



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



# Oral History Interview

with

## Marty Swain

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**Interviewer:** *Francesco De Salvatore*

**Narrator:** *Marty Swain*

**Location of Interview:**

*Lloyd House, 220 N Washington St, Alexandria, VA 22314*

**Date of Interview:** *11/09/2022*

**Transcriber:** *Terilee Edwards-Hewitt*

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### **Summary:**

*Marty Swain reflects on her experiences traveling with the Alexandria Community Remembrance Project to Montgomery, Alabama and the Equal Justice Initiative in October 2022. She also discusses her experiences in education in Washington, DC and Arlington, Virginia.*

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<b>General</b>	Education; Teaching; Equal Justice Initiative; Alexandria Community Remembrance Project; Social Justice
<b>People</b>	Cheryl Robinson; Audrey Davis; Martin Luther King, Jr.; Rosa Parks
<b>Places</b>	Washington, DC; Arlington, Virginia; Alexandria, Virginia; Montgomery, Alabama; Selma, Alabama

<p>MARTY SWAIN: 00:05</p>	<p>My name is Marty Swain, and I'm 83 years old. And the date today is November 9, 2022. And we're doing this interview in Lloyd House.</p>
<p>Francesco De Salvatore:</p>	<p>Great. My name is Francesca De Salvatore. We're at Lloyd House. And it's November 9th, 2022. So, yeah, Marty, let's start with just, you know, why did you decide to be a part of the ACRP [Alexandria Community Remembrance Project] pilgrimage?</p>
<p><b>Learning about Alexandria’s Community Remembrance Project</b></p>	
<p>MARTY SWAIN: 00:36</p>	<p>Well, I learned originally about the ACRP events and their organizing the first time that they met to discuss this process of remembering these two young men from a friend and colleague of mine named Cheryl Robinson, who was my boss in the Arlington [Virginia] Public School System in the Office of Minority Achievement. And [she] then went to the Alexandria City Public Schools as their director of, I believe it was called, diversity. And so I was present at that first event, that organizing event where Audrey [Davis], you know, explained what was going to be done to develop the memories and remembrance of these young men. And also, there were EJI [Equal Justice Initiative] representatives there. And, and then I went to some of the other educational things that they did. For example, you know, they did something about the abuse of black, black enslaved men. Usually the focus is on white enslaved men and their abuse. And this was about black enslaved men, which was an area that I had no nothing about and was very surprised, actually, to learn what had happened in those circumstances.</p>
<p>Francesco De Salvatore:</p>	<p>So, yeah, like, why do you think you decided to be a—to go to these events? Like what—?</p>
<p><b>Why interested in participating in Alexandria’s Pilgrimage to the EJI</b></p>	
<p>MARTY SWAIN: 02:08</p>	<p>Well, well, of course The reason, the reason why Cheryl told me about them and the reason why I worked for Cheryl in the first place, is because I have a longtime personal interest in not only social justice in general, but racism. And I'm one of those White people who didn't know I had a race until I was probably, I don't know, 55 or 60 years old, although clearly I knew I my skin was White. But I didn't understand the impact of White ideas of supremacy, superiority, in this society. And my first really time thinking about this was in the school system. I mean, I'd been active in civil rights stuff. As I mentioned, I served on the D.C. Board of Education where I was 1 of 4 white people in a board of 11. So I was, and I was working to represent people in the school system that was predominantly Black.</p>

So I knew a lot about the issues related to race, but I did not understand their foundation in the behavior of White people. I didn't understand how White people created the system. I hadn't put together all those pieces. I'm a history major. I have a degree from Howard University in American history. So I've studied American history from a lot of different perspectives. But it wasn't really until I was in the Arlington Public Schools teaching American history that I saw how this system worked. So I had young men, primarily African American and Latino, boys of color, in a ninth grade world history class. Who could, they participated perfectly well, and everything went on in the class. They knew all the material we were teaching and talking about, and they could not write a paper, they couldn't answer on a history exam a question in writing and digging further. You know, I figured out, number one, they didn't have any special ed [education] issues. They'd been in the school system since kindergarten. I know there are some very competent teachers in the Arlington public school system. I had a lot of colleagues who taught in elementary school. So like, how did this happen? And that was really the place where I began to see what systemic racism means and what it's like. And I encountered Cheryl, not working for her, but in another circumstance where this subject came up, why do kids of color do badly in the Arlington Public School system? And she said, teacher expectations. And I thought, oh, I don't know about that. You know, I know a lot of good teachers. And then again, as I dug into it, I discovered that actually a lot of the problem is teacher expectations, not necessarily intentional, but the fact is White people carry around in their heads ideas about people of color. That assume that they can't do stuff, that they're inferior, and that carries into the classroom and kids of color pick that up from a teacher instantaneously, unless the teacher is constantly consciously countering that experience that kids of color have with White people. And so, you know, I was interested in the Alexandria Remembrance Project, initially also, because it seemed to me that because the Remembrance Project is very visible, very tangible, these men were killed. This is the place they were killed. These are the things that happened. That through that project and exploring the the White responsibilities for what happened and the actual effects in the community, White people could see how this system worked. Because if you get into conversations with White people or you try to work on that, which I've done, I've done facilitation of conversation on race for the last 20 years, you're always immediately up against the question of how you make this real for them, how you make it possible for them to understand, even though they don't personally harbor any racism in the sense of personal vindictiveness or sense of superiority. The fact is they live in a system that constantly reinforces this, and unless they push back, they're helping the system. So that's really the underlying reason why I was interested in this project.

**DC School Board in the 1970s**

<p>Francesco De Salvatore: 06:37</p>	<p>Could you maybe share more about being a White teacher in in the District [of Columbia] and later in Northern Virginia? What was that experience like for you?</p>
<p>MARTY SWAIN:</p>	<p>Well, I never taught in the district. I was just on the school board. So, yeah, I was very young. I was elected to the board when I was 30. And well, in that circumstance on the board, it was just a constant learning curve, you know, just figuring like, the school board at that time, can you believe this? At that time prohibited kids from wearing their hair.</p>
<p>Francesco De Salvatore:</p>	<p>When was this again?</p>
<p>MARTY SWAIN:</p>	<p>This is the [19] seventies. Wearing their hair in cornrows or any semblance of, or a bush [Afro]. Crazy. That's where the school board was. And that's where the community was. Not the board that I was on, but previous school boards, you know. So one of the things that we did actually was get rid of that administrative regulation. Kids could come to school wearing their hair the way they chose to wear their hair, even if it wasn't what the people running the school felt they should be doing. And of course, some of those people who didn't want kids coming that way, in cornrows, were African American administrators and teachers. So that was a whole learning, too, because, you know, people in those kinds of positions of authority unintentionally also absorb these White standards of behavior that are so destructive to Black kids.</p>
<p><b>Teaching in Arlington, Virginia</b></p>	
<p>MARTY SWAIN: 08:06</p>	<p>When I came to teach in the Arlington Public School system, I was, I mean, it is a school system with a large minority population. When I first started, of course, that population was smaller. So when I was teaching at Wakefield [High School], the majority of my classes were probably white, although there was a significant African American and Latino population and some Asian kids at that time. I think probably another story that might be useful. And it was kind of useful in my growing up about this subject of racism in an American history class I was teaching. Of course, there's a required discussion on slavery and the Civil War. And so we, we you know, we ended up with a discussion in this particular class on slavery. And I had gotten a lot of material. I wasn't using the textbook, about what was actually happening. And one of the kids in the class said to me, You know what, Mrs. Swain? I really don't want to talk about this. This is an African American kid. She said, I'm tired of this. You know, I've heard this discussion about slavery since I was in elementary school. You know, for me, it's a very unpleasant subject. I would rather that we not discuss it. And we had a conversation about it in the class. And I thought to myself, you know, that's a point of view that I, I wasn't looking at this material from her point of view.</p>

	<p>And so a lot of the experience of teaching in a circumstance where you have kids who don't look like you, I'm White, is hearing what they have to say. And every time you learn something about what how you should be, what kind of material you should be providing, what's the context for the discussion? And another time I was doing some, this is when I was doing conversations with adults about racism. And somebody said to me, you know, the books we use, there are no really admirable black male individuals in these stories. And we were using some, I think, Maya Angelou and Toni Morrison books. And the particular one that she was talking about was <i>The Bluest Eye</i>, which is a rough book. And, you know, she was right. And so I went looking for texts in which there, there were Black men who were really developed as characters who were admirable. They exist, of course, but I wasn't using them. So I think teaching is always a learning process. And in this particular case, the question that you asked, my learning process included learning a lot about the material I was teaching from the point of view of African Americans. My one great regret is, you know, I'm not teaching now the things that are been made available about the reconstruction, about the way slavery operated, all kinds of data and information that I had no access to at the time and unfortunately is still not in most textbooks, is just phenomenal. It would be, my history class would be a very different class than it was when I was teaching.</p>
<p>Francesco De Salvatore:</p>	<p>How would it be different?</p>
<p>MARTY SWAIN:</p>	<p>Oh, there would be so much more material about what actually happened during slavery and the enslavement of people. And then also the whole economic context has been developed. So there's a lot of information about all the participation of northern traders and shipbuilders and mercantile operations and insurance companies in profiting from the slave trade. They never owned slaves individually, but they profited. And that was a fundamental part of the development of the economy here and the society here. And that's information that high school kids should know. Yeah. That's important.</p>
<p>Francesco De Salvatore:</p>	<p>Right, for sure. I'm curious. So when you were growing up. Let's go back in time even more. Further than when you were 30, serving on the board. Like, what were moments in your life growing up? That perhaps looking back now, you would say informed your understanding of of racism or race in America or your own identity?</p>
<p><b>Family Background Influences</b></p>	
<p>MARTY SWAIN:</p>	<p>Yeah, well, I come from a family. I'm German. And I come I come from Pennsylvania, Redding is where I went to high school, Redding,</p>

12:53	<p>Pennsylvania. And I grew up in Lancaster County, and my family comes from Hamburg. So Hamburg is very German. I'm sure that it was when my parents were growing up [in Lancaster], 95% German. My grandfather from that town, my maternal grandfather was a very bigoted individual. You know, as I learned as I grew up, my parents worked very hard to not be that kind of community, not that kind of a person. And so from very early, you know, they were they were part of, they contributed to the War Resisters League. They were, from the day they were married, they tithe 10% of their income. And they they were members of the NAACP. They were members of, you know, whatever organization was interested in social justice nationally and in the state of Pennsylvania and in the town where we were. My dad did sit ins with African American colleagues of his in Redding. And my dad and my husband and my sister were present at the March on Washington in 1963. I was not personally there because I was eight months and four weeks pregnant. So going to a march on a hot August day was not a choice. I delivered the next day, actually. So I came from, and my dad was a pastor at a UCC [Unitarian Universalist] Church and he was part of a community where he was one of the churches that built relationships with the African American churches in Redding. Redding was founded by William Penn Freedmen were welcome there. That community goes back, you know, hundreds of years. But of course, it was in a segregated part of town. And those churches were not, generally speaking, incorporated into the other religious activities of the town. But so I grew up in a circumstance where there were African American people in my home and they were in the church that I attended with my dad. I didn't have an in-depth understanding of racism, but I also had plenty of experiences with African American people to know that they were, you know, there all these biases were totally inappropriate and wrong. So that was I'm sure that's a, you know, a basic characteristic. I went to Oberlin College in Ohio, which is one of the colleges that was the first to admit African Americans, women, you know, during the time of slavery, they had students who were African American. And so that was an environment that was very conducive to thinking about social justice issues. Although, again, I didn't realize I was White. You know, it's one of those things about how White people don't talk about race in a way that that makes it clear that this is a system that White people created, that that we're responsible for. At that time in my life, I thought of myself as, you know, a participant, obviously in this environment, but more in the way of an observer, not as a responsible person for racism. And, in fact, you know, that is what the case is, I am a responsible person for racism. I'm part of the system. I benefited from it. I never knew about White privilege until I was 55 years old. Anyway, so that's an answer to your question. There were a lot of influences in my life that brought me to that place of being interested. Yeah.</p>
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<p>Francesco De Salvatore:</p>	<p>De That's great. That's great. So, well, so fast forward to you getting ready to go on the pilgrimage. And so can you maybe this—so I forget, you did take the bus [on the pilgrimage from Alexandria to Montgomery]?</p>
<p>MARTY SWAIN:</p>	<p>No, I did not take the bus. No. I want to add one thing about the pilgrimage itself. From my perspective, the remembrance project. That at the initial meeting where Audrey talked, there was an EJI representative and she was asked a question from the floor after the presentations and all the information about whether this project should be concerned about reparations and what it was. What she said has stayed with me because I thought it kind of laid out the work that's involved here. She said, I'm a lawyer, I live with lawyers and EJI project. And so I'm looking at the meaning of the word. The meaning of the word is repair. So I feel that reparations needs to be the product of repairing the harm. So reparations. Not where you start. You see?</p>
<p>Francesco De Salvatore:</p>	<p>De Take your time.</p>
<p><b>The Need to Change the Larger Systems</b></p>	
<p>MARTY SWAIN: 18:02</p>	<p>Yeah. And what that meant to me was a reminder. That the work is about the system. It's not about fixing some sort of end result way, but it's about changing the system, which is a lot harder. There was a lady sitting next to me, an African American woman sitting next to me, and we talked about this subject of reparations. After the whole event was over and she said to me that EJI lady was right. She said, I don't want 225 bucks in a check in the mail to me. I want the criminal justice system fixed. You know, I want black men not being arrested in the ways they are. I don't want them disproportionately in the in the criminal justice system. And I felt like that was a like that was a moment of understanding. One of the capacities, really, of this remembrance project that you might really repair, do things differently.</p> <p>And so that's part of the reason I was interested in going not just going to Montgomery, which is very important, but going on this remembrance project because I felt like the people who are running this remembrance project, they're in it for the long haul. This isn't just only about these young men whose lives were taken. They were murdered, but it's about educating the whole community. And not educating in the sense of reading books only, but in the sense of knowing really what the system is like and what damage it does to people today</p>
<p>Francesco De Salvatore:</p>	<p>De Why did that moment make you emotional, like looking back on it and just curious.</p>



<p>MARTY SWAIN:</p>	<p>Well, it's a good question, and I think it has to do with a number of things. I think I am, I'm an emotional person. In any case, yeah. I'm really happy when I'm happy and I'm sad when I'm sad. So the emotion is partly that. I think the other reason. Which is a lot more complicated to explain is that I was raised, and I lived my life in an environment that was basically optimistic. Of like this belief that the goodwill apt. And I guess I'm old enough now to see that that may not be true. Yeah. Which is sad. It is sad. And the truth is that for things to change, like for the system of racism that the Alexandria project is working on, to be challenged, to be eliminated takes persistence. Takes a lot of time. So basically, you have to never be discouraged. Never. And of course, the people who are giants in this field, you know, like John Lewis and Martin Luther King and Fannie Lou Hamer and, you know, those people who have been leaders of this area. They were never discouraged. They never, ever. I'm not saying they weren't sad. I'm sure they were. But their public and their personal behavior was always about just keep on trucking. No matter what bad things happen or what evil there is that you see, there's keep.</p>
<p>Francesco De Salvatore:</p>	<p>Yeah.</p>
<p>MARTY SWAIN:</p>	<p>Yeah. Yeah. But that's hard work.</p>
<p>Francesco De Salvatore:</p>	<p>Right? Yeah. What was that? What does that hard work look like for you?</p>
<p>MARTY SWAIN:</p>	<p>Well, it's, I guess it's it's paying attention to a lot of things simultaneously. You know, so when people talked on this remembrance trip. Like, for example, Pastor Q, at the discussion in the trip after we had taken the ashes and the ashes had been given, I think it was, anyway in the ceremony in which the ashes were transferred to EJI. I'm not sure exactly what in the agenda he spoke, but he said, you know, he wanted to remind White people that that there's work to do here. And what comes to my mind then is I mean, he did say what he meant, about just answering your question. What I mean by that is you commit yourself to making sure that every kid who attended the Alexandria Public Schools is on grade level in reading by grade three. And you don't make excuses. Because there are no excuses. You know, we don't have a preponderance of children in Alexandria who are of color, who are any different from children anywhere in the world. And the fact that we don't teach them either in Alexandria or in Arlington and we don't in Arlington either. Is simply a result of the fact that we don't do what we need to do in the early years to make sure those kids succeed. They're normal kids coming to us. Those high school kids I had in ninth grade, they were normal boys. No reason why they shouldn't have been able to write a perfectly good essay, but they had not been taught how to</p>

	<p>write. This is really not rocket science, I'm sorry. So that's one thing public schools. Another thing is housing.</p> <p>You know, we have a big fight going on in Arlington right now about housing, about whether we change the zoning from single family zoning to a zoning that permits more kinds of dwellings, because more kinds of dwellings would make a range of cost possible in housing. And basically you have to change the zoning to get the kind of housing that's going to make it possible to support a community where there are a variety of people. And the circumstance that we're in, single family zoning was entirely racist in its intention. It was to keep black and other people of color, including in the day Jews out because they weren't acceptable. And if you want to follow up on the challenges of a place like Montgomery and this Remembrance Project, that's what you have to do. And then there's the criminal justice system. So in my mind, it's pretty clear if you're going to break up a racist system, you have to take it apart piece by piece. And the pieces are pretty clear to me. And they are within our power. The question is: are we going to do it?</p>
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<p>Francesco De Salvatore:</p>	<p>Yeah. That's great. Thank you for sharing that. Not necessarily going off track, but may have, maybe like other moments from other than the moment you describe, that powerful moment from the trip. Are there any moments from the trip that that were that you want to mention.</p>
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**Trip Events in Montgomery, Alabama**

<p>MARTY SWAIN: 26:05</p>	<p>Yes. Now, I would like to. The first one, you know, in the same initial ceremony when we went to, it's called a Legacy Site. It I think it must have been the first museum that the EJI initiative set up where we actually transferred the ashes to the EJI representative. There was a deputy mayor I think. I have the new mayor. Montgomery is black, an African American gentleman who grew up there and then went off and, you know, made his fortune in education, all that stuff, and came back and ran for office and the deputy mayor came and spoke of to welcome us to Montgomery. And he's White. And he talked about how this was a change election. We have this new mayor who has a different vision of Montgomery. And he spoke eloquently about the, the need to be honest about the brutal history of Montgomery, to reject White supremacy. He pointed out that Montgomery was the home of the Confederacy, which I'm sure I knew at some time, but I had forgotten what a powerful fact the first Congress of the Confederacy was held around the corner from where we were meeting actually. Jefferson Davis was sworn in there. George Wallace actually declared his candidacy for President on the steps in front of the Capitol, which is about maybe 10, 15 blocks from where we were sitting. And he said he said, you know, that acknowledgment of this White supremacy as the foundation of</p>
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	<p>the city of Montgomery and its wealth at one time or another, that that acknowledgment is a foundation of rebuilding Montgomery.</p> <p>And that was really an amazing moment. I have never in all my life heard a, even a black person, let alone a White person who's a public servant in a public place like that, discussing it using the word White supremacy. It was really remarkable. And it was clearly not something he just thought of that day. You know, he was speaking for himself and for the government. And that was a sort of like a little sign of hope, you know, that a person could be representing the city and be comfortable talking about the issues that still remain in Montgomery, and they still remain with us, you know, everywhere.</p>
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**The National Memorial for Peace and Justice, informally known as the National Lynching Memorial**

<p>MARTY SWAIN: 28:33</p>	<p>That was one thing that when we went to the, we went to the lynching museum [formally known as the National Memorial for Peace and Justice] where the pillars are hung. And that whole museum is a very visceral, for me, it was a very visceral experience. I just. And I think that Bryan Stevenson achieved his goal there, which is to make this be something what you cannot ignore. You have, you know, an object there that names every person who we know of who is lynched. And of course, they're probably three times as many people who in some way met their end through violence or war. But they're all they're named, unnamed, and it's part of it. There's actually detail. Histories of exactly how they were alleged. What was the charge? Which is, I couldn't read all of them, it's just too much. When we were leaving, I was there with my daughter, who's a teacher in the Fairfax County school system. Suzanne is her name. And when we were leaving, there was, there are security people, you know, spaced around and they are they're not really security. That's not how they appear. They're basically people to answer your questions. So they have a kind of a dual purpose, but there are a lovely presence. There was a young woman, African American, and I said to her, so I wanted to know where you can see the Capital. And she showed me, because you can from the top level of these pillars, you can see the capital of Montgomery, which is a powerful symbolism to me. And so she showed us the place.</p> <p>And then I said to her, and I wonder if you could tell me if you had to say to a person who visits there one thing, about what it was that you wanted them to take away, you know, what would that be? And I've written down what she said. I would like to read what she said. Uh, let me see. Here. I asked her if she might tell me what she would hope that any person visiting the museum would take away. And she said, I want them to see and take away the truth. I think that that is the most important thing for people to be understand, understand the truth of what happened and take that away with them. And I will carry that.</p>
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**The Legacy Museum**

MARTY  
SWAIN:  
31:14

And then the Legacy Museum, which is the next thing that we went to. The entrance to it is incredibly powerful. And again, that kind of a very visceral experience of what life was like for people who were enslaved in the Middle Passage. You are faced initially with these huge rolling waves coming in. Really, as if you were looking out of a boat close to the water level. And then, of course, there's a of you know, there's a voice telling you some information about the trade and then you move into an area where the water is not coming at you, but it's lapping, there's waves lapping at your feet and you're in a path. And all the shore where these waves are lapping is full of the busts of people, that the waves are coming over, people who died. And we learned afterward, of course, that those are busts created from life, from real people, and then transported from West Africa to this location. But they really do communicate to you the vast numbers of people who died in this passage.

And then the next room is a room that's full of data. Every city that was a shipping city. And I'm not sure what year they started, but it's after the [American] revolution, I believe. You know, there's Boston, there's Providence, there's New York, there's Philadelphia, there's Annapolis, there's Richmond, there's Wilmington, North Carolina, there's Charleston. All the way around to New Orleans. That gives you the kind of trading that went on there and the number of enslaved people who were landed at those ports. And it's a wonderful set of data just to tell you that this trade was all through all the colonies in the states. It was everywhere. And it was so much material, so much information. I really can't remember. And I would love to have it written down. But I do remember Charleston was almost 200,000 people were brought in from the Middle Passage to be enslaved in the United States. So that combination of the waves and then the lapping water and then all this information was for me, it was, it was a very, I don't know any other word to say except visceral. It was just kind of inside your body, you could feel it. And then, of course, there's a huge museum, an incredible museum that follows.

Then the last thing that was really a memorable occasion was the food at the last night. So the last night was a reception at a, it's a Montgomery art museum that's not downtown. They used to be downtown, but, you know, a wealthy man offered them this huge property if they would move out. It's in Montgomery, but it's further out in Montgomery. And at the dinner, which followed the reception, there was catering by local people. And again, I went I wrote down their names, I just want to read. It was just so marvelously done as an evidence of the kind of African American culture that is being developed in Montgomery and the richness, really of what's going on there. So these are, this is called an African Diaspora dinner at the

	<p>Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts. And this was set up, obviously, through the folks here in Alexandria and the office of, used to be a tourist office, that's not what they call it now but for visitors in Montgomery. The dinner was done by a company called Verdi, and the cooks were Nick and Devine Jernigan, and they created what they called a tour of the Diaspora. Grilled chicken with sweet, smooth sauce, black eyed peas, cabbage, kale, tomato with a sour slaw dressing, collards, sweet potato dish, mac and cheese, and tiramisu. And the woman, I want to say her name correctly, Devine pointed out that while tiramisu is not a Black recipe, chocolate comes from Madagascar. And actually, the food was fantastic. So it was this, you know, this combination of the intellectual understanding about the African Diaspora and the actual experience of the food, which was really good. So those are my, I mean, there are many other moments, but that's one of them.</p>
<p>Francesco De Salvatore:</p>	<p>One of them. Well, is there a moment or it—yeah. Is there a moment of feeling that you'll always remember about, about the trip.</p>
<p>MARTY SWAIN:</p>	<p>Oh.</p>
<p>Francesco De Salvatore:</p>	<p>Well, okay for you?</p>
<p><b>Visiting Selma</b></p>	
<p>MARTY SWAIN: 36:22</p>	<p>All of those that I talked about, yeah, definitely. And then in addition, I would say the trip to Selma and Miss Bond who was the person who took us around that Selma and all these other things together. What will always remain with me, aside from the particulars of the individual experiences, is violence. The presence of violence is everywhere in Montgomery. You know, it's we—every museum that we went to there is evidence of violence against black people, the violence that they had institutionally for hundreds of years, but then the violence that was involved in the civil rights movement. You know, we went to the Civil Rights Museum. It's there. It's in the Rosa Parks Museum. It's there. Selma is, it's a very, very poor town to this day and no investment in anything. It's clearly the state of Alabama doesn't take Selma seriously. It's an important place. There's been no investment in the town. There's a Park Service [National Park Service] building there that was closed that's very well rehabilitated. But there's, none of the other major buildings in the town have been invested in there. We drove through a part of the town where the housing was lovely. But that's not what you see in the main street of Selma. And just the history of violence of the Confederacy there.</p>

	<p>And then, you know, urban renewal. I mean, basically, downtown Montgomery is empty. When you look at the pictures of when the bus boycott was that streets are teeming with people. Nobody's in Montgomery anymore, except there are tourists, of course. There's parking lots everywhere because lots and lots of stuff was knocked down. The hotel that we stayed in, faces on Commerce Street, which blocked down and ended in the river where enslaved people were. You know, disembarked off boats. And if you walk up Commerce Street three blocks, there's a huge, huge warehouse in part of which is you know the EJI Initiative has offices. That was a warehouse, I'm sure, for other things, too, but it was for hundreds and hundreds of enslaved people who were kept there to be sold. There were slave pens there. It's just in your face everywhere you go is violence. And I think, you know, as a white person, I'm insulated from that. And—but there's so many ways in which it, not only in Montgomery, but it's in cities everywhere. That I will never forget.</p>
<p>Francesco De Salvatore:</p>	<p>Before we close out, we're almost at time. Just curious, I mean, is there anything that I haven't asked you that you wanted to mention?</p>
<p><b>Last Thoughts on the Pilgrimage</b></p>	
<p>MARTY SWAIN: 39:23</p>	<p>I think probably the only thing is that I went in part because I have a huge respect of not only for the people here who organized this pilgrimage and who clearly are committed to, they're long distance runners. They're going to keep working on racism here as long as they have breath. But I have a lot of respect for the Equal Justice Initiative. I just think that's a group of folks who, you know, every penny that folks aren't giving today to political campaigns because it's over, they should be giving to the Equal Justice Initiative. Not only because they free people who are wrongly imprisoned, but because of this kind of outreach that they've done, which really does give people a way to educate themselves if they choose to go. About what racism is and means for really everybody in this country. Not only the people in Montgomery or the people in Alexandria.</p>
<p>Francesco De Salvatore:</p>	<p>Right now, it's great. That's great. Well, thank you so much for sharing all this today.</p>
<p>MARTY SWAIN:</p>	<p>You're welcome.</p>