

ASBURY PARK AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSIC HERITAGE PROJECT

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Interviewee: Duval Moore [DM]

Interviewers: Jennifer Souder [JS]
Charles Trott [CT]
Melissa Keeling [MK]
Yvonne Clayton [YC]

Date: March 27, 2018

Time: 12:00 P.M.

Place: Asbury Park, NJ

JS: We'll tell you a little bit about the project, then we'll go through these questions. As I said, anything else you want to talk about... we don't have to stick to this. We're trying to hear stories from Springwood Avenue from people who *know* Springwood Avenue. This project has a small grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission. There's been a number of us around town for years who have been trying to get the stories and the history of Springwood Avenue document, shared, and more accessible, so people can find out more and learn about the history. Both for people who live here now, and also for visitors. It's a big passion of Yvonne's [Clayton], and a lot of people have a real big interest. What we kept coming across was people wanted to learn more, and it's really hard to find information. We feel like the stories from Springwood Avenue should be at the *front* of the stories of Asbury Park, not the side. We've been working... we got the grant in August, so not quite a year, on this particular piece. The library's been helping, the public library here. We were able to hire Melissa and also Mr. Charles Trott, who might be joining us. I don't know if you know the Trott family, Gladstone Trott...

DM: I know a lot of people, I really did. The names don't really help me, but...

JS: When you see him, you might recognize. He's been helping a lot, too. I'm Jennifer Souder, I just live here. This is not my profession, I just have a real interest in the history of Asbury Park, and particularly the African American community here and the music. So many amazing stories, it's something I really wanted to be a part of. I've been feeling really lucky to have the opportunity.

DM: What do you do, Jennifer?

JS: For work, for my day job? I'm a landscape architect by training. I do a lot of work with environmental buildings and landscapes. Research. I'm very interested in how

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communities are shaped, and what makes a community thrive, and that type of thing is a real interest.

DM: What do *you* do?

MK: I'm a music teacher in Red Bank; I teach elementary school music, kindergarten through eighth grade, as my day job.

DM: Development of other people, I like that.

MK: I'm a musician myself, I'm a flutist.

DM: A what?

MK: I play the flute.

DM: Oh, okay. Herbie Mann!

MK: That's right, he's the man! I live here in Asbury, and it's by far my favorite place I've ever lived. I love this town, and I love music. I feel strongly that there's a huge part of the history of this town that is missing from the narrative.

DM: Asbury is growing, it's really growing. Don't be surprised, you'll say, "I didn't see that coming." But, Asbury Park is going to be a successful town, I can see that right now. And what are *you* doing now?

YC: Right now, I'm a councilwoman here in Asbury Park. As we said, I grew up here, I moved away. I went to college, moved away, lived in New York for a number of years, and moved back in 2011, with my husband at the time. We moved back, and one my heartbreaks has always been Springwood Avenue dead. So, it's been a passion of mine to do whatever I could to reactivate Springwood Avenue. Also, to let people know that Springwood Avenue was a vibrant community...

DM: Yes it was, yes it was.

YC: ...that lived, and anything you needed, anything a community needed, they could find on Springwood Avenue: the meat market, the jewelry store, stockings, the pharmacy, it was all there. Every place you went, there was always music. When you walked down the street in the middle of the day, there's music coming out the stores, it was Hits Record Store, it was music. The Orchid Lounge was very big part of that. It was a part of my youth. It was a place to go hang out, to see Shirley Scott play, and just all of that.

DM: I've got a list of people that I did bring.

- YC: That's why I'm involved in this project, because it means a lot to me. I want our youngsters to understand that there's a history, and I want to preserve it, and make sure information is available, and that we promote it. Not just that it's available, but that we promote it, so you know that it's out there and you can access it. That's why I'm here.
- DM: Alright, that's very nice. What do you want to know from me?
- YC: Everything! *[laughter]*
- DM: Before you start... that's not on, is it?
- MK: It's on. We don't have to put anything in the official record that you don't want.
- JS: I should mention this, though, what happens with the interview. We record it, and Melissa's been doing an amazing job of transcribing it, so she types it up. We take a look, we share it with you, so that you can take a look and see if you want to add or change anything. Once you're good with it, it goes into the Bruce Springsteen Archives at Monmouth University. For now, they are kind enough to house it there, so people doing research can come and search and find it. We all hope that one day, all of this will be here on the west side of Asbury Park, in the future.
- YC: There *is* going to be a museum. There is. That *is* going to happen.
- DM: Okay.
- JS: That's the process of this piece. If you could just start with telling us your name, and where and when you were born.
- DM: My name is Duval Moore, I was born in Fitkin's hospital, which is now Jersey Shore [University Medical Center]. What else did you want to know?
- JS: When?
- DM: What year? I was born in 1947. May 25th, 1947.
- JS: Your birthday's coming up.
- DM: Yes, it is. I'll be 71 – isn't that something?
- JS: That's amazing. You were born here in Asbury Park?
- DM: Yes, Neptune, Asbury Park. All my life, Asbury Park. We lived on a street called Borden Avenue. When Borden Avenue was coming up—when *I* was coming up on Borden Avenue—I used to see Frank Budd, Joe Major, Frank Donato, a lot of stars from Asbury used to walk there. My father was a fireman at this time. I said to my daddy, I said,

“Daddy, why don’t you be a police officer?” Sure enough, the next week, he was a police officer! *[laughter]*

YC: I never knew!

DM: What was so good about my father was, the whole time he was a police officer, he never locked anybody up. He locked *one person* up the whole time he was a police officer, so they put him on the desk. He wasn’t going out. Then, he bought the bar. I must’ve been about 16 years old, he took me to Newark. When he took me to Newark, he got me some special license so I could go inside the bar and clean up. Now, by me being able to go in the bar and clean up the bar, I was able to go in the bar and sit down, watch the bands, and do what they did. That’s when I got a chance to get involved with all the groups. My mother would always play jazz at home. She liked Lambert, Hendricks, and Ross – “My wife got tired of me running around, so she tried to keep me home.” She liked all that. I grew up on jazz, since I was a little boy.

JS: Hearing it at home?

DM: Hmm?

JS: You grew up, hearing it at home?

DM: At home, all the time. She liked *[inaudible]*, and things like that.

YC: What was your mother’s name?

DM: Catherine Moore was my mother. After my mother passed away, my father married Miriam. Miriam Moore, as it is now. Anything else?

YC: Keep going!

DM: Keep going? Well, I remember Mr. *[Cliff]* Johnson, that you had. His son and I were friends. Clifford Johnson was like an idol to me, always sharp, had the suit on when he was going to the drugstore, real sharp guy.

JS: Still is! *[laughter]*

DM: Griffin – Al Griffin, I think it was, right? I knew *him* since I was a little boy. As these men, the ones that you had, they were real close to me, watching me grow up. So, from high school – I was a track star in high school. I ran track. In fact, my record’s been in my school for fifty-some years, which nobody’s broken yet. From there, I went to college.

JS: What distance track? What did you run?

DM: The 440, one time around. You don't have to put this on there, please! *[laughter]* I was second in the state of New Jersey, my last year. The guy I ran against that beat me, he was number one in the nation. I was number five in the nation. That was long story, and all that, but it's not about me. It's more about my father. My father was a "people" kind of person. Everybody seemed to love my daddy. He was that kind of guy. He'd give you twenty dollars even if he didn't even know you, that's the kind of guy he was. He evidently loved jazz. We had groups there like Irene Reed[?], Charlie Early, George Benson... I remember, with George Benson, I used to sit next to George, and say, "George..." – just before they got *famous*, now, just before they all hit the charts like they are now – I say to George, "What are you drinking?" He said, "I'll have rum and coke." I said, "Give me rum and coke, too." And we would sit down and have our rum and coke together. Charlie Early, like I said, he was *something* on that organ. That man could play that organ. He's got a song out, I can't remember the song now... He has a song out that they always play on 88.3, the jazz station. I hear *all* of them on there! I said, "I know this guy! Me and this guy sat together!" Jack McDuff, right? Now, Jack McDuff has a drummer named Joe Dukes. Joe Dukes used to beat those drums, and Jack would get mad, because Joe was taking the show, right? It looked like Joe Dukes was chopping wood! He would take a stick and throw it in the air... he was really something. Then we had a guy named Lonnie Youngblood.

YC: I know Lonnie Youngblood! I knew him in the city!

DM: Yeah. He was a piece of work. We also had Irene Reed there. She was something. She got a song now about one man with one leg, one arm, and all that. She was a crazy girl. I've got a list here, I don't want to miss anybody that I got here. [DM pulls out his hand-written list of musicians who played at the Orchid Lounge.] Back in those days, my father seemed to bring something out of people. The construction men that worked and made good money – I mean, they made *good* money, building [inaudible] or whatever they were building. They would come in on the weekdays with their construction stuff on, the boots and all. But weekends, when the bands were coming, they'd come out sharp! They had suits and ties on... weren't they sharp? *[laughter]*

YC: Yeah, they always came clean to the Orchid Lounge!

DM: Yeah, everybody was clean when they walked in there. My father was clean too, you better believe that. We had Stanley Turrentine, Lou Donaldson, Houston Person, Harris Silva, when even had Red Firesock and his brother was even there. We had Pat Martini there, we had the Funk and Corp there, we had the Escorts there. Boy, I have a list here... Lonnie Lister Smith, Doctor Lonnie Lister Smith, he even played there. I knew these guys personally. If I wasn't... if they met me again, they would know that they knew me, because we had that close bond back then. It was just something. The riots changed everything, of course. But back in those days, when my father had it, they had a bar called Cuba's Bar. You remember Cuba's? You've heard of that?

JS: We've talked a lot about Cuba's, I wish I had been there.

DM: Oh yeah, that was the bar. Minnie had it. Minnie had the little store next door, then they had the poolhall and all that. When they had parades, the whole street would be filled up with people. Nothing but people. We had a family called the Joneses; Johnny Jones, you remember?

YC: Yeah.

DM: Her sister, I can't think of her name, and I know them good. Anyway, we used to go get on top of their roof, and look down at the parade. I'm talking about *something*, boy. You're talking about a *parade*. They all used to go to the Elks, remember the Elks?

YC: Yep!

DM: You know about that, too?

JS: We've been talking to some people! *[laughter]*

DM: They used to go to the Elks, and they had a good time there. Now, I'm just a young man, I don't know that much. And the boardwalk, we used to go straight to that boardwalk. You remember that?

YC: Mm-hmm.

JS: So the parades would go from Springwood to the boardwalk?

DM: Well, I don't think so, no. They wouldn't go to the boardwalk.

YC: No, no. The parade stopped.

DM: We would *walk* to the boardwalk from Springwood Avenue, and get a chance to get a pizza, and ride on the rides, and things like that.

YC: Easter Sunday, going to the boardwalk?

DM: Oh yeah, yeah. Everybody would get dressed up for Easter Sunday. It was really a good thing back then. It was so strange when the street I lived on, it would rain on one side of the street, and *not* rain on the other side of the street. It was like, what's going on here? They had a little hurricane that came down Bangs Avenue one time. It took a two-story house, and brought it down to one-story. The sky was all red. It was right by Mr. Carter's house – you know Mr. [Joseph] Carter, that took the pictures?

JS: Yes.

DM: That was my man, too. That was Mr. Carter. *[doorbell rings]*

- YC: I'll get it. Excuse me. [answers door]
- JS: Thank you. That's probably Mr. Trott.
- DM: Anything else?
- JS: We have a lot. *[laughter]* When you mentioned that your dad took you to Newark so that you could work at the club, was that before it opened?
- DM: No, it was after it opened. I know this guy right here... [Charles Trott enters room and shakes hands with DM] He's a little younger than me.
- JS: How are you, Charles?
- CT: Alright, how is everyone?
- JS: Good! We really just got started. It's good to see you. We were talking about, Mr. Moore was saying his father took him up to Newark to get a special license to be able to work before you're of age, in the club. Do you remember – I'm sure you do – the opening of the Orchid Lounge?
- DM: Yes, yes.
- JS: Can you tell us a little about that?
- DM: I was so young. My daddy came home and said, "Okay, I'm opening the bar up," and he's going to do so-and-so. He didn't let me go in there at that time, I probably would have run in somewhere from the street, or whatever I was doing. I couldn't tell you too much about opening day. That I couldn't tell you too much about. Anything else?
- JS: Can you describe the original Orchid Lounge for us? As if you are just walking in, can you tell us what you'd see if you walked in the front door?
- DM: Purple and black. Oh, you're talking about *pretty!* That was a pretty club. That was a nice club. I've been in a lot of them – Big Bill's had a nice club also, down the street; the Turf Club. But, I thought the Orchid was – I might be a little prejudiced on this – but I thought the Orchid Lounge has the real "look." It was clean – he made me clean it, but he kept it right. He did it up real good when he did it. The chairs were nice, the barstools... He added on. We added on later in the years, to put a lounge over here, you know. What made it so nice – there was a chicken coop next to the bar. He bought that license, and then the chicken coop, where my mother used to take us to pick out the chickens. Chickens would be running. Remember that? The chickens would be running, and she'd say, "Give me that chicken there?" He bought that, and expanded it into the way it was at the time. It was like everybody had something smart to say, "You bought a chicken coop for the bar," you know. But, he really did it up nice. I'll say that about my father. He was

a go-getter. He was a “people” kind of person, and God seemed to bless him on what he was doing, and what he wanted to do in life.

JS: Was it laid out with the bar in the middle, with the seats around it, like this?

DM: No, it was more like a horseshoe, with the band... It was more like *that*, and then the band’s stage was up in front. They had a little, thin booth where you could sit down, before we expanded it, on the picture that you got.

JS: The expansion was more seating?

DM: Yeah, more tables. We put a lounge in there; I mean, a *bar* up there, where we had bartenders up there also.

JS: Did you charge admission?

DM: Oh yeah, of course.

JS: It varied, depending on who was playing?

DM: Right, right. They were pretty cheap on admission, nobody really complained. Everybody wanted to get in for free, you know how that goes.

YC: Do you remember how much you charged for admission?

DM: I think back then, it might have been five dollars. It wasn’t all that, you know. It wasn’t like today, I don’t remember a twenty-dollar ticket. It wasn’t twenty dollars to get in there.

JS: The Horners – Charlie and Pam Horner – they said to say hello. I think you met them when your father became one of the Asbury Angels on the boardwalk. They have been doing a lot of work looking at this history, and they’re writing a book. They mentioned that as they’re doing their research, the Orchid Lounge from the start was known as “the place to play,” the jazz place, even more so than some of the other clubs.

DM: Yeah, because a lot of groups, my father seemed to follow from out of Newark. Newark was the heart of all the jazz players coming in. He would get them from there, and then they would come to us. That’s how he started, I believe.

JS: Did he have a connection to Newark?

DM: He had connections from other bar owners. They would talk, and they would tell him, this is what I think you should do, this is what’s working here. He brought it down this way. That’s what he did.

JS: Was your father born in Asbury Park?

DM: No, he was from Georgia.

JS: Do you know what brought him to Asbury Park?

DM: Hmm. Now *that* I didn't ask that far! *[laughter]*

JS: Just, always interesting to hear. Do you know around when he came up here?

DM: No, I have no idea.

JS: Do you have a favorite story from the Orchid Lounge? Probably many. One you would be willing to share?

DM: Hmm. I'd have to think about that one. Can you come back to that one?

JS: Yeah, you can think about it. So, it seemed like before it expanded, it held about 100 people, the lounge?

DM: Right. Even though it might have said that, when we really got it all said and done, we would have about three, four hundred people in there. It would be that you couldn't even get through there. We had some good times there. We had some good times.

JS: Because after the riots, things changed so much on Springwood Avenue, and it was still there, can you tell us a little bit about that time, after 1970?

DM: I remember I was standing in front of the bar, and the first brick that I saw thrown was by a guy I'd never seen before. I don't know where this guy came from. There was some people riding by, and he picked up the brick and he threw the brick like it was a football. It went right into this window and hit this man in the side of the head. I'll never forget that as long as I live. I've never seen this guy before. The people that came and started this riot, we didn't know. We had no idea who they were. They started burning the town down, burning Springwood Avenue down, which was a shame. My father stayed in the bar because he wanted to protect his business, because they eventually would have burned that down, too. What happened was, the state troopers were out there, this guy threw one of those [Molotov] cocktails through the window. My father being there, he was able to put it out, and stop it before it started. It would have burned the whole bar up. It was a shame that we had to go through that. It was like, it was all planned. Somebody planned this, because didn't know the people. We knew nothing about this guy who's throwing the brick, there were people coming who we'd never seen before. Right? Am I right or wrong?

CT: Yeah, I heard. Provocateurs.

DM: We had no—You see, the people of Asbury Park had no reason to throw nothing at it. We were *enjoying* Springwood Avenue; Springwood Avenue was our life. We had Fisch’s department store... we had this, we had that, we had *all* those things. Why would we want to burn it down? Back in those days, you could walk from one end of Springwood to other end of Springwood, and by the time you come back to *this* end of Springwood Avenue, you got a hundred dollars in your pocket. “Man, give me five dollars, give me ten.” And people would give it to you like that. We had no reason to do what happened. We were fooled, somebody fooled us. When they started doing what they were doing, everybody joined in. It was a shame. Even if you didn’t want to join in, you joined in, or you just went out there to see what it was all about. I remember as soon as they started to go over the railroad tracks to the Cookman Avenue part, they weren’t playing that. They had the National Guard out there, they had everybody. And I was out there with them, I’m not going to lie, because I’m one of the boys, you know. As soon as they saw us coming, I’ll put it that way – I’ll put myself in it, because I was nosy – soon as they saw us coming towards the tracks, they started charging. I’ll never forget, they had a fence about this high [DM stands up, and holds his hand about four feet above the ground], about *this* high, to get over the tracks, to the other side of the tracks. This state trooper came and he hit this girl, bang! In the leg. When he went back to hit her again, she got over that fence; you better believe it. Them people weren’t playing. They’re like, “You can tear your *own* stuff down.” But it wasn’t us tearing it down! People just started joining in. Now, understand... we’re all drinking as minors, that seemed to be a thing with us. We all were drinking. When they went to go in the liquor store, raid Brownie’s[?] liquor store, everybody wanted to get a little bottle out of there, so it was a thing like that. Like I said, it was a shame, that what happened to Springwood happened to Springwood. Because *we* wouldn’t have done it, it wasn’t us. Anything else?

JS: We do have more, but... Yvonne, do you have anything jumping out?

YC: I’m just remembering, because those were all black-owned businesses. These were people that we knew, these weren’t strangers, these were people who lived in town with us, these are people you went to church with. Why would you burn down your neighbor’s store? It just didn’t happen. Anyway, moving on. I wanted to know, do you remember if Billy Poll[?] play at the Orchid Lounge?

DM: No, I don’t have him on my list. You have to remember, I went into the war at a certain time, too. So, when I went into the army, I missed a little bit of time of who my father might have had. I couldn’t say.

JS: When did you join the military?

DM: I went into the military from ’67, ’68, and ’69. I came out in ’69. I’ll never forget – this is my best memory of the Orchid Lounge. Here it is. I’m in the service, and I’m working in the mess hall. We were feeding between 800 and 1100 people, coming in for basic training. So, all my sergeants, just happened to be black sergeants, so I say to them... “My daddy got a club. Ya’ll gotta come down here with me!” Now, I’m fresh in the army.

I took them down there, and my father *laid it out* for them. That was the best time I can remember at the Orchid Lounge. They had a *ball* down there.

JS: I'm sure everyone had a good time!

DM: Yeah, they had a ball. Anything else?

YC: Where were you stationed?

DM: Here's the best part – I was only stationed at Fort Dix, and then I did my last little bit at Fort Monmouth. Nobody knew I was in the service, because I came home every weekend! *[laughter]* I was a terrible young man. Once I took the sergeants to the bar, they let me do what I wanted to do! *[laughter]* So, it was nice, it was really nice. That's my best time, I'm glad you brought that up.

YC: Oh, let me see... This is like old home week for me! *[laughter]* Do you remember any of the bartenders, or the people who worked in the bar?

DM: The bartenders, yeah. We had Bubbles as a bartender. Bubbles was a real smooth guy. We had Frank Donato, he was a bartender. Then we had a guy named... I can't think of his name. He was a white guy, I say it the way it really was. Only white guy... We had white people come in there, don't get me wrong. But he was *smooth* white guy, everybody just loved this man. You remember him?

YC: I'm trying, I don't remember that.

DM: What made it so nice about my father, being a people kind of person, he had the other color coming in there. It wasn't like we were all for black. You could be any nationality and come right in, it wasn't a problem with my father. He'd make you feel right at home. Am I right or wrong?

CT: Yeah.

DM: I'm telling you, it was a nice club. It's a place to remember. I see people and they say to me, "When are we going to open the Orchid Lounge up?" I say, "Man...!" *[laughter]* The way kids are now, you really wouldn't want to open up nothing. With the Bloods and the Crips, and the way they're killing. The way they're killing now, even in the school that she works in. It's a shame. It's a shame what this world is coming to. It's a shame that they are a lost generation, that they don't know what they're doing, they don't know where they're going. If you don't change with the times, because times are changing. Technology is something now. You don't see the telephone booth no more. Some of these things you don't see anymore, some of these things that we got to stay prepared, or you have to keep up with what you're doing. With me, and I say this respectfully, I'm not trying to keep up with the clock on the wall anymore, I'm trying to keep up with the speed of God. My mother made sure – my mother and father – made sure that me and my

sister went to church every Sunday. I don't care if I fell asleep in the corner of the church!
[laughter]

JS: Where did you go to church?

DM: We went to Saint Stephen's.

JS: Saint Stephen's?

DM: Right. What made it so bad was... the bar business was a tough business. There are so many different influences in that business. I got caught up in the drugs, and the alcohol. I went homeless for a little while. ...I went homeless. So, life was tough for me. By my daddy giving me so much, and being the guy with the silver spoon in his mouth, you know. I'm going to high school with a brand new convertible Cadillac; going to college with an El Dorado, and all of the sudden I'm out on the street, "Give me a quarter, give me a nickel, give me a dime."

JS: So you saw both ends. You saw it all.

DM: Yeah. Through it all, through all that that I went through, I found out that God was with me. I didn't stay hidden in that valley, I went *through* it. That's what I'm saying, because I walk down the Avenue now, and I see people and I say, "Boy, if he would have only *stopped*." I've been clean. I wish my daddy was here to see me, my momma was here to see me now, say, "The boy is alright. I thought he was going to be lost. But he's alright now." I sold cars for the last seventeen years, I was a car salesman. My last job was at Galaxy Toyota; I made good money. All that was because of the raising I got from my mother and my father. What I did was, I took the good parts that I see in my mother, and the good parts that I see in my daddy, and I kept those. The bad things I see in them, I let them go. That's how I'm living my life now. Go ahead.

JS: If someone's walking down Springwood Avenue today, what would you want them to know?

DM: That this was a great time. Asbury was a thing, the only reason why it'd be forgotten... if they weren't doing what you're doing now. Nobody would ever know that it even exists. What I found out about life is, you are soon forgotten. If nobody says anything about you, nobody will know about you. But if you keep doing what you're doing, you'll keep that Avenue alive. You'll keep that thought in everybody's heart. Because everyone like her, like me, like him... Springwood's in our heart. We *loved* it. We actually *loved* it. The weather, it could be storming, we still loved it. You know what I mean? It was just something to have, something to treasure, to cherish for that time that we had it. And we didn't have it long.

JS: That's definitely a thread. Everyone we've spoken to has talked about the passion for that time, how much joy came from that time. Hearing the music, hearing so much music.

DM: With me, I was hearing it for free! *[laughter]* It was just *embezzled* in there! I got a list. I even had escorts, we had them there. They all were bad boys. My father wasn't discreet on who he took, he loved everybody. If you had something going on, he loved it. If he thought that the people would like it, he had it.

JS: Your dad, was he retired from the police department before he started the club?

DM: Right. You couldn't be a police officer and own a bar, those two don't mix, it's like oil and water.

JS: I was wondering about that. But first, a fireman.

DM: But first, a fireman. And before then, he worked as a janitor at Fort Monmouth. My mother, she was at Fort Monmouth, she was a GS-11. She was up there, she was a real smart woman.

JS: What was she doing as a GS-11?

DM: Whatever the government asked. I was a little boy, I don't know. She was one of the highest-paid women in Monmouth county at the time. She was good. They would send her to Fort Lee or something. Not Fort Lee... somewhere. They were always sending her somewhere. She was a smart lady.

JS: And she was involved, too?

DM: No, that was more my step-mother.

JS: Miriam?

DM: Miriam. Miriam was a sweet lady, she was always in there doing her thing. Helping. I remember seeing Miriam come in, she'd be dancing... *[laughter]* ...she'd be rocking when she hit the door! She was sweet. Everything was good.

JS: Your father lived in Asbury Park during all those years?

DM: Yeah, he lived on Borden Avenue all those years. Yes, he did. I'll never forget, at our house, he added on like you did here; whatever you did here, he added on. He had the floors like this here, like you have, the wooden floors. He would do them every day. If my friends came over – "Take your shoes off before you walk in the door." You couldn't walk in there with your shoes on, like we are doing in here. That's how my father.

YC: I always loved your house.

DM: Hmm?

YC: I always loved your house, it was a good-looking, nice house.

DM: Go ahead, I'm ready.

JS: Before we end, can we take a picture of your list? Not this minute, but is that okay with you? Because you have all those names.

DM: Oh yeah. [DM passes notebook to MK, who takes a photograph]

MK: Here is the list. I'll take a photo.

YC: Grant Green, you didn't mention Grant Green.

JS: Grant Green?

YC: Yeah.

DM: I had Chico Mendoza there. Have you heard of Chico Mendoza?

YC: Yep!

DM: You're kidding me! I'll never forget, I had a Latin Night. I brought the Latin Night there. Oh boy. That was really something, when I brought that in. I'd like to see Chico again. I meant to see him when he was down there on the beach?

CT: Oh, he was?

JS: On Lake?

YC: And Milford Stanley had a birthday party on Cookman Avenue, and Chico came and played –

DM: Oh yeah! Chico played!

YC: – Chico came and played for the birthday!

DM: Chico was another friend of my father. My father used to let Chico play, and he wasn't even old enough to play, he let him play in the band.

CT: What Chico are you talking about?

YC: Mendoza.

DM: No, I'm talking about Chico, the head of the club!

CT: Chico *Rouse*.

YC: Oh, Chico Rouse.

CT: You're talking about Chico Rouse. Let's not mix them up! *[laughter]*

DM: There's two Chico's.

YC: Chico Rouse played Latin, too?

DM: No, no.

YC: Okay, two different people; sorry.

JS: Can't confuse Chico's. Is there anything else you'd like to share with us?

DM: Not that I can think of right now. I think I had a ball. I'm glad to go back into those times. I think that we'll never get it back. It's gone – as far as the way it's going now, because of what they're doing now. You ride down Springwood Avenue, it's going to be something else.

YC: It's going to be different. It will be different.

DM: It's going to be something else. They're cleaning it up. I remember when I went on 125th Street in New York... I was living in Perth Amboy, and I took some kids down the street on 125th Street. I said, "Look at these people here." They were all swollen up with the drugs. It was so bad. I went down there a couple years ago, and it's all cleaned up. And that's what they're doing to Springwood Avenue. We might not like it, but they're cleaning it up. All the people who are doing what they're doing, they're pushing them right on out. It's going to be for the better. Now, we can be selfish and want what we want, or we can let time take care of time; let them do what they're going to do. They're going to make it a better town. They're going to make Asbury a better place. There's no doubt in my mind. How do you feel about that?

CT: With gentrification, certainly things are better. But I'm not sure how the community feels.

DM: I can't hear you...

CT: I'm not sure how the community will play into, those who have been here for years and still *are* here, especially if they don't take part; voice their opinion, voice their desires. Whether they're listened to or not, I don't know. It's certainly going to *look* better.

- DM: You know, drugs is a big part in Asbury Park. I've done wrong, I'm not sitting here like I'm an angel. I'm not looking for anyone in here to forgive me for what I've done. But, drugs is a big part in Asbury Park. There's these pills that these kids are taking, and all these things are happening. See, they're not going to have that. In any town you go to, they're not going to have that anymore. You can't find a guy – if you look around – you can't find a guy standing on the corner, saying, "I've got this" here no more. They ain't playing that no more in the street, they have to take it somewhere else. And that's what they're doing with Springwood Avenue. They're cleaning it up, slowly but surely, and they're pushing the people that are "undesirables," they push them back towards the highway. Have you noticed that, how they're going back further towards the highway? If you go on Cookman Avenue, they don't even go over there. They *could* walk over there, but they don't even walk. I'm talking about the "undesirable" people now. They won't even walk over there, because they know better. They're going to make it so that people can be *safe* in Asbury Park. Whether we like it or not, that's what we need. We need more safety in Asbury Park. We need more safety on Springwood Avenue, we *need it* to be clean. It'd be nice to bring the groups back, it'd be nice to do this and do that, but... will other people let us have them? It would nice to open up another Orchid Lounge.
- YC: I am a councilwoman in Asbury, and because I remember the old Springwood Avenue, I know that the new Springwood Avenue will never be the old one.
- DM: No.
- YC: But, it is *my* goal, and I hope the goal of the other councilpeople, that the community is still going to be there. The community that lives there is still going to be involved, because we're making sure that there's affordable housing. So, the people who have been here, who have survived, and when everybody else left, they stayed and endured. Now that things are getting better, they can also reap those benefits. That's the Asbury Park, that's what I'm going for.
- DM: That's what you're going for. Which, that's what I'm saying, maybe I'm not saying it the same what as you're saying it.
- YC: I'm agreeing with you. I'm hoping it's going to get better for everybody.
- DM: Oh, okay. Right.
- YC: When things start rising, they rise for everybody – not just for some. It's my personal goal to make sure that happens in this city.
- DM: Let me say this. The problem that you have in what you're doing is, you've got corruption is there. You got that man on top, he's still in the money. Where'd he go – remember the guy in the projects over here, on... what's that... Asbury Avenue? He had all of Washington Village and all that? He stole the money?

YC: He's gone. He's gone.

DM: He's gone, but you understand what I'm saying? This is the problem that we're having, with people being tempted. Temptation, touching other people, everybody's trying to locate that dollar. Now, you've got to worry about this guy we got in there: is he right?

YC: Yeah.

DM: It's a problem.

JS: It's a long time to recover from those events. It's a long story.

DM: Yeah. Go ahead, I'll let you finish.

YC: I have one more question for you. I told a friend that I was going to see you today, and she said, "Do you still have your red suit?" *[laughter]*

DM: My red suit. I bought that for Valentine's Day! *[laughter]* I remember that suit! Tell her, no, I don't have that red suit. I bought it for a Valentine's Day. I remember also, I met... I gave a show. But before I gave the show – I gave it at Convention Hall, my father set it up. This was my "going out" thing, I'm going out to be a promoter. So, I went to a place called Queens Booking Agency. When I walk in there, they've got Curtis Mayfield – not Curtis Mayfield. They got Jerry Butler sitting in the side. I'd never seen Jerry Butler before in my life, I said, "Lord have mercy!" It was Jerry Butler. "Jerry Butler, how you doing, how you doing." So I go in there, the guy acted like he was talking to Aretha Franklin. He talking, whatever. So, I put a group together. I put Curtis Mayfield, Black Ivory, the Persuaders, and another group, at the Convention Hall. So, I give the show, and we go in the back, and I meet Curtis Mayfield. Oh, my God. Now here's what made it so bad: if I would've waited another month to have this show, he came out with the movie *Superfly*. It would've *filled* Convention Hall up!

JS: Oh wow. One month before!

DM: Oh, that was a bad break. They would've filled it up. But I'll never forget that as long as I live. But I got a chance to meet Curtis Mayfield. You remember John Morton? Did you know John Morton?

YC: Oh yes, yeah.

DM: John Morton went up to the show with me – not to the show, to the Queens Booking Agency. I think they were on thirteenth floor, or the thirtieth floor, whatever it was. John said he's going to take the steps, and me and... because I'm taking everybody out to lunch. I'm taking all of the secretaries, and everybody's going to lunch with me. I'm that kind of guy, I'm like my daddy. So, John says, "I'm going to take the steps. I'm a track star like you." We go down the elevator, and we're waiting for John to come down the

steps. When John gets downstairs, he's all black, he got black from here all down, in the front. He said, "Dude, I went to hit that first step, and I fell off it!" [*groans, laughter*] He said, "I went to get up, and I fell down again." John was something, he was a good guy though. John was, he was in the community. He had a lot to do with the community.

YC: Yeah.

DM: That's a little off subject.

JS: That's a good story. So, you were a promoter for a good period of time?

DM: For a little period of time, yeah.

JS: I'm just looking, to make sure we didn't miss... and if other things come to mind, please let us know. We're not going anywhere.

DM: Okay. You're not going yet?

JS: We're not going anywhere.

DM: Okay, okay. You haven't said anything yet.

JS: Put Melissa on the spot.

MK: Put *me* on the spot. [*laughter*]

JS: She's not usually quiet.

MK: I come at it from the music perspective, so all my questions are about the music, as a musician. So, what was your favorite act that came through?

DM: George Benson!

MK: Really?

DM: Yeah, George Benson, Lonnie Smith, Jack McDuff, *all* of them. All of them. What I liked about jazz was, it's not like when you hear R&B and all the sudden, you start thinking about the girl you used to go with ten years ago. That's the vibe. You break up with a girl or a guy, whatever the case may be, "Why are you playing that song now?" But jazz is something *different*. Back in our day, we'd get a fifth of wine, turn on the jazz, and we'd sit back and relax. Jas some something you can *feel*. You could *feel* jazz. It doesn't have to be the words. It don't take you there. You know, ladies, you like to have your glass of wine, hear a little jazz. I'm sure you do.

MK: I love doing that.

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DM: And hear that favorite band, or that favorite instrument you might want to hear. I was more an organ man, I liked the organ. But when I met George, I liked the guitar. We had a guy named... Freddy McCoy. He played the xylophone. That man was *bad*, I loved him when he came to the club! *[laughter]* That's how it was, because I got so close to them. It's not like they were away – "Hey man, come on in, let me show you where the dressing room... Let me show you this here. If you want something to eat, I'll tell you, go down to Sunny Honey's and get you something." *[laughter]* "Go to Kershaw's, get your ribs." Oh, man. That's another thing, I'm going to get back to you. We had a barbeque place called Kershaw's.

CT: I remember.

YC: Because of that, we just named one of the Lanes here, "Kershaw's," after that. We said, nobody... anybody from my generation, you say "Kershaw's," and that was the place.

DM: Yeah, that was the place. And then Danny came out with his. The Kershaw's son, he was someone named Joe Kershaw. He was a year ahead of me. You might have knew Joe Kershaw? You don't know him?

YC: I don't think so, I don't remember.

DM: Anyway, that boy could drink a whole bottle of hot sauce – because his father had that sauce. His father made a barbeque sauce you've *never* tasted before in your life. Am I lying?

YC: It has not been duplicated anywhere.

DM: That man was something. But back to the jazz, now. I just loved jazz. My mother and father put it in me and I've loved it ever since. If I turn on one of those other stations, it just ain't there. It ain't there.

JS: We were talking about this this morning. Did either of your parents play any instruments?

DM: No, no, no. I'm glad you mentioned that. We lived on Borden Avenue, and Bangs Avenue was a half a block away. My father buys me a saxophone, I'll never forget. A tenor sax. I was too lazy... I said, "Daddy, I don't want to play no saxophone." *[laughter]* I was too lazy! I said, "Dad, I don't want to play it." He was so mad at me, he was mad at me. I said, "Dad, I don't want to play no saxophone." *[laughter]* But he sure put it in me.

JS: He tried.

DM: He tried, he tried. It was a nice sax, too. A real nice sax. Maybe if he would have bought me a flute...*[laughter]*

- MK: That's why I play the flute, because it was so small. *[laughter]*
- DM: What else do you want to ask me?
- MK: You say that you really like the organ. Was there an organ there, at the Orchid Lounge?
- DM: Yeah, we had our own organ there. My father, he did it up. Yeah, he did it up.
- MK: Did you ever hear Dee Holland play at the Orchid Lounge?
- DM: Who?
- MK: Deloris Holland, on organ?
- DM: Yeah, Dee. I remember her playing.
- MK: We were talking with her before, so I'm curious as to how everything intersected. So, she came through, for sure.
- DM: Yeah. Yeah, she did.
- MK: There were a lot of organ trios?
- DM: I believe so, yeah.
- MK: I had never really heard of that type of ensemble before, which is strange because I went to music school for ten years, and no one ever mentioned to me, "organ trios." Now I'm learning that was a predominant arrangement.
- DM: Like I said, there's time's when I wasn't there. There was an era there when I was in the army, so they might have done a lot of things that I don't know about.
- YC: One of the nice things about the Orchid Lounge is that, it was small. Small, so that you weren't removed from the musician. The musician was here, and you were right here. You were *in* the music, you could *feel* the music. You could look at them sweat when they were playing. You were *there*. It was just the *perfect* jazz club. I can't imagine...
- DM: The more I look at you, the more I know you. I can see you now. *[laughter]*
- YC: I *loved* the Orchid Lounge. I loved the Orchid Lounge. It was just the perfect jazz club. It wasn't like going to a concert where you're so far back, that you need a screen to see.
- DM: No, you're right there. And everybody was cool. It wasn't like when they came up with the DJs, fight break out over there, fight over there. That's a problem I had in later years. But with the jazz, there was never fights. Never, never.

- YC: Everybody got *dressed* to go out to the Orchid Lounge.
- JS: You were describing before about the construction workers, from where ever they were working, would during the week in work clothes, but on the weekends, get dressed...
- DM: They'd get dressed, get sharp as a tack. I'm talking about *sharp*.
- JS: Can you tell us a little more about the crowd? You said it was mixed. Did you see a change over the years of who was coming in?
- DM: What happened was, me being the way I was, I turned it into a DJ booth. That's when it just *expanded*, it just got crazy. It wasn't a jazz room anymore, now it was the new generation. I was telling my father, I said, "Daddy, I understand it, but they aren't coming out." Talking about the people who liked jazz. I said, "Number one, they aren't coming out because they're scared to come down here because of the way Springwood Avenue is now. It changed for them." It's like me and you now, I can't walk down Springwood Avenue 10:00 at night, that's not happening. Times are changing, so I try to change with the times. It is what it is. I didn't like it after I started it, because I saw what I got into. I got hooked on the wrong thing. But, we wouldn't have been able to pay the bills, because the older people weren't coming out anymore. They were scared of what was out there.
- CT: In our generation, when you look across the board in our generation, there weren't that many of us that listened to jazz, that could patronize the jazz. We're talking about the '70s was – disco period. Lent itself directly to... jazz has always been one of these musics that's always around, but there's only but so many people really will go out there and patronize it. It was greater in the '30s, '40s, '50s... '60s, a little bit. '70s, mmm.
- YC: Unless you lived in the city.
- CT: I'm sure, even with all the millions of people in the city, there's only a fraction of people come out and patronize those clubs and those concerts. With *jazz*. Jazz is a funny music like that.
- JS: You mean now, or then?
- CT: Consistently, it fluctuates. The greatest participation was back in the '20s, '30s, '40s. Maybe into the '50s. By the time of the '60s, things started to change. '70s, it was definitely changing. '80s and '90s, come back up a little bit more. All in all, when you look at the general population of what the town or city is, I think you'll find that. That's not to say there's a small amount of jazz lovers. Maybe a great amount of jazz lovers. But, there's only so many that will patronize the clubs and concerts. Think of your home. How many people had records of Sarah Vaughn, Duke Ellington, Count Basie in their early years, coming into the '50s and '60s when we were kids. But how many would you see later in the clubs, going out? When I was a kid, our parents would go out to dance.

The music they were dancing to was jazz. They went to New York, they'd go here, they'd go there. But by the time *we* were old enough to go into the clubs, when *we* went to dance, it was disco. For the most part. *[laughter]*

YC: You're right.

DM: There you go.

CT: Now, jazz was still going on, because Miles had just kicked it off, he and Eddy Harris kicked it into the electronic age, from the '60s into the '70s. It was blossoming; they were starting to look at other avenues where they'd use the orchestra more. It's a strange music. It's truly a fine art. Fine art's a soft market, so it fluctuates, according to people's whim.

JS: It seems those things are were all coming together with the change, what happened on Springwood Avenue. Before that, you had that density of clubs, so you had music, you could walk down and hear music all over.

DM: You could go half a block and there was another bar. Then you could go a little bit more and there's another bar. It was just bar, bar, bar, bar. It was really something. And now, you can't find a black person with a liquor license.

JS: In Asbury Park.

YC: Right.

DM: My father only paid \$10,000 for his license. Now they're a million dollars. I mean, come on. If I would have known better, if I'd used my head, I would have kept those licenses. Times are changing. The generation, they're lost. We have to do our best to hold on to what you're holding on to. Keep on doing what you're doing. Keep on keeping it alive, don't let it die. It means so much to us – what you're doing, what you're doing, and what he's doing, and what she's doing – it means so much. And she's younger than all of us, I believe. I don't know about you. *[laughter]* She's got those dreads, though! *[laughter]*

JS: That's what's been so interesting talking to everybody in this project, because of the different generations. In my opinion, it's not about trying to recreate that time, but those stories and how all this happened is so important to understand for the younger generation now that's coming up. There is this rich history that their families are part of, and some of the kids now in high school didn't even know what it was like. So, that's part of the story.

DM: A gentleman called me up and said that you were running out of people to find to tell you about Asbury Park. In other words, we're leaving here. We're going home. Everybody's going home. We try to get ready, and I'm glad that you can keep this going. Keep doing what you're doing, keep going at it. It's something that shouldn't be forgotten.

JS: We agree.

YC: We do. Preserved, protected, and if you don't know your history – and our kids don't know their history – they don't know their history, how do you survive? What's your basis? What's your essence? That's what we're trying to do.

DM: The problem that we're having is, the mother and father are lost in the cocaine, or the pill, or whatever it might be, that they're not really showing their kids what they should. The kids are being grabbed by somebody, and taken in another way. Like I said, my mother and father made us go to church every Sunday, and God is still in me, now, today. We have to pray for them, because with the President – I don't know how you feel about the President, what about the stuff he's doing? *[laughter]* What are we going through here? What's happening? ...look at everybody shaking their heads. You ask me all these questions, I want somebody to answer *me* a question! *[laughter]*

MK: That's a great question!

DM: I make them talk. This is going to be something. Just keep on doing what you're doing. Don't stop, keep it going. I can see it, when I look in your eyes, what you're feeling. You want it. You want to hear about it. Like I said, there's not that many people left. Everybody's going home. I have an aunt, she's 93 years old, she was 93 in March – that's Pat's mother.

YC: Oh, okay.

DM: She's the last one of her generation. She's the last one in the family that she grew up with. See how time is going on? We all have to get ready for that. Our day will come. *[laughter]* Remember *that* song, don't you? *[sings]* "Our day will come." *[laughter]* Let you guys just keep on searching out. Keep on grabbing. Throw enough stuff against the wall, something's going to stick. No doubt in my mind about that. I appreciate it. Any more questions?

JS: We thank you, that's it.

[End of Interview]

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