

Inner Feelings

By TK Coody

George Clipper was just returning from a demoralizing business trip. Before entering the plane in the Middle East, every Arabic person was searched very thoroughly, but he was not. He had always believed that you should understand the perspectives of another person before you judge that person. He understood this emotion because he too once was discriminated against as a Black person.

George had been seated next to an Arabic man who had an oddly proportioned box placed upon his lap the entire flight. George noticed it when he first got into his seat but it never bothered him again.

When the plane reached LaGuardia Airport in New York City, the security officers had a different feeling for the seemingly harmless man and his box. Without even asking him a question, two very burly security guards abruptly grabbed the Arabic man while he was walking along the terminal. He went with out a protest. George then turned a slight shade of red because of his intolerance towards the way people are falsely accused of being something they are not. In this case, a man assumed to be a terrorist. It seemed to George, like it was yesterday that he would have been forced to drink out of a “Colored only” fountain, or ride in the back of the bus.

He could vividly remember when these actions first became a problem in his life. George remembered when he had just finished high school, in a small town in North Carolina, George was going to apply for a summer job. He had finished first in his class both out of black and white students. However, when he applied for a job at the bank he was turned down. The answer was the same everywhere in town, except as mop boy at a fast food restaurant. It was not that he was not smart, it was just because of the color of his skin.

A security guard walked out and asked one of the other TSA people to see if they could find an interpreter. George stopped the TSA person and told them that he could act as interpreter because he was fluent in Arabic from his representation of a Middle East oil company. George then spoke to the man in Arabic.

“Hello, I am George,” he said to the man upon entering the room.

“Hello,” the man responded in a somewhat depressed voice.

“I sat next to you on the flight.”

“I remember you; you seemed to be very nice.”

“May I ask what is in the box you have?”

“It is only some toys for my daughter and son.”

“Ah, I see, let me tell the TSA this.” George turned to the TSA people and translated what the man had told him. Upon opening the box, they found some baseball cards and a doll just like the man had said. He was free to go; he thanked George and left.

George Clipper retrieved his bags from baggage claim, called for a cab and left LaGuardia as if it was any other day. Even though it was not apparent to George, he had taught something not only to the TSA people, but also to the Arabic man. The lesson was that you should always put yourself in another person’s shoes before you judge them.