

PAUL from TALLBOY WALKIN' by Joshua James

PAUL

You know . . . If I had a dollar for every rich white liberal that fed me that line of leftist BULLSHIT, my name would be William H. Gates.

SPENSER

Who said I was rich?

PAUL

Those are three hundred dollar shoes you're wearing, don't try and tell me they're not. That suit is tailored, a couple grand at least, you going to sit there and tell me you don't have money? Just walking around here dressed like that is pure ignorance anyway!

SPENSER

I have a right to walk wherever I want!

PAUL

Very true, but that doesn't make it SMART! Why are you waiting for a bus, dressed like that, at this time of night?

SPENSER

I got ripped off by a cab, stuck here, my mom changed the . . . I don't have to explain myself to you!

PAUL

You're right, you don't. But I am explaining to you that your strong opinions against violence mean nothing to this young man, your life means nothing to him, YOU mean nothing to him, and if I hadn't of stepped in, your political views would have been little help for you.

SPENSER

I didn't ask you to stand up for me. I'm not asking you to fight any battle for me.

PAUL

I'm not doing for you. I'm doing it for me.

Short pause.

SPENSER

I was born poor. In this very neighborhood. So in a way, I wasn't much different than him.

PAUL

Not different, is that what you're saying?

SPENSER

That's what I'm saying.

PAUL

I want you to do something. I want you to look at him.

SPENSER

What?

PAUL

Look at him, take a good look, tell me what you see.

SPENSER

I . . . I . . . I see a kid, I look at him and I see an underprivileged kid, so?

PAUL

Would you stop with WHITE POLITICAL BULLSHIT and look at him! FUCKING LOOK AT HIM!

Short pause. Spenser looks at Axel.

PAUL

You look at him, you don't see a kid. You see black. Don't try and tell me you don't, I know it, you know it and he knows it. When you see black on the street, you don't look black in the eye, when black moves close to you on the bus, you instinctively step away, you instinctively feel for your valuables, when you see black on the street you fucking stop and you know it. It stops you and it stops him. It doesn't happen with white kids, it doesn't happen with Asian kids or Irish kids, it happens with black, black stops you. You can go to as many rallies and political meetings and join the NAACP all you want, but as long as black stops you and him you're not getting anywhere fast. You may have grown up in the neighborhood, you may have had some hard knocks, but you're not like him. Not even close. You're white and you got out. He's not and he didn't.

SPENSER

So how are you different?

PAUL

I got out.