

Deanna Davis interviews Niland Davis
February 5, 2021
New York

SUMMARY KEYWORDS: People, racism, protests, trump, police officer, president, police, America, Black Life Matter, capitol, home, voice, felt, lost, life, surprised, incited, profiled, white house,

Deanna Davis: So it says, to remind you that you don't have to answer any questions you're uncomfortable with. I'll tell you that anyway. Anyway, my name is Deanna Davis. I am interviewing Niland Davis in New York on Wednesday. February 5, 2021. Do you give me permission to record and distribute this oral history?

Niland Davis: Yes.

DD: All right. Please. State your name.

ND: My name is Niland Davis.

DD: Your age?

ND: I am 46 years old

DD: Your occupation?

ND: Syndrome Tory corridor.

DD: Racial identity?

ND: Black

DD: Gender identity?

ND: Male

DD: Sexual orientation?

ND: Female, no, straight. I'm sorry. No sexual orientation.

DD: Oh, look, what am I attracted to women?

ND: Let me just take my ring. Okay. All right.

DD: Where are you from?

ND: New Rochelle, New York.

DD: Okay, tell me the long story of how you or your family ended up in New York. Or if you want to be in a new home.

ND: My parents migrated from Jamaica before I was born, they bought the house in 1973. Got married in 1973. And I was born in July of 74.

DD: How has the Coronavirus changed your life? 02:24

ND: It has changed my life because I had to be alert to be conscious of where I go. I have to be conscious of who I'm in contact with to make sure I'm protected not just for myself, but for my family as well because you can pick it up on surfaces up in the air, anywhere anything is possible.

02:49

DD: What was it like to be home for often? 02:53

ND: It wasn't bad. I'm a homebody. So I'm like I enjoy being home. I don't mind being home because I supply myself very well with things to keep me occupied at home. So being home is not a headache or a bad thing. It's actually a good thing.

03:13

DD: How do they impact you mentally and emotionally? 03:17

ND: Well, I got fearful and nervous, you know that I could be exposed to it at work and bring it home to my wife or my daughter because of the uncertainty of what's out there. And today, almost a full year later, there's a lot of uncertainty still present.

03:41

DD: How has it impacted you socially?

03:44

ND: Not, Not at all. I mean, at least I still speak to my friends, co-workers, family. Out of all my siblings, I'm the only one in the state of New York. So as far as work-related friends, we still interact as if the virus was going on. I mean, you know, keep distances we have a mask on but still talk and joke and have fun.

04:13

DD: Impact your family?

ND: Well, we just we're very conscious as far as where to go, making sure we're protected making sure when I come home from work, I change my clothes or screen to the shower. Put my clothes in a designated area to make sure it doesn't get exposed or be exposed to anyone, anywhere in the house, people in your household. Yes, my wife. She's a nurse case manager.

05:00

DD: Have you learned about yourself and your family since the beginning of this crisis?

ND: That we're on tour I'm looking for Debra flexible, and that we are adaptable. And that's the word I'm looking for we were adapting well done very well to circumstances that we can't control.

05:24

DD: What has been the hardest part of this pandemic for you?

ND: With the uncertainty of day-to-day, the strands who are infected at my job, we've had at least a minimum of 20 people over the course of the year that has been infected. That's, in almost every week, a new case. So it's kind of challenging.

05:57

DD: Has there been anything positive to come out of this pandemic?06:02

ND: Yep. positive thing is, we just know, we are resilient people. We bounce back and we're able to know what we were facing. And we can be adaptable, being adaptable, under circumstances like this is a good thing.

06:26

DD: Next question, do you think the nation will learn from this pandemic to be alert and ready for anything as possible? And to be prepared? Right now we're going to talk about the Black Lives Matter protests. Explain to me why you think these entire racial protests erupted?

06:59

ND: Came from Mr. Trump who incited people that were already racist, and he incited stuff that was already was the word accepted, I guess if that's the right word. And since it's okay from the President at that time, people felt it was right to voice, their opinion and voice what they were really feeling. So basically, he just found people and gave them a voice and he was their voice.

07:43

DD: Why do you think New York City became an epicenter of protests?

07:46

ND: Well, because New York City is a melting pot. Remember, you got Ellis Island Statue of Liberty, everybody came to New York. And you have every ethnicity in the state of New York or New York City, I should say, you have literally every ethnicity. So, and not all ethnicities get along for one reason or another. It's not just about color, it's about culture because there are some Caucasians that don't get along with other Caucasians because of their culture and their beliefs, and what they practice. So it's not just brown and black and white within your own culture, they're issues. That's any race, any ethnicity, any gender.

08:45

DD: To have the uprisings, excuse me, how have the uprisings across the country shifted how you think about your ethnic identity and your place in the US?

09:00

ND: Well, makes me realize that people are ignorant, and people share what they want to see. People hear what they want to hear people do what they want to do. And a lot of people don't need much of an excuse to do what's already inside of them or do what's already in their minds. So, for people to racial profile, or to act out in that regard, then that's something that they've already considered that they're already experienced, or they already accomplished because you know, the average person or in some cases doesn't really think about these things unless they're exposed to it or they've been, you know, I'm not gonna use the word brainwash, but a condition for a lot of these space.

10:03

DD: Do you have any stories you were willing to share about encounters you have had with racism with the police?

10:09

ND: Personally, I haven't had any encounters with the police, to the levels that have been displayed on whether youtube or Facebook or on the news. We all go through racism in one way or another. It can be mild, it can be extreme. And what happens is because of my height, and my you know, I'm like the sixth one, you know, and being around people that are shorter, not it's not a height issue, but to know that you are, it's tall, black guy. People get intimidated by it, and they automatically think you're coming to assault them or hurtful so they kind of fend off and kind of walk in the opposite direction. But not I have not experienced racism to the levels that have been displayed on social media haven't been that way, including the police because I make sure I put myself in a position that I'm it's what's the word I'm looking for. I put myself in a position that I'm not in a compromising or compromised way. As far as driving, or walking the street. I make sure I don't fit the profile. Like when my pants hanging or traveling with loud music or speeding and going inside, in, and out of lanes. Kind of conservative like that. Just keep it basic and simple to not draw attention to myself.

12:01

that they edited the tape or the other video, and only put a certain portion of the video on Facebook to give the impression that there was racial profiling. In fact, that was it.

17:25

DD: Do you learn more about the history of racism in this country since the protests started?

ND: No, no, no. You learn about history it's always been there, but it's been quiet. But for the racists to do what they did, they had an authoritative voice. And that voice was the former president of the United States, Mr. 45 himself. He gave them a voice, even when Trump was do DD: Do you think more stories among friends or family members are being shared about racism police's to protest?

12:08

ND: Of course, of course, of course. Even one Facebook I went on Facebook today, that's screw scrolling through. And I saw a police officer pull a gun on our court, I think I'm gonna say possibly to a girl who is Hispanic because you have y a different tone in his voice, and the guide police officer had his gun pulled on him. And he was like, and he was on the radio saying the armor I identified the guy but he was reaching for under the seat. So, he assumed there was a weapon of some type of deceit but the officer said yeah, I need your license or registration. So how you read I don't know if he was reaching into the seat or not. But, the officer felt threatened to pull out his weapon call for backup, and the guide I was in a passion you see felt extremely uncomfortable. But, the police were like oh, relax. It's okay. It's okay. He's like wait, no, I'm not gonna relax you got your gun pointed at me and look like you trigger-happy. I mean, he was cussing and swearing also but this is wow.

13:26

DD: Have you learned about the experience of someone close to you? 13:31

ND: Fell on people that work to talk about it. I've seen even driving home from work I've seen I've seen one of my Hispanic friends get pulled over by the police actually to police vehicles on all this because his car is kind of revved up but I have seen it you know we just hope and wish for the best and he was able to talk about it the following day or next time he came to work.

14:02

DD: Were you active in the protests that fall on the digital or in-person way over the last six months?

14:07

ND: No, not at all in any way shape, or form. 14:12

DD: Have the protests in the context of Coronavirus shifted the way you think race in America?

14:26

ND: People put their beliefs over their health so when the Black Lives Matter, was protesting a lot of them didn't have a mouse glide they didn't have a mask and some of the pictures and videos that I saw were kind of outlandish. Of course, there are no special people everywhere but they felt they were doing it for justice. And even with the devoting in November even though you know, we did want to make sure the button they were repping the Black Life Matter was represented throughout the process, and especially in Philadelphia with the votes turning and shifting in Philadelphia and possibly in Georgia.

15:11

DD: Perhaps you changed how you think about policing and racism in the US? 15:16

ND: On scabby care, for now, an issue aware that, at any given time, you can be a victim. At any given time, you can experience racism at any given time, and you can be profiled, and it's a real thing. It's a real pain, then you just got to make sure you don't put yourself in an awkward position. You know, don draw attention to yourself. I'm sure somebody's gonna say, Well, I don't. But think about what we do on a daily basis, we're loud with loud music, the way we dress, the way we carry ourselves the way we speak. And there are people that are educated and have been profiled and been harassed and been falsely arrested. So, it works both sides, but you just got to make sure you are not found in a compromising position because a lot of these perfect examples, there's a clip-on Facebook that a black guy and his girlfriend got pulled over unjustly because they were profiled. But, come to find out, the girlfriend and her boyfriend edited the tape or the video. I'm not showing everyone on Facebook that this guy was pushing 100 miles an hour on the highway. So what do you think happened to the police officer who pulled them over and immediately made it about race? Now, the police officer you could tell in his face and his tone it was uncomfortable because they tried to make it about black and racism and where he's like, hold on, you were speeding? What does that have to do with race? Was that to do with Black Life Matter was ever doing anything he was speeding, coming to find out the couple, the black couple was found out actually, in his campaigning for the election. A lot of the Caucasians spit spat out racial slurs, and so on, and so on, during when he was campaigning, so he was getting histories and why he could have gotten a vote that he got the first time he won, probably in 2016 because of the agenda, he was pushing racism. And he was only feeding into what was already in America. Let's be honest, the thing about America is every person in America is an immigrant. The only people that are not immigrants are native Americans. Those are only non-immigrants on this land. Everybody else is immigrants, the Irish, the British, the Polish, the German, the whoever, all our great grandparents or, our great, great or however, you want to either they came over on this on ships because of racial, not racial, I'm sorry, because of religious persecution. And they ran from Europe. Then they dealt with the native Americans and took over the land and went to Africa to get slaves and because of labor, the Native Americans couldn't handle the labor that was expected of them. Hence, the reason why they went to Africa to get sleep, the men and women who were there come over because they weren't able to handle and manage the labor that was required. So, they went to the Caribbean, you know, Christopher Columbus, he was a slave trader, etc, etc. So it was all about labor and free labor and suppressing people is racism. Really? Yes, we're slaves really? Yes. And that's a fact. But it's just sad to understand that former

President Donald Trump just incited people to show their racism. The daily and openly and consciously.

20:25

DD: I had a question. Do you think America has progressed or stayed the same in terms of racism gotten worse?

20:32

ND: It got worse because racism has always been here, racism will always be here. And racism is not going anywhere. It's not going anywhere. We can be sneaky. We can take

23:14

DD: How you like to see this movement resolved? 23:20

ND: Just fear each other respect. And know that each life has a value to it may not be valuable to the next person, but someone's life is valuable to that to their family, to their community, to their culture, that life is valuable, and we have to treat life as such, we did not create each other as God created us. So we are then taking our hand and applying it as God when we take life. Now realizing we are not God, and or gods but we are the results of his creation. And we need to value life. Across the board doesn't matter what color you are doesn't matter what culture you're from, or ethnicity. You need to valued life.

24:19 all the sensitivity classes until we're blue in the face. We can do community service and so this is going to be here. It's great to be here because you'll find someone that has a voice that will speak on the behalf of racism and people will follow it. So, unfortunately, recent racism I'm sorry will always be relevant for some people because it's a culture.

21:16

DD: What have you seen your peers doing that inspires you? 21:20

ND: I know, just getting up every day going to work taking care of their families, as I do, you know, we talk we, we share, you just keep grinding when between the corner Coronavirus issues and vaccines and the other injustices that are on the land in the country. Just keep grinding.

21:45

DD: What do you think about the cost response to the protest that began in May 2020?

21:51

ND: I surprised not surprised again because you have racist police officers, some of them consciously and purposely joined the police academy so they can legally administer pain and death and dust lack of a better word to brown and black people. Someone purposely going to go to the police academy to beat and possibly kill people of color.

22:29

DD: What do you think about the local and national government response to the protests that began in May 2020?

22:35

ND: There was from Mr. Trump clearly didn't care because again, his voice was to promote and push racism so much as he gave the facade of all this work together. But if you notice, there are a lot of things he did not disband or condemn. That's the word I'm looking for and then not condemn. He supported the use of words, to make it seem that this was acceptable or was okay.

DD: What is your role in achieving the outcome? 24:21

ND: Well, as a pastor, you continue to teach love and long-suffering and gentleness and kindness and meanness, self-control and you reach to people that can help the community learn. And it's not just about teaching, it's about changing people's minds, change people's mindsets. And to let them know that change is possible. change is possible but, you have to want to change for it to be possible.

DD: Is there anything else about the races of races you'd like to share? 25:08

ND: No, pretty much so long. 25:12

DD: What are your reactions to the evasion of the US Capitol by Trump supporters on January 6, 2021?

25:19

ND: Unbelievable. And total, total shock. To know that happened in our country, usually, that happens in other countries that are not governed correctly and are in a movie. But just know that happens in life and your witness may not have been there physically. But you saw the pictures. You heard what was going on, you saw the police within the Capitol itself, pulling out weapons to protesters, and what four or five people died. Probably it was up to five people that died. And it's real. This totally unbelievable and unacceptable.

26:18

DD: What do you think led these people to vote for? What do you think to lead these people to attempt to overthrow the government?

26:27

ND: The former 45th president? Coffee, he lost an election. He is a sore loser. And metaphor, let me go, let me go to this point. He doesn't like losers, because I remember when he was doing an interview in Arizona, he called the former senator John McCain a loser, remind you he was dying or he died of brain cancer. But, because he lost to President Barack Obama, he was called a loser. So mind you he was a war veteran. And from Trump said that he was no one better and he was all fake, and so on and so on. So, to have a president, or to know that you lived in a time you thought that really some of the stuff that happens you thought it was fictional, not really, because of if it was so easy that it rolled off his tongue. And he didn't bat his I think twice about he said, Let's go to the Capitol. And so since I've done the one thing I found out is that the Capitol was consciously unprepared for the events. Because you have that type of meeting in front of the White House, there have to be permitted. And whoever was the coordinator for the gallery in front of the White House where President Trump spoke had to apply for permits or a permit. And no one considered that there might be an issue. But going back to the Black Life Matter, they made sure the steps in the capital were guarded much more intensely than when the former president opened his mouth and said, Let's go to the Capitol.

28:38

DD: Were you surprised by how they were treated by the police? 28:41

ND: Wasn't a total surprise. But it was a surprise because there were some people that are no doubt were misguided. As far as their behavior and there were video clips that you saw police taking selfies with the protesters taking pictures and allowing them to go to the gates desk. There's video evidence and pictures to show that the guards or the police officers moved the gates and allowed the protesters to come in and again, they will take selfies and so on not all of them, but a good chunk because there was an investigation and it was actually proven that the guards are in manufacturing those guards. I believe will be prosecuted or were prosecuted for assisting in the rights. So, it was disappointing to know that you took the oath to serve or protect. You support something that was insane in the beginning.

29:50

DD: How about has he been at the police?

29:53

ND: Well, simple crowd again, I believe one or two police officers died because of the erection as it's being called. I guess those who allowed the protesters to come to go into the capital were scared or nervous. They weren't prepared. Their work appears. And because they weren't prepared decisions were made to compromise the Capitol. The Capitol police were not prepared for the protesters. Mind you, again, going back to the old permit, the permit was issued to the coordinator of whatever was going on from the White House. And knowing that it could have not been no one knew or could have known, but it could have got ugly, which it did get ugly. But again, the Capitol police were not prepared. But yet a permit was issued. And a lot of 1000s of people showing up. They have to request the members of the groups that stole the capital, of habit to be public of public officials, like police officers listed official members of the US military. What, if anything, should we do as a satellite society, but the information of these things. Good to know they're not above the law, let them know that they are expected to follow the same rules and regulations we know. There are two because they may have a certain career, our office our status doesn't mean you're better. You got to follow the same laws we do. And if you don't, then you're going to get prosecuted. Period. There should be no exception to the rule. period because lives were lost. Literally, lives were lost wasn't like a fictional thing could have been lost. I believe five people lost their lives unnecessarily.

32:05

DD: What do you think about President Trump's reaction to the invasion?

DD: What do you think about the things your parents may have had to deal with during their time, do you think that America can be better or worse, where racism worse might just be that?

ND: Because when you ha 32:12

ND: Well, he didn't respond, knowing what happened. He went back into the White House. I watched the news, probably. I'm sure he wasn't surprised, because again, he triggered them by what he was saying, to go do his bidding. Now, what if more lives were lost? What if one of the senators or the House of Representatives got injured or hurt or killed? It'd been I mean, it's down to five people passed at their level. It would have been more intense if someone on a higher level we lost the laughs on that hurt. People had on gas masks, they were hiding under the benches or in pointed chairs. So it was insane. It's been reported that a member of the Trump administration may have planned that attack but as a home loan protest campaign strategy, I guess what scared them on how you feel about that national powers. Premier also found pipe bombs in the bushes on the grass or at random in the vicinity of the Capitol. We found pipe bombs as well. So not surprised.

33:49

DD: But do you think about the impeachment trial of an informer 45? 33:55

ND: Well, he said he's not showing up. When I read that this past week, he's now showing up to the trial to testify. So again, he feels he's above the law. And he doesn't have to answer for 87 minutes.

34:15

DD: Do you think Congress or whoever has been tough?

ND: It's kind of tough because if they throw me in jail, you'll be the first president to be put in jail like that. Next mixing after watergate he resigned. I mean, Trump already lost the election so he doesn't need to resign but he is admitted to what he did was wrong, which he later did apologize for or some type of apology. But he should have done a better job knowing that he has a voice. He should have done a better job and use their voice more correctly. For more Respectfully, I write these in my own questions. I would love for them to the recent events of the protesting and meaning scare you guys, because it can happen at any time, any place.

35:25

ve a public voice, and they deal with the 45th President, they feel justified in doing and saying what they want.

35:49

DD: How do you think Trump's impeachment and re-election loss will hurt or improve America?

ND: Well, it's going to hurt America because it's going to only invite those who are already angry and racist. But, it will help America let them know that the system is no one above the law, and all who are participating babies like this will be prosecuted.

36:23

DD: How do you think the law handled Trump's impeachment and the possible repercussions?

36:30

ND: I think I'm not too sure about that. I think Biden has other things he has to deal with. I think he's gonna let congress handle that. And not say or do too much with it. So he doesn't seem like he has time for that. That's just me. Okay. You have too much time for that. Of course, he's going to get updated and tone and so on and so on. But, he's the president now Trump is a necessity as far as your thoughts and feelings are concerned. Surprisingly, Kamala Harris made it to the White House to become America's first strong female vice president after racism and sexism of 45.

DD: The descent mind, do you think America is ready for a female in the White House as president?

37:26

ND: Not yet? Not yet. So yeah, but not yet. I mean, I'm Coronavirus is a woman obviously. So I believe president Biden already made a comment to introduce her as the

next president of the United States or something to that effect. So, I guess in a sense, he's grooming her for the next election. So, I think not yet whether she's the first or not, I don't think it's going to happen, but not yet. Just don't know when but when was she the first female president of any type of column or not? she has a strong chance.

38:28

After getting 45 out of the office, do you think America is the laughingstock of the world?

38:44

Yes.

38:46

But do you say that because look what happened the last four years?

ND: Donald Trump was not presidential. He was not presidential meaning, his etiquette was terrible, his mannerisms were terrible, his speeches were terrible. Everything he did was not presidential. He wasn't suited to be a president. And because he was not suited to be president, it showed way spoke short, carried himself. It showed me a certain type of decisions he showed when times got tough. He wasn't presidential and there is a difference. There's a difference other presidents carry themselves with more integrity than Donald Trump. Donald Trump knows because he's playing And he thought he couldn't do what he wants, but he was not presidential not going to agree with everything a president says or does you're not going to agree with everything. But, you also respect them how they carry themselves as a man. And Donald Trump did not carry himself well as a man he carried himself as a bully and as an insecure man, very insecure.

40:31

DD: Do you think that if Hillary was made President in 2016 that most of the recent events would have happened example?

ND: I think remember the reason why I said it because she already had eight years of experience for her husband being in the White House. So she may not have been in every room every decision but she knows what she was exposed to a lot of things when those eight years when her husband was president knighted states. And remember, she was also the first lady of big Arkansas. Bill Clinton was a governor in Arkansas as well.

So being a governor's wife and being the president's wife, she does not a lot of knowledge. And experience may not be trusted to an extent now we will open one but she has gone knows.

41:41

DD: Do you think things will get better under divided administration?41:46

ND: Initially No, but Yes, because throughout to deal with the repercussions of Donald Trump's decision. Hence the reason why President Biden did a multitude of executive orders or reversals based on what Donald Trump put into an office or put into policy.

42:13

DD: Do you think America is capable of being angry?

ND: Yeah, of course as much as Donald Trump protested, I remember on President Reagan, Ronald Reagan, remember him as a child. And when he spoke, things got done. These were he was a Republican, you know, but the world respected what he said in a new Americans not to be messed with. So I fall back to that. And they didn't. We didn't want to mess with America. And because of Mr. Trump, we've kind of lost our respect and shine if you want to say

43:17

DD: Thank you for your time.

43:19

ND: You're welcome.