Dear All,

He is just three years old.

Three years old.

At an age when most children are discovering the world through play, laughter, curiosity and imagination, Nevada Neymar Pierre, a little Black boy in Florida, is already demonstrating extraordinary footballing ability. He plays alongside children older than himself, some aged five. He trains with his father, develops his skills, controls the ball, moves confidently around the pitch and scores goals. His talent should be a source of celebration, encouragement, and opportunity. Instead, what should have been an ordinary childhood football match ended with the police being called.

The police. At a children's football match. Involving a child of just three years old.

On 24 October 2026, disagreements about Nevada's playing time and behaviour escalated into a confrontation between adults. His parents say that other families were unhappy because Nevada was so much more advanced than the other children and that he was repeatedly being taken off the pitch. The league organiser gave a different account, alleging that Nevada had pushed other children and that his parents were being disruptive. Nevada's mother strongly disputes these allegations. The organiser called 911, requesting police assistance to deal with the parents. Police officers arrived at the football ground. No criminal offence was identified; nobody was arrested and the family cooperated with officers. But for Nevada, the experience was not simply an administrative disagreement between adults. His mother described how frightened he became when he saw the police, as though he had done something wrong.

Imagine being three years old, doing something you love, something you are exceptionally good at, and suddenly finding yourself surrounded by adult conflict and police officers.

- How does a child of three make sense of that?
- How does he understand why the adults around him are arguing about his abilities?
- How does he understand why he cannot simply continue playing?
- And what happens to his confidence, his sense of belonging and his joy?

These are the questions that have stayed with me.

Nevada has already developed remarkable physical coordination, concentration, determination, confidence, and footballing ability. These are skills that deserve to be nurtured.

But what concerns me is the entirely different set of skills that Black children may be forced to develop far too early: understanding when they are being treated differently, navigating adult hostility, managing fear, and learning that their abilities or achievements may not always be welcomed.

No three-year-old should have to develop emotional survival skills simply to enjoy being a child.

And this is where Nevada's story raises questions far beyond a football pitch.

It challenges us to examine racial inequality, unconscious bias, adultification, privilege, institutional responses, and the ways in which Black children can experience exclusion. It also demands that we confront **white silence and white fragility**.

White silence is what happens when people witness or become aware of racial injustice but choose not to question it, challenge it, or speak up.

White fragility can emerge when conversations about racism produce defensiveness, discomfort, or denial rather than reflection, listening, and accountability.

These are not simply abstract concepts. They have real consequences for how children and families experience the world.

We must be willing to ask difficult questions without immediately retreating into defensiveness.

Would the situation have escalated in the same way if the child and family had been white?

Why was police involvement considered an appropriate response to a disagreement at a children's football match?

Whose feelings, voices and experiences were prioritised?

And what responsibility do adults have to protect children's dignity, confidence, opportunities, and sense of belonging?

We must be careful not to assume that every disagreement involving a Black child is necessarily motivated by racism. But neither should we ignore the racial context or dismiss the concerns raised by Black families.

Equality requires us to examine not only what happened, but how decisions were made, whose voices were heard, and whether different children and families would have been treated in the same way.

I woke in the middle of the night thinking about Nevada.

Thinking about his age.

Thinking about his talent.

Thinking about the police arriving at a football match.

And thinking about the questions this incident raises for every one of us.

I asked myself: **What can I do? How can I turn my concern into something meaningful?**

And so, I created a children's story.

A story for children to read, for parents and carers to read with their children, for teachers to use in classrooms, and for families and communities to discuss together.

I wanted to take something deeply troubling and turn it into an opportunity for education, reflection, empathy, and action.

Drawing on the important themes explored in *Me and White Supremacy*, I want this story to encourage us to examine white privilege, white silence, white fragility, racism, and our personal responsibility to challenge inequality.

Because the responsibility for addressing racism must never rest solely with those who experience it.

It belongs to all of us.

Our children learn from the adults around them. They notice who is included and excluded, who is celebrated and criticised, whose talents are encouraged and whose behaviour is questioned. They learn from our actions, but they also learn from our silence. We cannot teach children about fairness while remaining silent in the face of unfairness.

We cannot celebrate equality in principle while refusing to challenge inequality in practice. And we cannot expect children to build a more inclusive future unless we are prepared to model the courage, compassion, and accountability that this requires.

I am honoured to have brought this story together and to share it with you.

Please read Nevada's story and share it widely.

http://www.eduk.uk/flip/nevada

Read it with your children. Share it with grandchildren, friends, families, schools, educators, community leaders, and colleagues.

Use it to start conversations about difference, fairness, belonging, privilege, courage and standing up for others.

Ask children how Nevada might have felt.

Ask them what they think the adults could have done differently.

Ask them how we can make sure that every child feels safe, included, valued, and encouraged to fulfil their potential.

And ask ourselves what we are prepared to do when we witness injustice.

Nevada is three years old. He should be learning how to enjoy the beautiful game, not learning how frightening the adult world can become.

His story deserves to be heard, not because we know every answer about what happened that day, but because the questions it raises matter enormously.

- This is why I created the book.
- This is why I am sharing it.
- And this is why I am asking you to share it too.

Tell the story. Share the book. Challenge the silence. Start the conversation. Be part of the change.

With warmest wishes,

Alyson Malach