I See My Light Shining: Oral Histories of Our Elders

Oral History Interview with

John Love

Columbia Center for Oral History Research

Columbia University

2023

PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with John Love conducted by April Reign on October 20, 2023. This interview is part of the I See My Light Shining: Oral Histories of Our Elders project.

The reader is asked to bear in mind that they are reading a verbatim transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose.

Transcriptionist: Audio Transcription Center	Session Number: 1
Narrator: John Love	Location: Midland, Texas; Los Angeles, California
Interviewer: April Reign	Date: October 20, 2023

Q: All right, here we go. If you would please, tell us your name.

Love: John B. Love III.

Q: What year were you born?

Love: 1968.

Q: And where were you born?

Love: Denver, Colorado.

Q: What city and state do you live now?

Love: I live in Pelham, Texas, it's my official residence. Although the mailing address is another city. The town that I live in is so small that we have to use another—actually the post office in our zip code, so my address actually reads Hubbard, Texas, but I live in Pelham.

Q: How big is Pelham, about how many residents? Do you have a sense?

Love: Man, maybe eighteen people.

Q: Eighteen total?

Love: Maybe. Yes, maybe a little bit more, but I definitely would say less than thirty, but around about eighteen people, yes.

Q: How many people are in Hubbard, if you know?

Love: That I don't know. I go to Hubbard very rarely. It's a small town. I can look up the population.

Q: That's okay.

Love: Hell, I got Google, girl. Go ahead though. [*Laughter*]

Q: I've never heard of Pelham—

Love: One thousand four-hundred and—wait a minute. About 1400 people in Pelham—in Hubbard. Excuse me, sorry.

Q: Less than thirty people in Pelham and around 1400 in Hubbard last time anybody counted.

Love: Correct. The Pelham population peaked in 1926 at about 350 people, but now it's obviously way less.

Q: All right. We will get to how you—

Love: You're saying you never heard of Pelham.

Q: No, so Pelham and Hubbard, what is the closest big city that I may have heard of?

Love: The county seat is Corsicana. It's also near Hillsborough. Hillsborough is where I-35 West and I-35 East split, one going to Dallas, one going to Fort Worth. Those are the nearest I think recognizable cities.

Q: You were born in Denver, Colorado.

Love: Yes.

Q: When did you come to Texas for the very first time?

Love: When I was five years old my mother is from Texas, obviously, born in Pelham, and you eventually came out to Midland with her mother, my grandmother, who followed my grandmother's sister. My grandmother's sister left Pelham and came out to Midland, Texas to

work in the kitchens and work as a domestic servant when Spindletop jumped off and the oil boom started on Santa Rita Number One, which was the, I think, first drilling site here in Midland, Texas. A lot of African Americans from East Texas came out west to be the yard man and domestic servants of wealthy white people. My mom came out—my aunt came first and then she brought her sisters and her little brother, eventually, and then even my great-grandfather eventually came out here.

My mom went to Carver High School, an all-Black high school, and graduated, I believe in 1962 as valedictorian. Then she ended up in Denver. I'm not sure what made her go to Denver, but she was married, she married another man, and then they got a divorce, and she met my father. Her and my father got married and I was born in 1968. Then my dad, working for the government, moved up in the different G-levels, as they're called, and we moved around a lot as a child. I went from Denver at five to Midland for two years, went to first and second and grade in Midland. Then we moved to San Angelo for three months during the summer, actually. We moved there because my dad was going to take a job in San Angelo. But then he got another job in the Washington D.C. area, so we moved to Fairfax, Virginia. I went to third and fourth grade elementary in Fairfax, Virginia. Then we moved back to San Angelo, Texas, and I went to fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth grade in San Angelo, Texas. I was getting ready to start—or actually I had started my sophomore year at San Angelo Central High School when my mom and dad actually got a divorce and my mom came back to Midland. I went to Midland High School, graduated from Midland High. Then I attended the University of Texas where I met the wonderful April, now Reign, Cheatham [*phonetic*].

Q: Thank you for that. When your mom and father met, was your mom already back in Midland, or did they meet in Denver?

Love: No. They met in Denver. Actually they were both really big in the union, the postal union, and they were instrumental in the Postal Letter Carriers Union, which revamped and caused the Post Office to be renamed. The post office is called USPS, United States Postal Service. It used to be called the Post Office. People still call it the Post Office but its name changed and it changed because of the protests and the unions that required the Post Office to reorganize. I don't know the full details of that, but I do know that it happened all over the nation, New York, Denver, as far as the union activity. My mom and dad met there. I've got a picture of them from a newspaper, I can probably find it real quick, of them. It's a really, really good handsome picture of them both. Let me see if I can find that right quick while we're talking, but please continue.

Q: They were very active in Denver with the union, why did they decide to come back to Texas?

Love: My dad moved up in government levels, so he went wherever the job was. There was a job coming back to Texas—now, I don't know for sure because it's interesting that they came back to the place where my mom's family was, so I don't know if it was he sought a job specifically at the Midland Post Office or it just so happened that he got transferred there. Probably the former is the situation, but I can't verify that.

Q: You mentioned that your mother was born in Pelham, is that correct?

Love: Yes.

Q: What about—do you know about whether her parents, either of her parents, were born in Texas?

Love: Yes, both of her parents were born in Pelham also.

Q: There's a long family history in Pelham. Can you go back further than that? Your great grandparents?

Love: I think so. I don't have that information here, I would have to go to the Pelham Museum and talk to the previous curator of the museum, Elaine Robinson, and get that information, but I think that I can, yes. My ancestors were part of those who were down in Galveston to hear General Granger's Order No. Three on June 19, 1865, the original Juneteenth. After their hearing, they marched northward and settled the community Pelham, one of the last Black enclaves.

Q: Do you know if your ancestors traveled the Emancipation Trail or might that have been different, a different direction?

Love: That I don't know. I am not sure of that. I could probably find out, but I'm not sure.

Q: That's fine. It's fine. Was Pelham in a freed man's town at some point?

Love: It was. It was established as a freed man's town after slavery, yes. There's a couple of them that were real close by. I believe there's one in Waxahachie as well. I think there's another one around the corner. I'm not going to say any of that tongue in cheek, maybe about ten, fifteen miles away, but that name escapes me. I've been trying to find out as much history about the area as I possibly can, but I can't confirm that, that third location. But I do know there was one in Waxahachie.

Q: Okay and so it's your understanding that your ancestors were part of the original settlers of Pelham, a freed man's town, back in the late 1800s, maybe early 1900s?

Love: I believe it was 1868 or 1866. Hold on, I got this pulled up, let's see. Yes, 1866. It used to be called Forks of the Creek. The town was settled by Black families after 1866, Wesley United Methodist Church housed the first school, it was organized in 1878, and it was granted a post office in 1898 when the town was renamed Pelham by the postmaster, Postmaster Louis Richie's wife, for her home in Alabama. So Pelham, Texas was named after Pelham, Alabama.

Q: Interesting. Okay. Are Pelham and Midland close to each other?

Love: Six hours away.

Q: Not really. After Denver, when you were five, you and your parents moved to Midland. Your dad had a job there. You weren't there very long before you moved to San Angelo.

Love: Correct.

Q: Did you start school in San Angelo, first grade?

Love: Went to first grade in Midland, first and second grade in Midland. Third and fourth grade in Fairfax, Virginia. Fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth in San Angelo.

Q: What grades did you do in San Angelo? Isn't San Angelo in between Midland and Fairfax?

Love: Yes, but it was a summer. We left Midland, moved to San Angelo, and we were there for the summer. I was getting ready to start school but then my dad got an even better job and we moved to Virginia, Fairfax, Virginia. I went to third and fourth, then came back to San Angelo.

Q: For fifth through ninth, got it. You weren't in San Angelo the first time very long at all, just a couple of months maybe.

Love: Three months, just the summer.

Q: Do you have any siblings?

Love: I do. I have two, technically they're half-brothers, but they're my brothers-brothers. They're both older than I am. One we have the same mom, the other we have the same dad.

Q: Did either of your brothers live with you when you were growing up?

Love: Yeah. As a matter of fact I had another brother, a third brother, who when we came back to San Angelo from Fairfax, Virginia, we—we were living in San Angelo and I remember my mom and dad had been gone all day long. It was me and two of my brothers, my oldest brother was gone, David. The police kept coming by asking if my mom and dad were there and we were like, "No, sir." They were like, "All right, then we'll come back." I think they came by twice and my mom and dad weren't there. Then mom and dad came home, we let them know that the police had come by. When they came back by again, we were in the other room and you just hear my mom wailing, just wailing. It turns out that my older brother David had drowned in Lake Nasworthy. He went with some friends, I was young, I didn't really know what was happening. I was nine at the time. He was sixteen when he drowned.

He had gone off with some friends and my mom had always warned us about doing stuff, and going out and doing stuff with people who were not as the same complexion as we were. I don't know if that has anything to do with it, but it was shocking that my older brother drowned in Lake Nasworthy in San Angelo, Texas. He's buried in San Angelo right now.

Q: I'm very sorry for the loss of both you and your family. You said you were nine, but you remember that very vividly. You mentioned, sort of, the demographics of the neighborhood. When you went to first and second grade in Midland, was it a predominantly Black school or all-Black school or mixed school?

Love: Midland desegregated schools in 1968. Brown v. The Board of Education was I think 1956, I think? I'm not sure. But desegregation didn't happen, like right after that. As a matter of fact, Midland is notorious for fighting back against desegregation. As a matter of fact, there's J. Evetts Haley, a prominent Midlander, ran for governor against LBJ [Lyndon Baines Johnson], and his whole platform was to get rid of desegregation. I forgot what your question was. [*Laughs*]

Q: Tell me about the makeup of your elementary school.

Love: It was Latino, Black, white. Ben Milam Elementary was in a predominantly Black and Latino neighborhood at the time. Those neighborhoods were previously all-white neighborhoods as minorities were confined to south of the railroad tracks, which is actually where I'm at right now. I am literally sitting in my grandmother's—my grandmother had two houses, the one next door which she owned and lived in, which my step-grandfather built, and they also built this one next door which was my grandmother's rent house for a long time. My mom turned it into her office years ago and of course it's my office now. Blacks and Hispanics were south of the railroad tracks. North of the railroad tracks, like most cities, was white. Then as African Americans and as Latinos moved northward, then you had white flight, and the city kept growing to the north and to the west.

Q: You had the tragedy in San Angelo when you were nine and then you moved and started in Fairfax for third and fourth grade, then you moved back to San Angelo for fifth through ninth

grade. Again that was because your father was moving up the ranks of the GS ladder and got a better position than Fairfax, and came on back to Texas.

Love: Right, but just for clarity, the drowning happened when we came back to San Angelo. Not the first time we lived in San Angelo, when we came back to San Angelo. I was in Crockett Elementary. I don't know if it was in fifth or sixth grade. I do remember being nine. That was the first time—Crockett Elementary, the very first time I was called a nigger. [*Laughs*] I remember it distinctly.

Q: Please tell me that story.

Love: Going to school, I had always been a smart kid, an intelligent child, and so I remember his name, his name was Sean, he had blonde hair, it was kind of all 1970s, 1980-ish, big puffy hair. I don't know what the instance was in which he called me a nigger, but he called me it, and then I just remember me having his head, and literally just pounding it into the ground, and they had to pull me off of him. I don't remember what punishment I might have received from the school. I didn't receive any from my parents. But I was not called a nigger again at Crockett Elementary. So it had to be fifth grade, yeah. It had to be the first year I was there, fifth grade. The next year a friend of mine Darren Maldin [*phonetic*] fell off the monkey bars, broke his wrists, and I went to help him to go to the school office, so yeah, it would have been fifth year, fifth grade.

Q: Please continue the story about Darren breaking his wrists and you helping him.

Love: It was a red-headed guy. I got along, I think, with everybody, as well as you can think you can get along with white kids when you're nine years old. He was a friend and he was smaller than me, skinny. He was up on the monkey bars and something happened and he slipped off or fell off, and broke his arm. It was the first time I'd seen a broken bone and it was quite horrific. It was the type of broken bone where you could literally see one part over here and the other part over here. He was hollering and screaming in panic, and everybody else was just kind of in shock. I just went and tried to escort him to where he needed to go. But that's basically it. Since then everything I've been doing has been geared towards helping people.

Q: What are the sounds that you remember in your childhood home?

Love: What are the what?

Q: What are the sounds you remember in your childhood homes? I realize you've had a few.

Love: The sounds? Music, just constant music. We would have to get up on Saturday mornings and clean house. My dad was a music lover and so we would play records, until satellite radio came out, but we would play records and listen to music all day long. Randy Crawford, the Gap Band, which is a particular favorite of my dad's, him being from Tulsa, and other artists during that time period. We listened to a lot of music and I think that's why—my girlfriend says, "You know everything, every song that comes on." We listen to a lot of music, I've always loved music. Music has been—I guess how I would put it is that being young and Black and my dad having a decent middle class government job, we did not have any inclination of if we were poor

or if we were rich. We were comfortable. We had what we had and if we needed something mom and dad would figure out a way to get it. I think the music helped to insulate us.

We learned from the music whatever was happening with a particular song or whatever was going on at the time period was usually expressed in music and mom and dad would comment on it. Fast forward to years later, maybe 2013, 2014, 2015, maybe earlier than that, I know probably after 2010, I was visiting with my mom, and I have, like I said, been a lover of music, so I would not only listen to what was going on at the time of the day, but I would go back and listen to other artists. Now before I had this conversation with her I had been listening to Gil Scott-Heron I think at the time I just was listening to it because hey, I'm listening to Gil Scott right now. I was having a conversation with my mom, I'm not exactly sure what we were talking about, but we got on the subject of music, and we started listening to Gil Scott. What was she listening—[*singing*] It wasn't that one. I think it was *Pieces of a Man*, [*singing*] did you hear what they said, they said they shot him in his head. I think we were listening to that and that's the next time I distinctly remember my mom just bawling. She listened to that song and it just brought back everything, it brought back the 1950s, the 1960s, and she just started bawling. It affected me deeply because I had never seen anything make my mama cry like that. Because I didn't even see—yeah, I did, when my brother died, she wailed, and we went in the room to see what was going on, so I did see her cry then. I was young then. But this I distinctly remember. I experienced the 1960s, I was born in 1968, I experienced the 1960s as an adult through my mother's pain. What you hear and what you read in textbooks is completely different when you're sitting across from a woman who actually went through it, and you can see it just coming all out,

and welling up in her expression and her face. It was quite powerful. To the question that you had asked, what do I remember, I remember music.

And the reason why is because we were not allowed to watch TV during the weeknights while we were growing up and in school. Of course when you're a child, I don't want to say—we could watch Monday Night Football, we could watch something if it was a special like the Oscars or something that was a special we could do that. Other than that, no, we could not watch TV. I thanked my mom for that years after the fact because it cultivated my love of music and more specifically reading.

Q: I'd like to go back to your mother having this transformative moment sometime after 2010 listening to a Gil Scott-Heron song. As she both opened up and broke down, and I'm sure you're asking her what's wrong, what's going on, what are you remembering, what did she say to you?

Love: She talked about—I won't give specifics because I really can't remember. I mean in something that traumatic you remember the feeling, you don't necessarily remember the words. But what she really spoke about was just the injustices, the hatred, the being treated like a second-class citizen, and it was double for her. My mom and dad were together, my brother died, and my two other brothers left the house, and then it was just my mom and my dad and I, and then they got a divorce, so it was my mom and I. From tenth grade into adulthood, my mom basically raised me, cared for me, took care of me. She really, really conveyed what it was like to be Black in the 1960s, to be a person but not yet a person, not treated like one, not given the same dignities and opportunities that others had.

My mom was valedictorian of Carver Junior/Senior High School, to her dying day she was pissed off—my mom passed away in 2019. She was pissed off at Midland County Library. My mama was a voracious reader and she wanted to go to the library and check out books, and the county library would not let her because she was Black. She could not check out books. Literally the woman that my grandmother worked for, Helen Greathouse, which incidentally there's a school named after Greathouse here in Midland, there's a whole bunch of crap that the Greathouses did here in Midland. Helen Greathouse would go and check out books for my mama. But my mama was pissed off at Midland County till her dying day. What was interesting is I learned a lot from my mom about business, about community, about white folks, about how business was done, because like she said, she learned in the kitchens about all this in white folk's kitchen. My mom would tell me all the time that they would plan something before it went to City Council, and then it would be approved at City Council, and she would be at the kitchen, my grandmother would be watching my mom, and as a little girl she's sitting there listening to these white folks plot about what they're going to do and what they're not going to do. She learned a lot just by listening to their conversations. Of course the audacity and arrogance of them, they didn't think of revealing their secrets in front of a little Black girl would do anything. Of course it didn't, except it taught that little Black girl how they really are acting and treat—what they do and how they treat people.

Q: Your mom was valedictorian of her high school class. After she graduated from high school, what did she do?

Love: She went to the University of Texas for a while, which I think she only went for a semester before she came back home. It was way, way, way too racist for her. I think she went to TSU for a while, she came back home. Then what happened after that I'm not sure, but then she went up, I believe, to Denver, and started working for the post office. Yeah, my mom went to the University of Texas. That's how I grew up loving the University of Texas because as a child, even though the University of Texas treated her horribly, she still was a Longhorn fan. I say that to people all the time, I like my racism burnt orange.

Q: [*Laughs*] Do you feel that you perhaps fulfilled your mom's legacy by going to UT?

Love: Yes and no. I went to UT but, you know, I didn't graduate from UT. I graduated from the University of Texas Permian Basin. She was proud of me, she was proud of me going back to school and finishing. I don't know if I made her proud as far as that is concerned. I still to this day am always—like right now I heard that they have a year-long MBA program at the McCombs School I'm interested in. I've always wanted to get a JD, I don't want to be a lawyer but being a business owner, being involved in politics, I wanted the knowledge, so I've considered going to law school if I'm fortunate enough to get into UT Law. I don't think that would be a problem, I graduated summa cum laude from UTPB, and I don't think I'll have a problem with the LSAT if I were to study and take it. It's just a matter of if that's something that I'm going to do. I've got my hands full with a lot of stuff and a lot of projects, so maybe sometime I'll settle down and actually do that.

Q: I'm going to circle back to that in a little bit. Other than your parents initially and then your mom from about tenth grade forward, were there other family members that you credit for helping to raise you that were nearby?

Love: No, just more my dad. I didn't see a lot of my dad after they divorced when I was in tenth grade until I started going to college. In sophomore, junior, and senior, I didn't see a lot of him. Of course he did raise me all the way up until that grade, tenth grade. As far as my mom and my—she came back because she had a family nucleus here, so what used to be here in Midland was my grandmother and her three sister, Eula Fae [*phonetic*], Catha Lee [*phonetic*], and Mosel [*phonetic*], and then their little brother John Pace Jr., and then eventually they brought their father, John Pace Sr., my great grandfather. They were all here, but I wouldn't say that they helped raise me. I would visit and do all that stuff, but mom was very particular. She did not like—I guess maybe I shouldn't say didn't like. She didn't want her children to be raised by them like she was raised for whatever reason that might be. She always told me she had a lot of baggage that she had to get through with respect to church, with respect to being a woman. My mom has always had an entrepreneurial spirit and her family had treated her as an outcast to a certain extent because she was trying to be an entrepreneur. They thought that she needed to be working in houses, and kitchens, and shit like that, because that's what they did, so they were very discouraging to her about that. None of them ever did any business with her. I take that back, they didn't do business with her, but when they needed something of course they would ask her. Whether it's figure this out, or take this down to the court, or whatever the case may be. No, it was her through those years. It was mama and dad up until ninth and then after that it was her.

Q: When you decided to go off to college, you mentioned your mother had gone to UT, did you consider other schools or was UT it for you? UT Austin.

Love: I applied to two schools. Actually my PSAT I put on two schools, University of Texas Austin and Prairie View A&M. I was going to Prairie View A&M because they were giving me a full ride and I was getting ready to go there until I found out about TAHA [*phonetic*]. I'm still mad at my high school counselors to this day because his dumb ass did not let any of us know—he was a Hispanic gentleman and didn't inform me about TAHA or any of that stuff. I was like—I don't even know how I found out about it. I think by my PSAT I was granted admission, or either my SAT, I was granted admission to UT, so I got in both, was going to PV, and then I got a letter about TAHA, and so I was like oh snap, so I went to the University of Texas.

Q: Can you explain what TAHA is?

Love: Oh man, I can't remember the acronym, you'll have to look that up, but TAHA was a scholarship for minorities to attend the University of Texas. Now I think it's gone because they don't—the Texas legislature has gotten rid of any authority for universities to try to have diversity, but TAHA was really, really big. I think most of the people who I knew who were Black at the University of Texas were on TAHA. It was TAHA and I think TAA and TAHA was the big one, TAA was the small one. Sorry.

Q: No, that's fine. Was TAHA a full ride like you had gotten at PV, at Prairie View?

Love: It was enough for a full ride, yes. I think it was $4000 a semester which back in 1986, that worked.

Q: Somehow you found out about the TAHA, unfortunately not through your counselor.

Love: And I got a scholarship from the Fasken Foundation. Those two together were enough. The Fasken Foundation, the Faskens are an oil company here in Midland, and so they gave a Fasken Foundation scholarship. I think they were $2000 a semester, so I was living in high cotton as the old folks say.

Q: [*Laughs*] As I recall, when I began UT at least in 1987, it was about $18 a credit hour. I remember distinctly it was about $530, tuition was about $530, so if you're getting $2000 here and $4000 there, in fact you were, you had a little surplus. [*Laughs*]

Love: Yes. Yes.

Q: Somehow you found out about the TAHA and decided to go to the University of Texas instead of Prairie View. Did you give any thought to the fact that Prairie View was a historically Black college and the potential experience you might have there as opposed to UT, which obviously is not?

Love: At that time, no, I thought it would be interesting going to an all-Black school as I had never been to an all-Black school. All my schooling had been desegregated schools. I thought

that would be interesting and more specifically the Benjamin Banneker Program was interesting to me, and before then, at that time, and afterwards I've always been a huge admirer and fan of Benjamin Banneker. I was interested and compelled to do that until of course I realized I could go to UT also.

Q: What was the Benjamin Banneker Program at Prairie View?

Love: I think it was science, or engineering, or math, something like that, and I think that was the program that I was going to, as I was planning on going to Prairie View that I was interested in, and was going to participate in.

Q: When you got to UT Austin, did you also major in something science-related.

Love: No, I actually went business. I enrolled in the business school. It wasn't called McCombs at that time. Then I eventually left the business school and went to liberal arts economics because economics was in the liberal arts department, not in the business school. Really I was quite disillusioned by college, which was one of the reasons why I left school among several. When I graduated from Midland High School I think I graduated thirty-four in my class, number thirty-four. I was in honors everything. Interesting, remind me to come back to that. When we left San Angelo and the first six weeks we went to—came to Midland, and so my mom did two things that were significant. One, she lied about where we lived because she did not want me going to Robert E Lee High School. I thank her for that because I don't know if I would have been able to sit there with the rebel flag and listen to the [*singing*] wish I was in Dixie, and all of that stuff. I

don’t think that I could have done it. I went to Midland High School. I always say this, I like my racism purple and gold as opposed to maroon and white. [*Laughs*] I went to Midland High School, so that was the one thing.

The second thing my mom did is she was smart enough to know about tracking. So she circumvented it by when I enrolled in school, when she enrolled me in school, she put me in honors everything. Honors everything. They called it advanced placement now or advanced something now, but it was called honors back then, so I was in all honors classes. Being new, transferring in, I was again placed in classes with all white people. There were Black people and Hispanics who were going to Midland High, but I was in all white classes. It was cool. I didn't have a problem with it. Did the work, graduated thirty-fourth, did my thing. But what were we talking about before then when I digressed?

Q: No, not at all. Let's stay there for a second. That you recall you were the only Black person in your honor's classes in Midland?

Love: Definitely.

Q: All through school?

Love: Yeah.

Q: What was that like? You were called nigger the first time when you were in elementary school, did you have any issues with either the fellow students or with your teachers in high school?

Love: Not anything that was as blatant as that, no. Did I have any prejudices? I would imagine yes, I did. I remember I used to have an economics teacher and he thought he was the coolest person on the planet. He would always talk about I'm Black, and Black, and Black, Black, and I'm like why is this mother fucker continuing to say this, what is going on. I think it was just his way of not knowing how to deal with an intelligent Black kid and so like a lot of white people, they try and find common ground, and the only thing that they can find that's common ground is to acknowledge that I'm Black. I remember that.

I hung out with kids from my class. I didn't really—hold on. [*Pause*] Wait a minute. Sorry. My monitor shuts off after four hours and it just shut off.

Q: You were saying that you hung out with kids from your class.

Love: So mostly white kids. All through growing up, going through desegregated schools, and my parents wanting me to be in the best schools possible, moving the neighborhoods so I could be in the—go to the best schools, I'd always gone to school with white kids. Getting to Midland High, it was the same because, again, I was in all classes with white kids. It was the same, it was like that at the University of Texas at Austin because I didn't know anybody, so I had a friend of mine who was in my classes that I hung out with in high school, and he was going to UT, and he

was going to stay at Dobie Dormitory, which was a predominant dormitory that's really right next to the Forty Acres. I don't know if it's technically on the Forty Acres, but I was there, and so for the first semester I was on the twenty-fifth floor of Dobie. It was really interesting because there were other Black kids who were staying in Dobie, and they were friendly to me, and I was friendly to them. I had always—I had never had a phobia of talking to Black people, but I did not know how, as crazy as this sounds, how to act around Black people because I had never really been in social situations like that.

My first six weeks I had an epiphany at that time, that white folks did not really give a damn about me, as much as they were my friend. My eyes really opened at that time that this was really fake, and this was really B.S., and I cannot do this. I started hanging out with the Black kids in my second semester and the people who I had come to UT with from Midland High, still friendly with them, but I just moved away from them. Hanging out with the Black kids, it was awesome, it was really awesome. I had a good time, I felt as an equal, and I didn't know that I didn't feel as an equal when I was hanging out with the white kids. I didn't know that that's what I was feeling. I actually had to hang out with Black kids to be like damn, this is different. [*Laughs*] That second semester, what is that? I went to school, I graduated 1986, fall of 1986 I enrolled at UT, that first semester, that second semester I came back would have been spring of 1987, so spring of 1987 I had a great, great time.

During that time period I would go to Soul Night, and go to various functions on the Yard, and maybe off the Yard, and that's when I saw the various Greek fraternities. Didn't even know anything about them, that they even existed. But I saw them and I saw all of them, the Kappas

who I was like why in the hell would you want to call yourself a pretty boy. I could never understand that. I don't get that to this day, but hey, I'm not trying to take a shot at Kappa Alpha Psi, but as a seventeen year old, eighteen year old, I didn't get that. I saw the Alpha's, I was like okay, these dudes seem all right, okay. They seemed a little timid at the time. Then there were the Ques and I was like, man, look at these Negros here. These Negros is hard. What really cemented it for me was they were friendly as hell. Michael Anderson, Clarence Hill, these dudes were friendly, man, and I was like wow, this is cool. I was considering, and I thought about it, and I thought okay, what is it that I would want to do, and I was like I want to become a member of Omega Psi Phi.

What was interesting was a lot of people around me wanted to be Ques. Man, I'm going to be a Que. We used to stay up and when we were by ourselves, oh yeah, we're the Que —I'm going to be a Que, I'm going to be a Que. But what was interesting is all of them were hiding. Meaning they said they wanted to be Ques, but they were like well, we don't want nobody to know. I didn't care, I wanted them to know, so I hung out with Anderson and Hill, and I let them know I wanted to be a Que. Why am I going to try and keep it a secret from them? Interestingly, and I don't know how this happened, but I attended so many smokers. Smokers is the interest meeting for Omega Psi Phi, I attended so many smokers, and I was literally on two or three—three lines. First smoker I went, we were getting ready to start, they had the little underground line scenario, and that did not go anywhere. Then we had another smoker and it was me and Louis Hernandez, I remember distinctly. Man, he was a cool dude. Real cool dude. Louis Hernandez, he was a real big thick guy, real, real good looking Hispanic male, and he dated Black girls. He wanted to be a Que. It was me and him, we were getting ready to pledge. They ended that because they thought

that at the time it would be too much for a Hispanic to become a member of Omega Psi Phi at the University of Texas.

Now there had been Hispanics who had joined before, not Eta Theta Chapter, but Omega Psi Phi, because I know some to this day, Hispanics who pledged in the 1970s and the 1980s, but at that time what was told to me is they thought it would be too much because everybody would come out of the woodwork to see the Hispanic pledgee. That line got kaputz. I don't know when all this took place. I think the first line was in spring or it might have been—I think it was spring because Eta Theta Chapter had a summer 1987 line, so I went home after my first year of school, and then had a line summer 1987, my chapter brothers Quinis [*phonetic*], and Derek, and Major, they had that line. When we came back from school in August, they were actually still on line, and they were coming through Soul Night hard. I was like god dang, these Negros is hard. The other two smokers were in fall of—that's summer 1987, yeah, summer 1987, so then those other lines were not in the spring, not in the summer, but in fall 1987 they had a smoker which didn't work out, then they had one in spring 1988, which didn't work out, and then the third line was fall 1988, and it was four of us, three of us. Fred Stromile [*phonetic*], Bubba Jacks, Tim Williams.

Let me put a little pause right there. In my thought process I pledged Omega Psi Phi because I wanted to see if I could make it. I had heard about how hard it is, how tough it is, and even as a young child I wasn't no punk. I don't mean that as a pejorative for LGBTQ, I mean I wasn't scared, I didn't have fear, and I still don't to this day. I'm like, I want to see if I can do it, I can make it.

Fall of 1987, spring of 1988, fall of 1988, third time, we started, and I remember it that very first day we were exercising, let me say that, because Omega Psi Phi is a non-hazing fraternal organization. We were exercising and at that moment I'm like, man, I'm already in this mud because there is no way I'm quitting after this. No way! We did that for three weeks, and came back, and sent off our applications, and the only one who came back approved was me, I was the only one who had the proper grades. Clarence Hill said, "Hey man, you're the only one who has the proper grades, do you want to continue?" I said, "Hell yes!" Because already ,this is my third one, I'm like yes. I went another six weeks. I'll have to backdate it. Let me think. It was a Friday I believe December 18 when I was read into Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. I had taken all of my finals except one and so nine weeks before that, November, December, October, so I guess maybe the end of September maybe is when we started. I went nine weeks with the three others and then the six by myself, and became a member of Omega Psi Phi, one of the best decisions I've ever made in my entire life. The other was becoming a Freemason.

Yes, Omega Psi Phi taught me so much. It's really interesting because when I crossed over in fall 1988 I was just—again, you've got to understand, it was December, people were going home, finals were almost over, I had one more final, and so I took that final—I was read in, took that—I literally—I fell asleep during my step show, my dog show. I was so damn tired I was stepping in between Jester [*phonetic*] East and Jester West and I got a point, and I was just so damn tired, and I hit the stop and paused for the next one, surrounded by a bunch of people. I was out. Then I woke back up and I continued to do what I was doing. They were, "Oh, look at him! Oh, poor lamb, look at him!" Let me tell you, I reaped those benefits, you can believe that.

It was December, I went home for the Christmas holidays, and one of the local milliners had said, "You pledging? You better pledge with Omega Psi Phi. You better pledge Omega Psi Phi." I said, "Yes, sir." Because that was his chapter, he went to the University of Texas at Austin, as a matter of fact he founded our chapter, Henry Hammins [*phonetic*]. He lived here in Midland at the time. He said, "You better pledge my chapter if you pledge anything." I said, "Yes, sir." The local Omega chapter here always had a New Year's Eve party. When I came back home I went to it with my letters on and I was so hyped, and I saw him, and he hugged me, and I hugged him, it was great. When I came back the next semester, everybody was gone. My dean had gotten into trouble with the school and some authorities, so he was gone, Michael Anderson graduated, Clarence Hill graduated, the only people—Derek had literally disappeared. I don't even know where he is today. The only Ques who are on the Yard were Scott Patterson, who was a brother from another chapter, he was from Paul Quinn, Zeta Eta, and Quinis [*phonetic*] Hampton [*phonetic*], who pledged summer 1987, he was on that hard line, he went and we graduated 1986. He went to Lee High School, I went to Midland High School, but he was running track so he was gone all the time. Then it was me.

We didn't have any money in the account, we didn't have nothing going on. We had a tradition of doing a Greek show in the spring for Texas Relays, and the Kappas had the block party the night before, so I didn't know what the hell was going on. I just knew that I was not going to disappoint my big brothers. Well, they weren't big brothers anymore. But I was not going to disappoint them and I had to put on this Greek show. Never done it, didn't know how, didn't have any money. I learned a lot about promotion, about sales, about debt, financing. I literally wrote

checks on a Friday hoping to make money on the weekend to put the money in the accounts [*laughs*] so the checks would clear from the vendors. But it was the livest Greek show ever, it was awesome. I pulled it off. Again, Scott helped me. Quinis was gone, but we pulled that thing off.

What was interesting is—when did I threaten to—no, that was another time. The Kappas, I guess they underestimated me. What they did was they had the outside of Gregory Gymnasium where the block party and we reserved the inside the next day. Well they booked both days. I literally had to threaten the members of Kappa Alpha Psi and I told them that you're going to give up the gym because we reserved it, it was our event. They were going to try and do a little block party thinking that the Ques were off the Yard. I said, you're going to give up the gym and if you don't, I'm going to fight each and every one of you every day, every time I see you on the Forty Acres. Then them niggas gave up the thing. I went in there and I reserved it, did my debt financing, and I got the people to come, and we put on a live Greek show. The after party was great. Then I followed it up the next year with the X Clan Greek show where I did the Greek show, the university bought X Clan, and I was in charge of picking X Clan up. I went to pick up Brother J and Lumumba, and I had Lumumba, Professor X, sitting in the passenger seat, I had Brother J sitting diagonally behind me, and I had this other Negro sitting right by me just in case something jumped off.

We went around and I took them around. I remember distinctly I had to stop and get Newports because them Negros smoked Newports like crazy. Took them to the University of Texas, they did the concert at the University of Texas that UT paid thousands, and thousands, and thousands

of dollars for, and the next night was the Greek show. The Greek show, something had happened, I can't remember, and we couldn't do it at UT for some reason, so we did it at HT. I reached out to the bruhs at HT, we did the Greek show there, and I was like, "Hey, man, we got a Greek show, you all want to go?" And everybody was like, "Yeah! Let's go!" You know, trying to get some weed and trying to do all this stuff. We went, smoked weed with them, it was cool. We went to the Greek show, had the Greek show, and then those Negros performed a second concert for free, and it was awesome. [*Laughs*] It was awesome. Yes, University of Texas.

Q: [*Laughs*] I hate to take you back because you're in such a wonderful place right here. You were talking about high school and your mother made sure that you didn't attend Robert E Lee and she also made sure that you were not subject to tracking. Can you explain what tracking is?

Love: Tracking is an unofficial term for schools that they place Black kids in lower inferior schools, classes, and they don't—let me put it to you this way. I was just reading—my father wrote something. I haven't even told you my father's side of the history, which is incredible as well. I was reading up on it and he wrote something I just read about schools and what he's talking about elevated into what is now called tracking. Let me find what he—one second. I don't know if I can find it. Basically what it was is—it's in mama's house. It was that the teachers only—and my dad he's writing in the 1940s. My dad was born in 1936 in Tulsa, right, fifteen years after Black Wall Street Massacre, which is an interesting story. He was born in Tulsa. He went to school at an elementary school and he talks about how the teachers would only help Black kids if they saw that they were gifted. Regular Black kids, they didn't give a damn about, would let them fail. That's what it was. The Black teachers would not let—that's exactly where it

is. Let me find it. The Black teachers would not pass Black kids. White teachers would pass them because they were like let's just get them out of here. But Black teachers wouldn't do that. No, I can't find it. If I had the time I would because I literally just read it.

That's basically what—oh here it is. He's talking about his teacher Miss Radcliff [*phonetic*] who also taught his mama. She was hell on wheels. He says, "As terrible as Miss Radcliff was, she still taught a hell of an English class even if it was for only a half period. No Black teachers in our segregated schools ever allowed students to pass onto the next grade without learning their subjects, until they were severely mentally handicapped. Not like today when these so-called liberal white teachers will only spend time with exceptionally gifted Black students if and when they recognize their outstanding abilities. They subconsciously or consciously ignored, watched, and allowed most of the rest of their other non-white students." That's what tracking basically essentially is that after desegregation they were like screw Black kids, we don't give a damn whether or not they have an education or not. Nobody will know because we'll just pass them and they still don't know anything. We'll just pass them, pass them until they get out of school. That was a part of tracking, but tracking specifically is putting Black kids in remedial math, remedial English. Most of the time it had nothing to do with their intelligence, more of the fact that they didn't get proper basic education training so when they got to this point they were behind. But that equated to oh, he's just dumb, and stupid, and lazy, so we're just going to put him over here. My mama did not let that happen to me. She specifically enrolled me and filled out honors, honors, honors, I had all honors classes. Honors Algebra, Honors English, Honors whatever you had, I had it.

Q: So I'm clear, it was the Black teachers that were engaged in tracking? [*Crosstalk*]

Love: That's correct. My dad said, I'll read it again, "No Black teachers in our segregated schools ever allowed students to pass onto the next grade without learning their subjects unless they were severely mentally handicapped, not like today when the so-called liberal white teachers will only spend time with exceptionally gifted Black students."

Q: Okay, so kids that are learning at grade level didn't get any help and assistance from white teachers, they would just pass them on even if they hadn't learned some of the units in Algebra, or in History, or whatever you. Then because they hadn't learned those things, which are foundational, right? You really can't do Algebra II if you don't know Algebra I. But if you've been passed to the next grade and said you've completed Algebra I but really haven't, then by the time you get to Algebra II you're in trouble. Now you're considered remedial. Go ahead, please.

Love: Yes. Think how racist that is. Look, we have a—I say this all the time, there's a difference between bigotry and racism, we confuse the two. You can call me a nigger all day long. I might beat your head in while I'm child, but now you can call me nigger all day long, it doesn't matter to me. Don't call me broke. That's a much more offensive word to me. I forgot where I was going with that, I just had a mind blank.

Q: You said don't call you broke, B-R-O-K-E?

Love: That's correct. I was talking about bigotry versus racism and how racism is. Listen, you can be a bigot, and not like Black folks, and call us niggers, and all that other stuff, I don't really care. I don't care what you think. What you think about me, my mama taught me, doesn't mean crap to me. I don't care what you think. That's why I was the way I was in city council or anything I do, I don't care what you all think about me. One, I'm smarter than all you all probably, know more, have read more, and I'm exceptionally prepared, so I don't care what you think, I'm going to beat you at the rules. But this is so racist because if you think about what a teacher is supposed to do, a teacher is supposed to engage a child, and connect with that child to be able to give education to that child, so that they can grow up and be productive citizens.

Here is a situation where the teachers, white teachers, don't give a damn, they don't do what they're supposed to do, their mandate, because it's a Black child. Whether they think, it's a Black child, I'm not going to deal with Negros, or they think well, it's not going to matter anyway, because he's—perfect example is in the Malcolm X movie. I identified with that when I read the book, first of all, but then also seen it in the movie when the teacher was like—Malcolm was like, "Well, I want to be a lawyer," and the teacher's like, "Well, Malcolm, you're a nigger, so you can't be a lawyer. You need to do something that you're going to be good at and I hear you're good with your hands." That's what I'm talking about and that's the—we think racism is oh, he called me a nigger, and racial crimes is well, did he say nigger, well, if he didn't say nigger it's not a racial crime. Racism is much more deeper than that. Now racism is economic. It's always been economic.

Listen, there's a page right now, I'd have to find it for you, and I can send it to you. It was on the tip of my tongue. Anyway, what it is they went back and look at lynchings in Mississippi, the very beginning, white folks did not start lynching Black people in Mississippi because they hated Black people. They started lynching Black people in Mississippi to take their land. There's an entire website devoted to this. What they did is they went and they looked at lynchings, and they went and looked at the county records, and invariably what would happen is a Negro would get lynched, and then they would scare off the family, the mother and the rest of the kids, and either the taxes weren't paid which they didn't have time to wait for an entire year for the taxes to not be paid, they would declare the property abandoned, and then the counties would sell it to their cronies, their friends, at pennies on the dollar. Lynching is about land grabbing. It always has been.

Now it got so popular that then they started lynching at the white woman or whatever. Here it is in my dad's teaching, my dad's writing. I'll read this to you too. He talks about how his—yes, here it is. His mama was born in 18—no. Now mama is what he called his grandmother because his actual mama Missy was sixteen when she had my dad, so his grandmother raised them both, and Missy was her last child. "Mama was born in 1898 and Missy was her last child. Mama was twenty-two when she gave birth to her. Missy had me when she was sixteen in 1936 and she managed to complete the tenth grade in high school. She taught me to read, count, and write way before I went to school. They both taught me to not look up directly at white folks, to look at the ground when I passed them because they would lynch me for no reason." Imagine growing up like that. That's his equivalent to my equivalent of damn, I feel like I'm an equal, I'm a person. That's that same equivalent in my mind.

Q: What are you reading from? Did your father write a memoir?

Love: My dad was going to write a book. He passed away—him and my stepmother wrote it together. They've got a chapter—well the name of the—let's see. The name of the book was going to be *Don't Let the Sun Catch You Crying* and they really worked on just the last chapter, Stories my Grandmother Told me, thirteen, and so this talks about my grandmother. So now is a good time to talk about my dad's side. Let me see if I can find it. Where she talks about it. First of all they talk about sharecropping. Here's the other thing is when my—

Q: Let me just ask you, tell me low key, you talking about Tulsa, Oklahoma right now?

Love: We're talking about Oklahoma, that is correct. They were in Oklahoma and Oklahoma was Indian territory. Here's the thing that's being revealed slowly that I've seen a lot of recent Tik Tok videos. I think Maxine Waters in 2016 made a comment about this, what I'm about to say. They passed laws forbidding Black people to be called Native Americans. My great-grandmother was Seminole. Her husband, Jim Wilson, was Creek. Jim Wilson was white as all can be, she was dark as all can be. They were on the Trail of Tears. I think I get to that later. It's been a long time since I read this. They went to Georgia and they were sharecropping. They spent a little over two years there trying to sharecrop until they soon discovered that no matter how good the crop, they still owed the white man more money than they did the year before. Everyone else they talked to was in the same boat. They fell into a new kind of slavery. They realized that they would be killed if they left without paying their bill off and they also realized that they would never be

able to pay their bill off, not the way the white man counts. They had to sneak off in the middle of the night. "We ran all the way across Georgia. I was carrying my babies in both arms and I was scared to death. We slept in the day and ran at night until we got back to Oklahoma."

Can you imagine traveling on foot from Georgia to Oklahoma—I've driven from Texas to Georgia, it's a long trip. But they ran back. Then records of their marriage in existence burned up in a courthouse fire. Jim was mixed Creek, he looked almost white. Mama was coal black with a pretty long good grade of coal black hair until she cut it short in her older age. She didn't have a clue as to where her folks came from except she was born in the country somewhere close to Wewoka. I believe that she was Black Seminole. Looking at the map where all the tribes were located, the Seminole was the small red area and the Creek nation was the large yellow area at the top and right of the Seminoles.

There's a lot of people that are now coming to the realization that we were already here as Native Americans and that the treaty that George Washington signed with the Moors was because the Moors, we were already here. Then the other thing that I've been speculating, I have no proof of this, I've just done my reading, and I think I either read this somewhere or hypothesized this, and that's about Black Wall Street. Where did Black Wall Street get its wealth? Nobody ever really talks about that because this is in Indian Territory, 1865 the war ends, at some point Black Wall Street starts flourishing. Texas was independent in 1836 and then it became a state in 1845, so Texas was sixteen when it seceded from the Union, sixteen years old. Damn, I lost my train of thought again.

Q: We're talking about Oklahoma and Black Wall Street.

Love: It's my belief that the wealth from Black Wall Street came from peace treaties signed by the United States government with Native Americans. The Native Americans were Black so they took that and parlayed it into what they achieved in Tulsa at Black Wall Street. Now I don't have any proof of that, but I'm currently looking for that. I believe that with my being. Because if you know how capital and wealth works in this country, nobody was loaning Negros any money, so how did they get their capital to create Black Wall Street. We think that oh, Negros just got together, and started doing things, and went to Lincoln, and got a degree, and became a doctor, and ta-da, Black Wall Street. That might very well be the case, but I think what's more possible is the fact that wealth was land, and so they got land from various treaties. It's my thing, I want to go to Oklahoma, and do research on treaties, and see what the heck has happened. I can tell you that there has been a significant effort in this country to make Black people believe that they only come from Africa and that they are not indigenous to this land.

Q: Okay. Because of your lineage, your great-grandparents were Creek and Seminole.

Love: Yes, and they had a place in Lawton, Oklahoma. That's where her parents were at the time. She talks about—let me find it.

Q: When you say she, are you talking about your great-grandmother here?

Love: Yes, my dad's grandmother, who he referred to as mama. He got the date wrong in his writing. He says, "She told me stories about the big race riot in Tulsa in 1926." Well it was 1921. "Bullets were whistling around everywhere," this is her words. "Bullets were whistling around everywhere. They took over the brickyard and I grab my babies and hid behind brick walls up in the yard until we could sneak out of there. A whole lot of people died that day."

Q: Your great-grandmother was a witness to the race massacre of Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1921?

Love: Yes. Between Juneteenth and the Tulsa Massacre, I'm rooted in Black history. I like to tell people I wasn't born in Texas, I was born in Denver, but my mama always says this, and I've adopted it, she says, "I'm so Texan my ancestors slaved here." I'm sorry?

Q: I was going to say, that appears to be true.

Love: Yes. Yes.

Q: Why didn't your father complete his book or publish it?

Love: I don’t know. I'm not sure. Him and my stepmom started writing it together. I'd have to ask her why they never completed it. I think they separated and went their own ways, and then he just never got a chance to finish it. He died in 2010. Was it 2010 or 2009? I think it was 2010. I'm not sure why, but it's a lot of great information in here that I'm wanting to use. I've been so

busy I haven't had a chance to go to Oklahoma and looked into the libraries and the books there. I do know that their wedding certificate was burnt up in a fire on the reservation.

Q: Might you consider publishing his book at some point?

Love: It's not a book, it's just a chapter, chapter thirteen, and I'd like to talk to my stepmom about that because she's listed as a co-author. I really think that I could frame a book out of this information myself. I'm actually currently working on another book, so while campaigning, while doing all this other crap I'm doing. This will probably be I'll work on this probably a couple of years from now, try to work on this.

Q: You said that this is chapter thirteen that your father wrote. Is it part of a different book or an anthology? What are chapters one through twelve in other words?

Love: That's what's crazy is he has the title, the table of contents, he has the chapters all lined out, but he only wrote chapter thirteen. Chapter one is The Runaways, chapter two was Trail of Tears, so they were on the Trail of Tears. Chapter Three, Indian Territory, Chapter Four, Escape to Mexico. Chapter five, It Looks like War's A-Coming, chapter six, The Civil War, chapter seven, Freedom, chapter eight, Buffalo Soldiers Ninth Cavalry, chapter nine, Buffalo Soldier's Twenty-Fourth Infantry, chapter ten, Released from Purgatory, chapter eleven, Black Heroes and Villains, chapter twelve, Final Kiss-Off, and then chapter thirteen, Stories Our Grandmother Told Me.

Q: There's no chapter fourteen there in the table of contents? Okay. I don't know, have you talked to your stepmother about where the—I understand that he didn't write the previous twelve chapters, but where the research might be that he was going to use to write. I'm wondering if there's a file cabinet somewhere with all of this information about Buffalo Soldiers, and Trail of Tears, and so on.

Love: I'll ask her. I haven't talked to her about it. I don't believe so, but it could be. I can tell you that my stepmother, they married in San Angelo, my dad stayed in San Angelo. Then they went to Washington D.C. again where he was a trainer for the post office, and then they came back to San Angelo, and then they split up. Remind me again what it was that you were asking?

Q: Sure, we were talking about where the research is for your father's book and whether it might be somewhere. You said you'd need to talk to your stepmom.

Love: Yes, I remember now. What I was going to say is you asked about the Buffalo Soldiers and all that, so my stepmom worked at Fort Concho in San Angelo for years. Fort Concho in San Angelo is where the Buffalo Soldiers were stationed. They were stationed in three places in Texas, Fort Concho, which is in San Angelo, Fort Stockton, which is in the city of—or near the city of Fort Stockton, and there's another place I'm not sure. My stepmom working at Fort Concho, she knew everything about the history of the Buffalo Soldiers. Me being a Freemason, I've done research into them because many of the Buffalo Soldiers were freemasons.

As a matter of fact, Captain William D Matthews, who was a grandmaster of King Solomon Grand Lodge out of Kansas, was the first commissioned officer. He recruited Blacks to fight for the North in the Civil War. He was able to get them to be able to serve and got them commissioned, and he was also a cattle guy. He would drive cattle—after the war he would drive cattle from Texas up through Oklahoma and Kansas. So much so that he is in the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth, Texas. He was a significant person. He started the Grand Lodge of—the King Solomon Grand Lodge in Kansas created a lot of lodges in Texas, Colorado, and various places, so our Grand Lodge in Texas was formed from five lodges that were created from the Grand Lodge of Kansas. Of course they split off. Our first grandmaster, Norris Wright Cuney, who was appointed by—I can't remember what president, I've got to go and look that up. He was appointed by the president to be the gatekeeper down at the ports in Galveston. He was republican and as a matter of fact he was involved in the fracas between the Jay Birds and the Woodpeckers. Always going to get that right and not say that reversed. I don't know if you're familiar with the story of the Jay Birds and the Woodpeckers.

Basically the Blacks were republicans, party of Lincoln, whites had the Democratic Party on lock. What was happening is that Blacks in the Republican Party were dominating. In Fort Bend County there were—the county clerk was Black, a couple of other Blacks were elected to prominent positions, and obviously white folks didn't like that. The republican side were called the Lily Whites so they were going to go and put forth a slate of white candidates. The democrats were called the Woodpeckers. They were obviously opposed. What they did was is that they went to a gentleman in Fort Bend. He was a landowner and he had Blacks sharecropping on his land. They went to intimidate this white man to get him to tell his Black people to vote a certain

way and he said no. They killed him. Then a skirmish broke out between Blacks and whites in Fort Bend County. Sul Ross was the governor at the time, which there's an institution in West Texas out in Alpine who is named after Sul Ross, the governor, Sul Ross University.

Anyway, Sul Ross sent his adjunct general to Fort Bend County to straighten out the mess and he got there, and did what he needed to do, and what he said before he left was, "If I have to come back down here, I'll kill every nigger dead." That's the fracas and the story of that. Norris Wright Cuney, our first grandmaster, was the head of the Republican Party in Texas. Now we—[*audio cuts out*]

Q: I lost volume for you, I can't hear you.

Love: Can you hear me now?

Q: Yes, thank you.

Love: Okay. W.D. Matthews created masons and masonic lodges in Texas and he also created a lodge that was with the Ninth Cavalry, I believe. That was a military lodge that—of course military lodges travel and so that lodge actually did not become a part of Texas because those boys moved. But they were masons and I don't know if they were stationed in San Angelo or Fort Stockton or at this other place. I don't even know how we got on this topic, but that is W.D. Matthews, incredible individual.

As a matter of fact, my campaign, I have a campaign motto, "Truth, honor, and integrity," which comes directly from W.D. Matthews. He was a very controversial individual and a very influential individual. Like I said, he is profiled at the Amon Carter Museum in downtown Fort Worth as one of the leading cattle trail cowboys. Which incidentally, cowboy—I have to tell you. I know you know this. Cowboy is a pejorative. Oh look, Black cowboys. Cowboys were Black because that's what they were called. They called Latinos vaqueros and they called white ranch hands cowpokes. Cowboys was an insult to Black ranch hand workers. I have to tell that to people all the time.

Q: You gave us a lot of information there. I just want to make sure we've got the names correctly. You mentioned Lawrence Sullivan 'Sul' Ross, who was the nineteenth governor of Texas, he was a Confederate States Army General during the Civil War, and the fourth president of what is now called Texas A&M, which—you know.

Love: Don't even get me started talking about. [*Laughter*] Go ahead.

Q: You mentioned Fort Bend County, which is a county that was founded in 1837, and Fort Bend it was in the Sugar Land area, made, we believe, because of the sugar crops that were being harvested.

Love: Sugar Land, Texas, yes, ma'am.

Q: Right. Then you also mentioned Fort Concho, which is C-O-N-C-H-O, Texas. That's in San Angelo, as you mentioned, but also has a very, very rich history.

Love: Yes, on the Concho River. Concho River flows through San Angelo. Fort Concho was settled near the Concho River and it specifically was a Black installation headed by a white man. It wasn't a fort—that's the thing is the west was—how the west was won, the west wouldn't have been won if it wasn't for Blacks because the Black Buffalo Soldiers were the ones who gave the Indians hell as far as allowing white settlers to proliferate.

Q: In fact elements of all four regiments of the Buffalo Soldiers were stationed at Fort Concho during its active period. The importance of Buffalo Soldiers there.

Love: That's where I went to—ended grade school and went to junior high, and that's where I was first called a nigger in San Angelo, Texas.

Q: Okay, yes, look at that, full circle. Is there anything that you'd like to share about your father's family history?

Love: Not at the moment. I know my grandparents, my great-grandparents were a part of the Trail of Tears. Again I believe my grandmother was a Seminole. I've been trying to track them down through ancestry but I refuse to give my DNA because I don't want my DNA corrupted and they just try to automatically include me in Africa and not that my family was indigenous to this country. Or at least that side of it. No, I think that's it. My grandfather was a—[*singing*] papa

was a rolling stone. My grandfather John B Love Sr. was in the military and he met Missy when she was sixteen. She was fast at the time and my dad writes about it. Really actually my dad has a sister who was born when he was sixteen years old. It's interesting because she grew up as this fast—let me back up.

Yes, to answer your question, I do have more to say. My great-grandmother, who my dad called mama, his grandmother, was in the saloon business. What would happen is they didn't have nightclubs and stuff like that. What they would do is they would have a light and so depending on the color on the light outside of your house meant what type of activity was going on inside the house. She ran a saloon and in the Indian territory where alcohol was—Oklahoma was a dry—I don't even know if Oklahoma was a state at that time, but the territory was dry, but she would make alcohol and chalk, which is a kind of a—here it is. [*Pause*] Okay, so I've passed that. Anyway, I think it's called chalk. I will keep scrolling and looking for it. She used to have a saloon in her house. She used to also be a shaker for numbers. People used to request for her to shake because she would shake numbers and they would hit the lottery, so numbers from Black folks, then made it illegal, how about that?

She would have a saloon and so Missy, her daughter, my dad's actually mom was fast. She'd get drunk, and fight, and cuss, and would sleep with men, and all this other stuff. Then they had a house and when their parents died they left it to the kids. I think there was five of them or no, there was a bunch of them, but there were three that were left. Mama, my great-grandmother, lived in the house, and she paid rent to her two brothers for their share. Then one of the brothers

was pressuring the other brothers to sell because in the will it said if two out of three agreed then they could sell. They sold the house. They sold it for $500. They got $167 each.

What was interesting was the one who was pressuring it had a bunch of houses already and my dad speculates that he thinks they basically kind of stole the house because the other brother could only mark an X, and I don't think his mama, grandmother, knew enough about it. Anyway, they had to move out, and she had to find a—and Jim had ran off. He got liquored up and ran off, so she was raising the kids by herself. She had to do something so she was strictly Baptist, but she put them in Catholic Church, Saint Monica's Catholic Church. It was a huge Catholic church and school combined, church and school combined that sat right in the heart of the Black neighborhood in Tulsa. She was Baptist, but she put the kids in Catholic school to give them some type of foundation, so Missy became Catholic. When my Aunt Jackie was born, Missy was holier than thou, because she had gone through Catholic. My dad talks stories about Missy and my Aunt Jackie says, oh no, that's a lie, that's not true because the mama I remember was a saint. Well this was after the fact.

But yeah, and my grandma and Missy died in a fire in California. I don't know what caused the fire. I just remember when we were young, we went out to California for the funeral. That's when I first met my Uncle Jerry Love. I think yeah, I met my grandfather at that time. I think he was alive, John Love Sr. Then of course he's passed away since then.

Q: It's such a rich history. The other name that you mentioned was W.D. Matthews, who is William D. Matthews, who was a Black abolitionist Civil War Union officer and freemason, as

you mentioned. He was born in Maryland and died in 1906 in Kansas. But in between then fought in the Civil War and then, as you said, helped—

Love: Got into gun fights, shot a dude, got acquitted, came back, shot another dude, got acquitted. [*laughs*] He was a controversial character and he alienated himself and all of freemasonry because the freemasonry—Prince Hall was made a mason in a military lodge. Prince Hall had actually been a cook in George Washington's camp. He'd asked to be made a mason and they refused. The British were stationed in America at that time so a British regiment that was to come through—so Prince Hall was made a mason in 1775, one year before 1776. He was made a mason and so the descendants—and it's interesting, they wrote to the Grand Lodge of England for a charter. A bunch of Africans, or descendants from—I say descendants from Africa, but we just had a conversation about indigenous people. But descendants of Blacks, a bunch of Blacks, were made masons either in the islands, the Caribbean, or through military lodges, and so fourteen of them gathered together, and they requested a warrant from Grand Lodge England. John Hancock's brother was a captain of a ship and he went over and brought the—they got the charter two years, or two or three years, afterwards. John Hancock's brother brought it back.

Prince Hall and John Hancock were close. Prince Hall did catering and so he would cater parties for John Hancock. Also he was the first to actually start schools in the Boston area. He wanted to educate Black kids. They formed a lodge, Africa 459, I'm a member of Africa 459 as an honorary member to this day, and I got a copy of the charter that was from England. Interesting story, the lodge building caught on fire in Massachusetts and one of the grandmasters ran into the fire and

grabbed the charter off the wall and ran out, so I have a picture of it partially burned, but you can still see the charter.

This is important because for years white masons would call Prince Hall masons clandestine or irregular with no justification. As a matter of fact, our lineage is probably stronger than theirs because in 1776 the Revolutionary War breaks out. Guess what happens? American lodges stop talking to English lodges. What happened is there's a process called self-constituting. The white lodges that were in the colonies formed Grand Lodge, specifically Paul Revere. Paul Revere and his one if by land, two if by sea, he left the lodge meeting to do that. Not only that but there's allusions that the Boston Tea Party resulted after a masonic meeting. Side note, the state of Texas was formed in a masonic meeting. The Grand Lodge of Texas was formed and they created their independence and their—yeah, their independence in the Grand Lodge. Anyway, I'm sorry, I'm all over the place.

Anyway, Prince Hall—so what happened is that Prince Hall didn't hear anything from the Grand Lodge of England, the Grand Lodge of England didn't hear anything from Africa 459, and they kind of fell off the roll. If they don't hear anything from you, you fall off the rolls. What happened is during the Revolutionary War the white boys self-constituted, which means that if you have three lodges, you can come together and form a Grand Lodge in a particular territory or jurisdiction. That's exactly what Prince Hall did. They have said that oh, we were clandestine. That is the impetus of the grandmaster running into the fire to get the charter off the wall. Since then now we have fraternal recognition and what's called amity because the lodges in every state except, I think one, Black Prince Hall masons and white Prince Hall mason recognize each other.

As a matter of fact, side note, I'm campaigning in the 6th District for Congress, which is part of Grand Prairie, part of Arlington, part of Irving, Mansfield, Midlothian, Waxahachie, Ennis, Texas Corsicana, Hillsborough, Jacksonville, and Fairfield, Texas. I had been going to visit white masonic lodges and I've been to three, I've been to Corsicana, I've been to Mansfield, and I've been to Ennis. I'm going to Waxahachie next Monday and I'm going back to Ennis for degree work. I sit in these lodges. For example, I went to Mansfield, and I'm looking at the wall of all these Worshipful Masters that served. This is a 150 year old lodge. Literally the city of Mansfield was founded by two gentlemen, the one named Mans, the other named Field. They founded the lodge first and then they founded the city of Mansfield.

What's interesting is that there's a book that I'm reading right now, it's a PhD dissertation paper, so it's not technically a book, but it's like 167-pages or something. It's called *Dallas Freemasonry and the Klan*. The Klan was invented in, I think it was 1921? 1921, right? Coincidentally the same time as the Tulsa Massacre. It was invented in Alabama so what happened is that the Klan would use freemasons to try to one, increase their membership, and two, legitimize themselves as a fraternal organization. This is what is happening at Dallas at the time. You've got to understand, Dallas County was founded—or Dallas City was founded in—let's see, 1846, 1845, 1828. Texas gets its freedom from Mexico in 1836, Dallas is founded in 1838, and so what was going on is when the Klan came to bear, they started going to masonic lodges and started recruiting in masonic lodges. To the point that the grandmaster of Texas in 1922 issued a statement that said that the Grand Lodge of Texas and the Ku Klux Klan are not affiliated. Now if you have to issue a notice, [*laughs*] a letter that says that you all aren't affiliated, guess what?

And that's what I'm reading this book and that's what this book it outlining, it's outlined the proliferation of the Klan in freemasonry.

At first I was nervous because the three lodges I went to, and I just did this last month because I'm campaigning and—I'm not going to lodges to campaign, I'm just going to meet people. I understand this, and I know this, and the three lodges that I've been to, every single one of them said you're the first Prince Hall mason that has come to visit us and I'm excited and I'm encouraged by that. I sit there in them lodges and I've got the old white men, for years they didn't want to recognize Prince Hall freemasonry, and only this recognition only happened in 2015. For years we couldn't actually visit. In order to visit, I would have to write a letter to my grand secretary, he would write a letter to their grand secretary, and their grand secretary would write a letter to that local lodge requesting a visit. Then I'd have to go all the way back up. Now we have the right of visitation like masonry is supposed to be. I've been visiting these lodges. I sit in these lodges with these white gentlemen looking at the history and understanding that this is the fertile ground of the Klan, this is where the Klan would come to recruit, and also would come to try to legitimize themselves as an organization. At first I was a little bit nervous but now I can't wait to go. I can't wait to sit in that lodge and let them know that I am a freemason, and realistically I know more than you guys do about freemasonry.

As a matter of fact I went to Mansfield and when you go into a lodge—I was late because I couldn't find it. It was weird, there was construction. Anyway, I came late. When you come late you go to the door and you have to let the Tyler know that you're there. The Tyler is the person outside the door guarding the interests of the door. The Tyler, they say, oh, you know, he's here.

I talked to the junior warden letting him know I was going to be there. They come out and he's like, "Brother Love, you're late." I said, "I couldn't' find the place but hey, I'm here now." He's like, "We're on the third degree so we're going to have you come in in a minute." I walk in and I go into the lodge and when you go into the lodge you're supposed to salute the Worshipful Master with what's called a due guard, it's an actual physical sign. There's one for each degree, first degree, second degree, third degree. What you're supposed to do is you're supposed to look—they told me they were operating on the third degree, but I go and I look at the altar like I'm supposed to because the Bible is open to a specific passage reflecting that degree. When I look at the Bible I'm like oh, so I step back, and I gave the second degree sign.

The Worshipful Master's like—everybody's like oh. He gives me the third degree sign again and I give him the second degree sign right back. I said, "Sir, Worshipful Master, I apologize but this Bible is open to blah, blah, blah." They're like, "Oh, we apologize. We have a new senior deacon." The senior deacon is supposed to open the Bible to the correct page. Well he didn't and I let them know you all are tripping because this is not the third degree. Just right off the bat instantly they knew oh, this is a mason, he's not playing, he's real. I'm trying to go to all of these white masonic lodges and establish my presence and let them know eventually I want to start doing masonic lectures and let them know that my knowledge of freemasonry is probably much more than theirs. I want to be able to lecture. I'm saying that braggadocious-ly, but I know more about freemasonry than our own masons, most masons in Prince Hall Masonry, so I would imagine that carries over to their side as well. I don’t even know how I got on that topic.

But history is not lost on me when I go and I visit. It's not lost on me when I'm campaigning to rule Texas. I specifically went and bought—I'm not a gun guy, but I'm not stupid. I inherited a .357 and a .38, .357 from my grandma, a .38 from my great aunt. Then I bought one myself years ago. I have the shotgun at my house in the country. The .357 and .38 they were just old and not really reliable. I recently, within this last year, bought a gun, a 9mm. I support the Second Amendment, but I think sensible gun regulation is a must considering that we don't allow people to own Tommy guns and machine guns, why would we let them own AR-15s. Not that I want to take anybody's guns away like the faux pas that Beto O'Rourke committed, but I think sensible gun regulation is necessary.

The Army equivalent is an M-16. An M-16 you have to, in the Army, my understanding is you have to be tested each and every year, you have to take classes on that gun, and you have to have training for that gun. At the very least I think civilians that own that gun should have the same standard of education and training. I bought the gun because I am not going to be in rural Texas with all the stuff that happens in rural Texas and not be prepared to be able to protect myself.

Q: What year did you become a freemason?

Love: Five years after I became a Que, 1993. This is my thirtieth year actually.

Q: Let's go back to your days at University of Texas. You basically rebuilt the Eta Theta Chapter of Omega Psi Phi at the University of Texas because you were—

Love: Which I don't get enough credit for. These little young Ques, I do not get enough credit for—but yes, that is accurate. I'm glad you said, it came out of your mouth, because that's exactly what I did. I rebuilt the chapter of Eta Theta, yes, ma'am. Sorry, I cut you off.

Q: No, not at all. You deserve your flowers for that. I remember you being on line by yourself and we were afraid for your very life, much less your safety. [*Laughs*]

Love: Welcome to the club. [*Laughs*]

Q: Those were scary times for us on the outside and I'm sure for you as well. We got up to spring 1990 and the X Clan, the two shows, one at UT and the one not far at Houston Tillotson. How much longer did you remain at the University of Texas at Austin?

Love: I left UT in 1992, in the fall of 1992. I left Austin in 1992. I stopped going to school in 1990. A friend of mine and I, who you've already interviewed, we were embarking—we've always been ahead of the game. Even at a young age at that time I realized how important communication is to people. At the time a friend of mine and I—I don't even know how we got into, how we started it, but we were trying to open up a—we had gathered some potential investors, did our homework, and researched, created a credible business plan, and a great company, Bass Beat Broadcasting. This was on the cusp of Black urban radio. It was called Churban at the time. The Black radio stations now today was at the very beginning what we were trying to do. Of course it's Rudy. We were working on that and so I put everything into that.

I'm glad you asked me this question. I put everything into that and I just kind of let school go by the wayside. The reason why is because I was disillusioned at the University of Texas. When I graduated Midland High School I was excited because I was like, I'm off to college, I'm getting ready to go and learn how to think. Oh man, this is awesome, this is great. I got to UT and I'm like dammit, they're not teaching me how to think, they're teaching me how to regurgitate. I was quite disillusioned by that and I was completely turned off from school. I was a good student when I applied myself, but I just lost interest in it, and I was focusing on the radio station that we were trying to do, several radio stations. I've still got a real great idea for radio stations, but that's another story.

I was disillusioned so I stopped going to school. I was working on the radio station. The company that we were working on, that didn't go through because we did all of this work, and at the very end my backers, who were Caucasians who were here in Midland, didn't want to pull the trigger. It's a shame because right after that Black Urban radio exploded, 98.7 KISS in Houston and all of these stations just blew up. I came back home. Actually I was homeless for a couple of days. I actually lived on the street.

I had a fire in my apartment. I was working on the business and like a fool I was just doing that and I let things go by the wayside. Broke, run out of money, my electricity was cut off at my apartment, I lit a candle. I went over to a friend's house who lived right next door and was there watching TV, we opened the door, and we saw the smoke and fire trucks, my apartment burned down. I was kind of moving from—

Q: What year was that?

Love: 1992.

Q: Still in Austin?

Love: Yes. Moved from place to place, lived with friends, with frat brothers, and finally I just felt that I had worn out my welcome, so I just slept in my car. No, I take that back, my car broke down and was at a shop. Yes, I slept in the street for at least one or two nights. Then finally I talked to my mom and she said, "Boy, bring your ass home." She gave me money for a bus ticket, I caught the bus back home, and came back to Midland.

At the time my mom was—my mom was a big fan of mythology and she was raised in the Christian church, and she was Christian, but she had a different viewpoint of Christianity than what your typical person did because she read a lot. She loved mythology, she read a lot about astrology. She gave me my first book, *Star Signs* by Linda Goodman, incredible book, changed my life. I started learning, reading, studying astrology, and alchemy, and all these different esoteric sciences, and I was doing this right out of high school. As a freshman at UT while pledging and while at the University of Texas, I was reading and studying this stuff, and really nobody knew because I didn't share it with anybody.

I kept reading in the books that I was reading about the masons and the freemasons and this long lost knowledge that the freemasons had. When I came back home after leaving Austin, I found

out that my grandmother's sister's husband was the head of the local lodge, the Worshipful Master. I asked to become a mason and in 1993 I became a freemason. What's interesting is that I became a freemason, went through the Scottish Rite 32 Degrees, became a royal arch mason, became a Knights Templar, we didn't have royal select at that time, and then I joined the Shrine. I was literally reading and translating Latin, German, Hebrew, hieroglyphics, and I was reading books that were written in the nineteenth century, eighteen-something-something, where they had a different writing style. I really got a really good strong educational foundation from that, so much so that in the year 2000 I went back to college. I transferred my UT hours over to UTPB and I breezed through college. It was so easy that I graduated summa cum laude. The statistics class and econometrics class that I tried to take at UT, I ended up teaching my classmates because they couldn't get it from what the professor was talking about.

What it was is that I learned how to read. Now, I know how to read, I knew how to read, but I didn't know how to read, and I learned that from reading these ancient texts, and ancient rituals, and doing research. I learned how to read. I learned how to comprehend. I learned to stop what most people do is they come to a word, and they don't know what it is, and skip right over it and keep on going, I learned to stop, look that word up, so I had comprehension of context. When I went through—like I said, I went through both sides of freemasonry, I went back to school, and it was easy. That's why to this day I believe that with education of children, we should do nothing but teach them reading and math all the way up through the sixth grade. Just reading and math. Not science, not social studies, not any of this stuff, but reading and math.

Because one of the things that my mom shared with me, she always shared it with me, and I try to share it with people as well, is if you can read and you can think, you can do anything. I believe that wholeheartedly. I believe that just like we were talking about kids getting passed over to the next grade, I don't think we spend enough time teaching kids how to read. I don't think kids get enough basic instruction on mathematics. My opinion is if we were to do those things only through the sixth grade then by the time we got to seventh, eighth, and started dealing with social sciences, and geometry, and chemistry, biology, all of those things, civics, we are better equipped to comprehend and understand that stuff because we can read it and we have comprehension of it and we understand the mathematics that go with it, with those particular classes, physics, chemistry.

Chemistry, I took honors chemistry in high school, and I got an A or a B, but I just kind of coast through it, it was no big deal. But when I went back to the University of Texas at Permian Basin after becoming a mason, I got it, I understood it completely. Yeah, there you have it. I can't hear you.

Q: Sorry about that. Between 1993 when you returned home and 2000 when you went to UT Permian Basin, did you stay in Midland for those seven years?

Love: Yes, I did. I worked for—interesting. When I came back to Midland, I don't care where you work, you got to work somewhere. [*Laughs*] I actually got a job at Red Lobster waiting tables. I love waiting tables. If I weren't doing what I'm doing now, I would probably wait tables. It's an art and a science. Back up. Mark Reynolds is a good friend of mine, you know him as

Blue, you probably know Mark. Blue always loved sports and I always loved markets and stuff. To the point where when I was a kid, I would sit down and I would watch cartoons on TV, and then I would turn over to CNN and watch *Money Line* because it fascinated me. I'd always been that way at UT. Blue and I would always tell each other, "Man, J Love, you need to get involved in the investments and the market." I'd say, "Well Blue you need to be involved and be a sportscaster." God rest his soul, he passed away. I had to tell you that to continue this story. I'm working at Red Lobster and I'm a hell of a waiter. I try to do everything I can to the best of my ability. Plus my pocketbooks depend on how good of a waiter I am.

I'm waiting tables and this woman just compliments me and says, "Man, I really appreciate your work and your work ethic." I said, "Thank you, ma'am." She's like, "I'd like for you to come and visit me." She was the head of the Housing Authority at Midland County. Long story short, I went to work for her as a grant writer. I was a contract laborer. They were administering Section 8 and she was doing some really unique things like she was going out and trying to buy apartment buildings to generate revenue for the housing program. As a matter of fact, that was my first deal. My first deal was I got to participate on the purchase by the Housing Authority of Ranchland Apartments. This was in—I got licensed in—this had to be in 1993, 1994, somewhere along there. Long story short, I worked on the deal, and I got four grand out of it. I was like wow, whoa, this is cool. I need to be doing this.

I worked there for probably a little over a year when someone called me and said my name had been given to them. Prudential, the insurance company, was creating Prudential Preferred Financial Services and they were looking for people to become financial advisors. My name was

given by actually one of my mom's competitors. My mom was a tax preparer, bookkeeper, and one of her friends, a Black lady, was also a tax preparer. She was transitioning and she had already gotten on with Prudential Preferred Financial Services, so Brenda gave my name to the recruiter, and they called me. I remember what Blue was saying, I was like man, this is it. I went through a six interview process. I had never gone through a six interview process. I went through a six interview process. Passed, got all of my licenses and passed, and got there, and all they wanted me to do was sell life insurance. I'm like what the? I thought I was going to be a financial advisor. Their compensation schedule was horrible, it was hard for you to succeed on it, and they lost a lot of agents over time. Then Prudential Preferred Financial Services eventually went out because the compensation schedule was crappy.

I had my license, I had a Series 6 and 63 which allows you to mutual funds and variable annuities, it's not a full stock broker. I didn't get my full stock broker's license until later on. I went to work for First American Bank as their investment advisor. They had been a bank that had been done CDs, of course, and then they had brought on an annuity department because in the 1980s, early 1980s, interest rates were high because of inflation, so you can get a CD for eighteen percent. They were locking them in for five, ten years. What was happening is that these CDs were coming due and interest rates were horrible. They were like, why don't you talk to our annuity guy and so I did very well rolling over annuities. There was a book of business already of annuities that this had been, so I would roll over five-year annuities that were maturing to another annuity, maybe a little mutual funds. It was great.

Q: And this was all before you got your degree from Permian Basin?

Love: That's correct.

Q: This was between 1993 and 2000?

Love: That's correct. I got licensed in 1994, my security license in 1994, and then in 1999 I was recruited by Bank One. Duh, duh, duh. Of course that was a precursor to Chase and before Bank One is—was called something else, I can't remember. But anyway, they were recruiting me and so I went through their process. I was on for maybe two months and I got fired. The reason I got fired is because—so when I was at UT, you know, I always had the entrepreneurial spirit. Me and Rudy, again, getting in trouble with Rudy. We created some t-shirts. We created an African t-shirts, and the one with the boat on it with the black. We went to a t-shirt guy in Austin and I'm like hey, man, look, let me—once again, debt financing, Black for I ain't got no capital, ain't got no money—look man, let me get these shirts, let me sell some of them, hold my check, and I will get money in the account, and then you can deposit it and everything will be good. He was like sure. Well that's not what he did, he deposited the check. The check bounced obviously so I had a theft by check charge against me. I pleaded nolo contendere, did community service, and all that other stuff, but it still, in the security industry, a theft by check, which is fraud.

My Prudential Preferred didn't have a problem with it, the first bank I had didn't have a problem with it, but when I went to Bank One I went to the financial side and then there's also the FDIC side, so I had to apply for both. This is on my U-4, it's not like I'm trying to hide it, I'm very upfront with it. I got a stock broker's license, I'm with LPL Financial to this day, they know

about it, I don't hide it at all. I was young, I was eighteen, I did something that was stupid and believed the guy, and I got this charge on me. The FDIC came back and said, oh no, he can't be on here, and so they fired me. Then they tried to act like I lied and I'm like, what are you talking about, I didn't lie, it's on my U-4, you have my U-4. Anyway, at that point I was sick of working for other people. I say that euphemistically. I'm sure that you know what I'm talking about. I refused to work for other people.

It was 1999 going into 2000 and I was like look, I'm never ever going to work for another person in my life again. To this day I have not. It has been a struggle early on. I bought a business, I borrowed some money from my aunt, and I bought a delivery business. A guy who my mom I think did taxes for was looking to sell his business, and I bought a truck, and I bought some of his stuff, and it was a delivery business. At that time you could go—people would buy stuff from Rex TV, or Lowes, or whatever, and these companies didn't have delivery, so I would go and pick up their washer, dryers, or whatever, big screen TVs, and we would deliver it. I was running that business while I was going to school, while I was going to UT 2000, 2001. Eventually it got shut down because companies started getting their own delivery and yadda-yadda.

Yeah, I went back to school, I paid for it myself, graduated from UTPB, would drive to UTPB every day or whenever I had class, do whatever I needed to do, come back, study, get my thing done, and running my business. I also had my license and I would do financial advisory on the side. I still had some other people. I wasn't supposed to have the old client list, but I called some people, and was able to get some rollovers, and get some clients, and so that helped me along the way. It was tough. There were many numerous other times that services got cut off, but again, it

was a great decision, and I've been an entrepreneur ever since. I love it. I couldn't imagine myself doing anything else. I love working for myself. I love building my own wealth. I like doing what I want when I want. Interestingly it helped me also to become an effective city councilman. So, how I became a city councilman.

My mom, once again, she was involved—so Midland had a court judgment that they had to get rid of at large because all of the at large council members were over on the west and north side, all the white folks. They had a court order, they had to go to districts. Midland now has four districts, and two at large, and a mayor. The very first—not the first, maybe the second council person from District 2, which is the Black and minority, was a Hispanic gentleman, and my mom supported a Black candidate. Well the Hispanic gentleman won, but he won by only like five votes, something like that. My mom was like, you owe us, and he was like okay, yeah, cool.

My mom at the time, unbeknownst to me, went to one of the city managers, who eventually became the long-term city attorney for the city of Midland, he's now a judge. He tells this story just like I tell this story. When I left the City Council I mentioned it. There's a video that I can share with you that I did for the bruhs and in there I talk about this video. I don't know if it's bruh video or not. Because I tell people I'm sure you guys are wondering what the heck is because I did it all the time. It would piss my mom off because here I am at City Council and I'm bare and I've got pictures. If you go to my Facebook pages I got pictures of me in Council like this. I tell my mom, they've got to know, they've got to know.

Anyway, when I left Council I was like I'm sure you're all wondering what this is and I said, well, at the young age of eighteen I joined Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, this was an organization that taught me development of self and giving back to the community, so every time I've had the opportunity I pay respect to my fraternity. In that same meaning when I left this city attorney who later became a judge tells the story of my mom. My mom goes to him and says, "What does my son need to do and where does my son need to be in order to participate in government, in politics?" I didn't know this. He says, "Well, really you need to be on Planning and Zoning because that's the stepping stone to be city councilman." My mom comes back to me and tell me, "You need to go join Planning and Zoning." I'm like, okay, so I join Planning and Zoning.

Q: What year?

Love: 1986. I'm fresh out of high school. I'm literally going to UT Austin as a freshman, driving back, sometimes flying back to Midland once a month to serve on the Planning and Zoning Commission. I did that for almost a year before it was just too burdensome for me. No. I did it for two years. Did I do it for two? Yes, I did it for two years before I resigned because it was too much of a burden for me.

When I moved back to Midland, I get involved in the Planning and Zoning again. From 1994 to 2000, actually it was 2002, I've got a certificate somewhere, from 1994 to 2002 I served again on the Planning and Zoning Commission for the city of Midland. I became chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission in 2000. First Black and the youngest person to be chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission. What's interesting is my first stint as Planning and Zoning

commissioner, the head planner pulled me aside one day and said, "Hey, I just wanted to let you know that there are some people on the commission who think you second too fast." Exactly, I'm glad you got that look. I'm like, "Wait a minute, I'm seconding too fast?" "Yeah, he thinks you're seconding too fast." I already knew who it was, it was one of the good old boys, he was the chairman, he thought I was seconding motions too fast. If that ain't some [*laughs*] bull crap. Anyway, I just thought that was a little bit interesting side note.

I served, I became chairman in 2000, I rolled off in 2002. If you know the dates I'm going to school, I've got my business, I'm going to school, I'm chairman in 2000, I go back to UT, I'm running my business, I graduated in 2002 from UTPB, and my last year as Planning and Zoning chairman is 2002. I'm working my business, I'm hustling, I'm trying to make a living, I eventually get rid of my business, and I'm just focusing full-time on investments. [*Pause*] I forgot where I was going with that. Hold on. Yeah, I'm just minding my business, so my mom is always encouraging me to give back, so I'm serving on boards galore, you know what I'm saying? Everybody needs a—we've got to diversify our board, so we got to get somebody, right? I went to Project Blueprint. They revised Project Blueprint, it's going on now, but I'm one of the original graduates of Project Blueprint. Project Blueprint was created by the United Way to teach minorities how to serve on boards so that United Way could have some diversity so they could continue to give money to these organizations. I went through it, I was the youngest member at that time obviously and everybody else was a senior, or retired, or whatever. Bam, I'm on board. I was on so many boards, Big Brothers, Big Sisters, became vice president, Jaycees, I've got a whole list of them. I can't remember them all right now, but if you go to my website they're all listed there.

I was serving on boards giving back because I felt Black pride, I wanted Black people to be able to have representation, and to be able to have input. Very quickly I found out that they wanted a Black person but they were shocked that I was actually contributing, and had questions, and pointed things out, and all that stuff. I served on a whole bunch of boards, do a lot of stuff. The current District 2 city councilwoman, Vicki Haley was terming out, and she had a shortlist of people who she thought would be good replacements for her. I was on that list. I don't believe I was the first person that she asked. I think my brother was on the list and my brother was like, nope, not going to do it. She asked me and I was like, "Well, let me think about it." I'm sitting there thinking about it and I'm like no, I have better shit to do. But then I thought about it and I'm like damn, John, that is really, really selfish because if not you, then who. I had the ability and the skills to do it. I graduated summa cum laude, I could read anything, and if not you then who. I'm like, okay, I'll do it. I told her that I would do it.

Quick side note, I started going to City Council meetings. I scared the shit out of the City Council. They were like who is—because I'm a Black guy in a suit at a City Council meeting. Who is that? Who is this person? They thought I was an FBI plant, they thought a whole bunch of stuff. This is what Vicki told me later. She was laughing about it. I get Rudy as my campaign manager. He's in government, he's run a couple of campaigns. I went down and talked to Rudy and said, "Rudy, man, I want to be a city councilman, I know I can do the job, and I know I would be good at it. I just don't want to be involved in the politics, or raising money, or campaigning, or kissing babies, I don't want to do that stuff." Rudy looked at me and said, these are his exact words, "Nigga, how you going to lead the people if you don't know the people?" I

was like, wow, and I had an epiphany. I learned a valuable important lesson that day, which is the power of decision. People think that decisions take a long time, but they don't, they're instantaneously, they're instantaneous. Once I decided that, you know what, he's right, whatever it takes I'm going to do it no matter what. I made that decision within my own being and it transformed the entire universe around me because when I made that commitment, I went back, started raising a little bit of money, but what happened was it's a short window, it's like forty-five days from the time you declare to the time the window closes. I went back and I started talking to the people. There were two other individuals who were thinking about running. I went and talked to them, and told them, and convinced them how serious I was that they didn't run. I didn't have to raise money and I didn't have to campaign. I'm like, wow. I understood that lesson of the power of decision. Once you commit and make a decision, it's like god, the universe, however you want to express it, works in your favor to make that a reality, and that's exactly what happened. What I went to Rudy and wished for I got because I made the decision. I ran unopposed and I was unopposed three times.

I served seven years, I was supposed to serve nine but I stepped out to run the senatorial race, which is another story. But that's how I became a city councilmember and I was good at it. I was good at it because I saw my predecessors and what they did, Black city councilman Julius Brooks was after the guy my mom had a race against, he was Black, owned a barbecue place. Then James Bradford, he taught at Carver, he was a history teacher, he was head of the history department at I think Midland High or Lee. He became a city council member. Then Vicki. They all served for nine years, nine years, then Vicki, and she served nine years. I think Bradford died early though. My predecessor Vicki, I love her, but she got characterized as the mad Black

woman because she would come with this as opposed to coming with facts. Me being the reader that I was and being able to understand everything, I would read everything. The city would give us a package, we were lucky if we were to get it on a Thursday most of the time—and if I need to let you go, if I need to stop, I'll be happy to. We would get our package on a Thursday if we were lucky. Most of the time it was on a Friday. We would have until next Tuesday to go through it. I'm talking about a thousand, fifteen-hundred pages of City Council documents. You've got to be twice as good to get half the recognition, so I read everything. I read it to the point where I wanted them to know they couldn't pull shit over on me. I would literally correct errors in their stuff and I would point it out to them. There's a mistake on page this, and this, and this is spelled wrong, and this right here, and I would ask questions that the other council members never even considered. I was good. I was good at my job as a council member.

I wanted everybody there to know that John Love is reading his shit. None of the other council members did that. They didn't read twelve-hundred, fifteen-hundred pages over a weekend, and to be prepared. They would read, and glance, and do all this other stuff. But I got my chops that way, I learned city government, I read, and I understood, and I learned how this crap works. Here's one for your readers, unappropriated fund balance. [*Laughs*] It's a phrase that city councils use and what it means is that's where they go and find money for shit. What they'll do is they'll do a budget and they won't spend all the money that's in a particular budget for a year, so it goes in an unappropriated fund balance. What happens is they'll tell you, we don't have any money for it, then all of the sudden they're like, well, we got this out of the unappropriated fund balance. I'm like, what the hell is that? They got money, but it's not budgeted money for the year, so we don’t have any money for it. It got to the point where I had to act bad a couple of times, when

they eliminated the tiers, I had to literally go against the entire city council. It was the dumbest thing in the world and then afterwards they all regretted it. I tried to tell their asses, but that's another story.

I had to go after them about racial profiling. Racial profiling and law in Texas is the biggest joke in the world. It pisses me off because apparently African American legislators signed off on it. It is such a horrible thing.

Q: Let me—I appreciate you bringing us all the way current, I think, or just about current from—that gives us all of your city council background and now you're running for a different seat. I think it's just such a wealth of knowledge that you've provided not just about Texas, but also Oklahoma, the connection between Native Americans and Black folks, and how there is some significant overlap there, and all of the things that your father did. It sounds like there's some unfinished business there with the stories he was thinking about writing or perhaps even started to write. I just really appreciate everything that you shared today because I think it's going to add to the archive and make this story even more complete. I appreciate you.

Love: My pleasure. My pleasure. I'm glad you stopped me because I've got so many stories about so many different things, it's ridiculous. I could have been literally talking for another couple of hours. I'm glad you put the kibosh on it.

Q: I don’t mean to do that intentionally. Let me stop the recording. [*Laughs*] Hold on a second.

[END OF FILE A]

[BEGIN OF FILE B]

Q: Thank you, John. We took a little bit of a pause and we're going to go back to you being a city councilperson, but there's something that you wanted to correct before we go back there.

Love: Yes. Now I said that the adjutant general said that he would come back and kill every nigger there. But the actual quote is he'll kill every Negro in the county. This was in 1874, 1875, 1880—yeah, between 1884 and 1885, sorry. I need to correct that. The quote comes from a book that was written in 1986 at Texas A&M, it's a biography of Sul Ross. I would imagine that what I said was accurate because I can't believe that he would have said Negro. If I may, I want to share this little quick story with you.

Q: Please.

Love: This comes from one of my Masonic brothers, Dr. Robert L. Uzzo [*phonetic*]. His story is interesting enough. He was made a Mason in Waco with our Caucasian Masons, got behind on his dues, and kind of had to step away from the lodge. He applied for an application to be admitted and they denied him. They denied him because he married a Black woman. He then came and joined Prince Hall Masonry and has been a Prince Hall Mason ever since. As a matter of fact he's a CME pastor. This is the book that he wrote, *Prince Hall Freemasonry in the Lone Star State: From Cuney to Curtis 1875-2003*. That's what I'm reading from. This is from his chapter talking about our very first grandmaster.

Q: May I ask a question first? How does he know that he was denied re-entry because of his spouse? Did they tell him?

Love: I think they may have. That's what he shared. I don't know if he was actually verbally told that or whether he got the impression that that's what it is. He confirms that that's what happened.

Q: Okay, please continue.

Love: No, you're fine. This is about coming from the chapter of Norris Wright Cuney, he was the first grandmaster of Masons for the state of Texas. Our Grand Lodge was founded in 1875. Norris Wright Cuney was the head of the Republican Party from 1883 to 1896. This happens while he's the head of the Republican Party. Let me go back a little further, so in 1884 Cuney, our first grandmaster, attended the Republican State Convention in Fort Worth where he was selected as delegate at large to the Republican National Convention in Chicago. There he helped James G. Blaine obtain the republican presidential nominee. He was a member of a select committee chosen to travel to Augusta, Maine where they notified Blaine of his nomination. Blaine was defeated by democrat Grover Cleveland, however it is true that, "Even though Blaine lost, Cuney's pluck and his steadfast support of Blaine won him friends in high places."

Now to the story. Meanwhile Cuney found it necessary to focus attention closer to home. In 1888 young whites in Fort Bend County, Texas, where Blacks outnumber whites four to one and held many elective offices, formed the Young Men's Democratic Club. This organization better

known as Jay Birds built a slate of candidates. Earlier I called them lily whites, but lily whites is a term that comes later. They were known as the Jay Birds. The local republicans, called Woodpeckers, attempted to hold onto power with an all-white slate. The Jay Birds, who were the republicans, white republicans, sought to intimidate Black voters but experienced a major setback when democrat J.M. Shamblin refused to allow them on his plantation to intimidate his Black workers. This refusal resulted in Shamblin's murder. On September 5 Jay Birds met at the Fort Bend County courthouse and drew up a list of seven African Americans, ordering them to immediately leave the county. This list included the County Clerk, Charles M. Ferguson, and teacher James M. Davis, both Prince Hall Masons and friends of Cuney. When the Jay Birds failed to win at the polls, the county disintegrated into mob violence. Democratic governor Sul Ross sent in the state militia, assigning his adjutant general to restore order. When the militia left, however, the Jay Birds were in complete control. The adjutant general reportedly stated that the next time he came back, he would, "Not come as an official, but would come back to help kill every Negro in the county."

Cuney helped Ferguson sue in the US Circuit Court under the Civil Rights Act of 1875, which we know was rejected by the Supreme Court. He wrote letters to Prince Hall lodges throughout the country requesting an assessment of five dollars per lodge to finance the lawsuit and eventually they settle the case out of court. After a federal grand jury in Galveston indicted the sixty-two white perpetrators, the case was settled out of court.

It's one of the reasons why I'm proud to be a Prince Hall Mason because the history of Blacks after the Civil War is Prince Hall Mason history. Actually from the founding of this country, it's

Prince Hall Masons. Requested an assessment of five dollars to help fund the lawsuit. Prince Hall lodges were sops on the Underground Railroad. Prince Hall members were financing the elimination of Jim Crow. Thurgood Marshall was a lawyer for the NAACP and he was fighting against racism everywhere he possibly could. He had to raise money in order to do that. He went to the Prince Hall Masons, specifically the Scottish Rite. That's why he became a Mason himself and why he became a Sovereign Grand Inspector General of the Scottish Rite for the Southern Jurisdiction for many years, all the way up until he passed away. But he went there because that's where he got his money to be able to litigate against injustice.

Quick side story. Martin Luther King was assassinated in April. He had been attending—the night before he spoke at a Prince Hall Masonic meeting. He spoke at the Scottish Rite. The Scottish Rite is headquartered in Memphis and he was speaking there. As a matter of fact, when I went to a meeting a year ago, or two years ago, I stayed in an AirBnB that was catty cornered across from the Lorraine Hotel where he was shot.

I want to share something else with you. If I may. This is a book, *The Lost Empire: Black Freemasonry in the Old West 1876-1906*. It was written by Sublime Prince James Morgan III out of Washington DC, alpha man, really good writer. This is an incredible book. What I wanted to read in it is I told you that my campaign motto today is, "Truth, honor, and integrity," and here's the reason why because W.D. Matthews wrote this about Masons, but this paragraph can apply to your country right now, today. He wrote, "In view of the responsibility resting upon each one of us, we ask you to prepare to meet the issues on the decision of which will depend whether we will continue as an honorable body. Founded by our fathers on the basis of truth, honor, and

integrity, or become a shadow of our former greatness based upon broken vows, deceit, false pretensions, and treachery. I think that's so apropos to what's happening today in politics at the federal level all over this country between democrats and republicans is we've lost our way, our high standard of doing right and being right because it is right. We're at the point now where it is every man for himself, we see that right now in the attempt to elect Speaker of the House. This is why I chose that because although he was talking about the Black Masons in America, this applies to us today politically. Are we going to be who our founders intended us to be or are we going to continue to try to get things accomplished and done by broken vows, deceit, false pretensions, and treachery. Anyway, I wanted to share that with you.

Q: Thank you for doing so. I wonder for those folks who have no idea what Masons are—and I have very limited knowledge. Stereotypically it's a very secretive organization, it's all men, it's unclear what one has to do to get in, and what one has to do to stay. You think of some of the movies that have been out there. What can you share about what Freemasons are, who Freemasons are? For folks that have no background.

Love: The interesting thing about Freemasonry is that there are no secrets in Freemasonry with the exception of certain signs, certain passwords. Other than that, there are no secrets in Freemasonry, which is quite interesting because it's—it's the oldest, largest fraternal organization. It's descended from the ancient mystery systems that were found in Africa, Egypt, all the way up to Greek, Rome, all the way to modern day today. It was just called various things throughout history. Today we call it Freemasonry. It's a fraternal organization. It's an organization that—we have a phrase that is used that we have a beautiful system of morality

veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. It's an organization in its true form, pure form, designed to make good men better, designed to be able to establish friendships when otherwise none would exist, to recognize the brotherhood of man and the harmony. This is so ironic because I'm telling you this, and this is what it is, and this is what my Caucasian brothers of course Prince Hall Masons believe, but at the very same time we had to have two complete separate systems of Freemasonry because of racism.

There are no secrets in Freemasonry. I won't reveal the things that are secret, the signs, and that stuff. You can do research on it. Unfortunately it's received a negative stereotype because it is perceived to be a secret society. It's an organization that has secrets, that's basically it. There are lots of those, churches, Rotary, Kiwanis. It can be an organization or institution that can transform a man teaching him just what I said earlier, do good, and do the right thing not because someone's looking or because you might receive an advantage and a comeuppance because of it. Do what's right because it's what it's right. Do what's good because it's good.

What's interesting also is that—so Prince Hall was made a Mason in 1775 and the National Grand Compact, that's what I was talking about earlier, that W.D. Matthews supporting was a part of, was doing something really weird among Masons. That is, it had a national Grand Lodge. Grand Lodges are supposed to be independent and sovereign to a specific—in America to a specific state. He was part of a national Grand Lodge so a lot of Masonic lodges started to break off from that. What's interesting is that—so there's a rich history of free Black men who were not slaves being Mason from Prince Hall to when the Grand Compact was created I think in 1827 all the way up until its controversy started in 1867, so that's forty years. Civil War jumps off in

1861, ends in 1865, so we have a long rich history of free Black men who are abolitionists, who were trying to educate, trying to free slaves. A rich, strong history. After slavery, W.D. Matthews fought, he was commissioned to guide Blacks to fight amongst the Union, war ends, he's traveling the trail leading cattle to where they need to go from Texas up to the North, and again, this is before the railcar and refrigerated railcar, and he's starting Masonic lodges. What's interesting is that African Americans—I've got to stop saying that—Blacks understood the value and the importance of this organization. If you ask most Black people today they'd say, "Oh, my grandfather was one or my great-grandfather was." It was what you did because HBCUs [Historically Black Colleges and Universities] were just starting up and it was rare for someone to go to college, but to be able to have the wherewithal to be a productive member of society, the former slaves realized that this is what they needed to empower themselves. Our Grand Lodge was founded in 1875, ten years after slavery. Ten years after slavery ended.

I'm extremely proud to be a part of the organization that in this state organized in 1875 and helped the community from Rosewood—I'm sure you've seen the movie *Rosewood*, and the fact that it was a Prince Hall lodge where they were meeting at, and it was a Caucasian Mason whose wife was cheating on him that started the whole entire riot. Just like Medgar Evers. Medgar Evers was a Prince Hall Mason who was assassinated by a white Mason. Byron De La Beckwith was a Shriner. As a matter of fact he has the Shrine emblem on the back of his car. I think there's pictures of it where they have him when he's pulled over. You can see the Shriners emblem on the back of his car. The organization has been fighting for people for so long that people don't know that Black Greek organizations and even Black churches themselves are indebted to the Shriners. There's a Shriner temple in Houston called Doric. Doric #76. They had their 100-year

anniversary a couple of years ago. They were founded in 19—either 1910s or 1920s, something like that. I can't remember.

But what's interesting is that the white Shriners sued the Black Shriners because they said they were copyright infringement and all this stuff. This is documented history. It went to court and what happened was that the courts ruled in favor of the African American Shriners. This was the beginning of they say separate but equal, this is not in the same vein, but it allowed African American organizations that were patterned after white organizations to legally exist. This is the first case. As a matter of fact Black Shriners to this day celebrate what is known as Jubilee Day, which is July 3. July 3, 1883 is when the Shrine was—I've got to get this right. I think 1883 was when it was started, which is another interesting story. It was started at Chicago's World Fair which was entitled—it had a certain theme. I'll have to get my Shriner's book and look that up. But they titled it a white something. Blacks went in masks to the World's Fair to let be known, so that's where the Shriners started in Chicago, and then they threw court cases later on July 3, and I can't remember what year, the courts ruled in favor of us.

Here's the most ironic and funny part about it. They were trying to stamp out not only Shriners but Black Freemasonry as well. They were just trying to get rid of it. We've got to get rid of them, they're not valid, and this, that, and the other. They lost the court case because, this is so funny to me, they tried to say that they didn't know that the Shriner's existed, and that the Shriner's didn't have any standing, or anything like that, but they lost the case because they were selling their old Shrine memorabilia to the Blacks, and that's how they lost the case because when the court found out that that's what was going on, all their claims went right out the

window. Yeah, I'm extremely proud to be in the organization. Most Masons usually refrain from talking about it and the main reason why is because they don't want to get into arguments with someone. There are so many people who know what Masonry is who aren't actually a part of it, there's books, and they call us all different types of things, idol worshipers, devil worshipers, and all different types of stuff. But the reality is in order to be a Mason you have to believe in a supreme being, you have to believe in a deity. What's beautiful about it is that Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs, anybody can become a Mason. The requirement is that you believe in a higher being. It really is an organization that is designed to be able for people to come together no matter what their religious persuasion is and to be able to fellowship.

Prince Hall Masonry outside of the church is really the only organization where Blacks learn Robert's Rules of Order, learn how to do a budget, to do a project, to raise money for the community. It was not only the social backbone, but the economic backbone of the Black community all over this nation for years and still is, and it's a shame that most Blacks don't know that.

Q: You indicated that there are or were at least a few white folks who are Prince Hall Masons and you also indicated that you, and you'll have to forgive me, but you did several different—you joined several different orders, the Scottish Rite and some others? I know my terminology isn't great. Are there any Masonic orders, for lack of a better phrase, please correct me, that you cannot join, that are all white, or that you would be reluctant to join? I don't mean Mason-specific.

Love: Sure. I'm not reluctant to join but there are some that I'm not able to join only because they don't exist in Prince Hall Masonry. It's my hope that—the Grand Lodge has established fraternal relationship, Scottish Rite has established relationship, but in Texas, I'm only talking about Texas, and actually Scottish Rite is nationwide, so nationwide Scottish Rite has recognized each other, but in Texas Royal Arch Masons, and Knights, and Royalists like Masters have yet to establish official recognition. Masonry is formal and it has procedure, protocol. The Knights Templar and the Prince Hall Masons, the Blue Lodge, the first three degrees, have recognition, but those two organizations don't. Royal Arch Masons, there's a whole entire off branch of different Masonic orders, different Masonic organizations, that you have to be a Royal Arch Mason in order to join. We don't have those in Prince Hall. It's my hope that when we establish, and we're in the process of establishing, going through the protocol and establishing fraternal relations in recognition among Royal Arch and Royal Select Masters, that it's my hope that once that happens then brothers from Prince Hall Masonry will be invited to join these other organizations that you're required to be a Royal Arch Mason.

Q: Okay, thank you for that. Let's go back to you were a city councilperson for seven years, correct?

Love: Yes.

Q: Then what happened after that? Typically, as you were explaining, several other folks had been city council people for nine years, you did seven, and then what happened after that? Tell me what year we are in now.

Love: In 2013 I became a city councilman. Let me go back just a little bit. I believe,I think the year is 1965, I believe it was, the mayor of Midland, Texas, Hank Avery—also incidentally he was also a Freemason. He was able to get a cornerstone laid at Midland City Hall. He was a water guy, he would go in and established water sale rights and that type of thing all around West Texas as his profession, but he was one of the presidents of the Texas Municipal League. The first Midlander and the only Midlander up until 2019 to become president of the Texas Municipal League. The Texas Municipal League is an organization for elected officials and city municipal workers that ninety-nine-percent of the cities in the state of Texas are members of. It's a state organization for elected officials and city employees. Hank was president, he was mayor of Midland, he was president of the Texas Municipal League, and he got a cornerstone laid at the City Hall.

I told you that I was on a short list for my predecessor that I decided to run, made the decision, and nobody ran against me. As a matter of fact the filing deadline came and it was closed, and I was the winner. The election hadn't even taken place. Election is in November, this is the end of August. I'm like wow, okay, this is cool. City reached out to me and said the Texas Municipal League, the TML Convention is happening, it happens in October every year, do you want to go? I was like, sure. In 2012 I went to my first Texas Municipal League Convention and I was blown away. I went in there and there is—Texas Municipal League is the biggest municipal league in the nation, there's none bigger. I go in there and there's 5000 people in a room from pretty much every city that you can think of in Texas, both elected officials and municipal workers. I'm in there, and it's the opening, and I'm looking up on stage and it's a Black man, and I'm Texas, and

I'm like wow! I'm in Texas, the head of this organization is a brother. I'm like—so he's doing his thing, and I'm sitting back there, and I'm like I want to do that right there. I go back and I start participating in the regional TML meetings. They have regions of meetings where you go and you learn, you do trainings about city government and all of this stuff. I was like man, let me find out how do you do this. I found out that you had to be—the path to get there was I had to be the board representative from the region, so I found out how you do that. You had to apply, and do an interview process, and then be nominated, and then voted upon by your region.

The current regional representative—god, I'm blanking on Barbara's name. I can't believe I'm—Barbara—anyways, she was a city councilwoman from Odessa. She also was a county commissioner, so she did both sides, both county government and city government. She was a representative and she would come back and talk about this, that, and the other. You could only do four terms, and she was about to term out, and hey, I'm interested, and she said, this is what you need to do and this is what you've got to do. I applied and the other person who was going to apply, who I thought would be some competition for me, was the mayor of Alpine, who was an Indian. Not Native American, but from India. He's a doctor there. It just so happened that he couldn't come to the interview that we were doing for the position. Invariably I got the position.

Man, how this life works is just amazing. My very first TML as on the board was in 2014. I remember it because I was in a hotel that the city of Midland booked for me doing TML. TML is from Tuesday, which is the board dinner, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, it's over Friday. I was also getting my 33rd degree of Freemasonry in the same hotel. That started Friday night, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday. It was in Houston. Obviously it was in Texas, but it was in

Houston. I was even able to, I think, keep the same room. I think I kept the same room. I might have had to relocate to a different room but I was in the same hotel. It was just amazing. My very first board meeting I'm like I'm going to be president of this thing. I walk in and I introduce myself to everybody in that room. I don't walk in nervous Nelly, and sit down, and see what's going on, no. I walked in and I introduced myself to everybody. More importantly and specifically, I introduced myself not just to the board members but to the staff. I made it a point to introduce myself to the staff. I could tell they appreciated that because no one had ever done that. City council members from San Antonio, and Austin, and Dallas, and all these places, they come in, they don't have time for staff. They're an elected official. They come, and they sit down, and blah, blah, blah. I introduce myself to everybody. I participated. One of the presidents, past presidents, I let him know that I was interested, he thought that I would be good, and told me you need to do this, you need to do that. I'm like all right, cool.

I go back to my city—my first is 2014. You can only serve four years so 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017 I would be termed out. Wait, 2014—yes, I would be termed out. I've got four years to make this happen because the position that I was in, only four years. I tell the city of Midland, hey man, I'm going to be the president of Texas Municipal League. Yeah, okay, yeah, whatever, yeah, all right, sure. I'm like oh, okay. My third year I apply for the position, I didn't get it. Didn't get it. I was like, wow. But in the interview process I was told by the past president at that time, she was like, "Hey, listen, you interviewed really well. There's a lot of support for you. However, blah, blah, this person said that she'd been skipped over. Blah, blah, blah. So we voted on her." I'm like okay, no problem, cool, I'll do that.

Another lesson I learned is I didn't trip out. I was like okay, if not now at your will and pleasure, god. I did it again. When you do it it's like a seven-page application and resume that you've got to send in for them to—you've got to make seven copies to go to the committee to decide on you and all this other stuff. I went and it was interview process and there was a couple of people that interviewed, but it was really between me and Houston councilman Larry Green. Who I actually thought was going to get it. But it was a two-year commitment and Larry Green said he couldn't do two years. So I was elected, the nominating committee nominated me, it went before the voting, they voted me, I was elected president of the Texas Municipal League. President-elect, Vice President, I was President-elect because it's a two-year commitment. I was President-elect 2017 and actually how the years work out, it's part of 2017, but all of 2018, so I then became president part of 2018 and then all of 2019 I was president. You go around the state, you go to the different meetings, and all that stuff, and you represent Texas. I had a chance to go to the National League of Cities a couple of times, which was awesome. I forget what it's called now, but there's also an organization for southern states that I went to a couple of times.

In 2018 I become president, I'm sworn in or officially take over, and I'm doing my thing. February of 2019 my mama calls me and she tells me, "Come get me. I need to go to the hospital right now." It's like five in the morning. I jump up, I fly down there to my mom's office. When I come in the house she's dressed sitting on the bed. I'm like oh my god, we go to the hospital, she has some heart issues and stuff. She really never recovered from that. She's a tax preparer and I worked with her for years and I took a sabbatical, but when she got ill I came back and I did her—this happened in February, tax season, I did taxes for her that entire year because that was

her income. I didn't know that she was going to die. That was her income and I wanted to make sure she had the income necessary to move on. I didn't want the business to collapse.

All this is going on and I'm the president of the Municipal League. I'm having to travel—I had to go to Oxford, Mississippi, I had to go to Los Angeles National League of Cities for their big meeting, and then I'd go to DC every year, and I had to go to DC to meet with elected officials for the state. Ironically I met with Joe Barton right before he resigned from Congress because he had a sexual scandal with little boys. The crazy part about it? I'm running in the same district that Joe Barton [*laughs*] had. But 2019 was one the best years of my life, one of the worst years of my life. My mother passed away. I was in Oxford—my mom—I learned a lot of stuff. If you have an urinary tract infection in seniors, if it goes untreated, it starts to make them a little loopy, and it shows signs of dementia. It looks like dementia. So that's what happened with my mom and it got to the point where she refused medical treatment. Although I had medical power of attorney and I had some other power of attorney, I did not have custodianship, I think that's what it was called. If she wasn't conscious, medical power of attorney kicks in, but she was conscious. Even though she was tripping, she did not want to be treated, and there was nothing that I could do, nothing that I could do.

One of her high school friends, she graduated with the same class with her, local pastor and his wife, and I'm just now trying to forgive them, they were friends of hers, and I was like begging them, please. She would listen to him. She wouldn’t listen to me in her state of mind. I was begging him please, she'll listen to you, please get her some help, get her treated. They told me, both of them, that they didn't want to because they didn't want my mama mad at them. I was so

hot and so mad that I just now just started coming around to letting go of that. But it didn't happen, so she came home. I had to take the keys away from her because she wanted to get in the ride and go off somewhere, and I wouldn't give her her keys back, and she was pissed off at me. She had a little blue raincoat, she put it on and she had her house dress on, and she just started walking down the street. I saw her and I couldn't do anything. But a little while later I jumped in the car and drove down to, it's an area called the Flat where people hang out and all that stuff. She was sitting there in her coat. I'm like okay, she's okay. I went back to the office and I was doing taxes. It was right, like near close to April 15 so I'm working my butt off. I look up and it's dark and I'm like oh my god, my mama. I jump in the car, and I go down there, and she's gone. I have no idea where she is. I'm panicking.

Turns out that she called my stepdad. They had separated and were living apart. She called him and I guess he—no, she didn't even call him. She hitchhiked with somebody, got a ride, and went to his house, and that's where she was. The police called me at two in the morning and told me that's where she was. I was like oh my god, thank god. Her situation got worse. It came to the point where the only thing I could do was call the county sheriff and they had something where if somebody was unreasonable then they could take you and put you in a facility. That's what I had to resort to and I hate—to this day I regret doing that. I'm torn. I had to get help for my mom and they treated her and they treated her urinary tract infection, but they put her on psychotic medicine, and it was horrible for her. I'm like what's happening, what's going on. My brother is out of the country, he's somewhere, I don't even know, and I'm like okay, what's happening, is she going to be released. Well, we're going to keep her here. I'm like all right, great, I'm president of TML, I have to go to Oxford, Mississippi for this convention. My girlfriend at the time was

helping me to watch and take care of my mom. [*Pause*] [*crying*] They released my mom while I was in Oxford, Mississippi, brought her, and just dumped her on the floor. Thank god my girlfriend was able to go in and get her off the floor. I'm in Mississippi and there's nothing that I can do for her. I'm sorry.

Anyway, she doesn't get any better. She starts having more and more health complications. She's losing weight drastically. Then she dies August 4, 2019. I'm still president of the TML, I'm still having to go around the state, and do stuff, and fulfill my responsibilities, and serve on City Council, and take care of her business and my business too. She's restored to her right mind by the urinary tract. She gets out of that place and she's just deteriorating, so we're trying to do the best we can for her, keep her comfortable, and all of that. My seventh year as city councilman, six years, excuse me. Yeah, beginning of my seventh year. My congressman Mike Conway, you may remember Mike Conaway, he took over as Speaker for a while, and was dealing with all the Trump stuff. Anyway, he decides he's not going to run for Congress anymore. A lot of us were like oh, this is about to open up. One of the council members I served with decided to run, a republican. I considered it. A whole bunch of people wanted that position.

I had some advisors, Rudy and another gentleman. They came back and said the *Cook Report* indicates that the 11th District in Texas, which is Midland, is the most conservative district in the nation. They said you have a better chance of winning the United States Senate than you do congressman in your district. I was like okay, well cool, let's do that. That's when I decided to run for senator for the very first time. It was against John Cornyn. I never filed the paperwork to run for Senate. What happened is that—I think this happened in—Conaway said he wasn't going

to run in July and I know it had to be July because I was able to tell my mother that I was going to [*crying*] run for United States Senate. Although she was deteriorating, she was really proud. I had my announcement, I continued to serve as TML president. I was the TML president in an odd year, meaning that the Texas legislature was in session, so not only was I doing all this stuff, I had to go down to the legislature and advocate on behalf of cities while my mama was sick. [C*rying*]

I made my announcement. I ran. She passed away. I kept on going. My term for president ends at the TML convention, which is the first or second weekend in October, it kind of rotates. I ended my term and I really couldn't do a lot of fundraising and campaigning until I did that, so it's the second week of October, and you have to file in December. I did a little campaigning at the end of October and in November, and around right before Thanksgiving we decided, got in too late, weren't raising enough money, and so not going to do it. I didn't run. There's a law in Texas that says if you have more than nine months or a year, I can't remember, left on your term and you run for another office, you have to resign. Because I threw my hat in the race for Senate, I had to resign my position of councilman. February, this is 2019, my last City Council meeting was February of 2020, and that's right before the whole entire world shut down because of the pandemic.

What's interesting is that I was keeping track of COVID because I remember hearing about it in October, November, and in December. Being a new junkie was hearing about it and keeping track of it. Then I remember, I think it was right after January, the first case, it was reported in the United States, so—[*pause*] I actually got COVID, didn't know it at the time. My girlfriend

and I got it and I never felt anything like it. Every time I coughed it was like an electric shock was going up my spine. Still sometimes if I cough I still kind of get that feeling to this day. I'm the type of person that I kind of burn through illnesses pretty quickly, so I was sick for three days, in bed for three days. Then I got better. My girlfriend was sick for, I think, two weeks. She lost her sense of taste and her sense of smell. We were like what the hell is going on. Afterwards in late March we found out that one of the symptoms of COVID is that you lose your taste and you lose your smell, so we were like okay, that's what we had. We got over it and I had to stop, drop, and redo my tax season, how am I going to do that with COVID going on? I was able to successfully navigate that. It changed the industry completely, for the good actually.

If you of course remember, so the insurrection at the Capitol by Donald Trump supporters happened on January 6 of 2021, so this is a shut-down of—started actually in March of 2020. I got sick in February of 2020. At that time people were coming out and talking about masks and this type of stuff. One of the people who eventually went to the January 6 rally was a Midlander who was found guilty, they kind of just gave her a slap on the wrist, but she was one of those MAGA, the election was stolen, all this type of stuff. What's interesting to me is I visited with this woman previously before the January 6—actually I visited with her—I can't remember when it was. It may have been 2019. I think it was 2019 because she was running for mayor and the council seats and mayoral seats are staggered. She was running for mayor, she came to visit me, and I was kind of short and rude with her, then I apologized later because I was focusing on other things. She was one of the people who stormed—this video of her talking hot shit. I remember reflecting back that in February of 2022 she posted a picture on Facebook and she made a foil

mask, you know, they don't even believe COVID was serious, and she made a foil mask, ha-ha, I'm going to start selling masks and stuff. I was pissed off because I got it and just got over it.

I can't remember, I said something, I posted something, blah-blah-blah-something, and so all her little friends who were friends with me on Facebook went and told, and so I'm a city councilman. She tried to front me, and out me, and all that stuff. You know you can't embarrass John Love. You know what I'm saying? You can try all that stuff that you want to. I'll tell you a story later about the city secretary, remind me to tell you that story. Anyway, so all her friends were oh, this John Love, this blah, blah this, this blah blah that, all that. I didn't really give a damn. The end of that story is that she caught COVID herself in March. Right after making fun of it. Apparently she had it pretty bad. She didn't become mayor, she lost that because she was a complete idiot and an extremist. Then she tried to do the MAGA thing and all this stuff. Her name is Jenny Cuud, C-U-U-D, like a cow chews its cud.

That's why I served seven years and not nine years and I'm so happy that I left when I left because the incoming mayor was a pastor who is just arrogant. You know how you get the feeling that someone is just a good ole' boy racist, but they haven't really said anything to you? He gave me that feeling. He was condescending, he tried to make some insulting jokes about me. I only served two meetings with him and then the subsequent mayor is our first female mayor Lori Blong. She's the mayor right now. When they first came on they were both idiots. Patrick Payton, we all thought he came in just to be a stepping stone. He'd been a pastor at a really successful church, got well off, and we all thought that he was trying to be a stepping stone to take Greg Abbott's place. I still think that that's what he wants to do. He was so arrogant that we

have a city manager's office and there's secretaries there that do stuff for the council members, make reservations when we've got to go somewhere, all of this stuff. He required them to communicate with his personal secretary to get anything done for the city. That's how arrogant this dude was.

Anyway I left and I'm so happy that I did not have to serve as city councilman during the pandemic. It's amazing how life and how god just moves things for you, because I definitely didn't want to serve during the pandemic, and I didn't have to. I said my goodbyes and my team was like well, with your financial background maybe you should run for controller. I didn't want to run for state office, but I was like well, okay, I'll do controller, that's cool, I'll consider that. Controller was 2020, 2021, I can't remember what the election cycle was, but January 6 happened, and I was shocked and pissed like everybody else. I saw Ted Cruz raising money off of it and I was so pissed off, I called my guy, I said, "Hey, let's run for Senate, let's go after him." All right, let's do it. I was the first person to declare to run for the 2024 Senate race. Unfortunately the team that was behind me, we just kind of languished and didn't really raise funds. I had a whole year advance start and just had a guy who was focusing on other races instead of mine, so I didn't raise any really good money. I went places, did things, met people, went to the Democratic Convention in the state of Texas.

The first time I ran for Senate and for John Cornyn's position, all the African Americans in the state were backing Royce West, state Senator, in Texas long-time state Senator. He's my frat brother. As a matter of fact, his son Rodrick West is my chapter brother, went to UT, a member of Eta Theta, which that's the chapter that I rebuilt for him. They all supported him. I'm not a

hater, I get it, no problem, cool. I am running this time and I've talked to Edie [*phonetic*], I've talked to Sheila Jackson Lee, I'm at the Democratic Convention. Edie is like oh, well such and such and such is supposed to be running. I'm like, oh, okay. Anyway, I switched my campaign fundraising guy and went to someone else who is just wonderful. She's out of Atlanta. She's real good at what she does, young sister—I'm not going to say what—I don't know how old she is, but a sister. She actually has done federal elections before. One of her clients is Fanny, Attorney General who is—what? [*speaking off recording*] Fani, sorry, I said Fanny. Fani. Who is the one prosecuting Trump in Georgia. We start on our Senate campaign and then Colin Allred jumps in the race. He's bringing $4 million, gets a $2 million donation. I was not running for United States Senate just to be a senator. I was running—I mean, that is enticing and it's attractive. I was really running to help people, help Texans. Just like when I was a city councilman, if not me then who, I have the ability to help people, so that's what I want to do.

My team pivoted. Colin's in the race, he's bringing big money, there's no way I'm going to be able to catch up. His money's going to out-drone my money. It's not a point. People still in this race. I went to a Corsicana event just last month or the month before, there were eight people running for United States Senate in that race, neither one of them were the two leaders that were there. [*Laughs*] But anyway, we pivoted, and we looked at other places. It just so happened I have—my mama was born in Navarro County in Pelham. My family's had a house there for almost thirty years. I have inherited that house, I've owned it for the last three to four years. We looked at the district and we were like hey, here's the district, and I was like that's it. I pivoted and I'm running for Congress in District 6.

Here's what's interesting about District 6. I already told you about Joe Barton, but let me give you the history of this district. This district was Phil Graham's district for over twenty-something years. Phil Graham was a democrat who in his last two years as state representative, switched to the Republican Party. He then went for United States Senator for Texas and became the Senator for Texas, Senator Phil Graham. The guy who took his place was Joe Barton. Joe Barton was in that position for twenty-something years and then in 2019 he stepped away because he was in a scandal, a sexual scandal with little boys. I've got a picture of me and Joe Barton. [*Laughs*] It's crazy. I do, I'll be happy to send it to you. It was when I was president-elect, so it's me, the president of TML, Joe Barton, and somebody else, one of the staffers, and it's a picture of us in Joe Barton's office. This happened literally right before the sexual scandal jumped off.

So he's out and the next guy, I think his name is Wright, I believe. I always get the name confused. You will remember this guy because he was the republican congressman who was a COVID denier and then died from COVID. They had a run-off for his spot. His wife ran and she actually got the most votes, but the second place—there's like thirteen or fourteen people who ran for this congressional seat. His wife got the most votes, but Jake Ellzey came in second, and so they had a run-off. It wasn't a primary because it was a special election, so there was a run-off between the two republicans, Jake Ellzey won. He serves out—he had just became a state senator or representative, state representative, I forget which one, for that area. He lives in Waxahachie. He'd only been in it four, five months maybe, when Wright passed, and he won the run-off. He served out the rest of the term and then in 2022 he had a primary opponent who ran against him, but he handily defeated, but no democrat ran against him. He basically walked right into the office.

We saw that, we looked at the demographics of the district and the makeup of it, and we are very confident that it's a district that we can win. The under-voters are—there's a lot of them. We have the ability to—the district historically votes 65 percent republican, 35 percent democrat, and the more people that vote the more democrats win, so with it being a presidential election people are going to come out. Plus it's our strategy to get the Divine Nine to come out and register people to vote, as well as the Masonic lodges to get people to register to vote, and I'm very, very confident that I can beat him. What we're doing right now, we've been raising money because federal elections are unfortunately about money and being able to communicate to the 850,000 plus people that are in each congressional district. It's heavily gerrymandered. I told you, the cities. It's just crazily gerrymandered but we are confident that we can win that district.

Jake Ellzey has, I think, at least two primary opponents already. He is getting a lot of pushback because he's one of two republicans who did not vote for Jim Jordan for Speaker of the House. One of them has received a death threat, the other is Jake Ellzey. Republicans are not happy with him at all. A lot of people in the district are not happy with him. Just like my first city council race, I'm sitting waiting to see if someone is going to join and run as a democrat in the primary. There are rumors that there was a gentleman who's going to, but I met him at that Corsicana event I told you about where eight people were running for Senate, he was there, and he has decided to run for Congress in District 32, which is Colin Allred's district. Rumor is that there is a gang of people running for that spot, but that's where he is running, and I really hope he stays there, because I'd really like to not have a primary opponent because that will allow me to focus on beating Jake Ellzey and not have to worry about a primary.

Once again, the favor of god and what happens in your life is influenced by you, you have the ability to affect it, the verb affect it with an A, to be the captain of your ship, to shape your destiny, but really it's the hand of the almighty as far as my life has been concerned that has led me to these positions. No, not yet Negro, you're not ready for that. Okay, now go right ahead, you can be the president of the Texas Municipal League. This feels like that same thing. Things are falling into place, just like then. I plan on winning, if I don't it won't be the end of the world. I will continue to serve and help in any way that I can. We're going to do it, we're going to do it big, and my goal is to bring representation to Texans. Texas is not a red state, it's a blue state that under votes. It's always been that way. It's not a conservative state at all. That's what our goal is and that's what we're trying to achieve is we're trying to bring out the urban vote in Irving, Grand Prairie, Arlington, and also the rural vote, but focusing on those rural cities, Mansfield, Midlothian, Waxahachie, Ennis, Corsicana, Hillsborough, Jacksonville, Fairfield. I'm excited about it, I'm looking forward to it. I said to you earlier, everything I do is helping people. I got that from my mom, from my serving on boards, my fraternal organizations, Omega Psi Phi, the Masons, even being a financial advisor and a tax preparer, it's all geared towards helping others. That's essentially what I am about. That's what I enjoy doing, that's what I want to do, and I want to represent the people of Texas. Although I will be representing a specific district, I will be representing Texas in the legislature. I just want to bring common sense. Those 67 percent of Texans who agree with the democratic platform, I want them to be able to have their voice, and do things to help benefit their lives, and stop the distraction politics that have existed.

I'm looking for my book, I don't see it. I've got a book for everything. There's a book called *Race and Politics in Texas*, which is fantastic. It talks about race and politics in Texas. It talks about

the distraction politics of Ma and Pa Ferguson and all of those things, all of those governors were pretty much represented business interests and the local wealthy white individuals in each city. Meanwhile the majority of Texans have suffered because of that. It still continues to this day. They used to be democrats, they switched parties, and now they're the republicans. That's my thing.

I try to be a peaceful person but I'm a fighter. I told you about the fight that I had first time I was called a nigger, I have been fighting ever since both literally and figuratively. My frat brother, we were having a conversation once, Scotty P, you know Scotty P. We were having a conversation one day on the phone and he was telling me, he was like, "Yeah, man, you had a fight every ninety days." I'm like, "Nah, no I didn't." He's like, "Yeah, yeah you did." I'm like, whatever. Then I called my friend Rudy and I was like, "Rudy, Scott said I got into a fight every ninety days at the University of Texas," and Rudy was like, "Yeah, that's about right." I'm like, really? Then I thought about it and they're both right. What happens on the Forty Acres is, and this is some historical perspective, Rudy will confirm this, is that I went to the University of Texas in 1986, I had the pleasure of making Omega Psi Phi in 1988, and so I started getting in fights at the University of Texas. I never started a fight, never started a fight in my life. I've never even fought Kappa's. Now I've threatened to whoop every one of their asses every time I see them, but I've never ever got into a fight with another Greek organization. My chapter brothers got into it one time but I wasn't there at that time. I've never gotten into a fight.

What would happen is that—let me give you some context to this because this is the late 1980s. Jim Crow really just started to end in the 1950s, early 1960s, Civil Rights were the 1960s, and

then the 1970s like Richard Pryor says, "The Negros got government jobs," right? So the 1970s was just a little bit passé. Then here comes the 1980s. Very rarely would you fight white boys or very rarely were there altercations between Blacks and whites because we all know how that ends, so it really didn't happen a lot. But at the University of Texas they have a tendency to insult you and they have the audacity to think that you're not smart enough to know that you've been insulted. That happened to me a lot. What I would do is I would insult them back and usually it was funny and made everybody standing around laugh. This happened always at the gym, pick-up basketball, always at the gym. Never just walking down going to campus, but at the gym. That happened a lot and when that happened they would want to fight me and then it was on. But what happened is, Rudy had mentioned this to me, is that—because right before that Randy Bowman [*phonetic*] was thrown out of a fraternity house at a party that he was at the Fiji's [*phonetic*]. The Blacks were all in an uproar and poked us, and all that other stuff. I was like, bump that. Alex Haley had just came to the campus and I had read Malcolm X before he got there, the biography of Malcolm X, so I'm like bump that.

I think Rudy had said that people at UT started to realize that we could fight back. I wasn't trying to—I guess people have said I'm a natural leader, but I really wasn't trying to lead a movement. I was just like all right, you're going to high cap on me, I'm going to high cap right back on you, and then oh, they're ready to fight, and then it was on. Of course this was before cameras and cell phones obviously. Then the M.O. was you get into the fight and then you leave, you don't hang around, and video tape it, and take interviews, and all this stuff, UTPD is coming. I would squab and leave. I like to think that it gave inspiration to BSA and to others that we do not have to continue to be in a subservient position or place ourselves in a subservient position because that's

what we're used to and that's what our ancestors did, our relatives did. Like my grandmother teaching my dad—my great-grandmother, his grandmother, teaching my dad to walk with his head down and not look white folks in the eye.

I took that and I started fighting for City Council, fighting for my district. The conservatives, oh, they play a game. There's two pools, city pools, in Midland. One obviously on the white side of town, one at Washington Park on the Black side of town. They spent four, five million dollars on the pool, and they're like oh, well, Washington is coming up, it's coming next year, or the next time we do our CO's, our bond issue. They get in and bidded into one of those now theme water cool parks with the little slides and the sprays, and all that nice stuff, so bam. Here we are, we're coming in, and we're going to do our CO's. Well the price of oil dropped and all of the oil councilmen, the price of oil dropped and we don't think that we need to be issuing any debt. I'm like, okay. I literally ask our financial—the city treasurer, "You brought this to us, this is based on the past, it's not based on the price of oil today, is it?" She's like, "No, it's not." "We can do this and the price of oil will not affect these bonds that we issued?" "That's correct." They voted against it anyway. I was pissed and I cussed them out in the retreat. I said I don't give a fuck. I said this money was supposed to be for Washington Pool, you all are not doing the CO's, I said, you all better find this mother fucking money or you all are going to have some serious problems, and I walked the fuck out and went home.

I got a call from one of the new—this was the Tea Party, the Tea Party jumped in. We had two Tea Party council members. I got a call from one of them and he was like, "Hey, John. I just want to let you know I think we found the money that we can do the Washington Pool." I said,

"Oh well, I appreciate that, thank you very much." He told me where it was and blah-blah-blah, and I said, "Thanks, appreciate it." Click. I had to continue to fight. I didn't physically fight, but I cussed everybody out in that room. Because you all had told me—I'm like, what about Washington Park? Well Washington Park is coming when we do our CO's, and then you all vote against the CO's? Man. They found that money, and they fixed that Washington Park, and I did the dedication at Washington Park. I got the video of it. Did the dedication of it.

But the story I was going to tell you about the city secretary is that so learning from my mama, she learned from the back rooms, listening, sitting in the kitchens as a little girl of what they did. She taught me a lot. I'm on City Council, I'm reading, I'm doing my stuff, I know my stuff, I'm learning, going to TML learning. So you get invited to these things, they want a city councilman to come to our meeting, to this, that, and the other. Desk and Derrick is a female organization of oil and gas—females who work in the oil and gas industry and it's called Desk and Derrick. They had an event and they invited city council members so I was like, okay, I'll go. I'm a vegetarian, do you mind? And they were okay, we'll get you a vegetarian meal. Before the event I got really, really sick, and I could not go to the event. I get better, I guess over the weekend, and then that next week, the city secretary says, "Hey, just wanted you to know that I got an email from Desk and Derrick and some not so nice things were said." I said, "Well send it to me." She sends me the email and it says that—it was two councilmen who were supposed to be there, Councilman Sparks and myself. The lady was like, oh thank you very much, Councilman Sparks was wonderful, and blah-blah-blah this, and blah-blah-blah that. Then she wrote, "And that John Love, who do these people think they are?"

I responded back to her. I probably still have the email somewhere. I don't know. I've got to see. No, because that was a City of Midland email and I don't think I have access to that. I wrote back to her and I CC'd, left the city secretary on it, and I copied the three TV stations. I said, "I'm so sorry that you feel this way. I was really sick and couldn't attend your event." She had mentioned something about we had gotten him a vegetarian meal and everything, and he didn't show up. I said, "I'd be happy to reimburse you for the vegetarian meal, but what do you mean by these people? That's usually a derogatory statement, reference to African Americans." Sent, sent it out to the three stations. Within thirty seconds, literally within the first thirty seconds, one of the TV stations called me. What is this, what is going on? I said, "I don't know, but I'd be happy to keep you informed." I copied the city secretary on it because I wanted her to let the entire city know, you can't pull John Love's hoe card. Cannot do that. My predecessors who came before me that you all could bamboozle, and fool, and hide stuff from, and all this stuff, you all got the wrong Negro. The wrong Negro.

The other thing that I did is I went and visited each of the council members before I joined the council. I just let them know straight up, I was like listen—because I told you they were already scared of me, they thought I was an FBI plant, and they didn't know who I was, and all this other stuff. I went and visited every single one of them and I let them know that I'm about entrepreneurship, self-determination, pretty much the same thing that they think all conservative ideals. Like ooh, this is conservative. No it's not. We want the same thing too. They were like, oh, okay. I let them know hey, you don't ever have to worry about me pulling the race card because I don't have to. I don't have to pull the race card. All I have to do is ask the right question. I left it alone at that. I went in letting them know, no, you all are not going to treat me

like my predecessors, that you are going to have to be straight-up with me, and as a result when I left the council I got accolades and praise. The *Midland Reporter Telegram* gave me compliments saying I'm one of the best city councilmembers that Midland has had in a long time.

I started out by talking about Hank Avery. Hank Avery was the mayor of Midland, he served as president of the Texas Municipal League, and he got a cornerstone laid for the City Hall. I was mayor pro tem twice, but I was mayor pro tem when I became president of the Texas Municipal League, and I got a cornerstone laid by the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Texas at the George and Barbara Bush Convention Center. I served as one of two councilmembers plus the mayor who served on the committee to design the new convention center. They tore down the old one and they designed a new one, so while they were doing it I was like hey, we'd like to lay a cornerstone. To this day you can go. I've got my name on two buildings. The courthouse was built during my tenure. They put all the city council members names on the little plaque, so my name is there. Then on the cornerstone of the convention center at Centennial Plot is a Masonic cornerstone with my name on it twice.

Side note, Hank Avery, I went to high school with his daughter, and she's a wonderful person. She's a democrat, she's a really, really cool person, and we went to high school together, graduated the same year. That's the John Love story.

Q: Oh we're not finished. The George and Barbara Bush Convention Center, what city is that in?

Love: Midland, Texas.

Q: And then the courthouse that also bears your name or has your name is also—

Love: Midland, Texas. Yes, those were built when I was serving as councilman for Midland. They put the council members names on the plaques that are there, so my name is there. I did the cornerstone. There was two sets of councils during the building of the Barbara Bush—they've got the one the councils at the start, and the council at the finish, and I was on both councils so my name appears twice along with my lodge name. Quite proud of that.

Q: As you should be. Can we talk about Juneteenth?

Love: Let's do it.

Q: Do you remember celebrating Juneteenth as a child?

Love: I do. Love it. I remember—I don't remember celebrating Juneteenth in San Angelo until later I went and attended maybe one Juneteenth event in San Angelo, but not as a kid. I remember we would come to—when we were living in San Angelo, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, we would come to Midland to visit Grandma, and Aunt Kitty, and Aunt Fay, and Aunt Book [*phonetic*], and Uncle Buddy, and we would visit, so we sometimes stay the summer in Midland. I remember Juneteenth in Midland and participating there. Washington Pool was small, it's not as big as it is today after the refurbishing. I remember I was the youngest and so it was me and Cary, we were young, Cary is I think five years older than I am, and Kenny is six, and

then David would have been seven years older than me. We would walk to Washington Pool from my grandmother's house. It seemed like a long distance as little kids, but it's literally maybe three blocks east, three blocks north. We would walk to Washington Pool and Midland, especially the east side and south side of Midland, is known for dogs. Dogs just run rampant.

As a matter of fact they've got a little dam. The dogs use the ditch like a highway and all the homeless dogs go and they use it, and that's how they travel the city, but they're mostly on the south side. They've gotten pretty good at getting rid of them now because that was one of the things I ran on, you all got to do something about these damn dogs. Because you couldn't walk—as a matter of fact, people who walk in Midland walk with a stick because of dogs.

When we were little we walked to Washington Park to swim, it was twenty-five cents, that's what it cost, and Kenny and David would spin the towels and pop the dogs to keep the dogs away while me and Cary would run. [*Laughs*] To this day my brother Cary is afraid of dogs. He does not mess with dogs at all. Me? I don't give a damn about a dog. The fear is—I don't have any. I'm like Daredevil, you know, the man without fear. You become a member of Omega Psi Phi in the 1980s, all your fear leaves you. [*Laughs*]

Q: Was it at the pool where you celebrated Juneteenth?

Love: It was at the park, Washington Park. It was named after actually—most people think it was named after Booker T Washington because there is a Booker T Washington School, elementary school, right next to it. The elementary school was Booker T Washington, the high school was

Carver High School, and it was segregated. The park was actually named after a Dr. Washington. When I was councilman I spoke to his wife. He was a tennis guy and he was instrumental in getting tennis courts put up at Washington Park and that's where I learned to play tennis. Now they've got rid of the tennis courts and made it a parking lot. But yeah, people would go around the park, and they'd be selling barbeque, and all that stuff.

Then my mother, she graduated from Carver, and so Carver has a reunion. They have it every two years but when the pandemic hit they stopped it. My mom died in 2019, they didn't have it in 2020. They had it this year, right? Was it this year? Yeah, they had it this year and I went to it this year. My mama was so proud to be a graduate of Carver and she has all this memorabilia of just articles in newspapers that are laminated and stuff on boards. I have all that stuff and I just didn't want me to have it, so at the last Carver reunion I went to the last Carver reunion and asked for—I was late and I just asked for permission, I just wanted to set my stuff up so people could come and look at it. It was very inspirational for me because I want to put together a database that eventually hopefully will become a book of Carver students and Carver High. I've got teachers, I've got yearbooks, I've got students and classes. The first state championship that Midland earned was the Carver football team. I think it was 1961? I can't remember what year it is. But yeah, the first very state championship that Midland got was Carver. She was really, really proud, so I have all that in memorabilia, and when I have some slow down time I'm going to code all of that into a database. I've actually already created the database, probably need to improve on it a little bit, that will cross reference students, and classes, and teachers, and extracurricular activities, and try to create a history. Because they're all passing away and they're getting—the ones who were in junior high when desegregation finally hit in 1968, they are all in

their late sixties. Most of them are passing, so it's something that I want to do for my mom and for Midland, is to take all of that that she has and put it so that I can share it with others so that Carver's not forgotten.

Q: You remember celebrating Juneteenth at Washington Park. Was it something that individuals, and families, and maybe neighborhoods took on themselves, or do you remember any organized celebration?

Love: Both. Juneteenth in Midland has been great and terrible. Meaning that really the Masons had gone kind of defunct at that time, I had joined in 1993, and so really the only other organization was the Lions Club. The Lions Club were the ones who were the facilitators of Juneteenth and they held it on too long. They basically kind of ran it into the ground. It was great in its heyday, and it just got horrible, and now there's a younger generation that is bring Juneteenth back, which is really great. Obviously this is before a federal holiday, before anybody gave a damn about Juneteenth or knew what it was about. We did, we knew what it was about. Like I said, my ancestors were there. They marched northwards. It has always been a part of us and we've always come back to Midland because that's where Big Daddy, my grandmother, and my great aunts, and everybody lived.

Q: Tell me the story again. Tell me what you know, what you learned, I guess, from your family members about Juneteenth. Because not everybody definitely in your age group at that time knew the importance of the celebration. For some it was an early Fourth of July or just another excuse or happy reason to barbecue. But for your family it meant something different.

Love: Yes. I didn't really know about the connection, the Pelham connection to Juneteenth until after high school. I think after high school. Juneteenth was just the day that we were freed as slaves, and that's what we celebrated, and it was good times, and it was hood, it was community, that's what we did. It wasn't until Pelham started reviving itself, and they created a historical museum, my mom was a part of that board, and then they have a museum now, there's a historical marker in Pelham and also a museum that's there. That's when going to homecoming I learned where my ancestors came from. That was probably in my early twenties, probably, that I understood that significance of Juneteenth.

Q: Maybe it was after you returned home from UT Austin?

Love: Yes. I had to think about that. But yes, I believe that is correct.

Q: What did you learn at that time?

Love: I learned about hearing General Granger's orders about marching up, settling, forks in the road. Forks in the road? Is that what it is? Hold on. I've got to get this right. Forks of the Creek. Dammit, I always get that wrong. It was actually called Forks of the Creek and then of course it was renamed Pelham by the Postmaster based off of the town that his wife had come from. What's interesting is that my ancestors' land was flooded by the College of Engineers. The College of Engineers was going around creating lakes and so they created Navarro Mills Lake. My ancestors' property is at the bottom of Navarro Mills Lake to this day. I'm pissed off about it.

I've got a deed to that property somewhere. I thought it was in this room. It may be hanging up in my closet, I mean, in the hallway. I've been able to go, and look, and try and track down some records because if they ever drill oil, which I doubt that they would, but if they ever drill oil in that place, we should still have the mineral rights.

Pelham is just I feel good in Pelham, Texas. Not only the surroundings, being in the country is wonderful. I've had friends that have come down there with me and one of them said that's the best sleep in the world because you're out in the country and you don't hear the noise from the city, so you can just sleep peacefully. Every once in a while you'll hear a car drive by the highway. We're far enough back from the highway that if you're asleep you're not going to hear it at all. The ambience, the atmosphere is wonderful and beautiful. I'm glad I'm moving back there. I want to grow my own vegetables, I want to have my own electricity after Snowmageddon here in Texas. It's just great. There's just so much success from there. There's a family down there, the Porter's, they own so much land it's ridiculous. Wealthy family, you would never know it, but they own a good god amount of land.

Q: Is it a Black family?

Love: Yes, Black family. Yes. As a matter of fact, my Aunt Fay was friends with Cecelia Porter Heiskell and the Porters were always taught never sell land, never sell any land. They were friends and they wanted to come back—my aunts and then wanted to have a house in Pelham so Cecelia sold land right next door to her house to my Aunt Fay. It was supposed to be an acre but it's not an acre, it's probably a half or maybe a little less than a half. Man, they were pissed off at

Cecelia. They were pissed. It's crazy because they want people to come back and live in Pelham, but they don't want to sell any land. It's a double wide house, it's four bedrooms, two baths, really wonderful place, but in order for me to do what I want to do I've got to get some more land. My brother has 8.37 acres and my mom had a half an acre, but they're in the same general location, but they're separated by Porter land. I'm in the process of trying to get my brother's land and get my mom's land in my name and then reach out to the younger Porters and see if they'll do a swap. I don't want to buy any land because I know you all ain't going to sell any land, but can you swap this half acre with me, which is still contiguous with your land, with a half of acre that's attached to my brother's so that I can have a little over 1.3 acres, about 1.4 acres. That's where I want to build a house, build a greenhouse, just do my thing there.

Q: You said your brother has how many acres currently?

Love: He has less than an acre. He's got 8.37 in Pelham. He owns land all over and he owns stuff all over. But yeah. I'm trying to put that together. I'm going to go back to the excellence that comes out of Pelham, Texas because my neighbor Cecelia Heiskell's son is Michael Heiskell. He actually lives in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, he's a lawyer there, but he inherited his mama's house, so they come down. It's about an hour fifteen minutes from Dallas/Fort Worth. They come down there as a retreat, Labor Day, holidays, homecoming, that type of thing. Michael Heiskell was the first African American to graduate from Baylor Law School. We have a good strong background of excellence coming out of that community. We're extremely, extremely proud.

Q: Just to complete the circle of where we started, you said there are less than thirty families that currently live in Pelham?

Love: People.

Q: People, okay. Not even families.

Love: Not even families, yeah, people. That is correct. I'll share this little bit with you, my grandfather, maternal grandfather, was Younger. I saw my aunt, who is my grandfather's little baby sister, I saw her at homecoming this past year, and I asked her about the Younger family, and she was like I don't know, your Uncle G.C. knew all of that, but Uncle G.C. died. Apparently the Younger family consisted of Blacks and whites. When I say Younger I'm talking about Frank Younger and the Frank Younger Gang. My Uncle G.C.'s claims is that we are related to Frank Younger, as the Younger Gang, and that Frank Younger was actually Black. I don't have any documentation about that. I've got to do some research about that. My Uncle G.C. died, passed away. But that was one of the stories that was told to us.

Q: Okay. We're talking Frank Younger?

Love: Jesse James. Jesse James and Frank Younger. Yes.

Q: Okay. All right. We have gone through a lot. I wonder—

Love: We talked another two hours? God dang. I cried, I laughed.

Q: [*Laughs*] There was a lot going on. I wonder as we bring it to a close, if there's anything that I didn't know to ask or that I should have asked and did not, or anything that maybe you touched on but want to fill in some spaces before we close?

Love: Yes, it's what I was saying to you earlier before you told me to shh, save it for the recording. Which is we're people and that's the thing about bigotry and about racism that is I think bigots and racists don't appreciate, I'm a person just like you, just like your dad, just like your son. I have hopes, I have dreams, I have experiences, I'm a human, I'm a person. I really applaud what it is you guys are doing and giving me this opportunity to share the things that I know, that I've experienced, that my family's been a part of. I hope it gives context to my life later on regardless of whether my political career continues or not. We're human beings. We're people. We have desires, we have dreams, we have hopes. All we want is to be treated as such.

The question is going to come up, John Love, are you for reparations? Not only yes, but hell yes. The case can be made for reparations so easily and on so many different levels, it's ridiculous. The case for reparations is not made to people who don't want to hear it, but if you listen to it from the fact that slave owners used to insure their slaves, and not only that, we didn't get our forty acres and a mule, but slave owners got compensated for the loss of their slaves by the United States government. Redlining, gerrymandering, Jim Crow, getting lynched because you were perceived to have spoke to a white woman wrong. The value of slaves in Texas was greater than the value of oil, and cotton, and other agriculture at one point in time. I say this to people all

the time and people are shocked, guess which state today has the most Black people? And they're like I don't know. I'm like you're standing in it. There are more African Americans, there are more Black people in Texas than any other state and the reason why is because when the—again history, 1836 Texas becomes its own nation, remember the Alamo. But what I remember about the Alamo is that you all were fighting to keep slavery and that Santa Ana and Mexico were like you can't have slavery. That's what I remember about the Alamo. Then in 1836 you become a nation for nine years, 1845 you become a state, and at the age of sixteen you secede from the Union in 1861. What happened is that all the other southern states sent their slaves to Texas to hide them, which is why we've got such a large population.

What's interesting is that the cotton gin plays an integral part in that because the cotton gin was not invented by Eli Whitney, it was patented by Eli Whitney. It revolutionized production of cotton in Texas. I just drove to Alabama three weeks ago, four weeks ago, for an honor. While I was driving I was like I've got to look at this cotton. I'm driving and I'm looking at it and I'm like oh my god, look at it, the cotton is just perfect balls. It literally looked like cotton balls out of the damn cotton ball sack that you buy. You could just pluck them right off the plant. But if you seen cotton in Texas it's got burrs and all of this stuff, so the cotton gin made cotton viable in Texas to the point that Texas became the leading producer of cotton. It's evidenced by the fact that we have a Cotton Bowl, [*laughs*] just like in Louisiana we've got the Sugar Bowl, and Florida we got the Orange Bowl, we've got the Cotton Bowl here. I'm so Texas my ancestors slaved here.

Q: I want to ask you two specific questions. Juneteenth, were you fully in favor of it becoming a national holiday? I ask because some folks say Juneteenth is about the emancipation of Texas

enslaved folks, so perhaps the—and people in Arizona, and California, and Wyoming, and wherever, aren't really thinking about that part of it, so this should remain something specific to Texas as we teach that history. What do you feel about Juneteenth as a national holiday?

John Love: I love it. I'm glad it was elevated to a national holiday. Even though it is Texas-specific it is the official end of slavery regardless of what Lincoln signed. Listen, the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln did not free all the slaves. He freed the slaves in the states that seceded from the Union. It is the official ending of slavery. I will tell you if ever there needed to be a holiday, it's that one, and they're not going to go back to the Emancipation Proclamation, because that did not really free the slaves, and they don't go back to Lee's surrender at Appomattox, right? The irony of the fact that Texas got another eighteen months of slavery out of my ancestors is just icing on the cake of what they were really about. That anachronism is you can't hide that. You cannot hide that at all, it is there like an albatross around their neck. I will say this, they're trying to get rid of Black History in Texas and in Florida? I would counter that and say, no, they're not. They're trying to get rid of white history because you can't talk about Black history with respect to slavery without talking about what you all did to us. *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, written by James Weldon Johnson. He wrote it, he was in Tallahassee. They had to leave Tallahassee because of the racial riot that happened in Tallahassee.

They try to compartmentalize us with Martin Luther King, Martin Luther King, Martin Luther King, Martin Luther King, and because yeah, to a certain extent they may not want us to know Black history, but what they really don't want us to know is white history, and what they did. So yes, I'm glad that this shit is a holiday. Sorry about that.

Q: My last question is about the narrative around Juneteenth. Folks outside of Texas are taught that all the rest of the enslaved people were freed by the Emancipation Proclamation and folks in Texas just didn't know, had not heard of the Emancipation Proclamation, were still working as enslaved folks toiling every day, and it wasn't until General Granger showed up and read it out, and that's when it happened. I've talked to other narrators like you who said that's incorrect because obviously there were folks in Texas who knew about the Emancipation Proclamation. There were also folks who worked, as you mentioned, as domestics in the homes of white folks who were probably discussing what happened, and how they could hold onto their enslaved people a little bit longer. Do you have a thought about the real versus perceived narrative about who enslaved African American Texans were at that time?

Love: Yes. If you look at it logically, what that argument is, what they are trying to argue is ridiculous. What they're saying is that, oh hey, like you just said, Blacks in other states were free, it's just these dummies in Texas, they didn't know about it. Really? You're trying to tell me from 1861 to 1865 in the South Black people were just like we're free, we're free, but shh, don't tell them Texans? That's the argument that they're making and it is dumb. It is extremely dumb. What was going on is the North was coming down to the South and having battles. You can look, I don't think there were many battles in Texas. There was maybe one as far as the Civil War was concerned. I don't know and I'm not a Civil War historian as far as the battles were concerned, but the war wasn't fought in Texas. Which is why they sent their slaves to Texas.

I think that's just a ridiculous statement. The reality is that slavery didn't end. It just changed formats. Sharecropping, the new slavery. Jim Crow—

Q: Indentured servitude.

Love: —indentured servitude, yes. Jim Crow, same thing. We know by DuVernay and her 13th Amendment that it literally legally still exists. I think that it is people who just really don't know history, don't know, and don't read. Here's what I will say is, is that if you were looking for a majority to tell a minority their history, you're completely barking up the wrong tree. I hear this all the time, why weren't we taught that in schools? Because they don't want to teach you all accuracy stuff. You have to work hard, you have to study and find out your history. People think that history is supposed to be served up on a platter that says here it is, this is what happened to you, and it doesn't work like that. The victors of war as well as society write the history, which is what's happening right now in the state of Texas. They're trying to rewrite the history. It doesn't matter what they do or what they say. I knew about Juneteenth before it became a holiday and before it became chic and before it became a national celebration, and I will continue to learn this, and I hope future generations from this oral narratives and other narratives that people have contributed to this will learn, and understand, and do research. I will tell you, I have seen like I said I think earlier that there have been a lot of revelations I've seen in Tik Tok videos, not just from Blacks, but from whites talking about the Black Native Americans who lived here who George Washington signed a treaty with of the Moorish flag. You know the story of I cannot tell a lie, chopped down the cherry tree? The Moorish flag is a cherry tree. A cherry tree on a red banner. That's a euphemism or allegory of him chopping down a cherry tree, of him decimating

the Moorish nation that was already here. You all can try to hide the truth and hide who you are, but the beautiful thing about truth is it always will surface. No matter how deep you try and bury it and obfuscate it, it will rise to the top. Between the internet and people like you, myself, and others, we ain't going to let this die.

Q: Thank you, John Love.

Love: I'll be looking for my $500 check. [*Laughs*]

[END OF INTERVIEW]