

Transcript for Oral History Interview

Conducted for University of Maryland Course HIST428M – Spring 2017

Instructor: Dr. Anne S. Rush

Interviewer's (Student's) name: Andrew F. McGillicuddy

Interviewee's name: Timi Tinuoye

Interviewee's Country of Origin: England/Nigeria

Interviewee's Current Residence: McDaniel, Westminster County, Maryland, U.S.A.

Date of Interview: March 9, 2017

Place of Interview: McDaniel, Maryland, Westminster County, U.S.A.

Andrew: My name is Andrew McGillicuddy, and I am interviewing.

Timi: Timi Tinoye

Andrew: on March 9th at McDaniel College. *pause* So Timi, first things first how are you doing today?

Timi: *breath* It's been a umm *pause* It's been a fairly dull day to be entirely honest, but I'm feeling fairly well at the moment.

Andrew: That's good, that's good. So first things first uh, what's your full name?

Timi: Um full name is Oluwa Timilane Olubume Oyewole Tinoye.

Andrew: Wow, that's a--an interesting name right there, umm can you tell me more about your heritage?

Timi: Uhh yeah, the first name Oluwa Timilane it roughly translates to "God is protecting me," the like more direct translation would just be "God has got my back," but that's what the name means in general. The umm prefix Olu is in a lot of Yoruba names, and you'll hear that a lot, and Olu is a term for "God" so when you hear like Olu something it's like that name has some kind of meaning that references God, and that person is most likely Yoruba. So like in Nigeria there are 3 main tribes which you are going to see. So like there is Yoruba, there's Igbo, and there's Hausa, and that those are like the 3 main...3 main ones, and they all them each have their own language, but most --a lot of people are able to speak like more than one language, like a person will be able to speak like English, Igbo, Hausa, or like English, Igbo, and Yoruba, or English, Hausa, and Yoruba. Though most - a lot of people can speak like 2 or 3 languages.

Andrew: Wow

Timi: Yeah

Andrew: So that's pretty interesting, so uh like you said that there's 3 tribes. What tribe are you apart of?

Timi: I'm Yoruba

Andrew: Yoruba?

Timi: Yeah

Andrew: Alright true, umm and...do you still have family in the Yoruba tribe?

Timi: Yeah no like, uh, all my my family is like directly from Nigeria so a generation above me everyone was born, and raised in Nigeria, like my mom, my dad, my uncles, my aunts, they were all like born, and raised in Nigeria so there's a lot of heritage still just still there. My mom's in Nigeria right now, my dad's in Nigeria right now, so I definitely still have a lot of family still there, yeah.

Andrew: Oh that's cool, umm so when you were growing up, uh what - where were you born?

Timi: I was born in England actually. I was born in umm London at the Royal Free Hospital in umm Ca-Camden yeah. In the Camden Borough.

Andrew: What day?

Timi: May 10th, 1995.

Andrew: May 10th, 1995.

Timi: Yup

Andrew: Uh that's cool. So how did you end up in England? Why were you born there? Or like how did your parents get there so that you were born there?

Timi: They already had family in England, and--I'm not sure exactly why, I dunno whether I dunno the particular reasoning, but we just had--there's a lot of my family that's in England. So I imagine, I imagine it was just something to do with business opportunities or something along those lines.

Andrew: Interesting. So why - like do you know why your parents were errr like did did they live in England at any point, or did you live in England for some time?

Timi: Yeah me, and like my mom lived in England. My dad has pretty much always lived in Nigeria, but me, and my mom lived in England.

Andrew: Cool. For how long?

Timi: Ummm I came to America in like 5th grade, so like from 1-9 I was in England.

Andrew: True.

Timi: Yeah.

Andrew: Tell me more about your life in England.

Timi: Um--like over the weekends I would usually go to my auntie Twines house, and it would just be - she has three sons. One Christopher, Zach, and Daniel, and most weekends I would go over to their house, and we would all hang out there, but umm in general I played a lot of I played a lot of video games. I would, I just chilled. I played a lot of um...soccer is what it is here, but I played a lot of football. Yo like we, we actually got days off *pause* like we would constantly get days off of school because like there was like a huge game, and they were like no one is - no one is gonna show up so there is no point in even having school. Cause it was like parents weren't gonna be like you need to go to school, and parents were gonna be like are you kidding me? England is in the World Cup, where do you think you are going? Get back here. So it was like there there was just so many days where you just got to stay at home, and watch football. It was, that was pretty tight.

Andrew: That's awesome, so you said that you played football when you were there, what position did you play?

Timi: I was a defender. Cause I was I was like I'm still fairly tall, but like I was tall early so I was bigger than most other kids, it was, I was a mad good defender cause it was just like "I'm bigger than you" what are you really going to do to get past me?

Andrew: Yeah.

Timi: And I like wasn't slow, it was like I was big, but I was I wasn't slow so it was like they really wasn't much people could do pass me as a defender.

Andrew: Yeah. So um...I guess umm my question is how do you connect with like that English heritage, and how do you also connect with like the Nigerian heritage?

Timi: Well there's...the strongest connection is obviously my family, and like I have like aunts, and uncles that like live here in the US, and Maryland, but they're Nigerian. So any time that I am hanging out with them is I'm int-interacting directly with the Nigerian heritage, it's not like, it's not distanced from me at all. I'm like ten, fifteen minutes away from it. You know what I mean. So like, like whenever I have Thanks-Thanksgiving dinner, or Christmas', any of the holidays when I'm with my family, any time I'm just with my family just because I'm directly linked to that heritage like immediately. And then there is also the link that's just like doing business with my mom as well there is a lot of just like Nigerian context she has that like...I would just be like doing like reviews or edits or some like just...analyzing, and editing for the most part documents that they like have, and just being like "oh like ah this is a good idea", or I have these suggestions, and they either take the suggestions, or they don't, but it's like a direct, it's like putting me in line with it because everything that they're doing is in Nigeria. So all the like numbers, contracts, everything that I'm looking at is all about Nigerian policy, and Nigerian things, so it just connects me to that especially. For instance like there is umm...right now there is a huge abundance of gold in Nigeria, there is a uh like in Africa in general there is just a huge abundance of gold, but there is not even a say [indecipherable] there is nowhere where you can like just take ore, and be like it's this quality, and we need to get it shipped out for this price to bring revenue here. It's always being im-exported illegally. A lot of it goes to Dubai, and Dubai is prospering hugely, and a lot of it, and a lot of just gold is being just taken out, and just illegally moved out, illegally moved out, none of that money comes back into the economy, you know what I mean? So like my mom my mom is working really hard to try and get something in place to where it is like there's actually like money in circulation within the country, within the continent from the gold that they have there because that's been a huge source of Africa's wealth just like that's going back centuries. That's going back millennia, it's been a huge source of wealth ever. They've always been laid in gold because...it's a huge continent, and it's just rich with gold. So getting back to being able to like actually prosper off the gold, instead of releasing it is gonna be mad beneficial. You know what I mean?

Andrew: Yeah

Timi: Like the richest man ever was Mansa Musa [1312-1337], and his empire was built almost entirely upon gold. That was what he did. He, I can't remember I believe it might've been Egypt. I think he visited Cairo, he dropped so--he gave out so many gold gifts, he just gave them so much gold that their whole economy was just screwed for like years. It took them years to get the value of gold back up because he just handed them so much gold that their whole gold market just got screwed up. He like that's, and that was what his empire was built upon. The fact that he

just had a huge abundance of gold made him extremely rich, extremely wealthy, and allowed him to expand, and that's why he's the richest man in history. The richest recorded man in history, and it's all off of gold within the continent, and right now none of that wealth is being capitalized upon. So it's like very important that like things are setup so that money instead of being moved out illegally, can be legally coming in, and circulating throughout the economy so that various things can be going on, various things can take place. You know what I mean?

Andrew: Yeah, definitely.

Timi: Yeah

Andrew: So what exactly is like your mom, like what is your like what is your mom's job title? Or like what is she-

Timi: The job title would be entrepreneur. But right now, right now she is...umm proprietor of a gold mine.

Andrew: Wow

Timi: Yeah, so she is just like she the gold comes out of the mine, and it's hers. She employs people to mine it, and what comes out is hers, and she pays them.

Andrew: Cool.

Timi: Yeah.

Andrew: So what about your dad, what is he doing.

Timi: I don't even know. I do not know. (Laughs) I do not know.

Andrew: True, yeah. Um so have you ever been to Nigeria?

Timi: Yeah

Andrew: Yeah, well when was the last time you went?

Timi: Ummm, I was like 7.

Andrew: 7?

Timi: Yeah.

Andrew: That's cool, so what do you like remember about like Nigeria?

Timi: I remember I would be steady be late to-, I would always be late, just because like...it was it was just a difficult situation getting me to school because I was like-

Andrew: Wait, so you went to school in Nigeria?

Timi: Yeah.

Andrew: Cool.

Timi: Yeah, but like it was a difficult situation getting me back, and forth to school cause it was just like...it was a- temporary, but my mom was like well you're not just gonna not go to school, so she got me signed up to school so I was going to classes, but it wasn't at all convenient, so I was like late very often, and I was always getting punished for being late all the time. But um, it wa- like it was a good system man, we played so much badminton, like there was a badminton court outside when you went to recess. I was nice at badminton when I was playing there bro. I was saucy, I was saucing everybody. They were like, "who is that fine fellow over there hitting them shuttlecocks," and I was like "that's me. That's me."

Andrew: That's cool, so how long did you live in Nigeria for?

Timi: It was just it was like probably like...four or five months.

Andrew: Four or five months?

Timi: Four or five months that's it yeah

Andrew: And then when, where did you move, or you move-

Timi: I just went back to England, cause I was living in England, and I just went there. I was there for like four or five months, and then I went back. And then there was like various other times when I went there for like- I don't really have a strong grasp of what the timing was cause I was so young, and I like I didn't I wasn't keeping track of how long it was, I didn't care, I was just like oh like I'm, I'm going somewhere with my mom, you know what I mean?

Andrew: Yeah

Timi: So I don't like exactly how long I was there each time I was there, but like I went several times, but that was the longest time, and I'm guessing that it was about 4 or 5 months.

Andrew: Cool. *pause* So, huh, interesting. So... what was your impression of the United States before you like came here?

Timi: It seemed cool cause of the movies. 'Cause hella movies come out of America, so America just seemed like it was like just like cool cause of movies. I didn't really know anything about it, it wasn't like—like, like I didn't have really like preconceptions of what it was gonna be like because I didn't know anything about it. I was just like oh that, or I've heard that's cool place, seems cool, they make the movies there. *pause* I went to Disneyland, and Universal Studios a few times though, but like-

Andrew: Before you came?

Timi: Yeah, but like that didn't like really shape my opinion of America cause I didn't think of it like oh that's America. I was like oh that's Disneyland, you know what I mean? So it was like I didn't really like form any opinions off of that, but I wa-was there for the things like that a few times.

Andrew: *pause* Alright so what was your decision, or like why like why did you come to the United States?

Timi: Com- yo yo, complete no reason, no reason. My mom was like I need to go to America for business, do you want to come? And I was like, yeah America is cool they make the movies there, and then I didn't leave. Like there was no reason for me coming here at all.

Andrew: So like you were living in England with your mom?

Timi: Yeah

Andrew: And she was going to America so you just like alright let's go?

Timi: Yeah

Andrew: So...tell me about like your journey to the United States. Like, like, how, what was the move like? Like I mean like, I dunno like.

Timi: Ummm at first we lived in...Turf Valley [this is in Ellicott City Maryland, near Baltimore] and we had one of the places on Turf Valley. It was a hassle going into school cause they were

like...they were like oh we're like gonna need to like put him here, do blazze-blazze-blazze-blazze, and my mom just like wasn't having it she was just like she was just like no. Like I like my, my son is smart, put him in school where he is supposed to be. You're not holding him back, you're not doing as- uh - so then um she got it so that I just like it was like okay we're gonna take the umm test for the years, and see like where, where you end up. So like we started with the fifth grade test, and I like passed it so they just put me there. [Checks to make sure the recording is on]

Andrew: That's cool, so umm so like I mean like you remember...do you just like, how do you huh...so like, like the journey though, like to like, coming here, you know what I mean? Like you moved to Turf Valley, but do you remember like you know on like the airplane, or stuff like that? Or like...

Timi: I mean I know I took a plane here, but like nothing interesting--it wasn't like something interesting happened on the trip. Like I said earlier I had been like I've been here a few times to like just for like Disneyland, or things like this, like and I had been to Nigeria a few times as well. So it wasn't like going on a plane was like, like a new, exciting territory. It was just like yeah, this is how you get from place to place, so it was just like. I just I got I remember I feel like I feel like airline food was better. *pause* Airline food I feel like it's declined over the year, and I don't know if it's declined because my taste buds have changed from being a child, and I'm harder to please, or if it's declined because they've been putting lower quality food out there, but I do know that for certain that the quality of the food on airlines has swiftly, and sharply declined, and perhaps the only surviving good food on airlines *pause* is the roasted peanuts. Not the bland ones, not the plain peanuts. I'm talking about the seasoned peanuts, I'm talking about the properly, properly roasted peanuts. That's the only thing that has survived the sharp decline in airport food. But it has been just an atrocious, and abysmal the way that these airports have just been serving worse, and worse, and worse food. It used to be delicious, I used to be happy about my in-flight meal. I was like "foods coming," but then again it could've just been because I was young. I don't know if it is their fault or time's fault.

Andrew: Interesting, interesting. I dunno, I can't say I've noticed the decline, but I don't know if it was ever good.

Timi: It was fi- I remember it being fire.

Andrew: Eh alright.

Timi: Fire, man.

Andrew: Um, *pause* so you, what stood out to you your first couple of days here? Or like your first couple of days like that you remember here?

Timi: I remember it wasn't as cool as the movies. (Both laugh) I like, my whole opinion of America was formed on movies. So I came here, and I was just like...this is just a regular place. I like I was I was expecting it to just be like action-packed, and dramatic.

Andrew: *Long pause* Cool, yeah. Um *long pause* so who's like the person in the United States that's in your family that you're closest with?

Timi: My sister.

Andrew: Your sister?

Timi: Yeah, I live with my sister, so.

Andrew: You live with your sister?

Timi: Yeah

Andrew: Cool, what's your relationship like with her?

Timi: Um *long pause* she's transitioning from being my mom to being my sister at the moment because I am becoming an adult. So cause like she, she's um *pause* she's like my elder sister, so she was like in charge of the household, and everything like that. She was b- when my mom wasn't here she was in charge of everything, so she was basically my mom, but now that I'm like getting older, and I don't like need supervision, I don't need like--it's not even that I don't need someone telling me what to do. People cannot tell me what to do like *pause* I'm entirely making my own decisions at this point. So she is transitioning into being my sister now. But it's still in a transitioning phase.

Andrew: That's interesting. So you said like she's transitioning from being your mom from being your sister. Like, *pause* what does that mean? Or like how was she your mom?

Timi: Like when I had school papers, she was the one who signed my papers when I had reading, she was the one who drove me places, she was the one who did everything you like your mom would do for you. Like my sister was the one who did all of that, and she was the authority on okay x, y, z was out, or like if you do this than you are in trouble. If you do this you're okay, like all that. But now it's just like you can't tell me I'm in trouble. Like I'm, I'm an adult, you know what I mean?

Andrew: Yeah.

Timi: So it's not like, she not like my mom anymore, she's my sister.

Andrew: Yeah. Yeah.

Timi: But the dynamic still has to *pause* like evolve to meet the new situation, so now it's at the point like okay like okay, like I'm an adult as well now. I'm not a child anymore, so it's like we are equals there, but at the same time it's like you don't just go from like supervising someone, and like telling them what they can, and can't do, and telling them what's good, and what's bad, and x, y, z. To just be like okay do what you want, you're an adult now. Like there is still like that sense of like I need to watch over him, and make sure he is doing this, and doing this, and this, and this, and this. So still like in the transit, so that's what I mean like still in the transitional period in the sense like mentally like the dynamic *pause* in the mind has to meet the dynamic in reality. So it hasn't, those two things haven't quite met yet. But they will.

Andrew: Yeah, *pause* so who do you consider like your guardian then?

Timi: *Pause* I'm an adult, I don't have a guardian.

Andrew: Err like when you were growing up, like-

Timi: My sister.

Andrew: Your sister.

Timi: Well *pause* in England, well *pause* I would say my mom, and my sister. *Pause* my mom, and my sister were my guardian.

Andrew: Alright, cool. 'Cause errr, do you feel that what-

Timi: No I- they're my, they were my guardians because they were the ones who guarded me, they were the ones who raised me.

Andrew: Yeah.

Timi: Yeah, so like they, they're definitely my guardians. There is no one else that would like be in the running with them.

Andrew: Yeah. Umm so uh *pause* when did your mom like leave the United States?

Timi: I don't know the exact time, I believe I was in 7th grade.

Andrew: 7th grade, so two years after you came to the United States?

Timi: Yeah.

Andrew: Yeah. So why, err like what, err tell me about that two year period. Like that your mom like lived in the United States with you.

Timi: I, I just, I just went to school, hung out with my friends, and just like I just did kid stuff. I was just a kid, I was, you know. I went to school, and hung out with my friends, and played video games in my free time. I was very good at what's it called? Um "Runescape." I was nice on "Runescape" yo. I was, I was cooking up. But umm, yeah like I wo- I would, it was just like stan- just like standard childhood. Just I was, I was just chilling.

Andrew: Yeah, that's wassup. Ummm so like d-you said you lived in Turf Valley-

Timi: Yeah, but umm I was blown in fifth grade cause umm I lived in Turf Valley, so like everyone was going to Marriotts Ridge for high school, oh no, no, no, not Marriotts Ridge. Ummm Mount View, everyone was going to Mount View for middle school. But we were moving so instead of going to Mount View, I was going to go to Burleigh Manor, and I was like, bu-but all my friends are going to Mount View. What do you mean I'm going to Burleigh Manor? But then like, but then like I went to Burleigh Manor, and I got over it. *laughs* Yeah, I just got over it. There wasn't anything that I could do about it. So...

Andrew: Yeah.

Timi: Burleigh Manor was cool too, I li-I enjoyed it. It was good. The teachers were high quality, and we had a very good principal during the years that I was there.

Andrew: Interesting. So, *pause* errr, so you lived in Turf Valley for like a year?

Timi: Yeah I lived in Turf Valley for like a year, and then I moved to um like I was right down the street from Burleigh Manor, and Centennial. I was on Blandford Way.

Andrew: Blandford Way.

Timi: Yeah.

Andrew: Umm so, *pause* like what brought you to the D.C. area, or what brought the people that like, or like your mom, and your sister to the D.C. area?

Timi: I honestly, I have no idea. I know like my mom and my sister came here 'cause we already had family here, but I don't know why the family we had here was here. I don't know why this was the location that they chose. I never thought about it, or asked them about it. I just like this is where they lived, and I was just like okay this is where they live.

Andrew: Alright, interesting. So like, when your mom did live here what like- what kind of job did she- [Checks question on phone].

Timi: Well she's an entrepreneur so she's always just doing businesses. It's not like- it's not like she like comes to a place, and applies for a job, no it was just always just like business. Like umm, she opened one store called Etotes Discounts. Where we would um just get a whole bunch of things from umm Goodwill, fix them up, and then sell them at umm Etotes Discounts. That was like my summer job in umm *pause* during middle school. But that was like one thing that she did. But like while she wa-like a- small things that she looked li-looked at was like this has barely been used. This definitely can be like fixed, and sold. This is high quality would go to Etotes Discounts. Everything else she would export to Nigeria, and then in Nigeria that would like, that was li- people would be able to work on those things cause like she- like my mom is a Nigerian, so she's very like- deep in the root of her, I want Nigeria to prosper, you know what I mean? I- like she wants the country to do well in its entirety, not just her. So she would like send the shizz over, and it was like whenever she's doing that, she's like, it like it creates jobs. You know what I'm saying? If she's- she's saying look I'll pay you. Fix up these things, and she's like doing that so that she can push money back in- put money back in people's hands, and after they fixed the things though she'd be able to re-sell them because they had been touched up, refurbished, and like they were as good as new, or better than new. You know what I mean? So like that was- that was one of the things she did as a business while she was here. But it was always just- it's always just business. She was looking at what opportunities were available, and then taking advantage of them.

Andrew: Wow, that's awesome. Lik- so like, I mean like *pause* what do you think about like uh you know, how your mom helped out Nigeria, or like what do you like *pause* like what's your take on that?

Timi: I-I'm very happy with it. She's still do- the gold- I'm thinking the gold mine is gonna do a lot. I think the gold mine is going to make like a huge difference. So I- like- I'm mad proud of my mom, my mom is awesome.

Andrew: *Pause* That's awesome, wow. So what did your sister do, or like what's your sister - what did she do when she came here?

Timi: Uh- well like it was supposed to be temporary. So she was just like taking care of me for a while, but it was taking a while so umm *pause* she went to school, and now she is just working just *pause* working, earning money, and just cooling out.

Andrew: Where does she work at?

Timi: Um, I can't remember the name of the place right now, but...

Andrew: True, umm so sh- uh *pause*

Timi: Yeah, but she's very uh she's very chill. She's just like, she's not like very dramatic, or like hyperbolic about things, she's very just *pause* she like she works, she comes home, and she does what she needs to do, and then she enjoys her free time. But it's- she's not like high maintenance, or anything like that. She's just good to- she's fine with her own company. You know what I'm saying? She doesn't need extras, she's just fine with her own company.

Andrew: That's cool too.

Timi: Yeah

Andrew: So, *pause* huh, it sounds like you've had a lot of interactions with like a lot of fam-err like mainly your mom, and your sister, but like other family members as well.

Timi: Yeah

Andrew: So what was that like when you first came here. Like you said that you had like other family in D.C?

Timi: Not in D.C. in- in Columbia. But I actually um stayed with my aunt, and uncle for a while. Because my mom had to go to Nigeria for business shit for a few weeks. So I was staying with them, they were like taking care of me, taking me to school, and everything like that. So it was jus-it was just like *pause* I like- I, it was- I don't know how to describe it cause it was just normal to me. I wasn't like used to anything else, like I didn't like those- there was never a point in time where I was like oh like you're supposed to just live in one place, and stay there. Like I never like had that conception in my mind. So like to me it was just like there wasn't anything remarkable about it. It was just uh like a normal life. I didn't like think of it like oh other people

don't live like this, this is weird. I didn't really care, I still don't really care how other people lived. So I was just like this is like, I'm happy, I'm not concerned, you know what I mean?

Andrew: Yeah, dang, that's pretty cool. So like *pause* just because you like had like so many experiences like growing up in like different places, and like *pause* like how- how is that err- is that shaped your view, or would you like say that has shaped your view?

Timi: Yeah of course, like every- everyone is at least to an extent a product of their environment. So every environment that I have been in has without a doubt shaped me, you know what I mean? Like I- I am who I am because of *pause* because of like where I grew up, who I was with, how I was raised, all- like all of those things. You know what I mean? That- like that plays a huge role in it. You know what I mean? It's like, like my genetics don't account for everything about me. Like a huge amount of who I am is just from like where I grew up, and I came in. So like that definitely plays a role, you don't- you don't become a person that like wasn't developed by your experiences as a child. Like people don't grow up, and be like oh yeah no my childhood didn't affect me. No- like it definitely had a huge effect yeah.

Andrew: So like who was the oldest person like you remember connecting with?

Timi: What do you mean connecting with?

Andrew: Within your family-

Timi: But like what do you mean connecting? *Pause* just talking to?

Andrew: Or like, *pause* yeah.

Timi: My grandpa. My grandpa is like 113 right now.

Andrew: 113?

Timi: My grand- my grandpa is very, very old yeah, and he still like he's still got all of his he has all of his faculties. He can like walk, and talk, and he's all good to go, and he's in his hundreds.

Andrew: Wow.

Timi: Yeah.

Andrew: So, what's your grandpa's secret, what's he do that uhh-

Timi: Ummm, I - I don't know his secret. I don't know, I think it must be the food. Or something in the water, I don't know.

Andrew: Where, where does he live?

Timi: Nigeria.

Andrew: Nigeria?

Timi: Yeah.

Andrew: Wow. That's awesome.

Timi: Yeah.

Andrew: So when was the last time you saw your grandpa.

Timi: I was - I was - I don't remember the exact age I was, but I was very young, probably like 6 or 7.

Andrew: Interesting. *Pause* So, so...you notice like anything different like between like *pause* living in England, and like living in the United States.

Timi: Yeah, like, people in America are way just more- they are way louder, and more just like "look at me." Like *stammering* there's just way more just like, like "look at me look at what I'm doing this is very important, pay attention to it." Like in England, people like *pause* I guess like - like, cause people go to the pub a lot, so there's like a lot of people who would just be like, like casually drunk, and expressing themselves, but it's not like just like a like uh like I'm just gonna like go be the - it's not as...egocentric. The culture is not as egocentric. There is not as much like *pause* appeal to being like loud, and boisterous, and drawing everybody's attention. That's not looked at as like as - it's not as cool to do that in En- it's still cool, like it's still a bunch of people doing like cool things, and being like "yo, like I'm dope," you know what I mean? But it's not the same kind of just like like I need to be louder than you, I need to be be- like cooler than you, I need you to know that I'm cooler than you. There's more just like *pause* there's just more conscious- it's just way- America is just way more self-conscious. America is just way more self-conscious than England, and the fact that just like *pause* there's just so many things in America that people are just like "oh shit, that's terrible, but like *pause* it's a hassle to deal with." You know what I mean? So like people focus on completely different things, so like - *stammering* England is like a mad materialistic place. Like most of the Western world is, but

like it doesn't compare to like how Americans are, and the way it's just like *pause* it's more glutinous, you know what I mean?

Andrew: Mhm.

Timi: Yeah.

Andrew: *Long pause* So what do you enjoy about like being from like a diverse background?

Timi: Well for one, it's just cool to say *pause* like it - it's like way easier to like, it's just way easier to be like--I have something to talk about. When you've like lived in a bunch of different places, and done a bunch of different things. Like I - I don't have to worry that like I'm gonna go in a conversation, and someone is gonna be like "you are a boring person, I don't want to talk to you leave me alone." You know what I mean? Like people aren't going to be like "yeah um I'd rather talk to someone" - like I can start a conversation, and have a confidence that like I have enough interesting things to say to like have a conversation with this person. I - I don't have to worry about boring people, you know what I mean?

Andrew: Yeah

Timi: Because if I have been to an entire country that you haven't been to *pause* and it's gonna be hard for you to like not have anything at all that I know that interests you, you know what I mean? Because it is a whole different culture, it's a whole different place to be. So there's gonna be just like aspects of it that are going to interest you just because like it is different, it's exotic technically.

Andrew: Yeah.

Timi: So it's cool on that part just cause I can always be like...I have something to talk about, like I'm not a boring person, and that like can like help, it just helps a lot with just like *pause* confidence in your interactions with other people, knowing that you are not going to run out of things to say. You can go forth confidently just like, I can talk to you, and not be worried, or anxious about like coming up with things like I have material stories, so I'm good, you know what I mean?

Andrew: Yeah.

Timi: It's like imagine a stand-up comedian going up to a show right, and imagine going up, and being like I'm going to wing it versus going up, and being like I have like a whole bunch of jokes

that I know the crowd is going to react well to. It's like one is just way easier than the other. You know what I'm saying?

Andrew: Yeah.

Timi: So like, if I like, if I started a conversation, and be like oh oh yeah no like that was really cool, I did something like that back in England, and it's like immediately there is an interest. Like wait you're from England, blah blah blah, well I did this in Nigeria, like wait you're from Nigeria? Blah blah blah, it's like immediately there's like an interest in the conversation, just because you have *pause* access and knowledge to a culture that another person doesn't have access or knowledge of.

Andrew: Wow, that's pretty, that's pretty awesome.

Timi: Yeah.

Andrew: So, alright on the flip side, is there anything that you don't enjoy?

Timi: *Pause* Well it's not cultural specifically, but being black in America is kind of a hassle. *Pause* Much more so than in England, definitely way more so than in Nigeria. It's just kind of a hassle, it's just like a whole bunch of things that you have to be like that's legal, but I can't do that, or like oh ah I have the right to say no to this, but I don't have the right to say no to this. Like, just like things that that is just like a uh that like sucks. It's not like it's not like this overt, and deliberate in other places, you know what I mean? But like that that aside there isn't much downside. Especially since I'm like a mad expressive person, so I would say like America is a lot more like expressive, and glutinous, but that fits my personality better because I'm not particularly meek. You know what I mean? So like tha-that's shaped my personality a lot, so like it's allowed that part of me to um grow, and flourish. It wouldn't - I doubt it would've grown, and flourished in England. I feel like I would be a much more tame person. Still like, still like outgoing, and what not, but like in an entirely different way.

Andrew: So like *pause* did you have an experiences like that when you came to the United States that like made you like realize that like what you did, or like, like, or like your routine was unique, or like different, or like stood out?

Timi: I mean there was never a point in time that *pause* I like I always knew that my background was different from other people, and it stood out so there wasn't like a point where I was like oh like this is different, but like I - like it was never of a – it's never been of like much importance to me, you know what I mean? It's never been like oh I'm different from this person, and that matt- it didn't matter because it wasn't like we were taught - like as kids we weren't

talking about like oh what is your heritage? Like really? That's what your culture does? Oh we do this. Like that wasn't what our conversations were like. Like I was - I was trying to battle Pokemon, bro. Like I was like who - I was like who, who thinks they can beat my Charizard? Try me. Try me. You know what I mean? Like I was- I was trying to get my Yu-Gi-Oh cards on. So it wasn't like...where I came from wasn't really relevant to any of the things that I was doing. It wasn't like they were like they were picking football teams by country. You know what I mean? It's was just like if you want to play you go play, if you want to do this you just go do it. I was in school, this is like I'm in school with a bunch of people my age, and we live in the same area. So like, it didn't seem relevant to me that like a year ago I lived in a completely different area. That didn't really affect our interaction. You know what I mean?

Andrew: Yeah.

Timi: Actually now that I think about it like, *pause* other people did have like more like stro- they had like tight knit circles of friends that they like grown up with consistently so there was that, but I like never felt like people were like leaving me out, or anything. I like knew that like they were like closer to each other than they were to me, but I was just like yeah like they've, they've like known each other longer. I didn't think anything of it, I was just like they have known each other longer so they are closer, and after x amount of time has passed they'll - that's how close they will be to me. Like it's not - it wasn't, it wasn't ever like a pressing issue on my mind because most of the time *pause* most of the time if like if I like look at a situation, and I'm like *pause* this doesn't really - like there's nothing - either this doesn't affect me, or there is nothing I can do about this. I usually just like kinda *pause* like procrastinate on caring about it. I don - *stammering* I just like I don't care about by the time I like noticed that like oh like man maybe that matters, I'm like already over it, or it's already done with. I don't really like dwell on things such as like, like my background wasn't important as a child. It would be way more important - it's way more important now as an adult. You know what I mean? Now as an adult it actually like it actually brings something to like my interactions with people, but as a child it wasn't relevant. Because we didn't care where you came from. Like we didn't know about like different countries, and x, y, z. We were just kids, I was just like...like how am I supposed to get these five cards of Exodius. I don't - I need the hookup, who's got his hand, I've got his left hand, who's got his right hand? Somebody, please. You know what I mean?

Andrew: Yeah. *pause* So *pause* tell me about like your interests when you were growing up from like middle school on. Like what were you interested in the United - err in the United States when you lived here?

Timi: Well, I very much enjoy Anime. I know that's not American, but I discovered Anime in America. Um basketball. I love basketball, it wasn't popular in England. So I didn't really play it, but in America it was popular, and I enjoyed it a lot. 'Cause I was tall, like I said I was tall that's

why I played defender because I was bigger than most people. So people were always like oh you should play basketball, you're tall. So I started playing, and I was like this is lit, I like this, this is tight. So, but like, basketball was one of the big ones. Anime is tight. Um I make music, and I put out a song the other day called "Blue Lungs," and there is an anime clip in the middle of the song from this show called "Blue Exorcist." Where she is talking about umm *pause* the main character is Satan's son, and he has blue flames, and he's like long explanation, but Anime is...lit. It's - the story, the story-writing in Anime is a lot better than in umm general American cartoons. It's like they have like very like intense in-depth story-lines because they have adult and child audiences. So they can't like make like just a simple plot that's only going to appeal to children, so they stylize it so it appeals to children, and also appeals to adults at the same time. So I'd say the two biggest things that America has given me are Anime, and basketball.

Andrew: Wow, Anime, and basketball.

Timi: Anime, and basketball. *pause* But this cursed place made me wait till 21 years of age to legally buy alcohol, and I do not appreciate that. That's three years, three years of happily, and legally enjoying alcoholic beverages that was stolen from me. Stolen, stolen, the law is ridiculous, it's absurd, it's absurd. It's a - I think we need to go I need to, we need to use prohibitionist tactics to get this law repealed. Because I do not appreciate, actually I'm twenty-one now, I don't care, forget repealing it, no. The kids can't drink. They - they gotta struggle like we did.

Andrew: Alright so umm, tell me about like your first job.

Timi: The first- the first job that I had was the one with my mom, but after that the first job that I had was at Shadowland.

Andrew: Shadowland. [a laser-tag facility]

Timi: Yeah, but getting a job was mad hard because um I didn't have a social security number. Every job application is like what's your social security number. They don't let you get a job without. So I couldn't get a job until senior year of high school, and I was always blown. I was like I'm trying to get a job, I'm broke, like I don't have money, but I used to *pause* when I um started Burleigh Manor Middle School right. *Pause* My mom would give me \$15 each week for lunch money. That's how much it came to for each day. It was like \$3 for lunch each day, so I would get \$15 a week, and I would go to school, and I wouldn't spend my lunch money. I would - I just - wouldn't eat at school 'cause I was like I need my lunch money so I can like hang out with my friends, and go to the movies, and go to the mall, and buy shoes or whatever. So I - so I just wouldn't spend my money because I was like I'm just not eating lunch, whatever, and like I was just like get like little things like here and there to eat, and then I'd come home, and I'd eat

right? So I went from like I went into school, and like I could jump my highest, and touch the bottom of the net on the basketball hoop, and like three months into school I hadn't grown a single inch taller, but I could grab the rim just because I lost so much weight from not eating my lunch, and being like I'm saving my money up. I - I lost so much weight it was so clutch cause I was chub - like in fifth grade I was just like a little bit chubby, I wasn't like fat, but I had like a umm a little potbelly, and like little - uhh like not like chubby cheeks, but like...just like thicker, like on the thicker side I guess. Like I got to middle school, and like I'm saving my money. I'm not eating lunch, forget this, and I dropped hella weight, and I got mad - I got mad better at basketball.

Andrew: Hmmm, so uh *long pause* how like how do you like get money like after like middle school, like after that 15 bucks every week. How'd you like –

Timi: I went to high school, and lunch was more expensive so I had 20 bucks every week, and then um *pause* the easiest thing that I could do was buy, and sell basketball shoes. You can get a lot of umm you can make a lot of money buying, and selling various things. So I would like - the main thing was basketball shoes because I know this is surefire money, and it is going to sell fast. There are a lot of things like I knew I can definitely sell this, but like I don't know how long it is going to take me to sell this, and I was young, and I didn't have the maturity to be patient, and wait it out, and like make sure that like I was making the right moves because it was gonna make me the right amount of money. I was just like okay I can buy these shoes for \$160 they are like \$200 now, but back in high school it was \$160 for the new Jordans, and I would get them for \$160, and I could go online, and I could sell them for \$400. \$300-500 for each pair, so I would pay \$160 for them, sell 'em for \$300-400, and when you're in high school 150, 200 dollars come up on a pair of shoes, that was, that felt good. That was like I got some spending money, oh my goodness. I could watch like 20 movies, oh my God. It was - it was wonderful, but like that that the main thing was just saving my lunch money, and what I didn't spend on hanging out with my friends I would use to buy, and sell things so that I would have more money. But that was the main thing, I should've been - I had a friend, um, you knew him, Alex Eason, and he would sell these cookies. He would bake the Oreo cookie into the cookie dough, and he would sell the cookies, and the school wouldn't let him do it, but you know you gotta do what you gotta do son, he made so much money off those cookies. I - I should've been doing that like he was, but I was just selling shoes, that was the main thing, and then I finally got my job at Shadowland, and I was like “oh my I got money. What?” But then I got a car, and then I was like “damn I don't got money, I gotta pay for gas.”

Andrew: So uhh, how did you get your car?

Timi: My mom got it for me as a graduation gift, and I got uh I got uh 2002 Toyota Camry.

Andrew: Wow

Timi: You can't - I love - Camry's are a wonderful, and amazing car. They are very reliable, that's all I - I don't like like - *pause* I love like flashy cars, but only if they are reliable, I don't like any car that, it could be the most beautiful car in the world. If it doesn't have good gas mileage, and it's not gonna run me past 300,000 miles on it I don't need it in my life. Okay, I don't need it.

Andrew: So you - do you still have the Camry?

Timi: I don't, I kick-flipped it. It was terrible. Yeah I was umm, I was driving home from West Virginia, and it was 6 in the morning, and I was driving, and I was like finally, I was like 15 minutes from home. So I was like finally like I'm about to be home this is great. I'm there, and then this animal ran in front of the road, it's like I don't - it was just like uhh I don't know what it was, it was like a raccoon or something. Just something like, it was on the ground, but it was like big, it wasn't like a small thing, and it just ran past, and because I was kinda like just on autopilot instead of just keeping my calm, and avoiding it, I like swerved, and so like my whole car was in the grass, and I was trying to get my car back on the road, but my tires were wet cause of the grass, and I didn't like think about that like it's morning my tired are going to get wet. So as I was trying to go my tires just wouldn't grip the wheel - the road, my tires wouldn't grip the road. So they went just kept going across the side, and my car hit the guardrail, flipped upside down, corkscrewed, and then landed facing the other way with the back wheels up on the guardrail.

Andrew: Wow.

Timi: Yeah, and then I had to like climb out through the passenger window, and *pause* I had to get the car towed, get all my stuff, and go home. And then I had - I had - like once I got home I had to like shower, I had like two or three hours to like eat, drink, and like recover mentally from almost dying, and then I had like a six or seven hour shift at Shadowland, and I had to go like in front of all the kids, and be like "hi guys how are you doing, it's a great day right? We're going to have fun," and I was just like ugh my car is totaled right now, and my insurance is limited liability. What am I going to do? But, it was okay, I still don't have a car, but I'm saving up for it now, and I have a wonderful penny-board. So I can cruise around on my penny-board, and get from point A to point B. This area right here, tons of downhill, like the important places that I need to go I can get there downhill, downhill, it's beautiful so I love it. I also got a new skateboard from my Steez Boutique store, so now that I have that one it's a lot, the wheels on it the bearing are wonderful, so I can go a lot faster with a lot less effort. It's a great way to get around, I would recommend everyone get a penny-board to be honest.

Andrew: (Laughs) So um, you're like very entrepreneurial?

Timi: Yes, extremely.

Andrew: So you said that you have your own store?

Timi: Yeah, I have an online store called Steez Boutique. I make music so every week I get um revenue from sales on like iTunes, Spotify, Tidal, Amazon, Google, just all major streaming networks. It's always like a small bit, like two or three dollars a week, but like as *stammering* I've steadily watched it grow. 'Cause it started out being like 10 or 15 cents a week, and I was like what is this? Then it was like 50 cents, and then it was like a dollar, 1.50, now it's getting to be like 2 dollars a week. I'm trying to get it to be like 2000, 250,000 dollars a week eventually, but you know I'm just doing everything that I can. I also made a video game that I sell on the online store as well. Um *stammering* music, and the clothing store are my main entrepreneurial efforts, but I'm also going to start offering mixing, and mastering services, and graphic design services, and marketing services cause I've learned all of those skills over the course of developing the website, and the music.

Andrew: Wow that's pretty awesome, so –

Timi: Oh I also cut hair, I'm a barber as well. Like here round Westminster, there are not that many people who know how to *pause* cut black people's hair. So I'm like one of the few options where it's like I can do a good haircut. In like tenth grade I was like, I'm only making \$20 a week on lunch money here, I can't be spending \$15 every two weeks on a haircut, that's not, I don't have enough bread. So I just got clippers, and I taught myself how to cut my hair 'cause I was like I don't have enough lunch money to be paying for haircuts, it's too expensive, you know? So now I have that skill, I was like well there is not a there's not a good you know, there is not a solid barber around here let me, let me come in on a college campus, and say “hey *pause* if you got a lot of melanin, I'm who you need to talk to about your hair,” you know what I'm saying? So I - that, that's actually very clutch, there have been a whole bunch of times, where I have been like I'm broke, what am I going to do? I've checked my phone, and like two or three people were like “hey man I need a cut today,” and I was like yes. Like I'm going to eat dinner tonight, this is perfect, this is perfect. So - I, but I do whatever I can man, whatever I can.

Andrew: Yeah, so ummm how, err like *pause* umm *pause* what's your, do you support yourself?

Timi: For most of the time my mom is like the one who has been supporting me with everything, but right now Nigeria is going through a huge economic crisis. It's extremely hard to get money out of the country right now. So like - whereas like a few years ago it would be 150 Naira, that's the Nigerian currency, 150 Naira would buy you \$1. So if my mom wanted to send me like \$300 she would have to spend like 450 um, 4500 Naira to send me like \$300. But, or is it 45? Sorry

about the math, but anyway, if she wanted to send it now, one Naira is like 516, I mean like 516 Naira is like \$1. So where as before I want to send you \$100, it would have cost her 10,500 Naira. Now if she wants to send \$100, it's going to cost her 51,600 Naira. You know what I mean? So it's - she can't, and because of that there is a scarcity on the dollar, right? People have been pushing all of the dollars on the black market, and there is a huge scarcity. So even when you have the money, and you want to go buy dollars, there is no one selling dollars anymore because it is just such a scarce resource because of the pricing of it, right? So she's not able, even if she has the money to send to me, and she's ready to do it, she's not able to like send me any money to like help support me because this just - the government, and the economy has failed her. So she's like unable to do those things.

Andrew: Hmm

Timi: So it's like my mom, my mom, like my mom consistently does everything in her power to like send me money, and take care of my expenses, and whenever there is not an avenue that is allowing her to do so I pick up the slack.

Andrew: Cool, so what's like your current situation?

Timi: *pause* Alright because of that same money situation, I'm not able to go to school this semester. So right now, but I still have my job from last semester, and I make more than working at home, and plus I still have to pay the rent of the lease on um my location by school. So I am still here, and in the area, but I can't go to school because of the situation in Nigeria, so I'm just working on music, and working on business, and working to earn money to continue my music and business. That's what it is right now. I've just been pushing everything as hard as I can, and just doing my best to encourage people to support it.

Andrew: That's pretty awesome.

Timi: Yeah.

Andrew: Ummm alright so we got about 45 seconds left until the hour, is there anything else that you want to tell me, or just say before the interview is over?

Timi: My mom, and my granddad are um *pause* they are like from the hierarchy in the Ocian region of Nigeria, so technically we would be considered royalty.

Andrew: Wow, and what does that, so *pause* can people tell that by your name?

Timi: People in, not my name, my mom's last name is Lowoin which comes from Olowoin, and people like Yoruba people will be able to like recognize Olowoin, and be like “okay like I know who that is,” but people wouldn't like see like Timi Tinoye, and be like oh you - they wouldn't recognize that name, but if it - the Lowoin name which comes from the Olowoin name they - like people would recognize that, yeah.

Andrew: Hmm, interesting. So *pause* um *pause* alright, anything else you want to say on that?

Timi: Turnuprapsnow.com, check out my music, tantalizing.

Andrew: Wow, alright (laughs) uh thanks for listening if you are listening this is the end of the interview, uh it's 9:16 at McDaniel College closing it out.