

“The Hate U Give”

By Helen Lutz

Civility: *noun*- 1) formal politeness and courtesy in behavior or speech; 2) polite remarks used in formal conversation

It’s unfortunate that we can no longer go to church, open our mail, turn on a television/radio (especially with all the political ads running), pick up a newspaper or even go out to dinner (locally, think about the young man at Whataburger) without being bombarded by hateful speech or violence. I grew up in a household where my parents said that the two topics not to be discussed in our home were politics and religion. Religion became the hot topic just after all the changes involved with Vatican II. Politics reared its ugly head when I was in college and supported Nixon – my mother worked for a union for 46 years and was a life-long Democrat. We agreed to disagree.



Over the years our society has done a pretty good job at agreeing to disagree and working together to resolve our differences. ‘RESIST’ was never an option. We’ve come a long way in accepting the chastised Vietnam vets and in the pursuit of Civil Rights. Our technology now delivers mixed blessings. When I was little if you saw a photo in the newspaper or on a magazine cover, you knew it was a true and honest depiction. With the advent of computers, we can no longer believe our eyes. Everyone is connected by cell phone technology – cell phones with really good cameras. Our photos/videos can be uploaded to the web in a Hart Beat (no pun intended, just self-serving). Unfortunately, a few seconds of video rarely tells both sides of the story, it just serves to stir things up. And what about the Community Organizers ... I used to notice license plates from out of state knowing that they were either tourists or members of the military – now I wonder if they belong to ‘organizers’ just trying to start trouble in our town.

My soapbox leads me to tell you about a movie that is extremely well done and a story well told in “The Hate U Give.” Just in case you don’t notice – the title makes the acronym THUG. It’s the story of a young lady of color, Starr Carter (Amendla Stenburg). Starr comes from the wrong side of the tracks living in the poor neighborhood of Garden Heights. Starr’s mother, Lisa Carter (Regina Hall) wants the best for her children and sees to it that they attend a private, mostly white, school in a prestigious neighborhood.

Starr walks a difficult line between the two worlds. She readily admits that the local public high school is where you go to get jumped, high or pregnant. When Starr walks into her fancy high school, she takes on persona Starr 2. She ‘blends’ in nicely even having a white boyfriend Chris (A. J. Apa). Like fingernails on a chalk board, Starr has to stay strong when her fancy white friends do their best to be cool when spouting black slang.

Starr’s is a difficult world which is turned upside down when she attends a party in her neighborhood. She meets a childhood friend Kahlil (Algee Smith) who whisks her away when the party turns violent. While taking Starr home the two are pulled over by police. Starr’s father, Mav Carter (Russell Hornsby), has taught Starr to always do exactly as instructed when questioned by police and to keep her hands in clear sight at all times. Kahlil is not so lucky as he questions the police as to why they were stopped and once out of the car fails to keep his hands on the roof while the officer runs his license. Reaching into the car to grab a hair brush turns fatal.

Director George Tillman, Jr. takes us on an eye-opening adventure into both sides of one of our current issues. “The Hate U Give” never gets preachy as we enter Starr’s world showing that both sides have merit and need work. On a scale of one to four Hart Beats I give “The Hate U Give” ... THREE STARS. It’s time for everyone to take a deep breath and re-read the definition of CIVILITY and politely agree to disagree.