TAPE 9 B

Interview with
WESTSIDE
Chicago Vice Lord
22 year old Black American

Interviewed by Kate Cavett
Hand in Hand
February 7, 1997
Reentry Services, Saint Paul, MN

KC: What name can I use?
W: You can use the name people call me here, they call me Westside.
KC: Why do people call you that?
W: Came off of the Westside of Chicago.
KC: And you know that I'm gonna... we've gotta remember to do this, too. That I'm going to interview you. Anything... any time I ask you something that you don't wanna tell me, don't give me a bunch of bullshit. Just tell me you don't wanna answer me, okay?
W: Okay.
KC: And that any of the stories that you tell me are, you know, anything that you share with me I'll use for various educational purposes and you're releasing your rights to let me do that.
W: Okay.

KC: So where are you from?
W: Chicago. The Westside.
KC: How old are you?
W: 22.
KC: What first attracted you to gangs?
W: Well, my mother's brothers. My uncles. And you know, I was just growin' up and ah, I heard them sayin' it all the time, you know. Vice Lords, CVLS, you know. And ah, you know, I just grew into it. I guess I wanted to be like my uncles.
KC: What was it about your uncles that attracted you?
W: I don't know. I just looked up to 'em, you know? Ah, I don't know. I just wanted to be like 'em.
KC: So when did you first start being like them? When did you first start hanging

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around the gang.

35.56
W: At about um, about 12, you know, I started really gettin' into it. And then, you know, I really got into it when I got about, about 13 or 14. And, I just took it from there, you know. I didn't my uncles, no supervision or nothin' like that, you know. To know about gangs and whatever. I don't consider what I was in a gang, though.

KC: What do you consider it?

36.25
W: A organization.

KC: What was your path through the organization?

W: My path?

KC: Were you initiated into the organization? You started hanging out around 12. Then what happened?

W: Okay. Then, yea, I was initiated in. I was blessed in. You'd be blessed with a prayer. And you don't get beat up or nothin' like that. It ain't like that.

KC: Were you blessed in because of your uncle or were you blessed in because your organization just does that?

37.01
W: Well, let me see how it went. I got blessed because I wanted to be blessed in and I talked to some people and people knew I was about that. About being a Vice Lord and, you know, and before I originally really came one, I was always represented. So um, you know, they blessed me in. A lot of little older people, you know. Higher ranking, you know. Elites and supreme elites, chief, stuff like that. So they blessed me in.

KC: What was the blessing in ritual?

W: Um, it's really, it's, it's called the um, you be blessed in. It's like four basic prayers that they give. It'd be a oath, you know. And this statement of love. And the Afatiah and the holy luvern. Those are the four basics that um, that if you, in the street, that a Vice Lord should know. Should know they signs and stuff like that like represented like the hat and cane, the star and the moon, stuff like that. Champagne glass and the gloves. You know, there's meanings to all that. And our colors. The original colors of the Vice Lords is black and gold, you know. You may see some wear black and red, you know. We can use that, too. But that's originally, black's the only color. But um, it's, when I got into it, it wasn't, it wasn't for protection like other people doin' now. It was just sumpin' I just wanted to get into, be a part of. That's all it was. And it's like I grew. I grew with it, you know. And as I got older, I guess the feelings got stronger for the, for the Vice Lords so I just took it from there.
Westside 3

KC: So when you were blessed in, the high ranking officers were there. Was everyone else? Is it a meeting where everyone's there and they bless you?

39.15

W: Yea, it could be like that. And um, just a little sumpin'. It wasn't nuttin' hard or nuttin' like that. I knew stuff that um, that they didn't expect me to know. Like as in literature. Like the statement of the holy divine, all this stuff. The lords of lords. The introduction of it. Everything. Valley of death. The vice lord concept. It's, it's a big book. It's a lot to know. And ah, most ah, literature is based on the Koran. Like the Afatiah, you know. The holy divine and stuff like that.

KC: Are you Muslim?

W: Nah. Originally, I'm Baptist but as a Vice Lord, they look at you as being Muslim or Moorish American, you know. So you can, it doesn't really matter.

KC: So how to you learn, how do you learn the lit? How do you get a hold of the lit so you can learn it?

W: Um, you got um, got people that's in, in Vice Lords. Well, what I was in could serve to a vice lord. All vice lord leaders are treated the same. You got CVL. You got TVL, IVL, UVL, RVL.

KC: Conservative Vice Lord.

40.34

W: You got insane vice lord. You got renegade vice lord. You got unknown vice lord. You got ebony vice lord. You got executioner Vice Lords. You've got ah, imperial insane Vice Lords. Mafia insane Vice Lords. It's a, it's a lot. You know, you got Spanish Vice Lords, too. But CVLs is the first branch that ever, it's like the mother tree. That, like say had little babies, you know. You know, people branched off and wanted to, you know, come up with they own thing.

KC: Do the different branches fight with each other or support each other?

41.17

W: Some, most of the time they, they support each other but it's a lot of animosity between certain branches. You know, like CVLs and TVLs, those are traveler Vice Lords. They really don't get along. And we made them, you know. And we don't get along because of sumpin' happened years ago in Chicago. Um, they feel we had sumpin' to do with they um, one of their chief elites, their supreme elites being killed so that's who they call they king. Man named Neil. It's true though. Some conservatives did kill him. And right to this day, some still in jail and some out. They brothers. You know, they was known. They trademark was they hair. They long hair. Ah, they was called
the wave brothers. And they was originated from off the Westside of Chicago on a street called Albany. So they was ACVLs, Albany conservatives.

KC: What do we have here in Minnesota?

42.28

W: Oh, you got a lot of wannabes. But you got a lot of people comin' from Chicago recruitin' people. What they doin', they recruitin' babies that don't know no better, you know, so I mean, they just, they just come to the young people. To most people now and just all right, you a vice lord. All right, you a GD. Stuff like that. Don't even try to school them and let them know but a lot of people now wanna be a part of organizations because of, for protection and they think it's cool. But it's not. I didn't get into for that.

KC: If you hadn't been blessed in, is everyone blessed into the conservative vice lords?

43.12

W: If you real. Yea, if you real, you been blessed in. But if you ain't been blessed in, you just out there. You lost. But like say, for instance, I'm a, I'm a elite and ah, I may meet somebody down here that's a vice lord and I might not even, I don't, I don't know if he been blessed in or not. But most of the time they don't even ask. Now, they don't ask. It ain't even that important no more to be askin' because they feel... I guess people feelin' now they go through too much trouble to even try to teach them about this. I mean, back then, it was mandatory that you know.

KC: Are some people beat in?

W: Beat in? No, not with no vice lord. That's Crips and Bloods. Those gangs. No, they bless. GDs bless each other in.

KC: Here they're beatin' 'em in.

W: Up here...

KC: See, that's where the difference is. A lot of the biracial groups are beatin' them. How did you gain rank? How did you become an elite?

44.26

W: Not killin' nobody and puttin' in work and all that. It was just that I was always, I was always in the older cats' business and I listen to everything. I liked to hang around the chiefs and stuff like that. Liked to be around and tell people, Yea, I know him. You know, stuff like that. And ah, I just listen a lot and you know, they used to look at me as a little shorty, you now. Now, they, you know, they pull me under their wing, you know. And ah, you know, from there, I don't know. By me knowin' what I knew at that certain age, you know, and that kind of impressed 'em. You know, they was like man, you know? And after that, you know, it was like well, it started from a little chief.
enforcement spot. Just a little branch elite. See, branch elite is just in your branch of that CVL.

KC: What are the different ranks?

45.32

W: Okay, let me see. You can jump from just a representative to a, to a universal elite. Universal, that's all over. All Vice Lords. You gotta little juice over all of 'em.

KC: What...foot soldiers is a term that GDs are using around here. No rank.

W: Representatives. Just representatives. That's all they is. And this...this, now, it is just so different now, you know?

KC: After a representative, then what?

W: Bein', bein', I mean, if they feel that whoever, they feel that um, you deserve to, to be moved up, then you can be moved up. But now, people, you got people out there payin' for rank. That he's a representative. Man could be makin' $30, $40,000 a day and he'll pay an elite $50,000 just to get him some bread, I mean, some status, some rank.

KC: So you can buy the status of elite.

46.41

W: Now, you can. And that's not, that's not right. So, I say all the real Vice Lords mostly are locked up. They down in Stateville, Dixon, Illinois and all over. Joliet, Pontiac. They all down in the joint. But ah, you got a lot of real ones still out here on the street. And the majority of them are older. So, you got Vice Lords that are 60 years old. Maybe 70. Vice Lords was originated in the 50s.

KC: They got grandkids and families.

W: Yea.

KC: So if someone's a representative, then they can become a branch elite and then a universal elite. Then what?

47.25

W: After you become universal? All right. It's like this all right. You can become, you can get a little, little rank around the neighborhood like they may put as an overseer or sumpin' like that. I mean, stuff that ain't in the books. It's a book that, that all elites and the real Vice Lords are in. And for me, an old book, you know, and um, you know, I might, I might just tell a little shorty well, and get a meetin' together and everything. Like, well, he's gonna, you know what I'm sayin', while I'm not around, he's gonna take care of business while I'm not around. So he's gonna be the overseer while I'm not around. But that might not be in that book. But it's, it's, it's what I told them and they gonna go by what I said. And he's gonna, gonna run this, you know. But um,
you can, you can come up. I mean, it's like lieutenant. Now, they changed it. There's so many changes. It was princes, you know. Now you got, but now, it mostly go like this. Ah, branch elites. You can be now, at this point, I think they start at now, at three star branch elite. You can be four star branch elite. You can be a five star branch elite. All right. Then, after that, you can become a universal. You know, be two star. Start from two then. Two star universal, three star universal, five star is the highest. As high as you go. And, ah, you're five star universal elite, you know. It's a lot of 'em out there, too. And um, you may got people say they five star universal elites and ah, might don't even, don't know nothin'. Don't even know about it. Just may make up what they hear, you know. They may hear a little sumpin' and put it together and bullshit. It's all bull, you know. It's all right, I guess.

KC: How long were you real active?

49.30

W: Ooh. Ah, I think I really stopped...I stopped maybe...I really slowed down when ah, I think about...maybe about 20. I think I really slowed down but I was always, it was always in the heart. I was always a vice lord in the house. At 21. Even now. You know? But ah, I done put that behind me, though.

KC: Why?

W: 'Cuz it ain't worth it. Just bein' out there. Shit. It's not not. I mean, it ain't, it ain't no fun no more.

KC: Why isn't it any fun anymore?

W: Well, things don't go the way they supposed to go, you know, and ah, just...it was fun. It used to be fun, you know. Even when we'd get in the wars and stuff, you know. Shoot outs and stuff like that, I mean. But after awhile, it seem like you grow out of it. But you got some people that don't. They constantly growin' into it. So...you know, you got old men out there still talkin' about they Vice Lords.

KC: Tell me about a war.

50.51

W: A war. All right. A war can just be kicked off any time. It can be over...it could be over...I don't know. Let's see. Somebody's um, territory. Sumpin' like that. Or...it's not a lot of drive by shootin's now. All that shit is back in L.A. somewhere. You know, it's ah...if we gonna come by and shoot you, we gonna walk by. We gonna park the car and we gonna get out. And we gonna come get you. We not fittin' to be shootin' no innocent kids and all that. Um, makin' mistakes. We come to get you. But ah, a war, I mean, it's just, it could go on for months. Months and months. People shootin' back and forth at each other.
KC: Do they know why they’re doing this or is it fun to be at war?

W: They know why they doin’ it. I mean, some...say for instance, um, I got ah, I got one block. This block belongs to me. And ah, and I’m the only one gonna sell dope on the block. Then you might come over there you know, and be like, No, I gotta get some of this money, too. You know, you might be sumpin’ else. You could be a...maybe insane vice lord comin’ on a conservative’s territory. That’s disrespectin’ me. Even doin’ that. You stoppin’ my money. Then you disrespectin’ me. You coulda asked. And stuff like that. That’s how that stuff get kicked off a lot. Sometime it get kicked off over a woman, you know? So there’s a lotta childish shit it get kicked off over. So...it ain’t worth it no more.

KC: Were you ever at the start of a war?

W: Oh, yea.

KC: What?

W: I mean, we...mostly I stayed in war with travelers. Traveler Vice Lords. Like, we be talkin’ right, like I’m talkin’ now, to you, you know? And ah, we could be face to face talkin’ and, and we disagree on sumpin’ you know? First sumpin’ they kick off and then we all get together, you know, maybe give each other a call and be like, well, we gonna meet up and we all gonna get it straight and holler at each other, you know? And we gonna try to get this squashed. And if, you know, I’m talkin’ to you and then you feel like I’m ah, maybe soundin’ like, you know what I’m sayin’, that ah, we can’t be touched and all this other shit, you know, then you might, you know. It just goes back and forth and then, after awhile, motherfuckers be like man, well, whatever, man. We can take it how you wanna take it. And ah, then everybody, you know, the whole crowd walks off and then, we may, you know, it may kick off from there. We may come through there, you know what I’m sayin’, runnin’ through there shootin’. And ah, they may come on back shootin’, you know. But after awhile, it dies down, you know. Somebody gives up. See, conservative, they don’t, they don’t mess with nobody until they be messed with. That’s how it is. But you got a lot of young motherfuckers out here. It’s always somebody to start some bullshit for nothin’.

KC: Sounds like most of what goes on is around business. It’s about drugs.

W: Now it is ‘cuz you got Vice Lords fightin’ Vice Lords over...you know, over the business thing. You don’t too much see in Chicago GDs and Vice Lords fightin’ each other. You don’t too much see them fightin’ each other that
much. You know? That goes on on the Southside. The Westside got Vice Lords fightin' Vice Lords. Just...you know, that's how it is.

KC: Did you come to Minnesota for vice lord business?

W: Yea. I came to help somebody. Um, I came to help a dude that I grew up with. He's a vice lord, too, and um, he asked me um, well, he was kinda down and he didn't have no money no more, nothin' like that so he called me and found out I was doin' good again down in Chicago so he happened to call me and you know, I told him I'd help him out. So I came up here, you know, paid his bills for him and helped him out. Took him shoppin' and I told him, you know, I took a trip back to Chicago. And I came back up here. My first day I came back up here and we got caught up in the car with some shit so...and he turned his back on me and testified against me. So...that was a real good friend there. And we grew up as little kids together. But I helped him out, so...

KC: How much time did you do for him?

W: I'm still doin' a little time. I've been down since November 17th of '95. But, that's how much I love for him. Yea. He...

KC: Did you come back for him or for a woman?

W: I came back to um, to help him, to continue helpin' him out. That's all. You know. 'Cuz I see the business down here was kinda all right. But it wasn't as quick as Chicago, though. But I was like why not expand, you know? Have a little sumpin' down here and my businesses back in Chicago, so, you know, I came back. But it was a few women I was messin' with, too, you know. But nah, I ain't come back. It wasn't like that.

KC: Did you come to help him because he was a vice lord or because he was a childhood friend?

W: Because he was a childhood friend, that's why. But even though he was, he was a vice lord, too. But it, it never really mattered to me as I was growin' up. You could be anything and still be my friend. I wasn't like that. You know. 'Cuz my family, my father's side of my family is, is GDs. And BDs. And, my mother's side is all conservative Vice Lords so, you know, I went to the other half, you know.

KC: Are the conservative Vice Lords all black Americans?

W: Nope. They supposed to be, though.

KC: Tell me about they supposed to be.

W: Okay. Well, in our literature, like the statement of love says um, it says, it
Westside 9

says black. It says, ah, For you my brother, my love for you is begin at birth. For we have manifested our life through our heritage. Wait. The color of our skin which is black and I am you and you are me. Stuff like...it's...I'm not gonna get into it but that's what they said. The color of our skin which is black. And ah, you got Puerto Rican conservatives. You got, you got some white ones. So ah...a lot of 'em.

KC: Any white in your branch?

58.10

W: In conservatives? Oh, yea. Yea, I done met a lot of 'em. They mostly from the suburbs in Chicago, though. In the suburb part. I think they just wanna be. Think it's cool. Just wanna be down, that's all. I think that's why they be into it. And then they get deep into it to impress us. I mean, really deep into it to try to impress us even more because they white and they...so then, we just goin' look at them like, you know, yea, whatever, you know.

KC: Do they impress you?

W: They impress me in the way that they try so hard to, you know, to impress us. That's the only way, you know. But nah. I still look at them, you know, if you say you're a vice lord, you're a vice lord. All right, almighty then, you know. That's what I say.

KC: How do you...when you recruit people, is it recruiting people to do the drug business?

59.10

W: No. See, it's not like that. I guess you recruit people, I guess, seem like to make the mob even deeper or even stronger. Or, I don't know. I mean, if I done it. Let me see. I done blessed people in before. I done it because I see that um, I can see that he really wanted to be a vice lord, you know? And I run it all down to him before he even get involved wit it. I'll say, you see how things go. I mean, I'm sure, you live in the neighborhood and you see how things be goin' on, man, you know? Shit, man. When we move, you move, you know? And ah, you know what I mean? I'll recruit somebody because they really wanna be in it. But if ah, but now, you know, when I got here in re-entry, it was a couple dudes that wanted me to bless them in and I just ran it all down to 'em. I'm like, nah. I'm not gonna bless you in because, you know, I can't really teach you all how to be a vice lord being down here in Minnesota. It's like you gotta be back home to really see how it really is. You got to grow into it, I guess. And I told them I'm not gonna bless them in and they asked me for some literature and stuff. You know, I tell, Yea, I'll get it to you. But I ain't, I ain't took the time to even do it. Because of, they really don't know what it's about. They, they just, they think it's cool just to be in it.
That's all. And ah, they think that ah, that ah, I mean, they think they're just being walkin' walkin' around with your head cocked and shit like that. You don't conduct yourself like that no more. Ain't none of that shit. You can without wearin' a hat. A person ain't got to know what you is. And ah...

KC: Are there girls? Are there female Vice Lords?

W: Oh, yea.

KC: How are they...blessed in?

1.01.26

W: They blessed in the same way. You may gotta...you may gotta woman elite. And ah, she deals wit hers. But ah, but on top of all that; you know, the man...it's a certain dude that's runnin' all this. He's in jail right now. Rico. Minister Rico. And ah...he da man. You know. He minister of all Vice Lords. He's the supreme elite. Elite of all elites. And ah...but he's a conservative. And ah...he been to jail for a while now.

KC: Is he gonna get out?

W: He...I hope so. I don't wish nobody in jail. I hope so, though. He a good man, though. I mean, he smart.

KC: Have you met him?

1.02.22

W: Yea. And ah...but now you see a lot of Vice Lords. We got...we into politics. You got a lot of 'em into politics. And a lot of people you see as aldermans and ah...and all this other shit that's in Chicago, you wouldn't even know. They Vice Lords. Older dudes. Wouldn't even know. And they lookin' out for the community. That's all. And ah, try to do positive stuff, you know. Like we got businesses. Stuff like that, you know. But people, the media label us as just havin' shit. Just drugs. And these cars ridin' around. They don't know. They need to get deep into it if they wanna really know sumpin'. But yea, we, you know, it's a lot. They got jobs out there for a brother that just don't wanna sell no drugs. They got businesses out there for 'em. You know, but you gotta go to school. But, they make sure you...you supposed to have a high school diploma, though. You have to go to school or GED. That's what they recommend.

KC: Is that in the lit?

1.03.28

W: Yea, that's in some of it. And now, that's mandatory. It's really not much in the lit but ah, but you supposed to do sumpin' to help yourself, not just drop out of school and think you're gonna be out there gang bangin'. Nah, but you got a lot of people doin' it, though. And ah, no, that ain't even right.

KC: The GDs are pushin' that but I've not necessarily heard that the Vice Lords
are. The school piece. You said that you started moving away from the act of outward banging when you were about 20. It's still in your heart but you haven't been doing as much. Is it hard to do that? To graduate? Not be an active banger anymore?

1.04.21
W: No, it ain't hard at all. Just showin' that I'm maturing, that's all. And I'm makin' my mother happy and my family happy. And you know, my mother didn't know what I was for a while. She had an idea because her brothers was...and one day, she seen a hat that I had, that I had it wrote on there and shit so...after that hat, she kinda got, really got the idea. But she still didn't really know until one day I come in with a tattoo on my arm. I was tryin' to hide it. I end up fallin' asleep with it shinin', you know. With Vaseline on it so...

KC: Tell me about your tattoo.
W: It's a symbol of Vice Lords. It's a hat, cane and a star. And you know, the hat means sumpin' and the cane means sumpin' and the star means sumpin', you know.

KC: What do they mean?
1.05.15
W: Ah....well, the cane is strength. And the hat is shelter and you got the star, it's just the eye of Allah. But it got five points to it. It stand for love, truce, peace, freedom and justice. And ah...it's part of the literature, you know? You got a symbol, another symbol, the gloves. That stands for purity, you know? And ah, you got the champagne glass. Celebration. You know, you got the two moons, you know. The crescent moons. It represents for the brothers in the East and West. And um...it's a lot, you know?

KC: Were you given the literature to study or did someone sit down and spend a lot of time with you and teach it to you?
1.06.04
W: You know what? How did I do that? I think I was given....was I given it? Yea, I was given it but some time of way, I don't know how I got it, though, but I got it and I learned it and when I learned it, I learned more. And ah...I used to sit down and...I used to bring it to school and sit down and study it. I used to type it up in typing class and stuff like that. And give it to other Vice Lords that needed to learn. I used to ask a lot of Vice Lords and they was older than me. You know your lit? Is you down on your lit, man? And ah...you know, they'd give me this old story ah, Well, ah...a little bit. Ah...so, so. What you know then? And they like, Well, I know a little bit of the Afatiah. I'm like, Well, that's all you know?
KC: What's the Afatiah?
1.06.55
W: It's an opening prayer that Muslims use and that we use. So we like...we Moorish American, really. But ah...it's an opening prayer that we open meetings with and um, we close the meetings with the holy divine. But certain days we can close it with Afatiah, you know. But it's a meetin'. See, you might know what a meetin' consist of. A meetin' may, we may meet on a weekly basis. We supposed to me ah...how it go? We ain't been doin' it in a long time but you supposed to me maybe like the first of the month and the end of the month. Somewhere like that. But people ain't been...we don't, they don't go by the book no more. I guess they look back. The book is old. We growin' up. We a newer generation, you know? We do it like that wanna do it. So, you know, when I used to have my little clique together, we would meet once a week. And we had the meetin's based on, is everything goin' all right? Anybody, any trouble goin' on or whatever? Make sure things are all right, you know? Or if we end up gettin' into it with somebody, then we'll meet to see what's happening, you know? See if we can, you know...if we can get it squashed before we go out there and get to shootin' and fightin' and shit, you know? Then we can do that.

KC: How many were in your clique?
1.08.20
W: That I had that was runnin' with me? I had about, it was about, it was a good 15 or 20 or us. We had our own little mob. We called it...we was...we was off this little one little street that we, we got up ourselves. We always conservatives but we call ourselves...but the little street that we was on, that was just really us. And we ride out together. We was on this street called Polk and Kizzie. It was a block between Kizzie and Spalding in Chicago on the Westside. And we had our own little crew there. And one of our elites, foster university elite, he put us together 'cuz we was comin' from all different places. Like I came from out...well, originally, I became a vice lord from out south, like southwest. In this place called LaClare Court where my uncles and them was from. And then, that's really, it was just back and forth. I really didn't came from there but I was originally vice lord from the Westside, though. And I come from there and we had ah, one of my other buddies, he came from off the strip called 12th Street. And ah...that's part of, see, that's part of this. Well, Vice Lords was originated, like originated at like called the holy city in Chicago. Everybody heard of the holy city. And the street where they really call the holy city, it's called 16th. So that's where most of the conservatives were at. A lot of older ones are up there, too. A lot of pimps
and stuff too, you know.

KC: That was something I heard somebody saying recently was that the Vice Lords would run a lot of prostitute business.

1.10.09
W: Oh, no. Who said that?
KC: A woman in a class.
W: From where?
KC: Here.
1.10.16
W: She from here. No, no, no, no. No, you may have some Vice Lords that...pimpin' is played out in Chicago. You still have some people pimpin'. You know, you got old timers, you know, still pimpin' like um....people like Sonny Ray. You got Don Juan, the most known pimp it is. Bishop Juan. He um, he been pimpin' for years but I'm not sure if he was a vice lord or not. But he associated with 'em, though. He associated with unknown Vice Lords that I knew of and that was Willy Lloyd. That's who he associated with but um...he might have been a vice lord. You ain't got a lot of Vice Lords out there that was pimps. But as far as now, no. You don't have too many pimps out there.

KC: So what happened with your clique. Did you just kind of not...you just kept the business going and just kind of disassociated or just moved away from being a vice lord?
1.11.14
W: Well, what really happened, it was like um...all of us was gettin' fed up. I mean, some of us was...some of us didn't trust each other no more. You had, you had one brother in the clique that was really...he was really dirty. And um...and...there was a lot of...a lot of stuff goin' on. He would keep up a lot of shit. He would keep up a lot of shit. And I also kept up a lot of shit with other people, too. 'Cuz which, mostly was with travelers. Them Vice Lords, 'cuz I hated them. And ah...I grew up in they neighborhood. Around them and I never...and they was wonderin', always wonderin' why I never became a traveler. I just didn't. I told them, I just didn't. And I always had trouble with them, you know. They, you know, they try to disrespect me and stuff like that. I disrespect them back, no matter if I am.

KC: How did they disrespect you?
1.12.13
W: You know, they would come in my back yard and write on my garage or a wall or sumpin' around and put CVLK or some shit like that and Fuck you, Jew. You and your boys. Shit like that, you know? And ah...I used to write
shit like, Traveler killer, god damn it. Turn the “T” upside down but won’t write the VL upside down. And ah...as I was growin’ up with them, we was cool until everybody started getting money. Started to that stage where they was gettin’ money. Selling drugs. And ah...everybody got big headed. But man, to me, everybody, we still cool. We Vice Lords. You know what I’m saying? We still cool but they let somebody around there brainwash them and shit. And ah...figured that ah...they the strongest and they the most meanest and all this other shit. And ah...that they can...they just let people lead...a lot of them older dudes lead them on. That is was the traveler vice lord or nothin’, you know? And a lot of ‘em don’t even know the history.

KC: So now, when you get stuck here in Minnesota for a couple of years, does part of the nation take over your business and run it for you and keep it alive so you can go back to it?

1.13.29
W: You know what? Well, the little, the little business that I did have. I was involved with a couple mo’ people, you know and it’s like, when I fell off, it was like, it was like I was the head. When you cut the head off, the whole body’s gonna fall. So it was like um...they started fallin’ off left and right, you know? It was like, no money here and no money there, you know. And our little clique. It was just...also, I had...that little clique I had, it was about 15-20 of us. But I had some that was really my boys. Maybe 2 or 3 that, you know, say we really down with each other, you know? And they...I feel bad ‘cuz I got locked up and I just left them out there. And they ain’t in no, really no other runnin’ good. You know, I had one buddy, my best friend, he was school so had had time. And I had one buddy. He was fightin’ a case and he couldn’t, you know, and he couldn’t do it by hisself. And I guess he figured without me out there, he don’t wanna pick the wrong people to get up with him and they fuck up. And I’ll be mad at him and shit. So I guess he just let it, he let it go down and things went down. And the little clique we had together started branchin’ off. We kept gettin’ in, we kept branchin’ off from each other back and forth, back and forth and um, so, we got to the point where all of us branched off. Some of them stayed branched off. Say, you know, fuck that. And ah, they branched off because another, ‘cuz our elite, our five star university elite, one of our chiefs that had it over us. He was doin’ all the bullshittin’ and ah, all the brothers was fed up with it and shit. Some of ‘em left. I left a couple times, you know. Pulled my buddies with me and I left. Then I came back. It been about 3 or 4 times. Because he always callin’ me and shit, you know. So I guess he felt all this, like maybe his son or sumpin’
KC: How old is he?
1.15.41
W: He about 42. Big old dude named Omar. Calvin Omar Johnson. That's his name. Smart. Went to college. Everything. And he like, and he also pushed the issue of staying in school, you know.
KC: And he's not in prison?
W: Nope. He managed to weed through that. But he a five star university elite. He's a chief as a conservative but he deals with all the vice lord politics on the political side so you know, he does all that. And ah, he does a little business with Louis Farrakhan, too, so they real good friends, too, so....
KC: How does the business work? Do you get your supplies through the vice lord connections or do you have your own suppliers so you need to be able to stay connected with the Vice Lords to be able to stay in business?
1.16.46
W: No, you don't need to be connected. Let me see. All right. You may, I may have my own little spot, you know? I may be moving about 3-4 kis a day, maybe a week. And I may be gettin' a better price from somebody else, some Jamaican from somewhere else, you know? And I may like his better. So I was gettin' it from the Vice Lords, I can, No, man, I'm cool, and throw down with dude. But what you supposed to do, you supposed to always...how do you put it? You're supposed to always buy from yours. No matter what, though. Some people press that issue. Some do now back in Chicago, press that issue. That you supposed to spend your money with your own. But um, it's a lot of people now that ain't spendin' they money with they own.
KC: Part of the money that you earn, does that have to go into a combined pot to help people that are in trouble?
1.17.41
W: Okay. That's down with your little clique like the little 20 we had put together. 15, you know. We all looked out for each other. One of 'em go to jail, you know, we go bond him out, get him a lawyer. We already had a lawyer paid up anyway. One of the best. And we go get him out, you know. But as far as another CVL. Say, for instance, another conservative vice lord from another deck gets locked up, you know what I'm sayin'? Even though we know him but he from that deck. They supposed to look out for him. But if it get to that point, we'll all at least get together and be like, if his bond is really high, then they can get together and be like, well, we gonna go over them and get him. We gonna all put our heads together

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and put our money together and get him. But it don't take all...all the Vice Lords to put their heads together. All it take it one 'cuz you got some out there makin'...they average about $50,000 a day so you got some out there makin' a nice piece of money.

KC: They don't make that kind of money here.

1.18.40

W: No, they don't. They don't. I know that. They make maybe a couple thousand here and a couple thousand there and they got to stack, you know, save, til they get that type of money but ah, oh yea. You know how we line up, you ever seen us line up for dinner or sumpin' like that? Well, you ever seen like, you be in line at the movies, crowded movies and long line? That's how they be out there buyin' that shit. Be out there buyin' cocaine and heroin. And ah, I mean, the line be's long. You know, and they constantly comin' and ah, and a lot of people come up here from Chicago 'cuz ah, 'cuz the money's good and what they pay. All right, what you all pay up here...all right. Say, for instance, you all buy ah, a 50. A 50 in Chicago is about $5 or $10 so we comin' up here triplin' our money, you know. Like off a half. Like if I'll buy an ounce of cocaine. Up here, they may make $2,500 to $3,000 off of it. Chicago you might buy it for about $700 and you might make...you probably won't even make your money back. You might make about $500. You may make lesser than that.

KC: Sounds like you made a lot of money 'cuz you were high enough up. You weren't out on the street selling yourself.

1.20.08

W: Right. But, you don't have to have big rank to make a lot of money. You could just be a vice lord or whatever. If say, for instance, I know you and you ain't nothing, right? But you associate with Vice Lords and they your friends and all this and we like you and everything and you just come to us be like, I need to make some money, you know? Can you find me a block where I can jump down or sumpin' like that?

KC: What did you say?

W: A block so you can jump down. It's like a, just one block. A block. You know, one whole block.

KC: To work?

1.20.40

W: Yea. To get you some workers together and to work. And you know, by you bein' cool with us, you ain't nothin'. But people might see you with us and think, Oh, she's one of them lady lords. She a vice lord. You know,
they might think that. But go on and jump down and get your money, you know?

KC: One of the questions I get asked a lot is if a woman is hanging out with the Vice Lords, then she becomes sexual property of anybody.

1.21.08

W: Oh, shit. That's...oh...I think that's got sumpin' to do with the Crips and Bloods. They all get to run up in there and all that type of shit. But ah, no. It ain't like that. You got to...for more...you got to show a woman more respect that you show your own brother. I mean, as being a vice lord, you can't disrespect no woman. And that's in the lit and shit. Don't disrespect a woman. You know? And...none of that ah...all of them get the...initiation, all of 'em gotta fuck her and all that. No, it ain't like that. But I think that's what...maybe with them Crips and Bloods or somebody else. But I heard about that shit, too. No. They done went way out, you know? But it ain't like that.

KC: Why are Latin Kings under the five point star with the Vice Lords?

1.22.04

W: Let me see. Latin Kings been out a long time, too. And ah, it's just sumpin' they put together. I really don't know too much about 'em but I had a lot of friends that was Latin Kings. And ah, they were cool, you know? Even when we go to...go to, like we all go to the joint. Latin Kings rival Vice Lords and Blackstones. And ah, you got all type of Latin gangs, though. Latin Counts. Latin Lovers. Party Gents. Spanish Cobras. You got Spanish Lords and Gay Lords. You got um, Puerto Rican Stones. You got, oh man, it's a lot. Harrison Gents. Collarton Duces.

KC: Now, in the prisons, like in the prisons in Minnesota, you ran with the Vice Lords within the prison?

1.22.56

W: In Minnesota? Okay. Yea, you could say...okay, when I got to St. Cloud, all right...I had, I was in the county with somebody that knew me and he was tellin' everybody in St. Cloud that this elite is fittin' to come down here and he was talkin' about me so when I came through the door, people already knew me. So they expected me to take over the whole St. Cloud and run the jail. But I had, you know, I had another thing for their ass, though. I was like, no. I ain't got time for that. I'm here to do my time and get the fuck outta here. But ah, I said, but if you all need some type of guidance or some type of knowledge of sumpin', you know, just come holler at me, you know? And they was like, all right, you know. When they have meetin's and stuff, they have to have it on a...see, the guards,
they're not supposed to see us so you have to play it off. Play cards or sumpin' and have a meetin'. And you know, and I'll tell 'em, you know, say if they not sayin' sumpin' right or doin' it wrong or whatever, I'll let 'em know. And try to, you know, shit, they try to be down so... but I didn't take too many... I don't take Vice Lords from Minnesota serious. I don't even consider. I don't mess with no Vice Lords from Minnesota. Always told myself that. If they from Minnesota, I don't mess with 'em.

KC: How many elites are there in Minnesota?
W: I don't know but ah... I don't know. I heard of a few. I heard of one, Sharif Willis. And he was guidin' brothers the wrong way. You know, so...

1.24.40

KC: How was he guidin' brothers the wrong way?

1.24.40
W: He was sellin' 'em dreams and, and ah... sendin' 'em off to do stuff that he done supposed to do, you know. And ah... sendin' 'em off to go... when they got. I heard about somebody, some... a few people, they got into it. I don't know. I guess some got sumpin' to do with killin' a cop. I heard sumpin' about that. I heard sumpin' about that way, way in Chicago. Oh, we get it. We get the information. Anything. And ah... Sharif, he was just doin' a lot a crooked shit, man. And ah... I don't know why they didn't come down here and put it on his ass, you know. 'Cuz he was doin' all the lyin' and frontin'. So I don't know why they didn't put it on his ass. They supposed to have. 'Cuz he wasn't, he wasn't doin' brothers right, though. But you know, you can do that down here in Minnesota. You can tell on the next man and be... and walk past that man the same day and he won't do shit. See, it's not like that. And the joints are way different. I like the joints down here, like luxury compared to what's down there, you know. I used to carry shanks when I was locked up down there.

KC: Shanks?
1.25.56
W: Yea, sumpin' you may tear off from aluminum. Make 'em sharp. Be long. I used to keep about 2 or 3 of 'em on me. So... and when I go to the bathroom or take a shower, I had security watch. Standing at the door while I take a shower so wouldn't nobody, opposition, like GD or whatever come up in there on me. You know. But a lot of times I didn't because I wasn't worried. I wasn't really thinkin' about... I'll go in and take me a shower, like use the bathroom, take a shit or whatever and they used to get mad at me for that. For not lettin' 'em know. So ah... it's ah... you got people die every day that's in Illinois jail, you know? You know? People die every day. So...
KC: Is St. Cloud as divided by gangs as I have the impression that it is? I've been up there and interviewed an Asian guy. I think he was a TMC and have made contact with a couple GDs and they give me the impression that it's really divided by gangs.

1.27.09
W: Divided. Man...I don't know, man. St. Cloud was a joke. All this shit was a joke. But um...as far as ah...you can... I mean, you sit in certain areas now. The Vice Lords may sit over towards the corner right along with the Blackstones and the Kings. And then you might go the folks that sit on the other side. Then you may have the Arians sittin' over somewhere else and you have them Asians sittin' somewhere else. You know. They all, it's all, yea, it's divided like that. But as far as bein' rowdy and rough up there. It ain't...that ain't really shit, you know? So...it ain't really nuttin'.

KC: What else do I need to ask you that I'm not smart enough to ask you? What I don't know I can't ask.

W: You can ask anything.
KC: But if I don't know enough to ask it.

1.28.11
W: Yea. Let me see um...I know a lot of...let me see. I don't know. It's a lot to know so that's why probably I can't think of nuttin' right now.

KC: How would I get a hold of some lit?
W: How would you get a hold to some? Through another vice lord if he give it to you.

KC: How would I give a vice lord to give me some lit so I could look at some lit?

1.28.42
W: Well, it's the '90s. You can pay somebody and they'll give it to you. And ah...yea. Now, they'll pay but you don't supposed to give that out. Unless you become a vice lord or sumpin' like that? And ah...you know...for example. My baby's mom is a vice lord. A conservative. I got a picture of her upstairs right now. And she know. I told her about that shit. She calls me. I tell her to leave that shit alone. But she said, just like me. It's still in the heart. I guess I had her out there brainwashed and shit. You know, I had her out there talkin' about she was CVL and all this shit. C fluid. Big ol' C. Concrete. You know. You got two different kind of CVLs though, too. You got...and some people don't know that. You got some that call theirsself C Fluid. And ah...you got some that ah...call theyself Concrete. Big ol' C. But they all conservatives. You know, just little branch off a sumpin', you know. Different set. And ah...now, you see a lot of rappers.

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on TV now. Um, a few groups on TV that I grew up with are conservative dudes. And people don’t know that. One of ‘em was really my buddy, though. We used to go out and kick it together and stuff. So he done made it big. Say, well, he done made it now. He been tryin’ for a long time. Him and his brothers. But it’s him now. His brothers wanna continue sellin’ that shit, I guess. But my boy stuck with it and stayed on the positive side. So he went on and done it. He all right now.

**KC:** When do you go back to Chicago? Are you gonna go back and reconnect with your set? I’m assuming you’re not staying in Minnesota.

**W:** I don’t know. My mother wants me to stay up here in Minnesota because she don’t want me to get back into that shit. But I had got a call, maybe about a week or two ago from some of my buddies. They ah, they told me that... that they waitin’ on me and ah... they got a nice little piece of money waitin’ on me and couple kis of cocaine to jump me right back off. And ah... outta all that money, I got a damn house to show for it. And that’s fallin’ apart, you know? And, outta all that shit, I would not save no money. I save sometimes and ah... shit was fucked up. Man, I had a shoppin’ habit like a woman. And, I’ll be in the store for hours. One store. I’d put shit back and try it on. No, maybe I want this over here. I’ll rack up about a couple thousand dollars worth of shit and then put it back. And whoever’s helpin’ me be mad. But that’s how I shopped. I shopped every day almost. I just love the clothes.

**KC:** So not havin’ a lot of money might be useful for you.

**W:** Now, oh, man. It feels so... I feel bad, you know. Before I go to bed, every night I sit there and dream about when I had it like that. What if I had it like that again? I daydream for it. That’s the only way I can go to sleep. I daydream about it.

**KC:** So when you back to Chicago, you gonna go back in the business?

**W:** I want to but I’m gonna do what my mother want me to do. I’m gonna stay out that shit. And um... it’s gonna be hard but I’m... she want me to stay up here. She told me if... if it takes her to get me an apartment or whatever, she gonna keep me from comin’ back. Unless I’m visitin’ or sumpin’. I might just do what she said, though.

**KC:** What if a vice lord says, Hey, you’re an elite. I need help. Do you have to go and help?

**W:** Yea, if I’m still active. If I’m still active, yea. Really, you don’t have to go.
Am I still active? Do they consider me back in Chicago active? Oh, yea. They consider me still active. But I told a lot of 'em, a lot of 'em, I ain't with it no more. No, see, it's still in the heart and if I'm there with you and sumpin' kick off, then I'll probably just like bein' a friend anyway. But um...no, man. I'm not fittin' to travel way down there just to help nobody unless it's family.

KC: What if it's up here. Somebody says, Hey, you're a vice lord.

W: That's too bad. No, I'm not fittin' to get in no trouble for nobody else no more. I'm gonna try to go to school and see if I can do it. Stay in this time. I think if I stay up here, I could stay in school. But there, there's a lot of stuff pullin' me away from it. And I normally get to that point down there again that ah, man, I need to go shoppin' and I need some money, man. You know, my friends will be lookin' like, Hey, what's up? Let's take care of business. I'm like, Yea, let's go get this thing and take care of business, man. Let's jump down again. And ah....

KC: And how many times do you wanna go to prison?

W: How many times do I wanna go? I don't wanna go back. I'm tired of goin' to jail. I've been goin' to jail since I was about 12. And the juvenile and all the way til I got 17 and it's like shit. I really got some rankin' in 17, though. That's when I really got my rank. When I got outta jail.

KC: How?

W: How did I get it? All right. Through the years, as I was growin' up, before I got 17, you know, I was givin' little spots of maybe...little chief, little chief over the little shorties or sumpin' like that. But then, I got outta jail and then I was really...gettin'...talkin' to like all, most of a lot of elites, you know. They always look. Always kept they eye on me, too. And they liked how I carry myself. They seen I was out there young at about age of 15. Out there maybe gettin' nice little money. Maybe 14. My teacher calls here and she reminded me about when I started school, in high school, and she reminded me that, that at that age, I think 14, 15, I was gettin' money. Gettin' a lot of money then. Nice little piece but not as much as I did when I got older. And she reminded me all the stuff I used to wear and all that. And I was like, Man, it was that long? I thought maybe I started maybe at 17. But that's when I, when I got outta jail, I was blessed with three branch stars. I was a branch elite. And then ah...

KC: What did you do to be branch elite. For going to jail?
1.35.49
W: No, that ain't it. A lot of, that's where a lot of rankin' comes from. From jail. You go to jail and they'll bless you with some rank. But um, no, I think that probably was one of it, too, and plus that...they was lookin' to give it to me anyway. And ah, they wanted to give me universal status. But ah...a lot of elites was like, Oh, no. He too young right now and he's already, he's still wild. He don't know how to act with that type of rank so...I got about maybe 19. 19 or 20. 20. 20, 21, somewhere around there. I got universal status then. Really, the rankin' didn't, I didn't really care nuttin' about the rankin' after about a year of havin' it. Rankin', it don't mean nothin'.

KC: Did you have to do anything?
W: No.
KC: Like management just says, Hey, you get this now.

1.36.45
W: I was set down and talked to and let...and let me know what I'm gettin' and what's this about and ah...and I was givin' ah...this sheet that you fill out like an application. So it's an application. And that was lettin' me know I was bein' put in the books really. I knew I was already...I was known already by the man. We call him the old man, Mr. Rico. I cal him the old man but I know probably before then I was put in the books anyway as one of the little young representatives of Vice Lords. And I carried that C to the fullest. That CVL, Conservative. I was Conservative to the fullest. That's all.

KC: What'd you do to be conservative to the fullest?

1.37.38
W: I don't know, man. I just. I loved being a CVL. It's just at that time....you know, I could be ridin' in my car and I see some more Vice Lords. They may throw up a vice lord sign, you know. I throw up the vice lord sign but I always got to say sumpin', big old C. You know what I'm sayin'? Holler out the window, C Fluid, niggers. You know what I'm sayin'? Sumpin' like that. But ah...it's...it ain't...now, I mean...it's...that just played out to me now.

KC: Why? How did it play out? Where's the change in mind?

1.38.17
W: Um, I don't wanna get back out there. I don't wanna get in no more trouble. I'm not sayin' that Vice Lords got me in trouble. I'm just sayin' that ah, I just don't wanna...one day, I might be involved with sumpin' that ah....that'd get me in a lot of trouble, even dealin' with Vice Lords, you know. 'Cuz I know they sayin' we known as a gang and known for trouble anyway. But ah...it's not like that. We do a lot of positive things, though.
Hopefully, you know... hopefully things will tightin' up. These gangs ain't gonna get it, though.

KC: What else do I need to ask you? I know you need to get to work.

1.39.03

W: I don't know. Maybe next time I'll have sumpin' good.

KC: You have lots good. Tell me about weapons.

W: Well....

KC: What's your favorite weapons?

1.39.18

W: You know what my favorite weapon is? And a lot of people on the Westside know it. It's my hands. 'Cuz ah... they know I like to box. So before I pick up a gun, I like to, you know, I feel you, I test my skills by fightin' somebody maybe... I feel if I fight somebody bigger than me, I feel I'll beat 'em. I don't feel threatened. But if I fight somebody my size or maybe smaller, I'll feel threatened. I get a ?? this motherfucker might whoop me. But I can go, too, you know what I'm sayin'? And everybody know that I wouldn't pick up no gun. That would be the last thing I do, pick up a gun. But if you shoot at me, then I'm gonna shoot at your ass.

KC: Would you be strapped?

1.40.06

W: Did I used to walk around strapped? You wouldn't believe it, nah. With my hands. Sometime you may catch me with a gun. If... it may in the car hid. We just ridin' just to be ridin', you know what I'm sayin'. Police, it'd be hard for 'em to find it so I have it in a good place but ah, I ain't like ridin' with no damn gun in a car and I ain't like walkin' around with one unless somebody come to me and be like, man, we into it with somebody, you know? All right. Make sure, you know what I'm saying, keep that thing on you. That thing meanin' gun, you know? And sometime I still wouldn't keep it on me. But ah, 'cuz I'd rather fight.

KC: Have you used it? Tell me about shootin' it.

W: About usin' a gun before? Oh, yea. Plenty of times. Yea, I made... I think I done shot a few people. I'd a been shot. I'd a been stabbed.

KC: Hows were you shot?

1.41.01

W: Ah... some more Vice Lords was robbin' me. They were tryin' to rob me. And ah... I guess ah... I guess I was takin' 'em as a joke. And they shot my ass. And ah... and... I was just shot, you know? The only thing, when I got shot, I was just thinkin' about was I gonna lose anything? You know, first thing came to mind was man, football season comin' up. I got to be well.
And I think the doctor told me I was gonna... I got shot in the side of the knee. And it came on my thigh. So when the doctor told me my leg might be fucked up for a little while, might have a slight limp or something. No, I wasn't havin' that shit. I wouldn't use crutches or nuttin'. I was back out on the street in two days. My grandmother, she don't like me in hospitals so she came and got me the next day. She was like, Let's go. Yea, let's go.

KC: Tell me about you shooting at people.
1.42.08
W: Oh, me shooting at? You know, if somebody shoot at me, then I'll shoot at them. But far as, if they don't shoot at me, I'm not fittin' to use no gun. Now, I done had... I got lots of 'em. I still have a few guns.

KC: What do you have?
W: Left? I have a... a have a lot of glock 9s left and I have... I have two tommy guns. If ain't nobody stole 'em. And we got a few Mack 10s. Got a few of them. Let me see, I got some more, I got more old throw away pistols I call 'em. Little 38s and shit. And um, little revolvers and shit. And 357s.

KC: Where'd you get 'em?
1.42.57
W: You can guy 'em off the street. You can buy 'em... I got those through a, through a man that came up to me, came up to my spot and asked people who runnin' this spot right here? They was like, Well, tell 'em I got sumpin' for him and I met up with the man and he had a crate of guns for me. And I gave him a little bit of nuttin' for him. It was about 12, 13 guns in there. I gave the man like $1,000. He was smokin' that shit so... as far as the other guns, gettin' other shit, you know. You can get that off the street. People be sellin' they personal guns and all this shit for that shit. So ah... you run into a lot of shit. But you out there sellin', a motherfucker come through with they whole floor model TV, a fuckin' computer, a copy machine. They hustles to get that shit. So...

KC: Did you ever use dope?
W: Never, never.

KC: How much marijuana do you use?
1.44.01
W: Never smoked it. Never. I got a contact before 'cuz I was in my car and ah... and my uncles and them, my uncle and my friend was smokin' that shit. And I was drivin' and that shit had me thinkin' that my car was floatin' while I was drivin'. And ah... I thought my car was on a flat. And I kept pullin' over and lookin' out and they laughin' at me and shit. And I'm like, man, my car don't feel right, you know, and they laughin' and shit thinkin'
it's funny. And I'm like, Don't y'all feel the tire wobblin'? I'm like, I'm on a flat, man. One of these girls done put me on a flat. And ah, they was like, Man, you is trippin', man. You ain't on no flat. So the car got to leanin' to me like, you know. And I was like, Oh, hell. I was like, Put that shit out, man. I don't allow nobody to smoke any weed or cigarettes in my car. I throw the ash tray out.

KC: Do you drink?

1.44.55

W: Never. I tried a beer once. On my birthday. When I turned 21. I tried a beer and that shit was nasty. Oh. No. And they told me, Just guzzle it down. Little, little Heineken, I think. Just guzzle it down. I'm sayin', No, I'm not fittin' to do that. I just tasted it and threw it away. But as far as other drugs, I wouldn't use them. I wouldn't use them.