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Bamboozled

By Spike Lee

INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

WE are in the living quarters of PIERRE DELACROIX. The windows overlook the Brooklyn Promenade and the majestic lower Manhattan skyline.

DELACROIX (V.O.)

Bonjour, my name is Pierre Delacroix.

I'm a television writer, also a showrunner, a creative person.

We see a tall figure move in and around the space.

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I'm one of those people responsible for what you view on your idiot box.

CLOSE ON:

Monogrammed cuff sleeve - the initials P.D.

2.

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The problem is not enough of you have been watching.

CLOSE ON:

Monogrammed shirt pocket - the initials P.D.

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

With the onslaught of the internet, video and interactive games, nine hundred channels to choose from and whatnot, our valued audience has dramatically eroded.

CLOSE ON:

Razor cuts a path through a white foam on a black face.

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

To put it in much more simple terms...

Delacroix YELLS.

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Like rats fleeing a sinking ship.

CLOSE ON:

The handsome face of Pierre Delacroix.

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

People tuning out by the millions.

Delacroix turns to the CAMERA and addresses US.

DELACROIX (CONT'D)

Which is not good.

EXT. TENEMENT - LOWER EAST SIDE - MORNING

The tenement building is boarded up, condemned, bombed out, but a home, a shelter nonetheless.

INT. TENEMENT - MORNING

People to our surprise live in here. It is a commune. The homeless, people who have been left out, forgot about, written off, and don't matter. The fringes of society.

CHEEBA, a skinny Puerto Rican male, tries to wake a slumbering body under a mass of old newspapers.

3.

CHEEBA:

Yo, let's get to it. You don't dance, we don't eat. Simple as that.

The mass begins to move.

CHEEBA (CONT'D)

That's right. We slow. We blow.

We snooze. We lose.

INT. CNS TOWER - MORNING

MANRAY, a young African-American dread-lock male, and Cheeba are getting set up in front of the entrance to the CONTINENTAL NETWORK SYSTEM building. CNS is one of the fledgling, upstart new networks, trying to battle with ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX, WB, and UPN.

ANGLE ON:

Entrance. Cheeba is putting the portable floor down on the sidewalk. Manray sits on the curb, taking the sneakers off and putting on his tap shoes; bottle caps are on the soles of the shoes instead of real taps.

CHEEBA:

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

I know everybody is in a hurry to work, ready to begin another day in this rat race. But don't sleep us.

I'm Cheeba and I introduce to you the world renown MANRAY, the man with the educated feet.

Manray takes a small bow. A few, not many, people have stopped to look.

CHEEBA (CONT'D)

As we continue our world wind tour,

we would like to give you a little somethin', somethin' before you go off to make that money. I give you Manray.

CLOSE ON:

Manray, who starts to do his thing, and when he starts doing his thing attention must be paid.

ANGLE ON:

Crowd, as Manray gets busy, people gather to watch.

ANGLE ON:

4.
Delacroix, he is about to walk into the CNS building but stops to check out Manray.

CLOSE ON:

Manray, he pounds out some intricate steps and freezes at the end of the move.

ANGLE ON:

Crowd, who applaud as Cheeba unfolds a brown shopping bag and holds it out in front of them.

CHEEBA (CONT'D)

Thank you very much but please don't go without giving us some cheddar, cheese, money. We prefer two's than fews.

People are digging into their pockets.

CHEEBA (CONT'D)

I would like to add that both of us are homeless. Not that it means anything.

A WOMAN is about to dump some change in the brown paper bag.

CHEEBA (CONT'D)

I said homeless. Ladies and gentlemen. Senorita, do you know what that means?

Cheebea looks at her and she quickly pulls out a 5-spot from her purse and drops it into the bag.

CHEEBA (CONT'D)

Muchos gracias.

Cheebea works his way over to Delacroix.

DELACROIX:

Good morning, Cheeba.

CHEEBA:

Good morning to you, Mr. Delapot.

DELACROIX:

De-la-croix.

CHEEBA:

Y'know what I mean. Got a gig yet
for Manray and I yet?

5.

DELACROIX:

Not yet.

Delacroix hands Cheeba a ten dollar bill.

CHEEBA:

Gracias.

Delacroix moves towards the revolving doors of CNS.

DELACROIX:

Manray, Sloan says you're too
talented to be dancing on the street.

MANRAY:

Well do something about it.

INT. ELEVATOR - MORNING

Delacroix is the lone person of color in the elevator.

INT. CNS - MORNING

Delacroix gets off the elevator, takes out his ID, slips it
through the scanner and enters the reception area of CNS.

DELACROIX:

Good morning, Marie.

MARIE:

It's not gonna be a good morning
for you if you don't get into
Dunwitty's staff meeting.

DELACROIX:

What staff meeting?

MARIE:

The staff meeting that started 30 minutes ago.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

Delacroix walks, or better yet, slithers into the staff meeting that is already in progress. TWENTY WRITERS sit around an oval table, all are Caucasian except Delacroix, again he's the lone person of color, the "fly in the buttermilk."

DUNWITTY, Senior V.P. of the Entertainment Division of CNS looks at Delacroix and waits for him to sit down before he continues.

6.

DUNWITTY:

Monsieur Delacroix, this very important meeting commenced...

Dunwitty looks at his Rolex Chronograph - Daytona Model.

DUNWITTY (CONT'D)

...exactly thirty-two minutes ago.

DUNWITTY:

I'm sorry I'm late.

DUNWITTY:

Do you know how much information can be dispensed in one minute alone?

DELACROIX:

I didn't find out about this very important staff meeting until...

Delacroix looks at his Jaeger-LeCoultre.

DELACROIX (CONT'D)

Four minutes ago.

DUNWITTY:

So are you telling me everyone knew about this get-together except you?

DELACROIX:

I wasn't told about this until Marie informed me as soon as I got

off the elevator.

All eyes are on Delacroix and he feels it.

DUNWITTY:

People, you can attempt to pull a Rodman like our friend Delacroix, but I guarantee you'll be sent packing just like him.

Dunwitty via remote turns off the lights and turns on an overhead projector.

DUNWITTY (CONT'D)

These are the standings. Read 'em and weep. As you can plainly see the Continental Network System is languishing.

CLOSE ON:

Ratings charts.

7.

DUNWITTY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Look at 'em people. We are BOOTY, CA CA. We are DOO-DOO. Doo-doo on a stick, if you will.

CLOSE ON:

Dunwitty.

DUNWITTY (CONT'D)

I do not like to be the laughing stock of the broadcast industry. I have pride and people, you better start getting some too. These numbers have to go up.

Dunwitty turns on the lights. JOAN, one of the writers, raises her hand.

DUNWITTY (CONT'D)

Question?

JOAN:

So what do you want us to do?

DUNWITTY:

What I want everyone to do is write some material that is FUNNY. The junk you've been writing is about

as funny as a dead baby. It's not
funny, it's not new. It's not sexy.
It, it, it...

CLOSE ON:

Fish.

FISH:

Sucks.

ANGLE ON:

Conference room.

DUNWITTY:

SUCKS. Thank you, Fish. This
meeting is over but I want everyone
to seriously think about what I
said and how you can deliver.
People scurry out.

DUNWITTY (CONT'D)

Monsieur Delacroix, in my office now.
8.

INT. HALLWAY - MORNING

The writers, beat down, come out of the conference room and
move past SLOAN HOPKINS, a highly attractive African-
American "sistuh."

Delacroix sees Sloan and holds her arm as they walk. He
talks under his breath.

SLOAN:

How was it?

DELACROIX:

Why didn't you tell me about this
staff meeting?

SLOAN:

Nobody told me anything.

DELACROIX:

What good are you if you don't tell
me stuff like this?

SLOAN:

It wasn't my fault. If I would have known, I would have known.

INT. DUNWITTY'S OFFICE - MORNING

Delacroix enters his corner office, which has huge action photos of ALI, JORDAN, GRIFFEY, TYSON, AARON and JABBAR on his walls, it is also decorated with African art throughout.

ANGLE ON:

Office. Dunwitty looks at the floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking mid-town Manhattan.

DUNWITTY:

Do you know what C.P. Time is?

DELACROIX:

C.P. Time is Colored People's Time.

The stereotypical belief that Negroes are always late. That Negroes have no sense of time - time except when it comes to music or dance.

They both laugh.

DUNWITTY:

Let's sit down over there.

9.

Dunwitty and Delacroix sit on the sofa.

DUNWITTY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about my blowup but I have to have a whipping boy every meeting.

DELACROIX:

I understand. But again, in all honesty I was not informed.

DUNWITTY:

Forget it. I believe you're my most creative person I've got on staff. You're hip. You know what's happening. I got some corny white boys and girls writing for me.

Delacroix doesn't join him in his laughter because he doesn't know how to take that comment or where Dunwitty is

headed with it.

DUNWITTY (CONT'D)

I understand Black culture. I grew up around black people all my life. If the truth be told I probably know "niggers" better than you, Monsieur Delacroix. Please don't get offended by my use of the quote-unquote N word. I got a black wife and three bi-racial children, so I feel I have a right to use that word. I don't give a damn what Spike says, Tarantino is right. Nigger is just a word. If Dirty Ole Bastard can use it every other word so can I.

DELACROIX:

I would prefer you not use that word in my presence.

DUNWITTY:

NIGGER. NIGGER. NIGGER. NIGGER.

Delacroix pounces on top of Dunwitty like a cat on a mouse and gives him a quick BROOKLYN BEAT DOWN.

DELACROIX:

Say it again. C'mon, say it again.

CLOSE ON:

Dunwitty. He's a bloody pulp.

10.

CLOSE ON:

Delacroix.

He straightens his tie.

DELACROIX (CONT'D)

Who's a nigger now?

POW. This is a fantasy in Delacroix's mind. We go BACK TO REALITY. Everything's how we left it.

DUNWITTY:

The material you've been creating is too white bread. White people

with black faces. The Huxtable's, Cosby, revolutionary. But that's dead. We can't go down that road again.

DELACROIX:

I don't agree. The Negro middle class does exist, and it's rich material for a dramatic series or sitcom.

DUNWITTY:

I'm telling you it's not.

He goes to his desk, picks up Delacroix's scripts and starts throwing them one by one against the window.

DUNWITTY (CONT'D)

The middle class black family moves into a white suburban enclave. The middle class black family moves into a small Southern town that is run by the KKK. The middle class single black father raises his teenage daughter. The middle class single black father raises his teenage daughter. The middle class single black mother raises her teenage son. And so on and so forth. It's too clean, too antiseptic...

DELACROIX:

...to white? I still feel all of my scripts would make good shows.

11.

DUNWITTY:

Delacroix, wake up, brother man.

The reason why they didn't get picked up was because nobody - and I mean NOBODY - niggers and crackers alike wants to see that junk.

DELACROIX:

I've never been given a fair shot.

DUNWITTY:

You got your head stuck up your ass with your Harvard education and your pretentious ways. Brother man, I'm blacker than you. I'm keepin' it real and you're frontin', trying to be white.

DELACROIX:

I'm an oreo, a sell out? Because I don't aspire to do HOMEBOYS FROM OUT OF SPACE, SECRET DIARY OF DESMOND PFEIFFER, A PJ's or some as you might put it, some "nigger" show? I'm a Tom? I'm whiter than white and you're blacker than black? Is that what you think?

DUNWITTY:

That's exactly what I think. I want you to create something that people want to see. Let's be honest, the majority of the people in the country are deaf, dumb and blind and I'm including 35 million African-Americans. You know and I know "niggers" set the trend, set the styles. This is a golden opportunity now. These idiots have to be led to the water.

DELACROIX:

I'm not sure if I can deliver what you want.

DUNWITTY:

You will or you'll be back at BET so quick you'll never know what hit you. I need a mid-season replacement and pronto. It will be on the fast track.

12.

DELACROIX:

What is it you want from me? Some plantation follies? Some sitcom that takes place on a watermelon patch? Some show that follows four nigger generations of junkies and crackheads? You want me to go back to the ante bellum days?

DUNWITTY:

Yes! Yes! Yes! I want a show that will make headlines, that will have millions and millions of households tuned in, glued to their televisions every week. I want advertisers dying to buy on this show. I'm gonna squeeze this show out of you if it kills you.

EXT. TENEMENT - NIGHT

WE SEE a street lamp, and coming out of it are some wires. WE FOLLOW the wires into a tenement building.

The residents have tapped into a street light courtesy of CON EDISON for power.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Cheeba stands in front of the makeshift kitchen, which includes a hot plate, and prepares a gourmet meal of a tasty Spanish dish. The clean apartment is furnished with stuff people have thrown out that they picked up on the street.

MANRAY:

I'm starvin' like Marvin.

CHEEBA:

My world famous, famous world Arroz con pollo will be ready very soon.

MANRAY:

Hurry up, I wanna watch HBO.

CHEEBA:

Did we get our bill yet?
They both laugh.

MANRAY:

I guess that will come with the rent, gas, and Con Ed bills, too.

13.

CHEEBA:

Ahh, the luxuries of life.

MANRAY:

Yo, check it. This is good and all that but one day soon I want to have much Benjamins so I can have a nice crib and pay all my bills. You hear me.

CHEEBA:

Chill, I'm the brains behind this outfit.

MANRAY:

And I'm the feet.

CHEEBA:

Yo, you gotta show some patience. You want me to snap my fingers and presto chango - you're an overnight sensation. Son, there is no such thing.

MANRAY:

I'm tired of waiting.

INT. DELACROIX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He sits in front of a large flat-screen television, watching the Yankee game and eating his takeout Chinese food. On top of the monitor, he has attached a sign that reads "FEED THE IDIOT BOX."

INT. SLOAN'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

She sits in front of her television, hand on remote, flipping channels and eating takeout Chinese food.

INT. CHEEBA AND MANRAY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

They both are devouring the chicken with rice, as they watch bootleg HBO.

INT. DELACROIX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Delacroix sits at his desk, a ream of white bond paper in front of him, a box of number-two pencils and an electric

pencil sharpener.

DELACROIX (V.O.)

I was never good at performing
under the gun.

14.

CLOSE:

Pencil after pencil gets inserted and sharpened to a knife
like point.

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Well, this wasn't a gun, it was a
bazooka and it was pressed dead
blank right against my dome.

CLOSE ON:

Delacroix, staring at the blank ream of paper. It is very
intimidating.

CLOSE ON:

Monitor. Bernie Williams is at the plate for the New York
Yankees.

CLOSE ON:

Sign atop monitor. Again, it reads "FEED THE IDIOT BOX."

INT. SLOAN'S STUDIO APARTMENT

She too is blank. A screen saver bobs and weaves on her
laptop.

INT. DELACROIX'S APARTMENT

Delacroix grabs a pencil and put it to paper.

CLOSE ON:

Paper. He doodles.

INT. TENEMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Manray screws out the bare light bulb which is the sole
source of illumination and lays down onto his mattress on
the floor.

INT. SLOAN'S STUDIO APARTMENT

Sloan closes her laptop and jumps into her bed.

INT. DELACROIX'S APARTMENT

Delacroix is already in the bed, the lights are out.

CLOSE ON:

Delacroix, who's wide awake.

15.

INT. TENEMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Manray and Cheeba are both sound asleep.

CLOSE ON:

Cheeba, he has a sheet pulled over his head.

CLOSE ON:

Manray, who's sawing logs, snoring loudly.

OFF-SCREEN, WE HEAR A RUCKUS, A BIG COMMOTION. VOICES
yelling. Police sirens, cars and trucks.

ANGLE ON:

Apartment. Cheeba and Manray run to the window and look out.

THEIR POV:

The street is filled with police cars, vans and wagons.
Helicopters hover overhead with their searchlights on the
building.

CHEEBA:

Oh snap! It's a raid!

Cheeba and Manray jump into their cloths.

EXT. TENEMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Cops in riot gear storm into the tenement. A police chief
barks over a speaker system.

POLICE CHIEF:

Please evacuate this building. All
of you are illegal residents of
this condemned building. Please
leave immediately, by order of the
Mayor of New York City, Rudolph
Giuliani.

INT. TENEMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Stairwell. It's bedlam. The hundreds of SQUATTERS who have
been living here all making a bad dash trying to flee the
NYPD as they "bumrush the show."

ANGLE ON:

Floor. Cheeba and Manray try to push against the crowd.

16.

CHEEBA:

Not this way. Out through the fire

escape.

The COPS are running up the staircase. People try to escape with as many of their belongings that they can hold.

MANRAY:

My tap shoes.

INT. DELACROIX'S APARTMENT

DELACROIX:

EUREKA!!

He jumps out of bed.

INT. SLOAN'S STUDIO APARTMENT

SLOAN:

Oh my God!!!

She too jumps out of bed.

EXT. TENEMENT BUILDING

It is a MADHOUSE, BEDLAM. It's PANDEMONIUM. The Squatters are being seized as soon as they come out of the tenement. Searchlights go back and forth, as the cops make their arrests and fill the "Paddy" wagons.

ANGLE ON:

Street. The Squatters are like ROACHES in a dark kitchen at night, scrambling as the lights turn on. Do you remember those old "RAID" commercials. "Let's scram, IT'S RAID!!!"

INT. DELACROIX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The phone rings.

CUT TO SPLIT SCREEN

CU OF DELACROIX AND SLOAN

Delacroix picks it up. They yell in unison.

DELACROIX:

Manray!

SLOAN:

Manray!

17.

DELACROIX:

How did you know?

SLOAN:

It hit me like a ton of bricks.

DELACROIX:

How can this be? You and me at the same time, the exact same thought. It's scary.

SLOAN:

The idea was out there in the universe. Now what?

INT. TENEMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Cheebea and Manray run down the fire escape and just elude a group of cops.

ANGLE ON:

Fence. They lay still as the Fuzz run past them.

MANRAY:

We ran out without my shoes and the floor. I gotta get my stuff. What about our savings?

CHEEBA:

Are you crazy? The joint is crawling with cops now. You wanna go to Rikers? Go to the hoosegow? Manray looks at his friend, he knows he is right, at least this time.

EXT. CNS BUILDING - EARLY MORNING

Delacroix and Sloan sip hot coffee as they stand in front of their office building.

DELACROIX:

Manray was under our nose the whole time.

SLOAN:

Do you know how you will use him?

DELACROIX:

Not yet, but this thing will never get made.

18.

SLOAN:

You lost me.

DELACROIX:

Dunwitty wants a Coon show. And that's what I'm going to give him, it's going to be so racist, so negative, he won't have the balls to put it on the air. Hence I'll prove my point.

SLOAN:

What point is that?

DELACROIX:

The point being that him, the networks don't want Black people on television unless they are buffoons.

SLOAN:

Sounds risky to me.

DELACROIX:

You getting cold feet?

SLOAN:

I'm in till the end.

DELACROIX:

Good. I'm going to need your support.

SLOAN:

Can't you just quit? Walk away?

DELACROIX:

And lose out on my money? The only way I get paid is if I get fired. And that's what I intend to do.

EXT. CNS BUILDING - NEW DAY

It is pouring rain and Delacroix and Sloan huddle under an umbrella.

DELACROIX (V.O.)

Everything was going according to plan. I was working on the outline.

Dunwitty was off my back for now.

CLOSE ON:

Delacroix.

19.

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But there was a catch. A big catch.

CLOSE ON:

Sloan.

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Manray and Cheeba were nowhere to be found.

EXT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - DAY

Manray and Cheeba are soaking wet. They stand together in a doorway, trying to stay out of the elements.

ANGLE ON:

Street. They run in the downpour.

DELACROIX (V.O.)

It was like they had disappeared off the face of the earth.

CLOSE ON:

Cheeba.

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I had no contact numbers, no address, no beeper.

CLOSE ON:

Manray.

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

No nuthin', no clues...

EXT. CNS BUILDING - NEXT MORNING

It is a sunny and pleasant morning. Again, Sloan and Delacroix hold vigil.

SLOAN:

Maybe something happened to them.

Maybe they're lying in an alley

bleed to death.

DELACROIX:

Manray better not be bleeding to

death. I need him. After we're done he can do whatever he wants to do, until then, he's ours.

20.

SLOAN:

You're beginning to sound like Dunwitty.

EXT. TENEMENT BUILDING - MORNING

Manray and Cheeba stand across the street from their former residence. All of the doors and windows have been boarded up and two cops stand watch. They both look defeated, dirty and hungry.

INT. CNS LOBBY - NEXT DAY

Sloan gets off the elevator and sees a skirmish. TWO SECURITY GUARDS are trying to escort Manray and Cheeba out of the building.

CHEEBA:

His name is Delapoint.

SECURITY GUARD #1

WE have no one by that name.

CHEEBA:

Delapot. Dela-something.

SECURITY GUARD #2

De La Soul ain't here either.

Let's go. Out. Off the premises.

Manray turns around and sees Sloan.

MANRAY:

Sloan! She knows us.

The security guard stops.

SLOAN:

It's alright. They are associates of Mr. Delacroix.

SECURITY GUARD #1

Sorry, Ms. Hopkins. They both walked in off the street without an appointment.

SECURITY GUARD #2

Do you need an escort?

SLOAN:

That won't be needed.

21.

INT. DELACROIX'S OFFICE - DAY

He sits in front of his TV and watches a tape of the old "Amos 'n' Andy" show. Sloan leads Manray and Cheeba in.

DELACROIX:

Eureka! Where've you been?

He hugs them both.

DELACROIX (CONT'D)

Sloan and I have been looking all over for you.

CHEEBA:

You'd take no offense if we called you DeLa for short?

DELACROIX:

No offense.

CHEEBA:

Manray needs a job.

Delacroix smiles at Sloan.

MANRAY:

We got evicted from our home.

We've both been on the streets for the last week.

CHEEBA:

We was coming to see you.

MANRAY:

If it's not too much trouble could you order us some food?

CHEEBA:

We're starving.

DELACROIX:

I apologize. What would you like to eat? Anything you want.

TIME CUT:

INT. DELACROIX'S OFFICE - DAY

A feast of McDonald's is taking place. Cheeba and Manray are stuffing Big Macs, Fish Deluxes and large french fries into their mouths. They were famished.

22.

DELACROIX:

I have this concept for a TV pilot. There's no guarantee it will get made but regardless, you'll still make some money.

CHEEBA:

How much?

DELACROIX:

First things first. I have to know if Manray is up for this.

MANRAY:

What do I have to do?

DELACROIX:

Some tap dancing, some singing.

MANRAY:

Where do I sign?

CHEEBA:

What kind of show is this gonna be?

DELACROIX:

Different.

MANRAY:

How different?

DELACROIX:

Trust me. Of course I still have to pitch it to my boss, but we'll have an answer one way or the other.

MANRAY:

DeLa, I'm aboard. As long as I get to hoof and get paid too!!!

DELACROIX:

That's right. Money turns the wheel.

CHEEBA:

What about in the mean time? Not the in between time?

DELACROIX:

You'll both get an advance and you can stay with me.

MANRAY:

Bet.

23.

DELACROIX:

I would like to change your name.

MANRAY:

To what?

DELACROIX:

You're now Mantan.

MANRAY:

Mantan? I don't even care as long as I'm dancing. Which reminds me, I need some new kicks.

EXT. BROADWAY - DAY

Manray holds two Capezio shopping bags of shoes as he walks next to Sloan.

MANRAY:

I never had a really real pair before.

SLOAN:

You've never had any formal training, either?

MANRAY:

Not a class, not a thing, just
picked stuff up by myself.

SLOAN:

I wish I had your natural talent.
God only makes that visit once in a
while.

MANRAY:

You sing and dance?

SLOAN:

A little. I just graduated from
NYU film school. Cinema studies.

MANRAY:

So what's up with you and DeLa?

SLOAN:

What do you mean?

MANRAY:

Are you and him kicking it?
Knocking boots.
Y'knowwhatI'mtalkin'bout.

24.

SLOAN:

No, we're not knocking boots. I
got this internship while I still
was at NYU, DeLa was impressed with
my get up and go and hired me to be
his assistant.

MANRAY:

I'm sure that was the only thing he
was impressed with. You look
beautiful like that.

SLOAN:

If that was suppose to be a
compliment, I thank you.

MANRAY:

You're welcome. You shouldn't give up on performing.

SLOAN:

Why do you say that? You've never seen me.

MANRAY:

I think that would probably make you the happiest. When I'm hoofing, I mean really doing my thing, hitting it, nothing compares to that feeling in the world.

SLOAN:

I envy you. That's the way I want to feel about my work.

EXT. HARLEM STREET - NIGHT

Sloan walks from the subway to her block.

ANGLE ON:

Street. A huge black Chevy Suburban follows her, all the windows are tinted jet black, you cannot see it all into it. She notices the vehicle and starts to walk faster.

ANGLE ON:

Corner. As Sloan tries to cross at the corner, the Suburban pulls up in front of her, blocking her path.

ANGLE ON:

Suburban. A tall black man jumps out of the Chevy. This is BIG BLACK.

25.

BIG BLACK:

Li'l Sister.

ANGLE ON:

Corner.

SLOAN:

You idiot. You almost gave me a massive coronary.

BIG BLACK:

I didn't mean to scare you like that.

SLOAN:

Well you did.

BIG BLACK:

Give me some?

SLOAN:

I'm not huggin' you in the middle
of the street. You must be crazy,
Julius.

BIG BLACK:

Whoa, hold up li'l sis'. I done
told you 'bout that. Julius ain't
my name, you better recognize
Hopkins was our slave name. My
true name is...

SLOAN:

I'm not callin you Big Black Africa.
Mommy and Daddy named you Julius.

BIG BLACK:

BIG BLACK is the first name and
AFRICA is the last.

He hugs her, she becomes lost in his huge arms and laughs.

INT. SLOAN'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Big Black is rummaging through his sister's refrigerator.

BIG BLACK:

Damn, Sis, you don't keep no food
up in here in dis' piece.

SLOAN:

I order out mostly. So what do I
owe this visit to?

26.

BIG BLACK:

My group we need some exposure.
Was wondering if you could hook a

brother up?

SLOAN:

Hook you up? The Mau-Mau's? You must be smoking. Why in the world would I want to hook up a bunch of red, black and green flag-waving pseudo revolutionairies?

BIG BLACK:

So now I see where you're coming from. Just because we ain't rapping about Gucci, Timberland, Rolex, Benz, Cristal, ho's and bitches, we're pseudo.

SLOAN:

Who are you revolting against?

BIG BLACK:

We're revolting against the powers that be, that been enslaving the minds and hearts of all people of color. And we won't stop rapping till we bring about the overthrow of the government of the U.S. of A.

SLOAN:

Please.

BIG BLACK:

If you were really down you would get us together with that boss of yours. What's his name again?

SLOAN:

Delacroix.

BIG BLACK:

Yeah, him.

SLOAN:

What makes you think he would write a show about the Mau-Mau's.

BIG BLACK:

C'mon, why not? The Monkees had a show. Look at all that other junk that's on TV. We got underground cult following.

27.

SLOAN:

You don't have the demographics.

BIG BLACK:

So are you telling me that you wouldn't even introduce me to Delacroix or set up a meeting? I'm talking 'bout me, your only brother, ya own flesh and blood, hook a brother up, youknowwhatI'msayin'.

SLOAN:

That'swhatI'msayin'. I'm not blowin' my young career, brother or no brother, for you or anybody else.

BIG BLACK:

There is a name, a term for your kind, the likes of you. Back in slavery days, you would be classified as a house nigga.

SLOAN:

If you think I'm a house nigga then that's your prerogative. You got your ways to affect change, I have mine. And I would appreciate it very much if you took ya field nigga ass out of my house.

BIG BLACK:

My own sister throwin' me out. I hope to seeya later when you get ya mind right. Don't bother letting me out.

SLOAN:

That's mighty black of you.

Big Black slams the door.

INT. DUNWITTY'S OFFICE - MORNING

One by one, the team enters the office and sits down on the sofa.

DUNWITTY:

Delacroix, I'm glad you got your mind right.

DELACROIX:

It's right and tight. Good morning, let me introduce you to everybody. You know my assistant, Sloan.

28.

SLOAN:

Hello.

DELACROIX:

This is Cheeba.

CHEEBA:

Nice to meet you.

DELACROIX:

And this is Manray.

MANRAY:

How do you do?

DUNWITTY:

Good. I like the names. Very theatrical.

DELACROIX:

We're all happy to be here and I'm going to paint a picture for you.

DUNWITTY:

I'm wid it.

DELACROIX:

I've done a lot of soul searching and once again you are right. In my previous work it's been all surface, superficial. I have never really dug deep. Not anymore. As Mark Twain fully understood satire is the way. Race has always been a hot button in this country's history and it needs to be pushed harder. If we are ever to live side by side in peace and harmony. It's about promoting racial healing.

DUNWITTY:

Go on. Good so far.

DELACROIX:

I know you're familiar with minstrel shows. They came about at the turn of the 19th century. It was a variety show in which the talent was in blackface - singing, dancing, telling jokes, doing skits.

Dunwitty, I ask you when was the last time there was a good variety show on the air. Carol Burnett?

HeeHaw?

29.

DUNWITTY:

Word!!!

DELACROIX:

So let's take this great form, this very American tradition of entertainment into the 21st century, into the new millennium.

DUNWITTY:

The name of the show?

DELACROIX:

It is called:

MILLENNIUM MINSTREL SHOW.

DUNWITTY:

I'm lovin' it. You know how I know?
Because I'm getting a boner, my
Johnson is hard, no disrespect my
sister.

Dunwitty starts walking around his office, pumping his fist.

DUNWITTY (CONT'D)

I'm feelin' dis'!

DELACROIX:

It will take a lot of courage and
backbone on the part of the CNS to
get this on the air. In fact, I
would understand fully if the
subject matter is deemed too
risque, too controversial.

DUNWITTY:

Don't worry about that, that's my
department. Now who do we cast?
We need a star. Can Whoopi sing or
dance?

DELACROIX:

I don't know if Whoopi is the way
to go.

DUNWITTY:

Are these our two stars, sitting
here in front of my nose? Which
one is Mantan again?

MANTAN:

That's me.

30.

DELACROIX:

And Cheeba is Sleep 'n' Eat.

CLOSE ON:

Cheeba. A look of surprise is on his face. Complete, utter
surprise.

DUNWITTY:

That's a great handle.

DELACROIX:

Mantan and Sleep 'n Eat. Two real coons. I know we're way out there but it's satire.

DUNWITTY:

I want you take it there. All the way to the edge and back. Sloan looks at Delacroix with concern.

DELACROIX:

Every week we follow the trials and tribulations of two real coons - Mantan and Sleep 'n Eat. The Dusky Duo.

DUNWITTY:

What are there character traits?

DELACROIX:

Ignorant, dullwitted, lazy, and unlucky.

DUNWITTY:

Exactly!

DELACROIX:

Mantan is an uneducated Negro who always by some stroke of unbelievable stupidity makes his best laid plans go haywire.

DUNWITTY:

And Sleep 'n Eat is his comical sidekick?

DELACROIX:

Yep, you guessed it.

DUNWITTY:

This could be bigger than "Amos and Andy."

31.

DELACROIX:

Protest finally forced "Amos and Andy" off the air. Could stop us from ever getting on.

DUNWITTY:

Let'em try. I will kill to make this happen.

Delacroix looks at Sloan.

DELACROIX:

Negroes would be in an uproar.

DUNWITTY:

So what. We would just give the NAACP a donation that would be the end of that. No such thing as bad publicity. So what. Earlier you said singing and dancing.

DELACROIX:

Mantan right here is a gifted hooper. He has educated feet.

DUNWITTY:

Who are the other characters?

DELACROIX:

Do we have characters? How about Honeycutt, Snowflake, Rastus, Nigger, Jim, Sambo, Jungle Bunny, and how could we forget Aunt Jemima. Dunwitty is dying with laughter. He's the only one.

DUNWITTY:

We gonna hit 'em wid da BOMB DICKEY on dis' one. What's the setting?

DELACROIX:

In the projects. Like Eddie

Murphy's "The PJ's."

DUNWITTY:

Ya first bad move. Projects been done. That's one of the problems now, everything, movies, TV, are set in the urban jungle, da hood. That's so tired. Mantan's Millennium Minstrel Show should be set on a plantation. In Alabama.
(MORE)

32.

DUNWITTY (CONT'D)

And every week these Alabama porch monkeys will make us cry, make us laugh, make us look at our own humanity. Make us feel good to be alive.

DELACROIX:

I don't know about that plantation angle.

DUNWITTY:

What are you talkin' 'bout? It's the move. Stay wid me now. We're movin' fast. What does everybody else think about this?

SLOAN:

We'd get a lot of mail.
She laughs, it's a fake one at that.
SLOAN (CONT'D)

Mr. Dunwitty, there wouldn't be another show like it.

CHEEBA:

I've always wanted to be on television.

DUNWITTY:

I like you. Sleep 'n Eat. That's funny. Mantan, how do you feel about performing in black face?

MANTAN:

As long as the hoofing is real,
that I can do my thing, I can
blacken up. Let me hit it, beats
and rhythms, express myself.

DUNWITTY:

Show me a little somethin' somethin'.
Mantan starts to put on his new tap shoes.

DUNWITTY (CONT'D)

Delacroix, you dug deep, deeper
than deep.

Mantan is ready.

33.

MANTAN:

I'm gonna give you just a taste.

My tap shoes are brand new. I
haven't trained 'em yet.

He starts to work out.

MANTAN (CONT'D)

Rhythms, rhythms, rhythms. Beats,
beats, beats. No Fred Astaire
here, baby. Just rawness.

Dunwitty clears his desk of everything, just knocks stuff
flying onto the floor. And Mantan taking the cue, jumps up
on his desk and really starts hitting it.

CLOSE ON:

Delacroix, as he watches his creation, it's not a happy face.

CLOSE ON:

Mantan, he's bringing it home. With the final move, he
leaps off the desk into the middle of the office, and FREEZES.

ANGLE ON:

The office.

DUNWITTY:

That'swhatI'mtalkin''bout.

That'swhatI'mtalkin''bout! He's
off the hiz-hook!

DELACROIX:

We think so.

DUNWITTY:

Sleep 'n Eat, what do you do?

CHEEBA:

I play the straight man. I do some singing and dancing also. I also manage Mantan.

DUNWITTY:

Oh you do so?

CHEEBA:

I'm the man behind the man behind the man.

DUNWITTY:

You da man.

34.

CHEEBA:

No, you da man.

DUNWITTY:

I'm gonna run upstairs with this. If CNS doesn't want to do this, somebody else will have da balls to pull the trigger. I want to thank each and every one of you. This is great, Delacroix. I'll get back to you later today.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Cheebe and Mantan are walking in midtown Manhattan. They both have a pep in their step, money in their pockets, and a roof over their heads.

CHEEBA:

Life is beginning to look up. It's all good in da neighborhood.

MANTAN:

You might be right.

CHEEBA:

Why are you smiling so?
His smile is a mile wide.

MANTAN:

I'm not smiling.

CHEEBA:

Naw, not you. It can't be. That
hottie Sloan Hopkins.

MANTAN:

It's that bad, huh? It's all over
my face.

CHEEBA:

No shame in ya game. She got ya
nostrils, ya chnoz is wide open.
Sloan's what we certified ladies'
men call low hanging fruit.

MANTAN:

Certified ladies' man, huh?

CHEEBA:

She's also moorish.
35.

MANTAN:

What's that?

CHEEBA:

Moorish. Ya get a little taste of
dat booty, ya wanna get some MORE.

MANTAN:

Seconds and thirds, too.

CHEEBA:

Sloan is all 'dat. I try her. I'm
a tri-sexual.

MANTAN:

You'd try anything. I got first dibs. You get ya own stuff.

CHEEBA:

Naw, just jokin'. That's you. That's you.

INT. DELACROIX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Delacroix sits with Manray and Cheeba in the living room.

DELACROIX:

I want you to start using the name Mantan and not Manray if you don't mind.

MANRAY:

Why?

DELACROIX:

You have to start getting into your character.

CHEEBA:

At the risk of sounding ignorant...

Cheebe turns quickly towards Manray.

CHEEBA (CONT'D)

...don't say a word but who is this cat Mantan you keep talkin' 'bout?

Delacroix hits the remote button. The TV and VCR are powered.

CLOSE ON:

Television. We see MANTAN MORELAND in some obscure movie.

36.

DELACROIX (O.S.)

This is Mantan Moreland.

CLOSER ON:

Television. Mantan reacts to seeing a ghost.

DELACROIX (O.S.) (CONT'D)

He was a clown, a buffoon but he was funny.

ANGLE ON:

Living room.

CHEEBA:

That ain't funny.

MANRAY:

DeLa, I don't know 'bout this.

DELACROIX:

Gentlemen, the show, our show will be satirical. You know what that is, don't you? Trust me on this one.

CHEEBA:

We might need some mo' money behind this.

DELACROIX:

That can be done.

MANRAY:

Mantan?

DELACROIX:

Mantan!!

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - NIGHT

THE MAU-MAU's in full effect, bob their heads to the funky track that blasts from the studio monitors.

ANGLE ON:

Studio. They pass around joints that look like they've been on steroids and 64 ounce JUGULARS of DA BOMB MALT LIQUOR - liquid crack, the preferred alcoholic beverage of GHETTO NEGROES. All the members of the MAU-MAU's are AFRICAN AMERICAN except one. There is one Caucasian member. He goes by the name 1/16th BLACK, the engineer tech-whiz kid computer geek.

37.

1/16TH BLACK

Yo, Big Black, we needs a name for this joint.

BIG BLACK:

How 'bout...

Big Black takes a long, long drag on a joint, then he quickly empties a 64 oz. in one swing without missing a

beat, without missing a head nod.

BIG BLACK (CONT'D)

Black Iz Black?

The whole group goes crazy with the title of the song.

DOUBLE BLACK:

That's da bomb.

MO BLACK:

That's gonna give me some
inspiration.

JO BLACK:

Gonna make me get my flow on.

BIG BLACK:

We should call dis da BLACK album.
Everyone starts high-fiving each other.

SMOOTH BLACK:

Yo, check it out. We have never
conformed to none of the white
man's rules and regulations and
later for that ole slave owner
Webster. Therefore I respectfully
submit BIG BLACK that we from now
on, hence forth and whatnot spell

BLACK:

HARD BLACK:

I feel dat.

1/16TH BLACK

B-L-A-K. BLAK. The darkest of all
colors, the opposite of white. A
member of an African people. But
check it out, here's where the grey
people try to get slick with their
trickery. Listen to the full
connotations. GLOOMY. DEPRESSING.
EVIL. WICKED. ANGRY. SULLEN.

(MORE)

38.

1/16TH BLACK (CONT'D)

BLAK OUT. BLAK LISTED. BLAK BALL.
Need I say more.

BIG BLACK:

B-L-A-K it is.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

A middle-aged African-American woman is working in the kitchen. Delacroix sits at the kitchen table talking with her. This is his MOM, ORCHID DOTHAN.
Orchid puts a plate of food in front of her son.

ORCHID:

You must think I'm some kind of fool.

DELACROIX:

It looks delicious.

ORCHID:

You hear me talkin' to you. The only time you come up here when something is wrong.

DELACROIX:

C'mon, Mommy, don't start with that I'm an ungrateful son stuff.

ORCHID:

I said no such thing. All I said is that something must be wrong.
She sits down with him.

ORCHID (CONT'D)

How's the food?

DELACROIX:

Can't beat it with a hammer. Well, since you asked, it looks like I may have a new show, a pilot being shot.

ORCHID:

That's wonderful. Isn't that what you always wanted, a show of your own?

He talks between mouthfuls.

DELACROIX:

It was. It is. But this is a different kind of show.

ORCHID:

If at first it's not what you want, just work that much harder, Peerless.

DELACROIX:

Mommy, please don't call me that.

ORCHID:

Son, Peerless is your name. Now you might be one of these Hollywood types, change your name and all that but Peerless Dothan is on your birth certificate.

DELACROIX:

I know what's on my birth certificate. You heard from Daddy?

ORCHID:

I guess he's still on the road. What kind of show is this? Are they some Negroes in it without being buffoons?

DELACROIX:

To answer your question, there are a lot of Negroes in it and what is your definition of buffoons?

ORCHID:

Peerless, I didn't raise a buffoon. We have enough of those on television already.

DELACROIX:

Please let me know when you hear from Daddy, get a number or something.

ORCHID:

I will. And good luck with your show. I hope it's a huge success. You've worked very hard. You deserve it.

Delacroix gets up from his seat and hugs his mother.

40.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A celebration is going on as Delacroix, Sloan, Cheeba and Mantan sit at a table.

ANGLE ON:

Table. Cheeba and Mantan are giddy. Sloan looks at Delacroix who is visibly not happy.

SLOAN:

You okay?

DELACROIX:

I feel like somebody hit me upside da head with a sledgehammer.

CHEEBA:

DeLa - what's the matter with you.

MANTAN:

You ain't happy about the green light?

SLOAN:

People show their happiness in a lot of different ways.

MANTAN:

Well, homeboy, looks like he's at a funeral.

DELACROIX:

I'm happy for all of us. It's just we have a great responsibility now. The pressure is on.

MANTAN:

Pressure? DeLa, you don't know what the hell real pressure is. SHEEETT!!! This is lightstuff. Now when you scramblin' out on the street in da January winter and the hawk is talkin' to you with NO money and NO prospects of money anytime soon, now that there is some pressure.

DELACROIX:

I didn't mean it to sound like that.
41.

MANTAN:

That's the way it came out. Let me ask you one question. Have you ever been in want, in need your entire privileged life?

DELACROIX:

Now I'm privileged?! Why? Because I didn't grow up on food stamps and welfare? Because I didn't call home a cardboard box? No, I never ever went to bed hungry and I'm proud of it, too. Whoever told you that living in poverty earns you somekind of badge of honor flat out lied to you.

MANTAN:

The point I'm trying to make is that this is a blessing. It's going to be fun doing this show and we should all look at it that way. Delacroix gets up from the table and leaves.

CHEEBA:

What's wrong with him?

MANTAN:

Must be the pressure.

Cheeba and Mantan laugh, give each other some dap. A highly

attractive PUERTO RICAN female walks over to their table.
This is JESSICA GRILLO.

JESSICA:

Sorry I'm late.
Cheeba and Mantan are in awe.

SLOAN:

Hey, girl. This is my best friend,
Jessica Grillo. I invited her down
to celebrate with us.

CHEEBA:

I'm Cheeba.

MANTAN:

I'm Mantan.
They both rise.
42.

CHEEBA:

Please, have a seat.

MANTAN:

Sloan never told us she had friends
like you.

CHEEBA:

In fact, we never knew she had any
friends period.

SLOAN:

Later for you.

JESSICA:

She has a lot of friends

CHEEBA:

Male?

JESSICA:

Yes.

MANTAN:

A lot?

SLOAN:

Enough.

Sloan and Jessica laugh at the expense of these guys.

JESSICA:

I propose a toast.

She grabs an empty glass and pours herself some champagne.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

To the success of your show. Good
luck.

Everyone raises their glasses. CLINK!

SLOAN:

Excuse me.

Sloan gets up from the table and takes after Delacroix.

ANGLE ON:

Steps. Sloan catches up with Delacroix at the rest room area.

SLOAN (CONT'D)

Wait here.

43.

She goes to the ladies' cubicle.

CLOSE ON:

Delacroix. He leans against the wall.

ANGLE ON:

Bathroom door. Sloan comes out, grabs him inside.

INT. LADIES' ROOM - NIGHT

Sloan locks the door.

SLOAN:

What is your problem?

DELACROIX:

My problem is MANTAN THE NEW
MILLENIUM MINSTREL SHOW.

SLOAN:

Why did you even come up with that
shit if you didn't want it made?

DELACROIX:

It was the principle. Dunwitty had to be enlightened. I was making a point. I take pride in my work. Plus, I already told you I wasn't gonna walk away from my money.

SLOAN:

Fuck da money. Why do through all this effort? Why? Are you looking for love from Dunwitty? For respect? Dunwitty and his likes don't give a goddamn about you. So now what are you gonna do? Someone begins to pound on the bathroom door.
WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Will you please let me in? I have to use the toilet.

SLOAN:

You're gonna have to hold it in because we're not finished yet... She returns her attention to Delacroix.
SLOAN (CONT'D)
...QUIT then.
44.

DELACROIX:

Even if money wasn't an issue, Dunwitty will still go ahead without me and that could be more dangerous.

SLOAN:

What's the chances of MANTAN being picked up?

DELACROIX:

I wouldn't bet against it. My Negroidal ass is stuck between the proverbial rock and a hard place.

SLOAN:

Like I said, all this for some

twisted, distorted sense of principal. Dunwitty, he just tolerates your Negroidal ass, he doesn't respect it.

The banging starts again.

MANAGER'S VOICE (O.S.)

Please open this bathroom door immediately. You are being very inconsiderate.

Sloan unlocks the door and they exit.

ANGLE ON:

Ladies' bathroom. Sloan and Delacroix file past the strange looks of the manager and FIVE WOMEN waiting to use the bathroom as they rush in.

INT. DUNWITTY'S OFFICE - MORNING

DELACROIX:

I strongly feel that a Negro should direct this. This kind of satire is a high wire act in a gale storm. One misstep and we're doing "Amos and Andy." Only a Negro will have the sensitivity and cultural awareness to navigate this dangerous terrain.

DUNWITTY:

To hire someone solely on their ethnicity, gender or religion is not right. It's un-American. I will hire someone who is most qualified for this particular job.

45.

DELACROIX:

I was hoping to perhaps direct some episodes myself, if not the pilot soon after.

DUNWITTY:

I want a hot, young white director. Maybe the kid, that pheenom who just did that hot new sexy Madonna

video.

DELACROIX:

You're telling me some white boy is gonna direct this pilot?

DUNWITTY:

I just want you to meet him. Keep an open mind.

DELACROIX:

Besides, what does he know about Negroes?

DUNWITTY:

Probably nuthin', but that's why it's such a sexy way to go. Sometimes an outsider has a fresh new outlook, a different unique perspective. A black director, y'know what he's gonna do given the subject matter? With this kid, the possibilities are endless.

DELACROIX:

What are his qualifications besides being a white male and directing a hot new sexy freaky Madonna video?

DUNWITTY:

If Spielberg can direct "The Color Purple" and "Amistad", our whiz kid can direct the Mantan pilot.

DELACROIX:

That's exactly my point. Has he even directed actors before in anything?

DUNWITTY:

No!!! Just meet the guy. That's all I'm asking. Look, I'll even let you choose your own musical director. You can have that.

DELACROIX:

In the immortal words of Derrick Coleman, WHOOOPDEEDAMNDOO!!!

DUNWITTY:

Derrick Coleman, he possessed all the talent in the world, coulda, shoulda, been a great ballplayer but alas D.C. didn't want it bad enough. Delacroix, do you want it? Bad enough to kill for it? Do you want it that much.

Delacroix stares at Dunwitty.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - NEXT DAY

Delacroix, followed by Sloan, enters the room full of writers.

CLOSE ON:

Delacroix

He surveys the room.

P.O.V. - DELACROIX

All of the writers are Caucasian - male and female. Every single last one.

ANGLE ON:

Conference room. Delacroix and Sloan sit down at the head of the long oval table.

DELACROIX:

Good morning, for those of you who don't know me, I'm Pierre Delacroix. I'm running things and this here is my assistant Sloan Hopkins.

SLOAN:

Hello.

DELACROIX:

I've never worked with any of you and you've never worked with me so we'll be starting from scratch. I'm a fair person, a straight shooter and I don't hold my tongue.

Everybody up in here should know I had nothing to do with you being hired.

(MORE)

47.

DELACROIX (CONT'D)

I would have preferred at least one other Negro writer. Any questions? Comments?

MONA raises her hand.

DELACROIX (CONT'D)

Yes, your name?

MONA:

He, I'm Mona.

DELACROIX:

Hi, Mona.

MONA:

I perfectly understand where you're coming from. As a minority I can relate to your struggle also. But I think you should give us all a chance. We want this pilot to be successful just as much as you. Please don't be so quick to judge us based only on our whiteness.

DELACROIX:

Oh, is that what I'm doing?

BETH jumps in.

BETH:

I think because of our background we can bring a unique perspective to Mantan.

SETH pipes in also.

SETH:

A fresh pair of eyes. A new look, insight, new angle that hasn't been seen before.

DELACROIX:

I've heard this somewhere before.

David raises his hand.

48.

DAVID:

My name is David. I do think it would be better to have some African-American writers but for whatever reason they are not here. I don't know if they couldn't find any people with experience, they wouldn't work for the pay or refused to work for the show. I don't know and nobody in this room probably knows either. I'm looking at this as a unique opportunity. We all should. I'm a damn good writer and I'm ready to go to work. Everyone in the room applauds. Sloan looks at Delacroix.

FREEZE FRAME:

DELACROIX (V.O.)

This thing was rigged, the deck was stacked, the fix was in. Could Don King be near? Good thing Sloan had my back. She's my rock. This was going to be a whole lot of work.

UN-FREEZE FRAME

DELACROIX (CONT'D)

David, I appreciate your comments. Anybody got an ideas? Everybody just talk out loud.

MONA:

I've always liked the format of Rowan and Martin's "LAUGH-IN."

ANNA:

That could be cool.

KIRK:

What about something like "The Jeffersons?" I grew up in Idaho so

that's how I got my understanding of black people. Through Sherman Helmsley, LOUISSEE!!!.

DAVID:

"Good Times" was better. Kid Dy-no mite!!!

49.

AARON:

You pole are going to far back for me. I think we have to go after a hipper feel. Like the stuff Eddie Murphy used to do on "Saturday Night Live."

PETER:

Or Martin. You go girl.

JEFF:

What about the black exploitation films? No one has ever tried making that work on TV.

DAVID:

And for reason. Have you ever seen "Scream Blacula, Scream?"

MONA:

I think, and Delacroix will agree with me, the politics of this show have to be right. We should always be laughing with our characters, not at them.

CLOSE ON:

Delacroix, as the writers continue to ramble on, he lets them jerk off.

DELACROIX (V.O.)

The mission was accomplished. All of these people left the room thinking they would have real input. I was writing this pilot alone, myself, me.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A long line reaches down the block and around the corner. It's a "cattle call," open auditions for "Mantan."

DELACROIX (V.O.)

Now came the fun part, finding the talented performers to cast in the show.

WE DOLLY past the hundreds and hundreds of unemployed African American actors, many of them dressed in various costumes.

50.

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Everybody and their mother was trying to get in, trying to be seen. Trying to get their piece of the rock.

INT. REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

Delacroix sits in the first row with Sloan, RUTH, an African American casting director. LEVI, the musical director, also black, is on the stage at the piano.

AUDITION MONTAGE

WE SEE singers, magicians, dancers, acrobats, comedians, rappers. Some good, most are terrible. Many come out on stage dressed like mammies, Stepin' Fetchit, slaves, pimps, ho's, hustlers, and basketball players. It is a cavalcade of all the stereotypical roles one has seen.

ANGLE ON:

Space. LULU, a spoken word artist, goes her rendition of "WAY DOWN ON THE SWANEE RIVER."

DELACROIX (V.O.)

This was amazing. Who had told these Negroes that this was what we were looking for? The same old image, it damn for sure wasn't me.

CLOSE ON:

Lulu.

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Were people this desperate to get work?

CLOSE ON:

Delacroix. He interrupts Lulu.

DELACROIX (CONT'D)

Thanks, Ms. Lulu.

LULU:

But I had several more poems.

DELACROIX:

That's good. We've seen enough.

We'll get back to you.

Lulu scurries off stage.

51.

RUTH (O.S.)

Next.

The Mau-Mau's run onto the stage, yelling and screaming.

They are all fired up, in fact several fire their 9mm's into the ceiling.

ANGLE - TWO SHOT

Delacroix and Sloan.

SLOAN:

This is the group I was telling you about.

DELACROIX:

Which one is your brother?

SLOAN:

The big one.

CLOSE ON:

Ruth.

RUTH:

Let's get started here.

ANGLE ON:

STAGE:

Big Black preens around on the stage.

BIG BLACK:

The Mau-Mau's are up in dis place.

That's right, the Mau-Mau's.

DELACROIX (O.S.)

What's your name?

BIG BLACK:

My righteous name is BIG BLACK.

DELACROIX (O.S.)

And what are the Mau-Mau's going to do for us today?

BIG BLACK:

We gonna drop some knowledge, wisdom and understanding. The Mau-Mau's, we be scientists. We drop science.

52.

CLOSE ON:

Sloan, who's trying to disappear. If she sits any lower she'll be under her seat.

ON DELACROIX:

DELACROIX:

We're ready when you are.

ON STAGE:

BIG BLACK:

Microphone check. One. Two. One. Two. One. Two. Hold up. I gots to give my peeps some props. Brothers introduce yourself.

DOUBLE BLACK:

Yo, I'm Double Black.

BLACK BLACK:

Check it, Black Black.

SMOOTH BLACK:

I'm Smooth Black, the lover in dis' piece.

HARD BLACK:

Hard Black.

MO BLACK:

He's Jo Black.

JO BLACK:

And he's Mo Black.

1/16TH BLACK

I'm last but not least, you can
call me 1/16th Black.

ON DELACROIX:

DELACROIX:

Good. We're really blacked-oops,
backed up, so shall we begin?

ON STAGE:

BIG BLACK:

Microphone check. One. Two. One.
Two. Yo, the name of this joint is
BLAK IZ BLAK. Hit it.

53.

The booming track starts and the Mau-Mau's do their thing,
bouncing all over the stage. The lyrics about everything
that is BLAK!!!

ON DELACROIX:

A look of disbelief is on his face.

DELACROIX (V.O.)

Needless to say, the Mau-Mau's did
not fit into our plans.

ON SLOAN:

She's in shock, horrified.

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

As I told Sloan, there's a black
sheep in every family.

BACKSTAGE - LATER THAT DAY

Delacroix is screaming at the top of his lungs.

DELACROIX (CONT'D)

Finland. This is a travesty. A
debacle. A mockery.

INT. LOBBY

Dunwitty approaches Delacroix in the lobby of the rehearsal space. He is with JUKKA, a young, very young blonde kid.

DUNWITTY:

Delacroix. This is the director I was telling you about. Jukka Laks.

JUKKA:

So nice to meet you.

DELACROIX:

Nice to meet you. If you don't mind me asking you - how old are you?

JUKKA:

I just turned twenty.

DUNWITTY:

I'm gonna leave you two creative geniuses alone.

DELACROIX:

Dunwitty, don't leave.

54.

Dunwitty is out.

DELACROIX (CONT'D)

Where are you from?

JUKKA:

Helsinki, which is the capital of Finland.

DELACROIX:

Finland.

JUKKA:

You know, Finlandia vodka? Yes?

DELACROIX:

Yes, I know. Jukka, have you ever seen a Negro person before? Even had a real conversation with a real Negro before?

JUKKA:

What's a Negro.

INT. BACKSTAGE

Delacroix continues to rant and rave. Sloan is unsuccessful in attempting to make him be quiet.

DELACROIX:

A fiasco. A disaster. A boondoggle.

An abomination.

INT. LOBBY

DELACROIX:

Did you just ask me what's a Negro?

I'M A NEGRO!!!

JUKKA:

Ahhh!!! I never heard of that term before. I thought you were BLACK of African-American. No?

DELACROIX:

Well before there was BLACK or AFRICAN AMERICAN, there were NEGROES. I'M A NEGRO.

JUKKA:

Thank you for correcting my ignorance. I'm looking forward to working side by side with you. I feel we make a good team.

55.

DELACROIX:

How did you get this gig?

JUKKA:

My visual style is very erotic, sexy, how do you say - hot?

DELACROIX:

This is a TV show, not a music video.

JUKKA:

Then will you teach me what I need

to know. Maybe we learn from each other, if that's possible, no?

INT. BACKSTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

DELACROIX:

This is a travesty. A debacle.

SLOAN:

You've said that already.

DELACROIX:

I'm gonna slit my wrists. Cut my throat. For the love of Joseph.

INT. DELACROIX'S OFFICE - NEW DAY

He's sitting behind his desk, reading new "pink" revisions of the "MANTAN" pilot. He screams.

DELACROIX:

For the love of Joseph and Mary. Delacroix bolts out from his office.

INT. DUNWITTY'S OFFICE - DAY

Delacroix charges in as Dunwitty and Jukka go over the same "pink" revisions.

DELACROIX:

I will not be held responsible for these revisions. These changes are not the way I want to go. This is an outrage. This is a sham. A violation!

DUNWITTY:

Calm down, please.

JUKKA:

In Finland, when we get upset...

56.

DELACROIX:

I don't give a good goddamn about Finland, Norway, Sweden or wherever ya blond ass came from.

DUNWITTY:

We just punched it up a bit. Made it funnier.

DELACROIX:

Funnier to who and at who's expense? Dunwitty, when Negroes start to run amok, the boycotts, when the demonstrations commence, I'm giving them your home address. Let's see how you like it when they picket your lawn in Greenwich, Connecticut.

DUNWITTY:

I seriously doubt that will ever happen. Didn't I tell you I know your people better than you do. But if by some miracle you're correct, I'm gonna invite them inside my house and we'll have a sit down, discuss it like civil human beings.

INT. STUDIO - NIGHT

Much activity is going on. People are moving to and fro.
WE FOLLOW Delacroix and Sloan.

EXT. MANTAN'S DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Delacroix knocks and they enter.

INT. MANTAN'S DRESSING ROOM

Mantan sits in front of his mirror.

DELACROIX:

Just want to say good luck.

SLOAN:

Break a leg.

She gives Mantan a kiss on his cheek.

DELACROIX:

Wait a minute. Hold up.

They all laugh.

57.

DELACROIX (CONT'D)

Can I kiss you too?

MANTAN:

Naw. I'll take the zero.

DELACROIX:

You feel good, not nervous?

MANTAN:

I feel fine.

DELACROIX:

Not nervous? Relaxed?

MANTAN:

Sloan, will you take your boss out
of here so I can get ready.

EXT. SLEEP 'N EAT'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Sloan and Delacroix enter the dressing room.

INT. SLEEP 'N EAT'S DRESSING ROOM

SLEEP 'N EAT

How's the audience?

DELACROIX:

Fired up.

SLOAN:

How you feelin'?

SLEEP 'N EAT

Good. I'm not sure about this
material.

DELACROIX:

The material is fine.

Sloan cuts a look at this liar.

SLEEP 'N EAT

You really think so?

DELACROIX:

We're trying to do something new
here, some groundbreaking stuff.

SLEEP 'N EAT

It's the bone breaking stuff I'm
worried about.

58.

SLOAN:

Everything's gonna be alright. You and Mantan will be huge stars after tonight.

SLEEP 'N EAT

You really think so?

DELACROIX:

Your life will never be the same.

SLOAN:

Let's leave the man in peace so he can get ready.

INT. BACKSTAGE

SLOAN:

We both lied to him.

DELACROIX:

What do you want me to say?

SLOAN:

Just don't lie to me.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

HONEYCUTT, a rotund, elder black man who is one of cast members, is warming the audience up.

ON AUDIENCE:

It's very young and diverse. They are laughing at the comic stylings of Honeycutt.

INT. CONTROL BOOTH - NIGHT

Delacroix and Sloan take their seats.

DELACROIX:

Good luck, Jukka. Do a good show.

JUKKA:

Thank you very much. I always try my best.

INT. MANTAN'S DRESSING ROOM

Mantan is slowly getting dressed. He puts on an old, tattered tails (tuxedo).

59.

INT. SLEEP 'N EAT'S DRESSING ROOM

Sleep 'N Eat is also getting dressed. He wears a worn

Pullman Porter uniform with red hat to match.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Dunwitty with his black wife in hand, VERNA moves toward Delacroix and Sloan.

DUNWITTY:

I want you to meet my lovely wife Verna. Honey, this is Pierre Delacroix and Sloan Hopkins.

VERNA:

Nice to meet you.

DELACROIX:

Same here.

SLOAN:

The pleasure is mine.

VERNA:

My husband has been raving about the awesome work you've done. How did you ever think of something like this? It's absolutely brilliant. Pure genius.

DELACROIX:

I guess it was divine inspiration.

VERNA:

Hope to see you both after the taping. Congrats in advance.

ON CONTROL BOOTH

Verna and Dunwitty go to the front of the control booth.

TWO SHOT:

Delacroix and Sloan.

SLOAN:

Divine inspiration?
She laughs.

DELACROIX:

I was trying to be nice.

60.

SLOAN:

I want to apologize about my brother and the Mau-Mau's. I should not have imposed them on you.

DELACROIX:

C'mon. You were only doing what family is supposed to be doing for family. You gave your brother a shot. That's all anybody can ask for, an opportunity, a chance, a shot. He got his.

INT. MANTAN'S DRESSING ROOM

Mantan is in front of his dressing room mirror.

ON MIRROR:

Mantan looks, stares at his reflection.

INT. SLEEP 'N EAT'S DRESSING ROOM

Sleep 'N Eat is staring at himself also.

INT. MANTAN'S DRESSING ROOM

CLOSE ON MANTAN:

SLOAN (V.O.)

We should blacken up like they did it back in the day. Keep the ritual the same.

Mantan puts some corks in a dish.

SLOAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Pour some alcohol on the corks, then light it.

INT. SLEEP 'N EAT'S DRESSING ROOM

Sleep 'N Eat strikes a match to his corks in a dish.

CLOSE ON SLEEP 'N EAT

He watches the cork burn.

SLOAN (V.O.)

Let them burnt to a crisp, and when burnt out, mash them to a powder.

61.

INT. MANTAN'S DRESSING ROOM

Mantan is mashing the corks.

SLOAN (V.O.)

Add water, mix to a thick paste.

INT. SLEEP 'N EAT'S DRESSING ROOM

Sleep 'N Eat is mixing it all together.

SLOAN (V.O.)

And voila! You have your blackface.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

The audience, which has become restless, starts a rhythmic clap.

SLOAN (V.O.)

Please put cocoa butter on your face and hands...

INT. MANTAN'S DRESSING ROOM

ON MANTAN'S HANDS

SLOAN (V.O.)

To protect your skin.

He applies cocoa butter to his hands.

INT. SLEEP 'N EAT'S DRESSING ROOM

ON SLEEP 'N EAT'S FACE

He rubs cocoa butter all over his face.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON HANDS:

Audience hands are clapping faster.

ON FEET:

They're stomping.

INT. MANTAN'S DRESSING ROOM

ON MIRROR:

Mantan blacks up his face.

62.

WE HEAR THE POUNDING OF THE FEET STOMPING AND THE HANDS CLAPPING.

INT. SLEEP 'N EAT'S DRESSING ROOM

ON MIRROR:

Sleep 'N Eat blacks up also.

SLOAN (V.O.)

The final detail...

INT. MANTAN'S DRESSING ROOM

ON LIPS:

SLOAN (V.O.)

...are the lips.

Mantan is applying lipstick.

INT. SLEEP 'N EAT'S DRESSING ROOM

ON LIPS:

Sleep 'N Eat is puckering his lips as he too puts on the lipstick.

SLOAN (V.O.)

The redder the lipstick the better.

I suggest firetruck red.

ON MIRROR:

For the first time WE SEE SLEEP 'N EAT in FULL BLACK FACE.

SLEEP 'N EAT

Show...

INT. MANTAN'S DRESSING ROOM

ON MIRROR:

Mantan in FULL BLACK FACE.

MANTAN:

...TIME!!!

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

The audience is in an uproar when the lights go down. They applaud and they quiet as the CURTAIN GOES UP on a bucolic setting. It is a combination of WATERMELON PATCH and COTTON FIELD.

63.

ON STAGE:

First Sleep 'N Eat then Mantan shuffles onto the stage.

MANTAN:

This is my best friend Sleep 'N Eat.

SLEEP 'N EAT

And this is my very best friend

Mantan.

BOTH:

We're two real COONS!

The audience lets out nervous laughter. They don't know what to think.

MANTAN:

We both left the hustle and bustle of Uptown, Harlem...

SLEEP 'N EAT

...the big apple, New York, New York.

MANTAN:

To come back to our roots.

SLEEP 'N EAT

Our Alabama Home. Now we're
getting countrified. We is Bama's.

MANTAN:

No mo' "city slickers." Ahh, can't
you smell the sweet aroma of the
ripe watermelons and high cotton?

SLEEP 'N EAT

Tell 'em what you mean Mistuh Mantan.

MANTAN:

Well, thank you Mistuh Sleep 'N Eat.

SLEEP 'N EAT

Give or cousins some of dem educated
feets.

Mantan begins to do a slow, steady step.

SLEEP 'N EAT (CONT'D)

Cousins, first, second, third and
distant, let's have Mantan take us
all the way back to a much more
simpler time. A time wen men were
men, women were women, and Neggras
knew their place.

64.

The AUDIENCE is aghast. Mantan has picked up the pace.
He's tapping fast and furious.

MANTAN:

Cousins, I want all of you to go to
your windows. Go to your windows
and yell. Yell, I'm tired of the
drugs, the crack babies born out of
wedlock to crackhead aids infested
parents. I'm tired of the inflated
welfare rolls while good wholesome
Americans bring less and less of
their paycheck home every two weeks.
I'm tired, you're tired, we're all

tired of these so-called bible-thumping God fearing, whore mongling Professional athletes. Aren't you tired of these basketball-dunking, football-running, hop-hip rapping ebonic-speaking sex offenders who got ten kids from ten different Ho's? I know I am and so is Sleep 'N Eat.

SLEEP 'N EAT

You tellin' the truth.

MANTAN:

Go to your windows and yell out, scream with all the life you can muster up inside your assaulted, bruised and battered bodies. I'M SICK AND TIRED OF NIGGERS AND I'M NOT GONNA TAKE IT ANYMORE!
Mantan stops dancing and collapses.

ON AUDIENCE:

They're stunned. They can't believe what they've heard, what they've seen. What they've been witness to.

ON YOUNG WHITE COUPLE

They look at the black people in the audience.

ON YOUNG HIP-HOP BLACK MALE

He starts to clap slowly.

ON AUDIENCE:

Slowly more black people begin to applaud. Slowly it sweeps up into the black people.

65.

The WHITE AUDIENCE, of course, has been waiting to see how their black brothers and sisters would react. Now feeling comfortable and safe, they too being to join the applause.

ON AUDIENCE:

The applause changes into laughter. It is not nervous laughter we hear, but straight out RIOTOUS LAUGHTER.

ON BLACK AND WHITE FACES

The laughter is contagious.

ON STAGE:

Mantan starts to move, he's coming back from the dead. He slowly gets up from his prostate position as he HEARS: A WAYBACK ALABAMA JIG played by the house band, THE PORCH MONKEYS, led by musical director Levi. Mantan is joined on stage by the other hoofers in the show: JUNGLE BUNNY, SNOWFLAKE, SAMBO, AUNT JEMIMA, RASTUS, NIGGER JIM, plus SLEEP 'N EAT. Each take turn as it evolves into an elaborate DANCE NUMBER. The hoofers and the band are also in black face.

ON AUDIENCE:

They are rolling down the aisles.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

ON DELACROIX:

Delacroix looks like he has seen a ghost.

CLOSER:

He buries his face in his hands.

INT. DELACROIX'S APARTMENT - NEXT NIGHT

Delacroix is in the same position as the scene before. Face buried in his hands.

ON PHONE:

It rings and he picks it up.

DELACROIX:

Hello?

66.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

Dunwitty drives his Mercedes Benz CL 600 Coupe.

DUNWITTY:

Yo, DeLa, I just got the news from the CNS brass. They saw some clips from the pilot and they're rushing it onto the air. Yo, we're a midseason replacement, ordered 12 shows. We're on in 3 weeks. Didya hear what I just said, Yo?

ON DUNWITTY:

DUNWITTY (CONT'D)

They didn't even view a rough cut,

just some scenes we quickly cut together.

ON DELACROIX:

DELACROIX:

This has to be a big mistake.

DUNWITTY (O.S.)

The big mistake was my not believing in your genius earlier. From the gitgo, from jump street.

DELACROIX:

Hold on a sec, I got a call.

HE CLICKS OVER.

DELACROIX (CONT'D)

Hello, Mommy, let me get rid of this other call.

INT. BENZ - CONTINUOUS

DELACROIX (O.S.)

I gots to go, it's my Moms.

DUNWITTY:

I want to meet her one day, please tell her the great news. I'm OUT like Vanilla Ice.

INT. ORCHID'S HOUSE - NIGHT

She is on the phone with her son.

67.

ORCHID:

Peerless, your father called.

INT. DELACROIX'S APARTMENT

DELACROIX:

I'll be right over.

INT. STREET - NIGHT

It's a warm summer night.

MANTAN:

So what's up with you?

SLOAN:

What do you want to know?

MANTAN:

The good stuff.

SLOAN:

I'm an asthmatic. Been one all my life. Can't go anywhere without an inhaler.

MANTAN:

What else?

SLOAN:

Are you trying to rap to me?

INT. ORCHID'S HOUSE

Delacroix sits at the kitchen table.

ORCHID:

He wants you to come and see him.

DELACROIX:

He said that?

ORCHID:

Yes he did.

DELACROIX:

Where is he?

ORCHID:

He's performing at some place outside of Richmond, Virginia.

DELACROIX:

I can't go all the way down south.
68.

ORCHID:

Richmond is not all the way down south.

DELACROIX:

I don't even know why you're still concerned over him. Daddy's not

with you.

ORCHID:

Regardless, he still is your father.

DELACROIX:

It's gonna be hard for me to get away with the show taking off.

ORCHID:

Even more reason to see him. He'll be overjoyed with your success.

DELACROIX:

C'mon, Mommy. Daddy hasn't been impressed with anything I've ever done. From winning my fifth grade Spelling Bee to the present.

ORCHID:

Peerless, last time, go see your father.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Mantan and Sloan are sitting on a park bench, nothing is being said. He sits up and starts to do a dance for her. To her.

ON BENCH:

Mantan is doing that "Mating" tap dance.

SLOAN:

Are you trying to seduce me?

He puts his index finger over his mouth - "Quiet."

SLOAN (CONT'D)

You think that's gonna work, huh?

He quickly jumps up on the bench, does some intricate steps then pulls Sloan up from her sitting position.

ON MANTAN AND SLOAN

They kiss.

69.

EXT. I-95 SOUTH - MORNING

Delacroix is driving "down south."

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Delacroix adjusts the mirror so he can see himself. HE

SPEAKS TO US through the MIRROR

DELACROIX:

I figured this was a good time to get away. Just jump in my ride and go. I always did my best thinking when I was driving alone. I needed to think out clearly what I was going to do with this MANTAN - THE NEW MILLENNIUM MINSTREL SHOW.

EXT. I-95 SOUTH

Delacroix is driving on his way to "Ole Virginny."

EXT. MAMA'S SUGAR SHAK - NIGHT

Delacroix pulls up in the parking lot of a rinky-kink, funky, greasy BAR/CLUB/BAR-B-Q joint.

CLOSE ON NEON SIGN

"MAMA'S SUGAR SHAK" - most the letters do not light up, underneath it, "2-NITE - JUNEBUG."

INT. MAMA'S SUGAR SHAK

It's loud as hell as Delacroix enters this smoky, dark establishment.

P.O.V. DELACROIX

This must be a big night in here because the PATRONS are dressed to the nines. What's in style down here is a lot different from what's happening en Nueva York. Many of the men are dressed like PIMPS from 70's BLAXPLOITATION FILM, the ladies like HOOTCHIE MAMAS from "Luke" video.

ON SUGAR SHAK:

Delacroix works himself through the crowded BAR/DISCO into another small room.

ON COMEDY ROOM:

He walks into a small space where his father JUNEBUG is on the stage.

70.

ON JUNEBUG:

He is a good-looking man, the only speckle of gray in his hair betrays his age. As he walks around the small stage doing his comedy stylings, he keeps a drink in one hand and sips it often.

ON COMEDY ROOM:

Delacroix sits in the back so his father can't see him.

ON DELACROIX:

He looks around.

P.O.V. DELACROIX

It's dead in here. The room is nearly empty.

ON TABLE:

A couple gets loud, arguing over something.

ON JUNEBUG:

JUNEBUG:

'Cuse me. Please. Can you please show me some respect. I'm up here trying to make a living.

MAN:

Mind yo' business.

JUNEBUG:

Don't make me have to come over there and whoop you upside ya head.

The sparse AUDIENCE laughs.

JUNEBUG (CONT'D)

Just messin' with ya. But please if you and your lady need to discuss something, take it outside. Thank you.

He continues on with his show.

ON TABLE:

Delacroix walks over to the fighting couple.

71.

DELACROIX:

Brother man, that's my father up there and I drove a long way to see him perform. Please take this fifty, go buy you and the young lady some drinks in the club. The guy looks him up and down.

MAN:

That's yo' Daddy?

Delacroix nods.

MAN (CONT'D)

Don't need yo money for drinks.

Besides, she's drunk already.

C'mon, let's go.

The guy grabs his friend by the wrist and drags her kicking and screaming out the room.

CLOSE ON JUNEBUG

JUNEBUG:

Don't bring your woman out if you can't keep her in deep check. If my woman ever did something crazy like that I'd put my size 12 dead up in her ass.

This gets the biggest laugh of the night.

EXT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Delacroix knocks.

JUNEBUG (O.S.)

What do you want?

DELACROIX:

I want to speak with you.

JUNEBUG (O.S.)

Go away, unless you got my money.

DELACROIX:

It's me, Peerless.

INT. DRESSING ROOM

He enters into a closet, it's a makeshift dressing room. A younger lady, much younger than Junebug - DOT - stands behind him as she massages his neck.

72.

Junebug gets up from his chair, rushes to his son and they embrace.

JUNEBUG:

Son. Good to seeya. Good to seeya.

DELACROIX:

It's been a long time.

JUNEBUG:

Pull up a chair. Oh, excuse me,
this is my lady DOT.

DELACROIX:

Pleased to meet you.

DOT:

Glad to meet you, too. You are all
your father talks about.

DELACROIX:

Is that so?

JUNEBUG:

Honey, pour me and my son a drink.
They both sit down as drinks are poured.

DOT:

I'll leave you two alone.
She kisses Junebug on the forehead before leaving.

JUNEBUG:

Good woman. I trained her right.

DELACROIX:

Daddy, she's younger than me.

JUNEBUG:

My game is still strong. No Viagra
for me, don't need no chemicals.
Just my tonic.
He holds up his drink and kills it in one gulp.
JUNEBUG (CONT'D)
Purely for medicinal purposes.

DELACROIX:

I thought you had promised Mommy
you stopped.
73.

JUNEBUG:

I did. I'm not an alcoholic. I
just like to drink.

DELACROIX:

How did you end up here?

JUNEBUG:

How did I end up at the third rate
chittlin' circuit greasy hole in
the wall in West Hell, Virginny?
Is that what you're asking ya Daddy?
Delacroix takes a sip of his drink.

DELACROIX:

That's what I'm askin'.

JUNEBUG:

Because I had too much pride. Too
much integrity. I wouldn't lick
nobody's butt. Some material I
refused to do.

DELACROIX:

Daddy, it can't be just because of
that. There had to be other factors.
Junebug pours himself another stiff one.

JUNEBUG:

That's the only reason, period.
They only want one certain kind of
black comic.

DELACROIX:

Another one of your conspiracies to
hold ya career back?

JUNEBUG:

All I know is what happened to me.
All that other mess I just file
into the "life's too short" category.
He downs another one. Junebug drinks like a fish.

JUNEBUG (CONT'D)

Enough about me, what's happening
with you?

DELACROIX:

The same old, same old. Trying to

get my stuff through.

74.

JUNEBUG:

Dem white boys giving you a hard time?

DELACROIX:

Nuthin' I can't handle.

JUNEBUG:

The truth is never let them see ya sweat. You do that, that's half the battle.

DELACROIX:

Where do you go from here?

JUNEBUG:

Three nights Charleston, South Carolina.

DELACROIX:

I didn't mean that, in life.

JUNEBUG:

In life? I'ma keep on living, having a good drink, got me a good young woman, make a couple of dollars and make people laugh. Haven't I always tol' you all nigga's are entertainers? The question is what are you gonna do, Peerless?

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Delacroix and Dot are on either side of Junebug as they hold him up.

ON DOOR:

Delacroix struggles to put the key in the door.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

The door is kicked open as the trio comes in. Junebug is drunk as a skunk.

JUNEBUG:

I'm not an alcoholic. I just like to drink.

DOT:

We know that baby.

75.

DELACROIX:

Let's get him over to the bed.

JUNEBUG:

Baby, you treat me so good.
Peerless, you're a good son, I love you. You never gave me no trouble.
They lay him down on the bed.

DELACROIX:

I love you too, Daddy.

JUNEBUG:

Always keep 'em laughing.
Dot takes off his shoes. He's out like a light. Gone.

DELACROIX:

How long has my father been like this?

DOT:

Not that often. He was excited to see you.

DELACROIX:

So he drank himself into a stupor?

DOT:

The drinking is for the pain. It doesn't kill it, just dulls it.

DELACROIX:

So what's up with you?

DOT:

I was a hostess at this club, your

Daddy was performing and I had never laughed so hard in my life. He asked me to come with him. I quit my job and we've been together ever since.

Delacroix pulls out his billfold and gives Dot five crisp new model hundred dollar bills.

DELACROIX:

Don't tell him it's from me or he won't take it.

DOT:

Your father is proud of you.
76.

DELACROIX:

He never showed it.

DOT:

He did the best way he knew how, Junebug is stubborn just like you. Delacroix kisses his sleeping father of the forehead.

DOT (CONT'D)

I'll take care of him.

EXT. I-95 NORTH - NIGHT

Delacroix is driving back home - up North.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

DELACROIX (V.O.)

My Daddy. I'm not mad at him. Not at all. Junebug was the reason I got into this business in the first place.

CLOSER:

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And I thank him for that. However, it did me no good seeing him in that state. Daddy was a broken man. He had been a strong man, with conviction, integrity, principles and look where it had gotten him. I had to ask myself did I want to end up where he was?

OVERHEAD REAR VIEW MIRROR

Delacroix adjusts the mirror so he can see himself, and
SPEAK TO US.

DELACROIX (CONT'D)

That was the last time I ever saw
my father.

EXT. I-95 NORTH

Delacroix's car flies past us.

INT. MANTAN'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

ON MIRROR:

Mantan starts to black up.

77.

INT. SLEEP 'N EAT'S DRESSING ROOM

Sleep 'N Eat also begins to black up.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

Honeycutt stands in front of the festive young, mixed
audience.

HONEYCUTT:

Everybody say Ho!

AUDIENCE:

Ho!

HONEYCUTT:

That's what I'm talkin'bout!

That's what I'm talkin'bout! I want
to be the first to welcome you to
the second taping of Mantan - The
New Millennium Minstrel Show.

Audience applauds.

HONEYCUTT (CONT'D)

My name is Honeycutt and I want to
try something different. Can you
do this for me?

ON AUDIENCE:

AUDIENCE:

Yeah!

BACK ON HONEYCUTT

HONEYCUTT:

I'm gonna start a chant and I want y'all to follow me. Let's make our own 2 real coons know you're ready to start the show.

CLOSER:

HONEYCUTT (CONT'D)

Let's go Niggers. Then clap five times like this.

Honeycutt claps the cadence.

78.

HONEYCUTT (CONT'D)

C'mon. It's easy. It's the same thing y'all do out at the Yankee game, no different 'cept we changing one word. Everybody go it?

ON AUDIENCE:

AUDIENCE:

YEAH!

CLOSER ON HONEYCUTT

HONEYCUTT:

Alright. Here we go. Let's go NIGGERS! LET'S GO NIGGERS!

CLOSE ON AUDIENCE

AUDIENCE:

Let's go NIGGERS.

INT. MANTAN'S DRESSING ROOM

ON MIRROR:

Mantan is finishing the black.

AUDIENCE (O.S.)

Let's go niggers!

INT. SLEEP 'N EAT'S DRESSING ROOM

Sleep 'N Eat is finishing his Black.

AUDIENCE (O.S.)

Let's go niggers!

INT. STAGE - CONTINUOUS

HONEYCUTT:

Louder. They can't hear you.

CLOSE ON YOUNG BLACK WOMAN
YOUNG BLACK WOMAN
LET'S GO NIGGERS!
CLOSE ON YOUNG WHITE MALE
YOUNG WHITE MALE
LET'S GO NIGGERS!

79.

INT. MANTAN'S DRESSING ROOM
Mantan is applying his FIRETRUCK RED lipstick.

AUDIENCE (O.S.)
LET'S GO NIGGERS!

INT. SLEEP 'N EAT'S DRESSING ROOM
Sleep 'N Eat's also applying lipstick.

AUDIENCE (O.S.)
LET'S GO NIGGERS!

INT. STAGE - CONTINUOUS
Their CHANT is deafening. The audience's hyped.

HONEYCUTT:

You sound so good to me. Ladies
and gentlemen, boys and girls,
without further adieu, let's
welcome youknowwhoI'mtalkin'about,
your two favorite coons, Da Dusky
Duo, our stars Mantan and Sleep 'N
Eat.

The audience goes crazy as the curtain goes up and the house
band kicks in with the Mantan theme.

ON STAGE:

The setting is a chicken coop, live roosters and chickens
move freely about Mantan and Sleep 'N Eat. They start right
into their routine at a furious pace.

MANTAN:

Y'know my lady Lucindy?
SLEEP 'N EAT
The one with da big...

MANTAN:

Not her, the one with the little...
SLEEP 'N EAT
Oh her.

MANTAN:

Tomorrow is her birthday and I want
to get her something really nice,
like a...

80.

SLEEP 'N EAT

No, not that. How 'bout...

MANTAN:

She hates dem.

SLEEP 'N EAT

Too bad. How 'bout a dress?

MANTAN:

Sleep 'N Eat, one of dem slinky,
sexy, little foxy...

SLEEP 'N EAT

Mantan, way too short, too tight.

Get her one of dose...

MANTAN:

...to big. The in-between one, not
too tight, not too lose.

SLEEP 'N EAT

That'll work. I just bought one
for myself.

Mantan cocks his limp wrist. The audience ROARS.

SLEEP 'N EAT (CONT'D)

Not for me, my woolly headed cotton
pickin' friend for...

MANTAN:

I thought you got rid of...

SLEEP 'N EAT

...that was Vicki, her best friend.

Dat dress will cast ya round...

MANTAN:

...dat's too much money. I can't
'ford it. I needs me a dress that
cost no mo' than...

SLEEP 'N EAT

...aconite get it dat cheap.

MANTAN:

I'll buy her a less expensive
dress, so I can have some money
left over to take her out to dinner.

SLEEP 'N EAT

We should go out on a double date.

81.

MANTAN:

I heard ya lady is wild.

SLEEP 'N EAT

No. That's her second cousin.

Who's married to Li'l Bit.

MANTAN:

Oh, because on our first date, she
let me...

SLEEP 'N EAT

...no, she didn't...

MANTAN:

...yes she did.

SLEEP 'N EAT

...I heard different, thought that
was...

MANTAN:

...not that time...

SLEEP 'N EAT

So when are you comin' to pick us up?

MANTAN:

Around...

SLEEP 'N EAT

...too early...

MANTAN:

...then what about...

SLEEP 'N EAT

...too late, maybe around...

MANTAN:

...perfect...

SLEEP 'N EAT

That's what I like about you and me.
We git along...

MANTAN:

...like macaroni and cheese...
SLEEP 'N EAT
...like grits and butter...

MANTAN:

...like fried and chicken...
82.

SLEEP 'N EAT

...like sleep and eat.

OFF-SCREEN we HEAR the VOICE of MASSA CHARLIE, he's the
overseer of this plantation.

MASSA CHARLIE (O.S.)

Who goes in there?

SLEEP 'N EAT

We'd better hide.

MANTAN:

It's dat mean, evil overseer Massa
Charlie.

They hide behind some boxes.

MASSA CHARLIE:

I say who goes in there?

BOTH:

There's nobody in here 'cept us
chickens.

Massa Charlie enters the chicken coops with a SHOTGUN
blazing. Sleep 'N Eat and Mantan do a jig as they try to
escape the buckshot.

ON AUDIENCE:

They're rolling down the aisles in hysterics.

INT. CONTROL BOOTH

Everyone in the booth is laughing uncontrollably. Except
Delacroix. Even Sloan is dying.

DELACROIX:

Who's side are you on?

SLOAN:

I'm sorry, I can't help it. It's too funny.

Delacroix starts to crack a smile. He is definitely trying to hold it in.

INT. DELACROIX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He sits in front of the television, which is off.

83.

DELACROIX (V.O.)

It was the Day of Reckoning. After a massive advertising and publicity campaign...

CLOSER:

Delacroix stares at the blank screen.

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...the public would finally get a chance to view Mantan. I was feelin' a little bit like Dr. Frankenstein.

INT. SLOAN'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sloan, Jessica, Mantan and Cheeba are gathered around the television in the small studio apartment, jabbering away.

DELACROIX (V.O.)

What would their reaction be? I hadn't the foggiest.

SLOAN:

Everybody shut up.

ON TV SCREEN:

We see the OPENING of MANTAN - THE NEW MILLENNIUM MINSTREL SHOW. It is in CLAYMATION. Mantan and Sleep 'N Eat are doing a "jig." Their noses and lips are done in a grotesque characterization, BIG WIDE BEGROIDAL NOSES and JUICY RED SAUCER SOUP COOLING LIPS.

HONEYCUTT (V.O.)

Calling all my cousins, you're about to take a trip down to Hang 'Em High Plantation, home of your two favorite coons, Mantan and Sleep 'N Eat.

ON SLOAN, JESSICA, MANTAN, AND CHEEBA

Mantan isn't happy.

MANTAN:

Why they gotta make my nose so big?

CHEEBA:

Look at my lips.

JESSICA:

I think it looks cute.

84.

ON SLOAN:

She can't believe her eyes.

HONEYCUTT (V.O.)

Mantan - The New Millennium Minstrel

Show is proudly sponsored by...

ON TV SCREEN:

DA BOMB PRODUCT SHOT AND LOGO

HONEYCUTT (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...Da Bomb. We'll take you there.

And...

CLOSER ON TV SCREEN

TIMMI HILLNIGGER PRODUCT SHOT AND LOGO

HONEYCUTT (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...Timmi Hillnigger. Keep it really real.

ON HONEYCUTT:

HONEYCUTT (CONT'D)

We will be right back with the start of our show, but first, a word from our proud sponsors.

CUT TO COMMERCIAL #1

EXT. STREET CORNER - ANY GHETTO, U.S.A. - DAY

The TRACK is BOOMING. The fire hydrant is open on this sizzling day and practically butt naked "Playaz" and "Hoes" dance in the water. Each one is guzzling from 64 ounce JUGULARS of DA BOMB which are in the shape of a bomb.

ON HONEYCUTT AND CROWD

He's in the spot, he's the spokesperson.

HONEYCUTT:

DA BOMB. Yo. It's 125% pure

pleasure MALT LIQUOR.

HOOCHIE #1

It's Da Bomb, Baby.

PLAYA #1

It's Da Bomb, Baby.

85.

ON CROWD:

Nothing but butts and breasts gyrating.

HONEYCUTT (V.O.)

Clinical testing has found that
Viagra doesn't work on black
"johnson's." That's why our
scientists developed Da Bomb for
you. It makes you feel like a MAN
and it makes dem bitches feel like
Natural Women - I mean Ho's.

PLAYA #2

It makes my nature rise.

HOOCHIE #2

I want to get fucked up.

HONEYCUTT:

DA BOMB - 125% pure pleasure malt
liquor.

Honeycutt takes a big swallow from his 64 oz. Jugular. Two
statuesque ladies sandwich him, grinding up on Honeycutt.
He takes the jugular from his lips. As he speaks, flames
come out of his mouth.

HONEYCUTT (CONT'D)

Oooooo-weeee!! Da Bomb makes me
wanna get my freak on.

TWO MO' HOOCHIES

Honeycutt, let's get our swerve on@

CUT TO COMMERCIAL #2

EXT. STREET CORNER - ANY GHETTO, U.S.A. - DAY

A middled-aged Caucasian male, TIMMI HILLNIGGER, is
surrounded by a mob deep of hard-looking PLAYAZ.

TIMMY HILLNIGGER

Yo, my name be Timmi Hillnigger. I
was born and raised up in Strong
Island so you know I know about my
peeps, my niggaz in the git-toe. I
design and own TIMMI HILLNIGGER

125% Authentic Git-Toe active wear.

DAWG #1 steps forward.

DAWG #1

Hillnigger keeps it real.

86.

DAWG #2 steps forward also.

DAWG #2

Timmi's gots all da latest gear.

TIMMY HILLNIGGER

If you want to keep it really real,
never get out of the git-toe, stay
broke and continue to add to my
multibillion dollar corporation,
keep buyin' all my gear. The Timmi
Hillnigger collection. We keep it
so real we give you the bullet holes.

Hoe #1 laying in a white thong on top of a white Rolls-Royce.

HOE #1

All my niggaz wear Hillnigger or
they don't wear a damn thing at all.

It's Git-toe Fabulous.

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

The lights are on in the White House.

DELACROIX (V.O.)

I was sunk, dead. My goose was
cooked. The cat was in the bag and
the bag was in the river.

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE

President Clinton is seen behind a TV set laughing his head
off.

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - PRESS CONFERENCE - DAY

The President of the U.S. stands behind a podium and takes
questions from the press.

REPORTER:

Did you watch MANTAN - THE NEW
MILLENNIUM MINSTREL SHOW last night?

PRESIDENT CLINTON

Yes I did and I can honestly say I
feel it promotes racial healing.

INT. DUNWITTY'S OFFICE - MORNING

Dunwitty, Delacroix and Sloan are joined by a young Caucasian
woman, MYRNA GOLDFARB.

87.

DUNWITTY:

I know all of you have seen the overnight ratings. Through the roof. But in this game you gotta be one, two, three steps ahead. I introduce you to Myrna Goldfarb. She's the best media consultant in the biz.

MYRNA:

First, I would like to say I love the show. It's very courageous. My parents marched in Selma, Alabama with Dr. King.

DELACROIX:

Why are you here?

MYRNA:

Good question, straight to the point. I like your style. Because of the content of the show we can expect some spirited reactions.

DUNWITTY:

Myrna is here to help us plan our strategy.

MYRNA:

The best defense is offense.

DELACROIX:

I thought it was the other way around.

MYRNA:

You get my point. I've mapped out some strategies to help bolster our position.

SLOAN:

Which is?

MYRNA:

That this is fun. Nice wholesome fun.

DUNWITTY:

Goldfarb, run it down for them.
88.

MYRNA:

The Mantan Manifesto. Catchy ain't it? Number One. We gainfully employ African Americans, in front of and behind the cameras. Two. Let the audience decide. Three. Who put these critics in charge? These so-called cultural police? Four. Who determines what is black? Five. Mantan is a satire. Six. If they can't take a joke, "F" 'em.

DUNWITTY:

We all stick to this, it's smooth sailing.

SLOAN:

It sounds kinda simplistic to me.

MYRNA:

I've done my research.

DELACROIX:

These are black folks we're talkin' about, not some lab mice in a cage.

MYRNA:

Monsieur Delacroix, I got my PhD in African-American studies from Yale, so I do feel I'm qualified.

DUNWITTY:

Let Myrna finish.

MYRNA:

Thank you. And always smile.

DELACROIX:

Yeah, show dem pearly whites.
She ignores him.

MYRNA:

Wear Kente cloth, invoke the name
of Dr. Martin Luther King, use the
word "community" often when talking
about Mantan. And finally our
biggest plus is you, Pierre
Delacroix.

DELACROIX:

Me?
89.

DUNWITTY:

Yes you!

MYRNA:

This show was created, conceived by
you, a non-threatening African-
American male. Voila. End of
argument. It can't be racist
because you're black.

DELACROIX:

I'm not black. I'm a NEGRO!!!

INT. CNS HALLWAY - POST MEETING

Sloan and Delacroix are walking in the hallway. They keep
getting interrupted by people who congratulate Delacroix on
the success of the show.

SLOAN:

So you have your small victory, now
what?

DELACROIX:

A small victory isn't that small
when you've been use to losing.

INT. DELACROIX'S OFFICE - MORNING

Sloan hands Delacroix a wrapped gift.

DELACROIX:

What is this?

SLOAN:

A gift.

DELACROIX:

For what?

SLOAN:

No matter what you think, you did
come up with something unique.

Open it.

Delacroix opens his gift. It is one of those old cast iron
Black Collectibles. This one is called "THE JOLLY NIGGER
BANK," a head of a Negro, big lips, big nose, wide eyes.

SLOAN (CONT'D)

Put a coin in the hand.

He puts a quarter in the hand.

90.

SLOAN (CONT'D)

Watch this.

She pushes the lever and the mouth opens, the quarter flies
in and his eyes go to the top of his head.

SLOAN (CONT'D)

Read it on the back.

Delacroix reads.

DELACROIX:

The Jolly Nigger Bank.

SLOAN:

This is authentic, not a repro,
circa turn of the century.

DELACROIX:

Thanks.

SLOAN:

I thought it was appropriate.

DELACROIX:

Is that good or bad?

SLOAN:

It's all good. You got a hit show, you're gonna need a bank. Plus, I love these old black collectibles.

DELACROIX:

How so?

SLOAN:

To me, it shows part of our history in this country, a time when we were considered inferior, sub-human.

CLOSE ON JOLLY NIGGER BANK

Delacroix puts another quarter in the hand and flips the lever. The quarter flies into his mouth as his eyes roll to the top of his head.

INT. WLIB - DAY

Delacroix is a guest on the GARY BYRD show. WLIB is the number one black talk radio station in the nation.

91.

GARY BYRD:

Our guest today is Pierre Delacroix.

He is the creator of the highly controversial TV show MANTAN.

Let's get right into it. You have been called by some in the community a traitor, a sellout, an Uncle Tom. Why does your show generate such feelings?

DELACROIX:

Because race has always been a sensitive issue in this country. Gary, I have no problem with people disagreeing with the show, it's when folks start trying to mess with my inherent right as an artist, that's when I get mad. No one, in any way, shape or form should be censored.

GARY BYRD:

No matter how sexist or racist the

material may be?

DELACROIX:

Yes. And I say yes because who is to judge? Who is to stand before us and say this is righteous and this is not? Who? Who can play God?

GARY BYRD:

But the line has to be drawn.

DELACROIX:

Don't you people get it? We're in the 21st Century. Slavery was over four hundred years ago. All that stuff people talked in the old days, it's over. Folks always crying, white man this, white man that. Let's all grow up.

GARY BYRD:

Are you trying to excuse our Holocaust?

DELACROIX:

Can I finish? Thank you. I had a great Aunt, we called her Sister. She went to her grave not believing man had walked on the Moon.

(MORE)

92.

DELACROIX (CONT'D)

When I was a little kid, I would argue with her, "it's on TV." She would answer "I don't care what's on that idiot box. No MAN is on the MOON." Well, there are a lot of your Negroes just like my Aunt Sister. Face up to it. The world has changed and if you don't adapt, change with it, you will be left behind. This show is a parody. Are you telling me that nobody can use some humor, have some laughs in

their lives? Is that what you're
telling me?

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - NIGHT

Mantan and Cheeba gaze skyward at a behemoth billboard for
their show. Some people recognize them and start asking for
autographs and a crowd forms.

ON MANTAN AND CHEEBA

They're enjoying the adulation.

ANOTHER CORNER:

Big Black and the Mau-Mau's also look up at the 2 REAL COONS
billboard. Their faces say they are not happy.

CLOSE ON 2 REAL COONS BILLBOARD

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON AMERICAN FLAG

It blows majestically in the wind.

DELACROIX (V.O.)

When American people want something,
they want it now, they want it big.

NEWSREEL FOOTAGE

Kids swinging in their hula hoops.

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

They wanted the hula hoop...

NEWSREEL FOOTAGE

Kids playing with their yo-yo's.

93.

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

They wanted their yo-yo's.

NEWSREEL FOOTAGE

A young girl petting her Pet Rock.

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Who could ever forget those lovable
pet rocks.

CUT TO:

INT. TOYS "R" US

Parents are fighting over Beanie Babies. It's a RUCKUS.

DELACROIX (V.O.)

Beanie Babies...

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - NIGHT

Mantan and Sleep 'N Eat are doing a tap dance on the GIANT
DIAMONDIVISION SCREEN.

DELACROIX (V.O.)

Now the latest, hottest, newest
sensation across the nation was...

CLOSE ON MANTAN AND SLEEP 'N EAT

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

BLACKFACE!!!

BLACKFACE MONTAGE

We SEE AMERICANS - young, old, black and white in BLACKFACE.
MANTAN and SLEEP 'N EAT are #1 and #2 in the best-selling
Halloween masks. They fly out of the stores. We SEE Mantan
and Sleep 'N Eat THE DUSKY DUO Action Dolls, backpacks,
lunch boxes, T-shirts, jackets, board games, watches, and
CD-Rom video games. Football players, wrestlers in black
face also.

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It was the rage.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO

Big Black stands behind 1/16th Black who sits in front of a
laptop computer.

94.

1/16TH BLACK

Big Black, I can't log on the
Mantan Website now, it's overloaded.

DELACROIX (V.O.)

The Mantan - The New Millennium
Minstrel Show at [www .nigger.com](http://www.nigger.com) was
getting 500,000 hits a day.

BIG BLACK:

Keep trying.

1/16TH BLACK

I'm on it.

INT. CAR DEALER - DAY

A Mercedes-Benz salesman is showing Mantan all the newest,
latest models.

INT. JUSTINE'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Mantan and Cheeba sit at a big table with Puff Daddy, Andre
Harrell, Russell Simmons and other assorted RAPPERS.

Everyone is drinking that DOM P. Buxom Hotties sit in
between the BIG WILLIES.

EXT. CNS BUILDING - DAY

A group of protesters led by the REVEREND JESSE JACKSON and
AL SHARPTON carry signs and banners objecting to Mantan.
They're calling upon the FCC to pull the show off the air
and for the boycotting of the show's two sponsors: TIMMI

HILLNIGGER and DA BOMB MALT LIQUOR.

ON PROTESTERS:

The press is watching.

INT. DELACROIX'S OFFICE - DAY

Delacroix has now decorated his entire office with Black Collectibles Art. WE SEE black jockey lawn pieces, banks, mummies, signs for products, etc.

ON WINDOW:

Delacroix and Mantan are looking out the office window down on the protesters.

MANTAN:

Why is Jess and Reverend Al down there?

95.

DELACROIX:

So they can be on TV.

MANTAN:

You sound like the media.

DELACROIX:

This is nothing. It will blow over by tomorrow.

MANTAN:

Same thing Giuliani said.

DELACROIX:

Tomorrow it will be all about cruelty to animals or some sex scandal. Besides, there is no such thing as bad publicity.

He hands Mantan a wrapped gift.

DELACROIX (CONT'D)

Rest your mind. It's a little somethin' something.

Mantan opens it. He pulls out an old pair of tap shoes.

DELACROIX (CONT'D)

Those were the last pair of tap shoes worn by Bill "Bojangles"

Robinson. In fact, he died with them on.

Mantan starts to laugh.

DELACROIX (CONT'D)

No joke. Serious.

MANTAN:

Hope the same thing doesn't happen to me. That's some big shoes to fill.

DELACROIX:

In time.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - NIGHT

The Mau-Mau's are in meeting. They all drink 64 ounce jugulars of Da Bomb, are all attired from head to toe in TIMMI HILLNIGGER Active Ghetto Wear and brandish their 9's.

BIG BLACK:

That Tom, That Negro...

96.

DOUBLE BLACK:

...that handkerchief head...

BLACK BLACK:

...dancing monkey...

1/16TH BLACK

...Benedict Arnold...

BIG BLACK:

...that simpleton is holding back the race. They got rid of us and keep those two buffoons, Mantan and Sleep 'N Eat, y'knowwhatI'msayin'?

HARD BLACK:

Yo, Big Black, Sleep 'N Eat ain't even a nigger, y'knowwhatI'msayin'?

SMOOTH BLACK:

He's Mexican, y'knowwhatI'msayin'?

MO BLACK:

He's Dominican, y'knowwhatI'msayin'?

JO BLACK:

He's Peter Rican,
y'knowwhatI'msayin'?

BIG BLACK:

Same thing, y'knowwhatI'msayin',
y'knowwhatI'msayin'!

1/16TH BLACK

We know. We know. Yo, check it,
my black brothers, we can't let
this slide. Not this injustice.
Nah, no way. Dem' two real coons
iz ill.

BIG BLACK:

1/16, tru' 'dat. True 'dat.

DOUBLE BLACK:

Let me gat him.

BIG BLACK:

Nah, too easy, this has to be
symbolic, has to be on the world
stage.

INT. MANTAN'S APARTMENT - CENTRAL PARK WEST - DAY

Mantan is showing Sloan his new residence.

97.

SLOAN:

This is a nice place. It must have
cost a pretty penny.

MANTAN:

Sloan, I got it like 'dat.

SLOAN:

Oh you do, huh?

MANTAN:

Just a little something' somethin'.

SLOAN:

I hope you save a little somethin'
somethin'.

MANTAN:

Gots no intention of ending up broke.

SLOAN:

Y'know, at the beginnin' of the
century, African-American had to
perform in blackface. You ever
heard of Bert Williams? He was a
great artist.

MANTAN:

No, before my time.

SLOAN:

You don't read, do you?

MANTAN:

Never read a book in my whole life.

SLOAN:

Maybe you need to start.

MANTAN:

Maybe I need to do a lot of things.

SLOAN:

Bert Williams and the rest, they
had to black up. They had no
choice. They were considered
3/5ths of a human being. Did you
know that's written in the
Constitution of the United States?
98.

MANTAN:

Why all of a sudden are you flippin'
on me? This blackface thing was
part of the deal from the git-go.
Don't even try to play it like you
ain't a part of all this. You down
with Delacroix.

SLOAN:

I just don't want you and Cheeba to get hurt.

MANTAN:

We can look out for ourselves.

INT. SLEEP 'N EAT'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Sleep 'N Eat is applying his black face.

INT. MANTAN'S DRESSING ROOM

Mantan also puts on his mask.

INT. STAGE

CLOSE ON HONEYCUTT

HONEYCUTT:

Let's have a warm nigger applause for our two favorite coons, Mantan and Sleep 'N Eat. TWO REAL COONS!

ON AUDIENCE:

The entire audience is in BLACK FACE. They applaud, yell, cheer wildly. This is becoming a religious cult.

ON STAGE:

The curtain rises on Mantan and Sleep 'N Eat. They are in a cotton field.

MANTAN:

I fell out of my bed last night.

SLEEP 'N EAT

You slept too near where you got in?

MANTAN:

I slept too near where I fell out.

SLEEP 'N EAT

You expect the unexpected in circumstances of that peculiarity.

99.

MANTAN:

Sleep 'N Eat, what's the matter with you? Using all dose ten dollar words?

SLEEP 'N EAT

Mantan, it is possible that my hyphenated sentences are entirely too complex for all the intellect contained in that diminutive coconut?

MANTAN:

Hold on, you allegorical hypothesis.

Don't cross words with me.

SLEEP 'N EAT

Ain't Jemima on the pancake box?

MANTAN:

Dat's yo Uncle Ben. That reminds me, I've seen a lot of troubles lately.

SLEEP 'N EAT

How be dat?

MANTAN:

I don't know who I am.

SLEEP 'N EAT

Well, I'll be an Alabama porch monkey's uncle.

MANTAN:

Years ago I married a widow who had a grown-up daughter. My daddy visited us often, fell in love with my stepdaughter and married her. Thusly he became my son-in-law and my stepdaughter became my mother because she was my father's wife. Soon after dis my wife gave birth to a son, which of course was my father's brother in-law and my uncle, for he was the brother of my step-mother. My father's wife also became the mother of a son. He was of course my brother and also my grandchild for he was the son of my daughter. Accordingly, my wife was my grandmother because she was my mother's mother.

(MORE)

100.

MANTAN (CONT'D)

Sleep 'N Eat, I was my wife's
husband and grandchild at one and
the same time. And lo' and behold,
as the husband of a person's
grandmother is his grandfather, I
Mantan, became my own grandfather.

SLEEP 'N EAT

Mantan, dat sho' is a whopper.

They both start to do the jig.

INT. CONTROL BOOTH

Delacroix is dying laughing.

DUNWITTY:

You couldn't hold out any longer,
huh?

ON SLOAN:

She looks at Delacroix, her face tells us she's not amused
at all.

ON TV SCREEN:

The Dusky Duo is joined on the cotton patch by Snowflake,
Rastus, Sambo, Nigga Jim, Jungle Bunny, Aunt Jemima, And the
Porch Monkeys Band.

MANTAN:

I feel a song a comin' on.

SLEEP 'N EAT

A song a comin' I feel.

The Porch Monkeys kick in and Mantan sings.

MANTAN:

I fell right dead in love/wid da
sweetest little dove/little LuLu
Snow from Tennessee/she made a
slave of me/an' from her I'se never
free/I'd do anything she'd ask me
to...

Sleep 'N Eat takes over.

101.

SLEEP 'N EAT

De money I did save/to dat yeller

gal I gave/for to keep till we was
wed/she told me dat nobody'd get
away dat cash/I'll take good care
of date, she said.
Everybody joins in for the chorus.

PIKCANINNINIES:

She's de cutest gal in all dis
world I know/If you met her you
would say it so/Oh, Lulu, Lulu,
ev'ry day I pines for you/no other
gal will do/All I've got is yours
for life, my little, my little
yaller Lou/A week ago dat Lou wid
anudder nigger flew/took ma money
too, all I had/She broke ma heart
in two/when I heard dat she had
flew/Do you wonder dat I feel so
bad?/She told me not to cry 'case
she didn't say good bye/but she'd
take care of dat red/and nobody
would get de cash away from
her/She'd keep her word to me she
said.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - NIGHT

The Mau-Mau clan surrounds the television monitor, howling
in disgust.

BIG BLACK:

He gots to be did.

1/16TH BLACK

Did he gots to be.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Delacroix is leading the meeting of the staff writers on
Mantan.

DELACROIX (V.O.)

To my astonishment, not only did
the people in TV land love us, but
also the critics.

—

102.

CLOSE ON DELACROIX

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Mantan was being hailed as

groundbreaking, barrier breaking,
also earth shaking. I looked
forward to my awards. Just
vindication for all my hard work,
all my talent that had been
previously overlooked.

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

Delacroix sits in tux amongst many stars.

ALEC BALDWIN:

The winner for Best New Sitcom is...

The envelope please...

A starlet hands him the envelope.

ALEC BALDWIN (CONT'D)

The winner is... Pierre Delacroix
for Mantan - The New Millennium
Minstrel Show!

Delacroix jumps out of his chair and starts sobbing. Two
ushers have to help him to the stage. He is overcome with
emotion. The audience is on their feet with a standing
ovation. He hugs Alec Baldwin.

DELACROIX:

Alec Baldwin, this is the very
first time we've ever met, you
don't know this, I'm your biggest
fan and I want you to have my Emmy.

It's for you, out of the deep
bowels of my heart - I don't
deserve this. You take it.

Alec Baldwin is shocked. He grabs Delacroix in a bear hug
and they both cry like babies.

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

If I did that I'd be assured to
work forever. Delacroix the
grateful Negro.

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM - NIGHT

Delacroix sits at a table in his lucky tux.

WOODY HARRELSON:

The winner for Best Sit-Com is...

103.

Woody opens the envelope.

WOODY HARRELSON (CONT'D)

...Pierre Delacroix for Mantan.

Come on up and get your Golden Globe.

Delacroix jumps out of his seat and sprints. He gets down on the stage and starts to breakdance, even spinning on his head.

DELACROIX (V.O.)

That routine would go over like gangbusters. I would be a dancing fool, Hollywood's new favorite Negro, move over Danny, Morgan, Samuel L., move over Whoopi.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Delacroix is finishing up the meeting.

DELACROIX:

I had it all planned. To the T.

INT. DANCE STUDIO - DAY

Mantan is running rigorous rehearsal of The Pikaninnies. Over and over, repetition after repetition, Snowflake, Rastus, Sambo, Nigger Jim, Jungle Bunny and Aunt Jemima try to do an intricate dance step.

MANTAN:

I'm tired of you pickaninnies messing up my choreography. It goes like this.

Mantan does the step with ease.

MANTAN (CONT'D)

Try it again.

The dancers do it once more.

MANTAN (CONT'D)

Better.

Cheeba walks in. Mantan checks him out.

MANTAN (CONT'D)

Let's take a ten minute break.

They quickly file past Cheeba without saying a word. The rehearsal space is just the two.

104.

CHEEBA:

I'm not drinking the Kool-Aid.

MANTAN:

What are you talkin' about?

CHEEBA:

Jim Jones, y'know. I'm not drinking the Kool-Aid.

MANTAN:

Meaning?

CHEEBA:

I'm out.

MANTAN:

Good. I've got a broken back from carrying you all these years anyway.

CHEEBA:

So that's what you been doing?

MANTAN:

Damn skippy.

CHEEBA:

You're in this up till ya neck.

MANTAN:

Don't shoot me, I'm just the piano players.

CHEEBA:

You can walk away. We both can.

MANTAN:

Yeah, that's easy for you to do. You never had any talent.

CHEEBA:

I'm so tired of you running that. I always worked hard for you. You think I'm a leech, a kling-on, I quit.
Cheeba walks out.

MANTAN:

I'm the star of Mantan, so you do

that. Quit, walk away. And don't
come crawling back, either.

105.

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Mantan and Sloan ride in back. He's still thinking about
Cheeba.

SLOAN:

Why don't you call him?

MANTAN:

For what? He left. Not me.

EXT. APOLLO THEATRE - NIGHT

The limo drives past the World Famous Apollo Theatre in
Harlem, a big crowd is in front.

TIGHT ON THEATRE

It READS:

INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

It's an unruly, fired up crowd that can be heard all the way
back here.

SLOAN:

You're sure this is a good idea.

MANTAN:

My people love me.

He kisses her, she doesn't resist.

SLOAN:

I love you.

After a long, deep kiss she gently pulls back.

SLOAN (CONT'D)

I'll be down front. You better
start putting your face on.

MANTAN:

Y'know what?

SLOAN:

What?

MANTAN:

You look beautiful like that.

INT. APOLLO THEATRE - NIGHT

Sloan takes a seat down front.

106.

INT. DRESSING ROOM

Mantan, face already done, puts on the firetruck red lipstick.

INT. APOLLO THEATRE

Sloan is looking around this boisterous crowd when she sees

ON THE MAU-MAU'S

In one of the side boxes.

ON BIG BLACK:

He waves to his sister.

ON SLOAN:

She knows her brother and his clan are up to no good as the house lights go black.

ANGLE ON STAGE:

Honeycutt walks out on stage. The audience goes crazy.

HONEYCUTT:

Thank you so very much. Show me some love.

He laughs.

HONEYCUTT (CONT'D)

Thank you. My name is Honeycutt and I want to welcome you to a very special evening. It's always great coming back to the World Famous Apollo Theatre.

The audience applauds.

HONEYCUTT (CONT'D)

As everybody knows if you can make it here on this stage in front of the most discriminating audience in the world you can make it anywhere.

Ladies and gentlemen, let's show some real Uptown love for Mantan

The Marvelous!

The curtain goes up and Mantan the Marvelous stands there, arms raised. He starts to do his thing.

107.

ON MAU-MAU BOX

Led by Big Black, they start shouting insults at Mantan.

ON STAGE:

Mantan is a pro, he doesn't stop. In fact, this makes him dance harder and harder.

ON SLOAN:

She leaves her seat and goes to stop her brother.

ON STAGE:

Mantan is moving and grooving. The unrest in the audience has picked up.

ON AUDIENCE:

They start to "boo." The tide has turned. Encouraged, the Mau-Mau's pick it up another notch.

ON MANTAN:

He's human after all, and he does hear the boos. Don't let those athletes in the papers fool you. You hear the boos and nobody, nobody except Dennis Rodman likes to be booed. Mantan is getting rattled.

ON MAU-MAU'S BOX

Sloan rushes into the box and they are quiet. They don't have to say or shout a thing. The rough Apollo crowd is doing it all themselves.

TWO SHOT ON SLOAN AND BIG BLACK

The sister and big brother look at each other. There is no love between them.

SLOAN:

This doesn't change a thing. I will still love him.

Big Black can't believe what he has just heard.

ON STAGE:

Now projectiles are raining down upon Mantan. This has turned into a RUCKUS, a BROUHAHA, a DONNYBROOK. Honeycutt races onto the stage to pull off the still tap dancing Mantan as the Harlem natives BUMRUSH the stage. THE WORM HAS TURNED.

108.

ON MAU-MAU'S BOX

Mantan, led by Honeycutt, runs for his life.

ON MOB:

They chase him.

ON BACKSTAGE DOOR

Mantan is hauling ass.

EXT. BACKSTAGE

The door crashes open, Mantan rockets out into an open car door.

ON CAR DOOR:

The door slams.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The car spins away.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Delacroix is behind the wheel. This is the most shaken we've seen Mantan to date.

DELACROIX:

Pull ya self together.

Mantan is distraught.

DELACROIX (CONT'D)

What are you? A man or a mouse?

Are you a punk? Punking out on me?

MANTAN:

No.

DELACROIX:

You getting scared because some people don't like what you are doing?

MANTAN:

Yo, DeLa, they tried to lynch my black ass up in dat piece.

109.

DELACROIX:

You've made it from the guttermost to the uppermost. Don't you know you should never let them see you sweat. Y'knowwhatI'msayin'?

MANTAN:

Yeah.

DELACROIX:

And now is definitely not the time
to bitch up.

EXT. HARLEM STREET - NIGHT

Delacroix speeds away.

INT. BET STUDIO - NIGHT

Mantan is on the BET show with host TAVIS SMILEY.

TAVIS SMILEY:

Our guest tonight is the
extraordinary, talented performer,
Mantan. Thanks for coming in.

MANTAN:

Tavis, thank you for having me.

TAVIS SMILEY:

Before we begin, I want to thank
you for coming on my show for your
first television interview. You
could have chosen Mike Wallace,
Barbara Walters, Jane Pauley,
whatnot but you're here.

MANTAN:

I'm more comfortable around my
people.

TAVIS SMILEY:

Let's jump right into it. Your
show has sparked a world of
controversy, provoked a tone of
dialogue. How do you see all of
this?

MANTAN:

Yo, Tavis, check it out. This is
the two-one, the 21st century and
it's all about the money. Like my
man Mase says, "it's all about the
Benjamins."

110.

TAVIS SMILEY:

Money and nothing else?

MANTAN:

Money makes the world go round. It ain't no joke being poor. I know what I'm talkin' 'bout.

Y'know what I'm sayin'? I've lived on the street. I've been homeless. I've learned how to play the game, work the game, be in the game.

TAVIS SMILEY:

Is it inevitable that the game plays you?

MANTAN:

No if you go with the flow, Tavis. That's what a lot of Negroes don't understand. Protesting isn't gonna do a damn thing. If people don't like our satire in our number one hit show then don't watch it. Or better yet write your own show. Do it better.

TAVIS SMILEY:

Don't you feel that is a simplistic retort?

MANTAN:

I don't know what a retort is, but it's simple. Mantan - The New Millennium Minstrel Show is UNIVERSAL. It's not just for Negroes in Compton or 125th in Harlem. This is America. Our ancestors helped build this country, we got a right, just like everybody else. I'm not gonna box myself in. This show makes people think, and they're laughing at the same time.

TAVIS SMILEY:

I admit, that's a very hard thing

to do. Quickly let's go to the phones before we pay the bills and hear from our proud sponsors, DA BOMB. 125% PURE PLEASURE MALT LIQUOR. IT MAKES YOU WANNA GET YA FREAK ON AND TIMMI HILLNIGGER. 125% AUTHENTIC GIT-TOE GEAR WHEN YOU WANT TO BE GIT-TOED FABULOUS. (MORE)

111.

TAVIS SMILEY (CONT'D)

Our first caller is Big Black from Brooklyn. Go 'head.

ON MANTAN:

BIG BLACK (O.S.)

Microphone check, one, two. One, two. Yo Tavis, I be lovin' yo show but Mantan you is foul. Why you perpetrating? You a sellout.

MANTAN:

That's our opinion.

BIG BLACK (O.S.)

You're a traitor to the race. A tool for the Caucasoids.

MANTAN:

Why? Because I'm successful? Because I don't use "Causcasoids" as an excuse for not fulfilling my dreams?

BIG BLACK (O.S.)

I ain't hearing all dat noise. You getting played and you don't even know it.

TAVIS SMILEY:

And Big Black from Brooklyn, what do you do?

BIG BLACK (O.S.)

What do I do?

TAVIS SMILEY:

What do you do?
BIG BLACK (O.S.)
I'm a revolutionary.

MANTAN:

That's a job?
BIG BLACK (O.S.)
That's a full time job, especially
when sellouts like you are running
around, acting insane.

TAVIS SMILEY:

That's enough.
112.

BIG BLACK (O.S.)
And another thing, you better stay
away from my sister or you better...
CLICK!!!

TAVIS SMILEY:

Ladies and gentlemen, there is no
need to go there. We can all agree
to disagree without making threats.
INT. DELACROIX'S OFFICE - NIGHT
Sloan turns off the TV.

DELACROIX:

Why'd you do that?

SLOAN:

I don't want to hear it.

DELACROIX:

How long have you and Hambone been
hangin' out?

SLOAN:

You're the one that put us together.
We're friends.

DELACROIX:

That crazy brother of yours doesn't
think so.

SLOAN:

He's just playing big brother.

DELACROIX:

Oh, is he? You getting jiggy with Mantan?

SLOAN:

Please don't go there.

DELACROIX:

Dunwitty and I feel you've been getting too close to him, getting his mind all messed up.

SLOAN:

I can't lie to him. If he asks me something, I tell him what I think.

DELACROIX:

Do you have to be so damn forthright?
113.

SLOAN:

DeLa, you should try it sometime.
Come into the light.

DELACROIX:

Light?

SLOAN:

That which has been hidden in darkness is now in the light. This bucket of blood.

DELACROIX:

You can talk all that mumbo jumbo if you want to but your hands are much bloody. I know where I made my big mistake. I have a general rule, never get involved romantically with somebody crazier than you.

CUT TO FLASHBACK

INT. MIDTOWN HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Delacroix and Sloan are taking off their clothes.

DELACROIX:

This is crazy.

SLOAN:

That's why it will be so much fun.

They kiss, fall half undressed upon the motel bed.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. DELACROIX'S OFFICE - NIGHT

SLOAN:

That was a mistake, but I don't regret it.

DELACROIX:

The first and only time. A big mistake. I'm gonna have to ask you not to see Mantan anymore.

SLOAN:

Work related or otherwise?

114.

DELACROIX:

Otherwise. I trust you know the difference. You're an intelligent woman, finished at NYU.

SLOAN:

DeLa, kiss my big black ass.

DELACROIX:

And that's how you got me in the first place.

Sloan pulls a 3/4 inch cassette out of her bag and hands it to him.

SLOAN:

I want you to please view this. It may save your Life.

INT. MANTAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Mantan and Delacroix are in the middle of a heated discussion.

DELACROIX:

You shouldn't even be mad at me over Sloan.

MANTAN:

What you did is dead wrong.

DELACROIX:

Oh, is it? Buddy boy, in this business if people don't produce, they get fired.

MANTAN:

Sloan is the hardest working person I've ever met.

DELACROIX:

Let me ask you a question, if I may. How do you think she got the job in the first place? I don't mean to burst your bubble, Mantan the Marvelous, but Sloan is an opportunity.

MANTAN:

I don't believe it.

DELACROIX:

Do I have to spell it out for you? In fact, go ask Sloan yourself.
115.

INT. SLOAN'S STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY
Mantan is grilling Sloan.

MANTAN:

How did you get this gig?

SLOAN:

Worked my black ass off, first as an intern, then worked my way up to this position.

MANTAN:

You leave something out?

SLOAN:

After my internship expired, Dela was impressed and offered me a position as his assistant.

MANTAN:

And?

SLOAN:

And what?

MANTAN:

Stop playing me Sloan.

SLOAN:

Just ask me what you want to know.

MANTAN:

Oh, you gonna make me say it.

SLOAN:

Say what, Manray?

MANTAN:

Did you ever sleep with DeLa?

SLOAN:

We did it one time, only once. It had nothing to do with the job, it was stupid. Everything I've got I've earned.

MANTAN:

Aw, c'mon.

SLOAN:

That's ancient history. That has nothing to do with you and I.

116.

MANTAN:

So you say. Sloan, you wuz gonna use me up just like you used DeLa? Work it to the top. I never imagined people in this biz could flip on you like "IHOP." I'm damn happy DeLa fired ya ass.

SLOAN:

Forget about me, are you a puppet for DeLa?

MANTAN:

Don't try to change to the subject.

SLOAN:

Why don't you answer?

MANTAN:

I know I won't be your puppet.

SLOAN:

You can go now.

MANTAN:

I wuz leaving anyway, for good.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - NIGHT

As usual, the clan is smoking and drinking DA BOMB, a thick marijuana haze hangs over the studio.

1/16TH BLACK

Yo, I got da bomb plan. We gonna hook homeslice Mantan up nicely.

He holds up a floppy disk.

INT. DELACROIX'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Delacroix sits behind the desk. He's bought even more Black Collectibles, he's surrounded by them.

ON DELACROIX:

He dials the phone.

DELACROIX:

Hello, Mommy, how are you?

117.

ORCHID (O.S.)

I'm doing okay. Been reading about

your show, it's all over everywhere.
I watched it's all over everywhere.
I watched it once. I thought you
said there would be no buffoonery.

DELACROIX:

You going to attack me too. The
show is a hit. Aren't you happy
for me?

INT. ORCHID'S HOUSE

ORCHID:

Of course I'm happy for you.
You've worked very hard for your
success.

DELACROIX (O.S.)

Yes I have, very hard. Has Daddy
called?

ORCHID:

No.

ON DELACROIX:

DELACROIX:

Not at all?

ORCHID (O.S.)

You know how your Daddy is.

DELACROIX:

If and when he calls, please don't
forget to ask him if he's seen
Mantan.

ORCHID (O.S.)

I won't forget. When are you
coming up here to see your mother?

DELACROIX:

Soon.

Delacroix hangs up the phone. He takes out some change from
his pocket and puts a quarter in the hand of his Jolly
Nigger Bank.

TIGHT ON JNB:

Delacroix flips the lever and the quarter flies into the MOUTH as the EYES roll to the top of its HEAD.

118.

Delacroix does this several times. CLOSEUPS of the BLACK COLLECTIBLES in the office.

CLOSER ON JNB:

Delacroix is staring at the JNB when its MOUTH OPENS, a quarter flies in and its EYES roll to the top of its HEAD.

ON DELACROIX:

He is incredulous.

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

When I thought or imagined that my favorite Jolly Nigger Bank, an inanimate object, a piece of cold, cast iron, was moving by itself...

Delacroix slowly, carefully approaches the bank and picks it off the table.

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...I knew I was getting paranoid. Did I really see what I saw or was I buggin'?

ON JNB:

It's stopped moving.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

Honeycutt is warming up the crazed "Black Face"-wearing audience. He points to a YOUNG WHITE MALE, BOBBY

HONEYCUTT:

Is you a nigga?

BOBBY:

Hell yeah, I'm a nigga.

The AUDIENCE CHEERS WILDLY. Honeycutt points to an old WHITE LADY, LOUISE, a senior citizen.

HONEYCUTT:

Ma'am, is you a nigga?

LOUISE:

Yesiree Bob, you darn tootin' I'm a nigger.

The AUDIENCE loses it as Honeycutt hugs Louise as if she's a grandmother.

119.

INT. MANTAN'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Mantan looks up at his makeup laid out before him on the counter.

TIGHT ON MANTAN:

He stares at himself in the dressing room mirror. Mantan can't stand to BLACK UP anymore.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

Honeycutt stands next to a young black couple TRE and STACY.

HONEYCUTT:

Are you a nigger?

TRE:

Yo!

HONEYCUTT:

Are you a nigga?

STACY:

Honeycutt, I'm a really real niggress.

Stacy gets a standing ovation.

HONEYCUTT:

You. You. Him. Her. We're all God's niggas. Even the lost souls who don't know it are niggas cuz niggas is a beautiful thing.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

As Mantan walks down the hallway WE NOTICE he is not dressed in his costume and he has no BLACK FACE on.

EXT. SLEEP 'N EAT'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

A Worker is painting over Sleep 'N Eat's name on the door and replacing it with HONEYCUTT

MANTAN:

They don't waste any time, do they?

INT. CONTROL BOOTH - NIGHT

The phone rings next to Delacroix and he answers.

120.

DELACROIX:

Delacroix. What?! I'll be right down.

Dunwitty looks at him.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Delacroix is met by BUNNING, the STAGE MANAGER.

BUNNING:

You better talk to him. He won't listen to me.

Delacroix walks over to Mantan who stands in a corner.

DELACROIX:

Mantan, we got a show to tape.

MANTAN:

My name is Manray, goddamnit.

DELACROIX:

Kook and the Gang, it's Manray. Let's do the taping. You go back to your dressing room, get dressed and blacken up.

MANRAY:

I'm not playin' myself no mo'.

DELACROIX:

How you sound?

MANRAY:

I won't do it anymore.

DELACROIX:

Manray, I'm very sorry about ya boy Cheeba and Sloan. Believe me, it gave me no joy pulling ya coattail about her, just lookin' out for a brother. I feel you, all this stuff happenin' at once but you can't let it affect your work. You gotta be professional.

MANRAY:

I'm always gonna be that. But I ain't doing no more buck dancing.

DELACROIX:

No costume. No blackface.
121.

MANRAY:

No. No.
Manray leads the way to the stage.

BUNNING:

I should notify Dunwitty.

DELACROIX:

And I should put my foot dead up in yo' ass.

BUNNING:

I won't be held responsible.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

Honeycutt stands in front of the drawn curtain.

HONEYCUTT:

We apologize for the holdup but without further delay, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, let's give it up for Mantan.

A THUNDEROUS ROAR FROM THE STUDIO AUDIENCE.

HONEYCUTT (CONT'D)

C'mon, don't be niggardly, give it up. Show Mantan some love.

The CURTAIN RISES and MANRAY stands before them in his regular street clothes and NO BLACK FACE.

ON AUDIENCE:

The THUNDEROUS ROAR is CUT OFF LIKE the LIGHTS, LIKE CON EDISON PULLS THE PLUG WHEN YOU DON'T PAY THE BILL.

INT. CONTROL BOOTH - NIGHT

Dunwitty is HYSTERICAL.

DUNWITTY:

Stop the tape. Stop the tape.

Delacroix. Get me Delacroix.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

Manray speaks to the silence.

—

122.

MANRAY:

Cousins, I want all of you to go to your windows. Go to your windows and yell, scream with all the life you can muster up inside your assaulted, bruised and battered bodies.

ON MANRAY:

MANRAY:

I'm sick and tired of being a nigger and I'm not gonna take it anymore.

ON VARIOUS AUDIENCE MEMBERS

Black and white. Male and female. Young and old. All in black face.

ON MANRAY:

He collapses onto the stage and the AUDIENCE sits on their hands. Manray gets up and begins to dance.

ON STAGE:

Dunwitty runs to Bunning.

DUNWITTY:

Drop the curtain. Drop the curtain.

Bunning drops the curtain. Security rushes onto the stage and grabs Manray.

DUNWITTY (CONT'D)

Escort him out the building now!

MANRAY:

I wasn't finished doing my dance.

DUNWITTY:

But you are finished. Done.

Nigga's like you are a dime a dozen.

I'm gonna slide Honeycutt right
into ya spot. We won't miss a step.
Get him outta here.

The security guards move Manray as Dunitty glares at
Delacroix. Honeycutt is all smiles, he's being bumped to
the top.

DUNWITTY (CONT'D)

DeLa, I'll deal with you next.

123.

EXT. BACKSTAGE

The security guards toss Manray out the stage door. Manray
looks down the alley and it's empty except for a parked SUV.
He picks himself up and does a joyous dance. This is
Manray's dance of Freedom.

ON STREET:

The Big Black Chevy Suburban creeps down the alley to a
dancing Manray and comes to rest right in front of him.
Manray tries to shield his eyes from the hi-beam headlights.

MANRAY:

Whaddup?

No one comes out.

MANRAY (CONT'D)

Whaddup?

The doors open and the Mau-Mau's file out.

BIG BLACK:

You truly are a dancing fool.

1/16TH BLACK

Yo Black, you looking for trouble.

MANRAY:

Don't start none, won't be none.

The Mau-Mau's are dying laughing. Manray tries to walk
through them. They block him. Manray attempts to climb
over the suburban. He's quickly nabbed, give a good ole
Brooklyn Beatdown, then thrown into the rear of the vehicle.

EXT. EMPTY BROOKLYN STREET - NIGHT

The Mau-Mau Mobile rolls up to an abandoned factory.

ON CHEVY SUBURBAN

The Mau-Mau's quickly carry Manray out from the back of the
vehicle into the factory.

INT. FACTORY - NIGHT

Manray sits, feet and hands tied, in the middle of a cavernous space. A digital video camera stands on a tripod in front of him.

BIG BLACK:

You is one dead nigger.
124.

MANRAY:

What did I do?

BIG BLACK:

What did you do?
The Mau-Mau's laugh.
BIG BLACK (CONT'D)
Brothers, he asks what did he do?

DOUBLE BLACK:

If you don't know there is nuthin'
we can do for you.

BIG BLACK:

Nigga, you will be executed.

ON MANRAY:

His face says he can't believe this is happening.

MANRAY:

For singing and dancing?
1/16TH BLACK
You will be done in front of the
world.

MO BLACK:

The whole world will be watching.
1/16TH BLACK
Via the internet.
DELACROIX (V.O.)
The Mau-Mau's had come up with a
brilliant, sadistic plan to
broadcast Mantan's execution LIVE
over the internet.
1/16TH BLACK
We have pirated broadcasting

facilities. No way we can be found out. We're in cyberspace.

JO BLACK:

Nobody will find you till it's too late.

MONTAGE:

Various newsrooms, computer screens, people running, shouting, yelling over phones.

125.

DELACROIX (V.O.)

The Mau-Mau's sent anonymous e-mail proclamations to the websites of CNN, ABC, MSNBC and CBS. It was an invite to witness the Dance of Death, 9 PM, prime time, tomorrow night on a site to be designated at a later date.

INT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Delacroix and Cheeba are being interrogated in two adjoining spaces. WE ARE seeing them through the two-way mirrors.

DELACROIX (V.O.)

It's no joke getting grilled by the FBI for five houts.

Delacroix SCREAMS.

DELACROIX (CONT'D)

I don't know anything.

FBI AGENT:

We know you're involved in this abduction.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

CHEEBA:

You know more than me. Why would I do something like that to my best friend? Why?

FBI AGENT #2

You tell us.

EXT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

It's a mob scene as the media frenzy heightens. Delacroix and Cheeba try to fight their way through the print and broadcast journalists trying to question them as they leave

FBI headquarters.

DELACROIX (V.O.)

Somehow, somehow, somebody had tipped the sharks off. It was a feeding frenzy.

Delacroix and Cheeba start pushing people out of the way as they get in to their waiting car.

126.

INT. X-FORCE WAR ROOM - NIGHT

There is a flurry of activity - people man phones, computers all HI-TECH.

DELACROIX (V.O.)

The X-Force was brought onto the case. When something involves the internet, these are the people IBM, XEROX, the CIA, FBI, even the US Government go to.

ON CLOCK:

It reads "T-minus 19 HOURS 22 MINUTES."

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It was a race against time. The Dance of Death.

INT. CNS STUDIO - NIGHT

Dunwitty is taping a spot.

DUNWITTY:

Hello, my name is Thomas Dunwitty. I'm the Senior V.P. of the entertainment division here at CNS. I come to you with a heavy heart.

INT. SLOAN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

She's watching Dunwitty on TV.

DUNWITTY:

This abduction is a cowardly, vile, sinful and dastardly act and I promise these creeps will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. This is an attack on your American way of life...

INT. DELACROIX'S APARTMENT

He's watching the same.

DUNWITTY:

We here at CNS are offering a \$100,000 cash award to any information that leads to the safe return home of our dear friend, Mantan.

127.

INT. CNS STUDIO

ON DUNWITTY:

DUNWITTY:

Help us and in addition you will get a guest-starring speaking role on the next Mantan - The New Millennium Minstrel Show, plus an

added bonus:

125% Malt Liquor. Let's you get ya "freak on", as well as a full wardrobe of Timmi Hillnigger Active Git Toe Wear. Mantan, may God bless you...

INT. X-FORCE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Delacroix and Sloan hurry to stay with BARNETT, he's the commander of the X-Force.

BARNETT:

Let's go, time's wasting.

INT. X-FORCE WAR ROOM

They follow Barnett into the war room.

BARNETT:

They sent the notice out on an anonymous remailer.

SLOAN:

A what?

BARNETT:

It's used to mask the origin of an email, also the computer from which it's sent.

DELACROIX:

There oughta be a law...

BARNETT:

Not yet, anyway, it's legal. We will find the source where it's being broadcasted and hosted. We'll get the people that bushwhacked Mantan.

SLOAN:

Before Manray is dead?
128.

BARNETT:

I can't answer that.

ON CLOCK:

It reads "6 HOURS 16 MINUTES."

MONTAGE:

Police squads, SWAT Teams are busting into the wrong homes, apartments, projects, hi-tech computer labs looking for the Mau-Mau's.

DELACROIX (V.O.)

SWAT teams all up and down the East Coast busted in on known dissidents looking for Manray. All the tips called in, info gathered through surveillance proved for naught.

INT. X-FORCE WAR ROOM

BARNETT:

The both of you should go home. We will keep you abreast.

SLOAN:

This is looking like a needle in a haystack. It's hopeless.

Delacroix holds Sloan as he leads her out. She is having difficulty breathing with her asthma.

DELACROIX:

Thank you for your help.

BARNETT:

The X-Force always gets their man.

INT. DELACROIX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He sits in front of his GIANT SCREEN, on the desk in front of him is the 3/4 inch cassette Sloan gave him. He picks it up and turns it on.

DELACROIX (V.O.)

It was ten o'clock and the Dance of Death was about to commence.

129.

ON MONITOR:

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Since a lot of people still didn't have computers, the networks sought a court order to carry it live, taking the feed off the internet. It was granted. A life snuff broadcast right into your living room.

ON DELACROIX:

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I had to give it to the Mau-Mau', they definitely had a sense of irony. They chose www .nigger.com as the website to pirate.

INT. FACTORY - NIGHT

The Mau-Mau's ironically wear WHITE MASKS, they stand behind the tied-up Mantan. A device alters their voices.

BIG BLACK:

We are LIVE on the cyberspace.

Whereas Mantan is a TOM...

BLACK BLACK:

Whereas Mantan is a disgrace...

SMOOTH BLACK:

Whereas Mantan is a head-scratching, foot-shuffling Negro...

1/16TH BLACK

Whereas, whereas, where's the ass?

The Mau-Mau's laugh.

BIG BLACK:

Whereas Mantan the dancing fool,
you are condemned to death.

JO BLACK:

The Dance of Death.
1/16th Black unties Manray.

MONTAGE:

WE SEE DELACROIX, SLOAN, CHEEBA WITH LOURDESE, DUNWITTY,
JUNEBUG AND DOT, ORCHID, THE X-FORCE WATCHING THIS SPECTACLE
ON COMPUTERS OR TV SCREENS.

130.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

We see a CARTOON, Yosemite Sam is shooting at the feet of
Bugs Bunny with his six-shooter in each hand. Bugs Bunny is
doing a fast dance, dodging bullets.

ON MONITOR:

The Mau-Mau's shoot at the feet of Manray.

BIG BLACK:

Dance nigger.
Manray taps.

SMOOTH BLACK:

You got anything to say for yourself?

MANRAY:

If you're gonna kill me, kill me.

SMOOTH BLACK:

Don't worry.

INT. SLOAN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

She is having an asthma attack, it was brought on by the
proceedings. Sloan uses her inhaler.

INT. FACTORY - NIGHT

Each Mau-Mau has a 9mm and is firing it at the feet of
Manray. They scream "Faster!" and "Dance!" Manray is
hoofing. He's never tapped this fast, at this breakneck
pace, ever. But it's evident his dance is one of defiance.
He's not dancing to stay alive.

INT. DELACROIX'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

He screams at the monitor.

DELACROIX:

Don't dance. Don't do it.

INT. FACTORY

The Mau-Mau's have noticed Manray's strong will, his pride and they don't like it. They shoot even more at his feet.

BIG BLACK:

You ain't Blak.

DOUBLE BLACK:

Blak you ain't.

131.

SMOOTH BLACK:

You a Oreo. Not Blak. Not BLAK.

The Mau-Mau's start to chant, "Blak, blak, blak."

INT. SLOAN'S APARTMENT

She hears this and quickly picks up the phone to call the authorities.

INT. FACTORY

MANRAY:

There is nothing you can do to me.

I'm wearing the taps of Bill

"Bojangles" Robinson.

Manray is shot in one foot. Then the other.

BIG BLACK:

Let's seeya dance now, Mr. Bojangles.

Manray somehow manages to right himself and starts to dance again. The Mau-Mau's can't believe it.

ON MANRAY:

He dances like his life depends on it. Despite the fact his feet are a bloody mess.

BIG BLACK (CONT'D)

You ain' BLAK.

He shoots Manray in the chest, the Mau-Mau's follow him and he does a spastic last jig as the 9mm bullets riddle his twitching body.

ON TV SCREEN:

It goes black.

MONTAGE:

Helicopters fly through the night sky. Cop cars and trucks, SWAT team vehicles are on the move. SIRENS BLARE.

INT. DELACROIX'S OFFICE

Delacroix's head is on his desk. He has been crying. On cue the Black Collectibles start to move. The Jolly Nigger Bank, Aunt Jemima's, Mammies, etc., they are animated for REAL.

132.

ON DELACROIX:

His head pops up as he sees the objects. He too is in BLACKFACE. In a rage, he starts to throw them against the wall.

DELACROIX:

Leave me alone. Get away from me.

You spearchucker. You black sambo.

You nigger pickaninny. Fat Mammie.

Delacroix has finally lost it. He looks at the shambles he's made of his office.

EXT. FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

The Mau-Mau's come out of the factory high as a kite. Each has a big fat joint or a 64 oz. of DA BOMB. They're also doing a free-style rap about their execution.

ON CHEVY SUBURBAN

They get in when the squak of police walkie-talkie's clicks.

BIG BLACK:

It's the man!

What follows is a horrifying display of firepower. All the Mau-Mau's bodies are doing the Bonnie and Clyde Sonny Corleone Dance of Death as bullets tear into them and the Suburban. Not one of them is able to get a shot off. The shooting stops. The twitching stops. All's quiet. 1/16th Black comes out with his hands up.

1/16TH BLACK

Don't shoot! Don't shoot! I've been held hostage. They made me part of them against my own free will. Don't shoot!

The cops quickly pounce on 1/16th Black.

1/16TH BLACK (CONT'D)

I'm WHITE. I'm WHITE! Look at me,
I'm white!

INT. DELACROIX'S OFFICE

Delacroix is on the floor when the doorknob turns. It's Sloan and she has a gun in one hand and her inhaler in the other. She's wheezing like mad.

SLOAN:

Get up and put that tape in.

133.

She points the gun at his head.

SLOAN (CONT'D)

Do what I say.

Delacroix takes the cassette tape off his desk and puts it in the 3/4 inch desk.

SLOAN (CONT'D)

Don't make me have to use this.

DELACROIX:

I didn't think this was in your studies at NYU.

Delacroix hits the PLAY button.

ON SCREEN:

IMAGES. HISTORY. VISUALS. Sloan has put together a tape of the worst, most racist, stereotypical images from cinema and TV over the last 100 years. With these images there's also a laugh-track.

SLOAN:

Watch this. This is what you contributed to. Because of you, Manray is dead. Mu brother's dead. It's all because of you.

Delacroix can't watch the monitor.

DELACROIX:

I'm sorry. I didn't know anyone would get hurt. I'm sorry, please give me that gun before you hurt yourself. Give me the gun.

He reaches for it. BOOM! Sloan screams.

SLOAN:

I told you but you wouldn't listen.
You never listened to me.

DELACROIX:

Give me the gun.

She reluctantly hands it to him.

DELACROIX (CONT'D)

Go, get out of here. Go home.

Sloan runs out. Delacroix slumps to the floor, WIPES HER
FINGERPRINTS off the revolver.

134.

ON DELACROIX:

He looks at the monitor, the tape still playing.

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

As I bled to death, as my very
precious life oozed out of me all I
could think of was that I never
made my father proud. My mother
didn't count.

ON SCREEN:

We see STEP 'N FETCHIT, MANTAN MORELAND and WILLIE BEST.

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Everything I did, no matter how
great or small, was always
extraordinary to her. With Daddy
it was a different ball game. He
never saw me. Pierre Delacroix.

ON DELACROIX:

A pool of blood has formed around his dying body.

DELACROIX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Now it was time to buy the farm,
for me to meet my maker. Goodbye
cousins, and please tune in next
week for the Best of Mantan - The
New Millennium Minstrel Show.

ON SCREEN:

We see MANTAN in BLACKFACE doing his BUCKDANCE
CLOSE ON DELACROIX

He looks at Mantan.

DELACROIX (CONT'D)

For the love of Joseph and Mary,
what have I done? My God, what
have I done?!

Delacroix slumps over dead.

CUT TO:

135.

ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE OF MALCOLM X

MALCOLM X:

You've been had. You've been took.

You've been led astray. Run amok.

You've been bamboozled.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END.

END CREDITS.