



The Good Black

- I. Background
 - a. Reconstruction Era Challenges
 - i. How to integrate the South back into the union
 - ii. How to integrate newly freed slaves into the political and economic system
 - iii. Seemed like those were mutually exclusive
 - iv. Amendments
 - 1. Thirteen. End slavery
 - 2. Fourteen. Try to end legal discrimination
 - 3. Fifteen. End racial discrimination in voting.
 - v. Civil Rights Act. Meant to end discrimination in private economic affairs
 - vi. Southern Whites tried to re-enslave blacks
 - 1. Sharecropping / tenant farming
 - 2. "Debt Peonage" – blacks had to go in debt to even get started
 - 3. Those who worked against the system were handled through terrorizing them (KKK, et cetera)
 - vii. Supreme Court held that Civil Rights Acts were unconstitutional: can't regulate private economic transactions.
 - viii. Plessy v. Ferguson: Segregation is *not* unconstitutional assuming that the separate facilities are actually equal
 - b. World War II
 - i. Fighting against fascism – against the idea of racial supremacy
 - ii. Fought with segregated units
 - 1. Most blacks were relegated to non-combat positions.
 - 2. Cooked, hauled things, drove trucks
 - 3. Navy: Could not serve except as steward / cook
 - 4. Believed it offensive to have blacks fighting since they weren't qualified and it would be insulting to whites
 - iii. Begin to see civil rights movement
 - 1. Started in courts
 - 2. Use federal courts to gain status
 - 3. Knew legislation wouldn't get through
 - iv. Kennedy issues executive order to get federal agencies to take affirmative action to reduce segregation
 - v. Johnson gets Civil Rights Act through saying businesses open to the public can't discriminate
 - vi. Need to gain access to economic structure, and just laws won't accomplish that.
 - c. Affirmative Action
 - i. Have to overlook some of the usual indicators in order to get blacks into the elite schools, elite jobs.
 - ii. Court says: cannot have quotas, but *can* treat race as a "plus" factor.
 - iii. Businesses are getting sued where the percentage of blacks is "wrong" – companies are encouraged to get the numbers right anyway
- II. The Book
 - a. Background
 - i. From Harlem, father in-and-out of his life
 - ii. Brought up on King's vision of multicultural America – play by the rules and you'll be fine.
 - iii. Person first, American second, Black Man last.
 - iv. From housing projects
 - v. Star in high school
 - b. Harvard
 - i. Avoided all-black groups
 - ii. Felt very insecure about being at school with such accomplished people.

- iii. Goes into the Navy to set himself apart
- iv. Wants to excel wherever he is. If he feels he's not in the situation to which he's entitled, he bails out.

c. Law Firms

- i. Had reasonable expectation that he'd show up, work hard for a few years (about seven), and make partner
- ii. Law firms had become *businesses* though.
- iii. Hire lots of associates to do the work, and generate billables.
- iv. Can't all make partner!