

Vol. 1 - A Post Racial America

By

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THE PIECES:

AMBER ALERT

THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER

A POST RACIAL U.S. OF A.

TWELVE

BLACK WOMEN TALKING

HATTIE MCDANIEL

JIM CROW

DON'T BE BLACK

MASKING OUR BLACKNESS

TARGETS OF CHOICE

A PLACE FOR CHILDREN TO PRETEND IN

A CHANGE OF HEART

A CONCERN OF NATIONAL INTEREST

CAST / CHARACTERS:

SAMARIA - BLACK FEMALE - 24 to 35

DARRYL - BLACK MALE - 24 to 35

SIMON - BLACK MALE - 24 to 35

RICHARD - BLACK MALE - 24 to 35

DIANE - WHITE FEMALE - 45 to 55

JUANITA - BLACK FEMALE - 24 to 35

MATTHEW - WHITE MALE - 45 to 55

CARA - BLACK FEMALE - 24 to 35

FEATURED CHARACTERS:

AMBER ALERT

- SIMON - AS TRAYVON MARTIN

THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER

- RICHARD
- SIMON - AS TRAYVON MARTIN
- ENSEMBLE

A POST RACIAL U.S.OF A.

- RICHARD
- SIMON - AS TRAYVON MARTIN
- ENSEMBLE

TWELVE

- CARA, JUANITA, SAMARIA, DIANE
- SIMON - AS TRAYVON MARTIN

BLACK WOMEN TALKING

- DARRYL, RICHARD, SIMON, JUANITA, SAMARIA, CARA

HATTIE MCDANIEL

- DIANE, MATTHEW
- SIMON - AS TRAYVON MARTIN

JIM CROW

- JUANITA, SAMARIA
- SIMON - AS TRAYVON MARTIN
- ENSEMBLE

DON'T BE BLACK

- RICHARD, CARA, DIANE, MATTHEW

MASKING OUR BLACKNESS

- RICHARD, SIMON, CARA, SAMARIA, DARRYL

TARGETS OF CHOICE

- MATTHEW, DARRYL, RICHARD
- SIMON - AS TRAYVON MARTIN

A PLACE FOR CHILDREN TO PRETEND IN

- DARRYL, JUANITA, DIANE, MATTHEW
- SIMON - AS TRAYVON MARTIN

A CHANGE OF HEART

- DIANE, MATTHEW, SIMON

A CONCERN OF NATIONAL INTEREST

- ENSEMBLE
- SIMON AS HIMSELF & TRAYVON MARTIN

***WHENEVER SIMON APPEARS AS TRAYVON MARTIN HE ALWAYS HAS HIS HOODIE PULLED UP OVER HIS HEAD AND A CONFEDERATE FLAG FACE COVERING IS PULLED DOWN OVER HIS FACE.**

****SCENE ROLLS DIRECTLY INTO THE NEXT SCENE WHEN THERE IS NO LIGHTS FADE AND LIGHTS UP.**

LIGHTS UP:

SCENE ONE

AMBER ALERT

(A noose made from the American flag hangs from the rafters - center stage. A lynching block sits below it.)

(SIMON - AS TRAYVON MARTIN enters. His hoodie is pulled up over his head. A Confederate flag face covering is pulled down over his face. He takes a seat on the lynching block and removes an Arizona Iced Tea and a bag of Skittles from the pockets of his hoodie.)

(An AMBER ALERT sounds.)

(SIMON pulls out his cell phone and stares at the screen. The following ALERT is cast onto the wall behind him.)

AMBER ALERT

MISSING: 20 TO 25 AFRICANS

REPORTED MISSING: 1619

AGE: UNKNOWN

SEX: MALE & FEMALE

TRAVELING IN: THE WHITE LION - SHIP

(The AMBER ALERT fades out and is replaced by an image of the American Flag waving in the wind.)

SCENE TWO

THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER

(RICHARD enters. He motions for SIMON to move from the lynching block. SIMON gathers his things and steps away. RICHARD climbs to the top of the lynching block and slips the noose around his neck.)

(ENSEMBLE enters and begins singing.)

ENSEMBLE

America, America, God shed your grace on thee

Oh, say can you see by the dawn's early light

What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?

Whose broad stripes and bright stars thru the perilous fight,

O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?

And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,

Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.

Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave

O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

SCENE THREE

A POST RACIAL U.S. OF A.

(The ENSEMBLE stands at attention at the end of the song. SIMON looks on.)

RICHARD

How do you tell Martin Luther King Jr. he was wrong?

How do you tell Rosa Parks she was mistaken?

Fannie Lou Hamer, The A&T Four.

How do you tell them their assessment was too tame?

The confrontation was given the wrong name.

Molotov cocktails, dogs unleashed, Black bodies bound and drowned.

How do you tell them that fifty years after their stand there would be a Black man ruling this land?

And that Black man's election would give the offspring of Bull Connor and Strom

Thurmond license to say, "We are now living in a post-racial U.S Of A."

How do you tell the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement they were wrong?

How do you tell the gathered at the Lincoln Memorial they were mistaken?

Adam Clayton Powell, Bayard Rustin.

How do you tell John Lewis he chose the wrong ism?

Ruby Bridges wasn't fighting no racism.

The mutilation of a Black mother's son and the nation screamed racism.

Greyhound buses set ablaze and the nation screamed racism.

Fire hoses wash away the young and the nation screamed racism.

September 11, 2001.

102 minutes of planes and flames, death and ash, and the nation screamed terrorism.

Two hundred plus years of shackles and chains.

Countless years of being lynched and hanged.

Ninety years of separate but the same.

RICHARD (cont'd)

The misdiagnosis - Racism.

So when I deny that Black people are now living in a post-racial U.S. Of A.

I will tell them that Martin Luther King Jr. was wrong.

Rosa Parks was mistaken.

The A&T Four, Freedom Riders, Little Rock Nine they were all too kind.

Our mother's mothers and our father's fathers chose the wrong ism.

They were not living in the midst of racism.

They were living and surviving under the torrential reign of terrorism.

LIGHTS FADE:

*(RICHARD should strike the noose and lynching block
when leaving stage.)*

LIGHTS UP:

SCENE FOUR

TWELVE

(SIMON - AS TRAYVON MARTIN stands center stage.)

(JUANITA enters.)

JUANITA

(West African Woman)

They have taken my son. Twelve years old. The stories were true. Mothers shoos their children from the hut and never seeing them again. It was me who told him to leave that day. Go out into the sun. Go from this hut and play. You are always underfoot. There was cooking and mending to be done. That boy was always in the way. Mother this and mother that. Go son. Go to the river, I say. Go splash in the water. Be a child because manhood is on its way. In three years time you will no longer be a child. Enjoy it while you can. Night time falls and he's no where to be found. Several of the boys have gone missing. Three days pass. Four days pass. One full moon. None come home. They are gone. My son is gone. The son that I shoos away from our hut for being under foot and in the way. What I wouldn't do for him to be under foot. In three years time I will not know this child has become a man. For the rest of my life, I will not know.

(CARA enters.)

CARA

(Slave Woman)

I thought I had fixed my heart. I had twelve years to fix it.

CARA (cont'd)

From the moment that boy come into the world screaming. Big Sally say, “Set your heart against it. Fix your heart not to love that boy. He come out you but he ain’t yours. The quicker you know that. The easier it gonna be.” How you fix your heart against your own blood? How you fix your face not to smile when he first find his toes? How you fix your body not to laugh when he first taste something bitter? “Fix your heart,” she say. I don’t know no mother capable of that. I come out the field and see my boy. He sitting on the back of a wagon. Hands tied. Feet tied. I know right then I ain’t fixed my heart. I start running. Massah send somebody to grab me up before I get to him. My son see his mama and throw himself towards me-- up off of that wagon. Hoping I could catch him and run him on away from here. Run us both on away from here. Why I ain’t never thought to do that before? Hating myself for not running us away from here sooner. Before this day come. What must be his new Massah pick him up from the dirt. Throw him like a bale of hay back into that wagon. Rode off with ‘em. Ain’t never seen my boy since.

(SAMARIA enters.)

SAMARIA

(Sharecropper Woman)

My boy know how to add and subtract real good. So my husband take him with him for the end of the year count. Seem every year we bring in more and more tobacco but we always owing more than we bringing in. Mr. Tillery say the cost of us living in his cabin go up. The cost of us using his farming tools go up. The cost of us buying food and supplies from his store go up. If he could, Mr. Tillery tell us the cost of us breathing his air go up. This year, my husband look at our son. He say, “We gonna put that boy’s learning to use.” My husband come back home just as proud. Junior caught three and four and five mistakes Mr. Tillery made in his record keeping books. This the first year we come out square. This the first year we don’t owe nothing to Mr. Tillery. My husband say, “If Junior had more time with them books, he probably find Mr. Tillery owing us something.

SAMARIA (cont'd)

I say, "How a twelve year old boy adding and subtracting better than a grown man?" Husband say, "They probably adding and subtracting about the same. Junior just honest about it." Three days later the school house burned down. My husband found Junior inside it. They tied him down to the teacher's desk. I hope they killed my boy before they set fire to the school.

(DIANE enters.)

DIANE

(Mississippi Woman)

I remember it. I had a fight with my husband. Henry was the real jealous type. He wanted to go out playing cards when I wanted him to take me to a picture show. I told him to go on ahead. I could find a date. Told him about the cutest little Colored boy that came into the store that afternoon. Maybe this colored boy would like to take me to the picture show. That's when Henry hit me. Asked me who this colored boy was. Wasn't no colored boy, Henry. I was just making it up. I wanted to make you jealous. He hit me again. Called me a liar. Asked me who this colored boy was. I was too scared to say there wasn't no colored boy a second time. Henry used to be a prize fighter. I was afraid, if he hit me a third time, I would lose our baby. Lucas Jackson's boy. He come into the store today, Henry. I had to give him somebody. Henry and Lucas Jackson grew up together. They was still as much friends as White and Colored could be. I figured Henry would just go talk to Lucas about his boy. Didn't think Henry would drag the boy out the house like he did. Didn't think Henry would beat the boy like he did. Didn't think Henry would hang Lucas Jackson's boy from the bottom of the railroad bridge like he did. Henry and Lucas had grown up together. The baby I was carrying. He turns twelve this Sunday. If Henry had hit me third time, this coming Sunday would just be a Sunday.

*(JUANITA, CARA, SAMARIA and DIANE hug
SIMON one at a time and exit the stage.)*

LIGHTS FADE:

LIGHTS UP:

SCENE FIVE

BLACK WOMEN TALKING

(DARRYL enters.)

DARRYL

I love to hear Black women talking, Black women squawking.
I was raised around Black women talking, black women squawking.
Not Black women created by VH1 for Love and Hip-Hop.
Black women created from black-eyed peas and collard greens.
Black women created from Motown tunes on Saturday afternoons.

(RICHARD enters.)

RICHARD

I love to hear Black women talking, Black women squawking.
I was rocked to sleep around Black women talking, Black women squawking.
Not Black women created by Andy Cohen for profit and fame.
Black women created from color lines and being told to stay behind the times.
Black women created from pain and strain and from blood stains from Bull Connor's reign.

(SIMON - AS HIMSELF enters.)

SIMON

I love to hear Black women talking, Black women squawking.
I cut my first tooth around Black women talking, Black women squawking.

SIMON (cont'd)

Not Black women created by a viral sensation viewed by a YouTube nation.
Black women created from working three to four jobs, nine to five, five to nine, rain or shine.

RICHARD

I love to hear Black women talking, Black women squawking.
I took my first two steps around Black women talking, Black women squawking. Not
Black women created from the mind of a Quentin Tarantino. Black women created from
the church saying Amen and singing Sunday school hymns.
Black women created from a Jim Crow South and being told to hush your mouth.

DARRYL

I love to hear Black women talking, Black women squawking.
I learned my ABCs and to count to three around Black women talking, Black women
squawking.
Not Black women Paul Ryan labels as welfare lovers and EBT mothers.
Black women labeled as Miss Pam and yes, Ma'am.
Black women labeled as Big Mama, Dear Mama, and just plain ole Mama.

SIMON

I love to hear Black women talking, Black women squawking.
I got my first ass whupping around Black women talking, Black women squawking.
Not Black women created by that DNA test peddling Maury, Maury, Maury Povich.
Black women created from assassination and still not losing love for this nation.
Myrlie Evers, Coretta Scott King, four mothers of Four Little Girls.
Black bodies swinging in the Southern breeze. Strange fruit hanging from the Poplar
Trees.

DARRYL

I love to hear Black women talking, Black women squawking.

RICHARD

I love to hear Black women talking, Black women squawking.

SIMON

I love to hear Black women talking, Black women squawking.

DARRYL, SIMON, RICHARD

I love to hear Black women talking, Black women squawking.

(CARA enters.)

CARA

But our Black women talking, our Black women squawking has gotten hijacked.
Our Black women talking, our Black women squawking has gotten hijacked and turned
into a misrepresentation of a Black woman's sass - a misrepresentation of a Black
woman's class.

(JUANITA enters.)

JUANITA

But our Black women talking, our Black women squawking has gotten hijacked and
turned into The Real Housewives of Atlanta.
Our Black women talking, our Black women squawking has gotten hijacked and turned
into R & B Divas.
Our Black women talking, our Black women squawking has gotten hijacked and turned
into the Wendy Williams show.

(SAMARIA enters.)

SAMARIA

Don't raise your babies around the hijacked versions of Black women talking, Black
women squawking..

DARRYL

Don't rock your babies to sleep around the hijacked versions of Black women talking,
black women squawking.

RICHARD

We shall not overcome with hijacked versions of Black women talking, black women
squawking.

SAMARIA

Because the hijacked versions of Black women talking, Black women squawking got Black
people twisted.

SIMON

Got Black people twisted.

CARA

Got Black people twisted.

EVERYONE

Got Black people twisted.

LIGHTS FADE:

LIGHTS UP:

SCENE SIX

HATTIE MCDANIEL

(MATTHEW enters holding an Oscar.)

(DIANE - AS FAY BAINTE enters to present Hattie McDaniel with the Oscar.)

(SIMON - AS TRAYVON MARTIN enters. He stops and stares at Matthew and Diane. DIANE notices Simon's attire and exits the stage. DIANE returns with a tuxedo jacket and dresses SIMON. She returns to the task of presenting the Oscar. SIMON observes.)

DIANE

I'm really especially happy that I'm chosen to present this particular plaque. To me it seems more than just a plaque of gold. It opens the doors of this room, moves back the walls. And it enables us to embrace the whole of America. An America that we love. An America that almost alone in the world today recognizes and pays tribute to those who have given their best regardless of creed race or color. It is with the knowledge that this entire nation will stand and salute the presentation of this plaque that I present the Academy Award for the best performance of an actress in supporting role during 1939 to Hattie McDaniel.

(DIANE and MATTHEW begin clapping and gets the entire audience to applaud along with them. Time passes and Hattie doesn't appear.)

DIANE

Hattie McDaniel, ladies and gentlemen.

(DIANE starts applause again.)

(MATTHEW whispers into DIANE'S ear that Hattie had to sit in the back.)

(DIANE peers out trying to get a glimpse of Hattie and her progress towards the stage.)

DIANE

Well, she'll be up here shortly. Seems she had to sit by the kitchen. *(Out to the audience)*
No, no, no, somebody please tell Bette Davis that she needs to give her drink order to a waiter and not to Hattie. Yes, she just won the Oscar, Bette. *(pause)* Vivian, no. She can't feed you right now. No, that was only in the movie, Darling. She's not really your mammy. She was acting. Hence her winning the Oscar. *(pause)* How about another round of applause for Miss Hattie McDaniel, everybody, as she makes her way up *(beat)* from the back of the room.

(A few more moments pass before video of HATTIE MCDANIEL accepting her Oscar is cast onto the wall. DIANE, MATTHEW exit as it plays.)

(DIANE enters after the video ends. She carries a sign and hands it to SIMON. She removes his tuxedo jacket and exits.)

SCENE SEVEN

JIM CROW

(SIMON displays his sign for the audience to read. It reads: REST ROOM - WHITES ONLY.)

(SAMARIA and JUANITA enter. JUANITA takes out a black magic marker and crosses out WHITES ONLY on SIMON'S sign.)

(SIMON exits.)

JUANITA

I wonder what it's like in there?

SAMARIA

It can't be that much different. You're just sitting down to do your business.

JUANITA

It must be a whole lot different. Why else would they fight so hard to keep us from using it?

SAMARIA

Well, they can't fight no more. We should go powder our noses, Juanita. What you think?

JUANITA

You're nose is a bit shiny.

SAMARIA

So is yours. Let's go.

(JUANITA and SAMARIA enter the ladies room. They both take it in like children on Christmas morning.)

JUANITA

It's a whole lot different. My feet don't stick to the floor. The faucets ain't leaking.
There's no rust stains in the sink. There's plenty of towels to dry your hands with. The
toilet paper is softer than anything I've ever touched, and they have doors on the stalls so
no one can see you doing your business.

SAMARIA

Her shit stinks like our shit.

JUANITA

What?

SAMARIA

Her shit stinks like our shit.

JUANITA

Well, it sure don't smell no better.

SAMARIA

All that fuss over having separate bathrooms you would think their shit don't stink.

JUANITA

It might just stink worse.

SAMARIA

(singing - TRADITIONAL GOSPEL)

Her shit stinks worse than our shit

Her shit stinks worse than our shit.

Whoever thought Whites Only was a good thing.

Jim Crow saved us from smelling their shit.

(ENSEMBLE enters as a choir. All are dressed in choir robes. They join in on the song.)

CHOIR

Mmm-hmm

JUANITA

Whoever thought Whites Only was a good thing.

SAMARIA

Jim Crow saved us from smelling their shit.

JUANITA

Whoever thought Whites Only was a good thing.

SAMARIA

Jim Crow saved us from smelling their shit.

JUANITA

Whoever thought Whites Only was a good thing.

SAMARIA

Jim Crow saved us from smelling their shit.

CHOIR

Jim Crow saved us.

Jim Crow saved us.

Jim Crow saved us from smelling their shit.

JUANITA

Whoever thought Whites Only was a good thing.

CHOIR

Jim Crow saved us from smelling their shit.

JUANITA

Whoever thought Whites Only was a good thing.

CHOIR

Jim Crow saved us from smelling their shit.

JUANITA

Whoever thought Whites Only was a good thing.

CHOIR

Jim Crow saved us from smelling their shit.

Jim Crow saved us.

Jim Crow saved us.

Jim Crow saved us from smelling their shit.

CHOIR

(repeat x 2)

Whoever thought that Jim Crow

Jim Crow saved us

Whoever thought that Jim Crow

Jim crow saved us

Whoever thought that Jim Crow

Jim crow saved us

Jim Crow saved us from smelling their shit

JUANITA

Whoever thought Whites Only was a good thing.

CHOIR

Jim Crow saved us from smelling their shit.

JUANITA

Whoever thought Whites Only was a good thing.

CHOIR

Jim Crow saved us from smelling their shit.

JUANITA

Whoever thought Whites Only was a good thing.

CHOIR

Jim Crow saved us from smelling their shit.

Jim Crow saved us.

Jim Crow saved us.

Jim Crow saved us from smelling their shit.

Jim Crow saved us from smelling their shit

LIGHTS FADE:

LIGHTS UP:

SCENE EIGHT

DON'T BE BLACK

(RICHARD enters with a plate of food. He sits down on a couch.)

RICHARD

(yelling out to the kitchen)

Babe, would you bring out the hot sauce?

(RICHARD grabs a remote and clicks on the television.)

(LIGHTS UP ON news anchors MATTHEW and DIANE seated at a news desk.)

MATTHEW

Good evening and welcome to the six o'clock news report. What do you have for us, Diane?

DIANE

Good evening, Matthew. Happening now an investigation is underway in Santa Ana where an off-duty Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputy was injured after being robbed overnight. The deputy was sleeping in his car on South Hickory Street when somebody stole his cell phone, cash and other items.

(CARA enters with a plate of food and a bottle of hot sauce.)

CARA

(talking to the television.)

Please don't be Black. Please don't be Black.

DIANE

Several witnesses report seeing a heavyset Black male running from the scene.

CARA

DAMN!

RICHARD

DAMN!

(CARA hands the hot sauce to RICHARD and sits down next to him.)

MATTHEW

A 73 year-old grandmother is listed in stable condition this evening after being held up at gunpoint earlier this afternoon. The grandmother of five was leaving a bank ATM when she was assaulted and stripped of her purse.

RICHARD

(talking to the television)

Please don't be Black. Please don't be Black.

MATTHEW

Authorities are reviewing bank surveillance footage as we speak.

CARA

We still have a chance.

DIANE

This just in. Police have arrested Leroy Johnson for the armed assault of the 73 year-old grandmother, Matthew was just reporting on.

CARA

Damn.

RICHARD

What? They didn't say he was Black.

CARA

It doesn't get any more Black than Leroy Johnson.

DIANE

Police have issued a second arrest warrant for a suspected accomplice in this afternoon's ATM assault, 23 year old Tyrone Jefferson.

RICHARD

It just got more black.

CARA

A solar eclipse black.

MATTHEW

It has been a dramatic day for a Sherman Oaks neighborhood--

DIANE

Excuse me, Matthew. Just to clarify. Both suspects from your earlier report are Black.

RICHARD

Damn.

CARA

Damn.

MATTHEW

Thought so. (beat) It has been a dramatic day for a Sherman Oaks neighborhood after police dismantled a meth lab inside an apartment complex.

RICHARD

There's no way. There's no way that these people are Black.

CARA

We got this one, Babe. We got this one.

MATTHEW

Officers raided an apartment on Kessler Avenue and arrested two men and three women. Officers also seized multiple components used to manufacture the illegal drug. Police say a tip led to the bust.

DIANE

Girl Scout Troop 88 gets the spotlight on this weekend's community calendar.

RICHARD

Wait a minute. You didn't tell us what color they were.

DIANE

The troop will be holding their annual car wash in the heart of Encino this weekend. All funds will go to support their annual trip to the Girl Scout Jamboree.

CARA

What about the meth people?

RICHARD

That shit ain't fair. What color were the meth people?

MATTHEW

Airport security is on high alert this evening after a man leaped across security lines--

(RICHARD and CARA look at each other with a bit of confusion.)

RICHARD

Please don't be Muslim. Please don't be Muslim.

CARA

Please don't be Muslim. Please don't be Muslim.

MATTHEW

The 19 year old Muslim man is being held for questioning.

RICHARD

Damn!

Damn!

CARA

LIGHTS FADE:

LIGHTS UP:

SCENE NINE

MASKING OUR BLACKNESS

*(The couple, DARRYL and SAMARIA and their friends
RICHARD, CARA, SIMON - AS HIMSELF gather
around to welcome in the New Year.)*

DARRYL

Ten seconds to midnight everybody!

SIMON

Let's do this.

EVERYBODY

10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1 HAPPY NEW YEAR!

*(DARRYL and SAMARIA kiss, and both start singing
Aud Lang Syne. SIMON and RICHARD exchange
high-fives. CARA celebrates.)*

CARA

We made it! We made it everybody! Happy New Year! Happy 2020!

SIMON

Happy New Year!

RICHARD

Happy New Year, Brotha'.

SAMARIA

Resolutions! Resolutions, everyone! We are just a few seconds into a brand new year and that means brand new hopes and brand new dreams for everybody. Who wants to go first?

CARA

I resolve to lose my last ten pounds of post baby weight.

(Everyone cheers their support.)

SAMARIA

Hold up. You ain't never had a baby.

SIMON

She meant post eating weight.

RICHARD

She also meant twenty-five pounds.

CARA

Damn. I thought y'all was my friends, but you ain't stealing my joy. I'll be attending Zumba classes on Mondays and Fridays. Taking Hip-Hop Ab classes every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, with that fine ass instructor Malik--

DARRYL

(dismissing CARA'S resolution)

Good luck. NEXT!

SIMON

I resolve to--

CARA

Can a Sistah finish?

SIMON

My bad. What else you got?

CARA

Not to get shot and killed by the police.

RICHARD

Are you serious?

SIMON

She can't be serious.

SAMARIA

Girl, I was with you right up to Hip-Hop Ab classes. Seeing Malik's fine ass three times a week is a resolution any woman can keep.

DARRYL

(warning SAMARIA)

Careful, Baby. Careful.

SIMON

None of us should be trying to make that resolution.

RICHARD

I give you until February.

CARA

To drop ten pounds?

RICHARD

No, until your ass gets shot and killed by the police. My boy Tyrone made that same resolution in 2019. Six hours into the new year he was shot thirty-six times by one cop. Who has a real resolution? One they might actually keep.

SIMON

I resolve to no longer purchase articles of clothing that make me appear suspicious or threatening. I also resolve to cross to the other side of the street whenever a white woman is approaching me.

DARRYL

So she won't think you're trying to snatch her pocketbook.

SIMON

You feel my pain, Brotha.

(SIMON and DARRYL exchange high-fives.)

RICHARD

We have all felt that pain.

SAMARIA

I don't see you giving up your Timberlands.

CARA

And saggin'. Your pants haven't been around your waist since third grade. You've been considered suspicious and threatening ever since you turned eight.

DARRYL

(to CARA)

That's that school to prison pipeline, Sistah.

SIMON

Wearing black or grey hoodies can get your ass shot. I'm saying good-bye to all that. I was recently approved for a Brooks Brothers' credit card.

EVERYBODY

Brooks Brothers?

SIMON

It came in the mail three days ago. I got a seventy-five dollar limit.

SAMARIA

If you got a Brooks Brothers credit card in your pocket, why are you still dressed like somebody from the Wu-Tang Clan rather than Ben Carson?

SIMON

Well, you see. What had happen was--

DARRYL

What had happen was-- You walked your Wu-Tang Clan looking ass up into Brook Brothers and they thought you were there to rob the place.

SIMON

Not at all. Four men rushed over to assist me as soon as I walked through the door.

RICHARD

Since when do security guards measure your inseam? That was stop and frisk, Man.

CARA

So why are you still dressed like what Fox and Friends would describe as a drug dealing thug?

SIMON

There was a slight issue with the credit card.

EVERYBODY

They didn't believe it was yours.

SIMON

Identity theft is a big problem these days.

SAMARIA

Why not pull out your driver's license and prove who you were?

SIMON

Hell no. With four security guards surrounding me? Remember the video of the brother pulling out his driver's license during a traffic stop? The cop shot his ass thirty-six times.

RICHARD

That was my boy Tyrone. His dash cam video went viral! Over two million views.

DARRYL

Y'all need to do better with these resolutions.

SIMON

We haven't heard from Richard.

(Everybody looks at RICHARD)

RICHARD

I stopped making resolutions three years ago.

SAMARIA

I remember that one.

CARA

That was the year you was trying to bring sexy back.

RICHARD

I was trying to train for the New York City Marathon.

CARA

All I know was by April a Brotha' had it going on.

SAMARIA

You were looking Michael B. Jordan kind of sexy.

CARA

Chadwick Boseman kind of sexy.

*(CARA and SAMARIA exchange Black Panther salutes
with each other and fall out in laughter.)*

CARA

Wakanda forever!

SAMARIA

Wakanda forever!

DARRYL

(warning SAMARIA)

Careful, Baby. Careful.

SIMON

You gave up on running in that marathon. Why did you stop training?

RICHARD

White women.

CARA

Barbecue Becky?

DARRYL

Permit Patty?

RICHARD

Both. They kept calling 911, frightened that a Black man was running through the neighborhood. I'm done with resolutions. You can keep all that hope for a safer tomorrow.

SAMARIA

Don't bring us down, Richard. I think there's hope for every one of us to get through the new year without being shot and killed by the police. Darryl honey, tell everyone what your New Year's resolutions are.

(DARRYL opens a large wooden box that sits on top of a table.)

DARRYL

I resolve not to get stopped and frisked every time I walk outside my apartment. I resolve not to get pulled over for a broken taillight on my brand new car. I resolve not to get tased while shopping for toiletries inside Walmart.

(DARRYL leans into the wood box and places a white mask over his face. He returns to an upright position and has been transformed into a Caucasian man.)

SIMON

Who invited the white dude?

CARA

I think it's Darryl.

SAMARIA

No, it's White Darryl. Doesn't he look wonderful?

(SAMARIA reaches into the wooden box and places a white mask over her own face and is transformed into a Caucasian woman.)

SIMON

(shocked at Samaria's transformation)

What the fuck?

SAMARIA

We can drive through Texas without getting pulled over.

CARA

How about swimming? Can you go to a pool party without being thrown down to the ground?

SAMARIA

You can go to any swimming pool that you want to. You can even put our head underneath the water.

CARA

Give me one of those.

RICHARD

I want one too.

(RICHARD and CARA rush to the wooden box and pull out two white masks and place them over their faces. They are both transformed into Caucasians. SIMON stares at the unfolding scene.)

RICHARD (cont'd)

I have a sudden desire to watch Seinfeld.

CARA

Something is telling me to put peas in my macaroni salad, and not to season my chicken.

(SAMARIA pulls out two hand mirrors from the wooden chest and hands one to CARA. They both admire their new reflections.)

SAMARIA

Look at us. Have you ever felt prettier?

CARA

Never. I have good hair.

RICHARD

What's this feeling I'm having?

DARRYL

White male privilege. Becoming President without releasing your taxes. Telling a cop that he works for you and still making it home okay.

RICHARD

I think I could get used to this.

SAMARIA

Darryl and I have been wearing our masks outside for a week. No labels. No judgement.

DARRYL

Not considered suspicious. Not considered a thug. We got the bathroom codes at Starbucks without buying coffee. (beat) We actually brought in our own coffee, and asked them to heat it up.

SAMARIA

And they did.

(All four are relishing the experience and fully slip into their new whiteness.)

EVERYBODY (EXCEPT SIMON)

It's beautiful being white.

(SIMON goes to the wooden box and searches for his mask.)

SIMON

There's not one in here for me, Darryl. Samaria is there another mask?

DARRYL

Who is that?

SAMARIA

There's a colored man in our house.

CARA

Somebody call 911.

RICHARD

We'll be dead by the time 911 arrives. Let's give him some money or whatever he's looking for. *(to SIMON)* Do you need money for drugs?

SIMON

Nigga, it's me.

(The four respond in horror at the word.)

CARA

He must be one of those rappers. *(beat)* Are you Drake?

SAMARIA

I don't feel safe.

RICHARD

I feel threatened.

DARRYL

I have a gun over there in that drawer, and I've taken lessons on how to use it.

SAMARIA

Don't tell him where your gun is.

CARA

I'm sure he came here with his own. (beat) Didn't you?

SIMON

Why y'all trippin'? You two was just talking about Wakanda forever.

(DARRYL rushes over to the gun's hiding place and pulls it out.)

DARRYL

I'm standing my ground. You're all my witnesses. I'm standing my ground.

EVERYBODY

You're standing your ground.

SIMON

Man, have you lost your mind? It's me, your Boi. It's Simon. Where's my mask? Just give me a mask.

(SIMON frantically searches the box for his mask.)

CARA

I think he's looking for a knife. Kill him. Kill him before he kills us.

SIMON

Y'all completely caught up in this white bullshit. Just find me a mask.

SAMARIA

Shoot him.

RICHARD

Shoot him, Darryl.

CARA

Shoot him.

EVERYBODY

Shoot him. Shoot him. Shoot him. Shoot him. Shoot him. Shoot him.

(DARRYL fires his gun six times. SIMON falls to the floor.)

DARRYL

I had no choice.

EVERYBODY

You had no choice.

DARRYL

I warned him.

EVERYBODY

You warned him.

DARRYL

You heard me.

EVERYBODY

We heard you. You had no choice. You warned him.

SAMARIA

It was the hoodie.

(RICHARD lifts his mask for a moment and looks at Simon's dead body. Not liking the reality he lowers the mask back down on his face.)

RICHARD

He had a gun.

CARA

He was being aggressive.

DARRYL

They always get away.

EVERYBODY

We had no choice.

LIGHTS FADE:

LIGHTS UP:

SCENE TEN

TARGETS OF CHOICE

(MATTHEW enters.)

MATTHEW

The Emancipation Proclamation killed Mike Brown.
The Emancipation Proclamation brought his value down.
Wasn't so much killing of Black boys before Abraham Lincoln laid his pen down.
Wasn't so much killing as long as they were plantation bound.
Once upon a time, Black boys were valuable.
Ships sailed the ocean blue in search of that darker hue.
Six foot three, three hundred pounds at eighteen years old.
Imagine at what price Mike Brown would have sold.
Once upon a time, Black boys were precious.
One would come missing and send the whole town searching.
Find that black boy.
Hunt him down.
Only beat him within just an inch.
His master will pay something, but a dead Black boy ain't worth one damn cent.
No master was going to pay for the capture of Mike Brown.
Might be the reason Darin Wilson chose to shoot his ass down.
Once upon a time, Black boys turned a profit.
Stored in steerage and insured against losses.
Once upon a time, Black boys were prized.
White men in grey fought White men in blue and died over the ownership of the darker hue.

MATTHEW (cont'd)

The Emancipation Proclamation devalued a Black boy's life.
And stand your ground now comes out of a grown man's mouth.

*(DARRYL and RICHARD enter, pushing SIMON - AS
TRAYVON MARTIN onto the stage.)*

MATTHEW (cont'd)

Black boys have become the targets of choice.
From he was armed and dangerous
To it was just a bag of Skittles
From he was armed and dangerous
To just a shiny object - reflecting in the light
The Emancipation Proclamation needs to be torn to shreds.
One man's decree that another man is free.

DARRYL

I was already free.
Until our nation realizes that.
She will always try to take Black people back.
The hell with proclamations.
I call for a declaration.
I was already free.

RICHARD

My freedom wasn't scratched onto a piece of paper.
My freedom blew in the West African wind and brushed up against my ancestor's skin.
I was already free.

MATTHEW

As long as there's an Emancipation Proclamation,
The thought will remain that your freedom comes as a gift from this nation.

RICHARD

The hell with proclamations.

DARRYL

I call for a declaration.

RICHARD

I was already free.

DARRYL

I was already free.

MATTHEW

They were already free.

LIGHTS FADE:

LIGHTS UP:

SCENE ELEVEN

A PLACE FOR CHILDREN TO PRETEND IN

*(DARRYL and JUANITA sit in the backseat behind
DIANE - AS UBER DRIVER. JUANITA holds the
couple's 2 day-old son - wrapped in a blanket.
JUANITA constantly rocks and soothes the newborn.)*

DARRYL

I'm sorry.

JUANITA

You should be.

DARRYL

That's not what I was looking for. I was hoping you were going to reassure me by saying
(imitating his wife) It's okay, Honey. I understand and I love you. *(back to his voice)*
That's kind of what I wanted.

JUANITA

First of all, I don't sound like no white girl. And second, you should be sorry. Our son's
big ass head didn't come from nobody but your side of the family. It took six hours just
to push that out alone, so your black ass needs to be sorry.

DARRYL

I'm sorry that I'm bringing you and our baby home from the hospital in an Uber. I was
hoping we would have a car by now. That's the reason I'm sorry, not my big ass head.

JUANITA

(mocking Darryl's earlier impersonation) It's okay, Honey. I understand and I love you. How was that? And my mama warned me about marrying you and your big ass head.

DARRYL

Your mama got some nerve. Throw a slipcover over her booty and four people could sit down.

JUANITA

Are we going to be talking about people's mamas?

(DARRYL leans over and kisses JUANITA.)

DARRYL

No, we're not. I take it back. Don't worry. Austin will grow into his head. I did.

JUANITA

No, you didn't. You still need to do a little more growing for all that head to fit your body.

DARRYL

Are you going to talk smack about your husband in front of our son? Is that how it's going to be?

JUANITA

Austin knows I'm playing. I love everything about my two beautiful, big-headed, black men. *(serious)* Honey, it's okay. Things will get better once you get accepted into the jobs for veterans program. But I still should still have listened to my mama about marrying a man with such a big ass head.

DIANE

Can I offer you two some waters? It's not champagne but just my small way of saying congratulations and thank you for your service. There should be a cooler next to your wife's feet. Where were you deployed?

JUANITA

That's sweet of you, but I'm good.

DARRYL

Two tours of duty in Afghanistan.

JUANITA

But he's home for good now. No more military.

DARRYL

Would you mind if we take the waters home? Kind of like a souvenir of Austin's first Uber ride.

DIANE

I would be honored. Maybe twelve years from today I'll receive a call to pick up your son at the playground. I'll drive him back to your house and three of us recognize each other. We'll have one of those Hallmark movie moments.

JUANITA

Can I keep my baby as a two-day old for a little while longer?

DIANE

Sorry.

DARRYL

Speaking of playgrounds, we just passed by the nicest one I've ever seen, but we don't have playgrounds in our neighborhood. Where are you taking us, Lady?

DIANE

The address that came up. It says we're only three minutes away from your house.

JUANITA

Three minutes?

DARRYL

If we could afford a home in this neighborhood, we wouldn't be calling Uber. We would own three cars, a boat and have a dog named George.

JUANITA

Darryl, this is the neighborhood we have on our vision board. I remember the name of the park, TR Recreational Center. What's the address you have, Miss?

DIANE

26 Loehmann Avenue.

JUANITA

That's the open house we went to a few weeks ago, remember? We were petrified they would ask how much money we make a year. We put the photo on our vision board next to the car.

DARRYL

We live at 46 Garbback Boulevard. That's on the other side of town. Are we going to be charged for this?

DIANE

Is it possible you put in the wrong address?

DARRYL

Why would I put in the wrong address? I know where I live. Besides, this is still a mostly all white neighborhood.

DIANE

Your wife did say it was on your vision board and you came here three weeks ago. Maybe you made a mistake. I'm sure you have a lot of things on your mind right now.

(The stage is suddenly bathed in red and blue flickering lights from police cars.)

*(MATTHEW - AS COP enters and extends his arm for
DIANE to bring the car to a stop.)*

DIANE (cont'd)

Sorry. He's asking us to stop.

JUANITA

We have people meeting us at our apartment. Is it possible to turn around?

DIANE

It looks like traffic is coming to a stop on both sides. I'll get out and ask.

(DIANE leaves the car.)

DIANE (cont'd)

Officer, is there a way around this? I'm driving a couple and their newborn home from the hospital. Somehow I got the wrong address. It would be nice not to have them get stuck in this mess. It might save my tip too.

COP - MATTHEW

You're going to be here for awhile. Some guy went and got himself killed. Pulled out a gun on two officers.

DIANE

Jeez. Are the officers okay?

COP - MATTHEW

This time. Turned out to be a toy gun.

DIANE

Thank you, Officer.

(DIANE returns to the car.)

DIANE (cont'd)

I'm sorry. We're going to be here for awhile. The police had to shoot some guy. I guess he had a gun. It doesn't help much but the ride is on me.

(SIMON - AS TRAYVON MARTIN enters and stands where the dead body would be.)

JUANITA

(looking out Darryl's window)

That's not some guy. It's a kid, a Black boy. He doesn't look more than ten or twelve years old.

DIANE

I thought you said this was a mostly white neighborhood.

DARRYL

You see who they shot, don't you?

JUANITA

Why haven't they picked him up from the sidewalk or at least covered his body? His poor parents. I wonder if anybody has called them.

(DARRYL steps out of the car.)

DARRYL

Officer. Officer, excuse me.

COP - MATTHEW

Please return to your car.

DARRYL

I will, but would you mind having someone cover up the young man's body? It's bothering my wife. She just gave birth to our first son. I think it might be hitting a little too close to home for her-- for us.

COP - MATTHEW

You need to get back into your car, Sir.

DARRYL

Officer, you can't ask someone to cover his body?

COP - MATTHEW

Tell your wife to stop looking out the window.

DARRYL

What?

COP - MATTHEW

You two make sure you raise your kid right. We don't need any new thugs coming into the world.

(DARRYL steps closer to cop.)

DARRYL

What did you say?

(JUANITA and DIANE get out of the car.)

COP - MATTHEW

Sir, back to your car.

JUANITA

Darryl, what's going on? Come back to the--

DARRYL

I suggest you try saying that shit that just came out of your mouth one more time.

JUANITA

Darryl.

COP - MATTHEW

Are you threatening a police officer?

JUANITA

No, he's not. Darryl, what's happening?

COP - MATTHEW

Get back into your car.

DIANE

He's sorry, Officer. We don't need anything else to happen today. Isn't there some way you can direct us out of this? The first baby can be stressful. Are you a father?

(DARRYL catches a better glimpse of the young boy and studies the face for a long moment.)

DARRYL

That's Austin.

JUANITA

What?

(DARRYL tries to get to the body. COP pushes him back.)

DARRYL

The boy on the ground-- dead. That's our Austin. Can't you see that?

JUANITA

Austin is in my arms. That boy over there is ten or twelve years old.

(DARRYL has been completely transported to another place that only he can witness.)

DARRYL

He's twelve. His birthday was two days ago. We broke down and bought him that toy gun that he's been bugging us for. Don't you remember? That's all he could talk about wanting for his birthday. A want a toy gun, Mom A toy gun, Dad. A toy gun. A toy gun. A toy--

JUANITA

You're scaring me. Come back to the car and have a drink of water. It's been a long two days. Two days, Austin is only two days old. There's been no birthdays. That boy over there isn't ours.

(DARRYL tries to get to the body again. The COP holds DARRYL back by placing his hand against his chest. Back and forth pushing goes on between the two men. DARRYL gives up the attempt to get to the body.)

DARRYL

(To COP-MATTHEW)

What did you do?

COP - MATTHEW

Buddy, I need you to calm--

JUANITA

Darryl, take a deep breath like they told you--

DARRYL

Who shot him?

COP - MATTHEW

I'm not going to warn you again. Calm the fuck down and get back inside your car.

DARRYL

Was it you? Did you shoot my son? He was twelve year old boy.

(DIANE tries to pull DARRYL back away from the cop.)

DIANE

Sir, that can't be your son. Please come back to the car.

DARRYL

Get off of me.

(COP pulls out his gun.)

COP - MATTHEW

I need everybody to back the fuck up away from me and get back into your car.

DARRYL

You want to shoot me now?

(DIANE pulls out her cell phone. The COP swings his gun towards her sudden movement.)

DIANE

It's my phone. It's just my phone.

COP - MATTHEW

Put your fucking phone away and get back inside that car.

DIANE

You're escalating the situation, Sir.

COP - MATTHEW

(to Juanita)

Is your husband on any kind of medication or taken illegal drugs today?

JUANITA

My husband doesn't use drugs. Darryl, it's not Austin. Don't you see that? It's not possible. Please come back to the car--

(DARRYL breaks past the COP and wraps SIMON up in a tight hug. The COP swings his gun towards DARRYL.)

JUANITA (cont'd)

No! He has PTSD. Please don't.

DARRYL

They killed our son. We moved to this neighborhood because it was safe. Because it had a playground. Because it had a park. A park for children to pretend in. Isn't twelve years old still being a child? Isn't this park where he's supposed to play? Isn't this park where he's suppose to use his imagination? Be allowed to be whatever it is he wants to be inside this park. I never met a boy who didn't ask for a toy gun. Asking for it right before Christmas, or for his birthday or just asking to be asking for something. And you shot him. He was playing with a toy gun inside of a park. A park for him to pretend in. He wasn't pretending to be anything bad. He wasn't pretending to be anything wrong. Look what's on his chest. He drew it and I cut it out for him. It's big and yellow and sheriff is spelled out on in big black letters. Didn't you see that? Didn't those cops who shot him see that? Why didn't you see that he was pretending to be one of you? What did you see when you looked at my son? Because I see a twelve year old boy. Didn't you see that? Didn't you see that he still needed time to grow into his head? He's never going to get that chance. He's never going to grow into that big ass head that he got from me.

DARRYL (cont'd)

That he got from his daddy and I got from mine. He's never going to be able to give it to his son because you killed him.

(JUANITA crosses to DARRYL.)

JUANITA

Babe, Austin is not dead. He's okay. It hasn't been twelve years. It's only been two days. Austin is only two days old. That's all. Our son is safe.

(DARRYL releases SIMON from the hug and turns to Juanita.)

DARRYL

No. No, he's not. They've already chosen to kill our son.

(DARRYL rips the blanket from JUANITA'S arms and snaps it open. The blanket is empty.)

LIGHTS FADE:

LIGHTS UP:

SCENE TWELVE

A CHANGE OF HEART

*(MATTHEW PETERSON enters carrying a duffle bag.
DIANE PETERSON enters a few feet behind Matthew.
She carries a cake container. Both walk towards a
house. Both are disheveled from the three hour drive.)*

DIANE

Would it hurt you to wait for your wife?

MATTHEW

(annoyed obedience)

Waiting for the wife.

*(DIANE reaches a waiting MATTHEW and hands him
the cake container. She continues fussing with her hair
and putting herself back together.)*

DIANE

Why in the world are you dragging a duffle bag around with you?

MATTHEW

This duffle bag is between me and this Simon fellow we're about to meet.

DIANE

Simon fellow? Is that how you planning on addressing him? How do I look? Do I look nice?

MATTHEW

(looking everywhere but at Diane)

You look fine.

DIANE

It might help if you looked at me.

(MATTHEW takes a long look at his wife.)

MATTHEW

You've done the best that you can.

DIANE

Matthew! I want to look perfect. How about my hair? It must be a mess. Why did I wear yellow? I hate yellow. I should have worn the blue dress and black heels.

MATTHEW

You look fine. Why are you worried about the color of your dress?

DIANE

Tommy always liked when I made an effort. Remember the time I showed up to his baseball game in my curlers? He wanted to strangle me. "Mom, you looked like you just stepped out of a slasher movie!" Deranged Mother from Hell was the title he gave it. After that day, I promised to always dress my best for his games. He liked when I wore blue.

MATTHEW

We won't be seeing Tommy. We'll be seeing this Simon Morrison fellow. I thought you had that straight in your mind.

DIANE

It's straight in my mind. I bet he's tall with curly blonde hair.

MATTHEW

Diane.

DIANE

Do you think he'll have dimples like Tommy? Well, one dimple. Lord, how that used to bother your mother. She called it a birth defect. She thought the poor kid was a freak of nature because he only had one dimple. Meanwhile, your mother is the freak of nature. Thirty years as my mother-in-law and she thinks I haven't noticed her extra toe. Your mother should never wear flip flops, Matthew.

MATTHEW

It doesn't sound like you have it straight in your mind that you won't be seeing Tommy.

DIANE

It's straight in my mind.

MATTHEW

It doesn't sound like it. You haven't stopped talking about Tommy and this Simon fellow the entire ride out here. I wonder if Simon likes to play baseball. I wonder if Simon likes Three Days Grace. I wonder if Simon likes the crust cut off his sandwiches. Simon. Simon. Simon.

DIANE

That's who we drove all the way out here to meet. Is there something wrong with wondering what a person likes?

MATTHEW

Yes. Because all those things are what Tommy liked. This Simon fellow isn't going to be our Tommy. If you don't have that straight in your mind, we can get back into the car and go home.

DIANE

Tell me you wouldn't do that. We've waited two years for this. I know Tommy is gone. And I know this Simon fellow won't be our son. You don't have remind me, but does it hurt to hope that there might be something similar. Something that reminds us of Tommy. Something other than the fact that this Simon fellow is walking around with--

MATTHEW

Tommy's heart.

DIANE

Yes. Other than the fact that he's walking around with our son's heart in his chest.

(MATTHEW hands DIANE the cake container.

MATTHEW straightens DIANE'S dress a bit.)

MATTHEW

You look beautiful, Diane. Let's go meet Simon.

(MATTHEW and DIANE continue to the front door.

MATTHEW rings the bell.)

(SIMON - AS HIMSELF enters and opens the door.)

SIMON

Hi. You must be Mr. and Mrs. Peterson.

MATTHEW

Yes. Simon Morrison is expecting us.

SIMON

That's me. I'm Simon Morrison. It's nice to meet you both.

DIANE

You're not blonde.

SIMON

I beg your pardon?

MATTHEW

My wife was hoping you might be blonde.

SIMON

No, I'm not blonde. I'm guessing Tommy was.

(DIANE instinctively runs her hand through SIMON'S hair.)

DIANE

Beautiful golden blonde curls. I'm sorry. Tommy always hated when I did that. You have nice hair too. It's different but it's nice.

MATTHEW

Forgive my wife. I tried to warn her that it's possible you wouldn't be anything like our-- That you might not be blonde.

SIMON

Please, why don't the two of you come inside. I know it's been a long drive.

(MATTHEW and DIANE enter the home.)

DIANE

I baked you a cake.

(DIANE hands SIMON the cake container.)

SIMON

(excited)

I hope it's coconut. That's my favorite. *(catching his bad manners)* I mean, thank you. It was nice of you to bring it all this way.

MATTHEW

Coconut was Tommy's favorite.

DIANE

It's coconut. Isn't that a nice coincidence, Matthew?

MATTHEW

How do you like your peanut butter and jelly sandwiches?

SIMON

With the crust cut off.

MATTHEW

Tell me you like baseball.

SIMON

Not really. I wasn't able to play sports much.

DIANE

He doesn't have a dimple. You don't have a dimple.

SIMON

No. Should I?

DIANE

No, you shouldn't. Do you mind if I ask how you're feeling? Are you okay now?

SIMON

I've never felt better. Your son had a strong heart. I don't even know how to thank you. I should be the one baking you a cake. I should have drove the three hours.

MATTHEW

You didn't need to do anything for us, Tommy-- Sorry. Diane and I are just happy to meet you and check in on the old ticker. See how it's holding up.

DIANE

Matthew. Sorry. My husband is full of bad jokes and bad timing. Tommy would never bring home any of his girlfriends on account of it.

SIMON

Sounds like my pops. After the transplant, I had to stop going to restaurants with him. My dad would wait for me to place my order. Let the waitress walk away from our table and then call her back. "Sorry, Ma'am. My son had a change of heart. Can he get the pancakes?" I kept having to say, "Dad, they don't know I had a transplant. Only you get your joke."

(SIMON and MATTHEW share a laugh at the story.)

DIANE

That's not funny.

SIMON

I'm sorry. You're right. It's not. I shouldn't have retold it.

(MATTHEW hands SIMON the duffle bag.)

SIMON

You don't have to give me anything, Mr. Peterson.

MATTHEW

It's Tommy's cleats, his catcher's mitt, three hard-balls, two T-shirts, blue gym shorts, a fresh pair of socks, and a Three Musketeer bar. He was running late for his baseball game that day. He called and asked me to pack his duffle bag for him. Tommy was going to pick it up right after he got out of work, but he never made it home.

DIANE

You've been holding onto those things for two years?

MATTHEW

I promised him, Diane. Just beep is what I told him. I'll bring the bag out to you so you won't be late getting to the game. I've never broken a promise to my boy. That's why I've been lugging that bag around. I needed to bring it out to Tommy - somehow.

SIMON

Mr. Petterson, may I do something for you and your wife?

MATTHEW

Sure.

(SIMON allows the duffle bag to gently drop to the floor. He removes his shirt. A long scar runs down the center of his chest. SIMON picks up the duffle bag and lifts it over his head for six repetitions. After the sixth repetition, he leaves the duffle bag raised above his head.)

SIMON (cont'd)

Come listen to your son's heart.

LIGHTS FADE:

LIGHTS UP:

SCENE THIRTEEN

A CONCERN OF NATIONAL INTEREST

(SAMARIA enters and begins singing.)

SAMARIA

America America, God shed your grace on thee

Oh, say can you see by the dawn's early light

What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?

Whose broad stripes and bright stars thru the perilous fight,

O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?

And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,

Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.

Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave

O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

(ENSEMBLE ENTERS.)

(RICHARD interrupts SAMARIA.)

RICHARD

That ain't our song.

CARA

You can't sing that. America ain't for us.

DARRYL

You from the Motherland, Sistah'.

SAMARIA

Last I checked I was from Detroit, Michigan.

JUANITA

(to DARRYL)

Ain't your Black ass from Boulder, Colorado?

RICHARD

Boulder Colorado ain't got no Negros.

SIMON

That's 'cus they ain't had no cotton.

SAMARIA

Let me sing my song.

CARA

Home of the free? What America you singing about?

SIMON

Don't pay her no mind. Sing the song.

DIANE

You got the right.

SAMARIA

I earned that right.

SIMON

Off the backs of the black domestic.

DIANE

On the balcony of the Lorraine Motel.

JUANITA

In the belly of a slave ship.

MATTHEW

You think them slaves were singing God shed your grace on thee?

DARRYL

They were singing God Damn America.

RICHARD

Nigga, you trying to get us lynched?

SAMARIA

You still using that word?

DIANE

They buried that word when Obama took office.

DARRYL

45 and Mitch McConnell turned around and dug it back up.

MATTHEW

Make America Great Again.

CARA

Great for who?

DARRYL

Damn sure not for you.

RICHARD

Or them migrant children they got locked up in cages.

MATTHEW

Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free.

CARA

But your tired and your poor and your huddled masses better be pushing off the shores of Norway.

DARRYL

Or wherever our fashionista First Lady was born.

RICHARD

Didn't she used to do porn?

DARRYL

Used to?

CARA

But they still mad at Michelle for baring her beautiful black arms.

MATTHEW

You still want to sing that song?

DIANE

She's got the right.

SAMARIA

I earned that right.

RICHARD

Didn't we just have this conversation?

CARA

Whose back did she earn it off of this time?

DARRYL

Who died on what balcony on what night?

MATTHEW

Don't that seem to always be the case?

RICHARD

Why a Black man always got to die to prove his love for this country?

MATTHEW

World I--

RICHARD

And II.

DARRYL

And his son still had to drink out of the colored only fountain.

SAMARIA

It's not only Black men who bled for this country.

CARA

Four little girls in Birmingham.

SAMARIA

Myrlie Evers.

CARA

Diane Nash.

DIANE

Ella Baker.

SAMARIA

Betty Shabazz.

JUANITA

Why is the Black man always leaving out the Black woman when talking about our struggle?

RICHARD

Here we go with that shit.

JUANITA

Yeah, here we go with that shit.

SIMON

No. We ain't going anywhere with that shit.

DARRYL

Separating the Black man from the Black woman was the master plan.

SIMON

And y'all working overtime to keep it going.

DARRYL

Even I can agree with that shit.

SIMON

(to DARRYL with a fist bump)

My brotha'.

DIANE

Go on and sing your song.

SAMARIA

I got the right.

SIMON

She earned that right.

JUANITA

And put some soul into it.

CARA

Ain't that how we do?

SIMON

Took that stale classical music and turned it into the blues.

DIANE

Jazz.

SAMARIA

Gospel.

JUANITA

Hip-Hop.

CARA

Iggy Azalea.

DARRYL

The constant appropriation of the Black man's innovations.

RICHARD

He means stole, right?

MATTHEW

Hijacked by Elvis.

CARA

Ripped off by Pat Boone.

DARRYL

You been to Harlem lately?

CARA

(blissfully happy)

It's so nice there. They got a Whole Foods market. *(remembering the crime)* I mean, you been to Harlem lately?

DIANE

You can't take the Black out of Harlem.

MATTHEW

You sure as hell can price it out. You been to Leimert Park lately?

DARRYL

Where them Negros supposed to move to now?

CARA

No Negros allowed.

DIANE

We fought that fight and won. The Fair Housing Act of 1968.

CARA

Have you seen the new Supreme Court pick?

MATTHEW

All that shit is about to be rolled the fuck back.

DARRYL

Send in the police to keep the peace.

RICHARD

Keep us in our place is more like it.

DARRYL

Can't play music at a gas station.

RICHARD

Can't laugh and drink on a wine tour.

CARA

Can't barbecue on a Sunday afternoon in the park.

DARRYL

You can't even relax in your own apartment.

RICHARD

You just can't be black.

CARA

You just can't be black.

MATTHEW

You still want to sing that song?

SIMON

Don't y'all love America?

DARRYL

I don't love shit that don't love me back.

RICHARD

America loves you. It's the GOP that hates ya Black ass.

MATTHEW

Somebody better tell Ben Carson that.

CARA

He Black?

RICHARD

Nigga 'bout to find out.

SAMARIA

That word, Man. That word.

DARRYL

It ain't his word. It's America's word.

CARA

The same America you want God to shed his grace on.

MATTHEW

Your home sweet home?

DIANE

Where else would she call home?

DARRYL

Aye Dunamba, Kobanfi, Sabaro, Dunamba.

DARRYL / RICHARD

Africa.

CARA / MATTHEW

Africa.

SIMON

What's the address?

JUANITA/ DIANE

What's the address?

DARRYL

Ask America to check her slave records.

SIMON

I am the dream of the slave.

JUANITA

Educated, strong and proud.

CARA

Brought forth by The Great Migration.

SIMON

Lumberton, North Carolina

DARRYL

Birmingham, Alabama.

CARA

Perry, Georgia.

RICHARD

Boston, Massachusetts.

MATTHEW

Boston, Massachusetts?

DARRYL

They had slaves too.

SIMON

Go on and sing your song.

(SIMON exits.)

SAMARIA

I have the right.

To be Black is to be Red, White, and Blue.

Is this our country? Is that our song?

SAMARIA (cont'd)

Pose that question while staring up at the barrel of Harriet Tubman's shotgun.
Post that question to the swing of Ella Fitzgerald.
The strut of Cab Calloway.
The screams of Emmett Till.
Check our inventory
What makes a nation is not what she leaves you, but what you leave her.
Unpaid labor.
Crispus Attucks being the first to fall.
"Ain't I a Woman" by Sojourner Truth.
We went from the set back of Dred Scott to the 44th President.
If you think any of that is just bad or sad,
Call in Louis Armstrong to blow away the blues.
A Spelman's tuition paid with a Pullman Porter's wage.
Don't forget the shoe shine boys, popping that rag and making everybody glad.
Do I need to continue reviewing Black people's inventory?
Quincy Jones is enough alone.
But for extra measure we gave her "Still I Rise" and "Their Eyes Were Watching God".
Sprinkle in the minds of George Washington Carver, Percy Julian and their legacy Neil deGrasse Tyson.
Have I introduced you to the William Sisters?
And it's not only the famous:
Josephine Baker, Langston Hughes, Barbara Jordan.

*(SIMON - AS TRAYVON MARTIN enters with the red
white and blue noose.)*

SAMARIA (cont'd)

It's about the barber shop owners, the factory workers, the cooks and the maids.
Your grandmother, your sister, my Aunt Sissy-boo.

(SIMON takes off his hoodie and removes the Confederate flag face covering. He hands these two items along with the red white and blue noose to SAMARIA.)

SAMARIA (cont'd)

To be Black is to be red, white and blue.

Who deserves more than me to sing that song?

Who deserves more than we to sing that song?

(SAMARIA throws the hoodie, Confederate flag face covering and noose se against the wall. FREEDOM by Common and John Legend begins to play (or an original composition evoking the same power.)

BLACKOUT

END OF PLAY