

## CHAPTER ONE

### **It's a Judgment Call**

I have always enjoyed *The Twilight Zone* television show... *Traveling to another dimension, not one of time or space but of mind...* It was very cool stuff, with fascinating stories that often expanded the way we think about things.

In 1983, there was a movie version of *The Twilight Zone*. What I found most interesting was the first of four short stories in which a white man named Bill Connor enters a restaurant in a bad mood. He sits down at a table and immediately starts venting to two of his friends about his hard day at work.

Bill explains that a “kike” was promoted ahead of him, a “gook” bank owns his house, and “niggers” live six blocks away. He adds that Arabs are “Niggers wrapped up in a sheet.” Finally, Bill finishes his tirade and walks out of the restaurant. Instead of being in the parking lot, however, Bill finds himself in another dimension. He has entered... the “twilight zone.”

*Bill is now a Jew in Germany during the Second World War!*

Spotted on the street by the Nazi Party police, Bill runs through an alley and into a building. He finally ends up on a balcony, where he's shot and falls through the air. After landing with a thud, Bill discovers he's no longer in Germany but in an isolated field in America.

*Bill is now African American and surrounded by the Klu Klux Klan!*

The Klan is preparing to lynch Bill when he escapes and hides by slipping underwater in a lake. After surfacing, Bill discovers he's no longer in America but in a jungle in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War.

*Bill is now North Vietnamese!*

Patrolling American soldiers see Bill as the enemy and throw a hand grenade in his direction. When the hand grenade explodes, Bill is blasted back into Germany, only this time he's captured by the Nazi Party police and forced on a train with other Jews headed for a concentration camp.

A Jew in Germany; an African American in America—the “twilight zone” was definitely sending Bill a loud wake-up call!

And, to me, that makes for an interesting story. I was gripped by the action as I sat there with popcorn in hand. I was entertained.

I was also moved to think. It may have been a fictional account, but Bill's behavior offered serious insight into how some people use what is known as judgment.

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**judgment**, *n.* the ability to make a good decision after consideration of the facts.

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Judgment is the ability to make a good decision about *something*, like when we decide not to smoke cigarettes after considering factual, or real, information about the dangers to our health. Judgment is also the ability to make a good decision about *someone*, like when we decide to respect our school teacher after considering factual information that he or she is trying to help us succeed.

It isn't always easy to use judgment; depending on the situation, we may have to consider quite a bit of information.

