

AN INTERVIEW WITH ANDRE KING

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**This is Claytee White. It is July 20th, 2018, and I am with Brother Dre in his home in 89106.**

**Could you please pronounce and spell your name for me?**

My name is Andre King; A-N-D-R-E, K-I-N-G.

**Andre, I want you to start by telling me about your early life. I know that you were born in Chicago, but your family is originally from Tallulah.**

Correct.

**Can you tell me some of the things that your parents used to talk about when they talked about Tallulah?**

To be honest with you, they really didn't speak on family and stuff because, as I told you earlier, my mother was killed when I was three, and so my family got separated; me and my two older sisters, we got separated. My uncle adopted me and brought me out here to Las Vegas when I was three years old.

**Oh, so you don't have any memories of Chicago.**

I do remember the shooting. I do remember that I got in a car accident with my babysitter and I remember flying through the window. Just some terrible stuff I remember. But, yes, I come out here when I was three years old.

**What are some of your first memories of Las Vegas?**

Of course, it was hot, no doubt about that. We lived on the base—no, at first—I apologize—we moved over into Highland Village and stayed there a couple of years, and then we moved to North Las Vegas.

**Where is Highland Village?**

It's off Martin Luther King and Carey. There are some apartments and then there's a housing

development. Martin Luther King used to be Highland back in the day. We lived in that community for a couple of years and then we moved to North Las Vegas.

**Where did you live in North Las Vegas?**

Off Christina. I went to Quannah McCall Elementary, Jim Bridger, and then Rancho a little bit, and then we moved on to the base because my uncle was in the Air Force and we lived on base. Then we moved over there in those housing developments right behind Boulder Station. I went to Chaparral and graduated in '77. But my early years was wonderful because my uncle, he was my judo instructor and my wrestling coach. I started judo and wrestling at four. We discovered the old YMCA on Bonanza and Casino Center. Now it's RV and P and P is across the street from there. That's where he became a wrestling coach and I was the wrestling superstar there. I played football, but mostly wrestling; that's what I was best at.

**Tell me about judo.**

That's how I got into wrestling because we went upstairs and we were going to work out and all the sudden there were some wrestlers up there. My assistant coach's son, he just got back from taking second in the nationals. My uncle kind of like sicked me on him. "Dre, you know how you can pin people in judo? Well, wrestling is similar." He showed me the techniques. He said, "I think I got it." So I wrestled my assistant coach's son and I pinned him in less than a minute and from then on that was history; that's when I started wrestling until I was eighteen.

**When did you start? How old were you?**

Four years old and I wrestled all the way until eighteen. I was a seven-time national champion for my age. I was truly blessed.

**Wonderful. After high school what kind of work did you do?**

I worked, after I got burned out in wrestling, a little bit at the hotels and stuff. Because I was a

superstar, I got some nice jobs at the time.

**Give me some examples.**

I was a food server for the celebrity tennis tournaments and other conventions and stuff that came in. I also dish washed, numerous different jobs in different hotels. It was nice. Then I got in some trouble. I was seventeen years old and I got in some trouble. I was fighting cases and I ended up going to prison in 1980. I did almost twenty-one years in prison all together. It was quite an experience, a great learning experience. I learned about life.

**What was that first day in prison like?**

Oh, it was horrible. Going from teammates to inmates, it was like culture shock. I was fighting all the time because I didn't know no other way until an older gentleman told me—like he was my big brother, rest in power, he passed away—but he took me under his wing and he showed me the ropes and everything. I went there with ten years and I ended up getting in more trouble while I was in there and got out one time for a few months and went back and stayed a long time afterwards. I got out two months after 9/11.

**How old were you when you got out?**

I was forty, forty-one when I got out. I became a militant Muslim when I was in there.

**What does militant Muslim mean?**

I was one that saw everything unfit with this government. I was just about my people. In there it was a lot of racism. People don't know what goes on behind the walls, but there's a lot of racism and everything. Everybody managed in their own group. That's where I really learned about racism, when I was in prison. Then the guards, they were really racists.

**Most of the guards were white?**

Yes. I had to fight all kinds of men. I was a fighter. We had some brothers that they litigated and

others did other things. I did fifteen years in the hole because I was a bad actor.

**What is the hole?**

The hole is solitary confinement.

**You did fifteen years?**

Yes.

**That shouldn't even be possible. Describe life in the hole for me.**

All it is, is just you get one hour out for recreation and to take a shower and use the phone.

**But the hole is a cell?**

Yes, it's a cell. Sometimes you could be in the cell with somebody, but I didn't like living with too many people when I was there because I live a certain way and I just wasn't used to being around another man all day and all night, and so I mostly did time by myself.

**You're in an isolated cell by yourself.**

Yes.

**Does it have bars or does it have a steel door?**

Well, it depends on which prison it is. NSP is Nevada State Prison. In the hole they had bars. Those are the ones that were there during Jesse James days. The real hole is down on the main yard of the max housing. They call it max, NSP, where they have the little hole in the ground and it was complete darkness. But when I was there I was in bars in a cell. These are the cells that you can't get out of if something happened.

**What do you mean?**

Because it's operated manually.

**There is a person down the hallway that closes your cell door.**

Yes, closes our cell door. These are bars that you can't...There are some people that escape

because they have chisels or whatever. That's NSP.

**Where is NSP located; which city?**

Carson City. It's the oldest prison in Nevada. I was over at NNCC. It's across the way.

**The one that you were just talking about where you were in the hole by yourself, now, that was which one?**

NSP.

**You're in the hole by yourself. What do you have to do all day other than that one hour out?**

It depends on what classification. If you really messed up, they usually take your personal property, and so you don't have nothing but an old blanket and some hygiene and stuff like that, your Koran, your Bible, or some writing materials and stuff like that.

**You don't have any of that?**

No.

**All you have is hygiene products and a blanket.**

It depends on the disciplinary action that was given to you. Six months of not being able to use your TVs and radios, commissary. You're not allowed to purchase commissary. It depends on what you did and the disciplinary action behind it. Ad seg, they could put you on that if they feel—

**What is that?**

Administration segregation. What that is, is if they feel that you're a threat to the population or yourself—well, there's PC, but I've never been in PC, and that's protective custody. That's where like the child molesters and rapists—not rapists, but doing stuff to the elderly, snitches and stuff, they go to the PC. There was a lot of times that I acted out because it seemed like the walls were

closing in on me. But I did hole time at every prison that I've been in.

**How many different prisons did you stay in?**

My first prison that I went to was NNCC; that was in 1980.

**Now, NCC is Nevada...?**

Northern Nevada Correctional Center. That's in Carson City also, not too far from NSP, Nevada State Prison. You have to go through a three-week isolation period, and they call it the fish tank, where they evaluate you and classify you and deem where they want to put you. The next prison I went to was Jean, Nevada, because I had a short sentence.

**I thought Jean was just the women's prison.**

No, that became the women's prison later.

**Oh, later. When were you in Jean?**

From the last part of 1980 to '81. I was released, but I had cases pending. I had three cases pending. In 1982, September 1982, Indian Springs opened up, and I was there for about three, four years. I got rolled up.

**What does that mean?**

They come and roll you up to get ready to send you to another prison.

**To roll you up means to pack up your things?**

Pack up your things, yes. I was involved with a guard's wife. He worked there and she worked there. They took me off the yard and they shipped me up to Carson City.

**What happened to the guard's wife?**

She ended up quitting her job there because she worked in the plasma center; that's where we met, and she moved up north with me.

**She went to Carson City where you went.**

Yes. I end up going to the hole in NSP, Nevada State Prison. I stayed up there until 1989. When Ely State Prison opened up in 1989, I was transferred there.

**Which one is Ely?**

That's the super max.

**Oh, really?**

Yes, super max. Everything is gun controlled. Everywhere you go there's gun control.

**The guards walk around with guns?**

On top of the roofs, when you're walking across the yard. In the hallways, on the door there's a lower hole for a lower gun hole, and the top one. Then inside the bubble, they're able to shoot you inside the unit.

**This is an open unit?**

Open unit.

**And it's called the what, the bubble?**

The bubble is where the guards are at, so the unit is where the inmates reside.

**How many inmates are in that unit?**

Over a hundred.

**You're all in that open space?**

We have cells, two-man cells.

**That's the super max.**

Yes, it was considered super max, yes.

**Do you think you should have gone to super max?**

No. I don't believe anybody that has anything less than twenty years should go to max because you have individuals that have astronomical time and they don't want to hear about nobody



getting ready to get out. You know what I'm saying? And so a lot of people have gotten hurt and some have gotten killed because somebody was jealous of them about to be leaving.

In prison, I'm going to tell you something, it's like wild kingdom and it's the worst of the worst. And so if you're not used to doing time and all that, you usually act out like I did. I mean, I was fighting everybody because I didn't trust nobody; I thought people wanted to do something to me, which they did. But up there at super max, Ely, it was something else.

That's where I became a Muslim. It was a steppingstone to where I'm at spiritually now because God has always had his hand in my life. I was a Christian. Before I got in trouble—I apologize—before I got in trouble, I was in a foster home for a few months and my foster parent beat me. We just got out of church and I ran away from the church.

**How old were you at that time?**

At that time I was fifteen, sixteen years old. He beat me, and so I hated Christianity and I hated anything church. I wasn't religious and all the sudden these Muslim brothers came to me.

**Now, this is before you ever went to prison?**

Yes, this is before. I apologize, I should have mentioned that. But, yes, this is before I went to prison I was going to church with my foster—matter of fact, the man's name is Moses and his wife, a beautiful lady, Sarah, Moses and Sarah. He was six-foot-six, three hundred and fifty pounds.

**Why did he have to beat you that day?**

We were getting ready to leave to go out of town and there was a young lady Sylvia Green that lived across the street. The outfit I wanted to put on was on the mobile home, and so I hear Sylvia say, "Dre, you're not going to hug me and say goodbye to me?" And I'm talking to her through the window. All the sudden he step on. "Didn't I tell you to change your clothes?" And I

said, "I am." But he heard me talking to her, so I guess I couldn't do two things at one time. He came in there and he hit me in my head. If it wasn't for God giving me the strength, because it's a small area on the camper, so I was able to push him off me and I ran.

Yes, that was a turning point as far as my spirituality. I didn't care too much about Christianity because we just got out of church and he was flopping on the floor, foaming at the mouth, like the Holy Ghost hit him or something, and I couldn't understand how he would beat me. His eyes were bloodshot red. I was like...

So when I get to prison...

**Did you go to prison for that?**

No. I was able to go back home. I was wrestling a little bit, but I was getting burned out. When I just completely stopped—because, you see, I had two wrestling practices. And I'm sorry if I'm going backward and forward.

**No, I'm fine. I'm following.**

You see, I had my school practice and then sometimes I would run to the YMCA.

**You had a community and the school.**

Yes. I wrestled all over the United States. The only states that I haven't been to is New England states and Minnesota, but every other state I wrestled in. Our wrestling team was ranked second at one time in the whole United States.

**Wasn't that a lot of good discipline for your life?**

Oh, it was beautiful. It was beautiful. The only problem was, is that the Vietnam War messed up my uncle.

**The uncle who had adopted you.**

Yes. He was abusive.

**Now, is the uncle the same person who beat you at fifteen?**

No. That was the foster parent. I had messed up and went to juvenile, and so they said, "Okay." They wanted to teach me a lesson. "We're going to see how you live somewhere else and under somebody else's roof."

**That's what your uncle said?**

Yes. My mother didn't want that. She cried.

**After all the wrestling and the traveling, when did you have time to get into trouble?**

That's what I'm saying. It's just like an animal is caged up and finally the door is open. It was just like that [snapping]. I ran away when I lived over there by Boulder Station.

**Were you with the uncle?**

My uncle and my mother. We lived right there. Down the street was a family, the Reeses, and the oldest son was my best friend. I ran with him. He was always into doing things.

**Something mischievous.**

Mischievous, yes.

**Did he actually get into real crime?**

Yes, yes.

**What was he doing that was illegal?**

At the time he was into burglaries and stuff. He had gone to Spring Mountain and all this.

**Spring Mountain is a correctional institution?**

It's youth, yes.

**Up at Mount Charleston?**

Yes.

**Okay, I've heard of that one.**

It was exciting to me because the things he would steal, like jewelry and all that, he used to give me a bunch of gold.

**Bling.**

Bling-bling at the time, what they called bling-bling at the time. All the sudden he stopped. He said, "You're going to have to come on with me if you want your own." I said, "Nah, I'm not going to..."

One day I went with him and got into that life of crime. He and I separated and I did something with this one individual and he told on me. He testified against me; that's how I went to prison the first time.

**Another robbery?**

Another burglary, yes.

**Burglary. With another partner and the partner informed on you.**

Yes, informed on me, yes.

**That's how you started going to prison.**

Yes. My first offense I got the max years, ten years for a burglary.

**Ten years for burglary?**

Yes, my first offense.

**Did you have a good attorney?**

At the time my parents—well, my mother, she was out of state. She became a referee for wrestling, and so she went to the Pan American Games and all that. She was the first woman referee. She was going with my assistant coach because my uncle took ill. He had multiple sclerosis. My uncle, of course, he's not going to pay for no lawyer because he's military. He's by the book, and so he wasn't going for that. It was a public defender.

**What I have a problem with in your case is that you had the discipline of wrestling and judo. I can't make that jump even though your support is a little sketchy because your mom is there sometimes, your uncle is there sometimes. But what made you decide to follow Reese and this other partner?**

Like I said, it was just fascinating to me.

**Oh, so it was the excitement.**

The excitement, yes. The first time that we got away with something and we seen the police, *vroom*, going by, it was an adrenaline rush. I never got high, but that was my high. To walk around draped and women gawking..."Can I wear it?" And I'm like...

**The first place they sent you, when you got the ten years, was Indian Springs?**

No. They sent me to NNCC. That's where the fish tank—

**Carson City was first?**

Yes, yes. You know the fish tank?

**To evaluate you.**

To evaluate me, yes.

**How long were you there?**

I was there for about a month.

**That's just for evaluation.**

Yes.

**Then they sent you to?**

They sent me to Pioche. It's an honor camp. I had messed up there.

**You messed up at the honor camp?**

At the honor camp. And they shipped me to Jean.

**How long were you at the honor camp?**

Oh, months, a few months, yes.

**When you say you "messed up," did they catch you fighting?**

Yes, I got in a fight with a guy, yes.

**Now, what happens to the other person who is in the fight?**

Well, because he was a snitch, he had been snitching on people, he was the lieutenant's pet...And so they sent me to Jean.

**Jean is number three. Jean is from 1980 to 1981.**

Eighty-one it expired, and I had some cases pending.

**What do you mean "cases pending?"**

Pending means that I was fighting cases while I was still in prison. I was sentenced on one case—

**But there were other cases also.**

Yes.

**I didn't understand that. While you were in Jean, you were still going to court?**

Yes, I was still going to court.

**Are you going to the court in Las Vegas?**

Yes, coming into Las Vegas, yes.

**With the same public defender?**

No, somebody else.

**Public defender?**

Yes, yes. I was sentenced and that's how I ended up going to Indian Springs in '82, when it opened up.

**When you were sentenced again that put more time along with the ten years? In addition?**

In addition, yes, in addition.

**You have how many years by the time you're getting ready to go to Indian Springs?**

All together I was having seventeen and a half years.

**All the cases are over at that time; nothing else pending?**

No, I still had a couple more pending.

**Still had some pending, wow. So what happens?**

They ended up dropping two. When I got out for the few months—

**You got out early?**

No, I mean—yes. You see, when you work and stuff, you get stat time.

**You got some time on the books.**

Yes, the stat time eats away after your sentence, and then you're day for day until they both meet.

I would be going on fires during the days at the honor camp. The honor camp is really where you want to go because you're getting day for day off your sentence.

**A day served is a day off the sentence.**

It's day for day, yes, like thirty days is thirty days.

**Off of the sentence.**

Off the back. So it's like sixty days in a sense.

**When you were at the honor camp, you did some firefighting?**

Yes.

**How did they train you for that?**

First they test your lungs and see if you're able to have some stamina. Then they show you the tools. They put you on different crews.

**Did you go out of state to fight fires or all here in Nevada?**

All in Nevada. I went on forty-eight fires all together.

**But that was only for the few months that you were there.**

The few months. I went to camp twice.

**You went to honor camp twice?**

Yes. When I was at Indian Springs.

**They transfer you back to...**

Outside the—see, the honor camp at Indian Springs is right outside the prison gates.

**Oh, wait. Pioche is not the only honor camp.**

No. Those are the only two camps that I've been to.

**Indian Springs had an honor camp also.**

Right outside the premises of the prison. That's where I did my first really bit of time.

**How long were you in the honor camp at Indian Springs?**

I was there about a good—maybe close to a year and a half, maybe. Then I messed up and they brought me back up to the...

**When you say "messed up," you got into another fight?**

No, not a fight. I cussed the lieutenant out, the sergeant, and so they brought me back to the yard.

Then I got in trouble with the...

**They sent you back into Indian Springs?**

Indian Springs Prison, yes, they sent me back. About a year and a half later I got in trouble because I was involved with the guard's wife, and they shipped me up north to NNCC.

**And then you went back to...**

I got in a fight with some Native Americans. There was a riot and everything.



**Wait. After the guard's wife, they sent you to?**

Carson City, in the hole, but they shipped me just momentarily to NNCC.

**You actually go to...**

It was like a round-trip. You know what I'm saying? Because I ended up messing up and having to come back to NSP all over again. Then from NSP, in '89 Ely opened up; that super max that I was talking about. Like I was saying, I was messing up.

**Did the guard's wife continue to go with you to all these places?**

Yes. What had happened was that she took ill. She ended up moving with her daughter who had at one time disowned her. I just heard she passed away a couple years afterwards. She was up there for about six or eight months.

**Eventually you were released from the super max for your freedom.**

Yes, I was released from my super max in 2001, two months after 9/11, on my mother's birthday, November 28th. I expired my sentences twice on her birthday; one of my other sentences was on November 28th, yes. I've been out going on—this November 28th will be seventeen years I've been out. I haven't been in no trouble or nothing.

**With this kind of record can you actually get a job?**

At the time I entered a reentry program, several of them, and got my certificates and everything. I went to go to work and all of a sudden some individuals, they were haters and they told the boss man, "Do you know he did a lot of time? He did twenty-something years."

**Didn't the boss know this?**

Well, at the time I kind of hid...

**I thought after a reentry program, don't they find jobs for you?**

Yes, they found a job. But on the application, you see, when I filled out the application—no, this

is what happened. I apologize, I apologize, I apologize. This was another instance. I apologize. The reentry program, yes, they knew. I just didn't put on the application exactly the numerous times that I was incarcerated or how long; that's what it was. That's what it was, yes.

**How did the person who informed on you to the boss, how did they know?**

They were in prison with me. I beat up one of their family members. The boss came and asked me, "I heard you did a lot of time. Were you in there for murder?" I said, "No." He said, "Didn't you stab a guard or fighting guards and stuff?" I said, "Yes, but that was when I was young. But I'm trying to work." One thing about me, I have good work ethics, and he liked me a lot.

**What kind of job was it?**

Oh, it was just a dishwasher at the time.

**At one of the casinos, hotels?**

Yes. Then after that I got kind of discouraged, but I ended up finding another job at the Sands Expo. I became a crew boss and almost became a boss, and I got crossed out behind this young lady.

**You got what behind...?**

Crossed out.

**What does that mean?**

Meaning that I allowed myself to get put in an uncompromising position. I had an all-female crew, and she was into women. The main woman I had my eyes on ended up being my wife. The way she worked, she worked like she had octopus arms, doing something of everything, with her feet and everything. So when I'm on top of the little railway with the bosses, they're like, "Man, who is that right there?" I said, "That's my girl right there. That's my main girl right there." But this one female, she was a crew boss, too, and she liked my wife. I didn't know my wife was into

women also. They were bickering back and forth. The next thing, "Leave my coworker alone. Matter of fact, leave my woman alone." "Ah, she your woman now?" You know what I'm saying? "You know, she's been mine..." No.

But anyway, that was just one of those things that I didn't know how to deal with it. And that was my last job; that was 2003, and I became self-employed from then on.

**What kind of work did you do self-employed?**

I was selling body oils, burning oils, incense, car fresheners. I hooked up with this young lady, Denay, and we were selling clothes. I had two booths at the Indoor Swap Meets in North Las Vegas and then off Rancho and Washington. That's what I did until about...It was about four years I did that. I ended up separating from my wife and that's when I had my stroke.

**After you separated you had a stroke?**

I had a stroke when I was with her. I couldn't maintain both spots. I just eventually started...They say hustling...doing the same thing in my wheelchair, going throughout Vegas, and I was doing good, real well.

**After your stroke and then you did a few years in the wheelchair.**

Yes, I've been in the wheelchair since my stroke. For about four and a half to five years I was selling stuff.

**Tell me what October One meant to you.**

It was just something that I couldn't understand, how people were scattering and running for their lives, not knowing where to go. I seen little kids in strollers and their parents pushing them, trying to...It kind of messed me up. But throughout life, I never got over my mother's death. And then I've been shot, too.

**How did you get shot?**

I got shot not too far from here. I got caught in a crossfire one time and then another time I was at a barbeque.

**You've been shot twice?**

I've been shot at and was shot, yes.

**Here in the neighborhood?**

Yes. When this happened it's like God put it in my heart, like "go and try to comfort these people" and that's what I ended up doing.

**What happened the first day that you decided to do this?**

Oh, it was the final day. It was First Friday. It was the final day of the completion because it took three days—

**Completion of?**

Of the Healing Garden. I was in my wheelchair. I had to put old Betsy in Jeep Cherokee mode. I passed out food and water to all the volunteers. They gave me the honor to tie a ribbon on one of the fifty-eight trees.

**Oh, wow. Where did you get the food and water that you were passing out?**

People donated it. I passed the food and stuff out. The next day God told me, "Go back, go back, go back." I said, "There's something I could do for these people." And that was to lend an ear, a tear, a hug. My spirit was kind of messing with me because I had done things in this community, going to coroner's inquests, going to marches, speaking to the county commissioners and all them, at one time before I met my queen. She passed five years ago.

**This is since prison you're talking about.**

After I got out of prison, after I got a divorce, yes.

**You were doing all kinds of things in the community?**

Yes. I was an activist somewhat. When I met Angela, she was so wounded from the two previous baby daddies, and so I wanted to show her that she was a beautiful queen. I stopped completely and just tried to take care of my butterfly, my beautiful butterfly. These are the things that I never healed from. God didn't tell me at the time this is where your healing is going to be, it became my healing by going every day. I met forty families and hugged over three thousand survivors, and so it's like a transference of pain when I hugged them.

I met stone-cold haters. Matter of fact, ninety-nine percent of them love Trump.

**Ninety-nine percent of whom?**

The country.

**Oh, the country music people.**

Yes, they love Trump. But I don't get into that because, man, you almost lost your life, and so you're worried about politics? You've got better things to worry about, your family, yourselves.

Anyway, I met—matter of fact, the family that gave me this thirty-thousand-dollar chair—this is a thirty-thousand-dollar chair. Hydraulics, it could put me in my bed. You've got a control on the back, too, besides this one. They brought it from California. Their sister died from multiple sclerosis.

One gentleman had swastikas and lightning bolts; he's a hater. But God is a great God, and so he showed me "hold your peace; this is not about you until it is about you, the healing part."

This guy was with his mother and he said, "Brother Dre." That's what they call me. He said, "Brother Dre, how would you like a brand-new chair?" I had this one for five years and I was trying to get another one, a bigger one. All of a sudden, man, I was having problems with Medicaid, because Trump is in office, right? So I said, "Yes, right." His mother came up to me

and she put her head to my chest and she was crying and I hugged her. I said, "What's wrong, ma'am?" Her name is Ms. Hall. Matter of fact, I've got to call her. She said, "My daughter died"—his sister—"from multiple sclerosis and we have a brand-new chair. She only drove it less than ten times. Would you like it? Would you ride this in honor of her?" So they brought it all the way from California.

God has done wonders with this situation. I met Van Jones from CNN. I took pictures with him. I took pictures with Nancy Pelosi and Congressman Kihuen and the mayors. I've been in two documentaries and been on the news four times and the paper four times. I've been blessed by this and, also, healing. I'm healed with my mother, I'm still in the process of being healed from her, and then recently my wonderful father. That kind of hurt me because the last thing he said to me the night before was, "Son, I'm very proud of you." We didn't have a good relationship because when my mother got killed, my dad went crazy, and that's how the family separated. We became real tight when she died. There was no way I could call but him because he knows what it was to lose his soul mate.

But the Healing Garden, I have to go back to it. I've been away for two and a half months now and it's hurting people. The medicine that I take, I can't be out in direct sunlight.

**Oh, yes, and right now it's really hot.**

The Healing Garden, it's a beautiful place. What I've done, because God allowed me to do it, is I keep the whole, for us, my people, the Hispanics and all that, because it's called a Community Healing Garden; the community built it. I always tell people, I say, if you have a loved one you want to show reverence to, paint a rock or bring some flowers; it's not only put in front of the fifty-eight trees; that's reserved for the families; put it to the side. Have the kids—that will be something that they can come to for years on out. They can bring their friends. "That's the rock I

painted." By doing so—the black community doesn't have a healing garden. We have the cemetery, but we need a healing garden. In the meantime, in between time, why not come to the Healing Garden? If you're putting some flowers down or something, dialogue can be created. A person might have been a survivor or lost a loved one, and say, "Did you lose somebody?" And you can tell them, "Oh, no, no, but there's somebody close to me that died." Now all of a sudden...That's what I had a vision. And it's happened because some blacks have come. If it's the Lord's will, me and this one pastor, we would like to do something for the black community.

**Which pastor?**

Pastor Dwayne Collins.

**Which church is he?**

He's the church right here up on the corner of H Street and Owens. It used to be a dry cleaner's. He has that right on the corner, right here.

**What is his first name again?**

Dwayne. We want to start something for gun violence families. See, that's what I really want to get involved in because I'm a victim of gun violence. Then I lost my mother and lost other people. I want to do both. God put it in my heart to do both, go to the Healing Garden. Because these people, I mean, not one of them has denied me. I'm on Facebook with hundreds and hundreds. They keep on requesting me, "Brother Dre." They bring their families, their kids. "Momma, there goes Brother Dre." It's like, "You know you're famous, Facebook famous?" I said, "Nah, that's not what it's all about." They say, "But you can't help that. We appreciate the things." It's all in God. I give Him the glory about all this because He's been showing me how wonderful He is since I was spanked on my behind. That's when it was good. But He's been great many my life, been great.

**You can say this after all those years in prison and you still say this.**

Yes. They know I've been in prison. They know I was a militant Muslim. I don't hold nothing back. I told them that I hated white people at one time and all this, yes.

**Now where do you define yourself in the area of spirituality? You're not Muslim anymore.**

No, no.

**How do you define yourself now?**

I'm nondenominational. I'm just going with another frequency. I'm just trying to do His will and that's it. At the end of the day—my earthly father said he was proud of me—I want to hear the words from Almighty.

**Wonderful. From this Healing Garden experience you've been able to heal yourself.**

Yes.

**What are some of the things you learned about yourself?**

I never knew that God was in me because for so long I never got over my mother's death. To me, some kids that they lost their mother...It was just a beautiful spiritual awakening that God...He's not mysterious to me. People say that. I feel, man, that if you line yourself up with Him, then He's going to reveal Himself to you in more ways than one, mostly through waves, through kids. To see those kids so happily want to come and want to hug and take pictures with me...

But, yes, my spirituality is stronger. I've slipped into a depression in the last few weeks because of my loneliness, right? I'm on Facebook all the time, and so when I posted about my queen that "damn, I miss you queen," oh, they were "Brother Dre, hugs, we love you." I told them that I can't come out there because of the medication. "You take care of yourself. If there's anything we can do..."

But, you see, I can't take nothing. There's people that gave me hundreds of dollars, family



members and stuff, and I feel bad. I had to tell Jay and Daniel, the ones that built and created the place, and they came the day that—they said, "Brother Dre, you deserve it." A lot of people are taking advantage. There's family members that sit up here and give me hundreds of dollars and they're crying. How can I not? How can I dishonor them by not accepting? I'm going to do good with it.

My journey has been great. I have to get back there because now this interview has pumped me up. I told one of my brothers last night, and he said, "Well, that's your cue."

**That's great.**

My spirituality is strong now and my love for people, humans. When you break it down instead of human color, mankind. I don't have no ill bones. I hate racism. I hate that. But that's a spirit. You know what I'm saying? If you allow your vessel to be used.

**Okay, in that way.**

In that way. It's wasted energy, it really is, hate. I know what I went there through. I hated everybody but my own, and so I was always sick. It's not fun. I might have to say to these wonderful people, it became a humbling experience for them. Sometimes God chastises; He spans us. But that situation there, when I think about toddlers, that's what really messed me up is the toddlers, and none of them perished. God is so magnificent. There's people that lost their lives.

I met people from Sweden and Denmark and Germany and Thailand and Japan and China. They all have done interviews with me when they come. This situation impacted the world. It really did. You wouldn't think so, but it did. It did. I tell them all the time—because they got me on their country support groups—I tell them, "Man, it's been a humbling experience with y'all and I appreciate y'all allowing me to come in to your healing." What I tell them when

they come, I say, "I hope this is a giant step to your healing." Because it has to be. They can't stray away from the healing and nobody can tell them how long to grieve. I tell them this here, I say, "Eagles don't soar with pigeons." What I mean by that is that hang with people that are eagles like yourself; that can empathize. Even family members, they might say the wrong thing in trying to show sympathy. "Oh, get over it; you're stronger than that." That vexes their spirit because the person that usually tells them that, if something like this happened to them, they'll tell an ant on the ground, cry to an ant, "Man, you know what I've gone through?" And be the biggest crybabies. I just tell them, "Hey, man, just take it one day at a time and just hang with the people."

**The anniversary is coming up. It is now July. In a few months. Are you planning to attend any activities?**

They invited me. There's going to be an event at the Healing Garden and I'm going to be there, if the Lord says the same. They invited me to go to Anaheim to all these baseball games and stuff. At the time I wanted to, but then all of a sudden I said to myself, "No, man, that's for a survivor or family member to go." They say, "No, Brother Dre, we appreciate what you do. You deserve to go too." I said, "Nah, I deserve to let you guys know that this is God and that I'm satisfied. I appreciate it because you guys didn't have to let me into your lives."

Yes, they can't wait to see me. There's been a few times, "Brother Dre, are you going to be at the healing garden? I'm going to be in town such-and-such date." I say, "Just tell me and I'll be there. I'll show up."

**Even today, even though it's hot outside, how long can you stay out in the sun?**

Now that I have an umbrella, I will take some frozen waters and I would be all right. I was thinking about getting one of those fans, those air conditioners that they advertise on TV. It's like

a cooler. I could take it out and all you've got to do is just pour water into it and it blows. It has something that it does something with the heat to turn it into cold air.

**Oh, that would be great.**

Yes. They're supposed to be building a building. Since I came back from my father's funeral—I didn't make his funeral. I made his burial because everybody is getting out of church. When I came back, all of a sudden the manager of the Healing Garden, Jessica, she was on there and I seen her on Facebook. "Yes, we're going to accept applications if you want to volunteer. We're going to teach you the ropes." Like trying to undermine the people who were telling me, "Man, what's happening with you, Brother Dre?" I said, "Man, I'm going to keep on keeping on doing what I'm doing." It's like, "We have a book and all this here that you could sign and then if you would like, you pay us." But, you see, I have several books.

**From people who have signed?**

People who signed. This is built up. I have some more books, too, I have to find. What I wanted to do was get sixty copies. This is all...That's my father's obituary at the beginning. I would like to send it to each family, let them know that this is all the beautiful things people have written.

**Oh, this is beautiful. You told me about the family that gave you the wheelchair and other families that have given you things. Anybody special that you have not talked about today, anybody who came down and did something unusual?**

Anytime they do an act of kindness, a random act of kindness...They've brought me so many things. Let me show you. This one lady from Canada...These are only given to polices.

**Oh, that's beautiful. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police.**

You see what it says? Read it. On one side it says something with excellence.

**Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Oh, here it is. "Recognizing excellence." Oh, this is**

**beautiful.**

These are all the things that they've given me.

**Oh, these are great.**

They've gave me what you're sitting on right there.

**Route 91. That's great. These are the bracelets.**

Bracelets, also they are here. I have some more that broke. They gave me a bunch of gift cards.

This one school policeman from California gave me that. A lady gave me five dollars from England.

**Five pounds.**

Five pounds. Most of the survivors, they gave me this.

**Turn that back around. It's a heart with a Las Vegas sign in it. "Forever bonded, Las Vegas strong, Route 91."**

That's what they say; they bonded forever. They come out of the wild blue and bring me food and wanting to take me out and everything. Meeting Nancy Pelosi; that was a wonderful experience. She shook my hand. I'm in the paper with her. I got pictures with her. Ain't nothing more meaningful than these people that survived, the family members.

**That's right. I agree.**

To know that you touched someone's life...

**Is there anything else that you would like to add?**

I would just like to say that human kindness, it can't be bought off eBay or Wal-Mart shelf; it lies with everybody and we have to leave it dormant for these type of things when it does happen and release it like a floodgate because you never know. The smallest of things could be the greatest thing to a person. Me just hugging them and listening to them and crying with them, they take

that in. They say it's powerful. I want them to leave relieved a little bit that people do care. One thing I tell them, I said, "It's natural to love your own kind, but it's super natural to love all mankind."

That's my life right now. I've had problems with some of the Muslims and brothers and sisters in the community don't want you hugging on no whites. I said, "Are you hugging on our people on a daily basis? What are you doing in the community? You don't remember..." When you get up to heaven, if you do get up in heaven, you ask God why he sent me. When He's through, He'll tell me to go someplace elsewhere I'm going. But human kindness...

**Were you surprised at the way this city poured love out?**

I'm proud because look how long it took the Boston bombing, the 9/11, the Oklahoma City. It took them a decade or so. Just like this, I'm talking about. And I love the mayor because it happened Sunday. Monday she said, "Here goes a piece of land." Tuesday, Jay, Daniel and Mark and the city officials came up. Jay drew it on a napkin, and Wednesday they started on it, and that Friday.

**Yes, it was open for dedication.**

I was so happy. But, you see, everybody been going on their merry way and that's not cool. That's not cool. We can't forget about nobody. Just like these beautiful mothers that are marching for their sons and daughters, every day they've been on this, and we can't forget about them.

**Who is marching?**

No, I'm saying all this gun violence going on, mothers are not laying down; they're not jiving. All this is true, but it's the mothers. You know what I'm saying?

**Yes, I agree.**

We can never let this die out. I'm Vegas Strong, Chicago and Vegas Strong. It's happened in my

city and it bothered me. I don't care what anybody thinks or say, this here is history, an unfortunate history, and something needs to be learned from this. I'm tired of hearing about, let's make it better for your kids' kids and all this. No, let's make it greater, and not just here. Let's make the world better. Let's not just talk about the United States. Let's talk about the whole world. We've seen some marvelous things throughout our lifetimes, really. We've really been blessed to see how God is working.

This is one of my things and I'll leave it at this. I feel that I'm an integral makeup of our universe, each one of us are. I know my position in life. My position is to do the will of God, touch as many lives as I can. My thing is, this here: I ask people, if this is your last day on Earth, how would you go out living it? I heard some beautiful answers. Mine is that I just want to be a blessing to others. That's how I think a lot of us should want to leave this world, being a blessing to others, because the world is in dire need. It's hurting right now and we need this type of love.

**I agree, yes. Brother Dre, thank you so much.**

Thank you. It's been an honor.

**[End of recorded interview]**