



Green Book

Tony Lip

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The movie *Green Book* was written by Nick Vallelonga, Brian Hayes Currie, and Peter Farrelly (Vallelonga, Currie, Farrelly, 2018). This movie takes place in New York City and the Deep South during 1962. During this time racial discrimination and segregation was already heavily enforced throughout the Deep South (Vallelonga, Currie, Farrelly, 2018). Although laws were being made to establish equality for African Americans, the separation of white and black people was still very evident (Thomson, 2007). Segregation laws were not as dominant in the northern states but they still enforced several acts of racial discrimination (Thomson, 2007).

There were a lot of unemployed workers at the time; poverty was very common for all races (Vallelonga, Currie, Farrelly, 2018). In 1962, about nine and a half million families had an income of less than three thousand dollars (Scammon, 1963). The high rate of unemployment mixed with the racial discrimination and segregation kept black people at a lower social and economic class (Thomson, 2007). Tony Lip is a middle aged Italian man from the Bronx (Vallelonga, Currie, Farrelly, 2018). He has a wife named Delores and they have two young boys together.

Tony Lip is a bouncer at the Copacabana night club (Vallelonga, Currie, Farrelly, 2018). Tony Lip is first introduced when a fight breaks out in the Copacabana, he is called to diffuse the problem and does so with ease (Vallelonga, Currie, Farrelly, 2018). One can tell that Tony Lip is an enforcer. Tony ends up losing his job due to renovations at the Copacabana but is quickly hired to drive Dr. Shirley on his musical tour through the Deep South (Vallelonga, Currie,

Farrelly, 2018). Dr. Shirley is a wealthy, highly educated black pianist in a trio called the "Don Shirley Trio"(Vallelonga, Currie, Farrelly, 2018).

One can tell Tony Lip's dress from the first few scenes of the movie. Tony Lip always wore a black suit except for when he was working at the Copacabana. He wore the same suit from his interview with Dr. Shirley throughout most of the movie (Vallelonga, Currie, Farrelly, 2018). One can interpret that he was not very wealthy. He would only wear a full suit with a tie and a white button up shirt when Dr. Shirley went to perform at each show (Vallelonga, Currie, Farrelly, 2018).

That portrayed that he was equally important as the Don. Tony Lip even wore polo shirts underneath his suit sometimes. That showed that he wanted to be a professional but was still just a guy from the Bronx. According to the Origin of Dress, one can say that Tony Lip wore a suit most of the time because it was a form of protection. When Tony Lip wore his black suit he was protected from being detected as a scammer or someone who was unprofessional.

Another influence that shaped the appearance of Tony Lip was his neighborhood. Tony Lip lived in an Italian-American neighborhood in the Bronx where the mobster presence seemed to be (Vallelonga, Currie, Farrelly, 2018). So his appearance was always tough but he was a warm hearted family man on the inside. When he was not dressed in a suit he dressed real casual. He wore a lot of dark colors as if he was depressed and it showed on the outside, which was until he went on tour with Dr. Shirley.

The social cultural influences affected Tony's behavior because it made him ignorant and blind to the racist things that he said and did. He was very stereotypical when he was driving Dr.

Shirley, assuming that he knew about the music from Little Richard, Aretha Franklin, etc (Vallelonga, Currie, Farrelly, 2018). Tony Lip even assumes that Dr. Shirley eats fried chicken because he is black. The social role signified by the dress of Tony Lip was that of an enforcer or bodyguard. Tony Lip makes sure that Dr. Shirley is safe and that he is treated with respect when he is around (Vallelonga, Currie, Farrelly, 2018).

The Don even gets himself in trouble at the YMCA and at a racist bar and Tony handles both incidents with no problem (Vallelonga, Currie, Farrelly, 2018). The age group that was signified by Tony Lip's dress was middle-aged men. Tony always dressed as if he were heading to a formal event. The primary social group that signified Tony's dress was his family. The secondary social group that signified Tony's dress was his job.

Before Tony Lip went on tour with Dr. Shirley he was definitely racist (Vallelonga, Currie, Farrelly, 2018). By the time that Tony Lip and the Don Shirley returned from the tour Tony was no longer racist (Vallelonga, Currie, Farrelly, 2018). This change was signified through Tony's dress because by him getting a better understanding of black people and ending his racist ways he was able to make more money and gain a friend. As his role changed he began to dress in more light colors, which signified that he was opening up and did not need the protection of his black suit anymore. The green book comes into place when Tony Lip and Dr. Shirley begin their tour through the Deep South (Vallelonga, Currie, Farrelly, 2018).

The Negro Motorist Green Book is a guide book for black people traveling throughout the Deep South (Vallelonga, Currie, Farrelly, 2018). It provided places where black people were allowed to stay, dine, etc (Vallelonga, Currie, Farrelly, 2018). Don Shirley never looked at or

even mentioned the green book. Tony Lip was the only one who looked in the book, mainly because he was the chauffeur and the bodyguard. Dr. Shirley was socially disconnected from the black culture but he knew that he would be facing some discrimination on the tour.

The movie is called the *Green Book* because Tony Lip and Dr. Shirley have to depend on the Negro Motorist Green Book to get through the Deep South. If they did not have the green book they would never have made it to all of Dr. Shirley's shows. The green book played a significant part in the safe passage way for black people traveling on the road.

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