

Interview with Rodney Muhammad: April 27, 2012

**Interview with Min. Rodney Muhammad**

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**Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

**April 27, 2012**

Note: The majority of the narrator's verbal pauses or feedback words, i.e., "um" or "uh" have been eliminated from the transcript for improved readability. The interviewer's false starts and incomplete questions also have been edited for improved readability. Two question marks (??) indicate inaudible statements by the narrator.

VJ: Ok, today is April 27, 2012- I'm here with Minister Rodney Muhammad. Mr. Muhammad, do I have your permission to conduct this interview?

RM: Yes.

VJ: Can you tell me when and where you were born?

RM: I was born in Chicago, Illinois...1952.

VJ: How many years did you live there?

RM: I lived there up until 1992 and I moved to Philadelphia.

VJ: Did you move around a lot when you were younger?

RM: No, I didn't.

VJ: Now, let's talk about your grandparents. What were they like?

RM: Well, from what I know of my grandparents, they were hard working. They were southerners, of course, from the state of Tennessee. My grandfather on my mother's side had a lot of his own land that my family kept and work. They didn't sell that land until recent...I'd say in the last...maybe six seven years they actually sold that land. Maybe in the last ten years.

VJ: Are there any stories or sayings that you remember from your grandparents?

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RM: None that I can pull up right now. They were both very religious and they were devoted to the church. I'll put it like that. And that I remember, most of my grandmother, my grandfather died much earlier so I saw him far far less. I was very, very young when he passed, but to my grandmother, I was very close. I can't really think of any real saying that I can lift from either of them right now.

VJ: Were there any other older people that were especially important to you as a child?

RM: Well, I'd say. My mother had two sisters, one was Rachel and one was Ruby, both of which are still alive. They live in Chicago, Illinois. They were instrumental in my early development and they've been with me all the time. So if I had two other people, I'd say the two of them, I was very close with as my mother's sisters.

VJ: Lets talk about your father, where was he born? Do you know?

RM: My father was born in Mississippi and their family moved to Chicago early on also. My grandfather, my father's father, and my grandmother, they separated and came apart. In fact, Saginaw, Michigan and my grandmother stayed in Chicago.

VJ: What was his family's name? Well, I know your....

RM: The family name was Ellis.

VJ: Ellis, so that was your name prior to....

RM: The family name was Ellis.

VJ: How old was he when he died?

RM: My father was...I'd say he was 78, about 78 years old. He had to be about 78 years old.

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VJ: Were you guys close? What was his character like?

RM: Very kind hearted, generous. He had lines that he drew. If you cross those lines, you would get a response from him (laughs). He always seemed to care about people. A lot of people loved him and everything, of course he was an athlete so...

VJ: Oh ok, what kind of sports did he take part in?

RM: He was an All-Star for Michigan State. He played on the only football team of Michigan State that won a championship, so before he died, they did put him into their hall of fame.

VJ: What's his name again?

RM: Jim Ellis

VJ: Jim Ellis....WOW....what kind of work did he do?

RM: He ended up doing social work. He suffered an injury after playing for the Chicago Bears around nineteen-sixty something....early sixties...he had to come out from playing with the Bears. It was a lot of college ball he played with the Army at one time, the Army football team, at one time. So, he was pretty good at that. He ended up doing social work. I don't know if you know about a program called Model Cities<sup>1</sup>. Model Cities, I think, was a concept that came out of President Lyndon Baines Johnson's administration. Somewhere around that. After John F. Kennedy was assassinated and Johnson became President, Johnson signed the Civil Rights Bill in 1964, I believe. And when that was signed, that gave launch to a series of programs in the urban settings to try to help the poor and the disadvantaged etc., etc. . Model Cities was one of those. He was the director of one of the Model Cities Centers that were set up in Chicago. I remember, it was on 47<sup>th</sup> St in Chicago. So, he did that kind of social work.

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RM: In cooperation with the Chicago Urban League and even other organizations. They provided a lot of social services out of those centers to help people.

VJ: Let's talk about your mother. Where was she born and is she still alive?

RM: My mother was born in Tennessee. She's not still alive. Both are deceased. My mother and father.

VJ: Sorry to hear that, can you describe her character to me?

RM: She was more...I'd say she was a tolerant kind of person. She was very...She always insisted on what was right and doing what was right. She was very talented. Of course, she was an extraordinary secretary at one time. You know, back in her day, they had typewriters. They didn't have all these laptops and things today, but she could type 98 words a minute. She was a model. I think she was the first black model for Ford Motor Company back then.

VJ: And what was her name?

RM: Katherine

VJ: Katherine Ellis?

RM: They called her Kay. She did some modeling and she worked her way up to a Master's degree and then a Ph.D. Then she started working for human resources for St. Bernard's Hospital and doing a lot of other things like that. She was always...she always had a focus on education, us learning- that kind of thing.

VJ: So your father worked for Model Cities and your mother was model.

RM: Yeah, but they had a business. They had a night club business. My family, particularly on my fathers

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RM: side. We owned several night clubs. I had uncles. My father was one of five boys. His oldest brother had a nightclub. He had a nightclub of his own. I had some aunts and cousins that had nightclubs also, and also liquor stores in Chicago. So, the family was into a lot of business also. So he had that business along with his work.

VJ: How did your parents meet? Do you know?

RM: They met doing work. The way they said it, it was a Playboy club on the Northside. These were where jobs were and that kind of thing. They had a setup of some clubs downtown Chicago. They met there. That was when they first met.

VJ: Did your parents consider certain things important in life?

RM: Well, like I said, if I could back and capture what was real important to them is education, our learning. Every parent, I would think, would want their child to stay out of trouble. But if they were driving us toward anything, it would be education. Really learning, not playing second fiddle with yourself, so to speak. To really push yourself for excellence in that area so....

VJ: You mentioned us, how many siblings did you have?

RM: Well, I have a sister and a brother.

VJ: Are they still alive?

RM: Yes, they are

VJ: What order did you come in?

RM: I'm the oldest

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VJ: What responsibilities came along with being the oldest in the household in your house?

RM: Well, outside of chores, many times, you stayed at home with the younger ones when mother and father were out. But it all still worked out good. My sister and I are only two years apart, so it wasn't long. She was well able to take care of herself after a while. But by us being only two years apart, if she was young enough to where she had to be watched; generally, I was also.

VJ: How did you guys get along when you were younger?

RM: Like siblings, we got along. Even now and then, there were spats, but for the most part, we got along. We weren't in each other's way. She didn't need to be everywhere I was. My younger brother didn't need to be seemingly everywhere that we were.

VJ: How much younger than you is your younger brother?

RM: My younger brother is a lot younger...He was born in like 62'.

VJ: So about like what, Nine years?

RM: Uh huh

VJ: Would you consider your household....what religion did you all practice?

RM: We were Baptist growing up.

VJ: Did you guys go to church every Sunday?

RM: Well, my mother didn't really start going to church every Sunday, I would say, until her later years. Her later years, she started going to church every Sunday. When she passed, she was a member of Rev. Jeremiah Wright's church in Chicago.

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VJ: What's the name of his church?

RM: It was called Trinity<sup>2</sup>

VJ: Lets talk about your uncle and your aunts, did they live near you as a child or with you?

RM: Some did. A lot of my family, mother and fathers side both, moved to Chicago. So we had a lot of family that was there in the city of Chicago so we had a lot of cousins (laughs).

VJ: Going back, you said your favorite aunts were on your mother's side.

RM: Well, there were two. You asked me, you didn't say favorite, you asked me if there was anyone else that played a significant role or something.

VJ: I did

RM: Those were the two I'd say. But the ones that had children, all of our cousins, we all knew each other and came up together. So we're still, many times are in touch with each other I would say. You know reasonably, when a family comes together, you get to see everyone. When my father died, a lot of relatives came and were present.

VJ: So do you guys have family reunions a lot?

RM: Well, they tried that. Sometimes it depends on where the reunion is how successful we are at it. But I would say, the family reunions we've had, a lot of the family has gathered together. So, they've worked out pretty good.

VJ: So gaging from what you're telling me about your parents having businesses, your dad being in social work...both your parents were professionals, would you consider your household to be in a middle class

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VJ: neighborhood?

RM: Yeah. When my folks ended up buying some property, I think, in 1967. I think you could really say we were in what would be called a middle class neighborhood at that time. Their careers had gotten well off the ground and the business that they had established had grown considerably. They were a lot more fluent than some of the earlier years. The neighborhood that we were in, in the Southside of Chicago, is called South Shore<sup>3</sup>. Then, it was considered a middle class neighborhood.

VJ: In the neighborhood, would the neighbors watch you? Were you close with your neighbors?

RM: Well, some neighbors knew us, but many people didn't know us there. The way Chicago is constructed, you'll see that in that part where we were residing, there were a lot of apartment buildings. So a lot of families lived in apartment dwellings. Of course, when you're talking Chicago, I imagine, New York or even some other cities, the apartments were very large. Some of these apartments were so large. I know people who lived their entire life growing up in an apartment, because many of the homes built in Chicago had smaller rooms than many of the apartments. Like I said, they were very large. Some apartments I've known them to have four or five bathrooms in them. So they're very very large. People living in apartments, apartment living. I mean, people had space but it's not like you have a front porch when you can see the children playing, and wave at them and they wave at you. So a lot of people never saw or interacted with the young people that were around them. But I'd still say, as much as we could, it was a tight-knit community.

VJ: What kind of games did you play as a child? What did you do outside of school?

RM: Well, we played a little basketball. We did play softball.

VJ: On the street?



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RM: There were parks to go, playgrounds to go to. There was an excellent place to play basketball, they put lights out there and you could play midnight basketball out on the lake. Because you know, of course, Chicago is sitting right on Lake Michigan.

VJ: Yeah, they had to be beautiful. Was the neighborhood safe?

RM: The neighborhood was safe when we moved to South Shore up to a point. Gang life was big in Chicago. I don't know if you're talking about safe for who, but for young people, gang life was big during those years...1964, 65, by 1966, gang life was really big. And it swelled up, by 1967, it had really exploded in numbers. I can only go by my experience, by 1968, 69, a consciousness began to really come up in black people that we noticed. I could just tell by the books that I was asked to read. Even for school, we had to read the Autobiography of Malcolm X, ManChild of the Promiseland. We were reading books like Black Power by Stokely Carmicheal and Charles Hamilton. Robert Knowles Institutional Racism, Dick Gregory had written a couple of books.

VJ: They made you read that in schools?

RM: Some of the mandatory readings led people like me to read even other writings, so I'm just naming some of the books that I remember that were out. There were things happening in the news, you have to remember. See, by 1968, Dr. King was killed. Chicago was one of the cities that went into a riot mode. I actually saw the army and the tanks going down the street trying to bring law and order back.

VJ: Tell me about that! So when Martin Luther King died, like what happened? People just marched or they rioted?

RM: Well, I can't say they marched. What I can say....(Mr.Muhammad's cellular device rings and he answers) ----->Break in the tape at 20:06

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0:00 (Interview Session I April 27 2012 after a brief phone call taken by Mr. Muhammad)

VJ: So you were telling me about after Martin Luther King died and the condition of Chicago, the neighborhood and things like that...

RM: Yeah. We heard it, obviously on television, that night. I remember that the next day was a school day. I never forget my science teacher, who was black man. We were in the classroom and the mood was very solemn. Mr. Harrison, I never forget it, he slammed the book down on the desk. And he just looked ahead. I think I saw water in his eyes. It was a dim day. The rest of the day gets foggy to me, but were in school with blacks and whites. And so tensions started to rise. The kind of neighborhood I lived in whites were around also. So if any fighting was going on, it wasn't gonna be black fighting blacks, it would be blacks fighting whites. In fact, once I lived in South Shore, those were really the only real fights we saw and had. All up and down Stoney Island, one of the main thoroughfares, boulevards in Chicago, I remember seeing the tanks and the soldiers walking down the middle of the street. I remember a curfew was set on us in Chicago. Mayor Dailey was saying at the time, that he wasn't gonna tolerate...he told the police shoot to kill. It got pretty testy in Chicago. It was a lot of rioting. Now, the rioting didn't take place in the area that I was living in, but we were all in the city and we were apart of it. We had to adhere to the curfew. We had to abide by all of the Marshall Rulings that took place. It was things like that, I think, that began to cause the passion of young black males to be in a gang to begin to wane. That's what I was telling you about. A sort of consciousness was coming over us. We didn't have rap, but we had Donnell Lear, as he's known today, Haki Maudabutti<sup>4</sup>. All the poets...Sonya Sanchez<sup>5</sup>...we had poets out there...we had the Last Poets and others. They were our rap, but it was all consciousness. It wasn't a lot of filth and kind of some of the toxic things that were experiencing today that were working with our brothers and sisters. Because we know that through our artists, we can reach scores of people. And what it might take years for you to teach a people, artists can do it in one record.

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VJ: That is so true.

RM: And reach us in the broadest sense of the word. All of the things that we were hearing. They were bringing about a certain consciousness. The Nation of Islam, as I would learn later, cause it would be years later that I would come into the Nation of Islam. As I began to learn about things that the Honorable Elijah Muhammad was teaching through Malcolm X and his other ministers. They were affecting particularly black people in the urban setting. It affected the music and the music was becoming more conscious. Curtis Mayfield from Chicago....He had a record out that they were refusing to play on the radio called 'We're a winner'. The Temptations had made a song Message to the Blackman. But all the temptations songs...they went from singing more love songs to a conscious thing. They came out with Cloud 9 and then, Runaway Child. They were on a whole new wave. You had different artist out here. The songs that they were making; they had a certain conscious ring to it. James Brown

VJ: Im black....

RM: I'm black I'm proud, but he had also made 'I don't want nobody to give me nuthin', just open up the door, I'll get it myself'

VJ: I never heard that one.

RM: And if you listen to the lyrics of these songs, you would see James Brown challenging black America and scolding White America. I have no doubt that some of the pressures that came on James Brown in his later years was as a result of the records he put out and more importantly, the effect that it had on the listener. It was an interesting period and it had an effect on me. So, as a teenager, I was greatly affected by the pain and suffering of our people, but I was never really made conscious until that period.

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RM: Those were the periods of time I began to awaken in that. As you're processing all of those things, within the next three years of my life, by the time I was 19 going on 20, I just really made a break and start going to feed myself a lot of the knowledge that I wasn't taught so much at home or at school. I would go over to the Positive Institute of Education<sup>6</sup> on Cottage Grove Ave., Haki Maudabutti's store. I would just begin to buy four or five books every week. I just began to line my den with books and it was just causing my head to explode, the things that I was reading because you're out of touch with a lot of things, you know. So, it was periods like that. You had Malcolm X being killed and it wasn't but three years or more before King was killed, Kennedy was assassinated, Robert Kennedy was shot in the same year King was. So, it was a very violent period in America.

VJ: And then Vietnam....

RM: But you had Vietnam...Probably Vietnam was the first, most unwanted war. I think for the first time in America's history, her soldiers came home without honor, without celebration. Many of the veterans left to their own personal strengths and sense of wherewithal to get by, because you just had a government that just wasn't taking care of them. And so that period about wraps up the 60s in my life.

VJ: Lets talk about your high school and college experiences, were you apart of any fraternities?

RM: No , I wasn't. We had a social club. We started in high school. It carried on to college. Some of the guys from our social club in high school, they went on to become Phi Beta Sigma. There's a sigma house in Chicago, so they had their own house. They're on King Drive and all that. You know, those kind of things, but I never bothered with that. I was more interested in being apart of more conscious raising black organizations than to be in a fraternity.

VJ: Did you go to parties...girls?

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RM: Oh yeah, I did. I did. By the time I got to college, I learned how to do all my work in the library. So that all my work would be done, so by the time I went to parties and everything, I wouldn't be caught short Monday Morning coming back to class and not having covered subject matter.

VJ: You see, this is why we need you in the schools to teach kids how to do that.

RM: I took all my books. I'd leave early in the morning on a Saturday. I'd hit the library and I wouldn't leave until all my work was done. I would put my books down and I would never pick those books up again until it was time to go back to class.

VJ: What did you major in, in college?

RM: Well, I ended up majoring in. You know, first year, you don't know what you're doing. You start off, you think, business administration, but it's too broad. But then I specialized and I was an accounting major and so that caused me to focus. I figured death and taxes would be with us. I'd be a tax accountant or something like that. I'd always have work the way I figured it out. I wasn't too passionate about being part of a big accounting firm. I was more....Because of the other things that I was reading, you have to understand, the way I process schooling, I went to college with a seed in my mind that I was not gonna let school interfere with my education.

VJ: Wow! Can you say that one more time?

RM: I promised myself, when I entered college, that I was not going to let school interfere with my education. I felt I was learning for the purpose of tooling myself with something that I'd be able to do once I embraced the self-determined reality. I more thought I wanted to work for myself. See, my father was already working for himself with the club. He did the job thing because he would max out, get his pension, he had already done a number of years with the city. Basically, he had his own business.

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RM: And you have to understand, I was helping him in that business. I was bartending, I was picking up liquor, bringing it in, stocking up the refrigerators, bringing the whiskey in, replacing bottles that we were almost out of things in. So, I was trying to learn the business- the flow of it and when to buy. And by me taking accounting, I was learning to set up the proper formulas for them, because he didn't have a knowledge of that, but the proper formulas for knowing how to break even, when do you start making profit, you know, how to really put his financial statements and things together. In my mind, I was learning...you build your own business. It felt so reachable and doable to me. All in all, I ended up doing my own business. I was an estate planner, financial planner, getting my licenses so I'd be able to sell the financial instruments necessary. I lived purely on commission, but I made more money than I ever made at any job like being a payroll auditor with the Board of Education and all of that. Those things pay peanuts compared to what I made when I went to work for myself.

VJ: See, that just, these are things that I think, of course, the Nation of Islam, we'll talk about it later, self-help is one of the main components. My next question, did anything you learn from college equip you with the knowhow to do what you do today, as the minister?

RM: Well, it helped me to learn how to put financials together, some banking and good ways to invest dollars. Having a knowledge of financial instruments can really be something that could work for us, as a people. One thing I was fascinated with learning was once you have money, the bank is willing to lend you money. Now, the people who really seem to need the money are people who don't have money. That's why you need to go to the bank so the bank can front you something to do, something that you have as a vision, obviously some plan of how you're gonna make this money back, because the bank has gotta get their money back if they lend it to you. But if you have money, the bank is willing to lend you money right away. If I got 200,000 dollars in the bank, and say I want to borrow \$50,000...

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RM: the bank is more open to listening to me than someone who only has \$20, \$2000 in the bank...they wanna know bunch of stuff to see who you are and what is your ability and capacity to pay back. You simply can take \$75,000 and put it in a CD and let the CD be collateral for the loan. They're ready for you to sign the papers right then. Then, you can pay the loan back through that same bank and by the time the loans paid off, when you come back to the \$75,000, its grown into a larger amount because you're still making interest off your principle while you let it be collateral for a loan. So you still got your money. Even though, you've paid them back, you're not out of money, you got whatever business you started and you got your principle back with interest.

VJ: Sir (laughs). See, these are the things, and I'm not supposed to say my opinion, but these are the things that needs to be taught. So you're business, how well did it do and how long were you a planner?

RM: It did good, because you are your business when you're an estate planner. It's how you sell yourself. If you're not lazy and you do your work well, the people are gonna see their money managed well. People are getting money whether it's a life insurance claim, whether its inheritance. When you know what you're doing based on what the peoples need are and what they're trying to achieve, you make quite a bit of money. And it's rewarding, because you're helping other people increase their estates. I think what was most rewarding and what was most challenging was to help people change their inner conversation about money. In fact, I use to title my seminars "How to buy money".

VJ: How to buy money....

RM: Right, how to buy money. Because I use to tell people, you buy rings for loved ones, you buy gifts at holidays, you buy vacations and everything, but the one thing you never buy is the one thing you always need more of, is money. You teach people that saving money, is buying money. The question is not

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RM: whether or not, you're buying money. It's how much are you buying for the money that you have? And then I begin to show them formulas and show them how they can get a higher rate of return on their investments and then increase their estates.

VJ: Where did you go to school at? College, rather.

RM: Well, I went to DePaul University.

VJ: DePaul, I need to go there. (laughs)

RM: I didn't graduate. I went three years of accounting. I had a A.A. degree in accounting from a private college downtown Chicago.

VJ: What was the name of it?

RM: It was called Central Y, but it was a private college. And my mothers had gone there before she went to Roosevelt and got her bachelor's and master's from Roosevelt, and then she went on to get a Ph.D in Public Administration. But I went to that same school she went to and I got my associate degree in accounting. Of course, I was doing taxes. I had enough , that if I had walked away and never went to DePaul, I could have just kept going because I learned enough right there at Central Y to do what I was doing, because you have to take courses to become an estate planner, a financial planner. You have to take test to get a Series 7 license, which allows you to sell stocks, bonds. You have to get a Series 6 to be able to sell mutual funds, variable contracts and all that. You have to have an insurance underwriter's license to write life insurance for people and stuff. And you have to have a Series 22, because I also sold shares in building skyscrapers and things, and communications equipment for Marriott Hotels all over the world. Because they're raising public dollars, and if they're raising public dollars...then selling shares...How do they amass the money that they get to build all these things? Its people like me



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RM: We're out there showing people, you can invest and be apart of Marriott. You can invest and be a part of this skyscraper going up. And when they open the office for leasing, we've already shown that you're going to make profits monthly because what you're getting on leases as opposed to expenses for maintaining the building, it's gonna exceed that. You working on a profit, you're sharing those profits in dividends, in capital gains engrossed on your shares. So people can sit and let their money sit and grow. So I was doing those kinds of things.

VJ: So is that what you learned at DePaul? Central Y?

RM: The basics I learned at DePaul was, Central Y and DePaul, I learned accounting, I learned taxes, foreign banking. We, of course, learned economics, both the basic economics and advanced economics. We took all that. Those things are good, because you wanna be able to understand how this whole economic paradigm is set up. There's a lot of corruption out here, but the one thing we wanna know is how things are set up. Most people, I'm finding, they know something about the political system, they something about the economic system and maybe even the social system, but hardly no American knows anything about the monetary system.

VJ: The IMF...

RM: And that's where.....well, Im talking more about your local bank and how fractional banking works. How does the government borrow ten billion from the Federal Reserve and that ten billion turn into ninety billion all over? (Phone rings twice; Recording stops)

21:12

00:00 Part II

VJ: Ok, we're starting the interview again after a brief break. So Mr. Muhammad, you were talking about your businesses. I wanna talk about what you did after college. What were your steps after college?

RM: Well, my steps after college. Number one, while I was in my third year, I think I went into the Nation of Islam, because I had gone back. After I got my degree, I was out for a little while doing some work, taxes, and I had done some work in hospitals. I joined the Nation of Islam and I decided to go back. I think I only went back a year. I took quite a few courses in accounting, taxes, foreign banking, some more economics courses and things like that, but then I got into a company where I got into a course of study with estate planning, getting all my licenses and certifications in line so that I could do business. So those kinds of things took place after college and I began to build a career from that.

VJ: What made you want to join the Nation of Islam? What was the process?

RM: Well, one of the things that happened was, I think it was 1979. A friend of mine, who use to always come over my house, we would sit and drink and talk about the issues that were going on. He and I would be going over articles we read in like Newsweek magazine and things like that. He called me one weekend, it was a Saturday. He said 'Look, this guy is gonna be speaking and he use to work with Malcolm X' or something like that. He didn't say his name and I said 'Really?' He said 'Yea, he gonna be speaking... you wanna go over there?' And I said 'Yea'. So I jumped in the shower, go out and put some things on and we went over to a gymnasium at Martin Luther King High School in Chicago. Dr. Charles Knox, some of the members of the nationalist community in Chicago, they had put this on, Lou Palmer and others. The featured speaker was Minister Louis Farrakhan. It was like...Man, I heard that address that night and the way he could take the Bible narratives and sort of mathematically put it over our situation and it was such a match. I was so...I was more than impressed, I was drawn. By him and I was

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RM: drawn by the message he gave that night. I never forget it. It was Pharaoh and the Children of Israel in bondage for 400 years and how that had not taken place and really, historically, there's no history of it. But we had always accepted that it was, but we never investigated it. He just brought out so much that night and it gave me so much hope and I was just electrified. I know I went to see him, two or three, on three other occasions. I heard that he was speaking somewhere in the city at some big meeting. I always made sure I was there and each time I was drawn more and more. I eventually went looking for where I could find their station, so I could talk about becoming a member to help him and the rest is history. We were, I came in, we were not as big a group as we are now, I came in 1982, I became a member. We've just been there. It's been a way of life for me.

VJ: So what was the training like to become Rodney Muhammad?

RM: Well, there's always disciplines when you come into an organization. You learn what its rules and regulations are, but if I could nail one thing down that the Minister was adamant about. If I was gonna follow him, I had to be a man who was willing to study. He absolutely has a no-tolerance for blind followers. He wants you walking with him with your eyes open and that you're learning at every step. That was good. That was good. That was good for me; it was for all that come with him. That you learn. We have learned tremendously. Our life is rich from the level of our learning with Minister Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam.

VJ: I could tell. I did come to the Mosque one time and heard you preach. Well....speak rather

RM: Well, preach is alright.

VJ: Yeah, Preach. Do you consider it a religious organization or is it a nationalistic....?

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RM: Well, we practice the religion of Islam. That's our religion. We live in a world that deals with the science of religions. Because of that, our religion is Islam. It's called that by name, some 1500 years ago. Keep in mind that the Quran even says what we've given to Muhammad, we also gave to Moses, and to Abraham and to others, so they were all given the same thing. We believe that Islam is the religion of all the prophets. There was point I was thinking of when you talking about all this, but as it turns out, it's really the nature that we were created in. So, we always see Islam as not just a religion, but the very nature we were created in. If Islam means 'entire submission to the will of God', then the will of God and the nature of man, really constitutes our religion. In the world of a science of religions, we had to pull from that. We had to pull from our actions and begin to construct out of those actions, a set of practices and actions that constitute a religion, but Islam is really not a religion. It's the nature of the original man and it's that nature out of which religion comes. If you really think about it, in the Quran, in the Bible, when you cover the narrative of Adam, you know that no church was present when Adam was created. You know that no mosque was present, when Adam was created. You also know that there was no such thing as a Bible that Adam carried around and there was no such thing as a Quran that he carried around. So how did Adam have a relationship with God? Except through the very nature that God had created him in. He had created the man to be able to relate to him. So the religion is not what causes the man to be able to relate with God. It may cause him to begin to act closer to the nature that he was created in that was made for a relationship with God. But that's what religion may do. So in that sense, religion acts as a force. But Minister Farrakhan has always taught us that when true principles die in you, your religion dies in you because your religion is based off of principles. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad always taught us 'The age of a religion is not the date when so-and-so said it was, the age of a religion is when the principles of that religion came into existence' And those principles have to be alive in you in order for your religion to be alive. You know, sometimes I always tell people 'you try to

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RM: put more religion in your life, rather than more life in your religion'.

VJ: (repeats quote in a whisper) I have to write that down.

RM: You know, these are troubling areas for us in our walk of faith.

VJ: So, how long did it take you....was there a process where you were once Rodney X?

RM: Yes, Rodney 2X, and then I became Rodney Muhammad.

VJ: And how did you....what were the....?

RM: Well, we were all given the name 'Muhammad'.

VJ: What does that mean?

RM: Muhammad means 'one worthy of praise, one praise much'.

VJ: So what did you do to climb the ranks? Like, I don't know...are the X's? And I understand... Tell me about why you changed your last name. I have some type of knowledge from reading the Autobiography of Malcolm X.

RM: The X in mathematics represents a field of the unknown. Our true qualities and attributes are unknown until we can get in the right environment, the right formula for life, when we can begin to make manifest what attribute that really comes from God is prevailing in our character at that point in our development, our personality at that point of our development. We wear the name X for unknown. And we're solving for X and the way to solve for an unknown factor is to start with that which you know. So, if X plus 5 equals 10. We know the ten is there and we know the five is there. So if 5 is an added number to an unknown factor and that equals ten. Then always have to do is subtract that five from that

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RM: ten and that will tell us what that unknown factor is. It's another five.

VJ: That's a good way of breaking that down.

RM: So X would mean, us wearing an X in the place of a name that we're waiting on. Because when your real qualities and attributes are becoming manifest, it's obvious who you are.

VJ: Do you think your last name is indicative of your qualities and attributes?

RM: Muhammad?

VJ: Yeah

RM: Not necessarily. I think that Muhammad is praise much and I think that as long as Minister Farrakhan is with us that we will have the greater chance of appearing righteous. But I think its more his righteousness that people look at us through than our own righteousness that were producing ourselves.

VJ: Ummm.....not supposed to say 'umm'. Let's talk about Wallace D. Ford<sup>7</sup> or Fard. Who was he or it?

RM: Well, this was a man who came to Detroit and began teaching Islam according to the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, July 4, 1930. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad came to him and said he recognized him when he saw him. That he was the fulfillment of the Second Coming of Jesus that he was the fulfillment of the Son of Man who the Scriptures said was to come. These terms, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, was already somewhat familiar with because his father was a Baptist preacher. And he saw this man as the one that the world had been waiting on.

VJ: The Mahdi<sup>8</sup>, right?

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RM: And so...Well, he didn't know about the Mahdi yet, because he wasn't taught Islam yet. Initially, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad said, he thought Islam was a heathen religion. As this man taught him and began to raise him up in his own wisdom, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad saw more and more that he was becoming more and more like this man. And so, he represented this man to us as God in person. Now certainly, many in the world would say how could that be? How could a man be God? But how many people really study the fundamental beliefs of every Christian? The fundamental belief of every Christian is that Jesus is God. That God came to Earth in the person of a man and when you put it in those terms and you begin to review what the Honorable Elijah Muhammad says we believe, you can see that the beliefs are identical. Now, if you don't wanna except the man, Farrad Muhammad, that the Honorable Elijah Muhammad says is that one; If you are Christian, you yet are in a faith where its foundation that God is actually seen, expresses himself, and exercises his power through the form that we know of as man. As Paul said, All the deity of our Lord lived in Jesus Christ. Now if they deity that you called God lived in Christ, then man, you could look at Christ and say this is God in person! All of these terms, we need to review now because the Quran reminds us that when he comes , he will verify that which is already with you. That means that whatever he's teaching, if its fulfillment, then fulfiller in his teaching that is a match for all the predictions that he would do in his teaching would have to be a verification of what you already have. So in Deuteronomy, just to give you an example of what I mean by verifying. In Deuteronomy, the eighteenth chapter, the eighteenth verse, It says to Moses 'and I will raise them up a messenger, like unto thee, and then I will put my words in his mouth. Now, that messenger has not come. Well, why do you say that? We had prophets after Moses. Yeah, but they weren't like unto Moses. To be like unto Moses, is to have grown up in the house of your enemies. To be like unto Moses, would mean that the people of Moses, because that's the only way you can produce a man like Moses. You got to first have a people who are suffering at a level, so that women who are in

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RM: that level of suffering, they carry a child, that child is being shaped in that kind of environment. So when that child comes out, that child has a constitution that once they grow up, they're gonna be able to deal with that oppressor. Moses was such a man. When you say a man like unto Moses, you gotta have a prophet who's raised up who deals with a singular personality that represents the power in that time. So you would need, even for the day, you need a modern day Pharaoh, a Pharaoh-like rule. Now what was Pharaoh's rule like? According to the beginning of the book of Genesis, Pharaoh summons his cabinet. Now, God called his cabinet 'magicians', but he said to them, the Children of Israel, they're exceedingly greatly in the land, they're growing. Come let us deal wisely with them, kill the male, and spare the female. It didn't tell you how he was gonna kill em'. He didn't tell you how, but what is he sparing the female for? To give her a job, while he stays unemployed, which will set them up at variance with each other, in competition? To make the woman the breadwinner, while the man gotta just sit and eat the bread. These are things that the magicians went about. What is a magician? A magician is a person who is engaged in the systematic study of the science of tricks. So this was a government that knew how to trick people, deceive people and manipulate people. And work with people in such a way, where you're trying to destroy the man and you're sparing his woman at the same time that you're plotting; you're in a conspiracy to destroy him. So, I'm just saying that these are parallels that we can find from the scripture in our own existence in America. It caused the Honorable Elijah Muhammad to say, that like Moses, who the Bible says met face-to-face with God; he said that never happened 4000 years ago, but that was a prophecy- that was a prophetic picture of what would happen today. Well you say, now wait a minute. Well, Moses was here 4000 years ago. Yes, he was, but that Moses that was here 4000 years ago, his history is hidden under this verse. Where Jesus said, as Moses lifted up the serpent of the wilderness, so shall the Son of Man be lifted up in the last days. So wait a minute now, what was Moses doing, we thought he was in Egypt involved with the Exodus. But then there's another



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RM: Moses who's in the wilderness lifting the Serpent of the wilderness. And we were taught, if you would go to every clinic in the world and medical house, you will see Scepter of Moses' law and two serpents being lifted up on that<sup>9</sup>. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught us, this was the Caucasian who was in the caves, whose body had grown diseased. Moses had to come and deliver them from that because they had a 4000 year work to do. They had a work to do in the Earth. Six days, they would work and on the seventh day, the seven thousandth year, they would be put to rest from their work of evil on our planet. And this one that comes, we see him as coming in the person of Master Farrad Muhammad. That he comes with a wisdom that would end their work, end their rule, end their world and plant in us the germ for a whole new world that is going to take place right on Earth. Well, they say it's the hereafter, but they treat it like you gotta die and go somewhere else, but if you have to do that, then it should be the thereafter and not the hereafter. Hereafter means here after a rule of a wicked and contrary people to God's will after their power is sufficiently broken and they are broken down. They said 'well, naw, you supposed to die and go to heaven'. We say, 'Man, heaven is a higher plain of existence right here on Earth' and we proved it. When you're guided properly, you'll eat the right food. You'll eat at the right times. You'll think the right thoughts. You'll feed on knowledge and you'll grow and you'll see yourself being elevated, right here while you're sitting here on Earth. Jesus prayed the prayer 'On Earth as it is in Heaven'. We're gonna make Earth just like it is in heaven, so you won't have to die and go to heaven, you'll be able to live here right on Earth. How can you do that unless heaven is a state and condition? And hell is a state and condition. Well, you know, there's a lot in that answer, but the main thing is, when he comes, he comes to set us up in that and set us on fire through his messenger. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad said 'I am his messenger. As Moses met God face-to-face, I met God face-to-face in Master Farrad Muhammad'. Well, Elijah, you know most people not gonna believe you; well, we were ready for that. But I'll do a work that will make proof that I must have met

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RM: with God or something like one to be able to do what I'm doing, despite enemies that wanna stop me in the government, enemies that wanna stop me in the World of Commerce, enemies that wanna stop me in the religious world. Rome wants to stop Farrakhan. Mecca wants to stop Farrakhan. All of your major centers where religious thought is cast out over the planet-they'd love to stop Farrakhan, but they have not been able to stop him. And so you have to ask yourself, when you put the weight and the power of your organization against what is undesirable to you to see coming into existence, and with all that power, you are unable to stop that thing. The question doesn't become what's wrong with your power, the question becomes what power is with that thing that you haven't been able to take it down? The claim that the Honorable Elijah Muhammad makes, he makes the claim, but he's willing to prove it. And so we have been in these scriptures and they have been back with us. You know....did you read the back of our newspaper?

VJ: I did, what we believe.

RM: About the beliefs?

VJ: Yeah.

RM: Yeah, so you'll see in there. Because many times, people don't have us properly described to the public. So I always tell people, go and read what we believe, then you can get a better picture, then we can come back and discuss the points. But if you read the points first, you at least know, what we are stating emphatically that we believe. And you'll see we believe in the Bible, but we do believe its been tampered with. We didn't go around saying it was tampered with, they said it was tampered with.

VJ: Who's they?

RM: They, in the world of Christendom, Christian scholars, Biblical Scholars. We believe in all the

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RM: prophets. And we believe in the scriptures they brought, which means that what came to the Israelite prophets, what came to the apostles of Jesus-see we believe in all of those. That makes it clear. That makes it clear. How can we believe in all those, you say, and were not Christian? How can you then believe in the Holy Quran and the other scriptures that are brought and you not be a Muslim? The Honorable Elijah Muhammad said 'A real Christian is a Muslim and a real Muslim is a Christian when you properly understand'. You see, the Nation of Islam is not here to convert anybody from their religion to this religion. When Jesus sent his disciples into the world, he said 'Now preach this gospel to every kindred, all people, every nation'. That means that he's got enough evidence in that teaching, in that gospel that he once taught, there's enough evidence to make people of every nation accept it when they properly understand it. That doesn't mean, give up your religion and take mine; that's not how you go into another man's house. Tell him to throw away something he's been practicing 7000 years, 5000 years, 2000 years and take what you got. That's not the way to handle people. You're gonna get rejection all the time.

VJ: So was Wallace D. Fard, Wallace Dodd Ford?

RM: No, he was not.

VJ: How do you know?

RM: We know that because Wallace Dodd Ford didn't have the same information. This man who did time in San Quentin, this man who they had down....First of all, it wasn't the same person. The person who came to the Honorable Elijah Muhammad could speak 16 languages. That man could barely speak the ones that he was supposed to be able to speak and handle. The man who taught the Honorable Elijah

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RM: Muhammad, he never stayed around and tried to get anything. They chalked this man up as being involved with narcotics and trying to con people and stuff. If Farrad Muhammad was a con man, he would have been one of the worse conmen, because he never stayed around to get anything out of anyone. He taught something and disappeared. They don't have an obituary for him.

VJ: Where's his body?

RM: Yeah, they don't have an obituary, isn't that interesting?

VJ: I was always wondered. If he was a criminal, where is the body? Where is the body of Master Farrad Muhammad, to your knowledge? Is it in a spaceship?

RM: Its on the plane.

VJ: What's the plane?

RM: The plane is the mother of planes seen by the Prophet Ezekiel in his book written after his name.

VJ: Is that the Wheel in the middle of a wheel?

RM: If you study white people, you will see that they invest millions studying these vessels. They like to get you to think that they're studying beings from another world, planet that is, and that these vessels are really unidentified. These vessels are not unidentified to those who believe and have been made to understand. They have been identified as planes that belong to a mother of planes. You know, it's interesting how much money they spend on this. Almost every week, there's a program on research on whats called UFOs. In the recent movies, where they try to show vessels like this, or they show vessels

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RM: like close encounters of the third kind, Independence Day, all of these vessels are inside of a cloud when they travel. And you notice that when the Children of Israel are being led out of Egypt, it's a cloud leading them by day and there's a pillar of fire by night. As if to say, a beam shining down, providing light for those traveling in the night. And its just interesting that they make these movies and they make these vessels, do exactly that. But to say all that to go back to say Farrad Muhammad is alive and it's what we see.

VJ: Did Master Farrad Muhammad actually go to prison for selling narcotics?

RM: No, he never was in prison. That's not the same man. Wallace Dodd Ford and Farrad Muhammad are not the same man.

VJ: But the FBI seems to think they can match fingerprints.

RM: No, they didn't match fingerprints. What they did, they arrested Farrad Muhammad in Detroit. And when they arrest Farrad Muhammad in Detroit, what they did, the FBI didn't come across looking for him till much later. I have the Detroit Free Press copies when Farrad Muhammad was arrested by the authorities there.

VJ: Why was he arrested?

RM: Well, they were trying to charge them with some delinquency from the school, with the children, because we were educating our own children and they wanted to try to have an occasion to come and raid the Mosque. They not only arrested Farrad Muhammad, they arrested Ka'Lat, they arrested Elijah Muhammad and others who were helping him there in the temple at that time.

VJ: What year was this?

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RM: We're talking between 1932 to 1933. Maybe even 31' to 33', but I think it was more 32' and 33' that this campaign of persecution really began. The time that we were in, it really did have a lot of persecution coming on the Muslims at that period. I was going to the picture. They took a mugshot of Wallace Dodd Ford and tried to the police record number from Detroit of 1932 or 33', when they had Farrad Muhammad in for questioning. They took the number off of there and superimposed it on the document in a whole other part of the country to try to show that this was the same man that was arrested there in 1930. Now, everything the Honorable Elijah Muhammad knew of Islam, this man had taught him and there were those who were present when he taught him because the temple had at least 8000 registered believers. No, this man, Wallace Dodd Ford, he didn't have a clue of what the Honorable Elijah Muhammad knew and was teaching. They could not have been the same man. There was no confusion of it, in truth, but they came up with this as a ruse to try to derail the progress that the Honorable Elijah Muhammad was making. He even had a \$100,000 certified check taken in by two of his ministers to offer him up if they could prove that this man was the same man that taught him in Detroit, because he said it was not the same man.

VJ: The Hearst Press said that a woman by the name of Hazel Ford came forward and said Wallace Dodd Ford was her husband and that was Farrad Muhammad. Do you have any knowledge about that?

RM: Well, I'm not sure about Hazel, but I do know that there's a book that has been put out on it clearly defending that Wallace Dodd Ford and the man that taught him are not the same people. *Who was Farrad Muhammad?* I believe is the name of the book by Dr. Wesley Muhammad. There you'll find a lot of the mischief that went on with the FBI...because the Detroit Police did not have the authority to go over to California and superimpose an old arrest number on a document. That was the work of the FBI then.

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VJ: And that wasn't until....

RM: That wasn't until years later, because initially, it was not on there. See, from the very beginning, it wasn't on there, but all of a sudden, you see this number. This shows you how they're playing with this thing because they wanna derail people from it. It's not a falsehood that Farrad Muhammad was taken by the police in Detroit; that's true, but that was only to get him away from teaching what he was teaching.

VJ: So, let's talk about the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. He moved from the South when he was about 20. His dad was a Baptist preacher and his mother was a homemaker. His name was Elijah Poole and he came to hear Master Farrad at the request of his wife. There are some that speculate, he, Master Farrad Muhammad, never told Elijah Muhammad that he was God. What do you say about that?

RM: Well, in the beginning when he taught this, there are those who said that they never heard Farrad Muhammad referred to himself as that. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad saw him as that even while Farrad Muhammad was present, but he was told by his teacher not to teach that yet until I'm gone. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad began to represent him as that and that he was his messenger. There were those who felt that Elijah had tried to lift up Farrad Muhammad in a way, so that he could lift himself up above them and be a leader over them. This same thing was felt when the Honorable Louis Farrakhan took the seat as the father over the house in the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's absence. You know, to go back to this, it's really proved by the backing that's behind the man. If I met with God and I hold fast to that, God would obligate himself to back me up, because I'm not denying him and I have faith in him, that he has come to me. So, I don't say that people wouldn't have a question, here or there, but when you try to satisfy the questions and concerns and you see people just digging in and holding their same positions. You begin to realize that all the people aren't searching for the truth. Some are just

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RM: adamant about saying things that they want to say and want to hear. Many have written books on the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, they've written in those books about Master Farrad Muhammad and they did all of it with no interview of the Messenger while he was alive among us. They're doing it today with no interview the Honorable Louis Farrakhan, who knows the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, but they're not interested in going before a man that is knowledgeable, not only about the two men who you say you want to write about, but he's knowledgeable about the tricks and the plays that many who mean us no good will employ when they come to us under the guise that they just wanna help and they want to investigate this aspect and that aspect.

VJ: Here I come in peace.

RM: Yeah, that kind of thing. So I don't put a lot of stock in that. Jesus said it like this. He said two things. "Trees are known by the fruit they bare, men are known by their works'. He also said 'If you cannot believe in my words, examine my works for my works testify of me'. So, when there's confusion about the real identity of a man, especially in the divine sense, then leave the man alone to do his work and when he does his work, then let that work testify. Because there's a work described in the Scriptures, prophetically laid out and they tell you what he'll do. Then, you want to see will he do those things? Will those things come about? Is he a match for what's been predicted? That's what you want to do. So you study what's been predicted, then you see if he's a match for it. What would he look like? When you say look like, you're more talking about sound like and how he would come up generally against the powers of his day.

VJ: So Master Farrad, was he half-white? What was his nationality?

RM: Well, we could say half-white. I don't know if it comes out half-white, but he had a white mother



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RM: and a black father.

VJ: So, does that make him evil?

RM: No. What it does is, it makes him a child with a sense of giving justice to both worlds. The Black world and the White world, because white people should get justice. That means the truth should be made known to them. Then and only then, do they have an opportunity to respond favorably to the truth. You can't respond favorably to something that is not being presented to you in the clearest possible terms.

VJ: Doesn't the Nation of Islam believe that Jacob created white people on the island of Patmos?

RM: Well, we believe that Yakub<sup>10</sup> did that but that doesn't mean that there is not a wisdom present that if white people embraced it, they could begin to come out of the mind of Yakub. The teachings teaches us that Yakub taught them to do this devilishment, not white skin. Yakub taught them this evil and self-<sup>destructive</sup> way. Not white skin, Yakub taught them to rule over us and everyone else that's non-white, not white skin. So, it's what's in the white skin that we're concerned with; the teaching and the wisdom that went into it.

VJ: But where did this evil come from? I had heard that they were locked up in a mountain for two thousand years and that's where they became savage. Where did it come from?

RM: Where did?

VJ: The savage ways that the Nation refers to.

RM: Well if you live on a level with them, I'm in the eighteenth Surah<sup>11</sup> called the Cave. (Opens up Quran and flips pages). Some say: They were three and the fourth of them their dog. And others say five, the

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RM: six of them their dog, making conjectures about the unseen. And others say, the seven and the eighth of them, their dog say my Lord best knows their number. None knows them, but a few so contend not in the matter, but with an outward contention question not any of them concerning it. Now that one talks about the dog, which was the best friend to them in this wild like existence. But this is a section. Now, the eighteenth Surah of the Quran, the Cave, it deals with it-dwellers in the Cave. We relate to thee their story with truth. Surely, they were youths believed in their lord and we increased them in guidance. And we strengthened their hearts when they stood up and said 'Our Lord is lord of the heavens and the earth, we call upon no God besides him for then indeed, we shall utter an enormity. These our people have taken gods beside him who they did not bring clear authority. Why do they not bring clear authority for them? Who is more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allah? And when you withdraw from them and what they worship, save Allah, take refuge in the cave. Your lord will spread forth for you of his mercy and provide for you a profitable course in your affair. And thou mightest see the Sun when it rose decline from their cave to the right. When it set leave behind them on the left while they were in a widespace thereof. This is of the signs of Allah. He whom Allah guides, he is on the right way. But I wanted to get to this part, just so you could get to the people. Dhul-Qarnayn and Gog and Magog. Now Gog and Magog are in the Bible, but they ask thee about Dhul-Qarnayn<sup>12</sup> say I recite you an account of him, truly we established him in the land and granted him means of access to everything. So he followed a course until when he reached a setting place of the Sun. He found it going down into a black sea. If I had a map, the black sea would be up there. And found by it a people. We said 'Oh Dhul-Qarnayn, either punish them or do them a benefit', he said. As for him who is unjust, we shall chastise him and then he will be returned unto his lord and he will chastise them with an exemplary chastisement. As for him who believes good and does good (*Mumbles*)...we should speak to him an easy word in our command, then he followed a course till when he reached the land of the Rising Sun,

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RM: he founded it rising on a people who we had given no shelter from it. So it was and we had full knowledge of what he had. And then we followed a course until when he reached a place between the two mountains, he found on the side of them a people who could hardly understand a word. They said 'Oh Dhul-Qarnayn, Gog and Magog do mischief in the land. May we then pay you tribute on condition that thou raise a barrier between us and him. He said 'That wherein my lord has established me is better, so if only you help me with strength of men'-Give me some men. And I will make a fortified barrier between you and them. Bring me block of Iron and length. When he had filled up the space between two mountainsides, he said blow till when he had made it as fire. He said, 'bring me molten brass to pour over it' so they were not able to scale it, nor could they make a whole in it. This is being locked up now. And the footnotes tell you, that thus is clear the ancestors to the present Teutonic<sup>13</sup> and Slavic races are the Gog and Magog speak of in the Holy Quran. The Effigies of Gog and Magog in London and the names of Tubal<sup>14</sup> and Muscor occurring in the Bible are clear indications of this fact. The barrier referred to in this verse and described in the verses that follow is the famous wall, Edurban. See, you can find these things. These things are set there and this wall was built to keep them up in the Caucasus Mountains. But see, Dhul-Qarnayn is gonna tell them that they gotta Sally forth. He said, so they were not able to scale it nor could they make a whole in it. Then he said to them, this is a mercy from my lord, but when the promise of my lord comes to pass, he will crumble it and the promise of our Lord is ever true. On that day, we shall let some of the surge against others and trumpet will be blown, then we will gather them all together. And that is the day that we're in now, the day that everyone will be gathered together based on truth as everyone as a people. But they have Sally forth in the Earth, as the Bible prophesized, Gog and Magog would sally forth in the Earth. They have conquered just about every land. They conquered all throughout Africa. They've conquered over in the far East. They conquered the Western Hemisphere of the world. The Lord's hand would be lifted up against them. So in other words,

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RM: we locked them up in the caves; we held them back, as the Honorable Elijah Muhammad said, for about 2000 years. But after 2000 years, Musa came and Moses went to teach them and to lift them up out of the wilderness. He had to teach them how to clean up, how to rid themselves of a disease. You'll find in the 66<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Isaiah where there's an abomination going on of an experiment going on in the forest with the rat, some say the mouse and others. From these three creatures, an animal was made over 5000 years ago called the Pig. This is why, you'll see in the Old Testament, they say, don't even touch his flesh, don't come near it. It's not food, its medicine. This creature ate up the feces and the urine and everything that was laid around because they lived in a cave like dwelling. And this pig would begin to clean up the things and inside the pig, you'll find, many of the properties that are used for medicine today. You can have a wound that's infected and all I can do is cut a piece of the pig's fat, and put it on there and it will draw all of the poison out of it. So, there are things right here in the Bible. Many times, people will tell you that we follow the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and other Muslims follow the teachings of the Quran, but the teaching of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad is a perfect teaching of the Holy Quran. He helped us to see it clearer, making it relevant to the time. This is one of the reasons young people won't accept religion today. They don't make it relevant.

VJ: That's true

RM: They don't even really make education relevant.

VJ: That's true

RM: And so, the children are bored and they're rejecting it. The Minister says if a child is hungry and you put a plate of food in front of that child, that child will do its best to devour all that food on that plate to satisfy its hunger. But if you put a plate of food in front of a hungry child, and they're rejecting the food

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RM: you gotta ask yourself, not what's wrong with the Child, what's wrong with what you got on that plate? Why are they pushing religion back? Why are they pushing the plate of education back to the point where over 50% of black males now are not even graduating from High School? What has become so unattractive about school that their pushing it back? Even some of the worse of children would still graduate from high school, but now, they're pushing education back from them. Even though, they're gonna suffer in the current society, as its setup, as a result of it, but nevertheless, they're pushing it away. Its time for something new and the human soul is yearning for a higher manifestation of truth, I don't care what religion you in. Islam, Christianity, Buddhism- whatever you are in, if you are teaching of a power greater than the human being sees itself exercising on a daily basis, you're in a time now where the human being will say you're teaching this, now where is it? Bring it on! Show me and I think that's appropriate. I think that everyone that wants to teach religion ought to know that you're in a position today where you gotta answer some questions for the people. And in Islam, under the leadership of the Honorable Louis Farrakhan, we're prepared to answer those questions.

VJ: Speaking about black males, actually its been said that there are more black males in jail, than there are graduating from college.

RM: Not true. Well, graduating yes, but there's more black males going into college than those going in the jail, but they're not gonna push that.

VJ: They're not gonna push that.

RM: They gonna have you focus on the prison so that you keep doing more of what you're focusing on. It's still too many of us going to prison. There's enough of us going to prison for us to be having a discussion about it. I've learned that the number of those going in prison and those going into colleges

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RM: that the prison numbers don't exceed the college numbers.

VJ: Speaking of prison, Malcolm X. I read an article that you did. You were quoted in the daily news talking about the impact of people that have a gone to prison and have come out and done great things. Such a person is Malcolm X, can you speak on Malcolm X?

RM: Malcolm had only been to the seventh grade in the current school system. After living a wayward life, of course, Malcolm went to prison as the history teaches us. In prison, according to his account if I remember him correctly, his brother came to prison to visit him and told him to stop eating pork. And then he came and told him to stop smoking cigarettes, from what I saw of this history, as Malcolm did these things, he began to learn of the honorable Elijah Muhammad. I believe he corresponded with the messenger via letters from the prison. Sometimes, I guess sitting around with seven years on your hand or better, give a man a lot of time to think. So you have an opportunity, I feel, to discipline yourself. It probably helps to cut the time away to be busy and disciplining yourself doing something because they say the days are much longer when you're doing time.

VJ: I heard! I don't ever wanna go to jail.

RM: So, Malcolm learned of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's message. He came out ready to work and he did an incredible work for the Nation during the time that he was with the Nation.

VJ: Why did he leave the Nation?

RM: Well, many people should give a lot of different reasons. Malcolm didn't feel that he should be silenced while he was at the height of his career. It seems that Malcolm saw himself as immensely gifted and richly cultivated in a way that he could do a lot of good for his people. And both are true, both are true. You should not be silenced at a time when you felt that you're at the height of your career?

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RM: You wouldn't have had a career had it not been for the man that not only had taught you, but was teaching you and was trying to guide you. One of the things that we have to learn is that, our gifts can take us to great places. But you don't ever want your gift to take you somewhere, where your character can't hold you. And if the character is wanting and flawed, sometimes these corrections help us to check that character flaw and get our character growing properly. Because once your character's out of line, you don't even see yourself properly and you think you're something that you're not.

VJ: So you think Malcolm's character got out of line?

RM: Oh sure!

VJ: Did he get cocky?

RM: Sure, there were things he wanted to do.

VJ: Malcolm, on a couple interviews that I saw on YouTube, was quoted saying Elijah Muhammad had 21 different children and eight of which, he had children with his 16 and 17-year old secretaries. What do you say to that?

RM: The Honorable Elijah Muhammad had a domestic life. He had wives like the Prophets had wives. Again, if a man is risen up and we see him standing up with a bold claim before the world that he has met with God that he's under the guidance of God. God doesn't guide you in every other aspect of your life and then leave you on your own in your domestic life, so we have to see his domestic life as nevertheless being guided like rest of his life was being guided. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad took on wives. One of the interesting things, so we can clear this part about Malcolm's talking about it in an interview, when Malcolm tried to get other ministers in the Nation to be disaffected with the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, he never went to them saying the Messenger is having sex with his teenage

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RM: secretaries. The language he used was the Messenger has taking on wives, but when he would talk to the public- he would use this term 'teenage secretaries'; you know, it helps generate a real ruckus in the public.

VJ: Yea. In their eyes, because they don't understand; they don't understand the religious context.

RM: Sure, Sure, Sure. But you go through the life of Abraham and you see a man who goes into his wife's handmaiden and a handmaiden is a virgin, a very young virgin. So, we could say Abraham had a teenager and they produce a child, he and Hagar. And then, Abraham puts her and the child out. Imagine what kind of story that would make today. But what makes Abraham okay? His person and his history settle alright in our soul, because we believe Abraham was a divine man. Prophet Muhammad had 11 wives, Allah made him cut it down to 9. Prophet Muhammad is honored and not condemned by us.

VJ: This is Farrad Muhammad?

RM: No, Prophet Muhammad is not condemned for having 9 wives. And we find out, that he's not condemned, because it is believed that he's a divine man. So when people reject the Honorable Elijah Muhammad based on what they say is this domestic setting that they're coming into the knowledge of. Well, if you don't see Elijah Muhammad as a divine man and that his walk is a guided walk, every step he's taken is a guided step. That it is his God that is behind him moving him in this direction. If you think God's hand is not over him and not in these affairs. Well, naturally, you gonna look on it and say 'Oh my God' this is a horrible thing. But if you are walking with the belief that God's hand is in it and that he's guiding him into this. You ask yourself. Well, if he is a man that is corrupt, he can't produce a people who are freeing themselves from corruption. If he is a man who dark in mind and heart, he can't have student that walk out of his classrooms full of light. No immoral man can produce a Nation of people



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RM: who had moral barring and fortitude like you saw the Nation of Islam standing up. There's always a few bad examples here and there, but for the most part, the citizens of the Nation of Islam were decent hard-working, God-fearing people and they learned that way from the teaching of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and if he was in darkness, he could not have caused them to walk in a light like that.

VJ: So, when Malcolm left the nation, right? There are different reasons as to why he left the Nation. What did he go on to start? He started another religion, right?

RM: Muslim Mosques Incorporated is what I heard. He wanted to impact some of the issues of our people, he also wanted to repair bridges he had burned with Civil Rights groups when he was a disciple for the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. You know, Malcolm was trying to build a base, some kind of coalition or something.

VJ: It never really amounted to anything.

RM: Never had time.

VJ: Did he ever come back to the Nation?

RM: Well, we understand that he wrote requests for the opportunity to return and we don't know how all that got handled. From what we're understanding, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad may not have received them all. Once Malcolm got to express this to the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, the Messenger said to him 'Brother, there's nothing that's unforgivable, but you have to go and put out all the fires that you started.' And Malcolm's pride wouldn't let him do that, so he didn't come back.

VJ: It seems to be like a similar type of progression. Master Farrad to Elijah, Elijah to Malcolm and now Malcolm to Farrakhan. How did Malcolm get Farrakhan apart of the Nation?

01:06:57

RM: Well, now you gotta remember now that it was Malcolm that recommended Minister Farrakhan to be a minister and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad told Malcolm to make him the number #2 man in the mosque, instead of the number one man. Let us see, before he leads, how does he follow? Minister Farrakhan, then, was the minister of Boston Mosque and for about nine years, he worked assisting Malcolm. And so, during this period of time, the minister is being shaped all the time through Malcolm. And then, of course, Malcolm begins to fall and as he's falling, he's trying to infect others with information that he has about the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. And so one night, the minister had taught in New York and they were having dinner at Malcolm's home, and Malcolm drops this thing on him talking about the messenger's wives. Then, the minister gets on a plane and starts heading back, so he gets a call from Malcolm. He said 'Brother, what I shared with you keep it to yourself'. And he said 'Awe Brother, you got my head so messed up, I'm not gonna tell nobody except the messenger'. He found a scripture that showed the Messenger of God would have wives and that there'd be some controversy over it. He said 'Well this fulfills what the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's doing'. So, he gets back on the phone and calls Malcolm to tell Malcolm, he found something in the Quran that could defend the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm already knew it. He said 'Brother, you just let me handle that.' I gave you that whole scenario to say if Malcolm was informing the Minister of this domestic life, why was he doing it? Was it to increase the Minister in knowledge? Was it even necessary? Or was he trying to infect him in a way that he would be disaffected with the Honorable Elijah Muhammad?

VJ: Was Malcolm half-white as well?

RM: I don't know anything about. I think he had some white in his family. He said his mother's mother was raped by a white man.

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VJ: So let's talk about after Malcolm dies and then after Elijah Muhammad dies, you have Minister Louis Farrakhan and the Minister's son, Wallace D. Muhammad. Why was there a rift between the Nation and Wallace D. Muhammad?

RM: Well, I don't know if there was a rift. The Honorable Louis Farrakhan said that when it appeared to them that the messenger was dead, he did not know the next step. It was Wallace, his son, who said he knew the next step. So, the minister submitted to Wallace's leadership and Wallace began to tear down the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's reputation and then the Minister came to him like a man and said 'Brother, the people know you're father, but they don't know you and if you tare him down, you won't have a foundation to stand on'. Then finally, if the Minister loved the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and was grateful for what the Honorable Elijah Muhammad did for him, then he didn't wanna muddy the man's image and history. That's not even gratitude. You know, if you're thankful for what someone does for you, even if you feel you got something different that you wanna go with, then just go with what you wanna go with and you can be grateful for whatever they did for you then. I'm grateful, but I think this is the better way, but that's not what Wallace was doing. He was tearing down his father's image. His father's work.

VJ: Why do you think he was doing that?

RM: Well, for whatever reasons. It could have pained him in his own thinking. He could feel that he was doing the best thing for the house. So its not so much a rift as it is.... The Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught something, Minister Louis Farrakhan wanted to stay right there with what he taught. It's not like he deviated from Wallace, Wallace deviated from the Honorable Elijah Muhammad.

VJ: Why do you think he deviated?

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RM: Well, he had already expressed more than once that he didn't believe that man was God and he was pained over the domestic life of his father and how it may have pained his mother. A very sensitive child. Spiritual. Sensitive.

VJ: Lastly, especially when you talk about his mother and things like that. Are women equal in the Nation of Islam to men?

RM: Women are allowed to rise as high as their God-given gifts will take them. In the Holy Quran, there's a section (flips pages). The position of women spiritually women raised to the position of man. This is another subject of misunderstanding that prevails the belief that according to the Quran, woman has no soul is almost general. Where it's probable, it took hold of the mind of Europe at a time when Europeans had no access to the Quran. No other religious book or no other reformer has done one-tenth of what the Holy Quran or what the Holy Prophet Muhammad has done to raise the position of women. Read the Quran and you will good and righteous women being given the same positions as good and righteous men. Both sexes are spoken of in the same terms. The highest favor of which God has bestowed on man is the gift of Divine Revelation and we find women to whom divine revelation came spoken of along with men. I can go on. The woman is the equal of man in rights of property. It goes on to cite verses in the Quran that substantiate these narratives and arguments. The woman is not supposed to be dumbed down, not educated. Minister Farrakhan has taught, more than once, the Woman, as the Messenger taught, is the first teacher, the first nurse and that if you make the woman ignorant, your whole nation would go backwards. So in the Nation of Islam, we say you teach a man, you teach an individual, you teach a woman, you teach a nation.

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VJ: Now, I want to talk about something. You've been in the news a couple of times. Speaking of women, why is it that when the Nation was preparing for the Nation of Islam, they wanted to address men only?

RM: When we preparing for the Nation of Islam?

VJ: For the Million Man March, my apologies, the Million Man March.

RM: Well, we wanted to address men because the man is the target in this civilization. The man is the who is the most damaged. If we don't grow into real men, then the woman is gonna be continually pain, brotha. It was time for the man to stand up. They, during the slave making process, always took the strongest black men who were willing to stand up for us and made example out of them, brotha. Tying them between two horses and the horses being sent in the opposite directions. All types things they did to destroy us and to signal to all the slaves that they made watch 'Strength, don't pay off'. Being a stand up man and acting like a man, they don't pay off here. What pays off is to be less than a man. We'll take what you practice as less than a man as real manhood. And that's what we've been doing. So, that's a pain deep down in the soul of a black man that he knows he's greater than what he's putting off down here, but he can't prove it.

VJ: This is a July, 12<sup>th</sup> 1994 article from the newspaper that I got from the archives

RM: (Recites Title after being given Newspaper Article for reflection) 'City officials block Muslim leaders to rent Civic Center. He wants to give a speech to Men-only. The city says this violates the anti-bias law. The local Nation of Islam leader (mumbles) Yep, I remember Kevin Bond.

VJ: Can you speak on it?

1:18:25

RM: I went to talk to them about this. We ended up at the Civic Center<sup>15</sup>. We ended up with the Men's meeting at the Civic Center. Kevin Bond was the commissioner of human relations, I believe, there. He was approached by the ADL and others about Farrakhan and his men's week. We had had a successful one in New York. The minister was gonna go around the country with these meetings. In New York City, he had already said 'meet me in Washington'. I want a million of you to meet me in Washington. So we got ready for the meeting here. Bad night too, because SEPTA<sup>16</sup> was going on strike at midnight and a lot of people had to be concerned how they would get home that night if they came to the Civic Center. So it hurt us in attendance that night. Kevin Bond felt that we couldn't have this meeting so I had to get a meeting with Kevin Bond. And at the meeting where Jews were present and others, I asked white men the questions they kept challenging me on this because I said that Minister Louis Farrakhan has asked black women to stay home while he talks with the men. And the women love him, because he has built up substantial good credibility and good will with the community throughout the United States. So, if he asks women to sit home while he talks with their men, those women are gonna honor that request. And so, that's the men meeting that we're having. If Teddy Pendergrass can have a concert with just women, why can't Minister Farrakhan have a serious talk about a man that's in trouble in this land, with black men? Kevin Bond came out and I think some woman did try to come and crash that thing. There were a group of black women in Philadelphia who came and set up a wall to keep those women out. They turned away nearly 48 women from the feminist movement from even coming up in that meeting. Black men came and I think about two women; A foreign women, not sure, I know she was from Europe. They were in the country and they had heard about this big meeting. So, she came down there, but she didn't really come down there to try to prevent Minister Farrakhan from having a men's meeting. She didn't know what the heck was going on. And then they had a young girl from Power 99 Radio who came, but she was told from someone that she could come so she could get a story. And they threatened that poor

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RM: girl. Women threatened her for coming to do that. I got a call from the radio station the next morning. Could I do something to prevent her from getting personal injury and harm, because women in the city were gonna get her. But all in all, the minister got his message across, which was the main thing. The messenger came, we got the message. Philadelphia sent the largest contingent of black men to the Million Man March.

VJ: So I heard. How many men, do you estimate Philly sent?

RM: Well, we're looking at a figure of about 80,000. Close to 80,000.

VJ: Just from Philly?

RM: Well, when you're dealing with Philadelphia, you're dealing with this metropolitan area.

VJ: The Delaware Valley<sup>17</sup>

RM: Yes.

VJ: Speaking of the Million Man March, the Nation of Islam worked with a lot of other groups. What were the roles of each group in the creation of the march?

RM: Well, it wasn't like a role of each group. We all worked together and wherever help was needed, an individual came and helped in those areas. We're a very large organization here in Philadelphia and actually, we were spearheaded by Joe Certain who was then the city managing director. Who got, Rendell, who, I believe, was the only mayor publicly to endorse what he felt was the value of such a march. So Joe Certain was allowed to work through the office of city managing director, which brought a lot of departments together. The unions were on board; different city workers were on board. We went to clergy to get clergy on board and it was massive from Philadelphia by the time this took off.

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VJ: Was there a clash in authority between the NAACP?

RM: No, the NAACP. You have to remember, there was another group running it then. It was after the Million Man March that J Whyatt Mondesire was inspired. Then he came to me and others to ask if we would help in his bid to become President of the local NAACP and we said 'by all means' and the rest is history. Now, J Whyatt Mondesire is president of the state NAACP and a member of the National Board. So, Philadelphia is represented well in one of the oldest Civil Rights organizations in our history of this country.

VJ: Was there opposition to the Million Man March?

RM: Well, there was opposition, but most were staying away from it. There was more confusion over the concept. Black folks were so use to marching to put a demand on the slavemaster's children and the minister was not gonna March to be begging the slavemaster's children to do for us what we could get up and do for ourselves. He wasn't about to do that. I remember the Minister saying something was missing. He was looking for something. It was Rev. Bevels that say the word 'Atonement'. He said 'Farrakhan, we need to go down there and atone' and that got us into a whole study of the atonement process and we could how Aaron was told by....God told Moses to tell Aaron to call the day of Atonement. He didn't tell Moses to call it. He told Moses to have Aaron make the call for the day of Atonement. So, we study the atonement and we study the Ancient Egypt Pharaoh Anton. Anton was the one that brought Egypt back into the worship of one God and took them out of the polytheistic approach that they had traditionally been involved in. He brought them under the rule of the One God and he taught them about the One God. The A-Tone, the minister being a musician, The A-Tone, that's the tone you bring all the keys up on to get the band ready, the ensemble ready, the orchestra ready to play. So, we wanted to make a symphony to the world. The word 'A Tonement', A-Tone, bring humanity



1:26:34

RM: back to one. Notwithstanding that it's two words, at one. We wanted to be at one with God again. So it was so much in it! We were on fired up once Bevels<sup>18</sup> had said that. That resonated through the Minister and the Minister went to work with that word and we were just seeing so much coming out of it. We knew it was right. We didn't really have what you call opposition, there were just some confusion. Many people said 'Well, I don't understand this march. Why are demanding from him jobs, demanding from him...?' No, the Minister said, this is different. We're gonna go up to Washington, but we're not going to Washington to ask the government for nothing. And I guess, we had never had such a gathering like that, but it was so serene when we were there. The spirit of tranquil that God brought over the brothers and men came from every walk of life, we had black men there. From every organization, we had black men there. We were represented from every field of human endeavor you could find. We were represented there at the Million Man March. If I could just say what really served as opposition, someone who don't want Farrakhan to have this march. The ADL<sup>19</sup> came out, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1995 and they put out in the paper, Farrakhan calls Jews 'bloodsuckers'. Now, just look at that title for a second. It didn't say Farrakhan called other black men bloodsuckers. It didn't say black men called Farrakhan anything. This is talking about the Jews. It don't have nothing to do with the Million Man March. This is how much they think of themselves, that we're supposed to prioritizing their concerns before we deal with ours. What arrogance, man? That's arrogance! So, there were fencestraddlers. (Imitating people) 'I don't know about this Million Man March, I don't know Farrakhan called it. I don't really know what it's really about and anything'. But when the Jews start coming out against Farrakhan, Oct 2<sup>nd</sup>; Man, it was like women start packing lunches, telling their man 'Oh no, you going' and the fencestraddlers got off the fence. Somehow, when they started attacking the minister, they helped the March man. I mean, people got off the fence and got on the bus, you understand? And they came down by the boatloads.