

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS WITH:

- **Dennis Flannigan**
- **Greg Kleiner**
- **Jim Walton**

**INTERVIEW WITH DENNIS FLANNIGAN
TACOMA/PIERCE COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBER, DISTRICT 4**

January 27, 1994

Janice Foster: Thanks again, Councilman Flannigan, for taking the time to meet with me this morning. Could you tell me a little about your background? Where were you born, and where did you go to school?

Councilman Flannigan: I was born in Tacoma.

Janice Foster: You were? You're a Tacoma product?

Councilman Flannigan: Yes, that's right, a Tacoma product. I was born in Tacoma and raised down in Browns Point, which is nearby. I went through elementary and secondary school here and attended the University of Puget Sound, but I didn't get a degree. I left college in 1964 to go down to Mississippi to work as a civil rights worker [on a] summer project. Then I came back here, got married, and became a janitor. A year later I got a job working for Tom Dixon, who's now the Director of the Tacoma Urban League, but who then directed a program called the Hilltop Multi-Service Center, one of the old antipoverty programs. Tom hired me to direct an agency called the Hilltop Housing and Relocation Office, a low-income housing effort, and that began my track of social service involvement. After two years I went to work on the Governor's staff.

Janice Foster: Which governor?

Councilman Flannigan: It was then Governor Dan Evans, and for six months I worked on a project on how to develop urban services. That led to the next 18 months where I worked for public assistance developing a minority employment effort that the state has and had at a time. I left that to teach for two years at Western Washington State College in a program called "New Careers for the Poor." Basically, it was an alternative education where you could go to college and work a job inside the system and combine those two. I left that to work at a mental health center here in Tacoma, became the director of their community services. I did that for a year when I was asked to direct a new agency called the Pierce County Drug Alliance. I did that for eight years, the Drug Alliance still exists in [Pierce County]. It began with one employee, me, and it now has 100 employees. I left that to work for Governor Booth Gardner to look at the need in the county for emergency services because the issues of homelessness and hunger were beginning to filter into Pierce County; it was

found that more people couldn't eat throughout the month. So we started the Emergency Food Network, which was to collect food, store it, and distribute it, in essence. We were not a retailer, meaning we gave food to the food banks or the Salvation Army and to other programs. I did that for two years until I resigned and started an advertising copywriting business.

Janice Foster: That was quite a departure from what you'd been doing, wasn't it?

Councilman Flannigan: Yeah, but I did that for four years, and the chance to serve on the County Council came. I had run for office 20 years before and had been narrowly defeated.

Janice Foster: You'd run for what position?

Councilman Flannigan: I'd previously run for the City Council and the state legislature. In fact, Harold Moss, who was just appointed Tacoma's mayor, and I ran together, and we both were defeated at the same time back in 1970. Now we were both narrowly defeated for the City Council, but we were both kind of alternatives to life as it was then. Twenty years later I got back into it (politics), and was appointed to the County Council when a vacancy occurred in my district. I've been a County Council member ever since then. Inside all that, there's been lots of other volunteer things; I was a disc jockey on weekends for country and western music and police concerts. My interests are pretty varied.

Janice Foster: It sounds as though you didn't necessarily have a trajectory in mind relative to your career path--there were opportunities and you opted to take the risks to pursue them. Is that a fair characterization?

Councilman Flannigan: I think that's fair.

Janice Foster: So you ran for the County Council--no, you didn't actually run, you were appointed. At that point you were presented with a whole new set of opportunities. You've served on the County Council since 1990 then?

Councilman Flannigan: No, since 1987 or 1988. I filled the last two years of a term. When you're appointed, you run the next year when you run for the four-year term. So I ran for office basically three times in two years with the appointment, and I was re-elected to office a year ago.

Janice Foster: When you stepped into the role of Pierce County Council member, did you have some notion about some of the things you were wanting to accomplish? Also, what was occurring in Tacoma at that time relative to crime and other social problems? Did you have a passion to get in there, roll up your sleeves, and make things change?

Councilman Flannigan: I guess the first thing that I did when I came on the Council was learn what it takes to be a Council member. I've now decided that there's three things you can be as an elected official: first, you can sit in the seat, which means you just occupy it; second, you can observe what comes before you and make the best judgments that you can; or third, you can see what must be done and decide to do it. I think the first role is one that obviously doesn't have much value, but I think there is value in the second role and, in the beginning, that's what I did. Before I could fix things, I had to learn what was broken. I think I spent some time with that viewpoint. The other thing is that I have a range of interests which just spreads all over; my job patterns might hint at some of that. So my interests as I began to decide what I wanted to do came partly from just looking at things. For example, I had the County logo designed because before the County had 12 or 13 different logos. There were pictures of people fishing, pictures of mountains, trees, water, and the Narrows Bridge. What did it all mean? It didn't mean anything. I wanted us to have a corporate image that says, "This is an efficient operation." So a friend who's a designer designed the logo, which I'm sure you've seen [reaching for a business card]--here it is. The point being we needed to look like a professional organization. Now, I recognize that it's corporate and somebody might want a softer image, but that was one thing that it seemed to me the County needed.

Safe Streets is probably the most significant, socially active intervention that I've been a part of; I've always been a part of the struggle to have human services issues dealt with. However, the issue of violence in the community was one that I was probably no more aware of than a lot of citizens. I was asked to facilitate an effort with Juvenile Court administrators from across the state; that was in Olympia. I went down to that meeting and, while I was there, people from the Tacoma School Board and the Tacoma School District--the top administrators--were there for their own retreat. Some of those people are friends of mine. After both retreats, that evening, we were sitting having a Coke, and both our director of Raymond Hall, the juvenile corrections program, and the school people started talking about how many weapons were appearing in the schools; it had jumped something like 9 from the previous year to 108 or more that year. There was just this explosion of weapons which were being confiscated from school kids, and kids with weapons were seen hanging out across the

streets from Lincoln High School. So we spent the evening talking about that issue.

As I drove home, I thought, "This isn't something that I can let go." There are a lot of social issues that come before me where I can recognize the need but I don't see that I'm the intervenor. But this one, I thought, "Dennis, nobody's doing anything, you have a position, you have relationships in this community, maybe you can do something." There was no name of "Safe Streets"; this was just a dilemma. That was on a Wednesday. On Thursday, I came into my office and began making phone calls, and I called 24 community leaders. I called the sheriff, I called the police chief, I called the prosecutor, I called the head of the Boys Club, I called the head of the Urban League. In essence, I tried to bring together the diversity of the community and the power of the community, including Native Americans, to represent the breadth of this culture. On Halloween morning, Monday, October 31, 1988, 23 of those 24 people came to a 7:30 a.m. meeting. Clearly, the sense that this was a need was larger than we'd anticipated. It was kind of like the old circus thing where you shout, "Hey rube," and everybody comes. Well, I shouted, "Hey rube," and everybody came. We were meeting at 7:30 in the morning, and that meeting began probably one of the most impressive, enjoyable processes in issues that I've had. The first thing that happened . . . it was about a 90-minute meeting, and everybody vented. The school people said it was the nursing profession, the nurses said it was the churches, the churches said it was the cops, the cops said it was the judges, and the judges said it was the politicians. In one sense, everyone recognized that there was a problem, but it was as if somebody else should do something. We were thinking at that time of drugs, violence, crime, and weapons; we had a panorama of issues. But as we went along, we focused and made some decisions before the meeting was over. The decisions were that we were going to limit ourselves to consider gangs and drugs; we wanted to focus on something that maybe we could get a handle on. Second, we all agreed that each of us is both a part of the problem and a part of the solution; there would be no finger pointing. Then we clearly stood up and said to each other, "I accept responsibility," which is pretty remarkable for one meeting if you think about it, and we decided that we didn't know what to do, which is a pretty remarkable thing for a lot of professionals to say out loud. We said that we must meet again.

In just a few days 16 of those same people came back and one additional person, Priscilla Lisicich, who I'd run into in the meantime. (She is the current director . . .) So I asked her. She also was added, and 16 people came to a second meeting to say, "What do we do?", etc., and again we

continued to refine and define the problem. The analysis got better. No solution emerged, but we knew we had to do something; the issue was compelling. The police had this happening . . . We held a third meeting. I think by this time we were down to eight or nine, not because other people didn't want to participate, but because others had been designated as participants. I am pretty much at this point calling people together. The meetings were up here. Jim Walton, the assistant city manager or deputy or whatever their titles are . . . Jim Walton brought two pages of observations. It was the first time that ink hit paper, I guess. I can't even remember what the two pages had, but they were the first kind of formulation of something; the path was beginning to emerge.

Those meetings continued, and eventually I drafted, probably, the early work because most of it is in my writing. It boiled down to [the fact that] that we [still] didn't know what to do. But we know something needed to be done and we had to engage the community. Most of us were professional grant writers at one level or another. I mean, that's what my living had been and that's what many [had previously done]. But [each of us] had also abandoned that easy skill of [saying], "Let's crank out a grant to get funding to go do something." So we decided to ask people . . . what could be done, and we scheduled a community forum. The papers became engaged in some way. The city, county, and school districts had combined to say, "We're behind this." On a parallel track we were putting on a forum that between 1,600 and 2,000 people arrived at. We were prepared for them because we had 200 people prepared as facilitators. We had organized ourselves well, and while we privately said, "Gee, maybe only 300 or 400 people will come," we also thought we were onto something, and that many people (approximately 200) came to Foss High School. At the other end of it ____ there's my democracy and there's my Machiavellian type, so you hear them all. I had three things I wanted to accomplish in this nondemocratic part of what I'm trying to do.

Janice Foster: Your personal agenda.

Councilman Flannigan: My personal agenda. My personal agendas were [that] I wanted democracy in a sense. I wanted the community to rally around the need and to help define the issue. I wanted a specific person to direct it, Lyle Quasim, and I wanted good public relations. I wanted to kick it off with enough money to do something. _____ I wanted it to be as much as possible an organizational tool, not a service delivery tool. I would say we realized that we needed to get the community engaged in the problem, not hire 14 people to go out, and you call them up and they are supposed to solve the issue, 'cause that's crippled every city or every community that ever tried to do

it. How many cops do you need? We need more. The list goes on and on. The development of this kind of community intervention strategy went pretty good. At the same time, and I guess this is a long ramble because there's a lot collecting here. Also research is indicating that basically the Block Watch sorts of things . . . don't work. That isn't really the method that moves, for a variety of reasons--I can't remember the research now. We're also raising the real issues of these [programs] because the community kind of pushes you toward, "All we have to do is . . . have a block watch."

I wanted Lyle Quasim for some very specific reasons. Not number one, but obviously most apparent, he is black. The two real reasons are that he is intellectually and physically fearless. He was also in hot water in Olympia; the Governor just canned him. (However,) he nevertheless held an (important) job with stature and all that sort of stuff. I thought it was possible to woo him. I also know Lyle real well. He's an old-time friend. He's happy being a bureaucrat. He's inside the system. He has retirement benefits, but I also know how big his heart and soul is. I talked to Jim Walton and basically we put the hit on Lyle to come do this. Lyle didn't want to come to work for some goddamned street program, sort of speaking in quotes. Here he is, a former director of Mental Health and currently director of VGR or whatever it was, or some significant role. Somebody says, "Will you come run a street mission?" It doesn't really pattern itself out so much, but he also knew what the work was and that it was an important mission. The second part of that is I knew that you had to establish credibility for this agency to set it larger than street program identification. Grant writers create street programs all the time and they don't rise above that role.

Lyle can help it rise; a good image can help it rise. I have friends because I worked in the business for a bit at Cole & Weber. Cole & Weber is the largest ad agency in the Northwest and I went over . . . Cole & Weber since the inception of this program has contributed many, many thousands past \$100,000 in services, probably a quarter of a million dollars if they were billing all of it in kind, the result of which is that they gave the very kind of professional presence that United Way could give. In a sense they had the same quality work. For the first year there was an article about every third day somewhere about Safe Streets. Either an article or newscast, national, political, or whatever that gave [the program] credibility in some ways, in the ways that it might . . . (There are lots of memories skipping here at the same time.) It sounds like Dennis tells the story and Dennis did it all. Dennis didn't do it all. Dennis had a lot of power in defining it, but lots of people also defined it. People like John Landenburg, Jim Walton, Lyle, and others were right there in a sense that if the

community was hemorrhaging they were right there stopping the blood. They left it to me to make sure who comes to the next meeting and what was . . .

Janice Foster: You were sort of the facilitator.

Councilman Flannigan: Right. Right. At some point we called this combined press conference and we are getting good press and I'm trying to think what to call [the program] outside of "Just Say No to Drugs," (I hate that) or "The War on Drugs." I hate that, too; I'm a wordsmith . . .

Janice Foster: Here's a News Tribune article of May 1989. Is that the meeting you're speaking of when we get an announcement of the [Safe Streets] plan . . . ? [Shows Councilman Flannigan May 31 TNT article.]

Councilman Flannigan: It may have been.

Janice Foster: The second page has the balance of the May article.

Councilman Flannigan: No. This is a year before [the article].

Janice Foster: Okay.

Councilman Flannigan: This [article describes] another meeting that follows up, but okay . . . this is after the large meeting, the large meeting [where some] 1,600 to 2,000 people provided their input. That was all facilitated, put up in books . . . and then we went to a retreat several months later because it took that long to organize it. From that retreat came back these things that we then delivered to the community on how to do it. We're about to go out and have a press conference, but I still don't have a name for it. We are calling it "The War on Drugs," but I wanted something softer and more nurturing than punitive. The idea of "Safe Streets" crossed my mind, which is one of the successes in that I think it is the right kind of name. It is a name everyone can gather under, the libertarian as well as the conservative. The other thing and the other Machiavellian side of me is that I wanted everybody's fingerprints on it, and I made five phone calls and I raised half a million dollars. I called the City of Tacoma and asked them to commit \$50,000 a year for two years, I asked the Tacoma School Board commit, and I asked the County to commit. At that point . . . we (the county) had set aside \$35,000 for this issue. I got us to commit. I got the state to commit, and I called the director of United Way, Frank Hagle, and asked if he knew of anybody in the private sector who would be willing to commit \$50,000, and he said, "We will." So with actually five calls--

the only delay was that Lillian Borna, then the Superintendent of Schools, was out of town and it took about three days. This is really pretty early on. This was before people committed to it for two years, that they would put up between us a quarter of a million dollars. More money was eventually raised, but that was the beginning, with everybody having their fingerprints on the money in the sense that we also were then saying, "We're not only individually a part of the problem but we have collectively become a part of the solution." And whether Safe Streets is a solution and 100 other questions that we'll get to are fair.

Janice Foster: That's exciting. It sounds like perhaps it wasn't difficult necessarily to arrive at a consensus to the approach, given the fact that you had a lot of community support for the basic program strategy.

Councilman Flannigan: Yeah. [With some hesitation] . . . Well, I had and have misgivings even about some of the directions that we took, and originally we had these three interventions, education, whatever they were. The easiest strategy in a community sense is the strategy that affirms the safety of the majority of citizens. The majority of citizens are middle-class, white, basically the people who are afraid of black people, you know, underneath it all. That's the truth of it.

Janice Foster: Right.

Councilman Flannigan: And so when we put the Block Watch piece of business in, that became kind of our growing organizational tool because people could relate to it. We'll put up more lights. We'll watch each other and get rid of this crack house. So that's been a healthy organizational tool in one sense, but it's also never sent anybody up to talk to a gang kid to see if the gang kid could have a chance for another life. You have to remember these are a lot of (I'm sure you do) 12-, 13-, 14-year-olds--I mean some of them are 25 and 30, but a lot of them are kids who are not there because they have figured life out; they are there because they haven't figured life out, and maybe we could capture them and . . . I feel none of us in America have made a very successful effort at that part of intervention. Anyway, we wound up in some ways doing the things that are easiest to have a community support and which the legislature and others think make a lot of sense. The violence primarily, you know, is [that] young black men shoot young black men. That's just the way it is. That business has not been tackled, I think, effectively by us or anybody else. There are steps. There are people conscious . . . Lyle's conscious of it and Priscilla and others, and there's work being done. But in my soul, the business of organizing my block (and it's helped me not have my

house burgled, so I appreciate it), but [this being a key focus for Safe Streets] has been a struggle for me. I think as you gain momentum, you know; if you are a good student in French and not a good one in Spanish, you take more French classes.

Janice Foster: Exactly.

Councilman Flannigan: The other thing was the hiring of Lyle Quasim. When Safe Streets first started, I was very active, but soon after I had a heart attack and then I had cancer. I wound up having a triple bypass, and four months later they took a football out of my abdomen, and I had a year of lots of, you know, those kinds of things. In the beginning, Lyle and I were kind of, I was kind of the chair of the kind of philosophic spot where people talked. Lyle was the director. I moved away out of it, didn't have . . . and I just bailed out emotionally. Lyle is a director who sets his own agenda and gets on with it. I used to argue with him, and the argument ended one time when he said, "Dennis there's 20 things to do; I can do three of them. I've chosen these three. When someone comes to me, I'll listen, but if that is item number 7 or 4 and not 9 or 18 or 21, I don't do it. Sometimes I tell them, sometimes I don't."

Janice Foster: It's about priorities.

Councilman Flannigan: Now your priorities, you might have number 7, 4, and 3 as your first second or third priorities. They aren't mine. Lyle put in 55-, 65-, 75-hour weeks. I wasn't going to take his job away from him. I wasn't going to be black. I had a lot of things against me here, and Lyle and I are very close. It let me settle into [recognizing that] Safe Streets will be what it is under the leadership that it has. And he is a first rate talent and a first rate leader, and it isn't what I would have designed but it is something special. That's funny--I was speaking yesterday to a group who is mad at me for coming out against the DARE [Drug Abuse Resistance Education] program.

Janice Foster: Oh, really? [With surprise]

Councilman Flannigan: Yeah. It's not exactly against the DARE program, but Pierce County has four DARE officers and a budget of \$330,000. They can divide. You can divide. You are real good at that type of stuff. That is about \$81,000 just roughly, \$81,000 to have someone in the elementary school for nine months . . . does some good. If you have children, and they are in elementary school and I gave you \$81,000, where would DARE fall on your list of best things to do? It wouldn't be in the top ten. At the same time, one week ago in the paper there is an article about

how the cops love it; [DARE] makes them feel good, and they do good work; there's nothing wrong with it. Mr. All Tribe has a school. (Here's another oral history [lesson] to grab while they can.) Six years ago there was 61 students at Chief Leschi school. It was riddled with drugs, alcoholism, gangs, abuse, all kinds [of problems]. The school was falling flat. It couldn't get accredited. It has 660 students. It has a woman superintendent, Linda Rudolph. It has been declared by the feds and awarded one of the . . . It's a drug-free school. It is recognized . . . That woman has turned it around. She didn't bring any DARE officers in. She brought love, compassion, and a sense of what the tribe must be. Whatever she brought, she brought the viewpoint that you can succeed. I just know that for \$81,000 I can have a lot more impact with some other methods. But people are in love with cops and in love with the idea [of DARE.] (It's pretty tough to get me to have a view, as you can tell.) [Laughing] But I'm a friend of the sheriff and he loves DARE and we argue but it doesn't change our friendship _____.

Janice Foster: It sounds as though there was something of a reconciliation, that even though perhaps Safe Streets wasn't necessarily in keeping with your initial aims and vision for what that program could become, it could nonetheless become something fairly powerful and have an impact by virtue of the design that Lyle and others practiced and what people thought they wanted . . .

Councilman Flannigan: Right. And then my views are murky, too. I mean it's a lot easier to complain than to have a vision. So, I didn't have answers so much as more problems . . . what about, what if, what if? But I'm finally a real believer [that] if you have \$50,000 then let's get \$50,000 worth of work out of it because we can't get \$80,000 work out of \$50,000. You might get \$80,000 work out if some people work for free, but you can't get it out of \$50,000 will actually buy _____. And Lyle says, "This is what we can do and this is where I'm going," and Lyle did things. I mean, Lyle would go up [at] 3 o'clock in the morning and would be standing on the streets with no guns in his pocket talking to drug dealers. He's out there. As I say, I feel of him that he is physically and intellectually fearless. What more can you throw on a good administrator? It's not my style but what can you throw at something better than that? I can't think of anything.

Janice Foster: The article I just handed you outlined the initial strategies that were presented to the community as to what Safe Streets was initially setting out to accomplish. It sounds as though maybe even then, at that juncture, [the strategies] weren't necessarily altogether in keeping with what you had in mind; but, in retrospect, how do you feel at this point about how well the agency has

measured up to those strategies?

Councilman Flannigan: The first preamble is that basically my commitment and other commitments is that what citizens asked us to do would be what we did; it was an attempt to a part of democracy. If you look through here at the bullets they have, I would say only one of them has been accomplished at all. [Councilman Flannigan begins to read the six bullets outlined in the 5/31/89 TNT article.] "Lobby for repeal of the State's Juvenile Justice Act." I'm sure that some of that was done, but the Act has not been repealed to this date, it continues to be on the agenda, and I don't think that any significant effort was made other than once in a while to go [to Olympia] to testify there. We just don't have time.

Janice Foster: Sure.

Councilman Flannigan: "Push for increased sentences for drug dealers and for more jail space through the use of electronic home monitoring." That continues to go on, but that has not been a Safe Streets mission, basically in terms of the staff. "Cooperate with landlords to prevent rental properties from becoming crack houses." They have done a first rate job of that. That's one of the places where it really does work.

Janice Foster: It sounds like that one was perhaps really a systemic issue because when you look through some of the old TNT articles, there is a long history of absent landlords who did not maintain property, which created problems back in the 60s.

Councilman Flannigan: That's true. In fact, I remember houses that had drugs way back when with the same kinds of difficulty . . . In addition to organizing the landlords, you're organizing the neighborhoods to work with those landlords or to get those landlords involved. But those associations did voluntarily come in and feel that they were a part of a Safe Streets program, activists who were helping them. Not many landlords want to have an amphetamine lab on their property. "Encourage youth involvement in all aspects of Safe Streets Campaign." In my view, not a very good job was done. There was a group that, there was a grant, youth were involved, good youth, but I always thought basically the program itself was kind of a hustle. It was a thing (a component of the campaign) that was contracted out, and I don't think it had any major impact. So youth come in and out of it, but I don't think that has been very effective. I think it's perhaps in some areas more effective now. There are some places, I went over to the Safe Streets community meeting last night-- there were 200 citizens there but not very many young people. It's basically the adult population . . .

Janice Foster: Now, I [recently] learned that Safe Streets got a grant, a substance abuse grant, to help kids with [drug] refusal and life skills. Maybe that will [help strengthen youth involvement].

Councilman Flannigan: Right. The steps were taken but they are more . . . those are more organizational, I mean those are more, we'll deliver the service steps, then we'll organize the community to wrestle with that. Not that one's right or wrong, but it's not my view (for the agency). "Continue the ministry and presence in which church foundations peacefully demonstrate in high drug area," which I think has a powerful [potential], really fell by the wayside partly because it's tough to hold it. It was a part of Safe Streets, and it's kind of a Mothers Against Drunk Driving approach, I think in the long run closer to what will work, meaning that--and here is where you have to build community courage, but it is interesting that those housing projects across the country which are improved are never improved by Housing Authorities. They're always improved (I shouldn't say "never"), but they're always improved by citizens who reside there. So I don't think we have done a very good job in knowing how to nurture the "I've had enough" movement. "Work to create one thousand jobs for young people by year's end." Certainly we tried, but the economy is falling and jobs aren't invented; jobs are stolen. You don't get hired; I do. I don't get hired; you do. But there is still only one job there. You might create 7 or 12 or 20, but that's a pretty cold assessment right there.

Janice Foster: Fair enough. I submitted some of the excerpts of various articles that I read, background for this interview, that cite some of the observations about Safe Streets that we'll say were less than favorable. How do you respond when you see that kind of thing? How do you react intellectually?

Councilman Flannigan: Well, some of them are right. But first there's a jealousy, partially there's a jealousy of Safe Streets having risen, I mean not even Phoenix-like--there weren't even any ashes. It came out of nowhere to, probably next to United Way, [become] the best known agency in this county. That's in five years, you know.

Janice Foster: Remarkable.

Councilman Flannigan: If you could move in your profession at that rate, we'd all have good jobs! [Laughingly] Safe Streets has a capture on the money (when other agency representatives seek

financial aid). Someone says, "Are you working with Safe Streets?" So there's a lot of power there, and people, particularly in street work, are particularly jealous of [that because] they get the crumbs. If Safe Streets were sending them \$52,500 per year, they wouldn't be bitching. But they have a right to bitch because the very issue of walking into the lives of gang members has not been as effectively addressed by Safe Streets. They're measuring Safe Streets by a set of standards that Safe Streets has perhaps even expressed itself sometimes, that it isn't Safe Street's long suit. So what they are angry at Safe Streets for is what it doesn't do!. And they [other agencies] don't get enough money to do it. Also, institutionally there's jealousy among larger institutions, too, and jealousy doesn't mean it's illegitimate; I'm not equating that as a put-down. Lyle and the director of Raymond Hall, Steve Johnson, are both good friends of mine. They could never get along. I don't think Raymond Hall has been able to still get a good relationship with Priscilla, but it's better. I think both do good work. If both do good work, they ought to damn well get along. We have more and more kids who got shot last year. Violence is around. The trouble is that Safe Streets itself is not a systemic [approach to violence and crime]; it's a bandaid as well. That is a better bandaid than some things that preceded or even some things that will follow it, but that doesn't make it not a bandaid. So much of the anger, I think, at Safe Streets is anger at a world that doesn't pay attention to this issue. I mean, shoot 21 white kids in Tacoma in a year. I mean, I guarantee it. I guarantee it. I mean I can't stand even to say that. [Pause. Councilman Flannigan's eyes fill with tears.]

Janice Foster: In the best of all possible worlds, do you have a sense as to what might be some things that one could try to do address the systemic causes of crime? I sense that you have a lot of ideas.

Councilman Flannigan: Well. I wouldn't say a lot of them. Nurture.

Janice Foster: Nurture?

Councilman Flannigan: Nurture. I mean what the Seattle politicians--"the job of politicians," somebody said to me the other day, "is to keep reminding people that hope is possible, that it won't be this bad if we work on it." So one of the things that the politicians can do is not so much to direct the army as to say the army will win. Someone else has to be a soldier. Someone else has to be a general. Someone else has to be even a victim. What I watch us do as a culture right now is rush to arrest. Rush to incarcerate. Rush, in essence, to obliterate. We are, systemically we are, we've moved from an industrial age to the possibility of an information age. And that has left lots of chaff

and not much wheat, and so we basically are surviving as a culture because two people in every family work. Somebody pointed out to me [that] we would be in a depression if it wasn't for the fact that two people work and no one of them is out of work at the same time. It's when they both get out of work that they fall off of the ladder. I don't know if we need to return to that, I guess because I don't think there is a place for it, but we need to find values: government can't raise a child. Parents are disappearing. Schools aren't trusted and the church doesn't exist. That's why Emergency Rooms--heck, there isn't even a doctor that isn't in the Emergency Room. Half of the medicine delivered in the Emergency Room isn't appropriate. We are willing to shovel a bundle of money into the Emergency Room because rather than get it [phone rings] . . . It's just a point I'm trying to make, if I know what it is, that you need to find people like Dennis Flannigan who sees things larger than the goddamn little hole in the wall and then they need to have more passion than Dennis and more courage and raise the issues. We don't know what to do in America, and so we are going to have to stumble. Like the earthquake. My son lives in LA and he has been in the center of some of that stuff, so it's in my mind.⁴² And the analogy is [that] in an earthquake or any similar emergency everybody rushes to help, and in rushing to help they make mistakes, they stumble, they lift a wall and it falls back on a person, and everyone tolerates those risks and that effort because they know it was Katie bar the door, we gotta do it. We are currently in a decade or so of social earthquake. Because we can't see it because we're in the midst of it, we are beginning. Instead of saying, "Let's do everything we can, let's take risks, let's have failures and successes, let's pour money at the problem, let's pour resources at the problem," we are saying, "stop the money; don't tax me any more." So politicians and whomever have to be given room to flunk as well as succeed. The more we are constrained, the more I can't give a cop money or can't give this money, the more I have to hold to the straight word accountability--it's all bullshit. Accountability is all bullshit, meaning that we wind up using a CPA's numbers to measure the soul of--you know, it's like using the stethoscope to discover the soul. You know, we'll look each other in the eye and decide if we like each other. One of my troubles is that I see the problems.

I think Safe Streets is a remarkable community achievement and that it should be celebrated. What I say to it and to myself is that we can't have the celebration of our success unless we examine the

⁴² Councilman Flannigan makes reference to the January 17, 1994 earthquake in the Northridge area of Los Angeles measuring 6.7 on the Richter scale.

weaknesses of what we do as well. I think it's an enormous mark of pride and talent and commitment, and there are people down there just slugging away in the trenches doing beautiful, beautiful, beautiful work. Organizing on the east side. I was out, as I said, at Lakewood and a woman there named Clipper Maxwell who doesn't do things the way I would do it, and I disagreed with her, and she has been mad at me. She came up to me last night and said, "Dennis, now, I have a whole new view of you." She was mad at me about DARE and she realized what I was trying to do when I spoke to her, or at least changed her view. But she does good work. She gets 200 goddamn people per month to come to a community meeting. I mean, you can't get 200 staff in a facility of 1,000 people to come two weeks in a row. I mean there's more people coming to Safe Streets than coming to the incorporation of Lakewood. There is just beautiful work being done, and it's being done on pennies. In some ways the best . . . well, there's pretty good money; I mean if DARE is \$330,000 and we still give \$50,000 from the four organizations, the state . . . basically [the] Safe Streets commitment from the city, the county, the schools, and United Way is \$200,000 per year. That's four DARE officers--that's only three DARE officers. I mean we are getting a hell of a lot more bang for the buck. They would argue, "Well, there's other grants." Well, there's a lot of other grants in the sheriff's department. The problem is so enormous. The kids are killing each other [so] that you just can't say, "We've done enough," and you have to look [them] in the eye and say, "Can we change? Do we have the courage to be different?" And I worry about the institutionalization of Safe Streets, that we continue to do traditionally good things but we don't challenge it, you know. We don't challenge ourselves. Well, you got my teardrops too, but what the hell; I'm no longer and I haven't been for years embarrassed by crying--I do it once in a while.

Janice Foster: Councilman Flannigan, I just want to thank you for your compassion, your dedication, and your time.