

SEVENTH WARD SPEAKS

Derek Meilleur

SKELETON

CEMENT FINISHER

GARDENER

I REMEMBER THE SKELETONS FROM WHEN I WAS A LITTLE BOY.

I used to see them on Claiborne. On Mardi Gras, my mom and them were deadly afraid of them. I found out after that my daddy and my great uncle used to make them.

I don't know what happened, I just got stuck doing it. I found a piece of wire and I shaped it. I made it like me. I felt my own bone structure in making this thing. I close my eyes and do it. It's a feeling, a possession. Any mask makes you feel different. Put the whole suit on and look in the mirror.

I enjoy doing it. I don't ever scare nobody. If kids tried to run from me for Mardi Gras, I would take the head off and show them it's a person underneath it. I make them come shake my hand, take pictures. I can go down Canal Street and take three hundred pictures all day long. Everybody wants a picture of the skeleton man. And I give them all pictures.



**THIS POSTER PROJECT IS A COLLABORATION BETWEEN
THE PORCH AND THE NEIGHBORHOOD STORY PROJECT.**

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON DEREK'S PORCH ON ANNETTE STREET, BY RACHEL BREUNLIN IN DECEMBER OF 2004.

For more information about the Porch call, 504-312-2701 or 713-504-6267.