

Growing up as Emmett



Ages 12+

A story told from the point of view of an African American about growing up in the United States and the injustice that comes with it.



Hi my name is Emmett and it all started when I was born in 1998. My mother, a nurse, was so happy when she brought me home and my dad, a construction worker, was a little nervous about raising me.



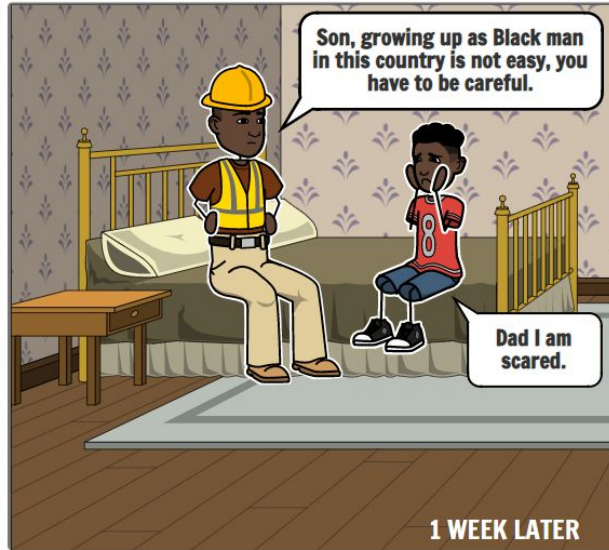
5 YEARS LATER

When I turned 5, I was excited to start school to make new friends and learn new things. A lot of my friends got picked up from school, but I had to walk home because my parents had to work a lot to take care of us.



5 YEARS LATER

A lot of my friends go out with their families on the weekend but I wasn't able to go out much since my parents were always working. Instead I stayed inside and watched movies until they came home.

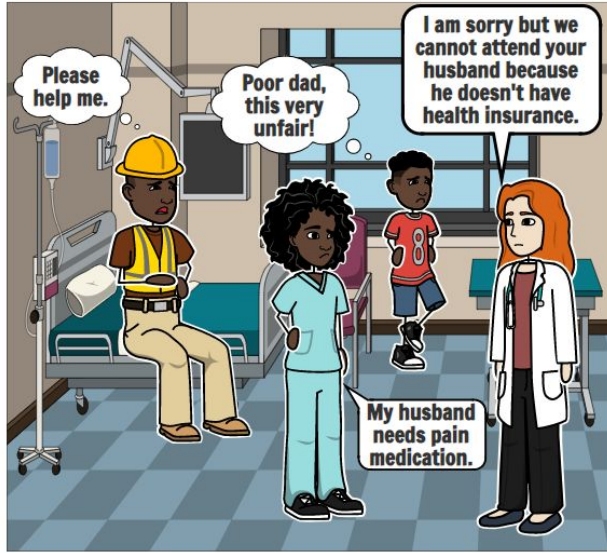


1 WEEK LATER

My dad talked to me about the dangers of being a Black man. He explained to me that I wasn't allowed to do the same activities as my friends, such as play cops and robbers and play with toy guns.



My dad was always working very hard. One day at work my dad got a very bad injury, but still had to go to work to make money for our family.



We brought my dad to the hospital, hoping to get some pain medication for his injury. They refused to give my dad treatment because he did not have health insurance.



One night, I heard my parents talking about my dad's injury. My mom offered to work extra hours so my dad could rest and get better. My dad ended up only taking a week off even though he was still in pain.



6 YEARS LATER

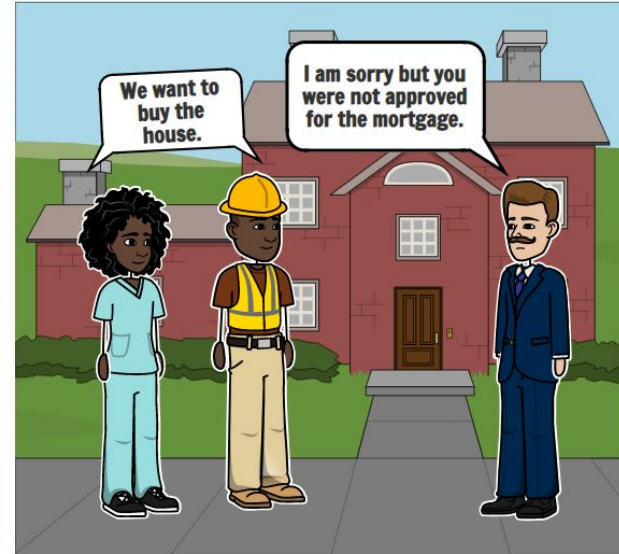
When I was 16, my dad sat me down for a serious talk. He warned me to make sure to listen to the police for my own safety and to continue my education for a better future.



One day, I decided to bring my mom food at work. I didn't know my way around the hospital and asked the woman at the front desk for directions. She yelled at me assuming that I was there to cause trouble and treated me poorly.



When it came to picking a college, my dream school was in another state, I needed to dorm but it cost a lot of money to live on campus and my parents could barely afford the tuition.



My parents wanted to buy a house near the school so we could save money for dorming, but they could not get approved for the loan or mortgage because of redlining.



Redlining is a racist system used by the government to decide if you can be approved for a new home based on where you live.



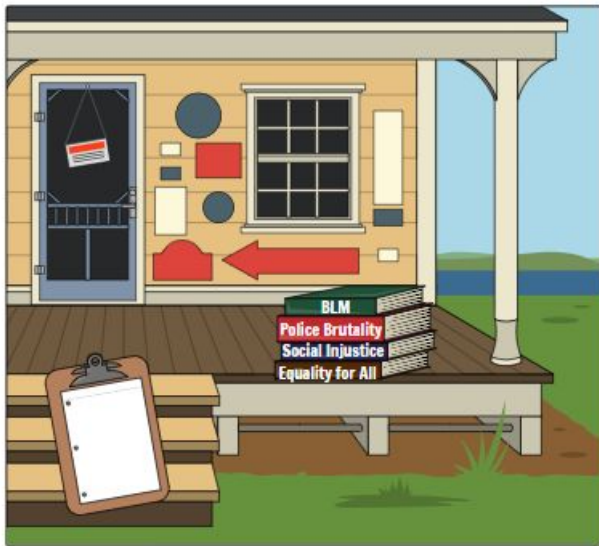
My parents sat me down and told me the bad news. I couldn't go to my dream school and the school near us wasn't as good for learning.



I went to get my first internship during my freshman year of college, the interview was quickly dismissed as though they already made their decision.



Systematic racist systems such as police brutality, redlining, inequitable healthcare, education, job opportunity, and so much more had come to light. It feels good to know people see our struggle.



Educating yourself, being aware of privilege and inequality, protesting, signing petitions, and supporting black businesses are steps everyone can take to help create an anti-racist world that fights racism together.



The authors of this book Melinda Ngo, Ashna Omar, and Dana Winer thank you for reading this book and we hope that this will be one step closer to change.



I did not get the internship, instead I had to get an essential job as a fast food worker to make whatever money I could.



In March of 2020, a pandemic occurred and the entire country was put on mandatory quarantine. People had to work from home, however, my parents and I were essential workers and had to continue going to work.



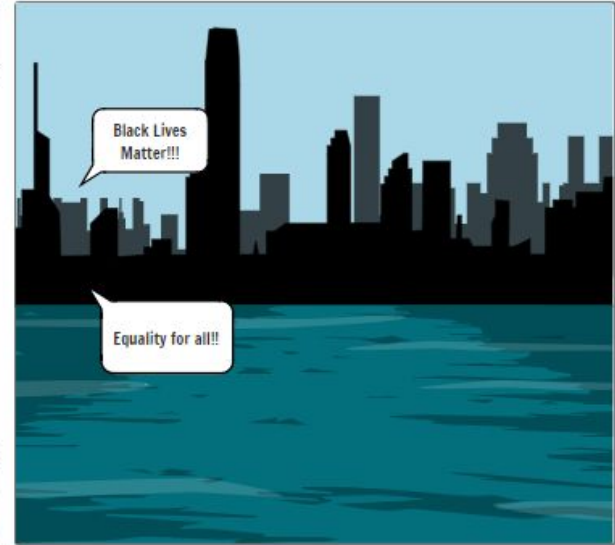
People wore masks everywhere and many were scared to get sick. My mom got exposed to coronavirus from working at the hospital and had to quarantine away from our family.



I couldn't be around my mom but I would sit outside her door and talk with her. She would tell me how the hospital didn't give her the proper care, denied her symptoms, and didn't give her sick paid days.



Thankfully, she eventually got better and was able to go back to work. Although she had recovered, it was hard to stay safe due to our essential jobs and not being able to social distance at work or home.



The coronavirus pandemic helped the Black Lives Matter movement resurface. People started to talk about social injustices for Black Americans on social media and even began protesting.