

**Darrion Clark**

Daniel, you ready? Alright, what's your name?

**Damien Valentine**

Damien Valentine

**Darrion Clark**

Where are you from and when was you born?

**Damien Valentine**

I was born. I'm from South Central LA, Vermont. Knowles area was born in 1997.

How do you think South Central has changed throughout the years?

Throughout the years what I've seen so far from my up from the beginning of my upbringing, the difference I see now is I just see more people involved in a community. I know back when I was younger running around it wasn't too many people really focused on the politics or like really improving a community or like people we just didn't have any knowledge of that. So it wasn't really a lot of people like involved in any type of social justice thing so you know, when you tell people you did social justice at school, you feel me they would laugh at you That was a joke to people and now I see like, they take it more serious now like it's more people and more schools and involved in it.

**Darrion Clark**

what do you what do you feel it's South Central's strengths, how would you describe it?

**Damien Valentine**

the greatest strengths that we have. I'm not gonna lie to you, it's our underground economy. I say that because there's just so many people out here that just got like they own businesses and they own clothing lines and it's like it's easy for a person to strive out here. You feel me as it's like a lot of connections out here. And I feel like that's one of the biggest ones is just like people from LA know how to just go out there and hustle for themselves. you feel me, they know how to make money they know how to they know how to keep the revenue within their community.

**Darrion Clark**

How did the riots affect your family?

**Damien Valentine**

the riots? What type?

**Damien Valentine**

I was in the George Floyd riots

**Daniel Trujillo**

the LA riots

**Damien Valentine**

the one Okay, so the only I'm gonna tell you about the riots that I've been in Doctor the only riot that I was in was the was George Floyd right in like 2020 Yeah, it was up in Beverly Hills. And that was the first time that I ever like personally experienced police brutality. Because when I was out there protesting I got hit with batons. this is at the time we're you feel me every one is around looting. So I'm inside we almost in Santa Monica. We have like Fairfax and like Fifth Street. So I'm getting I'm getting whooped and then there's like people around us it's like making it worse by like looting some Yeah, you know it's it is making us we'll make for the people that's actually out there protesting it made it even worse for us because we're the ones that's actually in close contact with the police and with everything that's going on I got shot in the head with metal pellets deem it was a lot but it was all in the name of justice that's why I don't trip about it but that really changed my whole outlook on life. Because it's it's like...

**Daniel Trujillo**

it's deeper than what it is

**Damien Valentine**

like deep

**Daniel Trujillo**

like people say one thing and then

**Damien Valentine**

the people that say that there was nobody out there protesting were the ones that were breaking things. You feel me making it worse. And that was a hell of an experience.

**Darrion Clark**

So like knowing that's going on and stuff like what's all going through your mind at the time?

**Damien Valentine**

I'm about to be in the hospital tonight. It was smoking on us out there. And yes, all I could think was like dad we found out we offered to go down by George Floyd honestly, just because just like the madness that was going on starting fires people breaking into everything you know, usually from cars, flipping cars, you know, it's a difference if you if you break in cars and stuff out here then in Santa Monica, or like Fairfax in Beverly Hills, you know out there, they they really own it. You got you got cameras on you got white people on you got police on you over here and probably you bring someone over here it's gonna take the least 30-45 minutes to come out and look it. We started with all we did was step foot out there and they were surrounding us.

**Darrion Clark**

Do you feel like the local authority made the situation worse?

**Damien Valentine**

Of course, of course, because we initially went out there for a peaceful protest and then once the police started, you know having a like Chang gang thing where you can't where the crowd can't pass this line right here. That's when everything just got chaotic.

**Darrion Clark**

So you feel like that, Some riots could be positive and negative or all negative?

**Damien Valentine**

I feel like I think that there I think that they can all be positive just depending on what, what, what are your intentions when you're going out there. Some people had intentions of going out there and just messing everything up. But if you have intentions of going out there and actually protest for justice, and for peace then I think it comes out like it comes out successful.

**Daniel Trujillo**

Thank you. Thank you for your time

**Damien Valentine**

of course.

**Daniel Trujillo**

Nice to meet you.

**Damien Valentine**

Thank you. Thank you. Well, first time being interviewed