

ZOE. The thing is - I think someone else could do more with this platform. I think someone else could do more to support students of color.

JANINE. That actually isn't most of what this job is.

ZOE. I mean - let's say I sign your statement.

Let's say you go back to teaching.  
And then - what?

Maybe you give an extra handout on the black experience during the revolution. Maybe, before you discuss our miraculous democracy, you talk just a little about how American opportunity was fertilized by oppression. If I'm really optimistic, maybe you even remember to give me credit for those ideas. Maybe you show up for a couple protests.

I mean I don't feel like I can count on that. But maybe you do.

Even if you do all the right things.

What are you really teaching?

You're teaching 100 future leaders a year, to say, "Yes, there are some *horrible* elements of the American past," asterisk, "There are still things to fix," and as long as they do that, they can go off into the world and become guilt-free corporate lawyers, or investment bankers, or senators, or artists, and send their kids guilt-free to great schools, and help them get good jobs, they don't actually have to give up a single bit of their money or their power.

Because they're the *good* white people.

I don't think I can be complicit in one more generation of American leaders learning that if they get five percent better than their parents, then they can keep running the world.

I can't sign that piece of paper.

Because I think you should be fired. I think you should be done.

(Beat.)

(JANINE starts laughing.)

JANINE. Why me?

Why couldn't you have wanted to study microeconomics. Or cognitive psychology. Or art history - oh, you would have loved them. Them and their Dutch Masters.

I mean have you met the other people on this faculty? I could give you a list of professors who've slept with undergraduates.

There are multiple people in this department who told me to quit when I had a kid. There is a person in the math department who voted for George Wallace. And you go after me?

ZOE. It takes work to not be a bad person.

You know that right?

You can't just be the least bad person in a lineup and call yourself good.

JANINE. I did everything that was ever asked of me.

I did the best that I possibly could.

If you had been born who I was, when I was, you would have the same opinions, you would have made all the same mistakes. You cannot say I am a bad person if there was no way for me to be better.

ZOE. Someone else can be better. That's why I want you out / of the way.

JANINE. I have won teaching awards. I have mentored accomplished people who have done wonderful things.

ZOE. You are an inherently oppressive and uninspiring figure for the students who matter most.

JANINE. That's unfair.

(ZOE laughs.)

Don't laugh - that's not - that's not funny. You are describing a world where I am not right for a job because of my age and my skin color that's not funny that's - that's awful.