



Erik DeSean Barrett

Thursday, April 4, 2024

Dear People of The Internet,

Six months ago, accompanied by my wife, I stood on the steps of city hall, in front of City Clerk R.A.Bull, and I placed my hand on my raggedy, but special blue Bible, taking an oath to in my role uphold the values of the City of Norfolk.

Present at this event were just two shy of all my living family members. My aunt said, somewhat emotionally, ***This was one of the only times we were this close to the entire family being all in one place.*** I hadn't thought about it before then, but she was right. To this point, my entire family has never been able to agree on anything dealing with a calendar. This goes back to my birth, taking place the same exact moment, my uncle Jay was graduating from the University of Nebraska, 19h, 41mins, or shall I say 1,356 miles away. The day I was ordained, my uncle and aunt contracted covid, forcing them to watch virtually in Maryland, while I was in North Carolina, even my graduations presented unyielding conflicts. So yeah, I guess that did give reason, for a tear, or two, seeing as the only two times we had 100 percent participation, was for my wedding, and for Hey Lets Walk 7.

HeyItsEDB

My family is a special bunch. They're for the most part super ambitious. My brother and I, are the Pillars of competition. If I got 5 cents, he wanted 10, not because he thought he was better than me, but because we both knew the bar of achievement wasn't stuck. Both my brother and I, suffered the ultimate, but common reality. Our college careers were defunded. What is special about both of us, we were determined this was not a defeat, as a matter of fact, during one doctor visit, we were asked, do we have an common allergies, **we both shouted, poverty**, apart from that we weren't trying to be a member of the butt of society.

He and I are not emotional people, but the one time we did come close to fluff city was after he and his wife purchased their home. He said, bro, we did it, both married, both homeowners, both not the butt of society.

Who do I blame? My great grand pa. Thomas Ellis Welch Sr was the man who taught me not only that I didn't have to be poor, but if I put my mind to it, there wasn't a human breathing who would overpower me. PaPa, as we called him, had multiple businesses, lived in the most exclusive communities, at the time, and had a controlling stake in how the black dollar moved throughout NFK, all this while, and even before Dr. King was had a DREAM.

PaPa was one of the main advocates for blacks voting in NFK, for Justice Joe Jordan becoming the first black on the bench, ultimately leading to his council run, even starting the process which put the monument to Dr. King in the middle of Black NFK. Those men and woman, accomplished the unthinkable, with only one formula: **FIND AWAY!**

Have you ever cut yourself? On impact it hurts like hell, but in retrospect, it was only a superficial wound? PaPa taught me that was the struggle of the culture, it hurts, but it's not as bad as it feels. Some would say, thats easy for y'all, for the most part you guys were the royal negros of NFK, that maybe true. My great aunt was Dr Alice Welch, head of then Norfolk Community Hospital, accompanied by my uncles wife Evelyn who served as head nurse, my other uncle who in 1988 was one of the main engineers during the construction of The Dominion Tower in Downtown NFK, and lets not forget granny, PaPas wife, the one responsible for my raggedy blue bible.

What PaPa taught about society, granny taught about spirituality. She was convinced, nothing was impossible, that I had the power to achieve anything I believed in. There was no challenge, nor adversary, nor decenter who could ultimately defeat me. All I had to do was stay forced, and **FIND AWAY.**

So placing my hand on the Bible she gave me meant, I now carry the responsibility of doing for others, what my Granny, and PaPa did. May this letter serves as a moment of awareness for some, and reminder for others, ol edb won't rest until he finds that way.

Sincerely yours,

Hey Its EdB

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