

Daniel Kaluuya in "Get Out"  
(Credit: Universal Pictures)

## “Get Out” moments are real: Why Jordan Peele’s new film should be required viewing

The movie is fiction, but the experience of being the only black person in an all-white space is true to life

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02.28.2017 • 6:59 PM

I’m now joining the list of about a zillion people who have already told you to go [see Jordan Peele's new horror film "Get Out."](#) This film should be required viewing for Americans because — no spoilers, I promise — of how precisely it captures the experiences of black Americans navigating all-white spaces.

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Roughly 400 million people live in America, and only about 13 percent of them are African-American. That means it’s very possible for a black person to be the only black person in the room. "Get Out" moments happen all over the country every day. I won’t ruin the film, so I’ll let you borrow a "Get Out" example from my own personal collection.

You are the first guy from your family to go college. You could have left the state but you have decided to stay local and attend a school 15 minutes away from your neighborhood. Cookouts, block parties and the kind of celebrations that happen only in all-black neighborhoods are had before you even attend one class. The only white people you know are teachers — and of course the hosing police, who always come by to break up the parties.

The hopes and dreams of your entire neighborhood follow you to your car as you prepare to hit the campus for the first time. A veiny caramel hand grips your shoulder as you throw your books in the trunk. “Do good for us, baby.” You turn around and it’s Aunt Mae: She’s not your blood aunt but she is the hood’s aunt, which is just the same. “Make us proud.”

You hug her, hop in the car and pull off. On the way to campus you wonder what college will be like. Will the work be easy or hard? Will you fit in on the first day like you did in high school or will there be a struggle? Will the girls like you, are you smart enough, can you really swing it in general? You wonder why you are the first — why were you chosen to be the one? What’s going to happen, what’s the campus like, what will going to school with other races be like? All your other schools were all black, all the time.

You park on the street because you haven’t figured out the parking laws yet. The campus is only half a block up. You arrive to your university — your white university. You knew the campus would be diverse, but you didn’t know “diverse” meant many variations of whiteness. There’s acoustic guitar whiteness, hacky sack whiteness, jock whiteness, preppy whiteness, motorcycle jacket whiteness, yoga whiteness, pastel sweater with khakis and boat shoe whiteness — and this is just on the front lawn.

Other types of whiteness wait inside the building, clog up the lobby, peak through bathroom stalls, hang from the ceiling and pop up and out of trash cans. They all have the same smirk, and it only shifts when you say, “hello.” They never speak back or directly address you unless they have questions: What sport do you play? How high do you jump? Are you on the team?

You are so confused. You can hoop but didn’t plan on balling for the school team. Maybe you should, you think to yourself. Some other black guys walk by. You well up with excitement and introduce yourself. They greet you with the same smirk, brushing you off. Now you’re even more confused, wondering if this place can ever be decoded. You’re not sure if you should stay, but you can’t go. You don’t want to let Aunt Mae down. You don’t want to disappoint the hood.

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A week goes by and you have the chance to study those other black guys. They all seem to have endorsement deals with different white crews. A few of those black guys even tried to recruit you, but you fail all the tests with flying colors. You've never seen an episode of "Friends." You hadn't heard of Kings of Leon. Your feet are too big for Sperry's.

You take all this information back to your neighborhood and they don't believe you: "It can't be that bad," they say.

You nod your head. "It's worse." Now you don't fit in on campus, but you'll look like a loser if you quit.

Do you "get out?" Or do you stay? Go see the movie and think about it.

### D. WATKINS

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