

## When They See Us

*When They See Us* is a Netflix Crime Drama Series that was released on May 31, 2019. Ava DuVernay created and directed this show. It is based on Ken Burns's 2012 documentary film, *The Central Park Five*. It concentrated on a true story of five young men: Yusef Salaam, Kevin Richardson, Raymond Santana, Korey Wise, and Antron McCray who lived in a nightmare when they were incorrectly accused of a sex crime that they did not commit.

What is the theme of *When They See Us*?

Empathy is the theme of *When They See Us*. Empathy is a person creates from another person's perspective to observe and review the world. It could be incredible to analyze others' perspectives. They could extend an idea to the world to learn something.

How does the theme teaches *When They See Us*?

DuVernay used empathy as an important lesson to create *When They See Us*. "These are just some of the many themes DuVernay explores. The consequences are devastating. *When They See Us* is an incredible study in empathy. It's impossible to watch and not to feel for the boys — which is the exact opposite of what happened to them in reality. When it mattered most, those who took oaths to protect and serve, those who swore to uphold the law, didn't see boys who needed protection from a terrified, vengeful city. As characters in the series say repeatedly, they saw animals. (Burnett, 2019)"

What *When They See Us* illustrates Interpersonal Communication?

*When They See Us* illustrates the three dimensions of empathy as explained in Chapter 4 in the *Looking Out, Looking In* book. "In one dimension, empathy involves perspective taking—an attempt to take on the viewpoint of another person. Empathy also has an *emotional*

dimension that helps us get closer to experiencing others' feelings: to gain a sense of their fear, joy, sadness, and so on. A third dimension of empathy is a genuine *concern* for the welfare of the other person. (Adler, and Proctor p. 128)"

How does *When They See Us* capture the behavior in Interpersonal Communication?

*When They See Us* captures a behavior that disrupts Interpersonal Communication in stereotyping. "Stereotypes and popular myths. Distorted media coverage and portrayals have contributed to the perception that Black men and boys should be viewed as threats and sources of violence. (The Opportunity Agenda, 2019)"

It explains how does the media generalize African-American males. "Our research shows that Black men and boys are more likely to be depicted as threatening, and news outlets are more likely to depict Black men and boys as committing crimes when compared to their arrest rates. These media stories contribute the myth of Black criminality contrary to what research shows. (The Opportunity Agenda, 2019)"

Researchers used the scene of *When They See Us* as an example of a stereotype in the late 1980s. "For example, in 1989, the defendants in the Central Park 5 case were routinely labeled 'a wolf pack' and worse. Donald Trump took out newspaper ads calling for restoration of the death penalty. And then-mayor Ed Koch routinely referred to the young men as 'monsters.' The media picked up these examples, and others, countless times. (The Opportunity Agenda, 2019)"

## References

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