went to the bathroom, I said, "Hang on." [inaudible 01:11:25]. I say, "That dude say something to me, man, it's going to be on." I said it just like I was talking to you. He must have rabbit ears or something. He turned around and said, "You shut up, nigger!" Just like that. I'm going, "Really?" I puffed up. I said, "You going to have to whup my ass now." You know, something to that effect.

He comes over there and little [Decastro 01:11:50] gets in between us. Got his back to the guy. But he's allowing this guy to take swings at me from behind him. He kind of standing in my way, letting this guy try and get off on me. So I lit his ass up. Got Decastro out the way, then we go over the table. It's like the wild wild west in there. And I look over there at my friend mugged in the corner, he wasn't down yet...

...and I had to do a big natural something like I could grab by a handful of hair. Go ahead and pull that out, got him out. And then I got a chair and just beat somebody off. Somebody else. It feel like it was staged from Hollywood.

Right? Then all of a sudden, people start jumping over the [bounce 01:12:29] because they got word that we were fighting. Now I'll have backup. We were doing pretty good. Two against the eight or so. Because they didn't realize they were going to have this much fight out of us. I said, "Okay, now it's on." I said now it's on. They broke it up now, but this is there. That squashed. No real repercussions on that one. We kind of washed that off.

we still had our orientation weekend that week. So we still partied. Weekend of party. And I had a trap drum set, so I'm practicing my drums. I had a little guy helping me out, he was a really good drummer. Little White guy. Because I wasn't really prejudiced. Unless you were.

I think he was the only other Black guy in our little room. There were three or four of us in there, and he was only other White guy, and he was kind of like, "Mmm." Yeah, I mean, that kind of stuff. So we try to make him feel comfortable, you don't want him to feel bad, so on the drums. And people knock on the door, or finally somebody would call and say, "You don't stop beating on them damn drums, I'm going to put your head through the floor." Or something like that.

I knew exactly who the guy was. Because he had harassed us before. So I go downstairs. Little guy came with me. Knocked on the guy's door. I said, "Look, if you call up there again, you and me going to have to have a problem." The guy looked at me and I was only about 5' 7" or something like that at the time. Hand on the doorway, big White boy. He says, "What are you going to do, boy?"

I think I had a cigarette or something in my mouth, just like pull my cigarette, "What?" He said, "Yeah, what are you going to do, boy?" Like that. Pow! To the groin. Bam! Snatched him out. It was on. Before he knew it, he was whupped up. Bam! And the guy standing next to me, kind of shocked him. Because the guy was so big. I was wearing this dude out. I said, "You're just big. I'm bad." So I grabbed this guy, running him down, started flipping and before you know it, I'm doing head combustions. I said, "Something's going to give. The cement or your head."

This guy runs upstairs, "Hey!" Because you could see from upstairs. "Earl's fighting that... Y'all go get him!" Next thing I knew, paramedics were all there. I'm covered in blood. "Everything okay? You okay? You bleeding?"

And the other guy said, "It's not his blood, it's this guy." And they got this big guy up, and he's semi unconscious because I was wearing him out. "We're going to ask him what happened. Yeah." The first thing out this dude's mouth. He says, "The nigger." While they was holding him up, I blazed him again. Pow! And they got me back out of there. I said, "Whoa."

Now, they was going to press charges, and they wanted to do all that, except for I had a White witness. I had a White witness sitting right there said, "Nope. This guy started it. He started off with this racial shit, and he got his ass beat. And by this little guy." You know, I was a little guy. So I'd seen that guy across campus, big old bandage around his head, big dude. He seen me, he kept moving. He realized, yeah, bad can be in a little bitty small package. I'd have too much of a problem. Thing is I didn't get kicked out yet. Okay.

This one guy we were trying to recruit, would never come to our meetings. He'd walk past the rec room while we were sparring, we jacked him in there. Kind of roughed him up a little bit, but we didn't beat him up, we just verbally threatened him. We intimidated him, try to make him come to our meetings. What a mistake that was. Little did I know, okay, he was half Mexican and Black.

The Mexican part was his daddy, was a major contributor alumni to Cal State Fullerton. So that Friday, me and [Ephremm 01:16:50] got arrested for assault, battery, and all kind of shit. We sitting in front of the judge, he breaks out a record, "Is it true that in martial arts this, you do this, and blah, blah, you got a background in this, blah, blah, blah." "Yes, sir." "And is it true you got to do... literally had everything on us." "Yes." "What do you got to say for yourself?" Because this guy said we'd beat him up, we had did this, and blah, blah, I mean we were accomplished martial artists, both of us, and he had not a chance and it was just horrible for this guy and we beat him down.

I said, "Your honor," I said, "You're correct. We do spar every day. We are capable of really doing some bad stuff if we got into it." I say, "But, why is he so pretty over there? He don't have a mark on him." I said, "Yeah, we closed the door, we talked harshly to him, but we never touched him. We never laid a hand on him." And their heads drop. They go, "Hmm." He looked at me and said, "Son, what are you studying in school?"

I said, "Criminal justice and law." He goes, "The next time you lay your hand on somebody, Mr. Karate, you going to do five years in my court." And at that point I realized, there's a good chance that I might have to knock somebody else out or put hands on somebody, especially when I'm the one defending myself. It always looks worse when the attacker looks like he's gotten mugged, right?

I had to get a little bit more disciplined because I had real quick... I mean, if I knew it was on, it was on. So I had to get my black belt. That kind of...

I didn't smoke that much in high school, I smoked more in college. But weed was something that would help the anger issues. Other than that, I didn't use it for medicinal until that was later in life. When I had reason to... the [inaudible 01:18:52], the disc back, and stuff like that. It became a more of a necessity than just a pure pleasure thing.

Yeah. It was there. I can remember being arrested on my ten speed. Just [inaudible 01:19:11] look what I got, what the refraction was. Because they didn't need much. "There he is! Get him! He got weed. Keep him for 72 hours for something. Or nothing." A lot of times it was for nothing. But they took my ten speed. I had weed in my handle bars of my ten speed. Oh, I got to get my damn bike.

I had to finally go get my bike and my weed was still there. They didn't have the dogs and all that stuff. And weed wasn't a big thing back in the day. It was like, "Dang." I knew where my weed was. You had to be creative back in those days because it was a... you go to jail for life down there if you're Black and weed.

Yeah, yeah. For Black Student Union. So as part of the BSU-

Speaker 3:

No, that was for the male Black students.

Earl Pedford:

Yeah.

Speaker 3:

Because we didn't have anybody.

Interviewer:

Until they [crosstalk 01:20:06].

Speaker 3:

Yeah, this one was brand new. [crosstalk 01:20:07] girlfriend.

Earl Pedford:

Yeah, she lived in the best one. They got a big...

Speaker 3:

Got to [crosstalk 01:20:10].

Earl Pedford:

The males had to do stings.

Speaker 3:

Yeah.

Earl Pedford:

Two stings there for two separate departments, I ended up getting. You were there for a part of that, [inaudible 01:20:21].

Thing was, okay, I'll go try to apply for an apartment that was advertised as being vacant. And when we get there, there was no vacancy, or it was not available. [inaudible 01:20:37], couldn't see it. And we made it a point to go in first. Then we'd send in our White constituents that were working with us. Oh, they got a view of the apartment and the whole works. "When can you move in?"

"Okay, we'll be right back to you." Right back to you was me. So they got to see the apartment, we're from Fair Housing Cal State Fullerton, blah, blah. I forgot what we called it then. "Well, I couldn't get this apartment because what... Now, what was the reason again?" So I ended up getting that apartment.

It was on Hawaii, and then there was another one that was around the corner. It was a three bedroom apartment. Had a pool and everything. We got arrested at that one, too. One-

That was in Hawaii. Yeah. Come out of the shower, cop sitting right there in my living room. Waiting to take me to jail for the weekend. Didn't even put me in the back seat of the car. It was casual. I mean, I was a casual arrestee I guess. If they knew I wasn't a thug, I wasn't a criminal, I was just somebody with a mouth that they didn't want to hear. And I wasn't bad enough for them to want to kill me I guess.

Because the cops, some of the cops actually liked me. "Earl, get in the front seat. That's all right. You know I got to take you down anyway, but anyway..."

I also got kicked off the police bus once. That's a funny story. I actually got thrown off the bus and had to find my way back. I got arrested, we were in LA, it started in Fullerton. In my '59 Chevy, me and my partner named Rick. They wouldn't let us eat at Denny's or something. Had on my little gangster little jacket, my tam, my hat. Yeah, actually wear nice little hats. And they wouldn't let us.

"Hey, man. \$5 to fill up the tank, just go to [Mattress Factory 01:22:54] in LA." We went down to LA, and party down in LA until we get run out of there. We're smoking weed, we divvied up the weed. [inaudible 01:23:06]. This is how high Rick was. The police passed by, and hit the light in the window. I guess they could see the smoke coming out.

We're still getting high. It was like, "Who was that? Oh shit! It's the police!" I had big shag carpet. But now, my feet can hack those up. So before the cops could come, the shag carpet, whatever I had with the shag, a little bit. And the rest we ate. Just ate it.

So they finally get to us, jacked us up. Just a little weed now. They can smell contact, so they go to my trunk and I had some poetry back there. "Oh, we got a Black poet here!" They had some of the stuff I had written in college. "Oh." So they kind of teased us for that a little bit. And then-

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:24:04]

Earl Pedford:

... teased us for that a little bit and then they took us to jail. I think this was first time I was really, literally given a break from the police department. I was a college student. They arrest me. The guy, pulling out my portrait. Hold on. Stop. I had a nice hat. He crushed my hat, throws it into the trunk.

They get us down there. By the time we get to judge, we had a little problem with one of the little [inaudible 01:24:40]. Me and this little tiny dummy became friends. The dude told us, if I don't shut up, he's going to come put my head through the fucking floor. A little guy and him talking shit like that. By the time I get to the judge, the judge asked us ... they told me to charge involved. Trespassing.

I went to my public defender. "Excuse me, judge." "Trespassing, you say? It's either trespassing or murder one." "Guilty, your honor." "Do you have anything to say?" "No, sir." "Well, I do have something to say. That guy right there, threatened to put my head through the fucking walls, me and my friend right here, if I didn't shut up or something. He threatened me in the hallway." The judge didn't like that. Dude put his head down.

I was leaving West Covina, driven from the Twin Towers, downtown Los Angeles. West Covina. They put us all back on the bus, supposed to take us back. Our case is over. They're supposed to release us. I get on the bus before they leave. They open up the door. "Pedford, your stop is right here." "We're not" ... "No, you're supposed to stay" ... "No, get out right there." I said, "Okay."

Zoanne Pedford:

We're used to it, because it was something that happened. It just happened all the time.

Earl Pedford:

Right. But I knew how to stay vocal.

Zoanne Pedford:

One step ahead.

Earl Pedford:

What caused me to write this was because some of the flammatory stuff that was done to a mural that was just put right across our office. First, the VSU office had a couple of black artists came. Just beautiful murals.

What had happened, overnight, somebody came and scratched the word nigger all across the thing. Pissed me off. That prompted me to write this poem.

Your time is up white boy, all your bullshit speculations and your jive ass manifestations of the black folks destination.

Your time is up white boy. You are now outnumbered by the same oppressed faces of this dying jive ass nation.

Your time is up white boy. Time has come to pass of whooping niggers and lying about his past.

Your time is up white boy. No more lies, please. No more lies, please. Please, no more lies. We are tired. We are tired. We are tired of being teased, displeased because you control the keys.

Your time is up white boy. You step on my pride. Many of us cry. Some even die, but we still try. Yes, we still try. Do you know why?

Your time is up white boy? Your time is up on world domination. Ask me why. Ask me why. Ask me why. I'll tell you why.

Because your time is up white boy. Time has ran out on you, white boy. The time is one minute to hell. This is not a recording white boy, thus disconcerting you.

I was 19 years old. This is 48 years old. And my mother used to worry and say, "They're going to kill you."

Let me tell you something, how we're supposed to be together. I can recall, when we lived on 20 street, we used to walk, there'd be a herd of us, to the place where we can all go swimming. What was the name of-

Zoanne Pedford:

The plunge.

Earl Pedford:

The plunge. I'd go to the plunge.

Zoanne Pedford:

Exposition Park.

Earl Pedford:

We'd all go there.

Zoanne Pedford:

The Coliseum.

Earl Pedford:

We'd all swim. It was always this little girl on the side, little reddish hair, a bunch of hair.

Zoanne Pedford:

With a bloody nose.

Earl Pedford:

With a bloody nose. All the time. I'm going, "Man, she gets a lot of attention." Like how can I get me that bloody nose. She got it going over there. We'd meet and I always would see her. It was her.

Zoanne Pedford:

I'd always have a bloody nose.

Earl Pedford:

Because we started talking about it, how she had ... I said, "I remember the girl that had the bloody nose all the time." We grabbed paths then. We were kids, like eight, nine years old, if not younger. Then, later on we end up being good friends.

We've been together for a long time. We were good friends in high school. She helped me work on the newspaper I had. [inaudible 01:30:16]. She was in VSU with me. Then, we did a musical group together. We traveled from high school. We did that, this African group. She was like my good friend. We weren't boyfriend and girlfriend yet at the time, because I had a girlfriend at the other school that everybody knew about. Then, I was her escort because I was the VSU president.

Zoanne Pedford:

Political. That was political.

Earl Pedford:

I was her escort. She broke the mold with the black gown. It didn't really get serious until we got to college, because she started dating my best friend's older brother. He came to visit her one day in college. I said, "I don't think I like that." Something clicked.

He's one of the tough guys, big guys, but I was one of the little bad guys. You can do all you want, but don't try to touch me because everybody knew I was a can of whoop ass

I said, "No. Not only is she my friend, I don't think I like him that much." Greg's older brother, but no. That's when I made the move. Then, we-

Zoanne Pedford:

Little Earl comes.

Earl Pedford:

Little Earl comes on our freshman year. I said, "That kind of fixed that." But then, I was so proud then it was like ... I was at my mother's house and she was at the grandma's house. We were in LA. 90 seconds [inaudible 01:31:48]. I was in my '59 Chevy. She gets a call on the phone and I was always around kids. Always having kids and have the kids on my head. She said, "I'm glad you like kids." I go, "Huh?" That was a big clue. I wasn't dumb. Then I started smoking once ... is Zoe pregnant or something? She just right out of the blue. I mean, did I give it up that fast?

So we confessed. She was quick. My mother was quick about it. It's funny, of course the parents we're going to get into it. My mom was pretty strong and her mom was getting into it, because I was kind of like a knucklehead too, but she was my girl. It came down to the ladies. The guy had to make an agreement. My mother said, "Well, he didn't rape her." They got to figure it out themselves. My mother [inaudible 01:32:44]. They kind of went on their separate ways and let us figure it out.

Just because she was pregnant ... I was that guy, "Well, that's no reason to really get married." I don't know if I really like her first.

Zoanne Pedford:

I wasn't all for getting married either.



Earl Pedford:

We were good friends and everything, but then I wanted to make sure Little Earl wasn't going to be raised the way I've seen other kids being raised, particularly black males.

I was really politically astute, as far as the social awareness of black males. I was already aware that 85% of all black males, by the time they were 18 or 16, had some kind of felony or some kind of misdemeanor, which disqualified him.

Earl was everywhere with me. People say, "Man, he's always get that little boy." Sometimes they thought I was nuts, because they'd see me in the car just talking and somebody didn't see Little Earl. "You're going nuts. I know he's high a lot."

I was really focused and that was the focus that made us really ... because we had the same reason to do what we wanted to do. We were already friends.

One day we're just sitting up. My father had passed away and I inherited his house. Upscale house. Here we are in this house. Lay down one day and she says, "Earl, let's just go get married." I said, "Okay." Before the sun was out, we locked the door. I just said, "Okay."

Zoanne Pedford:

We went to Vegas.

Earl Pedford:

Went to Vegas, got married, came back and told everybody. Now the parents are pissed off we didn't tell them. Wasn't y'all's business.

Zoanne Pedford:

We didn't want a wedding. We needed money for other things.

Earl Pedford:

I say, "Most of those people that had big weddings, then they have another big wedding, and then they have another." What does tell you? The big wedding really is not going keep you together.

Zoanne Pedford:

Wasn't important. Things like that just aren't important to us.

Earl Pedford:

It wasn't a show boat type of thing. It was just done. We handled it.

Zoanne Pedford:

Quick.

Earl Pedford:

Quick. Almost didn't make it home, because we didn't have no money. I think I had to-

Zoanne Pedford:

You pawned your gun.

Earl Pedford:

I had a gun. I pawned my little gun, because I had to be packing a lot of times, because I was the marked guy. I had a little watch. I thought it was worth something. Put the little watch down. He says, "Okay, you can have that back." I thought my watch was worth something. "Oh you can have that back. I will take the gun." I said, "I will come back."

The honorable Elijah Muhammad sang with me.

Zoanne Pedford:

Well, the Jim Jones was ... I was like the business manager. I did all the business for Jim so he could take the music and stuff. They approached us and they wanted us to do a show. They came to another show that we were doing and saw. We accept the job and they want to pay us more. I say, "No, no. This is our fee." We get there and when we were starting to unload the truck and you hear this-

Earl Pedford:

Cathedral. It's going up and down the street.

Zoanne Pedford:

It's a converted movie theater.

Earl Pedford:

It had balconies.

Zoanne Pedford:

In San Francisco, a converted movie theater or-

Earl Pedford:

Something. It was huge.

Zoanne Pedford:

And it was huge and it had the balconies. He's preaching. He's on the stage. He's preaching. He's got sunglasses on. He's got his robe and he's got this choir in the back of him.

Earl Pedford:

It took a while for me to realize who this guy actually was, because he sounded black. He sounded like a black guy.

Zoanne Pedford:

Had the choir in back of him and they're doing their thing. Then, we set up and we do a show. We do a great show, so they want to put us up for the night.

Earl Pedford:

It was the-

Zoanne Pedford:

[inaudible 01:36:44].

Earl Pedford:

I'll tell you my version when she's finished.

Zoanne Pedford:

I'm with a group of men, whoever the girl ... Jean.

Earl Pedford:

Jean.

Zoanne Pedford:

It was Jean at the time. We're at this black people's house and we're talking about the father, because they called him the father. "The father, he's so great, and he takes us on vacations with him."

Earl Pedford:

Takes all [crosstalk 01:37:11].

Zoanne Pedford:

"He's got to be the nine buses and when he goes on vacation, we all go on vacation. We give the father all our-

Earl Pedford:

Worldly valuables.

Zoanne Pedford:

"Worldly goods. The diamonds and gold"

Earl Pedford:

He also had access to your wife.

Zoanne Pedford:

They wanted us to come and be on tour with them and be a part of their-

Earl Pedford:

We had a show that you better not let us open for you. That's your death, because the crowd would call for us back after the headline. We did The Gong Show. We were too good for The Gong Show.

Zoanne Pedford:

I mean you get 30 seconds-

Earl Pedford:

37 seconds I think we had.

Zoeanne Pedford:

To do your thing.

Earl Pedford:

(vocalizing) And everybody was still going "Oh." They'd go, "How'd they do that?"

It was funny, because see, I was so involved in getting my xylophones together. I'm hearing this voice, still not paying attention. I got to get these drums. I've got to warm my drums up.

I'm part of that part of the setup and I've got to have my instruments right. I got xylophones. I hear this guy. I finally get on stage. I still hadn't paid attention what was going on, because there's thousands of people in this theater. I'm going, "Oh, it's a white dude." [inaudible 01:38:40] He had two big old, black goons standing behind him. He's standing on the pulpit with dark black shades on. Right off the top-

Zoeanne Pedford:

With a robe on.

Earl Pedford:

I said, "Oh, shit." I'm in the church talking about, "Oh, shoot, this dude." I mean, right off the top, when I looked at him.

Zoeanne Pedford:

You knew it was something up.

Earl Pedford:

I knew it was something up.

Zoeanne Pedford:

They surrounded us. Five people were just surrounding me, telling me how great the father is. Five people surrounding him. They separated us.

Earl Pedford:

Yeah, they did.

Zoeanne Pedford:

Then, they tried ... and they're pounding us and telling us how great and all his accolades and we're like, "We need to get out of here."

Earl Pedford:

I got put up with an opening group and I'm kind of vocal. I say, "What's up with this fathership?" That woman looked at me like, "Oh we don't talk about the father like that." I said, "Oh, shit." The father's

this ... I was like the wrong guy to hear this. She's talking on dead ears. I just shut the hell up. I said, "Oh hell no."

Zoanne Pedford:

It was scary.

Earl Pedford:

It was a cult.

Zoanne Pedford:

It was scary.

Earl Pedford:

It was literally a cult. They're going, "Oh, we [inaudible 01:40:08] our rings and everything. All our jewelry and everything." I said-

Zoanne Pedford:

We give the father everything.

Earl Pedford:

Not long after that, that's when they drunk the juice.

Zoanne Pedford:

Well, it was because they were getting ready to open a temple in Los Angeles.

Earl Pedford:

My brother ran across him and my brother came to my mother and say, "You need to give the father our TV, because we don't need a TV." My mother said, "Boy, you want to take your ass out of here."

Zoanne Pedford:

You give the father your stuff.

Earl Pedford:

"Give him your shit." Well, she didn't cuss, but, "You give him your stuff. You better get on out here with that."

Well, I wasn't able to finish college, because of that type of environment. But, I still have that sense of righteousness to do the right thing, no matter what, no matter who. A good friend of mine, by the name of Maurice [Merchant 01:40:58], we all grew up together. His younger sister was part of our little pack.

Zoanne Pedford:

My best friend.

Earl Pedford:

It was three of us. Shirley, go call John [inaudible 01:41:08] Shirley. He says, "Earl, ... I was in the streets at that time, doing whatever I could to make a living, all of it not legal. "Go get a job." He said, "I know this lady in personnel. She's a black lady and she runs the personnel department for Alpha Beta. I'll tell her that you're on your way." Cool. I rolled up there, expecting just to get a shoo in job. I already got this job and I didn't have to do nothing but sign my name. Man, was I mistaken, because I still looked like a thug.

Although I had a shoo in, raggy little goatee, my hair half done. I wasn't really presentable, but I didn't know what the norm was. I just had an in. I thought that I'll have to do was go sign my name. This woman looked at me and says, "Go cut your hair, shave and come back." You don't talk to me like that, but she's black woman. Can we have a respect for that? That's like, "Okay."

Did exactly what she said. Came back. She noticed I had college background. I can do this. I can do that. I was just what she was looking for, but I had to be a package that she can market. Then from there, did part-time. I did whatever thing she could throw at me. Graveyard, big three, whatever. It was always a situation where being black was still an issue you always had to fight for.

I couldn't do the same job as somebody else. I had to do a way better job, just to get the next thing. The proof to that was how I really got promoted over to where I ended up being a steward.

I was working graveyard in the bakery, cleaning the pans. It's tough work, but I didn't mind it. It was work. It paid. I knew there was more opportunities and to me, I figured, "I'm smarter than most of people I'm working around." That was how I felt.

I had this foreman. He had just became foreman. One of the first Hispanics actually to become foreman. Big job, because he's going to make an example out of me, as a minority, to put the thumb on me, so he can be part of the group. I already knew what the deal was.

A couple of people said, "Earl such and such is trying to fire you." I said, "What do you mean?" "Man, he's giving you bad reviews." I said, "Many, you guys see my work. You know it." "You need to go talk to Mr. Green or somebody similar." Supervisor isn't working our shift. He came in right after our shift, so I waited.

I've talked to the supervisor about this guy, told him my case. He said, "Really? I don't think Garcia is like that." I said, "Well, why don't you give me something to do. You come in a little early and you check my work before Garcia does. Then, have him tell you what he thinks."

I presented myself well enough. He said, "Fine." Sure enough, checked my work the next morning and he had talked to my coworkers. They said, "No, Earl does like this all the time. Matter of fact, he helps us out when we need some."

Because Garcia, what about this Pedford guy? "Ugh. I don't know Mr. Green. I don't know if he's going to make it." He stopped him right there. He said, "Stop." He says, "I just checked his work. He does some of the best work that we've gotten half done around here. Everybody backs him up. You're done" He just walked him out.

He kept his job and he got referenced. What happened was, that kicked me over to another warehouse. It was a specialty warehouse. I was working in the dock. They got to wear regular clothes over there. They had women over there. It was sharp. You could tell everybody had nice cars. They were making top money. How do I get over here? I managed to get over there and get a 30 day trial. I did whatever butt kissing, whatever yes sir I had to do to get that 30 days, because now I'm a union rep.

I'm represented by the union and it's quite still racist in this organization over here.

Zoeanne Pedford:

And probably anti-union.

Earl Pedford:

[inaudible 01:45:40] I had a habit of wearing ethnic hairdos, beads in my hair, stuff like that. We had a supervisor come over to me and says, "We don't wear our hair like that around here." "Say what?" "We don't wear our hair" ... I said, "Well, this is how I wear my hair. I'm in the damn warehouse. Who's going to be seeing it?" I said, "Did you say anything to the white boys that cut their hair? Did you say something to these women who wear beads in their hair?" I went off on him like that. I'm 31 days in.

They didn't know I had a ... I never said anything back to him. I was in. They met Earl for the first time. Sent me back, he said, "Oh shit." He did.

I think, about a year-

Zoeanne Pedford:

They were dumb. They should've told you that during the 30 days.

Earl Pedford:

They figured, "Hey, we got primo job in the whole organization. You're not going to have problems with people. Ain't nobody complain." When I called him out on certain things, it wasn't going off everybody else, but I still have to do my work. Make sure it was better than anybody else. I would get called in the office for little infractions here and there. I never get written or something. They said, "How did Earl go in the office and never be in trouble." Earl knows how to talk and I'm not really intimidated by management. Never have been.

Man, we need Earl up. That'd be our union steward, because the union steward that they had was just a kiss ass to management. He'd do whatever they tell him, right or wrong. He'd let them rifle stuff unnecessarily.

It and it was like 95% white and then a couple of blacks and Hispanics. Had an election. I can win the election. Oh, it's off. I held that spot for 23 years and I went on strike. I became very visible for 952, but I also wouldn't take the shit from the union when I see, "Oh, no, no, that's not good for my warehouse." I would get in their face and would not bow down to them when my people was involved and it didn't benefit us. That made me more dangerous then, because I got promoted to a manager or like a foreman.

I actually opened the grounds. I mean, keys, computer. I ran receiving dock, forklift, stocking, and the selection area. Where everybody get this stuff and it had to be ... The previous steward, who was a little punk, got in my ways. "He's our union steward. He can't be the foreman in the warehouse too, because he's such and such." I said, "Okay, fine. Vote me out."

They weren't. Voted me back in. He said, "Got to be very unique for this guy to be steward and a foreman and the whole place still [inaudible 01:48:57] ... If you're my friends, you did something, I told you not do it, you got to deal with me. I can handle stuff on the floor. Instead of everybody getting written up and being in their office, we're going to handle this right here. You don't need to worry. When it came to the office, don't go to the office without Earl, because you subject to get fired. I would write grievance up on you. I'd have you technically tied up in these offices. You couldn't do management in the warehouse.

I caught on there. Made a deal to move our warehouse.

Zoeanne Pedford:

This is the union [crosstalk 01:49:34] management.

Earl Pedford:

We moved our warehouse across the street. We had the most efficient warehouse, not just in Orange County, but in the nation. We had to first make mechanized ...where I see that stuff, I ... We were the first.

They had the Chinese, Japanese companies come though, do tours. How can you guys put up this much merchandise with this few people and this many old people? We were the most senior. They had made a terrible error. They created warehouse to when you can work for 20 or 30 years and retire out. That was way too expensive, because that's a burnout job. Nobody retires. They had created a perfect environment for us. They had to break it down. They wouldn't allow us to go across the street from our work. Let's clear the contract right here, buddy.

I wrote up all kinds of stuff, but I wasn't getting the back end from the union. What the hell is going on here? Even then, we were smart enough.

The fight for [inaudible 01:50:38] ... we had to file a 50 million dollar lawsuit, that lasted ten years. They had one of the best attorneys in Orange County. It was on some kind of magazine that we hired. Everything was going our way and all of a sudden, all these people from Detroit or wherever, they just came and sat in front of our ... didn't see them the whole time for the verdict. We lost that day.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:51:03]