

Interview with Mr. Harold Mackelmore featuring Emily

**Total runtime: 7:12**

## **PART 1**

**[[00:00:00]]** - *(Background noise)*

WOMAN: Boy, something.

EMILY: So, did you all live in Black Bottom?

MAN: No, I wa -- I lived up around uh, that uh, Woodward Avenue.

EMILY: Okay.

MAN: Yeah. I had people that lived down in Black Bottom. So, when I was going down on Black Bottom -- I'm like this -- so I didn't even *(laughs)*

EMILY: Yeah, I see it's probably harder to remember.

MAN: Yeah, really. Yeah, my father and mother were takin' me down there -- I didn't know nothin' about it.

*(Overlapping voices)*

MR MACKELMORE: Duffield is still standing.

WOMAN: Oh, yeah.

MR MACKELMORE: Garfield -- the one where I went -- they tore it down.

*(Woman laughs and mentions a school named Barstow)*

MR MACKELMORE: Barstow was the first school they had in the city of Detroit.

EMILY: Really? First school ever? Thank you.

MR MACKELMORE: First school that they had.

EMILY: Thank you, thank you.

MR MACKELMORE: In Detroit. Very first.

EMILY: So, are you here every Wednesday?

MR MACKELMORE: Yeah.

EMILY: I would love to come sometime and just sit down with you and kinda interview you about your memories.

MR MACKELMORE: Come anytime you want.

EMILY: Awesome. Okay. Thank you.

WOMAN: Not only that, you know -- boom -- he knows everything.

MAN: Yep.

EMILY: I'm -- I was just amazed. We were talking yesterday and you were like telling me every single business and all the stuff that was going on in the neighborhood. It was amazing.

WOMAN: Oh, he know.

MR MACKELMORE: The bucket of blood.

EMILY: Yeah. *(Laughs)*

MR MACKELMORE: Tip-toe in. They call it the bucket of blood. They cut somebody up and fry 'em.

WOMAN: Where you live at?

MR MACKELMORE: On Russell and uh, Monroe.

WOMAN: Oh, my god.

*(EMILY laughs. Background noise continues until [[00:01:46]])*

MR MACKELMORE: Boy, sure brings back memories. Like I said, I call 'em -- another boy was raising me, he lived in Atlanta, Georgia. And uh, I called him and told him.

EMILY: Oh, wow.

MR MACKELMORE: 'Cause that's who imma send these pictures to.

EMILY: Oh, that's so great.

MR MACKELMORE: Yeah.

EMILY: Well, I don't know if he does much traveling but if he does um, we're gonna be up at the library for like a month.

MM: Main Library?

E: Hopefully, hopefully. We're gonna -- we're trying to organize a--a time where we can put it up.

MM: I have all my kids come up there.

E: Yeah, that would be amazing.

MM: Yep.

**END**

**[[00:02:16]]**

## **PART 2**

**[[00:00:00]]** - MR MACKELMORE: Delores Pitts and we -- I graduated in the winter. So, she had the gown and we had to walk up to Miller and she had to hold -- hold it up. So we could get -- walk up to -- so we could get up to the graduation.

EMILY: Oh, man. That's funny.

MR MACKELMORE: She dead now but that's a long time ago. Now, this here... is right across the street from Barstow. That's the store. We used to - next door was uh, I used to sell papers of -- 'cause I sold papers when I was a kid. I did everything when I was a kid. *(Pause)* And enjoyed it. I enjoyed this neighborhood.

EMILY: Oh, man. I'm so happy that you get a chance to just walk around it again.

MR MACKELMORE: Yeah. We didn't have much. The only reason my dad was picking up numbers so *(wind hits microphone)* hey, you know. I took it over... Yep. When my dad was livin', he had a heart attack. *(Pause)* Heart attack... I'm sure glad you got all the-- Ooh you got all these out the -- all the -- out the archive. That's--that's--

EMILY: Yep.

MM: Well, like that guy I showed you last night, he brought me that picture... 'bout 10 years ago.

E: Wow.

MM: 'Cause he went in a--archives and found it.

E: Wow... That's amazing. Yeah, they have just boxes and boxes of these pictures.

MM: Ooh.

E: There's like 2,000 of 'em, or something.

MM: Well, see a lot of people didn't know Black Bottom was a mixed neighborhood. You know, Dagos, Greeks, Blacks, and Syrians was all in the same neighborhood. Lived next door to each other. Eat in the same house. I'd eat their food and they'd eat ours.

E: Man.

MM: Yep... Wudn't none of that prejudice crap.

E: Yeah.

MM: You know, we--we had a good time. I didn't know nothin'--

E: That's so nice.

MM: Tell the truth, I didn't really know nothin' 'bout no prejudice 'till I got drafted in the army.

E: Wow.

MM: And when I got... I left from Fort Custer. I was going to... Texas. And when we stopped in St. Louis.

WOMAN: They got my picture over here.

MM: Huh?

WOMAN: They got my picture over here.

MM: What picture?

WOMAN: Over there. Ain't it in that room?

MM: No. *(In realization)* Oh, yeah, I know you over there.

WOMAN: Oh, you saw me.

MM: Yeah, Bert took me back there.

WOMAN: Aw, alright.

MM: Klien in there too and Wayne. Uh... but uh, that's the first time I... endured segregation.

E: Wow.

MM: And we were sittin' out there -- was three--three troop cars of Black boys and the whites was in the front.

**[[00:03:00]]** - MM: So the guy come out there with the ice cream and he stayed up on the other end. So, he wouldn't come back there where we were. So, boy named Charlie jumped off the train and went up there and asked him 'How come you ain't come in the back? He say you wudn't comin back?' So he just took the whole cart and brought it back there where we were. When we looked up they had done surrounded him -- three cars -- disconnected us from the rest of 'em and talkin' about we had to pay 'cause we clown down there.

E: Wow.

MM: Yep.

E: Wow... Gosh.

MM: But you know, uh, you know, a lot of people don't know this neighborhood and them days -- everybody was friends. Everybody knew everybody. And everybody *talked* to everybody. Wudn't none of that 'you black' and 'I'm white.' They didn't even think about that.

E: Yeah.

MM: And half of them Greeks come in -- they didn't know -- couldn't talk. You know, they couldn't speak no English.

E: Yeah.

MM: You know, they kids could, but they couldn't. The only guy that's still livin', he's down there named Pete -- he got Monroe Cafe down there in Greektown.

E: Oh, man.

MM: Yeah.

E: Yeah, I know that place.

MM: He stay upstairs. Lil' short Pete.

E: Oh, man.

MM: His daddy used to run Baboo - you don't know nothin' about Baboo. But uh, he's still--

E: What's Baboo?

MM: That's a gambling thing.

E: Okay.

MM: Greeks do. You know, with cards. Yeah, Pete's down there. He's the only person down there and Jim Pakas and Ted Kazeras -- their daddy used to own a store -- a bakery right on the corner across the street from Greektown. Uh... my dad one time tried to send me to St. Mary's. And I -- you know, it didn't cost nothin' to go to Catholic church. But you had to wear a white shirt and a black pair of pants. And I'd have to fight everyday 'cause they called me a sissy. And I didn't like that.

*(E laughs)*

E: So, that didn't last long.

MM: I -- He had to stop sending me to Catholic school. He wanted me to have a better education but I didn't wanna go to Catholic school.

E: That's funny.

MM: But it's good you got this 'cause a lotta people don't know nothin' about Black Bottom.

E: Yeah, for sure.

MM: See, a lot of people -- you talk about Black Bottom -- they keep talkin' about it was all Black -- no. It was three fam-- three different races there.

E: Wow.

*(Long pause)*

MM: Well, I'm glad you got it 'cause the rest of them be down here a while.

E: Yeah, that's awesome. Yeah. We--we -- so we actually have to take this down today.

MM: Uh-huh.

E: Um, but it'll be up soon I hope -- at the library. So--

MM: Okay.

E: You'll be able to come back and see it.

MM: Okay.

E: Um, actually, why don't I get your-- ?

**END**

**[[00:05:56]]**