

LCPL Orlondre Lawrence
Camp Johnson, North Carolina
Interviewer: L.J. Kimball
9 August 1999
Page 1 of 30

L.J. Kimball: Lance Corporal, what is your name?

LCPL Lawrence: Orlondre Lawrence, sir.

L.J. Kimball: Orlondre Lawrence, is that a French name?

LCPL Lawrence: Yes sir.

L.J. Kimball: Did your parents have some kind of French heritage?

LCPL Lawrence: I was told that on my mother's side, not actually confirmed. I am trying to go to London next year so I can possibly look it up while I am there for a year of duty.

L.J. Kimball: Is that Marine Barracks?

LCPL Lawrence: It is actually Marine Corps Security Forces.

L.J. Kimball: That's interesting. So, off the top of your head, you do not know the origin of that name?

LCPL Lawrence: No sir.

L.J. Kimball: Other than the fact that somewhere in there you have a French person in your family tree?

LCPL Lawrence: From what I understand, yes sir.

L.J. Kimball: And you are black?

LCPL Lawrence: Yes sir.

L.J. Kimball: Where were you born?

LCPL Lawrence: In Nashville, Tennessee.

L.J. Kimball: When?

LCPL Lawrence: That was in 1974, April 17.

LCPL Orlondre Lawrence
Camp Johnson, North Carolina
Interviewer: L.J. Kimball
9 August 1999
Page 2 of 30

L.J. Kimball: April 1974. I like to pause every once in a while when people tell me when they were born. I was a Major in 1974 and you were just being born.

LCPL Lawrence: (laughs)

L.J. Kimball: Well that's the way it works.

LCPL Lawrence: Yes sir.

L.J. Kimball: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

LCPL Lawrence: One brother and two sisters. They were all older than me. Yes sir.

L.J. Kimball: What were your parents like?

LCPL Lawrence: They were your basic, middle class, shelter the family-type family. Very religious. My father was a minister. My mother singer/songwriter.

L.J. Kimball: Would I have heard her name?

LCPL Lawrence: Possibly. She has had a few, maybe 2 or 3 songs recorded in Chicago. I cannot off the hand remember which one. She used to work with Kenneth Hendrix I believe from when I was growing up.

L.J. Kimball: That's not the same person as Jimi Hendrix is it?

LCPL Lawrence: No sir.

L.J. Kimball: Did your mother record under the name Lawrence?

LCPL Lawrence: Yes sir. She is under BMI.

L.J. Kimball: Okay. Your father being a minister, you weren't allowed to run free on the streets and he kept a pretty close watch on you?

LCPL Lawrence: No sir. The funny thing is that out of the other oldest kids, I was the first one to actually attempt to cross the street and play across the street. So it was extremely sheltering at a young age.

L.J. Kimball: Where are your parents from?

LCPL Orlondre Lawrence
Camp Johnson, North Carolina
Interviewer: L.J. Kimball
9 August 1999
Page 3 of 30

LCPL Lawrence: They are both from Middle Tennessee. They are both originally from Franklin, Tennessee. It is considered part of Metro Nashville now, but it was a small town at the time when I was young.

L.J. Kimball: Did you know there was a famous Civil War battle fought there?

LCPL Lawrence: Yes sir. There is a big history thing in Franklin.

L.J. Kimball: Did you go to school all of your life in Nashville?

LCPL Lawrence: Yes sir. Well, actually I attended school in Franklin and graduated from Franklin High School in 1992, went off to Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) that is in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and it is a pretty big university. It's a good college. I went there for a year but financial problems caused me to leave. I did the work a job thing for about three years. I went back to school.

L.J. Kimball: What did you do when you worked?

LCPL Lawrence: Basically managerial work or sales. I worked at a couple of fast-food restaurants and did sales for a beefing company, beef packaging company. Then I decided to get back into school and went back to school for another year. When I first went to school President Bush was there and he was just coming into his last year in 1992 and then when I went back to school President Clinton had already changed a lot of things like with the student loans and student grants and I found out that had I stayed in school the first time, I would have came out a whole lot better.

L.J. Kimball: What year was it that you went back to school?

LCPL Lawrence: I believe it was 1995. Yes. Then I stayed through the spring of 1996. Then that summer I was sitting at home one day and just watching TV and got to the point where I said "Gosh" the bills were there and I had no alternative and felt like, it was a Saturday morning about 8 o'clock and I was awakened by my sister as I was living in her apartment. My sister Lori, she screamed my name, I woke up and two minutes later I was holding the phone calling all the four different armed services and leaving messages on the answering machines.

L.J. Kimball: Why was it that Lori was waking you up that morning? Was it some kind of emergency?

LCPL Orlondre Lawrence
Camp Johnson, North Carolina
Interviewer: L.J. Kimball
9 August 1999
Page 4 of 30

LCPL Lawrence: No she was just waking me up early for some reason, I can't remember exactly why.

L.J. Kimball: But whatever it was, you associated that with calling the armed services and leaving messages?

LCPL Lawrence: Yes sir. Let's see, I called the Navy first, then I called the Army. I do not actually recall calling the Air Force and then my last call was to the Marines. It took me a while before I could actually bring myself to calling the Marines because I was thinking that after talking to friends, they were like you know "those guys are crazy, they're just killing machines and not even human anymore." I went ahead and called and I thought I was going to get an answering machine but I think that was my first taste to find out that the Marine Corps is always working.

L.J. Kimball: So with all the other services you got a recording but with the Marines you got a person on the other end of the phone.

LCPL Lawrence: Right. It was Gunnery Sergeant Neace. Well, actually, he was Staff Sergeant Darrell Neace at the time. He was working at the recruiting station down in Murfreesboro and he answered the phone like he was my own brother and then before we even got deep into the conversation he was asking me "where are you at? I'll come by and pick you up." So I put clothes on real quick and went over to the station. He got some work done and we sat and talked for a while and it just started there. He just devoted and made sure that I got enlisted despite the fact that I had a couple of waivers. He was just working through them to make sure that I got in and once I saw that he wasn't giving up, I just got to the point where I was like "I'm definitely going through with it" because the first time I ever thought of joining was prior to the second time that I went back to MTSU and I called the Navy. I went down there to test and then I said "no that is not what I want to do." I had seen older Navy personnel and you know, not knocking the Navy, but if you see a Marine from the outside as a civilian, you look at a Marine even if they are retired or done, there is just a total difference than when you see retired personnel from other forces. Most of your retired Marines are going to stay in shape, for some reason, I don't understand it right now but I am sure I will some day why Marines always hold themselves differently.

L.J. Kimball: After you have done that for 30 years you find that it becomes a habit.

LCPL Lawrence: That is why I am thinking that you probably just get in a rut and your body knows to exercise every other day.

L.J. Kimball: Plus you can get into good habits just like you can get into bad habits.

LCPL Lawrence: Yes sir. I have seen where some of the people I have worked with got into bad habits. They were good Marines but they associated with the wrong crowd and things on different bases change different faces.

L.J. Kimball: Well, let's get back to that later because I am interested as to what Marines are doing these days. Lets go back first to your childhood and then we will go back to where we left off. In your childhood, during the time that you were growing up, did you experience anything that you recognized as discrimination or being treated differently because you were black?

LCPL Lawrence: Yes. In my mom's home town it has changed some, but it is the buckle of Bible Belt and I guess that it did have some influence on me joining because you look at where I was growing up, it is basically considered one of your higher rate towns. You know, people wish they could live there because of the cost of living and everything is pretty high there in Franklin and Brentwood, Tennessee. Brentwood being where most of your country music singers live and that's from I understand, the highest price town in the Southeastern U.S. But, growing up it is like and is still this way, say that if you saw a mixed couple, that is very taboo in Middle Tennessee or say if you want to hang out with a white friend or an Asian friend that was a really good friend as opposed to your counterparts, they were right there with you, that was also looked down on. Like I said, maybe it has changed less than what I think it is, but I think it has changed a lot. I saw that in 1984 this really got to me and in 1984 there was a riot in Franklin, Tennessee, on Halloween where a white male was pulled out of his car and beaten to death in the middle of the street on Natchez. It took forever before white people would ever ride down Natchez. They would drive all the way around just to get where they were going and nobody really wanted to go down through that street for a while because of what happened and the riot went over on another side where there were individuals in a truck that shot at someone in a phone booth just because of the color of their skin.

L.J. Kimball: Was the person in the phone booth black or the person shooting from the truck black?

LCPL Lawrence: The person that was shooting was black.

L.J. Kimball: And they shot at someone white in the phone booth.

LCPL Orlondre Lawrence
Camp Johnson, North Carolina
Interviewer: L.J. Kimball
9 August 1999
Page 6 of 30

LCPL Lawrence: Yes sir. I was only a kid at the time and was at home and we heard all the sirens but did not understand what was going on. We later found out that for that night, the only thing that mattered was the color of somebody's skin and that was one thing that influenced me and the way that I think now.

L.J. Kimball: Do you recall what caused the riot?

LCPL Lawrence: I can't actually remember but all I can remember is the fact that even my parents, my dad was the minister of the church, the pastor of the church right down the street from where it happened and I can recall him saying that no matter what the color of someone's skin, if it would have been him he would have ran right over the person blocking the street and he was saying that he wished that the guy [meaning the white male] would have just run over the person that was standing in front of him, because the person standing in front of the car was stopping the car while everyone else tried to get him [the white male] out.

L.J. Kimball: You said that this partially influenced your decision to go into the Armed Services?

LCPL Lawrence: I think that this did have an effect because in Middle Tennessee I felt like no matter where you go, you have prejudice. I had an uncle that was in the army and I had other people that were in the Army tell me about the Army and they said that if you do want to go into the armed forces you do not want to go into the Army because they do not promote blacks the way the Marine Corps will. I think that had a great influence in swaying me to make sure that I would go into the Marine Corps if I did because of promotion and the chance, it is not a double standard. At the same time that I say that, I can still say that sometimes it seems like it is a little harder.

L.J. Kimball: A little harder to be black?

LCPL Lawrence: Sometimes I feel that way.

L.J. Kimball: Did you feel that way then or do you still feel that way?

LCPL Lawrence: I still feel that way.

L.J. Kimball: That day that you called the recruiters, was your principle motivation at the time to get a steady paycheck?

LCPL Orlondre Lawrence
Camp Johnson, North Carolina
Interviewer: L.J. Kimball
9 August 1999
Page 7 of 30

LCPL Lawrence: Actually, I think that the reason that I talked to, I hope that he is a Master Sergeant by now because he was probably about the best recruiter there is. Darrell Neace, I think that the reason that I talked to him was because I was really angry for being awakened that early and for some reason I was thinking that there is so much out here that makes it difficult and I could put myself in the Marine Corps and go through the 12 weeks of torture and then just shell out another 3 years and 9 months and it would not be a problem. My intention at first on that morning was to sign up for two years. I got down there and he said that there was only a four year contract and I was kind of shaky on that but I agreed and thought that after four years if I want to stay in I can stay and if I want to get out I'd get out. I have always, other than my parents taking us different places, I have always been around the small town and have always liked the small town. But it seems like some small towns do not grow intellectually to look beyond the color of someone's skin. I had a conversation with a friend of mine and I just posed a question and asked "I wonder what kind of person we end up with if everybody was blind and nobody could see color. What kind of person would we be?" This was maybe two days ago and I still have something instilled in my mind that one day everybody will just look to each other the same. I did notice growing up that there is something about black people and white people in America. They have animosity towards each other, but not against the other races for some reason. I don't understand that because of something that happened last month can still drive me to hate somebody this month.

L.J. Kimball: When did you sign up for the Marine Corps? What was the date you enlisted?

LCPL Lawrence: Actually, after almost a year of working I finally raised my hand at the Nashville MEPS 3/31/97.

L.J. Kimball: What does MEPS stand for?

LCPL Lawrence: Not sure what it stands for. [Military Entrance and Processing Station]

L.J. Kimball: So Gunnery Sergeant Neace black or white?

LCPL Lawrence: White.

L.J. Kimball: Okay. And you say that after working for a year after your initial visit to the Gunny it took you a year to get into the Marine Corps?

LCPL Orlondre Lawrence
Camp Johnson, North Carolina
Interviewer: L.J. Kimball
9 August 1999
Page 8 of 30

LCPL Lawrence: Almost. Almost a year. We started in the summer of 1996 and we had gone up to MEPS and I had done everything to try to get in and was just about to give up and I got up there and they told me I needed to lose 2 lb. When I first looked at the Military I was weighing 225 lb. and I wasn't even muscle, it was all fat. I went up there and had to basically almost dehydrate myself just to get in and I fought and did all that to get in, running 5 miles a day everyday and finally got underweight but I passed out right there in the recruiters room where everybody else was about to get sworn in. We were just about to walk out into the room and they held me back and I missed going to what I thought was first battalion but everything got switched to Second Battalion. It was a group of good guys and then they sent me the following week. Me and Gunny Neace were just adamant about making sure we got up there and everything went good. He then said "This week I am going to get you in, I promised you this the whole time." He stayed out there to make sure that everything went good and he just looked over me to make sure everything went fine.

L.J. Kimball: You said that you and the Gunny had to work through a couple of waivers. Is this the reason that it took a year for you to get into the Marine Corps?

LCPL Lawrence: Well actually yes, I think so, because we signed for the police records to be released and we signed for the education records to be released. The police record came back but the education records from MTSU were held off and then for some other reason, which I don't understand why, it took so long.

L.J. Kimball: Did you have to get a waiver on your police record?

LCPL Lawrence: Yes sir.

L.J. Kimball: Was there anything else you had to get a waiver on that you recall?

LCPL Lawrence: Negative. The one problem that kept me from getting an enlistment bonus was that I had a misdemeanor back in the day, I forgot when it was, it was probably in 1993 and they told me it had gone off my record after three years but I turned it in anyway and there was a possession of a small firearm that someone had handed me and for some stupid reason I kept it and it was sitting there when the person got pulled over down the street. The police came back and the person who had it got it and it haunted me later but that was just in my past.

L.J. Kimball: How long after you were sworn in did you end up in Boot Camp?

LCPL Orlondre Lawrence
Camp Johnson, North Carolina
Interviewer: L.J. Kimball
9 August 1999
Page 9 of 30

LCPL Lawrence: I stayed in the delayed entry program until 4/28 I went to Parris Island.

L.J. Kimball: 4/28/96?

LCPL Lawrence: 4/28/97 sir.

L.J. Kimball: What did you think of Boot Camp?

LCPL Lawrence: When I first got there I was told that I was going to Second Battalion and all the recruiters said it was a good thing I got in that week because if I had gotten in the next week I would have gone into the Third Battalion. I was relieved, I did not want to go into Third Battalion.

L.J. Kimball: Why would you not want to go into the Third Battalion and why is Second Battalion a good thing.

LCPL Lawrence: Well, First Battalion on Parris Island is the best because you are sitting there right by the General's building. There is not much that a drill instructor can do under wraps at First Battalion with all of those officers walking around. Second Battalion is the second closest so maybe once in a while you might find yourself getting pushed a little. Third Battalion, I never to this day I still have never see the Commanding General of Parris Island the whole three months that I was there. The highest rank I saw was the Lieutenant Colonel Strain I believe and that was the only Lieutenant Colonel I saw and I only saw him once and that was it. Then over in Third Battalion you are in the middle of nowhere. None of the other officers come by. Once we got there, I had already seen the map, they told us exactly what battalion and the address we were going to. When they said Third Battalion, I looked up like "Oh my god I got the worst of the worse." I got over there and sure enough.

L.J. Kimball: You got over in Third Battalion.

LCPL Lawrence: Yes when we dropped our platoon that weekend. Sure enough, everything was peachy keen. Then we got out to Third Battalion and got dropped off at our platoon. Senior Drill Instructor Sergeant McColgan and the First Drill Instructor was Sergeant Henry and the next Drill Instructor was Sgt. Beiser. Senior Drill Instructor Sergeant McColgan, he kind of devoted against his own will spending time with me because I was one of the fat bodies. At the end he finally told me that I would be going into a MOS that didn't exercise enough so he told me ahead of time to exercise on my own plus whatever

your unit does. To this day I take that last word that he told me to heart. He didn't give you the best pros and cons [Proficiency and Conduct Marks] out of Boot Camp, they still kind of haunt me, except I have never gotten less than 46 [that is, a 4.6 out of a possible 5] since Boot Camp and I think my life at Boot Camp helped make me what I am and how I feel that I should be towards Marines now. I have toned down what they have taught me, because in Third Battalion like I said, fighting is the thing and . . .

L.J. Kimball: What do you mean fighting? Being a Marine and fighting for your country or fighting between yourselves?

LCPL Lawrence: Fighting Marines. You know, you had your drill instructor, two drill instructors on the same parade deck at the same time and the recruits were always cutting eyes because we knew what was going to end up happening eventually. You had certain platoons that were just wanting to rip the other platoons head off like we were, 30-57 and 30-56 we were always at each other. All the other platoons would possibly pick a fight with one of our platoons and that would be the only time that you would get 56 and 57 to stand by each other. It was more so that we were brothers and we fight because we want to fight and hurt each other but nobody else can.

L.J. Kimball: You say that once you got out of Boot Camp you toned down a little bit, do you mean that you don't feel quite so aggressive and wanting to fight different units?

LCPL Lawrence: Well, we first got here at Camp Johnson in 8/97 and our testosterone was still pumping pretty heavily. So, the people who knew each other, the east coast Marines really did not know the West coast Marines too much, that is Camp Pendleton. In school, you had instances where East coast Marines could say something to each other but if the West coast Marines said it, there was a fight right afterwards. Our instructor got fed up because our class had the most fights out of all PA schools classes at the time and that was Staff Sergeant Holzworth at that time.

L.J. Kimball: Tape 1, Side 2

LCPL Lawrence: He is still an instructor down there. He basically told us that was it and I am done with baby-sitting and having to watch and keep you guys from fighting all the time. No matter where you go you beat the crap out of somebody. I took it upon myself cause he was standing there, Gunny Castille, Staff Sergeant General were all standing in the room and asking "what's wrong

with you all? We have never seen a group fight as much as you all?” I took it on myself to tell him why, and told him that was all we were taught and that’s what we were told. You know, you don’t say it, you don’t use the page 11 [the page in the Service Record Book where administrative remarks, such as being counseled, are made], you don’t counsel a person. The way you counsel them is that if their face takes enough dirt, consider them counseled. I think there’s still that aggression is out of me sometimes but I think that’s what keeps me PT-ing all the time because I burn it off.

L.J. Kimball: This aggression, you think it came from Boot Camp?

LCPL Lawrence: Well, coming here and finding out that some of the drill instructors were Motor-T kind of makes me wonder if I will ever see Sergeant Henry again. You know, me and him weren’t the best friends and I think that I can go as far as saying that considering we were all in maybe about 50 miles apart, our houses, he is from Middle Tennessee and I’m from Middle Tennessee, I think that kind of helped to fuel the fire. Around from where he was from was Cookeville, that’s Klan country, and you basically put up a guard when you find out that somebody is from Cookeville or Crossville.

L.J. Kimball: You mean if they’re white.

LCPL Lawrence: Right. If they are white and they’re from Cookeville or Crossville you basically want to look around and make sure that they are in view if they are around. We had one scuffle where we got into it on the quarter Deck privately while the rest of the platoon was in the head and I don’t think we ever really finished that. They told us before we went that it was illegal to touch a recruit, for a drill instructor to touch a recruit or curse, scream or holler at a recruit singly. I went back and told my recruiters “you might want to change that brief that you told everybody because I got touched, screamed and hollered at and I touched back.”

L.J. Kimball: Well, first of all, how did you know that when you showed up at Boot Camp that the First Battalion was the best and the Third was the worse. How did you find that out?

LCPL Lawrence: They showed me on the map where the battalions were and where the General’s building sits and you got First, Second and Fourth Battalion, the female battalion, that circles around the front yard so to speak of the General’s building. Third Battalion is a little bit down the street. I think that

I saw the graduating parade maybe three times the whole time that I was at Third Battalion.

L.J. Kimball: So was it Gunny Neace that told you to stay away from the Third Battalion if you could?

LCPL Lawrence: Yes sir.

L.J. Kimball: Did you find while you were at Boot Camp that all Marines were green or did you ever get the impression that you were being treated differently because you were black?

LCPL Lawrence: Well, you had to have noticed that the majority of the black Marines they kind of stuck together and the majority of the white Marines did. There was about half of us that were like "the heck with it." We are all dying here you know, why not die together. I can remember McCracken, I don't even remember what his MOS was and I hope that I see him someday, McCracken is from Tennessee, a country boy and a good guy. He is a white guy and we were pretty cool together. We were both fat bodies at the beginning but we both got it taken off at the end because we fought it tooth and nail and I still believe that he is probably still in and doing good. I never thought I could get along so well with a white guy from East Tennessee. It is a rule that if you get pulled over by the police halfway between Knoxville, Chattanooga or Nashville, you go ahead and take the police with you. There was another guy that was buddies with McCracken but he fit the stereotype.

L.J. Kimball: Getting back to the question, did you notice that you were treated differently because you were black at Boot Camp?

LCPL Lawrence: By the drill instructors?

L.J. Kimball: Yes or by the other recruits.

LCPL Lawrence: There were a couple of recruits that I really don't think got a chance to live around the opposite color or what have you because they were young and straight out of high school and I can say that I really did not have the key to their home, their upbringing.

L.J. Kimball: But the drill instructors treated you like any other Marine? Did they treat all the black Marines like white Marines and all were treated the same, is that your impression of Boot Camp?

LCPL Orlondre Lawrence
Camp Johnson, North Carolina
Interviewer: L.J. Kimball
9 August 1999
Page 13 of 30

LCPL Lawrence: I think so because it is like we were all dirt to the drill instructors. A good example is, my senior drill instructor had three different Platoon Guides and the first one was Hispanic from Puerto Rico named Perez, the second one was Mink who works at Intel now and was a white guy and the third one was a black guy and I can't remember his name and I think he kind of hurt it for all the other black guys, because like the older Marines would say, he was not too manly.

L.J. Kimball: And he was selected as a guide.

LCPL Lawrence: Yes but he could PT better than everybody else in the platoon. He basically could not swim but could run the fastest, pull up more than the best and do sit-ups. The only fault that we looked at cause everybody was like, even though they are drill instructors and the other platoons were like "how could that be your guide?" and that he was basically homosexual.

L.J. Kimball: Was he really or did he just act that way?

LCPL Lawrence: Oh he was. He was. I can't remember his name but that was my first view of homosexuals in the military. No one really wanted to shower at the same time that he did and basically when he got in the shower, everybody left and said they'd get the second half tomorrow and got out.

L.J. Kimball: Did he graduate from Boot Camp?

LCPL Lawrence: I am not positive. He was still there when I left because he got dropped a week behind. He started out in the First Battalion and then he got dropped to Third Battalion and then he got dropped again to Second Battalion.

L.J. Kimball: Do you have an recollection why he was dropped.

LCPL Lawrence: He had his mother die while he was there, he had his brother die while he was there. Like I said, he couldn't swim too well.

L.J. Kimball: In Third Battalion, did you have drill instructors lay hands on you other than maybe just putting a finger in your chest, did they push you around and beat up on you and that sort of thing?

LCPL Lawrence: I say this and I am not really sure if I really want to but to tell the honest truth because silence is a lie, so I can go ahead and tell you that yes without saying names. You had certain drill instructors that basically you felt like you were

choked out or maybe your head got banged up against a brick wall a couple of times too many. I still ask people that were in another battalion, I ask them if they went through that and a lot of them look at me like I am crazy.

L.J. Kimball: If you found yourself as a drill instructor, would you think it acceptable to lay hands on the recruits based on that experience.

LCPL Lawrence: I fought with that all through school and all through my first year in the Marine Corps and I have come to the conclusion that because of the way that I came through the Marine Corps, I think it best that I don't go to recruit depot to drill. I think it's best to find something else to do.

L.J. Kimball: You think you might be inclined to lay hands on a recruit once in a while?

LCPL Lawrence: Well, I feel that drill instructors do what they are taught and the best way of being taught is going through something. A lot of those drill instructors were previous Third Battalion and if you ever see a Third Battalion drill instructor look to his left and to his right real quick and they look back at you, you knew you were about to get hit. So, you either tightened your stomach or bit down with your teeth. That's how they do it.

L.J. Kimball: What MOS [Military Occupational Specialty] did you get out of Boot Camp?

LCPL Lawrence: I was supposed to be 4421.

L.J. Kimball: Which is?

LCPL Lawrence: That is supposed to be a Legal Clerk and my goal was to be a Legal Specialist and then possibly go into the officer program and become a lawyer while in the Marine Corps. However, there were three people in my entire company that were for 4421 and we got to Camp Geiger and the Master Sergeant over there had to make a decision.

L.J. Kimball: So you left Boot Camp with a 4400 MOS then.

LCPL Lawrence: Yes sir. He had to make a decision between the three of us who he was going to put in 4400. All three of us were black. The master sergeant was black, but the scores that we had were counted different because I was told with the GT [General Technical] score that I had, whatever job I asked for I would get and that helped me stay adamant about coming in. No disrespect to the guy who got selected, but he got selected because he was the Honor Graduate at Boot Camp. It did not matter the fact that I came in contract PFC because if

they were doing it by rank, then my contract date says April that I have been a PFC. I confronted the Master Sergeant right there in front of the entire group. It was the only time that I got pissed off about my score. I said "I guarantee you that I know I'll beat him." If you do it by PFT, he has got me there, but one out of three is not the rule. It is two out of three. That was the decision that I made and they gave me 0121 which is SRB [Service Record Book] Clerk, well actually it is Personnel Clerk now because they changed it but I mean, there were three of us and the one who did not get selected along with myself he has already been kicked out because of drug use. The guy who did get selected failed out of the class and was made a Supply Clerk and then I got here and graduated at the top of my class.

L.J. Kimball: At Personnel Clerk School?

LCPL Lawrence: Yes sir. I don't know if the fact that . . . I can't really tell why I just went in and graduated at the top of my class because I was basically bored. It gave me something to do and I think that as long as I am learning something new I want to continue.

L.J. Kimball: When you left Boot Camp, did your attitude towards the Marine Corps change at all and did you feel that you had a high sense of motivation when you got out of Boot Camp for the Marine Corps or what were you thinking?

LCPL Lawrence: I still was like "Yeah, I'm glad to be a Marine," go home with my mom and in Georgia we stopped at a store and I still had on my Delta's [a uniform] I think, I still had on my Delta's and a guy bought me a cup of coffee because I was a Marine. I was still hard core all the way to the bone. I believed the saying that if you jump in front of a truck the truck will bounce off your chest. I took that home and I wore my Third Battalion PT gear almost every day. I had three sets and went running every day all over Franklin and just letting people know I went through Third Battalion, I did it, Parris Island with the sand fleas and all. Yes sir.

L.J. Kimball: So you got to Camp Lejeune and you went to school here.

LCPL Lawrence: First we went to Camp Geiger and a couple of days later . . .

L.J. Kimball: Camp Geiger was infantry training, SOI [School of Infantry]?

LCPL Lawrence: Yes sir, it is the Marine Combat Training.

LCPL Orlondre Lawrence
Camp Johnson, North Carolina
Interviewer: L.J. Kimball
9 August 1999
Page 16 of 30

L.J. Kimball: MCT?

LCPL Lawrence: MCT.

L.J. Kimball: MCT. Did you do that at Parris Island or did you do that here.

LCPL Lawrence: They do that at Camp Geiger now.

L.J. Kimball: So you went to Camp Geiger and did MCT?

LCPL Lawrence: Yes sir. Then I got dropped over here and picked up the school.

L.J. Kimball: Okay and how long was school.

LCPL Lawrence: School back then was about 10 weeks and then dropped to 7. School had you still going for it and then I got stationed here.

L.J. Kimball: When was it you got stationed here?

LCPL Lawrence: I remember that day, it was Friday, October 17, 1997. I graduated school, checked into my unit. At that time they had a, I forget what kind of party that was, but it was a party. I checked in and the first day there was a party and I was like "Hey this is all-right, this is a pretty nice unit." I guess for the first couple of months I was still going for it, happy, attacking full force and then I guess things went downhill. I still believe that, that is the worst thing you can do to a Marine.

L.J. Kimball: What's that?

LCPL Lawrence: After two years, I see it now, a Marine goes to duty station for two months and then you put that Marine into Equal Opportunity Training. That Marine has no idea what we do as Marines and the Marine has no idea what they are going to see later on. I say, you got them in for four years, let them stay where they are and see what is going on for a year and then put them into Equal Opportunity Training to find out what is going on.

L.J. Kimball: Okay. You are talking about Equal Opportunity Training, what is that?

LCPL Lawrence: From what I understand, it was an engine that General Krulak [former CMC] really pushed to make sure that the Marine Corps changed and to make sure

that the hate crimes in the Marine Corps that still happen today, were put to an end.

L.J. Kimball: So after two months you were put in EOT?

LCPL Lawrence: Yes sir.

L.J. Kimball: And you think that was a bad experience for a young Marine to have to go through?

LCPL Lawrence: Yes sir because you don't know what is going on and your units basically, where I was stationed, make it seem just peachy keen and you don't hear about what is going on and nobody talks to you to tell you "watch out for this, watch out for that." You know, this is happening and that is happening. You don't know anything and they ask you have you seen any discrimination male/female or blacks/white" and at the time you don't see anything and you are too worried about when you are going to get a TV in your room or when you are going to get speakers for your stereo. Then, after that you start to see where some things just aren't right, they're just not kosher.

L.J. Kimball: So you didn't think the EOT was right because you could not identify with any of the problems they were talking about, hadn't experienced any, didn't know they existed.

LCPL Lawrence: Right and another thing was the EOT was supposed to be the time when you leave your blouses outside and you come into a room and you tell people what you have seen and what is going on?

L.J. Kimball: So people take their blouses off when they go into EOT?

LCPL Lawrence: That's the way it should be but they laughed when I told them because I went to my refresher course a few months back and you have to go at least once a year and we did an exercise where do you feel equal? And they asked people what they felt and I held up my hand and I said, because we were commenting about why you felt you could not sway your group and I told them that it made me feel like a Lance Corporal. In the Marine Corps, if you are not this rank or that rank you can tell somebody that a building is on fire, you do not want to go in there and sit down. But if you are not the right rank and the person outranks you, you can't stop them because they will go in anyway.

LCPL Orlondre Lawrence
Camp Johnson, North Carolina
Interviewer: L.J. Kimball
9 August 1999
Page 18 of 30

L.J. Kimball: So when you say that you felt like a Lance Corporal you didn't feel that you had any influence over the situation?

LCPL Lawrence: Yes sir. But for EO training, somebody is going to have to sit down and figure out that it is not being done right.

L.J. Kimball: You're shaking your head, so you think that it is going to waste early on in a person's experience to go through EO training?

LCPL Lawrence: Yes, I always say wait and let the Marine see what they are getting into first.

L.J. Kimball: When did you make Lance Corporal?

LCPL Lawrence: I was picked up meritorious out of school 10/17/97. I thought I would get to my unit and go to a meritorious board and then I found out about my unit and I figured, even to this day, that as long as I was stationed at Camp Johnson I won't see a meritorious board.

L.J. Kimball: You picked up meritorious Lance Corporal but you were not promoted meritoriously to Lance Corporal?

LCPL Lawrence: No. Both, I was meritorious PFC, meritorious Lance Corporal. This was the only rank that I stayed in for its time in grade and I don't plan on staying Corporal for time in grade because at that time I should be in a new duty station. I don't feel like this duty station is totally looked upon the same. For instance, we had a Lance Corporal that went to 7 or 9 meritorious boards in a row and couldn't pick up Corporal. That right there I think is an atrocity. You mean to tell me that you can't find another Marine out of that office or out of that base that can't go to a meritorious board and that kind of pissed off all the males that worked in the shop that I worked in.

L.J. Kimball: When you went out of school, you went to Headquarters Camp Johnson, never MCSSS.

LCPL Lawrence: Yes sir, I worked in the admin shop.

L.J. Kimball: Is that where you are now?

LCPL Lawrence: Yes sir.

L.J. Kimball: And that is in the headquarters building right now?

LCPL Orlondre Lawrence
Camp Johnson, North Carolina
Interviewer: L.J. Kimball
9 August 1999
Page 19 of 30

LCPL Lawrence: Negative. That is the building right next to us.

L.J. Kimball: And this Marine that went up for meritorious Corporal Board all this times and didn't get it, why do you think he did not get it?

LCPL Lawrence: It was a female that, I don't know how to say this, her superiors liked the way she looked.

L.J. Kimball: Liked the way she looked.

LCPL Lawrence: Yes.

L.J. Kimball: This individual kept going because she was a female and they liked the way she looked but you do not think that she carried the freight to become a meritorious Corporal, in your opinion?

LCPL Lawrence: Well it wasn't that, I felt that if she would have fought tooth and nail and took the time out to do everything that was required, because back then you did not have to do all the PFT, the obstacle course, the drill platoon, all you had to do was answer questions and you got meritoriously promoted to Corporal. If you told me that, then yes at that time we were all studying our brains off hoping that next time they will pick one of us and will not keep sending the same person. I remember hearing about and I don't know if it is truth or not but I remember Sergeant Major Greene saying that this is the last time we are going to be bringing this Marine to the board. I am tired of seeing the same Marine every time and that is the only time that they decided to switch it up.

L.J. Kimball: Do you have any idea why, after making meritorious Lance Corporal out of school that you were never promoted meritoriously to Lance Corporal?

LCPL Lawrence: When I first got here, Chief Warrant Officer Schwartz was in his office with Master Sergeant Moore, Chief Warrant Officer Schwartz told me that as long as I am in the Marine Corps and as long as you are stationed in Camp Johnson, you will never see Corporal.

L.J. Kimball: What did you do to piss off CWO Schwartz. Any idea as to where this attitude came from?

LCPL Lawrence: The Master Sergeant was going along with what his superior was saying. I don't really think that he feels that same way. I am not positive but with

Chief Warrant Officer Schwartz, he was pretty strong on it and was not going to budge. He was basically the main influence on making sure that one female got promoted to Corporal.

L.J. Kimball: Why didn't he want to see you Corporal?

LCPL Lawrence: I don't know. When I got here I blended in pretty well. I didn't have any enemies except for maybe one and he is a good guy now and we are pretty much respectful to each other, but when I first got stationed here, he could not understand why, I had a clean record your know, a clean slate. He could not understand why I was meritorious Lance and my prior rank was meritorious. I think that he knew that I wanted to be meritorious Corporal too and he could not understand that.

L.J. Kimball: Tape One, Side Two.

LCPL Lawrence: I can say this about retired Chief Warrant Officer Schwartz—I do not feel that his Marine Corps is and what it should be. I pretty much think it is safe to say and I could speak for anybody else who worked under him that he was prejudiced.

L.J. Kimball: He was prejudiced because you were black?

LCPL Lawrence: Yes, basically plus he was one of those kind of leaders that if a female did not look good, then might as well toss her in the pile with the guys and who cares how other people treat her. It could be his own Marine and he was one of the old womanizer-type leaders and I hate that. I mean personally, if someone holds themselves and carries themselves as a Marine, then they are a Marine. If someone uses their color or their sex, I basically have no respect for those individuals.

L.J. Kimball: So you feel that not only was he prejudiced against you because you were black but that he showed favoritism toward the female because she was a female.

LCPL Lawrence: Yes he did and there are a still a lot of problems on that because this is the base to ask. If there is anybody with an integrity bone in their body, they will tell you that it is more so male-female than the color of your skin on this base because rightfully so we put the majority of the females in the Marine Corps having the Admin. and Supply Schools here. Now with logistics and

LCPL Orlondre Lawrence
Camp Johnson, North Carolina
Interviewer: L.J. Kimball
9 August 1999
Page 21 of 30

financial management we put the majority in the fleet. I don't think we have ever had two months where an incident didn't go by because of stupidity.

L.J. Kimball: Okay, you are talking about aboard Camp Johnson, there is an incident every few months, male-female, is that what you are talking about?

LCPL Lawrence: Yes sir.

L.J. Kimball: What kind of incidences are we talking about here?

LCPL Lawrence: Where somebody loses his rank or gets kicked out of the Marine Corps. Put in the brig for rape or all over not being able to keep their hands to themselves or know when to stop and that's why we have so many, I deem, unnecessary rules but I guess we do need them if the Marines are still being stupid.

L.J. Kimball: Now, these instances, if I understand you correctly you are saying they have them because the women try to use their sex to their advantage and the men think they can take advantage of the women. Both those circumstances apply?

LCPL Lawrence: Usually what you will see is the senior enlisted or senior officer males trying to say "look at me I am this rank and I can help you out if you help me out." It sounds so stereotypical but it really works and that is what it is and how it happens around here.

L.J. Kimball: Do you see a lot of that?

LCPL Lawrence: Yes sir. Also, if you take a look at your majority of your younger females in the Marine Corps who are married to Marines, most of them are married to the same rank. You hardly ever see or once in a while you will see a senior female married to a junior male. But, on this base, the younger females, they go to main side, blood stripe, right at it.

L.J. Kimball: Wait a minute go back. They go to their main side and they do what?

LCPL Lawrence: They look for like Corporals or Sergeants. I have had female friends of mine, even while I was in school they would talk about hooking up with Sergeant such and such. Then in Jacksonville, you got all single enlisted guys and the MP's are some of the worst ones. They come over here and they try to show off for the females. And I am like "how about just doing your job and let that

be it?" As long as you got that uniform on, who cares who she is and do your job. If you take two situations where a senior enlisted is talking to a junior and they are both males and you take them and you put them to the side and have those two conversate. But if you bring a female by and that senior enlisted, but not all are the same and some of them are good, don't get me wrong. But, if you take that same female right buy that conversation, instantly that conversation changes. Why? Because the bigger rooster wants to stick out his chest a little more.

L.J. Kimball: So, you have seen in the time that you have been in Camp Johnson a definite favoritism shown to women Marines.

LCPL Lawrence: I can say that I have heard of instances and I don't have the hard facts in front of me, but there was a point in time where if it was between one slot at Camp Lejeune and a slot at Camp Pendleton, a cute female vs. an ugly female or vs. a guy and they both want that same slot, the cute female will get it at Camp Lejeune. Why? Because at that time there was a power thing, I don't think it happens now, but I know back in time I was told about where Main Side got pretty stacked and all the ugly females and guys when to Camp Pendleton.

L.J. Kimball: The good looking women went to Headquarters Camp Lejeune?

LCPL Lawrence: Yes sir.

L.J. Kimball: What about black/white favoritism or prejudice. Have you seen any of that?

LCPL Lawrence: I have seen where it is even happened where I have had a Staff Sergeant tell me "Hey, you don't know it yet but you have to fight for your rank. There are going to be times where you will be standing and they will be looking at your record book. You will outdo that person beside you in every aspect but they will select him and you won't know why but you will find out." I have had a Staff Sergeant told me that.

L.J. Kimball: What you are saying is all things considered, unless you are much better than say the white Marine who is beside you they will select the white Marine for the desirable position.

LCPL Lawrence: Right.

L.J. Kimball: The Staff Sergeant who told you this, was he black or white?

LCPL Orlondre Lawrence
Camp Johnson, North Carolina
Interviewer: L.J. Kimball
9 August 1999
Page 23 of 30

LCPL Lawrence: He was black and he took me off to the side and told me that. I would like to say that I had never seen so far anything like that but I think I have, I am not sure. Because my record book was pulled and I was told ahead a time by a white Marine, a Sergeant told me that "hey you are not going to get this job and the reason was that you are going up against a white guy and a cute female. Chances are, they are going to put her in this job because they want females working in the main building. Plus, you are a little heavy set and they don't want a big brawn guy working in the first door of the commanding officers building." I was surprised because my record book is pretty stacked and I got an award and a letter of appreciation every six months ever since I joined the Marine Corps so I didn't believe it and then I got to my interview and sure enough, PFT, GT, time and grade, age, everything panned out and my Sergeant Major told me I surpassed in every field and he said that what I needed to do was work on my PT a little and as soon as I got working over here because I got selected over those two people and then I got working over here and about maybe a week later my office told me I had to come back and they sent the white guy over. It wasn't that the Sergeant Major selected it, it was just that. . .

L.J. Kimball: Do you have any idea why they pulled you back and sent you over?

LCPL Lawrence: I don't know.

L.J. Kimball: You didn't do anything to embarrass yourself over there during that week did you?

LCPL Lawrence: No. It was only a week that I got to work over here.

L.J. Kimball: Now talking about the main building, we're talking about the one we are sitting in here at Camp Johnson not Building One at Camp Lejeune.

LCPL Lawrence: Yes sir. Camp Johnson headquarters building. I just look at it as a learning experience. It drives me.

L.J. Kimball: It drives you to work harder or drives you out of your mind?

LCPL Lawrence: It drives me to do PT more, there is not a day that I don't PT. I try to fill my mind on a daily basis. I do different things to exercise my mind to send it in different ways with studying, Marine Corps knowledge or just different things in general. Before Sergeant Major McMichaels picked up Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps I thought of that as a goal to be the first black Sergeant

Major of the Marine Corps. I can't lie and say that when I was standing at the PX and saw that he got selected, I can't say that I wasn't kind of pissed off at him and I was like "Dog gone it now what is there to do?"

L.J. Kimball: Do you still have good feelings about being a Marine?

LCPL Lawrence: Yeah. I think that as long as we are changing somewhat I think that is for the better.

L.J. Kimball: You think things are eventually getting better?

LCPL Lawrence: Right. I mean, we as Marines don't tell everything and I thought this whole weekend about this interview if I was going to sugar coat it or tell the truth and I went back to my conviction and I was going to tell the truth.

L.J. Kimball: Well I appreciate that because if we just wanted another rah-rah history of the Marine Corps I could write that and I wouldn't have to talk to anybody. That is why it's important to get the personal perspective. Your experiences might be unique or your experiences might be representative of every young black Marine who had those feelings but you just don't know until you sit down and talk to some people. I have a completely open mind and I had the same problem when I retired. I was Base Operations Officer when I retired from Camp Lejeune and you just don't come in contact with young people. You know what senior officers are thinking or senior civilians but you never have a chance in the performance of your duty to sit down and not being a troop leader to talk to a Marine about what is bothering them unless they have gotten in trouble and you feel then that you have to intervene at that point to see if you can do something. I was a battalion commander for three years and I got to talk to a lot of Marines but that was a few years ago. Now I sit down and talk to a lot of officers and senior staff NCO's and to talk to them there is no prejudice. I mean, males and females are all treated equally and black and whites are treated equally and at the time they are telling me this of course the thought has to cross your mind as to if they are just blowing smoke or do they honestly feel that that is the case. Now, if I tell you that the senior NCO's and the officers are not aware of this, what do you think needs to be done?

LCPL Lawrence: What the younger Marines have to learn is that no matter what the rank is, if they give you a chance to say what is on your mind, it doesn't happen often enough, you might want to take advantage of it. You know. If the Commandant comes on deck and he opens up for questions, usually they are like, if you are not NCO or Staff NCO, actually on this base they are like, if

you are not Staff NCO sit down and keep your mouth shut. I did that the last time the Commandant came on deck, it was General Krulak, and I can honestly say that if General Jones comes on deck and opens up for questions, I got questions and solutions and I wish there was a way to get them across. Hopefully the book will come out and help sway some of the future Commandants and Sergeants Major of the Marine Corps.

L.J. Kimball: If you were talking to General Jones, what questions and solutions would you propose to him?

LCPL Lawrence: Equal Opportunity is one thing. Another question would be how can a Marine regardless of rank be assured that they can speak and where does it come about. Why is it that Marines are stuck and if you are not a certain rank you have a meal card? Not all Marines use that meal card and that is my latest and greatest question. Why not go to where you swipe the card, and whatever money is extra and left over, why can't that Marine change that money into a uniform? You would be amazed as to how many Marines will start looking more squared away. Not saying that you give them that money to go spend in town, if they save money here for the Marine Corps and you automatically say that you are giving them that money, let them use it to look better. I know that I don't use the chow hall and I can think of three other people that live around in my room because I live in the barracks that don't use the chow hall. Why is it that Marines are getting married simply because of the money, why not make the single life worth meaning? You know, you have staff sergeants telling you before you even join, don't get married in your first enlistment because you don't know what you are getting into. At the same time, they are doing nothing to make the Marine Corps a better place. People outside look at us like we are freaks of nature and machines. Why is it that Marines can't be human? I think we are all human.

L.J. Kimball: Why isn't the image portrayed more as humans because you know that you are all human yourself? Do you think the image needs to be changed or maybe the Marine self image needs to be changed?

LCPL Lawrence: Right, because you have Marines all looking at each other like we are all machines. I know all active duty is going to hate me for saying this, but I have to thank God that I got a chance that I got the chance to work at the Reserve Support Unit because it helped me realize that we are all human indeed. If you asked someone how you are doing, the first thing they do and you can try it, is that they will look at your collar. They check your rank. I'm just a Marine. I was human before I joined and I will be human after. Can I

be a Marine first and human second? If I ask you how you are doing don't look at my collar, just tell me. That kind of sucks. Then I will say "is there anything I can do to help you out?" You can be a Colonel, General, Private, you can be busted down to Private sitting down in the brig and if someone is asking you how you are doing just answer, don't look at the collar, you are human and Marines don't understand that. It is sad enough that it is going to take someone of higher rank. What better higher rank than the General himself to tell him you know, you are human and stop being machines.

L.J. Kimball: The way you feel about Marines now, do you think one enlistment is enough or are you considering continuing your service in the Marine Corps.

LCPL Lawrence: I go through an old jinx of never say never, but right now I can say that the Marine Corps isn't all that bad, knock on wood. Should I decide to re-enlist. To toot my own horn I feel like I would do a good service. I have been told from 0-6 down to PFC and privates and all ranks in between that if you desire to re-enlist you would do a good job and help out with some things. I think that would be one of the main reasons why I would. It is a brotherhood and also to be politically correct it is a sisterhood and we all need to keep working together. If we get more Marines that start to realize that fighting each other is only hurting us, then maybe we will and some of the things that other Marines are thinking will come to pass.

L.J. Kimball: Now you said that one of the main reasons they did not want you in the main building was because you were heavy set.

LCPL Lawrence: Right.

L.J. Kimball: I didn't get a chance to have a good look at you when you came in but are you heavy set because you carry more fat or are you muscular.

LCPL Lawrence: I am more so a brawn individual. Muscular because they have never been able to say that Lawrence that he is heavysset and overweight, you know, over his maximum body fat. Never have I been. I have been 17 a couple of times but that was because I was lazy for like three months.

L.J. Kimball: You mean 17% body fat.

LCPL Lawrence: Right and that was because I was lazy and in a rut and I didn't PT like I should and I could not get any higher and I think that at one point I was almost ready to say "okay if I get 19% do what you got to do." Then I got to

a point where I was like, wait a minute, I am letting these people piss me off. Oh God I just thought about somebody, Sergeant Morrison. To kind of helped to reinstate that some of the people in the Marine Corps are going to stay the same, he is one of those people that looks at your color before he treats you.

L.J. Kimball: Is Sergeant Morrison black or white?

LCPL Lawrence: White. He has already been discharged.

L.J. Kimball: Because of completion of service or something he did.

LCPL Lawrence: No on medical board. He got out on Medical board and most of the black individuals that worked with him would state that and I know out of them all because we didn't trust him because no matter what he did. There was a situation where a felony was committed, there was falsification of ID cards setting up DPP accounts. You had two white males and two black males all go up for NJP [Non-Judicial Punishment]. One of the black males was the one using the ID cards. One of the white males was the one helping make the ID cards because he had the combination for the cards. Then you had a black male that knew about it and a white male that knew about it. When the black male that was using them got busted he got hit with a felony, plea bargained and got kicked out. The white male that had the power to do the cards got off scott free and actually got promoted, come to think about it.

L.J. Kimball: Was this Battalion Commander's Mast or ?

LCPL Lawrence: No I believe it was at company level. He got promoted. The black male and white male that just knew about, the black male got 6 months suspended rank. The white male who knew about it got 3 months suspended rank. That NJP scared the piss out of me. I wasn't even stationed here and I heard about it and it scared the piss out of me because in both cases, one black guy got discharged and one got 6 months suspended sentence and then this one white guy who had the biggest part and if he had never done his part none of it would have happened, he turns around and gets promoted and is still in the Marine Corps.

L.J. Kimball: This was something that was discussed amongst the black Marines. Is this how you found out about it?

LCPL Lawrence: Yes.

L.J. Kimball: And the conclusion that they came to was that life's not fair if you're black.

LCPL Lawrence: That was under Chief Warrant Officer Schwartz's command and he handed who he wanted to the company commanders.

L.J. Kimball: Do you think that the Company Commander was completely faultless in this or was he just following the recommendation of the Warrant officer?

LCPL Lawrence: Well, from WO Schwartz it went to First Sergeant Brockington. He was a black First Sergeant who if you were black you did not want to stand in front of First Sgt. Brockington. He was "Uncle Tom." That is an old saying and I have yet to understand it and read that book. But what I have heard, that is where you have a black guy who will do twice as much harm to his own than he would to anybody else.

L.J. Kimball: It's interesting and a shame because *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had a tremendous political impact on the country. It was kind of an exaggeration in some sense but it made people aware of the racial inequality that existed in various sections of the country. But, the shame is that Uncle Tom in this book is one of the most admirable people you'd ever want to meet: heroic, self-sacrificing, noble, and intelligent. It is one of those terms that has been misused to the point that you think that if someone calls you an Uncle Tom, you think it an insult and the person saying it to you may have meant it that way because they don't understand who Uncle Tom was. But read *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and you will get a different idea as to what the real Uncle Tom was like. It is nothing to be ashamed about anything he ever did. He was a great guy. Drawing this to a close, can you think of any final observations or comments you want to make of the Marine Corps and where it is right now.

LCPL Lawrence: It's a lot better than it was.

L.J. Kimball: You mean looking back in your past experiences as a Marine, you can see it has improved?

LCPL Lawrence: Yes, over the past 2 to 2½ years, I have to say it is a lot better than it was. As long as I am still here I will fight to make sure that all the Marines below me are all treated the same and some of the superiors above me wonder why I will fight for a private or PFC. If they are right and the Corporal is wrong, I want the Corporal to see it.

L.J. Kimball: To what do you attribute that the Marine Corps is getting better?

LCPL Orlandre Lawrence
Camp Johnson, North Carolina
Interviewer: L.J. Kimball
9 August 1999
Page 29 of 30

LCPL Lawrence: As long as each and every day you do something positive, you exert yourself as a positive role model, doesn't matter what's your rank, somebody's going to be influenced. You might not see it and it might not happen this week, but somebody's going to change, as long as you do what you're supposed to be doing.

L.J. Kimball: One final question, do you still want to be a lawyer and an officer?

LCPL Lawrence: I will be a lawyer and I still have the desire to be an officer, but. . .

END OF TAPE