

**Interview Records of Gray Nischwitz
Completed for the Black Lives Matter Oral History
Project**



**Gray Nischwitz was interviewed By Stewart Buchanan
11/28/2023**

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Interviewer: Stewart Buchanan

Interview date: 28 November 2023

Location: DuPont Library

Length: 15:25 mins

Interview with Gray Nischwitz

Gray Nischwitz was born on August 8th 2002 in Memphis, Tennessee and has lived in the same place his whole life. Memphis is a predominantly black city which has given Gray a perspective that most people in other cities that are predominantly white wouldn't get. Gray is a student at Sewanee: University of the South and is also a member of the football team. Gray plays quarterback and long snapper, he really found his spot on the team this season as a dominant long snapper making many important tackles. His community throughout his whole life has been through sports teams leading him to experience every kind of culture especially African American culture. Gray first learned about the Black Lives matter movement during covid from Fox News. His family mainly watches Fox to get their information and he believes that people watch certain news networks not to gain new information but just to reaffirm the beliefs that they already hold. Gray recounts that a majority of the protests were held during covid and one of them even blocked off a bridge. He was never personally involved in the BLM movement but was never far away from it. Gray believes that the movement should keep fighting for equity among all people and unity within the nation because division is what hurts us the most. This is a part of the Black Lives Matter Oral History Program to document BLM in America.

Narrator- Gray Nischwitz

Interviewer- Stewart Buchanan

Date- 28 November 2023

Location- DuPont Library

Narrator: Gray Nischwitz is a undergraduate student at Sewanee: the University of the South. He is a member of the schools football team as a quarterback and a long snapper. He is a Finance major and minoring in business. During the summer he works as a bar back at a local bar. He lives in Memphis, TN with his dad, stepmom and 6 step siblings.

Interviewer: Stewart Buchanan is an undergraduate at Sewanee the University of the South. He is a linebacker for the football team and a member of the Kappa Alpha fraternity. He has lived in Dallas, Texas all of his life. He was at boarding school for his junior and senior high school years.

Description:

In an interview with Stewart Buchanan from Sewanee: the University of the South, Gray Nischwitz, a resident of Memphis, Tennessee, discusses his life, community involvement, and views on the Black Lives Matter movement. Nischwitz shares that he found community through sports teams and fundraisers for St. Jude as a child, and now finds community through a student-run business called TSV and football at Sewanee. He works at a bar when not at school, a job he got through his sister. Nischwitz admires his father for his leadership, communication skills, and work ethic. He has traveled extensively, both within and outside the U.S., and enjoys a variety of foods. Nischwitz believes the Black Lives Matter movement has succeeded in highlighting problems in black communities, but also thinks it has caused further division. He hopes the future of the movement will promote equity and unity among all people.

Notes: The interviewee was drinking a celsius during the recording.

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Stewart Buchanan (00:00):

This is Stuart Buchanan from Swee, the University of South. It is Tuesday, November 28th, 2023 at 6:53 PM I'm with

Gray Nischwitz (00:10):

Gray Nischwitz

Stewart Buchanan (00:12):

And you are from

Gray Nischwitz (00:13):

Memphis, Tennessee.

Stewart Buchanan (00:15):

Thank you Gray Inwitz for being here.

Gray Nischwitz (00:18):

Pleasure.

Stewart Buchanan (00:20):

How is where you live currently different from where you were raised?

Gray Nischwitz (00:25):

It's completely the same, completely

Stewart Buchanan (00:27):

The same

Gray Nischwitz (00:27):

City. I've stayed in the same city my whole life. Nice,

Stewart Buchanan (00:30):

Nice. And where did you find community as a child?

Gray Nischwitz (00:34):

Through sports teams. We did fundraisers for St. Jude through those sport, through football record leagues when I was younger. So I got to know a lot of people through that. I went around the city doing competitive basketball. I did competitive baseball throughout my life too, so I've kind of been around

the block around Memphis and seen different parts of it.

Stewart Buchanan ([01:00](#)):

Were you a member of any church organizations growing up?

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Gray Nischwitz ([01:04](#)):

No. Anything like that? No. I went to church, but I was never part of a church organization.

Stewart Buchanan ([01:08](#)):

Alright. And where do you find community today in your current life?

Gray Nischwitz ([01:13](#)):

Here at Suwanee? I'm in a student run business called TSV. I see a lot of my classmates walking around. And then obviously again, football helps me with community. Got 75 players, 75 teammates that I look to whenever I need some help and they come to look to me if they ever need help with something.

Stewart Buchanan ([01:34](#)):

Alright, that's pretty good. What is your occupation and what was your journey to getting to where you are now?

Gray Nischwitz ([01:43](#)):

So currently when I'm on the mountain, I'm unemployed. Other than my student business, when I'm back in home, I work at a bar. I had to work as a bar back there. How I got here, I mean, my sister got me the job at the bar. She worked there too. And as for just getting here, just football and working hard in class.

Stewart Buchanan ([02:12](#)):

Awesome man. Who inspires you and what traits do these individuals have?

Gray Nischwitz ([02:21](#)):

Well, my main goal in life is to be my father. I want to be my father in every facet. So I guess I look up to him. He's got great leadership abilities, he's got great communication skills and a great hard work ethic that I like to emulate.

Stewart Buchanan ([02:38](#)):

That's awesome that you look up to your dad.

Gray Nischwitz ([02:39](#)):

Appreciate it.

Stewart Buchanan ([02:42](#)):

Have you done any traveling before?

Gray Nischwitz ([02:44](#)):

Yeah, I've traveled many places. I've traveled a lot in the States. I've traveled a few times out of the states. One when I was really young, went to Cozumel on a cruise, and then other time I was in Spain for football trip with my buddies. And then I've been Colorado, Florida, the beach and the mountains. I've been to Ohio to see family in Cincinnati, been to San Diego, been around.

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Stewart Buchanan ([03:18](#)):

So you've done a lot of traveling. That's pretty good. What's your favorite type of food?

Gray Nischwitz ([03:25](#)):

Not a picky eater. So I like a lot of things. I love a good steak from time to time.

Stewart Buchanan ([03:30](#)):

Perfect. Solid, exceptional answer. And how have you experienced international cultures in your life?

Gray Nischwitz ([03:39](#)):

International cultures? Well, being from Memphis, there's I think 40% of the population is black. So I've played on many, many sports teams with black athletes and went to school with a lot of diverse, a lot of diversity with Indians, Asians, black kids, gosh, all of 'em.

Stewart Buchanan ([04:08](#)):

Alright, so how did you first learn about Black Lives Matter?

Gray Nischwitz ([04:16](#)):

Well, it was during covid, so most likely social media or on a news network like Fox or CNN.

Stewart Buchanan ([04:25](#)):

All right. And what was your experience with social media? What apps do you use and

Gray Nischwitz ([04:30](#)):

Stuff like that? Well, primarily during the Black Lives Matter movement it was, I used social media or

Instagram always. And at the time I would use a lot of TikTok, got talk TikTok. But now just mainly Instagram is Snapchat.

Stewart Buchanan ([04:46](#)):

Just those two.

Gray Nischwitz ([04:47](#)):

Yeah.

Stewart Buchanan ([04:48](#)):

All right. And what is your opinion on the Black Lives Matter reason?

Gray Nischwitz ([04:54](#)):

I think that the idea of it is good. I think that disunity in the country is a great thing to strive for on all facets. I think that the idea of Black Lives Matter is great.

Stewart Buchanan ([05:08](#)):

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Yeah. Going off of that Unity, how do you think Black Lives Matter brings more unity into the community and the country?

Gray Nischwitz ([05:16](#)):

Well, I mean, to solve problems, you have to identify right what the problem is. At the time, it was George Floyd and police brutality, and I think that Unity is you got to find the source of a problem and then make sure you make that problem aware. So in that facet, I think that Black Lives Matter did a good job of trying to unify the country by showing one problem that a certain group has or has had to deal with over centuries.

Stewart Buchanan ([05:50](#)):

Yeah, yeah. What was your community's reaction to the Black Lives Matter movement?

Gray Nischwitz ([05:58](#)):

It was a strong movement. I remember that we had protests all throughout Covid. I want to say one of them. We blocked off a bridge. I mean, we wasn't me, but it was just a city in general. And we had a few walks downtown. I think those are the two that I can remember off the top of my head.

Stewart Buchanan ([06:25](#)):

Alright. Alright. Anybody close to you participate in any of those movements?

Gray Nischwitz ([06:33](#)):

Not that I know of off the top of my head.

Stewart Buchanan ([06:35](#)):

Alright. Which generation do you think was most affected by the Black Lives Matter movement?

Gray Nischwitz ([06:44](#)):

Well,

[\(06:48\)](#):

Gosh, it's tough to say. I think that during the Black Lives Matter movement, because it was covid and because we're in lockdown, we had to be in our houses. People that were on social media the most probably were the most affected, probably the millennials, I'll probably say were the most affected just because they're older than my generation of Gen Z. So they had more influence over it, deeper pockets to fund it, to help fund it. I would say a lot of the millennials were the ones that were out there in the streets, kind of the younger type, probably twenties to early thirties. I'd probably say that they were the largest demographic during that time.

Stewart Buchanan ([07:41](#)):

I'd say so too. How has the Black Lives Matter movement impacted your life?

Gray Nischwitz ([07:48](#)):

Impacted my life, not much.

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Stewart Buchanan ([07:51](#)):

Not at all?

Gray Nischwitz ([07:52](#)):

No, not really.

Stewart Buchanan ([07:54](#)):

Alright. Has the Black Lives Matter movement affected how you talk with your family and friends? Is a conversation topic at the dinner table?

Gray Nischwitz ([08:06](#)):

Well, yeah. I would say my family being more conservative,

[\(08:12\)](#):

They would watch a lot of Fox News during that time, so they would see riots that were in Minnesota, the bad ones. So they saw kind of the bad side of rioting and protesting. So whenever I would talk to my family about it, they would not have great things to say. They thought it was very chaotic and anarchist. Same thing with my friends. The part of the town I'm in Memphis, that's typically conservative. So my friends, at least my guy friends, they had probably the same ideas. The ones that were girls, they were a lot more sympathetic towards it. So when they talked about it, they were in high to high support. But yeah, I would say it kind of varied. I got to see both sides.

Stewart Buchanan [\(08:59\)](#):

Alright. All right.

[\(09:00\)](#):

Was there a reason your family doesn't watch any other news network other than Fox? Other than being conservative, you think?

Gray Nischwitz [\(09:07\)](#):

Oh gosh, man. I think that they watch it for positive reinforcement on their beliefs. I think everyone wants to believe that they're right and that their ideologies are right. So I think that's why both people watch. I think both sides. That's why people watch CNN and Fox News, and so that they can have, they feel like they're right and solidify their beliefs.

Stewart Buchanan [\(09:40\)](#):

How has Black Lives Matter movement changed how you interact with people of other races?

Gray Nischwitz [\(09:44\)](#):

Not by anything. As I said earlier, I've been on sports teams with all sorts of different races. I've gotten to see who they are as people, and they're not different than any other person. They're people at the end of the day.

Stewart Buchanan [\(10:06\)](#):

How do you think the Black Lives Matter movement has succeeded? In what facets?

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Gray Nischwitz [\(10:18\)](#):

Well, I think they succeeded in identifying and highlighting a problem or problems in the black communities.

[\(10:30\)](#):

But I do think that there's a flip side to where it's probably caused even more divide, because I think

people, especially the ones that kind of watch the, highlight, the bad parts of it, the destruction of Minnesota and riots, I think it's also also created a divide in some ways. The ones that are ignorant that don't want to change or don't think they need to change. And that just goes back to people want to idolize or want to reinforce their beliefs and their ideologies so they don't believe that anything's wrong with the country, and then they have people telling them that there is something wrong with the country. Then I think there's going to be a more divide in that sense.

Stewart Buchanan ([11:16](#)):

Alright. And is there any other ways that you think it's failed? Other than that

Gray Nischwitz ([11:20](#)):

It It's failed?

Stewart Buchanan ([11:21](#)):

Yeah,

Gray Nischwitz ([11:27](#)):

Probably. Maybe. What's acceptable whenever you want to fight for change? I would say I think it blurs the lines of what a good movement is, and that's just from different reports of

([11:43](#)):

How it's been good and how it's been bad. And people can look at the good and the bad of either, and then they want to highlight the one that they think more correct in their beliefs. So I would probably say, yeah, protests, like with Martin Luther King, super peaceful. We always look back that on that one in history books and say, that was a great one. And then what Black Lives Matter stood for was also a good idea. It was a good movement for good cause. But when you have violence get into it, then you have people say, well, it's bad because of this, but others, people, well, there's only one way you can do it. And that's to show that this is a serious matter and that if violence has to be taken in, then violence has to be taken in.

Stewart Buchanan ([12:38](#)):

What is the state of relations in the United States?

Gray Nischwitz ([12:43](#)):

Say it again.

Stewart Buchanan ([12:44](#)):

What is the state of race relations in the United States?

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Gray Nischwitz ([12:51](#)):

Race relations. Give me an example of what you mean by race relations

Stewart Buchanan ([12:54](#)):

Violence between the black and white community.

Gray Nischwitz ([12:56](#)):

Okay. Gosh, I think that people have been more PC behind closed doors nowadays, just in fear of getting canceled or something like that. I think that people are, I can't really tell you because I've always been in the same little town, but the same people my whole life. So I haven't really gotten to see what other people did before BLM happened. I only know what's in my little group and I mean, it hasn't really changed too much.

Stewart Buchanan ([13:39](#)):

Alright. And what do you think is the future of the Black Lives Matter movement?

Gray Nischwitz ([13:48](#)):

Gosh, equity among all people. Just be mindful of other people's cultures and don't look at the color of person's skin. I would say that that's the whole point of the whole Black Lives Matter movement, not just specifically for black people. I think it could be for anyone. Just be unified. Love your neighbors as you love yourself.

Stewart Buchanan ([14:14](#)):

Yeah. So what do you think the movement itself, like the organization and whatnot, what do you think their direction is going in the future?

Gray Nischwitz ([14:22](#)):

I didn't even know they still had one. Yeah. Gosh, dude. I don't know. I don't really keep up with them.

Stewart Buchanan ([14:29](#)):

I mean, they've been still trying to do stuff, but it's significantly fallen off since Covid and there's been a couple scandals going on in the organization. There's also caused its downfall, but I think recently seen a little bit of a resurgence a little bit.

Gray Nischwitz ([14:46](#)):

Has it?

Stewart Buchanan ([14:47](#)):

I think so. I've seen a little bit more stuff on my

[14:50](#):

Feet about it.

Gray Nischwitz ([14:53](#)):

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And you're asking me what they

Stewart Buchanan ([14:55](#)):

Should do? Yeah, what direction or what they should do to fix that.

Gray Nischwitz ([15:07](#)):

Try to find ways to, gosh, I don't even know. Yeah, I have no idea. I don't know what they should do.

Stewart Buchanan ([15:19](#)):

All right. Well, thank you Greg.