

I am Rochelle Riley and I've been a journalist since I was eight years old. I am doing the job I dreamed of. I am doing it in a place that I could not have imagined would be better for me. And I think that I am doing what I was meant to do. You know, when we talk about beginnings, you know, you don't have to go back to the Jurassic period all the time. For me, my beginnings came from separation. My parents, who were sweethearts in college at North Carolina Central University, lived in New York, which I loved because I'm a city kid, divorced, and my father got New York. My mother got North Carolina. And I wound up in a little town called Tarboro. There were 10,000 people there when I grew up. There are 10,000 people there now. I used to think it was the worst thing that could ever happen to me until I realized it was a better place to raise writers. So that little girl who used to get in everybody's business and write stories on little notebook paper – became someone who wrote stories for the high school paper and for the campus newspaper and for the paper in our state capital of Raleigh, North Carolina. And now I do it here in Detroit.

Detroit is unique in that it has been coming back for so long that if you're going to be here, you either are part of the solution or part of the problem. So for me, I wanted to make sure I was participating in ways to make Detroit better. And I have lived through a time in this community where the power of the press was strong. So I knew that with a column I could recommend things, I could chastise people. You know, I recently broke my toe and somebody walked up and said, "Oh, my God, look at your foot. Who's ass did you kick today?" That's not what happened... I stubbed my toe on a bed, but I got the sense... people's to see me as hard hitting. I don't call it hard hitting, so much as truth telling. I don't consider myself take no prisoners, so much as do the right thing. So if you're an elected official who's an idiot, I will let people know. I will tell you if you're someone who is doing something great for this community, I want to celebrate you. And I will never apologize for writing about race and about the achievements of Black people because they need to

happen. I think that one of the things that we've missed in this country and in this community, actually in the world, is we have so misrepresented, you know, the lives of Black people that – if we hadn't done that, young White children, young Asian children, young Black children would not have grown up thinking that Black people were inferior. We would have given them the whole story.

My greatest wish for Detroit... whether I can continue to make it happen or I come back and see it as a 90 year old woman who can celebrate it, is that people stop seeing Detroit and its surrounding area as two different places separated by race, separated by economic status, separated by money. I think the greatest thing that this community can do for itself is to see that we're all one community. Most the people who are live in all of these other places and a lot of Michigan were born in Detroit. Detroit is Michigan. Detroit is America.