

I AM LIVING **BLACK HISTORY**

I was born a "Black Nationalist". I was diagnosed at the age of 16 as a "Black Nationalist" by a Kent State University psychologist, Milton E. Wilson, Jr., Ph.D., albeit, termed as:

The following report is based upon my study of Otis Rodgers: "This tall, Proud Negro youth... appearance was characterized by a neatness and reflecting favorable self regard... with a strong interest in CIVIL RIGHTS and Pride in being a Negro... with a heightened RACIAL CONSCIOUSNESS."

I am a septuagenarian, a sixties "Black Panther" and a Civil and Human Rights Advocate. Not only am I Living Black History; I am a force in shaping Black History, I stand 4-squares against American Racism, Discrimination, Bigotry, and Injustice of any and all types...

My parents were atypical, semi-illiterate, southern born, from grossly impoverished, illiterate, poor sharecroppers; Manual Laborers, non-political, devout superstitious and religious; who knew and stayed in their place in racially segregated America.

1) I was first introduced to America's racism during the mid-fifties at 8-eight years of age in our poor segregated black ghetto on the east side of Cleveland. In our black ghetto, there was only one poor white family, our next-door neighbor. Our neighbor had a white daughter about my age. There was a fence separating our property. When Susie's father would leave for work, Susie would come over to the fence near our property and we'd talk and play until she thought it was time for her father to come home; and then she'd either go in the house or go and play by herself in the center of her yard and discontinue all conversation with me. One day Susie's father came home early and "caught us" talking and playing. He in a very angry voice ordered her to come inside, and she immediately began to cry and as soon as she got near him, he slapped her hard and then swatted her behind. That was the end of our relationship. At that age I didn't understand it; and my mother brushing it off stated that I should not try to play with her since her father didn't want her playing with colors.

2) *AGAIN*, during 1957 at the age of nine, while traveling with my handicapped, polio-ridden, college degreed (Tuskegee) Uncle through Nashville, Tennessee. We were pulled over by a local white Police Officer. The Officer inquired of my Uncle how much money he had. My uncle gave the white man his billfold, the officer took half, instructing my uncle to drive safely and have a nice trip. a) Now knowing that this was a shakedown, strong-arm robbery, of course my southern-born uncle was too afraid to say anything or complain, knowing full well the Rules of the JIM CROW south; and the risk of complaining against a white man and definitely against a white policeman, that would have been a kiss of death. The robbery was a cheap price to pay for his safety to continue on unscathed.

3) *AGAIN*, at the age of ten in 1958, while traveling with my parents to visit my grandparents in Troy, Alabama. Whenever we crossed the Ohio River into Kentucky, my mother would start praying, saying "we done cross the Mason-Dixie line, our hearts are in our hands (whatever that was supposed to mean)." My mother would cook a bunch of food like box dinners; we were told that we couldn't stop at any restaurant to purchase food. So, my brother and I sat in the back seat with the smell of chicken, pies, etc. For a long time, my parents were frightfully whispering to each other "where can we buy gas?" as we were passing dozens upon dozens of gas stations.

Finally, my father pulled into a service station in Montgomery, AL, got out and spoke to the station attendant sitting on a chair: "I'd like a fill-up." The white station attendant responded, "Don't got no gas, waiting for the gas truck." I could see the confusion and then anger in my father's face as he glared at the white man sitting on the chair totally unconcerned. My mother then began to plead and entreat my father "let's go, let's go." My father was hesitating walking back to the car door when a white customer sped in and the white attendant jumped up and began to put gas in that car. By this time, my mother was near tears, begging "let's go, let's go." My father slowly drove off, visibly angry not saying a word as my mother was rubbing his arm. We drove around and my father saw this Black Man, he hollered out the window, "Sir, Sir!" The black man, hearing my father, immediately ran over to the stopped car and my father said "where can we buy some gas?" The man spoke, "keep going" and over the tracks, Mr. Johnson sells gas to colors. My father thanked him and drove off and we were able to buy gas to continue on on our trip. a). I learned and was told it was an unwritten rule that one black seeing another black from out of town, they would immediately help them in the JIM CROW SOUTH.

4) *AGAIN*, at the age of 11 in 1959, while in the rural town of Troy, Alabama, I was almost fatally assaulted by racist white men, having ridden to town with my grandfather on a mule driven wagon to town. My grandfather pulled in back of a small general store, and before leaving sternly, instructed my brother and I not to get out or leave the wagon. It was a hot balmy summer day. I looked across the street and saw a drinking fountain in the park. Disobeying my grandfather, I jumped out of the wagon, ran across the street and began to drink out of the fountain. I then heard a loud voice, "NIGGER CAN'T YOU READ?" While I didn't know who a "nigger" was, I turned around a faced the voice. I saw three angry looking white men. I stood there pondering as to what they wanted. And in that split second a beer bottle and a tin beercan came past my head grazing me and then I took off running back across the street to the wagon. The white men didn't chase me, but I could hear them cracking up laughing. I got back to the wagon, scared to death and out of breath. I made the mistake of telling my father what those white men did to me, and my father was so angry that he whipped me. I have never seen my father that angry. It took my mother and grandmother's intervention, pleading with him saying that I didn't know any better, that I wasn't raised in the south. a). As I got older and became a member of the Black Panther Party, I fully understood my father's misplaced cowardly anger; his anger was cowardly Shame, that he wasn't able to protect his own children from ignorant racist white men.

Moreover, about four years prior in Mississippi, three white men had kidnapped, beat, tortured and killed a fifteen-year old black child named Emmett Till.

5) *AGAIN*: at the age of 16 in 1965, while my mother and great aunt visited my grandmother in Troy, Alabama. I stated that I was hungry and told my mother that I wanted to stop at the upcoming car-hop restaurant. My mother said no, a fearful no. My mother's much older aunt countered, no let that boy stop if he is hungry and so I did. I flashed my lights to get the car-hop's attention, and one started to skate over, but as soon as she was close enough to recognize who we were, she made a hasty retreat. I commented on it and my mother began with "let's go". I ignored my mother, tooted my horn, and flashed my headlights. Another car-hop began to skate over and when she got close enough, her facial expression changed and she made a sharp u-turn.

By this time, I was perturbed and announced that I was going to open the door and my mother stopped by saying "NO, let's go." Again, my mother's aunt countermanded her and said "leave that boy alone; he was raised like that." So I walked into the car-hop kitchen, looked at the greasy cook, gave him my order, and told him to take it out to the car with the Ohio plates. I walked back to the car and got in, somewhat tense, wondering if he would do as I commanded. In about five minutes the white cook with an apron walked out with our food and we paid for it and pulled off. a). later I found out that white restaurant didn't served black on that side of Birmingham, Alabama.

6) *AGAIN*: at the age of 16, I was working at a service station pumping gas. I had brought my white girlfriend with me to work. It was a small booth with a high chair, so she was highly visible from the street. I received a phone call from a grumpy sounding white man who said, "Nigger, I know you got that white gal there with you and if..." But I called my brother to come and pick her up and he did.

7) *AGAIN*, at the age of 16, while attending R.B. Chamberlin High School in Twinsburg, my girlfriend Andra and I had stayed after school and went upstairs which was empty of students to talk, kiss and make out. My girlfriend's friend saw us kissing. She went home and told her mother who called Andra's mother who called the principal, who inquired as to the kissing. I proudly admitted and said "so what? Many of the white kids do it all of the time, so what's the big deal?" I was expelled from school by the white principal. I was charged with displaying affection towards another student. Plainly put, after school, my white girl and I were sent to be examined by a white psychologist who recommended that I receive therapy, who diagnosed me as an "expansive" individual who was unconcerned about the feelings and values of others. As a young Black Nationalist, I request a SECOND opinion.

I was reproved by a Black Kent State University Psychologist, Milton E. Wilson, Jr., Ph.D. who countered with a scathing criticism of the school intern psychologist who diagnosed me as a danger and threat to others simply because I had a white girlfriend. He diagnosed me as a tall, Proud, Negro youth with a strong interest in Civil Rights and a Heightened Racial Consciousness. Based on Dr. Wilson's report per our agreement I was allowed to return to school without receiving psy therapy. My girlfriend's parents took her out of school and they moved out of the school district.

8) *AGAIN*, at 16 years of age, during 1965, I was a member of the Cleveland "Black Nationalist" Party and participated as a soldier, the peoples' soldier in boycotting ALL five brand-new

McDonald's restaurants built in our ghetto east side of Cleveland. We stood ever so proud and dignified in front of McDonald's in our black uniforms with berets on our heads. Our complaint against McDonald's at that time was that it would hire blacks only as laborers, not Managers, Asst. Managers, or allow them to participate in McDonald's Management Trainee Program.

We were the people's Soldiers. **POWER TO THE PEOPLE.**
The boycott of McDonald's last about three weeks before McDonald's capitulated and wisely agreed to all of our demands (e.g., hire black managers, etc.). McDonald's, Your business was down to ZERO.