

12th July, 1998

## WHAT COLOUR AM I TODAY?

DEAR DIARY, Claire at work said something odd to me today. We were having a general chat and then she told me about her impending holiday. She's going to Brazil for 10 days. Claire then said to me can you recommend a good sun tan lotion? I said Claire, I'm black! I don't use sun tan lotion. She said oh, it didn't even occur to me and we carried on talking. But you know how these things pop back into your mind when you're able to quietly think about the events of the day.

I know that black people do in fact use sun tan lotion; I'm in no doubt about that. It's just that I'm not one of them. These days, we're made more aware of skin damage because of the sun and black people have also been encouraged to apply sun tan lotion or sun block and in all honesty it's all a mystery to me in terms of factor this and factor that because I don't use it. God didn't give me plenty of melanin for no reason whatsoever but that's just me. Someone out there might call me an ignorant fool but I just don't think I need it and I don't get enough sunshine or holidays for the sun to be a threat to me.

Anyway, this conversation with Claire got me thinking. She said that it didn't occur to her that I didn't use sun tan lotion. Is it because she thinks everyone uses it. Or was Claire colour blind and didn't see me as a colour but as another female at work? Then mini me, the one that sits on my shoulder holding a pitch-fork said in my ear was Claire taking the mick? Did she fully well know that asking a black woman a dumb-arse question about sun tan lotion was just looking for trouble? Wasn't it a bit like asking a black woman where the nearest sun bed salon was situated?

Well it's funny because I spoke to two different people about what Claire said to me. I already thought I knew the answer to my question which was is Claire trying to be funny and I concluded that Claire was not. She genuinely asked me an ordinary question that she would have asked anyone else and it just didn't occur to her that it was something I didn't use and maybe if she asked another black person, that person may have been a sun lotion wearer and could have pointed her in the right direction. I don't think Claire had a hidden agenda.

# The AUGUST MAYFIELD Diaries

I spoke to a friend of mine who went ape-sh\*t. She accused Claire of being racist and knowing full well what she was saying and said Claire was being a b\*tch and I ought to watch my back!

Someone else said Claire see's you as colour-less, which in psychological terms means that you're a non-entity and you actually mean nothing to her and you're invisible!

I guess this is like the case of three bystanders seeing the same car crash and all three people tell the police three different versions of events.

*August Mayfield*