

Rhodes College Digital Archives - DLynx

Cheltonya Banks, 2011

Download date	2025-05-17 22:43:54
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/10267/34222

Matt Strauser: All right, so first we're gonna be doing some demographic questions. What is your name?

Speaker 1: Cheltonya Banks.

Matt Strauser: Okay and how old are you?

Speaker 1: Twenty-five.

Matt Strauser: All right, do you have any children?

Speaker 1: Yes.

Matt Strauser: Do you mind giving me their ages?

Speaker 1: Nine, five and three.

Matt Strauser: Okay. And how long did you live in the Cleaborn Homes?

Speaker 1: About a year and a half.

Matt Strauser: Do you remember what year you moved in?

Speaker 1: In 2011 now would've been 2009.

Matt Strauser: Two thousand nine? Okay. And how did you come to live in the Cleaborn Homes?

Speaker 1: Well I was staying in Ridgecrest at first so and I had put in – it took about five years for my application to come up and that's when I moved in, yeah.

Matt Strauser: Okay and who lived in your Cleaborn Homes apartment with you while you lived there?

Speaker 1: Me and my three children.

Matt Strauser: All right and so what was it like when you first moved into Cleaborn?

Speaker 1: It was everyday life. Pretty much was used to – it was just something on my own being around that kinda environment so it was –

Matt Strauser: Mm-hm, and could you elaborate on what that kind of environment is? The environment that you were usually around?

Speaker 1: The environment, well the people or whatever, but I mean it was – well the part I was in anyway, it was good people and I never seen anything go wrong where I was at – well, one incident over on the other side but –

Matt Strauser: Yeah.

Speaker 1: - other than that, it was all right.

Matt Strauser: Okay.

Speaker 1: Nobody bothered me.

Matt Strauser: Well that's good and how did you feel about living there when you first moved in?

Speaker 1: At first, I really didn't wanna take it because of the stories I heard about Cleaborn Homes.

Matt Strauser: Yeah.

Speaker 1: But they sat down and they explained to me that I actually wasn't gonna be there long so it was like, "Go on and take it, you know, you ain't gonna be there long. They fixin' to tear 'em down," so I was like, "Okay."

Matt Strauser: Yeah. Can you tell me about some of the stories that you had heard about Cleaborn?

Speaker 1: Well some of the stories I had heard was, I mean, there was pretty much drug infested, crime, all of that but toward the end, it really had slowed down from what I see.

Matt Strauser: Okay, so would – you say it changed over the time period you were there?

Speaker 1: Right, I mean, I mean from the time period that I was there; I really didn't see none of that but from – in the past – stories –

Matt Strauser: Yeah.

Speaker 1: - from the past, yeah.

Matt Strauser: Okay and how were the physical conditions of the buildings?

Speaker 1: The outside was kind of rough but the inside - the inside it was nice.

Matt Strauser: And you said your relationship with the people that you encountered, that was fine?

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Matt Strauser: Okay and would you say that changed? Did you come in and already you were getting along well with those people or did it take some time to develop

a relationship?

Speaker 1: It took – well, not my neighbors but the other people that had been there because from what I saw when I moved in that my spots was kind of vacant for a minute and it –

Matt Strauser: Okay.

Speaker 1: - had become the hangout spot.

Matt Strauser: Oh, all right, yeah.

Speaker 1: So I had to develop something right there, you know. I was like, "Okay, somebody live here."

Matt Strauser: Yeah *[laughs]*.

Speaker 1: "I come home. I can't get up my stairs," you know?

Matt Strauser: Yeah.

Speaker 1: So yeah, I had to work on that. Yeah.

Matt Strauser: Yeah and how was your relationship with the police while you were living there?

Speaker 1: With the police? I mean, I've never had a situation with the police.

Matt Strauser: Okay. And would you say the neighborhood surrounding the Cleaborn Homes, how was that while you lived there? Did it change at all while you were there?

Speaker 1: No.

Matt Strauser: Okay.

Speaker 1: Not really.

Matt Strauser: And can you describe maybe how the schools or any factories or businesses were around there or any churches?

Speaker 1: Well the church that was right behind the Cleaborn Homes, I pretty much didn't really associate with 'em until the end, it's pretty much where we had our meetings at.

Matt Strauser: Mm-hm.

Speaker 1: But they was pretty nice and my children, they went to Georgia,

right there, and –

Matt Strauser: Okay.

Speaker 1: - they liked their school, so I mean –

Matt Strauser: All right and were you ever employed while you was in Cleaborn Homes?

Speaker 1: Was I ever employed?

Matt Strauser: Yes ma'am.

Speaker 1: Toward the end.

Matt Strauser: Okay and could you tell me where that was and how you got the job there?

Speaker 1: Well actually, it was during the summer and it was through the summer youth program.

Matt Strauser: Okay and where was the summer youth program run out of?

Speaker 1: Actually it was ran through Memphis HOPE.

Matt Strauser: Okay. Okay and was this a full-time job or a part-time job?

Speaker 1: It was a full-time job while it lasted during the summer, yeah.

Matt Strauser: Okay and I'm not sure if we got that – what was the job again?

Speaker 1: Well actually, we was stationed at a church on East Trigg. It's called - it was called East Trigg Church.

Matt Strauser: Oh, all right. Yeah.

Speaker 1: [Laughs]

Matt Strauser: That's fine.

Speaker 1: Yeah, it was stationed at the church and I mean pretty much did whatever they needed us to do.

Matt Strauser: Okay. How did you travel to work every day?

Speaker 1: I had a car. I had a van.

Matt Strauser: All right and how did you balance your job and taking care of household responsibilities?

Speaker 1: It was pretty much easy. While I was at work, the kids was at daycare. When once I got off work, I went and picked them up, we went home and –

Matt Strauser: Okay.

Speaker 1: -We did whatever.

Matt Strauser: Yeah. So living in Cleaborn ever feel like a community to you?

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Matt Strauser: Were there any neighborhood traditions?

Speaker 1: No. Not in the part I was in, I never seen that.

Matt Strauser: Okay.

[Ringing]

Speaker 1: Sorry.

Matt Strauser: That's fine.

Speaker 1: It's nobody.

Matt Strauser: Oh.

Speaker 1: [Laughs].

Matt Strauser: Who were the people you trusted?

Speaker 1: It was a lady – it was about two ladies across the way, well if they weren't that far, it was about the next building over. I remember a lady named Miss Jenny and I forgot the other lady name, those were about the two that I most confided in, it was them two.

Matt Strauser: Okay. And were there people that you relied upon for support?

Speaker 1: Not really. I pretty much didn't associate with nobody up there, you know?

Matt Strauser: Yeah. What types of support did people offer to you? Or did people offer to you support?

Speaker 1: No, not. I pretty much supported – offered them support where, I mean Miss Jenny and the other lady –

Matt Strauser: Yeah.

Speaker 1: - yeah, that's all. Yeah.

Matt Strauser: Okay. And what kind of support did you offer those two ladies?

Speaker 1: Well, I got food from a food pantry and pretty much we really didn't eat it. So –

Matt Strauser: Yeah?

Speaker 1: - you know, I pass it along if they needed it, you know? So –

Matt Strauser: Okay and did you and the people in your community ever trade goods or services without using money?

Speaker 1: Without using money?

Matt Strauser: Yeah, like doing each other's hair or cooking for each other, making TV repairs or car repairs.

Speaker 1: No.

Matt Strauser: No? Okay. And how did you get the community's news or gossip?

Speaker 1: *[Laughs]* actually everything just went around. The lady, Miss Jenny, she was the older lady. She's about 50, 60, something like that.

Matt Strauser: Yeah.

Speaker 1: And she knew everything and when I first moved in, she came over there and she told me the lowdown on everybody and everything that was around there. Nothing got past her.

Matt Strauser: All right. So she was the go-to news source?

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Matt Strauser: All right. So did you and your family feel safe living there?

Speaker 1: Yeah. I mean, nobody ever tried to break into my place.

Matt Strauser: Okay.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Matt Strauser: What kind of activities did you do as a family, with your children?

Speaker 1: While I was there?

Matt Strauser: Yes ma'am.

Speaker 1: Nothing there.

Matt Strauser: Nothing there, okay. All right, so did you leave the community, then, to do stuff?

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Matt Strauser: Yeah, okay. And so I've heard from other people that living in a place like Cleaborn creates a strong sense of responsibility for the children there. Would – how would you say the children in Cleaborn Homes were raised? Was there a sense of shared responsibility amongst the adults for raising the children?

Speaker 1: Well, I don't know because –

Matt Strauser: Oh, yeah.

Speaker 1: - like I said, I really didn't associate with folks over there –

Matt Strauser: Right, okay.

Speaker 1: I was leaving and I was coming, so –

Matt Strauser: Yeah, so you personally really didn't –

Speaker 1: Right.

Matt Strauser: Right. So you didn't experience that?

Speaker 1: Right.

Matt Strauser: Okay. What do you like best about living in Cleaborn Homes?

Speaker 1: It was nothing best about it. I mean I don't know. It was just a place – it was a place to live. It was - it was a pretty nice size.

Matt Strauser: Okay.

Speaker 1: Other than – I mean it was fine till the summer came and we didn't have no air *[laughs]*.

Matt Strauser: Yeah, okay. All right and would you say that was the big – what would you say were the biggest challenges of living in Cleaborn Homes?

Speaker 1: The biggest challenges? Nothing, really other than when the summertime came it was no air *[laughs]*.

Matt Strauser: Yeah, so having no air, okay. All right and who would you say were the leaders in the Cleaborn Homes community?

Speaker 1: The leaders?

Matt Strauser: Yes ma'am.

Speaker 1: As in –

Matt Strauser: People that were kinda either looked up to in the community or made a lot of stuff happen in the community or people had to look to to get stuff done.

Speaker 1: I really don't have anybody's name.

Matt Strauser: Okay. How successful would you say Cleaborn Homes' residents were in getting support from the Memphis Housing Authority?

Speaker 1: How successful?

Matt Strauser: Yeah.

Speaker 1: Once we started moving or –

Matt Strauser: On things like security or home repairs.

Speaker 1: They was pretty good on home repairs.

Matt Strauser: Okay.

Speaker 1: They was. Security – other than late at night, nobody really wasn't around.

Matt Strauser: All right.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Matt Strauser: So they provided security late at night, but then on the home repairs –

Speaker 1: Right.

Matt Strauser: - they were good?

Speaker 1: Yeah. They were good.

Matt Strauser: Okay. Do you feel like there were ever people who came and meddled in your community without being welcome there?

Speaker 1: Yes.

Matt Strauser: Could you explain that?

Speaker 1: I mean it was just a lot of people over there that had grew up over there and they was over there all day, every day and they didn't live there, you know?

Matt Strauser: Yeah.

Speaker 1: It was a lot of that going on. So –

Matt Strauser: So it was people that had lived in Cleaborn Homes and probably grown up in Cleaborn Homes –

Speaker 1: They were living – right.

Matt Strauser: - but they were no longer in Cleaborn Homes and they would come in –

Speaker 1: They come in. Right.

Matt Strauser: - and just be there all the time? Okay. What about like researchers or preachers or Housing Authority Leaders or social service agencies. Did they ever come in and meddle in Cleaborn Homes?

Speaker 1: No. I've never seen any.

Matt Strauser: Okay. And how did you feel when you first learned about the plan to demolish Cleaborn Homes?

Speaker 1: How did I feel?

Matt Strauser: Yes ma'am.

Speaker 1: I was happy about it.

Matt Strauser: You were happy about it? What made you the happiest about it?

Speaker 1: I mean it was just time. It was –

Matt Strauser: It was just time for them to do that?

Speaker 1: It was just time, yes.

Matt Strauser: Okay. Did you feel like you were given enough information and support to move away from the Cleaborn Homes?

Speaker 1: Actually, me – I pretty much found my own. I mean it's pretty much where every- sit down somewhere –it's pretty much what I had to do.

Matt Strauser: Okay, so you –

Speaker 1: I mean it's pretty much what I did. But it was a lot of people over there saying that they couldn't find anything and they was supposed to – and they were supposed to be getting buses and stuff to take us around and that never happened.

Matt Strauser: So they never got you buses to take around –

Speaker 1: Right, take us around –

Matt Strauser: - and look, yeah, okay.

Speaker 1: - to look and all that. So folks that didn't have a car and stuff like that.

Matt Strauser: Yeah, okay. And you had a car, if I –

Speaker 1: Right.

Matt Strauser: - so that made it – you were able, then, to go –

Speaker 1: I was able to, yeah.

Matt Strauser: - and look for yourself and try to find a place to live.

Speaker 1: Right.

Matt Strauser: But you would say more – you would think probably some of the other residents in Cleaborn homes weren't able to even go look at other places 'cause they never got the buses that they were promised?

Speaker 1: Right.

Matt Strauser: Were there any other kind of – was there any other information or support that would've been helpful for residents to have in addition to the buses?

Speaker 1: Information? I mean, I don't know because to me they really did said, "Okay, this is what you got, this is what you can go look for. Go."

Matt Strauser: Okay, yeah. So they didn't give you much guidance?

Speaker 1: Right.

Matt Strauser: So you would've liked some guidance, you know –

Speaker 1: Right.

Matt Strauser: - maybe a little –

Speaker 1: Right, yeah.

Matt Strauser: - help.

Speaker 1: Little bit more for - for other folks but I mean for me, I just got out there went. Okay, they gave us a website. I just got out there and got on the website and just –

Matt Strauser: And –

Speaker 1: - just went for it. I mean, until I –

Matt Strauser: Yeah.

Speaker 1: - yeah.

Matt Strauser: So they didn't really hold your hand much on that?

Speaker 1: No.

Matt Strauser: It was just kinda like –

Speaker 1: Uh-uh.

Matt Strauser: - they're gonna throw you out there and do it.

Speaker 1: Right.

Matt Strauser: All right. Now you said you went on a website and looked. Where did you access the Internet? The –

Speaker 1: The library.

Matt Strauser: Just the library? Can you walk to the library or is that another thing that it helped that you had a car?

Speaker 1: No, the library was actually on the corner where the store at.

Matt Strauser: Oh, okay.

Speaker 1: - yeah, it's right there. Right next to the store.

Matt Strauser: Okay, so you could have walked to it?

Speaker 1: Yeah. I walked there.

Matt Strauser: Okay. All right. Do you feel like you trusted this Housing Authority to help you? Do you feel like you could've trusted them or what they told you is accurate?

Speaker 1: I mean, yeah.

Matt Strauser: Yeah, so they were – so what they told you is accurate, but they just didn't necessarily do much for you?

Speaker 1: Right.

Matt Strauser: Okay. Okay, so it wasn't like they were deceiving you?

Speaker 1: Right.

Matt Strauser: Alright. Are you still in contact with people who lived in Cleaborn Homes?

Speaker 1: No.

Matt Strauser: No?

Speaker 1: I haven't really been, no-

Matt Strauser: Okay. And so what are your hopes for yourself and your family now that you live away from Cleaborn Homes?

Speaker 1: I mean – I mean it's just everyday living.

Matt Strauser: Yeah.

Speaker 1: It's how it is – I guess, I guess it's – it's just time to move up the ladder.

Matt Strauser: Yeah, so try –

Speaker 1: Do something big and better.

Matt Strauser: Okay. And have you been any – offered any case management to assist you in meeting that goal and to help you, you know, do bigger and better things and move up?

Speaker 1: Yes, I – actually, since I left HOPE VI, Memphis HOPE, whatever y'all wanna call it – they actually send me through school, so I can get my license so I get the job that I have –

Matt Strauser: Oh okay.

Speaker 1: - so I mean they actually –

Matt Strauser: So they did assist you –

Speaker 1: Right.

Matt Strauser: - they did a good job with that?

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Matt Strauser: And so that was through Memphis Hope?

Speaker 1: Right.

Matt Strauser: Okay. Is there any other type of case management support that would've been helpful or would you say they've done a sufficient job helping you?

Speaker 1: I mean, that's pretty much all I needed. Now, anybody else –

Matt Strauser: Yeah. Right, yeah, so you're not necessarily concerned about what they can do for other people?

Speaker 1: [Laughs]. I didn't say that.

Matt Strauser: No but –

Speaker 1: I didn't say it like that.

Matt Strauser: Right.

Speaker 1: But I mean, they – I mean, they helped me out.

Matt Strauser: But for you – yeah.

Speaker 1: Right.

Matt Strauser: And it sounds like you – I guess I meant that more is you haven't really been contact with other people –

Speaker 1: Right.

Matt Strauser: - haven't heard any other –

Speaker 1: Right.

Matt Strauser: complaints. So for you, personally, Memphis Hope has helped you with the case management.

Speaker 1: Right, right.

Matt Strauser: All right, well that concludes the interview.

[End of Audio]