THE ALEXANDRIA ORAL HISTORY CENTER
OFFICE OF HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA
CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

# Oral History Interview

with

# Amos Sims

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**Interviewer:** Francesco De Salvator

**Narrator:** Amos Sims

**Location of Interview:**

Lloyd House, Alexandria, VA, 22314

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**Summary:**

*Mr. Amos Sims talks about growing up in Alexandria from the mid-1990s through the present day. Mr. Sims reflects on living in different housing projects, and he mentions different recreation centers where he played sports in Alexandria.*

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| General | Childhood, New Projects, Recreation Centers, Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority (ARHA) |

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| Places | Samuel Madden, Andrew Adkins, John Roberts, Cameron Valley, Parker-Gray, The Berg, Charles Houston, the Boys Club, Cora Kelley, Lee Rec Center, Mount Vernon Rec Center, T.C. Williams High School |

**Amos Sims** [00:00:00] Hi, my name is Amos Sims. Today's date is September 17, 2025. And my location, I'm at Lloyd House as we speak.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:00:13.0] Cool. My name is Francesco De Salvatore, and today is September 17, 2025. We are at Lloyd House, which is at 220 North Washington Street in Alexandria, Virginia. Thanks for being here with us today.

**Amos Sims** [0:00:28.2] Thank you. Thank you.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:00:28.7] I'm really excited to hear about different facets from your life. And so, let's just start with the beginning. Where, you know, can you describe where you grew up?

**Amos Sims** [0:00:40.3] I grew up in—they call it Andrew Adkins, but as I grew up, they call—we called it the New Projects. And I also grew up in Cameron Valley, and I also grew up in—it's called the Berg. I grew up in just about all the neighborhoods in Alexandria. And also, one other place called John Roberts. And I grew up just about running around all neighborhoods. I've been here so long I done played on Parker-Gray's playground—I mean school. I did watch them build the subway station. Well, I could just tell you I done watched them tear just about everything down that I grew up at. I done used—I was used to seeing every phone with like a phone booth at every corner.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:01:30.8] Wow.

**Amos Sims** [0:01:31.5] Now there's not such thing, but I also used to play on the train tracks that was down here. And I also grew up where they used to have to the post office down here right on Washington Street. It's just so many places that I actually grew up at watch them grow and go down. But hey—they making it look like good as it is, but they never be the same.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:01:55.1] Yeah. Yeah. So, let's maybe start so with Adkins or, you know, what people call it—

**Amos Sims** [0:02:01.2] Okay.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:02:01.1] —like you like—

**Amos Sims** [0:02:03.2] Okay, what?

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:02:03.3] —like the New Projects. Right?

**Amos Sims** [0:02:04.3] Okay.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:02:04.5] That's what they called it?

**Amos Sims** [0:02:05.3] And so which would you want me to call the New Projects or Andrew Adkins?

F**rancesco De Salvatore** [0:02:07.4] Call it the way that you want to call it.

**Amos Sims** [0:02:08.6] Okay. Well—

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:02:09.8] Yeah, call it the New Projects. So again, can you describe sort of—so you lived there from like what years and like do—

**Amos Sims** [0:02:18.2] Well, I lived in the new projects from the age of 5 till I'd say 12.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:02:23.5] Okay. Wow.

**Amos Sims** [0:02:24.1] It used to be since when—when it was the projects when I was growing up there, it used to have fence—black fence going around, concrete blocks as stools for us. So, it also, I mean I rode my big wheels around there. [Laughs] I done played jumping jacks around it. I done did hopscotch. I done did it all when I was young. But I also when I did hang around it, it was just so much fun just running around that one little neighborhood cause it just a one big square anywhere you can get in. Anywhere you can get out. It was—seemed like it was always something to do there.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:03:02.4] Yeah.

**Amos Sims** [0:03:02.5] We used to play hide and seek, touch football in the alleys, basketball—do you know the old—we play—put a crate up in one of the telephone poles and make it a basketball court. We done shot play horse on our side in the alley. We done had races by feet—where we're using our feet to race. We did—it was just so—we just made fun for ourselves. We used to race our bikes against each other see who gonna run around—ride the bike around the square the fastest. It was just all—it was just awesome when I was living in the projects.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:03:40.6] Yeah.

**Amos Sims** [0:03:41.4] Aka Andrew Adkins and then—

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:03:45.1] So when you were 5 like what year was that?

**Amos Sims** [0:03:48.1] Oh man! [Laughs]

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:03:49.0] I know like it—

**Amos Sims** [0:03:51.8] I want to—

**Francesco De Salvator**e [0:03:52.0] Think roughly?

**Amos Sims** [0:03:53.1] I want to say the 1980s.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:03:54.5] Was like the 1980s? Okay.

**Amos Sims** [0:03:55.4] I would say the 1980s because what I—what I can say was when I was in the projects, I was almost young enough to cross the street.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:04:04.4] Okay.

**Amos Sims** [0:04:04.8] But I wasn't quite old enough yet. But once we—once I got old enough, I started going to other neighborhoods as you say like Samuel Madden. I grew up walking up and down Samuel Madden going to the corner stores, meeting family up, cookouts, basketball games cause it was a basketball court up there in that area. And then once I was due there, I go to a different neighborhood cause we had so many neighborhoods in this area. I also went down to the Berg. Had family down there doing the same thing—had corner stores, grocery stores. There was just seemed like it was more fun. It was fun I'll say. It was always something to do down in Andrew Adkins—they say the projects, the Berg, and Samuel Madden. It was always something to do in those neighborhoods, but as I was growing up. So as when I got older, I moved down to the Berg. And that's down there close to Old Town. And once I was down there, that's when I—I hate to say—that's when I had my first only child. So, I was—raised her down there. As I was raising her down there, it was just something fun to do when you had your kid. And when I was growing up, I was teaching her how to walk, ride her bike down in the Berg. And it was—it was just fun in the days of when all these neighbor—when these neighborhoods before I knew the name of them.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:05:43.1] Yeah. Yeah. These all—all these memories are great. Thank you for like—yeah sharing them. And I'd like to hear more just about—let's maybe talk about Adkins? Yeah, like where—who did you live with at Adkins?

**Amos Sims** [0:05:59.9] I had—it was officially my aunt. Her name was Aunt Mona, and she used to keep us all—like me, and my older brother, her kids. She used to just keep us over the weekend. We'd sit outside. She'd walk us to the park. She also cooked dinner. She had cook on the—she'd have a cookout. She always had a sleepover almost every other weekend with my aunt. She was the one that always—she was like I'm gonna say church forum lady, but she always liked to keep having fun. She was a people person.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:06:32.2] What was her last name? It was Mona—

**Amos Sims** [0:06:33.9] Mona Ward.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:06:35.1] Mona Ward? Ward like W-a-r-d?

**Amos Sims** [0:06:37.2] Yes, sir.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:06:38.2] Yeah. And yeah—can you say more about her? Like what—what was she like?

**Amos Sims** [0:06:44.0] My Aunt Mona was the type—she was strict, but she was fair. If you're doing something correct, she'll let you go outside. If you didn't do it right, you'll sit in the house. But then she'll ease up. Be like okay, well she'll put a time limit on your going in and out outside because she ain't like nobody running in and out her house. [Laughs] Cause she used to live up—a fly come in there, she seemed like she's a different person cause she hated flies. So, once you were outside

only time you're coming back in, you go to the bathroom or get some water. Or dinnertime. But she was like—you know what I mean? As she was a very good person—[inaudible 0:07:20.7] rest in peace, Aunt Mona. She was like the family get together. Like when we need it—when we'd have to have cookouts or family reunions, she was the one that did it. Cause she was, you know, the people's person. And she always been a people person. She used to keep like 12/14 kids in that small area. If anybody knew how big it is in there, the Andrew Adkins—she used to put us all in that one little house for—I mean you all. I ain't talking about just for a couple of hours. She used to keep us for weeks. And when I mean it was hot—it was pretty compressed, but we enjoyed being in there because she was the favorite aunt of ours. She was the one that put like the—she would made us have fun. She wasn't the one make you go to bed early, or the one that makes you like a milit—she was never like a military mom. She was like one of the aunts that kept us straight. So, if we did something at school she'd hear about it, "Oh your Aunt Mona wants you." If you got to take that walk of shame up to her house, that means she gonna give you the real piece of her mind without using bad words. That she ain't cuss at all. And she—I ain't gonna say she never whooped us, cause if I do, I'd lying to you. But she always had—went straightforward towards her. When I mean she jumped on us you know it, cause you have attention there in your face if you didn't listen. She was a very, very, very good woman. Now if anybody knew who Juanita Ward was, aka Mona, they would know her.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:08:53.8] Yeah. What do you remember from her apartment at Adkins? What did it look like and—

**Amos Sims** [0:08:59.2] When I first walked in there, I used to say, "All these steps." And once you get to her living room, you had to immediately sit down because she didn't allow no running around in her house. But once you sit there, she'll give you like puzzles or, you know, something for at your age limit. She'll give us a puzzle, or if there's something on TV, she'll let you watch it for a little while. But she won't let you sit there and do nothing. She'll make sure you're doing something educational or watching TV. If it's nice outside she'll let you go out, but she'll put you on a time schedule. Cause if you don't come back in before the light come on, that means you're not going back outside half of that day the next day.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:09:44.3] Yeah. So, we have—but maybe—yeah. Can you walk us through more? So, like you would like tell us like from the en—like you would enter and go up all these stairs you were saying?

**Amos Sims** [0:09:53.9] Oh. What I was—oh what I say when I walk up the stairs. The first thing she'll say, "Come here." And once I walked up them steps, I be like, "Aunt Mona, how do you do it every day all day?" She's like, "It was exercise to me. You need it." And I was like, "Okay." So, when I go back downstairs, I always look back and be like, "I don't know how she do it every day all day."

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:10:16.6] [Laughs] How many like steps were they?

**Amos Sims** [0:10:20.0] Oh, I could tell you all cause I lived in. It's 14 steep steps. And I'm talking about they kick my tail now going up and down them.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:10:27.7] Yeah, so.

**Amos Sims** [0:10:28.7] And when she's—when you go up her steps, it seemed like the rooms was big. But then [laughs]—when I went in there you had to stand by the door. You're not coming in her room. But the bathroom—she always had her bathroom smelling girly. But it was just the steps that used to always amaze me when she walked. And I mean you all if she forget her comb, she go up them steps and come back down them like it's nothing.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:10:53.4] Wow.

**Amos Sims** [0:10:53.6] When I go up them, I be like, "Hold on, Aunt Mona. Where they at again?" Cause she'll tell me, and I be so tired just getting up them. But her—she was just one of the amazingest aunts. She was strong, and she kept us in place—all of us.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:11:10.4] So—okay, so you're talking about steps in the house?

**Amos Sims** [0:11:13.4] Yes.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:11:13.6] Not go—okay, okay. I see what you're saying.

**Amos Sims** [0:11:16.4] Yeah. I'm talking about this—no. I'm talking about the steps going up the steps. Not the first pass—that the first three steps is easy. Cause you know what I mean? Once you take that bam, bam, you're in the house. But once you open up the door, you see them steps, cause you—really when I walk in, I never look to the left. When I first walk in there—when you open up the door the first thing you do is see steps.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:11:36.1] Wow.

**Amos Sims** [0:11:36.4] And you know we went—when I was young, I was like, "Oh man. Is that the only place I got to go?" Cause I never paid attention to my left cause I always once—my mom opened up the doors. She'd always like go upstairs.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:11:50.1] Okay.

**Amos Sims** [0:11:50.6] I wasn't the one—I wasn't able to be the one to go sit down yet. I had to earn those, right? But once you get to her house you immediately had to go upstairs.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:11:59.1] What was on the left? Like what was—

**Amos Sims** [0:12:01.0] I didn't get to see until—cause like I said, when I was first started going up there, I would just go to her room cause I was, you know, little. But when I came—when I got old enough to your left, she had a TV, couches, end tables, carpet. She had the whole house furnished. I mean I can remember the color. It was always red. She had red carpet. She had a black couch, cause red and black was her color. And actually, I was like 9 when I found out that was her colors. Cause like I said, I wasn't too much old enough to go to the left because I guess a room—the living room had expensive stuff. I don't know? I was always told, "Go up the steps." So, when I go up the steps, my head was always down. It wasn't like—let's see, when I had to walk them steps, I'd be like, "Oh," walking up the steps.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:12:55.2] Yeah, wow.

**Amos Sims** [0:12:55.8] Well, they were terrible. They was—

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:12:57.1] So—so just so I understand. So, when you walked in like to the left was almost like a family—

**Amos Sims** [0:13:02.0] It was a living room.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:13:02.6] Was like a living room?

**Amos Sims** [0:13:02.7] It was a—she had her living room set up. Yes.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:13:05.5] And then, where—what were the other rooms in the house like—

**Amos Sims** [0:13:07.9] There was a kitchen. The kitchen, I wasn't allowed in. Cause the first you go like I said when you walk in her house, when I got old enough—cause I'm like I said, she I guess when I when I was old enough to start go wander her house. Cause I wasn't able to wander her house when I first started going there. So, whereas when I was starting to wander, when she was like, "Well Pokey, go downstairs." And when I go downstairs, the first like I said, it'd be the couch, or a chair, or the floor. I wasn't allowed into the kitchen because you know at that age, they had gas through—they'd had gas stoves. So, she wouldn't let me go into the kitchen unless she was down there.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:13:47.1] Yeah. What did the kitchen look like? Do you remember?

**Amos Sims** [0:13:49.4] The kitchen looked like it was like how could I put it? It looked like it was like a square. Cause when you walk in, it's a stove, sink, and the washing machine area. And then once you do there, it's the back door. But if you close the door—it's a pantry that's in on the left-hand side. So, when as you walk in the first thing you do is see is the refrigerator. You can't see the stove yet because you got to walk in further to see the stove. And I think the way they set it up; that's the reason she didn't allow me to go into her kitchen because the stove was like wide over. And it wasn't like—you know how some stoves is in the corner or something? But hers was like literally in the corner middle of it. So that's why I think she didn't allow me to go into the kitchen till I got older.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:14:47.6] Yeah, yeah, yeah. What were the colors of the walls? Do you remember?

**Amos Sims** [0:14:51.3] Yellow. They were yellow because it was old school. It was in the days when I would—I'll never forget it. Cause when I seen that picture, I told you I had, I was looking for it. But her walls was yellow in the kitchen—just the kitchen though. Everything else was the walls was—all the walls in the house was white but the kitchen.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:15:09.1] But the kitchen. So, the first floor had a living room, a kitchen, was there any—was there like another—was there any other rooms?

**Amos Sims** [0:15:16.6] No, no. It was just no. Every—

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:15:19.0] It was like—

**Amos Sims** [0:15:19.1] —it was two beds—was a two-bedroom and a bathroom upstairs. Downstairs is no rooms at all.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:15:25.2] Okay.

**Amos Sims** [0:15:26.0] Only thing down there is a living room, a closet, the kitchen, the storage unit for your perish stuff.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:15:34.8] Yeah. In the well—and it sounds like you went to her room a lot. Like what do you remember about her room?

**Amos Sims** [0:15:39.7] Her room was like a fuzzy—like I said, she was like—she loved red. When you walk in her room, she had the—you had to take your shoes off, you know, before you go in her room. When you walk in her room she had the nice soft carpet, and she'd have you sit at the end of the bed. She got a TV there. She used to have like a—I don't know. The ladies call it a vanity. She'd sit at the vanity talking to me, putting on her makeup, or whatever she was doing. But I just sit at the edge of the bed until it's time to—the other cousins of mine to come. Because I was never by myself. You know. She had her kids there, but she also had me and, you know, like a few other cousins. So, when the other few cousins come, she'd have them come upstairs, sit at the edge of the bed, because her kids be all ready in their room waiting for us to get there.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:16:30.3] Do you remember like the neighbors there? The other people who lived there?

**Amos Sims** [0:16:35.1] Yes. I remember her name will always be in my mind. Her name was Brenda Talbert. Brenda Talbert, that's her name.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:16:44.4] That's all right.

**Amos Sims** [0:16:44.4] My neighbor.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:16:46.1] Yeah. What do you remember about her? What—

**Amos Sims** [0:16:47.6] She—I remember Miss Talbert when she was—she used to direct us. If she heard us use bad words, she'll come outside and tell us, "I'm gonna tell you all mom you all using bad language." And she kept us impressed because me and her son went to school. We grew up together. So, she knew my mom. My mom knew her. So, when I would used to go up Aunt Mona house, if Aunt Mona be like somewhere, she—I could be at the playground and I'm cussing. She'd come like, "I know who your mother is." And ever since, to this day, she still the same way. If she heard a kid cuss, then she know who your parent is, she'll still do it.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [inaudible 0:17:25.5]

**Amos Sims** [0:17:26.2] She still—and to this day, she's—and you all would not believe. She is my neighbor now.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:17:31.3] Wow. I mean—

**Amos Sims** [0:17:32.1] She's my neighbor now.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:17:33.4] Wow. Are there other people you remember during that time from Adkins?

**Amos Sim**s [0:17:39.5] Well, everybody that I know that's passed away. But like I said, my Aunt Mona let me scravage around to places only you can go is her yard and the playground. So, I couldn't—like I said, she controlled us like, "If you don't listen, you're gonna sit in the house." And what kid wants to sit in the house with her? In our days, if anybody riding bikes, big wheels—"I want you all to sit in the house." So, I did what she said.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:18:02.9] Yeah.

**Amos Sims** [0:18:03.2] The yard, the alley, or the playground.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:18:05.3] Yeah. What—so was the playground in Adkins?

**Amos Sims** [0:18:10.5] Yes.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:18:10.8] Was it—yeah, yeah. What do you remember about that playground? Is there things you remember?

**Amos Sims** [0:18:14.6] Yes. The playground [laughs]—you all—if you grew up there, we used to have the slides was metal. We used to have the metal rocking horses there and a merry-go-round. I'll never forget it. The merry-go-round was black and white, and I can't—cause I think one of the rocking ponies was blue and yellow. That's all they had there was the slide, the merry-go-round, and swings. And I never forget it because you know when you're growing up you think you're good, you're swinging, and you jump right on out there out the swings and you jump in the air, that's what I was doing. They didn't have mulch then, you all. It was just nothing but concrete. [Laughs]

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:18:57.5] Just concrete. That's funny. Do you remember, like did like were there community events at Adkins? Like, you know, like picnics? Like early—what like what was the social life there like?

**Amos Sims** [0:19:09.5] Well, we did—they had—we had block parties when we was growing up. They didn't have like what they have now. When we had block parties they'd have—they'd have a stage with bands playing on it. They used to have they're like people feeding us, but they didn't have too many gatherings, I'm gonna say—what you all calling them. The only time we used to have a here and there, somebody give a function or, you know, the most—you know mainly like if somebody that's known in the neighborhood and then they would pass out a flyer. It wasn't many functions during my days. The only thing we had was like, well, they—I forgot what they used to call it? Every summer, they used to have a block party. We maybe had two block parties a year

growing up, but it wasn't like it is now—nowhere near. No where near. Cause we was always when we got older, we was always at the rec playing basketball—rec league basketball, rec league football.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:20:01.7] Talking about Charles Houston?

**Amos Sims** [0:20:03.1] Charles Houston, the Boys Club, Cora Kelly. Well, I mean, we played—basically, we played all against each other in different rec centers. And them was the good days without fighting or shootings. Cause we didn't have that—in our days, as we grew up, we didn't have all that. We didn't have—if we did, it'd be knuckle up. There wasn't no stabbings, wasn't no shootings. There wasn't any of that. Only thing we did was I know it's not good to say—we fought. There wasn't going back to go get no knife or no guns or none of that. But now—wooh! I'm glad my—well, the way I was raised, they raised me right.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:20:42.2] Yeah. Do you remember like—you remember any interactions with like the homeowners around Adkins? Or like were there interactions? Like did—

**Amos Sim**s [0:20:52.2] No, sir.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:20:52.9] No?

**Amos Sims** [0:20:53.3] No, sir.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:20:53.5] It really was like—

**Amos Sims** [0:20:53.7] Everybody, like I said—everybody knew each other. So, if you—everybody was playing amongst these kids. So, they—we didn't even—we didn't need that. Because like I said, everybody like—everybody grew around each other. Cause there's only just—there's only—we only got so many elementary schools and one high school. You know what I'm saying? As we was growing up.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:21:14.7] Right.

**Amos Sims** [0:21:15.1] So we all grew up in the same circle, just about.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:21:19.3] Yeah.

**Amos Sims** [0:21:19.5] You know what I mean? Like if you go anywhere around me in any one in the neighborhoods, I guarantee somebody would know me. Any one of the neighborhoods, cause we all, like I said, we grew up. We all played around. We played basketball. We played football. Played at the skating rink.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:21:35.9] Yeah.

**Amos Sims** [0:21:36.4] We did all that. So, it wasn't really like no—wasn't like no community person that was actually up there.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:21:43.3] Yeah.

**Amos Sims** [0:21:43.5] Not at all. That's when I was growing up.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:21:45.4] Do you remember—so you were living between Adkins and Cameron Valley. Right?

**Amos Sims** [0:21:51.4] Yes.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:21:52.6] So like what—so who was living at Cameron Valley when you—

**Amos Sims** [0:21:55.7] My name—her—but I was living with my Aunt Polly. Her name is Vergie Carter. And I used to—me and her son, aka my cousin, we all went to school together at the same time. And we used to have to walk to school because there wasn't no bus taking us to school when we was—when I was in Cameron Valley with my Aunt Polly.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:22:15.2] Where did you go to school?

**Amos Sims** [0:22:16.7] MacArthur.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:22:17.4] MacArthur, good. And what are your—so describe at that time, like what did Cameron Valley look like, you know, like when—

**Amos Sims** [0:22:25.3] Oh, man! You talking about how to get how it looks when you get there? Or how it was when you was running around playing?

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:22:31.7] Like when you get there. Yeah. Like what—

**Amos Sims** [0:22:35.8] When you get there the first, man—it depends which way you're going. If you been—if you're walking or getting off the bus, you can walk through the cut. There's a 7/11 right there, and you can take a cut. But if you have a vehicle, you got like another five-minute ride cause you have a huge hill to go down. And then when you start going down, there's houses to the left, houses to the right. But there's a hill that you go completely down, and there's a circle. Once you get to the circle, you can turn around, go back up the street. But my Aunt Polly—she lived in the circle—for once you get down at the bottom, you got to go around. And she lived right there.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:23:13.7] What did the homes look like?

**Amos Sims** [0:23:15.8] They looked like to me when I was growing up, they looked like—how could I tell you—a luxury house to me because they was all different kinds—they all had different types of colors and different sizes. Then they was—or some of them was developed different. Cause, as you know, I didn't go into many people's houses, but it seemed like the few people's houses I did go to it was different than my Aunt Polly's. So, I'm saying about all of them had different color walls. Some bathrooms was on the left. Some was on the right. Just so—it was—they looked like little—that's why I thought this—they looked like little condos. They was nice when I was growing up. Cause I was young. It was somewhere that I was like, "Well, I'm in a nice house." Cause that what I was thinking when I was young.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:24:02.7] Yeah.

**Amos Sims** [0:24:03.9] Cause I knew everybody too also in there. So, everybody's house looks—they ain't gonna say the same, but you know, the framing and inside was different.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:24:12.5] What did Aunt Polly's home look like?

**Amos Sims** [0:24:15.1] Aunt Polly's house—you walk in, and you walk up two steps. You walk in. To your left is the kitchen. To your right is the dining room. They actually had a dining room area for in their house. Then, if you keep straight once you open the front door, you would see the living room. Then, once you get to the living room, you go to the back door. Once you get to the back door is a row of steps to go up. And once you go up them row of steps, there's a—once you get up those steps there's a room to your right. It's two rooms to your right, and straight ahead is the bathroom, and to your left is another room. And it was spacey when I was young, but that's exactly how the model was made. And it seemed like—like I said, it was big.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:25:01.5] And it was all one floor?

**Amos Sims** [0:25:03.6] It was on two—

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:25:03.9] Two floors.

**Amos Sims** [0:25:04.8] —with the bathrooms and the rooms, it was all on the top floor.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:25:08.3] Okay. So, the second floor—

**Amos Sims** [0:25:09.7] The second floor had two rooms to your right, one bathroom, and the one family room for, you know, the husband and wife.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:25:16.2] Oh? On the second floor?

**Amos Sims** [0:25:17.1] Yeah. The second floor. The first floor was just mainly, but once you walk in there, to your left is the kitchen. To your right is the dining room area. And once you go straight, you're going to the living room. And when you keep on straight, you'll see the back door. Once you see the back door, you look to your left. You're going up a flight of steps. And once you get up the flight of steps, you'll go to your right. You got two rooms. If you keep straight, you're going to the bathroom. If you buck a left, you're going to the parents' room.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:25:47.2] What's—like what was like the color of the walls and like—

**Amos Sims** [0:25:50.7] Their walls was white.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:25:52.2] They were white? Yeah.

**Amos Sims** [0:25:52.6] They was white.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:25:53.4] And was it carpet or it was—

**Amos Sims** [0:25:55.2] No carpet.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:25:56.1] Yeah.

**Amos Sims** [0:25:56.5] No carpet at all.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:25:57.5] Yeah. Do you have any other memories of what it looked like? Anything that like stands out to you about when you think about?

**Amos Sims** [0:26:03.5] We always sat on a green box that was out there at the bottom of the hill. There used be like 12 of us just sitting on the box. And we used to sit there talking about who the best, who's the best transformer [laughs], playing G.I. Joe on there. Some people started doing flips off of it. It was just—it was just a fun place that was like we had—it was a circle that we have down there. We can run around in the circle too. It was like a big old doughnut. You know what I mean? And you can—you and your crew could be on the other—one left hand side of the circle, and we gonna be on the right hand side, cause that's how big it was. Cause it had trees in the middle. You know. The trees in the circle of it and everything.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:26:46.5] Yeah.

**Amos Sims** [0:26:46.8] So we used to have Easter egg hunts in there. We used to—yeah—we used to—we had—it was pretty cool. It's still there, though. The circle is still there.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:26:56.9] Still there?

**Amos Sims** [0:26:57.7] Cameron Valley where what they call it now, but the circle was still there.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:27:00.9] Nice. And do you remember the people who lived there like—

**Amos Sims** [0:27:03.9] Oh yes.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:27:04.6] Like, can you describe some of them, like who were—

**Amos Sims** [0:27:07.2] Well, one of them [inaudible 0:27:08.4] named Jeffrey Elder. He was—right now, he was one of the cooler dudes. He was a, you know, the so-called "pretty boy" we called him. And we had this young lady named Peppy. Her name—well, her real name is Peppy Wheelheart. We thought she was the finest thing down there. When she said something, we all used to jump higher. She was like this, "Can somebody go to 7/11 for me?" We used to fight over her like who want to take her to 7/11. Who want to—it was just—then we had—we also had her name was Pauline. She used to give her fruit cups to us. Oh, she would serve us fruit cups or ice cream. She used to just—twice out of the week she had let us know—scream out the door that, "I got ice cups and ice cream and candy and stuff like that." She was like two doors down from my Aunt Polly. And Jeffrey lived four doors down from my Aunt Polly, and Peppy lived six doors down. Cause they usually have like—it was like 1, 2, 3—like 7 houses on the same row.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:28:16.9] Wow. And like, were there—so like the main area you played in was that circle?

**Amos Sims** [0:28:23.5] Yes, sir. And the green box.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:28:25.6] The green—and the green box it—

**Amos Sims** [0:28:26.5] You know the green box with I guess—

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:28:28.2] Where did that green box come from?

**Amos Sims** [0:28:29.1] I don't know. We just know what we was told when we was growing up. Don't try to open it because it's like wires and stuff in there.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:28:35.7] Yeah.

**Amos Sims** [0:28:36.7] So cause we was—well, when they caught us sitting on there, you know, they didn't complain at first. But, you know, then when the older people started coming, they started doing bad stuff to it. So that's when we seen them doing bad stuff to it, we went to the circle. Because they started doing stuff that we know we shouldn't be over there watching them do. So, we found our circle, and we kept it as our circle. We'd meet up there now cause they used to do bad things on that—on the green box.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:29:09.7] Then you haven't really talked about Aunt Polly. Like, what was she like? What was—

**Amos Sims** [0:29:13.9] Strict. She didn't take no mess. She was like you mess up, you in the house. You know what I mean in the house? Oh, you get a book. That's all you get. You get something to eat, and you get some water or whatever she give you, but she was mainly strict. She didn't play that. She didn't—she was fair, like I said, but she was like strict. [Laughs] That's why I was telling—I didn't want to go. But I had to go cause that's my Mama's sister. So, but she didn't—she eased up as, you know, I guess when you—she eased up as I got a little older. But at one time, I was scared of her. But Aunt Polly was—she is—she was one of the leaders when I was growing up. Cause, you know, I wasn't raised—I couldn't be around grown-ups. You know. Hang under grown-ups. So, I wasn't the type that know too much was going on. My mom always kept me in a child's place. So, like I just know the things Aunt Polly didn't play. She didn't allow you running in the house, play—what you call it—horse play—horse playing or, you know, just making dishes in the sink, and not washing them. She was that type of person. She put a—she just put her foot down a lot. That's basically what she was doing.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:30:33.6] That's good. And really quick, do you remember the address at Cameron Valley? What was that—do you remember?

**Amos Sims** [0:30:40.7] Give me a second. 244 Yale Drive.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:30:44.5] Okay. And I don't think I asked—I mean, you told me this earlier before we started recording, but just so we have it on the recording.

**Amos Sims** [0:30:50.6] Okay.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:30:52.3] What was the address at Adkins?

**Amos Sims** [0:30:53.9] 1225 Wythe Street.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:30:57.7] Wythe Street. Right. Okay. Great. And you also—you mentioned that you had an aunt living at Sam 30 during this time?

**Amos Sims** [0:31:08.2] That's Aunt Mona. Aunt Mona was Sam Madden. Aunt Polly—Aunt Polly is the one at Cameron Valley.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:31:16.3] Okay. Oh, so—so was that Sam Madden or Adkins?

**Amos Sims** [0:31:21.1] Adkins—

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:31:21.9] Cause Adkins is on Wythe Street.

**Amos Sims** [0:31:23.7] That's my grandmother's house on Adkins. Then the 1225 Wythe Street—

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:31:29.0] That was your grandma's place.

**Amos Sims** [0:31:29.3] Yeah, that was my grandmother's place.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:31:30.8] Oh? Okay.

**Amos Sims** [0:31:32.4] I can tell you—I can give you—I can give you the scoop on that too. How it looked, what it looked like walking in.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:31:37.3] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Amos Sims** [0:31:37.9] Cause dude, that's what you want, sir?

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:31:42.6] No, no, no. I just want to—well, yeah. We can definitely talk about that. I just want to—so Aunt Mona was at Sam Madden?

**Amos Sims** [0:31:48.7] Yes.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:31:49.8] Okay, okay. Okay. And then I have some questions about that. So, cause—so did the other units there, did they all look alike? Like, do you remember other people's units that matched that?

**Amos Sims** [0:32:05.2] Yes. They all looked alike.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:32:06.9] They all looked the same?

**Amos Sims** [0:32:07.4] Yes.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:32:07.8] Okay.

**Amos Sims** [0:32:08.7] They all looked the same.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:32:09.7] So they all had kind of that first floor, like the—

**Amos Sims** [0:32:12.8] Yes, sir.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:32:12.9] —left—

**Amos Sim**s [0:32:14.1] Yes, sir. Everybody has the first floor.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:32:15.2] Interesting. Okay. Do you—and you mentioned like do you remember there being like a—like a committee of residents there that helped govern? Or, like do you remember any kind of like involvement by the community—

**Amos Sims** [0:32:32.3] No, sir cause that's—

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:32:32.6] —at Madden?

**Amos Sims** [0:32:33.4] No, sir, cause I told you. I had to stay in the child's place [laughs].

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:32:36.5] Right. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Amos Sims** [0:32:37.5] Yes.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:32:38.5] Yeah. Well yeah. You mentioned, okay, so your grandmother—

**Amos Sims** [0:32:44.1] This is 1225 Wythe Street.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:32:45.7]—was on 1225 Wythe Street. And then the address—

**Amos Sims** [0:32:48.9] 1225.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:32:50.2] —at Sam Madden—

**Amos Sims** [0:32:52.5] Sam Madden was 812, 814—816.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:32:56.1] 816. Okay.

**Amos Sims** [0:32:56.8] 816 Patrick Street.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:32:58.8] Yeah. Patrick Street?

**Amos Sims** [0:32:59.8] Yes.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:33:00.1] Okay. And so yeah. Let's talk about your grandma a little bit. So yeah. Like what did—what did her place look like?

**Amos Sims** [0:33:07.2] Okay. Driving or walking? Well driving it's like a little—it's an alley coming in. And once you come in, is a little sidewalk. And once you walk in, the first thing you see is a refrigerator and a kitchen. The kitchen walls was yellow with black and white on it. When you get there, to your right is a refrigerator, sink, and the stove. And once you get—once you walk there, you buck a left—you're in the little hallway. Then if you look right, it's steps to go up. And then when you go up the steps to your right is a bathroom and a room. And to your left is a room—it's two rooms to your left. And then if you go back downstairs, you go to the left, it is actually the living room.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:34:10.5] Okay. And did you—did you ever live there? Or was it more just a place that you visited?

**Amos Sims** [0:34:19.3] No. I was there. I lived there for four years.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:34:23.3] Okay.

**Amos Sims** [0:34:24.3] And I was—that was between—I could tell you I'll never forget it. Between 6 and 10. Cause that's when—I was going to MacArthur because my father was picking me up, and my mom—oh wait a minute. My grandma was picking—my grandfather was—my grandmother was the one picking me up, and my father was dropping me off.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:34:42.4] Yeah? What do you remember about your grandmother? What was she like?

**Amos Sims** [0:34:46.8] My grandmother was the sweetest person in the world. Every day she used to always ask me could I go to Hardees. Hardees was up there where the McDonald's is as we speak. I used to go up there twice a week to get her one coffee, two biscuits. And I used to sit there with her, and I never thought I would—that's where I first started liking the Dallas Cowboys. Cause my grandmother always wore blue and black, and I wondered why. And I found out she was a—she liked the Redskins and the Cowboys. So, every time I got there, she used to always have breakfast or lunch, whatever time I go by there. But I think that that was my reward, cause each time I used to go up to Hardees, ride my bike, rain/shine/sleet or snow, you all—just to get her coffee and biscuits. Because she would—she didn't like anybody else's breakfast food but theirs. And when you get—once she gets you, that she'll let you go outside, and she'll sit—she was so cool. She sits outside on her porch and watch you run around, ride your bicycle, ride your big wheel. When the ice cream truck comes, she looked out for every kid that came out there, you all. Every kid. And she was the type—she never seen nobody kid hungry. If I came over, I brought a friend over they was thirsty or hungry, she fed them and gave them something to drink too. It could be five kids. It could have been seven kids. She looked out for every kid that was hanging with—well running around with me as a kid.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:36:26.8] That's great. And what are your—like just really quick, what did Adkins look like? Like what—like what did buildings look like like during that time?

**Amos Sims** [0:36:35.2] In like the well—

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:36:37.0] Do you remember?

**Amos Sims** [0:36:37.1] Yeah. I remember when I got—when I first when I grew up, and I was looking around. At one time, I was intimidated because I never seen—and it was just a whole bunch of houses. And you know and has, you know, I started hanging with my brother. I used to walk around the block with him and stuff like that. But I was terrified at one time because I didn't know nothing about him. But as I got older, I started walking, cause I was young. I used to walk up that a whole street. Because sometimes they didn't have parking, and I used to walk up there. And I used to look around. They used to have big, huge trees. What I used to was telling you—they used to have black fence going around it. It was nothing—it was just—it basically reminded me of a jail. Because if you get out of your car the first thing you see is black fence all around the whole square that she lived in. And then that's when I was like, I never asked because I am—I was young, but I knew what a jail looked like. So, I was like, "Well, is this a bad place?" Cause when I was going, I never came outside until I got old enough. But it was a scary place at one time for me.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:37:55.5] All right. You mentioned a little bit about like the surrounding neighborhood, but do you want to talk about like—yeah. What was the neighb—like what were the businesses? Like, were there other places in the neighborhood you played in?

**Amos Sims** [0:38:08.9] Well, the businesses only I could tell you that was around what—are you talking about, Andrew Adkins, right?

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:38:15.7] Yeah. Or just around the whole—

**Amos Sims** [0:38:17.1] Okay.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:38:17.4] Yeah. Adkins and—

**Amos Sims** [0:38:18.6] Okay, well—

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:38:19.2] —mad—all around Charles Houston?

**Amos Sims** [0:38:20.9] Okay. When I was growing up, I was basically running around like I said. I was—used to go to Charles Houston. I used to be at Parker-Gray only on Parker-Gray steps, just doing playful things and whatever. I also used to be at John Roberts just running around riding my bike, riding our big wheels. And I was there before the subway station was there. I used to run around in those woods right there on [inaudible 0:38:50.0] Street. That used to be nothing but storage containers or storage units for people. I done watched people get electrocuted there. I was—what else? I done watched the 7/11 that's right here on Braddock—then they built three/four different times. I remember there was a subway over there. I remember when it was a laundromat over there. George Washington Middle School was there, but that area that's right across from there now is completely different now. It's nowhere near what you all used to see. And also let me see, where everybody knew about Al's. Al's still there. The Giant down here on First Street, I remember when I was growing up, was there. Now it's no longer there. I remember about the post office that's right here on Washington Street, that's no longer there. I remember the phone booths on every block. They're no longer there. The train tracks—there's still some running around, but it ain't nothing that you playing on anymore. But I used to play on train tracks that we each had train tracks right there on Fayette Street. They used to have some down there at—well, it's still a few down in Old Town. We used to play on those train tracks. And I also used to play in the fountain that's right

there in Old Town—right there at City Hall. I used to play in the water, and they kicked me out cause they said people was taking money out of there. And I was like, "It wasn't me." They were like, "It doesn't matter. You don't supposed to be in this property." I remember doing. I remember running around. I remember used to—they used to have an ice cream shop down there on King Street. They did looked out for youngins. I remember there used to be a Footlocker down on King Street. I remember there used to be a Popeye's down on King Street. I remember there used to be a Montgomery Ward down there on King Street. I remember there used to have a JC Penney's down there on King Street. Oh man. They used to have everything down here, man. And that's no longer there. Everything is gone. What else? Holly Farms—that was used to be in Del Ray. My gracious! The post office right there on Wythe Street? That wasn't there at first, but it's down there. Oh man! It's just—

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:41:17.2] A lot, yeah.

**Amos Sims** [0:41:17.2] —it's just a lot!

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:41:18.7] Yeah. What's it like to reflect on the fact that so much has changed since your childhood? Like what's that like for you?

**Amos Sims** [0:41:25.8] That's a great question cause my grandkids be questioning me. And I be like, "You all just do not know how lucky you all are." And they was like, "Why you say that, Grandpa?" Cause I'm like when we was growing up, it was hard to get—for how to ride the bus. Now they tell you all everything. They give you answers to everything. We didn't have laptops. We didn't have iPads for homework. Now these days the kids don't even have homework. It was just I tell them each time. You better enjoy life because we had it hard. Everything we had to do, we had to do by foot or look on paper to see what time buses came. We had to make phone calls to set up appointments. See, like now you all could just going online and make one. We had to call to make sure we get in touch with people to make an appointment. And I was like, "And also, you know how you all could just walk across the street?" She was like, "Yeah." I like, "No. We could—you had to push the button going across the street because it was so much traffic during our days." We had regular traffic lights, but you all got to push buttons because it's so much traffic. So many of you all kids now than I was telling them about football, basketball. I was like, "How you all got it?" We had to earn our rights. We had to earn your spot. Now you all just—you can walk on there and get a position on any team. And I also told them about washing clothes. Cause they was like, "What do you mean?" I'm like, "You all have washing machines that does all the work. We had go by our timing." They was like, "What do you mean?" I'm like, "We didn't have clocks on our washing machines. The only thing you just had to do was put your money in and push the money in." They was like, "What do you mean?" I'm like, "We had to use quarters." They was like, "All quarters?" I'm like, "Yes. They didn't have dimes and nickels. You had to put in all quarters." And they was like, "They didn't tell you how long the machine gonna run?" "No. You had the education—you had to educate it yourself." They was like, "So how did you figure it out?" I said, "As soon as I started, I was looking at my watch." They was like, "So you had to actually keep looking at your watch each and every minute?" I'm like, "Yes. Because we didn't have the times you all have." Then I told my granddaughter about shoes and clothes. She was talking about how easy it is now to buy the clothes online. And I'm like, "When we was growing up if I want a set a clothes, I had to go to Montgomery Ward, Sears, or Footlocker for buying—finding my stuff. And she was like, "So you actually had to go school shopping at three or four different stores?" I'm like, "Yes." She was like, "How do you get

around?" I said, "The bus." She was like, "So you all didn't have deliveries and all them?" I'm like, "No. The only thing we got delivered in our days was mail." And, you know, it was some stuff. But she was like—I'm like, "All the stuff that you all getting delivered, we didn't get that. We had to carry our stuff home." And, you know, and she and I look every time I go to different areas. I be like so shocked. Be like, "Not another one." And now I just keep on rolling. Cause they have a historic building right here that they rebuilding. And at about 50 years of life, I did not know that was historic—there was a historic hair salon. And I was flabbergasted, and I'm still flabbergasted cause I read up on it today.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:44:48.6] Can you give the location of that, just for people who don't know?

**Amos Sims** [0:44:53.1] Oh, okay. I want to say it's right there on Pendleton Street. I'm trying to think is anything else?

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:45:02.5] No. That's helpful.

**Amos Sims** [0:45:03.0] Okay.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:45:03.1] Yeah. That's great. Yeah. And you've mentioned—so like you were playing basketball a lot—

**Amos Sims** [0:45:09.8] Yeah.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:45:10.2] —at the time? Like—

**Amos Sims** [0:45:11.3] Rec league. Rec league.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:45:11.8] Rec league.

**Amos Sims** [0:45:11.8] Yes, sir.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:45:12.9] Yeah, like, can you talk more about, like, who were the coaches? Who, you know, who—

**Amos Sims** [0:45:15.7] Oh, well, we used to have—well, we used to call it—it used to be all different rec centers. It used to be Charles Houston, Boys Club, Lee Rec Center, Mount Vernon. I'm naming all the rec centers that we all used to play basketball. We had Charles Houston was always our rivals. Their coach name was New York Mike. My coach name was Larry Jordan, and we used to pack [inaudible 0:45:53.9]. I'm talking about packing them. Then this was just rec league. It wasn't charging no money. Every Friday we used to have practice. Every Saturday we had a game at the rec center, but all our games was at George Washington Middle High School. And when I mean we used to battle, we used to battle. We used to have people from D.C. coming to watch us play basketball cause it was just fun. There wasn't no fighting. There wasn't no like nobody going to jail. It was just completely fun. We just used to love every—we'd go to school Monday through Friday. Once we see each other at school on Friday, we start talking big trash cause we know we play that opponent the next day. It was just great, man. It was like all the coaches of different—all the teams

knew who we all—like I said, we all grew up together. We knew each other. So, you know, they tried to split us up equally. It was just—it was like family time for us without fighting without any violence. But when I mean we—when I mean pack the gym, we used to pack the gym when they used to—wouldn't let people in anymore—just for the rec league game.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:47:10.0] Were you part of "The Untouchables?"

**Amos Sims** [0:47:13.2] No.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:47:13.7] No? Okay, okay.

**Amos Sims** [0:47:18.6] When I was about to get in there, they had already filled up.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:47:23.7] Okay.

**Amos Sims** [0:47:23.8] So that's when I ended up going to the Boys Club.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:47:27.1] Okay. And that's where you played basketball, and yeah?

**Amos Sims** [0:47:29.8] Yeah. Oh, I played for the Boys Club. I played rec league for the Boys Club. I played rec league for Charles Houston. I've been around. I'm pretty known around here. Pretty well on the court, too.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:47:40.8] That's cool. You haven't talked about—so you eventually moved to the Berg, right?

**Amos Sims** [0:47:47.1] Yeah. I moved to the Berg—

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:47:48.4] And so, like how old were you when you moved to the Berg?

**Amos Sims** [0:47:49.7] I moved to the Berg when I was 18.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:47:52.2] You were 18?

**Amos Sims** [0:47:52.5] Yes, yes.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:47:52.6] Okay, okay. And so that was also a public housing—

**Amos Sims** [0:47:58.7] Yes, yes.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:47:59.9] —location. Yeah. Can you talk about that a little bit?

**Amos Sims** [0:48:03.7] Well, I got a little bad part. So, the reason I had to move to the Berg cause my mom had got sick and passed away. So, once you do that—once you're 18, you're able to have your own spot. So, they waited till I turned 18 to move me. And when that year came, my mom passed away, I had a daughter. My daughter was born—cause I graduated June 24. My daughter was born July 19, and my mom passed away October 30—all in 1993.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:48:34.4] Wow.

**Amos Sims** [0:48:34.5] I moved down into the Berg in 1994 with my daughter, and I was down there raising her with a few of my cousins and aunts. Cause I was a—like a single parent cause the mom wanted to hit the streets. So I, you know, she started going—I started taking her to the recs. I started taking her to the pools. I started—well, I basically—well, I was a single parent taking care of a 2-year-old daughter by myself. I was—ain't gonna lie. I was down—I was hustling while—what I mean by hustling—I was doing newspapers. I was like, shook the bell for Santa Claus. I was doing all that just to raise my daughter on my own.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:49:18.2] Wow.

**Amos Sims** [0:49:18.8] I had babysitters, but I had to pay the babysitters because I had to do something to take care of my daughter.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:49:26.9] Yeah. We haven't talked too much about your mom. Do you want to share a little bit about her?

**Amos Sims** [0:49:34.0] Yeah. We can.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:49:34.9] Yeah?

**Amos Sims** [0:49:37.0] Well, my father had—my mom got—she turned real strong. My father left my mom when I was 9 years old. And then I didn't understand what was going on cause, like I was telling you, my mom wouldn't allow me to be around grown-ups. But she had told me the reason why that her and my father split up. When she told me, I was like, "Okay." He had cheated on her. So, as the years went by, you know, my mom raised me and my brother by herself—did a great job until, you know, years went on. I'm going to school doing right cause then as the years going by, the years going by, when I turned 16, I started noticing something about my mother. My mama's skin started turning real black. And, you know, she made me stay—you know, concentrate on school, so it was times that she wouldn't come home for a couple of days. But my brother was going with her, and I didn't know what was going on. So, I got to my senior year. My brother had went to—my brother had got locked up. So, everything started coming out, I want to say about her—that she had a skin disease called scleroderma. The scleroderma was eating up her muscles, and her bones, and her body. So, she wasn't able to bend her fingers, basic close her arms because they started leaving gases in the skin. There was times that I had to bathe her because she couldn't bathe herself. There was times that when Mother Nature came, I had to do what anybody would do for their parent. I changed—I did everything for her for months. And then the October of 1993, I went up to the hospital that day on the 30th because me and my uncle had stole money from my mom in the house. So, I was going up there to tell her what was going on. So, when I got up there the first thing she told me, "I don't want to hear your bullshit." Excuse my language. So, when she told me that, I was like, "Okay." She said, "How are you and the baby doing?" I'm like, "We're doing fine." So, once I got back home from the hospital, I was running my daughter's bathwater. And I was doing this day, they had the Caller ID. So, my daughter's mom telling me that it was from the hospital. So, I cut the water off for the tub, and they called and told me that she had passed away because the skin disease had ate up all her muscles into her body. And that's when I just had to turn into a grown man real fast to take care of my daughter because she had passed on me just that quick

within that year. Cause I didn't agree with—I didn't really enjoy my graduation when I turned 18. I didn't really enjoy taking care of my daughter because I was taking care of you know, my mom. Then she went to the hospital. So, I really wasn't enjoying life right then and there because I knew I don't like to say it like this, but I knew something was happening. Cause once she got to the hospital, they kept saying she wasn't able to come home. She wasn't able to come home. But when I went up there on the 30th, that's when they—that's when she—they came home, and that's when I knew she passed cause they called. And I had ran right on up to the hospital. Didn't wait for no car, no cab. And I was so amazed. I got up to the hospital less than about less than a half an hour. Because it was nothing but—I had to walk all the way up Braddock Road just to get to the hospital. But that was one—that was one of my lowers of my life, cause I didn't get to enjoy any of, you know, my mom didn't enjoy me graduating, cause she was, you know, in pain then. Cause she hid a lot from me. My older brother knew, but she didn't want me to know. So that's when I—that's the reason why I had to move to the Berg at 18 to take care of my daughter, because I had to live by myself, cause there was no longer—

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:54:23.7] Yeah.

**Amos Sims** [0:54:23.8] —a two-bedroom because she had passed away. And it was just me and my daughter. So that's how I ended up moving to the Berg.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:54:31.5] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Thanks for sharing some of these, like—

**Amos Sims** [0:54:35.3] Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:54:35.9] —some of these painful memories.

**Amos Sims** [0:54:37.7] Oh, I mean—

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:54:37.8] —I can't believe you were 18.

**Amos Sim**s [0:54:39.0] I was.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:54:40.1] All that in one year.

**Amos Sims** [0:54:41.1] All in one year, man. So, I'll never forget it. I'll never forget it.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:54:46.8] Yeah.

**Amos Sims** [0:54:47.0] I can't forget it.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:54:49.0] Yeah. Yeah. Is there a memory with your mom that always sticks out to you? Like it—like what's like one?

**Amos Sims** [0:54:56.9] To me—my mom always told me when she's—"Always take care of your responsibilities." Cause at my days I was always—I was—I had more than one woman. That's all that mattered. But when I had the daughter, when she found out the girl I got pregnant, she always told me, "Out of anything, you better take care of your responsibilities. Because she was not asked

to be brought in this world—not to be taken care of." And that was the last thing that stuck in my mind now. And to this day, I still help my daughter, and she's grown.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:55:35.9] What your daughter's name?

**Amos Sims** [0:55:36.7] Nettina.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:55:38.0] Nettina? Yeah. Yeah. What was it like being a single parent raising?

**Amos Sims** [0:55:45.4] Hard.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:55:46.4] Yeah?

**Amos Sims** [0:55:47.4] Especially when you didn't have no job. You had to figure out who you're gonna borrow money for. A good thing I [inaudible 0:55:53.3] got back in a relationship with my father a little bit. But it was hard. I had some assistance. I had—like I said, I had a big family. I had a few cousins. I had a few aunts that used to—I mean, cousins that used to look out for me more than my aunts did. Cause I had a problem with them as I was growing up, cause before she even passed away, they talking about they want this out of the house. They want that out of the house. I'm like—and I cussed them all out. My mom wasn't even in the grave. But it was—like I see some of my family members when I was a single parent. I say what's up to them, and that's all I got. So, they say I started acting different. I'm like, "Well, how am I—I'm trying to be a parent more than this. I'm not a street runner no more. I'm not out there having fun no more. I got responsibilities." And people looked at me like, "Oh, well, he think he's good and better than people." "No. I was just gonna go by what my mother said—take care of my responsibilities." And that's what I was doing, and I'm—and that's always gonna stick. I'm a responsible person now—very.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:57:07.7] So, cause so you were mainly living between Cameron—like growing up?

**Amos Sims** [0:57:11.9] Yes.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:57:12.3] Going back a little bit, you were mainly living between Cameron Valley—

**Amos Sims** [0:57:15.9] And the Wythe Street.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:57:16.8] —and Wythe Street.

**Amos Sims** [0:57:17.3] Correct.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:57:19.3] Where was your mom living?

**Amos Sims** [0:57:20.4] 1330 Madison Street.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:57:22.2] Oh, she was on 1330 Madison Street? Okay.

**Amos Sims** [0:57:24.2] Right in the projects. [Laughs]

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:57:25.7] Yeah, yeah, yeah. Right.

**Amos Sims** [0:57:27.2] That's why she passed at—well, she didn't pass in 1330. She passed at the hospital, but I was living on 1330 Madison.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:57:34.5] Okay. That's great. And I just want to fast forward a little bit.

**Amos Sims** [0:57:42.5] Sure, sure, sure.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:57:44.3] So you moved to Sam Madden—you said seven years—

**Amos Sims** [0:57:45.8] Seven years ago.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:57:46.6] Right. Seven years ago.

**Amos Sims** [0:57:47.4] Yes.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:57:50.0] Yeah. And so, what's it like now living in Sam Madden, you know, as you look back these past seven years together? Like, what's it been like living there?

**Amos Sims** [0:57:59.9] Honest opinion?

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:58:01.9] Mm-hmm.

**Amos Sims** [0:58:02.3] Horrible. Do you want me to be—want me to be frank? I will.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:58:06.9] Yeah, yeah. I mean that's—

**Amos Sims** [0:58:07.6] As we speak, the maintenance—it sucks. We have the project of rats. I'm talking about rats that's bigger than my arm running around through our neighborhood all over all morning every day. Fixtures ain't fixed. The walls, the foundation is cracked. The foundation is plainly—I can walk—if you walk in my house, like now, how cool it is? I don't need an air conditioner. I leave the door open because it's so cold from the foundation is cracked in the house. And, you know, everything is so old so they can't fix. Every time they come through there and try to fix something it breaks right back maybe a month or two later. Cause everything is old. And I just don't understand what took them so long to get rid of this place. Because as we speak, if you walk in my house now, you can look at the walls. You can see the foundation is cracked. The ceiling, the walls, and we got manholes are for—I'm talking about holes rats—I mean be like 3/4/5 rats coming out these holes that sit there. It's just pitiful over there. They seem like they gave up on all—giving up on us over there. They talking about it's from the project they're doing now. No. These rats was here before they even started the project. And I called and I warned them. It's just despicable up there. I'm just being straight up with you, sir.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:59:34.8] Yeah.

**Amos Sims** [0:59:35.7] Despicable.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [0:59:36.6] I'm sorry about that. Yeah. And it's always been like—like the past seven years?

**Amos Sims** [0:59:40.8] [Inaudible 0:59:40.8] the last five years we've been having this rat attack. And I mean it's so bad you can't walk your dogs without the dogs chasing them. But as we speak now, people won't even—people barely come outside now because there's nothing out there to do. They got one measly playground, but they broke—some of the pieces broke on that. And then like I said, just seem like people is distancing themself from there. It seemed like—like during the holidays, you know, how kids come out and play and all that? It is none of that up there. It's so quiet, man, up there. It's like a desert now. And there's people actually still—we actually still living in there. Once the sun goes down, it looks like a completely desert. There's no—there's no—it's lighting, but it's only in the parts over there where the—there's no way you can walk through it. But also, it's just time for them to tear it down. And I should be moving, I pray, by at least two weeks—I should be out of there because—

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:00:49.7] Where are you moving to?

**Amos Sims** [1:00:50.3] The Carlyle. And I think—and so as we speaking now, it's so bad that they have started—what is it called? A committee for housing because it's about how despicable they're being to the residents—which is true. And I'm trying my patience. I'm not one of the ones that used to be ready to choke somebody. But no, now ever since I have a wife, I calm myself and just do what I had to do. I go to your boss, but it seemed like they just fired the boss. They fired the CEO of housing because of what he did. He was living on the property for Section 8, and I'm sitting there like—they're just unorganized around there at this property where we're at. They just seem like they don't care. They don't. They got a guy there. His name is Finley. He's the one placing people, you know, once you move out of there—placing people. They better keep him. He's the best guy they got cause he getting people bumped out of there, but they seem like they don't care. I think for like they abandoned us. And that's why I said it's time for Samuel Madden to get a re-up or whatever. They gonna rename it—just put a [inaudible 1:02:07.9] name on it. Do something. Do something.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:02:12.5] Can you talk more about how residents have been treated?

**Amos Sims** [1:02:16.2] Residents been treat—well, like I tell you, residents stopped making calls because they stopped depending on them. Cause like I say, I'm one of them. We called for cracks in the walls. We called for the toilets. We called for the sink, and I'm putting buckets under there for them to come. I had to get up in the morning and dump a bucket because the whatever the line or PVC pipe they're putting under there is worthless or weak, or they—I don't know what they doing. But it's time that I done had to pour bleach to kill the—to get the smell out of the faucets in the kitchen. We're wondering why. We don't know. We can't never find the smell. We thinking it's a dead rat. We don't know what it is. It's just—they just like I said, they abandoned—there's people be walking down the alley like, "Pokey"—"Well, Amos, have you seen maintenance at all?" I'm like, "No." They is like, "Have you called down there for them to put a ticket in?" I'm like, "You all, I'm in the same boat as you all are. They're not responding. They do not call back. They don't email you. They don't do anything." So, people just stopped depending on them. So, cause I'm like one of the people since I've been born and raised there—they know who I am. They know I speak up. Cause I

go down there to the board meetings and everything. I'll be like, "Well, this person, this person." I don't say their names, but I be like, "Well, one of your clients is wondering this? Wondering that?" So, I'm like one of the head people that when they started moving people from out of there—out of the section, they was following me and my wife because they believed that me and my wife were—we was going to the meetings for. So, when we started going to the meetings, everybody else started going to the meetings. And when we started speaking up, they started not liking it. And they still not liking cause, like I was telling you, the CEO was living on—you've heard of Section 8 and vouchers, right? He moved in on one of them—remodeled the whole place for himself. And so, when they found out, they fired him. And they wanted their [inaudible 1:04:21.3] under investigation why and where was the money? Well, who gave you the money for it? Who gave you the place to live there? But you all were—he get to do what he want to do, but you're not doing anything for us. And that's why I was like, after this, if I don't move up of out of here at the end of this month, Hell is gonna freeze over. Cause I'm coming with all my proof. I got so many pictures of emails of their bull shalarkey saying they gonna do this and saying they gonna do that. I keep it all. They're just not fair. They just like—they just don't care.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:04:53.6] And just so like we understand for people listening, who's they?

**Amos Sims** [1:04:58.8] Housing—A-R-H-A.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:05:01.0] You're talking about ARHA, yeah.

**Amos Sims** [1:05:02.1] ARHA.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:05:02.8] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

**Amos Sims** [1:05:06.1] I don't bite my tongue. I speak up. And I have—if somebody that need my assistance when I'm with them, I will help them because it seem like ARHA intimidates people. They don't call you. They ignore you. Even if you send an email—they just don't care. And I'm talking about present. I ain't talking about the past. I'm talking about present now. They don't believe, and their office is only open two days out of the week. Are you kidding me? That's how they feel about housing. That's how A-R-H-A feels about us. Not just because I'm about to move, I'm talking about all properties. And they just seem like they behind. They about to get ran through with a fine-toothed comb as we speak cause they under investigation now.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:05:57.2] And so do you plan to like—are you moving to the Carlyle temporarily to then move back?

**Amos Sims** [1:06:05.4] No. I'm not coming back. I'm not coming back to—

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:06:06.9] You're not coming back?

**Amos Sims** [1:06:06.9] —I'm not coming back to any of their properties. Cause like I was telling you, their maintenance is on zero. Their communication is on zero. Their attitudes is on zero. This is you all job. Why do you all have to have attitude? You know what I mean? You all have attitudes, being rude. As soon as you being rude then, you gonna try to take it back out on or retaliate or

something. And that's why I was like—that's why people don't depend—that's why people don't deal with them with the managers anymore, cause they feel like they're gonna retaliate on them because they suck. And I'm talking about for us to move, we done filled out seven packets, sir. Each time—I'm talking about within this year. Like we just did another package two days ago. So why is the paperwork keep getting messed up, and we did fill out this packet six times?

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:07:01.3] Wow.

**Amos Sims** [1:07:01.6] They're unorganized, period. They need a new leader. They just need to fire every single soul in there because they treating them—and I'm being serious. They're treating us like garbage. If you come up there as we speak, if you ride by there, anybody that's gonna listen to this, if they have enough time as we speak—ride through there. Come to the alley around 7:00, for you can sit there and watch the rats just—we have a—they have a rat soul line that's doing whatever they want. Pest control—we don't see them, but every 90 days. You know the black boxes for the rats? They don't even have those on all our—over by in our yards anymore. They just took them all up. That's just ridiculous. I sit in my wife's car every morning, warming it up, sitting there just watching rats going past, going through everybody's neighborhood. I'm watching them going to people's engines of their cars. I'm letting every soul that comes out while I'm out there letting them know that, "Please check your hood. Bang your hood. Look under your hood, cause you might you have a rat in your hood." That's how bad it is. And before it got that bad, one time—we used to have cookouts. We used to do things, but maintenance, like I said—maintenance stopped coming through there. They stopped doing whatever they're supposed to for us, so when the people start not depending on them.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:08:31.1] So these cookouts like this was happening seven years? Like there's—

**Amos Sims** [1:08:34.4] And we used to do all that!

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:08:35.8] Yeah.

**Amos Sims** [1:08:36.3] We used to all that, but like I said, the maintenance went down to zero. They don't depend on maintenance no more. They don't—they hate to call down there. Cause you can call and call and call and call and call. Guess what's gonna happen? Nothing. They don't call you back. Seemed like when they feel like it. There was times when I used to go down there just to talk to them, they wouldn't even like—you could ring the doorbell all day long. They could be looking at you—won't answer the door. That's how bad they are. And you asked about how I feel about Samuel Madden—I mean, yes, sir. That's how I feel about Samuel Madden and their crew.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:09:16.7] How does it compare to your childhood growing up in different properties?

**Amos Sims** [1:09:19.7] Oh no, man! Childhood, man, it was fun. The place was clean. Front—there was things to do. People saying hi and bye. You don't even get that. I may—I might see 10 people today in my area, in our alley walking through. With and I'm gonna include the kids to make it 10. Cause wasn't nobody like I said—many people don't even want to come outside. They don't. If they don't, they had the rat. And the rat—they got ridiculous. You got to have—if you don't have an

Alexandria area code, you can't go to that rat. I'm sitting there like I—and it's just like that disgusts me. How you all gonna stop kids from coming to a rat if you don't even live in the area code of Alexandria? I was like, "It's time for me to go." But, you know, new rules, new laws, what could I do? But Samuel Madden has always been the coolest—one of the coolest areas to hang in, man. Cause they had a playground. They had an alley—they used to have a—they had an alley that you can you run up and down without cars coming through there like that. Had a playground that was in one big square. If you kicked the ball, the ball can't go into the highway or nothing. It was fun, but now it's not fun. There's nothing to do with and I—is nothing to do with right now absolutely nothing but going out. There's one car that's parked in the alley, and that's ours. There's no—we have a—where is this one guy we cook out every year, cause it's his birthday and [inaudible 1:10:56.6] That's the only fun you're gonna get from Samuel Madden as we speak. No one said you—you'll see like some kids if they have a backpack drive at the rec—you'll see—you'll probably see a few kids. But don't—it's not a few. I can't even—I can put on one hand that's how many kids I see comes out of Samuel Madden and goes to the rec to get a bookbag. There's not many people coming out. Not at all. Samuel Madden looks depressed. How about that?

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:11:31.1] Yeah.

**Amos Sims** [1:11:31.2] Now in the days—no, we had a ball. We had big balls. We had fun.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:11:36.3] Yeah. What do you hope for the future of Sam Madden as they start to redevelop it? What do you hope for it?

**Amos Sims** [1:11:47.3] How can I put this? Better living, freedom, that's what I want. Because as we speak, there's nothing you can do right now, they don't have—it's no activities. You know what I mean? There's nothing for the kids to do. If I mean no—I'm not me—I'm entertained by being alive. I'm talking about—about the neighborhood and the community, they don't do anything. The only thing they doing over here is worrying about this building, and building, and building. What they build, and if you don't know, I'm gonna tell you all. They building another complex with more stores, a food bank, and what you call like a Campagna Center or a so-called another childcare. That's what they—that's what they are building, right—that's what they gonna be building where we—at Samuel Madden.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:12:40.9] How did they tell you about these plans? So, like—

**Amos Sims** [1:12:46.5] Okay. This is how they told us about the plans. So, we started getting letters in the—we started getting papers in the mail saying it's about—they about to tear down Samuel Madden. Yay! Yay! So, we went—this is—this be third year. So, the first year me and my wife was the commanders of the area of Samuel Madden. When I was telling you we was doing all these meetings—well, I was going down to City Hall—talking to City Hall about everything, what they needed. I did all that. So, then the second year came, did the same thing. Then they pushed it back another year. So, this is the third year I've been going through this with them about moving. I've been here since Day 1 when they was talking about relocating everybody. That's how long I've been dealing with this. I was—they called us the kings when we was doing all this, cause we was going to Charles Houston like every two months for these meetings. And every time we get back, "Oh well, we're six months behind. Oh, we gonna see—it might be another year." So, I'm tired of being—my wife is tired and frustrated because now what's the holdup now? One section is gone now. What's

taking so long for our section? Cause I'm in the second section, and I'm close to the—to Charles Houston. And like I said, it's so—it's so—it's so dry over there where we at. There's only like—like I was telling you, me, my neighbors, as the grown-ups. And like I said, we may see four kids walking through the alley with their mom. Don't nobody—it's just not—it's like I said, it looks like a desert. Which is the—they just—I don't know what else to tell you.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:14:36.8] Yeah.

**Amos Sims** [1:14:36.9] It's time for us to go. They just don't have no respect down there for nobody.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:14:44.6] So you're moving soon?

**Amos Sims** [1:14:45.4] Yes, sir. I better be. I better be, cause like I was telling you, man, this is my third year of being pushed back. People moving before us, and we pay top rent. Everybody else paying zero. And that's what frustrating me more. Why we paying $1,460—the people that's all moved out paying something to nothing. But I'm sitting there like, "Why we have to wait?" "Well, we got to do this cause you're on that end." "Okay." So, as we speak, we still fighting that. So, we—we supposed to be moving by October—I mean or end of this month. Supposed to be in the new place by October 3rd. Pray that I move.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:15:25.3] Yeah. I'm sorry you've experienced all this. Is [inaudible 1:15:30.1].

**Amos Sims** [1:15:30.2] It's terrible, man. I'm just being honest. You come sit in my—are you coming—anybody come sit in the alley as soon as 8 o'clock come. I guarantee you count at least 20—and I didn't say mice, you all. I want to, you all to hear me. I'm talking about rats. Big enough that you can see their bodies—half of their bodies before they get all the way through. You got smells in the house cause of the sewage. When you come out, like what you know how we—it floods? We can smell it. Then I mean the whole neighborhood—as soon as you walk out the door, you can smell straight you know what. They don't—they don't care about the pipes. They don't care about anything but getting that one section over there done, and don't care about our section. Like today—like I've been telling the head maintenance dude for housing, there's a door—it's one of the units open, and I seen kids come out of it. So, I need you to go check and see if the kids may have left the gas on. You know. Cause I took a picture of it. I can show you that it was open. But do you think he came? No. Cause I seen it this morning. And I'm not gonna go in there and open up the door cause they could be like, "Well, we seen Mr. Sims going in the empty property." No. But there is just—it's sad, and it's depressing there now.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:16:44.4] Yeah.

**Amos Sims** [1:16:44.5] They gave up. I mean, they've given up. But I'm still there. My wife said we gonna stick it through till it's time to go. Cause I've been ready to go—been. It's just—cause like I was telling you, I know they having a problem down there because like they just fired their CEO. Now they mad at the world. But don't nobody—don't nobody really even come to visit—come through there anymore. Cause it used to be—it used to be big crowds of kids with their little girlfriends, baby mamas, you know, all that stuff. But now you don't get none of that. Only on—you

would not be surprised. There's only two people decorating. That'd be us—that'd be us and my neighbor across the alley. We the only two. Don't nobody decorate cause these are like—they not wasting—excuse my lang—I'm not gonna say the word. We not gonna waste our money on this raggedy place, but you know what word they used. [Laughs]

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:17:47.0] Right. Right. Well, I hope this transition is better to—

**Amos Sims** [1:17:51.8] Well, we're not—

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:17:52.3] —to the Carlyle.

**Amos Sims** [1:17:52.8] —we're not coming—cause God forbid, thank you Lord, we're not coming back on housing property. We're not—that new building they building? I don't want to be—no disrespect—I'm at that age now where to be to have our own garden, have my own look. You know. Little square outside Alexandria. I just want to get away from a bunch of knuckleheads. But you know, these youngins—these youngins, man, I don't say nothing to them. And their mouth is torrential. That's another reason why I'm glad they tearing it down, cause them youngins up there just smoking, drinking, yelling all night. It's time for me to get away from that—cause it's time. I am 51 years old. I done did my partying. I just—but they're so disrespectful. So, I just sit in the house. I think that's a lot of reason why a lot of us sit in the house because those youngins—cause where we live, we did had shootings. We did had stabbings. We did had drive-bys. We did had all that in our where we live at now on Samuel Madden. And that's another reason why people don't come out because of that cause two/three years in a row, we done had shootings. We done had stabbings, and we even had drive-bys in that little old area. So, I think that's one of the reasons why people start shutting down.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:19:15.1] Yeah. Is there anything I haven't asked you that you want to share before we close out?

**Amos Sims** [1:19:23.6] Like what type of—I mean like what—I mean I told you just [inaudible 1:19:26.5]. Enjoyed everything I've done. Like I was telling you, I have siblings but they're, you know, we all cool. But it's nothing—whatever else you want to ask, I'm down. I answered my best I can.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:19:39.2] Yeah, right. No, it's been great. I have one last question and just like if, you know, what's one memory you could hold on to forever if there's one? Like what would it be?

**Amos Sims** [1:19:55.6] One memory that I can remember when I was growing up, right?

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:19:59.4] Or just—any memory in your life. If there's just one that you would hold on to for the rest of your life what—

**Amos Sims** [1:20:05.0] Me when I took a picture on Parker-Gray steps. You want to know why? Because when I—as I got older, I found out that it was historic. That's the reason why. I'll never forget it—never. Because of two things: my father and my uncle ran track for them, and they beat

T.C. Williams. I will never forget that photo. And also, the other one, if you don't mind me saying it, Holly Farms. When I was growing up—that's a restaurant. You heard of Holly Farms?

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:20:35.5] Mm-hmm.

**Amos Sims** [1:20:36.2] I always went there with my father—with my—basically my father and my mother. Every Saturday, we got Holly Farms chicken to my grandmother's house. I never forget that either—never. I think they did that for life—eight years straight. I never forget it—never.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:20:55.4] Wow.

**Amos Sims** [1:20:56.2] And one of my fondest memories with my father was, you know, the red light/green light stoplight? I told him it was a green light, and it was a red light, and he ran through it. I was like 5 years old. I never forget that either. I was like—them my three memory things. And my last thing with my mom was like I told you—take care of your responsibilities.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:21:19.9] Yeah. Great.

**Amos Sims** [1:21:21.9] They're my fondest memories. I'll never forget them.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:21:25.1] Great. Well, it's been an honor sitting with you today and listening. Yeah.

**Amos Sims** [1:21:28.4] Well, it's been an honor for you asking me, man.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:21:31.3] Yeah. Thank you so much for speaking with me and yeah.

**Amos Sims** [1:21:35.6] Yeah. I mean, look, if there's anything else you need from me, man, you can sure enough—I like this. I liked this interview.

**Francesco De Salvatore** [1:21:43.5] Great, great.

**Amos Sims** [1:21:44.9] I'm about to call—