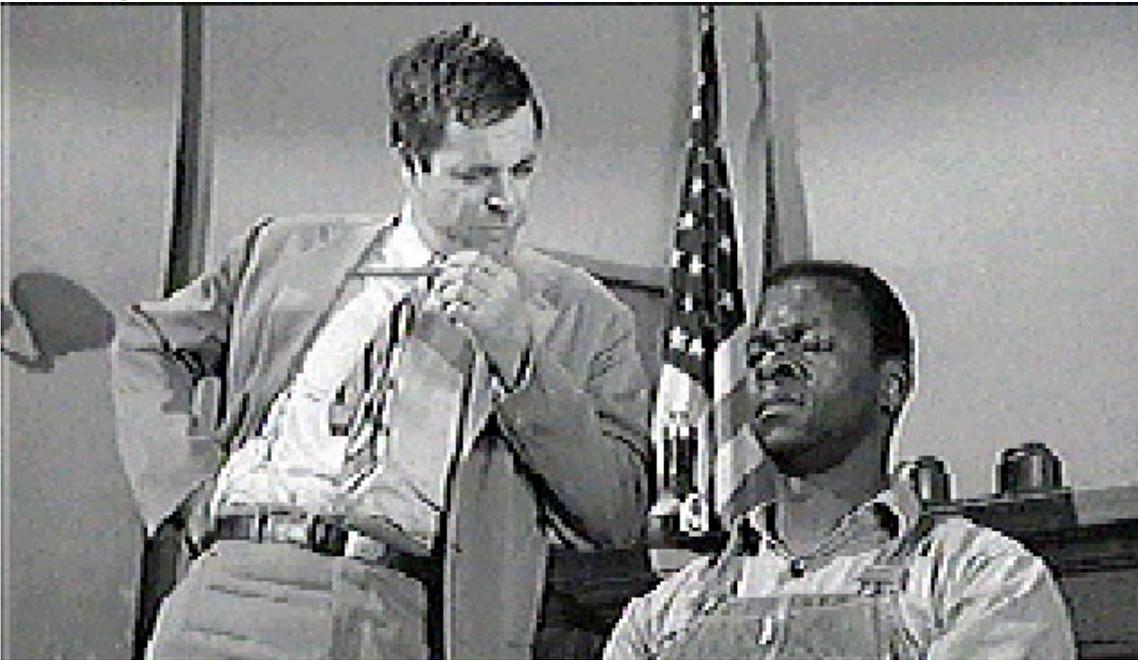

SCHOOL NEWS

NEGRO TREATED WITHOUT EQUALITY AT COURT?



Tom Robinson with Mr. Gilmer at court.

Haw there! My name is Jean Louise Finch and my daddy is Atticus Finch. For those of you that don't know this my daddy Atticus was the defense lawyer for the Tom Robinson case. I never really understood that case much. It wasn't until years later that it actually hit me why Tom Robinson never won. I didn't know it then but the case was hopeless before it even started. That made me always think " Why did Atticus take the case then". Miss Maudie told me it was because in our world where "evils" are constantly around, there's people out there that must do the jobs no one wants to do. My daddy was one of them. Why was that case one that nobody wanted? Because Tom Robinson was a negro. And thats what gets me thinking. Theres nothing different from us and negros other than the color of their skin. White folks say theres a big difference. That negros can't read or write as well as us. Well i've been reading and writing for as long as i could remember. And if i think about it, its not because i'm white folk. Its because my daddy taught me. Maybe if negros were taught to write as children then maybe they would be as smart as us. Then maybe people wouldn't see us as different. It comes down to one thought though that took me awhile to realize. Negros are treated unequally and white folks want that. And that is wrong.

For longer than i could read and write, i was always taught that negros were second best. Maybe taught isn't the right word. I was always exposed to the idea that negros were second best. I never thought much about it. It was just and just was it. No one commented on it or denied it. Colored folks themselves accepted it. My history teacher told me its because years ago colored folks were slaves. I also learned about the civil war and them Yankees from Calpurnia. So when i first spoke the word "nigger" i never understood why Atticus got upset. " Don't talk like that Scout it isn't nice" is what he always said. The word "nigger" that i most often used after ignoring Atticus' threats and remarks, didn't strike me as bad. It was just a word. When i said it to describe colored folks it never felt like an insult. White folks used it all the time so why couldn't i? As i grown i concluded that maybe the word was used to label colored folks. To show inferior power over them by white folks. Thats when i stopped using it. But all of this thinking and running around like an adult , that so repeatedly my aunt Alexandra said was un-lady-like and would ruin the Finch's name, didn't start until the Tom Robinson case. Maybe that was what needed to happen to make me realize the truth. Maybe thats what was needed to make all of Maycomb realize and eventually America, that negros are people too. Equal people. Best People. Not second best.

Daddy Atticus once said that maybe if we could look at people from all views and see more than one story we could all live happily and equal. At first i won't lie to you i thought that was quite weird. White folks and colored being happy together. But as i grown more i saw that it isn't weird cuz there isn't colored folks, and there isn't just white folks. There isn't Confederate folks or Yankee folks. There is only one time of folks...folks. Once we realize that then maybe like myself we can better understand and agree with my daddy. The Tom Robinson case made me feel like i could cry. In the bible it says God created us all equal. That there is only one folks. If that is true then why would Tom Robinson be sentenced to death. Why would all the white folks laugh and smirk at him and think bad thoughts. I finally did cry when i saw it was because folks, even though created equal, persecute each other cuz its just our nature. That even the same in race and spirit, some folks are just different personality wise. Some folks are just mean. It made me feel sick when my teacher taught me what a "D E M O C R A C Y" is. Cuz' this is no democracy. Atticus once told me a democracy is the practice of freedom. That the nation is ruled by all folks and all folks are created equal. If that is so then we haven't been living in a democracy. I go around and ask the white folks and they say we do have a democracy though. But i can't see how we do when negros are treated as they are. If we were a democracy black folks and white folks could live in peace together without discrimination. For those of you Cunninghams and Ewells that don't know what discrimination is, Calpurnia told me it is treating someone differently than others because they're different. I dont agree with discrimination. It just doesn't make sense to me. Why do we treat eachother like that if God made us all the same kind of folks. Makes you think if we really are the same kind of folks. Thats what makes my brother Jem cry. That we could actully be different and that the mean peoples out of the white folks are right. Anyway, if we were a democracy then negros could vote. If i think about it more, if this were a real democracy then women could vote too right? We are all the same kind of folks. Black and white. Male and female. Human.

I always wondered what was going through Mr. Ewell's mind when he accused Tom Robinson of raping his daughter. The first view is obvious. Tom was a negro being accused of raping a white woman. Mr. Ewell couldn't possibly lose. It just wasn't right in society today for him to. Everyone knew it. And i think Atticus did too. Rape, a word that i was never familiar with, until i asked Atticus when i first found out about the case isn't a christian word. I shall not write what it means for the sake of myself if Aunt Alexandra found out i knew, or that i would ever write it in the news for school. For you folks that don't know what it means, ask your parents. One thing that i can tell you about rape is that its inhumane. I learned that from Calpurnia. Its hard to see how Tom Robinson, a man, not just a negro, but a man could possibly be charged with rape once you know that its inhumane. He has children and a wife to care for. He is not just part of the black folks but a human like us. Not inhumane. How could a human commit an inhumane act like rape? For to be human you can't be inhumane. And if we are all the same folks, and if white peoples consider themselves human, then so are black peoples. Tom Robinson is a human and therefor can not commit an inhumane act. If the courts say he can commit an inhumane act, and he is part of the black folks, who are part of all folks, and white people consider themselves folks, then courts must confess that white folks can also commit an inhumane act. And if Mr. Ewell is indeed white, then what is to stop him from committing an inhumane act? What is going to stop him from raping his own daughter and then putting the blame on a negro, who is part of every folks, white and black? The answer is nothing except one. Only the courts can stop him. And to see my daddy Atticus lose this case, to see the courts fail to do their rightful job as citizens of our society forever held to bring justice to the wrong, disheartens me. It not only disheartens me but it oppresses me. It makes me feel unsafe on the streets. That i can no longer go outside with Jem and play. How could i feel safe? How could anyone feel safe if the jury can't even keep an innocent man from being stripped of his freedom. I feel our world needs to change. Everyone needs to see how wrong this case was. How much we wronged a negro, an equal negro. Peoples need to see not just the first story but many views of other people, of humans. Humans as one race who are all perfectly capable of love and laughter. Of reading and writing. Of fairness and equality. We need to realize who we are. Not folks who persecute each other just for inferiorness. Not folks who are too scared to pick out the innocent from the guilty. But folks of black and white.

-Jean Louis Finch