

THE WHITE CARD

CONTENT GUIDANCE

Recommended age 14+

The White Card is the UK and European premiere of Claudia Rankine's first published play, written in 2017 during an increasingly racially divided America and before the murder of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter protests rippled across the globe. It poses the question: can society progress when whiteness remains invisible?

In the play, a wealthy, privileged white couple invite a talented Black artist to dinner. Tensions run high and a heated debate uncovers some uncomfortable truths that can't be ignored about white privilege, cultural appropriation and representation. *The White Card* invites us to all to play our part in the debate.

This show contains some sensitive content including topics that cover racism, racial injustice, violence, brutality and murder, plus some strong language.

If you would like to read more about any of these specific topics please see below for details.

Racial language

Themes of racism and racial injustice run throughout the play. Derogatory descriptions of Black women are repeated, for example Charles says a Russian tennis opponent described the Williams sisters as “*brothers*”, and Virginia relays that First Lady Michelle Obama was described by a government official as “*an ape in high heels*”.

Violence, death and brutality

There are several references to violence and brutality against African Americans, the constant fear of brutality (“*Knowing you could be killed simply for being black*”), and graphic descriptions of injuries.

There are descriptions of the deaths of Michael Stewart (“*who was beaten into a coma by police. He died.*”); Emmett Till (“*A fourteen-year-old black kid – murdered for whistling at a white woman.*”); Michael Brown (Virginia: “*It’s Michael Brown’s autopsy report!*” Charles: “*to see exactly where and how many bullets entered the body of this man...*”); and of the Charleston mass shooting where nine African Americans were murdered during their Bible Study class (Charlotte: “*I’m staging the aftermath of the Charleston crime shootings*” Eric: “*when Roof murdered 9 people in Bible study no images were released to the public.*” Charlotte: “*Nine bodies bleeding to death on a tile floor*”).

The script refers to the murders of Trayvon Martin, Freddie Gray and Eric Garner and has several mentions of lynching and dead bodies. The death of a Black man (James Byrd Jr.) in 1998, a victim of lynching, is graphically detailed by Charles who says “*white supremacists dragged a black man to his death in Texas. A lynching by car. They tied him to the bumper and dragged him until his head and various other limbs detached from the trunk of his body.*”

Anti-Semitic behaviour

At the dinner table, Alex questions Eric and states “*How can you talk about beauty when we have Nazis in the White House? Didn’t you see Sebastian Gorka in his Nazi uniform at the inauguration and the pictures of the Breitbart staff as the Executive Cabinet?*” There is also a reference to the Holocaust and photographs taken of the liberated camps in a discussion between Charles and Charlotte. Charles: “*Postwar, the Allies blew up photos of the emancipated Jews and the dead bodies in the camps and forced the Germans to look at them to combat anti-Semitism.*” Charlotte: “*Did it ever occur to you it could have the opposite effect? All those bodies could have fed their anti-Semitism.*”

Strong Language

Very strong language is used sporadically throughout the play, including the words ‘fuck’, ‘fucked’ and ‘fucking’ by the characters Alex and Charles, and once by Charlotte. ‘Shit’ is used by Alex once and ‘shithole’ is used by Charlotte once.

Aggressive behaviour

There is one occasion where Charles displays aggressive behaviour towards Charlotte. He angrily shouts at Charlotte, “*you have no idea what’s in my heart!*” Then grabs Charlotte by the shoulders and shouts, “*what is it you think you know?!*”

Partial nudity

There are two occasions where characters are naked on the top half of their bodies.

Alcohol consumption

Characters drink alcohol frequently throughout the production.

Loud noises

The production includes two occasions of sudden loud noises, specifically champagne corks popping.

If you would like further information or clarification please email

info@northernstage.co.uk with The White Card Content Guidance as the subject of your email.