

Epiphany in Trump Town: Finding common ground with the “American Sniper” crowd

So I'm on stage in Florida with Chris Kyle's wife Taya, wondering how I can connect with this very white audience

by Dwight Watkins

There may be hope yet for relations between white Donald Trump voters and non-Uncle Tom blacks — America may not be as divided as we think. That's what I discovered last weekend during a book tour stop at the [Southwest Florida Reading Festival](#) in Fort Myers.

I like to do my research on a place before I pull up, mainly for demographic checks, because I once made the joke that \$15 apples at Whole Foods all have different names, like exotic strains of weed, in Jonesboro, Arkansas, which didn't have a Whole Foods at the time, so it made zero sense to the audience and got zero laughs. I'm not doing that again. So, Fort Myers, the county seat of Lee County, Florida, and one of the many places that Trump dominated in the 2016 election?

“You sure they want me?” I asked my publicist. “You do know that this is a Trump town, right? And my [Trump opinions are pretty well documented.](#)”

She laughed. “They'll love you, D. You'll sell a ton of books and have a great time.”

Now, don't get it twisted. I have held countless events with all types of white people — all types of liberal white people, that is. Normally, the white people at my events eat organic foods, love cardigans, own multiple pairs of Birkenstocks for the summer and winter, and they all have at least one dashiki. Some even wear locs like rastas. They march, protest, avoid gluten

and quote James Baldwin. I didn't see too many of those types of white people at the Fort Myers airport, or in the hotel lobby or at the actual festival when I checked in for my morning event, but I wasn't really worried. The organizers were really nice, and they greeted me with open arms.