

BY MYRA FAYE TURNER

CHRIS GARDNER

BUSINESS LEADER
AND ENTREPRENEUR

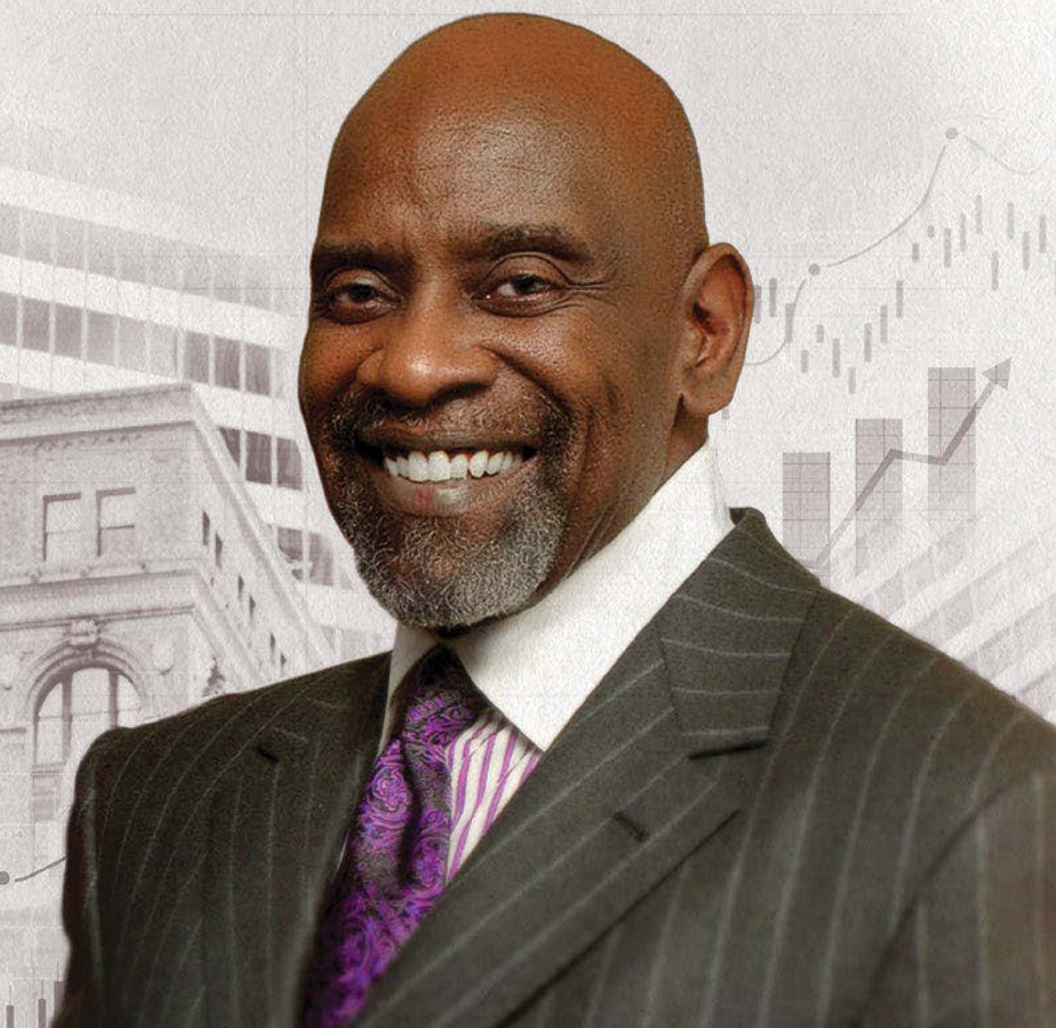
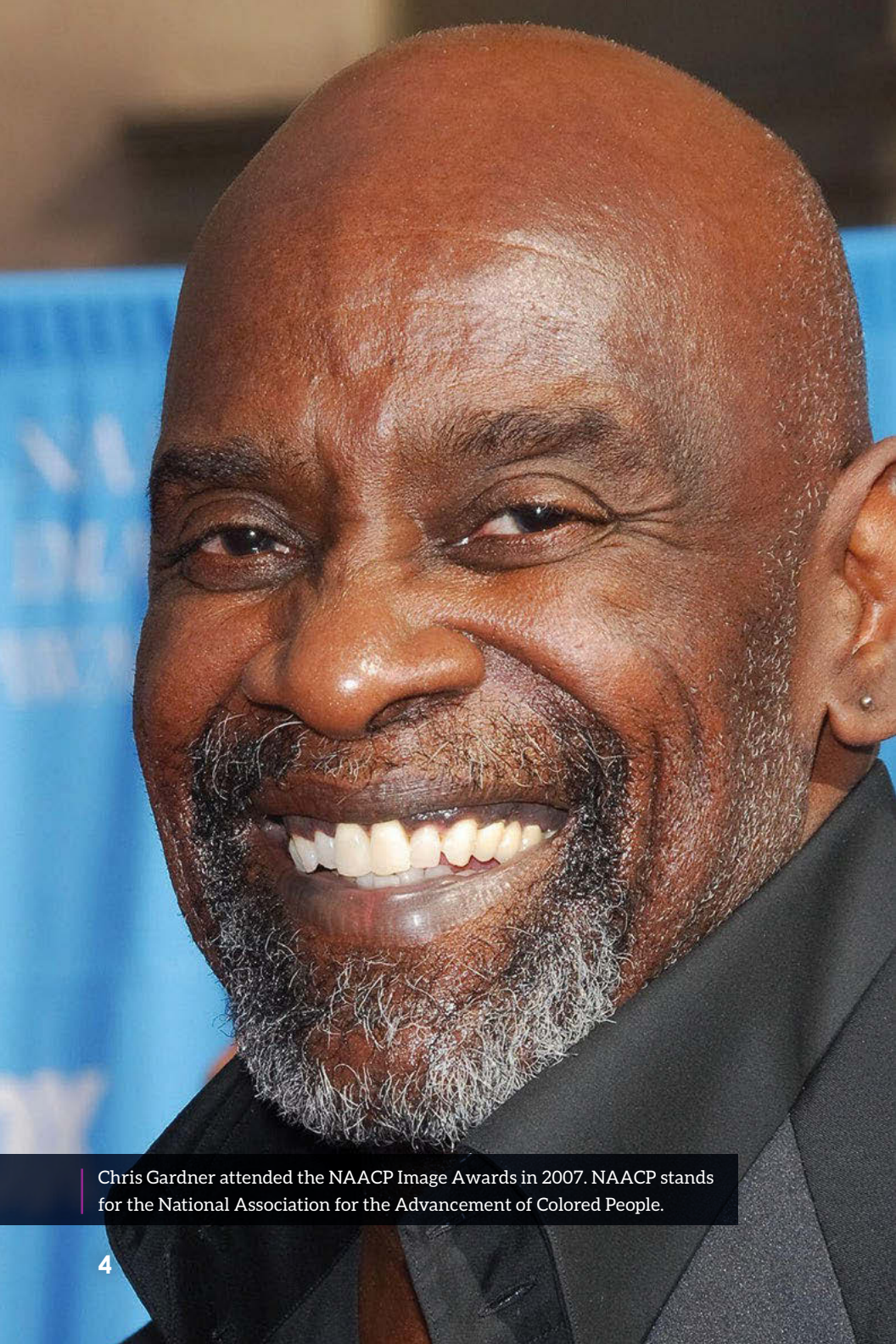




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Chris Gardner attended the NAACP Image Awards in 2007. NAACP stands for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.



CHAPTER 1

Who Is Chris Gardner?

Click. A father locks the bathroom door. His young son looks up at him.

“Let’s play a game,” the man whispers. “It’s called ‘Shh.’ The goal is to stay as quiet as possible.”

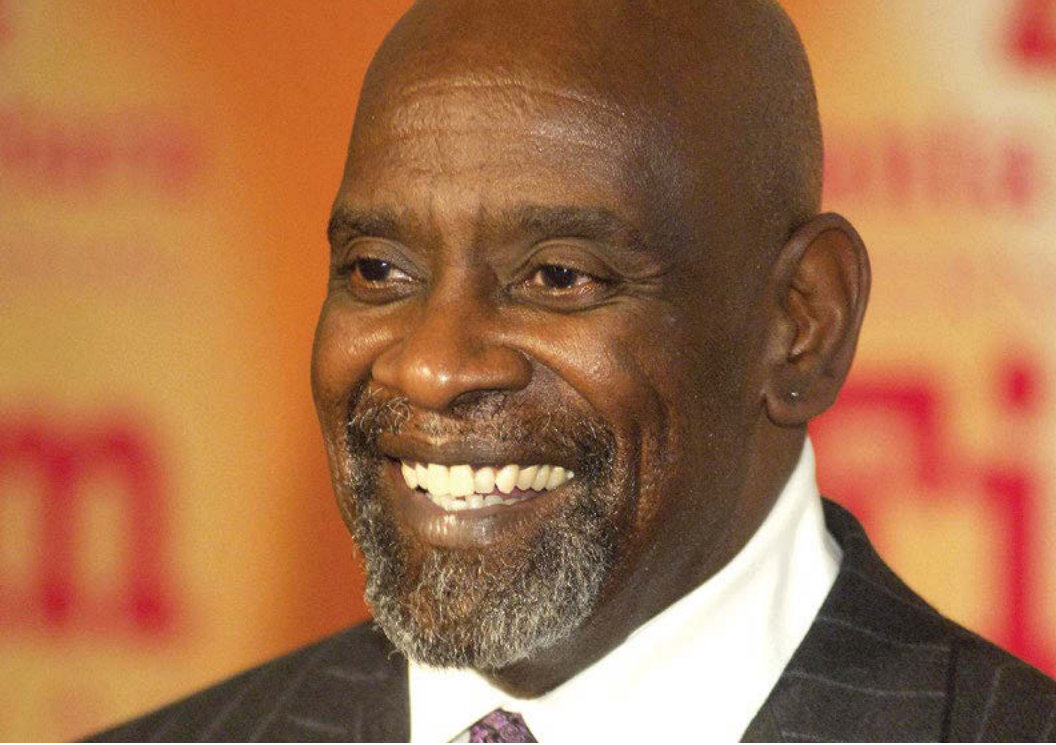
Someone jiggles the handle. Then they pound on the door. The father locks eyes with his son. Neither makes a sound.

Trains come and go. More people try to open the door. Father and son keep silent. Eventually, they fall asleep.

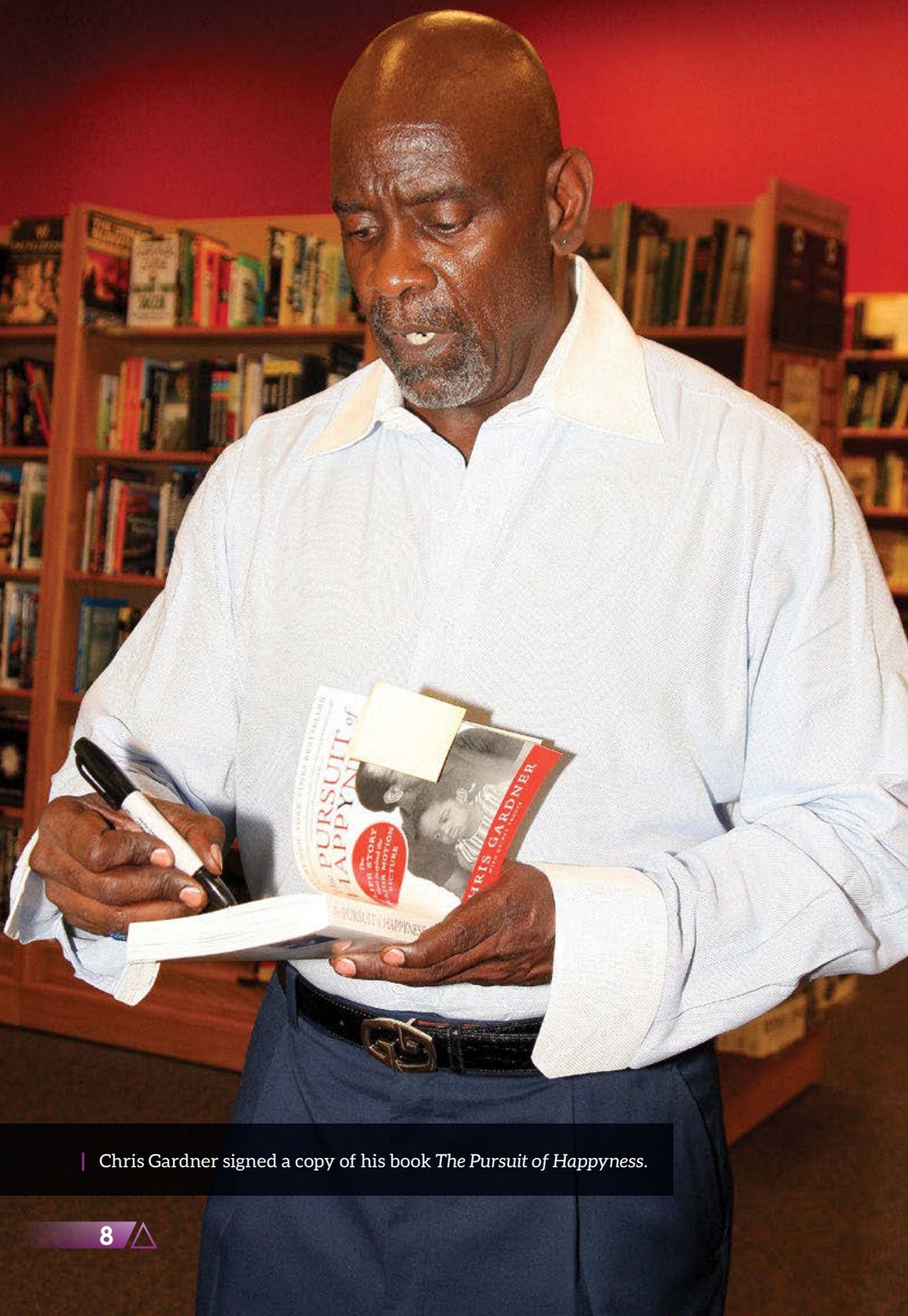
For Chris Gardner and his son, this scenario was more than a game. It was how they lived. In the 1980s, Gardner was a homeless single father. Sometimes, he and his son slept in a train station bathroom. This was in San Francisco, California.

Today, Gardner is a successful businessman and speaker. He is worth more than \$60 million. But turning his life around wasn't easy. As a child, Gardner was abused. His family lived in **poverty**.

Soon after becoming a father himself, Gardner decided to become a **stockbroker**. His goal was to give his son a better life. Gardner took a low-paying job as a **trainee**. Most of his coworkers were white. As a Black man, he faced **discrimination**.



Chris Gardner and Will Smith greeted each other at a special screening of *The Pursuit of Happyness* in San Francisco, California, in 2006.



| Chris Gardner signed a copy of his book *The Pursuit of Happyness*.



None of this stopped Gardner. With hard work, he got a job on Wall Street. This is in New York City. He became a top performer. His success led him to start his own firm.

Later, Gardner wrote a book about his life. He wanted to inspire people. A movie based on the book came later.

Today, Gardner travels the world sharing his story. He knows what it's like to struggle. But past struggles don't have to define us, he believes. Everyone can dream big and find success.



CHRIS GARDNER

After a difficult childhood, Chris Gardner promised himself he would be a good father. He also vowed to become successful. When he found himself without a place to live as a single dad, Gardner didn't give up. Instead, the Navy veteran put all his energy into becoming a stockbroker and building a happy life. Today, Gardner inspires people to keep reaching for their dreams.

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