

## Voices of Southern Hospitality Oral History Project

**Interviewee:** Gadsden, Tamika

**Place of Interview:** 205 Calhoun Street, Addlestone Library, Charleston, SC

**Date of Interview:** 2018-07-02

**Interviewed by:** Baele, Sylvie

**Date of Transcription:** 2018-09-10

**Transcribed by:** Wright, Alexis

**Date of Revision(s):** 2019-01-30

**Length of Interview:** 00:36:08

**Keywords and Subject Headings:** Social Justice, Activism, Social Equity, Wadmalaw Island, Tourism Industry, Memory, Development, Gentrification, White supremacy, Poverty, Cultural Heritage, International African American Museum, Charleston City Council, African Americans, Joe Riley, John Tecklenburg, Municipal Administration, Homelessness, Racial Discrimination, Laws, Police, Profiling, Marginalized Community, Peninsula, Downtown, New Jersey, Denmark Vesey, Black-owned Business, Reparations, Dellz Uptown, Hannibal's, Martha Lou's Kitchen

**Abstract:** This interview contains first hand information from activist Tamika Gadsden. Gadsden discusses how gentrification has changed her home community of Wadmalaw Island and how the Black community is constantly struggling, especially when compared to other social and economic sectors within the Charleston area. This interview also shares insight into problematic interpretations of the lives of enslaved people and the institution of slavery within the tourism industry in Charleston.

**Biographical Note:** Tamika Gadsden is a local social justice activist who specializes in studying and analyzing the effects of tourism on the preservation and interpretation of the history of Charleston. Gadsden was born in New Jersey but relocated to Wadmalaw Island, SC with her family when she was a teenager. Gadsden spent years as an executive in the retail industry before embarking on a career as a social justice activist and outspoken advocate for traditionally marginalized people, organizations, and communities in the region.

### Project Details:

In the summer of 2018, student researchers from the College of Charleston conducted oral histories for the research project, *Voices of Southern Hospitality*. The project documents diverse opinions and stories about southern hospitality in Charleston, South Carolina, but also offers a deeper and more intimate history of a changing community. Over the past thirty years (early-1990s to 2018), the Charleston peninsula and its surrounding islands have experienced rapid economic growth and rapid cultural and ecological changes. The *Voices of Southern Hospitality* project chronicles this profound transformation with the personal histories of Charleston residents.

The project was launched in June 2018 with funding from The Committee for Innovative Teaching and Learning in the Liberal Arts and Sciences at the College of Charleston. In addition to documenting important stories, the project was designed to train College of Charleston students in oral history

research methods. Five student researchers and 42 interviewees participated in the first phase of this project (June and July, 2018).

## Interview Begin

[Interviewer Initials]: **SB**

Interviewee Initials]: **TG**

**SB:** Alright, my name is Sylvie Baele and I'm conducting an interview today, July 2nd 2018 at the College of Charleston Addlestone Library. If you go ahead and introduce yourself for our record.

**TG:** My name is Tamika Gadsden. I'm also known as Mika. And I am a local activist and podcast host. I guess yeah. [laughter] content creator.

**SB:** And you're originally from?

**TG:** Born and raised in New Jersey. However my father is a native Charlestonian or native to Wadmalaw Island specifically. So while I was raised up until 14, 15 years old in New Jersey, I did actually relocate to South Carolina. To Charleston. Back in '96. Graduated high school from Saint Andrew's High School (which does not exist anymore) in 1999.

**SB:** Wonderful. Thank you! Tamika can you describe to me your childhood? Either your childhood in Jersey or your childhood here?

**TG:** Yeah absolutely. I'm the daughter of parents who lived through the Jim Crow South. My mother is a native of North Carolina. Eastern, North Carolina - so New Bern or Havelock. My father is a native Charlestonian. And so but they both had migrated up north to New Jersey - New York and New Jersey - and they settled in New Jersey eventually for better opportunities and that's a similar story to many who have migrated. Many African Americans or or descendents enslaved Africans who traveled up North for better jobs. You know just to be better economically. And so they met up North. Yeah and I was raised in a suburb of New Jersey in Monmouth County, beautiful Monmouth County. It's called Tinton Falls - is my home town and yeah I was raised near the Jersey Shore the real Jersey Shore.

**SB:** I heard it's really beautiful.

**TG:** Mmmm, it is really beautiful. It is not a caricature of debauchery [laughter]. So yeah I was raised near the Jersey Shore and pretty much grew up in a very diverse *cul de sac*. Like my street was I would say 95% African American, if not more. So I grew up around black, upwardly mobile black folk, interracial homes, men - two veterans that had, from the war, who both had German wives. So I've seen interracial relationships close-up. I just saw a lot of brown people, black and brown people who thrived where I lived. And so it was a pretty dope decision my parents had to settle in Tinton Falls. It was the right thing and the schools were great. Some of the better public schools in New Jersey. That

informed my upbringing. Up until 10th grade I lived in Jersey and then we relocated to Charleston, South Carolina because my dad wanted to just semi-retire and go back to where he had land - on Wadmalaw and that so started the second part of my journey as a young person. So, yeah I landed in Charleston in, I believe 1996.

SB: Alright. So in 1996 did y'all live out on Wadmalaw?

TG: Yeah, so this is sticky [laughter]. So we used a cousin's address in Charleston. I guess my dad was aware that St. John's wasn't the best school. That's the closest school to Wadmalaw - St. John's High School. My cousins - my older cousins- had graduated from there. However, I think by the time it came for us to attend high school it wasn't a choice. We actually had to use a cousin's address - someone who lived in West Ashley.

SB: Yeah to go to St. Andrew's

TG: Yeah to go to St. Andrew's

SB: I feel you. I grew up on John's Island and I wasn't about to go to St. John's either. My mom was not gonna have that.

TG: You know it's funny because I did a summer program. Some sort of just keep busy whatever and it was like the inside of the schools were ridiculous. Like from an infrastructure stand point I could never attest to the quality of education. I only read about that later, but I saw the classrooms were in disrepair and looked like they haven't been touched since the seventies or something. So I think that was a smart move, but I will say this having moved from New Jersey public schools and at least attending one year of high school in New Jersey., The quality of education in St. Andrew's was subpar - and that's being generous. Yeah.

SB: Alright. Let's see - so let's say Wadmalaw is your secondary home area. How has that area changed since you were young?

TG: Right and - so I currently reside on Wadmalaw. I returned to Charleston 4 years ago after going to undergrad in Jersey City and living in Philadelphia for 10 years. I returned to Wadmalaw to be closer to my aging parents and to take care of the land. We do own an acre. And I will say this, the biggest change that I've witnessed on Wadmalaw has been the emergence of more white families - gentrification pretty much is creeping. Wadmalaw is still Charleston County, it's not city, so it's still rural and I think that's why people gravitate toward it because of the seclusion it offers. However, it's been a huge uptick in white families moving to Wadmalaw and while that's ok on some levels I've already seen the eroding of culture. I've heard some folks wanting to refer to Wadmalaw as "The Wad" and that's to me a complete erasure of the indigenous culture.

SB: Yeah [laughter] Geez.

TG: Um that exists there.

SB: Yeah that's terrible.

TG: Yeah maybe you say that at home or something but someone really wanted to start a t-shirt campaign called "The Wad" and I thought that it sounded disgusting too. It sounded like gum that you spit out. So I've seen that. I've seen a lot of property be developed. You see a lot of acres for sale. A lot of African Americans have lost their property. Their heirs property that they've had in the family for generations. They lost it due to bad taxes and what-not so you see the signs for huge amounts of acreage going up and so you can't really stem the tide. It's coming but there is a group of engaged citizens who are trying to A: pay homage to the past - there's even, I believe it's a bed and breakfast or some sort of inn on Wadmalaw that acquired property that also has a cemetery. They discovered it was an African American cemetery and when I tell you what they did with that it was so profoundly humane and respectful. I was encouraged. So I do know that there's people [that say] "Hey we love Wadmalaw, we wanna live here, but we also wanna respect the land". There's a responsible way to go about growth and then some people could make that argument that there's responsible gentrification.

[Pause in audio]

**SB:** Alright, Tamika, you were just telling me about the B&B that exists on Wadmalaw that had the African American cemetery.

**TG:** Yeah so the point was that basically through growth and the emergence of the white population on Wadmalaw there are a faction of those who are very engaged in keeping Wadmalaw rural, keeping it beautiful, keeping it natural, and staving off impending development and also city infrastructure like water. That was almost two years ago it was in the paper. There were some insidious groups that found their way to the black communities and - mainly the black church - and pretty much misled the black community. It was in the *Post and Courier*. They had suggested to the black reverends and clergyman that Wadmalaw's water was tainted and toxic because it was rural and they suggested that we were living in a third world country. It actually made the front page and it couldn't have been further from the truth. What they found was an isolated incident of a woman whose tank was too close to her septic system and so she did have some bacteria present in her drinking water, but she just needed help relocating the two systems.

SB: I've got a septic tank.

TG: Right exactly. I've been drinking Wadmalaw water since the 90s. Like never had a issue.

SB: It was safer than a lot of water in the country.

TG: Right there you go. Even the fluoridated water I consumed as a child in New Jersey. But the point is that what that story showed me and I was so encouraged by my next door neighbor who really lit the fire under me and also that faction of concerned citizens who went to the county council meeting to

say that we don't want to fight against city water because that was the trick: try to tell folks that their land is toxic and not only will city water come and development then commercialism or commercial properties, but the other thing that would happen would be land would be seized. We've seen that in 1992 with the Ansonborough communities that was near the Aquarium. They tell you that your land is toxic and then they take it from you and you're displaced. And I don't think that African Americans on that island saw that. They just saw oooh I want the convenience of water. They had no idea that their property taxes would probably triple. They had no idea that they would essentially turn Wadmalaw into John's Island. Which is right now very crowded and overdeveloped. There's another storage unit going up off of Maybank.

SB: Yeah those condos.

TG: Yeah. I don't know where those people can live. I don't know where these people come from. I know where they come from. They come from Ohio

SB: They come from Ohio [laughter]

TG: And New Jersey. But I don't know where they're going to fit. John's Island has two lanes going this way and two lanes going that way. But the point is that could be Wadmalaw, but again engaged citizens - we clean up the side of the roads. I've participated in that. There's a newsletter so it keeps people up on the sales of property. So if someone comes in and acquires wide swaths of land, at least we are aware even if we can't stop it. So that's all we can do is just band together and hold onto to the land and keep it current as long as possible. It's the only thing you can really do.

SB: Have you seen people becoming more aware? Is that one of the changes in the community there?

TG: Yeah. Well this is the sticky part. So a lot of times in black communities - this doesn't mean that African Americans are not smart, but people prey on the prejudices and their experiences. So like with the water issue, they were told that the quote unquote "white man" was trying to keep them living in the third world conditions and they were using prejudice and they were using the Flint, Michigan crisis to rile up this anger. And so they had misplaced anger and they did not do their due diligence and researching it but moreover, the leaders in the black community who were leading them on that path - I blame them more than I blame the public at-large, the African American public at-large, because if you trust this minister, if you trust this church, you only assume that they're telling you the best things. I have no doubt in my mind that there was some other interests at play and so unfortunately there are some blacks on the island who do get it like my next door neighbor who built his house from scratch - he knows the dangers of development and I believe that we're part of the minority but in terms of African Americans - but there are huge swaths of white folks who really who knows what's up there trying to keep it rural 'cause they want to keep their property taxes low. They want to keep the waterfront property.

SB: They saw what happened to John's Island.

TG: Right exactly so they want to keep it that way.

SB: Yeah so you told me earlier but can you kind of extrapolate on what your occupation is and why you pursued this type of work?

TG: I'm the most irresponsible thirty-seven year old woman you'll ever meet. I quit my job as an executive in retail to relocate here and follow my heart. My heart, even though I left Charleston because it was traumatic. My high school experience, which I talk about very often, was traumatic. I was told that I wasn't smart enough to go to a four-year school. I was told to work with my hands or join the military by my guidance counselor. I had to complete all of my college applications I had to do on my own. I had to figure it out - and my mother did not graduate from college - she received schooling but she did not go to a four year institution. My father most likely did not finish the eighth grade. So me and my twin brother, who was athletically gifted, we knew we had to do something so I don't know what it was - thank God this internet was just popping - back in the nineties. I went to the school library and I found schools in New Jersey that had varying admittance standards because I didn't have the best grades because the school was so, they didn't engage me. I was called everything but Tamika, I was called Lanika, Tamisha, Takika - whatever. No one committed my name to memory and so I wasn't engaged but at least I had the wherewithal to know that I could go to a four-year school and so I left and never looked back for years, until I looked back. And I saw Charleston changing. So fast forward through life and loss and all these different things, I said you know what I want to move back to Charleston and then what I saw was the growth, I guess the beginning of the growth, every time I visited my folks, I saw and I heard things sounded different and didn't sound as oppressive. It didn't sound as good old boys and it looked different. I saw co-working spaces emerge and I just saw people who were advocating for bike lanes and I'm like wait let me give this a try and so about four years ago I quit my job in retail as an executive - I left Trader Joe's and I said I'll figure it out. Came with a nest egg and just have pursued finding my voice being an activist. I tried my hand at content creation which was great because it gave me the wherewithal, it gave me I guess the foundation to learn how to use social media a little bit more effectively. So I took classes at the College of Charleston and got my Digital Marketing and Social Media Certificate and so I've been using multiple platforms to amplify the voices of the marginalized and specifically African Americans since I got here and women because I am a self-proclaimed feminist. So I have been using my voice and using my lived experience both here in Charleston - specifically here in Charleston- and my experience growing up in New Jersey too- to really just bring attention to some issues.

SB: So thank you it's good work what you're doing.

TG: I hope so

SB: I believe that we're going to switch gears slightly. I wanted to ask you how has tourism affected your work as an activist?

TG: Well absolutely so back in college I did come home on my break from college. So my first college job was at the aquarium. Okay yeah so that was when it first opened. I was one of the first cashiers. I

just remember just the popularity of the aquarium it was amazing and it was beautiful. I actually look back finally at that time then but one thing I definitely had seen when I was dating when I would you know go out to the city with friends you go and eat and you'd just be bombarded with some very one dimensional type of history - a whitewashed version of history. And even though I didn't have the word power, I was learning. I was in college so I was able to take really robust African American history classes in the New York metro area so it was very, very robust and so I come home knowing that wait a minute this isn't

SB: Something's not right

TG: Something's not right. Something's not clicking so why pick brown people so disenfranchised and more importantly why are black, when you go downtown this is still remains the same go downtown see more white people enjoying Charleston and black and brown people servicing those enjoying Charleston? That dynamic is starting to change but it is just now starting to change and I noticed this in the nineties, in early two-thousands where you see domestic workers, you see cooks in the kitchen, you see the sanitation workers but when it comes to restaurants and venues being open to black folk or brown folk you don't see that and over the years people have been calling attention to that. This last two weeks we've seen the owner of the local King Street Public House refer to African Americans overtly as niggers. He did that in Columbia. He owns several properties down here in the lowcountry from what I've read. So that just tells me that that sentiment is the same sentiment of other bar owners, of other club owners, restaurateurs, you name it. The sentiment that blacks don't belong in Charleston. All you have to do is look at the history. I've blogged last week about the 1960s boycotts that were helmed by the NAACP youth leaders and basically they sat in a five and dime, which is just like a Woolworth's, or whatever Target, with milkshakes - I don't know what the equivalent of a five and dime is now - but you know how they sat there they disrupted business because their bodies were prohibited by law from enjoying the very basic of human life which is patronizing a restaurant and eating like a human being and that's also - while that was in the five and dime - that's the same thing with tourism. Blacks are not expected to enjoy tourism. That's why they didn't tell the truth. If they told the truth to edify blacks or to just to share that information it would have been more honest. It was never designed for us to consume. And also for Charleston to thrive and succeed to continue to be this bastion of the Civil War - you know this is Civil War Disney World as Benny Starr says or something like that. For it to succeed it needs to continue to perpetuate that that the Civil War was about State's Rights and it wasn't that bad and so on and so forth. Where and we know from reading *Denmark Vesey's Garden* and other great books that that's far from the truth, right, and our tourism industry is predicated on white supremacy and that's how it's going to flourish and that's how it's going to continue to flourish. You know Charleston is invested in that. They've dug in. Even the current mayor and even Mayor Riley - and I know that for some that's a bold take - but you don't have a man in office for forty years and you don't experience that **type of hyper-tenured** and then see the displacement of black and brown families and then say that oh he was a good old guy that Bill Murray just, you know, cradled in his arms at a Riverdogs game. That's just the caricature. He was actually at the helm of some really, really fundamentally damning policies and where he decided to put that Denmark Vesey statue was a damn shame too. I will say that.

(12:55)

SB: I agree sorry

TG: that was a rant

SB: I agree that is true. If you weren't looking for the statue you would never find it.

TG: I walked...

SB: ever

TG: I walked that park, literally, I had to stop and say look I don't want to bother you lady, but can you tell me - and this was a woman, thank gosh says I know you, I'm like oh. She says yeah you're Mika, you stopped by the ACLU and she was like yeah the statue is over there. Thank God it was just like the divine. I don't believe in coincidences but you're right that statue was just ridiculously hidden and it's on purpose and that's the thing that's the magic trick that the previous mayor

SB: Right

TG: That's the sleight of hand. He was so good at that like "Oooh I'm gonna take care of you but you know I'm gonna hide this inequity" or he was very good with the sleight of hand when it came to stuff like that and we see perpetuated today with the last week or two weeks ago with the apology that even a current council, sitting city council member referred to slavery as a necessary good in some way shape or form in the paper and I called him directly. So the point is that that doesn't exist unless you're empowered and he didn't just arrive at the conclusion

SB: Right [not] by himself

TG: Yeah so that's just the system that he's benefited from so he's going to view something, he's going to view the African Holocaust as good, but I would deign to say that he would never do the Jewish holocaust that way at all. Yeah. Um, yeah.

SB: No, you're right. So I think we can kind of covered your current opinion on tourism but I think I kind of got an idea of what you would change about the tourism industry but if you'd like to make it even clearer I'd love it.

TG: Oh, I'm sorry

SB: No, no, you you don't have to apologize at all!

TG: You know what I would do to make it better is be honest and you know I think a lot of people like to argue "oh heritage versus this and that" we know for a fact, it's written down - Calhoun has said it, it's documented. I'm reading a new book right now about the history of America from Jon Meacham.



It's written, Calhoun has stated what slavery's purpose was and he was the architect of a lot of things here in Charleston so that informs how we view the humanity of the descendants of enslaved Africans. So once you've decided that they were not humane - that they're not human - that they're devoid of humanity you, can continue to perpetuate lies and it happens easy and easier. So I would start with telling the truth. Read the Articles of Secession. Read what it says. Also understand that South Carolina was the first state to secede from the union. Know this history. Know the architects. Know why they were invested in keeping these margins on profit because free labor - hello - what's the margin of return on that? So, understand economically they needed free labor. And so I say all that to say that if you can't even tell the truth about that, how can you have these carriage rides? How can you continuously strive to whitewash history? The new African American Museum is going up and that's not without controversy itself in that those who are constructing it, those who are making decisions are they are they largely African American? You know, what about the contracts? Was there anything written to where you make it so that minority businesses get first dibs on the contracts? No there wasn't. Oh okay. So you are still perpetuating the very systemw that you say that this is in the name of.

SB: And the creation of

TG: Right!

SB: It's pretty damning.

TG: Right, it is pretty damning and then so again this is the magic trick of our previous mayor, or your previous mayor, I live on Wadmalaw so I don't have a mayor. The magic trick was this is his legacy and this is going to be his crowning jewel. So people look back in history and they gonna say oh "he wasn't that bad he was..."

SB: "he did this"

TG: Right and people need to understand that that's not the whole story so even that museum, which I will go into to learn more about and see things and all that, but I will also speak out about how this is another miss from Charleston. They just need to look at some other cities who've done it right.

SB: Right

TG: And Charleston refused to do it. It's not in their best interest they want to be the number one city in America because that's just that's their bread and butter - it's tourism. So what I would do is make it more equitable. I would stop creating laws like Mayor Tecklenberg's new law about banning young boys from creating palmetto roses.

(17:53)

SB: What's up with those signs?

TG: Exactly. So they are literally making it illegal to, this is almost reminiscent to the vagrancy laws that existed back in the day

SB: to keep people off the streets

TG: Exactly. So basically it's illegal to be

SB: On the streets

TG: Right. So we've made homelessness a criminal act. Now you have police officers - I saw a legless man in a wheelchair being accosted, not accosted but addressed, by the police. So now homelessness, instead of taking care of the core issue, you've made it illegal to be homeless on King Street. So God forbid you disrupt tourism.

SB: Right tourists would have to see that.

TG: Right. So I would want them to get real, be honest, confront their ugly past and also stop making it illegal to be a marginalized community on the peninsula.

SB: Those are some incredibly pointed paths and if anything we got the story the story on here. So it won't ever die now. So let's switch gears a bit, Tamika, and delve into this topic that, especially with the rise of a certain TV show, seems to be a buzzword, but there's this concept, idea, existence of "southern hospitality". So what do you consider to be southern hospitality? Or hospitality - you could take it as like.

TG: Well I will say this: being raised in the North by two parents, oddly enough who did not raise me southern. So my cousins always thought that I was disrespectful when I came home when I came down here because I didn't say yes ma'am, no ma'am maybe southern but the point is when I came down here I noticed very quickly that the different customs and the shared customs between all communities. Charleston is a very friendly city. It is. It's a very friendly city. People are yes ma'am no ma'am but it's also like a mask. The thing about, you'll see this like if you read *Gone with the Wind* or watch the movie, these customs that the South hangs onto, it makes them, I believe, it makes them feel better about how ruthless and how vicious the institution of slavery was and what they were doing to black bodies. I was just reading something before I came here about lynching in the South - how not only would they castrate black men, they would make them consume their own genitals. So imagine if that was like - and that was not an isolated incident - so imagine that type of institution was allowed to be pervasive. You'd have to act like "oh no, I'm genteel and we wear gloves and we, you know, we have certain darkies in the house they have their hair tied up" - it has to look . . . for you to be able to live in that type of viciousness, you have to affect an image that contradicts that or else or else you'll be consumed by how heinous it was and some people were. Some people were transfixed by slavery. That's why you had abolitionists and, you know, people who weren't black speaking up about the institution of slavery and referring to the Bible and saying this is immoral and this is not right but the southern hospitality, I guess, I tell people when you come here it's almost like going to Pleasantville.

Everyone's nice and smiling but if you ask them - like the authors of *Denmark Vesey's Garden*, when they went to go tour property that they wanted to rent, the lady said "oh the servants lived here" and she said "oh no no no slaves". "No they were servants". That's the hospitality, you know, you wanna be polite but no keep it real - they were slaves. When she tried to sell them some bull about it but that's, you can't, if you believe in the truth, you can't feel good about it. So that hospitality to me is informed by an inability to embrace the painful past and makes you feel good about things and I mean even it just makes you feel better about these restaurants that are selling classic Gullah cuisine but no black person

SB: calling it southern

TG: Yeah calling a southern. Men coming from different regions and acting like they're doing, you know, cooking this stuff for generations and just pretty much stealing from the culture. Black people do not benefit from the very culture that they've created and I keep referring to this great book I'm sorry but

SB: Please go ahead, I love it.

TG: *Denmark Vesey's Garden* says it like there were people took Gullah spirituals - white people - and say "oh no no no black people can't can't take this they don't honor it the same way we know how to take care of it right" and that's what you see in the tourism - specifically on upper King and maybe in the market area you see that with the restaurants that have emerged - is that they've taken black cuisine and repackaged into something trendy. But you know but Martha Lou's is over here and why can't Martha Lou's be on upper King? Why can't she get the same support? You know in other restaurants, why can't Hannibal's get the same support?

SB: And it's packed when they're in there

TG: I ain't gonna lie I waited too long, but it's worth it. And yeah I enjoy King Street sometimes - there's some good business on up there. There's some conscious folks but the vast majority - it's just not. So that hospitality is a coating, it's a patina of politeness that's just to anesthetize you from the grim reality - there's no equality here, there's no equitable access to resources. Dellz - I see your sticker on your water bottle - Dellz mentioned this at the city council meeting about slavery about well how come there's no systems in place instead of apologizing how come you not helping black businesses

SB: Right

TG: Have a brick and mortar

SB: Well I can't pay my bills with an apology that don't help me that much.

TG: I said that, like you know, my future kids can't take an apology to the bursar's office. You need to set people up for success so that, that's what's missing with the hospitality. If you don't see a Dellz, you should see more Dellz on upper King you should see more Hannibal's on upper King, but you don't.

SB: It seems as if a lot of the African American business owners - that they've had to struggle a lot more to succeed. I mean I've known Dellz for almost ten years and her and I have had long long chats

TG: She's really, yeah exactly

SB: And I... lots of ups and downs in the business... this opens closes opens closes, moving around, termites. You name it, you know.

TG: Everything. And that's not I mean there's not that investment. And it's not that black people are this species of folks don't know. It's literally - again go back to my high school - I was being taught something very different than my white counterparts. So imagine a business owner.

SB: Right

TG: You know the way that they're engaged is gonna be very different from a white woman or a white man - especially a white man - the way he's engaged. He's going to get instant credibility. He's going to get the benefit of the doubt. People are going to take risks. We have a current President of the United States who I grew up with - he's a clown that had bankruptcy four times but the bank said, you know, what we're going to let you keep profiting we're not going to collect that debt we're going to give you the benefit of the doubt so you can sell your name. But that that's what goes on every day in America. They give someone else, another class of people, the benefit of the doubt and give them countless opportunities, whereas you don't see that with business owners down here. I know struggling black yoga teachers who are looking for a brick and mortar you know situation so they can, you know, do and flourish just as well as the amazing you know other yoga classes here, but they can't get that opportunities you know so you know you want to see more representation and I just ask people to always ask why you don't see that. And don't assume it's because of lack of knowledge or wherewithal. There are systems in place that make it so. Yeah

SB: So Tamika we've covered a lot of questions - other questions I have so I will make a good use of the rest of our time and just ask you one final question. How do you picture, think, or hope this area will be like in the future?

TG: Honestly, to be real with you, as long as I can draw breath and I'm here in Charleston, I want people to google Angela Peoples. Angela Peoples held an iconic sign at the Women's March, the first Women's March on Washington. She's a black activist and her sign was "Remember white women voted for Trump" and she held that in front of three or four white women wearing the classic pussy hats

SB: taking a selfie or something like that

TG: Taking a selfie. Yeah you know such an iconic image. I always say that I want to be the Angela Peoples of Charleston tourism. And so I plan on supporting, encouraging, and arming younger me's, bolder me's. Whoever's ready to disrupt Charleston's tourism. So I don't see Charleston - I think there's generations of things set in place that whereas we're not going to see equality for quite some time - but I'll be damned if Charleston continues to thrive without a fight. And so I plan on being part of not no bullshit resistance. Not no white-led feminist resistance. None of that bullshit. I plan on being at the helm of some pretty disruptive forces and it won't be on Facebook and it won't be co-signed by your favorite local quote unquote activists who are full of shit. It's going to be real. It's going to be radical and I'm gonna honor all people - differently-able people, trans women, we're gonna just do away with the conservatism, with the white supremacy. We're going to just really fuck some shit up and we're going to start - it's going to start with that King Street Public House has yet to apologize, but yet to address Jimmy Latulipe's use of the n-word and I think they think they might be having a great fourth of July, but if I have to stand out there with my sign from Michael's, um, they will, they will address it in some way, shape, or form. So, yeah, I'm gonna fuck some shit up. I hope that . . .

SB: I look forward to seeing and helping you.

TG: Hopefully, yeah I need some friends. Yeah.

SB: So amen. Well thank you so much for doing this interview. I'll keep you abreast of what's going on.