Campbell Dunn

GLS

Interview Transcription

- CD: I am conducting an interview with Will Yao Paul, can you basically tell me where your family is from and what languages they speak?
- WYP: My family is from the Ivory Coast and they speak French and a native language called Baule.
- CD: Throughout history, through globalization and colonization, the French colonized the Ivory Coast, what were the original languages?
- WYP: The land was divided, they banned all of the tribes together, but to my better understanding Baolu is the primary secondary language of the Ivory Coast. Everyone in my family and Africa still continue to speak this, if they do not speak, then they at least understand.
- CD: You currently speak French?
- WYP: I speak French, but do not speak the native language.
- CD: In your opinion, because of French colonization, these languages are disappearing.
- WYP: It will disappear as you get further into the cities, it would be best to learn both languages, going back to their roots and keeping their authentic culture.
- CD: How would you identify yourself? American, Ivory Coast, French?
- WYP: I identify as being American and Ivorian, I was the first generation to the United States, i've seen both sides of the spectrum. I have really good insight into both worlds. I
am part of both cultures. Slaves can not say where exactly they are from, however me, I
know exactly where I am from.
- **CD:** What was your first language?
- **WYP:** Spanish, then French, then English
- **CD:** Your parents first language?
- **WYP:** French first, then Baolu, then English.
- **CD:** There is a loss of identity through generation to generation, it's good to see that your
family held onto their cultural roots. Through French colonization, was there a loss of
identity?
- **WYP:** Yes and no, everyone is going to complain, but the world is progressing, they are
assimilating French into their own culture. It's not necessarily bad.
- **CD:** At what age did your parents come to the USA?
- **WYP:** early 90’s
- **CD:** Why did they go?
- **WYP:** For a scholarship and to make money.
- **CD:** What is the most influential language in the Ivory Coast?
- **WYP:** French
- **CD:** Explain the changes that occurred in the Ivory Coast, was it quick or long, through
language and identity?
- **WYP:** Corrupted everyone, the change was not good, but what can you do.
- **CD:** Globalization - Do you know of an changes, from how they have changed from the
past to now? Through language, identity?
- WYP: They are trying to play catch up with the rest of the world. Ever other country is so much further advances than the Ivory Coast, they are trying to make up for lost ground?
CD: Would you have wanted to see Ivory Coast keep its identity, or would you rather have the French continue to control? So do you want them to keep all their identities and values?
- WYP: People would have fought anyway, someone would have tried to attack them.
- CD: Have you ever been there?
- WYP: Many times
- CD: What is the geography like and what age did you go?
- WYP: 3,5,7 - There are forests in the desert, the us geography is so much different. It is a completely different way of life, it makes you appreciate what you have.
- CD: Did everyone speak the same language?
- WYP: Every spoke French
- CD: Was there a language associated with the poor?
- WYP: No

Thank you for your interview Will