The Nine Who Dared
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In September of 1957, a group of nine African-American students were the first to enroll in previously all-white Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. Although segregation had been ruled unconstitutional in the Supreme Court case of Brown v. the Board of Education, many communities in the South were reluctant to open their doors to African-American students. Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus ordered the National Guard to prevent the “Little Rock Nine” from entering the building on their first day of school. He was eventually overruled by President Eisenhower, who sent troops from the 101st Airborne to safely escort the students to Central High.

Once enrolled, the nine students faced daily harassment, but were trained not to react to the constant insults and abuse. After months of being tormented, one of the students, Minnijean Brown, decided to fight back and was expelled from school.

Violence and discrimination against African Americans in Little Rock had increased as a result of school desegregation. Members of the community were conflicted about what to do next. Some believed that integration should be postponed for the safety of the students and the greater community. Others strongly believed that the students must stay in school, no matter what sacrifices had to be made.

The Nine Who Dared

Yon gwo defi pou nèf elèv nwa Kriz nan Little Rock


Zafè entegrasyon timoun nwa nan lekòl blan sa-a te fè diskriminasyon ak vyolans blayi nan Arkansas. Moun nan kominote a pat konn sa pou yo fè. Gen moun ki te panse ke fò yo ta mete zafè desegregasyon sa-a pou pita pou pwoteje elèv yo ak kominote a. Yon lòt pòsyon moun te panse ke se pou timoun yo rete nan lekòl la, kòlkeswa sakrifis sa ta mande.
Minnijean’s act of defiance sets the stage for Theatre Espresso’s production of *The Nine Who Dared*. In the play, you will act as members of the Little Rock community. You will view a dramatization of the events, interview characters, debate the issues with your classmates and determine whether the remaining eight students should return to Central High immediately or wait until September in hopes that the violence will subside.

**Questions to consider**

- When the students do go back, what actions should school administrators and elected officials take to help protect them?
- What coping strategies should the eight students adopt in the face of harassment?
- What risks are worth taking in order to end injustice?
- Should young people be asked to risk their safety and emotional well-being for the sake of an important cause?

**Arguments for returning to school**

**Arguments against returning to school**

**Changes that need to be made if the eight students return**

**Rezon pou timoun yo retounen lekòl**

**Rezon pou timoun yo pa retounen lekòl**

**Chanjman k pou fèt si 8 timoun yo ap tounen lekòl la**

**Révakson ke Minijean te genyen, devan pwovokasyon atoufè yo, espire pwodiksyon pyès teyat sa a. ou pwal jwe wòl mamm kominote « Little Rock » la. Ou pwal asiste yon repwodiksyon evenman yo, w’ap kapab pale ak aktè yo, brase lide sou pwoblem yo, epi detèmine si rès 8 elèv yo dwe tounen nan lekòl la toutswit ousnon si yo dwe tann septanm avèk lespwa vyolans lan a kaba.

**Kèk Keksyon pou ta konsidere**

- Lè elèv yo tounen, ki aksyon ekip administratè lekòl la ak otorite yo ka pran pou pwoteje yo?
- Ki konpòtman 8 elèv yo ta sipoze adopte lè atoufè blan, malentensyone lage lan kò yo?
- Jiska ki degre nou kapab pran risk pou n kaba enjistis ?
- Eske nou ka mande jenn moun yo pou yo riske sekirite ak byennèt yo pou kòz ki jis ?

**Questions! Debate! Decide!**
Kronoloji Istorik

May 17, 1954: The United States Supreme Court rules that racial segregation in public schools is unconstitutional in the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka decision. Five days later, the Little Rock School Board announces that it will begin desegregation in compliance with the Court’s decision.

May 24, 1955: The Little Rock School Board votes to adopt the Superintendent Virgil Blossom’s plan of gradual integration, beginning with the high school level in September 1957. Lower grades would be integrated over the next six years.

Spring 1957: Eighty of the 517 Black students living in the Central High district express an interest in attending the school. After interviews with the Superintendent and staff, 17 students are selected. Eight students later decide to stay at the all-Black Horace Mann High School.

August 27, 1957: Seeking to prevent African American students from enrolling at Central High in September, the Mother’s League of Central High School files a motion for a temporary injunction against integration.

August 30, 1957: Federal Judge Ronald Davies orders the School Board to proceed with its desegregation plan.

September 2, 1957: Governor Orval Faubus calls upon the Arkansas National Guard to surround Central High, prohibiting African American students from entering the school. In a televised speech, he declares that this move is to prevent violence and keep the peace.

September 3, 1957: Judge Davies orders that Central High School must be desegregated.

September 20, 1957: Judge Ronald Davies rules that Faubus has used the National Guard to prevent integration, not preserve the peace. On Davies’ orders, Faubus removes the Guard.

September 23, 1957: Nine African American students are escorted into Central High, while an angry mob of over 1,000 protesters gather outside. Before the end of their first day of school, the nine Black students are removed from the school by police officers for their safety.

September 25, 1957: Under orders from President Eisenhower, 1200 members of the 101st Airborne Division escort the nine students back into Central High for their first full day of classes.

December 1957: After being taunted by white male students, Minnijean Brown dumps a bowl of chili on one of the students and is suspended for six days. She is later expelled for a subsequent altercation and transfers to New Lincoln High School in New York City.

Kronoloji Istorik

Historical Timeline

May 17, 1954: Tribinal federal nan peyi Etazini deside, selon ka Brown kont Konsèy edikasyon, diskriminasyon sou zafè ras nan lekòl piblik se yon bagay ki pa ale ak konstitisyon meriken a. Senk jou apre, Depatman edikasyon nan Little Rock, nan leta Arkansas declare ke, an akò ak desizyon tribinal federal, y’ap kòmanse kaba diskriminasyon sou zafè ras nan lekòl piblik.


Ete 1957: Sou 517 ameriken nwa ki tap viv nan awondisman “Central High School”, 80 lan yo te fè lide antre nan lekòl la. Apre entèviyou, ekip enpektè a chwazi 17 élèv. Pi ta, 8 lan yo deside rete nan lekòl nwa “Horace Mann High School”.

27 aou 1957: Pou ampeche élèv nwa enskri nan “Central High” en septanm, asosiayson gwoup manman nan lekòl la ale nan tribunal kote yo mante yon jij pou l fè yon kanpe sou zafè entegrasyon moun nwa nan lekòl piblik.

30 aou 1957: Yon jij federal, Ronald Davies, otorize Konsèy edikasyon Little Rock pou I mache pi devan ak plan entegrasyon moun nwa nan lekòl yo.


3 septanm 1957: Jij Davies bay lòd pou yo sispan diskriminasyon rasyal nan lekòl segondè “Central High”.

20 septanm 1957: Jij Ronald Davies deklare Faubus itilize Gad Nasyonal pou l ampeche 9 ameriken nwa yo antre lekòl, pa pou l te pwoteje la pè. Sou lòd jij la, Faubus sètòglie retire gad yo devan lekòl la.

23 septanm 1957: Nèf élèv nwa ameriken byen eskòte antre nan lekòl blan “Central High”. Pandan tan sa-a, plis pase mil moun, move tankou kong, tap pwoteste devan lekòl la. Avan premye jouen lekòl la te fini, lapolis te sètoblije retire nèf élèv nwa yo nan lokal lekòl la pou sekirite yo.


1. Over three years passed between the Brown v. Board of Education decision and the integration of Central High. What are some possible reasons why the Little Rock Superintendent decided on a “gradual integration” of the schools?

2. Of the students initially chosen to enroll in Central High, many decided to stay at Horace Mann instead? Why do you think those students decided to stay at an all African-American school?

3. Governor Faubus was initially supportive of integration. He stated that the reason he prevented Black students from entering Central High was for their safety. What other reasons might have caused him to take this action?

4. Why do you think Minnijean Brown received such a strong punishment for her actions?

1. Plis ke twa zan te pase depi desizyon “Brown kont Konséy Edikasyon” epi pwogram entegrasyon nan lise “Central High”. Poukisa Enspéktè Jenereral edikasyon nan Little Rock la te deside fe yon entegrasyon pworesiv nan lekol yo?

2. Sou kantite elèv nwa yo te chwazi pou antre nan lise “Central High”, plizyè te deside rete nan “Horace Mann”, yon lekol pou moun nwa. Poukisa w panse yo te pran desizyon sa-a?

3. Gouvènè Faubus, avan te dakò pou yo entegre elèv nwa nan lekol blan yo. Li di se pou rezon sekiirite timoun yo ke li pa t kite timoun yo antre nan lise a. Ki lòt rezon w panse, ki ta ka fè 1 poze ak sa-a?

4. Eske w panse gwo pinisyon yo bay Minnijean Brown lan jis par rapò a sa l te fè a?
Brown v. Board of Education: the 1954 landmark Supreme Court decision that mandated the integration of public schools.

Segregation: the separation of a specific racial, religious, or other group from the general body of society.

Civil Rights: the rights to full legal, social, and economic equality extended to African Americans.

Lynching: putting a person to death by mob action without due process of law.

National Guard: a dual State-Federal military force that can be called upon to protect citizens and their property in times of emergency. The National Guard can also be deployed to serve the U.S. abroad during times of war or crisis. Each state has command over its own National Guard, but shares that authority with the Federal government.

NAACP: the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People founded in 1909. Its mission is “to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons, and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination.”

Brown kont Konsey Edikasyon: yon desizyon kle Tribinal Federal nan peyi Etazini te pran an 1954 pou fè entegrasyon elèv nwa nan lekòl piblik vin yon reyalite.

Segregasyon: Eksklizyon yon ras, yon relijion ousnon yon gwoup nan sosiyete a.

Dwa Sivil: Etann tout dwa legal, sosyal epi ekonomik bay moun nwa ameriken.

Lenchaj: Lè yon gwoup atoufè touye yon kreyon vivan san yo pa bal chans pou l genyon pwose nòmal.

Gad Nasyonal: Se yon fòs militè ke otorite yo kapab rele pou pwoteje sitwayen ak byen yo lè gen gwo dezòd nan lari. Yo kapab deploye l tou nan peyi etranje pandan la gè ouson nan period gwo kriz. Chak eta gen pròp gad nasyonal pa yo.

NAACP: se Asosiyasyon National pou Avansman Moun Koulè(ANAMK). Li te fonde an 1909 avek misyon pou l “Veye aske tout moun gen menm dwa nan zafè edikasyon, politik, sosyal epi ekonomik. Li travay tou, pou l elimine hèn social epi diskriminasyon sou zafè ras.”

Students meeting the mayor of New York City
DAISY BATES, president of the Arkansas NAACP, provided guidance and support to the Little Rock Nine. In the fall of 1957, her home became the headquarters for those working to integrate Central High.

MINNIE JEAN BROWN, one of the Little Rock Nine, was suspended and later expelled for retaliating against the students who harassed her during her first year at Little Rock High. She transferred to New York’s New Lincoln School, where she graduated in 1959. She became a social activist and served in the Clinton Administration as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Workforce Diversity.

THELMA MOTHERSHEDE, one of the Little Rock Nine, completed her junior year at Central High School in 1958. After Central High closed, she continued her education through summer school and correspondence courses, went to college, and earned a master’s degree in Guidance and Counseling from Southern Illinois University.

ELIZABETH ECKFORD is remembered for facing the angry mob outside of Central High all alone on September 4, 1957. After Little Rock schools were closed in 1958, she joined the U.S. Army and earned her G.E.D. She returned to Little Rock in 1960 and later attended Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio.

GLORIA CECELIA RAY, a sophomore when she entered Little Rock High in 1957, was the first African American student to graduate from the school. He earned a bachelor’s and master’s degree from Michigan State University, after which he work as the Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Affairs under the Carter Administration.

ELIZABETH PAISLEY HUCKABY, a vice principal at Central High School, was responsible for shepherding the female Black students through their first year at the school. She was a believer in integration, stating that “no public school system segregated by law on the basis of race is consistent with democracy.”

CARLOTTA WALLS LANIER, the youngest of the Little Rock Nine, returned to Central High when it reopened. She received her bachelor’s degree from Colorado State College, and later founded a real estate brokerage firm.

TERENCE ROBERTS, a sophomore when he enrolled at Central High, moved to Los Angeles, California to complete his high school education. He received his Ph.D. in psychology from Southern Illinois University and serves on numerous boards, including chairing the Little Rock Nine Foundation.

JEFFERSON THOMAS, a sophomore when he entered Central High School, graduated from the school in 1960 and went on to work as an accountant for the U.S. Department of Defense.

THELMA MOTHERSHEDE, one of the Little Rock Nine, completed her junior year at Central High School in 1958. After Central High closed, she continued her education through summer school and correspondence courses, went to college, and earned a master’s degree in Guidance and Counseling from Southern Illinois University.
As members of the Little Rock community, you will have the opportunity to ask questions of the following key players. Write down some questions that you may ask.

**Daisy Bates:**

**Ernest Green:**

**Melba Patillo:**

**Vice Principal Huckaby:**

Ou se yon moun kap viv nan koninote “Little Rock” la. Ou kapab mande aktè prənipsal yo keksyon ou vle. Ekri kèk nan keksyon ou ta renmen poze yo.

**Daisy Bates:**

**Ernest Green:**

**Melba Patillo:**

**Sou direktè Huckaby:**
TheatreEspresso performs at the John Adams Courthouse in Boston (in collaboration with the Supreme Judicial Court), at the Lawrence Heritage State Park Visitors Center, and in schools and museums throughout New England. The company thanks Mass Humanities and the following foundations for their generous support.

Cabot Family Charitable Trust, Catherine McCarthy Memorial Trust Fund, Friends of Lawrence Heritage State Park, Foley Hoag Foundation, Immigrant City Archives, National Endowment for the Arts, C. Pringle Charitable Foundation, Nathaniel and Elizabeth P. Stevens Foundation, and the White Fund

*This program is supported in part by a grant from the Boston Cultural Council, a local agency which is funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, administrated by the Mayor’s Office of Arts, Tourism, and Special Events.

Since 1992, TheatreEspresso has toured its educational dramas to schools, museums, libraries, and courthouses throughout New England. TheatreEspresso’s work challenges students to make critical judgments, explore social relationships, reflect on the role of law and human rights in our society, and question accepted truths about the history of America. These plays confront students with complex situations, based on actual historical events, that provoke a variety of opinions and solutions. By asking students to consider themselves participants in the drama, the company engages students in examining contradictory events and testimony in order to reach their decisions.

TheatreEspresso does not advocate any one viewpoint, but hopes to compel students to relate historical events to contemporary issues. TheatreEspresso is in residence at Wheelock Family Theatre.

For further information, visit our website at www.TheatreEspresso.org