

I missed a lot of classes, and eventually dropped out in the fall of '67 without completing 2nd year, came back in Spring of '71, finally graduated in '72.

But after I dropped out, I joined VISTA in January of 1968 and watched all hell break loose the rest of that year, while I was busy attempting to be a community organizer in the South Bronx.

When the Nixon people took over in 1969, all hell broke loose within VISTA as they tried to clean out all the radicals among us who were causing a lot of trouble.

That was really when my true education began. A fascinating time.

We came into the program through a terrific (and mind-bending) training program in the South Bronx sponsored by a very radical outfit called Wel-Met (no idea what that name was supposed to represent). Mostly did welfare rights organizing (highlighted by a lengthy several-days sit-in at the Melrose Welfare Center in May of '68), and some tenant organizing.

Succeeding generations of trainees tired of the frustration of getting nowhere with rent strikes, so decided to up the ante by picketing and demonstrating in Westchester County outside the private homes of the absentee landlords!

That caught the attention of the incoming Nixon Administration and some LBJ holdovers who were trying to protect their jobs by firing all the radical training folks and cracking down on the activist VISTAs.

The whole thing was more than a little radicalizing for me (a now fully recovered former liberal Republican prior to VISTA and the turmoil of 1968-69), and an eye-opening education.