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Warren G. Gaines

Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front Oral History Project

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Interview conducted by
Sam Redman
in 2012

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Interview #1 June 21, 2012

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01-00:00:00

Redman: Today is June 21st. My name is Sam Redman and I'm in Stockton, California with Warren G. Gaines.

01-00:00:15

Redman: Gaines. G-A-I-N-E-S.

01-00:00:16

Gaines: Warren Gamaliel Harding Gaines.

01-00:00:20

Redman: Gamaliel Harding.

01-00:00:21

Gaines: Gaines. I was named after Warren G. Harding.

01-00:00:24

Redman: All right. That's great. I'd like to ask you about that in a moment. Today is June 21st and we're in Stockton, California. I've asked you to state your name. But will you tell me where and when you were born?

01-00:00:36

Gaines: I was born in Goodnight, Oklahoma, which is five miles from Langston University, on the farm, my daddy's farm.

01-00:00:46

Redman: Can you tell—

01-00:00:47

Gaines: In 1920.

01-00:00:48

Redman: 1920?

01-00:00:49

Gaines: Yes.

01-00:00:50

Redman: Can you tell me a little bit about who your parents were and what they were like?

01-00:00:53

Gaines: Well, I can tell you about my parents. From what I know in my research, I've learned who my parents were. Very few people know who their parents are.

01-00:01:05

Redman: In terms of actually knowing who they were?

01-00:01:08

Gaines: I know my parents.

01-00:01:09

Redman: Can you tell me a little bit—

01-00:01:10

Gaines: My father was born in 1867 in Waco, Waco, Texas. He was the son of an immigrant Jewish German from Germany. I know my father but I don't know my grandfather. My grandfather was a slaveholder. His name was Heinrich Mueller. His son was my father, Heinrich Mueller. He had two children. The original German had two children, Aunt Fannie, and my poppa was named Henry Walter. But his real name was Heinrich Mueller. He was a German immigrant slaveholder, which there's a lot of them here that you don't even know. They don't even tell you that they were Jewish.

01-00:02:18

Redman: So was he farming? Did he have a homestead?

01-00:02:21

Gaines: He had 5,000 acres of land.

01-00:02:24

Redman: Five thousand acres. That's pretty amazing.

01-00:02:27

Gaines: Well, land in Texas was nothing at that time. But it's a very unique story. It's hard to explain and I had to do a lot of research to explain it. Now, I'm going to tell you what happened. My father's mother and father were slaveholders. They had a vast amount of land. They loved to ride horses. At the age of two years old or three, they were riding and the horse reared up and killed Heinrich Mueller the first's wife. That left him with two kids, Aunt Fannie and my dad, Henry Walter. I'm going pretty fast through the story. What happened was that left him with those two kids and he was all taking care of his vast cattle and so forth. But you won't find this in your history because a lot of this is blotted out. What I know and did in research and went down there and found out about it by research. Then I found out some things. Oh, they going to say, "Oh, you're lying and all this stuff." And I didn't understand it until later on in my life.

01-00:03:56

Redman: So when you were growing up, I'd like to get just a feel of when you were a kid, this sort of history wasn't really talked about in this way?

01-00:04:04

Gaines: I'm telling you about my history, what my daddy told me.

01-00:04:08

Redman: Okay.

01-00:04:09

Gaines:

Okay. So what happened was the slave woman by the name of Aunt Hannah raised his two kids. You understand?

01-00:04:19

Redman:

Sure.

01-00:04:20

Gaines:

Because she was the housekeeper, which was the slave had—was running the household. She ran the house until this man, Henry Walter, Henry, Heinrich Mueller, got married again. You understand?

01-00:04:36

Redman:

Yes.

01-00:04:37

Gaines:

He married an American white woman. Okay. She was taking care of these kids, taking them back to the slave quarters at night with her and she'd be up there with him. Well, I mean, well, after he got married, she'd take them down. This woman didn't like these two little kids because she started having children of her own, of which she had four kids. Four boys. Okay? Pretty soon poppa tells me that he stayed in the slave quarters and grew up, he and his sister, with these slaves, okay. The ex-slaves because this was 1867 when he was born. You see? But slavery was really going on because they had no place to go. The slaves had no place to go. But poppa stayed there until he was about fourteen years old. Everyone understand? But he stayed in the slave quarters and was raised with the slaves, with the ex-slaves.

01-00:05:39

Redman:

So often what people are taught in U.S. history textbooks is that this was then an era of sharecropping in the south. But it sounds like very much a continuation of the slavery system in reality for these people.

01-00:05:57

Gaines:

They didn't have anywhere to go. You understand? This is on my father's side. Now, later on I'll tell you how I understood it after I got to be older. My father was German, German-Jewish. You understand?

01-00:06:10

Redman:

Yes, that's—

01-00:06:12

Gaines:

Okay. Now, we'll start right there because we'll—my dad—when you take a look at his picture you can tell he doesn't look like me. He says I look like him a lot. But he's a little small German, black hair, kind of almost blue eyes. You understand? I know who I am. My Aunt Fanny had long blonde hair and they both married African Americans. You understand? And people do not understand the south if you've never lived there. If you went on a slave plantation in the south after slavery or during slavery you see more mulattos

there than you do today because the white man mixed with the slave women. It was nothing. He had babies in both places. His children had babies there.

01-00:07:11

Redman: And that was just accepted as a part of life?

01-00:07:13

Gaines: That is accepted but they don't like to talk about this. And when you start running your history, you will find this—do you realize that 52,000 blacks passed into the white neighborhood? I mean in there, changed their identity. When you mention Warren G. Harding, you mentioned Warren G. Harding.

01-00:07:37

Redman: Yes.

01-00:07:37

Gaines: Look up his history. He's black. Have you ever known that before?

01-00:07:40

Redman: He was one of the people that passed as a white person.

01-00:07:44

Gaines: I say, did you ever look up his history?

01-00:07:46

Redman: I didn't know that about him. That's interesting.

01-00:07:48

Gaines: Well, look it up. Look it up and you will find—

01-00:07:49

Redman: It's really interesting.

01-00:07:52

Gaines: And that's where I got the name Warren G. Harding Gaines. My daddy named me after Warren G. Harding.

01-00:07:56

Redman: Wow.

01-00:07:56

Gaines: Now, when you look it up, they're going to deny this. A lot of them going to deny. And there's one movie that you can find it. [*From Up on Poppy Hill*] is a movie that was made about guys that passed over. And another one is—let me think of it right now. Just a movie just made. It's a lot of whites that think they—look at Bill Clinton. He's nothing but a big nosed mulatto black guy that passed over. Read his life story and you'll find out who he is. But when you pass over, a lot of guys don't want to accept it. But now it's a little bit different. You understand?

01-00:08:42

Redman: Right. Tell me—

01-00:08:43

Gaines:

Now I'm going to tell you about my mother.

01-00:08:45

Redman:

That's great. Tell me about your mother.

01-00:08:47

Gaines:

Tell you about my mother. My mother was born in 1882. She was the daughter of a slave. Near as they can figure, my grandfather was born on the slave side, on the African American side, he was born around in the 1840s as a slave and he was beaten and done everything to. He was Ashanti. Now, the reason I know he was an Ashanti, there is a tribal mark on the Ashanti that my mother didn't have it but her aunty had it. My grandfather had it. My grandfather had it. You understand? My father's sister. Okay. I didn't get a chance to see it but my older brother and sister saw hers, see. Okay? She had the tribal mark under her left eye, okay. It was a half moon turned upside. The female was upside when the moon like receiving. And the topside on the right cheek of the male was down like this? You understand? I know who I am but you can't tell me who I am because you're not writing the history for me, I have to find out for myself. Europeans don't write history about African Americans or Native Americans. They write the history about Europeans the way that they see it. When Columbus come here and say he discovered America, how in the hell could he discover a country with already twenty-five million people in this—in—you understand?

01-00:10:35

Redman:

Right.

01-00:10:36

Gaines:

History is in the eye of the beholder who writes it.

01-00:10:41

Redman:

Tell me then about how the—do you know how they met?

01-00:10:43

Gaines:

Now, wait a minute.

01-00:10:44

Redman:

Oh, go ahead.

01-00:10:45

Gaines:

I'll tell you how they met. My father, when he was eighteen, twenty, he moved into Waco. Now, poppa learned how to be a carpenter. How did he learn how to be a carpenter? The guy that built all the furniture and all the equipment and stuff for the plantation, the Mueller plantation was black, okay. He took my dad and taught him all of this and poppa took his name. The Gaines. He named himself. This guy named himself. He was married to the lady, Aunt Hannah, who was the slave woman that raised the kids. But, you see, they stayed there until my daddy got to be about eighteen years old, then he got out on his own. Okay? Now, the reason he got out on his own, he was

about twenty-three years old when Heinrich Mueller passed away. Heinrich Mueller left my father and my auntie, Aunt Hannah—Aunt Fanny, nineteen hundred acres of land apiece when he passed away. He had four kids. My brother, he got a chance to meet some of his uncles. They were white. And they told him, they said, “Henry wants to be a nigger, let him be a nigger.” The woman had kicked him out into where the slave woman raised him and that’s where he stayed. Poppa took his land and he sold it. Now, I’m going to get ahead of this, now get ahead of my story. And Aunt Fanny married a guy in Waco, Texas. And if you go there now and search the records, you’ll find she was. But, you see, here’s what happens. In the south, if you marry and you’re a light skinned person, all they have to do is say, “I’m a black.” When I was in the service, on the bus in New Orleans—no, in New Orleans, I’m from New Orleans, really, and we got on the bus. It’s segregated. Blacks sit in the back and come up when you move a sign up and it says—so we got on the bus. Bunch of guys on there from New York. And the bus driver says, “Hey, you guys, you have to sit back there. They move us up.” So they said, “We can’t sit back there. They’re all white people back there.” “Those are mulattos.” We just laughed. You understand that?

01-00:13:29

Redman:

Right.

01-00:13:30

Gaines:

Because this is the way the south. But here’s one thing I cannot understand about America. Why is it they will not accept the real history in this country? They’ll tell you about—listen to the radio. “We built this country.” You didn’t build shit. The thirteen original colonies were built by slaves. The White House was built by slaves. My sister was teaching at Howard University. I’d come to listen a little. She says, “Come to Washington.” I said, “I don’t want to go to Washington.” She said, “Oh, come on up here. You will see a lot of things.” I said, “I’ll go.” She said, “I’m going to tell you about the White House.” I said, “For what?” I said, “How in the hell I want to go see a White House that slaves built, put the dome up there, they don’t know how they got it up there?” And you tell me to look at this building. They don’t tell you it was built by slave labor, do they?

01-00:14:30

Redman:

Right. Yeah. No, they don’t.

01-00:14:33

Gaines:

Okay. Well, let’s—

01-00:14:33

Redman:

So then how did your parents meet?

01-00:14:37

Gaines:

Here’s what I’m going to tell you.

01-00:14:38

Redman: Great.

01-00:14:38

Gaines:

Okay, my dad got married to a mulatto woman. Her name was Lily Basham. She was half-breed. It was a slave. Probably daddy was a slave owner. He met her and he married and moved to Oklahoma. Maybe in eight or nine years after the running of 1889 he moved into Oklahoma and bought 160 acres of land. Okay. He built his house there. They built a house there and they owned the land. It's 114 years old. We still own it. I still own my land in Oklahoma. One thing I tell people now. If you get you some dirt, don't sell it. You know they're not making no more dirt. That's the reason I bought this five acres forty years ago. I live in the country. Okay. My mother's father got in his wagon, these were all wagon days, and drove to Oklahoma with his thirteen children to settle in Chandler, Oklahoma. He was a very mean man because he had been beaten and everything else. But he moved there because he wanted his kids to go to school. There's one thing about people that don't understand. African Americans have always clamored for education because they were denied it, to read and write and so forth. They were very egotistical about getting an education. And what I can't understand now, what has happened to the whole America? My mother wanted an education so bad, she had raised seven children, plus the three that my dad had when he first met her. I had a ninth grade class with my mother and she was fifty-one years at that time. And they asked me, say, "Aren't you ashamed?" I said, "I'm not ashamed of my mother because she wanted an education." You understand? So it's very hard to understand if you're not an African American who is searching for who you are and what—that's the reason I can express myself so well. I know who I am. The average person don't know. Do you know who you are? Do you know who your great-grandparents were?

01-00:17:06

Redman: Not the way you do.

01-00:17:08

Gaines: Huh?

01-00:17:19

Redman: Not the way you do.

01-00:17:09

Gaines: Oh, well—

01-00:17:10

Redman: So tell me, then—so—

01-00:17:13

Gaines: So they met, my mother. Well, now I'm going right down.

01-00:17:15

Redman: Yeah.

01-00:17:16

Gaines:

My mother, or her parents were not educated. And when they said hobo, they said, "They're hoboes," they don't know what hobo really come from. At that time in Oklahoma they didn't have equipment like we have today. These people would get in bands and go chop cotton and pick cotton for the farmers in Oklahoma that needed help. And they would put their hoes on their shoulder and go chop the cotton. You understand? My dad had his 160 acres of land. Now listen. He had the three kids. Jonie Mae, Marcella and Stella, his three girls. My mother was in this group of about fifteen guys, was chopping the cotton my daddy's ranch, farm. You understand? So he picked her out because she was very neat in doing this work and he brought her to the house and says, "Would you take care of my kids while I oversee the ranch, the farm." She says, "Sure." They got together and started talking and he said, "Well, I like you. I think I want to marry you." He wanted to have sex with her then. She said, "No, no. I'm twenty-three years old. I don't have sex with no man until we're married." Poppa married her and nine months and twelve days after they were married they had my first—my sister Leatha. He already have three kids. So she raised those three kids. Now, we're five miles from Langston University. My dad believed in education because he had had an eighth grade education in Texas. Now, listen, he had the Blue Black Speller [Marion Webster's Blue Black Speller dictionary] which was a book about that big. It had everything in it. History, English. It's just one book. Okay? Now, my dad wanted education so bad for his children that he sent them to a Catholic school about three miles away from where we were, my two older sisters. My older sister and brother, they got a Catholic education. Now, when poppa moved there and bought that land, he started farming, and 60% of the land was owned—around him was owned by African Americans, was owned by blacks. And there was some Germans by the name of Wien that had a farm, 160 acres, next to ours where it was joined. My brother would hunt with those Wien boys and they were just like brothers. You understand?

01-00:20:08

Redman:

So even though the schools were segregated you would hunt together?

01-00:20:12

Gaines:

Yes. Listen, what makes segregation is a few people that are poor and don't understand and they want to keep—the white man is smart. He uses the old English ruse, divide and conquer. If you can keep two people fighting against each other, you have them. That's it.

01-00:20:33

Redman:

So you see as the bait? That the Jim Crow structure that was set up was so powerful there because of that dividing mentality?

01-00:20:44

Gaines:

Absolutely. That is a whole problem. If America would just face up to the fact of what happened to the two most important people in the United States, what we call the United States, is African American and the Native American.

Approximately, then make a rough figure, say maybe from eighteen to twenty-five million Indians here in this country. Why is it we only have less than five million now? Huh? Something happened. Why don't you just tell the truth. They exterminated them. So I can't dwell on that because—but these are absolutely the facts I'm telling you.

01-00:21:34
Redman:

But in your family's experience, even though they were next to some German families, they would still hunt together or do certain things together?

01-00:21:41
Gaines:

Hey, look, I'll tell you—well, I'll skip a little bit. In 1954, I went to Oklahoma, my brother and I. We had some oil wells on our place there in Oklahoma. We went there to see about it. He said, "I think I'll go and see about those Wien boys. I said, "The Wien boys?" He said, "Yeah, you know the Wiens that used to live right next farm to us." I said, "Yeah." He said, "Oh child, I want to go over and see them." I said, "How in the hell we going to go see them? Man, I don't know where those people live." He said, "Well, I'm going to the post office," and found out where the rural address was. It was funny. He found out where they were. Here come this guy—now, they had a lot of hunting dogs, old, you know, teeth out and everything. They were Germans. He was old. He was getting old. They were up in their fifties. So he said, "Man, there's the mailbox. I think I'll stop by and holler." I said, "Okay." He said, "Now, here comes a guy humpbacked." And the guy walks, "Walter, is that you?" They ran out and hugged each other. Man, they start talking. And damn, those dogs all around. Now, they did everything but kiss. Then he pulled out that jug and they started drinking it, moonshine out of—got drunk. I had to put him in the car. See, now that is how close they were. You understand? And those Germans lived all around. It was a funny thing about those German people. They wasn't very prejudiced. It is a fact. Now, so far as the school you mentioned, in the school, okay, I was raised in the country. My daddy had seven kids by my mother. Four boys and three girls.

01-00:23:29
Redman:

And were where you in the—

01-00:23:31
Gaines:

I was living on the country, in the country. I was just born. And I can go back to the time I was five. I can remember this very well. You didn't go to school until you started in the first grade. Didn't start having no kindergarten. We learned to read and write at home, you know. You were taught there by your mother and father. They would teach you this. Okay. I had to walk a mile and a quarter to school. Now, I'm living in the country and we had timber wolves at that time. And I've seen the wolves. They'd be out there looking at you and we'd go to school right down the road. And I was the only kid there, my sister and I. But as I grew older, they moved to Langston. My mother sent my two sisters was going to school there, high school there at Langston. We went to high school on the college campus because the segregated school was there

and it had—excuse me—they had a high school there and a college but the high school and the grammar school up there was used to train teachers, you understand. It was all on one campus. Wasn't but one black school in Oklahoma and that was Langston University. I went to high school on a college campus and grade school on a college campus because that's where the teachers had to practice on us, you understand. So that's where the education come in. My father wanted us to have—and my mother wanted us to get an education. So if you were following me very closely, education is a prerequisite that all people should have and I believe in education. And my father sent all his kids to school. Now, my four sisters all become teachers. I have one sister that graduated from Boston Conservatory of Music and I have one sister, my older sister, or my next to my oldest sister, which was one of my father's first kids, she graduated from Kansas U, KU, because she went to high school on the Langston campus but poppa didn't want her to go to a segregated school, so he went her to—but she come back and taught in Langston and in Luther. Okay? Luther, Oklahoma. You understand? So when I become old enough to go to high school, I went to high school right there on the campus. Now I'm taking you right on up.

01-00:25:57

Redman:

So something happened there in the midst. Is that in 1929 something that would have seemed—

01-00:26:02

Gaines:

That's what happened.

01-00:26:03

Redman:

The stock market crashed.

01-00:26:04

Gaines:

Here's what happened to me.

01-00:26:06

Redman:

Okay, great.

01-00:26:07

Gaines:

In 1928, I was eight years old to about nine. The Depression started. My daddy had nine thousand cash dollars. Cash money. These guys were jumping out of the windows and killing themselves. You understand? My daddy hung on for about two years. The first time I seen him cry he had to sell all his stock. We had forty head of stock. You couldn't sell them, you couldn't give them away. Then the Depression set in. 1932 and 1933. My sister was just getting ready to graduate from college, Fanny. She was named after my Aunt Fanny, okay. She got married. Okay. My other sister and my brother Verne, they were up there on the campus at Langston. See, my dad built a house in Langston, bought some property in the little town, a black town. Now, this is one thing about me. I'm a very unique person. I was raised in an all black town. There are fifty-two black towns in Oklahoma. You never heard of that before, huh?

01-00:27:27

Redman: No.

01-00:27:28

Gaines: See, they don't tell you the history.

01-00:27:30

Redman: In the 1920s in Tulsa there were a number of riots.

01-00:27:39

Gaines: Absolutely. I'll tell you about them. Yes.

01-00:27:41

Redman: I was wondering if you can tell me—.

01-00:27:43

Gaines: I'll tell you about the riot. I was born in 1920. This is in 1921 and they've told it to me several times. The blacks got in wagons, got their shotguns and they got everything and were going to Tulsa to get into the riot. My daddy was getting ready to go, too. Understand? Now, the blacks had thirty-nine blocks of black businesses. This is not in your history book. They won't tell you nothing about it. It was called the black Wall Street, okay. My two uncles, OD and RD, on my mother's side, were killed in that riot. They were twins. They volunteered to go there to fight. They fought. They went over. They burned thirty-six square blocks of black businesses. And you know how they burned them? Aerial bombs. You won't find that in your history books. But what happened was they sent to Oklahoma City and got some piper cub airplanes and flew over the black neighborhood and dropped Molotov cocktails and set the whole place on fire. It's in the books. Now, what you have to understand is they don't tell the truth. Now, Oklahoma sued.

01-00:29:13

Redman: No, that's fine. [Audio adjustment]

01-00:29:13

Gaines: Oklahoma sued but now they wanted to give them some back pay for their homes and things. And this guy settle, say, "Well, you give them some scholarships instead of giving them some money." You understand? There was a lot of black businesses destroyed. I mean, what happened in Tulsa—people come up from Greenwood, Mississippi, from Texas, from all these places in Oklahoma because Oklahoma was a free state. Oklahoma didn't become a state until 1906. That was a territory state.

01-00:29:50

Redman: Other than there being all of those businesses there, why did that become such a major flashpoint for the broader black community? What possessed, say, your uncles to go, to travel there?

01-00:30:05

Gaines: It was freedom.

01-00:30:07

Redman: Freedom.

01-00:30:08

Gaines: Freedom. People from Tennessee, from plantation come from Tennessee. All these people coming in and they start setting up black towns, black—see, Oklahoma was one of the first states that was supposed to become a black state.

01-00:30:24

Redman: Let me just make sure you're—because you're hooked up. [Audio adjustment]

01-00:30:26

Gaines: I'll just give you a little small inkling of my background, of my history. I won't go into too many details.

01-00:30:33

Redman: No, that's good. Now tell me about, from your perspective, the effects of the Great Depression. You talked a little bit about how that affected your father. When you were a young boy could you see these things happening?

01-00:30:52

Gaines: Being like I told you, I was reared as a middleclass up until the Depression. We had buggies, horses. We had all of this, everything the middle class. We had a Model T Ford. My dad had bought a new Model T Ford in 1925. Paid cash for it.

01-00:31:11

Redman: Which was a big thing.

01-00:31:13

Gaines: Big thing. Oh, yeah. We lived good. We had everything. I remember when I was about seven, I guess it was. My dad, we'd go to church and we would sit in the back, my sister and my brother and I with the other two kids. We were older. And they would be setting up in the buggy. Poppa would be driving the two white horses and we'd sit there. Beautiful, you know what I'm saying? Come home and get some ice from wherever the little store was, the black store. Smith had a black store. Get ice, come home and make ice cream, homemade ice cream. We had an orchard. We had an orchard with everything in it. We lived good on the country. I love the country. But, you see, no cars, very few cars. I grew up in this environment. But after, when I got to go in the high school, when I was thirteen years old, the Depression hit. It's thirty-three years. I'm really seeing it hard. I got in the Depression. I went to fourteen and fifteen. It really was hitting me. I didn't have clothes to wear. No shoes. But we still had the farm and we had a big lot in town. How did we live in town? It's a rural town. We had almost an acre of ground in town with a house on it. We had a cow there. I'd milk the cow. Momma raised a garden. We ate out of the garden, and what we would do—if it don't be for rabbits, I'd be dead. Because I hunted and killed rabbits with a twenty-two. What mom ma would do, she would cook them and can them for the winter, make sausages out.

How we got all this? You had to hustle to live. But when the Depression come it was tough, not only on all the blacks, it was tough on everybody. Now, then, after the Depression, we had the dust storms in Oklahoma. You ever heard of that?

01-00:33:18

Redman: Can you tell me about the dust bowl? The dust storms? What was—

01-00:33:21

Gaines: The dust storms were the most terrible thing you've ever seen.

01-00:33:24

Redman: What was that like to live through?

01-00:33:22

Gaines: The dust storms were the most terrible thing you've ever seen.

01-00:33:24

Redman: What was that like to live through?

01-00:33:25

Gaines: It was like this. Just like you see a sandstorm here? That went on for days. You didn't see the sun. And the sun was just full of dirt. Nothing but dirt. And if it come a little rain, it rained down mud. I'm not talking by hearsay. I saw this with my own eyes. You understand? Now, at that time my brother had gone. Nobody in the house. My sister had passed away. This was in 1937. My brother and sister had passed away, okay, because—not like we would think it was today. Because my sister had what they call strep throat.

01-00:34:08

Redman: Strep throat. Yeah, sure.

01-00:34:10

Gaines: Let me see, it was 1936. Thirty-six, yeah. Because they called me and said, "Well, she was in the Catholic hospital in Oklahoma City." And they said she needed blood to save her. "You have to come over. If your blood will match, we'll give her a transfusion." I said, "Yeah, that's my sister," you know. I went there and she was there. "Which hand?" This is this big vein. I put it right there. You can see that vein from here.

01-00:34:39

Redman: Oh, yeah.

01-00:34:41

Gaines: I gave my sister blood. They didn't have it like it is now. You have plasma now, you see. And I wish they had been able to give the man that discover plasma, just like they did me, you know who that was?

01-00:34:56

Redman: So then the dust storms, would that confine you to the house? You couldn't do farm work when—

01-00:35:03
Gaines: There was no work. What you going to do? Listen, the thing that saved us from having a revolution in this country, and people don't give him credit for it—if he hadn't done what he did we would have had a revolution.

01-00:35:22
Redman: Franklin Roosevelt.

01-00:35:23
Gaines: Franklin Roosevelt organized the first NRA. You know what that meant?

01-00:35:29
Redman: The National Recovery Administration. New Deal.

01-00:35:31
Gaines: No. The National Recovery Act.

01-00:35:35
Redman: Act.

01-00:35:35
Gaines: That's right. Which really explained the whole thing. But then after the NRA came the WPA, Work Progress—Work Progress Administration. Then they had PWA. You understand? And one of the streets that my business is on downtown, they still have a sidewalk that was built by the PWA, which is Public Works Administration.

01-00:36:01
Redman: So these New Deal programs—

01-00:36:03
Gaines: Saved us.

01-00:36:05
Redman: They hired young men.

01-00:36:08
Gaines: No, they hired young men but they hired—when I came to California—I was getting ahead of myself. They had the CCC camp.

01-00:36:16
Redman: The Civilian Conservation Corps.

01-00:36:19
Gaines: That's right. But now, look, I'm going to tell you right straight on up through it. Now, I'm sixteen years old. I'm getting ready to graduate from high school. Two months to graduate. My brother was working out here. My other brother Laurence was here. He was in California. Everybody come to California, see, before I come. So my brother come home and he says—Momma told him to say—he said, "I'm going to take Warren G. back to California." "No, you can't take him. He got to finish high school. He got to stay here." He says,

“No, he’s starving to death here.” Says, “Look at his shoes. He don’t have any shoes, he don’t have—“ You know what the most embarrassing thing for me was? I went to a football game, high school football game. Everybody stood up and yelled. I went to get up and yell, my pants split right down the seat. I didn’t have no pants. They were clean. My mother washed them so much I had no clothes. My shoes were—my brother said, “You going with me.”
[phone ringing]

01-00:37:21
Redman:

Do you want me to pause?

01-00:37:22
Gaines:

No, no, just let it ring. Now, his wife had finished at Langston University, my brother’s wife. In fact, he met her when my mother—my mother had this house that the kids was living in. My two sisters and my other brother was living there and she took in roomers that would go to school on the campus. He met this girl from Cressen. Her name was Odessa. And he started going with her and they got married. She graduated and she graduated as a teacher. She majored in education. He came home and got me in 1937 and got his wife and me and we got on a freight train and come to California.

01-00:38:17
Redman:

You were sixteen?

01-00:38:19
Gaines:

Yeah, going on seventeen. Seventeen years old. I dropped out of school with two months to go to get my high school diploma. But my father taught us, yes. He said, “You girls, you get your—I’m going to make teachers out of all of you.” All of my sisters are teachers.” He said, “You get you an education.” He said, “But you boys, you make whatever you make on your own. Don’t never let anyone harness your brains to make so much money a month or a year. Make as much money as your brains will allow you to make.” I’ve never worked for anyone in my life. I work for myself. You understand? So he brought all of us here to California on a freight train. Now, I had never been on a freight train before in my life. The train runs— is two miles from Langston but that’s just a little small train. When I got on the train, I went to Guthrie to get on the train, it was something new to me. When I got on the train, we went down to Rock Island and we got on the main line coming to California. When I got on that train you would see hundreds of people on top of this train. I am the original *Grapes of Wrath*.

01-00:39:48
Redman:

So that was a real image for you? There were people on the train—

01-00:39:53
Gaines:

Absolutely. Yes.

01-00:39:55
Redman:

—going out to California.

01-00:39:55

Gaines:

I saw a guy, this is a white guy, on a freight train, a mattress, a goat and his three little kids. And we were coming to California. It was a parade really. But, you see, people don't want to let them touch them. I tell the truth about it. I know what it is to be hungry and I tell people this: You don't know what it is to be poor unless you were once poor. Once you were poor you never forget what happened to you. Something happened to me. Now, my brother and I got off. His wife got sick down here at San Luis Obispo and she went and told—went up to the—going up to the hospital, she was telling someone a black lady took her in and kept her while my brother and I came on. In San Jose, California, I'm sixteen years old, seventeen. I was hungry because I didn't have anything to eat on the freight train. Two or three days, you were begging, begging. I was sixteen and I walked up to this white guy in San Jose. I said, "Mister, I'm hungry. Would you give me something to eat? Give me a quarter?" The man gave me a dollar bill, a white man. So this is what I'll tell you. All people aren't racist. Some people have sympathy for you. You don't know what it is to be poor unless you be poor yourself. That's the reason I teach my kids about being poor, because once you're poor you learn how to economize.

01-00:41:37

Redman:

Did that change? It seemed to change your life a lot in terms of going from driving with your dad in a Model T, you guys had everything, and then to not be able to have shoes or pants. Is that—

01-00:41:50

Gaines:

It was terrible.

01-00:41:51

Redman:

It must have been very hard emotionally.

01-00:41:54

Gaines:

It was hard emotionally. But see, the boys left home but the girls stayed there and went to school and got their education. My sister taught in Oklahoma for fifty dollars a month. So she was teaching before I come and she would help my mother with us after she had graduated from—got her teacher's credentials. But it's a tough story. But you don't give up and that's what I tell people today. Give out but don't give up. Always have something in you. Like I'm ninety-two years old. I have other projects I want to do. But once you start that—now, I was in the CC camp, too. But you know what saved this country, and they don't want to tell the truth about it. What do you think saved this country for what it is now? The Depression. What do you think happened?

01-00:42:41

Redman:

I think the New Deal was a big—I mean, essentially—

01-00:42:44

Gaines:

Excuse me. After the New Deal, while we were still not out of the Depression—

01-00:42:54
Redman: World War II comes.

01-00:42:55
Gaines: Hitler. Hitler saved this country. What do you mean saved it? They started the factories to working, they started airplanes building and they brought people from all over the south. Do you know how many people left the south, not including blacks? Over one-third of the people left the south coming here. I said you was an immigrant.

01-00:43:15
Redman: Oh, yeah, that's right. That's right. We're all kind of immigrants to the state, right. Yes.

01-00:43:19
Gaines: Kaiser shipyards up here. Up here in Washington. The aircraft companies up there. You see, this is what happened.

01-00:43:28
Redman: So how do you first get hooked up with the Civilian Conservation Corps? With the CCC? How do you first get that job?

01-00:46:36
Gaines: Okay. They had what they called the NYA.

01-00:43:40
Redman: The NYA. The National Youth Administration.

01-00:43:43
Gaines: I was in the NYA.

01-00:43:45
Redman: What was that? What was that like?

01-00:43:46
Gaines: There's an NYA. They'll give you food and lodges and clothes and all that stuff. But tell you—

01-00:43:51
Redman: For young people.

01-00:43:51
Gaines: Yes. They say you can join the CCC camp. So I say, "I'm going to join the CCC." I joined the CCC camp and went down here to San Pablo. San Pablo dam in Richmond, California. There was only seventeen blacks in Richmond at that time.

01-00:44:07
Redman: Wow.

01-00:44:07
Gaines: That was before the war.

01-00:44:08

Redman: Only seventeen black people in Richmond.

01-00:44:09

Gaines: In Richmond, California. San Pablo was none. I was stationed at San Pablo. What was San Pablo? Show you something. San Pablo was a camp, a CC camp. Do you know who was there? All the blacks from California, Washington and Oregon were in the CC camp in San Pablo dam in Richmond, California. That's segregation. That's where they had all—I know some fellas now from Oregon and Washington, some guys that I met from Washington. You understand?

01-00:44:46

Redman: They were in that camp? So it was a segregated—

01-00:44:48

Gaines: This was segregated and they brought those kids from those three states. We having the same thing now. What you talking about, Gaines? I'm getting into something that's very, very deep. It's the third largest business in the United States.

01-00:45:06

Redman: Prison system.

01-00:45:08

Gaines: You got it. You got it.

01-00:45:09

Redman: So you think it's—

01-00:45:10

Gaines: You pretty sharp.

01-00:45:12

Redman: So now instead of having the National Youth Administration and the CCC, we've managed to desegregate those things but instead we're funneling young people into prison. This is how you—

01-00:45:26

Gaines: Here's what happened. Get this book.

01-00:45:30

Redman: What is this? This is *The New Jim Crow*.

01-00:45:33

Gaines: *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander.

01-00:45:35

Redman: Okay.

01-00:45:36

Gaines:

And it tells you about what is happening. Now, let's go through one right quick. New York City in 2011, 2010-11, had over 50,000 kids, whites, blacks, Puerto Ricans, and Mexicans and underprivileged people smoking a joint of marijuana. They go to jail first time. They say, "Okay, we're going to call this a misdemeanor." Okay. "We're going to give you a three year probation. You come back up here, we're going to give you some time." Okay. You know they're going to smoke another joint. Eighty-six percent of them smoked a joint. They come back. This time say, "Now, what we're going to give you a felony." You can't get food stamps, you can't get tuition fee, college. You can't get anything. What do you do? You going to commit a crime, okay. You commit a crime. Where they going to put you? They going to put you in the jail. So if you don't have enough jails, what do we do? We'll build another jail. Okay. We'll build another jail by the state. So no, Wall Street say, "No, let's put in some private prisons. We'll build some private prisons." Okay. Here's a lobbyist over here, says, "Okay, you got a private prison. I got a dairy. I'll furnish the milk." Okay. Like I tell people, if I had a contract with the state to sell toilet paper to California, eight hundred thou—now, you talk about the food stamps, sure.

01-00:47:23

Redman:

Yes. When you were working with the NYA, with the National Youth Administration, did you have—so I know that was a program. That must have been a lifeline for you.

01-00:47:34

Gaines:

It was a lifeline but it was just something to eat. Because, see, when I first come here, I never used that to make my living. When I came to California, I was only about seventeen, going on eighteen years old. When I got to be eighteen I was working my own business. I got me a lawn mower. Had iron wheels and I got me a bicycle and I pedaled down the street in the white neighborhood asking to get their lawn cut. I lawn cut, twenty-five cents a lawn. Might take me all day to cut it. I made twenty-five cents. I kept doing that until one day I was working, a lady, Ms. Laroca, I never will forget it. On the flower garden. She said, "You want to cut lawn?" Say, "Yes." She say, "How about digging my flowers?" I say, "That's fine." She said, "I'll give you twenty cents an hour." "Oh, that's a great deal." I worked for her for almost a year but I worked on my own. I said, "Now, I'll come and I'll work. It'll be twenty—you can't pay me by the hour so you have to pay me by what you think it's worth," because I didn't want to get no wi—so she started paying me. I bought me a little Plymouth truck and I put my tools in the back and I started doing lawns. Should have stayed in that business. I'd have been rich. But, you see, always made my own living. Never worked for nobody.

01-00:49:02

Redman:

But then tell me about what your experience was? We'll get back to that in a moment. But I am really curious to hear about life in the CCC camp.

01-00:49:13

Gaines: Well, the life—

01-00:49:14

Redman: And what sorts of projects you did.

01-00:49:16

Gaines: Okay. The life in the CC camp is just—they did roadwork and they're cutting trees and all that kind of stuff. But I was a little bit too sharp for that. I didn't get out there and do that kind of work. So the guy started asking me, he says, "What can you do?" He says, "Can you come in here and work around the hospital?" I said, "Yeah, I'd be glad to."

01-00:49:36

Redman: Around in the CCC hospital?

01-00:49:36

Gaines: Oh, yeah, they had a hospital and everything there.

01-00:49:40

Redman: Wow.

01-00:49:40

Gaines: And he saw that I always was interested in medicine and I picked up everything that he showed me how to do and learned sterilization and all this kind of stuff. And he says, "Well, you're pretty sharp." Said, "Why don't you stay in here and we'll make a little office out of you, give you a stipend." I said, "No, I don't want this." You see, because it was 1938. Work was opening up then, see. Opening up because 1939, it started opening up because Hitler had marched into Danzig, see. And so things begin to open up. I come back to Sacramento. And then I had to, about twenty, I was eighteen, you had to register for the draft. Well, I had to register. So I didn't want to go in the army because I had been in the CC camp. Said, "Why didn't you want to go in the army?" Why in the hell should I go into the army and fight for something that I don't have here in this country? And I stayed out and I did everything to stay out. I got a government job working at Mather Field and I was working as an aircraft mechanic. I'm pretty sharp when it comes to little things, see. Because first thing, I'm real good at math and people don't understand. What most people don't understand about African Americans, they're pretty sharp, some of them, and they can hide it to let you know that he's not as dumb as you think he is. But a lot of times they put on an act to make you think they dumb. But you have to use the charade to get along in this world. Now, you take a woman that's scrubbing the floors and she's doing all of this dirty work. "Yes, Ma'am," and so and so. She's sending her kids to college while she's doing that. You understand? Did you see *The Help*?

01-00:51:36

Redman: Yes.

01-00:51:38

Gaines:

That show was how it works, you see. But why? Why? I asked this question. Why is it white people hate us? Could you understand why? I don't understand why. They done all the dirty work, they done everything to make you what you are and look at today. This guy up here talking about what he's going to do for people, Romney, and when he was read that we were devils. We couldn't go to heaven unless the white man took us. You understand? And he's up here talking all this bullshit he's talking. This is crazy. Don't you know we can see through that, fella? I hope you're not a Mormon.

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02-00:00:00

Gaines:

I'm going a little ahead of the story. We were talking about education and working for yourself. I was telling the interviewer that I had a grocery store, a barber shop and an ice cream parlor and I was coming home at night and a policeman picked me up. They always follow black people at night. That doesn't bother me. I was coming down Charter Way. I said, "Oh, got a cop following me." He was in one of the patrol cars, in a city car. I knew what it was. Followed me all clear across to the outer city limits and turned the corner right here onto Carpenter Road. Pulled me over. He says, "Keep your hands on the steering wheel." I said, "All right. I got my hands on the steering wheel." Said, "What you got in the car?" I say, "I got my bag in the car," and I say, "I have a pistol laying down." "You got a gun?" I say, "Yes, I have a gun." He says, "Keep your hands on the steering wheel." The other got out on the other side and placed the lights on. Says, "What are you doing with that gun?" I say, "I run a business downtown." "I think you're lying." I said, "Well, I told you, I think, I have a business downtown." So they call the desk sergeant. They say, "We got a guy named Warren Gaines here, he got a gun, a loaded gun," blah, blah, blah, blah. He say, "Oh, that's Mr. Gaines." Say, "Don't bother that fellow." You understand? This is racial profiling. I meet it all the time. I know how to—see, here's a proposition with police. This is a mistake that the police department in every city that's made, they go get some yokel that don't know anything about the African American community. Doesn't know any, can't *hablo espanol, nada*, and put him on the force. Here he comes from a small town, don't know anything, and he reads all these books and he's a punk in the schoolyard, put a badge on him. He's going to take it out on every person he see that he can kick his ass. You understand? And I was against hiring people out of the city limits. You understand? Because they hired guy—

02-00:02:17

Redman:

Because you don't know the community.

02-00:02:20

Gaines:

They don't. They don't go into the community. They're afraid to go in there because they was afraid on the schoolyard. He don't know how to talk to people. Guys be clowning, going on. He think the guy going to cut his throat.

The guys just be kidding with each other. You got to be in the community. This is the reason why this fellow that's running for President today, he doesn't know anything about poor people. He don't even know what a donut is.

02-00:02:47

Redman: Right, right. So we're in 1939. So you've now left the CCC and started going into business on your own?

02-00:02:59

Gaines: No, no. Thirty-nine, I was only nineteen years old.

02-00:03:04

Redman: Nineteen.

02-00:03:05

Gaines: Twenty we started the war. Now, this is the time I worked for the government. I had to work as an aircraft mechanic and I was doing the work. But I was working there to stay out of the army because I was married. I didn't have any children. But I was married. I worked for the—and I got deferred, you understand, clear up until 1942.

02-00:03:29

Redman: Can you tell me about December 7, 1941 when Pearl Harbor was attacked?

02-00:03:31

Gaines: Yes, Sir. I can tell you exactly what happened at Pearl Harbor.

02-00:03:35

Redman: What was your—

02-00:03:35

Gaines: I was working.

02-00:03:36

Redman: Continue.

02-00:03:37

Gaines: I was working as an aircraft mechanic and then I went in the construction work because they let black people in the union. Now, what are you talking about? We finally got into the union. They paid eighty-eight cents an hour in the union. Construction. Airfield union. I got in the union. Started pouring cement. I was doing dirty hard work. I poured cement all day the night before Pearl Harbor. I didn't know about Pearl Harbor until the next day because I slept that Sunday and I went to crawl through the fence like—and they put the guns—"What are you doing?" I said, "I'm going back to work." He say, "Man, don't you know they just attacked Pearl Harbor?" I said, "I didn't know anything about it." That was December 7, 1941.

02-00:04:24

Redman: Wow.

02-00:04:26

Gaines: That's right. I remember that.

02-00:04:28

Redman: So being in the union was a big deal?

02-00:04:29

Gaines: Big deal for blacks. We couldn't get in the union. Couldn't get in the union.

02-00:04:34

Redman: And then once you finally did get in the union was there a particular tension or attitude about—

02-00:04:41

Gaines: Yes. Not with the construction workers. There was no attitude because most of those guys were doing construction work were poor just like we are. They'd come up from Oklahoma and all that kind of stuff. They were just transient just like we were before the war. But now some of them, the racism begin to come out on these guys that come out of Arkansas, Oklahoma, Mississippi and everything. When they got you in, they wanted to bring the same tactics as they had down there. They had the same thing going in in California. Of course, that was when I was picking fruit. You know, like these harvest workers pick fruit. I picked fruit. What are you talking about? That's what I had to do. My lawn wasn't working or my business wasn't working, I worked with a little short handed hoe, picked tomatoes for three cents a box. Let me tell you, when I first come to California I had never seen a five dollar bill.

02-00:05:40

Redman: Wow.

02-00:05:40

Gaines: On my own. Because my brother was already here. He was working for the round house at Western Pac—Southern Pacific Round House. He was a janitor down there. That's all he was doing. But he told me, said, "Man, you can go out there and pick up spinach. They pay you three cents a box." So I said, "Three cents a box?" He said, "Yeah. They'll show you how to do it." I went crazy. I picked one hundred boxes of spinach at three cents a box. That's three dollars. I took that money. After a week I think I made fourteen or fifteen dollars. I put it in the post office, postal savings bank. I have not been broke since then.

02-00:06:28

Redman: Wow. That's amazing.

02-00:06:33

Gaines: Three cents a box. I never been broke since. And I don't make any bills. Nothing. Because my dad taught me, says, "Son, don't ever pay interest. Take interest in. Don't pay out interest."

02-00:06:52
Redman: Tell me about your feelings about FDR.

02-00:06:56
Gaines: Franklin D. Roosevelt saved this country from a revolution. If he hadn't done what he did, look where we would have been. We would have riots. I mean real ones. Shooting. But he held it until Hitler come along. Then they opened it up. But someday this country is going to revert back to what it was originally for. Rich people are not going to run this country forever. And middle class people are going to be the ones that change it because it's no sense in five people running the whole country. You know who I'm talking about. You know who I'm talking about? The five people?

02-00:07:37
Redman: No. The five people? Who are the five people?

02-00:07:41
Gaines: Where did our money come from?

02-00:07:44
Redman: The banks.

02-00:07:46
Gaines: Who owns the banks?

02-00:07:52
Redman: Help me out here. Wealthy business owners who own it?

02-00:07:58
Gaines: JP Morgan.

02-00:07:58
Redman: JP, yeah.

02-00:07:59
Gaines: Rockefeller com—those are the people that run the country.

02-00:08:02
Redman: Yeah, right. Right.

02-00:08:06
Gaines: Now, what if those people want to put the clamps on us like they doing today? Now, the first thing they're getting ready to do now—I don't know how the Supreme Court has been bought. The health care bill that they're putting up now is the best thing that ever happened in this country but they don't want that. That's all. I can't [understand].

02-00:08:30
Redman: I'm just curious about the start of the war, then, and that job.

02-00:08:35
Gaines: Well, the war come on. They finally drafted me.

02-00:08:40

Redman: They finally drafted you. Okay.

02-00:08:41

Gaines: Yes. I was drafted in 1942 and they sent all of us up from these three or four counties to Sacramento to be examined.

02-00:08:51

Redman: Into the army.

02-00:08:53

Gaines: No, to examine in Sacramento and then we'd go down here to Fort Ord. So they examined me and everything. Lot of blacks and everybody's all together and we went down there to get examined and so forth. I passed. Sent down here to Monterey. So they were shipping us out to different places. So we were all together, integrated and everything, going fine. Of course, you know, California has always been integrated. But you live in different parts of town. So anyway, when I got down there they say, "Well, we're going to send you to Texas." I say, "Oh, go to Texas. Oh, I've been through Texas." Hop on a freight train. Texas they run me like I was a rabbit. So anyway, we got to Texas. Segregated army. I went into the Ninth Cavalry Division. My IQ was over 120 so they put me in the Signal Corps, okay. Fifteen thousand blacks in one spot. That's right. But, see, the army's divided Signal Corps, medical, engineers, fighting division, and all this other stuff. I was in the Ninth Cavalry Division. Horses. They had horses in it. Segregated. All the officers were white and no black officers, nothing. And most of them were first or second lieutenants, didn't know shit about nothing.

I'll tell you one incident that happened to me when I was there. You had to go get your teeth examined and filled and all that. So I went up there to get my teeth filled. So this guy started filling my teeth and he put that grinder right on a nerve. And I said, "Man," I said, "you got the grinder on a nerve." "Shut up, soldier." I said, "Man, look," I say, "I'll tell you what. You cannot fill my teeth." "Open your mouth. I want to fill your teeth. Soldier, you just sit down." White guy. I grabbed him by both his arms and I started to the window. We going to jump out of the window on the second story. He hollered and the lieutenant come. "Turn him loose." I said, "What the hell? This guy's grinding on my teeth. Doesn't he understand that he's hurting me?" He said, "You just sit down over there. We go to the MP." I said, "I don't give a damn who you call, you understand?" So he called. We calmed down. Captain Marks stuck his head in the door I never will forget, said, "What's wrong, soldier?" I said, "I said this guy don't know about filling no teeth." He was a ninety day wonder. Called himself a ninety day wonder. We called him lieutenant. He said, "You come back tomorrow and I'll feel your tooth." Captain Marks, the next day I come back, he came there. He sat me down. He said, "You have to understand. You're in the army now." I said, "Oh, we're talking about being in the army." He said, "Some of these guys don't know how to do anything and we just let them do it." I said, "But that's

hurt.” He said, “Now, you be careful. You’ll get yourself in trouble.” There’s always somebody that understands. He fills my tooth and we get along fine. He’s Captain Marks. He’s from New York. He saw me later. “How you doing, Private Gaines?”

We were at Fort Clark. That’s where the fort, we were at Fort Clark. It’s 120 miles from San Antonio. Then there’s Randolph, Kelley, Honda Field and all these air bases around there. We were on the bus going from Commerce Street over to the Squeeze In. That’s a black place that they had dancing and all the music and everything over there. We were on the bus and we were all drinking, everybody drinking and having fun on the bus. This girl, white girl comes sit down beside this black guy on a bus that’s supposed to be segregated. Now, I’ve got the uniform on. I wasn’t in this. So I was there sitting on the bus. He says, “The minute I started talking the bus driver said, ‘What are you doing talking to him?’” They got in an argument. They were from New York. She was from New York down there and he’s from New York. They started talking. He stopped the bus and kick him off the bus. And when he started to kick him off, he called the police. Here come the police. So people getting to crowd around the bus like that. We were all in there. All over the bus. Now where is she? You don’t understand it. But wait a minute. One of them guys stuck his head through the window. The guy slapped him and beat the shit out of him.

02-00:13:40
Redman:

Wow.

02-00:13:40
Gaines:

Here come the provost marshal, because you going to have a riot there because the white folks were rioting. Black folks be. That’s the race riots because we were outnumbered. He said, “Can any of you guys drive this bus?” This guy said, “Yeah, I drive a six by six, eight by eight. What do you mean?” He said, “Take this bus and drive it away.” These guys in the south, when they run a troop train from Texas and got to go through Alabama and Mississippi, they shooting the damn planes at the black soldiers. Don’t you let nobody tell you they didn’t.

02-00:14:20
Redman:

Right around the same time I understand there’s a growing campaign in the African American community starting around ’43 called the Double Victory Campaign, where African Americans are talking about why would we fight Hitler and fascism in Europe when we don’t have the civil rights here at home that we’re supposedly fighting for. Victory abroad and victory at home. So it seems like the racism that you confronted in the army during that time, it would make one wonder why are we—

02-00:14:59
Gaines:

Why do you think that the blacks didn’t want to go? They didn’t want to go. I’ve seen guys that were North Carolina guys that went to Germany in the

war, got their eyes punched out, they got beat up and everything else after they come back. Why? Because they thought they'd fool with a white woman. Let me tell you something. As long as they were screwing black women, it's all right. But let one of them guys start messing with white girls, it's altogether different. I started my barber shop in 1945 here in Stockton. I've been there sixty-nine years.

02-00:15:40

Redman: Wow.

02-00:15:40

Gaines: I've seen rich people come down there looking for black whores. They're asking me, say, "Hey, man, you know where I can find a nice young white—black girl?" I say, "Yeah. I say, let's do it." I said, "Now, you bring me a nice young white girl and we'll have some fun." Then he gets mad. You understand?

02-00:15:58

Redman: So it's a big component, the racism and the sex. Sex and sexuality.

02-00:16:04

Gaines: Why?

02-00:16:05

Redman: Why is there that [complex] intersection?

02-00:16:06

Gaines: I don't know. But it's got to happen. It's getting there now. It's almost there but it's not quite there. Look, and the worst thing is your police department and your detective department and your justice system. And I can tell you things about the justice system. I'll tell you one incident happened to me. Now, the crack cocaine and the cocaine, this is a different thing. The drugs in the forties and the fifties was really, really going rampant, you know what I mean? In the forties, in the fifties, in the sixties. [Later] we start having crack cocaine. Methamphetamines hadn't started up until about in the early seventies, you know.

02-00:16:52

Redman: Right.

02-00:16:53

Gaines: I'm working in my barber shop. I'm using a razor that time, cutting hair. This policeman came in there. I'm standing there cutting hair. A guy come up. He had on a white uniform like he was working a drug store or something. He said, "Hey, man," said, "you know where I can get some reds?" You know what red devils are, don't—red devils at that time was a pill.

02-00:17:21

Redman: Pills.

02-00:17:21

Gaines:

Yes. Red devil. You know where I can get some marijuana or some heroin? I say, "No, just a minute. I'll tell you." Set it down." And I grabbed him by both his shoulders like that and I kicked his ass out of my barber shop, hard as I could kick him, right down the street. I said, "You come back in here next time I'm going to cut your damn throat." Next day here comes the policemen. This little guy said, "You remember me?" I said, "Remember you?" I said. "You remember kicking me out of here yesterday?" I said, "What for? Oh," said, "you the guy that asked me for them drugs." I said, "You're lucky I didn't cut your fucking throat. I don't sell no drugs here. I'm a businessman." And old Quail and Bird—these guys was named Quail and Bird. They were big on call detectives. I knew them. And, of course, I'm on the street all the time. And I told them, I said, "You know I don't sell no damn drugs." I haven't been bothered since.

Now, here's where I likely got in trouble. I'm standing out in front of my place. Sun was shining. Now, they had the paddy wagons in. You never seen the paddy wagon here. A paddy wagon is where they used to pick up the drunks on the street. They'd throw them in there. They'd be drunk and throw them in. So they threw this drunk in there and his leg was sticking out like that and this guy closed the door on his leg. Wham. Bam. I said, "Man, what are you doing?" I said, "Don't you see that man's foot sticking out there?" "You better get back in that barber shop, boy." I looked at him. I said, "You don't have to do that." Wham, wham. He closed the door. That's a white guy closing the door on another white guy. So that just goes to show you the mentality that some of your policemen have.

02-00:19:11

Redman:

Right.

02-00:19:13

Gaines:

That's kind of terrible, isn't it?

02-00:19:14

Redman:

It's terrible. Let me get back to the war for a moment. Tell me a little bit about the experience that you had in '44 and '45. I'll ask about the end of the war in a minute. Tell me about '44 and '45.

02-00:19:29

Gaines:

Forty-four and forty-five. I got out in '44. In '43 I was down in Texas and I was in the Signal Corps. They broke up Signal Corps. They were sending blacks overseas. It was hot then. It was really getting—guys was at Anzio, and they were in Germany and every place. They were going to send us overseas. But we were technical. We did pole line construction and we did radio receiving and pole line construction. And it wasn't like it is now. You didn't have a radio and all that kind of stuff. Just a very little bit. Because we hadn't elevated into that part of technology. So they made our signal corps—see, the signal corps is the background for the whole unit. They broke up the whole

unit. They sent some of the engineers someplace and some of the guys that was in artillery, field artillery, they sent them. But so much was happening down there. If you study the history of blacks down in the south you'll see that they had a lot of riots but they don't mention it very much in your books because they try to keep it out of there, let you know what was going on. But anyway, they sent us to Fort Clark. I mean to Camp Crowder, Missouri. That's where I was in, Camp Crowder, Missouri. I was married then. I got my wife down there. Of course I didn't have no children. Because she was drawing my little—I was only getting twenty-nine dollars a month. So she came down. Because when I was stationed at Fort Clark, Texas we would send convoys into Mexico every weekend. Now, why would you send the soldiers over there? Because they had open prostitution there. And they'd send all these soldiers over there. A whole 2,000 of them or 3,000. And you'd go into the Mexican and where all of them whores was out there and you'd go over there and you had fun.

02-00:21:44
Redman:

Wow.

02-00:21:44
Gaines:

Dance and you'd go tricking with the whores and all this kind of stuff. And they had 15,000 soldiers there, so you know they were having fun with the girls over there. It was as in Villa Acuna in the state of Coahuila. And then you'd go over there and you'd come back and they had a big prophylactics station, about as big as this whole thing here and you'd go in there and then they'd shoot that iodoral up in your penis and wash up and everything. Of course, a lot of guys got gonorrhoea and everything else.

02-00:22:13
Redman:

Right, sure.

02-00:22:14
Gaines:

I remember one guy, he'd been going over there. He came out one morning to take a leak and had holes in his penis. Water went everywhere. But this is the experiences that I had. I saw all of this happening, see.

02-00:22:33
Redman:

You see images of manuals given out to soldiers or instructional guides to avoid loose women or -

02-00:22:46
Gaines:

They tell you all that bullshit. That's nothing but jive—look, let me tell you. I've seen guys that would line up to have sex with women. There would be three or four whores in this one house and guys lining up to go in there and have sex. Aw, man, what the hell's wrong with you? Something's wrong up in the head. But men are that way. Sex is a terrible thing. Guys kill for sex and all that other kind of stuff. I don't know, something goes wrong with a guy's head when you get that crazed. But now, sex is something—we all come hear about sex. We know that. But some guys just take it to a different level. But

the experiences I've had, I've had a lot of experiences, but I never let that bother me because one thing that I teach my kids, and my father taught me this, is something that you really have to understand. It's to take a piece of paper and go up the river, stand on a bridge and drop it on this side. That piece of paper goes under the bridge and down the road. Down the river. And I teach my kids this: Don't dwell on that past. That's water under the bridge. That's gone. You can't rectify that. But you can use your experience that happened, and you don't want it to go under the bridge like that. Do you understand? And that's when I tell you don't give out. Don't give up. I mean, you can give out but don't give up.

02-00:24:32

Redman: So you had your wife there with you stationed at the base.

02-00:24:35

Gaines: Yes.

02-00:24:36

Redman: That was fairly uncommon?

02-00:24:40

Gaines: No, no.

02-00:24:42

Redman: No?

02-00:24:42

Gaines: You could bring your wife down there but you'd have to leave her in the little town where you were. And they'd give you a pass to go and see her probably at night or something so you didn't get in no trouble. But you got to be back at the base for revelry at that point. So I did that. And when we was in Missouri, she stayed in town. I'd go take a bus and go downtown. She lived in the black part of town. I'd get on the segregated bus and get on the army bus and go back to—now, the army—this is at Camp Crowder, Missouri. There was 80,000 people there. We had a company of three thousand and some men. We were stationed over at what we called Camp Coal because there was nothing but black over here. Segregated. All these guys had tanks and everything over here. They had a little problem. But the ammunition dump was in our neighborhood. I mean around the blacks. And they got in a little riot. And man, it's terrible. Everybody was shooting bullets, tracer bullets flying everywhere. Then they were going to send the air force in there. But, you see, the blacks never give. They were fighting over some guy said this black guy had raped some women and then they had lined all of us up. I think it was three companies of us. Lined us up and said, "Look it here. This girl is coming to look and see if it's one of you guys." Now, if she'd have chosen me, I'd have been a dead man. You understand?

02-00:26:20

Redman: There's nothing you could do.

02-00:26:21

Gaines:

Nothing I could do. All of us lined up for them and then she walking by looking. What the hell. It's very, very—

02-00:26:27

Redman:

Was that a powerless situation or a frustrating? How did that feel?

02-00:26:34

Gaines:

It's just like it is with the army if the government and the policemen round you up and put you in that position. Nothing you can do. Here's an old African proverb that I told my kids. This is an Ashanti proverb and my mother taught me. When you have your hands in the lion's mouth, go easy until you get it out because if you snatch it out he going to claw you back. So we have our hands in the lion's mouth. You got to work easy with it. And I told my son's this. I say, "Don't ever talk back to the policeman. You understand?" My two boys majored in criminology so when they got out they went out to work. My twins. They was going to work out at San Luis School, a boy's home. He said, "Daddy, I don't want to be around all those criminals." I said, "Choose another field." You understand? So I said, "You going to get stopped because of the color of your skin." He said the police stop him all the time right now and they say, "What is your name?" He tell. You understand? But you have to be—don't get bossy with them because you get yourself in trouble. They weigh 230 pounds. They fight like hell but I teach them not—you can't win.

02-00:28:12

Redman:

Now, you leave the army before the end of the war?

02-00:28:16

Gaines:

I left in—

02-00:28:17

Redman:

Can you tell me about how that happened?

02-00:28:19

Gaines:

Yes. They turned us out in 1944. I got discharged at Camp Beale up here in Sacramento. They were getting rid of the surplus. We weren't in a fighting unit anymore, they didn't need us, so they just give you an honorable discharge and you were getting out of the army. I got out of the army in 1944, in December 1944. And then I went and got me a divorce because I just stayed there until I got out. Then I went back and started my own business again. But what happened when I got out, they had the best thing that ever happened to soldiers and it should happen today. Is the GI Bill arrives. When I got out, I said I'm going—a guy said, "What are you going to do? You going to get the GI Bill?" I said, "Yeah, I'm going [go to school]—" Said, "What are you going to be?" I said, "I don't know." So one of my friends, he said, "Well, why don't you be a mortician?" I said, "Well, that'd be fine." So I said, "That'd be good but how am I going to do that? I don't have nobody but myself." He said, "That's all right." Said, "They pay you fifty dollars a month.

They'd pay for your tuition, fees. You have to find a place to live." But that was fifty dollars a month then and they pay for your schooling. So I went to barber school. You understand? I went to barber school and you had to serve out your apprenticeship. Now, I was making fifty dollars a month. That's what they were giving me. I was going to barber school. I got me a job working at night, working icing cars at the railroad and I was working at a mechanic's shop at night, cleaning up a mechanic shop in Sacramento. I was there before I went—I had two jobs until I could get my apprentice license. Then when I got my apprentice license I come to Stockton, California, 1945. October 6, 1945. I went to work for an inventor named—what's his name? Richard Spikes. That's right. His name was Spikes. Spike. He had a barbershop. He hired me as an apprentice. Was getting a dollar a haircut. He took twenty-five cents on the dollar. That made me seventy-five cents. I made thirty bucks that first day. Man, I was really rich. You understand?

02-00:31:01

Redman:

I want to get back to that in a moment but let's talk first about—because FDR passes away and Truman comes into office. Can you talk a little bit about what—

02-00:31:09

Gaines:

I can talk about the best president ever been there.

02-00:31:13

Redman:

Truman.

02-00:31:13

Gaines:

[It] was Harry S. Truman. When Truman got up and played is piano that morning and [hand clapping] clapped his hands, he said, "I'm desegregating the army today." That's the best president we've ever—he stood on his own courage. He was a sharp man. Because you know why he was that way? He was once poor. Truman didn't always have anything. You knew that, didn't you?

02-00:31:40

Redman:

Yes. He came from pretty modest means.

02-00:31:43

Gaines:

That's right. And Truman was a real president and he spoke—of course, I had my doubts about him when they persuaded him to drop the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

02-00:31:57

Redman:

What did you think about that?

02-00:31:59

Gaines:

I think that's the most cruelest thing could ever happen. Would you kill 280,000 people at one time? Huh?

02-00:32:08

Redman:

Women and children—.

02-00:32:12

Gaines:

Everybody. What did Sherman say? War is hell. You know who I'm talking about, don't you? General Sherman when he burned Atlanta [during the Civil War]. War is hell. Why are people that mean? I cannot understand it. And so far as this being a Christian nation, this is the worst you've ever seen. Now, people ask Mr. Gaines, say, "You don't go to church or nothing?" I say, "I'm not an atheist. I'm not anything that you think I am." I say, "I am a follower of the greatest teacher of all time, is Jesus Christ. Jesus the son of Joseph." "What do you mean? He's a Christian." I said, "But I'm a Christian. I follow his teachings. I don't go to nobody's church. Jesus didn't go to nobody's church. He ripped them out of the church. Using my father's house is den of thieves. They selling things in there." What do the churches do today? It's the worst hypocrisy in the world. How can you call yourself a Christian nation and keep people in slavery and kill Indians like they're dogs. Europeans are terrible people. Some of them are. Not all of them are. Look how they did to people in Central and South America. And Indians that wouldn't even convert to Catholicism. They killed a lot of them right here in California. And this is what I cannot understand about Europeans. Why is it they want to be conquerors? Even King Philip. And I was talking to a Filipino lady. I said, "Where do you think you got your name from?" King Philip. They named the Philippine Island.

I have a grandson who's real sharp. He's fourteen years old. He wants to be a dentist. He's my grandson. Four point student. And I asked him the other day when he was over here, I said, "What do you know about the pyramids?" He said, "Oh, I know quite a bit about the pyramids." I said, "Well, who do you think built the pyramids?" He said, "Slaves built them." I said, "What slaves?" He said, "Well, the African slaves built them." I said, "Oh, you know before the map was changed that this part of Egypt was in Africa." "Oh, yeah." I said, "How do you think they got those rocks up there?" He said, "Well, the slaves put them up there." I said, "But some of those things are almost 400 feet in the air." I said, "How do you think they got them up there." He said, "Well, Poppa, I really don't know." I said, "Now, I'm going to tell you something about those rocks." I said, "If you look at those rocks, there's no rocks. Almost granite. It may be granite in that vicinity. Those rocks come from 300 miles up the Nile River. How do you think they got them down there? He looked at me just like you." I said, "You know about the Stonehenge in England?" He said, "Yeah, I know about them." I said, "What do you know about the terra cotta soldiers?" He's fourteen. He said, "Yeah, this and China." He says, "Yes." He's sharp. I say to him, I said, "You're pretty good." So I teach all my kids and my sons teach their kids the same thing. Here's what he said. He says, "I read." I say, "Also, your daddy taught you what I taught you—what I taught him." He says, "Yeah." Knowledge doesn't fall out of the sky into your head. Knowledge is found in books. So

this is what my whole family go to. And I'll tell you what I want you to do. This is the best birthday present I've ever gotten.

02-00:36:05

Redman: You should read it out loud under the camera I think. Is that okay? Will you read this to me?

02-00:36:11

Gaines: All right.

02-00:36:13

Redman: So this is the best birthday present you've ever received?

02-00:36:15

Gaines: I don't celebrate no days. I don't celebrate Christmas, don't celebrate birthdays. I'll tell you why. You were talking about the Depression. I think I was nine or eleven years old. All the kids in the room, they got—on Christmas Day they got oranges in the sock and everything and I didn't have anything. Nothing. Didn't even have food on the table. You understand? It hurt me. I said, "I'll never celebrate a day in my life. No more." I don't celebrate no days. My birthday, I don't celebrate that. No, don't celebrate it. Because one day is just like another as long as you're alive.

So I'm a strange kind of fellow. I'll tell you why I'm strange. I stayed on the farm with my daddy for about four years. Nobody—he and I out there. I'm a loner. I stayed on my daddy's horse, herd my cattle, herding his cows and seeing they didn't bring out of the fences and all, because we had a big stock. Wasn't nobody there but he and I. And I found out something about my father. I did not know he spoke German because he never taught his kids none of it. So he'd communicate with this German guy next—

02-00:37:48

Redman: That's amazing.

02-00:37:49

Gaines: That's very amazing.

02-00:37:51

Redman: Wow.

02-00:37:52

Gaines: I don't know why he didn't teach us German. Because I guess he didn't want—I'll show you my daddy's picture in a few minutes. I understand Jewish people. Jews, the original Jew, was my color. You don't find no Europeans in Jerusalem. And this is why I don't have any respect for the Jewish nation that's there today. You know why? When Golda Meir and Menachem Begin went into Israel in the seventies or sixties or wherever it was, and it was before that in the forties. They sent 8,000 black Jews to Eritrea. You know where Eritrea is, don't you? It's a little country right outside of Ethiopia. Black. They haven't brought them back yet. You follow?

02-00:38:50
Redman: So there is a racial—racism—

02-00:38:53
Gaines: There is racism.

02-00:38:53
Redman: Sure.

02-00:38:56
Gaines: Now, have you ever known anything about Beethoven? Beethoven's hair is just like mine.

02-00:39:03
Redman: Right, yes.

02-00:39:03
Gaines: Huh?

02-00:39:05
Redman: Yes, it is actually. Tell me about what's the connection.

02-00:39:11
Gaines: They were all civilization begin in Africa.

02-00:39:16
Redman: Right, yeah. That's—

02-00:39:19
Gaines: Now, I'll tell you a little incident that happened with me. I was in this doctor's office and we were talking. I said, "You really like using that method of sterilization." He says, "Yeah." He says, "What do you know about steri—" I say, "I know about Imophomes of method." He said, "What do you mean? What do you know about them Imhopt method?" I said, "That's the method of sterilization." I say, "It originated with Imhotep." He said, "What do you know about Imhotep?" I'm not supposed to know this.

02-00:40:00
Redman: So is that the sort of reaction that you would get over the course of your life? A big aspect of that is like you—the way African American men are expected to project what they know or they're not expected to act and behave in a certain way. Do you find that surprised a lot of people?

02-00:40:23
Gaines: I love it. I love it. I eat it up. Look, when you go to a black school, you learn how to speak English. You learn. The teachers there put so much in your head. When you go to a black college or a black school when you're growing up, the teachers put this in you. They used to. They don't do it anymore. They teach you to speak correct English. My kids right here, good, got a master's degree. Can you diagram a sentence?

02-00:40:58

Redman: Most people in my generation can't, and that's a problem. That's a problem.

02-00:41:03

Gaines: Where is it at?

02-00:41:05

Redman: Right.

02-00:41:05

Gaines: Using a preposition at the end of a sentence. But, you see, we don't teach that today. But my kids say, "Daddy, you always—" I said, "Listen, I was taught. I don't have a college degree but I can work any problem you have, any problem that you have in that algebra and geometry and trig." But see, math runs in my family. I had one daughter. My father was a mathematician and an artist and a musician. This runs in my family. I had one daughter, she's passed away, she could work trig in her head. She was too smart. She passed away when she was in her—graduated from high school two, three years. My sister did, too. They were all real smart. But I hope that my grandson is not too smart. But he's very, very sharp. And I talk to him the other day. I told him, I says, "Now, my two kids went to, my—three kids, four kids of mine went to Franklin High School. When they went to Fresno State they had to take bonehead English because English wasn't taught, the curriculum wasn't high enough." So when they went there, they told me, said, "Daddy, send Tasha to Saint Mary's." I said, "But it cost some money." She said, "You pay now or pay later." So we sent her to Saint Mary's. She's not as sharp as they are but she obtained a better education than they got. You understand? This is what I'm telling you about our public schools, about the English.

02-00:42:42

Redman: Let me ask. Oh, do you want to read this to me? Tell me what that is. Tell me what that is. Tell me what—

02-00:42:46

Gaines: This is from Father's Day. This is my son. Well, I'll tell you this. I'll just read it and let you listen to it. "From son to father. Of all the wisdom you have bestowed upon me, I carry it wherever I go. Now I reflect on the journey that I have taken and the voices of consciousness that have guided me all the way. It has been yours. I see now the importance of true fatherhood, the burden of worry, the constant nagging of wanting more for your child. You have grown me well. More importantly, you have made me a good person. With all the craziness in the world, you have protected me. I shall offer my son, only offer the same and encouraging him of the legacy you have created. Education is the key to success, no matter it be through vocational or traditional means. Thank you, from father to father. Ali Gaines." How did that sound to you?

02-00:43:56

Redman: That's really poignant. That's really amazing.

02-00:43:59

Gaines:

It's very amazing. And I let a guy read this who's a teacher. He says, "Can I take this and teach it in my school?" I said, "You can take it whenever you want."

02-00:44:10

Redman:

That's really great. So I have several questions for you before we wrap up. Let me ask the first question. We talked about Richmond and how when you first went to Richmond, California it had a population of nineteen black people.

02-00:44:28

Gaines:

That's right. This was before the war.

02-00:44:30

Redman:

After the war, when you come back, what had changed and why?

02-00:44:36

Gaines:

Well, I'll tell you what happened. Richmond, El Cerrito and all these places are populated with people who coming here from the south. Both people. San Francisco, all of it. You see, I was in San Francisco in the forties. In the thirties. I used to go over there to party and everything. San Francisco was one of the racist towns you'd ever want to see. What? I was there when it was racist. There was very few people there until the war. You see, San Francisco was made up—you know what it was made up out of, don't you? Whores and gamblers. Well, I'm just telling you the truth.

02-00:45:26

Redman:

All right.

02-00:45:28

Gaines:

And this is a bad thing to say but it's run by rich people. But that was before the war. Now, look, there was no Hunter's Point. But after Hunter's Point, Army Street and all that, when they started to do—they had—Han Guster didn't want to black policemen there and all that kind of stuff. You do some research, you'll find it out. It's kind of bad. Now, look what happened there. During the war, Fillmore Street, from Haight—from Sutter clear down to Haight Street. Do you live in San Francisco? You know what I'm talking about?

02-00:46:07

Redman:

Mm-hmm.

02-00:46:08

Gaines:

They had everything there. Grocery stores, drug stores, clothing stores, everything you want to see there. What did they do? They wiped it out. All the businesses out. Oakland the same way. Oakland was a thriving community. Had more black businesses than Atlanta, Georgia. Don't have them now. What did they do? Watch this. They ran the freeway through Oakland. They wiped it out. They ran the freeway right down Beale Street in Memphis, Tennessee. Wiped all the black businesses out. Stockton, California we had

one hotel seven, eighteen stories high. They run the freeway right through it. I moved five times. Five times my barber shop was moved. They run the freeway right down through the black businesses. We don't have any businesses here now. This not done by accident. This is done by design. Why? Why? Redevelopment. They call it redevelopment. Urban renewal. Redevelopment. Scatter you out. They do nothing. It's terrible. But I'm one businessman. I'm standing there, "Look, that hotel, barber shop, beauty shops, saloons, and everything, we don't have it here now. What's going on?"

02-00:47:34
Redman:

So those developments are taking place at the same time that a small group of people are starting to become more and more active and vibrant and organized in the south and then eventually a lot of people from the West Coast start to get hooked up with them in what we now understand is the Civil Rights Movement after World War II. Can you talk about was there some—did you start to hear about this guy Martin Luther King and what he was doing in the south and letters from the Birmingham jail. Things like that. Was that starting to resonate?

02-00:48:21
Gaines:

That resonated with me quite a bit. Yes. But Martin Luther King and all these guys, Malcolm X and all of them, they're doing a terrific job. But the population that we have—you see, it's only 7 percent of us. It's only 7 percent of blacks in California. Ain't much we can do. But there's the point. I cannot understand why they want to do this segregation between the races like that and to keep us divided. They keep us divided, then they can conquer you. But why? Why I cannot understand. We are the true Americans. We are the ones who built this country. Never got paid a dime for building it. You understand? But now you're saying who built this country? All the immigrants built it. Look, they talk about the Hispanics getting citizenship, making citizens out of them. You know how long it took us to be a citizen? From 1620 'til 1869 we were not citizens. We built this country we wasn't citizens until after slavery made a citizen out of—

02-00:49:39
Redman:

Now, in the fifties and sixties, one of the big debates that's coming out is on the one hand you've got a legal strategy of the NAACP of trying to fight legal court cases to address segregation and civil rights issues and then you also have a group, the Congress of Racial Equality, the biracial group that's doing more of the non-violent civil resistance, like the sit-ins and shop-ins and stuff during that era. Was that a little bit of a tension there between those two or did you see those two groups as working together?

02-00:50:16
Gaines:

Well, they're working real well together. They can only do so much by going by the law. We can't win by fighting because we are not organized enough with artillery and all this other kind of stuff. We're not that way. In fact, we're not warriors. We really want this country to survive.

02-00:50:37

Redman: The NAACP strategy is pretty radically different from the riots that—

02-00:50:47

Gaines: But Thurgood Marshall was a lawyer with the NAACP. He took it to the Supreme Court. We're saying we want to make you live by what you say you wrote. All men are created equal. Now, why do you want to have separate schools if this is your law? This is your law. We let you run your own law. Now we going to take you to the courts and see if you will live up to your own law. That's how we have to have that. We can't fight to get it. Nobody gives you anything without a fight so you fight legally to get it. Now, here's the main problem with the Constitution. How in the hell does a guy go write the Constitution and he has slaves? Huh?

02-00:51:34

Redman: Right.

02-00:51:36

Gaines: This guy that—Fannie Hema had five kids by him. What the hell? Took her to France with him. She was a mulatto, all right. You know who I'm talking about?

02-00:51:47

Redman: Thomas Jefferson.

02-00:51:48

Gaines: Thomas Jefferson.

02-00:51:48

Redman: Yes.

02-00:51:49

Gaines: And listen, let me tell you about George Washington. I got a thousand dollars for any man can name me a white man in this country, that's white, named George Washington.

02-00:52:06

Redman: Right. And—

02-00:52:06

Gaines: I'll tell you why.

02-00:52:08

Redman: Why is that?

02-00:52:10

Gaines: George Washington came here with his brother Henry. Henry went back to England. George married Martha. She was buried and couldn't have any kids. He had 900 slaves. Most of them were mixed with him. Name me one person. Tell somebody come to see me.

02-00:52:39
Redman: Yeah. I can't think—[laughter]—of course the first name that comes to mind is George Washington Carver, right?

02-00:52:47
Gaines: Oh, shit.

02-00:52:47
Redman: Yes.

02-00:52:47
Gaines: But look it. Booker T. Washington's daddy was white. You see? You understand? Here's what I can't understand. If I had a kid over here, I own that kid, that's mine. Strom Thurmond is the only one I give credit for having any gumptions about it. You know Strom Thurmond. The racist.

02-00:53:09
Redman: Yeah, yes.

02-00:53:11
Gaines: You know he had a baby by a black woman and he raised those four black kids and she went there to see him. "That's my daddy."

02-00:53:21
Redman: Right.

02-00:53:24
Gaines: And he voted against segregation. Voted for segregation.

Begin Audio File 3 gainses_warren_03_06-21-12.mp3

03-00:00:00
Redman: All right. My name is Sam Redman. Today is Thursday, June 21st. This is my third tape with Warren Gaines. Warren, when we left off we were at the end of the war. We talked about how life had changed in cities like Oakland and Stockton and Richmond during the war. We talked a little bit about civil rights and the Civil Rights Movement and the influence that that was having here in California. Can you talk to me about how black servicemen from World War II who used the GI Bill, who then—many of them went into business for themselves or would further their education with the GI Bill or build a home or things like that. When that happened to these folks living in California?

03-00:00:57
Gaines: Well, a lot of servicemen took advantage of the GI Bill. That was the best thing that ever happened in the United States, was to give education. And a lot of them taking second generations now. Their kids are going to school now, a lot of them. But you going to have some that don't. But a lot of people took advantage of the GI Bill of Rights and a lot of servicemen coming out of service today, they should have the same opportunity that we had. Because I got mine through going under the GI Bill of Rights, just being a barber, but I

wanted to be a businessman. And after I got to be a barber I learned how to finagle and make more businesses for myself. I started out with nothing and now I'm in a pretty good position. Of course, I'm a farmer. I love what I'm doing now. I raise goats, sheep, and all this other stuff. I did that on my own five acres of land. Sure. That's what I like. And I got businesses in town. But here's the point about going into business. You have to have money to go in business. And you can't get a loan. And the loans that you make, a lot of the time the percentage is higher than it is for other people, especially for blacks. That's the reason I don't buy on credit, because you get a different percentage when you go to make a loan. And I have white guys that I know, real good friends mine.

One guy was working in a used car lot. And he's told by the management, "When a black guy comes in here, get what you can out of him." You know what I mean? If the percentage is 5 percent tell him the lowest he can get is eight. You understand? And he tells me why they do this. Now, why is it they have to do that? This is what they are taught, to take advantage of you. And most people don't understand percentage. First thing, a poor person or poor person never should have a credit card. You can't pay no 27 percent on a dollar. Are you out of your mind? This is how they look at ignorant people. And ignorant people is the one that they—that's not only blacks they take advantage of.

And about housing. We could only buy in a certain district in town. When I first come to Stockton, Main Street was the dividing line. Everything south of Main Street was owned by blacks. Now, over in the other part of town, the north part of town, you couldn't live over there. You couldn't go over there. You'd go over there, "What are you doing over here at this time of night, boy?" You understand? You couldn't cross the dividing line, okay. I stayed over on this side of town. I refused to go over there because the rent's too high. But here's the point. I was renting a house, a business place downtown. It's on Market Street. It was owned by Franzia Brothers Winery. You understand? I had a barber shop in there. They never fixed the building up. Rats in it, roaches, everything else. I had my barber shop there. I remember one day we were cutting hair and a rat run across. A big old rat run right across the floor. And Lorenzo, the guy that worked for me, this guy jumped and said, "Man, there goes a rat." He says, "Oh, no, that's a pet rat. Pet rat. We raise them around here." Now, if a rat died, I had to go into the wall, take it out, spray it. This is in the ghetto. Look, I said if I could ever get me a place of my own, I would get it. Look, in the ghetto they let these guys, these absentee landlords come in there and get money out of you and don't fix up the places. The health department don't say a damn thing about it. They let it go. I've appeared before the city council numerous of times, not only for that other thing. But they know who I am. I'm a rabble rouser, say I'm an activist. No, I'm just telling the truth.

Now, the biggest thing that hurts me today, it hurts me every minute of the day. When you turn the corner down there, you saw that big manufacturing company name. Enviroplex. They have some 200 people there. Not a single black work there. I went there two or three times. Last time they called the sheriff on me because I asked them why they don't have some blacks. They're using public funds to sell schools, portable schools to the county or to the state and yet they don't hire any blacks. And I wrote to the city councilmen, I wrote to everybody. I can't get anything done. I'm a World War II veteran. My kids and everybody fought over there in Vietnam and every place else and you have this same damn discrimination going on, was a hundred years ago, and they're doing it right today. Nobody says nothing about it. And it's, "Oh, we going to hire some," or "We hired some last month." You understand? I'm just one man. I write to McNerney, this congressman. Yeah, he not going to do a damn thing. But, see, here's what makes me angry now. They're building jails now for my great-great grandson because with racial profiling and poor people, they cannot house all the people that they are going to build for. These farmers, the grocery men, the clothing stores, and all of these people, they have a ready made customer.

The biggest thing that hurts is the foster care system? What are you talking about? You should take care of these kids. Sure, take care of them. But you got to teach them something. What they're doing is for money. They get a kid, they keep him for ten, fifteen, eighteen years. When that kid gets eighteen years old, he's been used to having everything done for him. He doesn't have to work. He is going to get fed. He doesn't have any things to do. Nothing but go to school. If he goes to school, he might be cutting every day. But when he gets eighteen they turn him out. He's through. He doesn't have a job. He's going to be a criminal because he's going to live. He might want to sell dope or might want to rob or might want to steal. He doesn't care because he's been used to somebody taking care of him. The girls go to the street. A lot of them turn out for prostitution. Now, here comes the guy that's going to build a private jail. This is the welfare system. The same as getting food stamps because he's got food stamps coming in. The farmer's selling food, the guy's selling milk and everything else. If I had a deal to sell toilet paper [to the prisons] I'd be a millionaire. It's crazy, isn't it? I'm talking crazy.

03-00:08:08

Redman:

No, I think it makes sense. Well, it's crazy in that it makes sense to me. I feel like it is—

03-00:08:17

Gaines:

It is making sense.

03-00:08:19

Redman:

Yes, right.

03-00:08:22

Gaines: I know a guy that makes \$100,000 a year as a guard at the prison. Lots of them make big money. It's nothing but a business.

03-00:08:33

Redman: Right, right.

03-00:08:34

Gaines: Now, why can't you take this same kid, spend that \$31,000 a year on him from birth, put him in a place where he can learn a trade? But technology is going to destroy a lot of jobs, you understand? What are we going to do with these people?

03-00:08:52

Redman: May I ask you one final question?

03-00:08:55

Gaines: Yes.

03-00:08:57

Redman: Now, this is a big question. You can take a moment to think about it if you'd like. But looking back on your life story, and I'm particularly interested in the Great Depression, the dust bowl, your work in the CCC camp, coming out to California, finding that work and then being in the army and going and seeing that segregated army firsthand and some of those experiences during the war. If you could look back on those days in your life and tell a young person something about it, thinking back on that, what do those things mean to you overall? What does that story mean to you in your life?

03-00:09:38

Gaines: That story that I'm telling you, what we've been talking about, is the same story that my dad told me years ago. Is a teaching from my father and my mother. Is the hard times that they went through and what they went through they projected in me. The same thing that I'm projecting into my kids. Is don't be dependent on nobody but your—anyone but yourself. Live a good, clean life and don't worry about the past. Look to the future because the future is where it is. I've done all this and I've told my kids my whole life story and it's in my book. And that piece that you have that my son wrote, that explains the whole thing in just a few words. He put it all together. The things that I went through as an African American, a white boy couldn't have taken this and still hold himself together like I held myself together. I'm almost ninety-two years old. But my mind is keen. It's still keen. Very sharp. My health is good. Now, a lot of African Americans, they have adopted the Christian religion, which is nice for them. They have to have something to hold onto. I'm not an atheist but I look forward to one thing, the universal creator and the teachings of Jesus. If you follow the teachings of Jesus—I'm not talking about the American teaching or the European teaching. Is the teachings that he taught. Love your neighbor, share with each other. Don't kill and do the things that is good. He never taught anything bad. Now, I have no problems with

homosexuality. Why? Because I look at the teachings of Jesus. He said one thing. Let the wheat and the chaff grow together and I'll separate it when it come, when I come. That's his job. That isn't mine. So this makes a lot of sense to me. They're human beings. Now, you talk about the different religions we have. We have Christian, we have the Jewish, we have the Muslims, we have all kinds of religion. Now, everyone is looking forward to going to this beautiful place they call heaven. Now, if you take all these people and put them into heaven, what are you going to have up there? All of a sudden you're going to have everybody together? Huh? So the teachings of Jesus is—but here's what he said. Somebody was over there teaching the same thing he taught. He said, "Oh, the sheep I have are not of this road."

03-00:12:38

Redman:

Just to finish up. But thinking about the teachings of Jesus and how those relate to your life. The big stories that you've—

03-00:12:48

Gaines:

I've read all the stories in the Bible. I read the Bible real good. But you see, here's what you have to understand. Now, when I was talking to you about my grandson, about the terra cotta soldiers, I never explained what I'm going to explain to you now. Your Bible says we're six thousand, seven thousand or eight thousand years old. Right? The terra cotta soldiers are 32,000 years old. You understand? So how does that relate to the Christian Bible the way they teach? But I'm talking about the way he teach. Can you explain to me about the Incas and then—you understand?

03-00:13:32

Redman:

Right. A lot of unanswered questions.

03-00:13:33

Gaines:

But, you see, here's where I put religion. I quote some of the things that Jesus said and what they write in there. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child. But when I become a man I put away childish things. That's where my religion is. When I was taught all of this garbage, I understood that. Now that I've gotten older I've put all away this childish thing. I looked to the universal creator, which I know nothing about, you know nothing about. Now, here's what I cannot understand. When Jesus said, "Other sheep I have are not of this fold," here's what I'm getting to now. Do you know they just discovered a new planet? How do we know what's up in—this movie that you saw where they had the tails and they were running around, hanging on the vines and everything and the eagles flying around. What do we know about this? Somebody's looking way ahead. What do we know that's out there? It's hard to understand. But I look to the future. Somebody we will find out. We will know a lot. Now, we want to go to the planets and all that. We haven't even gone down in the ocean deep enough to know what's down there yet. So life is boggling. It's mind boggling or whatever you want to say about—but here's the point. As long as you have racial segregation in this world, not only here in the United States, and you

have a class system, it's not going to work. Somebody's going to get destroyed and supporters dropping bombs on people and all that kind of—I don't believe in killing. I really don't. Because you're killing somebody that's innocent. Do you realize we killed over 150,000 people in Iraq? Dropped bombs on innocent woman and children. Dropped bombs on women and children. Killed a lot of innocent people for nothing. What did we get out of it? Yes, we got something out of it. The guys made millions of dollars. You know what I'm talking about?

03-00:16:03
Redman:

Yes.

03-00:16:04
Gaines:

The guys that got these contracts. It's business. Just like I'm telling you about the business now of the penitentiary. You spoke about it before I could even tell you what the third largest—you can see it, can't you?

03-00:16:18
Redman:

Right.

03-00:16:19
Gaines:

And don't you think that the people are not looking at this? A lot of people think a lot of people are dumb. They're not dumb. They see what's happening. The penitentiary system is getting—is terrible. And something has got to be done because you're producing a lot more children today and what are you going to do with these kids when they get to be twenty-one, twenty years old and they don't have [sense] to be taken care of? Crime is going to get worse. Now I'll tell you one more thing.

03-00:16:54
Redman:

Sure.

03-00:16:55
Gaines:

I have a niece who's a judge in Chicago. She's retired now. She was a judge there for thirty years. I was telling her the same thing and she says—I says, "You're sending kids to the penitentiary that don't need to be there." I said, "Look at their background and see what causes them to be there. They wasn't educated, they didn't have a job, they had to live." I said, "Now, you're a superior court judge." She said, "Uncle Warren G, you know what? As I look back now, a lot of those kids are not responsible for what they did. You can't hold a person responsible for wanting to eat." And so that's the kind of fellow, person I am.

03-00:17:51
Redman:

I really appreciate having the chance to interview you today. Thank you so much for sitting down with us.

03-00:17:56
Gaines:

All right.

Interview #2 July 17, 2012

Begin Audio File 4 drew_othro_and_gaines_warren_g_04_07-17-12_stereo.mp3

04-00:00:04

Redman: My name is Sam Redman and today is July 17. I'm back in Stockton, California. Mr. Drew, would you mind stating your full name and when and where you were born?

04-00:00:16

Drew: My name is Othro Drew. I was born in Coffeyville, Kansas on July 24, 1930.

04-00:00:23

Redman: And Mr. Gaines?

04-00:00:24

Gaines: Warren G. Gaines, born in Langston, Oklahoma, or Goodnight, Oklahoma, whichever one you want to use. I was born on the farm. October 18, 1920.

04-00:00:37

Redman: All right, so gentlemen, one thing that came up last time during our respective interviews that I wanted to talk about a little bit more, to see whether or not some of these things resonated or if they didn't. I understand that much of what was happening that was important for the African American community in terms of art and in terms of music and things like that were happening in Harlem, New York. The Harlem Renaissance. I wanted to ask about Bessie Smith, Louie Armstrong and Duke Ellington, and see if those musicians were things that you guys would have listened to growing up on the farm at all. Would that music have been available?

04-00:01:22

Drew: Early on, those names are—they're saints as far as the black community is concerned. But early on—I don't know about brother Gaines, but my great grandfather and grandmother were slaves. My grandparents were the first free generation. During those days, music, especially if you're in the South, the only music that you had access to was white religious music, Western music, as far as radio and this type of thing, because blacks weren't heard on the radio. Or maybe at the street corner, there would be a group playing music, or the church, or a club. That was the essence of the music. With me, for instance, I was in the Army in 1947 and I heard about jazz. You were saying Louie Armstrong, Bessie Smith, Duke Ellington, those people. I was saying, what's jazz? What's jazz? Fortunately, there was a young man out there that I was in who lived in New York. He understood jazz. There was the first jazz program that came on in 1947. It's called *Jumping with Symphony Sid*. For one hour, one day a week, they played jazz music. Then I found out that there were innumerable jazz clubs in New York. I'd get a leave, I'd go to these jazz clubs, and then I fell madly in love with jazz. Then I started doing a little studying of jazz. Jazz was a total different type of music. Probably the closest thing to jazz was blues and maybe Western music. But jazz was created out of misery, just plain misery. You listen to the old jazz songs compared to today's

jazz, you can see the hurt and all the angst that happened when they were alive. The pain that they suffered from being denied the right. You go to college and you could study. You would get a Ph.D., and you couldn't get a job. You had a Ph.D., walking around Phi Beta Kappa with a key hanging on your keychain, and you were lucky if you were a porter for a train.

04-00:03:51

Redman:

Mr. Gaines, tell me a little bit about music. What do you think?

04-00:03:54

Gaines:

What about music?

04-00:03:55

Redman:

Yeah.

04-00:03:56

Gaines:

There was something you said there before we got on the air. You said you'd go back to the past. I quote a lot of people that says, to know the future, study the past. Without the past, there is no future. Let's go back to the past. I mean the real past. Before jazz, before this music you're talking about. This is one thing—you're telling a story of humiliations you've had when you listen to what they call Negro spirituals. Now, let's take one song, "Carry Me Back to Old Virginia." Let's take that one. It was written by a black guy, but who got the credit for it? A white guy. He took it and did—same thing with the cotton gin. Take the cotton gin. It was invented by Jim Ellis. But they never tell you this.

04-00:04:51

Redman:

Eli Whitney—

04-00:04:52

Gaines:

Oh, shit. Oh, excuse me, excuse me. I hate to be vulgar. These are the biggest lies. Why don't they tell the truth about who actually built this America? You won't believe the rice production was produced out of South Carolina. The biggest rice production in the world right out of South Carolina. Who did the work? You listen to these newcomers come in, "Who built America?" "The immigrants built"—immigrants didn't build it. The thirteen original colonies was built by black people.

04-00:05:29

Drew:

Slavery.

04-00:05:30

Gaines:

Slavery. And look, they were built by slavery, because here's what happened. These people that come over here were too ignorant to do anything. But the ones that they brought, the slave masters, the poor whites that they brought over here, they had to do the same thing, make them the boss over the slaves. But look, George Washington, for instance. I give anybody a thousand dollars right now can find me one white man named Washington, George Washington, and prove that he's not mixed, he's white. There were two

people come over, George Washington and his brother Henry. Henry went back to England. Martha was barren. He had almost a thousand slaves. If you went on his plantation, it would be more mulattos there. You understand?

04-00:06:27

Redman: Right. So—

04-00:06:28

Gaines: When you start talking about let's go back to the past, now you're talking about radio. I was born in 1920. Radios wasn't even in our community clear up until 1930, because you had electricity. Where I lived in the country, they had a few battery radios. We had to go to the next neighbor's house, way down, to listen to the radio. In so far as phonographs, Bessie Smith and all this, yeah, they had all this.

04-00:06:55

Drew: Years later.

04-00:06:56

Gaines: But look, here's the problem about music. Music is fine, but we should stop putting all our hopes in music. Let's see about getting some education. Now this is where the real problem comes in, in education. I called Othro the other night and told them to read the story about a guy named Jordan. This guy, Jordan, was born a slave. He ran off—

04-00:07:24

Drew: In Virginia.

04-00:07:25

Gaines: He ran off and went into Ohio. Understand? He got a job over there and was making money. Made \$11,000 while he was working there. The slave master—this was during slavery time—he'd run off, and Ohio was a free state—told him to come back and work on the plantation. Now, he's a slave already, but he's in a free country, and he wrote him back and told him—he was a man that didn't know how to read or write, so he learned how to read and write, and he wrote the slave master a letter. Excuse me a minute. Back. Here's what he said. Here's what he said about coming back to be a slave and work for him. He said this, and I quote, "According to available records, Jordan Anderson was born in Tennessee in about 1825, and by the age of seven or eight, he had been sold to a plantation owned by General Paulding Anderson. In Big Spring, Tennessee, Patrick Henry Anderson was one of the general's son in the eighteen and forties." So when he said, "Come back," he said, "Would you want me to come back and take my girls, my two daughters, to be humiliated by your sons to produce some more children for you?" This is showing you one thing, how smart this African descendant person was. But you see, here's what happens to most whites. They do not understand. You should read Frantz Fanon's *We Wear the Mask*. Have you read it? You read it?

04-00:09:23

Redman: Yes.

04-00:09:24

Gaines: Well, you understand, we wear a mask. Most of us wear a mask. When you look at me, you don't know what I have in my head. You understand? Here's what happens. When you don't educate these people—I see children every day in my business. Some little kids like this are geniuses. They don't send them to the better schools. You understand? What they do to them—he's hyper. Let's give him some—what do you call it? Ritalin.

04-00:09:56

Redman: There are a lot of topics in there that I want to get back to. The Frantz Fanon ideas, I feel like I also want to talk about writers like Ralph Ellison and Richard Wright after the war. But before we get that far ahead in time, I want to ask about something that happened when you were very young. You were probably not aware of this, but in 1927, there was a great Mississippi flood that affected a lot of people in the Deep South who were living in—

04-00:10:35

Drew: In the Delta.

04-00:10:35

Redman: In the Delta. A lot of people criticized this at the time. They criticized Calvin Coolidge and the government as being incapable, and a lot of people compared this to—we think about that as being, oh, that was in the 1920s, but then of course what happened with Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, we're reminded that these sorts of things are alive today. Is that something that people talked about at all? It seems like that's a forgotten moment in history, these disasters that happened in the South.

04-00:11:10

Drew: Black people have been written out of history completely. We're taught by the same history book, public schools, that you have access to. But I sit there and I read this book, and I don't exist. When I was going to school in California, there were three black people existed. That was all. You had Carver, Booker T. Washington, and there was one other, and that was it. You had about two lines for each one.

04-00:11:46

Redman: W.E.B. Du Bois, maybe?

04-00:11:48

Drew: No, no, no, no. Oh, no. He was too radical. Much too radical. What he was talking about, wearing the mask, they didn't understand that Booker T. Washington, George Washington Carver, they say, they're good niggers. They don't cause no problems or anything. Very radical men. Blacks are always—they'll say, "They don't know what they're talking about." There's always been this double talk. I'll give you a for instance. The word "peckerwood." White people use it now. Initially, it was one of those words that blacks used

among themselves to describe white people. "He's a peckerwood." Then white people would say, "Certain niggers so damn dumb, they don't even know what a woodpecker is." They were saying "peckerwood" instead of "woodpecker," and the blacks sit there.

04-00:12:52

Gaines:

You mentioned this flood in 1927. That was when they had the flood down there. They don't mention the Tulsa riot in 1921.

04-00:13:04

Redman:

I know the Tulsa riots, we talked a little bit about last time, and how your two uncles were—

04-00:13:11

Gaines:

Passed away. But now, listen. Do you know anything about the Rentiesville situation that happened in Rentiesville, Oklahoma?

04-00:13:23

Redman:

No.

04-00:13:24

Gaines:

You see, here's where I am a little bit different than most African Americans, because I wasn't produced and raised up in a segregated community. I was in a black town, all-black. Drugstores, everything in there, was black. I didn't come in contact with whites. Black schools and everything. I was taught who I am. The first thing, you've got to find who you are. I know who I am. Most people don't know who they are. I know who I am. So when you would find out who you are, then that makes you a better person. I want to go back to slavery. Sure, we'll go back to slavery. I know who my mother was. My mother was an Ashanti. I did research and found out why. I met a gentleman in my shop the other day. We were talking and I said, "Where are you from in Africa?" He said, "I'm from West Africa." I said, "What tribe you come from?" He said, "I'm an Ashanti." I said, "What?" I said, "You may be my cousin." I said, "Do you know anything about the marks on Ashanti tribes?" He said a lot of tribes had different marks, just like we have the Indians in this country. Here's the difference. People teach slavery and they teach history, but they only teach one side of it.

04-00:14:48

Drew:

That's all they know.

04-00:14:49

Gaines:

So look. I was taught, on the right cheek of my aunty, one of them, it was turned up like this. A half-moon. And the male's, on the other side, was turned down. I know that. Now, look. He said, "How do you know this?" I tell everybody one thing. I've been in every country of the world. Why? Knowledge don't fall out of the sky and hit your head. Knowledge is found in books. When you read, you understand this. When the riot come in Tulsa, that was in 1921. But before that, in eighteen and sixty-three, in Rentiesville, they

had a riot there. It wasn't a riot. The Texas Rangers come down from Texas, about 600 of them, to Rentiesville. They heard there were some blacks. The blacks had moved in from Tennessee, Mississippi, and every place, come in to Oklahoma because it was a free country. When they came down to Rentiesville to try to take these blacks back to Texas, the Texas Rangers come down there. Now, it's in the book. If you study, you will find out, at Rentiesville, the blacks, in the First Calvary out of Kansas—not on the Confederate side, on the Union side—they met down there and they whipped these guys back, these Rangers back, and they had 400 handcuffs in there to take the blacks back to slavery. You understand? Now, this is not in your history books. If you go to your history, you'll find this stuff out. Once you find out, it gives you a lot of dignity.

04-00:16:45

Drew:

One of the main things that escaped, when it came to the Tulsa riots, *so-called* Tulsa riots, there was a Greenwood District. The Greenwood District, in those days, they were black communities. They were inclusive. You could live in the black community. Everything that you needed was there, whether it was a lawyer, doctor, dentist, department store, grocery store, whatever. The Greenwood District was one of the richest districts in Oklahoma, white or black. The average income there was unbelievable, because all these businesses were located there, plus there was a university, Langston University. Blacks couldn't go to white universities, but they'd crowd—the black universities were full of them. They produced unbelievable people, teachers, black teachers. Almost all my teachers came, when I was in grade school, came from Langston. Like I've told you before, when I came out here, I came out here thinking I was this poor, dumb black who was incapable of absorbing the knowledge of white people. I came out here, found out that I went to this little school and these teachers were so successful that I was two years ahead of the children I was going to school with. What he was talking about, about inventions, one of the things that has escaped everybody, even blacks, primarily, have you heard the term that necessity is the mother of invention? This was absolutely true. Most inventions during that period of time was created by blacks, because it was a matter of, "I have to ride this wagon all day long. Carry loads and loads of cotton. This thing is wearing my bottom out." So we developed the springs for the wagon, to ease my butt. All of these inventions, but who gets credit for the inventions? The master, because the black slave was what? Was *property*. Whatever he produced, he didn't produce it. I produced it, because I'm his master. And on through history, like railroads. You start reading up on inventions, railroad inventions. A hundred and twenty-something railroad inventions, black, out of necessity.

04-00:19:22

Gaines:

When you mentioned railroad, the man that invented the wigwag that goes up and down, his name is Richard Spikes I worked for him doing my apprenticeship as a barber. I worked for him starting in 1945. He still had a shop in Stockton. His hair was about that long. He'd go back there and play

his violin. He has a bunch of inventions. Now, you take the Big Ben. The Big Ben clock that is in England, you know who put that there, don't you? Benjamin Banneker. Benjamin Banneker. *Big Ben*. He's the one that designed that clock. He also set up the laying out of Washington, D.C. You've read about Benjamin Banneker. If you don't have the money today to produce these things, you're in the same shape. Just like right now. I have a book that I got 800 pages of real book. I'm going to publish it soon, because it's telling the straight facts.

I have a grandson. Excuse me for skipping around. I have a grandson who's a four-point student. Real smart. When he talks to me and I talk to him, just like my dad talked to me—I want you to read something, and I'll let you read it in a few minutes—I asked him one day, I said, "Hey"—he's fourteen years old—I said, "What about the Pyramids? Who build the Pyramids?" He says, "Pop, slaves built the Pyramids." I say, "Oh yeah?" I say, "If the slaves built the Pyramids, how did they get these stones up there?" He said, "Slaves put them up there." I said, "Okay, but the stones that's in the Pyramids, the stones in some of the Pyramids, are not from that area. They're from 300 miles up the Nile. Tell me, how did they get them down there?" He shook his head. He said, "Pop, I don't know." I said, "Then tell me about the Stonehenge." He said, "I really don't know." I said, "That's in your time." He said, "Well, the book says that they don't know how they put"—then I say, "Just tell me about the Terracotta soldiers in China." He says to me, he's been real red, he says, "Well, I don't know." I said, "You see? Here's a fallacy in your Bible. The Bible tells you that we're 7,000 years old. Explain to me about the Terracotta soldiers. Or explain to me about the Stonehenge." You see, here's what happens. History has been distorted.

04-00:22:06

Drew: Of course.

04-00:22:09

Gaines: When Hannibal crossed the Alps and went into Italy, come out of the boot, he had seventy-five elephants and 25,000 soldiers. He saw all these people living in caves with long blonde hair. They thought they were rats or something. I'm not kidding.

04-00:22:28

Drew: It's true.

04-00:22:29

Gaines: The truth. Because that's how they lived, because it was cold. Then when the soldiers captured Rome, they were there for twenty-five years. The soldiers were black. There's a lot of Italians that have kinky hair and everything.

04-00:22:45

Drew: Sicilians especially.

04-00:22:50

Redman:

This is a big question now. How does the Great Depression affect the black community? It seems like some of the advances that were made in the 1920s in terms of the black community, that the possibility of even making a Tulsa where there is a black Wall Street, some of that sort of gets rolled back by the Great Depression in some sense, because blacks are the first people to lose jobs and lose economic possibility. But that's sort of my assumption. Can you tell me about how blacks were affected by the Great Depression?

04-00:23:28

Drew:

I think blacks were affected differently than white folks. Number one, you had black communities. A black community is totally different from a white community in those days. A black community, everybody within a black community knew everyone. It was like a family. If a person on the street got a hundred-pound bag of potatoes, everybody around there had potatoes. Even the one black policeman that was in that community, he was—when you said your policeman is your friend, he was your friend. He would see your two kids standing on the street corner, and he would—“Boys, what are you doing standing here? Does your daddy know you stand out here on this corner?” “No, sir.” “You get home and tell your daddy I sent you home. I'm going to stop by and let him know that you've been hanging out on these street corners.” That was the relationship within the black community. You read about all the poverty in the white community. Well, we already had poverty in the black community. There wasn't too much more you could do to us. In fact, there were some gains made in some areas as far as blacks who had never been able to work at all. They got shovel jobs, digging holes and this type of thing.

One of the big myths between blacks and whites—like he was talking about, *wearing the mask*. Blacks have always been able to do more with less. I guess we always will. Even if we talk about education, school. When that black person went to school, it wasn't to get an education for himself. He was obligated to the entire community. Even today, in the South, there are kids that live in poor neighborhoods, very intelligent black kids, no way he's going to go to college with the fees and this type of thing. The people get together in that community. The churches and the lodges and all these people get together. They get together and raise money to keep this one boy in school—or girl—and when they're graduated, they're obligated to come back to that community and share the knowledge and try to improve that community. But then you've got this large, large volume, too large a volume, of just so-called black elite. They've done the same thing that a white person would do. If a white person lived in this community, he got a million dollars, hey, I would expect him two weeks from now, expect they'd end up some other people. Black people do the same thing now. It's constant—

04-00:26:14

Gaines:

So-called bourgeois.

04-00:26:15

Drew:

This constant knocking of, “Those blacks don’t want to get ahead. They don’t want to do anything.” Who do we hear it from? From Bill Cosby, of all people.

04-00:26:25

Gaines:

People forget one thing, and I tell them this every day. Look at that. Here you have a president of the United States of America. Got a college degree, cum laude and all this other jazz that goes with it, his wife, Michelle, but he’s still considered, as I, an uppity nigger. I’m telling it like it is. When you come back to the Depression, I’m with the original *Grapes of Wrath*. These are facts. When the Depression hit, we were very good livers. We had 160 acres of land and everything in Oklahoma, and around us was nothing but blacks and a few German people, and whites that own land. You understand? When Depression hit in 1928, I was eight years old. First time I’ve seen my daddy cry, when we started losing everything we had. But my daddy didn’t lose his farm because it was paid for and everything. The Depression lasted from 1928, clear up until 1941.

04-00:27:40

Redman:

That’s a long time.

04-00:27:41

Gaines:

Hitler eliminated the Depression when he marched into Germany. Now, there’s another thing that I’ll mention here. I mentioned it before. We were supposedly being freed, African Americans, slaves, in 1865. Eighteen and sixty-five, we were just like the Mexicans here now. We were immigrants.

04-00:28:05

Drew:

We were worse.

04-00:28:06

Gaines:

We were immigrants *and* we were slaves. We didn’t become citizens until 1869. Put these in your head. We were not citizens. We were here working.

04-00:28:21

Drew:

We were property.

04-00:28:22

Gaines:

We were property. After that comes the worst thing, as bad as slavery. *Peonage*.

04-00:28:29

Redman:

Jim Crow.

04-00:28:30

Gaines:

Peonage and Jim Crow. Peonage is worse than Jim Crow.

04-00:28:34

Drew:

Slavery.

04-00:28:35

Gaines:

It's slavery, taking you and putting you in jail, then send us a nigger to Mr. Bubba's farm, and you work there for life. A life sentence. One of the great senators right now in Alabama made his money off of slavery in the steel mills in Alabama. He had peonage going. Read your books and find out who he is. I'm not going to tell you. Let you do the research and find it. He's up there right now. Look, here's what happened to me. I was sixteen, seventeen years old. I was going to school in Langston High School. I was born in the black town. The high school was on a college campus. Now, here's the law in Oklahoma. Oklahoma has one good law, its educational law. If you live in Oklahoma, you're going to go to school until you finish eighth grade, or the truant officer is going to come around in small towns and made you go. Got a hold of your parents and made you go to a school. I went to school on a college campus. When I got ready to graduate, four months to graduate, my brother came to California. We had a hard time. People do not know what it is to be poor. I mean, really poor.

04-00:30:05

Drew:

Not poor. Way back, they were called *po'*. You were *po'*.

04-00:30:09

Gaines:

I know what it is to be poor. My brother had been in California, working. He had come out here in the thirties. This is 1937. I got on a freight train in Guthrie, Oklahoma and rode down to change trains near Parker City. When we got on the train coming out here—I've seen this. People on freight train, on boxcars, flatbeds. Stacked with people. Lawyers, doctors, and everybody else, white and black, no discrimination, on this one flatcar. This white guy was on there with his wife and three kids, with a goat to feed them milk. This is how hard times work. My sister-in-law, my brother's wife, had graduated from Langston. She was a schoolteacher. She got on the train with us. All of us on the train coming to California. I tell people this. California, to the black man and poor whites, is what God promised Moses. This is the promise land. You read *The Grapes of Wrath*?

04-00:31:11

Drew:

Up to a point.

04-00:31:12

Redman:

Up to a point!

04-00:31:13

Gaines:

At that time, this was the promise land, because—

04-00:31:16

Drew:

Yeah, it was promise, but we find out the promise wasn't kept.

04-00:31:20

Gaines:

But it was a haven from what we were going through, even for the whites. Just look at *The Grapes of Wrath*, what happened. They tell it in the movie, but they don't really tell you the whole story.

04-00:31:34
Redman:

There's something that I was a little surprised that—sorry. Do you have one more thought on the Depression that you want to add?

04-00:31:41
Drew:

No, the only point I was going to make is that there's been a continuation of the Depression. Actually, before the Depression, right up through the day. Right now, we talk about the recession and compare it to the Great Depression. These things seem to go in cycles. We get the same thing over and over again. The only difference is the people get dumber and dumber. Not smarter. They get dumber. They roll with it. Well, what can I do? What can I do? I've been unemployed for two years. I've joined unemployment. Now the Democrats want to renew the unemployment bill. The Republicans say no. I'm going along with the Republicans. I don't get care if I've got a couple kids and a wife. I agree. They shouldn't renew that thing. They shouldn't give us food stamps. If they didn't give us food stamps—I'm quoting a program—television. These interviews that was given on television. This is a gentleman with a wife, two kids. He lost his home. He's renting. He's so poor and bad off that he's sitting there trying to figure out how he's going to pay his rent. He's \$250 short. His rent is due the next day. He's going to go use his telephone, and he's not sure his telephone is still on. His gas bill is due the next day. He's sitting there and he's—"I'll call my mother." He called his mother and she said, "I don't have any money." He doesn't know anybody with any money. I'm opposed to all these giveaways and things. If they didn't exist, we would find a way to take care of our own. I'm saying, this man is stupid. I say stupid. I can feel that way about me. If I want to sacrifice myself, fine. I have the right to do that. But do I have a right to sacrifice my family? I don't give a damn what it takes to feed my family or to house my family, to take care of my family. I'm going to do it. If you want me to bend down and kiss your boots to take it, so what, your boots have just been kissed. But my family. Anything that's going to be detrimental to my family, and I agree to it, there's something wrong with me, and that's why we have a nation of people like that.

04-00:34:13
Gaines:

But now, what Othro is talking about gets to be very deep here in this political situation that's going on today, because why is it the rich people can control the majority of poor and lower-middle-class whites? Why can't they see through what's going on? Just like in the Depression. During the Depression, Roosevelt saved this country from having a civil war, which would have eliminated the rich people so far. It's as close as we have come to socialized everything. Roosevelt stopped it. Then when Hitler come along, then they got back on to defeat the rich people, and they started producing, and it was going back into the same dilemma that we're in.

- 04-00:35:06
Redman: Did the war, in that way, mask a lot of what was happening and the reality of it? The fact that a lot of people made a lot of money off of the Second World—
- 04-00:35:17
Drew: Oh, worse.
- 04-00:35:19
Gaines: The war changed the dynamics of this whole country. The South moved out, coming to Detroit and everything. Kaiser went up in Washington. Shipyards and everything. They brought a lot of blacks with them. These blacks, they were very well to learn and everything, but didn't have the proper education. Now that they've got the proper education now, there's more discrimination now than there was, just as much as it is—
- 04-00:35:49
Drew: There's more.
- 04-00:35:52
Gaines: I was looking at some of the things that this gentleman and I did here during the Civil Rights Movement. We stood on the corner. You couldn't work at Safeways. You couldn't work at the banks.
- 04-00:36:03
Drew: You couldn't work anywhere.
- 04-00:36:04
Gaines: Couldn't work anywhere.
- 04-00:36:05
Drew: Anywhere. Just yard work, basically.
- 04-00:36:12
Gaines: Here's one of the things that I have here, where Othro and I have stood on the corner, right there.
- 04-00:36:17
Redman: That's great. Okay. When is this article from? Do you—
- 04-00:36:21
Gaines: This is in in the forties. Let me see what date is on here. This was in the 1940s through the fifties and sixties. We were working in this capacity.
- 04-00:36:34
Drew: Actually, we started before the Civil Rights Movement officially.
- 04-00:36:38
Gaines: Riot here starts in California. In the same way it was in Berkeley or in El Cerrito and so forth, and Richmond and all those places. But here's what I cannot understand, getting through my small cranium. Why is it Europeans

that are in charge hate the people that built this country, and hate the people that own this country? They treat the Indians just as bad or worse than we're treated. Why? Why is it in their large cranium or whatever they have, why is it this seed is planted down into the young kids now that blacks and Indians and these people are not as good as we are? What is wrong with them?

04-00:37:28

Redman:

There was something that came up that I asked about that didn't seem to resonate with either of you gentlemen, and I want to ask about it now, related to the Second World War, and see why maybe that didn't—maybe it's a nonstarter. We can talk about something else. The *Pittsburgh Courier* started something called the Double Victory Campaign during World War Two. This concept of, why would we go off and fight fascism abroad if we don't have civil rights at home?

04-00:37:55

Drew:

Don't have freedom at home. Just plain freedom.

04-00:37:58

Redman:

Just plain freedom, right.

04-00:37:59

Drew:

That's not civil rights, it's plain freedom.

04-00:38:00

Redman:

Right. At the same time, there are a couple of other names that I just want to throw out there to see if these resonate. Both A. Philip Randolph, of course, became—

04-00:38:09

Drew:

One of the greatest men of all time.

04-00:38:10

Redman:

He becomes a major political leader in the black community. Then on the arts side, I want to point out Marian Anderson and her big concert at the Lincoln Memorial in 1939. Those are three sort of big, key things that I see. Then also, too, the Tuskegee Airmen, as becoming a big symbol for the African—

04-00:38:32

Drew:

He can tell you about the Tuskegee Airmen. He has friends that were—

04-00:38:36

Gaines:

My classmate was one. But look, when you start talking about World War Two—I was drafted in Sacramento, California. I was twenty-two years old. I had stayed on the Army before in 1941, early forty-two. When I was drafted, we all went to the reception center and everything. When I got to the reception center, of course I knew what segregation was. A lot of guys are—we call them black Portuguese. Some guys from—

04-00:39:10

Drew: Explain to him that, during that time, all military were segregated.

04-00:39:14

Gaines: Oh, yeah. All military. But some Portuguese, some of my friends, my same color, they came up from Cape Verde Islands. I speak a little Portuguese. Some of them, they didn't know what they were. But anyway, when we got to the reception center, then we went to Monterey. They say, "Okay, you fellows, you Negros, you get on over here. We're sending some of you to Texas." I was going to Texas. Now, we're on the train. We're riding along. When we got to Arizona, here comes the conductor. Say, "Okay, you Negros have to go back here in the back, because we're getting ready to go through Texas."

04-00:39:51

Drew: Same thing in California.

04-00:39:53

Gaines: Here I am, American soldiers going to—of course, I understood this. When we got down there to Texas, we had all white officers. There was 15,000 of us in the cavalry. Most of those guys were second lieutenants. They didn't know anything about anything, you know what I mean? Most of them were racist, because they didn't understand African Americans.

04-00:40:22

Drew: The other reason they were racist, too, there was such a stigma attached to being black that if a white person was forced to affiliate with a black, if you were an officer and they assign you to a black outfit, you hated blacks. Plus, number one, they tell you, "You're never going anywhere. You're never going to progress. You're stuck with this group of people, inferior people. Why do we send you there? Because we figure you're an inferior officer." You were talking about World War Two. For a short time there during World War Two, whites were so interested in this American thing about victory, winning the war, they sort of pushed us to the side. It was okay for us working the shipyards and things like that, because as soon as this is all over with, blacks will be sent back to where they belong, back to their proper place. Along with that, the fact that the military was segregated. You brought up Randolph. People give Truman all this credit about integrating the military, but the reason that the military was integrated was Randolph. Randolph had Truman's ear. He had the fear of God in Truman. He'd already arranged to bring over 300,000 blacks to Washington. He explained to Truman, "If you don't desegregate the military, we'll have a million blacks out here permanently this summer." Truman got the message. I disagree with him a little bit when it comes to Roosevelt. To me, Roosevelt was one of the lousiest presidents we ever had.

04-00:42:23

Gaines: Racially, he was.

04-00:42:25

Drew:

He was, because they gave him carte blanche because of the situation. “President Roosevelt, you can do anything you want.” What did he do for the blacks? Nothing. He could have, with just a stroke of his pen. He was in a position, stroke of his pen, he could have—

04-00:42:41

Redman:

Done much more.

04-00:42:42

Drew:

He could have desegregated the military. He could have done everything. He could have done enormous things. He did nothing. But that nothing that he didn't do was better than the ones that had come before. [laughter]

04-00:42:55

Gaines:

It's good to disagree. He's right. But I'll note one thing about Roosevelt. He did this for the country when he established the NRA, the National Recovery Act. Then he formed the WPA. That's the Works Progress Administration. There was no segregation in the Works Progress Administration, because he put black people on the WPA, because everybody was starving. Then he had the NYA, National Youth Association. Then he did the CCC. He saved this country from going communist or socialist. That's what he did. The same thing is going to happen now. Why you say they're games? Here's why I'm saying it. Right now, right now, today, over 40 percent of young black men are being arrested and put in jail. Fifty-two percent of them go to jail. Then, know what they do? They take away—

04-00:43:54

Drew:

Their citizenship.

04-00:43:56

Gaines:

They take away their citizenship. They take away everything. Here's what the drug program is producing. It's kept a secret now, but it's going to happen. The penalty for crack cocaine is different than the penalty for—

04-00:44:11

Drew:

For cocaine, regular white cocaine.

04-00:44:13

Gaines:

They have a new drug out now that's affecting poor whites, and they don't know what to do about it. It's a feeling of what's called—

04-00:44:24

Redman:

Meth?

04-00:44:25

Gaines:

Meth.

04-00:44:25

Redman:

Methamphetamines? Yeah.

04-00:44:26
Drew: Also, that other—oxycontin.

04-00:44:29
Redman: Oxy, sure.

04-00:44:31
Gaines: This is what's happening. Here's what's happening. The third largest business in the United States, you know what it is today?

04-00:44:39
Drew: Prisons.

04-00:44:40
Gaines: The justice system.

04-00:44:41
Drew: Prisons.

04-00:44:42
Gaines: We're bringing back 35,000 people now, back from Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, that we were farming out to prisons. Who's building the prisons? The same guy that built over in Iraq. [Dick Cheney] The same company is building—

04-00:45:04
Redman: Halliburton?

04-00:45:04
Gaines: Halliburton is building. You understand? Look, here's the problem. Here's the whole problem. The people that are supposed to have the brains, they don't talk about this, because he makes \$400 million a year.

04-00:45:22
Drew: He's a college dropout anyway.

04-00:45:24
Gaines: They are not going to tell the poor whites what's happening to them. When they wake up, if they ever wake up, it might be too late.

04-00:45:36
Redman: Let me ask two more questions on this tape. We talked a little bit last time about Port Chicago. Go ahead.

04-00:45:45
Drew: One thing I think is extremely important to bring up, *extremely important*, is that, during World War Two, [and] prior to World War Two, all we read about in history books, about some black person at American Revolution here and there, but [really] prior to that, if you were in the military, it was believed that if you were black, *you were incapable of fighting*. They didn't want you to fight. We don't want you to die for our country. You can drive trucks, you

can do all these things, but you can't go on the front line and fight. We don't want you on the front line fighting. In Korea, they changed their mind, because these guys were so proficient. But before that, they couldn't. Like I said, even after World War Two—we talk about the GI Bill and all the rights that came along with this type of thing, like housing industry got started after World War Two, primarily because part of the GI Bill was to provide these guys with houses. They can buy houses. Before, they couldn't. But then only 3 percent of those houses went to blacks. The soldiers fought, they came back, and they couldn't [actually] buy houses.

04-00:46:55

Redman: Why was that?

04-00:46:58

Drew: Because of the system. Everything was white. The government was all white. There were no blacks in the government or anything. Whatever the whites said, it went. It was just like after the Civil War. The North won the war. What did the Confederacy do? They walked back into Washington like nothing ever happened and started demanding things. They had no contrition. No "We apologize for what we did, for the people that's killed."

04-00:47:27

Gaines: Is your [camera] still on?

04-00:47:28

Redman: Yes. Do you want me to pause it or—

04-00:47:30

Gaines: No, no. I wanted you to take a picture of this.

04-00:47:33

Drew: I'll just keep talking while you're doing that. This has been an ongoing thing, but like you were talking about, today, the difference today than, say, World War Two, World War Two it was always felt that once the war is over, we can always return the coloreds back to where they came from. Today, the situation has gotten a little bit different. The genie is out of the bottle. We can hate them. We can do bad things. We can try to pass the laws to try to put the genie back in the bottle, but it's not going back in the bottle again. Now we have to try to deal with it. We deal with it in a totally different way. We're back almost like the segregation beforehand. We've got the South Side of Chicago. We've got parts of New York. Blacks are contained in certain areas. Then you say, "Well, if they would get an education." But how do you get an education when you've got—not only discriminate by black, by race, we discriminate by zip code.

04-00:48:46

Gaines: That's it.

04-00:48:47

Drew:

You put all the blacks in one area, and then the board of education can say, “Well, we’re going to send”—I’ll give you a good example. Right here, Edison High School. Edison High School, about seven, eight years ago, had the lowest graduating rate of any high school in the country. Not California. In the country. They only graduated 27 percent of their students. Twenty-seven percent. The gentleman, Mr. Washington, Mr. Washington and I grew up together. He was a good friend of mine. I went over to his office to find out what’s going on. It pissed me off when I read these figures. I went over and he was sitting there with his hand like this, shaking his head. I said, “What’s the matter?” He said, “I know what you come in here for.” I said, “What for?” “About the graduation figure.” I said, “How could you let that be?” He said, “I have no control of it.” He says, “You know what type of teachers that the board of education is sending me?” I said no. “First-year teachers, substitute teachers, and teachers that other schools don’t want. That’s the basis of the teachers that I have here.” He said, “There’s nothing for them to learn. They’re talking about dropping out of school.” I can understand that. What amazes me is that a child would get a high school education if he’s not planning to go to college. High schools are prep schools. They’re preparatory schools. Prepare you to go to college. That’s all. You think of all the things that you learned in high school if you didn’t go to college. After seventh or eighth grade, what did you learn that could help you in the world once you were out there? Nothing.

04-00:50:34

Gaines:

I want to continue on education.

04-00:50:40

Redman:

This is a T-shirt for a family reunion.

04-00:50:46

Gaines:

Family reunion. What does it say?

04-00:50:48

Redman:

2005. “Still growing.”

04-00:50:50

Gaines:

This was in 2005, but this is 138 years.

04-00:50:54

Redman:

“Educational, business, and vocational.”

04-00:50:57

Gaines:

There you have it. I have twenty-something grandchildren, great grandchildren. Five generations. This is what I teach. Academic, vocational, or business. I’ve never worked for anyone in my life. I work for myself. All of us work by ourselves. There’s thirty-something barbers in our family. Some of those barbers are now lawyers, some are dentists, some are doctors, and so forth, because [they work for themselves]. Here’s something. When all my kids were born, I took a California gift to minors. Most people never heard of

it. I take out a scholarship for them when they're born. They put it in the bank. They can't take any of the money out until they go to college. During the time when [Jimmy] Carter was president, I had some children born. When interest rates were 17 percent—you understand?—my kids go to college. None of them have got a student loan. They paid for it and they worked. They worked every day. My daughter worked for a clothing store. The other daughter worked for Old Navy. My sons work in group home. They helped to put themselves through school. Now, here's the point about education. If you get an education, you're ready to compete, but you can't compete with the money. That's why I bring in the business part. Let them go in business. I go in business for myself. Here's the point. When people get millions and millions of dollars to invest, they want to buy four, five different cars and all this other bullshit, when they should try to help to pick somebody else up, to give scholarships to these unfortunate blacks. There's a lot of unfortunate blacks that really can understand and have a high IQ, but when they go to classes, they're not taught in the school.

My wife is a schoolteacher. She said this guy—she got a student that comes and had thirty-five kids in the class. This is why the guy sent his kid over there and says, "Look, I have too many kids. This is a real bright kid." Says, "He's real smart. You'd be happy to have him." This is when they had the XYZ system, which you may not know about. Do you know what XYZ is? A kid comes into the first grade. He's put in the category of X group or Y group or Z group. Now, the teacher has to teach three different groups in that class. She has thirty-five students in there. You understand? How is she going to teach that many kids when we wanted to reduce it? So anyway, when she got the kids, she looked at his {queue?}. The kid was in the fourth grade. He couldn't read on a first-grade level. Now we're passing students out today, that's finishing high school, that can't read on a third-grade level.

04-00:53:56

Drew: Which has produced thirty million adult illiterates in this country.

Begin Audio File 5 drew_othro_and_gaines_warren_g_05_07-17-12_stereo.mp3

05-00:00:04

Redman: Today is Tuesday, July 17, [2012] and this is my second tape today with Mr. Drew and Mr. Gaines. When we left off, there was one topic that came up that seems to be important for African American[s]. Especially, at the time, servicemen, during World War Two, and something that was both known and unknown at the same time, which is the explosion that takes place at Port Chicago The legacy of that, of course, with the lawsuits that follow in terms of the mutiny trial and Thurgood Marshall's position. But at the same time, we talked about Port Chicago and it was [largely] covered up. It was more or less a military [or] government secret. To what extent do you think that [incident] resonated or didn't resonate with African American community? That here

were these African American sailors who were subjected to unsafe working conditions, and this tragedy took place?

05-00:01:07

Drew:

It was such a cover-up that whites didn't know what was going on. Like I told you, I went to Port Chicago. It was off-limit. You could come up there, but you couldn't go in, you couldn't see anything. The press couldn't go in. That's why you saw almost no pictures of it. The few pictures you saw was usually shot from long range or something else. It's like—what's that place over in New Mexico?

05-00:01:36

Redman:

Roswell? [Los Alamos?]

05-00:01:37

Drew:

[1951]. Just like that. If the government decides to cover up something, they can cover it up, absolutely, completely, and you'll never, ever know about it. That's the way Port Chicago is. How did it affect the black community? The black community heard rumors. Rumors, that's all. No proof, just word of rumors. Maybe it happened, maybe it didn't. If you lived in New York or Pennsylvania or Texas or some place, did it really happen? People now are questioning, did a man really go to the moon? Of course, I lived in California, and they said that this rocket took off in Florida. Did it really go there? Other people have questioned, did 9/11 really happen? Did they really blow up those buildings? No, the government probably did it. When you can't get the facts, you create whatever you want. Port Chicago - the same thing. Almost all the information that we received about Port Chicago was what people surmised to have happened. They believe this happened. This could have happened. Well, maybe those blacks were—the blacks get uppity. Maybe they just didn't want to do their work. Maybe they were lazy and shiftless and didn't want to go up there and unload those ships. In fact, maybe they're responsible for blowing up the darned thing in the first place. Here we are in the middle of a war, and they're going to blow up the ship with all this ammunition and everything. It didn't happen, but—

05-00:03:14

Redman:

That's the way the conversations—

05-00:03:16

Drew:

If I tell you this, you tell your friend that, somebody else tells somebody else, their friend, now they can do it more effective, using the internet.

05-00:03:26

Redman:

Mr. Gaines, I wonder [if] can you speak to that? Port Chicago.

05-00:03:28

Gaines:

Oh, yeah. I remember the story very well. It's all cover-up, the old shell game. You caused it, but we're going to settle this thing right now, and they never get to the bottom of it. They really don't know what really happened in Port

Chicago. In fact, they really didn't even—they didn't care, because most of the guys that got killed were black. It didn't make—

05-00:03:51

Drew: Almost all of them were black.

05-00:03:53

Gaines: Most all of them black. They didn't even care.

05-00:03:54

Drew: We got rid of part of our problem.

05-00:03:56

Gaines: The first thing you have to understand is, when you've been in a segregated army, which I was in the segregated army, it is terrible. When you face segregation all your life, then you really look back and see how much bias was against you, that you couldn't really get ahead. You begin to realize what's going on now. Take Oakland, for instance. At one time, Oakland had more businesses, black-owned businesses, than Atlanta, Georgia. Oakland today doesn't have very many black businesses. What happened to the banks in Oakland? What happened to all the loan companies in Oakland? Here's what happened. There's discrimination in jobs today. I'm driving down here today. On the highway, I'm looking. About fifteen people working there. Not a single black. I live right down from this company, Enviroplex. They build schools to be sold to the counties and other counties. Government work. Not a single black, and 200 people working there. And they wonder why blacks are in the penitentiary. Just like this kid said in Fresno the other day, white kid, he said, "I will murder now, and I'm not going to sleep under the bridge. I'm not going to go hungry." Now, why did he say that? He was taken, when he was a child, and put in a foster home that didn't teach him manners. They didn't teach him how to get an education. They didn't teach him how to make a living. He stayed there until he was twenty years old. Nineteen or twenty. What's he going to do? He can't get a job. He's not qualified. He can't read. Naturally, he's not going to sleep under the bridge. How many foster kids do you have in this country? A lot of them. You know what the boys do? The boys go to selling dope or robbing or everything.

05-00:06:09

Drew: End up in jail.

05-00:06:10

Gaines: End up in jail. But that's where they want them, in jail, because they make—

05-00:06:13

Drew: It's profitable.

05-00:06:15

Gaines: They make \$41,000 a year off of him.

05-00:06:19

Redman:

You brought up jobs and hiring, and then we've also brought up the lawsuits. Especially in Port Chicago, the mutiny trial, Thurgood Marshall. We're talking about a couple of different things that would become really important for the Civil Rights Movement as it took shape after World War Two. I'm thinking in particular about the NAACP and their strategy that they took, but then also CORE, the Congress of Racial Equality, and organizations like SNCC, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. The people who were talking about civil, nonviolent disobedience versus the legal strategy. Can you guys talk a little bit about, after World War Two, starting to learn about some of these organizations and movements?

05-00:07:12

Gaines:

I can tell you about the NAACP. I joined the NAACP when I was nineteen years old, in Sacramento. Reverend Muse was the president. I have been a member of the NAACP. This is where I worked. I worked for thirty-five years with the NAACP. I got guys together to picket Safeway, picket PG&E, picket the motor vehicle. They didn't hire any blacks. Here's one thing that happened when I was chairman of the NAACP labor committee. They said, "We're going to hire. Send me someone down here in the motor vehicle. If they can pass the test, we'll put them to work."

05-00:07:56

Drew:

I think we should explain the NAACP in Stockton compared to NAACP in the rest of the country.

05-00:08:02

Redman:

That would be great, yes.

05-00:08:06

Drew:

The first time I joined the NAACP was in Stockton. We were a very aggressive organization. When I left Stockton, when I was forced to leave Stockton, and I moved to the Bay Area—

05-00:08:21

Gaines:

He was the first black librarian here.

05-00:08:23

Drew:

I joined the NAACP over there. It was like a social club. After about two months, I couldn't deal with it, and I couldn't make them understand—I was trying to explain to them what we were doing in Stockton. It was like, oh, shoot, they're not really members of the NAACP. It was two totally different worlds, the NAACP here and the NAACP across the country. I read about the other parts of the country. They were more akin to what was happening in the Bay Area. Mostly legal. Legal, legal, legal. Compared to other—I'm sorry, brother Gaines, go ahead.

05-00:09:03

Gaines:

No, no.

05-00:09:05

Redman:

It would be a mistake, then, as a student of history, if I were looking at this and you see the NAACP does this, or the NAACP does that, that doesn't reflect all of the chapters, in your experience.

05-00:09:21

Drew:

That's the crux of the entire matter. You can't pigeonhole blacks. Like you say, you've got all these different organizations that have different goals, different aims. You've got Malcolm X and all these different groups. Their thinking is different. Initially, when Martin Luther King was busy, it was almost you're either with Martin Luther King or you were with Malcolm X. Which, for my past, I was almost with Malcolm X, although I appreciated what Martin Luther King was doing.

05-00:09:55

Gaines:

I appreciate it [the different approaches], too. See, I'm different. I was with the NAACP ever since I was a kid. Still belong to it. But there's certain things that I would not take, you understand? I was telling you about this gentleman here that wanted to send his daughters back—Anderson was going to send his daughter back into slavery. I was talking to my daughter, and I let her read the article. It was in the paper. I said, "This slave master was asking—this guy was freed—to send him and his two daughters back there to slavery." So I asked them, I said, "Now, what would you think about me, as your father, and I sent you back there?" I said, "If a bastard come to me and tell me to bring my daughters out here, I want to have sex, I'd blow his fucking brains out." Excuse me. You understand?

05-00:10:54

Drew:

He'll edit it.

05-00:10:55

Gaines:

But look. She said to me, she said, "Daddy, if you didn't do it, I wouldn't respect you." You understand? This is the kind of [feeling]. I was in the NAACP. I did all of this work. We're going to have a march that all of these dignitaries and teachers and everything else, we were going to march from the Stockton Hotel down to University of Pacific. I'm one of the guys that—Othro and I don't buy where you can't work and all this. They asked me, said, "Brother Gaines, you going to march?" I said, "No. You know I don't march." They says, "Why can't you march with us?" I said, "I told you, I can't march. I just don't march." Because my rearing didn't teach me to march. My father never taught me to let somebody humiliate me and do everything to me and I don't fight back. I was taught that. This is the way I am. So they kept on hounding me and said, "Gaines, you have to march." I said, "You asked for this." I said, "If a son of a bitch spit in my face, I'm going to stick my fucking knife in his belly." You understand? This is what's happened. What happened to us is this. When you brought him over here and took all the fight out of a black man, you could do anything you wanted to with him. If he ever fought back, it would be a different thing. You understand? Everything would fight

back except for rabbit. You go and run rabbit. You run off and leave his kids in the house. Son of a bitch come and—excuse me—if a son of a gun come in my house, I'm going to fight until I die to protect my family.

05-00:12:30

Drew:

On that line, white people do not understand blacks. Things that happened—you, even you, you're sitting there. I can see, the way you look sometime, that your mind just can't digest these things. It didn't happen to white people. It's going to be that way for probably another hundred years. They were saying blacks should have more conversation. We should have more conversation. All these things are right. But still, it's going to bring about some understanding. It's not going to bring about complete understanding. My generation would have to die out. Like I tell young people, the greatest thing that could happen to them is all old people like me go somewhere and just lie down and die. That's the greatest thing that could happen to young people, because young people have a better chance of progressing. They won't have all of us old people indoctrinating them with all kinds of ridiculous stuff. Some of the things that I say, and I consider myself a person that's fair—

05-00:13:39

Gaines:

This is the best Father's Day gift that I ever had from one of my sons. I want you to read it.

05-00:13:47

Redman:

You showed me this. Yes.

05-00:13:50

Gaines:

I want you to read it. Read it loud so it will be on there.

05-00:13:53

Redman:

This is—all right.

05-00:13:54

Gaines:

From my son.

05-00:13:56

Drew:

There was an author, (John Howard) Griffin. His name was Griffin. He wrote a book entitled *Black Like Me (1961)*. Heard of it or read it? What Griffin did, he was so interested in what was happening with black people. This book was written about—when was it? About the fifties?

05-00:14:13

Gaines:

Oh, yes, it was back early sixties.

05-00:14:17

Drew:

But anyway, he decided, as an experiment, that he was going to pass himself off as a black person. He got these berries and dyed his skin dark, and his head and everything, and he went out to pass himself off as a black person. He tried this experiment for six months. Two weeks later—the man almost ended up in a mental institution. In his book, he concludes, he says, "I can't understand

how colored people can even live in this country.” People just thinking that he was black, he had been humiliated so much over that period of time and everything that he just couldn’t—his mind couldn’t digest it. Couldn’t deal with it at all. But we do this, what we deal with every day.

05-00:15:10

Redman:

I want to read this, and then I want to get back to a question about civil rights activism in just a moment. This is from your son.

05-00:15:18

Gaines:

My son.

05-00:15:20

Redman:

“From son to father, of all the wisdom you have bestowed upon me, I carry it wherever I go. Now that I reflect on the journey I have taken and the voices of conscious that guided me all the way, it has been yours. I see now the importance of true fatherhood. The burden of worry, the constant nagging of wanting more for your child. You have groomed me well. More importantly, you’ve made me a good person. With all the craziness in the world, you’ve protected me. I shall, for my son, only offer the same and encourage him the legacy that you have created. Education is the key to success, and no matter it be through vocation or traditional means. Thank you, from father to father. Love, Ali Gaines.”

05-00:16:03

Gaines:

The guys wanted to know who wrote this. I’ve told them, I’ve said, “My son wrote this.” But this was written by my dad. In his mind, this is what he wanted for all his kids. This is why I speak education, be it academic, vocational, or business. You’ve got to have that to get along. And respect. You see, respect. My kids give me ties. They give me golf clubs. This is what is passed down. The legacy is passed down 138 years from this, my father and my mother. But see, we’ve gotten away from that. We don’t teach our kids this. You don’t have to beat them. I don’t whip my kids. Teach them.

05-00:16:54

Drew:

One of the worst things that happened to blacks was desegregation. When desegregation came, [now] can do all these type of things, [but] prior to that time, Langston University, all-black university, you know what the graduation rate was for that university over ten years? The highest in the history of this country. Ninety-eight percent. Ninety-eight percent graduation. Your mind can’t even deal with it. Because the people that went there felt so obligated. If you flunked out and you couldn’t complete it, your best bet was to pack up and go someplace else, go down to South America someplace. This went down the line. There were a few things that we were allowed, and a few things that we did well. It was the same thing with sports. They said, “Why are black athletes so good?” They had to be. Like Joe Lewis. Joe Lewis had to be good. During those days, if you were, say, a boxer, you were a black boxer, you lost a battle, a fight, to a white person, you didn’t come back home. You may as

well have somebody ship your bags to wherever you were going. Because say you went back home. It would be such a humiliating thing. There wasn't many things that we had. Most of all, I think, our black community, that was our lynchpin. That was our taproot. We drew all our strength from—the saying that it takes a community to raise a child, we believed that. Every child in that community was subject to whatever any grownup would tell. A grownup would never tell you wrong.

05-00:18:42
Redman:

There's one question I want to get at. When you were involved with the NAACP and with other civil rights organizations throughout California, one of the things that a lot of historians have talked about recently is, this is a different time, [but] women were treated differently within these organizations than you might imagine today. Can you guys speak to that? How women would or wouldn't fit within this—

05-00:19:09
Drew:

When the Civil Rights Movement started, women were most valuable. The other thing about black women in this country, black women, from slavery time, there were things that black women were allowed to do, black men couldn't. A black woman was like the maid of the house. She would—"Well, Ms. So-and-So, I don't like the way you're treating that child" and everything. "Well, that's my child." "Well, I don't care. I have to take care of him" and this type [of thing]. It was tolerated. The black guy out in the field, if he says something, or he just looks up—you *don't look the master in the eye*. One day, he can't take it no more, he stands up, he looks, he raises his head, [and] he's dead. When the Civil Rights Movement came along, it was almost like slavery time during the Underground Railroad. Black women could kind of ease out and do things that men weren't allowed.

05-00:20:06
Redman:

Rosa Parks is a symbol of that.

05-00:20:08
Gaines:

Yes, but see, here's what happened. We go back to Mary McLeod Bethune. You can go back to the lady [Harriet Tubman] that took all the slaves out and took them up over to Canada and everything. But look, the black woman has borne the burden ever since she got on the ship. It left the harbor in Africa. They left, and sometimes it takes six months to get here to America.

05-00:20:32
Drew:

If they got here.

05-00:20:35
Gaines:

The girls, twelve years old, were raped and everything else on the ship. Raped by saying, "Come on, girl, go with me." This is why, when I hear a young black man call a black woman a bitch, I look at him and I wear the mask. This man doesn't understand what that woman went through all her life. She had to have sex with the white man's son to break him in to sex. His daughters. Like

that bastard that helped to write the Constitution. He had black babies, five of them, by Sally—Jefferson. You understand? And yet wouldn't give her *freedom*. You understand? When you mention a black woman, she has borne the burden. Any time we mistreat her—she was there scrubbing the floor. Oh, look at Sally. She's scrubbing the floor for the white—but sister Sally's daughter was going to go to school, or sister Sally's son. That's what she was doing it for.

05-00:21:44

Drew:

I was going to say something about the women, the black women. They kept us alive during slavery time. We talk about all the soul food now. Chitlins and all that kind of stuff [Chitterlings – also known as “Chitlins”]. This was throwaway food. This was stuff that whites couldn't [eat]—they'd bury it. They couldn't feed it to animals or anything else. Nothing you could do with it. It didn't make good fertilizer, nothing. They're getting rid of it. Oh, we'll give it to the blacks, let them eat it. So they come up with all these different—these women. Not the men. Man's working the fields. She takes this stuff and she does all these things with it and creates all these great dishes. Then you'll hear some white person from Georgia, “Yes, we had chitlins for dinner, and we ate this here.” God, this guy doesn't even know!

I was in CORE in San Francisco after I left over here and I couldn't reach an agreement with the NAACP. About that time, CORE was starting. I read about this. We formed a CORE group in San Francisco. Very militant group. Was loaded with well-educated people. Before we did anything, we used to spend maybe a month or two just on homework, just going out. San Francisco, people around the world—and California has perpetuated this myth—San Francisco has always been a liberated city. San Francisco has never been a liberated city. If you think of the people that came here, the sailors and all these people that came here and the people in California, especially San Francisco, and that even when it comes to education, it was determined, since there were blacks moving in to San Francisco, how do we educate them? The first idea was separate schools. But there was a woman, single woman—they wrote a book about her.

05-00:23:46

Gaines:

Madame Pleasure. She ran a whorehouse.

05-00:23:50

Drew:

She ran a whorehouse. All the powers and divas visited the whorehouse. The mayor, the chief of police, all these people. She kept very great documents on what was going on.

05-00:24:01

Gaines:

Kept the books.

05-00:24:02

Drew:

When they were deciding on what do we do about education systems—we got all these blacks here, we feel obligated to educate them—they finally decided that they would have separate schools. She said no. “Nothing you can do about it.” “Oh, yes, I can.” She waved her little book then. Had all these clipper ships come in. This information—we can take this stuff to New York and it can be everywhere. They decided, okay, we’re going to segregate the schools, but we’re not going to segregate them. How do you segregate and not segregate? The classrooms, they put a sheet down the middle. Blacks sit on one side, whites sit on the other side. Same teacher. The education system, education, there’s a constant among blacks. Get an education, get an education. The whites are not—they’re surreptitiously saying, “Yes, you should get educated, you should get educated, but we’re not going to let you get educated.”

05-00:25:07

Gaines:

Now you’re talking about—

05-00:25:10

Drew:

We’re not going to let you get educated. We’ll make sure you don’t get educated, because we’re going to give you the worst teachers.

05-00:25:14

Redman:

One of the things I wanted to ask about that we talked about, between 1960 and 1964, this is a really active, active time. I’m just going to mention a few big things that happened during this period, and I’d like to see if you could speak to them. In 1960, of course there’s the big sit-in at the Woolworth in Greensboro, North Carolina. We talked about the sort of idea of why would a black person even want to eat at Woolworth.

05-00:25:46

Drew:

That’s a great, great question. Prior to people being able to eat at Woolworth, in the black community, black people said, “I don’t know how even white people eat that food, it’s so bad.” But then when desegregation occurred at Woolworth, blacks are lined up down there at Woolworth. The food that was served in the black community, it was such that whites would come down to the black community to eat. They’d come in, and quite often, like the barbecue places. Some of them would reach the point where it was a two-way street. Some of the blacks had to come around the back to eat, and some of the whites didn’t want to be seen, so they would be able to come to this window and get this black food, and sneak back and take it back and everything. When it came to the desegregation thing, the black community missed a lot of it. Missed it in that white people, they were money orientated. Let’s go over to Fillmore District. I can give you more exact point. The Fillmore District. Fillmore District was one of the most complete affluent districts anywhere, and especially the state of California. It was absolutely one solid block of black-owned businesses, black houses and everything. Three hotels, two schools—I mean, two—

05-00:27:19

Gaines:

All the way from Sutter to Haight Street. Nothing but black business down Fillmore.

05-00:27:26

Drew:

The interesting thing about it, the whites had abandoned this area earlier, when blacks started moving in. This is right off the downtown area. You can walk downtown. When the weather is bad everywhere else, you can be in the Fillmore, you can look up to the sunshine. You leave the Fillmore district, someplace else, and it's overcast and everything else. That area, people, earlier on, before they came there to redevelop this area. Justin Herman. Justin Herman determined that the Fillmore District was an eyesore. Anywhere black people are is an eyesore, although we had the best jazz clubs and everything. White people would come down there. You go to some jazz club, there's more white people than there were black. Some of the restaurants, the same way. But they decided to destroy Fillmore. They did. They came in. They gave the people almost nothing for their homes and everything. So the question was asked, why didn't they fight back? Who are they going to fight? The judges are white. The system is white. The lawyers are white. Whatever they says, go. That's it. We had one—

05-00:28:40

Gaines:

You wanted to talk about the sixties. That's what you—

05-00:28:42

Redman:

I'll just say because in sixty-one, CORE has the Freedom Rides, and then a lot of Californians participate in that. Then in sixty-three and sixty-four, I understand that there are the shop-ins at Lucky in Berkeley, which are pretty famous, and then the Free Speech Movement.

05-00:29:01

Gaines:

But you see, here's where CORE and all of them made a mistake. In this article that was written by the Stockton Record to me, here's what it says, "Gaines first came to Stockton in 1945. After leaving Sacramento, he has since then been constant voice of numerous committees and caucuses. One of the most successful was being labor committee chairman for the Stockton chapter of the NAACP, a committee which he headed for over thirty years at that time. Throughout this time, Gaines was busy organizing various groups in effort to attain better black representation in the job market. 'We have made a considerable amount of progress where employment is concerned. You can now see blacks working in many of the same places that they weren't allowed to go years ago.' He continued. 'It was our protest back in the 1950s and sixties that created the new position that blacks hold today. The white-orientated system didn't give anything to blacks. We had to take it.' One of the methods devised by Gaines through the NAACP was to have all blacks pay their telephone bills in pennies, only to protest them not hiring blacks in the companies." You see, if you hit a man in his pocketbook, that's what hurts. The CORE was doing the sitting in the counters. All they had to do was

boycott, like they did the bus system down there in Alabama. What I preach and taught, don't buy where you can't work. If you don't buy automobiles, you say, we won't buy any more Chevrolets this year.

05-00:30:51

Drew:

Like we did in San Francisco with the Cadillacs. They found out that the people that bought more Cadillacs than anyone else were blacks. We asked the Cadillac dealer down at Automobile Row to hire a black salesman. Across in Oakland was Patterson's Cadillac. We went over to Patterson with these statistics. We said, "If we could direct most of these black people over here to buy a Cadillac, would you consider hiring a black salesman?" You know what his reaction was? "Can you have one here this afternoon?" [laughter] Like he was talking about with CORE, down South, CORE did sit-in, this type of thing. San Francisco CORE was a complete different story, like I said earlier. We did our research on how many people worked here, this type of thing. Like, for instance, Safeway. Safeway, in the black community, was a total different entity than the Safeway in the white community. We stood up. We watched what was going on. We found out that the produce and meat that was sold in the white community, after the expiration date, it was brought down and put in the Safeway store in the black community, and the price was increased. They found out with the Bank of America, which was formerly the Bank of Italy, the Bank of America, three-tenths, or 1 percent, of all of its employees were minorities. Not black minorities. They said, "We have an officer working for the Bank of America." Who was the officer? He was assistant branch manager in Watts, an all-black community. We said, we've got to devise a strategy to change this. We've got to devise a strategy to take care of the Safeway situation. All these things. There were no such thing as, they call it, a driver salesman. The people who deliver bread and stuff to the stores, and wine and beer. It didn't exist. We devised a strategy, how do we get these people to hire? We did a lot of sit-ins and this type of thing. I went to jail so many times. I would go in, come out, go down to the place, and turn around and come back down there again. We had an enormous amount of sharp people, lawyers and this type of thing. They're standing there with bail bondsmen. We walk in, they book us, and demand to know what the bail is. "This man has never done anything. Release him on his own recognizance." Back out on the street, back demonstrating.

05-00:33:40

Redman:

Now, by this time, you're both a little older. I'm wondering if you could speak, just for a moment, your perception about the student movements, say, at Berkeley, where either the Free Speech Movement, a lot of white kids from California are going to the South, and for many of them, it's a really eye-opening experience. They're bringing that back. But on the other hand, you're in this multiracial organization, but are you ever looking at these young, naïve white kids who want to help out with a degree of skepticism, or are you just happy to have their enthusiasm and involvement?

05-00:34:20

Gaines:

Let me tell you this. All white people aren't racist. We got some good breaks from white kids. Without the whites that come in—look at those guys was killed in Mississippi. What's the name of the lady that was killed? Listen, all white people don't think that way. Some white people are really down with being what is the right thing for the United States. This is one thing that's happening today. We are faced with a Mormon religion. Go to Salt Lake City, or go anyplace. You don't see any blacks in there.

05-00:34:58

Drew:

The first place I was ever called a nigger in my whole life—

05-00:35:01

Redman:

Was Salt Lake City?

05-00:35:02

Gaines:

What you talking about? It's the most—

05-00:35:03

Drew:

I was going to Utah to ski.

05-00:35:05

Gaines:

All black people—you can't go unless a white man take you. You read the Mormon religion. Okay. When I was listening to this, I was thinking about how we were treated when we tried to get these good jobs. Now, today, you would think we wouldn't have to sit in to get a job. But when I passed this place, what I did, every day I passed it going to work or going downtown or going down to my business, today they hired 200 people there, and not a single black worked there. Now, look, that's what you're talking about years ago, but we're talking about today. Why do you think a lot of black kids are in the penitentiary today? They can't get a job. Back to this white boy who said he wasn't going to sleep under the bridge. You're going to have trouble in this country if you don't start to equalize and give people a job. Look at the Mormons this week. Billions of dollars. They're opening up a new shopping center there. The Mormon Church is the richest church. They're richer than the Catholic now. Now we're going to put a head of the Mormon, or the head of the church, president?

05-00:36:30

Drew:

Also, another thing. I don't believe in religion.

05-00:36:32

Gaines:

Oh, no. Take religion away.

05-00:36:34

Drew:

I'm not religious. I can't understand it.

05-00:36:37

Gaines:

I can't understand religion either.

05-00:36:38

Drew:

When blacks came over here as slaves, the Christian religion didn't exist. The people in West Africa, they had totally different religions. They came over here, and to pacify the slave, maybe if we take him to church, let him stand in the back—you stood. You didn't sit in the back of the church, you stood in the back of the church. Take a look at the Bible. Find me one thing where it says something good about a black in there. Nothing. Everything that they say about blacks is bad.

05-00:37:13

Gaines:

Let me tell you something about religion. I used to be a Christian. What do you mean, *used to be a Christian*? Here's what [I mean]. The Christian religion is the best thing in the world, but hypocrisy has taken over the Christian religion. I believe in the teachings of Jesus. The best teachings that were ever given, love your neighbor as yourself.

05-00:37:40

Drew:

But Jesus wasn't a Christian. He was a Jew.

05-00:37:44

Gaines:

What did I say? Listen. Listen. I believe the teachings of Jesus. I was talking to an African doctor, the biggest doctor in Stockton. He's a heart doctor. I went to him because I thought I had a little palpitation heart, whatever. I asked him about my heart. He said, "Whoever or whatever put this body together was a smart person." Now, you're laughing. But how did we get here? How did we get here? You see what happened the other day, didn't you? You see when they got this thing to try to figure the big explosion?

05-00:38:38

Redman:

Smash atoms together. Yeah, sure.

05-00:38:42

Gaines:

They smashed atoms together. How do you know what happened on a distant planet? Huh? We've gotten so now we can take the heart out and put in another heart. How do you think a person could do with putting in a new brain? Huh? It's going to be possible someday.

05-00:39:04

Drew:

Oh, of course. We'll substitute the whole body. The question you asked the last time, you asked again, and I know it must be important to you, about the students at Berkeley. Were they naïve or this type of thing? We have the same situation today, only it's dealt with on a much larger scale. The kids go to college, they go to school, they learn. They learn a lot of the things that they were taught are not true. It was just opinion. Like today, you're told by the politicians, especially the Republican politicians, they say, "Those leftwing schools, they go to those"—

05-00:39:48

Gaines:

California.

- 05-00:39:49
Drew: Like Stanford and University of California, Harvard and Columbia. Since Obama went to school there, we know it is, but I've never been able to quite figure this one out. He's a communist, socialist.
- 05-00:40:08
Gaines: He's a Muslim first.
- 05-00:40:09
Drew: What's the other one? Hitler was a—
- 05-00:40:12
Gaines: A fascist.
- 05-00:40:13
Drew: A fascist. He's a—
- 05-00:40:15
Redman: Communist and fascist.
- 05-00:40:16
Drew: Communist, socialist, fascist. I'm listening to Fox News, and who says this? O'Reilly. This is a half-way educated man.
- 05-00:40:25
Gaines: O'Reilly's getting paid to say that.
- 05-00:40:28
Drew: With the student thing, the main reason that [this] comes down to the students, because students learn—what do they teach you in college? *How to think*. To think. You don't accept, *you think*. You question. You write a paper. You write your college paper, you don't just take—or even when you get to college, you're writing a theme on a book. For this story, we want you to write a paper on this. So what do you do? If you're a half-way decent student, you'd say, this is one person's opinion. Let me go out and check on some other opinion. That's three or four different opinions. I read these opinions and I say, well, now, automatically, can't see this side, but these two here, they have possibilities. So now, all of a sudden, I've learned something new. That teacher back in high school, my parents told me, what they told me, may not be necessarily true, because these people are much more intelligent and better-educated than my father was.
- You've got youngsters going to college and they're learning these things. They're not going to segregated colleges. There are blacks in these colleges, there's Indians, there's Mexicans, there's Filipinos, everybody in that college. They're learning from each other. They're talking about what happened in his community. "Did you go home for the weekend?" "Yes, I went home." "What did you guys do?" This is a white guy talking to a black guy. "Oh, we did this. What did you do?" "We did this, then we did something else." "Oh my. Really? Was that fun?" "Yeah." "Well, you're going to have to come home to

my house.” They were going back and forth. You’ve got these things going back and forth. That was the reason I made the statement earlier on about the greatest thing that we old people could do for young people is just lie down and die.

But Berkeley, there were those who saw this. There was a parallel between what was happening at Berkeley. There was a lot of students that demonstrated in Berkeley, and they were members of our CORE group. Our CORE group was an integrated group. Mostly we had these young people, and they were down there, they were going to jail, they were getting beat up by the police, all these types of things, because they saw what was happening. But then where I felt really bad, and to this day I’ll go to my grave with this guilt, when the Civil Rights Movement was over, they declared the civil rights—we won our civil rights—and the first thing that came to my mind, we haven’t won anything. They’re talking about we had won our right to a job. We don’t own anything.

05-00:43:02

Gaines:

Look, there’s one thing I wanted to mention when you asked me about the whites participating in our activities for the NAACP. Here’s one thing you have to look at. Who is white? This is a problem that most white people don’t understand. The people that helped me, a lot of them, are black, but they thought they were white.

05-00:43:34

Drew:

The bourgeoisie.

05-00:43:35

Gaines:

Not bourgeoisie. These people had crossed over the color line. Over 50,000 black people crossed over the color line.

05-00:43:43

Drew:

More than that. Three hundred thousand per year passed.

05-00:43:48

Gaines:

Passed over the color line.

05-00:43:49

Drew:

Passed as white.

05-00:43:50

Gaines:

One of my best friends here, one of the guys, had a big {flooring?} company. He thought he was white. He’d come down to the shop. I’d close the windows down at night and straighten his hair. With the barber. I straightened his hair. I knew him very well. He owned the San Francisco {Flooring Company?}. A lot of people that you don’t know that’s passed over the color line, and this is what I’m talking about. You don’t know who is black. When I told you Warren G. Harding was black—I told my son, I say, “I’m named after the first black president,” the other day, the same one. He’s very smart. So he got on

his computer and he was reading Warren G. Harding's background. When he got done, he says, "It was rumored that Warren G."—

05-00:44:37

Drew: It's always rumored.

05-00:44:39

Gaines: But look, look. It was rumored that Warren G. Harding was black, but his four sisters were teachers in Washington, D.C. But you see what I mean, what I'm talking about? All of these people that you think are white, they're not white. Look at Dinah Shore. Dinah Shore's mother was half-white. Who was her son? This is what I'm talking about.

05-00:45:05

Drew: The anthropologists during that period of time did some studying—I think it's from Vanderbilt—I believe it's Vanderbilt—they did some studying of the South. They had all this racial tension going on. Blacks are bad, whites are good. Blacks are bad, whites are good. You've got, like you said, all these mulattos, half-black, half-whites, this type of thing, people around there. So they went down there and they start researching. Looking at family trees. Somewhere along the line, we find out that his eighth cousin, his eighth cousin removed, was black, and on down the line. Their conclusion was that very few people in the South could say that they were white or that they were black.

05-00:45:57

Redman: That creates a big problem, culturally, for the South, because, for years, it's been the precedent of the so-called *one-drop rule*.

05-00:46:08

Gaines: I can tell you about that. You know the girl in San Francisco, she was suing this millionaire to get her inheritance out of Louisiana. They took her back to Louisiana and went through the records and in the books there. One-sixteenth drop of blood makes you black. The other fifteen drops won't make you white. This is the laws. I'm back to the cranium. What is in the white people's head that's racist that way, that makes them think—they're still 98.1 [water and] organic substances, just like everything else. Why does it make them think that they are [better]? Because they push themselves. Now, back to University of California. The white person has found out one thing. Most of the students are Asian. You understand? They've got so many of them that they're trying to keep them out.

05-00:47:11

Drew: They tried to pass a law in San Francisco to keep kids out at law.

05-00:47:23

Redman: I'm going to flip these around. I was going to ask about the Black Panther Party, but before I do that, can I ask about KKK in Stockton? Tell me—

05-00:47:32

Drew: It exists today.

05-00:47:33

Redman: Tell me about the KKK.

05-00:47:35

Gaines: I can tell you a lot about the KKK.

05-00:47:37

Drew: Go ahead.

05-00:47:37

Gaines: Because I appeared before the city council all the time when I was working with [NAACP].

05-00:47:42

Redman: But I understand that you've had a personal incident at your home.

05-00:47:46

Gaines: Absolutely. A personal incident at my home.

05-00:47:49

Redman: That's maybe a safe way to say it, "an incident."

05-00:47:51

Gaines: I went to the city council and I was talking about the vultures in Stockton. I call them vultures. That's the absentee landlords. The absentee landlords that owned all the buildings downtown Stockton, all dilapidated buildings that they'd moved out of and they started moving north. They rented to blacks, because we were on the certain part of town, then we were allowed to move up across Main Street. I rented one of those buildings from the Franzia Brothers Winery. I'm a person they called. They didn't do anything for the building. The health department wouldn't do anything for a restaurant across the floor like that. One day—this was in the barber shop—my barber, Lorenzo was there—a rat ran across the floor. A big wood rat ran across the floor like that. The customer jumped. He said, "Man, there's a rat!" Lorenzo said, "Oh, that's a pet rat. We raised him around here." Look, if a rat died in the hall in my building, I had to tear the wall out, put spray and stuff in there. These guys are millionaires and they wouldn't fix it up. You understand? Now, when I say the vultures, the absentee landlords that owned all the rent houses and things, didn't fix them up or nothing, the health department didn't—same thing today. But anyway, when I went up there, the KKK called me up over the phone and said, "Hey, nigger, we're gonna [get you]." They shot at my house. When they shot at my house first, I come out. Being a World War Two veteran, I come out and shot back with my thirty-ought-six. Wasn't in the paper. Nothing said about it. They didn't come out messing around my house anymore. But see, this is what I'm talking about.

05-00:49:33
Redman: Was this incident, may I ask, was that during the day? Was it at night? Was it—

05-00:49:37
Gaines: Nighttime.

05-00:49:39
Drew: KKK is not going to do anything during the daytime. That's why they have white sheets. I guess it's on your bed, you've got a white sheet on there, so at night—

05-00:49:54
Gaines: I can tell you about the white man's—biggest army he's got. He has the best army in the world and the biggest army, because he talks to the ignorant whites. You know what his name is, let's. You know what let's is? "*Let's get him*". He may not go do anything himself. "*Let's get him.*"

05-00:50:16
Drew: Back to the KKK here in Stockton. You couldn't separate the KKK from the police department, because there were so many—the KKK was peopled by—I mean, the police department was peopled by the KKK, so there was no difference. The police department lends legitimacy to the KKK.

05-00:50:38
Gaines: Do you know who the biggest KKK organization in the United States today is? Think. Think. What is the biggest organization in the United States today that says the same thing that the KKK says?

05-00:50:55
Drew: You wouldn't be talking about the Tea Party, would you?

05-00:50:58
Gaines: No. It's bigger than the Tea Party. I'll let you guess. Think a minute.

05-00:51:05
Drew: The Republican congress?

05-00:51:07
Gaines: No.

05-00:51:08
Drew: It can't be bigger than that unless you're talking about the Koch Brothers and that.

05-00:51:11
Gaines: I'm talking about the [National] Rifle Association.

05-00:51:14
Drew: Oh, yeah. Well, they—

- 05-00:51:16
Gaines: They're the KKK. "We believe in the Second Amendment."
- 05-00:51:22
Drew: But they only have 1,300 representatives in Washington.
- 05-00:51:28
Gaines: Only 1,300. [laughter]
- 05-00:51:29
Drew: Thirteen hundred lobbyists. There's 1,300 lobbyists, if you can imagine that.
- 05-00:51:33
Gaines: That's the KKK.
- 05-00:51:34
Drew: That's National Rifle Association.
- 05-00:51:36
Gaines: National Rifle Association.
- 05-00:51:38
Redman: We have time for one more question on this tape. Tell me about how the Black Panther Party is misunderstood by members of the public and why.
- 05-00:51:52
Drew: I was over there when the Black Panther was formed, the whole thing. Huey Newton and [Bobby] Seale and the whole group. Oakland was such a racist city that it was almost like being down South. You couldn't do anything. They would shoot a black person. He was just dead. That was all there was to it. Even today, it's true today. A policeman in Oakland is never going to be convicted of killing a black person. They have never been, never will be.
- 05-00:52:23
Gaines: Same here [in Stockton].
- 05-00:52:24
Drew: It's just not going to happen. This was so prevalent in the black community. Policemen are talking about shooting, about these gangs shooting. Cops do that. They can shoot a person [and] they know nothing was going to happen. These young men could be someone where they weren't going to take it anymore. Plus, all the food programs and things that were designed for the Oakland community went to the white school. So you've got all these black kids, some of them didn't have a meal all day long. They were expected to get up, go to school, and learn, without having a single meal. Part of their program was providing meals for these kids. They provided food for people. They did all kinds of things. Initially, they didn't carry guns. When they started doing this, the police started coming out, harassing them, shooting, this type of thing. They said, okay, we'll have our guns for our protection. We're not going to carry concealed weapons. We're going to stand here with our guns and we're going to announce to the world, we're not aggressive. They

never, ever aggressively went after anyone. They never shot a policeman. But their position was, *we're here to defend ourselves and defend our own*. That's all it was. The press across the nation [reported that] you got these radical blacks out there, they're threatening to kill everybody else. They're parading around with guns and doing these black hand salutes and stuff like this here. They're dangerous. Like today, even with Congress now talking about the new Black Panther Party. You know how many members there are in the new Black Panther Party? Eight people. There's eight people. Eight people, and it's dangerous. New Black Panther Party is threatening to take over the nation. They can't even take over a block. Couldn't even carjack.

05-00:54:20

Redman: With that, I need to pause and change tapes here.

Begin Audio File 6 drew_othro_and_gaines_warren_g_06_07-17-12_stereo.mp3

06-00:00:03

Redman: Today is July 17. I'm back with Mr. Drew and Mr. Gaines, and this is our third tape today. When we left off, we were talking about the Black Panther Party and how that is remembered or not remembered in terms of its impact in the Bay Area. Mr. Drew had a chance to speak to that. Mr. Gaines, I'd like to ask if you would speak to that.

06-00:00:24

Gaines: Okay. I'm just talking about the Black Panther Party? When they went to Sacramento and marched around with their guns—the guns were empty. They were unloaded, the guns. Here's what I have to say about the whole thing, is if you can keep your head about your losing theirs and blame it on you, if you trust yourself when all men—that's "If" by Rudyard Kipling. But here's what I say. If rabbits had guns, how many people would hunt rabbits? Huh? You're smiling.

06-00:00:59

Redman: That's a great point. You're right.

06-00:01:02

Gaines: All right. If black folks protect themselves and start shooting back, you won't have no problems. But as long as you don't have no guns and they have all the guns—now, what he and I were talking about, what you were talking about, when you asked us about the Black Panther Party. Here's what destroyed the Civil Rights Movement, *redevelopment*. Redevelopment destroyed the black community. It wasn't redevelopment. It was black removal. Now here's what happened. Like they did in Oakland, like they did in San Francisco, like they did in Stockton, California, Oklahoma City, and Memphis, Tennessee, they took and run the freeway right through the black businesses. In Stockton, California, we had fourteen service stations, we had grocery stores, we had drugstores, we had hotels. This is the community I live in. We had one hotel, was seventeen stories high. What did they do? They run the freeway right

down, wiped out all the black hotel owners. I moved four times, moved my barber shop. The last time I moved, I moved and bought a corner lot on Airport Way and Main. They tore down all those buildings. In Memphis, Tennessee, they run the freeway right down Beale Street and wiped out half the black businesses. In Montgomery, Alabama, Gaston had an eighteen-story building. They tore it down, wiped it out. They'd run the integration and the urban renewal, or black removal, destroyed all the black businesses. The same thing that happened now happened in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Black Wall Street had thirty-six square blocks of black businesses. They destroyed them. They sent to Oklahoma City in Piper Cubs and flew over Tulsa and dropped Molotov cocktails and set the whole thing on fire. But you don't find this in your history books.

06-00:03:12

Drew:

Those were government planes, by the way.

06-00:03:16

Redman:

This brings up a good point in terms of we talked about sort of the reflection at the end of the Civil Rights Movement, quote unquote, "the end of the Civil Rights Movement," in terms of what are we left with. What's interesting to me is that you've got the Civil Rights Act. LBJ passes the Civil Rights Act. Someone might be inclined to read this as, oh, this is this major advance, but then in 1965, a reminder of how life really is, there's a major race riot in Watts, Los Angeles.

06-00:03:52

Drew:

That brings back another point. The riots in Watts, these were just symptoms of things that were going on. At one time, it was sort of an unwritten thing that police could brutalize blacks and get away with this type of thing, and so they would do it wink-wink. They go out and take this guy out of his car, beat him up, wink, wink, wink, wink. Now we don't have to do that. With home security and all this type of thing, now they say the policemen have a right to do anything. White people don't realize that this affects them, too. One time, if you were stopped in your car, there was only three ways they could search your car. You gave them permission. Number two, they had to have reasonable cause, or a court order. That's the only way they could search your car. Otherwise, they could keep you there for three days if they had to go get a court order to do it. You said no, they had to get a court order. Now they don't [require a court order]. You can leave here right now, drive down the street, policeman stop you and you haven't done anything, he can tell you to get out of your car. "Stand back there, we're going to search your car." "But, but, but"—"No buts. Are you questioning me? Because if you question me, I can take you to jail." We have come to that.

When the Civil Rights Movement came to an end, and LBJ and the whole thing—I love LBJ. He's one of my favorite presidents. From his position, he did something absolutely great. But see, blacks, we were bamboozled. As Malcolm X said, we were bamboozled. We were led to believe, all the sudden,

everything is going to be great. Everything is going to be wonderful. We didn't realize everything was great and everything was wonderful before this. When we had our own little communities, we were thriving. We were getting bigger, because the people over here on the edge of this community, they were unable to what they call block-busting. If we wanted to move out further, all we had to do was arrange for some white person to buy a house in that area. The black person move into the house, then all of a sudden, "The blacks are taking over this community. Let's go." There was flight. Now we have another couple blocks to add on to it, so we could always grow if we wanted to. But when the Civil Rights Movement was over, I was lying there thinking, oh, this is great. We've done all this great work and everything. Then it dawned on me, *we own nothing*.

06-00:06:38

Gaines:

We lost. We lost. We lost.

06-00:06:38

Drew:

We lost what we had. We owned nothing. I worked for months putting together a scheme. I [thought], what we could do, we don't have a lot of money to start all these businesses and everything. What if every black person in the country bought stock in whatever company we call it? We call it, say, Company X. Every black person bought—who could afford—just put ten dollars. Even welfare recipients could afford ten dollars. You buy ten dollars' worth of stock. Not donate ten dollars. Ten dollars' worth of stock. We'd put this money in certain banks, like the bank of Harlem or Chicago bank, and we'd give it a deadline. We're going to raise a certain amount of money by this deadline. If we don't, we're going to return your money to you with whatever interest is accrued. But if we reach that point, we are going to start building black businesses. We know we can't go out and build the biggest businesses. We're going to start with garages, small. The thing about success, once you show that there's success; people want to buy in to success. That piece of stock that you bought is now worth so much more. My money helped me buy that service station down there. By now, god knows where we would be. I talk to people about this. I talk to Bill Russell and Jim—

06-00:08:24

Gaines:

This is one thing that perturbs me, but I can understand it. The first thing they did after the Civil Rights Movement was supposed to be over, which it never will be over, they were supposed to treat you equally. When I started my business, I wanted to borrow some money to build [it]. I had been moved four times under urban renewal, black removal, and I bought me a lot. I bought a corner lot. It cost me \$25,000. I didn't pay for it, because I was being paid cash for it. The way I got it, I told this lady—she's a Jewish lady, and I told her I wanted to open up a business, and she says, "How much money you got?" I said, "I don't have much money now, because," I say, "I'm working two jobs. Running a business and I would like to open up a grocery store." She says, "I'll let you have a lot." She says, "How much are you going to pay down on?" I said, "How much you want down?" She said, "Oh, you give as

little as you want.” I said, “I don’t have much money. I could give you a thousand dollars down.” She said, “That would be all right.” I said, “How much would the interest be?” She said, “It would be 10.5.” I listened. “Mm-hmm. Yeah. That would be fine.” I said, “But here’s one thing I would like to do. I would like to pay on the principal without paying on the interest.” She said, “I’ll give you twenty years.” I said, “That would be fine.” She thought it over. I have her fooled. I had the mask on. My wife was working. She’s a teacher. I worked in a barber shop, had my barber shop. Guy working for me. Then I worked longshoreman, too. I paid her off in two years. She flew up high, because she lost that eleven or twelve thousand dollars interest.

06-00:10:31

Drew: See, that’s where not only black people get bamboozled, white people, too. Until recently—

06-00:10:40

Gaines: Wait, wait, let me finish. When I got the permit to build my building, I go down to get a permit to build a business, the guy says to me, building inspector—I had built several houses, rent houses that I had built with my own two hands—I says, “I want to get a permit to build this building.” He says, “You can’t get a permit. This is a public building. You can’t get a permit.” I said, “Why?” He said, “Because I say so.” He was the building inspector. White boy. A little short white boy, skinny nose, funny-looking fellow. But anyway, I said, “I’m going to my attorney.” I went to my attorney and I said—Jack Dozer was my attorney—I said, “Hey, Jack, I want you to tell me what article in the city charter says that I can’t be the general contractor and hire subcontractors if I’m going to own the building.” He called down there. He says, “I have a client by the name of Warren Gaines that says he wants to build a building. What article in the city charter says”—“Oh, send him right on back down.” Found out later on, Burger King wanted that lot. So he was working with them, and they offered me \$87,000 for the lot. I told them to—you understand? But you see, here’s what you have to understand. The atrocities that’s been conflicted upon the African Americans in this country is beyond the human imagination. You couldn’t imagine the things that we go through—

06-00:12:12

Drew: I see you [Redman] sitting there sometimes, the things we say, you sit there like, I don’t really believe that.

06-00:12:19

Gaines: He understands. This guy understands.

06-00:12:20

Drew: No, there’s a lot of things he can’t [understand]. You’d have to be black. You would have to be black to understand.

06-00:12:25

Gaines: He’s beginning to understand.

06-00:12:29

Drew: Black people don't understand white people better than—better than. They don't totally understand white people.

06-00:12:32

Gaines: Do you know the reason I can talk to him freely? He's read Frantz Fanon's *We Wear the Mask*.

06-00:12:40

Drew: I don't care how many volumes of black history he's read. I can tell by the look in his eyes, he's sitting there and he's saying—he's trying to figure out, how could that happen? How could people do that? How can people still live through that? You asked me the question the last time about if I had to go back through this again. I told you, no, if I knew this was going to happen to me, I had to go back through it again, I would kill myself early on.

06-00:13:10

Gaines: No, I wouldn't. I wouldn't.

06-00:13:13

Drew: You know why? If I had a vision, I think if I was twenty years old and I was told, "Now, when you get to be eighty-two years old, all these things will have happened to you," I would sit there and I would say, "Holy cow. I can't deal with that."

06-00:13:33

Gaines: The reason why I couldn't agree with him—you see this? A hundred and forty-six years ago, my dad looked down and seen what his kids would do, and this is what I'm talking about what my son can [do]. I'm living on the {inaudible} putting this into my son, and then my son will put it in, and we will continue to evaluate and get stronger. The generations that follow me will have our teachings in them. All of our stuff didn't die with slavery. You can't hold us down. They're going to try.

06-00:14:14

Drew: After all this time, the slavery mentality, slave mentality, still exists. It sticks—

06-00:14:24

Gaines: There's hope. Like they say, where there's life, there's hope. They say, where there's trees, there's ropes.

06-00:14:34

Drew: Basically, psychologically, that's exactly what it is today. Psychologically—

06-00:14:38

Gaines: Where there's trees, there's ropes. [laughter]

06-00:14:40

Drew: As long as you are a minority, and you don't control the money and everything—it's all about the money. The thing about it, like I said earlier on,

poor white people are bigger victims than blacks, because they have been bamboozled into believing, you can become rich. Like today, what they tell you. You've got these poor white people who are saying that they shouldn't raise the tax on this [top] 1 percent.

06-00:15:16

Redman:

I asked last time about one thing that surprised me, and I asked you maybe at the wrong moment. I asked you, Mr. Drew, I asked you about anger, and if some of the racism that you encountered, and some of the nasty things that people would say, made you angry. I was surprised [at the time], but your answer makes sense. It was that you didn't have time to be angry, because you were thinking about where you were going to sleep that night and where you were going to get your next meal.

06-00:15:44

Drew:

That's blacks. Blacks are docile. The worst thing that ever happened in this country, the very worst thing, in my opinion, my humble opinion, that ever happened to black people, was Christianity. Christianity. Now we are more religious than any white group in the world. We can rationalize everything. This thing was so ridiculous that during the Civil Rights Movement, before it started, down South, they brought these black people into court because they had demonstrated or something. They got this white judge. You probably read about it. These black people were standing there, and this judge is reading all this racial hatred, spewing out this racial hatred, to the point where he had a heart attack. It's true. He had a heart attack. Know what happened? The black people that he was putting in jail came over and got down around him and prayed for him. He died, of course. Black people, the first thing that we—

06-00:16:53

Gaines:

A lot of humility.

06-00:16:55

Drew:

Yes. We rationalize everything, like Christianity. Like I said, they have nothing good said in the Bible about black people. No version of it. I think there's been like forty-something different versions of the Bible. Talk about being racist or segregationist. They took out twenty-nine chapters, because primarily it involved Jews or it was written by Greeks. True.

06-00:17:28

Redman:

Tell me about your thoughts on black leadership after Martin Luther King. One name that jumps out, of course, is Jesse Jackson. There are many more. What are [your] thoughts on black leadership?

06-00:17:44

Gaines:

Black leadership? That all depends on who you're talking about leadership. See, my black leadership man would be different than all you guys. I considered Malcolm X a black leader, because he was for the right thing. You're talking about picking up arms, no? Defending yourself.

06-00:18:07

Redman:

But that thinking is largely absent from the next generation that came along in the seventies and eighties.

06-00:18:16

Drew:

But it wasn't so much generation came along. Like I said, blacks had been fully indoctrinated, even those who could understand the unfairness and all this type of thing. But they had these so-called Christian values, which I don't know what they are to this day. I have no idea what they are. We don't want to hurt anybody. They've been told that you do good, you do right, you're going to go to heaven. You're going to get yours in heaven. But that is telling him, that is stealing everything he can get. Well, I'm not too sure about heaven. I'll sacrifice going to heaven to make sure I have a good time down here. But then they go and they read. It says, well, man was born in sin, and no matter what he does, he's going to die in sin, and you can't get into heaven if you're a sinner. I can't figure this stuff out. Like [Gaines] says [about] his pea brain. My miniscule brain can't deal with all these complex things.

06-00:19:21

Gaines:

What he's talking about, it makes a lot of sense. You heard me say I believe in Malcolm X. He taught blacks wanted to get their own businesses and everything. You can't get away from that. He taught one thing that I teach: don't let nobody push you around. You understand that? He also taught that. But I couldn't be a Muslim, because Muslims were the big slave traders in Africa. In the Muslim religion, they took black girls out of Nubia, brought them down to Saudi Arabia, young girls, and Ibn Saad had forty black sons. You understand? He had maybe a hundred eunuchs that he had castrated, young blacks, to run his compound. So how in hell I'm going to be a Muslim? You understand? Although Sonni Ali who went across Spain—he was black, he was a Muslim—went across Spain, all the way to Portugal. The last city in Alhambra was built in Spain by Sunni Ali. That's the reason the Portuguese language is the hardest language in the world, because it's mixed with Africa, Latin, and so forth. But you have to know who you are. That's why I say I know who I am. Just like I taught those Africans, here's the key to the whole thing. Ignorance. Africa, by 2020, will have a billion people in it. There are thirty-something states in it.

06-00:21:05

Drew:

Forty-two.

06-00:21:06

Gaines:

Forty-two. Do you know that literacy rate is only 14 percent? Eighty-six percent illiterate people in Africa. Now, the Chinese have gone in there now and they're building schools. They ask the Chinese, "Why are you building schools and roads?" They say, "We want people to be able to trade with us." But the Europeans come in there and took the stuff out. You understand?

06-00:21:32

Redman:

Two more questions. One, jumping forward again in time, in 1983, Harold Washington is elected the mayor of Chicago. Does this do anything for black politicians? Does this send a signal into the black community in any—

06-00:21:48

Gaines:

It did, it did. It helped the black community.

06-00:21:51

Drew:

In Chicago.

06-00:21:52

Gaines:

In Chicago. In Chicago, because you couldn't go to Cicero. Blacks couldn't go to Cicero. They'd kill you if you go over to Cicero. The Italians were—

06-00:22:01

Drew:

Or any of the towns around Chicago.

06-00:22:04

Gaines:

In Chicago, you had the polacks on one side. One thing about Harold Washington, he appointed my niece as a judge there, and she just retired. Her son is the state senator, and she's in the politics. I called her up on the phone. I said, "You're not going to jail, are you?" I said, "That other fellow, the governor went to jail." Now Jesse Jackson, Jr. is in trouble. They say he's having a nervous breakdown, but I think he's scared, because here's what happened. Jesse Jackson, Jr. wanted to get that appointment. If he'd had got the appointment to the senator, my nephew would have been appointed to his position as being congressman. But my nephew is still the state senator. Politics in this country runs the whole country. It's politics.

06-00:22:57

Drew:

Chicago politics is totally different from elsewhere. Like today, you hear the Republicans talk about Chicago-style politicians. What does that mean? That means that that period of time in America, Chicago is one of the few places in the country where blacks were involved in politics. The black—what do they call it? Not ward, but the districts. Ward healers. They called them ward healers. It was the leaders of these particular wards. You would move up. You'd sit there long enough, all these black areas, they would move up. They would become a part of the city government. That's why the Chicago politicians have been given more grief than any other city in this country.

06-00:23:53

Gaines:

They'll put their gun to your head, too. Shit.

06-00:23:58

Redman:

The last question I want to ask—this is a big question, considering the entire scope of your lives and the experiences that you've been through. With the election of Obama, I wonder—some of the discussion that was taking place. We've talked a little bit about some of the problems that stem up when people say, "The Civil Rights Movement is over," or, when Obama was elected,

people talked about, “Oh, now we’re in a post-racial America.” We see that that’s a naïve assumption. But can you tell me—take a step back to 2008—how did you both think and feel when it finally came true? When it finally happened, when Obama was finally elected, how did that affect you both personally?

06-00:24:51

Drew:

Me, it affected me in that it was nice. It was nice to see him as president. But I realized it was just a smoke screen. What was happening prior to that, football. You had the Chicago Bears was down the tube. The Cincinnati Bengals and these others teams weren’t going anywhere. The white coaches didn’t want the job. Who did they hire? They went out and hired these black coaches. They never coached before. They’re assistant coaches. Please save our teams. Like the guy that became coach of Indianapolis.

06-00:25:41

Redman:

Oh, the Colts. Oh, what’s his name? He won the Super Bowl.

06-00:25:45

Drew:

Yes, won the Super Bowl.

06-00:25:47

Redman:

Tony.

06-00:25:48

Drew:

Tony Dungy.

06-00:25:49

Redman:

Tony Dungy.

06-00:25:50

Drew:

Dungy had the job down there with a team in Florida [Tampa Bay Buccaneers] before that. The team had never won anything. They had never even broken even one time. Nobody wanted the job. Dungy was an assistant coach and they gave him the job. Dungy turned this team around, and they never had a losing team after that. He kept forcing the owner to get the parts that he wanted. They would draft them and this type of thing. Finally, he said, “I’ve got all the parts that I want. Next year, we’re going to win the Super Bowl.” You know what happened? They fired him. Then they hired the guy that was coach of Oakland, and they won the Super Bowl. The players on the team were so enthralled by winning, they wanted to vote Dungy a share of the winning money. But the rules prohibit, because he was already coach of Indianapolis. The same thing with the President [of the United States]. This country was going down the tubes. We’re headed for the biggest recession. Bush is taking us to the biggest recession ever. Who wants the job, [John] McCain wants the job. Before 1999, I liked McCain. Back [in 2000] when he ran against Bush to become the Republican nominee, I switched over and literally voted for McCain. Most of the people on the Republican side, they didn’t like McCain, because McCain’s position to that point was the country.

If it was a good idea, okay, me and [Joseph] Lieberman, we'll get together and we will hammer out a good—we're going to make this work.

06-00:27:44

Redman: But he moved away from that [after] 2000.

06-00:27:46

Drew: In 2008, he moved away from that. Two thousand, actually. He saw that if Bush can get voted in with the things that he's saying, that's the only way you can get elected. So he changed. You see what you have today.

06-00:28:05

Redman: Back to Obama, Mr. Gaines.

06-00:28:08

Gaines: Obama is a good man. Well-educated. Knows the law, knows everything. He got in. I'm glad to see him get in there, president, because we needed somebody with some sense in there. Bush was a numskull. We know that. He's a drunk and everything else. I don't know what else he did. But he had money, see. Obama didn't have anything. He come along, he wanted to do the right thing for America. The things that he's accomplished, they don't even talk about it.

06-00:28:46

Drew: He doesn't talk so that people understand it.

06-00:28:48

Gaines: They don't want to talk about him capturing and killing Bin Laden. They don't want to talk about how he wiped out the people with the bombs over there in—

06-00:29:04

Redman: Afghanistan.

06-00:29:05

Gaines: Not Afghanistan.

06-00:29:06

Drew: In Pakistan.

06-00:29:07

Gaines: Pakistan. What he's doing now, he ended the war over there. Now he wants to end the war over in Afghanistan, but Afghanistan is the survival of America. What are you talking about, Gaines? I'm talking about arms, ammunition, supplies. It's a good thing to keep the country going. That's the same thing that happened in Iraq. You understand? It's a business. It's a business.

06-00:29:36

Drew: It's a business. Halliburton and—

06-00:29:38

Gaines:

Now, what he wants to do, they're going to call it socialism. What he wants to do, he wants to put Medicare in there. Right now, if you've got to have a certain kind of pill, it will cost you fourteen, sixteen dollars for one pill.

06-00:29:54

Drew:

More than that, some of them.

06-00:29:56

Gaines:

You understand? See, he's trying to get something for the people. They're going to call him a socialist or whatever. But what I'm talking about now is you watch this country—I may not live to see it—this country is going to go different than what it is, a capitalistic society, today, because you can't have 350 million people and only about 10 or 12 percent of them are living good. You understand? You're going to have a social revolution, and I hope we don't have a violent revolution.

06-00:30:31

Redman:

If you could tell a student of history, twenty-five years from now, fifty years from now, a hundred years from now, anything about your story and your life, what would be the things that you would point to?

06-00:30:46

Drew:

Nothing. Because he wouldn't believe it.

06-00:30:49

Redman:

You think people will read this and they won't believe the story?

06-00:30:54

Drew:

No—

06-00:30:56

Redman:

One of the other things, too, you said it's impossible to understand the full extent of the pain, and I want to hear a little bit about that, too.

06-00:31:09

Drew:

That's a great question. If something is done to you, no matter what it is, from the day you're born until the day you die, it's repetitive. Over and over and over and over again. After a while, you become [de]sensitized to it. It becomes a way of life. The same thing that I would probably walk away from, you'd be ready to, "I'll knock your block off." Believe it or not, eighty-two years, I've never had a fight. I've never had a physical confrontation. Never found it necessary. I embarrass people. I could hurt them with words worse than I could ever do with hit—they want to hit me? Go on, hit me. I don't care. The only thing that's going to happen is I'm going to get a broken jaw and you're going to get a sore hand. I say, "I know you can beat me." Or even if he couldn't, I d {inaudible}. "Oh, this nigger's crazy." And he walk away. But twenty-five years from now, maybe they would believe me, because I don't see things changing that much in the next twenty-five years. I really don't, because things are going south now. The gains that they claim that we

made in the sixties, this type of thing, they're now being all tossed out. Women's rights are now going. You hear even our Supreme Court justices, Scalia, Thomas, talk about going back to—in fact, Scalia and Thomas, they've got to be—I don't know how these people can be judges.

06-00:32:53

Gaines: You're making my stomach hurt. [laughter]

06-00:32:55

Drew: These have to be two of the most ignorant judges that we've ever had.

06-00:32:58

Gaines: You're making my stomach hurt.

06-00:32:59

Drew: Literally. They said we should go back to the Constitution days, back to the days of the Constitution. Thomas doesn't realize that the days of the Constitution, not only would he not be a judge, he'd be out there working the fields. Scalia, being an Italian, he couldn't even come to the country.

06-00:33:17

Redman: Mr. Gaines, what would you say to a student twenty-five or fifty years from now?

06-00:33:21

Gaines: I'd have them read my book. That's the first thing I would do, because it tells the whole story of my life. There's hope. I teach my kids the same thing.

06-00:33:30

Drew: There's rope. [laughter]

06-00:33:31

Gaines: Where there's trees, there's rope. I believe this. Without progress, we don't advance. [Just] two words, progress and advancing. Through education and ownership, you can advance. But you can't stay in that same hole and expect to get freedom. What I mean is total freedom. You've got to have all of these things, these three things that's all you need, and then advance. Listen, we live in a society where you have to have money. You can't get money unless you have means to get it besides robbery. We know the people at the top are robbing you, because any time that you have gone and paid 31 percent on a credit card, if you're stupid enough to have a credit card, then you're stupid enough to be ignorant enough to stay in that same hole the rest of your life. You understand? I try to teach my kids. The legacy that I try to leave is the same legacy as my father left for me, and it's going on down through my grandkids and great grandkids. Teach them this. You can't be this way and have a heart in you to where you have separation in races. All people are the same, just like I said. Ninety-eight point water and two points organic substances. That's it. So what you do, have respect for everyone. You understand? Now, so far as religion is concerned, choose a religion that you want that doesn't make me any different. Because whatever you want to

believe, that's your belief, but don't treat your fellow man wrong. That's the wrong thing to do. *Do unto others before they do it to you.*

06-00:35:19

Drew: We were discussing religion, and I said if I was going to form a religion, I would call it "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" religion. That would be the name of the religion.

06-00:35:30

Redman: I missed something fundamental and so silly. Can you tell the story of how you two met?

06-00:35:37

Drew: How did we meet?

06-00:35:38

Gaines: I don't know.

06-00:35:39

Drew: NAACP I guess it was.

06-00:35:41

Gaines: When I first met him, he was working for the city then. When did you work for the city?

06-00:35:52

Drew: To give you an idea of how racist Stockton was, I went to college, got a job as—what?

06-00:36:01

Gaines: What were you doing?

06-00:36:02

Drew: Assistant—

06-00:36:04

Gaines: Janitor.

06-00:36:04

Drew: Assistant librarian. People don't even know who a librarian is. They put a picture of me in the newspaper. This black guy is assistant librarian.

06-00:36:16

Gaines: He went to Cal, see.

06-00:36:17

Drew: You know what my job was at the library?

06-00:36:21

Redman: What's that?

06-00:36:23

Drew:

You couldn't be out front if you were black. You couldn't be at the desk. So I didn't wait on anybody. I would put books on the shelves and I'd wipe dust. This was my assistant library job. That was it. But just one more point, if I may. You were talking about education. You kept emphasizing education, education. But then we look at the country as a whole. We are declining education-wise, continually. What was it? The last survey they took, national survey—I mean, a world survey they took—we have now dropped to seventeenth in math and science degrees. We have dropped down. We were the world's leader at one time in education. We are no longer. We are seventh and dropping. Just a year ago, we were fifth. Now we're down to seven, and dropping. Statistics, not too long ago, eighth-grade math education in this country, math education among the average eighth-grade public school student was so bad that it was declared that eighth-grade math was to be considered math illiteracy. We are that bad. A lot of areas, we're so bad that we don't have them anymore. English. When it comes to learning sentence structure, parsing sentences and all this type of thing, it doesn't exist anymore. Teachers don't even know how to do it. They don't have to know how to do it.

06-00:37:53

Gaines:

Diagram a sentence. They couldn't do it.

06-00:37:54

Drew:

Can't do that. When it comes to learning how to write, printing is fine. You don't have to learn how to write anymore. It's not going to be taught any longer. We are getting dumber and dumber and dumber. We are still operating schools the same way we did a hundred and fifty years ago on the agrarian system, when summers was needed for kids to work in the field. Now it's no longer needed. We're still doing the same thing. European schools, especially Scandinavian schools, they're so far advanced, they have reached the point where a child is interested in a particular area. If you're interested in computers, we have schools designed for you to learn computers. You learn all these other things. You're learning the Norwegian language and all this math and all this kind of stuff, but you're also learning about the field you're interested in. In Ohio, Illinois, some years back, the high school dropout rate was the lowest in the country. It dropped down to 49.5 percent. They said, what can we do to change this? So they went around and they were talking with kids. "Why did you drop out of school? Why did you drop out of school?" This type of thing. "I don't see any reason why I should go to school. I'm not going to college, so why should I go to school?" Like I said earlier, nothing I'm learning in high school is going to help me once I get out of school. So they decided, well, what we will do, we will teach the regular curriculum during the first half of the day. In the evening, we will steer this child into whatever it is he's interested in. If he's interested in mechanics, we will find some elite garages, and we will, the board of education will, give them money to teach this child how to become a mechanic. Same thing in the medical field, whatever area. Within a few years, the dropout rate had gone from 49.5 percent, and now the graduating student rate was 60 percent, which

was based on the European system. You tell them that—talking to them about 60 percent dropout rate. “Are you crazy?” What is a 60 percent—

06-00:40:10

Gaines:

What you’re talking about is true, but he wanted to know about—your perspective, what you told him, was right. But now here’s what I see about—the whole thing is based upon education, and that’s the reason that I teach my kids this. I teach my children this. You have to have an education. It has to be academic or vocational or business.

06-00:40:34

Drew:

Let me stop you here. How many Gaines are there out there? How many non-Gaines are there out there?

06-00:40:39

Gaines:

But this is what I’m talking about. This is what I’m talking about. Here’s where you get sidetracked with education. You put entertainers in our group of people. You put entertainers as our leaders. Like—

06-00:40:55

Drew:

Jay-Z.

06-00:40:56

Gaines:

Jay-Z. Not him. I’m talking about entertainers. Football players. Basketball. Baseball players. Entertainers.

06-00:41:03

Drew:

The people in sports, role models.

06-00:41:05

Gaines:

They don’t have to invest any money. They don’t do a damn thing. Ninety percent of them can’t read on a high school level. My kids don’t have no football, baseball, basketball, track. They don’t do that. Because if you’re not the top, you don’t get there. Look. The only ones that do, prosper, and you don’t hear of them. The mayor of Detroit now.

06-00:41:34

Drew:

[Dave] Bing.

06-00:41:35

Gaines:

Bing. But you know what he had? He has a steel mill. Work 800 people.

06-00:41:42

Drew:

Five of them. His four daughters that head four of them, and he heads one.

06-00:41:47

Gaines:

You see, this is what I’m talking about. Now they talk about this numskull up there now. He’s a basketball player. A hundred and fifty million dollars a year. He doesn’t know how to tie his shoe so far as I’m concerned.

06-00:41:59

Drew: He knows how to buy wheels.

06-00:42:02

Gaines: Because what could he do with \$150 million? He could open up some enterprises. Look at that other fool down there. He got thirty-something cars.

06-00:42:14

Drew: And shoes. A whole room designed for nothing but shoes.

06-00:42:17

Redman: It doesn't make any sense.

06-00:42:18

Drew: It makes no sense.

06-00:42:18

Gaines: It doesn't make any sense at all. Like I told this lady yesterday—she's a professional woman. I was telling her about investing your money. She's an insurance lady. She and I are good friends. I was going to change my insurance to {inaudible}. I told her, I says, "The average person don't understand business. They don't understand interest and percentages." Here you put your money in the bank, draw 0.5 percent on it. Maybe you draw 2 percent on your money. I told her, I said, "Look, people with brains invest their money where it's going to make the best money." I said, "Now you look at your insurance company. You're with AAA." I said, "Look at Omaha, Nebraska." We have a place here, have 240 apartment houses in the ghetto. They're all rented.

06-00:43:11

Drew: Projects.

06-00:43:11

Gaines: Project houses. You know who owns it? Omaha, Nebraska [Mutual of Omaha]. Now, look. If you take your money that you have now saved up, and put it in the banks, and you draw 1 percent, 1.5 percent, take that same money, buy you a duplex, when you get it paid for, you get 80 percent profit. Twenty percent upkeep. That is deductible from your income tax. You're making a 90 percent profit. People don't understand this country is built on money. Now, the people that run this country, like your future president—

06-00:44:00

Drew: Like you're saying, but all these people come from the same universities. It's a repetitive thing, same—

06-00:44:04

Gaines: But they know how to manipulate that money.

06-00:44:06

Drew: Of course they do. That's what they learn in college.

06-00:44:08
Gaines: Look. Here's what's going to happen. Men running around with three houses here and a house there like that, all that money, someday, somebody's going to come up with a party—not like the Tea Party—they're going to destroy all these millionaires is doing. Democracy won't be the same. Guys like—what's his name, with the [National] Rifle Association?

06-00:44:31
Drew: Oh, yeah.

06-00:44:33
Gaines: Down here at Carmel. He'll be dead.

06-00:44:36
Drew: He is dead. Didn't he die?

06-00:44:38
Gaines: Not yet. That movie actor [Charlton Heston 1923-2008].

06-00:44:41
Drew: I thought he [died].

06-00:44:44
Redman: Is he still alive? He might still be kicking around.

06-00:44:49
Gaines: He played Moses in—

06-00:44:50
Drew: Moses, yes.

06-00:44:51
Redman: With that, gentlemen, I'd like to say thank you both for participating and sitting down and sharing your memories. Thank you.

06-00:44:57
Gaines: I enjoyed listening to my buddy here talk. He and I went through a lot. Hey, man, we know—listen. When you talk to us, we're going to give you the straight facts. About these bourgeois blacks, they don't mean shit to us. They don't.

06-00:45:13
Drew: See, the difference, the reason I keep emphasizing the thirty million people that are illiterate, these are people that are lost. I don't care what kind of business you've got or what it is. You're lost. You're incapable of really learning anything. Like politics today. These adults, most of them are going to vote. Thirty million illiterate people going to the poll.

06-00:45:42
Gaines: Tell him about your buddy Bill Cosby.

06-00:45:45

Drew:

Bill Cosby. He goes around, and he talks about the people should be ashamed of themselves in the ghetto. They're not getting an education, they're not doing this. But then I asked a question, "When's the last time you've been down there to help out? When's the last time you went down there to educate someone?" "Well, I gave twenty-three million dollars to my alma mater, Temple University." Big deal. You're going to give to Temple University, you'd have paid it in tax, so what's the big deal? What have you done for the people down in the ghetto? This community here, for instance. There is not a black policeman here, schoolteacher. That low level. Doctor or anything else. Where are they? They're all out in the suburbs someplace. Now, I expect this kid down the street—he's got the potential to be a doctor. I expect him to be a doctor. How does he become a doctor? He's going to one of the worst school systems there is, public school system. There's nobody. He doesn't have a person he can even talk to. The only time he sees a doctor is when he takes his card and goes down to Medicaid or whatever it is, and the doctor, he doesn't want to see him. All he wants is his money.

06-00:46:53

Gaines:

He's talking about Edison High School, their graduation [rates]. Franklin is the same way. Four of my kids graduated from Franklin. But if you go to this ghetto school and you get the right thing—and all five of them have master's degrees now. But here's what happened. Excuse me. My kids went to Franklin. Three of them went to Franklin, and the fourth one, my baby daughter, they said, "Daddy, don't send her to Franklin, because the curriculum isn't high enough for her to get into a first-rate college." They were going to Fresno State, which is a good school. Fresno State University. She said send her to Catholic school. I sent her to St. Mary's. It cost me money to send her there, but she got a better education at St. Mary's, and they told me why. When they went to Fresno, they had to take bonehead English. You understand? One of them graduated with honors. The other graduated without. I don't expect them to all graduate—but the point is this. They got their degree. They could have went to barber school or whatever. Education is the key. You can't open that door without it. That's what I preach. That's the main thing, is to get an education. In this society, you have to have it.

06-00:48:18

Drew:

The thing I can't even get brother Gaines to understand—okay, I'm going to ask you. How many men have you met like him? White, black, or anything else. How many men have you met like this?

06-00:48:29

Redman:

None like you.

06-00:48:30

Drew:

That's the point I'm trying to get him to understand. He's got the personality, he's got all the tools to do that with his kids. What about the woman that's on welfare, that doesn't have the—

06-00:48:41

Gaines:

Wait, wait, wait. Here's what I want to say about Franklin. Franklin produced the only astronaut we have in Northern California, [Jose] Hernandez. Now listen, that's Franklin school. That same Franklin produced the salutatorian at Stanford, Tubbs, who's running for city council. Oprah Winfrey gave him \$10,000. Young black kid that went to Stanford, got his master's degree at twenty-one years old. If a kid has it in him, it's putting him in the right position where he can get the education, he will get it.

06-00:49:17

Drew:

But you said he's put in the right position. He's put in the right position. But when you grow up in this community, you grow up in this community, what chances do you have? In the first place, there's no encouragement. There's no encouragement to graduate from high school.

06-00:49:32

Gaines:

Listen. If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you, if you can trust yourself when all men doubt you and make it—

06-00:49:40

Drew:

Mr. Kipling.

06-00:49:41

Gaines:

But if you can dream and not make dreams your masters, and if you can think and not make thoughts your aims, if you can meet with triumph and disaster and treat these two imposters just the same—

[End of Interview]