

My name is Satori Shakoor and I am a twisted storyteller. Sadie was my stepmother. She was my father's wife. I'd be under Sadie all the time, because she would pour stories in my ear and I loved them... because I could see the little movies. She was just a storyteller... she was a master. There was a mailbox right down there and we would walk down there together to mail the letter and she would make it sound like Lord of the Rings.... We would... dum dum... dum dum... dum dum... to the mailbox... and she would open it up and she would say, "there's a dragon in there"... She put the letter in and shut it back. And, you know, that was where I got... and all of the old Black ladies I grew up with were storytellers. And that was why I created *The Secret Society of Twisted Storytellers*, really, because this even though this block looks like a mouth with a lot of teeth missing in terms of the houses, it was full of people and life and diversity. Denise, Polish girl and Ray Phil Evenov used to live there. He was a track star in high school and everybody on the street was like... and he used to run... and practice running down the street so everybody would put their cars in the back, so he could have the whole street to himself. It was support... and then when you walk down the street, you had to say hi to everybody who might be sitting on their porch. And if you didn't, when you got back, your mother said "you didn't say hi, you got to go back down there"... "Hi, Hi Jeanie"... then you go back on home. We had Maria, she was Mexican, she lived down there. Little John's lived across there, they were Native American. Theo, she lived on the other side, she was Italian. I didn't see them as different. They were just who they were. White people were like Mr Magoo, Lassie, Gidget and Shirley Temple those were... White people were people on TV that were White.

After the riots, 67/68, it was all this activism – I was shaped as a human being, as a woman and as a human by living here on the East Side of Detroit. We're sandwiched in between two very affluent communities, and we were this community of working class people. My father worked for *Ford*. Right over here, she worked the elevator at *Hudsons*.

She had a brown – like a brown uniform. She had white gloves and "fifth floor millinery". I can't remember what her name is now, but she would come up... Miss Barksdale, she would walk down the street all proud from her job. And she had a gold tooth... and she was like my she'ro because she'd get her beer, sit on the porch with her husband and cuss him out. And I would be like, yes, yes.

Matter of fact, when Sadie... it was just before she died. I went across the street to say hello to Mr. Barksdale. He says, you know, I knew something was wrong because Sadie would come out on their porch every morning. And I saw Billy put her in the car and I knew some was wrong – because that's what community is, it's people watching your rhythm.