Michael Joseph Gourrier: Black southern belles in their southern attire, the wide hoop skirts, and they would do the dances that had been passed on, the Bamboula and the Kalinda and the other folk dances that had been brought over from Africa and had developed here in the States. And basically the primary objective of the organization was to maintain that particular tradition and keep it from going the way of a lot of things like the dinosaurs just going by the wayside. There's no memory, no recollection or no reminder of it.

Kate Ellis: In a sense, to preserve what they would consider their cultural heritage.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Exactly. Exactly.

Kate Ellis: Now why was it Creole?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Okay, the Creole, that term is a very bandied term. Everybody uses it. Everybody's got a definition. But from the Black perspective, a Creole was an African-American that had a cast, C-A-S-T skin color.

Kate Ellis: With a cast?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Of a paper bag or lighter.

Kate Ellis: Oh okay. (laughs) Is that what a Creole is to you?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: That's my perspective, yeah. Because I'm not going to going delve into the racial heritage about whether you one thirty-second or two-thirds or one-eighth or one-fourth or fifty percent.

Kate Ellis: For you, it's about skin color.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Yeah, that's basically what it is.

Kate Ellis: Well, let me ask you what you call yourself.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: I've never really had to answer that, but I guess from a heritage point of view, I'm a Seventh Ward Creole. That would be what I would be categorized as. Anybody ever told you about the Paper Bag and Fan?

Kate Ellis: I heard about the— did the Autocross Club put the paper bag up there?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Yeah, the Paper Bag and Fan Club.

Kate Ellis: What's the fan? I'm not sure.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Well, the fan had to be able to blow through your hair and you had to be the color of the paper bag or brighter.

Kate Ellis: I'm not sure I knew about the fan part. That's interesting.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Yeah, fan and paper bag.

Kate Ellis: Do you think this Creole Fiesta Association, would that have been a group that might have—

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Well, actually I think it was more of just a little local organization because if you broaden it out, and I mean with my interests in just not only music but the genealogical development of situations, I've seen Creoles and, like I say, the term can be used any way that you want to use it. If you look in the dictionary, they say one thing. People have their own perception of things. I've seen Creoles that were black as my shoes and had, say, hair like Indians, straight, coal-black hair. There was no African features to their hair. These people, from my perspective, they could be considered Creoles. Over in western Louisiana, they do have what you can consider Black Creoles. These are people with African features and they have these, or at least African colorings, but they have non-African features, even from a keener nose and straight hair, as opposed to coarse hair. That's a term that I say its time has come and gone.

Kate Ellis: Right, yeah. Actually it's interesting because that's one of the first things that we learned when we got here was just this question, what is a Creole?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Yeah, and everybody's got a different definition.

Kate Ellis: Right. For some people, for some, it's like, who cares? I don't want to bother with the labels.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: For some people, it can be an embarrassment, because they can get red in the face. "I don't know," this type of stuff.

Kate Ellis: Really? So it can be a sensitive topic sometimes.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Yes. Well, racial conversation, depending on the intent of the people conversing about it, can be quite sensitive. Whereas if you objective and you just garnering general information, there should be no problem. But like I said, the intent, and that intent means a whole lot as far as everything is concerned.

Kate Ellis: You mean the intent of the people in the conversation?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Right. If they have ulterior or derogatory motives in their racial discussion.

Kate Ellis: I see. It can almost be a political question, when you say to somebody, "How do you identify yourself racially?"

Michael Joseph Gourrier: It's like, you don't discuss sex and politics because they're too controversial and some people can get highly emotional. It's the same way, I think that race can be included in that particular situation also.

Kate Ellis: Yeah. Okay. So Seventh Ward—

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Can we start wrapping it up?

Kate Ellis: Okay. You want to—Okay. Let me just get a couple things about as far as, actually we can start with the family history, and I'll get it that way, as far as you came up in the Seventh Ward. Well, let me ask it this way with these questions. You have to answer these anyways. Okay. First of all, how do you want your name to appear in written documents?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Michael J. Gourrier.

Kate Ellis: Okay, so J. You're married. What is your wife's name?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Eloise. E-L-O-I-S-E.

Kate Ellis: What's her maiden?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Chinn, C-H-I-N-N.

Kate Ellis: Did she take your last name?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Yes.

Kate Ellis: And her date of birth?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Five fourteen, '37.

Kate Ellis: Where was she born?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: She was born in Galveston County, Texas.

Kate Ellis: And what's her occupation?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: She's a registered nurse. This is the same thing. It's the city and the county is the

same name.

Kate Ellis: That's fine.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Okay.

Kate Ellis: Yeah, that's fine. Your mother's name?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Edna Ricard. R-I-C-A-R-D. Oh, you want her—

Kate Ellis: Her maiden? Ricard is her maiden?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Her maiden name, right. R-I-C-A-R-D.

Kate Ellis: And is that, well, does she have a middle name that you know?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Miriam.

Kate Ellis: M-I—

Michael Joseph Gourrier: R-I-A-M.

Kate Ellis: Okay. When was she born?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: November the seventeenth. I have to figure the age of her. 1916.

Kate Ellis: Is she still living?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Yes.

Kate Ellis: Where was she born?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: She was born here in New Orleans.

Kate Ellis: Okay. Her occupation?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: She's a retired schoolteacher.

Kate Ellis: Okay. Where did she teach?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: She taught in Orleans Parish public school system.

Kate Ellis: Which school, or all over?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: I think that she spent the longest period of time at Valena C. Jones Grammar School.

Kate Ellis: Okay. Your father's first—

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Alfred James.

Kate Ellis: His—

Michael Joseph Gourrier: May the seventh 19—Seven years, '09. 1909.

Kate Ellis: 1909. Is he still living?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Yes, he's still living.

Kate Ellis: Where was he born?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: He was born here.

Kate Ellis: So y'all go way back there.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Right.

Kate Ellis: His occupation?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: United States Navy, retired.

Kate Ellis: Navy retiree. Okay. Do you have any siblings?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Nine. Eight, well, there's nine of us total. I have eight brothers and sisters.

Kate Ellis: Can you tell me their names, and if you remember when they're born or if you know how old they are, that's great.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Alfred George. Maycarol. M-A-Y-C-A-R-O-L. C-A-R-O-L.

Kate Ellis: C-A-R-O-L. Okay.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Ann Marie, A-N-N. Ricardo, R-I-C-A-R-D-O. Maurice, M-A-U-R-I-C-E. Assunta, A-S-S-U-N-T-A. Kevin, and Francis.

Kate Ellis: Do you know, if you tell me their ages, I can figure out the years that they were born. Oh, before I ask you that, what order are you in this?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: I'm the oldest.

Kate Ellis: Oh, okay. Number one.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: They're in order. That's the order. I said them in order.

Kate Ellis: Okay.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: He was born two ten, '43.

Kate Ellis: And these are all in New Orleans, right?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Right. I think she was born one ten, '45.

Kate Ellis: If you don't remember the birthday, but you think you know the year.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: She was born in '46.

Kate Ellis: Okay.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: He was born September of '48. September of '48. He was born in '50. '52, '54, and '57.

Kate Ellis: Okay. Do you have any children? What are their names?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Steven, S-T-E-V-E-N. Christopher, Jonathan, and Joseph.

Kate Ellis: Oh, four boys.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Joseph Michael. Right.

Kate Ellis: When were they born?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Steven was born November the first, 1965. Chris was born January the fifteenth.

Kate Ellis: Not sure?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: May the sixth, 1971 for the last one.

Kate Ellis: If they're somewhere between there, that's fine. [indistinct 00:12:52]

Michael Joseph Gourrier: He was born—

Kate Ellis: Okay. From New Orleans in 1962, where did you go?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: I moved to Columbus, Ohio.

Kate Ellis: Why?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Went to graduate school.

Kate Ellis: Okay, so from 1962—

Michael Joseph Gourrier: To '64.

Kate Ellis: Okay. And then?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: From '64 to '69, I moved to Indianapolis.

Kate Ellis: Why did you go to Indianapolis?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Job related. My ex-wife was stationed there in the Army at Fort Benjamin Harrison. That was the closest duty station she could get while I was in graduate school.

Kate Ellis: Oh, okay.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: From '69 through '82, I lived in Texas.

Kate Ellis: In Galveston.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Well, I lived in a variety of cities.

Kate Ellis: In Texas. What were you doing in Texas?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Job.

Kate Ellis: And the job you're talking about is—

Michael Joseph Gourrier: In the allied health science area. Well, I was working, doing laboratory work. My undergraduate degree was in medical technology. The main job that I had when I was in Texas was with the

United States Federal Government. I worked with the department of what was called the Health, Education, and Welfare. I was the laboratory supervisor for the United States Public Health Service Hospital. Yes, I was recruited from the civil service roster to move from Indianapolis to move down to Texas and take that position. Then in '82, I moved back here to New Orleans because the hospital closed up as a result of Reaganomics, and I just got, the door closed up.

Kate Ellis: And you've been here ever since.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Right.

Kate Ellis: Wow. You've really had, it sounds like to me, two careers.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Oh, yeah.

Kate Ellis: That's like, it's not just your day job, obviously.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Well, I wish I could, I enjoyed doing the medical work that I do, but I wish that I could derive sufficient enough remuneration from doing the music, anything in the music aspect, to devote full time to it. But it's like the musicians here, and that's something that I would like to mention here. There are more starving musicians than you can shake a stick at here. The music appreciation here in the United States is very low. I've had the opportunity just to travel overseas, and music appreciation over there is very high. It's considered as an art form as it should be. I think one of the reasons that it's not relegated to such a status here is because of a racial aspect. As I mentioned earlier in the conversation, the Blacks were the innovators and originators of this particular art form. To keep from giving them their just due and credit, it has always been relegated to an outcast or clandestine type of performance.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: In effect, that's not what it was. But that's how it was pigeonholed to keep from giving the actual acknowledgement and accolade to individuals who perpetuated and have maintained the heritage of the only original performance art form that was originated here in America. I qualified, I say performance art form because it was an original performance. The reason I do that is because I defer to the American Indian because their jewelry is an original creative art form, but it's not a performance art form per se. But jazz originated right here in America, in the United States, and it was a Black thing. It's been like every other thing that Black people have had to deal with. They've been pushed aside. They never have gotten their just due and credit. Overseas other people have had the opportunity to experience this particular art, and they appreciate it and enjoy it. It has actually been relegated to the proper and due level of appreciation and enjoyment over there, where it has not been here where it originated.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: I can't remember the quote exactly, but he's not known in his own country, something similar to that. The Europeans and the Asians are ardent jazz enthusiasts. American, or shall I say African-American jazz musicians are held in high revere and regard over in Europe and in Asia. The people are highly respective of those performances. Like I say, from my perspective, it was a racial thing. I'm real disheartened that these vestiges of racism are still prevalent. I can point to something more contemporary. I

can remember a few years back when Marsalis made the cover of Time magazine, and here he was what I considered the new Messiah and the new disciple of idiom. And he's going to carry the music on into the twenty-first century.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: As a result of the interest that was generated by his performance and the exposure of new artists, I had a real strong feeling that jazz was on its comeback. But to show you how the racist society in which we live in has come up to counteract that, they have spent millions of dollars in what I call, it's not the proper term, but for lack of a better term, alternative music. They have invented this genre of music that they call rapping. To me, it's not anything of any social redeeming value, because from my perspective, rap is nothing but a debasement of people, females specifically. From my perspective, it has no social redeeming value. But I think that this was a ploy to keep the interest from continuing that had been sold by the advent and the big splash on the scene that Wynton Marsalis and his disciples had made.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: The man has made a whole lot of money, not only in the jazz venue, but also from his classical performances. He was an ideal role model where he stimulated a lot of people. We were well on the way, but then there's no interest because everybody is turned the other way because millions of dollars have been spent. I'm speaking from the insight that I have with my radio background about the money that's spent promoting this, what I call junk music as opposed to American classical music, that idiom we know as jazz. If this is not a racist type of situation, I'd like to know what it is. Because the millions of dollars that they spend on this bumpty-bump and noise and hoopla and the small amount of money that's spent for jazz, I'd like to know what it is.

Kate Ellis: Mm-hmm, yeah.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Okay. With the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation, we have several projects that we do on a regular basis. Our biggest thing is our jazz festival, which is actually the biggest jazz festival in the country, and from a lot of sources, the best one in the world because of its multifaceted format and diverse types of presentations. We also sponsor the New Orleans Heritage School of Music, which as I mentioned earlier, is for the education of inner-city kids to give them the opportunity to have some formal musical training. We have a grants program. These are revenues that are derived after the expenses of the festival are paid off, that we use the funds to fund the Heritage School of Music, to fund the grants program. We also have what's called the Congo Square Lecture Series, which is a series of formal presentations of different types.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: It's not just limited to music. It might be a historical lecture or an author or it's some type of interesting topic that would be of general interest to the community. Then we also sponsor what's called the Neighborhood Music Festivals. In fact, we have one coming up the last Sunday the month. It's going to be the Carrollton Festival. It runs, it's going to be in uptown New Orleans in the Carrollton section, and it'll be from eleven to six, and it'll feature a day of free music in that particular part. We have other parts of the city where we have the Uptown Street Festival, and we have the Treme Street Festival, and we have the Downtown Street Festival. These are other ways that the foundation puts the money that we get from the festival back into the community.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: I'm also on the board of the New Orleans, the Louisiana Jazz Federation. Our biggest project is Jazz Awareness Month. That occurs here every October. During that particular month, we have thirty-one days of musical events to try and expose the idiom to a broader group of people than would normally have exposure to. Our programs include concerts in halls. We have a school program where we have concerts in the schools to help to expose the kids. Then we have performances. We usually get several major national artists to come in and perform. The rest of the year, we offer a referral and informational service. When I say referral and informational service, we are a resource for general musical, current and past knowledge. We have a library of musical periodicals and the like. We offer referrals for people looking for bands and groups and stuff like that. We act as a social service informational agency for musicians. If a musician is down and out and he needs to be referred to somewhere where he can get medical care, food stamps, or other social service needs, we make referrals for that.

Kate Ellis: How long has that been available?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Ever since the foundation started.

Kate Ellis: Which was what year?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: We are in our tenth year. Also we have a jazz calendar, it's a telephone service where you can call 5-2-2-J-A-M-S, that's 5-2-2-5-2-6-7, and have a current updated listing of jazz performances around the city. Basically that's what the Louisiana Jazz Federation does.

Kate Ellis: All right. Let me get some, I want to [indistinct 00:26:32].

Michael Joseph Gourrier: All right. Go ahead.

Kate Ellis: This just came up a few minutes ago. As far as the work that you're doing, and again, the devotion you have to documenting the history of jazz music and spreading the word, do you feel that that work is helping to teach African Americans as well as Whites about their history?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Oh, most definitely. In my radio programs, I try and, not to a point where it becomes boring or dull, because I have a motto, my motto is "more platter and less chatter." But when I do—

Kate Ellis: More platter, less chatter?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: More platter, less chatter. But when I do chatter, it's informative and informational, because I'll give you information about the artists, maybe where he was born or who he had as a role model or who caused him to play the way that he played or all types of little pertinent information and the like relative to the musicians that I play on my show. It's something that, like I say, it's really ingrained in me because if for no other reason than there's a lack of people doing it. That's why I feel I want

to do it. That has been one of the motivating principles and guiding reasons why I've done this radio show for the last twelve years to afford people the opportunity to hear America's original performance art form and have the opportunity, to have a choice to listen to it as opposed to being fed nothing other than a diet of the current pulp stuff that's played on commercial radio.

Kate Ellis: All right. I know that you want to wrap this up soon, but let me just ask you something about your growing up. I know that your family, you said, you grew up with a musical appreciation, you had musicians in your family and you had exposure to music. But do you feel that around you in your community or in the general New Orleans area, was that same exposure available? I guess what I'm saying—

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Oh, most definitely. Most definitely. New Orleans is a musical city. You hear music from the time that you woke up in the morning until the time that you go to bed. Depending on where you were and what the context was, from street performers or during the day, the brass bands might parade through the street if you had a funeral. It was just constant. There was never a time when there wasn't music. Music is something that goes with everything, whether it be sorrow or whether it be joy. There's always a place for music in any of those situations. I use those as the two parameters and everything in between. Music can be tailored to accommodate any situation,

Kate Ellis: Yeah, I agree with you. I guess all I'm saying is that one of your missions is to teach about the history of this particular genre, which is an enormous genre. Again, in teaching—

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Yeah, we didn't even talk about the influence that we had, say, Kansas City or Chicago or St. Louis. As you say that it's so broad that in order to do a better job, I think that that's one of the reasons why I have limited myself to this particular region and the things that happened as the music evolved right here.

Kate Ellis: When we talk about history, what we have talked about in our project is the invisibility of African-American history. That's one of the reasons we're doing what we're doing, to document that African-American history. Although music suffuses this whole community and has all through your upbringing, do you feel that the musical history of African-Americans in this country is on some level still invisible or invisible in some way?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: It's not "in some ways." It is, period.

Kate Ellis: Okay.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: As we spoke about it off the record earlier, I think it definitely can be attributed to racism because the bottom line would be that you would have to acknowledge it as an art form that had a Black origin. To keep from doing this, other alternative forms have been invented and perpetuated to keep this from taking its place. As I mentioned, I feel that Duke Ellington was as great a composer as Mozart was in his particular genre of music, but he doesn't get the credit that is due him, nor do a lot of the other innovators and originators of the various styles and types of music were concerned.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: It's a nationwide thing because you can go from one area to the other, and the level of knowledge is no greater in one area than it is in another. Maybe a little bit, if it's specifically with a local artist. I would feel that more people in Washington, D.C., would know Duke Ellington than in Houston, Texas, because that's where he was from. As a Black musician who had a great impact on an art form, his name should be known across the country and by anybody that is dealing with music per se. Even to the point where people that are not dealing with music at least can relate that name Ellington, "Okay, yeah, he was a musician."

Kate Ellis: In this project, as I said earlier, one of the things we do is look at the way, in spite of the Jim Crow laws, enactments, everything that were around, we look at the ways that African Americans formed organizations, communities, support networks, whatever, to help one another, to support one another to create strong communities. Do you see music playing a role during the Jim Crow era in particular as far as helping to strengthen communities?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Okay, you remember back, we talked about how the benevolent associations eventually evolved into the social and pleasure clubs. It was not uncommon for, and even to this day to have museums—Museums. Musical groups that have been playing for functions for these different social and pleasure clubs for dozens of years. Like Houston's Orchestra and Tommy Ridgley and Dooky Chase used to have an orchestra. Clyde Kerr, Senior, used to have an orchestra. There used to be the Royal Dukes of Rhythm, Wardell Quezergue, who's an arranger for Allen Toussaint. He used to have a band. The reason that a lot of these bands had their organization was because there was a need. Because these social and pleasure clubs constantly have functions and desire music. As I mentioned before, music is very inherent in all activities here in New Orleans. You just can't take the music out of the city.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: So there's a need. Even nowadays with the large population that we have, there is quite a few musicians who derive good money from playing at these social and pleasure club functions. But in I'd say the last twenty, twenty-five years, there's been a decline in—Now I can't say that this is a racist thing, but it did have a big impact on the development and nurturing the music. The disco period, because disco knocked out a whole lot of live musicians, because it was cheaper to just go ahead on and buy a sound system and some records and not have to pay the musicians. The United States has never rebounded from that particular era. It affected not only Black musicians, but White musicians too. They were displaced. As a result of that particular era, there has been, it never really has rebounded to the point where there is a big demand or support for live musical performances.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: It's unfortunate because this is how, shall we say, the word is spread by people having the opportunity to come out and hear and personally experience the performances of these musicians. If there are no venues for them to perform, then the people don't have anywhere to go. It's a two-way street, because what came first, the chicken or the egg? Did they have a club that had a band and people came out, or the band was there, nobody came out, because the people didn't know that they were supposed to come out, or it was a problem with the money. So he had a band this week and then they didn't have one next week. So nobody knew when they were going to have the band. You couldn't get on an

established pattern as to when you could actually come out. I mean, there's a whole bunch of different factors.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: I can say that the 1970s was the era that really sounded the death knell of live music and clubs. We just have a few here in New Orleans, and as you travel across the country, there's not as many live music clubs as there were before that particular period. It's unfortunate because it's a big difference between listening to recorded music and live music. You can be in communion with the artists when you there and they performing their art. I do a lot of emceeing around town, and I have a little promo that I like to put in to try and get people to pay attention and tell them that the musicians are going to play according to the degree of response that they get from the audience. If you're going to sit out there and go to sleep, then the musicians are not going to be fired up, they are not going to get that energy that you're emitting and interject it into their performance and in turn give back to you a performance of a high quality or caliber.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: But if you show them that you are interested in their performance and you're enjoying their performance by your attention, lack of talk, and enthusiastic applause and response, then this will drive and spur them on to the hilt of their capability. But if you're going to be a lackluster audience, then that's the type of performance you're going to get. So let's see if we can start these fellows off on the right track and get them out. That is an actual fact. I have observed this over the years. There is a certain chemistry between the performer and the audience. If the audience is a real good audience, then the performer will perform admirably, but if the audience is a ho-hum audience, then hey, that's going to be the manner in which the performer performs. That also transcends race, that can be a Black artist or a White artist. That same chemistry is present in the performance setting regardless of what color the artist or the audience is.

Kate Ellis: I was struck by that, and what you say makes me think of a musician that I talked to who used to perform I think in the fifties. Occasionally, well, many times, it would have to be for all-White audiences, who might be hostile. Besides the appreciation for the music but beyond that, there was this basic racism there. I was like, how did you do that? And he just said, "Well, we had a job to do and we did it." Do you think that's the case for a lot of—Given what you're saying about the musicians in some sense need the audience's support in order to spur them on, to have those kinds of transcendental musical experiences. But in their case it was like, "Look, they're just sitting in front of us. We're paid to be here. We'll do what we've got to do."

Michael Joseph Gourrier: The era, the financial motivation, this might have been the only source of income that this person had. That's another thing that we didn't talk about, but I think needs to be noted, that there are very few African-American musicians here in the city that derive their sole support from playing music.

Kate Ellis: Really?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Very few.

Kate Ellis: Has that always been the case?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: For the most part. I guess you could say it reached a peak back in, I'd say just before integration.

Kate Ellis: It reached a peak as far as the most musicians—

Michael Joseph Gourrier: As the number of musicians doing a lot of work and making money. Because right now, I'd say nine, actually, it's more than that. I don't want to fool with percentages, but nine out of ten musicians that are playing here in New Orleans, they got other jobs because you would starve if you were waiting around to get a gig.

Kate Ellis: But why would that have changed? What was going on before integration [indistinct 00:42:58]?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: There were more, hey, there were more venues. See, when you had integration, you had, well, when you had segregation, you had your Black clubs and you had your White clubs. Then when they were combined, it was just a matter of business. The business couldn't support, you had more places than you had people that were going to come out and support them. So you had a loss on both sides. That cut down on the number of locations that had live music. Each one of those particular topics can be discussed and debated at length.

Kate Ellis: Which you mean?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Well, just about everything that we've talked about. You know what I mean? Because this is a very general discussion. Like I said, right now, and as far as money is concerned, it might be the root of all evil, but if you don't have any money, you can't buy any groceries. If you're a musician and you don't have a gig to play at, then where you going to get the money to buy the food for your family if you got a family? So like these fellas here, they're part of the one out of ten.

Kate Ellis: Oh, really?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Yeah. All of these fellas here, that's all they do is play music. The people across the street, that's all they do is play music. But then on the other hand, fella I ran into at Atlanta airport Sunday, Alvin Red Tyler, he's a saxophonist with Dr. John's band. Red has been playing music since World War II, since after World War II, when he came back and he went to music school on GI Bill. Red Tyler was a liquor salesman up until about four years ago. But this is how he made sure that he had money to keep his family clothed, housed, fed, and sent his kids to school and the like. Because if you waiting around for a gig and they ain't no gig, what you going to do?

Kate Ellis: You think it's been worse for Black musicians than White musicians?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Most definitely. When the musician unions merged—Now I'm not going to go into

this, somebody else will have to talk about that.

Kate Ellis: Okay, yeah.

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Since the merger, Black musicians have gotten the short end of the stick. Because the White power structure is such that they're going to cater more to White musicians than Black musicians. Just like all of the, say, all the convention work, all the tourist work—

Kate Ellis: It's goes to White?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Yeah.

Kate Ellis: You don't want to talk about the union stuff?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Nah, uh-uh. Because I really good warm around the—

Kate Ellis: Really? That makes you hot?

Michael Joseph Gourrier: Well, it's inequitable and the system stinks, and it should be abolished and let people either by word of mouth or have some other method of getting employment. Because it's not equitable at all. I mean, they do—