

**Leon Correy for Fairhaven Select Board**

October 28 · 🌐



F&%* you ni&&\$r! Someone screams out of the window. Hey Leon, nice house I thought you were poor. Why is he flexing about his education in a meeting that has nothing to do with him? Ironic a black man holding the same fire hoses that used to spray his people during the civil rights movement. He serves us, know your place and shut your mouth. I like you, you're one of the productive ones.

These are just examples of the things I have heard over the 17 months that I have been in service of a town that people thought was progressive. Some of these statements are from people who thought they were progressive. Some were statements from people who voted for me. All are racist whether or not that's their intention.

As you read this most of you won't like it but I promised to give you the truth and despite the fact that you don't like it, this is my truth.

The truth is that I am the first elected official in the town of Fairhaven to have his history be that of slavery in this country. I'm not Cape Verdean. I'm just Black. I haven't hid from it but at no point have I waded it in your face as a town. When I was running against a woman, who repeatedly mentioned there hadn't been a woman elected to the Select Board in 30 years, I never mentioned my race. When my sign was spray painted black and it was dismissed as "kids playing around", I never mentioned it being a racist act. When a man called me "boy" and everybody else called out how racist it was, my focus was finding out what I was being accused of, not that it was a racist act. When an elected official in town, who is 20 years my junior, felt it was okay to call me and tell me to step aside. I never called out that it was a racist act. When various local members tell me I need to run for a lesser position, meanwhile others quietly say I have one of the best resumes and academic records in the town, I never called it a racist act.

When the Town Administrator hired someone outside of the inner circle to serve as the next Chief, it was you who said it was because his wife is Black. He didn't have the right last name in town, nor was he part of the inner club that had represented the town. When people who hate the Town Administrator reached out in support of the hire, none of you were willing to stand up against your friends and issue that support.

The time has come for me to stop taking time away from my family to serve people who either don't want me here or aren't willing to stand up to their friends and call out the racist acts that are happening in front of their face. I get it. It's tough to be uncomfortable. However I am uncomfortable every day of my life when I have to hear these statements.

When I was running for office and showed up at someone's door asking me how I feel about the "fake racist police events", I just kept on going because the mission was bigger than that. It's not just politics. There is a man and a family on the other side of the words, threats and insults you so cowardly cast from behind your screen. As you punch away at your keys with passion and anger because "how dare you try to come in and change our town", there are people at the other end of those words.

When there was a recall, I didn't jump in and support that. I recognized that man has a family. Anything I said, I first said to him and he supported me for that. However when I chose to stand up for myself, the "progressives" in town all walked away because I didn't act in a manner they felt I should act. Now you create secret Facebook groups aimed at what to do about the Town Administrator and me.

A man in town appreciated that I'm not "hooked up" with any clique. He liked that I would be fair and independent. My views and opinions wouldn't be impacted by my relationships because I don't have any. In fact, one of the people I consider among my closest allies is a man with whom I had a spirited disagreement.

I am not letting the bad people win. This is 2023, not 1963. I don't have to fight for you. My life is fine. I can pack my bags and move to another town. I can walk away from this town and never look back. I am a fighter and I was willing to fight with you but I am not willing to fight for you. I am not willing to fight everybody.

For the past 17 months, not one month has gone by where I haven't had to deal with some micro or macro aggression from the people I serve, and not once has anybody been willing to look their friends and family in the face and call them out. Instead I'm accused of making it up.

You can call the Town Administrator a "Black bi%^h". You can assume because there's a person of color that you haven't seen before they must be a "migrant" and that's fine. However when I reference it, I'm the one bringing color into it and how dare I do so.

You like to tote out MLK and Barack with the turn the other cheek and "when they go low we go high" as the right thing to do because they didn't make people uncomfortable. They did so because their mission was different. The civil rights leaders you don't talk about are the ones who simply told the truth and embraced it. The truth is that the town of Fairhaven isn't ready for a person of color to be a visible leader in the town. You can get free haircuts and backpacks. You can take me bringing the issues with Firefighter staffing and the shared events, but you can't take the truth that comes with it.

You have friends in the town who are members of the LGBTQ+ community and women. You can support those initiatives because they are personal to you. Yet, with the exception of a friend or two across the bridge, a distant relative, or the man or woman you've slept with, there's nothing personal about the connection you have to people of color and you simply didn't realize how you would handle it when the time came. As long as we know our place you'll support and wear your BLM pin and feel like you've done something. I fought for the right to serve this town. I went to your doors. I shook your hands. I took your shit. I smiled the entire time.

I'm done smiling. Those before me fought so that I could be equal and have the right to serve. However they also fought so that I could teach the generation behind me of young people who look like me and those who don't, that there is better and I don't have to eat what you feed me.

Nobody before me has heard any of the things above, nor the many other comments. Nobody before me has had to hear a servant of the town mention going home to get their "white sheet" then be thanked for picking up a shovel by a member of the Select Board only a week or two later.

The Town Administrator asked for support as a woman of color and what she got was "there's good people on both sides" and "we all deserve respect". Until you are willing to tell your friends and family the truth, this town will stay the subject of those on the other side of the bridge. This town did embrace me until I began to serve it. My experiences were just fine, until I became a visible figure. When it came time to lend me the support and respect I gave you, you all disappeared. Yes, ALL.

It is with that, I make it clear that I will not be seeking another term in service of this town.