



FILM

White Liberals Are Taking the Wrong Lessons Away from ‘Get Out’



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All white people are Rose.

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Spoiler alerts, obviously. Also, why haven't you seen this movie already?

I've seen a lot of think pieces zoning in on the fact that the true horror of Jordan Peele's debut feature film, *Get Out*, is white feminism. That's true. But I've also

seen a horror extending from the screen and filling the packed theatre spaces; the banal laughter and obliviousness of white progressive liberals. I'm allowed to laugh during *Get Out*, because the awkward situations Chris had to extricate himself from are regular scenarios in my everyday life. Incredulous laughter is what makes them bearable. The white liberals I saw knee slapping themselves into hysterical oblivion clearly missed the mark and seemingly saw the film as only a comedy and not a commentary of their actual faults.

I say liberals because I doubt the Piers Morgans and Tomi Lahrens will venture within a 100 metres of this film after hearing the subject matter. They'll probably call it anti-white and inflammatory while continuing to blow hot air up the precarious aircraft barely keeping Trump afloat. It's white liberals who'll go see *Get Out* as a testament to their "radical" beliefs and ability to maneuver through identity politics and come out smelling like Febreeze. And it's white liberals who will so skillfully disengage from the subject matter so as to see themselves only as spectators and not perpetrators capable of exerting the same macro and micro-aggressions endured by Chris (played by **Daniel Kaluuya**), at the hands of his white girlfriend's (Rose, played by Allison Williams) progressive middle-class family.

I have an uncomfortable truth for white people raving about *Get Out*—it's great cinema and I'm glad the thespians in you could appreciate the art. Just as long as you understand that you are Rose. All of you.

Before Trump, I always wondered what white liberals talked to their contrarian friends about. The ones who begin every racist observation with, "I'm not trying to be racist but" or the "I'm going to be devil's advocate" line. For future reference, don't be modest. Own up to it. You are the devil. When they were around people of colour, they were quiet and listened to our traumas. They wore the label of ally with pride as the symbol that separated them from their confederate-flag loving kin. But when racialized folks were absent from spaces, and it fell upon our "allies" to speak on equity, anti-black racism and oppression, how loud were their voices? Clearly not that loud because November 8th.



Photo via Screenshot.

It's become increasingly clear that for white liberals, allyship is a role they act out to ease a conscience and fulfill a self-imposed quota of good deeds. No one is more capable of placing anti-black racism on a hierarchy of *least* to *most* than white people. Not for the betterment of those oppressed but for their own sake, so they are never seen as being on the same level as the REAL racists. But here's the gotcha moment—racism is racism. Spouting racist crap is as detrimental as saying nothing when the racist crap hits the fan. Much like Rose remained silent when her Milo-like brother went on about Chris's genetic make-up, white liberals will tsk and frown when they hear about police brutality against black people and yet choose to say nothing when their voices are most needed. Why? Because it's easier to pat yourself on the back for not being like the "worst" of you, than actually being uncomfortable and recognizing the many ways you are just as bad.

There is no humor to be found in racism except for these who see it on a scale of 1-10. For the liberal whites, quips about black men's prowess in bed are witty and tongue-in-cheek. Parents sincerely asking why my English is so good are cringe-worthy yes, but it's forgivable because they are curious, that's all. Grandparents who inquire on the mechanics of our hair without so much as a *may I?*, as they

rush to paw at the strands are clueless but well-meaning. They are from a different time you say. Damn right they are from a different time. One where good times meant gathering for the communal lynching or hosing protesters fighting for equal rights. "Good" white people are the worst white people. Many of you are smart enough to know that anti-black racism is not simply the stuff of history books and strategically placed days for remembrance. It's an all year, week to week, day by day kind of experience, and yet you choose to treat it as a foreign entity that crops up once in awhile, and only in the most blatantly violent of ways. Rose was dating a black guy and in her mind she probably didn't even see him as black. She didn't see his colour; just that she loved him. Bullshit. When the white cop asked for Chris's ID, he knew well enough to co-operate because black men interacting with the police more times than not ends tragically. Rose chose to be vocal not realizing that while she can be let go, Chris could so easily have been arrested for something she said. Why? Because racism.

In the last moments of the film as the cop car approaches with blaring sirens and red lights, many of you were probably rejoicing for Chris's good fortune. Now he could tell the police what happened and be safe! I can assure you that for black people watching, myself included, my heart fell to the bottom of my stomach because I knew that whatever cop came out of that car was going to see an injured white woman, an injured black men looking over her, and probably if Chris was lucky, arrest him on the spot, or shoot him and never ask questions. White liberals still find comfort in the very systems that oppress us, and that my fair-weathered friends is what makes you just as bad as the others. Pretending that the half-hearted do-gooder actions of the best of you, will soften the blows from the worst is a lie you need to stop regurgitating every decade.

There is really no difference between Lena Dunham and Megyn Kelly except for the fact that one uses racist rhetoric to amplify her platform **and** the **other** IS racist rhetoric. Velma Dinkley and Aryan Barbie may seem like polar opposites but enough can be taken from the fact that neither of them have ever specifically called out anti-black racism (past the performative liberal tweet), but in different ways they've contributed to it. One as a means to a racist end, the other as a

woeful attempt at pithy humor. The giddy reactions of white people excited by *Get Out* are just a microcosm of the larger narrative of bad whites and good whites. At the end of the day you share the same camouflage that shields you from a reality which you understand is fucked, but which you're too comfortable to actually want to see torn down. Just like Rose, while sipping her glass of milk, earplugs shutting her off from the rest of the world, you are all perfectly content to be shut off, listening to The Time of my Life.

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