

WATCH OUT

TIME: 2:30

RUSSELL McCLANAHAN

The reputation of South Rome—I know that just when you’d be talking in a group of people, they say—I tell them I live in South Rome, and they’ll kind of look at me and say, “You actually live in South Rome?” And, my aunt would always tell—she just died last year, but she would always tell them, “Yeah, I’m from South Rome, so you better watch out,” and they’d know exactly what she meant.

DUSTIN NEIGHBORS:

The only thing that I know about South Rome is the Myrtle Hill. We used to, I was in a band, and we used to play every year for Veteran’s Day right there at the cemetery. And I know that now south Rome is a more underdeveloped kind of place. You can really see once you cross that bridge, how distinctly different it is because you’ve got, right before you get to the bridge, you’ve got a lot of development, you’ve got a lot of businesses, but once you get on the other side of that bridge it’s really underdeveloped. Kind of like, pushed away, hidden away, it’s like that way and people say “oh South Rome, you don’t need to be in South Rome” and that’s what you here a lot of people saying now.

ALVIN JACKSON, SR.:

No white person wants to come to South Rome at night, I would dare to say if you interviewed a white person and asked him when the last time they’ve been in the South Rome area after dark you could count on them on one hand I’m pretty sure. They’re just not going to come in that area because of this cloud that’s been placed over it – blacks there, drug dealers there, prostitution there – they never say anything good about the good people that live there.

REVERENCE WARREN JONES:

I know this is on record, and folks forgive me, but I’ve said it for the last 37 years. Nobody lives in Rome. You live in West Rome, you live in Garden Lakes, you live in Garden Homes, you live in North Rome. And folks in 2006, it’s still that same way. We all love Rome but we love one block at a time.

McCLANAHAN:

And I think the idea was that if you grew up in South Rome, you had to be tough to survive. I think there’s still a little bit of that. I pick up a little bit of that when I’m talking to folks.

JONES:

From an outsider’s viewpoint, they found as few reasons or excuses as possible to go to South Rome. And the people who live there love it, love with an undying devotion. The people who did not live there didn’t want to have touch with it...just because they’d heard the name “South Rome” used inappropriately and untruthfully. It was untruthfully.