

Name: _____

Date: _____

On Cracking White City

The following oral history, recounted by [James Farmer Jr.](#), explains how the Congress of Racial Equality successfully integrated the Jack Spratt Restaurant in Chicago in 1941.

We went into the restaurant with a group of about 20 — this was a small place that seats 30 or 35 comfortably at the counter and in the booths — and sat in just about all of the available seats and waited for service. The same manager was in charge again. She ordered the waitress to serve the whites who were seated in one booth, and she served them. The manager then ordered the waitress to serve two whites who were seated at the counter, and she served them. Then the manager told the Black people in the restaurant, “I’m sorry, we can’t serve you, you’ll have to leave.” And they, of course, asked to be served, did not leave, and continued to sit there. By this time the other customers who were in the restaurant were aware of what was going on and were watching, and most of these were university people, University of Chicago, who were more or less sympathetic with us. Soon they stopped eating and the two white people at the counter she had served and those white people in the booth she had served were not eating. There was no turnover in the restaurant because no one was leaving their seats since not everyone had been served. People were coming in and standing around for a few minutes and walking out. There were no seats available.

So the manager walked over to two of the white people at the counter and said, “We served you. Why don’t you eat and get out?” They said, “Well, madam, we don’t think it would be polite for us to begin eating our food before our friends here have also been served.” A couple of minutes went by and she announced that she would serve the black people in the basement. We, of course, declined and told her we were quite comfortable in the seats we were already at. She then said, “If all of the black people will occupy those two booths in the back we will serve you there.” We declined again. She said, “I’ll call the police.”

The Gandhian Motif

Then I said to her, “Fine, I think that might be the appropriate step.” By the way, we were following what was known as the *Gandhian Motif*, which uses nonviolent practices to create change. Gandhi had called the police in advance, being completely open about what was happening. We had called the police department and told them what we were going to do, that we were going to eat at this restaurant and that we wouldn’t leave until everyone had been served, no matter their race. In fact, we had to read the state civil rights law to the police. Even though they were the police, they weren’t familiar with the recent law banning segregation in restaurants. The police assured us that if we followed the pattern which we outlined to them over the phone, there was nothing they could do to arrest us. They’d have no grounds for making an arrest because we were within our rights to insist upon service, no matter our race, at this restaurant as stated in the state civil rights law. We also asked the police if they would make sure that we were served as they were obligated to do by law, but this they would not do. No, they wouldn’t make sure the civil rights law was enforced, but they also said they wouldn’t arrest us.

Police Arrive

We said, “Perhaps you should call the police.” The manager did. Two cops came a few minutes later, looked the situation over and said to the manager, “What did you call us for? I don’t see anybody here disturbing the peace. Everything seems to be peaceful.” She said, “Won’t you arrest or at least kick these people out based on the right we reserve to seat people where we want and would serve some of them in the basement?” The cop didn’t know. He went to a telephone booth and made a call. I guess he was calling police

headquarters to see if they could arrest us for not being willing to eat in the basement. He came out and said, “Nope, sorry, lady, there’s nothing in the law that allows us to do that. You must either serve them or you can solve the problem yourself.” And with that the cops then walked out. On the way out they turned around and winked.

We stayed there until closing time and then got up and left and went back the next day, a little bit earlier, and stayed until closing time. And so on. The restaurant then tried again to negotiate — without success. We went back in several more times and tied up all the seats and slowed business. In fact, with us there they were doing no business at all. Finally they cracked. The next time we went in, the managers served everybody in the restaurant no matter their race and accepted our money. They did not overcharge us. We then sent a smaller interracial group in the next day. Everyone was served. We then sent an all-Black group in and they were served. We waited a week and sent another Black group in, and they were all served. We sent individual Black people in and they were all served without any problem. Once it was clear they were no longer practicing racial segregation in their restaurant we wrote them a letter thanking them for their change in practice in accordance with the law.

***“Prelude,” from *My Soul Is Rested* by Howell Raines, copyright © 1977 Howell Raines. ***

DEFINITIONS

<p>Target: - Victim, the person an act effects, victim of the perpetrator, person getting picked on, the person getting “bullied,” victim to perpetrator (preyed on), BULLIED</p> <p>*** A group of people (a specific identity group) ***</p>	<p>Ally/UPSTANDER: <u>interrupts</u>, person or system that realizes what is happening between the perp and target and stands up to the perpetrator, sticks up!, intervenes, supports target, interrupter of something they don’t think is right</p>
<p>Bystander: Sees injustice but doesn’t act, sees something happen, but doesn’t help, literally stands by, watching, on-looker, stays in own safe, comfort zone, maintains “status quo”</p>	<p>Perpetrator: person who is bullying (picking on) the target, person or system inflicting harm, someone who starts the thing, person that acts</p>

Writing for Justice - Definitions & [Graphic Organizer](#)

- **Perpetrator(s):** The person, group, land, or law that is acting unfairly
- **Target:** The people whose lives have been negatively impacted (who is hurt by an act)
- **Bystander:** “non-___”, witnesses who do NOT act
- **Ally/Upstander:** person/group/law that supports and stands up (**interrupts**) for the rights and dignity of individuals and identity groups often other than their own... going out of one’s way/one’s comfort zone

"Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim." -- Elie Wiesel
"Just because you feel bad for someone doesn't mean you are an ally" → Being an ally takes interrupting

Who was involved? What was their role?

Read the story! As you read, find an example for each of our 4 terms...

Circle/highlight the line and label it T, P, U, B

"Just because you feel bad for someone doesn't mean you are an ally" → Being an ally takes interrupting

"Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim." -- Elie Wiesel

Congress of Racial Equality (James Farmer Jr.) →

- Target → (line 5)
- Upstander → (line 47)

Manager →

- Perpetrator → (line 5 & 16 & 34)

Waitress→

- Bystander → (line 3)

The police →

- Bystander & perpetrator→ (line 30)
- Upstander → (38-39)

Waitress →

University white people already in the restaurant + Other people in the coffeehouse (people walked in) →

Police →

What else played a role in this story? What role did it play?

- **The waitress** → **bystander** → she didn't do anything... she just did what the manager told her
- **The cop** → called HQ if he could or could not make people move in the restaurant → **police HQ** was involved
- The different groups that went in after people started getting served to see if the restaurant would keep its non-segregation practice
- The white people who were not part of the activist group who were served food but then stopped eating when they realized that others weren't being served in the restaurant
- **The manager** of the restaurant → **the perpetrator** (the main person who is doing the "bad" thing)
- **The activist group was involved** → changed the problem of segregated seating in the restaurant

- **The random white people** who were at the counter who spoke up to the manager (**upstander**)
- **The people who made the law**
- Everyone who everyone who ever talked to anyone on this
- The people who walked in and out of the restaurant who saw that it was crowded and just left (bystanders) ...
- The people making the food

Target: -

Targeting a person or a thing ... someone or something that is being focused on in a negative way ... Something that is being focused on ... a person or group that is targeted... a goal... something you are trying to achieve

Victim

Perpetrator:

Person that people think did it... somebody who committed a crime (even though they have not yet been convicted)... someone who targets people who don't have as much power as another person... Someone who commits a targeted action ...

BULLYING

ACTIONS

Bystander:

Ally/UPSTANDER:

Something happens ... you are there... you do nothing... you do not take action ... when they see something that is wrong they don't make it better or worse
... stands by and does nothing...see something bad happens and does nothing... witnesses

Background: 1941 segregation is illegal by law but that law is not always enforced

PLOT:

1. 20 people (a mix of black and white) patrons enter the restaurant and they take up all of the tables. The manager tells the waitress to only serve the white people.
2. The white people who have been served don't eat and say they will not eat or leave until their black friends have been served.
3. Waitress finally tells the black patrons that they will be served in the basement. Black patrons refused and stayed in their seats.

4. Waitress threatens to call police and there is a flashback to the group calling the police beforehand and discussing the law.
5. The restaurant call the police who show up and they say that they will not arrest the patrons but also will not make sure they are served.
6. Finally, the patrons were all served after many more sit-ins while the restaurant was not making any money.

Write the following in your **READING JOURNAL**

2/11 - Read Aloud - On Cracking White City

Good Readers...

Background Knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1941 (when) & Chicago, Illinois (where) • James Farmer Jr → Jack Spratt Cafe SIT IN → leader of non violent action (civil rights) → 	Connection
Question	Inference I think that _____

	because _____
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