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# The Election symbolized a Moment and Movement

*by Eric Welch*

Growing up in my hometown Richmond California and being in some of the situations I've been in, I never really gave too much attention to elections, presidents, and politics. I was usually occupied with watching my back while walking around my neighborhood, or worrying about where I was going to sleep. My attitude towards any president of my time was that they were just men with money and control, who worried about our problems, but only to a certain extent. Meaning, they would do something like give a fundraiser for a program, or school that still ends up having to make some budget cuts. They give us talk about doing the right thing and what changes need to be made in our neighborhoods, but barely know what we face and go through in our inner city communities. Violence and drugs being the most common two problems in my community are things I had to face every day. People's jobs are being cut because we are in a recession. As a result, people in our country have to struggle and live in poverty because of the way the system works against what people categorize as lower class. The people that the system supports are the financially stable while the matters of the less fortunate sink deeper into the background. This is why I never put too much energy into what president's had to say because it always appeared to be false white lies disguised with a smile and a friendly looking wave.



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The reason why this election represents a moment is because a lot of people thought they weren't going to live to see a black president, or just thought there wasn't going to be one at all. I thought the same. Yet, it was a moment to celebrate and congratulate one of our people for the work that's been done. When the first black man was elected for that leadership position it proved a point, that all things are possible and was a wakeup call for African Americans. The day he was inaugurated was a moment for me to think about what my purpose is in life. What am I going to do to see some changes? Which is why the election represents a movement. Most of the people that support Obama are going to do more things to transform their lives independently. If everyone does something to change for personal improvement like, the way they talk, or dress then that's a representation of a movement. If Obama can get the the parents to have their children do more studying than playing, that's a sign of a movement being started. If everyone does something to contribute to change then we represent the movement. Obama has influenced other people to do things differently instead of choosing to let things stay the same only to get worst. Like me for example, I'm currently doing things different from what I thought was normal. I don't get involved with gang activity anymore, I'm back in school, I spend more time at home, I give advice to people and apply it to myself to do better and not let excuses keep us shielded from what can turn out to be something helpful. Most importantly, I care for mines and other people's lives. I try to let the positive rule over negative in my head. These things wouldn't be possible if I didn't have an example like Barack Obama as our countries leader. I also have support like the Office of Neighborhood safety in Richmond and Omega leadership academy in San Francisco to back me up and help me stay aware.

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I just would like to add, when I heard there was a black man running for president my first thoughts were, he's going to be assassinated. Then I started to think positively, maybe this was a time for change, individually and as a country. I never thought I would see a black president and it shocked me that he went through some of the same situations many of us do and he still became president. For example, not having a home to go to, not having any money, food to eat, and being raised by grandparents. I can relate to those struggles a lot, especially not having a home to go to, or food to eat. This is why I respect our president so much and give him my attention and really take heed to the messages he sends us. His story, along with others, inspires me to take my education more serious and do things the right way, so that I can stay Alive & Free. This way I can get all the enjoyments I want out of life. My life is less complicated and stressful so far because I don't take part in the same things that used to keep me down. That's why I'm glad this movement has come about to give me something else to look forward to instead of violence and inter-communal segregation. I would like to thank and applaud the president for the affect he brought upon me and all the other people he inspired to change.

Thank you.