

Basic Detail Report

Title Interview with Tyrone Bynum

Date 2022 April 28

Primary Maker Tyrone Bynum

Medium born digital audio file

Description (a) Interview with Tyrone Bynum. Interviewed by Samariya Smith and Peter Moran on April 28, 2022 at Hartford Communities That Care Office, 2550 Main Street, Hartford. (b) Photograph of Tyrone Bynum taken at his interview. He was interviewed as part of the Connecticut Historical Society's Community History Project discussing his experience during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Tyrone Bynum works at Hartford Communities That Care as a crisis interventionist specialist/youth development specialist. He also creates documentaries about Hartford and its people. Tyrone first heard about COVID-19 online, sitting at home. When lockdowns began, he was working as a temp in a warehouse. He wasn't guaranteed continued employment, but the job was in-person and "essential" so he kept at it despite unreliable pay and unreliable hours. He noticed during the pandemic's early period that people were more understanding of the unprecedented challenges. He saw less blame being applied to individuals. Tyrone is a self-described "history nerd" and reader of conspiracy theories. The empty streets of lockdown made him think of the apocalypse. When lockdown lifted, he remembers the streets being filled with people. Tyrone is unsure of who to trust and what information is accurate. He remembers hearing that the virus began because someone ate a bat. He did not

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believe this story. He thinks that most people are like him, and rely on personal, trusting relationships for their news. He didn't vote in the 2020 election.

Tyrone was raised to be informed and skeptical of the American political process. He believes that elections are becoming more divisive because it is more entertaining, and politics suffers as a result. The insurrection of January 6, 2021 seemed to reveal the reality of the United States in two ways. People care deeply about their politics. And white Americans are treated entirely differently than people of color. Tyrone sees the internet as a space of brainwashing through repetition. He views mandates as warfare and attacks on the individual. He lost some family members to COVID-19. The pandemic magnified the need for mental health care. Tyrone gained a sense of independence, a sense that society is arbitrary. In one word, he describes the pandemic as bullshit. Smoke and mirrors. His lesson for the future is to prepare. He believed he developed more empathy and hopes that people reprioritize their lives after seeing others struggle. His advice is to trust your instincts, prepare, and support one another. He hopes that people will create harmony and manifest peace. Speaking historically, he knows that others have suffered more, and he hopes that everyone will remember this about one another, and the past. Tyrone is worried by institutional ignorance and mistreatment. He thinks this can be overcome by knowledge, especially by interviewing regular people. He practices this through a series of documentary videos he has made, interviewing community members in neighborhoods widely regarded as dangerous or derelict in Hartford. He hopes to someday create a safe house, a safe space for young black men to

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shelter from systems pursuing their failure. He described how this safe space

would work, training young men in advocacy while nurturing their growth.

Tyrone feels an urgent need to act, asking: “if I don’ t, who will?” Tyrone has

previously interviewed Samariya Smith for his video series and has produced a 3-

hour documentary from his videos.

Dimensions Duration: 29 Minutes, 7 Seconds