

The colour of my skin – Real stories of racism (Reihe)
Tapiwa (Sendung)
46800773 (DVD-Signatur Medienzentren)

Filmskript: Tapiwa**00:00**

I'm Tapiwa and I have an afro.

00:06

I grew up in a single parent household. So I live with my dad. My white dad.

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I grew up in a very urban environment. There wasn't any segregation of sorts. Because of that, it was lovely. It was diverse.

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The haircare or hair styles that are done take place in the home. You know your mum does your hair.

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But of course I wasn't living with my mum.

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My dad did not know how to approach my hair at all. He was clueless, completely clueless.

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I couldn't tell you how many salons I went to trying to find anyone who could do my hair. They all said that they couldn't do Black hair.

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We did find one place.

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It was the only place for miles that was run by Black women, who'd been doing hair for over thirty years.

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They were very kind to me. They understood how ignorant my dad was. They supported me for a very long time.

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But unfortunately they couldn't pay the rent anymore because the area was being gentrified.

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So we lost them.

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And my dad decided to take matters into his own hands.

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We walk into the chemist and we look for the hair section for Black hair. It was in this kind of little corner next to other haircare products.

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01:29

There was just so many on offer to those with straight hair.

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So we go up to the aisle and there's nothing but empty shelves and one item in the centre of it all.

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It was green, it had a Black woman on the cover. Her hair was bone straight.

01:49

That's when my hair was relaxed. Afro hair with a treatment that usually takes about like two hours or so and burns can turn into straight hair.

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You could burn your hair, your scalp, if it's left on for too long. But then the longer you leave it on the straighter the hair becomes.

02:08

When I was around the age of eight, I began to transition out of my relaxed hair.

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Around that time my hair was a lot more noticeable. It was a lot bigger.

02:16

A lot of people thought it was beautiful and I myself was coming to like my hair.

02:22

A lot of people would ask if they could touch my hair and I would say 'yeah' out of politeness.

02:27

Who really wants someone's hand, like, in their scalp, you know? Things started to change when my hair got too popular.

02:40

So I was sitting in class and a lot of people were playing with my hair. And my teacher turned around to me and said that my hair was inappropriate.

02:52

That I should change it because it was distracting other students.

02:58

I didn't think my hair was distracting. I thought my hair was and that others decided to distract themselves with it.

03:04

But of course, when you're in primary school, you're told that you listen to your teachers and I listened.

03:10

In that word inappropriate, I heard not good enough.

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03:19

I became more protective of myself. I had quite strong reflexes. I could swipe a hand away before it was even raised.

03:28

When people would go to hug me, I'd be cautious that they didn't try to touch my hair.

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I was always on guard and I was always ready to tell someone off.

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There was a point, after years of people just touching my hair without permission, despite me asking them not to and I just remember shouting 'stop touching me'.

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And I said to them, 'it's been years of people touching my hair without permission. How would you like it?'

04:06

I typed in how to do black hair and videos came up!

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I was so surprised and excited that videos came up.

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The natural hair movement was this influx of information about Black haircare and understanding that we do not have to conform to Eurocentric standards of beauty.

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I was able to learn from other people who had the exact same texture of hair as mine.

04:35

My hair is beautiful.

04:37

I mean, it defies gravity. Because you pull it and it bounces back.

04:45

Until I decide otherwise, that's not gonna change.