

Piano Man

Nope. Not about Billy Joel. But I love many of Billy Joel's

lyrics. I wish I could write like that. But I can't. So, I read a lot. I've professed that more than once.

My reading has become a lot more purposeful. I think I only read one piece of fiction, John Grisham's, *The Guardian*, recently. I used to read a lot of Grisham.

Love his love for the game of baseball as much as his writings. Little known fact. His son played at the University of Virginia, and as the story goes, Grisham built the Cavaliers a new baseball stadium.

While fiction, *The Guardians* was a disturbing tale about imprisoned inmates who were innocent. The guardians, thankfully, were able to secure justice in the end.

Other recent reads and recommendations are in no particular order: *Shoe Dog* by Phil Knight, *Becoming* by Michelle Obama, *His Truth is Marching On* by Jon Meacham, *One* by Dennis Rouse, *White Like Me* by Tim Wise, *The Idealist* by George Hirthler, a re-read of *The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren, *White Lies* by Daniel Hill and Pulitzer Prize winner Isabel Wilkerson's *Caste*.³²

Another is Emmanuel Acho's *Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man*, named after his award-winning video series of the same name. Lots of insight. And yes, a bit uncomfortable at times. But it's supposed to be. Addressing systemic racism is not an easy topic.

I liked his description of the piano. Not uncomfortable at all. Rather inspiring, quite actually.

"My favorite instrument to play is the piano. I taught myself how to play in college in breaks between training camp practices when there wasn't enough time to nap. Turned out I loved it. During the most grueling parts of my time in the NFL, it kept me calm. Every day getting back from practice I would hop on my keyboard for a while. I still play even now. When I bought my first home in Austin, the first thing I purchased was a piano. The beautiful thing about the piano is that you got white keys and you got black keys. And the only way to make the most beautiful, magnificent, and poetic noise is with both sets of keys working in tandem. You can't just play all the white keys, because you won't maximize what the instrument has to offer. You can't just play all the black keys, because you won't maximize what the instrument has to offer. But integrate the white and black keys together, and that is when the piano makes a joyful noise.

That's what this "we" is all about. If we can truly

integrate white people and black people together,
working in tandem, that's when our world will make
a joyful noise."³³

While I'm not sure all my reading will foster a joyful-noise stage career, I do believe I must learn to play those keys better.

Commentary

If you've discerned anything from reading Me, Jesus, a Beer, and a Cigar, it's my passion and focus on racial reconciliation. God made one race. He intended us to live in harmony. Sadly, we have failed. But we can get better. I believe much of the strife over the last several years has made us focus on how to do that better. Sure, we have a long way to go. And we can't get there without God. But those Black Keys and White Keys make the most incredible music when they play together.