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## Interview With Mr. Indifference

*(Happyville is a town where everyone is named by their most dominant personality trait. This is an interview with Officer Grumpy and Mr. Indifference, where Mr. Indifference learns about the value of being empathetic and having opinions on important issues.)*

**Officer Grumpy:** Will you state your name in the microphone for the record?

**Mr. Indifference:** My name is Mr. Isaac Indifference.

**Officer Grump:** Birthdate?

**Mr. Indifference:** September 5th, 1900.

**Officer Grumpy:** And for the record, are you speaking to me voluntarily?

**Mr. Indifference:** (hesitates) Yes. Yes, I am. But if I may ask, why am I here?

**Officer Grumpy:** So, I hate to open with this, because it seems like you don't understand the gravity of the crimes you have committed. But, I can't sugarcoat this: you are one of the most wanted criminals in the 21st century. I mean, you definitely did have a part to play in the 20th century, but we weren't able to pin you down then...

**Mr. Indifference:** Woah, woah, rewind? From my knowledge, I haven't committed any crimes. I mean, there was this one time in second grade where I went to the bathroom without a hall pass, but I don't think that counts.

**Officer Grumpy:** I was afraid this might come up. So, you see, you are indirectly responsible for many of the major crimes in history.

**Mr. Indifference:** Huh? Can you explain?

**Officer Grumpy:** You are the very essence of evil in our country. You might not do this on purpose, but you have poisoned the minds of citizens of this world, causing them to be bystanders and indifferent to issues that plague our world. You are obliquely responsible for the

Holocaust, the Armenian Genocide, and the Rwandan Massacre — to name a few genocides you allowed to continue. Even the Asian and Black hate crimes in 2020 were partly your fault.

**Mr. Indifference:** (frowns) Officer Grumpy, you are making me feel very awful about myself right now. I do not understand what I did wrong. I've just been living life like a normal citizen; I don't try to get involved in these issues. I do recognize that the problems you mentioned before are important, but surely someone else is to blame, like Hitler, for the Holocaust?

**Officer Grumpy:** You still don't understand. You see, the very fact that you have "just been living life like a normal citizen" in this shows your indifference. Indifference is not a mask for peace, in fact, it could cause many more problems in the future than expressing your views on political, social, and economic issues.

**Mr. Indifference:** (gets up) I'm going to leave now. This is clearly a misunderstanding and I'm being wrongly accused.

**Officer Grumpy:** (grabs Mr. Indifference's arm) Sit down. Let me ask you a question. Have you ever heard Elie Wiesel's speech, 'The Perils of Indifference?'

**Mr. Indifference:** Yes, I did.

**Officer Grumpy:** Then you should know what I'm talking about. You should understand the dangers of being indifferent. People who are not in our family or don't look like us have been reduced to abstraction, simply because we cannot connect to their struggles. But the problem is, we don't even try to make them feel heard because we don't take the time to understand them.

**Mr. Indifference:** Well, I agree with you. I never tried to make anyone feel bad; I just tried to stay out of it. I didn't feel like it was my responsibility to involve myself in matters that don't affect me. I do understand what you are saying, though.

**Officer Grumpy:** When indifference clouds the minds of citizens, they start to accept anything and everything. In our town of Happyville, we live in a bubble. It is one of the safest and most diverse towns, but we don't always make the effort to empathize with the struggles people who don't look like us have faced.

**Mr. Indifference:** But, surely you can't blame me for this! It's not my fault I was given the name "Mr. Indifference" upon birth. I don't want to hurt people.

**Officer Grumpy:** (chuckles) I wasn't blessed with the name Grumpy, either.

While you aren't fully responsible for these crimes in history, you still have a part to play in them. I am giving you a community service sentence. You will work with Mrs. Empathy to make everyone in our town feel more welcome and accepted, regardless of their age, gender, sexuality, class, or race. You need to teach people that we must not simply advocate for what affects us, but for what affects others.

**Mr. Indifference:** I think you are right. I have learned my lesson, and I will never be indifferent again, for every voice matters. Every opinion is necessary and can make a huge impact on the lives of others. Am I dismissed?

**Officer Grumpy:** You sure are. You know, when us officers were first trying to pin you down, we thought you would be a lot less agreeable. Turns out, you're a nice man who just needed to be straightened out.

**Mr. Indifference:** (gets up) That means a lot. Thanks, Officer Grumpy.