



Michael Harriot @michaelharriot Sun Nov 27 06:43:35 +0000 2022

Stephen A. Smith might be right. Maybe it's wrong to judge Jerry Jones for something that happened 65 years ago. Maybe he was just "curious." How could anyone know?

A thread. <https://t.co/2r7EyljhPx>

he discussion centers around this photograph, taken on Sept. 9, 1957, when white students tried to prevent six Black students from integrating North Little Rock High School.

One of those white students is Cowboys owner Jerry Jones. <https://t.co/X62h7fGOrk>



It worked.

They actually turned the Black students away. The North Little Rock School District would not integrate until 1964.

And Jerry Jones was right in the middle of it all. <https://t.co/tc04D56Tko>



To be fair, Jerry Jones was a sophomore in high school. And, according to the Washington Post, he said:

"I don't know that I or anybody anticipated or had a background of knowing ... what was involved. It was more a curious thing."

https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/interactive/2022/jerry-jones-black-coaches-nfl/?itid=hp-more-top-stories_p003

So even though some people ALWAYS find a way to contort themselves in a way that lands on the side of the powerful white establishment, maybe Smith is right about this one. Maybe Jones didn't know what was going to happen.

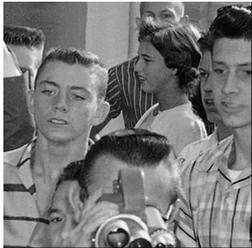
How could he have known? <https://t.co/5n7lt30MU1>

That directive did not deter Jones. He showed up near the conflict's epicenter, stationed on the top landing near the school's double-leaf entry doors, a face in a rear row of the human bulwark intent on keeping people out because of the color of their skin.

Jones said he was there only to watch, not participate. "I don't know that I or anybody anticipated or had a background of knowing ... what was involved. It was more a curious thing," he said.

If Jerry Jones, a high school football player, didn't know, it meant he wasn't listening when his COACH warned the team that there would be trouble.

Wait... Didn't he tell the post that he had heard? <https://t.co/Ae6ymiNc85>



Associated Press, shows a young Jones wearing a striped shirt, craning for a better view, "looking like a little burrhead," as he said in a recent interview with The Washington Post, acknowledging his presence on the steps that day. He was one month from turning 15. He had been bulking up by lifting weights and going through two-a-days since August trying to make the school's football B-team. The coach, Jim Albright, had warned there might be trouble and said he "didn't want to see any of you knot-heads near the front of that school tomorrow."

Maybe he had no clue that people in his community were planning to use violence and the threat of violence to preserve white supremacy. Maybe he didn't communicate with a lot of his neighbors

Oh, wait... <https://t.co/RgaizyDfIk>

Long before Jones became one of the most recognized National Football League team owners, he was recognized all over Rose City.

His dad owned a grocery store, Pat's Supermarket on Broadway. Jerry spent most of his time working at the store.

"Of course everybody would go in there and hope to see Jerry. All of us young girls... every once in a while," Havens chuckles. "He was always friendly."

And for the last 56 years, Georgia and her husband, also named Jerry, have lived just a few houses down from where Jones grew up.

It would also mean that Jones had no idea that his school was even planning to desegregate. After all, this happened on Sept. 9. What was the biggest story in Arkansas at the time?

No... What was the biggest story in AMERICA? <https://t.co/nJKY6cF0dL>

On September 2, 1957, Governor Orval Faubus announced that he would call in the Arkansas National Guard to prevent the African American students' entry to Central High, claiming this action was for the students' own protection. In a televised address, Faubus insisted that violence and bloodshed might break out if Black students were allowed to enter the school.

The Mother's League held a sunrise service at the school on September 3 as a protest against integration. But that afternoon, federal judge Ronald Davies issued a ruling that desegregation would continue as planned the next day.

Elizabeth Eckford

The Little Rock Nine arrived for the first day of school at Central High on September 4, 1957. Eight arrived together, driven by Bates.

But hindsight is 20/20. What were people saying at the time? Who prevented those students from integrating NLRHS?

According to every report I could find, the Black students were confronted by 10 white students in front of the school.

But that's not what turned them around <https://t.co/kWU3PdIJTf>

At North Little Rock, the six Negroes made two attempts to enter.

After they were shoved and pushed away from the building on their first try, the school superintendent F. B. Wright, walked out of the building and gestured for the Negroes to follow him into the school.

Call for Troopers

Once again they climbed the steps. Reinforcements flocked to the white students. Five adults joined them.

One adult, identifying himself as L. E. Stroud and father of a girl student, shouted, "they shall not pass."

When Wright sought to escort the Negroes into the building, a youth shoved himself in front of the oncoming group.

"If you want to stay in this school, you'd better get out of the way," Wright told the youth sharply.

"I'd rather get out," the boy said. His sentiment was echoed by similar cries from the crowd.

The youth would not give his name.

An estimated 150 persons surged around the Negroes.

Wright gave up and told four Negro adults who accompanied the children to meet him at a downtown office later.

Police made no effort to escort the Negroes inside the building. Their only action was to break up the first violence.

The top of the stairs <https://t.co/oSqJdlpU1e>

The six students were approached by ten white students at the front steps of the school. The white students pushed and shoved them away from the steps as forty to fifty white adults watched from across the street.

Principal George Miller and Superintendent F. Bruce Wright came out of the school and asked the six students to come inside to talk. The North Little Rock Six climbed the stairs again and reached the front door, but they were met by twenty to thirty white students blocking the entrance.

The white students refused to move even after Superintendent Wright threatened them with no admittance to the school for the year. The six black students were instructed by Wright to meet him at the school

administration building at 28th and Popular streets for their conference.

You know what? Maybe I'm making this up.

Maybe we should ask someone who was there, like Richard Lindsey, one of the North Little Rock Six <https://t.co/OSYrKjUgOI>

Apparently, not only did Jones not see the national, local and state newspapers, we are supposed to believe that EVERY STUDENT THERE knew what was going on except Jerry Jones.

Yet, for some reason, Jones decided to go...

To the TOP OF THE STAIRS <https://t.co/fe8Ttb7uDB>

But Straeter's photographs indicate Jones had to scurry around the North Little Rock Six to reach the top of the stairs before the Black students completed their walk up to the schoolhouse door. And while Jones offered a common explanation of the confrontation — that it was the work of older white supremacists — most of those surrounding the six young Black men were teenagers.

So what happened at the top of the stairs? <https://t.co/r6WhlS1kYx>

But here's my beef with this entire conversation and white supremacy in general.

Forget about all those racist students and their parents and the cops and the school administrators or the government.

What if Jerry Jones wasn't a violent segregationist?

What if he really didn't want his classmates spitting on Black kids & using the n-word? What if he wanted to attend an integrated school? NO ONE expects teenage Jerry Jones to stand up to a mob by himself, but ask yourself this?

Why are the "good white people" never around?

Why is it always Black people vs ALL the white people?

Why weren't there 25 or 10 or 6 white kids out there standing for what's right?

Why weren't a dozen white parents out there?

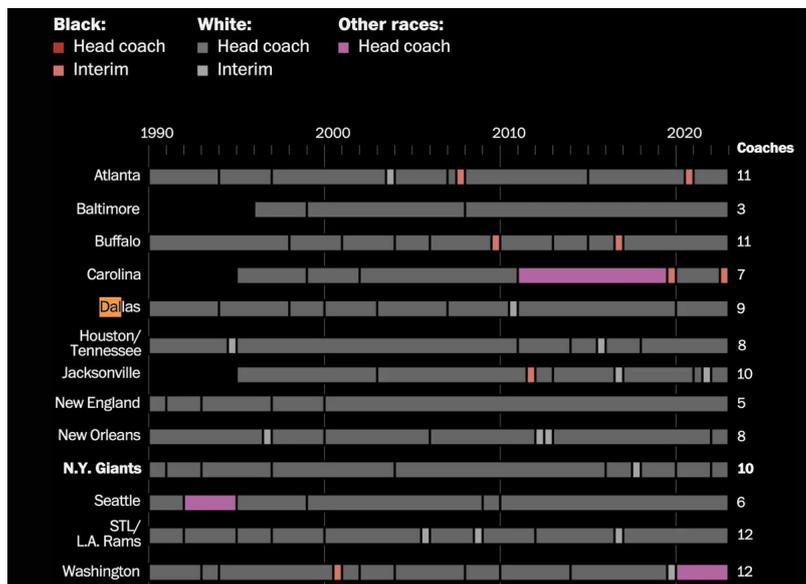
Why can't news reporters find them?

Why aren't they on the police force or the school board?

THAT IS THE POINT.

The point is not that Jerry Jones was a violent segregationist. The point is that he can watch something like this and never MENTION IT FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE. The point is not that Jones has never hired a Black head coach...

<https://t.co/SdnnxQOVpZ>



It's about how people can rationalize racism with fantastical excuses that have no basis in logic or reality.

Jones not knowing what was going on that day is as unbelievable as the CEO of a company with an 80% Black

workforce saying: "I can't find a qualified shift leader"

And the crazy thing is, PEOPLE WILL BELIEVE IT.

But maybe I'm one of those CRT people who distort history by applying today's standards to the past.

Instead of listening to me or the guy who was actually there, let's see how newspapers back then described what happened. <https://t.co/pC5E8yXxvb>



**White Students
Force Six From
School Ground**

By ROBERT E. FORD

But this isn't about 1 day 65 years ago.

It's about NOW. It's about WHY this inequality persists.

But I truly understand why some people ALWAYS seem to land on the side of defending whiteness: I even understand WHY some people will stand and watch and do nothing.

We are all just trying to reach the top of the stairs.