

**Interview Records of _
Completed for the Black Lives Matter Oral History
Project**



**_ was interviewed By _
Interview Date**

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ABSTRACT – Herb Piercy IV

Narrator: Herb Piercy
Interviewer: Selena Piercy
Date: November 24, 2023
Location: Oak Ridge, Tennessee
Length: 44 minutes

Herb Piercy IV is a forensic social worker from Oak Ridge, Tennessee. He was raised in Knoxville, Tennessee and earned his master's of social work degree from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. Piercy has a wide range of experience that have shaped his beliefs and perceptions about race and the Black Lives Matter movement including his experience as a punk/goth in high school, military police officer, and currently as an active employee in the justice system in rural Tennessee.

The interview begins with Piercy discussing his upbringing in Knoxville and his path to becoming a forensic social worker. He also talks about his worldwide travels from his time in the United States Army including his time in El Paso, Texas, Germany, and deployment in Somalia in the 1990s. Piercy receives his news mainly from Google News but first encountered the Black Lives Matter movement in 2016 and 2020 through Youtube and CNN. He also witnessed his family members posting anti-Black Lives Matter content on social media platforms, primarily Facebook. He believes the Black Lives Matter movement was a perfectly rational response to the injustices Black people have faced in the United States and mentioned mass incarceration as an example of systemic oppression of Black lives. His role in the justice system has exposed him more to such issues and explained the lack of resources for non-English speakers and people of color who will plead guilty to a crime they did not commit just to not be incarcerated. Piercy says the Black Lives Matter movement has made him more aware of racial inequity and more of an advocate for all types of identities, not just race. Additionally he says the movement has taught him to use his white privilege to advocate for those who cannot speak up for themselves, such as standing between the police and Black people at a local protest to form a protective barrier for people to feel safe to keep using their voices in protest. He believes the movement succeeded in raising awareness of the cause, but it lacked homogenous leadership and therefore

did not have just one clear message across the board. Herb is afraid that the movement will become obsolete because of its lack of publicity lately.

Field Notes-Herb Piercy IV

Narrator: Herb Piercy IV

Interviewer: Selena Piercy

Date: November 24, 2023

Location: Oak Ridge, Tennessee

Narrator: Herb Piercy IV is a forensic social worker raised in Knoxville, Tennessee and currently resides in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. He received his master's of science in social work from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville and is a married father of one daughter, with many cats and dogs. Piercy has had many experiences witnessing racial injustice and has participated in local protests and educating his peers and family about how to be a more socially conscious citizen.

Interviewer: Selena Piercy is a student at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee. She is a junior psychology major and women's and gender studies minor. She was raised in Knoxville, Tennessee and currently resides in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Her future plans are to attend graduate school to become a clinical psychologist.

Description of the Interview: This interview was conducted at the Piercy residence in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, recorded using the interviewer's iPhone, and lasted about 44 minutes. Piercy discussed his life journey up to his career in forensic social work, as well as his beliefs and experiences pertaining to the Black Lives Matter movement. No notable interruptions occurred.

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Selena ([00:01](#)):

This is Selena Piercy from Sewanee, the University of the South. It is Friday, November 24th, 2003 at 11:30 AM and I am with,

Herb ([00:15](#)):

My name is Herb Piercy the fourth, and I'm from Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

Selena ([00:19](#)):

Thank you. Herb Piercy the fourth, for being here. So now we're just going to lay some groundwork, get a feel for your background. Where are you originally from?

Herb ([00:30](#)):

Well, I was born in Richmond, Virginia. Lived there for a very short time, grew up in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Selena ([00:39](#)):

Okay. And how is where you currently live different from growing up in Knoxville?

Herb ([00:48](#)):

Where I currently live, I would say Oak Ridge is a lot more progressive than Knoxville. You might call it a little blue fort in the middle of a Red Sea.

Selena ([01:05](#)):

Okay. Where did you find community as a child?

Herb ([01:11](#)):

Well, I kind of had a hard time fitting in really, so most of my community was with gamers. I would go to shops where they sold d and d game books and meet other people there, and that's how I got my whole friend group when I was a kid.

Selena ([01:26](#)):

Awesome. And where do you find community today?

Herb ([01:33](#)):

Well, very similarly. I have a group of people I game with in real space. I also play a lot of online games with people. Although my office has become kind of a community for me, it's the first time I've worked somewhere that was a little more progressive or liberal and I didn't have to keep my mouth shut. So being a member of the Public Defenders Conference is really helpful for that.

Selena ([01:57](#)):

Awesome. What is your occupation and what was your journey to this role at the Public Defender's Office?

Herb ([02:07](#)):

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Herb Piercy (Completed 11/26/23)

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Wow, that's a huge question. I've had many different jobs in my lifetime, including real estate agent, military police officer in the Army IT and help desk at Covenant Health. When my daughter was very young and getting her white belt from the Tiger Belts, her instructor told her that she had to go on and finish her bachelor's degree, which is something I had never done. So I guess my journey to where I'm at really started that day. I decided I wasn't going to have her get hers before I got mine, so I went back and got my bachelor's in psychology. I fell in love with the idea of psychology, talked to some of the graduate students that were teaching classes, applied to a graduate program in counseling psychology, got accepted after being on the waitlist for a while, which was kind of annoying. I spent four and a half, five years in that program hating the last three because of how much they pathologized people and didn't really take into account the circumstances that people lived in.

[\(03:25\)](#):

As an example, I think it's normal to be depressed if you're very poor. I don't think that's a pathology of who you are. I think if we gave you lots of resources, you might not be depressed anymore. But counseling psychology sees that as you're a depressed person and that's who you are, and that's how they talked about people in class. They would literally say things like my depressed patient and this, that and the other, instead of saying Client X who has depression, and that just really bothered me. I also had a hard time writing at the time, and I was getting help at the writing center, but also through a psychiatric nurse practitioner who put me on medication that really helped with my concentration. And I talked to one of the professors from the experimental psych department. He had told me his wife was a social worker, and I asked him what that meant.

[\(04:23\)](#):

He had told me years before I should go into social work if I want to be a therapist. And he said, you go to school for two years, you get your master's, you start practicing right away. You have the same 3000 hour requirement afterwards to get your clinical license that psychologists do. You just don't do as much assessment. You do more therapy. And so I decided that's what I wanted to do, and I went and talked with Father Reagan at the University of Tennessee who did the same thing. He informed me, had gone through a couple of years of a counseling psych program and then switched to social work. He encouraged me to come take some classes for free while I was in the other program I did. I loved them. So I applied and transferred to that program, got my master's.

[\(05:08\)](#):

In Tennessee, you have to get two licenses and LMSW is your first license to practice, but you practice under somebody with ACSW, which is a clinical social work. So I knew I wanted to be independent. In order to do that, I had to do a lot of therapy to get my 3000 client hours and my a hundred hours of supervision. So I continued to work where I was at a treatment center. I got all 3000 hours. I actually got 3004 perfectly on the day that I left. A friend of mine who I'd graduated with had gone into forensic

social work, and I saw her post an advert for a job. I went and shadowed her for a day, and then I applied for a job. I got turned down a year later when I hit my 3000 hours, the public defender there emailed me and said, "Hey, are you still interested in the job?"

[\(06:00\):](#)

The person we have didn't work out." So I said yes. I went up and had another interview. They didn't even interview anybody else, they just hired me for the job. He apologized and said he probably should have hired me right away, but I think it was a good lesson for all of us, and it helped me get to my 3000 hours so I could apply for my LCSW, and that's how I got to forensic social work. Quite a long meandering journey. But I think all of that training that I had in the counseling psych program makes me a better therapist, better listener, and a better partner, my wife has commented

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Selena [\(06:36\):](#)

Well. Awesome. Yeah, that does sound like a very long, taxing journey, but I'm glad you finally found something you're happy in. Who inspires you and what traits do these people have?

Herb [\(06:53\):](#)

Well, that's a really great question. I think one of the first people that inspired me was actually a fictional character, and it's going to sound kind of corny, but when I first read the book *The Hobbit*, I discovered that little people could do big things, which was a big deal to me because I was a young Ladd at the end of middle school and I wasn't feeling very big in the world. And that kind of inspired me to have curiosity and a kind of never give up attitude. I have been beaten down some, but I still just kind of keep moving forward.

[\(07:43\):](#)

I would say I have a pretty extensive list. It also probably sounds corny, but my wife is very inspiring to me through everything that I've been through. She's always been a solid companion who helped me through it wasn't always as judgmental as she could have been and still around, which is kind of amazing in this day and age. And traits she has is the same. She has unwavering go-get itness when she wants to do something, she researches it and goes and does it, and she doesn't give up if it's hard. I really appreciate that about her. She has a very strong sense of family, which I really admire also.

[\(08:51\):](#)

I think those are two big ones. My dad, in some ways, I think he's kind of the little engine that could, he's getting really old and he still doesn't quit at anything. He's in his late seventies and just chugging away. He knows how to do everything, and if he doesn't, he buys a book and learns how to do it. So I sort of picked that up from him. If I want to know something, I research it and figure it out. I also really admired Robin Williams, although I didn't know him really well. I didn't really know him at all, except that he had this spirit of always trying to make other people feel happy no matter how I felt. And I really love that. And I think that sort of informs my practice a little bit, that a lot of the people I meet as a social worker haven't been in the greatest places. And I try to attend to what they're feeling and let there be space for that. But also sometimes I try to make 'em giggle a little bit. Everybody deserves some joy in their life.

Selena ([09:57](#)):

Yeah, sounds like a nice list. Okay. What traveling have you done?

Herb ([10:10](#)):

I've been a lot of places. Let's see, I've been in Somalia, Africa, specifically in Mogadishu and Kismayou. I've been to Mombasa, Kenya, Cairo, Egypt, Madrid, Spain. I think our plane was in Barcelona, although I didn't get to spend very much time there. We also went to Shannon, Ireland. I've been everywhere in Germany, you could name, I was, when I was in mp, I was in the rail guard and later customs. So anywhere there's a railroad track in Germany, I've been on it. I had to guard military gear and stuff. And then when I was customs, I went to every little base everywhere that a general lived, and I had to search their stuff and say whether or not they could send it back to the state or if they had to clean it. I've been through Belgium, France, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Holland. I think I went through Norway on a train, but I didn't really hang out or see much. And then I've been all over the United States with the Army. So Fort McClellan, Alabama. I've been to both Carolinas, Virginia, Texas, Arizona. I don't know if any of that matters. California? No, we didn't make it to California, made it the edge of California, Arizona, New Mexico,

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([11:59](#)):

Maryland. I don't know. A lot of places I've forgotten. I'm kind of old. I've been a lot of places in the US.

Selena ([12:09](#)):

I think I would forget too if I had been that many places. Yeah. How did you get to do so much traveling?

Herb ([12:17](#)):

Well, most of it was with the Army. They sent me to training in Alabama. Then I was stationed in El Paso, Texas. While I was in Texas, I traveled to New Mexico and Arizona, did some duty station stuff. And both of those, as an example, our range was up in one of the two, gosh, I forget which one. Las Cruces, New Mexico, I think. Went to Ruidoso, New Mexico with my wife for our honeymoon. Nine months later. I'd been sent to Africa. Most of the African countries I've been in, it was when I was deployed to Somalia and we had to fly places and land. And although I've been to Cairo, Egypt, the only thing I saw of it was outside the window of a plane. They wouldn't let us off the plane for the entire eight hours that they were replacing our engine. Oh, wow. So that was joyous. Some of Germany and Italy and Switzerland and Austria and places like that. I went to as a tourist while I was in the military in Germany. And some of it I was sent either as a rail guard or as a customs agent. So mostly the military. I saw the world in my short five years that I was in it.

Selena ([13:48](#)):

Wow. Yeah, that is a lot to see in five years. Alright. And what is your favorite food? Bless you.

Herb ([14:05](#)):

Well, that's a tough question. I would say my staple favorite food is steak. But if I had to pick something that was the quintessential food of my people, I would say chicken and dumplings. That's the thing I like that my family makes. I can get a steak anywhere, but not everywhere has great chicken and dumplings.

Selena ([14:31](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. That's fair. Alright, and then now we're going to move on to the questions more specific to the Black Lives Matter movement. Okay. So to begin, how do you receive the news

Herb ([14:52](#)):

Of the Black Lives Matter movement?

Selena ([14:54](#)):

Just in general, or

Herb ([14:55](#)):

How do I receive the news? The news? Oh, mostly Google News. When I go to work, I pull up Google News and scan through articles on there. Now, during the time when Black Lives Matter was happening, I was at home and seeing a lot of things on YouTube news channels and stuff like that. Mostly local stuff or CNN.

Selena ([15:24](#)):

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Okay, awesome. And then what is your experience with social media?

Herb ([15:34](#)):

Well, I'm not great at it. I mostly use Facebook to put pictures of my family on or my cats or my puppies, or to help me coordinate events with my friends. I have a Twitter, but only for the purpose of occasionally looking at Twitter. I think a long time ago I set up Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to post each other. So now when I post on Facebook, it posts on the other two, but that's not really me making any sort of active planet using the other two. I don't ever look at 'em. Occasionally I'll go look at one when my wife says that there's a picture of my daughter on it that I should see.

Selena ([16:21](#)):

Fair enough. Alright. And then you mentioned briefly your first encounter with the Black Lives Matter movement. Would you care to tell me more about that?

Herb ([16:34](#)):

Well, I don't remember exactly which incident it was, but I remember several happening around what felt like the same time period. It may just be that I was made aware around the same time, but Breonna Taylor and [Ahmad Arbery], I'm probably saying his name wrong. When they were killed, I saw the news, most people in the ways that Black Lives Matter was getting involved. And then of course, because my family is extremely conservative, I got to see all of their horrible posts about Blue Lives and all lives and all this kind of stuff, and had many arguments with them about the difference between those two things.

Selena ([17:22](#)):

Yeah, that was definitely a time. So I feel like I can kind of gauge a feel for your general opinion of the Black Lives Matter movement, considering what you said about Blue Lives Matter, how you're not really a fan, but what is your opinion in your own words of the Black Lives Matter movement?

Herb ([17:50](#)):

Well, I feel like it is a good response to things that were happening to black people. I've supported them in some ways, not really big, but we didn't have a ton of money at the time. I wish people could hear more of what they were saying. I feel like the problem, a problem in our country is that people won't because they're so scared of the idea that they might be. And if they are right that people of color are targeted by our government for mass incarceration and murder, then we live in a pretty terrible place. And I think that scares people. And I think it is the truth, and I think it's hard for people to see that there's lots of great things about our country along with this terrible thing and that we can correct the terrible things and still have all the good stuff too. So I feel like I wish I could support 'em more, but also I'm putting a kid through school, so

Selena ([19:16](#)):

Thank you!

Herb ([19:19](#)):

There's that.

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Selena ([19:20](#)):

Yeah. Alright. And then what about your community's reaction to the movement, like your gaming community or your work community?

Herb ([19:31](#)):

Well, it's funny that you put it that way. My work community, I don't want to say anything negative about public defenders, but I want to be honest also, I think there's a lot of ignorance about diversity. And while they definitely understand the prejudice against black people, there's still microaggressions

that happen all the time. And when I try to correct them, I get some of the same things I would get from my conservative family about it's just a joke or this, that or the other. And so that's a little frustrating. But also they support Black Lives Matter. They definitely agree that people of color are not treated with the same level of care as white people in the justice system. And we see it all the time. People of color who don't have appropriate translators. In the example of Hispanic people, the fact that black people are incarcerated differently because of the number of S that are in the local jails. In some of the counties I work in, the people of color are housed in different places that aren't as good as they should be in jails because of the guard's inability to keep them safe from the massive number of Aryans that they also jail. So there's huge disparities of treatment and it's impossible to address because if we report some of the things that we see, we have to do so very visibly and then we lose all cooperation from the people that run the jails and then we're not able to help anybody.

(21:39):

So trying to figure out how to do an anonymous report to the ACLU is something I've been working on for a while.

Selena (21:48):

Oh, nice. Yeah, that sounds,

Herb (21:50):

Because you have to give them enough details to be interested, but not enough to show that you're the person that knows them.

Selena (21:56):

Yeah. That sounds like some pretty crappy power dynamics going on in the workplace.

Herb (22:03):

It's terrible. Well, my workplace is good. The criminal justice system is bad. I think the public defenders do a really good job with our clients, given the tools that we have, which some might say we're still trying to help people with the master's tools, which makes it very difficult.

Selena (22:27):

That is a good way to put it. Which generation do you think was most affected by the Black Lives Matter movement?

Herb (22:41):

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Oh wow. I would say the people in their twenties today. I think they have a level of compassion that

previous generations. I know as a Gen Xer that I'm very jaded. I was a latchkey kid who basically took care of myself and my brother most of my life. And although I can see the plight of others, it's very easy to get stuck in. Well, my life was shit too. So mine wasn't as bad as being a black person. And I've definitely never feared for my life in the face of police, especially when I became military police. So I know it's different, but also that I think changes how I'm affected by it. My parents and most of the people in their generation that I've dealt with, which would be the boomers, are freaking idiots about it and understand it. And all they can say is, "doesn't my life matter?" And I'm like, mom, no police officer's ever going to shoot you for a speeding ticket. I really think you're okay.

[\(23:56\)](#):

I think the people after us, the millennials were really hammered in the gap between us and the newer generation and treated like crap by the boomers and blame for everything. So I think it's very hard for them to be as effective or affected by that movement because they're constantly under pressure. People still pick on 'em in social media and bully them as an entire generation. So I would say people in their twenties and they really, I feel like they've really taken up the mantle. When we had the BLM march here in Oak Ridge, it was mostly 20 year olds. There were a lot of people in between, but I would say of any generation, they were definitely the most represented.

Selena [\(24:47\)](#):

Interesting. And then I feel like we've touched on this throughout the whole interview, but are there any other ways in which Black Lives Matter has impacted your life?

Herb [\(25:03\)](#):

Well,

[\(25:07\)](#):

I had to examine a lot of my thoughts about police. I wasn't yet in the forensic social work field. When I first started seeing it, I was still in a treatment center working as a therapist and surrounded by people with very conservative belief systems. And I still had a lot of deep rooted thoughts about police and brotherhood and this, that or the other. But it was very hard to ignore the examples of what was happening, especially the gangs within the police who have matching tattoos and talk about whatever their desire to harm people of color and trying to root those groups out. You're looking like you've never heard of such things.

Selena [\(26:03\)](#):

I haven't really thought of that before.

Herb [\(26:07\)](#):

So from what I've read, it seems like there are groups of people in police forces who are part of groups with a symbol that they get tattooed on themselves, and then they specifically seek out people of color to harm by arrest or whatever they're capable of, which is pretty crappy because that's not how I envisioned the police. We always joked we're all green. I recognize now that that didn't mean the same thing for black officers and Hispanic officers that were a part of my group, but I think we were a lot tighter with each other.

Selena [\(26:57\)](#):

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Interesting. And then I guess moving on from that, how has Black Lives Matter affected how you talk with your family and friends?

Herb ([27:15](#)):

Well, that's a great question.

([27:25](#)):

I basically don't talk to my parents much about anything political because they just make me really angry. And in terms of things like Black Lives Matter, I've argued with my mom enough that she no longer brings up things about people of color, although occasionally she will make some kind of terrible microaggression that I have to talk with her about in the car afterwards, such as going out to eat and having her make offhanded comment about out a person of possibly Spanish origin. I don't know. She said really shitty things like, "wow, you're really pretty for a Mexican woman," which I remember that I had to talk to her in the car about how incredibly rude that is. And it's not a compliment at all because basically she's telling this lady that all of her people are ugly except for her, and she just, I don't know. She doesn't get it. I keep telling her over and over and I don't know, she's just stopped talking about it.

Selena ([28:48](#)):

What about with your friends?

Herb ([28:52](#)):

Well, most of my friends are pretty liberal. There's a few that they claim to be libertarian because they don't want to take a political stance on social issues. They think that they can divest themselves from that and only talk about economics. And they don't agree with me when I say that economics are directly connected to social issues such as defunding things like Planned Parenthood that affects a social issue through economics. And so sometimes I beat my drum a little bit much at 'em there. I also, I do something a little maybe under the table about role playing, and my players have never caught on, but I'm a game master. I run games with people and I will put them in social circumstances that mirror the real world. And most often they act like liberals. And I love that they do that. They freely oppressed, they redistribute wealth, they fight inequity. And I've never pointed it out to them that they're acting against their stated political beliefs or values, but I'm hoping that it creates some cognitive dissonance and forces them to think about it a little bit. And maybe over time their mindset will change some. I mean, I was a pretty staunch conservative when I started my graduate program. And really the Intergroup dialogue class shifted me almost 180 in about three months on my political. Also, I was with a diverse group of people, which really helped me see differences.

Selena ([30:48](#)):

Yeah.

Herb ([30:50](#)):

Anyway, I don't know, did I answer your question? Yeah,

Selena ([30:54](#)):

Yeah. And then how has the movement changed how you interact with people of other

racers? Herb ([31:06](#)):

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Well, I don't white knight nearly as much, but I'm happy to support. I've done things like gone to marches and stood between people of color and the police so that they can't do anything. But around here they're not going to. But I did it because I feel like that's an important thing for the police to see that white people are willing to stand in front of 'em. I think it has to affect their mindset about how they act if they see that. Can you ask me a question again?

Selena ([31:46](#)):

How has the movement changed how you interact with people of other races?

Herb ([31:52](#)):

And I listen more and talk less when I'm in spaces of color, especially when talking about color issues. And interestingly, that has changed how I interact with groups that aren't about color, but are also still about diversity. I'm on a board of directors for a group called Fun with Friends Helping Hands, and we wanted to do some things for the L-G-B-T-Q community. So I went and listened to some people talk for about an hour and a half and didn't really say much except to prompt them to keep talking because I wanted to learn about their issues instead of assuming I understood 'em.

([32:44](#)):

I don't run into lots of people of color except a little bit in my work, and I try to be very aware of how what's happening affects them. So if the lawyers act differently, I point out those differences and say, Hey, you wouldn't normally plead this because it's a really crappy case. Why are we pleading it on this fellow? Is it because his last name is Reyes or he doesn't understand, or it's harder because we can't get a good statement from him? And sometimes I think those little language barriers, the difficulty of getting an interpreter can affect how they treat those cases. They want to dispose of the case quickly. Disposing of the case is just what you do. It's not meaning they're trying to trash 'em all, but you dispose all cases. But they try to move through those cases quickly. And I think sometimes it's of the frustration that they feel with not having the proper resources, not at the individual, but how can I do my job if I don't have somebody here to tell me exactly what he's saying, not try to guess what he's saying in the interpreter.

([33:53](#)):

The pool is very small in this area for people who speak Spanish and also understand legal terms. So they have to be able to explain legal terms to the clients and then explain to the lawyers in more legal

terms what the clients are saying. It's not always a hundred percent or whatever. And with people of color, I think I work harder for them, and that's probably some of the white guilt, feeling bad about how they're treated. I had a fellow who came down here and stayed with somebody who did some really dumb things and got him in trouble because he was in the car when they happened, and he ended up pleading the case, even though he didn't really do any of the things just because he wanted to get out of the jail here and away from this crazy white city as quick as he could. So now he has a record. He wanted to get away quick and he didn't have access to.

(34:54):

Our public defenders are really great, but maybe if he had had an attorney of color, they would've been able to sit with him better. I don't know. I don't, I don't want to say our attorneys aren't doing a good job. I think they are. I think definitely having somebody like you represent you would be maybe better, maybe better understand him or something. But I don't know. It's hard. Sometimes people just want to get out of jail, so they plead to things that maybe they didn't do or didn't happen the way they're charged. In his case, this guy was driving a radically shot at police officers and then ran off, and so he got

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charged with all this stuff and most of it got dropped, but some of it he's going to take with him the rest of his life. If he gets rearrested, they can affect how his further charges get punished.

Selena (36:00):

Wow, that's a lot.

Herb (36:02):

Yeah.

Selena (36:04):

And then how do you think the Black Lives Matter movement succeeded?

Herb (36:12):

Well, like most good social awareness groups, even if they refute it, everybody has to admit that something's going on wrong. Many of the police officers involved in shootings these days are fired, although they often find jobs in other states, it costs them. If you can't stay with the same police department for 20 years, your retirement is not quite as good as it would be. So even if they manage to go somewhere else, it hurts 'em financially. And I think in a lot of these cases, the families have been able to sue for a lot better compensation. And I think people are maybe going to be a little shy about pulling their gun on somebody when they know there's people watching and there's a whole group with good funding waiting for them to mess up.

Selena (37:15):

Yeah. And then on the other side, how do you think the movement has failed or

Herb ([37:32](#)):

I don't know of specific failures. I remember reading some drama about how different parts of it were organized, and they were trying to, I believe if I remember reading correctly, they were trying to have an organization that wasn't run by one person, which I think in terms of keeping power in many hands is a good thing, but also it's caused some issues where they don't all act the same. And so in some places they're received very poorly. In some places they receive very well because of that type of interaction. So I don't know, maybe that you could call that a little bit of a failure. I think it's in the design, the reason why they don't have a one leader, they might now, I don't know. I hadn't looked at 'em in a long time. But

Selena ([38:25](#)):

Yeah,

Herb ([38:27](#)):

So I think that's a little bit of a failure, I think. I don't know. It's hard for me as a white person to say, because I haven't been treated the same way, but I think sometimes they were a little militant, and that has made it very difficult to have some white people hear. I'm not sure those white people could ever hear 'em though. So that's sort of the other side of that.

Selena ([38:58](#)):

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Right. Yeah. And then what do you think is the current state of race relations in the United States?

Herb ([39:12](#)):

I would say that this is going to sound horrible, but the more old people die off, the better they get. Because I feel like the younger generation is way more inclusive than older generations. There's some exceptions. I would say Gen X is pretty solidly liberal because we were punks and goths and everybody was allowed to be one. There was not a, you're black, you can't be a punk. If you showed up with a Mohawk, you were jumping in the pit with everybody else, and we didn't give a crap what you looked like. Right? I know that's not a hundred percent accurate, but that's sort of been my experience. I know there are definitely people my age who are racist, but I think the more the older generations die off, the more equitable things will get as they have. Things are better now than they were a hundred years ago.

Selena ([40:23](#)):

And then this is our final question. What do you think is the future of the Black Lives Matter movement?

Herb ([40:33](#)):

Well, frankly, I haven't seen much about it lately. So I'm worried that it's going to disappear if they don't become more active with publicity in talking about things. It may be because I'm more distracted. I will

admit that when the pandemic was happening, there wasn't a hell of a lot to see except for basically what was happening with BLM and the big orange turd. And so that's most of why I paid attention to them at the time. I have watched occasionally to see if things come up, but I haven't seen 'em in a news cycle on Google in a long time, which makes me concerned that maybe they need to do some things more than just whatever they're doing now, which requires funding, which is hard to get. And I get that. Does that sense?

Selena ([41:33](#)):

Yeah, that does make sense. Do you have any other thoughts that we didn't touch on?

Herb ([41:40](#)):

I think it's really hard as a white person to make judgements about the Black Lives Matter movement because again, I haven't experienced the kind of prejudice they had. I know I've been treated badly by people because I was poor, poor white trash. You might say something, you haven't had to experience as much going to that big fancy private school. But I know it's nothing like my black friends. When I did the intergroup dialogue in one of our sessions, this woman talked about how if she could, she would drive separately from her boyfriend because having a black man in her car meant she would pull over almost every time. And that to me is just crazy. I think if I hadn't heard her say it with tears in her eyes, I probably would've thought it was bullshit at the time, because it seems insane that just having a black man in your car would change how police affect you. But when I think back, I don't remember ever having a black man sit in my front seat with me. I know I've driven around groups of friends, but they were usually in the backseat. And I wonder if they did that because the cars I drove, you couldn't see in the backseat, and they were protecting themselves, and I never thought about that. So I think as white people, it's very hard to find an appropriate place of support without white knighting or ignoring other people's experience.

Selena ([43:29](#)):

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Yeah. Well, awesome. Got a lot of great stuff. So thank you, dad for joining me today. You're welcome.