

ROLANDA JONES: We, Rolanda Jones and..

NAGONDA MILLER: Nagonda Miller.

ROLANDA JONES: Hereby give the results of this interview on January 22, 2007 to the city of Lincoln, Nebraska, as an unrestricted gift - with the gift we've transferred to the city of Lincoln, Nebraska, legal title and all literary and property rights, including copyright. Okay Miss Miller, where were you born?

NAGONDA MILLER: Lincoln, Nebraska.

ROLANDA JONES: Have you always lived in Lincoln?

NAGONDA MILLER: Yes. Well, when I was a kid we moved back and forth from California, but the majority of my life has been here in Lincoln.

ROLANDA JONES: Oh. Okay, so do you have any siblings?

NAGONDA MILLER: Yes, I've got two sisters and two brothers.

ROLANDA JONES: Okay, okay. Um, so did you go to school here?

NAGONDA MILLER: Yes, I did.

ROLANDA JONES: Okay, what schools did you attend?

NAGONDA MILLER: Clinton Elementary, Elliot Elementary, [laughs] Lefler Junior High and Lincoln High School.

ROLANDA JONES: Oh, okay! That's great, that's great. Okay um, after you um, finished high school, where did you go?

NAGONDA MILLER: I went to Job Corp...

ROLANDA JONES: Oh, okay.

NAGONDA MILLER: In Clarefield, Utah.

ROLANDA JONES: So how was that?

NAGONDA MILLER: It was fine, I did two years there.

ROLANDA JONES: Okay, so were there many African Americans?

NAGONDA MILLER: Yea, there was a lot of African Americans there. There was people from all around the country there.

ROLANDA JONES: Oh, okay. Okay, okay. So, what college did you attend?

NAGONDA MILLER: We went to, I went to - attended, like, I did a year at Salt Lake University. Salt Lake City University.

ROLANDA JONES: Okay...

NAGONDA MILLER: Salt Lake City, Utah.

ROLANDA JONES: What major, or what subject did you take in...

NAGONDA MILLER: I studied psychology.

ROLANDA JONES: Oh, that's great! So you know about a lot of these people here in Lincoln!

NAGONDA MILLER: Mhmm, yea. Bunch of cousins, yep. [Laughs]

ROLANDA JONES: Okay, okay. So now, do you still reside here in Lincoln?

NAGONDA MILLER: Yes, I do.

ROLANDA JONES: Mmkay, and work?

NAGONDA MILLER: Yes, I do.

ROLANDA JONES: I have a few questions I'd like to ask you. One of 'em - oh, have you ever been married?

NAGONDA MILLER: No.

ROLANDA JONES: Okay, okay. How 'bout your mother and father? Are they still here in Lincoln?

NAGONDA MILLER: My mother's still in Lincoln. My father's in California.

ROLANDA JONES: Oh, okay. Okay, okay, that's great. That's great. Okay um, well since you've been here all your life, I'd like to ask: what sort of things would you - what sort of things have you seen change here in Lincoln? Population wise, and also as far as the African American community?

NAGONDA MILLER: Well, I'd say back in the early '90's we'd get a lot of Southern African Americans comin' in. There's like a big ol' rush of Mississippians! [Laughs] But it's true! Hey...But, it's expanded a lot. Yea, so it's good.

ROLANDA JONES: So would you say um, for instance, like - okay, so there's more now, here, than there's ever been?

NAGONDA MILLER: Yea, yea. Yes.

ROLANDA JONES: So do you seem to uh, I mean, as far as - do you see anything change, as far as uh, Lincoln changing for the better? Or, the African Americans uh, are getting better at, you know, as far as getting help and stuff while they're here, comin' from different states and countries?

NAGONDA MILLER: Well, I think some things they get, you know, there's better - there's quicker help here. You know, 'cause we've expanded but we're not like, a big city, you know. We're not New York City, we're Lincoln, Nebraska. You know, we're still Mayberry, so...And, I mean, we've expanded our city, we've got more places to go shopping and stuff like that, but as far as - uh, helping African Americans...we're okay.

ROLANDA JONES: Okay. What would you say about like, business wise - as far as African Americans have uh, as far as having their own business. Have you - would you say there's been a growth at all, in that area? In owning their own businesses?

NAGONDA MILLER: No.

ROLANDA JONES: Okay. Uh, what would you change, as far as, uh - or what would you say we would need more here, than anything? As far as African American businesses or services?

NAGONDA MILLER: Oh, I think we need a lot more, like an African American restaurant would be nice. You know, Soul Food restaurant? Um, we do have a um, a clothing place, like in the mall. I think it's called Total Image? Yea, but that's what, one? You know, out of fifty million other stores here. So um, I mean, it seems like the only time they celebrate or even acknowledge African Americans is during what, the month of February? Black History Month? And, they think that's it, that's it. One month out of the year.

And that's because they, [laughs] they basically have to! You know, and that's when we're acknowledged in Lincoln, Nebraska, so. I mean, it's a nice place to raise the kids and stuff like that, but they need to, you know, do more. Besides this, you know, acknowledge the African Americans who are on the football team. [Laughs]

ROLANDA JONES: Okay, so say - so it would be more like, so in your opinion, as far as celebrating African American holidays in February it should be more like, what? It should be more than that, is what you're saying.

NAGONDA MILLER: Yea, more than that one month. You know, have some more - get some concerts comin' in. Some entertainment would be nice. You know, you gotta travel to Omaha or Kansas City or - shhh, basically somewhere else to get entertainment here! I mean, we get the same stuff every year, it seems like. We got the State Fair, which I'm sorry, but not really in to the Country music all the time? Um, you get the same stuff at the um, the Pershing Auditorium here. I mean, it's, it's just - it's a trip. They don't let 'em come here. But they don't even try to um, I should say, advertise. Saying, "Hey," you know, "Come to Lincoln," you know, "We're expanding our city." You know.

ROLANDA JONES: So you sayin' we need more businesses?

NAGONDA MILLER: More businesses, we need more entertainment, we need more something for, you know, the African Americans that do live here - something for them to do, you know? Our city [inaudible], well and this place - we close down at what? One? [Laughs] It does! You know, and Sundays it closes at six! Hey! And...

ROLANDA JONES: Okay, so what would you say like, if one wanted to do something, what would be the first thing would you probably suggest, that's outside of a restaurant that African Americans need more here in the community?

NAGONDA MILLER: We need more, I say, just more - uh, I don't wanna say get-togethers, uh... You know, more community, you know, functions, you know. Something like that so everybody gets to know everybody. And, you know...

ROLANDA JONES: There was something I meant to ask you while you, um - the school part. I'm sorry for that. Um, did you by any chance ever experience, or know anyone else that experienced any prejudice? While in school, of any age?

NAGONDA MILLER: Not really. Not really.

[Noise in background, unidentified "Oops."]

ROLANDA JONES: Okay. I'm gonna stop for a minute, okay? Okay, now you, you told me you went to college in a community college.

NAGONDA MILLER: Mmhmm.

ROLANDA JONES: And you'd taken up psychology.

NAGONDA MILLER: Mmhmm.

ROLANDA JONES: So tell me about that adventure.

NAGONDA MILLER: Well, it was through the Job Corps in Salt Lake City. So, and it was - I did a year. It was a nice school, it was cool.

ROLANDA JONES: So did you like subject itself?

NAGONDA MILLER: Oh yea, I love psychology. Psychology's fun.

ROLANDA JONES: Well is that, is that something that you might be looking forward to in the near future?

NAGONDA MILLER: I thought about it.

ROLANDA JONES: Now you know we need a lotta help out here in Lincoln, don't you?

NAGONDA MILLER:[Laughs] Yea, all these inbred cousins. But anyway!

ROLANDA JONES: Okay, so given the chance [inaudible] - if you was to get uh, a grant or what have you, that would be something that you would consider?

NAGONDA MILLER: I would consider it, but I also like cooking. [Laughs]

ROLANDA JONES: Okay, psychology...Okay.

NAGONDA MILLER:[Laughs]

ROLANDA JONES: Okay now, does any of your siblings go to college?

NAGONDA MILLER: No.

ROLANDA JONES: Okay. Now, I wanted to touch a little bit also with your mom and dad.

NAGONDA MILLER: Mmhmm.

ROLANDA JONES: What kind of work did your mom do?

NAGONDA MILLER: She did a lot of maid work. She worked the hotels.

ROLANDA JONES: Oh, okay. Here in Lincoln?

NAGONDA MILLER: Mmhmm.

ROLANDA JONES: And your dad?

NAGONDA MILLER: My dad didn't know too well, and I think he did like, just the odd jobs and stuff like that. Like handyman work.

ROLANDA JONES: Okay, well I'm not gonna stay too long on that um, right now. But I would like to ask you, as far as, uh - I know that you have uh, nieces and nephews?

NAGONDA MILLER: Mmhmm.

ROLANDA JONES: What do you think about the kids now, the teenagers now here in Lincoln, compared to the - when you were coming up?

NAGONDA MILLER: Oh, gosh. These kids are a trip. They, they're very outspoken kids these days. I mean, they're very - they're wild. I mean, not all of 'em. There could be some good kids and everything, and pretty respectful ones, but with a lot of - we have a lot more kids that are just, you know, becoming adults at the ages of thirteen and stuff like that. And twelve and thirteen. And by the girls becoming mamas, and by the boys becoming daddys. And, I mean, it's crazy. When I was a kid, we weren't doin' that. Of course, we were wondering about things, but we were too busy playin', you know, tag. Playin' games and stuff. We weren't that crazy.

ROLANDA JONES: So if you was to give some advice to the teens out there now, what would your advice be?

NAGONDA MILLER: Stay in school. Stay in school and appreciate school. You know, get that high school diploma for one thing. Make sure you get that. Even if you don't plan on goin' to college, just make

sure you get that. 'Cause otherwise, [laughs] flippin' them burgers the rest of your life ain't gon' be fun. You know, and if you can go further, go further. Make sure you can go further. You know, go as far as you can. You know, get you somethin', get that paper. It's important. It is *very* important. You know.

ROLANDA JONES: So were there any rough spots that you had to go through growin' up?

NAGONDA MILLER: No. There was a lot of, um - as I got older, I was in my teens and stuff - the um, crack world, crack-cocaine world, came to Lincoln, Nebraska. Yea. And, of course we were not a rich family and it came and hit the poor folks, and you know - and it's still here. And it's just - and it's sad. I know a lot of people who, as I got older, and people I went to school with and turned out to be drug addicts. And that includes family members and stuff like, they're drug addicts.

ROLANDA JONES: So, would you say - which one is the bigger problem, that or this meth thing I'm always hearin' about on TV?

NAGONDA MILLER: I think meth. I hear more about meth than I do about crack. 'Cause uh, I'm not saying crack's not a problem but I hear more about the meth. And meth seems, there seems to be more deaths um, you know, with the meth system goin' on. 'Cause you have to make it and, and they're blowin' each other up, or they're blowin' somebody's barn, or...[laughs] I don't know, killin' the cows or something, but...

ROLANDA JONES:[Laughs]

NAGONDA MILLER: It's a trip! I hear more - and then, we're gettin' from the other states, too. Because, it's always on the news: somebody come from California with tons of marijuana under the damn trunk! And they're drivin' like nuts down the highway!

ROLANDA JONES: Yea, yea that's true, I've heard about that too. Um, I need to ask you now, is your mother from Lincoln?

NAGONDA MILLER: Mmhmm.

ROLANDA JONES: Oh so everybody's from Lincoln?

NAGONDA MILLER: Mmhmm.

ROLANDA JONES: Okay, okay, okay. Yea, this drug thing, it's gotta stop.

NAGONDA MILLER: It's crazy.

ROLANDA JONES: Yea, it is. Well, um - say right now, as far as uh, do you know, uh, anyone that would probably like to tell their story as you're telling your story?

NAGONDA MILLER: Mmm, probably my sister. My older sister.

ROLANDA JONES: Okay, well I think that's it for now.