



**The Hoarse Whisperer**

@HoarseWhisperer

Thread Reader App

8 tweets - 21 Jan 2019

[HoarseWhisperer/status/1087473436098772992](https://twitter.com/HoarseWhisperer/status/1087473436098772992)

The eroding conviction among white liberals that the Covington boys displayed racial animus has been a reminder of how difficult it is for many of us white people to really see the behaviors of bigotry even when we see them.

1/

We don't recognize intrusions of personal space.

We don't hear the subtext of language or tone.

We don't see in a single facial expression things that have been seen a million times.

We don't see the disrespect of a frozen stare - as if a teen and an adult are peers.

2/

No, instead, we look for some incredibly overt and specific statement or act of bigotry which loudly declares itself.

If bigotry was not said aloud from a narrow dictionary, we deny it was said at all - even when it was said in a million small ways.

3/

Underlying this is the singular reality that we, as white people, have never in our lives experienced the things we come to insist were benign or nonexistent.

We have never been the minority surrounded by 100 people unlike us chanting and mocking us.

4/

We have never been in the center of a circle with the path forward or back blocked.

We've likely never been stared down by someone telegraphing they have no intention of yielding.

We've never experienced any of these cues.

We have no aptitude for even understanding them.

5/

We view ambiguous situations through the lenses of safety and privilege.

We filter out things we've had the luxury of never seeing firsthand directed at us.

And in so doing, we ensure they will continue to exist.

6/

There is a blindness that comes with privilege.

It makes things that are obvious and familiar to others invisible to us.

It puts the subtle cues others rely on to navigate situations outside of our detection.

When we can't see though, we should at least be able to listen.

7/

It is not a failure for there to be things beyond our vision, experience and understanding.

When we cannot see the racism in a situation, as white people, we should listen long and hard to the people who can.

When we can't see, we most need to hear.

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