



Willie_Tiggs, 2011

Download date	2025-03-23 08:03:36
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/10267/34251

- Matt Strauser:* All right, so we're just gonna begin with a few demographic questions. What is your name?
- Speaker 1:* William J. Tiggs.
- Matt Strauser:* And how old are you if you don't mind me asking?
- Speaker 1:* 61.
- Matt Strauser:* And do you have any children?
- Speaker 1:* Got five.
- Matt Strauser:* And could you give us their ages?
- Speaker 1:* 25, 25, 26 and I got one maybe 29 and one about 28.
- Matt Strauser:* And so how long did you live in Cleaborn Homes? Do you like remember the year you moved in?
- Speaker 1:* I moved in 2009 and I moved out 2010.
- Matt Strauser:* So you lived there about one year.
- Speaker 1:* About one year and then I moved here. This is where they – I found a place at to live.
- Matt Strauser:* And how did you come to live Cleaborn Homes?
- Speaker 1:* Well, I was homeless back in 2005 and I used to just walk these streets around the Cleaborn Homes area, sleep all in the ditches, porches and things like that just to have somewhere to stay. And with the little money I was coming by somebody had told me that I could go down to 700 Adams and apply for a place to stay at Cleaborn Homes. So after going down to 700, I filled out a little form and they told me, said well, when something come available, then they'll contact me. So I had to give them a phone number and my children live in the housing right here. That was for people who lived in Cleaborn Homes, they come by more money and they wanted to progress and live better.
- Matt Strauser:* So this is like the step up from Cleaborn Homes then? Okay.
- Speaker 1:* And across a whole another side of that Club Paradise too, all the new houses over there, all of them into Cleaborn Homes.

- Matt Strauser:* And while you lived in Claiborne Homes who lived in your apartment with you?
- Speaker 1:* Nobody but me.
- Matt Strauser:* No? Just by yourself? All right.
- Speaker 1:* Yeah, by myself.
- Matt Strauser:* So now we're gonna talk about some of the changes over time. What was it like when you – so it's gonna be over a relatively short period over that one year, but what was it like when you first moved in, in 2009?
- Speaker 1:* Well, when I first moved in I was rushed in. That means I didn't have nothing but three pillows. I found these three pillows beside the road. That's what I slept on when I got a chance to get the building, you know, the one room. And I kept those pillows cleaned up until now. And I still got them.
- Matt Strauser:* Wow, yeah.
- Speaker 1:* I didn't have no product. Everything you see here people gave to me, everything.
- Matt Strauser:* Wow, awesome. Very generous of them. So how do you feel about living there when you first moved in?
- Speaker 1:* Well, it was okay and I stayed to myself, just like I do now, anything start happening and it was more going on than what I knew so people didn't like me like they don't like me here. I don't do what they do. I mean it's drugs, I don't deal with drugs. And so when you get around people and you don't do what they do, then they don't want you living around. So I'm still having difficulties, but I still stay to myself and try to stay out of trouble. And there was a great deal of trouble to get into in Cleaborn Homes.
- Matt Strauser:* Would you **say** you went over that year, did it change, the conditions of Cleaborn Homes change while you were there?
- Speaker 1:* Well, the change came about because we all had to be mobilized out of there. And I mean people was upset. People were crying because people had accepted other people in they houses, a place to live and they taken over selling drugs and they didn't know how to get them out. This was a big issue of best way to get people out

of your house. Couldn't ride in the moving truck so the guys were calling the women all out of their name because they couldn't live with them no more. See they had to move. A lot moved to Frasier, Raleigh, further out. They didn't have no car. Just like I don't have a car. So I couldn't hardly move around or couldn't do nothing, but I had my own place. I never had a woman give me a place to stay. Somehow or another these particular guys had women taking care of them, feeding them. They wouldn't come around to check there, no how.

Matt Strauser: Okay. And while you were living there, did you notice any changes in the overall neighborhood like schools or businesses closing or just any things going on like churches or social service agencies?

Speaker 1: Well, you got schools around those now. I think they call it Georgian Hills School. The word is out that they don't have enough students so they gone close it. It's back up here to your right, up on that hill, that's Georgian Hill School. And then when the people moved out, so that took a lot of the children away from here. So maybe they might be bused further out now.

Matt Strauser: Yeah, so the school is having some difficulties, Georgian Hill is. All right and back one more question, you're talking about kind of the prevalence of drugs in the neighborhood. Did the relationship between the neighborhood and the police change while you were at Cleaborn Homes or how was it when you were at Cleaborn Homes?

Speaker 1: Well, during the patrolling of security team, see we had security offices. So whenever you had a problem with getting somebody out of your house or wanted to get people evicted, you reported to security. Security will take it to the office in writing.

Matt Strauser: All right, so security then to the police, all right. So now we're gonna ask some questions about employment. Were you ever employed while you lived at Cleaborn Homes?

Speaker 1: I worked at a church.

Matt Strauser: A church? And how did you get the job at the church?

Speaker 1: Well, it was like the Cooke Convention Center where a lot of the church people would come together every year and I worked there like six weeks.

- Matt Strauser:* Okay, so it was a part time job. All right. And did you have to work with any unions while you were at that job?
- Speaker 1:* No. Union's been gone a long time ago, back in the '70s.
- Matt Strauser:* All right. and how did you get to work?
- Speaker 1:* Oh, I walked.
- Matt Strauser:* You walked.
- Speaker 1:* I walked.
- Matt Strauser:* And how was balancing work with what you had to do back at your home at Cleaborn? Was that difficult? How did you do that?
- Speaker 1:* Well, I just would get up a hour early every morning and start walking cause I know I had to be there by 8:00. So by me having arthritis I couldn't really just move that fast and everything, but Lord always blessed me to be able to get on through, make my day and come back home. I work about four hours a day.
- Matt Strauser:* And so now we're gonna move on about kind of community aspects about Cleaborn Homes. Did Claiborne ever feel like a community to you? I'm sensing from what you said earlier about – kind of referring to what you said earlier about how people didn't like you there, could you maybe elaborate on that?
- Speaker 1:* Well, it was just if you didn't deal with drugs, they figure you was there to turn them up and then see, I retired in law enforcement.
- Matt Strauser:* Oh, okay.
- Speaker 1:* That was the key factor. So really if they didn't bother me, I didn't bother them. If they bothered me, I didn't hesitate to call the police. See. Just like I have here, I call them several times but that's because of people conduct. I ain't bothering them, but they want to bother me.
- Matt Strauser:* And so were there any like neighborhood traditions or block parties or stuff like that that happened at Cleaborn while you were there?
- Speaker 1:* That was every day. Every day in there. It was – people in the surrounding area would come to Cleaborn Homes to party. That

mean there was a lot of violence, shooting, fighting, cutting, even people getting killed.

Matt Strauser: So that really was a negative influence then of people in the community?

Speaker 1: It was terrible.

Matt Strauser: And were there people there that you could trust? No? No, all right.

Speaker 1: There's nobody but yourself.

Matt Strauser: All right. And so did you have anybody to help support you while you were there or was all –

Speaker 1: Well, the police is always supporting there. I mean they didn't hesitate when you called them they came because this was one of the ways you would get evicted. So just like said, you get – if you was selling drugs and they find out you sold drugs, you were gonna get evicted. Now it might take awhile in court see, cause see I was one while living on Beale Street in the Vincent Center. They wrongfully evicted me. That's what caused me to be homeless. I came to court. I stayed in court two years. I just won year before last, that's why I moved to Cleaborn.

Matt Strauser: All right.

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