

What is your name?

Jaredd Simpson

What is your gender?

Male

What ethnicity do you identify as?

Jamaican

What race do you identify as?

Black

Where were you born?

New York, NY

Where were your parents born?

Jamaica

Is your blackness unique or does it have similarities to other ethnicities?

It's a mixture of both, I believe. Across the board, I think there's a macro culture within blackness and across every country or nationality within being black. But then there's definitely some uniqueness to being Jamaican, and even within being Jamaican there's some uniqueness depending on where in Jamaica you're from or what customs do your family emphasize, or what practices that you do within your own family. So I think it's a mixture of both. I think there's a larger culture of blackness. And then it gets more specific the more you go down the line.

Do you feel like your blackness is questioned? If so, what aspects?

It is to an extent, outside of the black community from other ethnicities and cultures looking in. There is definitely at least being in Miami and going to school in Miami. There is this subtle expectation of what you're supposed to be like being black. And then even within the black community. So because I'm of a lighter skin tone, you know I, I'm treated somewhat differently, made fun, of, you know, jokingly by friends about, you know me being lighter, but there's definitely a difference in how I'm treated because of the color. The texture, well, the color of my skin tone being lighter versus other people. People see other things. There's a whole light skin culture. Light skin versus dark skin kind of thing so. Even then, for some people I am not looked at as black. You know there are certain things that I may not face or I might not have as a hard time or like certain things that I don't realize because I'm not about darker skin complexion because those people go through different things than I do because I'm a fair skin tone. So it is question on both sides within both within the community and outside.

Do you believe there to be an implicit or explicit hierarchy of blackness? i.e. Is Afro-Cuban seen as lower than African-American in society?

I do believe that it is. I would say it's more implicit. And it depends on where you are. I don't think it's a universal rule, but being in America, you know black Americans or African Americans I would say it would be at the top of the hierarchy. Then other minorities within the black community go down and then you know being in South Florida for example, being Jamaican because there's such a large population of Jamaicans and I would say it's more higher than say for example someone who is from Haiti. Haitians are in my opinion sometimes looked down upon. Within a black community, or if you're from a country in Africa, that's not well known or not well known to be doing well economically, you will be looked down on versus someone from like, South Africa.

Did you grow up in a house or apartment?

House.

How many people lived there?

4 people

Which of the following rooms were in your living space? Bedroom, Bathroom, Kitchen, Dining Room, Living Room, Den, Foyer, Library, Office, Front Porch, Back Porch, Balcony, Basement, Laundry Room, Front Yard, Back Yard

Bedroom, Bathroom, Kitchen, Living Room, Front Porch, Back Yard

What activities did you participate or witness in the kitchen or on the porch that is unique to your culture? If you did not have a formal porch, was there a communal space that acted as a porch?

We had a formal porch, so in my culture, Jamaica, most houses have a veranda

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or patio like that is a standard or custom, and that's throughout most of the Caribbean, so guests and friends, when they would come over the communal space would be the veranda. You don't go into someone's house, you know, unless explicitly invited to do so. So that's where all the meetings and even just within a family when we would go to unwind in the evenings, we would just go and sit and cool off on the veranda. The kitchen is also, I would say like the heart of the house, that's where everything took place. 'Cause food is a huge part of Caribbean culture, so my mother loved to cook so we were always in the kitchen. You know, her sons, her children had to be there. 'cause if she had to do it, we had to be in the process. So we had to help out, even if we're not helping her actually cook at least doing some of the pre work for preparing meals with her. So that's where most of the conversation is definitely. After school when I would get home, my mother would always be in the kitchen and that's where our initiation of conversation would happen when, when my brother would get home if I would get home first, he'd get home first. My mom would still be cooking, so it would be us in the kitchen. That's also where the family connected and where we spent a lot of our time.

What type of non-conventional activities did you participate or witness in the kitchen, on the porch? If you did not have a formal porch, was there a communal space that acted as a porch?

Our washing machine was in the kitchen 'cause their house is small, so we did laundry in the kitchen as well. So my mother would be making breakfast and separating the clothes at the same time. I think that's pretty unconventional. There's nothing else really off the top of my head. On the patio. We would sometimes cook. My mom had put that table on the veranda so we would also sometimes eat on the ground, which is pretty unusual, so we'd have the whole kitchen, ignore it and just eat on veranda.

What is your relationship to water?

It's there, we're good. I didn't grow up near any accessible like beach or huge waterfront. So going to the beach or going to the water would be something that was only done on summers or holidays so it was something to look forward to. So if there's a big holiday we would make a huge beach trip with the entire family. There would be 20 of us extended family and we'd take an hour and a half trip to go to the beach. We would go all out and we would spend a whole day and we would do everything. So, my relationship with water, it's a place of gathering and happiness and good times because that was the only memories or recollection I have with it. And we didn't have pools, so pools weren't really a thing in Jamaica. So again when I would visit during American summers and my aunt had a pool there then it was an everyday thing. So we love the water for the sentimental value that it brought to our family.

In what spaces do you feel liberated?

Water is definitely one. I would definitely say the veranda, I feel liberated. It's because that's where most of the life happen. A lot of catching up, a lot of memories and interaction with people happen. I feel like wherever you have a lot of interaction, that is a lot of time where you feel most liberated or most comfortable. So definitely the veranda and I would say the water and for me just being in mountains I don't know. I grew up close to the mountain side, so being in the mountains is very liberating for me.

In what spaces do you feel restricted?

The bedroom. Funny enough I feel very restricted in bedrooms. You know the only purpose for being there is to sleep, and it's just four walls. It reminds me of a prison. So when you're in the living room it's more open and you're in a patio its

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different when you're in the kitchen you're doing something. When you're in your bedroom, I feel like I sometimes get lost into only being in that world. I feel like that's when I separate from everything else. Which is good if that's what I need to do. If I'm just stuck in a bedroom for too long, I feel very restricted.

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