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# Interview with William Southwick

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1 **TRANSCRIPTION**

2 **INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM SOUTHWICK**

3 (Cut off chatter)

4 NANCY SALTO: (laughs) So you participated in the civil rights movement?

5 WILLIAM SOUTHWICK: Uh, right, I did, both my wife and I did. And also in the anti-war  
6 movement during the Vietnam war stuff.

7 NS: What was your first experience as an activist?

8 WS: Oh gosh, jeez, I don't know. I kind of right from the beginning—I mean, I remember the  
9 coffee house—we'd been working on the set up, which was really staffed by volunteers, which  
10 was my job, (laughs) and we opened in 1963 in Lakeview, the day that Kennedy was shot, in  
11 November. So, I don't know, I'd always been involved, I guess. I came back from Edinburgh  
12 and the civil rights movement and SDS and SNCC and things like this that were on the south  
13 side. And the antiwar movement as well.

14 NS: What were some recurring issues that you found in your community?

15 WS: In the community itself?

16 NS: Uh-hmm.

17 WS: Well, it was always everybody was trying to figure out who they were and you didn't have  
18 the same pressures that kids have now, in terms of trying to find jobs and in an economy that's  
19 really—it's quite an active economy, so I remember more time spent with people wondering  
20 what they wanted to do that was meaningful and what kind of jobs they wanted to have and  
21 things like this. It was not just a question of having a job. It was a question of having a  
22 meaningful job that could have some impact in terms of the community.

23 NS: Why did you decide to participate in running the local coffeehouse?

24 WS: Sounded fun. (laughs) Y'know, and, you could meet interesting people and were involved  
25 in the movement in some way. Or were cabdrivers (laughs).

26 NS: (laughs)

27 WS: Yes, it—it was just fun. I thought it seemed like the kind of thing that I'd—actually I had  
28 started when I was in Edinburgh, the second time, working at the church, my job was really as a  
29 youth minister, I suppose it would be called now, and worked with a lot of university students  
30 because the university was in our—in the parish over there. And one of the things that we did in  
31 the youth group—in the church—in uh, the cathedral—at the cathedral, got some space in the  
32 basement of an office building near the church and we opened it as a coffeehouse. So we had a

33 lot of folk singers (laughs), if you will, and y'know, general political roustabouts (laughs). So  
34 that was kind of fun.

35 NS: How did you get involved in the anti-war movement?

36 WS: Oh, I don't really know. Sort of all my friends and people that I knew, y'know, in one way  
37 or another were involved in the movement, and, and, I remember very early on in the—in the  
38 coffeehouse in '64 or something, 1964, uh, one of the guys who was a volunteer with one of the  
39 churches in the area, an Asian-American, in the Japanese community, the very large Japanese  
40 community in the Lakeview/Uptown area in the time, but anyway. He had heard, or I mentioned  
41 or something, that I'd really like to go to this demonstration in Washington but couldn't afford it  
42 really, so he came in and said, 'Here's an airline ticket, I'll at least cover that.' And so he  
43 covered the cost of me going to that—that conference or whatever it was in Washington, D.C.  
44 Yes.

45 NS: Why do you think he did that?

46 WS: Beats me! (laughs) He probably—he was pretty involved in all kinds of movements and  
47 things, and was really a leader in some respects, in terms of reparations for Japanese-Americans  
48 who had been in camps—

49 NS: Mm-hmm

50 WS: —in the U.S., who came from California and were in the camps here. He worked for a  
51 number of years with—an attempt to get reparations for the people who grew up there. I  
52 remember one night, an incredible instance, where my wife and I went to a Christmas party in  
53 somebody's house that, y'know, we knew. And we were—pra—I guess, probably, maybe even  
54 the only Caucasians there, everybody else was—was Japanese. And somebody had a guitar, as  
55 everybody did in those days, and was playing a—one of the people who was there said, one of  
56 the women said, 'Play such and such, some Christmas song,' she says, 'Cause I remember we  
57 always sang it for the guards,' and it just blew me away. And I—I—they never really talked  
58 about it, but all of the people at the party had been in the same camp together during the Second  
59 World War. Just blew me away 'cause I had no idea of that at all. Amazing experience.

60 NS: How were you involved with that community?

61 WS: Just I knew them, a lot of—there were—there were several Asian churches in the Lakeview  
62 area at that time, there were probably three or four. And, uh, one of the—one of them in  
63 particular from the Methodist church on Sheridan road volunteered at the coffeehouse. So I met a  
64 lot of people who both just lived in the area and who happened to have attended that particular  
65 church. So.

66 NS: So, starting into 1968.

67 WS: Okay.

68 NS: How did the start of Tet Offensive in January of that year change your work with young  
69 adults in the neighborhood?

70 WS: I don't know that it really did in some senses, I mean, it was certainly an important event in,  
71 y'know, in the war in Vietnam, and was viewed as—as, I think probably, as a success for the  
72 anti-war movement, really gathered many other people into it, when they began to realize what  
73 was really going on in Southeast Asia, but y'know, as—I—it was just part of a number of  
74 instances of—of—of the war.

75 NS: Right. What do you mean by success—of the—of the anti-war movement?

76 WS: Well, just, I think it brought a lot of new people and brought another level of, y'know, of  
77 experiences and another level of understanding in terms of what was going on in Southeast Asia.  
78 By that time, there had been so many American casualties and certainly lots of casualties among  
79 Vietnamese themselves, through various groups. I know recently there's been a TV show about  
80 the last days of Vietnam and stuff and it was incredible. All the people that we left behind there.  
81 But, in any case, that's another issue.

82 NS: How did you feel when you learned Martin Luther King had been assassinated in April of—

83 WS: Oh, terrible.

84 NS: —1968?

85 WS: I mean that whole, y'know, year was an astounding year and I remember my wife was  
86 volunteering down at the SNCC office on the southside of Chicago and heard about it, drove  
87 down there and picked her up. In a beauty parlor, we all—they all went downstairs to a beauty  
88 parlor to watch TV. Everybody was kind of glued to their TVs for oh, a week or so there.

89 NS: How did King's death affect your work with youth services?

90 WS: Well, I think for everyone—what, that was in '68, was it? I forget.

91 NS: Mm-hmm.

92 WS: Yes, I think 1968 was a real critical period in terms of, uh, uh there was the convention in  
93 August and King was killed. I think for many people, they had decisions to make, some of them  
94 joined the underground, that were more committed to bombings and stuff like that during that  
95 period, a more violent approach. And others, other groups, that formed during that period or had  
96 been in existence during that period were more in terms of King's experience, with Dr. King's  
97 experiences with nonviolence. So th—they—that—so after the convention in '68, the  
98 Democratic Convention in Chicago, I think a lot of people who were involved in the movement  
99 had to decide, y'know, how do you—how do you go? Where do you stand with respect to  
100 violence in the movement? Even the—even though very few people in all the bombings that  
101 occurred among the—were instigated maybe by some of the Weather Underground and stuff like  
102 that. There were people killed but they were members of the, y'know, the underground at that  
103 point. It was in a townhouse in New York where they were building a bomb. But they were very  
104 careful, y'know, bombings were generally on off-hours in universities and things like that, so  
105 there were no, as far as I know, there were no civilians who were accidentally killed by these  
106 bombings. But they were dramatic.

107 NS: Were you ever worried about something like that occurring in your neighborhood?

108 WS: Oh, not really. I mean, we'd gotten used to it by that time. I mean, it was an occupation  
109 army, y'know, and prior to the '68 convention, Democratic Convention in Chicago, there were  
110 tanks and they were going up and down our street, y'know. We all knew that there were spies  
111 around and things like that (laughs) so we were kind of used to it by that point. No one was  
112 really scared. There weren't so many guns available now, except the police (laughs).

113 NS: How did you react to learn of the student protests at the Columbia University in the spring?

114 WS: Well, there were a number of them that went on, certainly at Columbia Co—y'know in New  
115 York, and certainly Berkeley, the most famous in San—uh—Berkeley (laughs). And, uh—so,  
116 and y'know, I think the biggest shock during that sort of period, as I recall, and I may have the  
117 sequences all mixed up here, was at Kent College in Ohio where there were students who were  
118 shot by—and killed by National Guards who occupied that campus. So I think that was in some  
119 ways more moving, but there was a general movement among students at universities all over the  
120 country during that time.

121 NS: Did you see that in the neighborhood in any way?

122 WS: Um, not particularly. Y'know I think Chicago, y'know with the University of Chicago and  
123 Northwestern, which are all kind of upper-class institutions—(laughs). That's a terrible way of  
124 characterizing it, but, if anything probably Columbia College was in the forefront of having  
125 students that were involved in one way or another, in y'know, the movement.

126 NS: Where were you when you learned Robert Kennedy had been assassinated in June?

127 WS: Jeez, where was I? We were on—we were visiting some friends in Ohio, as I recall. We  
128 didn't hear about it because it was in California, and they were time differences, so really, I  
129 remember this friend, whom I'd gone to seminary with, and his wife kind of knocked on our  
130 door—on the bedroom door and said, 'Kennedy's been shot and killed.' As I recall, that was my  
131 experience there. Bobby. He gave an amazing speech in Indianapolis, before he was killed that  
132 still quoted a lot. It was amazing. In a black neighborhood.

133 NS: Right.

134 WS: African-American neighborhood.

135 NS: Tell me about your time in Lakeview during the protests in the summer of 1968.

136 WS: Oh, well, there was a lot of preparation, y'know, beforehand among the churches in  
137 organizing the churches to provide housing. Usually on a basement floor somewhere, y'know,  
138 and to do—prepare for what everyone understood would be demonstrations that went on during  
139 the convention itself. But, it was a little scary because—during that period because there was a  
140 clear occupation of not only the Chicago Police and the Red Squad, but, uh, a lot of, I remember,  
141 Naval intelligence even. Y'know, there were—that don't get a lot of publicity, but there were  
142 lots of other groups in addition to the FBI, that prior to the convention itself where trying to get  
143 some handle on what was going on. What were the possibilities that might happen. And they

144 kind of focused, in some ways, on the Lakeview and Lincoln Park area on the north side. Partly  
145 because that was where many of the students lived, it was also many out of state demonstrators.  
146 Some of the Yippies and whatnot and Jerry Rubin and some of the people were, y'know, were  
147 staying there with people in that neighborhood, in Lakeview at the time. So, there was a lot—  
148 there was just a lot of stuff going on and of them, people coming into town who were part of the  
149 demonstration or would be part of the demonstration, and organizing what went on among—  
150 among young people and middle-aged people too. I can't (laughs) not say that. So, yes, it was a  
151 very—on the one occasion that I remember, and this was before cell phones of course, we had a  
152 pay phone in the coffee house that y'know, hung on the wall some place. Every night, we closed  
153 up about midnight or eleven o'clock, every night, something like that, and we had arranged—we  
154 had organized with local ministers, 'cause we knew the phone was tapped. You could hear it; it  
155 was so clear—obvious that it was being tapped by whoever. And so they would come in about  
156 closing time and drop a dime in the phone and say, "Well guys, you can go home, we're closing  
157 up,"—

158 NS: (laughs)

159 WS: —and they'd give a little sermonette, sort of on the phone, and read a little scripture and  
160 say, "See you around, talk to you again," and hang up, right? (laughs) To send the FBI home to  
161 their wives and children or whatever they went to.

162 NS: (laughs) That's thoughtful.

163 WS: (laughs) It was pretty funny.

164 NS: You mentioned that the Red Squad was operating in Lakeview. I'm not familiar with that  
165 organization—

166 WS: It was part of the Chicago Police department; it's been discontinued (laughs)—maybe—  
167 now. But it was clearly designated, y'know, their—their mission was to serve as kind of a  
168 undercover intelligence gathering segment prior to the—prior to and during and after. It's been  
169 disbanded since then.

170 NS: Umm—

171 WS: But it was part of the Chicago Police Department.

172 NS: Right. So did you encounter any trouble with the police department at the coffeehouse or in  
173 your work during that summer?

174 WS: Not really, I mean, we, you could—you could always tell the FBI guys by their shiny shoes,  
175 but (laughs) there were some others that we never suspected, who ended up being, y'know,  
176 people who reported on us, but nobody cared. (laughs) It was part of the business.

177 NS: How did your work impact your family that summer?

178 WS: Well, I mean it was tough on them, I mean the whole time really that—that I worked, but  
179 particularly that summer and we were—we lived on Bryar, which was the next street up from—

180 from the coffeehouse. My wife was pregnant at the time with our second child, a daughter. I  
181 remember we had a really great apartment, it was terrific and it faced south. The big opening  
182 demonstration was the night in Lincoln Park before the—the convention got underway. She  
183 was—and helicopters were flying over and tanks were going on the neighborhood and stuff like  
184 that, so she got very paranoid. She was pregnant, she was about ready to deliver, and she did in  
185 September. I had one child. So she said, “You gotta stop going to this stuff, y’know,” and she got  
186 a little nervous by it. So, kind of after that first night or so, I worked in a kind of triage—I  
187 volunteered in the triage unit in the local church for the people that were injured or beaten or  
188 whatnot, as a part of that demonstration and the other demonstrations as well.

189 NS: Did—

190 WS: It affected me.

191 NS: —working in the triage unit affect your—your ideology in anyway?

192 WS: I don’t think so really, it was just part of—(phone rings) Excuse me—

193 NS: Sure

194 WS: —one second, I have a call. Hello? Bye. (laughs) Who knows?

195 NS: (laughs) I’m just going to shut this door.

196 WS: Oh, okay.

197 (door closes)

198 (phone slaps on the table)

199 WS: It’ll take me nineteen minutes to drive home (laughs). Swell.

200 NS: Umm— oh right, your triage work.

201 WS: Um, I don’t think it affected it in anyway except it was—I got a little antsy because it  
202 wasn’t, y’know, it wasn’t right in the middle of things for a few days there. But, did some—went  
203 on some demonstrations during the day. Marches and whatnot—through the—we were never  
204 y’know, you could never get very close to where the convention was held. But I remember one  
205 with Dick Gregory was leading it and we sort of marched down the street and police turned us  
206 back (laughs).

207 NS: How did you feel about Nixon receiving the Republican dom—nomination at the  
208 Republican National Convention early August?

209 WS: (laughs) Oh we were very depressed by that. Wasn’t exactly who most of us had voted for if  
210 we voted, so.

211 NS: Tell me—

212 WS: But it was tough, between Nixon and Kennedy, it was difficult. Anyway, go ahead.

213 NS: Were you interested in anyone in particular receiving the Democratic National—the  
214 nomination?

215 WS: Well certainly, Gene McCarthy was running, y’know, at that time. So I think most of the  
216 support was there. But he didn’t get far with it (laughs).

217 NS: Tell me your story of your experience during the Democratic National Convention in late  
218 August of 1968.

219 WS: Well, it kind of started out with that first demonstration between the—and confrontation  
220 between the police and the protestors in Lincoln Park. There was, I remember a story, I didn’t  
221 know him or anything, of one seminary student who tried to get in between the police on one  
222 side and the—the demonstrators on the other in the park that night. That he was injured, quite  
223 badly I think, when the police charged against the demonstrators. It was fairly scary. I remember  
224 standing, talking that night with Mike Royko from the Daily News, at that time, a reporter, and  
225 Nick van Houghman who was with, I don’t know, the Washington Post or some New York—I  
226 don’t know, on the East Coast. And Mike Royko’s dead now. But standing around talking and  
227 then suddenly, y’know, the police charging (phone chimes) towards everybody and— so you  
228 know, we just ran (laughs). I mean, they were coming with clubs and all, gas—tear gas and all  
229 that stuff. So it was a big night at the triage center, I remember, ‘cause a lot of people were  
230 beaten and stuff like that, and clubbed. I wasn’t particularly, I mean, maybe a swing at me, but  
231 everybody just kind of ran off into Old Town and into the streets in Old Town, so. (laughs) But  
232 then, during the convention then, as I said, I worked there, and much of the action kind of really  
233 was focused more on Balboa and Grant Park and that area. So, y’know, went to some of those  
234 things. The Church Federation in Chicago was pretty much open twenty-four hours a day—that  
235 had—they had offices on Michigan Avenue, I think, some were in the loop. So a lot of people  
236 scattered to there when things got rough but there were a whole series of demonstrations, mostly  
237 during the daytime or early evening that focused out of Grant Park or other areas in the  
238 downtown area. I went to some of those, but (shrugs).

239 NS: What was your position during the protests?

240 WS: Oh well, I was still working at—at the—the coffee house in Lakeview, so I had to go to  
241 work every night, that’s the thing (laughs). That’s why I remember the daytime marches. But,  
242 y’know, it was kind of a place where people felt was safe. Some of the demonstrators would  
243 hang out there and certainly a lot of sympathizers with, y’know, with what was going on.  
244 Looking back on it, I probably should have been more scared than everybody way, but it seemed  
245 just kind of—it was crazy, I mean it was—y’know, people were going through your garbage,  
246 looking for, y’know—mem—I don’t know what they were looking for! (laughs).

247 NS: (laughs)

248 WS: But y’know, there was stuff going on that was just crazy. But, yes.

249 NS: At what point where you most afraid to get involved?



250 WS: Oh gosh, when I got beaten! (laughs) No, Lincoln Park—that first night in Lincoln Park was  
251 my only experience of seeing people getting beaten really, and clubbed by police. So, I don't  
252 know that—well, obviously, I ran away like everybody else, so I guess was scared, but I don't  
253 know. I don't remember at the time. Yes.

254 NS: Did you fear for your family?

255 WS: Not really, no. I mean, my—my wife, y'know, God bless her, was, y'know, at home during  
256 this whole period because we had a son who was a couple of years old and she was pregnant. So,  
257 she couldn't really participate in much of the stuff that was going on 'cause she was, like I say,  
258 our daughter was born in September, and so she was pretty close at that time. So she really didn't  
259 go out much but I think it was hard on her, clearly, because I was working nights for a long time,  
260 in movements that were not the most popular in the general world, y'know. So— who knows?

261 NS: Right. When the tensions were coming to a head what was going through your mind?

262 WS: Oh gosh, I don't know, just wondering, how, if we could get a little closer to the, y'know,  
263 where the convention was being held, but. I don't know that I—I don't recall having many  
264 worries, y'know, in that sense, y'know, maybe there were. Maybe there should have been if there  
265 weren't (laughs), so. But I don't really recall, it was part of—as I say, it was a chaotic time.  
266 Y'know, I never really experienced, y'know, an occupation, an army in a sense, which it felt like  
267 at the time, in the neighborhood and in the community and stuff. So, that was a little—little  
268 unusual, and a little scary certainly. But, y'know, whatever (laughs).

269 NS: How did the protesters respond to the presence of religious leaders?

270 WS: Um, well, I don't know. I mean some people chose to wear clerical collars and things like  
271 this to be, y'know, as a signal as they were from the clergy or something. Others didn't. So, I  
272 didn't experience any, y'know, problems with that. I think probably the clergy were a lot more,  
273 in terms of followers of Dr. King and non violence and stuff like that. So, from the more violent  
274 protesters, there may have been some—some uncertainty about the role of ministers, but for the  
275 most part, they were simply non-violent participants like everybody else. I didn't experience,  
276 personally any problems.

277 NS: Did you wear the—

278 WS: I did not.

279 NS: —collar?

280 WS: I did not. No,

281 NS: Was there any reason behind that choice?

282 WS: I just never did. Except to traffic court (laughs).

283 NS: (laughs)

284 WS: But no, I didn't. I just never did wear one, y'know, I worked with kids and stuff, so.

285 NS: Why did you decide to leave the Northside Cooperative Ministry after the DNC?

286 WS: Got offered a job that paid more (laughs). No, I don't know, y'know, like I say, it was a  
287 time when everybody was going through some—some compatriots of mine joined groups in  
288 Uptown or in the Lakeview neighborhood who tended to be more inclined, toward, y'know,  
289 violence. I also at the time committed to the issue of trying to deal with substance abuse 'cause I  
290 had seen, y'know, street people and friends that I knew who came in the coffeehouse who,  
291 y'know, who were users, and young people and young adults. So I was interested in finding a  
292 way and I didn't think the coffeehouse was the best place to really—and so I ended at that time.  
293 Rightly or wrongly, became more engaged with substance-abusing young people and treatment  
294 forms for that. The program in the YMCA that I came to was very small and was based upon an  
295 early experiment of street workers, working with kids on the street and in parks and whatnot. I  
296 remember this was a period before a lot of guns were available to everybody, so, it was much  
297 tamer in some respects than it was now—than it is now, but y'know, I think that was part of my  
298 decision, so it wasn't just for more money, 'cause it wasn't more money (laughs). But it was  
299 working—continuing to work in the Lakeview community, and uh, with, starting a Methadone  
300 program that began as part of a—of a—of—Masonic Hospitals stuff. Also we got funding to  
301 open up—that I was more involved in, with a treatment center for young people called Flash Tire  
302 on Halsted, just north of Broadway that worked, y'know, with some of the early days of  
303 development of drug treatment and stuff. It was a time of LSD and stuff like that.

304 NS: Did you see a lot substance affect the protests or the protestors?

305 WS: No, not really. At least, I didn't see it. y'know? I was working more, y'know, in the  
306 evenings and with kids on the street in the Lakeview neighborhood, where the coffeehouse was,  
307 rather than in Lincoln Park, so. I don't know, could well be, i have no idea.

308 WS: What new issues arose in the community after 1968?

309 NS: Well, certainly the drug issue at that time became very hot, in terms of publicity and what—  
310 largely because it had hit the white community. Up until that it had been mostly jazz musicians  
311 or African-American people, y'know, but then it began to hit the white community, y'know  
312 middle class kind of, upper-middle class kind of.

313 NS: How did your role change in the community after 1968?

314 WS: Umm, well, I don't know. I'm really not sure because after, like, I was with the YMCA  
315 started. y'know, late '68 and at the end of '69, I got fired from the Y 'cause I hadn't raised  
316 enough money or something. 'Cause I working for one particular region at the YMCA that  
317 covered Lakeview, but the director of the program, Stan Davis, who started the program, who  
318 you may or may not know, but he was running the program on the northwest side of the city with  
319 more blue-collar, working class Italian and German people. So, he hired me to move out there,  
320 y'know, it was really the same program but I moved down. So most of my work in '69, started  
321 out of working in the northwest side of the city, which at that time was very conservative. It was  
322 one of—in Portage Park, where Dr. King led a protest, as he did when he lived in Chicago for a  
323 while, so.

324 NS: Um, did you find that issues were different in that community?

325 WS: Yes, considerably different. (laughs) One of the interesting things that wouldn't happen  
326 now, maybe, was that—one of the things that we did was we would take kids on what we called  
327 retreats, which were out of the city, in a place over in Oregon, Illinois. But retreat, we discovered  
328 had really a bad word—was a bad word—not a bad word, but was thought of differently than we  
329 thought of it, because it was largely a Roman-Catholic community, and they were very  
330 suspicious of the YMCA and some of the parishes wouldn't let any kids participate in programs  
331 that we had. We found out later that it was partly because we used the word retreat, where we  
332 take kids off into the country. Because for them, a retreat was a religious, y'know, kind of thing,  
333 where as for us it was more of a religious kind of thing, whereas for us, it was not particularly—  
334 it was really more therapeutic kind of thing. So, attitudes changed.

335 NS: Mm-hmm.

336 WS: I remembered when we hired our first African-American counselor. We had a big  
337 discussion as to whether it was a—a good thing to do, not—not so much for the community, but  
338 because the community's attitudes might put him in some danger. Y'know, taking the bus and  
339 what not in the neighborhood, 'cause there were a lot of garage burnings and things like this to  
340 try to keep black people out the northwest side of the city. But we ended up hiring him and he  
341 was so successful that within two weeks, all the little old ladies, y'know, Italian ladies from the  
342 neighborhood were bringing him cookies and cupcakes and things like this because he was such  
343 a good counselor, in family therapy and stuff so. It turned out well (laughs), he was great.  
344 Anyway, I forget what the question was, I kept rambling.

345 NS: Um, you mentioned family therapy and you worked with—

346 WS: Right.

347 NS: —substance abuse at that time. What kind of issues did you see that were different from the  
348 community you came from?

349 WS: Well, it was really quite different. It was very interesting and working at FlashTire for some  
350 period of time, it was part of a guy who was named Dr. Jerry Jaffey, at the University of  
351 Chicago, was an a sort of, I don't know, an assistant professor or something, was very good at  
352 raising funding and he actually went out to New York and there was a big split going on within  
353 the—the—the drug treatment community at that time at Synynom (??) in New York, which was  
354 one of the first drug treatment programs in the country. It was really divided by those staff  
355 members that were more political and those who were simply into drug treatment, period. And  
356 so, y'know, he went out there and hired a whole bunch of people from Synynom (??) staff, who  
357 he brought to Chicago and they started, really, a gateway house in various kinds of modalities of  
358 treatment, ranging from in-patient—or in-sort of cottages, sort of thing, down at the Tinley Park  
359 mental health center to gateway house, which was a therapeutic community. And various other  
360 programs, probably four or five other programs around the city that were—that were treating  
361 that. As a part of that, uh, I told or mentioned earlier, about a Methadone program—

362 NS: Mm-hmm.

363 WS: —that was sponsored by—at Masonic Hospital in Lakeview for drug addicts, usually heroin  
364 users and whatnot. We were able to also put together FlashTire because a big problem, in terms  
365 of hallucinogens and whatnot, we put together crisis teams who worked with—in—y’know, in  
366 emergency rooms at hospitals in the area. That kind of stuff—that, so. But it was very different,  
367 oh, I know (laughs). I started into this because, as a part of that, because we received some of the  
368 funding through the University of Chicago program and the state of Illinois program, was on one  
369 day we would meet for a T-group, which was a group of—and they were staff people, and we  
370 would meet every day. It was basically a confrontation group sort of thing. Most of the people  
371 that were staff were ex-addicts and things like this, a lot of street experience. I was the naive,  
372 y’know, young ministerial student, y’know.

373 NS: laughs

374 WS: So they came after me, I tell you. So—but it was great, it was really a good kind of—that  
375 we would meet once a week and learn from that, and the processes. Everything was very  
376 confrontational with T-groups and things like that, during that process.

377 NS: How did your activism change after ‘68?

378 WS: Well, I don’t, I mean it took a different form. I mean, things were very different after ‘68.  
379 (phone rings) Sorry, excuse me.

380 (Pause) (Phone slaps table)

381 WS: Okay. Um, things were very different, I think after the ‘68 convention in Chicago. Nixon  
382 was now the president with a focus on—on—on, y’know, street demonstrations were really kind  
383 of shut down in a lot of ways. People were frightened, I think, y’know. The drug situation was  
384 kind of where the action was in some respects, but it was seen always as a—as a (phone chimes)  
385 criminal issue (phone chimes) as opposed to a—to a medical issue. I was used to having spent a  
386 couple years in Europe, in the United Kingdom, where it was really dealt with at more as a  
387 medical issue as a opposed to a criminal issue. So, y’know, it was just changed a kind of—I’m  
388 not sure it really changed, it certainly didn’t change my ideologies much. But it did methods and  
389 motives for, acting, within the drug community rather than in the outreach community, with kids  
390 on the street.

391 NS: What were you most proud of as an activist?

392 WS: Oh geez, I don’t know. (laughs) Being an activist, I suppose, I don’t really know. I mean,  
393 there were lots of, y’know, events. I remember, and this was much later, y’know, in terms of the  
394 working. I volunteered for a while with the American Friends Service Committee, here in  
395 Chicago, the Quakers. I remember one time we were on a—having a demonstration against the  
396 Iraq war, and we marched from a Federal Plaza to the North Side. One of the women I was with  
397 was tired and so I said, “Let’s get a cab and we’ll take it back.” So we just flagged down a guy  
398 and he took us back to where our car was parked. We—he and I got talking and stuff, and he—  
399 we came to the end of the thing and he said, “I’m from, y’know, Iraq originally, I’m an  
400 immigrant.” He wouldn’t take any money for the cab ride. He said, (phone chimes) “You guys,  
401 demonstrated for me when I couldn’t today—couldn’t today get off work.” So that was kind of  
402 moving in terms of that experience, and uh—

403 NS: What was the most regrettable consequence to come out of '68?

404 WS: I think it toned down everything a lot, in some unhealthy ways. I think people, the people,  
405 were, y'know, talking about the—this is a real generalization, but I think that the median became  
406 more important for a lot of reasons. I think it was the tenor of the—of the politics during the  
407 period after the convention. It kind of put a real left among the general population, a feeling that  
408 the protesters were just kids, and they really, they weren't serious. And many of them became  
409 conservative (laughs), y'know, they really did, and the whole tone of the country changed at that  
410 time, they didn't really want to talk. You had to have balanced news, y'know, and stuff like that  
411 rather—rather than, apart from democracy now, which, still is there (laughs). Amy Goodman  
412 was a tremendous reporter, but on—for the most part, the newspapers were collapsing and  
413 moving to social media, and took people into a very individualistic kind of mode, as opposed to a  
414 collectivism.

415 NS: What was the most positive consequence to come out of '68?

416 WS: Well, I don't know, y'know? i mean, voices were heard, changes were made, things—some  
417 things are much better now than they were prior to '68. I think there have been things even  
418 though there's been a damping down of some of the more radical events. It did bring about some  
419 changes. It certainly ended the war in Vietnam in some ways. I think that the demonstrations  
420 were, in the long run, it took an awful long time, but it did result in changing attitudes of people  
421 towards war in Vietnam. Didn't change them much when it came to wars in Iraq, but (laughs),  
422 but, y'know, it did have a significant grouping like clergy and laity against the war in Vietnam. I  
423 think it did have an affect towards ultimately changing attitudes of war towards that.

424 NS: What parallels do you see between society in '68 and now?

425 WS: I think, well, at that time people really believed that there was going to be—protesters—I  
426 really believed that there was going to be a revolution within a few years. That kind of attitude  
427 that motivated a lot of people. I think that changed significantly. I think people realized people  
428 who were activists and parts of the movement saw, y'know, the status quo as very powerful  
429 among the general population. But (laughs).

430 NS: Do you see that now in society?

431 WS: I do. Yes, I do. Y'know, I think a lot of it is very easy, common sense solutions to guns—

432 NS: Mm-hmm.

433 WS: —stuff, and the liberalizing some of that drug stuff, in terms of marijuana now being  
434 available, as opposed to then you got arrested and thrown in jail or something, I don't know.

435 NS: How did you see the role of religious leaders change?

436 WS: Oh boy, that's a good question. I—I'm—I'm not really sure. I think the church has always  
437 been pretty moderate in many respects. I mean, if you look at Dr. King's statements when  
438 preached into Riverside church in New York, when he moved into poverty, he lost a lot of  
439 followers who thought there should be just a anti-war movement, y'know? People began to see

440 there was some underlying roots in the society, that, they moved away and got a little nervous  
441 about that.

442 NS: If you could give one piece of advice to modern activists, what would you say to them?

443 WS: Oh jeez, hang in there! (laughs) There aren't many of us. That'd be it.

444 NS: (laughs) Um, could you tell me why you decided to participate in this interview?

445 WS: Oh, I don't know. I got to talk a lot (laughs). No, it sounded interesting. I think it was a real  
446 turning point within things, and it changed a lot of people for a long period of time. It was—I  
447 still see it as myself, personally, as a watershed, in terms of—of—of progressive politics and the  
448 general mood of the country. (laughs) What can I say?

449 NS: Is there anything you would like to add?

450 WS: I don't think so, I've talked a lot, man! (laughs)

451 NS: Well, I'd like to thank you so much for participating

452 WS: Oh sure

453 NS: And helping us out.

454 WS: Well, thanks for doing this, this is—I think it's interesting. There's a new book out in terms  
455 of the Weather Underground and the underground movement that followed '68. It's kind of  
456 interesting.

457 NS: Sure. Thank you so much.

458 WS: Sure. Glad to do it.

459 (Post-interview chatter)

460 [Recording ends]