

Interviewer (main):

Thank you. I want to begin by thanking you, Mr. McAllister, for agreeing to be interviewed today.

Walter James Morris:

Morris.

Interviewer (main):

Morris. I already messed up. You can tell I've got no brain today. Mr. Morris. Well, there you go. You can shoot me already. Now I'm going to be feeling like an idiot.

Mr. Morris, you can until I've got my names mixed up and I'm not even here. So I am going to really thank you for being present and pulling me back into reality about who you are.

I'm here because your history is valuable to me. I'm from Fullerton. I went to Nicolas Junior High School at Golden Hill. And then I was sent to a convent for high school.

So we can just tell you about that later, the X-rated version. None. There's no X-rated version. It was a convent. I usually ask my interviewees to begin by telling us your name. If you were named after anyone else, if you have a nickname, if there's anything significant to your name.

Walter James Morris:

No, my name is Walter James Morris and my oldest son, Walter James Morris, Jr. And my understanding is my father had... There were seven boys and five girls so I was named after one of his uncles. I mean, one of my uncles, Walter. That's all I know.

Interviewer (main):

Where were you born and in what year?

Walter James Morris:

Fullerton, California, 1939.

Interviewer (main):

Where were you born? Where exactly? In a hospital?

Walter James Morris:

Yeah, a hospital.

Interviewer (main):

Which hospital?

Walter James Morris:

Which is currently now, UCI. Back then, it was the Orange County Hospital.

Interviewer (main):

Wow. What schools did you attend?

Walter James Morris:

Maple Elementary, Wilshire Junior High, Fullerton High School, Fullerton College, and Cal State Fullerton.

Interviewer (main):

Okay. I'm going to ask them to ask you some questions, too.

Victoria:

Joe?

Joe:

So I'm curious. Basketball career. Where'd you start? Where'd it end up?

Walter James Morris:

No, those are all my sons, those trophies and pictures of them.

Joe:

You didn't play yourself?

Walter James Morris:

Pardon?

Joe:

You didn't play yourself?

Walter James Morris:

Yeah, I played in high school.

Joe:

Okay.

Walter James Morris:

And I played at the Fullerton Boys Club when they... I think that was 1950 something. They organized that boy club and me and some of my neighborhood friends, we joined and we played on the basketball team now there, too. At Fullerton, I played football, ran a little track.

Interviewer (main):

When did you start engaging in sports?

Walter James Morris:

Well, my friends and I, we always played... They didn't have what... When we were growing up, there was no little league and there was no Pop Warner. So we just played in...

Interviewer (main):

Unorganized teams.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah and the park. And then when we got to, I think the first organized teams, we played on with a junior high school, at Wilshire Junior High and then on up through Fullerton.

Interviewer (main):

You know, Janine Farquhar says Wilshire Junior High School is the best. Do you believe that?

Walter James Morris:

Well, yeah. I'm a graduate of Wilshire Junior High.

Interviewer (main):

Tell me about that school. It's so beautiful.

Walter James Morris:

It was a great school. I'm trying to think. Let's see. At the time I went there, there was no Parks Junior High. Nicolas wasn't around. And I don't even think Ladera Vista was around. Those three youth...

Wilshire was the only junior high in town, like Fullerton High was the only high school. And my sophomore year, I think La Habra High opened. So the students broke off, went there. Then my junior year, Buena Park High opened. So our school got split twice in the four years I was there.

Interviewer (main):

That's a huge commute.

Walter James Morris:

What's that?

Interviewer (main):

To Buena Park.

Walter James Morris:

Oh Buena Park's just down the road a few minutes.

Interviewer (main):

Yes.

Walter James Morris:

But we had a lot of kids from Buena Park and all that come to Fullerton and the La Habra kids came to Fullerton and we had a big student body then. Even after they broke us off twice, my graduating class was 500, which is a lot of students.

Victoria:

Wow.

Interviewer (main):

Yes, it is.

Walter James Morris:

They broke off twice for those two other high schools.

Interviewer (main):

Do you remember where the Duley Ranch was? Duggan Ranch? The Farquhars told-

Walter James Morris:

Oh, I know who you're talking about. Duggan. The name was Jim Brown.

Interviewer (main):

Okay. Do you know where their ranch was located?

Walter James Morris:

It wasn't a ranch, but he had a lot of property on West Valencia between Gilbert and Magnolia. He owned a lot of property on the right hand side of the street there because...

In the summertime, my buddies and I worked for him. He grew all kind of vegetables and stuff, planted everything. He grew cotton. Everything. So we worked in the summer for him. We plant it, irrigate it, picked it. And on Saturdays, he would load off his truck with all the vegetables and stuff, and go to Los Angeles and sell them, off of his truck.

Interviewer (main):

Wow.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. His name was Jim Brown. We all called him Duggan.

Interviewer (main):

What was he like?

Walter James Morris:

Oh, he was a nice guy. He was from Georgia and he loved baseball because I think he played some in the old Negro leagues. And he would go to the World Series every year.

Interviewer (main):

So he was black.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah, he was a black guy.

Interviewer (main):

I was under the impression he was white this whole time.

Walter James Morris:

No, no, no. Duggan. Yeah, that's Duggan's deal.

Interviewer (main):

Wow.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. He owned a lot of property. If you go down there now, there's apartments, there's Pacific Drive Elementary School. None of that was there when I was there.

He had most of the property on the right hand side and then there the big chicken ranch out there because we would go, collect the fertilizer, walk down the rows of the thing, scoop it up in a wheelbarrow, throw it on a truck.

And this was one of the places we took it because this was an orange grove until about '56. So we would fertilize his orange grove. One of the worst jobs I ever had in my life, walking behind that truck and... You're pitching fertilizer and you're walking into spider webs in the orange grove. Yeah. This was all orange grove.

Interviewer (main):

That says a lot about people who do that work today, too, how hard it is.

Walter James Morris:

Oh yeah. I mean, we worked for him and it was like 25 cents an hour.

Interviewer (main):

I did a history in Riverside of Citrus and the Mexican kids who picked up the fruit that was on the ground, they're called ratas, rats to grab all the fruit they could save.

Walter James Morris:

They grab all the stuff on the ground. Yeah. That's one thing I never did. I didn't pick oranges. A lot of my buddies did, but I wasn't getting up that early to pick.

You had to get up three or four o'clock in the morning, get on the truck and go to all these outline places. That's one thing I did not do. I had a lot of little jobs, but that's one I didn't... Got into.

Interviewer (main):

Yeah.

Walter James Morris:

Duggan, as you guys call, he was a very nice man. He hired a bunch of us during the summer. But one thing, we would ride our bikes out to his house. Wait until he came outside, then he'd tell us what we had to do that day. And we'd mark down our hours at the end of the day. So come Friday, it's payday and we'd go in there.

He'd say, "What? How many hours you all had today?" I says, "Well, Mr. Duggan, we had 45 to show" and he'd laugh. "No, no, no." He never paid us for the right hours.

Victoria:

Oh, my gosh.

Walter James Morris:

But hey, he was cool because we still had money. And we were just eighth grade, ninth grade, and we had money in our pocket so...

Interviewer (main):

But it shows us, you know-

Walter James Morris:

But every night, when we got off work, he made us go out there and pick all the vegetables and bring them home to our mothers and all that. So we had fresh, garden, growing vegetables, which we planted, irrigated on it. We took home bags of vegetables every night.

Interviewer (main):

Do you still farm? Do you still... Do you have a garden?

Walter James Morris:

No, no, no. I just did that while going to schools for some summer money.

Interviewer (main):

Oh, because I love gardening and it's actually a divorce issue with me and my husband because his tortoise likes to eat everything I plant.

Walter James Morris:

Oh. No, I never had a garden or anything like that. Garden.

Interviewer (main):

No, I planted succulents one summer and it was like dessert.

Walter James Morris:

Oh. Yeah. No, he was a good guy. We worked for him every summer, like I say, take home big bags of... We eat fresh vegetables every night. He just... His hours and our hours didn't agree.

Interviewer (main):

Farmer's hours are hard.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. His hours are... He'd say, no, we didn't work that many hours so what the heck? He paid us what he [inaudible 00:08:54]

Interviewer (main):

Do you want to do the next question?

Joe:

Oh yeah, I just have another question about the Duggan Ranches. Do you know how long in business he was for?

Walter James Morris:

Oh God, he owned that property forever. I can't recall how many years, but I know he had a... And the school kept wanting to buy some of the property and he kept selling little chunks of it where the elementary school is.

And then he had some back surgery that left him paralyzed, but he had... Did that farming, as you call it, for years because I was a little guy until on up through high school and all that, he owned that property out there. So he started selling little chunks.

Joe:

And was that just Fullerton kids that would come work for him or did he pull from all over [crosstalk 00:09:43]

Walter James Morris:

Not Fullerton, but the neighborhood guys, me and my buddy, [inaudible 00:09:46], the Owens, McCoys.

Interviewer (main):

And he lived where he farmed that's-

Walter James Morris:

Yeah, he had a home right there where he farmed.

Joe:

Okay.

Interviewer (main):

Victoria?

Victoria:

Yeah. I see a couple pictures of family members that maybe served for our country, right behind you, or maybe one was you. I just want to know.

Walter James Morris:

Okay. That's me right there.

Victoria:

That's you?

Walter James Morris:

Army.

Victoria:

That's awesome.

Walter James Morris:

And that's my oldest son over there. He was Army and we were both stationed in Germany.

Victoria:

Oh, in Germany?

Walter James Morris:

Yeah.

Victoria:

That's super cool. I'm a quarter German. That's really cool. But would you guys... How was your experience with the Army?

Walter James Morris:

I like the Army. Before going to Germany and some of the other bases before I went to Germany, I hadn't been out of Fullerton that much.

Victoria:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Walter James Morris:

And before going into the Army, my interactions with other blacks was practically Neil, just the guys I grew up with. Where in the Army, you have a preponderance of black guys in there.

And back then... I mean, we all lived in integrated barracks but when we went to eat in the mess hall, the blacks always sat together. The white always sat together and same in the movie theater. I went in in 1960, '60 to '62.

Interviewer (main):

Oh, my goodness.

Walter James Morris:

So it was still like that, a lot of racial prejudice-

Interviewer (main):

Plus, there's a behavior you learn and you don't want to get killed for breaking unspoken rules.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. I can remember, I was about ready to rotate home. And when you're ready to rotate home, the commanding officer calls you to the office, try to get you to re-up. So I go in his office and I salute.

He tells me, "Stand at ease," and then first thing he says, he asks me, he says, "Where are you from, Art? And I said, "I'm from California, sir." And he says, "You don't have it as bad as the other boys" and I said, "Who are you referring to, the other boys?"

And he said, "You know, Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama." I said, "No, I'm from a little place called Fullerton, California. I come from a two parent home. Parents own their home there and that's why I'm going out here."

And then he says, "I'm going to tell you. The best place for all you colored boys is right here in the Army." And I straightened up to attention, I saluted him and said, "Well, thank you, sir" and walked out.

I thought that was a... That comment. I didn't like at all. If he had came at me in another way maybe, maybe I would've considered staying in the Army because the Army was a good experience for me.

But the way he came at me, telling me "That's the best place for all you colored boys here." I'm a grown man. I'm not no boy. I'm in uniform, my country and this guy-

Interviewer (main):

I noticed that, I did a history of the Veterans Administration in LA, West LA, and I noticed that when politicians wanted something out of veterans, they called them boys. And then when they wanted to talk about them as people who gave their service, they were men.

And they always used language that diminished their statue as human beings, despite the fact they had put themselves on the line for our country. I mean, that must have been so difficult to come back to such a racist country-

Walter James Morris:

Well, like I say-

Interviewer (main):

How was Germany?

Walter James Morris:

Up until, going into the service and then seeing how... That work then coming home, like I told you previously, I was trying to get a job and I had a good friend who I met in Germany. He came home before I did. He was from Alabama and we kept in contact.

And as soon as I got home, boom, he shot from Alabama out here. So him and I would go around looking for jobs. I mean, these weren't... These were just regular jobs. They were no high tech jobs or anything like that.

And everywhere we went, it was, "no we're not hiring." So I says, "Okay, look, John, we're going to do it this way. We're just going to sit in the car" and we'd watch a couple of white guys go in there and they'd come out and we'd say... And we'd already been in there and we'd say, "Are they hired?"

"Oh yeah, we just got hired, man. We start next week." And we already been in there. We looked all over.

Interviewer (main):

Do you remember the places you were-

Walter James Morris:

They were just manufacturing places in Anaheim, at Fullerton, nothing big time. And then I walked in the post office one day, saw the sign "postal career." So I says, "It won't hurt to try that." Took the test, passed, and [inaudible 00:14:15] Park was already working there. And I knew him because he lived on the same street I did. I got there and I stayed there.

Interviewer (main):

Tell me about the Farquhars and then I want to ask you about your parents.

Walter James Morris:

Well, the Farquhars, like I say, they lived in the 100 [inaudible 00:14:32] 200 block. It was Janine and Kathy and Peter and their mother was Juel. And she was... She must have been the first black teacher in Fullerton-

Interviewer (main):

She is.

Walter James Morris:

Maybe in all of Orange County, as far as I know.

Interviewer (main):

We haven't tracked all of that yet, but Fullerton-

Walter James Morris:

She just turned 97.

Interviewer (main):

We interviewed her.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah, she just turned... And-

Interviewer (main):

She's a beautiful woman-

Walter James Morris:

Yeah.

Victoria:

It was such a fun interview.

Walter James Morris:

Her husband, Ozel, he was stationed in Italy with the [inaudible 00:15:00] airmen. He worked the mail room or something like that. In fact, my cousin, he was stationed at the same base when they were over there. And so I've known the Farquhars ever since I was a little guy. Yeah.

And Janine was a cop in Anaheim for a while, but I guess it got too much for her to bear, all the crap they were giving her-

Interviewer (main):

She told us a different story, but you know, people edit their stories.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah, she's a female cop and she's black. So you pull someone over they're going to...

Interviewer (main):

Yeah. She actually self-censored a lot on that story and said she decided to not be a cop for her... She wanted to be a present parent.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah.

Interviewer (main):

And I think that's a really great reason to say publicly, but if you're willing to be public about the pain you endured, it does a lot. And sometimes you are not ready and sometimes we can't see it.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. Her sister Kathy, she does a lot into dancing because I remember she used to teach a lot of the youth dancing-

Interviewer (main):

She still does.

Walter James Morris:

Okay.

Interviewer (main):

Yeah. She teaches through Zoom now because of the pandemic at the Fullerton Unified School District.

Walter James Morris:

Because I remember I went to her wedding. She married an African guy. I don't know how long they were together, but... And then Peter, he was a big football star at Fullerton High School.

Interviewer (main):

Yeah. Peter would not want to be interviewed.

Walter James Morris:

Oh yeah. He was a good football player and he had a full ride to some colleges, but I guess he didn't want to leave home. So he ended up playing at Cal State Fullerton. I mean, he could have had a full ride to two or three colleges.

Interviewer (main):

I think something bad happened him.

Walter James Morris:

Everything paid... Sometimes you don't... Some don't leave home. You're comfortable and go to some other state. And it's just like...

Interviewer (main):

When we saw him, he seemed a little shell shocked and I get that. I think they were trying to tell me, in a general way, that you may expand on that. Black men get it so much worse than any other group and as a natural leader, as a sports hero-

Walter James Morris:

I think... I haven't seen Peter in a long time, but the last time I saw him, I could tell he had some type of illness.

Interviewer (main):

Oh, maybe that's what it was.

Walter James Morris:

I've known him all his life and he wasn't his... I don't know if it was maybe some Parkinson's coming on or something, but I could tell that wasn't the Peter I knew.

Interviewer (main):

Yeah, he seemed very thin. I think that's what it is.

Walter James Morris:

Because he used to... He tall, he'd be downtown Fullerton, partying on the weekends and stuff. Yeah. But I guess-

Interviewer (main):

Where do you party in Fullerton? I never found the spots.

Walter James Morris:

Oh, there's 50 bars. There's 50 bars and restaurants down there.

Interviewer (main):

I used to go to Mickey's.

Walter James Morris:

Oh, down there on Harbor's. Mickey's.

Interviewer (main):

Mickey's had the strongest drinks and the cheapest drinks. And it had a leather bar on Wednesdays.

Walter James Morris:

No, they got 50 bars-

Victoria:

A leather bar?

Walter James Morris:

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And restaurants down there, where you can go party. Well, not so much now with the COVID but before that, on Friday night, Saturday night, there'd be 5,000 young people down in Fullerton.

Interviewer (main):

Wow.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah because they would come from out of town also.

Interviewer (main):

That's so hard to imagine.

Walter James Morris:

To go down and party, then you had the Fullerton College kids and the Cal State University kids and downtown was the party spot.

Interviewer (main):

Wow. I only see that now on First Night.

Walter James Morris:

No, it's down there because I used to go to a little place on Commonwealth called Joe's Tavern. Every Sunday, they had live entertainment, four to eight. And there was other places, I didn't even go to the other places. I'd been in them but Joe's was-

Interviewer (main):

Joe's was where you [crosstalk 00:18:43].

Walter James Morris:

Joe's was a must on Sunday afternoon and we partied.

Interviewer (main):

That's going to go on the map.

Victoria:

Yeah.

Walter James Morris:

We partied. No, we've got a lot of places. Years and years ago, there's a place down here on Lemon, across Orangethorpe. It's called InCahoots.

Victoria:

Yeah. The country bar.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. But before that, it used to be... What the heck do you call it? I can't even think of the name. The Hop. The Hop. Yeah. They had one in Lakewood and they had one in Fullerton.

Interviewer (main):

I remember that.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. And then across the street, on this side, Orangethorpe, there was another place called Geckos. Then there was Michael's, out on Orangethorpe. There were a lot of places. You just had to find out where they were.

Interviewer (main):

I guess I'd never strayed too far because I always walked.

Walter James Morris:

Oh, okay, yeah.

Interviewer (main):

But you know, we also heard of cases where blacks were refused service, like the Red Onion on Harbor.

Walter James Morris:

The Red Onion, yeah, because... I know my son went there and he told he wasn't dressed right and he takes pride in the way he dresses. So he came back and changes into something else and he got refused entry two times that night. And I know later on, a group of blacks sued the Red Onion and won their case for-

Interviewer (main):

Yes, they did.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah.

Interviewer (main):

It was... They went out... They wouldn't let Persians or blacks in.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. I can remember when I... Was this after the Army? I think so. And my neighbor, Joe Lopez. He's the guy who really did good because I can remember just before I went into the Army, Joe got busted for selling drugs.

So he went to Tracy and I don't know how many years he did there, not that many, but he got all his education there, and he came back, and he ended up with his doctorate. And he taught at Cal State Long Beach and he's written several books and-

Interviewer (main):

We have his book.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. Okay. Yeah.

Interviewer (main):

Yeah.

Walter James Morris:

So yeah, that's my neighbor, Joe Lopez.

Interviewer (main):

Yeah. Brick told us about him.

Walter James Morris:

Okay.

Interviewer (main):

And how he protected him from the cops.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. Joe was a small guy. Yeah.

Interviewer (main):

They had to do a drug deal, I guess. And they said, "Hey, we got to drop off Brick before we do this." And they were like, "Why?" And he's, "Because he's the golden child. He's going to go to college. We don't want to mess up his career." It's like, "Whoa."

Walter James Morris:

I had another buddy on this side of him. Joe lived here, me, and then... Ronald Banderas. He was a great guy. He's passed on and-

Interviewer (main):

Tell me about Ronald.

Walter James Morris:

Okay. He grew up right next to me. I don't know how many years older. I was nine maybe. Maybe eight or ten, something like that. But he just came from average family. His mom worked at one of the packing houses and the dad picked oranges, but he went on, and got all his education, and he established his own business, real estate and insurance. Did great, got elected.

And I remember we went to Fullerton High one day to talk to the principal because they have a Wall of Fame, alumnus who-

Interviewer (main):

Are you on it?

Walter James Morris:

No.

Interviewer (main):

We're going to change that.

Walter James Morris:

Alumnus who distinguished themselves, and right after we went and talked to the principal, the next time they elected people to the thing, it was Ronnie. Ronnie got on there and he did very well for his-

Interviewer (main):

He's Mexican-American by the last name?

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. Yeah. And he did very well for himself. Smart guy and established that business himself. And ran for City Council a couple of times and didn't get nowhere.

Interviewer (main):

What do you think of Fullerton's City Council and the Fullerton Police? You can be honest with us. I hate them.

Walter James Morris:

The Council, I don't think that highly of it. I don't agree with a lot of the decisions they make.

Interviewer (main):

There's some lack of transparency, there seems to be.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. Seems like the incumbents really win and you don't get too many new people in there. Now we had that girl. You heard of the Calhoun Family?

Interviewer (main):

Calhoun? Yes.

Walter James Morris:

Okay. Vicki Calhoun. They live around there. Now she ran, I guess a couple years ago, and she didn't get in. Now, she's got all her degrees and all that stuff. And the mayor at the time, Doug Chaffee, and his wife was running, but she didn't live in the area.

So she rented an apartment in the area and then she was going... She was caught going around, taking other candidates sign out of the yards, but they-

Interviewer (main):

How petty.

Walter James Morris:

But they didn't remove her name on the ballot and so she still pulled a lot of votes. And in my mind, if her name wouldn't have been on a ballot, Vicki might have won.

Interviewer (main):

Right.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. Vicki might have won and got in there. Yes. She moved in, I don't know where her apartment was, but she moved.

Interviewer (main):

In some cases I believe that... Like with Bernie Sanders, even if the handwriting's on the wall that your candidacy will hurt democracy, they are in...

They have an incentive to not drop out. Whether it's, they believe the hype up about themselves, like Bernie. I don't know. I'm not a fan. To this, Chaffee person, they don't understand that it dilutes who we vote for.

Walter James Morris:

She drew a lot of votes and in my mind, a lot of those people would've voted for Vicki, but it's neither here nor there so...

Interviewer (main):

That's sad.

Walter James Morris:

And then Vicki, she ran for the school board and she didn't get elected to that either. So neither here nor there.

Interviewer (main):

What about the police? You know-

Walter James Morris:

The police? Well... When I was growing up, there weren't that many cops at [inaudible 00:24:40]. And like I say, when I was, maybe my junior and senior, I had my car and I'd be coming home from a date at 1:00 or 1:30 in the morning. We'd come down Harbor to get home, car behind me, flashes the lights, boom, pull over. And he asked me where I'm going. I said, "Sir, I'm going home." "Where do you live?" And I said, "What do you-"

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Walter James Morris:

I'm going. He says, "I'm going home, where do you live?" And I said, "What did you stop me for?" He says, "Well, we had an automobile just like this that was reported in a robbery." And I knew they would feed me a bunch of crap because they stopped myself and all my buddies whenever we were just riding around. But, they didn't really hassle us because we've had some cops, we'd be riding around with a six pack in our car and they would stop us, and they would just pour it out and let us go. Because I graduated

with a couple guys who was on the police force. I had one buddy, his name was Boyd Newhart, white guy. And he would tickle me because he said he would go up to Hillcrest, the lover's lane, and he'd jiggle all his keys real loud so that all the lovers in the car would know that the cops were around.

And he didn't do nothing or say nothing to him, but he just let them know. Yeah. So, growing up the cops-

Interviewer (main):

If they knew you.

Walter James Morris:

Well, they didn't really know us.

Interviewer (main):

But recognized you.

Walter James Morris:

Well, maybe some of them, like Freddy King, he ended up being a captain. Now, he knew all us guys real good. And Freddy King was always nice to all us guys, Black, Mexican, whatever. He eventually made captain. He was one of the real, real good guys. Because there weren't that many policeman in Florida by the time when I was growing up. You don't [inaudible 00:26:25] just a little town hemmed in by orchards, orchards, orchards, orchards. So, it wasn't bad. But then as the years roll by, I think I told you this story about when my sons, they buried their best friend.

Interviewer (main):

Yes. Tell us again about that because that's an outrageous story.

Walter James Morris:

I'm talking about Vicky Callum and that was her brother, Keith Calhoun. So, he went to school with my youngest son. They played ball together. They were real tight buddies. So anyway, he passed away and we had the funeral and everything. So, that night, my son and some of the other guys who went to school with Keith, he was a real popular guy. They all met downtown at the bars and were drinking, and then they came home, and they pulled in the driveway with my oldest son, my youngest son and the two Whitehurst brothers. So, they're parked in the driveway, just talking and two Fullerton cops roll up on them, get out with their flashlights and their hands on their pistols and ask them what they're doing. I said, "We're not doing nothing, man, we're just sitting in my dad's driveway."

And he said,-

Interviewer (main):

On private property?

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. And he said, "We just buried our best friend, man. He's 48 years old. We just buried our best friend, funeral was today, and we're just sitting, you know." And then one of the cops uttered something to one of the Whitehurst brothers, Quentin, the oldest one, some curse words. So, Quentin cursed the guy back. And then things got a little heated. And my son, he got out of the car and he was walking towards the door and the cop said, "Oh, you're the tough guy. Where are you going? Where are you going?" And my son told him, "Yeah, if you feel that way, take off that gun and badge, and I'll show you who's a tough

guy." And then they were shining lights on one of my cars in the driveway and they said, "What are you doing?"

Running the make on my father's car. He's had that car forever, and he's lived in this house forever. I was asleep, this was like two in the morning. So, the next day I went up to the department, and one of the officers came out, and I explained to him what was happening. And I says, "I know you guys aren't going to take this any further than me talking to you because I know how it works." So I said, "I just want to get this off my chest, and I think you should teach your officers some more sensitivity training. Because these guys were very rude and they were parked right on my property and your guys got their hands on their guns, asking them all these questions. And they told them we just buried best friend hours ago, man, what are you hassling us for?" And I said, "I don't know the officer's names that [inaudible 00:29:09], but you could pull the records and see who was on shift at that time." And I doubt if anything was ever said about it, if they even told the officers anything.

Interviewer (main):

We thought this case from '63 where these people were getting gas in Fullerton, and they saw the police arresting a black man and they were doing it really rough, excessively rough. So, they reported it to the Fullerton police and the Fullerton police charged them with reporting a false crime. And they had to fight it for a couple of years. And they won. But it basically was like, don't do the right thing in Fullerton.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah, because-

Interviewer (main):

You'll be punished for it.

Walter James Morris:

That happened a long time.

Interviewer (main):

Sorry.

Walter James Morris:

I recall it. Okay, I was coming home. I picked up some medicine for my kids over here on Lawrence. I'm went to this big dip, and my brother, him and his buddy were a little bit ahead of me like that. And so, I came through the dip and I gunned my pipe, wrapped my pipes and I passed him. And his cop was coming down and he turned that way. And by the time I got to the house, he had the lights on, everything, and he asked me, "Where are you going?" I says, "I live here. I'm going to house, got some medicine for my kids." And then my buddy that was riding with my brother told him, "Hey, get off of that man's property. You don't have no right to get off to get there."

So, he got off the property, and he made a call, and then you had 10 cops down here,. 10 cops. And the Sergeant came, and I tried to explain and he wasn't even looking at me, acknowledge me. And I told him what was happening. And I says, "Okay, I'll sign a ticket. But I'm going to court and fight it." And I went to court, and I fought it, and I won. And then, Fullerton didn't like that. Now, there was another black guy named Mack McCoy. Now, Mac, he did a lot of drugs, and was always in trouble, this and that. But he got shot by the police one night and they said he was running from him. But he got shot through here. So, I think he sued, and he won, and he was always under the watchful eye of the police because they knew

his drug issue. They were all trying, trying to get him on something, especially after he sued on the one. He's shot here in the midsection. And they tried to say, "Oh he was running, and I shot him."

Interviewer (main):

Very few people survive that if it hits the wrong area.

Walter James Morris:

To show you the mentality of those cops now, when they beat up that for Kelly Thomas kid, these cops were all big guys. This guy's 120 pounds in there. [inaudible 00:32:05] bashing his face in with tasers.

Interviewer (main):

And he was screaming, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry."

Walter James Morris:

Screaming and sorry, hollering for his dad. And they knew he was a mental case because they all hang around at the bus station out there. The police know who's there. They tried to say he was breaking into cars or something in the parking lot. And the other one was, "No, he wasn't. They just hassled him for some reason." And they just beat him to a pulp.

Interviewer (main):

And you know what they did to the protestors.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. Oh, yeah. Yeah. They beat that kid-

Interviewer (main):

The people who protested the verdict were charged with conspiracy. You were not even allowed to protest.

Walter James Morris:

Oh, his the mom got her money early. I guess she must have dropped any charges. She got a million.5. The dad stuck with it all the way. He got 4.9 million. That don't replace their son.

Interviewer (main):

Exactly. And what they had to endure, seeing him killed.

Walter James Morris:

I just read in the paper, I think it was the last week, the two officers that were pursuing, they were denied their jobs back. Yeah.

Interviewer (main):

Well, I'm sure LAPD will hire him.

Walter James Morris:

They were denied their jobs back. One of them, he had served on LAPD, and they had him on disability because he had one eye or something. I don't even know how he ended up being on Fullerton Force.

Interviewer (main):

And they make so much money.

Walter James Morris:

And I think the other guys, I know that one, Ramos, I think he sued the city of Fullerton, I don't know where his case is.

Interviewer (main):

Yeah. I heard that. I was laughing about that.

Walter James Morris:

They denied Wolf and Cintinelli [phonetic 00:33:41] or whatever his name was.

Interviewer (main):

Wow. So, you know Fullerton history amazingly, intimately.

Walter James Morris:

I've been here 80 years except for the two years in the army.

Interviewer (main):

So, you remember when they found bodies in Hillcrest Park?

Walter James Morris:

I don't recall.

Interviewer (main):

Oh I remember that.

Walter James Morris:

That body. I know Hillcrest Park to be the big hang out for the gays up there.

Interviewer (main):

Yes it was. And it also was a Indian village. Yeah, they find bodies there all the time that are ancient. Yeah. It's why it was [crosstalk 00:34:15]

Walter James Morris:

The railroad tracks, well, you can't see them now because under paths. But I know all the kids from high school would come down across the tracks to where we lived on this side of the tracks. We got along great, all the kids because we went from elementary school all the way to high school and JC. I still see some of the kids I know that went to Maple School because we had these reunions, but it had a reputation. Boy, you don't cross the tracks and go over there.

Interviewer (main):

But isn't that where all the cute guys are?

Walter James Morris:

It wasn't bad on this side. Because-

Interviewer (main):

No, it's just-

Walter James Morris:

There was no drive by, there was no gangs. We had, back in my day, we had a lot of car clubs in Fullerton. We didn't have say, east side Fullerton fighting west side Fullerton, that came years later. They had the guys from west Fullerton coming through the neighborhood fighting and all that, but we didn't have all that when my friends and I were coming up, a lot of guys used to smoke weed. And that was the extent of it. I didn't know anybody who was really strung out or messed up or breaking into homes. They just smoked their weeds, and they all had their little riders, and we had our garage parties, and it was cool. Fullerton was okay.

Interviewer (main):

That must have been how all these garage bands were formed too.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. A lot of them. Yeah.

Interviewer (main):

Because that's what Orange County was known for in the 70's and 80's.

Walter James Morris:

But like I say, sometimes we'd get to do it with maybe Placentia or Anaheim because we'd be having a house party, and they would come over and then you'd have little scrap now and then, but there were no shootings or stabbing, we just get out on the street and fist fight, and that was it.

Interviewer (main):

It's crazy how bullets changed everything.

Walter James Morris:

Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. I know. Shoot. You just fought man to man, fists or something like that.

Interviewer (main):

Yeah. I listened to one history thing where part of growing up in the Bronx was learning how to fight, and your older people would teach you how to fight by beating you up slowly. It was something, a coming of age. And the change with knives to guns just dropped that whole relationship.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah, because my brother has a plate and auto body shop down here in Fullerton. And I ran it for the last three months because he was out on injury. But anyway, this couple came in, the guy's name was Tony, Tony DiCenzo [phonetic 00:36:52] or something. And he said he knew my brother Lenny, and he lived on Elm street. I don't know if he lived on Elm, this side of [inaudible 00:37:02] or Elm on the other side, he just said he lived on Elm, and then his wife was talking, "Oh, Tony says, oh it was so terrible in those days back and then, all that."

And I said, "No, no, no." I said, "It was not like that. We didn't have no fights, no drive bys, and all that." I said, "All the guys, we took pride in our cars because we had three or four different car clubs at Fullerton High. And then we had our own established right down here. And my brother, he had his. His was the Rare Breeds and then myself and some of the older [inaudible 00:37:34] we were the Rambling Sinks.

Interviewer (main):
The Rambling Sinks?

Walter James Morris:
The Rambling Sinks.

Interviewer (main):
Did you have patches and stuff?

Walter James Morris:
Well, we had a plaque.

Interviewer (main):
Do you still have one?

Walter James Morris:
No.

Interviewer (main):
Oh!

Walter James Morris:
We had a plaque in the back of the car that had who we were. And like I say, car clubs was a big thing. The high school had three or four different ones.

Interviewer (main):
So, what was the Rambling Sinks about? What was that name about?

Walter James Morris:
I don't know. We just picked it out of the air. It didn't really pertain to anything. We just kicked the name out. Like the Rare Breeds, my brother's club. I don't know what it was, but yeah.

Interviewer (main):

Yeah. I have a friend who renamed himself when he was in junior high. His name was Yidinao [phonetic 00:38:11], and the English speakers wouldn't add the O, they'd call him Irene. So, he didn't know what to change his name to, and he got a Life magazine and they had a special on Leonard da Vinci. And he's like Leonardo? No, Leo. And he change his name to Leo, and he's now Leo Limon. He's a famous artist. But that's just crazy how we can just grab onto something and it can [crosstalk 00:38:33].

Walter James Morris:

It's like when I worked at the post office, the guy said, "Hey, where you, live? Walking?" "I live over on [inaudible 00:38:40] there, about from there, about five minutes." "Oh you live over a little TJ, huh? That's the way they [inaudible 00:38:48]. and then when they came, because we used to take turns going to different guy's houses and have drinks after work. So, then they came to my house one day went, "Oh, this is pretty nice. This is all right." I don't know what they thought the neighborhood was like here.

Interviewer (main):

Yeah. This is a really nice house. I don't know what they were expecting.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. I don't know how they expected me to live. But I said, "Well, yeah." Yeah. And then they said, "Does your wife work?" I said, "No." "You're doing this on your own?" I said, "Well, I want her to stay home with my kids, so she never worked." It kind of mind boggled her.

Interviewer (main):

Tell us about your wife?

Walter James Morris:

She was born and raised over here in Guadalajara, you know where Guadalajara is?

Interviewer (main):

Of course, Guadalajara.

Walter James Morris:

She was born over there and-

Interviewer (main):

What's her name?

Walter James Morris:

Her name was Margarite, and we all called her Margie. And I met her, I think I was 19 and she was 18 when we met. And I told my buddy, I said, "I just saw this girl. She's very beautiful. I like her." And he said, "What's her name?" Well, I said, "She's from Guadalajara. Her name is Margie." He says, "Oh, I know her. My grandfather's right next door to her." I says, "Get her phone number for me, David, get her phone number for me. And if you do all this, you'll drive my car." I had two cars at the time. Because that second car, I eventually sold to David.

So, he calls her up and he says, "Hey Margie, I got a friend that wants to meet you." And she says, "Well, what's his name?" He says, "His name is Walter." And she says, "That's not a Mexican name." And then she says, "Is he white?" And David said, "No, he's a black guy." And she says, "Oh, no, David, my mom

would never let me go out with the black guy." But it worked out the other way. We got married and were married 42 years before she passed away, so it worked all to the good.

Interviewer (main):

Wow. It seems like love at first sight too, for you.

Walter James Morris:

Well, I don't know about love, but I was sure attracted to her.

Interviewer (main):

Lust at first sight.

Walter James Morris:

I was very, very much attracted to her. I could show you her pictures later. She was a very beautiful woman. Yeah. Yeah. Beautiful.

Interviewer (main):

Tell me about your wedding. Tell me about your courtship.

Walter James Morris:

I met her and then I finally got her. Me and my friend, we got her and girlfriend to go on a double date with us. And then after that I followed up and asked her out, and we started going out, going out, going out, and then we eventually got married. But I didn't have no big wedding or nothing. My best man was another neighbor of mine. He was married at the time. Black guy named George Will. He was married to Mexican woman who lived right down the street from him, so he stood up for us and we just went to Santa Ana and got a local minister to marry us.

Interviewer (main):

Your face lights up like heaven when you talk about her, that love is so real.

Walter James Morris:

Good, good person. Yeah. We did good years there.

Interviewer (main):

That kind of love is very rare too.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. Like I told you, see what was funny about it, that one sister I didn't meet, that was the oldest one. I met all her other sisters and that one was the one who was against her getting married to me and told her all kind of things. And then I looked back on it, like I told you, her sisters are all married Hispanic men like them, and they all eventually divorced. So, ours is only marriage that lasted, and we were the ones that weren't supposed to make it. Why would you marry this guy?

Interviewer (main):

Forged by fire.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah.

Interviewer (main):

Sometimes.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah.

Interviewer (main):

I have a friend whose marriage didn't make it for the same reasons. He was African. Many of his black friends wouldn't talk to him after he married a Mexican girl. And similar to hers, and they didn't make it.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah, no, see, my mom and dad didn't say nothing and all my buddies, they didn't say nothing because I had some buddies that were married to white girls, other ones married to Mexican girls, some were black, but we never had that thing between us, like how come you married her? How come she married you?

Interviewer (main):

Of course. I mean, you're obviously gorgeous.

Walter James Morris:

It was probably tougher on my wife because back then, we got married in '64 and back then it's, you know how time works? Yeah. Civil Rights Bill was just signed and you'd go somewhere and, oh, I'll give you a good case. We were at the hospital in Orange, and my daughter was six years old and she needed open heart surgery. So, she had a little small hole, nothing major. So, we'd go to the little room and the lady's there taking information, and she never did look me in the eye the whole time. She's directing all her questions to my wife, and I would interrupt. And I said, "Look, lady, I'm the one who's employed. It's coming under my insurance and all that." And she couldn't even look me in the eye.

Interviewer (main):

At some point in the 50's, in the '47, you have Perez versus Sharp where you have miscegenated marriages being allowed. But the courts read Mexican as white in '47. So, there's a flux where some Mexicans identify as white and they think, I'm not a peon, I'm not brown, I'm not this. Oh my god.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. They were classified as Caucasians, and that was it. Yeah.

Interviewer (main):

Yeah. So, it could have been that too, phenotype shifts.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. But nobody ever said nothing to me that bothered me.

Interviewer (main):

What about your children? You obviously have beautiful, gorgeous children.

Walter James Morris:

I got two boys and a girl. My daughter's the oldest. And then the two boys. None of them have ever married though. My daughter has, she had one girl and then the youngest son, he's got two kids. His son, the first kid he had, was from a black girl he knew, went to school with, and they never got married or nothing. And that was that. And then he was working at a Red Lobster and he met one of the little waitresses there. They hooked up and eventually she had a baby, and that's my granddaughter. She's 14 now. But they never got married. They had the child and this and that. And then things came along in separate ways...

Interviewer (main):

It's hard to stay married.

Walter James Morris:

And he fought for that daughter for years and years. And he's the type of guy, he doesn't hold his tongue. And I used to tell him, "Curtis, you're going over here to the family court. The judge is a white guy. Carol is a white woman and you're a black guy. You're not going to get any breaks. And sometimes, you got to bite your tongue man." Which he did. He would get right into it with the judge. And finally, he was so persistent in going, finally, the one judge cut out all child support and gave him 50/50.

But then another new judge came off. Another one. Real [inaudible 00:46:28]. And him and that guy would get into it. First, the first judge said she's not supposed to leave Orange County and all that. But eventually, she married some guy and she moved out of Orange County into Redlands, and then they were still sharing joint custody of the kid. And then from there, she moved up to Pleasanton, and he hadn't paid child support for years, but she opened the new case up there and he got stuck with child support again. And she basically has full custody. We maybe see the girl three or four times a year, she'll fly down.

Interviewer (main):

At least she comes down.

Walter James Morris:

Oh. Yeah. Yeah. She comes down.

Interviewer (main):

My brother, his marriage was horrible, his first marriage and his wife poisoned the daughter against him. And expected him to pay for Catholic private school when she didn't even go to church. And my brother was atheist. So he was like, "Why would I pay for that?"

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. Carol was a very, very vindictive woman.

Interviewer (main):

It's very sad.

Walter James Morris:

A lot of guys I know, they've never paid a day of child support. They could care less about their kid, and he's always fought toward daughter, gone to court, argued with the judges, and bailiffs have to say, "Hey, chill out, cool down."

Interviewer (main):

That's a soft spot. She knows how to push him.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. Very close, so I don't know. She's 14 now.

Interviewer (main):

She'll see you on her own.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah.

Interviewer (main):

If she's related to you, she has critical thinking skills.

Walter James Morris:

She's in high school now, so she's been up there. She has her own circle of friends and all that.

Interviewer (main):

She'll learn to hate her mother anyway, as a teenager.

Walter James Morris:

Oh yeah. Because my son asked her, "Hey Aurora, where are you going to go to college?" And she says, "As far away from my mom as I can get."

Interviewer (main):

Sounds like a healthy teenager.

Walter James Morris:

Hey, I used to watch her. For first three years of her life, I watched her. Little kids, and I'd watch her, then she'd start toddling around. And her mom would work, and she'd come here after work to get her. And as soon as her mom came, Aurora would be in my arms and she'd scream and holler, "No mommy. No, no." And I had to kind of, "All right, Aurora, you'll be back tomorrow. It's okay." And one time she's playing soccer in Cypress. And Carol tried to say that Curtis knocked her down and grabbed a [inaudible 00:48:59] or something. So, we went to court and we had 20 witnesses. We had the soccer moms who actually saw it, and the judge didn't even let us all talk because there were too many. And Carol's mom, she was real cool for years because she went to court and testified against her daughter and everything. Yeah. Because they had a tumultuous relationship coming up, so she always was on our side too.

Interviewer (main):

Probably was denied access to her own grandchild.

Walter James Morris:

But he's still very close to his daughter and does everything he can for her. So, I don't know.

Interviewer (main):

That's a great dad.

Walter James Morris:

I know. Now, younger son, he doesn't have any kids. He said, "No, not me. Not me."

Interviewer (main):

There's a thing that I shared on Facebook, and it says, "Why I'm not having children." It says, "The curse ends with me."

Walter James Morris:

Yeah.

Interviewer (main):

That's a joke. Tell me about your parents.

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:50:04]

Interviewer (main):

... About your parents.

Walter James Morris:

I could say my dad... My dad's father, from the story I get from one of my first cousins. No, I don't know why I don't have no facts to it, but I met him on a family reunion one year. And anyway, we spoke and we have phone contact, so his grandfather and my grandfather were brothers, and supposedly they were slaves on some farm in Kentucky. And some guy from Tennessee came and bought him and took him to his place. And I still got my dad's birth certificate, so the Tennessee part sounds right, because it shows he was born in Tennessee. And then, I guess, whenever they got their freedom or something, they left there and my dad was mostly raised... There were seven boys, five girls, they were mostly raised in Oklahoma, little parts of Kansas and then the Oklahoma. I never met my grandparents. So I don't know, the grandpa on my dad's side, he was supposed to be part Indian and black. And the grandma was supposed to mostly all Indian, as far as I know. I got pictures, after I could show you.

Interviewer (main):

Have you done ancestry yet?

Walter James Morris:

No, I had a nephew. He's a real smart dude. And he was doing that because he's off into all that. He lives in Virginia, but he's pretty well.

Interviewer (main):

Has he shared the results with you?

Walter James Morris:

Some. We used to have a cousin in Compton, was doing them, but I don't know how far back she got into all that. And when we were growing up, the old people never spoke about anything. They didn't talk about where they were from, what kind of education they had, nothing. I had an aunt and when we buried or we put her age at 95, but we knew she was older, so we got to put something down. And that woman, she married into my father's family and we never knew nothing about her. Where she was raised, if she was an only child, where parents were. Anything about her at all, nothing. The old people would never tell you anything about their lives.

Now the elder lady I tell you about that passed at 111 years old, when we had that... That was at her 100th birthday party and the one thing she said, "I don't know why those people were so mean to us." Making reference, she was from Alabama or something and that was her saying, "She don't know why they were so mean to her." And I said, "Man..." I told my buddy, "You know how much your grandmother has seen? She's a hundred and something years old." I mean, and she... And then she lived to 111. I got thing out there, I can show you.

Interviewer (main):

One of my girl friends-

Walter James Morris:

And I told my friends, I told my buddies, you guys got to sit your grandma down and get it on tape and all that stuff. Oh, this is really, really history. But they didn't like to talk about. None of the old people like to talk about it.

Interviewer (main):

It's too painful.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. Our parents-

Interviewer (main):

It's very painful.

Walter James Morris:

Our parents, they were just too busy...

Interviewer (main):

Surviving.

Walter James Morris:

Like the Owens, there was like 10 of us. And we had nine. So they were just scuffling to put food on the table and stuff, to find jobs and all that and get a place to live.

Interviewer (main):

So you had nine siblings?

Walter James Morris:

Pardon?

Interviewer (main):
You had nine siblings?

Walter James Morris:
No, I had eight. There were nine of us total. Now there was just two left, myself and my younger brother.

Interviewer (main):
Would you talk to us about your... What are your parent's names?

Walter James Morris:
My father's name was Arthur Lee Morris.

Interviewer (main):
And your mother?

Walter James Morris:
My mother's name was Lillian Alberta. And her maiden name was Tarpley.

Interviewer (main):
Tarpley.

Walter James Morris:
That was her maiden name.

Interviewer (main):
T-A-R-P-L...

Walter James Morris:
T-A-R-P-L-E-Y or something like that. Tarpley, yeah.

Interviewer (main):
And were they from Oklahoma as well?

Walter James Morris:
No, I believe... I'm not sure, but I believe. What makes me believe this is, I believe they were from Texas because my mom's sister lived right across the street from us. They were very close. One you saw one, you saw them going downtown to shop and all that. And I know they had some property in Texas because my cousins drove down there one year and sold the property. So that tells me, they apparently were from Texas and all that.

Interviewer (main):
Tell me about your siblings.

Walter James Morris:

Let's see. The two oldest... There were five girls and four of us boys and the two oldest were...

Interviewer (main):

Is this your son?

Walter James Morris:

No, I think that's my daughter coming in the door.

Interviewer (main):

Hello.

Walter James Morris:

The two oldest were... I mean they were married and out of the house before I was even born.

Interviewer (main):

Oh, okay.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. Because we just buried my last survived sister a couple weeks ago and she was 92.

Interviewer (main):

I'm so sorry.

Walter James Morris:

So the two older ones, before her, they were out of house before I born.

Interviewer (main):

Where is she buried?

Walter James Morris:

Englewood Cemetery. Now my mother and father... Let's see. My mother, my father, my brother... Two brothers, three cousins... Anyway, up at the Loma Vista Cemetery.

Interviewer (main):

That's where my mother's buried.

Walter James Morris:

Okay. We've got about... In that one row, we've got about eight or nine graves-

Speaker 1:

Oh my goodness.

Walter James Morris:

... Of Morris's and stuff right there.

Interviewer (main):

Yeah. I have a plot there too. Yeah, I bought my plot when my mom died because I didn't want her to be there alone.

Walter James Morris:

And years ago... This is probably way before I was born. They would only bury the Mexican and the black over this part of the cemetery.

Interviewer (main):

Near the mausoleum? Or towards the grammar school?

Walter James Morris:

Towards the back, it overlooks part of the golf course.

Interviewer (main):

Yes.

Walter James Morris:

And the new homes. The mausoleum's over there.

Interviewer (main):

Yes.

Walter James Morris:

Because if you walk around in that section, you'll see all the Hispanic names there, but now you can buy a space anywhere in there, but this was years and years ago they had designated spots there in Loma Vista where they put the minorities.

Interviewer (main):

Yeah, I can see that.

Walter James Morris:

Where they put the minorities. Whether you're a veteran and not a veteran or what, you went over there on that side of the cemetery.

Interviewer (main):

Yeah. I did a history of Evergreen Cemetery in LA and it's the same way. And you have people who are in films versus first pilots, you have people who ran for president in the progressive party, you have activists, they're all in this one tiny corner. And then all of the mayors are right in the center of the cemetery.

Walter James Morris:

Now the same family has owned that cemetery for years and the son, Kurt, runs it now. And I used to belong to the Owen Foundation and we put on this golf tournament every year and other things. And I would go around... All of us has designated duty. Go around to try to get local businesses to take out an ad, full pay, little business card. And I would go up there to Loma Vista, speak to Kurt, "Hey Kurt, soliciting ads for this year's program for the golf tournament off." "Oh, okay. Just leave the paperwork here." And he never did contribute. And I said, "Man, between the Owen's and the Morris's, we must have 15 people buried up here-

Interviewer (main):

That dude's a clod.

Walter James Morris:

... And you can't take out even a little \$50 business card ad. Come on, man."

Interviewer (main):

I'm going to tell you that dude's clod. When we were getting my plot for my mother... She was dying in St. Jude's down the street and I didn't never had to deal with death before, I was 29, and I was crying and crying and I said, "I want to make sure I have a plot next to her. Can we do that? I don't want her to be alone." And he said, "She's not there. You don't think she's there, do you?" And I was like, "No." And I looked at him like, "Are you moron? Is that how you talk to people who are grieving?" I was really unimpressed by him. Let's just say that. Underwhelmed.

Walter James Morris:

Right.

Interviewer (main):

I'm sorry.

Walter James Morris:

Because I know we go every year. Myself and several of my nephews go every year, decorate all the graves. And we go the day they're having the big-

Interviewer (main):

Sunrise ceremony.

Walter James Morris:

... Memorial service there and there's always a bunch of Fullerton cops there. And after I don't know how many years, the cops would walk over to us and tell us, "Hey man. We really think it's nice what you guys are doing. We see you here every year. Every year you guys are here, decorating."

Interviewer (main):

Cemetery doesn't recognize it.

Walter James Morris:

And we take beer and stuff and pour it on the graves and they didn't do nothing to it. They said, "Boy, I wish I was off duty, I could have a cold one with you," but they did come over and they said, "Hey, it's really nice what you guys are doing."

Interviewer (main):

And the people who run the cemetery can't see that.

Walter James Morris:

No, they can't see it. That guy, Kurt, he's a... I don't even want use the language here-

Interviewer (main):

He's a clod.

Walter James Morris:

I don't want to use the language. I said, "Man, many people we have buried up here and what we pay for these plots and all that and you can't even take a little ad out?" He never did. The reason I quit... He was going to ask him, I said, "This guy's never going to..."

Interviewer (main):

Well, I definitely will take out an ad because I owe Shirley Owens McClanahan my kidney for connecting me with her brother, who connected me to you.

Walter James Morris:

Oh, Marvin?

Interviewer (main):

No, Brick.

Walter James Morris:

Because I know Marvin needed a kidney and got one.

Interviewer (main):

Oh no. I was just saying I owe you in organ because I owe so much and I don't drink, so my kidneys are okay.

Walter James Morris:

Oh, okay.

Interviewer (main):

It's the one good part of my body. But I really I'm so grateful to you for sharing this so candidly, because as you know, many people would like to self-censor this history so that white people feel comfortable in their privilege. And if it wasn't for you, I couldn't have gone to school here as a mixed race person, right? I wouldn't have had the ability to even be a professor if it wasn't for you. And I think a lot of Americans owe black people, in particular, a lot and we don't recognize their contributions to activism in civil rights.

Walter James Morris:

Well, I know [inaudible 01:01:09]... We never had any black history classes or any studies on it. Even when I was going to the JC, when I got to Cal State, because I took ethnic studies, and they had that. That's where I had the one black professor, the female, the only one I ever had. But at Fullerton, I could say... Because me and my buddies would get together, I say, "There was few of us and we went to school up there and we got the same education as a rich kid from Sunny Hills or this and that," because it's not like you hear some kids where they talk about some schools where they didn't have enough books for the kids and didn't have that. So we had everything they had. And if you listened up, you got the good grades and all that.

But the only thing, when you would go talk to a counselor, they would never tell you, you should take this step, prepare for college, they would say, "Well, you got an elective here. Why don't you take metal shop or wood shop or auto shop." And those are the things that I've never had any interest in, that mechanical ability stuff. So I'd rather have history or civics or anything, but the counselors never steered us or did anything like that. But if you went to school and didn't ditch and sit in a classroom, you got the same education as the richest man's kid in Fullerton or anybody else. And at the high school, like I say, I was the only one in my graduating class, one black, out of 500, but I never had any racial problems at the high school or anything. You could date whatever girl you wanted, you could go to the parties.

Interviewer (main):

Did you date any white girls?

Walter James Morris:

Oh, yeah.

Interviewer (main):

Whoa.

Walter James Morris:

Well, there were no black girls in town.

Interviewer (main):

That's right.

Walter James Morris:

There were no black... Brick had one sister who was maybe two years older than me. She's passed on a long time ago. And to her-

Interviewer (main):

Dorothy, right?

Walter James Morris:

I mean, to us she was like our own sister.

Interviewer (main):

Dorothy.

Walter James Morris:

No, Dorothy's still around. This one's name was [Lawrence 01:03:20].

Interviewer (main):

Oh, yes. She was the teacher.

Walter James Morris:

Yes, she's a school teacher. Yeah. And she was like our own sister, because we was all at each other's house. If we wanted date a black girl, we had to go to Santa Ana where they had some black girls. So, we dated white girls or Mexican girls here.

Interviewer (main):

And their parents didn't give you flack.

Walter James Morris:

No.

Interviewer (main):

Or they didn't let their parents know.

Walter James Morris:

I don't know. Some of them didn't let them know or nothing. They'd go to the football games and you hook up after football games. So the parent didn't know who they were out with or what was going on.

Interviewer (main):

Behind the bleachers?

Walter James Morris:

Well, yeah. What was going on. Because Lenny, who's my younger brother, his first wife was Hispanic. And then my brother Harold, he passed on, his first wife was Hispanic. So the three of us at one time were married to Hispanic girls. Yeah.

Interviewer (main):

I got lost. Oh, where did you have your first kiss?

Walter James Morris:

First kiss? Oh God, I don't know. Probably just a little sneak kiss, like in the closet, in the fifth grade or something, where they hang the coats [crosstalk 01:04:29].

Interviewer (main):

I remember mine. It was on the big wheel.

Walter James Morris:

Like that but I don't consider that a kiss though.

Interviewer (main):

All right, your real first kiss then.

Walter James Morris:

The real first kiss was probably after the football game, at one of the sock hops. We used to have a sock hop after the game, you know a dance, they called it sock hop.

Interviewer (main):

Did you take your shoes off? Why is it called a sock hop?

Walter James Morris:

Yeah.

Interviewer (main):

How cute is that? Oh, that's so awesome.

Walter James Morris:

We didn't have no problem dating. We didn't get no flack from it. Guys didn't say nothing to their... I know my son, the oldest son, now he was going with this one Hispanic girl. And some of the kids were kind of mean and rude to her, but it was mostly that Hispanic kids were calling [inaudible 01:05:17] lover and all that and this and that. Yeah.

Interviewer (main):

One of our people we interviewed was from Compton, he's black, and when he got to Santa Ana, he was so surprised at how friendly the white people were.

Walter James Morris:

What was his name? I knew some Santa Ana guys.

Interviewer (main):

Clarence Bracken, he became a Black Panther. His name is Mustafa Khan?

Walter James Morris:

No. Uh-uh (negative).

Interviewer (main):

He had a really hard childhood. He was kicked out of the home, but he said he got flack from black kids, because they thought he was from Compton, he's got to be some tough dude. And he was like, "Do you really want me have to fight you? Come on." And he was really strong.

Walter James Morris:

Well, two of my nephews, my older brother's kids, they came down to Fullerton for a while. I don't know if they would get in trouble in Compton and then my brother worked in Fullerton, so they'd drive down with him in the morning. They'd go to high school and I'd get off work and come home and my wife would say, "Mr. [inaudible 01:06:13] called you." He was a vice principal. "Ronald and Rodney were in another fight today." So I had to go to the high school and talk to the vice principal and then I'd go talk to my brother. He worked for McCoy Mills Ford there. And I'd say, "Hey man, Ronnie and Rodney fighting

again." And he'd just laugh and he said, "Well, you're the guardian man. Don't tell me." And they fought everybody though. When they first moved from Compton, they fought the black kids, the Mexican kids or white kids. They fought everybody. Because they lived in all black neighborhood in Compton and all their schooling had been all black. So they came down here. This was a whole different scenario to them and them two guys, they scrapped every day. Every day.

Interviewer (main):

Yeah. I remember in Fullerton... I mean, I grew up in the 70s. Newcomers had issues with the diversity. I remember the people I got crap from were people who had just moved into the neighborhood. I was called chocolate face by some redheaded dude. And I was like, "It's better than being a carrot."

Walter James Morris:

Well, I know when they closed the school down here in, I think around 1970, they closed Maple. So all the kids in this neighborhood, they had to bus them all over to Laguna road, Acacia and all that. And I told my two boys, "Look, if you ever get called out your name," I said, "Just turn around and sock them up." I said, "That's the only way you're going to stop it, if you don't..." So they did it. And the principal would call me up and I'd say, "Look, I told them that." And I said, "You people knew that our kids were coming here and you have these PTA meetings. You could have told these parents that, 'Hey, we're going to have minority kids coming here and we don't want you to have your kids call them out of their race.'" And both my sons had to go through that, where they had to pop them and then they had no trouble with these guys. They ended up best friends with some of those guys at school, but they tested them and called them.

Okay. Another story about my granddaughter. This was in eighth grade. She's up in Pleasanton. She's real fair-skinned. So she's standing around their little group and she said this one guy Stanley is using the N-word, just constantly using the N-word. So she'd tell him, "Hey Stanley, wait a minute, wait a minute, just stop it." She says, "I'm black." And he says, "No, you're not." He says, "I thought you were a dark white." And she says, "No, my dad is black. And if you keep using that word, I'm going to take you outside and kick your ass." And Stanley never bothered her anymore. So she spoke up for her race, she didn't try to shy away.

Interviewer (main):

I have to ask you...

Walter James Morris:

Her dad is real fair-skinned, a lot of people will ask my son, is he Samoan or not, because he's a big guy and the ponytail thing and his got fair skin. And so his daughter's white because her mama's white and you're white, so a lot of kids didn't even know she had any black in her or anything.

Interviewer (main):

There's a documentary about Wattstax, that big summer festival in Watts, and in the beginning of it, they interview a bunch of people and it's... I have to ask you, it's a very hard question. And it's a question I ask women, when did you know you were a female? And for me, it's not a pleasant experience. When did you find out that you were black? And when did you find out... When were you first called the N-word?

Walter James Morris:

In the third grade, me and my friend, Will Wright, he lives in LA now. Two guy, Bobby Counts and Merle Mitchell, at recess in third or fourth grade they called us the N-word and so we chased after them.

We finally caught them downtown behind this bar called The Smoker and they were hiding some empty trash cans. And we pulled them on the trash can and we kicked their butt and from that day on until the time we all graduated, we were the best of friends. The best of friends. But that's the first time anybody ever called us the N-word, about third or fourth grade.

Interviewer (main):

In the documentary. It said, someone called me that, I told my mom and she said, "You better talk to your dad." And his answer was, "If anybody calls you that again, just beat the shit out of them. Don't even ask any questions, just beat the shit out them."

Walter James Morris:

I had a cousin, me and my wife used to watch him after school, I think they lived the next few doors and his mom was working, so him and his sister would come over here for a few hours. Kenny, he's a very dark guy. And he'd come over to my house, his tears were running and nose were running, "Kenny, what happened, man?" "Oh, they hit me," and, "You didn't hit him back?" "No, my mom said, just turn the other cheek." I said, "Kenny, don't do what your mom tell you, you hit him." So Kenny started punching those guys and nobody messed with him after that. But he was [crosstalk 01:11:18]-

Interviewer (main):

Sometimes it's the feel of bodily harm that actually changes behavior. I've seen interviews where people said, "The only way I got off drugs is because someone kicked my ass and it took a long time for me to admit I had a problem, but it took the fear of getting my ass kicked to stop. Someone cared enough about me."

Walter James Morris:

Yeah, that's the first time, third or fourth grade, and I was never called that again from that day and point on, never called that.

Interviewer (main):

I have an issue when people are harsh to my father because he's from India. Did you ever have to experience seeing your parents discriminated against? Because that to me is the worst feeling.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. No, coming up, I've never seen him... My mom, she did housework, took in ironing and all that. And my dad, he was a custodian at the first Christian Church up here in Fullerton. He worked-

Interviewer (main):

I went there.

Walter James Morris:

Okay. He worked there for years. After school we'd go help him work. But they were real nice. I mean, I could remember Christmas. They would come by our house and do the Christmas carols and all that stuff and so. Yeah, but I never... And in fact, he used to clean a couple of places at [inaudible 01:12:31] alone and I didn't want him cleaning up at night, so.

Interviewer (main):

I want to ask you about your mom and what your favorite food was that she prepared for you.

Walter James Morris:

Shoot. I can't really say I had anything favorite because we just ate everything.

Interviewer (main):

She was just a great cook.

Walter James Morris:

Everything you cooked, it's not like kids nowadays, don't eat this and we got to have [inaudible 01:12:54].

Interviewer (main):

But was she a good cook? Because my mom was horrible.

Walter James Morris:

She was a great cook. And I can remember we never ate cold cereal in her morning. We always had bacon or eggs or hot biscuits or something like that. We didn't eat no Cheerios or Wheaties or nothing like that. She home cooked for us.

Interviewer (main):

What about desserts?

Walter James Morris:

The what?

Interviewer (main):

What was the desserts that she made, if any?

Walter James Morris:

Desserts? I know she used to make this bread pudding, which is very good. Most people don't even know what it is. You use the stale bread and we all love the bread pudding, but she could make apple pies and stuff like that. And we had chickens in the yard and the old man would go grab a couple of chickens, rang their neck and the chicken would flop around, flop around. Then you'd get a wash tub like that, hot water, and you got to dip it in there to pluck all the feathers, then cut it, did it. And that's how you got the fried chicken back in those days. You did all the work there. You couldn't go in no market. They didn't have fried chicken in the market. So none of these chicken places.

Interviewer (main):

Yeah, it's like some agrarian here.

Walter James Morris:

Because we would buy... The Fullerton feed store, every year they would sell... I think the little chickens were like 10 cents a piece. So we'd go up there and buy a whole box of chickens and we keep them in the house because they're so small, cover them with a blanket at night, so they don't get cold. And usually in the morning you might find one or two dead because they huddle together for warmth. And as soon as

they got big enough, we just let them out in the yards, run around and feed them. Yeah. That's how we got chicken. It was a long process. The ringing the neck and [inaudible 01:14:40].

Interviewer (main):

Did you ever go fishing at Hillcrest?

Walter James Morris:

I went fishing at Laguna Lake. Didn't go Fullerton Hillcrest. Fullerton Hillcrest, they had the duck pond there, but we didn't-

Interviewer (main):

There's turtles there and tons of fish, I know.

Walter James Morris:

But you know Laguna Lake up there.

Interviewer (main):

Yes.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. That's where we went fishing.

Interviewer (main):

My brother lives next to that.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. We would go fishing up there, ride our bikes up there.

Interviewer (main):

Wow.

Walter James Morris:

Go fishing there. And we would go... One of my friends dad-

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:15:04]

Interviewer (main):

Wow.

Walter James Morris:

Go fishing there and we would go... One of my friend's dad, we would have little meetings at his house every week and we had what we call dues, whatever you had, a nickel, a dime, give it to him and then Mrs. McCoy would always bake. She could really bake and then he would load us all in his car and drive us out to Irvine park and we would fish out there or something like that.

Interviewer (main):

But is this McCoy from McCoy Mills? Is that-

Walter James Morris:

No, no, no, no. This is McCoy Family. [crosstalk 01:15:34] Yeah, different McCoy.

Interviewer (main):

My mom got her car from McCoy Mills.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. I worked-

Interviewer (main):

Everything you say. I'm like, "Oh my God."

Walter James Morris:

Yeah, because I worked there part time high school. In fact, I worked there, my older brother worked there, my cousin Bob worked there, my brother under me worked there.

Interviewer (main):

I still have her emblem from her car.

Walter James Morris:

Oh yeah. I worked at the McCoy Mills. In fact, when I came out of the army, they wanted to give me a job. Nah, I don't want to do that again. I wanted something a little better, because they would've hired me right on the spot.

Interviewer (main):

What was it like working for the post office?

Walter James Morris:

Okay. Let's see. Got hired for the post office and I was probably a substitute for... Because you sub when you first get in there. I think I was a substitute for maybe two and a half, three years. You had four post offices. They could send you anywhere. You might start at 5:00 one morning and the next day you don't have to come in until 1:00, because you got to go pick up mail and I didn't like that, because I had to work Saturday and Sundays and that was my party days.

I said, "I've got to find something different." I went to the city and I applied. I took the test and I passed and then they called me and told me to go down here and get your medical and you can start, but by then I had been at the post office for about four or five months and I was used to the different shifts and I said, "No, I'm already here. I'm established. I'll stay at the post office," but I liked the city, because you work Monday through Friday from 7:00-3:30, Saturday and Sundays off. The post office, you could work seven days a week, and-

Interviewer (main):

Depending on who's the president, it can be eroded.

Walter James Morris:

And Phil Casas, he was a Hispanic guy. He was a supervisor. They had one woman. What was her name? I can't forget her name, because all she did was deliver special deliveries and they had [inaudible 01:17:34], who was there and then I got hired and that was the whole minority deal at the Fullerton Post Office.

Interviewer (main):

The whole... Was the woman white?

Walter James Morris:

Yeah.

Interviewer (main):

It's just like the whole...

Walter James Morris:

And she lived in a little house, it was off Acacia Avenue. It was all Orangethorpe. She lived way back there. Oh, her name was Jesse, Jesse Bier and they'd say, "Walt, go pick up Jesse, her car won't run or something." I'd go pick her up and bring her to work and then all the guys would be teasing me, "Oh, you went to pick up Jesse," but she was an older lady and everything. I just had to do it. Yeah, and then there was one guy there, I would go around and help throw the magazines for the guy, make their thing a little lighter and this one guy, we called him Tex, he was from Texas, big guy and he didn't want my help. Said, "Okay." I went to the next guy. Then after a while he saw, I caught on fast and knew what I was doing and I'm helping these other carriers and they were working a little lighter and then he wondered why I wouldn't help him and he told the supervisor, he said, "Hey, why don't he help me?"

And he said, "No, he's not going to help you. You didn't want his help," and the only reason he didn't want my help in the first place, because I was black and he didn't want nothing to do with me and then the two supervisors called me up to the desk one day and said, "Walt, we've got to send you out to Orange Hill Station. They're short a carrier." Okay, "And when you get out there, some of these guys aren't going to shake your hand." I said, "I don't care, just... I know where the post office is. I'll go in there and they tell me what route they want me to carry, I'll do it. They don't have to shake my hand or nothing."

Interviewer (main):

You don't have to talk to them.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah, but for the most part, the post office, it was okay and I knew I could get away with a lot of stuff, because I was a veteran and I was black and there were only two blacks there and they're not going to make any waves or get you for anything. In fact, I had a cousin. He got in after he came from Vietnam. I talked him into coming to the post office and he got fired three times, but he got his job back through the union.

Interviewer (main):

That's a great union.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah and they used to tell me, "Hey Morris, where's your cousin at?" I said, "Look man, he's my cousin, but I don't live with the dude. I don't know where he is at."

Interviewer (main):

You're not his keeper.

Walter James Morris:

Because, he missed a lot of work in those days and he wouldn't come to work, but he survived it, the three firings and he's retired, now. He lives out in Reno Valley and he had a long [inaudible 01:20:11] career, but it was... And then I had some guys, I don't know what their jobs were, they'd come in, in suits and all that and they'd come up to me.

Invariably, they'd have a black guy with the group, two or three guys. They walked to me, "How are you doing?" Oh, okay. "These people giving you any problems?" I said, "No, I don't have no problems here, come on in," and he gave me his card, "Anytime, anything come up, call me," but I never had to call the guy or nothing and then the one Postmaster Foster, he used to always tell me, "Hey, how come you don't take the supervisor's test? Don't you want to be the supervisor?"

I said, "No, never aspired to be a supervisor." He says, "The money's a little better." I said, "Money has never... Being me, I never had no money coming up and all that," and I said, "The one thing I like about now," I said, "I got enough seniority in town, that I can get every Saturday off during the summer months, when my boys are playing football," and I had enough seniority to get the... And I didn't want to lose that and I said, "Another thing, Mr. Foster, you're about the fourth postmaster I've worked under and I don't know how many supervisors."

And I said, "Two or three of those supervisors had heart attacks," and I said, "And the way you talk to your people, you berate them in front of everybody. You don't take the supervisors to your office and get on them. You bring them right out on the workroom floor in front of all the carriers," and I said, "I can't treat people like that." "Oh, you, you can't be a leader?" I said, "Look, man." I said, "In the army, I was Assistant Squad Leader." I said, "For three months, I worked at an Army stockade in Dachau, Germany. Yeah.

Interviewer (main):

Oh my God. You were in Dachau?

Walter James Morris:

Well, yeah, because they still have it there, the tourist thing and then on part of the property, you had American Stockade, where we had prisoners and-

Interviewer (main):

You saw that in 1960s? It must have been still, really fresh.

Walter James Morris:

No. Yeah, you could see that and then behind there, they had what you call a DP camp, Displaced Persons. They had all these people from Eastern Europe, waiting to try to come to the United States, but they didn't want us to go back there. There's a lot of girls back there and they'd say, "Hey, if we catch you back there," but some guys would go on in there and found some girlfriends and I said, "No, I worked as a prison guard and all that. I can do what has to be done, but I don't like the way you guys have your supervisors treat people. No humanity, no anything."

Interviewer (main):

I've never done well, by being publicly humiliated. I actually do well with cheerleaders, people who actually recognize the strength and then maybe say, "You could do a little bit better, if you did this."

Walter James Morris:

Now, I told you about the post office. I stayed on the same route for 27 years and the people are very nice. They'd cook these cakes, soda pops, everything, beer, everything.

Interviewer (main):

See's Candy. That's what I like.

Walter James Morris:

Oh yeah. Tons of See's Candy, but I would have some of them come out and we would talk and they'd say, "Hey, Walt, we wouldn't mind if you were our neighbor," but just making reference to me, but they didn't want any Hispanic or any blacks in there, because where I carried at the time, it was an all white neighborhood, not one black family, not one Hispanic.

Interviewer (main):

Where did you carry?

Walter James Morris:

Okay. From Valencia all the way down, to where almost the 91 freeway is and then I came back down. I had a big apartment unit on Orangethorpe and then I worked the residences that were East of Euclid street, over past Woods Avenue. Same area, because I-

Interviewer (main):

I was just wondering if you went to Sunny Hills, where we lived.

Walter James Morris:

When I was substituting, I carried everywhere in Fullerton, but Sunny Hills was pretty cool, because a lot of Sunny Hills routes, the mailboxes were on the curb and you didn't have to get out. You just ride up in your Jeep and I could have been on those all the time, because I number two in the whole city in seniority, but I didn't like that. I didn't even drive a Fullerton vehicle. They had a few little lease cars. I drove a little Pinto.

Interviewer (main):

A Pinto?

Walter James Morris:

A little Pinto.

Interviewer (main):

Oh my God.

Walter James Morris:

And it had signs, you could stick on the door that said, US Mail and-

Interviewer (main):

We had a Pinto.

Walter James Morris:

I drove my little Pinto. I had two of them. I loved it, but they could never find me and my Pinto would be parked in the driveway. I'd come home and the guys that carry my route on my day off, they hated it, because it was very hard to work out of, unless you got it down pat, like I did. These guys were working out of a Jeep. They'd just jump out, park the Jeep and go, but I had my little Pinto. I'd park it on the corner, but when I first started at the post office, all the carriers used their own car. You got a dollar a day, you parked it at the start of your route and the way your route was designed, you ended up at your car.

Interviewer (main):

That's a lot of money back then.

Walter James Morris:

What a dollar a day?

Interviewer (main):

Oh, well my husband, he gets credit for his computer, it's only a hundred a year.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah and I liked that, because I could get done, throw my mail bag in the back and take off for a couple hours and do what I want.

Interviewer (main):

You could take a nap in the Pinto.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. I could come home and if it's stormy and raining, I could come home, get a dry uniform on and everything, sit here and watch TV, and my wife would have me a hot lunch. When I got ready to go back to work, I'd take my rain coat and I'd throw it on my Bush out there and it would get wet. When I'd walk back in the office, it looked like I had been out in the rain the whole time.

Interviewer (main):

Oh my God.

Walter James Morris:

That's the only thing that was wet, was my jacket, because I'd come home, put a dry uniform on, hot lunch, I'm watching TV a couple hours and then I'd go back, but all the guys went home and all that, because I remember when I was training, the guy says, "You take that block and I'll take this one." Okay, we finished early, then we went to his house and he says, "Wake me up in a couple hours and go watch TV."

I watched TV and it time to wake him up, "Hey Johnny, Johnny, wake up." We drove back to the post office and it was real. good in those days, because we worked out of this one over here on

Commonwealth and the mail would be late coming from Santa Anna and we were all up and all that stuff, waiting on the truck. We had a cool supervisor, because that was at time when you got gas, you either got even our odd day, according to your license plates and we had a shell station. He said, "Any of you guys, if it's your day to get gas, go gas up your car."

Interviewer (main):

That was the seventies, right? With Carter? The gas thing? I remember that.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah and then on the corner of Harvard and Commonwealth was the restaurant and he'd say, "Any of you guys want to go eat, get it." We'd walk down to the restaurant, get breakfast and all that. It was real good and we'd never seen the postmaster or any of the higher ups. We just had a supervisor in the office. The only time we saw the Postmaster, was Christmas. He'd walk through and say, "Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas," and he was gone. I worked there for 15 years and then they transferred us to the main one on Chapman and that was terrible. You'd have the Postmaster, Assistant Postmaster, this guy and everybody's watching you and-

Interviewer (main):

In that strip mall, right? Next to where Toy City was? It's on Chapman and-

Walter James Morris:

It's on Chapman.

Interviewer (main):

Near east, maybe? More-

Walter James Morris:

Yeah, it's on Chapman. East of Raymond right there. That's on the right hand side. Yeah.

Interviewer (main):

My dad has a PO box there.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. I worked out of that one, until I retired. It was okay

Interviewer (main):

I know the Toy City that was next to it and the thrift store.

Walter James Morris:

And when I was a sub, I would go out and I finished the route real early and I'd disappear for a couple hours and I'd come back in and the supervisor said, "Hey Morris, you did a good job. Usually some guys are out here for hours and hours," and he didn't know I was done hours ago, but see, I knew this city, because I had a paper out when I was a boy and I knew this city, plus we rode all over on our bikes.

I knew any area they sent me to. Boom and you just follow the mail. It's very simple. You follow the mail, you get out of mail, you go around the corner to the next block. No Einstein stuff, to follow the mail and look up at the numbers, stick it in there and do that and I'd get finished. I knew the area, because a lot

of guys lived out of town. They didn't know nothing about Fullerton, just the immediate area they carried in, but I knew all about Fullerton, wherever they sent me.

Interviewer (main):

Did they ever have two or three shifts of mail? When I lived in France, for example, I got mail twice a day.

Walter James Morris:

No, that was before I got there. We started at 6:00 and we were in the office till maybe 8:30, 9:00 and then we'd hit the streets and we were off 2:30. Just one delivery.

Interviewer (main):

Oh that's good.

Walter James Morris:

But now, I talk to some of the guys. They say those guys, they can't even take all their mail in their first trip. They have so many parcels and all that, the vehicle won't hold it. They have to go deliver what they've got and come back and get some more. It's terrible, because I was talking to one guy. He said, "Them guys weren't coming in off the streets, till 10:00 at night."

Interviewer (main):

Oh my God.

Walter James Morris:

And when I was working, no carrier was allowed to be on the street after dark and now you see carriers walking around, with a little light on their hat. I don't know if you've ever seen it. They have a little light and they're out there and it's dark.

Interviewer (main):

That's too dangerous.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah, I know, but they start so late, because I've got a nephew that works there now and he says he doesn't start, till 10:00 in morning. By 10 o'clock, I had already been in the main office, left there, and had over half my route done and these guys aren't even starting until 10:00 and the mail [inaudible 01:30:01].

Interviewer (main):

And it's hot.

Walter James Morris:

Especially the parcels. They say you're just so overloaded.

Interviewer (main):

Especially with COVID.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. Those guys make great money. When I was working, you didn't make crap. I started at \$2.05 an hour and then Congress controlled your pay raises. You might get a nickel or a dime or something and even when I left, which was in '92, I think I was only making \$13 bucks then, but those guys, they get \$25, \$26 bucks an hour now, if they have the time in, because when I started, you had to work 21 years, to get to the top pay grade. 21 Years, but then they cut it down to eight years. The money's real good now, but they're just running them in the ground and they have-

Interviewer (main):

Plus they're on a skeleton crew.

Walter James Morris:

They have these little scanners on them. Have these scanners on them and they pinpoint where you are every minute of the day.

Interviewer (main):

Oh gross.

Walter James Morris:

See when I worked, we didn't have nothing like that. They could never find us or nothing, but now-

Interviewer (main):

That's when you attach it to a cow and send it out into a field.

Walter James Morris:

Every minute, they've got you on that thing.

Interviewer (main):

That's so sick. That's such, tailorism, efficiency model and not about quality [crosstalk 01:31:31].

Walter James Morris:

I remember one day I was carrying mail and it was raining. I slipped and I didn't know at the time, I had broken my ankle. I laid there a while and it was hurting like hell. I said, "I'll do these other two houses and I'll go across the street and get all the way back to my vehicle," because what else am I going to do? I just delivered the mail and I drive back to the post office and I go in there and supervisor said, "What happened?" I said, "I slipped delivering mail, right on my ankle" and the Postmaster came out. He didn't say, "How you doing? What happened?" And the first thing he said, "Were you wearing your rain shoes?" And I had my rain shoes on and then he wanted to, "Well you're going to the doctor," I said, "No, I'm not going to your doctor. I'm waiting until my doctor comes back."

I had to sit there, because my doctor was out. They go out for an hour or two in a day and come back and I had to wait until my doctor came back. The supervisor drove me down to the doctor's office. They told me, "You fractured your ankle, go to St. Jude." Supervisor's with me the whole time. Go to St. Jude, this and that, go back to the main office. They got to get somebody to drive my car home and supervisor [inaudible 01:32:41] and when we were pulling into the parking lot, the supervisor says, "Oh, Walt, when will you be back?" I said, "Eric, you were with me the whole time, man. You see that I got a broken ankle and it's cast up to here and you're going to ask me when I'm going to come back, come on man," and then I was off and-

Interviewer (main):

That's the attitude I saw at USC. One of my girlfriends, who's African American. She slipped on wet, concrete in the stairs and hurt her back and one of the secretaries, who was in charge of her workman's comp, didn't know I was in the room and she started talking about black people and that's what they do and I walked in and I said, "Excuse me, you're in Ethnic Studies." It was an Ethnic Studies Department and she was saying stuff like that, but it was run by Mexicans. There was actually racism, that Mexicans were openly talking about, without black people around, without recognizing there's black Mexicans! There's Asian Mexicans. There's white Mexicans.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah.

Interviewer (main):

It's just really hurtful.

Walter James Morris:

There was one guy, he made a black joke or something. I was casing my mail. He would say, "I didn't say nothing." Well then later on he realized what he said. He said, "Walt, come on out here to the back dock," and he went out there and he apologized for making that joke, but he was just talking over hand. I guess he forgot I was right there, casing mail too and then he realized, turns all red, blushes. He takes me out on the back, "Hey, it is what it is, man. You apologized to me." [crosstalk 01:34:16]

Interviewer (main):

That's all you can do.

Walter James Morris:

That's all you can do. Yeah.

Interviewer (main):

I was at the Huntington Gardens with girlfriends from the Philippines and it was their birthday. I wanted to take a photo of she and her mother, and they were closing and one of the security guards said, "We're closing," and I said, "I'm just going to take their photo and then we'll leave," and they were going to the gift shop and I had to leave, because I would buy something at the gift shop and I did not want to do that.

Walter James Morris:

I'm going to get that article and I'll bring it right over here.

Interviewer (main):

And one of the security guards said, "I really want to say, I'm sorry about the other security guy making you guys leave," and I said, "No big deal. It's Sunday, I get it, closing," and he said, "Well, you know how Asians are."

Walter James Morris:

This was when they honored some of the blacks.

Interviewer (main):

Oh yes, we have this.

Walter James Morris:

That was a long time... Oh you got that one?

Interviewer (main):

Yes. You're in here.

Walter James Morris:

Well, the name is in there, yeah.

Interviewer (main):

That's it and we have the book and Lawrence De Graaf. Did you meet Dr. De Graaf?

Walter James Morris:

There's a lady who was 105 years. Roxie Jones. 111 years old, when she-

Interviewer (main):

I have to take a photo of this. May we come back next week and finish this interview?

Walter James Morris:

Sure.

Interviewer (main):

I feel like we're in part one of it.

Walter James Morris:

Let me see if-

Interviewer (main):

Because now that I have all of the small details, I'm going to do a research and then we can come back and ask you more specific things, if you're available, Mr. Morris.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah. I'm available. That's one thing I got, is time. Now this is when they reopened Maple School and they did an article and my grandson got to go there.

Interviewer (main):

Lynette Morris.

Walter James Morris:

Oh yeah. That's my brother's daughter.

Interviewer (main):

Oh, that's amazing.

Walter James Morris:

She's a CEO of some company out there. Smart girl.

Interviewer (main):

We need to take a photo of your wedding photos too. His son Curtis Morris. Walter Morris.

Walter James Morris:

That's my son, with his son.

Interviewer (main):

How do you say his son's name? Jamari.

Walter James Morris:

Jamarja.

Interviewer (main):

Jamarja.

Walter James Morris:

We all call him Malik though. That's his middle name. His mom gave him the Jamarja

Interviewer (main):

This is great.

Walter James Morris:

Yeah, because... See now, this is some more articles on Mrs. Jones her life [crosstalk 01:36:32].

Interviewer (main):

Look at all the stuff you've saved. This is beautiful.

Speaker 2:

Awesome.

Walter James Morris:

And that old lady was a sharp, sharp lady, like I said, boy. She still knew what was going on and everything.

Interviewer (main):

One of my older friends, she's 94 and she remembers being in Poland with her mother, in '33 and her brother saw a picture of Hitler on the wall and went [inaudible 01:36:55] and his mother had to rush and say, "Don't do that to me. Don't make fun of your mother," they would've put him in jail. He didn't understand the severity of doing that to a Hitler photo.

This transcript was exported on Sep 18, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

Walter James Morris:

Real quick like, I'll show you my dad's family. Remember, I told you I was going to show you [crosstalk 01:37:12].

Yes, yes. Yes. Let me just turn off the camera then.

Speaker 2:

Do you want me to turn off this video?

Interviewer (main):

Yes, just shut it off.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:37:18]