

# We Want To Live

*We Want to Live - The Pain of Black Men*

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://EINPresswire.com/) -- June 1, 1977, is a date that I will never forget — for it is the day my world shattered. Early that morning, I heard my father, William Roger Reaves, in the bathroom; when he came out, I shot out of bed to tell him goodbye as he prepared to go to work. Two hours later, he died from a massive heart attack.

His death came without any warnings or final goodbyes. I have since wondered if my father's skin color was a factor in the care he received when

he was taken to the hospital prior to his death. I have wondered what my life would have been like had my father been alive to share some of the important milestones in my life -my high school and college graduations; the purchase of my first car and home; my wedding, and births of my children; the celebration of my first Father's Day. While I will never experience these significant events with my father, I am grateful to be alive and to celebrate numerous achievements with my wife and children.

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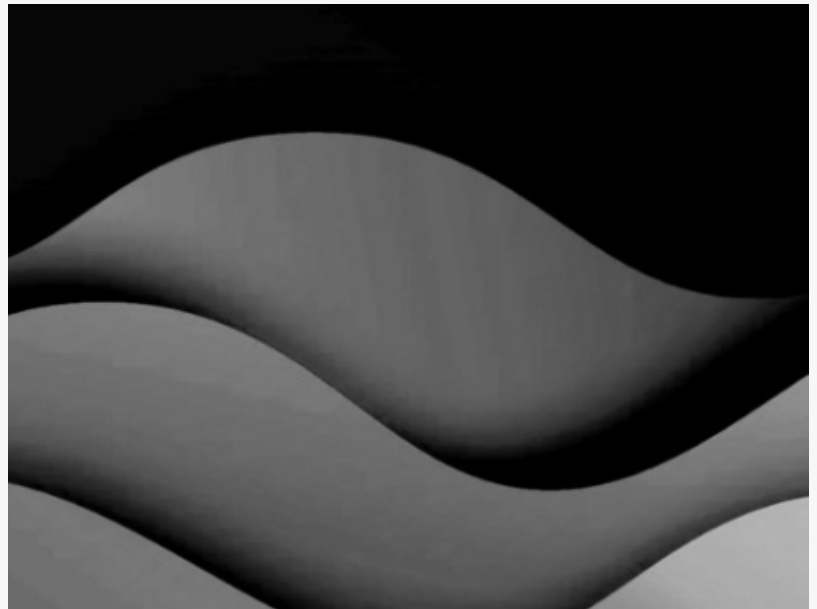
I know this is 2020 — and it is hard to believe that such requests are not welcomed by many people in our society — but people of color should not have to plead to live.”

*John A. Reaves*

Generally, on June 1, I recognize my father's passing by saying a prayer and then calling my niece to wish her a happy birthday. This year was quite different not only because of the approx. 100,000 deaths related to COVID-19, but also the recent heinous murders of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd and Rayshard Brooks. What

all of these terrible deaths have in common with my father's death is that there were no final goodbyes — and each left behind a multitude of family and friends who loved them unconditionally, with no regard to what they had accomplished in life or their skin color.

I thought COVID-19 would unite us as a nation because of how it randomly afflicts someone



Waves of Life

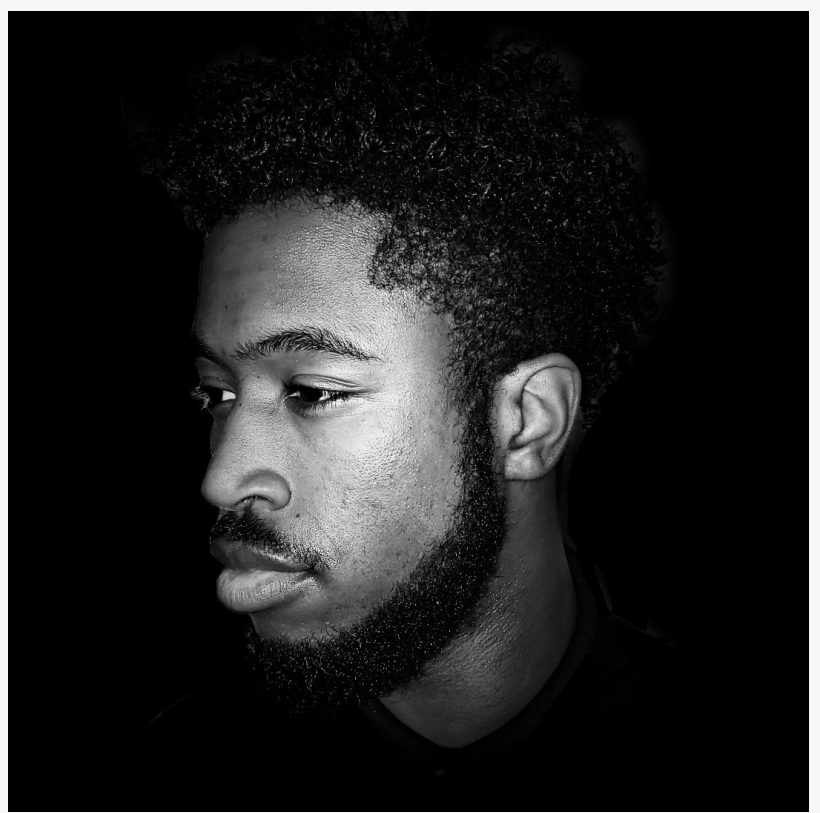
healthy or a person with a preexisting illness. I thought COVID-19 would bring us together because so many of us can empathize with the death of someone we love. I thought that death was an equalizer for humanity, but even with death, some people still believe that people of color, particularly black men, are not worthy to live. To those who believe this, I say WE WANT TO LIVE!

We want to live in a country where all lives are meaningful; if death falls on our doorstep, it is only because of natural causes. We want to live in a world where a black man can jog in any neighborhood or stand in an elevator and hold his head high without someone calling the police, clutching their purse or wondering if he will be harmed simply because of that person's skin color.

As black men, we want to go to the hospital and receive high-quality care without the presumption that all black men are supermen and do not require medication to fight ailments. We want to live in a society where a black man can ask questions or engage in discourse without being killed. I know this is 2020 — and it is hard to believe that such requests are not welcomed by many people in our society — but people of color should not have to plead to live.

Let us honor the tens of thousands of people of color who lost their lives because of their skin color by

individually looking in the mirror and asking ourselves "Do Black Lives Matter?" Our verbal answer to this question matters, but our personal actions when no one is looking over our shoulders will matter more.



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