EYES ON THE PRIZE II
SONIA SANCHEZ
CAMERA ROLL 1051

INTERVIEWER: BACK THEN WHAT WAS YOUR IMPRESSION OF THE SOUTHERN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND THE IMPACT IT DID, OR DID NOT HAVE, WAS NOT HAVING ON THE UH, ON BLACK FOLKS IN THE NORTH?

Sonia Sanchez: It was interesting observing the Civil Rights Movement. I observed it from New York Core. I was in an organization called New York Core. I and some other people had made that trek down to Washington, um, to listen to Martin talk about the dream. We came back very much involved with that dream and also very much involved with being the people who were going to do some real work in this country. Um, and I continued to be involved, um, ah, with that whole movement of New York Core but we always, at least I did, I'm not sure about everyone, I always viewed what was happening there as necessary for the South. I always viewed it, not necessarily necessary for us, in the North, because we could sit, or we could go on subways trains and sit any place, uh, we could go on buses and sit any place. We could actually eat many places if we had the money. I do know there was a subtle, very subtle, segregation that existed in New York City. Um, still, but so it was like something you observed and were very proud of, and knew people who were doing some of that work also in the South and who came back and talked about it. But it was not necessarily talking about some of the things that we had, were talking about in the North. And I think that's probably how Malcolm, um, talked about what we felt. Um ah, it was not, just give me a seat on the bus. Let me go to a pool. Let me wade in, and pray in, and sit in, but let me also go downtown and get some jobs, ah, that most certainly we needed. Let me live, ah, on Riverside Drive when we're living in the Harlems. And if you were walking over the Broadway and Riverside Drive, you got looks, you couldn't get apartments in New York City. So there were other things. And when he began to talk about our oppression, um, we looked up. Because we knew there was a freedom we had. But we knew also that there was a non-freedom we had. So when he articulated that kind of oppression and what we needed to do to feel good about ourselves and to make for some kind of movement, um, when he said it in a voice like we had never heard before, when he said it for even the brothers on our block who didn't go to church, so couldn't involve themselves in the Civil Rights Movement, okay? Um, who, um were hanging out on corners. Ah, what he told people like me, in a sense, um, who had come out of Hunter College, who had gone to grad school, had really thought that she had most things that she really needed at some point. I mean I was exceptional blood is what I'm saying. Ah they called us the exceptional niggers, in quote. I'd ah, really didn't, really didn't think that there was much that I needed at all. And really thought that was a movement there in the South, okay? Because we up in New York City, and we in Chicago, and we in Philadelphia, we were like okay. I mean we were doing okay, although a part of us knew that we were not doing okay. There was some part that knew something was wrong. Every time we experienced that peculiar, ah, subtle prejudice, ah, segregation that New York was about.

INTERVIEWER: TELL ME ABOUT YOUR FIRST IMPRESSION OF MALCOLM.

Sanchez: [LAUGHS] See what's interesting about, talking about Malcolm is that quite often people always want to make you believe that he was some terrible, terrible man who never smiled and who was always scowling. And … and demanding something that was obscene almost. When I first saw Malcolm on the television, he scared me also. Immediately the family said, "Turn off that television. That man is saying stuff you ain't supposed to hear." [LAUGHS] And so of course we did. But always, you know when the sun comes in the window and you kind of jump up to get it, to close the blinds or pull down the shade, but before you do that, the sun comes in. Well before, each time we turned the television off a little sun came in. And you'd be walking someplace and it would resonate in your ear what he said. And you would say, "No, I can't listen to that because I'm in New York Core." You know, I can't listen to that because they say he's a racist. And he must be a racist if they say he's a racist." So don't listen. Well one day we … we were doing a huge demonstration in Harlem. Right in front of the old Hotel Theresa, which doesn't exist anymore in Harlem. Right diagonally across from Mr. Mashow's [sp?] bookstore, there on 7th Avenue before he had to move to Lennox because of that building, the state building that was going to be built there.

INTERVIEWER: DO THAT AGAIN …

[BACKGROUND DISCUSSION]

Sanchez: Um the first ah time that I really listened to Malcolm was ah when New York Core was doing a large demonstration. And Malcolm had sent out a directive to all of the organizations most especially the civil rights organizations that um you cannot have a demonstration in Harlem unless I, unless you invite me to speak. So in our office at 125th Street, we moaned and groaned and said, "Who is that man? Imagine that man saying such a thing. Who does he think he is?" And of course we had to say yes. Um so we went to this big demonstration. Malcolm came with his bodyguards. I shall never forget that day. It was a day where it was cloudy. There was, ah, no sun. And in New York City when it's cloudy and rainy, you know, ahh you finally see the colors of the buildings. The yellow came out on the buildings and the reds came out on the buildings. And when Malcolm got up on this ah man-made stage, the reds on his face came out. The red in his hair came out--but that kind of blond red thing. I was standing on the island there looking at him. Um and my friend said, "I'm going back to the office. We're going back." And I said, "I'm going to stay because I like the rain." There was this kind of quiet drizzle that was happening there, and I looked up and looked around determined not to look at him. Determined not to listen. But he started to talk. And I found myself more and more listening to him. And I began to nod to my head and say "Yeah that's right. That makes sense. That's logical. Mm hum," whatever. And the audience was like, "Yeah, Malcolm, yeah man, Mm hum Malcolm. Amen. Yes, um hum, right on, yes brother, um hum," whatever. There was this great call and response that goes on in the African American community. When he came off the stage I jumped off the island, walked up to him, and of course when I got to him the bodyguards you know moved in front. And he just pushed them away. And I went in front of him and extended my hand ah and said um, "I liked some of what you said. I didn't agree with what all that you said, but I liked some of what you said." And he looked at me, held my hand in a very gentle fashion and says, "One day you will, sister. One day you will, sister." And he smiled. And I

remember just standing there because I was ready to withdraw my hand in a very fast fashion like you know, it was like extending the hand like here it is, for being polite, but don't really, you know that's it. But I left it there and he smiled at me. And, ah, I remember walking back to the office, the Core office there at 124th Street smiling. Well what happened then is that every time he was speaking in New York City I was there, I came there to the temple. But what was strange is that everybody else was doing it. Baraka was doing it. The poets were doing, the musicians were doing, the teachers were doing it. The nurses were doing it. Everybody who was an intellectual was coming out to hear what this man had to say. People don't want to remember that or talk about it. And that's how we became very much involved, and he saw us coming. Now we'll try to disguise the fact that we were coming. We didn't tell people we were coming. You'd come in and sit on the side and you wouldn't say anything. And you just kind of sit there and look around. There you see all your friends, whatever. You nod your head and then keep looking at him. And I began to, through him, I began to go the [Shamburg?] more and read up on history. Because he began to give us black history. He began to give us a sense of ourselves and. . .

INTERVIEWER: [INAUDIBLE]

Sanchez: O.k. Um hum. Malcolm began to make us understand ah how we had been denied the history of African-American people in this country. So I began to up to the [Shamburg?]. And when he'd mention a name I'd go search the name out at the [Shamburg?]. When he'd mention a time I would go and search out, ah, in the [Shamburg?] what that period was. So, ah, Malcolm sent us back all to the history books. He began to make us begin to move to a point of like, "What was he talking about? Why was that period important? Who was that person he was talking about?" He sent us back to the libraries of America. Um, but above all, it was, when you watched him talk he would fire you up and you would simply respond, "Mm hum, yes sir, yes that's right, Mm hum." But then also he'd turn a smile and his smile warmed us. The smile said, "I know you're lost. The smile said, "I know you don't want to hear that." The smile said, "But I will protect you with my, with my smile. I will love you above all." Above all the smile was about love. We knew that man loved us. We knew Malcolm was saying simply, "I, I can take the weight for everything that I'm saying. But I will raise up," ah, "a generation, your generation, my generation. That we'll begin to talk and preach truth in this country. I will listen to you. I will even," um, "send off your scowls. I will," like, ah, "send off when you get, when you get angry," because we got angry quite often, because he called us names. We were the educated group don't forget, o.k., we were the group that simply had come through and had been the exceptional people. So all of a sudden he was telling us that we were not so exceptional. That we were dumb probably. Ah that we didn't know our own history. That we didn't really know what it was to be a black person in America. As a consequence, ah, we got annoyed quite often. But we kept coming back.

INTERVIEWER: WHAT DID YOU FEEL LIKE WHEN YOU LISTENED TO HIM?

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INTERVIEWER: IF YOU COULD THINK BACK ON A RALLY WHERE HE WAS PRESENT, WHERE HE WAS A SPEAKER, TO GIVE A SENSE OF WHAT AN ELECTRIFYING SPEAKER HE WAS.

Sanchez: Well, I think that, um, the reason why he was so effective- The reason ah why Malcolm was so effective was because the moment that he come into an audience, he told them exactly what he intended to do, what he intended to do with them. What he said to an audience is that almost like we are enslaved. Um and everyone looked at first and said, "Who? We are enslaved? We're free." Um, and he began to tell us and explain to us in a very historical fashion just as to what our enslavement was about. The moment he did that, he always had some information for you, some new information as a consequence you see he drew an audience towards him. Malcolm knew how to curse you out in a sense and make you love him at the same time for doing it. He knew how to, in a very real sense, to open your eyes as to the kind of oppression that you were experiencing. On the other hand he would say something in a very harsh fashion, and then on the other hand, he would, ah, kiss you and hug you. And he said, "I understand why you feel the way that you feel because you have the following missing." The joy of Malcolm is that he could have in an audience college professors, school teachers, nurses, doctors, musicians, artists, poets and sisters, ah, who were housewives, sisters who worked for people in their houses, brothers who were out of prisons, brothers who were on drugs and were coming off drugs, brothers who were workers, ah, brothers who ah were just hanging on the streets, whatever--or were waiting outside the temples to get inside. The point is that I've never seen anyone appeal to such a broad audience, and that reason why he could do that unless he understood the bottom line is that if you tell people the truth, then it will appeal to everyone. If you tell them all about their oppression, ah, in a fashion that they ain't never heard before, then they will all gravitate towards you. So he could have an audience of people who were um [inaudible], you know like, "I'm here to listen to you perhaps but I really don't want to hear too much," whatever. And a sister sitting next to him, "Yeah you're right, man. Go on, tell it like it is." And all of a sudden you'll find yourself now saying, "Yes, tell it like it is." You say, "Yeah man, you're right!" I mean you went back to roots. Very fantastic roots you see. And he cut through all the crap. In other words he said, "I know you've learned how to speak this English in the proper fashion. But you forget that." We said, "Man you're right," you know at some point. So yes, he cut through a lot of nonsense in this country. At the same time he informed us. And he made, the broad mass of people respond to it. The joy of Malcolm is that he would get on a television and he would be sitting there with bright, bright people. This man with no Ph.D. This man with no M.A. This man with no B.A., and would listen in a very calm fashion to what people, how people analyze the world be they black, or be they white, or whatever. And then he will come right around and speak in a very articulate fashion. And you see what he said out loud is what African American people had been saying out loud forever behind closed doors. And he said, "I'm now going to say out loud for everyone to hear what African-American people have been thinking for years." And he did it. The reason why initially we cut off the televisions is that we were scared. What he did, he said, "I will now," in a very calm fashion,

“Wipe out fear for you.” He expelled fear out of African Americans. He says, “I will speak out loud what you’ve been thinking.” And he says, “You’ll see. People will hear it and they will not do anything to us necessarily, o.k. “But I will now speak it for the masses of people.” When he said it in a very strong fashion and this very manly fashion, and this fashion that says, “I am not afraid to say what you’ve been thinking all these years.” That’s why we loved him. He said it out loud. Not behind closed doors. He took on America for us. He assumed the responsibility of father, ah brother, ah lover, um … um man, um he became again Martin Delaney’s Blake, ah the first black revolutionary character in … in literature. He came out and he became the person that we wanted to see. The man that we needed to see in the North and in the South. He became the man that most African-American women have wanted their men to be: strong. “See I want to take you on, America. Here I is. Look at me. I’m going to say the things that you’ve wanted people to say.” That’s why the men and women loved him. That’s why we all loved him so very much. Because he made us feel holy. And he made us feel whole. He made us feel loved. And he made us feel that we were worth something finally on this planet earth. Finally, we had some worth.

INTERVIEWER: WHAT WERE [SIC] THE BLACK FOLKS’ REACTION? PARTICULARLY IN HARLEM BUT GENERALLY BLACK FOLKS REACTION TO MALCOLM’S, AH, “CHICKENS COMING HOME TO ROOST” AH COMMENT AT THE KENNEDY ASSASSINATION?

Sanchez: Well I think, ah, black folk ah, or were in agreement. O.k., yeah. You know, when JFK was assassinated, you know and I know that this country had what we call um an oppor- had an opportunity for people to expel that horror via the television. Okay, so they said simply, “We will assassinate on television but we will also allow you an opportunity to get rid of the horror and your pain via television.” So they televised everything. Then Malcolm of course made a statement about ah this is just an example of chickens coming home to roost. Um this country also will not only kill African Americans, this country will kill its own also too. Especially people who think they can be president. When certainly that is not what happens in this country; you don’t run a country as president. You’re just there for ah, to be um, um you know artifacts. You’re just there to be the head of state, etc. Of course he was then set down. What happened then for us, many of us as we were watching that from the Harlems of America, we thought it was a very unjust thing. We thought what he had said was hip, was like yeah, why couldn’t he say that? We didn’t have a sense of the nation at that particular time being threatened, feeling threatened by the government.

INTERVIEWER: IF YOU COULD INCORPORATE THE “CHICKENS COMING OVER THE ROOST” COMMENT SOMEWHERE.

[BACKGROUND DISCUSSION]

Sanchez: Since we were not in the Nation [of Islam], o.k., at that time, we didn’t have a sense of like, there was a, a hierarchy involved. We say the Nation as Malcolm. You’ve got to understand that. Um, although we knew that there were other people involved with the Nation, our sense of the Nation was always Malcolm. Our sense of the Nation of coming around the nation and involving ourselves the Nation, Malcolm was indeed the person. So when someone could say we are sitting

you down because of your statement, we thought ah the dialogue in, in the Harlems of America was simply um [false?]. He said, “Well that’s true.” And why shouldn’t he say what was true because he had been a person who could always say what he wanted to say? So we began to have a dialogue among ourselves about there’s something wrong. There must be something more than what is happening here. It is not just a statement. Perhaps there are other things involved at this particular point. So, ah, we began to watch very carefully, watch Malcolm. Watch his movements. Um, or watch his non-movements. And then all of a sudden when he announced that he was no longer part of it then we sort of said, “Well good, you know.” I mean we all said, “O.k.,” because he was our connection. He was our lifeline. Ah, in retrospect you see, you do understand some things that were happening there. Certainly we realized now from reading. . .

[BACKGROUND DISCUSSION]

INTERVIEWER: …IN TERMS OF WHAT HE WAS TRYING TO DO WITH THE AFRICAN CONTINENT.

Sanchez: And so there was his disconnection from the, the Nation. There was our disconnection as artists and observers of the nation. Ah, we became very much disconnected also from the Nation. And then we began to observe ah, Malcolm’s, ah, movement towards Africa, and were very much involved with talking to people who were involved with that. There were people who made, had strong connections ah, ah with Malcolm and had letters back and forth from him at that particular time. And would let us know what was going on at that particular point. What we saw and didn’t see however, I think was that we didn’t really know what was going on. We heard the roar from Africa. Africa responded in a very splendid fashion towards Malcolm, you know. When he travels, ah, the students most especially loved him. So they loved him in the same fashion that we, that we loved him. So we knew that he had a very successful movement there, ah, ah on the continent. When he came back, ah, his movement to the Audubon ah, the movement to, to forming his own organization. Ah, many of us went up to the Audubon Ballroom to see him, ah, and to hear him talk at that particular time. The fire was still there. Ah, you saw some disconnections in terms of crowds. The crowds were not the same anymore, you see, because people didn’t know really what to do. Ah, people had come into the Nation you must remember because of Malcolm. So many people stayed in the Nation. Many left also. Many came to listen to Malcolm, be he didn’t have the, the support that he had had in the nation. He didn’t have the tempo. Ah, he didn’t have all the people who would go out and make sure people came out to hear him speak. So you had other people who were involved more with a pan-Africanist kind of attitude coming towards him at that particular point. So I think that it was probably ah, a low period on many levels for Malcolm and for many of us also who were observing him, not in a disciplined fashion but in the fashion where you thought about going on a Sunday to hear him talk. And, and when you came. . .

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CAMERA ROLL 1053

INTERVIEWER: COULD YOU GIVE ME A SENSE OF THE BLACK REACTION TO MALCOLM’S [INAUDIBLE] A BROADER VIEW IN TERMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOING TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND HOW BLACK FOLKS SAW THAT.

Sanchez: When Malcolm went to the UN and began to say, “This is no longer just about um, black folks in America but it’s about the whole movement of human rights, that this is now a human rights problem. It is a problem that the world has got to deal with,” I think it made him much more dangerous. I think that many blacks in the country were not exactly sure as to what he meant, to be frank. And I think again because he was not in a base, a real strong base the way he had been, that it made him less effective. It became, he became as a person um, who was having ideas but not really having a strong base to bring those ideas into motion or to make them really become effective. You see, when you have a base, the way the Nation was at that particular time, then if this is what you want to send out to world, it got out because you had people working. He had a limited group of people around him.

INTERVIEWER: DO YOU THINK IT MADE HIM MORE VULNERABLE?

Sanchez: And I think it, of course, it made him much more vulnerable because you see, for him to have said to people, “I don’t want to search you,” when you realize that people are searched now um, it made him, actually you know, literally vulnerable in the sense you see. But the point is that couldn’t change. He had to do what he had to do because of course the movement toward human rights was a very real movement. And African Americans have always been at the forefront of the human rights movement. So he was on time. The point is that his organization had grown to support him as he was moving. His ideas had grown in a very real sense. But he didn’t have the platform, the real platform, so he was in the Audubon Ballroom. You see what I’m saying? A place that was crumbling, um, ah, a place that didn’t have the kind of security that it should have had. And so I think that when he came out on that stage that the morning I heard, I was going to the Audubon that that day. Had been out the night before reading. Had gotten lazy and had said simply, “Ah I’ll go next week.” And so proceeded to go into the kitchen, put some coffee on, turn on the radio. In my little apartment there, I had a little black and white kitchen table with these little black chairs. And I had this little black radio on that table. And I put the radio on. As I stood there thinking about what had happened the night before, turned towards the stove to pick up my coffee and a flash came through on this station and said, Malcolm had been assassinated. [Pause] And I froze. I remember turning in that kitchen and screaming. [Crying] I remember walking down to my living room to my bedroom to put my clothes on. And I remember cursing myself for not being there because I thought maybe in some strange obscure fashion that if some of us had been there perhaps it wouldn’t have happened, but of course it would have happened, but still. I remember coming back saying, “No, no this can’t be. This has not happened to us at this particular point.” And I remember the rage, the sheer rage--not helplessness, just rage. And then sitting down and just sitting still for the rest of the morning because the telephone began to ring with people asking me had I heard. And I said, “Of course I‘ve heard.” And I remember hanging up the telephone and the telephone ringing again. And they said, “Did you hear? Is he really dead, Sonja?” And I knew he was dead at that point. And I said, “Yes, he’s dead.” And I remember what all that was about at that point. That um, that sheer rage, that this man was no longer on the earth. And then I began to, later on that, that night I began to write a poem that I had done for him that night. Didn’t finish it but I’d begun it. Um, and I began, I understood finally that, that night. I said simply in my anger “Why, why him?” Why

not some other person, etc.? And then I began to talk to myself. I began to understand his sanity for the first time in my life because I knew that many of us would speak out about it. And we had to be sane about it. We had to have some sense of it. Um, I knew also at that particular point that we had to um, that we were looking at a country that not only would kill, but also ah, would begin to explain. But because already on the radio all day long and the television, the explanations were coming as to who had done it, why it was done, etc. So we had to be prepared for like looking at it, analyzing it in a very real sense. Ah, I remember that night I didn't sleep. I remember some people came by and we talked about it. I remember ah, walking them downstairs um, from my apartment and then coming back up. I remember the faces of people, ah, people like were crying, would just stop and we'd cry. [Pause] And I remember hugging people saying, "Simply this has happened but he'll always live on as long as I breathe and you breathe, and you truly believe that African-American people need to be free. And all oppressed people need to be free." I remember saying that. But I remember also not being that lucid, ah, in my own place and my own time with my own quiet--with my own pain. But I knew at some point that we would come through it, because he had given us so much, much more probably than we had given him. And I knew also because someone went to say that he was before his time. I said, I remember saying, "He was on time." We're always on time, you see. Whether people want to deal with what we say when we say it is not the. . .[Sound lost]

INTERVIEWER: IF YOU COULD GIVE SOME SENSE OF THE [INAUDIBLE] BUT ALSO THAT YOU WERE NOT GETTING THAT OFF MALCOLM.

Sanchez: Well what I remember, and what I know, ah, what Malcolm gave us, those people who sought him out, those people who came to hear him speak, ah, he gave me what I needed in order to move into another arena, into an arena that began to talk against oppression. So I did no ah, receive the whole idea of, of a sexist message. Um, I do know that there, you know and I know that there was much sexism, ah, within the movement. But the point is that the message that, that he gave was a message that came out to men and women. And each one of us took that message and went on to do the work that needed to be done. I never, in a very real sense, allowed myself to be relegated. Ah, or, if I saw people relegating into an arena, I complained about it, and would say something about it. And, I think that most of the women who were involved with that movement, did it. I mean they would ah, do things, like get coffee. Ah, and do stuff like that. But, at some point they recognized the fact of what they were doing. So, Malcolm's message was a message that came out to men and women. And, it did not say, "Now, women you be this way." Ah rather, he was, his message was like, quite often, like he'll say, "I want to say this to the men: be the men that I want you to be." But, and also, he made women feel like they were queens of the universe, whatever. But, it was a queen not in the sense set on a throne and did nothing. It was a queen that worked, a queen that taught, a queen that led. A queen that was very much involved with the movement, you see. So yea, you said, "Hey, I am pretty. Um, look at here, look at this, um, look at these big lips. Aren't they full? When you been kissed by these lips you know you been kissed by these lips--that's why they so full. Um, no one kisses like these lips kiss." I mean it was that kind of beauty, you see. And, if your nose was wide, yeah, your nose was wide, simply that you could breath well in the

summer time when it was hot, you see. And the hair was what it was, simply because ah, you know, it jumped back when we went swimming, but you know, we could go swimming again. I mean all those things we began to integrate from his word. So, when he began to talk to us about our beauty, we understood that beauty, but it was not to relegate us in an arena that we got quiet and didn't say anything. I mean, my listening to Malcolm was like, "Here is, here are the words. Here's the message, now go forth and spread the message." And, that's what we did, ah, listening to him.

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CAMERA CREW MEMBER: THIS IS SONIA SANCHEZ. CAMERA ROLL 1054]

INTERVIEWER: GIVE ME A SENSE MALCOLM AND THE [INAUDIBLE] STORY OF [INAUDIBLE].

Sanchez: Right. You see, what Malcolm did, I think, is that he freed those people who needed to be freed, who were waiting for someone to say, uh, "Hey, come on, you can do this, in this fashion." So, as a consequence, um, I never say Malcolm as an icon, of sorts, o.k. So, I never saw anyone else. I saw them all as my brothers in the struggle. Now, of course, ah, Malcolm maintained a rarefied position for all of us, make no mistake about that, o.k.? But, what I'm saying is that when, when I heard the message at the same time that many of these other people had heard the message, so therefore, they were my brothers and sisters in this struggle. So, when I went to see people, I remember a point in [Amiri] Baraka's life, heading for Newark, heading for the University of Pitt, very much ah, in need of some kind of help there, at that particular point. [Technical difficulty off-camera] I saw it and couldn't say anything [laughs].

[LOUD BELL SOUND IN BACKGROUND. TAPE CUTS OFF FOR A FEW SECONDS]

INTERVIEWER: WHAT WERE YOU SAYING ABOUT NOT SEEING BLACKS IN THE POSITION OF POWER IN THE NORTH?

Sanchez: In the North we never really saw um, Afro-Americans in any position of power, except in the church. Ah, even at the corner stores, the supermarkets, African-Americans were not in a position of power. Ah, you had other people who would sell you food and see you vegetables, whatever. When you went to church, quite often you would have a black pastor, if you went to a black, black church. But, if you went, perhaps to a catholic church, you would not necessarily see, you know, African-American priests up there preaching to you, or talking to you, or doing the sacraments. So, I guess Malcolm made us say, simply, "There is man in the position of power. Ah, and he's exerting power and he's spreading that power around, and he's saying, here's some power for you, it's spelled, p-o-w-r!" It is indeed Black Power, because I is, you know Black, um, excuse my English. Um, and we understood that always, in some very instinctive fashion, because we extended our hands very fast and said simply, I'm going to be seen, whatever. So, when we simply got naturals in the early sixties, and I walked across ah, um, a street in Harlem at a hundred and thirty fifth street, I stopped traffic with this natural. Now, you must remember, the natural is not

big, it was, like, not a huge natural as many of us got to be known for, um, but it was a natural, and people recognized that it was different. And, the taxi cab driver would stop and as soon as I got across the street, he would lean out and go, “Oogaa booga booga,” you know. And, I would like draw myself up real, real proudly, you know, and keep on going, ah, in a very real fashion. But, my father said, “Girl, what’s your problem? Now, why don’t you get married and have some babies, and move to Long Island or Connecticut or some place.” Um, and we would say, you just don’t understand, ah, period. And, but, but, what we understood is that we have been released, um, ah, the power energy had been released in the North via Malcolm. Ah, the energy that says “You can be what ever you wanted to be. You can do whatever you want to do. You want to write a play, girl, write a play, write a play tonight, bring it out tomorrow, and do that.” And I did that. And someone said, “Are you a playwright,” and I said, “Mm-hm, Mm-hm.” They said, “Isn’t it strange the connection between the poet and the playwright?” And I would say, “Mm-hm,” you know. They said, “Isn’t it really interesting that you write poet- you write a, you write plays and poetry.” And I said, “Mm-hm.” And, I said, “When do you want that play?” They said, “Tomorrow.” I said, “No problem.” Went home. Set up. I wrote a play--typed a play. Brought it back the next day, and said, “Isn’t it amazing the connection between the poet and the playwright?” and walked out. Burst out laughing going down the steps, because you could do whatever you wanted to do. He had released that kind of energy within us, and, we still have it. I mean I still have that energy that says, simply- And everybody I know who came from that period has that energy also, too.

[CUT]

[TAPE CUTS OFF FOR A FEW SECONDS]

INTERVIEWER: [INAUDIBLE]

Sanchez: Malcolm made you believe that the message was not a separate message. I mean, even when he was saying, “Now this is for the brothers,” you know. Hey, listen, you say, yea, I bet. You felt that it was also for you, too. Um, so it made us feel as equals. I mean, I felt equal to the brothers in everything that we could all do, etc. So, I was heading, ah, to the University of Pitt, coming out of Indiana, came through to see [Amiri] Baraka and Amina [Baraka] and their family and that whole organization that they had formed there. I had come to that organization to do a talk, once. So, I was coming back through on my way to, ah, the University of Pitt. Ah, I walked, I came up, I came into the office and I was stricken by the way the men were dressed, and the way they were like, um, rushing around, so I said, “Hey, I’m expected, my name’s Sonia Sanchez.” “How you doing sister?” whatever, etc. And, we at, some people talked to me, very respectful. When I got upstairs I was led upstairs to the office, where, Baraka’s office, and as I was walking in, um, I observed that many of the men were doing this and bowing down and backing out, and I said, “Hey, how you doing, Amiri? How’s everything going?” I remember he looked up at me and I looked up at him and my eyes said, cause, “Ain’t no way, I’m going to do that, and ain’t no way. Amiri, I know you expect me to that.” I, because, he understood fully that we had come to some other times together and that was not in our, that was not our gender. That was not in our history, and in no way had we been taught that kind of history

at all, too, which was interesting. So, I went over and hugged them--him. And, I remember watching some of the people watching me. And, we looked at each other and I began to talk about, you know, some problems I was having at that time, and he began to talk about what they were going to do, or what he was going to do, etc. And, ah, we, and I left and went on to stay over in Newark. I stayed in Newark, perhaps, for about a day, or so, with my twins. But, I thought about that whole, that arena that he had moved into, and I thought to myself. I remember writing in my journal--because I keep journals--uh, I said, simply, "Oh, what does this mean? Ah, what does this mean when we have in a very real sense made people, put people on strange pedestals. Or, we have-–in a sense--um, made people believe that people have to bow down." I hadn't quite gotten to what it was really all about. But, I knew in some strange fashion that is was not where we were supposed to go, ah, at all. And, um, didn't verbalized that with him, at that particular time, ah years later we all managed to laugh at some of these things.

INTERVIEWER: [INAUDIBLE]

Sanchez: I got it. The moment I said it, the more I realized. . .

[TAPE CUTS OFF FOR A FEW SECONDS]

[SLATE]

INTERVIEWER: AS A BLACK WOMAN, WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THE NATION?

Sanchez: What brought me, and a lot of women and men, to the Nation, was that, finally, the continuation of what had gone on before. When we began to search out how had we come into this sense of ourselves--this blackness, this, this sense of like what it meant to be an African-American woman or man, in America. We realized that a lot had come via Malcolm--he had been a vessel--but a lot of the information had come, also, through Elijah Muhammad, in terms of his ideas. So, many of us, because of other things that had happened in the country at that time, began to go to the various temples again, and sit and listen. And, it was because of this sense of support of this blackness. Also at that particular time, too, it was the strongest organization in America. And, so, many of us who were ah, working very hard, felt an obligation to go as, people were saying, to the source of the information that we had become familiar with. So, many of us went in. I went into the Nation, I think, in '73, and, um stayed until '75. What I saw and experienced as a person who was very much involved with ideas and, and writing books that, ah, I ended up teaching some classes and my classes were controversial. But, I taught women, um, I taught poetry. I taught also the whole idea of, you can not have twenty-five children in three years and stay sane--it's impossible. Ah, I continued to lecture. I was called, not a Muslim, but a Pan-Africanist, at that time. And people wondered why I was in the Nation. Ah, I had children. I had twin sons and I took them into the Nation, in a sense, I think, for probably, for probably protection. There was a very real atmosphere of strength in the Nation; almost the same kind of strength that emanated from Malcolm. And, so, I went into the Nation with my children, for, I suppose, for surcease from a lot of turmoil that we were all very much involved in and lived, but, also to begin to study more about the Nation than I had. I had not studied the doctrines of the Nation. I had

not really looked at it. I had looked at Malcolm and all the other information I had gone into as far as black history and black literature in America. So, I began that interesting look at some of the mythologies that the Nation was involved in and with. Ah, and so that's what I did.

INTERVIEWER: YOU SAID, THE NATION WAS BLACKNESS; WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY THAT?

Sanchez: The Nation, actually, made America begin ah, Black America begin to use the work "black." You know, we used "Negro" and "Afro-American." Ah, the Nation said, "You are a *black* man and *black* woman." And, it's very obvious, at lease from my study of it at that particular time, um, it was like you are black in the diaspora--wherever you are, and you're looking like you look, you're black in this diaspora. Ah, and it's something to be proud of. You know, and I know that when someone called you black in America before then, ah, you said, "Not me, I'm not black, I'm brown, I'm yellow." Or, "I'm, you know, ah, um, whatever." But, you did, you were not black.

[PERSON IN BACKGROUND SPEAKS. INAUDIBLE. TAPE CUTS OFF]

[END OF CAMERA ROLL 1054]

CAMERA ROLL 1055

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: THIS IS SONIA SANCHEZ. CAMERA ROLL 1055

INTERVIEWER: CAN YOU TALK A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT THE BLACKNESS THAT THE NATION REPRESENTED?

Sanchez: You see, Malcolm had made the country receptive to blackness. It said, simply, "t's o.k to be black. It's beautiful. Ah, it's o.k. to have that history. It's o.k. to understand that part of what it really means to love yourself." So what, what, where were those people going to go, you see? There was no other place for them to go with that information, with that intelligence, um, with that kind of movement, so they moved in almost en masse into the Nation, you see. And, the Nation says, "Here I am. Here. Yes, I, I respect your blackness. I say you are a black woman, and you're beautiful and you're queen of the universe and walk up and be correct, be moral." It was the greatest moral, ah, place for people who were trying to be correct, who were trying to be political, who were trying to be very much involved with their blackness. People were trying to learn about themselves--that was the place to go. And, of course, there were restrictions involved. There were problems, make no mistake about it. But, that was that arena, ah, that had been left--the legacy Malcolm had left was that legacy right there for many, for many people, masses of people. It was an arena, also, where people said, "I want to get off drugs." What people forget, during that period, drugs were decimating the black community. People want to forget that. They say, "Now Crack is new." Crack is new, but the whole idea of people being on drugs was not new. I, I actually saw men come into the temple who were out, and woman were out, and they were resurrected in one week, and would come back, it was like seeing people rising from the dead: "Stand up straight, brother, stand up" and say, "I was yesterday here" and was standing up straight and was walking. They had the best drug rehabilitation program on the planet

earth, right there. And the same with women. The same thing happened with women. When you told a woman, “You’re not a ho’, you’re not a whore,” you know, “You’re not somebody’s whatever.” I saw women, who, in one thing came in, you name it, whatever, and three weeks later, two weeks later they were coming in saying, “I know I am not on that level.” So, here was this, this, this, um, this organization talking about resurrecting and, and reordering you life. And, not just, I don’t mean moral in terms of dress; I mean moral in terms of your responsibility to your people. It was that kind of morality that they were talking about. “You are responsible to your people. So, therefore, you must do the following.” You see? “You must act in a certain fashion, but, you must also preach this message to bring people to assist themselves. You must, indeed, um, do as Du Bois and others said in the ‘30’s,” you know, ah, ah, “Go and frequent Black businesses, you see. Erect black businesses. Work for black folks.” It’s that whole push in terms of blackness. It was a sea of blackness there, to see people saying to themselves, “I like me.” I saw people, ah, liking themselves. I would walk down a street, and people who were like, you know, were not doing right, as such, would say, “Uh, uh, don’t worry now, Sister Sonia, uh, uh, I’m going to get it together, uh, uh, uh, yes, and I know,” but, stand up better you see, at some point. There is moral energy ah, in the country that made people--whether they wanted to be a Muslim or not--think in a fashion that was, ah, healthy towards each other. Old people, old women in Harlem could cross the street and no one mugged them. Woman could walk down the street with diamonds, and no one, because even though the brothers ah, were poor, or po’, they knew they could get a meal if they went in there. They knew that someone would give them food for thinking, which would make them say, “I don’t need to do that. Let me go out and get a job. Let me go out and see the paper; let me do something else.” So there was that moral fiber that was given to that black community that was so necessary and so needed.

INTERVIEWER: WHAT WAS THE IMAGE THAT BLACK MEN HAD? WHAT WAS YOUR SENSE OF THAT?

Sanchez: The image of Black men in the Nation was one of, um ah the FOI. The FOI, the Fruit of Islam, was an organization that came over as being extremely strong ah, extremely powerful, ah, extremely protective. Ah, and they brought back the whole aura of Garvey, ah, that whole era where you came in, you came into uniforms, you came in and you didn’t mess with them. There was some bad bloods, you know what I’m saying. I mean you did not mess with the FOI; when they came out on the street, people said, “Ah, um, yes sir, um, um.” But, even the brother who came into the Nation, and just wore the suit every day-- They had to wear a suit, ah, into, into the temple, whatever. Ah, and you saw the brother selling the paper on the street. It was an image of, like, an upright brother, you know. I’ve come from ah, being powerless to a position of having power. I’m selling a newspaper. And, they were like pushing newspaper on you and you bought that paper, you know. Ah, and they really believed in that: brothers going around selling fish that came from ah, ah, Latin America, if you remember, Central America at that time. Ah, brothers selling bean pies, ah, brothers with businesses. It was like a sense of, of, of people trying to do, be correct with each other. That people weren’t going to hustle you out of anything. And, you could trust them. You could trust the sisters; you could trust the brothers. And, so therefore, in that sea

of blackness you were home and you didn't have to … you could let down and say, simply, "These people are good; they can take care of me."

INTERVIEWER: WHAT WAS YOUR SENSE OF THE RESPECT THE BROTHERS IN THE NATION HAD TO THE SISTERS IN AND OUTSIDE THE NATION.

Sanchez: Right. Well brothers did … I mean, you, you felt that respect that brothers had for sisters, because they were taught that. They were taught. I'm not talking about problems with that at all, o.k., because, certainly, there were problems with that. But, certainly on a, on a, on a level of sisters were queens; or, sisters were to be respected. Sisters were to be taken care of. All those kinds of things were interesting kinds of things that some women had never experienced. I mean, some women told me they had never experienced anyone saying to them, ah, "I like to protect you; I like to take care of you; I live very much to, in a sense, make sure that ah, ah you are protected." So, when sisters came into a neighborhood, whatever, and the brothers were standing outside, they felt safe. You hit a hundred and sixteenth street, or two blocks before One Sixteenth, you felt protected. You knew no one was going to mug you. And, you knew the brothers would not mug anybody within that area, because, they knew that if they did they were in deep trouble--they wouldn't even think about doing it, you see. So, there was that, that wall of protection that was there all the way from One Twenty-fifth street all the way down to One Hundred and Tenth street, you know. From Lennox Ave., the Seventh Ave., you didn't commit stuff in that area, you know what I'm saying?

INTERVIEWER: [INAUDIBLE]

Sanchez: Because, the Temple was there--the Mosque was there, yes, you better believe it, you see? And, if something did happen, they was, you know, you felt that they would go out and say, what's happening, what is this really all about, you see? Um, ah, and I think that you have to, we have to understand that when the Temple was attacked once by the police that the neighborhood came out and surrounded the Mosque, and said, "No, no, no, no, what are you doing here?" And, the police said, we're looking for someone who supposedly stole something. They said, "No, no, no, you know it won't be here." I mean, you had people coming out. You had, poets and, and writers, and social workers, and all kinds of people coming out doing that.

[TAPE CUTS OFF FOR A FEW SECONDS]

[SLATE]

INTERVIEWER: CAN YOU GIVE ME A SENSE OF PROTECTION AND LACK OF CRIME AROUND THE MOSQUE.

Sanchez: What, what the Mosque was, I think, for many people, it was a, a beacon--a, a haven. And, as a consequence, you know, or you knew that you were safe within the confines of like ah, less you hit Lennox Ave. ah, coming down towards a Hundred and Sixteenth Street that you were going to be o.k., because, actually there were brothers up and down that avenue selling the papers, and, it meant, simply, that if they saw anything happen, or, people wouldn't do anything around them, first of all. So, once you got to One Sixteenth Street you were, like free, you were home, you were okay, you were safe. And, people knew that, and so

therefore, and if anything happened around the confines of that Mosque, I mean, ah you knew the person had to be crazy to do it, because someone would find them out and go and say, “What’s your problem brother or sister?” So, there was that sense of, of, of, being safe within that arena, which was very important. I think that it was that aura ah, and, and that mystique. Ah, and that sense of seeing brothers and sisters around. I mean, we saw sisters walking in a certain fashion, and dressed in a certain fashion; and, even though, it seemed different than the rest of the populace, people respected that. You know, you, you had to go back and look at the respect that ordinary people had for the sisters. I mean there was a sense of, like, respect for these are good sisters. And people would say, the church would say, “How are you doing today, sister?” ah, “Everything o.k.?” Cause you say, “I’m fine sister.” And, there you were. There was a common ground of respect and, and love for each other. And, some would stop you and say, “I don’t know if I really believes in this stuff that you people is talking about, but you know, my daughter’s in this, you know, and she done changed. My daughter used to run and do this, and drink, and smoke that pot, and just run with all kinds of mens, but she don’t do that no mo’ and, so even though I don’t quite understand what it’s all about, ah, [whispering] I like my daughter now, my daughter is nice now, and she’s respectful, so, keep on doing what you’re doing girl, you know, cause I know there’s some good in that.” That’s what I’m talking about. You can’t fight that. And, that was a very real kind of movement there. And, we have to remember that and understand that so young boys would not hit or knock down older women for anything at all, because they knew that they weren’t supposed to be that way. Uh, that’s why I understand, truly, um, the feelings that some people have now about saying, talking about that in these new rap songs, o.k. I know [LAUGHS]

[INTERCHANGE BETWEEN INTERVIEWER AND SANCHEZ. LAUGHTER]

[END OF CAMERA ROLL 1055]

CAMERA ROLL 1056

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: THIS IS SONIA SANCHEZ, CAMERA ROLL 1056.

INTERVIEWER: [INAUDIBLE] WHAT WAS YOUR SENSE OF HIM?

Sanchez: I don’t like fights and fighters but I love Muhammad Ali and I love Muham… Muhammad Ali because he was not just a fighter. Um, he was, um, a cultural resource for everyone in the time, in that time, black students, white students, green students, brown students, blue students. He cut across, I mean every race, every religion, because he said, “No, I will not go,” and then tried to continue to fight at the same time. And students loved him because they said simply, he articulated what they were thinking, that indeed it was an unjust war. So, you had to love him. And so I would, ah, when he fought, I would like make myself, force myself to come and watch him fight. But I knew that I was not just seeing him in an arena. Because you see, these things are not just about fights. They’re always about the, ah, ah, the struggle for people’s minds. So when people played baseball or fight-or fights, they struggling for the minds of people, saying come over to my side, you see, and not that other side. So I recognized this. I was

always pulling for him to win because then it meant he won some other people over to his side, you see, so. . .

INTERVIEWER: WHAT DID YOU THINK WHEN HE JOINED THE NATION?

Sanchez: Most of the people I know. . .

INTERVIEWER: SORRY, COULD YOU SAY, WHEN HE JOINED THE NATION.

Sanchez: When Muhammad Ali joined the Nation it was a continuation of what we knew was happening already. Everybody had seen Malcolm down in his camp, ah, everyone has seen, knew that he was teaching him, instructing him at that particular time, so when he changed his name, we said very simply, that's his name. When people, in fact when people called him "Cassius Clay," we would say, "That's not his name. Call the brother by his name. His name is Muhammad Ali. Go on do it. Get it. Walk on." And we were very pleased and very happy. So it was not a bone of contention unless people wanted it to be. People who said, "I can't pronounce that name." Or, or I don't want to pronounce that name, or what it meant, perhaps, at some point, that maybe, um, they thought that he had gotten to be too big. But the man knew what he was doing, could do it, did it and brought everybody along with him when he did it because he had that sense of himself, that sense that when he said, "I'm the greatest." You say, "Yes, you are. There's no doubt about that, Muhammad Ali. You are indeed the greatest, the greatest that ever done walk on this earth, whatever." And you believed that. But you also, again, this man was a gentle man. I mean he get out of the ring and then would grab your hand and be very gentle with you and said, "Did you like that sister? Did you like what I just did? Did I tell them really off? Ha, ha, ha, ha." And he'd laugh that laugh, that very infectious laugh and you would day, "Yes, you did," and that was good.

[CUT]

Sanchez: Can you really imagine whole generations living and dying and never once having loved themselves. That's what we tried to change when we moved into the black arts, black culture, black consciousness movement. I said, "Never again will I allow anyone to live and walk on the planet earth and not like what they are, what they be, not like the full lips and the flat noses and, and the hair that was curly or not curly or so-called nappy but just like the skin, the browness and the yellowness and the blackness and the blue-blackness and brown berryness of it all." Ah, and that's one of the things we attemped to do. Um, we initially, many of us wrote in Black English. And many of the people, black, white, green, purple, blue, said, [haughty voice] "This is not proper English so it's not proper poetry." But I remember my grandmother speaking in black English. And I remember what held me and drew me to her was that sound and that beauty of it so I implanted it in my psyche a, a, and, and at an appropriate time I pulled it out and uses it and said, "Here it be. This is what this is really all about." And I loved it and I loved those words and I knew those words loved me. But I knew also those people who had used those words said finally, "Oh, Girl, you done used us. Is we home yet?" And we all looked up and say, "Yes, you're home. We're all home now," because we understand home finally.

INTERVIEWER: WHAT OTHER INFLUENCES WERE THERE ON YOUR POETRY AT THIS TIME?

Sanchez: Of course, ah, Brother Malcolm. Of course what was going on. The, the influences on my poetry at that, ah, at that time, was of course, Brother Malcolm. Ah, his sense of heartness, his sense of humor and his sense of [playing the dozens?]. People forget that you see. We integrated all of that in our poetry. So, we had hard-hitting poetry. But, ah, after we hit people, we were like in a sense, given a chance to breathe and say, "O.k., you have a little breath. You have a little leeway here." Um, also what was going on in the South. Ah, the movement in the South played a great importance in, in my poetry in that I wrote about the children being killed in Birmingham. I wrote about people moving in the South, trying to move towards what it meant, not only to be black, but also to grasp power at that particular time. Also, I read a lot of people of what was going on ah, in Cuba, ah, influence me. Ah, what was going on in terms of a [Guilienne?] and a [Laruder?]. We extended ourselves. We had to teach Third World literature because we were teaching in Black Studies, so I couldn't relegate myself just to a Phyllis Wheatley or Du Bois I had to then move out and read what the Chairman was saying, what [Laruder?] had said, what [Guilienne?] was saying, [Guilienne?] was saying, what, ah, ah, other people were saying in terms of leadership. So, we went to Africa and we all of a sudden looked up and began to read the African poets. I met, Nngugi [wa Thiong'o] came to this country. And I met him and he listened to me read. He said, "When I go back home, I've got to write like you people are writing now about yourselves, a sense of identity." So all of these influences, what was going on in the world and the Black Diaspora, you see, influenced all of us and we began to come together. We met. We shook hands. We hugged. We said simply, "This is what we've got to do worldwide. This is a movement that must go worldwide. It must, um, people must hear what we're saying about ourselves and about the world." And so there was this sense of not only black identity, black consciousness, but always the sense of black politics also, being weaved in, because when people said "Black Power," we say, "Yeah, here it is in poetry. Look at this, ho, ho, ho." When people said, "Ah, we need, ah, land," say "Here it is. Let me you about land, ok.?" When people said, said simply, "We need black schools." We say, "Let me tell you about black schools. Here's a poem about a child loving herself and she'll love herself more if we take over these bloody schools or if we have our own schools, period." So, there was always the coming together. We were like weaving together, moving and if someone said something, we picked it up in the literature. When someone said, simply, "We need to go South," I did a trilogy of plays that talked about, ah, "The Bronx is Next" and "Moving South", "The Trek South, Returning Home Forever." And someone said something else, we say, "Oh, we got the poem for you. We got the music for you. We wrote songs for peoples to sing and record," you see. There was that that move, moving, coming, coming together, you see. When I saw Coltrane playing his last concert I went home and wrote a poem about, about, ah, Coltrane and they began to use my voice at the same time. So when I did a Coltrane poem and got to the poem, the part where we didn't understand what Coltrane was doing at the time, I went [high, saxophone-sounding scream] with my voice. And I brought up Coltrane at the same time. When I said, ah, "Are you sleeping brother John? Are you sleeping brother John?" I responded with my voice, ah, when I said those words also too. It is that kind of motion and movement that we did. And I saw the

paintings for the first time. When I saw Charles White painting for the first time, stumbled over this painting. Ah, when I saw, saw a [Romare] Bearden for the first time, stumbled over this pain- I responded in terms of my writings also too, about, we were like in every arena, looking at each other, ah, when I heard people speak, ah, all the way from a Stokely [Carmichael] to a Baraka, ah, to, ah, ah, a Muhammad Akhmad—-med [sp?]. You know, you name the people, you know, Akhba, you name the people. We responded to each other. When Free Mother Moore stood on the stage and said, “Reparations,” I said, “What the he-, what’s what’s reparations?” She came down off the stage and said, “Honey, let me tell you reparations. It, it’s what we all should have,” you see? Then I went and wrote about that also, too. This is what I’m talking about. It’s that kind of moving in and out of each other--that kind of coming together. No separation of the art, the culture and the politics. And so we said simply, I wrote an essay that said, “Culture is the consciousness of a people. If you don’t own and maintain the culture, you will not keep, keep a conscious people. They will become unconscious. They will give you all kinds of peculiar people and call it your culture and it’s not your culture at all.”

INTERVIEWER: CAN YOU GIVE ME A SENSE OF WHAT YOU WERE FIGHTING AGAINST IN TERMS OF THE IMAGE OF BLACK FOLKS AT THAT TIME.

Sanchez: The image of black folk in the late ‘50’s, early ‘60’s, um, was one of, in the movies still, of like the big fat mammy syndrome, you know? Ah, um, I mean it’s not by chance that people say the most important movie is “Gone With the Wind.” You know. Come on. Because you had like, “Miss Lucy Mae, honeychile, you mean that no-good man done left you honeychile? Honey, honey, honey, honey, honey, ‘course I’ll come. I’ll stay with you and work for you. I’ll do all I can for you.” She say, “But I can’t pay you any money darling.” “Honey, I don’t need no money. I don’t need no money at all. I’ll work for nothing cause you is my family.” And then of course she has six little crumb-crushers at home. We saw that. You know. And we said, “No, no, no, no, no, no, no. That’s not what African American women be. That’s not what they are. Not at all. Period.” And we began to literally reconstruct the image forever. Of course we still had those funny movies coming, Tarzan movies, you know, that we grew up on. Ah, African people were always scared people, whatever. And we said, “I, I came through Harlem. I couldn’t have been scared.” [Laugh] You know what I’m saying? If I was scared I was dead, you know? So therefore, we began to say simply, that’s why people are always brash, you know, very much sure of themselves. Ah, people want to say, we didn’t see always black, ah, a human quality. Well, the, the human quality was to make them bad, you know what I’m saying? I mean, like, that was like the human quality. We saw bad. You don’t mess with us, you see? And what that did. Oh the telephone, yeah,

[END OF CAMERA ROLL 1056]

CAMERA ROLL 1057

INTERVIEWER: WHAT WAS THE NEW BLACK IMAGE THAT CAME OUT WITH THE BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS?

Sanchez: Well, the new black image was one of people who were taking control of their lives. One that denied, ah, that Africans in the, uh,

Diaspora were, were weak, ah, child, you know childish, um, childlike, ah, incapable of doing anything. It denied that whole image of black women as whore. I mean we as black women put that down to rest, to sleep. Ah, the whole image of the pickininny kind of thing, ah, and we did that by braiding our hair and saying, see, "Lookey here, look at these braids," you see. Because we've been braiding our hair for a very long time don't forget. Um, these are the kinds we, and, and, and African-American men who were taking control of their lives. Um, they're not scared and shaking. Ah, the images that we gave in our poetry were, were men and women who were very certain of what they were doing, uh, strong, um, men and, and women--complex, you know? Weaknesses yes, o.k., but not weaknesses that would destroy them, you see. And I think that initially at the very beginning, ah, a lot of the writing was, was on purpose one-sided, in that, um, even one-dimensional on some levels, ah, to show simply an audience, this is a possibility. This is really how people are. But if you really read, if you do a close reading of the literature of that period, there was always, ah, the other that was there too at that time. Quite often people push one, one side of the literature we were doing. But you always had the poems about being lonely, the poems about being a woman, the poems about, ah, being a mother, single mother, the poems about being, um, oppressed, along, but there's a double and a triple oppression that we all had at the very beginning, ah, ah, as, as we wrote, you see. Most certainly as the women, the African-American women were writing the pieces, um, and always, most of the times, the difference is that we were not victims. Ah, and you must understand that, um, we say, "Yeah, I'm lonely but the point is that and, and I'm by myself and I might even show some fear every now and then." But most of us had gone through the whole process of expelling fear. You know, if you listen to Brother Malcolm long enough you expel fear, you know. If you really got up and did something. If you became active, fear was expelled from the body. It's when you are inactive that fear accumulates like fat in the body, o.k.? And that's what I'm saying. So the moment you, we, we can't, we were lean, we were lean, you know, we stayed lean because we moved around a lot. We were lean with action and lean with courage you see and we leaned against the co- the country with that courage, you see. But the activism made that happen.

INTERVIEWER: WHY WAS IT IMPORTANT THAT BLACKS DEFINE THEIR SELF-IMAGE AND WHO HAD BEEN DEFINING BEFORE?

Sanchez: One of the things we learned from Malcolm and others that, ah, we had not been in control of defining ourselves. There's no such thing as self-determination. We were very much concerned about doing that for ourselves. Who are we? The whole question of identity came up. Are we Negroes with a capital N? Because American didn't capitalize Negro until the 19- late 1920s o.k, in the newspapers and books. Are we Afro-American, and what that means also, are, are we black? And so all of a sudden people came, saying, "Well I'm not black, please," I mean you know. And, and we said, "No, no, we're not talking about color. We were talking about are we these black people who populate the earth?" So, it became important that we define ourselves as black men and black women, walking on this planet earth, doing what we need to do. It became important that we write our own books, eh, that we write our history books and our poetry books and we write in the language that we wanted to write, um. It became important that we educated out children, ah, that we start, that we begin to talk about black religion, you know,

ah, black Christian theology, ah, black history, black English, ah, ah, black poetry, ah, black sociology. People began to look at, ah, little black girls and say, Yeah, okay, maybe they do have some problems in these urban, ah, ah, cities, but there's a strength about them that's fascinating, whatever. And how, how, then, then do we change that? Ah, we began to teach black literature. For the first time people, in our classroom in San Francisco, um, we had like people sitting on the floor to read or write to read a Du Bois, ah, to read a Garvey, ah, to read a Zora Neale Hurston, ah, to read all these people. And they cried. People literally cried in the classroom, say, "How can I say that I was educated, ah, when I didn't know these people existed." People cried. And so when you gave a syllabus out with 13, 14 books, people say, "Hey, I'll read it," because they wanted to read. Because they knew that they had been deprived of that information about themselves. That is the kind of joy. So, that at sometimes, so you began to have in the churches, ah, at the shrines the Black Madonnas, Black Jesus Christ, you know, a Black Jesus Christ up there and people say, "Sacrilege, sacrilege." And we say, "No, no, no, no. Think of the place. Think of the time and say it is not sacrilegious to say a Black Jesus Christ," you see. Ah, people began to put up Black Marys and, and black, you know, all of these things. And people said, hold it, now that might no be the case. We say, think of Isis and you'll know something then. Think if you go into certain countries, if you go, you'll see that the people that they worship are these black women. And so people said, hold it: "If they worship black women, how will we become to be people who are not, women who are not worshipped, and who are damned," you see. And so a whole movement began to come in terms of women beginning to look at themselves in a different fashion.

[PAUSE]

Sanchez: I began this poem after Malcolm was assassinated and I never finished it. I used to come to it, look at it, hold it, put it down. But the great joy of poetry is that it will wait for you. Novels don't wait for you. Characters change. But poetry will wait. I, I think it's the, it's the greatest art, because it will wait for you in a drawer, in a notebook. And when you open that notebook and say "I'm ready to finish it." The poem will say, "Welcome, come on, get to it, do it." And I did it.

Malcolm
Do not speak to me of martyrdom, of men who die to be remembered on some parish day. I don't believe in dying. Though, I too shall die. And violets like castanets will echo me. Yet, this man, this dreamer, thick lipped with words, will never speak again. And in each winter when the cold air cracks with frost I'll breathe his breath and mourn my gun-filled nights. He was the sun that tagged the western sky and melted tigers while they searched for stripes. He said, "Forget you, white man. We have been hurled too long. Nothing is sacred, not your white face not any land that separates until some voice is squat with spasms." Do not speak to me of living. Life is obscene with crowds of white on black. Death is my pulse. What might have been is not for him or me but what could have been floods the womb until I drown.

Ah, that poem for him was, um, was done almost, I finished it, ah, in one night in one sitting, ah, as I walked through it and thought about, um, how to at some point say to people, "Don't talk to me about

martyrdom. I know it. I feel it. I taste it. I've lived through it. Um, I don't believe in dying but we're all doing to do it," you know, ah, and then go to the man. Talk about this man, this dreamer, "this man thick lipped with words who will not speak again." But in a sense when he spoke we listened and we heard and knew and felt and lived and loved and, and we were.

[SLATE]

INTERVIEWER: WHY WAS THE CONGRESS OF AFRICAN PEOPLES' CONVENTION IN '70 IMPORTANT AS A FIRST STEP IN BUILDING THAT NATIONAL BLACK MOVEMENT?

Sanchez: The Congress of African People was in 1970 in a place called Atlanta, Georgia and it came about, I think because Stokely Carmichael or Kwame Turé and, um, [Ossi Sedaki?] decided or began the discussion about bringing this into the international arena, bringing the sense of being black into an international arena, an African arena also at that particular time. And so, Stokely, Kwame had been discussing this from '68 until 1970. As a consequence, there was a gathering there. And we all came. You had at that gathering, no forget, um, everyone from Farrakhan, ah, to [Rep. Charles] Diggs, ah Whitney Young was there--you're talking about two years before his death--also in a dashiki. Ah.

INTERVIEWER: I'M SORRY.

[END OF CAMERA ROLL 1057]

CAMERA ROLL 1058

INTERVIEWER: COULD YOU TELL ME ABOUT THE CONGRESS OF AFRICAN PEOPLES CONVENTION IN 1970 AND THIS SENSE OF IT BEING THE FIRST STEP TO THIS NATIONAL BLACK MOVEMENT?

Sanchez: The Congress of African People happened in 1970 in a place called Atlanta, Georgia and, to have been there, to have felt that excitement to have seen on a stage a minister, Louis Farrakhan, ah, a Whitney Young of the Urban League, ah, a Congressman Diggs, um, to have seen, um, people come together, holding hands, saying simply, "We are going to advance the cause of blackness and take it to a level that it, that this country had never seen before." It is that excitement, that kind of mood, ah, that permeated, ah, the room there, in Atlanta, Georgia. And we knew, many of us, that it had been in a sense the brainchild of a number of people who had begun to push for an internationalizing of the movement. Ah, it was not just nationalizing the movement, but internationalizing the movement, saying simply, "We are moving to, we are taking it to an African arena now." Ah, we are bringing people along who perhaps don't want to come along. Ah, because the mass of people, the mass of black people in this country are saying simply, "Get on board this train," just as Tubman said, "if you don't get aboard in 1970, you might get left." [Slight laugh] So, a whole lot of people got on board that train in Atlanta, Georgia because they knew that the train was running and was on high speed at that point.

INTERVIEWER: WHAT ARE YOUR STRONGEST IMAGES OF THE CONVENTION?

Sanchez: Ha, ha. Watching people. I'm an observer of people, you know. I don't, if I, if I were not a writer, you know. I think I would just

enjoy watching people. My children always tell me that I'm a snoop, that I watch people all the time. And it's true. I do. I watch people. And I went into, ah, workshops and saw the workshops function, saw people function with people. People came to that convention ready to learn, ready to be moved, ready to hear about how we were going to cooperate and do things, ready to talk about the idea of, ah, Af- African liberation on a global, ah, scale. Ah, ready to see people make, ah, ah, alliances. Ah, that was the important kind of things. I watched the faces of people as they gave talks and speeches. I watched the people respond. The, the crowds, the crowd, um, the crowds, people stood up almost at every line that people said, you know. When I got on the stage and walked on the stage, ah, everyone who walked on the stage, people were given standing ovations. You, you walked on the stage, um, I had my head wrapped in a [gaylai?], um, ah, I had, um, I, a long African dress on. And you looked out and you saw all of that, ah, in there. And you saw people not dressed in that fashion. But people got up and, and, the women were especially happy because there weren't that many women involved there, ah that cap- meeting. So, you knew you were there for the women. And you said, well I, I am here. "How you doing, sisters?" First thing you said is, "How are you doing sisters?" And sisters cheered, stood up and cheered, because you were, you were about them. You were there because of them. You were not there because you were the exception. I never like took that, ah, that role. I was there representing the sisters and the brothers but also saying, "Sisters I'm here." Now, you're here and we're going to look at this and talk about it and, and see what our interests are also too. Um, that was a, that was a, a really great time and a great movement also, too. Ah, because you saw people willing, at some point, to put aside differences and begin to come together also.

INTERVIEWER: WHY DO YOU THINK THAT HAPPENED AT THAT POINT?

Sanchez: Planning, contrary to what people want to believe, a lot of this stuff was always impromptu. People planned it. People saw. People had ideas about, see my idea has always been that we're going to be, call ourselves African people eventually. But I know that we have to go through stages. We have to go through Negro and Black and African-American and now finally African. So, one of the things we understood fully is, that if you're talking about piggy-backing off Brother Malcolm, you had to understand what his trip to Africa meant. It opened up avenues to all of us. Um, what is also meant too, at some particular point, is that it meant that, ah, people were asking for, for help. What we were doing in this country, people were doing, began to do in, in the Caribbean, began to do in Africa, on the continent, you see. So what was happening here, we had to be at, in the sense, in, in the vanguard. So, we were in the vanguard. What, what we did here, it, ah, it, it became, it, it happened in the Caribbean. It happened in Jamaica. It happened in Barbados, you see. It happened on the continent. So, therefore, those lines were open finally. So we truly understood, ah, ah, what we had to do at that particular point. It was a realization of being at the forefront, ah, pushing people, ah, to their roots in a, in a very real, in very real terms, not in superficial terms.

INTERVIEWER: CAN YOU GIVE ME A SENSE OF BARAKA'S POEM, THE NATION TIME? DO YOU REMEMBER THAT?

Sanchez: Oh yeah, ah, I, I, I think had heard that poem before he did it there. I could be wrong. Um, but you know, Barbara Ann Teer and a lot of people who was, she was the, the, the head of the Black National Theatre. Ah, people came down and recited what it was be involved with Nation Time. What was interesting about that is that people said, "Nation Time," and people began to sing it and chant "Nation Time." And so when Barbara Ann Teer and [Hug?], and [Hug?] Theater Group began to say, "It's Nation Time." And Baraka began to say, "It's Nation Time." And when we began, as poets, to say, "It's Nation Time. Get it together brother. Get it together sister. This nation needs you, requires you. This nation requires your energy, your intelligence, your, your, your, your abilities," whatever. Ah, the people began to chant in the house "It's Nation Time, Nation, Nation Time." And we knew what nation we were talking about. Because the country told us there was a white nation and a black nation. So, we knew we were talking about a black nation at that time. And that was important for people to understand that, ah, so people chanted. It was a call and response that was going on there. Ah, and we responded to the call for Nation Time. And Nation Time meant very strict, um, um, response to what was going on in the country. Get your life together. Ah, get you politics together. Ah, get your eyeballs straight. You know what I'm saying? [Laugh] Ah, get the body straight, the hair straight, the face straight. Ah and get your job straight. Whom are you working for and, and what are you working for? Ah, and what is this world all about? Ah, are you indeed a human being or are you think, do you think you're a human being? If you think you are a human being you probably aren't going to act like one. Become the human being that people want, really want us to become. As a consequence you, you found people walking out, out of each cultural night. You see the cultural night, ah, reinforced the workshops. What happened in the workshops, you see, the cultural nights said, said it again in voice, in singing, in poetry, in dance and whatever, and music, you see. Because when people taught there during the day they sang it at night. When people, ah, argued during the day, at night it came together you see? And people, people's names were mentioned. So we mention all the names. We didn't leave out anybody when we sang this Nation Time. "For you too, Whitney. For you too, Diggs," you know. "For you too, Baraka. For you too Farrakhan," you see? Everybody was included you see in, in that, you see. And as a consequence, you see, people, ah, left there humming, "It's Nation Time, it's Nation Time." And it got all the way into their insides, all the way down into their toe jam.

[CUT]

INTERVIEWER: WHILE YOU WERE AT THE CONGRESS OF AFRICAN PEOPLES CONVENTION, WHAT DID YOU HOPE WOULD COME OUT OF IT?

Sanchez: You know I, that's a difficult- to say that I came to the Congress of African People with specific, with a specific agenda and specific hopes beyond bringing people together and beyond moving them to an idea of what it was to connect with, as African people, all over the planet earth.

INTERVIEWER: CUT.

INTERVIEWER: AS A WOMAN WHAT WERE YOUR EXPECTATIONS GOING INTO THE CONGRESS OF AFRICAN PEOPLES?

Sanchez: I'm not sure what my expectations, uh, were as we moved into Atlanta for the Congress of African People because most of the woman had not planned that conference. And so we weren't too sure what was expected, ah, of any of us, um, as women, other than perhaps be, ah participants or performers, ah, or to lead a workshop. But as we moved in and looked and observed and worked, ah and listen to conversations and listened to, listened to arguments be understood that certainly out of that would come some other things and they did come, good things, African Liberation Day came, ah, of course, um, the movement to Gary also. All of that made for the movement to Gary, ah, going into Gary to try to fuse together, ah, the politics of the time with the politicians of the time. Um, I didn't make that meeting. I, I didn't make it because at some point I had the [gun?] to say simply, this had nothing to do with control of power, it had to do with finally the realization that, we were going, we were getting one point of view. It was the point of view always, usually of men, and of perhaps a woman or so who reflected the views of the men, you see. And that was, I didn't want to be divisive and so I thought it was much more important at some point to observe it, to listen to people when they came back, to read the writings of what happened and just say simply at some point, ah, "That too is not going to make it." And I think it didn't make necessarily because it did not have the input of, of women who, quite often, can mediate, um, could take it in different directions, can sometimes insist that that not be the case and also could say simply, it's not about egos here people, it's about the survival and the movement of African people to a different level. Let us not involve ourselves with this at all.

INTERVIEWER: WHAT WAS THE REACTION…

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: WE'VE GOT A ROLL OUT.

[END OF CAMERA ROLL 1058]

CAMERA ROLL 1059

[THIS IS SONIA SANCHEZ] [CAMERA ROLL 1059]

INTERVIEWER: COULD YOU TALK AGAIN ABOUT THE, UM, THE NON-INVOLVEMENT OF BLACK WOMEN IN THE LEADERSHIP, IN TERMS OF PLANNING FOR THE CONGRESS OF AFRICAN PEOPLE CONVENTION?

Sanchez: Well, one of the things that one understood as, as one appeared in Atlanta, Georgia. Um, one understood that there was no real leadership, um, of black women in the planning, in even the execution, maybe in the execution, maybe in the doing of, um, um, running around making sure that things were kept on time or passing out pencils or making sure the um, that we had directions, in terms of places to eat, et cetera. But you came there, not really knowing what that agenda was all about. You came there, not really knowing what the expectations were. So, therefore, you came out of great love, ah, for our people. You came out of great love for the people who were going to be participants there. And you came because you know you were involved with history. You were indeed a part of history so you came, ah, wondering exactly what would come out of all of that. Um, what came out of all that was of course, um, African Liberation Days. Um, what came

out of that of course was Gary, later on, where we say the fusion of, ah, poets and writers and cultural workers and politicians and, and the fusion of people who were involved in politics, with people who were just ordinary students and workers, et cetera. But we also knew at that particular point, ah, that, there again was an example of things being planned without the participation of African-American women. And I decided at the last minute that I would not participate in that, um, I decided that, um, I would not go that I would wait for the conclusions, ah, of that, ah, meeting.

INTERVIEWER: IF YOU COULD BREAK IT UP AND JUST MENTION, THE SENSE OF NOT PARTICIPATING IN GARY.

Sanchez: Um-hmm. So as a consequence of observing what was going on, I, I decided that I would not, ah, go to Gary, Indiana, that I would not be a participant, ah, what I call a an, an observer on the, a non-participant, ah, asked, asked to be a participant on a limited level in the Gary experiment, where people came to involve themselves with politics and, and culture, ah with politics and staying alive in America. So, I didn't go. And, and, and I got the results of, of that, ah, of that event, ah, from other people who did participate. I got the, the problems that came out of that. And really thought at some point that maybe if women had been very much involved with the planning of some of that, that some of the emphasis might have been somewhat different, maybe.

INTERVIEWER: WHAT WERE YOU FIGHTING AGAINST IN TERMS OF THE ATTITUDE OF BLACK MEN AT THAT POINT OR IN THE STRUGGLE? THEY WERE NATIONALIST, THEY WERE MILITANT?

Sanchez: What we recognized finally as women in the movement, ah, in, in spite of what organization we were in, that African-American men had been socialized by America and they were socialized to be patriarchs and they were socialized to be people who control things. Also, we, don't forget we had come out of the pa-, the time of [the] Moynihan [Report]. Moynihan when he came out with his report that said, "The problem with America is black women." You know what I'm, what I'm saying? "They have the power," which was sheer nonsense, ah, so, we also were coming out of the, some of the literature, that damned black women. We came out of the literature that said the reasons why Black man couldn't advance is that Black women were holding them back. So, we came, we were coming out of a lot of madness, you see. At the same time we were trying to refocus some of that and say simply that Black women were not responsible for this oppression, that we were involved in and with, um, and that was very difficult, ah, so we see, ah, I lost my thought, uh
. . .[laughs]

INTERVIEWER: COULD YOU GIVE ME AN INCIDENT OF THAT, AN EXAMPLE OF THAT AT THE CONGRESS OF AFRICAN PEOPLES CONVENTION?

Sanchez: No that, that would be hard.

[CUT]

[SLATE]

INTERVIEWER: 1966 THROUGH ’68, IN THAT AREA, WHAT WAS THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY OFFERING THE BLACK COMMUNITY THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT FROM WHAT OTHER CULTURAL, NATIONALIST GROUPS, OTHER ORGANIZATIONS WERE OFFERING, WHAT PLACE DID THEY FILL IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY?

Sanchez: The Black Panther party actually, ah, was a very important movement in the black community. The people, what they, what the party did initially was that they escorted people home, ah, when they got off those buses late at night, to their homes. They were like an escort service, initially. Ah, for the women who were coming in very late and for anyone, because the cops over there, ah, where they lived, would like, were menacing people. There would be a menace by, ah, policemen there. As a consequence, ah, they offered a service. Actually, there were very much part of the community, and the community was very thankful that they could do this kind of thing for them. And then, ah, we saw a different kind of motion and movement, um, of, of Huey and Bobby Seale and Huey Newton as they moved into the classes with a woman by the name of Sarah Fabio, who was teaching over, ah, in Merritt, Merritt, Merritt College. And I first met Huey when I went to his class to read for Sara Fabio there and began to talk to them about some of the things they intended to do. Their newspaper was a very important paper. Just as *Muhammad Speaks* was an, an important pa- newspaper at the time. It gave you all the news that you needed to have. The Black Panther paper was modeled after the, after the *Muhammad Speaks* paper, with the same kind of demands, you know, “We want the following,” on the back, et cetera. It had news that the other newspapers did not print. And it had something that was different from the *Muhammad Speaks* paper. It had poetry. It had a cultural side. It had the cartoons. It had the art work by, ah, ah, the cultural workers there. And it was fantastic, a very good paper, ah, a very important paper, ah, Em- Emory [Douglas] the artist, did the cover for my first book, *Homecoming*. Um, and he’s a very fine artist. This is the kind of thing that the, the Panther Party did. And what it offered young men, you know, was a sense, the kind of thing, the Panther Party was probably the manifestation of Malcolm, on many levels, again. It gave that sense of, we were men and not boys, ah, in an arena with, with fathers, o.k. Um, we were not boys. “Don’t call us boy, call us young men,” ah, walking down the street. It was not new to me in terms of look however because, ah, I grew up in, in Harlem where all the very hip people wore the black leather jackets, you know. I wanted to have a black leather jacket because all the so-called bad kids in our school had the black leather jackets and the black berets and of course I didn’t have that and the black skirt. So that was not new at all. That was a familiar kind of scene. And I thought they were very hip because I had always wanted to wear those kinds of things. So, um, I would simply that, ah, the image they gave the men, a very powerful image and then of course the whole image that went around the world of them going into the assembly with the guns, whatever. They were not loaded, by the way, okay, but it was just something that said simply, ah, don’t mess with me. And I remember like talking to some old folks at the time, they said, “Well, girl, that ain’t nothing new. We always owned guns. We just kept them in our top drawer,” you see? But the whole point of the newspaper articles was simply that, ah, this was a new phenomenon that we never thought Black men had guns. But if you South or when people went out West, Black folks always had guns someplace in the house. And you were told, “Don’t touch those guns,” ah, that were in the second drawer on, on the right underneath some shorts someplace.

[SLATE]

INTERVIEWER: COULD YOU SPEAK ABOUT THE INTERACTION BETWEEN THE PANTHERS AND CULTURAL AFRICANISTS AT THE TIME?

Sanchez: There was a lot of interaction between the cultural workers and the Black Panther Party. An, if the part…, if the party gave a demonstration in the park in, in the Bay Area, or, or in Oakland, the cultural workers were called upon to read their poetry, to talk to the audiences. There was no division between the Black Panther Party and the people at Black Studies or Baraka or myself. We were all in the same area, or, or at [Ed] Bullins's. Ah, the division came somewhat later on. But, ah, what we, when we did programs at San Francisco State, the Black Panther Party was, ah, Huey came to speak, Bobby came to speak, o.k?. The sisters had their own little, ah, ditties that they would do and they would come up and do their little ditties and, and do their little talk and do their little march and things, et cetera. So, there was always great interaction there. Ah, there, because we had the Black Arts, ah, Repertory Theatre in, in New York, ah, as a consequence of that we had, ah, in San Francisco, the Black House.

[SLATE]

INTERVIEWER: [INAUDIBLE] BLACK HOUSE'S INFLUENCE ON THE PANTHERS AND HOW THE PANTHERS MAY INFLUENCE [INAUDIBLE]

Sanchez: Black House was really the, the western extension of what we had done in a place called New York City, at the Black Arts Repertory Theatre. And there at the Black House you say, ah, Baraka's plays and Bullins's plays and we read our poetry and you, you saw Emery's works, ah, ah, Emery Douglas's paintings and drawing and whatever and you saw people cooperating with, with each other. You saw students and Panthers and, and artists coming together there. And I thing what you saw also too is that, ah, the Panther party allowed us to print our poems, our poetry and our, our, our messages and our articles in its newspaper, ah, and also the Panther Party allowed us an arena for reading our poetry at the various events that happened. There was a fantastic coming together. There was a great collage of people from Panthers to so-called cultural nationalists, um, ah, to students, ah, to people from the Black Studies and they supported each other and the audience was one that, that, lived for that kind of interaction.

INTERVIEWER: GREAT.

[END OF CR 1059]