

## **Why 3?**

Ed Richters

Scene: Delivered as a monologue to the audience.

3.  
Why 3?  
Why 3 times?

My son was accosted by several young men of color, apparently ranging from ages 14 to 18.

He was waiting at his bus stop.

They knocked off his glasses, took his phone, and took flight.

3.  
Why 3?  
Why 3 times?

Big thank you to my neighbors for jumping to the rescue, preventing further torment.

My son was shaken, but not broken.

We got him a new phone, and the cops called for an interview.

3.  
Why 3?  
Why 3 times?

Two different times he looked through binders of young black faces.

It had happened suddenly and his glasses got knocked off.

He saw nobody and we politely said goodbye.

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But then a week went by and a call came from the detective asking for a 3rd interview.

To review another binder likely filled with the faces of young black men as before.

Despite that it had happened suddenly and his glasses got knocked off.

So?  
Why 3?  
Why 3 times?

Two different times my son, with no reason to lie one way or the other, had acquitted two binders of young men.  
Two different times my son did his "civic duty" despite having to relive traumatic events before they'd even had a chance to cool.  
And now they wanted a 3rd interview when finally we'd put an inch of distance between us and the event.

So?  
Why 3?  
Why 3 times?

What good would it do to revictimize my son in the hopes that some literally fuzzy memory would withstand open court?  
What if he'd picked someone?  
Could ruin that kid's life or even get them killed.

For what?  
To burden my conscience and make my son complicit to what from all accounts looks to be shoddy justice?  
To mark some case file "solved" with the lives of young people of color who have themselves been victimized by no less than society itself.

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At first I was open to the idea of a third interview.  
Then I started to wonder about it.  
Soon I was upset and plagued with numbers, weights, and divisions.

3.  
Why 3?  
Why 3 times?

I never called back.