

**INTERVIEWER:** Please can we meet you sir?

**PRINCE:** You are welcome.

**INTERVIEWER:** Thank you sir.

**PRINCE:** It's a pleasure to meet you. Well you are meeting Prince Tajudeen Oluyole Olusi. Well, people call me Prince; I have not rejected it, for the simple reason that my late father was a former Oba of Lagos; a ruler of the kingdom of Lagos. Apart from that, I have been in the politics; an avenue for serving the people; an avenue for country booting to various aspect of our life, preservation of culture, history, etc. I have had the opportunity to serve the city of Lagos as a councilor of the Refront Lagos, town council, Lagos city council and also the current Lagos island local government. I have also been opportune to serve Lagos state as commissioner for commerce, industry and tourism at one time. I also have the privilege of representing Lagos in the national assembly; a law making body for the nation as honorable member representing Lagos south. I was elected into that Legislature twice. Our term was terminated by the military in 1983. May I also say I have the privilege of being one of the foundation members of the Lagos state council for Art and culture, one day the body was established by law. Previously to that, I was the secretary of Lagos state Art council. So in brief, that is part of what I did in the arena of service. Maybe it is also relevant to mention that at one time, I was the chairman of defunct social democratic party, and at that point in time, I was also the national vice chairman of that party. I also have the privilege of serving as national chairman of ACN; one of the defunct parties. Currently, I am one of the leaders in APC in the south-west, as also the chairman of the governing body; governance advisory council in Lagos state.

**INTERVIEWER:** Thank you very much sir. Looking at this your very robust portfolio, I think you are one of the most credible personalities to talk about the history, and the single pattern of Lagos and its people. The first question is this, Can you give us a brief description of the historical pattern of Lagos and its people?

**PRINCE:** Historical pattern of Lagos still count as history of Lagos. I need to explain that, because I have the privilege of being inducted into the learning of history at a very early age. Because in the royal houses, most of what they do relate to history; they settle quarrel, they talk about hypothesis, they sing songs, and most of this songs contains historical information and historical materials. Having had that foundation, I have had the privilege of reading a number of records, a number of historical books. I am saying this to explain there are a numbers of records, a number of interpretations that may not be accurate. Talking about the history of Lagos; Lagos like all other cities was founded by a migrant from other part of the country, the area that is now called Nigeria. I want to emphasize that having read various histories, even the history of Britain that was once our colonial masters people move from France, from other part, people will tell you of Anglos, people will tell you of southsus; who at one time occupy and claim the area that is known as England of today. But today we hear of English people, Lagos is not an exception, there were movements from Benin (Benin was a very powerful kingdom in those days), and in African, Benin had an empire, Historians took special note of the extent of the power of the Oba of Benin, the kingdom of Benin. Therefore, there were substantial migrations from that empire to Lagos. It is important to also take note of Oyo Empire; Oyo was also a nearing empire. There were migrations, at the earliest time, even at the time when Oyo Empire was broken by various wars, people moved from one part, particularly towards the lagoon, particularly towards the ocean, and people moved to Lagos. For reference purpose, when we talk about Eyo (which is an important festival; cultural festival, play) in Lagos, you will hear a song, which they sing in the memory of Imalakin and Ejilu, as the people who originated the Eyo play. They say “ Imalakin wo mi saye, Isaye Ejilu, Isaye ato, Omo wa lowo ko, lo re Oyo ajaka, owa ri ohun mubo si rele, ofakala mo Awo, mo esi ko le, oun lon se oniko eleyo.” That brief song mentioned Oyo, and they try to be specific of the Oyo; Oyo Ajaka, that is the defunct Oyo, Oyo Ajaka, where one of the earliest Alaafin ruled. That shows the connection, the migration of people from those areas. Prominently, it is the Onikoyi family in Lagos. Also, Awo Opa is one of

the oldest Awos; the people call it in English; cult. Awo opa (Cult) was brought from the Ancient Oyo (which Oyo? I have not been able to determine), but one specific evidence is that during certain ceremonies in the Awo Opa, particularly during initiation (which is the very beginning), they have this incantation which they say "la lade Oyo nibi ti eruku ina gbe ta joni gberu gberu, la lade Oyo". That shows, that cult has something to do with the Ancient, and when they talk of Alade; they are talking of the very beginning. So we would found Lagos as part of earliest settlers or immigrants people of (Ancient) Oyo origin. To digress, when I was in primary school, Geography was part of the lesson we are being taught, and during the course of study, the teacher (most teachers in Lagos as at that time were Ijebus, Egbas, few Calabars and some igbos) will ask (having told us about various part of the country; North, East, Abeokuta, Oke Olumo, etc.) "Pupils which is your home place? some said Abeokuta, Ibadan Oshogbo etc, and were being applauded. When it got to my turn and I will say Lagos, the teacher will just burst into laughter, and will say Lagos is No Man's Land, in which I won't be applauded which in turn makes me unhappy. When I get home I will relate the situation to the Kabiyesi (My father). Kabiyesi will say in Yoruba "Iwonba nkan ti tisa yin mo lo n so, ko ye tisa yin". He will say the place being called Oyo is not the original Oyo, but rather, it is Agbodoyo, before they moved to that place, Lagos has been in existence. So if those people there can call Oyo their home, then we that have been here for like 500years can call this place our own home. He will also make reference to Abeokuta. He will say "awon baba wa ti wan bi, bi ogoorun odun maruun" (our fathers have been here for like 500yrs). "Awon egba, won sese se ogoorun odun, Oba Ademola lo ko centenary hall ni Abeokuta, ti gbogbo won jo, ti won yo", Kabiyesi will begin to tell me. This will now cool me down, and enrich me to face my peers, friends, and say I know Lagos has been in existence for a very long time, and say if people in Oyo can claim it to be their home, people in Abeokuta can claim it to be their home, then we also have the equal right to call Lagos our home. Let me also make a particular reference to Ile-Ife. Ile- Ife has a significant place in the history of South-Western Nigeria, because a number of people,

number of national rulers traced their origin to Ile-Ife. Therefore, Lagos also has its own connection with Ile-Ife, its own connection in the sense that, there were immigrants from Ile-Ife. It a very notorious history; the history of Awori; that we all know some immigrants, people disagree with their brethrens in Ife had cause to leave and pass through the Ogun river, and move to the area of Iseyin, according to History, and find their way to the Ogun river, which they finally got to a place called Isheri. It is significant for one to mention that history, for the history of that movement was recorded in the oriki of the people who are now being described as Awori, these were people of Ife origin; they moved from Ife and got to Iseri, and from their Oriki, it tells you the brief history. They will say “ Awon omo olofin, awon omo kafi opa we, ka fi ajewa we, kafi ogedegede owo wako de isheri”. The story according to historians, according to our fathers, was that when this people got to Isheri, and before they left the Iseyin area, consulted the Ifa Oracle, and Ifa told them to prepare a sacrifice in a plate made with mud(Awo Alamo), and this sacrifice should be placed at the front of the canoe they are paddling, and wherever the plate slipped into the water, that is where they should embark and find their way. According to history, when they got to Isheri there was a storm which disturbed everything, and the plate containing the sacrifice slipped into the water. The people, in order to save their lives also have to jump off the canoe and that’s why they have to swim ashore. It is from that, that they got the oriki “kafi opa we”, they are as well being paddling the canoe, all these off, they have to save their lives through swimming, it is from that, they got “ati fi opa we, ati fi aje we, awa fi ogedegede owo wako”. It is from this that the Oriki was deduced from. I want to say as well that, they settled at Isheri. Isheri is coined from the expression ‘Ibi ise erin’. It is Ibi ise erin’ that was compressed to Isheri, which is now what we call the place. History has it that, the Benins were the first to get to this area. We have the Isheri, Igbo-erin in this area, and you know the Benins were looking for elephant tusks and body, therefore they will slaughter the Elephants, dismember it and carry the carcass and take it to where ever they want to, it is important to note as well that, this in turn, were important royal materials that adjourn

the palace of Oba of Lagos in the Ancient times as also, as the palace of Oba of Benin. I have outlined three (3) sources of migrations to Lagos; Benin, Oyo and Ife. It is also important to say there were other Migrants to Lagos. One important example is that there are a number of Migrants from the Ijesha Land, at married princess Erelu Kuti of Lagos, the daughter of Ado (that Migration was at the earliest stage of migration) and produced Oba Ologun Kutere. The lineage of Oba Ologun Kutere son of Olosogba, who later became an Ogalade chief of Lagos; called Alaagba. The title 'Alaagba' is derived from 'Ala gbi gba'. The Ijeshas called their own 'Ifa Agbigba'. Its type of crap is long and when they consult the thing, they will put it down 'gba'. It will sound 'gba' and some point in time. The most important one is the story of Olosogba Ogboolu; a prince of Ilesha who came to Lagos, and from them, they say it is called 'Alagbigba'. It is from Alagbigba that we now have 'Alaagba'; he is a chief in Lagos, and the palace is at Idumota, in which we now have a bank there now, it got burnt around 1925, and the artifacts were removed from that side to Idumagbo. So from that we have the Ijesha connection. Now let's move to Tapa. The Nupes during the time of slavery; many Hausas, many Nupes, many Ijesha, many Yoruba, many people were sold into slavery. Lagos being a broad center, many people, our grandfathers, our ancestors were making money from that Slavery. So we have many notable persons and families in Lagos who are of Nupe origin. I can site myself as an example, my mother is from Idumota, my maternal grandfather is called Suberu Davies, I know him but I don't know he's own father. He's own father was Buraimoh. Buraimoh was a prince in one of the town at Nupe, and he moved to Lagos, he traded, he became successful, and he had a compound. Buraimoh Okola compound at Idumota, Idushagbe. Another person is the Tapa who is well known. So we have many Lagos family are from the Nupes origin. It is the Nupes families that are being described as Obinja. We also have Hausas. We also have Hausas Manis in large numbers. For instance, it was said at one time that there were people from Manis, people from Nupe, people from Hausa, who are slave at the palace. There was a morning they gathered themselves together, they started praying, they form their ground, they made loud

noise, chiefs were worried and went to the palace to lament that how can they be making such noise, and you are making such a noise like Oro, and breaking the tradition. They wanted to kill the slaves. The reigning Oba at that time was Oba Adele the first, he was taking a stroll, and asks what was happening, the chiefs said the slaves were making similar cries to that of Oro and the penalty is death. He pleaded that they should not be killed and these people were taken to Okoawo area, and Idioluwo area, and later Moshalashi Jimoh area. It is from the family that we now have all the Chief Imams; the families who are holding the offices of Chief Imams in Lagos, whether it is Nola or Ibrahim. They have been integrated into the family system of Lagos. Like I have explained earlier, the Benin, the Oyo, the Ife, and the various Tapas, and in the later years we have some other people. For instance, on the mainland of Lagos; there is an area called Oko-Baba. Oko-Baba in the past is the site where the Oloris of the Obas are buried, and that is why it is called Oko-Baba. But close to Oko-Baba we have where is called Ago egba, it is still there and called Ago egba till today, the Egbas were moved from Abeokuta during the colonial period, when it was alleged that the Christians were being persecuted, and in order to protect them, (I think) it was Governor Glover who moved them. We now have Egbas being integrated into Lagos; the descendant of earliest Egbas are now being integrated into Lagos society. Although they are from Egba, but the Origin is Lagos. When we go to the outskirts of Lagos, We have a number of places where it tells you Ago egba or Egbatedo, as those who migrated. The earliest Migrants to Lagos where the Benins, Ifes now called the Aworis, they have spread all over Lagos state today, and if you look into the histories of various Obas, various chiefs, this tells you of the origin. That is the pattern of the earliest settlements.

**INTERVIEWER:** Thank you very much sir, in fact you have answered the second question, which is what groups make up the present Lagos? And you have already answered the question that we have the Benins, the Oyos, the Tapas, etc.

**PRINCE:** Also in Lagos today we also have the Sabo at Yabs, and also Obalende; where earliest people are Hausas. They were soldiers; they were moved from some area to Obalende. Most of them were Konikes. If you go to Obalende today, I have some cousins there; I have cousins who are from the Egbe family. They are Konikes; they bear that surname Konike. They are Lagosians, they are still there till today.

**INTERVIEWER:** Thank you sir, another important question here sir, you have identified different groups in Lagos. Can we call refer to all these groups as Lagosians? Or better still, who are Lagosians?

**PRINCE:** I will answer you that as far as I am concerned, all of them are Lagosians. Lagosian that they are dwelling, trading, either permanently or temporarily Lagos is their home. It is rare for them to decide where they want to cast their lots to. People will tell you that aborigins, for instance, I am an aborigin of Lagos, because I know about my fore generations. I was born here, for over 80years ago, my father was born in Lagos in 1885. My grandfather, Fagbayi Ige Olusi was born and died (1920) in Lagos, and was buried at cemetery Ikoyi. His own father was Prince Olusi, son of Ologun kutere was buried at idumota, when the bridge was to be erected, the body was exhumed, and was replanted in one house, that house till today is 46, bridge street. There is a building there when coming from iddo it is called Olusi Lounge, with that little information, will I be wrong to tie my destiny with Lagos? Will I be wrong to refer myself as an indigene of Lagos? Nevertheless, we have other people who have two homes, for example if the father moved from Ibadan to Lagos 100years ago, and the descendants still maintains the connection, they still go home ( Ibadan), such families have two homes. Such families (I have seen such families) are always divided. Some of them will claim Lagosians and hold they have nothing to do with Ibadan, while others will claim they are not Lagosians and Ibadan still remains their home. This is an issue of choice. If you look at the earliest beginning, our fathers in Lagos led by the Benins came together, established a kingdom, form pattern of administration. It was said that it was King Ogabaro, who established the 44classes of chiefs that we have in

Lagos. They were product of immigrants, however it was this wise Oba who said, let's all come together, let's establish classes of rulers and chiefs, and they established that. Those of you who Babalawos; who are spiritualists; we would call you Ogalaade; you will take care of the kingdom, spiritual innate. Those of you who are Warlords will be called Abagbon; you will defend the kingdom. Then we have those who are from Benin, who are originally chiefs from Benin, they said they will be advisers, and are called Akarigbere. They also created the Dejos, who were ground officers, people who are appointed as temporary head or as the first person who moved from a particular place. Take for example our history, According to History, Onikoyi, when he came from Ikoyi, settled at Ido and moved closer to Bar-Beach. Oniru was also said to be at Ido, and moved with his people closer to Bar-Beach. Same as Elegushi. Each head, leader, was said to moved with his people and they settled, and it is these four classes that will go to the palace every 17<sup>th</sup> day for the Ose, for the administration of the Kingdom. They have welded themselves together, and have forgotten whether ones original home is Ijesha, Benin, Ijebu, Oyo etc. So they ruled and have a united community.

**INTERVIEWER:** Thank you very much, you have given us an insight into who can be called a Lagosian, the different groups that come together to form what we now have as Lagos. I really want to know sir, if there won't be any difference between people who are coming to Lagos in the last 40, 50, to 60 years ago and those that have been here in Lagos for the past three to four century ago? Because I understand the fact that some can actually lay claims that they can be identified as a Lagosians, which is the question of identity. They are also coming now, because they now work in the Lagos, because their fathers come from somewhere. Can they also have that kind of identity as Lagosians? Can they also lay claims to some opportunities, vacancy opportunities and other traditional institutions.

**PRINCE:** The pattern has been laid and it is straightforward. Let's look at the pattern of settlement at the Island of Lagos. There is an area on the Island of Lagos called Isale-Eko. Isale means the source (beginning, the first part of

everything, bottom). It is at the source that we have the meaning well established. Borrowing a name from the History of the present Oyo as comparison, if you go to Oyo today, there is an area called Isale-Oyo. It is at the Isale-Oyo that we have asipa, and we have Alaafin at another place. Alaafin is the supreme ruler, but according to history, it was said that Asipa was the first settler, but Alaafin (an emperor) moved from his area and settled at the present Oyo, which at that time was called Agbodoyo. It was a belief at that time that the Alaafin will move back to his domain. So we have the friction of the people of Isale-Oyo claiming they are the earliest settler, but Alaafin is the supreme ruler. What I want to compare is the description of that area as Isale . So Isale-Eko is the source of Lagos, and it there you have the palace of the Obas. It is there we have the palace of all the Benin chiefs, if you move from Idumagbo (which is part of Isale-Eko), you will get to Idungaran where we have the Oba palace, and you will get to Idumoyingbo. All those areas you will find, up to Idumota, them to be dominated by the Benins. It is at Isale-Eko that you have Eletu Odibo's Palace, that you have Ashogbon's palace, Eletu Iwase's palace, Olorogun Adodo's palace, all these warlords who came from Benin, that is where they settled, and there area is made the headquarter. And if you should go to Isale-Eko, you have Igi-Olobun (ie a tree that was brought from bin), movement from that you will get to Idumota, from Idumota, you have Aromire (who is not from Benin, but rather belongs to the Dejo's class). After Aromire, you have other people, who are related or connected to Oba. You have Onikoyi, who has a palace there, that palace was established so that when Onikoyi comes from Moba to the city, he can have a place to stay and rest before he goes back. In front of Onikoyi's palace, we have Iga Alagba, close to that place we have where we call Eletu-Awo, who was said to have come from Benin, then you have Onisemo , who came from Ilaro. If you move to Erepo you'll have Asajon, you have Onilado, all this chiefs are moved by the Oba to that places. That shows Isale-Eko is the source of Lagos. And from that, you will move to Ita agarawu, it is the Ita agarawu Oko-Awo that you have the muslims. Oko-Awo, the Nolas family; who are Hausas, Tapas or Malis. Gradually you move to Oluwole; that was

established by Oba Oluwole and people were put there. The shows that, the first place of settlement is Isale-Eko, where you have Iga-idunganran, and then you move to Marina where you have Ita Tinubu, Kakawa. These are areas where they put Kakawa; a chief to take care of the Marina. Then we have the Brazilian quarters; where people are stationed (at Ita-Faji) when they return from Brazil. People recognize the grade of Isale-Eko. Also Popo-Aguda; a Popo-Aguda man will not claim to be superior to Isale-Eko man. Gradually, we have Obalende. What I am trying to make clear are the areas history has established itself. They know how they followed each other. They all agree that they are all Lagosians (Eko ni gbogbo won), whether you go to Ebutte-Metta, whether you go to Apapa or Mushin, etc. For instance, if you go to Mushin, the Olu of Mushin is from Benin. Anyone who is from Mushin will submit himself to the palace of Idunganran. In Lagos, we regard ourselves as one (Lagosians), where Mushin, Surulere, Itire, no area will distance itself from the Island of Lagos. And If you go to Mushin, you will find that each area has connection with Lagos Island.

**INTERVIEWER:** Sir you have given us very rich information about the number of the Groups of people that comes to Lagos, including the Brazilians (the returnees), With all these different people, with different backgrounds. What is the implication of the development of a place like Lagos? The implication of having different, diverse people coming together.

**PRINCE:** The diversity has help Lagos tremendously because the earliest rulers of Lagos take this diversity and make good use of them. From the Brazilians quarters (the returnees) we had people who had connection with the Western world, people who have education; our father respected them and allowed them to lead, that is where we have people from Herbert Macaulay, people from Sapara Williams, The Moores family, the Jones family, even from this family who are educated, they are the earliest legislator. People supported him in voting into then Legislation. They made use of the people; their knowledge. After some time, the indigenes(the earliest settlers) started having their children being Doctors, being Magistrates, legislators etc. They made use of the diversity, infact the

Brazilian Quarters were the people who build the Architectural structure of Lagos, because from them we have bricklayers, builders etc. The churches and Mosques of today were built by them; their knowledge; their expertise that they brought from Brazil. So that association has been very useful to Lagos.

**INTERVIEWER:** We cannot thank you enough for your time sir, and we have already identified the major point that we want, which is diversity. We see that diversity has actually helped the city to grow to this present situation. Lastly, what is the implication? What else do we think? Going forward sir, do we see any change in the pattern? If not, then what do we think can come out of this whether positively or negatively sir?

**PRINCE:** You see, the movements continue to extend; people moved from Lagos Island to Surulere; people moved from Lagos Island to Mushin, to Agege. Immigrants continue moving from Ijebu land to Lagos, from Egba to Lagos. When they come to Lagos they conform. The people of Yoruba stock from the Hinterland accepted that Lagos is the pacesetter, they accepted Lagos as the center of everything. Just like the musician Abibu Oluwa sings “Eko joba kun le, ki le tun le je o, kun le ki le tun le je o. Eko joba kun le, ki le tun le je o. Nitori ile ola ni won ti bi wa, ibe lon ti wo wa dagba.....” On ko orin yen to je wi pe, awon agbagba Eko, won maa ma jo. Won de gba pe Eko ni ile owo. There was a time that one Ladigbolu. (I think) Ladigbolu Alaafin was Aremo then, and he came to Lagos, and he was amazed at the dresses of Lagosians. The chiefs; the type of umbrellas they use; the jewelries; and everything. The chief of Lagos saw him off and when he returned to Oyo, he came by train to Ido, that he burst into a song and he sings “Owo leko ni, ara Oyo lo loba. Owo Leko ni, ara Oyo lo loba. The type of way people worship Alaafin, Lagos was an advanced civilized place we wouldn’t do that. To him, what make Lagos excel is the money and wealth they have and because it is the center of trade; center of excellence. The relationship continues without any problem. However, in their arena of politics; the Yoruba conceded to Lagos, and that is why Hebert Macaulay was produced in Lagos. And most of the governance you have heard in Lagos, the first

governor Alhaji Lateef Jakande; Jakande from Lagos island, Jakande family is a notable chieftancy family, one of the earliest settler, the progenity of that Family; Oluwo Jakande was the head of the Ifa group in Lagos before king Kosoko. So you have all these association to continue; Jakande became the governor and he did well. Under the Military, we have Johnson who is the product of Olowogbowo, and the Brazilian quarters. We can see the combination; Jakande from Epetedo, extension of native area. The returnees, Olowogbowo and Brazilian Quarters produced Johnson. We had other governors, we have Fashola from Isale-Igangan, Bola Tinubu from Ita-Tinubu (that's the extension of Ita-Faaji) and Kakawa area. Also, we have Governors from Epe; Otedola, Ambode. We have been working. Before your describe yourself to a friend (maybe at Ibadan) that you are from Agege, the first thing you say is you are from Eko (Lagos). It is when they ask which part of Eko, that you will say Agege, if the friend has a fast knowledge, then he will say you are of the subordinate area. That the interesting aspect of it.

**INTERVIEWER:** Baba, thank you so much sir, we are so grateful sir, thank you for your time. We hope to work on this, and we are going to premier it around November, but before we do that we are going to get back to you and let you go through it, in order to note out any reservation for it

**PRINCE:** You are welcome, well-done.