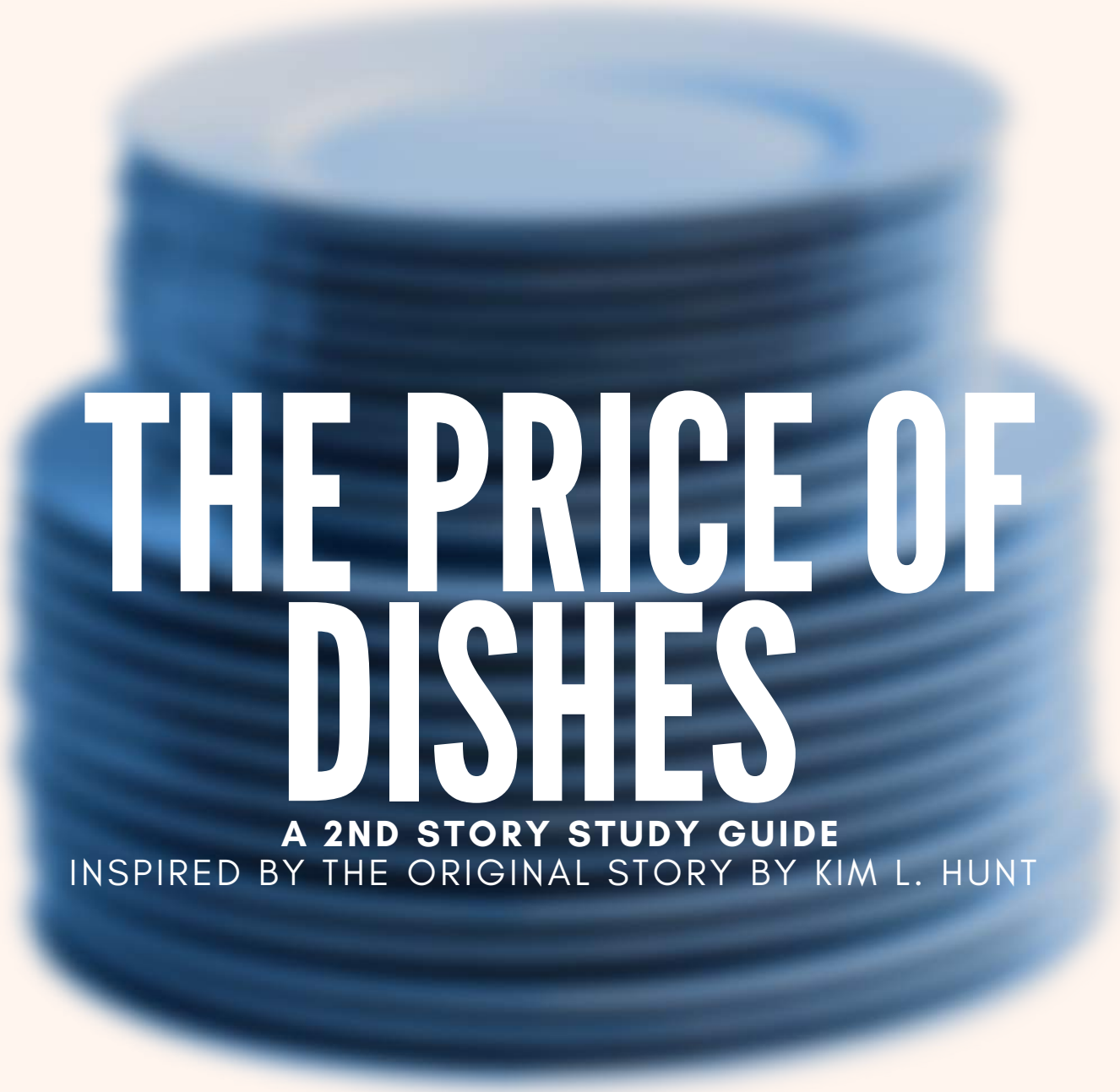

THE PRICE OF DISHES

A 2ND STORY STUDY GUIDE

INSPIRED BY THE ORIGINAL STORY BY KIM L. HUNT

2nd Story

WWW.2NDSTORY.COM

CONTENTS

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Welcome to our study guide.

2nd Story is a collective of story-makers and story-lovers committed to building a more empathetic world by sharing one great story at a time. We believe in the unique power of sharing one's personal story.

This guide takes a closer look at a real story told by a real person.

In *The Price of Dishes*, teller Kim Hunt brings us to Kansas City, Missouri, during the late 1960s, and we learn about the arduous lengths her family would go through to try and obtain a set of dishes.

Inside this study guide, you will find activities, an interview with Kim, and contextual information, including information on the history of "Jim Crow" and the Civil Rights Movement during the 1960s, which will add to your understanding of her story. On our website, you can find additional resources and related learning standards.

To use this guide in any capacity, please start by listening to Kim's story, available on the 2nd Story website at 2ndStory.com/studyguides.

Happy listening! Happy learning!
The 2nd Story Collective

Study guide curated by **Liz Rice** and **Max Spitz**
Articles by **Max Spitz** and **Liz Rice**
Edited by **Amanda Delheimer** and **Liz Rice**
Designed by **Lauren Sivak**

The 2nd Story study guide is made possible by generous support from **The Lupo Family**.

START TALKING.

2nd Story uses **true, first-person stories** as an entry-point for conversation. After listening to both stories, use the following questions for a guided discussion with your students.

GROUP AGREEMENTS

When sharing personal narratives, stories, and sensitive information, we begin by establishing the following agreements with participants. Before beginning your discussion, we recommend going over the following group agreements. When finished, ask them, "Do you agree?" and then have them collectively and vocally respond with "I agree."

1. What is learned here leaves here. What is said here stays here.
2. Take care of yourself.
3. Practice equity by sharing the floor.
4. Stay curious.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What moments in this story feel familiar to you and your life?
- What are the stakes of this story for Kim and her siblings? For their mother?
- How would you describe the lengths taken by her family to collect the 500 pennies?
- How are the events in this story shaped by the community/city it takes place in?
- When did you see someone you looked up to be vulnerable? How did they navigate that moment?
- How does Kim's story intersect with your understanding of the US in the 1960s?

CIVIL RIGHTS TIMELINE: THE 1960s

Set in the 1960s, Kim's story lives in the midst of one of America's most tumultuous eras. Understanding the culture of America at large and where Black Americans lived in the culture, requires a look back as to how the country restricted and oppressed the lives of Black Americans, and why the 1960s proved pivotal. After the turn of the century, Black Americans entered a period we now refer to as The Great Migration. From approximately 1917-1970, over six million Black Americans moved from the rural South to urban areas in the North - especially concentrating in Midwest and Northeast cities. Kim's family, for example, moved from Louisiana to Kansas City, Missouri in the 1940s while her grandfather was serving in World War II. The rural South had steadily grown less appealing due to the predatory practices of sharecropping and oppressive discrimination of Jim Crow Laws, as well as other factors.

The urban North became more attractive with a lesser degree of overt racism and greater job opportunities within the industrial market. In some cities, most notably Chicago, newspapers such as *The Chicago Defender* actively supported the Great Migration, which included printing ads and stories of success and comfort in the city. While the Great Migration explains why so many folks left the South for the North, the era of our story needs more background and explanation. In the wake of the 1954 verdict of Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka and growing policies towards desegregation, this timeline highlights some key events that occurred in the U.S. during the 60s, giving additional context to Kim's experiences.

FEBRUARY 1, 1960 - THE GREENSBORO SIT-IN

- On this date, four Black students in Greensboro, NC enact a protest against racial discrimination when they sit at a Woolworth's lunch counter and ask for service. They are refused and, eventually, asked to leave the store. While they do leave, the news of this protest sparks a wave of similar protests across upper Southern states - and is marked by many as the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement, though the movement had been underway for years.
- *See our activity "Newspaper Theater: Getting a Bigger Picture of Historical Events - The Greensboro Sit-In" for more information.*

NOVEMBER 14, 1960

- Six-year-old Ruby Bridges is the first Black student to integrate her elementary school in New Orleans, LA. Opposition is so intense that federal marshals are required to ensure she is kept safe from adult protesters.

1961 - FREEDOM RIDERS

- Throughout this year, groups of volunteers travel across the South in protest of segregation. Often met with violence from southern white Americans, the Freedom Riders bring massive awareness to their movement.

JANUARY 1961

- John F Kennedy is inaugurated as the President.

JANUARY 1963

- Alabama Governor George Wallace speaks at his inauguration claiming that he will endorse "segregation forever." He would later personally and physically block two Black students from registering at the University of Alabama - prompting Kennedy to send federal troops to Alabama to enforce integration.

APRIL 16, 1963

- Martin Luther King Jr. is arrested in Birmingham, Alabama. While in jail there, he writes the Letter from Birmingham Jail, where he outlines his belief in the moral imperative to disobey unjust laws.

AUGUST 28, 1963 - THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON FOR JOBS AND FREEDOM

- In the 1940s, Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters labor leader A. Phillip Randolph and NAACP Executive Secretary Roy Wilkins planned to march on Washington with the NAACP in response to racial disparity in FDR's New Deal and the jobs that came out of it. However, at that time, the march was delayed due to perceived success in negotiations with the president. By the mid-1950s, after seeing the the Civil Rights Act stall in Congress, Randolph allied with King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to plan the march, calling in Wilkins to help lead. By August 1963, leaders from three additional major civil rights groups (Congress of Racial Equality- CORE, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee - SNCC, National Urban League) had joined the coalition to lead the march for both Jobs and Freedom, combining its origins with its present.
- Attended by approximately 250,000 people, the March on Washington is most notable for featuring King's "I Have A Dream" speech in which King speaks of a future without discrimination or inequity.

SEPTEMBER 15, 1963

- The 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham had long been a meeting point for Civil Rights leaders - in addition to its largely Black congregation.
- On this day, during Sunday school classes, a group of white supremacists detonate a bomb on the building's east wall.
- Many are injured, and four young girls - Denise McNair, Cynthia Wesley, Carole Robertson, and Addie Mae Collins - are killed.

NOVEMBER 22, 1963

- President Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas, Texas. His Vice President, Lyndon B. Johnson is sworn in as President and later wins reelection in 1964, serving as President through 1969.

JANUARY 23, 1964

- The 24th Constitutional Amendment is ratified, outlawing any practices or laws that require a poll tax to vote: a practice that had been used in Southern states to target impoverished Black Americans since the Reconstruction era (1865-1877).
- Poll taxes were fees citizens were required to pay before being allowed to vote. States with poll taxes often included exemptions if one had voted prior to the law's enactment - thus allowing poorer whites to vote and only disenfranchising citizens of color.

JULY 2, 1964

- President Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This Act explicitly forbids discrimination with regard to race and sex, with protections specifically referring to employment, public/federal services, voting rights, and desegregating public schools. It is this passage that lays the legal groundwork to actively end Jim Crow legislation and discrimination.

AUGUST 1964

- Three civil rights workers are found dead in Philadelphia, Mississippi after working in the area to register Black voters. An FBI investigation would implicate over twenty white segregationists, some of whom were also members of the police.

FEBRUARY 21, 1965

- Malcolm X, one of the most prominent civil rights leaders of the era, is assassinated in New York City by a member of the Nation of Islam - a group he had previously been a prominent member of himself.

MARCH 1965 - SELMA TO MONTGOMERY MARCH

- In this month, King, along with hundreds of fellow protesters, begin a march from Selma to Montgomery - an act of civil disobedience against the violation of Black citizens' voting rights.
- On March 7, Selma police attack the protesters as they march peacefully. This police brutality is captured on film, leading to a massive increase in supporters traveling to Selma to join the march. After further violence towards the protesters, President Johnson speaks out in favor of the Selma march and sends federal Army troops to protect them on their path.
- The protesters arrive in Montgomery on March 25th, eventually massing to a size of over 25,000 participants.

JUNE 4, 1965

- President Johnson speaks at Howard University, outlining the importance of affirmative action - the necessity to take targeted actions to undo and repair past oppression.

AUGUST 6, 1965

- President Johnson signs the Voting Rights Act of 1965; this outlaws the use of literacy tests for registration - a notoriously discriminatory practice - as well as gives federal officials the power to observe and investigate areas suspected of voter discrimination.

OCTOBER 1966

- Huey Newton and Bobby Seale form the Black Panther Party for self-protection in Oakland, California. The Black Panthers would grow massively over the following years, providing social services and protection to Black communities across the US.

JUNE 1967 - LOVING V. VIRGINIA

- The US Supreme Court officially rules that any laws outlawing interracial marriage unconstitutional.

APRIL 4, 1968

- Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee. In the week that follows, protests and riots break out across the country: notably in Washington DC, Chicago, Baltimore, and Kansas City.

APRIL 11, 1968

- President Johnson signs a further Civil Rights Act, known as the Fair Housing Act, which outlaws explicit racial discrimination when buying, selling, renting, or financing a housing unit.

A NOTE ABOUT OUR TIMELINE:

Our timeline of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s ends here, but the fight for equal rights and the existence of discrimination did not end in 1968. For example, the Stonewall Riots occurred just over a year after the signing of the Fair Housing Act on June 28th, 1969, igniting a new movement towards equality for people in the LGBTQIA+ community. The fight for equality, equity, and continued renewal of our civil rights persist to this day. We continue to strive towards a just and equitable society, working towards the very same goals of the Civil Rights Movement of the past.

UNDERSTANDING JIM CROW

In Kim's story, we see the Kroger manager prevent Kim's mother from acquiring the grocery store's dinnerware promotion because the coins that their family so meticulously gathered were not in paper rolls. Kim notes that the ad promotion had never said the coins needed to be in paper rolls. The initial attendant who greeted Kim and her mother also did not point out that the coins needed to be in rolls when she showed her the jar full of pennies. In that moment, she becomes "very aware of her blackness," and we can infer that the manager was treating Kim's family differently and less empathetically than they expected.

Kim writes in her story that "Kansas City wasn't the South, but it wasn't not the South, either." Throughout U.S. history, we can find multiple examples of this type of racial bias, profiling, and aggression that has created a government and societal culture that promotes racial prejudice and inequity. Much of this prejudice and racist thinking grows out of the U.S.'s race-based slavery system and the Jim Crow laws that were enacted after the legal eradication of slavery. The Jim Crow laws worked to restrict the rights and liberties of Black Americans, particularly the newly emancipated from southern States.

THE BEGINNING OF "JIM CROW"

Between 1876 and 1965, the U.S. saw a rise in state, territorial, and local laws that specifically aimed to oppress, segregate, and restrict the rights of Black people, and other minority groups. These laws were colloquially known as "Jim Crow Laws" - originating from a popular minstrel show character from the 1830s and 40s. A white actor, after traveling the American South, created a character called "Jim Crow", where he dressed in blackface and parodied a slave. As the character grew in popularity among white audiences, it became commonly used as a derogatory term for any Black American.

The laws that would eventually come to be known as "Jim Crow" initially began as "Black Codes" that restricted the voting and employment rights of Black citizens - heavily penalizing them if indiscriminately rigid rules were not followed. In one example, Black workers in South Carolina were fined if they held any job other than servant or farmer. While these codes were made illegal by the 14th (ratified July 9th, 1868) and 15th (ratified February 3rd, 1870) amendments, racist lawmakers found loopholes that allowed them to continue their discrimination and oppression.

Though Jim Crow laws varied from state to state, the central thesis behind them was to explicitly segregate white and Black Americans - and, by default, to not provide basic services and rights to Black citizens. This included segregating public systems like schools, public transportation, and parks. Private businesses (like theaters, stores, and restaurants) could legally exclude customers based solely on their race, as well. One particularly notable example came in 1890; Louisiana created the "Separate Car Law" which meant that white and Black bus and train riders had to sit in separate cars. While these laws explicitly targeted Black Americans at their inception, these same segregations were also used to keep other targeted groups from accessing public services and spaces as well. Signs stating "No Jews", "No Spanish or Mexicans", and "No Coloreds" were commonplace, and often combined.

"SEPARATE BUT EQUAL"

In theory, laws like the above claimed to provide "separate but equal" accommodations. In practice, this was rarely (if ever) the case. The Separate Car Law was brought to the Supreme Court in 1896 after Homer A. Plessy, a man of mixed race (seven-eighths white, one-eighth black: the minimum to be legally considered "a person of color" at the time), was denied access to a white train car and arrested. The Supreme Court, in the landmark decision known as Plessy v. Ferguson, claimed that segregationist laws were legal as long as all citizens had access to equal rights and services.

Thus, the false concept of "separate but equal" became officially ingrained in American law. It was decisions like Plessy v. Ferguson that allowed states with Jim Crow laws to segregate an unending number of services and businesses, with no actual enforcement of the "equal" definition. Any business could claim to only serve white patrons, and Black citizens looking to own a business of their own were subject to increasingly harsh regulations. The same was true for segregated schools, hospitals, cemeteries, etc. These laws were also supplemented by a social code occasionally referred to as "Jim Crow etiquette".

Jim Crow etiquette largely consisted of social rules meant to keep Black citizens in subservient positions to white ones. For example, a Black man could never offer to shake hands with a white man, as it implied social equality. Doing so with a white woman would be considered an act of assault, and Black men were at risk of attack if accused of such. Even when both parties were friends, if a supposed violation was merely witnessed by another white person, violence could ensue, putting both parties in danger . This social code undermined many attempts at integration, as Black Americans were in danger simply when existing in public and especially when interacting with white people.

THE END OF "JIM CROW"?

The explicit racism and segregation caused by Jim Crow laws lasted for decades, and the repercussions of these laws linger today. The turning point for these laws came in 1954, almost 80 years after their inception, with the Supreme Court case, Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka. This case challenged race-based segregation, specifically in Topeka, Kansas, claiming it unconstitutionally violated Black citizens' right to equal access to public services and, therefore, any protected rights at all. The Supreme Court unanimously ruled in the favor of Brown, forcing Jim Crow states to remove their distinctly discriminatory laws and begin the process of integrating all public services. The "separate but equal" concept was officially considered unconstitutional, but, over the course of the following years, many states' governments and private white institutions fought to maintain their place at the top of an imaginary racial hierarchy.

While the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s made great strides towards racial equality, especially regarding explicit oppression and discrimination, recent discussions have looked towards implicit, or hidden, systems that uphold the white supremacy of Jim Crow. For example, economic systems, such as bank loans and mortgages, are subject to the prejudices of their creators. Discriminatory practices within these systems can still be seen today. In 2021, a Black Johns Hopkins University professor had his home appraised at nearly $300,000 less than when he and his family removed all traces that the home belonged to a Black family, including having a white colleague meet the appraiser at the door. Housing discrimination has been long documented. Another type of housing discrimination, redlining, is a process where the government designated majority-Black areas as "risky" and therefore not worth investing in. These types of housing discrimination created a financial separation in post-Depression America that has yet to be repaired.

Additionally, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were supposed to end and prohibit discriminatory voting practices from the Jim Crow era. For example, literacy tests and poll taxes were enacted to exclude people from voting. This disproportionately affected People of Color, although poor white citizens were also excluded. Literacy tests were nearly always held by white officials, who could choose to ask impossible questions to prospective Black voters or simply fail them without reason. While these practices are outlawed now, state governments are still finding ways to make it more difficult for marginalized communities to vote. In 2021, the state of Georgia enacted a suite of voting reforms, all of which target marginalized voters. The most blatant of these include making it illegal to provide food or water to voters waiting in line, along with severely restricting early and absentee voting opportunities. In a state where Black voters wait on average an hour to vote compared to white voters waiting only six minutes, these laws continue the Jim Crow practices of voter suppression, using modern language of fighting nonexistent voter fraud.

In 2010, author Michelle Alexander coined the phrase "The New Jim Crow" to refer to the racial inequities of mass incarceration in today's United States. Nearly two million Americans are in prison/jail, and 38% of them are Black, despite only 13% of Americans overall identifying as Black. The continued over-criminalization of drug use and inconsistent sentencing rates create a "racial caste system", actively harming marginalized individuals and communities at once. Marginalized people already lack resources, and laws and systems continue to harm them. Thus, while the "end" of the Jim Crow era occurred in the 50s and 60s, the effects of Jim Crow are still felt to this day. How do you see the effects in the community around you? Where does Jim Crow continue to echo in the world today?

SOURCES:

- https://www.britannica.com/event/Jim-Crow-law
- https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-codes
- https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/amendment-14/
- https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/amendment-15/
- https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/what.htm
- https://www.britannica.com/event/Brown-v-Board-of-Education-of-Topeka
  - https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/brown-v-board-of-education
- https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/18/realestate/housing-discrimination-maryland.html
- https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/17/realestate/what-is-redlining.html
- https://www.naacpldf.org/naacp-publications/ldf-blog/important-facts-about-ldfs-lawsuit-challenging-georgias-voter-suppression-bill/
- https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/US.html
- https://newjimcrow.com/

AN HOMAGE TO RESILIENCE

A CONVERSATION WITH KIM L. HUNT

*Originally from Kansas City, Missouri, **Kim L. Hunt** has called Chicago home since the mid-80s. Kim is an advocate for LGBTQ+ rights, wife, mother and huge storytelling fan. In her spare time she is co-host of OUTSpoken! LGBTQ Storytelling and indulges in her other love, shoe shopping.*

So, tell me about yourself. Where are you from? Where did you go to school? What do you do? Etc.

I turned 61 years old on March 28. I moved to Chicago in the mid-1980s and definitely consider it home with a small "h". Home with a capital "H" is Kansas City, Missouri, where I was born and raised until I went to college at Iowa State University. I'm a Midwestern girl through and through. I'm a Black queer cisgender woman who is a mother, wife (Mary and I have been together almost 24 years), a daughter, niece, aunt, sister, and sneaker lover, among other things. I have had the privilege of working alongside some amazing folks to try to make our corner of the world a better place.

How do you identify as an artist?
It took me a while, but I definitely consider myself a storyteller. I grew up with some natural storytellers and have been able to develop my skills over the years. I also consider creating inclusive collaborative spaces to be a form of my artistry which I get to do as part of my job at AIDS Foundation Chicago (AFC) where Pride Action Tank (PAT) is one of my major projects. PAT is a think tank that's focused on action that leads to increased outcomes and opportunities for LGBTQ+ communities and other historically marginalized groups.

What role does story and storytelling play in your life?
Storytelling is a major component of my life. I craft and perform stories in my spare time and have deeply embedded storytelling into my advocacy work at AFC. In fact, the Policy and Advocacy department, where I have a leadership role, has incorporated storytelling as a major strategy in AFC's strategic plan.

Why did you want to tell this story?
I think this story was sitting with me for a long time before I actually wrote it down. Sometimes stories live in my head for years before I commit them to paper. This is a story that surfaced as I was thinking about what a big influence my mother has been on the person who I am today. Unfortunately, she died in 2014. I miss her everyday and I am reminded of her everyday because I look so much like her as I grow older. So this is an homage to her resilience and the many lessons she offered without even knowing it.

In your opinion, how do you think we've grown/changed (or not) as a country in regard to race? Has it improved? Does history keep repeating itself?
Hmm. There are certainly more laws on the books to protect racial identities and, until 2015/2016, there was an understanding that people should not say certain things or act on their biases and racial prejudices. We can also point to many achievements and opportunities for Black folks and other folks of color. And we still have work to do 1:1 and across races and different identities within the same race. Right now, I feel like as society takes two steps forward regarding positive human relations, there's always a blowback from a small corner that has us fighting the same fights over and over again. My personal vision is to co-create the beloved community that Martin Luther King, Jr. and others have talked about, and my mission is to make sure all the co-creators are at the table. So, as frustrated as I feel when it comes to race relations, I'm in the fight for the long haul.

How have the female relationships you witnessed and/or experienced as a kid impacted your perception of family and friendships with women now that you're an adult?
I talk about this a bit above, but generally speaking, there are some strong, kick-ass women in my family and I recognized that at a very early age. They were my she-roes even when they got on my last nerve. For a long time, it was always the women in my family who went to college or found a way to make sure the family thrived. And for some, the quest for love and companionship was rarely satisfied - as if they couldn't be strong and partnered at the same time. I name that because that was often the conversation over cups of coffee or beer. At the same time, they had such strong friendships with other women who always had their backs. Such friendships were actually missing from my life for a long time and this was a source of jealousy as I looked back at my mother's friendships. Fortunately, I have my own sister circle now, a group of women in leadership positions who I can be real with. We saved each other during lockdown and continue to celebrate each other and feel all the feels each of us goes through. We have each other's backs.

The story ends with a moment of resistance by your mother. What lessons did you learn from that moment? How did watching your mother in this moment impact you? How have you thought about and/or engaged in resistance in your own life?
The end of the story makes me so proud every time I read it. That moment is everything to me and says so much about who my mother was. She wouldn't often make a big fuss about the negative things she experienced but she was a rebel at heart. If you were wrong, you were going to get read, whether you knew it or not. She's just always been my hero and that was one of many moments where she earned her cape.

What do you hope students or listeners take away from your story?
I hope students and listeners know that there are many ways to exist in their everyday lives. Protest, policy work, and other forms of collective activism are important. And it's in the everyday encounters that we experience pain, joy and, ultimately, liberation.

PUT THE PEN TO PAPER

At 2nd Story we believe that sharing first-person, true stories has the power to change hearts and minds, and we want to know what stories are living inside of you.

We invite you to share your story. Below are several writing prompts that you can use to share a story from your own life that parallels the themes and ideas in this real-life story. Select a prompt and begin writing on the next page!

SHARE A MOMENT WHEN YOU:

- [ ] STOOD UP FOR YOURSELF OR SOMEONE ELSE.
- [ ] WITNESSED AN ACT OF INJUSTICE.
- [ ] WENT TO GREAT LENGTHS TO GET SOMETHING THAT WAS IMPORTANT TO YOU.
- [ ] WHEN YOU TURNED A BAD SITUATION INTO A MOMENT OF JOY.
- [ ] FELT YOU WERE TREATED UNFAIRLY OR UNEQUALLY BY AN AUTHORITY (A PERSON, ORGANIZATION, INSTITUTION, ETC.)
    - HOW DID YOU DEAL WITH THE SITUATION?
- [ ] FOUND JOY IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY.

Newspaper Theater:

Getting a Bigger Picture of Historical Events - The Greensboro Sit-In

As individuals, we can often feel like our personal experiences happen in a vacuum; they just happen to us. Part of our work of sharing personal stories at 2nd Story is showing how our personal experiences can be universal or relate to larger events that are happening in the world: how our perspective of a situation is just one of many points-of-view.

A backdrop to Kim's story is the social turmoil, particularly around race, in the U.S. during the 1950s and 1960s and the Civil Rights Movement. While activists have used sit-ins as a peaceful protest tool since the late 1800s, the sit-in at a Woolworth's drug store in Greensboro, N.C. sparked a series of protests across southern states to promote the integration of public spaces. News outlets across the country, including here in Chicago, reported and weighed in on the protests which furthered the Civil Rights Movement and growth towards desegregation in the U.S.

Here are some articles to help understand how media outlets were talking and thinking about this moment in U.S. history:

**Please note that due to the historical nature of these articles, there is language used that is outdated or no longer appropriate or respectful, including terms used when referring to Black folks.*

- *The Chicago Defender (National Edition)/Daily Defender* (Daily Edition)
  - Collegians Win Initial Victory in Bias Fight - The Chicago Defender - 2/8/1960
  - Bomb Scare Fails to Halt 'Sit Down' Against Bias - The Chicago Defender - 2/9/1960
  - A & T Students Campaign to End Dime Store Bias - The Chicago Defender - 2/13/1960
  - Whites Aid Protest of A&I Youths - The Chicago Defender - 2/13/1960
  - The New South in Action - Daily Defender - 2/16/1960
- *Chicago Daily Tribune*
  - Klansmen Try to Break Up Negro Protest - Chicago Daily Tribune - 2/6/1960
  - Negroes Hold New Protest In N.C. Stores - Chicago Daily Tribune - 2/9/1960
  - 'Gandhi'Aims Seen in South Negro Protest - Chicago Daily Tribune - 2/10/1960
  - Lunch Counter Sitting Starts in N.C. Capital - Chicago Daily Tribune - 2/11/1960
  - Seize Negroes in Dixie Lunch Room Protest - Chicago Daily Tribune - 2/13/1960
- *The Evening Star/The Sunday Star* - Washington, D.C.
  - 3 White Coeds Join Negroes in Dining Protest - The Evening Star - 2/3/1960
  - Bomb Call Interrupts Negro Demonstration - The Sunday Star - 2/7/1960
  - Negro Students Extend Protest - The Evening Star - 2/9/1960
  - Negro Protest Hits Charlotte - The Evening Star - 2/10/1960
  - Stalemate is Reached in Lunch-Counter Row - The Evening Star - 2/11/1960
- *The Chapel Hill Weekly*
  - The Negro Speaks on Integration (pg.1) - The Chapel Hill Weekly - 2/11/1960
  - The Negro Speaks on Integration (cont. pg. 5) - The Chapel Hill Weekly - 2/11/1960

12 Techniques of Newspaper Theater

In the later half of the 20th century, Brazilian theater practitioner and activist Augusto Boal created the Theater of Oppressed pedagogy to promote social and political change. One of the many techniques that he developed was newspaper theater, a method of using non-dramatic texts (like news articles, documents, etc.) to create a performance that critically examines social reality. These methods are useful when examining information on a singular topic from different sources and what potential biases they may reveal. From Uri Noy Meir's article for ImaginAction Theatre Inc.

Using the techniques below, discuss what the social reality of this moment in U.S. history potentially looked like. Think about:

- What happened?
- What biases do you have about the situation? What biases do the articles have?
- What information is potentially missing?
- Whose story or experience is being centered?

1. SIMPLE READING

Reading the news without any comment or commentary, detached from the original context of the text, thus biases connected with the position of the text are reduced; Already choosing and reading the text out loud makes it into a public and performative event.

2. COMPLEMENTARY READING

In this technique, we add information omitted by the text to give a more "complete" version. This information comes from other sources, research, or knowledge: The leading questions in this stage are "What do we know that is not there? What is missing?"

3. CROSSED READING

Reading two contradictory or linked stories (alternating them) to shed light and add a more in-depth understanding of the text. This reading provides a new layer to the original text and allows for new theatrical possibilities.

4. RHYTHMICAL READING

When reading (or singing) a text with rhythm, we add a musical commentary, such as samba, tango, or a chant. The text is "filtered" by the new rhythm's connotations in rhythmical reading, allowing for more critical and empathic reading.

5. PARALLEL ACTION

Reading the text while adding parallel actions showing either the context in which the reported events occur to complement or contrast the spoken story with physical activity, thus enhancing the performativity of the text.

6. IMPROVISATION

The text is improvised on stage to explore/exploit variants and possibilities. It is open to re-playing, suggestions, and even involvement from the audience (like in Forum Theatre). The text can become a jumping board for a completely different story in this technique.

7. HISTORICAL READING

In this technique, "Reading" is the acting of the text/story with facts or scenes that show the event in the context of other historical moments or other countries or social systems. It could be referring to a time and place from the past or the future.

8. REINFORCEMENT

In this technique, the performance of the text is aided or accompanied by reinforcing material, such as audio/visuals, jingles, advertising, or publicity materials. It adds new aesthetical dimensions and possibilities to the performance.

9. THE CONCRETION OF THE ABSTRACT

This technique reveals on-stage what the news often hides or masks beneath clichés, over-used terms, or matter-of-fact reporting. Concepts such as torture, hunger, and unemployment become concrete through theatre and embodiment. It allows for reclaiming the emotional impact of abstracted ideas from the text.

10. TEXT OUT OF CONTEXT

This technique is about performing the text out of the original context; an actor portraying the Prime Minister delivers a speech about austerity while devouring a huge dinner. It unravels the truth behind the words; for example, the PM wants austerity for the people, but not for themself.

11. INSERTION INTO THE ACTUAL CONTEXT

Reading the text while adding parallel actions that show the context in which the reported events occur, in order to complement or contrast the spoken story with physical activity, thus enhancing the performativity of the text.

12. FIELD INTERVIEW

In this technique, the characters featured in the text are interviewed on stage, creating an active investigation with the performance audience. The interview aims to make the actors of the text more humanized and complex in their depiction of reality.

THE PRICE OF DISHES

AN ORIGINAL STORY BY KIM L. HUNT

My mother's love of pretty things was her inheritance from my grandmother who moved her family from rural Louisiana to Kansas City, Missouri just before my mother was born. As my grandfather's only child and the only daughter of my great-grandfather's baby girl, my mother occupied a place of royalty in the family, especially to our southern relatives. They treated her like a princess when my grandparents made annual trips back to Louisiana.

Kansas City wasn't the south, but it wasn't not the south, either. Those strong southern ties revealed themselves in my mother's manner of speaking, her cooking, and her name - Pinkie Lavon. She also embodied the quiet defiance of southern people who powered through their trauma with politeness and deft smiles.

As a little girl I bore witness to the laughter and stories of my mother and her friends — fearless, magical, Black women — just one generation removed from the south. During weekly card games she and her girlfriends shared tales about raising kids, dealing with white folks, other people's business and holding on to their men.

Sometimes I'd catch the opening lines of stories about the sweetness of making up after yet another fight with husbands, boyfriends, or unnamed lovers. But before the details were revealed, someone would discover me in a shadowy corner or under the table and my mother would shout, "Kim, get out of here and go play!"

I would reluctantly leave their company, disappointed that I was missing yet another chance to hold the secrets of adults.
I have a memory of my mother from when I was about seven. She was studying an in-store promotion during one of our weekly trips to the Kroger. It was a poster showing a four-serving set of dishes for 500 pennies. For a long time my mother stood there looking at the picture and reading the words, even the little ones. I knew from how she studied that poster, she wanted those dishes — badly.

We ate our meals on worn, plastic dishes. The ones in the store ad were special occasion dishes. They looked like fine china with little pink roses on them.

It was the late 1960s so who knows what cancer-causing material the dishes were really made of. But that didn't matter. My mother was already picturing those dishes on our dining room table loaded with a Sunday dinner of baked chicken, greens, hot water cornbread, macaroni and cheese, sweet potatoes, and peach cobbler, served with ice tea in real glasses.

From that day until the last day of the promotion, my mother was a junkie in need of a constant copper fix. She gave my little sister and me nickels to buy milk for our school lunch so she could hoard the change. She conditioned us to scan sidewalks and parkways. She went through my stepfather's change each morning. She searched between sofa cushions and car seats, ours and other people's. Every gathering with family and friends included a shakedown for pennies.

My mother even tried to convince her girlfriends to change the kitty for their weekly card game from pennies to nickels so she could hold onto their copper. But they weren't having it.

The weekly count occurred on Saturdays just after she finished washing the dinner dishes. She'd dump the collected pennies on the kitchen table and mesmerized my sister and me as her slender brown fingers turned the copper mound into neat stacks on the other side of the table.

My sister would jump up and down, barely able to wait to find out if we made it to 500. I tried to play it cool, but my little heart would pound away until my mother announced the week's total.

"Good job girls," she'd finally say when she finished counting. "We just have a little ways to go."

Each week we'd be so disappointed. But my mother was smart. Dessert always came after the count. Freshly baked cookies or cake became balm for pleasant dreams and motivation for beginning the next week's penny hunt.

After a few months of this madness, we sat down at the kitchen table for the final count. It was the last day of the promotion. Play time was over.

This time my mother told my sister and me to start making stacks of 10 pennies. I had just learned my times tables so I proudly announced that we needed 50 stacks. That made my mother smile. But my little sister was unimpressed. Counting to 10 was the extent of her math skills at the time.

We triple counted the pennies in the stacks and the stacks themselves. After correcting for a few errors, we were good. In fact, we had five extra pennies.

My mother announced that we had 30 minutes before the store closed. So we quickly shoved all those pennies into a big jar and closed the lid. My stepfather was working an extra shift, so we had to walk the six blocks to the Kroger. God was it hot! Heat waves shimmered above the sidewalk ahead of us. And, the humidity made it feel like we were wading through syrup.

My mother and I took turns carrying the jar. Helping her made me feel like a big girl, but I'm sure I wasn't providing her with much relief from the jar's incredible weight. My sister was too little to be useful. Instead, she got on my last nerve, whining about not being able to carry the jar.

My mother and I tuned her out, propelled forward by the anticipation of ending this long journey. Our family had endured hearing my mother talk about those dishes every damn day for months. I couldn't wait to unload these pennies and get those dishes home.

We were welcomed into the store by the woosh of Kroger's automatic doors and its blessedly cool air. We made a beeline to the customer service desk.

"How can I help you," the attendant asked with a smile.

My sister complained about not being able to see. So, my mother put the jar on the counter, picked her up and put her there too, but far enough away that my sister's excited bouncing wouldn't send the jar crashing to the floor.

"I'm here for the dishes that were in the ad," said my mother. "And here's my 500 pennies," she said proudly pointing to the jar. The attendant beamed.

"I just got these dishes last week," she said.

"It took me forever to collect those pennies. I nearly drove my family crazy." She and my mother shared a laugh.

"I'll let the manager know you came for them." She turned away to go to the manager's office.

The "office" was actually a small room at the other end of the customer service area. It was slightly larger than my mother's closet.

A few minutes later, the attendant came out of the office. But instead of returning to us, she fussed over something near the far end of her work area.

The manager took his time coming towards us.

"What do you want," he finally asked.

My mother took a deep breath, pointed to the promotion poster and the jar and said dryly, "I brought 500 pennies for the dishes like the poster says."

He looked at the jar but not at my mother.

"The pennies have to be in bank rolls," he said and started back to his office.

"But that's not what it says here," she said just loud enough for him to hear.

"No rolls. No dishes," he said without stopping and walked back to his little office.

"Is he going to get the dishes," I asked.

"No," my mother said. "He said the pennies have to be in the paper rolls like they have at the bank," she added quietly.

I knew not to ask any more questions. She wasn't facing me, but I knew she wasn't excited like before when she talked to the customer service lady. That man made something happen to her. She was no longer strong or fearless or magical; my mother looked weak.

For the first time since we'd come in, I let my eyes shift from the customer service area to other parts of the store. And I became very aware of our blackness. Every worker was white – the manager, the woman at the customer service desk, all the cashiers and the baggers. And the manager was the only adult male.

Then I was angry at my mother. She studied that ad every time we came to the store. She should have known the pennies had to be in rolls! Now we couldn't get the dishes. Until that moment, I didn't know how badly I wanted them.

We just stood at the counter for a while. My sister and I quietly waited for our mother to tell us what we were supposed to do next. People went about their business around us like they didn't notice us. But at the same time I felt . . . seen.

Finally, my mother took a deep breath, straightened herself, and turned on a smile.

"How about some ice cream," she said.

"Yes!" my sister and I shouted in unison.

We did a happy dance over to the grocery carts. My mother lifted my sister and put her in the seat and the jar of pennies in the area behind her. We marched over to the frozen dessert section at the far end of the store.

"You can each pick one flavor," she said.

"Really," we said, wondering what had come over her. We rarely got to pick what went in the cart.

Life gets complicated when you're told you can have anything you want. Ten minutes into discussing the pros and cons of various flavors, we heard the announcement, "Store closing in five minutes."

With no objections from our mother, we settled on three flavors — butter brickle, Neapolitan, and rainbow sherbet – which even then I knew technically wasn't ice cream.

My mother walked us slowly to the cash register at the other end of the store. One by one, she put our treats on the conveyer belt. Then she pushed the cart forward so she could face the cashier. My sister and I watched as our ice cream was put in what my mother would call a "paper sack," not a "bag" like they say in the north.

"That will be $3.64," said the cashier.

My mother reached behind my sister. She picked up the jar. She unscrewed the lid. Then she slowly dumped the contents onto the conveyer belt.

Once the last penny was out, she looked the cashier in the eyes, politely smiled and said, "I'm paying for this with pennies."

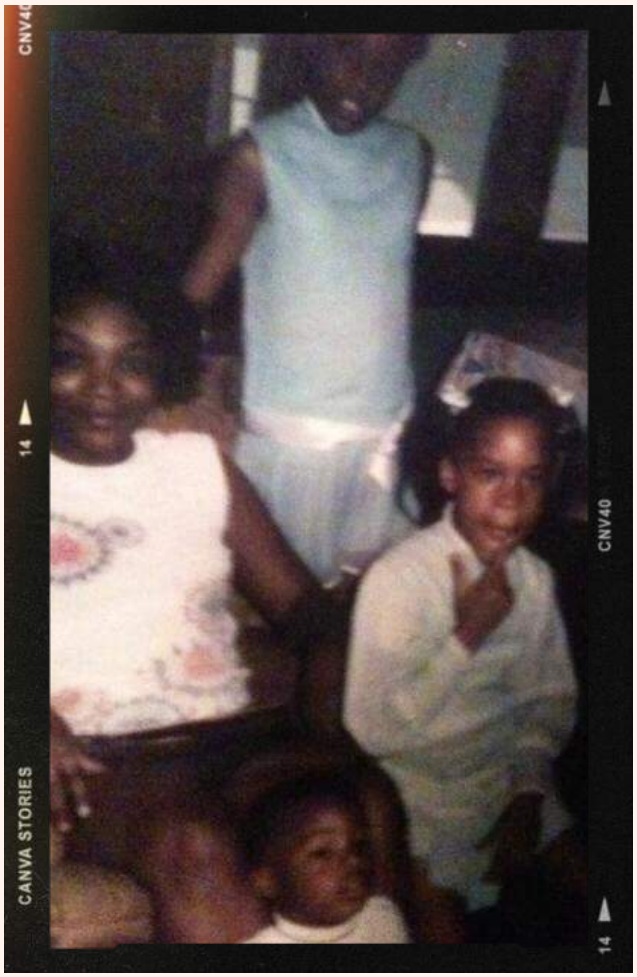

Photo description: Seated is my mother, Pinkie. I'm the one standing in the back. My sister, Rhonda is next and my brother, Nicholas (then known as Nickey-man), is on my mother's feet, which you can't see.

THAT MAN MADE SOMETHING HAPPEN TO HER. SHE WAS NO LONGER STRONG OR FEARLESS OR MAGICAL; MY MOTHER LOOKED WEAK.

KIM L. HUNT