

Ben Passmore

YOUR BLACK friend

and Other Strangers



YOUR BLACK FRIEND

Your black friend is sitting in a coffee shop, your favorite coffee shop. He's eating a po-boy even tho he knows he's not supposed to. He's hoping white guilt will keep the barista from confrontin him about it.



Your black friend listens to a conversation between a nicely dressed white woman and the barista---



I saw this sketchy guy coming out of this backyard with a bike an I called the cops right away.

what'd he look like?

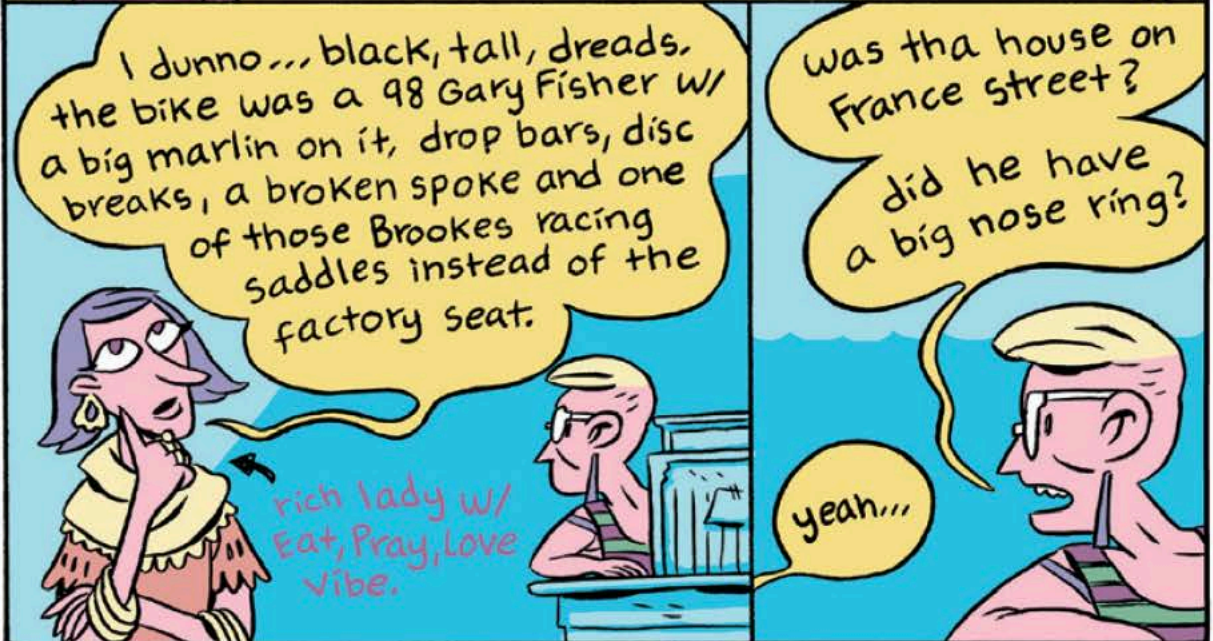
I dunno... black, tall, dreads, the bike was a 98 Gary Fisher w/ a big marlin on it, drop bars, disc breaks, a broken spoke and one of those Brookes racing saddles instead of the factory seat.

rich lady w/
Eat, Pray, Love
vibe.

was tha house on France street?

did he have a big nose ring?

yeah...



that sounds like Darren,
he comes here all the time.
that's his house,
that's his bike.



this is an important moment. Your black friend has seen this many times: a white person, unaware of their racism, blunders into a moment in which it is undeniable. He knows that this woman still will not see it, she is both afraid of black people and the realization of that fear. It will take the barista, seemingly race savvy and familiar to the rich lady, to clarify what has just happened. But, your black friend knows the barista will say nothing. What white ppl fear most is "making things awkward."



your black friend would like to say something but doesn't want to appear "angry." he knows this type of person expects that from him and he will lose before he begins.



This' why he has white friends, he thinks. White ppl are allowed to be "angry" when he is expected to be calm and reasonable. he wishes he could make you understand this, and many other things...



for example: your black friend wishes you understood why he hates it when the barista calls him "baby" like she is his "auntie", or any other black woman over the age of 50.



It reminds him of all the times he sees his white friends put on linguistic "black face" (he calls it "black voice.") with unfamiliar black people and especially black kids. He sees white friends wanting to participate in "Blackness," like it was a costume, but knows they wouldn't want to live with the consequences of actually being black. He wonders if white people know they're over using the word "trippin"?

your black friend wonders if you know that, unlike you, he has to constantly monitor his speech, dress, and affect relative to his environment and a misreading could mean the difference between being the black friend and that black guy---

Your black friend hates that you slide into "black" presentations thoughtlessly. he feels like you're mocking him, But knows that you are totally unaware of this.



Your black friend wishes he knew how to bring this up, but he doesn't know how.



Your black friend wishes you would play more than Beyonce; there are more black performers than Beyonce and he's worried you don't know that.

honestly your black friend is tired of partying with you.





sometimes your black friend feels like a man without a country.

frozen Pickle Pops? Are those actually Pickles or ice cream in the shape of Pickles?



New Orleans's hoods are called wards

what ward you from?

i'm not from here.



you're gonna go far wit that voice. u soond white!

should do somethin wit that hair tho.



your black friend feels like a man without a country.

ppl ask me why I live in such a dangerous hood and I'm like, it's a NORMAL hood where NORMAL ppl live, and fuckin cheap too.

honestly I feel more comfy around blk ppl, I totally get them! I think I was blk in another life.