

Adeya Allen= AA, Khalel Smith= KS

AA- Hello umm my name is Adeya, and I am interviewing...

KS= Khalel Smith

AA= Umm explain who you are

KS= I am Khalel Smith, a 6'0 tall black male

AA= What is your ethnicity?

KS= My ethnicity is, I have 2 I preferably go by is I am black and native American

AA= How long have you lived in the area (Tacoma WA)?

KS= By area do you mean by just town or state?

AA= In this town

KS= I have lived here for about 4 years

AA= have you experienced any racism in your life? And give me some examples

KS= yeah so I'll start with the most recent one, I went down to go see my friend for prom cause she was feeling sad and lonely, she goes to this all white school and I didn't realize it at the time cause she told me there was a few black people, I was expecting some color of some sort, and so when I went down there and you know I dressed up all nice and went to the prom it was a whole bunch of country dressed boys and girls in nice dresses and no matter where I went in the area they all went away from me like me being a tall black male in a crowd of white people that just huddled away from me like any energized group would move away from me and anywhere I would stand it would be an empty zone with me and my friends, and it did hurt cause I did want to try to communicate and meet new people and just make a few friends when I'm down there but none of them were open to it.

AA= What school was it and where was it?

KS= Union High School and LaGrande High School both down in LaGrande Oregon, it was a joint prom

AA= Are there some aspects of your ethnicity that you love and or hate?

KS= the fact I don't get sunburnt easily is one of them, another thing is the community of my ethnicity we're really friendly with each other like we understand like we understand the pain each one of us go through that's why when you go around the streets like when you talk to someone of my ethnicity they are just going to talk to you like a random person but if I were trying to talk to them I call them brother or sister because you know we feel together, we feel

at one cause we all understand the pain and suffering that comes from the discrimination and the pain.

AA= who in your life helped you keep pushing through life?

KS= it was definitely my uncle Adian because he grew up in Colorado and he grew up in a relevantly calmer neighborhood compared to what I grew up in but he understood the pain cause he was around people who acted that way and he would just keep telling me to push forward and there is always a brighter side to life and I still hold that to heart today because at the end of the day it just what happens in a day, tomorrow could be better you don't know so you just keep pushing forward.

AA= is there any tradition or practice that your family does?

KS= my family is huge on Christianity like my dad is a very straight forward Christian and he tries to pass it around in the house hold and me personally I have been on the boarder of it cause it kind of been slammed down my throat, you know when something gets slammed down your throat you kind of just reject it and so my dad has always been strong towards that and good at making soul food and so those are pretty much the traditions soul food and Christianity.

AA= how has Christianity really impacted your life?

KS= I mean there are occasions I am just like down on my knees in pray reaching out and trying to feel that connection but I just do not feel it in a way my family claims they feel it, so I just stick to myself I look at every outcome and I start working on every bit and both sides had helped me but the independent side of me working on every little bit has helped me a little bit more.

AA= what was your childhood like?

KS= very dark, very bleak during my childhood I got bullied a lot every day I would go to school I would get left on my own spent alone I had a couple friends across the way I still remember them to this day DeVon and Kya DeVon was my childhood friend who would hang out and talk to me to 2nd grade and he was all I had until 4th grade I met a girl name Kya I was very close to her we got along we were like the Ying and yang she was the darker side and I was the lighter side because she was aggressive but they made it easier but I still face different types of shunning and people looking at me a certain way it wasn't because of how I acted and I figured that out by naturally I made everyone laugh and stuff but it was just because of who I was that made people start turning away from me and it kind of hurt but I couldn't blame them because they grow up in an environment like that.

AA= are there any memories of anything traumatic that happened in your life?

KS= when they say black fathers always leave they are wrong there are actually a lot of black fathers that stay but those fathers have experienced a loss of a father so they don't really know how to act around their children and so when I was in 5th grade in northeast Tacoma my sister

told my dad that she was getting bullied and that I wasn't there to protect her because I was at Orchestra practice because I played the violin for 3 years and so my dad yelled at me to go to my room and I was wondering what for because I wasn't even there to do something and then he came into my room and asked me why I didn't protect my sister and I started to try and tell him and he picked me up by my shirt and started throwing me against walls and into our fuse box in our apartment and then he slammed me down and screamed in my face why can't you protect your sister and then he stormed off into his room and slammed his door shut and I was just there frozen there scared cause that's supposed to be someone you trust, be yourself with but I couldn't cause and I still can't to this day cause it just rings in my head like a bell going off every single day.

AA=have you heard or seen you friends or family experience racism?

KS= I definitely know my grandfather has which he has passed but when he was alive he would tell us all the different things Hes faced as a black male back in the 1940s dealing with discrimination and the different pains but back when he was alive he used to tell use different stories of different things he would face just dealing with that segregation it had me feeling sad for him cause he was a man who just wanted to live his life and he couldn't do that cause of his race and who he was as a person which my grandfather wasn't a bad person he was just dark.

AA= do you want to share any stories of what your grandfather went through?

KS= I currently do not remember the ones of the racial aggression towards him, but I remember the stories of when he used to be a pilot for the air force, he would fly planes and how he enjoyed that life.

AA= is there anything that impacted your life greatly?

KS= definitely some of the friends I've made They Definity make it better and some family members made life some much easier try to handle through there has been times where I just wanted to just give up but I reach out to them and they give me the motivation to want to finish my journey and see what I can do and give me the power to want to improve people's life like being a stand-up comedian or a therapist so like reach out to people to make sure they are not alone cause its hard out here it's hard to be yourself sometimes like whether your black, Asian, native or whatever we've lived in a world where white is majority, what rules everything but I just want to show people that there is light at the end of the tunnel and that things will get brighter.

AA=have you experienced racism at work or school?

KS= not at work cause my manager is a black woman that does not play when it comes to that but at school occasionally some people will make little pokes like even when they are joking it still counts at least in my opinion of like being called the n word and stuff they try and make it seem like it is a joke but still kind of burns someone from the inside especially to their face.

AA= are there any stereo types that you have been compared to?

KS= I have been assumed that I was a gangster that I would be a rapper that I would be a priest all those stereo types I mean I do sing but I do not really know how to rap like I need a good mellite and have the song flowing not hard bars like that and I like poetry but that is not a part of the realm of stereo types.

AA= if you have one piece of advice for someone who does not know what to do in their life because of the stuff they have experienced what do you have to say to them?

KS= I say hold on to what you have close to you whether its family or an action figure or it's just a really good friend you've had for a long time even if you lose that friend even if it's a pet hold on to that little bit of light because that little bit of light will guide you all the way through because no matter what thing are going To come things are going to happen but it's hard not to avoid it unless we finally get to a world peace and no one is racial or anything but I don't think that's happening anytime soon but just hold on to that little bit of light in your life because if you let that light go out you're going to let the darkness consume you and so many bad things will happen if you let the darkness consume you so focus on the light things.

AA= well thank you for letting me interview you and thank you for listening.