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SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
HATE CRIMES TASK FORCE
William H. Rogers Legislative Building
Legislative Auditorium
725 Veterans Memorial Highway
Smithtown, New York
-----X

Date: May 25, 2010

Time: 5:00 p.m.

BEFORE:

LEGISLATOR DUWAYNE GREGORY, Chairperson

REPORTED BY:

THERESA PAPE, Court Reporter/Notary Public

FIVE STAR REPORTING, INC.
90 JOHN STREET, SUITE 411
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10038
631.224.5054

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2

2 P R E S E N T:

3

LAURA A. AHEARN

4

REVEREND JOANN BARRETT

5

REYNOLDS E. HAWKINS

6

DR. DAVID SCOTT KILMICK

7

RENEE ORTIZ

8

DETECTIVE SERGEANT ROBERT REECKS

9

INSPECTOR ARI STIDES MOJICA

10

11

A L S O P R E S E N T:

12

JASON A. RICHBERG

14

15 G U E S T S:

16

ROBERTA RICHIN

17

NAYYAR IMAM

18

NANCY MANFREDONIA

19

BAZEEL WALTERS

20

WILLIAM PEREZ

21

22 *** All other interested parties

23

24

25

1 Hate Crimes Task Force 5/25/10 3

2 (WHEREUPON, this proceeding
3 convened at 5:00 p.m. Off-the-record
4 discussions ensued, after which the
5 following transpired:)

6 (Time noted: 5:25 p.m.)

7 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: All right. I
8 apologize, we're going to get started.
9 We have some members that are stuck in
10 traffic, and they're on their way, and
11 out of respect for your time, we'll --
12 we don't want you to wait around too
13 much longer.

14 So we have Porter-Trejo, who is
15 here, and we also Nayyar Imam.

16 Is he in the lobby?

17 SPEAKER: He's in the lobby, and so
18 is --

19 MS. ORTIZ: There he is.

20 SPEAKER: Roberta is also in the
21 lobby.

22 MS. ORTIZ: Here they are.

23 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Oh, okay.

24 All right. So, actually, we'll
25 have Porter-Trejo come up. I know you

2 guys have been waiting.

3 So we have Basile Walters.

4 Will you please come forward.

5 MR. WALTERS: (Compl ying)

6 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Thank you,
7 Mr. Walters, for coming as part of the
8 Hate Crimes Task Force. We have some
9 members that are here today, and some
10 that are trying join us who aren't
11 visible.

12 We've been convening since last
13 June. We have public hearings, going
14 out in the community, getting feedback
15 from various communities about the issue
16 of hate crimes. We've asked groups to
17 come forward and to talk about hate
18 crimes as well and how it pertains to
19 their organization, and they've given us
20 recommendations.

21 We've come across your
22 organization, which I believe is in
23 Huntington Station? Okay.

24 MR. WALTERS: Yes, you're right.
25 Huntington Station.

3 you'd just move the mike up a little
4 closer so the -- she can get you.

5 So we heard about your
6 organization and some of the things that
7 you're doing. You're a fairly new
8 organization, from what I understand;
9 correct?

10 MR. WALTERS: That's correct.

11 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay. You're
12 running out of a church -- well, you --
13 I'll let you explain, but welcome and
14 thank you for giving us your time, and
15 we appreciate -- appreciate you coming
16 before us today.

17 MR. WALTERS: Thank you,
18 Legislator Gregory, for inviting the
19 Porter-Trejo Action Network. We're a
20 new coalition in Huntington, a new voice
21 in the community. We have been in
22 operation for the last eight months
23 officially, and we have started working
24 with the Latino -- Hispanic community
25 and African-American and Asian community

1 Hate Crimes Task Force 5/25/10 6
2 all in one. Something that hasn't been
3 done in Huntington since I've been
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4 living there over 50-something years.

5 We've been having problems with the
6 gangs, problems in Huntington housing,
7 other things that create community
8 problems that we have now in Huntington.

9 We feel that we're still in the
10 learning process, and we need help to
11 address a lot of these gang issues. We
12 know about their gang signs and some of
13 the areas that the gangs -- areas that
14 the gangs use for their turf.

15 We've been working with Officer
16 Drew -- Officer Drew Kayman (phonetic)
17 from the Suffolk County PD. We had him
18 in one evening to talk about the gang
19 situations.

20 We've been reaching out to
21 different -- different people in
22 different areas that are expert in -- in
23 that area of gangs because we don't know
24 too much about it.

25 So this is why we're here today, to

1 Hate Crimes Task Force 5/25/10 7
2 talk to you about your help and see what
3 we can do.

4 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay.
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5 Well, our focus, as I said, is more
6 on the hate crimes. Certainly, anything
7 that we can help you with, you know, me
8 personally, address the gang issue, I'd
9 be more than happy to -- to work with
10 you on.

11 I know in Hempstead there are some
12 issues in the schools between the Latino
13 community and African-American
14 community.

15 MR. WALTERS: Right.

16 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Are you seeing
17 some of those similar issues in
18 Huntington Station?

19 Part of it -- not too much of it --

20 MR. WALTERS: We -- we have it --
21 we have it -- we have it in the school
22 systems right now, the hate crimes
23 between the Spanish, blacks, whites --

24 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay.

25 MR. WALTERS: -- in that area -- in

1 Hate Crimes Task Force 5/25/10 8
2 our area. A lot of it in the 13 --
3 district 13 and district 3 area. That's
4 where the most --

5 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: School
Page 7

6 District 13?

7 MR. WALTERS: Right.

8 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay. Okay.

9 Nothing with -- you had School

10 District 5, too; right?

11 MR. WALTERS: School District 3 --

12 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay.

13 MR. WALTERS: -- is Huntington

14 Station, is the area that we have a lot

15 of gang activity.

16 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay.

17 MR. WALTERS: School District 13,

18 and I believe it's reaching out to the

19 Elwood School District.

20 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay.

21 Now, as far as the gang activity,

22 is that -- do you see gang-on-gang

23 violence being perpetrated strictly

24 because of gang affiliations, or is it

25 gang affiliations and ethnic identities,

1 Hate Crimes Task Force 5/25/10

9

2 or --

3 MR. WALTERS: More so ethnic

4 identity --

5 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay.

6 MR. WALTERS: -- in the area. You
Page 8

7 know, of course, you have your different
8 types of gangs that they have. In
9 Huntington right now, we have the -- the
10 Crips, the Bloods, the South Side Posse,
11 the Old Station gang. You know, they
12 got a school of different gang members
13 in that area that are having turf --
14 turf problems. A lot of drive-by
15 shootings in both areas, in South
16 Huntington and Huntington Station.

17 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: And that's --
18 and you -- you highlight a part of the
19 state law that's -- that's problematic
20 in that -- and Detective Sergeant
21 Reecks, who is the commanding officer of
22 the Hate Crimes Unit, will -- will
23 testify to this, that the crimes that
24 you're referring to are more -- they're
25 not -- they wouldn't be classified as

10

1 Hate Crimes Task Force 5/25/10
2 hate crimes because the -- I don't know
3 what the words would be -- I guess the
4 motivation is more gang related, not
5 necessarily on race or gender or -- or
6 anything like that. So --

7 And that's some of the things that
8 we seek to address, too; how do we
9 change the -- the state statute to -- to
10 coincide with what we're seeing in the
11 streets, if possible? I mean, it was
12 more restrictive, and now it's become
13 less restrictive, and it's still -- in
14 the eyes of many, still too restrictive.
15 We can't -- my estimate is you can't
16 water down the law so that everyone
17 is -- every crime is considered a hate
18 crime, but there are certain elements
19 that have to be met. And from what I'm
20 hearing, it probably wouldn't be
21 classified as a hate crime. Although
22 that doesn't make it not a problem, we
23 just have to address it in a different
24 way.

25 But I know -- I -- I lived in

11

1 Hate Crimes Task Force 5/25/10
2 Huntington Station for a short time, but
3 I know that, from my understanding,
4 it's -- it's a growing community, a
5 growing Latino community. There's a
6 significant African-American presence as
7 well. There's a little Caucasian

8 presence. So it's a -- it's a melting
9 pot of different ethnic groups and races
10 and things, so I'd be curious to see how
11 the community handles that because some
12 communities haven't dealt with that
13 well.

14 Do you have any feedback as to the
15 types of things that -- are there any
16 types of programs that are going on that
17 kind of brings the community together to
18 address those issues?

19 MR. WALTERS: Well, as you know,
20 we're just starting out as a start-up
21 group in the last eight months. We
22 haven't had any contact with anybody
23 about the hate crimes in them, but --
24 yeah, but we've been working towards --
25 we've spoken to anybody that knows some

12

1 Hate Crimes Task Force 5/25/10
2 of the things about hate crimes so maybe
3 we can identify things that might be
4 hate crimes. We're just realizing kids
5 are just fighting and kids -- you know,
6 the Latinos are fighting, or he's
7 fighting somebody because of -- he's

8 Hi spani c or he' s white or he' s black.

9 LEGI SLATOR GREGORY: And that' s
10 also important, too. I think one of
11 the -- the important aspect is that we
12 reach out to our communi ty
13 organi zations, because you guys are the
14 eyes and ears of the communi ty, and
15 somehow devel op some type of partnershi p
16 in -- in educati ng the communi ty
17 because --

18 Especi ally when we -- we held our
19 first meeting at the -- in Wyandanch,
20 whi ch is a largel y Afri can-Ameri can
21 communi ty. It has a signi ficant
22 presence of -- of Hi spani cs and Lati nos.
23 But they have peopl e there, you know,
24 peopl e that I know of personall y, after
25 that heari ng, sayi ng, Wel l, you know, we

13

1 Hate Crimes Task Force 5/25/10
2 di dn' t talk about, you know, Afri can --
3 the -- the majori ty of the focus was on,
4 you know, hate crimes as it pertains to
5 the Lati no communi ty. And some members
6 in the Afri can-Ameri can communi ty were
7 upset that -- they thought that enough
8 focus wasn' t on the Afri can-Ameri can

9 community. And then they would proceed
10 or follow that with an example of
11 something that they knew about or they
12 experienced, and it wasn't really a hate
13 crime.

14 MR. WALTERS: Hate crime. Well --

15 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: So I think an
16 important part of our -- what we should
17 be trying to do, or a result of this
18 task force is to have -- educate the
19 community on what the law is. It
20 doesn't make it less hurtful that -- if
21 somebody experiences something that's
22 racially motivated or a prejudice or
23 whatever, but it doesn't necessarily
24 mean that it's going to be investigated
25 and charged as a hate crime.

14

1 Hate Crimes Task Force 5/25/10

2 MR. WALTERS: Well, from what I'm
3 listening to you saying is that we need
4 to be educated at Porter-Trejo to
5 know -- so we can identify what a hate
6 crime is in the community because maybe
7 we're -- we see it all the time and
8 don't realize just -- they're fighting

9 among themselves. So, you know, if we
10 can get the information, then we can
11 take that information back to the
12 community and explain to the community
13 as a whole, you know, what is a hate
14 crime, you know, what -- what to look
15 for if -- to see if it's a hate crime.

16 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Right. And
17 that's something that Detective
18 Sergeant Reecks, his office, does; they
19 make presentations to community groups.
20 And I think that's an important aspect
21 that needs to be done so that we --
22 because, you know, you hear the charge,
23 Well, the Hate Crimes Unit is not doing
24 enough, just not doing their job because
25 they went there and they said, Well, you

15

1 Hate Crimes Task Force 5/25/10

2 know, I got into an argument with my
3 boss and I got fired -- you know, that's
4 not a hate crime.

5 So, you know, I think a significant
6 part of what -- what we have to do is
7 education, particularly, in our schools,
8 but in particular -- and also in the
9 community at large.

10 MR. WALTERS: Do you have like a
11 list of things that you have to identify
12 certain things in -- that pertain to
13 hate crimes?

14 DETECTIVE SERGEANT REECKS:
15 Certainly, this task force and part of
16 our recommendation will be recommending
17 education, as we said, to various
18 groups. That is paramount to getting
19 the word out that (A) what is a hate
20 crime, what is not a hate crime; how do
21 we deal with it; what facts are we
22 looking for.

23 On a personal note, you're a
24 start-up group, as you stated. I will
25 be more than happy to give you my card

16

1 Hate Crimes Task Force 5/25/10
2 and we can talk, and certainly, if you
3 have a meeting or something, we'll
4 offer -- I -- I will personally offer to
5 you right here on the record that we
6 will come and discuss with you what a
7 hate crime is, what to look for, and
8 certainly give you contact numbers to
9 call for a hate crime as well as any

10 other crime. So let's --

11 You know, this is part of what this
12 task force is for. Certainly, in the
13 final recommendations, I think a large
14 component of it will be educating people
15 what a hate crime is. I think a lot of
16 people are under the misconception that
17 there's a lot of hate crimes out there
18 that's not a hate crime. And, again,
19 I'll give you my card, and I welcome you
20 to give us a call, and we'll be more
21 than happy to help you out.

22 MR. WALTERS: I want to thank you,
23 because a lot -- I don't know how much
24 is a hate crime when I see it. I can't
25 identify it. So I know that if I can't

17

1 Hate Crimes Task Force 5/25/10

2 identify, we can't identify it -- we
3 don't even know what a hate crime is.

4 DETECTIVE SERGEANT REECKS: And
5 really, the bottom line is, you just
6 need to know who to call --

7 MR. WALTERS: Right.

8 DETECTIVE SERGEANT REECKS:
9 -- whatever the crime.

10 MR. WALTERS: Whatever the crime.
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11 DETECTIVE SERGEANT REECKS: And
12 certainly, that's what we at -- in the
13 police department and this Hate Crime
14 Task Force is here to do.

15 MR. WALTERS: We have had -- at our
16 meetings, we have had, as I said,
17 Officer Drew. We had -- we had --

18 MR. PEREZ: Officer Reels
19 (phonetic); right?

20 MR. WALTERS: -- Officer Reels come
21 in and talk to our organization. We're
22 trying to get Inspector Moore to come.
23 You know, and right now, we're getting
24 ready to have Steve Israel come.

25 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay.

18

1 Hate Crimes Task Force 5/25/10

2 DETECTIVE SERGEANT REECKS: All
3 right. You can add -- you can add me to
4 that list.

5 MR. WALTERS: June 4th.

6 DETECTIVE SERGEANT REECKS: I'll be
7 more than happy to --

8 MR. WALTERS: June 4th.

9 DETECTIVE SERGEANT REECKS: -- come
10 and help you out.

11 MR. WALTERS: Thank you.
12 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: All right.
13 Anybody else have any questions or --
14 (WHEREUPON, there was no response.)
15 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay. Well,
16 great.
17 Thank you.
18 MR. WALTERS: Thank you.
19 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: So, Roberta,
20 you have a presentation; correct?
21 MS. RICHI N: Sort of, yeah.
22 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay. So how
23 about I ask -- since yours is -- I
24 imagine yours is going to be a little
25 bit longer, so I'll ask Nayyar to come

19

1 Hate Crimes Task Force 5/25/10
2 forward.
3 MS. RICHI N: Absolutely.
4 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: We have Nayyar
5 Imam who is from -- a representative
6 from the Long Island Muslim Alliance,
7 and he is also a member of the
8 Muslim-American Advisory Board --
9 Suffolk County Muslim-American Advisory
10 Board.
11 Welcome. Thank you for coming.
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12 We -- I've been kind of having
13 informal conversations with Nayyar. We
14 have a -- over the months, and he
15 expressed concerns about his community
16 not having representation on the
17 committee. And we had appointed a
18 gentleman by the name of Moe- -- Moe- --
19 Moeson Al Sayed (phonetic). I'm not
20 looking at it right now. I'm going
21 off --

22 I know Moe per- -- I call him Moe.
23 He's -- he's -- I consider him a friend.
24 And he got called off, as we all know,
25 to -- well, he went to Egypt, and now

20

1 Hate Crimes Task Force 5/25/10
2 he's working in Iraq.
3 So, unfortunately, the Muslim
4 community has not had the representation
5 that I had anticipated, that I had hoped
6 for, that I expected, and that I wanted,
7 but as we've done with other communities
8 and other groups, we're asking them to
9 come forward and give us their insights
10 as to hate crimes and how they address
11 their community, so that's why we

12 reached out to Nayyar to come before us
13 today. And I -- I suspect that -- I've
14 spoken to the county legislative counsel
15 and put his name forward to -- to join
16 us in replacement of Moe's place on the
17 task force. So that should be coming
18 within the next month.

19 Okay. Nayyar.

20 MR. IMAM: Thank you very much for
21 having me here, Legislator Gregory and
22 all the members of the task force.

23 As we're talking about the hate
24 crimes and -- and it's difficult that
25 Sergeant Reecks says that the definition

21

1 Hate Crimes Task Force 5/25/10

2 is so -- I mean, I would say a killer at
3 this point, that every time we turn
4 around, we find out that there are a lot
5 of hate crimes. But there's a lot of
6 bias going on in the community at every
7 level.

8 If you start from education, from
9 the schools, from colleges, from the
10 teaching -- the teacher -- from the
11 teaching staff, then it goes to the town
12 level. If you go to the -- I did with

13 Brookhaven Town. I am chair of the
14 Anti-Bias Task Force there. And someone
15 asked me in the town that we should
16 include more members of community in our
17 Anti-Bias Task Force because we don't
18 have minority representation. My answer
19 to that person was, How many persons are
20 minorities in your office? And I was
21 surprised to know that if you go in
22 Brookhaven, there's only one color of --
23 one color of people on all three floors.
24 So there are a lot of things going
25 on, and there's a lot of disparity in

22

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2 every walk of life in totality. And
3 latest -- that personal experience I had
4 at McArthur Airport. They just pulled
5 me out of the line, checking -- began
6 checking for the -- radiation -- the
7 swab test of the hand. And
8 unbelievably, I had to take my wallet
9 out and show them the Suffolk County
10 Police Department ID, and they let me
11 go. So you're always -- you're always
12 in hot seat. So this community is

13 always in the hot seat.

14 In the Smithtown School District,
15 one teacher has to take the hijab, the
16 headscarf, because she cannot work
17 there. She was working there for so
18 long, eventually, she had to take off,
19 and now she's working without it.

20 In the Newfield School, there's a
21 teacher who -- were in school -- every
22 day there's a problem. Kids laugh at
23 it, name -- take the names of it, and
24 there's no -- nothing has been taken --
25 any -- any action has been taken by the

23

1 Hate Crimes Task Force 5/25/10

2 authorities as of yet.

3 Miller Place School District, last
4 year, we had to literally force the
5 administration to have a presentation by
6 me and Rabbi Moss at the school because
7 so many complaints came from various
8 schools, from junior high, from middle
9 school, and even from elementary school,
10 that kids were called -- they're living
11 with Osama bin Laden, terrorist, go back
12 from where you come from; all kinds of
13 names. And then, finally, they need

14 to do the program which I do with
15 Rabbi Moss in different school
16 districts. And we did that program
17 twice in junior high and middle school,
18 and I think we're still going to need a
19 lot of education in that.

20 Law enforcement is another story.
21 They had a program in the -- in the
22 academy for the new recruits who come in
23 to use -- to join the force for
24 sensitivity day, but I think that two
25 hours training is not enough. Then

24

1 Hate Crimes Task Force 5/25/10
2 after a few hours, they forget about
3 every- -- few years, they forget about
4 everything, and I -- I think it should
5 be constant. And me and Bob Reecks have
6 spoke about it, and hopefully, they will
7 come up with a program that in each
8 precinct they have some kind of
9 presentation which reminds police
10 officers about the minorities in the
11 community who are living in Suffolk
12 County, and they should have some kind
13 of constant sensitivity reminder. And

14 especially if a woman gets -- a Muslim
15 woman gets involved in some kind of
16 fender bender accident on their own,
17 it's always her fault.

18 Unfortunately, something happened
19 in the 6th Precinct --

20 DETECTIVE SERGEANT REECKS: It
21 happened.

22 MR. IMAM: Sergeant Reecks knows
23 about some of the incident. And we took
24 care of that, but the only thing we
25 don't know that -- what was the outcome

25

1 Hate Crimes Task Force 5/25/10
2 of all these complaints, and -- we went
3 there, we met with the people, we met
4 with everybody, but then what happened?
5 And in the end, it happened to their
6 officer, there's somebody -- there's a
7 note in his file. There's a -- there's
8 a -- there's a need of more sensitivity
9 training for that teacher who was in
10 that school, and these people wanted --

11 So we don't really get any
12 feedback, as a community leader, that
13 what happened and what are the
14 precautions we are taking that this

15 thing does not happen again.

16 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Right.

17 MR. IMAM: Because as the main
18 issue right now -- that, okay, things
19 are happening and -- and yes, you get
20 stopped randomly by -- by -- at the
21 airport by per- -- per- --

22 If you want to see really the one
23 thing which I want to -- which I saw
24 last week, and I was really surprised.
25 And I would say just every one of you to

26

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2 take ten minutes of your time and go to
3 the building next to H. L. Dennison
4 building, the motor vehicle office.

5 I was first time in that building
6 in my life about two weeks ago because
7 of my nephew. And then I went again two
8 days ago just to see the -- nothing I
9 have -- nothing to do -- I just want to
10 see the line, but people who are there
11 to pay there tickets or they have some
12 kind of violation, you will not find a
13 single white person. And then twice, 20
14 people in the line, every ethnicity, but

15 no white people in Suffolk County. This
16 is amazing. You can do it any time, any
17 day of the week. You would be surprised
18 to see that line. It looks like they're
19 living in another county or they're
20 living in another part of the country.
21 Out of 25 people two days ago, there was
22 one white, and 24 people -- all colored
23 people; Muslims, blacks, Hispanics,
24 not -- not a single white.

25 And this -- I've addressed this to

27

1 Hate Crimes Task Force 5/25/10

2 Sergeant Reecks, that you better look
3 into it, that only the colored people
4 are driving in Suffolk County. That's
5 what it looks like when you go in that
6 building.

7 I was shocked. This is something
8 that you have to be concerned about, and
9 I would suggest to every one of you that
10 just take ten minutes out of your time.
11 You all live within this area, just stop
12 by that motor vehicle office, go to the
13 second floor and see the line, and just
14 come back. And then you can see what's
15 the difference, plus the disparity, and
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16 what kind of county you're living in.
17 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: You bring up
18 some goods points. And one is that not
19 only do you deal with the -- the ethnic
20 component of hate crimes, but you also
21 deal with the religious component. And
22 the -- at least authorities being
23 educated enough to -- to know the proper
24 way to show respect when -- I don't
25 know -- searching or, you know, a -- a

28

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2 Muslim person.
3 I was watching CNN, I think, last
4 week, or it was -- maybe it was
5 shortly -- or during -- when they had --
6 were having the elections in Iraq, and
7 there was a person who had opposed. And
8 a person came up to her on a bike and
9 they had -- undid her head garb --
10 her -- un- -- headdress. And I don't
11 think they could do that. But they did,
12 and --
13 So when you mentioned the
14 situation/incident in Smithtown School
15 District, you know, it's -- to me, there

16 has to be some type of education as to,
17 you know, what's -- you know -- you
18 know, we have to respect people's
19 religious preferences, and -- and, to
20 me, it -- from what you're saying, at
21 least initially anyway, it seems that
22 that has- -- that wasn't the case there.
23 And part of that comes through, again,
24 this word -- education keeps coming up
25 over and over.

29

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2 As a community, we need to be
3 informed about the various aspects of
4 not only the different racial and ethnic
5 groups in our communities but the -- but
6 all the differences that come within
7 those various cultures so that we can't
8 offend someone and treat them in a way
9 that they find disrespectful, hurtful --
10 so that people won't feel that they have
11 been victims of hate crimes.

12 And I -- in -- and whatever
13 recommendations you can give us -- I
14 know that you're saying you're a member
15 of the Anti-Bias Task Force; I know
16 you're on the Muslim Advisory Board.

17 You know, we really need to focus on how
18 we can really attack this -- for lack of
19 a better word -- address this education
20 piece. So whatever recommendations you
21 can give us on that would be
22 appreciated.

23 I know you do -- you're part of
24 the -- and we just had it not too long
25 ago, the ceremony at the Dennison --

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2 that's through Mel Guadeloupe's
3 office -- and it's escaping me -- but
4 it, you know --

5 MS. ORTIZ: The congress.

6 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Yes, the
7 congress.

8 DETECTIVE SERGEANT REECKS: It
9 wasn't Black History Month.

10 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: No, it wasn't
11 Black History Month.

12 DETECTIVE SERGEANT REECKS: No, I'm
13 just saying.

14 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: No.

15 But I think events like that are
16 important, but we need to -- to do more

17 of it than just -- you know, really have
18 to, from all aspects, address the
19 education piece.

20 MR. IMAM: We have the whole
21 PowerPoint presentation, we're working
22 on it, and we want to educate the
23 educators. That's what the plan is.
24 Because after the Smithtown School
25 District -- now it's in Middle Country

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2 School District, that's the second time
3 we're facing the same problem.

4 So that, I just found out last
5 week, and we're working on the
6 PowerPoint presentation. We want to do
7 it first to BOCES and then go back -- I
8 think we'll go to the different schools
9 and different school districts, wherever
10 they allow us do this. I think it will
11 not be in Smithtown, I can tell you
12 right now.

13 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Now, the types
14 of hate crimes -- I know there was an
15 incident, I want to say, in the Walmart
16 parking lot, or some parking lot of some
17 center, about -- maybe five months ago.

18 I don't know what happened --

19 MR. IMAM: It was a gas station,
20 not a --

21 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Was it a gas
22 station?

23 MR. IMAM: It was a Hess gas
24 station --

25 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Oh, I

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2 thought it was --

3 MR. IMAM: -- on 347 in Smithtown.

4 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: When the
5 gentleman tried to run over two women or
6 something -- okay.

7 Generally, what are the -- the
8 nature of hate crimes as it relates to
9 your community, or bias-related
10 incidents?

11 MR. IMAM: After dark, women don't
12 drive alone at night in my community.
13 You won't see any Muslim woman,
14 especially with -- with the hijab and
15 the head cover, driving alone at least
16 after 7:00 p.m. nowadays. Very rarely
17 you'll find that. Either they go with

18 their family or they postpone their
19 programs to the next day. They don't
20 drive alone.

21 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Do you hear a
22 lot of incidents, I guess, involving
23 children in the schools of their general
24 community-type --

25 MR. IMAM: The schools, you heard

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2 one -- every year you have one or two
3 incidents from different school
4 districts. Like Basile mentioned, it
5 was Miller Place. Before that it was in
6 Port Jeff. Every year you have -- one
7 school district will come up with
8 multiple complaints, and then we have to
9 go and put out the fire.

10 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay.

11 Now, as far as the mosque, any, you
12 know, phone calls or graffiti or any
13 letters or anything like that that --

14 MR. IMAM: No. Mosque, people
15 usually respect that. And the law
16 enforcement is very active protecting
17 the mosque, especially in Bay Shore,
18 Huntington, and some of the individual

19 mosques. People -- we are -- they are
20 pretty good at the mosque, and they have
21 close contact with the law enforcement,
22 and they're really helpful in that.

23 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay.

24 Now, as far as -- I mean, other
25 than Peter King, I guess a lot of it --

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2 it probably is just verbal, you know,
3 outbursts and things like that.

4 Is that common, you know --

5 MR. IMAM: It goes like -- when
6 something happened like a few -- you
7 know, I think it was a month ago when
8 something happened in New York City,
9 then you can see here and there.
10 Otherwise, after that, people just go
11 along like nothing's a problem. If
12 some incident happened like this, and
13 then you heard a few things, but not
14 nearly -- it's not a very common
15 practice of common individuals that you
16 hear something like that.

17 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay. So
18 that's good.

19 Are there any particular areas? I
20 know you mentioned Miller Place and
21 Smithtown and -- are there any -- from
22 your experience -- is more -- you're
23 hearing out in the community, are there
24 any particular places that are of
25 concern that -- you know, that you're

35

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2 hearing things going on that give people
3 caution?

4 MR. IMAM: I think you -- you just
5 said before that education is the main
6 component. Wherever the people are
7 living and -- as a big number, and they
8 have their mosque there, and -- and they
9 shouldn't be permitted in the district,
10 but after finding out that there's
11 nothing wrong with it -- now people
12 understand that some other religious
13 institute, also, who are flirting with
14 us, and now it's like a part of the
15 community. And same thing with the
16 Smithtown, because there's not a big
17 number of Muslims living there, so
18 people are scared and they are -- if
19 they know us, then it's a different

20 story. Now you -- what you called it,
21 the ignorance is the problem.

22 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Right.

23 MR. IMAM: Wherever they live,
24 people just listen to Sean Hannity and
25 Chris Lumbar, and that's the problem.

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2 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Right.

3 MR. IMAM: Other than that, educate
4 people that -- you know, by association
5 after that.

6 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay.

7 As far as -- what's the population,
8 statistic-wise, of your community in the
9 county? Do you know offhand?

10 MR. IMAM: I think we are
11 about -- I would say between 8- to
12 10,000 families in Suffolk County.

13 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: And have you
14 seen any statistics to -- to show
15 projection or estimates over the next,
16 say, five or ten years? Is that going
17 to be a steady number, is it going to
18 increase more than normal, or --

19 MR. IMAM: I think it's going to

20 increase the way -- the way I look at
21 it, the most -- as soon as they get
22 established, they started building up
23 their mosque. So now, lately -- like
24 last year, we have two new mosques; one
25 in Port Jeff and one in Medford. So it

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2 just shows that people are coming in
3 this community, and as soon as they're
4 starting to build the mosque and they
5 see the sign, we consider people are
6 moving this -- in this county more and
7 more.

8 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay.

9 MS. ORTIZ: (Indicating)

10 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Yes, Renee.

11 MS. ORTIZ: Do the mosques have
12 anything set in place like to do out- --
13 community outreach or interfaith-type
14 activities? Like, is that something --
15 like a program that you have set at each
16 mosque or --

17 MR. IMAM: It's not at each mosque,
18 but some of the mosques are more active
19 than the others. Like Selden mosque,
20 community activities are by month; and

21 Sister (inaudible), a really strong
22 program of interfaith. Mission has a
23 very good program of interfaith,
24 and (inaudible) club that they started
25 just now.

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2 So, yeah, as soon as they establish
3 themselves and people reach out to them
4 and not be afraid of who they are. Like
5 Port Jeff and Medford are relatively
6 new. They're just trying to establish
7 themselves right now, and they will get
8 established -- obviously, they will
9 reach out to the community, and they
10 will get more increased numbers.

11 MS. ORTIZ: And the mosque at
12 Brentwood --

13 MR. IMAM: Brentwood also -- is
14 also --

15 MS. ORTIZ: -- that's fairly new;
16 right?

17 MR. IMAM: Very new. That's very
18 new, yes.

19 MS. ORTIZ: I wanted to share with
20 you -- and I was very happy that you

21 came to our event Saturday. Thank you,
22 again.

23 There were some comments that where
24 made that disturbed me, and it was all
25 the more reason why I was really nagging

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2 you all week long to touch base with the
3 board of that event.

4 You know, I'm from a very diverse
5 community. Brentwood and Central Islip
6 are extremely diverse. And I was very
7 surprised when I mentioned that I had
8 spoke to you, and that we wanted to
9 bring representatives from the mosque or
10 from the Muslim community into that
11 event.

12 And now, the event that took place
13 last Saturday in Brentwood and Central
14 Islip was predominantly coordinated by
15 faith-based organizations. It wasn't
16 only faith-based, but it was
17 predominantly faith-based. And they had
18 set up a couple of stations that were
19 going to be prayer points, because there
20 were -- there were areas where violent
21 incidents had occurred. And when I

22 mentioned that we were trying to bring
23 the -- you guys representative and maybe
24 some of the mosque members, a couple of
25 people from the faith-based community

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2 commented that they didn't know if they
3 were comfortable with that. And I was
4 very taken back, and I -- I didn't make
5 an issue of it. I just thought it
6 better to make sure that you were there
7 and to make sure that your community was
8 represented.

9 But I'm asking -- that's the reason
10 I'm asking what kind of efforts each
11 mosque makes to do outreach and to do
12 interfaith-type activities, because I
13 think that it is, again, education, and
14 even in a diverse community like mine,
15 they're still not educated on the
16 faith -- on the Muslim faith, on your
17 community, and I --

18 After you spoke at our event
19 Saturday, several people approached me
20 and just commented on what a nice man
21 you were, and, you know, how great your

22 words were, and -- almost as if they
23 were surprised. And I said, Well, you
24 know, he's a good man, I told you that,
25 but, obviously, my word wasn't enough,

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2 but --

3 I just think that -- even in a
4 community like Brentwood, that it's
5 still necessary that -- that the -- that
6 your community should be seen as an
7 active part of that community, and
8 somehow outreach be done so that they
9 can be more educated on the Muslim
10 community and -- and realize that your
11 community members just like them, and
12 you live your lives just like them,
13 and -- so that they are comfortable and
14 it's not something -- that type of
15 question. Because I was really taken
16 back by that. I was very upset about
17 it. But I think it made somewhat of an
18 impact, the fact that you did come and
19 speak and, you know, people saw you just
20 as a regular guy.

21 MR. IMAM: Well, the communities we
22 are involved in -- the religious

23 activities, especially the Muslim
24 members of religious activities, they
25 have the -- they don't want to come and

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2 limelight and -- they're afraid, to be
3 honest with you. And whenever they hear
4 that law enforcement will be there, they
5 try to dodge that and they don't want to
6 come forward because they think that
7 everybody out there is against them.
8 There are only a few individuals like me
9 who have made friends out of that circle
10 and feel very comfortable like I'm
11 sitting here talking to all of you.

12 I know that half of them are
13 like -- on the personal level. So that
14 level, I think, there's -- there's a
15 lack of real confidence on the system,
16 and that's why they don't want to come
17 forward. And I agree with you that a
18 lot of people would think that if you go
19 forward, it will hurt them or their
20 community. And there is a fear in the
21 community. There is a --

22 And an incident took place back in

23 Shirley and Selden just two weeks ago,
24 and it was scaring the community right
25 there. FBI helicopter flying on -- and

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2 there were like eight cars and -- the
3 way they came, it was like -- they
4 didn't have the tank, they had
5 everything (sic). So this scared the
6 community also.
7 Obviously, there are some bad
8 apples in every community. It's not
9 just Muslim communities. And nobody
10 likes them. You just use law
11 enforcement or us. But the way -- the
12 treatment and the way the media projects
13 it, it just stops people from coming
14 forward who really wants to come
15 forward.

16 There is a barrier there. I agree
17 with you. There is.

18 REVEREND BARRETT: I just wanted to
19 make a comment about when you -- when
20 you're talking about faith communities
21 coming together, having a lot of work in
22 interfaith and bringing communities
23 together, it's usually okay to do

24 something for social justice, for just
25 outward speaking, but when it comes to

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2 prayer, there are certain faith
3 communities where it's not appropriate
4 for them to pray with other communities
5 because it's against their faith. So
6 they can't pray with other communities,
7 but they can, like, be at a -- a party
8 or do some social justice work. But
9 it's hard -- we've have had a lot of
10 problems with that in Huntington.

11 MS. ORTIZ: I mean, the prayer --
12 the prayer was called a "community
13 corporate prayer." So it's supposed to
14 be --

15 REVEREND BARRETT: I know.

16 MS. ORTIZ: -- you know, it was
17 supposed to incorporate anyone and
18 everyone from our community, and our
19 community is not just one faith. So --
20 you know.

21 REVEREND BARRETT: But you can't --
22 some faiths, that's their faith, that
23 they are one. So --

24 MS. ORTIZ: And -- and that's fine,
25 and I also understand that. But I also

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2 feel that if that was the case, then you
3 just don't -- don't pray. But they --
4 the comment was made as if they didn't
5 want Nayar or his representatives
6 there, and that's a problem.

7 MR. IMAM: Well, general prayer --
8 Muslims have no problem in getting --
9 prayer. There shouldn't be a problem
10 for Muslims.

11 MS. ORTIZ: Right.

12 REVEREND BARRETT: But I've had
13 that problem within, you know, different
14 communities within the same religion.
15 So it's -- it's not really a hate thing,
16 it's a faith thing.

17 MS. ORTIZ: Understood, but that's
18 why -- that's why I said --

19 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: It sounds like
20 a new slogan.

21 (Laughter)

22 MS. ORTIZ: It's not a hate thing.

23 But that's why I -- I think, if
24 they're not already doing it, there

25 should be some type of a -- and I

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2 realize there is going to be some
3 hesitation in your -- on your
4 community's part, but there could be --
5 because, like I said, once Nayyar was
6 there and he spoke and people met him,
7 that -- that feeling lifted. So it just
8 a matter of reaching out and having that
9 interaction.

10 DETECTIVE SERGEANT REECKS: As far
11 as the -- again, this -- this task force
12 was put together to find the problems of
13 hate crimes and resolve them -- or not
14 resolve them, because I don't think
15 we're ever going to resolve them, I
16 think we can patch things up a little
17 bit. Perception is everything. We know
18 that. You even said the cops came all
19 over the place -- well, it was the feds,
20 it wasn't the cops.

21 MR. IMAM: No -- the feds, right.

22 DETECTIVE SERGEANT REECKS: So it
23 comes down to what you perceive and what
24 you don't perceive.

25 I would like at this point to say

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2 that the Suffolk County Police
3 Department has made you a chaplain.
4 That was a huge hurdle in Suffolk
5 County. Something that's never been
6 done in the 50 years of the Suffolk
7 County Police Department.

8 So I think education, again. I
9 don't use the word "tolerance." I think
10 that's a four-letter word. As far as I
11 am concerned, inclusiveness is what
12 we're -- we're looking for. This task
13 force should -- again, the
14 recommendation is education, education,
15 education.

16 And we're always going to have the
17 fear. I think that's where we started
18 on June 9th -- did you say -- of last
19 year.

20 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Something like
21 that.

22 DETECTIVE SERGEANT REECKS:
23 -- where people will not come forward.
24 We're now here a year and a half later,
25 and we're hearing the same thing we

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2 heard on June 9th. That's going --
3 that's a fact that we have to put in our
4 report, that that is not going to
5 change. All we can do is push a little
6 bit. You know, I -- I equate it to
7 moving a Freightliner or a cruise liner.
8 If we can change it ten degrees, we've
9 made tremendous headway in what we're
10 trying to accomplish here on this task
11 force.

12 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Right.

13 I think you're right, and I think
14 part of the message, just by
15 establishing the task force, is to -- to
16 allow the community to understand that
17 we're addressing hate crimes, we're
18 serious about it, and that law
19 enforcement in the county are not the
20 enemies, that we're your friends and we
21 want to investigate, you know, incidents
22 of hate crimes and -- and we've had --

23 And Detective Sergeant Reecks is
24 absolutely right, we've heard it from
25 community to community -- from community

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2 to community that they're afraid to come
3 forward, for whatever particular reasons
4 they may have, but the same message is
5 that they're afraid to come forward.
6 Whether it's the immigration status or
7 whether -- you know, their -- their --
8 you know, whatever. You know, that's
9 something that we have to work on. I
10 think just -- people will get a -- a
11 better sense of where we stand and --
12 and that we are not the enemy, us being
13 the county and, particularly, law
14 enforcement. So I hope that that will
15 be the message that the community gets
16 and receives and accepts. I think we've
17 made some movement in that direction,
18 but we'll see. And --

19 Okay. Is there anything else you
20 had to --

21 MR. IMAM: No.

22 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay.

23 MR. IMAM: Thank you very much.

24 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: All right.

25 Thank you.

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2 DR. KILMICK: If I could just add
3 something.

4 I don't want to let it go that
5 we've heard more than education is
6 needed. And I think we've heard, you
7 know, throughout the time that the
8 county isn't as inclusive as it needs to
9 be. So, you know, I just don't want
10 that --

11 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Uh-huh.

12 DR. KILMICK: -- since we're
13 typing that -- that -- just to be fair,
14 that we've heard education is important,
15 but we've also heard the reasons why
16 people don't come forward, which I think
17 are just as important and that we need
18 to consider when we do our
19 recommendations. There are many
20 different factors why people aren't
21 coming forward, and it's -- you know,
22 and there are lots of things that can be
23 done, policy-wise, education-wise,
24 inclusiveness throughout all levels of
25 county government, which is not

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2 happening right now.

3 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Right. I hear
4 you loud and clear.

5 All right. We're going to ask
6 Nancy, then Roberta --

7 Nancy Manfredonia from the Central
8 Islip Civic Council.

9 MS. MANFREDONIA: Well, thank you
10 so much for inviting me here.

11 I am the executive director of the
12 Central Islip Civic Council and a
13 longtime resident of the community of
14 Central Islip.

15 The Civil Council is kind of an
16 unusual organization. We're -- we are
17 not just a civic association, we are
18 a -- a community-based nonprofit agency,
19 and we do have a staff of people who
20 help the community. Our mission is to
21 improve the quality of life for everyone
22 in the community, which is a big
23 mission. But we do see thousands of
24 people every year.

25 I don't profess to be an expert on

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hate crimes or race relations. I can only tell you, you know, what we hear, what we see in our office, which is in downtown Central Islip. And we have a caseworker who helps people with housing issues, we have a counselor, and we have hundreds of people who come to us for help because they're losing their homes. We also, over the years, have built and managed affordable housing properties. We get involved in economic development and recreation opportunities, job opportunities for people.

So that being said, I do believe, and I know many people agree with me, that Central Islip is a little bit unusual in terms of communities in Suffolk County. We are a very diverse community. We have been for a long, long time. I'm sure the -- the new census will show different things, but the community is Caucasian, African-American. We have some Asian. We have a very growing Hispanic

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population. We have Muslim, Haitians. So it's really a pleasure to be in the community. And to the best of our knowledge, you know, over the years, people have gotten along very, very well.

The only thing I can say is that -- you know, was some gang activity. I know your definition does not include gang activity as a hate crime, per se, but, of course, as we all know, we're -- we're the same as other areas with gang problems, as there are ethnic-based gangs.

We are trying the best we can to address some of the causes that kind of contribute to people's anger or frustration that may be race-based. And what we're trying to do, number one, of course, is to try to help provide recreational opportunities for our -- our children. Every part of Central Islip and in all the schools, it's diverse. It's not like, you know, one

2 part of the community is all this, or
3 one part of the community is all that.
4 So people do tend to get along, and I'm
5 very pleased with that.

6 The other thing that I would say,
7 if I've heard anything, that is -- shows
8 a level of frustration right now, might
9 be the whole job issue. People are
10 really, really hurting. And once in a
11 while, not very often, I will hear one
12 of our clients, an African-American or a
13 Caucasian person, expressing frustration
14 that jobs are being taken by Hispanics.
15 So, I mean, that's about the extent of
16 what I've heard, myself, in terms of
17 frustration.

18 We try to find jobs for people.
19 Obviously, the economy is -- is really
20 lousy right now. So it's not easy. And
21 I think everybody's hurting, not just
22 in, you know, our community, but all
23 over Suffolk County. But in areas where
24 we have so many people just on the edge
25 economically -- and we are,

2 unfortunately, in that situation now.
3 We have over 300 vacant homes in our
4 community, we have almost 600 homes that
5 are in some stage of default right now.
6 So people are really hurting. But so
7 far, I don't see any -- any real serious
8 hate crime problems or -- coming out of
9 that. I mean, it's all -- almost like
10 we're all in it together type of a
11 thing.

12 We do have a group of church
13 leaders and pastors who have a -- a
14 community leaders group that meets. I
15 am very, very pleased with the march
16 that Renee, of course, and so many
17 people were involved in on Saturday. I
18 think it was a wonderful response to the
19 problems that have been happening in
20 Brentwood and Central Islip and other
21 areas.

22 But, honestly, I don't have any
23 specifics to tell you, other than my
24 staff and our experience. And at this
25 point, knock on wood, things seem fairly

2 calm and people get along in
3 Central Islip by and large.

4 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Great.

5 As a task force, we decided that
6 part of our research should be reaching
7 out to community-based organizations and
8 civics just to -- because, again, we
9 feel we understand also that, you know,
10 you guys are the eyes and ears of the
11 community, you're at the grassroots
12 level, and you have a lot of power and
13 impact over -- and -- and -- and you can
14 empower a community around an issue.
15 And we've seen it.

16 Several years ago, I mean,
17 there was a civic that formed in
18 Farmingdale, the Village of Farmingdale,
19 because there were, I think, ten
20 Hispanic gentlemen that had lived in an
21 apartment building, and the community
22 was up in arms. They were trying to get
23 the village to come with up with all
24 these code violations to condemn the
25 building and all this stuff, and really,

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2 it was a civic group that really pushed
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this issue.

And we've seen it all throughout Suffolk County, and throughout the nation, where civic groups have organized under the guise of quality of life issues, and really, you know, panning the flames of, you know, of racial and ethnic undertones that have really kind of stirred up a situation that's gotten out of control. So, you know, we thought, Well, maybe we should reach out to civic organizations.

Not saying that Central Islip Civic is in any way -- has been associated with though types of behaviors. I've heard wonderful things about your organization, like -- come from Central Islip originally. And a very old friend of mine, close friend of mine is Nancy Vargas. She's -- you know, she's a member --

MS. MANFREDONIA: Wonderful. She's on our board.

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LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Right. And

3 Renee speaks very highly of your
4 organization as well.

5 So we just want to get feedback as
6 to -- and wanted to query you as an
7 active civic in the -- particularly in a
8 diverse community, what do you see your
9 role -- not necessarily your role, but,
10 generally, the role of a civic. How can
11 they take part in educating the
12 community on the issues of the hate
13 crimes? Understanding that it's usually
14 not an issue that civic groups generally
15 get involved with, it's usually against
16 quality of life issues, whether it's
17 code violations or some environmental
18 projects or something like that in a
19 local area that they -- they get
20 involved with, but --

21 You know, I see my role as
22 approaching some civics in the future
23 and trying to form a collaboration, you
24 know, because you want to work with the
25 community and not --

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2 MS. MANFREDONI A: Right.

3 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: -- against the
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4 designated leaders within those
5 communities.

6 MS. MANFREDONIA: I think -- again,
7 I -- you know, definitely in Central
8 Islip, I mean, if we have code
9 enforcement complaints or, you know,
10 quality of life issues, I mean, we have
11 people -- it's -- it's not at all race-
12 or ethnic-based. You know, it's like --
13 it's just people want to be able to live
14 comfortably. They don't want to have,
15 you know, problems of any kind, you
16 know, in their community. They --
17 everybody is concerned about taxes.
18 Everybody is concerned about, you know,
19 vacant homes and crime problems.

20 I can see where in -- in some
21 communities that might -- you know, that
22 are not as diverse, that might create
23 problems. And, you know, I don't know
24 what to do about that, but I think that
25 the -- the tendency for people, you

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2 know, if they see a house with 15 or
3 20 people in it, and most of them are

4 Hi spanic, or, you know, there -- there's
5 some problem that, you know, this is
6 going -- this can create problems. So I
7 think what has to happen is everybody in
8 the community has to feel kind of like
9 empowered to do something in their own
10 communi ty. And it gets really sticky if
11 you're talking about, you know, a
12 communi ty where everybody's one ethnic
13 group and they're pointing the finger at
14 another ethnic group.

15 So I don't know what to tell you
16 about that, but I think that the economy
17 being the way it is, with job problems
18 and people losing their homes, I mean,
19 it's amazing to me that things aren't
20 worse than they are. I don't mean to --
21 I don't mean to be pessimistic, but I
22 mean, you know, under the circumstances,
23 I think most communities in Suffolk are
24 doing pretty well with this situation.
25 And I know you guys know a lot more than

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2 I do about what's going on behind the
3 scenes, but I'm -- I'm pretty
4 optimistic, and I'm hoping, once the
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5 economy gets better, that we'll see less
6 and less hate crime problems. I hope.

7 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Do you see the
8 civics as a way of -- I don't want to
9 say being a filter, but maybe what --
10 even what Detective Sergeant Reecks has
11 spoken about earlier with the other
12 organization, you know, making
13 presentations and -- and addressing hate
14 crimes and -- and having also -- in
15 addition to that, having, you know --
16 you know, festivities that -- that --
17 that -- that embrace, you know,
18 diversity --

19 MS. MANFREDONIA: Yeah. I think --
20 well, first of all, I -- I think it's
21 clear that everybody needs some
22 education on hate crimes and what they
23 are, and the definition, and so forth.
24 But -- and I think a lot of our schools
25 are doing a good job with that. But,

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2 again, certainly, the more -- whether
3 it's a civic association that has a big
4 meeting, or a school district, or some

5 community meeting, the -- the more that
6 we can get the message across that, you
7 know, these people aren't our enemies,
8 you know -- and I think -- I think that
9 this is something that you would think
10 most people would know, but in some
11 communities, they're -- you know,
12 they're very influential, very isolated,
13 and I think the -- the more information
14 you can get out through either the
15 police department or education through
16 the schools, programs that the other
17 speakers were talking about, I think are
18 really important. But other than that,
19 I don't have any brilliant ideas for
20 you.

21 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay. I know
22 some civics do -- like when someone
23 moves into the community, there's like a
24 welcome committee.

25 MS. MANFREDONIA: Yes. And that --

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2 I think that's a great idea.

3 Now, one of our local civics has
4 that welcome wagon effect, and it's a
5 great idea. You know, people come in,
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6 they feel welcome, they figure, okay,
7 because -- you know, let's face it, some
8 people move in a community, they're
9 very -- you know, what's going on?
10 Who are these people? Who am I? But if
11 they -- if they have an actual neighbor
12 to welcome them --

13 And we do have a good neighbor
14 program. We try -- we're not -- we
15 don't have a lot of money, so, you know,
16 a larger type of a welcome wagon for the
17 whole community is very difficult. We'd
18 love to do it. And I think that's a
19 great idea, especially like if you
20 could -- if you could pinpoint
21 communities where you think there may be
22 problems, I think that kind of a welcome
23 wagon approach, even -- some communities
24 have better chambers than others. If we
25 could get that idea across, you know,

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2 a -- you know, welcome neighbor type of
3 a thing, I think that would go a long
4 way, you know, to make people feel
5 comfortable. Both ways --

6 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Right.

7 MS. MANFREDONIA: -- not just the
8 new person who moves in, but the people
9 who are greeting them.

10 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Right.

11 DR. KILMICK: If I could add
12 something here.

13 What does this have to do with hate
14 crimes in terms of -- I'm just a little
15 bit confused --

16 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Well, if you
17 let me finish, I was going to get to
18 that.

19 DR. KILMICK: Okay.

20 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: My line of
21 thought is that, as we had in
22 Brookhaven, when you had a county
23 executive that had raids on homes,
24 kicking people out, putting them in the
25 streets, that wasn't -- that wasn't

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2 something that he came up with himself,
3 I'm sure there were complaints to the
4 town from a civic organization or from a
5 person within the community. So trying
6 to understand, I think, a way -- and

7 from my experience, when a lot of it
8 happened -- and that was going to be my
9 next question -- was how do you deal
10 with absentee landlords? Because from
11 my perspective, a lot of these
12 situations happen with absentee
13 landlords who do not care. If you
14 listen to the concerns of the community,
15 they rent out their homes to 10, 20, 30,
16 40 people.

17 You know, if there's a relationship
18 between the local community leaders, the
19 civics, with the property owners, I
20 think there's a level of respect there.
21 Just -- you know, and I -- I see it in
22 my own district where, you know, if you
23 have a home that's being maintained by
24 the property owner, and a home that's
25 being maintained by a renter, you know,

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2 it's not going to be the same level of
3 care. But if you have a relationship
4 between the community and the civic
5 organizations and the property owner,
6 whether it's an absentee property owner

7 or someone who's living there, I think
8 there's a level of respect that is in a
9 relationship that is developed.

10 So me as being an absentee
11 landlord, and I have a relationship with
12 Nancy, and she says, Well, you know,
13 this is what our community wants, this
14 is the quality of life that our
15 community expects, you know, we have a
16 relationship. I'm going to respect
17 that. If we don't have a relationship,
18 I'm going to do whatever I want with my
19 property.

20 And a lot of the issues, not
21 necessarily hate crimes, but certainly
22 situations that, in my opinion, can and
23 have fueled animosity towards certain
24 communities, have flamed, have started
25 the underlying groundwork for -- you

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2 know, I don't want to say hatred, but
3 attention that has led to what we are
4 dealing with today as it relates to the
5 Latino community.

6 And let's go back five years. It
7 wasn't that -- you know, part of it was,
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8 Well, we have 200 people standing on a
9 corner in Farmingville. The other side
10 of it was also, Well, we have 40 people
11 in a home. No one was complaining, you
12 know, a few years prior to that, you
13 know, Well, what are these people's
14 immigration status? You know, it all
15 came from quality of life community
16 issues. You know, then it led into,
17 well, maybe we should deputize our
18 police officers.

19 So everything developed from a
20 community issue -- you know, rightly or
21 wrongly, but it developed from a
22 community issue on how do we address,
23 how do we build a relationship or get
24 some feedback from those -- not those
25 same community groups, but similar

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2 community groups that have similar
3 interests so that we can try to make a
4 recommendation as to how we can address
5 this issue.

6 Because, again, you know, we're
7 here to address the sources of hate

8 crimes. And my impression, one of the
9 sources of hate crimes was, Well, I live
10 next to a home with 40 people in it, and
11 these people live differently than I do,
12 oh, and these people may not be legal,
13 or they may be legal, or whatever, and
14 then they identify that behavior with a
15 certain ethnic group. And then it just
16 spiralled out of control when you have
17 politicians that labeled certain ethnic
18 groups as behaving in a certain way, and
19 they sort of identified resources to
20 attack or address -- I won't say
21 attack -- I shouldn't say attack, but
22 certainly focus on that group.
23 Everything kind of spiralled from that.
24 So I think that, you know, we have to
25 address that issue.

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2 That's where I was leading.

3 MS. MANFREDONIA: I tend to agree,
4 and, I mean -- I mean, I know you're
5 looking for specifics on hate crime, but
6 your point is well taken that, you know,
7 the average person cares -- maybe
8 wouldn't pay attention to anything

9 unless it's on his or her block and, you
10 know, it's effecting their, quote,
11 quality of life, unquote.

12 You hit a nerve when you talk about
13 absentee landlords, because if we're
14 honest, a lot of the absentee landlords,
15 whether in more affluent communities and
16 they own houses in less affluent
17 communities -- not always, but that's
18 generally, you know, what we deal with.
19 So I think that everybody deserves
20 decent housing, and there are things
21 that can be done.

22 Just as an example, I think the
23 basics, no matter what you feel about --
24 you know, you don't want people on the
25 street and so forth, but no one should

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2 be in a house without smoke detectors,
3 without carbon monoxide detectors,
4 without running water, and -- and
5 cesspools that work, et cetera. And
6 these problems are pretty common, you
7 know, all over Suffolk County,
8 especially in certain communities.

9 So I think that you do have to make
10 sure that your town officials and your
11 county officials do their jobs. Not --
12 not on, you know, a specific complaint
13 basis, per se, but that the -- that
14 rental permits, such as in Islip
15 Township, are required, that Suffolk
16 County --

17 I mean, you have the county paying
18 \$300-plus a month in many places for
19 houses that have 20 or 25 people in
20 them. So it's very, very lucrative for
21 the landlord. You know, he's got two,
22 four, six people in a room. I mean,
23 this is obviously not going to be a good
24 house to live next to. Even if they are
25 all wonderful people, you know, this is

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2 a problem.

3 So you're right in that if you're
4 looking at underlying causes, if you
5 could just get, you know, the -- the
6 county and the towns to do their job on
7 an, you know, equal basis, not attacking
8 any particular landlord or whatever, but
9 just making sure that there's decent,

10 safe housing. I mean, we've seen
11 children in basement apartments, it's --
12 it's just -- with mold and all sorts of
13 problems that would just break your
14 heart, and that shouldn't happen. And I
15 think that you're right, that that's
16 something you've got to consider.

17 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Yeah. Ten
18 years ago I worked for the Town of
19 Babylon, I was in charge of the
20 Constituent Services Department, and we
21 received 50,000 phone calls --
22 complaints -- not phone calls,
23 complaints -- a lot more phone calls --
24 and I remember this one particular phone
25 call. And I said it to my staff -- it

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2 was from a local community leader who
3 said -- and I had never heard this term
4 before -- she said, you know, what can
5 you do -- you know, You're in my town,
6 what can you do about this blockbusting?
7 You know, I guess she -- she didn't
8 identify my voice as being
9 African-American so she felt comfortable

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talking to me.

10

I said, What do you mean?

11

12

And she goes, Well, we have all

13

these black families moving in on my

14

block.

15

I was like, Really? And that's a

16

problem?

17

Yes, there was one, and then

18

another one bought one next to me. You

19

know, can we just, quote, unquote,

20

trickle them in so that she could sell

21

her home and move?

22

So that's what I mean by, you know,

23

the community -- and -- and I've seen in

24

going -- and I would investigate

25

complaints. A lot of times it was just

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2

neighbor and neighbor who, you know, had

3

some -- whatever dispute. But a lot of

4

times, if there were a Caucasian family

5

who had rented out their basement and

6

their -- you know, their downstairs and

7

had eight people living in a home, that

8

was not an issue, but if it was an

9

African-American or Latino family,

10

same -- you know, same setup, Oh, all

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11 these people are coming in, and they got
12 two meters, you know, all this garbage
13 and music playing at night -- all these
14 complaints, and their behavior wasn't
15 dissimilar to the Caucasian family, but
16 it was just that, you know, they were
17 minorities.

18 So a lot of these issues, from my
19 perspective and past experience, stem
20 from, quote, unquote, quality of life
21 issues. And they kind of -- there's
22 astigmatism that's attached to them,
23 that these people live a certain way
24 different than us, they're less than us,
25 then that builds into this animosity,

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2 you know, and --
3 So I would like to try to get, you
4 know, some feedback, and I think it's
5 important to reach out to the local
6 civics to -- to form some type of
7 partnership because I think it's
8 important. And I've seen it work
9 where -- in communities where there is a
10 welcome wagon, as you said, and people

11 still accept it. You know, it's not,
12 Oh, those are the new people, whether
13 they're white or -- or not, you know,
14 they, for one -- they -- as a resident,
15 they feel welcome, Wow, you know --

16 MS. MANFREDONIA: Right.

17 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: -- this is a
18 welcoming community that's particularly,
19 I think, comfortable for someone who may
20 not feel comfortable coming to a
21 community, just looking for a place to
22 stay. So I think that's good in all
23 aspects.

24 MS. MANFREDONIA: Yeah, I like -- I
25 like that idea, and I think maybe -- I

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2 know there's a great emphasis now on
3 neighborhood watch --

4 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Right.

5 MS. MANFREDONIA: -- and the police
6 department is, you know, promoting
7 neighborhood watches, but maybe, at the
8 same time -- I mean, if you actually get
9 a group organized on like a block or a
10 three- or four-block area, you might be
11 able to promote the welcome wagon as a
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12 part of that.

13 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Right.

14 DR. KILMICK: If I could just add
15 two things.

16 One, I mean, I didn't, you know,
17 mean what I said before as -- I mean, it
18 sounds like these are very important
19 issues in terms of housing -- housing
20 codes, enforcement codes, and -- and
21 et cetera. And I personally see these
22 as two different -- or as more than
23 two -- two different things that were
24 brought up. But -- but also, you know,
25 it deals with a lot of policy issues

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2 that -- that need to be taken care of, I
3 think, somewhat separately from -- from
4 dealing with hate crimes.

5 And, you know, just from a personal
6 perspective, I kind of see relating hate
7 crimes to a quality of life issue as a
8 little bit demeaning in a sense because
9 quality of life is -- you know, I mean,
10 it could be defined very broadly. But
11 when someone is a victim of a hate

12 crime, as we've heard from people or as
13 I've experienced myself, it's a matter
14 of life, really. Like when you're
15 walking on the streets, you know, it's a
16 matter of can you walk on the streets as
17 yourself and be yourself, or is someone
18 going to do something to you?

19 So that's my own personal opinion,
20 that I see quality of life in a much
21 broader sense that deals with a lot more
22 economic perspectives than we talk about
23 with bias and discrimination.

24 And, lastly, just -- Nancy, I was a
25 former resident of Central Islip, and

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2 you did a great job -- you're doing a
3 great job with the Central Islip Civic
4 Council, so --

5 MS. MANFREDONIA: Thank you.

6 DR. KILMICK: -- thank you very
7 much.

8 But in -- you had mentioned in the
9 beginning that, you know, the Central
10 Islip community is very diverse. What I
11 didn't hear, as a representative of the
12 gay and lesbian community, was you

13 mentioned the gay and lesbian community.

14 MS. MANFREDONIA: And we have a
15 gay and lesbian community also. You
16 know, we do. I mean, we're diverse in
17 any way you want to look.

18 There was an article in Newsday --
19 oh, I don't know, six -- maybe a year
20 ago, but -- promoting Central Islip as a
21 good place for gay and lesbians. You
22 know, so I -- I was in the real estate
23 section, and I think that -- I don't
24 know where that started from, but maybe
25 Park Row or something. So yeah. So,

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2 we're glad.

3 DR. KILMICK: Okay.

4 REVEREND BARRETT: (Indicating)

5 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Yes,

6 Reverend Barrett.

7 REVEREND BARRETT: Hi. I just have
8 one question.

9 How welcoming do you think that the
10 local civic associations would be to
11 provide education on diversity? Because
12 you had, you know, different groups,

13 different civic associations, and some
14 of them are less diverse than others.
15 How welcoming would they be to actually
16 have programs come in and, you know,
17 teach them on diversity?

18 MS. MANFREDONIA: Yeah. Well, I
19 mean, you know, I think -- even, to be
20 honest, in Central Islip, I -- I think
21 you're probably preaching to the
22 converted, but -- I don't know. I think
23 in most communities if -- if you -- if
24 you had some kind of a program where
25 you -- you know, you offered it, I mean,

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2 civic associations usually are looking
3 for programs of some kind, and I think
4 they would -- I think they would be very
5 receptive. That's my opinion, anyway.

6 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay.

7 MS. AHEARN: (Indicating)

8 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Yes, Laura.

9 MS. AHEARN: Hi, Nancy.

10 MS. MANFREDONIA: Hi.

11 MS. AHEARN: I have to thank you
12 for coming this evening and being so
13 candid and honest. And I know that it's
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14 difficult at times, it's even difficult
15 for us as task force members, to hear
16 some of the things that community
17 members are reporting, but it's not
18 necessarily your feeling, but it's a
19 reporting of the community. And we're
20 charged with identifying the sources of
21 racial tension; that's specifically what
22 we need to do -- one of the things we
23 need to do.

24 You had said earlier that you are
25 making every attempt to address issues

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2 that make the community frustrated or
3 angry. And then you went into a
4 discussion about the economy and how
5 you're making every effort with your
6 caseworkers to try to help to identify
7 jobs, because that is this -- this
8 unfortunate misperception in the
9 community that certain individuals,
10 specifically Latinos, are taking away
11 jobs. And that was started, as
12 Legislator Gregory had just touched on a
13 little bit, years ago in Farmingville

14 when all of this started many years ago.
15 And, you know, I can recall coming up to
16 the Legislature and seeing outrageous
17 types of protesting going on there
18 against Latinos. They were wearing
19 toilet seats on their -- over their
20 heads, on their collars -- I can recall
21 this -- and specifically using, as David
22 had said, quality of life issues to try
23 to move a highly inappropriate racist
24 agenda.

25 MS. MANFREDONI A: Right.

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2 MS. AHEARN: So you are -- it's so
3 welcoming to hear from you because we
4 need to hear what the community is
5 saying to shine light on and be
6 transparent about what's happening so we
7 can address it.

8 MS. MANFREDONI A: Right.

9 MS. AHEARN: Because unless it's
10 said out loud, then we're never going to
11 solve the problem.

12 So beginning with -- I agree with
13 Legislator Gregory in his assessment
14 that when -- when stereotypes are being
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15 perpetuated early on -- years ago in
16 Farmingville and left unaddressed, and
17 they perpetuate and they grow and they
18 grow, it leads to greater tensions.

19 And one of the issues that I just
20 wanted to talk to you about, you had
21 mentioned it, it's kind of sticky
22 because it is sticky, whether you have a
23 house that's populated by 50 Suffolk
24 County College students, or 50 of any
25 particular group, that becomes a source

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2 of tension in the community.

3 MS. MANFREDONIA: Right. Right.

4 MS. AHEARN: And when the town
5 doesn't respond to that, it becomes a
6 greater source of tension.

7 And you had said as well that
8 people in the community have a right to
9 a quality of life. That's right. But,
10 unfortunately, some of the more
11 racist groups have used that, as
12 Legislator Gregory said, when there's a
13 family that has a basement apartment
14 that's not registered and there's four

15 of a particular race there, when they
16 become a race they don't want, then it
17 becomes an issue, and then the town
18 might respond because they're
19 pressuring.

20 Do you have a problem in your
21 affiliated civic association, in groups
22 there -- do you have a problem -- or do
23 you see a source of tension -- to say
24 tension first, and then do you see a
25 source of racial tension as a result of

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2 these issues with housing?

3 MS. MANFREDONIA: I see,
4 definitely, I mean, there's tension. I
5 mean, people of all races, you know,
6 call us with complaints. You know, I
7 mean, and they give us an address, so --
8 you know, and all -- all we can do is
9 forward it onto the town, or, right now,
10 you know, if there are vacant homes or
11 squatters in the homes or something,
12 we'll try to work with the bank.

13 So, yes, there's always tension
14 with this kind of thing. Whether it's
15 an informal sober home or, you know,

16 there are Hi spanic workers living there,
17 or whatever, you know, it's just
18 plain -- people don't want to hear it,
19 they don't want to see it, they -- you
20 know, if somebody's playing music at
21 midnight, they have a fit, which, you
22 know, this is -- whoever's playing the
23 music. If there are beer bottles all
24 over the place, even -- we don't have
25 college students really, but I'm sure

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2 that if you're living next to a group of
3 12 college students in a house, people
4 would have tension. So, yeah, there's
5 tension.
6 Now, in terms of race, honestly, I
7 mean, I'm sure in some other communities
8 it's there, but we are just -- really
9 and truly, you know, we just don't have
10 that. I mean, maybe there might be --
11 you know, if people are -- you know, if
12 you have a Hi spanic family that's
13 barbecuing on the front lawn or, you
14 know, playing Hi spanic music until all
15 hours, you might hear something, but

16 you're going to hear the same thing if
17 there's kids -- a Caucasian group of
18 kids, you know, raising holy hell in the
19 middle of the night, too.

20 So, I mean, just -- in Central
21 Islip, it's -- there's no real race base
22 to this kind of a problem. It's just
23 not there, because, you know, we -- we
24 do have -- you know, we have low income
25 and middle income of all races, and --

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2 you know, so it's just -- everybody
3 seems to complain as much as everybody
4 else.

5 DR. KILMICK: Nancy, are you
6 saying that because it's a fact that
7 it's not there, or it's something you
8 don't see?

9 MS. MANFREDONIA: Well, like I
10 said, I cannot tell you what's in the
11 hearts and minds of people. I just
12 hear -- and what's interesting, our
13 staff -- you know, we have Hispanic, we
14 have black, we have Caucasian. So, you
15 know, as human nature is, you will have
16 people who will talk to me, or they --

17 you know, and they might be telling me
18 something that they wouldn't be telling
19 to my Hispanic caseworker or vice versa.

20 So I can only tell you what we
21 hear, you know, as the staff meets and
22 we talk about it. And we -- you know,
23 so I don't know. On the street, you
24 know, what one homeowner is thinking
25 or -- you know, I'm sure that people who

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2 have been there for many years, you
3 know, may be saying something different,
4 you know, then -- then that I'm telling
5 you, but this is what we hear in our
6 office from our clients.

7 And I don't hear -- I'll tell you
8 the truth. I don't hear -- again, it's
9 very interesting, because for years our
10 organization had a wonderful lady, Betty
11 Ford, who worked with us, and it was
12 always kind of, like, people would talk
13 to Betty and then they would talk to me.
14 So both of us -- and Betty is
15 African-American. So we would -- we
16 would kind of get a real feel for what

17 was going on in the community.

18 So, yeah, sure, there are plenty of
19 white families that are probably
20 prejudiced, and there's plenty of black
21 families that are prejudiced, but most
22 people who really don't want to live in
23 a diverse community moved out a long
24 time ago. You know, so I think we're
25 left with a fairly, you know, tolerant

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2 group of people.

3 DR. KILMICK: And what is the
4 mission of the Central Islip Civic
5 Council?

6 MS. MANFREDONIA: The mission is to
7 improve the quality of life for all the
8 residents of Central Islip. It's a very
9 broad and ridiculous mission, but we try
10 to do it.

11 DR. KILMICK: So I just want to
12 put it out there so it's conceivable,
13 that if someone is having these issues,
14 that they wouldn't approach the Central
15 Islip Civic Council, they would approach
16 advocacy and social justice
17 organizations that work for these

18 issues.

19 MS. MANFREDONIA: Yeah. That's
20 very true. They would -- they might go
21 to Long Island Housing Services. They
22 might go to Adalante (phonetic) if they
23 were Hispanic. So, I mean, yeah, no way
24 am I able to give you a full idea of
25 what's happening. I can just tell you

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2 that we do have a -- you know, a fairly
3 substantial number of people that we
4 deal with.

5 DR. KILMICK: Thank You.

6 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Anybody else?
7 (WHEREUPON, there was no response.)

8 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay. Great.
9 Thank you so much for coming in.

10 MS. MANFREDONIA: Thank you, and
11 thank you for the good work you're
12 doing.

13 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: All right.

14 MS. MANFREDONIA: I appreciate it.

15 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Thank you.

16 Okay. Roberta, last but certainly
17 not least.

18 Do you have a presentation for us?

19 MS. RICHI N: Sort of --

20 LEGI SLATOR GREGORY: Okay.

21 MS. RICHI N: -- in a friendly,
22 conversati onal way.

23 LEGI SLATOR GREGORY: All right.

24 (WHEREUPON, a brief recess was
25 taken, after which the following

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2 transpi red:)

3 (Time noted: 5:52 p.m.)

4 LEGI SLATOR GREGORY: Okay. We'll
5 get started.

6 Thank you for coming, Roberta
7 Ri chi n. You're from the Council for
8 Prejudi ce Reducti on, and you have a
9 presentati on for us tonight.

10 MS. RICHI N: It's good to see
11 long-time, I won't say old, as well as,
12 hopefully, new friends here.

13 The Council for Prejudi ce Reducti on
14 is a publ ic/private partnershi p. We are
15 very much devoted to achi evi ng
16 excell ence through educati on and ethi cs
17 and equi ty. And we are actual ly in a --
18 we're an enti rely vol unteer organi zati on

19 at this juncture, and have been for
20 years. We are in both Nassau and
21 Suffolk, and certainly representation
22 from New York City from different
23 burrows in and out. We have several
24 hundred members. We were acknowledged
25 by the Children's Defense Fund in 2000

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2 as the only entity of its kind that they
3 could find in the United States, which
4 for a few seconds made me really happy
5 and jump up and down, but then I
6 thought, Isn't this sort of a
7 no-brainer? Shouldn't there be a corner
8 of every community where everybody
9 convenes?

10 And one of the things we do is --
11 have now for 18 years -- coming this
12 November 5th, for 18 years, run an
13 annual conference that showcases
14 existing practices that -- demonstrated
15 to advance equity and reduce prejudice
16 in collaboration with public schools.
17 So people actually walk out with stuff
18 that they can do. But that includes

19 members of the private sector, the
20 public sector, and -- as well as the
21 governmental and -- and kind of NGO kind
22 of organizations.

23 I've been the executive director
24 for the last several years. I was
25 previously the chair of simply the

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2 conference and -- as well as our
3 planning committee. This is just to
4 give you a little bit of background.

5 We convene in the -- thanks to the
6 gracious commissioner of the Suffolk
7 County Police Department, we convene in
8 the police academy in the -- on the
9 campus of Suffolk County Community
10 College in Brentwood to, ten months out
11 of the year, plan our conference, which
12 is collaboratively planned. People from
13 everywhere, from Henry Schein to --
14 which is a multi billion dollar,
15 multinational cooperation whose global
16 headquarters are in Melville, to, you
17 know, my little basement operation,
18 convene. And we have a level playing
19 field, and we -- we create this -- what

20 other people -- I am proud to say, is a
21 really world-class project every year.

22 We receive between 2- and 400 phone
23 calls and e-mails and contacts a month.
24 I like what Detective Sergeant Reecks
25 said about, you know, the struggle

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2 versus the -- over the word "tolerance"
3 versus "inclusiveness." It's been my
4 observation, for what it may be worth,
5 that the greatest accomplishment of the
6 20th century was increase inclusiveness.
7 I'm optimistic we will continue the
8 progress.

9 It isn't a linear move; one step,
10 six steps back. And I -- I just want to
11 give you a little bit of background to a
12 conversation that I bring regarding hate
13 crimes and the struggle, I think, that
14 folks have been having this evening
15 regarding teasing apart -- how we live
16 amongst each other and -- and where
17 these sort of insidious roots are that
18 produce and bubble up and explore --
19 explode into a hate crime.

20 In Nassau and Suffolk County, part
21 of what you might have to do as a result
22 of committing a hate crime is work with
23 me. I operate on the premise that
24 Morris Dees from the Southern Poverty
25 Law Center was correct when he argued

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2 before the Supreme Court that in this
3 country, you're entitled to hate, you're
4 not entitled to hurt. You could drive
5 by my house and think I shouldn't get to
6 live there and the way that I live
7 there, and just keep on moving, because
8 sharing is overrated.

9 The intent of the work that we do
10 is based on a model that I developed
11 called "connecting character to
12 conduct," which is essentially
13 connecting the best of who you are to
14 what you do every day and what you are
15 going to do the next time you feel like
16 blowing up, because there will be a next
17 time.

18 We're sitting in a room and I'm
19 looking at a relatively, for Suffolk
20 County, diverse panel, but behind us are
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21 images of -- of less than diversity
22 standard. As we look at our pictures
23 who were gender diversity, maybe a few
24 other things that aren't as evident, but
25 we are, I think according to race/racism

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2 news, the third most racially,
3 ethnically, linguistically,
4 socioeconomically, and every other kind
5 of league-divided community. And we
6 were that way when I was a child, and I
7 really spent my whole life in -- in this
8 work.

9 My personal vision, and the vision
10 of the Council for Prejudice Reduction
11 as well, is to contribute to a
12 sustainable, vibrant, peacefully
13 coexisting community; a world-class
14 community, with the best of small town
15 quality, that make people feel safe and
16 happy. When you talked about you want
17 to go outside and -- and feel safety in
18 who you are, you want to hold hands with
19 who you are. I walk across the parking
20 lot, I'm female; I'm prey. You know, I

21 am praying, and I am prey.

22 I have some problems with the way
23 the hate crimes laws are written, you
24 know, so I do have three
25 recommendations, but I'll wait until the

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2 end of my brief -- what I'm going to try
3 to make relatively brief comments about
4 how we might, you know, make advice
5 regarding -- to our legislators and
6 representatives, both the state and --
7 local and state and national level
8 regarding the language of hate crimes
9 and -- and clarification so that law
10 enforcement can -- can do an even better
11 job.

12 And I'm certainly not a law
13 enforcement professional, but what I
14 bring to a conversation is that I -- I'm
15 a consultant to the Simon Wiesenthal
16 Museum of Tolerance -- forgive the word,
17 but you did introduce me to the group --
18 both in California and New York;

19 I advise and consult with the
20 United Religions Initiative, which is a
21 global organization that works with

22 Nobel Peace Prize winners;
23 Associated with Peace Jam, which is
24 a fabulous organization, I urge you to
25 check it out on the Web, through the

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2 work of a woman -- a colleague of mine,
3 a member of the Council for Prejudice
4 Reduction whose name is Monica Willard;
5 I'm also on the board of directors
6 of something called "Miracle Corners of
7 the World," which is an international
8 youth leadership organization devoted to
9 creating local change through global
10 exchange. We have thousands of kids all
11 over the world, lots of organizations in
12 different countries, continents.
13 Everything pretty much so far is
14 (inaudible), so we're pretty happy with
15 that;

16 And I spent most of my professional
17 life in schools. So although I do --
18 some of my work is corporate, and with
19 the nongovernmental organization law,
20 the governmental organization law, most
21 of it pre-K through 16. So I'm with the

22 universities and the public schools --
23 mostly public schools. And what I do is
24 job-embedded professional development,
25 which means I -- you know, mostly

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2 professional development for teachers,
3 which consists of going into a forensic
4 box, discussing what people should do
5 with children theoretically, and then
6 going forth, trying it out, and coming
7 back and reporting how badly it worked
8 or didn't the next Tuesday when I'd be
9 slowly victimized by that staff
10 development.

11 I prefer to show up in school and
12 do cheek-and-jowl work. If I'm going to
13 suggest to you how I think your
14 cafeteria should run, I'm going to be in
15 the cafeteria. You know, we're going to
16 be on a bus; I'm going to be on a bus.
17 Wherever it happens to be, I'm going to
18 demonstrate a lesson, and I -- and
19 I'm --

20 The first central point, for me,
21 which probably is a quality of life
22 observation, but it's also about how the

23 capacity to commit a hate crime matches
24 with the opportunity to create a hate
25 crime, and creates a niche for

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2 hateful ness.

3 There's a marvelous book that was
4 very unpopular called Thinking AIDS that
5 looked at the way HIV took hold, because
6 it's really about a hundred years old,
7 but where the capacity for this disease
8 manifested itself and the -- then the
9 opportunity for it to explode as a
10 pandemic really is a metaphor for the
11 way we relate to each other. You can
12 increase capacity for goodness or
13 increase capacity for something to be
14 destructive. You could increase
15 opportunity or decrease opportunity, but
16 when we manipulate that, that's the
17 ecology.

18 And what I think you're reflecting
19 on here, and I could be wrong, is the
20 ecology in this community and how the
21 capacity for hate manifests itself and
22 where the opportunity (inaudible). And

23 we're the opportunity for a peaceful
24 coexistence because, for the most part,
25 people do peacefully coexist. There's a

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2 bubble of anger; somebody cuts me off,
3 says some, you know, sexist remark, but,
4 you know, there's the wound, whatever
5 they perceive me to be. But if we
6 didn't have that traffic incident, that
7 person wouldn't have said it.

8 There's a marvelous entry to the
9 Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles.
10 You're invited to walk in through two
11 doors. One says Prejudiced, one says
12 Not Prejudiced.

13 What do you think happens when you
14 walked through the Not Prejudiced door?

15 DR. KILMICK: An alarm goes off.

16 MS. RICHIN: As a teacher, I have
17 to ask the question. Even though it's
18 not the right format.

19 What do you think happens?

20 DR. KILMICK: An alarm goes off.

21 MS. RICHIN: What happens?

22 DR. KILMICK: An alarm goes off

23 because --

24 MS. RICHIN: An alarm goes off. I
25 would really prefer that.

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2 They're not that in your face, but
3 I would like that.

4 I think things should happen like
5 that -- like that thing from Nickelodeon
6 where you get slimed.

7 But, basically, you run into a
8 wall. It's sort of, get over yourself,
9 we're all hardwired to prejudice.

10 In the first seven seconds that we
11 saw each other, we made -- arraigned
12 through 11 conclusions about us. You
13 know, me to you and you to me. It's the
14 7-11 factor. We are hardwired to
15 prejudice.

16 So if you look at Shelby Steele's
17 work on this -- Shelby Steele wrote
18 a magnificent little book called
19 The Content of Our Character in which
20 the central point is that we -- and I'm
21 paraphrasing him now, I think he's one
22 of the best writers of our time, is that
23 we scour the world for evidence of our

24
25

So there can be 15 pieces of

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2

information that you find out about this

3

wonderful person, and then (indicating),

4

they're gay. Well, Jack isn't good

5

enough. You know, so I knew that

6

they -- you know, so you find reasons to

7

confirm your original assumptions.

8

We are devoted at the Council for

9

Prejudice Reduction to creating safe

10

places for people to say their original

11

assumptions out loud, challenge them,

12

ask great questions, and find common

13

ground.

14

We are not a Kumbaya group. It

15

isn't, you know, army special and you

16

have to love me. You don't have to

17

respect me. You have to treat me with

18

respect that you have for yourself and

19

according to the social contract,

20

because feeling respect for somebody is

21

different from treating them according

22

to a common standard of respect.

23

So that said, I haven't found a

24

place anywhere in my travels -- I'm not

25 a very well-traveled person, but in my

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2 56 years on the planet, I haven't found
3 a place that isn't prejudiced. That
4 isn't -- that we, in this country, tend
5 to racialize things. But we also reach
6 for very, what I found, oversimplified
7 and romantic notions that if we do some
8 cultural tourism and have a falafel and
9 bagel, we're all going to go home, we're
10 all going to be okay. It's not okay.

11 The Jews in Pre-Holocaust Germany
12 were the most integrated community that
13 there could be in the Jewish -- in the
14 Jewish experience up until that time,
15 which is millennia.

16 In Rwanda, people of the same
17 faith, the same language, the same race,
18 killed each other at a rate three times
19 greater than that of a holocaust with
20 machetes that they got from China and
21 with clubs that they made themselves.
22 And we saw it, and we ignored it. It
23 rained on the parade in South Africa at
24 that time, so it wasn't convenient, and

25 Bill Clinton had sort of squandered his

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2 political bully pulpit. So a million
3 people died.

4 I was asked a question recently by
5 a young man who just came to this
6 country recently, and I was the first
7 Jew he met. And he said, I -- I have a
8 question, and I'm embarrassed to ask it.

9 How come so many --

10 You know, move along. Okay. No
11 harm, no foul.

12 He said, How come so many people
13 around the world hate Jews?

14 And I said, Well, how come so many
15 cultures subjugate women? How come so
16 many cultures want to kill and torture
17 and exclude and punish people based on
18 sexual orientation? How come children
19 are exploited in so many cultures?

20 He didn't have an answer. He said,
21 It's the stories we tell each other.

22 It's the story.

23 It's the story in Rwanda of
24 Ntotsi and Hotoo (phonetic).

25 It's the story.

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2 It's the story that once the -- the
3 boot of the Soviet Union was off in --
4 in Europe, Muslims and Christians
5 murdered each other. But it really was
6 genocide against Muslims.

7 If you took a snapshot of the
8 diversity of Muslims -- the Muslim
9 community worldwide, it would look as
10 diverse as any group of human beings,
11 because every group has Muslim people.

12 We have a picture that looks like a
13 terrorist. So if somebody says to me,
14 Well, you know very -- all that Kumbaya
15 stuff, but if you saw somebody on an
16 airplane who looked like a terrorist,
17 you wouldn't want to sit next to -- sat
18 next to somebody who looked just like
19 Timothy McVeigh the other day, didn't
20 bother me at all.

21 (Laughter)

22 MS. RICHIN: So the question is,
23 what stories are you telling each other,
24 and how do we overcome our history of
25 dividing and our history of sort of

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2 siloing our issue. You now, I'm female,
3 you are this, you are that. I'm
4 whatever it is. I'm fat, I'm short, I'm
5 whatever it is. How do we find where
6 it's important to each to say this is a
7 world-class community and we just don't
8 do that here. This is how we treat each
9 other. This is how we speak to each
10 other. You can't assume that these
11 people want to be treated the way you
12 want to be treated, you have to ask
13 them.

14 This is sort of a presumptuous
15 weird thing, treat others as you would
16 have others treat you. Well, if you
17 have a high tolerance for misery, I
18 don't want to drop to your standard.

19 (Laughter)

20 MS. RICHIN: You know, so we want
21 to establish a code of conduct that
22 says, Welcome to Suffolk County, this is
23 what we do; we drive on a right; we stop
24 at a red light.

25 I rolled through a stop sign when I

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2 was very distracted, my sister was quite

3 ill, and I was in Washington, D.C., and

4 I got pulled over by a police officer.

5 I went into the drama of my life and,

6 you know, whatever, and he was rolling

7 his eyes. And he looked at my license

8 and he said, What do stop signs look

9 like in New York, Ms. Richin?

10 I said, Give me the ticket.

11 We don't have a universal code that

12 says this is what we -- we -- how we

13 behave. So if we don't have a universal

14 snapshot for what we need to do and say,

15 what peaceful coexistence looks like and

16 sounds like and feels like, then our

17 seven seconds, 11 assumptions drives

18 our -- you can come to my party, but you

19 all can't.

20 As the child of a grandparent who

21 lived 17 men to two rooms in the Bronx

22 and had a toilet three stories down, who

23 peed off the balcony because he didn't

24 want to go three stories down -- my

25 grandfather is spinning in his grave --

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2 I know we all come from the same place.
3 He who knows my home in one generation
4 is going to own it in the next
5 generation.

6 So if you look at snapshots of
7 Italian -- both documented and not
8 documented, 100 years ago, there were
9 17 men living in a little house, you
10 know, or 20 men living in a little
11 house. And the women didn't come. It
12 was a great life, everybody wanted a
13 pretty house, a pretty garden, and so
14 they just decided to -- 115 years or
15 whatever on Long Island.

16 Somebody asked me at a party
17 recent- -- a couple of years back,
18 actually, When did the Italians settle
19 in Long Island?

20 Italians settle in Long Island? It
21 was the Dutch. They came and saw
22 everything, discovered it, and made
23 themselves at home.

24 He said, Well, how come so many
25 people appear to be from Italian decent?

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2 Was the Dutch (inaudible)? So you have
3 one Dutch person, then you had
4 100 Italian people who came and worked,
5 worked, worked. So by numbers alone,
6 this is what happens. And over time,
7 things change. And people don't wake up
8 in the morning and say, How can I get on
9 my power and my control over my life to
10 somebody who's passing through?

11 We at the Council for Prejudice
12 Reduction hear a lot of the stories that
13 goes before the hate crime, during the
14 hate crime, and in the wake of the hate
15 crime.

16 So given your particular mission,
17 what I can say for sure, and I've met
18 now with -- I've tried to count, but I
19 think over a hundred perpetrators of
20 hate crimes at this point; youth and
21 adult. I've never seen anyone commit
22 one alone. They are -- it's a pack
23 behavior.

24 So we know that young people, in
25 particular, because that's the profile,

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are more inclined to commit them than
not -- than older people. Pack behavior
can be directed any which way.

We can't do metaphor about this.
We have to be very explicit. There's no
metaphor about a stop sign. If you go
into a school, you tend to see
metaphors. Kids are concrete, they see
metaphors.

Try your best if you see a ski
image. I don't ski. I'm not going to
slide down icy hills on sticks on my
feet. Like I -- it's not for me.

Children don't transfer knowledge.
We need to be explicit and specific that
the code of conduct in every school has
to be revisited for what leads up to
-- for the antecedents to the hate crime
or to the hate incident, to the crime
itself, as well as the consequences.

So it seems to me you have a
bully pulpit that says, Here's a
snapshot of the community we want to all
live in; this is what living in

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2 Suffolk County looks like and sounds
3 like and feels like. Mostly you want to
4 get up and kill your family, you know.
5 So there are moments where you -- mostly
6 you're going to more than likely be
7 killed by people who know you and love
8 you than people who are strangers.

9 I try to encourage children only to
10 talk to people who they don't know,
11 they'll be safer over time.

12 So the issue that presents is not
13 the impulse to be hateful but what we do
14 with it. And in a very kind of crude
15 way, this is emotional toilet training.
16 We need to learn how to read what builds
17 up in us and get rid of it in a way that
18 doesn't make a mess. And we're very,
19 very, very good at toilet training, but
20 we don't do it by metaphor, we do it
21 explicitly. This is what you do, this
22 is why you do it. Yay. So -- being if
23 you've ever trained anybody. So -- or
24 occasionally had lapses on -- all right.
25 I'm moving on. Too much information.

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2 So what I would ask is that this
3 conversation about hate crimes become a
4 showcase for best practices for how
5 people peacefully cope with this.

6 Profile folks who are -- not
7 profile in the negative way, but profile
8 communities where people are creating
9 common ground. Small exchanges that
10 protect and advance the dignity of
11 community life, of private life and
12 individual life. What's happening in
13 the hospital? What's happening when you
14 walk across the street? What's
15 happening in the supermarket? Because
16 the child --

17 Years back a Jewish child, I
18 believe in Smithtown, who -- I believe
19 it was a Jewish child. Do not quote me
20 on this -- who stabbed a boy in the
21 chest. They were in the library, and he
22 had a little penknife. He stabbed the
23 boy. The boy survived. Nobody --
24 nobody died, but he blamed the constant
25 tormenting and negative -- and meanness

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2 and anti-Semitic remarks. It's not
3 acceptable. Not acceptable.

4 You can be angry at anyone. You
5 can be angry at anyone. You have to
6 have a plan for how you're going to
7 discharge your anger. And you have to
8 have a plan -- you know, a lot of people
9 who've committed hate crimes have talked
10 with me about how they felt -- really
11 felt that they did the wrong thing, but
12 they were justified and that they would
13 not be convicted by a jury of their
14 peers. So if you distinguish between
15 right and wrong, you're more
16 appropriately sentenced. But they
17 really felt that they -- that they were
18 provoked, and most people who do great
19 harm feel that they are the victims.

20 So we want to make sure that we
21 showcase and -- and demonstrate to
22 people that when you feel victimized --
23 early on, when you feel targeted, no
24 matter what anybody else thinks, that
25 Suffolk County has a place for you to go

3 community of faith, in your school and
4 whatever it is, and find -- and build a
5 life team that's going to help you get
6 through these moments so you don't
7 justify your actions and imagine that
8 you're not going to get convicted,
9 because you will be convicted by a jury
10 of your peers.

11 So there are three small things
12 that I'd like to say.

13 The first one is, first, I'd like
14 you to save the date for November 15th.
15 November 15th, the Charles Wang Center
16 gives us their space for the -- for the
17 Council for Prejudice Reduction's annual
18 conference. Your organization has been
19 wonderfully represented, and Bob is a
20 fixture.

21 DR. KILMICK: (Head gesture)

22 MS. RICHIN: We have a full range
23 of services. We would love to provide
24 technical or specific kinds of support
25 to you, if you'd like, in helping you

3 send this to you, these are our numbers,
4 but I don't think it particularly
5 matters, and this is who we serve.

6 Last night I got to go to the
7 Apollo for the first time in my life.

8 Anybody been to the Apollo?

9 It was fabulous. Fabulous.

10 And it was a celebration of an
11 organization called "Do Something." And
12 I'm going to encourage you to look at it
13 and maybe look at how Suffolk County can
14 be a leader in using social networking
15 and Web-based exchanges for the benefit
16 of advancing peaceful coexistence and
17 sharing what small or large things
18 people can do every day to promote
19 peaceful coexistence and sustainable,
20 vibrant communities, advancing equity
21 and fairness, inclusiveness.

22 Six hundred kids from around
23 America applied for the opportunity to
24 win an initial prize of \$10,000 each,
25 and go for a larger prize of \$100,000.

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2 Do Something gives a lot of other
3 awards, and they have over a million

4 kids participating in their work.
5 There's a section on their
6 Web page, which is, I think, one of the
7 best Web pages -- Web sites I've ever
8 seen. It's thou- -- hundreds of
9 thousands of pages of content, lots and
10 lots and lots of constantly renewed
11 stuff, but opportunities for people to
12 post what they're doing. And they'll
13 actually say, What good have you done
14 for a minute? What's something you did
15 that took a minute? What's something
16 that you did that took a day? What's
17 something that you did that took a week
18 or -- or longer?

19 So last night there were
20 15 finalists from the 600 young people.
21 And this is in collaboration with VH1
22 and Pepsi and every brand known to man
23 or God. It was just -- I mean,
24 Buffett's son was there. The
25 billionaire?

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2 MS. ORTIZ: Jim.

3 MS. RICHIN: Jim.

4 Who is it? Jim --

5 MS. ORTIZ: Buffett.

6 MS. RICHIN: -- Jim Buffett.

7 He's a musician, and he's part of
8 this Do Something organization.

9 It was just staggering the amount
10 of influence and resources from a little
11 hard-scrabble group like myself. I was
12 a little overwhelmed. But five young
13 people were chosen, given \$10,000 each
14 last night, and are in the running for
15 what will happen live on VH1 on
16 July 19th, one of them is going to get
17 \$100,000 for the work that they've done.

18 One young man is from the Midwest,
19 and I think a very, very fierce
20 competitor. His -- his -- this is in
21 response to the CI issue of, you know,
22 economic pressure and jobs and issues.
23 His issue was he was getting ready -- he
24 graduated from high school, was getting
25 ready to do two years in the Peace Corp

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2 when the major employer in his city or
3 town left and they went from

4 sustainable, basic, healthy,

5 economically secured, 25 percent
6 unemployment, like that (indicating).
7 He stayed. He has generated
8 \$1.2 million of resources to retool
9 those -- those environments and retrain
10 folks in green jobs.

11 We can do that here. We have all
12 the resources -- the money may not be
13 distributed equally, but the brains and
14 the heart and the imagination of the
15 resourcefulness and the resilience is
16 distributed equally across our island.
17 It isn't just north of 25A or south of
18 27A.

19 So I would encourage, if you don't
20 do it yourself, to partner maybe with
21 the university or partner with an
22 organization to create a Web-based
23 resource that people can go to and brag,
24 This is what we're doing. This is what
25 works. Let me grab a headline of

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2 something good. If it bleeds, it
3 shouldn't always leak, you know.

4 I -- I think that Mr. Lucero's

5 memory would best be honored by people
6 being able to peacefully go visit their
7 family and watch a movie, which is I
8 think what he was planning to do, and
9 not risk their lives regardless of who
10 they are.

11 So if you look at where the
12 electronic world and social networking
13 can serve in a way that's monitored by
14 people smarter than I, if we -- if we
15 create lots of opportunities for people
16 to locally exchange through faith and
17 other existing networks what they're
18 doing so they foster independence and
19 have a common vocabulary for peacefully
20 focusing in Suffolk County, and then if
21 we specifically educate in every place
22 we go --

23 We know now that alcohol harms a
24 fetus. Something that nobody would
25 mention. No one knew, first of all, my

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2 mother drank when she was pregnant with
3 me, hence me. So -- not as an
4 alcoholic, but her doctors gave her
5 liquor. The good old days, may they

6 never return.

7 We know how to do the Heimlich
8 maneuver. Where are the posters that
9 say, This is how we treat each other,
10 and if you do this, bad things are going
11 to happen? Words have power, and words
12 have consequences. Images have power,
13 and images have consequences. Music has
14 power, and music has consequences. We
15 can use those things to engage our young
16 people and our older people in helping
17 them understand that words -- that
18 thoughts turn into words, words turn
19 into actions, and terrible things can
20 happen or wonderful things can happen.
21 And our intention is different from our
22 impact. So no matter what we intend, we
23 really have to think about the impact
24 and how it will spread one way or
25 another.

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2 Now, I'll close sort of this
3 random, optimistic, strange one way by
4 suggesting that inside the county system
5 of recruitment, retention, supervision,

6 observation, evaluation, firing,
7 whatever, that in -- in every issue that
8 the county legislature raises,
9 inclusiveness is an issue. It shouldn't
10 be a siloed, separate conversation. It
11 should be as part of the fabric of the
12 conversation.

13 So whether you're talking about
14 buying cars, allocating resources,
15 figuring out how to manage the budget,
16 what's the inclusiveness impact? Just
17 like an environmental impact has to be
18 made, what's the inclusiveness impact of
19 letting go three percent of the staff?
20 What is the furlough, to a degree?
21 What's the inclusiveness impact of
22 buying this bunch of stuff versus that
23 bunch of stuff, or this policy versus
24 this policy?

25 If it becomes an item that -- where

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2 people are promoted, where people are
3 hired, where people are redirected,
4 corrected, whatever, then you have a --
5 then you're saying this is a core value
6 of our community, and there isn't an

7 issue reengaging that isn't effected by
8 it, and if it's part of the everyday
9 conversation, then it's a rolling stone,
10 eventually, you have to (inaudible).

11 So that's my story.

12 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Wow. Thank
13 you.

14 MS. RICHI N: I sort of have a
15 hamster wheel, so you have to --

16 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: No, I really
17 enjoyed your presentation.

18 Now, the conversation that's --

19 MS. RICHI N: November 15th.

20 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Now, that --
21 what exactly is that? I know it's a
22 public/private partnership --

23 MS. RICHI N: People come from
24 business, from law enforcement, from the
25 legal community, from activist

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2 organizations and advocacy groups, they
3 come from Pre-K through university; they
4 present, they co-present, they -- we
5 have pretty cool speakers and wonderful
6 workshops --

7 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Now, it's --
8 MS. RICHI N: -- a great meal.
9 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Now, it's to
10 address --
11 MS. RICHI N: It's at the Charles
12 Wang Center.
13 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay.
14 -- the different -- I don't want to
15 say best -- best methods --
16 MS. RICHI N: It is best practices.
17 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Best
18 practices.
19 MS. RICHI N: It's, what is a
20 company like Henry Schein doing to earn
21 such high marks with corporate social
22 responsibility for the triple
23 bottomline? What is the business case
24 for? It's not just diversity, but
25 inclusiveness. You know, when I was

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2 growing up, if I went to a movie, there
3 was a sign, No wheel chairs beyond this
4 point. It's part of the landscape. You
5 don't see that anymore, you know.
6 So -- but there's prejudice against
7 people in wheel chairs, anyway.

8 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Right.

9 MS. RICHI N: We're all one slip of
10 the chair away from being in that
11 wheel chair. You know, even at an
12 overriding self-interest, we want to
13 make sure we include folks.

14 So we are fairly inclusive in both
15 our content and in the range of folks
16 who are delivering the content.

17 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Great.

18 So I can get it more clearly, what
19 do you feel is, in your experience and
20 work, a resource of -- well, I mean, you
21 said it is -- everyone is kind of -- I
22 don't want to say predetermined, but
23 everyone has the ability -- is prejudice
24 in some --

25 MS. RICHI N: We're hardwired to

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2 prejudice.

3 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: -- way --

4 MS. RICHI N: Yeah.

5 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: -- but it's
6 their ability to not act on that -- that
7 prejudice.

8 MS. RICHIN: We tell the story.

9 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Now, I guess
10 in your experience, what do you see as
11 triggers to those actions? Is it
12 just --

13 MS. RICHIN: That's a really cool
14 question.

15 I find that this is a culture that
16 is -- excuses a lot of things with
17 alcohol. I have never accepted it.
18 Alcohol is a revealer, it doesn't change
19 who you are. Every young man or old --
20 young lady or older person who said to
21 me they committed a hate crime because
22 they were under the influence of
23 alcohol, I said, Did you kidnap and rape
24 a five-year-old? Completely horrified.
25 I said, Well, if you didn't do that,

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2 alcohol didn't change you, it just
3 revealed you.

4 So you have to have a plan. You
5 want to surround yourself with people
6 who can protect you when you're
7 vulnerable, who help you make the right
8 decisions for the right reasons even if

9 no one's looking and no one will know.
10 So one of the triggers that I found
11 is the social commission of the peer
12 group. The scapegoating -- these aren't
13 hate crimes, but the constant corrosive
14 scapegoating of kids who are
15 gay/lesbian/transgender in schools, in
16 my view, creates the opportunity for
17 something afterwards, because it can
18 escalate; somebody pushes somebody else,
19 somebody pushes somebody else, somebody
20 pushes somebody else. And it's, I'm
21 going to push you harder, you know,
22 until you have to sort of outdo the
23 other person.
24 I believe that most of the things
25 that people say to each other in public

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2 schools or in businesses, and I've heard
3 the same things in businesses, reflect
4 the biases of the people running the
5 organization.
6 There are certain words I just
7 don't hear. And I don't hear them
8 because of the people running the place

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LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Now, you said that you're in the schools and --

MS. RICHI N: (Head gesture)

LEGISLATOR GREGORY: -- so I'm sure you've seen, because you deal with it, prejudice in the schools.

What are your feelings about the families and what role would they have in the children --

MS. RICHI N: I think that everybody is extremely influential in their sphere of influence. Children -- the premise that children are going to be hateful because parents are hateful, I haven't found to be true. Children -- the first people children refuse are their

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parents. The first people children reject are their parents. They argue with them over clothing. They reject their music. They -- young people are, in my experience, much less invested in racial, ethnic, linguistic hatefulness than the previous generation. They're much more willing to accept the

10 possibility of somebody who will be
11 different. The problem is, they want
12 someone to be suffering. Because I'm
13 not me unless you're in trouble. You
14 know, like where am I in the pecking
15 order? And in return --

16 We did a Tools for Tolerance for
17 Teens in -- and I would invite you to
18 come to the New York Tolerance Center.
19 It's an amazing venue. Whole
20 communities have come to the New York
21 Tolerance Center to envision, you know,
22 who they want to be; what kind of men
23 and women and children do they want to
24 be.

25 We have teen programs, of course,

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2 as well, and the -- this one little
3 girl said, Okay. Well, we can't call
4 anybody -- we can't say -- gay can't be
5 negative, and you can't call anybody
6 negative about their religion. You
7 can't -- what if we, like, make up a
8 word?

9 This is one of the top three

10 percent in the country that -- or top
11 two percent -- you're struggling to make
12 up a word for hating someone when you
13 call somebody blah, blah, blah.

14 She said something, Well, is lame
15 okay?

16 I said, Why would lame be okay?
17 Why are we making fun of somebody
18 because they're limping? You've never
19 limped? You know, are you defined by
20 limping, or what does limping have to do
21 with who you are?

22 She couldn't wrap herself around --
23 a very high IQ, very high-performing kid
24 from a very high-performing school
25 district that is pretty ethnically and

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2 linguistically diverse, and she could
3 not wrap herself around the notion that
4 they couldn't have a word to put people
5 down.

6 Well, what if you feel like putting
7 people down?

8 You couldn't feel like it.

9 You could also feel like pulling
10 your clothes off. You're not going to

11 do i t.

12 LEGI SLATOR GREGORY: Ri ght.

13 MS. RI CHIN: You know, i t' s an
14 oppor tuni ty for i mpul se control .
15 I mpul se control and doi ng the ri ght
16 thi ng at the ri ght reas on even i f -- for
17 the ri ght reas on even i f no one else i s
18 ever goi ng to know.

19 LEGI SLATOR GREGORY: Ri ght.

20 I thi nk -- I thi nk i t' s part of the
21 human condi ti on --

22 MS. RI CHIN: I t i s.

23 LEGI SLATOR GREGORY: -- to kind of
24 i denti fy peopl e. Whether negati vel y or
25 posi ti vel y --

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2 MS. RI CHIN: That' s ri ght.

3 LEGI SLATOR GREGORY: -- and I thi nk
4 you' re tal ki ng to that.

5 MS. RI CHIN: My own ni ece started a
6 li ttle gang i n Remsenburg out of
7 nowhere. A li ttle gang.

8 You can only wear these col ors --

9 She' s i sn' t -- she' s 12. Curly red
10 hai r, and you have a gang. Not good.

11 You know, you can come to the
12 birthday party, you can't; you can talk
13 to her, you can't. Little control
14 freak.

15 She's doing this because her family
16 went through whatever conflict; her
17 father was in jail and all sorts of
18 other issues.

19 The displaced anger that children
20 bring into school, and acting out is
21 really defined as displaced anger, it
22 manifests itself in all kinds of ways.
23 But human beings tend to want to be, I'm
24 better than this person; you know,
25 you've got this, I've got this car. You

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2 know, we're going to sort of sort each
3 other out by who we are in relation to
4 the other human.

5 I am very optimistic that for the
6 most part we don't have to do that.

7 We can get 100,000 people in a
8 Texas stadium, have opposing teams and a
9 lot of beer, and everyone goes home
10 peacefully.

11 I can go to a Yankee game and not
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12 kill anyone from the Red Socks.

13 So if you know how to do the things
14 that are expected of you -- millions of
15 people go back and forth on the road,
16 they don't hurt each other.

17 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Right.

18 MS. RICHIN: If the social
19 infrastructure is clear, and we are
20 concrete and specific about what we
21 expect people to do and say with each
22 other, what is okay and what is not, not
23 by metaphor, not by being judgmental,
24 not by saying you aren't a good enough
25 person because you hate folks --

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2 everybody hates somebody sometimes.
3 They normalize that. They say this is
4 how we behave no matter how we feel.
5 Feeling is different than doing.

6 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Now, you
7 bring up an interesting point. You said
8 that -- just to go back a little bit,
9 about -- you don't feel that the parents
10 have an influence.

11 Well --

12 MS. RICHIN: I do feel parents have
13 an influence. I think that parents are
14 as likely to learn from their children
15 as their children are to learn from the
16 parents.

17 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Say that
18 again.

19 MS. RICHIN: I think the premise of
20 a little child will lead them is
21 correct. So I find that parents in --
22 in my -- I'm 56 years old. I'm a baby
23 boomer. My generation of parents is
24 much more likely to change its behavior
25 based on its children's choices than the

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2 other way around.

3 If you look at the way Madison
4 Avenue behaves, and you look at how cars
5 get sold, vacations get sold, even homes
6 get sold, it's does the child like it,
7 and is the parent going to support -- is
8 the parent going to have a good time now
9 because the child likes it?

10 It's really quite extraordinary,
11 the children have an enormous influence
12 on the previous generation.

13 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay. Good.

14 MS. RICHI N: I do believe, though,
15 that parents are immensely influential
16 in what they say.

17 I mean, we had a situation with a
18 kid setting a fire where the mother
19 said, You know, if it wasn't for all
20 these people, you know, you would be
21 able to have your sports program. So
22 the kid decided to express his
23 displeasure, you know, by -- the mother
24 was horrified. She said, I never
25 thought that it would -- those words

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2 would turn into actions.

3 Thoughts turn into words, words
4 turn into action. Opportunity for
5 impulse control.

6 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: That leads to
7 my next question, and you had referenced
8 before to Mr. Dees --

9 MS. RICHI N: Morris Dees.

10 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: -- Morris Dees
11 with the -- the Southern Law Poverty
12 Center and their report, The Time of

13

Fear --

14

MS. RICHI N: Yeah. There's a whole

15

other story.

16

LEGISLATOR GREGORY: -- and -- and

17

his inferences that, you know, some of

18

the statements that politicians have

19

made could possibly have caused some of

20

the animosity, you know, that has led

21

to, you know, the -- particularly as

22

it -- towards the Latino community, and

23

very possibly, some of the hate crimes.

24

Now, I'm curious about what your

25

thoughts would be considering that

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you've -- that you -- is it your opinion

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that the parents don't necessarily have

4

an influence over the children's actions

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as it relates to hate crimes? How would

6

you feel about third party's influence

7

as it relates to those same actions?

8

MS. RICHI N: I think there's a kind

9

of synergy that happens, and I'll tell

10

you a brief story.

11

A little boy, middle school child

12

in a district I'm not going to name,

13

whose dad was a Nazi and a committed

14 hater. He hadn't committed hate crimes
15 that anybody knew, but he was --
16 certainly, plenty of tattoos would say
17 this was a man who had his life -- his
18 whole social world was built around --
19 around whatever. He wasn't, you know,
20 and everybody else was.

21 Anyway, this father wanted to talk
22 with me because he was outraged that I
23 was perpetrating only a partial point of
24 view about the Holocaust in some
25 programs that we were offering -- as

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2 well as slavery in some programs that we
3 were offering in the school district.

4 And so I worked with the principal
5 and -- actually, it was a member of a
6 gang, and he -- a white gang, and he
7 said to the principal, Sir, in deference
8 to your authority, I've left my colors
9 on my bike.

10 And later on the principal said,
11 You know, not for nothing, Roberta, but
12 nobody really does anything in deference
13 to my authority.

14 So -- this guy, all bad, you know?
15 It's kind of a joke.
16 But what I said to this gentleman
17 was, You can count on us to fulfill our
18 role in implementing the curriculum as
19 it's envisioned by your Board of
20 Education and the State Education
21 Department. We count on you to teach
22 your children what you believe. We
23 count on your child to create knowledge
24 and to move forward and sort all that
25 out. Would you like to see your son's

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2 work?
3 And later on when the boy went to
4 his guidance counselor to sort of deal
5 with some of this stuff, he was
6 embarrassed that his father came. He
7 said, My father's crazy, but I really
8 love my dad. And he had
9 compartmentalized, and -- and I found
10 that children are -- are extremely
11 vulnerable to being seduced by all kinds
12 of ideas, both at home and elsewhere,
13 and that while I'm -- you know, that
14 notion about people --

15 We know kids go for a Happy Meal if
16 it has broccoli in it and if it had --
17 if there's candy, but as a piece of
18 broccoli on the outside, they won't do
19 it. You know, they're influenced by the
20 way people market to them; whether the
21 marketer is the parent or the community
22 or somewhere else.

23 By the same token, I think there is
24 synergy in this county, like carefully
25 selected words used by people in

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2 political power to divide folks. I
3 think it's a -- it's a historically
4 successful way to win an election. To
5 do a wink and a nod and say, we know
6 about those people, and then you get to
7 run and nobody even opposes you.

8 I don't really know that that's
9 actually -- the notion that you're
10 running when you're unopposed means more
11 like you're sitting, but at any rate --
12 (Laughter)

13 MS. RICHIN: -- this is -- I
14 believe that words do have power and

15 consequences, and I -- I believe that
16 these are -- that we have to choose them
17 carefully, and great harm can happen,
18 and great good can happen. That your
19 bully pulpit is huge.

20 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Now, is
21 that -- do you think -- I've always kind
22 of thought that maybe that -- the
23 political leader standpoint had more of
24 an influence over the parents which, you
25 know, stirs kitchen table talk where the

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2 kids are present and they kind of -- not
3 maybe actively engage, but passively,
4 you know, interpret, perceive this
5 information that they act out that way,
6 or is it just the political banter kind
7 of leads a community type of -- I don't
8 want to say frenzy, but atmosphere where
9 it's not positive and the children that
10 way kind of feed into it?

11 Because I -- I would bet that, as a
12 politician, you know, 99.999 percent of
13 kids out there don't know who the heck I
14 am. Maybe a little bit more will know
15 who Steve Levy or someone else --

16 MS. RICHI N: Maybe you need to work
17 on that.

18 LEGI SLATOR GREGORY: Yes, but
19 that's my personal problem.

20 MS. RICHI N: Well, maybe what we
21 need is for children to have a youth
22 legislator -- you know, a youth
23 legislature. Let them -- let them --

24 I'd be really happy to talk about
25 that with you.

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2 LEGI SLATOR GREGORY: Right.

3 MS. RICHI N: That would be a way,
4 you know, just for them to know that
5 you're part of running the county
6 government.

7 LEGI SLATOR GREGORY: Right.

8 MS. RICHI N: What's the diversity
9 in our county government.

10 LEGI SLATOR GREGORY: Right.

11 MS. RICHI N: You know, which would
12 be a great conversation. I'd love to
13 bring you to Smithtown, like, tomorrow.

14 LEGI SLATOR GREGORY: All right.

15 MS. RICHI N: But -- but that's

16 it -- or Miller Place or wherever. But
17 that's it.

18 Your question is extremely
19 compelling and very interesting, and I
20 don't know -- I don't think I'm smart
21 enough to answer it. What I will say is
22 that, completely, I do --

23 I'll take an example of Bill
24 Clinton. When Bill Clinton looked into
25 the camera and said, I did not have sex

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2 or sexual relations with that woman, he
3 changed forever the way children look at
4 sexual contact.

5 So what I know for sure is that
6 when it's on TV and when it's on the
7 Internet, and when it becomes part of
8 the joke cycle, it changes people's
9 behavior.

10 I saw a size mix shift in the
11 health education and the HIV/Aids
12 education that I did in the way kids
13 perceived sexual contact based on that
14 comment. And it's also the way adults
15 do as well. There is this weird kind of
16 separation.

17 By the same token, I believe that
18 happens when somebody, who they may not
19 be able to name, but who's -- it's --
20 it's -- my father has an expression --
21 he's 90 this year, so I touch base from
22 time to time for some wisdom. He has an
23 expression, it's in the air. You know,
24 and -- and you can feel hate. You
25 can -- you can feel it like when you go

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2 into a store and you're not welcome,
3 they just talk about their husbands or
4 something, and then they -- or when you
5 walk into a household and people were
6 fighting, and you just can't wait to go.
7 When you walk into a neighborhood
8 where you know you're not welcome, you
9 can feel it. And people got permission
10 to -- to -- and they may not have known
11 the source, but it was viral.
12 So the work that I do with the
13 Council for Prejudice Reduction, and
14 that everybody who's a member does, is
15 appreciate the power of a catalyst, and
16 how a catalyst can lead to a contagious

17 and considerate culture. So that goes
18 to, here's our capacity to hate and our
19 opportunity to hate, and is the niche
20 strong, or does the niche shrink, and is
21 the catalyst going to be for good, or is
22 it going to be for destructiveness and
23 the otherness, the meanness? And I
24 believe that the conversations you were
25 talking about were catalysts to hate.

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2 It's an opinion. I'm not speaking for
3 the organization, but I think the
4 majority of people who are members would
5 agree.

6 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay. Thank
7 you.

8 Anybody else have any questions or
9 comments?

10 (WHEREUPON, there was no response.)

11 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: Okay.

12 Thank you so much. I really
13 enjoyed your comments.

14 MS. RICHIN: I appreciate it.

15 LEGISLATOR GREGORY: All right.

16 Thank you. Have a good night.

17 Okay. We stand adjourned. We'll
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18 be -- my office will be in touch with
19 the -- try to get some dates for the
20 next meeting.

21 Okay. Thank you.

22 (WHEREUPON, this proceeding was
23 adjourned at 7:43 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

5

6 I, THERESA PAPE, a Shorthand Reporter and
7 Notary Public of the State of New York, do hereby
8 certify:

9 That the foregoing is a true and accurate
10 transcription of the stenographic notes taken
11 herein.

12 I further certify that I am not related to
13 any of the parties to this action by blood or
14 marriage; and that I am in no way interested in the
15 outcome of this matter.

16 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my
17 hand this 25th day of May 2010.

052510 Hate Crimes TF.TXT

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THERESA PAPE

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