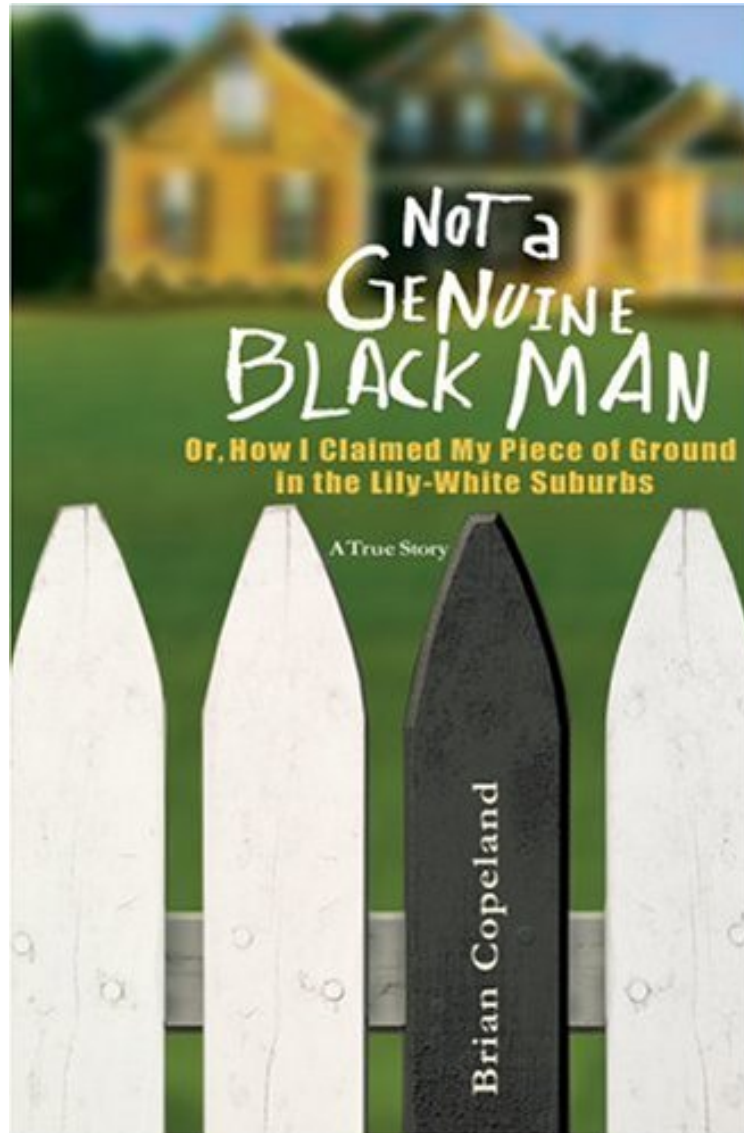


Not a Genuine Black Man: Or, How I Claimed My Piece of Ground in the Lily-White Suburbs

Brian Copeland

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Brian Copeland : Not a Genuine Black Man: Or, How I Claimed My Piece of Ground in the Lily-White Suburbs before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Not a Genuine Black Man: Or, How I Claimed My Piece of Ground in the Lily-White Suburbs:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Super poignant and often funny memoir of growing up black ...By

Brian Super poignant and often funny memoir of growing up black in an all-white SF Bay Area suburb. Brian Copeland is a generous soul. I've seen a couple of his solo dramatic presentations--"The Jewelry Box" and "The Waiting Period." Powerful and moving. This is a great book!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Unique Racial Perception

By Tom Byrnes I identified my racism several years back as well as my sexism and homophobia. I have been attempting to change all 3 in tiny steps each day since. Awareness is the first requirement for making changes, and I've noted that positive daily effort and perseverance are necessary for making any real improvement. I am convinced that "cure" of my condition is not possible, but changes in response and willingness to do the uncomfortable can help me to be a positive factor in these areas. Brian Copeland's book opened further perspectives from a victim's standpoint who is similarly aware of his biases as he tries to navigate a positive lifestyle as a minority. His insights and humor are delightful. His optimism appeals. I'd love to spend some time with him over a beer(or 2) learning more of his journey as a black man and sharing my white (WASP) Southern upbringing. We could learn a lot from each other.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great read, totally different perspective

By Stephen C. Dowd I grew up in SL, arrived there in 1973. Being white, I fortunately did not have to go through the experiences that Brian did, and I hope to Hell after reading his book that I did not contribute to his (or others like him) horrible experiences. His book opened my eyes and unveiled my (mostly) ignorance of my hometown. Since I will probably be going back there to live soon, after traveling the world for 30 years, I'm glad that he and folks like him have made it a better and more cosmopolitan place to live. I think he is incredibly brave for writing this book and sharing his experiences with the world.

Based on the longest-running one-man show in San Francisco history -- now coming to Off-Broadway -- a hilarious, poignant, and disarming memoir of growing up black in an all-white suburb

In 1972, when Brian Copeland was eight, his family moved from Oakland to San Leandro, California, hoping for a better life. At the time, San Leandro was 99.4 percent white, known nationwide as a racist enclave. This reputation was confirmed almost immediately: Brian got his first look at the inside of a cop car, for being a black kid walking to the park with a baseball bat. Brian grew up to be a successful comedian and radio talk show host, but racism reemerged as an issue -- only in reverse -- when he received an anonymous letter: "As an African American, I am disgusted every time I hear your voice because YOU are not a genuine Black man!" That letter inspired Copeland to revisit his difficult childhood, resulting in a hit one-man show that has been running for nearly two years -- which has now inspired a book. In this funny, surprising, and ultimately moving memoir, Copeland shows exactly how our surroundings make us who we are.

From Publishers Weekly This memoir offers a candid and funny response to those who question the racial authenticity of successful black men. After receiving a letter asserting that he is "not a genuine black man," Copeland "comic, actor, radio, talk show host" tries to understand the qualifications needed to earn the classification: "I can't swim. That's black. But I can't play basketball either." Raised in San Leandro, a suburb bordering Oakland, Calif., Copeland delves into his experiences as a lone black child struggling to blend in among a white majority. His mother attempted to assimilate in any way possible, converting to Catholicism and taking her family to "brunch" after church, despite resistance from whites. Copeland details a futile search for a barber who would consent to cut his hair, being searched by a security guard while trying to shop and receiving an eviction notice based purely on the color of the family's skin. Copeland's comedic talent is evident throughout the book, though he concedes that he uses laughter to keep the pain at bay and endured a time when he descended into depression. Honest and engaging, this memoir is a valuable book for anyone trying to straddle racial lines, for anyone who has ever felt out of place. (July) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

About the Author Brian Copeland is an award-winning writer, stand-up comedian, and actor. He lives in San Leandro, California, with his wife and their three children. His one-man show, also entitled *Not a Genuine Black Man*, was the longest-running solo show in San Francisco history and opened in New York City in 2006. The *San Francisco Chronicle* called it "a beautiful mix of wry humor and heartbreak, indignation and inspiration, a singular story of extreme isolation that speaks to anyone who's ever felt out of place."