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Gullah Project

Glen Adams

Damien Johnson, Hope Perry, Dave Catchadorian

July 25, 2012

St. Helena Island, South Carolina

HP: Alright it is July 25th, 2012. We are in St. Helena Island, about to interview Mr. Adams. In our team, is Hope Perry, that's me. And Dave Catachadorian (laughs) and Damien Johnson. And... alright, is that everything? So Mr. Adams, can you tell us a little bit about yourself and about kinda where you come from and what your background is?

GA: Okay, well I was born and raised in College Park, Maryland, by the University of Maryland. And I was there for most of all my life. And then of course, when I got 18, I moved to Benning Road. You know what that is? Benning Road? (HP nods). And then my daughter was born so we moved back to Maryland. And I stayed over in Riverdale, and Greenvale, Maryland for awhile. And I was doing bad things then, really. Dealing and stuff like that. My life was like... I lived the party life. I was doing everything! Selling, using, having fun, just doing everything. And I don't know what happened. I just kept doing it and then me and my wife, we separated so I've been a single father now for what, like twelve years now. I raised my son and my daughter. My son, he's at work right now. And my daughter, she just left. And matter fact, I have two older kids. They still live in Maryland. I raised them too, by myself. So they call me all the time. My son, he lives in Baltimore. And so I don't know... one day I said, "Let me move to North Carolina." Road with no rapids. It's right there on the Virginia border. And oh boy, me and my wife, we separated there. And after that, I just started doing the party life. Doin this, doin that, doin this and then one morning, I rolled over and George Myers came on TV. I looked down at her and I heard her and I said, "Nah, she ain't talkin bout me." So I turned it off and then the next day, somethin told me turn it on again. And I turned it on again and then I started crying. And I said, "Oh man, she is talkin about me." She was saying things like God is watching you, and you're doing things, the devil is doing this and that. So I'm like, "Wow." But, I still continued doing what I was doing. I didn't need... just taking it for granted what she was saying. So I kept on doing my thing. Then I started having a whole lot of bad luck, bad luck. Things kept happening to me. Financial problems, just all kinds of things just started happening. And I know what it was. The bad things that I was doing was causing that to happen. So I just kept doing things and then I got sick and stuff. Then one day, my niece, she lived down here. Her and her husband, he was in the Marines at Parris Islands. She'd been down here for like ten years and all of a sudden that one year she said, "Come on down here for Thanksgiving!" I'd never been down here. I never heard of Beaufort before in my life. I had no idea what Beaufort was. Me, I thought South Carolina was like hillbilly or country. Cause I lived in North Carolina. That's what North Carolina was like. It was like country folk. So this is North Carolina. South Carolina must really be country. (HP and DJ laugh). So I came down here to visit and she was living over here. So we came down here to visit. I said, "Man!" We seen all the water and the bridges. I said, "Wow, this

is like Florida!” So we came to visit that Thanksgiving. We stayed there, I think like a week. And I told her I really liked it and I asked how much the rent was down here. And she was tellin me like how cheap the rent was. So that was in November. In February, I was here!

HP (offscreen): Of what year?

GA: Wait a minute, I’ve been here for... February’ll be four... in 2008.

HP (offscreen): Okay.

GA: In 2008, I was here (nods head). It was November of 2007, I came to visit. February of 2008, I was here. I moved here and then I still continued doin some bad... I stopped as far as sellin and that kind stuff. I cut all that loose cause I knew that was bad. But I continued drinkin, and smokin and then I had got sick one day. Had a cold infection. So I went to the hospital, they gave me all kinds of antibiotics. So that went away. And then, that was about July. So in November, I went and got me a colonoscopy done. That was on that Wednesday. And that Friday, he told me after he’d done it, two or three days, you’ll have gas. It’ll go away. And that Friday, I started getting really sick and in pain so they took me to the emergency room. And my colon ruptured. It ruptured so they put me in an ambulance, drove straight for Charleston, South Carolina. That’s bout an hour and a half away from here. Cause Beaufort Memorial didn’t have the facility to do that. And the doctor told me, he don’t know how I’m still alive.

DJ (offscreen): Woooow.

GA: Cause once that poison back up in your system from your colon, you usually die. So they got me there, I went straight to the emergency room, the ER and went to the operatin room and stuff and they cut me open. And repaired my colon and I stayed in intensive care for like two weeks. I was tube fed, cut through my neck. Some type of white stuff, looked like a milkshake white. They put a colostomy bag on me and all that. Then they reversed that and stuff like that. But I thought I was gone die. I guess God wasn’t ready for me to go. So he gave me a second chance. And then my physical therapist, whose name is Charles. He used to be in charge of the musicians at the church. And he came here and he said, “Brother Glen, come to my church. Come to my church. The pastor’s from DC. Y’all can talk together. Both of y’all from the same neighborhood.” So I went down there and sure enough. I went down there and I heard him. The following week, I joined. I went up front, like they said come to the front, went to the front and I got saved. And I joined the church and I’ve been going there, what, almost two years now. Haven’t missed a Sunday. I drive the church bus. Couple things there and the church, I just love the church. That’s like what I do now. I just stay home and I go to church and come home. I don’t do anything else. That’s just what I do. My whole life has just changed. When God gave me a second chance, I said “I’m not gone blow it this time.” (Nods head).

HP (offscreen): Can you talk a little bit about the community that you moved into?

GA: What, here?

HP (offscreen): Yeah, what does this community... what does it feel like to move from a city like D.C...

GA: Oh, gosh. So different! City life, everything was so fast. You had public transportation. You don't need a car. You can go from the bus to a train, from a train to the bus. And go anywhere you wanna go. But things up there were so hectic and so fast. And just things goin up there... I didn't like it up there anymore. I didn't want my kids to be raised up there. So we moved down here and it's like, "Wow. This is laid back. Country." This ain't really called country. It's like city. Country-city. Like in between, ya know?

DJ (offscreen): A nice mixture.

GA: Yeah, it's a nice mixture. It's in between the city and the country, ya know? It's nice! And I just... and the people were different. Cause they talk different.

HP (offscreen): What'd you think about that when you first came...

GA: When I first came down, I thought they were Jamaicans or somethin! Ya know, like okay Marlon and all this and rude boy. I said, "Wow! Jamaicans down here." But they told me it was the Gullah-Geeche. I know when I lived up North, we'd say everybody Geeche. But I didn't know that was... We just say that cause you talk country or somethin. But I didn't know there really was somethin called Geeche. And I moved down here and everybody was like... everybody had long dreads and everybody was very, very dark. Like, wow where are we? But after awhile, I got used to it. My daughter, she startin to get it now. She start talkin like them cause all her friends do that. But I was glad to get my kids down here. I really enjoy it down here cause it's a nice place to live. We just started gettin crime down here. I don't know what's goin on on this island. You hear the pastor start talkin about yeah a lot of crime killings and stuff and for some reason these young guys... I don't understand 'em.

HP (offscreen): What have you seen change since you've been down here? When you say it didn't used to be like that and all of a sudden... why do you think all of a sudden...

GA: I don't know. It's cause the guys bored. I don't know. It's nothing to do, I guess. They don't have no kinda rec centers or nothing down here. And these guys just got nothing else to do. And I guess jobs... It's jobs down here but some of these guys just don't wanna work. My son, he always had a job. And it's just... I think it's boredom mainly. Mainly boredom. There's nothing for these guys to do. Just got the gangs in the school. The gangs on the island don't like the guys

in Beaufort so they beefin. The gangs here and the gangs in Beaufort beefin with each other. It just escalated. A lot of drug dealers on the island. So, I guess it startin to escalate and I don't know. I just don't understand why it's goin like that. Cause I just don't understand. When I moved over here... when I first moved here, there was a lot of break ins. People started breakin into people houses. But then we got an officer, he moved in here and they moved out all the riff-raff people who think were causin it. So and they got locked up in jail. And now it's alright over here now. It's a nice neighborhood.

HP (offscreen): Safe place?

GA: Yeah.

HP (offscreen): That's good. How long was that period where it was at least a little bit?

GA: At least a year. Yeah, they was breakin into people's back glass doors out and comin in. And I knew the guy who was doing it. Yeah. Cause he was tellin us... he was a friend of my son's and he was tellin me how he was doin it. It last about a good year. Matter fact, those guys are still in jail.

DJ (offscreen): Good.

GA: That's where they need to stay. But now, it's a lot different over here now. At first it was mostly just like 98% Black over here. But now, it's mixed in with everything now. And that's... I'm glad of that. Cause we got a lot of everything over here now. All nationalities over here now. So it makes it easier. It makes it a lot better.

DC (offscreen): Why does it make it better?

GA: Because... I don't know. It's just, I don't know. Just like, I like to see more different people. And we got Hispanics, we got White, we got everything, like Orientals. It seems like it's more of a (shapes hands in a big circle). And you know, I don't know. I hate to be stereotype, but a lot of Black people together... they seem to steal and do things, ya know? And where I was raised, I wasn't raised anywhere, I went to a predominantly White school. I went to Parkdale Senior High.

HP (offscreen): I know what you're talking about.

GA: You know Parkdale (to HP)? Yeah, I went to Parkdale. So you know, back in the '70s and that's how I was just raised. My neighborhood was all Black, but all my schooling was mixed.

DC (offscreen): And do different groups here get a long?

GA: Yeah, yeah (nods head). All the kids play with each other. Get along fine. Yeah, they all get along over here. The little kids, every time you see ‘em run all around through here.

HP (offscreen): And your daughter goes to, did she... I don't know. Does she go to...

GA: She goes to tenth grade this year.

HP (offscreen): In Beaufort?

GA: Well, she went to Beaufort last year. She not goin there this year.

HP (offscreen): Oh okay. What'd you think about that school?

GA: Terrible school.

HP (offscreen): Why is that?

GA: Cause they don't teach you nothing. She can tell you more than I can. Beaufort High, you don't learn... she told me, "Dad, I didn't learn anything that past year. Please get me out of that school."

DJ (offscreen): So where's she gonna go in the fall?

GA: She's goin to Whale Branch Early College.

HP (offscreen): Where's that?

DJ (offscreen): That's a beautiful school!

HP (offscreen): Oh, that's the one! Okay.

GA: Yeah, Whale Branch Early College. Yeah. She goin there this year.

HP (offscreen): That's good.

GA: Cause she said she didn't learn anything at Beaufort. Just cause, Beaufort had gangs and they fightin and the kids... just do so much stuff. They allow them to do what they wanna do. She's called me on her phone a million times. I hear the kids in the background just havin a ball... And this in class!

DJ (offscreen): Right.

GA: But she came to me and told me she didn't learn anything. Cause the school she came from was a magnet school. When we came down here, she was ahead of these guys. And the stuff they teachin in ninth grade, she had learned in the sixth grade. And she'd finish her work and sit there. And teachers would just, "What are you doin sittin there?" And she says, "I finished my work." But still they wouldn't, you know and just, so she went through a lot of stuff at that school last year. And she told me she wanna get out. Cause she didn't learn anything. Yeah, Beaufort High is (chuckles)... anybody can tell you. Beaufort High is the kinda school, they'll pass you through just to get you out of there. You know, I know some guys who, can't hardly read or count but they got a diploma. Yeah (nods head).

DC (offscreen): And was the early college hard to get into?

GA: No.

DC (offscreen): Did she have to apply or...?

GA: Yeah. All I did was fill out the application, and they go back and check your other school records or whatever and then you get a letter in the mail that say you've been approved. So all I gotta do now is go back for orientation and stuff like that.

DC (offscreen): Great!

GA: Yeah, cause a lot of kids from Beaufort are transferring there this year. Cause this school, it's a early college (nods head).

HP (offscreen): Are there kids who live in Beaufort that will come to this school or there mostly kids who live on the island that will go to...?

GA: Beaufort. Just anybody can go there.

HP (offscreen): Oh okay.

GA: Cause they have a bus that comes down here and pick the kids up. But a lot of kids... some kids don't wanna go. Cause some kids, they like that life that Beaufort has. It's always drama, everyday. Everyday, drama at Beaufort. Everyday! You'd be surprised things goin on at Beaufort High. And it's a lot of kids... I don't know. Some of her friends, all of them transferrin up to that school. I love when you first go there, all the kids get a laptop to bring home. If you destroy it, you gotta pay for it. But they give em to do they work on. You get a laptop or tablet to take home.

HP (offscreen): So we've talked to quite a few people. And something that comes up often, we've heard a lot about is the tension a little bit in the community between developing on the island. And so there's some people who don't want to see...

GA: They don't want. They say the don't want stuff here. They say, if they do, Beaufort or the island will end up like Bluffton or Hilton Head, ya know with a lot of congestion and a lot traffic.

HP (offscreen): And there are other people...

GA: We need it here!

HP (offscreen): ... who are interested in bringing that here.

GA: It'll bring jobs here.

HP (offscreen): So where do you fall in that?

GA: I think they should bring more here. It'll bring more jobs here. It'll bring more jobs for these people cause these kids (points backward). Maybe it'll help 'em out. They know they got a job, it'll give 'em some incentive to do somethin. At least somethin on this island. You know how long it took... they thought they'd never get that Family Dollar there. They didn't want that there at first.

HP (offscreen): But don't you think, I mean maybe they say that one of the problems or reasons why the don't want that is because they don't want other people coming in and...

GA: Yeah. I guess they don't want... Times have changed, man. They gotta get outta that. This is... times have changed. I understand you wanna reserve the history of the island, cause there's a lot of history on this island. Lots of history!

HP (offscreen): Did you feel that, just as an [Note: unclear], when you got here, you obviously could tell that everyone was different and there was something weird about people.

GA: Right.

HP (offscreen): Did you feel like you had access to the history? Like did you know how to go about finding out about the history or did people just tell you? Like for example, the Penn Center.

GA: People just told me.

HP (offscreen): When you got here, did you go to the Penn Center or use that as a resource? (GA nods head).

GA: Yeah, when I came here to visit my brother, he was living down here. He toured me down here. He showed me all the stuff. He showed me the place that Forrest Gump shot his movie in town. Cause it was a lot of movies shot down here. The Jungle Book and all that, lot of stuff was shot here in Beaufort and a lot of movies. You look on the Internet, there's a lot of movies shot down here in this area. Gullah Gullah Island, the TV show. The teacher... he teaches at Beaufort High, the father. I don't know if you remember that show or not.

HP (offscreen): Oh yeah, I know that show.

GA: Yeah! Yeah, and the kids, they went there. But yeah, then my son, he come down and Penn Center, he show me the first black school. And all that stuff back in the area. And the Land's End, where the forts at. Y'all been down there to the fort?

HP (offscreen): Uh uh. I don't think so.

GA: Yeah, and Land's End down on the beach, there's a fort back there.

HP (offscreen): Yeah. It's a hard discussion as looking in from the outside trying to figure out how to make sense of it all because there's on the one hand, people really wanna preserve the history and on the other hand, people feel that it's very urgent for them... for the situation to change.

GA: It's a little of both. You wanna preserve the history here but you wanna bring a little somethin here. Just to... on the outside, we have to go so far. To do everything.

DC (offscreen): What...

GA: Go 'head.

DC (offscreen): What kind of development do you think would be best? What kinds of things would you like to see come in?

GA: Definitely not no Wal-Mart. Maybe somethin like, maybe a fast food place. Couple of those down here maybe. A McDonald's, Burger King, somethin down the island. I don't know. A grocery store. Maybe a laundromat, you know. Stuff like that, that people need. Not just stuff that people want. Somethin that you really need on this island. Like grocery stores and laundromats, stuff like that, you know. A nice recreation center, with basketball courts inside or something or even a pool. Somethin to keep these kids busy. Cause this is a nice area to have

something. (Nods head). Yeah, that would help a lot round here. Really don't need a whole lot of big development down here, cause like I said, that would take away from the history of the island. But still, as long as... Penn Center. You don't have to build nothin down by Penn Center. That's where most of the history is. But farther down toward Fripp and... they could put something there.

DJ (offscreen): So maybe have like different districts. Like Penn could be your historical district.

GA: Right!

DJ (offscreen): Then you could have a commercial district.

GA: A business district. And a historical district, you know. That would be nice on this island.

DJ (offscreen): Speaking of... Go 'head.

DC (offscreen): Can I ask you about this house. Are you renting or...?

GA: Renting.

DC (offscreen): And how did you find it?

GA: My niece was staying here. When I visited her and I said, "Wow, how much y'all pay for this house?" And she told me. I said, "These are nice homes." You know, three bedroom, four bedroom. Two full baths, a garage, and got nice yards and stuff. I said, "Wow." When I was living up North, man somethin like this would cost a lot of money!

DC (offscreen): Yeah, and is it like a private developer or is it a...?

GA: Yeah, they own this one. They own a place called Waterford Cove, and they own another place called Fairfield Village. That's over there on Sams Point Rd. And Magnolia Apartments. They own that four different developments. They own that.

DC (offscreen): And do you get trash pickup? (GA nods head).

GA: Every Tuesday.

DC (offscreen): And that's the county or is that the...?

GA: County. They cut the grass for you. They do everything, you know.

DC (offscreen): That's nice.

GA: Yeah. They just put all new roofs on here this spring. So every house has a brand new roof.

DC (offscreen): So they're keeping it up, too?

GA: Yeah. They're goin around now and doin the outside. That's next. I think they gone replace all the porches that need it, the damage. They gone replace them. (Nods head). But they keep it up pretty good. Cut grass every week. You know, pick up trash. The neighborhood... the people take care of it. Show pride in the neighborhood cause you don't see a lot of trash on the ground and stuff like that.

DJ (offscreen): Mr. Adams, you talked about the element. Let's talk more about church. I'm thinking of Pastor Russell as someone who has been a true shepherd. Has really been doin his job in developing that church. (GA nods head). Can you talk more about what he's doing and what you all as a church community are doing that helped this area?

GA: Well Pastor Russell, like I said. He has that school down there. And he's talkin about building upscale, low-income apartments, a child development center. He already purchased a lot of acres of land. So he can do this stuff. I mean he wants to do things for the church. And everybody in that church, they stick together. They try to do things for that neighborhood. He wants to build a rec center for the neighborhood. He wants that also, you know.

DJ (offscreen): What attracted you to that church? Cause...

GA: When I first went there, what attracted me, when I went there and heard him preach. And he was hittin it right on, I mean he was hittin it right on it boy. Everything. He didn't bite his tongue. I mean, everything he said was like right on the money, boy. And he like caught my eye and in my mind I'm like, "Wow." This guy... he's a good shepherd. And then I love the band, the choir. And then everybody in the church, they showed me so much love when they first met me. It's like this is my family. And that's the way... they felt like they were my family. And my friends. And that's hard to find a good church. But that church there, just something about that church just caught me. When I got there, they embraced me. And that's where I wanted it to be.

DJ (offscreen): Spiritually, the old people talk about somethin they call seeking, where they go out into the woods and they might have to go two, three, four times before they have a talk with the Lord. It seems like your journey started with the evangelist that you saw on television. (GA nods head). And it got you down here and then once you got down here.

GA: I got into it, right.

DJ (offscreen): You got into it. And I remember you saying that you've been a member and you haven't missed church in two years. (GA shakes head). Talk to us more about that. Like how your relationship with God has been developing and it seems like you're so strong.

GA: God has done so much for me. I mean, He just... I don't know. I don't know. He's done so much for me. And just goin to see him. I miss a Sunday, I feel like I miss something. It's like, "Wow, I missed Sunday. Man, I know I missed somethin today." I know the pastor probably talkin about somethin. I really miss the learning experience. You know, I just... God has just, He blessed me. Everyday He bless me. By letting me live again and that was a blessing right there. And then my family, you know, I just. It's just spiritually, it's hard to even explain. It's everything to me.

HP (offscreen): Did you attend church in D.C.?

GA: (Shakes head). I hadn't been to church in thirty years.

DJ (offscreen): Wow.

GA: Lemme see now, matter fact. It might've been thirty-five, forty years 'fore I even been to church. I've never been to church till I came down here. (DJ chuckles). I hadn't been since I was a kid and my parents made me go. So I've never been. Only time I went to church is weddings and funerals. This is the first time I've been to church, and it's hard to find a good church right away. Yeah, somethin about this church just got me.

DJ (offscreen): Talk to us about your parents, Mr. Adams. Are they still alive?

GA: My mother died when I was ten years old in a house fire.

HP and DJ (offscreen): Oh, wow.

GA: My house caught on fire. And she had died. So my uncle, my aunt and them, they raised me. And my grandmother. They raised me, my sister and my brother. Til we got on our own and our father, he was never really in the picture. So, I ain't know him til I became a teenager. Or who he was. But my uncle, my aunt, and my grandma, they raised us.

DJ (offscreen): They're still in Maryland?

GA: Yeah. Everybody still in Maryland. Everybody's gone now. My uncle, my aunt, my grandma. Everybody's gone now. I have one uncle that's still alive. And the rest is my cousins, my son, my daughter, my grandkids. (Nods head).

DC (offscreen): Where was your family from?

GA: My grandmother was from Roanoke, Virginia. She was... There's a picture of her there (points). She was like part Cherokee, somethin like that. (Nods head). Yeah, when she was in a wheelchair, she'd always wear two ponytails. (DJ laughs). She was from there. On my father side, all them was from down there too. Somewhere down in Virginia. Cause my father and my grandfather and my grandmother, they were all real light-skin with really curly hair and. So they were all from down there too. And my grandma, I know she was bout half Indian I think. And my great-grandmother was, too. I lived in a house with my great-grandmother, my grandmother, and all of us. We were all in the same house.

DJ (offscreen): Wow. What type of stories did they share with you?

GA: My great-grandmother had a piece of, a newspaper. And the article was like, Jesse James I guess got captured.

DJ (offscreen): Wow! So that's like 18...

GA: She was born in 1880. And she died in 19... 1960 something. '65, '68 maybe. So I got to know her for awhile. Cause we all lived in the same house. When the house burned down, my mother was stayin there with us. My grandmother, my great-grandmother and my grandfather. All of us lived in the same big house. But she, she had stories. But yeah, Jesse James.

DJ and HP (offscreen): Wow!

GA: Her mother was a slave. Yeah.

DJ (offscreen): So your grandmother's mother?

GA: My great-grandmother's mother was a slave. Cause she was born in 1880. So yeah, her mother was a slave. My great-great-grandma, yeah. But I got a chance to be with my great-grandma for awhile. Yeah.

DJ (offscreen): Now did your great-grand ever talk about her mom?

GA: Nah, I can't too much remember her saying too much about her mom. I always remember her sayin sometimes how they lived on a farm or some type of plantation. She was talkin bout that sometimes but she never got into it bout as far as what they did back in there.

DJ (offscreen): In Virginia?

GA: Yeah. But yeah, I knew my great-grandma.

DJ (offscreen): What did she used to talk about? What was your relationship like with her? What was her name first of all?

GA: Her name was Mrs. Hattie.

DJ (offscreen): Mrs. Hattie?

GA: We used to call her Momma.

DJ (offscreen): Momma?

GA: Yeah. She was just... I don't know. She was always. I was one of her favorites though. Matter fact, I was the last person she touched and talked to before she died. The ambulance put her on the stretcher. She grabbed my hand and said, "I'll be back, son. Don't worry. I'll be back." And she died that same night. But me and her had a good relationship. My mother did, too.

HP (offscreen): How old were you when she died?

GA: My mother? I was ten.

HP (offscreen): No, your great-grandmother.

GA: I was bout fourteen, maybe. Yeah, thirteen or fourteen when she died. But yeah, it was alright. It was alright with her. We had pens, we had chickens and all kinds of doves and rabbits. We had everything in our yard.

HP (offscreen): So the way that you were raised with your family, do you think that impacts how you raise your children?

GA: Yeah. I wanted them to have what I didn't have. Cause I didn't have a dad at all. I made sure all my kids had a dad. I raised them, gave 'em everything they ever wanted. My oldest kid, they call me... my son call me least once a week round this time to see how I'm doin.

HP (offscreen): How do you get them... how do you ensure that they know to do the right thing? How do you teach them that?

GA: I just try to pretty, always... All my kids love to work cause they know I worked hard. So they always had a good job, get education, do something good in your life. Don't just be like... don't just be an anybody. Ya know, just do something with your life. Cause you see how hard your daddy worked. I worked hard all my life. And now all my kids work. And now she's 16

(points backward). She said she ready for a job, too. She wanna work! All my kids wit it. I put that value in 'em. Always get you a work, hard! Ya know, matter fact, my oldest son... when I left Maryland, he took my job over. I worked for Southern Management Corporation. They own apartments and townhouses and stuff all in Maryland, D.C. and Virginia. And I was a maintenance engineer. I got my own couple properties and stuff. So he took my job. He told 'em his name was Glen Jr., so they hired him. They said, "We love your dad, so you got the job."

HP (offscreen): And that's what offered him...

GA: Yeah. Good for him. He love his job. He works in the main office. Yeah, but all my kids just do right. None of my kids, they no trouble. Never been in jail, none of that kind of stuff. Never got arrested for nothing. Never did anything. Cause I never been in jail. I ain't never did no time. Lot of my friends had, but not me.

DC (offscreen): So how did you avoid that?

GA: Just... I don't know. Always luck or just doin the right thing at the right time. I just... mainly because I had kids. If I didn't have kids when I was young, I probably would've been there too. Cause when you have kids, you think about a lot of things. Cause ya know, it's not just about you anymore. You have a family to look after, so when you got that, you double think what you gonna do. So that's a lot that save me. I know I had kids to take care of so I said, well... I always worked. Had good jobs. I worked for the University of Maryland for what ten, twelve years. I always had jobs, took care of the kids. If it wasn't for them... if it wasn't for my kids, I don't know where I would've been. I probably been in jail sometimes, too. I don't know... might not've even been here right now. Cause back in the '70s and stuff like that, if things were... No '70s were great, I ain't gone lie! '70s was a ball! (Laughs).

DJ (offscreen): Mr. Adams, you look young. How old are you?

GA: I'm 57!

DJ (offscreen): Okay...

GA: I know. Nobody thinks I am. (DJ laughs). My oldest daughter, she's 36.

HP and DJ (offscreen): Wow, okay.

GA: Yeah, she's 36. Yeah, I'm 57 years old. I gotta get a hip replacement cause I got a bad hip and knees. So I'm waitin to get that done. They gone do that eventually. And once I get better, they gone go and do it. But yeah, that's alright. I like my life so far. I just want my health to get better and then I'll be alright.

DJ (offscreen): Has the climate down here helped you with your hip or your joints by being warmer?

GA: Yeah, yeah it does cause you know, that cold weather, once that cold sets up there boy, that stuff make everything hurts. But down here, you don't get no cold. It be 70 degrees on Christmas Day. I was used to havin snow up there, ya know. Snow and sleigh ridin and havin fun. Down here, Christmas Day, it be 70, 65, 70 degrees. Kids outside with shorts on. To me it's just seems like it's just so different. Cause I'm used to it being 20, 30 degrees... cold! Down here, you don't see no cold. Every now and again, you might see a day where it might be 40 or 50, but that's it. No snow, no ice, no nothing. It's all year long. This is all year long. It's like living in Florida.

DJ (offscreen): Mhm hm, that tropical climate.

GA: Yeah, tropical climate. Ya know, another thing got me when I came down here. I seen the palm trees, and the Spanish moss and all that kinda stuff. I said, "Wow, this is alright."

DC (offscreen): Do you eat the kind of food that they eat down here or do you still eat the kind of food that you ate when you were a kid?

GA: I eat a lot of food. I eat what I was a kid and them too. Cause down here they a lot of rice. Rice with everything. I mean they eat rice at breakfast, lunch and dinner. Rice, rice, rice, rice, rice. And I mean, I'm used to eatin potatoes and stuff like that and rice so. I have changed though. Down here, they eat a lot of seafood. Shrimp with this, shrimp with that. Rice. Crab and rice. Shrimp, shrimp, shrimp, everything is seafood. So I like it cause I like seafood. Ya know what I'm sayin. Ya know, Maryland's known for crabs, too. But down here, they known for crabs and shrimp. The conch. Stuff like that. Ya know?

DJ (offscreen): What's conch?

DC (offscreen): I didn't know they could do conch here.

GA: Yeah!

DC (offscreen): That's getting, like Jamaica.

GA: This place down right here, Port Royal sells it. Yup. Called David's Seafood. It's a little house on the side of the road. They sell conch and all that stuff.

DJ (offscreen): Now for our viewers, can you tell us what conch is?

GA: Conch is like a big... it's like a shellfish, like a oyster like type. And so it's all the way at the bottom. You gotta get it at the bottom. Type of oyster but it's big.

DJ (offscreen): Is it tender?

HP (offscreen): It's a snail.

GA: Yeah, it's like a snail! That's what that is, is a snail.

DJ (offscreen): Oh yeah, like the conch shell?

GA: Yeah! The big conch shells (shows with hands). Yeah, it's a big, giant hunk of conch inside of there. You take it out and you just gotta cook it down. But it's good. Conch is good. But yeah, they got it here. You ever get the chance to go to that seafood house in a town. It's called Sea Eagle. You go in there, as soon as you pass the Wendy's, it's right there on the left hand side. You pass the Wendy's, like goin towards Wal-Mart, down that way. You see a Wendy's and you see a car lot on this side of the street and all that. You see a place called Sea Eagle. Go in there. They got every kind of fish you can think of! They catch everything locally. Groupers. Everything you can think of. Fish this big (holds out hands to armspan). Tunas, everything just huge. Get a chance, go in there. They got everything you can think of in there.

DC (offscreen): And do you eat rice everyday now?

GA: No! No way. I eat rice like once, maybe once a week, maybe. I can't do that everyday. Red rice, brown rice, rice rice. Rice, rice, rice. Up north, you go to a cookout, nobody has rice! No one has rice. You have potato salad, stuff like that. Down here, they have rice at cookouts. Every function, there's gone be two or three different kinds of rice. That's just the Gullah culture. Rice. Rice, big bags of rice. Everybody eats rice. But no, but I still like my stuff from up North. I know guys down here who say they never had fried potatoes with onions before. Right. And I say, "Huh? You gotta be jokin!" Never had homefries with onions before and I say, "Wow." Cereal with bananas. "You eatin cereals with bananas? What?" Yeah. The culture down here is different but it's alright. It's easy to adapt to. Cause they sell everything so easy. Everybody on the side of the road sellin crabs and shrimps on the side of the road. And with the heads on 'em. I never bought 'em with the heads on 'em... down here. Up north, when I go to the wharf. Go to the wharf, and buy 'em at the wharf in D.C...

HP (offscreen): Yeah. Do you fish at all here?

GA: Yeah. I go fishin with my brother couple times. Caught sharks and stingrays. Lot of stingrays down here.

HP (offscreen): You eat those?

GA: The wings. You eat the fins. That's what they make the uh... what you call those things? What those things called? Scallops? You knows how they seem all perfectly shaped round?

DJ (offscreen): Yeah.

GA: Somebody told me they use the fins from the stingrays use as a cookie cutter like and make that. Cause scallops are not round like that.

DJ (offscreen): I was gone say... they always perfectly round. They sure are.

GA: They not that way. Scallops not that way. You get a scallop out the sea, scallops not like that. Somebody said they make 'em out the fins of the stingray.

DJ (offscreen): When you all fish, where do you fish down? Where do you go out?

GA: There's places down here, Port Royal, Coral Sands, Hunting Island down here.

DJ (offscreen): By the beach?

GA: Uh huh. Yeah. And there's just a lot of piers. Lot of private piers down here that my brother knows. Lot of piers. Everybody got a piers. You go in the piers, the ponds, and just go fishin, crabbin. My next door neighbor, he goes crabbin all the time. Crabbin and shrimpin.

DJ (offscreen): What does he use for bait when he crabs?

GA: Chicken. Chicken necks and stuff like that. Just throw it in the net and pull 'em up. Yeah, crabbin. Shrimpin is easy. Just drag it, put your net in then pull it in. Lots of good fishin holes down here. All kinds of fishin holes. Every little road you go in, someone got a fishin hole back there somewhere. Lot of private ones too, people won't let you go on their land.

DJ (offscreen); What could you tell our young folks about this area because we've talked about the spirituality, we've talked about the culture, we've talked about what brought you down here. What is something that you can share, that you can give to the young people so when they look at this, they'll hear Mr. Adams say these words to the young people. What can you tell our folks?

GA: Bout this island? Or just...

DJ (offscreen): About this island or what they can do to better themselves?

GA: For people who live here or the people that wants to come down here?

DC (offscreen): For our students up North.

GA: Up North? Yeah. Beaufort, South Carolina is a good place to come and live. Because it's live, the culture is different, it's very educational down here. And it's laid back, there's lot less crime and there's things to do here. Not like the city. The city there's something... it's all everyday. Running everyday but if you want a place where you can just slow down a little and enjoy your life, this a good place to come. It's nice. Because people okay here; it's not bad. It's educational. The kids who never been away from up North can come down here and see all this water and bridges and all the scenery here. They wouldn't believe it if they come here. How this place is. I know when y'all first seen it, it was like, "Wow." Beautiful down here, ya know? Even if you go on the Internet and they show Beaufort. I mean like we right on the water. We are right here. And believe it or not, we don't get hurricanes like up North yet. We right on the water, always jumps by us for some reason. We right on the Atlantic Ocean.

DJ (offscreen): Yeah. You'd think you be prone to all the hurricanes.

GA: But if kids want a different culture and learn more about slavery and stuff, then it's a good place to come. There's a lot of ports down here where slave ships used to come. There's a lot. And even Charleston. You ever go to Charleston, man they got a place called Marketplace. You ever been there?

HP (offscreen): Uh huh.

GA: Where they used to walk the slaves from the water, auction 'em off right there. Or down here, Land's End too, down by Penn Center. Over there to Land's End... Lot of slaves came in down there. In Beaufort too. Before that bridge was there, used to be... ferry boats come to it. Used to bring the people in ferry boats. But if the kids wanna learn about the history, Beaufort, down here is a good place to come. Something different. My daughter said she don't wanna go back. (DJ laughs). Said she wanna stay here. Said she ain't never leaving. My son too. He said, "Dad, I ain't never goin back." Cause he came down here, so he can have a car, he have a job and stuff. Found a young lady, and stuff, a girlfriend. He said, "Man I ain't never goin back up there." It's a good place. Some people, it might be too slow for 'em down here, ya know. Not enough excitement, but I guess it depends on I guess how you wanna live. In the city, it's easy to get in trouble. Easy! You live in the city, trouble is right at every door you turn. Everything is happening so fast. But down here, everything is lowkey. If the kids wanna come down here just to... I would tell anybody come down here. Any of my friends, I would tell 'em, "Y'all come on down..." But everybody thinks that Beaufort is so far cause from Maryland it's like 9 and a half, 10 hours from here. I tell anybody. Sure come down. Come down here. You'll see. Just a different culture. Everybody needs a change. Try something new. You don't like it, you can always go back. Or try it. I never thought I would like it. Like I said, everybody think South

Carolina is South Carolina. They don't know that it's not like that. This is more like... it's closer, like Florida. Florida's only two hours away. Jacksonville's only two hours from here. I think Miami is like four. So, we're so close to the Savannah and Georgia line. But yeah, I tell anybody to come down just to see how it is down here. Cause I was shocked when I came here. I couldn't believe this place was down here like this. And I'll never go back. No way. When I go to visit, I'm ready to come home. (DJ laughs). After bout a day or two, I say, "Man, I'm ready to go back home, man." Up there, the car and kids, they drive so crazy. Everybody like zoom, zoom, zoom, zoom, zoom!

DJ (offscreen): Not like that down here?

GA: No! The roads, you see how nice the roads are down here. Yeah, but I would tell anybody. Please come down to South Carolina, Beaufort. Charleston, anywhere in South Carolina. Just come down to South Carolina, especially on the coast. On the emblem. Right here on the water, it's real nice. Got a lot of beaches down here and just so much stuff to do. Not like the city where you have all these concerts and all that stuff. But the water fun is really nice. In the summertime and stuff... The water stuff is open year round. All year and oh down here in November, we have Heritage Day. Y'all heard about that, haven't you?

DJ (offscreen): Yeah!

GA: That's off the chain!

HP (offscreen): Can you talk a little bit about that for people who don't know?

GA: It's heritages... it's about the Gullah-Geechee culture. You got all these people coming from all over the world come here. They have parades, all different kinds of food, people selling this stuff. And just all this culture and African culture and that's what it is. It's called the Heritage. And everybody talk about the heritage of the Gullah people here and the African people who came here. It's a big day, I mean all day, for three days. For a whole weekend. It's just nothing but parades, fun, just have just food, all kinds of different... People come down here from all over the world. Big campers, winnebagos that come down here and popular to stay here the whole weekend. And just a lot of fun. Just a lot of fun. The Heritage Festival is great. Anybody come down here, they gotta come down here in November to the Heritage Festival. Man, it's off the chain. It's real good. Lot of marching bands, floats, it's just good. They block the whole street off down here. Whole street, they block it off. Cause the grand marshalls goes through Penn Center. Everything goes through Penn Center of course. That's where all the history is, down at Penn Center, so that's where the parade goes. The whole road where Penn Center, there's thousand and thousands of people.

DJ (offscreen): Wow! That's gotta be a beautiful sight.

GA: Yeah, it is. Walking, driving. We rent golf carts. It's a hundred dollars for the whole weekend.

DJ (offscreen): Wow!

GA: Yeah, so we just go down with golf carts...

DJ (offscreen): And zoom around (laughs).

GA: Yeah, cause it's hard driving down there. You can't drive down through, it's too many people. On both sides of the road, it'll be all different kind of people you can think of. The Gullah culture. The African heritage that come to this island. And they do it every year. They sells kind of bands and everything. They sell stuff and everybody on the side of the road sell all kind of food and stuff. It's alright. When I first saw it, I couldn't believe it. And the whole, everybody be out here for the Heritage Festival.

HP (offscreen): Well thank you very much. It's been wonderful, sitting down and talking to you.

GA: Thank you. It's been great. I've been looking forward to this.

HP (offscreen): Yeah, but thank you very much. It's been wonderful.

DC (offscreen): Thanks. It's been really helpful.

GA: Thank you!

[End]