

Kevin:

How are you all doing? Thank you for coming on this freezing night in Orange County. [inaudible 00:00:07] advisors. I'm Kevin Cabrera. I'm the Executive Director here at the Heritage Museum. So this is another part of our series of lectures for Black History Month. We have the opportunity to have a really good conversation with Michael Daniel Lynem, who I know as Daniel. Everyone knows him by Michael and everything else. So I've got to know Daniel, I don't know how many years ago.

Mr. Lynem:

It's been what? Three or four years ago?

Kevin:

Something like that.

Mr. Lynem:

Yeah, something like that.

Kevin:

Just, we became close and his story is fascinating, and it really gives a glimpse of the African-American experience here in Orange County, which is my research as a historian. So we're happy to have you here today and have a conversation about your experience growing up in the city, what you were seeing around, and what led to the Black Panther movement here in the county, and everything that ... all the aftermath of the craziness. Right?

Mr. Lynem:

Yep.

Kevin:

So thank you. So, I just want to start with your name, and where were you born?

Mr. Lynem:

Daniel, it's Daniel Michael Lynem. I'll just tell you a little story about that. My father's name is Daniel Bill Lynem, and so he didn't want a junior. So he told my mom, "We're going to name him Michael Daniel Lynem." So back then, the father wasn't allowed back in the delivery room and all that. So my mom decided she was going to name me Daniel Michael Lynem. So my dad, of course, he didn't get his way. So he insisted that everybody call me Michael.

Mr. Lynem:

So all my life, people called me Michael. People who've met me recently within the last 10 to 20 years know me as Daniel, but I answer to both, so it's all good. I was born in Santa Ana, January 14th, 1947. My father got stationed here. He was the Army during World War II. So he got stationed, and they came out here in 1945, and we first lived in a new house on Fourth Street here in Santa Ana right off of Bristol.

Kevin:

It's still there.

Mr. Lynem:

Yeah, it's still here.

Kevin:

So people ask, "How do you get along so well with Daniel?" I think if we get along so well, it's because we're born on the same birthday, same day, right? We're both January 14th.

Mr. Lynem:

It's the best day. Right?

Kevin:

Yeah, the best day. Can you share a little bit about your parents? Maybe your dad first.

Mr. Lynem:

Yeah. My dad was born in Milford, Ohio, and he had 15 brothers and sisters. So they had a large family. My grandfather moved from Milford to Indianapolis and that's where my dad, that's where he grew up. My mom was from Kentucky, a little small town called Lawrenceburg, Kentucky. But we had a lot of family on my mother's side that also lived in Indianapolis, and so she went to school there, living with some other family members. That's where she met my dad. He got into the service and then officially came out here to California.

Kevin:

Can you talk a little bit more about your mom? Your mom was very active in the community. So can you share more about Lucille?

Mr. Lynem:

My mother was ... First of all, I'll say about my mom, she was just a tremendously godly Christian woman. She used to tell me that, she said, "You started going to church when you were in my womb." She went every single Sunday, but she was very involved in the community. She was one of the founding members of the NAACP here in Santa Ana, at the time. She was one of the Eastern Stars when that group was big. My mom started an organization with Harriet Wieder, who we all know was very active in the community. They called it the Citizens ... What was the name of it?

Kevin:

Interest in Citizens.

Mr. Lynem:

Interest in Citizens. So they would raise money through different means. They had the dinners and so on and so forth. Every year, they'd give scholarships to different young people in the community. So my mom was very active in the community, very, very busy. So yeah, she was one of the ... But the thing that stood out to me about my mother was that she was so forgiving. My mom could forgive things that I would just be like, "No way." But she was. She was a very, very sweet woman, very soft-spoken. She was very strong woman, and somebody who, she had strong opinions. She stood on her principles and values.

Kevin:

Do you know why your mom became so engaged in the community?

Mr. Lynem:

I think she grew up in Kentucky and I spent ... My grandmother was a school teacher back in Kentucky. At that particular time, Jim Cole was very much alive and well in that time. So my mom had a real strong sense of being active and real strong sense of what was right and fighting for equality. So I think that's what really drove her. She had a sense of fairness, a sense of equality, a sense of what's right. I think that's what drove her during her life.

Kevin:

Talk a little bit more about your dad. He came out here for the service. Do you remember a lot of service men in the area and what it was like being in a military household?

Mr. Lynem:

I don't. My dad, when he was in the service, he mostly, he was overseas and going over to Britain over there. I don't have a lot of memory of him at that young age. I was two or three years old. I do remember after the Army, he left the Army and he went into the Navy, just at the start of the Korean War. So I remember him leaving. I remember we went to the train station down on Fourth Street in Santa Ana, and all the Navy guys were getting on the train with the big doors were open. It wasn't like where you could go in and sit down. I remember he was leaving and I was crying because I wanted to go with him. That's my memory.

Kevin:

Can you talk a bit about your childhood growing up in Santa Ana? You were here in the 19 ... You were born here in the 40s, and so you would be considered part of those pioneer families of the black community. So what do you recall growing up in Santa Ana?

Mr. Lynem:

One of the things that I remember growing up in Santa Ana, I remember the street car they had going down Fourth Street back in the day. But I also remember when we moved, we moved to a house on Seventh Street. I was probably about four years old when we got that house. I remember my parents talking about how they had to go to court to get the house. The community there was an all white community, and they were fighting having black people move in as their neighbors. So I remember that.

Mr. Lynem:

I remember after we moved in, as a kid, it just seemed like to be one day I woke up, I walked outside and it was like all these "For Sale" signs, where everybody was like moving out and it seemed like all these people were moving. It was very interesting because there was a two block area basically where all the black people, when my parents moved in, that other blacks in Santa Ana moved into this area.

Mr. Lynem:

But it was only in a two square block area, and in the very next block, and I found this out later, that they had told people, they says, "We're not going to sell to blacks in this particular neighborhood, but only in this neighborhood." So some people sold their house on our block and bought a house in the

very next block and moved up there. So that's where a lot of us lived. It wasn't just us blacks, but there were a lot of Hispanics and Mexicans, and we all lived in the same basic area, same community.

Kevin:

So with that, it really started to be this growth of a really tight black community. So can you talk about some of your neighbors and what you remember about them?

Mr. Lynem:

Yeah. We had, in our street, we had a very close neighborhood, very much so. It was during the time when, as a kid, you would play outside and the sun would go down. Then your parents would come out in the yard with you, and you're playing while they're all communicating and so on. Or your parents, somebody be yelling, "It's time for dinner." Everybody would run into the house and everything.

Mr. Lynem:

So yeah, we had quite a neighborhood. There were the Hunters, they lived across the street. I remember them. The Reed family that lived on the left side of the us. There were the Joneses that lived in the street. I remember Zeff Jones worked for the post office for a lot of years. Then I had some cousins and aunt and uncles that lived down the street from us. We had quite a tight neighborhood.

Mr. Lynem:

I remember at one point in time, and this is interesting, the real estate agent that was ordering this whole thing over there, in terms of who's going to move where, and who can live where, I ran into him ... Oh, it's maybe been about 15 years ago. He was in his eighties or something. But he had become a Christian and he told me, he said, "You know what?" He said, "I'm so glad to meet you." He said, "I was your parents' real estate agent."

Mr. Lynem:

He said, "Our policy then was that we would move a black family into an all white area, and then we'd go along and we'd tell all the white neighbors, 'You better sell your house because your property values are going to go down.'" He said, "Then we would pick up that business at the same time." So as a kid, I got memories, a little bit of that. But so all of us have lived in other areas of Santa Ana. All the black people moved into this one area on Seventh Street.

Kevin:

A lot of people might not be probably not aware of this, but it was your family was the first family that moved out of that little pocket.

Mr. Lynem:

Yes.

Kevin:

So it was between First and Fifth Street. Then it was his family that really led to this growth, that grew outward, but stayed in the-

Mr. Lynem:

We moved.

Kevin:

... stayed in the-

Mr. Lynem:

We did move in on Seventh Street first.

Kevin:

I know that you had a very interesting incident that occurred when you were at Wilson Elementary. Can you talk about that and how that affected you?

Mr. Lynem:

Yeah. I was going to Wilson Elementary School. So there was only ... George Reed was my neighbor and myself, we were the only two black kids at the school. So I just remember it almost seemed like every single day when we would go to school, on our way to school, there would be four or five little white kids. They would throw rocks at us and just call us niggers, as we were going to school. Then it would happen during recess. It would happen during lunch and everything.

Mr. Lynem:

The principal there was a man named Mr. Emily. So one day, my mom kept me, she said, "Well, just tell the teacher. Just tell the teacher. Let her ..." I'm going, "Mom, the teacher is standing right there and watching and everything, and she's not saying anything." So finally I said, "Okay, I'll tell the teacher." So I went to the teacher, the teacher said fine. So she takes me up to Mr. Emily's office and he's sitting behind his desk.

Mr. Lynem:

I remember he looked at her and he says, "Thank you." He said, "Close the door." He leaned across the desk and he said to me, he said, "What is your problem?" I said, "Well, these kids are calling us niggers every day. They're throwing rocks at us and everything." He said, "Why is that a problem?" He says, "You are a nigger." He says, "I want you to remember that." He said, "You will never be better than white people." He said, "That's what you are." He said, "You were born one." He said, "You're going to die one." He said, "Now I want you to get out of my office." He said, "I wants you to go on the other side of the school yard." He says, "Don't ever come over here in this area again."

Mr. Lynem:

So my friend, George, ended up falling down, skinning his knee. So I decided to walk him to the nurse's office. So I walked into the nurse's office and Mr. Emily comes in and he says, "What did I tell you? I told you to never come over here." I remember he picked me up by my neck. I was in fourth grade at the time. He actually carried me, my feet dangling, across the school yard. He slammed me on a bench and he says, "Don't ever let me catch you on the other side of this line ever again."

Mr. Lynem:

So I was sitting there. I'm crying, and I could see that I had blood on my neck. So I went home, and I told my mom and dad what happened. So the next day my dad took me to school. He'd drive me to school

and he just went into the office and he said, "You stay right here." He went past the secretary and she was going, "Oh, excuse me." I just remember the door closed and I could just hear this noise. It sounded like there was furniture being tossed, bodies bouncing off the wall and everything.

Mr. Lynem:

Then my dad, as he opened the door and came out, he says, "Don't you ever put your hands on my son again." He said, "If you do," he said, "I'll kill you." He left, and we didn't see Mr. Emily for about four days. So when he did come back to school, he was wearing dark sunglasses. So that was my experience. But I have to say most of the teachers were pretty good. I had a fifth grade teacher that stood out to me, who was one of the best teachers I had in elementary school, a real [inaudible 00:14:33]. So I didn't have all bad experiences.

Kevin:

Did your parents ever share any things, any discrimination that they had happen to them, either when they were back in the East Coast or coming here?

Mr. Lynem:

My mom didn't talk about it. My mom was very protective, in terms of, and my dad was, too. They didn't want to expose me to a lot. I just know that a lot of people stayed in the neighborhood. Some people moved, but a lot of people stayed. So I've got pictures of birthday parties I had, where it was ethnically mixed. There was all ethnicities there. So the white people that lived there wanted to live there. They stayed there for a long time. So I became friends with those kids and we played together and developed friendships. But my parents didn't talk about that much.

Kevin:

I know that you would go back towards Kentucky to go back to Kentucky and visit your grandmas. Can you talk about your experience heading back to the South and what it was, compared to living out here?

Mr. Lynem:

Yeah. Yeah, it was definitely Jim Crow. It was definitely alive and well. When I would go back to talk to Kentucky, it was a little city. It was a small town, a little town called Lawrenceburg, but it was really a pretty small place. When I would get there, it was so small that people would say, "Okay, Miss Katie's grandson in California is here." So the thinking was that, and it was very, very segregated and everybody got along because they basically lived apart.

Mr. Lynem:

But I remember that I was told that the white people would say, "You know what? Miss Katie's grandson is here. So he doesn't know any better. He hasn't been taught the way we've taught our other Negroes here." So they would give me a little bit of grace because I did stuff.

Kevin:

Like what?

Mr. Lynem:

I did stuff. I was so indignant at all of these separation and everything. So my grandmother taught in a rural school house. Pot-bellied stove in the middle, out in the middle of the country. So we would have to walk so many miles to get to the bus and the bus had to take it to this road. Then we'd have to walk up the road. Well, on the way to the bus, there was a strip of sidewalk, one block long. My grandmother would always cross over when we got to this sidewalk.

Mr. Lynem:

I asked her, "Why come we can't walk on the sidewalk?" She said, "That sidewalk belongs to those white people. They don't want colored people walking on the sidewalk." Well, why did she tell me that? So the next morning, what do I do? I'm walking on the sidewalk. I didn't just walk on the sidewalk, but I walked up, and walked back and I'm looking at the front window, waiting for somebody to come out and say something to me. So I did do stuff like that.

Mr. Lynem:

At the theater, we could only go through the back door. We had to sit in the first two rows. So I got in a fight with this kid one day and I just finally said, "That's it. I'm going to lead this revolution. We're going through the front door today." Now my cousin said, "Come on, man. Don't do that." Anyway, so I go through the front door. When I get home at night, there's my grandmother there, there's the pastor of the church and they're looking very somber. They come in and they have me sit down and they say, "Listen, son."

Mr. Lynem:

My grandmother told me this. She says, "They could come for you in the middle of the night." She said, "and they could take you. There wouldn't be anything I could do about it. We'd find you hanging." [inaudible 00:18:30]. So the only time I get a couple of times, they actually put me on the train and took me out of town. [inaudible 00:18:38]. So yeah, I did stop. I just could not stand the idea. I just thought it was unfair. So I just wasn't going to submit to that very well.

Kevin:

That's something that, in our conversations over the years, you talked about that a lot, about this whole idea of fairness. Did you ever have a fear? Did you ever fear for your life when you were out there or you just were not thinking about maybe consequences at that time?

Mr. Lynem:

I wasn't thinking about the consequences. I didn't have any [crosstalk 00:19:19] stuff.

Kevin:

One of the biggest catalysts for the growth of the community here in Orange County was the church. You had mentioned that your mom was very active in the church. What do you remember about the church growing up and how that played an important role in your life as a child? Obviously it's playing a huge role in your life today.

Mr. Lynem:

What I remember was that I went to church every Sunday. My mom and my aunt, we would drive to this church, Second Baptist Church in Longbranch, and every Sunday, we would go there, before they built

the 22 Freeway. So we just went up this road there. I remember the one thing that stands out to me, which has a huge impact on my life today, is that when I was about six or seven years old, I came to believe what the Bible said about who Jesus Christ was. It said that he is the son of God, he is God in human flesh. He came, he lived as us, with what we couldn't do in keeping God's law perfectly. Then he went to the cross, took the punishment that was made for us, died, buried, and rose from the dead.

Mr. Lynem:

About seven years old, I came to actually, I believed that. So I remember it moving on me quite a bit. So we had a service one night at the church, and I remember I went down for the altar call. I remember I was really pretty serious about it. I did that. But then after that, I struggled with the idea of ... I felt like, you know what? If you're going to give your life to Christ, then you need to be all in and not just partway in. I looked forward to being a teenager. I thought, "Well, when I get 13 years old, if I give my life to Christ, there's things I want to do. Surely I couldn't do that as a Christian, if I'm going to be a real Christian."

Mr. Lynem:

So, yeah, so I battled with doing that, but I think it was at that point that the Lord really, really planted a seed in my life, in my heart that He would use to draw me as the years went by.

Kevin:

So can you talk a little bit more about those teenage years and what you were experiencing and what the black community is experiencing during the teenage years?

Mr. Lynem:

During the teenage years, probably when I got about 14, 15 years old, I could rebel and make it stick, I did. So I quit going to church. I just wouldn't go. I just went about my own way of doing my own thing and living my life in the way that I wanted to live it. So I'd get in trouble here and there. The first time that I ever went to jail was when I was 18 years old, and I had just turned 18 at the time.

Mr. Lynem:

So me and some friends were out. We had went to somebody's house. We went to the store and on the way back from the store, we get pulled over, which was par for the course. You know what I mean? We talk about racial profiling but it was a way of life. You just knew, if I left my house to go somewhere and a police car went by, I just figured if he made a U-turn, I was going to get pulled over. So that's what happened.

Mr. Lynem:

During that particular stop, he planted the switchblade knife on me, that I didn't have. So I was arrested for that. The first time I had been really arrested and taken to jail. That began this career of getting arrested back and forth and in and out of jail. So that was my experience [inaudible 00:23:15]. The type of injustices and just the kind of harassment that we experienced in the community from the police department, I just thought something needs to be done about this. At that particular point in my life, I wasn't sure what, but I began to develop a fairly militant attitude towards doing something that would bring some equality and also bring some real justice into our community.



Kevin:

Can you talk a little bit more about this harassment? A lot of stories about what was going on, walking down Ray Street towards El Salvador Park and things of that nature.

Mr. Lynem:

Yeah. You remember that, right?

Audience Member:

Of course.

Mr. Lynem:

Yeah, every Wednesday night at El Salvador Park in Santa Ana, we always had a dance every Wednesday night. So every Wednesday night, like clockwork, so all the kids would come from our area, but they also came from on the other side of First Street. When you get up in that area, we called that Little Texas. Okay? So everybody would congregate at this park over there. Every single Wednesday night, just before the dance would let out, the cops would stage. They had to take a little area and there'd be four or five, six police cars. They would stage up in this area.

Mr. Lynem:

As anybody left, walking down Ray Street? There would be groups of kids four or five kids in this group, four or five kids in this group, walking back home. Eventually, the cops would pull over groups of kids. There'd be maybe four or five stops that would happen on the street. They'd pull over these groups of kids. That happened every single Wednesday night. Nobody was doing anything wrong, just walking home. So they would pull up these groups of kids and hold them there. Sometime you'd see kids up against the car and they'd be patting them down and searching them. That was what people were experiencing in the community at the time.

Kevin:

So all this happened in Santa Ana for a fairly small black community. Around the nation, you see this happening, a lot of racial issues, discrimination happening within the black community around the country. So this really gave rise to some civil rights leaders and this rise of the Black Panthers. So can you talk about how you got involved in that and how that happened? Because that's a very fascinating story to hear as well. Right?

Mr. Lynem:

Yes, yes, yes. I got involved in the Black Panthers. I read about them. I know they started around October of '66, probably [inaudible 00:25:56] up North. I ran into a guy who had a record store on Bristol Street, a guy named Tommy Crockett at the time. So a bunch of us were out walking around. We'd go into this record store one night and he's got these posters on the wall. Some of them were people with dashikis. There was Stokely Carmichael, H Rap Brown. A lot of those guys who were becoming more known in the media for their activism, in terms of fighting these types of situations in the community.

Mr. Lynem:

So Tommy said, "You know what? I got a Black Panther office on First Street." So that really fascinated me and interested me. So I started to going over there and eventually, I remember thinking I love the

uniforms. They had the black berets, and we had the black leather jackets and the turtle neck. I just thought that looked cool. So I thought that's really nice. I liked it. But so we got involved in that.

Mr. Lynem:

Eventually the LA chapter got involved with us, and we connected from there. I made a couple of trips up to San Francisco and Oakland, where the office was up there. So we eventually started a breakfast for children program. A lot of people don't really know about the Black Panthers. They just see what the media painted, but the party was, they had a 10 point program.

Kevin:

Yeah, I was going to ask you about that.

Mr. Lynem:

I don't know all the 10 points, but a lot of it was just about having some say-so in the community, having some representation. So we talked a lot about taxation without representation, having representatives in education and the city council. So we could speak up and say, "These are the things we want for our community." Really having some level of sovereignty in determining what was going on in our community, in terms of education, in terms of meeting people's needs and so on and so forth.

Mr. Lynem:

So we had a breakfast for children program, where we fed kids every morning. We had a free food giveaway program that we had. I did some work in the area of working with the elderly in the community, helping people get to the doctor, get their prescriptions and giving people rides and things like that. So we were very community-orientated and do a lot of communities. The thing about it was that we were also Communists. So we were very much into Karl Marx, one of my heroes at the time. Che Guevara, a revolutionary. So I saw myself as a revolutionary that was looking to make a difference, looking to bring some justice, looking to fight back against the type of things that we were experiencing from the establishment. So yeah, I think we were doing a lot of good things, but we were Communists at a time in this country when I think Communism was really bad.

Kevin:

We had one of our previous lectures, we had Katherine McCullough as one of our panelists, and she made a very poignant point that the reason that she got involved in politics wasn't because she wanted to, but she's all, "If we didn't have representation, if we weren't at the table, if I wasn't at the table for our black community, then we would be invisible." So that's very much what the 10 point part of that 10 point system-

Mr. Lynem:

The program, yes.

Kevin:

... of the Black Panther party is just having that representation. Who else was part of the party and how did they get involved as well?

Mr. Lynem:

You mean members who are here in Orange County? One of them ... Well, there was a couple of ... one guy, Ricky Tice, and he had a younger ... The younger guy-

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:30:04]

Mr. Lynem:

... [Ricky Tice 00:30:00]. And he had a younger ... The younger guys, we call them junior Panthers, 14, 13 year olds. We call them junior Panthers. But [Arthur League 00:30:13] became involved. Another gentleman by the name of [Otis Grimes 00:30:15] who grew up in Santa Ana in the community. He was also involved. And then we had other different young people. [Debra Moore 00:30:24]. I never will forget Debra. She was a fireball and she was very much involved in the department also. People would come into our office. We had an office on first street for a while, and we closed that down and we opened the office on fourth street, right there off of [Bristol 00:30:42] and fourth street, in that area.

Kevin:

You had a very interesting story that you shared with me about when the party was getting started. You had some folks from LA come out and there was some-

Mr. Lynem:

Yeah, that was-

Kevin:

... altercation. Yeah, I would love to hear it.

Mr. Lynem:

Yeah. So come to find out, we met [Tommy Crockett 00:31:03]. He said he was a Black Panther and we opened this office up. Well, we had the guys from LA come out and this was right after the time that of the leaders in the LA chapter [Bunchy Carter 00:31:15] and [John Higgins 00:31:16] had been murdered at UCLA because there was a conflict with another group called US Organization, it was another black organization. And so the guys who rose up was a guy named [Elmer Geronimo Pratt 00:31:31] and some other guys. Well, they heard about what was going on in Santa Ana. So they came out and eventually come to find out Tommy Crockett was not an official Black Panther.

Mr. Lynem:

And so they come out and I meet with them and we're going over this whole thing. And so we have breakfast and we talk. We go back to the office. And so we gather everybody in the office, they put everybody in a circle and proceeded to pistol whip Tommy Crockett and another guy. And so they pretty much made their presence known in what they were not unhappy with. But they liked [Kana 00:32:17], they liked myself and a couple of other guys. So they left that day and they pointed out, they said, you are now the head or the leader of the Black Panthers here in Orange County. So that was kind of my official start in being made officially the leader of the party in Orange County.

Kevin:

You had mentioned that your mom was active and one of the founding members of the NAACP here in Orange County. And that organization is also fighting for political representation and equality. Did she

ever share with you about you going to the Panthers and she's being part of this other organization that's less political and ...

Mr. Lynem:

The only thing my mother shared with me about me going to a party was that she was always fearful for me because of the things that I ... just my presentation, my conversation, the things that I would say. Because I mean, I was out there pushing a really militant narrative. And she just basically concerned about ... my mom would always, you know what, I pray for you every day. And there was a point in time to where it seemed like I was getting worse. And she said, you know what? She said, it seems like the more I pray for you, the worse you get. She didn't understand that. But it was all working out. God was working it out. So it was good.

Kevin:

Can you talk about some other black leaders in the committee?

Mr. Lynem:

The one thing that immediately comes to mind is a guy named Reverend [Corbin 00:33:53]. And he was a minister here. And my memory of him was that he walked into our Black Panther office one day and he just began to preach the gospel to me, to share the gospel with me. And we had quite a long conversation. He was such a ... Reverend Corbin was a very humble man. He was a good man. One of the men that I met that I truly believe really loved the Lord and was very sincere about his Christianity. And he kind of befriended me, at that point in time, and we would have conversations. And then he'd start talking about Jesus. And I'd say, you just blew the conversation. We were having a good conversation until you brought up the Jesus stuff kind of thing. But Reverend Corbin stands out to me really the most of anybody.

Kevin:

He was also really beloved within the Latino community too.

Mr. Lynem:

He, he was, he was.

Kevin:

Spoke Spanish, was bilingual.

Mr. Lynem:

Very much so.

Kevin:

And very much loved within that.

Mr. Lynem:

Yeah, he was a good man.

Kevin:

Let's move on to this incident that has ... The shooting of Officer [Sastrum 00:35:02], what kind of led up to those events and things of that nature?

Mr. Lynem:

Well, you know what? My rhetoric was very, very militant. And during that time, the Black Panthers called police pigs. And we had songs that we made up about off the pigs and killing police officers. And so that was our narrative out there. And so of course we developed some pretty serious enemies in the police department. But kind of what led up to that was the situation where we would have those parties at El Salvador park. And the constant stopping of people, which was pure harassment. And I remember some of the leaders in the black community, Reverend Corbin was one of them. They would go to the police department and kind of plead with them, you know what? You need to stop doing this. It's not good. Somebody is going to get hurt. It's going to end up in a very bad situation. So it was one of those situations, kind of where that was.

Mr. Lynem:

And so that one night, right there on [Rate 00:36:10] and third, I remember that, the police officer, that's what they were doing. They were stopping people up and down that street. And they stopped a couple of guys and one of them shot Officer Sastrum.

Kevin:

You shared with me that that was meant to be you.

Mr. Lynem:

Yes.

Kevin:

Can you reflect on that? Like what happened at the house prior to all that?

Mr. Lynem:

We were in our office that night. And so I would teach these classes at the office. Young guys would come in there and I was studying Marx and Lenin and I was studying all those guys. I carried around Chairman Mao's Little Red Book. So at the time I called that, that was my Bible. And I can literally quote, Chairman Mao quotes from that Little Red Book. But so I would teach these classes and I was also doing gun classes, teaching guys how to break a gun down, clean it, and put it back together. We were doing that. And so it was myself and [Stevie Rice 00:37:13], [Ricky Tice's 00:37:13] younger brother, Arthur League, who was also a party member, Otis Grimes was there. And so Stevie wanted to go home. He said, I need to go. I mean, he was 15 years old.

Mr. Lynem:

So our policy was, nobody walks alone. We always walk in twos wherever we went and I was always packing. I always have a gun on me all the time. And one of our other policies was that you never get caught with a gun and you never let a police officer take a gun from you. So I said, I was going to walk Stevie home. And then Arthur steps up and says, no, I'll walk him home. So we start arguing. I was determined. I said, no, I'm going to walk you home. And so eventually I relented and let him walk Stevie

home. But if it hadn't been ... if I had been there instead of Arthur League, walking Stevie home that night, there's a strong possibility that I could have been the one that pulled the trigger that night.

Kevin:

And so what do you know about that story, once Arthur and Stevie got pulled over?

Mr. Lynem:

What I know about that story is that, and this came out from Stevie in the trial and everything, was that when the officer went to pat Arthur down, Arthur pulled a gun on him. And Arthur was telling the officer, you know what, look he says, I don't want to hurt you. I just need you to turn around, get on your knees, and give me a chance to run and get away. And so he said, the officer was saying, well, where do you want me? He says, you want me over here? Or you want me over here? And this went on for awhile. And then Stevie said, the officer went for his gun. And when he did, that's when Arthur shot him [inaudible 00:39:06].

Kevin:

And that was Officer Sastrum?

Mr. Lynem:

Officer Sastrum, yeah.

Kevin:

And when did you hear about this.

Mr. Lynem:

I heard about it only about three or four o'clock in the morning. When somebody ... they came by the office and says, oh my God, you know what? A police officer has been shot. So we thought it was Otis Grimes that did it because Otis Grimes was more your street, tough guy, type of guy. Arthur League, when we first met Arthur League, he was working in a bank, as a bank teller. Kind of straight laced, middle-class, kind of nerdy kind of kid. So we never considered that would be Arthur League. So we went looking for Otis, couldn't find him. And then eventually I headed at home to my house at [inaudible 00:39:52] point in time.

Kevin:

And when did your house get raided?

Mr. Lynem:

It was, if I remember, I think it was later that day or the next day, I think. And here's the thing. When I was walking home, there was a police officer, Santa Ana Police Department, named [Bob Stebbins 00:40:08]. And Stebbins and I developed a real adversarial relationship. I mean, there were times that he would come to our office in the doorway and we'd stand there and just go at each other and threaten to kill each other and everything. We had a serious hate thing going on between us. And I remember when I was walking home, I went right past the area where the cop had just been shot. And Stebbins was driving up the street towards me. It was almost like in the movies in slow motion, where he's mad

dogging me and I'm mad dogging him. And he's driving by and our eyes are going like this and everything.

Mr. Lynem:

And so I get home. I had a cousin at home who was ... my cousin was married to ... he had a wife and she was there. And I had been there maybe five or 10 minutes and she gets a phone call. And at this point in time, the police were just kicking in doors in the community. They were just raiding the community, kicking in doors, dragging people out, putting them on their lines. And it got pretty crazy. And so I remember when I got home, she said, police are on their way over here. She says, if you want, I'll give you a ride, away from here. Me, I'm like, no, it's on. It's on, it's on. I'm like, no, I'm not going anywhere. I'm just going to stay right here and see what happens. And so knowing that they were coming, I began to prepare.

Mr. Lynem:

And I had a couple of 45s. I had an M1 carbine with the banana clip. So I get all my weapons together and I began to kind of fortify the house and everything in preparation for this. And I was game. I was like, it's on. We're just going to have a shootout and that'll work for me. So I remember the cops pulled up and they kind of staged up in front of the house at that particular point in time. And they came up and I remember they knocked on the door and I said, who is it? They said, it's the police. And they said, open the door now. And I said, do you have a warrant? And they said, we don't need a warrant. We'll kick the door in. I had a shotgun. I wrapped a round in a chamber and they broke off the porch.

Mr. Lynem:

And so then I got to thinking about it. I'm sitting there thinking. My mom was in New York on vacation visiting. And I'm looking at the house and I'm thinking, you know what? A shootout would destroy my mom's house. And that's what I began to think. I thought, I couldn't do this to my mother. I said, I just could not do that. I could see [inaudible 00:42:58] the house [inaudible 00:42:58]. She had worked hard. She was a very hardworking woman. Very consistent, very hard worker. And she'd worked hard all of her life. And then bought this house and was doing all she could to keep it and keep it up.

Mr. Lynem:

And so I just decided, you know what? I said, I'll just give up. And so I took all my weapons and in our hallway, we had a little area where I could push up this little door, like you go up into the attic. So I just put all my weapons up there. And I came out and I ended up opening the door and sticking my hands out first. And I ended up surrendering. And so I went out and then they picked me up. They brought me in the house and he handcuffed me. And sat me in the living room at that point. Then they proceeded to search the house and everything else.

Kevin:

What was happening within the PD that just led to all this?

Mr. Lynem:

You know what? I'm not sure what was going on exactly inside of the PD. I just know that, that was one of the things that happened after this happened, I remember an article in the Register. Now, the chief at the time was Chief Davis and they quoted him as saying that, he said, when we patrol the black

community, he said, basically ... and this is my interpretation. We patrol them as ... our policy there is different than our policy in patrolling our communities. He says, we're there to control those people and we do it through intimidation and harassment. And so one of the things he said, and this was quoted in the Register, he says, "We tell our officers, whenever you come in contact with a black male, you always refer to them as boy." Always refer to them as boy. So there was a different thinking, I think, in the department of how they were going to patrol in the black community, as opposed to in other communities.

Kevin:

And [Lam 00:45:08] back there, who was the first African American cop in Orange County's history.

Mr. Lynem:

In Santa Ana, yes, yes.

Kevin:

If you guys want to have conversations with him, he can share stories about the infiltration of John Birch Society with [inaudible 00:45:27] the police department.

Mr. Lynem:

Yes. Very, very much so.

Speaker 1:

When are we having that lecture?

Kevin:

Soon.

Mr. Lynem:

He's got a book coming out. I want to read that, he's going to tell [inaudible 00:45:41] experiences with this.

Kevin:

So you got arrested. How does that whole case transpire?

Mr. Lynem:

I get arrested. And so they take me down and, of course, I'm not saying anything to anybody. And they said that they were going to book me for ... They said, we're going to book you for first degree murder and for conspiracy to commit murder. So I was like, you know ... So they arrest me, they lock me up. And so I'm getting close to a court date. Well, the first court appearance you have is a preliminary hearing. And that's where the district attorney has to present a level evidence to take the court forward to trial. And so I get a public defender at the time. And I just remember when they gave me the paperwork that where the DA had all this information, they had listed eight witnesses, okay? None of them had a name. They were listed by witness A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and H. Every witness had a personality.



Mr. Lynem:

Every witness had quotes from ... that they attributed to these witnesses. And the reason they said that they didn't want to ... the witnesses were feared for their life so they did not want to give their name. I come to find out these people didn't even exist. And so what they use that for, so they give me the preliminary here, I'm in the court for the preliminary hearing. And what happens is that the DA kept saying, I want to recess. My lawyer kept saying, yeah, that's fine. What was happening was they had taken it to the grand jury so they were trying to get a grand jury indictment. And they were waiting for that. So every time the DA would call, because they had no evidence to present against me until the preliminary hearing.

Mr. Lynem:

And so finally the DA comes back. He makes a motion that my case be dismissed in the interest of justice. The judge grants it. They stand me up, they open the door to go out. The deputy walks up and says, you're under arrest for first degree murder. And they put me on the elevator and shot me straight to the superior court for an arraignment where they don't have to give you a preliminary hearing in that arraignment. And so during my stay in the county jail, I was locked down 24 hours while I was in there. And some of the DAs really gave me a hard time, very much so. And I eventually worked my way, they threw me in the hole. And I don't know how long I was in the hole. When you're in the hole, it's just dark. You don't know when it's morning or night or anything like that.

Mr. Lynem:

But I do remember that they did come to me one day. They just got me out, dressed me up, cleaned me up, shot me to court, and they dropped the charges at that particular point in time. And they had already arrested Otis Grimes and Arthur League for that.

Kevin:

After the shooting, where did they head up to? Arthur and Otis?

Mr. Lynem:

Oh, that was really interesting. Arthur and Otis were actually caught at [Donald Sutherland's 00:48:50] house. An actor, Donald Sutherland. Now here's the story. Donald Sutherland's wife was involved with, with a group called Friends of the Panthers. And Friends of the Panthers was a group basically of your really upper class celebrities, white, very wealthy people. They would have cocktail parties and everything and raise money and give it to the Black Panthers. Give it to the party. Well, his wife was involved in that. During this time Donald Sutherland was in Europe, filming the movie MASH. And so Arthur and Otis were staying in the basement type of thing, but it was a house down there. You know what I mean? It was very nice down there. And that's where they were staying.

Mr. Lynem:

And so they were supposed to stay there until the party could work out to get them out of the country or somewhere else. And so what actually happened was that, there was a lot of hijackings back then. People hijacking planes and going to other countries. And so there was two black guys who were considered revolutionaries who had hijacked a plane to go to Cuba. So people thought that was Arthur and Otis. And one of the guys who was there at the shooting thought it was because I'm sending

messages out there saying, we know you didn't do it. We can get you out. Don't go no where, keep your mouth shut. We're riding this out. And so they thought that's who it was that hijacked this place.

Mr. Lynem:

So they ended up saying, oh, now that they're gone, we can go down and get Daniel out of jail. So that's kind of how that happened. And so what happens is they were told to stay in the basement, Arthur and Otis. Arthur comes up on the main floor one day, he's going to make a sandwich up there. The maid walks in and sees him and of course there's pictures all over the newspaper and all over the news. The maid sees him and she calls the police and they go there and arrest him [inaudible 00:50:58].

Kevin:

So you get released. Arthur is arrested and is going through trial. What happens with the party after that?

Mr. Lynem:

After that, after I got out, we decided to close down the office here and I ended up moving up to Los Angeles to the office in Los Angeles, on 41st and Central up there.

Kevin:

And can you share with us that experience of going to Los Angeles, because this is when you really started to see some ... it really starts to ... you see cracks, right? Within the party.

Mr. Lynem:

I start to see some cracks. And I'm still teaching the Marx and Lenin and stuff. I'm into that big time. I thought Marx was brilliant and a genius. And the first crack that there really stood out to me, that was really a turning point for me was I was getting ready to teach a class and I'm reading Karl Marx' books, and I would do a chapter by chapter. And so I get to one chapter and the title of the chapter is, "There is no God". And I was stunned. I was literally stunned because I grew up always believing that there was a God. I actually made a mental assent to the gospel. I hadn't made a hard commitment to Christ, but I believed facts of the gospel, what the Bible said about Christ and salvation in him.

Mr. Lynem:

And so when I read this that I thought, no, this is just a tricky title for the chapter is. Surely Marx believes that there's an ... I thought ... There's a scripture in the Bible that says, "Only a fool says in his heart that there is not God." And I'm thinking, how can a man be so brilliant and yet be kind of so stupid to not believe that there's a God. And right to the day, I don't know why that bothered me. I wasn't interested in giving my life to the Lord. I wasn't interested in living for him. I was on my path to be a militant and a revolutionary, but it bothered me that that was the case.

Mr. Lynem:

So I thought, you know what, I'm going to blow this thing wide open. I'm going to go back to the office. Surely nobody ... We're all black people right in the office. And we got a tradition of church in our lives. So I'm thinking, they don't know this. If they knew this, they would not be following Karl Marx. So I go back to the office and I started saying this to people and I said, did you know? And everybody's going,

yeah, we knew it. And I'm like, what? And they're like, we're cool with it. And I was stunned. I was totally stunned at that particular point in time.

Kevin:

And so continue your experience there and what ... and how you left and how that ... You were very lucky when you left the party.

Mr. Lynem:

Yes, it was ... I look back. As a Christian, I hold really tightly to one of the attributes of God that I love, and that's that God is sovereign. And so when I look back, and that's the only time you can see the sovereignty of God is looking back, you can see him working in situations. You recognize later on that he is providentially working his wheel, moving people in certain paths to move me to a certain particular place in my life. And so I just remember that this thing bothered me about Karl Marx and about the party not believing that there was a guy. But probably two or three weeks later ... Now, the office I was in was at 41st and Central. That's the office I operated out of. And we had tons of weapons in that office.

Mr. Lynem:

We had ... I handled the bazooka. We had hand grenades. We had grenade launchers in this office. We had AKs. I mean, we were pretty much armed to the teeth. We were in the process of digging a tunnel underneath our office. We were digging a tunnel that would lead out to the sewer system so if the police ever showed up and we needed to get away, we can go through this tunnel system, but we had the maps where the tunnel system went all over LA. And so we were digging this tunnel under here. Big, it was a huge tunnel. It wasn't a small one. And so I knew everything that the office had, I knew everything that we had available in there. And so one day I walked out and I was going to go out and sell some newspapers, the Black Panther paper.

Mr. Lynem:

And I walked for a few blocks and I just thought, you know what? I can't do this anymore. And so I took the papers, I threw them in a dumpster. And I had a cousin who lived in LA. She probably lived about it ... It probably took me three hours to walk to her house from where she was. So I get to her house, she puts me up, and the next morning, she's cooking me breakfast. She wakes me up about four or five o'clock in the morning and she says, you got to see what's going on with TV. The office where I just left was, there was a huge raid and a gun battle going off in that office. Just a matter of hours from the point that I left that office. And I just remember sitting there watching the TV and I'm thinking, how come those guys are using the bazookas? How come they're not using the grenade launchers? That was my mindset.

Mr. Lynem:

And so I was thinking, if I was there ... And I actually regretted not being there at the time, that was my thinking. And I thought I just left there. But again, looking back, and where I'm at today and where I'm convinced of where the Lord has led me, that was God sovereignly moving in a way that took out of that situation at that particular point in time, and moved me into another situation, which kept me safe for later on. So yeah, that was ... And so they raided all over LA. They raided ... We had opened up an office on Normandy. I was instrumental in opening that office on Normandy. We had an office in Watts, 103rd over there in Watts.

Mr. Lynem:

And they did a coordinate raid on all these offices. The gun battle that on 41st and Central lasted about five hours. It was from that raid was the beginning of the concept of SWAT came out of that, out of that raid there. Matter of fact, there was a guy who was, I think he was the chief in Fullerton who was a lieutenant who was there at that raid in LA [inaudible 00:57:38].

Speaker 2:

I think they have footage of that at the Southern California Library Research Center. And [inaudible 00:57:43], they made them strip naked when they came out. And burned down the house.

Mr. Lynem:

Yeah, yeah. They made everybody strip naked. Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

Kevin:

You were also, when you were in LA, you also started to get a little bit ... the leadership. And you've shared with me a little bit about when you thought about Pratt. And if you wanted to share a little bit about that.

Mr. Lynem:

Yeah. There were some things that happened in the party that seemed a little shaky to me. Elmer Geronimo Pratt came out of Slawson. At the time before the Bloods and the Crips were formed, you had gangs that were named by streets. So you had the Hoover street gang, you had the Slawson street gang. And so Geronimo Pratt had four or five of his main guys that, and they came out the Slawson street gang and they came into the party as leaders in that party.

Mr. Lynem:

But there were things that were ... that I thought was a little bit funny and a shaky at the time. Because the guys who were really running the party, they got all the benefits. Okay? They were getting all the goodies and everybody else was working hard and they were doing their thing. They lived in nice houses. Everybody else was sleeping on the floor at the office.

Mr. Lynem:

And so I began to kind of question some of these things, what was going on. And the one thing that really stood out to me, there was a guy named [Walter Turay Pope00:29:03]. And so we were going to actually ambush these two detectives from LA. The plan was we were going to kill him. And so that was one of my strengths was planning and doing that kind of stuff. So I was, I could really work in that project to set this up. So I had went out and scanned these guys. I knew where they were. I knew what their habits were, set it up.

Mr. Lynem:

So of course I was going to lead this raid on these cops, to ambush these police officers. And so the night we were going to do it, I'm all ready to go. I'm all dressed and everything. And we were at an apartment where [Erica Huggins 00:59:42] and [Elaine Brown 00:59:42] were there. They both were pregnant at the time. And so I remember they ... I'm ready to go. They come to the apartment and they say, okay, let's

go. So I'm ready to go. And then he goes, oh, Daniel, you're not going to go now. Turay's going to take your place. I was upset-

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [01:00:04]

Mr. Lynem:

[Toray 01:00:00] is going to take your place. I was upset. Wait a minute, I'm doing all this work, I did all this planning and now you're going to say that I can't go. So I put up a big stink about it and then finally they say why that we want you to stay here with the ladies because we trust you with the ladies. We always, never leave the ladies alone. Well, probably about four hours later, they get a knock on the door. And the guy comes in, he says Toray is dead and, the other guy's in the hospital with a serious shotgun wound to his back. They didn't know how he got there. Well, then you don't think much about it, but of course now, and later on, I look back and I'm thinking there's God sovereignly working, intervening in my life to guide me away from that kind of danger.

Mr. Lynem:

So Toray gets killed in that. The issue was that when they get there with these guns, both of their guns jammed. I was the one who set the guns up, I was the one to clean them, I was the one that checked them again. So I knew that they should have worked. And so I remember the next day at the office when [inaudible 01:01:15] came into the office, there was kind of a smirk on his face, he goes, "Oh, a good brother just got killed. What y'all doing?" Type of thing. I just remember thinking, something's not right here. Something's kind of shaky here, in that situation. But I remember the story was Toray had been shot while he was laying on the ground, pleading for his life. And he shot between the eyes, the cop just stood over top of him and executed him.

Mr. Lynem:

And I remember going to the funeral and I remember as I walked past the casket, I stood there for, it seemed like a long time, looking in. And I saw me in there. I saw me in there. And he hit me. I said, that was supposed to be me. Not Toray. At the time, of course I didn't tie it to anything, but years later when I looked back again, I see that God was working in my life and moving things around sovereignly, positioning me in a position and really actually keeping me safe in those situations. So I became kind of discouraged with some of the things that was going on there. And so I think too that, some people were telling me, you better watch your back. There was suspicion. Geronimo had a habit of calling people snitches, everybody's a snitch and so on and so forth. And so, I mean, I really had no fear of that. So I look back and I think, me leaving there because I was upset that Karl Marx was an atheist. You know, it was all working together. God was working it all together for his purpose.

Kevin:

And [inaudible 01:02:55] also shared with me that LA was very different because, as you mentioned, Pratt came from this very thuggish background, and you started to see that, that whole 10 point thing, you didn't see that really implemented.

Mr. Lynem:

I didn't see that, because when I would go up North and I was up north a couple of times in San Francisco and Oakland. I saw the party function in the way that I pictured it to function. I saw the 10 point program being put in motion. I saw educational programs. I saw pro... Now I ran the Breakfast for

Children program in LA. We were feeding 60, 70 kids every morning for breakfast. And these were kids who literally were not eating breakfast before they went to school and they were having serious educational issues in terms of learning. And so they were kids that were really in the need. I worked in the community, gathering donations and working with the elderly and things like that. So I saw the party functioning, as I knew it was supposed to function when I was up North. But then down here, when I was in LA, it was a totally different kind of picture. It was more of a militant thing. You know, let's just get some shootouts going, kind of idea. That's why, I think that's what it was.

Kevin:

So we're going to, we'll move forward a little and talk about your experience of how you ended up getting into prison. And in some of the stuff, after you left the party and got into some really, you got into a really dark place, right?

Mr. Lynem:

Yeah. I got in a very dark place. I kind of was in a place of light, in the beginning, when I first left the party. I left the party, I just walked away and I ended up coming back to Santa Ana, just as militant as ever. I was now just an independent revolutionary, just doing my thing. And so I went to a function over in Santa Ana and it was during the election season. So at this function you had the DA in there and I was really offended. I said, "You know what? These white people don't come into the community until they win our votes." And here they are, coming in here just to get our votes, to get some photo ops. So I was very offended by that.

Mr. Lynem:

And so with the program, I stayed in the program, when the program kind of started up again, they of course asked for the pledge of allegiance. And so I was the only one of the building, I sat in the front row and I said, I'm not standing. So Kaps got nothing over here. Right? So I was very rebellious. So when that was over, I'm walking away and this guy, I heard this guy behind me saying, "Excuse me, excuse me." I turned around and I see this older white man walking and I'm going, what is this guy want with me? Well he walks up to me and he says, "Hi, my name's Lorin Grisette, I'm the mayor of the city of Santa Ana." And so I tell him my name and he gets excited and says, I've been looking forward to meeting you. And I'm thinking, "Does this guy know who I am?" I mean, I've been all over the news, I've been in the newspapers, on TV, in the news on this police situation. And I'm thinking, "What is with this guy?"

Mr. Lynem:

Lorin Grisette ended up being a man who had a tremendous impact on my life and influence on me. He was one of the most consistent, wonderful Christian men that I've ever known in my life. And he befriended me for the next 10 years and just, he just became my friend. He became friends with my parents. He had me at his house for dinner. He'd take me to these Christian breakfasts, and different functions and events. He shared the gospel with me one time. He invited me to his office, in city hall, and he gave me about a 15 minute presentation of the gospel. And after that, he really didn't say too much. He just mirrored Jesus Christ in his life. Just the way he lived, his consistency, his grace that he showed me. Cause I wasn't always nice to the guy, and he just stayed really consistent for about 10 years.

Kevin:

You had mentioned that you got into some rough times, drugs, stealing, things of that nature that that led to prison. So can you talk about that experience?

Mr. Lynem:

Yeah, after this time with Lorin Griset, I worked for the County of Orange. I was a mental health counselor. My major in college had been psychology. So I was working there as a therapist and doing that kind of work. And then I began to kind of move in a... I had two younger kids that I got custody of actually. But I just loved to party. I think if I'm going to get a PhD, let it be in party.

Mr. Lynem:

I wasn't much interested in anything else. So I just loved the party, and thinking back, I think, you know what, I'm trying to fill the void. I think everybody in life would just like to be happy. People say, "I just want to be happy." And so we look at different things, I think in life, "Well if I had this, this would make me happy. If I could do this, this would make me happy." Well, I was kind of on that journey, trying to be happy. I just wanted to be happy in life. And so that led me to... I thought, "Well, money will make me happy." And so I decided to become a drug dealer. And so I began to sell some drugs with a friend of mine here, I won't mention his name, but... Charles, Charles.

Kevin:

We'll save you for another day, Charles.

Mr. Lynem:

We go way back. We became really good friends from when we were about 15 years old, in high school, in class, and everything. But we were doing hair. He was a barber, I did cosmetology, and so we worked in the shop together, and we were doing drugs and everything. And so then you know, I really liked cocaine. I thought it was really good to me. So I would snort all this cocaine. And I hated the way it felt coming down. So I thought, "Well, you know what, I'll just snort a little heroin, to take the edge off the cocaine." And so eventually before I knew it, I'm strung out on the heroin and I couldn't get off of it. And I just began to pursue a career as a heroin addict. Which of course eventually led me, I had to commit crimes.

Mr. Lynem:

I did robberies. I did burglaries. I did a lot of different things to feed that habit. And I ended up eventually with about a \$200 a day heroin habit. All the things that happened, it was a lot, a lot of things that I did, but I think that if I had been caught and convicted for maybe 5% of the crimes that I actually committed, I'd be doing 60, 70 years, easy. But again, I have to look at, God has been really gracious to me, more than I could ever ask for, and imagine. And so I get arrested for a series of burglaries and they gave me six years in the state prison. And that was in, I got arrested in 1978.

Mr. Lynem:

And so from there, I ended up at Chino State Prison in April, 1979. And that is where, at this particular point in time, now my mother's praying for me. I got all these people that are coming to me, and my mother had a friend named [inaudible 01:11:06]. And so every time I would see [inaudible 01:11:11], she would sit down and look at me and she very softly say, "Michael, when are you going to give your life to Christ?" Every time I'd be like, "Oh my God." And so I'd be at my mom's house, pulling up in front



of the house, I'd see her, I'd run out the back door. I'd be like, I don't want to talk to [inaudible 01:11:29].

Mr. Lynem:

So it was at this particular point in time in April, I get to prison. I'm pretty broken at this particular point in time, and I was pretty lost. And so, I could really sense God was putting a calling on my life. I felt like I had been running from him for a long time and he just wasn't going to cut me any slack. So I went to this, I went to the chapel, and it was at that chapel service, that I just surrendered and just gave my life to Christ, at that particular time.

Kevin:

You shared with me a very fascinating story of riots that occurred in jail and you have just a clear memory of it and how you... Can you talk about that?

Mr. Lynem:

Yeah, that was pretty, that was fast. That was super natural kind of stuff. So when I get to the prison, I went to Chino and they ended up transferring me to Tehachapi, where I give them the bulk of my time up there. And so the Christians... In prison the racial politics are very, very thick and they're very, very clear. So at the time I was there, the white gang was the Aryan Brotherhood, the black gang was the BGF, or the Black Gorilla Family, then you had the Hispanic gang in Southern California was the Mexican Mafia, and in Northern California, they were called the Nuestra Familia Gang up there.

Mr. Lynem:

And so the racial politics were very, very heavy in prison. But the Christians... So they would call, "What car are you riding in?" I'm in white car, I'm in the black car. It was kind of the language. But the Christians, we had our own car. We were the Christians. And so nobody really messed with us or bothered us. If they caught somebody faking that they were Christians, well, they would do serious harm to them. They say we don't want to serve God, but you're not going to let you mess around, play with God in that situation. So one day we were on the yard and we knew that they'd been a riot on the other yard where I was at. And so you can get a sense of feeling the tension as things kind of begin to break.

Mr. Lynem:

And so I'm with some other Christian brothers, there's about four of us together. And so I said, "Let's pray, and then let's go inside cause it's getting pretty heavy here." So we get up to walk inside and I look across the yard and there's this black guy stumbling across the yard. He had been stabbed. And I just heard some of the black guys say, "They got Frank." And so they began to attack... In a prison riot, in a race riot, your skin becomes your uniform and that's just how it is. And so it doesn't matter if you were one of the good guys, if you were a gang member or not, your skin dictates your uniform. And so they just began to jump my guys on the yard. And so I hear a scuffle next to me. And one of the guys I was with, the Christian guy who was white, I turned around and they are like stomping him, it was about five guys and were just stomping him and I didn't even think about it.

Mr. Lynem:



I just stepped up and I walked forward. I just said, "Stop." I said, "You leave this man alone." Well, unbeknownst to me, that was unheard of in prison, in a race riot, you don't save the other guy's life in that situation. And so they actually stopped. I said, "Stop." They looked at me, I think they were so stunned. They were like, "Is this really is this guy doing this for real?" And so they took off running, and the guy, they got him off, got him to safety. And so later that night they locked everybody down. And so I had some guys that I knew, some other black guys, come down to my cell and he was trying to get me to go into protective custody. And he told me, he said, "Listen," he says, "They're going to put a contract out on you" He said, "It's going to be an open contract." And what that would mean is that anybody could fill that contract.

Mr. Lynem:

And he said, "You got young guys here are trying to build a reputation for themselves." He said, "So you don't know where it's going to come from." He said, "You know what, man, you're a good guy," he says, "I like you, you need to go into protective custody." And I told him, I said, "You know what, I just want to do what God wants me to do, what the Lord wants me to do." And so I said, "If that's what the Lord wants, me to go into protective custody, I will." I said, "If he wants me to walk the yard," I said, "I will." I said, "If he wants to take me home at this point in time," I said, "As a believer, I think we're in the classic win-win situation." If we live, we win because we get to live another day and serve God, and honor him. If we die, we get to go be with him for eternity. So, my thought is that that's a win-win.

Mr. Lynem:

So the next morning they opened the yard. And so I knew I had to make a choice in the decision. So I'm down praying. And I usually remember you, I'm asking God, now I wasn't that brave. So I did have a sense of fear. I did have a sense of fear. But the fear wasn't going to keep me from doing whatever God wanted me to do, I'll put it like that. So I remember my Bible was sitting on my bunk and I'm praying. And I look up and I come cross this scripture in Proverbs, it said, "When a man's ways please the Lord, he'll make even your enemies be at peace with you." And so it was at that point that I was convinced I had the answer from God. So I walked the yard. It wasn't all peaceful. I had guys doing this motion at me, doing the stabbing motion. I was threatened, surrounded a couple of times and threatened. But I just trusted the Lord in that. And so it was interesting in that about...

Mr. Lynem:

So nobody did anything to me, obviously I'm still here. One of the guys, who was the head of the BGFs, and this person came to me at nighttime, one time before they took us off the yard. And he said, "You know what?" He says, "I'm going to ask you a question." He said, "I want you to tell me the truth." He said, "Don't you dare lie to me." It can only be one of three things, he said, "Either you're really, really stupid," he said, "or something's mentally deranged with you," he says, "or this God you serve is really, really real." He says, "I want you to tell me which one it is." And I said, "It's the third one you said." I said, "The God I serve is really, really real." And he just said, "All right," and he turned around and walked away and that was it. Never saw him again. I think paroled out at some particular point in time.

Kevin:

So you just became this, you just went down this once you gave yourself to God, you've gone down this road.

Mr. Lynem:

Yes.

Kevin:

And how has this... Talk about your life today? You're probably the happiest than you've ever been, right?

Mr. Lynem:

I like to say living from Christ is like an adventure. I like to say that. But characters like Batman and those guys, they got nothing on adventure. We get all the action, and the drama, and the edge of your seat action, those kinds of things. But, from that point, I just began to get into my Bible, studying my Bible. Bible getting into me. I can look back and see, how my heart has changed, how my life has changed. Some of the things I've seen in myself now, I'm much more compassionate towards people. I love people. I'm a lot more patient, which I was very impatient when I was younger. I have more of a, just a desire to give to people.

Mr. Lynem:

I love working with young men. Right now God has put me in a position where I'm managing and helping with some Christian men in sober living homes. With a church over there, His Place Church, my new pastor, pastor Joe, right there. So it's a new family for me. I was at Kendrick Community Church for about five years and God moved me out of there. And so he's moved me over here and so it's like I've got a new family. And so I'm teaching Bible studies and working with the men one-on-one, which I enjoy doing. And just seeing God work and just do what he does.

Kevin:

And also coming in here and participating whenever I ask you, being open. He's helped work with some of the youth, with some of our programs-

Mr. Lynem:

Yeah, the high school.

Kevin:

They enjoy just picking your brain and just getting your understanding. So you're doing a lot.

Kevin:

Can you talk a little bit more about like, what's going on currently? You know, there's a lot of, the black lives movement going on, a lot of issues still within African-American community. So reflecting, you've done a lot of reflecting on your childhood and what do you see with that and how, what do you, I want to know your thoughts?

Mr. Lynem:

I started to really get interested, probably about three years ago, looking into the whole thing of racial reconciliation. And so I began to do research. I began to do reading and began to talk with people. And when I look at our current landscape today and I look at the political environment, and just how absolutely divisive it is, more partisan than I've ever seen in my life. But racially, being what I grew up and my experience growing up, I think that the division racially in this country is worse than I've ever

seen it in my life. It is worse and it is getting even worse on top of that. And I think the narratives that are created are very hateful. I see hypocrisy on both sides and it's like, nobody is talking to each other.

Mr. Lynem:

The concept of reconciliation first requires, I think, that people are willing to admit and acknowledge the truth. And I think you have to sit down across from people and listen to each other and acknowledge the truth, and develop relationships in order to work through things. It doesn't mean, I think that people are going to agree on everything, but I think it does mean that you develop an understanding and therefore you develop respect, and then I think you can begin to talk about reconciliation. Reconciliation isn't necessarily we agree on everything, but it's just a matter of relating to people, and treating... One of my things about politics, and I'll tell you this right here, my values put me in the campus conservative. I'm very conservative on the social issues, and I'm fairly conservative on the economic issues, but I always say this, that I didn't leave a party to become conservative.

Mr. Lynem:

When I think back on my values throughout my life, those have always been my values. But I also like to say that politics is a very, very, very tiny, tiny part of my thinking in my heart. Because my values take me way, way beyond politics, to how you treat people. That's really important to me, is how you treat people. So, I may come down on some issues, I've had people tell me, "You're not a real conservative, you're a liberal, you're at the democratic plantation." That whole narrative there, but that's kind of my thought. So my thinking in that, as a Christian, how do I approach it and how do I speak it into the culture and into the situation? I speak into it with the gospel. So my question is always to me, is that, here's the situation, how do I apply the word of God to that situation? how do I react? How do I honor and glorify God in my life, by how I speak into that situation?

Mr. Lynem:

So I'm big on relationships, and building relationships with people, and listening. One of the things I've learned over the years is, there's a scripture that says, be slow to speak and quick to listen. I put this thing on my Facebook page, a meme that says, how does it go? It says that, how do you know if a man is spiritual? You don't tell a man is spiritual by the way he speaks. You can tell a man is spiritual by the way he bridleth his tongue. And so I think that the tongue can get us in all kinds of trouble, when I was growing up, my tongue kept me in trouble. The black panther, when I was in school, and, whenever I got in trouble, I could always be like, "Shut up. Get under control." So, I think we need to listen to people, I think as a Christian, we need to, we need to love people, we need to just take people right where they're at. So I see a lot of, a lot of issues and problems. I think it's not good.

Mr. Lynem:

And so this whole racial thing, I think if it continues as it is, that part of it cannot end well. But I also see that God is doing a work. God always has a remnant, of faithful believers, he's always raising up an army of people, and God is not a respecter of person, so he's not considering, these are my black believers, these are my white believers, type of thing. All God's people, I look at all God's people are my people. And so I think that I see people being ready. I see young people stepping up, I see young black men getting educated, they're getting equipped, they're getting trained, they're planting churches. And we're seeing more of multi-ethnic situations. We see people reaching across, but those are the things you don't see and hear and read about in the media. They're pushing a whole nother agenda, but God is working in the midst of that. So that gives me hope and it encourages me, to go forward.

Kevin:

Well, I've asked you a lot of questions. I want to kind of leave you with some last parting thoughts, if you want to say anything. And then I want to really kind of open it up to anyone who might have some questions for you. Anything else you want to say?

Mr. Lynem:

Well, not at this point in time. I've done a lot of talking.

Mr. Lynem:

Yes?

Speaker 3:

I'll try not to make it long. My name's David Moya. I'm an ex [inaudible 01:27:29]. And I remember when the Drawbridge first started, they utilize a lot of the concepts of the Black Panther party. And one of the books that I did read a lot when I first started my activism was the Black Panther party, and how it was originated and how it started, and some of the stuff. How did the concept of Eldridge Cleaver and Huey Newton's political process affect, over here, the black Panther party awards in Orange County? And a lot of the stuff that you were saying too about LA versus Orange County and Oakland, same thing with the [inaudible 01:28:08], East LA versus Orange County. They could organize over there, but they can't organize over here because it's a whole completely different animal over here. But anyway, how did Eldridge Cleaver's big fiasco affect the black Panther party over here?

Mr. Lynem:

It didn't affect us here in orange County, but it did affected in LA, and up North, because Eldridge Cleaver was brought in as the minister information for the party. Eldridge Cleaver's agenda was more militant. He wanted a real blood and gush revolution. Let's shoot it out and over throw the government, kind of thing. So he was more militant. Bobby Seal was more... Bobby Seal began to move the party towards more traditional politics. He actually ran for mayor of Oakland and came fairly close to winning. Elaine Brown, ran for city council and she came close to winning. But you had these two factions. And so Geronimo was meeting with Eldridge Cleaver, that was his faction. And so you had kind of a divide of the party, with Huey Newton too. So it affected the party, kind of on the national level, but it didn't affect us here in Orange County.

Speaker 3:

But just, Eldridge Cleaver got arrested without any clothes on.

Mr. Lynem:

Yeah.

Speaker 3:

Got to fight.

Mr. Lynem:

Yes.

Speaker 3:

So does...

Mr. Lynem:

Sometimes you'd rather live and be naked in the street. I think that's kind of what it was.

Speaker 4:

First off, thank you for being here. Thank you for your time and your stories and reflections. Going back a little bit to your youth and growing up in little Texas. Back then, as much as the black community was limited to where you could live, you had to go to similar schools where there was more integration. There was one high school at the time, Santa Ana High School. And my question is, did-

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:30:04]

Speaker 4:

... Santa Ana High School. And my question is did it have any impact in the community once they built Valley High School in the late 50s, where that was where most of the black community went, where Santa Ana was more of the white school, Valley became the black. How did that affect the community and maybe its pride?

Mr. Lynem:

Well, I think that what happened [inaudible 01:30:24] the necessity for Santa Ana Valley High School was because they begin to build that community up over there. And so, how Little Texas got its name was that you had a lot of black people moving from Texas into that community. So, that kind of became the black community in Santa Ana, and then on the other side of Santa Ana, matter of fact, me and pastor was having lunch, he grew up just on the other side of-

Speaker 5:

[Lake 01:30:50] McFadden.

Mr. Lynem:

... Of McFadden, yes. We had a great conversation, too. A lot of things we kind of experienced, I think, together. And so, Santa Ana Valley was the school that was really integrated. And it wasn't just integrated with just the different races, but it was integrated socially, so I went to Santa Ana High School, which, it was very cut and dry. There's white over here. It was just a handful of us, and you guys remember this. We used to gather in the hallway in the morning, just little section of us right here, kind of bound together. So, there was no socializing there.

Mr. Lynem:

So, I get kicked out of Santa Ana High, and they send me to Valley, and I get over there, and people are partying together. You've got white people and black people and Mexicans partying together.

Mr. Lynem:

I'm like, "Dude, I don't know. Maybe I died and went to heaven. This is unique here," kind of thing, but I think the community really kind of took Valley as, "This is our school." And so, I think they had a lot of pride in that. You had a lot of good athletes that came out of Santa Ana Valley at the time.

Speaker 4:

Gary Templeton.

Mr. Lynem:

Yeah, Gary Templeton. You had-

Speaker 5:

Myron White.

Mr. Lynem:

... Gene Kelly. Myron White, yeah. Myron White.

Speaker 4:

Curtis Martin. [crosstalk 01:32:11].

Mr. Lynem:

Yeah. Santa Ana. He came out of Santa Ana. [crosstalk 01:32:24].

Speaker 6:

I know you said you're somewhat conservative now, but what do you think today's leftists can learn from the Black Panthers?

Mr. Lynem:

Oh wow, that's a good question. I think maybe just off the top of my head, maybe a little bit more focused on working in the community, and this is what I tell my conservative friends. I have a number of conservative friends, and because where I was going to church was very politically conservative. And so, some of my white friends that I have, they said, "Daniel, what can we do to speak into that community?" And so, my answer is always, "Build relationships." If you want to influence people and convince people, you need to get to know them. People need to believe that you care about them. And so, I would say that... Listen, I think both sides are kind of crazy. I think there's a little madness going on on both sides, and I know that, I believe this, that a lot of what we're hearing that's the craziness is media driven.

Mr. Lynem:

But I mean, a lot of my friends are Democrats and liberals, and they're good people. They're responsible people. They're good parents and everything. So, I think you've got to be careful of the narrative. And I think that starts. I like that Michael Jackson, that great theologian, Michael Jackson. And he says, "You know what? It starts with the man in the mirror." So, I tell people, "Who you see in the mirror starts with you. What can I do myself to make a difference?" And so, that's what I think they can probably do. And that's why in the Black Panther party, we did a lot of one on one. We did training for the different reasons, but I think that's what it is. Building relationships, real relationships. Did that?

Speaker 5:

I've got two questions. I know you were based in Southern California, but out of Chicago a year before he died, tragically, Fred Hampton had come down here, did you ever get a chance to meet him?  
[crosstalk 01:34:37] briefly?

Mr. Lynem:

Yeah. I didn't get a chance to meet Fred Hampton. Yeah, that was a very tragic, very sad, very tragic situation.

Speaker 5:

Secondly, you had mentioned Elmer Geronimo Pratt, and I didn't know that there was some questions about what had happened to your friends who had been killed, but the irony is though that he himself spent 27 years in prison-

Mr. Lynem:

Absolutely.

Speaker 5:

... For a crime that was later attributed to somebody else.

Mr. Lynem:

Yeah, but he didn't do. He was definitely a victim in that sense. And matter of fact, when Elmer, when he got out, I got a couple of telephone calls from a couple of friends of his that reached out to me, and he wanted to want to meet with me. And we talked about having lunch together, but we never made it happen. He ended up moving to Africa. Can't remember where it was in Africa he moved to, but I think he ended up getting cancer and dying. Yeah. He was over there where Stokely Carmichael was living.

Speaker 7:

Tanzania.

Mr. Lynem:

Where was it?

Speaker 7:

Tanzania.

Mr. Lynem:

Tanzania, yeah.

Speaker 7:

He died in 2011.

Mr. Lynem:

Yeah. Yeah, he did. [crosstalk 01:35:45]

Speaker 7:

Did you get to see him when he was [crosstalk 01:35:47]

Mr. Lynem:

When he got out, I didn't get a chance to see him when he got out. I wanted to see him. I mean, look, now, listen, I'm living in Christ. I wanted to share that with him. I wanted to share the Gospel with him and other people from my past.

Speaker 8:

I got a lot of my faith after my mom died. She actually came to me in [inaudible 01:36:09]. Have you ever had those kinds of experience, where you feel someone who's passed on has come to you?

Mr. Lynem:

I've never had the experience where I thought somebody has come to me. You know what? Both my mom and dad passed away, and I've seen them in dreams, but I've never really had anybody that's passed on to speak to me, so to speak.

Speaker 8:

Mine comes monthly. A lot. [inaudible 01:36:43]

Kevin:

Anyone?

Speaker 9:

You spoke about the police raids and the shoot outs. And that was one thing that undermined the Panthers as well, was all of the other [inaudible 01:36:54] organizations, but more insidious than that was the organized effort and the systematic effort on behalf of the government and law enforcement, COINTELPRO for example, to undermine these organizations, to infiltrate them. And what happened, one of the things that we experienced at that time as a student activist, was a sense of paranoia that existed within the organizations, because you didn't know who to trust, because the person that could be going to meetings with you, and you could hang out with, you turn around the next day, and you find out they're working undercover for LAPD or the FBI or any of these other organizations. Can you speak a little bit about that?

Mr. Lynem:

Yeah. There was this interesting, when I started going to Kindred over here, I wasn't there for a short period of time. There was an Asian man there, that we started to talking. And he had been a Christian. Come to find out that when he found out I'd been in the Black Panther party, we were close to around the same age. He had been in the CIA at that particular point in time. And so, we talked about 41st and Central, and we talked about the Black Panthers, and we talked about that whole thing. And he said, "I bet we were in that office at the same time."

Mr. Lynem:



So, now I'm trying to remember him. I'm thinking [inaudible 01:38:32]. So, what he told me was that he would always say, he says, "The Black Panthers turned me." And what he meant was that, he says, "I was working for the CIA." He said, "I had been sent in undercover to gain information from the party." And he said, "When I began to walk around the neighborhood with you guys and other people there," he said, "I began to see what was going on in this neighborhood was the same thing I experienced as an Asian growing up in my community, the same kind of police profiling and those kinds of things." And so, he said it moved him in such a way that he decided that, so he became a double agent.

Mr. Lynem:

So, he told me. We're standing, talking at church when he goes, "Yeah." He says, "The Panthers turned me," he said. So, he's feeding his supervisor one thing. And he's feeding the party some other things like this here, kind of at the same time. But yeah, you're absolutely right. J Edgar Hoover actually had a special unit designed. I was picked up a couple of times by FBI, just snatched off the street, like you see in the movies. They just opened the door and throw you in the car, take you down to this underground thing and so on and so forth. Yeah, there was very much that.

Speaker 3:

That's what happened with the Berets, also. There was a lot of set up where they had an officer actually become a Brown Beret, who actually funded and gave a lot of this stuff to the Berets, so that way, they could get busted. And then encountered several times strange individuals, and I was involved in a situation in Colorado, and I come back the next day. And this gentleman's telling me about the whole situation. He was found to be an undercover cop, so there was in the movements of the Black Panther party, the Chicano movement, and even with the student nonviolent or the anti war movement, there was a time there was a lot of infiltration. Another question that I do have, do you feel that the drugs that were brought in, because you were in a drug situation, and I've seen it too in the barrios [inaudible 01:40:36]. Do you feel that the CIA or the police intentionally put a lot of the drugs, especially cocaine, into the communities?

Mr. Lynem:

That's interesting, because... Carol Anderson wrote a book called White Rage, and one of the things she goes over, she brings in a lot of documentations. During the Reagan administration and that whole Iran Contra affair, that the CIA needed to raise money to fund the rebels in the Iran Contra, but yeah. And so, they actually introduced drugs, cocaine, into South Central LA.

Speaker 7:

Yes, they did.

Mr. Lynem:

And so, out of that was the birth of the Bloods and Crips, because the Bloods and the Crips-

Speaker 3:

And crack cocaine.

Mr. Lynem:

... And yeah, well, crack cocaine was after my time, which I'm very thankful for, because I would have been on it. But yeah, from my research and what I've looked at it is that the evidence, factual evidence, seems to point that the CIA didn't introduce intentionally into South Central Los Angeles-

Speaker 3:

East LA.

Mr. Lynem:

... Yeah, in East LA area, yeah, up in Los Angeles. They did do that. Absolutely, yeah.

Speaker 4:

From your days in the Black Panther party or even right now, what do you look for in someone who might be an ally to you, who might not be marginalized or who might benefit from the system that we have right now?

Mr. Lynem:

In terms of [inaudible 01:42:12]

Speaker 4:

Just, I guess what's your definition of someone who might be an ally to the Black Panther party who might not be African American?

Mr. Lynem:

You mean, what does that person look like to me?

Speaker 4:

No, no, no. What kind of qualities, what kind of certain personality, I guess?

Mr. Lynem:

Well, you know what? Listen, as a Christian, I have different allies. There is no one particular, kind of, how do I determine who's an ally, type of thing. People who come to me who are real, real people, who show a compassion and caring, and I can determine that they're really concerned about me and care for me, and they can become my friend, then they can be my ally. And not only that. I can be their ally. Depending on the situation, I can be the ally for other people as well as them for me. Does that? Did I [crosstalk 01:43:20]

Speaker 4:

Yeah. I mean, I didn't really expect any particular sort of answer.

Mr. Lynem:

Okay.

Speaker 10:

I have something. Hi Michael.

Mr. Lynem:

Hey.

Speaker 10:

I want to say Wakanda Forever. Always clowning. But I do have, I wrote a whole list of stuff. Where is Arthur League and Odis Grimes [crosstalk 01:43:43]

Mr. Lynem:

Arthur League, he's still up north. I talked to him, it's been about 10 years ago, since the last time I talked to him, but he's working. He's still doing community work, and he's involved with helping guys in prison, and as they get out of prison. That's kind of what he's doing. Odis Grimes passed away. Trying to think when he passed away. It's been a number of years ago. Yeah, he passed away.

Speaker 10:

Yes, and another one. What was your experience coming off from heroin?

Mr. Lynem:

Oh. Picture the flu times 10. Because I was in the county jail, so I had to kick cold turkey. It was one thing I never want to experience again. I don't think I've had my body experience the trauma, from the detox and from the heroin, cold, that I don't think I'd ever want to experience it. It was terrible. Yeah, it was terrible.

Speaker 10:

And another thing too, looking at some of the movies that have come about what the Black Panther movement and Detroit, those types of movies. And when I saw them, I was so disturbing. What is your take on those movies?

Mr. Lynem:

Actually, I haven't watched either of those movies.

Speaker 10:

What have you seen?

Mr. Lynem:

There was one documentary that came out. I just read some reviews on it. I know Elaine Brown didn't like it. A lot of other people didn't like that particular documentary. They didn't think it wasn't as accurate, but I haven't had the chance or the time to watch some of the other ones, though.

Speaker 10:

Yeah. And, well, from my view, how many people have seen those movies?

Speaker 7:

Name the movies.

Speaker 10:

Detroit and Black Panther. And from my viewpoint, there's racism at its best as to where they are trying to paint a very ugly picture of accounts, as far as the Black Panther movement. Growing up as a young person, I looked at the Panther movement as they were militants. They were violent. They were against society. And after of course, when you start becoming educated, I was like, "Wow. Racism at its best in America." The people were basically policing their communities, and what government police went in and purposely...

Kevin:

One more over here. And then we'll wrap it up. And if you want to stay and talk, I know we'll probably be here for a little longer, so...

Speaker 11:

Hi. When I saw that you were coming, I had to be here. I was like, "Wow." But my memory of the Black Panthers was all good. As a young girl living in Los Angeles, born and raised, I do remember the Black Panthers when they started, got together in Los Angeles, and basically it was to protect the women and children of the black community. And I remember how they protected us. And I remember that WLCAC on 120th Street. 120th and Central Avenue. And it is still there today. A lot of people don't realize, but what they call WIC now, that was from the Black Panther party.

Mr. Lynem:

Yes, yeah.

Speaker 11:

They started that program for the black community, because the government had started taking the parents, separating them by putting the husbands in jail. And so, a lot of the mothers were left to raise their children alone because of what was being done. And I remember when the drugs were brought into our community, and it was what they called a social problem, but once it got to their community in Beverly Hills, then it became a national problem.

Speaker 11:

The WLCAC, the Black Panthers there, they had built, there was a grocery store, where the women could go and get free groceries if they did not have any money. They also started, the Black Panthers, also started the summer work program for the black community, for the young children, ages 13 and up. The afterschool program came from the Black Panthers, so that the parents that had to work, both of my parents worked, my mom and dad entrepreneurs. My father was the very first black person to own a business in Burbank, California. That was at a time, in 1964, when he opened that business, that if you were black, you could work there, but you had to be off the street before dark.

Speaker 11:

But they didn't bother my father. He was the very first business there, auto mechanic business there. And my mom was a hairdresser and a seamstress. She owned a sewing shop and beauty shop. Those were her entrepreneurisms by trade. And my dad owned his auto mechanic shop. That was by trade as well.

Speaker 11:

And 41st Street, I remember the office, because my church is right around the corner, and it still stands there today, my church. There on Central Avenue, that's a historical area there. That's the jazz area for Los Angeles, California. And it is still there today. And they put up maybe even in different places, they placed it, and let you know that that is a historical area there now.

Speaker 11:

And the WLCAC still stands. It is standing there today, and it is still owned by the original owners. The father has passed away, but the son has taken over. And if you go there on 120th and Central Avenue, they have put a museum inside of the WLCAC that takes you through, when you start out, it takes you through, it's like an area that is dark, and it will be like the woods, with the people running from the KKK and all of that. But then you go in there, and it's all of this history. So much history in there, from the lunch counters to Martin Luther King, to all of the cartoons that they made of us with the black face and all of that type of stuff.

Speaker 11:

They even have from slavery, the thing that was put around the neck that had spikes going out. They have a lot of original stuff in there, and they also, my favorite part, my favorite part, was the Black Panther portion of it. It is absolutely amazing. And I would implore anybody that wants to know a little more, and you can't travel to Washington DC. Another place that I went to the African American Museum there that was just out of this world, amazing. And can't go there, that far, go to 120th and Central Avenue.

Mr. Lynem:

All right. Thank you for sharing that.

Kevin:

Thank you everyone. Lamb, do you want to say something?

Lamb:

Yeah. I was a cop. It all started in [inaudible 01:53:43] Within six months [inaudible 01:53:52] look it up for now. The title of the book, Badge of Color, Breaking the Silence. You wouldn't believe what... That's all. You were right.

Speaker 3:

Yeah. But has it changed?

Speaker 7:

No.

Speaker 10:

No.

Speaker 7:

It's worse.

Speaker 3:

How do we do that?

Lamb:

It hasn't changed.

Speaker 3:

It has not changed.

Lamb:

But please, please get this book.

Kevin:

So, we'll do a program here with Lamb once the book comes out, so if you want to put your name on our sign in sheet, we'll put you on our mailing list, and you'll be informed when we have that. So, yeah, Lamb's story is incredible. I've got a chance to know Lamb over the past few years as well, but we thank you for-

Speaker 3:

No, I was going to say, Mr. Lynem, two things. One is, we're not Hispanic. We're Latinos or Chicanos. Two... So, we don't like the word, "Hispanic." Second thing is if you want to see a beautiful portrait of Mr. Corbin, myself and my partner over here, Mr. Camacho, we're muralists. We're artists. You'll see his portrait on the wall over here done by a young 17 year old Vietnamese student. Perfect, beautiful drawing or painting of it. It's on the back wall on the mural. I can't see it right now. It's dark, but if you ever come by here during the day, go take a look at that mural. We do plan to have a fantastic unveiling possibly in June.

Kevin:

... It's June 7th.

Speaker 3:

June 7th.

Kevin:

June 7th is going to be our mural unveiling.

Speaker 3:

You'll see Mr. Corbin's face right up there.

Mr. Lynem:

Okay, thank you.

Lamb:

I have one more thing to say. I was the person of color to be hired in Orange County. You can guess what I saw.

Speaker 7:

Oh, yeah.

Lamb:

Read the book.

Kevin:

I want to [inaudible 01:55:58] for a second. A few weeks ago, we had a rain out for one of our other programs, so it got postponed to March 7th. So, Thursday, March 7th, we'll have our next program. It's going to be with Mr. WASH Fulton Washington, who was an artist who was wrongly convicted, served 23 years in prison. And while in prison, he taught himself how to draw. And it was because of his drawing that he was released from prison. So, he's going to be doing an art demonstration here. We're going to show his mini doc, and we're going to be Q and A with him. So, March 7th, if you want to come, or like I said, just write your name on our list, and we'll get you on our list there, and you'll get... Thank you for coming.

Kevin:

Thanks for coming.

Kevin:

[crosstalk 01:56:54]

Speaker 12:

I met this woman. She now lives in LA, and she's up, she's focusing on the lives of Koreans, but she's originally from Missouri. [inaudible 01:58:27] Korean.

Speaker 13:

How can we get that book?

Speaker 12:

It's called Badge of Honor. And we're doing an event for him at Cal State. I will ask them to promote it here. He has his own website. His name is Harlen, with an E. H-A-R.

Speaker 13:

H-A-R.

Speaker 12:

L-E-N.

Speaker 13:

L-E-N.

Speaker 12:

The last name is Lambert.

Speaker 13:

L-A-M.

Speaker 12:

B-E-R-T. He saved three children from a burning building. And the next day, the headline for the Orange County paper was, "It's hard to be a hero when you're a nigger cop."

Speaker 13:

Oh, really? Wow.

Speaker 12:

1970. And the kids found it.

Speaker 13:

Oh, really? Wow.

Speaker 12:

Yeah.

Speaker 13:

So, you're involved-

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:59:13]