

I Aint No Little White Girl

“I aint no little white girl,” I thought to myself many days of January 2004, even though a little white girl was all I wanted to be the days of my early childhood years, because that’s what my mama called me. Not because I was light-skinned, had light eyes, a white daddy, but because I had long, bouncy strait-hair.

I loved it when she called me her little white girl, and that’s probably why I always kept up my hair and never let it look nappy. Then one day after getting perms after perms, after rollers, curlers, and hot irons, I decided to let my hair grow natural.

I knew it would probably be hard for me socially to walk around my peers with a bush or dreads or anything natural, because that’s just not what my peers were into and just from observing their conversations you would pick that up. You would find a lot of them saying stuff like “girl I need a perm” and “girl you need to brush up them bebes.”

It never really crossed my mind that it would be hard for me to walk around my mother like that. I thought my mother understood, until the day she was mad enough to put me out when she asked, “Rodneka when you gonna get a perm?” and I replied “never.”

It was always hard for me to explain to my mother why I made this decision, because she always got upset before I could get to explaining. She told me one time that she kept our hair straight, because one day when we were poor somebody said something like “look at Mary’s old nappy-headed children,” and she promised herself she would never let her children walk around looking nappy-headed. I tried to share with her that I am a beautiful young African American girl the way god made me, and I don’t have to constantly change myself to look like somebody else just to be beautiful. But I don’t think she understood.

At school after a while some of my peers started to accept me, and though they had a whole lot of questions and suggestions, I was happy with that. But of course there were those who just couldn’t stand that I chose naturally nappy hair over that permed stuff. To them I tried to explain the same as I did to my mother. “I ain’t no little white girl, I’m beautiful and I’m black. Naturally my hair is nappy, and that’s the way I’ll wear it.”

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