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A Southern White man to James (10 October 1962)

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Birmingham, Alabama October 10, 1962

lenlympathic
James H. Meredith
c/o The College
Oxford, Mississippi

*no sign. or return
address*

James. I have been reading to the news at Oxford, & in Missossippi, & first thing I want to say I am White, & you are a negro, I am born & reared in Birmingham, & State of Alabama, & I undrrstand you were born & reared in Mississippi., I only wish that you & I could sit down, just you & I & talk, as I believe that when it is over with two Southerners, one white, one colered, there could be a great understanding.

First of all at once time I had a good business, in my business I worked on straight time rain or shine, cold or worm or hot, I worked some 22 colored men, & about 8 white men, they all worked & mingled to-gether, on there jobs, & in 30 years in the business, I can not recall for the first time, where, there was any fights, or disturbance between the two races.,

In an other business, I had a colored woman who worked for me for over 14 years, she was loved by both the colored & the white, she went into my cash regester, same as I did, once I left the entire business with her, & under her sole control, & the white customers, were 100 white, to the one colored, never a hard word from any customer to her, & never did she ever fail to meet the customers, women, children, & men, with out a smile., that goes to prove one thing that the negro race is not abused & run over by the white people.

Now James, I want you to stop & think, study it out, why was it so important that you had to go to the Ole Miss, or any other white college, now I know you have been in Birmingham, & other parts of Alabama, the grammer schools, High schools, & Colleges, are not only in the state of Alabama, but in Mississippi, now lets stop & think, does Mississippi, have good schools, for the negros, colleges & Etc., surely you do not mean to say the reason you want to go to ole Miss A White college, is because the negro teachers, & there schools, are no good, & that the negro teachers does not have enough sence to teach a colored oerson, you know it as well as I do, the largest negro high school in the world is here in Birmingham, named the Parker High, which covers many blocks, now I do not know how the wages run in Mississippi for negro teachers, profiers, vocial & Etc., but in Alabama, the negro teachers make as much money per month, as a white teacher, I have talked with quite a few of the negro high ups in education, schools, colleges, & I have hear many of them say, that the negro people should be left alone, as they are well pleased & satisfied, as they make a good wage, that they are well paid, & lots of them bost that there husbands bring home \$400.00 per month, besides her pay, & as you know as well as I do, that here in the South, the colored children, they are raised in good homes, & they get out & hustle & bring in \$1.00 or more a day, to add to the regular family budget.,

Now James, isn't it true that the colored people as a whole here in thee South live better than any part of the U.S., I go into the large Super Markets & Groceries, & I would like for you, & any one else in the United States, just stop look & watch, & see how our negros live, they buy the best, this is the way of the negro race of people when they have money, & here in Birmingham, same as other Southern Cities, they eat well, they dress well, they drive good looking cars, they either live in nice homes, or apartments, or they live on a rent, nor own large tracks of land, they live well, not just in Ala., but in Miss.,

I feel sure you read in the Birmingham News, where the negro woman, with her 12 children, & one grand child went to Cleveland, she wanted to go there, she felt she could live better, no she & those little children, went hungry, they according to her words, she was treated mighty bad, so she came back to Centreville, Ala., & brought her hungry & down & out family, with any money or home, no place to call home, but James, I bet you one thing, that the southern people will see they have a place to stay & a place to put there feet under a table, & food on the table, & that the white people will see that* they have clothes, & they do not have to sleep in the cold & rain, now you were born here in the South, went to school there in Mississippi, & I feel Mississippi, gave you a good education & by the colored teachers & Etc., & in the Jackson College if you had continued throug the colored college, you would have gotten a good education, & later on, you could go to other colleges, if you wish, & there would not have been any trouble threats & etc., for which we all, regreat, & you regr at it to, as you were not brought up as a hoodlum, thief, & a murderier, & crime, as they never pay, I am much older than you are, & read lots, & have never seen a case where crime pays.,

I came up the hard way, many nights I went to bed hungry, & a glowing hungry gut, but crime in any way large or small ever entered my mind, & I feel the same way to-day.

My Mother & Dad, had a colored woman, who lived with us, all here life, & until death, Munt Jenny, we always called her, she use to take us children to the Church, sit in our church, she was loved by every one, there in our family appeared we had more than our share of sickness, & kept my Dad broke.,

Take the negros, that was sent to Hyannas, Mass., were they treated right, according to news on the Air, & news papers, they were not, they were sent out in the Country some 20 to 30 miles, where they could see nothing or hear nothing, had some to say it was worse than being in Prision, is that the way to treat the negros, just because they are colored, NO, I say No., they are just as much human in the north as the are in the South.,

I know a colored man & his wife, here in Birmingham, his wife went to Cleveland to visit, & stayed two weeks, & when she came back to her husband & home here, she talked so much like a Yankee her husband & none of her old friends could hardley understand her, she kept on to her husband, to seal out & move to Cleveland, & he did, (he was one of the best all around decorators in Birmingham, & made good money,) in fact when we needed a good inside job done on our home in Birmingham we called him, He had a nice 6 room home, lot 50 X 150 ft. and a corner lot same size, we bought both from them, & moved them to Cleveland, they rented a Apartment for \$85.00 per month, still had to pay, gas, water, lights, & heat.,

He got some Apts., to fix, & re-derate, well when they were about done, so he could collect his money, some one went in there threw red paint all over the walls, & floors, there went several hundreds of his dollars he had made in old Birmingham, he redone the job, & same thing happened again, then he was broke, some 5 months from time he sold his home, lot & etc., he called me, asking if I could move him back to Birmingham, that he was broke & they had served notice that they intended to put his furniture across the side walk & if he moved any part of of it or went back in the apartment, he would be arrested for tresspassing., so at that time I had a large moving van in Akron, Ohio, so I told him, yes I would get* in touch with driver & have him pick up his furniture & bring it to Birmingham,

James, the truck was there the next A.M. early about 7 A.M. you should according to the drivers ~~thaxx~~ said you should see the smiles on there faces, he called me & wanted to know if he could borrow \$75.00 so they would have money to come home on, I let them have the \$75.00, & when they got here they had very little of it left, the home they had lived in, was leased to a L & N. R.R. fireman, so I let him have another \$75.00 to pay rent wityh, lights, gas, & Water deposits,

Then he had no furniture, so I let him have enough to get started of ~~f~~with, soon people begin to learn he was back, & work begin to come in & pile up, the money began to come in, he was well known, & was no trouble to get all materials needed on credit., I wish you could have one hour talk with him, he makes it plain, that the place for the negro is in the South, that the people up there, do not want the neger, & is even hard to get any kind of work.,

James, this is not a letter of threat to you, or to any negro, as I was raised here in the South, where we have 100 negros to the norths one., who lives the best, & where are they treated the best in the north, or the South., I would like to know if it happened in Mississippi, or any other Southern state where was you ever mis-treated, & for what, be fore the Ole Miss.

James, stop & think, look back, I am White, & you are negro, suppose the white people, just sit down, & never hire a negro, because he is a negro, how could they live.

Here in Birmingham, they have blocks after blocks, of nice Apts., for the negros only, & still more going up, that runs into millions of dollars., & they are doing the same thing in Miss., & all parts of the South, do they do this for the negros in the north, if so I have never heard or seen of the apts.,

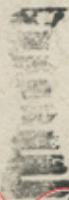
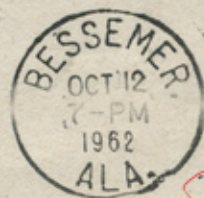
In Harlem, once, a driver was there unloading some furniture, in one of the dinky crowded apt., the mother of a 4 to 5 weeks old baby went next door to meet the new neighbor, & the driver heard the Baby screaming, he called its mother, she went in & a gofer rat, had eat the ends off on three of the babys finger, I have never heard of such in the South.

Have you checked the Naacp, how much money is Russia, putting into it, you are a American, & I think you should check close, & see, as after all you are like I am, & I love America, & This beautiful & wonderful United States., & I want to go down fighting for this U.S. & not for Russia, & I do not think you do.,

James, inclosing I say here in, that if the negros, did not have colleges, of there own, then I w would say every college in the South should open its doors for the negros to, but the negros do have there on colleges, & wonder ful teachers, s all I can say is, give this lots of thought & after all know who your friends are, a one friend, is worth more than a million others.

I am, Yours very truly.,

A Southern White man,



James H. Meredith
c/o Ole Miss College
Oxford, Miss.,

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