

## IRIS BAEZ INTERVIEW Transcription

Q: (I guess the first thing we wanted to know, one thing we never talked about, and that's to tell us who Anthony was, as a person?)

IB: Okay. Mm. Anthony. Anthony was a little boy that um, he was always was smiling at people, always was smiling, playing, he always had to play, as he grew up, he had a lot of friends, as he grew up, um, his teachers loved him in school, there was nothing that Tony asked that I don't thing anybody never gave him, when he asked for something they would give it to him. He had that, I don't know, there was something about him, that made people just, you know, give it to him want to give it to him. And um, when, in church, you know all the teachers, Tony here Tony there, and Tony was always trying to help, find something to be helpful, um, he would always try to be a teacher in church and help the teachers, always wanted to give a hand. And um, though he had a condition of asthma, around 17 he sort of outgrew it, because he wasn't like in the hospital, he didn't have to go to the hospital, so he was dealing with, though he knew that in some occasion he could get an asthma attack he was very athletic in the sense that he always had a football or basketball, a baseball and bat in his car and everywhere he was, he had dominoes, chinese checkers, and he had all the kinds of games that kids would enjoy he had in this car, his trunk was full of junk all the time with games. And he bacame at about 18, they said would he be willing to work in a camp with children and because he loved children he accepted and he started working in the camp, in Martmont Camp, a christian camp with kids, and the people there liked it the way the worked and the way he got along with the other

counselors. So he was there like one year and the following year when he went back they asked him if wanted to be counselors of other counselors that would come from all different areas to take care of the kids, and that's where he became the counsel of the counselors, and though he loved his position, because he still counseled some kids, but now he would counsel the counselors that you know like they'd want to pull their hair when those kids started, um you know like screaming or doing things that they wasn't supposed to.

Q: (Was Anthony, was Tony different than your other kids?)

IB: In a way yes. He always wanted to be Santa Claus, he always wanted—

Q: (Who?)

IB: Anthony.

Q: Anthony what?

IB: Wanted –

Q: (I'm sorry you said he, sometime you use, you should just use his name instead of he.)

IB: Anthony would wanna be Santa Claus. And the other people, like the other kids would be like "Oh no I don't wanna be that so you can laugh at me" you know he would say "I wanna be, I wanna be" you know he would get all excited and everything and run for a pillow to put it on, you know he would do things that, um, none of the other kids wouldn't do it. And um, they would try to imitate he sometimes, you know they'd say "Oh here comes the preacher" you because he always walked around, Anthony always walked around with a Bible, so and he was always telling them you know "Look in such and such a place you

can find such and such a thing," so they call him Tony the Preacher, here he comes, you know and would always like walk away from Tony because Tony would say something about the Lord. And you know he had kids around here that he picked up and talked with the family, gave them counseling, and the family gave them the kids to take to camp in the summer. So he was like counseling the kids in camp but also counseling them out of camp. And um, though we're still in touch with one particular boy that he was going through some hard times with his mother, and Anthony, you know, like adopted him, and guided him through his adolescent years and helped his mother a lot.

Q: (Did Anthony go to college?)

IB: Yes he went to Bronx Community College, he went two years there, and then he went to Valencia College in Florida.

Q: (How'd he get to Florida?)

IB: Um...

Q: (Did he marry in Florida, in like--)

IB: No um, Anthony, well this neighborhood was, you know, becoming a problem with when the crack came in, and then Anthony said, you know it would be nice if we could take the girls outta here because at that time I had just adopted four girls and Anthony didn't want, you know, didn't feel that it was a right neighborhood for girls, and then so um, in '89 I went to Florida. Tony went first, Marybell had already went her mother, so they knew, you know, some areas in Florida, I had never went to Florida, and uh in '89 I went and I saw you know, I took the girls to Walt Disney and we saw certain areas and I said well I would like a litte house, you know, but I would like a little farm, you know, so then he says

well let's start with the house. So what he did, he rented an apartment in Florida, and then told me, the only one I had that was 15 at the time was David, um he was fourteen years old, so let's try with David first, send him to Florida, and then if he likes it, then, you know we can all go. So my husband went with him and got the apartment and then we sent David with him and that was in '90, um, in '90. So in '91, um, David liked it so '91 they bought me a house, Raymond bought me a house, little Raymond Jr., and then—

Q: (So basically what was happening is, you had, your, all kind, gradually leading this community cuz you thought it would--)

IB: Well we were looking for the best thing for the girls at the time that we adopted them, and the boys seemed to, you know, go right along with it. Um, you know, they were looking, for the area, they were looking for a house, they did everything, because I didn't even see the house until after they had bought it. And um, Anthony picked the house and the area, and then um, he was happy, then he came in '92, he got married and he took Maribel um to Florida with them. He got married here. In his church where he was baptized. So then um...

Q: (Were you close to Maribel? Were you close to her?)

IB: Um, yeah, we were, sort of close, you know, when she used to come here and we used to go to her mother's house. And then they moved to Florida and she started working and he started working so then we moved to Florida in you know in '92, and then um we closed this house down, cuz there was nobody here, so we closed it down and then we left. And then um—

Q: (How old was Anthony when you adopted the girls? And when you answer the question if you could say "Anthony was...22 years old" you know like, full--)

IB: Um, Anthony was...mmmm, 20, I think he was 23 when I adopted the girls. Him and Maribel, um, Anthony and Maribel was gonna keep the girls, they wanted to adopt them, but because they wasn't married at the time that I adopted them, so they couldn't, you know, that transition could not happen because it was illegal. So I kept the girls, I adopted the girls under my name and my husband. And um, they wanted to take one of the girls, that, well they raised her since she was a baby, Linda, because Linda and him was, uh, the same birthday, that's, um, September 20 is his birthday, and it so happened that her birthday falls on September 20, also on September 20. So you know, for her it's hard time for her, that day, birthdays, she don't have a birthday anymore, she don't celebrate her birthday anymore, because Anthony's not around. And um, it's hard because he was very close to the girls, Anthony, and um, to everybody, he was like, if you had a problem you go to Anthony, you know, he, had something that he could fix and diffuse situations. And um, he went to Florida, he took a test to become a police officer, and everywhere he went he left his mark. Everywhere he went.

Q: (Why'd you adopt the girls?)

IB: Um, well, the baby was David and um he was like um, he was like twelve, and um, it was a group of kids that I had here and it was the four girls and a boy. And um, um, it was that time that either you adopt or you have to give them up to go to another house so to see if somebody else wanted them. And um, I couldn't let them go. So, um, and the kids couldn't let them go and Anthony

wouldn't let them go because we got them since they were babies. So um, first we had two, and then in, in, uh—

Q: (Foster care?)

IB: Yes, first we had two in foster care, but we had other kids but I got into a program where they go back with their family, you know, you have to go into a hospital until you go through to the hospital through foster care, and that was the program that I was in, and um I got into that because we found out we had a nephew that was, um, in foster care, and we said, hey, we can't do that so they, you know, my cousin, so they, the boys started actually looking how to take him out, but then we had to go in because we were the adults, they were the kids. So we had to go and take over. So first we had, um, a neice, and then we had another, two neices, and then we had a nephew that we took out of the system, and then um, the girls came. And then, because you know, the girls said ooh girls, we want them, we want them, you know so, and I had a lot of kids that were teenagers that really, um, there was nothing much I could do but I watched them during the day, after they come from school, I didn't see the girls anymore, they took over, so really it wasn't a burden on me to take, to get to take care of the girls. So...

Q: (So, you're saying kind of like, Anthony had a very special quality in him?)

IB: Oh yes, he did. Anthony, you know like, he, uh, my pastor used to be always on top of him talking because he wanted him to become a minister because he had, you know, he had that touch, you know and he could talk to you, and if you were angry, you know, when by the time he finished talking to

you, you was not angry with the person that you were supposed to be angry. And in school that happened a lot, he diffused a lot of arguments with girls, and um, any argument they would call Anthony come here, to room so-and-so, because there was an argument with the girls and he could diffuse them, you know, and you'd think that all the bosys would be jealous would be jealous of him, but then he was diffusing boys too, so everybody looked, went to him with his problems, you know. And it was so funny because in the school they vote him the lover of the year, he was the most loved child of the year, because he always you know, with the girls, and the girls loved him like a brother, they didn't see him as a boy, they looked at him as a brother, and then the boys loved at him as a brother, because they didn't, you know they saw that loving that he had that he didn't try to take their girlfriend away, that he wasn't that type of boy, that he was serious, and that's they always looked, this house was always full, and especially here, this 2w3as a baaasement, and they'd come here and he was like, you know, he was always here for everboody. You know there was nothing that Anthony, like you know, God gave him a gift that, I don't know. God gave him a gft that none of the others got it. And they know it, you know, and that's why they say, you know he works so hard, and he's the one that made it, you know they say and yet, he was the one that was taken away. So, it is hard for everybody, you know we don't talk about it much, because every talk about it, you know, then comes the questions, why go to church, why pray, why ask God for anything, because, I mean, Tony did everything step by step, you know, and um, the thing about it is, I don't know if we got clo9ser the last year, beucase um we were shopping for, um, he gave his wife a car, so we were shopping for a car,

then in the process, they were going to buy out Fred's house, So it was a big thing, you know, they wasn't gonna keep it, they was gonna get a house, so that was that last Christmas in his apartment, so they wanted to make the real Christmas, you know, and um, we were shopping that, since before Thanksgiving, chekcing out every ornament for the tree, and looking at books, um with blue ribbons and pruple ribbons, what he hwanted to do, you know, and um, in Florida, and he was like a little baby, all the little toys he would pick em up and wanted to play and he said you know, this has to go unerneath the tree, to go around the tree, and hw was tellin us how it wasg gonna go, and we bought it and when um, when he put up his tree, at two o'clock in the morning he finished, Mearibel tells me you know he wanted to wake you up at two o'clock in the morningjust to show you that his train light up and his train blew smoke, as it goes around, and he bought like little houses, and he decorate the whole Christmas tree, and he needed the popcorn to put on the Christmas tree, and um, I bought him the Navity set that goes underneatht the tree, and um, that was my last present to him. And um, I got still got the gift that I was gonna give him, his pajamas, I still got it in the house, wrapped up, he never got to open none of his presents. And everybody got, his presents, that they gave him, and Maribel had em all, didn't open none of them. And gave them back to the kids, and they still got them put away, nobody ever opened that. And when um, I went back in February to my house we still had the Christmas dinner that we were supposed to have as a family and since that day we never had a Christmas, family Christmas, like everybody in table? We never had that again. Ohhhh...

Q: (Are you all right?)



IB: Mm-hm. Then we gotta laugh and make believe that we're happy, because it's something that, it doesn't go away, it doesn't go away, and you could put a front but it's still there, every time you see a boy walking through the streets, everytime you see a car that looks like his, everytime you hear a voice that looks like his, you get, you take a second glance back, so you know, like when you wait for your child's sick, and you know he's gonna die, mentally you prepare yourself, and you ask God, you know, don't let him suffer like this, you know. And you want God to take him so you won't see him suffering. I don't know if it makes the pain easier, that your child is gone, but to, just take a life like that, I know how millions of people out there feel, when a car, take a life, take the kids life, your wife's life, I know how that person, if they really loved them, how they feel. You know. It's not something we plan, it's not something that , you know, we desire to happen, it's just something that happens and there's no, no closure to you, to it, because you're always have, you're always waiting for him, I always wait for him, I wait for his phonecall. You know, when he's supposed to call me, I wait for him every night, because he used to go to my house every night, to check on me. So, you know, it's hard here and it's hard there, so wherever I am, and it's hard.

Q: (You don't feel like there's closure even with the fact that well, I guess one thing is the fact that you've fought so hard and you've actually had some victories, has that given you comfort?)

IB: No because after you had the, you go out and you protest and you come home, I mean you still coming home, you're not staying out in the street, the people are not around you 24 hours. Though when you're, when you're

upset for that moment, you just want justice. It's after you go home, that everybody's gone, is that you know, reality hits. And I know it's difficult, you know, it's very hard, and I don't think there'll ever be a closure.

Q: (Is that partly what keeps you fighting?)

IB: It keeps us going because we see the injustice and we see other people going through the same things, but I went through that, don't these people learn from their mistakes, and that gets you more angry and it wants you to go change, but now, um, after five years, I find out that only certain individuals can change it. And to their establishment, I think it's good that it happens, though they need a little rise from the people, and then they need to give a little bit that they were gonna give us anyway, but you know what I find now is, this circle who has the power and who has the money and that's it. They lose the reality, they lose all touch of reality, and it's people that um, that don't have children that have the power, like, well, this is the law that I want, I want to implement this law, and has only one side and because they are not poor and they are not with child because it's their idea.

(Q: Let me go back a minute, before this happened, with Anthony being murdered by the police, how would you describe your family, if you were to describe your family, do you know what I mean by that?)

IB: Well we celebrate. Every month we have a party, a birthday party, because you know we're so many, we just every month just did a party, and we had dinner with ice cream and cake, and all the kids, basically, and um, those were the parties that we had, you know. And...

Q: (Were you an activist then?)

IB: No.

Q: (Tell me about that.)

IB: Um, I just used to work and go to church and come home. Basically that was my life. And my husband and all of them they used to go school come home and that was it. And though, you know they had friends from school, um, we lived upstairs and we gave them the basement so they can have their company here. So I didn't let them go to other people's house while they were little so all their friends used to come here.

Q: (So you were, I mean, you, were like just kind of like--)

IB: No, normal family. No normal family in the sense that you know all my kids were here, my husband was here and do you want anything you can have it here, and we go to church and I go to work and my husband go to work and we're here, at three o'clock you're in the house, you know dinner is, is five o'clock, and you know everything's, is in order. I thought I lived, I had a pink world, I don't know, I lived in a pink world and nothing could destroy it cuz I had six beautiful kids and um that the Lord gave me and five that I adopted and everybody else that was around. And we used to have a ball. Within side, you know, our family. So that's why, you know I think I, everything was beautiful. That everything was pink. We didn't needing nothing we didn't bother nobody nobody bother us, my children went to school, they didn't have, you know, like, I don't think they had fights fights fights, you know, they musta had arguments because everbody got arguments but nothing that they would come home, you know and say well I hate this person I hate this, where now I hear the word hate

out of everybody. But before that word hate never came to mind, you know, to nobody's mouth.

Q: (How did you find out about Anthony?)

IB: Um, I was in Florida and um, my husband called my aunt and my neighbor and um, they came, I found it out they came at five o'clock in the morning I thought something had happened to them because it was my neighbor across the street in Florida that came and um, my aunt, and she lives in another town, so um the neighbors came first and then my aunt came and when they came in you know, like oh you get up you make coffee and you don't know what's happened, and um, they um, they neighbors told me, when my neighbors was telling me I was in uh, um, we think that you have to go to New York. And then I said why? And then I said did anything happen to my husband? You know. And then my aunt knock on the door and then she came in and her eyes was red, you know, and then she was telling me that Anthony had an accident. So, um, and he was in the hospital. So I had to get on a plane in the morning and that was the 22<sup>nd</sup> and fly over here, so when I came to New York, my house was full of pastors and ministers and um, then um, I don't, I don't remember who told me that Tony died. And um, I know there was a lot of pastors, I remember, and that's all I remember. Then everything else is, you know, that they told me, you know, that happened, and ...

Q: (And when you started to try to find out what happened, how did that come about?)

IB: Oh because they told me that Tony died of asthma, and I said you know how he died of asthma? And they said um, yeah the papers says, then the

next day they, they show me the paper, or three days later, I don't remember, but then they show me the papers that said ashtmatic young man with it died of asthma and I said no he didn't have asthma. And then um, I called, uh within that time frame I said look um, get me Alan, that I have to find Alan Lablan that was the lawyer, I want him to do me a favor to find out what Tony died of asthma, because and then they said that the police was involved and my husband said that he had choked so I said so he didn't die of asthma, you know, it was that the police choke him, so then he said um no but the newspapers are saying that he died of asthma. So then I called, I think it was the 24<sup>th</sup>, the 23 I called the lawyer and then um the 24 they did the second autopsy on Anthony and um, the pathologist said that he died due to compression to the neck and chest. So that's when you know we said, so you know I said okay so now you know is the police gonnna go to jail? And that's when the nightmare, another nightmare began. That the police officers don't go to jail for killing somebody.

Q: (So you said is the police officer going to go to jail?)

IB: Yeah, I says, you know—

Q: (Who did you say that to, in other words, because that's a very--)

IB: To the pastor, you know I assumed that the law is you do a crime you have to go to jail and it went through, that's all my life that's all I known, you know if you commit a crime and you gotta go to jail, and if you kill somebody you can go to the electric chair. So you know I'm thinking here's this man he muredered my son so he's going either to the electric chair or he's gonna go to jail. And, it just became a nightmare where you know a police are treated different and because of their uniform and but then you know I used to say, but nobody made

him become a police officer, so um that's not in a profession that you're drafted into you volunteer to protect a community, so what's gonna happen, you know, and that's when everybody's telling me no Iris it don't go like that, then I started to ask you know for parents, that, um the following, on January 16<sup>th</sup>, um I, before that I went on television a couple a times asking for mothers who knew that you lost your sons to come and join, you know, join me, and that's on January 16, Martin Luther King's birthday, that's where I met other parents and they came and I you know we were telling about the rally that we were gonna have and my husband prepared with the, uh, he met with the National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights, Richard Perez, he met with him, and they I think they did some announcements and they put it on, they spread the word to other organizations that existed that I didn't know about, um, they started spreading the word and that's how we all got together in, um, 161<sup>st</sup> Street the Criminal Court and that's where I met, um, on that day had been seven days I think that they had murdered Margarita's sons and nephew and I met Dagracia Majing, and we met a coupla other people, be, you know by that January 15, because January 12 they had killed, um, in '86, then they killed Frankie Aswega and um,

Q: (In '86?)

IB: Yes.

Q: (In '96.)

IB: In '96.

Q: (...)

IB: Um, well, I didn't know much about rally's and um everybody here was just crying and crying so when um they layed Anthony in the funeral, you know

everybody was kicking and punching walls, and then my sister brought some paper, and he said why don't you have the kids draw something, you know, and so you know I said draw anything you want, you know you can draw I want justice for my uncle, my cousin, my brother, you know then I had my son draw a big sheet and he drew something there, and then um, that day it was um me my husband and my sons and my grandchildren, and we started walking from here to, to the precinct, cuz I wanted to tell them that they were, that there was a murderer in there and he murdered my son, and then the pastor came, cuz they were going to the funeral so the pastor came, and then, we went from here to the precinct and we were about, um, 20-25, between kids, and you know, and then the pastor, we met the pastor in Grand Concourse, but by the time we walked from here to Grand Concourse it was like, 100, and then by the time we got to the precinct it was the whole street, and then by the time we walked to, we came up to Grand Concourse, then they had blocked Grand Concourse and in the funeral, so um, the, because of all the excitement a lotta, we got a lotta media that day. And um, I don't know what happened because I, after that, I blacked out for a couple of days and then, um...

Q: (What do you mean blacked out?)

IB: Like yeah, I, I don't know cuz I don't remember what happened, I know we went to the precinct, um, I know we walked but somewhere along the line I lost it, and um, I didn't know what happened cuz I didn't see my son in the funeral, and I didn't see him get buried either. So, um, I don't remember those, you know, whatever happened there, I don't even, I you know I can only hear, if I start the conversation somebody will say oh remember this, and they say there

was a big rainbow when we were in the, in the, when we were going to bury my son, there was a big rainbow in the sky and it follow us from here all the way to, to um to where we were gonna bury him, and um, then we came home and I didn't know, and then there was another time when they said Fernando Ferrer was here, and I didn't even know he was here, I was, you know like I didn't know where I was. I used to black out for days and not know nothing. And, or blanked everything around me, and there's you know lots of things that happened that, you know, that I don't know.

Q: (Somehow you go the strength to come back and fight.)

IB: And um, my husband went to court, and they used to tell me cuz I didn't go to court, um how, they they used to put them in rooms and they would take Livoti's picture, um the police in there, the ones that had, from the D.A.'s office that had to question them, um, they would put Livoti's picture and then they would change, cuz they saw Livoti with a toupe, and then they put Livoti without a toupe, and they tried to switch him with plain clothes, when they, you know in the picture they have he was in uniform, so they played you know a lot of little tricks on them, and then you know, they would come real mad, frustrated, because of what they, you know saw was happening.

Q: (Again, when you say, it's hard to understand.)

IB: The police, um tried to itimidate they would fill up the courtroom with police officers and intimidate the kids, and it would only be them three going up there and um, and that just boiled, you know, when they came home they would cry, and tell me what happened, and then that would get me more upset and I say why is it taking so long because it shouldn't take so long to put a cop away,



he murdered my son and this is you know the way it's supposed to be, because if my son woulda murdered him, then, other police officer then, my son woulda been facing the electric chair. So um, I kept on, you know babbling like that and you know they didn't want me going to the courthouse, and I said okay this is it, I don't want none of you to do anything, I'm gonna do it, because this is not right, you know and then um, they would argue—

Q: (Wait who would you that to?)

IB: To my husband and my kids—

Q: (What did you say again?)

IB: I told em I don't want you to talk—

Q: (Okay start again, told who?)

IB: I told, my husband told me what they were doing to my kids and my husband and then I said okay, so you're not going to go anymore to court and you're not going to go where there's a lot of police officers, we're gonna make sure that our people are there. So then I started, uh when I came back from Florida um I went to Richie Perez, and I told him you know that this is going on, why is this going on, and then they said well this is what they use intimidation for the family to quit, and then okay, I don't want to get involved, I don't want my husband to be involved, because they were there and they'd been through enough, so I wanna, I wanna be, I wanna come to the meetings, I wanna be in, you know, I wanna know everything about anything, anything you know from previous cases that um, how they conduct, what should I do. Tell me what to do and I'll do it.

Q: (Was he helpful, was the Congress helpful?)

IB: Oh yes, they were, they put me in contact with a –

Q: (Who put you, tell me who put you--)

IB: Ritchie Perez put me in contact with a lotta other organizations that were around that knew, and um, with Mumia, Abu Jamal's organization, with the Black Panthers organization, with the Zulu Nation, that they'd been through courts, they know that going on in court, so I went to all their meetings and um, as my DA was supposed to be investigating, um, then, uh, my hus—

Q: (Wait, wait, who was supposed to be investigating?)

IB: Robert Johnson,

Q: (I don't understand--)

IB: --is the DA to, in my, in my district, he was supposed to be investigating the case, so here goes time and nothing happened, so when we went over there we asked him what happened, we asked for an appointment to see Robert Johnson, me and my husband, and then they said well it's, you know, it's not as easy because this police officer was as delegate for the union and the union was blocking everything. So I spoke to my lawyer and he said that he couldn't get involved he couldn't do nothing because they're not that kinda lawyer, they were civil lawyer, but they could take the civil case, but nothing legal that they could do cuz it was up to the DA, because this was the city, so they couldn't do nothing. So the only thing they can do is accompany me wherever I wanted to go, an I say okay, and then um, they said we can follow you wherever you want but that's the only thing we can do, be there for moral, moral support, so I tell em okay, so then I started going around to all these other organizations

to meetings and then I found out that, Robert Johnson was supposed to do it, but he wasn't doing his job. So,

Q: (Why was the DA not doing his job?)

IB: Because the union had intimidated the DA.

Q: (DISCUSSION – Why was the DA not doing their job, because that's what their job is, to investigate?)

IB: Well, the first job that saw the case threw it out, he said my son died of ashtma. The second time that Johnson brought him up on charges, somebody played with the papers, somebody has took some papers, you know they had to oppose some police officer from the District Attorney's office then the papers were not there, then um, that's when Ritchie decided you know we have to do something more.

RECORDING INTERRUPTED; RESUMES

IB: So, um...

Q: (So basically the police and the DA were trying to block.)

IB: Yes, and then um, what happened was um Ritchie Perez said that we had to think hard what our next step was, and then they started saying um, we can either take over the DA's office and make him,

RECORDING INTERRUPTED; RESUMES

IB: So um, they told me that the only thing we can do is do a sit-in, but it was up to the family because they couldn't get involved, um, they could only suggest, so because the family had to do it it was a family decision. So then um, I took it into account, and I needed my husband to call the lawyer, to get me out, so I didn't want him to go in, I needed somebody to keep me company, so I took one of my daughters, I kept on thinking my kids, you know, I didn't want them to do this, um they had jobs and you know I say I didn't want them to lose their jobs because of this, so um, okay I eliminated, then the only one that was available was one of my daughters, so I said the other one can take care of the other one's baby, so I worked it out that my daughter went with me, and then um, I had um, from 1199, her name is Marion, Marion came with me, and a coupla people from [ ] came with me, and, girls, and um, two other people, and Margarita, she came with me, and we had a lawyer that, would take us out you know if they arrested us—

PAUSE; RESUMES

Q: (So basically you met with the National Congress of Puerto Rican Rights, and they suggested you take some kind of action.)

IB: Right, and then we asked what kind of action, and they said well you know, disobedience, that means that you either, lay yourself, you know like lay yourself on the street and stop the traffic, so they explain to me what disobedient mean to get attention so that the courts and people that don't know that this is going on would get attention, so um, once they explain, and then they explain the

consequences, if you do this you can get arrested, and depending what it is, you know that's the, you know the more time give you the greater the, the place you go in, and what greater than the DA's office. So we were looking here for you know a coupla years in jail, so I said well, I'm, you know I'm willing to take it, and then Margarita said she was willing to take it, you know as long as we could talk to the DA face to face, and then um, my daughter said she was willing to take it and the people that went in knew what they were gonna get themselves in, once we got in there, so we had to go first and check out how is the DA's office where to go how we had to go, what time we had to go so it took time for us to make a plan and to put it in action, it wasn't something we just did at the spurt of the moment it took time, planning and action. And once we were in there, you know like everybody like didn't know what to do, um, they, the people that were there didn't wanna touch me the officer that were there didn't wanna touch me, and then the court officer were telling the regular police officer well you arrest them and the other one no you arrest them and it became like a ping pong in there you know and we were looking at them what's wrong with them you know arrest us already, you know? And nobody wanted to arrest us so, um, maybe because of you know the way, because I was praying, reading the bible you know, I was praying not to go to jail, really, but um I said you know, Lord you know this is for a good cause and I explained to the Lord why I was doing what I was doing and that nobody there wanted to get in trouble but it was for the courts that they wasn't doing nothing in this case and in other cases they were not doing nothing because of who Robert Johnson was, he's the DA and he's like weak, he doesn't do nothing for this community. And we know they say the DA can indict anybody

he want if he want, so it was very hard on us when, um, they first, they said that um they had to let Livoti go because of a technicality, we said what technicality what's wrong with you, you know all you gotta do is rewrite the paperwork and then the judge threw it out because of the technicality, all the judge had to do is tell them here go do your job, rewrite this over and bring it back to me, that's all he had to do and he threw out the case. So that was the second time Livoti had gotten that, then they resume another grand jury to bring up, up on charges and they found him guilty again for the third time, and then, um, the judge threw him out again. After we had the sit in then they wanted to do a, um, bring him to court, but it would be in a couple years, like it would take two years for the process to go through, the paperwork so I said no we have we want him now, you bring him up we'll face that, when that river comes we'll cross it but bring him up on charges now, make, put a grand jury together so they could check out the paperwork, so he did and we spoke to him, they found him guilty again—

Q: (Wait a second, you spoke to who?)

IB: We spoke to Robert Johnson in his office and then Robert Johnson explained that his hands were tied because of all the pressure that he was getting from the police, police union, and then we said we don't care about the police union what we care—

Q: (Wait a second, when was this now that you had this conversation with him?)

IB: On that day, that day we had a little conversation with him—

Q: (This is the day you were occupying?)

IB: To go to the DA's office.

Q: (Okay start there.)

IB: Okay we took the DA's office, once we had the sit-in, and none of the police officers wanted, then by at 12, 10 o'clock, the DA came down and he spoke to us because he had to come down to where we were to get out of the building, the building was closed already it was 10 o'clock, so he said that there was nothing he could do, talk to us now, but because the media was there he didn't want to say too much in to camera, but he promised to make an appointment for the next day for us to come to his office and he would sit down and talk to us. The next day me and my husband went to the DA's office and he told us there wasn't much that could do because his hands were tied because of the union, um, he needed the police to make cases for him, to bring up in court that's why he couldn't really prosecute police officers, so we said uh this officer you're gonna have to bring up on charges and if you don't want this to happen again, if you don't want something worse to happen, you have to bring this police up on charges. So he said I will bring up, make a jury, and they pick, the DA Robert Johnson picked the worst, I don't know where he went and he got some people together and they found him guilty again, I know he was trying to find people that would let him go but he found people that found him guilty again for the fourth time, found him guilty, um, Francis Livoti, the police officer that murdered my son, and then uh we went back to court. When we were in court the judge this time was judge Shandling, and he took the case and the judge took the case and the trial started, and the DA sent his worst assistant to handle the case, so when Robert Johnson's assistant started working we knew this lady didn't want to push this case so she didn't want to bring in Daisy Borea that was

one of the officers that came when my son was laying in the street, and they put the Sargent that was supposed to be monitoring Francis Livoti, the police that murdered my son, didn't do nothing when Livoti attacked my son, and then she was the one who came when my son was already on my floor, and he, the Sargent ordered Daisy Borea to take my son to the precinct and then the other police officers that were here arrested my son, my other sons and took them to the precinct.

SOME DISCUSSION; CONTINUES:

IB: So they didn't want to bring her in for testimony and then so my husband, my husband told Lou you don't bring her in for testify I'm gonna do something here, because you are trying to lose my case and we were talking so loud and the media was all around us that she said yes I'm gonna call her in, so—

Q: (Call who?)

IB: The DA assistant said they was gonna call Daisy Borea in to testify, so when they call her in to testify she testify that when they told her to take my son to the precinct, behind the precinct they were talking what they were gonna say, how they were gonna do it, and she was like left out a little bit, like she wasn't in the crowd of the police, cuz she was a woman, you know she didn't mind, when she went back in the car saw my son he was already like blue or purple, took him to the hospital said he's not breathing they told her take him to the hospital, she drove him to the hospital there they pronounced him dead on arrival, and my son were inside the court, the station house, and when she came back she told them



look I don't what's going on but calm down don't worry, ask all the questions they ask you, and she left. And then when she went to court—

Q: (Wait, don't say she.)

IB: When Daisy Borea went to court, when she took the stand, she told the judge that, that what happened she took Tony to the station house, and from the station house to the hospital, when she came back they were all talking about what had gone down, and that Daisy Borea, they didn't include her, but when she was giving her testimony the lawyer of the other police officer was with her lawyer taking her testimony, to hear what she had to say, and then the judge told her, okay, you're finished, don't take the stand no more, and she left. And that Tony was dead when she arrived there, and her partner, um, that perjured himself on the stand said that when he came with her, I don't know I don't remember his name, but when Daisy Borea's partner came to the stand, he said that he had to cuff Anthony because he was fighting and scuffling with Livoti, so he had to put his help him put the handcuff, but Daisy said no when we got there Tony was already on the floor, laying so he coulda never got up and talked and walked, because that was the story they had planned behind the station house that Anthony was wrestling with Francis Livoti, and that he would get up and walk, so Francis couldn't have killed him because he was walking when they took him to jail.

So after she gave her testimony, after everybody else gave their testimony, the coupla days after, months after, the judge said to Livoti, though you're guilty of this crime, you're not fit to be a police officer because of you actions, you are a disgrace to your uniform, but I have to let you go. And with

that Livoti got up with his lawyer, went to the back, and it was like he murdered my son again. And then, um, they had cleared the court house totally, there was no other trial going on in the court house, they tell me there was hundreds and hundreds of police officers outside, they tell me that uh, they took me to the hospital, um, and there was police officers on horses, and my husband tells me that it was like a World War III ready to happen when the people came out of the court room.

#### TAPING STOPS; RESUMES:

IB: Nobody understood why, not even the media, the media thought that Livoti's going to jail, everybody thought Livoti was going to jail, so when the judge said I have to let you go, everybody like you know dropped their jaw, everything they have in their hands they drop it, and then we found out—

#### SOME DISCUSSION; RESUMES

Q: (So basically, nobody got it.)

IB: Nobody understood why the judge let him go. Then we found out that um, somebody from the police union went into the judge's house and they broke his car, like that morning before he went to trial, we found out they have threatened the DA, you know after the trial we found out all this, but before the judge let him go we had already spoken with the federal judge and we had already spoken with several investigators from the federal and they were

prepared, they had an idea that they were gonna let him go, so they were waiting, so and then they, um, we brought him up on charges on federal level, though with the police depart, the police departmental, they fired Livoti, um, they found him guilty and they fired him and um, there was a lot of cover up there was a lot of you know, even the mayor, the mayor knew that Livoti murdered my son eight hours after it happened he already knew everything that happened and he kept shut. He didn't say a word and um because my son incident and a coupla incidents that happened after my son died, um, Bratton, was getting, had to resign, we say, we said the union is gonna resign, we—

Q: (The union head was gonna resign?)

IB: Yeah, we said Matarasso was gonna resign we gave um, this is the people, the community speaking you know you're gonna have to resign we're telling the media, um Bratton have to resign, Matarazzo have to resign, all the ones that were covering up the issue of police brutality, that were covering up for Livoti, um here is an officer that have fif- um almost fifteen complaints before he got to me, and that was a habit he had of choking people, and they knew about it, and they didn't do nothing. So, with that record, you know the judge should've locked him up and didn't, so the only thing we, because we couldn't go back cuz they had tried him three times prior, and they already had tried him for Manslaughter One, they had tried him for Manslaughter Two, and then because they said they couldn't be murdered because he didn't get up in the morning with intent to murder my son. I say it's murder because when my husband was pleading with him, the police officer, to let my son go, that he was a sick man, he didn't let go, and he only laughed at my husband, so, with that you know I, when,

it's like if I tell somebody look let him go you're gonna hurt him and you don't let go, then you choose to keep on doing what you're doing and to hurt the other person, so that's why I felt like I had to go, I had to go out and scream I had to do anything to get attention to my son's case because of the union, the clause that the union had.

Q: (What clause?)

IB: Well clause under contract that they can't go to jail, clause under contract that they are exempt from a lot of things, that we as community are not exempt. And the blue wall of silence, you know police officers covering up, risking their jobs risking everything for another officer, and if you don't do it, then you are blacklisted and that means that you can go to find yourself in a situation where there are guns and nobody's gonna back you or you can find yourself with a bullet by accidental friendly fire. So, you have to think about that.

Q: (Were there any officers that actually came forward).

IB: Well, um, when he murdered my son and I started going out there and I put an 800 number um, me and the lawyer, um, um, she put out an 800 number for anyone who had any information on Livoti, and we had phone calls and even police officers called and told us you know what you're doing is great, I hope get this BS, and um, he's done a lot of damage, and he's ruined a lotta careers for other officers in the precinct because of his connection, because he was, um, he was a nephew or the godson of, um, police, police, um...

Q: (Yeah, I know who it is, say this again, Livoti was the--)

IB: Livoti was either a nephew or a godson of Luis Animone, and this is the top ranking police officer in the city, very close to Guiliani, so it was very hard,

anything, if anybody wanted to write him up, anybody wanted to write Francis Livoti up on any charges they couldn't because then Animone would demote them, and he demoted a lot of officers who did speak up on, you know, because this police, Francis Livoti was doing bad things, and they couldn't take it anymore, and they had spoken up and they were demoted, so a lot of them then just kept quiet, because they knew that if they speak up they would lose either their job or they would be framed. And that was why they were scared to say anything about it, and there was a lot of dirt that came out afterwards, that police officers would make an anonymous call to us and we would find out things and we would find out addresses and everything, that um, would happen, when the DA, when the technicality happened, his girlfriend was in the DA's office that day that the technicality happened, the papers disappear, Francis Livoti's girlfriend was in the DA's office, so we figured that she walked in there and walked right out with papers from the case, and nobody did nothing, and somebody sent a tape to um, the lawyer, that this was happening, so that's why we know that that happened, and who it was, because then we found out that it was Francis Livoti's girlfriend.

Q: (So the cops are pretty tight with the DA that they can walk into the office and walk off with something.)

IB: Yes. Because the um, they have that freedom, the police got that freedom to go to a DA's office and sit down and look through the paper, because they have to make the case, you know, so that's where the perjury comes in, like the police officer who perjured themselves on the stand, in my case, to this day nothing has been done. You know, for all those files are missing, a crate of files

were missing when from Livoti, in the case, a lot of little stuff was missing at the time, that the DA didn't have their hands on it, because other officers walked in to the DA's and disappear.

Q: (On a daily basis?)

IB: Yeah, on a daily basis they come with paperwork on cases that they arrested somebody, and this is the case, and they have to bring those cases to the DA's office. The DA office should have a personnel specially for that, but they don't so the police officers have to do that. And then you have your girlfriends that you know that come with you to bring those cases to the DA's office, and the DA don't say nothing because it's common for them to be walking in and out, it's nothing that you know will upset the DA or nothing out of the ordinary. So, it's you know, it's ironic, that a police officer that's being, that's on trial can go through a DA's office, or send somebody to go through the DA's office.

Q: (Is that one of the things that you're fighting now, to change?)

IB: Well, we're trying to change a lot of things, see the problem is that when we put them in a position that everybody knows it's dirty, well they'll go around the, the mayor, and the Commissioner, the Police Commissioner, would go around what the people want [*someone enters*] – nothing, nothing, go upstairs. Um, we would tell them like, we were saying to take away some powers of the Street Crime Unit, well people were screaming and yelling, what did they give us? They put in the car, um, Courtesy, Respect, and Professionalism. That they're gonna teach them. They shoulda know that when they joined the force, um they gave them new uniforms, but then who did they

cater to, the taxpayers paid for that, all those changes that they say they did, and business goes as usual. That's why we had the Luima incident. Because, nobody listened. And because they say oh we're gonna do it, they're gonna be changes, we're giving the people what they want.

Q: (Talk to me a little bit about how you met Milta.)

IB: I met Milta in the courthouse in another rally that we did, um, where she came with Richie Perez and the National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights, she came with that group and she, they introduced us, and then we had meetings over there at the Congress, and then we dialogue you know we talked about the cases and what they're doing in different cases.

Q: (When you first met her was she going through a hard time?)

IB: Yes.

Q: (Tell me about it, say when I first met her, Milta, use her name.)

IB: When I first met Milta um she was going, like losing it because they said that they had shot her son, in, that her son took a stand, that her son was shot in the stomach, and then when the autopsy came her son was shot in the back and they took his ID that he had, and then a coupla months after she learned that her son was shot in one place and he was removed from that place and placed in another place. So, and these little things that we learn, we learn them because some officers after a while their conscience bother them and that they give information. And other people find out information, um, how did this happen? And then when people start asking questions, we get more information and that's how she found out through, you know, through, the, um the coroner, that her son was shot from the back and at a close distance, not a, you know,

long distance like they were saying. And um, when I met, um, Frank, Frankie Aswega's mother she was, you know, really a mess, and we found after a couple months that he was shot close range, he was not shot from a moving vehicle like they were saying, he was not shot from, uh, in the back of the head like they was saying, it was on the right temple, and it was only like about five feet away or three, um, this is from the hospital report. So it's a lot of things that don't come out in the first couple months in the you know when we're trying to go to court and when the DA wants information because all this is covered, it's not until after we go to court that they throw out the case because they don't have no evidence, then all the evidence started emerging, a couple months, even years it start coming up.

Q: (One day we were here your husband was saying that Milta was really in a financially hard time and you guys had helped her, do you remember that?)

IB: Well we were doing a fund raiser and because Milta's son was the only one that was helping her, when they murdered him, that means he wasn't, that money was not gonna be coming in anymore, and because she was part of the group and was always out there with us and I had formed the Anthony Baez Foundation, because it's part that, the police murdered her son, so it's only logical that the Foundation was fighting police brutality and this was the way we gonna do it, so we put his, um, his share of the rent that he woulda gaved her for that particular month that he was killed because you know, they shot him, so next month he couldn't come up with the money so that boy was gonna be there, and top of that she was going through the loss of a son, you know, so it's, it's very hard, they put us in a position that is very hard. Emotionally they destroy a



parent, a family, and financially, um, I didn't know I was poor, until after they murdered my son, that, that first month I was going, um, flying back and forth because I lived in Florida so I had to fly back and forth, and you know buying a ticket for today, I have to go to New York today, you know was like \$600, you know, and my mind of stage, I wasn't thinking about the money I was thinking I have to get right now to New York, and if I had to bring two of my kids that was 1,000 something, almost \$2,000, \$3,000, and at the time I didn't care about money, and I didn't anybody to talk to me no you can't touch that money, you know that's money for the future that's retirement money, I just hopped on the next plane out, and now I realize now, my God, you know, what was I thinking about, but it was my son that got murdered. So.

Q: (You said that you didn't know that you were poor, it sounds like your perception of the world changed a lot.)

IB: I mean I told you I thought I was in a pink world, my balloon got popped and then I saw the black and the gray, I saw the real world like it was, um, when I was brought up I was brought up you know you respect the police, you go to the police when you need something, um if somebody hurts you you go to the police, if somebody violates you got to the police, they are there for you. To help you. They're you're community police officer, um, they are there for you. And that was the way I brought up, so if you kill a, you know if you kill, a, a, human being you go to jail, so that's why it was so frustrating for me at first, why can't this cop go to jail, he murdered my son, and I couldn't deal with it. I had to have that cop in jail, or I was going to commit suicide if he didn't go to jail.

Because I know they, woulda, they would locked my son up in a blink, before you can open your eyes with a blink my son woulda been locked up.

Q: (...how did you actually find out the details of what happened that night?)

IB: I didn't find out all the details. Um...when, um, a lotta people were talking to me, and they said um Tony died of asthma, it was the 23<sup>rd</sup>, I came here the 22<sup>nd</sup>, it was the 23<sup>rd</sup>, and you know the newspaper had it, a young man died of asthma, it was that he scuffled with the police, I said didn't scuffle with the police cuz my kids you know they have respect for the police, and um, I know Anthony didn't scuffle with the police, I knew Anthony, um, he was, you know, a Christian boy and he always was, you know, the authority came first and you obey authority, and he preached that so much that I knew that he wouldn't have lift a finger against, especially the police. So um, when they, one of my sons was explaining that they were playing football in the front of the house, first they told me they were packing the luggage and then they found a football, David said Raymond was upstairs, I was upstairs, my husband was upstairs, and my daughter had gone home um because she was gonna rest because she was gonna drive the next day with the boys, um, so um, when Anthony came down, David came down and Henry came down they were putting the luggage inside my van—

Q: (And why were they packing the car?)

IB: Because they were leaving for Florida at four in the morning, they were going back home at four in the morning, and um, Tony had said all his good-byes to the people in church and gaving out all the gifts that they bought

down, the reason Tony came to New York, we were in Florida and um we were in the kitchen talking, and my daughter was supposed to go up to Florida to visit me, and then they had cancelled her flight, and then we had a whole bunch of presents there waiting for the kids, and then, um, Tony said, so why don't we take the presents to them? And it was December 19<sup>th</sup> so my husband said yeah we should take it to them so all these boxes won't be here, stay here for Christmas, so then the other one said well I'll accompany you, and then he said well it's gonna be a short trip because I have to be back, Tony had to go back to work on the 26<sup>th</sup>, so then they packed the van with all the gifts and everybody came down, they left me over there, and the two girls, the four girls, and one of the boys, with my other daughters. And then, um, on the 19<sup>th</sup> they took off for New York. They got here the 20<sup>th</sup>, in the evening, on the 21<sup>st</sup>, um Tony took all the toys and started giving out all the presents to the friends and his nieces and nephew –

TAPING STOPS; RESUMES:

Q: (So you were telling me how they got in the car and they came up here.)

IB: So they got in my van and they came down, um they drove down, it was two cars driving down with all the presents, and then on the 21<sup>st</sup> Tony went to visit everybody, Anthony took all the gifts to the, to the –

TAPING STOPS; RESUMES:

IB: That was the 21<sup>st</sup>, and then um, that night, because they were leaving at 4 o'clock and Anthony wasn't gonna drive and Henry wasn't gonna drive and um, David, well David couldn't drive, but they, my husband wasn't gonna drive, they had three other drivers they were gonna caravan back home, everybody from New York was gonna go to my house to give me a surprise, cuz it hadn't been two years that I didn't well didn't see none of them, so they were gonna go up, so we had like two vans outside and they were getting packed up. So, they found a football, and um, it was about 11 o'clock, 11, 11:30, and they started, playing, they stopped what they were doing packing the van and they started throwing the football and they noticed the police car parked in front, but he'd been there for hours so he knew what they were doing, and they started playing, and about an hour after they were in the game, another police car came and parked parallel to that one, though he came from the wrong way cuz this was a one way coming, going, up, east, he came going north, then so, he almost ran into the kids, and then, uh, David, you know, tell him, you know, he jumped up, and then he was telling him wait, you wanna run us over? So he, Livoti started mimicking him, because David when he gets scared he stutters, so he started mimicking him and laughing at him, so the boys moved away a little further up from where the police were, and then they were playing, and then David is short, was shorter, so when they, when I think the first time Henry threw a ball and it went over David's head it hit the ground it ricocheted and hit the car, so they picked up the ball, Henry picked up the ball and showed it to the cop and he apologized, and he went back and there, Livoti came out and starting telling them

to get out of here and he didn't want them in the block, so then what they did they stopped the game and they moved further up away from the cars. So Livoti walked back into the car and sat down. So the boys moved away from them. So they kept on playing and then, um, it was about half an hour they said, into the game, when the ball ricocheted and hit Livoti's car the second time. When it hit Livoti's car then Livoti came, and um, first he, he told Raymond that was leaning against the wall, he told Raymond um, who's the leader of the gang, and Raymond said this, you know, this is not a gang, you know, we're brothers, and then he said I'll take you one on one, and then so they looked at each other, you know and like this guys crazy, so then, when, when Livoti said, was talking with Raymond, the other boys were coming down, cuz they didn't know what happened, so they were walking down cuz they were more like to the corner, to the Walton side, so when they were walking down to find out what happened, Livoti was saying I don't want you here, now get out of here, and you know, telling David, and David was saying but we're not doing nothing, you know we're only playing football and he said no, I want you to stop the game now, get out of here, but at no time did they say, you know, what, we're here doing an investigation or nothing like that, so what David did was he sat on the bumper of the car and by him sitting on the bumper of the car Livoti felt that that's an insult to him so Livoti went and grabbed him by the, you know the chest, and then, no grabbed him by the back of his collar and then dragged him on his feet then turned him around and handcuffed him with his handcuffs, he handcuffed David, and the boys you know then they were walking faster like running towards Livoti, and they were saying but what happened, what happened, and then cuz

everything happened so quickly, and then, he was, so he was walking David towards the car and the boys were asking what happened what happened, so the boys froze, when the boys froze they were saying you know what happened, and they said what you're doing is wrong you know you can't take my brother and then Livoti said well I'm taking him and I'm gonna take you too if you don't shut up. And then he put my son in the back of the car, that was David, then um, Tony said but you can't do that you know we know our rights we're not doing nothing, and then he turned back around, this time all the boys were in the middle of the street, and they were yelling, calling my husband, and my husband was at the window, so he was running down the stairs at the same time that they were yelling, and then when my husband was running down, Tony got close to Livoti and told him you know what he was doing, that he was a correction officer, and then when he said that, Livoti pushed him against the jeep, so his, he ricocheted from the Jeep forward and then his back was towards Livoti, so when he ricocheted backwards that's when Livoti put a choke hold on him, and then that um, when my husband was running down he was asking what happened what happened, and then the other officers came out of the car, already David was in the car, and none of the officers, still, none of the officers had gotten out of the car and then when Livoti walked back and got to Tony, and put the choke hold on him, the other two boys were yelling at my husband to come down, and then they were running back to where Livoti was with Tony, and then two officers came out of the car and one put a gun on Henry and told him to lay down on the floor, and the other one was running after Raymond, but Raymond ran into the house, my husband was running out of the house, then

they locked the gate, keeping Raymond inside the gate, and my husband ran to where to the car was, and was pleading with Livoti to let Tony go, and then um, other, at that time, he was saying who's in charge, who's in charge, and then the Sargent was inside the car, and then he got out, and said I'm in charge and then at that time, at the same time there were cars coming from here, uh, another, Daisy Borea's car was coming, and because of the parallel that Livoti's car was, she wind up where the tree was on the right hand side of the street, and then, her partner got out of the car, and came to where Livoti and the Sargent was, and by that time the Sargent was with Livoti and they had handcuffed Tony, and when he got there, Tony was already handcuffed with the Sargent's handcuff, now Henry was lay down on the floor with a gun in his head, Raymond was inside the house, David was out of the patrol car because when the Sargent got out David got out too because David saw what they were doing to Tony, and then more police officers were coming, more cars, and then um, the Sargent told Daisy Borea, Sargent Moynahan told Daisy Borea to put Tony in her car, and then they, she couldn't do it, so it took three officers to pick, drag Tony, cuz they didn't pick him up they dragged him and put him in, shoved him in the car.

Q: (Was he unconscious?)

IB: No, he was, he wasn't conscious, he was unconscious, so um, when she did that, they were there, no, they didn't call no ambulance, no ambulance never came here, and my husband was in socks and short—

END OF TAPE