*Matchsticks: An Education in Black and White*is a snapshot of 1960s Maryland and an American society that was still heavily segregated. In recounting his journey of pursuing an education and joining the golf team at an all-Black institution, Fred Engh admits his intentions were never to make a statement, but to make something of himself for his wife and family.  As the founder of the National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS), Engh attributes his non-profit work to the influence of his schooling for a degree in Physical Education. Through his experience as the only white student at Maryland State College, Engh not only witnessed racism and insensitivity in the culture surrounding him, but was forced to confront his own ideologies and misconceptions.

Engh's short yet powerful memoir highlights important moments in America's history of Civil Rights, leading up to the recent events of 2020 involving police brutality, recession, and major political milestones. This book provides more than a story of a white man learning to see beyond his own perspective, it also portrays the longevity of racial injustice by peeling back the layers of overt and implicit racism, exposing the systemic flaws within American society. By putting himself in multiple situations where he was the only white man, Engh was able to catch a small glimpse of the historic struggles and mistreatments of African Americans; however, through his growing companionships with classmates and teammates, he begins to confront his own privilege and imagine how he can contribute to a better future.

As he writes so eloquently, "And when I decided to go to a segregated college, I did it so I could get ahead in my life, not to break any sort of barriers. What I did not expect to see was how my attitude of doing nothing was no better than overt racism- and that was an education that has shaped the direction of my life ever since." Though imperfect at times in his journey of understanding, Fred Engh presents an honest portrayal of the potential to change the hearts and minds of people subscribed or apathetic to America's systemic racism, beginning with empathy born from human connection.