

Patti Drew

PATRICIA DREW: Is the little wheel turning?

DINO ROBINSON: It's turning. Can you say your full name please?

PD: Patricia Drew.

DR: And this is recorded January 20, 2000.

PD: 2000. Never thought I'd see it.

DR: And the interviewer's name is Dino Robinson. And I will begin with the first question. When did you come to Evanston?

PD: The family. Six girls. Mother, father. We moved here in 1956, coming from Nashville, Tennessee.

DR: And why did your parents decide to come to Evanston?

PD: Well, my father had a great aunt that lived here. She had been here about 10 years and she had been trying to get my father to move to Evanston, you know, move -- come to Chicago or Evanston, whichever suburb he chose, mainly for our education. He wanted us to have a better education than what we were getting in Tennessee. So he came here first and about a year after he was here, he had saved his money, and he was able to send for us. And we came here on a train all the way.

DR: What was your dad's first job here?

PD: My father was a garbage man. He worked for the city of Wilmette and he lived in Glencoe with my aunt, because she lived in Glencoe. Well, we call her my aunt, you know.

DR: When he went back to get the rest of the family, did your mom have a job when she came to Evanston here, too, as well?

PD: Yeah. My mama worked as a cleaning lady. She had odd jobs where she'd clean up the house, or do laundry for him, or cook a dinner for him, something like that. She did that for a long time. Well, and my father didn't have a car, so she had to take a bus. The guys would pick him up from home and take him to his job. But we didn't have -- Daddy didn't have a car at the time, so she had to take public transportation. Which at the time was not too good. There was one bus -- one or two buses running to Glencoe and where she worked was Wilmette and Glencoe. Different houses. But that's what she did when she came here. She cleaned houses, ironed, washed, cooked, you know. I can remember her coming home when there would be snow on the ground. Snow would be up to your knees, almost. And I remember her coming in the door, full of snow. "What did you girls cook for dinner," you know? But she was a good woman, too. She was a good woman.

DR: When your father brought the rest of the family up, your mother and the girls.

PD: Yeah.

DR: Where did you first live?

PD: We lived at 1831 Lamar. And at the time it was a dirt road. There were nice houses on that block, but it was all dirt. All the way dirt. All dirt. Lamar was nice. We stayed there. I went to Nichols School, the girls went to -- the rest of the girls went to Haven. I was the only one who went to straight to Nichols School when I got here. And at that time, it was sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-graders going there. So that's where I was. I was in the sixth grade... Yeah, sixth grade I guess. It was an experience because--

DR: What was it like, yeah?

PD: Well, there was still so much prejudice here in Evanston. And me being light skinned as I am, and I had freckles at one time, freckles all over my face. And just nappy red hair. And the kids used to tease me. [00:05:00] The whites as well as the blacks, you know, and call me old, white girl and old, Indian girl and nigger. I don't know you know, they just, and I'm talking about both sides. Both races. They were very -- it was very hard. It really was. Because of my color.

DR: How were the teachers in the 1950s?

PD: The teachers were good but you know what? They had a -- when I was going to school down south, we had to say "Yes, sir," "Yes, ma'am," "No ma'am," "No sir," and all of that. It was a lot of polite stuff going on. And then when I got here, and the teacher would call my name, and I would say what I said, and answer them by saying, "Yes ma'am?" They didn't like that, because they didn't want to be called ma'am. You know. So we had to work on that because if you used to saying something, it automatically comes out, you know. But it was kind of rough. But I made it. You know, I made it because I finally made friends that thought I was just -- it was just neat to be around me, just nice to be around me. We had fun, buy candy and split it, you know. So I made a few friends, a few friends.

DR: They live around that area (inaudible)?

PD: Yeah, they lived [around us?].

DR: That's cool. Did you go to Evanston Township High School?

PD: Yeah went to it. What a trip. Big school when I got over there. We did the orientation, but it was just a big school, and it was so much for me. But I liked it. I'd get lost every day, forget -- so what I did was, I had me a locker on each floor. You know, put the books that I needed in that locker, so that I wouldn't have to be

dragging books all the way back and forth up the stairs. I could just get them all -- you know, put them all in one place, for this class, and you know. It was neat. The school -- the teachers were nice. I had some nice teachers. I liked my English teacher, she was kind -- she was real sexy and she wore red all the time. Red shoes, red dress, red headband. And at the time, women were wearing the petticoat thing, you know, that flared out. She used to wear some of the neatest clothes and I used to say -- I used to say all the time, "I wanna dress like that woman when I get her age," you know. And she was real nice to me. Real nice. Because she knew I was trying. And most of the kids that I went to school with, not the white kids, but the black people, they didn't appreciate it. They didn't appreciate it at all. They would come to school without their homework and, you know -- then there was another fight that I had struggled to go to because I was doing the homework and liking it and they weren't. That was freshman and sophomore year. Junior year was quite a different thing... Wait a minute, Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, right? Right. Junior was different. I begin to, ditch school, you know, and go with my friends, and we'd ride around all day in somebody's car, and stuff like that. But I passed because even with all the running

around and stuff that I did, I still did my homework. I wasn't allowed to do anything unless I did that. And my mother and father checked on me every day. I had a hard time with multiplication and I had a hard time with telling time. But the rest of it I grasped pretty easy, you know. My history teacher, OK, tall, slim, always wore a suit. He would sit at the back of the classroom and make us turn our chairs around so that we would [still see him?]. I have no idea why he did that, but I liked him. But I can't think of his name, but he was such a beautiful person. And, again, you know, some people just didn't know how to appreciate it. You know, he wasn't overbearing, he would sit down, cross his legs and he'd say, "OK, who did their homework?" You know, and I'd raise my hand. Then maybe two or three other people would raise theirs. But again, they just didn't appreciate it. But he was a nice guy, he really was. Gym teacher, well, it was kind of funny because I -- all the other girls were wearing training bras. And I didn't have enough to put in my training bra, so I wasn't too happy about that [00:10:00] gym at all. Didn't like it. All the girls would be around and be taking off their little training bras, and I had on this t-shirt that I had to wear. Take my t-shirt off, nothing, not even a "pmf." So that was kinda rough. That was rough

because it took me a long time to grow. But I finally did, though, I did. I started coming around in my, about the end of the senior year, you know, and then I started coming around. Yeah, but it was nice, it was all nice, you know.

DR: I'm going to backtrack a little bit. When you first came to Evanston, so your first maybe one or two years in Evanston, what was your first impression of Evanston?

PD: That they were prejudice. They were nice-nasty. If you could ever picture a person being nice but nasty to you at the same time. They didn't want to really take care of things, you know, like you -- they don't understand why we had money. How come we had money to buy stuff? How can we go into Wieboldt's -- and my aunt would take us into Wieboldt's and buy us clothes out of the -- "Well, how dare you come here with these three little girls, these little black girls, and wanna dress them in the best of dresses? How dare you," you know. You know, it was like, "May I help you?" So it was very prejudiced. Very prejudiced. It was just places on Davis Street in Evanston that blacks just didn't go. You just didn't go in there, because you weren't going to be treated nice, so why do it? You know, spend your money somewhere else. So what we did, my aunt started taking us to the Loop, and we would go to Marshall Fields. And that was a little bit better because you could

see black people exchanging with white people or whatever. There weren't a lot of Puerto Ricans in Evanston, there weren't -- as a matter of fact, I don't know if there was any at all. It was just black, whites, and Jews. You knew where to go, you knew what street to stay off of, you know. You didn't go to Skokie at all. Ah, don't you dare, because they would just pick you up just for being there. If you walked across to the -- there was a liquor store right there, on, what's that, McCormick and Church, I think. The liquor store. And you could go there. That was Skokie but that was just the tip -- the beginning of Skokie. But you could go in there and buy liquor or whatever, but you couldn't go no further than that, because they would pick you up or they would beat you. You know, you'd come to school hearing about your friend that went to Skokie to trick-or-treat and got tricked all right. You know, they'd beat them and took the candy away from them, you know. It was a lot of things going on and it was real prejudice. I'm still leery about going in certain places on Davis Street in Evanston. I just don't trust -- I don't want to be treated bad. I'm not protesting for nothing. I don't have that, you know, type of thing going. It's just better here in Evanston but it was wild. Mm. Yeah.

DR: Did you attend college?

PD: No, no college.

DR: So after high school, what did you do? What was your first job, for example?

PD: My first job, I was 15 years old and I worked for a towel factory this right over there where the Buick used... You know where those cars -- you know where Chicken Shack is right? Well, there was a towel company right across the street where you go in and fold towels, you know. And my first job I was making three dollars an hour. To a 15 year old, back then, that was a lot of money. Because you did work, you'd work eight hours. That was my first job when I was 15. Then after that, I kind of babysat a lot. My mother -- some of the people that my mother worked for needed a babysitter, so I would babysit, you know. Got tired of that. Started working at Bethesda. Bethesda Hospital, which was on Ridge and Howard. Think that building is still there. There's something else there now though. But I worked there for about nine months. And I was doing such a great job, and had such compassion, for people [00:15:00] until the nurse wanted to send me to school. But I didn't take that because by that time I learned that white women like black little girls, OK? I mean liked them. So that scared me. It scared me off. So I quit and... What else did I do? I can't remember what I

did after that, do you know? What did I do? Oh, left there and started working at the Presbyterian which is out in Skokie. I worked there for about five as a nurse's aide. Both of those jobs were nurse's aide job. Make up the beds... And Presbyterian home, I mean the Bethesda Home taught me how to blood pressures and temperatures and stuff like that. She was real serious about helping me go to school but, you know, the friends I were hanging out were then, you know, they taught me a lot, they really did. They taught me a lot about personalities and how people can manip-- how white people can manipulate little, young black girls. And it really scared me. So I left that place. Went to Presbyterian and all I had to do there was make a bed, help somebody take a shower, maybe wash two, or three, four little dresses in the laundry room, you know, wash them and dry them and stuff. So, you know, that's what I did. Everybody that was working there was either -- we had two Jamaican women, two Chinese women. They tried to, you know, give equal opportunity to everybody, you know. There was a black woman at work, they called her Eva. And Eva was mean. Eva was a little, short woman that was mean. She checked behind you know to make sure you were doing the right thing. She looked at me one day and she said, "I don't think I like you." And I said "Pff, boy, here we go,

now what?" you know. I was so surprised when she said that I didn't know what to say. So I said, "Huh?" She said "I don't think I like you. She said "I have trouble with these other girls keeping them on a schedule to do their work and you do yours and have time leftover." You know, and I said "Well, that's just the way I move" you know. She didn't like me. So I left. I ain't work if you don't like me. I ain't, mm. So then, I don't know, it was odd jobs. I worked at a soda fountain shop. What else have I done? I've done a lot of little things -- a lot of little odd jobs, never kept them long, you know. So I had these boys at the -- I was beginning to grow, and look good, and, you know, I thought I was cute. So, I mean, I don't need no job, you know. And my father, he used to give us money just about every week, he'd give us some kind of money to go out on the weekends, you know. Depending on how the grades were and how -- who cleaned up the kitchen the best. So then he'd give you a little change to do your little thing on the weekend, you know. He was a good man. Very good man. Just I -- you know if I thought for one minute I could find somebody like him to marry, I would do it, without even thinking about it. But there's just no such animal. No. Nobody, nobody, nobody. No man that I've met yet ever topped that man as far as being what I

would call a father and a daddy. He was both, you know. And he would give us chump change, but see -- well I could exist off of his change, you know for the whole weekend. Then I got tired of the little money he was giving me, I was running out of it. So he told me, he said, "Well, you know what you have to do." And I said, "What, Dad?" "You gotta a job, kiddo." I said, "Oh, man, I've had one of those. They don't work out, I don't work out on jobs." He said "That's the only way you gonna get money." He said, "You too old for me to give money to now. So I had to start looking for something to do, so I started working at -- let's see, first of all, I worked at... Was that Kresge's? I think it was Kresge's. On the corner of Church and -- [00:20:00] what other street is that, what is that corner? Oh, no not Orrington... Oh, I can't think of it.

DR: Sherman?

PD: Mm-hmm. Had a little -- started working there. I worked there for a while. Then I got absolutely too grown. You know, but we'll save that for another time. (laughter) Don't want to talk about that right now. It'll scare you half to death. But...

DR: When you first came to Evanston, what church did you and your family belong to?

PD: We went to Mount Carmel. Mount Carmel on Brown, I think that is. Mount Carmel Baptist. Funny, we were baptized as being sanctified, all of -- most of us. But, and my father was going to my aunt's church, the one that she went to, that my great aunt went to. That didn't work out for my mom. My mom didn't wanna stay there, so she finally convinced my father to move us to Bethel, on Lyons and Darrow. So that's where we were. We became Methodist after being Baptist, after being sanctified, so lotta, lotta, lotta church in us. Whole lot. Grandfather was a preacher, and all my aunts were, you know, they were missionaries, and sisters in the church, and oh, boy. So, it was every Sunday you go church. If you didn't go to church, you couldn't go nowhere. And you had to have your church clothes put up so my father could see them. And sometimes we'd come in on Saturday night from one of them binges? Of nothing but liquor? And I could hear him calling, "Pat, get up, it's time to go to church." "Oh, dad, please, oh daddy, please?" Hungover like a dog just... The girls and I would meet each other at the bathroom and we'd look at each other, then I said, "Is he for real?" They said, "Yeah." So we'd dress and we went to church and I'd sit there, just stomach would be turning', and [I'm mad and in the church?], you know

(laughs). It was funny. But we used to do that every weekend (laughs). Oh yeah, he did, "Well, listen, if you didn't go -- get up and go to church, we could make it hell for you," you know. So he had to go drunk or sober, so that's what we did.

DR: Were you pretty involved in the church?

PD: Oh yeah, all of us were. In the choir, then they had youth groups and stuff, you know. So we all belonged to something. And I've always belonged to one of the choirs, either the youth choir or the adult choir. You know, as I got older, I got into the adult choir, the senior choir. Yeah, we -- they had -- they would have functions all the time, you know, something for kids. They all, they direct themselves at the young people at Bethel. And they still do. I haven't been to Bethel since my mom died. My mom died when... '84? No, Patti, Dad died in '84. And Mom lasted 10 years, so it was '94. Yeah, pshh. I haven't been to that church. I'm not saying I don't believe in going to church because I think everyone should pick out what they wanna do as far as their religion is concerned, you know. I don't think you have to go to church every Sunday to be, you know, be a perfect citizen or perfect Christian. I just feel it's in your heart, what you do. You know, how you treat people yourself. That's enough

Christian right there. You know, you hear people -- well, I went to this one church one time and we were praying with a whole bunch of kids. And one kid started shouting and falling around, and falling all on the floor, and I believe that is, you know, that's mass hypnotism, you know, what that is. They had me doing that. You know? And to sit here and tell you that I did not feel nothing would be a lie because I did feel something. I don't know what it was. [00:25:00] Like I said, it could be a form of mass hypnotism, but I know everybody in there started doing the same thing. And we were all talking in tongues, and... Just hugging each other, and praying, and anointing each other, you know, with the hand -- you know what I'm talking about, [y'all?]. So I was into that and, like I said, to sit here and tell you that I did not feel nothing, Dino, would be a lie. I felt it. I don't know what it was. It had me going. I couldn't talk for two days. I made no sense for two days. My mother and father said -- they and my sisters said, they had no idea what I was saying. So I mean, you know, there is such a thing. It can happen, you know. But...

DR: Who would you say was your major influence in your life?

PD: My father because he talked. He believed in having family counseling every now and then, so that we'd all know what

we were all looking forward to. He would explain to us why we might not have enough meat in the stew, because they had cut his hours, and he couldn't work long and mom couldn't carry it on her own. My father, oh, I loved him. I loved that man, and I don't understand it -- I will never understand it why he had to die. Never. I could think about -- oh, I could think of at least six people that I would like to see dead, but, you know, not him, you know. But, yeah, my father was -- because he talked to me. Even though I didn't want to listen, or even though I heard what he said, but, you know, just didn't pay any attention to him. And I think about that sometimes now how, what my father said to me, because of different situations that I've been in. And I come back home and I'm like, "Wow, now he said that 30 years ago." He was way ahead of his time as far as being a father and a dad, because he was -- and all my friends loved him. Had one, she wanted to talk to him, but I said, "Girl, fuck you, you aren't messing with my daddy." Oh, I don't think so. No, no way. And he never cheated. You know, like, you have a friend who dies and then after they die, you get all this gossip back. They wait 'til you're dead to talk about you, you know. He heard nothing', about my momma or my daddy. And any person that knew my father, and most of the guys in school did,

because my father -- we drew boys home. It was, Jesus Christ, it was six of us, OK! So here's knock, knock on [the door, "Is Patti home?"]? "Patti's doing her homework and, boy, I better not see you at this door no more, because you're too old to go out with Patti!" And I'm like (inaudible) "Oh, God, he's embarrassing me. Jesus Christ." So I'd go to school the next day and I'd be... "Mm." He said, "I like your daddy, he's a cool cat." I'm like, "Whew." I'm saying to myself, "So that means you will come back and see me? You will go out with me? You will take me out?" It was strange. It was strange. It was... Weird.

DR: Outside of church, did you belong to any other organizations or any clubs or social clubs?

PD: Nah. The gang-banger girls. We had a club called the Latin Ladies. They were the tough girls on the block, you know. And we wore black scarves tied around our head, black jeans, and black shirts. And we called ourselves the Latin Ladies. Well, that was because of the group of boys called the Latin Lovers, OK? So we were their girlfriends, right? (laughs) But other than that, nope. I didn't belong to nothing. I did a lot of things on my own, you know, a lotta -- I was by myself a lot. I really was because I was dealing-- doing things before people even

thought about doing them. My girlfriends, they would, by the time they get ready to do something, honey, I had been done and went to the next step. [00:30:00] I was very fast, moved very fast. And just loved men. Just absolutely whacked out. I had two or three friends, girlfriends, that sometimes I would go with them, you know, and do their stuff. But most of the guys I went with didn't want nobody to know. I don't know if that because they were ashamed of me, or because they wanted to keep me to themselves, I don't know. But no, I kept to myself. Did my dirt by myself. Mm-hmm. Turned out, I tried to turn on every young boy in Evanston but I missed a few. Mm, I don't know how I did that but I did, Dino.

DR: How did you first get into the music industry?

PD: That started in church. When we lived in Tennessee, my grandmother on my mom's side would come to visit us and she'd make us go to the church nearest to us, on this side of the street, because the other side was all white people and this side it was all black, so. They had a church at the end of one, two, three -- 'bout three or four blocks up. You could go up and it was a big church on the corner and my grandmother started us singing then. She made us sing songs with just three of us. Just her, myself, Lori, and Judy. And we -- and then my grandmother on my father's

side, she got wind of us that we were singing there, so when we moved to Evanston, she came to Evanston to live with us, she made sure we got to church and sang. So it all started right in church. They just picked out three -- well, we would sing around the house, you know, the girls and I would. And before my father died, it was nothing for us to gather on a Sunday evening or Sunday after dinner, you know, cook dinner for everybody, they'd come over, we'd sing and play the piano. So my father loved that so much. He loved it. He really loved his girls. He really did. He gave us all... He told us, you know, you make up your mind but, you know, you can go wherever you wanna go, but you still gotta acknowledge the fact that God is alive and God is keeping you. You know, he used to say it that way. There was no "bruh bruh." It was none of that. It was like, "Look, you old enough to know what you supposed to be doing now, if you out there doing all that dirty as you say -- as some of these people calling back here, telling Bern, that's what they used to call my mom, and Bern tells me, if you doing all of that, how you [staying?] -- (knocking in the background)

DR: Keep going, keep going.

PD: Oh.

DR: Keep going. Sorry.

PD: Background? OK all right. Yeah, I can see it moving. I can see the little thing down there. Mm-hmm.

DR: Can you talk about the music industry?

PD: Oh yeah. My mother babysat for a guy who worked for Capital Records. So she happened to mention one day that she had three girls who sang. And we had gotten real popular in the church and everything, and they was always asking us to sing. And my mom said, "Well, it's a good thing if you stay in church," she said, "but if you ever decide to sing and not sing gospel, God is not going to bless you." You have to understand my mother was real strange. Let me say that and then we'll continue. Mom was the type of a person who would sit down and say "You shouldn't go out tonight with that man because you don't know his family, you don't know his roots, you don't where he came from, and what if something happened to you? What if you get in a car and the car stalls and you guys don't have any way to get home?" She was always made it look like we're all destined to die, you know, and as soon as we reached 16, we're going to die because of the things we were doing. She was lovely, beautiful woman. I didn't realize how nice she was until about, oh, God, about maybe two or three years before she died. But it took us all a long time to [reel in?] my mother because my mother was

so... I don't know, like I said, you know you're gonna die if you do this. I don't even know what you would call it, but she would try and predestine what was gonna happen to us and she'd tell us. [00:35:00] Then when something bad happened to us, we'd turn around look at to each other and I'd say, "Didn't she say that was gonna happen?" You know. So she made us scared sometimes to go out. But, anyway, she -- the person she was babysitting for told us "Why don't you bring a tape out, we'll take a listen to the girls, maybe I can do something for you? You know, or find someone who can." So she, we went out there one Sunday to where she worked, where she babysat, and we took a friend along with us, his name was John [Tarrant?]. And we loved John and John loved us. John was a friend of family's. I used to go off and do escapades and come back home and tell him all about it. He loved to hear about me and my dirt. So, he always, "Tell me, tell me, what'd you do, what'd you do, what'd you do? Oh, I know you didn't, no you didn't, no --" I think he's got a little sugar in his tank but he's OK, you know. I'd love him, [man?]. If he came to my door today, and said to me, "Patti, let's get married" I'd tell everybody, "Bye." I just love him that much, and yet I'm not in love with him. But I loved John. He just, he just, a real good friend, a real good buddy. I couldn't --

if I had wanted a brother, he would have to be like John, you know, but not with the sugar, you know, but, you know, nice. So we went out to their house and sang and everything, had dinner and everything. So, we made a tape that -- his name was Maurice Lathouwers -- and he took it to a friend of his by the name of Peter Wright. So, Peter had the three of us to come in and we did a song that Carlton Black wrote which was called "Tell Him." So Carlton went with us, and we got to the studio, and we did his song, then we left, and they put the song together and you know, press it up real good and it turned into a beautiful, little song. So, that's how we got into it, through my mother's, the guy she babysat for.

DR: What was your group called?

PD: The Drew-vels.

DR: The Drew-vels?

PD: Mm. The Drew-vels.

DR: Were all your sisters involved in it?

PD: No, just two. It was just the three oldest girls, me, my sister, Lorraine, and Judy, or Mickey. Whichever one. And she has her moments. Somedays she's Judy and somedays she's Mickey, so I don't know. (laughs) But we're all strange. We are. We're all strange. That was a big thing for us to get involved in music like that and have

producers and writers and guitar players, and, aww, man, you talk about blowing somebody's head (deep breathes). We got so strange, we really did. I never realized that until maybe about three years of us getting into it. And I thought, "Jeez, are they strange." Sisters, but they strange, you know. But you know we made it. It was too much for them to handle. And a band that was too much for me to handle because I couldn't continue it either, you know. But then again I know why I didn't, you know. If it hadn't been for the drugs and the constant sexual activity that [involved?] myself into then, you know, I would've have been able to continue. But I just got strung out, you know. And they stopped. What happened was, they listen to the song -- the song began to be good and it would show up on the charts in Chicago and several other places. Well, in the meantime, my sister Judy decided that she was gonna raise a family and she wanted to get pregnant. So, there was one gone. Then Lorraine came to me and told me that if I wanted to, I could go ahead on by myself and be a solo because she didn't want to be involved with me if Mickey didn't wanna be. And I'm like here we go, jealousy. But anyway, I took up the offer, to do it, by -- you know, be a solo. And that was it. I started working. I worked the Playboy circuit for two years, staying two weeks at all the

Playboy clubs and, you know, around. I missed Hawaii and Alaska and.. Great Lakes. But the rest of them, I played at. And I played the Chicago [00:40:00] Playboy twice. Two weeks each time. So I got to travel around, I was by myself, and met a lot of people, had a lot of fun, lot of fun. Had to give it up, though. It was either the drugs or the singing, and at the time, I was not strong enough... You know, I couldn't give the drugs up, so that was it, you know. But in the meantime, we did, like, other records. We did *Workin' on a Groovy Thing* which turned out to be a very hot record. The Fifth Dimension picked it up and did it, and really made money with it. You know, I didn't. I don't know, I was just strung out, Dino. I was strung out, you know. I couldn't handle it. And I waited -- I almost waited too late to stop. Because I had gotten to the point where I had taken -- I had the coke, I had the marijuana, I was drinking, plus I was dropping speed and all kinda, other kinda -- taking acid and everything. And just one night of taking a tab of Purple Haze, and I ain't been right since. I freaked out, they had to come out -- they had to come and get me. And they put me in the hospital, you know, to detox. I was there for three months, then I came out, stayed out about a month, and then I had to go back for two months. So the last time I went in there and

came out, I said, "Hey, that's it, no more of that," you know. I would still drink occasionally, but the drugs were gone. Out for the drugs, you know. The only thing I hold onto is my cigarettes. That's the only thing I do. I will smoke cigarettes, you know. I do have a big addiction. I can hold off for a while but not too long. But it was fun. It was fun. I fell in love everywhere I went. Yeah, I fell in love. [It was kinda hard?]. I went to Jamaica, I really had a ball. I'm telling you, them Jamaican men are something else. But anyway. It was honestly, you know what you gotta do? You gonna sit down and listen to this later (laughter). You think you laughing now, you wait 'til you sit back and hear it again. It's gonna be wild. You're gonna say, "Oh, boy, Patti, Patti, Patti."

DR: I'm picturing you in black pants with your girls, those Latin Ladies. (laughter)

PD: Oh yeah. [You haven't come here yet?] You still there?

DR: I can see it now.

PD: It was absolutely -- it was gorgeous. It was about 12 of us and we were [for tough?], you know. Bad chicks. We had on all black with black scarves. Cute, just cute. And now that I think about it now, I say, "Boy, we were something else." My mother didn't know about it, though, because I wasn't even supposed to be wearing those kind of clothes

but I would sneak them out. You know, the old thing, you give them to your girlfriend, take -- go her house and change, put makeup on, and everything... Long earrings down here. It was fun. I was just glad we never got in a fight because I'd have been chicken. I would have ran. Nah, I would have stood there because I thought I was bad. That was a time when I was drinking a lot. I would drink a, you know, drink Kool-Aid with your [Violette?] -- no, no, with Thunderbird. You get you some Thunderbird, put your pack of Kool-Aid in it and then you can make yourself a boilermaker if we got whiskey and beer, oh boy. Oh yeah, I was hooked on boiler-makers. I would be. You know, it couldn't been a sweet drink. It had to be the daggum booze sort. Patti's been through a lot, more than we have time for all the tape. I'm telling you.

DR: While you're singing, when you were making it bigger and bigger, did you sing anywhere in Evanston?

PD: Yeah. We worked the 1623 Club, we worked there twice. I had my own band. I worked there twice. People in Evanston love me. And I love them. [00:45:00] They always have. A big bash about two years ago at Family Focus. Man, that place was so crowded, you couldn't even get by. And I went up to start singing and they started throwing money up on the stage, I said "Ooooooh. Ain't that nice?" I picked the

money up. Yeah. Oh yeah, I worked Evanston. We had a, what was the other one on...? Not the Salvation Army, you know what I'm talking about that building down there on Davis, was it Davis? I forgot, something-hall. I forgot about it. I worked there, we did a show there. Yeah I've did quite a few shows here in Evanston. Yeah, they always coming, they always nice. You know, they still want me to come out in the world and sing. I tell them I ain't got the chops no more, man.

DR: I know in the music industry you had connections with other local musicians in Evanston. Who are some of them others in Evanston?

PD: I tell you, oh they lived in Evanston? It was, oh, what's his name... Lord, the man just died. I can't think of any names right now. Pee Wee... Dino, I drew a blank.

DR: Carlton Black?

PD: Yeah. Carlton, Doug Friar, Jimmy Reed... What's his name? Peter Gibbs. Yeah, quite a few guys. I worked with, who plays trumpet? Oh boy, Arthur Taylor! I forgot, it's been so long. So long, and I, when you start to change, your mind blocks out a lot. You know, when you, see I had put all of this behind me, in hopes that one day I'd be able to write it down myself in a book, my life, because I don't think people know what I did. I mean outside of what was

known to -- I mean, you know, I'm talking about the kind of life that I led while I was out there by myself traveling all over, making sure my luggage got there on time. Making sure I got to the airport on time, making sure this, making... My manager and I took care of all of that. It was done over the phone most of the time. You know, and how lonely I would get. And, see, but all that... Once you start asking -- you ask God to take that away because you don't want to be bothered with that anymore. So you ask and you pray for that and it happens. You know. Then you tell the next person, "Don't pray for something you don't want." Because it's gonna come true. Sooner or later, you know. I believe in prayer, I really do. I believe in prayer and I think it should be done according to that person. Don't pray to impress me. You pray for yourself. Don't worry about me because my back is covered. You know, I'm not worried about that. So, but yeah, we did a lot. I worked the Pussy Cat Lounge. I don't know if you -- it's down... I worked the Pussy Cat. Is it off?

DR: Where's that? Is that in Chicago?

PD: Mm-hmm. Yeah, down on... [Welles?]

DR: What other places in Chicago did you sing besides Playboy Club and Pussy Cat Lounge?

PD: At that time, I think it was called the Caravel. It was, I think they've changed that whole thing around down there. I probably wouldn't even recognize half the places if I went down there. It's been so long. But you know, that's about it. I didn't work a lot in Chicago. I worked around going back and forth, you know. Hugh had hired me and... James Brown heard me sing and wanted me to travel with him on a tour. We had an appointment to go see... What's his face, the Playboy man? [00:50:00]

DR: Hugh Hefner?

PD: Mm hm. We had an appointment to go see him and I got so high I couldn't even get out the bed. So I blew that. But when it started happening, me not wanting to do it anymore, wanting to get higher and higher, instead of working, I knew it was going to be]below?] -- I knew it was time to quit. You know, because I had focused in on the drugs. And you know, when you working out there, singing, and carrying-- that's a job. That is a job, Dino. You owe yourself to the public, you gotta look right. [Ain't?] nobody gonna pay \$25 to get in to see you, and you come in and you high, and you gonna fall off the stage. Not that I did. But I'm just saying, that's what I'm using that, you know, as a scenario. That's what happens. You owe yourself to your job. When my job got to the place where I

wanted to get high rather than to go to work, I knew it was over with. I knew it. And I took one tablet. Just one tab-- been taking stuff for the long -- I took one tab of acid, Purple Haze, and I was gone. So I knew I was over with. I don't have any [chops?] now. M-m, uh-uh.

Somebody told me, "Patti everybody's coming back and all the oldies are coming back." I said yeah well this [old lady?] ain't gonna do it. No, no way. It's too hard, it's too much work. I'd rather lounge around in my pajamas 'til twelve o'clock in the day. And then put clothes on if I want to. And if I don't want to, I don't have to. Ain't gotta make up my face. I don't have to do my nails. I don't have to make sure my hair's all in one place. No. That is too much, Dino. That's too much. You have to be fully full of yourself. I'm talking about an ego like a -- you know, you have to have an ego as big as this room. It has to be fed by [clap clap clap], you know and all that kissing [and all?]. You know, I kiss you because I can. Why do I have to wait to become a star before I can kiss you? Or before you can kiss me? No, I'm not going through that. Plus, I don't have the chops anymore. I tried it already. It don't work. Up to two packs of cigarettes a day, I don't think so. Mm-mm.

DR: As you reflect back on a lot of your experience living in Evanston, and you're used to the life experience, what changes would you like to see?

PD: In Evanston?

DR: Yeah.

PD: You know what, there's something to think about because I enjoy the fact that the police are breaking down a lot of these people that are selling drugs. Those kids are out there and they don't need that. They don't need that out there in front of them. Well, I'd like to see the welfare system, the general assistance, and town center, whatever it is, Evanston Township, whatever it is that they've got, I'd like to see those pep up a little bit and help a little bit more people than they're helping. You know, I mean I got down on myself, Dino, I had to go over there. You know, I had to go down to public aid and see if I couldn't get food stamps and a check and they wouldn't give it to me. They told me the check that I receive once a month is too much money, I'm not qualified. Well, yes I am, because I need insulin, I need things that I have to have for being a diabetic or -- high blood pressure, and asthma. And that money that I get is not enough money, but I make it do, OK? I was making, when I was singing, I was making about anywhere from three to four thousand dollars a week. I'm

not talking about a month, I'm talking about a week. I walked around nothing but money in my pocket, you know. And I didn't, I spent it loosely, was mostly done on the family and friends that I had, you know. Wasn't buying drugs with it. You know, I wouldn't just, you know, to the point I couldn't stop, I did stop, you know, I did stop. It took two times around, but I still stopped. What else? Let's see, I think the school system is doing pretty good, considering these parents and the way they send their school [00:55:00] kids -- kids to school and they don't help the kids with their homework, you know, and you have to help them along, they don't know. I'd like to see more school things going on. More activities for the kids, you know. I'm talking about for the younger years, I'm not talking about teenagers. I wouldn't want to be involved with them in no way. They're definitely out of my -- mm-mm. No, because see they think they know everything. And it's OK to be like that if you do, but then when you open your mouth, don't open your mouth and you a fool. You know, you going to tell anybody what to do out in -- they told Patti you need to go over there to Family Focus and they want to set up some kind of program where you can come in and talk to the young people, the teenagers. And I told them, I don't think so. They not gonna listen. I be

wasting my time. They not gonna listen. No but that's about it. Just the police department need, I give them credit. They are good. They really are. They help cut a lot of that bull down. They cleaned up Church Street. You know, had to -- the pool room was gone. I remember when it was there and both -- one, two -- three burger joints had been on Church Street and gone, gone. Because it was hanging, it was hurting each other. You got blacks jumping on each other, trying to hurt each other, and that don't make no sense. How can you help each other out, you know? The way they be doing. Mm-mm. And I got two guys, I got two boys. And my boys are bad. They'll do anything and I know they would, you know. You know, that's why they say, "We love you, Ma, we love you so much," I say, "Yeah, but I know what you doing, buddy." You know, you ain't doing nothing I didn't do but they don't want to hear that. They don't want to hear that their mother was on drugs. They don't believe me. They don't think that what I -- when I sit down and tell them what you going through is the same thing I went through, it's just on another level. But it's the same type of thing. You know, drugs, they want to be in music. I gave them a chance twice. I called my ex-manager and got through to him, took me five days to find this man. Finally he called and I said, "Pete so and so,

so my boys are talented, they wanna -- sit them down, sit them down." He said, "OK." So I sent the boys down there to him. They got down there and started fighting with each other over the money that Pete gave them to get them back home. They bad. My boys are bad, Dino. And they'll do anything and I do mean -- I don't think they've put a needle in their arms yet, but they've done everything else. So I'm trying to tell them. All I'm trying to tell you is you're gonna wake up one morning and all this shit is going to be so nothing to you. And then you're gonna be bored. What are you gonna do? Are you gonna be able to sit like I can and go through those changes? Or are you gonna leave here? You know, do I have to put my black dress on? Is that what you want? Is this the kind of thing you got out for me? To look upon your body in a black dress? Oh man. So anyway I deal with, I just don't want them to think I don't know what they're doing. I know what they're doing. But they gotta do it. They gotta do it themselves, you can't tell them nothing. You couldn't tell me nothing. And I was a girl, the oldest girl of six girls. My mother said, "You got the girls doing like that because you started the whole thing." And when I think about it, I did. You know. But yeah, they'll do anything. I love them, I love them to death. Wherever I got they can have

at least three-fourths of it. Cause I'm that way with them. Because when I did have money, you know, two, three, five dollars is all they gonna ask for, you know. I used to, when I worked for the social security office here in Evanston, I worked there for 10 years. I was there for 10 years. [01:00:00] They knew when I got my check. The bank was right next door, they would be standing outside the door of the bank, both of them. They would escort me to the bank, I would politely give them some money, 50, 75, whatever they needed. And I'm not talking about one time, Dino. I'm talking about every time I got paid, OK? I mean it's no big thing. Money, I like to have money on me because if I were to run around the corner and get me a Pepsi, or a 7-Up, or Coke, I wanna be able to do it. At this particular time in my life, I'm not able to do that, you know. And I don't have anybody helping me. My sister does what she can. You know, they said, "Find you a sugar daddy." A sugar daddy? Lord have mercy. Where? Everybody in Evanston is broke. I can't go to Chicago. So here I am, boujee-ing down in a t-shirt and boots. That's about it, Dino. It ain't nothing fancy. It's just me. You know, just me. I have a hard time keeping cigarettes, I have a hard time keeping my medication up, but I make it, I make it. And I'm not on public aid, you know. But I

mean it's rough, it's rough. It is baby, it's rough. It's not what I'm used to at all. But you know I got so sick, I couldn't work anymore. I couldn't do it, I couldn't hack it. You know. And they were kind enough to pull me to the side, you know the manager was, the district manager was, and she said, "Look here", she said, "You seem to be having a lot of problems, and a lot of sick days." I said, "Yeah, you know, I don't know what's wrong." She said, "Why don't you go on disability?" I said, "Well, I worked a lot of places but I don't think I worked one place to get anything." She said, "Let me check things out for you." So she did, and next thing I know, I was on disability. Hadn't been able to work, just got to the point where I can move without hurting all over my body. Oh yeah, I was sick for a while, so sick I thought I was gonna die. I wasn't scared, I was so sick and tired of being sick. Dang, you know, just oof. Couldn't go a day without flopping into bed. Oh man, it's rough, it's rough.

DR: What do you consider as your accomplishment?

PD: Well, you mean if [I have?] to myself or?

DR: Personal accomplishments.

PD: Right now, Dino, just being able to get up every day is an accomplishment because there's been so many days I wasn't able to get right up. But if I did, I was in so much pain.

I was popping aspirin like crazy. I think the biggest accomplishment that I've had as far as myself really is just staying alive because it's been -- like I said, it's rough. And anybody in my situation would have somebody helping them, you know, financially. Anybody that was in my shoes would have -- the sugar daddy would have to be there. But I've had a lot of sugar daddies so... Play games with people's mind, and stuff, and with their money. So the biggest accomplishment is just to be alive and take care of myself. You know, I'm not disabled to the point where I cannot move and do things. That's about it because I can't save the boys. Because they've let me down terribly. I am, you know, I expected to see them with a briefcase, a suit, and some Stacy Adams. And I ain't seen it yet. So if I can accomplish that, that would be the biggest accomplishment. If I could see them make something of their lives. And when they come to my house, don't come ask me for money, give me money. I gave to you. You know. Give it to me, I'll take it. (inaudible), I got it. You know. Don't ask me if I need any money or don't ask me to give you any money. Just give it to me and keep on stepping. Knowing that I would not have taken it, had I not needed it, because I don't need -- I'm not a high-

maintenance person you know, you don't have to keep me
dressed all day, every day and nails. I'll grow my own --

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