

DEAR WHITE PEOPLE

Written by  
Justin Simien

REVISED:  
August 21st, 2013

1 NEWS BROADCAST - VARIOUS SCREENS, VARIOUS PLACES 1

ANCHOR

A "race war" has erupted at one of the nation's oldest and most prestigious institutions.

Glued to this are our story's subjects, who we meet in...

2 A SERIES OF SHOTS 2

TROY FAIRBANKS, 21, Black. He drags a brush through his finger waves anxiously. The look of guilt is the only mark of imperfection in his privileged and chiseled demeanor.

ANCHOR (O.S.)

Outrage over an "African American Themed" party organized by predominately white students of Manchester University has resulted in rioting and property damages.

2A KURT FLETCHER, 21, white. No sympathy in his jaded blue eyes as he watches on an iPad in a lavish parlor room. 2A

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

Guests were invited to "liberate their inner Negro, fry up chicken, enjoy a sugar water concoction known as Purple drank and wear oversized Barack Obama T-shirts."

2B COLANDREA CONNERS (COCO), 20, Black with blue contacts adjusts the straight bangs of her weave to better see the small TV in her dorm. A smirk on her glossy pink lips. 2B \*

ANCHOR (CONT'D)

Officials claim an investigation is underway to find those responsible for the event and subsequent riot.

2C SAMANTHA WHITE (SAM) 21, records the broadcast in an edit bay. Despite her light skin, the Afro pick in her fro pompadour leaves little doubt she identifies as Black. 2C

ANCHOR (CONT'D)

In an effort to address diversity issues, the school appointed African American scholar Dr. Walter Fairbanks as Dean of Students.

2D LIONEL HIGGINS, 20, Black, watches through dark rimmed glasses in a bustling indifferent Dining Hall. A guilt pains his otherwise boyish face. 2D

## ANCHOR (CONT'D)

Last year the Dean's office celebrated slight gains in diverse applicants but with many now calling for Fairbanks' resignation, that may have been pre-mature.

2E DEAN WALTER FAIRBANKS, a well adorned Black man in his 50's fights a panic as he watches in a stately office. 2E

## ANCHOR (CONT'D)

Up next, a cat that loves to water ski? That and more after the break.

## DEAN FAIRBANKS

How could this happen?

TITLE CARD: FIVE WEEKS AGO

3 EXT. MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY - DAY 3

This sprawling impressive mix of Colonial, Gothic and Modern architecture is presented like a living brochure.

SUPERIMPOSE: MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY - "NOSCE TE IPSUM"

As we cut through the living brochure, we're presented with groups and programs. Their CRESTS and titles SUPERIMPOSED.

SERIES OF SHOTS - TOP ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

3A White kids with "Trump" blazers and glares - DESMOND SCHOOL OF BUSINESS. 3A

3B Kids with dark eye circles and unkempt hair stand before the BING SCHOOL OF HISTORY. 3B

3C A cluster of skinny jeans and expressive hands before the GOODMAN MEDIA SCHOOL. ONE BLACK KID stands in the back. 3C

## SAM (V.O.)

Dear White People. The minimum requirement of Black friends needed to not seem racist has just been raised to two.

4 INT. STUDIO BOOTH - DAY 4

Samantha White (Sam) watches the campus through a one way window with the cool but knowing gaze of someone much older. She gets off on sensing and pushing buttons - with a subversive delivery style that borders on deadpan.

SUPERIMPOSE: SAMANTHA WHITE, SENIOR, VISUAL AND NEW MEDIA

SAM (CONT'D)

Sorry, but your weed man Tyrone  
does not count.

She fades in JAZZ on her control board and leans back to address a box of pamphlet sized books bearing the title "EBONY AND IVY: A SURVIVAL GUIDE." One by one she scribbles her autograph on the books.

5 EXT. ELLINGTON LIBRARY - DAY 5

SERIES OF SHOTS - NATIONALLY RENOWNED STUDENT GROUPS

Disheveled caffeinated writers of the MANCHESTER BUGLE.

5A Casual Prepsters shoot us the finger - PASTICHE HUMOR INC. 5A

5B Hopping out of a taxi is Lionel Higgins. His sweet but 5B  
insecure nature as plain as the unkempt fro on his head.

SUPERIMPOSE: LIONEL HIGGINS, JUNIOR, ~~PHILOSOPHY~~ UNDECLARED

STUDENTS shove past him - one even slaps a flyer into his already full hands. Lionel's a guppy. The kind that gets eaten alive in a tank of sharks.

As Lionel gets to the door of a large Colonial style home he checks his pockets. He's missing something. Shit.

LIONEL

(knocking)

Kurt! You home?

Lionel dials on his cell and we hear the PHONE RING from inside. Voicemail pops on with a voice other than Lionel's.

ANSWERING MACHINE

Hey boyssss, you've reached Lionel  
Higginsss, the only bitch on  
campussss who'll give you a  
dickssscount. That's right hunty,  
the bigger the dick the less you'll  
have to pay me to sssuck it.

The beep sounds. Lionel's in shock. Should he hang up? Or...

LIONEL

Kurt. It's Lionel. I'm locked out.

As Lionel slides down the length of the door into a sit he unfolds the flyer he was just handed. It's a rendering of Sam White on a carton of milk with the caption:

"MISSING BLACK CULTURE - SAM WHITE TO BRING IT BLACK"

6 EXT. MANCHESTER ROW - DAY

6

Signs scream out "ORIENTATION" as jazz music wafts from the laptops of a group of NEO BEATNIKS. As the music fades...

SAM (O.S.)

Dear White People, apparently Morgan Freeman in "Deep Impact" wasn't enough. Despite two terms Obama could cure Cancer and somewhere White folks will be embroiled in protest. And he's only half Black.

GABE, 24, white and ruggedly handsome in spite of his shaggy hair and "laundry day" flip flop clad ensemble, catches the end of this as he passes - grabs his cell phone and dials...

7 INT. STUDIO BOOTH - DAY

7

...Sam presses a button next to a red light on her controls.

SAM

Talk to me.

INTERCUT with Gabe walking about on campus.

GABE

What would you say if someone started a Dear Black People?

SAM

(recognizing the voice)  
No need. Mass media from Fox News to reality tv on VH1 makes it clear what white people think of us.

8 EXT. MANCHESTER COURT - DAY

8

SERIES OF SHOTS - POPULAR RESIDENCE HALLS

Manchester's white and rich elite before BECHET HOUSE.

8A Athletes of many disciplines before WEBSTER HOUSE.

8A

8B An eclectic group of Black students with some Latinos and a sprinkling of whites before ARMSTRONG / PARKER HOUSE.

8B

COCO (V.O.)

I'm fucking pissed...

11 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

11

Colandrea Connors (Coco) trains her unnaturally blue eyes right at us from a Youtube page pulled up on an iPad. She's got an entitled air about her. Even her cusses sound erudite.

COCO (YOUTUBE)

...I am! The whole point of randomized housing is to mix shit up. I'm out here trying to find the Olivier to my Halle Berry, and they've got me looking like an extra on a Different World...

The video ends with a click. Looking up is HELMUT WEST, a 30's something Black man in dark rimmed glasses and trendy everything. Too stylish for this place. If he's impressed, it's barely perceptible.

HELMUT

You call your Youtube show "Doing Time at an Ivy League?"

He stares right at Coco, there in the flesh.

COCO

In my second year of a four year sentence. Wanted to go to New York.

SUPERIMPOSE: ~~COLANDREA~~ COCO CONNERS, SOPHOMORE, ECONOMICS

HELMUT

Yeah? And do what?

COCO

Things my mama taught me not to. You know get in a lot of trouble and become famous for it. But alas I didn't get into Tisch...

HELMUT

Armstrong / Parker? That your rooming assignment?

COCO

Traditionally it's where the hopelessly Afrocentric gather to process their guilt over not going to an HBCU.

(off Helmut's look)

Where the Negros be at.

HELMUT

That's not where you want to be?

COCO  
Bechet House is more my style.

HELMUT  
With the rich white kids.

COCO  
Excuse me?

HELMUT  
What part of Chicago you from?

COCO  
Hyde Park.

HELMUT  
What street?

COCO  
Seventy Eighth and --

HELMUT  
-- Seventy Eighth is Southside  
sweetheart. And you know what they  
say. You can take the girl out the  
hood but --

COCO  
-- Ain't nothing hood about me.

HELMUT  
Thanks so much for coming in.

Coco gets up to leave. Tries to recover.

COCO  
So what's this show about anyway?

HELMUT  
Here's the way reality works  
sweetheart, I'm the producer. I ask  
the questions. Be in touch.

And with that Helmut hustles Coco out. He sits and ponders  
before unmuting his iPad.

SAM (O.S.)  
Dear White People I am here to  
burst your post-racial little  
bubble.

(MORE)

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

Yes Oprah may have her own network,  
but Ann Coulter is still writing  
best sellers, Black kids are still  
getting shot for wearing hoodies,  
and even here the few vestiges of  
Black culture are under attack by  
conservative groups, trustees and  
yes our very own President  
Fletcher.

Helmut double checks his app fighting a genuine grin.

HELMUT

This is the school radio?

13

INT. ARMSTRONG / PARKER HALL - DAY

13

A pristine pair of Retro Jordans make their way through the  
halls of Armstrong / Parker where Black students have lively  
debates, flirt and bump the student radio.

SAM (O.S.)

Dear White People, thanks to the  
new process of randomizing housing  
assignments for Sophomores, some of  
you may be jarred by an assignment  
to Armstrong/Parker house.

The owner of the Jordans is revealed as Troy Fairbanks.

TROY

Someone turn that trash off.

SUPERIMPOSE: TROY FAIRBANKS, SENIOR, POLITICAL SCIENCE

Even with his post workout sweat he looks like the cover of  
Jet. Troy exudes "approachable homie" as he spots a small  
group of WHITE SOPHOMORES who walk timidly down the hall.

TROY (CONT'D)

Newbies right?

The white sophomores nod their heads yes.

TROY (CONT'D)

Welcome to Armstrong / Parker, home  
of the dopest dining hall in all of  
Manchester. I'm Troy, Head of  
House.

SOPHOMORE

What's up my brother?



SAM (O.S.)

When encountering a Black person  
try and stay calm. Don't say things  
like "what's up" and "my brotha"  
That's not how you normally talk.

TROY

Ya'll take care. Nice Jordan's bro.

Coco and SOFIA FLETCHER, a dewy-eyed, pink lipped brunette  
who exudes a kind of sexy boredom saunter down the halls.

SOFIA

Your hair is so cute B. T. Dubs.

COCO

You're so cute.

SOFIA

Is it weaved?

Coco's face is a battle between fury and polite surprise.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

I saw "Good Hair" in Afro studies.

COCO

(moving on)

Hey what house did you get?

SOFIA

Huh? Oh Bechet bitch.

COCO

Of course. The mere thought of a  
Fletcher anywhere else...

SOFIA

Easy, it was the luck of the draw.  
Daddy had nothing to do with it.

Coco rolls her eyes behind a smile.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

And honestly, if I had to pick  
anywhere to be it'd be here.

Sofia eyes the delicious morsels of chocolate boys about.

COCO

I'm down to switch if you are. You  
get your Denzel. I get my Gosling.

SOFIA

Oh I got mines. Want to meet him?

They turn the corner to spot Troy greeting more new Sophomores. Coco's caught off guard by his looks.

COCO

Cute...

(off Sofia's jealous  
glance)

...for a Black boy.

Troy sees Sofia and flashes his trademark grin. They kiss.

SOFIA

Hey boo. This is my friend Coco.  
She's new to the house.

TROY

Hey I'm Troy. Welcome to Armstrong  
/ Parker, home of the dopest --

SOFIA

-- Are we on duty?

TROY

Head of House is always on duty.

COCO

Nice to meet you. I should get  
settled. Thanks Sof!

Sofia and Troy smile as Coco turns to go - and continue down the hallway. Coco sneaks one last glance at Troy's ass.

TROY

Think I got time for a quick cut?

SOFIA

You got it cut last week.

TROY

It's a Black thing babe.

SOFIA

Since when is OCD a Black thang?

TROY

Don't say "thang" like that.

SOFIA

Besides you've got a shift at the  
Politicos booth, then a shift at  
Orientation, then your advisor --

TROY  
-- I'll just wear a hat.

SOFIA  
Then a movie maybe? Just us?

TROY  
Election night. Babe, come on.

Sofia holds her tongue. Troy ignores this as he spots...

TROY (CONT'D)  
Yo, Kurt my man.

14 DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

14

...Kurt Fletcher - flanked by guys who share his cynical knowing glare. We recognize them from the "Pastiche" portrait from before.

As they chow down on Mac & Cheese in the Dining Hall - Kurt's glare burns particularly hot towards Troy who waves at him.

KURT  
Sis.

Sofia smiles at her brother Kurt. Troy covers the sting of his dismissal.

They both spot Sam's "Missing: Black culture" flyers.

TROY  
Is she kidding with this?

SOFIA  
You don't have to run again. Just because it's her doesn't mean --

TROY  
-- I can't let Sam and her wannabe Black Panthers take the House. The House needs me. This is who I am.

SOFIA  
It's who he wants you to be.

Troy smiles over his irritation. This is an old fight.

TROY  
Oh so you pick up a Psych class you think you Freud or something? Huh?

SOFIA  
A Freud reference. Sophisticated.

TROY  
 (seducing)  
 Fine Beck, Jung, Maslow...

Troy gets a kiss out of her as they pass a booth featuring stacks of Sam's "EBONY & IVY." The booth is manned by REGGIE, 21, Black - his fro top and preppy punk attire is both bohemian and radical.

Troy glares at Sam's picture on the book. It's on. There's a history between Sam and Troy. Off Reggie's laptop we hear...

SAM (O.S.)  
 Dear White People, this just in.  
 Dating a Black person to piss off  
 your parents is a form of racism.

Sofia walks off as Troy hears snickers from around him.

REGGIE  
 Yo Troy I forget. Is your major in  
 shucking or was it jiving?

TROY  
 My major's in Jive. Minorin' in  
 Shuck. You're still majoring in  
 trying to fuck my left overs right?

Troy walks off as Reggie and Kurt watch him join Sofia.

SOFIA  
 You need a shower.

15 INT. TROY'S BATHROOM - DAY 15

Water runs while Troy takes a hit of weed from a pipe over the toilet. He blows the smoke out an open window through a paper towel tube with a dryer sheet attached to its end. He jots something down on a notepad as he whispers...

TROY  
 You went from ODB to Trey Songz...

16 INT. ARMSTRONG/PARKER DINING HALL - NIGHT 16

The hall is packed with STUDENTS - stylish and mostly Black. Helmut West watches from the back.

TROY  
 Artie, you know your success ratio  
 with the ladies went up like thirty  
 percent after I started edging you  
 up dog, come on. You went from ODB  
 to Trey Songz!

The audience is in STITCHES at this last line. Everyone except Sam, Reggie and their crew of afro'd bohemian disciples (who we'll call the BOFROS). Sam records the proceedings with a vintage Super 8 camera.

REGGIE

That's his platform? Haircuts?

SAM

Oofta is as Oofta does.

Coco, sneaks through the door. She's got the eyes of Helmut on her. What is he doing here? As Coco breaks eye contact she sits in the only open spot next to...

SAM (CONT'D)

Just because we're colored don't mean we run on colored people time.

COCO

Boycotting hot combs don't make you an expert on "colored people" boo.

Coco wafts her silky hair over her shoulders and sits.

TROY

No but seriously, I care about you guys. I care about this house. We had a great year last year and if it ain't broke...

Troy basks in his applause. Coco eats him up with her eyes.

Sam doesn't want to get up - her breathing gets heavier.

REGGIE

Just pretend like you're in the booth. Just you and the mic.

SAM

Hate this shit.

As Sam gets up and passes Troy --

TROY

You really think you can take this from me?

SAM

Troy we live in a world where there's a Big Momma's House 3. I don't have a chance in hell. Thank God.

Sam grabs the mic. Her voice shakes before the silent crowd.

SAM (CONT'D)

Troy my brother, it's broke.

The BoFros cheer and make noise on each line.

SAM (CONT'D)

Troy's a legacy kid. And yet it's under his watch that Armstrong / Parker, the bastion of Black culture here was gutted. By the Randomization of Housing Act. Second years of color no longer have a say in where they go. The culture that's been fostered in this house for two decades will be wiped out in two years.

Troy looks to see if the speech is working. As Sam warms up --

SAM (CONT'D)

This wasn't motivated by a desire to mix things up. Bring about racial and socioeconomic harmony. No, the Black kids are sitting together in the proverbial cafeteria and they must be up to no good.

Coco's eyes are in the back of her head.

SAM (CONT'D)

We sit together to protect ourselves. Over a century of houses grouped by sports affiliations, political leanings, majors, you name it. Black folks get their own house, suddenly we got a problem?

Students look at each other stunned. Are they turning? Sam delivers the next one directly at Sofia and Troy.

SAM (CONT'D)

This Act doesn't affect the other houses like it does ours. There are plenty of trustees, former coaches, and presidents watching out for the others. All we have is a Dean who'd rather please his massa --

TROY

-- Yo that's enough of that Sam --

SAM

-- then stand up for his own. Look, I know ya'll ain't voting for me. Ya'll ain't ready and I didn't come here for that. The Black Student Union and I have brought a petition to repeal the Randomization of Housing Act. I plan on bringing it to the President and together we can bring Black back to Manchester. It'll be by the door.

Sam sits as claps trickle from the crowd. The BoFros go crazy - give her daps and all sorts of praise.

MARTIN, 20, a gentle erudite giant of a football player with neat braids tucked under a Fedora raises a hand.

MARTIN

I assume everyone has the app I created by now?

REGGIE

(aside)

It's a child's app...

MARTIN

Good. Voting may commence.

Everyone takes out smart phones. Reggie hides his from view as he punches something in.

Troy spots the white Sophomores he greeted from before who give him a head nod. Troy's got this. After a moment...

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Okay. Looks like we've got ourselves a winner.

(devastated)

Sam White?

The blood drains from Sam's face and Troy's smile plummets into the floor as the two turn to look at each other.

TROY & SAM

Oh shit.

Reggie's grin is from ear to ear as Helmut walks over and slips a card to a still stunned Sam. Coco watches him go.

17

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

17

Right on the heels of Helmut's exit is...

COCO  
So that's what you're looking for?

HELMUT  
I'm looking for good TV sister.

COCO  
I think I'd be good TV.

HELMUT  
You're at a great school, getting a great education. Be good at that.

COCO  
I am. And when I graduate early with an Economics degree from Manchester it will be the crowning achievement of my Black middle class parents' ambitions.

HELMUT  
Conflict is a commodity in my industry. Sam's got it. Do you?

COCO  
So you want me to start a fight.

HELMUT  
(exactly)  
I don't want you to do anything you wouldn't otherwise do.

Helmut hands her his card. A fire sparks in Coco as he exits. He contemplates her. Fights a growing smile.

18 INT. DEAN'S OFFICE - DAY

18

A fireplace rages behind Lionel who stares at the floor while the message plays over speaker phone.

SPEAKER  
...bigger the dick the less you'll have to pay me to sssuck it.

Dean Fairbank's mind ticks away behind a concerned glare.

DEAN FAIRBANKS  
Most everything's locked up, but we'll find another residence to move you to. Third time's a charm.  
(off Lionel's sigh)  
What about Armstrong / Parker?



LIONEL

I don't know...

DEAN FAIRBANKS

I might have an opening. Maybe it'd be good to be around...you know.

LIONEL

Dean. The worst thing about high school, and believe me it was a long list, were the Black kids.

DEAN FAIRBANKS

Maybe it's in your head. Sure, sometimes our folks can be intolerant around people like you. Homo --

LIONEL

-- I don't believe in labels.

Fairbanks just smiles. This is a sore spot and he backs off.

Lionel glares up at a poster above Fairbank's desk: Students of all races on the steps of Ellington Library including Troy with the phrase "MANCHESTER: WHERE YOU BELONG" printed below. Troy's huge smile seems to mock him.

DEAN FAIRBANKS

You like jazz Lionel? Manchester's like jazz you know.

LIONEL

This is a research school.

DEAN FAIRBANKS

And jazz is tension. The interplay of improvised solos all creating one song. Your problem is you've got no instrument. No major, no affiliations, no solo son.

LIONEL

I submit articles to the Independent Observer.

DEAN FAIRBANKS

No one reads the Independent Observer, my point is are you playing swing or bebop?

LIONEL

You're mixing metaphors.

DEAN FAIRBANKS  
Are you a sax or are you a trumpet?

LIONEL  
I hate jazz.

Fairbanks checks his watch. All out of ideas.

DEAN FAIRBANKS  
I'll do what I can. Not a word of  
this in the Observer okay?

LIONEL  
What's it matter? No one reads it.

19 EXT. MANCHESTER - DAY

19

Lionel walks alone through the buzzing campus. He looks out to..

...a group of BLACK KIDS. He sees a version of himself amongst them - his hair a finger waved Ceasar fade, as he trades "No Homo's" with the others.

Lionel shakes it off. Peers over to a group of out and proud gay kids and sees a version of himself amongst them - his hair straightened and coifed in a fitted shirt laughing.

Not right either. Where does he fit? By surprise...

GEORGE  
Lionel right?

GEORGE PIERCE, 24, an intellectual whose tattooed quotes from Nietzsche peek out seductively from under his button up.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
George. We had Civ last semester?  
How you doing?

LIONEL  
Grood...Gate...I'm ah..

GEORGE  
Fan of your stuff. In the Observer?

LIONEL  
No one reads the Observer.

GEORGE  
You seen this?

George hands Lionel Sam's "Missing Black Culture" flyer.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

The residents of Armstrong / Parker just made her head of house. Am I crazy or is there a there there?

LIONEL

What made you come over here?

George holds up Sam's "Ebony & Ivy." Lionel takes it.

LIONEL (CONT'D)

I mean I'm glad you came --

GEORGE

-- My staff? God bless them. They're whiter than Michael Jackson's kids. We're fucked if anyone of them writes this story and I will not let the transfers at the Gazette do it first.

LIONEL

The oldest one has his face.

GEORGE

You're in the Black Student Union. You probably know Sam.

Lionel shakes his head "yes" and "no" at the same time.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

You come up with a good angle? I want it in the Bugle.

Lionel eyes the bold "Bugle" logo on George's shirt.

LIONEL

(aside)

Trumpet...

GEORGE

Bugle. Focus. The only paper on campus with a national subscription base and an Advisor from the New York Times? Only so many ways a person can distinguish themselves at a place like this Lionel. You're good. You belong with us.

The way Lionel fights the smile creeping up his face - we know he's never heard these words. Never belonged any place. Doesn't hurt there's a handsome boy smiling at him either.

20

INT. ARMSTRONG/PARKER DINING HALL - DAY

20

Troy and Sam sit across from each other at a table. Their opposite facing laptops and a world of tension put a wall between them.

TROY

Get it yet?

Sam shakes her head yes.

TROY (CONT'D)

Good. You've now got the shared calendar, contacts, and official email.

Troy throws a smirk her way before pulling out a thick stack of papers.

TROY (CONT'D)

Oh and before I forget.

SAM

Event requests for the year?

TROY

Just this month. They need your approval. Also don't forget to pick your office hours. At least 20 per week.

SAM

That's absurd.

TROY

You're in charge of a hundred residents now. And they need time to complain to your face. About noise. Leaky pipes. Gluten free options in the cafeteria. Etcetera.

SAM

Troy. I didn't think I was going to win.

TROY

And by the way petitioning the President on the Randomization of Housing Act isn't gonna do shit. None of the other houses are concerned.

SAM

Because they all have a legacy of rich and powerful allies on the board who will make sure that "random" works out to their advantage.

TROY

And you think a petition is going to change that?

Troy gets up to leave as Reggie sits - suspicious. Sam's phone buzzes: "MOM." The letters chill Sam to the core.

21

INT. ARMSTRONG / PARKER - DAY

21

Lionel steps his way through the hall, a deer in headlights with a notepad. He flips through Sam's "EBONY & IVY" book...

SAM (V.O.)

The Armstrong / Parker dining hall is the epicenter of Black culture as it stands at Manchester. Only here can you commiserate, celebrate and discuss everything from Kanye West lyrics to theoretical relativism all in one sitting. Not to mention find someone who can actually do your hair.

ARMSTRONG / PARKER DINING HALL - CONTINUOUS

Lionel enters and takes a place in a line. He absorbs this lively and somewhat alien dining hall.

Troy now holds court near the windows at a table of eight or so friends including Martin and SUNGMI, a lip ringed Korean art major.

MARTIN

"We wuz robbed." That election was suspect man.

Martin glares at Reggie and his giant souped-up Laptop. Sam breaks this by sitting back down - her phone call ending.

SAM

You call me the minute there's an update. Love you too mom.

Sam hangs up. The call's really put her in a bad place. She sits at a table of her Bofros - who we'll name by their hair.

CURLS

There is one other sister in my  
Relativity class, I'll be damned if  
our professor doesn't call me  
Laretta every God damn time.

DREADS

We all look the same.

REGGIE

Programming professor gets me and  
Martin here mixed up constantly.

MARTIN

You should be so lucky.

Reggie glances over at Martin's Mac Air.

REGGIE

Cute. You get that at Toys R Us?

Sam pulls out her Mac and her student ID card.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

You still using your ID number?

SAM

I always forget passwords.

REGGIE

You are begging to get hacked.

SAM

Good thing the one evil techno-  
genius thinking like that is on my  
side.

Sam pushes aside all the paperwork on her table.

SAM (CONT'D)

So this is what the revolution  
looks like? Office hours and  
paperwork.

Sam pulls her camera out - starts to shoot the room.

REGGIE

Winning was a happy accident. We  
want the reform repealed right?

CURLS

Means to an end, sister.

Sam feels the heat of her disciples' eyes on her as the topic of the day rages on with the entrance of Coco, who sits with a group of well manicured hot-ironed group of girls, white and Black.

COCO

The talented tenth always has to bust its ass a little bit harder, but I don't see the benefit in blaming white folks for everything.

CURLS

Who's blaming?

TROY

I don't see the issue. I never had one. Never ran into any lynch mobs.

Lionel takes a seat alone facing the action.

Kurt and crew enter with plates of mac and cheese and sit in the heart of the conversation. Lionel avoids eye contact.

SAM

Lynch mob is still there. Just re-branded itself.

TROY

As what pray tell?

REGGIE

The Republican party.

SAM

Want to know how this world sees you? Go to a Young Republican's meeting and bring up Welfare.

SUNGMI

Or Immigration.

LIONEL

(aside)

Or gay equality.

KURT

Bullshit.

MARTIN

I agree. Got something to add?

KURT

The biggest athletes, movie stars, hell your president is Black.

(MORE)

KURT (CONT'D)

Sometimes I think the hardest thing to be in the American work force right now is an educated white guy.

SUNGMI

You're not serious.

KURT

You guys still got affirmative action, you're set.

REGGIE

This shit.

SAM

What are you doing in here?

KURT

Obama. Leader of the free world got into Harvard on affirmative action. Know who's not president right now? The guy that didn't get in.

SAM

On behalf of the colored folks in the room, let me apologize for all the better qualified white students whose place we're taking up.

Kurt chuckles - a bit turned on by the argument.

SAM (CONT'D)

You get lost? Bechet is that way.

KURT

Yeah but what other dining hall gives you chicken and waffles? Dear White People right? Funny stuff. How haven't we staffed you yet?

SAM

On Pastiche? Your uninspired humor magazine?

KURT

We're a lot more than a magazine sweetie. SNL staff is basically half Lampoon, half Pastiche. Just like the network comedies.

A flash of envy comes over Troy and Coco.



SAM

What gives you Clubhouse kids the right to come to our Dining Hall?

Kurt eats an exaggerated scoop of mac and cheese.

SAM (CONT'D)

You don't live here.

MARTIN

Sam? What are you doing?

SAM

You can't eat here.

Kurt eyes this new adversary. Enjoys a good challenge.

TROY

Chill Sam damn. Let the man--

KURT & SAM

-- I got this.

KURT

Who are you to put me out?

SAM

(realizing)

I'm the Head of this house. And I'm doing things my way.

Sam shoots this last one to Martin. Kurt rolls his eyes to which Sam slams his tray to the ground.

Lionel scribbles down notes furiously on a notepad.

KURT

You got any idea who you're --

SAM

-- Yeah, I know who your daddy is. The same one who's been pushing to break up this House for a decade. What's wrong? Is he scared letting the Negroes gather in groups might start a rebellion on the plantation? You tell him from me...he should be.

Kurt looks into Sam's eyes and then his crew. They want out.

KURT

Bad move.

Kurt leads his crew out of the dining hall drawing a slight snicker from Lionel which draws Sam's eyes right to him.

Something sparks in Lionel. He takes out his phone and texts to GEORGE: "I've got the angle. I'm in."

SAM

You too.

LIONEL

Me?

SAM

Is this your house?

Lionel sinks - the eyes of everyone in the room on him.

Sam sits back down as a trickle of claps grow to a steady applause. Troy and his table look around baffled.

By the caution on Sam's face it seems the first time she's ever heard this sound directed at her.

A slight envy boils in Coco.

One last look to the room from Lionel before he slips out. Locked out again.

23

INT. COCO'S ROOM - DAY

23

Coco scrolls Sam's "Dear White People" Youtube page. 75K Subscribers. She presses play on the latest video.

SAM (O.S.)

Dear White People, stop dancing.

Two seconds. 600K views.

COCO

The fuck?

Coco exits and opens her own "TIME AT AN IVY LEAGUE" page. 2K subscribers. Her latest video is at 10K views. Alright... She presses record. Let's the camera rest on her briefly...

COCO (CONT'D)

Muffins. I hate to do it, but Imma have to get real Black with you.

(comes to mind)

So the other day, a girl had the nerve to fix her mouth and ask me if my hair was weaved.

(after a moment)

Weaved. Weaved bitch?

(MORE)

## COCO (CONT'D)

First of all if you're going to fix your mouth to ask me something like that, say it right please? It's weave. Noun. Present tense. Second of all don't assume just because you see a sister with some hair it's a weave. Is it? Clearly. If a bitch could grow straight Indian hair directly out her own head I wouldn't have just overdrafted my account paying for this shit but that ain't your business. Are those your lips sweetie? Sweet heart is that really your skin? These white girls and these tans I swear to God, they're starting to look darker than me.

Coco pauses it. Her mouse hovers over the check box next to "private." Instead she plays it back...and hits "publish."

She clicks back through to Sam's last video and hits "reply." As the red light on her computer's web cam turns green...

## COCO (CONT'D)

Dear White People. What do I think about it?

24

INT. SCREENING ROOM - DAY

24

Sam with arms folded watches as Gabe (Sam's caller from earlier) presses play on a DVD. Horrified students watch...

...a Black and white 1920's style silent movie, complete with Dialogue Cards and dramatic PIANO MUSIC.

SERIES OF SHOTS - ON THE SCREEN

- A) OBAMA speaks at a debate
- B) DIALOGUE CARD: "We are the change that we seek."
- C) A FAMILY in white-face go ape-shit
- D) DIALOGUE CARD: "HE'S READING OFF A TELEPROMPTER!!!!!!!"
- E) More intercut footage of Obama speaking with actors in white-face reacting. Until...
- F) DIALOGUE CARD: OBAMA WINS A SECOND TERM!
- G) A WHITE-FACE CROWD goes nuts in the streets - scream into camera - loot buildings and shoot themselves in the head.

H) Dialogue Card: "FIN"

PROFESSOR BODKIN, late 40s, with a "seen it all before" demeanor hides a grin and lets the room settle.

PROFESSOR BODKIN  
Okay. Does anyone have any comments  
for Sam's "Rebirth of a Nation?"

All of the kids are too scared to comment. Except...

PROFESSOR BODKIN (CONT'D)  
Gabe, go ahead.

GABE  
I dig the "silent movie" thing, but  
it's a little self-congratulatory.  
Light on story and frankly  
thematically dubious.

PROFESSOR BODKIN  
Okay. Anybody else?

SAM  
What?

SAME PLACE - MOMENTS LATER

As students filter out of the class...

PROFESSOR BODKIN  
Sam?

SAM  
Before you say anything might I  
remind you that I sat through Birth  
of A Nation, Gone With The Wind,  
and Tarantino week without protest.

PROFESSOR BODKIN  
And might I remind you that I read  
all fifteen pages of your  
unsolicited essay on why Gremlins  
is actually about suburban white  
fear of Black culture.

SAM  
The Gremlins are loud, talk in  
slang, are addicted to fried  
chicken and freak out when you get  
their hair wet.

PRESIDENT BODKIN

My only problem with your movie is that it was late. The silent projects were last semester Sam. You were supposed to have emailed your sound treatment over Summer.

SAM

I've been getting footage.

PROFESSOR BODKIN

This is your senior thesis Sam, where the hell is your head at?

SAM

I've got Radio, BSU, this Head of House thing --

PROFESSOR BODKIN

-- Do you want this? Cause if not, don't waste my time here --

Sam pulls out the Super 8 camera from her satchel.

SAM

-- Look this thing might as well be my right hand Professor. I was busy this summer that's all.

PROFESSOR BODKIN

With everything but your major? While your peers are taking internships, making short films...

SAM

My dad. He's sick. Had to go home.

PROFESSOR BODKIN

If you need some time off, take it. But if you want to make it to next semester --

SAM

-- I do --

PROFESSOR BODKIN

-- Pull it together. This is Manchester.

Sam wants this. It's in her eyes as she holds her tongue.

25

EXT. MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY - DAY

25

Sam exits the theater and spots Gabe talking to some guys.

SAM  
Thematically dubious?

GABE  
Well what was that supposed to be  
about exactly?

SAM  
You're thematically dubious!

Gabe rolls his eyes and catches up with her.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Since when do TA's give critiques?

GABE  
You invoke Minstrelsy for shock  
value, but to what end?

SAM  
To invoke the same feeling I get  
when I turn on the TV and see some  
so-called reality star shuck and  
jive for ratings egged on by no  
doubt white producers. Or the sassy  
Black secretary with no backstory  
or character development aside from  
their skin color.

GABE  
So it's a tit for tat? \*

EXT. GOODMAN MEDIA SCHOOL 2 - DAY \*

SAM  
You're honestly saying that art  
can't be reactionary? \*

GABE  
You're reacting to a work made  
almost a hundred years ago. \*

SAM  
Yes because fear of Black men being  
involved in the United States  
Government is a completely  
antiquated concept. No social  
relevance whatsoever today. \*

GABE  
Frankly I just think sometimes its  
better to hold a mirror up to your  
audience than to drop an  
ideological piano over their head. \*

SAM  
 Frankly I just think works that deal with the African Diaspora through a post-modern lens are outright rejected unless they're handled by a white artist.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

GABE  
 African Diaspora? Really?

\*  
\*

26 INT. DAVIS HOUSE - DAY

26

The war rages as the two continue up a fleet of stairs.

SAM  
 Blackface is alive and well in our culture. Who primarily buys hip hop? Watches Housewives of Atlanta? The same homogenized images of Black people over and over again? White people Gabe.

GABE  
 Who goes to see Tyler Perry movies?

SAM  
 We're an underfed community. None of this changes the fact that the vibrancy, the complexity of Black culture has been distilled into commodities and marketing schemes to be bought and sold--

GABE  
 --to the detriment of the so called "real thing." Got it.

And into a room...

INT. GABE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gabe slams the door.

SAM  
 I am indistinguishable from the so called "urban" images used to amuse and market to white America.

GABE  
 And the commodification of culture is uniquely oppressive to Black people?

Sam nods fervently as Gabe grabs and unbuttons her jeans.

GABE (CONT'D)

So when Kanye raps about Louis V  
and Rolexes and Classical Art,  
exactly what exploited pocket of  
Black America are those references  
being mined from?

Sam can't get her shirt off fast enough.

SAM

On your knees.

Gabe kneels below frame as Sam closes her eyes in ecstasy.

CUT TO BLACK.

27A INT. GABE'S ROOM - EVENING

27A

Sam's eyes pop open - a startled scream escapes her lips. She's surprised at first to see Gabe beside her in bed, the outside spoon. They're both naked. Her pompadour frayed.

GABE

What? You dream in "Cosby" again?

SAM

My hair was so straight. My sweater  
so big. I told you about that?

Sam's phone buzzes. Gabe grabs it and sees Reggie's photo pop up. He swallows his envy and hands it to Sam. She doesn't answer. Silence as it hits her voicemail.

GABE

Hey so...this whole "Head of House"  
thing. Congrats?

SAM

Yeah, it's...it's.

GABE

Weird, right? Never took you as a  
student politician...

Reggie's photo again - New Voicemail. A regret in Sam's eyes.

SAM

Yeah, well...

Sam rolls out of bed. Gabe thinks twice before he asks it.



GABE

Sam? What are we doing?

She badly wants to give him the answer he wants. Instead...

SAM

Fucking.

28 INT. STUDIO BOOTH - DAY 28

Reggie stares at Sam with stars in his eyes as she effortlessly addresses the campus in between bits of jazz.

SAM (V.O.)

Dear White People. Please stop touching my hair.

29 INT. GARMIN CLUB HOUSE - DAY 29

Lionel at an ancient oak dining room table listens to the broadcast over his laptop. Makes studious notations...

SAM (V.O.)

Does this look like a petting zoo to you?

Lionel gets an IM: "George: Hey handsome, how's the story?"

To which Lionel writes: "Going great sexy." Lionel deletes "sexy" and replaces it with " : )" before hitting send.

29A BAR DIVIDE 29A

Across from Lionel is Kurt flanked by his eager but self conscious right hand GORDON - and MITCH, swagged out varsity crew captain and connoisseur of all things Black culture.

They wear "PASTICHE" gear, hunch over a glowing iPad and scroll through a series of student group photos in the Yearbook. Kurt stares off into space, turns up the GANGSTA RAP playing from a nearby blue tooth speaker.

Kurt pours shots of Jack which Gordon eyes with caution.

GORDON

Kurt it's three.

MITCH

Y.O.L.O. my nigga!

Everyone takes the shot.

GORDON

We don't even have our new staff yet. Why are we planning this?

KURT

Everyone wants to be on our staff that's the easy part.

MITCH

We're going to make staff bids on Game Night, and the RSVP's are through the roof for that.

KURT

Yeah but Halloween is our premiere party. The waitlist is already a hundred deep and it's going to take a lot to outdo this summer.

MITCH

Cinco de Mayo was epic.

INSERT:

A black and white photo of Kurt and crew dressed in Sombreros and Mexican stereotypes at a wild pool party. The title reads... PASTICHE PRESENTS "WETBACK"

GORDON

How about the Young Republicans?

KURT

Too close to the Tea-Party.

INSERT:

Photo of Kurt and crew dressed as famous female political conservatives - brandishing rally signs with misspellings and cups of tea. The title reads... "PASTICHE'S TEA PARTY"

MITCH

Yo we need an East vs West hip hop party. Get the honeys in here.

GORDON

"The honeys?" You're from Vermont.

KURT

Guys what's the Pastiche motto?

GORDON

"Sharpen thy sword."

MITCH

Our motto is a euphemism for  
masturbation?

GORDON

It's a reminder that satire is the  
weapon of reason. So who on campus  
is being unreasonable?

MITCH

Sounds like a reminder of how gay  
you are.

GORDON

Was that even a reasonable attempt  
at a quip Mitch?

MITCH

Hey Gordon, say reasonable again.

SAM (O.S.)

Dear White People, knowing Lil'  
Wayne lyrics no longer earns you an  
Honorary Black Card. It just  
reminds me how often you say the  
word "nigga" when no one Black is  
around as is required in reciting  
said lyrics.

Kurt turns up his music and shoots Lionel a look, who plugs  
headphones into his computer and looks down.

KURT

The hell does Sam think she is?

MITCH

Like Spike Lee and Oprah had a  
pissed off baby.

Kurt shares a glance with Mitch and Gordon - they're leaning  
towards the same idea.

KURT

Could we?

GORDON

How?

Kurt turns his heat towards Lionel - has a bone to pick.

KURT

Hey Lionel. Talked to the Dean  
today.

(MORE)

KURT (CONT'D)  
 We had a very enlightening  
 conversation. I just want to say...  
 I'm sorry about the voice message.

29B DINING ROOM

29B

Kurt and his crew cross over to Lionel's table. Kurt unzips his pants silently.

KURT (CONT'D)  
 Do you accept?

Lionel removes the headphones and turns to Kurt, just as he starts flopping his dick around off screen. Lionel quickly looks in the other direction. Kurt's friends crack up.

GORDON  
 Please put that away.

KURT  
 You got to talk to these people in  
 a language they'll understand.

Lionel shoves his headphones back on over his fro.

LIONEL  
 Pathetic.

KURT  
 (yelling)  
 Wherever he ships you off to, be  
 sure to pack a sense of humor with  
 you, kay bro?

Lionel drowns them out. He flips through Sam's "Ebony & Ivy" book to a section called...

SAM (V.O.)  
 The Paper Bag Tests.

As Lionel reads we swish pan to...

30 DREAM DINER

30

...an abstract Diner set. Sam at the counter addresses us.

SUPERIMPOSE: THE TIP TEST

SAM  
 The Tip Test. You hit up Jelly's  
 for a snack. Your waitress mistakes  
 you for someone who looks like you  
 (Black) who once ran up a thirty  
 dollar bill and left a dollar tip.

WAITRESS, over it, crosses frame and glares coldly at us.

Lionel takes a seat at a booth with Sam across from him.

SAM (CONT'D)

You watch all the other customers  
order before you do...

Waitress huffs her way over to Lionel.

LIONEL

Pastrami sandwich on rye.

SAM

...then proceed to wait no less  
than forty minutes for your food.

A wall-clock advances forty, before the food and check come.

SAM (CONT'D)

How do you tip? A...

LIONEL

Forty minutes? Man she's lucky I  
leave her forty cents. You do a  
good job, maybe you'll see a tip.

SAM

B...

LIONEL

Doris was tripping, but fifteen  
percent is the least I can do.

SAM

Or C...

LIONEL

I reject the stereotype that  
African American's don't tip. I'm  
leaving her twenty, no twenty five,  
just to prove I can!

CUT TO:

Lionel's back in reality. He ponders the scenario.

LIONEL (CONT'D)

C?

He turns the book upside down and reads the small print on  
the bottom of the page. "A) ONE HUNDRED" "B) OOF TA" and his  
answer "C) NOSE-JOB."

LIONEL (CONT'D)

Nose-job?

31 EXT. MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY - DAY 31

The campus has settled into the semester as students trudge back and forth to class.

SAM (V.O.)

Dear White People in a shocking reversal using the term "African American" is borderline racist now.

32 INT. DEAN FAIRBANKS OFFICE - DAY 32

Dean Fairbanks and PRESIDENT HERBERT FLETCHER, 50's in an even better suit than Fairbanks listen to the radio. Fairbanks eyeballs Fletcher - tension between the two.

SAM (O.S.)

Turns out if you're too worried about Political Correctness to say "Black", odds are you secretly just want to call us niggers anyway and truth be told I'd rather you just be honest about it.

PRESIDENT FLETCHER

Free speech my ass.

DEAN FAIRBANKS

Stalin quotes for two hundred?

PRESIDENT FLETCHER

You're joking about this?

DEAN FAIRBANKS

I'm sorry, was I supposed to take "Free speech my ass" as a legitimate suggestion?

PRESIDENT FLETCHER

This is your office's issue Walter. Especially after that episode with Kurt in the dining hall.

DEAN FAIRBANKS

Every race issue is my issue.

PRESIDENT FLETCHER

It's a student issue. You are the Dean of students aren't you?

The two share an old and heated glare.

PRESIDENT FLETCHER (CONT'D)  
 The Times has been watching us like a hawk. Last thing we need is some "race war" on newspapers across the country. How do you think our donor base will feel about that? Our fundraiser is four weeks away.

DEAN FAIRBANKS  
 How bad is this deficit of yours?

PRESIDENT FLETCHER  
 Worse. But let me tell you something. If this blows up any further? It's on you Walter. Racism is over in America. And if anyone's still dealing with it, it's the -- I don't know Mexicans probably.

Troy pokes his head in. Fairbanks cuts the radio off.

PRESIDENT FLETCHER (CONT'D)  
 Come on in.

TROY  
 President Fletcher.

PRESIDENT FLETCHER  
 Son, call me Herb.

Fairbanks grits his teeth as Fletcher exits and Troy sits.

DEAN FAIRBANKS  
 President Fletcher tells me his son got his ass handed to him.

Troy hates this game.

DEAN FAIRBANKS (CONT'D)  
 Bout time. Can't tell you how many instances I had to defend Armstrong / Parker when I was Head of House.

TROY  
 Sam's out of line. Kurt's alright.

DEAN FAIRBANKS  
 But you're supposed to be better than alright. Since when do we lose elections Troy?

TROY  
 The Housing Act passing without a fight didn't help.

DEAN FAIRBANKS

What have I told you about excuses?

TROY

Pops my course load is full anyway.  
I'm head of Econ Board, I'm  
thinking about Pastiche.

DEAN FAIRBANKS

Pastiche? On Kurt Fletcher's staff?

TROY

You know to round out the res?

DEAN FAIRBANKS

I'll be God damned if twenty years  
from now you have to end up working  
for that dumb asses son.

TROY

(put in his place)  
Yes sir.

DEAN FAIRBANKS

Fletcher and I graduated a year  
apart. He barely made it through. I  
graduated Summa cum Laude. Now look  
who's President and who's Dean.

TROY

What's the difference?

DEAN FAIRBANKS

A couple hundred grand a year.  
Understand what I'm saying? Now  
what happened between you and Sam  
to make her come after you anyway?

TROY

Sofia. You remember Sofia? Daughter  
of the President. Psych major. "Has  
the world ahead of her Troy."

DEAN FAIRBANKS

I don't like your tone boy.

TROY

Sorry sir.

DEAN FAIRBANKS

So you lost the House. On to the  
school presidency then.

The light in Troy's eyes dims a bit.



DEAN FAIRBANKS (CONT'D)  
 It'll be good to show this campus  
 is capable of electing someone like  
 you as school president.

TROY  
 Someone like me?

33 INT. TROY'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

33

Troy hovers over the toilet - smokes weed while the shower runs - exhales through his paper towel / dryer sheet apparatus. He jots down on a notepad and LAUGHS to himself.

TROY'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Sofia has her face to the floor - peering underneath the bathroom door. She can see Troy's feet. What the hell?

Off the SQUEAK of the shower being cut Sofia jumps up.

MOMENTS LATER

Troy bounds out the bathroom in his undies. Sofia on the couch pretends to have been watching television.

TROY  
 Babe. Hat or no hat?

Troy stands before her in his undies holding a Kangol. He eyes her oversized T-shirt.

TROY (CONT'D)  
 Are you wearing that?

SOFIA  
 I don't have to be.

Sofia yanks Troy to her by his underwear to kiss his navel.

SOFIA (CONT'D)  
 Hey boo...why don't we put some of  
 your new found free time to good  
 use? It's been a while since...

TROY  
 What's with all this boo stuff?

SOFIA  
 ...since you fucked me with your  
 big Black cock.

Troy pulls away.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

It used to turn you on when I talked like that. Is it me?

TROY

(yes)  
I love you.

SOFIA

Is it Sam?

TROY

Can we please just, get ready?

SOFIA

Why? I hate my brother's friends.

Troy thinks over his next words carefully.

TROY

You're not going to go with me?

SOFIA

You'd go without me?

Troy tries to flash a charming shrug.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

You're my guest!

Sofia gathers some books and heads for the door.

TROY

You can hang out while I'm --

SOFIA

-- Okay, what's with you and my brother? Are you in love with him? Is this like, some DL shit?

Sofia storms out.

TROY

"DL shit!?"

34 INT. FOREST - NIGHT 34

Lionel walks up the darkly lit stairs of a very old building. He reaches a door marked "Newsroom."

35 INT. NEWSROOM - NIGHT 35

Lionel looks around the dimmed office. There is music and light coming from a room past all the cubicles...

36

INT. BULLPEN - NIGHT

36

...An office filled with computers. George and a few other EDITORS scream with laughter - beers and pizza in hand.

GEORGE does a beat on his desk while...

GEORGE

*I keeps it clean  
Ya know what I mean.  
I drinks my Vodka straight,  
like I'm a fiend.*

ANNIE, a strawberry blonde laughs in George's lap. Lionel's envy shows.

ANNIE

Wait, quiet I want to hear this.

Annie turns up a Youtube video of...

COCO (O.S.)

If I could grow straight Indian  
hair out my head --

ANNIE

Ohmigod, this is going on Facebook.

Annie swivels in her chair only to SCREAM BLOODY MURDER at the sight of Lionel.

LIONEL

Relax the Negro at the door is not  
here to rape you.

Annie laughs. The mood is drunk and light.

LIONEL (CONT'D)

So this is what editors do?

GEORGE

We're taking a break, what are you  
doing here?

LIONEL

You wanted me to drop in and tell  
you how the story was coming?

GEORGE

Yeah like this week. It's Saturday  
night. You got nowhere else to be?

LIONEL

It was this or the new Madea movie.

GEORGE

Dear God. Where does Madea go this time? Dialysis?

37 EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

37

Sam, flanked by Reggie and the BoFros are in mid rant.

REGGIE

Man fuck Tyler Perry.

SAM

Like, can we have a movie with, you know characters in them? 'Stead of stereotypes wrapped in Christian dogma?

REGGIE

Why is every educated person inherently evil? Why this Nigga gotta be in a mutha fucking dress all the mutha fucking time?

SAM

How come the only Black movies Hollywood wants to make are ones with mammies in fat suits or Black women in pain man?

All of this is directed at a TEENAGER in the box office.

TEENAGER

Most people are here to see Fang 9.  
(after a beat)  
Kelly Rowland's in it?

The group throw up their hands and groan in protest.

38 INT. KURT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

38

Game Night and Kurt's house is filled with smoke, music, and rich kids who play cards at various tables.

Coco, in a banging jumpsuit scans the room for prospects. A few eyes from the WHITE BOYS start to flicker her way. This perks her up, as she arches her back slightly...

...only to see their eyes follow the WHITE BRUNETTE HIPSTER GIRL who has entered behind her.

Coco catches herself in the mirror. What don't they see?

38A CARD TABLE

38A

Troy deals cards at a table - the game is Texas Hold Em. Troy holds court - much to Kurt's chagrin. The mood is playful. There's a brief eye contact between Troy and Coco.

39

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

39

A huge "Boycott Sal's Pizzeria" poster hangs on the walls of Sam's chic dorm surrounded by other street art. The BoFros and a few cool residents of Armstrong / Parker hang about.

Underground hip hop permeates the room. Sam refuses a joint coldly from Reggie - her eyes fixed on "SCHOOL DAZE" which plays on her 36' flatscreen.

SAM

How 'bout you stop stereotyping  
yourself and put that shit out?  
This ain't "Friday."

REGGIE

Yo Sam. We got to talk about the  
protest. When are we are bringing  
the Housing fight to the prez?

Sungmi takes a seat next to Sam. Some kids hop up and start grooving it out when a new song pops up on the playlist.

SUNGMI

The House voted down sponsoring the  
rally.

REGGIE

What do we need it sponsored for?

SAM

Demonstrations can get shut down if  
a House doesn't sponsor them.

REGGIE

Like the House you're head of?

Sam shoots Reggie a glare. He backs off.

SUNGMI

Hey Sam, I read "Ebony and Ivy."  
What's with the Oofta, Nose-Jobs,  
One Hundred stuff? I miss  
something?

Sam smiles.

SAM

You want me to break it down?

40 INT. KURT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

40

Troy deals another hand with Kurt, Mitch and Gordon. Troy's homeboy swag is thicker than usual.

MITCH

Yo my perfect Friday night is whiskey and my T-Bone Walker records, real talk.

TROY

Who the fuck is T-Bone Walker?

40A INTERCUT WITH SAM'S APARTMENT:

40A

SAM

Only a few ways colored folks survive at a place like this.

MITCH

Uh only a pioneer of electric and jump blues bro. Know your roots.

TROY

White folks always be on stuff like decades too late and act like they discovered some shit.

SAM

"Oofta" is the jazz age term for Bojangle types who Blacked it up for White audiences.

MITCH

Don't sleep on T-Bone man.

TROY

Rock, Jazz, Blues - Nigga whatchu got on right now?

MITCH

Public Enemy my Nig--

TROY

--Yo watch that man.

GORDON

You just called him --

TROY

-- Ya'll get Country Clubs we get to say Nigga.

Everyone at the table erupts in laughter. Except Kurt.

GORDON  
And golf? And all our girls?

TROY  
Whatchu mean all your girls?

GORDON  
Dude, between OJ, Tiger, Wesley  
Snipes and uh, Troy over here...

TROY  
Yo. It's a word for that.  
Reparations.

More Kurt-less laughter from the table.

TROY (CONT'D)  
Forty white bitches and a mule.

Perfectly executed. Troy grins as the table erupts.

SAM  
An Oofta modulates his Blackness up  
or down depending on the crowd and  
what he wants from them.

MITCH  
Kurt?

KURT  
What?

GORDON  
Kurt.

Troy watches this exchange closely.

GORDON (CONT'D)  
Troy. You thinking about Pastiche?

TROY  
That's the magazine right?

GORDON  
For starters.

MITCH  
What other "magazine" you know has  
a first look deal at NBC? The third  
biggest Youtube channel. Talk show.  
Platinum comedy record homie!

GORDON  
 Couldn't you see him on the talk  
 show Kurt?

Kurt looks at his cards.

KURT  
 I fold.

41 INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 41

A small crowd's formed around Sam.

SUNGMI  
 Okay, and a nose-job is a wannabe?

42 INT. KURT'S HOUSE - NIGHT 42

Coco finishes her drink and catches Mitch and Gordon as they start up a Youtube video on their iPad. The previous game is over. They watch "Dear White People - 1,378,480 views."

42A INTERCUT WITH SAM'S APARTMENT: 42A

SAM  
 Sort of. Nose-jobs smooth their  
 Black edges and try to blend.

Coco runs her fingers through her straight hair.

GORDON  
 You seen this one?

SAM (YOUTUBE)  
 Dear White People using Instagram.  
 You have an iPhone and go on hikes.  
 I get it.

COCO  
 Ugh.

Gordon and Mitch turn and notice Coco. Mitch eyes her curves.

GORDON  
 Not a fan?

Coco makes a "no" face.

MITCH  
 Sup ma?

COCO  
 Don't talk like that.



GORDON  
Hey I know you...

Coco is taken aback as Gordon punches up her video and plays it back. She hovers over them.

COCO (YOUTUBE)  
Muffins. I hate to do it, but Imma  
have to get real Black with you.

Coco a bit embarrassed scans the view count.

SAM  
A Nose-job's worst fear is that  
their "Blackness" might cause a  
fuss or draw undue attention so  
they apologize for it or use it to  
self deprecate.

COCO  
Forty thousand views already?

GORDON  
Looks like someone submitted you to  
Buzzfeed. Taking off...

Coco leans over them and scrolls down. The first comment is from a HELMUT: "Much better..." Coco soaks this in.

MITCH  
You wan' a drink a sun'in?

COCO  
Let me guess you're from Ohio?

MITCH  
Vermont.

GORDON  
What do you have against Dear White  
People?

Coco smiles and slyly clicks to her next video.

COCO (YOUTUBE)  
Dear White People. How do I feel  
about it? Well for one it's Blacker  
than thou propaganda from a bougie  
Lisa Bonet wannabe who smells like  
patchouli and frankly I can't  
believe we're letting Sam get away  
with it.

Mitch and Gordon's mouths are ajar. Coco studies the view count...26,758. A pride strikes Coco.

43 INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 43

As the impromptu party dies down...

SUNGMI  
Okay and One Hundred?

REGGIE  
Keeping it One-Hundred! Being Black  
as hell just cause.

Sam rolls her eyes.

SUNGMI  
But what about just being you?

SAM  
Like I said...

44 INT. NEWSROOM - NIGHT 44

Lionel's got the eyes of the Bullpen on him. Annie's really warmed to him - her hands play with his afro.

ANNIE  
You don't mind do you?

SAM (V.O.)  
There's only a few ways a person of  
a color can survive at a place like  
this...

LIONEL  
Of course not.

GEORGE  
Alright so then what?

LIONEL  
So then Sam says "What, is your  
daddy scared the Negroes are gonna  
start a rebellion on the  
plantation?"

George goes CRAZY at this.

GEORGE  
To Kurt Fletcher!?

LIONEL  
Yeah. Yes. Yup.

GEORGE

We've got a news item but there's something bigger here. It's a profile piece on Armstrong / Parker and Sam White's pseudo revolution.

ANNIE

What's the headline?

LIONEL

Outdated nationalist seeks purpose starts race war?

Lionel's joke hits, but he feels gross for saying it.

The image of Sam shaking her head in the dinner FLASHES before Lionel briefly.

GEORGE

Beers in the corner. Bang out the news item tonight and we'll work on the profile piece for next week.

Lionel grabs a beer and takes a seat at one of the open computers. George starts up a beat on his desk as he and Annie stare at Lionel expectantly.

LIONEL

What are you doing?

ANNIE

All Bugle staffer must freestyle. It's law.

GEORGE

You want to be a staffer right?

LIONEL

(awkward)  
*My name is Lionel*  
*Kind of like a lion*  
*King of the jungle*  
*Indigenous to Africa...*

The beat has long since stopped.

LIONEL (CONT'D)

Sorry.

45

INT. KURT'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

45

Troy heads into the kitchen just as Kurt heads out.

TROY

Yo man, you know I wasn't talking about Sof back there with whole forty bitches thing. I was just --

KURT

-- trying to get on my staff?

TROY

I never really thought about --

KURT

-- Bullshit. Game Night is where we make our bids for the new staff. It's why everyone's here. You were practically about to bust out a tap dance.

TROY

I'm a Poly Sci major man. I just came to hang out.

KURT

My staff likes you. A lot.

TROY

But you don't.

KURT

This thing with you and Sof...

TROY

I'm good to her.

KURT

Our dad's have been playing a game of chess off and on since 1972.

TROY

What and Sof is the White queen?

KURT

You're a pawn. And I think it's time you get off the board bro.

Troy takes this in.

KURT (CONT'D)

Here's the deal. Every year we throw a party. The point is to mock the self important and moronic entities of the campus. The way to get staffed is to write an invite for the party.

(MORE)

KURT (CONT'D)

Our invites are legendary, we make Gawker, the Post, tons of blogs every year. If your invite is the one that goes out, you're guaranteed a spot on the staff. The runners up are voted on by the rest of us.

Troy catches eyes with Coco who gives him a seductive glance.

45A LIVING ROOM

45A

Coco turns back to her now enamored crowd. She's in her element with these boys at her feet.

COCO

I just think having good hair and carrying on with a degree of sophistication doesn't make me a traitor to the race.

MITCH

Want to know why they used to call me Black Mitch?

GORDON

Absolutely not.

COCO

No one called you that.

KITCHEN

Just as Gordon, Mitch and Coco approach...

TROY

Okay. And what's this year's theme?

Kurt rolls his eyes instinctively.

KURT

Still working on that...

TROY

The party's a couple weeks away.

GORDON

Yo Kurt. I want you to meet someone.

COCO

You guys got a party coming up?

Coco smiles at Kurt, before flicking her eyes over Troy.

46 INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

46

Sungmi is one of the last to clear out of Sam's apartment as the party winds down.

SUNGMI

Hey, about the rally. You could still get the permit anyway Sam and go against the board. Most people consider that political suicide though.

REGGIE

We got to rally Sam. Time is now.

SAM

Use your head Reggie. You think a rally is going to change things?

REGGIE

It'll do a hell of a lot more than a radio show or views on Youtube.

Everyone gets quiet. Sungmi takes this time to exit.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Look, we got power Sam and it's time we used it. We earned it.

SAM

We? I didn't see you running for shit Reggie.

The Bofros trade looks as Reggie storms out. Sam waits a beat and rolls her eyes.

47 EXT. ARMSTRONG / PARKER QUAD - NIGHT

47

Sam walks after Reggie.

REGGIE

Tired.

SAM

Don't "one word" me.

REGGIE

Why you got to snap at me all the time? I'm around you like twenty four seven. Like your lap dog. I don't even usually get down like that with no red bone chicks man.

SAM  
Don't call me that.

REGGIE  
Come on, I thought your ass was  
Puerto Rican when I met you.

Sam turns to go.

REGGIE (CONT'D)  
Oh so you can dish it out but you  
can't take it?

SAM  
I'm taking my ass home.

REGGIE  
Come on Sam. You know how I feel  
about you.

SAM  
How am I supposed to know how you  
feel about me?

REGGIE  
You know what? Forgive me if I see  
something in you. Something  
inspiring. Something folks like me  
can get behind.

Reggie puts his hands on Sam's belt and pulls her in to a  
kiss as a group walks by. Over Reggie's shoulder Sam sees...

...Gabe look back at her. He's heartbroken. She pretends not  
to be affected and sinks into a kiss from Reggie.

REGGIE (CONT'D)  
Tell me you'll set up the rally.

SAM  
I'll set up the rally.

48 INT. KURT'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

48

Kurt, Gordon, Mitch, Coco and Troy all trade glances.

GORDON  
Are we sure about this?

KURT  
It's ironic. Bold. And don't tell  
me I'm the only one who thinks Sam  
White's little movement needs to  
get cut down to size.

Agreement Coco's gaze. Uncertainty in Troy's.

KURT (CONT'D)  
Looks like you got your Hip Hop  
party Mitch.

MITCH  
'Bout time. It's going to be huge  
man, fucking epic.

Kurt holds back a smile.

KURT  
Boys, we've got a lot more mingling  
to do. We'll be in touch. And Troy?  
Get off the board bro.

Troy chews on this as Kurt leads his group out. Troy smiles,  
goes to exit.

TROY  
Nice seeing you.

COCO  
Where's Sofia?

TROY  
I have no idea.

COCO  
Trouble in paradise?

Troy shrugs and heads to the party.

COCO (CONT'D)  
Figures.  
(off Troy's  
incredulousness)  
Nothing. I'm sure you've got  
something else fair and petite  
and...fair lined up for that drink.

TROY  
What's that supposed to mean?

COCO  
It's fine. I'm not even really into  
Black dudes anyway.

TROY  
I'll have you know I'm an equal  
opportunity employer, okay?



COCO  
And what kind of jobs are you  
hiring for mister?

Coco's stiletto rubs the side of Troy's calf.

TROY  
Aren't you and Sofia --

COCO  
-- I'm an accessory to Sofia. Can't  
ever shake the feeling I'm an  
assignment for that Afro Studies  
Minor of hers.

Troy nervously glances out at the crowd and then back towards  
this dangerous and tempting creature before him.

COCO (CONT'D)  
I'm sure you have no idea what I  
mean.

49

EXT. MANCHESTER YARD - NIGHT

49

Lionel and George walk through the campus at night. George  
waves goodbye to Annie as they pass Bechet House.

LIONEL  
She seems really cool.

George just smiles.

GEORGE  
Did we go too far? You're in  
Armstrong/Parker right?

LIONEL  
No. Garmin.

GEORGE  
Fancy.

LIONEL  
George I'm not exactly down with  
Sam and I'm not in the BSU. I got  
kicked out of Armstrong / Parker  
same as Kurt. But I'm going to  
write a good story, okay?

GEORGE  
I hope so. I want a Bugle on your  
chest by the end of the month.

Lionel fights a smile as his heart beats through his chest.

They reach the front of Lionel's house. George runs his hand through Lionel's hair. Mitch, smoking on the porch with some other kids - trade glances.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Your fro's so gnarly.

LIONEL  
I'm growing it out.

GEORGE  
Night Lionel.

Lionel heads up his stoop - past the snickers and glares of Mitch and company.

MITCH  
Party's not over.

LIONEL  
I live here.

MITCH  
Sorry bro. Invitation only.

LIONEL  
It's two in the morning.

Mitch shrugs as humiliation floods over Lionel.

Lionel sighs and slumps on the steps outside the door. He scrolls through his phone for a contact...OFFICE OF THE DEAN. Starts an email.

50 INT. TROY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

50

Troy's Kangol sits in the ground, besides his undies, and besides a bright pink thong.

Coco's pink painted finger nails travel through the creases of Troy's immaculate abs.

TROY  
Coco huh?

COCO  
Colandrea doesn't exactly pass the resume test, you know? I mean couldn't you fucking die? My parents should've just named me Ghetto-ass-hoodrat-anisha. Do you...indulge?

Coco fiddles in her purse - pulls out a joint.

TROY

It's ten am.

Coco lights it and takes a drag. She hands it to Troy.

TROY (CONT'D)

I don't mess with that stuff.

Coco sees right through him as Troy hits it like a pro.

COCO

Sure about that?

TROY

Sure you don't like Black guys?

COCO

Girl like me is just a placeholder  
for ya'll at a place like this.

TROY

I'm not like that.

COCO

I don't think Sam would agree.

TROY

That was different.

COCO

No it wasn't. Poor thing, she was  
light skin-ded and everything.

TROY

Yo, it wasn't like that alright?

Troy's tone sobers Coco a bit. She places a hand on Troy's.

TROY (CONT'D)

My pops. He wanted me with  
Fletcher's daughter. They've been  
in competition ever since they went  
here. Pops hates that Fletcher  
ended up President and he got stuck  
as the Dean.

COCO

So your upbringing may have  
actually fucked you up more than  
mine? That's hot.

Troy laughs and takes the joint back.

COCO (CONT'D)

The hell is the difference between  
a Dean and a President anyway?

TROY

Apparently four hundred years of  
unreconciled oppression.

COCO

He's not going to like you running  
with the Pastiche boys is he?

TROY

If I even get tapped.

COCO

You will. And you should do it.  
They all land somewhere big, some  
before they even graduate. I've  
seen you in front of a crowd Troy.  
I bet you could be famous.

TROY

That what you want? To be famous?

COCO

I want people to know my name.

TROY

Which one?

Coco's phone buzzes with a message. It's Kurt.

COCO

(reading)

We want you. Come by Ellington  
tomorrow at eight.

(to Troy)

Anything?

Troy checks his phone. Nothing. A decision weighs in Troy's  
eyes as Coco throws on a shirt and gets up to go.

COCO (CONT'D)

You're going to have to stand up to  
him sooner or later Troy.

52

EXT. ARMSTRONG / PARKER QUAD - DAY

52

Troy and Sofia stand still amidst the bustle. Devastation  
marks her pretty face.

SOFIA

You said you loved me.

TROY  
I like you a lot.

Salt meet wound. She wants to go, but something nags at her.

SOFIA  
What do you do in the bathroom?  
When you leave the shower running?  
Was it just to get away from me?

Troy wagers his answer and decides to confess.

TROY  
I smoke weed and write jokes.

Puzzled by the man before her and too hurt for more, Sofia just turns and walks away. Troy watches her go just as...

...Lionel passes by. The two share an awkward glance before Troy turns to enter the house.

53 INT. ARMSTRONG / PARKER HALL - SAME TIME 53

Lionel shyly trudges down the hall of Armstrong / Parker. He turns to see Troy behind him. The two avoid the other's gaze.

As they both head up the stairs, Troy notes it strange that they're headed in the same direction.

53A UPSTAIRS 53A

Lionel heads to a door at the end of the hallway and opens it with a key. Troy's already at the door when he looks up and realizes Lionel's just entered his apartment.

54 INT. TROY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS 54

TROY  
The hell are you doing?

LIONEL & TROY  
This is my apartment.

TROY  
The hell it is.

LIONEL  
The Dean said it was the only opening.

TROY  
Head of House doesn't share.

LIONEL

But you're not Head of House.

Still stings. Troy heads into his room and closes the door leaving Lionel alone in the living room.

57

INT. ARMSTRONG/PARKER DINING HALL - DAY

57

Lionel sits alone in front of another bowl of soup. Eyes the different cliques of mostly Black students. Dreads walks past and shoots a head nod. Lionel uncomfortably shoots one back.

DREADS

Stay Black, my brother.

LIONEL

Sure thing?

Lionel watches as Kurt and Troy walk together towards the entrance - suddenly chums. Troy's getting good news and gladly shakes Kurt's hand.

KURT

Need your submission by Thursday.

TROY

You got it bro.

The two try and enter, when immediately Dreads slams a GONG in the back of the hall - prompting the whole of the dining hall to turn and throw paper balls at Kurt.

KURT

The fuck?

Sam grins from a table comprised of Martin, Sungmi and her other support staff. Martin is visibly annoyed.

TROY

Yo!

Troy takes some of the brunt of this and walks with the humiliated Kurt back out of the Dining Hall.

Lionel watches with a smirk as Troy talks Kurt down on the other side of the entrance. Lionel catches eyes with Sam briefly who shares the same smirk.

He realizes Sam's actually looking at Reggie, perched behind him at a table flanked by Curls and Dreads. They address him.

REGGIE

Finally made it in.

DREADS

Been moved around a lot right?

CURLS

You must have been terrified when you saw "Armstrong/Parker" written on your moving assignment.

LIONEL

I was just finishing up.

REGGIE

Do Black people scare you?

LIONEL

(realizing its true)

No.

REGGIE

You're too scared to even ask anyone for a cut.

LIONEL

I'm growing it out.

DREADS

No. I'm growing it out. You're fostering an ecosystem.

REGGIE

How come you don't come to BSU?

LIONEL

I listen to Mumford and Sons and watch Robert Altman movies. You honestly think I'm Black enough for the union?

DREADS

Yo, I love Robert Altman. Mutha fucka goes in.

CURLS

(after a beat)

We're not all homophobes you know. Black folks?

Lionel's eyes dart around. How did she know?

DREADS

I'm bumping Frank Ocean right now. I don't give a fuck. Imma still eat at Chik Fil A though. Them nuggets good as hell.

LIONEL  
I'm late for class.

REGGIE  
You're the "Black voice" of the  
Bugle now. We're just trying to  
decide if you are friend or foe.

Reggie pulls a folded copy of the Bugle from under his arm. Sam's on the front page with the headline "WHITE STUDENTS TOLD TO 'GET OUT' BY LIONEL HIGGINS."

REGGIE (CONT'D)  
We got to protect our girl.

Reggie motions over to a stressed out Sam as she argues over something with Martin at another table.

LIONEL  
I'm not on staff. Not until I make  
good on my assignment, I'm just --

REGGIE  
-- Assignment? What's the story?

LIONEL  
They want me to do a profile piece  
on Black culture at Manchester.

REGGIE  
Of which you are so clearly an  
expert.

Shame floods Lionel's face.

REGGIE (CONT'D)  
So what's harder man? Being Black  
enough for the Black kids or the  
white ones?

LIONEL  
Being neither.

Another GONG sounds with another shower of paper balls. This time it's for...

...Gabe, who's stuck outside. He makes eye contact with...

GABE  
Sam! Really Sam?

She just looks away. Reggie eyes him coolly.



58 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

58

Professor Bodkin watches over a small class as the students fill in essay questions. Sam's eyes are glued to a window...

Outside below the Brofros pull up in an SUV. They hop out and start pulling out rally signs and bullhorns.

Sam's eyes dart back to the clock as Gabe watches her watch the time.

59A EXT. MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY - DAY

59A

Sam bounds out of a building on her way to the parking lot. From behind her...

DEAN FAIRBANKS  
Running late.

Sam pauses and turns to see him.

DEAN FAIRBANKS (CONT'D)  
For your little rally?

SAM  
Forget your sign Dean?

DEAN FAIRBANKS  
Do you honestly think this is in the spirit of Armstrong / Parker house?

SAM  
The role of the counter culture is to wake up the mainstream to --

DEAN FAIRBANKS  
-- I've got furniture older than you. Counter culture? Is that what you think this is? That show of yours?

SAM  
What about my show?

DEAN FAIRBANKS  
Your show is racist.

SAM  
Black people can't be racist.

The Dean is rendered speechless at this statement.

SAM (CONT'D)

Prejudice? Yes. But not racist. Racism describes a system of disadvantage based on race. Black people can't be racist since they don't benefit from such a system.

DEAN FAIRBANKS

Do you read the school papers?

SAM

Is the New York Times a school paper?

DEAN FAIRBANKS

Your antics are making press Sam and press like this keeps men like President Fletcher up at night.

SAM

Warm milk?

DEAN FAIRBANKS

He's building a file on you.

SAM

It's not my fault your son couldn't beat me in an election.

DEAN FAIRBANKS

I'm sure it was hard growing up. Wondering which side you fit into. Feeling like you have to overcompensate perhaps?

SAM

If that's true, I'm not the only one Dean.

Sam walks off in a half jog - Fairbank's last words resonate more than she'd like.

Gabe, making his way outside just catches her exit.

59B EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

59B

Huge canvas signs with the words "WHITES ONLY" are strewn about the pavement, along with bullhorns and picket signs.

Sam takes these in while the Brofros feverishly unpack the SUV.

REGGIE

There you are! We supposed to start at noon.

SAM

I told you I had class.

There's a vibration in Sam's pocket. Her phone says "MOM." She cuts it off and picks up a "white's only" sign.

REGGIE

Those are going up on Gillespie. Good right?

Sam shrugs in the affirmative but it's too much. Reggie sees a doubt in her eyes.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Yo. What's that? You're not getting cold feet are you?

SAM

No. I mean how long do I have to talk anyway?

REGGIE

You're kidding right? You're sort of the keynote.

SAM

Yeah but...you know I think the whole Malcolm X thing is your lane Reg. I'm just not --

REGGIE

-- They came to hear you Sam. Grab a bullhorn. Turn it on.

Sam is struck by the command. Stuck between wanting to curse and comply another buzz in her pocket yanks her attention to her phone. Sam checks: "IT'S ABOUT DAD. CALL ME"

Sam turns for some privacy. She makes eye contact with Gabe who's just happened upon the parking lot.

GABE

What is all this?

SAM

(on phone)

Hey. In the middle of--  
-- Okay. Okay. Okay.

Tears well up in Sam's eyes as she shakes her head no and heads away from the parking lot and passed Gabe.

When Reggie looks up and catches eyes with Sam. His tilted look of indignation asks her what she's doing.

REGGIE

Sam?

Sam takes in the scene and decisively turns to go. Reggie's heart sinks as a bewildered Gabe goes to chase after her.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Sam!

60 INT. ARMSTRONG / PARKER HALL - DAY 60

Reggie flanked by the BoFros bangs on Sam's door.

REGGIE

Yo, what the hell Sam?

61 INT. SAM'S ROOM - DAY 61

The banging continues as Sam sits on the edge of her bed. The tears have dried. Gabe paces behind the bed.

GABE

You want me to tell them to go?

SAM

You're so tough.

GABE

I will.

SAM

I want you to wait until they've gone and then head home.

GABE

I'm trying to be here for you.

SAM

Can you be somewhere else for me?

61A HALLWAY 61A

REGGIE

Sam! I know you're home.

61B SAM'S ROOM

61B

GABE

What do you see in him?

SAM

The only eligible single brother on campus.

GABE

Wow. Okay.

SAM

I get it. Your parents owned in Harlem or something? You watched "Do The Right Thing" in high school and you want to prove to the world you're down?

GABE

I want to be down? How long does it take to get your hair like that?

REGGIE (O.S.)

Sam. We want to talk.

SAM

Reggie I will call you later damn!  
(to Gabe)  
You don't know what you're talking about. Girls like me--

GABE

--what? Have to pick a side? I'm sick of your tragic Mulatto bullshit Sam!

SAM

You can't say Mulatto.

GABE

Mulatto! Mulatto! Mulatto!

MORE BANGING

SAM

Window. Go out the window.

GABE

I'm sorry if I can't be your Nubian prince on my Black horse ready to take you back to fucking Zamunda!

SAM

That's not a real African country.

GABE

Can I please get some credit for a solid "Coming to America" reference?

Sam tries not laugh at this.

GABE (CONT'D)

This isn't you Sam.

SAM

No? And who am I?

GABE

You're this...girl...

SAM

Perceptive.

GABE

Who...likes to argue with me about every fucking thing. And I hate it because we both know you're smarter than me. Your favorite director is Bergman, but you tell people its Spike Lee. You love bebop, but you've got a thing for Taylor Swift. I know because my Mac picks up your Mac's library.

SAM

And I was so careful...

GABE

You like to use phrases from the thirties and wear clothes from the fifties and hairstyles from the sixties. You like to watch me when you think I'm sleeping. And trace the outlines of my face.

Sam fights any signs of this moving her. Another BANG.

GABE (CONT'D)

You're more "Banksy" than "Barack" but you've been co-opted as some sort of revolutionary leader or something? But really you're an anarchist. A beautiful writer, artist, filmmaker, shit starter. And beautiful, in general.

Sam's heart beats through her chest. Her phone rings: "Mom."

SAM

Yeah? Yeah? Yeah. It's okay. Get some sleep.

Sam hangs up. A silence hangs - followed by a loud EXHALE from Sam as she let's go of the tension she'd been holding.

GABE

Everything okay?

SAM

(happy tears)  
His condition's stable.

GABE

Good. That's good Sam.

Gabe goes to exit just as Reggie BANGS again.

SAM

Gabe!

Gabe opens the door to the very shocked Bofros and Reggie...

GABE

What!?

...and brushes right past them. Sam gets up and stares down the heartbroken looks on her disciples' faces.

SAM

I'm sorry.

And with that she closes the door right on Reggie.

62

EXT. ELLINGTON TERRACE - NIGHT

62

Coco and Helmut look out over the campus from the glowing terrace atop the Library. They sip on coffee's.

HELMUT

New videos are picking up steam.

COCO

Told you I was good TV.

HELMUT

The show I'm scouting for... It's called Black Face / White Place. It's reality. Like a "True Life." Each episode centers on a different one of "us" in a sea of "them."

COCO  
Interesting.

HELMUT  
Interesting? You think they want interesting? Dignified stories of triumph and survival?  
(off Coco's naive shrug)  
They want the "authentic urban experience" which is basically network talk for bitching and weave snatching. I'm telling you this because the network is looking to take one of the subjects to series. I got one episode. One shot to find that subject. So if we do this...

COCO  
...we do it all the way. I'm guessing Sam turned you down.

HELMUT  
I think so. She called me a Bojangling Oofta, whatever that means. Everything else she said would've been bleeped on tv.  
(off Coco's laugh)  
So look, forty thousand hits on Youtube is good. It's not great.

COCO  
I'm about to get a whole lot more.

63

INT. KURT'S HOUSE - DAY

63

Coco sits before a video camera. The room is dim.

KURT  
We don't have anyone like you on staff and you had a great idea. We brought you here to --

COCO  
-- I want to MC it. Your party.

KURT  
We're here to tell you what we want.

COCO  
You want me and in order to get me, you have to let me MC.  
(MORE)



COCO (CONT'D)  
 And I want to do a live video blog  
 from my Youtube account.

BACK TO:

64 EXT. ELLINGTON TERRACE - DAY 64

HELMUT  
 They'd let you do that?

COCO  
 They got no choice. They need me --

BACK TO:

65 INT. KURT'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 65

COCO  
 -- cause without me ya'll look like  
 a bunch of privileged assholes.

KURT  
 We don't let people video blog our  
 events...

COCO  
 ...You got a week to put this thing  
 together boo boo. What's it going  
 to be?

CUT TO:

66 EXT. ELLINGTON TERRACE - DAY 66

Helmut looks at Coco with a shocked gleam in his eye.

COCO  
 You look surprised.

HELMUT  
 It's just...

67 INT. TROY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 67

Troy and Lionel both type furiously at their computers in  
 their rooms. Troy on his invite - Lionel on his article. They  
 each look at the other in alternate intervals.

HELMUT (V.O.)  
 ...not everyone is as camera ready  
 as you.

67A LIONEL'S ROOM 67A

Lionel pauses the episode of STAR TREK THE NEXT GENERATION on his TV and heads to...

67B KITCHEN 67B

...bar divide. Pours a bowl of cereal. He glances into Troy's room. He's also got Star Trek on. Could it be? Troy, feels Lionel's eyes on him and quickly switches it to Basketball.

67C TROY'S ROOM 67C

Troy types in "KURT FLETCHER" in the "To" field and "PASTICHE SUBMISSION" in the subject field. He hits "send" and swallows the lump in his throat.

68 INT. DEANS OFFICE - DAY 68

Troy gingerly enters into the Dean's office. Martin and Dean Fairbanks talk in hushed tones around Fairbanks' desk.

DEAN FAIRBANKS

Martin, would you share with Troy what you shared with me?

MARTIN

The server that processes the voting results for House Elections has shut down the A.P. database. Saw it this morning. Apparently the intermediary program is on a refractile loop.

TROY

I'm a Poly Sci major man.

MARTIN

Sam currently has 445 votes. That's 200 more than she had last week during the actual election.

TROY

There's not even that many residents in Armstrong / Parker.

DEAN FAIRBANKS

She cheated. Hacked the system.

69 INT. PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY 69

Sam sits before a giant fireplace - twice as large as the Dean's. She faces President Fletcher and fights nerves.

SAM

I wouldn't even begin to know how to do something like that.

PRESIDENT FLETCHER

Is your little war really this important?

Sam shifts gears slightly - he wants something from her.

PRESIDENT FLETCHER (CONT'D)

I understand the pressure to stand for something at an institution like this but you're barking up the wrong tree okay?

70 INT. DEAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

70

MARTIN

Had to have been Reggie. Dude's in my programing class. Good. Just forgot to turn his program off.

TROY

Wow.

MARTIN

You're the rightful Head of House.

TROY

(shit)  
So great.

DEAN FAIRBANKS

Martin, let me talk to Troy for a bit. I appreciate this.

71 INT. PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

71

Sam glares at Fletcher.

PRESIDENT FLETCHER

Your advisor tells me you're hanging on by a thread in you major. Perhaps it's time to reprioritize.

SAM

You're trying to frighten me, but I think you're the one who's scared.

PRESIDENT FLETCHER

And I think you long for the days  
where Blacks were hanging from  
trees and denied actual rights.  
Then you'd actually have something  
to fight against.

A swell of emotion behind Sam's steel eyes.

PRESIDENT FLETCHER (CONT'D)

You will be facing two hearings in  
the coming weeks that could end in  
either Probation or Suspension. One  
on the merits of your show, the  
other on your election to Head of  
House.

Sam is truly scared by this.

PRESIDENT FLETCHER (CONT'D)

Your responsibilities to your house  
are suspended. Your show is done  
for. And another one of your  
illegal "demonstrations" will only  
make matters worse. This is a  
critical time for this school.

SAM

You damn right it is.

PRESIDENT FLETCHER

We don't have an intolerance  
problem here. Except for the one  
I'm looking at.

72 INT. DEAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

72

Troy and his father are alone.

DEAN FAIRBANKS

You didn't tell me you and Sofia  
had a misunderstanding.

TROY

Who did?

DEAN FAIRBANKS

Her father. She was very upset.  
(off Troy's silence)  
Troy. What sort of vision do you  
have for yourself?

TROY

Get my degree. Then Law School and then --

DEAN FAIRBANKS

--And what's that got to do with partying with Kurt? With smoking weed and writing jokes?

Panic flashes over Troy.

DEAN FAIRBANKS (CONT'D)

Okay, so what? Is it the spotlight Kurt gets? You want to be on...tv or something? You know how many Black men waste their lives to get on TV? Be rappers and ball players?

TROY

(wanting it to be true)

Dad no. I want what we always talked about. Maybe have my own firm someday? Run for office. Make a difference. Wife. Kids. I want all that. I really really do.

DEAN FAIRBANKS

And the drugs? God damn it Troy I taught you better than this. I have been in academia a long time, I've seen a lot of things. The men who really run this world? You got no idea what they see when they see you. You are not going to be what they all think you are. You will not give them that satisfaction, you hear me?

TROY

Yes sir.

73

INT. PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

73

Sam steps out of Fletcher's office into the waiting room. Kurt is there. He stands and the two silently stare the other down as Kurt enters his father's office.

A SECRETARY picks up a ringing phone - prompts her to exit the room. Sam watches her sign for a delivery outside through the window.

Sam slips behind the office door - quietly pushes it open and listens in.

PRESIDENT FLETCHER

I know about the party. You picked a hell of a time.

KURT

What party --

PRESIDENT FLETCHER

-- You're cancelling Kurt. End of story.

75

INT. BULLPEN - DAY

75

Lionel walks through the empty office - slows down as he over hears...

GEORGE (O.S.)

Lionel's story on the would-be protest outside of Gillespie is running tomorrow and I'm also having Lionel work on a profile piece of Armstrong/Parker like you suggested. Really break down what's going on.

Lionel gingerly approaches the door to see George finish up a phone call.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Right. It's almost like they recycle so much from their past - Music, food, fashion, and now turbulence.

This leaves a bitter taste in Lionel's mouth.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Thank you so much. Okay, take care.

George can't fight his grin as he looks to Annie.

ANNIE

Well?

GEORGE

That was our Times advisor. He said it's stories like these that get editors recommendation letters.

Lionel knocks on the door. Annie and George are startled but reassured when they see who it is.

LIONEL

The Negro at the door didn't scare you this time.

Annie smiles and heads for the door.

ANNIE

Lionel please. You're only technically Black. G, going to French. You want me to hold your seat?

GEORGE

Thanks.

Annie smiles and walks out.

LIONEL

You need something? Saw your e-mail.

GEORGE

Yeah, I need someone to do the Donor's function on Saturday. Small dinner for the school's big givers. Administration wants a little coverage.

LIONEL

That's Halloween night.

GEORGE

Right, which is why no one else will take it.

LIONEL

Ah. Thus the new guy.

George gathers his backpack and walks over to Lionel. Gets close.

GEORGE

On my way to class, but you can stay and check out last year's piece. You'll do fine.

LIONEL

I don't know. Are there going to be any racially fueled outbursts at this thing?

GEORGE

Never know right?

It's clear Lionel wants to say something else. George too.

LIONEL  
Am I a good writer?

GEORGE  
You'll get better. And we need you  
right now.

LIONEL  
You're just a big recommendation  
away from landing the Times.

GEORGE  
God I hope so.

Lionel looks down. He is being used. Turns to go, just as --

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Hey.

-- George grabs Lionel unsure what he wants to say. So  
instead he just kisses him.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
I'm glad we finally got that Bugle  
on your chest.

Lionel's all mixed up.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
There's a big party the night of  
the Donor's event. Call me after,  
maybe we can hang?

LIONEL  
Yeah. Sounds good.

George heads out - leaving Lionel perplexed.

76

INT. TROY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

76

Troy stares at his reflection in a mirror as he lifts his du-  
rag to reveal his perfectly curled finger waves. He's getting  
ready for something.

His phone buzzes with a notification: "Message from:  
PASTICHE"

Troy nervously clicks it open. As he reads...



KURT (V.O.)

Dear White People. Are you tired of your hum drum, Wonderbread existence of accidental racism and wishing you could sip on Henny out yo crunk cup without a Bitch giving you the side-eye? Course you are.

MONTAGE:

As our subjects get ready for their evening.

Troy goes back to combing over his finger waves, finding and correcting imperceptible imperfections.

KURT (V.O.)

For all those looking to unleash their inner Negro from years of bondage and oppression Pastiche proudly presents "Dear White People" our 89th annual Hallow's Eve Costume Party - tonight at 10 Pacific Time or 5 Colored People Time. Sorry for the short notice, but let's keep it one hun-ed. You've had us on your calendar for weeks.

76A Lionel stares into a mirror in an ill fitting suit combing out his unwieldy fro. He flinches in pain as he fluffs out each section. 76A

KURT (V.O.)

Dudes must rock FUBU, Ecko, Rocawear, or Sean John. XXXL is the smallest size T-Shirt you can wear, preferably with a collage of Barack Obama and Tupac on it. Stunner Shades, chains, and Blue-Tooth devices sticking out yo ears are also encouraged.

76B Coco pulls a blonde curly wig over her natural hair. She smooths her tendrils to frame her face, almost pale with foundation. She begins on her eyes. 76B

KURT (V.O.)

Ladies, we need to see huge hoop earrings, long nails, and cheap tight clothes.

(MORE)

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

A proper hood rat starts fights, speaks loudly, and when she can't think of the word she's trying to say just makes one up, such as "edumicated." Feel free to fry up some chicken, bring Kool-Aid, Watermelon, 40s, Henny, and of course Dat Purple Drank. No bougie bitches allowed.

76C Sam removes the pins and the black power Afro pic holding 76C up her pompadour fro hair-do, and lets it fall flat around her ears. She takes in her image in the mirror.

KURT (V.O.)

Naturally there will be a freestyle rap competition so bring it, get yo shine on and join us for the party of the year! Oh and Nigga Nigga Nigga Nigga. Boy that felt good.

77 EXT. GILLESPIE HALL - NIGHT

77

Laughter and music from the well to do event wafts outside while Troy dressed in a slick Armani tux hangs by the entrance. He smokes on Coco's one-hitter from before.

Lionel steps out in his ill fitted suit, a camera in hand. The two are surprised to see each other.

LIONEL

Funny seeing you here.

TROY

Father likes to show me off at all the Donor functions. The dessert course is usually my cue to take a breather while they talk shop.

(friendlier)

The trick is to dazzle them into forking over their estates just before they kick the bucket.

Lionel could just leave. Instead he accepts the olive branch.

LIONEL

So...Picard or Kirk?

TROY

Kirk. Wait...

LIONEL

I saw you watching Star --

TROY

-- Yo what happens in the crib stays in the crib. Not trying to get my card revoked.

LIONEL

Hey, some could argue that a show with Whoopi Goldberg, Michael Dorn and Kunta Kinte himself is a pretty Black show.

TROY

Yeah? That work out for you?

LIONEL

No. No it did not. At least not in High School. I bet there's a statue of you at your High School.

TROY

I was beloved. Won't lie.

LIONEL

Did they know you were a trekker?

TROY

My pops left a paint by numbers template for success at that High School. All I had to do was fill in the blanks. Football captain. Valedictorian. Prom King.

Lionel sees a sadness in Troy.

TROY (CONT'D)

So what? You're growing that out?

LIONEL

I think it's gaining sentience.

TROY

It's...out there.

LIONEL

It's like a black hole for white people's fingers. They're obsessed.

TROY

You know I cut hair. Why didn't you ask me?

LIONEL

You're I dunno...you?

Behind Lionel, George and Annie pass by the steps to Gillespie.

GEORGE  
Li! You ready man?

LIONEL  
No costumes? I got a tux for this.

ANNIE  
We just got out of the staff room.

GEORGE  
Yeah, we're going as overworked.

LIONEL  
Where is it?

ANNIE  
Garmin House. On third I think?

LIONEL  
Third and Basin. I know it.

Before Lionel jets to join them.

TROY  
Yo man. If I'd gone to your High School, I'd have had your back.

Lionel smiles and heads after his new friends.

78 EXT. KURT'S HOUSE - NIGHT 78

Lionel pauses before his old home - now filled with the chaos of a wild party. Lionel clears his throat and heads in.

79 INT. KURT'S HOUSE - NIGHT 79

The party is dark and rambunctious. Lots of white kids in costume. Some as fairies or ninjas or Spiderman - but most as pimps and thugs. As Blaxploitation characters. As Barack Obama and Condi Rice. As Shaft, Ice Cube, and 2 Chainz.

It's a lot for Lionel. Cups are handed to them filled with "Purple Drank." Everyone downs the stuff.

INT. GILLESPIE HALL - NIGHT

Troy is being appreciated by an ancient COUPLE.

TROY  
...my own firm. Maybe run for office. Make a difference you know?

The couple smile. A buzz draws Troy's eyes to his phone - photos from "Dear White People" pop up in his news feed.

80 INT. KURT'S HOUSE - NIGHT 80

Lionel watches as Gordon and other Pastiche crew nervously put up flyers and posters. They seem caught off guard. Lionel glances at the posters - it's Kurt with a large Afro wig mimicking Sam's "Missing Black Culture" flyers.

LIONEL

This is kind of fucked up. Right?

GEORGE

Pastiche. The world's most erudite boneheads. Who wants another round? Come on Lionel, help a brother out.

LIONEL

Kitchen's this way.

80A ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS 80A

Coco enters the party - blinged out like Nicki Minaj. She's feeling herself as she's handed a drink.

She's got eyes on her - for the first time like this at a party. But she sees the same thing Lionel saw.

Her confidence starts to fight a shame that creeps up beneath her party face. She switches her iPhone to video mode...

COCO

Hey there muffins. How do I look? Why are white folks so obsessed with being Black? And why are Black folks so addicted to Blonde Barbie doll weaves? Honeys it's a strange symbiosis we're here to explore...

Coco's voice cracks as she stares into her own image on her iPhone. She pauses it and takes a breath.

80B HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 80B

Lionel leads George through the dense crowd towards the kitchen - George pulls Lionel into a hallway and into...

80C BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS 80C

...the bathroom and up against the door. George inhales Lionel's lips. Runs his fingers through Lionel's hair.

LIONEL

Ouch.

GEORGE

Sorry.

LIONEL

It's okay. Can't wait to cut all  
this off.

GEORGE

Don't you dare.

George plunges his fingers into Lionel's fro once again.  
Pulls a touch too hard.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I could eat you like a Hershey's.

This sets something off in Lionel.

LIONEL

I'll be right back.

Lionel breaks George's grasp and heads out the bathroom...

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

...and back out into the party. He's trapped in a nightmare  
of caricatures and reveling students. Can't breathe.

EXT. KURT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lionel squeezes his way outside. Something goes off in his  
head as he starts walking away from the party.

Just then Kurt arrives in front of the house with some  
friends. Looks at Lionel then at the house.

KURT

What the hell?

81 INT. ARMSTRONG / PARKER - NIGHT

81

Lionel paces the halls. His mind churns as he passes the  
dining hall. Sam and Reggie are engaged in something intense.

DINING HALL

SAM

For a genius dude you're a fucking  
idiot.

REGGIE

I did it, we did it for you.

SAM

I didn't ask for it Reggie. I look like I betrayed this house.

REGGIE

Yeah? Well you betrayed me.

Sam gets up and storms out - brushes past Lionel.

LIONEL

Sam? Can we talk?

Sam turns back around fiercely.

82 INT. KURT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

82

A turntable is uncovered and rolled out - as a DUDE DRESSED LIKE SERENA WILLIAMS starts up a MYSTIKAL record.

The crowd starts to get live now.

Coco continues to make her way through the party - her face visibly perturbed by the time she reaches the kitchen. She continues out back...

83 EXT. KURT'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

83

...and sits pulling out a cigarette. She sees Annie put on a long straight Black wig and brag to friends...

ANNIE

Hey who am I? "Bitch it's weave.  
Noun. Present tense ho!"

Right in the gut. She's playing Coco. Coco grabs her phone...

84 INT. KURT'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

84

Kurt stumbles about the party in a daze. Drunk? Folks give him props while he searches for and spots Gordon with the others. His phone rings.

KURT

Yeah?

INTERCUT

COCO

Kurt, it's me. I can't do this.

KURT

Okay, I'm fucking confused.

85 INT. SAM'S ROOM - NIGHT

85

Lionel sits across from Sam.

SAM

What do you want me to do? Go over there and yell at them?

LIONEL

Have you heard you yelling?

SAM

This house is filled with folks willing to take up after a cause Lionel. Believe me. Never would have guessed you'd be one of them but...

LIONEL

For the first time in my life, I can't just sit around and do nothing. How can you?

SAM

If I'm caught being a part of anything like this...it wouldn't be good for me right now okay?

Lionel gets up and walks towards the door.

SAM (CONT'D)

I'm done being everybody's angry Black chick.

Sam looks down as Lionel gets up and heads out.

Sam's focus shifts to her Super 8 resting by the door and then to a bullhorn directly across from it. Her mind ticks.

86 INT. ARMSTRONG / PARKER HALL - NIGHT

86

Lionel exits and paces down the hall. He walks by the dining room - taken over by Reggie, the BoFros, and a mix of other students mostly from ARMSTRONG / PARKER.

86A DINING HALL - CONTINUOUS

86A

Lionel gingerly walks in the room. He's still an outsider here - but something's changed in him.



LIONEL

Hey. How's it going. Hi.

No one answers him - just stay to their own conversations.  
Lionel spots a familiar face...Sungmi.

LIONEL (CONT'D)

Hey...what is this?

SUNGMI

Black Student Union.

Lionel smiles shyly. He should've known that.

Reggie, Curls, Dreads and the Bofros hang out at the front.

DREADS

Your call then man.

REGGIE

(to everyone)

Alright ya'll - thanks for coming  
out tonight. Looks like Sam's not  
making it so...let's just call it.

The crowd starts to talk amongst themselves, get up and  
leave. Just then Lionel stands and before he can think...

LIONEL

Uh. Excuse me. Hi. I'm Lionel. Some  
of you...none of you probably know  
me. I've never been to a meeting.  
But I just came back from a party  
on campus and I think you should  
know about it.

Lionel's nerves can be heard in his voice now. He's got the  
judging eyes of the room fixed silently on him. He sees an  
open laptop on a desk.

LIONEL (CONT'D)

Anybody mind if I?

Reggie shifts a bit as Lionel goes to the laptop and pulls up  
the party on Facebook. The crowd gathers around as Lionel  
browses through the photos.

LIONEL (CONT'D)

I mean...I don't know. This is  
fucked up right?

REGGIE

Alright brother. What's the plan?

Lionel realizes the eyes aren't judging. They're mobilizing. Ready for action. Lionel steels himself.

LIONEL

We go over there. Now.

CURLS

Think there's enough of us?

SUNGMI

You know you don't have a monopoly on being a pissed off minority. Latino's United is meeting across the hall. Asian American League too.

(off the stares)

You guys got better snacks.

87

INT. GILLESPIE HALL - NIGHT

87

Troy scrolls through an endless amount of Facebook uploads from the party. Forties, bad Afro wigs, fake asses.

Shoved in between two RICH OLD WELL TO DOS at a long table covered in empty plates and glasses - Troy looks across to his father, in mid exaggerated guffaw with President Fletcher.

TROY

Dad...

DEAN FAIRBANKS

Not now Troy.

TROY

It's important. There's something happening on campus. I might've...

DEAN FAIRBANKS

You're being rude son.

Dean Fairbanks turns away. Troy ponders a moment and then--

TROY

Oh am I? How about I tell your precious donors and anyone here who'll listen about the kind of a school it is they're giving to?

The Dean can feel the eyes of the Donors and the President on him - an outrage comes over him as he pulls Troy aside.

DEAN FAIRBANKS

I don't know who you think you are young man but you don't get to talk to your father any kind of way.

TROY

All I say to you is yes sir and no sir! Look I should've brought this up before but --

(off Fairbanks dismissal)

-- listen to me!

Dean Fairbanks tries to cover this moment with a smile.

88 INT. KURT'S KITCHEN - NIGHT 88

Kurt, still dazed, huddles with his core Pastiche group.

KURT

What?

GORDON

Yeah dude. We all got it. I mean, everything's cool right?

A noise in the other room startles them...

88A LIVING ROOM 88A

...It's Reggie who knocks over a bowl of chips. Dreads argues with a few people. Martin rips shades off a kid's face. The party swarms with BSU kids and their Latino / Asian allies.

A SMASH yanks Kurt's attention back to the kitchen...

88B KITCHEN 88B

...where Lionel smashes bottles of liquor in the sink.

KURT

Lionel?

Kurt yanks the booze from Lionel and shoves him.

KURT (CONT'D)

The fuck you think you're doing man?

Lionel shoves Kurt into the bar divide. A few of the BSU kids flood into the kitchen and hold Kurt back.

KURT (CONT'D)

That all you got?

LIONEL  
We're putting an end to this Kurt.

KURT  
Fuck you I'm calling the cops.

MARTIN  
Half of this crowd is under 21.

A loud AMP sound alerts everyone to the DJ platform in the Living Room.

88C

LIVING ROOM

88C

Mitch has taken over the mic.

MITCH  
*Gimme that mic  
Before I slap ya  
Looking for some dykes,  
that wanna another chapta.  
If you do me slow,  
you can do me faster,  
I'll pass you to the Nigga on my  
right, he gets you after.*

LIONEL  
Kurt--

KURT  
-- Why don't you tuck your tail  
between your legs, run and tell the  
Dean and get the fuck out.

Lionel sinks from this attack while his posse from BSU watches helplessly as the party goes back into full swing.

Lionel turns to go and spots...

...George who joins Annie, fresh beer in hand. But right behind George is...

...Sam, having just arrived with her camera in hand pointed at the rap battle. She winks at Lionel.

Lionel turns around - summons something from deep inside.

Lionel steps onto the DJ platform and snatches the mic out of one of the rapper's hands.

LIONEL  
*Heyyyy! Hoooo! Heyyy! Hooo!*

The crowd is with it - thinks it's part of the show as Lionel proceeds to freestyle terribly...

LIONEL (CONT'D)

*My name is Lionel,  
Some people call me Li.  
Lots of people think  
that I talk kinda white.  
Well that's alright.  
Yeah that's cool.  
I'd rather you think I'm white,  
than tap dance for you.*

With that Lionel takes the mic and SMASHES it on the wall. He then takes the turntable by his hands and flips it over.

Sparks fly - the amp goes crazy - the crowd is in shock.

Lionel grabs a speaker tower and slams it to the ground. Lionel's off the platform now. Kurt grabs him - Reggie pushes Kurt away in his defense.

Gordon grabs Reggie - A FIGHT BREAKS OUT.

More equipment is slammed to the ground and stomped on as the party disintegrates into chaos.

Sam dodges fights to capture it all with the camera.

Art is being ripped from the walls. Dishes being smashed on the ground. Arguments come to physical blows.

The steel in Sam's gaze fades. Replaced by...heartbreak?

And then she spots...

...Coco squeezing her way through the crowd for the door. Sam's camera and mic stay trained on Coco.

COCO

What? Say it. Come on.

Sam stays silent.

COCO (CONT'D)

This may come as a shock, but these people don't give a fuck about no Harriet muthafuckin Tubman. They pay millions of dollars on their tans, their lips, their asses, Jay-Z tickets, you name it, cause they wanna be us.

(MORE)

COCO (CONT'D)

So they got to be for a night. I'm not about to go out into the streets in protest of a Halloween party.

Sam keeps her mouth shut and her camera rolling as Coco realizes it's herself she's trying to convince.

Coco storms off. Sam exhales and lowers her camera. This is new for her. Keeping her mouth shut.

89 EXT. KURT'S HOUSE - NIGHT 89

Coco trudges down the side walk - yanks off her hair, her lashes, her bling - shedding the shame of the night.

90 EXT. KURT'S YARD - NIGHT 90

Kurt hustles Lionel out into the yard. Kurt shoves him to the ground.

KURT

Dude. I know you can't help it...

Lionel just gets back up again only to be slammed down.

KURT (CONT'D)

...but why are you such a fag dude?

Lionel spits in Kurt's face and pops right back up again. We see it in his eyes - he'll never give up.

Kurt's hand is on Lionel's collar. He pushes him down again. Kids are all around - some from the BSU - some from Pastiche - some from the Bugle. Everyone holds an opposite party back.

Lionel looks over at his audience and then into Kurt's eyes. Lionel leans in and kisses Kurt on the mouth long and hard.

LIONEL

Finally got me where you want me.

Kurt's in shock. He looks at his crew who laugh at him.

Lionel sees the surprise in the eyes of his new supporters as well. No time to soak this in though. Kurt's let up. For a moment. Lionel turns back to Kurt and PUNCHES him in the face. The BSU kids go CRAZY in support.

The shock gone - Kurt damn near knocks Lionel out.

The world goes all slow motion and out of focus. Lionel sort of makes out that Kurt is yanked off him.

Kids run in different directions - Flashlights fill the yard - One is shone directly on Lionel. CAMPUS SAFETY GUARDS and a couple POLICE OFFICERS surround him.

91 INT. KURT'S HOUSE - NIGHT 91

The motor on Sam's Super 8 ticks away. The party is at a complete standstill.

Troy enters and looks around in disbelief. Makes eye contact with Kurt who is being held by a Campus Safety Officer.

Dean Fairbanks enters and stands in the middle of the chaos. Sam tip toes in for a close up and holds out a small mic.

DEAN FAIRBANKS

What is all this?

92 INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT 92

A SERIES OF SHOTS FROM A MOVIE BEING PROJECTED ON A SCREEN

We see the Dean looking about the party with disappointment.

CUT TO:

92A KURT looking bewildered outside his house after the party. We hear BOOS from a crowd. The carnage is devastating. 92A

Windows are blown out - trash and destroyed furniture on the lawn. Ash where fires were put out.

KURT

I didn't do this. Sam. I had nothing to do with this.

CUT TO:

92B MORNING NEWS 92B

ANCHOR

What some are calling a "race war" has erupted at one of the nation's oldest and most prestigious --

CUT TO:

92 GILLESPIE FORUM now filled with students who sit before Dean Fairbanks and President Fletcher for a Town Hall. Everyone wears a look of outrage. 92

DEAN FAIRBANKS

We don't condone this egregious event and are investigating its origins. The president and I are looking at ways to address issues of Diversity at Manchester.

REGGIE

HOUSING REFORM!

Applause breaks out amongst the crowd. But so do boos.

CUT TO:

93 VARIOUS SPOTS AROUND CAMPUS. Students address the camera. 93

MITCH

I'm sorry but it's bullshit. Yo this is how we get down. If you can't take a joke in this day and age? The fact we can joke about it proves we've moved on you feel me? This is an attack on free speech! We're the victims here!

CUT TO:

93A A series of Busts have been PAINTED IN BLACK FACE outside 93A of Armstrong / Parker where Lionel address the camera...

LIONEL

It's hard enough for us to even get into a school like this. Let alone succeed. Find our way. This is only a debate because of who Kurt's dad is, which just proves the point. All you did was have a radio show and look what happened to you.

CUT TO:

93B COCO as she talks directly to camera. 93B

COCO

I know this may come as a shock, but nobody gives a fuck about no Harriet muthafuckin Tubman...they wanna be us. So they got to be for a night.

CUT TO:



93C A POSTER featuring Troy rendered like the famous Shepard 93C  
 Fairy Obama posters with the words "A NEW HOPE" written at  
 the bottom as well as "TROY BROUSSARD FOR PRESIDENT." This  
 gets some more applause from the crowd watching.

TROY

Of course I got my dad involved. It  
 was the right thing to do. I didn't  
 mean for all this to happen. All  
 the posters and everything.

SAM (O.S.)

But you'd welcome it? A shot for  
 school president.

TROY

I think...I'd make more than few  
 people happy if I ran.

CUT TO:

93D RADIO BOOTH - where Sam puts her headphones on. She 93D  
 lingers.

SAM (V.O.)

Even though I'd been expressly  
 forbidden to do so, I wanted to do  
 one last show. Something to sum up  
 the moment. To savor in the pop of  
 the post racial bubble just burst.

SAM

Dear White People...

SAM (V.O.)

I wanted to react.

Sam takes in a thoughtful breath before...

SAM

...Know what? Nevermind.

She fades in a melancholy piece of Be-Bop before hanging her  
 headphones up as the title on the projected movie fades in:

"...BLACK FACES BY SAMANTHA WHITE"

Sam stares nervously at the screen as the lights come on,  
 when all at once the room BREAKS INTO APPLAUSE. Sam turns to  
 see that the entire room is on it's feet including Prof  
 Bodkin and Gabe.

94 INT. DEAN'S OFFICE - DAY

94

Dean Fairbanks loosens his tie, flanked by several SCHOOL OFFICIALS. They've been here for hours listening to...

KURT

Once I heard what the group was planning, I sent out an email to the staff to cancel it. You have the email printed in front of you.

DEAN FAIRBANKS

Who's this?

Kurt turns to a SUITED MAN next to him.

KURT

My lawyer.

CUT TO:

94B We'll be cross cutting between several of these sessions. 94B

COCO

So when I got the invite and saw everyone clicking "yes" I figured it was back on.

DEAN FAIRBANKS

You were hoping to make the staff?

COCO

...

CUT TO:

DEAN FAIRBANKS

At what point in time did you show up to the event?

94C Sam sits with arms folded.

94C

DEAN FAIRBANKS (CONT'D)

Samantha. Please.

SAM

Why am I even here?

CUT TO:

KURT

94 Guys throw parties at the house all the time.

94

DEAN FAIRBANKS  
We know you were planning this.

KURT  
Your son tell you that?

CUT TO:

94D Fairbanks stares down his son. Troy is silent and anxious. 94D

DEAN FAIRBANKS  
(reading)  
"...wishing you could sip on Henny  
out yo crunk cup without a Bitch  
giving you the side-eye?"  
(and then)  
You write this Troy?

Troy looks up at his father embarrassed.

TROY  
No. Mine wasn't chosen.

DEAN FAIRBANKS  
But you wanted to be?

TROY  
What I wanted didn't matter then.  
Why should it matter now? I told  
you about the party, remember?

CUT TO:

94 DEAN FAIRBANKS The invite came from the Pastiche Facebook account. 94

KURT  
I loathe Facebook.

An OFFICIAL whispers something in Fairbanks' ear.

KURT (CONT'D)  
You've got to believe me.

DEAN FAIRBANKS  
You've used that line on me before  
this year Mr. Fletcher. When a  
homophobic message mysteriously  
appeared on a voice mail line you  
shared with a roommate.

CUT TO:

DEAN FAIRBANKS (CONT'D)

What were your intentions when you went back the second time?

LIONEL

To stop it.

DEAN FAIRBANKS

By any means necessary?

LIONEL

Someone once told me...Manchester is like jazz. I don't know much about jazz. But from what I can tell, when your solo's up, you better blow.

Fairbanks fights a smile.

CUT TO:

94C

SAM

94C

All I did that night was hit record brother.

The Dean takes a gulp from a glass of water. He stands and looks out his huge windows onto the campus below.

CUT TO:

94E

The Dean has Facebook opened on his computer. Officials are taking a break. Drinking water. Discussing the day.

94E

The Dean tries a few passwords.

CUT TO:

94C

DEAN FAIRBANKS

94C

Want to hear something strange?

The Dean turns from the window.

DEAN FAIRBANKS (CONT'D)

The Pastiche group page hadn't been used for months, until the invite went out.

CUT TO:

94E

The Dean tries a different password. Still invalid.

94E

CUT TO:

94C SAM 94C  
Fascinating.

DEAN FAIRBANKS  
Well what's interesting is how easy  
it was to access the group before  
the note was sent. The password was  
"Pa\$tiche" spelled with a dollar  
sign according to Kurt. Seems  
recently it's been changed.

CUT TO:

94E The Dean tries one more. It works. 94E

CUT TO:

94C DEAN FAIRBANKS (CONT'D) 94C  
Couldn't figure it out at first.  
Then I thought to try something.  
Five, seven, eight, three, five,  
twenty six, one, nine, four, six.  
Eleven numbers. Just like our  
student ID numbers. Just like your  
student ID number.

SAM  
As much as you hate him, you will  
stop at nothing to protect your  
master and his boy.

DEAN FAIRBANKS  
Did you send out the invite Sam?

SAM  
That invite, whoever sent it  
should've been met with derision  
and outrage. Instead, a hundred  
people showed up and they pulled  
out posters and decorations and  
costumes they'd made for just such  
an occasion.

Sam and Dean Fairbanks at a stalemate.

Silence falls in the room. The Dean's mind ticks.

95 EXT. MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY - DAY 95

A pack of EMERALD BUGLE newspapers hit the stand with the  
headline: "INVESTIGATION INCONCLUSIVE! FLETCHER GOES FREE. NO  
EXPULSIONS MADE"

Next to it is another stack of papers from the INDEPENDENT OBSERVER. The headline reads: "EBONY & IVY: CAN THERE BE HARMONY? BY LIONEL HIGGINS."

George picks up a copy of the Observer and starts to read...

96

INT. TROY AND LIONEL'S APARTMENT - DAY

96

Lionel flips through his own article as well. A satisfied grin on his face as a razor makes its way through his hair.

LIONEL

2 Chainz? Shaft? While endless complex depictions of whites, white men in particular exist - there aren't that many versions of us in the culture.

His locks waft towards the ground as Troy styles a fresh and fearless fro-hawk atop Lionel's head.

LIONEL (CONT'D)

Culture has a powerful way of telling people what they can and can't be. For people of color the options are rather limited.

TROY

Next James Baldwin up in here. Wait hold on a sec.

Star Trek is back from commercial break. Troy and Lionel watch in silence.

97

EXT. MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY - DAY

97

Gabe is just about finished with Lionel's article too. Looks up just in time to see...

GABE

Hello Sam.

Sam sneers at his formalities.

GABE (CONT'D)

Read about Armstrong / Parker.

SAM

Yeah. Prez made an executive withdrawal. Armstrong stays Black.

GABE

Congrats?

SAM

(with a shrug)  
Getting too dramatic man. Thinking  
about getting an apartment off  
campus. We'll see.

GABE

Sam going against the grain?  
Shocked. How's papa White?

SAM

He's recovering.

GABE

Good. Well...

Gabe fights the urge to hug her.

SAM

We were actually on the phone last  
night for hours. First time we  
talked since the bypass. He was  
putting up a strong front. Teasing  
me about being so worried. Then  
came the stories about me as a  
little girl I'd heard a thousand  
times. About how independent I was.

Gabe smiles politely. Senses she needs a moment.

GABE

Want to talk about it?

SAM

My mother worked nights so he would  
take me to school. And it pissed me  
off because he would follow me all  
the way to homeroom. Every time he  
tried to hold my hand I'd scream  
and pull away. He thought I was  
just being...difficult.

A hint of recognition in Gabe. Is this about them?

SAM (CONT'D)

But it was the kids. And the  
parents and the teachers. They'd  
see this Black girl and this white  
man and wonder what we were doing  
together. Even at nine I could feel  
their eyes on me. Especially at  
nine. It brought tears to my eyes.

Gabe's stone face melts at this.

SAM (CONT'D)

I was just a bratty girl, didn't know any better but-- The thought of losing him-- You know? I just feel so bad. How awful am I to do that to him? To anyone I love?

Gabe gets it. This is an explanation. An apology, to him. His arm is on her shoulder now.

GABE

I'm sure he forgives you.

SAM

Think so?

Gabe nods. Sam's normal defenses come back up lest she cries.

SAM (CONT'D)

So anyway. I didn't mean to say all of that. I don't know why I did.

GABE

Sam. Where are you going?

SAM

I don't know. Lunch?

Gabe starts to walk with her.

GABE

Isn't it Mac and Cheese day at Armstrong/Parker?

SAM

Think they'll let you in?

Gabe smiles. They walk a bit. Then he grabs her hand. Sam lets the moment happen. Squeezes his back. They look into each others' eyes.

Don't even notice as Reggie and the Bofros pass them by.

98

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

98

Coco sits across from Helmut. He's got his eyes on a Youtube clip from Sam's movie featuring Coco.

COCO (YOUTUBE)

I know this may come as a shock, but they don't give a fuck about no Harriet muthafuckin Tubman...



HELMUT

Two hundred thousand views. Look they even auto-tuned it.

With a click Helmut pulls it up.

AUTOTUNED COCO (YOUTUBE)

*Muthafuckin Tubman! Muthatfuckin Tubman! Don't give a fuck about no muthafuckin Tubman!*

Coco's not sure what to think.

HELMUT

Couple months, that's how long shooting for an episode takes. We recommend you cut your course load in half to accommodate the schedule.

COCO

Half?

HELMUT

Trust me it it'll read "full-time" in the episode. If...once we go to series, we might have to figure out a summer schedule.

COCO

For shooting?

HELMUT

For uh...classes and stuff. Won't be graduating early anymore sweetheart.

Helmut shifts a contract over to Coco.

HELMUT (CONT'D)

Five grand for the episode. Twenty each if you get picked up for series. What do you say?

Coco stares at the contract and back at Helmut.

HELMUT (CONT'D)

Trust me sweetie it's the same out there as it is in here. Good news is? Against all that damn white you and I? We pop. Think I wanted to be the go-to producer for all things Black?

Coco shrugs.

HELMUT (CONT'D)

Tell you what's worse though. Being that broke Nigga stuck on the south side of Chicago. Hundred and Fiftieth street.

Coco takes a deep breath. Stares right into his eyes --

99

EXT. MANCHESTER - DAY

99

Coco exits a building and spots Troy up ahead. He's flanked by his former enemies turned supporters, Reggie and the other BoFros. They all carry Troy's "New Hope" posters.

COCO

Made some new friends?

Troy shrugs as Coco grabs for his hand. He pulls away and shares a glance with Reggie, who doesn't approve.

COCO (CONT'D)

Fine.

TROY

Come on Coco.

COCO

Fuck you.

Coco starts to walk ahead.

TROY

My dad saw your videos. He's a little worried about --

COCO

-- how it'll look. With your campaign and all. What's your best friend Reggie think?

Troy motions for Reggie to go on ahead.

TROY

We had fun, alright?

COCO

I get everyone else wants you to win Troy. But do you?

Troy doesn't know how to answer that. He stares at the triumphant, winning version of himself on his poster.

Coco's eyes shift longingly as she walks ahead - unsure of who she is at the moment and who she will be in the next.

Watching her is Lionel and Sam - sitting with Gabe and Sungmi. They both know that look well...

SAM

Hey Lionel. With me out and Troy moving on - A/P's going to need a new head of house.

LIONEL

Think there's a story there? Who do you think it'll be?

Sam and Sungmi share a glance and stare right at Lionel.

LIONEL (CONT'D)

What? No.

SUNGMI

Everyone loves you. Won't be hard to rally the vote.

SAM

Yeah. We got you man.

Lionel takes in this moment. One of complete acceptance.

100

INT. FLETCHERS OFFICE - DAY

100

Fairbanks turns from the window in Fletcher's office to join him at his desk. They're all ears as they look across to...

HELMUT

Let me get this straight. First you tried to break up the Black house. Then you took down the sister with the little radio show. And after all that, your kid throws a Blackface party?

FLETCHER

Now wait a minute!

HELMUT

You thought you were having money problems before? Wait till cable gets their hands on this story. Bill Maher is gon' fuck you up!

FLETCHER

I have heard enough --

HELMUT

-- Wait I'm sorry. Look from where I'm sitting this place is a goldmine.

DEAN FAIRBANKS

What?

HELMUT

For one we got to show the events that led up to the party --

DEAN FAIRBANKS

-- That already happened.

HELMUT

Well yeah, but we can reenact --

DEAN FAIRBANKS

-- reenact?

HELMUT

Documentary term...Look, I can start putting together an overall deal today. I'm talking real money! Turns out the one thing America likes in it's reality more than ignorant Black folks, is crazy racist White people!

DEAN FAIRBANKS

Now you look here. This is an honorable institution. The idea that we would so much as entertain this suggestion --

Fletcher holds his hand up. His turn to speak.

FLETCHER

How much we talking?

Fairbanks' outrage turns to resignation as Helmut, the one winner here smiles. Dollar signs in his eyes.