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LINDA – Fieldnotes – Monday, November 19, 2007

Subject: Tom Goodridge

Location: office

Time: 3:30-4:35pm

We begin by chatting; Tom is out of work now and waiting to hear about a grant to hire him as a special-ed preschool teacher. We work on his writing for awhile.

He asks me if I want to meet Loretta Williams, the person he mentioned on his card last week. I say yes, but I don't remember who she is or why I should meet her. He tells me she's also a street vendor, someone he finds "wise," who knows about all kinds of things. I get excited. I look for the card he gave me and see that she's also a community gardener. I tell him I probably can't meet with her until January.

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On his way out he mentions the boycott meeting. I haven't quite processed the meeting emotionally so I do a little complaining, prefaced by a disclaimer: that I think their political analysis is pretty good, that I believe in economic justice, but I felt threatened by the no-non-blacks-allowed rhetoric, which I expected but unhappy about.

He tells me that church is different from other churches, "on the edge." I ask, More political? He agrees. He says that other churches are welcoming, you get a strong sense of "humility." I ask if he mostly goes to Baptist churches and he says yes. I say I think this one was Pentecostal, and that the minister really criticized other pastors as sell-outs. He concedes that maybe there's a difference between denominations. [not quite what I meant, but oh well. I'd like to interview him a little more about his participation and understanding of churches.]