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Oral History Interview on Education/Instruccion, part 1

Julia R. Grenier

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Location: at her home in Arizona, via phone

Recording format: digital audio

File name: GrenierJuliaRamos_interview20091114.mp3

Length: 1:49:18

Transcribed by: Jasmin Agosto

Additional files: none

Abstract: Dr. Julia Ramos Grenier recalls her time working as co-director of Education/Instruccion, a civil rights advocacy group based in Hartford, Connecticut. As a young Puerto Rican woman, she speaks about how she met the other co-directors (Boyd Hinds and Ben Dixon, at Westledge School in West Simsbury) and their work on challenging institutional racism and housing discrimination. She also describes obtaining her prior role with anti-poverty programs, earning her PhD in psychology, her work with multicultural consulting at The Travelers insurance company, her time with the Hartford Community Mental Health Center, her studies with Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, and her interactions with other Hispanic community leaders in Hartford.

Additional Comments: This is the first of two interviews. Submitted as part of the [OnTheLine web-book](http://OnTheLine.trincoll.edu) by Jack Dougherty and colleagues (<http://OnTheLine.trincoll.edu>).

Speaker key:

JA: Jasmin Agosto

JRG: Julia Ramos Grenier

[all comments by transcriber in brackets]

JA: Why did you decide to go to Arizona?

JRG: ...Mostly for health reasons. I was hit by a car back in 86 I think it was, when I was crossing the street, and...my knees are kind of messed up. My doctor said I could delay knee replacement if I moved to a climate like this so we came.

JA: I've never been to Arizona but I've always wanted to go

JRG: It's great...when you guys are getting snow and ice and all that stuff, in the day time it's 60 degrees...it is a dry heat

JA: ...Ever since I went to Cape Town, SA, I've been interested in camping...the mountains, camping and all that stuff...I was never used to that. I grew up in West Hartford and my family was never into that...

JRG: You should come out West some time!

JA: I'm thinking of going on a cross country trip sometime...convert a vehicle to veggie oil and just run...explore...So I wanted to just start off by letting you know who I am and why I am interested in all of this. I grew up in West Hartford. I started working in schools in the North End of Hartford. I started at Milner when I was in 10th grade trying to teach a creative writing class. It was a mess but I love it. I loved the kids, I loved the people I was working with I met women who were a part of Hands off Assata at the time, something that was inspiring and I was a part of a community and I came to Trinity basically because I wanted to build off of the organizing that I was doing...In high school I started organizing these collectivist events...getting all these sorts of different folks together getting like a pot luck dinner and an open mic and just kind of gathering people, networking kind of thing and then I came to Trinity and I started taking Educational Studies and started learning about how messed up the educational system was and that I had been tracked all this time. I had allowed into AP classes or not for a certain reasons, I saw myself growing up in such a different neighborhood then my friends in Hartford and I was just like, what's going on here? And I was realizing that I hadn't learned at all about my own people. I'm Puerto Rican...and the struggles that people had been through in a multi-facted way, I guess. It had been so black and white.

JRG: And your parent's ended up living in West Hartford, huh?

JA: Yeah, they...we moved from Boston in '95 and they are both educators. My mom is a bilingual resource teacher in New Britain. My dad is now the Dean of Hartford Seminary and he was doing the Hispanic Studies over there and New Testament. And they were very much into schools and they were able to get a house in West Hartford. And growing up I never felt like I was a part of a community really because our house was just like this house on a street and I kind of was like where are my people at? What's going on? Conard, the high school that I went to was relatively mixed but a lot of the kids didn't live in my neighborhood per say so it was kind of a struggle for me growing up in West Hartford and then coming to Hartford I met all these people and I live here now and I just feel like I am so much more a part of something...I want to be a local historian and build on a center. I know in the 90s they had a Hartford Black History Project and I guess in like '96 it started to fade away and I kinda want to revive something like that but do it not just Black history but like Black and Latino history because I think in Hartford those are the major groups of people. I know those are such big...cause you know there's West Indians, there's a lot of Peruvians and Colombians and it's such a diverse...and there's a lot of recent refugees from Somalia and Bosnia and stuff like that but. I really want to impact and push against that the system is working right now and I'm trying to gather those resources right now and those tools of how to do that. So here I am with you. I was working with a professor of mine who is working on a book basically about cities and

suburbs and schooling...schooling and property...we came across Education/Instruccion and we were just fascinated...

JRG: How did you come across E and I?

JA: Well, I know that Jack, my professor, I think he came across you guys in one of the court cases you showed up in and then he found...some of your reports, the housing stuff, in DC. And then we found all of them in the CT Fair Housing Center. And then I was like, you know what, this is the group I want to study...do research on and I've only found...the reports are the most complete thing that we've found and I know that you guys did more than housing so I'm really interested in expanding my idea of what you guys really did and who you guys were and why you guys even came about.

JRG: Have you been able to find Ben Dixon?

JA: Yeah, I called his house, I found his home number through Virginia Tech...but he hasn't responded to me so Imma try again and maybe see

JRG: The number was good? You left a message?

JA: Yeah, I left a message so

JRG: Because we lost touch so I don't know what he's doing, where he's living, that kind of thing...and I'm sure he doesn't know where I am either...well you know, find anybody on the internet

JA: When was the last time you guys spoke?

JRG: Oh my goodness...you know I can't even remember. After Boyd passed away and I knew he was heading south was my understanding, but after that I don't know anything else...We basically lost touch.

...(skype drops call)...

JRG: Why don't we go ahead and do this interview so that in case we lose touch again here Now your first question is my name and position in Education/Instruccion. Well, my name is Julia Ramos Grenier. At that time it was Julia Ramos. And then I later married and became Julia Ramos McKay and then I divorced that husband and now I'm Julia Ramos Grenier. Now, when I was at E and I was Julia Ramos, basically, and my position was as a Co-Director of E/I. Now how did we get started? That is such a convoluted thing. I was working at Travelers Insurance at the International Department because of my language facilities and I remember being contacted by Boyd I believe, Boyd Hinds at the time...and you have to remember this was a long time ago so some of my memory is a little fuzzy on some of things...anyway he contacted me and asked me if I would be interested in working with them at a school that of basically white individuals had put together. It was a private school called Westledge School in West Simsbury and they

wanted to know if I would be interested in talking to them about maybe doing something with them. So I met with him. I think it was lunch or something like that. We met and talked and I liked what they were talking about. They basically had come together and this was a group of white individuals who I think were feeling a deal of white guilt, the fact that they were privileged. You know they came from you know affluent backgrounds. They had come together to form this school that was going to be pretty diverse and offer an education for I believe it was high school level at that time and I liked their philosophy because it was very open and inclusive and they were talking about doing things with different minority groups. They were giving scholarships to Hispanic and Black individuals to come to that private school in West Simsbury. So I went to work there. And there I met besides Boyd all of the other individuals who had founded that school, all of the teachers, and Ben was also teaching at that school.

JA: Boyd had called you. How did you know Boyd before?

JRG: I'm not sure how he found me.

JA: So you didn't know him previously?

JRG: You know what, I wasn't at Travelers, no, I was at the Poor People's Federation. I recall correctly now. I went from Travelers to the Poor People's Federation and I was the Assistant Director. That was a one of those anti-poverty program that was funded back in the 60s to improve the inner city, blah blah blah. And this one was supposed to generate more employment opportunities and get individuals from the inner city kind of more training and geared towards working and I was a deputy director of that and I think that's how Boyd heard about me. Because he wanted to know if I was interested in what they were doing and I said yes. So I went to Westledge School and that's where Boyd was working and also Ben. So that's where I met them. We started talking. And Boyd had a much higher level of need to do something that was meaningful than some of the other people that had founded their school. They were happy and their white guilt was basically assuaged by opening this school. Boyd wasn't. And his wife Wendy also was very much in agreement with him. They wanted to do something more. And as Boyd and Ben and I started talking together, we started generating ideas about what could be done in terms of eliminating racism. And that was really our basic breast. And the philosophy behind E/I was to eliminate racism wherever it existed. Institutional racism in particular. So we talked and worked together and decided to break off from Westledge and found this new entity that would be called...and we kind of hustled around with names and we finally came up with a name that was bilingual. That really reflected an educational perspective. We thought that this would be much more amenable to schools, companies, etc. if we had kind of an educative perspective. So we called it Education/Instrucción to reflect the fact that education and instruction are basically the same kind of word and we wanted it in Spanish and English but we didn't want to say Education/Educacion, you know that sounded redundant. And the logo, then we worked with an artist and I don't know if you've seen the logo. Did you ever find the logo?

JA: I don't think I've actually have seen it

JRG: It's been stolen since then in many ways but it was kind of a hexagon with hands grabbing on top each other and the hands were yellow white and black. They kind of formed a little kind of a pattern of those hands holding the top of each hand in a circular frame. That was our logo. And we wanted to again have E/I promote a very multi-cultural kind of image in the community and the people that we wanted to work with. So, and the funding from this came solely from Boyd Hinds and Wendy's family.

JA: Really?

JRG: Yeah, they funded it. There was no way that anybody was going to fund this. And, again, they came from very affluent backgrounds and Wendy's family had some kind of trust fund or something that they could tap. So basically, they funded salaries for the three of us and the salaries were equal because we wanted to make sure there was no disparity in terms of income. We found offices and we got letterhead. We did all of that stuff and still our idea was to go out there and develop these training programs that would educate companies in particular about institutional racism so that they could then become aware and eliminate it within their own entities. I remember working in our office. We started taking a look at all of the different offices working in the Hartford area, banks for example and other institutions. And we started linking. We did a link up. On the walls we put down all of the Boards of Directors names and then realized that some of these people were on each other's Boards. So we started linking them with colored yarn and it was amazing to see in this small room how the spider web of link ups of the same white men. It was just amazing to do that kind of visual kind of image of how these same men ran almost all of the companies. They sat on each other's Boards, they knew each other, we comfortable with each other and so on. So we realized that there was a very incestuous kind of relationship among all of these institutions that had money behind them. So, we started going to these companies and saying that...we were going to do training for their staff...white collar workers, whatever, in order to make them more aware of racism, discrimination, prejudice, and how they could get rid of this within their institutions. And they look at their institutional practices and see how they could eliminate it. Well, needless to say they weren't interested. They had no need to do that. We kind of batted our heads against the wall for a while with that. There was no giving. As a matter of fact, I remember being invited to a meeting of the Council of Governments which was again this white group of men who sat on this one board from all of these institutions and basically made all of these rules for what was going on in terms of business. And I remember, the three of us were invited Ben, Boyd, and I to meet with them. And they basically tried to buy us out. They offered us a lot of money. To cease and desist. Because as we were doing this we were also going in the news and making statements about what companies were receptive, what were not and exposing some of their institutional racist practices that they engaged in and they didn't like that. So, they basically wanted us to go away and offered us money to do that and we just said no. And so we continued our approach but we started to take a look at specifics. So one of the things we decided to do was to go and buy a share in each of these companies so we could go to the stock holders meetings. And so when the meeting would come about we would go to the meeting as shareholders and we would stand up and talk about the

institutional racist practices of the company. Again, they didn't like that very much but they couldn't keep us from buying the stock. So that was one of the things that we did. As we did all this, a number of people started coming out of the woodwork. We would get calls from some of the employees from some of these companies to give us information about what was going on in the company that was racist in nature. And many many people began to feel an affinity for E/I. Openly they may not have said so but they were feeding us and giving us not only information but support as well. A number of other people became very openly affiliated in participating in E/I and came to the meetings. I know for a while our phones we tapped. The government, yeah. The way we found out was basically someone from community, because our offices were in the inner city, the North End of Hartford, it was the corner of Albany Avenue and I forget what, Vine Street I think, and a person walked in and asked to use the phone from the community that day and we said sure and he picked it up and you know having been involved with the criminal justice a number of times he knew that the phone was tapped. He picked it up and started dialing and says "Oh my God, you're tapped!" and he ran out of the place. And so after that you know, it was just like a joke for us, you know we would pick up the phone, answer the phone, talk to people, say, you know "Watch out what you say because we're being tapped." And we never did anything about that we just allowed it to go on. We knew that they were FBI dalliers and files had been built about each one of us in particular because you know, we were being seen as a possible subversive group. They wanted to keep an eye out to make sure we didn't start engaging in bombs and things like that. So, the group really started to expand E/I. We were still the Co-Directors and we were the ones that basically made the policy decisions but other people started to come in and be supportive and volunteer to work in our offices, put posters up, set up flyers, whatever it was that we needed to do to inform people of things that we were becoming aware of. The papers loved us and they basically would try and do stories because we were a little controversial, especially for those times. The other thing that happened was that we started, this support group that we had started to bring us information about redlining. The real estate companies were beginning to become exposed, become obvious in the fact that they were steering people to certain neighborhoods who wanted to buy homes. Now they had been doing this for years. But the group of people working with us had started to realize how discriminatory and racist this was. And so they started bring in this information. So we looked at that we said, you know, let's do something about it. So we started putting together some test groups. We would send out couples. We would send out single people of different colors, nationalities, to different real estate companies in the Hartford area, including West Hartford, East Hartford, and so on. And we would pose as people who wanted to rent or buy a property. And I remember going out with a Hispanic male and we posed as a couple that barely spoke English, you know, our English was supposedly very minimal to a West Hartford real estate company. We walked in and basically made known through gestures and a little bit of English that we wanted to buy a house in West Harford. And I remember the receptionist there. She was very cordial, very friendly but I remember a guy in the back yells out to her, "If you yell at them they'll understand you better." He actually said that. All I could do to hang on to my friend who was with me so he wouldn't jump over and attack this man. But basically we were steered to the North End of Hartford and the South End of Hartford. Shown houses and given listings in these two locations. All of this we taped. We all carried tape recorders in

our bags and we taped all of what they said. We got enough of those. I mean we had almost all of the real estate companies were found to be steering.

JA: I actually have a lot of that stuff. All the written up stuff. From the Barrows and Wallace case in particular we found like almost 200 pages worth of stuff.

JRG: All of that we accumulated came back to the office and transcribed the tapes and did all of this de-briefing stuff. So much so that we took all of this and the Justice Department decided to sue these companies for steering. Needless to say it didn't come to very much because they settled. But they were supposed to cease and desist. Well, you know, haha. It just became a little more quiet and underwater about it, that's all. But it had made an impact and a splash and people again to take a look at us and say you know, maybe these people have something to it. Around about this time I think the three of us started to realize that we wanted to go in different directions. I became more interested in psychology, you know, personally became interested. I had been involved in education. I thought and actually even ran for the Board of Education in Hartford but was basically destroyed and my campaign was destroyed not by the system, although it was indirectly the system, but actually by my own community. The Hispanic leaders were very threatened by an educated Hispanic woman. These leaders had been there, nibbling away at the little crumb that had been thrown at them by the system. And that was the thing that killed the three of us most... We saw our community being happy with being thrown a few crumbs from the pie and thinking, oh, now we have a share. What were saying was well, where is the rest of the pie. We wanted a big slice of the pie and they were happy, these so-called leaders of the Hispanic and Black community, were happy with just the little crumbs that were being thrown to them. They thought that that made them participatory. And we said you're being bought out, essentially. And so I wanted to become part of that system and try and do something about education from within...

(gets cut off)

Basically the leaders of the community decided to go against that and because they wanted more representation by this one woman who had been known in the community for many many years, Maria Sanchez. Maria had a 6th grade education. And she was a nice old lady but educationly she was not prepared. I had a college education. And thought that I was a little bit better prepared than she was to work on the Board of Education about education. But Maria also had a little store where people came to and I later found out that there were also kind of illegal things that were going on in that little store of her that gave her the support from certain types. In any case, she ended up on the Board of Education. I got a little disenchanted by that and decided I was going to go away from education where all of the so-called Hispanic and black leaders were and now becoming more perforated and going to an area where there weren't very many of us. And psychology became that area for me. And so, I decided to go back. I knew I needed to go back and get a higher degree. And I started thinking of the Masters and I started the University of Hartford. That was another trip. Because I went to the University of Hartford and applied they rejected me. They said that my GRE scores were not high enough. Same thing happened at the University of Connecticut where I had graduated

with honors. I got my B.A. with honors and I applied to their psych degree and they told me not to bother to even apply because I would never make it through a PhD in psychology based on my GRE scores.

JA: Quote unquote, based on your GRE scores.

JRG: Mhm, exactly. That's what it was all about. So I even went to the president of the University of Connecticut at the time and made a complaint. Nothing came of it. You know, he was distressed. But nothing ever came of it. With the University of Hartford I became a little more proactive and I said, you know, you are all out there. And you know at this time they were saying they wanted diverse students and all that stuff. So I said, you know, you are advertising about diversity and yet you have a Hispanic woman who wants to apply and you're not even giving her an opportunity to show that she can or can't do it. And so, I said I think the media will be very interested in this. And because I was E/I and we had been in the media, they decided to give me a chance. And so they said that if I could make up all the credits that I didn't have in psychology over the summer and passed them, then they would consider in taking me into their masters program. And so I did that and I passed them.

JA: How many classes did you have to take?

JRG: That summer I took a minor in Psychology. I actually ended up with enough credits for a minor in psych. And I did it and I passed it and they had to take me but there was always that kind of cold approach to me because I had gotten there in a way that they didn't like. And so I did the classes and I finished the first year and then I realized that you know, a masters was not going to make it. I needed to have the PhD. I didn't want people to tell me what to do, I wanted to be the one deciding. So I decided to apply to the University of Massachusetts. Unfortunately, the University of Hartford didn't send my grades on time. So I missed the applications for that one year and had to wait to that next year. So the second year, I decided I was not going to go to the University of Hartford and take the full course load because the University of Massachusetts was not going to accept my master degree from the University of Hartford because there was no thesis. It was only orals. And the University of Massachusetts required a written thesis. So I said, I'd waste my time and money in getting a masters in University of Hartford if it wasn't going to be accepted anyway. So I just took a couple of courses, advanced statistics, experimental design, that I knew I would need at UMass and then didn't do any more of that and then re-applied the following year and was accepted because UMass was proactively seeking a diverse population of students and they did not look at GRE scores, they looked at experience and they looked at my E/I experience and went wow! And took me. And not only was I a student there in their PhD program, but they also waved all of the core courses I had taken at the University of Hartford, even though I didn't get credit for them, they were waved so I didn't have to re-do then and then I could take other courses. So I ended up finishing that program in less time than anyone had ever finished their program. So I did all of my course work in 4 years including my internship and got my PhD.

JA: 4 years?! Wow.

JRG: Yes. Because they allowed me to wave those courses. All I needed was to get the credits I needed to get the PhD and they were also willing to let me do the kind of Masters and PhD dissertation that I wanted to do. It had to do with multiculturalism and ethnic kinds of questions and issues. So, I was able to graduate from there. But as you can see, it was not an easy task. That was the direction I decided to take. Ben on the other hand decided, again, to get more involved with education and attack the institution of racist practices from that perspective. Boyd decided to go under the direction going into the system again, because our approach was always not to beat on the door from the outside even though we had to start that way sometimes but to try and get inside and change them from within then from without and so he decided to run for the legislature and see if he could make some changes and make a difference in that perspective. And so he did get elected and he did that for a while and then realized after a while that it just was beating his head against a wall that was not going to yield and so eventually he decided not to run for office again and started to spending more time with his family, because they were growing up at this time and he wanted to spend more time with his children. So, basically we kind of dispersed. E/I got kind of taken over by another group of people and they moved it to, I think it was Massachusetts and I think it was incorporated in Massachusetts. Part of that became fuzzy for me because I was spending so much time on my own studies. I didn't have that much time to spend on what was going on with E/I at that point. And we were still the directors and we still met once a year to have the required annual meeting of the Board. But we were not, I was not and Ben was not that directly involved in E/I. There were other people now doing things. And they were doing kind of replicating the same kind of real estate things in Massachusetts and I think the last meeting I had was with Ben and Boyd's children who are now grown up. I think it was when Boyd passed away that they wanted to meet and see if E/I would continue and in what form and we basically said. Ben and I said that we could not continue but if they wanted to do that they could. Not sure whether they ended up doing that or not. That was kind of the end of the E/I threesome. The three of us. A lot of people referred to us, you know, back then as the Mod Squad because I don't know if you ever saw that TV show; it was an actual TV show called the Mod Squad. It was a threesome that did investigations of murders and things like that, I think they were cops, I'm not sure. But one was a white female, one was a black male, and one was a white male.

(cuts off)

They used to call us the Mod Squad because we were, you know, we kind of represented that little threesome on TV. People identified us with that. When they saw us coming, they said oh there goes the Mod Squad. Because, you know, when they saw us coming, they always expected some kind of problem or issue to arise. And it usually did. That's kind of in a nutshell the history of E/I. What else do you need to know?

JA: Well I'm really curious as okay, obviously you guys started talking, you were interested in this, but what kind of even got you interested in doing this kind of work? How did you grow up? Where are you from? What schools did you go to? What organizations were you part of before E/I?

JRG: Well, I'm Puerto Rican. And I was brought up til the age of 8 in Puerto Rico and then my dad was in the army. We started travelling with him. We went to France for 2 years when I was 8. There I went from Puerto Rico to France so my first language was Spanish. There was a little bit of English that was required in school in Puerto Rico but I did not speak English. We went to France and there was no American school there so I went to French school. So my second language is French. And I became fluent in French and I also, with my sister, would go to the movies every Saturday and the American army had a movie that town that we were living in. So we would go to the American movies that Saturday. So we learned English by watching the American movies. And the reason we said that we learned English is because from France we moved to Oklahoma after a brief stay in Puerto Rico in between then we ended up in Oklahoma. And I was by that time 10 years old and we, my sister and I did understand English but we had not been educated in it so our writing of English and our reading of English was a little less formal but we went to this school in Oklahoma and they said oh, you've never been to an American school. Never realizing that Puerto Rico is part of the American system, but they decided to put me and my sister, my sister at that time was like 8 ½ and I was 10 and they put both of us in the 1st grade because we had never been to an American school and you know that was bad enough for a 10 year old to be in 1st grade but then they started pulling both of us out to give us speech and give us help, extra help and all that. Luckily for us there was no special ed in those days because we would have got labeled in some way and tracked in a different way but there was no special ed in those days. This was in the 50s you have to realize. And so we just got pulled from class a lot to be given extra and so forth and they realized that I was doing okay so they moved me to the 3rd grade and my sister to the 2nd grade. And I could understand everything the teacher said at that point. I could even write in English but I became an elected mute because it was so traumatizing to me that I would write notes to the teacher in English but I would not speak in school. I would speak on the way to school and I would speak on the way to school but I would not utter a word in school for that whole entire year until they left me alone and realized that there was nothing really wrong with me other than I didn't speak and they left me in my 4th grade and then I started speaking. And from that point on nobody bothered me. But that whole first year in that so-called American school in Oklahoma was a very traumatic experience. And then from there we moved around. We went Illinois we went to Germany. My junior year I decided to go a year abroad and I went through Wagner College in Staten Island because they would send 60 students every year to Bergins, Austria for a year to a school that they had established there where...the students would be amerced in the Austrian culture and they would be given classes there and you know college classes. And I had already spoke German because I had lived in Germany. So I thought Austria made sense. And so I spent a year there and then I came back and then I came back and finished my last year at University of Connecticut...I graduated from high school in Hanao, actually in Frankford, Germany because we went to the high school in Frankford, Germany, the American Army high school. And that's where I graduated from high school. So college we came back and my dad was assigned to a little post in Connecticut, Hartford, Manchester, actually East Hartford. He sat and received all of the retiring or all of the army personnel that were leaving the army, he would get all their gear and drive it up to Massachusetts...that was

his job. And then he retired from that and we stayed in Manchester, we lived in Manchester. and I went to Manchester Community College for two years. And then from there, went to Bergen, Austria for my junior year and then I came back for my last year and finished up at the University of Connecticut. Okay, so kind of convoluted, but it's my history. When I left college, University of Connecticut, my whole idea was to go out and kind of help society and do things I felt were important. So I started working in the anti-poverty programs. I started in Community Renewal Team. I don't know if it is still there.

JA: I think it might be. I don't know if it's that large, but I think it's still around.

JRG: The was the big anti-poverty programs in the Hartford area. That was the biggest one and I became a program writer...you know, basically funding proposals to get money to do different things. Then from there I went to the Poor People's Federation as the assistant. And then from there I went to, and I did do a stint at Traveler's, that was right after college, before I went to Poor People's Federation, and then from Poor People's Federation to Westledge School. And that's where I met Boyd and Ben. And that's where E and I came from. Then when I finished my PhD work I...did my internship at the Institute of Living. And so they asked me to stay on staff after my internship and I did that. And I was working there when again a group of so-called self selected Puerto Rican community leaders came to me and asked me if I would be interested in heading the brand new Hartford Community Mental Health Center that had just received funding. What basically they had was the proposal, the funds, and nothing else. That intrigued me so I said sure. And I became the Executive Director of the Hartford Community Mental Health Center. I was the one that rented the buildings, bought the furniture, hired the staff, developed the policies, put the whole thing together. And that was a very traumatic experience also. As I did that and got the whole program going, and you have to realize I don't know if it's still the case, but Hartford Community Mental Health Center had satellite offices. It wasn't one place. It had two or three and then it went back to the two and the funding was cut back but we had three satellite offices out in the city. So that I had to have staff out there and I had to supervise and make sure that everything ran. I had a Board of Directors made up of community leaders and the president of the Board was to put it very kind of mildly, a psychopath. You know, he considered himself a mover and a shaker. He got fired from that job and decided that he wanted my job.

(cuts off)

He decided he wanted my job essentially. And he and his wife were both on the Board. His wife had been one of the people who had come to me to ask me if I could do this job and I had considered her a friend. Kind of distant, not close friend. An acquaintance. But he decided he wanted this job, because he had been fired from his job and she, his wife, was promoting that. So they basically started to undermine my authority. They started to micromanage me in terms of the Executive Director's position. I tried to work with them. I tried to get them to back off and let me...do what I needed to do but they continued to do that and put so much pressure that I decided that it was time for me to go, reign. I did have a meeting with the Director of Mental Health, the Commissioner of Mental Health for the state of Connecticut, who was a psychiatrist and I met with her and told her that I

was resigning. She was absolutely livid. When I told her what was going on and she basically said, she wanted me to reconsider, but even if I stayed away, he would never have the opportunity to have that job. And that's what happened. I did resign, but he never got the job and actually was drummed out the Board of Directors of the Community Mental Health Center. He and his wife left. And so now as far as I know the Hartford Community Mental Health Center is doing okay.

JA: It might be called the Hispanic Health Center?

JRG: No. That's a different entity....That was also what this women, this man's wife also did. She was on staff there. The Hispanic Health Center. No. The Hartford Community Mental Health Center is not run by the Hispanic community. It's a city-wide program. And it's funded in part, or at least was by the state. So you might want to take a look at what it's doing now but I am the one that started that program, from a piece of paper and a budget.

JA: Just to go back a little bit. You had said you left UHart and you were kind of like, I want to help out society in some capacity.

JRG: University of Connecticut, that was before I went back to school to do the psych retraining. I had a BA in the liberal arts degree at that point. And I went to the Community Mental Health Center and then I went to, I think I did the stint of Travelers in between and then I went to the Poor People's Federation. Again, I'm 63 years old so my memory is a little fuzzy with these things that happen. But I think that's basically, and when I was back at E and I, I decided to go back to and get trained in psychology and I went to University of Hartford and then to UMass. Interestingly enough, after I finished my PhD, was at the Institute of Living, was at the Hartford Community Mental Health Center, left the Hartford Community Health Center and decided to go into private practice, this psychiatrist came to me and asked me if I would be interested in starting a psychiatric clinic with him in the inner city of Hartford and I said sure and so at Community Health Services, okay, which is a different entity then the other, he and I started a psychiatric clinic on Monday nights where we would go together and we would see patients with no appointments. They would come in and they would be seen. They would get medications if needed. I would talk to them, do some very brief therapy with them. And this was every single Monday evening. And this is part of the work that I did. While I was doing my training in psych and then while I was at the Institute of Living also and then when I decided to leave the Community Mental Health Center I went into private practice. I continued the clinic on Monday nights. That was voluntary by the way. We didn't get paid for that. And I did that for I think it was 15 years. Yeah, 'cause I have a plaque that they gave me to thank me. Evans Daniels was the director of the Community Health Services at that time. He was a black physician that had started that clinic in the North End of Hartford right on Albany Avenue. So I was in private practice after I left the Hartford Community Mental Health Center and I was married to my first husband at that time and the same psychiatrist that had come to me about Community Health Services asked me if I was interested in doing some work with the Hartford Police Department cause and the chief were talking about developing some psychological

services within the Hartford Police Department. So I met with him and Bernie Sullivan, who was the Chief of Police at that time and the three of us decided that I would be hired by the Hartford Police Department and I would become the first ever Behavioral Sciences unit Director in the Hartford Police Department. And so, Hartford the only was the only and I think to date still is the only one that ever had an in-house psychology service. All of the other police department had out of house contractual services with outside companies or vendors for employee assistance. But we had our own in-house Behavioral Sciences unit which had a employee assistance arm to it. And so as part of doing that job I needed to know more about police work so I convinced Bernie that I needed to go through the Police Academy with the recruits as if I were a recruit. And so I went through they 20, I think it was 26 weeks of training with the brand new recruit class. I did all of the training, I was in the classroom, I was crawling through burning buildings with them, I was running 5 miles, I was boxing with them, I went to the range and I had to shoot a gun. I did all of it. But when I finished the training with that class the decision was I couldn't be out and be a patrol officer because that would not work. Being a patrol officer would put me under the direction of sergeants and lutenants and captains so that wouldn't work. So Bernie established this very new rule that was I was half civilian half police and I had a badge...and I was at the level of a gold shield so that I could directly report to Bernie and only Bernie. And no one else. Because this hierarchy and if you're underneath, at the bottom of the hierarchy then you have to go through ranks and I couldn't do that being the police psychologist. So, he created this brand new role in the police department and I was to directly report to Bernie, who was the Chief of Police. And I had an office in the police office, headquarters. I went out and road with the police, did shift work with them. I went through the whole thing just to learn more about it. And we became one of the most successful I think, service, because people were saying, you know, they're not going to come to you. You're not only a civilian, you're a woman, and you're a psychologist, and you're a minority. But you're also in-house. You're right there in the police department. Nobody's going to come see you. Well, we proved them long. I was able to yank a police officer. And that's how he puts it, I yanked him out of the, he was in traffic division, but he was also one of the peer counselors because they had had a developed peer counselor group...they were understressed. But it was not very well organized. It was just police officers that helped each other. Well I yanked him out of traffic and I made him the director of the employee assistance program. He is now my husband. Yeah. Because I had divorced my husband when I was beginning my work in the police department and he had lost his wife and so we came together and we worked together everyday and then we became friends and then we married. So we developed an extremely viable and helpful program that was supported by all of the police officers and also by the different factions because there was Black police officers association and a Hispanic police officers association as well. And as part of the work that I did it was to meet with Bernie the chief and help him to understand issues about race relations and diversity issues in terms of male female because women were still kind of a new thing in the police department at that time. And so they were not that well accepted yet. And they still aren't to some extent.

JA: Was this in the 80s or the 90s, 80s, late 80s?

JRG: This was in the 80s. Yeah. So you know, E and I continued to kind of guide my work and has through time. I've gone on to be, have been very active in the American Psychological Association, our national organization in Washington D.C. I've held different positions there. I've been the chair of the ethics committee, I've been the chair of Board of social ethical responsibility. I've been the chair of committee on legal issues. I'm now sitting on a committee that establishes standards in psychology. So again, from within, I've decided to do that kind of work, rather than doing it from without. And APA has gone through a lot of changes and has become very committed, not just because of me, but because many of us minorities working within APA has changed and had become very committed to diversity issues and multi-culturalism as an organization. And they have made sure there has been, for example, on slates, that there positions that can only be filled by ethnic minorities psychologists so that there is diversity within all of the committees and boards of APA and I worked with APA on that and if you call APA and you ask for psychologists who are able to give talks or training to talk to the media about issues of racism, for example, they'll give you my name. I'm one of the people listed by as one of the people that does that. So I've been very very active and again, E/I's philosophy and all of the experiences and the learning that I did with E/I has continued to affect the things that I do with my work and with myself. Um, Sure there's lots more that I could tell you but...

JA: Can I just; I'm just going to ask you this one question. Thinking back to that kind, that feeling that you got, after you left UCONN and you said, I wanted to affect change in society, and you talk of this philosophy of, this idea that you guys wanted to eliminate racism in way that you could. Where do you think that came from? Do you think that came from travelling and seeing all these kinds of people and your experiences in school, you family?

JRG: For me it did. But I think it kind of took form and shape when I got together with Ben and Boyd. That's when we started to talk about our own personal experiences, mine and Ben's in particular. Boyd was very interested in what we had to go through to get where we were and then of course also Boyd's experience as a privileged white male and having to deal with those issues and the three of us did a lot of talking. And out of this talking came this idea, this concept that it's institutional racism that we need to take a look at, yeah individual prejudice and racism does exist but if everyone were to leave every single institution in this country and their policies and procedures remain, those institutions, without the people, would continue to be racist unless you change those institutional policies. And that's where our thinking started to come into being. Now, at the same time, and I forgot to mention this, I was also reading and studying about ideas from people like Paulo Freire.

(cuts off)

JA: I'm sorry you broke up, Paulo Freire? So Pedagogy of the Oppressed?

JRG: E/I gave me the opportunity to go to Mexico to study with Paulo Freire for 6 weeks.

JA: Wow.

JRG: So I essentially sat at the man's knee and learned about his method of *concentricación*. And one of the aspects that I learned about was teaching literacy to these farm workers and brought that back with me and then went to the tobacco farm workers, to the tobacco farm owners actually and said, these people, many of them are illiterate and I can develop, I have a program that I can develop to teach them how to read. They all thought, oh, wonderful. They didn't know that part of that method was Paulo Freire's method of *concentricación*, which is to raise the consciousness of the worker and in the process of learning how to read, they learned about their oppression and what happened was that on the day of graduation, all these men, basically, because they were all men tobacco workers, they had learned how to read in the process. They could read and they wrote and they brought into the graduation ceremony that we had for them, this wrapped up scroll and they stood there and unraveled the scroll on the floor, it was like yards and yards and yards long and it was a written contract of all of the things that the tobacco owners required of them and that they had no say in. That led to them staging a strike. All of the tobacco workers went on strike at that particular camp.

JA: Do you remember when this was?

JRG: Oh my gosh, it was back in the, late 60s early 70s, somewhere around there, I think it was probably the 70s. Needless to say I got thrown out of the tobacco...I was asked never to come back to teach literacy again. But I showed, because one of the challenges that Paulo Freire had given to me was to go and see if this method of teaching literacy that he had developed would work with Puerto Ricans, because he had said that the Puerto Rican reality and existence has been in history has been very different from those of other Latin American groups. And actually, that's what I ended up doing my dissertation on. And I don't know if you've read my dissertation, but my dissertation had to do with basically the difference in the way that Puerto Ricans have developed in terms of their reality and where as Cubans and all other Latin American groups and Hispanic groups in history have staged a revolution of some kind and have become basically independent. Puerto Rico tried to do that and was unsuccessful. So because Puerto Rico has never been independent. It gained its independence by Spain but quickly taken over by the United States. And my thesis basically was that...independent identity, especially those who had brought up in Puerto Rico, this kind of duality, where we looked

(cuts off)

...to higher being or higher power to guide of and take care of like a parental figure. Puerto Rico is very dependent and the personalities structure that you have tends to be that way. A very dependent kind of personality development. And you can read about that, if you want, in my dissertation, and stuff

JA: Could you send that to? Your dissertation? Or is it like a large large file?

JRG: Yeah, it's large. It's probably on microfiche somewhere...but it basically had to do with that so that came from Paulo Freire. Of course I was reading lots of other things as well at

that time, in trying to expand my knowledge and my vision, so *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was certainly one of the things, books that I said was my Bible, by Paulo Freire. The other one was, oh, I just blanked on his name, um, who also talked about the oppression of the masses. I'm blanking on his name. But, you know, very well known writer. It's on the tip of my tongue and I can't remember. But all of those kind of subversive writers, because Paulo Freire was thrown out of Brazil because of his philosophy and writing and took, I think at that time when I met him was in, I think he was living in Chile. But anyway, and I think that was also tenuous because he was also creating problems with the Chilean government there. Because of his teachings and philosophy. I think he ended up in Switzerland, if I'm not mistaken. I think that's where he passed away. But, I mean, I wanted to experience and do this and that's been my approach throughout my career is that I like to go to the horse's mouth so to speak and directly rather than just the writing and the books. So in psychology for example, when I became very very interested in the works of Ruben Forschstein, who developed this new way of teaching intelligence to children who basically had been seen as low intellectually, in terms of their functioning. His whole method...he was at Yale as a visiting professor. So I was at the Institute of Living at the time and I decided to go and study with him and learn more about his system and became so taken with it, I used it on my own son 'cause I then had a child who was brain injured and so that occurred at birth, so I ended up using it at birth so I ended up using it at birth and I don't know if it was because of that but his intelligence you know, but his intelligence came out in superior range. And he's been able to be very successful. He has his own IT company now. So I learned all of these things. And now here in Tuscon, what I'm doing is, I'm actually going in and teaching a class of very low functioning Mexican American children. I do a class 4 days a week, where I teach them, basically, intelligence: how to think, how to...organize their thinking, using Ruben Forschstein's educational system. So I think E and I was the beginning of all of this. Kind of the germinating root that has spread in terms of my philosophy and how I approach things and how I approach the changes that I think need to be made.

JA: Right, wow. That's incredible. So, what was it like being with Freire?

JRG: Ah, it was amazing. It was amazing to sit there and talk to him face to face and argue with him. 'Cause I said yeah, it'll work with Puerto Ricans and he says no, it won't. I tried to tell him but I couldn't make the link after I had that in the Hartford and got kicked out of the tobacco farm for being a subversive person and you know getting these people riled up. But they learned how to read and they learned about the reality of what the contracts were doing to them because those contracts were an abomination in terms of, you know, they were basically indentured servants, these tobacco workers. And that got started in terms of changing some of these contractual requirements, that strike of these group of men that I had worked with to teach them how to read started. So, I'm not sure what else, I mean I could certainly go on and on an on.

JA: I'm curious. I came across an interview with Ben Dixon and he had mentioned a project that you guys had started when Quirk Middle was starting and I was curious, I had read

that you guys were looking at like a multi-cultural approach with the school. What happened with that?

JRG: It also went by the wayside like many other things. You know, we got in there, we worked with the principal...and they incorporated some of the ideas that we had in terms of teaching multiculturalism and trying to get white kids to go to that school as well, you know, so that it wouldn't be a segregated private school. It worked for a while, but again, and this is where the system continues to...that's why we said, if you don't change the institutional racist practices of the organization, of the institution, then, you can change some things, but the institution, it's like regressing to the mean, continuously. Because what happened was that as we started to do that and introduce some of these practices, the whole educational system of Hartford, that it was very turf oriented, would beat us down, would change the rules, would take away funding. The same thing happened with Forschtein's (breaks up)...in Tuscan. We started and trained every single one of the teachers in Hartford to do this, this program. I don't think you knew that. Well, we did. And the teachers were gun hoe. But the administration in the central office, it became a turf issue. Who was doing what and why and who was going to control this and where and they destroyed the program. If you want to find out more about that talk to Vivian Cross, Dr. Vivian Cross. C-R-O-S-S. She lives in Simsbury and she is the head of FEA, which is kind of a multi-cultural educational organization. And she has been. She and I hooked up and I can't even remember where. I think it was through. She came to the training for instrumental enrichment. Got very very interested in it and she and I...formed a good friendship and from there she became very interested in instrumental enrichment, continued that at work, and became a trainer in instrumental. She went to Israel to do that training. She's a black woman. She's a black doctor in education. She went to Israel, became a trainer, and then through our work, she also became very aware, because I was working in my private practice with kids who were lead poisoned in the inner city. And I was doing evaluations of these kids for the purposes of litigation so that these kids could get some kind of settlement to help financially with their futures. Vivian became very interested in this and now Vivian recently was successful in getting the legislature to pass laws about prescreening of children, early screening of children for lead poisoning and she's now looking at instituting educational requirements of kids who have lead poisoning in the public school system. So, the tentacles are many. E and I continues to be alive through...lots of the things that I have done and I'm sure lots of the things that Ben has continued to do. Just you know, we were sorry that we lost Boyd. That was a significant loss. And I think that's what kind of put the cap, the ending period, of the actual E and I continuing as an entity.

JA: What year was that when he passed?

JRG: ...I don't have any records...

(cuts off)

If you want more of the documents from E and I, you would have to contact Boyd's family, because those were kept by Boyd. When E and I kind of disbanded, we decided

that they would keep the documentation. I don't know if they kept it, destroyed it, I don't know.

JA: What, I'm sorry, what year did he pass?

JRG: Oh, goodness, it was some time in the 90s. I can't remember the exact year. If you can track down his children, they may have kept some that. I don't know if you realized it but Boyd and Wendy died together.

JA: Really?

JRG: Yes, they were coming back from having dinner with friends up in, I think was in Massachusetts, Vermont, some place up there. They had a piece of property that they had. They were coming back one night from dinner. And I think they think that they tried to avoid a deer and the car rolled into a stream, a river and they drowned.

JA: Oh my goodness.

JRG: Together, yeah. I was the one who had to call Ben and tell him. I was at the Hartford Police Department at that time and I found out and had to call Ben and it was very traumatic for both of us.

JA: So this is when you were still in touch, still meeting annually? And then this is when you made the decisions that, okay, we're going in different directions completely. Okay, let me see, I think there was, I guess just overall looking back, I know that there is a lot of great stuff that you told me I'm just, I love sitting here listening to you and watching you express yourself. But I guess overall, what strategies really did work in your eyes?

JRG: I think that some of the strategies that would use like buying the stocks and going to these stockholders meetings and speaking at those meetings had some impact because I think that's when we started to get some of the employees of these organizations to start seeing us viable sources, you know, for them to come to and slowly things started to change because of that. I think that certainly the whole real estate suits and what we did with that was...brought more light to that problem. And I think although many of them reverted back to some extent, I don't think they ever came back to the same level of racist practices that they had. And just our own discussions. I mean we would sit and discuss things that became important for us to look at. I mean even small things like when we travelled, I brought up to them the fact that they shared a room; I was by myself in a room. Because of the sex differences and we couldn't sleep together. But that they then had more chance to talk with each other and to share and discuss things that I wasn't privy to and how that separated me sometimes from their thinking and the things that they had come to terms with. When they sat there and talked at night in their room. I mean little issues like that we would spend much time talking about and formulating, how it should work and what affect it had on our capabilities and our ability to see things and understand things in different ways. We spent a lot of time doing that together.

JA: Well I guess that's really important seeing as you guys are really coming from all these different perspectives and backgrounds. I mean, to really build on this whole multiculturalism is something that seems really hard to do at the end of the day.

JRG: Not there yet.

JA: Do you think the conversations were the most important part of building on that?

JRG: Yeah, that was a big part of, because that's where our ideas came from. We would sit and brainstorm, basically, with each other and bounce things off of each other. And test things out with each other. Thinking and opinions and philosophies all that. And I think eventually the biggest success of E and I was that other people picked it up and went with it. It didn't stay with us. That we were able to walk away from it and other people were continuing to do things with it even if it wasn't under the umbrella E/I, that enough people's consciousness had been raised to the point that they began to question in the same way that we were and to make suggestions and try to make changes.

JA: Did you guys see yourselves as kind of coming out of the Civil Rights movement or having connection to the Civil Rights movement?

JRG: Yeah, because, remember I was involved in the anti-poverty program. That's where I had started to kind of started to get my feet wet. Ben was in the educational system and of course a little greeting ground of racism too. So he had his own experiences. And then Boyd was raised by the anti-poverty and Civil Rights movement and all of that. And that's when he started to question and realize, you know, that he had white guilt. That he had this privilege that he had been given that other people didn't have and was revealing that he needed to do something about that. So, definitely, the Civil Rights movement got that going.

JA: Where you guys reading anything that was written... 'cause you guys are starting right after MLK gets shot and the riots were happening in the North End of Hartford and then you know it sounds like E/I really got started in the beginning of the 70s, like right after this is happening, so I guess were you guys talking with community members that were involved in these kinds of things. I know the Black Panthers...

JRG: Oh, we met with the Black Panthers a lot.

JA: So you knew Butch Lewis?

JRG: Uh, yeah.

JA: I'm just trying to connect all of these things, because I know bits and pieces but...

JRG: Yeah, they knew us. We met with them, we talked. They had a different perspective. Again, we thought that it was important to go...within the system, not try to beat the

system down from outside and change it from within. So, we agreed to disagree about the approaches.

JA: The other thing, I guess, up until this point, a lot of the fighting was happening within the city limits, at least to my understanding. But you guys started targeting, you know, going further out, targeting the suburbs and the power that was kind being taken out and the money that was being put into the suburbs, so...

JRG: Oh yeah, we saw the city changing. I mean the North End of Hartford became more and more ghetto as the white families moved further and further out. Hartford, you know, because of the highways and the way it's constructed, can't grow anymore. And so the people who are trapped in it were becoming more minority than anything else. When everybody goes home, Hartford becomes a ghost town and is left to the ethnic minorities. And then til people come back again in the day time. Went into the city and leave it. You know their investment in the city...and we were seeing this happening.

(cuts out)

So this is when all of these things started to happen...we were looking at the fact that population of the United States was becoming...was going to end up heavily Hispanic, for example, with Spanish being a second language in this country. And we started there were know dual signs anywhere in Spanish and English. And you know we were trying to promote those things. These things are going to happen. You need to get ready for it, is basically our call. You need to get ready for it, basically because the people you are going to draw from for employment are ethnic minority people. You are not going to have that many white people to turn to, necessarily. You need to start making those changes. They weren't ready at that time. But, gradually, over time, they had begun to understand that that's the reality and you want to continue to make money as an organization you need to pay attention to that. Not only for employment, to get employees, but to sell products. But we were too early I think, in a way.

JA: You guys were before your time, thinking before you time....I think that's how we are, especially if we are educated people of color. We come with kind of this double consciousness that like DuBois talks about in his writing. Um, I was going to ask, so what was it like going to college at the time that you went? Going to UCONN as Puerto Rican woman?

JRG: They kind of considered me...I hung out with all the international students. I didn't relate to others at all. I just went to classes. I was a resident advisor of a dorm. But again, you have to remember this is when dorms were segregated. There were no integrated forms with males and females. The boys were in their dorms and the girls were in...we had panty raids and all that.

JA: But not segregated in terms of race.

JRG: No. Only in terms of sex. These were the good ole' days. And also the Vietnam War issues started come out a bit more. We had some demonstrations around the late at UCONN. But, you know, it was just the beginning of that before I left. So, you know I just went to school, basically. People didn't bother me very much because they kind of thought of me as a one of those international students...I mean people kept asking me, even then, so when did you come to the United States for the first time? And I was saying well, I well I was born in the United States...because they didn't understand that Puerto Rico's part of the United States. I'm willing to think that there are still some people out there who still don't know that.

JA: Yeah, it's true. There's college students in Trinity that are still like, oh, it's a part of the United States?

JRG: You're a U.S. citizen? Yeah.

JA: I'm like, y'all are so uneducated. Like I don't even understand. I'm curious about, before we have to leave...you talked about the trainings that you guys did and the trainings that you guys were trying to do with companies and then you had mentioned the woman that you had worked with that was part of the training. How did those play out and work and what did you guys base it off of?

JRG: Well, you know, we didn't do to many of those, really...These companies were not interested. I mean we did do a few and...I thought that they went very well because we would talk about institutional racism, we would play the game star power.

JA: What's that?

JRG: It was a game. We started with that game. It was actually a boxed game that was developed and don't ask me...how many years ago as a way of getting people to understand the issues of power. And what the game was basically was that you put these chips, colored chips in bags and you gave them to people in the group and they were to, given the direction to go out in the group and mingle around and trade the chips with other people. Now, chips that had the highest value were the gold chips so if you ended up with the most gold chips then you would end up having the most money and the most power and we would give them several sessions of training that they would be able to trade the chips to see how many they could get. The one thing that they didn't realize because we didn't tell them was that we had preloaded gold chips in certain people's bags and so those people already started out with more power and then at the end we stopped everything and we asked everyone okay so who how many gold chips? And then they would realize that this particular group had more chips than anybody else and the other two groups they would question how they ended up with so many gold chips. The fascinating thing was how people dealt with this. We had one group. We did it in the prison with the prison guard population. The group with the green chips, I think it was the lowest valued chips, looked at the group that had the most gold chips and they ran, grabbed their bags and ran out of the room. So, it's like, what? People reacted to this very very...and then at then end what we did was we sat down and debriefed and said okay,

how did that make you feel? To know that there was these people that were the haves, you know they had all the gold chips and then there's these other two groups of people who had the have-nots and how...you know to see in playing this game, how power really became overwhelmingly controlling and that they were not willing to give it up or share it and not in any one of those games did we have the people with gold chips being willing to share their gold chips with the rest of the group. And we talked about that. And we made it not as you know, you did the wrong thing, but so how does that make you feel? That in the game you do that and in real life that's exactly what happens? So star power was a very useful game for us. I don't even know if it's published anymore. But it's a very interesting game to play with people. And we did it with teachers, we did it with prison guards, we did it with administrative type people, that worked in companies and basically the same thing happened. They were not willing to share the pot once they got it. But we didn't do as many of those as we thought that when we first started out we thought we were going to do. Our entire thrust was we were going to go out and do this kind of training and people are going to be really happy to get it and learn from it. It didn't happen.

JA: Wow, that's a lot of stuff. Just before we finish. You had mentioned Maria Sanchez and that you were up against her. And for another project I was going to look into some work that she did with another organizer. Did you ever know Muriel Johnson?

JRG: Yes.

JA: I guess how would you characterize them or how did you view them in the community?

JRG: Um, I was a little leery of Muriel. I believe she and her husband worked together. And they had a tendency to...my perspective was that they would zoom into town and do their thing and then zoom out of town. And somehow they gained something by it, (financially? Or Eventually?) So I was a little concerned and a little leary...They were not trusting.

JA: What do you mean by they would zoom in town and out of town?

JRG: Well they kind of would to a particular area of town/city and do their thing. They would come in and do it...but they didn't have any commitment and stay-to-itiveness and you know sticking with it.

(cuts out)

But they didn't seem vested in the city and what was going on. They seem a little peripheral. I don't even know are they still there?

JA: Um, Muriel Johnson died at like by, she died in the early 70s and Maria Sanchez was around for longer.

JRG: Yeah.

JA: Okay. Okay, well thank you! I really appreciate this.

JRG: Now what's going to come of this? Are you publishing a paper? I mean, I'm not sure.

JA: Actually, it's just going to be published at my school for now. 'Cause I'm a senior at Trinity and I have to do a research project for Educational Studies and I'm kind of fitting you guys into having something to do with Education but I guess you guys had done a lot more than I had originally thought just from looking at the housing stuff. So, I don't have as much time with this. I have to kind of write this whole thing up and present something by mid to late December. So I'm doing what I can do with it and starting with this. I want to keep your kind of oral history thing...we have a thing called Hartford Studies Project and we have footage from that time around the riots, we interviewed people who were around at that time but in early 2000s. And there's not that much stuff. I kind of want to take over the project because there's no one really...we have a new Urban Global Center and they have stuff there but there's no one really organizing it and disseminating it at this point. It's probably going to move into new leadership...I might want to be a part of that leadership. So I wanted to have this be a kind publicly accessible information, start to build a kind of center of looking back at what happened over the 20th century. I might want to go further back. 'Cause we have information of the black population from like 1639 in Harford. So kind of looking at like, from the perspective of the blacks and the Puerto Ricans and all the people who are considered minorities but we're really the majority population in this city but that doesn't necessarily mean that we have all the power.

JRG: Right. People are still happy with the crumbs.

JA: Right. And it's easy to be distracted by popular music, popular television and culture, and you know, oh, success means having all the cars and all the houses

JRG: Yeah, things.

JA: Right, things instead of having power over your community and the way it looks and the education system and what we learn in school and all these things. And it's really difficult to if you're scraping by, you know, working multiple jobs and could barely even be with your kids. So...we're trying to work with all this stuff and I've decided that this is the city I want to stay in and learn about work with the people here. I'm just 21 so I mean it's just the beginning.

JRG: That's about what I was when I was doing this.

JA: How old were you when you were a part of E/I?

JRG: I was in my 20s.

JA: That's incredible.

JRG: Yeah. I was like 20, 21, 22, somewhere in there.

JA: ...I can't even imagine, I mean the work you guys were doing was so sophisticated. And I'm just thinking about the organizations, the non-profits that are around right now, and it's like everyone's so constrained by the kind of funding that they are getting and it's so difficult for people to spend all that time strategizing and evaluating and thinking and talking, which seems like that was really important for you guys to grow.

JRG: Ben and Boyd were a little older than I was. They were like 30 maybe. They were slightly older than I was. But Ben and Boyd had families, I didn't. When I had children I was not...

JA: And Boyd seems to have had the money and the backing to really help you guys out as well, so that's important.

JRG: It was actually Wendy's family's money more than Boyd but because they were married...I would like to see a copy of your paper whenever it's done.

JA: Oh of course, it's not going to be incredible but, I'll definitely try and do you guys justice. Just from whatever I've been able to scrape up and put together with the stuff that you've told me today and just get something down, get something started, you know.

JRG: Let me know if you can get in touch with Ben because I'm sure his perspective may be slightly different, you know.

JA: Of course.

JRG: Different people and two different things going on in our heads. But if you do get a hold of him, tell him I said hi.

JA: Okay. I will. I'm going to try and call him, maybe...call him today. 'Cause I know Saturday is a little more flexible for people. But I heard he was retired. I heard he retired by 2005, 2006. He was the Multicultural Director at Virginia Tech.

JRG: Yeah, I think he's in his 70s now. Hopefully, he's okay.

JA: Yeah, that's what I'm hoping. Okay, so I can also send you a copy of what we recorded today and I'll send you the paper when I write it. And so you signed off that I can use your name?

JRG: Mhm.

JA: Okay, great. I really appreciate you taking this time.

JRG: No problem. Well, you know it's important. I forget. I go from day to day, you forget where you've been. So it's kind of interesting to go back and kind of re-think it again.

JA: And now how it applies to your life. So you're still, you have a private firm still?

JRG: No. This is my retirement job now. I work for the Sunnyside Unified School District. Which means that I work 180 days a year. And I decided I just wanted to go back and work with kids. And that's what I'm doing. I'm their psychologist in their school. I go in and I work...I can't be called a school psychologist, I'm not certified as a school psychologist. I can be called a psychologist, which is fine with me because I had more credentials than a school psychologist. But they allowed me, which is really nice, they not only allowed me to not only do...psychological evaluations, which I've been trained in, which is a great boom to them because a lot of these kids have such brain involvement and a regular psych evaluation just doesn't give them the information they need. So I'm available to do neuropsychologicals for my district. The director of Special Ed bought me the materials to teach his class instrumental enrichment and if you want to really find some interesting stuff about education and learning read Ruben Forschstein's work. That's also very interesting. He's still alive and I studied with him to at Yale so he's an amazing psychologist and what he came to in terms of mediated learning and the fact that for many children, especially for those from economically deprived backgrounds, they end up being called mentally retarded when they actually aren't. And then he developed...it's been an interesting process. But my job basically allows me to do...

(cuts off)

We need to just say bye. It was really good talking to you and good luck.

JA: Okay, thank you so much.

JRG: If I could ever be of any help, let me know.

JA: Okay, great.

JRG: Bye, bye.

JA: Take care.