Personal Narrative Speech – *A Soldier’s Story*

Hi, my name is Jimmy Moore. I’m a 49 year old father. And my children range from the ages of 32 years old to 16 months old. That’s right, 16 months old. I’m not going to answer that question so don’t ask it. [Laughs] Okay, I’m not going to answer what happened, right. I have two grandchildren and a daughter-in-law. My grandchildren are older than my youngest.

I’m an African American from a small town in Mississippi called Houston, Mississippi in Chickasaw County. I left that small town in 1984 to become a United States Marine. I went to San Diego to boot camp, at the MCRV, the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, and from there I matriculated to Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, beautiful San Antonio, Texas.

And for the first time in my life I went to a movie theater in 1985. I’ll never forget it. It was the summer of 1985 and I went to see the movie, “A Soldier’s Story”, which became my favorite movie. The movie had a large, black cast in it with some of the biggest names today.

[Refers to screenshot from movie] Like you can see the young man looking down at the little, short light-skinned African American. That was Denzel Washington. He was the young man that said, “I’m not gonna take it anymore”. And that was Sergeant Waters. He wanted all the black people to prove that they were worthy; that they were just as good as the white people.

[Refers to screenshot from movie] And you see the young, dark captain, Howard E. Rollins. He was the Harvard educated young man that when the captain asked him, “Why do you wear those blasted glasses?” He says, “Because they look like MacArthur’s.”

[Refers to screenshot from movie] And that young man in the middle is CJ. Oh CJ, CJ was from Alabama. He was a country boy and Sarge did not like him at all. Sarge did things to add—just irritated him; just put him through all kind of agony. Well, Sarge ended up being murdered. Sarge was (unintelligible) cut. Sarge just did not like black people that did not use proper grammar and that held onto those slave superstitions and had that southern accent. Oh my goodness. They really irritated him. And Sarge, after Sarge was murdered, in comes Howard E. Rollins and this is a flashback type of movie.

But, I could identify with this of movie because I could recognize just about every person in there. Being from the deep south and a post-civil rights young man, I was a civil rights child, a product of it, but I remember meeting at least every character in there from the young man who was from Alabama who said he was from Detroit, to the high and mighty Captain Davenport played by Howard E. Rollins, and the country dude that was a pickin’ and grinnin’ played by Larry Wilcox, and the little man that carried the black race on his shoulders, Sergeant Waters.

This is a movie that I suggest everyone see. It’s an interesting movie. It’s a good movie, well-acted.

Thank you.