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Whiteout: a Peter D Chisholm story.

WHITEOUT

It is a warm and sunny Sunday morning July 19th 1996 as 8-year-old Poohgie as his mother calls him because of his love for his favorite cartoon character Winnie The Pooh, wakes up out his bed from the sunrays beaming on his caramel complexion face. His bed is located next to the living room window, which he shares with his 13-year-old brother Darian. He can hear his mother Cassandra in the kitchen making his favorite breakfast scabbled eggs, grits, hash brown and yup he hears the toaster eject and knows it is Eggo waffles.

His mother rents a one-bedroom apartment in which he and Darian shares a twin bed in the living room. Cassandra shares her small bedroom with her daughters Yvette 17 years old, Patricia 5 years old, and Erika 2 years old. Poohgie turns over from the sunrays. He sees Darian still sleeping with his right hand in between his legs grabbing his penis. He sits up and watches the remaining television ministry. Poohgie listens carefully to the white man on the television screen talk about

how God loves everybody and if we love like Him and treat each other good we will go to heaven. Poohgie has wanted to have a serious talk with his mother for the last 2 years, but always thought his mother may not take him seriously because of his age. Somehow this morning is different. He is ready, hoping his mother is also.

Cassandra enters the living room ready to wake both him and Darian but to her surprise finds her baby boy glued to the television. Before Cassandra could say a word, Poohgie still looking at the television screen says, “Mom, do you believe that shit bout God loving us all? Watch your mouth!” Cassandra exclaims. Cassandra’s loud voice frightens Darian out of his slumber. He turns and looks at Poohgie as his mother looks at him steadily. Poohgie turns and looks his mothers’ way. “Seriously mom, God don’t loves us. He don’t love you. He don’t love this family. Why would you say that?” Cassandra asks. “Mom look at this man.” Poohgie points to the television screen. “Look at him mom. Put a police uniform on him and he looks just like the fuck who killed dad and Junior right in front of us.”

Cassandra starts to cry. “God don’t love us. He didn’t love dad and Junior. He took them away from us. How can He love me? How can He love you mom how huh?” Darian sits up and shouts at Poohgie. “Shut up dick shut up!” Poohgie startled quickly turns towards Darian and gives him the finger. “Anthony Maurice Blackwell, what has gotten into you?” Cassandra says in a voice low and slow. “It’s not what has gotten into me mom, it’s what I need to get out.” Cassandra leaves the living room. “I thought we were ready mom. I thought we were ready.” Darian sits next to Poohgie. “Why would you do that? You don’t think ma has been through enough? What about me Darian? What about you? What about Yvette and

Patricia? Mommy needs to talk about it. Look how many times Patricia wakes up crying for dad and when she cry where's daddy mom says heaven. That's bullshit! Why can't she tell her the truth? Tell her dad is dead in some dam box with Junior? Poohgie, Patricia wouldn't understand. She's too young. See big brother, that's the problem. All you older folks think we too young to be smart and me and Patricia is smarter than you."

Darian punches Poohgie in is mouth. After searching his lips with his fingers to see if he is bleeding, Poohgie states, " I'm smarter than you. When I get bigger I'll be stronger than you and I will fuck you up. In your dreams!" Darian laughs. "No Darian, I dream about Satan. I dream how he kills you. How he rips your face off and rips you to pieces. How he kills mommy and kills Uncle Kenny and Uncle Brian. I dream when he smiles his face changes and looks just like them. I dream when he smiles he looks just like him."

Poohgie is now pointing at the television screen at the white preacher man talking about God's love. "I don't dream of kicking your ass cause Satan beats me to it. You need to fucking dream like me and stop grabbing your dick like you're grown." Darian grabs Poohgie by his neck. "I am grown punk! I gotta dick. We live in the Bronx, you think I'd survive being an intellect like you?" Poohgie wrestles Darian's hand from off his neck. "Maybe not big brother, but I don't think you'll survive being the dumb ass you are." Cassandra enters back into the living room. "Are yau'll ready to eat?" She asks. Both boys gets up and follows her into the kitchen where two plates of food already dished out is ready to be eaten.

It is 10:30pm 3 days later. It is a hot and muggy night on Clay Avenue. Cassandra is in her bedroom when she hears

gun shooting outside. At the same time of the shooting Yvette burst through the front door screaming. “Ma, Darian’s not listening to me. He’s gonna get himself killed ma!” By now all the other kids including Erika is hearing Yvette’s dramatic story. “Oscar and Miguel were talking with me and Darian just punched them in their faces.”

As Cassandra gets dressed Darian walks into the apartment. Yvette slaps his face. “What the hell is wrong with you? Dad didn’t raise no hoe. You acting like a hoe out there. Yvette you’re my fucking sister, you ain’t no dam hoe and I will not let you embarrass me. You are my fucking sister. You come from this family, my father’s family. Let me see you acting like that again and I’ll bust your ass after I fuck them up. You ain’t no hoe!”

“What’s going on?” Cassandra barks. “Mom, she’s out there acting like a hoe. I’m not going to let her embarrass me or you mom.” Cassandra gently puts her hand on Darian’s shoulders. “What happened? Me, Juan, Carlos and Craig was talking and stuff when we heard shots at 167th, so we went to check it out. Didn’t Donovan always tell you to go in the opposite direction of gunshots?” Cassandra asks. “Yeah mom, but dad also said protect my sisters all the time and I know Yvette was down there so I went to check. You did not know I was there.” Yvette interjected. “Anyway ma,” Darian continues. “When we got to the corner it was Willie acting stupid shooting up and stuff. We started to leave when Craig showed me Yvette with these two stupid asses. One had his hand on her ass kissing her. And the other one, and you know him, Mr. Martinez nephew was standing behind her with his hands, both hands mom on her tittes right there on 167th.”

“No mom it wasn’t like that.” Yvette said. But Cassandra knows she is lying and slaps her face really hard.

Cassandra yells at everyone to get out. Darian looks at Yvette with disgust and goes back outside. Yvette goes into the living room crying. Erika follows her. Poohgie and Patricia stand outside Cassandra's bedroom door for a moment before going into the living room. Poohgie stands by Yvette and she looks up with tears in her eyes. He hugs her. She holds him tight and whispers to Poohgie: "I miss them Pooh." Patricia joins the hugging saying she miss her daddy too.

Cassandra is lying in her bed crying. Her thoughts dwell on the good times with her now dead husband Donovan and her first-born Donovan Junior. She thinks about when they lived in a big 6-bedroom home with a wonderful basement. 4 bathrooms and more closets than needed in a beautiful country setting in Pennsylvania. Now she and her family minus a husband and son are crammed in a small one-bedroom apartment with half a bathroom and other families living a thin wall away in all directions including top and bottom. She regrets not taking Donovan seriously when he was willing to teach her everything about the two businesses he started. The only other person capable of running the businesses is also dead. Donovan Junoir.

She thinks of how the state of New York and Donovan's partners swindled both business and their capital gains away from her. Although having a Master Degree in business, because of her lack of interest in his business, now it hurts. She never thought she could lose her husband and child at the same time and funeral two coffins. All the control she once had is gone. Donovan's first princess is heading down the wrong path. Donovan's second champion is a young gangster. Trying to be a 13-year-old man but lacks true responsibility. And Poohgie, oh God poor Poohgie. He loved the dirt Donovan walked on. Will he manage without his father? Will we all be all right without Donovan?

5 years later, Poohgie with tears in his eyes sits in an auditorium with his classmates as he marvels at the guest speaker of the day. “Ladies and gentlemen, let your hearts not be troubled or concerned for what is to come. Just continue to strive. Over the last four years many of you have become close friends. Many of you have become just friends. Some may part this 19th day of June 2001, and never see each other again, but whatever path you choose, and I hope you’re paying attention. I did not say whatever path you go. I said whatever path you choose, rest assure if you continue to strive, you will be all right. I have made many appearances and have lectured all over the world, but this one, this time, this place is special like no other. I cannot and will not speak any further without your valedictorian standing by side. Please Mr. Anthony Maurice Blackwell also known as Poohgie, come stand next to me.” The entire auditorium, students, teachers, faculty, everyone stands to their feet cheering and clapping. Poohgie surprised hesitates but the students next to him already standing helps him up. When he stands the cheering becomes louder along with the clapping Poohgie slowly makes his way to the stage. After the applauding stopped, the speaker continues to speak.

“Today, today I thank you. When I was your age, you once told me you were smarter than me. You were and you still are. I love you Pooh.” Darian starts to cry as he hugs his little brother on Lincoln Center’s Stage. Poohgie looks up to his brother, he starts to cry and embraces the moment, embraces the love, embraces the blood, embraces his brother. “I love you too punk.” Poohgie replies. The full to the capacity auditorium begins to cheer once again.

After a moment the cheering quiets. Darian with Poohgie by his side continues. “As I was saying, please don’t

be sad for today is not the end but only the beginning. Every single one of you posses an extraordinary gift. If it were not so you would not be students of this school. Each of you no matter if your grades were so so or you were top of your class, to the world of students in your age caliber, you are the elite. Each of you was hand picked by a committee of geniuses in the United States, England, and parts of Europe and Africa. In other words ladies and gentlemen, genius recognizes genius. The board of education in association and participation with Dignitaries, Ambassadors, Diplomats, Prime Ministers, Kings and Queens have chosen you according to your academic scores and achievements you've acquired at your so tender ages.

Thirteen, and some of you twelve and graduating from a program such as this? Wow! This is a graduating class of what, 200?" Darian looks at Poohgie. "168." Poohgie replies. "168, from what little I know past graduation have numbered 40 to 75, am I correct?" Darian looks towards a coordinator for the school. She nods he is correct. "168. I have to take this time to honor you all but a special glee sustain me today for I have counted over 50 faces of color. And, from my research, none and sometimes one; but today 53 faces to be exact. I as a black man stand here today so so proud. The telecommunication world is revolutionizing this planet. This technology is born of geniuses like you.

The satellites and spacecrafts are designed and manufactured behind the ideas of geniuses. This planet would still be in the stone ages so to speak if it was not for geniuses like you. Cooperate America does well because of people gifted like you. The average man working 9 to 5, the directors for great movies and your favorite pop or R&B artist who get rich off of technology they don't understand. Men have these opportunities because of great minds like yours. So go out

there and strive. Strive beyond the stars. Make your heroes proud.

Which one of you will cure aids? Which one will solve the hunger problem? Who will save the world?" "Only Jesus can save this world." Poohgie interjected. Darian pauses, looks at Poohgie, hugs him and smiles. "You are the elite." Darian continues. "Some of you may stay in New York and continue. Some may travel the world and learn different cultures. But whatever you do, you choose your path and strive." Darian turns towards Poohgie on the stage and says, "Before I close, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you Anthony. Thank you for never giving up on me even when mom did. And on many occasions I beat you cause even at such a young age you spoke the truth. It's like dad is living in you. I am so grateful. Thank you little brother. Thank you."

It is several days later when Poohgie and his friend Marc enter the 125th Street Pizza Restaurant on the corner of Amsterdam Avenue in Harlem USA. For the last 2 years every second Friday of the month Poohgie and Marc would meet and have a slice or 2 over conversation. Poohgie was not able to brush off his friends because of the path they chose to follow no matter how different they were from each other.

Marc is 2 years older than Poohgie and also a genius. Marc is not recognized by the committee that hand picked Poohgie along with his classmates for Marc lacked the academic scores they look for. Marc did not attend school everyday for he has to be responsible for his older sister and younger brother who were always getting into trouble. Poohgie however knows Marc is smarter than him and was not recognized because of his carelessness and rebellious ways against people placed in authority.

“So, what you gonna do?” Marc asks as they are seated waiting for their slices to be ready. “I don’t know. I was thinking about going to England but mom needs me around for Darian is on the move too much now and mom needs support with the house. I’m not Worried about Patricia cause she got accepted to my academy, but now that mom is working and we live in Queens, someone has to be with Erika and Yvette is not reliable.” “She still acting up?” Marc asks. “Well she calmed down a lot since mom bought the house out there, but I’ll have to say it’s because Darian bust her ass, and I mean he bust her ass. He told her he would kill her before she further hurt mom. And Marc he meant it! What she do? Darian caught her with some nigga, a shit head with no moral substance, just substance in his system in the house. Poohgie, ain’t Yvette like 22 or 23? That doesn’t matter Marc. Not in my mothers house. When you bring people like that in your house where there’s a 10 year old and 7-year-old girl and a mother that looks like she’s 25, that’s dangerous. Yvette is stupid sometimes, thinking the world loves her. She trusts too easily. She’d bring Satan himself in our home if he smiled and said it’s alright.”

Both boys laugh as Marc goes to retrieve their ready to eat slices. When Marc returned, Poohgie continues. “Plus I don’t want to leave Patricia and Darian. I’ve learned so much from Darian that it is crazy. Wasn’t he bugging out at one time? Bugging out is an understatement Marc. At 13 Darian had 40-year-old gang leaders fearing him. I know he has death under his nails, but I don’t know how many. At one point my mom was scared of him. That’s fucked up when your mother has to be scared of you but she was. Yvette’s scared of him, even today. He has changed his life around, but there’s still some old Darian lingering somewhere near.”

Marc looks at Poohgie and says not a word. After a moment of silence just chewing, Poohgie looks at Marc. What? Marc smiles. Poohgie, what's it like to be brother to Darian Blackwell? I mean everybody and their mother wants to be him. I even heard Giuliani big him up. And everyone knows he don't like blacks. He's 18 years old and has a key to the city. He's been a personal guest of the President. He has so many fans he can go to war with anybody. And you, you live with him. You talk with him." "Marc you act like you haven't talked with him. You've been over my house more than any of my friends. Yeah, but we don't talk. Marc, you on something? I recall you spending hours at the apartment when we were in the Bronx.

Since mom bought the house, 3 times that I know about you've been there helping him set up and network computers." "That's different!" Marc quickly interjected. "When I'm with your brother we don't talk. Bullshit! We don't talk about anything personal, it's always zeroes and ones, nothing more." "And why is that? Poohgie asks. "I don't want to seem like I'm trying to get in his business? You couldn't get in his business if you were the subject at hand Marc; I'm scared of your brother man. For what, he loves you like a brother and I heard him tell you so? I know, but he loves Yvette too, right?" Poohgie pauses. "Emm yeah, you're right."

The boys continue to enjoy their pizza as they converse. "So what are you gonna do Marc?" Poohgie asks. "Well I kinda wanted to surprise you, but I guess this time is a gooder time as any." "What?" Poohgie asks with a gleam on his face. "Darian is into worldwide affairs as you know and he asked me to travel with him as his official technical consultant. Marc, you're 15, what about school? He'll be paying me a guaranteed six-digit salary plus benefits yearly.

Plus I took my GED test and got 100%. I've had that for the last 6 months Poohgie. So what did your mom say? She said go. She said the experience will be good for me, and I need to get out of the city." Poohgie pauses. Marc smiles. "So you've thought this through Marc? Yup! So how come you scared of him but you can work all around the world with him? I do as I am told. I ask no questions." Marc replies. "Guess what else Pooh? What? Mel Bourne will be with us too. Oh shit word? Yup!"

It was a hot and sunny day. Marc asks Poohgie if he wants a cup of Italian Icy to go with the pizza. Poohgie agrees. Marc gets up from the table and heads towards the counter at the same time 3 teenage boys about 17 years old enter the restaurant. The 3 boys start arguing over a girl. The argument becomes physical and punches are thrown. Before you know it, everyone is scattered. Many rushing out the restaurant while others found themselves in corners and behind tables. One of the teenagers fighting reaches in the waste of his pants and pulls out a gun. Poohgie falls to the floor for cover. Marc although scared approaches the boy with the gun and wrestles it out of his hand.

The same time Marc takes control of the gun, the police burst into the restaurant, sees Marc with the gun in his hand, pulls out their weapons and without any warning of any kind, shoots Marc down. Even after Marks falls to the floor, the two white policemen keeps firing until their guns are empty. Poohgie lies on the floor as he sees Marc's head hit the tiled floor. Seconds later his body jerking as each bullet rips into his chest and stomach. Poohgie is in shock. All he can hear is screams saying no, but they fade as his clothing becomes soaked with Marc's pool of blood, which flowed across the tiled floor in all direction.

