From: Candace Raines
To: bbethune@cityofmyrtlebeach.com
Subject: [External]
Date: Tuesday, June 2, 2020 11:43:57 AM

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Hi, Ms. Bethune.

I'm a visitor to your area often, have been coming to the Myrtle Beach area literally since I was in diapers, 49 years ago. I'm hoping with that being the case you can take input from this "outsider" on an issue and see what you can do to improve this man's quality of life. If he is an upstanding citizen, has been a successful business man, well established in your area for years, there needs to be a change here. I wanted to make you aware of his story and hope you can discuss with the powers that be so that he can work normal business hours, and even respond to after-hours emergencies, without harassment or anxiety/fear that he will be. I'm sure the increased income would bless him in many ways and freedom of movement would give him a sense of security and belonging in his community. I appreciate your time and attention.

Sincere thanks,

Candace Raines

Hendersonville, NC

The following is cut and pasted from a Facebook story (photos to follow):

Caroline Crockett Brock

I am a 45 year old white woman living in the south, and today was the first time I spoke frankly about racism with a black man.

When Ernest, my appliance repairman, came to the front door, I welcomed him in. As this was his second visit and we'd established a friendly rapport, I asked him how he was feeling in the current national climate. Naturally, he assumed I was talking about the coronavirus, because what white person actually addresses racism head on, in person, in their own home?

When Ernest realized I wanted to know about his experience with racism, he began answering my questions.

What’s it like for you on a day-to-day basis as a black man? Do cops ever give you any trouble?

The answers were illuminating.

Ernest, a middle-aged, friendly, successful business owner, gets pulled over in Myrtle Beach at least 6 times a year. He doesn’t get pulled over for traffic violations, but on the suspicion of him being a suspect in one crime or another. Mind you, he is in uniform, driving in a work van clearly marked with his business on the side. They ask him about the boxes in his car--parts and pieces of appliances. They ask to see his invoices and ask him why there is money and checks in his invoice clipboard. They ask if he’s selling drugs. These cops get angry if he asks for a badge number or pushes back in any way. Everytime he is the one who has to explain himself, although they have no real cause to question him.

Ernest used to help folks out after dark with emergencies. Not anymore. He does not work past dinnertime, not because he doesn’t need the business, but because it isn’t safe for him to be out after dark. He says “There’s nothing out there in the world for me past dark”.

Let me say that again. Ernest, a middle aged black man in uniform cannot work past dark in Myrtle Beach in 2020 because it’s not safe for him. He did not say this with any kind of agenda. It was a quiet, matter of fact truth.

A truth that needs to be heard.

When I asked Ernest what ethnic terms he gets offended at, he said that the most offensive term people use is ‘boy’. Ernest has a bachelors in electronics and an associates in HVAC. He is not a ‘boy’, and the term ‘boy’ in the south implies inferiority in station and status. He came to Myrtle Beach and got a job at Hobart. The supervisor repeatedly used the term ‘boy’. Ernest complained. After several complaints Ernest was fired.

Ernest says most white people are a little scared of him, and he’s often put in a position where he has to prove himself, as though he’s not qualified to repair appliances.

After getting a job for 2 years at Sears appliance, Ernest started his own company, one he’s been running for several years. He is the best repairman we’ve had, and has taught me about washer dryers and how to maintain them myself, even helping me with another washer/dryer set and a dishwasher without charging me. I highly recommend his company, Grand Strand Appliance.

I asked Ernest what he thought of “black bike week” in Myrtle Beach, where thousands of black people come with bullet bikes and trash our town. He says it hurts black people in our city, and he disagrees with the NAACP coming in to sue businesses that close on black bike week. He hates working that week.

Ernest doesn’t have hope that racism will change, no matter who the president is. His dad taught him “It’s a white man’s world”, and he’s done his best to live within it.

When I asked him what I could do, he said, “everyone needs to pray and realize we’re all just one country and one people”.

I am a 45 year old white woman living in the south. I can begin healing our country by talking frankly with African Americans in my world---by LISTENING to their lived experience and speaking up. I can help by actively promoting black owned businesses. That’s what I can do today. Let’s start by listening and lifting up. It’s that simple.

#listenandlift

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Edit: I asked Ernest if I could take his picture and post our conversation on facebook. He thought it was a great idea. As he left my house an hour later, he looked me in the eye and said, "If you ever march, or have a meeting on this topic, or want to change things in Myrtle Beach, I'll stand with you."

What a great idea. Let's begin standing together.

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