

PRIDE

Written By:

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Synopsis:

Chase and Thomas meet one fateful night after a Pride parade celebration on NYC's infamous L train headed back to Bushwick (Brooklyn). Due to a delay in the train, they end up having a deep conversation/introduction to each other which causes them to look within and examine their differences.

Chase: Black male, Mid 30's.

Thomas: White male, Mid 30's

Train Operator: Voice Over

Setting:

2019 NYC Pride weekend. 3 am, L train, Two people in the car, CHASE (Black), THOMAS (White). Both Gay, THOMAS is dressed in lots of rainbow attire and glitter, CHASE is in a red Tank top, black jeans, and his nails are painted in rainbow colors. They are sitting across from each other. Both slightly tipsy from festivities, the train is trickling along slowly

TRAIN OPERATOR:

Attention passengers, we are being held momentarily due to signal problems ahead. We apologize for the inconvenience, we hope to be moving shortly.

THOMAS:

Damn it!

CHASE:

I know right ...

THOMAS:

It's bad enough the damn train is running every 20 mins!!

CHASE:

Yeah .. and the whole point of that was to fix shit like this ...

THOMAS:

EXACTLY

They both chuckle, after a beat, THOMAS looks over to CHASE who is now looking at his phone

THOMAS:

Happy Pride!!!

CHASE:

(not looking up from his phone) Yeah ... same to you

THOMAS:

Did you go to the parade?

CHASE:

(still not looking up from his phone) Nawl ... I'm good on all of that ...

THOMAS:

OH, ...I'm so sorry ... I saw your nail polish and assumed you were ...

CHASE:

(looks up from phone) Gay? Yeah, I am ... Don't apologize ... Just the parade isn't really .. you know ... "for me", so I'm good on all of that ... *(looks back down at phone)*

THOMAS:

HUH? ... wait ... I'm confused, I'm talking about the PRIDE parade...

CHASE:

(not looking up from his phone) Right ...

THOMAS:

As in the *GAY PRIDE* Parade ...

CHASE:

(not looking up from his phone) mmm hmmm ...

THOMAS:

And you're gay???

CHASE:

(looks up from phone, annoyed) Yes ... *(looks back down to phone)*

THOMAS confused and leans back in his seat, looks off to think, *CHASE*, Still playing with his phone, glances up, notices *THOMAS*'s confused expression, chuckles and returns to his phone.

THOMAS:

Hey ... I'm sorry to bother you, but I just don't understand what you mean. How is the PRIDE parade, not for you and you just said you are *GAY*?

CHASE:

(still playing with his phone and not looking up) because it's not, it never was, so like I said, I'm good on all of that.

THOMAS:

What?!?!?

CHASE:

(puts phone down, clearly aggravated) Look, you wouldn't get it ...

THOMAS:

Try me!!

CHASE:

(sighs) ... The "PRIDE" parade is a celebration of the WHITE GAY perspective. It was not nor has it ever been a celebration of the BLACK GAY experience. So I choose not to participate, I'd rather just kick it with my friends at a bar or something ... and even that is still littered in WHITE gay-isms, But they have good drinks specials being pride and all. SO we take advantage of that, just like everyone else does on "PRIDE" weekend

THOMAS:

Wow ... I .. umm .. I don't know what to say to that

CHASE:

Exactly ... "Happy Pride" (*looks back to his phone*)

THOMAS:

Well, I will say that I don't agree

CHASE:

(*still looking at his phone*) You don't have to agree, truth is truth ...

THOMAS:

Yeah, but what you said isn't the truth and honestly, I find it a bit problematic

CHASE:

(*looking up from his phone*) YOU find it Problematic?!?!?!?

THOMAS:

Yeah, If I said something like that to you, wouldn't you find it problematic ??

CHASE:

But everything a white gay says is "problematic" to me, so I guess we're even for today (*looks back to his phone*)

THOMAS:

WOW

CHASE:

FUCK

THOMAS:

EXCUSE ME?!?!

CHASE:

No ... sorry that wasn't towards you ... I was killing this game and my phone just died.

THOMAS:

Oh ...

(Awkward Silence)

CHASE:

Listen, I wasn't trying to offend you with what I said. I told you, you wouldn't understand... You're white .. so it will never click to you.

THOMAS:

What does being white have to do with anything??

CHASE:

It has everything to do with EVERYTHING. The entire appeal of pride caters to the white gay audience. The ads, the music, the clothes ... everything. So yeah you may not think its the truth but .. it is. Sorry

THOMAS:

But the whole point of pride is to be proud of who you are, no matter what color or culture you are. It's a celebration for everyone

CHASE:

Yeah, keep telling yourself that

THOMAS:

Do you even know how pride started?

CHASE:

Of course, Stonewall riots, Marsha P. Johnson .. Blah blah blah ... etc, etc

THOMAS:

Ok so, then where do you come off with saying PRIDE is only for white gays?

CHASE:

Alright let me clarify, it may have started as a protest for all, but what it has turned into is a money making big machine for white gay culture, who, in fact, have now taken 85% of their whole vernacular from the black community, while at the same time still looking down on us. That is until we do something else that they think is going to be profitable. Pride ads feature mostly white males, White Gay couples, or the occasion interracial couple. There are never really any representations of Black Couples and if they are, they have been styled to fit the white male gaze.

THOMAS:

I'm sorry, but "White Male gaze" ?? That's a strong generalization, you don't know what I like

CHASE:

Oh come on man, if you saw an ad, that features two black men with, I don't know ... say Locs's, or dressed a certain type of way, you wouldn't look twice, if you even noticed it at all

THOMAS:

Are you kidding me? Yes, I would !! I think that's beautiful

CHASE:

Oh, so you're one of "Those" ...

THOMAS:

Excuse me ?? What is that suppose to mean

CHASE:

We aren't your fantasy !!

THOMAS:

WOW hold on for a second, You don't even know me!! That's just really disrespectful and uncalled for.

CHASE:

No disrespect intended, I'm just calling it like I see it

THOMAS:

Oh really?? Well, do tell, please ... What exactly is it that you see ?

CHASE:

(Laughs) I'm not doing this with you right now

THOMAS:

No please, don't get shy with words now ... go on tell me what you see, I'm just dying to know

CHASE:

(Leans forward) ok then, you know what I see? I see an entitled white boy, dressed in all his rainbows and shit, who more than likely grew up with his "well to do" family, full of privilege and support, with his uppity NYU degree, probably in some bull shit like "Art History", who more than likely had everything handed to him on a silver platter, trying to tell a black man that somehow this white ass capitalist celebration is for him too.

THOMAS:

Hmph... well, you got one thing right ... Yes, I am white. But you don't know shit about me, and for you to sit here and judge me, based on some some convoluted characature about what a Gay white man is, is utter bull shit. For the record, actually ... I grew up extremely poor, Both my parents died when I was 6, and I was raised by my older sister in the projects of East New York . I went to a predominately black school and every day was fucking torture, and then just as I thought it was all finally coming to an end, my sister died in a car accident a week after graduation. And no, I did not go to NYU ... I couldn't afford it, I went to community college and took up Social Work, which I paid for MYSELF. *And THAT* is when I finally made friends, and wasn't scared to be who I am. My first time at a PRIDE celebration, I cried like a fucking baby because, for the first time in my life, I felt like the world wasn't against me. I finally felt like I belonged to something greater than me. So for you to sit there and pass all this judgment, makes me wonder who the real "Problematic" one is, as it's very clear you have no idea what pride means to many people, white, black or whatever!

CHASE:

Damn man ... fuck ... I ... uhhh... shit ... I'm sorry to hear about your family and all that you went through. Shit ... I'm sorry man ... look, I just get a little tense around this time of year and sometimes I can be a dick about it, I'm sorry ... What's your name?

THOMAS:

(Hesitant) Thomas ... Your's?

CHASE:

Chase Nice to meet you.

(Extends hand ... THOMAS looks at it, looks at CHASE and then shakes it)

Listen, my first "Pride" wasn't so great, and ever since then I just kinda stay away from it ... I mean I do love "Black Gay Pride" ... but that's differnt and as I said, the drinks are cheaper, so...

THOMAS:

Wait ... back up ... "Black Gay Pride" ... what do you mean?

CHASE:

Oh... yeah ... "Black Gay Pride" ... *(laughs)* ... a Pride just for us ...

THOMAS:

You're Serious ???

CHASE:

Yeah!! It's usually the 4th of July weekend here but in some other states, it's ..

THOMAS:

OTHER STATES??? This happens all over????

CHASE:

(laughs) Yeah man ... it happens everywhere ... The weekends are always different tho, like, I think ATL is usually MLK weekend .. but yeah ...

THOMAS:

But that doesn't make any sense?? That defeats the whole purpose of Pride??? And let's just be real ... If there was a "White Gay Pride"

(CHASE gives a look to speak)

AND NOT THE WAY YOU SUGGEST ... but like an advertised "White Gay Pride" there would be a total uproar! This doesn't make any sense ...

CHASE:

I tried to tell you, "Pride", even if it means alot to you, isn't the same for everyone. Look, I was 19 when I went to my first pride, I had just come out and honestly, I was mad hyped about it. A group of college friends and I went, but it turned out to be a whole bunch of White drunk older men, being way too aggressive and disrespectful. Trying to Grab our dicks and saying dumb shit like "let me get that Big Black Cock" or just touching us, in general without premission and shit. I swear to you, every few minutes, it seemed, we were telling people to back the fuck off. It was not fun, and I did not feel celebrated AT ALL... I felt like a product and mind you this is the PG version of the shit that went down that day. After like the 12th Guy grabbed my dick, I was over it...I snapped and then the mutha fucka had the nerve to tell me to "chill" like I was doing something wrong. Before I knew it... There was a swarm of people around and I was made to look like I was causing a scene. I looked at my boy and told him "we need to get the fuck out of here, cause we gonna end up on the news or some shit" and we left. I didn't go to Pride for years after that .. until my ex took me to a "Black Pride", and it was just... different, I had so much fun!! Yeah, people were doing too much, at times, but it wasn't the same energy at all. There was respect there. And besides, our cultures are just so different in how we celebrate things, so overall I just had a better time. Saying that to say, THAT's when I actually felt proud ..you know ? So Yeah man ... I'm sorry I came at you like I did earlier. I didn't mean any harm .. I just know the other side of it, and it's not all "rainbows and glitter", no pun intended.

THOMAS:

DAMN!!! That's fucked up! Shit ... I can't even imagine... Why didn't you say something to the police ???

CHASE:

Really?? You really think that a bunch of Young BLACK gay men, can go to the police during PRIDE, complain about being groped and they are gonna actually do something about it? *Really????*

THOMAS:

FUCK... I mean for what it's worth tho, they probably wouldn't listen to me either ... It's a Gay thing... not a color thing...

CHASE:

It most definitely is a color thing. Trust me, they would be more inclined to help a white boy than a black one ... I can tell you that much

TRAIN OPERATOR:

We are still waiting on the signal ahead, we plan to be moving shortly, we apologize for any inconvenience.

(both look at each other and laugh, there is a beat, THOMAS break the silence)

THOMAS:

Can I ask you a question?

CHASE:

Shoot ...

THOMAS:

You say there aren't any black people in advertisements and stuff like that, but what about RuPaul, and all the Black Drag queens that are literally everywhere now, and POSE, Billy Porter. I mean that's like the majority of main gay media right now.

CHASE:

I knew you were going to ask me this. Honestly, the only reason Black Gay culture is even mentioned now in the "Pride extravaganzas" is because it has been commercialized by the likes of RuPaul, who, in my personal opinion, certainly caters to the White male demographic at large. And while I respect and appreciate POSE and all that, I still think it's a bit too unrealistic ... considering

THOMAS:

Interesting

CHASE:

What?

THOMAS:

Oh, nothing, it's just that I didn't think of it that way. I guess, now that I think of it, you might have a point... but isn't POSE written by Black Trans writers and directors ???

CHASE:

It is???

THOMAS:

Yeah!! One of the writers, I think her name is Janet Mock, has been pretty vocal about that ...

CHASE:

Hmmm, didn't know that ... Don't get me wrong, I watch the show and like it even, just shit is mad bubble gum, sometimes. But ok, cool...

THOMAS:

It is weird you know, I guess because of the way I grew up ... I just don't see things all the same way, I don't really see race the same way others do

CHASE:

BULL SHIT !!!!! (*laughs*)

THOMAS:

(*laughs*) WHAT????

CHASE:

Oh, come on man... I mean, it's not every day you hear about a white kid growing up in the projects, who, for lack of better phrases, was a token in school (*laughs*) You can't tell me you don't see race the same way... in fact, with your perspective, you prob see race even in your food

THOMAS:

Ahhh, well yeah, I mean, of course, I see race, but It, not the first thing I pay attention to. Believe it or not, I didn't really start hanging around White People that much until I got to college. Even then it was weird for me, cause I didn't quite fit in with them either. So I kinda just made friends with whoever would talk to me... and met all different kinds of people from all different kinds of backgrounds

CHASE:

A white boy, who didn't fit in with other white boys ... that's one for the books...

THOMAS:

God, you make it sound like, I'm some case study or something ...

CHASE:

Well ... from my perspective you are ...

THOMAS:

I guess

CHASE:

(Laughs) Man ... Look, If you want to know the truth, I went to a predominately white school, and shit was not easy on me, either. Mostly kept to myself...

THOMAS:

Wow .. look at us .. Yin and Yang ... *(laughs at his own joke)*

CHASE:

ANYWAY... I had a few friends, but there was always something missing... There was never a moment when I didn't see or feel the difference. Rather it was the way I spoke, walked or the things I liked to do for fun . It was just very clear to me that I was Black in a White world. But what always puzzled me, was how everyone else had permission to be "Black" except for me. I watched those kids dress like us, talk like us, bump our music, But if I celebrated my culture with pride like that ... It was threatening. I remember the first time it really hit me, I was 16 ... just got my first car ...

THOMAS:

CAR ... ??? DRIVING ... at 16 !!!

CHASE:

Oh.. yeah ... I forget you New Yorkers don't know anything about that life ...

THOMAS:

Wait... where are you from?

CHASE:

Cleveland, OH

THOMAS:

Ahhhh ...

CHASE:

But yeah ... I had just got my first car and I was listening to 50 Cent. At the time, "In Da Club" had just come out and I was feeling myself. So, I'm playing my music real loud, pulled up in the school parking lot, everybody looking at me, *I felt like I was the MAN!!!* I get out of my car, and I don't even make it to the front door of school, when I'm met by the vice principal, who tells me to follow her to her office... do you know I got In-school suspension for what they called "Severely disrupting the learning atmosphere" ... Mind you, not a single one of the white boys, who had done the exact same thing, ever got so much as a warning for that shit. They'd pull up blasting, 50, Eminem, Jay Z .. all of that, Park, go in the building, act a fool in class all day, in the halls, and leave blasting music the same way they came in ... and not a single word. And here I was, an honor student, top 10 percent of my class, never once causing any problems, and getting in-school suspension on my first so-called "offense" for playing my music too loud BEFORE SCHOOL EVEN STARTED. That was the moment I realized it was different for me and was always going to be different for me. No matter how hard I worked, no matter how much I offered to this world ... I was black. And while everyone else got to be proud of that ... I couldn't be and could be punished for it even ..

THOMAS:

Whoa ... that's wild... what did your parents say??

CHASE:

Oh they were pissed, but not at the school... at me. They said I should have known better and that we aren't "Those kinds of Black people". Which is a whole other thing...but whatever, I wasn't allowed to drive to school for 2 weeks after that ... and when I did start driving again... I just didn't even bother putting on music at all... Kinda how I learned to just enjoy silence, sometimes ...

THOMAS:

Oh .. wow ... I'm sorry to hear that ... and sorry to kill the silence ... I guess i've been a bit bothersome

CHASE:

Aawww nawl. You're cool ... I mean, it one thing to be silent while driving your car, it's a whole other thing sitting in a silent train stalled between stations, after a few drinks (*Laughs*).. Shit is pure anxiety ... So, thanks actually

THOMAS:

(*Pause*) ... I'm sorry, but I have to ask, what did your parents mean by "not those kinds of Black People" ??

CHASE looks to THOMAS, with reserve ... contemplates .. then speaks, cautiously

CHASE:

Being Black in this country means two things ... You're either a part of the problem, or you're a part of the solution. And both of those things are like two magnets working against each other. In order to be taken seriously, you "present" a presentation that is supposed to be digestible, only to be asked in return for the brilliance of our innate culture, just as it is. That very thing that is supposed to be "indigestible". Our ideas, our input, our contribution to science, art, psychology, agriculture, are all celebrated and revered... that is until WE take pride in it and celebrate it. Then it's questionable, disrupting, and a threat to society. This system has caused a lot of hurt in our people, and in relation, Hurt people, hurt people .. and thus generations of Black people, have mistakenly crushed the pride of blackness in our own homes. We grow up being told to conform, Then watch as they take what we create, make it standard, then tell us, it isn't standard for us. So we create again, then they take ... And the cycle continues. I understand what my parents meant, and I'm certain they thought they were doing something good, but in reality all they did was teach me my culture, my people ... was not something to be proud of. I had to learn on my own what it meant to be unapologetically Black. I had to learn, on my own that Black people are in fact pure brilliance, Magic even. With what we have been able to do, with all the odds against us in this society is just beyond words. That's why I love "Black Gay Pride" so much. I see the beauty of my people, Black ... Gay ... Free Unapologetic and PROUD, in all shades, presentations, and expressions. Not a fetish, Or objection of admiration... I could just be and breathe. My Blackness wasn't even a consideration. It was just ...just... peace.

TRAIN OPERATOR:

Thank you for your Patience... Signal has been cleared ahead ... Dekalb Ave is the next stop

CHASE and THOMAS sit in silence as "Train sounds" past for 30 seconds, then start to slow

THIS IS DEKALB AVE

THOMAS:

This is my stop ... umm ... Thanks ... this was really eye opening

CHASE:

Yeah Same here

Sounds of train door opening

TRAIN OPERATOR:

This is Dekalb Ave, stand clear of the closing doors

THOMAS:

We should keep in touch ... My instagram is “TommyTuTu22” ... Follow me, please ?

CHASE:

Yeah ... for sure ... I'll add you!!

THOMAS:

Cool ... well ... I'll see ya ...

CHASE:

Yeah .. see ya ... OH ... and Happy Pride

THOMAS:

(shocked) Happy Pride!!!!

THOMAS Exits ... Train door sounds and doors close, CHASE is left alone, ... sits in silence for a beat, then pulls out his phone

CHASE:

FUCK... *(realizes phone is dead)* What did he say it was ... TommyTu...

(BLACK OUT)

End

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