

**In 1957, many American schools in the South were *segregated*: white or black. The government wanted them *integrated*: white and black. Melba Patillo, 15, was one of the nine black pupils who wanted to go to Central High School in Little Rock, but there was a lot of white opposition.**

**September, 4<sup>th</sup>**

There were hundreds of angry white people and Arkansas soldiers at CHS. The soldiers stopped my friend Elizabeth Eckford when she tried to go into school. Some white men tried to attack me and Mom. People are phoning constantly, saying they will bomb our house if I try to go to CHS. One good thing: Vince phoned. Maybe he wants me to be his girlfriend.

**September, 6<sup>th</sup>**

My friend Marsha from my old school didn't invite me to her party: she thinks that if I come the segregationists will bomb her home.

**September, 23<sup>rd</sup>**

We finally got into school today. Pupils attacked me and some parents tried to. Thousands of angry segregationists were outside. I was scared.

**September, 25<sup>th</sup>**

President Eisenhower has sent 1,200 elite soldiers to protect us. My bodyguard, Danny, accompanies me, but he cannot come into the classrooms. The pupils hit me and the teachers say nothing.

**September, 27<sup>th</sup>**

Students threw dynamite at me today. After three days in CHS I know integration is a bigger word than I thought.

**September 29<sup>th</sup>**

I am Vince's girlfriend!

**October, 3<sup>rd</sup>**

A boy put acid in my eyes. Danny put water on them. The doctor said I will have to wear glasses, but Danny saved my eyes.

**October, 31<sup>st</sup>**

No military escort today. A boy put a knife to my face, and the teachers didn't stop him.

**December, 14<sup>th</sup>**

My sixteenth birthday party. Only Vince came. My other friends say it is too dangerous to come to my house. I have nothing to say to Vince. He doesn't understand my life.

**December, 20<sup>th</sup>**

We went shopping for Christmas presents today. A boy from school attacked me in the shop.

**January, 27<sup>th</sup>**

We receive letters and prizes from people in the North saying we are heroes and heroines. Why is school so difficult?

**March, 9<sup>th</sup>**

A white boy at school, Link, helped me today! He gave me his car keys to escape his friends.

**March, 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Link phoned last night. He said not to sit in my normal seat this morning. He was right, there was glass on it. Is he my friend?

**April, 28<sup>th</sup>**

Mom's boss says that she won't have a teaching contract next year if I stay at Central. How can we live if Mom doesn't have a job?

**May, 7<sup>th</sup>**

Mom told her story to the newspaper and they published it!

**May, 8<sup>th</sup>**

Mom has her contract!

**May, 27<sup>th</sup>**

My friend Ernie is the first black student to receive his diploma from CHS

**May, 29<sup>th</sup>**

The summer holidays. I survived a year at CHS. What will happen in September?

**Arkansas governor Faubus closed all the schools in Little Rock for the entire 1958-59 school year to stop integration. The eight black students finally finished their education with adoptive families in other parts of the USA.**

Adapted from Melba Pattillo Beals. *Warriors Don't Cry: A Searing Memoir of the Battle to Integrate Little Rock's Central High*