

Tulane Talkin' to New Orleans Interview
Shaayna Slotkhin, Michael Rodgers, Phyllis Davis and Alvin Epps
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Corrected
Transcribed by Shaayna Slotkhin and Michael Rodgers

0:00

MR Alright, Project Title is Tulane Talkin' to New Orleans. Say all bold on tape, and since that's bold I'll say that.

SS [laughs]

MR My name is Michael Rodgers.

SS And I'm Shaayna Slotkhin.

MR We are here at the home of Phyllis Davis and Alvin Epps, right, Alvin Epps, and we're—what's the location, what's the address?

SS 2706 Clover St. New Orleans, LA

MR 2706 Clover St. Alright, fantastic. Ok. First question, could I have your name even though I just said it, please? Which way should we go first?

PD My name is Phyllis Davis.

AE My name is Alvin Epps.

MR Alright, do you guys have any nicknames, short names?

AE My nickname is "Quiet".

MR "Quiet"?

AE Yeah I don't talk too loud, I don't talk too long.

MR Right on.

PD My nickname, they call me Phil.

MR Phil?

PD Mhmm.

MR Alright, right on. Where were you guys, where were you guys born?

PD New Orleans, Louisiana.

AE New Orleans, Louisiana. Charity Hospital born and raised.

MR Right on. And when were you guys born?

AE I was born August 19, '64.

PD July 16, '66.

MD And could you please tell me your parents' names, like where—were your parents from here?

AE My parents was from Lexington, Mississippi, that's about 40 miles up north of Jackson, yes. And my mother passed, in 2001, but my father is still living.

PD Well my mother's from Prentiss, Mississippi and my father's from McComb, Mississippi.

MR When did they move here?

PD I don't—years ago. They've been here all since I've been born so—

MR Right on. Oh, and now I'm gonna ask you about your grandparents, what are your guys' grandparents' names and where are they from, please?

AE My grandparents are from the same place, from Lexington, Mississippi, and my grandfather's name was Abner Meeks (sp). I never met my great grandmother. I mean, you said my great grandparents. Yeah, they both from Lexington, Lola Williams and S.C. Williams. And I met my great grandfather, he lived to be like 105 but I never knew my great great grandmother.

SS Wow.

PD My grandfather's name is Larkin Sims (sp) and Nanny Sims and they both from McComb, from Prentiss, Mississippi. I never met my father's parents, they died when they was kids.

MR Right on. And what do you do?

AE Well, right now, I'm unemployed right now, at this time lookin' for a job.

MR What do you do, you know, when you do got work? Like is there anything that, whether it's work or whether it's something you like to do, like what would you say is your thing?

AE Well I was into the moving business longer than any job I had for like 12 years and then now I've been doing that construction.

PD Well I work for Entra Lots (sp). I work in assembly, we build assembly belts.

MR You work in assembly building assembly belts?

PD Yeah, we build belts.

MR That's awesome.

PD Yeah we build belts for Coca Cola companies, Coca Cola, Budweiser, you know all the big companies, we build they belts.

MR That's awesome. Like, assembling assembling stuff. That's cool. And what do you, do you guys play music, do you guys paint anything? What do you—well obviously I noticed the Saints stuff up on the wall. I see that you collect a lot of Saints stuff. So do you guys have like any hobbies or anything that you're really into?

AE Well other than that, one of my hobbies is making those umbrellas like you see back there.

MR I saw those, they're awesom.

AE Yeah, I made those.

MR That's you, all those are you?

AE Yeah, I made those.

MR Oh, right on. Do you also make stuff?

PD No I help him, I bust the bowls and everything to make the umbrellas.

AE Yeah it's a lot of work

MR Yeah, how long does it take to make those?

AE I could do one in a day now but...

MR But from nothing to where they're at right now?

AE Yeah.

MR Oh, that's awesome.

AE Yeah. But most of the time [unintelligible].

MR Solid.

SS Are those the umbrellas that they use on the second line?

AE Yes.

MR Solid. And I noticed like some of them were different colors, there was one that was blue.

PD Yeah, the blue one was from last year.

AE We had on blue last year.

MR Oh yeah.

AE The peach one was from this year and one of 'em I got a New Orleans Saints that's in there.

MR That's awesome... You got a New Orleans Saint umbrella?

5:19

AE Yeah.

PD You ain't seen the black and gold one?

MR No, no. You mind if I check it out real quick?

PD Sure

MR I'll be right back.

AE Turn the light on, it's right there to the...

SS [laughter] Now I'm curious. These are so cool

PD That's the one I had for the parades this year.

AE Yeah I use 'em, like when I go to second lines I still put 'em out there so people can see 'em and they be taking pictures of 'em.

MR Right on.

AE Yeah.

MR Is this on?

SS Yeah.

MR So how did you learn how to make those?

AE Well I joined the club in 1992 and the guy that was president then, Lonzo Landry, he was the president from '92 until he passed away in 2002. But I learned from him, he was real good at it. And the first time I paraded and I saw his, I wanted to do it and he taught me. I'm 'bout the best at it out of anybody in the club.

MR Right on.

AE Yeah.

MR So you started learning how to do that basically as soon as you joined the club?

AE Yes

MR Oh right on. And I had a question actually, that clubs over in 12th ward.

AE Yeah

MR And you guys live over here, How did you hook up with the Prince of Wales?

AE I was working out there on the river off of Napoleon on the river. And you know that's right up there and we used to stop there after work and drink beer and stuff. So Lonzo, you know, the club members used to be in there and he was talking to me maybe 'bout three years. It took about three years from 1988. Well really, this '89 to '92, and that's when I finally joined and I been in ever since. But you know you don't have to be from there. It don't really matter where you're from, right, because some people was in it from across the river. But that's how I got affiliated with it.

MR That's cool, that's cool.

AE Yeah, I been in it ever since.

MR And have you guys, how did you get involved with the Prince of Wales?

PD Well I joined the club in '96. The Lady Wales first got formed in 1995. I didn't parade that first year, but I joined the second year. I used to hang out at the club,

at the bar Rock Bottom, we all used to hang out there. And I just joined the club. I been in the club since '96.

MR So did you guys meet in the club?

PD Well I met—

AE Yeah, we pretty much met, that's how we met, at Rock Bottom.

MR Really?

AE Really, yeah. I was already in the club, like I say, I joined in '92. And that was maybe three years later. But that's how we met, at Rock Bottom.

MR How long did it take to get you to join Lady...

PD Lady Wales.

AE Lady Wales.

PD Well it didn't take long, 'cause we met in '95 and I joined the club in '96.

MR Oh right on, right on.

SS [laughs]

MR So a little quick transition.

AE Yeah

MR And so you guys have been parading every year since then

PD Every year since

AE Yes. The only year we missed was Katrina in '05. We was setting up, but you know it his. We was coming out in October and, you know, it hit in August.

PD In September.

AE September, right.

MR Where did you guys go during the storm, after the storm?

PD We went to Mississippi first but after they told us we couldn't come back home, we left and went to Memphis. We was in Memphis.

MR Ah, right.

AE Yeah, and I came back, I came at the end of October. But she was in Memphis until February of '06, stayed about six months.

PD I had to come home, ain't nothing like home.

MR No, no. New Orleans is the best. I mean. I don't know if you remember, I love where I'm from, I love Miami, I love South Florida.

SS There's nothing like New Orleans

MR No, this place is fantastic.

AE It is different. It really is.

MR Everything, man. Music, food, being able to walk out your door and see a second line, it's unbelievable.

AE Right.

MR But Memphis has good bars.

AE Yeah.

PD Yeah.

AE Yeah, I like them.

MR So, in the next year, when you guys—well how long was it after Katrina when you guys started parading?

AE Well we—

PD We paraded in December.

AE We was the first club to parade after the storm. We paraded in '05.

PD December the 18th.

AE December of '05.

MR Really, December?

AE Yeah, that's a picture right there that we had. We ended up—

MR That right there?

10:25

AE —with the white tux. We ended up getting together ‘cause Joe Stern, we was talking about it. He said we’re gonna parade, so I’m thinking more like February of ’06. He’s like, no, this year. So we got together, and we rented tux and we was able to get a hat and shoes and we made it, you know. And it was a beautiful thing. I mean, people was coming from out of town. And everybody was like, thank you, you know, thank you. We were like, thank you for coming. But it was nice, it was really nice.

MR It’s one of those things that I think after the storm seeing stuff like that, seeing second line made people be like alright, New Orleans is still here.

PD Yeah, it’s still here.

MR And that’s awesome, you guys were the first ones to parade.

PD We were the first ones to parade.

MR That’s awesome. Man, that must have been huge for so many people, man. Just seeing that.

PD People was coming from everywhere. When they heard about they had a second line in New Orleans, it was like Mardi Gras day out there.

MR Right, right, right. I can respect that. Man, that’s awesome.

PD Yeah.

MR And did you guys, so like after that, did you parade during Mardi Gras?

PD No we only parade in October.

AE Yeah our parade is the second week in October.

MR Oh so you only go out once a year.

PD And we parade at the Jazz fest

AE We parade at Jazz Fest, the last Sunday of Jazz Fest.

MR Every year?

PD Every year.

AE Yes.

MR And is it only Prince of Wales that—?

PD No they have all different clubs that, during the whole time of the Jazz fest they have clubs.

AE Yeah, every day and they got different times. You may have like three clubs a day but we pretty much go on that last Sunday.

MR Right on, And do you guys notice anything like, 'cause I mean it's a social aid and pleasure club. Do you notice any difference between I guess the social aid aspect of things before the storm and after the storm, or were you guys able to get the club back going you know pretty regular pretty quick after you started, after you came back in December?

AE We done pretty good, our club, but for some clubs it was slow, 'cause people were still out of town. Even some of the brass bands, you know.

MR Right, right.

AE But we got together pretty much quicker than most of the other ones.

MR And from the social aid aspect of things, like what were you guys doing with, I guess, the community involvement and the social aid after the storm? What was some stuff that you guys got involved with as a club?

PD Well we did the Christmas giveaway for the children, where we had all the clubs that got together and had to bring toys and stuff. Each club had to bring 100 toys for like the giveaway so 100 kids.

MR Oh right on. Wait, each club brings 100 toys?

AE Yes.

PD Yes.

MR Oh so that's a lot of toys.

PD This year we did the school supply where we had to bring school supplies for 50 children, each club had to do for 50 children. And they gave it away right over here off Elysian Fields at the Dinneral thing. I dunno if y'all heard about it. The man Dinerral used to play with the Hot 8 Brass Band and got killed recently.

MR He got killed?

PD Yeah, somebody drive through just shooting, he was just shooting, but shooting at somebody else and shot him. And he played for the Hot 8 Brass Band.

MR Was that—when was that—was that last year?

PD Last year, year before last. ‘Bout two years ago.

AE ‘Bout two years ago. But you know that’s a whole foundation now. Dinneral Shavers Foundation

PD Yeah.

MR Oh, named for him.

AE He was formerly a police officer until he got into, he was a band teacher, doing great things.

PD Yeah, he was a band teacher for Rabouin.

MR Man that’s sad, man. So he was a teacher and he was a cop, I mean, he was like—

AE Well he used to be.

PD He used to be a cop but then he started working with the brass band, Hot 8.

MR Oh I love Hot 8.

PD He was one of the top, He used to play for them, he was the leader for the Hot 8.

MR Man, that’s crazy. So do you guys like—oh yeah, I’m bad with moving the thing. I’ll do it.

SS [laughs]

MR I lost my train of thought. Oh, so is it usual for all the clubs to get together to do this sort of charitable stuff or...

AE Yeah some clubs do it, do things on their own. But we in the New Orleans Second Line Task force, so—

MR Task Force?

AE Every club is not in it. We might have, let’s say, 25 clubs. And every year we do something together, but some clubs do other things on their own too.

MR Right on, right on, that's cool. And would you say Prince of Wales, would you say that it's—since you guys have been in it has the club been real involved with like doing charitable stuff like that, like helping kids with school supplies?

15:25

AE Yes, yes we always do that. Sometimes we have easter egg hunts, different things you know.

MR That's badass. That's cool. I have an interest in this actually. Do you guys, have you ever been involved with this or do you know anybody who's either been a Mardi Gras Indian or a Baby Doll or...?

PD Yeah, we have a couple that's Indians.

MR Oh yeah? Which tribe?

AE They be with the White Eagles, I think, the White Eagles. But they from Uptown.

MR An Uptown club, yeah. Right on.

AE I wanna do that one time. I never masked, I would like to do it once, you know.

MR I think, I mean, seeing them umbrellas, I think you could definitely do it.

AE Yeah, yeah.

MR I think you could definitely do it.

AE I'm creative. And then he made them, my cousin made them suits, so he been trying to get me to go with him but I haven't been able to do it. But I plan on doing it one day.

MR That'll be awesome

PD It'll take a whole year to make the suit.

MR Oh man, yeah. And every piece, yeah?

PD Yeah, cause you hand sew. They hand sew everything, the beads and everything on these suits and everything.

MR That's like awesome. That's one of the things, when you see it, you know it's...and when you have that kind of understanding that the guy who's wearing that suit made that suit it adds something even more to it.

AE Once Mardi Gras over, they start for next year.

MR That's awesome

AE And then they work on it all year.

PD The next day they start making all their new suits for next year.

MR Last year when I—it was the first time that I saw the Mardi Gras Indians. Like I been coming to Mardi Gras, years.

AE Yeah, but you never did see.

MR Yeah I never got over there. Yeah, yeah.

AE Oh that's good.

MR It's fantastic, I love, I like the whole deal with the Uptown tribes, but one thing I really like with the Downtown tribes is they got some really cool like spooky looking stuff sometimes. Like I saw an Indian with fangs on one guy, I love that, man.

AE Yeah, they have all kinda.

PD They do all kinda stuff with they suits.

AE Right.

MR And so are there people in Prince of Wales who do the Indian thing too?

PD Well I know White Boy Joe deal with Monk. Monk is a Indian.

AE Big Chief Monk Boudreaux.

MR Oh Joe the dude who, the guy—

AE Yeah, Joe is a bone man.

MR Oh, he's a bone man.

PD Yeah.

AE Oh I mean a skeleton man.

PD Skeletone man, bone, however you wanna call it.

AE Yeah, skeleton or a bone man.

PD Skeleton.

AE Yeah, he done it. He went with Monk this year.

MR Oh that's cool, man. That's cool.

AE Yeah

MR So do you guys, like, with the club, do you hang out with the other club members a lot? I mean is that really like—

AE Yeah.

PD Yeah we do, we get together, hang out.

AE Yeah we really like family, you know.

MR Yeah, yeah. And is it, before the storm, after the storm, how is it for a club member, right, who let's say they hit a spot where they're in some trouble. Like they need some help for something right. Is there like support amongst the club to try to help them out?

AE Yes.

MR Yeah?

AE Yeah, yeah we do that.

PD We had a member that went to Memphis and went to jail out in Memphis. And we had to send money out there for him, to help him.

MR Oh, to get him out.

PD To get him out, yeah.

MR When was the problem in Memphis?

PD That was last year.

MR Oh ok, ok. And so has that—outside of like the social aspect of it, I mean, which is obvious. I mean you got a shitload of friends, you get to go out on the street and have everybody be like “look at them”.

PD Yeah.

MR Yeah, I mean is what how would you say being in the club has really impacted you or changed your life since before the club and after the club?

AE I wouldn't really say it changed me, but it's a difference, man. It's a good feeling because I been doing it so long. Like a lot of people know me, I don't even know 'em. Like in some cases they'll be like, hey man. like they my next door neighbor, man. I'll be like, hey man, but I really don't know them

MR [laughs] That's awesome. Like a celebrity.

AE Yeah.

PD They know you cause you in the club

AE Yeah, they see you so much. So it's great, you know.

MR And now you're in Lady Wales. Now this year when I was watching, I saw there was a float, right? Which was. had I guess the queen, and like other members of Lady Wales like on...?

PD No that was the Queen, that was her maids. All the Lady Wales parade on the streets with the men.

MR Right.

PD Yeah. But the queen, she had her float and she had her maids on her float.

SS So how do you get to be a maid or how do they pick the queen?

PD Well normally we had been doing—the ladies come and ask, they wanna be our queen and they'll pay \$300 to be the queen. You know that's the fee for the police. And they pick they own maids. If you're the queen, you pick your friends to be your maids and they just buy they clothes and y'all ride on the float.

20:45

MR Wait so the queen is not a member of—

PD No.

MR No way! [laughs] That's awesome.

PD This year it's gonna be our 15 year, the Lady Wales 15 year anniversary is this year, coming up in 2010. And we was thinking about doing, getting a King you know and he ride in the car and stuff, buy a suit.

AE Yeah, some clubs have kings and queens.

PD They have kings and queens.

MR That's awesome. So the queen, so someone comes up to you guys and is like "Yo, do you have a queen and if you don't I'd like to be the queen"

AE Right. That's how we been doing it, but I think this year we got three, so we're gonna—

SS So are you gonna vote?

PD Yeah, well, what we was gonna try was put all three of 'em in a hat or something, in the thing, and just pull one of 'em. 'Cause we can't say which one it's gonna be, won't be no favoritism, we know this one, we know that one, so we was gonna try to do it fair.

MR See that's the way to do it too, man, cause also when you got the hat no one can come back at you afterwards

AE Yeah.

MR Right, right, right.

PD So we're gonna pull one of the names out there. Whoever name comes out, they gonna be queen

MR So with the queen, and that whole krewe with the maids and stuff do they. are they related to people in the club? Do they just know a lot of people in the club?

PD No.

AE Not necessarily. In some cases—

MR [laughs] That's awesome.

SS [laughs]

AE In some cases you know some people may know them, but we can have it where nobody don't really. They don't have to be related, it can be anybody

MR So it's basically anybody who has \$300 and is—that's badass. That's cool. And so they pick their own maids. So is there—when the parade is starting, right, when the parade is going, is it basically like you're doing your thing, queen does her thing and you just move on or is it like?

AE Yeah we basically when we have a meeting we decide how we're gonna line up/ Like the band always is last and then we are before the band and then we might have a vehicle with drinks and stuff and we might have how many cars we have of floats. We line it up, though, and put 'em in order. Once it get rolling, we just keep rolling.

MR Right on. Now both of you guys were born and grew up here, yeah?

PD Yes.

MR What neighborhoods are you guys from?

AE Well. when I was born, I was born downtown on Conti. That's right around Charity Hospital, around Canal Street, Claiborne. Are you familiar with that?

MR Yeah, yeah.

AE And when I was about 7 I think, back in '71, we moved back more in Mid City around Thalia Street, Thalia and Clara. And in '76 I moved in Carrollton, in the Carrollton area. That's when I, I think it was '76. See, I became from boy to man in Carrollton.

MR Right on, right on.

AE And since then I been movin.

MR Yeah, I gotcha.

PD I'm from Uptown, from right around Claiborne and Napoleon.

MR Ok, right on.

PD Well I was born on Phillips St. but that was not far, right off of Claiborne. I been on Roman Street since I was 3 years old.

MR Wow, that's awesome.

SS Wow. When did you guys move over to this house?

PD After Hurricane Katrina.

SS After Katrina. And was your daughter born soon after?

PD Well no that's my godchild.

SS Oh, oh.

PD My baby is 22.

SS Oh really?

PD [laughs] I have a 22 year old, a 23, and my oldest will be 26 in January.

SS And what are their names?

PD Kevon (sp) is 26, Wyniqua (sp) is 23 and Gregory is 22.

SS And do they live here in New Orleans as well?

PD Kevon and Gregory do, but Wyniqua lives in Baton Rouge. She goes to Southern

SS Huh, that's great.

MR And are they your kids?

AE No, they're my stepkids. I have three kids. My daughter, her name is Alvinia and she's 26. And Alvin Jr. is 22.

PD 23.

AE 23. And I have another daughter, Denishia she's 15, by another lady, my first wife. This is my second marriage.

MR You guys look too damn young to have grown ass kids, that's crazy.

SS I know, you guys look young!

PD Man, people be like they have kids? Yeah, my daughter's 26 they look at me funny.

MR [laughs]

SS [laughs]

MR That's wild.

SS I know.

AE Yeah I'm 45.

SS Yeah, you guys look really young

MR Social aid and pleasure, man.

[laughter]

SS It keeps you young.

MR You're young, you got that exercise once a year, big exercise too.

PD All year cause we be out there every Sunday at the second line.

MR Oh man about your guys' route, I wanted to talk about that. Your guys' route is awesome. Like I like how you guys start up in by Rock bottom, you go down to Central City, you come up, you go by—that's badass.

PD We've been having that route since I've been in the club.

25:48

AE Yes, pretty much.

MR That's cool.

PD We always go down St. Charles and always pass by Commander's Palace.

MR Yeah I like that, that was real—

SS That was fun.

AE We were the first club that had done that.

PD That was the first time we ever had a stop at Commander's Palace. We always used to stop on the outside, but this time we talked to the people and they invited us where the club could come inside of Commander's Palace.

MR That's awesome. I remember when we went over towards Commander's Palace, I was like, alright, now's my chance to find somewhere to pee. I gotta pee right now. So instead of going to Commander's Palace like everybody else I knew—I didn't know they were doing this—I spent like 10 minutes trying to find a quiet place to piss.

[laughter]

MR And I come back and everybody was like, yeah, we all just went to Commander's Palace and I've never even been to Commander's Palace. I should have taken that opportunity.

AE Right.

MR I could have like walked through there all classy, it would have been beautiful.

AE Yeah, man.

MR So how many of your family outside your kids, how much of your family lives in New Orleans?

AE Well I have three sisters and they all live here. One of them was living with my 2nd oldest sister. I have an older sister and one under me, two under me. But the one that's right under me, she was in Atlanta but she moved back 'bout a year and a half ago.

MR How'd she like Atlanta?

AE She liked it, she was up there almost 10 years.

PD 8 years.

AE 8 years, yeah. But her husband got killed out there so that's why she ended up moving back.

MR Oh, right on. I got a huge family in Atlanta.

PD I didn't like it

AE Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MR It has a pretty cool downtown, but then like—

SS It's so spread out though.

MR Yeah.

AE It's so spread out, yeah. That's the difference. You can't walk where you need to go like in New Orleans. You have to have a car in Atlanta.

PD And then you're walking up hills.

MR All over the place. And all the houses all look the same.

[laughter, off-mic chatter]

MR Is it cool if I have a cigarette?

AE Yeah, go ahead and smoke.

MR Thank you. I was happy to see that.

PD I said, look, he must be outside smoking. Said, let em know we could smoke a little more, we could smoke in here.

MR So why you guys saving the caps?

AE I just be doing that. Like them cars, you see. If you look at 'em, I put saints stickers on them, made 'em all Saints colors.

MR Oh you made them Saints stuff

AE I put the stickers on 'em. All of 'em like that, they nice.

SS So you're gonna do something creative with the bottle caps?

AE Yes, I don't know what yet, that's just sitting there.

SS [laughs]

AE But I've got more in the back. I'm a put 'em out in picture frames or something. I like different stuff.

SS I like that.

AE Yeah.

SS I've seen a table with all of them on it, that's pretty cool too.

AE Yeah, that sounds good.

MR How much of your family is living in New Orleans?

PD Well really all of my family is living here except my sister and two brothers. I have five brothers and three sisters.

MR Wow.

PD Yeah.

MR That's a big family.

PD And I'm the baby.

[laughter]

SS Aww.

PD Yeah, but my sister is in Texas. She in a big town in Texas. She haven't been back since the hurricane. And I have a brother that's in San Antonio, Texas. He hasn't been back since the hurricane, he said he ain't comin' back.

MR Really?

PD Yeah, 'cause he stayed on the roof 7 days after Hurricane Katrina.

MR Yeah I can see that, you know, I'll take a break, a long, long, long break

PD He said all the people on the helicopters just passing down throw water to him for him to survive.

MR That's crazy.

PD Yeah, he's not comin' back.

MR Did you guys get out beforehand?

PD Yeah we left the Sunday.

AE We left that Sunday mornin' so we didn't actually go to that Superdome and all that stuff.

MR Horrible.

AE It was terrible.

MR Horrible, horrible stories, man, horrible stories.

PD I had all my nephew and them down here. But we begged them to leave with us, and they didn't wanna go.

AE Yeah everybody was thinking the same, saying it was gonna pass over.

PD It was gonna pass like the last time. But that was the big one that hit.

MR Yeah, it was one of those things, like I was in Florida at the time, right. And when Hurricane Katrina came through Florida, it was Cat. 1, it was nothing.

SS Are you talking about when it hit Miami?

MR Yeah, yeah.

SS It hit Miami beforehand, it was not bad at all.

MR Me and my brother actually—

SS It was my birthday.

MR We got drunk and went swimming while the hurricane was going on because it was that little of a hurricane.

SS In the Gulf, the hot water in the gulf was just...

MR It got crazy, seeing it come towards New Orleans was just like “holy shit”.

SS Surreal.

MR Yeah, it was the size of the Gulf of Mexico, it was insane. And where were you guys living for the storm?

PD We was living on the other—out here in Gentilly, but over here on the other side of the tracks. Over here on Sere Street, right there in Indian Village.

30:46

MR Oh, so right near here.

AE Yeah.

PD Yeah, not far from here

AE Really it's right around the corner. You go to the end of the street where the railroad tracks are. That's the only thing separating it from the other side, the railroad is on the other side.

MR Where did you guys move—you guys came back pretty quick, right?

AE Yeah. Well I was lucky, my dad right over here in Indian Village. That's right around the corner, my dad's house is around here. We were fortunate enough to move back in. You know, when I first came back, they didn't have no lights or nothing. I mean, it was bad. But his house was available, so I was able to stay there, and then she come back and forth.

MR Oh, so his house was alright.

PD Yeah, he didn't get much water in his house, like up to the baseboards. Like right up there.

MR That's crazy

PD That's what I was saying, 'cause the block down the street lost everything.

AE People lost everything.

PD And the next block, they didn't have much water.

MR How does that even happen?

PD You can't explain it.

AE We live in a bowl

PD It's like a bowl, we live in a bowl.

SS It just goes up and down, that's the same way

MR That's crazy.

PD We lived around the corner, and we had got more water than he got.

MR That's wild, man, that's wild. I imagine being pretty pissed off when you come home and your house is trashed, and then you walk around the corner.

AE Yeah, it was something, man. When we first came back we snuck back in, 'cause you know at one time it was hard to get in, we had curfews. And we got in. I was just thinking the worst, after seeing on TV how people's house were when they opened the door. And we opened the door and we got in. And see like our wedding stuff, it was up high.

PD Sitting up high.

AE So we saved that, all that stuff. Some of the Saints stuff. But we was able to save a lot of stuff. And I saved most of my clothes, 'cause they were hanging up high. And it was just a blessing, you know. We left all the other stuff, like pictures and clothes, hats, we couldn't save a lot.

PD He kept some of his, but I lost all my clothes.

MR Aww, that sucks. But you got the pictures, man.

AE Yeah.

MR That's where it's at.

PD Where we was living at, we had a big shelf and it sit up high. And so we had our pictures sitting up on the shelf, and that's how we was able to save our pictures. And I saved all my wedding stuff. I still got my bouquet, my shoes and everything.

AE It was just a blessing.

MR That's awesome, man.

AE 'Cause some people, nothing, not a hankerchief.

PD Yeah, a lot of people lost everything.

SS Yeah.

PD Ain't have no picture, no nothing.

AE We got photos, I got a lot of photos. Saved those.

MR It's one of those things, it's like you can almost lose basically everything but the pictures, right.

AE Right.

PD That's a lot.

AE You can't replace 'em.

PD You can't replace the pictures, and I was happy to save some of my pictures. But that's my three kids right there on the picture with us, on that wedding picture.

MR Which one? Oh, right there?

PD That's my three kids.

MR Nice outfits. Classy, classy duds.

PD Yeah.

AE And that's my sisters and my dad on the other one, on the other end. Yeah. Three sisters.

PD We got married in '02.

MR When did you guys get married?

PD In September 14th of '02.

MR Beautiful family.

AE It was big, man, we had like 14 grooms.

PD 14 men, 14 women. And that's not even.

MR 14 grooms?

PD And that's not even including the kids.

MR 14 bridesmaids? Oh man, that's crazy.

AE Two best men.

MR [laughs]

SS You guys are popular

AE Yeah, a lot of the club, a lot of the people who was in our club, members and her brothers and my sisters. You know, it was nice.

MR I bet you seeing a wedding of a social aid and pleasure club is something.

AE It was. We had the second line band and everything. And the people at the hall, they were saying, we ain't never had this much fun.

SS [laughs]

AE That was something.

MR That's awesome.

SS A lot of celebration.

MR What band did you guys have?

AE We had The Stooges.

MR Oh, I like The Stooges, man. I like The Stooges. They were the ones doing it this year.

AE The parade, yeah.

MR They're real good. Now what's the kid's name, the trumpet player? The one with—trumpet or trombone, I don't remember—huge, huge cheeks. You know which one I'm talking about? Like when he blows it's just like—

PD Yeah, all of them that blows the trumpet, they jaws get like that 'cause they gotta blow.

AE Yeah

MR That was crazy, it was crazy.

SS They are good.

AE They be into it to go out there on Sunday, you know.

MR It's beautiful, man.

AE Yeah.

MR I wanna go out there and measure it. It was wild. Do you guys play anything?

35:18

PD No.

AE No, I never played no instrument.

MR Anybody in your family play?

AE No.

MR Did you grow up around a lot of people playing, though?

PD Well, people from school. I had some friends that played in the band at school, stuff like that.

MR One of the things I noticed, like one of the coolest things—a cool thing I saw when I was here was in the 9th Ward. And we were just driving over there 'cause you can go to the levee over there and go see the river. I had somebody from out of town, and I wanted to show 'em the river. I was like, alright, this spot, we can go see the river. And so we were driving away and there were some kids fighting, just like how kids do. Like brothers or whatever, punching each other. And but

the coolest part of it, right, was that they had instruments in their hands the whole time.

AE [laughs] Oh yeah.

[laughter]

MR It was like, man, that's New Orleans right there.

AE Fightin' with one hand?

MR [laughs] Yeah, exactly.

[laughter]

MR Kid going hitting his brother, running across the street holding his—

AE They don't put their instruments down, they fightin'. Oh, that's funny.

MR Love that, man.

AE It is indeed.

MR And so The Stooges, they play at Rock Bottom a lot, right?

AE Yeah, yeah they play a lot.

MR So are they kinda like the club's unofficial official band?

PD No.

AE No, they switches things up. Sometime they have Rebirth. I'm just saying the club, I don't mean the bar.

PD Our club normally deals with Hot 8, but the last 2 years they had others. Last year they did something in England and Paris, they had to go do their thing out there. And this year they had something they had to do this year, so that's why we had to use the Stooges.

MR Right, right, right. They were good though.

AE All those bands are good, but I like Hot 8 the best, then The Stooges, then maybe Rebirth. Rebirth got the reputation, but I really like Hot 8 better. Andd Rebirth play this fast pace.

MR Real fast.

AE And I like the rhythm that's right, like how the Stooges go. But Rebirth has you moving fast. You wore out.

MR Yeah, you guys be done with the parade real quick.

PD Yeah, we run, and I don't like to run.

MR [laughs]

PD You get tired too quick.

AE Yeah, it wear you out quicker.

PD It wear you out quicker

AE Especially trying to keep up that pace of music.

MR Do you guys like Soul Rebels at all?

AE Yeah I like Soul Rebels. You ever been over there on Magazine on Thursday night?

MR Yeah, Le Bon Temps.

AE Yeah, I used to go there. It's been a while since I've been there, over a year now.

MR I love that place.

AE Yeah, on Thursday nights.

MR In the summer it gets like—have you guys ever seen the Matrix movies?

AE No.

MR Well, in the summer, one thing I love about that place and kinda hate, its love/hate with this. In summer it's real hot in there. You know, it's dancing around, like sweating, like mud all over the place. I love that, man. I love it.

[laughter]

AE You know, we went one time.

PD Yeah, I went once.

SS I have one question, is there a reason that the band didn't really dress up so much for the parade?

PD The band normally don't do it.

AE They normally do—that's up to them. Like sometimes you might see them with the color that the club have on.

PD Or they have their own shirts. They might have The Stooges on the back of they shirts. or Hot 8 you know, they wear they own thing.

AE They got their shirt so they might try to wear the closest thing to the colors we have on. But we don't tell them how to dress

MR Is there any kind of rivalry between the clubs about who has the prettiest stuff going on?

AE Yeah a lot of 'em do that, you know. But we all doing the same thing you know and everybody, I guess, like a team or something. You gonna feel like you the best, but I'm like, I don't dislike no club or envy no club. But a lot of clubs seem like they envy us though, you know, worry about what we doing or what we coming out with. You know, I hears things.

MR I like—

AE But it's like that.

MR It's cool before the club comes out, how for the first few days beforehand, people are like, I wonder what they're gonna be wearing this year.

AE Right, yeah.

MR I wonder what colors they got on.

PD What colors and all that, 'cause they be trying to find out your colors all, months or two months before you come out.

MR [laughs]

PD I'm like, I don't know what our colors it. Wait till we come out, then you'll see our colors.

MR [laughs]

PD You know, a lot of clubs, they don't tell you their colors.

AE You know, and they get these—

PD But they come out, you know.

MR That's the way to do it, though. That's the way to do it.

AE That's why our thing was "If you don't know..."

PD "Now you know.

AE 'Cause they were worried about our colors.

PD 'Cause we had that on our route sheets: "If you don't know, now you know."

MR [laughs] That's awesome, I dig that. So are any of you guys' family in the Prince of Wales, or are you guys the only members of your family that are in the club?

AE We're the only ones.

PD We're the only ones.

AE We had my Uncle Joe, one of my uncles he was in it. He moved to Mississippi now.

PD After the hurricane.

AE My mother's brother. Then he got, his back got bad so he can't parade no more. The last time he paraded was when we had this blue on. That was in 2002, yeah. Cause we came out with the green, in '04. It was '03, I think. But that's the last time he paraded. He was in it for years, we joined together.

40:22

MR That's awesome. And were there—so he left after the storm?

AE Yes.

MR So you had a few family members that just didn't come back, that just left.

PD Yes,

AE Yeah, yeah.

MR So I'm guessing that probably happened with the club, too, right? Were there people that—

AE Yeah they got one, only one. Well yeah well both Diverny, (sp) he was in the club. He was the president before I was. And he's in Texas now, so he retired from the Post Office. He said he's gonna move back one day, but right now, you know. And there's another guy, Cornel, that's in Atlanta, but he's thinking about parading with us this year. So we got to talk with him.

MR So does that happen with people who move away, do they ever come back just to parade sometimes?

AE In some cases. That's what Cornel is doing, staying in Atlanta. Yeah, he's thinking about doing it 'cause he wants to parade.

PD And he want to parade, yeah.

MR Right on

PD So he's just gonna send his dues and stuff. He's gonna come down here and support us and stuff, give dances to help us to parade.

MR You have dances, too?

PD Yeah, we have dances. Yeah, we do bus rides, stuff like that.

MR Bus rides?

PD Yeah we do bus rides to the casino, we do bus rides to a club. Like we might go to a club like say in Hammond, or out there in Lutcher. We might go to a club out there, you know, just go out there and party.

MR Oh, right on, right on. I didn't even know you guys did that.

AE Yeah, that's how we raise money,

PD That's how we raise money.

AE Well, we pay dues every month, but we have functions.

PD We have functions and stuff to raise money 'cause it's expensive to parade.

MR Yeah, yeah, I would imagine. Everything from beautiful shoes to crazy suits.

PD Then we gotta pay for the police you know, the police escorts. And we gotta pay the band.

MR I heard it got more expensive with the police after the storm.

PD Yeah the police is \$2500.

MR Damn.

AE That's for 4 hours

MR Jesus.

PD That's \$4000 that's not including our shoes and stuff.

AE Just to parade. The permit, you're looking at about \$50. You're looking at \$5000 just to parade.

MR Just for the basic stuff that you need.

AE Yeah.

PD That's just for the police and the band.

MR So do people pay for their—so are all the dues kinda thrown together and that's how you get the suits?

PD Yes.

AE Yes that's with the functions and stuff, but it come down to the dues. We raise the money with the dues.

MR And with the umbrellas, do you make all the umbrellas for everybody in the club?

PD No.

AE No, that's the good thing about us.

MR [laughs]

AE Like if you go to a parade and see other umbrellas, they all end up being the same. They may not have much on them, but ours, we cover them and then everyone do their own. They be different. If you look, every one will be different.

MR Oh, yeah, yeah.

AE See that, he can make 'em so pretty.

PD Yeah

AE He put it down. I mean, all of ‘em are different.

PD Yeah, he might do some of the club members, ‘cause they don’t know how to make ‘em. So he might do like two or three of ‘em for the other members.

AE Yeah. But basically everybody do their own thing.

PD Do their own thing.

MR That would basically be me. I’d be the guy like, come on, man, help me out. Just get me started.

AE Yeah, yeah, right.

MR Get something on there, and I’ll—

AE I did one or two of them this year, you know, got ‘em started.

MR That’s awesome.

AE It’s fun. It’s cool having the different umbrellas too, ‘cause everybody’s looking the same but there’s something different.

SS Something going on.

AE It’s so pretty, right? I’m telling you. All of ‘em, not one of ‘em gonna be the same. Even if I made—

PD It will be the same colors.

AE Like if I make three umbrellas for somebody, I might use the same pattern. I got patterns I can use. But you look at those umbrellas, what I’m saying, they correspond. They’re not just rolled on there. you might have the design but you have to look at it. But I might have four things here, then four things here. then the same. Basically, it’s equal.

MR Right, right, right. Like symmetrical.

AE If I design them, I might do the same design, but I’ll reverse the colors you know. So it might be the same design but all three of ‘em do the color part differently.

MR Oh wait so you’ll have two umbrellas, same colors and stuff, same design.

AE Yes

MR But reversed.

AE Say like I—

MR Oh that's neat, man. I like that.

AE I might put diamonds on them. I might have black ribbon with gold in the middle, then the other one I might put gold ribbon with black in the middle. It might be the same design but it gonna look different, cause of the color pattern.

MR I dig that.

AE You know, stuff like that.

MR So how long have you guys—now you're queen, or you're not?

PD I'm Vice President.

SS Vice President and President.

PD He's the President.

MR Vice President and President. How long have you guys been Vice President and President?

AE I've been the President since last year, really.

PD No, this the third year.

AE No. It's my third year?

PD Yeah, three years.

MR [laughs] Time has gone quick.

AE You're right, since after '06, right. Yeah you right.

PD I've been the Vice President now about eight years.

MR Oh, right on.

SS Oh, wow.

MR So what do you guys, as Vice President as President, like what do you—

SS Do you guys have extra responsibilities or...

AE Well not really so. We got other members like officers like secretary and treasurer and business manager. So we basically like an overseer, you know. And we vote on everything. I can't just say, well, we're gonna do this, and that's that. I might have suggestions but we basically vote on everything.

45:46

PD So one person can't make a decision. It's a voting club.

MR Right on, right on. So do you guys like being President and Vice President? Is it a lot of headaches, is it a lot of fun?

AE I think it's fun. Sometimes it can be a headache too, you know. 'Cause I get people coming at me like "You're the President" but I'm like, well I can't make no decision by myself without talking to the rest of them.

MR Right, right. [laughs]

AE They think I can do what I want.

PD They think by you being the Vice President and President that you're supposed to make the decisions, but we don't work that way. We vote on everything. So I can't just go walk into the club and say, we gonna do this.

MR Right.

PD No, we not gonna, we gonna vote on it. If we vote on it, we gonna do it.

MR See, that's the way to do it too man.

AE Right, that's the way to do it.

MR And also it's a lot better for you guys too because you can say "Listen man, I'm the President, but we gotta vote on things."

[laughter]

PD Yeah, because a lot of other clubs will come and want us to do such a thing. I can't say we're gonna do this, I got to bring it to the club first.

MR Right, right, right.

PD You know, I can't give you no answer. I got to bring it to my club first. If they vote on it, then we'll do it.

MR And how did you become Vice President?

PD Well the position came open. Linda Divergny was the Vice President and she stepped out, she got out of the club and the position came open. I was one of the ladies that had been in the club basically about since they started. I was a year later and I was voted as to be the Vice President.

MR Oh, right on, right on. And how did you become President?

AE Well it's the same way. The guy, really like I said, Lonzo was the president for 10 years and he passed and then Bo—Norman Divergny's name, we call him Bo—the one I said moved to Houston. Well, he was the Vice President so we voted him to step up. That's how we normally do it, the Vice President gets nominated. So Bo done it for two years till '04. And we had another guy by the name of Gilbert Kinniston (sp), he lived in Carrollton. Now he was in the club maybe back in the '70s, probably 20-some years ago.

MR President for 20 some years?

AE 20-some years he probably had been affiliated.

MR Affiliated, yeah.

AE With the club. He had been in and out, you know. But he took over as president after the storm, but he was still in Atlanta. He back now, nominated me.

MR Right on.

AE So I feel like I paid my dues, you know. It's been 17 years.

MR So 19—

AE I really joined in '92.

MR I can't believe '92 was like 17 years ago.

AE Yeah, that's when I joined. And this is my first year. That's my daughter Lavinia, she was like 10 then. That was in '93 when I first paraded on the street,

MR Right there?

AE Yeah, that's the first time I paraded.

MR Oh that's awesome, man. That's awesome. And I noticed in this picture, you don't got a jacket.

AE Right, then. See, things change. Back then, when I first joined, we basically used to have suspenders and a shirt. And you might see that a little bit nowadays, but most of the time you're gonna see the suit.

SS Yeah.

AE But that's how we used to parade for about the first 5 years. I got some of the pictures, we used to—yeah that's another one, that's how we used to do it with the shirt and pants. And that's another one, see the gold?

PD They used to have on suspenders with they shirt and pants.

AE We had, one of our club members' sisters used to make our shirts, them shirts, all them shirt is like made. And we started, the first time we wore a suit was in '96.

PD It wasn't '96, Alvin.

AE When we had that teal. Remember we had this here? Took the coat off and wore it. That was '96. Then we went back to two-piece suits, like leisure-type suits. But now we're wearing the regular suits. But that changed because back then we didn't have fans. Mostly everybody just had umbrellas you know. But they started wearing fans, they started wearing suits, so we've been going along with it.

MR How did that go down? Why all of a sudden were there fans and umbrellas? Oh, there were always umbrellas, right?

AE Yeah, always umbrellas.

PD Yeah, our club always had umbrellas.

MR Ok.

AE Most other clubs too, but they start using fans, you know, clubs started using the fans. And now you go, most all you see is fans.

MR Yeah, why did the fans start?

PD Because you can work the fans.

AE I like 'em.

MR Yeah. [laughs]

AE I ain't gonna lie, I like 'em, cause the umbrellas—

PD You gotta hold it up.

AE You can hold it how you want, but you want it to be seen like you're holding it up. And I know by me covering the whole thing, it gets heavy. I'll be like from this hand to that hand.

[laughter]

AE But with the fans, your arm don't have to be up there and you can be doing all kinds of stuff. They different to hold them any kind of way, but they more better to work.

MR And how did you guys get the idea to do the fans, was somebody doing them before you guys?

50:48

PD Well yeah.

AE Yeah some of the other clubs. Because that was our thing with the umbrella. We would all have our different umbrellas but we decided, you know, everybody else was doing it, so we gonna start doing it.

PD We do the fans and the umbrellas.

MR Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AE Everybody may not do nothing like me every time.

MR [laughs] Yeah, I feel that. And with the suits, how did it go from the shirts to the suits?

AE Well, we basically voted on it. They had some that wanted to stick with it, you know, but the majority wanted it. 'Cause like Joe Stern, when I got about 17 years, Joe's got about, I say Joe got about 20, 21 years. And I always talk about that because like Joe wanted—I aint gonna say he wanted to—but he talks about going back to the suspenders and the shirts. But the majority want to wear the suits.

MR I like the suits

AE Me too. I love it too. I love the suits better too. And as I said, for the price you're gonna pay, you get a pair of pants and a shirt, when you finish, they're gonna probably be \$100. If you pay \$150, \$175 you get a whole suit.

MR Oh that's the difference in price?

AE Yeah pretty much.

MR Hell yeah, go for the suit.

AE Yeah, they got a whole suit, its better.

MR Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AE True, true.

SS Do you guys ever repeat the colors that you use?

PD Not—

AE It gonna be a little.

PD Not for a long while.

AE It'll be a long time. We try to stay away from, like say this year we had red and gold. If we wear red again, it might be 10 years from now. Never say never, 'cause I have two royal blue hats, two navy. We gonna use these colors, but it's gonna be over some years.

PD It might be about 5, 6 years, 'cause you ain't got too many colors.

AE Right, you've only got so many.

MR Right.

PD One of those colors, you might have it, but you might put it with something different. It might not be the same thing.

AE And we be thinking, and I can't tell you this. But you know I'm being funny but serious too, colors, the way we do is a shame, it's a shame. But I laugh about it cause I've been picking the colors almost the whole time, I'll pick and suggest and then most of the time people go with it. And that's the way it's been. And what I'm trying to say is I can't tell y'all. but we already know what we gon' wear next year, the colors, but we can't say.

MR C'mon, you can tell us.

[laughter]

AE We know this before the parade, that's how much we be thinking about the next year.

MR That's awesome.

AE I know we ahead of time, but this parade ain't never here. But we gone tell them what the new colors are already.

SS Yeah.

PD We got our new colors already.

MR I love the peach and olive, man.

AE Oh yeah, that was different,

MR That was badass. That was awesome, yeah, it was different.

PD They still talking 'bout that. Ain't nobody topped us yet.

MR Oh man, I dig that.

AE 'Cause you know, now with that—

PD Everybody's asking, where did y'all get those colors?

AE Anytime you get a group of people [laughter] you could have like black and white, you could have brown and white, you could have any color. If you get a group of people and they're dressed, they're gonna look good. But I like the colors to look pretty, that's why I like all the loud colors. We coulda went with like a—some people woulda went with the olive green suit, all out of green, and had a little peach. But I like loud colors, they're bright.

SS Yeah.

MR That's the way to do it.

AE I like the loud. Say you get tan and brown, that might look good but it ain't gonna shine.

SS Exactly.

MR Exactly. Like with the loud colors, just on my side, yesterday night I went to this thing and I had this badass bright purple and almost iridescent blue shirt, man. Yeah because if you're gonna go out, you're gonna look nice, you want to be—

SS You want be noticed.

MR Yeah, you want to be like the peacock, man, you wanna have people seeing that. Right, right, right,

AE I like that, that's why I say, I look at some of the clubs, and I don't knock 'em, but they might have on a royal blue suit with light blue but the suit might be dark. If they had the suit lighter, that'd make it shine.

MR Right, right, right. You've gotta pop.

AE 'Cause see, some people too, I wear loud colors. I mean, I can go show you. I've got orange pants. I been having this stuff, this I ain't even paraded in. But some people don't like loud colors. That's why you see some of the clubs, the guys, they like to get the darker colors.

MR Right, right.

AE But I wear all them colors, I wear any color. I wear pink, yellow, any color, 'cause it's in the store, somebody gotta wear it.

MR Exactly.

AE But that's how I've been like. But a lot of guys they don't, they're like, man, I ain't gonna wear no pink suit. Or they'll wear it one time and that's it. I'm a wear my stuff.

MR Yeah.

AE But a lot of 'em, if they don't like that color, they got to go with it and they might not wear it any more.

SS Yeah.

AE I'll wear it any time.

55:32

MR Lots of colors like that, right? It's one of those deals, like when I was buying my badass purple shirt the day before yesterday. I went with my girlfriend to get it, and she's like, I don't know about this shirt, I don't know. And I'm like, I'm telling you, this is the shirt.

SS [laughs]

MR I got compliments like crazy yesterday. It's one of those things, they look loud when they're on the rack, but when you're wearing them, that's a nice shirt.

AE It's different to stand out, really, I always been like that. I had orange pants, orange snakeskin. But I buy that stuff.

MR That's awesome, man. Now you were saying that you guys go to a lot of second lines, yeah?

PD They have a second line every Sunday.

MR You go every Sunday?

PD Just about.

MR Oh, right on.

AE We gets out there. Now some people, man, like Joe Stern, they are catching it from the beginning to the end and every Sunday. Now we might go to peep 'em out, but we might not follow it. Or sometimes we might go stop to stop, like ride and go stop to stop. But like now, we love them Saints, so I have to watch some of the game and catch the end of it.

MR [laughs] Right.

AE I can catch the front of it, but I got to see the game too.

MR Yeah, I feel that, I feel that. And so do you guys, and I also heard you say something about church—you get your shoes and wear your shirts—you guys go to church still?

AE Yeah, we go to church before we parade, that's something we do too. I know all clubs probably do it, but before we go to church—I mean, before we parade—

PD We go to church. The whole club go to church.

AE We've been doing that since I've been in the club.

PD We go to church every Sunday before we parade.

MR Right on.

SS Does everyone go?

PD Well the majority of everyone goes.

AE Sometimes people be running late.

PD They coming in a little late, but they'll make it out there, make it there.

MR That would be me if I was, I'd be the late one.

[laughter]

MR I remember one time I went to a wedding, right, and pulled up in the car as people were leaving the church.

AE Yeah.

MR 'Cause—

SS Oh, that's bad.

MR Well I had to go buy a tie, and then I had to iron my shirt.

AE Well that's me too, I pretty much do that. I normally make it by [unintelligible].

MR It's like yeah, if you're gonna be there, just give me another hour.

AE Yeah.

MR If he says 8, it's 9.

AE Yeah.

MR Yeah, yeah.

PD They known us for being late.

MR Oh, right on.

PD They already know we gon' be late.

MR See, that's where you gotta get. You gotta get to be known to be late, then people don't expect you not to be late.

AE Yeah.

SS And they start telling you a half an hour earlier so you'll be there on time.

MR I tell people that all the time.

AE Yeah.

PD They've tell us an hour early—tell Alvin and Phil 10:00.

MR That's the way to do it, though. That's the way to do it. Otherwise it ain't gonna happen. Like yesterday, when I went to that thing, they told me 8, it didn't start til 9, and I got there like 10:30. [laughs] But at least I got there reasonable, 10:30 is alright, aint nothing wrong with 10:30.

AE Yes indeed.

MR So what church did you go to this year? It was over by Rock Bottom right?

PD Well it was Auchalet (sp) Baptist Church, that's right there off of Valmont.

MR Ok.

PD And Annunciation. Annunciation and Valmont.

MR Ok. Oh, right on. And do you guys go there, does the club use the same church every year?

PD Yes.

AE Well, we been doing that, but we have used different ones. But maybe the last 3, 4 years.

PD The last 3, 4 years we've been going to that same church. It's a little small church, they don't have too many members. And you know we give a donation and try to help them out and stuff.

MR So it's almost like a special service for the—

AE Yeah, yes, yeah.

MR That's cool.

AE 'Cause we have to leave out.

PD Yeah, they know we coming there and—

AE We got to leave.

PD We have to leave at a certain time, so they'll have their little service and they'll stop the service and come have us there, pray for us and stuff, and then we have to go. We leave and they continue with the service.

MR That's cool, man, I like that.

SS That's great.

MR It's like, on that Sunday, you guys are like royalty. You go in, and—that's cool. And what church, do you guys go to church by yourselves?

PD Well, I haven't—well, we got to get back in church. I used to go to the New Hope Baptist Church but I haven't been, I have to get back.

AE Right, yeah. And I belonged to St. Thomas, that's on Jackson Ave.

MR St. Thomas, is that a Baptist church too or is that Catholic?

AE Yeah, it's Baptist.

MR Baptist? Are most of the people in the club Baptist?

AE Yeah most of 'em, you find.

PD We got a few of 'em Catholic.

AE But mostly Baptist.

MR Is there a difference—like that's an Uptown club, and then Downtown clubs. Is there—like I notice sometimes Uptown I run into more Baptists or Methodists, and then Downtown I run into more Catholics and stuff. Have you noticed that with the social aid and pleasure clubs, too, or it hasn't really come up?

1:00:33

AE No, no.

MR I don't know how that would come up.

AE Yeah.

MR [laughs] It's like, what's up, social aid and pleasure club? You guys Catholic?

AE [laughs] Yeah.

SS So one question—how did the club get its name? I know it was a bit debated when we talked about it in class with Joe.

MR Yeah, that's right, that's right.

SS Yeah.

PD Well, I can't answer that. The club's been in existence since 1928.

AE Since 1923—'28, yeah.

PD So it's 81 years that the club has been in existence.

MR Damn.

PD So, how they came up with the name of the Prince of Wales, I cannot say.

AE You know, I got to get back at that, 'cause you asked me and I feel bad because I can't answer. I should remember that because I've been told that, you know, I done heard about it before. But I forget. Exactly.

MR We heard when Joe came—

SS This is funny.

MR There are two potential reasons why. One was that—what was it?

SS The bottle.

MR Oh yeah, there was one that—yeah, yeah.

AE So probably one of the guys, that's how they got the name. They was JB drinkers and they saw Prince of Wales on it.

SS Yeah, that was one, and then the other one was that it was just the actual Prince of Wales.

MR Yeah, like the Prince of Wales visited or something.

SS Yeah.

AE I heard that. I think I heard something else, too.

PD I heard about the JB bottle.

MR Yeah, I like the JB bottle reason. I hope that is the reason why.

AE Yeah, I didn't know that. We just found that out really last year when Bruce brought it in. They had that on the JB bottle. I like doing stuff, like I said. I've been wanting to get one so I can just—

MR You should do that, man. You should totally do that. Get a JB bottle and do something to it too.

AE Yeah.

MR Yeah, that would be awesome. And so—what was the next question I was going to ask—oh, back to your families. What kinda work, or what kinda stuff do your families do? Is there any particular trade or anything, like you got a lot of military? Like my family, I'd say if there was something that my family does, outside of this guy, it's go to the military.

AE Yeah.

MR Almost everybody in my family are Marines. So is there something in your guys' family that basically a lot of people do?

AE We don't really have no military, no police.

MR And it's not like, you said before you were working out on the docks, right? Do your other family members, do they work out on the docks? Do they do constructions? Like—

AE Well, my uncle Joe, he used to work out there too. I can't really say, you know. They have all different kinds of jobs.

MR Everybody doing all different type of stuff.

AE Yeah.

MR I feel you. And is that the same for you?

PD Yes. Everybody does basically different stuff.

MR Ok.

PD I have sisters that's nurses.

MR Wow, I could never be a nurse.

PD No, me either. Well, I have two nieces that's trying to be a nurse too.

MR Oh, that's rough, man, that is rough. I know you gotta deal with people getting sick all the time, but you also gotta worry, the sad stuff and then the nasty stuff.

PD Yeah, I don't know how you deal with all that, you know. My stomach wouldn't take it.

MR Exactly.

SS The weird hours, too.

MR Wack hours. But to me, even more than the hours or anything else is like “ugh”.

PD Yeah, I can't deal with it.

MR I'm not gonna clean that. [laughs]

PD Yup.

MR Clean up your own damn wound. Alright, and so—

SS I want to talk about dancing. I know you guys, you were talking about how you love to dance. Do you like to dance other than when you're parading or just in general?

AE Yeah.

PD You might hear second line music anywhere. you want to dance. You know, wherever you hear it you gonna dance to it.

(1:04:25)

MR Did you guys used to go to second lines before you were second lining yourself?

AE Yeah.

MR And so is that why it was for you a real quick decision to join?

PD I had always wanted to be. I was really, before I got with the Lady Wales, we had started a new club, the Diamonds and Pearls.

MR Right.

PD But they didn't last, so after, that's when I joined with the Lady Wales.

MR Oh, so that's why it was real quick.

PD Yeah.

MR Yeah, alright. And why did it take you three years to decide?

AE Well. I liked it but, and then I also thought back then, I was like, I can't afford it. But after I joined it, I found out that I could. You know, it wasn't as bad as I thought. And then I just had to get it in my head, because I wanted to, but I didn't

know enough about second lining. I didn't know how to second line, you know, so I was skeptical. When I'm feeling good, I'd be like, yeah I'm a join this week. Then when that week I'd be like, "I ain't ready, man." So it took three years and then I've been in it ever since

[laughter]

AE That's when I found a job, and ever since I loved it.

1:05:32

MR Were you nervous the first time that you were second lining?

AE No, I wasn't really nervous, I mean...

PD [barely audible] He was probably drunk.

[laughter]

AE Yeah, I was probably feeling good, so that helped me. But I really wasn't nervous.

PD Yeah, you got to feel good to go out there and go make a move.

MR Oh absolutely, I mean absolutely.

AE Well, not really for some people, but for me I'm better when I'm feeling better. Because I feel like I could do more. I feel like I could jump that high.

MR [laughs]

AE When I'm sober, I ain't gonna.

MR Yeah, I know what you're saying. Like my girlfriend is Peruvian, loves to dance. I hate to dance. So I got to get to a certain point where I also, I gotta feel like I can jump this high and then I'll start doing that.

[laughter]

AE Yeah, it be like that. I was kind of like that. Finally, like I said, once I made up my mind then it's...

MR Now, let 's see, where was this. This one? Alright. Now this is like an ethnicity question, like if you guys were going to describe yourselves. Like if someone gave you a sheet and was like, "What are you?" How would you feel that in? Yeah it's a weird question, right.

AE Yeah.

MR Hold up.

SS It's just saying if there's—

MR Alright, basically like what's your ethnicity?

SS Yeah.

MR Right.

SS If you speak any other languages or anything.

AE No, I wish I did, I wish I did.

MR Right on.

PD No, I don't either.

MR Right.

PD I mean, I work with a lot of Vietnamese and I wish I could understand what they be saying. Because a lot of time I think they be talking about me.

[laughter]

PD They'll talk English and then the next thing you know they start talking in their little language. They don't want you to know what they saying. You know, I wish I could, you know.

MR Talk a little Vietnamese.

PD Yeah, 'cause I could answer one day.

MR I started learning this language this summer—I still haven't really learned it yet. But it's this really cool language, it's like Garifuna, right. It's like this South American Indian language or whatever. I mean there's a lot of reasons I want to learn it. I work with them in Central America, but one of the reasons I really wanted to learn it is for the freak-out factor. Because it's one of those things, just to be like, walk up, white guy from the states, how's it going blah blah blah, boom boom boom boom. Like when I talk like that it freaks them out.

SS Yeah.

AE Right, right.

MR I love that, they're just like "holy shit, how does this guy know this language?" You should learn just a little bit of Vietnamese and just blow their minds.

PD Yeah, just a little bit, yeah. That's what I want, just a little bit.

MR Vietnamese is weird too, though, man. Like I have this friend who was Vietnamese and he had lived in the states for a long time. But when he would call his mom, right—he had normal English, right—well, when he would call his mom, it always sounded like he was yelling at her. I mean—

PD But that's how they talk.

MR [loudly imitates Vietnamese speech]

PD That's how they talk. And I be at work and be on my break, and I be talking to him, and they be outside. And he gets mad, you know.

MR [laughs]

PD But they be talking, that's how they talk. And he say, "Why that guy screaming?"

AE I'm hearing all this in my ear.

MR They're just chatting. [laughs]

PD When they talk, they really, they just be talking, but that's how they talk. When they talk, they like to sound like they fussing at each other.

MR Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely.

AE I was working around some Haitians and they like that too. Seem like they fussin' when they talk.

MR I almost wanted to learn—I was actually trying to decide whether to learn the Garifunda thing or Haitian, because being from South Florida there's a lot of Haitians down there. And another freakout factor, it'd just be beautiful. [laughs]

AE Yeah, 'cause they used to do that too.

PD They do that too, and you don't know what they be saying.

AE You know when they doing that they don't want us to know what they say.

MR And it's funny because sometimes it's not so much that they're trying, they don't want you to know what they're saying, right. But it sometimes really is. Like I

Speak Spanish, my girlfriend speaks Spanish, right. And yeah, sometimes we're speaking Spanish 'cause I want to say some shit about this person in front of me and not have them understand me. It's good having another language, little secret language. But the thing with Spanish, man, too many people speak it.

PD Oh really?

MR Yeah, you can't talk, you gotta be careful about what you say about people behind their backs in Spanish, 'cause there's a lot of people speak Spanish.

PD Yeah a lot of people speak it, I can't speak Spanish either.

MR Okay—well actually, this is a better way to ask this question. Alright, so right here you go, I'll just tell what the thing says. It goes "ethnicity", right, and then it says "African American, Creole, white". You can just, go ahead.

[door opens, nephew enters]

MR Hey, how's it going?

SS Hello. [laughs]

PD This my nephew.

MR Give you a handshake, let me wipe the sweat off my hand first. What's up man, nice to meet you. Mike.

SS Nice to meet you. Shaayna.

N Can't take it easy tomorrow, can't lay down.

1:10:34

PD We won't lay down, we gon' whoop St. Louis, baby. When the Saints beat New England, baby, we gon' be 10 and 0, 10 and 0. But we gon' whoop St. Louis and Tampa Bay.

MR Oh, I hate, hate, hate New England. Nice meeting you.

SS Bye.

MR Can I bum one of those off you by any chance? I ran out. Thank you. I probably should be quitting soon.

PD So what are the kind you smoke?

MR Well. alright.

AE They got different color boxes.

SS They got different color boxes.

MR I kinda quit. And then last night, I was expecting to get really really drunk. 'Cause it was \$1 drinks at this thing, right. And I was like, \$1 drinks? I need to prepare. So instead of bumming cigarettes from people all night, I was like, I'll buy a pack so I'll look fancy. And I bought these, these taste so good. They're like organic.

SS They're made with natural—they have like no carcinogens or something in them.

MR They probably got plenty carcinogens.

SS That's what it—

MR Tasty, tasty carcinogens.

SS It says on here they're supposed to be organic. I don't know what that means.

MR But they taste real good. They went real quick. But they, normally—

PD They menthol, or non-menthol?

MR These are non-menthol.

SS But do they have them in—?

MR Yeah, they got 'em in menthol, they got shitload of different versions.

SS They got all different boxes of them.

MR It's crazy. Where did you guys go to school?

PD We went to Alcee Fortier.

AE We went to the same high school.

MR Oh, right on. You guys went to the same high school?

PD Yeah, but we didn't know each other in high school.

SS [laughs]

PD But we went to school together at the same time. Well, he was like a year or two before me, but I don't remember him from high school.

[laughter]

AE I don't remember her either, that's funny.

SS [laughs]

MR Well, you had to say you don't remember her, now, right. She just says she doesn't remember you—"I don't remember you either."

AE [laughs]

PD Yeah, but it was kicks, because when he told me he went to Alcee Fortier, and I'm like, well, damn I went to Fortier too and I don't remember you. But I remember his sister, you know, I remembered his sister.

MR Oh, right on.

PD Yeah. I didn't remember him. Like I say, he must've been one of the quiet types.

AE Yeah, they changed it.

MR Hence the nickname "Quiet"

SS Yeah, "Quiet".

AE Fortier was on Freret and Nashville. What that is now, Lusher or something?

PD Yeah, it's Lusher now.

MR Yeah, now it's Lusher, yeah.

PD No more Fortier.

MR Yeah, I think they still got the name on the building on there or something.

AE Probably so, yeah. Think it's still there.

ME And when did it change to Lusher?

PD After the hurricane.

MR [laughs]

AE Yeah, since the hurricane.

PD Since the hurricane, after the hurricane.

AE Are you sure that it wasn't before?

PD Yeah, Alvin, Gregory graduated in '05 from Fortier. My son graduated from Fortier '05, right before the hurricane.

AE Alright.

MR Craziiness.

AE But they changed it.

MR So there's no more Fortier anywhere.

PD There's no Fortier anywhere.

AE We kinda hate that our alma mater gone.

MR Yeah man, seriously.

SS Yeah.

AE We used to love when parade season come, and the band come out.

PD They have the Freret parade, and Fortier used to take 'em. That's where it start at, from Fortier School.

MR Aw, that's badass. And it looks like an old building, so it's probably been there a long time.

PD Yeah, it was an all boys school at first, before we went there. So we been out of school almost 20-some years so you know.

MR Jesus.

AE I know, that seem funny, man because it doesn't seem like it you know.

PD I haven't been in high school in over 20-something years.

AE Like we be talking about that, our kids, they 23, 21, but they say we old. And I have to laugh.

PD But I feel good.

AE Yeah, right. But I guess, you know, we are old enough to be their parents.

MR [laughs]

AE When I was coming up, I felt the same way about—

PD Somebody 45, that's old. I ain't old. I'm just living up.

MR [laughs] Peaking.

SS Just getting started.

PD Yes, just getting started, yup.

MR Yeah, I'm always real careful about what I call old.

SS Yeah.

MR Because years go by real quick.

AE They do, yeah.

MR So I'm like, old's 60. Then, once I'm 60, then I'll comfortable with being old. So now—

AE Right, that's how I feel. I figure once I make it to 60 I'm getting old. But right now you know. I mean, I ain't going to lie, I'm 45 and that's it. Like I could say when I was 30, but I can't really say that I feel no different. I know I'm getting older but, it depends on, like I say, you old as you feel, you know, that's true.

SS Do you feel like time's going faster as you get older?

PD Yes.

AE I feel that—

SS That's what my mom said to me, she said, it's going to start going faster and faster.

PD Oh, the years are. The years are going fast, fast, fast.

AE It seem that way, it really do.

PD It really does.

MR Real fast.

AE And I guess when you get a certain age, you start thinking about it more.

[phone rings]

AE Maybe that got something to do with it.

MR It's not even, it's weird, man. 'Cause the whole old thing, right. Like I'm 27 years old, which isn't old.

AE Right.

MR But then if I hang out with some 18, 19 year old kids, all of a sudden I'm old.

AE Right.

1:15:30

MR And the worst, right, is I'm like sitting there and there's a conversation going on and someone'll be like, "when I'm old, when I'm 30," and I'm like, aw man, I'm 30 in like 2 years, come on. Like, please, please, please, please. And my girlfriend is a few years older than me too, so that makes it even worse. So I'll be sitting there having a conversation and then I'll be like, "oh she's old,"—not talking about my girlfriend but somebody else—"oh she's old, she's 30 years old." And I'm like "oh, man".

AE Yeah, yeah. But it's just, you know.

MR It's all relative.

AE Like they said, that old saying, every number's a number, that's it.

SS Exactly.

MR The key's to live very long, and that way old is way, way out there. Now this is an interesting sort of question. I don't know how I would even answer this. But what are some important events from your guys' lives. Wacky question, right.

SS I mean, it was about marriage, we talked about that.

MR I can guess one that might happen pretty soon. The Saints Super Bowl, I'm pretty sure [laughs] that would be a pretty important event, right?

AE Yeah, that would be.

PD Yeah

AE I can't really say, I can't think of something big.

MR Outside of marriage and having kids, right.

PD That's my kids there that keep calling my phone.

MR [laughs] And so do you guys get together with your kids a lot?

PD Well, my daughter, my brother and my little nephew, they supposed to be coming over here. We get together and we play spades and stuff like that, dominos.

MR That's awesome, man. That's awesome

PD They bring, they want me to cook. So that's then they be coming.

MR [laughs]

PD So I got to go back there and cook. So they gon' bring something for me to cook, then we're gon' sit down and play spades and stuff.

MR That's awesome, that's one of the things I miss about home. I haven't been home in almost a year.

SS Yeah.

MR Yeah. I miss my family.

PD You going home for the holidays?

MR Hopefully. If I can get the money together to rent a car, then yes. I was gonna try to see—my mom's willing to loan me some money, my dad not so much.

SS [laughs]

MR So it's like, you know, I got to play it right. Talk to mom a little bit under the table, "talk to dad see if he wants to give me some cash," see if that works out. But if it don't, it will be the first time I don't go home for Thanksgiving.

PD So how long you been here?

MR I've been in New Orleans now a year.

PD Ok.

AE Ok.

PD So you're you a freshman?

MR No, I'm actually a Ph.D. student in anthropology. So I've been in school a long time. I've got about five more years of school.

PD Yeah my daughter too, she's trying, she wants to be a lawyer.

MR Long school there.

PD This her fifth year now in school.

MR So how much more is she—is she in law school yet?

PD No, she didn't go for one year. She graduated in '04. She graduated out of high school in '04. She went to Southeastern, yeah.

MR Oh, right on.

PD For like two years and then she stayed out for a year, and then she moved to Baton Rouge after the hurricane. Then she went to Southern.

MR Ah, right on, right on.

PD So she works for AT&T.

MR Oh, right on.

SS That's good.

MR I need to get a job for my girlfriend.

SS [laughs]

MR That's one of the problems with the Thanksgiving thing. She's been out of work now for like four months. She actually used to work for ACORN.

AE Yeah ok, yes indeed. They been messing with them.

MR Oh, big time man, big time. The entire thing had to move to Washington, DC. So what other organizations are you guys members⁰ of? Any other organizations?

AE No. This is the only organization.

MR It probably takes up just enough time, right?

AE Yeah.

PD Yes, it is. And then you can't get [unintelligible]

MR How much are the dues anyway?

PD We pay \$100 a month.

MR God.

AE [laughs]

MR \$100 a month? Jesus.

AE Yup.

PD You got to realize that we pay four, five hundred for our shoes.

MR For the shoes?

PD A pair.

MR Oh my god, man.

PD [laughs]

MR Oh my god.

AE When I first got in the club. dues was about, I think it was 'bout \$15.

PD \$50.

AE It wasn't 50, cost 25. Might have been 15. But I know that, I remember 25.

MR \$25 to \$100?

AE Yes, over the year.

MR And then—

AE But we buying the stuff. You know, it change, we paying more for the stuff.

MR That's true, that's true. So I'm sure you have every pair of shoes ever you wore, right? I mean \$500 a pair of shoes.

SS You save 'em all, right?

PD Oh yeah, I wear my shoes. You see all them shoeboxes?

AE Them shoe boxes, I got 'bout—

[laughter]

MR Oh, yeah. [laughs]

AE See them brim hats, I got about 16, 17.

PD We still got all our hats and all that.

MR That's awesome, man.

AE So you always be wearing 'em, you know, mix it up.

MR I saw Bruce, he had the shoes, when he came to class, he had the shoes from the year before.

PD Yeah, with the eyes on 'em

1:20:37

MR Yeah, yeah, yeah.

SS Those were cool.

MR That's awesome. And so how often do you guys have the eyes on shoes? Was that just the one year?

PD That was the one year.

MR That's awesome.

AE We change 'em, yeah.

PD Yeah, we have different shoes every year.

MR Right on. And now the Lady Wales, now they, I was having trouble kinda figuring this out actually during the parade. Though now that I know that the Queen and her deal is different. So in Lady Wales, they wear the same stuff as the guys?

PD As the men? No. Well, what we have, we have ladies' suits. We have on a ladies' suit to correspond with the men.

AE The same colors.

MR Yeah, the colors and stuff are the same. But it's like ladies' cut.

PD Yeah, ladies' suits and ladies' shoes with the heels on we parade in heels and stuff

MR Right on. Is it hard dancing in heels, and walking that far in heels?

PD No. Well, they don't be too high. The highest we get is like a 2 1/4 inch heel, something like that.

MR Right on.

PD That we can parade in.

MR Right on.

SS Yeah.

PD You can't do the stiletto.

SS I was seeing some girls walking around there.

PD They do that.

SS On the parade with their heels, their five inch heels.

PD I can't wear them.

SS Those were tall heels, stilettos.

PD Them youngsters do it.

SS There were some good outfits out there.

MR So you got to wear them all the time, that's the deal.

PD But they do it. I can't walk in them. Then talk about parading in them, I would break my ankle.

[laughter]

MR It's one of those things with the heels. I mean, that's definitely one thing I feel bad for with women. [laughs]

PD Yeah.

MR I'm glad there's not an equivalent of that invented for men.

SS [laughs]

MR It's funny, 'cause my friends yesterday were wearing some heels for this thing, and none of them really wear heels very often, right. And watching them walk around was just hilarious.

SS [laughs]

MR It's just like, almost falling every five minutes. It was awesome.

SS Yeah, they're hard.

MR Everyone ended up talking their shoes off an hour into it, just like, that's enough. Let's put those over to the side.

AE Yeah.

MR Let's see. You got any other good questions. Oh, we got this over here.

SS Yeah, this.

MR We got that, "how long have you been members of a social and pleasure?" We got that.

SS Yeah, we've been talking about all this.

MR Other friends and family in the club? We named that. What is the purpose—alright, here we go—what is the purpose of Prince of Wales, of the club?

AE Well, I mean, just really it's a cultural thing.

SS Yeah.

AE The second line, you know what I mean. Really we just trying to prosper and keep the name going.

SS Yeah.

AE Keep it going, basically. Because some clubs, you know, they got clubs that used to parade that fell apart.

SS Yeah.

MR Since the storm?

PD They don't exist anymore.

AE Yeah, before the storm, since the storm. Even like last week, week before last, We are One was supposed to parade, they didn't make it.

PD They didn't make the parade

AE They didn't make it, you know.

MR Oh, man.

AE I don't know what happened, probably financial problems of some of their members. I don't know what happened.

SS Yeah.

MR Have you guys ever missed a—?

PD We never miss.

AE No, we never miss.

PD Hurricane Katrina was the first time we missed.

AE The first time.

MR And then you just moved it to December, right?

PD Well we, yeah.

AE We went on and done it, yeah.

PD In December, but in the following year we came back.

MR Right on, man.

AE See, we lost money.

MR Right on.

PD We had to buy all our clothes—

AE We had bought that stuff up.

PD And everything, so we lost all our stuff.

AE So we lost that, you know, 'cause of storage, and we ain't get no many back.

PD We ain't get nothing back.

MR Whoa, you had bought all the stuff?

PD Yeah, we had paid for it.

MR Oh man, how did you even get it together by December?

PD That's why we came out with tuxedos, because we had rented them.

AE Yeah, we rented the tux and we was able to make the umbrella, and Meyer's got us the hats. It was a quick thing. It was really amazing how it came together. We had help from organizations like the Norman Dixon, the Tipitina's Foundation, all that, they helped. Because you know—

MR Tips did a lot of stuff.

AE We didn't have no money collected after the storm, but they helped pay for it. They probably paid for the band.

PD The police and the band and all that stuff.

AE You know we just got our stuff.

MR That's awesome, man.

AE Yeah. So we had help, we didn't do it by ourselves. But it was great, just the effort, you know.

MR How many people had got together?

AE There were five of us, huh?

PD There were more than five.

AE Me, Walter, Lil' Bruh, White Boy Joe, and Junior—there were five, and you was out there.

PD Yeah, I was out there.

AE A lot of 'em were still out of town.

MR That's awesome, though, man, getting five people together.

SS Yeah.

MR Keeping it going, man, that is awesome.

AE Yeah, it was a beautiful thing, man. I mean, so many people, they was thanking us and we was thanking them.

MR It was probably real emotional.

AE We're all in this together, you know.

MR Craziiness.

AE It was great.

MR I like what you said where you said, like, it was a cultural thing?

SS Yeah.

AE Yeah, it is.

SS And also about giving back to the community too/

AE Right, right. Yeah, 'cause some people love, they wouldn't miss this for nothing. That's what I'm saying, I'm in it and I love it. But let's say on Sunday, I may say I ain't going this week, I'll go next week. But they got people that's not going to miss it man, you know, for the world. I mean, they're going to be out there every Sunday and follow it, you know.

1:25:40

MR It really is one of those pieces of New Orleans.

AE And then I may get out there. When I go out there I may just follow, you know, walking but, that's another thing, they got people gonna be soaking wet sweating on the ground every week.

PD Dancing all on the posts.

MR I love seeing that.

AE And they do that every Sunday

SS That was fun.

PD All on top of the trash cans, everything.

SS We saw that.

MR I love that.

AE They had one out there Sunday—where that at? Right there on Broad—

PD Yeah, on top of that building.

AE Against that billboard sign. He was like, his feet were working against it upside down.

MR Aww man, that's badass.

AE Yeah, they be clowning

MR There was this cat who was dancing on top of the church, I remember it was like—what church was it? It was a Baptist church when we were over in Central City.

PD In our parade?

MR Yeah, in your parade.

SS Yeah.

PD On 3rd Street?

MR Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AE Yeah.

PD Yeah, they had the church right there.

MR Oh man, there's some guys that were craziness on that church, craziness. Love that, man, I don't even know how they're able to move that way.

AE I love it, man.

PD I be saying how they be doing it?

AE A lot of this stuff, only in New Orleans, you know.

MR And it's one of those things, man, without things like the second line and Indians and the brass bands, like without that stuff, you know, New Orleans really isn't New Orleans, right?

AE Right, right.

MR No, you need that.

AE I can't imagine it without it.

MR So doing it, it's like, for you guys, you grew up around it, you grew up with it. Was there a time or a point where you kinda step back from it and you're like, man, this is really special. This is something really different. Or was it always like that?

PD It has always been like that for me.

AE Yeah

MR Right on, right on.

PD Since I paraded, I don't want to miss a year.

MR Right on.

AE Yeah, once you do it once—

PD Once you do it, you're gonna want to do it again.

AE You do it once, you're gonna want to come back the next year.

PD Like Joel. Y'all—? I don't know if he's y'all's teacher or anything.

MR Does he teach?

PD Yeah, he teach at Tulane

MR Joe?

PD Joel. Not Joe, Joel. His name is Joel.

SS Joel.

MR Wait, which one are we talking about? The dude who came into our class?

SS You're not talking about Joe Stern?

AE No.

PD Not Joe Stern.

MR Oh, okay. I was like—Joel.

PD Yeah, but y'all have, we have a teacher.

AE Joel say he a professor at Tulane.

PD Yeah, professor at Tulane.

MR Really?

PD Yeah. he parades with us.

MR Oh, right on.

AE This was his first year.

MR Oh this is his first year?

AE He done good, yeah.

SS Oh, I think Nick was mentioning that.

MR Oh yeah. He teaches like American studies or something, right?

PD Yeah.

AE Yeah, I think I saw one of his students at the Voodoo Fest. She told me, she mentioned she was a student or something. But you know we was out there.

MR You were at voodoo Fest?

AE Yeah.

PD Yeah, they paraded at Voodoo Fest. They had about four or five of them that came up.

AE All three days.

PD All three days.

AE I went out there Saturday.

MR Oh, that's awesome, man.

PD Yeah, that's how we raise money. We do different things, like the Jazz Fest and then go do the stuff at the Jazz Fest and they pay us to parade and stuff at the Jazz Fest.

MR That's awesome. What is some other stuff to you that's a cultural part of New Orleans? Like something that is part of your culture, part of you, like second line, yeah, like the Indians, like we were mentioning, that's another thing. What is some other stuff that you think that just makes New Orleans what it is, or makes someone—?

PD 24/7.

AE Well, the—

PD You can go somewhere and party 24/7.

MR Yeah.

PD And you can't nowhere else. When I was in Memphis, like on Sundays you can't buy alcohol in a lot of states.

MR That's crazy.

AE Almost everywhere.

SS But not here.

PD Not here, you know.

AE Almost everywhere you go.

PD 'Cause I didn't know that when I went to Memphis. I'd go to the store and I'd pick up a 12-pack of beer and people are looking at me like I'm crazy. And I'm wondering why they looking at me and they say you know you can't buy alcohol on Sunday and I didn't know that.

MR Right, right, right.

AE Yeah, I'd be like man—

PD I be like I want to go home. I gotta go home, you know.

[laughter]

PD Like they say if you don't get—

MR There's football today, damn it.

PD Yeah, if you don't get your stuff on Saturdays, before 12 o'clock Saturday. you can't buy it.

MR Scary.

PD And I'm like "oh my lord."

MR [laughs]

PD You know, I didn't know that.

SS That is—

PD So now we was getting to have everything we wanted for Sunday because we knew we can't buy nothing on Sunday. We had to buy it that Saturday so we had it for Sunday. Yeah.

MR See, none of the rules make any damn sense.

PD I know.

MR Because you're gonna still have alcohol, you just buy it the day before. It's not like people are going to drink less, so you just buy more the day before.

SS Yup.

MR When I went camping up in Arkansas, we were like, alright, we'll buy our beer right before we get to the campsite. So we go up there, we go to the gas station to buy beer, and they're like, no, we don't sell beer here. And I'm like, well, where can I get some? They're like, you gotta drive 45 minutes that way to a county that sells—and it wasn't a Sunday, it was just a normal day.

1:30:31

AE Yeah, a dry county.

MR Oh, it was horrible.

SS Aww.

MR Which again doesn't make any sense, 'cause you just go over to the other county, man, it's like right there.

PD And you go and bring it back to they county anyway.

MR Same thing, yeah. It's crazy.

SS Yeah, might as well make the money off of it, right?

MR It was funny too, man. 'Cause let's say this is like the border of the counties—like literally right over the border was a liquor store. First building on the other side of the county line, a drive-through liquor store. Stupid, stupid rules, man.

AE Yeah.

MR Alright, what do we got going on here? Sweet and sassy—oh yeah, I like this. Well, Bruce described the route, and we were talking about that a little bit before, as sweet and sassy, right. Would you guys say that's a good way to describe your route, sweet and sassy?

PD You could say that, sweet and sassy. I think it's a nice, I like the route you.

MR I dig it.

AE I like it too.

PD Because not many clubs go down St. Charles Avenue.

MR Yeah, exactly.

PD [laughs] I think we probably was the first club to go down St. Charles Avenue. We been going down St. Charles Avenue for a long time.

MR That's awesome.

PD So we stopped traffic on St. Charles, the streetcars and everything.

MR That's the way to do it though.

PD Yeah.

MR That's why I love that term, man. It is sweet and sassy.

AE And one thing 'bout it, I don't know. I guess by having, by us being last in the parade and they have all the other stuff in the front, I know that every time we hit St. Charles too, a streetcar pass too. It happen every time, I don't remember a time

when I didn't see one. I guess we got enough traffic so that one's going up past us, you know.

MR That's awesome, man.

PD The tourists and stuff get on the streetcar and they be trying to see what's going on, taking pictures.

MR That's awesome.

AE It is different. [unintelligible]

MR One thing that I thought was real cool about it. especially with the sassy thing right, is that you start up in the 12th Ward and then you go down to Central City and its like, that's right, "Prince of Wales". And then you come up and you go by Commander's Palace like, "Prince of Wales". Like I love that, man, it's like a ballsy parade route. You just, you own that route that day.

AE Oh yeah, yeah. That's the feeling.

PD We own the streets that day.

MR Yeah, man.

AE It's a great feeling, it really is.

PD Yup.

MR Let's see. Oh, this is a good question. What makes a good parade?

PD No violence.

MR No violence?

PD Yeah.

AE Yeah.

PD Well since I've been parading, since '96, we never had anything happen at our parade. But they have some parades where, some people have shootings at their parades. And the police'll stop their parade right then and there..

MR That's the end of the parade.

PD And that's the end of the parade.

AE Yeah, you lose your money.

PD You lose your money. You don't get reimbursed or nothing. The police, they have the right to stop your parade.

MR Really?

PD Yeah, if something happens.

AE Yeah, if something happens.

MR has that ever happened where a parade gets stopped, not over a shooting, but over something where people were like, come on man, those guys ain't involved with us, they just got into a fight. Just, let's keep going. Has that ever happened or are they pretty cool, the cops?

PD They're pretty cool.

AE They're pretty cool,

PD Pretty cool cops, you know.

AE They're kind of like, when they check it out and they know it don't involve the parade, they'll try to take care of you.

PD They'll just route you a different way where you don't have to go toward it. Say something happens like you're supposed to be going thataway and something happened down there, they'll just re-route you where you don't have to go that way, you could just go bypass it another way. And catch it, and get back on your route

AE Yeah, 'cause last year—

MR Oh, cool, so—go ahead.

AE I was tired because a guy got shot when we got on 3rd Street. That stop, like you say, where the church is. Right there, before we started again, a guy got shot around the corner before we even got there. And they made us—

PD We stood there for a long time. But they was talking about stopping our parade. We had to talk to them, "This don't have nothing to do with the parade."

MR Right.

PD This happened before the parade. It was something that happened, we haven't even got there yet. So somebody had got shot—

AE —around the corner, so they re-routed us, but we had to go a long ways without stopping.

PD Without stopping.

AE So I was like wore out, you know.

PD We passed up like three stops

AE Two stops.

PD We have stops—

MR Right, right.

PD —in between where we can get breaks at and get something to drink and sit down. But we hadn't had a stop from our first stop until we got all the way almost back to around Tchoupitoulas, Annunciation.

AE Right.

MR Geeze, oh man.

AE We were wore out.

PD And so we had to, you know. I was tired, I was really wore out and they wouldn't let us stop. They said “y'all want to go, or I'm gonna cancel y'all's parade.” So we had to go with it.

MR Wow.

PD So they passed up three stops, we passed up three stops that we couldn't stop, so we just had to keep on going.

MR But most times the cops are pretty cool, yeah?

PD Yeah they're pretty cool.

AE Yeah, yeah.

MR Alright. 3rd Street, man, there's always something happening on 3rd Street.

AE Yeah.

PD Yeah.

MR I remember last year after Zulu, right after Rex or right during Rex on St. Charles—

PD Yeah, St. Charles and Third.

AE Right.

PD Yeah, someone got shot, yeah.

MR Yeah, that's a bad street. [laughs] Watch out for 3rd Street.

1:35:26

PD Yeah we were just talking about, they got some little bad areas over there.

MR What, 3rd St?

PD Yeah, around up in that area. By us from here, we know some of the bad areas. And I don't even deal with them.

MR Right, right, right. One thing about New Orleans that's interesting, right, is that in other cities—maybe I'm wrong—but it seems in other cities there's a bad area over there and it's all there. And in New Orleans you got little bad areas.

AE Yeah.

MR Like when I'm going home or whatever, I'm like, this block, not that block.

AE Yeah.

MR You know, like—

AE Pretty much, I know what you're saying, yeah.

MR It's so weird though, right? How one street is fine; next street, not so fine.

PD Not so fine, yup.

MR Craziness. So is there one parade, one year that sticks out for you guys, was the best year for your parading?

PD I think this year was the best one.

MR It was pretty awesome.

PD Yeah.

SS It was great

PD Yeah, I loved it, this one here.

MR It's the first second line I followed the entire route.

PD Ok.

MR I normally do one of those drive up, chill for a bit, walking around.

AE Yeah, go to the next stop or something, yeah.

SS This was fun.

MR It was crazy.

AE Yeah, I'm glad y'all enjoyed it. I really am.

MR Oh, I'm definitely going again next year.

AE Yeah, right.

PD We come out every second Sunday of October.

MR 100%. It's one of those things, like, I'm going to be here a long time. I got another six, seven years of school or something crazy, shit like that. But it's one of those deals, like you watch it and you're like, man, I wonder, could I afford dues to do, be part of this. Is that possible? It's so amazing.

AE Yeah, you get that feeling. We had so many people, the day of or after, you know "I want to join." But a lot of 'em, when the time comes, they won't do it

PD But we got some new members this year.

AE Yeah.

PD They joined, they just gonna be with us for next year.

MR Oh, right on.

AE Yeah, about four ladies, I know.

MR Well, after the storm was it hard getting the club back together? Or was it not so bad?

AE It wasn't so bad 'cause we already was focused on doing it. It was just a matter of as some of the members came back.

PD Yeah.

AE But that's all it was.

PD We had enough members that came, we got enough members back, we just went on and started it back. You know, just kept it going.

AE Right.

MR And so people were still paying their dues and stuff?

PD Yes.

MR Oh, right on, man.

SS I know there were a lot of kids parading too. Do kids pay their dues as well or how does that work? [laughs]

PD Well. most likely either—

SS It's like family members?

PD Family members or somebody.

AE Yeah, somebody.

PD It might be they son or they daughter or they grandchild

AE The parents'll pay for their stuff, but they don't pay no dues or none of that.

PD They don't pay no dues.

AE They might sell a raffle book or something, they help a little bit.

PD They buy they own kid's stuff if they want to parade.

MR Oh, right on, right on. I saw this little guy this year—

SS Their shoes were so cool.

MR Oh, their shoes were badass. How old was this kid? I can't tell, man.

PE Maybe Jodie.

MR Maybe like 10 more or less?

AE Yeah.

MR Ok. I thought she was like 4. I'm not good at guessing ages. But yeah, I saw him, he was awesome. He had like the suit going and everything. I was like, man, this is good for this kid's confidence.

[laughter]

MR Next day he's gonna be like, "I was there."

PD But they be ready for it.

AE Yeah, that's what makes it cute, them kids.

MR Was there one parade that was horrible for you guys?

AE One time for me it was, [laughs], when that was back in, that was '94?

PD That's the same year they had that purple.

AE No, when we had the black pants and the red. The dude's tuba was broke or something.

PD Oh yeah, we paraded without a tuba, yeah.

AE Yeah, and then—

MR You paraded without a tuba?

AE Yeah, and we—

PD Yeah, without a tuba.

AE We had to pay the band in advance, so we're walking and they're not playing no music and I was like "play something." They were like "We ain't got no tuba." And I was like, "Play the drums. play anything."

[laughter]

AE But they done got paid already you see, so it was kind of bad. I never forget that. They played but they didn't—

MR You don't got a tuba, you don't got like—

PD Yeah.

SS Yeah.

AE You really need the tuba.

PD The tuba is the one that makes the noise.

MR Yeah, yeah, yeah, it's keeping the rhythm.

PD Yeah.

AE I don't know how far on we went, but we went a long way before they got it straight, whatever had happened. But that was my worst one. We made the parade, but.

MR What year was that? '94?

AE In '94. That's when [unintelligible] paraded with us. And y'all was trying to get together, you started parading the year after.

PD Yeah. they paraded in 95, I paraded in 96.

AE Yeah, that was then. But other than that, you know. I mean, it wasn't bad bad. But I just like to hear the music and have my fun the whole way, and it wasn't like that.

MR Have you ever had a day where it rains real hard?

AE My second year, that was '95, but this was '94, because that was '93. And on that second year we wore green. See like on that poster I got there, that green we got on? That's my first and second year. That was at the Jazz Fest, that picture there really. But that green was the second year, and it rained from the time we started to the time we stopped.

1:40:34

MR Was that fun?

PD Yeah, because once you start you can't stop.

MR Right, right. Then you're just like, "I'm in it."

PD Yeah, 'cause the police is not going to give you your money back. The band is not going to give your money. So if you start, you have like, if it's raining or something, you're supposed to cancel like two hours before the parade.

MR Right, right,

PD And if you don't cancel, you have to roll.

MR Right, right.

PD You're gonna lose your money, so you just got to go with it and roll in the rain. But I never had to parade in the rain so far yet.

[laughter]

MR Oh, right on.

PD Yeah, because see, if your feathers and stuff get wet, it's gonna mess up all your stuff. You know them feathers that we have on our fans?

SS Yeah.

PD We pays, it be almost \$2000 for the, just the feathers.

MR Jesus, \$2000?

PD 'Cause we have to buy so many pounds of feathers, because you have so many on each fan.

MR Right, right, right.

PD 'Cause see the ladies, they have like 20 feathers on each fan.

MR Right, right, right. That adds up.

PD It adds up.

MR That's crazy man. \$2000.

PD Well. they're like 200-some dollars a pound.

MR Jesus. I guess that's why you need to pay \$100 a month dues.

AE Right.

MR Plus raise money.

PD That's what we have to have functions and stuff to raise money and stuff, to do this.

MR Now with the functions, how do you advertise the functions? Or is it just people who know the club, and like—

PD Yeah, it just like different clubs and stuff. And then each member, we responsible for 10 tickets, so I have to sell 10 tickets. So you might sell 'em to family members or people that you know to get people to come to the dance and support you.

MR Oh, that's cool, man. That way normally with the dances, you know basically everybody there, yeah?

PD Yeah. And we have a second line band that comes to the dance and play for about 30, 45 minutes.

MR Right on, man, right on. And the second line band is normally like Hot 8 or Stooges, something like that?

PD Hot 8 or Stooges, yeah.

MR Right on. What was I going to say—we did that, who picks the queen.

SS What about the—is there a difference between men's activities and women's activities like for Lady Wales and Prince of Wales, or do you guys basically do the same thing?

PD We do the same thing. We one club, yeah. But we have Lady Wales. The Lady Wales had they own club at one time. We had two different bands when we paraded. But since Hurricane Katrina or right before Hurricane Katrina we became one, where we do everything together now.

MR You had two different clubs?

PD Well the Lady Wales and the Prince of Wales, we had our own club and the Prince of Wales was a different club.

MR So you paraded at different times?

PD We paraded at the same time, the same day. But we might have our band in front of them, they might be behind with they band.

MR That's crazy, that's awesome.

PD Yeah, we used to have two bands.

MR Oh man, that's wild, man. That's awesome.

PD Yeah.

SS That is cool.

PD Yeah, but we just started to have one band right before Hurricane Katrina.

MR Right on, right on. There was something that was right on here. Oh, so both of you guys dance, yeah, during the second line? How did you learn the second line dance?

PD You do what you want.

MR [laughs]

SS That's the feeling I got too.

PD Basically you do what you want.

MR Right, right.

PD You know, just keep up with the beat and do what you want.

MR Right on, right on. And so that's the same with the feathers and with the umbrellas, you just do what you want? You just feel what you're doing with it, right?

PD Yeah, you just make what you want.

MR That's awesome.

PD Yup. But we always, somebody makes our fans, but we always do our own umbrellas.

MR Right, right.

PD Yeah, 'cause we have somebody that makes 'em. All our fans be the same.

MR Oh, ok. So you—

PD And so all the ladies' fans be the same, be made just exactly the same. And all the men's fans be made exactly the same.

MR Ok.

PD But with the umbrellas, we do that on our own. The club will pay for our fans and stuff, but we do have to buy the stuff and make the umbrellas ourselves.

MR Ok. So the umbrella is definitely the thing where you're able to show your unique artistic talent?

PD Yeah.

MR Yeah, I dig that. Why do you have—I noticed this year you had, well I didn't see you the year before, but I've not seen this at every second line, but I saw it at your guys' second line—the guys holding the lines, the rope on the outside?

PD Yeah, that's to keep people from out your parade.

MR Right on.

PD See, it's like we paid for these streets. That's \$5,000 that we paid for these streets.

MR Right, right.

PD And then you have the video man that be out there and people taking pictures and then you know if you don't have the rope everybody will be in the parade. You won't even see us.

MR Right, right.

PD So we use the ropes to keep them out the parade so we can be seen.

MR And do you hire the guys?

PD Yeah, we pay 'em.

MR Oh, ok, right on. How do you find them? Is it just somebody that you guys know?

PD No, a lot of them guys holds the ropes for all the second lines, be out there, and we'll get 'em. But this year we had four of them, one of my members, her brothers who said they was going to do it. And so we normally have six rope holders.

1:45:44

MR Oh, right on.

PD And so we pay them, and we have one to hold the banner.

MR Right on. And so these guys who hold the banner, hold the rope and stuff, they work for a lot of the clubs?

PD Yeah, for a lot of different clubs, they hold the ropes for a lot of clubs.

MR That's interesting. How did they get into that I wonder?

PD Because a lot of people be looking for people to hold they ropes, you know. Because the members can't hold the ropes because they're parading, so they need someone to hold the ropes on the outside.

SS Yeah.

MR So do you guys call different clubs and ask, "Who were those guys you had holding the ropes?"

PD No, they're going to be at the parade, believe me. And they going to ask you, "You need somebody to hold your rope?"

MR Oh, that's awesome.

PD Yeah.

SS They come to you.

PD They come to you, they come to you.

MR Oh.

PD They be at, they go to all the second lines. "You need somebody to hold your rope? You need somebody to hold your rope?"

SS Do you ever turn anybody away, though? Are there ever too many of them?

PD Well, yeah, they have too many of them, they have a lot of them. Yeah, 'cause once you have your six, then you tell them "I got my rope holders already."

MR Right, right. How much do they get paid, the rope holders?

PD We pay the banner holder \$40 and we pay the rope holders 30.

MR Right on, that's pretty badass. I should do that next time I go to a second line.

PD [laughs]

MR And so let's see. We know who picks the Queen, the Queen picks the Queen. She comes up, is like "I got \$300." [laughs]

PD But this year, like I said, we got three of them, so we going to have to do different things this year.

MR And it's—oh yeah, the hat thing.

PD Yeah, we gotta do the hat thing. So whoever come out the hat this year, so that's what we're going to.

MR And the cops, you guys have to hire the cops by law, right?

PD Yeah we have to have the cops, yes.

MR Ok. You think it's better to have the cops?

PD Yeah, you won't be able to parade without them.

AE Yeah, you got to have the cops.

MR No, I mean, like if you could parade without the cops, and you had a choice, with the cops or without the cops?

PD I prefer with the cops.

MR Keeps it together.

PD Keeps it together.

MR People act right when they see 'em.

PD Yeah, 'cause if you don't have the cops, you stopping traffic.

MR Oh yeah.

PD So you know, you're not going to be able to stop traffic.

MR [laughs] Right, right, right, right. You're gonna see a bunch of second liners running across the street.

PD Yeah, people might stop at a red light and they gon' keep going. They'll run you over here.

MR Right, right.

PD So you have to have the cops.

MR I dig that. What pictures have we got going on here?

AE This is one of the rain. I had some more, but I couldn't find 'em. But it rained from the beginning. We was on Magazine Street and it rained the whole way. I have some pictures, the hats they bent down, they were soaking wet. But we had fun. I wanted to show you that but I couldn't find none of them.

MR That's awesome.

AE And this is one year when we had red. Now see them umbrellas? I made about three of those.

SS Wow.

MR Oh man, that's beautiful.

SS I love those.

AE This my first year I paraded. That was the first one I actually made, my first umbrella.

MR That's your first umbrella?

AE Yeah, I done good, that's the first one there.

MR That's crazy. That's the first one you ever did?

AE Ever made, yeah. And that one didn't have no ribbon. We call that stuff marabou. So all I had was maribou with the diamonds, and that's the first one I ever did. That's another one we had on like our streamer with the Saints symbol at the bottom.

SS Saints.

AE You can't hardly see it too good.

SS That is—is that an umbrella?

PD Yeah, that's that right there.

AE I used to have it decorated but that's it right there.

PD Yeah, we took the decoration off it.

SS That is so cool.

PD Yeah, we took the decoration off it.

AE Check this picture out, this is a better picture here. This is actually from Jazz Fest, I had it decorated then. See I have the Saints thing, the Saints suits and the streamers. I had a ribbon that was at the Jazz Fest.

MR That's at Jazz Fest?

AE Yeah.

MR That's awesome.

AE This is another one, this was at Jazz Fest. We had on like green and burgundy.

SS Oh wow, I like this one.

AE I didn't make that, I bought that about 15 years ago from the black and gold shop. They don't even sell 'em anymore. Yeah, I had that decorated.

MR That's badass.

AE And that's another one, we had on gold and brown.

SS Those are good.

PD Would you like a Pepsi? Like a Pepsi?

MR I'll have a Pepsi, sure.

SS Yeah, that would be nice, thank you.

AE See, all of 'em really look different.

SS That is so cool. I know, they all have different decorations on them.

MR I like that orange-brown right there.

SS Yeah. These colors are fresh.

AE Like I said, you see these, that's when we [unintelligible]. But that's the suits there. And all the other ones, we used to really—

SS I love those umbrellas.

1:50:34

MR I like the suits. You think it's a good idea to stick with the suits?

AE Oh yeah, yeah. It make it look just even better.

MR What's your favorite color?

[soda cans being opened]

AE I wouldn't lie to y'all. To me, it's like, I don't really have a favorite color. But one thing I see, to me it happen everytime—I don't know how we do it, 'cause every year to me is better than the next year.

MR Right, right.

AE 'Cause I mean, that stuff be so pretty. Like that blue, that was pretty.

SS Yeah.

AE We ain't got our other pictures, but that peach was better than that. Now when we come this year, whatever we coming with, we gonna probably feel like it gonna be better than that. That's how it seems to me.

MR So, what do you think you might do next year?

PD Oh, we already know.

MR Oh really?

PD [laughs] It's too soon to tell right now.

MR Oh man, that'll be awesome. I love that blue too, man, it like glows in the dark.

AE Yeah, man. That's what I'm saying, you know. Now we could have went with navy, some color like navy blue, I mean, royal blue suits. 'Cause they wanted the darker color, 'cause they might not like the lighter color. But the light color make it pretty.

MR I like how even the brown and yellow was like, "pop".

AE Yeah, that was tight. And this umbrella here, man, this was like—Lonzo died, this was in '02, the year after he passed—in February, we came out that year, '02. But see like all these ribbons? I used to, just like that picture there of my uncle, see how he got that burgundy and orange and stuff? And then I have, one year we had this here, see how this year we had that blue?

SS I like that blue.

AE That blue and gold.

PD Teal.

AE What I used to do after the parade, I would save my streamers, my streamers and my other stuff like that, and hang 'em on the walls. So when Lonzo died, he the one told me how to make 'em. I took ribbon off of all the streamers I had. Now these from different years, that blue, the orange. They might have been 5 or 6 different years, but I took ribbon off of the old stuff and made one umbrella.

MR That is badass.

AE But that is, people didn't know, but that was like from years. This year, the ribbon might have been from the past previous 5 years, you know. Ribbon and the other stuff.

MR That's awesome, that's awesome, man.

AE And that was a big one I filled. Man, this was one of them big umbrellas and they were heavy. And I, everytime I give it to somebody, they were bringing it back to me.

MR [laughs] You still got that umbrella?

AE No.

PD He lost that in the hurricane.

AE Yeah.

MR Oh man, that sucks.

AE But that was something, man.

MR Let me see that picture?

SS He has the pictures though.

MR Yeah.

SS Look at that.

AE I mean—

MR That is huge.

AE Yeah, it was one of them big ones.

PD Big, big umbrella.

AE It was pretty, too. But all them ribbons was from different years.

MR Jesus, man. That was probably like 30 pounds.

AE I don't know if it was that heavy, but it was kinda heavy. 'Cause normally, you know, you can let people, people be glad to hold it.

PD To help you hold it.

AE They had plenty people taking pictures, but they kept bringing it back to me.

[laughter]

PD Too heavy, too heavy.

AE Yeah. And I was like, shit, [unintelligible]. See, that's the only thing. Like you see them fans, it take some of the weight off. Then you can clown more, you know. Yeah, you can make it look more better. More things than you can do with the umbrella.

MR I like the kids right here, man, look at these kids. That'd be awesome, man. That's awesome. And what role does the second line play in the life of the city?

AE It plays the role, like I said, it's our culture, and they use it for so many things. Like way back, it's just a tradition, Richard Pryor, one of his tapes he had on there—and you know we have jazz funerals, second lines—and Richard Pryor made the statement, “Aunt Melpha's on Napoleon in New Orleans, partying at the drop of a hat (?). Aunt Melfa died, and that's the best part.” You know, we dancing behind.

MR [laughs] That's awesome.

AE Yeah, but that made sense. Somebody die, that's the best part. That's what he said about it, but really it's a jazz funeral.

MR I'm writing that down so I can make sure I tell somebody about that later.

AE Yeah.

MR So is it—

AE “Aunt Melpha’s in New Orleans, partying at the drop of a hat.” You know, we second line.

MR I love that.

AE He said it for what it look like, but it’s not really like that.

MR At the drop of a hat, I like that.

AE Yeah.

MR I like that.

AE Yeah, no doubt. That really a jazz funeral.

MR And—

AE They do it for so many things, like people nowadays, I mean, weddings. About anything, they’ll have a band.

PD A second line band.

AE A party.

PD Everything.

MR All over the place.

AE You know when they have a celebration, somebody dead, or their birthday coming, they have a band?

1:55:38

MR Now do you guys—that raises an interesting thing. Do you guys participate, like when a club member dies, right?

AE Yes.

MR Do you guys do a second line, like a jazz funeral?

AE Yeah, yeah. We will. Now some people, not every person in the club, that’s what they want. A jazz funeral, of course, I want to. But some families, sometime the family might not want it. But I feel like most people, they families would go with it ‘cause they was in the club. But we have sometimes, some people feel that’s too hard, or they don’t want the people.

MR Right.

AE Want to be more private, so they wouldn't want it. But one way or the other we participate in it. We buy wreaths or do stuff for the family.

MR Oh, so the club helps out with the cost of the funeral too?

PD Yeah, a little. We'll pay half on the band, we'll buy a wreath, you know, something.

MR Oh, wow.

AE Yeah.

PD Yeah, and we'll bring 'em out.

MR Really is like a family, right?

PD Yeah.

MR That's awesome. I told basically everybody in my family and my girlfriend, I was like, I don't care where we live. Like if everything works out beautifully, when I graduate from Tulane, hopefully, I would love to get a job at UNO, right. And just live here.

PD Yeah.

AE Might as well.

MR But I love it.

AE I mean, you gon' be here all that time, you gon' be here.

MR I'll be here a long time.

AE Really like home.

MR Yeah. And the thing is—

AE A long way from home.

MR It's one of those things, like I've been coming to New Orleans every year since I was 18, before I started school here. And every year I just learn a little bit more, a little bit more of the city. So when I came in, it was like I had this familiarity with New Orleans. But still, you don't really know the city until you live in the city.

AE Yeah, yeah.

PD True.

MR You can visit it, you can see a second line, or you can—

AE I met another guy, he moved, this guy. And he from Miami, you know what I'm saying, he was from Miami. And he said he liked the city. He said it reminded him a lot of Miami. And said some of his friends were like, "Man, you going to New Orleans?" You know, like it's bad. But he said, he from Miami, you know, they got spots. Really, it's bad wherever you go. Trouble is everywhere.

MR Yeah, it is.

SS Yeah, any city.

AE You can't run from it. And that's what he was saying. 'Cause some people, they really get that image and they think it's bad. But like he said, he live in Miami, New Orleans ain't no badder.

SS Exactly.

AE The same areas everywhere you go.

MR Yeah, it's just like, you gotta be smart.

AE Right.

MR You know what I mean? You don't walk by yourself down a dark street.

AE Right.

MR You know, at like 1 o'clock at night.

SS When you're drunk, too.

MR Yeah.

AE Right, right, right.

SS That's another thing, you gotta look out for yourself.

AE Right, that's all.

MR I ride a bike, I don't have a car. And at night when I go to unlock my bike, I'm like—you ever see one of those things on TV, like a nature thing, and they got a

deer or something, and he's like dipping his head in the river and pops back up?
That's how I am when I'm unlocking my bike.

AE Yeah, always be aware of your surroundings.

SS [laughs]

PD Be aware, you got to be aware of your surroundings.

MR Hell yeah, yeah. That's how you stay safe. That's how you stay safe.

PD You got to be aware of your surroundings.

MR And really, it's one of those things though, everywhere you go there's gonna be a problem.

AE Oh yeah, yeah. That's what he was saying, that's true, I agree.

PD 'Cause when I was in Memphis, it was like "Lord". It was worse than New Orleans, because it was like everytime you turn on the TV, three or four people were dead.

AE But we wasn't in a bad area.

MR Yeah, yeah, yeah.

PD Yeah, you know. And they were carjacking at the red light. They carjacking you at the red light, you know, killing you for your car. Putting you in the trunk and shooting you. And I was like, I was out there by myself, because after he had came back I was still there.

MR Oh man.

PD And I'm like, oh I know I got to come home. They broke into our truck twice.

MR Jesus.

PD Yeah. The cops said they probably was targeting us because we had the Louisiana license plate.

SS I mean, I've had worse experience with all that in Miami than here. Like I've had people break into my house in Miami, I've had all that, but I've never had anything happen here.

PD Yeah.

MR I've been robbed in Miami but not here.

AE Yeah.

SS Yes, that's what I'm saying.

MR Knock on all the wood.

SS No I know, exactly.

MR That was stupid when I got robbed.

PD It just depending on what area you go in.

MR Right, right, right. And your behavior when you're there.

AE Right.

MR Like even when I got robbed in Miami, it was when I was doing stupid shit. Like 18 years old, on the beach with a buddy in the middle of the night, you know.

AE Yeah.

MR Not a smart idea.

PD You lookin' for something down there.

MR Exactly, exactly. Not real bright. But what I was gonna say, I told my whole family and I told my girlfriend, Diana, I was like, I don't care if we're not living here, I don't care, I want to get a jazz funeral when it goes down.

AE That's cool. It's different. I'll never forget, now, the guy—did anybody tell you about Jimmy Parker?

2:00:38

MR No.

AE He used to be the president. They say he was the president for about 40 years.

MR Damn.

AE When I first got in, he was in. He stepped down and retired the year after that. This Jimmy Parker here, that guy with a white suit. That was his last year. He died the year after that.

MR Sitting there like Godfather.

AE Yeah, he was president for about 40 years. What I was saying, I forgot what I was—

PD You were talking about the jazz funeral.

AE Yeah, yeah. So when we had the funeral for him, my cousin was from Mississippi, he came down. And we got to the church and they had the horse and the carriage sitting out there. You know, you ever saw one?

MR Yeah.

AE Had the old black carriage and that little horse, look like a donkey or whatever.

MR Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AE And when we first got there, he ain't know. We went into the church and everything and we brought the body out and once we done it, but then my cousin wondered what the buggy was for.

MR [laughs]

AE It tripped him out, but that's different, you know, it's a jazz funeral. We put them in there and then we follow behind.

PD And then you have the band, you follow behind the buggy, mule, second lining and stuff. But a lot of times they take the casket off and they go down the street holding the casket in the air.

MR While they're like moving, yeah.

PD They hold the casket and second line.

AE We finally did come up and put him in the thing. [unintelligible] It's different.

SS [sneezes]

AE Bless you.

MR The first time I ever saw—

SS Thank you.

MR Bless you. The first time I saw a jazz funeral was at my third time here. And I had heard of them, but I had never seen one. And pretty much then I was like, "oh". If

I'm dying, this is how I want it to wrap up. I want this to be the credits, 'cause it's—

AE It's different.

MR Yeah man, it's a great way, it's a good way to ease people out.

AE Somebody died, hey, let's do it.

[laughter]

MR It's a lot better. My family style of funeral is everyone gets really really drunk and cries a lot, Irish Catholic, just lots.

SS Sad.

MR And it would be, add some music, get a carriage.

SS Yeah.

MR A lot better, man.

SS Celebrate their life.

AE Right. That's what it's like, really.

MR And, oh, is there something that the city could do to better support second line culture? Or do you think the city is invested in it? Like you guys actually—what were you going to say? I'm sorry.

PD No, the city don't invest in it.

SS Exactly.

MR So you don't think that—

SS I feel like for the publicity, they'll post the pictures of it, and they'll say "oh, it's part of our culture."

PD Yeah, part of our culture.

SS But then they won't—

AE Right.

SS —really be helping you guys out at all.

PD They don't help us at all.

AE They sure don't.

SS I feel like they even purposely don't, you know.

AE Right. and everytime you see tours, you see the commercials, I mean, President or anybody come to town, they have second lines, they have the brass bands. But they don't really treat us like they should.

SS Yeah.

PD If it was up to them, we wouldn't even parade.

MR Right, right.

PD We wouldn't even be second lining.

AE Yeah. One time—

PD That's really why we have the Task Force.

AE Yeah, the Coalition.

PD The Coalition, the Task Force, because were trying to fight for our culture, for some of our rights.

AE 'Cause they trying to—we paying—but they're trying to make us do exactly what they want. Unlike the carnival thing, where they treat them different.

MR Oh, the krewes.

AE Yeah.

PD The Mardi Gras, yeah.

AE 'Cause they don't pay that much for the police or none of that like we paying.

MR Yeah, I always wondered that.

AE Right.

PD I remember when I first paraded, I remember the police used to be like \$700.

AE Yeah.

PD The band used to be like \$700 too. Nowadays it's \$2500. And if you have a party or anything a half an hour is 350 for half an hour.

MR That's crazy, man.

AE Yeah, it's high.

MR That's crazy. How the hell did that even happen, like in 10 years?

AE That's how it happened.

PD Everything going up but your paycheck.

AE 'Cause we went—

MR Absolutely

[tape cuts off at **2:04:36**]

0:04

SS I'm assuming it wasn't that much that we missed, 'cause I know I looked at it like a couple times.

AE How are y'all going with the interviews? You got plenty more people to get?

MR Each student does one person.

PD Ok.

AE Oh, ok.

SS Or maybe two.

MR Or maybe two.

AE Alright.

MR We're trying to get everybody in the club.

SS Yeah.

MR Try to get a nice oral history of what's going on with Prince of Wales.

AE Right.

MR I think it's gonna be on Nick's show, right?

SS Yeah.

AE Oh yeah?

SS He's gonna do something with it on his show American Routes, probably.

MR You guys are gonna be able to hear your voices on the radio.

AE Yeah.

SS And we're gonna get the interview and the transcript to you guys, of course.

AE Cool.

SS You're gonna get to have that.

AE Cool.

MR One thing, I just wanted to know. When someone's coming to town, right, or when there's a commercial for New Orleans, or even if you watch the news and it's talking about New Orleans, it's like—

SS Always a second line, always a second line.

AE Right.

MR But, when it comes down to it, I don't even know how that works. It's like, ok, Katrina happens, you're trying to get the city back together, you're trying to get the culture right.

SS Yeah.

MR You're trying to continue things, and then they just try to screw you at the same time.

AE Right, right.

PD Yes.

AE Pretty much.

MR I don't even understand.

SS It doesn't make sense if they want to promote it so much, but then...

PD Everything you see, any kind of commercial dealing with New Orleans, the first thing you see is a second line. But they don't support us.

MR For Zatarain's rice commercials you see it.

PD See a second line, yeah, but they don't support it.

AE They don't support it. Now you would think [unintelligible].

MR Yeah, not only just the lack of support, but literally fighting against you.

AE Right, right.

MR Like, \$2500 after the storm.

AE That's how we figured the prices. And the way they were trying to do, keep going up on things to the point where we can't afford 'em. 'Cause some clubs couldn't.

MR And how, I don't understand how krewes, like carnival krewes, they obviously got more money as an organization.

AE Right.

MR Than a second line krewe. Than a social aid and pleasure club.

AE That's why we had to get the coalition, 'cause I heard, I really heard that this, say like a carnival club might be paying like \$700 for the police. But hell, we paying \$1800, whatever, you know. It's just not fair.

2:31

MR No, not at all.

PD And then, you know, we parade just one day. Mardi Gras lasts for two weeks.

AE Right.

[phone rings]

MR Two weeks, yeah. And if it's about security—

PD [on phone] What's up, A.A.?

MR Like we were just talking about—

PD [on phone] I'm over here doing my interview.

MR Like on Third and St. Charles last year.

AE Right.

MR Rex.

AE Right.

MR You know, like.

AE Right.

SS Yeah.

MR It's ridiculous.

AE It just, you know, really no way to explain it.

PD I wonder if y'all did Adrian yet, that's one of my cousins there.

MR Oh yeah?

PD Yeah, Adrian.

MR Have they been interviewed yet?

AE This her first year parading. She never paraded before. She been following them and stuff. She 30 years old, but this her first year parading.

PD This her first year parading, and that's all she talking about, "Oh, I can't wait till next year, I can't wait till next year."

MR Once people parade, do they just, is that like all they think about anymore?

PD That's all they think about.

AE Yeah, they gon' come back.

MR [laughs]

AE I'll tell anybody—

PD That's all they think about.

AE You do it once, you're gon' do it again.

MR You're done. [laughs]

PD The closer that they get, that's all they talk about. I say, "Girl, you feel like that now, but wait, after a while it's gon' come natural."

MR [laughs]

PD Adrian was so angry, "Ooh, I can't wait for you, I'm scared." She like, "I'm scared." I'm like, "What you scared of? Just go out there and dance, second line."

MR [laughs]

PD "You follow it every Sunday, so what you scared of it?" "But everybody gon' be watching me." I'm like, "Do what you gotta do, you know, you don't worry about that. Just do what you wanna do."

MR It is one of those things, though, like seriously, we were talking about getting to a point where you're feeling like you can jump this high?

AE Yeah.

MR That would definitely be me.

AE Yeah, cause I—

PD He did.

AE I done that by the same thing. I did funerals that way, you know.

PD He just start jumping in the air.

MR [laughs]

PD They got him on the video that we have, I think they—

MR Oh, so you were really jumping that high?

AE I was. See like right now, I can't do that. But at that purnt, I just felt it, you know. And I just jumped like I was a kangaroo all the way to the door, then I step on one knee.

MR That is badass, man, that is badass.

AE Yeah.

MR I dig that. Alright, cool. How long has the interview been, do you know?

SS Like two hours and 15 minutes or so.

MR Solid, solid. Well, is there anything that you guys would like to say, or anything you'd like to say about Prince of Wales Social Aid & Pleasure Club, that, you know, we haven't really discussed? Or something you just want to mention again? Anything like that?

AE Not really.

MR That kicks ass. [laughs]

PD And y'all basically covered about everything.

MR That's awesome.

AE Yeah, y'all been nice, I want to say that.

SS So interesting.

5:05

AE I appreciate it, and glad that y'all picked our club to do this with. I mean, we're the second oldest club.

MR It's, I feel real lucky that I live where I live, right.

AE Oh yeah, you in [unintelligible], yeah.

PD Yeah, you right there.

MR It was neat, it was kinda like, this is my neighborhood's social aid and pleasure club.

PD [laughs]

MR It was great, man.

AE Yeah.

MR It's great. Love it. And when do you guys—real quick—when do you guys meet at Rock Bottom? How often does that happen? That's the place where you meet, yeah?

PD Well no, that's our home. But we have meetings at different people's, other members houses.

AE Really, we got too many members. It got to the point where it was inconvenient, you know. They had a room in the back, but they got stuff stored in there, so that changed us from meeting there. But that's our home.

MR Alright.

AE But we—you know the band plays there on...

PD Thursday nights.

AE Thursday nights. And sometimes some of the members...

PD Some of the members be there on Thursdays.

AE Some be in there every Thursday, you know. I may not be there all the time.

MR That's crazy, man, that's awesome.

[phone rings]

MR Alright, well, thank you so very much.

AE Thank you.

MR Is there anything else you want to ask?

SS I think that sums it up.

MR Solid. Thank you guys so very very much.

AE Thank y'all. Alright.

6:17