

Collection: Thee Black Pride in Jackson Oral History Project

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Narrator: Germany Tate

Interviewer: Destiny Sears

Transcriptionist: Alissa Rae Funderburk

[00:00:00] Sears: OK, good morning. Today is October 9, 2021. It is 11:35 AM. My name is Destiny Sears and I am working on Thee Black Pride in Jackson for the Margaret Walker Center on Jackson State's campus. Do you mind stating your name, for the record?

Tate: Yes, my name is Germany S. Tate.

Sears: And then can you spell it please?

Tate: Yes, that's going to be G-E-R-M-A-N-Y, just like the country, T-A-T-E.

Sears: Alright, so we're just gonna start it off with some basic questions. Just some simple things. So, what are your pronouns?

Tate: She.

Sears: She, okay. And then, when and where were you born?

Tate: I was born in Jackson, Mississippi.

Sears: Alright, and then what part of Jackson did you grow up in?

Tate: I'm actually not from Jackson. I was just born here. My mama had difficulties with me during her pregnancy, so they had to airlift us to the University Medical hospital here in Jackson. So, I'm originally not from Jackson. I just kind of got here, kind of out of my norm. It was unrequested, so that's why I was born here in Jackson. But I'm not from Jackson.

Sears: Okay, so would you like to tell me where you're from?

Tate: Sure, I'm from Moss Point, Mississippi. Raised there most of my life. I lived in several states, but the majority of my life was spent in Moss Point, Mississippi.

Sears: Alright, so can you tell us some of the other states you lived in.

Tate: Sure, Atlanta, Georgia, Louisiana and those are kind of some of the most common states. We've been in.

Sears: Okay, and then you grew up in Moss Point, Mississippi. Can you paint your neighborhood for me please?

Tate: Oh man, wow. I wouldn't say it would be your every-dream home. You have—you know, people who use drugs up and down the street. I wouldn't say it was the best living . Your street

signs were tilted, you got road pavement that is you know, messed up, but overall, I could say it wasn't the worst that I've seen.

Sears: Alright, and then you live with your mom?

Tate: I actually—no, my grandmother raised me since I was two weeks old. My mom gave me up when I was two weeks [old], so majority of my life was spent with my grandmother.

Sears: Alright, and then how did that make you feel?

Tate: As younger, I thought my grandmother was my mom, but as I got older I started to question like you know why my mom never got me. Why she didn't keep me? She always had my other sister, you know. What was so hard about raising one that you couldn't raise two? So it kind of made me feel lonely. And now that my grandma is gone, I started to kind of feel like the same way.

Sears: Okay. So, do you mind describing the rest of your family for me?

Tate: Oh, Dad, I didn't—I knew who my dad was, but he wasn't a part of my life. I have over fourteen siblings, majority are sisters. My mother, she kind of was young when she had us, so I really can't tell you her lifestyle. But now—around about the age of probably like between thirteen and fourteen my mom was a drug abuser. So, things like that kind of was, in the way, as

well. I had one sister that I actually grew up with, and we're kind of like, you know, best friends now, but that's kind of it. Grandmother was the mother and father for me.

Sears: Okay, and did you grow up in a religious household?

Tate: I wouldn't say it was forced, but I did say we did attend church. My grandmother was Pentecostal but she did not force it upon me. But we do believe that, you know, you were taught to believe in Christianity and we did go to church, but it wasn't forced. Like if you go, I'm going, if you don't go, you're gonna get in trouble type thing. So we kind of had our religious beliefs. We believed in God. As I got older, and I started getting my masters at Jackson State. I started to figure out things on my own.

[00:03:54] Sears: Okay, so what kind of spiritual or religious beliefs do you ascribe to now?

Tate: I don't know. I don't actually believe in anything, at the moment. I do believe that there is a higher power, but I'm still kind of working that out. I don't—I'm not tied to no particular religious group at this moment.

Sears: Okay and do you believe that that affects the way that you live now? That like believing in a higher power, but not ascribing to a religion or spirituality?

Tate: I believe things happen for a reason, but I know that there's someone that everybody has the answer to. The way I live right now is kind of just day-to-day. You know things happening, it's a reason that they happen. I do believe that. I kind of just live a life on, you know, never moreso planning too far ahead. I don't really have a religious belief.

Sears: Okay, so you said that you grew up with your grandmother and your grandmother was the mother and the father within your house. So, can you talk about your education career?

Tate: Sure, yes, Grandmother was very very big on getting your education. I graduated number nine out of my high school. I've always had good grades. I started off at USM [University of Southern Mississippi], then my sister talked me into going to Tougaloo College. I graduated from Tougaloo College in 2018. Then after graduation, I enrolled in Thee Jackson State University to get my masters in criminology. Which I did take a year off this semester because I recently just got engaged and started a business. So I will be starting back up next year to finish out my degree. Education wise, my grandmother didn't play with it [laughter]. So you had to take that very serious. I'm a very smart person, always in leadership positions throughout life: the President of the Class, President of Delta Gems. I always had something going. I never wanted to be a failure.

And I guess because when you see all your family around you. You see most of my family and most of the people like my great aunts and uncles are drug abusers. So you grew up around that life. My step dad at the time was an actual drug dealer, so when you grow up around that

life you realize that's not what you want to live. I actually got myself into some trouble after high school following the wrong crowds, believing that this life is better. And I actually could have been, right now to this day, I probably could still be in jail for that. The reason being drug trafficking. And that was my first offense, kind of got pulled into it. Trusting friends, thinking that they wouldn't set me up and mess me up. To be honest if I wasn't going to the community college first with good grades, the judge would have actually threw me the book. I pleaded youthful offender and I was able to get out and I ain't been back. I'd probably served—I probably was in jail for like eight hours. My grandmother came and bonded me out. After that court case I've never put myself in position to get in trouble again.

Sears: Okay, congratulations on your recent engagement.

Tate: Yeah, definitely. Thank you.

[00:06:54] Sears: So, you said that you were in jail for like eight hours. How did that experience shape you, now?

Tate: Whew. I'm gonna tell you those eight hours—I don't see how people [laughter] want to go back. I don't see why people do things to go back. When I first got there, it was different. Having to scrip [strip] out of your clothes in front of people, it was so uncomfortable. That was the most uncomfortable—putting on somebody else clothes, putting on somebody else shoes. It just felt so uncomfortable. Being talked to like nobody. And when I got there, the first person—so

I got in trouble in Mobile [Alabama] and in Mobile you can't call out of state on their phone. So I was like, " how I'mma call my grandmother, we live in Mississippi, I gotta." I done went to jail in Alabama, so it's so, so scary. Then this older--this girl I met in there. She's like "Well I can call my sister and my sister call your grandmother on three-way." And I was so thankful. I was like "Yes! yes! You know my grandma gonna come and get me. She know she know better." I got on the phone with my grandma and said, "Grandma, you coming to get me?" She said, "No, I'm not." And she hung up on me. But I knew she was coming. I knew she just wanted to show me like Germany, that's not who you are. You know what I'm saying, why are you even doing something like that. And I kid you not, about 6:00 AM that day, I was checking out of there and I said to myself--I looked back, I said I'd never go back again. I don't see how people like the prison. The re-entry. It's full control of you. You don't have--you have to eat when they say eat. You have to use the bathroom when they say use the bathroom. The whole time I was there I never laid in the bed. I just sat in the corner with my knees balled up to my chest because I knew I wasn't supposed to be there.

[00:08:30] Sears: So you said that you got your bachelors from Tougaloo. So how was your college experience?

Tate: Oh wow. I will say, you know, when you're new to it, you're new to different people. You're new to different things. College took longer than what it was expected. But you know it's never delayed or long as you get it, but it was a great experience. Definitely different from University of Southern Miss. Big difference coming from a PWI [predominantly white institution] to go into

HBCU [historically black college or university] big difference. I learned so much about my culture, my background. I will say that going to Tougaloo College definitely shaped me. It definitely did as a person knowing about my ethnicity, knowing about your background. Understanding the values of why HBCUs were even built and to know that I went to a PWI first [laughter]. So I will say it shaped me as a person who wants to be a leader, who wants to be—set—create history, who wants to be a part of history so that we can keep it going. I'm writing right now, I'm trying to convince my little cousins and them to come to HBCUs. Don't matter which one. Just go to one. But definitely it does shape you as a person. HBCUs more o feel like family versus PWI is kind of like you out on your own. I was in classes of like 100 to 150 people so if you wanted to meet with your teacher you have to probably set a meeting that was like thirty days out. Versus going to HBCU, you can just walk up in your, you know, your professor at the time, knock on the door—he probably sitting there during after hours—and get help, you know. So it's a big difference coming from 150 classes to maybe a ten to fifteen people in one class. But you can learn more. You can get that one on one love and support. They usually become family or somebody you go really get close to on campus and look at them like family.

[00:10:16] Sears: Alright, and would you say you met a lot of people that changed your life at Tougaloo College and at your HBCU?

Tate: Yes, family like they—I talk to them now to this day. Any decisions that I'm making towards life or what I want to do or how I want to do it. Especially with me starting the organization, like went to people asking for help, and what ways to create things better for me. So I definitely

kept that relationship with a lot of my professors. Definitely. Dr. Davis is one of my favorites. He was hard, but he wanted you to give your best. You know, he was always one of—he actually wrote my letter for me to get into Thee Jackson State University. So he was one of the people that wrote one of my recommendation letters.

[00:11:01] Sears: Okay, and then you talked about your organization. Do you mind telling us what your organization is?

Tate: Yes, it is a LGBT Greek. It is called Alpha Nu Kappa fraternity incorporated. I founded the organization on January 17, 2014 on the campus of Tougaloo College. Actually, in my dorm room just thinking like, you know that I'm looking at all the D9 [Divine Nine] Greeks around me and my sister actually pledged and I thought about pledging but I'm like those people are not like me. You know, those people don't believe in what I believe in. Those—true enough, we may have the same. To me every D9 has the same goals, community service, leadership, scholarship, academics, you know. But I wanted to do something that was non-collegiate. Everybody doesn't—school isn't for everybody, so you want to make a place where people like me to come comfortably and be a part of something that has a foundation, that has a meaning.

So that's kind of what I—what the organization stands for. You know, people like myself that are part of the LGBT Greek, transgender, you got non labels. The only thing we don't allow is feminine women. You have to be a dominant or masculine woman to join. You do not have to have a degree, but you do have to work. You have to have—you have to work. We don't allow

smoking in paraphernalia, drinking in paraphernalia. I mean we have some of the same rules as D9. Believe it or not, a lot of people don't believe it, but I did a lot of research when I first—when I first started, it seemed like it was a dance group and I said no, that's not what I wanted to be. I wanted it to be more serious. I wanted it to have more meaning.

So we go a lot of places and people see us with our paraphernalia on, that are D9, they respect it so much. Even males, surprisingly, they respect us, they be like “that's cool that you went and started your own,” you know. Just like everybody else started their own, but we do get looked down. I will say most of our hateful comments do come from D9 members. Definitely, definitely come from the D9 members, surprisingly, you would think that. Even though you know they look like well, you could've joined this, you could've joined that. No, I couldn't. That's not what I believe in. That's not what I wanted to do. I wanted to find my own. I have my own beliefs. And yeah, we've gotten over the years, shameful, that you would think that members of D9 would threaten us and say harmful things to us because we wanted to be our true selves. So that's mainly why I built the organization.

Also for family too. Everybody—when people tell their parents that they turning lesbian, or that they like the same sex, most religious families or Christian families turned their back on them. You know we want to have a place where you can come to. We actually got families too. I'm a Perryon. Perryon has been around, I think we're having our fifteen year anniversary coming up in November. What it is is basically like a family, just like you have your family. Like I said, my last name Tate, but also my last name is Perryon. Jamari Perryon Senior. Basically it's a family, when

you come through, you bond with that person. If they see you as a father figure, mother figure, you ask them to be your child. They come in. We bring them in as one of our children. Like right now, I have seven rainbow kids. One is a feminine girl and rest of them are dominant. I have juniors, have things like that too. It's just a safe haven for our LGBT.

[00:14:16] Sears: Okay, and then how do you identify yourself?

Tate: I would, I really don't have a label like if people like my kids they gonna say pops. They're gonna say he when they say that because we're talking to each other but anybody else I'm not finna tell somebody, "Oh, you need to call me 'he,'" you know. That's not what I go by but I respect people that go through the transition because it's different. It's difficult. They have to seek counseling. Doctors don't—they tell them like, you know, they want to know if this something you really want to do. If a person feel like, "I was supposed to be a man," you know that's how they feel. Me per say, I don't have no specific. If a person messed up and say 'he,' I'm not going to try to chew you out. Try to fight you or nothing like that. I politely say, you know, "hey, I'm a girl," but I'm not gonna chew you out. So I don't have no specific pronouns. If somebody, say you, make a mistake, I correct you. If my kids are talking to me, that's just how we talk to each other.

Sears: Okay, and then without—like can you describe and explain what it means to you to not have a label?

Tate: So to not be labeled, I don't think it justifies who I am. You know, if we were—if the world was to not be considered a he, or she? What difference would it make? Like really honestly like, what would the difference it make if everybody was just called a person, like they're person, nobody has he or she? What difference would it make? So I just never talked myself into that. So, to be honest. But I do respect people that do go through the transition. So if I met you as a female and you started transitioning, every time I called you “she,” I would apologize because I know what you're going through to get those. To be labeled as a man, to have the man, you know, body parts and go through the whole transition of taking the T, taking the medication going through body changes. So like I have two people around me that are transitioning right now but when I met them they were females. You know they didn't—they weren't transitioning but I respect them now and if I make a mistake because I'm so used to seeing you as a lady, then I always say an apology. They be like, “you don't have to apologize.” No, I do apologize because you working hard to become who you are today.

Sears: Alright, and then you said the “T,” can you explain what that is?

Tate: Oh it's a shot if I'm not being. I'm not very knowledgeable on it, but it's like a shot that they take and it helps them, it changes their voice. It changes their body structure and things like that, so it's a shot for transgenders.

Sears: Alright. And then, so when did you first realize that you didn't want to be labeled?

Tate: Oh that's a good question. I really didn't. I really didn't realize it. Most people, when I was younger, I was really, really flat chested so a lot of people would think I was a boy anyway.

'Cause I wore dominant clothes. But I didn't just sit here and say, "Oh, I'm a no label," 'cause I do allow people to call me a stud. You know, like if I was affiliated to a group, they would put me in a stud because it's a black dominant female. But I really didn't have a day where I sat down and said, "hey, I don't want you to call me that," you know so it's just like whatever floats the boat unless it's just something disrespectful.

[00:17:24] Sears: Alright, and then correct me if I'm wrong, but you do like the same sex?

Tate: Yes. That's correct.

Sears: So when did you realize you was like, "Yeah, that's it for me," and then from there, can you give me the timeline of you actually coming out and telling people?

Tate: Growing up, you have a boyfriend, but I knew I wasn't attracted. Like I had this high school boyfriend. He was like the best basketball player at the time and he used to want to kiss me and I'd be like, you know, "no, I don't wanna kiss you," but I felt like at the time that that was right. My sister had a boyfriend. Like I said, I looked up to her a lot and I just felt like, you know, well, you know I'm supposed to have a boyfriend. But I would catch myself looking at—excuse me, I would catch myself looking at women and I'm like, you know, is this right? You know, am I going to get in trouble for this type of thing? So for a long time I was on the internet playing as

somebody else, as a male, because I wanted to talk to women and I didn't know how to come out. So you know you're chatting online. At the time you had websites you could go on and chat, but my mom had caught onto it. Kind of like ended that for me. When I would go visit she kinda like ended that and told the girl that I was a girl and everything.

But I think, like I promise you probably not a year later I dated my first girl openly and I just went to my mom. I was sitting on the computer on my Myspace account and I said, you know what it's either now or never. So I went in there and said to my momma, I said, this is my girlfriend and she was like, "well, invite her over," and ever since then that's just how it went. She didn't treat me no different. She never threw like gay slurs or nothing at me, to my face, you know what I'm saying. So honestly, my family was very accepting. I didn't go through the, "Oh, Germany is not our child anymore," type thing. They were very accepting of my lifestyle. To me. Nobody—now what was done behind doors I can't say. But to me, they never treated anybody female that I brought around different. Any functions. They love them just like they love me. If they came with children they treated their children like they was a part of the family. It just wasn't—now the type of women that I had. Maybe they didn't like them, you know, like you know me being in bad situations or something like that, but they were very accepting of my lifestyle.

[00:19:35] Sears: Alright, and then well how old were you when that happened?

Tate: I had to be no more than fifteen or sixteen. I'd put it between fourteen and sixteen 'cause it's been so long ago. It hadn't been no more than that 'cause Myspace was still going at this time. So I had to be no more than that. Now I'm 28 and everybody is waiting, ready for our wedding, so. But I have to say between fourteen and sixteen. Right before ninth grade, I will say that. So when you get coming to ninth grade, probably about fifteen, sixteen. So that's why I say probably middle school age.

Sears: Alright, and then your mom was the first person that came out to.

Tate: Yes, mom was the first person. I would visit, get chances to go visit my mom while living with my grandmother. At the age of, I want to say I was like nine or ten. I kind of got put in a bad spot. My grandmother had me up until that age and we was out in front of my grandmother's yard and they put me in a situation to where I had to pick between my mother—live with my mother or my grandmother. And I guess at this time my mom wanted me back. She felt like she could, you know, do it and I chose to go live with my mother. And it was because my sister was over there. You know, it kinda hurt my grandma feelings like a lot, but then I moved back with my grandmother when I was about sixteen or seventeen.

Sears: Okay, then how did that make you feel being put in that position to choose something at such a young age?

Tate: A that time I didn't have no feelings, it was just like I wanted to be over there with my sister and I wanted to—I didn't want to be separated. I had got to meet her, got to play with her even though I know my mom would always treat her better with little things like my sister will have more nicer things. My sister will have a newer model computer. I remember one time I went over there, Leapfrog used to be an AR reading or something you used to be able to play a little game or something on the computer and my sister had one. And I wanted to play it when I visited my mom and my sister wanted me to get out off of it and she went and told my mom and my mom made me get off. It had really, really hurt my feelings. So when I went back home to my grandma's and told my grandma, I said, "Well, you know India got a computer and I don't have one, and she and Momma made me cry," and stuff like that. My grandmama went and found a computer, wasn't the best but she went and found one so that I could have the same things you know.

So it really kind of, as I got older, that's when it started to hit me like wow, I chose my mother over my grandma. Like, that's crazy, you know. As I got older and started to go back and live with her because my mom used to beat on me, you know, really, really, really bad. My sister would always get to do things and not get in trouble. I don't know what it was, maybe, you know, and this was before I was gay so couldn't blame it on that. I couldn't, you know, I don't know if it was 'cause of the hate she had towards my dad. I just could never, could never tell.

[00:22:26] Sears: Okay and then, but how does that make you feel? Like not being able to tell the difference of—well where that anger came from?

Tate: Far as like, um it just made me feel like she didn't want me, you know? She used to kind of—she told me like a story like one time like when I was young like when I grow up, Grandma was supposed to tell me that my mom was my sister. She wasn't supposed to tell me she was my Mama, but my grandma would never lie to me, you know? So I was supposed to—you know, back in the day, you could do that. You can grow up as your parents sibling, supposed to be like a family secret. My grandma never did that. She always kept it one hundred with me. That she did, definitely did that.

[00:23:17] Sears: Alright and then. Being here and hearing you being in those uncomfortable situations. What are places that you feel the most safe in and most comfortable in?

Tate: To be honest in my own environment, especially now since my grandma been gone. Molly is directly right across the street from me and we still don't have a relationship. I at least would have thought that after my grandma died, that both of my parents would have stepped up to the plate and tried to fill that hole that you guys left years ago. So now the best places are doing things that I like to do, being around my organization, creating new fashion for my brand, being around my family, my actual family that I have, being around those who are like me. You know, traveling the world. That's type stuff I do now so.

Sears: Alright, and then what are places in Jackson that you feel the most comfortable in?

Tate: If I come to Jackson, I go to my brother-in-law's house or we go out to eat. I love seafood. I go to campus, Tougaloo campus. Visit the campus, go talk to some people there. Jackson is different. When I moved here some years ago, I didn't realize how the crime and stuff were here, when I moved here some years ago. But it's very different. I will say that I don't really have a spot that I go in here in Jackson and I say, "hey, I'm gonna sit there," 'cause you're so afraid you know what's gonna happen to you. But if I do I mean I know the locations. I don't change my location. There's certain sides of the Jacksons that I don't even go to.

Sears: And what are those odds if you don't mind saying?

Tate: Well honestly, before I came to Jackson State, I didn't come on this side [laughter] you know. Not to say that you know, I hate that. Honestly, this school could be placed a little closer to North Jackson then you know that would be amazing, but they want to be here. This is where the heart is, you know. But you got to be honest, you go West, South Jackson? I don't go those ways unless it's something I have to go there for. I moved to North Jackson. I've stayed in North Jackson since I've been here.

[00:25:30] Sears: Alright, and then you say you go to school campus to go visit old friends and things of that such. So, how would your friends describe you?

Tate: They'd probably say, first thing, they're gonna say I'm funny. They going to say I'm a fashionista, I like fashion. They're going to probably say I'm a leader. They'll probably most

definitely say I'm trustworthy. You can rely on me. But they also probably say at the same time don't ever cross her. She won't come back type thing, so those are some of the things that they'll say about me.

Sears: Alright, and then would you like to take a break for water?

Tate: Sure.

[00:26:11] Sears: Okay. Alright, so they would say you're trustworthy, don't cross you, okay. So, what would happen if someone crossed you?

Tate: Ah, because I'm—I give you chances, everybody says I'm a little weak when it comes to people 'cause my heart, it's I got the heart of gold. I give anybody anything, the shirt off my back. If somebody came in here right now. I'll probably give them these shoes on my feet knowing that they cost about \$400-\$500, but I would give them to him. I've done it before. So, people know that it takes a lot. I'm very forgiving though. They say I give people too many chances, but once I hit that peak with you, then you're going to—it's not that I'm going to react with violence, but I react more so with silence. I cut you completely out of my life, no access to me whatsoever and it ends up hurting you on the other end, because you know that I was such a good person to you. So that's kind of what they, you get.

Sears: Okay, and if you're comfortable with answering this question, I would appreciate that.

Tate: Okay.

Sears: But do you think you could, you would act that way towards people that you love?

Tate: What do you mean, kind of?

Sears: Like because you said that your mom has hurt you a lot, but is that someone that you believe that you could cut off?

Tate: I have. I've not talked to my mom for one or two years. We recently just not talked for over six months. I would definitely do that to my mom right now, to this day. I'm doing it to my dad right now to this day. I feel like with me and the person that I am. There's nothing. I'm not perfect, but I will say this, I'm a good friend. I'm a good daughter. You know, I'm a good granddaughter, so if something happens, you did something to me. So I cut off all access because for one, I don't want to cry about it. I don't want to be overly emotional about what you've done to me, so you know what? What I don't see can hurt me, so I don't. I don't. I just cut you off.

[00:28:23] Sears: Alright and then, okay so it is. What is it like being a non-identifier in the South? Not having a label in the South, what is that like?

[00:28:38] Tate: Because this is a hospitality state. I don't think people really are concerned. I think it comes down to transgenders who have it the worst. I don't think people really care. Most people gonna say—call us gay because they think that that's terminology for us. But it is not we're actually lesbians. Gay is for male, but everybody says gay. So I don't think—now I will honestly say I've never been in a situation in Mississippi where somebody has encountered me about my sexuality. I've been in a situation where I felt like something was done because of my color of my skin, not what I go by.

[00:29:19] Sears: Okay and speaking of that, do you believe that being black has impacted your LGBTQ experience in the South?

[00:29:24] Tate: Ah. Yeah, in some parts. To be honest with people, it's not really a big difference. The homosexual community and the LGBT—and heterosexual community, they have the same thing. It's just women and women, men and men. Arguments, fights, drama. The only thing is that most people don't have, well, you know what to be honest. They have the gay—hetero—homosexual community have problems with baby daddies and baby mamas too, believe it or not. So people think that it's a big difference. It's really not. The same stuff that a heterosexual community go through, same thing as a homosexual community through. Now being a party promoter, I will say that you're less likely to hear about gun violence at a lesbian club, versus you'll hear about that more at a heterosexual club. Now I will say now that I'm over helping my rainbow father in Hattiesburg for the pride there, it's segregated. The white LGBT never want to come have events at our LGBT but they want us to be on board to help bring in

Blacks for their side, but they never want to come to our side. So it is still segregation, believe it or not, people don't believe me, but it's still here. This stuff didn't go away. Just cover it up but it's still here. So definitely it does. It definitely makes it a different experience.

Sears: And then do you feel like your experience would be different if you were a different race?

Tate: I feel like yes, especially when it comes to getting like grants, people want to sponsor us. We don't get the big top dollar sponsorships for all the other prides like Atlanta, Texas, Chicago. We don't get big Caucasian sponsors, you feel what I'm saying. Most of our sponsors come from our Black community, you know, and they can only do so much, \$300-\$400 here, whereas I'm seeing other prides get like thousands written for sponsorship, so is definitely different. Definitely, it's definitely different.

Sears: And how does it make you feel?

Tate: Honestly, I don't get angry because I know this is society. So what can we do to change it? There's no, there's no point. Just like right now with the fair and all this stuff going on about 1800 themes. What are we going to do to change it. If you're so angry you feel like they shouldn't be able to do that, what're you going to change it? Versus me, everybody staying boycott it, boycott it. It's a lot of stuff we can boycott. There's a lot of brands and shoes and things that we can boycott. Let's go there. And me personally, if that was the case, I would actually go take a picture about it and thankful that my ancestors fought for me to be here

today. You know what I'm saying. It makes me a little bit like, what can we do to change it? Is anybody Black going to open up a fair? Is anybody or are y'all going to shoot and kill each other? Are we going to come together like one and go create our own thing so that things will be different for us? So that's—I'm always like what are we going to do? Okay, he killed. He was on George Floyd's neck. Are we going to get more Black officers, are y'all going to start bettering our communities? Are you going to start? It takes a village to raise a child. Is the village gonna start now, going to start back raising these children? What're we going to do to prevent another George Floyd? Are we going to get out and vote? Are gonna get out and be senators and get in these houses and and things so that we can be in control of what happens to our people. Because the system is going to be the system and the system was never built for us no way, it was just a way to protect that side.

Sears: When you say that side, can you be more specific?

Tate: The Caucasian side, as always.

Sears: Alright, and then you mentioned pride. What was the first pride event you attended?

Tate: The first one? I didn't attend, nothing until I made my first, my own. So I never had been to a pride, until I made my own and it's called the Unapologetic Black Gay Pride. That is what it's called in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

Sears: And when is that? When will that be hosted? When is that normally hosted?

Tate: One of them is usually the second weekend in July. It's usually the second weekend in July and now I'm a part of New Orleans Black Pride. I'm on their board now, which is usually the 4th of July, July fourth weekend during the Essence Festival weekend. So.

[00:34:00] Sears: Congratulations to that.

Tate: But definitely thank you.

Sears: Have you attended pride here in Jackson?

Tate: I've went to the events. I haven't lately. I'd be so busy, but I have a kid that attended some prides in Jackson. But once again, mostly Black. Mostly Black. So if white people here have a pride, I've never heard of it. Yeah, I've never heard of it, so I can't tell you what it's like. I couldn't tell you if they have one or not. Never seen it.

Sears: Okay, alright it was one last weekend [laughter].

Tate: [Laughter] See I never knew that.

Sears: Alright, and would you attend a white pride?

Tate: I'm actually in the Pine Belt Pride that's coming up in Hattiesburg and it's vendors from my organization and for my business. So they did reach out and like I said I'm part on board with their pride things, but we are making some adjustments. But I will attend one, I'm not against attending one. What I'm against is why we can't come together. Why are they separated? That's what I'm against [laughter].

Sears: Using what you said that we should go and change those things. So how are you going to change the white and the Black prides being separate?

Tate: Going to, they do have meetings, going to the meetings, seeing what is the division. Understanding. So with me having my sociology background, I look at why things are happening, what caused this to happen? Why do you feel? Are you afraid to come over here? So that's what we talk about in the meetings. Like what is it that makes you feel like we can't come together? The music is different. We understand that. We can always get a DJ that's you know [unclear] you know the style is different. They're more drag. Black has drag to, but the Black drag does like Mary J. Blige, Beyoncé, where you guys are probably doing Ariana Grande and things like that. But you gotta really realize it if we don't come together as one, how do we expect for the heterosexual community to respect us? They already don't respect each other, 'cause they kill each other every day, you know, hurtful to each other. So if one community can come together and fight for equal rights, then we can. If we're that strong force, we can get other people to believe in us. So I honestly think that there should be a class taught. Not in

elementary, but in high school, 'cause that's where you start really feeling yourself in high school. I think there should be a class taught about people being different from you. And I'm not just talking about LGBT, Black and white, you know, gay and straight, foreigner and born in America, you know. So I definitely think there should be. History is taught, but history has changed. So if you guys don't educate your children, you can't teach her son if you see a gay boy beat on him. You can't teach him that. He's still a person. As long as he doesn't disrespect you in the matter, you can't do it, you can't teach your kids that. So I definitely think it should be taught just like other things, creating finances. All that stuff should be taught when you get to high school so when people get into this real world, start realizing that people are out there that are not like me. There are people out there that are different from me.

[00:37:16] Sears: So you mentioned you said you think it should be taught in high school and not elementary. So how do you feel about certain states and cities? Putting that in elementary school?

Tate: I would say I'm not against it because now, believe it or not, you have some kids that grow up and may wanna play with Barbie dolls, but we tell him "no, that's a boy—that's a girl thing." But, who's to say he still won't like women after playing with those Barbie dolls. I'm not against it, you know whatever. It's funny to me because they say we force our lifestyle onto kids nowadays. I was raised by my grandmother, no mother or daddy and they didn't make me want to be like my mommy and daddy, so they didn't force their lifestyle on me. My grandma didn't force her lifestyle on me. She'd been with a man all her life. You know, so I don't know. They say

that we force it, nothing is forced. Nothing is forced. Even if that child comes out gay, now who's to say when they get 38, they say like this ain't what I want to do no more. So what made them change then? Did you force something on him? Whatever schools feel like is best, but I do feel like no matter what your child should choose to be, love them regardless. That's it. At the end of day you love them. You created it. You created that baby, that's your baby, that baby is your blood. And just don't leave them hanging.

Alright, and just to clarify, for the record, when we say bring that into the schools, we're talking about LBGQTQ and just knowing the difference in between people, as in black, white, race and things of that such. So, just wanted to state that for the record. So um [pause] [unclear]. So in those meetings you said that they all say and talk about the split in between the LBGQTQ community. What is the main theme? What is the main split? The main cause of the split, have y'all gotten to that?

Tate: No. We have not. Can not get definite answers on that. We want the answers, but no, we have not.

[00:39:50] Sears: Alright, and then you talk about having your own clothing line.

Tate: Yes.

Sears: Do you feel like your sexuality impact your clothing line and those that shop from you?

Tate: Yes, yes yes oh. Can we take a break and you ask again?

[00:40:11] Sears: Alright, today is October 9th 2021. The time is 12:19 PM and I'm doing part two interview with Germany Tate. Alright, so before we took a break the question was do you believe your sexuality affects your brand and the people that shop from you?

Tate: Oh yes. Definitely when I first started it was hard to get men to buy for me. Now I think, still, I'm going to have that hardest. That's gonna be the hardest thing for me in my brand. One, probably think, men probably think, "Oh, she got those clothes, only gay people supposed to wear that." You know what I'm saying, so it's definitely hard. I get a lot of support from by LGBT side, men that know me, know that what it is. So, to be honest with you, I had to go out this past year and find male Instagram influencers to wear my merch so men will know like hey this is for everybody. This wasn't just designed for my community. This was a design for the people that look like me. So it is very hard. It's very hard to get the support from heterosexual men.

Sears: Alright and then what about women? Are women more subjective to wearing it?

Tate: Yes, I have no problem with women supporting me. The only thing is I didn't have enough women merch. I drop mostly dominant clothing because that's who I am, so they'll still try though. They'll wear it, you know, try to support. So, women, no.

Sears: Alright and then can you tell us exactly like what your brand is?

Tate: Sure, my brand is called High Quality The Label. High Quality stands for of course quality. The quality of my merchandise is good merchandise, just like your Gucci, Prada, Louis, and then high. Each letter in—three of the letters in the word high have animal print in them and they represent the strengths of the animals like for “H,” I have a tiger print in it as hunger. Tiger going to do whatever you gotta do when he's hungry. So that means whatever I gotta do to get my brand into the top, that's what I'm gonna do. The “I” is solid, it's a solid color because the pressure that you apply for your business to grow is based off the individual and that's where I is. The individual is based off you. “G,” grind. “G” is filled with zebras. A zebra—people don't know it, but a zebra kick is very, very strong, so I'mma grind and if you're in my way then you just, I have to do what I have to do. Not physically, but I'm gonna do what I had to do marketing wise, I'm gonna do what I have to do to make my merch better. So that's why the zebra print is filled with that. And then, hustler, the last “H” in high, cheetah. I got Cheetah print in it. Everybody know a cheetah is really, really fast, so if you want to be a hustler, you gotta be able to drop merchandise, change of seasons when you need to. As quick, just as quick as a cheetah because things are drastically changing. So this year bubble jackets may be hot, but next year jean jackets may be hot and I have to be able to transition. So that's what that comes from. And then the quality, of course. I want to be able. I want everybody to be able to feel like they're wearing designer when they're in “High Quality”, and that's why it's called “The Label”. Most people think the label, when they pass by, they think of a record studio company or something like that and I said no, this is my brand. They're like, “that's dope, that's different.” Most people

say clothing brand and I say nah, it's the label because this is what I—this is my label. Everything I had with my brand, I have it from the socks to the underwear, to the boxers to the bras I'm labeling myself. And that's why it's called the label.

[00:43:54] Sears: Alright, and then we're probably going to wrap it up soon, and this is one of my last questions. Have you at any point felt repressed, and if so, did you have a outlet and what was it?

Tate: Repressed as in what? Can you?

Sears: Repressed as in you felt as if you couldn't express yourself.

Tate: Yes. I've always felt like even though I knew my grandmother was there for me, I always felt lonely. I always felt lonely. So I felt like if I expressed to people—I had to actually, one moment—I didn't. I'm not a person that vents a lot so I was really scared one day to call my grandma and vent to her about my lesbian relationship even though I know she loves me. But to be surprised at her response. I was surprised that she really just gave me a response as if I was dating a dude, you know. So sometimes I used to feel like I didn't have nobody to vent to. And that's why I outletted to the rainbow families you know. So being around people like you, you feel comfortable talking about those situations.

Sears: And then so did you have any other outlet?

Tate: Oh dancing, my organization. I never smoked. Never been a smoker. I drink occasionally, but I've never taken drugs or anything like that, like never did the utmost. If anything I did was sitting in a room and cry, you know. So that's about the most.

[00:45:20] Sears: Okay, and then one more thing, are you aware of the other sororities and fraternities that they have in the LGBTQ community?

Tate: Yes, I am.

Sears: Do you mind naming a few of them?

Tate: Yes, you have, what is the male? I think is Kappa. No, it's Alpha Nu Lambda, they're males. Then you have Omega Kappa Phi, they're women like us. There's so many. I'm in this Facebook group with over millions of them. You'll be surprised. Mississippi, when I first started it I thought this just to be a Mississippi thing. This is everywhere. They have an actual LGBT Greek Facebook group with over thousands of people in it. To be honest with you, just like the, you got your poodles, you know. You guys dis, you know, dis the other ones, and then the deltas dis them. It happens in the LGBT Greek as well. So you all we. We don't have a yard but we have a stomping grounds. Everybody has a stomping grounds, you feel what I'm saying, where they originated from, where they know that this is where it started. So it is, has it ever got physical? In some cases people have. Do we want it to get physical? No, I'm not. This is not a gang. This is an

organization, so I don't proud on it. I don't allow my—it's certain things. People have dance groups and I feel like I have a organization. So that's the difference, you know. That's the difference. So with us, we're more structured. We have a ritual. We have things that we go by. We have guidelines that they have to meet. They have dues that they have to do, that we have community service. We do the big, our big thing. We have a probate November 19th here at 201 Capitol in Jackson. This will be the eleventh line I crossed. But that following Sunday, we do a big feed the homeless drive every year. At, um, what's the park down, downtown here? I'm not sure what it's called, can't think of it right now, but we get big donations. We feed them hot food. Give them clothes, we do big donations. I'm big on community service. I'm big on that. That is what it was designed for. Wasn't designed here to dance, stroll. You could do that. That's cool. That's a privilege and people don't understand that.

Sears: Alright, and then is there something that you want to say and put on the record? Just anything?

Tate: Oh, I definitely want to say thank you guys for the opportunity. A lot of, I feel like more things like this need to come in place so people can understand about those of the LGBT that have reached milestones, just like heterosexual communities. Definitely think that the more that people know about us, the more they'll be respectful and understanding of why people are who they are. 'Cause you got some people who change their sexuality because they were touche in a way, so it kind of made them afraid to date the other, you know gender. You got some people who just truly like the other sex, like for me, I never been touched. And you got

some people that kill themselves because their family don't support them. So if I come into a world where my family all already don't support me, then I go to a place where people don't support me either. I'm less likely to do that myself. So I think things like this should be still in place for people to be educated. And I definitely still believe that it should be taught about people are different from you and not just the the gay community. Everything, color, finances people pick on you because you make less money, so it's a lot of stuff. People are different from you. You're going to be rich. You may have our new shoes, but this child may not. So are you going to clown him? Make him feel less of a person 'cause his mom can't afford it? But she may be trying everything she can. So that's why I say definitely that things should be implemented to learn that people are different from you. Just like we were taught that Black and white was different coming up. That was what all of the history books were about, understanding that we need to be one. We need be integrated. Okay now we've got to go back. Things are changing. So, that's mainly it.

[00:49:36] Sears: Alright, and I just wanna say thank you for coming out. We were honored to have you here and to do this interview and I will make sure that you get a copy of it.

Tate: Definitely, thank you

Sears: Alright.