In this one-hour documentary, Wise discusses the concept of white privilege, which he defines as the structural advantages for whites built into our system that make social, political and economic advancement more difficult for people of color.

To support his point, Wise provides several examples of what he calls “race-based” favoritism. In 1935, for example, during the Great Depression, President Franklin Roosevelt created programs to help those who had suffered losses; however, these programs excluded agricultural workers and domestic workers in private homes, most of whom were black. In this regard, these types of programs helped to benefit the white middle class. He cites other examples, such as how the Federal Housing Authority allowed funding for first-time homeowners, 98% of whom were white. While the GI Bill of Rights provided benefits to white veterans, such as low-cost mortgages, loans to start a business, cash payment for tuition and living expenses, it did not protect black veterans from forms of discrimination protected by the law, blocking many from the same benefits afforded white veterans.

The film also addresses the question of whether racism is just a thing of the past. Pointing to the election of President Barack Obama in 2008, many have posited that we now live in a post-racial era, where race no longer matters. Wise refutes the claim by referencing Michelle Alexander’s book: The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in an Age of Colorblindness. In this book, Alexander argues that we now have a new racial caste system that criminalizes non-violent drug use by targeting African American males.

The last segment introduces the idea of colorblindness, which Wise argues can lead to an intensification of racist thinking. Unconscious racial bias— that is implicit racism— becomes coded in our brains and thus reinforces bias. Rather than being colorblind, Wise encourages us to be color-conscious.

How do we heal? Wise suggests that racial healing can begin by learning about the history of anti-white racism, to hear about allies who fought for justice. I would suggest racial healing begins when we become allies as well.