

I grew up in the tiny town of Witten, SD where we had a little schoolhouse with 3 classrooms, one for grades 1-4, another for 5-8 and the last for freshman through seniors. One day while in the 1-4 classroom, not sure what grade I was in but probably the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 2 men came into the classroom dressed in black suits with white shirts and neck ties. We were all curious because we don't see many people from out of town certainly not in suits and ties and what happened next, Monte Kewley please stand up! What the hell is going on and why am I being told to stand, because that day, right there in front of all the students, the teacher Miss Simpkins announced that Monte Kewley is an Indian, and I didn't know what that meant until recess where I became the Indian and all the other students were the cowboys. Damn it! Oh, it got worse as time went on because of the social revolution going on in the 60's and then of course the race riots. So soon after that word got around that Mom was an Indian, don't know how these idiots didn't figure it out after years of Indians visiting our home at least weekly!!! After that it was

almost a daily fight at school protecting my Mothers reputation because of the names she was called. As I grew older, into the 5-8 classroom, it became better because an Indian family moved into Witten, and they became the target of all Indian stuff! As I watched all of this take place, I felt so sorry for the Larveys (the Indian family) because they were full bloods and every day was a nightmare for them! I remember trying to protect the youngest from the cowboys but eventually ended up just taking care of my own trials. I think they lasted about a year in Witten and moved on, so here we are again, I'm once again the f!@king Indian! I felt like a prayer was answered by the Sanders family moving to town and opening a restaurant on our little main street. They were a wonderful family and there was Carmen, Nancy, Bob and Avis and the parents were John and Robin. Larry married Carmen and they had Tammy, Tony, Char and Torrey and that was cool as hell!! I started hanging out with Bob and he became a hero type person to me by teaching me card tricks, guitar, and my favorite, how to fight. Bob, Harvey, and

Larry would take me to the basement of the restaurant and bring a bigger kid in for me to box, that was fun!!! Soon I was in the eighth grade and all my siblings were graduated and gone. Larry moved to Winner, Harvey joined the Army and Barb also moved to Winner and Wayne was older, so he was long gone. The Indian crap was nearing its peak and I needed to be mobile, so I sold the cow that I had and bought a motorcycle, bamb mobile just like that, but was told don't leave the yard. So, I build a ramp figuring if I can jump the fence, I'll figure out the rest from there and Mom would certainly be impressed by me jumping the fence so would probably let me go around the block. Funny though, as I'm building the ramp, I put everything on hold because my big brother Wayne shows up for a visit and I as always was excited to see him but he right away asked what it is you're doing, it was as if he knew! If anyone wonders why I don't mention Dad, it's because he spent almost all his time at the farm after Barb graduated and moved so it was like being an only child with a single Indian Mom. Back to the plan and once over

the fence and out of the yard I was off to Winner making new friends with the likes of Garret Foot, Earl Bordeaux, Deux Drapeau, and a few other Indians that were all boxers. In the 60's things got worse for the Indians, and most couldn't cross Main Street in Winner without being harassed or beaten and absolutely wasn't welcome in any white establishments. This is the short version of how I was LABELED as Indian and therefore became one, and as I got older and started a career it became clear that this was part of a bigger game called the Civil Rights Act and as a bigger company you get kickbacks from state and federal government for hiring and sub-contracting to minority people and companies. After finding this out it became a goal to start a company and after I did in 1985 it became obvious to me that the mid-west does not only not like Indians personally but big business in the mid-west is strongly against giving any business contract to Indian owned companies! In fact, as only one example, and there are many, my company won a contract at the University of Minnesota, and they did everything possible

to not issue the contract to my company. What was the outcome, they cancelled the original contract that we won and re-issued the bid with wording that dis-qualified us from bidding!!!! After many indictments like the one I just explained, we gave up on government contracting in the mid-west and only had a hand full of government contracts amounting to less than 5% of our overall revenue.

**BUT LISTEN TO THIS.** When we started expanding to other states such as Oklahoma, Texas, Georgia, Florida, and others in the south our phones blew up with calls from Fortune 500 companies that couldn't wait to do business with our minority company. I'm not sure what that said about the mid-west at that time, but it sure made it clear to me that the south does not discriminate against Indians, but the mid-west damn sure did.

I just have to say being labeled as an Indian at a young age was a blessing despite going through all the crap, because what it taught me was first, never give up because we have the power to change our lives in so many ways if we think deep enough and follow a

plan and secondly it taught me that most people want or need someone to feel better than so I really don't care what others think of me or what they say. And do I think there's white privilege, no not really because white people don't expect anything to be handed to them and they know they must work for everything they want, and they do. But there's also something much much bigger and it's called MINORITY PRIVILEGE, and it was signed in 1964 and it's called the Civil Rights Act which gives on paper, more rights to minorities than white people when it comes to business and being hired by companies and I used it in every way possible for not only my company but also for several Indian Tribes and companies. I was hired in 1975 by a big company because I'm a registered member of a recognize Indian Tribe and got a lot of free training and mentoring because of it. And because the rules favor minorities in certain circumstances, I used every tool available to minorities to succeed and retired at 42 years old. If you're interested in talking about minority business and what it takes, you got my number! MK