

PHOENIX HOUSE FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The Reminiscences of

Jean Scott

Columbia Center for Oral History

Columbia University

2014

PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Jean Scott conducted by Lance Thurner on November 3, 2014. This interview is part of the Phoenix House Foundation Oral History Project.

The reader is asked to bear in mind that s/he is reading a verbatim transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose.

Audio Transcription Center

Session #1

Interviewee: Jean Scott

Location: Las Vegas, NV

Interviewer: Lance Thurner

Date: November 3, 2014

Q: Good morning, Jean. This is a life history interview, and before we really get into Phoenix House, I'd like you to just say a little bit about where and when you were born, and your childhood, and a little bit of your life before you came to Phoenix House.

Scott: Well, I was born in Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn, New York. I was born to a single mother. When my grandmother—who my mother lived with—my grandmother came from the West Indies, and my grandfather, who was her second husband, who was not my mother's father, came from, I think it might have been Haiti, I'm not sure.

Anyway, my mother got pregnant, and my grandmother put her out. So when I was three months old, I had an aunt named Ekwah, who was my mother's sister, used to visit my mother. I guess she lived in a rooming house. The lady down the hall told her that I would cry all night because there would be nobody home. So when my mother took me to visit my grandmother, my grandmother said, "If you don't want the baby, you can leave her here." And my mother said no, whatever.

I guess two or three months later, she asked my grandmother to babysit, and that's how I wound up living with my grandmother. She never came back for me. Now, she came back in my life later on, but not in the beginning. My grandmother and grandfather raised me. I had a very good

childhood. My aunt Ekwah took care of all of my needs, like a bicycle and a doctor. My grandfather was a superintendent downtown in Brooklyn. He shoveled the coal and did all of that. My grandmother was a stay-at-home mom. My grandmother had two children, and my grandfather had three, so there were five children, but when I came along they were all kind of grown.

I got married very, very young, at 15. I thought if I got married I could get out of school. Not that I was pregnant, but I just didn't want to go to school. Got pregnant later on; my daughter was born when I was 16 years old. My husband was very, very abusive. He used to beat me up, all of that. He used to use drugs. I didn't use drugs at that time. I don't know what happened, I just started using it. I think I was just kind of curious about, what was it all about, and I just started. It had nothing to do with—I don't know if I was unhappy or not, I just didn't get into all of that. And after a while, I just liked it and I just kept using it.

Q: And what were you using?

Scott: Heroin. I tried cocaine once, twice. Anything make my heart beat fast, I didn't particularly care for. So I started using drugs. I wound up in jail when I was twenty-one. My grandmother worked for the Board of Elections. You know, once a year where you go vote? And I used to always take her lunch, and I used to always say I couldn't wait to be twenty-one so I could vote. But when I was twenty-one, I was in jail, so I blew that; I couldn't vote.

But I wound up in jail the first time for sales, and I got—I was working, I missed my whole

working life. I worked for Trump, Donald Trump's father, Fred. In Brooklyn, he had Trump Village, I think they called it. It was Mitchell-Lama housing [Mitchell-Lama Housing Program]. The city bought up some parts of it, but the understanding was, they had to either build a school or something for the city. So I worked there for him; I worked in the complaint department. And then from there, I went to work for the Department of Real Estate, once again in the complaint department.

Then I went to work in Far Rockaway, for the Department of Relocation, which was a city job, and I worked for the Zuckerman brothers; there were three brothers and a sister. The Urban Renewal Project started at, I don't know, 71st Street, then it went to Playland, and then it took up after Playland. So I worked there; that was very hard. I mean, I was using, but not a lot, but it was this—the way people took advantage of folks. You had poor black families that migrated from the south with a lot of children, and you had these men that owned these bungalows, summer bungalows, and they would put the kerosene heaters in the middle of the room for heat, and you'd have a woman and four or five children living in these one- or two-bedroom bungalows with this kerosene heater, charging them astronomical rents. It was just terrible how they lived.

Then they had this guy, I'll never forget his name, a black guy named Reverend Scarborough [phonetic] that would go around and tell the welfare people, "You don't have to worry about going to the office, I'll go pay your rent." And he didn't pay their rent, and they all got evicted. It was hard for me. I didn't like that.

Then you had the Irish people that lived up near Playland, and they would call for their complaints, and they would call me all kind of, “Niggers,” and things like that. I enjoyed the job because you had to move people into standard housing. So instead of a woman with three children living in one bedroom, she'd have three bedrooms. So I knew that when the rubber met the road, that they were going to be better off for where they were going, but the road to get there for them was just kind of rough.

So I worked there. Then I got transferred, because I was a provisional worker, because I hadn't taken the test yet. I was a good worker, I had good skills, I had good administrative skills. I went to work for the Department of Probation. That one was a real kicker. I was a Dictaphone operator, so I would transcribe the notes, the initial workup for court. So you had the person's whole history, their mother, and the crime, and hit them in the head and they spit out the dope, a whole bunch of stuff was there. I worked at 100 Center Street, that's where the offices were. And I was using drugs then really heavy at that time. I wound up getting arrested. When I went in front of the judge, he said to me, you know, he said, "You work in our courts, young lady, and you knew better." So he gave me three years. I had never been arrested, never nothing, nothing.

And I said to myself, "The hell with this. If having a job is going to cost me to have all this time, then who needs this job?" Because everybody else had six months or nine months that came out of Manhattan, but Brooklyn they were always kind of rough. So I had one to three years, I did time in the House of Detention down in the Village, used to be there. I don't know, you might be too young to remember that. I think I did nine months of the three years, and I came out and I started using drugs same day.

I guess I was out for about, I don't know, I got arrested in 1966, came out—I don't know, '64, came out '65. Got arrested '66. I don't know, whatever. So then I got arrested again. This time I got five years. So I wind up going up to Westfield.

Now, Bedford [Bedford Hills Correctional Facility], I think they have men—I don't know what it is now, but I was in Bedford, which was called Bedford later on, but it was Westfield when I was there. I did about eighteen months, or something like that. I came out and I started shooting dope the first day. Had a terrible overdose the first day, and I wound up with walking pneumonia. I had an appointment to meet with Efrén Ramirez's office, for a clerk typist position, because I had really very good skills as far as typing. I used to type seventy-five words on a manual typewriter. So I never made it, because I had a massive overdose, and then a week later I had pneumonia, walking pneumonia.

But I guess this was a new project that they had. I had a parole officer that wasn't a parole officer, more like a social worker, and I had her home number and I could call her any time, day or night. "So Jean, if you feel like you're going to use, if you're not having a good day, just feel free to call." Anyway, I never made it to the job interview. Somehow or another she wound up at my house, I don't know what happened with that, just to see how I was. Then after that it was just like off and running again. I wound up in the detox ward, and I think I was under an alias, I'm not sure. But I was getting ready to leave, and they have to walk you to get your clothes downstairs, and we were waiting for the elevator, and when the doors opened, this woman was getting off, and I just knew that was my parole officer. This was a different lady.

So I go back inside, and she says to me, she says, "You either go to Phoenix House or I'm going to violate you." So I sat there for an hour going back and forth: "I got to take care of my daughter, I got to do this, got to—" She didn't want to hear it. She didn't give me no car fare, she didn't give me nothing. So in those days, you could have money for the telephone in the detox ward. So all the girls got together and they gave me car fare. Coney Island was a double car fare zone, so I had to pay train and bus, no transfer. So I had enough money to buy a bottle of wine and train and bus.

So I bought my bottle of wine and poured a little bit on the ground for the girls upstate, and drank my wine to the One-W [phonetic] detox, and I got on the train and the bus and went to Coney Island. And that's how I got there. I didn't get there because I wanted to go. I didn't really feel that I could change. I just felt that this was my life, and I was OK with that. I mean, in my head I was just going to OD [overdose] somewhere, because I had OD'd a few times, and I would just go out that way. Because when you OD, you don't feel nothing, you just kind of go to sleep and everything's great. I wound up in Coney Island. That's how I got there.

It was a madhouse. It was like, they were howling, "Expediter!" and they were screaming, and it was raggedy, and it was all these people. In those days they set you on a prospect bench. They just had a chair for you to sit in till they felt like talking to you. I'm sitting there, sitting there, and I got a bad headache from this wine I drank. It was like a mess. And they finally took my intake. Edwin Caraballo [phonetic] took my intake, and he said to me, "How old are you?" And I said to him, "I don't know." So he said, "Well, when were you born?" And I said, "Nineteen forty-

three." He says, "Well, you're twenty-five." I says, "No." And we went back and forth for like, I guess, ten minutes. Somewhere along the line, I had lost track of birthdays and Christmases and how old I was and all of that. When it dawned on me that I was twenty-five years old, I sat down and said to myself, "Where did time go?"

Now, it still didn't make me want to change my life. It was just like, "Oh, man, you got to get a grip!" You know. So I went through the intake, and I'll say it now, because if I was admitted into Phoenix House today, they probably would have put me out. Because the next thing, I was seen by the assistant director, which was a woman, and I guess an older resident, Cynthia Canty and somebody else. She said, "You have to take a bath." And I said I wasn't taking a bath; I had just taken a bath, and water rusts iron, and I just need to lay down because I had a headache. Now, they kind of put up with that and I didn't take a bath, but I wound up participating in everything that was going on.

But I had a hard time my first two or three months. Everybody saying "Good morning," and "How are you?" And where I came from people didn't say good morning. Dope fiends don't say good morning, they just kind of want to make nice to you if you've got something that they want from you. Not that you're a good person and they want to be your friend. I just had a hard time with that one. I used to get a room change like every week. I just couldn't get along. They would say, "Good morning," and I would say, "What's so good about it?" I just, you know.

Then I had a real hard time with the job thing. They put me in the kitchen, and I told them, I said, "Look, I didn't work in the kitchen in the penitentiary. I'm not working in the kitchen here. I don't

know how to cook, and I'm not doing that." So she said to me, "Jean, you will work in the kitchen." Well, I didn't know how to cook. So the people in the kitchen, when they had pancakes, they would make the batter for me like the night before, and I had to make scrambled eggs. I'll never forget it. I made the greenest scrambled eggs. I didn't know that you had to scrape out the pan if they stuck, so I just kept adding the eggs. What a trip.

I don't know. My grandmother, who raised me, died. I guess I was there, I don't know, two months, three months, maybe three months, and my aunt Ekwah, I guess, called, and said that my grandmother was in the hospital. I went to the hospital, I had two or three escorts to the hospital, and she said, you know, "Jeannie," she says, "I can die now in peace, because I know that you're finally trying to do something for yourself." I said, "Oh, mama, come on, you're not going to die."

So I went back to the facility and the next day or two days later, I was going again to the hospital, and at the door when I was going out, they sent for me and they said she had died. So that was it, because as far as I was concerned, she was the only one that ever really cared about me. So I went to view the body, because I didn't want to go to the funeral and I didn't want to put up with my mother and people falling out and acting like a damn fool. So I went to view the body, it was raining like hell, I'll never forget it. It was me and two other people, and we were waiting for the bus or something, and it came by and all the water from the bus just soaked me.

So I came back, and they had me on, what can I call it? On watch. They were screening my phone calls and everything to make sure I didn't leave, because they knew that—what the hell

was I going to change for? Because there was nobody to show that I was going to change. So I managed to survive that. We had a director named Dwight Malone, real country, country bumpkin. He was on Mitch's [Mitchell S. Rosenthal] ship, he was from the Navy, and I think Dwight might have been a drunk or something, I don't know. Really nice, nice guy, and he really was very, very helpful to me. Then Herman Williams came later on.

I was working in administration because, like I said, I could type, and I took Kevin's [McEneaney] intake when he came, because he came from Morris [J.] Bernstein [Institute of Beth Israel Medical Center] to there, and I didn't know who the hell he was, I just took his intake, that was my job. But I worked in administration. So they sent for me one day and then I was a coordinator, which was a clinical position, like checking the rooms and giving people talking-tos, and things like that. So I had two jobs. So they sent for me and they asked me, What is it that I really wanted to do? I was torn, because I wanted to stay with Dwight to be his administrator, and then there was a part of me that wanted to be clinical and work for Herman.

So I finally said that I just wanted to be clinical, just cut to the chase. So I went on salary and I made \$4,750 a year working for the city. I worked in Coney Island for a little bit; I don't know the dates. Then I went to Far Rockaway. Now, Far Rockaway was a trip. Oh, I'm sorry, I moved out because I started going out with Douglas [Scott], and Douglas and I moved out together. I was working in Far Rockaway, and every pervert in the world rode that train. That's before Aqueduct opened season-wide. It was only open in the winter, or whatever that was, summer, so the winter there was nobody. And you'd have this long, long ride over all the water, and the guys were exposing themselves, and it was just unreal.

So I worked in Far Rockaway, I don't know, maybe eighteen months or something like that. Far Rockaway was cold. Far Rockaway was a *summer* house. It was huge, but it was for summer. The toilets on the first floor used to freeze, and the residents would lay on the floor on the first floor for body heat because it was just cold.

After I went to Hart Island, Capparelli [phonetic], what the hell was his name? Something Capparelli. Paul Capparelli hustled a boiler and whatever the hell they needed to get heat in Far Rockaway, and I then went to Hart Island. Hart Island was very interesting. Hart Island had five facilities, and each had its very own director. We had our own fire department, we had a fire truck in case there was a fire. We had our own medical department with a nurse and a doctor that would come, a visiting doctor. And I was the director of Phoenix III, where the fire truck was, and the medical department was.

The good thing about being a new director was that you had four other directors, so if something happened in your house, it always affected the other house. So say if somebody brought drugs on the island, they would share it, most likely, between all five houses, not just one. The five directors would go to each facility and hold meetings to attempt to find out the source of the problem.

I was Hart Island, I guess, I don't know, maybe four years. I worked in the Bronx for seven years and lived in Brooklyn the whole time. After a few years I became the manage of the entire island. And that's where Potter's Field was, that's where they buried the paupers. I used to ride

the ferry with the arms and legs in the hospital truck, because if you had your arm cut off or if the baby died, they would bury you on Potters Field, they'd bury your arm or your leg or whatever. Then they would also bury the dead bodies, so I also came over with the Rikers Island bus, because that was the highest paying job on Rikers Island, burying the dead in Potter's Field, or digging them up when somebody found out that they were there. So I wind up running the entire island.

I was down in induction giving a seminar one time, talking to the new people about staying and changing your life and all this other stuff, and there was a guy there from Ireland and there was a guy there from Alabama. The guy from Ireland talked about planting potatoes, and Ralph Duck [phonetic] talked about this farming. So I said to them, "Fine, maybe we should have a farm." Well, we sent away for the seeds, and the administration gave me \$200 to buy some starter potatoes. Well, we didn't have no machinery—we had shovels. Hart Island used to be a prison, for people that didn't pay child support or people who got arrested for running numbers. Short stay kind of stuff. They had buried all of the big, big rocks under the ground. So as we're digging, we're coming up with all these rocks.

Fagin taught me how to plant potatoes. There's a whole art; you have to put them in before Saint Paddy's Day; it's a whole ritual with this guy. He had a drinking problem, nice, nice guy. So you dig the hole, you put a little dirt on this side, a little dirt on this side, and you have to do the potatoes one foot apart. So you put your foot in the hole and you put a potato in, you know, put the starter potato. Well, I wound up with two tons of potatoes and 3,500 pounds of tomatoes and cabbage, big, big cabbage. So we were able to feed all of the houses for the entire summer.

Kevin worked in public information, so he was able to get the news crews to come and take pictures of the farm and all of that. And then I got transferred. I went to Phelan Place. Phelan Place was the Bronx again.

Q: Was this when Hart Island was closed, or was this before?

Scott: No, no. Ray Dibble went. There was a good one or two years more before Hart Island closed. So I went to Phelan Place. Now, Phelan Place was 140 residents, women and men. So I was on my own this time, because there wasn't no other four directors or whatever, but I had been a director for a while, so I felt kind of comfortable with that. I enjoyed Phelan Place. It wasn't the best neighborhood but it was still, it was OK. I didn't have an issue with that.

But I started having problems with supplies for the houses, for my house. Like Paul Capparelli, white guy, ran purchasing, and I would say to him, you know, "We need hair grease. Black people put hair grease in their hair," I says. "And we need lotion, you know. I don't know if you use lotion, but we need lotion because we're ashy." And we'd go back and forth and back and forth, and we were always running out of sugar and always running out of this and running out of that. So I made an appointment to go downtown to 74th Street to talk to Ron Coster. Now, Ron Coster was the senior vice president, he was in charge of purchasing and finance. So I went to see him, and I told him, I said, "You know, I don't feel that the purchasing department is sensitive to the needs of the residents in the facilities." I said, "Every month I have to ask for the same thing." I said, "And he doesn't give us enough, like, sugar and things like that, and we keep

running out, and I have to go out and buy it, then I get grief because I'm spending the petty cash."

So we went back and forth, back and forth, and he said to me, "Well, how would you like to run the purchasing department?" I tell him, "Look, I didn't come here for his job. I came here because I didn't feel that he was sensitive to my needs." He said, "Well, think about it." So I thought about it. I figured, no more sleeping over—because you had to sleep over in the houses then, because they didn't have paid night people, it was you. So you'd sleep over, and they had resident night people that would wake you up if something happened in the facility. So I said no more getting calls all time of night, no more weekends, I mean, that's like dying and going to heaven, right? So I said fine.

So I went to work in the purchasing department for five years. I enjoyed that, because I felt that I was really providing the residents with what it is that they needed. I was very sensitive to the fact that they needed hair grease, that they needed lotion, and that they needed to have a little extra sugar because they always put a lot of sugar in their stuff. So I was able to do a lot of things. I was able to upgrade the furniture. They had better furniture. So I really felt that I was doing some things.

So I was in my fifth year in the purchasing department and I got sent for by Ron Coster. He said to me, "We're going to make Kevin in charge of all the clinical operations, and I want you to help him." Because Kevin had never had a clinical job. He worked for Mitch the whole time in public information. He was a good speaker and all of that other stuff, but, other than his treatment experience, he never really worked in a house. And he says, "I would like you to help Kevin." So

that's when I went and started working for Kevin. I don't even remember how many houses we had then. I think we still had Hart Island, I don't know if we still had Far Rockaway. I don't think we had Far Rockaway. I don't remember. But I went to work for Kevin, and he wanted to expand the business. That's when the prison stuff was really wide open.

So we went to—Ronnie Williams ran a prison program in Texas. Amarillo. I don't remember the town. But anyway, we went to Texas and we looked at it. Dick Davison—he died, you would have liked him, he was a board member—he went with us, and we just wanted to look at it. So we looked at the one that he ran, and then we went to Wackenhut [Wackenhut Corrections Corporation]. Shirley Livingston was the woman that was in charge of the Wackenhut prison. Now, Wackenhut, everybody worked for Wackenhut. The correction officers, everybody worked for Wackenhut, whereas where Ronnie Williams was—only the clinical staff worked for him, and officers worked for the Department of Corrections. So you had two different views.

So we responded to an RFP, request for proposals, to run a treatment program in Utica, New York, Marcy Correctional Facility. So we responded to the RFP and we were awarded the contract. So we had to go up and we had to interview everybody. We interviewed the mayor and everybody in the world to run the program. We also took a lot of the clinical staff from our houses to go up there, to be the nucleus to start there. I enjoyed that. You had 200 men in this program, and you had them 24/7. Well, they had a job, but the jobs were right there in the units, and you were able to run a therapeutic community. So you had your morning meetings, your seminars, your encounters, you had all of that up there. We had a rocky relationship in the beginning, because the correction officers never felt that the inmates could change, so they

would call us the "Hug-a-Thug" program. We got a lot of resistance in the beginning when we first went there. But when they saw that there were no incidences of violence, there was nobody woofing off at the correction officers, that it was really low maintenance, everybody in the corrections field wanted to work in our unit, because they knew they would have no problems.

So we did that. Then another RFP came for the women, Taconic [Taconic Correctional Facility] for the women. We responded to the RFP, and I think because of the good work we did with the men, we were awarded the contract for the women. What they did, they renovated, to the tune of \$80,000, this little building they had outside the gates. Not in the gates, but outside the gates. We had thirty-two women that lived there. They wore their own clothes, but they were inmates in our program. So what we did was, part of the Marcy contract was—I hope I remember—six months in a prison, six months in a residential facility, which was Phelan and I'll get to that, and then another six months in aftercare. So we had all three components; it was a hefty contract. What we did was, we put the guys first in Long Island City, and then when they were mixed in with that big, big population it didn't work out that well, so we put the guys in Phelan Place. So we would have a hundred of them at any given time in Phelan Place. Then the women started coming down, and they went to Phelan Place. Not with the Marcy men. They went when the women were transferred to Prospect Place.

Then we responded to an RFP in Texas. One was for Hondo and one was for Dayton. Hondo was the men and Dayton was the women. Little hick towns, you know, they put prisons in little small towns. So we went there—Amy Singer and myself. Is anybody going to see her?

Q: I don't know.

Scott: We spent six months, off and on, hiring staff to work in these two prisons in Texas. Ann Richards, who was the governor at that time, went to Stay 'n' Out on Arthur Kill, because Ronnie Williams ran the prison program in Arthur Kill, to look at that, and she was very, very impressed with that. She was also very impressed with Sonia Page. Sonia Page was Ronnie Williams' second in command. She recruited Sonia Page to go to Texas and gave her a big, big job working for the TDCJ—Texas Department of Criminal Justice—to be a big mucky-muck in Texas. So Sonia Page went to Texas, and then we went there. So they had a big, big push in Texas at that time for treatment in the prisons, because Ann Richards, once again, was a recovering alcoholic and she was pushing this.

So I always called Texas a big AA [Alcoholics Anonymous] state, because everybody was into AA. I tried to explain to the people, when I interviewed them, that this was not going to be an AA program, this was not going to be a seven-step or twelve-step program, whatever the hell they had. They said they understood that, and they lasted, like, maybe two months and they would quit because they couldn't take it, so I had to go back down and hire more people.

[interruption]

Q: So, we were talking about opening the prison programs in Texas.

Scott: So we went and we opened the prison programs in Texas, and like I said, I flew back and

forth. I spent well over six months back and forth, hiring people and looking at the programming. Spent a lot of time in Dayton with the women, because I really had a vested interest in the women. Hot as hell in Dayton. The mosquitos were unreal in that dorm where the women were. So I called up New York and I got them to buy those big oscillating fans for the women so they could cool them off. I had very good relationships with the major. Karen Cruise was her name. It's funny. And after we lost the contract and Gateway [Gateway Rehabilitation Center] got it, I still stayed in touch with her. She was a Yankee fan, so I used to send her Yankee hats and Yankee T-shirts. She stopped being in the prison. She started doing training for the correction officers; she said because what we did in comparison to what Gateway did was like night and day, and she didn't feel that the women were really getting what they needed to get, and she just didn't want to be a part of that.

Q: Can you just maybe explain that a little bit more?

Scott: Well, Gateway is a program out of Chicago. I don't really know that much about their programming; it was supposed to be a therapeutic community like Phoenix House. According to Karen Cruise, the way that they ran the program in Dayton for the women was very different than what we ran, our program from Phoenix House for the women. She saw the difference, and she saw that there were some real changes with the women when we were there, versus not that much change with the women while Gateway was there. She called me up one time and she says, "Jean, I just can't stay here." She says, "I just don't like the way they treat the women." She says, "And I don't feel that the women are really getting anything out of it." She says, "So I'm just going to get a job, training." So she just went and she got a job where she did some training, after

we left.

But I had good relationships with all of the correction people, even the correction people in New York I had good relationships with, like the superintendent of Taconic [Taconic Correctional Facility], Bridget Gladwin. She retired, and she's now a professor teaching criminal justice in one of the colleges in New York. Then we had an associate commissioner, Ray Braudis [phonetic], who died, who I was really very good friends with, and he's the one that helped us with our program. For example, we say “No physical violence” in any of our programs, and if you fight, then—well, they changed it now, but in those days, if you fight, then we would put you out.

We were having a hard time with the deputy in charge of programming at the Marcy Correctional Facility, and the guys had a fight and he refused to take them off the unit. I called Ray Braudis up, and Ray Braudis made him take him out of the unit, because Ray Braudis really had an appreciation of the therapeutic community, versus Rick Harding [phonetic], that was his name, who felt that he just wasn't going to give in, because we were "hug-a-thug." So relationships help, not just with them, but also with OASAS [Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services]; that's the contracting agency in New York. So it's good to have good relationships with folks that pay you. That way you can always ask for their help, and if they need you to do something, then you know that you would have no problem doing that. So I always had, even when we had our parole contract—185th Street was a parole facility.

Once again, we responded to an RFP from Parole for a residential program and an outpatient program. We won the award once again, and we made 185th Street all men and all parole. So we

had a parole officer in the facility at all times who was a part of the treatment team. The guys knew that if they messed up, that the parole officer was right there and that we weren't going to book that. So we had that. Then we had a probation contract. So we had some probationers in there. So we had a thirty-bed probation program. So we had a lot of criminal justice programs and activities that we did.

Then what happened is, Corrections decided they were not going to contract out anymore, that they were going to do it all themselves. And that's what they wound up doing. So we lost the contracts for the men—and we lost the contracts for the women before then, because they said they didn't have enough money for the women, which is always the case—to continue their programming. So they stopped doing that way before they stopped doing the men. But I enjoyed that population, whether it was here or in Texas.

Now, I did a lot of looking at and evaluating criminal justice programs throughout all of Phoenix House. We used to have—I don't remember what they called it—we used to go every ninety days or so to review the elements of the program: the morning meetings, the house meetings, the encounters, the medical department, if the beds are made right, the cleanliness of the facility, all of that, and we had a whole big thing. We'd spend like three or four days. I did all the criminal justice programs. So I was always in California; California had Corcoran [California State Prison]. Now, not where Charles Manson is—because Charles Manson is in Corcoran, but they built two jails—two five hundred bed prisons. One Walden House had, and one we had. I spent a lot of time there with that program. They had other prisons in California; I didn't—oh, yes, I went to another one. They had a smaller unit in Corcoran that I went to also, periodically. But I

spent a lot of time with the prison programs. I enjoyed that. I felt that if they could learn some things about themselves, hopefully they wouldn't have to keep coming back.

Q: So, the prison programs in the various places, New York, Texas, and California, were they different, or were they all built on the same model?

Scott: Same model. Difference was, in some of the prisons you had to let them go out and work in the kitchen or other places like that for a while. Now, we had one unit that—they came into one building in the program, but they lived in another building. But they lived with people that didn't program, and we had no control over where they lived. So that one, you just kind of flew by the seat of your pants, because the other ones, everybody there, everybody programmed, so it wasn't a problem where they slept. But that one program, and I was really very, very pleased with that program, because the guys had to really tough it out, because the people in their room weren't programming. They were negative and doing whatever they were doing, but the guys were able to continue to program. And that one was really very good; I liked that. That was a ninety-two-bed program in Corcoran.

But I met some very interesting people, people that worked in California that I would have never met if I didn't—I mean Phoenix House people—if I didn't go to California. I met some nice, nice folks, like the major, Karen Cruise, and then there was another guy, a major, I forget his name, in Hondo, and he was nice. Then we had a special needs program for women in Texas, women that were on psychotropic meds [medications] or in a wheelchair and things like that. I never forget, I stayed in Waco, so I guess that this prison was close to Waco, because I would go back and

forth. I spent like a week there. Every time I went, I would spend a week in that program, the special needs program in Texas. I don't know, what else you want to know?

Q: Well, I'd like to talk now—

Scott: Oh, yes, and Portal. We had a women and children's program in a tier II homeless family shelter in Queens. The Saratoga Inn was the name of the shelter. We had women and children there, and we provided a therapeutic community there for the women and the children while they were waiting for permanent housing. We had that contract for quite a while, I would say. I don't know, six years, seven years. I'll never forget, Kevin and myself and Liliane Drago went, and we walked through the shelter to try to figure out what floor should the programming be on. I felt that if we put it on the top floor, then nobody had any reason to be there, because they couldn't say that they were on the wrong floor, because we were on the top floor. Then they had, same thing, they had groups and morning meetings and seminars and individual counseling, and we did things with the children also. The children would either go downstairs to day care, or someone would mind—they would take turns watching the children while they programmed. That one was very interesting. I think that's still going on. Camelot. I think Camelot has it now, or somebody.

But those were all additions. I know Kevin talked a lot about IMPACT, an after school program. Fee for service. These kids were in a fee for service program. And then we had Step One. He talked about Step One?

Q: No, he didn't tell me about Step One.

Scott: Step One had a teacher, and the kids came there during the day, and they were bad in school, got put out of school. IMPACT kids were still in school, and a lot of them went to private schools, so that was a fee-for-service, whereas Step One was a regular program for everybody else. There was a teacher there, and they had school during the day. They came five days a week, and they had counselors, and they had morning meetings, and they had groups, and they had little job functions on the floor, you know, mopping the bathrooms and things like that. That's still there, I think. I don't know why he didn't talk about that. But Step One is still there.

I had very little, if anything, to do with adolescents, like the Yorktown program and things like that. The people that ran Yorktown reported directly to Kevin. I ran all of the adult programs. But I knew about Step One—I know more about Step One than I do about IMPACT. But Step One, the kids went there for school. And the idea in Step One was to return them back to the school system, and then they could come back after school. Whereas IMPACT, they came after school, because they were in school already.

Q: And was Step One similarly family-oriented?

Scott: Yes, your family had to be involved. The family came once a week. Yes, their families came once a week. A lot of them didn't come, but the families were supposed to come once a week. But Kevin and I opened a lot. I'm trying to think what else.

Q: Well, that's interesting. Can you talk just a little bit about working with Kevin? What was your working relationship like?

Scott: [Laughs] I guess he was all right. I don't know. I don't know if Kevin made—how do you say?—made friends and influenced people. What's that saying? Anyway, I seem rough from the outside, if people talk about me, but underneath I'm really a good guy. Kevin is kind of standoffish and kind of better-than. Now, he had relationships with his peers in other programs and things, but he never had real relationships. I don't know how to say that. I had better relationships with the criminal justice commissioners and things like that than Kevin did.

We were awarded the RFP one time, and the assistant commissioner called me and told me that I was awarded the contract. Kevin didn't like that. But Kevin didn't have the kind of relationships with them that I did. I think some of that Mitch stuff kind of rubbed off on him, that we're better than all the other programs. And I think that on some level it kind of hurt us, because Mitch thought we should have a program in every state and be the biggest in the world and all this other stuff. Big is not always better, you know, and I couldn't understand that. New York took care of California forever; it's still probably taking care of California because it couldn't take care of itself! But we had to be there. It's kind of crazy, you know.

I worked for Kevin for a very, very, very, very, very, very long time. For an example, when we opened up Jay Street, down in Dumbo [Brooklyn], newest facility that we had. Oh, I didn't tell you about it. Did Kevin tell you that we opened up our own vocational training program?

Q: Yes, he did mention that.

Scott: We had our own vocational training program. We had to write a curriculum, and we had to go up against VESID [Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities]. Now, VESID is the one that we send all of our clients to for job training, and they get money for that. So we decided that we wanted to do it ourselves, in a better environment with sober people. So we had a warehouse that was given to us for a dollar in Brooklyn that was renovated. They put workshops, so we had culinary arts, we had woodworking, I mean, we had carpentry, we had computers, and I don't know, we had maintenance, I think. Three or four trades. Beautiful renovation, nice rooms and everything. And they hired this guy to run it. I don't know, Kevin hired him. All of a sudden I get transferred there.

Now, I lived in Brooklyn all my life. I had asked to be transferred to Prospect Place, which was in Brooklyn, which was a reentry house and whatever. Never. I kept saying to him, "Why am I going there? This man is going to run the program; I'm just going to sit in a chair somewhere in here and talk with my directors and do all of that other stuff." Whatever. Because the guy was working for Kevin. The guy was not working for me. Well, I moved there, and sure enough, I called him up, I said to him, "The director worked in a TC and did not know how it was done." So they wound up getting rid of him, and then all of a sudden, which I think was the plan all along, see, they hired a new director, and then Jay Street started to report to me. That's why I was sitting in that chair. Versus him saying to me, "Jean, I need you to go," and just like, "Look at it for me a little bit and let me know how the guy's working out," whatever. No, that was not the conversation.

So I'm sitting there feeling like a fish out of water, trying to figure out what the hell am I doing here, this program does not relate to me. I got the nicest, biggest office in the whole joint. I mean, it's like, you know, what am I doing? And the guy didn't last six months. So, I don't know, I guess we got along. At the end it wasn't that great. I mean, it was, you know, whatever.

While we were doing the Marcy stuff and going and interviewing all these people and doing all that stuff, I think it was good. But later on, I think, when he started getting a little grief and he wasn't feeling well and whatever, it just kind of—not that good. But I always covered his back and I always, you know, whatever he needed me to do I always did, because I was in the trenches while he was talking to big politicians and making press conferences and stuff for Mitch. We had very different roles for a very, very long time. But I guess we were OK. He was a hard man sometimes. You saw that, right? Yes. But I just, I think later on I kind of felt hurt by him, on some level.

Q: Like in the 2000s, you mean?

Scott: Well, yes, I guess. When did I leave? I left when I was sixty-five; I'm seventy-one. I left six years ago. Kevin was gone before I left. John Wolowski [phonetic] was my boss. That's the one you asked me what was his name? That was my boss. He was a real piece of work, well, whatever. He never liked me, and it didn't last. It was like—and I knew my time was up—I don't really want to get into this, but I think that they were going someplace that they knew I couldn't go, and it just would go against my grain to go there. I think that they knew that they would have

a hard time with me. I had been there too long, and I was getting up in age for them to just come in one day and say, "Hey," you know, "Your services are no longer needed." How do you do that after somebody's been there thirty-nine years? You just can't walk in one day and, you know.

But I've had, you know, Mitch hired Jack Klemp [phonetic], three-star general from the Marines. You know, a real—he never worked a cash machine, he never, you know, he just—? He had his own housing, but his wife took care of the money and whatever. He worked there for a while. We didn't get along that great, but I had glowing evaluations the whole time he was there. And when he left, he wrote an evaluation for somebody, it was like, who the hell is this person? He runs a program in Maryland, someplace, now, but weird stuff.

Now, see, that one was hard, because at that point Mitch and Kevin were fighting. So Kevin was pissed off because he hired Jack Klemp, and I'm in the middle of this thing here trying to maneuver my way around this mess. It was just hard sometimes. And Jack was good ol' boy. He had no need or use for me whatsoever. He was all good ol' boy from the Marines. I don't know, it just kind of got a little weird.

But anyway, like I was saying, I started having real, real problems with Kevin right before he left. Like I said, I think that stuff was not going on between him and Mitch.

Q: Why do you think Kevin was passed over to become the next leader of the organization?

Scott: I don't know. Well, I know that there were some issues with the pop [population]. You

have to know that in the beginning, people volunteered to come to treatment. Now, everybody is mandated to treatment. So, rather than do a year in jail, they do a year in Phoenix House. Now, it doesn't matter if I'm in the middle of training or I'm in the middle of treatment—my year's up, I'm leaving. Everybody's jailing. So it's very different. There were real problems with the pop, and in some places we reduced the pop because we knew that it was impossible to get where we needed to go. I think in some places we just needed to close some facilities, because it was unreal to try to have thousands and thousands of residents that we always had.

So the board was all over Mitch about the pop, and I think they started to get all over Kevin about the pop, and I think some things started to happen. I was not privy to him and whatever happened with Mitch, because I didn't have a lot of dealings with Mitch.

But him and I, we got along OK, you know. But him and Kevin started having problems, and I think it kind of just started to leak out. They brought in David Deitch from California to do Kevin's job, in essence, while Kevin just kind of sat there. I guess he was working out, What was he going to do...? Whatever, I don't know. But I really had very little dealings with Kevin. I did all my dealings with David Deitch at that point. Now, Kevin was still there, and he eventually wound up leaving.

So after him, then I guess it was my turn. So they brought in John Wolowski [phonetic]. John Wolowski might have been there with Kevin, I'm not sure. He probably was. He was a real piece of work. They had this new thing that you kind of interview people, look at them. He was going to be my boss, and he was a real wiseass, you know, in the interview and stuff. We just didn't hit

it. When he came, it was like, I guess he felt, “Well, it's time for her to go, because I'm here now.” So that one didn't work out at all. But I left when he was there, and you know? He wasn't even there a year after I left, and they got rid of him too, because they realized that he was like, you know, whatever.

No, but in the beginning Kevin and I were great. We did a lot of traveling, we opened up all these new programs together. We were a really good team. That lasted for quite a while, because I think I worked for Kevin for over twenty years, if I'm not mistaken. But I think at the end, when him and Mitch started to go at it, because I didn't understand what the hell a three-star general was doing there either.

Q: Well, so, this has been fantastic, Jean, fantastic to hear the story. I'd like to kind of think back over the history of Phoenix House and the way that the idea of the TC, the therapeutic community, changed, the idea of it, the way it was implemented, and how it had to change for the different programs. And maybe the place to start is to go right back to the beginning and talk about the influence of Synanon.

Scott: Well, when I got there, the assistant director, who was a woman, Pat Spellman, came from Synanon. The assistant director who was a man, I don't know his name, came from Synanon. And over the course of some time there was a guy there, a black guy named Bill Lee, he came from Synanon. Dwight came from the Mitch ship. And then you had—we had Frank Gracia. I don't know where Frank Gracia came from. He was a real lunatic. But it was very, very strict, because Synanon was very, very strict. The staff that were there, they didn't have reentry,

because Synanon was like one treatment episode, so the whole time you were there, you could get your head shaved in the drop of a dime in Synanon, it didn't matter.

They lived there, and they got a little stipend at Synanon, they supplied housing and vehicles and all that other stuff. Then they brought them here. So the assistant director lived in the facility and Pat Spellman, I guess she had her own place somewhere. The assistant director, the resident was cleaning his room and they found a set of works in his room, you know, the needle and all of that, because he was actively using in the room. So when I saw that, that was all I needed. Well, hey [laughs] you know.

When I first went there, I stayed up many a night because I could not believe that there was nobody using in this facility. You got a hundred dope fiends and you're going to tell me nobody's using nothing? No. And when they found the works in his room, that was it for me. I said, "I knew it! I knew it!" [laughs] I said, "I knew they were using in here." And then a lot of them started having drinking problems.

But I think, though, that—we had morning meetings, and we had seminars, and we had encounters, and I think we learned a lot of what not to do. For an example, if you went to an encounter, they would talk to me for two or three hours. "Hey, move it on and talk to somebody else." They just wanted you to give in to what it was that they were saying. Which isn't always the right thing to do. I think that, if something happened, they would call a big general meeting. I had no problems with the general meeting, but then they would shave the person's head and put diapers on them, you know, like big diaper, and put things in it like a shit stain in the back of the

diaper and have them walk around like that. I thought that was like so inhumane. How could you do that?

Q: Why would that happen?

Scott: That was like a learning experience.

Q: What kind of infringement would merit such—

Scott: Izzy Ramirez [phonetic], I think, he was a teenager; the Catholic priest brought him in. And the Catholic priest had been sexually abusing Izzy. I don't know if Izzy did something or what, but they stood him up on this piano and the whole population called him all kind of names. That's the way the general meetings were held in those days, and they MF'd [motherfucker] him and called him all kind of “Faggots” and all kind of, you know. I thought that was so inhumane. But the next day, when Dwight came in, Dwight took the diaper off and put him in regular clothes, because Dwight also felt that that was inhumane. So if you had a general meeting, and say, “I went out and shot dope,” they would stand me up in front of the house and call me all kind of “Assholes” and this and that and the other and whatever, and if you were a guy they'd shave your head, if you were a girl they'd give you a stocking cap or a big sign. Then you'd have a contract from 5:30 until midnight that you didn't have a bed, you had to sleep on the couch in the lounge, and you had to earn back a bed.

Now, as the years went on—not so much the years, but as things progressed and Phoenix House

became private, a lot of that changed because we saw how detrimental that was, to the people like us that had to be a part of them howling at us. So things started to change from that point, you know. We didn't have diapers. Now you might still have general meetings and you might have still been called an asshole, you know what I'm saying? But it wasn't to the extreme that it was early on. It was frightening.

Then it was funny, you know, because one time a guy [laughs], I think they gave amnesty. Amnesty means, it's like taking your gun to the precinct; nothing happens, right? So they said amnesty, you can just get rid of all your guilt. And the guy said he smelled the assistant director's panties. I mean, stupid shit. [laughs] I mean, some of them were great, you had to laugh at it, but some of them were really very—they took it to extremes. But I think that, more so than anything in treatment, and I know Kevin's going to say the same thing, it wasn't the staff so much, it was the guy or the girl in your room. When you went to bed at night and you talked about all the things that had happened that day, that was the filter that you used to help you understand, good or bad, what the hell was going on.

Now, in the beginning I didn't want to be there, and that Pat Spellman was one sick lady, I am here to tell you. That was a sick, sick lady from Synanon. I used to talk about her every night in the room. I'd talk about her mother and she should die and her dog and all that. You could have a general meeting any time of day or night. So at 3:00 in the morning they woke up all the girls, and when we went outside our door, there was a mop and a bucket and all that other stuff standing there for us to clean. So then we had this big, big meeting, everybody sitting on the floor. And so they said, "Anybody got anything they want to say?" So Pat Spellman said, "Jean, I

understand you have a lot to say to the girls in your room." I said, "I don't know what you're talking about." She said, "Yes." So a girl got up and she said, "You talk about Pat Spellman all the time."

So she said to me, "Jean, do you have anything you want to say?" I said, "Yes." I think we were standing up. I said, "I need to sit down, because this is going to take a while." I said, "Because you're one sick lady." So I sat down and I told her all the things that I felt about her. And she said to me, "Jean," she said, "fine. I'm going to give you a rain check." She says, "But if you talk about me again," she says, "I'm going to have to do something to you." I told her, "Fine." I just didn't like—she was a sick lady. She was weird. When they opened up Phelan Place and they were taking some people from Coney Island to go to Phelan, she wanted to take me and Dwight wouldn't let her, because Dwight knew that she had real mess for me. She was a strange lady, you know?

Then we had one of them elope with one of the residents. [laugh] Barbara Quinn [phonetic]. We had a Freddy Smallwood [phonetic], he came from New Jersey, little guy. He came in all strung out, and he was sick forever. I didn't think he was going to ever get better. And he could sing, so they started a choir. But I was never in with the staff. Like, they used to do the Ouija board at night, and I didn't—they didn't like me and I didn't want to be a part of that dang crowd, or whatever. Barbara Quinn was from Synanon. There was a book that she was in, I think they called her Cookie or some stuff, I don't remember. Anyway, they wound up eloping. The staff member and Freddy—

So a lot of things happened, you know, in the early days from people that were still trying to get their lives together, they were trying to help other people, you know. I think that on some level you knew that they might be there the next day, but hopefully the guy in the next bed was going to be there the next day. So that's really all you had was basically your peers that helped you get where it is that you needed to go.

I remember Kevin's brother. I think Kevin's brother came here high one day. I told him he had to leave, he couldn't come here like that. And to this day, he says, "Yes, you was like Kevin's mom." I say, "No, I wasn't Kevin's mom." I say, "But that wasn't right for you to come here like that. That's disrespectful to everybody." But I think that we just kind of had each other, because when the rubber met the road, that's really all you had. Because you had other people that were struggling with their own issues of reentry, getting their own apartment, and a lot of them didn't come from New York, and it was just kind of different. But we kind of hung in there together and we kind of made it. You had a lot of guys who did a lot of time. We had one guy that was very, very prejudiced. You just did what you had to do and moved on for yourself, to do things.

Now, I wasn't allowed to go home. So I used to go home with other people and see their families and spend time with their families and things like that. All in all, I had a good treatment experience, with the exception of some of the crazy things that would happen. But we had fun. We lived near the beach, so we would go to the beach a lot. The Chamber of Commerce, Kevin, because he worked in acquisition, did a lot of hustling. He used to hustle beds, he hustled bunk beds for the whole program, he tell you about that? He used to hustle the food for us to eat, and he used to hustle, from the Chamber of Commerce, rides, the thing where they punch the tickets.

So we used to always go to Coney Island and have a lot of rides, and we used to go in the water. So we had a lot of fun.

We had a clambake in the backyard in Coney Island. We had a big stage built in the back, so in the summer we would have morning meeting outside. Sometimes when Herman would come, when he was on staff, we would have morning meeting for two hours, because they would play the drums and we would be dancing. So you had some good times. They put it all together, it wasn't all just—it was still learning about yourself, because you were learning how to have a good time without using. I went into the program in October. They were having a Halloween party, and I didn't want no part in a Halloween party, because to me, you can't have fun if you're not using. So they had beautiful bedspreads, so we made a bedspread with an African thing or whatever, and I wound up having a good time. Everything that was done, it was to show you that these things can happen sober; you don't have to use to do those kind of things.

Now, that doesn't mean that people didn't use, because we had a guy there who was shooting dope in the boiler room every day. But things like that happened. You know, you got a hundred something addicts, I mean, that's going to happen every once in a while. But I never relapsed. Because I knew that if I used once, that was it. It wasn't about coming back again. I knew I would never, ever—never, ever—do that again.

Q: So a lot of people talk about having a moment when they're in the therapeutic community of, the light dawns on them of what they have done to themselves, what they need to do, and they kind of recommit themselves in their mind to the work of recovering their life. Did you have a

moment, was there ever a moment where—you said you'd come in there and you were very resistant, and was there a moment when you kind of said, “No, OK, I really have to go to this”?

Scott: Yes. My plan was to stay ninety days. My parole officer would get off my back; she knew I had good skills and I would be able to get a job, and I was going to leave. So I didn't want to make no friends, because I didn't want to disappoint nobody or any of that. And what happened, I had slowly started to care about some people, and Robert Albino [phonetic], I'll never forget this, him and Karen Schaeffer [phonetic], they left. I was devastated. He was the escort—in those days you had a thousand people that escorted you someplace. He was an escort, him and her, with me to the doctor. We get in the doctor's office and he says to me, "I'm leaving." And he was always joking and carrying on. I said, "Yeah, Robert, fine." He says, "No, Jean. Karen and I are really leaving." I just couldn't figure out, how could he do that to me? So the longer I was there, the more I started to say, “Man, I don't know if I would ever want to do that to somebody else. I don't know if I would ever want to make them feel the way that Robert made me feel.” He wanted to get laid. I mean, that's all he wanted to do.

So it was like he came back right after, or before—well, he stayed on the prospect bench for a week, poor Robert. But he just wanted—so he went, and they went and got laid for a few days, and then they came back. I mean, all to get laid. And I used to just whale him. Every time they would put me in an encounter with him I would just whale him for—“How could you leave me?” I sat back, and when my ninety days was coming to an end, I said, "You know what?" I guess that was my a-ha moment. I said, "You know what, Jean? All this time you've been trying to do it your way. Why don't you just give this a shot?" When I made that decision, that's when it was

like, straight ahead. I didn't give them no grief.

I never was on a contract, because I never acted out, acted out. My thing was, if you just let me say what I have to say, I'm going to do what you tell me. Like, I'm going to work in the kitchen even though I know I don't belong in the kitchen, but if you just let me say what I have to say, then I'm going to go work in the kitchen. And I raised hell, "I didn't work in the kitchen in jail," and this and that and the other. They said, "Fine, Jean, you finished?" I said, "Yes." I said, "Fine, I'm going to go work in the kitchen." So as long as you let me have my say, I was fine with whatever. After that I said, "You know what, Jean? Just go with the flow, do whatever it is they tell you to do, and you're going to be fine." That's when I did that, I think when my ninety days was coming up.

But that Robert Albino thing really hurt me. Oh, man, it hurt me. It was just like, How could you leave me? To get laid? I mean—because I thought that he was my friend. I really thought that him and I had a good relationship. He's still a nice guy. He lives in Long Island, and he met his wife at the bus stop when he was in treatment.

Q: Reflecting on that, could you say what you think was therapeutic about being in Phoenix House? What was it that worked for you? So you've mentioned your roommates, you've mentioned this experience.

Scott: For me, I believed, when I went to Phoenix House, that I was going to be an addict forever, all right? My grandmother, God bless her soul—my mother was a prostitute, and

whenever—now, I didn't know who she was, you have to know that, because she left me when I was two or three months old. Whenever something didn't go right, she would always say, "You're going to be just like your mother, no good." I didn't know what the hell she was talking about. I knew that my grandmother was not my mother, because in school she was my guardian. So I had enough sense to know that guardian and mother were two different things. Every time I turned around—and I wasn't a bad kid, you know, I went to school, I did, you know—it was always that.

So as I got older and started using drugs I kind of figured, what the hell. I'm not going to be nothing no ways, so I might as well be a good dope fiend. If I'm gonna be that way, let me just do the best I can. So when I came to Phoenix House, I said to them in that interview, "Listen. I just want to know what it is I can and cannot do, because I'm leaving in ninety days." I was clear with that. "So just tell me what it is I can and cannot do, because I don't want to break no rules. Because I don't want my P.O. [parole officer] to say that I gotta stay here." So I always followed the rules, other than talking about that Pat Spellman that time, but other than that, you know, get up, go to bed, wash up, cook the food—whatever they told me to do, I did. Because I didn't want to cause no waves.

But when I noticed that I could be somebody, and that the newer people that came in kind of looked up to me because I was able to give them information, like Howie Friend is going to tell you how I took him and bought him his first ice cream cone. Things like that, I said to myself, "Well, you know, give it a try, Jean. You know, you can't do no worse than what you did that got you here." I think at that point I said, "Well, the hell with it, let me just go ahead—" I was the

coordinator, and the coordinator is like as high as you could go in the resident structure. So when it came time for room changes and job changes, I sat in there with the staff and stuff and we would do that, and I would talk with the girls and do room runs and check behind them and make sure their rooms were clean and the bathrooms were clean. I had a position in the facility, I started feeling empowered, if you can call it that, that hey, if I kept on this track, that I don't ever have to look back.

But I was clear, when I made that decision, that if I ever, ever relapsed, there would be no turning back. I would not come that route again, I would not come back through there again, I wasn't going to have them call me a bunch of assholes standing up there in front of them, or none of that. So, maybe that was a good thing, you know what I'm saying?

Q: So, over the 1970s, the model of the therapeutic community within Phoenix House, and elsewhere, was very tamed down in some ways. The harsher elements were—can you talk a little bit about how it changed? Why it changed?

Scott: Well, like I said, I think that as the Phoenix House people started to learn more about themselves and get into higher positions within the organization, they felt that some of the things that were done to them were really inhumane, and on some level they no longer wanted to be a part of that. Now, you could have a contract, but you don't have to have a diaper with a shit stain in it. You could wear your regular clothes, or they can put bum clothes on you, and you could have a bed, you know what I'm saying? And you could still be treated like a human being. So a lot of that would change, you know, the way that people were treated, the way people were

talked to. A lot of that could change.

Now, on some level a lot of them you knew, underneath all of that, that they were kind of like OK, and some of them, underneath all of that, they were still crazy. So I guess you had to choose your battles, or whatever you call that. But I think that they still had the tough love, but I think a lot of the elements that they were using, like the general meetings were toned down, you know, everybody didn't get called a bunch of MFs. And a lot of times, if a person went out and got high, you didn't have to have a general meeting, you could just call them in, some of his peers could come in, they could just talk to him a bit, put him on contract, shave his hair, and move on. You do your work in the encounter groups and things like that, and whatever. So I felt that we were taking it—I don't even want to talk about where they're at now, but we would take it someplace else, with the same message but in a different way of kind of carrying that out.

Q: And how did it need to be altered to fit the prison programs?

Scott: We didn't.

Q: You didn't?

Scott: No. That was surprising, huh? We didn't, no. Now, in the prison, you could have a general meeting, they call it a house meeting, but it wasn't a lot of that, you know, "You're a fuckin' asshole," or whatever. But they could still do that in encounter groups, so you saved a lot of that for your small encounter groups, where they would get into each other's mess. You don't want to

have a riot with a hundred people standing up calling you a bunch of whatever.

But no, we had morning meetings, we had seminars, we had encounters, we had individual sessions. They had coordinators on the unit, they had department heads on the units, and the coordinators would go and do the room checks to make sure the rooms were clean. So basically we did the same things. But we had family meetings, they would call them. So we would bring up issues—in the community meetings, we'd bring up the issues in the community meetings about, you know, "Jean is having a bad day and maybe when you have your group somebody can speak to Jean about what's going on with her," or something like that in the community meeting. Or the coordinator would get up and say, "You know, we're getting a little lax, family. The bathrooms are not kept up to par the way they need to do. Let's pull ourselves up." And they were doing that in the houses, so it was more toned down, versus you're standing up there and you're cussing out the whole family because the toilet bowls are dirty.

So more and more you started having community meetings versus general meetings, and you got the same thing; if not, you got a better response, because everybody didn't want to be called an asshole all the time. I mean, it's like, how many assholes can you be?

But I think that a lot of that other real, real strict Synanon stuff kind of like, once Phoenix House people started getting into reentry, and a lot of the Synanon people had fallen, some had died, some had OD'd, some had turned into—one of them, Bill Lee, he went to a bar one night and got the shit beat out of him. I mean, he was all beat up. We had to go to the hospital and see him. Nice, nice guy, but—they didn't reenter. So they were struggling with the same things that a lot

of the other people were struggling with. So at some point, some of the reentry candidates started to take over, because all of them were in the houses. Because Herman Williams started out as a reentry person that was assigned to work in Coney Island. He lived in reentry house, but he came there every day like the house manager, so he made sure that trips got out on time and that the house was clean, and he helped with some of the clinical things, until he got up there a little more, and then he wound up taking over. So Phoenix House kind of groomed their own people to eventually take over, and that's how we did it.

Q: So, these years, though, in which you and Kevin are creating this—Kevin talks about this being a moment when Phoenix House is really trying to figure out how to, the word he uses is codify, the TC model in order to make it exportable, in order to expand.

Scott: It can go in any type of environment, yes, yes.

Q: And were you involved in that, and did that change the nature of the institution? How did that affect Phoenix House?

Scott: Well, I think that, when we went into the prison we found that we could adapt the TC in the prison. When we went into the homeless shelter, we found that we could adapt the TC in the homeless shelter. When we went into Step One and IMPACT, we had quasi-TCs there, even though they went home at night. So we had accountability, responsible concern, and all of the elements of the TC in every program that we ran, whether it was residential or outpatient. And you were able to mold it in there.

Now, you have to know, when we went into Marcy we were very clear that we didn't have total say-so of this inmate. DoC [Department of Corrections] had a lot to do with this inmate. So we knew that we had to do what we had to do between the hours of, what was it, seven or eight in the morning, and then we were there like eight or nine at night. On the weekends they were there—I think we might have had a skeleton crew on the weekend, because we wanted to see what the visitation looked like. So we were able to put it into all of those places.

Parole, for example, at 185th Street. It ran just like Long Island City and Jay Street. They all ran the same way. We just had different populations. And we had different people that we had to take—like, in 185th Street, we had a parole officer that was there who we had a former relationship with, and we indoctrinated him or her into the TC. In Phelan with DoC, they had the DoC people that came periodically to see the guys, so we had to form a relationship with them and to get them to understand what it is that we did. So we were able to incorporate all of that, and we had to tweak it a little bit here and tweak it a little bit there, but as long as you have the core elements, which they kind of got away from now, but if you have your core elements and your rules and regulations, and people are clear—see, and that's what did it for me. I was crystal clear about what I could and could not do. It is very gray now, see, I don't how they're changing anybody's lives. But I was clear that I could do this and I was fine, but if I did that, all bets were off. So I didn't do that, I just did this.

Now, you had a lot of people that just went on out there and just did whatever. They had to do that to get clean. I didn't need to do that. I wasn't a dummy. My thing was to do it fast and get the

hell on. So I just did everything people told me to do.

Q: So I'm a little struck about how the TC model has changed in the last two or three decades. I was going through the board of directors meetings, and I'd like to read this quote and have you reflect on it. This is from 2006 at a board of directors meeting, and this is a quote. It says, "Meitiner [Howard Meitner] added, and Dr. Rosenthal affirmed, that new paradigms for measuring performance are needed. Substance abuse is coming to be better understood as a chronic condition. Accordingly, success in treatment should be measured in ways that are similar to those used in evaluating effective treatment in other chronic maladies."

Scott: Let me tell you, they have now labeled—there's no such thing as staying sober for life anymore. They don't even talk about that. It's expected that addicts relapse. I mean, that's like a given now. So to relapse is not a big thing anymore. So you just go out and you relapse, and you know you can come back and go to your outpatient program and you're going to be fine. Nobody talks long-term sobriety anymore. Everybody's into, it's like AA, it's like alcoholism, it's a disease. It's not a goddamn disease. People make a conscious effort to shoot dope. I don't know, with that kind of attitude, how anybody's going to ever stay sober for any length of time.

If they said to me, "Jean, it's a reoccurring thing that you're going to chronically relapse, because it's a disease," well, what the hell? I mean, just go out and use every five or six months, because hey, it's expected of me. In my day, the whole end of the road was lifetime sobriety. Now, if you messed up in between, get up, wipe yourself off, and we're going to help you get back. And that's what everybody strove for. Everybody strove for lifetime sobriety. Look at any curriculum that

you want to look at, I don't care where you look, there's no such thing as lifetime sobriety.

We used to have graduation, which means that people were drug-free for X amount of time and they were going on into the sunset forever. It's not called that anymore. I don't know what the hell they call it now, they have some little ceremony that's whatever. They don't even want to do that anymore, because they don't want people to think that they've kind of met this milestone. So they want to treat it like it's this chronic disease that keeps reoccurring, and to me it's a cop-out. It's not a chronic disease that keeps reoccurring. You have control over that. But you have some things that you need to work on. And the things that you need to work on, they don't even talk about anymore. Whatever happened to accountability? People don't change their lives unless there's some structure and some accountability. There's very little of that now.

Dope fiends look for structure. They go to jail, they do well in jail, because there's structure. They go to Phoenix House, they do good in Phoenix House then, because there's structure. You got a schedule: this time you wake up, this time you go to bed, this time you do this, this time you do this. Hey, you need structure. After you're there for a while and you're getting reentry, then you can be a little loosey-goosey about some things. But not in the beginning, because you need structure. You need accountability. And you need your peers to help hold you accountable. Staff go home at night. That's what I used to always say, "I'm going home tonight. You need to look out for each other. I'm going to my bed in Brooklyn, and your roommate and you need to work this out, and we'll talk about it tomorrow."

Q: But I'm so confused, because in the beginning in Phoenix House, what distinguishes it from

Synanon is that there's reentry, and in the 1970s everyone was very vocal that they did not see addiction as a disease, that's instead something that is a psychological condition that can be fixed. How did it change?

Scott: I think that they saw, with the crack addict, you had chronic relapse, and I think the way that they kind of looked at that—because the crack addict was very different than a heroin addict.

Q: This is still the late '70s and most of the 1980s.

Scott: Well, in my day it was 99 percent heroin. Now it's heroin again. Heroin is coming back again. We'll see how they're going to treat these heroin addicts now. But with the crack addict, it was a lot, a lot of relapse. You had a whole other kind of population. I don't know if Kevin talked—I know he didn't. Phelan Place, the whole block was infested with crack addicts. They were selling crack across the street in two buildings. If you came up the block, there would be literally hundreds of people, hundreds, standing around waiting to cop. Hundreds. You could look out the window and watch this guy suck this guy's dick in a hallway for a few dollars. I mean, it was terrible. Douglas was the director then. And they were all over the place. Pregnant, not pregnant. Traffic all the time.

Steve Taylor, who was a lawyer, finally got some people to come in one night and they just raided the whole place and got all the dope from across the street and boarded up some apartments. But we lived like that at Phelan Place for two years. All they had to do was look right out the window. So we had very little relapse in that house, and very little split, because

you could see—it was frightening to see all these, every color, filthy, filthy people, men, women, in this block all the time. Very different caliber of a person. Heroin lasts for seven hours, seven to eight hours, so you don't have to worry about it for about five hours. Crack lasts five minutes, so you always are on the go for your next mugging, or whatever the hell you're going to do. They're some sorry people, these crack addicts, because they take what the dope fiend would leave behind if they were burglarizing an apartment, right? Chronic, chronic use.

Now, you also find that more and more, people have loose screws, right? All the alcohol or the drugs do is loosen up the screws more. So the majority of the people—no, I can't say. A good portion of the people in the penitentiary today have a psychiatric problem. They're either bipolar or whatever, whatever, whatever. They don't know what to do with them, so they throw them in jail. A lot of the addicts that are in the streets now have bipolar or whatever they might have. So you have a lot of chronic, chronic relapses with the crack addict. Rather than looking at what we were doing and how we were treating them, and how they got there and how the criminal justice played a big hand in them not getting sober—because if you had six months, at the end of your six months you walked out and [swipes hands] parole said, "Hey, I did my job." Versus saying to them, along with the counselor, "Hey, why don't you think about staying a little longer. Maybe you can get a trade." But that didn't happen. They were just, [swipes hands] they were done.

Because you had thousands and thousands and thousands of them in the criminal justice system, and you've got thousands of them now still in jail doing all this big, big time for this little bit of crack that they had. So you had this mad rush of this whole new mandated population that you had to get ready for that were chronic relapsers. So what they did was, they would send them to

Phoenix House with a set time—six months or one year, eighteen months—and then after that, you know, you go with God, you're on your own. And nobody was convincing them that hey, if you stayed a little longer, these are the things that could happen. The clinical staff would try, but without the help of the person that referred them there, you're kind of shooting yourself in the foot.

So I think what they did was, they then changed it from permanent sobriety to short-term sobriety, because it's a disease and it's expected that the cancer's going to reoccur. So, what they did, in order to keep these chronic relapsers, they changed all of the stuff, and it comes from your funding agencies. OASAS is the biggest culprit in this whole thing. Now, they felt, I guess, that the TC was too punitive still, all right? So now, they have a lot to say what it is you can and cannot do to the client.

See, but for me, there's some things that you hold fast on. Physical violence should not be allowed. You say to the client when they walk in the door, "This is a safe place. It's not like jail, you don't have to worry about getting raped or beat up. This is a safe place." I know when I was a director, if somebody had a fight, they had to go, because you have jeopardized this safe place for everybody else. If you bring drugs in here, you have to go, because you're jeopardizing this place for everybody else. Now, if you shoot dope out there, that's another story. You come on back, and we can figure that out. All of that's changed now.

Now OASAS says that you can't mandate them to have a job. Now, they have to clean their room and they have to clean the common areas, but you can't make them work in the kitchen. Now,

hey, if I was given a choice not to work in the kitchen, I wouldn't have worked in the kitchen either. So what I'm saying to you, they've changed a lot of things, and if you want to continue with your funding—now, they also have an OASAS hotline complaint department. So, the number is plastered up on the wall, and if you say something to me I don't like, I'll just call the number. And then they call up the facility, and then the director and everybody has to investigate whatever the hell it is that they're saying. So you got a lot of other stuff like that. On some level it could have been worked with, but I think that they threw out the baby with the bathwater.

Therapeutic Communities of America, with all the TCs in it, is no longer called Therapeutic Communities of America. There's no place that you see therapeutic communities no more.

Because I guess it's such a bad word and was so punitive. But it's like, you know, what? And to them, accountability and structure and things like that they consider punitive. Why? But you see, that's why the other day they had to land a plane because the parent couldn't do nothing with a two-year-old damn child. I mean, where do we live now? It's very scary, as far as I'm concerned. The kids are beating the hell out—well, I saw that in Step One—the kids were beating the hell out their mothers. The mothers were scared to death of the kids. And Yorktown the same thing.

Now, I've seen a guy that beat his kid, he beat the kid really bad and got it all messed up, the football player. But there's other ways that you can do that. But when you take away all of your structure, people don't change without it. I don't care what they say. Who ever heard of landing the plane? A two-year-old child? I mean, this is—hey, I'm just glad—well, they got rid of me, because they knew that I just could not, I would not, I couldn't do that.

Q: So this has been absolutely wonderful, Jean. There's one last topic I'd like to ask you about, and that is being a woman in the organization. It's pretty astounding how few there are, how few there have been historically.

Scott: I'm the only woman?

Q: Not the only, but I'm saying, if you look at the records, it's maybe twenty, ten percent of the staff are women over the last forty years. A very small percentage. And I'm wondering a bit about not only why that is, but how you think that affected your experience with the organization.

Scott: Well, you have to know that I didn't really have any female role model when I was in treatment. Pat Spellman was a crazy lady. She wound up getting transferred to Phelan Place. Pat Reichman [phonetic] came next. She wasn't as crazy, but she was a little flighty. Bea Kirschman [phonetic], who was gay, she wound up getting terminated for borrowing money from a resident that she had been in jail with. Barbara Quinn eloped with a resident. So I was it. For my last eight or nine months or so in Coney Island, I was it as far as a female person was concerned.

So, I was under Herman and Dwight Malone, and as a female coordinator, I was it, because all the other women staff that had been there, something had happened with them. So I didn't have good things with the women. I liked Bea Kirschman [phonetic] but she was borrowing money from Pearl Friedman [phonetic]. I mean, how do you do that? But there wasn't. I don't know. We had Pat Colon [phonetic] and Loretta—I'm surprised nobody gave Loretta's name. But I don't

know.

I just knew that I couldn't count on a female staff member being there for the long haul. But I knew that Dwight Malone would be there. And I'll never forget, he had all of us—Coney Island was two floors, and we were on the landing, and he had books on his head, a book, because he was teaching us how to walk. Because there was no female staff member there. So I think that I made it in spite of—because I didn't have good things with them. I knew that they wasn't going to stay. I knew something was going to happen that they was either going to get transferred someplace else or do something where they had to get fired. Then when I went to Far Rockaway, I was the only female again. You had all the men.

Later on, you had Ray Dibble. Mitch was always after me about the grass had to be cut, and when Ray Dibble took over Hart Island, the grass was as high as your head. Nobody never said nothing to Ray Dibble about the grass. And that used to piss me off. But I don't know. I just knew that there were some people that were a constant in my life, and none of them were female staff. I knew that. I learned that from an early on point in my treatment. I don't think it ever affected me, per se. I just, whatever I had to do, I did. I never worked for a woman, I always worked for men. I guess it just worked for me. I don't know. But there were some sicko women. That Ray Dibble was a real piece of work. I went on vacation to St. Thomas, and Barbara Quinn was there, the one that eloped with the resident? And she's a physical trainer now, and she has dreadlocks, and she lives with a black man and has—I don't know if those are her children or those are his children or whatever, but she's doing fine.

Now, Loretta was there for a long time. I don't know why Mitch didn't give her name. She's retired also. But there's not a lot of people. A lot of them didn't stay for the long haul, you know, they kind of made to senior counselor and they decided to do something else. They met a guy, and sleeping over one night a week and every other weekend, and you didn't know if it was going to be three to eleven or seven to three, and they had children. Because in the early days, there was no staff schedule. If you were there, then you were staff on. They didn't want to hear it. So it was kind of hard in the beginning. Later on we got a little more sophisticated, we got paid night people so you could go home and they would take over. And we had a staff schedule so you'd know what your life looked like for the whole month. Even though sometimes you had to be three to eleven and turn around and be seven to three, which was still not that great.

But after a while, OASAS started to dictate how big the caseloads were, and then you had to have more staff to accommodate the caseloads. Because in the beginning, it was nothing for you to have twenty-something people. Now you only can have fifteen. So that way, you can have more staff, which helped out in the long run. But in the beginning it was nothing for me to have to go in to work on a Sunday morning, you know what I'm saying? Or a Saturday afternoon. And I slept over, even though I was a director, I slept over one night a week. So one night a week I spent a night in the Phoenix House. They had a staff bedroom and I would sleep there.

Every Thanksgiving I spent the night Thanksgiving eve, because I would stay up all night and cook with the residents, the turkey—I mean, we had some fun times. Like I would—that one time a year they could tell me what to do, and they would take—you know, "Peel the onion. Put the onion underneath the arm of the turkey." We would have a good time playing music and

cooking the food, and then I would serve the Thanksgiving dinner for the people the next day. I would stay there for Christmas Eve and open up all the presents with everybody. A lot of people didn't want to do that. A lot of women had children and had husbands and wanted to be home. So people changed, you know. But my whole time as a director, I did all that. It was never an inconvenience to me, even though Douglas was making motor oil, working eight to five, or whatever it might be, I still did all those things. I traveled a lot, and I still stayed Thanksgiving eve and Christmas Eve and all of that. I still did all of that. I don't know if women wanted to get involved in that level of it. It was a man-orientated place. You kind of had to speak up if you wanted to be heard.

Basically I got along, I guess, with everybody, but later on, as they started bringing in these new people and things, it just started to change. But they treated me all right when I left. I resigned in, I don't know, June, July. I was sixty-four, and I just told them I didn't want no party. One of my standard lines about them was my buddy and all of that. Then I did consultant work until I turned sixty-five. So I did consultant work for Phoenix House for eight months. Then, when I moved here and they opened up a probation campus in Wilma, Texas, they asked me to come and help them set up the probation campus. So I set up the medical, the food, the house manager, the cars, all of that stuff. So I was there for about four or five months on and off.

The longest I stayed was forty-five days without going home at all, and then I would just stay like a week or so, and then whatever. But they called me up while I was here, David Deitch, and asked me if I would be a consultant in Texas. Because once again, it was a criminal justice population, and that seemed to be my forte, so I went and I helped them open up the probation

campus. But you know, people don't want self-help kind of curriculums anymore. They want evidence-based—where you have this curriculum and you sit down with X amount of guys or girls and you read a paragraph. Then everybody says what this paragraph means to them. Then you just read the next—I mean, what the? Then you just read the next paragraph, and, “Tell me what this paragraph means to you.” So that's evidence-based. So everybody wants evidence-based. Now, in Texas they wanted Milkman. Milkman is a curriculum that was made for criminal justice populations. So they want to sit around and read and critique what it is that they read. That's your evidence-based programming, and it's sad, because I think they're really doing a disservice, because people are not changing their lives. They're just kind of spending time in a place and kind of moving on. People are shallow, and you're now seeing, before I left, second- and third-generation addicts. If you had a population of a hundred, at least sixty or sixty-five of them come from addict mothers or fathers, or cousins or uncles. It's not something that's new to them.

It's very different. I could not work there now. I can't. I just can't see somebody hitting somebody in the head, and they let them stay there. What happened to “safe place”? I can't see somebody bringing dope in there, and you let them stay. They can use dope in the street, you know? Well, things are different. They call it a disease, so I guess, what the hell, they just kind of do what they do.

Q: Well, that might be a good note to end on. Is there any last comment you'd like to make?

Scott: So what are you going to do? You're going to just put all this together some kind of way?

Q: Yes. We can talk about that in a moment.

Scott: No, I'm just glad that I went to Phoenix House when I did. I think that I worked very hard, with some help, to change my life. When I left and got my own apartment, I knew in my soul that I would never, ever use drugs again. I said, "I would drink a gallon of gasoline before I would do that. I would never do that to myself again." I've been in detox wards seven times. I mean, never to stop using, just to cut it down because it got too expensive. Because I worked a lot when I was an addict. I had a job. But seven times I went. I just never went to not use again, I just went to cut down and try to save some money, and that was it.

The first time they arrested me, on Fulton Street they had a Sheffield, where they used to make milk in the window, they used to bottle the milk in the window, it was like a plate glass thing, and a conveyor belt. Nineteen sixty-what? Sixty-six? No, sixty-four. And there was a liquor store across the street, and I was working then, and I was the last person to come out of that liquor store every night. Five to twelve, two minutes to twelve, and I had bought the wine—Gypsy Rose I used to drink, me and this guy—and I was walking across the street right in front of Sheffield Milk, and these police cars came all up on the sidewalk. I said to him, I said, "Man, somebody must have robbed a bank." And the guy said, "Jean, it's midnight. The bank's not open." I had sold a bag of dope or something, and that's the way they came and locked me up. When I got to the precinct, I asked the guy if he'd let me drink my wine. He told me, "Sure," so I drank my wine.

No, but, you know, I look back at my life and it's just like, I'm just glad that I lived, because I didn't think that I was. I had OD'd a few times. I woke up one time with the firemen there with the oxygen mask on my face in the hallway, and it had been snowing and I was laying in all this water from the boots. The only thing that woke me up, I think that the cops might have said, "Does anybody here know her?" And the guy that I was going with, he didn't use no dope, and I used to always say to him, when I used to get all high, like, "What the hell do you want with me?" But anyway, and he came down and leaned in my ear and he hollered my name, and the firemen said that it was a voice that I recognized, and I kind of woke up. But the priest was there and everything. I should have died that day. I guess it just wasn't my time.

And then my grandmother walked up—I had fell out, with the needle hanging out my arm on the bed, and she came in there and shook me up and woke me up. So it was just like, you know, I was just lucky to be alive. I don't know if I had it harder than the average person, I don't know. But I knew that after I started getting myself together and knew that there was another way that I could live, that I did not have to be that way until I died. I did not want no part of that again, being sick and throwing all up and being in jail and being at the mercy of them assholes in there and all that. I just didn't want to do that no more. I just wanted to live a normal life like other people.

I would see people come in to work, even some of the crazy Synanon people, and the Phoenix House people as they started to get up in reentry, they were able to live a normal life without dope. I figured if they could do it—because I didn't want no cocaine, I didn't like reefer. I smoked reefer once in my life. They say every addict smokes reefer. That's not true. One time,

no more. I was too scared to cross the street. I don't like nothing that gets me wacky like that. Just let me shoot my dope and nod and burn myself up and set myself on fire like I did that time, set the bed on fire. And stupid me, I poured a whole bottle of wine on it, which is alcohol, right? And the whole damn thing blew up in a blaze. Please. You don't want to know.

But no, I'm done. I don't have anything else to say. I spent thirty-nine, forty years there. I made some good, good friends, and I have more fond memories than I do bad memories. It was cohesive; there was more whites than blacks when I first went into treatment. Kevin and them were there, "Hey Jude" at morning meeting and the Beatles and all that other stuff. It was good. I enjoyed myself, and there was no real issue about what color you were, it was like we were just all there trying to survive. Because we didn't know from one day to the next what the hell we were going to eat, so we were just trying to do the best we could, and we all got along. Well, most of the time. I never saw a fight. The whole time I was there, I never saw a fight. Now, I saw a lot of acting out in encounter groups, because even in the encounter group you couldn't threaten anybody, because you were talking about a safe place. You had to learn to work out your issues without threatening to beat somebody up or hitting somebody, and we were able to learn that, which was good.

I hear how it is now, and it breaks my heart. But I know that that's not a lot of the program's fault. But I still think in my soul that they can have some kind of accountability, and they can have some kind of structure. They just can't go by the seat of their pants with this stuff, with these people. And a lot of them are violent. I mean, you know, how do you not do that? I'm on the IRB committee. Internal Review Board. We approve all of the research that happens in

Phoenix House. They're now doing research where they can take your blood and they can tell the level of your violence. We live in a violent culture, so you get a lot of violence with these people. But if you've got clear rules and they know they can't fight, then, you know. If they fight you throw them out. But they don't want to have empty beds, so they kind of go along with that. I just think that, I just feel bad. I think California might still be in one prison. California was in a lot of prisons at one time; I think they might be in one. But nobody's in prisons in New York because Corrections felt that it would be cheaper if they provided their own programming, and that's what they do. And it's no good, but.

[END OF INTERVIEW]