“66 year old Bodybuilder William Reed sees color for the first time”

Kaylee Dudley
kayleemdudley@gmail.com

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“66 year old Bodybuilder William Reed sees color for the first time”
e-lore: Viral Video

Informant:
My name is Kaylee Dudley and I am 26 years old. I’m a senior Professional and Technical Writing major at Utah State University, but my academic interests also include social justice, design, and psychology. When not at school, I enjoy playing board games, reading long books, and drinking very large cups of coffee. I was born in Evanston, Wyoming, but I moved a lot as a child, so I wouldn’t say I’m “from” anywhere. I have been living in Logan for the last three years with my husband and two cats. I am currently enrolled in a social justice course so when it came time to collect folklore I decided I would turn to the disability community for my content.

Context:
I think it is important to first note that not all viral videos are considered folklore. What makes this type of video both viral and folklore is the number of people participating in telling the same story in the same way. In this case if you search “seeing color for the first time” on YouTube, which is where I found this video, you will get 5,610,000 video results. This video was uploaded by user JustineReed97 who I’m guessing is a relative on September 12, 2017. The video at time of discovery has 1,387,490 views. The video has 15,000 likes and 1,081 comments. The video length is 5:37.

Text:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqHlIRZnF38

The video opens with a man, William Reed, standing on his porch and the people around him singing happy birthday. He jokes about his age and then talks about guessing what the present might be. There are voices off camera saying, “Don’t guess,” and “You’re gonna guess wrong.” He replies, “Really?” Then begins unwrapping the present. He removes a box from a brightly colored bag filled with tissue paper. He then struggles to open the box because of the packing tape. Someone teases him for taking a while, “You’re just slow cause of your age.” The group laughs and he teases back as he finally is able to open the box.
Inside the box is another box wrapped in birthday wrapping paper. He unwarps that opens the box and stares bemusedly at the glasses case. He sets down the box, pulling out the case. He opens it, stares at the glasses, and says “What is it?” Everyone replies, “Put them on!” One person saying, “Sunglasses.” He pulls them out of the case, out of a bag, and then puts them on his face. He pauses once they are in front of his eyes, his hands still on the temples of the glasses.

“How does it look?” someone off screen asks. “It’s weird,” he replies. His head darts in different directions as he takes in the world around him. People keep asking him questions, but he stays quiet. Eventually he whispers, “The trees look neat.” He finally brings his hands down from the temple of the glasses and hits his hands together. You can see that he is emotional and someone off camera begins crying in response. Someone else off camera says, “Now you have rose-colored glasses baby.” Crying and wringing his hands he says, “I never saw that before.”

“I know,” she replies, “Now you see with our eyes.” He keeps looking around putting his hands in his pockets and sniffling and shaking. He pulls the glasses down for just a moment to see the way he did before. Everyone around him laughs, and then he puts the glasses back in front of his eyes. “Oh my goodness. It doesn’t look like mud,” William says. Everyone laughs again and his hands return to his pockets for a moment. He pulls them quickly back out and claps his hands together a few times, still clearly overcome with emotion. He hugs a family member and inquires who did this for him and it turns out the gift was from everyone there. He is continually looking around and says, “I’m like Dorothy,” referring to The Wizard of Oz when the opening scenes are in black and white, but in the world of Oz everything is bright and colorful. Someone replies “You’re not in Kansas anymore baby.” He asks about the color of the house behind him and the
group replies that it is a yellowish-cream color. He turns back to face the camera and the video ends.

**Texture:**
William seems overwhelmed by the new colors and his emotions that came up in reaction. The people watching also become emotional. With the number of posts in this category it is clear that people like both filming and watching this type of content. Most of the comments are positive responses as well.