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Bridges that Carried Us Over Project

Interview Summary

Interviewee:

Artelea Burgess

Interviewer:

Ratibu Jacocks

Interview Date:

August 12, 2015

Interview Location:

Rialto, CA

Interview Summary completed by:

Nicole Mayhew, 2021

Description:

Artelea Burgess discusses her family's Choctaw roots in Oklahoma, and their move to Riverside and then North Fontana in California. She discusses her experience as a young woman on welfare, and her efforts to get education before she became a beautician and business owner on the westside of San Bernardino. She remembers the complex social life of her shop on the Mount Vernon corridor where preachers, pimps, and prostitutes all could be respected. She shares her experience as a practicing Jehovah's Witness, and the profound impact she had on those in her community and community leaders had on her during her time in San Bernardino, California.

Subject Topic:

- Rubidoux
- Migrant farmers
- Choctaw
- Welfare
- Jehovah's Witness
- Beauticians
- Hair salon
- Geri's Velvet Lounge
- San Bernardino Valley College
- Black Athlete Hall of Fame
- Prostitution
- Business owners

Spatial Coverage:

General Location/Address	Name of Site (if relevant)
Cattle Farm	Bakersfield, California
N/A	Fontana, CA
Geri's Velvet Lounge	Mount Vernon

Temporal Coverage:

- Late 1960s: Computer programming
- 1970: Became beautician, worked for Bob Andrew
- 1976: Artelea Burgess moves to Mount Vernon, next door to Geri's

Key Events:

- Black Athlete Hall of Fame
- Construction and business boom in San Bernardino in the 1970's.

Key Organizations:

- Jehovah's Witness

Interview Index:

Media Format	Time (hh:mm:ss)	Topic Discussed
Digital Video	[00:01:20]	Artelea Burgess recounts how and why she became a Jehovah's Witness.
Digital Video	[00:07:46]	Artelea Burgess discusses her parents (Jim Jones and Reavy Wyatt) and their move to California.

Digital Video	[00:10:14]	Home of Jim Jones and family in Riverside, California.
Digital Video	[00:11:04]	Artelea Burgess explains how she got the “bug for business.”
Digital Video	[00:11:45]	Education on the Choctaw Indian reservations.
Digital Video	[00:13:24]	Social welfare in Riverside, California and how Artelea Burgess provided for her family.
Digital Video	[00:16:47]	Studying computer programming in the late 1960’s.
Digital Video	[00:17:41]	Artelea Burgess discusses the beginning of her career as a beautician.
Digital Video	[00:19:28]	Business classes at Valley College.
Digital Video	[00:22:56]	Ratibu Jacocks recalls his accounts in Mount Vernon around 1976.
Digital Video	[00:23:55]	Raibu Jacocks and Artelea Burgess discuss the influx of business in San Bernardino during the 1970’s.

Digital Video	[00:24:28]	Prostitution and vendors in Riverside County.
Digital Video	[00:25:32]	Artelea Burgess' discusses clients at her hair salon.
Digital Video	[00:26:17]	Artelea Burgess discusses her money intake and spending.
Digital Video	[00:28:21]	Townsen and Valerie Pope and their impact on the community.
Digital Video	[00:30:09]	The black athlete Hall of Fame.
Digital Video	[00:35:05]	Gambling, pimps, and Sidney Stevens.
Digital Video	[00:37:57]	Preachers, Reverends, and Artelea Burgess' hair salon.
Digital Video	[00:39:58]	Artelea Burgess recounts police activity in Riverside, California and how it affected her and the community.
Digital Video	[00:42:40]	Artelea Burgess discusses her experience with romantic relationships.

Digital Video	[00:45:07]	Community based organizations in Riverside, California.
Digital Video	[00:47:43]	Wanda Wells and their impact on Artelea Burgess.
Digital Video	[00:48:54]	Artelea Burgess' experience with Chris Joyner.
Digital Video	[00:50:51]	Artelea Burgess urges the youth to save their money.
Digital Video	[00:53:49]	Artelea Burgess' experience with Don Townsend.
Digital Video	[00:55:59]	Artelea Burgess discusses buying properties.
Digital Video	[00:59:37]	Artelea Burgess explains her current life in retirement.
Digital Video	[1:00:51]	Organizational structure of the Jehovah's Witnesses.
Digital Video	[1:07:22]	Jehovah's Witnesses and their stance on blood transfusion.

Digital Video	[01:12:11]	Difference between Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons.
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Full interview transcript can be found below.

Interview Transcript

Start of Interview:

[00:00:00]

Ratibu Jacocks [00:00:01] You learn the camera at the church, you didn't know anything about that before. **Unknown** [00:00:05] Nothing, nothing.

Artelea Burgess [00:00:07] Trial and error, huh?

Ratibu Jacocks [00:00:08] Yeah, and she's still learning.

Artelea Burgess [00:00:10] [inaudible].

Ratibu Jacocks [00:00:10] We're all learning.

Artelea Burgess [00:00:10] Because they come out with so much [of that] stuff, every fifteen minutes it seems. Yeah. Yeah.

Artelea Burgess [00:00:17] Yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:00:20] You ready? OK. Today is 8-12-15 [August 12, 2015.] My name is Ratibu Jacocks and I'm interviewing Artelea Burgess for the Archiving Black History Project in the Inland Empire. Now, will you spell your first, your name. Complete name for me, for the record. And if you'd look at it camera.

Artelea Burgess [00:00:45] Artelea, is A-R-T-E-L-E-A. Last name, Burgess. B-U-R-G-E-S-S.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:00:58] OK. And thank you so much for this interview. I really appreciate interviewing you. I'll tell you, let's start with something that we have been talking about for the last few years, and that is your spirituality, your relationship with Jehovah. Can you tell me how that came about?

Artelea Burgess [00:01:20] Well, how it came about? Ratibu is -- I start searching, trying to get answers to the Bible, not what someone was just preaching about, but a true study of the Bible. And I had gone to several churches and would ask, "when do we have Bible study?" But, when I go back for Bible study, it never ended with a Bible. You know, maybe if other things was discussed or whatever, and something, I guess, like prayer service. But it never was a study of the Bible.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:01:58] Deep studying the Bible.

Artelea Burgess [00:01:59] I wanted to study the Bible. I wanted to know what the Bible was about. And I didn't get that, you know.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:02:08] So, what made you want to know that? What was the first spark that got your attention in that direction? Because that's a transformation.

Artelea Burgess [00:02:20] Yes.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:02:20] For you. And for most people. And a revelation, transformation. And not only that, but it's a life changing activity. So, what got the spark? What's the first spark?

Artelea Burgess [00:02:35] The spark was the fact that, you know, as we get older, you know, we want to dig deeper into what we're about. You know, what does life really mean to us? And so I -- and through the Bible, this is where we're supposed to be able to get what we need or what a spirituality is supposed to be about.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:03:01] Right.

Artelea Burgess [00:03:02] So, that's why I wanted to study the Bible, to see what I am supposed to do, how I'm supposed to feel, how I'm supposed to treat people, how I'm supposed to serve God and be a follower of Jesus Christ. So, and several times, I had been doing several people's hair that was from Jehovah's, the hall. And one young lady asked me...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:03:28] Oh, you went there doing your search? Or...? **Artelea Burgess** [00:03:30] No.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:03:31] No, [you hadn't gone there.]

Artelea Burgess [00:03:32] I hadn't gone there. I had been several other churches and I -- [she's] a friend of mine. I had been doing her family's hair for years, and I was doing her husband's hair and she asked me, "Artelea would you like to, you know, study the bible." Which they have been coming by. We know how Jehovah's Witnesses...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:03:51] Yeah, they come by.

Artelea Burgess [00:03:51] We come by and knock on your door. And I attempted to have a Bible study several times. But, you know, it ended up maybe I wasn't there or whatever. But when this young lady, and I was comfortable with her, so I told her, I said, "OK," I said, "but, listen, are we going to study the Bible?" She said, "yes." I said, "I don't want to do the getting on my knees and praying and all that."

Ratibu Jacocks [00:04:19] You want to study the Bible.

Artelea Burgess [00:04:19] I want to study the Bible. She said, "that's what we'll do." And sure enough, some of the questions that I had been thinking about for years, even with -- my father, was a Baptist deacon. And sometimes I would ask him questions and it would almost be like a debate to me because it was a logical question. But he wasn't - he told me that, "well, that's not for us to know." But if to me, if God wrote it, I'm supposed to know it. But he wasn't able to explain [it to me and so when I sit down to start studying with these people, the questions that I had been asking, they were able to answer it clearly.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:05:04] [Clearly] and you saw it.

Artelea Burgess [00:05:05] From the Bible.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:05:07] And so you studied for a while.

Artelea Burgess [00:05:08] Oh, I studied for about eight years before I...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:05:11] So, the process is you study for a while, then you joined. Or, what happened to make you now know that you -- is there a ritual or anything?

Artelea Burgess [00:05:22] It's a pure study of the Bible. You know, there's no ritual. There is a ritual. You study the Bible, you come to know God, you know his son. And you know what -- you learn to know what you are supposed to do to be dedicated to him, you know, and that's what he tells us to do in Matthew 28:19 and 20. "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations."

Ratibu Jacocks [00:05:49] Right.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:05:49] And that's what I loved about it, too, is because you don't have a particular race of people.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:05:55] Right.

Artelea Burgess [00:05:55] You have all people there.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:05:57] People.

Artelea Burgess [00:05:58] People. And that's what he told us, Jesus told us to do. All nations and languages.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:06:05] How do you feel about [going] that? Because they knew you as a beautician. They may have known you as a mother. They may have known you as a business person. But they may not have known you as being spiritual too much.

Artelea Burgess [00:06:18] Well...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:06:20] But you never was -- how do you feel with your new transformation, coming into it?

Artelea Burgess [00:06:29] I feel that it's the truth.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:06:31] OK.

Artelea Burgess [00:06:32] That's what we all look for. Like, you know, in our relationship, you want the truth. You don't want to be fooled. And it is your decision to become baptized and serve God and his son Jesus Christ. You know, you have...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:06:48] When you do it -- when you do it is your decision.

Artelea Burgess [00:06:52] It's my decision.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:06:53] Nobody is making you, [since] the day you've been coming here...

Artelea Burgess [00:06:56] No, no. You know, and that's one of the misconceptions of Jehovah's Witnesses. And you hear a lot of things, negative things. But all they have to do is ask.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:07:09] Right.

Artelea Burgess [00:07:09] All you have to do is ask and you can get the information. As a matter of fact, now, you can go to the website and find out anything you want to know about Jehovah's Witnesses.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:07:19] So, where you born?

Artelea Burgess [00:07:20] I was born in Idabelle, Oklahoma.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:07:22] Idabelle. To who?

Artelea Burgess [00:07:25] To my -- Jim Jones. To my father and mother.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:07:29] His name was Jim Jones.

Artelea Burgess [00:07:31] Jim Jones. And she was a Wyatt. Reavy Wyatt. Reavy May Wyatt.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:07:35] In Oklahoma.

Artelea Burgess [00:07:36] Yeah. And they were married and I was out of that relationship.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:07:40] Oh, good. OK, and then you grew up there, and then... You didn't grow up in Oklahoma?

Artelea Burgess [00:07:46] No, no. Five years old, when, you know, everyone had to leave those places like that, you know, you was sharecroppers. And there wasn't a whole lot. And some of them had it, but, you know, like most migrants, you're looking for a better life. And my father and mother came to California and I think I stayed with my grandmother for about six months, maybe a year, and then they came back and got me.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:08:11] So, where did your father work, or do, when he got out to California -- no, before then? He was a sharecropper in Oklahoma? And then when he came here, what did he do?

Artelea Burgess [00:08:21] Well, he also -- we picked cotton, you know, a lot of people, we moved to Riverside, here.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:08:26] Oh, OK.

Artelea Burgess [00:08:27] And, so, a lot of times, I remember him trying to do laborers' work, but I know they went to Bakersfield. You know, there's a lot of cattle [there.]

Ratibu Jacocks [00:08:38] He went around a migrant worker? **Artelea Burgess** [00:08:41] Yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:08:42] Like what the Mexicans are doing today? **Artelea Burgess** [00:08:44] Same thing.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:08:46] How old is your father -- would be now? Is he alive? **Artelea Burgess** [00:08:49] No.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:08:49] OK, I was thinking now.

Artelea Burgess [00:08:51] He would be somewhere -- ninety-five, [ninety-six].

Ratibu Jacocks [00:08:55] So, he was around for World War Two.

Artelea Burgess [00:09:01] He was born in 1915.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:09:01] He's about one-hundred years [then.]

Artelea Burgess [00:09:08] Yeah, yeah, yeah. So, yeah, one-hundred years old. Yeah. This is, yeah, 2015. Yeah, yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:09:14] So, you moved to Riverside. Did you go to school there? And what -- did you go to elementary school there?

Artelea Burgess [00:09:23] Mhmm, elementary.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:09:25] Middle school and high school?

Artelea Burgess [00:09:26] Oh, no. I went to elementary, we moved to West Riverside. That's where a lot of the Rubidox...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:09:36] Rubidox?

Artelea Burgess [00:09:36] Yeah. Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. In that area. And then we, you know, I went to junior high school there. And then at thirteen we moved to Fontana.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:09:49] Fontana? OK. Fontana. And now was it North Fontana?

Artelea Burgess [00:09:53] Yes, you wasn't going into South Fontana.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:09:56] I didn't think so, but I just want to make sure for the record.

Artelea Burgess [00:09:57] You wasn't going into South Fontana!

Ratibu Jacocks [00:10:00] So do you know the spot where you used to be? And then how it looks now compared to then?

Artelea Burgess [00:10:08] You know where Costco is? That area right there.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:10:12] Right in there. Oh, boy.

Artelea Burgess [00:10:14] Right there. They bought my father's old house, to, now, that's what is it... South Highland. And they bought that -- bought his house. And then right between Sierra, no. Between Citrus and Cherry is where we lived. My father and mother used to hunt when my dad was out of work. We'd have meat because they'd go hunting and shoot rabbits and that's...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:10:41] [How far...] In that area?

Artelea Burgess [00:10:43] All in that area. Yeah. Yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:10:44] You don't know that.. [where you here...]

Artelea Burgess [00:10:45] Lyttle Creek area, all that.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:10:47] Yeah.

Artelea Burgess [00:10:48] Yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:10:49] Even this North Rialto wasn't here at that time.

Artelea Burgess [00:10:52] That's right. I remember.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:10:54] Yeah.

Artelea Burgess [00:10:54] I remember all that.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:10:56] Yeah. So, so, you're in school. And did you go to college?

Artelea Burgess [00:11:02] No.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:11:02] You didn't go to college.

Artelea Burgess [00:11:04] No, I didn't.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:11:04] When did you get the bug for business?

Artelea Burgess [00:11:09] Struggling.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:11:11] Why did you struggle?

Artelea Burgess [00:11:12] Because I was limited in my education.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:11:14] OK.

Artelea Burgess [00:11:15] You understand. So, and you go through life, and [silly] at early age things go, you know, make some decisions is not so good. But, you know, that you have to survive. My mother and father wasn't big on -- coming from the south, like my mother was a... from the nation of the Choctaw Indians.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:11:45] OK.

Artelea Burgess [00:11:45] So, therefore, they wasn't big on education. They didn't know how to teach you that you need to go to school, you need to have a education.

They wasn't big on those. Those Indians were very docile. You know, my grandmother was an Indian. My mother was born in the middle of a situation. So, she was raised on the Indian reservation 'till she was, I think, thirteen years old.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:12:11] And was she total Indian, or did she have black in her?

Artelea Burgess [00:12:15] She had black in her.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:12:16] She had black in her. And then she married a man that had black in him. Or was he native?

Artelea Burgess [00:12:20] My dad was a mixture, also. And his family was all colors. From the same mother and father, but they were all colors. He was real dark. He had some sisters and brothers that was [high yellow] with these eyes and they, you know, like that -- all colors in his family.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:12:45] In his family.

Artelea Burgess [00:12:46] Yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:12:46] Yeah. So, you're out here now. You're finished with school. You're trying to make a living. Did you have babies at that time?

Artelea Burgess [00:12:55] Oh, yeah. I had my first child at seventeen years old.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:13:01] Wow.

Artelea Burgess [00:13:02] Yeah. So you know, you don't know what to do and no one to really guide you. But I'm, you know, in my thing how am I going to feed these kids? You know?

Ratibu Jacocks [00:13:14] And what did you do?

Artelea Burgess [00:13:15] Well...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:13:16] What's the first thing you did? I mean, as you thought, that you're maing money now, making a living, you got to take care of yourself. But that ain't going to take care of y'all.

Artelea Burgess [00:13:24] Well, you know, you go from little jobs, you do factory work. You do whatever you can to make a living. And, as I say, time go on. And, Bill, let me tell you, I didn't know, see, when I had those two babies, I didn't know anything about welfare. So, you know, I was worried to death.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:13:46] Right.

Artelea Burgess [00:13:46] I didn't know anything about it.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:13:47] You had no income coming...

Artelea Burgess [00:13:48] Didn't have any [windows.] When I had my second child, I didn't know that welfare would give you money. And somebody told me, "yeah, they'll give you money!" I said, "for free?"

Ratibu Jacocks [00:13:59] For free?

Artelea Burgess [00:13:59] For free?

Ratibu Jacocks [00:14:01] You don't have to work! [inaudible]

Artelea Burgess [00:14:02] For free? They give you money? And I went and applied. During that time, all you had to do is fill out one piece of paper and you got, I think, it was about seventy-something dollars.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:14:13] A month?

Artelea Burgess [00:14:14] A month, yeah, but then... That would work for me. I'm going to survive off of that.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:14:20] OK.

Artelea Burgess [00:14:21] You know, I'm going to do my best off that. You know, and then you start learning, OK, after a while that's not going to work. So, you know, you start working. And I always worked and received welfare because calculate -- when I calculated my money, if I was working and on welfare, there was more money coming into the house. I wasn't like a lot of people. They said, "I'm not going to work because they'll cut my welfare." But I didn't understand that because when I did the math, that was more money coming into my household. So, I'm going to go to work.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:14:55] So, then you really didn't report to the welfare the money -- extra money that you...

Artelea Burgess [00:15:03] Yes.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:15:04] You had sense enough...

Artelea Burgess [00:15:04] To do it. Yeah, you can't do that, you'd go to jail! And, matter of fact, I got in trouble.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:15:10] You did [get in trouble]?

Artelea Burgess [00:15:11] Yeah. Yeah. And, not that I cheated, I had worked. Then, I got -- I worked for a month and I got off welfare. Those people came back and told me that I had done -- I had committed welfare fraud.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:15:29] Wow.

Artelea Burgess [00:15:31] Yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:15:31] So, did you have to pay money back?

Artelea Burgess [00:15:32] Yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:15:33] You had to pay it back?

Artelea Burgess [00:15:34] Yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:15:34] So, did you ever get back on welfare?

Artelea Burgess [00:15:35] I got back on welfare! That's what I didn't understand. You're going to give me your case for... I got off welfare! I was off for about a year, so.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:15:44] You were independent?

Artelea Burgess [00:15:45] Independent, and they came and [told me...]

Ratibu Jacocks [00:15:46] But, did you have to go back on welfare?

Artelea Burgess [00:15:49] Yes, I went back on welfare.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:15:50] Oh, you went back?

Artelea Burgess [00:15:49] Yeah, [it was] no problem.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:15:52] Because they didn't want to -- They didn't want you to make this extra money...

Artelea Burgess [00:15:57] I don't know... Yeah, it was a month. It wasn't even a month, I think. But, you know, the sad part, what they told me, Bill, they say, "you need to be careful of your friends."

Ratibu Jacocks [00:16:06] So, it was some of your...

Artelea Burgess [00:16:07] One of my friends.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:16:09] They may have been jealous of you.

Artelea Burgess [00:16:10] Yeah, yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:16:10] So, when did you get into the hair business? Or was that your first business?

Artelea Burgess [00:16:20] That was -- the hair business was my first business. But I've always used the programs to benefit me. I wasn't afraid of -- to ask if there's a program that I could do. And I had did -- I went to school for nursing, a nursing attendant. I got a certificate in that. I went to school for computer programming. That's where I should've stayed. But I just didn't have...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:16:46] You was [better] at it?

Artelea Burgess [00:16:47] I -- the man told -- the teacher told me, if he had given me a letter of recommendation, I could go to work for a computer program, a computer place. But I just didn't have that confidence.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:17:00] You didn't?

Artelea Burgess [00:17:00] I just didn't have the confidence.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:17:02] Because...

Artelea Burgess [00:17:03] I was studying programing now.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:17:05] Oh, yeah.

Artelea Burgess [00:17:06] Programming!

Ratibu Jacocks [00:17:06] And that was what year?

Artelea Burgess [00:17:08] That was in the '60s. Yeah. That was in -- '70, '71. No. It was before then, it was before then. Yeah. It was before the end of the '60s. Late '60s.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:17:25] So, you didn't do that and you started... I want to get into your business, now. When did you go into hair?

Artelea Burgess [00:17:35] I went to school in 1970.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:17:40] And got a license.

Artelea Burgess [00:17:41] Got my license, came out. And I don't know if you remember Bob Andrew. I went to work for him. Then I went to [Newbury,] I'd worked for

Bob for a year, and he decided he was going to close down. So, I went to [Newbury], worked for them for four years. And then I...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:18:04] You had a [chair] right in... Were they the same place they are now?

Artelea Burgess [00:18:08] They were right around the corner. Remember, how you walked over that little...?

Ratibu Jacocks [00:18:13] Where [inaudible]?

Artelea Burgess [00:18:14] Yeah, right there. Right over there. And there was the...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:18:18] In the front, more so, then the side.

Artelea Burgess [00:18:21] Yeah. Around the corner, yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:18:21] And that's where you worked?

Artelea Burgess [00:18:22] Yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:18:23] And you gained experience in customer relationship there?

Artelea Burgess [00:18:27] And, you know, what? That's probably the best thing that happened to me because you learn from people. That's where I got my education. The desire to walk more, to do more. People was really... I have friends that -- they encouraged me. You know, I said, you know, we -- I asked Bob, that was the owner there. I said, "why don't we do a little something else?" You know, [inaudible] when he was worried about, "well, you know, maybe we shouldn't do that because then we have to charge people more." But that's OK. They like that. You know, when you find something, you know, give them a little something. They expect that.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:19:09] Right.

Artelea Burgess [00:19:10] But he wasn't...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:19:11] That wasn't his [mission].

Artelea Burgess [00:19:14] Right. So, and then I went to business -- took a class at Valley College, small business class. And that's where I learned location, location, location. And the small things that you do to open a business and what you have to do to give it a little spark to draw attention to your business. So, I went... My education was, like, I went to get what I needed. You know, I didn't... I wasn't... I didn't go there to get a degree. I went there to get what I need...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:19:56] Needed to do... [inaudible]

Artelea Burgess [00:19:56] Right, that's right. That's what I did.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:20:00] So, that's when you moved on Mount Vernon? You moved at that location?

Artelea Burgess [00:20:03] Right next door to the club. Everything was going on then.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:20:09] Right.

Artelea Burgess [00:20:09] You know, and I had a gentleman that came in to help me decorate the shop. And when I had the shop inspected, the gentleman that inspected the shop, he says, "I've been -- I inspect shops all over San Bernardino County," he said, "and I've never seen a shop look like this."

Ratibu Jacocks [00:20:33] You had a black and white floor, I think, when I met you.

Artelea Burgess [00:20:36] No, no.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:20:37] You didn't have [those]?

Artelea Burgess [00:20:37] No. I had carpet. Just a little area where I could hair was linoleum. And then the rest of the shop was a decorative color carpet and it went up the wall, halfway up the wall, and then paneling from the [rest of it.] So...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:20:58] You were laid out.

Artelea Burgess [00:20:59] It was just as cute as it could be!

Ratibu Jacocks [00:21:01] You were first [class.] Well, what made people so attracted to you? This is a different subject. It's more emotional now. People -- I mean, since I met you, I mean, I don't know people who are not attracted to you. What do you think drew -- draws people to you? To like you? And want to do for you and help you?

Artelea Burgess [00:21:26] I think when you just be yourself. And I didn't try to pretend I knew more than anybody else, you know, because I was looking for information. You know, I needed information to help me move forward. And I just don't think -- and I, you know, you treat people like you want to be treated. You don't try to make anyone look small. Matter of fact, you make them look big and then they're going to help you. So, you put all the attention... I find that when you ask questions concerning another person...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:22:05] Right.

Artelea Burgess [00:22:07] You got them.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:22:07] They open up.

Artelea Burgess [00:22:08] They open up!

Ratibu Jacocks [00:22:09] They want to help.

Artelea Burgess [00:22:10] Yeah. Yeah, they want to help.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:22:11] So, you are able to receive that help.

Artelea Burgess [00:22:14] Oh, yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:22:14] And use that help to further your financial needs for you and your family.

Artelea Burgess [00:22:22] Yes.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:22:23] And became a star.

Artelea Burgess [00:22:26] Yeah, I know, but I never looked at it like that. But it worked.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:22:30] It worked for you.

Artelea Burgess [00:22:31] It worked.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:22:31] Right. So, now, you moved next door to Jerry's. Things are happening right there on Mount Vernon. And what year was that?

Artelea Burgess [00:22:43] I moved in there in 1976.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:22:45] '76. And Jerry was -- had already been there for a while.

Artelea Burgess [00:22:52] About three, four or five years before.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:22:56] Because when I first moved here, I'm on my way to meet some people in Palm Springs, but I'm living in L.A. with my cousin. And it was so late, I stopped on Sierra Avenue and the 10, that Motel Six or Five, or whatever is right there. And I asked some people, I say, "when I wake up tomorrow and [do in] the night, where do I go?" And they mentioned two places, they mentioned, if I wanted to stay in Fontana, or Rialto, Edgewood. And if I wanted to come all the way down, I could go to Geri's. And they gave me directions and I saw Bob, but I didn't go in. And then later on, I

moved out here and I saw that... What was going on with Geri's and that part of Mount Vernon when you moved there?

Artelea Burgess [00:23:48] What was going on, [inaudible]? Well, the money was good in San Bernardino.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:23:53] Money was good. People were spending money.

Artelea Burgess [00:23:55] You had Kaiser, you had Santa Fe. You had... What else? It was a third.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:24:03] They was building Norton.

Artelea Burgess [00:24:04] Yeah, Norton. And, so, you had it was...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:24:07] Construction.

Artelea Burgess [00:24:07] Yeah. Construction was going on. People had -- families had money in their pockets. Everybody was spending money.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:24:14] They was spending money.

Artelea Burgess [00:24:15] They was spending money.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:24:15] And you got some of it.

Artelea Burgess [00:24:17] I got some of it.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:24:17] And, so, you were...

Artelea Burgess [00:24:24] Some of everything was going on [there].

Ratibu Jacocks [00:24:26] What were some of the things that was [happening]?

Artelea Burgess [00:24:28] The girls was walking the street.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:24:31] OK.

Artelea Burgess [00:24:31] You know, I mean, let's face it. You know that.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:24:34] Yeah.

Artelea Burgess [00:24:34] Any time you have a popular club, or whatever, that attracts, you know...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:24:39] The girls were making money.

Artelea Burgess [00:24:39] I don't care where you go, they're going to be there.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:24:41] And they're making some money.

Artelea Burgess [00:24:43] They maked money, yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:24:43] And you did told me about people who were selling things.

Artelea Burgess [00:24:47] Yeah. Selling...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:24:48] Vendors.

Artelea Burgess [00:24:50] Oh, you had a lot of people that had their little own businesses. They buy clothes, they get their license and sell clothes out of the trunk of their cars. And then you had people... What was his name? That had the clothing store on Baseline there?

Ratibu Jacocks [00:25:09] I don't know. Amina may know.

Artelea Burgess [00:25:13] But you had people did... Little small things would make them a decent living.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:25:18] Right.

Artelea Burgess [00:25:19] Yeah, because people had money.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:25:21] So, you had hotels around there. And, so, the girls were going into.. Had -- they were paying for rooms? Would they come to you to get their hair?

Artelea Burgess [00:25:35] Oh, yeah. Not only girls. The preachers, the preachers' wives. The pimps, everyone. Everyone was right there!

Ratibu Jacocks [00:25:45] They were coming to you!

Artelea Burgess [00:25:45] Yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:25:45] And what -- so, did you see yourself making a good living at that time?

Artelea Burgess [00:25:51] I made a good living. I made a good living. I think I was making, during that time, two people working in the family. I was making that kind of money. If they had a person, with a wife and a husband working, I was...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:26:09] You were making both of them.

Artelea Burgess [00:26:11] I was making both their salaries.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:26:13] Wow. So, how did that make you feel?

Artelea Burgess [00:26:17] At the time, it... I didn't really know it when I was doing it, you know. But I knew I was making money, and... But money didn't... It wasn't like, "oh. You really doing things. You making this kind of money." I know I was able to buy my kids what they needed. I was able to buy me a couple... But I've always bought homes, you know, even through programs. But I was able to buy a couple homes at the same time, you know, and just live life. It was just, you know, I didn't worry about anything.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:26:57] Let me ask you this, were your boss lady? That's what I heard. That you were... You ran things.

Artelea Burgess [00:27:04] In that shop.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:27:05] But not in the... Not -- not around that area.

Artelea Burgess [00:27:09] No, no.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:27:09] You weren't the boss of that.

Artelea Burgess [00:27:10] No, no. But if a girl came out and she would stand on that corner and she would stop somebody from coming in that shop. I'd go to her and explain to her, "I'm not concerned about your business."

Ratibu Jacocks [00:27:26] Right.

Artelea Burgess [00:27:26] "But please do not stop anyone from coming into my shop."

Ratibu Jacocks [00:27:29] It's your business.

Artelea Burgess [00:27:30] For making my money.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:27:30] And they respected you for that?

Artelea Burgess [00:27:32] We respected each other. I didn't go out there insulting anyone, or anything like that. Those girls, for whatever reason, you do what you do. It's not my business to judge. You know, the... Even in, I mean, did Jesus judge? No. He told you what he thought you needed to know, but he wasn't judging. And that's the attitude that you have to have. You don't know what those people are going through.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:27:59] You don't know what they're going through.

Artelea Burgess [00:28:00] You don't know what they're going through.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:28:01] So, did they do counsel with them?

Artelea Burgess [00:28:03] If they wanted to talk.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:28:04] Did you give them any money?

Artelea Burgess [00:28:05] Yes. If they need money, yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:28:07] And you... Did you make contact for them, if they needed something else downtown?

Artelea Burgess [00:28:13] If... I would tell them, the best I could, go to so-and-so and do such a thing. You know, [that's the only thing...].

Ratibu Jacocks [00:28:20] Did you know Art Townsend at that time?

Artelea Burgess [00:28:20] Oh, I... I loved Art Townsend.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:28:23] But did he help some of these people?

Artelea Burgess [00:28:24] I think he... He gave advice.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:28:29] That's what I meant by helping.

Artelea Burgess [00:28:30] Yeah. Yeah, he gave advice. Yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:28:32] Who were some of the other men?

Artelea Burgess [00:28:36] People.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:28:36] Yeah. And women, too? That could help people downtown.

Artelea Burgess [00:28:39] Are you talking about Frances' niece. What's her name? She was a councilwoman.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:28:49] Frances...

Artelea Burgess [00:28:50] Niece, or cousin.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:28:51] Oh, you're talking about Valerie.

Artelea Burgess [00:28:53] Valerie Pope. You know, all these people. They were wonderful people. They didn't beat up anyone and try to judge anyone. If I give you some advice and you took it, that's good.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:29:06] But you didn't try to embarrass them or change them, even.

Artelea Burgess [00:29:12] Well, you know, what? You still can't change. I think the desire has to be theirs.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:29:19] From within.

Artelea Burgess [00:29:19] You have to want the desire to change. You have to want something better. I know that's the way I was. You know, didn't anyone preach to me, "Oh, you know, you shouldn't do this or that." People -- I had the desire to change, and they saw that, and they helped me. And that's what you do to people. You know, it's not your business. What they're...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:29:42] So, if I understand correctly, as people helped you, you helped others.

Artelea Burgess [00:29:48] You have to.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:29:49] And you... Did you feel obligated to do that? Or you just saw the need? What made you want to do that?

Artelea Burgess [00:29:54] You see the need. You see the needy, you want to. You know, you see the need.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:30:02] And, so, another event that used to happen when I first came here, and I realized, was the Black Athlete Hall of Fame.

Artelea Burgess [00:30:10] Oh, that was the thing.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:30:12] And that was it last Saturday in February. And people dressed up, and fixed up, and put up lipstick, and went out. And did they... Do you get business from that activity?

Artelea Burgess [00:30:23] Oh, yeah. Because they had to get ready. Oh, yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:30:27] They had to get ready.

Artelea Burgess [00:30:29] They had to get ready! "Do you know anybody with a dress this weekend? [I'll tell you!]" They had to get ready!

Ratibu Jacocks [00:30:35] So, do you make referrals for people who make other things besides the hair?

Artelea Burgess [00:30:39] Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:30:41] So, do people come to you, or...?

Artelea Burgess [00:30:44] Yeah, "I need a dress!" Well, you know, you had boosters [during that time,] too.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:30:47] Yeah, that's what I know.

Artelea Burgess [00:30:47] Yeah. Yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:30:48] And you had to know who was doing what.

Artelea Burgess [00:30:50] Yeah, "check with so-and-so, maybe they can get you what you need."

Ratibu Jacocks [00:30:52] So, that's where I got the impression that you were the boss lady. See, I don't know. I'm telling you now when I'm asking you these questions, I want to know you, you know. And, so, the Hall of Fame is going on, and people dressing up, and people are partying and coming out. And a lot of business and trade is going on. On Mount Vernon... [what to what] would you say this activity...?

Artelea Burgess [00:31:22] Oh.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:31:22] I'll get to Jerry -- I mean...

Artelea Burgess [00:31:25] Well. Well, you remember... See, they had, where that church is there at Seventeenth Street. I think there was a club in that little church area. But that may have been before I moved to Mount Vernon. May have been the... It may have been there already and gone. But I guess from Sixteenth Street on down to probably...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:31:58] Did it go to Baseline?

Artelea Burgess [00:31:58] Yeah, yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:31:59] Went away... A little further down?

Artelea Burgess [00:32:01] Yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:32:02] Do you remember the beauty shops on Medical Center, south of Baseline? I think there was one down there.

Artelea Burgess [00:32:09] Yeah. The House of Beauty there.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:32:11] Yeah.

Artelea Burgess [00:32:11] Right next to Garrett's.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:32:13] Yeah.

Artelea Burgess [00:32:13] Yeah, yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:32:15] So, they were now on the other side but you.... So, you went with the group that moved further...

Artelea Burgess [00:32:25] Then you had my lady Chris. She was on Mount Vernon.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:32:30] She was on... So, [that's steps forward blacks were one time] before they moved further West. You know, New Hope and St. Paul and all that came later on the other side of Medical Center. I don't know if you know Muscot. Before, they weren't living that far -- the early stage.

Artelea Burgess [00:32:51] Well, you see, not... You mean black residents?

Ratibu Jacocks [00:32:56] Yes, residents.

Artelea Burgess [00:32:56] Oh, no, they had all that there in... Was that... Well, we called it Muscot.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:33:06] Yeah.

Artelea Burgess [00:33:06] And, oh, what's that street? Sixteenth? Well, back...Sixteenth Street... Magnolia. All that was owned by blacks. All that was owned by blacks.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:33:27] Those houses, all back there. Now, the guy... [inaudible], you know, by the hospital. Coming out of the hospital.

Artelea Burgess [00:33:37] Gilbert, yeah. All that.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:33:39] Did you know Mr. Mulligan?

Artelea Burgess [00:33:39] I didn't know Mr. Mulligan.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:33:39] Your dad...?

Artelea Burgess [00:33:40] I did not.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:33:43] He's an attorney. And his people own a lot of that property. I'm going to interview him, too. He's a white guy, but he knows the early comings of the blacks who moved in those houses [on Twenty-Fifth Street].

Artelea Burgess [00:33:55] But those on West of Medical Center and Magnolia, I think Mr. Townsend's ex-father-in-law...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:34:05] Mr. Humphrey.

Artelea Burgess [00:34:09] Mr. Humphrey. All of those people bought those houses when they were new, I thought.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:34:14] Yeah, and they're probably dead. But this was a group, I guess, that was further.

Artelea Burgess [00:34:20] Yeah, [down...].

Ratibu Jacocks [00:34:20] And smaller homes. They weren't as big as these homes on Sixteenth Street. Where [Claude Diggs] and all them live in those big homes. John Johnson. Were they living there at that time? During the time we're speaking of now, when Geri was popping?

Artelea Burgess [00:34:38] Yeah. Diggs, and all those I think, were living on Sixteenth Street then.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:34:46] So, who were some of the players? The main players? Because I know drugs wasn't nearly, if there were any, I don't think so at all. But, I'm talking about the clothing, the girls, the...

Artelea Burgess [00:35:00] There was....

Ratibu Jacocks [00:35:00] Gambling...

Artelea Burgess [00:35:05] There was Sidney Stevens, which is probably the most popular player.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:35:12] Was he a black guy?

Artelea Burgess [00:35:13] Yes.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:35:14] OK. And was he a pimp?

Artelea Burgess [00:35:17] Mhmm.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:35:17] Or was he... So, he had girls. And, what kind of guy was he?

Artelea Burgess [00:35:23] Clean as a whistle.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:35:24] He was clean as a whistle.

Artelea Burgess [00:35:26] He was so pretty... I mean, he had these.... We all have flaws, but he was so shy.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:35:34] He was?

Artelea Burgess [00:35:35] Oh, he was shy.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:35:36] And he dressed nice? How did he treat the women?

Artelea Burgess [00:35:39] Well, I can only say what I saw.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:35:43] And what you know.

Artelea Burgess [00:35:44] Yeah, yeah. You know, I mean, yeah. I guess you had to go into your pimp mode and, you know, to me, he was... He was just, you know, check on his girls and going about his business.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:35:58] Now, did they come into Jerry's?

Artelea Burgess [00:35:59] Yeah, yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:36:00] Well, did they come into Geri's to make money, relax, or make new customers?

Artelea Burgess [00:36:05] Well, I think they did, but sometimes they would... I think some of the, I guess if you maybe wouldn't have favorites there, they would kind of push them aside.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:36:18] They did?

Artelea Burgess [00:36:20] That was probably after Sidney had died because he was killed there.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:36:23] This guy you're talking about was killed?

Artelea Burgess [00:36:25] Was killed.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:36:26] What was he killed for you? Do you remember?

Artelea Burgess [00:36:28] From what I understand, that he was killed because he had another lady that was out in the street had approached him. She wanted to become part of his stable. And the man that she had belonged to didn't like it.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:36:45] Oh, OK.

Artelea Burgess [00:36:46] And he shot him and killed him.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:36:47] Oh, God. Now, how about gambling? Were people gambling?

Artelea Burgess [00:36:52] Yeah, yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:36:52] And who was making money? Or who was controlling that? It had to be a bank. Do you know?

Artelea Burgess [00:36:56] Well, let's see. They would go... I think there was an area right over there by Ragman.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:37:04] Yeah, Ragman.

Artelea Burgess [00:37:05] Yeah, yeah. I think either it's Ragman's or next door, somewhere in there they... That's where they had a little gambling thing going. That's where... that's what I understand. I never would go because I don't gamble.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:37:16] OK, there was the Elks.

Artelea Burgess [00:37:20] Those places. Yeah. That was on... yeah, they was down the street. **Ratibu Jacocks** [00:37:26] They were?

Artelea Burgess [00:37:27] And then there was one further down across Fifth street. But I think they bought that place there at that Tenth, Eleventh Street.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:37:36] Yeah. Somewhere in there. And so, did they -- was that a popular place? Or just a club-y type place?

Artelea Burgess [00:37:43] Yeah. Yeah, yeah. It was, you know...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:37:44] For the public.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:37:46] Yeah. They would come in there, the public would come, you know, yeah. If you were a club member, I think you would get it free. But if you were public you pay five, ten dollars, whatever it was.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:37:57] But the preachers hang out over there. Did they have secret rendezvous over there?

Artelea Burgess [00:38:04] I... You know what, that's something that... They would come to the shop and we would respect them. And it's, "oh, it's OK." You know, "just be yourself." You know... they'd get their...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:38:14] Y'all trying not to curse.

Artelea Burgess [00:38:20] Yeah, yeah. You know, you try to be respectful. And not talk about certain things, because that's the way, you know, your mom and daddy taught you, you know... Reverend's son over there, so, you know, so you be nice!

Ratibu Jacocks [00:38:36] They still hung out there...

Artelea Burgess [00:38:37] They came, they came. They was never in a hurry to leave, or anything.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:38:41] They [kind of] enjoyed it.

Artelea Burgess [00:38:42] Yeah, they seemed to enjoy it.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:38:45] Were they in there witnessing or were they in there trying to look good?

Artelea Burgess [00:38:49] They're trying look good, they had to look good.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:38:51] They were trying to look good. For Sunday.

Artelea Burgess [00:38:54] Yeah, yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:38:55] So, you were a barber and a beauty?

Artelea Burgess [00:38:59] I was a barber originally.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:39:00] OK.

Artelea Burgess [00:39:00] Because I knew that it's a little hard accumulating a clientele if I'm a beautician. But I'm a young woman, I look -- you know, I was almost thirty years old, but they didn't know it.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:39:17] And pretty.

Artelea Burgess [00:39:17] You know, I didn't know that. That's the one thing. I wish I knew that I...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:39:23] You never knew that you were beautiful.

Artelea Burgess [00:39:25] I never knew that I was an attractive woman.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:39:27] You didn't? Isn't that something. Yeah. A lot of people don't see that... Well, see...

Artelea Burgess [00:39:35] The esteem wasn't there.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:39:36] Well, I think what people look at a lot of time, at themselves, they're looking at

their physical being, and not the attractiveness that's coming out of them.

Artelea Burgess [00:39:46] Right, right. I didn't know that.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:39:46] You know, and they don't see that.

Artelea Burgess [00:39:48] I didn't know that.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:39:49] Other people to feel it, but they...

Artelea Burgess [00:39:49] But I didn't, I didn't know it.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:39:51] So, you didn't know that. And... Now, how about the police? I wanted to ask you about them. How did they treat the activity that was going on?

Artelea Burgess [00:40:04] They were ugly at times.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:40:06] They were?

Artelea Burgess [00:40:07] They were.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:40:07] They didn't it.

Artelea Burgess [00:40:08] They were just ugly. I think that, you know, certain people just wanted control over the black community. And they were ugly at times. I remember I was at work late, and that's when I had that sports Mercedes. Me and my two sons was in the car, leaving the shop, going home. Two sons. They pulled me over. I asked them what for. They said suspicion of prostitution.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:40:39] Wow.

Artelea Burgess [00:40:39] And they looked over, and say, "what's your name?" I said, "his name is John."

He got to be a John. You're accusing me of prostitution, with my two sons in the car? You're kidding.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:40:53] Wow. And, so...

Artelea Burgess [00:40:56] They refused to let me go. I said, I'm... "then you need to take me to jail because I'm not giving you my license if you're not going to give me a ticket. I'm not going." My son -- "Mama, please, just give them what they want so we could go home."

Ratibu Jacocks [00:41:14] Don't leave us [inaudible].

Artelea Burgess [00:41:14] Well, my oldest son had license, so I told [him] "take the car and go home."

Ratibu Jacocks [00:41:18] So, so...

Artelea Burgess [00:41:19] So, stuff like that.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:41:20] So, you always had, what you call it -- strength. To speak up, to do things... You weren't scared. You weren't a scared person then.

Artelea Burgess [00:41:28] I had be, I had to protect myself and my children. That's all I knew to do. Is protect myself and my family.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:41:39] So, the father wasn't in the picture? No? And how about, men?

Artelea Burgess [00:41:44] I had some pretty cool guys.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:41:46] You did?

Artelea Burgess [00:41:47] Well, they they had... Pretty cool guys. They had positions. I mean, I'm not going to name them, you know.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:41:51] Yeah, [inaudible].

Artelea Burgess [00:41:51] But they had good positions. So, that's something that my sons had to look up.

You know, these police or lawyers or somebody that, you know...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:42:02] You knew them, too.

Artelea Burgess [00:42:03] Yeah, I knew them.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:42:04] And you had a relationship...

Artelea Burgess [00:42:06] I had a relationship with them.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:42:08] With them... And your sons respected...

Artelea Burgess [00:42:08] And they knew that. Right. A couple of them didn't like. But, you know, we got over that.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:42:15] Did they....so, they protect you, or...?

Artelea Burgess [00:42:17] Oh, my sons? Yeah, yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:42:19] Not your sons. These other contacts that you...

Artelea Burgess [00:42:21] Yeah, well, they were sensible men. That was knowledge, also. You know, they were sensible men. You know, and the ones that weren't sensible that I ran into all this time ago...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:42:35] So, you didn't have a problem getting rid of bad apples?

Artelea Burgess [00:42:39] You have to get rid of them. You can't let them pull you. You know, you have... and the thing I looked at --- you have children just looking at you. How are they going to feel when they see their Mama being dragged through the mud?

Ratibu Jacocks [00:42:54] So you were never drug through the mud? You wouldn't allow yourself?

Artelea Burgess [00:42:58] Not all the way down. You know, you go through changes in the relationship, but you deal with it. You think on it, you sleep on a day or two, and then you just go on about your business. Go on about your business. You can't make anyone do what you want to do. You can't make them be the person if they're not already that person. You can't turn people around. You know, that's their business.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:43:19] So, there's a quote that the... some bad experience, or a bad thing. I'm not quoting it right. When people come out of that, it shapes them to be better. What type of experience that you had that made you a better person at the end of the low point that you can talk about?

Artelea Burgess [00:43:42] I can't think of a experience. I think it was a lot of small experiences. You know, your association that you... well, you see that they're toxic in your life, OK? And they think they think I'm cool and you don't want to just tear them down. You know, how to get out of that relationship, how to come away and be a person of your own. And that's what I had to learn how to do. I've had many relationships. I mean, I got even a friendship that I thought was good. But after a while, I find that I need to move.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:44:23] OK.

Artelea Burgess [00:44:24] I had to move out of it. And still smile at them and go about my business.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:44:30] And not get hurt in the process.

Artelea Burgess [00:44:31] And not hurting you, and not hurting me.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:44:34] Right. You were able...

Artelea Burgess [00:44:36] Yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:44:36] How do you learn that?

Artelea Burgess [00:44:39] Because you don't want to be there. I don't want to be that... I like you, you know. But I don't want to be that. I don't want to be like you. I want to be who I am. And I have to move out of certain relationships, out of certain patterns, to be who I am. I don't want to be like that. I like you. I think you're fine person, but I don't want to be that.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:45:06] So, did you ever join any of the community-based organizations that was going on at the time? Were you a joiner?

Artelea Burgess [00:45:12] No.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:45:14] You were not a joiner.

Artelea Burgess [00:45:15] No. I support you. And do all [that]...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:45:20] Do people ask for the...?

Artelea Burgess [00:45:20] Yeah, donations and everything. And can I... can you do this for me [auntie]? Yeah, I'll do it, but I wasn't a joiner.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:45:29] You wasn't the president of none of those organizations?

Artelea Burgess [00:45:32] No.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:45:32] Why? Do you...

Artelea Burgess [00:45:34] I just felt -- I felt like I was limited on ideas, so I didn't want to stumble into [one.] And that was a shortcoming that I had, you know, I don't know. And maybe I should have felt a little better about myself because people would come to me.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:45:54] So you didn't... two ways you're telling me. First of all, you didn't know how beautiful you were.

Artelea Burgess [00:46:02] I didn't.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:46:02] Now, you didn't how... didn't think you have the competency to do it. **Artelea Burgess** [00:46:07] Right. I didn't think I had competency.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:46:08] [inaudible] was wrong about this, how you knew. So, how were you able to excel with that type of [inner]...? Because, I know you don't feel that with Jehovah. You don't like it. So, what... how do you aim to survive that?

Artelea Burgess [00:46:28] Hmm. I never thought of that, but I guess -- I guess the will to survive. I think we all have the will to survive. And we survive the best we can with what we think we have without putting pressure on anyone else. But we all, I think, have the will to survive. And that's what I think that I saw, even as a little girl, when Daddy said... When I said, "Daddy, I need some... I want some shoes." He said, "baby, I don't have... I don't... I can't... I don't have the money." So what do you do? You do without. But then I thought, I said, "OK, if you're... There's no one that'll make you happy, you have to make yourself happy." You know, you can't wait for someone else to make you happy. And, so, that's... I just... I just do me.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:47:32] OK. So who, in this group of people out there, that have helped you the most, and helped you the most that you could point to, and raise their name up.

Artelea Burgess [00:47:43] Wanda Wells.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:47:43] Wanda Wells?

Artelea Burgess [00:47:47] Yeah. Was one of the people that no matter what you do, if he didn't like what you were doing, he'd tell you need to stop.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:47:57] He would?

Ratibu Jacocks [00:47:58] [Wanda Wells]?

Artelea Burgess [00:47:59] [Wanda Wells] is one of the straight forwardest people I've ever met in my life. You know... Him and his family...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:48:06] What's his sister's name? You know her.

Artelea Burgess [00:48:06] Clara Fae.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:48:06] Clara Fae.

Artelea Burgess [00:48:09] That's his... Wanda's sister. The gentleman that I'm talking about. He's one of the most straightforwardest persons you can ever meet.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:48:19] And, Mrs. Wells. Mother Wells was a member of Temple for years. You know, Jule Wells?

Unknown [00:48:26] Right. That was here the other day.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:48:28] Yeah, that was here the other day. So, they come out of that family. Never heard this about Wanda.

Unknown [00:48:30] No, no. Wanda was...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:48:33] Upholstering man.

Unknown [00:48:35] Yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:48:35] You know, Crystal's uncle...

Unknown [00:48:38] Yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:48:38] Something like that.

Unknown [00:48:39] Yeah. Yeah, that's right.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:48:40] Yeah. So, yeah. So, Wanda Wells. Yeah, I wouldn't expect that name.

Artelea Burgess [00:48:44] Oh, yes. Oh, yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:48:46] Who else?

Artelea Burgess [00:48:47] Mr. Townsend was a wonderful person. Chris Joyner, because when I moved, she was a hairdresser. When I moved out on my own, she did every little thing she could to help me.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:49:03] She did?

Artelea Burgess [00:49:05] Yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:49:05] She was a beautician, too?.

Artelea Burgess [00:49:06] She was a beautician, too. But she wasn't afraid to help another beautician.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:49:11] She wasn't? She enjoyed it?

Artelea Burgess [00:49:13] She gave me things. "Here, Artelea. Here, here." You know...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:49:19] And what made her... Was she like that in general? Or was she attracted to what you were about?

Artelea Burgess [00:49:25] I think she was like that in general. You know, she was the kind of woman... She wasn't afraid to help another beautician, you know. And that's something I learned. When a young woman leave that shop, help them. Given them good advice, give them a little package to go with.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:49:40] So, you didn't try to hold them down?

Artelea Burgess [00:49:44] No. Why? It makes for bad relationships.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:49:46] But did you think that they were going to steal your customers?

Artelea Burgess [00:49:49] And a lot of them did! That's OK!

Ratibu Jacocks [00:49:50] They did!

Artelea Burgess [00:49:50] That's OK! What I learned: you a hairdresser, she's a hairdresser, I'm a hairdresser. You're not going to do everybody.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:50:01] You can't do it.

Artelea Burgess [00:50:02] You can't do everybody.

Artelea Burgess [00:50:04] You can't do everybody.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:50:06] And that was an attitude that you had.

Artelea Burgess [00:50:09] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:50:10] So, what advice do you give young people now, about business? And what are some of the things that's important to stay in business and be able to support yourself when you get our age? That's what I'm talking about because a lot of people make it when they're young. Prostitutes make money. They don't...

Artelea Burgess [00:50:31] Have a dime when they...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:50:33] I'm interviewing a lady now, who was a prostitute. She's so beat up and she's homeless [and she's sixty-five] and got a lot of other things going on. And, I know, I can't wait to ask her what could she have done differently. So, what could you say to...?

Artelea Burgess [00:50:51] And I tell anybody to come to that shop, if you make a dollar, save a dime of it. And don't let your children, your husband, anybody know about that savings.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:51:03] That dime!

Artelea Burgess [00:51:04] Because you might have to help them. You know, when I was coming up, I heard old people say "if you have property, you'll be all right." And for some reason [or another], every opportunity that I had to get a piece of property, I would do it. And that's one of the things that saved me. And I have made a lot of money. But I didn't have any idea what to do with it. I was making so much money. When you had ten, fifteen thousand dollars in a checking account.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:51:37] Wow.

Artelea Burgess [00:51:37] That's stupid! That's stupid. In a checking account?

Ratibu Jacocks [00:51:42] Checking account...

Artelea Burgess [00:51:42] In checking account! It would be at least ten thousand dollars in my checking account.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:51:47] Wow.

Artelea Burgess [00:51:48] So, I didn't know that I could pull that money and put it in a -- in a savings. Just automatically come out every month in it. Finally, I met a young man that showed me how to do that, and I started saving it, just coming automatically

out of my business account. I kept my personal account and I kept a business account. You keep those things separate.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:52:11] Separate.

Artelea Burgess [00:52:11] You keep them separate. You treat it like a business. Count your money, so you know what you're worth. And don't you don't work out of your pocket. If they don't take my check, my business check, I don't do business with you. I don't do business. Because that's how I keep keep things going. But you have to treat it -- You, and the business that you go in. It's good if you like it, and you go into business with the thing that you know most about. If you know more about this thing than all the other things then that's the business you go into. But save some money. I don't care what you do. I spent money.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:52:51] You lost and wasted money by not knowing how to manage it.

Artelea Burgess [00:52:55] Oh, yes, I did. Yes, I did. Yes, I did. I wasted a lot of money.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:53:01] And what did you waste it on?

Artelea Burgess [00:53:03] Kids. At the shop. You know, I'd buy food every Saturday for everybody...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:53:12] In the shop?

Artelea Burgess [00:53:13] Yeah, you know. Yeah, we had some fun there. I had fun.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:53:19] You had fun.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:53:20] So. So, although, you look at it and say, "I could have done it better..."

Artelea Burgess [00:53:24] I could have did better.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:53:25] But you still enjoyed yourself.

Artelea Burgess [00:53:26] I enjoyed myself and I'm all right.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:53:29] And you're still all right.

Artelea Burgess [00:53:32] I'm all right.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:53:32] You can't, you can't beat that.

Artelea Burgess [00:53:34] I'm all right. You know, I could have had more money, but I'm all right.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:53:38] Right.

Artelea Burgess [00:53:39] I'm all right.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:53:39] So, you had sense enough not to blow everything, and you probably could... Did you think the money was going to continue to come when you were younger?

Artelea Burgess [00:53:48] You know, what? Do you remember [Don] Townsend?

Ratibu Jacocks [00:53:50] Yes.

Artelea Burgess [00:53:51] One day. You know, he would, Don would talk, you know...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:53:55] Don [was] Don.

Artelea Burgess [00:53:55] Yeah. Yeah, he would. He looked at me. He was in my chair and I was cutting his hair. He said "you all right right now." He said, "but there's gonna come a time when it won't be like this."

Ratibu Jacocks [00:54:05] He did?

Artelea Burgess [00:54:06] Yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:54:06] You're going to be older.. or? That's what he thought?

Artelea Burgess [00:54:09] This is not gonna happen. And that's what we have to consider. What's going to happen to you when you get old?

Ratibu Jacocks [00:54:14] Right.

Artelea Burgess [00:54:15] What's going to happen to you when you get old?

Ratibu Jacocks [00:54:17] That's right.

Artelea Burgess [00:54:18] You need to start thinking about it. Don, I will never forget what he said. You know, in other words, see, I was at my peak during that time.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:54:27] And he told you...

Artelea Burgess [00:54:28] People was everywhere in that shop, waiting to get in these chairs. He said, "you're on high side now, but it's not going to be like this always."

Ratibu Jacocks [00:54:38] Why did he say that? He just knew life was like that, huh?

Artelea Burgess [00:54:41] Yeah, and I appreciate it. Sometimes, you think people being mean, but they telling you something.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:54:49] You didn't think he was trying to put you down?

Artelea Burgess [00:54:51] No. I don't think... But maybe being afraid is a good thing.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:54:56] Yeah.

Artelea Burgess [00:54:56] Yeah. Being afraid...and he did scare me. You're right. I'm going to be an old woman. If I live, I'm going to be an old woman.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:55:04] Right.

Artelea Burgess [00:55:04] You know.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:55:05] And you still got to take care of yourself.

Artelea Burgess [00:55:07] You got to take care of yourself. I am so fortunate I don't have anybody living with me. My children taking care of themselves, doing an excellent job taking care of themselves. And I'm living in my house by myself.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:55:20] How long you been there?

Artelea Burgess [00:55:21] In that house?

Ratibu Jacocks [00:55:22] In that house.

Artelea Burgess [00:55:23] Twenty-five years.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:55:25] So, did you buy from Clyde?

Artelea Burgess [00:55:28] I bought it... That house had sit there for two years.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:55:32] And it was Clyde Alexander house?

Artelea Burgess [00:55:35] Right.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:55:36] And it sat there for two years?

Artelea Burgess [00:55:38] Two years. Someone had bought it, they... When he built it and then they lived there for about six years, and it sit there for two years. I bought it in '80... I moved in the first part of '89.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:55:54] Was that your first house? Oh, that wasn't even your first house. **Artelea Burgess** [00:55:58] No. I had so many houses.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:56:00] You were buying houses.

Artelea Burgess [00:56:00] I have been buying houses since I was twenty-four years old.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:56:06] Properties. How many women do you know like you who know that?

Artelea Burgess [00:56:10] I don't know. I don't know.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:56:11] Do you tell them?

Artelea Burgess [00:56:11] If we get into conversation I tell them.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:56:17] But you don't try and impose your...

Artelea Burgess [00:56:18] No, no, no. If you want to know I'll tell you. But, no. I've been buying... Because they had all kind of programs way back then, on Porter Street. Twenty-five dollars down for a little three bedroom house, you know.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:56:34] And you bought it?

Artelea Burgess [00:56:34] And I bought it. Now, back then you would sell it and you run off and leave it. Forty-seven dollars a month, you'd leave it. But one thing I knew, it was cheaper buying a house than it is to rent.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:56:46] You knew that.

Artelea Burgess [00:56:47] I know that.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:56:48] The ownership of it.

Artelea Burgess [00:56:49] Yeah, the ownership. You're not paying as much as you might have to do some things around there. Keep it up. But, you know, I bought it... I bought... After I left there, I went to Rialto. I bought a house. But that was a bad situation. I won't go through that. So, I left there.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:57:11] Were you take your family with you to these [places]?

Artelea Burgess [00:57:12] Oh, yes.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:57:13] OK, so it wasn't just a buy and rent. It was buy to live.

Artelea Burgess [00:57:18] Buy to live. But then I got in the situation when my baby son went to school, he left and went to college. He says... I was on California... Colorado. He said, "Mom, I want you to move from here," you know, because that's when they were shooting and everything. Yeah. He said, "I want you to move." And, then, you know what I saw... I'd walk every morning. I saw the house that I'm in now. And I said, "OK. I should be able to get that for a pretty good deal." I got it for a pretty good deal. I got it for a good deal. It was sitting there a long time. You know, somebody will make a deal with you.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:57:55] So, you still, if I understand correctly, have land and houses now that you don't live in.

Artelea Burgess [00:58:02] Right. I have one that I don't live in now. I had three houses that I was renting for a while. Yeah. Well, the one that I moved out of Colorado, I sold that one. And then I had one out in Valley Farm and I sold that one. So -- because they just got to be too much for me. And let me tell you this. I met a gentleman that told me the value of credit and I learned that credit is your best friend, especially if you're a single woman. You don't have to ask anybody for anything. And I try to tell people that come into the shop, if you're not paying taxes, you're crazy because now you have to put in your mama's name. If you want anything, you're making all this money, you have to put in your mama's name. When your mom and dad... Now your stuff is going to be split between your sisters and brothers. Pay your taxes. Pay your taxes and build you some credit. Out of all those houses, I never was late on one house payment. Never. And I struggled with it.

Ratibu Jacocks [00:59:13] And raised your family.

Artelea Burgess [00:59:14] And raised my family. But I sold two of them and use that to put into a retirement account, you know. And I... have a piece of property and a house that I'm getting ready to try and unload that just...

Ratibu Jacocks [00:59:30] And retire. And use some of the some of the money that you have. What do you do for fun and recreation now? You're not on Mount Vernon and you're not into night life like you knew it. And so what do you do now?

Artelea Burgess [00:59:50] I get up Wednesday, Monday, Wednesday's and Friday's. I go to the pool to exercise. On Tuesday's, I go out and service and do my service to

Jehovah. On Thursday's, I work all day in the shop and sometimes I come in in the afternoons, on those other days. But, and then, Sunday, Saturday, I'm back up, out in service. And, in the afternoon, on Saturday, the friends might be giving little parties or luncheons, or things like that. I go to them, you know, and, then, we play cards and things, and we take trips. You know, we take trips, we go where... when I say the need is great, where preaching is very seldom done. So, we go into those areas and we have a good time.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:00:43] So, we're almost at the hour. But I want to ask you a few questions about the organizational structure of Jehovah's Witness -- talked about it before. One of the things, I know you do, is knock on doors. Another thing, I know you do, is stand out from the supermarket with your...

Artelea Burgess [01:01:05] Literature.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:01:05] With your stuff like this! You know, I know you do that. How is that organized?

And categorized? And how do you keep that -- how do you know that you're successful?

Artelea Burgess [01:01:21] We are successful because we keep records of everything we do. We keep records of the books that we -- of the literature that we place. We keep records of the hours that we serve. When we are out in service, we keep -- it's a record keeping organization, so I report every month the hours that I've done, the books that I've placed with people, the Bible studies that I've studied with. And that's how we know how the organization is growing.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:01:58] And everybody is doing this?

Artelea Burgess [01:02:00] Everybody's doing it.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:02:00] And now, who... how much do you pay for these books?

Artelea Burgess [01:02:05] We don't pay anything. You don't pay anything. But it's -- I donate. I do know that the organization needs funding.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:02:14] Right.

Artelea Burgess [01:02:15] But we don't ask anything from you.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:02:17] No?

Artelea Burgess [01:02:17] Because the scriptures also tell us God's word is free. You can get Bibles. And the most progressive thing that's going on now is J.W.org. You can

get any information on that you want to. You can get Bibles in, I think, eight different languages. You can -- no. You can get eight different Bibles in probably hundreds of different languages.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:02:51] Wow.

Artelea Burgess [01:02:51] On that website,.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:02:52] Free?

Artelea Burgess [01:02:54] Free. God's word is free. You get -- you receive freely, you give freely. And we do what the Bible says.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:03:03] So, when you build a hall, that's what you call it. You don't call it a church. It's the Kingdom Hall.

Artelea Burgess [01:03:11] Kingdom Hall.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:03:11] So you build that. Now, how is that done? I mean, collectively?

Artelea Burgess [01:03:16] Collectively, all the labor is free. The only thing -- everything we do... Everything is free. Those brothers get out there and build on their own time. No one is paid. We have to pay for the materials.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:03:35] That's what I thought.

Artelea Burgess [01:03:35] Yeah, we have to pay for the material. But every piece of labor is free.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:03:39] It's free. And... Suppose you can't do anything...?

Artelea Burgess [01:03:45] It's OK.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:03:46] You don't know no trade, you don't do anything...

Artelea Burgess [01:03:47] That's OK. You can sit out there and pass spoons out because we -- we have a... We fix lunch...

Ratibu Jacocks [01:03:53] Pass what out?

Artelea Burgess [01:03:53] Spoons.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:03:53] Spoons, OK.

Artelea Burgess [01:03:56] We fix lunch for those people that are coming out, [for] free. We -- the different sisters and brothers, we say, "OK, a certain group fixes lunch, a certain group fixes a breakfast." We bring it in there. So, if you can't do anything, if you're old and can't do anything, then give them a fork and a knife and a napkin, get your plate and go. Everybody can do something.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:04:18] And then they help clean up?

Artelea Burgess [01:04:19] We kept clean. There's no one... Every night, when we leave that hall, there's a certain group of people that clean the hall before we leave.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:04:30] Before you leave.

Artelea Burgess [01:04:31] Before we leave.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:04:32] So, when the next group come in...

Artelea Burgess [01:04:33] It's clean.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:04:37] Now, who is instructing people to do that?

Artelea Burgess [01:04:40] Jehovah.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:04:42] Well...

Artelea Burgess [01:04:43] Jehovah, we go to the Bible.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:04:45] I know that. You know, I know that.

Artelea Burgess [01:04:48] Yeah, yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:04:48] Because you can say, well, the map got me here. On the GPS. But somebody had to drive it and someone has to put gas in the car. Who is doing this part of it?

Artelea Burgess [01:04:59] There's brothers in headquarters in New York City.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:05:03] OK.

Artelea Burgess [01:05:04] They get together. There's certain committees that handle certain things. There's a committee that studies the Bible and gives you the information that [is in watchtowers] and things like that. There's a committee that, say, because a certain area has not been preached in, this committee that takes care of that. There's committees. There's different committees, and it comes down to us.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:05:36] And, so, you just kind of know where you fit in and you get in there on your own? Nobody... I'm trying to get a handle on this organization part of it.

Artelea Burgess [01:05:45] Yeah, yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:05:45] How do you know the day is today? And you say you do something on Wednesday...

Artelea Burgess [01:05:55] Yeah, yeah. OK, so, actually... So, actually, you do what you want to do. You don't have to do anything. But, you know, through the preaching work, we know that we need to help people come into the organization. We need to help people that... Jesus talked about the [scammed] and the people that have -- are just gone astray. We need to know, we need to help those people. So, this is what this organization is all about. So, if you feel like going out in the preaching work, brother, where can I go [to help? What can I do?

Ratibu Jacocks [01:06:40] So...

Artelea Burgess [01:06:41] And everyone...

Ratibu Jacocks [01:06:42] It becomes natural, then. For those that want to.

Artelea Burgess [01:06:45] Everyone, though, no matter what position you have, go out in the preaching work. I don't care who you are.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:06:52] Everybody's doing that.

Artelea Burgess [01:06:53] Everybody. There is nobody... Because that's what Jesus did.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:06:58] So, there's nobody who is standing in the hall while you all go out and knock on doors.

Artelea Burgess [01:07:05] No. They come, too.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:07:06] One of the questions that I got -- and Flo wanted to know the answer to this -- is blood transfusion for Jehovah's Witnesses, the position on that.

Artelea Burgess [01:07:21] We do not take the blood. Now, if you go on J.W.org, there's several videos of how the doctors -- and other doctors are coming to know this and understand it, too -- the position on blood. They'll give you everything you need to know -- why. And doctors are finding out that a person is better off when they do not have blood transfusion. They heal much quicker.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:07:49] What is blood transfusion? I'm not sure...

Artelea Burgess [01:07:52] The blood that you get from somebody, drawn from somebody...

Ratibu Jacocks [01:07:53] So, if I have an accident and I need blood -- is that blood transfusion?

Artelea Burgess [01:07:59] Yeah.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:08:00] And, so, don't take it? And you [better]...

Artelea Burgess [01:08:03] Because the Bible says sustain from blood, from fornication and from blood. Because who gives...

Ratibu Jacocks [01:08:11] From fornication and blood at the same place?

Artelea Burgess [01:08:14] Well, these are the two things.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:08:15] OK.

Artelea Burgess [01:08:16] These are the two things.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:08:18] That you stay away from?

Artelea Burgess [01:08:19] Right. Because who gives life? That's right. He alone has the right to give life.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:08:29] And he takes the life.

Artelea Burgess [01:08:30] That's right. And life is in the blood.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:08:32] So, so -- is that a doctrine from the word? Not from somebody [who just came up with it]?

Artelea Burgess [01:08:38] No, no. That's from the Bible.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:08:41] And [y'all] -- as much as you can because [nobody's] perfect. You try to follow it.

Artelea Burgess [01:08:47] That's right.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:08:48] So, on a scale of zero being the worst, ten being the best. How would you rate yourself as a Witness?

Artelea Burgess [01:08:56] I would say in the middle or –

Ratibu Jacocks [01:09:00] Five?

Artelea Burgess [01:09:01] Yeah. Or above. Just like you said, we all [fall short of the] glory. You know. And I'm doing the best I can. I'm always -- and the Bible also lets us know that you're not perfect.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:09:14] Right.

Artelea Burgess [01:09:14] You know, even when we look at Peter, you know. Jesus knew that he was gonna fall. Three times, didn't he? You know, he denied it. You know, but he forgave him. He forgave him and Peter became one of his best [...].

Ratibu Jacocks [01:09:31] [Go tell Peter!]

Artelea Burgess [01:09:32] That's right. You see. So, that's part of that, you know.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:09:38] So, so...

Artelea Burgess [01:09:39] No one is the best, no one is the best. See, [...] is talking about being perfect.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:09:46] Right. Yeah. So [wouldn't think]... Do you have any brothers or sisters who are in the organization that you would rate nine, [at least]?

Artelea Burgess [01:09:57] Yes, I do. I do. I see some of those sisters and brothers. They are –

Ratibu Jacocks [01:10:02] Their lifestyle proves it?

Artelea Burgess [01:10:03] Oh, their lifestyle, the way they talk to people. The, you know, and the way they do for people. Yeah, I wouldn't call them a nine, I'd call them seven or eight because, I mean -- how are you going to put somebody up there?,

Ratibu Jacocks [01:10:21] Well, when I slammed the door in your face and I said, "don't ever come back here knocking on my door." How does that make you feel?

Artelea Burgess [01:10:31] It's not... You're not... It's not me personally that you're...

Ratibu Jacocks [01:10:35] But that's what I'm talking to.

Artelea Burgess [01:10:36] No. But it doesn't matter.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:10:37] OK.

Artelea Burgess [01:10:37] I understand that you don't know me.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:10:42] [It ain't you!]

Artelea Burgess [01:10:42] You know, that's against Jehovah God. It's not me that you're slamming the door in. What did Jesus say? When you walked in, and if they don't agree, shake the dust off your feet and leave. You know, shake the dust off --

Ratibu Jacocks [01:10:58] Well, how long did it take you to feel? Like, there's so many people... My wife, don't even want you to tell her "no" for anything. She can't stand a "no."

Artelea Burgess [01:11:06] You have to accept it. And if you say -- you see that word, when you said, I said, "don't come back to my door."

Ratibu Jacocks [01:11:13] Right.

Artelea Burgess [01:11:13] We have a [leisured] there. Do not return.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:11:18] You do?

Artelea Burgess [01:11:19] We have a thing on there, it says, "do not return." And we won't come back to your door. Unless it's a few years from then. Maybe someone else is in that house. So, maybe we'll knock on their door to see.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:11:32] Still try?

Artelea Burgess [01:11:33] Yes. Still try.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:11:34] Because I heard a tape this [morning] and this guy was praying. And he said, "we are all ex- something, we all -- this is what he's trying to remind you of that church out there -- abundant life. [I got a tape] to hear what he was saying. He said, "we're all ex-something," and... But there's a lot of that ex-people out there. I thought it was really good the way he was saying that. And they want to know and we've got to go and tell them. So, I guess, the Jehovah Witness got that down. I don't know how good the Mormons are with... We're wanting to interview some of them, too, but they do that, you know, the younger kids, but [I don't see that].

Artelea Burgess [01:12:19] But they do it for two years. That's for a degree.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:12:21] And y'all do it all the time.

Artelea Burgess [01:12:24] [Forever,] and forever. The reason you don't do it, is because you can't.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:12:27] You can't do it.

Artelea Burgess [01:12:28] You can't crawl at your bed. You can't get out your bed. I've known some of them sisters that they get help to go to the mall and sit there with their... Ninety years old. They do not stop. Because -- but, also, the scripture says, "the end. And you might be saved." To the end of your life. There's no such thing as retirement. No such thing.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:12:58] So, you're in it for [the rest of your life]?

Artelea Burgess [01:13:00] For the long haul.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:13:01] Did you know that when you came in?

Artelea Burgess [01:13:03] Yes.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:13:03] That you would... Now, did you know you would be in it forever? For the long haul?

Artelea Burgess [01:13:08] Yes.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:13:08] You knew it?

Artelea Burgess [01:13:08] Now, sometimes... Some people draw back. And they just get tired for whatever reason or get dishearted. But that's not what the Bible says, you know. To the end. To the end.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:13:20] To the end and keep going.

Artelea Burgess [01:13:21] That's right.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:13:22] So... Well, what do you want to say to me? I didn't cover it, for some reason or another. But you wanted to say something and you're talking to... Fifty years from now.

Artelea Burgess [01:13:35] Fifty years from now.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:13:36] Or any time, you know. But you're saying it, and it's going to be recorded and

archived. Is there anything you would like to say?

Artelea Burgess [01:13:43] Oh, gee, I'd just like to say that I hope that we learn -- you know, this is what I'd like to say. Whether people believe in the Bible, or not. But I think that it's a mankind saving book. You know, a lot of people don't believe in God...

Ratibu Jacocks [01:14:03] For the [universe]?

Artelea Burgess [01:14:04] For the whole mankind, on the Earth. If we care about each other, start looking out for one another. You know, we can just... Mankind can be almost [fixed]. But we have to... That Bible is what's going to save us. We have to care about each other.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:14:27] Well, one of the people -- this is probably my last question. Some people really speak down on Jehovah's Witnesses. They say you're not even going to be saved.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:14:43] Well, that's OK. They don't know the Bible. That's what I say! They don't know the Bible.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:14:50] They don't know the Bible.

Artelea Burgess [01:14:51] You need to study the Bible.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:14:55] OK.

Artelea Burgess [01:14:55] Are you doing what Jesus said to do?

Ratibu Jacocks [01:14:58] And that's the proof?

Artelea Burgess [01:14:59] That's the proof. You've got to do [Jesus says...]

Ratibu Jacocks [01:15:02] Are you talking about people you couldn't... Fornication? You're doing [all this stuff...]

Artelea Burgess [01:15:06] That's right. And I'm not judging. I don't judge. But, I say, if you're a follower of Jesus Christ, that you need to know what he tell you to do.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:15:20] And do it?

Artelea Burgess [01:15:21] And do it.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:15:22] And do you find that for, most people outside of the Witness -- Jehovah's Witnesses. Do you find that these people... People who are Baptists or Methodists or something else. Do you think they follow the Bible...? [How do you look at them?]

Artelea Burgess [01:15:42] Do they go out and knock on doors?

Ratibu Jacocks [01:15:45] See, you're asking me questions, I'm supposed to be doing the interviewing!

Artelea Burgess [01:15:50] I'm sorry! But it's self-explanatory.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:15:52] OK.

Artelea Burgess [01:15:53] What do they do? What does Jesus have you to do?

Ratibu Jacocks [01:15:56] And are you doing it?

Artelea Burgess [01:15:57] And are you doing it?

Ratibu Jacocks [01:15:58] And if they are, then they all right [...].

Artelea Burgess [01:16:01] And what... Are you saying that all these Jehovah's Witnesses are going to heaven? I say, I don't think I'm going to heaven. I don't think I'm going to heaven. Because he made a paradise here on Earth.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:16:15] Right.

Artelea Burgess [01:16:15] And it's going to happen.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:16:16] Right here on Earth?

Artelea Burgess [01:16:17] Right here on Earth.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:16:20] So, [that's why you...]

Artelea Burgess [01:16:20] You see, she needs to study the Bible. That's all I'm saying.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:16:24] OK. I'm really so happy to talk to... I talked to [her] about once a month for [...]. And I was asking her questions. And I know she know a lot about -- I call this the underworld and the top world, so she thought you coming would... well, and I am going to review this and we're going to look at it. I may write down some little other questions that didn't fill the gap.

Artelea Burgess [01:16:57] OK.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:16:57] And I hope you'll be willing to...

Artelea Burgess [01:16:58] Come back. I sure will.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:16:59] Come back.

Artelea Burgess [01:17:00] I sure will.

Ratibu Jacocks [01:17:01] But I want to say... Tell you how much I thank you for this interview. And I hope that people gain not only knowledge, but practical application to their lives for what you have said. So, thank you so much.

End of Interview:

[01:17:26]