



Video Story Transcript

BLACK & WHITE: STEREOTYPES AND PRIVILEGE

By: Storyteller Diggsy Twain
www.diggsytwain.com

Link to YouTube Video:
<https://youtu.be/m2y9txxl1ow>

Note : The following is a transcription of a spoken story performance and may not reflect textbook perfect English. It will guide you as you listen (or read) along.

In 2014, I was driving. I was in the car with my best friend Jason and we were driving to a high school reunion. Yes, it was 2014, and we're going back and forth, just catching up a little bit and he asked me, "So, how's Chicago?"

I said, "Man, I've gotta tell you about the train. So, a few weeks before, I was sittin' on the train, I look over and there is a sign that says emergency exit only, um, do not enter. There's a black man that walks through that door. And it was surprising to me because the train's still moving, so he walks into the middle of the train car. And he stops and he makes his announcement, 'Change, change? Anybody got some change? Fifty cents or a dollar? Help me get something to eat. Change, change? Anybody got some change?'"

"The train's normally quiet and subdued. Everybody's kinda looking at Facebook and their U-Tube. So, no one's really paying attention to him, which I thought was surprising because he made this big announcement. So, he's scowling up and down, looking around and then he starts to walk to the next train car. Then he stops. He turns around. He makes eye contact with this middle-aged, white woman."

"'Woman, what you lookin' at? Don't you be lookin' at me! You lookin' at me? Don't you be... you think you're better than me? You ain't no better than me!'"

"Awkward. So, I, uh... Chicago has, uh, closed down some of the mental health facilities and he kind of looks like he's off his meds. I don't really know what to do. There's a seat to the left of her, left of this white woman. And I go and I sit down next to her just to give myself options. I don't know if I'm gonna do something or I'm

not gonna do something but I wanted to make sure that I had some options. And I look over at him and he's still going off."

"Woman, don't you be looking at me."

"So, it's not lost on me, on this same train, just a couple of days before, there was actually a black man that had stabbed a woman to death. And I'm wondering if that's going to be like a continuation here. So, I'm watching him just yell, yell, and, finally, nothing happens. He walks to the next train car and it's calm."

I'm telling this story to my friend Jason as we're driving to the, uh, reunion. I said, "Well, at least we now gave that white woman, um, options. She doesn't have to just stereotype me along with this, uh, angry, black man."

And Jason looks at me and says, "Why do you think that she would stereotype you with him? You're your own person. He's his own person."

And I just... it kind of surprised me that he said that. Because it was at that point I realize, "Wow! Jason's, Jason's white, um, because he thinks that I don't have to take on this stereotype that if she... if, if a black man stabs somebody on the train that I don't have to associate myself with him."

He said, "If Justin Bieber pees in a mop bucket, no one would ever associate me with him."

I said, "Yeah, but if a black man stabs somebody on the train, people may associate me with that black man."

And it was just interesting, just epiphany, that, wow, we come at this from different perspectives. Um, he was surprised that I had to take on certain stereotypes. I was surprised that he didn't have to take on certain stereotypes.

So, we're driving. Um, we finally arrive at the, uh, high school reunion. Uh, when we walk in, there's this guy, his name is Paul but I've always call him Dean. And, Dean, just to me, represents the stereotype of just white privileged. Uh, his dad was, like, the mayor of the town. So, he just represented all of those types of stereotypes to me.

So, um, after, after we're done smoozin', um, there's just the three of us left. We sit down, uh, we sit down at a table and I'm having a conversation with Dean. And it surprised me a little bit, um, because I'm asking him, "Uh, how did, how did life go for you after high school?"

And he tells me that he went, um, on to go play, uh... He was the star high school football quarterback and now he's gone on to college to become a star, uh, football player as well.

And I thought to myself, "Okay, you probably got this 'cause your daddy, right? You're white. You're privileged. It just goes along with the stereotype."

And then he told me... I said, "So, so, how did you get to college?"

And he told me that he actually put together his football tapes, that he was the top 10 passing quarterback in Ohio. And he went to exposure camps on his own, and he met with coaches on his own, and it kind of surprised me.

And I thought, at that point, I'm, I'm never going to call him Dean again because I'm undercutting all of his success and stereotyping him just as a white privileged guy. And it just hit me as all three of us were sitting there, that it's easy to make things seem so black and white when they're not always so black and white.

