

## EYE OF THE STORM (1970, ABC)

**Narrator:** This is Sandra's and Raymond's school. This is Sandra at her desk. This is Raymond at his desk. Sandra has brown eyes. Raymond has blue eyes. This is what their teacher said....

**Jane Elliott:** Blue eyed people are smarter than brown-eyed people, they are cleaner than brown-eyed people, they are more civilized than brown-eyed people.

**Narrator:** Sandra and her brown-eyed friends didn't like that day, but Raymond did.

**Raymond:** I felt like I was king...like I ruled them brown-eyes, like I was better than them....happy.

**Narrator:** This week, "The Eye of The Storm," an experiment in teaching the anatomy of prejudice....with ABC News correspondent Phil Butell.

**Phil:** Riceville, Iowa, with the population of a little less than 1,000 people sees the turmoil and hears the angry voices of the times only in television. It has no ghetto....it has no campus, no riots, no demonstrations, no Negroes. Its people are all white and all Christian. It's a relatively poor town surrounded by corn fields and it's so far removed from the anguish of the cities that it was often hard for the people here to understand the forces that are dividing the United States today....Until a teacher at the town school deliberately provoked an incident of discrimination based on color.

**Jane Elliott:** It might be interesting to judge people today by the color of their eyes...would you like to try this?

**Children:** Yeah!

**Jane Elliott:** Sounds like fun, doesn't it? Since I'm the teacher and I have blue eyes, I think maybe the blue-eyed people should be on top the first day.

**Boy:** And up here?

**Jane Elliott:** I mean the blue-eyed people are the better people in this room.

**Boy:** Huh uh.

**Jane Elliott:** Oh yes they are--blue-eyed people are smarter than brown-eyed people.

**Children:** Huh uh.

**Brian:** My dad isn't that...stupid.

**Jane Elliott:** Is your dad brown-eyed?

**Brian:** Yeah.

**Jane Elliott:** One day you came to school and you told us that he kicked you.

**Brian:** He did.

**Jane Elliott:** Do you think a blue-eyed father would kick his son?

My dad's blue-eyed, he's never kicked me. Ray's dad is blue-eyed, he's never kicked him. Rex's dad is blue-eyed, he's never kicked him. This is a fact. Blue-eyed people are better than brown-eyed people.

**Jane Elliott:** The blue-eyed people get five extra minutes of recess, while the brown-eyed people have to stay in.

**Brian:** Ooooh.

**Jane Elliott:** The brown-eyed people do not get to use the drinking fountain. You'll have to use the paper cups. You brown-eyed people are not to play with the blue-eyed people on the playground, because you are not as good as blue-eyed people. The brown-eyed people in this room today are going to wear collars. So that we can tell from a distance what color your eyes are. Now, the blue-eyed people, each of you can pick out someone on whom to put a collar. So, blue-eyed people, each come up and get a collar. You can choose someone to put this collar on.

Where are the most fun seats in the room? The front or the back?

Children: Front

Jane Elliott: Who should sit in the front then?

Child: The blue-eyed ones.

**Jane Elliott:** I think the blue-eyed ones, absolutely.

**Jane Elliott:** On page 127....Is everyone ready? Everyone but Laurie. Ready, Laurie?

**Child:** She's a brown-eye.

**Child #1:** It seemed like when we were down on the bottom, everything bad was happening to us.

**Child #2:** The way they treated you, you felt like you didn't even want to try to do anything.

**Child #3:** It seemed like Mrs. Elliott was taking our best friends away from us.

**Jane Elliott:** What happened at recess? Were two of you boys fighting?

**Children:** Russell and John were.

**Jane Elliott:** What happened, John?

**John:** Russell called me names and I hit him. Hit him in the gut.

**Jane Elliott:** What did he call you?

**John:** Brown eyes.

**Jane Elliott:** Did you call him brown eyes?

**Child #1:** They always call us that...

**Child #2:** Come here, brown eyes...

**Child #3:** They were calling us blue eyes.

**Child #4:** I wasn't.

**Child #5:** Sandy and Donna were...

**Child #6:** Yeah.

**Jane Elliott:** What's wrong with being called brown eyes?

**Roy:** It means that we're stupider and--well, not that...

**Jane Elliott:** Is that the reason you hit him, John? Did it help? Did it stop him? Did it make you feel better inside? Make you feel better inside? Did it make you feel better to call him brown eyes? Why do you suppose you called him brown eyes?

**Brian:** Because he has brown eyes?

**Jane Elliott:** Is that the only reason? He didn't call him brown eyes yesterday and he had brown eyes yesterday. Didn't he?

**Child:** We just started this...

**Brian:** ...yeah, ever since you put those blue things on.

**Child:** They tease him.

**Jane Elliott:** Oh, is this teasing?

**JANE ELLIOTT:** I watched what had been marvelous, cooperative, wonderful, thoughtful children turn into nasty, vicious, discriminating, little third-graders in a space of fifteen minutes. I think I learned more from the superior children than I did from the children who were considered inferior. Because their personalities changed even more than the other's did....whether this is what they'd like to be inside...or society inhibits them....I don't know. But for one day we removed their inhibitions and they were ghastly. We didn't like one another by the end of the day....that first time.

**Jane Elliott:** Yesterday, I told you that brown-eyed people aren't as good as blue-eyed people. That wasn't true. I lied to you yesterday.

**Brian:** Ooh boy, here we go again.

**Jane Elliott:** The truth is that brown-eyed people are better than blue-eyed people.

**Children:** (Laughter)

**Jane Elliott:** Russell, where are your glasses?

**Russell:** I forgot them.

**Jane Elliott:** You forgot them. And what color are your eyes?

**Russell:** Blue.

**Children:** (Laughter)

**Jane Elliott:** Susan Ginder has brown eyes. She didn't forget her glasses. Russell Ring has blue eyes and what about his glasses?

**Children:** He forgot them.

**Jane Elliott:** He forgot them. All these brown-eyed people are listening to what we're saying. Look at Brian. Are blue-eyed people good listeners?

**Children:** Noooo!

**Jane Elliott:** Brian, would you put that down please? Thank you. Yesterday we were visiting and Greg said, "Boy, I like to hit my little sister as hard as I can, that's fun." What does that tell you about blue-eyed people?

**Children:** They're naughty...in fact, they fight a lot...

**Jane Elliott:** The brown-eyed people may take off their collars. And each of you may put your collar on a blue-eyed person. The brown-eyed people get five extra minutes of recess. You blue-eyed people are not allowed to be on the playground equipment at any

time. You blue-eyed people are not to play with the brown-eyed people. Blue-eyed people go to the back and brown-eyed people come to the front. OK, brown-eyed people are better than blue-eyed people. They are smarter than blue-eyed people and if you don't believe it, look at Brian. Do blue-eyed people know how to sit in a chair? Very sad. Very very sad.

**Jane Elliott:** Boy, do brown-eyed people learn fast. Very good. Greg, what did you do with that cup? Will you please go and get that cup and put your name on it and keep it at your desk. Blue-eyed people are wasteful. Okay. Want to be timed this morning?

**Children:** Yeah

**JANE ELLIOTT:** I use phonics. We use the card pack, and the children, the brown-eyed children were in the low class the first day and it took them five and a half minutes to get through the card pack. The second day it took them two and a half minutes. The only thing that had changed was the fact that now they were superior people.

**Jane Elliott:** You went faster than I ever had anyone go through the card pack. Why couldn't you get them yesterday?

**Donna:** We had those collars on.

**Jane Elliott:** You think the collars kept you...Oh, and you couldn't think as well with the collars on. Four minutes and eighteen seconds.

**Raymond:** I knew we weren't going to make it.

**Child:** Neither did I.

**Jane Elliott:** How long did it take you yesterday?

**Children:** Three minutes.

**Jane Elliott:** Three minutes. How long did it take you today?

**Children:** Four minutes and eighteen seconds.

**Jane Elliott:** What happened?

**Child:** Went down.

**Jane Elliott:** Why? What were you thinking of?

**Rex:** This.

**Jane Elliott:** I hate today.

**Rex:** You do? I hate it too.

**Jane Elliott:** Because I'm blue-eyed.

**Rex:** See, I am too.

**Jane Elliott:** It's not funny, it's not fun, it's not pleasant. This is a filthy, nasty word called discrimination. We're treating people a certain way because they are different from the rest of us. Is that fair?

**Children:** No.

**Jane Elliott:** Let's take these collars off. Does that feel better?

**Children:** Yeahhh!

**Jane Elliott:** Does the color of eyes you have make any difference in the kind of person you are?

**Children:** No...Mrs. Elliott!