

**New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation Archive
Oral History Collection**

Interviewee: Gerald Platenburg

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Interviewers: Rachel Carrico & Rachel Lyons

Date: March 28, 2017

Location: Jazz and Heritage Foundation Archive, 901 Toulouse St., New Orleans, LA

Rachel Lyons (Archivist, Jazz & Heritage Foundation Archive) – All righty, and now it looks like we're rolling.

Rachel Carrico – Ok, fantastic. All right, so, Mr. Platenburg, can you start by starting your full name, just some basic background --

Gerald Platenburg – Gotcha.

RC - -- so full name, date of birth, and where you were born.

GP – All right. My name is Gerald Platenburg, I'm born in New Orleans, Louisiana, and, what I said? Gerald Platenburg, born New Orleans, Louisiana, I was born October the fourth, 1966.

RC – Ok.

RL – We're the same age!

RC – Yeah?

GP – Yeah?

RC – So, and tell me a little bit about your family, did you come from a family of dancers, social aid and pleasure club members, musicians, people who were in the culture? **[00:00:41]**

GP – Well, no, I came from a [WORD UNCLEAR] family, my mom, she dance, but wouldn't second line. The way I picked second line dancing up was in the Desire Projects, and, I want to say probably 1982. They had this group, back then they was called Nine Times Steppers, and I never was part of the club, but after watching it so long, I kinda fell in love with it, I always could dance, but never could second line.

RC – [laughs] What kind of dance, though?

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GP – Well, hip hop, breakdance. And when I seen the second line, it's kind of got my attention, so I said, 'I'ma try that,' and I been doing it ever since, now for, I want to say, fifteen years now.

RC – And what kind of, you said your mom danced but didn't second line --

GP – Yeah, my mama danced, but she did ballroom dance, it was not like second line.

RC – Ballroom!

GP – Yeah, she did.

RC – What kind of ballroom? [00:01:31]

GP – Well, I mean, you know, hole in the walls, down in New Orleans, we call our bar rooms hole in the walls, it was like hole in the wall dancing.

RC – Ah, bar room, not ballroom, yeah yeah yeah.

GP -Yeah, bar room dancing. So it wasn't too much second line, but I kinda got a little bit of that from her. I gotta give her her credit, you know, that's where I really got it from. But --

RC – So, I know a little bit about you as a breakdancer --

GP – Mm.

RC - -- as a hip hop dancer. Tell me about that, you were on, like, doing some competitions.

GP – Yeah, well, I did, the WYLD did a talent show, which is formed in New Orleans, but they don't do it no more, and in 1997, we entered this, we entered the talent show as Grandmaster Showcase, breakdancing group, and we won that year. And the winner, the grand, first prize was a trip to the Apollo, a thousand dollars, which we won that, and we did go to the Apollo in 1997, we won twice on it.

RC – And you won the Apollo competition too?

GP – Yeah, we won it twice, yup.

RC – What was the prize for that one?

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GP – A thousand dollars, but we had to split that among five of us, so it wasn't too much, but it was better than nothing.

RC – Was it an all-expense paid trip?

GP – Everything was paid, yeah, everything was paid, WYLD took care of all of that, so all we had to do was get our clothes together, but every, everything was all, everything else was paid.

RC – And the talent show, was it put on by a radio station?

GP – Yeah, a radio station, WYLD. FM 98. Based in New Orleans.

RC – And where was the talent show?

GP – At the Saenger Theater.

RC – Mm, mmhmm.

GP – Mmhmm. Yeah, so that was a big, a big stepping stone in my life, you know?

RC – Yeah, but you were, so that was in 1997, but you said by 1982 you were already --

GP – Yeah, I was already dancing, but I wasn't hip hop; I was, I mean, I was doing hip hop but it wasn't til later in my career that I was able to make it to, on the Apollo.

RC – Right, right. And, do you think that your, like, your experience with breakdancing, did that influence --

GP – Made it easy. [00:03:23]

RC - -- second line for you?

GP – Yeah, yeah, it made it easier, cause I mean, if you look at it, second lining, breakdancing it almost the same thing, it's just not doing a lot of flipping. That's the difference between it. Second lining is more on your feet, breakdancing is whatever goes, whatever comes to your mind. On your head, on your back, but second lining's more on your feet dancing.

RC – Yeah, right. I guess there's, with breakdancing you have the uprock, right?

GP – Correct, correct, right, the upbeat.

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RC – Uh huh. Where you go down to the floor.

GP – And breakdancing is kind of uptempo. Second lining's a little upbeat, but breakdancing's an upper tempo music.

RC – Mmhmm. I see you sometimes still, the, your history as a breakdancer is still evident in the

GP – Yeah, yeah, yeah. It do, cause sometimes I get on my head, or I'll do a little split right quick, so you about right.

RC – Yeah, you'll do like a freeze on your head. [laughter]

GP – Yeah, that's my signature move, that's my get out my way move there. **[00:04:18]**

RC – It's your get out --

GP – Yeah, my get out my way move; can't touch this. Get out the way.

RC – [laughs] Yeah. So, tell me about, did you grow, you grew up in the Desire Project?

GP – Yeah, Desire all my life, born and raised, Desire Housing Project.

RC – And then there were the Nine Times Steppers, were they --

GP – Yeah, they was before Nine Times Social and Pleasure Club, it was Nine Times Stepper, before we converted to Nine Times.

RC – Ok. And when did you join the Nine Times Social and Pleasure Club?

GP – I joined Nine Times, it was founded in '92, I joined it I want to say in '95, after the founder got killed --

RC – And who was the founder?

GP – Louis Pierre. And I always promised him I was gonna join, I was gonna join, and sorry I didn't join before he got killed, but after he got killed, that was my first year in it. So it was like three years after the club started, I joined.

RC – And how many members were in it when you joined?

GP – When I joined, it was like five, six members. Now it's grown to twenty-five.

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RC – And was there a ladies' division back then?

GP – No, it was just the guys first; the ladies came maybe three years afterwards.

RC – Ok, so maybe '98?

GP – Yeah, '98 the ladies joined, and they been there ever since now.

RC – And, besides your annual parade, which is a big one, it's one people come to every year – besides the parade, what else do you all do as a club throughout the year?

GP – Well, we believe in kids and family first, we believe in that, so the first thing we have is a Mardi Gras where, you know, we do our big cookout on Dumaine and Claiborne, we been doing that for about fifteen years now, and it's been, you know, it's been a big draw. And we feed everybody, you know, it don't matter where you from, who you is, come over, get something to eat, we feed everybody, we been doing that about fifteen years now. And our second event, which is coming up, for the kids, is an Easter egg hunt. We give a big Easter egg hunt on Sampson Park [?]. We give baskets, we give candy, and we also interact with the kids, and, you know, give 'em, we try to touch, we try to give 'em, touch out to 'em, you know, kinda see where they're at in school, we discuss a lot of stuff with 'em. Counseling, in other words. And let 'em know, you know, if you all want to be part of this, this what you got to do, and we just try to be positive, give 'em positive, lead 'em in a positive direction. And the next thing we do for kids is back to school. We have a back to school giveaway, we give 'em away booksacks, pencils, you know, we just do a lot, we just try to keep the community, not just a parade like some clubs, we try to make it a, we try to bring the community together. [00:06:58]

RC – Mmhmm. It sounds to me like you really think about the social aid part of the social aid and pleasure club.

GP – Yeah, not just the second line part. You know? Some clubs do, but we try to reach out to our community, where we from, and just try to give back. We don't have much, but the little bit we do have, we try to give back to the community.

RC – Mmhmm. What are some of your most favorite memories of being part of the Nine Times? Either parading, or otherwise?

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GP – Well, the best part of my life by being part of Nine Times was we was elected after Katrina to write a book, and we named the book *Coming Out The Door For The Ninth Ward*, and the book has been a success, I mean, we on our third printing now.

RC – Wow. This was with the Neighborhood Story Project.

GP – Neighborhood Story Project, uh huh. And you talking about thirty thousand books a print, and we almost out of our third printing, she said we only have, like, maybe forty books left from that.

RC – Wow.

GP – So that was my best, and that was one of my best and one of my greatest experiences I had with the club.

RC – It was a good experience putting the book together? [00:07:56]

GP – It was, it was. It was. It was a little work, it wasn't easy, it was a little work, it was a lot of writing and trying to go back and find pictures, but I mean, it was amazing how the book turned out to be. How everybody was able to track, track old pictures, and show people, instead of just words. We was able to put old pictures in there, and people that know us, they could relate with it.

RC – Did putting that book together, that experience, have an impact on your group?

GP – I think it did. It did, cause I mean, it's kinda, it kinda brought us together, and some of them kind of got away from it, cause it started with like twenty of us, and at the end of the day, it finished with five of us.

RC – The dedicated ones.

GP – Yeah, the dedicated ones; I mean, for somebody to pay you to sit down and tell you about your life story, you couldn't beat that. You know? And I'm glad the five of us that did, we did, cause we all coulda gave up and the book wouldn't have never been published, but due to five of us, it was enough to keep it going, and we kept it going.

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RC – I'm curious, you don't have to tell me this if you don't want to, but I'm just curious how it works, do you continue to get some of the money from the book's sales, every time it's reprinted?

GP – Well, we needed to question that, because we haven't got nothing in about a year, and I mean, if you started selling books, we should constantly be getting some, but I never really touch, I was so blessed for the money that we was awarded, I was kinda satisfied with that, so we didn't really pressure too much about, you know, y'all still selling books, where the rest of the royalties, so we kinda just let it went.

RC – I see. We were talking a little bit before we turned the camera on about [PHRASE UNCLEAR] and the [Nine Times SAPC's] chosen [parade] theme of "All Lives Matter," right? Talk to me a little bit about that, and how you all came to the decision to have both the suits that you designed and wore, and that theme. **[00:09:41]**

GP – Well, when we [Nine Times members] get our theme from yearly, we sit at the table and we ask each member to have an idea, because we believe everybody in the club have an opinion, and everybody have a voice. So we sit down, and, you know, we have like five choices to make. And with the murder rate and the senseless killing going on with the police and the community killing the police and the police killing the community, senseless, we thought it would be a good idea to do the Black Panther theme, cause I mean, they wasn't for violence, neither, they was just for what was right. And when the police did something wrong, the Black Panthers came together and stood up for it. So, we thought that would be a good idea to touch the community, to touch New Orleans, the city that we love that we are from. And we didn't say, black lives matter, we said all lives. That mean white, black or whatever race you was, it didn't matter, if you was mistreated, we was there for you, and so we thought that would be a good theme, and we thought that would get great attention in the city. On the crime. And I think it kind of slowed it up a little bit, but it took back up again, but that's where that theme came from, and that's why we used that.

RC – On each of your streamers you had the name of someone that had been, an unarmed black person that had been killed by police.

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GP – Yeah, yeah, we did it because we just wanted to let not only New Orleans, we wanted to let the world know that we in New Orleans, we do care about people, no matter who you from or where you're at, we do care about people, and we gave each member the option to pick who they choose to wear on their streamer, whether it's New Orleans, wherever they from. And it was good to see a lot of people pick people from out of state, you know? But a lot of us had people locally. Cause I mean, we do have a lot of, you know, we have trouble ourself in the city we have to get under wraps.

RC – Right, and we were, we were just talking about, too, before we turned the camera on, that there's a short, like a five-minute film about that parade that's on, airing on TV right now [*Inside the New Orleans Nine Times Second Line Parade* / *MTV News* (<https://youtu.be/2IXtbrnqkMI>).]

GP – Mmhmm.

RC – That you haven't seen, right?

GP – No, I haven't seen it, but I heard about it. You know, and like I said, I guess by me being part of it I don't be too jumpy about seeing stuff, cause you know, I'm part of Kinfolks Brass Band, too, and we do a lot of weddings, yeah, we do a lot of weddings locally every weekend, so I'm kind of over the, this TV thing, you know, cause we done did *The Bachelor*, we recorded *The Bachelor*, we even been on *Jimmy Kimmel*, you know, we done been on *CSI: New Orleans*, you know, I mean, I done been around the film a lot so, I guess that's why I wouldn't push it, too pushy about seeing it, but it is something I would love to see. [00:12:16]

RC – Are you a part of the Kinfolk Brass Band as a Grand --

GP – Grand Marshall, correct, I'm the head Grand Marshall, mmhmm.

RC – And you get with them a lot.

GP – A lot, yeah. Cause they one of the hottest bands in the city right now. When I tell you almost thirty gigs a weekend, that's what they doing.

RC – Thirty gigs a weekend.

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GP – A weekend.

RC – How many do you do?

GP – I do, out of thirty, I might do fifteen or ten.

RC – Wow!

GP – Yeah, so that’s a blessing for me.

RC – Yeah, so that’s like another source of income.

GP – It is. It is, yeah.

RC – And that’s in addition to, you also work a day job.

GP – Two jobs.

RC – Two jobs!

GP - Bourbon Orleans [Hotel] and Court of Two Sisters. **[00:12:50]**

RC – Wow.

GP – But one I’m about to, it’s a little bit too much. You push your body as far as it can go, and I think I went to the limit, so it’s time to tone down a little bit.

RC – Yeah, well, and on top of that, I mean, you’re at second lines every Sunday

GP – Yeah, yeah, yeah. I make everything, I make everything work out! I push myself, but I try to cover all bases, I mean, at home, everywhere, I try to, you know, touch everybody, put it like that.

RC – Yeah. So, this might seem like a silly question, but it’s a very basic question. Why do you belong to a social aid and pleasure club? Why do you second line? What drives you to dance --

GP – Well, for one --

RC – -- as a member of this community?

GP – Well, for one, I’m not stuck on self, I’m not selfish, so, to be part of a group of guys that I might could touch and might could get together and have fun with, I think that’s

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always good, cause I mean, it's easy for me to put a parade up by myself, and carry, but I think it's best to be part of an organization. You know, so I'm glad, I'm glad I chose Nine Times, cause I mean, I'm from the Ninth Ward, so that was an easy choice to make right there.

RC – Yeah, right. And when you're out, either, you know, at the club or at a parade, and when you're really feeling the music, dancing, you know, in your element, what does it feel like?

GP – Well, I mean, that's a feeling that each individual have to experience, cause I mean, I couldn't describe it, but I got to tell you, it's a good feeling. Cause I mean, I don't drink, I don't smoke, so that's a way of relieving a lot of anger within me, and that's how I express myself, in dancing. But it's a, I'ma tell you, once you get to love it, once you get to like it, you learn to love it. Mm. [00:14:35]

RC – You know, some people kind of describe the feeling of, like you said, releasing your anger --

GP – Mmhmm.

RC - -- what it feels like, it's almost like in, like a spiritual experience?

GP – Yeah, I think, I think it is. I think it is. Yeah, I think it is.

RC - Yeah.

GP – Yeah, I think it is, I think it's very spiritual. You know, cause I am, everybody, it's accepting your fear. And like I said, you can't teach second line dancing; either you got it, or you don't. Cause if you could teach it, I think I'd be the best teacher in the city, but I just can't see no kind of way to teach it, but I wish I could, but I think it is a spiritual movement, you know?

RC – Yeah. Yeah. So, do you have any, you answered this a little bit, but do you have any, like, signature moves? Something that you kind of, like, identify as, like, the Platenburg style?

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GP – Well, I couldn't really tell you, cause I do so many moves so quickly I can't really keep up with 'em, but I think when I get on my head I think that's my signature move, cause I think that's a move nobody can duplicate. Don't even attempt to duplicate.

[laughs] So I have to say that hey, when I get on my head, do the headstand.

RC – Do you call it anything?

GP – No, I never named it, I never named it, but I, since you brought this up, I think I gotta find a name for it. [laughter] [00:16:00]

RC – Exactly. All right, well I'll be listening to hear if I hear anybody talk about it --

GP – Say that name, yeah. But I think I need to get a name for it, cause --

RC – I think so!

GP - -- everybody like it, and they know it's my thing, but I never decided to name it, but I gotta find out a name for it.

RC - Yeah. Yeah. Do you ever, I've never seen you do this, but have you ever climbed up on rooftops, or anything?

GP – Oh, I did my share of that. I did my share of that, yeah, but I had a close call with that two years ago in our parade, I kinda climbed on a scaffold, and one of the bolts kinda fell off the scaffold and I almost slipped, so I promised myself, after that experience, I never do it, I never climb on nothing again. If it ain't two feet off the ground. [laughs] So you probably won't never see that no more.

RC – Yeah, yeah, yeah. I don't blame you, it looks --

GP – Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, you on your own, you know, ain't no insurance, you at your own risk out there.

RC – Yeah, exactly.

GP – So I think I'll never do that again.

RC – Hm. You said a minute ago that you can't teach second lining, and --

GP – I wish I could. [CROSSTALK] --

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RC -- I guess, right?

GP -- Yeah, I think so.

RC -- You personally, or just in general, it can't be taught?

GP -- I don't think that it can be taught. Terrylyn saying she gonna try to put something together, but I mean, that's a dance that you got to, that's gotta be in you.

RC -- Do people come to you and ask --

GP -- Always!

RC -- for that?

GP -- Always, always, always.

RC -- What do you tell 'em?

GP -- I tell 'em, I'll try to show you something, but I can't promise you. But I do tell 'em I'll try to show 'em, cause I, like I told you, I'm not selfish, so I don't mind passing it on, cause it was passed to me, but it wasn't taught to me. It was passed to me by watching it and seeing it. And the doors opened to me by the club accepting me, but it was never taught to me, so I don't, you know like I said, I wish I could. And maybe I need to try, cause I never really tried it, neither, and you can't say what you can't do til you try it. I never really tried it, so maybe I need to try it, and maybe I can teach, but I don't really think so. [00:17:43]

RC -- When it was being passed to you, were there any people that you really looked up to, or admired their dancing and wanted to --

GP -- Yeah, there was a couple of people. Joe Black, with Revolution, Rema William [?], that's a member of my club. And Raphael Parker, that's a member of my club, too, and they kinda had their own little style of dancing, so I kinda pat and watch some of the moves they made. And, I gotta say, Squirky Man [Oliver Hunter]. [CROSSTALK] And I think he's the best in the city. I tell him that all the time, you know?

RC -- Is he still living?

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GP – He’s still living, but he’s not, you know, he got that drug thing, he can’t shake that drug problem, you know, but I think he’s the best in the city, and I wish I had some of the skills he had, cause he is bad. And the stuff he do, you could take it to Las Vegas and make some real money with it.

RC - Right, right. Yeah. So, I, in the past, or now, like, did you ever practice your footwork or your moves, like, outside of the parade or the club?

GP – Never did.

RC – No?

GP – Never did. Once I hear that music, wherever it’s at, I’m up, and doing it, don’t matter. But as far as me at home, practicing, no, I never did. Matter of fact, I don’t even listen to second line music at home.

RC – You don’t? [00:18:55]

GP – No, I don’t.

RC – Really!

GP – Ain’t gonna lie to you, I don’t. So only time I get to hear it is when I’m out. Cause I think anything, you hear too much of the thing, after a while, it get boring to you. It’s like CD’s, people buy CD’s, and after they hear a song three or four times, since they got it, they don’t want to hear it no more, so I don’t think it would be a good idea to listen to it all day. But I love it when I do hear it.

RC – Mmhmm. And are there any particular songs that’s like, oh that’s my song when you hear it?

GP – Well, some of them that move me, but I love them all, but there is two or three that really move me.

RC – Mmhmm. What are they?

GP – Be honest with you, I couldn’t tell you the name, I just like the beat.

RC – You know how they --

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GP – I know it when I hear it, yeah.

RC - Uh huh, uh huh. You don't know the names cause you don't have the CD's.

GP – Yeah, shame on me.

RC – That's how I – you don't have to know the names, you just gotta know what they sound like.

GP – No, it move me, though, it move when, it move me, and that's all that matters, you know?

RC – Do you have any favorite bands, either right now or in the past? [00:19:50]

GP – Well, you know, I'm a TBC [To Be Continued Brass Band] – I love Rebirth, but the Rebirth kinda got out the scene a lot, so I'm favoring TBC now. And I go ahead with 'em every Wednesday [at Celebration Hall], so, you know, you learn to love what you hear a lot, so that's my favorite band right now, TBC.

RC – And when you go out to, you know, TBC on Wednesday, it seems like the last, what, five, seven years?

GP – They been a minute. They been a minute.

RC – Yeah! That's like --

GP – They had a long run.

RC – -- the weekly event for people who love to dance, right?

GP – Who love to dance, correct, there you go. Yeah, including yourself.

RC – Yes, exactly. [Platenburg laughs] Over there a lot. [laughs]

GP - Yeah! [laughs]

RC – And how does second lining at the club compare to second lining in parades? In your opinion?

GP – Well, I mean, it's the same thing, cause you still get audience. You have people coming there just to see the dancing. You know what I mean? Some people touched by the dancing, so some people need that touch, too, so I guess, there's no difference in it.

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Parade just be more people, but in Celebration Hall you still have that crowd of people that's watching you. So I think it's when you entertain second line, I think it's a parade. You know?

RC – That's true.

GP – Yeah.

RC – You know, I always notice, when we're in the club, that it's really, you can do, or I find at least, I have a lot of freedom to do a lot more things with my feet since I don't have to move forward, but at the same time, you don't have that, like, playfulness of, you know, interacting --

GP – The crowd.

RC - -- with the environment --

GP – With the crowd, correct.

RC - -- with the street, and all the cars, and the, you know, all the stuff.

GP – Yeah, it's, no, it's difference, but it don't seem no difference to me, cause like I said, you still got that same feel of people, that if they like it, they gonna reach out to you and touch you, so I think it's just the same thing. [00:21:31]

RC – Mmhmm.

GP – You just gonna have the environment as far as the food, and you don't have the enthused people pushing you, just grabbing you to, you know, to keep going and stuff.

RC – Right.

GP – But they close to the same.

RC – And when you go to the parades, do you have a particular place in the procession that you like to dance, like to be when you're dancing?

GP – Well, always on the side of the band.

RC – Which side?

GP – The side, I'll say the righthand side.

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RC – The sidewalk side?

GP – Yeah, sidewalk side, mmhmm.

RC – On the sidewalk, or close to the band?

GP – Close to the band.

RC – Mmhmm. And why do you prefer that spot, any reason?

GP – No reason, but it just, I been accustomed to doing that for so many years, I couldn't tell you the reason, but I been doing it for a while, so I just think that's my, that's a comfort zone for me.

RC – Mmhmm. And how do you keep your energy? You said you don't drink, you don't smoke – how do you keep your energy up the whole time? [00:22:20]

GP – Music. Yes, the music; it's the beat. It's amazing how I do it, I couldn't tell you, but it's amazing how it's been done, cause I don't know how I get the strength from myself. Now sometimes, on my second line date, I get short-winded, but during the regular parades, I'm all right. So I don't know why it's that, that's what I've been trying to find myself, why. I guess it's because of the emotion, and I guess it's the, the drive, you know? When you know people coming out to see you, and it is your turn to put on a show for four hours – but I mean, them four hours go quick, too.

RC – Well yeah, and you push yourself to do, I mean --

GP – A lot.

RC – A lot.

GP – Yeah, you put a lot on yourself. [CROSSTALK]

RC - -- on your --

GP - On your day, yeah, yeah, you gotta go over and be on the car.

RC – Right.

GP – They look for that, mmhmm.

RC – Yeah, people will not, will not stand for it, if

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GP – Yeah, they wouldn't, if you don't show up and show out, they will tell you. You know, so it's, and I guess that's what it is, you burn a lot of energy on just the adrenaline, you know? The rush, knowing you got to put on, you gotta perform. Regular parade, you do if you don't, you don't. But on your day, it's mandatory. So I think it's a special drive you got to have, and I think I started that drive, two or three months til, I start getting that feel, my day coming, my day coming; I think it's just the adrenaline.

RC – And what kind of preparations are going on in those couple of months as it's getting closer? [00:23:35]

GP – Well, whatever clothes we gonna wear, we gotta make sure we have that, whatever shoes we gonna wear, we gotta make sure we get 'em ordered and have 'em in on time. Whatever decorations we gonna wear [yawns] excuse me, we gotta make sure – excuse me, we gotta make sure we get people on it. Everything is with money. Long as the money right, everything gonna be right, but it's always the money, you know?

RC – That's something I think that people who aren't familiar with social aid and pleasure clubs and how they work, and people, I don't know, come in from out of town, maybe, to see a parade, they really don't understand --

GP – They don't.

RC -- the finances, the financial obligations that people who belong to those clubs --

GP – Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. But the thing I like about my club is we don't shoot for the moon. What I mean by that is we don't try to outdo nobody, we don't try to get the two, three thousand dollar shoes, we try to keep it within budget, in everybody's budget, somewhere, something you could live with. And that's why our club been having so many members and it been so successful for so long, because we try to reach everybody's needs. Keep it reasonable, you know, we don't try to make it high where you can't afford to do it, we try to keep it within reach of everybody, and keep it simple. But the whole key to anything is voting, and most votes win, and once you do that, I think anything you do with a group of people gonna be all right, and a lot of people get out of that, but that's the fairest way to do it, bring it to the table and vote on it, and as long as you do that, I

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think the club, a lot of clubs will last a long time. Instead of one or two people making ideas.

RC – Right, right so that everybody feels like their voice is heard.

GP – Right, and everybody's voice is heard, everybody's voice matters. And that's what works for us. Been working. [00:25:08]

RC – Right. You've been doing this a long time, what, have you seen changes in the second line culture, since you've been a part of it?

GP – Well the only changes I see is the clothes. Before the dancing, the routes, I mean, everything is been going, it's playing, it's just the decorations that change a lot. You know, everybody done got a little fancy, and like I said, that's the only thing, but it's no right or wrong thing, whatever you decide to do is what you do.

RC – Like people are spending more money, you think, on decorations?

GP – Yeah, yeah. Definitely. [yawns] Excuse me.

RC – But do you think dancing, it's stayed the same?

GP – Yeah, definitely, the dancing don't change. You know, you could look at it, you could study it years and years ago, you gonna see the same style. It's just different people doing it, but it's the same style of dancing, you know, that second lining, that's something that can't be duplicated. You know, you might have different moves from everybody, but at the end of the day, it's the same style.

RC – Mmhmm. What do you enjoy most about being a part of the second line community? Like, not just even your club specifically, but just being a part of the culture?

GP – Well, I mean, I mean, I've seen the culture at its worst, and I think now it's getting a little better, cause more clubs are interacting with each other. So, I kinda like that. You know?

RC – At its worst is when people were --

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GP – Yeah, when people were divided, and whatever ward you from, same with the Indians, you know. It was divided at one time, but as time went on, they grew to fellowship with each other, so, fellowship together, so I think that's brought a lot of the clubs together, and that's made it better. And it's positive, you know, and it makes people want to join something positive. [00:26:44]

RC – And what role does dancing have in your life? You've kind of answered this, but I'm just gonna ask it a slightly different way – what role does second lining and dancing in particular, or dancing, and second lining in particular, have in your life?

GP – It's a driving force in my life right now, because, like I said, I don't drink, smoke, so it's a way I solve a lot of problems, and it's the way I feel relaxed and feel comfortable about me. So, I mean, it's a driving force in my life. Without that, I don't know. If something were to happen to my legs, I can't imagine, you know, how would I move on, I couldn't tell you.

RC – I can imagine, you would just put that footwork in like your upper body.

GP – Some kind of way. [laughter] I move into my arms, huh?

RC – Uh huh. You'd still figure out how to stand on your head, I can imagine.

GP – Yeah, I try, but it would be a life I wouldn't look forward to.

RC - Yeah, yeah.

GP – You know, it's a blessing to have your health and strength and everything in tact. And able to entertain people. Cause my dancing touch a lot of people, you know, and I tell ten people – if that's, my dancing make you happy, you gonna get it every time you see me, you know, but it do touch a lot of people, a lot of people tell me that. Young and old, you know? 'Man, every time I see you dance, you make me want to dance; you make me feel all right. You make me' - so I mean, it's a blessing, you know? Something, a special gift I was blessed with. We all have them; some people don't search themselves to find out what it is, but I search myself, and I found out, that's what it was, dancing.

RC – Yeah. When, you know, when you're dancing, it's so, it's just so clear that it --

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GP – I enjoy.

RC – it makes you so happy, and brings you joy, and it's contagious.

GP – Yeah, yeah, it grows on people, yeah. It grows on people. Cause I mean, I make people dance when they don't even want to dance. They see me dance, and they'll try. And you'll see the children come up to me, and tell me that it really touched me, and like I said, I wish I could teach, you know, cause I mean, you gotta pass it on to 'em, if we don't, the culture gonna die, so we got to invest in the kids some kind of way. But that's something new we got this year, we got a kids' division.

RC – This past year you did?

GP – No, the year coming in. [00:28:38]

RC – Year coming, oh!

GP – Yeah, Nine Time Kids, yeah.

RC – Great.

GP – So we start, we getting on the right track with that.

RC – That's cool. You know, listening to you talk about that, it makes me think, one of the things I've been talking to people about, and thinking about, is this, the words that are in the names of these clubs, right, that we belong to, social aid and pleasure. And this idea of pleasure, like, what does that mean to people? Like what, where is the pleasure in all of this?

GP - Yeah, yeah.

RC – And for you, do you have any associations with that word, or what does it make you think about, or what is the pleasure in all of this?

GP – Well, I feel, the pleasure is what you pass on to people. What people get out of it. It's not selfish, cause I mean, it would be selfish to have pleasure in yourself, so I think the pleasure is how people, how you perceive the people, how people take, you know, how you take on the community. You know, and I think that's the pleasure part, being

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appreciative, appreciative and giving back to the community, that's our pleasure, the pleasure we get out of seeing kids happy. You know?

RC – It's so interesting you say that, cause the way you describe it, it sounds like that's the social aid part, but it's not like they're separate, right?

GP – No, it's like it's the same thing. Socialize means socializing with people; pleasure mean enjoying people, you know? So it comes together, you know, but we serious about it, so, I mean, a lot of clubs don't, but we serious about, you know, bringing the community together, and bringing the, see kids happy, make kids happy. [00:30:01]

RC – Right, and you do that through all of the events you describe, but you personally, I mean, and the people in your club, too, but you personally also bring people, your providing people pleasure through your dancing.

GP – Yeah yeah, correct. Yeah, correct.

RC – Yeah. So, I'll end with this question that I ask everybody I interview, in your own words, what is second lining?

GP – Well, in my words, or to me, cause I can't speak for other people, I could speak for me, to me, it's just, it's a free time for you to relieve all your stress, all your anger – I don't really say second lining, I say second line dancing.

RC – Ok.

GP – What I get out of it is fun, pleasure, happiness, joyous times, and just seeing other people smile means a lot to me. That's my meaning of second line.

RC – Is there anything else about any of this stuff that you'd like to add that I didn't ask about? Or we didn't get to?

GP – Well I think you covered a, I think you covered that and some. [Carrico laughs] I'm just glad I was able to answer clearly and truthfully, you know?

RC – Oh, you know what, I lied, there is one more thing I want to ask you about, is we talked about your breakdancing competition, but you've also been in some footwork competitions, too, right?

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GP – Yeah, I have, I have, but I didn't really compete, because I'm blessed so far as money-wise, so I wanted to let people that was less fortunate, I just got in it to be, to have fun with it, but I didn't get in the competition.

RC – Yeah. I remember talking with Terrinika Smith [?] --

GP – Yeah.

RC - -- who said you two, it got down to just the two of you --

GP – Mmhmm.

RC - -- and they gave you, they decided you were the winner, but she was so touched that you gave her the money, the cash prize.

GP – Yeah, I did, I did, so you know I ain't lying. [00:32:00]

RC – I do, I do.

GP – Yeah, so you know I ain't lying. Talk to people, everybody don't tell the truth, but that's just who I am. You know, you gotta give back in any kind of way you can, and I was glad I was able to do that, and that's what I told you, I didn't really get in it, I just wanted to have fun with it. And exercise myself, too. That's all.

RC – Ok.

RL – I got a question.

RC – You have a question? Ok.

RL – So, Nine Times, from the Ninth Ward --

GP – Uh huh, correct.

RL – -- is there any other meaning to the number nine for you all?

GP – No, not really.

RL – I think of cats have nine lives, and if you're saying --

GP – Nine times, yeah. Yeah.

RL – Nine times, you know. I was just wondering if there was any --

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GP – No, no meaning, no, no meaning behind it like that. But since you brought that to my attention, I might have to do some research on that to the club, and really find out where it really came from, cause I mean, not too many people pick, name something that don't have a meaning behind it.

RL – True.

GP – But as far as I know, to my knowledge, it just was a name, since us being out the Ninth Ward, cause it never was nine members. I could see, if it was nine of us, but it was always five or more. But where the name really come from, I couldn't really tell you. Is there a meaning behind it? I don't really think so. I think it was just a name, they came up with, and it sounded good, and they went with it. Cause I joined them three years ago, and they was established three years before I joined. But I'ma research that and let you know if I find out --

RC –It might be in you book! [laughter] [00:33:24]

GP – I don't know, I don't know. I don't think so. Cause we did the book *Coming Out The Door For The Ninth Ward*, yeah, so we did that for the community. And I'll tell you, they sure love to share the love. Yeah, yeah. Everything we did, they was there.

RL – I just had this vision that next year they're gonna come out in cat suits, or something. [laughter]

GP – No, this year we coming out, it's undecided right now. Now, they wanted to do the Mexican theme, cause we been doing themes, they wanted to do the Mexican theme --

RC – Oh yeah, cause you did the Irish one --

GP – Yeah, we did the Irish. Yeah, the kilts, yeah, we did the kilts one year. And when I tell you that, that shut the city. It was hard for anybody to come behind that. They weren't ready for that. It was, it was, we took it to a whole 'nother level with that, and couldn't nobody touch it, they were like, 'Man, y'all shut it down with that!' Nobody would have never thought of that, men with skirts on. And we coordinated, I mean, it was beautiful. We coordinated it so well, you know? You never seen it?

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RL – No, I’ve been to it, but I didn’t go to that one.

GP – Ok, yeah, it was, I don’t think I got nothing in my phone, but it was, that was a good year. We got a lot of rave reviews from that, I’m telling you. A lot of people like, ‘What!’ Yeah, we got it, yeah --

RC – And how did people receive the Black Panther?

GP – Oh, they received that well, too, cause we came out together, with our arms locked, we came out in unity. They received it well. Yeah, that went good, too. [00:34:44]

RC – Were they people who came to your parade who remembered the activity of the Black Panthers in the Desire Project?

GP – Some people did, some people did. Some people did, mmhmm. We did ourself, some of us remember it, yeah.

RC – Really!

GP – Yeah. I mean, I don’t remember their time, cause I was a baby during that time, but I do have history on it.

RC – Right, right.

GP – Mmhmm, so that was a good thing, too. And I said, it came at a time when the world, not just New Orleans, the world was going through that, cause there was senseless killing all over, just pulling people over and shooting them for no reason, they only had a phone in their hand, so, we got, that was a time to touch. New Orleans needed to be touched, too. So we did it more for the city than anybody else. Mmhmm. So the TV thing, I’m dying to see that, though, I never seen that yet.

RC – Yeah, yeah. I bet, I mean, I haven’t seen it on TV yet, just saw it, Lily sent the video on the Internet --

GP – Clipping.

RC - -- off the Internet or whatever, but, yeah. It’s good.

GP – Mmhmm.

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RC – Ok! All right.

RL – I'll go back to my camera.

RC – Ok, thanks. I'll be looking out for that, to hear about your name, your namestand on your headstand. [00:35:53]

GP – Oh yeah yeah yeah, I gotta put something together. I don't know what I'm gonna name it, but I gotta name it something. I never thought about --

END OF RECORDING

Transcribed by Jess Pinkham, 10/25/16