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## William Henry "Ratibu Shadidi" Jacocks (April 2015)

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# Bridges that Carried Us Over Project

## Interview Summary

**Interviewee:**

Ratibu Jacocks

**Interviewer:**

Flora Williams

**Interview Date:**

April 23, 2015

**Interview Location:**

Rialto, CA

**Interview Summary completed by:**

Riona Tsai, 2022

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**Description:**

Ratibu Jacocks discusses moving to the Inland Empire in 1977 to find a job with Ralston Purina after his own failed businesses, becoming their first African American salesperson. He talks about his experiences moving to San Bernardino and working for Senator Ruben Ayala Jacocks, being involved with many community based organizations such as the West Side Action Group, meeting his wife Amina Carter, his involvement with protesting the KKK in Fontana, and creating a directory listing community organizations. Jacocks also emphasizes the importance of culture, Kawaiida, and the influence that Dr. Maulana Karenga had on his life. He began going by the name Ratibu Shadidi, a name chosen with the help of Dr. Karenga, instead of William Jacocks. Throughout his life, Jacock's philosophy always was "earn while you learn," which he used as his own guide and for people who are trying to move ahead in life.

**Keywords:**

- Inland Empire
- Ralston Purina
- Great Eastern Department Stores
- Fortune 500

- Money
- Learning
- Community based organizations
- Directory
- West Side Action Group
- Salesman
- Politics
- Church
- Religion
- Ku Klux Klan
- Fontana
- Africa
- Marcus Garvey
- Dr. Maulana Karenga
- Civil rights
- Culture
- Kawaida
- Bible

**Spatial Coverage:**

General Location/Address	Name of Site (if relevant)
Inland Empire, California	Ralston Purina Temple Missionary Baptist Church
New Jersey	Great Eastern department stores
New York	Great Eastern department stores
San Bernardino, California	
Highland, California	Part of Senator Ruben Ayala's Congressional District
Pomona, California	Part of Senator Ruben Ayala's Congressional District
Riverside County, California	N/A
Sierra Avenue, Fontana, California	N/A
Los Angeles, California	N/A

Egypt, Africa	N/A
Greece	N/A

**Temporal Coverage:**

- 1967-2015

**Key Events:**

- Ralston Purina salesman
- Working for Senator Ruben Ayala
- Kwanzaa
- Sierra Avenue March

**Key Organizations:**

- Westside Action Group
- Temple Missionary Baptist Church
- Ku Klux Klan
- Black Muslims

**Interview Index:**

Media Format	Time (hh:mm:ss)	Topic Discussed
Digital Video	00:00:37 00:04:21	Coming to Inland Empire to look for salesman job with Ralston Purina
Digital Video	00:04:01	Community based organizations; Publishing business directory
Digital Video	00:07:52 00:14:48	Working for Senator Ruben Ayala
Digital Video	00:07:56 00:21:03	“Earning while learning”
Digital Video	00:08:36	Learning and earning at Ralston Purina

Digital Video	00:11:28	Churches in Inland Empire; Meeting wife Wilmer Amina Carter
Digital Video	00:18:05	Sierra Avenue march against the KKK in Fontana
Digital Video	00:20:40	Importance of having a heart of service
Digital Video	00:23:51	Choosing to go by the name Ratibu Shadidi
Digital Video	00:26:26	Important figures in civil rights; Dr. Maulana Karenga and importance of culture
Digital Video	00:28:51	Work of Kawaida
Digital Video	00:35:52	Advice from Ratibu Jacocks

**Related Materials:**

Oral History Interview with Jacocks from 2014.

**Full interview transcript can be found below.**

## Interview Transcript

### **Start of Interview:**

[00:00:00]

**Interviewer** [00:00:02] Today is April 23, 2015. We are here in your home, Ratibu. Can you go ahead and spell your name for me?

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:00:13] Could I do what now?

**Interviewer** [00:00:13] Can you spell your name for me?

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:00:15] William, W-I-L-L-I-A-M; Henry, H-E-N-R-Y; Jacocks, J-A-C-O-C-K-S. That's my name that was given to me by my parents. My name that I gave myself is Ratibu, R-A-T-I-B-U, Shadadi, S-H-A-D-I-D-I.

**Interviewer** [00:00:37] Okay. So, let's go ahead, let's get started. When did you come to the Inland Empire?

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:00:44] I got here August 16th, 1977, the day that Elvis Presley died.

**Interviewer** [00:00:50] Why did you come to the Inland Empire?

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:00:51] I got here because I was looking for a job for Ralston...with Ralston Purina to become their first African-American salesperson. They had over...they had two hundred salesmen. They had never hired a black or a woman.

**Interviewer** [00:01:09] Can you tell me a little bit about what Ralston Purina was and why it was so important for [inaudible]?

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:01:14] Ralston Purina is a pet food company. I have been in business for myself before I was five years old. I've always operated my own business, in New Jersey, well, we had a chain of furniture stores. We were inside the great Eastern Department stores. They have fourteen in New Jersey, sixteen in New York, and they failed. They went out of business, and all of our businesses that we had failed. So, my business went into bankruptcy, my house went into foreclosure, my cars were repossessed, my bank account was closed. When I went to sleep, I had thought of nightmares, and when I woke up, I had thoughts of suicide. And I asked my father for five hundred dollars, and he said, "I want you to use what I've taught you all your life,

that you have the power within you to help yourself. You don't need money, you need wisdom, so I want you to use wisdom. You have to earn while you learn, and that means find a company that can teach you something, and you can earn money while you are learning." And I looked in the Fortune 500 magazine, and Ralston Purina was the fourth largest company at that time, and they were earning over 4.5 billion dollars a year with two hundred salesmen, and I wanted to be one of those salesmen.

**Interviewer** [00:02:50] So, that's what brought you to the Inland Empire, and you did become one of those salespersons?

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:02:54] Yes, I became one of the salespersons. First of all, they said they didn't have openings, so they couldn't hire me. The second thing they said that I didn't have the...I didn't have the educational qualifications. You had to have a college degree in order to work for them. And thirdly, they said you didn't have experience in the grocery industry, so you couldn't work with them. So, I said, "Is anything else that would keep me from working with you?" And they say, "Well, this is off the record. We had never hired a black or a woman, so if we were going to, we wouldn't hire you." But I know what most people don't know. I have the power within me to do anything, and so I figured out how to work for them. In fact, I volunteered for them for nine months before they recognized how great I was, and they asked me if I would be willing to go to California. And I said, "Well, do they pay in California?" They say yeah, and that's how I got here.

**Interviewer** [00:04:01] Okay. So, after you arrived here in the Inland Empire, did you join any community based organizations? What were some of the things you decided to make yourself a part of? 'Cause it's my understanding that when you came to the Inland Empire, you didn't know anybody. You were just focused on work and trying to establish yourself.

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:04:21] Well, one, I was working with Ralston Purina. I wanted to know how a company could earn 4.5 billion dollars a year with only two hundred salesmen. How could you...? It was beyond my imagination, 4.5 billion dollars. We had done a million dollars in my own business. That was a lot of money, and now you're talking about billions of dollars. So, I wanted to know how they did it, so I learned how Ralston Purina was doing it. At this...[inaudible] At the same time, I always wanted to create my own business, so I created a directory. Well, first of all, I wanted to link businesses with contract opportunities from local governmental agencies, but because I didn't know any business...businesses to link, I completed a directory of minority women businesses. I always believe in the principle of earning as you learn, learn while you earn, so as I sold advertisements for the directory, I also learned that businesses is an

area that will eventually be my client while I was working for Ralston Purina. [phone ringing] So, I was doing that at the same time. And so from '77 to '79, I did both, and in '79, I resigned. I published my directory, and I've been in business ever since.

**Interviewer** [00:05:59] Okay. Now back to the community based organizations. What community based organizations did you make yourself a part of?

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:06:09] Well, the...because of the directory, I had a list of all the community, most of the community based organizations in this area, and one of the community based organizations that I was particularly interested in was the West Side Action Group. And the West Side Action Group was my type of organization because of their social obligation, moral obligation to serve. They didn't draw any attention or glory to themselves. They have elder people in the community, and that's what I got involved in in 1979 and still with them today.

**Interviewer** [00:06:56] Wow. So, you spent...

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:06:56] But there was other organizations around, but I was not involved with them directly. I helped all of them that I could find.

**Interviewer** [00:07:07] And which ones did you find?

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:07:09] I found all the organizations. I had a list of all organizations. That's what I'm telling you. I learned all organizations, what they were doing... Not only organizations, but community based organizations, but businesses from A to Z. I put those businesses in a directory. At the same time after I completed the directory, a guy who had been watching me named Mr. Art Townsend. He was the owner of the Precinct Reporter, and he told me that I need politics, so I worked for a state senator.

**Interviewer** And who is that?

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:07:52] I moved in San Bernardino and I worked for State Senator Ruben Ayala. See earn while learning, and I said this to everybody who is trying to move ahead. Earn while you learn. Most people are learning, and they're not earning. Some people are earning, and they are not learning. So, I think it's a combination of both, all at the same time. Or you go to college and pay for your learning, but the main thing is that, for me, is to earn money at the same time that I am learning. You should pay me to learn, not I should pay you to learn. That's my philosophy.

**Interviewer** [00:08:36] Now, how do you earn while you learn?



**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:08:39] Well, with Ralston Purina, they pay me a very decent salary, they gave me a call allowance, they gave me an expense...expense account. So, I was getting...I was earning, but I learned how do you operate? How do you sell six million dollars a year from your car? How do you arrange advertisement, and how do you sell the product? So, I learned how they did it and by learning that, now I can apply that to what I do today.

**Interviewer** [00:09:13] Now, did you just ask them "how did you do this?" or did you spend the time looking?

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:09:17] How did I do what?

**Interviewer** [00:09:18] Did you ask Ralston Purina how they were able to make four point five billion dollars a year? Did you asked them how to do advertisements? Did you ask them how to do any of the things that made them successful, or did you spend your time watching them?

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:09:34] I was doing it.

**Interviewer** [00:09:35] You were just doing it.

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:09:35] I worked as a salesman, I was required. Meow Mix was the cat food at the time, I'll never forget it. And so they put together a program for the television advertisement would hit, the coupons in the newspaper would hit, this place in the stores would be built, coupons on the products would be there so people could get fifty cents off a bag of cat food, and I watched how they operated. And as I watched them, I learned how...learn how they would distribute or how they would divide up their goal. They may have a quota of twenty thousand bales of dog food, and it was four of us, so we had to divide it up. And I asked them, the other people in the group, to take what they wanted. I would take whatever they didn't want and supersede the goal. Sometimes I would sell more than all of them together. I was just a fantastic salesman, but I had to learn how do you operate. It's not just selling. It's how do you operate the business so you could reach the goal, and they taught me that. They was real good at that, but the same with the senator. When I went to work with him, I want to know how politics work. How do you...how do you get a bill, a thought in your mind to become a law where everybody got to do it now? And I learned that by working for a senator. So, always, any job I had, anything I thought about, I wanted to earn as I was learning, and I wanted them to pay me for learning.

**Interviewer** [00:11:28] Okay. Now, changing the course of our conversation, I want to talk about the churches or any churches that you decided to associate yourself with when you did come to the Inland Empire.

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:11:43] Well, when I...as I said, when I first came here, I didn't know anybody which gave me a real good benefit that most people don't have because they come they...most people come in and have baggage. I call it baggage: people they know, people that know them, people that judge them, people who rate them, people who point them to certain...certain directions. I had none of that, so I could see everything, and I could decide. And in 1979, February the 24th, I attended an event that had over a thousand people, maybe fifteen hundred people there, and...and I was not paying any attention to the program. In fact, my face was against the back wall, and the stage was fifteen hundred people...people away. And I heard this voice say, "Hi, my name is Wilmer Amina Carter." And I turned around, and I said, "That's my wife." And everybody at the table laughed. And it took a little while for me to know her, but one of the things she required in order for me to take her out over Saturdays, she wanted me to go to church with her on Sunday. I wasn't interested in going to church any day, especially on Sunday. I wanted to rest. And I said, "Okay, Saturday is coming up. You can go out with me tonight, Saturday." She said, "No, Sunday is before Saturday, and you go to church with me first, and then I'll go out with you Saturday." So, I went to church with her, and I've been going to that church ever since. That was in 1982, but I met her in '79, so it didn't happen overnight. It took a little while before we would go to church, and that was Temple Missionary Baptist Church. And I began teaching Sunday school there, and I've been teaching Sunday school there since 1982.

**Interviewer** [00:14:06] Wow.

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:14:06] So, I learn while I learn.

**Interviewer** [00:14:09] Yeah.

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:14:11] You see, even in the church. Even in the church. If it's not paying me, I'm not going to teach Sunday school. If I don't get benefit from...I have to benefit equally. I don't want to do anything that I'm not getting paid for, and I don't want to get paid from anything that I'm not learning from and benefiting from in other ways. So, that's why I went to that church.

**Interviewer** [00:14:40] Wow. That's...that's quite a story. That's really sweet.

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:14:45] You never heard that story?

**Interviewer** [00:14:46] I've never heard that story. It's beautiful.

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:14:48] So, let me tell you another story about the directory...

**Interviewer** [00:14:53] Okay.

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:14:53] ...and Senator Ayala. I worked for Senator Ayala, as I said, to learn who in the community is making decisions, how highways are being built, how what has been distributed, how decisions are being made, and local governmental agencies and his district, and his district came from Highland to Pomona, primarily that ten south to Riverside County. So, I learned all about everybody and everything doing that four years. In '84, I was honored. And I went to the county, and I told them, "Now I want to link these businesses that I had collected in my directory to contracts from local governmental agencies. I had a directory, I had published two directories by then, and I wanted to link them. And...but I know that it takes money to do that, so I had the county to pay me eight thousand five hundred dollars to write a study on how to link businesses to contract opportunities with local governmental agencies. In 1984, three months, eight thousand five hundred dollars. Now, I use carpeting...flooring because I sell flooring all the time. That's how I earn money when no other money is coming in, I can sell flooring. So, I used flooring during the three month period, I bid on sixteen bids, sixteen opportunities to sell flooring, and I won fourteen. One of the contracts that I won paid me a profit of eight thousand five hundred dollars. So, not only did I learned eight thousand five hundred dollars from the contract itself, earning another eight thousand dollars from one contract plus these other thirteen contracts that I had won, and so I made money during the ninety day study period. Why? Because I needed to earn while I was learning how to do this. So, I wrote a paper on how to sell your goods and services to local governmental agencies, published a directory, published a how to book, and then in 18-...in 1983, I asked Amina to run for school board, and she ran and won and became the first African American to serve on the Rialto Unified School Board of Directors. I always use the same theory: earn while learning, learn while earning.

**Interviewer** [00:18:00] Now, what are some of the incidents that shaped you here in the Inland Empire?

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:18:05] Well, there was a lot of things going on in this area, and I had to be selective as to what I wanted to immerse myself in. One incident that stands out, I think it was maybe in '82, '83. There was a fella, Howard, who worked for the telephone company, and he was at the top of the pole in Fontana, and Fontana was known for the KKK. They were against black people. They were harming them, and they

shot him and...while he was on the pole, and I thought that was a terrible incident. I know young people now who don't like injustice. Now, when they see injustice, they want to do something about it, so I wanted to do something about this. And so what I did, I put together, not by myself. Jerry Herndon was my key person. We put together a group of community based organizations and the Black Muslims, and they didn't have a strong presence in this area, so they came from L.A. and there was a magazine that had hundreds of Black Muslims in black suits and bowties that march down Sierra Avenue, and that was the last time we heard from the KKK in Fontana. In fact, Fontana turned out to be one of the most progressive cities in this area for blacks. We have a black mayor in Fontana from then...from that time on. So, from that...that's how I believe that you get rid of injustice. Replace it, let them know there is no more of that, whatever it is, [phone ringing] and be strong enough to back that up, and then replace it with what you want all at the same time. So, there's a threat on one hand, but it's also a replacement on the other hand. And so that's one of the incidents that stands out, but you may not see me in any of those newspaper clippings about that particular incident because, as I've said before, I'm not trying to bring attention to myself. I'm trying to help others and serve them.

**Interviewer** [00:20:40] Now, I think that something you and I have talked about or you have tried to talk to me about a couple of different times, your heart of service. Why do you think it's important to have?

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:20:54] Have what now?

**Interviewer** [00:20:54] Have a heart of service 'cause I have a heart of truth and justice, and you have a heart of serving others.

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:21:01] Right.

**Interviewer** [00:21:01] Do you want to talk about that...why that's important to you?

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:21:03] Well, I believe in service, but I also believe in getting paid. That's different than most people who are in the service business. They are so concerned with the issue that they are not thinking about how they're going to feed themselves, how they're going to live, how they can not only survive, but thrive. And I know that if you serve others, others will serve you, that come from the [???]. But Dr. King said anybody can be great because anybody can serve. The difference between what I believe in and most people, including my wife, is that service is noble. But how can you serve when you don't have? And then you have, you have to figure it out. I read a book by DeLorean. I don't know if you ever heard of him. He was an automobile car

maker, and what DeLorean said, that you eliminate poverty through a profit. I bet you'd never heard that concept. See, most people don't eliminate poverty because its no profit in eliminating that. There's profit in keeping it. So, you see preachers they're still...they're serving, but you don't see people being saved. You see prison being built, but you don't see people not going back. You see people in war against drugs, but drugs is increasing. So, they don't...the profit is not to eliminate it, the profit is in to maintain it. But if you want to eliminate it, you have to put the profit motive. And I said that to all young people, "How you make money doing that?"

**Interviewer** [00:23:01] Well, that's a good question.

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:23:01] You tell me that, and I'll tell you how we can continue. And it's kind of funny because people think those two things are diametrically opposed to each other. You know, money and the elimination of poverty. How can there be money in saving souls? Money in not going back to jail? But, you know, the sheriff and all those people, they make money by locking you up.

**Interviewer** [00:23:32] Mm-hmm. Oh, I know.

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:23:33] They are not eliminated. [doorbell rings] [Hearsay??]. So, this is a different concept that most people have not thought about, and that's the only way I have lived. So...go ahead, ask me some more questions.

**Interviewer** [00:23:51] Ask you some more? Okay, so we talked a little bit about what your father...your father's advice to you, that you have whatever it takes inside of you to make yourself successful and survive, but now I want to talk about...about specifically about your connection to Africa and why you did choose the name Ratibu...remind me of the last name you chose for yourself.

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:24:12] Shadidi.

**Interviewer** [00:24:14] Shadadi.

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:24:15] S-H-A-D-I-D-I.

**Interviewer** [00:24:16] Why did you choose the name Ratibu Shadidi?

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:24:18] Well, I didn't really choose it. Dr. Maulana Karenga, who I knew about in 1967 from Kwanzaa, and I've been celebrating Kwanzaa since that time. When I moved to California in '77, I got to know him. And my name is...was William

Jacocks, and he said, "Why should we come in the name of the oppressor? Why should we use his name and come in? Why can't we come in our own names as black people?" And I said, "I never thought of it," and he said, "Well, you're grown now. What's your personality?" And I told him, "I like to put things in its proper place. I like to balance the scales forever, much like you." So, he's said, "A Swahili name for one who puts things in its proper place is Ratibu."

**Interviewer** [00:25:24] Maybe I should be Ratibu too.

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:25:24] Ratibushi.

**Interviewer** [00:25:24] Ratibushi.

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:25:31] And a name that keeps it there come from Shadidi, which is like permanency. It doesn't change. So, I got the name Ratibu Shadidi, and that's how I got the name. My name is who I am. It's not...it's more of a...not just a...who I am, but...in a title, but it's my personality, my whole being, my whole self, and when you call my name, Ratibu, that's who I see. That's what I like. "Oh, that's a car," and you know what I'm talking...car just passed. You can imagine what that was or an automobile. "Oh, look at that pretty plant." So, names, I'm telling you certain things, and that name tells me who I am.

**Interviewer** [00:26:26] Wow. Who stands out most in your mind in the struggle of civil rights, and what did they do to make them stand out to you?

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:26:34] The most important figure that I know of in my whole lifetime...one was Marcus Garvey. I thought I had on this shirt, this of my family [inaudible]. But Marcus Garvey from old, but the person who carried on his legacy in a different way, in a way that like it, is Dr. Maulana Karenga, and Dr. Karenga stands out because he saw the importance of culture as the answer. And when we say culture, we mean the self-conscious, listen to this definition of culture, the self conscious thought in practice by which a people creates itself, names itself, and then introduces itself to history and society. That's through culture, and it encompasses many areas. Not song, and dance, entertainment, but also history, also spirituality, and also economic organization, also political organizations, social organizations, creative productions as well, and then add those who have shaped your whole human personality that comes out of the practice of those, all the seven areas. So, culture is very important to me.

**Interviewer** [00:28:07] I actually really love that definition of culture, and I think, me as a young person, not only is that one of the things I embrace, but it's something I struggle

with teaching to others, but at the same time I see my culture, black culture, being...being...yeah, I'm gonna go as far as, say, being stolen from me by many different cultures in America. So, do you think there's a line between sharing your culture and having your culture appropriated and stolen from you in America and throughout the world, and can you talk about...discuss that concept a little bit?

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:28:51] That's a real good question because that's what Dr. Karenga taught. There was a work of Kawaida. K-A-W-A-I-D-A, Kawaida, and Kawaida takes from the past. What is tradition? That's a traditional, that's the first thing you have to decide and establish in your culture. Is it traditional in your own...in your own experience? Not in Europe, not in Mexico, not in China, but in Africa. Is it traditional? That's the first question I ask. Is it traditional? I want to know is it tradition, but it's not enough to say because it's tradition in Africa, then I should adopt it here because it's been a separation, four hundred years of separation, so I just...and plus, it's too big. I wouldn't know what to do. I wouldn't know what's next if I based it strictly on tradition. But the second question that I ask, and we have to ask, is is it reasonable? Is it reasonable? Let's see...is it traditional? Is it reasonable in America? And then thirdly, how would it prove itself in practice if I should practice it? So, then when we had our wedding, we had a Kawaida African wedding, we took the best that we could find in Africa. We shaped it as to its reasonableness in America. Then we said, how would it prove itself in practice? Everybody cried, everybody saw the beauty. Everybody loved it. They...it was in 1984, and people talk about it like it was yesterday, and over a thousand people were there because it was so powerful, but it was a Kawaida African wedding. We did not jump brooms. I don't know if that came from the enslavement period, so that's not traditional in Africa, so why would I jump a broom? I don't...I've been careful to ask: is it traditional in Africa?

**Interviewer** [00:31:15] Now, thinking about the...Kawaida?

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:31:22] Kawaida.

**Interviewer** [00:31:22] Kawaida. Thinking about Kawaida and thinking about the separation between our roots in Africa and our new roots in America 'cause there's...I feel like there is a distinction clearly. There are some aspects of the two cultures that intermingle, but there is a distinction between African culture and black American culture, and there are traditions in black American culture today. For those of us who can't really trace our roots back to Africa, there are people who do still jump the broom instead have a ceremony like you and Amina did. What are some aspects of black American culture that you think are tradition for black Americans now, or do you think

that black Americans should really...almost dismiss what we consider black American culture and revert to...so...or...adopting Kawaida to themselves today?

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:32:26] Okay. The continent of Africa is a big place.

**Interviewer** [00:32:31] Yeah.

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:32:31] In fact, the biggest continent. There is a lot of different ethnic groups all over the place. They have a lot of different traditions in Africa. A lot of them.

**Interviewer** [00:32:44] Yeah.

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:32:44] So, you don't know which one to take because, first of all, you don't know what part of Africa...most people don't know what part of Africa they came from and if they do, they still don't know the culture of that one little spot there. So, listen carefully. Its to take the most beautiful part of the continent that you can find. [coughs] Excuse me. The most beautiful part. So, this is why we are so special as black people. That's why no one else can do this in America. No one can do this. Chinese bring Chinamen with them, Mexican bring Mexico with them, Irish people bring Irish dance with them. We don't bring anything. We create what we want, and we just ask three basic questions. Is it traditional? Is it reasonable? And how would it prove itself in practice? Some stuff you leave alone. Strong families in America, in black America, still...should still be there. That's Africa, too, but it still should be there. Other things, lift every voice and sing to Earth and Heaven rings. That's an African American invention, but is African also in this tradition. See, let us be true to our native land. It's written in the song. So, we sang those songs. Not only that, we displayed the black, red, and green flag in American tradition, not an African flag. This is an American tradition. So, we don't throw that out because the black stands for the people, the red for the struggle that the people went through, and the green for the rewards that comes from the practice and the struggle of the people. So, that's why we put our hands on our heart, and we say our unity as sisterhood, brotherhood and struggle is continuously and constantly against not only the oppressor, but against all than us which is in contradiction to our values and the choice we make. We choose the liberation of our people as our life goal and light...and struggle as the method to achieve it. Our choice is conscious, full, and free. We accept our risk and welcome all rewards it brings. We have nothing better, more revolutionary or rewarding to do with our lives than to struggle, to bring to being a new world, a world in which we are people, and our children can live, love, and creative freely, and walk and stand and in a warmer sun. That's the Kiapa I just recited.



**Interviewer** [00:35:44] Wow.

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:35:46] And we face the flag when we say that.

**Interviewer** [00:35:52] That's beautiful. Now, just closing this interview, I want to ask you a couple more questions, or I'd like you to respond to one more thing? Just some parting advice. What advice would you give any young person, any young black person, young African person, what advice would you give them when they're searching for their culture, but also searching to earn and learn at the same time?

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:36:17] Study.

**Interviewer** [00:36:19] Study. Why study?

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:36:20] Study.

**Interviewer** [00:36:22] Okay.

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:36:22] Study, and then you have to study twice as hard. You take the book that they give you and they will say in the book, this started in Greece. This started here. Check it out. They said the Bible may have started here. Check it out. And once you study, you will see that you can find yourself in it. The only reason I studied the Bible, the only reason I teach the Bible, the Bible, is because in Act 7:22, it said Moses, who wrote Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, those first five books of the Bible, studied. Studied! In Africa and Egypt and with mighty in words and deeds. So, he studied that, so he knew that. So, I asked, and I always asked preachers, "What did Moses study?" You won't find that in the Bible. You have to come out of the Bible and see what was going on at the time. What did he study? He studied mathematics, he studied writing down, he studied military strategy. He learned to be so disciplined that he could sink in sand and walk on water. This is what the Africans knew. This is what they studied. So, he has so much knowledge, there's nothing for him to write five books of a Bible. Why? Because he's knowledgeable. So, study is first, and you study twice as hard as anybody else who studied. Not only do you make an A of what they're teaching you, but you make an A on what you're teaching yourself. No one can beat you when you do that. No one can stop you. And that's what I tell to young people, study... We used to say this in the '60s: if you are not working, and you are not studying, you're jiving. It was just no other way.

**Interviewer** [00:38:35] Yeah.

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:38:35] Its no in between. So, that may have been a little extreme, you know, but that's why we learn that if you're not studying, and you are not working, you must be jiving and goofing off. But that's what I said to young people.

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:38:54] Thank you so much, Ratibu Shadidi, from the bottom of my heart. I want to thank you for sitting down with me and sharing this knowledge with me and countless other people today.

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:39:06] Well, I just want to say to you, if I have said...said anything of beauty, if I'd done anything of beauty in my life, it's for the young people to transfer the knowledge that I have learned, so then the younger people can take it to the next height because I was twenty five young when I got this knowledge. Young people, and if it's going to change, it's going to come from you and the younger people. I'm here, I have resources, I have guns, I have whatever it takes to back you up, but I'm not just going to throw money out or just started shooting up the world. So, I need young people then to work with us. We need to work together. The young younger ones, we call them white and gray hair and black hair. We need to just work together. We do that, you will see a tremendous change and a rapid change when we work together. So, thank you.

**Interviewer** [00:40:21] Thank you very much.

**Ratibu Jacocks** [00:40:22] Okay.

**Interviewer** [00:40:24] We're all done.

**End of Interview:**

[00:40:26]