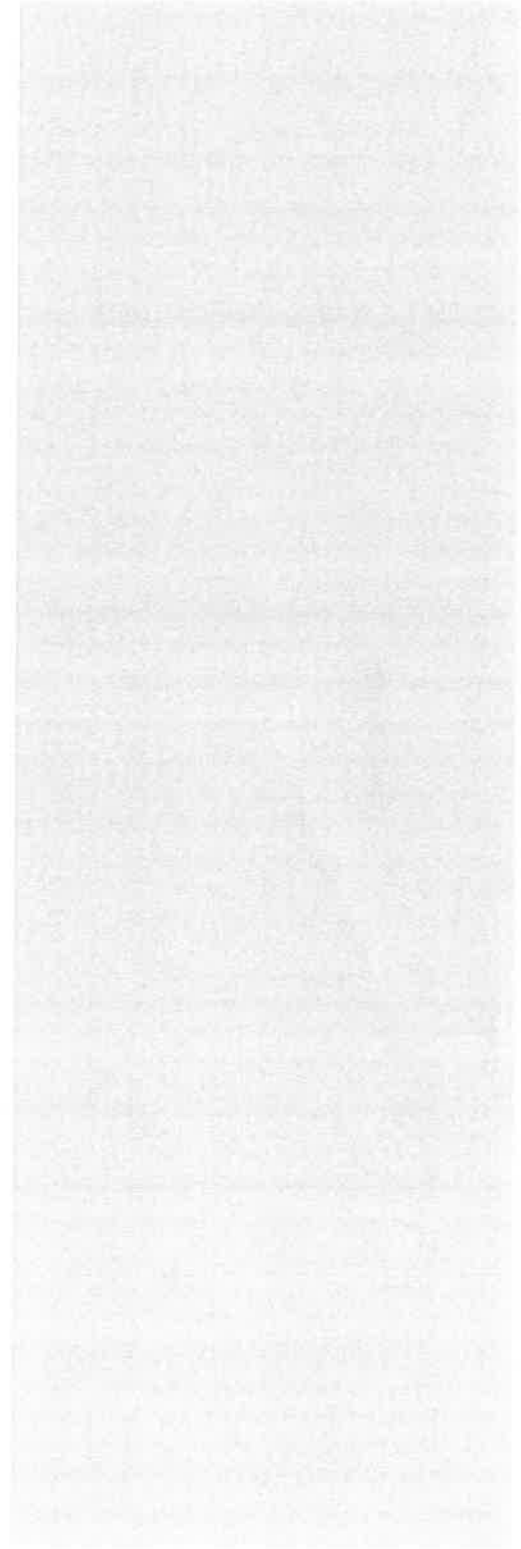


Interview
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On June 13, 2014, an in-person interview was conducted with a sixty year old man, who stated that he would like to be referred to by his given first name, "Carl". Carl resides in a suburb of Phoenix, Arizona with his wife of forty years. Carl and his wife have one daughter, who resides locally. When approached and asked about participating in an interview in regards to identity, Carl was asked to reflect on what factor's he believes influence his identity. Carl stated that his gender, race,

age, and sexual orientation merge together in defining his identity.

When asked what it is like to be a man in America, Carl stated that it is tough to be a man. Carl furthered that it is even tougher if you are a Black man and have not taken the steps to prepare yourself for your future. Carl stated he feels pressure every day to meet his individual expectations and to be a responsible and productive member of society. Carl shared that his reality is waking up every day and knowing that day could be your last day here on Earth. Carl stated he is in a competitive situation every hour of every day, not only with himself, but to live up to society's expectation that a man needs to be the best that he can be. Carl stated that it is important to own up to his responsibility to himself, to his commitment to not let his family down, and to not let himself down. Carl reported that he constantly has to make decisions that are in the best interest of his family. Carl stated that it is a never-ending cycle of doing what is right and to finish each day with the thought, am I doing everything I can, to be all I can be.

When asked what expectations does society placed on him as a man, Carl replied that he does not look at society's expectation as much as he looks at the

Commented [j1]: These are insightful comments

expectations of his family and friends. Carl stated that he is someone who prides himself on the fact that he can cut it, that he can deliver. Carl reported his family and friends expect him to be who he is, and to do what he says, 24/7. When asked how he copes with these expectations, Carl stated that it is a day to day struggle for him to be able to accept positive and negative feedback from people. Carl reported that some individuals have his best interest at heart and others are only there to second guess him. Carl reported that he manages to keep moving forward despite day-to-day negativity, that it is all part of the school of life, being in the World. Carl stated that being a man can mean everything to someone that is caught up in society's definition of what being a man is, or what being a man should be. Carl begs to differ though as he believes there is no definitive answer to the question of what does being a man mean to someone. Carl stated the answer varies from man to man, there is no blue print for this definition. Carl reports that he has different beliefs, experiences, and passions than other men. Carl also used the example of men stating, "I am a real man, a man's man". Carl stated that he would pose the questions to them, "what the hell is that supposed to mean?" For Carl, he stated that he tries to listen to people more and do his best to be more accepting of other's ideas and their convictions without compromising his own beliefs and convictions. Carl reported that he can be decisive, aggressive, caring, sympathetic, and loving. Carl stated that he is willing to learn new things while developing empathy. Carl stated that he cares about his appearance and accepts responsibility for his actions. Carl lamented, do these characteristics put him in the category of being a man, or simply an adult, someone who is a responsible member of society.

Commented [J2]: Great comment

When asked what it is like to be Black in America, Carl responded it is a day to day struggle. When asked about privilege as a Black in America Carl stated that Black people never had the privilege of being privileged in society. Carl stated that even successful Black individuals deal with the perception of what some in society feel is their true place is in the world. Carl stated that these prejudices can blind a Black individual in their not obtaining goals they set for themselves. Carl believes there is no privilege as the struggle continues today as there are limitations placed on Blacks due to their skin color. Carl stated that even with this lack of privilege, the Black community is a proud race and culture that has contributed significantly to the freedom and success of America and the world. Carl reported that these accomplishments are always limited, but cannot be duplicated. Carl stated that even with this lack of privilege, he does believe that everyone, no matter their race, should be given a chance to succeed or a chance to have an opportunity to succeed. Carl reported that he feels he is privileged in the sense that it is up to him to find his own success if given an opportunity. Carl stated that even with his being a successful individual that he exists as somebody who knows at the end of the day, he is still looked upon as a second-class citizen.

Commented [j3]: Powerful statement

When asked if Carl uses his success and the opportunities he has been afforded to his advantage, Carl stated yes. Carl noted that with using his privilege at times being a successful Black man goes with having to play a role. Carl reported that Whites do not know what Blacks are thinking about most of the time anyway. Carl noted the advantages for Blacks is that the aging process is priceless, they are intelligent, they have beautiful skin and hair, they have a mental toughness that

others do not have, along with this toughness comes confidence, they are more athletic, and they are cool. Carl also noted that his daughter, who is thirty-five years old, believes that her generation has more privileges; Carl believes that for Blacks, more privilege will come with time, but for Blacks, privilege does not come from race, it comes from setting yourself up for opportunity.

Commented [J4]: This is great. I think this is contrary to what most people think. It may be difficult for people to recognize the advantages of being a minority

Commented [J5]: Great comment

When discussing what expectation are associated with being Black in America, Carl stated that he believes that being Black can be associated with negativity. Carl stated that most people will not admit it, but black means dark which means danger, while white is the opposite, good and safe. Carl noted that one can look at inter-racial crime and the fear that makes someone hesitant to jump into conflict with a Black man or Black women. Carl noted that he and other Blacks, want to be accepted regardless of society's low expectations of his culture. Carl was raised with the number one expectation that he graduate from high school and college, as his family believed an education would make a difference. Carl's family believed that an education would allow him to do a better job of helping to improve and further develop his skills, talents, and knowledge to help him cope with society's expectations.

Commented [J6]: I like that he commented on the group's search for acceptance despite history

Carl believes that a major influence on his identity comes from his family and his upbringing. Carl reported that he has one sister and six brothers. Carl stated that his mother passed away when he was young and when his father remarried, Carl's father and his wife left Carl and his younger brother and sister in the care of Carl's paternal grandmother and paternal aunt in Columbus, Georgia. Carl reported that his older siblings went to live with family in Chicago. Carl stated

that his father and step mother were stationed in Hawaii for four years and when they returned to the main land they came for Carl and his siblings. Carl stated that moving from Columbus, Georgia to Fort Campbell, Kentucky in the fifth grade changed his life. Carl noted that while living in Columbus, he lived in a neighborhood that was primarily African American. Carl noted that there was generational poverty in the community which he believes would have been a barrier when he was in his teens as there was a belief that Blacks were stuck in poverty. Carl stated that many Whites were also stuck in poverty, so there was no hope for change. Carl reflected on his being in his teens and he was visiting family in Columbus and there was a sit in in front of the local police station. Carl stated that he and his brother happened to get caught in the conflict when police and the group clashed. Carl noted that both Blacks and Whites were at the sit in and the police were grabbing and hitting everyone in the group. Carl noted that while living in Fort Campbell the only trouble he ever got into with police was when he was on his way home from football practice and he was getting apples and pears off the trees in the base commander's yard. Carl noted that when military police told him they had to take him in, since he was trespassing, Carl asked who was upset that he was taking fruit from the trees. Carl stated the police pointed to the commander, who Carl thought was some White dude. Carl noted he later learned that the White dude was named Colin Powell. Carl stated that even though he was surrounded by people of all races while living at Fort Campbell, he still faced racism which at times came from his own race. Carl stated that one time he caddied for a Black man who was participating in a golf tournament at Fort

Commented [j7]: Such a harsh reality sometimes

Campbell. Carl stated that the man did not want a cart since Carl could carry the clubs the seventy-two holes. Carl stated that after carrying the clubs seventy-two holes, the man tipped him \$4.00. Carl stated that he was incensed as his brother who also caddied that day, was tipped \$20.00. Carl stated that he asked the man if that is all he was going to be tipped. The man stated to Carl that yes, that is all your n***** is going to get. Carl reported that he took a couple of the man's clubs out of his golf bag and destroyed them and then ran home. Carl stated that when he told his father what had happened his father told him that his reaction was what that man had wanted, and probably expected, and that Carl needed to get his anger under control. Carl stated that his father took him back to the golf course and told the man that his calling his child a n***** was unacceptable, but Carl's reaction was not acceptable and that Carl would pay for the damaged clubs. Carl stated that the incident was a learning lesson for him, that he would never call another individual n***** and that he would be a support and example to other Black males.

Commented [j8]: Loved this story about his reaction to racism

When discussing his responsibility to younger generations of Black men, Carl stated that he makes himself available to anyone regardless of color to answer questions about his life. Carl stated that he recently spoke with a twenty one year old Black male who stated that he was not going to bow down to anyone in his life. Carl informed the young man that he already had strikes against him as he was young, male, and Black. Carl informed the young man that all decisions will go against him and that the court system will be against him if he continued to believe that he never had to listen and follow rules. Carl informed the young man that if

you say you are not going to bow down to no man, you are never going to learn to make the compromises you need to make to be successful. Carl stated at times younger generations do not fully understand the sacrifices prior generations have made for the Black race and culture. Carl reflected on a story in regards to when he and his wife were at a fundraiser and were seated at a table with other young Black adults. Carl stated that the young adults have graduated from Spelman College and Clark College. Carl, who is very gregarious, stated that the young adults were very standoffish. Carl stated that once he engaged them in conversation they asked him what he did for a living. Carl informed them that he worked for McDonald's. One of the young adults stated how sad that he had spent his lifetime working at McDonald's and that he did not have the opportunities that they had. Carl informed the table that he had served twenty-two years in the military, retiring from the US Air Force as a Master Sergeant, and then went to work at the US Post Office overseeing all the customer complaints for the West Coast. Carl informed his fellow tablemates that he now is employed as the office manager and oversees customer relations for a franchisee who owns all of the McDonald's West of the Loop 101. Additionally, Carl reported that he is employed as a security supervisor for US Airways Arena and Chase Ballpark. Carl reported that he informed these young Black adults to not lose sight of how others have paved their way and to read the whole book, not just the cover.

Commented [j9]: Fantastic statement

When discussing how factors such as gender, race and sexual orientation play out in the military, Carl had much to report. Carl stated that he was in the U.S Air Force when the Don't Ask, Don't Tell came about during the Clinton

Administration. Carl reported that he did not agree with the bullshit from the get go. Carl stated that throughout his military career he worked with or knew the identity of the men and women who were affected by the policy. Carl stated that he had no problem with their sexual orientation, all he needed to know was whether or not they could do their damn job. Carl reported that issues in regards to race and gender in the military are no different than in civilian life. Carl reported that everyone thinks that because it is the military there is no racial injustice. Carl stated that is not true. Carl also stated that promotions are still male dominated even though there are qualified women serving in the military. Carl stated that women still get taken advantage of with little or no support from their superiors. Carl believes that just as Blacks males have made strides in the military, Black women will continue to make strides and take full advantage of opportunities made available to them through serving in the military.

Commented [j10]: It seemed that more people outside of the military had the issue than the military itself

Carl also discussed how his role as a husband and father influences his identity. Carl reported that he and his wife, Ann, have a very equal and supportive relationship. Carl stated that he has be subjected to negative comments from his friends and family members informing him that he should not give his wife so much freedom in making decisions in their marriage. Carl stated that he has friends and male family members who have the mentality that women are not equal and that women need to be subservient to their mates. Carl reported that he knows men who will not allow their wives to walk beside them, they have to walk behind them. Carl noted that the man being the head of the household and the one in charge is generational and he has worked to stop that idea with his generation. Carl

also has instilled in his daughter that she does not need a man to take care of her and a man should never make her feel that she is not his equal.

Carl reported that with age one has time to reflect on how life experiences affect an individual's identity and how they view themselves. Carl stated that in addition to his life experiences, he has seen many changes in regards to issues of race and gender during his lifetime. Carl stated that his older family members never thought they would witness a Black man being elected President of the United States during their lifetimes. Carl believes that the election of President Obama awakened many in the Black community. Carl noted that men of his generation still have concerns that younger generations have not stepped up and made an effort to be more aware of the things in society that affect them. Carl also stated his concern that our children cannot be our future if our future is dependent upon someone else's interpretation of what they feel their future should look like. When it comes to race and gender, Carl stated that the end of the day he tries to practice awareness and understanding of how the different races fit into society today. Carl stated that his hope is that someday we all can live in a society that is free from discrimination where people are judged by what they do, and how they treat others, other than by who they are.

Listening to Carl's story was so interesting and enlightening for me. Every day at work, I listen to others as they tell me their stories and experiences, but I have never sat across the table from someone and had a conversation with them in regards to how they view their identity. Carl is a casual acquaintance who I have known for five years. In our interaction's we have never had the opportunity to

Commented [J11]: Such wisdom

have such an honest and open discussion about race and gender. I feel honored that Carl was so open and honest when speaking to me. What I learned from his story is what I have observed from Carl in his interactions with others. Carl is a good man who treats everyone fairly. It reminds me of the saying, people listen as much with their eyes as they do their ears, since with Carl what you see is what you get.

I also found his views on the military, especially in regards to women and race to be interesting and informative. Carl mentioned that even with an increase in the number of women in the military there continues to be a lack of awareness when it comes to gender and race. According to the Pew Institute (*Women in the U.S. Military: Growing Share, Distinctive Profile*. www.pewsocialtrends.org) since 1973 the number of active-duty women enlisted in the military has grown from 42,000 to 167,000. During this time the number of commissioned female officers has increased from 12,750 to 35,341. Of the 167,000 active-duty women, 31% are Black women. This is almost twice the number of active-duty men who are Black. (16%). When female veterans were surveyed on why they joined the military the number one response was to serve their country, followed by to receive education benefits, to see more of the world, to learn skills for civilian jobs, and because jobs were hard to find. As Carl stated, what mattered to him was whether or not the person, male or female, could do the job and do it well. With the trend of the numbers in the military decreasing and the number of women who are enlisting increasing, hopefully other active-duty men in the military will have the same opinion as Carl, that women are vital for our military to grow and succeed.

Ann,

I thought this interview was fantastic. The person you interviewed has such wisdom and insights. I think you did a great job of telling his story and I made some comments throughout. I'm assuming the article you were using to make a comparison was the article from the Pew Research Institute. You are missing one part of the assignment. You were asked to discuss Tim Wise's comment about listening to someone's story and believing them with at least a paragraph. Overall, you did a great job. I even learned some things and this individual was inspiring.

23/25

