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Jamila Jones:

All right. It is Thursday, December 8th, 2022. My name is Jamila Jones, and I am here with ...

Sharmein Sloan:

Sharmein Sloan.

Jamila Jones:

And Dr. Kelli Johnson from Marshall University. And we are conducting an oral history interview, as a part of the National Parks Service, American American History in Appalachia grant program, focusing on civil rights history. Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed, again.

What is your full name?

Sharmein Sloan:

Sharmein Denise Sloan.

Jamila Jones:

What is your birthday and where were you born?

Sharmein Sloan:

12/6/64. I was born in Charleston.

Jamila Jones:

Okay.

Sharmein Sloan:

Yes, ma'am.

Jamila Jones:

Do you remember the hospital?

Sharmein Sloan:

Women's and Children's. No, no. Listen, no, this was my daughter. I was born in Kanawha City. I was born in Charleston. Back in the day, that was the only hospital they had, so I was born in Kanawha City. That's where mom had to go to have me.

Jamila Jones:

Okay.

Sharmein Sloan:

I work at Women's and Children's.

Jamila Jones:

Really?

Sharmein Sloan:

Yeah.

That's where I had my daughter.

Jamila Jones:

Okay.

Sharmein Sloan:

Mm-hmm. Yeah. She's 21 now. I had her young.

Jamila Jones:

Tell me about your family.

Sharmein Sloan:

We were very close. We were [inaudible 00:01:17]. There's four of us. You know what I'm saying? There's three girls and one boy. He's the baby, whatever. And my mom, she passed away about two, three years ago.

Jamila Jones:

Sorry.

Sharmein Sloan:

We then made it closer, closer. So we know she would be happy to see us. You know what I'm saying? Because I know that's all she probably worried about. But we [inaudible 00:01:41]. Mm-hmm.

Jamila Jones:

Tell me about your childhood. I heard a few of the stories.

Sharmein Sloan:

I know. I had a good childhood.

Jamila Jones:

Good.

Sharmein Sloan:

You know what I'm saying? Listen, one thing about it, my mom she was kind of young to have us. Then I seen my mom struggle to care of us, but we had the best childhood. I wouldn't trade for the world.

Jamila Jones:

That's awesome. What do you remember doing around Huntington as kids?

Sharmein Sloan:

As kids, we used to always, we would go to the Boy's Club. We had a basketball team. We had a baseball team. We had all them. You understand what I'm saying? [inaudible 00:02:19] and whatever, he used to be there, and he would have us and all that. We was up at the Boy's Club, and do stuff. It was like every day we came home, we had something to do.

Jamila Jones:

Mm-hmm. Something fun to do.

Sharmein Sloan:

Yeah, we had something to do. I think, he made sure he kept us busy, so we weren't doing nothing else.

Jamila Jones:

Right. You wasn't getting into trouble.

Sharmein Sloan:

Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Jamila Jones:

Any other stories about your childhood you would like to share?

Sharmein Sloan:

Hmm-mm.

Jamila Jones:

The Civil Rights Era in the US was the '50s, '60s and early '70s. Do you have any recollections from this time period?

Sharmein Sloan:

Actually, really, not really. Only thing I know about it is when my mom use to tell her stories about things that was going on, like she had to go sit in the balcony for a movie, and she only could go on Sundays.

And then, as far as me, having to experience that a little bit, stuff like that, at the time, I didn't. But mom, she used to try to explain, she would tell us about stuff like that.

Jamila Jones:

Yeah. When did you first vote?

Sharmein Sloan:

Me? I kind of like didn't vote, didn't vote, didn't ... But I think my first really was like 18. But then I kind of like, hold on. And then I voted when what-you-call-it was running for President.

So I voted [inaudible 00:03:45] trying to make sure what-you-call-it wasn't out there. He'd probably put Hillary in there. What? And then ...

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Jamila Jones:

What do you remember about people organizing around voting?

Do you remember it being a big deal?

Sharmein Sloan:

Yeah. Oh yeah. It was a big deal. Yeah, they made sure, they trying to tell you how important it was. And I'm saying then I really, until I got older, where I feel it was that important. At the time, I was coming up a little bit, I didn't really know. So ...

Jamila Jones:

What specific events happened in your city that had to do with civil rights?

Sharmein Sloan:

Really, I'm fixing to tell you now, every Martin Luther King Day they march through the city. You know what I'm saying? With everybody in the neighborhood, where they march through there. It's, yeah. Mm-hmm.

Jamila Jones:

How did you get your local and national news?

Sharmein Sloan:

From the TV.

Jamila Jones:

Okay. And which newspapers did you read?

Sharmein Sloan:

Herald-Dispatch.

Jamila Jones:

Who were the most important people in your community?

Sharmein Sloan:

Actually, really, in my community, the most important was Pete Gussy. You know what I'm saying?

Jamila Jones:

Who were the most important black national figures at this time?

Sharmein Sloan:

Our first black President.

Jamila Jones:

During the time of the Civil Rights Movement.

Sharmein Sloan:

Mm-hmm.

Jamila Jones:

How did the Civil Rights Movement affect your life?

Sharmein Sloan:

I really felt [inaudible 00:05:58]. I would never really know the real-

Jamila Jones:

What was really ...

Sharmein Sloan:

Yeah. Really going on.

Jamila Jones:

Okay. What were some of the differences you encountered at school, being out in public? Were you treated any differently?

Sharmein Sloan:

Actually, really not. You know what I'm saying? But it ended up being a time, I can kind of remember, it would be a time where somebody kind of had a little sly ...

Jamila Jones:

Comment?

Sharmein Sloan:

You know what I'm saying? Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Jamila Jones:

Who were some of the people fighting against segregation?

Sharmein Sloan:

Martin Luther King.

Jamila Jones:

What role did women play in the movement?

Sharmein Sloan:

[inaudible 00:06:59].

Jamila Jones:

Yeah. Double stories, huh?

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Sharmein Sloan:

Mm-hmm. Come see what I'm laughing at, because [inaudible 00:07:10].

Jamila Jones:

Yeah, we spoke about churches.

Sharmein Sloan:

Uh-huh.

Jamila Jones:

And what church did you go to?

Sharmein Sloan:

Antioch.

Jamila Jones:

And that was on 10th Avenue?

Sharmein Sloan:

10th Avenue.

Jamila Jones:

Okay. And do you remember if there was an NAACP in your community?

Sharmein Sloan:

I really don't.

Jamila Jones:

If you could go back to the '60s, is there anything you would do differently regarding your actions or attitudes, towards the civil rights issues?

Sharmein Sloan:

No, not really. I was just a baby then. I wasn't grown up.

Jamila Jones:

Right.

Sharmein Sloan:

You know what I'm saying?

Jamila Jones:

All right. That's all my questions.

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Sharmein Sloan:
Okay. Thank you.

Jamila Jones:
You did it again.

Sharmein Sloan:
I know.

Jamila Jones:
Thank you so much for interviewing with me.

Sharmein Sloan:
I'm going to kill my sisters.

Speaker 3:
You could pre-think through your questions.

Jamila Jones:
Wait.