

## Dance and the New Orleans Second Line Tradition

**Interviewee: Tamara Jackson Snowden**

**Interviewer: Rachel Carrico**

**Interview date: April 21, 2014**

**Location: SilenceIsViolence office on Oretha Castle Haley Blvd in New Orleans, LA**

*Tamara Jackson*

**00:00:00** My name's Tamara Jackson [*name later changed to Jackson Snowden*]. I'm the executive director of [SilenceIsViolence](#). I'm the president of [VIP Ladies and Kids Social and Pleasure Club](#). I'm also the director of the [New Orleans Social Aid and Pleasure Club Task Force](#), which is the umbrella organization for many second line clubs.

*Rachel Carrico*

Great. So, Tamara, could you start out by taking us way back and explain how you first got in to second lining?

*Tamara Jackson Snowden*

Oh, that was way back. My first passion with second life actually came as a second liner and not a first liner. I attended many parades as a child and with my family. We all went to second lines on Sunday, which was the most anticipated day. You know there was a second line happening, and I lived on [Jackson Avenue](#), and there was a bar a block away from my house, which many of the social clubs that was parading in [Central City](#) stopped at. So we all would sit out on my porch, and like once the parade would get by me, then we'll join in and follow. It used to be [Tammy's Lounge](#) [*sic*] on Jackson Avenue at the corner of I want to say [Danneel](#), and I lived at Jackson and [South Saratoga](#). And I did this, and, you know, my vision was once I was old enough and able to join a club and financially able to handle it, I would join a club. So the first club I actually paraded with was—well, actually, though, let me back up a little bit because before I actually paraded, I roll in the club with [Chosen Few Social and Pleasure Club](#), which no longer exists; it was a bunch of guys. And I rolled with [Perfect Gentlemen](#). I'm talking about years ago. And I actually paraded for the first time in a females club, which was the [Original Lady Sequence](#).

*Rachel Carrico*

Okay. And when you rolled, was that on the court?

*Tamara Jackson Snowden*

No, that was on the street. When I say rolled, I hit the street with footwork, touching the ground, like I was official first line. You know, first line is the host and hostesses of the event. That's usually club members; we're the first line. The second—and that's where the name second line come from. The second line comes from the actual followers. (coughs) Excuse me.

*Rachel Carrico*

And when you say you rolled with Chosen Few and Perfect Gentlemen but paraded for the first time with Original Lady Sequence, what was the difference there?

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***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

**00:02:57** I was a guest.

***Rachel Carrico***

Okay.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

I wasn't a member of the club.

***Rachel Carrico***

Got it. Okay. All right. And Original Lady Sequence, they are no longer in existence, are they?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

No. Original Lady Sequence no longer exists either, but they were one of the biggest female groups at one time. They were just as big as the [Lady Buckjumpers](#). And in fact, the Lady Buckjumpers and Original Lady Sequence used to be rivals at some point. They're a really big female organization, like a membership of, like, 20 or 25 to 30, all ladies.

***Rachel Carrico***

Wow. What year did you join them?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

I honestly cannot remember. I would say 2000, maybe.

***Rachel Carrico***

And in what year did they dissolve or quit parading?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Maybe 2000—wait. When was Katrina?

***Rachel Carrico***

2005.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

So they last time on the street had to be 2002 or '03, probably 2003.

***Rachel Carrico***

So what are some of your earliest memories of being a second liner?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

**00:04:36** My earliest memories? It was always a bash-free culture, where you travel in the inner city areas of New Orleans. The music definitely gives you that oomph you need to go on throughout the week. Like second lines, it was an opportunity for me to release all of the stress I had throughout my work week and all the drama you had in your life. You had four hours, you

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know, to parade and enjoy the music and the camaraderie. And usually that's where a lot of us see each other weekly. And, you know, if you want to say something or you got something you need to do, hey, well, we're gonna do it Sunday because that's when most of the club's gonna be out. And that's usually when clubs come out with their raffle tickets, fliers for dances because generally you're gonna see everybody at the second line. So it's definitely a opportunity to meet and greet.

***Rachel Carrico***

And do you remember, as a child or a young person, when you were getting out there and kind of getting your footwork, what was that like? Do you remember it coming natural? Do you remember—

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Natural.

***Rachel Carrico***

— like, getting mentorship from any—? Anybody give you tips, or did you follow anybody?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

It was just natural and—it was natural. It kind of goes back with [Rebirth's](#) song, [Do Whatcha Wanna](#). You just basically do what you wanna, do what you feel. You know, second line—there's no particular way to second line. It's all about that—it's an individual's expression, you know, and just following and keeping up with the rhythm and the beat, you know, the beat of the drum and the horns. And it just motivates you, but everybody is—it's eclectic, but everybody have they own style. Like some like—some people really, really elaborate. And then there's others that just trot and fancy, and everything is okay. Whatever style you choose, it's acceptable.

***Rachel Carrico***

So at what point did you become involved with the VIP Ladies? Tell me the history of that club as well.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

VIP Ladies actually is a spinoff from Original Lady Sequence. Once a lot of the ladies had grown older—we were like the younger version. When I got in, I was still young. Edith [Carmouche] was old; you know, they were fifty and up. So they decided to start a savings club. They no longer wanted to parade, and some of us wanted to continue to parade, but she wouldn't allow us to use her name because we would continued on today as Sequence. Right? But we couldn't use her name, so I'm saying, You know what? And then I wanted to do children, and they didn't want—they didn't embrace that idea of wanting to do a kid's division because the children are really true keepers of this culture. And if you don't engage them, then the culture loses its power and sustainability, you know? Because eventually we're gonna get tired. Right? So I had that vision, and the five of us that left Lady Sequence all decided we would start our own second line organization. And we've been parading for eleven years now. And mind you, eleven years ago, you didn't have as many clubs as you have now. I mean, but pre-Katrina was

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different because you had fifty-four organizations. You had second lines that happen uptown and downtown. And now you just have one second line on the Sunday. Whichever community that club originates, that's where the parade is held. But I got off course from your question, and I apologize.

**Rachel Carrico**

That's okay. This is all good information, too. (laughs)

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

**00:08:37** But VIP Ladies started from Original Lady Sequence; five ladies, five children. And that's how we started. And it took us a while to come up with a name. We'd think, What name would be best suited. And I thought about VIP, you know, very important people because I always like to do things top of the line. Like, I don't care if I go to a concert, I get VIP seats, and everything we did with Sequence, we always did the best. So I said, I wanted to have a good spinoff from the club that I came from, to continue to set the trend but not use the name. And we always did things five-star status. Like, we bought the best clothes, we had the best attire. I mean, we went to [Yvonne LaFleur](#) to get our hats custom-made, you know. So I had to keep the tradition. So and in doing that, I thought VIP would be best suited from where we came from. So that's how the name came in, and that's the start of VIP Ladies and Kids. And from that day to this one, I had a membership of ten, five children, five ladies; I now have fourteen ladies and nineteen children.

**Rachel Carrico**

Wow. Wow.

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

So the organization has grown considerably.

**Rachel Carrico**

Absolutely. I would love to go back to two things you just mentioned. In terms of the Sequence, do you know what year they started parading?

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

**00:10:17** 2003 was the last parade, and that was the twentieth year. So they had to start—

**Rachel Carrico**

'83?

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

In '80—yeah.

**Rachel Carrico**

Okay. And then this information that you started to talk about, I would love to hear that a little bit more fleshed out, about the number of clubs and how that's changed over the years since

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you've been going to second lines. Someone just recently told me—oh, I think it was [Keith Frazier](#) said that it used to be that the second line season would only be, like, September to December, that people wouldn't even parade in the spring. So could you talk a little bit about how that the number of parading clubs has changed over the years?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

The number of clubs parading has changed tremendously. And it's just a different—the aura is different. It's—the clubs now tend to be—it's not as—what I want to—what is that word I want to use? It's not as sanctified. You know? And to some degree is losing its track of tradition and origination. You get a lot of clubs just sprouting up, wanting a parade and not actually understand the complexities of the historical pertinence of what we do, which is really one of the main reasons a lot of the clubs, you know, from back kept a piece of that. A lot of the clubs—again, it's what I say with children because when you get older and you decide to retire, and you may choose well, no, this not for you, which to do, at least if you had children, they can continue in your club's name and continue the tradition. And a lot of clubs like [The Jolly Bunch](#) and so on and so forth that existed are no longer in existence anymore. You know? And members die off and things of that magnitude. And it's just—it's different in two ways. It's different just culturally in terms of the participants knowing the historical importance of it.

And it's different because the aiding portion, like the aid portion of what we do, has changed. Basically, you know, when the clubs were initially started, it started as benevolent societies. And that's where Young Men Olympian, they started as a benevolent societies, and then we started with the social and pleasure clubs. But the idea was to help your community, help your membership who couldn't afford burials and funerals and other expenses. You formed these clubs that were actually aiding each other and the neighborhoods in which they parade. Now, the aiding portion has changed just because the needs of the community has changed. You know, folks are lacking healthcare resources; where they may have burial and funeral insurance, they don't have healthcare insurance. So the clubs are finding ways, and I know the [Musician Clinic](#) [*sic*] was offering healthcare services to the [Mardi Gras Indians](#), musicians, and the social and pleasure club community. And that was in response to the healthcare need that existed among the cultural community. And I mean, people are still—

**00:14:02** We advocate for wage increases. You know, we advocate for the musicians to get regular jobs. We had to advocate after Katrina immensely with the city, with the permitting costs that jacked up 300 percent of what it was pre-Katrina. So then our advocacy began with advocating to have a standard fee structure that would be applied across the board. Right now, for the task force, our new challenge is still dealing with the permitting costs. With this new police consent decree and detailing stigma, it's putting some issues and pressures on the cultural community, which we will likely be probably be back in court. I hope not, but it's leaning more that way.

***Rachel Carrico***

Could you back up a little bit and explain the origin of the task force and then elaborate a little bit on the struggles with the city over the permitting cost in the years after Katrina?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Okay. The task force origination actually happened pre-Katrina. Barbara Lacen-Keller was the individual who initially spearheaded the task force, she and a couple of other people. However, it didn't manifest. They had a couple of community meetings with club people, but they ideas were really good. It's just that they didn't have the mechanisms to really apply what they wanted to do. It was just a bunch of talk, and usually nothing got resolved, usually. But I guess they made headway to some degree. I wouldn't know.

However, after Katrina, with the permit increase, we decided to organize one of the first parades where all the clubs would parade together for the first time. That happened for the first time in history January of 2006. We hosted a parade with at least thirty social aid and pleasure clubs, and for the first time, it actually brought us together. Like, it was truly—it was just solid. I can't explain it. It was just amazing. Like, uptown, downtown, like, everybody was together. You know, because usually, again, if you a downtown club, you stayed downtown. If you a uptown club, you stayed uptown. They didn't cross over. So the crossover made a connection because it was a disconnect. If it wasn't an issue relative to the entire culture, then the clubs normally don't work together. So Katrina forced us to work together, which was good.

And after we had the parade, there was a shooting, and the police decided to increase the permitting costs. And with the permitting cost increase, which they didn't formally notify us, so just a club went in, and it's like, Hey, look, this is this new fee structure you have to pay, which was \$4,445 after Katrina, which before Katrina was 1,200. Okay? So then we had a meeting, called all the clubs to the table to discuss what workable ways we can address it. Barbara Lacen-Keller was there. She suggested meeting with [Chief Riley](#) and talking it out, and, like, other clubs was like they was just tired of the talking because that's what they were accustomed to doing. They wanted a more formalized umbrella organization to actually be the core representatives when things happen. We will be the go-to people to try to reach a resolve, you know, and serve basically liaisons and speak on behalf of the clubs. So in doing so, I was just duly elected, and I'm like, Why all y'all just pick me out, you know, out the bunch? And it's myself and Michelle Longino and Richard Anderson and a couple of people that say, No, we think Ms. Tamara oughta do it. I'm like, Well, why are y'all think that? And why? I didn't want that job at first, I swear I didn't. But anyway, they thought I was the best person to represent them. And I guess, over the course of the years, it has proven so. I get things done. I'm not just a talker; I'm a doer. And if it means soliciting legal representation, then that's what I do. You know, I don't mind getting attorneys and suing the city, if I have to, if it's in the best interest of the culture.

***Rachel Carrico***

And that's what happened, right?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

**00:19:04** And that's what happened. We actually sued the city three times, not once; we sued them for the permitting cost for the clubs. We also sued them, particularly, for the club that

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paraded yesterday, [Pigeon Town Steppers](#). They were charging them time and a half for their officers for Easter Sunday, which is not the holiday. The holiday is Good Friday. So we went back to court and sued for Pigeon Town Steppers because they were paying, like, \$7,000 for a permit for Easter Sunday because they was charging them a holiday rate for the officers to come out. And we won that lawsuit. And then we sued the city again for [Lundi Gras](#) when we decided to do a second line for Lundi Gras. Funny you should—as I think about it or reflect, like [Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club](#)—right?—gave us such a hard time for Lundi Gras. So it was ridiculous.

**Rachel Carrico**

Really?

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

Really.

**Rachel Carrico**

Why?

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

That's what I don't know. Until today, I don't understand it. We put in a permit to have a second line for Lundi Gras, start from [Armstrong Park](#), end at the river, and bringing people to Lundi Gras on the river. Like—and they was like, no, that's they day.

**Rachel Carrico**

Oh, right. Because they have their big festival on the river on Lundi Gras.

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

**00:20:31** Yeah, but your day is Mardi Gras. Your day is not Lundi Gras. You know?

**Rachel Carrico**

And they didn't want you to—

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

No, honey, they—I got a restraining order put on me. Now, I couldn't host no events in the city of New Orleans. Then, the police served me a restraining order.

**Rachel Carrico**

Wow.

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

Me.

**Rachel Carrico**

Wow.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

And at the time, I was in nursing school, and somebody must have leaked. I was at [Charity School of Nursing](#), and they sent a letter. Like, really, they came after me. Like, are y'all kidding me? So then I had to get the lawyer for me because they were personally fooling with me, just unnecessarily, and I won that. They had to remove the restraining order. And, you know, I shoulda sued monetarily, but I didn't. I still was making sure the parade happened and whatever; we just had to reach a compromise. We couldn't end at the river. Not a problem. You know, but I made sure I hired all the bands that they would have had. I hired them for the second line. (laughs) So I thought it wasn't right, but hey, and the musicians coulda said, Well, no, we ain't gonna do it. Yeah, but they thought it was crazy, too. Like, why are you doing this? It'd have been one big party? Like—and then, we wanted to give tourists an opportunity to see an authentic second line. You know, not the ones, the makeshift ones the city like to put on with the man with a sash and a umbrella or woman with a sash and the jazz quartet playing. You know, we wanted to give them what it really is; all the clubs together, parading. And we had four divisions, four bands with—and they were afraid. And I think Zulu really got nervous because they know people will come by us first and go to the river later. Why not have a second line on Lundi Gras? It's going down Canal Street. What? They wouldn't let me make history, no, but that's okay. (laughs)

***Rachel Carrico***

So where'd you end instead?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

**00:22:39** Back to Armstrong Park. They just took us all around, like, [Treme](#), some of the Ninth, the Upper Ninth Ward, the Eighth Ward and then—but it was fine. It was fine, you know? But I really may still consider doing it again and do it the way I really wanted to do it. I mean, I feel like tourists are not given an idea of what a real second line is, you know? And they sell our culture. They don't put any money back into the social aid and pleasure clubs. And every commercial from Zataran's to Miller Lite to AT&T to [Lamarque Ford](#) wanna have a second line. I mean, even [Dancing Man 504](#) did some contractor commercials. You know, this is what y'all want, right? So it has some respect for it. That's the biggest piece with the city that I have. When the mayor gets elected, his inauguration always have a second line band. and he get a club to come bring him out; the city councils.

But we have the biggest problem with the police and our elected officials in terms of having some respect of our sacred space and our culture and what we practice and what we do. You all tax us out of existence and pose all these astronomical fee structures on us that you know many of the clubs cannot pay, which a lot of them really were already compromised with their membership with Katrina because people moved everywhere. So now you want 'em to pay you \$4,000. It's inevitable that they're not going to parade. And a lot of the clubs didn't parade. A lot of people just didn't parade because they couldn't afford it. And it's still not affordable. I mean, the goal right—the permit right now is 2,075.



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**Rachel Carrico**

And was that—that was a result of the conclusion of the lawsuit, right?

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

Right.

**Rachel Carrico**

Okay. Okay. And so how did the—how did it conclude? You reach an agreement where there was, like, a standard fee set that couldn't be changed? Is that right?

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

Right. The 2,075—and it's really 1.965. Right? And it was a breakdown of ten police officers, what the city mandated they needed to handle a second line, but ten would come out of the club's budget and another ten would be on the city roll, which the city will pay for, which usually hardly ever happens.

**Rachel Carrico**

Are you serious?

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

**00:25:09** Yes.

**Rachel Carrico**

Wow. I knew that I had been told that that was a requirement. I didn't know it hardly ever happened.

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

It hardly ever happens.

**Rachel Carrico**

Wow.

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

You tell me. You go to second line. When do you see twenty officers out there? It hardly ever happens. This is a bunch of BS. And then they lie to us and told us all these cockamamie stories, and some clubs get refunds because they don't—even with the ten that we supposed to pay for, all of them don't show up.

**Rachel Carrico**

And so you said that now you're coming up this—coming up against this again, right?

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

We coming up against it with this new detailing policy with the consent decree.

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***Rachel Carrico***

And what is it?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Because the [Justice Foundation](#)—you know, the Federal government mandated some policy changes within the NOPD, and details was one because of the way they were managing the detailing system. So that had to change, and a part of that change is being governed by the Justice Foundation. So it's a pool now; the same officers can't work the detail like—they have to change; it's a rotation. And in that rotation, they have to pay the Justice Foundation, I think, five dollars an hour for the detail that they do. They have to give five dollars back. So what the City has decided for the second liners, that we pay the additional five dollars. So they taxed on this season \$200, to kinda cover the officers' change in they pay with this new detailing system, and they also trying to impose a contract for trash. And we've been going back and forth. You know, the vendors are going to have a permit this upcoming season that they have to get. And they haven't been truthful in terms of clarity with the vendors' permit because with the vendors don't realize, doing the vending permitting to the City of New Orleans, you have to give them your information, which will probably likely include your Social Security number, which you will be reported to the IRS, and those are taxable revenues that you're selling. So you gonna have—they have to report the amount of income that they're receiving during the second lines. And I know a lot of folks are out there supplementing their incomes. They are already on disability and Social Security, so I don't know how that's gonna work. So you know—

***Rachel Carrico***

And they earn money for their clubs, too, right?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

**00:27:53** You know, see—and see, that's another change because initially vendors were only club members. And the years that I participated in second line, it was always [Linda Green] [The Ya-Ka-Mein Lady](#). You had Mike [*phonetic*] with Jump'n'Munch [*phonetic*]. He used to always sell hot dogs and nachos and cold drinks and water. You didn't have no vendors selling no alcohol. Then you had—you always had [Bittles](#). Bittles used to parade with Perfect Gentlemen. That's where he come from. Bittles' been on the scene. Bittles' was always the barbecue man, you know, and the vendors had respect for each other. They didn't sell the same stuff. You knew where you could get what from whom. And in total, you probably had five vendors that was out every—now, it done went from five to sixty-five. Everybody on the trucks selling barbecue, and everybody got liquor on it. It's just crazy. It's just like out of control. And you're like, where these people come from? Half of 'em don't parade with nobody. They don't even go to the second line beyond them coming out to sell something. It's ridiculous, but I only support club vendors if I'm out there. I don't buy if you're not a club member. Or if you used to be in a club or whatever. You getting my money.

***Rachel Carrico***

Right. Someone had told me they thought that in order to vend and to get that—like the twenty-five dollar permit for the vendors now, that you have to be a club member.

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***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

No.

***Rachel Carrico***

That's not true?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

No. Who told ya that?

***Rachel Carrico***

Somebody who sells—says she sells food out there. (laughs)

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

00:29:27 Who?

***Rachel Carrico***

Catina Braxton, President of the [Ice Divas](#).

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Oh, Jesus. Scratch her interview. That ain't gonna help and is—well, if you're gonna publish it, people are gonna read that and say that's a bunch of craziness. Unh-unh (negative).

***Rachel Carrico***

So I know—I also interviewed one of the cops who does the detail quite a bit, Officer—

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

He called me and told me.

***Rachel Carrico***

— Hamilton; did he?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

[Michael Hamilton](#).

***Rachel Carrico***

Yeah, exactly. And he said that there's now kind of the same group of guys that often does—they do the detail every Sunday.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Right.

***Rachel Carrico***

Is that—that's what they're proposing to change, right? Then there'd have to be—

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***Tamara Jackson Snowden***  
Right.

***Rachel Carrico***  
— a rotation.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***  
**00:30:02** And the task force has met with the Feds and offered our recommendation to keep—it's the task force, and it's the tactical task force, so they trained, like, to recognize a whole lot of stuff.

***Rachel Carrico***  
I see.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***  
And that's what Michael is a part of. And the tactical unit comes from this district, even though the parades happen outside of the Sixth District, but they're from the Sixth District. And [Sergeant LaShawn](#) or Sergeant Michael have—is usually the point people.

***Rachel Carrico***  
And it seems like it would be advantageous, then, for the clubs to have that same pool of officers every Sunday as long as they're willing to do it, right?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***  
Right. Also, not having that, ended up with the shooting for Mother's Day.

***Rachel Carrico***  
Yeah. He said he wasn't out there that day.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***  
Unh-unh (negative). None of them.

***Rachel Carrico***  
None of them were?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***  
Unh-unh (negative).

***Rachel Carrico***  
Why not? Do you know?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***  
Well, I guess they took off.

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***Rachel Carrico***

Did they just all choose to take off for Mother's Day?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

**00:31:00** It's Mother's Day with their moms. I know Sergeant LaShawn mother had passed because we sent some flowers to the church for his mom. His mother had passed right before Mother's Day, so, you know, anticipate he wasn't gonna do it. And [Officer Stamps](#) had a stroke. There was a lot of stuff going on with them, so the regular people were not there. And I keep up with my officers. They'll tell you; I called them on the phone, whether I'm at the parade or not. Like, [Single Ladies](#) parade happen; Ms. Ernestine [Crawford, Single Ladies President] call me. She said, Tamara, my cop's not here. I'm calling. Like, where are you? Where you supposed to be? And he's like, We coming. We coming, Ms. T. Okay. What time? Because, see, we have to note that so she gonna get a refund because you charging 'em and y'all not there.

***Rachel Carrico***

I wanted to ask what your point of view was on the city—the mayor's response and the city's response to the Mother's Day shooting?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

I think their response was nice, but then, they hit us with this \$200 fine. This and then they say—it's still a bunch of lies. They'll just stroke your ego. And I think he just did that 'cause the election was coming up to get back in. Yeah, 'cause he's—now he back in, he acting a booty. I'm sorry, tape. (laughs)

***Rachel Carrico***

That's all right.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

That's what they do. They just use us. But we don't recognize our own power, though. Like, the social aid and political community, at the least, represent at least 5,000 voters. You know? And they have to understand that we don't work for them, they work for us. You know, they are in place to work for us. Even with paying the officers or the problems we have the police department, you are being paid to do a job, not to control and police us. You are our employee. We are your employer. See? And that's why I have to get them in that frame of mind. And I tell the clubs you don't have to conform to that because when you spend your money, you paying for a service. And the officers don't need to tell you, you can't stay at this stop. You want to stay at that stop twenty minutes, that's your choice. They can't tell you you have to move. Well, they could tell ya, but you don't have to move. When your time is up, you know what time you have to be off the street at whatever time. You know? No—I just—there's a whole lot that I don't like that they do. And this season they did things really crazy. They wanted to just give people whatever parade date they wanted to give 'em. No. You don't tell us when we parade. We tell you when we parading. It's crazy.

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***Rachel Carrico***

And when this calendar that you gave me is decided, how does this happen? How does this get put down on paper?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

**00:33:51** Usually what happens is I put the schedule together, and I email them. I look at the calendar and set the dates. I know the clubs and what weeks they parade. Like, I know that. If you have holidays which usually change stuff, like Christmas, New Year's, Mardi Gras, then those clubs have to kind of seek and bounce around because you don't have a second line. Like, for me, I didn't have a second line. I couldn't second line my first Sunday in March because it was during the Mardi Gras season. So I had to move my date to March the 30th. So sometimes you have to do that. You have to make some—move around. And if the city have festivals—like we had the Super Bowl here. Usually Super Bowl Sunday is [Treme Sidewalk Steppers](#), but they just chose to sit out that year and not parade at all. But they would've had to move their date, which is crazy, again. Super Bowl Sunday in New Orleans, you won't let a second line happen and let the people see? Crazy. Y'all shoulda paid them. Y'all shoulda paid Treme Sidewalk Steppers to have a second—you—bought their clothes and just show off. Like, I don't—I just don't get it sometimes. These people traditionally been parading for twenty years, Super Bowl Sunday. Y'all know that; now, 'cause the Super Bowl here, oh, they can't parade. Now you tell me if that's not crazy. That's just crazy. And the rationalization that they use just don't make no sense.

***Rachel Carrico***

What did they use?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

It's Super Bowl Sunday and the Super Bowl here, like—

***Rachel Carrico***

Period.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

They don't have the manpower. Okay. Change their route maybe, pay them, let them make money that day. Instead of them paying for the permit, give them the permitting cost for free, pay for the band, even if you didn't want to do the attire, and let their route—I don't know if the club woulda been willing to do it, but let their route be downtown. I mean, they in Treme anyway. That's a step beyond the Quarters or whatever, anyway. No.

***Rachel Carrico***

Yeah, that seems like that just would make too much sense.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

**00:36:02** Right. That's too much like right. Yeah. They just decide, oh, it's Super Bowl Sunday, we don't have the manpower, we can't do it.

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**Rachel Carrico**

And that's the rationale for not having parades during Mardi Gras, too, right?

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

Right.

**Rachel Carrico**

It's not because, oh, people don't want a second line because they want to do Mardi Gras.

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

Yeah, 'cause no.

**Rachel Carrico**

No, it's just because of the police, right?

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

Right. Yeah. They can't do it. They don't have the manpower. They can't do it. Okay.

**Rachel Carrico**

So they kind of have blackout dates where they're like, okay, we're not going to provide assistance for these days.

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

Right.

**Rachel Carrico**

I see. Do you know the timeline of when second lines first required police escorts, and then when the four-hour time limit began to be enforced? Because people tell stories, right, that—

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

Oh, I need paper. I was trying to print the vending—

**Rachel Carrico**

Oh, okay.

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

— then, so you can read it and go over it for yourself.

**Rachel Carrico**

Oh, that's great. That'll be really helpful.

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

**00:36:54** I'm gonna make a lot of noise, so, to pull the paper and all that, so we'll do that after.

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***Rachel Carrico***

We'll do it after? Okay. Because people tell stories, right, that second lines used to go all day long, six, eight hours.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Yeah.

***Rachel Carrico***

And do you know when that got curtailed?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

I would say probably early '90s is when they change. And then, you know, for the longest, before the task force was in place, whatever the city imposed, the clubs just did. Like nobody challenged it. You know, nobody ever said, Well, I don't think that's right. You know? They—which, four hours, honey, is plenty enough for me, 'cause I be died. (laughs)

***Rachel Carrico***

Yeah, well, yesterday, Pigeon [Town Steppers], how they went over five hours.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Really?

***Rachel Carrico***

Yeah, they didn't end until after six o'clock.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Well, maybe they paid for five hours.

***Rachel Carrico***

That's what I wondered. So I—I'm like, well, wait a minute.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Well, honey, I can promise you if they went 5 hours and NOPD was there, [Joe](#) [Henry, Pigeon Town Steppers President] gonna have a bill. You ain't got to worry.

***Rachel Carrico***

I believe. I didn't even know that was an option, though. I thought, at four, it was like—it just wasn't even an option.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

**00:37:58** No, if you pay, they charge you additional. I mean, if you want to have a six-hour parade, you can have a six-hour parade. They just going to tax y'all out the wazoo.



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**Rachel Carrico**

I see.

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

Yeah, they're gonna charge you extra. Uh-huh (affirmative). They charged me extra.

**Rachel Carrico**

Really?

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

Yeah.

**Rachel Carrico**

Why?

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

Because I have too many elements, they say; my parade is too big. So my parade was twenty-eight hundred dollars.

**Rachel Carrico**

Because they had to, like, block off more intersections or something?

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

Girl, I don't know. I told ya we probably gonna be back in court because now all of this is craziness. Mitch [Landrieu] done got back into office, and I've been working with his staff. And he wanna play like he don't know what's going on; please stop it.

**Rachel Carrico**

Okay. I'm looking at all my questions. A lot of them we just got to without me even asking, so I'm seeing if there's any left on here that I didn't ask about. Okay. I want to maybe shift a little bit and ask about SilenceIsViolence as well.

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

**00:39:10** Right. I'm looking at your SilenceIsViolence list, and that goes back to the portion where I say the aiding portion of what the clubs do have changed. And a part of [New Orleans Bayou Steppers'](#) aid is SilenceIsViolence. There was—they decided to have an organization that would actually advocate for victims of violent crime, and the response to that was the number of musicians that have been murdered, a number of club members have been killed, and just cultural—how the cultural community was impacted. And then the routes and the areas in which we travel are primarily high-crime neighborhoods. Like, the areas where Joe and them went for Pigeon Town, it's a gang war back there. Right? And amazing you can have four hours apiece when the club parades, where traditionally you had a number of shootings that happened, homicides.

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***Rachel Carrico***

Right. And what goes on in order to ensure that peace, besides just the police presence at the parade? Is there footwork that happens before the parade?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

The spirit of the parade transcends into the community and even the criminal element know that the sacred space is sacred ground. And that's also difficult for us to fathom why somebody would shoot and for Mother's Day. Like, this, we have gotten so far beyond this, you know, and, you know, second lines have been attached with this negative stigma of violence happening at the second lines, which was the original position of the police department to impose the fee increase. Right?

***Rachel Carrico***

Right.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

But we all know too well, Mardi Gras and Carnival krewes have a number of things happen along the route. The parade is still allowed to continue, and life goes on as you know it, and they only pay \$750. And they have the entire police department and includes sanitation, and they're out there ten to twelve hours, so I'm not understanding it. Like, really? So they tell me, Well, Ms. Jackson, the second liners don't have an ordinance on the city books to protect 'em, so that's what I'm working at now, to establish a city ordinance that protect the clubs from these fee hikes that they want to implement when they get these whims.

And mind you that it's already challenging enough that once Mitch comes out of office within four years, we gonna have a new man, a new police chief, and a new way of doing business. Right? So it's difficult 'cause then we have to start all over. If your mayor and chiefs change, for us, we start all over. You start all over with talking with them, getting them to understand what you doing, especially if it's not a chief who work for the New Orleans Police Department. Like, when [police chief Richard] Pennington was here, he was clueless. A second line what? So we had to have several meetings, pitch it out. This is what it is, this is why we do it. And then you had Riley, who was an NOPD officer. He had ran for sheriff, lost the race, and became the chief of police. Okay. Sit with him, have another—like, this is—you have to go through this over and over and over again.

**00:42:38** And the same with SilenceIsViolence, for us, but our response to violence—you know, like Mitch has the [NOLA for Life](#). It won't be no NOLA for Life when he come out [of office]. Some other man may have something else, so then we got to sit to the table and strategize what would be the best way to address victims of violent crime and tell them this is what we do and how we can work together. It's the same thing with the second lining. And then people are amazed that SilenceIsViolence really is a social aid and pleasure clubs project. And they're like, Wow, well, how can you do that. And we try to employ people in the cultural community. Like, all of the staff are either in clubs or they're musicians or they have some cultural ties to the community or they participate in some way.

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***Rachel Carrico***

And yeah, because I know a lot of clubs there aid portion will be, you know, adopting a family for Christmas or doing things that are a lot more—

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

And you have some clubs, like, [Black Men of Labor](#). They aiding portion is the neighborhood housing development. That's their 501(c)(3); it help low-income families get houses. So you have some that are well-established, and they work for a greater good and a cause, to help, you know, their community and others. And that's what I wanted to do with VIP Ladies. And then I say, Well, we—with me being the executive director here, VIP Ladies is here anyway. And I get the ladies to do community service hours by volunteering through SilenceIsViolence.

***Rachel Carrico***

I see. So SilenceIsViolence has kind of become a portion of VIP Ladies as well—

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Yes.

***Rachel Carrico***

— through your connection. That makes sense. So your work on all these different fronts is really situated at the intersection of culture largely, the second line specifically—the second—

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Right.

***Rachel Carrico***

— tradition and the epidemic of violence in the city. And you've already kind of answered this in different comments, but I just wanted to ask, how do you see those things as connected? What's that intersection for you in the work that you're doing all the time? As an advocate, as a culture maker, you know, all the work you do.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

**00:45:10** It's really connected. My father was murdered, and, you know, a lot of the club people have lost—I mean, Ms. Ernestine, the president of Single Ladies, two of her sons was murdered. Yeah. [Valerie \[West\]](#) that was with the Lady Buckjumpers; [Linda \[Tapp\]](#), the president, her son was murdered; Valerie's son was murdered. You know, [Richard Anderson](#) with [Single Men](#), nephew was murdered, niece was murdered. Like, it's just—it's a common—unfortunately, it's a common—it's a commonality that we all share. Some clubs—actually, a [Prince of Wales](#) member was murdered last year, one of their members. So, I mean, then you have like [Brandon Franklin](#) was killed with [TBC Brass Band](#). You know, [The Hot 8 \[Brass Band\]](#), they lost three or four of their members due to violence. So it's a commonality. You know, you have several members of Single Ladies; like, Bebe [*phonetic*] lost her brother. She's a member of Single Ladies. Her brother was killed. And, I mean, I can just continue to call names and victims, and

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it's just senseless acts of violence. And the connection is, you know, we attached to the community. Right? And this is the real side of what happens. It exists. Violence exists. We in the inner city communities; we in the back streets, and on the back streets, there's crime. And sometimes those crimes come home and attack our families. Right? And so then we share that commonality of losing—all right? It's not one club that haven't lost a member, almost, or either the member in the club that lost a family member due to violence. And then, sometimes, it's on multiple levels. It could be two or three people.

***Rachel Carrico***

Or a brass band, for that matter.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Or a brass band. That's common.

***Rachel Carrico***

And so one of the things that people might wonder if they'd never been to a second line is, well, why do you—why do people keep doing it? Why keep second lining?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Second lining give you strength to begin tomorrow. It is our passion; it's driven from within. And that's what keeps the momentum. That's what keep clubs coming back. You know? And they do it for their communities, you know? Because they anticipate. And I know when VIP Ladies is coming, everybody know we coming out of [Ms. Edna](#) yard at [1627 South Liberty](#). And people look for that. When I didn't have route sheets, Ms. Edna was like, When y'all gonna have the route sheets because them people keep coming around here saying that they still coming from over here, right, Ms. Edna. So, I mean, the community depends on you for them four hours. They depend on having that parade. They take ownership and pride when they know that parade is happening in their neighborhood, passing in front their door, you know, by their houses, at their—the bars. They coming to their bars, so they take—they invest in it. And then that investment creates a sense of harmony and pride that just transcends from the front of the parade to the back.

***Rachel Carrico***

That's a really beautiful way to put it. And what do you see as the role of dancing in the broader second line tradition?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

**00:49:00** Child, I see dancing as a way to—I told ya—to release your stress. Dancing helps calm your spirit, you know? And to dance means a lot; like, dancing just sends your body into a different, like, mode, I mean, physically and medically, like for me, who's hypertensive. So if I'm dancing and doing a second line, I've lowered my blood pressure; I increase my cardiovascular activity. I'm actually doing some exercise that's actually healthy for me, so dancing actually compels you to do all kinds of stuff, girl. And then it's not no—what I like about it is whatever type of dance you want to do, you can boogie woogie, you can trot, you can sashay, or you can

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really break it down, and it's all accepted. You know, it's all in the energy. And if somebody's dancing next to you, you cannot not dance. Like, you know, sometimes you may be having a moment where you may be taking a break, but if somebody's beside you dancing, it's like that energy just spills over, and then you have to get a little bit of it. And, you know, sometimes we touch each other like, let me pass that on. Yeah, it's cool.

**Rachel Carrico**

And what does it feel like to be, you know, I guess inside the ropes or outside, first line or second line? And when it just really locks in and the energy just syncs up, what does that feel like?

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

For me? I don't know. I have more fun outside the rope.

**Rachel Carrico**

Really?

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

**00:50:39** Because the responsibility is great. I'd be more worried about the parade running smoothly and not having no problem. So when I'm in the rope, I'm stressed. I don't even dance as much as I would dance outside the rope, and then the police is, Ms. Jackson, well, this is this, and Ms. Jackson. And I'm like, I know I talk to y'all every week for other people, but could you not talk to me today like put—

**Rachel Carrico**

Well, there's no Ms. Jackson on the phones in this office calling 'em. (laughs)

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

Like, talk to my parade chairman or the person I put as a—they will not. They will not do it. It's like Ms. Jackson, you know, so I don't enjoy myself. Honestly, I'll be glad when it's four or five o'clock; then my party start. (laughs) You know? Yeah, like, phew, five.

**Rachel Carrico**

Yeah.

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

You know? And then I'm looking forward for next week where I can enjoy myself. Okay.

**Rachel Carrico**

Uh-huh (affirmative). Uh-huh (affirmative). And so when you're second lining outside the ropes and it feels the best, what does it feel like when you're dancing out there?

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

I feel great, so great. I can't even describe the feeling. It feels so good. It feels good.

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***Rachel Carrico***

Does it remind you of any other experience in your life or is it singular?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

No, it was just like a Calgon, take me away moment. You know? You get to relax. We actually rode in a parade yesterday, and it felt good for nobody not to ask me nothing. I can just get on this trolley, I can ride, I can dance, I can do whatever I want. And the person who's in charge of this parade got all the problems and not me. I was really having—I had too much fun.

***Rachel Carrico***

(laughs) Well, that's good. You deserve it. You're the person in charge a lot.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Yeah.

***Rachel Carrico***

All right. So do you have a favorite band there these days?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

**00:52:34** I do, [Most Wanted Brass Band](#), which is a spin-off from [The Stooges](#). They've been with me since day one. That was my very first band. And they—like, they've been with VIP, and whatever I do through SilenceIsViolence, VIP, or whatever, they support me. You know, we had the National Victims Crime Rights Week. They came out, and they played for the victims at the breakfast. I mean, like, anytime I call 'em, and that's they little community service.

***Rachel Carrico***

Yeah. (laughs) That's cool.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

But that's—and [Bennie](#) [Pete] with the Hot 8. Yeah, he plays for my kids. My children love the Hot 8 Brass Band.

***Rachel Carrico***

Do you have a favorite song that's just your song? Every time it comes on, you gotta dance?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Yeah. With Most Wanted, it's *So Amazing* [phonetic] by [Anthony Hamilton](#). They play that song so good. And with Bennie, it's—I like Joe, the song they did for [Shotgun Joe](#) and why they had to kill him.

***Rachel Carrico***

Uh-huh (affirmative). Shotgun Joe. Yeah. Cool. Okay. This last question is just kind of a bit of—just soliciting your opinion on this. There's, you know, all this information I'm collecting from

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these interviews and historical research. You know, it's gonna become a dissertation; hopefully will become a book. But if I could do something with all of this that would be of more benefit to people in the cultural community, what would it be? What would you like to see?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Everybody a copy in the city council and the mayor's office—

***Rachel Carrico***

Okay.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

**00:54:24**—and the chief of police; do that for me, please.

***Rachel Carrico***

I will.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

I don't know how the officers was feel about some—I know you interviewed, you know , but definitely my hat's go off to them, too, because the group that we have working with—Sergeant Hamilton and Sergeant LaShawn and they team works really well with the community. It works well with the second lines. And we've actually established a relationship which we didn't have before, and it's meaningful. The clubs respect them; they respect the clubs. And even if we disagree, we still able to work through the disagreement. And at one point, we never had that type of relationship with the police department. It was basically their way and we had to do it or either we just get off the street. And the passion and the sensitiveness and understanding what we do, we were able to build relationships, which is extremely important.

***Rachel Carrico***

Right. Which is why it would be so devastating if those people—if you had to have a constant rotation of different officers every week, right?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Right. Right.

***Rachel Carrico***

How long do you feel like it's been that way, that relationship with the NOPD?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

I think—which, the good one or the bad one?

***Rachel Carrico***

Well, I guess the bad one first and then the good one now.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

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The bad one lasted even beyond Katrina. I would say within the last four years, we've actually come to a place where we have a better working relationship, and we're able to voice our concerns and some of the issues that we have through the second line season. Many of them get addressed, if it can be worked out. I want to give my hats off, too, to the cultural economy office of Mayor Landrieu's administration. I think the implementation of a cultural economy office was important, and a lot of issues that we have, they are also advocates to help us work through our concerns with the police department or whatever. [Scott Hutcheson](#) has done a great job with advocating for the cultural community as well as [Asante Salaam](#). They have been true advocates and honest, and honesty and loyalty is what we seek. You know, you don't want people just to BS you and know they can't deliver. Usually when they say they gonna do something, they follow through on it, and that's extremely important.

***Rachel Carrico***

That's great. Anything else that you would like to add that I didn't ask about?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

**00:57:05** No, I think we covered it because I would talk forever.

***Rachel Carrico***

I would let you, but I know you got a job to do. (laughs)

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Yes, I would talk forever. I can talk. (laughs)

***Rachel Carrico***

That's good. (laughs) And I would love to hear it all, but I know you—I'll let you get back to your work. I really appreciate it. This is really, informative and helpful to get, you know, all of this history from your point of view. You've in the thick of it for a while.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Yeah, I've been on the forefront, and for me, it's a difficult job because with the cultural community, men have always been leaders.

***Rachel Carrico***

That—you know what? I'm sorry. That is one thing I did forget to ask about was, particularly—

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

I get a lot of heat.

***Rachel Carrico***

Yeah.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***



I get a lot of heat. People don't realize the stress I'm under, even for the clubs that impose. Like, they expect a lot from me because I'm a woman, where ordinarily they wouldn't put the same pressures on men. Right? And men in this role, I think, have a easier path than it is—than a black woman. You know, I get a lot—even from SilenceIsViolence. The whole, like, people—I have to go way up here, where somebody else can just go right here. I go way up. I get a lot of challenges, a lot of challenges. And folks just don't have that respect for women. And some people feel like I can't tell them nothing, and then that's when I had to get the attorney. Well, maybe you'll let her tell you, you know? Says, but she's gonna tell you the same thing that I've been telling you. (laughs). You know? But I mean, it's crazy.

**00:58:42** And even with the clubs, you know, a lot of them like, oh, she can't lead me, she can't tell me what to do. You know? And I'm not listening to her. And then, they go out there, and then something happen, and where they coming back to? The same her and she that can't lead and tell 'em nothing. You know? And I'm like, Oh, I told you, you chose to make this—I'm like, Okay, yeah, I can't fix it after you done went out here. I gave you that advice. I gave you the necessary tools you needed to go forward, and you chose not to. You know? Then there's—with the women, it's jealousy. With other women, it's different; it's the jealousy come in. Well, how does she getting it? And why is she—? You know? And like all of the men, they gonna complain and cry and whine. But trust me, they gonna call. They're not crazy. They know I'm capable, and I'm efficient and effective. They just like to just bump their gums, I think. You know? (laughs) I don't know. You know, the man told me he think I wanted to be male. No, I don't want to be the man. I'm just sharing some information with you that I think would be better for you to use. I don't want to be man. He's, Oh, yeah, I think you just wanna be the man. No, I don't, honey. You can have that job. I can promise you I don't want to be the male.

***Rachel Carrico***

It's interesting because like a lot of areas of society, women have been involved in second lining since it began and been in benevolent societies, right?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Yeah, but, you know, women couldn't parade at first. Women were only allowed just to ride. Like, they wouldn't allow us to hit the street. Then when that change, like, the culture is now dominated by women. You have more female clubs than male clubs. Like, we've taken over; which, you know, that's just in our nature. But women have taken over, and a lot of the clubs where, say, like, for instance, like the [Men](#) and Lady Buckjumpers, initially when they started, the men were the dominant force. Not anymore; the women dominate.

***Rachel Carrico***

Yeah, nobody talks about the Men Buckjumpers anymore.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Unh-unh (negative). It's like they don't even exist. It's the Lady Buckjumpers; they are the dominant forces. They rule. And women are just taking over. And it's not just in the cultural context, but just in the social scene, the executive scene. And a lot of—you have women in

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executive director roles, such as myself, and in the business communities. And it's still a challenge for me because this culture has been going on for hundreds of years. You never had no woman on the forefront. It was always men. So when I come up and make demands and put pieces together and do stuff, I get a lot of resistance, a lot of hatred sometimes. You know, people say some ugly things to me that tear me down, but I don't—you know, I build—I encourage myself every day, and I just look at it. And it used to bother me at one time, but then I had to understand this was something new to them. And everybody can't embrace change immediately. It takes time. So then I had to understand why they were being resistant and understand why they were being so hateful and mean and disrespectful. I'm like, Well, they never had no direction from a female. And it's not that I was telling them they're wrong, it's just that I was a woman, and I couldn't tell them that. Like, who are you? And I'm like, Well, I'm not telling you nothing wrong. And it just that in the midst of all that, like, I'm spiritual, and I'm like, God seen fit where I promise you, everybody I had a problem with got into a situation that I had to get them out of, either personally or the club was in it. And I'm like, Look how things work. I promise you, every one of them men, they gave me a hard time, got in trouble, and then it was Ms. Tamara, I missed—you're excellent, and I'm like, holding up the end of the phone to look at it like who is this again? And you're calling who? Are you sure you want to talk to me?

***Rachel Carrico***

You're making it easier for the women who will come after you.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

**01:03:23** I have. I just hope that the next woman sits my seat be as strong as I am. Because if you weak, honey, they will roll over you. The second line culture's not nice. They can be some mean people. And they so, like, protected. Like, they don't let everybody cross over into their world and into they space, so whosever's gonna take the task force have to be a strong person. If you weak—and that go from the club to the city, you have to be firm. If you weak, honey, they gonna pull holes through ya. You can't be easily intimidated. It's not gonna work because you gonna get the flack from the police department, the city council, the mayor's office. They're like, who are you? You know? And then it was, when I was sitting and writing proposals and sending emails, like, you're just a second line lady. That's how the city people look at you. I'm like, No, baby, I have a MBA. I have a bachelor's. Yeah, I'm a educated second line lady. I'm not the average second lines person that y'all done put in your mind. And some of us do have college educations and in the professional realm. That's how I had to do them for them to respect me. Oh, she just a second line. She just dance. Yeah, she buck jump, is what they say. She just a buck jumper. She just jump around, dance around, drink in the street, so why is she sending us these emails?

***Rachel Carrico***

Yeah. I mean, so many people don't understand that it's not just a party.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

It's a party with a purpose, is what I tell people. It's a party with a purpose. Don't just—you know—

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**Rachel Carrico**

And it comes out of the history of it, right?

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

01:05:17 Right.

**Rachel Carrico**

It comes out of a lot of—like a history of resistance.

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

Right. And ya see that, to me—that resistance within the cultural communities was, like, retarded to me. You would think you've been past that, but no, no. And every administration and police chief is a new challenge.

**Rachel Carrico**

They see it as threatening?

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

For some time; for some. I don't, but for some people they do.

**Rachel Carrico**

Yeah.

**Tamara Jackson**

And you know, this is the reason why—like the task force is a lot of work. It takes a lot of time.

**Rachel Carrico**

And it's completely volunteer, right?

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

Right. I don't get paid a copper penny. So when I have to sit and meet with attorneys and do different bookings and contracts and make sure that like the vending and stuff—they send all this stuff to me for me to approve it first before it goes out, and I have to make sure the language right. And I send it to our attorneys and let them go through and look at the legal side of it. That's my time I've given up for nothing but because I love the culture, and I know, in some clubs, they really need me and depend on me, and I do it for them. I do it for them.

**Rachel Carrico**

Yeah.

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

01:06:35 And I've got no respect, for they wouldn't have sent this out before. So when they solicit my opinion, I feel good about that, that mean they respect me.

Tamara Jackson Snowden  
Interview date: April 21, 2014

***Rachel Carrico***

Right.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

So if you gonna send me an email, let me approve policies from the city's side of things—'cause you can just implement this.

***Rachel Carrico***

Yeah. And that also means they care about how it's received.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Exactly.

***Rachel Carrico***

Which sounds like it's, at least in part, the result of years of organizing and advocacy.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Right. I mean, when I met with the Fed, it's at the request of the police department, ask that I participated in the meeting.

***Rachel Carrico***

And that was around the consent decree stuff.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Yeah.

***Rachel Carrico***

Is that right?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

With this new detailing system; you know, when the commander call me, it's to sit at the table with the big wigs, now. Ain't got no little cheese at the table. But you invited me to the table because you wanted me to share the side of second lines and the importance of having some consistency with the officers working.

***Rachel Carrico***

Right.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

**01:07:40** They could've called—they ain't call nobody else. They call me. And then when I go to that meeting that was two hours, I don't get paid for that. You know? And that's what the clubs don't realize, that stuff you do behind the scenes.

Tamara Jackson Snowden  
Interview date: April 21, 2014

**Rachel Carrico**

Yeah. Wow. Well, thank you for all of your work to keep it happening and keep it going.

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

Oh, it's a doozy. And a lot of the clubs, you have to babysit because they not gonna never—it's just like the movie [Life](#). You ever seen *Life* with Eddie Murphy and Martin Lawrence?

**Rachel Carrico**

No. (laughs)

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

Well, they have a Porsche, and they have a guy that they call [Can't Get Right](#) because he just couldn't get nothing right. And that's what I call something some of the club—Can't Get Right. I don't care what you do for 'em, how you set 'em up, set they EIN number or do the Secretary of State charter for 'em, and the next year, they's not in good standing 'cause they didn't file their report. And I just call 'em Can't Get Rights; I have my little group of Can't Get Rights, and you got to babysit them and constantly nurture them to get them to a point of—to sustaining. Like, you can do this; no, I can't do it. Yes, you can, it's not that hard. But y'all just want constantly me doing it for ya. I'm trying to get you to do this on your own. Now, right now, I'm doing a lot with the one app. You had to do this one app.

**Rachel Carrico**

For the school system?

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

No, for the second lining.

**Rachel Carrico**

What?

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

It's a new permanent system. You have to do the one app. It goes through city hall. Girl, first of all, these people are not computer-literate. Everybody don't have—so I did one application that I did for VIP Ladies. I did that in September of last year. Follow this module. Just don't put all my information. Put your club name, your club address, and like that, that's how you gotta do that. You check no to this question right here. Check yes to this question. Yeah, other than that, I'll be sitting on the goddamn computer doing applications every week.

**Rachel Carrico**

Yeah.

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

**01:09:56** No; I did one and sent it out. This how it go. If ya have questions, I'll talk ya through it, and that's how we do that.

Tamara Jackson Snowden  
Interview date: April 21, 2014

**Rachel Carrico**

Wow. Is that new this coming year?

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

That's new this season, yes.

**Rachel Carrico**

This season.

**Tamara Jackson**

It actually started in January. They made the clubs do it, so I been working with 'em to get 'em to that. And then they call me. Well, it's, like, [Ed Buckner](#). He call with [Big Seven](#). Well, can I do my app now? I say, You can do it now. And say, Well, how much it is? I say, I can't tell you how much it's gonna be because it's—right now, it's contingent upon what all you're gonna have in your parade? I say, But bring a route sheet. I'm gonna talk you through it. He said, Well, what'd you put for this question? You put this here for this question. I'll talk it through. I might talking , but I'm not doing it. I'm not doing that. I said, This is going to be too much work for me. When I seen that application, four pages, I say, Now y'all really trying to work me.

**Rachel Carrico**

And that a lot more than it was before, huh?

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

Oh you know that—yeah, it was just one page.

**Rachel Carrico**

Oh, man. And they would go—and people would just go to city hall and do it, right, to the permit office?

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

**01:11:02** No, to special events or NOPD; you just submit the permit for your parade through them. Now, that ain't gonna happen no more. It won't happen like that anymore. Let me see if I can show you that. I think I still have mine because I kept a copy. I keep, just in case somebody needing me to have to make a copy. I used to—

**Rachel Carrico**

Oh, yeah. Oh, I see.

**Tamara Jackson Snowden**

Yeah. So fill it out; so this is the actual application. This the master app. Then you have a—you do your supplement for your special event app.

**Rachel Carrico**

Tamara Jackson Snowden  
Interview date: April 21, 2014

Okay.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

And you—

***Rachel Carrico***

Oh, my God.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Well, they have to do all of this.

***Rachel Carrico***

And it used to just be one page?

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

One little page, simple: your club name, your address, where your parade starting and what time and who you parade chairman is. Not no more; they wanna know your whole life history.

***Rachel Carrico***

My God.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Well, I keep this, and I told 'em, you know, you only check yes to parades. Now for some clubs, they still—like they come out of the [NORD](#) centers. Then they would have another supplement to this application.

***Rachel Carrico***

Right.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

If they coming from [Treme Center](#) or Armstrong Park, then that—so to fix that, y'all can start at the Treme Center, if—you gotta do the supplement. If you coming from Armstrong Park, don't worry about it; don't worry about opening the park. Just come from the sidewalk little gate because that's too much to do.

***Rachel Carrico***

Yeah.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

**01:12:51** And when [*papers rustling*] did that, I say, Look, don't worry about that park thing. You still at Armstrong Park? Come from the gate. You don't have to come from—yeah. No, we not gonna do all that.

***Rachel Carrico***

Tamara Jackson Snowden  
Interview date: April 21, 2014

Uh-huh (affirmative). Wow. Yeah, you do have your work cut out for you.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Yeah. And that's the new application process.

***Rachel Carrico***

Yeah. The people who find their way to SilenceIsViolence to seek your services after they've been the victims of violence, do those networks of people know about you through the cultural community, or is it way beyond that by now?

***Tamara Jackson***

It's way beyond that by now. The police department usually refer clients and DA's office.

***Rachel Carrico***

I see.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Usually when a homicide happens, the detectives send us the information. See? Got to get the respect. When I first came, like, I had a problem with them. They wouldn't even answer your email, so I had to go on a stalking spree, go down to headquarters, and okay, y'all gonna answer or I'm just gonna come down here. Like, what's the problem? What is the problem? I'm doing a job here. Then it was like, Well, are you the second line lady? Can we get past the second line, 'cause, you know, I'm working with the police, and some of them—like, you have some detectives that may do details at the second line, so they were trying to embrace two sides of me, like I got to embrace two sides of you. You know? So they were like, well, you the lady that be at the second line. Yes, I am that lady, but I'm also this lady, too.

***Rachel Carrico***

Uh-huh (affirmative). You're allowed to have more than one identity.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

**01:14:34** Yeah.

***Rachel Carrico***

Yeah.

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

So it took me a while. It took me a while to get there, but then I'll send emails or text messages, like, to get us involved. Or can you come out? And on the Districts, like, be fighting over SilenceIsViolence.

***Rachel Carrico***

Really?



Tamara Jackson Snowden  
Interview date: April 21, 2014

***Tamara Jackson Snowden***

Yeah. You know, we were in the Fifth District. Then we moved up here, in the Ninth. Then they like, okay, y'all not gonna come down? I'm like, y'all don't be like that. I'll help. You know, if you don't see me, it's good; that mean you have no homicides down here. You know? It was like, Oh, yeah, right. Yeah. (laughs) So—

***Rachel Carrico***

All righty. Well, I have taken up enough of your time today. I'm going to go ahead and turn this off.

**00:75:23 [end of audio]**

***Transcribed by Adept Word Management, Inc 7/26/2022***

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