

Part I.

Adam. Okay. Great. So today is May 1st, 2009. And I am Adam Rodriquez at the John Nicholas Brown Center with Mr. Johnny Reposa –

Johnny. Yeah.

Adam. And his wife, Delores Reposa. Very pleasantly surprised to see you here. And we're going to talk today about the history of Fox Point. So why don't we just get started with...with...just telling me about what you think might be some of the defining things about Fox Point?

Johnny. For me it was the type of neighborhood that we grew up in where, very close-knit, and everything encompassed the neighborhood because at that time growing up, people didn't have a lot of automobiles, they didn't go far from their neighborhoods, they worked relatively close to the neighborhoods, and kind of knew everybody in the houses in the neighborhood. And we're very fortunate to have a Boys' Club in the neighborhood which really kept us busy all the time and just made it so everybody knew everybody, you know, generations of families living there, so to me, not knowing it at the time, later thinking back, it was just a pleasant place to grow up where everybody kind of knew who you were and watched over you, you know? Even though we were in the city and it was a tough neighborhood, it was, very close.

Adam. Okay...

Part II.

Adam. Okay. Yeah. These things [referring to recorder] are just so [laughs].

Johnny. Yeah.

Adam. Have a mind of their own.

Johnny. That's a fancy one too.

Adam. Okay.

Delores. But that's what I can remember, all the good times that you would go to see different people –

Johnny. Well, you know –

Delores. There was that togetherness there.

Johnny. Fox Point changed because as people became more affluent or got better jobs, they felt the need to move out because we didn't have yards and parking like they do in East Providence or Washington Park. So the move-out was a move-up for them at the time, you know, because Fox Point was not considered the best place to live. But, you know, and that's what changed it. And people moved away. So that, and generations of families that lived there were gone, you know, they had two or three markets, you know, Joe's Market was down here on Brooke Street and the market was across the street, you know, a big Portuguese market. Another market on Wickenden Street -

Delores. Solomon's.

Johnny. People - and Solomon's Market on -

Delores. Benefit.

Johnny. Benefit and Sheldon, they're all gone because the people moved away, and there was no, no need to have them. And I was lucky my father had the gas station, I seen everybody, I met everybody because they came and bought gas off him. And he was there for a long time and he was a neighborhood guy so they, and he was a mechanic, I learned off my dad, and the people kept coming back to the gas station. And they took the gas station out, changed that whole side of the city, also, so. And we, when we got married, we were looking for places to live and we couldn't find what we wanted here and we moved away. I don't know, I'd still probably - my kids would've grew up here, if I found a place I wanted, but we didn't.

Delores. Lorana went to school for kindergarten here -

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. And then we moved.

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. And she was -

Johnny. I'm jumping around. I hope that's alright.

Adam. That's fine.

Delores. And she was five years old.

Johnny. Yeah. I went to Arnold Street School, which they knocked down. I went to Thayer Street School, which they knocked down. And we wound up going to Nathan Bishop as part of our grammar school and junior high school. They used to bus us up to Nathan Bishop, and then I went to Hope High School.

Adam. And now, just getting back to when you were a little bit younger.

Johnny. Yeah.

Adam. You said that you had worked at the gas station that your father had worked at.

Johnny. Yeah.

Adam. When you were about thirteen or fourteen?

Johnny. Yeah.

Adam. And that was on –

Johnny. George –

Adam. George M. Cohen –

Johnny. Boulevard.

Adam. Okay.

Johnny. Which is Route 195 now. Yeah.

Adam. Okay. And now Delores, you had mentioned that he was a great mechanic [laughs].

Delores. He was [Adam laughs]. He always, he had a business on Brooke Street.

Johnny. Yeah, when I got older.

Delores. And then, when – he was on a fire department. And he would work fire department and then the garage and I, I had the two children then. And, he would work two days, two nights, and four days off. So, his garage was

right down the street from the fire department on Brooke Street. So, I would, he would leave on a Monday morning to go to work for himself in the garage, and then I would give him clothes because we lived a distance rather than come all the way home to have to run back to work. So he would work Monday-Tuesday days and then, at the garage and then go Monday-Tuesday nights at the fire department, and then go on the Wednesday back to the garage and then come home. I used to take the kids down to see him them two nights because that way they got to know their father otherwise he was always working, you know, and they enjoyed that, going to the fire department.

Johnny. I wouldn't go home for three days.

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. But my garage was across from the playground on Brooke Street. You know where the playground is on Brooke, the little green building that's got bicycles in it now? I had that garage. I owned it and operated it for a long time.

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. And. So effectively, I was involved with a lot of people in Fox Point through my father's gas station and then my garage after that, and I enjoyed fixing cars, I enjoyed the people, and my job changed on the fire department, so I had to give up the garage. I had to work days, I used to work rotating shifts so I could keep the business but then I got a different job on the fire department there and I had to work days –

Delores. That's when you became –

Johnny. – so I couldn't keep the garage.

Delores. Yeah, that's when you became the chief –

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. – on the job.

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. And he had to work days.

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. And when he closed, he told everybody. You know, I mean, there was some woman that actually cried because he was such an honest mechanic. He really was. And he used to do a lot of the Brown students' –

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. – cars. And one fella' became a doctor, and he got friendly with him, and he would get other people to come down, you know, so they missed him once he left there.

Johnny. Those Brown students – a lot of them didn't have much money so they owned cars and I took care of them for them and they did their four years. They'd come and thank me for taking care of their cars. And that was a nice association. And I just, I always felt that treat people fair they'll come back. And I was always busy. And always my wife sometimes used to run for parts for me, and when she got too busy at home with the kids and I would have friends that I worked with be there to run for parts for me, and my dad worked for me for a while and after a while he said, "I'm not doing this anymore," 'cause he, he had stopped working and I asked him to come to go for parts and just stay in the garage, then he started fixing the cars, and I s- and he found himself doing too much. I said, "Oh, you gotta' stop that, dad. You just, you can't" – He couldn't stay away from doing the repairs, too, you know? But, I worked with my dad a long time and I miss him and I had a good time working for him, you know? The only thing tough about working for your parents is probably your pay [Delores and Johnny laugh], pay don't go too far [laughs], but it was a good association - you know, a lot of people can't even work with their parents, so I worked with my dad a long time. And I enjoyed it, and he stay- they basically stayed in this house until he died. He wanted to move away. My mother never wanted to move. So they stayed in 2 Traverse Street until he died, and my mother lived there till she died, so, and I'll keep the house till I die, and my kids will get it. I don't care about selling it. I'm lucky that I don't need the money to, to sustain my retirement, so, and the house is self-sustaining, and as long as it is, we can keep it in the family, you know, and take care of it. It's in good condition and in fact, we're going over there today to do some stuff to it, but... I enjoyed working on cars and I missed it. And I s- I still do it for myself.

Delores. Fox Point was a beautiful place to live. I'm glad I got the opportunity to live there, you know.

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. And you don't have – I have a beautiful place where I am in Jamestown. Jamestown is gorgeous, but the neighborhood is not the same.

Johnny. No.

Delores. I knew everybody when my kids were going to school. They grew, they went on their own, they got married – one got married. My son got his own house. Half the people, I think there's about four people that still lived there when I moved in.

Johnny. Yeah, they don't stay.

Delores. People move away. Their kids grow then they move away. So you don't have that close-knit, you know, like you did in Fox Point.

Johnny. Yeah, I –

Delores. We still go down the club. We stop there, and it's so nice to see everybody that moved away but they all come back to Fox Point.

Adam. And which club was this again?

Delores. The –

Johnny. Portuguese American Club –

Delores. Portuguese –

Johnny. – on Sheldon and Traverse.

Delores. Yeah, it's really nice.

Johnny. Have you ever been in there? Yeah.

Delores. Brian r - , you know, stays there and helps out and – a big guy. You know, it's a nice place to be.

Johnny. That club has been there almost a hundred years. And I used to play soccer for Fox Point Rangers. They had a club on Ives Street. It was called Theophilia Braga Club. That was the oldest club in Providence at one time, and I played soccer for them. It was a – it was a social club, you know, a men's club. And there was no such thing as women going into the men's clubs. They didn't go. They were all men's bars, men's clubs. So they, you know, because of, I guess because of the right – Equal Rights amendments or whatever, it's mixed now. Sometimes I wish it stayed the old – old way for different reasons, you know. Because I think it creates more problems than helps things to have

it mixed sometimes, male or female relationships. And I don't mean that in any negative way, I just mean it – sometimes there's a place for them places.

Delores. I agree with you. I think men should get out to be able to sit down and talk without a woman being there, because now you're – you're with a woman, you 'gotta watch what you say and –

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. – you know.

Johnny. And I – I, my father actually was a councilman in Fox Point, a very long time ago. He –

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. He – I'm sorry, he wasn't a councilman. He ran for council on the Republican ticket, which was crazy 'cause everybody was a democrat. But there was no animosities between Democrats and Republicans. The club was on Wickenden – I mean Benefit and Sheldon Street, the First Ward Republican Club. And it was there for years and my father ran for council, didn't make it, but he was in politics his whole life practically.

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. And it was good, I was involved in politics indirectly being his son. You know, I met the people who would used to come and see him and I would be with him and we'd talk to different people. And we all got along well. The guy next door to us was a democrat councilman – Sylvester Perry – was a councilman in Fox Point for years. He and my father were best friends, you know. So there was no – no negative –

Delores. No bickering at one another.

Johnny. – problems just because you're in different, different parties, which is foolishness I think. And that was fun, too, being involved with that. And until he died he knew people in politics that used to come and see him or call on the phone and talk to him.

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. That was interesting. That just – that just gave you a broader view of – of different things when you were growing up without realizing it. And when he had the gas station, when he was in politics, he did that.

Delores. Oh yeah 'cause I remember going over to the garage.

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. If he had to work, I would – my mother would make meatballs and I would bring it to him. And his father was there, And some big guy'd come in, and the guy was talking but he was talking loud, and I've never really seen that, and I thought, I says to Matt, and I says, "Was that man really mad arguing?" He says, "No." He says, "They were talking politics," you know. And then shook hands and he left, you know, like that. It was funny to see.

Johnny. Yeah. And I was in the service, you know, from 1960 to 66 in the Air Force. I was in the Air National Guard and I was in during Vietnam but we never got activated. And that was when the draft was on. I wanted to go in the Air Force 'cause it was the Air Force I felt like I didn't want to go in the army, I wanted to do a skill and be in the Air Force. So I – I joined the Air Force National Guard up at Hillsgrove. And we never got activated in the 6 years. And I couldn't – and to this day, I don't know how that happened because we were a combat support squad. We had C-140 airplanes. I was a mechanic, auto mechanic, truck mechanic. I wanted to work on the planes. Not physically work on them. I wanted to work as a loadmaster or work – something to do with the airplanes. My mistake was telling them that I had – was a mechanic. So they let me fix some vehicles and they – I did everything they wanted me to do so they stuck me fixing vehicles. I didn't even have to go to a school. They – they had me working on trucks right away and that took away from what I wanted to do. And again, I enjoyed it working on the stuff so I didn't mind, you know. That was fun, in the Air Force. I like the Air Force National Guard, and... It taught you respect and bearing and accountability. It was – it was a good six years, I enjoyed it. I went to boot camp in Lackland Air Force Base in Texas and, for two months and then usually you go to tech school to learn the trade that – the field that you're gonna' work in. Well I didn't do that. I went right back here and just went to t work on the trucks, we used to go to meetings once a month – one weekend a month to fulfill our obligation to the National Guard. We never went away for a year or two within the service, it was strictly, you know, a weekend thing, and in the summertime we used to go away for two weeks in training and I did my six years and got out. Because it always conflicted what I was doing on the outside. So I didn't stay in. A – a lot of guys stayed in – in to build up pensions someday. I never stayed in. After I did my six years, I got out.

Delores. You got out as a sergeant.

Johnny. Well, I could've been a sergeant. They offered it to me, but I said, "No, I don't wanna'." I didn't want to do it.

Delores. Oh, I thought you had.

Johnny. I think I could've been a sergeant, but I used to get in too much trouble. [laughter] Nothing big.

Delores. Clown. He was silly all the time.

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. He was silly all the time.

Johnny. Yeah, have fun. Yeah, you know. But my memories of Fox Point are fond and a lot of good times and some of the things I went to with my dad, talking about politics before, were parties that got – party would run in the summertime they'd take the families and have –

Delores. Cookouts.

Johnny. – parties at the – we went to a farm one time.

Delores. Francis Farm. (14:15)

Johnny. Yeah, Governor Francis Farm. And they had parties in the neighborhood, just like the democrats did, you know. But I – my recollection is the stuff I did with my dad, and going to meetings. And then I – as I got older, I always was interested in the same things as he did. But my party affiliation didn't stay the same. I went with the Democrats, 'cause they were the ones that helped me when I needed things done, and – and that was okay because the guys that I met were guys from Fox Point that were Democrats, and they were the ones that when I wanted something if they could help me, they'd helped me. So that's the – that's the affiliation I went with till this day. And my son I think is a Republican.

Delores. Yeah, I think he is [laughter].

Johnny. Which is fine, you know.

Delores. I said he takes after my father-in-law.

Johnny. Yeah, yeah. And my mother stayed out of it. She just – again, like I said before, the clubs, the women didn't go in unless it was a special occasion. And the politics and the things of that nature, they didn't get involved with, they just didn't. That was it was in them days. The Boys' Club was the Boys' Club. There was no Boys and Girls' Club and I really think that was really good. Because – 'cause you're running around being a kid with boys. And as soon as the girl thing got in there, when the boys get older, they stop being silly little boys. It's a different atmosphere. We used to go swimming in the pool naked. I'm sure they can't do that with Boys' and Girls' Club, you know. I mean, there's a hundred kids going to the pool naked, don't even think about it. Which – which later in your life, made you less-ashamed of getting undressed in front of other guys, like in the service or – or just the way you were brought up. It wasn't that you were – I don't know, it's just the way it made you 'cause you did it since you were a little kid –

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. – five, six years old going swimming in the Boys' Club.

Delores. Well that was like when Johnny was playing hockey. My son played hockey. And there was a kid who was rugged and he was our – a goalie. He would never shower after hockey. They were kids – never shower. And he would –

Johnny. He was ashamed.

Delores. – go home. He was ashamed, which is sad, you know, we are what we are. And his mother used to say, "He don't want to shower." And of course the other kids would make fun of him, a lot of – some kids can be crude, you know. But, it was because he was ashamed, he had weight on him. Now he's a thin guy [laughs].

Johnny. But we were little, we used to go down to the waterfront on India Street and walk right near the water. And that water was dirty, but we didn't think of it. We used to swim in it, naked. We had a diving board built off the pier and we used to dive in the water right near where India Point Park is today, that was all manufacturing buildings and broken-down dock area. We used to swim down there, and the guy that we used to swim off the bridge near the Washington bridge, a black bridge to the right, and the jack-knife bridge was to the left. And we used to swim off both of them bridges, naked. But not – I'm only saying that because we didn't even think of it, you know. It was only – it was the way we were brought up in the Boys' Club. Well, we're going swimming down here, we'll go naked over here, too. Just take off your clothes, go swimming, put your clothes back on. But the Boys' Club now, we swam all – all – all summer when school was out. We could go to the Boys' Club all day, go swimming during the day, in the afternoon come home to our house and

have supper. So it really filled in a big gap of time that could be spent not doing anything, you know. It really, really was a wonderful place. And I – I actually think today, the kids don't use it as much, because they're more prone to being on computers at home, playing games. You don't see kids, 10, 15 kids hanging on the corner on the street no more 'cause they're home in smaller groups, and our society's different today, from, you know, in what's going on but that's a whole other thing, but. We used to play games until it got dark out. They used to call it "Blacksmith." You'd chase each other around till you catch everybody. And if you're the one that's got to catch 'em. As you catch guys, they – they help catch the rest of the guys. Running around the blocks. Till it got dark out, then we had to go home. We played a couple of games like that. Baseball, I told you baseball, in that park. And then they had another park where Fox Point school is, that was a beautiful park. That was Tockwotton Park. And they built a school in the middle of the park, which was terrible. There was a picnic benches, big oak trees, people used to walk through that park, Friday nights they used to show movies in the summertime. And they put a school and took the park out. That was terrible, terrible that they did that.

Delores. Well, how 'bout the library? They took that away –

Johnny. Yeah, well, you know where the –

Delores. – and put in the Boys' Club.

Johnny. You know where the school is. Right next to the school there's a building that they used as a library at one time. That was a shower house. Because we didn't have hot water in the houses. We paid a nickel, you went into that building, you took a shower, they gave you a piece of soap and a towel. And they had them in every neighborhood in – in Providence so you could take a shower. And that stayed after the – after the park got knocked down and put to school, the park – the building stayed, it was a shower house for a while, then they did away with it, 'cause people started to get hot water in their house. (19:32)

Delores. 'Cause they turned and made it a library. And –

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. – I used to take my daughter, which is 42, I used to take her down there when she was like 2 years old. And they would start showing 'em little

things on the screen, you know, video-type thing, and read stories to them. It was – every week you would go and take her.

Johnny. Yeah. The Boys' – the Boys' Club, this is – this is just me talking, this has nothing to do with growing up here. They put the Boys' Club in the worst place they could've put it because it took houses away. They could've put the Boys' Club down on –

Delores. Down on –

Johnny. – Gano Street.

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. They had plenty of land down there. We used to play soccer on Gano Street. All that property, without taking houses away. They plumped that – they took maybe 30 houses away, and put that right in the middle of the neighborhood. Took houses – I thought that was insane, what they did with the Boys' Club. I'm not taking anything away from the Boys' Club itself. I just think the location was terrible. They took us off of South Main Street because of redevelopment took the building. And I was already older, away from the Boys' Club when they did it. And they put the building where it is today. And that just was the wrong spot –

Delores. Well, they –

Johnny. – to put that in the middle of the neighborhood.

Delores. – how 'bout the 195? They put 195 where it is. Now they're taking it away because it's so dangerous.

Johnny. They made a mistake.

Delores. They made a mistake [Johnny laughs]. Just to save the church, they made that real curve, which a lot of people got killed over there.

Johnny. Yeah, that – that road through Providence went right through the heart of the city, that – that was terrible. It didn't change Fox Point because it was on the edge here.

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. But what it did to some of the neighborhoods was terrible.

Delores. You ever went by Holy Rosary Church close to the highway, you go around, it's a little, little, little street to go around, you know, and that's to save that church at the time.

Adam. What was your involvement in the Holy Rosary Church?

Johnny. I just went to church there –

Delores. He just went to church.

Johnny. But I wasn't an altar boy.

Delores. Made his first communion.

Johnny. Made my first communion.

Delores. Confirmation.

Johnny. Both of our kids were baptized there.

Delores. Yep.

Johnny. And, but I wasn't – I wasn't –

Delores. My daughter made her first communion there.

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. And then, you know.

Johnny. Yeah. We didn't –

Delores. We stood in the parish –

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. – because we had just moved, and she stood there, you know.

Johnny. But we didn't do a lot of –

Delores. Involvement –

Johnny. – involvement with the church.

Delores. – with doing things there.

Johnny. Just go to church on Sunday, and – and , you know, bring your kids up as Catholics, that type of thing but that's all. I wasn't involved with the church in any other way. And I, you know, we used to go there for – for – they used to call it Catechism to study the Bible when we were little 'cause we – I didn't go to Catholic school. So we used to have to go there for Sunday school, the nuns used to teach us the – the Bibles and –

Delores. Religion class.

Johnny. – religion, yeah. The kids that went to Catholic school didn't have to do that. There was a Catholic school over here on Hope Street where the church is, you know, so it was a Catholic School, St. Joseph's School.

Delores. Wasn't that Cleary?

Johnny. Well –

Delores. Yeah, it was St. Joseph.

Johnny. – we called it Cleary but it was – it was St. Joseph's. It was the building behind the – I think it's School One now, right behind the church that was St. Joseph's school for – for K through – through maybe eighth grade.

Adam. So did the church have any type of impact on the neighborhood when you were growing up?

Johnny. Not that I can remember now, I was little and if it did, I don't remember, you know. My – my growing up was a working household. Working with my dad. Playing in – in the street, playing in –there was no cars, to speak of, like today the cars – you could play stickball in the street. The cars – there were no cars. I actually have pictures that I took down the street with like one car parked on the side of the street. But the – you know, what they did as far as involved in the neighborhood, I – I didn't see that.

Delores. Well they never really did – you know how they have the feasts now? They have – they used to – they didn't do that when I was dating him.

Johnny. No, I don't remember that.

Delores. They did that I say like, I think my daughter was like three years old when they started that. And they would – a guy came from Portugal and he decorated the church with lights up on the two peaks. And they used to do

that, and that's when it started because in Portugal they put all the lights and they trim that whole church and it's a silhouette like, of lights. And they did that – but a lot – it was all Portuguese people came from the old country that got involved with that –

Johnny. I think that the –

Delores. – and also –

Johnny. – the Portuguese people were religious, and they were tied to the church through religion, but how much they actually did with the church I don't know, and we lived up the corner from it, and there wasn't a lot going on, that I remember.

Delores. No, there never used to be. It started when the people came in from Portugal and they got involved with this church and –

Johnny. Maybe –

Delores. – that's how they started.

Johnny. – years ago they did more too, though.

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. 'Cause I remember seeing –

Delores. I didn't come from there, so.

Johnny. – pictures – they had band, a band that was part of the church. Holy Rosary Band. I don't remember any of that when I was little.

Delores. So did –

Adam. Did your father ever get involved, 'cause he was from Portugal you said?

Johnny. No –

Delores. No.

Johnny. My father was from the United States.

Adam. Okay.

Delores. His grandfather.

Johnny. But, you know. And I'm – I'm, you know what? I'm gonna' say they didn't that much because they had to work to make a living and that was what their concern was more than anything. I think. I don't know that. But as to my recollection, there was no big involvement with the church other than being a Catholic and going to church.

Delores. His – I – I – I knew more about his family than he did.

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. Because his mom used to sit there, his father when I moved to Jamestown his father had lived up in, for the summers, they – the mother and father had a summer place up there. And so, he loved it down there. And we ended up going there because he would stay there more than my mother-in-law. And he used to tell me things about his family, you know. And the mother and father were born in St. Michael's in Portugal, you know, and then they came here. And you know, the father, his father, was next to the youngest. And, you know, the mother lived there, and the father. And then she died and that's when he was six months old. They moved from Benefit Street up to the house. And his aunt, she lived upstairs with his cousin and they were like brothers. Oh, since you were little.

Johnny. Yeah. My cousin lived upstairs from me.

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. My father and his mother were brother and sister. My cousin Joey and I – people thought we were brothers because we were together all the time.

Delores. They were inseparable.

Johnny. We got in trouble together, we went to the Boys' Club together, we did everything together.

Delores. And they didn't really look alike.

Johnny. No. But we're together all the time.

Delores. Yeah, they were always together. His cousin was very light and he looked Jewish [Johnny laughs], he always looked Jewish to me. And he was always dark like my son is the same thing as him, he'd go in the sun, he'd get

really, really dark. And when I met him, I met him at a dance up on Elmwood Avenue, that's how I got to know him. And his cousin ended up going to the dances, too, and then they formed a singing group.

Johnny. Oh, yeah, in the '50s. We had a little – the do-op stuff, I did that.

Delores. Called the "Sharp Tones." They were funny. They were good, too. They were –

Johnny. They, when that - you know, I'm jumping all over the place, I hope you don't mind.

Adam. That's fine.

Johnny. When I was little, my father and my cousin's father were like two tough guys in the neighborhood. Like, they were the tough guys. So as we were growing up in school, part of school was, your father supposed to be a tough guy, you must think you're a tough guy.

Delores. Yes! [laughs]

Johnny. So guess what. I used to get in fights all the time, but fistfights, that's all, you know, kids' fights.

Delores. Not like fighting –

Johnny. No.

Delores. – like they do today –

Johnny. No.

Delores. Good Lord.

Johnny. I remember that. I remember that happening.

Delores. It was funny.

Johnny. My – my uncle, never smoked, never drank. Physically – he was a physically fit guy. He swam from the Point Street Bridge to Crescent Park. Now Crescent Park was in Riverside, that's – that's quite a swim. And his

picture was in the paper. Yeah. His name was Manuel Cabral. He's a athletic guy.

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. My father ran the club, smoke, drank [Adam laughs], did all the other stuff. They were both, you know, the right guys for this neighborhood at that time. My father was called "Panky," I don't know where he got that from. My uncle was called "Bam."

Delores. And I know how he –

Johnny. And we –

Delores. – got that.

Johnny. – we know the history about that. His – his mother couldn't speak English that good. So she used to –

Delores. The guys used to come over and get him.

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. And then he was 'gonna go out. She goes, "Where you goin'? Where you goin'?" And he say, "I'm goin' out with my friends." "Are you - you go out with your friends, you a bum! You –" And they call – she call, "You a bam! You a bam!" They called him "Bam," but she was saying you have a "bum" –

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. – to hang with them.

Johnny. "Bam" Cabral and "Panky" Reposa. Some people didn't even know my father's correct name. They just knew "Panky." And some guys used to call me "Young Panky" and...

Delores. Yeah, even Johnny, those – different guys –

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. – when they were living. They'd call my son "Little Panky."

Johnny. Yep, yep. And what was I 'gonna say about that? Yeah, when he – when he – when my father died, they actually put his nickname in the paper so guys would know –

Delores. Yeah, 'cause they wouldn't know who he was.

Johnny. They wouldn't know who he was, yeah. I – I never found out how he got the nickname. My confirmation godfather, his name was "Gappy," that was a nickname. My Baptism godfather was "Ruffle," Sammy Ruffle. Yeah, they didn't change his name. But they all had nicknames, which we didn't have when we grew up but they did. Yeah. I don't know what else to inject into that. [Laughter]

Adam. It's okay. I'd like to go back to when you were in the National Guard.

Johnny. Yep.

Adam. Now you two were married in '65?

Delores. Yes.

Adam. So you were still in the National Guard when – when you were married?

Delores. He was in for one year –

Johnny. Yeah.

Adam. Okay.

Delores. – after I – we got married.

Adam. Okay. And so how – how did that arrangement work while you two were seeing each other when you were in – when you were in the National Guard?

Johnny. National Guard? It didn't have any effect. Because I only had to go to – to the meetings or drills once a month (30:30). So it was no negative effect, if any, it was –

Delores. And the first year we were married, that he was supposed to go away down, they would go down to Otis Air Force Base down the Cape, he never went because he put in that he was leaving, you know what I mean, before that. We got married October of '65 and his time to run out was like in '66. So he was done, you know.

Johnny. It helped us financially 'cause you got a few bucks for going to the drills, you know. Wasn't a lot of money, but it was a few bucks they used to give you once a month to – for the drills.

Delores. He played soccer since he was a kid for Fox Point Rangers, and he continued to play when he got older he played with a lot of guys that were pros, like one guy came from where was that?

Johnny. Scotland.

Delores. Scotland. They called him "Scotty." And he played – my Lorana was like a year-old.

Johnny. I stopped playing because I was afraid to get grip.

Delores. And he says I better stop because he had no –

Johnny. You know, you're playing soccer –

Delores. – no insurance.

Johnny. – and it's susceptible to injuries. people think soccer's not physical, it's very physical. And I'm twenty-something years old. If I get –

Delores. Twenty-six.

Johnny. – grip going, I won't be able to work, you know. So I stopped playing for that reason. But... Then when I got older and moved away and –and lived in Jamestown, I actually helped coach soccer for a while, that was fun, you know. Probably, the only thing wrong with me coaching is my – my style of soccer was aggressive where European style is more – less aggressive, if – if that's the right...Mine was more English-Irish type, physical part of soccer, whereas European style is more finesse, so – and that's where I taught my son was the physical part of soccer and he used to get in trouble all the time because of me [he and Delores laugh].

Delores. He was a good –

Johnny. Playing soccer.

Delores. – soccer player. He was a hockey player, too.

Johnny. But the – the service was great. I liked it. I enjoyed going. I met a lot of nice people. And, you know, I was working on vehicles so I was mechanic there. So I enjoyed it. It – it was a completely switch of lifestyle from a civilian

lifestyle. And I was still here, I wasn't away. So that made it nice. I enjoyed doing it. I never –

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. – disliked it.

Delores. We - he got friendly with a guy, he was a colonel and his name was Bill Dubey. And he was a nice man and when we went to Florida after all the years, he – he retired. And he had us stay at his place, you know. And that was nice.

Johnny. Yeah, yeah I enjoyed that.

Delores. And then he gave his body to Brown because he was...

Johnny. He was one of the first heart –

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. – not transplants –

Delores. Some like –

Johnny. They put valves in his heart. And when he died, he didn't die from any heart problems so he donated his body to the medical school so they could study on how well his heart did. He died from some other –

Delores. He ended up getting cancer.

Johnny. Cancer? Okay. But he donated his body to Brown for – for, you know, to study what –

Delores. Research.

Johnny. – why he lived so long with what they did years ago. But I don't know what else to say.

Adam. Alright. And now, Mrs. Reposa, what was it like for you – you mentioned that – that Mr. Reposa would be at work a lot of the time when you guys were starting a family. What was it like for you? What did you do with your time?

Delores. What did I do? Well, when I had my son, I was pregnant with him, he's the second one, that's when he got on the fire department, so – John always worked two jobs and when I first got married to him, he was working with his dad, and then he went to IBM school and he was doing, fixing typewriters and that, you know, but in a business suit, he would go check them out in offices. And then I had my Lorana and he ended up working with his father full-time. That's what he did there and then he ended up going into business up in West Warwick and when she was two, he got out of that, and he opened up down in Fox Point on Brook Street. And – so when I got pregnant with little Johnny he was on –

Johnny. Yeah, I was –

Delores. - ...school of the fire department.

Johnny. I was at the garage for about one year before I got down to the fire department.

Delores. Yeah, and he went there. And he – he would work. And living in Fox Point, he would – them two nights, he would be working at the station, but he wasn't far, you know, I – I was living in Fox Point. I didn't move until Johnny was two. And I would go see my mother a lot, you know, 'cause I had the two kids. And then I – I was driving, so I would go down, I would get my mother, go up and see my aunt with her. And I was more like a homebody, you know. I never went out with my friends. I went out with a friend of mine on a Friday every so often. My mother would watch the kids. And he was working or sometime he'd go with the guys across the street, have a beer and shoot pool, whatever. And, you know, I – I just used to go through them. I'd go up – go out to the show, go out to eat with him, and then come home. Or I would take my daughter and my son and every Friday I'd go to Ann and Hope, just to go out and do something, and I'd take my mother – I was very close to my mother, because my mother was by herself and it was just her and I and the kids always was with her, she was always there for them. Because she went through a lot in her life, you know –

Johnny. Well she liked taking care of them.

Delores. And she loved them.

Johnny. She was our babysitter.

Delores. 'Cause I had a brother that was murdered when he was nine. The state – he was in the state hospital and they – they killed him. (37:00) But anyways, her whole life was my kids. You know, my son – my daughter she loved, but my especially son, it was like her son and oh she'd play with him,

Comment [BU1]: What is this?

you know “Oh leave him here. Leave him,” you know and she was a wonderful Italian mother, you know. And I did that and we used to go out to –

Johnny. Well, fire department –

Delores. – different fire –

Johnny. – functions.

Delores. Fire department functions.

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. And then we’d go as a family. We’d see – I had a lot of friends. We’d see them. And my friends all knew I was there to watch my mother, you know. I always – always was with her. She could never walk good, she had a breakdown and she walked like she was drinking, she never drank. So I never really left her alone all the time. And that was it but I never complained about him working. I wouldn’t have what I have today if I did. Some women, they’ll say, “oh, he’s always working, he’s always working.” And “I’m getting a divorce because he’s never home.” [Johnny laughs] It’s so stupid, you know. We’re always together now [laughs]. You know. But we have a good family, a very close-knit family even my son-in-law, you know. I’m a very lovable person. I hug, I kiss. And my kids – my son is 38, he’ll be 39, my Lorana’s gonna’ be 43, October. They are so lovable. They never say, “Okay, see ya’ later,” and hang up the phone, ever, ever did they do it. They go “Okay, bye ma, I love you.” My son, “Bye Ma, I love ‘ya.” Same thing with him and when my son comes in, he greets me with a kiss on the cheek and a hug, and he does the same thing to the father, and so does my daughter, and her husband. He’s Portuguese, came from St. Michael’s, you know, when he was nine. It’s – they’ve – we’re just very close, you know? Always was.

Adam. That’s great.

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. Yeah, we’re fortunate, you – you know. Everybody goes their separate ways. But our families so far –

Delores. My mother was very –

Johnny. – close.

Delores. – lovable, and that's how I am. And his parents [Johnny] loved him to no end, but he was a boy so they you know a boy you don't kiss or hug. So I says to my father-in-law one day, I says – when my son was three years old he was gonna' go hug my father-in-law and kiss him. And my father-in-law say, "No, shake the hand. Boys don't kiss." And I looked at my father-in-law and I says, "Panky." I says, "Grandpa. What are you talking about?" I says, "Boys kiss. Look at all your friends. They're all Lebanese. What do they do?" They kiss on each side of the cheek. He went, "Okay, give grandpa a kiss." He always let him kiss him after that, you know. But – and he – he loves to be loved, my husband. But not all boys are loved. They – They're loved, but they're not shown it, you know? And me, I'm always huggin' and kissin,' and that's me [laughs] and my kids are the same way, you know. In fact, one time, not to get off the subject of Fox Point, but my son's friend he grew up with and then they went to separate high schools. My son went to Hendricken and this kid went to North Kingston. My son left his wallet. He – they were leaving and my son said, "Bye Ma, I love 'ya" and he kissed me. We're going out and he goes, "Oh, I forgot my wallet, wait a minute." And he runs upstairs, so Sean comes in. And he says, "Mrs. Reposa," he says, "that was so nice." I looked at him, I didn't know what he was talking about. I says, "What do you mean, Sean?" He says, "How Johnny and you kissed each other and you told – he told you he loved you and you told him you love him." I go, "Yeah," I says, "I always do that." He says, "My mother never did that to me." I looked at him I said, "Well, you come over here, I'll hug anytime." You know that he's a grown man today? My son was sixteen. Grown man. He always calls me on Mother's Day. And whenever – he'll even call, like three weeks ago he called. And he'll always say, "Hi, Ma. This is your other son." And I go, "Oh my God, Sean," you know. And some people don't get that, and – and so when they don't get it, they don't know how to show it, you know? And he's such a nice fella'. He's a policeman in New Jersey. But...

Adam. Well, Mr. Reposa can you maybe talk about what your family was like when you were growing up and how many, you know –

Johnny. Yeah.

Adam. – siblings you came from?

Johnny. Yeah, it was just me. I was the only – only son, and I just remember my father working all the time. Going to the bar, drinking all the time. You know, maybe, maybe drinking too much reflecting back. My mother didn't drink at all. But the lifestyle was, the guys come home, they go to the club, have a few beers, and come – come to the house. They didn't come to the house to the bar, they went from the bar to the house. And – but he always worked hard. He – he... As far as what I had in the house, I didn't remember wanting for anything, reflecting back. I always had animals, I had a dog, I had

cats 'cause my mother liked them too. And the only thing I can say that probably I didn't get that she got was information about the history of the family. Never – never talked about our family history, which is something you should do with your kids, just so they know what's going on. But...my mother worked in a textile mills. And – and then she worked in the jewelry companies in Providence. And I guess she worked till she was in –

Delores. Your mother came from Swansea.

Johnny. Well, Massachusetts –

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. – yeah. But I'm just talking about what happened in our house.

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. And – and what I can remember.

Delores. Right.

Johnny. Just that they both worked. And my father opened up the gas station. He worked around the clock when he opened that place. That place was a lot of work for him. But he made a very good business out of it. And when they took the highway out, he had to stop. And he opened another place, and I worked with him in the – another garage. It wasn't a gas station, just fixing cars. And he did okay there, but then he got sick to the point where he had to stop working and once that closed, he just – he was older and he pecked away at little jobs, nothin' special. And, you know, working for yourself is not easy, because if you don't save enough money, you don't have enough money for retirement. And he never made big dough, he made enough money I guess. And – but didn't – didn't look extravagant, never went away any places or – or any of that stuff. So – I don't think that was a concern in them days. 'Cause they – they grew up during the Depression, when nobody had nothin' anyway. So there wasn't unions to – to get a pension from, like I have today, you know. I was lucky I got on the fire department, I got a pension. Those things weren't around in them days.

Delores. No.

Johnny. They were –

Delores. His grand – his mother, her father, always, you know, he worked, but they had all the gardens and everything, your grandmother.

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. His mother told me that the grandmother would have her children and be right outside doing her gardening or her farm. And her –

Johnny. Not a farm, it's in a city. The yard is – is –

Delores. Not your mother –

Johnny. Oh.

Delores. – your grandmother had like her yard.

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. And it was like all vegetables –

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. – and all kinds of stuff. She says they even had a goat at one time –

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. – that they used to milk. [Johnny laughs.] And chickens, you know.

Johnny. Well I remember –

Delores. The swans and...

Johnny. – them killing the – killing the pig down and sellin' him on 2 Traverse Street.

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. And I don't remember this, but I – I – I was told by my father that his – his father made moonshine in the cellar. They used to sell it out of the house. And they used to have a hole cut in the floor, they used to –

Delores. Yeah, I know, because you wanted –

Johnny. – go from –

Delores. – to know what the hole was.

Johnny. – the cellar and put ‘em up to the first floor to take the bottles. So that stuff there, I know a little bit about, but not a lot of history. And that – I really wish I did know more.

Delores. And his mother never told him. Like, her – her mother came from Austria. She was Polish. And – my mother-in-law is Polish. And during some war, she was saying, that they – she had another sister, which is my mother-in-law’s aunt. And his grandmother and the sister, they put – the father and mother shipped them out. And the grandmother –

Johnny. What do you mean “shipped them out”?

Delores. In other words, got ‘em out of where they were.

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. And your grandmother was adopted by Ukrainian people –

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. – that had children so she could raise ‘em. And she never had the love. No love was ever shown to her. Her sister got shipped over to Canada. And then my husband’s great-grandmother and -grandfather got killed in a concentration camp. And so his mother never was shown love. My fath – my mother-in-law because her mother never had it, you know. So she came to the states here, and she didn’t even know her husband when your grandfather married her.

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. And then she had gotten pregnant and she had five children.

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. But, he never knew that, you know. So, but...His mother was a nice lady. She just – she seemed cold and that was because she never had that love shown to her, you know. And she said it. And – but she was a good-hearted person. She was very good to me. She was always making somethin’ or buying somethin’ for me, little things, when I was dating him, and she was an excellent sewer. And...

Johnny. Part of growing up in Fox Point, too, was the amount of people –

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. – with families. You know, so there was always people around. Even though I was the only one in the household, my cousin was upstairs. The – the only thing that separated us was, you know, first and second floor. Every time we went out the door, we were together –

Delores. Always.

Johnny. – or going. Always together. So it wasn't like I was alone. And he had a sister, and a stepsister living up there. And next-door was a family of three or four.

Delores. Oh, God, those –

Johnny. Across the street was –

Delores. – everybody –

Johnny. – Cape Verdeans –

Delores. – had kids.

Johnny. – had – Gomes family was [Christ] there was ten of 'em there.

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. – there was kids everywhere, so there was plenty of people around so you weren't – you weren't alone, except when – when you – when you came to your house at night, but the – the neighborhood was so – so full of people every time you went out the door –

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. – there was people around, you know.

Delores. You figure, the people, like my mother, his mother, his father, they're in their nineties. My mother is in her late nineties now, if she was livin'. They were all from the Depression.

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. They knew how – my mother could make somethin’ to eat outta’ nothin’, you know what I mean? They knew how to do that. And I do the – I can do the same thing, you know, different things. But...

Johnny. But we never went anywhere.

Delores. No, never.

Johnny. I mean, we stayed right in Fox Point. My father had a car –

Delores. The furthest we went to go to a restaurant was Young China.

Johnny. East Providence.

Delores. We used to go to East Providence –

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. – Young China. And if we went to somebody’s wedding, then you get the – the macaroni, the salad, and all that, you know. But we never went to restaurants.

Johnny. No.

Delores. Nobody really had – they didn’t have that much money –

Johnny. No.

Delores. – when we first was working, got outta’ high school.

Johnny. No.

Delores. You know, we lived in the –

Johnny. And, it – it –

Delores. – parents’ house upstairs.

Johnny. Yeah. My father charged me twenty-five bucks a month rent.

Delores. He – he had to do the fixing of the – ‘cause the house had no bathroom in it. It was just – it was like – we made a closet out of it. It was a

long room, and it just had a toilet because their toilet was down in the basement.

Johnny. Well, it had a sink and a toilet.

Delores. A little sink, yeah.

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. But they never had no bathtub or anything. So he took one of the bedrooms, it was a small one, made that over into a nice bathroom, and he did all the paneling, and they put new cupboards. But he helped his father do the work, and the father charged twenty-five dollars.

Johnny. I should've stayed there, huh? [All laugh.]

Delores. You own it now [laughs].

Johnny. Yeah.

Adam. This house that you own on Traverse Street, you don't have any family living in it right now –

Johnny. No.

Adam. – it's just owned? So what do you do as far as do you rent it out to –

Delores. Yeah.

Adam. – Brown students or –

Johnny. I –

Adam. – other residents?

Johnny. – I give preference to students. But –

Adam. Yeah.

Johnny. Yeah. But I – the second floor is – I don't think they're – they're teachers, they study history.

Delores. They're professors.

Johnny. Yeah. And the first floor is –

Delores. She works –

Johnny. – got nothing to do with the school.

Delores. She works at des – School of Design, and he works over to Brown.

Johnny. But it's –

Delores. A historian he is.

Johnny. Yeah. I have a girl from Fox Point that does my screening and – and getting renters.

Delores. We did rent to students.

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. And they were girls, and they were terrible.

Johnny. Well, there – there was mixed. Sometimes they –

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. – were good, sometimes they –

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. – were bad.

Delores. They were terrible. And then after we rented out to regular – that's gonna' stay there. And then we rented it to two students, very, very nice –

Johnny. Two –

Delores. – guys.

Johnny. – guys from RISD.

Delores. Two – they were –

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. – from RISD. One kid came from Greece and the other kid came from New York. He was Chinese. Very, very nice. Very young men. Nice. Really well mannered. And then they left. So I says to him, we – you know, you don't

want to rent to somebody that they're moving out in a year. These people are only staying there three years, you know.

Johnny. It's hard –

Delores. And it –

Johnny. – to control that, though.

Delores. – it's hard, it's hard. So we rented it, and so far, so good. Like, that other guy was only 'gonna – he wanted to put a washer and dryer in and we can't. There's nowhere to put it. And he was gonna' move out within a couple of months. He's still there. He loves it. Him and his wife love it there. It's a nice neighborhood, you know, nobody bothers –

Johnny. Yeah. I take –

Delores. – you.

Johnny. – I take extra-good care of the house. I – I – it's not just a rental property to me. And I tell my tenants that. This is not –

Delores. We don't milk it.

Johnny. – just a rental property. If you're gonna' abuse it, I'm gonna' kick you out. And I say that to 'em. I'll put you out. I know I can't put 'em out by law, but I say it anyway so they know how I feel about the house. You know, if they're gonna' go in there and not try to take care of it in normal fashion I don't want 'em there –

Delores. Like –

Johnny. – you know?

Delores. – if you, say you moved in and you moved in with me. And we split the rent. Well, I move out, so you go and you tell him, "Oh, my ten – my partner moved out. I'm only giving you three hundred dollars." What? You rented it for six hundred. I don't care what you do. This girl quit school – she – that's why we didn't rent no more, she was terrible. And she didn't think she was 'gonna have to pay the whole rent. I don't know where people get this from.

Johnny. It's – it's – it's okay though, the house is fine.

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. I did every –

Delores. It was a nice place.

Johnny. –thing I needed to do to fix it. And it's in the city that, you know, it's near Brown –

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. – a great piece of property.

Delores. And it's – it's historical. It's historical –

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. –home.

Johnny. I should get it – I should go to the historical society and let them do the research and – I've always said I was gonna' do it and but I haven't because it's – it's on the – it's one of the historical houses. You know, I can't do certain things to the exterior to keep it – keep it the way it is, wood siding and wood windows and all that stuff. And it is, it's in – it's in nice shape.

Delores. It has a fireplace that's a – the bedroom here, the kitchen, and the living room. You know, they lived in the house at one time.

Johnny. That was a single-family house, two levels with a fireplace in every main room, so it's got six fireplaces. They're not all opened –

Delores. And downstairs –

Johnny. – I opened one.

Delores. – had the – the piece that holds the parts for bread and all that underneath... It was a lot of history.

Johnny. Yeah, yeah.

Delores. He still has the deed that is from the first owner.

Johnny. I don't know if it's the first –

Delores. I don't think –

Johnny. – owner.

Delores. – so. But it's all done –

Johnny. But it's old.

Delores. – in

Johnny. It's like –

Delores. It's all done in that –

Johnny. Parchment paper –

Delores. – wax.

Johnny. – wax paper. So that's gotta' be somethin' just as a – as a – as a – as a paper, if you will. It's the – it's a –

Delores. I told him to frame it, put it in a frame.

Johnny. It's in a drawer. But, growing up in the house was wonderful. When I got married, we lived there for a while and moved on. It helped me make enough money by living there to move on, you know?

Delores. We lived there five years.

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. Then we lived in the other house five years, and we're living in Jamestown thirty-two.

Johnny. Yeah. Actually now I've lived in Jamestown longer than I've lived in Fox Point because I was born in Fox Point but about – about even, huh? Thirty years in Fox Point, yeah. But things change drastically in the last twenty, thirty years here. You know? Jamestown is like probably what Fox Point was before, as far as community and people living there a long time. The problem with Jamestown now, it's getting too expensive for families to move in. And when I moved there, it wasn't that way. But it's near the water, people want to live near the water. People from out-of-state come in and buy and make summer houses to – and the property values go up, which is good for me, I guess, but I – I'm not there for that reason, you know. And if I can't stay there, I'll come back here. You could walk everywhere from here, you can't walk everywhere in Jamestown.

Delores. Oh, yes, you're right. I used to walk all the way down here with my daughter in the carriage to go downtown shopping.

Johnny. Yeah. You know, if you live here in Fox Point you could take a bus downtown, you can walk down to Wickenden Street and get a coffee, you can walk to the bar across the street, you can walk around the – you know, it's a walking neighborhood, you don't even have to have a car. But you almost need one in Jamestown. It – you know, the closest store is two miles away, so...

Delores. That club across street's a nice club. They're very nice, from Sheldon Street. They're gonna' have what? A run?

Johnny. A kid that works there had his niece or nephew that died from cancer, so they're gonna' do a – a walk and a run at Roger Williams's Park tomorrow to raise funds for a – to give out money for kids that are going to school, I think, yeah.

Delores. Scholarships.

Johnny. Scholarships. Yeah. Yeah, well. You know, there's – there's a lot of generations of people going in there. You – you talk to LouLou Costa yet? Yeah, and, you know, he goes on and on. [Laughs]. He's a – he's interesting guy.

Delores. His son went to Brown.

Johnny. Did you know his son?

Adam. No.

Johnny. No? Okay.

Adam. Excuse me.

Delores. Allergies.

Adam. Yeah [Laughs]. How are you involved in Fox Point today?

Johnny. I'm not, basically, I'm not. I mean, I moved away and – and my life has been – was on the fire department with the people on the job. And when I was working, I didn't do much of anything with – with organizations, now. I do

belong to the Jamestown Lions, which is a - a very good organization because the Lions do things without a lot of fanfare, you know, for - for people in Jamestown. But I don't do anything here at all anymore. Other than owning the house and coming here to go to the club once-in-a-while. There's no connection for me with the people here anymore. There's nobody I know there anymore. The - the people in politics have changed, I think two of them are from Brown University, the - the state rep and the councilman. So I don't - I don't know the people there anymore. Like - like most of us that have moved away. I always say that we got cheated out of our neighborhoods because of ourself, we moved away. Once you move away, and break that - that family tie up, it changes. My son being here, when he was living here, we did more probably 'cause he was part of the neighborhood. But without knowing it, he really didn't want to stay there because people were coming to him with problems all the time because he's a police officer. So he was, like, doing work after work. So he - he moved away and bought a house in Narragansett which gives him privacy when he comes home from work. He can come home and just relax and nobody's ringing the bell to - to go and straighten some problem out in the neighborhood. So I don't have any connection with the neighborhood anymore. That's the way it is. I mean, I - I imagine that happens to a lot of people today. People move away they get involved where they live. And the first part of my life living in Jamestown, I didn't get involved with anybody because all I did was work. I had two jobs that took me right out of the house all the time. But when I came home, it was a beautiful place to be. But.

Delores. I have to use the bathroom.

Johnny. She got a bad back. [Delores Reposa exits the room. 58:39] Yeah.

Adam. Okay. And just as a note, Mrs. Reposa has just left for a moment -

Johnny. Yeah.

Adam. - stepped out. So I've heard a lot of good things about when you were working at the fire department.

Johnny. Yep.

Adam. We had a panel come in here and say, "Oh, you should talk to Johnny Reposa," like, "he's - he's so great with the fire department."

Johnny. Yeah.

Adam. Was there anything particularly eventful or special when you were working there?

Johnny. Oh, yeah, well, you know, I worked for myself. I was married with two children, with – with nothing in sight for security for the family. So I had the opportunity to get on the job. I took the test, I got into school. I was 29 years old. When I got on the job the cut-off was 30 years old. That changed after because of the Equal Rights Amendment that passed. Well, that gave a lot of latitude for a lot of things. In other words, the more age discrimination, besides other things so you could get on the fire department until you're 40 years old if you pass the test today.

Adam. Gotchya'.

Johnny. But anyway I got on at 29, now I've got medical benefits for my family, I've got security for them if I die and I'm being – I'm being – learning the job was a wonderful – it's a comradeship within the job that makes it so great, you know. Initially, you're looking for a job, but once you get the job, it's a whole different life. And nobody can experience it unless they're part of it. You know, I can talk about it, but you've got to be part of it to understand what I'm – what I'm talking about. It's probably like a military job in the – in the closeness of the guys together. And, you know, it gave me security, great lifestyle, the family going to picnics, family parties. With – with guys that get promoted you go to parties, and just a good comradeship within the job. And I moved through the ranks. I became chief in charge of maintenance at the end. Back to my old skills. Gave me the opportunity to get this job [1:00:50, Delores Reposa re-enters the room] to take care of the fire equipment. I just was happy every day I went to work. I just loved what I did and enjoyed all parts of it. Paramilitary, so you had to wear your – your uniform to work, you had to take care of the building, you had to clean, you – you cooked meals, you – you inspected buildings. A lot – a lotta' things you had to do. And, you know, it was dangerous at times going into the fires, naturally, I had some bad nights, bad incidences, but more good stuff, you know? I don't – I don't dwell on the bad stuff, it bothers me when I do. So I remember all the good stuff, my kids remember coming to the fire station and seeing me. She wound up meeting girls that she went to school with that were married to guys on the job – job that she didn't know till she met 'em. Wonderful career. I enjoyed everything.

Delores. We went to a wedding one time and we're walking in, and I look, I went, "I know the bride." I went all through school with her. [Laughs.]

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. She's in the receiving line and she goes, "Delores!" and hugs me and we hold the whole line up.

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. She just passed away last year.

Johnny. We had a great time. It – it just was so good, you know. And they always say that the best time on the job is on the back step. That means that you're just a private going to the fires and putting out the fires and learning the equipment and inspecting. As you're more of upper-rank, you get more responsibility, so you – you move away from the fun stuff to more management stuff, you know, and that's okay, 'cause I worked for myself and I knew everybody don't like it once you get up a little bit, you know. You're not everybody's friend all the time. But, eh, you treat people fair, they're fair to you. And I never had a bad day, other than when things happened for the – that were bad, you know? But overall, it was just a great job.

Adam. Well, so, what was your fondest memory of working in the department?

Johnny. Fondest memories was making lieutenant. I was on the job for about fifteen years, I made lieutenant and you ask any firefighter about that, that's made lieutenant, that first test, to pass that test, it was so gratifying because you study so hard. And you make rank, you pass the test by fractions of points. You know, it's a – it's a written test that's partly mathematical and partly general knowledge and the – the scope of stuff that they throw at you is so big you have to study the stuff and memorize it and memorize it. Five minutes after you find out you pass the test, you forget half of it [Johnny and Delores laugh]. Probably just like going to school, you know, you study all this stuff. Well what am I studying this stuff for? I'll never use it in a hundred years. How many gallons of water in the reservoir? And the size of the hydrants and the mains and, you know, I always felt after that they had to give you a test about something, so they did. It was – that was the most gratifying, the first lieutenant's test that I passed. And to go to a fire and do a good job and get accolades from the guys you're with, that's – that's good stuff. That's self-gratifying, you know, right away. And to get in there and get out without getting hurt. Sometimes you get hurt. I mean, you can get hurt walking

down the street we always felt, you know. People will say firemen take chances all the time. Well, yeah, you know. But all of our jobs are dangerous to a – to a point, you know. Fixing cars – I fixed cars my whole life. I got a lot of injuries fixing cars, you know, hand injuries and stuff. Fire department, like she said, when my husband goes to work I don't know if he's gonna' come home at night. And then a couple of times, that almost happens. That happens, it's part of the job. You know, fire department is at a fire. Police department is –

Delores. He's got people –

Johnny. – everyday –

Delores. – pulling guns out at him.

Johnny. – you know, domestic problems, you know. Police work is completely different. Stress all the time. Fire department is a lot of fun, living in the station, making dinner, watching “Porky Pig” on TV, studying for the test, you know, all the stupid stuff. And as you get older, the young guys come in. So you still stay actively young ... 'cause you're dealing with the young guys so it keeps you young, you know. And the young guys will go up to the old guys, the – they respect you and –

Delores. He's been gone –

Johnny. – you – you – you - you live by your reputation. You live and die by your reputation on the job. If you've got a good reputation, you're all set.

Delores. That's what I was just gonna' say.

Johnny. If you – if you don't –

Delores. He retired in '95. He sees guys that were just kids, that's grown up now and they'll say, “Hi Chief, how 'ya doing?” And he's not even on the job no more –

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. – and they respect him, they still call him –

Johnny. Well –

Delores. – “Chief.”

Johnny. – once on the fire – on the fire department, you’re always on the fire department.

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. It’s like being in the service or if you’re a – if a professor, you’re always a professor when you retire, you know, if you’re a chief on the job, a lieutenant, a captain, you carry that until you die, you know? And any guy that takes that job that – that doesn’t come off happy, I feel bad for him because it was wonderful. And you know, I was older. So that gave me a little more feeling for how good it was. I’ve already been through working hard, not making a lot of money, wondering where my next buck was coming from. I didn’t get on there when I was twenty-two years old, thinkin’ this is the way it is, you know. I really appreciated what they gave me. Every Friday they paid me for what I did. I was so happy [laughs]. And they had – I had a pension coming someday, you know, so.

Delores. The best thing that happened for us.

Johnny. Yeah, and I got that pension today. And I felt like I gained as much as – I hurt myself bad one time and I hurt my back, I was out for months, I didn’t know if I was gonna’ work again. She used to drive me around in the car, I’d be laying on the back seat. And I thought that was the end of my career. I was afraid. That was a long time ago, but thank God, I – I was able to come back without an operation. I - it took about three or four months before –

Delores. Oh, a long time.

Johnny. – I got back to work.

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. But I was really worried, then. But the highlights of – the lifestyle of the job, the accomplishments of the job. I always felt I wanted to be a lieutenant or more and became a lieutenant then I became a chief and took care of the equipment, and I always tried to do the best I could at what I did, so when I quit I never looked back like I did anything wrong, and you know, I got that from my father. My father ran a business. Never – never cheated anybody, gave everybody a fair shake and when I had my garage I did the same thing so if you came back and asked me what I did six months ago, I didn’t have to worry about I was lying to you or cheated you out of something, never

did that – never did that. And I never had to worry about anybody getting mad at me ‘cause I – I – I didn’t do right by them, and I think that carried over to what I did on the fire department. But...

Adam. Was there something unique about doing the work that you did in Fox Point?

Johnny. Unique, other than working every day? No. In what way do you mean that like?

Adam. I mean, with the people you interacted or the neighborhood that you were serving.

Johnny. The unique part of my business was it was a neighborhood business. I was – I was – I’m – I’m looking out the door – I was on Brook Street. And during the day, if you came by my garage, there’d be fifteen guys hangin’ there. I had a cooler in a corner with beer in it. It was a honor system. I never drank when I was working. In fact, the cooler came from my father’s gas station, he had soda in it. But I put it in the corner and whatever it took to replace the beer, that’s what we used to charge for the beers. And I’m only telling you that to give you an idea of the way – this was a social business.

Delores. Tell him how –

Johnny. And if the beers were twenty-five cents, that’s what it cost you to replace, just to replace. The liquor store was down the corner, Campus Liquor. We used to go down – the guy – when I was running out of the beer, whoever was there would take the money in the cooler, go down to the corner, buy the beers, put ‘em back in the cooler. It was self-sustaining. When Christmas came, any profit that was made in the beer, I would buy food and – and put liquor on a cauldron in the garage and the guys –

Delores. Yeah, the Christmas party.

Johnny. – could come in and take it as customers.

Delores. But how ‘bout the girl who went to Brown? There was a girl who went to Brown, she’d walk by everyday. And I’d see her, ‘cause I ran for parts for him. She was doing something with the making movies or something. And she made a movie of your garage.

Johnny. Oh yeah, she had me talk to her.

Delores. Yeah, and she took pictures and it was so unique for her to see. There was always people there –

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. – and they’d all say “Hi” all the time, the guys, you know, so –

Johnny. I think some people didn’t come in because the way it was –

Delores. Oh.

Johnny. – you know, they’d be afraid because there’d be so many people out in front.

Delores. I don’t think so.

Johnny. Yeah, it was a hang out. But it wasn’t –

Delores. It was all Fox –

Johnny. – a bad hang out.

Delores. It was all Fox Pointers.

Johnny. Yeah. Guys would tell their wives, I’m gonna’ go down to Johnny’s garage and have him look at my car. They came down to look at a couple of beers [Both laugh]. And I didn’t care.

Delores. He had –

Johnny. I had –

Delores. – everybody there. He had judge – the judge Gerrigan come.

Comment [CU2]:

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. All different people. Doctors, everybody.

Johnny. Yep.

Delores. It was amazing.

Johnny. But as far as my work ethic, my – I was – I was professional in my work, only charged for what I did, enjoyed working on their cars. But, I got to be honest with you, with the fire department, gave me my benefits, I didn’t

have to worry about making enough money to make a pension for myself someday. So I was making money so we could advance ourself, but that wasn't my primary source of income.

Delores. How 'bout when you first went there? He didn't have a telephone.

Johnny. Oh, this is a good story.

Delores. I –

Johnny. This is a good one.

Delores. I'm pregnant, okay. So now I'm – I'm over here, and I – I called the doctor because I had a showing. So I go up, I take the car, go up to Governor Street, and he says, "Delores, you're gonna' be going in, you – it's already start."

Johnny. Where'd you go on Governor Street? To the doctor's?

Delores. Yeah, Doctor Calvin Gordon. And so I called my mother, I says, "Ma, I got the – Lorana's –" she was three and a half, I said, "I got Lorana's clothes, everything's in the suitcase. I want to bring her down because I have to go over to Johnny's garage and sit there because if I start getting ready to deliver, he doesn't have a phone." I used to have to call the fire station and they would look down the street and yell for him and then he knew he had a phone call and he'd have someone watch the garage so he could run up and answer the phone. So I go over and I'm sitting down and I'm getting contractions [Laughs], and he's looking at me, and now he's on the fire department, right? So he goes, "What's happening?" I says, "Oh, I'm getting a – a contraction." He says, "Well, I'm taking you right now," he said, "because I ain't delivering this baby." He knew about it, where with Lorana, you know, he sat with me and waited. It was so funny, and he took me, and they couldn't get over it, how I sat there waitin' to deliver this little boy [laughs].

Johnny. When I first opened the garage, I didn't have any money. I wasn't on the fire department. I had no phone. And next door to my garage, no, two, three houses down, was a variety store called Mr. Anthony's. He used to serve – you know, small variety store, you could buy penny candy and he had a phone. So when I had to call for parts, I used to go to his store and use his

phone to call for parts. And I knew the guy, I knew his family, and he knew me. So I asked him if it was okay if somebody called me, they could call his phone and he could call me and I could come down and answer the phone. [Both laugh]. So he had –

Delores. He had both ends doing it. [All laugh].

Johnny. He – he'd stick his head out the door and would go, "Johnny, you got a phone call!" And it was a pay phone, where you put the nickels in, I'd go down and answer the phone, though. I had a dog named Shep, he was a Shepherd that used to come to the store with me all the time in the morning. I – I'd go – I'd go see him, say hello, I'd use the phone and call in some for parts. And I would buy a can of Rival Dog Food and I'd put it in the dog's mouth, and he'd bring it back, and I'd feed him. So after about two or three weeks of that, as soon as I open the door in the garage, he'd run down to the store, Mr. Anthony would give him the food, and he'd run back. And I'd open the can of dog food and feed him.

Delores. It was funny.

Johnny. That was funny. I did that for a long time before I got a phone.

Delores. Well, that's right because I was pregnant with Johnny –

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. – when you first opened that garage,

Johnny. I had no money. I couldn't afford to have them put a phone in. I thought you had to pay for a phone. But the way a pay phone used to work, and I didn't know it, if you put in enough money in the phone, the person who's billing the phone is – don't have to pay for it. Well, my – my garage didn't generate enough phone calls to pay for the phone, but I put one in anyway and then I converted it to a regular phone, but that was – that was when I first opened the garage. You do what you have to do.

Delores. Yep.

Johnny. That was funny.

Adam. And did you start working right after Hope High School?

Johnny. I worked while I was in school.

Adam. You worked while you were in school?

Johnny. Yeah, with my dad. I always worked. I don't remember not working.
I always –

Delores. His father –

Johnny. – worked.

Delores. – your dad asked you if you wanted to go to college.

Johnny. Oh, when I got out of high school, my father said, “Do you want to go to college, or do you want to go to work?” I remember that like, we were in the hallway –

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. – in Hope High School. I said, Dad, I don't want to go to school, I want to work with you. That was my choice, he wanna' – if I wanted to go to college – I don't know if I could've got into college, I didn't take college preparatory courses, I just took general courses. But I guess I was a decent student. I never had a problem with school. And I said, I want to work. So...I didn't even want a class ring, I said, I want two tires for my car. [Delores laughs.]

Delores. And my mother gave you the money for the other two.

Johnny. I think it was fifty bucks for two tires.

Delores. It was.

Johnny. I said, I don't want a ring, dad. I – I never wear rings 'cause it – when you're a mechanic, you don't wear rings 'cause you can get hurt. And the wedding ring that we got married with went in the drawer, I never wore it.

Delores. He caught a chain around his neck what got in the fan.

Johnny. I had a Cath – being Catholic, we used to wear a little medal around our neck. And I remember I was a kid looking at an engine to inspect it and the chain came out, hit the fan, and hit me in the head. So I took that off. I never wore that one no more, so. But what was I saying about that – the?

Delores. The tires. Your father –

Johnny. Oh yeah, yeah.

Delores. – says –

Johnny. I had a chance to go to school, my father was willing to pay for me to go to school. But I didn't want to go, I wanted to go to work with. So I always worked. I worked while I was in school. In the summertime, I worked every day. In the wintertime, I worked after school or weekends.

Delores. But then you – then he went to college nights.

Johnny. Oh, when I – when I got on the fire department. I went to – I went to college 'cause they paid me.

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. That's the truth. We were paid – we got incentive paid to get a fire degree. And it was like – every year we would get – depending on how many credits we had, we would get say three hundred, six hundred, nine hundred, depending on the credits we had for school. Once you got an Associate's degree, you got say, nine hundred bucks a year, once a year as – for finishing the – the courses. So my initial reason for going was monetary and I was going nights while I was on the fire department. And once I got there, I enjoyed it. And I got my degree after a few years, and – Associate's degree. And now the next one was a Bachelor's degree. Well, the math didn't – didn't go, I needed like twenty-four more credits to get nine hundred bucks at some...I said, I'm not, I'm not doing that. But... So my initial motivation was no to go to school. It was to get the money, the incentive pay. But I did go.

Delores. And he never gave himself enough credit. He ended up with a 4.0 average, and he graduated, cap and gown, we went and his father absolutely, I'm telling you the truth, cried. He was so proud of him that he graduated. He walked away and he was wiping his eyes. And my kids were so glad that their father graduated. That was a beautiful moment, you know.

Johnny. Yeah, I never thought of it.

Delores. Yeah

Johnny. But it was good.

Delores. It was so funny, though. He didn't – never gave himself enough credit. And there he – he took that whatever test and he had a 4.0 average. That's good [laughs].

Johnny. I didn't even know what it meant.

Adam. That's great.

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. But the –

Delores. I said, you never gave yourself enough credit.

Johnny. The problem with going to school, too, was I had the garage, I was working in my garage, I was working on the fire department, I was going to school, my daughter was sick with anorexia for a while, that was bad. So a lot of things were going on, and it made it difficult in my head for it to – to – to focus. And then while I was going to school, one of them instance that happened on the job, I stopped going to school, and I saw the teacher after. And I thought I got a "incomplete." Well, I thought an "incomplete" meant you failed. It's incomplete, you must fail. We happened to see the teacher in the store. He said, "No, Johnny, you can come back to school. You're a good student." It was an English course, a composition writing course. And I did finish it –

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. – I think. Yeah. But I had a lot of –

Delores. Yep.

Johnny. – blank spots in there.

Delores. A firefighter had died and he was with 'em, and my – my daughter was sick. Everything just was terrible that year, you know.

Johnny. You've got good years and you've got bad years. That was –

Delores. Then I thought – he thought he had a heart attack. He wakes me up three o'clock in the morning. And ended up, I had to call the rescue. And he went to Newport Hospital. They, back then, they wouldn't let you stay with the patient, you know, my husband – I'm way over in a hallway somewhere, waiting room. And he ended up coming home. He still wasn't feeling good so we

went to a doctor, all the while, what happened was the esophagus, the acid reflex –

Johnny. Stress.

Delores. – that was doing it. The stress, because he had everything – my daughter was very healthy and she got very sick, from being sick with that anorexia. She had it for seven years.

Johnny. So, you know, that's working on you, you don't know – I never even knew what that was. You know. I did all the wrong things when I first heard about it with her. And as it progressed, we learned more. We went to a doctor, psychologist that we could talk to. She talked to him, we talked to him. That was the best thing.

Delores. It did, it brought - we were always close, but we had a lot of words, because he didn't want to hear it. He couldn't face it, like, you know, couldn't accept it. It brought us closer, even closer with the kids, you know.

Johnny. Well, to understanding the problem.

Delores. Yeah, 'cause you don't understand something –

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. – you know.

Johnny. 'Cause that's a social-psychological sickness, you know.

Delores. She was eleven when she became a woman and twelve when she got anorexia. She was only a kid, you know.

Johnny. And because of the – going to the doctor, she's away from it completely. She can talk about it, you know. They say some kids never get away from it.

Delores. Yeah, she's good.

Johnny. But she's fine.

Delores. She talks to – now. She helps people. She's forty-two. But did you know that, if she – she went to this doctor, Dr. Marx. And he's dead today. He says, I wish I was born twenty years later in my life 'cause he was so brilliant. He studied the brain and he gave us a good psychologist in his office. And if – he told my husband and I – if she doesn't want help, they didn't know what

was going to happen because it wouldn't work. So they asked her and then they told us she wants help, and that helped her, you know. And it took a long struggle, but it worked, I thank God, knock on hard wood.

Adam. I'm very glad to hear that.

Delores. I know.

Adam. I'm just gonna' leave with one question, if you have any final closing remarks about the Fox Point neighborhood that you'd like to say.

Johnny. Well, I'm – I feel lucky that I grew up there because other – one thing that I didn't talk about was that mixed, diverse neighborhood. Irish, Cape Verdean, Portuguese, that was base – our basic neighborhood, and we got along very well, you know. I think I was lucky to grow up when I did in that – in them years because TV wasn't in the houses yet, you did a lot of interacting playing in the street with the kids.

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. It was just fun, a fun place to be. And, you know, when I think about being a child, a young person, you grow up wherever you grow up and you don't know any different anyway. But reflecting back, when I was little, I was very lucky. I worked with my father in the neighborhood I grew up in. Met all the people because they came in to buy gas. I don't remember all their names, but I remember a lot of their faces. Most of them remember me and I don't remember them. Then I worked there, on their cars, well after the neighborhood was changing, but they came back there so I could work on their cars. And I worked on generations of family's cars, the father and the son and the daughter's. I just enjoyed being there and I feel lucky that I grew up there. Even though I'm in Jamestown thirty years, I still come back here now, go to the Club, take care of my house, do some socializing with the people in the club that came from there when they were kids, so I – I just think it's – I was fortunate to grow up there, it was fun.

Delores. I – I'm fortunate that I got to meet him to be able to see how that was. Where I lived in South Providence, I was friends with a lot of people and everybody watched over you. But Fox Point, it's all like family, you know. They see me today, my husband, you get a hug, How are you? Oh, it's so nice to see

you. It's like a family that you left for forty years, but you meet everybody it's like that forty years never went by, you know. And I was glad to get that opportunity. I just feel bad my kids never got that there.

Johnny. No.

Delores. Because my daughter, she was only five years-old when we left there, and my son, he was only two and then we moved up to Fruit Hill Avenue, the last street in the city because they couldn't leave the city at that time. But it was - the best thing there was our house that he fixed over that made us have some more money to be able to sell it and get more than what we paid. And that's how we moved to Jamestown. 'Cause that was - it was awful there.

Johnny. Compared to Fox Point, it wasn't -

Delores. Oh, yeah.

Johnny. And, you know, the thing that we did in Fox Point was kind of unique, but there's other neighborhoods that are still -

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. - together -

Delores. Oh yeah.

Johnny. - because the people didn't move away. Like some places in Cranston or Johnston. They still have them neighborhoods where generations are living there. But ours - ours changed. It just people moved away. And I really think it's because they wanted to have a little yard and park their car -

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. - easier, and they, Fox Point look like I said, it was noted to be a tough neighborhood when we were kids.

Delores. Can you - can you -

Johnny. A move up was away, and that just changed the whole neighborhood.

Delores. Our yard in Fox Point goes -

Johnny. It's about as big as this room.

Delores. -from right to this here window to that wall. That's the yard.

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. You know.

Johnny. No parking, you know, you have to park in somebody else's yard. And I was lucky when I was little because my father had the gas station –

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. – and as I got older I could park the car at the gas station and walk home. The gas station was on the boulevard, our house was on Traverse Street and then when I got on the fire department, I was on the Brook Street Fire Station for a while, and so very – I was close to everything. A little bit more on the house on Fox Point, my house was funny, because I had – I was a mechanic, fixing cars, people in and out of my house all the time.

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. She always talks about that. And my house was like a subway station. People knockin' on the door. Can –

Delores. Always had people.

Johnny. Can you help me, my car is stuck?

Delores. You know what else is nice when I lived over there, him being on the fire department? I always had company. Christmastime, people would come. Always had company. I love company. And when we moved, he'd come by with the fire trucks, 'cause it was the last street in the city, and I would cook lunch for the chief, him, and then other people come. Then they had a fire over there, and they all knew we were there and they all came over, one o'clock in the morning. And Jamestown is beautiful, we'll get people, they'll visit us now and then, but not like the company –

Johnny. No.

Delores. – I got when I lived in the Point.

Johnny. No.

Delores. You know what I mean? And you don't get that at Christmastime, and –

Johnny. But you know –

Delores. – I miss that.

Johnny. – go – going back – I'm going get off Fox Point for a minute back to the fire department. When I first got on the job, we all lived in the city. I lived in Fox Point, somebody lived in Smith Hill, another guy lived in Olneyville. All lived in the city. Well, that changed, too because as the job changed guys were coming in from out of town to getting the job. They went home outside the city 'cause we all used to go to each other's houses on the fire department in the city.

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. So that changed, too. You know, just our society changed, it changes neighborhoods, too. So I – I just feel lucky that I grew up here in this – in this neighborhood where all the people I know, still know – once a year, we go to a reunion at – we used to go to the Boys' Club, but they stopped us from going to the club. We go to the church basement. In two more weeks, Fox Point Annual Spaghetti Dinner. It's just a reason to come together again from all over the state, and see one another.

Delores. It used to be all men, some women – I don't go – but some women will go, you know, because they got involved. They're older, but they got involved with it. But what was nice, about six years ago, there was a committee that got a group together to run a old-time reunion of Fox Point. And they had it at Venus de Milo. And that place was packed. It was –

Johnny. A thousand people showed up.

Delores. People –

Johnny. From Fox Point.

Delores. – that we haven't seen since we were young kids.

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. Which was so nice. And then they had it – all the people they couldn't get in, they all met in the hallway up in Venus de Milo because they set bars up in the middle, you know. And then they had it again, but it wasn't the

same. Now they had it one more time, three years ago and it's people that you – didn't even come from the Point, they live there now, you know what I'm saying? A big difference. But it was really, really nice. I mean, Fox Point was a great place.

Johnny. And that's – that's – I'm sure there's stuff I've forgotten, but kind of jumping all over the place, I didn't mean to do that, but it's – my thoughts come back that way, you know.

Adam. That's fine. You've provided a lot of information. Great. That was fantastic, thank you both for coming and – and speaking –

Delores. Well, it's nice meeting you.

Adam. – with me about Fox Point.

Johnny. Yeah.

Adam. You too.

Johnny. Now what are you guys gonna' do with this? Are you consolidating it to make a book or – or – or just a study about the neighborhood?

Adam. We will be archiving all of this –

Johnny. Yeah.

Adam. – and putting some of this on display –

Johnny. Oh.

Adam. – based on what we get from the interviews.

Johnny. Yeah.

Adam. And we think this project will continue for the next couple of years.

Johnny. Oh, wow.

Adam. And, you know, get as much information about the people and how it's been changing.

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. Now does this go in to – coincide with LouLou Costa's pictures?

Adam. Yes. We're using his –

Delores. Nice.

Adam. – pictures, yes.

Delores. Yeah, my daughter's in there, I'm in there, my son is in there [laughs]. He drives me crazy, LouLou. His cousin died, not to get off everything, but his cousin passed away, and here comes LouLou with his briefcase walking in.

Johnny. To the funeral parlor.

Delores. To the funeral parlor. I say, What the heck has he got? He takes out the camera. I says, "LouLou, are you crazy? You're at a funeral parlor at the wake and you're taking pictures?" He said, "Well, it's the best place to take pictures because everybody's 'gonna come in here and see him." So he's got the – I says, "LouLou, if you're gonna' do it, bring them over in that other room where people coming in can't see this." He's taking all the pictures, it's even on the website.

Johnny. Do you know John Costa? He hangs around with LouLou.

Adam. Yes, I had seen him.

Johnny. John lived down the corner from me on Sheldon Street. LouLou lived the next street over. But, John and LouLou, I guess they do a lot of that research with the pictures and stuff. LouLou's gotten better at it 'cause now he's got it all on the computer, which is much – he had it all on albums before –

Delores. Oh what happened –

Johnny. – it was crazy.

Delores. – someone stole one of his albums, I don't know if he told you that. He went to the Cape –

Johnny. Yeah, what for? Why would they do that?

Delores. I don't know, but he went to the Cape Verdean Club, they had a party. So he always takes his albums with him. He says, he took 'em, and of course then they're looking at it, someone else is looking at it, another one – he

never got one back. And that is rude. That's not nice, you know. So somebody stole it on him.

Johnny. Did you see the article in the paper about the museum they're doing on – on Water Street is in – in a hole because of the finances? I guess the guy that's doing the building over it got in trouble with other buildings so that whole museum is on – you know what I'm talking about? When you go over Point Street Bridge, you take a right on – on – on South Water – it's not South Water – Water Street. And there's a big old electric company building, they're making a museum there. And I'm talking about that 'cause LouLou said that some of the stuff that he was doing might go in there as a – but the – the whole process is on hold because they're out of money, so I don't know what's gonna' go on with that. But – it's too bad that you never talked to my cousin, Joey, he was really into Providence history and Fox Point history. He had a lot of stuff, too. I should ask his wife if he's got any stuff that he document that I could show you.

Delores. He wrote articles in the East Side News about The Sharptones.

Johnny. Yeah, I got some of the article s he wrote.

Delores. Yeah, he wrote that, and he wrote about how his father – what happened with his father coming here –

Johnny. Yeah. You were –

Delores. – 'cause his father came from Portugal, St. Michael's, too. And the stories he wrote. And he wrote how he used to jump off the black bridge.

Johnny. Yeah.

Delores. And one guy wrote back and said, no he didn't. And Joey was so mad. And it was – it wasn't true what that other guy was saying, you know. And Joey got upset about it. But he did write quite a bit of things.

Johnny. He wrote about five or six articles that were in the East Side –

Delores. Yeah. East Side –

Johnny. – Monthly.

Delores. – Monthly. So you could always get in touch with them, and they probably have that –

Delores. – you know –

Adam. Yeah.

Delores. – them articles.

Adam. Okay.

Johnny. I have the – I have the one to – he sent them to me on my computer and I copied them.

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. So if you ever wanted to see ‘em, I could show ‘em to you. But he was really into Rhode Island his – Providence history. I just said he Rhode Island – Providence history.

Delores. Love to – love to give – he’s the one that took my son to the place. Now I came from South Providence, I told you. And this guy, Connelly?

Johnny. Pat Connelly.

Delores. Yeah. He has that dock down there – it says – the boats go out.

Johnny. Allens Avenue –

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. – and Public Street.

Delores. And a friend of mine, he’s a judge, Frank Gerrigan, he was going and he picked up one and he signed his autograph in it. And oh it was so interesting because they used my uncle’s name in it, the Carmones. And that’s all about South Providence ,how it became – part of it was Cranston at one time and they gave it back.

Johnny. Did – did you ever find out how Fox Point got its name, “Fox Point”?

Adam. Yes, yes. I do.

Johnny. I – I think I might’ve done that. It’s part of the – the spit of land out in the water. Okay.

Adam. Yeah.

Johnny. That's what I was told. So...

Delores. Well, that's like Jamestown. They call it "Beavertail."

Johnny. Yeah, because it's shaped like a beaver's tail.

Delores. It's shaped like a beaver's tail, isn't that something, huh?

Johnny. My father can remember when he was a kid, swimming, when it was clean, they used to go to the electrical company with nets and catch the fish coming out of the discharge from the turbines. And they had bathhouses down near the Point Street Bridge.

Delores. And how –

Johnny. It must've been beautiful.

Delores. How 'bout during the winter? They could walk or ride their cars across the water to go to Crescent Park. You remember him saying that?

Johnny. Yeah, that's what he said. It's hard to believe. You never –

Delores. Yeah.

Johnny. – see it freeze anymore, there's too many chemicals in it now [laughs].

Delores. Yeah, probably. Do you think you'll stay in Rhode Island?

Adam. Perhaps, yeah.

Delores. Yeah, a lot of kids, they come here and they love it, you know.

Johnny. It's a nice ...

Delores. Even down URI. Half them kids that go to URI stay in Rhode Island for the beaches and all that, you know.

Johnny. Well, if you –

Delores. Wonderful –

Johnny. – like it and you like the community you might stay.

Delores. Your parents will miss you [Delores and Adam laugh]. Do you come from a big family?

Adam. Not too big of a family –

Delores. No.

Adam. – no.

Delores. That's nice.

Adam. No.

Delores. I'm an only child, he's an only child.

Adam. Well, let me conclude.

Johnny. Okay.

Adam. Thank you again so much.

Delores. Thank you for having us.

Johnny. You're welcome.

Adam. And I will – I will get this all back to you.

Johnny. Oh really? You're gonna' – you're gonna' recycle it back -?