

Annabelle: So, where and when were you born?

Ansley: I was born in Haiti in 1985, September 17.

Annabelle: That's my birthday too

Ansley: Virgos. Let's go, hey,

Annabelle: When and how did you or your family come to South Central?

Ansley: Actually, my mom traveled from Haiti on a boat. We ended up in Florida and from Florida we got relocated over here to first I was originally Inglewood. And then by the time I was in third grade I was in south central , and South LA became home. Yes.

Annabelle: How has South Central changed over the years?

Ansley: It's changed a lot. From what I can see there's a lot more infrastructure, or well developed infrastructure than my time. Like, for example, I remember like the railroad tracks weren't active when I was growing up, meaning because I went to foshay. And so I remember walking on a train track. But now we have the expo line that runs through there. We got new developments coming up with the George Lucas Museum. That was not there. That was a huge parking lot. I mean, you've seen what's happened with Sofi. And other developments have been going on. So I think the city is becoming a lot more developed.

Annabelle: What do you feel are South Central's greatest strengths?

Ansley: The people. Of course, like? It's always been black and brown since I've been here. And I feel like it's still the majority. And it's yeah, it's always been the people for me.

Annabelle: And in your personal opinion, do you think South Central evolved in a good or bad way? If so, why do you think that?

Ansley: I think it's evolved in a good way, I think it's gotten better. I feel like back then there was uh I mean back in my time, there was a lot more gang violence. I mean, there's still a lot of gang violence, but I feel like during my generation, it was a lot more. Like it was, seen a lot more, you know, and I don't see it as much, you know, but I might not be paying close attention, but I feel like it's not as dangerous as it was back then.

Annabelle: Do you think the crime rates were high back then?

Ansley: I think so. I think so. I feel like I mean, it's kind of throughout the years it's gone up and down. I feel like it's been a majority on the decline. Since back in my time.

Annabelle:The negative events that occur in South Central LA consistently dominate the news. I believe the preconceptions would alter if they featured more inspiring stories. How do you feel?

Ansley: Yeah, I agree. I feel like a lot of the positive doesn't get highlighted. And I feel like they're still trying to keep us in this box where South Central was just declared the hood. You know, I mean, like, for the most part, like I mean, to folks who are raised here, we'll always kind of consider it that. And I'm saying that we've seen all the positive change that has happened throughout the city. I mean, we've seen the developments that have taken place, which is why you see like, you know, a lot of different cultures and ethnicities moving here, you know, I feel like South Central has always been kind of like the midpoint of everything. I mean, like downtown LA not being too far from the beach. Not being too far from Hollywood not being too far from the valley in I feel like the Downtown LA South Central LA has always kind of been the center of Los Angeles

Annabelle: How did the LA Riots impact yours or your family's life?

Ansley: I came over right after the riots, like around, I think I got here in 93 and so, I was young, I was already moving around with my family with my mom, she was already moving from location to location. So I didn't really feel the impact, personally, but I know that like, it did feel like there was a lot more tension in the air when I did travel around with my mom, you know, I was just being a kid, you know, just not really worrying about it. But I could, I could kind of tell when my mom's energy was a little off, you know, so not sure where it was coming from, but I'm sure that the tension in the city had a lot to do with it.

Annabelle: What challenges have you faced living in South Central?

Ansley: My challenges personally have probably been the school system for me. I originally started off attending Weems Elementary. From Weems, I went to foshay, and then from foshay, I went to Manual Arts for like a semester. But when I got to manual, things got a little rough. I was, you know, that there was a lot of gang activity around, I didn't have a father figure or anything like that so kind of like, you know, steer me down the right path. My mom was always working. So, you know, I found myself looking for guidance elsewhere. And I know that, at that time, I didn't know of a lot, I didn't know of many opportunities. I tried to play sports, but I still kept,

you know, kind of falling into, you know, street life. But when I got kicked out of Manual Arts and went to Venice, which is where I actually graduated from. It was like a whole new world over there. You know, I can already tell the difference from me going to Venice, where there was no school or like no bars, gates around the schools to like coming from manual where, like, you know, it could kind of look like a prison at times, you know, so I know that that was like something that was different. And I feel like yeah, I feel like now we're kind of working towards trying to get a better LAUSD situation. But now, I'll just stop right there.

Annabelle: What do you wish to see in the future for South Central?

Ansley: I wish to see, you know, more black and brown folks thriving in South LA, like, actually winning, able to purchase homes, able to keep homes, you know, not getting pushed out. I want to see, you know, just mainly our folks just out here, just adding benefits, and, you know, helping the community thrive.

Annabelle: Do you think gentrification really impacted South LA for the better or the worse?

Ansley: I mean, it kind of depends on who you ask on that question. Some folks will say, you know, other folks moving in, and, you know, more Starbucks and Trader Joe's popping up as like a good thing. But, you know, what comes with that is, you know, losing a lot of folks that kind of helped build this community. I mean, what I've seen a lot is, you know, black and brown parents that have worked hard to, you know, build a foundation in South LA or south central and, you know, say they pass away and leave the property. I don't see, you know, the kids maintaining it, I mean, or keeping it. I see a lot of folks selling, which is, you know, causing more and more gentrification, selling their homes and moving far away to Moreno Valley or Palmdale. So I want to see more just black and brown folks, continuing to thrive in the community.