

just walk on by brent staples analysis

Just Walk On By: Brent Staples Analysis: A Deep Dive into Fear, Race, and Perception

Introduction:

Have you ever felt the weight of unspoken judgments, the chilling effect of assumptions based solely on appearance? Brent Staples' powerful essay, "Just Walk On By: Black Men and Public Space," explores this chilling reality with raw honesty and insightful prose. This in-depth analysis will dissect Staples' narrative, examining its themes of racial profiling, the psychological impact of fear, and the insidious nature of societal biases. We'll delve into the rhetorical strategies Staples employs, exploring how he crafts a compelling narrative that resonates with readers decades after its publication. Prepare for a journey into the heart of a deeply personal and universally relevant experience.

I. The Power of Perception: Deconstructing the "Black Man" Stereotype

Staples masterfully sets the stage by immediately establishing his position as a Black man navigating a predominantly white urban landscape. He doesn't shy away from the uncomfortable truth: his mere presence elicits fear and suspicion. He recounts numerous instances where his physical stature - his height, his gait, the very way he carries himself - triggers alarm in others. This is not a story about malicious intent; instead, it's a story about misinterpretation fueled by deeply ingrained societal stereotypes. Staples' experiences highlight the inherent power imbalance at play, where the perception of threat overrides individual identity. He doesn't portray himself as a victim but rather as an observer, acutely aware of the perceptions projected onto him and their consequential impact.

II. The Weaponization of Fear: How Stereotypes Shape Interactions

The essay's power lies in its ability to humanize the experience of being perpetually perceived as a threat. Staples meticulously details how his race becomes a weapon, transforming his simple actions - walking down the street, listening to music, even whistling - into potential acts of aggression in the eyes of those around him. He describes the psychological burden of anticipating fear, of preemptively adjusting his behavior to avoid triggering alarm. This constant vigilance becomes a form of self-preservation, a strategy to navigate a world designed to perceive him as dangerous. He's forced to play a role, to anticipate and react to the projections of others, rather than simply existing in his own space.

III. The Role of Context and the Construction of Fear

Staples' narrative transcends the personal; it's a social commentary on the construction of fear and

its inextricable link to racial prejudice. He subtly exposes the hypocrisy of a society that simultaneously celebrates diversity while harboring deep-seated anxieties about race. The essay implicitly critiques the environment that breeds these fears, demonstrating how institutional racism and societal biases create a climate where a simple walk down the street becomes an act of potential danger for both the perceived "threat" and the person feeling threatened. The context – the time, the place, the race of the observer – significantly influences the interpretation of actions, highlighting the subjective nature of fear.

IV. Rhetorical Strategies: Crafting a Compelling Narrative

Staples' writing is characterized by its restrained yet powerful tone. He avoids sensationalism, instead relying on precise language and vivid imagery to convey the intensity of his experiences. His use of anecdotes serves as effective evidence, illustrating the pervasiveness of racial profiling. The essay's structure, moving from personal anecdote to broader societal analysis, allows for a gradual build-up of tension and a powerful culminating message. His measured tone enhances the impact of his message, making it more persuasive and less accusatory. The reader is invited to reflect on their own biases and preconceptions, rather than being directly confronted with blame.

V. The Enduring Legacy: Relevance in a Modern Context

"Just Walk On By" remains profoundly relevant today. While societal progress has been made, racial bias persists in various forms. Staples' essay serves as a stark reminder that the anxieties and fears he describes continue to shape interactions between individuals of different races. The essay's enduring power lies in its ability to initiate conversations about race, perception, and the unconscious biases that permeate our society. It forces us to confront uncomfortable truths and acknowledge the ongoing need for empathy, understanding, and systemic change.

VI. Conclusion: A Call for Empathy and Understanding

Brent Staples' "Just Walk On By" is not simply a personal narrative; it's a call to action. It challenges readers to confront their own biases and prejudices, to acknowledge the impact of unconscious assumptions, and to strive for a more equitable and just society. The essay's lasting power lies in its ability to foster empathy and understanding, prompting reflection on the pervasive nature of racial prejudice and its impact on the lives of individuals and communities. By sharing his experiences with such honesty and vulnerability, Staples creates a space for dialogue and encourages us to actively work towards a future where fear does not dictate interactions based solely on race.

Outline of "Just Walk On By: Brent Staples Analysis"

Name: A Deep Dive into Brent Staples' "Just Walk On By"

Introduction: Hooking the reader and providing an overview of the essay and the analysis.

Chapter 1: The Power of Perception: Analyzing the construction of the "Black man" stereotype and its impact on Staples' experiences.

Chapter 2: The Weaponization of Fear: Examining how stereotypes shape interactions and the psychological burden of anticipated fear.

Chapter 3: Context and the Construction of Fear: Exploring the role of context and societal biases in

creating and perpetuating fear.

Chapter 4: Rhetorical Strategies: Analyzing Staples' use of language, anecdotes, and structure to create a compelling narrative.

Chapter 5: Enduring Legacy and Modern Relevance: Discussing the continuing relevance of the essay in contemporary society.

Conclusion: A summary of key findings and a call for empathy and understanding.

(The detailed explanation of each chapter is provided above in the main body of the article.)

FAQs:

1. What is the central theme of "Just Walk On By"? The central theme is the impact of racial stereotypes on the everyday experiences of Black men, specifically the constant fear and suspicion they face due to their race.
1. What rhetorical devices does Staples use? Staples uses anecdotes, vivid imagery, precise language, and a measured tone to effectively convey his experiences and their wider societal implications.
1. How does Staples' essay relate to contemporary issues? The essay remains highly relevant today, as racial bias continues to impact interactions between people of different races.
1. What is the significance of the title, "Just Walk On By"? The title is ironic, highlighting the seemingly simple act of walking that becomes fraught with potential danger and misinterpretation for Staples.
1. What is the essay's tone? The tone is generally restrained and reflective, avoiding sensationalism while effectively conveying the seriousness of the issue.
1. Who is the intended audience of the essay? The essay's audience is broad, aiming to reach anyone who might hold unconscious biases or lack understanding of the experiences of Black men in public spaces.

1. What is the overall effect of Staples' use of personal anecdotes? His personal anecdotes make the abstract concept of racial profiling concrete and relatable, allowing readers to connect with his experiences on an emotional level.
1. How does Staples challenge societal norms? He challenges societal norms by highlighting the absurdity and injustice of being judged based on appearance and race rather than individual character.
1. What call to action does Staples implicitly make? He implicitly calls for greater empathy, understanding, and a critical examination of societal biases related to race.

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just walk on by brent staples analysis: Parallel Time Brent Staples, 2017-09-27 From Pulitzer Prize winner Brent Staples, an evocative memoir that poses universal questions: Where does the family end and the self begin? What do we owe our families, and what do we owe our dreams for ourselves? What part of the past is a gift and what part a shackle? For Brent Staples there is the added dimension of race: moving from a black world into one largely defined by whites. The oldest son among nine children, Brent grew up in a small industrial town near Philadelphia. First a scholarship to a local college and then one for graduate study at the University of Chicago pulled him out of the close family circle. While he was away, the industries that supported the town failed, and drug dealing rushed in to fill the economic void. News of arrests and premature deaths among Brent's childhood friends underscored the precariousness of his perch in a world of mostly white achievers. A younger brother became a cocaine dealer and was murdered by one of his clients. His death propelled Brent into a reconsideration of his childhood and coming-of-age that offers vivid portraits of family and place, of values that supported and pressures that tore apart, of the appeal and pain of entering a predominantly white world, and of the strengths and vulnerabilities of the black world he grew away from.

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just walk on by brent staples analysis: The Autobiography of An Ex-Colored Man James Weldon Johnson, 2021-01-01 First published in the year 1912, 'The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man' by James Weldon Johnson is the fictional account of a young biracial man, referred to as the Ex-Colored Man, living in post-Reconstruction era America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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just walk on by brent staples analysis: Life on the Color Line Gregory Howard Williams, 1996-02-01 "Heartbreaking and uplifting... a searing book about race and prejudice in America... brims with insights that only someone who has lived on both sides of the racial divide could gain."—Cleveland Plain Dealer "A triumph of storytelling as well as a triumph of spirit."—Alex Kotlowitz, award-winning author of *There Are No Children Here* As a child in 1950s segregated Virginia, Gregory Howard Williams grew up believing he was white. But when the family business failed and his parents' marriage fell apart, Williams discovered that his dark-skinned father, who had been passing as Italian-American, was half black. The family split up, and Greg, his younger brother,

and their father moved to Muncie, Indiana, where the young boys learned the truth about their heritage. Overnight, Greg Williams became black. In this extraordinary and powerful memoir, Williams recounts his remarkable journey along the color line and illuminates the contrasts between the black and white worlds: one of privilege, opportunity and comfort, the other of deprivation, repression, and struggle. He tells of the hostility and prejudice he encountered all too often, from both blacks and whites, and the surprising moments of encouragement and acceptance he found from each. *Life on the Color Line* is a uniquely important book. It is a wonderfully inspiring testament of purpose, perseverance, and human triumph. Winner of the Los Angeles Times Book Prize

just walk on by brent staples analysis: Whistling Vivaldi: And Other Clues to How Stereotypes Affect Us (Issues of Our Time) Claude M. Steele, 2011-04-04 The acclaimed social psychologist offers an insider's look at his research and groundbreaking findings on stereotypes and identity. Claude M. Steele, who has been called "one of the few great social psychologists," offers a vivid first-person account of the research that supports his groundbreaking conclusions on stereotypes and identity. He sheds new light on American social phenomena from racial and gender gaps in test scores to the belief in the superior athletic prowess of black men, and lays out a plan for mitigating these "stereotype threats" and reshaping American identities.

just walk on by brent staples analysis: Please Stop Helping Us Jason L. Riley, 2016-01-05 Why is it that so many efforts by liberals to lift the black underclass not only fail, but often harm the intended beneficiaries? In *Please Stop Helping Us*, Jason L. Riley examines how well-intentioned welfare programs are in fact holding black Americans back. Minimum-wage laws may lift earnings for people who are already employed, but they price a disproportionate number of blacks out of the labor force. Affirmative action in higher education is intended to address past discrimination, but the result is fewer black college graduates than would otherwise exist. And so it goes with everything from soft-on-crime laws, which make black neighborhoods more dangerous, to policies that limit school choice out of a mistaken belief that charter schools and voucher programs harm the traditional public schools that most low-income students attend. In theory these efforts are intended to help the poor—and poor minorities in particular. In practice they become massive barriers to moving forward. *Please Stop Helping Us* lays bare these counterproductive results. People of goodwill want to see more black socioeconomic advancement, but in too many instances the current methods and approaches aren't working. Acknowledging this is an important first step.

just walk on by brent staples analysis: Despite the Best Intentions Amanda E. Lewis, John B. Diamond, 2015-08-04 On the surface, Riverview High School looks like the post-racial ideal. Serving an enviably affluent, diverse, and liberal district, the school is well-funded, its teachers are well-trained, and many of its students are high achieving. Yet Riverview has not escaped the same unrelenting question that plagues schools throughout America: why is it that even when all of the circumstances seem right, black and Latino students continue to lag behind their peers? Through five years' worth of interviews and data-gathering at Riverview, John Diamond and Amanda Lewis have created a rich and disturbing portrait of the achievement gap that persists more than fifty years after the formal dismantling of segregation. As students progress from elementary school to middle school to high school, their level of academic achievement increasingly tracks along racial lines, with white and Asian students maintaining higher GPAs and standardized testing scores, taking more advanced classes, and attaining better college admission results than their black and Latino counterparts. Most research to date has focused on the role of poverty, family stability, and other external influences in explaining poor performance at school, especially in urban contexts. Diamond and Lewis instead situate their research in a suburban school, and look at what factors within the school itself could be causing the disparity. Most crucially, they challenge many common explanations of the 'racial achievement gap,' exploring what race actually means in this situation, and why it matters. An in-depth study with far-reaching consequences, *Despite the Best Intentions* revolutionizes our understanding of both the knotty problem of academic disparities and the larger question of the color line in American society.

just walk on by brent staples analysis: *Patterns for College Writing* Laurie G. Kirsznner, Stephen R. Mandell, 2011-12-22 Laurie Kirsznner and Stephen Mandell, authors with nearly thirty years of experience teaching college writing, know what works in the classroom and have a knack for picking just the right readings. In *Patterns for College Writing*, they provide students with exemplary rhetorical models and instructors with class-tested selections that balance classic and contemporary essays. Along with more examples of student writing than any other reader, *Patterns* has the most comprehensive coverage of active reading, research, and the writing process, with a five-chapter mini-rhetoric; the clearest explanations of the patterns of development; and the most thorough apparatus of any rhetorical reader, all reasons why *Patterns for College Writing* is the best-selling reader in the country. And the new edition includes exciting new readings and expanded coverage of critical reading, working with sources, and research. It is now available as an interactive Bedford e-book and in a variety of other e-book formats that can be downloaded to a computer, tablet, or e-reader. Read the preface.

just walk on by brent staples analysis: *Never Quit* Jimmy Settle, Don Rearden, 2017-03-07 The epic memoir of an Alaskan pararescue jumper, Special Forces Operator, and decorated war hero. "That Others May Live" is a mantra that defines the fearless men of Alaska's 212th Pararescue Unit, the PJs, one of the most elite military forces on the planet. Whether they are rescuing citizens injured and freezing in the Alaskan wilderness or saving wounded Rangers and SEALs in blazing firefights at war, the PJs are the least known and most highly trained of America's warriors. *Never Quit* is the true story of how Jimmy Settle, an Alaskan shoe store clerk, became a Special Forces Operator and war hero. After being shot in the head during a dangerous high mountain operation in the rugged Watapur Valley in Afghanistan, Jimmy returns to battle with his teammates for a heroic rescue, the bullet fragments stitched over and still in his skull. In a cross between a suicide rescue mission and an against-all-odds mountain battle, his team of PJs risk their lives again in an epic firefight. When his helicopter is hit and begins leaking fuel, Jimmy finds himself in the worst possible position as a rescue specialist—forced to leave members from his own team behind. Jimmy will have to risk everything to get back into the battle and bring back his brothers. From death-defying Alaskan wilderness training, wild rescues, and vicious battles against the Taliban and Al Qaeda, this is an explosive special operations memoir unlike any that has come before, and the true story of a man from humble beginnings who became an American hero.

just walk on by brent staples analysis: *Sidewalk* Mitchell Duneier, 2000-12-20 An exceptional ethnography marked by clarity and candor, *Sidewalk* takes us into the socio-cultural environment of those who, though often seen as threatening or unseemly, work day after day on the blocks of one of New York's most diverse neighborhoods. Sociologist Duneier, author of *Slim's Table*, offers an accessible and compelling group portrait of several poor black men who make their livelihoods on the sidewalks of Greenwich Village selling secondhand goods, panhandling, and scavenging books and magazines. Duneier spent five years with these individuals, and in *Sidewalk* he argues that, contrary to the opinion of various city officials, they actually contribute significantly to the order and well-being of the Village. An important study of the heart and mind of the street, *Sidewalk* also features an insightful afterword by longtime book vendor Hakim Hasan. This fascinating study reveals today's urban life in all its complexity: its vitality, its conflicts about class and race, and its surprising opportunities for empathy among strangers. *Sidewalk* is an excellent supplementary text for a range of courses: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY: Shows how to make important links between micro and macro; how a research project works; how sociology can transform common sense. RACE AND ETHNIC RELATIONS: Untangles race, class, and gender as they work together on the street. URBAN STUDIES: Asks how public space is used and contested by men and women, blacks and whites, rich and poor, and how street life and political economy interact. DEVIANCE: Looks at labeling processes in treatment of the homeless; interrogates the broken windows theory of policing. LAW AND SOCIETY: Closely examines the connections between formal and informal systems of social control. METHODS: Shows how ethnography works; includes a detailed methodological appendix and an afterword by research subject Hakim Hasan. CULTURAL

ANTHROPOLOGY: Sidewalk engages the rich terrain of recent developments regarding representation, writing, and authority; in the tradition of Elliot Liebow and Ulf Hannerz, it deals with age old problems of the social and cultural experience of inequality; this is a telling study of culture on the margins of American society. CULTURAL STUDIES: Breaking down disciplinary boundaries, Sidewalk shows how books and magazines are received and interpreted in discussions among working-class people on the sidewalk; it shows how cultural knowledge is deployed by vendors and scavengers to generate subsistence in public space. SOCIOLOGY OF CULTURE: Sidewalk demonstrates the connections between culture and human agency and innovation; it interrogates distinctions between legitimate subcultures and deviant collectivities; it illustrates conflicts over cultural diversity in public space; and, ultimately, it shows how conflicts over meaning are central to social life.

just walk on by brent staples analysis: A Walk Across America Peter Jenkins, 2001-09-18 Twenty-five years ago, a disillusioned young man set out on a walk across America. This is the book he wrote about that journey -- a classic account of the reawakening of his faith in himself and his country. I started out searching for myself and my country, Peter Jenkins writes, and found both. In this timeless classic, Jenkins describes how disillusionment with society in the 1970s drove him out onto the road on a walk across America. His experiences remain as sharp and telling today as they were twenty-five years ago -- from the timeless secrets of life, learned from a mountain-dwelling hermit, to the stir he caused by staying with a black family in North Carolina, to his hours of intense labor in Southern mills. Many, many miles later, he learned lessons about his country and himself that resonate to this day -- and will inspire a new generation to get out, hit the road and explore.

just walk on by brent staples analysis: Whirligig Paul Fleischman, 2013-12-17 When sixteen-year-old Brent Bishop inadvertently causes the death of a young woman, he is sent on an unusual journey of repentance, building wind toys across the land. In his most ambitious novel to date, Newbery winner Paul Fleischman traces Brent's healing pilgrimage from Washington State to California, Florida, and Maine, and describes the many lives set into new motion by the ingenious creations Brent leaves behind. Paul Fleischman is the master of multivoiced books for younger readers. In Whirligig he has created a novel about hidden connections that is itself a wonder of spinning hearts and grand surprises.

just walk on by brent staples analysis: Salaam Brick Lane Tarquin Hall, 2006 After ten years living abroad, Tarquin Hall wanted to return to his native London. Lured by his nostalgia for a leafy suburban childhood spent in south-west London, he returned with his Indian-born, American fiance in tow. But, priced out of the housing market, they found themselves living not in a townhouse, oozing Victorian charm, but in a squalid attic above a Bangladeshi sweatshop on London's Brick Lane. A grimy skylight provided the only window on their new world: a filthy, noisy street where drug dealers and prostitutes peddled their wares and tramps urinated on the pavements. At night, traffic lights lit up the ceiling and police sirens wailed into the early hours. Yet, as Hall got to know Brick Lane, he discovered beneath its unlovely surface an inner world where immigrants and asylum seekers struggle to better themselves and dream of escape. Salaam Brick Lane is a journey of discovery by an outsider in his own native city. It offers an explicit glimpse of the underbelly of London's most infamous quarter, the real-life world of Monica Ali's bestselling novel.

just walk on by brent staples analysis: No Logo Naomi Klein, 2000-01-15 What corporations fear most are consumers who ask questions. Naomi Klein offers us the arguments with which to take on the superbrands. Billy Bragg from the bookjacket.

just walk on by brent staples analysis: Patterns of Exposition 16 Robert A. Schwegler, 2000-07 N [this book], the readings encourage students to take a stand on questions of culture, identity, and value in college communities, in the workplace, and in society. Thorough introductions to each rhetorical pattern and numerous exercises throughout the book emphasize practical writing strategies.-Back cover.

just walk on by brent staples analysis: Burro Genius Victor Villasenor, 2008-07-08 Standing

at the podium, Victor Villaseñor looked at the group of educators amassed before him, and his mind flooded with childhood memories of humiliation and abuse at the hands of his teachers. He became enraged. With a pounding heart, he began to speak of these incidents. When he was through, to his great disbelief he received a standing ovation. Many in the audience could not contain their own tears. So begins the passionate, touching memoir of Victor Villaseñor. Highly gifted and imaginative as a child, Villaseñor coped with an untreated learning disability (he was finally diagnosed, at the age of forty-four, with extreme dyslexia) and the frustration of growing up Latino in an English-only American school in the 1940s. Despite teachers who beat him because he could not speak English, Villaseñor clung to his dream of one day becoming a writer. He is now considered one of the premier writers of our time.

just walk on by brent staples analysis: Crime, Shame and Reintegration John Braithwaite, 1989-03-23 Crime, Shame and Reintegration is a contribution to general criminological theory. Its approach is as relevant to professional burglary as to episodic delinquency or white collar crime. Braithwaite argues that some societies have higher crime rates than others because of their different processes of shaming wrongdoing. Shaming can be counterproductive, making crime problems worse. But when shaming is done within a cultural context of respect for the offender, it can be an extraordinarily powerful, efficient and just form of social control. Braithwaite identifies the social conditions for such successful shaming. If his theory is right, radically different criminal justice policies are needed - a shift away from punitive social control toward greater emphasis on moralizing social control. This book will be of interest not only to criminologists and sociologists, but to those in law, public administration and politics who are concerned with social policy and social issues.

just walk on by brent staples analysis: True Legend Mike Lupica, 2013-05-21 #1 New York Times bestseller Mike Lupica makes his return to the basketball court! There's a reason teammates call him True. Because for basketball phenom Drew Robinson, there is nothing more true than his talent on the court. It's the kind that comes along once in a generation and is loaded with perks--and with problems. Before long, True buys in to his own hype, much to the chagrin of his mother, who wants to keep her boy's head grounded--and suddenly trouble has a way of finding him. That is, until a washed-up former playground legend steps back onto the court and takes True under his wing.

just walk on by brent staples analysis: Sororophobia Helena Michie, 1992 This study takes the notion of otherness--As it has traditionally been applied by Simone de Beauvoir and other feminists - to describe women's relationships with each other and to explain how these relationships have been textually and culturally represented.

just walk on by brent staples analysis: Frederick Douglass David W. Blight, 2020-01-07 * Selected as One of the Best Books of the 21st Century by The New York Times * Winner of the Pulitzer Prize in History * "Extraordinary...a great American biography" (The New Yorker) of the most important African American of the 19th century: Frederick Douglass, the escaped slave who became the greatest orator of his day and one of the leading abolitionists and writers of the era. As a young man Frederick Douglass (1818-1895) escaped from slavery in Baltimore, Maryland. He was fortunate to have been taught to read by his slave owner mistress, and he would go on to become one of the major literary figures of his time. His very existence gave the lie to slave owners: with dignity and great intelligence he bore witness to the brutality of slavery. Initially mentored by William Lloyd Garrison, Douglass spoke widely, using his own story to condemn slavery. By the Civil War, Douglass had become the most famed and widely travelled orator in the nation. In his unique and eloquent voice, written and spoken, Douglass was a fierce critic of the United States as well as a radical patriot. After the war he sometimes argued politically with younger African Americans, but he never forsook either the Republican party or the cause of black civil and political rights. In this "cinematic and deeply engaging" (The New York Times Book Review) biography, David Blight has drawn on new information held in a private collection that few other historians have consulted, as well as recently discovered issues of Douglass's newspapers. "Absorbing and even moving...a brilliant book that speaks to our own time as well as Douglass's" (The Wall Street Journal), Blight's

biography tells the fascinating story of Douglass's two marriages and his complex extended family. "David Blight has written the definitive biography of Frederick Douglass...a powerful portrait of one of the most important American voices of the nineteenth century" (The Boston Globe). In addition to the Pulitzer Prize, Frederick Douglass won the Bancroft, Parkman, Los Angeles Times (biography), Lincoln, Plutarch, and Christopher awards and was named one of the Best Books of 2018 by The New York Times Book Review, The Wall Street Journal, The Boston Globe, The Chicago Tribune, The San Francisco Chronicle, and Time.

just walk on by brent staples analysis: The Outside Shot Walter Dean Myers, 1986-12-01 When Lonnie Jackson leaves Harlem for a basketball scholarship to a midwestern college, he knows he must keep his head straight and his record clean. That's the only way he'll have a chance of making it to the pros someday. But his street smarts haven't prepared him for the pressures of tough classes, high-stakes college ball, and the temptation to fix games for local gamblers. Everyone plays by a whole new set of rules -- including Sherry, who's determined to be a track star. Her independence attracts Lonnie, but their on-again, off-again relationship is driving him crazy. Lonnie has one year to learn how to make it as a college man. It's his outside shot at a bright future. Does he have what it takes?

just walk on by brent staples analysis: Colored People Henry Louis Gates, Jr., 2011-07-06 In a coming-of-age story as enchantingly vivid and ribald as anything Mark Twain or Zora Neale Hurston, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., recounts his childhood in the mill town of Piedmont, West Virginia, in the 1950s and 1960s and ushers readers into a gossip, of lye-and-mashed-potato "processes," and of slyly stubborn resistance to the indignities of segregation. A winner of the Chicago Tribune's Heartland Award and the Lillian Smith Prize, *Colored People* is a pungent and poignant masterpiece of recollection, a work that extends and deepens our sense of African American history even as it entrances us with its bravura storytelling

just walk on by brent staples analysis: The Skin We're In Desmond Cole, 2020-01-28 NATIONAL BESTSELLER WINNER OF THE 2020 TORONTO BOOK AWARD A bracing, provocative, and perspective-shifting book from one of Canada's most celebrated and uncompromising writers, Desmond Cole. *The Skin We're In* will spark a national conversation, influence policy, and inspire activists. In his 2015 cover story for *Toronto Life* magazine, Desmond Cole exposed the racist actions of the Toronto police force, detailing the dozens of times he had been stopped and interrogated under the controversial practice of carding. The story quickly came to national prominence, shaking the country to its core and catapulting its author into the public sphere. Cole used his newfound profile to draw insistent, unyielding attention to the injustices faced by Black Canadians on a daily basis. Both Cole's activism and journalism find vibrant expression in his first book, *The Skin We're In*. Puncturing the bubble of Canadian smugness and naive assumptions of a post-racial nation, Cole chronicles just one year—2017—in the struggle against racism in this country. It was a year that saw calls for tighter borders when Black refugees braved frigid temperatures to cross into Manitoba from the States, Indigenous land and water protectors resisting the celebration of Canada's 150th birthday, police across the country rallying around an officer accused of murder, and more. The year also witnessed the profound personal and professional ramifications of Desmond Cole's unwavering determination to combat injustice. In April, Cole disrupted a Toronto police board meeting by calling for the destruction of all data collected through carding. Following the protest, Cole, a columnist with the *Toronto Star*, was summoned to a meeting with the paper's opinions editor and informed that his activism violated company policy. Rather than limit his efforts defending Black lives, Cole chose to sever his relationship with the publication. Then in July, at another police board meeting, Cole challenged the board to respond to accusations of a police cover-up in the brutal beating of Dafonte Miller by an off-duty police officer and his brother. When Cole refused to leave the meeting until the question was publicly addressed, he was arrested. The image of Cole walking out of the meeting, handcuffed and flanked by officers, fortified the distrust between the city's Black community and its police force. Month-by-month, Cole creates a comprehensive picture of entrenched, systemic inequality. Urgent, controversial, and unsparingly

honest, *The Skin We're In* is destined to become a vital text for anti-racist and social justice movements in Canada, as well as a potent antidote to the all-too-present complacency of many white Canadians.

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literature on this increasingly popular subject, this is the first book to consider the southern red scare as a unique regional phenomenon rather than an offshoot of McCarthyism or massive resistance. Addressing the fundamental struggle of Americans to balance liberty and security in an atmosphere of racial prejudice and ideological conflict, it will be equally compelling for students of civil rights, southern history, the cold war, and American anti-Communism.

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