

# AM I WHITE

by Adrienne Dawes

EXCERPT 2 – January 2013  
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## **CAST**

**3F, 2M**

WESLEY CONNOR: 32 m, Biracial (passes as White), member of White Order of Thule / also Tragic Mulatto

POLLY JAMES: 18 f, White, member of White Order of Thule

JUSTINE RAMOS: 30s f, Biracial (could pass as Black), prison guard/ also Tragic Mulatta

JADE HENNING: 60s f, White, Wesley's mother

RYAN CAHILL: 20s m, White, Wesley's cell mate, member of Aryan Brotherhood/also Interlocutor

TELEVISION ANNOUNCER: pre-recorded male voice/ also PRISON LOUDSPEAKER

## **SETTING**

Pre-trial detainment at Plymouth County Correctional Facility, Plymouth MA. Summer 2001 – Fall 2012.

## **CONTEXT**

When Wesley Connor's mixed-race heritage is revealed, he attempts suicide in his prison cell. Prison guard Justine Ramos (who identifies as "Mexi-Black") files an incident report, while Wesley's mother Jade makes her first visit to the medical ward.

SCENE FIVE: REMEMBER

Long beat of silence.

JUSTINE (O.S.)

Inmate found lying in his own blood.

Spotlight on Justine as she slowly raises the red curtains over Wesley's cell, her hands in white medical gloves.

She reveals an empty cell, then quickly drops the curtains.

Justine carefully disposes of her gloves. She fills out an incident report at her desk.

JUSTINE

Inmate inflicted several significant lacerations to the neck. Blood on the walls.

Beat. Justine is shaken. She takes a second to compose herself.

JUSTINE

Blood on the walls, toilet, bunk, and laundry. Decontamination performed according to safety protocol. No blood exposure during clean up. Recorded inventory of items discarded.

She stops.

JADE (O.S.)

I brought you a book.

Lights rise on Jade seated in a chair, arms crossed tightly. She is behind Plexiglas.

JADE

They said . . . they said it was okay to. Found it tucked away with some of your things back home.

She holds out a tattered copy of The Autobiography of Malcolm X.

A photograph falls to the ground from Jade's hands.

Projection: Wesley as a young child. He wears a Martin Luther King, Jr T-shirt emblazoned with the word "Remember." His hair is a light-brown afro, a golden halo of curls. He looks right into camera and smiles.

POLLY (O.S.)  
(whispering underneath)

*bumble-bee*  
*casco*  
*chinig*  
*half-caste*  
*halfrican*  
*haafo*  
*half-breed*  
*hapa*  
*jewxican*  
*jigger*

Lights rise on Wesley in his hospital bed. He's dressed in a paper gown, his neck swaddled in white bandages.

JUSTINE

Mis tías me dijeron, "No puedes ser una mexicana (verdadera) si no hablas español." You can't be Mexican if you can't speak Spanish. I made sure I learned.

Justine unties her hair. Thick curls fall to her shoulders.

POLLY (O.S.)  
(chanting louder)

*mexicoon*  
*mestizo*  
*mexijew*  
*metisse*  
*morena*  
*mulatto*  
*mutt*

JADE

I used to call you my golden boy. Golden skin, golden hair, little gold flecks in your eyes.

Wesley opens his eyes.

POLLY (O.S.)

*milano*  
*niggerican*  
*ninky*  
*octaroon*  
*oreo*  
*pinky*  
*quadroon*

JUSTINE

My uncles said, "You're too dark, girl. Everyone thinks you're Black. Why you want to be anything else? Ain't you got your pride?"

WESLEY

(hoarsely)

"Tell them you're the best . . . of both worlds." I come home crying, ripped jeans, a cut of blood above each knee.

Justine takes a sip of whiskey from a flask hidden in her desk.

JUSTINE

"Resistir una cosa nos lleva a lo contrario de lo que queremos. Fuerza produce una fuerza contraria."

WESLEY

Neighborhood kids threw me down, yelled, "Half-breed - -"

(a painful smile)

Next time I see them, my dad's hunting knife is tucked into my tackle box. I warn, "I'm the best of both worlds."

POLLY (O.S.)

(taunting louder)

*rainbow*  
*swirlie*  
*spetro*  
*spew*  
*spickaboo*  
*spigger*  
*spink*  
*trigueña*  
*yellow*  
*zambo*  
*zebra*

JUSTINE

"Resisting a thing brings up the opposite of what we want. Force brings about counter-force." I find myself searching . . . ojos azules que encontrarán a los míos . . .

WESLEY

"Half-breed." Knife is out and I'm running after him, screaming at the top of my lungs. "I'll kill you." I'll kill you.

JUSTINE

Blue eyes that will meet mine.

Lights fade on Justine.

A wash of bright light. Wesley weakly shifts in his hospital bed. He sees Jade behind Plexiglas.

WESLEY

Failed experiment.

JADE

Experiment's not over yet. Thank God.

(beat)

Catherine sends her love - -

WESLEY

(scowls)

Catherine?

He clicks the Demerol drip to administer more medication.

JADE

She's paying for your lawyer, so whatever you feel about - -

WESLEY

Your new girlfriend? I don't feel anything Mom. Nothing.

He clicks again.

JADE

Hey. Easy with that - -

WESLEY

Only thing keeping me alive.

JADE

I'm just saying take it easy - -

WESLEY

Been sober five years. The Order requires absolute discipline - -

JADE

The Order? You aren't still - - !?!

WESLEY

(snaps)

Just because biological defect prevents me from - -

JADE

Biological defect, Wesley?!

(sighs)

You wanna blame me and your father for your delusional fantasies - - ?

WESLEY

If you'd read the shit I sent you, Yockey says it, "History uses the human material at hand without questioning its antecedent" - -

JADE

Horseshit Wesley. It's all horseshit. You know what you are.

WESLEY

(snarls)

"Best of both worlds?" Then how do you explain it?

JADE

Dr. Fry had it when you were thirteen. Anti-social personality disorder - -

WESLEY

Another inherited biological defect.

Jade stands, shaking her head.

WESLEY

Yes. What a nice idea for you to visit. Truly. Should give you lots of new material for your interviews.

JADE

(quietly)

I gave you everything Wes. Everything I had. And I'd do it all again if I thought I could help you.

WESLEY

Help me. Yeah. Locked me up when I was ten, clearly that helped - -

JADE

We weren't safe Wes. I had to protect everyone in that house. Not just you.

Wesley scoffs.

JADE

I didn't know what else to do. It was impossible to know what would set you off.

WESLEY

Maybe it was living out someone else's utopian ideal.

JADE

Utopian? You don't remember your grandparents. You don't know what your father and I went through to be together - -

WESLEY

No but you made that choice. I've never had a say. Just had to keep taking the hits, day after day. And what was the fucking point anyway? You left Dad to be with a White woman - -

JADE

(angrily)

That's not how I . . . I don't see it that way Wes. I fell out of love - -

WESLEY

Then you "fell out of love" with Julia. Big. Fucking. Deal - it meant to you.

Jade turns to exit.

WESLEY

At least I hold onto my "delusional fantasies" longer than a few years! I make a REAL commitment!

Jade stops. She walks back to the edge of the Plexiglas boundary and glares at Wesley.

JADE

You weren't a social experiment or political statement. Your father and I were in love. That's all. That's it. We were in love.

(pause)

I wish you could feel that for someone.

Jade exits. Wesley clicks for more medication. Click. Click. Click-click-click-click. A wash of bright white light.

SCENE SIX: DREAM

Flashback.

The ceiling above Wesley rips open. He looks up and a blue eye stares back at him.

WESLEY

Polly?

Polly tears her way down from the ceiling and stands at the foot of his hospital bed.

POLLY

In my dream, I'm Freya. Goddess of the North. Ruler of the heavenly afterlife. Receiver of slain warriors that died valiantly in battle.

She crouches down, pulling the bed sheet slowly from his body.

POLLY

You are in the middle of a dark storm, waves crashing, wind whipping against your tiny vessel - -

WESLEY

(scoffs, playfully)

Tiny? My vessel?

POLLY

Shut up. Your ship rocks back and forth - -

She crawls on top of him, begins to unwrap his bandages. He has stitches underneath, tiny black tracks across his neck.

WESLEY

What next?

He unbuttons her shirt, a huge black swastika tattoo is inked on her lower back.

POLLY

I take your hand and lead you into the dark waves. We disappear.

Polly tears at his hospital gown.

WESLEY

Nice dream.

POLLY

Prophecy. Bring us to victory and then . . . we'll build a tiny army.

WESLEY

(frowns)

A what?

POLLY

(smiles)

What's the point of fighting for an Aryan future if we aren't going to populate it a little?

(off his look)

I know, I know. You want to go guns out, blazing. Big messy death. But if you survive . . . and I survive . . .

She leans in for a kiss.

WESLEY

(somberly)

It would be wrong for me. Fatherhood, it's . . . it's not for me.

Polly sits up.

POLLY

Not for you, with me?

WESLEY

No, that's not - -

POLLY

Because of your wife . . . ?

WESLEY

Polly. I told you. She has nothing to do with this. And I wouldn't even entertain these impulses towards you - -

POLLY

Impulses? That what this is?

WESLEY

No, I - -

(redirects)

I look at you. And you're beautiful. And smart. Your heart is in this, no fear, total submission to the Higher Cause. And I figure, if these are my last days on this earth, in this realm, then why not exist in harmony with a thing of perfect beauty.

POLLY

So you think I'm pretty?

WESLEY

I said smart too.

POLLY

(smiles)

I am smart.

She kisses him. Wesley's hands reach around to her back and become stained with the ink from her tattoo. Wesley notices his black hands and stops.

POLLY

What? What is it?

Wesley gets out of bed, ripping his IV tube from his hands as he pulls them forward to stare at them.

Lights drop on Polly. When Wesley turns back, she's disappeared.

He tries to stand on the edge of the bed. Sound of buzzer.

PRISON LOUDSPEAKER (O.S.)

(static)

Paging Medical. Hospital Room 5A.

Justine enters and quickly pulls him down, securing him to the bed with handcuffs.

WESLEY  
(disoriented)

Polly . . .

JUSTINE  
(yells)

I need a nurse in here! He's ripped out his IV.

Wesley waves a bloody hand at her, weakly.

WESLEY  
Just let me . . . bleed here.  
(exasperated sigh)  
What does it . . . matter? Keeping me alive for what?

JUSTINE  
Ssssh. Nurse is almost here.

WESLEY  
I suppose you feel . . . solidarity? Hmm. Two mutts. Stuck here, together.

JUSTINE  
(sternly)  
I don't feel anything for you.

WESLEY  
Mmmhmm. You're just like me. We're the same.

JUSTINE  
(scoffs)  
Except I don't hate myself. Or my family. I'm not ashamed of what I am.

WESLEY  
Ashamed of what you want.

Justine glares at him.

WESLEY  
(softly)  
Don't want to spar, Pig?

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**END OF SCRIPT EXCERPT**

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