

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS SCRIPT IS FULLY PROTECTED BY BBC COPYRIGHT. ANY ENQUIRIES CONCERNING THE RIGHTS FOR PROFESSIONAL OR AMATEUR STAGE PRODUCTION, BROADCASTING, READINGS ETC SHOULD BE MADE TO THE BBC.

SHOOT THE MESSENGER - SHOOTING SCRIPT

EXT. SCHOOL GATES. DAY

"Fuck Teac

raised dias stage at the front sit five people. In front of each person is a holder stating their name and job. There is a councillor, a head of education, a parent governor, an MP and a teacher. People have their hands up, champing at the bit to have their say. A woman from the

aud0.06528 Tc () Tj0pc (i) Tj01Tj-0.28-0.17472 Tc () Tj0.ac (n) Tj0.06528 Tc (f) Tj-9856 Tc () Tj-0.34536

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR. DAY

Joe walks along through throngs of pupils scurrying to their lessons.

JOE
(to us)

It went on like that most of the night. Everyone blaming everyone else. Digressing. No solutions offered.

The problems were just beginning to look insurmountable when it happened.

CUT TO:

INT. EDUCATION MEETING. EVE

The crowd is in the middle of a roar.

CHAIR
Mary as a teacher what do you think we need?

MARY
We need more black teachers.

The audience cheers to a man.

MARY CONT
But what we really need. What I believe could really turn this thing around are more black male teachers.

Joe suddenly transfixed. The audience signal their agreement. Joe's face lights up as she continues.

MARY O/S
These boys need role models. They need to see, hear that they have other options than the gang...

CUT TO:

INT. OUTSIDE JOE'S CLASS. DAY

Joe stands as boys stream by him into the class room.

JOE
(to us)
So here I am. Making a
difference.
(pause)
But it's more than that.
(thinks)
It feels.. It's as if I'm doing
what I'm meant to be doing. What
I was put on this earth to do.

He notices 14 year old, Germal Forest sauntering towards
him, flanked by his two 'disciples', Reece and Yannek.

JOE (cont'd)
(to boys)
Come on. Move it.
(to us)
I'm not saying it's easy. Some
of these boys are a real
challenge. Meet challenge number
one in year 9. Germal Forest.

As Germal saunters into the class, Joe gives him a 'get a
move on' tap upside the head.

GERMAL
Oi, don't touch me you perv.

JOE
In.

GERMAL
(to Joe)
You're not supposed to touch us!

JOE
In!

Germal kisses his teeth and walks into the classroom. His
disciples follow him. Joe looks at us and bats his eyes
heavenward. 'The drama of it all.'

INT. CLASSROOM. DAY

Joe walks about handing out certificates.

JOE
In third place Andrew Haynes,
(he places a certificate
in front a black boy)
in second place is Sean Moore
(he places a certificate
in front of a white

see her.

Joe flicks open a book that say 'Germal Forest' on the front. Pages of almost illegible writing.

JOE (cont'd)
(to Germal)
I'd appreciate the opportunity to
'show' her how well you're doing.

People snigger under their breaths, not wanting Germal to see them. Germal looks around, angry, humiliated.

JUMP CUT TO:

Joe packs up his stuff. Andrew is the last to leave the class. He looks down the corridor nervously.

ANDREW
Sir, are you walking towards the
science block?

JOE
I can go that way.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD. DAY

The 'late' kids dash to their various lessons. Andrew steps out of the school doors. Across the yard Germal and his cohorts, spy him and step forward, vicious little smiles on their faces. Their smiles die. Germal's eyes go cold, Yanek looks disappointed and Reece looks worried. Stepping out behind Andrew is Mr Pascale. Andrew sees the gang. He looks at them nervously. Joe sees them. He shakes his head. 'Why do they do it?' Germal stares back, insolent.

Germal watches as Joe and Andrew walk towards them. Yanek looks at Germal, 'maybe they should head off before Mr Pascale reaches them'. Reece looks at the floor, at the sky, anywhere, but at Joe and Andrew. Joe and Andrew reach the gang.

JOE
(without looking at the
gang)
Double detention.

Reece looks like he might cry. Joe keeps right on moving without missing a step.

GERMAL
(shouting after him)
We're just standing here.

INT. CLASSROOM. DAY

The class is packed. There are a few white, Turkish but mostly it's black boys. Germal and his gang are amongst them. The 'piggy in the middle' boys are there. They work.

JOE

(to us)

I'll tell you something about my detention classes. They're not really detention classes at all.

(he nods and grins)

I formulated a plan soon after I got here.

(beat)

Enforced Education.

Joe walks around looking at people's work. He walks up to Germal, Yannek and Reece. Germal makes a big show of doing nothing. Yannek works under protest. Reece works well. Joe looks at Reece's work. It's fair.

JOE (cont'd)

(overdoing it)

Excellent work Reece.

Reece embarrassed, looks at Germal who looks at him a wr.

Germal

way.

MR WATSON
Joe, the head wants to see you.

Joe looks surprised, but walks off.

INT. HEAD'S OFFICE. DAY

Joe looks shocked.

JOE
He said I did what?

MR MORTON
He said that you assaulted him.

JOE
That's ridiculous!

MR MORTON
I know it is, but you know what
the procedures are. All
complaints have to be
investigated no matter how flimsy
and no matter how unreliable the
source.

Joe is still reverberating from the charge made against
him.

JOE
What will happen now? To me?

MR MORTON
(confidently)
Nothing. I've investigated and
find his accusations unfounded.

INT. SCHOOL/CORRIDOR, OUTSIDE HEAD'S OFFICE. DAY

The placque on the door says 'Mr Morton, Headmaster'. Joe
walks out. He looks at us.

JOE
Bastard.

Joe storms off, we follow him. He looks back at us.

JOE (cont'd)
(to us)
The little shit.

He walks off. We watch him go.

INT. JOE'S CLASSROOM. ANOTHER DAY

On the board is written. "Subject and Object" There are 10 sentences on the board. Most of the class work studiously including Andrew. Joe looks to the back where Germal and his disciples lounge. Germal stares at him challenging. Reece and Yannek snigger.

INT. HEAD'S OFFICE. ANOTHER DAY

Joe looks stunned.

MR MORTON

I'm so sorry Joe.

JOE

I don't understand, you said it wasn't going any further.

MR MORTON

And I wasn't taking it any further, but his parents have been up to the school. They're threatening to call the police.

JOE

The police?

MR MORTON

I know, I know. It's crazy. The thing is, his friends Yannek and Reece are supporting his story.

JOE

(incredulous)

They're saying I assaulted him?

Mr Morton nods.

MR MORTON

You see my position?

JOE

Yea. Well actually no, I don't. What is your position?

INT. STAFF TOILETS. DAY

Joe leans back on one of the sinks thinking. He looks at

us through the mirror.

JOE

(repeating what Mr
Morton said to him)

As the head of this school Joe,
it's my job to protect the
children from any danger or any
perceived danger. While this is

7536 Tc (l) Tj-0.536 Tcre7.ly-Oj0.07jn o i
bewTj-0.1743 Tc () Tj0.06528s96 Tj-0.07656 Tc (c) Tj0.07512 Tc (h) Tj0.31848 Tc (o) Tj-0.1

Joe walks out and as a matter of course looks at the wall where the epithet is normally written. Someone has written "Fuck Mr Morton". A teacher is cleaning it off. Joe walks away.

INT. BOOKSHOP-CAFE. DAY

JOE
(to us)
I've been thinking about it. You know. This could be a good thing. I mean suspended with pay. It's like being on a paid holiday.
There are loads of things I can do until this all blows over.

Reveal that he has a book open.

JOE (cont'd)
(to us)
I can catch up on my reading.

Joe goes back to reading his book.

INT. JOE'S ROOM. DAY

Joe's room has a sleeping area and a work area.
INT. JOE'S ROOM. DAY
Joe's room has a sleeping area and a work area.

Story? What story? I told them
I wasn't interested. I don't
want to fan this thing. I think
the best way to do that is to
maintain a dignified silence.

INT. BOOK SHOP-CAFE. ANOTHER DAY

Joe looks with horror at the front page of The People (a
black newspaper a'la The Voice or The Nation) On the front
page is a forlorn looking Germal flanked by his parents.
The title, "My Abuse at the hands of Teacher". Joe looks
at us.

JUMP CUT TO:

Joe avidly reading the paper.

JOE

Ms Rowe sobbed when she talked
about the physical bruises
sustained by her son at the hands
of the teacher.

(to us)

Bruises, what bruises?

(reads)

"My son was absolutely terrified.
He did not want to go back to
school. Me and his dad were so
worried about what he might do we
had to put him on suicide watch.

Joe looks at us. A phone rings. Joe reaches over and
picks up a mobile. The screen says 'Mum'. He sighs.

INT. PASCALE LIVING ROOM. DAY

Joe's mother Ivaline Pascale, late 50s, neat hair and
attractive nails looks at the paper horrified. His father
Rodney Pascale, late 50s attractive looks at him, earnest.

RODNEY

Apologise.

JOE

For what? I didn't do anything.

IVALINE

(looking at paper,
talking to herself)

What a disgrace. Thank god they
didn't put your picture in the
paper.

RODNEY

You must have done something.

Joe looks at him angrily.

IVALINE

When I think of how you gave up
your good job in computing to
teach for a pittance.

RODNEY

Make them apologise then.

IVALINE

Just to help those wort'less boys
and this is the thanks you get.

RODNEY

Make them print a retraction.

The phone rings, Ivaline answers it.

IVALINE

(into phone)

Hello.

(she listens. she puts
her hand over the phone
and speaks to Joe,
bitterly)

You should sue them.

(into phone, sweetly)

No, it's not him.

Joe looks at her.

RODNEY

I'm telling you Joe, you can't
just let them get away with it.
Right now, you're suspended,
suppose you lose you job?

JOE

That's not...[...going to happen]

RODNEY

How you going to get another one
if this is following you? Speak
up man.

Joe's goes to speak when-

IVALINE

(into phone)

It must be another Joseph
Pascale, it's quite a common
name.

Joe looks at her and looks at us. Can we believe this.

INT. BOOKSHOP-CAFE. DAY

Music heard coming from radio behind counter. Jo

there.

SIR LANCELOT

Councillor Watts, what is going on? We got black teachers calling black kids dogs. Hitting black kids.

The councillor goes to speak.

JOE

I didn't hit him.

SIR LANCELOT

(to Joe)

Did you touch him?

JOE

Yes, but...

SIR LANCELOT

(to Joe)

Then you hit him blood. That's the meaning of 'hit'. Councillor?

COUNCILLOR

What I want to know, is given that he has admitted (pointedly to Joe) 'hitting' the boy, why the school is fighting to reinstate him.

SIR LANCELOT

That's a point, I mean I thought that if a teacher hit a pupil, he's gone.

JOE

(frustrated)

I didn't hit him.

COUNCILLOR

(ignoring Joe)

Seems like it's one set of rules for one kind of pupil and another set for another kind of pupil doesn't it?

SIR LANCELOT

Let's take a call. Nona from Lewisham you wanted to say what?

NONA ON AIR

He's ruuuuude! Councillor Watts is right, if he had hit a white child, he'd be in prison right now and then he'd remember how

black his arse is.

SIR LANCELOT
Keep it clean folks. Saul in
Camberwell, what you saying?

SAUL ON AIR
I wanted to say that comparing
our kids to dogs is an insult!

Councillor Watts nods his head, Joe is getting more and
more frustrated.

SAUL ON AIR (cont'd)
...to dogs.

Sir Lancelot laughs. Councillor Watts shakes his head.

SAUL ON AIR (cont'd)
If I was a teacher, forget
hitting, I'd beat them.

SIR LANCELOT
(to councillor, amused)
Saul is speaking for many people
who feel that a lot of the
problems we're seeing in this
generation is because they don't
get enough beating.

COUNCILLOR
Violence against children won't
cure bad behaviour.
(turning his focus to
Joe)

.06528 Tc (A) d T a 7 4 7 2 T a (e) T j 0 0 0 6 5 2 8 T a (u) U j - 0 2 7 6 5 6 T c (a) T j 0 0 0 6 5 2 8 T c (n) U j - 9 0 2 7 6 5 6 T c (j) - 0 1

SIR LANCELOT
Helen from Hackney. What you
saying?

HELEN ON AIR
He's a liar! My brother goes to
that school and he's been
complaining about him for months.

Councillor Watts nods vigorously. Joe looks as if someone
just sideswiped him.

HELEN ON AIR (cont'd)
He hates the black boys. He's
always giving them detention for
nothing!

COUNCILLOR
(to Sir Lancelot)
I've had loads of calls to my
office saying the same thing.

SIR LANCELOT
(to Joe)
Do you give black boys more
detention?

Joe looks at us, 'How to explain...?'

JOE
Yes, but it's...

Sir Lancelot is stunned, he goes to speak, but...

JOE (cont'd)
...not really detention,
(brightly)
...it's extra tuition. I'm
trying to...
(hears what the
councillor is saying)
No, I'm not a predator. Listen!
Please listen.

COUNCILLOR
(into his mike)
Black people, slavery days are
over, it's time to stand up and
be counted. Join me in a
campaign to make sure this
dangerous predator is no longer
given access to our kids. The
white establishment is...

COUNCILLOR
(into mike)

assault. Y

You saw that Mr Pascale didn't do anything of the sort.

REECE

I didn't. I didn't. I...I was looking the other way.

INT. COURT HOUSE. D O.D Tc () Tj-0.17472 O

J.34536 Tc (.) Tj0 -11.28 TD

teaching... my life...?

Mark pats him sympathetically and walks off. Joe looks devastated.

EXT. CO

A stony faced Joe packing stuff from his locker into a box: books, pens, a can of spray paint, folders...et al. As Joe turns to go we see several teachers waiting to say goodbye. They look at him sympathetically,

A CAMERA
SHUTTER EFFECT

INT. CORRIDOR. DAY

Joe walks down the corridor with a box of stuff. Behind him people are coming out of their classes and looking.

Joe hears the roar of the crowd outside the court house.

Andrew Haynes watches him sympathetically. Joe looks neither right nor left.

CAMERA SHUTTER
EFFECT

EXT. SCHOOL YARD. DAY

Joe walks across.

EXT. COURT HOUSE. FLASHBACK. DAY

Joe sees the banner "Protect Our Children". The angry faces. The man shaking his fist. The woman shouting traitor. The kids shouting "Out, out, out".

EXT. SCHOOL YARD. DAY

Germal and Yannek watch him out of the window as do the other kids in the class.

INT. CLASSROOM. DAY

Inside the class, the kids scabble for a good vantage point. Reece, is the only pupil still seated, his head hung.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD. DAY

INT. JOE'S ROOM. DAY

An open suitcase on the bed. Clothes being thrown in. Joe is emptying out his wardrobe. He looks 'happier' than he has for a while.

JOE
(to us, hopeful)
I'm emigrating...
(grabs more clothes and
dumps them in the case)
...to Australia.
(dumps more clothes into
the case)
They're crying out for people...
especially people with computing
skills... It's sunny... What
really decided me though is that
they have a white policy. They
don't let that many black people
in.

He carries on emptying the contents of his wardrobe into his suitcase.

INT. JOE'S ROOM. ANOTHER DAY

Joe's case is by the door. His room looks stark with the books gone and the wardrobe empty. Joe sat on the bed.

JOE
(to us)
I didn't get into Australia.
They don't take people with
criminal records.

He lies down fully clothed. Day becomes night, night becomes day.

INT. JOE'S ROOM. ANOTHER DAY

Joe sits at his table looking unkempt. He looks off into the distance.

The door knocks. Joe looks over at it, startled, almost frightened. The door knocks again. Joe

EXT. JOE'S ROOM. DAY

Joe opens the door a crack. Seen from the landlord's point of view he looks slightly wild eyed.

LANDLORD O/S
Joe, have you got the rent?
It's over a week late. I know
you're not working, but..

JOE
I'll have it for you tomorrow.

LANDLORD O/S
Okay. You alright, you don't
look-

JOE
I'm fine.

The landlord goes to walk away, then remembers.
Your mum phoned she says she's
been trying to reach you.

JOE (cont'd)
Tell her I moved to Australia.

Joe shuts his door abruptly. His landlord looks taken
aback.

INT. JOE'S ROOM. ANOTHER DAY.

Joe looks decidedly shabby. He has obviously not shaved in
a while. He looks at a grubby copy of the JO the JO teu

a while. Tj-0.26112 Tc (v) (b) Tj-

21. Tc () Tj4 shabby. il

J21. Tc () Tiopagc (l) Tj-0.29856 TfroabbyJ.. h

h

.

AYt

AY.

.

ssNDTj0.3156 Tc (TjLd) Tj0.1814RD0 Tc 4 Tc (t) Tj0.31510.07128 Tc (d) Tj(. 4092 Tc (u/) Tj0765o) Tj-0.05856

He ha c (h) Tj0.1346448 Tc (o) Tj-0.c (e) Tj-0.17472 Tc () Tj0.3n'8 TD (21. Tc () T) Tj0. Tc (Y) Tj0

21ide(h) Tj0.1328 Tc (h) Tj0.1329856 Tc (e) Tj0oJ06528 Tc (J) Tj-0.16632 Tc (O) Tj// Y 54c (Y) Tj0 Tc (.)c (v)

s Jy e Ja

whshabby. . e te J Jw J. J eo t o

Door knocks

LANDLORD O/S (cont'd)

Joe, Joe, open the door.

Joe doesn't move. Keys heard. The door is opened and we see things from the po p

medication. He takes it happily. She leaves. He looks around, he is in a room by himself. He looks at us and grins.

JOE
(to us)
That's better.

INT. H. s m JOE
(to us)

be2635 (s) Twj-028128Tj-828 (b 4223T2Q.) 53028070.07656d'245(c)Tj-0810948328Tj-076568Tcc ()) Tj-Tj0.0751615 (

Joe smiles up, grateful.

JOE
Thank you.

Joe looks over at the legs of someone as they walk up to the cash machine. He watches as they collect their money and go to walk away.

JOE (cont'd)
Spare some change.

The person walks on without giving 6 Tc (') Tj-0.07656 Tc (c) Tj0.07472 Tc () Tj0.0750.07512 Tc (n) T
Th There some change.

chkem

The egirson wals on wciw gime sis0Tj344 (m) Tj-0. Tj0.16872 Tc (p) Tj-0.29856 Tc (e) Tj0.06528

YANNEK

It is, It's Mr Pascale.

(he laughs)

Believe it! He's a beggar. A
beggar to rass.

Joe looks from a laughing Yannek to Germal. He focusses on
Germal staring at him accusingly. Germal grabs Yannek and
pulls him a

The woman turns around to see Joe. She looks startled by his appearance, but then she notices his eyes. There is concern in them. She smiles and nods. Joe silently takes all her1(6 Tc (s) Tj-0.29856 Tc (e) Tj-0.05856 Tc (e) Tj0.06j-0.26112 Tc (k) Tj-0.05856 Tcfj-0.26112 ly taka ed by rner hs.j0.06528 Tc (h) Tj-0.229856 Tc toI0 -11.28gj0.15216 Tc (t) Tj-0.34536 Tc (a) Tj0.218(h) V by edty ntrn eent ne ahie(i) Tj0.55536 Tc (l) Tj-0.0528 Tc () Tj-0.16488 c () Tj-0.34536 Tc (a) Tj0.07512

Joe wanders down towards his 'home' talking animatedly to himself. Joe sees a black couple walking arm in arm up the road. He makes a point of crossing over.

JOE

(to himself)

That was obvious man. Obvious.

(to us)

Can't believe I fell for it.

They sent her... The black people. Trying to get me back.

(he grins)

But I was too smart for that.

A young white woman with a child holds her child closer and creates a wide berth around the 'mad' man.

EXT. A DIFFERENT STREET. ANOTHER DAY

Joe looks a bit better. His eyes are a little clearer and he's seems a bit cleaner.

JOE

(to us)48 Tc (E u48 Tc (o) Tj-0.17472 Tc () Tj0.31512 Tc (u) Tj-0.31656 Tc (s) Tj0.07056

y-c (d (w(a))Tj0.64528 Tc (c) Tj-0.34528 Tc (Tj) Tj-0.70528 Tc (s) () Tj0.06528 Tc () Tj0.330528 Tc () Tj0.6528 Tc () Tj0.30528 Tc () Tj-0.17472 Tc ()

() Tj-0.17472 Tc () Tj06528 Tc () Tj-0.17472 Tc () Tj0.06528 Tc () Tj0.30528 Tc () Tj-0.17472 Tc ()

eyed Joe who watches her malevolently.

EXT. STREET. FLASHBACK. ANOTHER DAY

A tupperware lid is pulled off of a dish containing soup.

A mistrustful Joe looks at the soup and then up into the

face of a 'smiling' Mabel. For him her imagination Tj-0.17472 Tc () Tjj-0.1747 () Tj0.k6Y7-0.07656 To

JOE
(to us)
I wanted them to get lost.

EXT. STREET. PRESENT

JOE
(to us)
But they didn't.

A healthier looking Joe, in a 'new' coat watches something bemused.

A group of about twenty stand around him. Joe looks at the group with interest. He watches Rev Wilson who hops from one foot to the other, his hands up as if he's boxing.

REV WILSON
And Satan is in the left hand
corner. And Satan has come into
the ring to do battle with the
lord, but out of the skies, out
of skies comes the lord. And
with a one, two jab Satan is
down. The lord is the winner.
Help me people. The lord is the
winner.

Joe looks along, highly amused as everyone chants.

EVERYONE
The lord is the winner. The Lord
is the winner! The Lord is the
winner!!!

Joe is startled as Rev Wilson

MABEL

You and Roy are about the same height, he's bigger than you though. You're nothing, but skin and bone.

(she clucks sympathetically)

Help yourself. Roy don't need them.

INT. MABEL'S KITCHEN. CHRISTMAS DAY

The cassette recorder plays Jim Reeves. Joe stares. The table is like something out of a fairy tale. Lots of beautiful, brightly coloured food and drink.

JUMP CUT TO:

Joe tucks into the food. He keeps looking up at Mabel who watches him. At first she seems kind and benign, but then she begins to look more predatory.

JOE

(to us)

There's something weird about this whole thing. All this food...for who? She didn't know I was coming...or did she...

Joe, his mouth full of chicken, dribbling gravy, looks at Mabel suspiciously. She looks at him happily.

JOE (cont'd)

(to us)

Maybe when I'm finished I'll

INT. MABEL'S KITCHEN/MABEL'S KIDS SECTION. SAME DAY

Joe tucks into a pudding, happily.

A picture of Mabel's three children. Two boys and a girl.

MABEL
That's Roy, that's Everett and
that's Sherlene.

JOE
Are they coming?
(in his mind)
Please say no.

MABEL
Yes, they're on their way.

JOE
(to us)
It seemed rude to eat and run,
but...
(standing)
I better be going.

MABEL
To where. Sit down man.

Joe is about to insist when he sees a look of desperation cross Mabel's face. He looks at her hand holding his arm. Her hand shakes slightly.

JOE
Well, just for a little while.
Just till your kids get here.

INT. MABEL'S KITCHEN. CHRISTMAS DAY

The clocks says 3 o clock. The clocks changes to five then to seven.

INT. MABEL'S KITCHEN. CHRISTMAS NIGHT

Joe, comfortable eats some more food.

JOE
(to us, happily)
She's got these kids see. They
are real. They keep phoning and
saying they'll be here in ten
minutes.

He looks over at Mabel who looks towards the door

anxiously.

JOE (cont'd)

(to us)

She's worried they're not going to turn up, but I told her not to.

You see, there's Greenwich mean time and there's black people time.

(he laughs to himself)

I figure I'll get to let this food settle and have one more meal, watch the late movie, be another day older...before they arrive.

(he laughs, he thinks his joke is very funny)

Mabel looks at Joe laughing to himself. She shakes her head, "Poor boy".

The doorbell rings. Joe, almost jumps out of his skin. He looks towards the door panicked. The ringing seems to get louder. Mabel runs off towards the door excited. Joe looks about for a means of escape.

EXT. MABEL'S FRONT DOOR. SAME NIGHT

A child's finger holds the buzzer down.

INT. MABEL'S KITCHEN. SAME NIGHT

A nervous Joe watches as 29 year old Sherlene troops in with her four kids. A sullen 13 year old Sherman, 11 year old Malika, 8 year old Kaylon and 5 year old Shenequa. Sherman is medium brown with short afro hair; Malika is polynesian looking with shoulder length hair; Kaylon is medium brown with big curls; Shenequa is very dark with more obvious negroid features, her tight afro hair is in cane rows.

The kids rush the table. Joe immediately rises.

MABEL

What time you call this Sherlene?

Sherlene's attention is focussed on the food.

JOE

I really have to go.

MABEL

Nonsense, you stay. Sit down.
(to Sherlene)
You said you was coming at 2.

SHERLENE
(signalling Joe)
Who's that?

MABEL
This is Joe. He's one of my
brethren.

Joe looks at Mabel, she signals for him to play along.

JOE
(trying to think of
something christian to
say)
The lord is the winner.

SHERLENE
They got man in that church now,
maybe I better start attending.

MABEL
You need to forget about man and
give your life to the lord.

Sherlene ignores her and starts picking at the food. Joe
is hesitant, but Mabel signals for him to sit down.

JOE
(to us)
(sitting down)
I needn't have worried, it was
like I was invisible.
(BEAT)
Unfortunately they weren't.

He watches the kids helping themselves and devouring the
food ravenously. Sherman finishes his chicken. He looks
around. The other leg is on Kaylon's plate. He sticks his
fork into his plate and takes it. Kaylon starts to cry.

MABEL
What now?

KAYLON
He took my chicken. He took...

MABEL
Take another piece. Come on
Kaylon,
(offering him another
piece)
You want this?

Kaylon shakes his head.

SHERLENE

Sherman give him back his
chicken.

Sherman throws the chicken at Kaylon. It hits Shenequa.
She starts to cry.

MABEL

(reprimanding

Sherman

It .l

INT. MABEL'S KITCHEN. SAME NIGHT

Joe wakes as if from a trance to hear the doorbell ringing.

MABEL
That's probably Everett.

She goes out passing Sherman on his way in. He hands his mother the phone.

SHERLENE
What did he say?

SHERMAN
He was busy, said he'd call me
back later.

Sherlene hands the phone to her eldest daughter.

SHERLENE
Ring your dad.

Malika takes the phone and dials. Mabel comes in followed by 31 year old Neil. Kylon rushes him, hugging him.

KAYLON
Dad!

MABEL
(to Neil)
You want something to eat Neil?

MALIKA
(on phone)
Hi dad...

NEIL
(pats his stomach)
I woull (49 Tj0.07848 . Tc () Tj0..07848 Tc (o) Tj-0.16480.16872 Tc (49 Tj0.06528 T) Tj0

Malika.Sherlene's Malika.
...Sherlene.
(to her mum)
He says he don't know no
Sherlene.

Sherlene grabs the phone.

SHERLENE
Sherry you idiot.

Joe looks at us, "Can we believe this?" Sherlene hands the
phone back to Malika.

SHERLENE (cont'd)
(to Malika)
Ask him what he got you for
Christmas?

JOE
(to us)
Four kids for four different men
and she's not thirty yet.
Probably gave more thought to how
to name the kids than to who
should father them.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ROY'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

Joe looks about. He wears Roy's pyjamas.

JOE
(to us, referring to
pyjamas)
Don't ask.
(beat)
No wonder they don't want to come
back to this house. Once you get
here you're not allowed to leave.
(pause)
Everett never did turn up.
(thinks)
They say the family is the
building block of a nation.
(beat)
We're doomed.

INT. MABEL'S KITCHEN. ANOTHER DAY

Joe strips wallpaper. Shenequa heard screaming.

JOE
(to us)
Sherlene left the kids here
Christmas day. She had a party
to go to. That was a month ago.
Mabel's tried to contact her, but
no joy. Sherman ran off about a
week ago. No one's heard from
him since.

A comb is dragged through frizzy hair. Shenequa cries.

MABEL O/S
You head tough sah. You father
did too black. Malika get the
good hair because her father was
Indian. Your father did black
like pot bottom. If I told your
mother once I told her a thousand
times... "Anything too black is
no good"

JOE
(to us)
Wise words. I wish somebody had
warned me.

A sizzle is heard. Joe looks past the ring of fire on the
cooker to where Mabel is pulling the hot comb through
Shenequa's hair, straightening it. Shenequa's squinched up
face speaks of pain. Joe flinches.

INT. MABEL'S HOUSE/ROY'S ROOM. DAY

Joe reaches into a drawer and takes out a small container.
He shakes out two pills and takes them.

JOE
(to us, referring to the
pills)
Some...sometimes I see things
that...aren't there.

KAYLON O/S
Joe, what does this say?

Joe startled, turns to see Kaylon standing beside him
holding up a book. Joe closes his eyes tight. He opens
one, Kaylon is still there, his finger pointing at the word
'exactly'. Joe looks at Kaylon. Kaylon looks back at him
with big brown eyes, his face, sweet, innocent.

JOE
I don't know, ask your gran.

Kaylon looks

iniquity, but rejoices in truth;

INT. HAIR SHOP. DAY

Hair. Loads of it. Weaves, wigs, different colours,
different styles. Loads of black women trying on, looking

28 Tc (W) Tj-0.29856 Tc (e) Tj0.13464 Tc
edos 28 TD () T31536 TJ Tj-0.34536 Tc (a) TjblrnLo8 Tc (o) Tj0 Tc (m) T7Tc () Th Tj-er i Wer 4 Tc ()
8 TD () Tj0 -11.52 TD 0.06528 Tc (Tc (A) Tj-0.2364 Tc (Y) Tj0 -11.28 TD Tc (l) Tj-0.05856 Tc j0 -11.5
8 TD () Tj0 -11.5aiTc.31656 Tc (s) Tj0 Tc(28 TD () T31536 TJ Tj-0.34536 Tc (a) Tj) Tj-0.17472 Tc (f) T ()

INT. CHURCH. SAME DAY

Joe, who has changed into dry clothes, walks along the aisle.

JOE
(to us)

The whole church thing has given my life a sense of...direction. I feel like I belong somewhere again... I've found my kind of black people...thank god...because for a while there it was getting pretty scary. So what if they're 50 years older than me. I was born in the wrong era.

He finds his pew, he squeezes past a proud Mabel, a straight haired Shenequa, Kaylon and Malika. He sits next to Malika.

Mabel looks at her 'family' with great pride. She looks annoyed to see that Malika is reading a teenage novel. Mabel signals for her to put it away. Malika does so sulkily. She sits annoyed. She sighs bored. Joe offers her his open bible, she looks at him resentful, then takes it sulkily. Joe takes her novel out of her bag, opens it and puts it in the middle of the bible. Malika looks at the book and looks at him in wonder, she giggles. Mabel looks down the row. Malika looks at her guiltily. Mabel sees the bible in Malika's hand and smiles approvingly. Malika looks at Joe, he winks. Mabel looks at Joe, grateful. Joe smiles. Something catches Joe's eye.

A young woman is looking at him from across the church and smiling. He notices a woman behind her smiling at him too. He looks around, all the young and several not so young women, including Delia are looking at him like something they'd like to eat.

JOE (cont'd)
(to us)

Something weird's happened to the church though since I was little. It's full of...

Pulling out from Joe reveal that 95 percent of the congregation is female.

JOE (cont'd)
(to us)
Women. Where are the men?

INT. PRISON HALL. DAY

EXT. HIGH STREET. FLASHBACK. NIGHT

The gun man, seen from Joe's vantage point in the doorway, stands over the body of the guy he's shot. He looks over at the cardboard in the doorway 'Did it move?'

t er te Tj-10.29816528 (e) Tj0.0652 Tj0.1848 Tj0.06936 Tc (a) Tj0.08328 Tc (r)e

NTa

H Tc (y) Tj0.30528 Tjj0.30528 Tc () c (H)w-0.08c () Tj-0.30936 o of t0.06936 Tc (H T5500.06936 Tc (H () Tj0

30936 P17472 Tj-OR0936

e

30936 e HeoHe

e

H (50-0.07656k0 Tc (c (y) Tj0.30528) T70.08328 Tc (r)06(j0.31512 Tc (h) Tc () Tj0.16872 Tc -0.26112 u1687

2 TD 0.06528 Tc () Tj70yt

t .55.yt

MABEL (cont'd)
Forgive us our trespasses. As we
forgive those who trespass
against us.

Joe looks at her.

MABEL (cont'd)
Th

MTj-0.29856 Tc (e) Tj0.30528 Tc () Tj2 Tc (A) Tj-0.3168 Tc () Tj-0.17472 T
agai472 T5

MABEL

(kisses her teeth)

You is young. When you reach my
age Joe, you will know what I

JOE
(reading)
... So Noah awoke from his wine
and knew what his younger son had
done to him and he said. "Cursed
be Canaan; A servant of servants
he shall be to his brethren"...

MABEL
(nodding)
Cursed.

JOE
...be Canaan. It doesn't say
black people.

MABEL
Everybody knows it's black
people. "A servant of servants he
shall be to his brethren"
(pauses for effect)
Slavery.

Joe looks at her stunned. Mabel thinks he's impressed.
She goes back to cooking. Joe looks at us, he taps his
head, she's crazy.

INT. ROY'S ROOM. NIGHT

Joe jumps out of his sleep, his face covered in sweat. It
takes him a moment to get his bearings. He looks at us
startled.

JOE
Weird. Really weird.
Suppose...I mean just suppose
this whole curse thing is true.
I know, crazy right, but it would
explain everything.

INT. OUTSIDE MABEL'S ROOM. NIGHT

Mabel looks at Joe blurry eyed.

JOE
So what do we do? To get rid of
the curse. Do we apologise,
sacrifice a lamb, what?

MABEL
Pray.

JOE

Pray?
(getting angry)
Pray? But we been praying for
years...centuries.

MABEL
Talk to God Joe. Just talk to
him. God is good. God is Love.

Joe looks stunned.

INT. JOBCENTRE. DAY

Rows and rows of boards with jobs displayed. People wander
about. There are desks where the jobcentre staff sit.

JOE
(to us)
God is good. God is love.
Putting a people through 500
years, 500 years of slavery for
what, let's face it was a minor
indiscretion. He's rude.

Joe reads a card on the board. He takes the card and walks
towards a desk.

JOE (cont'd)
(to us)
But we are stupid. Can you
imagine any other people
worshipping a god who's cursed
them? Can you?
(he waits)
Course you can't. Stupid.

CUT TO:

A placque on a desk says "A thousand mile journey starts
with one step." Joe in front of the desk. HEATHER, a 31
year old dark skinned black woman with shoulder length
straight hair and beautifully done picturesque nails, looks
through Joe's application.

JOE (cont'd)
(to us)
I mean it's just ridicul-

HEATHER
What have you been doing for the
last year?

JOE
(playing for time)
Sorry?

HEATHER

Well, I see that you worked as a teacher and that you have a criminal assault conviction,

Joe flinches,

HEATHER (cont'd)

But with no time spent in prison which tells me it probably wasn't serious...but there's almost an 18 months gap here. What were you doing?

Joe thinks.

INT. MENTAL HOSPITAL WARD. FLASHBACK

Images of Joe being restrained in the mental ward.

EXT. CARDBOARD CITY. FLASHBACK

Joe on the street at his lowest.

INT. MABEL'S KITCHEN. CHRISTMAS. FLASHBACK

Joe at Mabel's for Xmas.

INT. MABEL'S HOUSE. ROY'S BEDROOM. FLASHBACK

Joe popping pills into his mouth.

INT. JOB CENTRE. DAY

JOE

I....I....

Heather waits.

JOE (cont'd)

I went travelling.

Heather looks interested, but obviously wants him to elaborate.

JOE (cont'd)

...to Europe. I went to Spain,
not to your usual tourist places,
I went to Granada it's amazing
there. The architecture is...

JUMP CUT TO:

JOE (cont'd)
France...the Riviera...

Heather fascinated.

JOE (cont'd)
(to us)
It was true, I had gone
travelling for a year...when I
was nineteen.

CUT TO:

.k(.) Tj0:JBTd(Q)CJN(E)j0.81512 Ty (t Tj-8 Tc () Tju) Tj0.0 ((.) Tjs Tj-806528 .10056 Tc (I) Tj0 Tc (NT) Tj
g

Joe nods, "Good". Heather goes to leave then turns back.

HEATHER (cont'd)
Had any more thoughts about your
appeal?

Joe looks nervous. He hears the roar of the crowd.

HEATHER (cont'd)
It would make such a difference
to your employment prospects. I
know a good lawyer.

Joe shakes his head.

INT. JOBCENTRE/OFFICE. ANOTHER DAY

A waste paper bin emptied into a large black bag. Joe walks
around emptying the waste paper baskets.

WARREN O/S
I don't wanna do that!

Joe looks over. Heather sits talking to a young man,
Warren, who slouches in front of her. Warren flicks a job
card back on the table, dismissive.

HEATHER
This is your third job in as many
months Warren.

WARREN
Stop sending me for s W

Joe. Joe, are you alright?

Joe looks at her. She smiles, "Can she help him?" Joe looks at Warren. He sits, unsoiled, the insolent grin still on his face. Joe looks at the bag of rubbish. He still has it. He looks at the bin. It's still koko,-0.10536 Tc (a) Tj-0.316 looksa I9 Tj-0.08784 Tc (t) T

i bis622.0u-0.38Tc6 Tc 9165105-656c (T651002 Tc (b)u36 Tj-y56 6.29856 315 Tj-0.38j) TT651002 Tc (b)u36
i
b Tj-8u36 T (j-)-0.c.0u-0.38Tc6 7T651002 Tc (b)u36 0.08u Tj-b
i b

INT. JOBCENTRE/HEATHER'S DESK. DAY

another.
(pause)
You're hiding something.

Joe looks nervous.

HEATHER (cont'd)
(gently)
Tell me.

Joe looks at her. There's something about her, an openness, a directness. He looks at us. Should he tell her? He looks at her.

JOE
(simply)
I hate black people.

Heather nods, she believes there's some truth in that. Her calm reaction surprises Joe. It releases him.

JOE (cont'd)
I hate being black. I find it...exhausting. When I think about being black...I physically ache. Sometimes I get so...tired...of wanting it to be different. So depressed looking around and seeing the state of our lives... Being black... feels like...a punishment.
(pause)
A curse.

Heather thinks.

JOE (cont'd)
(to us)
Well, she asked.

HEATHER
Maybe for you it is.

Joe looks at her, "What?"

HEATHER (cont'd)
A curse. Maybe it's your karma.

Joe looks confused, what is she on about?

HEATHER (cont'd)
Maybe in a previous life...maybe, just maybe, you were....a vicious, evil white slave master and you're condemned in this life, cursed to care, to feel the pain of the subsequent effects of

your behaviour.

Joe looks at her in consternation. Is she serious? He realises she is. He bursts out laughing.

JOE
(to us)
That's what I love about Heather.
She lives somewhere between here
and the twilight zone.

Joe looks at Heather with laughter filled eyes.

JOE (cont'd)
(to us, but looking at
Heather)
She makes me feel sane.

JUMP CUT TO:

'The Holy Bible'. Heather looks up from it. She and Joe are side by side on the sofa. The bottle of wine is nearly finished.

HEATHER
It doesn't say black people.

JOE
Everybody knows it's black
people.
(he points at something
in the bible)
And that bit there. Slavery.

Heather goes over to the book shelf and comes back with another book. She gives it to Joe. It's 'The Road Less Travelled'. Joe opens the book.

JOE (cont'd)
(reading)
Life is difficult.

He looks at her, he don't like this.

HEATHER
Read.

JOE
(reading)
Life is difficult. This is a
great truth,...because once we
truly see this truth, we
transcend it. Once we truly know
that life is difficult - once we
truly understand and accept it -
then life is no longer difficult.
Because once it is accepted, the

fact that life is difficult no longer matters.

HEATHER
(pointing)
Read this bit.

JOE
(reading)
Life is a series of problems. Do we want to moan about them or solve them?

He thinks about what he's read.

JOE (cont'd)
So, you don't think we're cursed?

HEATHER
I don't think we're cursed. Just you.

Joe bursts out laughing, that feels true. They laugh and laugh. Joe stops laughing and looks at Heather. She notices him looking at her and becomes self conscious. Joe leans in and kisses her. She kisses him back. He holds her face and goes to slide his hand into her hair, but it won't slide in. Heather jumps back.

HEATHER (cont'd)
Not the hair.

JOE
Oh, okay.

They kiss again. He keeps his hands on her shoulders.

INT. MABEL'S KITCHEN. DAY

Heather is having Sunday dinner with Joe, Mabel and the kids. Malika watches Heather resentfully.

Joe looks distorted. Reveal that he is being watched through the bottom of a glass tumbler by Kylon. Joe grabs the glass, fills it with juice and sets it down in front of the child.

MABEL
So your mother's seventh day adventist?

Heather nods, Mabel nods approvingly. Heather glances at Joe, he winks, she's doing well. Malika looks from one

MABEL (cont'd)
So you a sabbath keeper too?

HEATHER
I'm not into the whole 'going to church' thing.

Joe looks tense. Malika smirks.

MABEL
What do you mean?

HEATHER
The whole 'going to a building on a particular day of the week' thing.

Mabel looks stunned.

JOE
(to us)
This is not good.

Malika grins.

JOE (cont'd)
(to Mabel)
Heather's very spiritual.

MABEL
(spits out the word)
Spiritual. What's that?

HEATHER
I believe that most religions in the world are all saying the same thing and all of them have something to offer.

MABEL
"I the lord thy god am a jealous god, thou shalt have no other god before me!" Take care for your soul. Hell fire is hot. You look like a sensible girl, you're not like Joe, you won't be able to plead madness.

Joe looks stunned, what? Mabel's rancour silences everyone. They eat in silence. Heather opens her mouth to speak, Joe shakes his head at her, leave it. Heather eats.

Malika . hj-0.58536 Tc (a) jTc (r) Tj-0.05856 Tc (e.10536.073287-0.17472 Tc (Tip1o Tc (e) Tj0 -

Mabel freezes. Malika laughs, but an arctic glance from Mabel stops her. Joe and the kids look at Mabel and then at Heather. It's a gunfight.

JOE
(to us)
Uh oh.
(to everyone)
Anyone for more chicken?

Kaylon and Shenequa make sounds of glee. Malika watches as Heather squirms uncomfortably.

HEATHER
What I mean is. This is a beio
att ows eer y t t o .T te alt
an ttemea. Tte i ao
. Ttis is a beè et

oe hie a er

ETE
ttan nooe

-0.17474 Tc (t) Tj0.0652 Tc (o) Tj0.087472 Tc () Tj0.55536 Tc (n) Tu-0.31656 Tc (s) T

s e ieshie te i

ETE
tat nos teat
etents o ot
eiee tat tis
t o
t i
oe a a o o o to o

Joe in. Because that is love.
...in action.

Joe and the kids look at Heather. Malika is moved. Mabel slowly looks up. She's touched. She smiles at Heather. Heather eats. Mabel looks at Joe and signals Heather, "She's alright." Malika, sad.

EXT. MABEL'S HOUSE. DAY

Mabel hugs Joe. The kids hug Joe. Joe carries his stuff out of the door. Malika watches from an upstairs window as Joe puts his stuff in the back of a car.

Joe and Heather ready to leave. Joe looks at the upstairs window. Malika watches sulkily. Joe holds his arms out.

JUMP CUT TO:

Malika rushes into Joe's arms and he hugs her.

INT. JOBCENTRE. DAY

CUT TO:

Joe's picture on the wall, "Employee of the month."

JOE
(to us)
A good job, a great relationship.
It don't get any better than
this.

Joe looks at the new client who has just sat down. It's Germal Forest. They're both startled. Joe doesn't believe his eyes.

JOE (cont'd)
(to us)
Or does it?

Germal goes to get up.

JOE (cont'd)
No, please, please sit down.

Germal sits down.

JOE (cont'd)
What can I do for you?

GERMAL
I'm looking for a job.

JOE
(to us)
There is a god. And he loves me.
(to Germal)
Of course you are. What type of
job?

Germal shrugs, "don't know"

us)

of".s

.31848 Tc (o) Tj-0.27472 Tc () Tj0.31512 Tc (u) Tj-0.31656 Tc (s) Tj0.07056 Tc ()) Tj0

) Whofu.s.3156 8 Tc (o) Tj0.317-0.15672 Tc (r) j-0.15672iTj0.30528 TTj0.0fTc (r) j-0.15672iTj0

us)

lu

us .l

7-6 Tc.065 -1n.06528 c (lu) Tj0 528 T29 lur06.

l

b?

s"u Tj0.065-0.054 Tc Tj0

f"b? .5317Tj0.15672iTj0.3055 72 Tc (rcat Tj0) Tj0.15672i Tj0.25T72 Tc () T Tj0.30528 TT TD () Tj0 -11.52 2 T

s"u Tj0.065-0.054 Tc Tj0

5

0

1

j

0

u

m

T

j

s"u Tj0.065-0.054 Tc Tj0

f-11.5317Tj0.15672iTj0.3055 72 Tc (rcat Tj0) Tj0.15672i Tj0.25T72 Tc () T Tj0.30528 TT TD () TjTj11.52 7 17

uTj6 Tc (Tj-Och () Tj0.c (l) Tj-0.0 Tj0 .2iTj0.3055 72 T72 T) Tj0.06528 Tc () Tj-0.17472 Tc () (b?) Tj0 -11.28 TD () Tj0 -1

" b?

s un

Tj6 TD 0.0652c () Tj(17Tj0.15672iTj0.3055 72 T72 T.17472 Tc () (b?) Tj0 -11.28 TD (

6 un

mTj0. l

JOE (cont'd)
(to us)
I could see him now.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRAIN. NIGHT

Germ and a man slosh along through excrement filled
sewage.

FRED
There nR

ug 7182(d) (f) vT (s. 66526g) (Tj) 0.06528 Tc (n) -0.10528 Tc (n) Tj-0.087887Tc (l) Tj0.31j0 e 0.06528 Tc () Tj-0.17472 Tc () Tj0.06528 T

aphorism saying, "If you say can or you can't, you're right."

HEATHER

That's terrible Joe. Two wrongs,
don't make a right.

JOE

So, you think I should forgive
and forget? Just let him get away
with it.

HEATHER

No one gets away with anything
Joe, that's the meaning of karma.

Joe walks out.

INT. HEATHER'S FLAT/LIVING ROOM. EVE

Joe comes in followed by Heather.

JOE

You know what I think. I think
m

No, I don't, that's what I'm saying. ...I think if this boy keeps turning up, you know, at significant moments maybe, just maybe he has something to teach you.

Joe looks at her with growing irritation, then just plain rage.

JOE
He can't read or write, what the fuck could he have to teach me Heather.

Heather is taken aback by his anger.

HEATHER
(concerned)
Resentment gives you cancer

JOE
(stone cold)
It would be worth it.

Heather looks at him, he's cold.

HEATHER
This isn't you.

JOE
Don't start with that you don't believe what you believe crap.
This is me. Look at us, we never fight

Tj-0.08784 Tc (t) Tc () Tj0 Tc (m) T-0.34536 i31536 Tc-0.07128 .17472 Tc-0.05856 Tc (e)05856 Tc (e) Tj0.

INT. HEATHERS FLAT. LIVING ROOM. EVE

Heather looks at Joe, he's thinking about something. He sees her looking at him, concerned. He thinks about telling her.

JOE
I can't.

HEATHER
Tell me.

JOE
Tell you, tell you, tell you.

HEATHER
I love you. I want you to...

JOE
I don't dig at you. "This isn't
you, this isn't you"

He flicks her straight hair.

JOE (cont'd)
This isn't you Heather. I want to
touch your scalp once in awhile,
but you know what it ain't going
to happen so I let go.

Heather touches her hair, embarrassed.

JOE (cont'd)
You've got every book on loving
yourself as you are known to man.
(referring to hair)
This is not as you are.

Heather looks at him tears beginning to form.

HEATHER
I'm working on it.

JOE
And so am I Heather, so am I. I
make you a deal, you sort out
what's going on on your head and
I'll sort out what going on in
mine.

He walks out. Heather stunned, hurt.

- here.

He touches his chest.

JOE (cont'd)

And I just went cold. I've been
cold ever since.

Heather snuggles up to him as if trying to warm him. She
puts her hand in the spot on his chest that he touched and
rubs it. 56 Tc (s) Tj0.g (i) fj0. Tc (i) Tt1848 Tc536 Tc (i) fj0.35-0.1772 TTj-0.160.31848 Tc5
56 (p) Tj0.07848 Tc (o) Tj-0.017472 Tc () Tj0.07512 Tc (h) Tj0.31536 Tc (i) Tj-0.07656 Tj-0.y8

A young man walks by who, by the state of his clothes, is obviously a painter and decorator. He has a young child with him.

JOE
It says human hair. Whose hair
is it?

The woman doing Heather's hair laughs, she thinks Joe is
joking. Heather, knows he's serious.

HEATHER
The women sell it.

JOE
Yeah right.

Heather shifts uncomfortably, she's hoping he won't go on.

JOE (cont'd)
This is a billion dollar
business.

Wherever you find 'I hate myself

blackTj0.06528 Tc () Tj-0.07128 Tc (b)uc (l) Tj0.06528 Tc (f) Tj0 -11.52 TD () TjTj-0.174

- 0 . 0 7 k - T 0 j . 01 77 66 55 62 8

36 T06528 Tc (f) Tc ()36 T0472 Tc () Tj0.()o

f

f 7 2 T c (

. c (ol) 761772 Tc g f

.

4 c (f f) T 7 2

their eyes. And hair is so much
easier to steal than eyes.

Both Heather and the woman doing her hair look suitably
chastened.

EXT. STREET-COMMUNITY CENTRE. NIGHT

Heather, her hair in short, natural twists, storms along.
Joe walks along quickly, but can't quite catch up to her.

JOE
(to us)
She had to unpick the weave,
because I...I burned the hair.

He hurries after her.

JOE (cont'd)
Heather! Heather! Resentment
gives you cancer.

INT. COMM

He goes to talk.

JANINE O/V
Heather!

Heather turns to see Janine bearing down on her, a look of wonder on her face.

JANINE
I thought you weren't coming.

HEATHER
I wouldn't have missed it for the world.

JANINE
Your hair looks fabulous.

Heather can barely 'smile' an acknowledgement of the compliment. Joe looks smug. He winks at us.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTRE/BUFFET AREA. NIGHT

A buffet table. Heather and Joe help themselves. On the opposite side of the table, Elroy and Kwame help themselves.

KWAME
(to Elroy)
...We're the real Jews.

Something goes down the wrong way and Joe coughs. Heather looks at him, is he okay.

KWAME (cont'd)
The bible says, Jesus came out of
the , Jesus ca .6528 Tc () Tj-0.17472 Tc () Tj0.0

Heather elbows him, "be quiet".

ELROY

It's the same with the pyramids.
We built the pyramids.

Joe can't help himself, he starts to laugh. Elroy and Kwame look at him, 'what's so funny'. Heather looks at him annoyed. She walks away.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTRE/MAIN AREA. NIGHT

Groups of people talking. Some people dancing. Heather moving through is pursued by Joe.

JOE

They were being ridiculous.

Heather turns on him.

HEATHER

Because they don't think what you think? Anyone who doesn't agree with you is ridiculous that's right isn't it Joe?

JOE

(knows what she's really talking about)
I didn't say you were ridiculous.
I said sewing 'human hair into your head'....

Heather looks about self conscious.

JOE (cont'd)

...was ridiculous.

Heather walks off. Joe looks after her. He doesn't understand why she's so upset her. He looks back at where Elroy and Kwame are still talking.

JOE (cont'd)

(to us)
"I am black, but comely." They're talking shit. It's something we do. It's as if we look at our lives, don't like the mess we see so we go back into the annals of history to when
(he puts quotes around the phrase)
we were great.

Joe looks at the groups of people standing about. He looks

at us and grins. He walks off signalling for us to follow him.

JOE (cont'd)
(to us)
Black people always, I mean
always talk about being black.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTRE/THE GROUPS. NIGHT

Joe walks past a group. He listens in.

TIMOTHY
We bought early so whatever
happens we should be okay, house
prices will never fall as low as
that again.

JOE
(to us)
A pitstop, a diversion from the
main topic of our lives...
(pauses for effect)
"The problem with black people."

He looks about and then spots a group of women talking animatedly, he heads towards them.

JOE (cont'd)
(to us)
Let's see... talking about the
shortage of good black men, or
the fact that fifty percent of
black men are dating white women

He arrives at the group.

SARAH
I got

S

Joe in a different group.

PATRICK

We're consumers. We create stuff, but we don't make any money out of it. The Koreans sell us our nails and the Asians sell us our hair. We're dumb.

Everybody agrees including Joe

JOE

(to us)

He's good.

MAUREEN

That's not fair though. The white m

ELROY

...and the unlucky survivors of the journey were met with unimaginable violence and abuse. Our languages were destroyed and so were our families. The effects of that ricochets down to this day. So no, my friend, we cannot just "get over" slavery.

JOE

I know, I'm just saying...

ELROY

People like you are the problem.

Joe, startled.

ELROY (cont'd)

You've bought into the illusion of freedom. I bet you're educated. Been bought off by a degree and a decent job.

Joe confused, 'Could that be true?' People nod.

ELROY (cont'd)

You used to teach you say? How many other black teachers were there?

Joe thinks, he remembers the staffroom with its enclaves of white teachers.

ELROY (cont'd)

(correctly assessing
Joe's reaction)

You were The One. The one they let through while they kept all the others down, knowing you'd do nothing to help your brethren.

JOE

No, that's not true. I tried. I even tried...[...to force-]

MAUREEN

I know you. Didn't you get sacked from some school for hitting some boy? A black boy.

Everybody looks at Joe, some people recognise him and their faces take on a meaner aspect. Joe starts to panic. Elroy smells blood in the water and rounds on him.

ELROY

You're a sell out, a house

nigger. The proverbial crab in
the barrel...

Everybody nods.

ELROY (cont'd)

...Anybody tries to get out you
pull them down.

Joe shakes his head, "It's not true." He's no crab. He looks around and sees the crowd looking at him resentfully as Elroy continues. Joe's panic rises. He hears the roar of the crowd from outside the court house. Elroy is still talking. Joe catches the odd word...traitor...coconut. Joe sees the people all agreeing with Elroy. The roaring gets louder. Joe rushes off. Elroy looks after him, still talking, the crowd agreeing.

CUT TO:

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTRE. NIGHT

People headed into the centre. Joe paces up and down. He breathes in deeply trying to stem the tide of panic and fear. He hears the roar of the crowd.

JOE

(through gritted teeth)
Forgive them. Forgive them.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTRE/SLAVERY SECTION. NIGHT

The clinking of cutlery on glass. Everybody looks in the direction of the sound. Heather looks shocked to see Joe standing on a table, knocking a glass, with a knife. He looks at them ice cold.

JOE

Wanted to ask a question. Could
anyone here, anyone, who was a
slave, please put their hand up.

Heather stunned, 'what is going on?' The people look at Joe confused.

JOE (cont'd)

Anybody? Laid in the ship in
their own excrement... beaten and
raped by the massa?

Heather looks at him angry. Mutters of 'rude', 'facety',
'what's he on about?'

ELROY
You're taking the piss!

JOE
No, you are. We built the
pyramids. You didn't build the
pyramids, you couldn't build a...
fucking barbecue.

People laugh. Elroy angry.

JOE (cont'd)
We were not on the plantation.

) We're fr frntate. j-0.29856 Tc (e) Tj0.12216 () Tj-0.17472 Tc (j-0.29856 Tc (e) Tj0.122
lo eee e)06j-1T) () Tj0.06528 Tc () Tj0.30528 Tc () TTW

unlucky survivors. Maybe see it
as some kind of karmic...payback
for something we did.

"karmic payback...something we did", people don't know what
he's talking about

JOE (cont'd)
...and you know, look at the good
things that have come out of we e

JANINE

Slavery's got a new name, 'my friend'. It's called 'third world debt'. Black people are still...[...enslaved]

JOE

(frustration)

Fuuuuuuck Black People!!!

Everybody is stunned. Joe looks at them with rage. It consumes him. Heather see what is happening to him, where he's headed.

She shakes her head, 'don't, don't go there', but it's no use. Joe looks at them like some kind of avenging angel.

JOE (cont'd)

Fuck us. Fuck our self denial...

Fuck our "let's blame the white man for everything" response.

Fuck us.

(in their faces)

Fuck black people!!!

The crowd surge forward, "how dare he". Elroy and Kwame grab him down. Elroy punches him in the face. Joe falls. The crowd surround him, baying for blood. Heather tries to get to him, but it's no use.

EXT COMMUNITY CENTRE. NIGHT

Heather helps a bloody and battered Joe into a minicab. She stands at the door. Joe looks at her, is she getting in?

HEATHER

I'm going to stay with some friends for a few days. ...I don't want you there when I get back.

Joe looks at her, stunned.

HEATHER (cont'd)

You're so full of...anger. I've tried to find a way to deal with it...to help, but I can't do it any more Joe. You're just too... negative.

JOE

Heather-

She shuts the door on whatever he's going to say and walks/runs away. The minicab pulls off.

JOE (cont'd)
Heather! Heather!

EXT. COURT HOUSE. DAY

A smart looking Joe walks out with his lawyer, Mark.

JOE
Negative? Me? I'm not negative.
I haven't got a negative bone in
my body. Fuck her. I'm finished
with black women anyway.

He shakes Mark's hand. Behind them an older Reece can be
seen leaving the court.

MARK
(to Joe)
Good luck. What are your plans?
You going back into teaching?...

INT. NT

EXT. MENTAL HOSPITAL/GARDEN. DAY

Joe sits on a bench and thinks.

INT. MENTAL HOSPITAL/ROOM. DAY

Germal lies sedated. A nurse hands the doctor a chart. Joe loiters about with intent.

The doctor looks at the chart.

DR CHATTERJEE

Germal Forest, admitted last night. He was found wandering the streets in an extremely agitated state. The police judged him to be a danger to himself so they brought him here. We'll keep him sedated for now.

JOE

What's wrong with him?

The doctor and the nurse look at him sharply.

DR CHATTERJEE

I can't discuss patients with you.

The nurse looks at Joe angrily, he knows he's not supposed to do that.

JOE

(to the doctor)

I used to teach him.

The doctor turns. He looks at Joe, 'what does he want?'

JOE (cont'd)

I was

Having said as much as he's prepared to, the doctor abruptly walks away. Joe thinks.

INT. MENTAL HOSPITAL/GERMAL'S ROOM. DAY

Joe sat at Germal's bedside looking at him, trying to figure something out.

JOE
Why do you keep turning up?
(pause)
What do you want from me?
(pause)
What am I supposed to learn?

CUT TO:

INT. MENTAL HOSPITAL/GERMAL'S ROOM. NIGHT

Germal lies seemingly alone. Reveal Joe, in civilian clothes standing by the window looking out at the darkness. Germal opens his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. MENTAL HOSPITAL/GERMAL'S ROOM. ANOTHER DAY

Joe walks in with Germal's chart. He looks at Germal who stares out of the window. Joe thinks then-

JOE
(brightly)
How you doing today Germal?

Germal doesn't respond.

JOE (cont'd)
You want anything?

Germal doesn't respond. Joe goes around so he can see his face.

JOE (cont'd)
(conspiratorially)
The food in here is pretty crap,
I could bring you something.
Don't worry I wouldn't be cooking
it myself.

Joe looks at Germal's unresponsive face, his blank eyes.

Joe looks sad.

INT. MENTAL HOSPITAL/LOUNGE. ANOTHER DAY

Joe, walking by, notices Germal who stares at the TV like a droid. Joe walks over.

JOE
(to Germal)
What you watching?

GERMAL
TV.

JOE
Is it good?

Germal shrugs. Joe walks away. Germal turns to watch him go.

INT. BOOKSHOP. ANOTHER DAY

Joe looks at something surprised. He smiles.

JOE
Good book?

The 'Mind, Body & Spirit' section. Heather, her hair in a natural style, holds a book open. She looks up. Caught off guard and pleased to see him, she smiles.

They look at each other.

JOE (cont'd)
You look great.

Her insecurity around him returns and she touches her hair self conscious.

JOE (cont'd)
I miss you.

HEATHER
I miss you too, sometimes.

Joe smiles, relieved.

JOE
You want to get a coffee?

HEATHER
No, I don't think so.

She goes to leave.

JOE
Another time?

HEATHER
No. Thanks, but no.

JOE
Why?

Heather thinks.

HEATHER
I don't feel good about myself
when I'm with you.

Joe is upset.

JOE
Couldn't we just...[...be
friends]

HEATHER
A man walks down a road Joe. He
sees a hole in the road, he falls
in.

Joe doesn't know where she's going, but he listens.

HEATHER (cont'd)
He walks down the road the next
day, he sees the hole again, he
still falls in. The next day he
walks down the road, he sees the
hole and he walks around it.

Joe nods, he thinTc (a) Tj0.31536 Tc (l) Tj0 Tc (k) Tj-0.07656 28 Tc 23c (a) Tj0.3Tc () Tj0.30528 T

of the other patients are looking at him like he's mad.
Germal moves the pawn. Swiftly his opponent brings his rook across taking Germal's queen. Involved in the game, Joe is 'upset' by the careless loss of such a major figure. Germal is unmoved by the loss.

INT. MENTAL HOSPITAL/LOUNGE. ANOTHER DAY

Books. Germal looking along.

JOE
Reading. Good idea

Germal continues looking at the books as if Joe hasn't spoken.

JOE (cont'd)
...It stimulates the mind.

Germal looks at a pile of magazines. Germal's eyes fix on something and register interest, almost excitement.

JOE (cont'd)
Mental exercise is...

A pile of comics. Germal takes one, definitely excited. Joe looks at the comic, disappointed.

JOE (cont'd)
...good for you.

INT. MENTAL HOSPITAL/GERMAL'S ROOM. ANOTHER DAY

Pages of a graphic novel. Germal looking at it. Joe watches him.

JOE
Dr Chatterjee says you're doing a lot better. You could go home in a few weeks.

Germal turns a page as if he hasn't heard Joe. Joe looks out of the window.

JOE (cont'd)
You should go outside.

Germal is focussed on in his book.

JOE (cont'd)
I could go with you if you wanted.

Germal looks at him, something is confusing him. Joe looks at him, 'what?' Germal goes back to his book. Joe goes to leave. He is opening the door when-

GERMAL
(begrudging)
I'm sorry.

Joe looks at him, what did he say?

GERMAL (cont'd)
For what I did. I'm sorry.

Joe comes back into the room.

JOE
Why...why did you do it?

Germal shrugs.

GERMAL
It started as a joke. ...but my
parents got behind me and...

Joe waits. Germal nervous.

GERMAL (cont'd)
And... I didn't like you...
(looks at him)
I hated you. We all did.

JOE
(stunned)
All? Who?

GERMAL
The black kids.

JOE
(shocked)
The bl... Why?

GERMAL
...it always seemed...we
wasn't good enough for you...

JOE
(shocked)
I never said you weren't good
enough. I always tried to show
you guys your potential, what you
could be.

GERMAL
...Why was we never good enough
like we were?

JOE
(with disdain)
What? Illiterate, violent,
insolent.

Germal nods, that's the teacher he remembers.

JOE (cont'd)
I was suppTc (') Tjo528 Tc () Tj-0.17472 Tc () Tj0.16152 Tc (o) Tj00.06528 Tc (6528
65Tj-0.08784 Tc ((m) Tj0.40872 Tc (b) Tc () Tj-0.178Tj0.15216 Tc (ta Tj-0.105ITc (te) Tj-
ta 1H.1.c () Tj-0

b

INT. SCHOOL/CLASS ROOM. FLASHBACK. DAY

...the boys resentful faces.

EXT. MENTAL HOSPITAL/GARDEN. DAY

JOE
(to us)
I was trying to help them.

He sees...

EXT. SCHOOL/YARD. FLASHBACK. DAY

The boys who have been playing 'piggy in the middle' look at Joe.

JOE O/S
Detention.

The boys look angry, frustrated. 'It's unfair'.

EXT. MENTAL HOSPITAL/GARDEN. DAY

Joe looks at us, beginning to feel embarrassed, but he's not ready to give up. He was right. He sees...

INT. SCHOOL/CLASS. FLASHBACK. DAY

Reece's hurt expression.

JOE
(to us, smug)
We've got enough black
footballers.

EXT. MENTAL HOSPITAL/GARDEN. DAY

Joe's losing his confidence in his rightness. He sees...

INT. BOOKSHOP. FLASHBACK. DAY

HEATHER
I don't feel good about myself
when I'm with you, Joe.

EXT. MENT

up. Why was that by the way? I
never under...[...stood]

GERMAL

Cos he was stuck up.

JOE

He wasn't he...[...was a regular
kid]

GERMAL

...Thought he was white. Doing
all his work, winning
ce

to the door with a new confidence. He opens the door, he stands there about to leave, he thinks... He decides.

JOE (cont'd)
So what do you say to that walk
outside?

Germal looks at him surprised. This man keeps surprising him. He looks at Joe suspicious, 'What's he up to?' Joe smiles. Germal thinks, he nods, "okay". He gets up. Joe holds the door open, Germal walks through. Joe goes to follow him then stops. He looks at the room where both he and Germal have spent time...mad. He looks at the bed. He looks up at the possible author/orchestrator of these coincidences. He thinks. He leaves.

The empty room. Through the window we see Joe and Germal walking into the distance.

EXT. MENTAL HOSPITAL/GARDEN. DAY

Joe and Germal sat on the bench. We eavesdrop.

GERMAL
I just want a job that interests
me. Have that...special girl,
you know, the one that...well you
know.

JOE
(thinks of Heather)
Yeah...I know.

They sit in a companionable silence, each thinking about what they want.

GERMAL
Mostly, I just want a family.
...that all lives together in one
place. I suppose you think
that's pathetic.

ink
HE ink8 Tc () Tj0 -11.52sh

(I) 8(n) 10.0585 Inek In at's pathetic. j

0

ink

The boys run out around him, some say "Bye sir