

# Millie Taylor & Raymond Wazeeradin with Yugonda Sample-Jones

June 30, 2023

**Summary:** *This is porch conversation that is densely packed with historical information, anecdotes and conjectures. Miss Millie and her cousin Raymond are both lifelong residents of East End, and both students of local history. Topics range from coal dust to the project of re-naming public places after local Black historical figures, to Miss Millie's personal observations and experiences of gentrification that has developed alongside the Choice Neighborhood Initiative. Interviewer Adrian Wood also shares about the history of CSX as well as ongoing projects to work toward solutions to the coal dust.*

[00:00:00] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh, there's Miss Millie! We can go talk to Miss Millie. She's on her porch.

[00:00:04] **Adrian:** Oh great.

[00:00:04] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Hey Miss Millie! How you doing?

[00:00:08] **Miss Millie:** Taking a walk?

[00:00:09] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah, we're actually um, doing some recording and talking about the coal dust.

[00:00:14] **Miss Millie:** The what? Oh, wait. Oh, it's terrible!

[00:00:16] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** You wanna talk to her about it?

[00:00:18] **Miss Millie:** What?

[00:00:19] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** You wanna talk to Adrian about it?

[00:00:20] **Miss Millie:** I can talk about it-- It's all over my car--

[00:00:22] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** She goes to CNU (sic)

[00:00:23] **Mr. Raymond:** Said y'all are what to where?

[00:00:25] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** See the coal dust, talk about the coal dust.

[00:00:28] **Miss Millie:** I ain' trying to be on tv but I can tell you it's terrible down here.

[00:00:30] **Adrian:** Okay --

[00:00:32] **Miss Millie:** my tables are down--

[00:00:33] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Nooo!

[00:00:33] **Miss Millie:** My tables are full of coal dust, my car.

[00:00:35] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** I'm tryna ac' like you when I grow up.

[00:00:37] **Miss Millie:** Oh chi', keep keep on living. You will be. (laughing)  
Have a seat.

[00:00:41] **Adrian:** Yes ma'am.

[00:00:42] **Miss Millie:** Y'all wan' some water something?

[00:00:43] **Adrian:** Oh, I'm all right. Thank you so much.

[00:00:44] **Miss Millie:** You sure? I got Zero sodas in there too.

[00:00:47] **Adrian:** My name's Adrian.

[00:00:48] **Miss Millie:** My name's Miss Millie meet.

[00:00:50] Hi Miss Millie,

[00:00:51] This is Raymond.

[00:00:52] Hi there, Mr. Raymond.

[00:00:53] How you doing?

[00:00:53] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** So

[00:00:54] **Miss Millie:** what's his name?

[00:00:54] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Ms. Millie.

[00:00:55] **Miss Millie:** Oh. What's your name again? Adrian?

[00:00:57] **Adrian:** Adrian.

[00:00:57] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** But Miss Millie is amazing. She's been here forever. I used to live right beside her in a house that was right here and it was torn down cause the termites were terrible.

[00:01:07] **Miss Millie:** Oh yeah. That was bad, what I heard over there.

[00:01:08] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh my goodness. I thought we were in there one -- night--

[00:01:11] **Miss Millie:** that's why I had 'em that time. Cause you all had them

[00:01:14] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Probably, cuz we had them --

[00:01:16] **Miss Millie:** Now the truth come out.

[00:01:17] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Look, look look! Look, they-- did I tell you that? Cause it was, we sat in there, we were asleep and my children woke up screaming and it was swarms of little, um, termite larvae that had came out the walls. Anyway.

[00:01:30] **Miss Millie:** Paper walls. In there one time it was so soft, you could put

[00:01:32] your hands through 'em, I understand.

[00:01:33] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mm-hmm.

[00:01:34] **Miss Millie:** Little Kelly, Kelly (redacted) told me, told us that .

[00:01:36] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** He was terrible. I left there and I don't think he got another tenant after me.

[00:01:41] **Miss Millie:** But towards the coal dust concern-- it's all over our cars, all over. Every morning I come out here, I clean it up --not every morning, but most mornings-- I clean the tables off, come back the next day. They black all over. Now. I said-- on your porch.

[00:01:56] And then the window sills gets awful. But it's not as bad as it used to be, but it's still bad.

[00:02:01] **Adrian:** Mm. How long have you been living here?

[00:02:02] **Miss Millie:** We've been here since 1953 or 54.

[00:02:05] **Adrian:** Oh wow.

[00:02:06] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yep.

[00:02:07] **Miss Millie:** Wow.

[00:02:07] **Adrian:** Long enough to know.

[00:02:09] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Miss Millie shows up at the planning council. (laughing)

[00:02:12] **Miss Millie:** Yes. Cause I went over there and asked some questions about the coal dust and then they had a meeting one night at Dunbar.

[00:02:18] I asked the mayor, the old mayor, Price. He said, 'Well, there's enough money in the budget to-- so they have to leave from down here. We can clean it up.

[00:02:28] Cause they probably leave it messed up.'

[00:02:31] So I said, 'When will that be?'

[00:02:32] He said, '20 years from now.'

[00:02:34] I said, '20 years from now I'll be dead and gone.'

[00:02:37] Is there like a, do they have like a lease or something?

[00:02:40] Do you know?

[00:02:41] What was the question?

[00:02:41] **Adrian:** Uh...

[00:02:41] **Miss Millie:** Excuse me? I asked the question, when -- about the coal dust!

[00:02:44] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Uhhuh.

[00:02:45] **Miss Millie:** You got coal dust here. You got ship-- shipyard dust here.

[00:02:48] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mmm.

[00:02:49] **Miss Millie:** You're coming on 16th Street and put something else on the 16th street corner.

[00:02:52] **Mr. Raymond:** Heheheh.. (laughing)

[00:02:52] **Miss Millie:** So he said they got enough, they asked for money in the budget to clean it up whenever they leave.

[00:02:58] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** That's right.

[00:02:59] **Miss Millie:** So they'll probably leave it like it is. So I said, 'Well, sounds pretty good.' I said, 'When?' He said, '20 years from now.'

[00:03:06] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Was he definite, like he knew they were gonna be--

[00:03:09] **Miss Millie:** I dunno.

[00:03:10] **Mr. Raymond:** Heheheh (laughing)

[00:03:11] **Miss Millie:** I said--

[00:03:11] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** What you laughin' for Mr. Raymond!  
(laughs)

[00:03:13] **Miss Millie:** 20 years from now, where will I be 20 years from now? Man, I ain't gon be here.

[00:03:19] But you know, years ago people lived in the projects. When they washed they clothes, they'd be black from coal dust.

[00:03:28] **Mr. Raymond:** White clothes looked like dey was dark gray.

[00:03:30] **Miss Millie:** Mm-hmm.

[00:03:30] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Out Harbor Homes and--

[00:03:32] **Miss Millie:** Harbor Homes there over

[00:03:33] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Wow.

[00:03:33] **Miss Millie:** On 16th Street.

[00:03:34] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mm.

[00:03:35] **Miss Millie:** It's terrible.

[00:03:36] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Why isn't it that bad now? Why do you think...

[00:03:39] **Miss Millie:** They started waterin' it down.

[00:03:41] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Okay.

[00:03:41] **Miss Millie:** They started, you can see the sprinklers.

[00:03:43] **Adrian:** When'd they start doing that?

[00:03:44] **Mr. Raymond:** Ah, with the, uh, residue, the dust from the uh, coal.

[00:03:48] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mm-hmm.

[00:03:48] **Mr. Raymond:** You know what they do with that?

[00:03:49] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** What?

[00:03:51] **Mr. Raymond:** Y'all don't know?

[00:03:52] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** No!

[00:03:52] **Miss Millie:** Ask him.

[00:03:54] **Mr. Raymond:** They did a lot of 'em. A few years back in the paper. Big article.

[00:03:59] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** What'd they do?

[00:03:59] **Mr. Raymond:** You don't see the residue from the coal dust with sand blasting.

[00:04:04] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh.

[00:04:04] **Adrian:** Sand blasting?

[00:04:06] **Mr. Raymond:** That's *Barium*. That will kill. You. Dead.

[00:04:09] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh my goodness.

[00:04:10] **Miss Millie:** That's terrible.

[00:04:11] **Mr. Raymond:** Y'all-- yeah, y'all knew that

[00:04:13] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** I didn't!

[00:04:13] **Mr. Raymond:** Yes, you did. Y'all ain't paying no attention to the paper.

[00:04:17] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** No.

[00:04:17] **Mr. Raymond:** I thought when that, that came out several years ago.

[00:04:20] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** It was in the Daily Press.

[00:04:21] **Mr. Raymond:** Years ago. Was in the-- yeah!

[00:04:23] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Okay.

[00:04:23] **Mr. Raymond:** Several years ago.

[00:04:25] **Miss Millie:** It's just like brown ground over here.

[00:04:27] **Mr. Raymond:** There's a, a, a brother. By him being in the shipyard, he was a union rep also too. I thought that the union, the steel workers was going to jump right on it then.

[00:04:35] **Miss Millie:** Right?

[00:04:38] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Why hasn't there been--

[00:04:40] **Miss Millie:** You pay people money and they value money over their *lives*!

[00:04:45] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** You just answered my question cuz I was going to say, why hasn't there been like a big movement--

[00:04:50] **Mr. Raymond:** Money! As a matter of fact, when Linwood and Erica put this thing together--

[00:04:55] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mr. DeBrew?

[00:04:56] **Mr. Raymond:** Yeah.

[00:04:56] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah.

[00:04:57] **Mr. Raymond:** I was dealing with [00:05:00] only the water. Erica asked me if I would work with the air.

[00:05:05] **Miss Millie:** Said in the (unintelligible)

[00:05:05] **Mr. Raymond:** They ain't doing no air. They ain't do nothin' over there. They don't test.

[00:05:08] **Miss Millie:** Air quality.

[00:05:09] **Mr. Raymond:** They ain't never tested the air. Have you talked to Mr. Debrew?

[00:05:12] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah, I go and sit with Mr. DeBrew now, just like to hear the stories and stuff. But I really want to start-- so, I attend this church, right? And Pastor Johnson has, let me take over the community arm. So the goal is to reopen the school part to have it as an educational information resource center so that we can start building momentum.



[00:05:37] In addition to that, we've done, we have a, um, in investment group that we're really gonna start. Buying the block back and putting our money where it needs to be so that we can control. Yeah. And what I'm looking for is like...

[00:05:57] I I, I seen like Mr. DeBrew and Erica when I first came on the scene years ago, like they were doing the work. But I haven't really seen organizations or groups like that that are from our community. Every-- the other groups that are coming in are like from different areas and they're concerned, but the strength is from within.

[00:06:20] So where are the people? I don't--

[00:06:23] **Mr. Raymond:** Yeah, they're gone. Ain't nothin--

[00:06:25] **Miss Millie:** Even the-- even the--

[00:06:26] **Mr. Raymond:** Ain nobody down there. Nobody's down there.

[00:06:28] **Miss Millie:** In Ridley Circle. Harbor Homes is gone.

[00:06:29] **Mr. Raymond:** Harbor Homes is gone.

[00:06:30] **Miss Millie:** They're gone.

[00:06:31] **Mr. Raymond:** Dickerson Court is gone.

[00:06:32] **Miss Millie:** Oh, it's terr'ble. Everybody's gone.

[00:06:34] **Mr. Raymond:** Pigeonin' (?) out and got old.

[00:06:35] **Miss Millie:** Heehee (laughing)

[00:06:37] **Mr. Raymond:** And yeah, we want somebody that know the history and come behind it and do things and keep it rolling, you know?

[00:06:43] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah.

[00:06:44] **Mr. Raymond:** Cause Ivy Avenue used to be one of the busiest, most productive avenues in the Black community when I was coming up.

[00:06:51] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** I have two people, two contractors that's actually bought property on Chestnut Avenue. So we're literally trying to do what we're saying. But I, it's kind of weird, like, you know, I'm, I'm from the Eastern shore, I'm first generation Newport News.

[00:07:07] **Mr. Raymond:** Where from? What part? Where?

[00:07:09] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Eastern Shore.

[00:07:09] **Mr. Raymond:** Where?

[00:07:10] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Accomack County in Maryland.

[00:07:12] **Mr. Raymond:** Okay. Maryland,

[00:07:14] **Miss Millie:** That Eastern Shore, that Virginia side.

[00:07:14] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah,

[00:07:15] **Mr. Raymond:** I have people there

[00:07:16] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah it's from the Virginia side, from--

[00:07:17] **Mr. Raymond:** I had people that came outta Pocomoke City. My granddad is from Pocomoke--was well, he lived, when he left Dawson, Georgia, he traveled on for-- and he said he hitchhiked all the way from Dawson, Georgia.

[00:07:28] He worked different sharecropper jobs and made his way to the Eastern Shore, Maryland. In Pocomoke. Um,

[00:07:35] **Miss Millie:** Okay! Oh yeah, I have Pocomoke,

[00:07:37] **Mr. Raymond:** .That's where (redacted) and--

[00:07:38] **Miss Millie:** That's where the (redacted) Boys lived. Pocomoke, Maryland. Uhhuh. They live in, it's a two, two city names. Pocomoke, and another one. And you riding 3 0 1.

[00:07:50] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh. Rehobeth?

[00:07:51] Snow Hill?

[00:07:51] Berlin?

[00:07:52] **Miss Millie:** No, Pocomoke and another one. (unintelligible)--

[00:07:55] **Mr. Raymond:** Chincoteague--

[00:07:57] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** So my land, I have land in there and it's in Oak Hall actually.

[00:08:00] **Mr. Raymond:** Oak Hall.

[00:08:00] **Miss Millie:** Oh.

[00:08:01] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mm-hmm.

[00:08:01] **Mr. Raymond:** Yeah. I used to go up there and get my pieces. (?)

[00:08:03] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh really?

[00:08:04] **Mr. Raymond:** Yeah. I worked there, over there as a postmaster in Parksley Virginia.

[00:08:08] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** I lived in Parksley, Virginia!

[00:08:09] **Mr. Raymond:** You did?

[00:08:10] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh my goodness!! (laughing)

[00:08:12] **Miss Millie:** Keep on talking. Get related.

[00:08:13] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** I know! I know, right? Oh my goodness.

[00:08:16] **Mr. Raymond:** (laughing) Alright, yeah.

[00:08:17] **Miss Millie:** That's how we find out we related. Kept talking and talking and talking. In Surry County? (laughs)

[00:08:23] **Mr. Raymond:** Ask (redacted) when you see her.

[00:08:24] **Miss Millie:** You know (redacted) ?

[00:08:24] **Mr. Raymond:** (Redacted) My cousin! Ask her. She'll tell you about Pocamoke City. That her grandmother, her grandfather's grandparents came in through 'Nappolis. That's what they call it, 'Nappolis.

[00:08:35] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mm-hmm.

[00:08:35] **Mr. Raymond:** It's Annapolis. We know.

[00:08:37] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** It's 'Napolis.

[00:08:38] **Miss Millie:** 'Napolis. (giggles)

[00:08:40] **Mr. Raymond:** And you know, it used to be that what her grandparents' grandparents was telling her about it. That (redacted) knew that history.

[00:08:47] **Miss Millie:** Right.

[00:08:48] **Mr. Raymond:** Verbally,

[00:08:48] **Miss Millie:** Uhhuh

[00:08:49] That, uh, when they came over, his wife told him, 'You can't make no money basket weaving.' You know, 'You gotta feed these children.'

[00:08:57] So he learned to become a brick mason.

[00:08:59] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh, okay.

[00:09:00] **Mr. Raymond:** That's what he did.

[00:09:02] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah.

[00:09:02] **Mr. Raymond:** We were a very productive type thing.

[00:09:06] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah.

[00:09:06] **Mr. Raymond:** Initially.

[00:09:07] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** But we, I feel like we've lost that.

[00:09:09] **Mr. Raymond:** Don't forget they brought us over here for one thing. To work.

[00:09:13] **Miss Millie:** Get to work! Like, we didn't know they had that was brown ground.

[00:09:18] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** What is brown ground?

[00:09:19] **Mr. Raymond:** Brownfields.

[00:09:19] **Miss Millie:** Mm-hmm.

[00:09:20] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Brownfields.

[00:09:21] **Miss Millie:** Lettuce infected with infectious chemicals (?c) on the water and, and air. Right?

[00:09:25] **Mr. Raymond:** Yeah. That woulda died- died down. I don't mess with the air! I don't bother with the air.

[00:09:31] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah.

[00:09:31] **Mr. Raymond:** I told Erica, I said-- she asked me, 'Would you work with the air?' I said, 'No! No, no.'

[00:09:38] **Miss Millie:** You knew the water.

[00:09:38] **Mr. Raymond:** I just deal with the water.

[00:09:39] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** So were you working with them when they found the leak at the sewage plant?

[00:09:43] **Mr. Raymond:** Of course I did.

[00:09:44] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh my goodness!

[00:09:45] **Mr. Raymond:** We reported it!

[00:09:47] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh!!

[00:09:49] **Mr. Raymond:** That came from the sanitation department.

[00:09:53] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Wow!

[00:09:53] **Mr. Raymond:** They sent the water. They, they sent the waterworks out. They said, 'Ain't nothing wrong with them pipes, man.' Sanitation went  
[00:10:00] out there. We-- it was so bad. The e coli was so bad out there that we used to call it the death ditch.

[00:10:06] **Miss Millie:** Mm.

[00:10:06] **Adrian:** Oh my God.

[00:10:07] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** That's that ditch that's off Fourteenth Street?

[00:10:08] **Mr. Raymond:** Well after we found all of that, I wanted to get the, uh, because you know, uh, when children go, they in school, they go to the nurse's office and what have you. And I wanted to find, with the guy that I was talking with at the DA-- DEQ-- environment, uh,

[00:10:26] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Environmental Quality.

[00:10:28] **Mr. Raymond:** Yeah. Environmental Quality, to (redacted) that was the guy.

[00:10:30] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Okay.

[00:10:31] **Mr. Raymond:** He was working there.

[00:10:32] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Wow.

[00:10:32] **Mr. Raymond:** And (redacted) either retired or dead. One of them, I 'on't know. Heh. There's a lady that work with it now.

[00:10:37] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mm-hmm.

[00:10:37] **Mr. Raymond:** And I wanted to know what was-- the children keep- - that one, that was going continuously to the nurse's office.

[00:10:45] Mm-hmm.

[00:10:45] Right.

[00:10:45] Stomach virus or what have you.

[00:10:47] **Miss Millie:** Right.

[00:10:48] **Mr. Raymond:** And could we have traced that to that uh, that leak, that sanitation leak there?

[00:10:53] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mmhmm.

[00:10:54] **Mr. Raymond:** You know,

[00:10:54] **Miss Millie:** That's terrible.

[00:10:55] **Mr. Raymond:** Let me tell you, we tested-- we tested more storm drains in this city, in the, uh, Southeast Community than any other team in the whole state of Virginia. We had about 14 different drains.

[00:11:12] Tell you, I think that what you call them up there, the river rats. That's what they called them.

[00:11:16] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh, yeah.

[00:11:17] **Mr. Raymond:** River rats.

[00:11:18] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** The Hilton River. River Park.

[00:11:19] **Mr. Raymond:** We just called it the Southeast, uh, Water Committee. Now I got some stuff at home that I gotta take, because of the environment and I'm retired with my children.

[00:11:28] Lynwood and I, we do, we've been doing this on our own for a while.

[00:11:32] We were testing for lead and arsenic, and it's kind of expensive to do that. You know, you had to put in for a grant, I think. Well, I ain't even wanna go with that.

[00:11:42] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** I remember--

[00:11:42] **Mr. Raymond:** If I go into stuff, it'll piss me off about certain things and I don't need to be pissed off about certain things.

[00:11:49] I'm too old now! Millie and I are a year ahead of each other. Me, Lynwood and, and, uh, this is the--

[00:11:57] **Miss Millie:** Devil.

[00:11:58] **Mr. Raymond:** The matron.

[00:12:00] **Adrian:** ( laughing)

[00:12:00] **Miss Millie:** What you laughing about? You don't even know me.

[00:12:08] **Mr. Raymond:** This is, she stays right on. She got a lot of information that, uh, maybe one day she'll share with you.

[00:12:14] **Miss Millie:** I don't know anything about all dis coal dust.

[00:12:17] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** I know you know how to make some egg foo young.

[00:12:19] **Miss Millie:** I didn't make the egg foo!

[00:12:20] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** What did you make? Cause--

[00:12:21] **Miss Millie:** I made yak!

[00:12:23] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** The yak was good. All of it.

[00:12:25] **Miss Millie:** You wan' fried rice?

[00:12:27] **Mr. Raymond:** Are you a, uh, private journalist?

[00:12:29] **Adrian:** So, um, I'm part of a university.

[00:12:32] **Mr. Raymond:** Okay.

[00:12:33] **Adrian:** Yeah. I work with C N U and I work with the University of Virginia.



[00:12:37] **Mr. Raymond:** Okay. Okay.

[00:12:38] **Adrian:** Yeah. And so my group is called The Repair Lab.

[00:12:41] **Mr. Raymond:** Yeah.

[00:12:41] **Adrian:** We work with two activists. One of them is based here in Newport News, and his church is Pray First on 39th between, um, oh, it's between Roanoke and --

[00:12:54] **Miss Millie:** Pray First.

[00:12:55] **Adrian:** Yeah. It's called Pray First Mission Ministries--

[00:12:57] **Miss Millie:** On 39th Street?

[00:12:58] **Adrian:** Yes ma'am. They've been there since 2020. See, they're new.

[00:13:01] **Mr. Raymond:** Oh.

[00:13:01] **Miss Millie:** You seen that church?

[00:13:02] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mm-hmm. What's the pastor's name?

[00:13:04] **Miss Millie:** Roanoke Avenue?

[00:13:05] **Adrian:** His name is -- oh no, 39th.

[00:13:07] **Miss Millie:** 39th and Roanoke.

[00:13:09] **Adrian:** What's the other cross street?

[00:13:11] **Miss Millie:** What's, what else is in the neighborhood?

[00:13:14] **Adrian:** It's right on the corner--

[00:13:16] **Miss Millie:** That blue building?

[00:13:17] **Adrian:** It's uh...

[00:13:17] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** I seen it, I think it's over there by Friendship.

[00:13:22] **Mr. Raymond:** It's gotta be a, if you coming this way it's right on, must be on the right hand side.

[00:13:26] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah. It's next to Friendship Baptist. You know where Friendship Baptist is?

[00:13:29] **Miss Millie:** That's on 35th Street.

[00:13:30] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** You go over the tracks.

[00:13:32] **Miss Millie:** Oh.

[00:13:32] **Mr. Raymond:** Friendship Baptist is on 35th Street.

[00:13:34] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** That's on 37th Street.

[00:13:35] **Mr. Raymond:** That's before you go across the track.

[00:13:37] **Adrian:** So it's right there on the other side of the track.

[00:13:39] **Mr. Raymond:** Yeah, on that...

[00:13:40] **Adrian:** That's right.

[00:13:40] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** It's right next to that brick building that nothing's been done with for years.

[00:13:44] **Miss Millie:** They got a new, but now they have new glass up there. Up on that window pane or somethin', with the window up there.

[00:13:48] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** I saw somebody, hopin' somebody was working in there.

[00:13:51] **Miss Millie:** I thought they was gonna move across street, that black one on the-- supply, hair supply.

[00:13:55] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** The blue buildin'.

[00:13:56] **Adrian:** Yes.

[00:13:56] **Mr. Raymond:** ... that blue building..

[00:13:57] **Adrian:** Pastor Lathaniel Kirts.

[00:14:00] **Miss Millie:** Okay, between...okay.

[00:14:02] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Okay.

[00:14:02] **Adrian:** And his wife

[00:14:03] **Mr. Raymond:** (redacted) and (redacted) lived down there on the corner together.

[00:14:05] **Miss Millie:** They got those names up there. (redacted) . And (redacted) . I said those names, I didn't know what it meant. (redacted) went to school with us.

[00:14:10] **Mr. Raymond:** Mm-hmm.

[00:14:11] **Miss Millie:** And his mother was Madam (redacted) . She had a store on Jefferson Avenue years ago.

[00:14:14] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh wow.

[00:14:15] **Miss Millie:** Boutique.

[00:14:16] **Adrian:** Boutique.

[00:14:16] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Okay. Okay.

[00:14:17] **Mr. Raymond:** But he was a contractor.

[00:14:19] **Miss Millie:** Yeah. But--

[00:14:19] **Mr. Raymond:** And Mr. (redacted) , Mr. (redacted) and (redacted) that lived up there in Denbigh.

[00:14:22] **Miss Millie:** Mm-hmm.

[00:14:22] **Mr. Raymond:** On Tabs Lane, Wells Road, they built Warwick Lawn.

[00:14:27] **Miss Millie:** Yeah.

[00:14:28] **Mr. Raymond:** Warwick lawns up in Denbigh.

[00:14:29] **Miss Millie:** Was all Blacks up there back in the day.

[00:14:32] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** I remember...

[00:14:32] **Mr. Raymond:** Cameron Lane back up in there.

[00:14:34] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** It was a lady did a story on it. And is that the area where uh, the Warwick Lawns where the city like stole all the property from Black people?

[00:14:43] **Miss Millie:** That's mainly up there, Royal Lane.

[00:14:46] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Royal Lane.

[00:14:47] **Miss Millie:** Up by Fort Eustis.

[00:14:48] **Adrian:** Yes.

[00:14:48] **Miss Millie:** It was owned by the family called the Royals and the Blands.

[00:14:51] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Okay.

[00:14:51] **Miss Millie:** It's up in the Fort Eustis area. And I think, to what I understand, they took all that land, those people.

[00:14:58] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah.

[00:14:58] **Miss Millie:** For little to nothing.

[00:14:59] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** That's what [00:15:00] I've heard.

[00:15:01] **Miss Millie:** So we heard too.

[00:15:02] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah.

[00:15:02] **Miss Millie:** Cause I know some Royals. A lot. It was a big family. That's why they called it Royal Lane.

[00:15:06] **Mr. Raymond:** I ain't sayin' nothin'.

[00:15:09] **Miss Millie:** He knows! (laughing)

[00:15:09] **Mr. Raymond:** Cause if I am I'm gonna start cussin'.

[00:15:11] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** But who--

[00:15:12] **Mr. Raymond:** And I don't curse.

[00:15:12] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Who is picking up, like who do we need to talk to about the coal field that's actually doing studies like you and Mr. DeBrew did back in the day?

[00:15:21] **Miss Millie:** Sh.. You 'on't even hear 'bout any coal anymore. You don't even hear about, you know, one the um, the girl back here said that she come over that bridge almost every day.

[00:15:30] **Mr. Raymond:** That was...

[00:15:30] **Miss Millie:** And the coal dust is going down, but I don't think it's going down. I don't know.

[00:15:33] **Mr. Raymond:** With the water, (redacted) I would-- (redacted) and I (redacted) (redacted) and I was dealing with the water. We was dealing with the water. Then (redacted) got sick. Yeah. (redacted) was with us and she had to take care of (redacted) cause so it was just (redacted) and I was doin' it. We did it for about four or five years.

[00:15:44] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mm-hmm.

[00:15:45] **Mr. Raymond:** You know,

[00:15:46] **Miss Millie:** I don't know.

[00:15:46] **Mr. Raymond:** The city got that,

[00:15:47] **Miss Millie:** That's a good question.

[00:15:48] **Mr. Raymond:** You know, Department of Environmental Quality...

[00:15:50] **Miss Millie:** I do think -- I do think when these places being built come up and they move some white folks down there, no-- no offense --  
(laughs)

[00:15:59] **Mr. Raymond:** What are you talkin' bout the Chase Bag?

[00:16:01] **Miss Millie:** -- it's gonna be some changes made down there.

[00:16:03] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Did I tell you that? Did I say that?

[00:16:05] **Miss Millie:** There gonna be some changes made!

[00:16:06] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** When they put this--

[00:16:07] **Miss Millie:** No, no, no--

[00:16:07] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** You know --

[00:16:08] **Miss Millie:** The new buildings being built --

[00:16:08] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** --Down Ivy Avenue--

[00:16:08] **Miss Millie:** Old Ridley Circle.

[00:16:10] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** There's gonna be 28 houses down Ivy Avenue.

[00:16:13] **Miss Millie:** But there's some changes made.

[00:16:14] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah. And there's gonna be a school there. Um, a new, they, you know, they rezoned this area so now it's light industrial.

[00:16:22] **Mr. Raymond:** No surprise.

[00:16:23] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah. It's gonna be, um--

[00:16:24] They

[00:16:24] **Miss Millie:** did that last year. Cause I went to the meeting cause I wanted to see how it concerned me.

[00:16:27] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah, that's right.

[00:16:28] **Miss Millie:** With my tax going up.

[00:16:29] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mm-hmm. Yep.

[00:16:30] **Miss Millie:** I live residential, not industrial.

[00:16:33] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yep. But S 23. This Hold-- Holdings is coming. They're a fabrication business. And then--

[00:16:40] **Miss Millie:** Over here?

[00:16:40] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** They're coming down'ere.

[00:16:41] **Mr. Raymond:** Heyyy! (Waving to someone on the sidewalk)

[00:16:42] **Miss Millie:** What about the one over here behind the Moton?

[00:16:44] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** So that deal actually went down. That was IndeedWell. They're not coming anymore.

[00:16:50] **Miss Millie:** Oh no. I saw somebody go out and doin' somethin'. Yeah, but behind the Moton would've been supposed to be mobile houses, some kind of houses.

[00:16:55] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** They're not doing that anymore. They pulled out of the deal cuz they said it was too difficult to do business here. So they're still, they're looking for another location in Virginia. So what's going there now is the economic development authority is building a buil-- a school for the Virginia Peninsula Community College to do maritime trainin's and technical--

[00:17:15] **Miss Millie:** But the brown ground. The ground contaminated.

[00:17:18] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Because they rezoned it to light industrial.

[00:17:20] **Miss Millie:** It's still contaminated ground.

[00:17:22] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** They rezoned it.

[00:17:22] **Miss Millie:** Now it's no, no longer contaminated, huh?

[00:17:24] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** (chuckles) I know they can't put no more houses up there.

[00:17:29] **Mr. Raymond:** Where is this now?

[00:17:30] **Miss Millie:** Over here. (pointing across Jefferson Ave)

[00:17:31] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Right here. Right there. Behind--

[00:17:31] **Miss Millie:** On the brown ground contamination.

[00:17:33] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** And see in this middle, in the middle part, they're saying that they're gonna put, um, like retail. So the retail is gonna be catered to S 23 holdings and the school. So it's gonna be moreso like, um, repair shops or businesses right behind the Moton. So I really wanna have a conversation with Mr. DeBrew to see what's gonna happen to the Moton. I seen the city's plan.

[00:17:59] **Miss Millie:** I been wonderin' the same thing

[00:18:00] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** I seen--

[00:18:01] **Miss Millie:** Don't let Shannon get it.

[00:18:03] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** I'on'know who...

[00:18:05] **Mr. Raymond:** You have to go back about 40 years. That was very, very--

[00:18:09] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** So I saw the 20, I saw the 2040 plan and it's a movie theater there. And I'm like, how is there a movie theater there when the Moton is there with all our history? So what are they plannin' that we don't know? And how can we fight against that before it happens

[00:18:25] **Mr. Raymond:** The City zoned that the Moton would be like a theater.



[00:18:28] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mm-hmm.

[00:18:29] **Mr. Raymond:** That used to be a theater.

[00:18:31] **Miss Millie:** What? Right here? Uhhuh

[00:18:33] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** This used to be a theater.

[00:18:33] **Mr. Raymond:** It used to be a theater. And further down where the, uh, what is that thing that, uh, the shopping center where...

[00:18:40] **Miss Millie:** 23rd and Jefferson?

[00:18:42] **Mr. Raymond:** Yeah. It used to be --

[00:18:42] **Miss Millie:** That's the theater.

[00:18:43] **Mr. Raymond:** --a theater there--

[00:18:43] **Miss Millie:** Oh, the Dixie.

[00:18:44] **Mr. Raymond:** --called the Dixie Theater.

[00:18:45] **Miss Millie:** Mm-hmm. We had three theater. We had, we had the Moton, Dixie, and Jefferson. We had three theaters.

[00:18:51] **Mr. Raymond:** Jefferson was on 25th Street.

[00:18:52] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** So was the coal terminal there... then?

[00:18:56] **Miss Millie:** It did, we went to--

[00:18:57] **Mr. Raymond:** You tell 'em.

[00:18:57] **Miss Millie:** --1869. They said that's when they put the coal dump down here.

[00:19:01] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Is that where they were burning the shoes for the World War I?

[00:19:06] **Miss Millie:** Burning shoes?

[00:19:07] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mr. Ernest Thompson said that they used to burn shoes from the soldiers?

[00:19:12] **Miss Millie:** I know it was at one point they had, um, crematory down'ere, they burned horses.

[00:19:17] **Mr. Raymond:** Yeah.

[00:19:17] **Miss Millie:** Back in the day you could smell it at night. You knew it was burning. They were makin' glue, they said.

[00:19:22] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh, wow.

[00:19:23] **Mr. Raymond:** Mr. DeBrew has a very thorough history.

[00:19:26] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah.

[00:19:26] **Mr. Raymond:** And the only one that I know that may have anything comparable to what he has... uh, what was the teacher that died? She used to come to all the--

[00:19:36] **Miss Millie:** Miss Hayes?

[00:19:37] **Mr. Raymond:** No. That come to all the dances. She be on the floor.

[00:19:39] **Miss Millie:** Miss Edwards.

[00:19:40] **Mr. Raymond:** Edwards. Yeah. She knew. She was very, very,

[00:19:42] **Miss Millie:** She wrote a book.

[00:19:43] **Mr. Raymond:** She was knowledgable. She sure did.

[00:19:45] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Uhhuh, what's her name of the-- um, what's her name?

[00:19:47] **Mr. Raymond:** Lizzie Edwards?

[00:19:48] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Lindsey Edwards?

[00:19:49] **Mr. Raymond:** Inettie Edwards.

[00:19:49] **Miss Millie:** Inettie Edwards. Inettie Edwards. She wrote a book.

[00:19:52] **Mr. Raymond:** And, uh, there were several people that were very, very thorough about--

[00:19:56] **Miss Millie:** She said when she wrote her book, she went over Washington [00:20:00] Avenue about her husband and the property. They said, 'Put your ex.' Cause they think she couldn't read and write.

[00:20:07] She said, 'Oh, I can read and write!' And wrote her name. I met her.

[00:20:10] **Mr. Raymond:** And the thing about the shipyard too was you should have talked to (redacted) . That was Solomon Travis's grandson. Solomon Travis was a big wheel. No, not a big wheel. He fought for a lot of things in the shipyard.

[00:20:25] **Miss Millie:** (Redacted) used be the magistrate at one point.

[00:20:27] **Mr. Raymond:** Sure did. (Redactedc) did, overtown. I don't know where all the paperwork, I dunno if it's at the Moton or (redacted) got some of it or just what?

[00:20:34] **Miss Millie:** No. But Debrew -- DeBrew knows a lot of history of Newport News.

[00:20:39] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** This is..

[00:20:40] **Miss Millie:** Even though he come from that part of town, north part of town.

[00:20:43] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh, he did?

[00:20:44] **Mr. Raymond:** Who did?

[00:20:44] **Miss Millie:** He went to Carver.

[00:20:45] **Mr. Raymond:** Who?

[00:20:45] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh, he did!

[00:20:46] **Miss Millie:** He, he didn't grow up down here with us. He went to Newsome Park.

[00:20:48] **Mr. Raymond:** Who?

[00:20:49] **Miss Millie:** Oh, and then-- what he knows all about down here. He didn't go to Huntington.

[00:20:52] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh my goodness. His memory is remarkable. Like, say he's like in his eighties now, like you're talking about the grants-- he was like, 'Give me that book right there.' He knows the exact book that the grant is in.

[00:21:03] **Miss Millie:** He knows!

[00:21:04] **Mr. Raymond:** He does.

[00:21:05] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** His memory is just like--

[00:21:06] **Miss Millie:** Sharp as a tack.

[00:21:07] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** He is a hidden jewel. Like I don't understand. I'm like, why aren't we like playing this man up in books and everything?!

[00:21:13] **Mr. Raymond:** He went to Hampton University.

[00:21:17] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** He did?

[00:21:18] **Miss Millie:** He had a lot of history.

[00:21:19] **Mr. Raymond:** That's what Dr. Franklin and Dr... his name was Green at the time, Doc Diyad. Dr. Diyad. I went to Dr. Franklin as my doctor. Dr. Diyad, who was in Burlington, North Carolina. I used to get my shea butter from him. We would talk a lot and Linwood and I would talk all the time. First time when Linwood and I met, we were talking about books. I went to Huntington.

[00:21:42] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah.

[00:21:42] **Mr. Raymond:** And Linwood said,

[00:21:42] **Miss Millie:** B School.

[00:21:43] **Mr. Raymond:** 'You know about books. I'm the guru of books.'  
And--

[00:21:45] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** That's right.

[00:21:46] **Mr. Raymond:** --We start talking about books and he had read what I read. I had read some of them, what he read, and then I started throwing some stuff on Shank. Uh, Frank Yerby!

[00:21:57] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Frank Yerby.

[00:21:58] **Mr. Raymond:** Never heard of Frank Yerby?

[00:21:59] **Adrian:** I don't know that I have.

[00:22:00] **Mr. Raymond:** He wrote about the Antebellum South Black Reader.

[00:22:03] **Miss Millie:** You hearda him?

[00:22:03] **Adrian:** I don't know that I have.

[00:22:04] **Mr. Raymond:** He wrote about the Antebellum South. You know,

[00:22:06] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Antebellum South.

[00:22:07] **Mr. Raymond:** And Linwood said, he said, 'Man--' he ain't never heard of it.

[00:22:10] **Miss Millie:** He's an avid reader. He's a reader.

[00:22:13] **Mr. Raymond:** Linwood and I talked, Linwood and-- I think we, we just, that, Linwood, that's one of the things that both of us practice martial arts. But his mind is just phenomenal. He can recall stuff. You know, I can't do that. I forget now. I forget her name.

[00:22:28] **Miss Millie:** (laughing) He don't forget nothing.

[00:22:29] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** He don't forget nothing.

[00:22:32] **Miss Millie:** He don't forget nothing. He don' forget.

[00:22:33] **Mr. Raymond:** I'm not like that brother.

[00:22:34] **Miss Millie:** He reads a lot. He does read a lot.

[00:22:36] **Mr. Raymond:** That brother, you know, he traced his lineage back to, from all the way--

[00:22:39] **Miss Millie:** Oh yeah, he did a DNA. He did that. His, his family.

[00:22:41] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** He told me and he said that he, what is it? Havlock, he had me research Havlock tree.

[00:22:47] **Mr. Raymond:** (laughing)

[00:22:47] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** I was like, yes sir.

[00:22:49] **Miss Millie:** My grandmother from the Shenandoah Valley.

[00:22:51] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh really?

[00:22:52] **Miss Millie:** And I told him her last name was Jackson.

[00:22:54] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mm-hmm.

[00:22:55] **Miss Millie:** He said, 'Oh, they're Jackson Whites. I know about them.' I didn't.

[00:22:59] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh my goodness.

[00:23:00] **Miss Millie:** Shenandoah Valley.

[00:23:01] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh my goodness.

[00:23:01] **Miss Millie:** They were mixed culture of people.

[00:23:03] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah.

[00:23:04] **Miss Millie:** Just a mixed culture of people that ... 'cause my grandmother looked like she could've been, I don't know. Mixed -- not mixed. But she was fair looking.

[00:23:12] **Mr. Raymond:** You were related to (redacted) too weren't you--

[00:23:14] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Now one thing, like, sitting here, Ms. Millie-- like they've done the work to know who they are. You know, and they know their lineage. They know what they, dey here to ground it. Right? So we would talk about the families in Ridley Circle that are just, it's an oppressed mindset. And like they'll go to City-- you heard, they'll go to City Council and, and talk about what's going on. They'll be engaged. But it was really difficult getting families in Ridley Circle to get to that point. To even come to a City Council meeting.

[00:23:47] **Miss Millie:** You know why?

[00:23:48] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Why?

[00:23:48] **Miss Millie:** Cause people think they're not gonna do anything. We been coming to meet-- we went to a meeting, I went to a couple of meetings about naming the streets. Mm-hmm. We cain't name the streets Black names.

[00:23:58] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mm-hmm.

[00:23:59] **Miss Millie:** And why not? So, you know, we changed that.

[00:24:01] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** It's a naming committee.

[00:24:03] **Miss Millie:** Well, I was supposed to be on the naming committee.

[00:24:05] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Well, I mean--

[00:24:05] **Miss Millie:** So my thinking was, okay, so he's somewhere in Florida in a corner.

[00:24:09] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mm-hmm.

[00:24:10] **Miss Millie:** A--Already chose the street names.

[00:24:11] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mm-hmm.

[00:24:12] **Miss Millie:** So once you bring in Ridley Circle, here come the new street names.

[00:24:15] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** So we actually were able to--

[00:24:17] **Miss Millie:** So when we gonna meet?

[00:24:18] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** --give voice to that. And I, I get it right because it's like an ongoing battle with the, especially the naming. So what I did, cuz I just took over this Citizens Advisory Committee in April. And what I did is I created a naming committee. Because with the Choice Neighborhood Initiative, it's in the contract that they have to put those changes through the C-- like through the committee. Right. So having people like you, (redacted) was on it. Having people that have the knowledge-- huh?

[00:24:47] **Mr. Raymond:** She can't shut up, can she? That's my sister.

[00:24:51] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah. I love her to pieces.

[00:24:52] **Mr. Raymond:** That's my sister.

[00:24:53] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** But having people like that drives the conversation. So I know initially they said that we weren't gonna have any  
[00:25:00] names. Now four out of the five names are Black names.

[00:25:06] **Miss Millie:** Like who?

[00:25:06] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Rome. Apparently this guy Rome was, I think he was the first Black person on the school board.

[00:25:13] **Miss Millie:** Who else?

[00:25:13] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** And then we have --

[00:25:14] **Miss Millie:** Who else?

[00:25:14] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Huh?

[00:25:15] **Miss Millie:** Who else do you have?



[00:25:16] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Um, I don't have, I'll give it to you. But I need your phone number so I can make sure that you come in that meeting--

[00:25:21] **Miss Millie:** Because um, we were in the meeting one night and (redacted) was talking about the name 16th Street, Paul Lawrence Dunbar.

[00:25:26] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mm-hmm.

[00:25:27] **Miss Millie:** Cause that's where Dunbar was. And I was asking about Jessie Radley. Cuz she was our first Black mayor. And uh, they told--

[00:25:35] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh, I think I heard of her.

[00:25:35] **Miss Millie:** Yeah. They said to me, 'Well her name is over the City Hall.' But you can't see it in City Hall.

[00:25:41] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mm-hmm.

[00:25:42] **Miss Millie:** Why not put on the street? So we can drive by and see her name or something.

[00:25:46] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** And there's ways that, that's why I'm so happy that I'm in a position because we get frustrated about a lot. But they, my daddy always told me that white people leave a loophole. We just gotta find that loophole and bust it through for our brothers and sisters. What we found is that in the ordinance, if we went and put in a name change, there's an ordinance that says, well say Pickett's Beach, cuz we're working to change the park to Pickett's Beach.

[00:26:11] Um, the King-Lincoln part to Pickett's Beach, there's a street name that is in northern Newport News called Pickett Street. And that-- something that simple is gonna stop us from changing that name because in the ordinance it says that it can't sound similar to Pickett or sound similar to the name you're trying to change it.

[00:26:31] So what we did is put in two applications, one to change that name and then also change this name. We're going through their process and we have a strong group of people that are gonna show up at city council to advocate for it.

[00:26:44] **Miss Millie:** Pinkett Beach.

[00:26:45] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yes. So why not change it?

[00:26:47] **Miss Millie:** So you gonna name it Pinkett or Pinky Beach?

[00:26:50] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Pickett's.

[00:26:50] **Miss Millie:** Pinkett.

[00:26:51] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** After William Moore Pickett.

[00:26:53] **Miss Millie:** You gonna name Pickett? Okay.

[00:26:53] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yes.

[00:26:54] **Miss Millie:** Okay.

[00:26:54] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah,

[00:26:54] **Mr. Raymond:** She get that.

[00:26:56] **Miss Millie:** Now, I'm jus' sayin', cause uh, Miss *Pinkett*, I met the daughter.

[00:27:01] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yes.

[00:27:02] **Miss Millie:** Said I wrote the letter. I wrote a paper on her.

[00:27:04] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** You did?

[00:27:04] **Miss Millie:** Yeah. Uhhuh.

[00:27:06] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh my goodness.

[00:27:07] **Miss Millie:** Ms. Horn, she, she married a Horn, last name Horn. No, her cousin was a Horn. She married a Gillis.

[00:27:13] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Gillis. Okay.

[00:27:14] **Miss Millie:** 16th. One Six Street. Yeah. She had a big house right there. I would go visit her. But she was Mr. Pinkett's daughter.

[00:27:20] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Uhhuh.

[00:27:20] **Miss Millie:** Very fair woman. She was the first,

[00:27:22] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** She, she came when we did the pier!

[00:27:25] **Miss Millie:** She been dead a while now. I'm not sure.

[00:27:27] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** We did that pier about five years ago?

[00:27:29] **Miss Millie:** Because she, I think she died.

[00:27:31] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Well maybe it was a granddaughter cuz it was a real fair skinned lady--

[00:27:33] **Miss Millie:** It may have been her granddaughter. She was very fair with white hair. And they had this big picture went in her house on 6th Street.

[00:27:39] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh wow.

[00:27:39] **Miss Millie:** And she still there. One day and she was talking about her, her father. And she said that she was the first female in the band at Huntington.

[00:27:47] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh!

[00:27:48] **Miss Millie:** And she went when Huntington was at Dunbar.

[00:27:50] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Really?

[00:27:50] **Miss Millie:** Where it started out at. And we had a nice conversation.

[00:27:53] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** I didn't know Huntington started off at Dunbar.

[00:27:56] **Mr. Raymond:** Dunbar. Sure did.

[00:27:56] **Miss Millie:** Dunbar. Dunbar.

[00:27:57] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Really?

[00:27:57] **Miss Millie:** Back in 'e day.

[00:27:59] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** And then it moved to..

[00:28:00] **Miss Millie:** Wait, what's the next one it went to? I know it left Dunbar and went somewhere then it moved back here.

[00:28:06] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** What year did you graduate?

[00:28:08] **Miss Millie:** 62.

[00:28:08] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** 62?

[00:28:09] **Miss Millie:** Mm-hmm.

[00:28:10] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** And you went, you went to--

[00:28:11] **Mr. Raymond:** Same

[00:28:11] **Miss Millie:** Same year.

[00:28:12] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Okay. Oh, so y'all been friends?  
(laughing)

[00:28:14] **Miss Millie:** No, we're foes. (laughter)

[00:28:16] **Mr. Raymond:** Foes.

[00:28:18] **Miss Millie:** We been friends a long time. Long time.

[00:28:20] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Beautiful.

[00:28:21] **Miss Millie:** We think we related.

[00:28:22] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mm-hmm.

[00:28:23] **Miss Millie:** We think so.

[00:28:24] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Probably!

[00:28:25] **Miss Millie:** Outta Surry County. We outta Surry County.

[00:28:28] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Go 'head. Who, who was the first principal to Huntington?

[00:28:32] **Miss Millie:** Wasn't't Mr. Palmer?

[00:28:33] **Mr. Raymond:** Far as I know it was

[00:28:36] Mr. Palmer grandfather.. somebody...

[00:28:37] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Is he still living?

[00:28:39] **Mr. Raymond:** No, he was--

[00:28:40] **Miss Millie:** He fought for the teachers--

[00:28:41] **Mr. Raymond:** Mr. Allen was a very, very--

[00:28:41] **Miss Millie:** He fought for the teachers' rights.

[00:28:42] **Mr. Raymond:** - A very close friend of his son.

[00:28:44] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Chuck Allen. Okay.

[00:28:45] **Miss Millie:** Chuck Allen asked me for Miss Pinkett paper. I'm gonna findin' you a copy of it.

[00:28:50] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Please. I would appreciate that.

[00:28:53] **Miss Millie:** Cause you know what? I thought she was so old she didn't know nothing. So I wrote "Gospel Spreading Church of God." I wrote it wrong. I might have wrote it-- transposed at the words. She read it. She said, "Now when you get back home, change this name." I said, "Shit," what she was talking about. Cause I figured she was an old lady. She, I came home and looked, I said, "My God, she was right."

[00:29:17] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh my goodness. She knew what she was talking about!

[00:29:19] **Miss Millie:** And she would say, "I wanna take your picture tomorrow." She's, "I go to bed at five." I said, "I'll be here at four. Put your lipstick on." Nice house on Sixth Street! High ceiling with the nice chandeliers.

[00:29:35] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yes. Beautiful.

[00:29:37] **Miss Millie:** We had the best time.

[00:29:38] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** So the house is, it's not there yet.

[00:29:40] **Miss Millie:** It's a store there now.

[00:29:41] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** It's not there anymore?

[00:29:41] **Miss Millie:** That's Ms. (redacted) House. Yeah. It's Ms. (redacted) Two houses. And then the (redacted) house and an open field. There's a big white house there. With pretty flowers like these, like them orange ones. She had red like that.

[00:29:53] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Okay. I remem-- Okay. Cuz they said that his house--

[00:29:56] **Miss Millie:** Melms Street, M-E-L-M-S.

[00:29:57] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** -Was close to the water.

[00:29:58] **Miss Millie:** Melms. And [00:30:00] it used to be a pier right there.

[00:30:01] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yes! Yes.

[00:30:02] **Miss Millie:** Uhhuh. She said her father would fish out there.

[00:30:04] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh my goodness...

[00:30:05] **Miss Millie:** Her father was a tailor. T-A-Y-L-O-R. T-A-I-- T-A-I-L-O-R.

[00:30:10] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh, so that's not like Momma Pat cuz. Momma Pat is T-A-Y-L-O-R.

[00:30:14] **Miss Millie:** It's the same thing but the i's a y. My name Taylor.

[00:30:17] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh really?

[00:30:17] **Miss Millie:** T-A-Y-L-O-R. But he was a clothes tailor, T-A-I-L-O-R. They make clothes.

[00:30:22] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh, okay.

[00:30:23] **Miss Millie:** It's the difference in it. Tailor.

[00:30:24] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

[00:30:25] **Miss Millie:** You know, T-A-Y-- I said T-A-I. T-A-I-L-O-R. Clothes tailor. A, a seamstress.

[00:30:31] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Okay. Yeah. Like Mr. (redacted) ?

[00:30:32] **Miss Millie:** Yeah. Like Mr. (redacted) . Yeah. So, uh, I would go down there with Miss Pinkett and we'd have nice conversations. I had to go early. Cause she went to bed at five.

[00:30:43] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** So do you think--

[00:30:44] **Miss Millie:** She was good friends with um, Bobby Scott's father. They came to her wedding. Yeah. She'd tell me all that stuff.

[00:30:53] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** It's so many nice stories here. It's so much rich history. Like do you think us bringing awareness to what's happening with our environment here will get more eyes and maybe the government will be more inclined to do things...?

[00:31:08] **Miss Millie:** It might. You never know. The coal dust been here so long. It's like, it's a... I don't know...

[00:31:15] **Mr. Raymond:** Ain't nobody sain' nothin'...

[00:31:16] **Miss Millie:** You jus' inhale it. It don't sit. But I do think when new people come down here, whoever it is, there may be some changes. But I don't know for sure.

[00:31:26] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Well, Adrian said that the city looked at a study in 2011. It's like a mesh curtain where it will hold the big particles away from us.

[00:31:37] **Miss Millie:** A mesh curtain? Where's de mesh curtain?

[00:31:38] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** A wind fence.

[00:31:39] **Miss Millie:** Where's da mesh curtain?

[00:31:40] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** We don't have one.

[00:31:42] **Miss Millie:** Oh, dey had one.

[00:31:43] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** But they did a study.

[00:31:44] **Adrian:** They looked at it.

[00:31:45] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah, they looked at it.

[00:31:46] **Adrian:** They thought about it.

[00:31:46] **Miss Millie:** They thought about it. So all we have is sprinkler. Sometimes you can see the water sprinklin' over there. Some things you can't cuz of how the sun is setting.

[00:31:55] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** But we were coming across the bridge one day. You remember when that big storm came in? We were coming across the bridge and it was a big cloud of just black dust that was coming over our community. I'm like, "What in the world?" We have to bring attention to it.

[00:32:09] **Mr. Raymond:** That may have been from the wildfires comin' outta Canada.

[00:32:15] **Miss Millie:** That big storm was headed...

[00:32:16] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Was it last, last week when that big storm came?

[00:32:19] **Miss Millie:** When the big storm came and the wind. All that.

[00:32:21] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** It was just a big black cloud. So I'm like, we have to do something. I think with something like the mesh curtain or the wind. Wind curtain. Wind fence.



[00:32:30] **Miss Millie:** What is this coal dust bein' used for now? For who? Some rich people? Who woulda-- who heating by coal?!

[00:32:38] **Adrian:** It gets exported to Korea and Europe.

[00:32:42] **Miss Millie:** Cause they got a coal field on 39th Street as well. You seen that one? You haven't seen that one?

[00:32:46] **Adrian:** Oh, Kinder Morgan?

[00:32:47] **Miss Millie:** Down 39th Street, down Pembroke. It's a coal-- coal field down there.

[00:32:51] **Adrian:** Another coal terminal?

[00:32:52] **Miss Millie:** Yeah.

[00:32:53] **Adrian:** Yeah. I think --

[00:32:53] **Miss Millie:** Right down 39th Street

[00:32:54] **Adrian:** --that's the Kinder Morgan one.

[00:32:55] **Miss Millie:** I don't know who own it, I know bout this one. But the one on thirti-- you haven't seen that one? Right down Pembroke Avenue.

[00:33:00] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** So was it on a train?

[00:33:02] **Miss Millie:** No, it's like that. Stacks of coal, pyramids of coal.

[00:33:05] **Adrian:** It's just a different owner.

[00:33:09] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** So it's wrapped all around us.

[00:33:10] **Miss Millie:** Yeah. But it's not, like I said, some days I come out here, it's just black. When I-- if it rains, it's really black, you know? Cause it, it, it gets in the--

[00:33:20] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** It runs down. I know on the outside of my house, like it always--

[00:33:25] **Miss Millie:** My neighbor just washed his house down the other day. I said, "Man! You got, that's a whole different shade." I kept lookin', I said, "Wait a minute." I saw him power washing it. Then I came back and I saw his railings. I thought they were gray. (laughing) Lord, ha' mercy.

[00:33:45] I said, "Howard." He said, "Look, Miss Millie." I said "Howard. I thought yo' porch was *gray*."

[00:33:52] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Wow.

[00:33:54] **Miss Millie:** Look at that house. Whole new house.

[00:33:59] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** That's still the young man his, his mom left him the house.

[00:34:02] **Miss Millie:** Yeah.

[00:34:03] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Wow.

[00:34:03] **Miss Millie:** I mean that porch was black.

[00:34:06] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mm. Mm mm mm.

[00:34:08] **Miss Millie:** I jus' knew it had been gray.

[00:34:11] **Adrian:** Part of what I'm doing today is trying to also get some photos of like places where the coal dust is. Do you have anywhere? I mean, I know that you take really good care of your home. It's-- your porch is like, immaculate.

[00:34:25] **Miss Millie:** No. Just came out this morning. Wipe-- wiped everything down.

[00:34:29] **Adrian:** I can tell. It's so beautiful.

[00:34:31] **Miss Millie:** Yeah. I came out dis mornin', wiped the porch down. I came out-- this stuff nothin's on it, cause I washed these and- like old folks do back in the day, put the plastic.

[00:34:40] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** That's alright.

[00:34:41] **Adrian:** Good idea.

[00:34:42] **Miss Millie:** I'm trying to keep 'em clean. Yeah. This weekend. I had it on my couch too, and I wiped these down, so, okay. I wiped my little, my little thing here. I had to wipe her down. This down. That's Pearl. Miss Pearl died and give me that. So I [00:35:00] wiped all this stuff down this morning.

[00:35:01] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Miss Pearl did?

[00:35:01] **Miss Millie:** I had a friend named Pearl who died in November.

[00:35:04] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh.

[00:35:04] **Miss Millie:** And they wanted to know what I wanted. And I wanted that shoe in her yard. So I put those flowers in it. I always loved that shoe in her yard. So when she died, I said, "I want that. I want that shoe." So I put those pink, they were really pink-- the coal dust got in 'em. See the color? They were pink.

[00:35:21] **Adrian:** Yeah, I can see that. They're kind of like dull colored.

[00:35:24] **Miss Millie:** And this frog, she use' be another shade, but I cleaned her up. Clean him up. I guess they boy and girl, I don't know. I made a couple. I made 'em a couple.

[00:35:36] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** A frog and a snail.

[00:35:37] **Miss Millie:** And I cleaned 'em up this morning. But uh, when it rains and it comes in, in the air, it's black and dusty. And my daughter car being white, her car get real black. And my car's black, so she can't really see it. Her car gets black. But I don't know what we could do about this coal dust. We been complaining and complaining, but I don't know what it could do.

[00:35:59] **Mr. Raymond:** Well the problem is, as long as they use coal you may not have to, you're not gonna ever get away with it.

[00:36:04] **Miss Millie:** Mm-mm.

[00:36:04] **Mr. Raymond:** It's like a, a big thing that sits there. And it's uh, it's a hazard. So you have to find a way to work it around it to reduce.

[00:36:15] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Well, and it brings a lot of money. I believe you said it brings it how much of the United States coal or --?

[00:36:22] **Adrian:** Oh, like 25% between this one and the one in Norfolk. Like these two, the Kinder Morgan and Dominion, and then the one in Lambert's Point, it's like 25 30%.

[00:36:31] **Miss Millie:** Lambert's, I heard about Lambert's, Lambert's Point. We went to meeting, the air meeting. They was talking about a Lambert's Point. I didn't know where Lambert's Point even was. Never hearda Lambert's Point.

[00:36:41] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Me either (laughing).

[00:36:42] **Miss Millie:** I said "Y'all got coal too."

[00:36:44] **Adrian:** They have the same problem. It's not as bad as here.

[00:36:48] **Miss Millie:** Not as bad as here.

[00:36:49] **Adrian:** Yeah. It's not. It's still bad.

[00:36:52] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Is it as big as ours?

[00:36:53] **Adrian:** It's different. Um, because what happens here is the coal gets stored. These big piles that just sit and like slowly move, but they're storing it. So this coal is getting moved to foreign countries. It's for foreign export. And Lambert's-- so this is CSX. In Lambert's Point they have Norfolk Southern.

[00:37:12] **Miss Millie:** Who imports the coal and to-- who imports this coal?

[00:37:15] **Adrian:** Who imports it? Korea. Um, some European countries.

[00:37:19] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** But it comes from like, West Virginia, right?

[00:37:22] **Adrian:** It comes from West Virginia.

[00:37:23] **Miss Millie:** Yeah, West Virginia.

[00:37:24] **Adrian:** It's actually, you know the name Huntington?

[00:37:26] **Miss Millie:** Yeah. We do.

[00:37:28] **Adrian:** Huntington, West Virginia. He's the guy. Collis Potter Huntington.

[00:37:33] **Miss Millie:** Oh, that's our school named for him.

[00:37:35] **Mr. Raymond:** What's his name?

[00:37:36] **Adrian:** He, he built the railroad.

[00:37:38] **Mr. Raymond:** Collis P Huntington.

[00:37:40] **Miss Millie:** That's our school. Named after him.

[00:37:42] **Mr. Raymond:** Huntington.

[00:37:43] **Adrian:** Yes. So he built the railroad.

[00:37:46] **Miss Millie:** 1869, I think. Is it?

[00:37:48] **Adrian:** Yes. So he built the railroad from West Virginia-- Huntington, West Virginia.

[00:37:52] **Miss Millie:** And then they moved all the Black folks down here by the coal.

[00:37:54] **Adrian:** Yeah. He was a billionaire.

[00:37:56] **Miss Millie:** They knew what they was doing.

[00:37:56] **Adrian:** And his family is still extremely wealthy.

[00:37:59] **Miss Millie:** On the backs of us.

[00:38:01] **Adrian:** Yes. They, they used a lot of it was, it was post Emancipation. But it was after virginia started what they call the Black Codes that were like criminalizing Blackness in the state. And so they had a lot of new prisoners who they sort of rounded up and then the state was in a lot of debt because of the Civil War. And so they were like, "Oh man, we gotta do

something. Um, let's build a railroad that will drag a bunch of coal out so we can make this money back. Who can build it?"

[00:38:35] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Wow.

[00:38:35] **Adrian:** And Huntington was right there because he had just built the first Transcontinental Railroad with three others. They borrowed a lot of money from the federal government to do that, and they never paid it back.

[00:38:45] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Wow.

[00:38:45] **Adrian:** He spent all that money in Congress lobbying to try to make it so that he never had to pay it back, and he never did.

[00:38:54] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Wow.

[00:38:54] **Adrian:** And so the state was like, "Here's a bunch of free labor of all these incarcerated African-American men." Um, that they used to build the railroad.

[00:39:03] **Mr. Raymond:** That's interesting.

[00:39:03] **Adrian:** Through the mountains of west Virginia.

[00:39:05] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh my-- do you have, like, is there a way, you know how like Professor Finn, he does his, um, lecture on 21st century segregation. Like, is there a lecture that we can have like that, that can go to our churches and educate people? I think when people hear stuff like that, like that will motivate people to get engaged and really start speaking out about what's happening.

[00:39:27] **Miss Millie:** Yeah. That's a good idea.

[00:39:28] **Mr. Raymond:** It is, it is.

[00:39:30] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** We make it visual. If you make it visual, just like the documentary that we had, we make it visual and take it to the churches, we can start building momentum. At least make it safe for my great grandchildren.

[00:39:41] **Miss Millie:** Make people aware of what's going on and why.

[00:39:43] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah.

[00:39:44] **Miss Millie:** If these kids will listen. They're not hearin'.

[00:39:48] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** But I think they will.

[00:39:49] **Adrian:** Do you know the, the legend of John Henry? Do you remember that story? Did you ever hear that song?

[00:39:55] **Miss Millie:** Railroad!

[00:39:56] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** (sings a little) John Henry..

[00:39:58] **Adrian:** He raced the steam engine.

[00:39:59] **Miss Millie:** [00:40:00] Yeah.

[00:40:00] **Adrian:** Okay. He, he was one of the people who worked on that railroad. He was real. He's a real person.

[00:40:07] **Miss Millie:** John Henry?

[00:40:07] **Adrian:** I read a book.

[00:40:08] **Miss Millie:** Wow!

[00:40:09] **Adrian:** I read a book about it.

[00:40:09] **Miss Millie:** John Henry.

[00:40:11] **Adrian:** Um, yeah. Real person.

[00:40:14] **Miss Millie:** Collis P Huntington. Man, I... Thumb down (laughing)  
!

[00:40:18] **Adrian:** I know! Yeah. Seriously. Two thumbs down.

[00:40:22] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** But we still want the school. Want the school where it needs to be.

[00:40:25] **Miss Millie:** Yeah. Cause I know they, same way with Ferguson and Orcutt, all them related. Right?

[00:40:30] **Adrian:** Um, tell me more.

[00:40:31] **Miss Millie:** Orcutt and Ferguson, are they all related and all money?

[00:40:34] **Adrian:** I'm not familiar with those names. Can you tell me more?

[00:40:36] **Miss Millie:** I heard they were all related. Ferguson?

[00:40:38] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah.

[00:40:39] **Miss Millie:** And Orcutt.

[00:40:40] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** I haven't heard, I don't know who Orcutt is.

[00:40:43] **Miss Millie:** Yeah, Orcutt Avenue, whoever it is. The last name. Must be related cause they...

[00:40:47] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** See, I know Ferguson has a lot of money cuz it's a lot of Fergusons at Hilton.

[00:40:52] **Miss Millie:** But when we was tryna name 'e schools Black, the man said, uh, we the one naming Black, we don't know what they, what they've done in their history. What have they done illegal.

[00:41:01] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** We are riding on a Jefferson-- exactly! The slave owner talk about oppression. Like really we riding on somebody--

[00:41:09] **Miss Millie:** Black name because you don't know their history?! You don't know what they've done?! You don't know what Ferguson done, or Chestnut, or Roanoke!

[00:41:16] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** But even like blatantly, we know what Jefferson did. He was the biggest slave owner!

[00:41:21] **Miss Millie:** Jefferson Davis!



[00:41:21] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** But we gotta be re-traumatized by riding up and down the street and say his name.

[00:41:25] **Miss Millie:** And you can't put Jesse Ridley name on 16th Street or down Sixth Street.

[00:41:31] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** So we had--

[00:41:32] **Miss Millie:** It's constantly holding you back.

[00:41:33] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** It, it is.

[00:41:34] **Miss Millie:** All the time. And make you discouraged and not wanna do, it's sad. Really sad. It's sad for our young children come behind us.

[00:41:41] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** But that, that's why I keep asking like, where is the bridge. Like where is the bridge between your generation an' mine, and who do I need to go to to say, "Hey, this is what we're gonna do to save our community."

[00:41:56] **Miss Millie:** Well I think you talking to Adrian about coming to different churches and programs and saying about what's happening down here and why it's happening down here, it will get people getting up and going again. We didn't know, I sure didn't know that. How 'bout Collis P Huntington and gettin' this railroad and puttin' us down. But I do know the girl said, got it in here, 1860 something.

[00:42:19] **Mr. Raymond:** '69.

[00:42:19] **Miss Millie:** They put her down here. That's, and I said, so you move all, then you put Black folks down here by it? That was a plan. But now you want the water back. So what's your next plan? You want this water.

[00:42:31] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** To increase our taxes and move people out the community.

[00:42:34] **Miss Millie:** You don't want the water-- you want, but you don't want your coal. You want the water. Can't have it both ways, man.

[00:42:39] **Mr. Raymond:** Collis had, had a, a stepson by the name of Archer Huntington, and he wasn't really interested in, uh, what do you call it, in

industry and what have you. So he devoted his life to education. He was the first to establish a Hispanic society in New York, and he was a, a reader, proficient reader of Arabic , too. Archer.

[00:43:11] **Miss Millie:** Huntington.

[00:43:12] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** He was white though?

[00:43:14] **Mr. Raymond:** Yeah. He was white.

[00:43:15] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** What made him start a Hispanic society?

[00:43:17] He went up, he established the first Hispanic society. He got-- fell in love with a Spanish woman.

[00:43:25] **Miss Millie:** (laughing) in New York too.

[00:43:28] **Mr. Raymond:** Um, put a lot of money into making Hampton University and Tuskegee Institute.

[00:43:34] **Miss Millie:** Oh, he did? Collis Huntington?

[00:43:36] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** It's complicated.

[00:43:37] **Mr. Raymond:** Yeah.

[00:43:38] **Miss Millie:** Did some good.

[00:43:39] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah, exactly.

[00:43:41] **Miss Millie:** You know, tippin' 'e scales.

[00:43:42] **Adrian:** Doesn't make what he did forgivable, I think. Still really messed up.

[00:43:46] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mm-hmm.

[00:43:47] **Adrian:** It's just another part of this story.

[00:43:49] **Miss Millie:** Yeah. We all got a story to tell.

[00:43:52] **Mr. Raymond:** It's entitled, *Managing White Supremacy*. I think it was written by a professor at William & Mary. It may have been, but the book is *Managing White Supremacy*.

[00:44:03] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** It's really interesting that, uh, even when they had Hampton University, they separated the races, you know, when they would've had affairs and what have you down there and they separated the races.

**Miss Millie:** Where are you from?

[00:44:14] **Adrian:** I'm from Nelson County, Virginia.

**Miss Millie:** Nelson County.

**Mr. Raymond:** Where?

[00:44:17] **Adrian:** Yes, ma'am.

**Mr. Raymond:** Where?

[00:44:18] **Adrian:** It's near Charlottesville.

[00:44:19] **Mr. Raymond:** Where? Oh.

**Adrian:** I went to William & Mary.

[00:44:22] **Mr. Raymond:** Okay. Nelson County. Cool. Nelson County. Nelson.

**Miss Millie:** Nelson. Yeah. Isn't near Buckingham?

[00:44:29] **Mr. Raymond:** Buckingham?

**Miss Millie:** Something about Buckingham. He, he's a busy man. He travels a lot, it's interesting. Yeah, he do a lot of reading, and he goes and travels. He talks a lot of people too. He got a wealth of knowledge in that thing.

[00:44:43] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh, wealth of knowledge.

**Miss Millie:** He still has it.

[00:44:47] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yeah. So you gonna help us build this visual campaign?

[00:44:49] **Miss Millie:** I learned, I learned from him. Like I was trying to ask the people, the medias, "Who's gonna live in this new apartments?" He said they bringing the same ones back. I said they couldn't afford live in Ridley Circle. How can they afford to live in a brand new place.

[00:45:01] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** And that's the people portion of the CNI grant where I was telling her, the people portion, they were supposed to be getting financial literacy and budgeting skills and things like that. And because the organization that was there first, they didn't do that and they were removed, were behind the ball because now we have a new organization that's coming in. They have to build those relationships, rebuild trust again to able to be able to get people in these programs like the financial literacy, to help them transform their lives and be able to afford 'em. So the good thing about the Choice Neighborhood Initiative is that the residents are supposed to have first choice back.

[00:45:40] But what we have found when moving residents back to the Lift & Rise is that that's not necessarily true.

[00:46:05] **Miss Millie:** You are screening the people before you move them back in there?

[00:46:08] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mm-hmm. Yeah. They screen 'em, make sure that they're working.

[00:46:10] **Miss Millie:** I mean, what are you, what's the criteria?

[00:46:11] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Well, because they were relocated because of the project, it shouldn't be any barriers. But what I have seen is that they are looking at credit, they are looking at, um, "What have you done in the time that you left Ridley circle, are you working now?"

[00:46:28] And what I can say, the, the residents that, um, were left and came back, the ones that I've seen there, they're doing very well now. I was just telling her, it was a young lady that had came from, um, she, she was in Ridley Circle-- one of the last ones to leave. She went to Hampton. She had really bad respiratory problems.

[00:46:46] She's doing great now, but she's moved back to the community. She works at Family Dollar and she's living in Lift & Rise. I want to pay attention to her health to see, because she had to have like a heart stint and everything because the respiratory was bad. I don't know what it's about, but I want to, you know, just keep in touch and see how she's doing.

[00:47:05] But even her, she has a job now. She wasn't working at first. She has a better outlook on life. She's budgeting her money, her children are grown, so she's readjusting to a new life and being an empty nester.

**Miss Millie:** Do they have children in Lift & Rise?

[00:47:19] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yes, they do. They do.

**Miss Millie:** I saw a couple kids on the Avenue, the other, but they-- I was wondering, were they living in there?

[00:47:23] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** So those townhouses that are right on, I think it's 27th Street, it's four townhouses that send them back. Um, they're really nice. They're actually three story townhouses. And the family, one of the families that came back there, she has a car now. Like she has a job. Things are better. So I really believe, like in this project, the ones that are determined to come back-- cuz even with them coming back, they said, "Girl, I had to call my case manager four or five times. I had to stay on them."

[00:47:52] We still have those issues, but because we have made them feel like they are a part of a group that is supporting them and that, you know, "We got your back." Then they're more willing to make the phone calls that they need and handle their business.

[00:48:07] **Miss Millie:** I know a couple people said they had to reapply twice. And one of 'em said, "I'm not paying an application fee twice, but I'm going reapply now."

[00:48:15] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Even right now we have a waiting list of over 400 people.

**Miss Millie:** Are you serious?

[00:48:20] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** There's only 89 apartments.

[00:48:22] **Miss Millie:** 400 people!

**Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mm-hmm. But what I can say and I'm happy about is that all the, it's 38 apartments for Ridely residents.

[00:48:31] All 38 apartments are taken up with Ridley residents. So they are coming back, they're working, they want to do better. Um, the ones that haven't came back, I've spoken to some people and they're like, "Well, I'm holding off for the houses." And I really—

**Miss Millie:** What houses?

**Yugonda Sample-Jones:** So down Ivy Avenue is gonna be 28 houses, single family houses.

[00:48:52] **Miss Millie:** Well, lemme ask you this question. The new house right down here by this big tree I heard that was selling for \$320,000, and the next block they got two, three more new houses.

**Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mm-hmm.

**Miss Millie:** They keep having open house.

**Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mm-hmm.

**Miss Millie:** Who own these houses?

[00:49:10] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Not us. I don't know where they from.

**Mr. Raymond:** Some of those guys—Uh, uh...

[00:49:13] **Miss Millie:** Oh man, that house is huge.

**Mr. Raymond:** Eight blocks from 37th street, the 1100 block. It's already built. Already sold. It's sold. For 367,000.

**Miss Millie:** This one is—

**Mr. Raymond:** I said, ain't no three hundred.

**Miss Millie:** It gotta be a two thousand house.

[00:49:31] **Mr. Raymond:** worth 3 or 4 thousand dollars.

**Yugonda Sample-Jones:** There's a house that is on Chestnut, I believe in the grid. I can't tell you what number street is across from it. For \$420,000.

[00:49:42] **Miss Millie:** On Chestnut Avenue?

[00:49:42] **Mr. Raymond:** You heard what I said? Sheesh.

[00:49:47] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** So how can we afford this? Exactly. Wow. And then even while I'm riding some of the houses that's been sold and redone, I'm looking at them and they have keypads and stuff and I'm like, these are investors. And they're using [00:50:00] these houses for like Airbnbs and stuff and they're not saying anything.

[00:50:07] So they're people that's buying up our land and don't even live here.

**Miss Millie:** Yes. Same with, I think Christopher Shores over here in back. Same thing. Buying those houses and they're renting them out. I got a call. I said, I said, "Who in the world would buy this house down here?" They've had several open houses.

[00:50:24] They send me a letter two or three times a month. Try to take that. They want this land, they don't want this house. They want this property. And I know what it is. They probably got that one already. This belong to Newport News. Newport News got that property. This city land.

[00:50:38] **Yugonda Sample-Jones** [redacted] didn't keep it?

[00:50:40] **Miss Millie:** Who?

[00:50:41] **Yugonda Sample-Jones** [redacted]. He was the one that owned it.

**Miss Millie:** I, it was owned by Mr. [redacted]. His house there. Yeah. [redacted].

[00:50:48] **Yugonda Sample-Jones** Yeah. [redacted]. That was my landlord. I forget it was his lot.

**Miss Millie:** Yeah, landlord.

**Yugonda Sample-Jones** Where's he at now?

[00:50:52] **Miss Millie:** I don't know, but [redacted] called me on my job. I said, "How do you know my name?" Says to me, "If you gimme a hundred dollars, I can put down some sidewalk. We be having sidewalk in front of your door and in front of my door."

[00:51:02] And I said That's Newport New business. Not mine or yours. I come home the next Monday. We got sidewalk over by Zion Baptist. He knew it was coming.

[00:51:19] **Yugonda Sample-Jones** And tried to get money outta here. Oh no he didn't.

[00:51:25] **Miss Millie:** Mr. [redacted]. This is Mr. [redacted]'s stuff. Tower Aluminum Siding company. Uh, got my grandfather put that on the house. I don't know what he charged him.

**Mr. Raymond:** Know who was, you know, responsible for the front of the Robinson?

**Miss Millie:** I don't know, but I know he tried to get a hundred dollars outta me. I said no way. That's Newport News's to do. Not me or you.

[00:51:39] **Yugonda Sample-Jones** Exactly.

**Miss Millie:** Mr. [redacted] was a mess. And then had his two houses torn apart.

I had to go over see the [redacted] complaining bout, he was so far back in taxes. I said "Wait a minute, if that was me, I'd have been gone. No house." \$21,000 tax-- back taxes.

**Yugonda Sample-Jones** Are you serious?

[00:52:01] **Miss Millie:** So I said, an' the house up for sale. Does that mean they buying the house an' taxes? The girl said they can do it two ways and then they told me to leave them alone cuz it's white. Told my cousin, "Tell your cousin to leave Mr. Harper alone cause he's a white man and he got money." I said, "Uh-huh." I'm still complain' about it.

**Yugonda Sample-Jones** Are you serious?



[00:52:21] **Mr. Raymond:** She worked for city hall then.

**Miss Millie:** Because I stay complainin' 'bout these houses. They tore one down and had one left and it smelled so bad. Mm-hmm. I went over there again. They said, here come the lady by the stinky house. I mean, guys would go in there and defecate. That's how they would treat it. An' my house, my house smelled so bad from this house. Flies over my-- I had to go by the fly bottles.

[00:52:44]

**Yugonda Sample-Jones** My God!

**Miss Millie:** Flies all over my porch. My room. My house was-- I had to go over there several times, complain about Mr. [redacted]'s property. So I filed that complaint. They came here one day. Ms. Sterling.

**Yugonda Sample-Jones** Mm-hmm. Yeah. Pauline.

**Miss Millie:** And Chief Drew. Not Chief Drew.

[00:53:02] **Yugonda Sample-Jones** Myers?

**Miss Millie:** It was some police officer came with and some more. I came downstairs. They came out like this, throwing up. Oh!

**Yugonda Sample-Jones** See?

**Miss Millie:** Pauline? Sterling.

[00:53:12] **Yugonda Sample-Jones** Sterling. Yep. She retired now.

[00:53:15] **Miss Millie:** Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. I said that place was terrible. Mm-hmm. I mean, smell, smell, smell.

[00:53:20] **Yugonda Sample-Jones** So that was after I moved out.

[00:53:21] **Miss Millie:** You had moved out. I think the Duck girl had moved in. Uh, Kelly Duck. Oh, I didn't, she moved out.

**Yugonda Sample-Jones** They moved somebody else in there?

**Miss Millie:** Yeah. The Duck one left-- they remodeled the house! Look, they moved. Kelly got stopped. Yeah. They had a white, they had two white couples in there. They were contractors.

[00:53:39] When they were there, they kept this area looking so nice and clean. Kept the street clean. They moved away cuz they was contractors. So wherever they went for the new job. Yeah. Then Kelly Duck moved in there. They came in and did some work to it. Say the walls were so soft, you could put your hands through it. Poor contractors.

[00:54:00] But I kept complaining. After everybody moved out, they boarded the windows up. Look, I told them who to call with the roof. They boarded the windows up. Then they started going under the house to go in. So you start smelling 'at smell. And my house was stinking--

[00:54:14] **Yugonda Sample-Jones** So the people would go, the squatters were going under the house to get in the house.

[00:54:18] **Miss Millie:** So they had, they had boarded the windows up and they couldn't get in. And then I had on my porch, the little cand- uh, citronella candles, they disappeared one day. I said, oh, they need light over there. Now's gonna bring the house down.

**Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh my God.

**Miss Millie:** If you guys, uh, using my citronella uh, candles for light, no telling what you might do in there.

[00:54:38] So I kept complaining. And complaining. I had pictures. A bunch of pictures. Cause I go with pictures. I don' jus' go with conversation. I got pictures. So they finally came. Well now I gotta complain bout the grass being cut. Cause once the husband came down-- beautiful lady-- next thing you know I got--

[00:54:56] So I complain and complain. So then they start coming on their own every two weeks. So I said, who called you guys?

[00:55:04] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** But that had—Miss Millie, that had to happen like within the last five or six years. Like 10 years at least.

**Miss Millie:** Yeah. Mm-hmm.

**Yugonda Sample-Jones:** So that's the problem, like with her even going over to city hall, like complaining in the, all the time, and the type of response that they gave her.

[00:55:22] Like why do people wanna go over there when they're being looked at? Like they don't know what they're talking about. Why do you have to have pictures and stuff to say what's actually happenin'?

[00:55:32] **Miss Millie:** Well, I took them, I took them for my own benefit, because I'm talking, you don't see what I see. So I got pictures, this is what I gotta live with, all this stuff I had.

[00:55:41] So they finally, um, Pauline came, I dunno if Chief Drew came or not, but it was so messed up and stinky. So the guy named David somebody came and to' the house down. After he to' the house down, it was beautiful, dressed like that. Said, "Oh, that's so pretty." Next thing I know, we got grass, so now I gotta come cuz I'm always complaining about something.

[00:56:06] If I don't like it, I'm gonna go-- I pay taxes. So I'm gonna complain.

**Yugonda Sample-Jones:** See, everybody doesn't have that fight like Miss Millie has. So just imagine if you're not someone that is prepared to go over there and have that conversation, I feel like they won't do nothing.

[00:56:17] **Mr. Raymond:** Excuse me ladies.

[00:56:18] **Miss Millie:** You gonna go?

[00:56:20] **Mr. Raymond:** I, I gotta go.

[00:56:36] **Miss Millie:** Well, I'll see you later.

**Adrian:** It's very nice meeting you.

**Mr. Raymond:** It was—

**Adrian:** Adrian Wood.

[00:56:41] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Yugonda.

[00:56:42] **Mr. Raymond:** All right. We've met before.

[00:56:43] **Miss Millie:** Yugonda one of Pat's friends.

[00:56:44] **Mr. Raymond:** I know. Yeah. Pat talks about her sometimes. Pat and I grew up together. All us old.

[00:56:52] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Oh look, I gotta get ready to go. This guy needs the air pump

[00:57:06] **Mr. Raymond:** You ladies take care.

**Miss Millie:** You take care too. Drive safely. I gotta go too. Yeah. But I don't know what it can do 'bout the coal dust. I wish there was something we could do, but I'm thinking that when the people move out here, the new people coming. Mm-hmm. They will band together and do a petition or something, but they won't take it away cuz it's money making.

[00:57:21] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Well, we can definitely do things, take measures or advocate for measures and make it a little bit healthier and safer for us.

[00:57:29] **Miss Millie:** But when they put this new thing on 16th Street, that's another hazard, health hazard.

[00:57:34] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mm-hmm. I don't know what type of emissions that building's gonna put out.

[00:57:39] **Miss Millie:** Yeah. Because when I went to the meeting I said, "You got something on-- you got coal dust. You got shipping dust. Now you gonna have 16th Street dust?"

[00:57:42] So why aren't they down here?

[00:57:47] **Adrian:** I should have said this earlier. But the Sierra Club is sending a petition to the EPA about the coal dust from here and from Lambert's Point in Norfolk.

[00:57:57] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** So how can we sign it?

[00:57:58] **Adrian:** Yeah. So they're doing, um, testimonials like audio and written and video testimonials.

[00:58:05] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Wow.

[00:58:07] **Adrian:** And so, um, if you're okay with it, I can send some of what you talked about today, just like describing how that has affected you and, you know, problems that it's caused you.

[00:58:19] **Miss Millie:** I'm sure some, some of these kids had asthma they said from over here. Yeah. Yeah. They went to a meeting one day at Downing-Gross. They said a lot of children from Dickerson Court had health issues. I remember.

[00:58:30] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** And they didn't know why. Remember there used to be like an asthma clown. You remember the asthma clown when he would be in the parades and stuff and bring attention to it?

[00:58:38] **Miss Millie:** I probably do, but just because I lived away for a while. You know, I went, went away to work. Yeah. But I've been here, this has been our house all my life, but I lived in DC for 50 years and kinda still do.

**Yugonda Sample-Jones:** You live a little everywhere.

**Miss Millie:** Yeah. But, uh, yeah. I hope y'all get somebody to help out.

**Adrian:** Thank you. Thank you. Yeah.

**Miss Millie:** And you gonna help out!

[00:58:59] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** We gonna start doing this visual campaign. You gon' come in these churches wit me.

**Miss Millie:** Something-- we need-- people not aware and some people feel like nothing gonna be done. Been all these years, especially older people. It's like they, they fight, they lost their fight.

[00:59:11] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Mm-hmm.

[01:01:03] **Miss Millie:** Come back one day, we gotta have some food so you can eat!

**Adrian:** Oh geez.

**Miss Millie:** Some Chinese food, some fried rice or something.

**Adrian:** It was nice to meet you.

[01:01:10] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Let me know what I can donate.

**Miss Millie:** You be back in July?

[01:01:13] **Adrian:** Um, I think I'll be back by the end of the month.

[01:01:16] **Miss Millie:** If I have a cookout. I want you to come have some, some fried rice or some whatever y'all have. I'm, I'm making yak September.

**Yugonda Sample-Jones:** September?

**Miss Millie:** Labor day.

**Adrian:** Labor dayyy!

**Miss Millie:** I got too many kids coming. And yak juice, yak juice don't come out. So I got a lot of little children in my family. Hey, juice all over my porch. Oh, right. I got my porch painted cause my niece having a party here next Saturday. I got my porch painted in the back and front.

[01:01:43] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** This is beautiful. It's always beautiful.

**Miss Millie:** I try to make it nice on, on this. This is my corner!

**Yugonda Sample-Jones:** I know that's right. You need more people to tell you.

**Miss Millie:** You need a ride?

**Adrian:** Oh, I'm good. Yeah. Thank you.

**Miss Millie:** Do you be in the garden sometimes too?

**Adrian:** What's that?

[01:02:01] **Miss Millie:** In the garden. You go over there.

**Adrian:** Oh, I haven't. I just, I'm gonna volunteer there soon.

[01:02:07] **Miss Millie:** Okay.

**Adrian:** Yeah. I'm gonna spend some time. Every Saturday's farmer's market? When do y'all have work days?

[01:02:16] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Also Saturdays.

[01:02:32] **Adrian:** Oh yeah. I would love to come chip in.

**Miss Millie:** Well you look might African today girl, African princess.

**Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Thank you! I'm trying to keep up witchu!

**Miss Millie:** That's a Wakanda Strong! (laughing)

[01:02:44] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** (laughing) I love you! Thank you so much Miss Millie.

**Miss Millie:** Oh honey, you welcome.

**Yugonda Sample-Jones:** You take care.

**Miss Millie:** You too. Y'all want some water or something?

[01:02:53] **Adrian:** I'm alright. Yeah. Thank you. Wow.

Thank you so much for introducing us.

**Yugonda Sample-Jones:** No doubt. No doubt.

**Adrian:** That was amazing.

[01:02:57] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** I have to go ahead and head over to the basketball court.

[01:03:00] **Adrian:** Oh right. Yep. It's that time. Yeah. I should probably be heading on too.

[01:03:06] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:**..blowin' up and pumpin' needles like...

[01:03:10] **Adrian:** Oh gosh. Yeah. What's next? Um, yeah, listen, I'm so glad we got to hang out today.

[01:03:17] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Absolutely.

**Adrian:** Thank you so much.

[01:03:18] **Yugonda Sample-Jones:** Thank you! For just letting me vibe with you.

[01:03:21] **Adrian:** I really appreciate it.