

MALCOLM X

Screenplay by
James Baldwin
Arnold Perl
and
Spike Lee

Based on the
Autobiography of Malcolm X

THIRD DRAFT

April 15, 1991
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MALCOLM X

FADE IN:

1 EXT. ROXBURY STREET - DAY (WAR YEARS) 1

It is a bright sunny day on a crowded street on the black side of Boston. People and kids are busy with their own things.

SHORTY makes his way down the street. He is a runty, very dark young man of 21 with a mission and a smile on his face. He wears the flamboyant style of the time: the whole zoot-suit, pegged-leg, wide-brim bit.

Shorty turns into a grocery store.

2 INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY 2

With exaggerated care Shorty selects two large potatoes (rejecting one as too small); then moves to an egg bin and picks out two eggs. He brings his selections to the counter and impatiently waits for the white grocer to put them in a bag.

3 INT. HARDWARE STORE - CLOSE SHOT - DRAWING OF RED DEVIL 3
- DAY

A hand reaches for the devil and we see it is the label on a can of lye. PULLBACK SHOWS the hand to be Shorty's.

Shorty moves past sundry hardware items, stops to select a rubber hose with a metal spray-head. He tests it for durability.

4 INT. DRUGSTORE - DAY 4

A large jar is plunked on the counter by a white hand. Shorty leans INTO the SHOT to make sure it's what he ordered: a jar of Vaseline. Satisfied, he hands it back to the white druggist.

5 EXT. STREET - FOLLOW SHOT - DAY 5

Shorty is now laden with packages, winding his way down the street. His smile is one of anticipation. He nods to a pal without stopping; eyes a couple of chicks dancing on the street, but is not dissuaded.

INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

Shorty has his jacket and hat off, his sleeves rolled up. He is like a surgeon preparing for an operation. His equipment is spread out on a table: can of lye, large mason jar, wooden stirring spoon, knife, the eggs. His actions have the character of a ritual: each thing being done just so, in time-honored fashion.

He slices the potatoes and drops the thin slices into the mason jar. He adds water and makes a paste of the starch.

Behind Shorty is a spirited barbershop conversation. One man is getting a haircut; two others are watching (TOOMER, JASON) one of them from behind a newspaper. A middle-aged barber, CHOLLY, is doing most of the talking.

CHOLLY

After I hit the number that woman
wasn't no good to me at all.

The men laugh.

ANGLE - SHORTY

pries open the can of lye, whiffs it. It's good and strong. He pours some in the mason jar, stirring with the wooden spoon. He cracks the eggs into the mixture and stirs. He waits as fumes rise and feels the outside of the jar as it gets hot.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The barbershop seen FROM a door, slightly ajar. A woolly head, entirely in shadow, peers out.

CHOLLY (O.S.)

She says I'm cheap cuz I won't buy
her a diamond ring. Had the
indignation to call me a cheap
black motherfucker.

TOOMER

And when a black woman call you a
cheap black motherfucker you've
been called a cheap black
motherfucker.

Cholly is annoyed. It's his story.

CHOLLY

Will you let me tell it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ON SHORTY

He opens the bulky package he has been carrying, unfolds a large rubber apron and gets into it. Now he dons a pair of rubber gloves.

SHORTY

Where's Homeboy?

He is all ready; one of his hands is filled with a huge glob of Vaseline. His manner is indignant as if he were asking the whereabouts of an exasperating child.

CHOLLY

Red's in the head, man.

TOOMER

You mean hiding in the head.

CHOLLY

Hey, Red. Your man's here and waiting on you.

His hands full, Cholly opens the door with his feet and MALCOLM comes out, a big, gawky, bright-faced country boy, wearing down-home clothes and an expression of apprehension.

TOOMER

Gonna get that first conk laid on, hunh, Homeboy?

CHOLLY

Man, don't scare him more than he's scared already. Ain't too bad...

Malcolm allows himself to be led to an empty chair, where Cholly drapes him with a double sheet, tucking it tightly around his neck and adding a protective collar of paper.

CHOLLY

... Like anything else. First time a chick gets her cherry popped, she might put up a little fight. But pretty soon you can't give her enough. Right, Homeboy?

CLOSE - MALCOLM

Malcolm gulps, his eyes on the fuming mason jar.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Shorty starts massaging a great quantity of Vaseline into Malcolm's scalp covering his neck and ears as well. All the men have gathered around, involved in the ritual. For Malcolm it is closer to being a kind of execution.

CHOLLY

Git his forehead and eyebrows.

SHORTY

I know what I'm doing.

Shorty applies the Vaseline to that area. Now he brings over the steaming jar and places it nearby.

SHORTY

Lissen. You make sure there ain't no stinging when I get through 'cause this shit can burn a hole in your head.

CHOLLY

Hold tight, baby, and keep your eyes shut.

Malcolm nods his head, clenches his eyes and grits his teeth. Shorty applies the congolene with a comb, working it into Malcolm's hair.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

MALCOLM

I thought you said it was gonna sting... this ain't nothin'.

For a moment nothing happens, then the heat hits him. He yells, tries to catch his breath: his head is on fire.

MALCOLM

You motherfucker. You're killing me. I'm burning up. My damn head is on fire.

He nearly leaps out of the chair, but the barber restrains him.

Shorty, utterly unmoved by the outburst, continues working the congolene into his hair.

Malcolm breaks out of the chair wildly. But the three men drag him to a basin where Shorty has attached the shower spray. His cries filling the room, Malcolm is ducked under the spray. Shorty starts rinsing out his hair.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SHORTY

Don't fight me, man. Let me git it out.

Malcolm is a little relieved, he tentatively opens his eyes, then he feels the congolene again and there is another outburst. Shorty forces his head under the spray, spurts the water all over his head, wetting Malcolm and the shop in the process.

SHORTY

Is it out? How's it feel?

MALCOLM

How the hell do I know? Feels like I ain't got no skin on my head.

CHOLLY

If you can talk, it's out.

The men laugh as Shorty throws a large towel over Malcolm's head and begins drying him.

SHORTY

Lemme work the grease in.

Shorty is working Vaseline into Malcolm's hair with a comb. Malcolm is covered with sweat and water. His teeth are still clenched, his eyes still closed.

SHOTS OF MEN

watching. As the effect of the conk takes shape. It's clear that Malcolm's hair is as straight and smooth as any white movie star's.

CHOLLY

Well, all right.

TOOMER

Yeah.

SHORTY

Well, all reet.

CLOSE SHOT - MALCOLM

He opens his eyes. He cannot believe it. He stares at himself in the mirror. He wonderingly strokes his hair. His face opens into the sunburst of a smile.

MALCOLM

Sunovabitch, it looks white.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: (4)

6

ANGLE ON MALCOLM

as he tests his profile in the mirror. He laughs joyously.

7 EXT. STREET - NIGHT (REMEMBERED TIME)

7

FROM the POV of the motorman, the trolley tracks ahead as the trolley moves rapidly in the night. Someone is lying on the tracks a distance ahead. CLANGING of the trolley BELL is loud as it's RAINING cats and dogs.

8 EXT. TROLLEY TRACKS - NIGHT (REMEMBERED TIME)

8

A terrified black man, badly beaten, lies on the tracks as the trolley approaches. SOUND COMING ON. He is unable to move.

9 INT. CLOTHING STORE - DAY

9

SHORTY

Well, Homeboy, you almost there.
Turn around.

Shorty is supervising as Malcolm tries on a zoot suit. He slips into the jacket...

Shoes off, Malcolm steps into the tight-fitting peg-legged pants...

... dons a wide-brimmed hat with a bright blue feather.

... Finally, fully outfitted, he leans forward toward his new image in the full-length mirror, twirling a long, dangling key chain.

SHORTY

Well, all right, then.

MALCOLM

Well, all reet, then.

The transformation is complete. The two laugh and slap hands.

10 EXT. ROXBURY STREET - DAY

10

Malcolm and Shorty come strutting down the street: two conked zoot-suited sharpies. Hometown boy has departed.

(CONTINUED)

10

CONTINUED:

And the chicks on the street notice them, especially Malcolm, the taller of the two, the lighter-skinned, the more dominant. They walk imperiously past, fully aware of their impact.

CLOSE SHOT - MALCOLM

FREEZE FRAME. He becomes a STILL.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

When my mother was pregnant with me, she told me later, a party of Klansmen on horseback surrounded our house in Omaha.

ANGLE - KLAN ON HORSES IN FRONT OF HOUSE

MALCOLM (V.O.)

They brandished guns and shouted for my father to come out. My mother went to the door where they could see her pregnant condition...

ANGLE - PREGNANT LOUISE LITTLE ON PORCH

MALCOLM (V.O.)

... and told them my father was in Milwaukee, preaching.

ANGLE - KLAN

BREAKS all the WINDOWS in the house, then rides off into the glorious D.W. Griffith Birth of a Nation moonlit night.

CLOSE - LOUISE LITTLE

MALCOLM (V.O.)

The hooded Klansmen said the good, white Christians would not stand for his troublemaking, and to get out of town.

ANGLE - TERRIFIED LITTLE CHILDREN

look out a broken window at their mother.

(CONTINUED)

10

CONTINUED: (2)

ANGLE - OLD FRAME HOUSE IN OMAHA

MALCOLM (V.O.)

They broke every window with their
rifle butts before riding off into
the night, their torches flaming.

ANGLE - FRONT PORCH OF LITTLE HOUSE

An empty rocker on it.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

My father was not a frightened
Negro as most were then and as
many still are today. He was six
feet four and very black...

CLOSE - EARL LITTLE

He looks directly INTO the CAMERA, wearing a Baptist
minister's robe.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

... and had a glass eye. He
believed, as did Marcus Garvey,
that freedom, independence and
self-respect could never be
achieved by the Negro in America...

CLOSE - EARL LITTLE

He wears a Garvey hat, ornate with gold braid.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

... that, therefore, black men
should leave America and return to
the land of their origin.

ANGLE - EARL LITTLE

In a wagon with little Malcolm.

CLOSE - EARL LITTLE

MALCOLM (V.O.)

My father dedicated his life to his
beliefs because he had seen four of
his six brothers die violently...

(CONTINUED)

10

CONTINUED: (3)

WIDER ANGLE

We see Earl in front of a podium in church. He is preaching.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

... three killed by white men and one lynched. There are nine children in our family.

ANGLE - NINE LITTLE CHILDREN

CLOSE - LOUISE LITTLE

She is a pretty, mature woman and white-looking.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

My mother was an attractive woman, an educated woman, a strong woman.

CLOSE - LOUISE AND EARL

A posed wedding picture, serious but sweet.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

She was very light, her mama was raped by a white man. One of the reasons she married my father was because he was so black, she disliked her complexion and wanted her children to have some color.

CLOSE SHOT - FLASH BULB

of camera flashes.

11

EXT. ROSELAND STATE BALLROOM - NIGHT

11

Music of GLENN MILLER'S BAND is heard.

A poster and the marquee announce the well-known band.

The music is good, but cool and white.

In CUTS a big Saturday night crowd flocks in. All the patrons are white. People are dressed for the occasion.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

Malcolm and Shorty watch the crowd come in. Malcolm is impressed.

SHORTY

Now, baby, here's the ropes. What you got to do to get that bread is give them some tooth...

12 INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

The crowd dances sedately to the music, but the sheer mass of people and their fancy clothes amazes Malcolm's country eyes.

SHORTY

... 'cause them big white teeth worth more than a college education. Ya dig? Homey, the main thing ya got to remember is that everything in this man's world is a hustle.

13 INT. MEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

In time to the GLENN MILLER MUSIC, a pair of shoes is being given a high gloss. Malcolm, as shoeshine boy, is working them over till they gleam. At the same time, to the delight of his white customer, BURGESS, he is dancing to the music. He gives the shoe a final tap as the MUSICAL NUMBER ENDS and Burgess steps down. He appreciates Malcolm's expertise, his ingratiating manner and especially his smile.

BURGESS

You can sure swing it.

MALCOLM

Yes, sir. Natural rhythm.

Malcolm grins again and Burgess tosses him a quarter.

BURGESS

You're okay.

MALCOLM

If you got to go, sir, it's thataway --

Malcolm gestures the urinal nearby. Burgess nods "Not a bad idea."

14

INT. JOHN - NIGHT

Burgess has just turned from the urinal and Malcolm has a basin of warm water waiting. A towel dangles from his wrist. As he goes to wash, Malcolm nods over toward Shorty who, approvingly, nods back.

ANGLE - MALCOLM

is now giving him a brisk brushing off, the full treatment. He turns, fishing in his change pocket.

MALCOLM

You all set, sir?

Burgess eyes him, amused. Malcolm smiles broadly.

MALCOLM

I mean you name it, man: hash, rubbers, hooch --

Malcolm pats his pocket (the stuff's inside); flashes open the lining of his jacket. A pint bottle is visible.

MALCOLM

(no pause)
-- or maybe you'd like to have yourself a change of luck, change of color?

BURGESS

You on the ball. What's your name?

SHORTY

That's my homeboy. Old Red from Detroit.

BURGESS

I might see you later.

MALCOLM

I'll be there.

He smiles, tosses Malcolm another coin. He exits. Shorty sticks out his palm.

SHORTY

Hey, baby, crazy.

Malcolm slaps it.

MALCOLM

Solid. Hey, this gone be all right.

(CONTINUED)

14

CONTINUED:

Malcolm scoops out a handful of silver from his pocket and grins. Nice take for an evening.

SHORTY

Well, all reet! You think this is something? Wait'll you catch the flip side.

As the music of LIONEL HAMPTON comes BLARING through --

FLIP TO:

15

15

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

Miller has been replaced by Hampton; the white crowd is a predominantly black crowd -- and the contrast is immediate. The music is wilder, the dancing more frantic, the clothes more flamboyant. Although the crowd is overwhelmingly black, there is a peppering of whites, especially white chicks. And Malcolm is a little bug-eyed as he nudges Shorty, watching mixed couples on the floor.

A boy in extreme zoot-suit flips him; a white girl in long, blonde hair wigs him. Malcolm is a little open-mouthed.

VOICE (V.O.)

Showtime! Showtime!

ANGLE - BALLROOM - NIGHT

People start moving off the floor, making room for the showtime dancers. The music begins to get faster and more furious.

CLOSE - HAMPTON'S BAND - NIGHT

It is a fast Lindy. People start clapping to the beat as they form a U around the dancers, with the band at the open end.

16

INT. DANCE FLOOR

Two couples are on the floor, dancing wildly. They are quickly joined by a half dozen others. These are the best dancers and constitute the main event of a Saturday night black dance.

People crowd and push to get better vantage points and the competition is underway.

(CONTINUED)

16

CONTINUED:

ANGLE ON CROWD

It is dominantly black, but there are some whites in the audience, mostly women. One is SOPHIA, a spectacular blonde with a degree of refinement, something of a thrill-seeker. Many of the men try to catch her eye, but for the moment Sophia is just watching, looking for no one in particular, but nonetheless looking.

ANGLE - COUPLE ON DANCE FLOOR

Getting ready to enter the fray, the girl takes off her shoes and bounces out on the floor barefoot with her partner. Their advent is greeted with cheers and AD LIBS. Clearly, the crowd has its favorites.

WIDER SHOT

The music gets faster and the dancing takes on a more frantic and more remarkable quality.

FOLLOWING SHOT - MALCOLM

He is looking for his partner, the Girl he brought, and now he sees her. He makes his way through the watching audience.

CLOSE - LAURA

She is a fine chick, cool and beautiful. She smiles as she sees Malcolm approaching.

TWO SHOT

Laura and Malcolm stand together, delighted to be with one another, starting to move to the music, as they watch the dancers.

MALCOLM

Come on, baby, let's show 'em how.

Laura smiles shyly; she's willing.

MALCOLM

You better get out of them shoes, girl.

Laura laughs, goes quickly to a bench and changes into a pair of sneakers.

17

INT. DANCE FLOOR

Because of the competition, Laura and Malcolm begin at high speed. In a moment, they are executing the most intricate steps of the "Flapping Eagle" and the "Kangaroo." Malcolm starts boosting her over and around his hips, then boosting her over his shoulders. Laura is the perfect partner. She loves it.

ANGLE WITH CROWD

So does the crowd, who loves new stars. There are AD LIB remarks: "Go, man, go." "Hey, Red." "Mmmmmmm ummm."

ANGLE - SHORTY

A big, fat, hefty black woman takes Shorty out to the dance floor, and she takes the lead. As they do the Lindy, she is slinging Shorty around like a rag doll. This woman slides him through her legs and Shorty has had enough; he runs off the dance floor, and hides.

TWO SHOT

Laura and Malcolm are, in the phrase, cooking on all burners now; and when they execute an especially intricate step, even Hamp waves over.

Malcolm is sweating and flushed and enormously elated. He sees that people are watching him, goading him on. He notices that Sophia, in particular, has not taken her eyes off him; she is clapping in time to his steps.

Seeing new stars in the making, the other dancers move to the side of the floor, marking time, yielding the dance floor to them. Laura and Malcolm go into a solo.

VARIOUS ANGLES

The crowd loves it. Malcolm and Sophia are very aware of each other. The finale is the classic drag, with Laura hanging limp around Malcolm's neck as he capers off the dance floor to the spontaneous applause of the audience.

CLOSE SHOT - SOPHIA (SLOW MOTION)

Clapping enthusiastically -- in open admiration.

CLOSE SHOT - SHORTY

Waiting to catch them as they come off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Shorty is whistling and shaking his hand appreciatively. He is also looking out for his dance partner.

SHORTY

Hey, man, gimme some skin.

MALCOLM

Shorty, this is Laura.

Laura is flushed and out of breath and joyous.

LAURA

'Lo. I've got to freshen up.

MALCOLM

Now you come back.

Laura laughs as she goes. She surely will be back.

SHORTY

That's a fine chick.

MALCOLM

Fine as May wine.

SHORTY

Except she live on the Hill and got a grandma.

MALCOLM

Make it too easy and it ain't no fun.

Then his vision catches Sophia, who is approaching him. She makes a simple, direct gesture, "Want to dance?" Malcolm eyes Shorty and wordlessly glides into Sophia's arms.

ANGLE - DANCE FLOOR

Immediately from the glances of the other men at the dance, he is the cynosure of all eyes. He has new status. It's a heady feeling because she is the first white girl he has even been with socially who is not an obvious whore. He begins to show off a little, cuts a few fine steps.

TWO SHOT

They are dancing closer than before. Sophia begins to rock his black world.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (2)

CLOSE - MALCOLM

Trying to play it cool -- but he is beginning to pant.
Not from the dancing, but from the situation: a gorgeous
white chick asking for it.

SOPHIA

Why don't you take your little
girl home, Red, and come on back?

He stops in his tracks. He can't believe it.

SOPHIA

Just walk. Don't run. It'll be
here when you get back.

He can only grin.

18 EXT. LAURA'S HOUSE (ROXBURY) - NIGHT

18

The porch of a respectable house. Malcolm with Laura; he
anxious to get away.

MALCOLM

I better not come in.

LAURA

I ain't stupid.

MALCOLM

I mean, it's late, baby.

LAURA

I know where you're going.

MALCOLM

I'm going to bed. I gotta work
tomorrow, need my rest.

Laura walks to the door.

MALCOLM

Baby, I'll call you tomorrow.

LAURA

What for? I ain't white and I
don't put out.

The front door opens; it's Laura's grandmother, MRS.
JOHNSON.

MALCOLM

'Night, Mrs. Johnson.

He runs down the porch steps.

INT. SOPHIA'S CAR - NIGHT

The lone light emits from the car RADIO, which plays THE INKSPOTS' "If I Didn't Care."

ANGLE - SOPHIA

Sophia pulls her tight sweater over her head to expose two full, ripe, white breasts. Malcolm's eyes are popping out of his head. (NOTE: It's very unusual for women not to wear a bra back in that day, but you might say Sophia was way ahead of her time.)

SOPHIA

Malcolm, look at them. Have you ever seen white breasts like these?

CLOSE - MALCOLM

He shakes his head.

SOPHIA

Put your black hands on them.

He is paralyzed.

SOPHIA

Please do as I say.

Malcolm touches one softly, then the other.

SOPHIA

Go 'head. They won't bite. Feel them, they're hot... harder, they won't break.

Malcolm is getting used to their feel, their squeezeability.

SOPHIA

Don't you love my breasts?

Malcolm mumbles something. He then kisses Sophia as if his black life depended on it and he commences to kill it.

SOPHIA

Hey, baby.

She stops him for a moment, but he buries his head in her long neck.

(CONTINUED)

19

CONTINUED:

SOPHIA

Am I the first white woman you've
been with?

She already knows the answer.

MALCOLM

Naw, you ain't. I had aplenty.

SOPHIA

... That isn't a whore?

Knowing she's right, Sophia becomes the aggressor.

ANGLE - TWO PAIRS OF LEGS

Malcolm and Sophia as they bone.

A beat -- both panting -- then Malcolm stops abruptly.
He raises his hand to his face, then to Sophia's hand,
which is still caressing him.

SOPHIA

That's alright. Baby, take your
time. Sophia's not going anywhere.
I told you to walk, don't run.

MALCOLM

Shut up. I don't like bitches that
talk.

CLOSE - SOPHIA

She shrugs, then moves to embrace him.

SOPHIA

Who wants to talk?

The couple starts at it again.

19A

INT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

19A

On the screen, Bogart and Cagney are blasting away the
dirty, flat-footed coppers with machine guns. It's one
of those great Warner Bros. gangster B movies, maybe
The Roaring Twenties.

ANGLE - MALCOLM AND SHORTY

Malcolm and Shorty sit, transfixed, in their seats.

(CONTINUED)

19A CONTINUED:

19A

MALCOLM

Don't you know, you can't hump the Bogart.

SHORTY

Eat lead, coppers.

20

EXT. BOSTON COMMONS - DAY

20

A bright, sunny day, long shadows in the park. The Commons is almost empty. Two improbable zoot-suited blacks race past trees, and run over the grass. Malcolm and Shorty are playing cops and robbers while passersby stare.

SHORTY

Bang, bang. You're dead.

MALCOLM

Naw, you missed me, copper. Try this on for size.

Malcolm fires an imaginary Tommy machine gun at Shorty.

SHORTY

I forgot to tell you I'm wearing a bulletproof vest.

MALCOLM

The hell you are.

SHORTY

I'm tired of always playing the cops. I wanna be Bogart sometimes.

MALCOLM

You're too small to be Bogart.

SHORTY

I'm not too short to be Cagney.

Shorty shoots Malcolm from behind.

SHORTY

Pow. Take that.

Malcolm acts as if he's been hit.

MALCOLM

Ahhh! You got me, you dirty, rotten, stinking copper, only a low-down yellow rat bastard would shoot a man in the back.

(CONTINUED)

20

CONTINUED:

Malcolm starts to stagger, this is a long, drawn-out Hollywood drawn-out death a la Cagney death in Public Enemy.

LOW ANGLE - MALCOLM

Malcolm falls directly INTO the CAMERA, face-first, and Shorty stands over him.

SHORTY

He used to be a big shot.

21
thru
23

OMITTED

21
thru
23

24

EXT. HARVARD LAW SCHOOL - DAY

24

The campus is deserted as they stand before one of the impressive buildings of the law school. Ivy, columns, majesty.

SHORTY

And on your right, ladies and gentlemen, is where they teach 'em how to keep niggers in their place.

Malcolm laughs, then looks up at the motto on the building. Carved on the facade is a Latin maxim meaning "Equal Justice Under Law." The laughter fades from his face. BELLS RING behind.

25

EXT. HARVARD LAW SCHOOL - DAY

25

They are dismissal BELLS, RESOUNDING now, across the campus as the students (all white) pour out of the building. They are self-concerned and don't even see the two black boys standing in their pathway. There is no malice involved, merely indifference. Malcolm and Shorty are brushed aside, forced onto the grass by the mass of exiting students.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

as he watches the crew-cuts go by.

26 EXT. TROLLEY TRACKS - NIGHT

26

In the same sweeping rhythm and from the same direction that the students came, the moving trolley comes closer and closer to the black man lying on the tracks. Earl Little's mouth opens in terror.

27 INT. HEARING ROOM - DAY

27

A room, clinically empty: table, chair, and MR. HOLWAY. He is putting papers into his briefcase; the hearing is concluded.

LOUISE

What you mean took his own life?!

HOLWAY

I'm sorry, ma'am. You heard the verdict.

LOUISE

A man bash in the back of his head with a hammer, lay down on the tracks and kill himself!

HOLWAY

We merely act on the verdict. We don't make them.

He is nearly out the door.

LOUISE

Do you pay or don't you?

HOLWAY

Read the policy, ma'am. It clearly states.

28 EXT. COMMONS (AS BEFORE) - DAY

28

The students have left. Shorty and Malcolm are alone.

SHORTY

Fuck 'em all, big and small. I got a fishtail Caddy and you got a white broad. We living, daddy.

MALCOLM

Yeah.

Shorty wants to break the mood that has descended on Malcolm.

SHORTY

All reet, baby.

(CONTINUED)

28

CONTINUED:

28

MALCOLM
(half-heartedly)
All right, then.

SHORTY
Hub of the Universe --

He repeats Malcolm's hand gesture. Malcolm laughs forcedly. There is no joy in it. The two walk off, become tiny figures lost IN THE FRAME. A RADIO begins PLAYING one of the syrupy white BALLADS of the period.

29

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

29

Malcolm lies in bed, naked under the sheet. A half-empty whiskey bottle and an ashtray full of butts are on the night table: last night's partying.

SOPHIA
You like 'em scrambled soft or hard, sweetie?

MALCOLM
C'mere.

WIDEN TO SHOW Sophia at the stove fixing eggs. She wears an apron and nothing else. It's a nicely furnished, middle-class apartment.

SOPHIA
Sweetie, they're almost ready.

MALCOLM
You hear me, girl?

She shrugs, shuts off the burner, smiles and ambles toward him.

SOPHIA
You the man.

MALCOLM
You better believe it.

She starts to sit down on the bed next to him.

MALCOLM
Sit over there.

He points to a nearby chair. Sophia makes an amiable hand-shrug and compliantly goes.

(CONTINUED)

29

CONTINUED:

SOPHIA

You evil this morning.

MALCOLM

What's your story, baby?

He doesn't want to hear it; he wants to talk. He goes right on:

MALCOLM

You one of them white bitches can't get enough black dick. Is that what you are?

Sophia smiles. She aims to please. Malcolm smacks the bed next to him. She gets up and comes over.

MALCOLM

Take it off.

She takes off the apron.

MALCOLM

Now kiss my feet. Kiss 'em!

CLOSEUP - SOPHIA

As Sophia bends to do so.

MALCOLM

Feed me.

ANGLE

Sophia now has the scrambled eggs on a plate at Malcolm's side. She spoons some into his mouth. He chews and swallows slowly, then grabs her head and brings it to his. A long, brutal kiss. Then he pulls her head away by the hair. She looks at him: anything he wants.

MALCOLM

Yeah, girl; that's your story. When you gonna holler 'rape,' sister?

SOPHIA

Me?

MALCOLM

You will, baby -- if the time come.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: (2)

29

SOPHIA

Lemme feed you, sweetie, while
they hot.

Malcolm lays back on the pillow and she holds out the
eggs to him.

MALCOLM

Sure wish you mama and papa could
see you now. And that ofay you
gonna marry.

30 EXT. BEACH - DAY

30

Bright sunlight. Malcolm and Laura are on a deserted
Cape beach. They are dressed but both have their shoes
and socks off, and he has his trousers rolled up. They
walk, like birds, avoiding getting their feet wet as the
waves come in.

LAURA

Malcolm, you can be anything you
want. You got class and you're
smart.

MALCOLM

All them books you read and you
still don't know nuthin'.

LAURA

I do know I love you.

Laura stops him and moves to him. Her kiss is a tender
one, exploratory. Then Malcolm responds, embracing her
fully. Her arms go around him as they both drop onto the
sand.

CLOSE - MALCOLM AND LAURA

LAURA

Oh, Malcolm, I love you. Please,
there's no one around.

Malcolm turns his head from her, he gets up.

MALCOLM

Let's go.

LAURA

Why? Is it because of your white
gal? Folks say you're running
around town with her.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

MALCOLM

Save it, baby. Save it for Mr. Right. 'Cause your grandma's smarter than you think.

LAURA

Is your mother alive?

MALCOLM

Yeah, she's alive.

31 OMITTED
&
32

31
&
32

33 INT. DRUGSTORE - EVENING

33

Laura is eating a banana split. Malcolm is smoking and drinking coffee.

MALCOLM

You know how dumb I was? I used to think that 'Not For Sale' was a brand name.

Laura looks over. She doesn't understand.

34 INT. LITTLE KITCHEN - DAY

34

Louise's hand reaches for a small sack of flour stamped "Not For Sale." She brings it down on the table with a hard, controlled whap.

MISS DUNNE (O.S.)

I did knock.

Louise doesn't look up.

LOUISE

Did you hear me say come in?

WIDEN to show Louise with a white social worker, MISS DUNNE, complete with pad, pencil and good will. Huddled out of sight, but nonetheless visible, are five small black children.

MISS DUNNE

There's no point in fighting about it. I'm sorry. May I sit down?

Louise is very aware of the children and struggling for self-possession.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUISE

As you nice enough to ask, we'll
get you one.

One of the children brings over a chair. Miss Dunne sets
out her papers.

MISS DUNNE

It's the same question, Mrs.
Little. Since the death of your
husband --

LOUISE

Murder.

MISS DUNNE

-- there is a serious question as
to whether --

LOUISE

They are my children. Mine. And
they ain't no question. None.

MISS DUNNE

I think sometimes, Mrs. Little,
candor is the only kindness.

PAN the children's faces.

MISS DUNNE

All of your children are
delinquent, Mrs. Little, and one,
at least, Malcolm is a thief.

LOUISE

Get out.

MISS DUNNE

(still sitting)
Your control over your children,
therefore --

LOUISE

Did you hear me?!

MISS DUNNE

You'll regret this, Mrs. Little.

LOUISE

If you don't move out through that
door, you're going to be past all
regretting.

The terror-stricken children huddle together.

(CONTINUED)

34

CONTINUED: (2)

FREEZE FRAME. It becomes a STILL.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

We were parcelled out, all five of us. I went to this reform school and lived at this woman's house. She was in charge.

SMALL CLEAN ROOM

with a cot, a chair and a bureau.

MRS. SWERLIN

(motherly; friendly)

This is your room, Malcolm. I know you'll keep it clean.

DINING ROOM TABLE

Five white boys around it.

MRS. SWERLIN

This is Malcolm, our new guest. We'll treat him like a brother.

CLASSROOM

MALCOLM (V.O.)

I was special. The only colored kid in class. I became a sort of mascot. Like a pink poodle.

SCHOOL YARD - KIDS

Playing in the school yard.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

I didn't know then that I was a nigger.

MALCOLM

playing basketball.

MALCOLM

speaking before his class.

(CONTINUED)

34

CONTINUED: (3)

34

MALCOLM

doing homework.

HORSE

having its teeth examined.

MRS. SWERLIN
 He's bright. Good grades.
 Fine athlete. President
 of his class.

MALCOLM (V.O.)
 They talked about me
 like I wasn't there.
 Like I was some kind
 of pedigreed dog or a
 horse. Like I was
 invisible.

35

INT. OSTROWSKI'S CLASSROOM - DAY

35

OSTROWSKI is talking to Malcolm, it's after school, the
 classroom is empty.

OSTROWSKI
 The important thing is to be
 realistic. We all like you. You
 know that. But you're a nigger
 and a lawyer is no realistic goal
 for a nigger...

MALCOLM
 But why, Mr. Ostrowski? I get the
 best grades in the class. I got
 voted the class president. I want
 to be a lawyer.

36

INT. DRUGSTORE - P.M.

36

Laura and Malcolm. Neither is talking. She is simply
 watching him as he sips his coffee and puffs on a
 cigarette.

36A

INT. OSTROWSKI'S CLASSROOM - DAY

36A

OSTROWSKI
 ... Think about something you can
 be. You're good with your hands.
 People would give you work. I
 would myself. Why don't you
 become a carpenter? That's a good
 profession for a nigra. Wasn't
 your pa a carpenter?

36B INT. DRUGSTORE - CLOSEUP - LAURA - P.M.

36B

LAURA
It's not the end of the world.

37 EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

37

As Malcolm, driving, roars away in Shorty's Cadillac; Sophia at his side in the front seat. Shorty and two white chicks are in the back, all drinking out of a bottle, all high as kites.

MALCOLM
Fucking right, baby. It's only just the beginning.

38 SIGN

38

Bright sunlight. It reads "KALAMAZOO STATE HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE."

39 INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - DAY

39

Malcolm is with Louise, who sits in a chair at a window. She addresses him but without the slightest recognition of who he is.

LOUISE
I said it just as plain; I said. Don't let them feed that boy no pig. Because he got enough of the devil in him already. I told her she ain't got no reason talk to me that way because my hair blow in the wind.

MALCOLM
Mama, don't.

LOUISE
You want my skin. All right, I'll give it to you. I'll scrape it off. See how you like it...

She goes right on talking, although we do not hear her words. We GO IN ON her eyes TO an EXTREME CLOSEUP.

The sound of a SPEEDING TRAIN is heard.

40 EXT. YANKEE CLIPPER - DAY

40

The crack train of the New York, New Haven & Hartford speeds through the New England countryside.

INT. GALLEY OF TRAIN - NIGHT

THREE ELDERLY BLACK WAITERS and Malcolm, wearing a sandwichman's uniform, are crowded around a portable radio in the galley where food is prepared. The four stand around TULLY, a bland-faced personification of fine Pullman service. They are all listening to the Joe Louis-Max Schmeling heavyweight championship fight.

TULLY

Nigger, shut up so we can hear.

MALCOLM

C'mon, Joe.

WAITER #1

Turn it up, Tully.

TULLY

It is up. Fool, be quiet.

WAITER #2

Tully, move the antenna...

Tully fixes with the knobs.

WAITER #3

This guy Max is rough.

TULLY

Joe is just keeping his cool.
He's feeling him out.

The Waiters are acting as if they're at ringside.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Louis moves in, he fires a left,
another left, a looping right,
Schmeling goes down.

The Waiters are going crazy.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

The referee leads Louis to the
neutral corner.

TULLY

He let out that mule. Got that
Nazi with a mule.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Seven, eight, nine, ten. We have
a new heavyweight champion, Joe
Louis -- Joe Louis.

(CONTINUED)

41

CONTINUED:

41

The Waiters are all jumping up and down when the galley door opens. MR. COOPER, the white man in charge of the kitchen, pops his head in.

COOPER

What in hell's going on?

In a moment's notice Tully and the others have resumed their customary, servient roles.

TULLY

Nothing, Mr. Cooper.

COOPER

Got a lot of hungry customers out there.

TULLY

Yes, sir, Mr. Cooper, soup done finished.

COOPER

Stop the talk, get moving. You, too.

MALCOLM

On my way, Mr. Charlie.

Cooper eyes him narrowly.

COOPER

The name is Mr. Cooper and don't you forget it. Mr. Cooper.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Ladies and gentlemen, one minute and fifteen seconds of the eighth round...

42
thru
44

OMITTED

42
thru
44

45

INT. PASSENGER TRAIN - DAY

45

as Malcolm hefts his sandwich basket and a large container of coffee down the aisle, hawking as he goes.

MALCOLM

Get your good haaaam and cheeeeeeese sandwiches. I got coffee, I got cake and I got ice cream too. Right here.

(CONTINUED)

45

CONTINUED:

ANGLE - FAVORING WHITE CUSTOMER, BLADES

BLADES

Hey, boy. Gimme a cheese on white
and coffee.

Malcolm's mood is exuberant: the fight is still in his
ears. He makes the delivery with a flourish and a smile.

MALCOLM

Yes, sir. Best in the house.

BLADES

You mighty pleased with yourself,
boy

MALCOLM

Yes, sir. I aims to please.

BLADES

I like you, boy.

INSERT - FANTASY PROJECTION

Malcolm picks up a slab of cream pie and pushes it in
Blades' face.

BACK TO PASSENGER CAR

Normality again: Malcolm finishes serving him with
complete servility. He pulls out a bill.

BLADES

Keep the change.

And takes a satisfying bite out of his thin sandwich.

46

EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS IN HARLEM - P.M.

46

As the Clipper surfaces in Harlem, pulls up to the 125th
Street station.

47

EXT. 125TH STREET STATION - P.M.

47

Malcolm, out of uniform and dressed in his zoot suit,
comes down from the Park Avenue station in Harlem. He is
hit with the sights and sounds. Everything delights him:
the noise, the lights, the women, the pimps, the signs,
the windows, the crowds, the laughter, the MUSIC.

48
thru
50

OMITTED

48
thru
50

50A

ANGLE - CROWD

50A

A CROWD of people run by Malcolm yelling and screaming.

CROWD

The Brown Bomber, The Brown Bomber,
Joe Louis, the heavyweight champion
of the world. Joe got the belt
back. Lawd have mercy. Great day
in the morning.

ANGLE - MALCOLM

He runs after them.

50B

EXT. 125TH AND LENOX AVENUE

50B

All traffic has stopped, there is a huge spontaneous celebration going on. Black folks are everywhere, it seems as if all of Harlem is out on the streets. The citizens of Harlem are hugging, kissing, drinking, dancing, folks are hanging from street lamps, yelling out their windows, holding up handmade Joe Louis banners, everyone has great reason to be joyous. The heavyweight champion of the world is a black man -- Joe Louis, the Brown Bomber, he has regained his championship.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

Malcolm quickly looks at his watch, he's running late for his train, as he fights his way through the crowd like a salmon going upstream, the CAMERA CRANES UP to see him eventually get lost in a sea of black humanity "cutting loose."

FADE OUT.

51
thru
56

OMITTED

51
thru
56

FADE IN:

57

EXT. SEVENTH AVENUE - NIGHT

57

Malcolm, newly conked and sharp as a tack (zoot suit, trouser crease like a knife's edge, orange knob-toed shoes) walks toward his goal: Small's Paradise.

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED:

The street is crowded with people, kids and HUSTLERS.

YOUNG HOOKER

Slow down, daddy, what's your hurry?
Lemme show you somepin brand new.

Malcolm smiles "no thanks"; keeps moving.

HUSTLER

Hey, man, hundred dollar ring --
diamond; and a ninety dollar watch.
Take the both of them for a
quarter; twenty-five bucks.

Malcolm waves; he's not having any. Goes on.

58

EXT. SMALL'S PARADISE - NIGHT

58

Before entering, Malcolm sharps himself a bit, picking
off some lint, cocking his hat. And enters.

59

INT. SMALL'S PARADISE - NIGHT

59

The restaurant is crowded, both at the bar and at the
tables beyond. The immediate impression is of subdued
well-being, of decorum, of easy affluence. This is the
world Malcolm wants into. He digs it, drinking in its
details.

ANGLE - BAR

A big man, FOX, accidentally bumps into Malcolm almost
knocking him over.

MALCOLM

The word is excuse me.

FOX

Look, country boy, you shouldn't
have been in my way.

Everyone becomes quiet in the bar.

FOX

So what are you gonna do? Go run
home to your home.

Malcolm grabs a bottle off the bar counter and, with
lightning speed, brings it crashing down on Fox's head.
As he lays on the floor with head bleeding, Malcolm kicks
him in the stomach two times. It's done, the fight is
over and people pull him off of Fox.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MALCOLM

Don't ever again in life step on
my Florsheims again, and never
talk 'bout my mother.

ANGLE WITH MALCOLM AND BARTENDER

MALCOLM

Gimme a whiskey.

The BARTENDER pours him a double.

MALCOLM

I ordered a single, Jack.

BARTENDER

The double's on that gentleman.
Jack!

He points.

FROM MALCOLM'S POV - ARCHIE AT TABLE

The elderly man nods. He is big, he is very black. The
same color as Malcolm's father.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

He raises his glass, toasts ARCHIE and downs it. Then
leaning into the bar, asks:

MALCOLM

Who is he, man?

BARTENDER

That's West Indian Archie.

MALCOLM

Whut's he do?

The Bartender would not normally answer this, but Malcolm
is the man of the moment, so the Bartender speaks:

BARTENDER

This and that.

Malcolm nods, then looks over again at Archie -- in
appreciation. Archie wiggles a finger for him to come
over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

AT ARCHIE'S TABLE

Malcolm is standing.

ARCHIE

Sit down. We ain't fixing to eat you. You look brand new in town. Pretty handy with a bottle.

Malcolm sits. There are no introductions. He just nods at SAMTY and CADILLAC.

ARCHIE

What they call you?

MALCOLM

Red, and I ain't no punk.

ARCHIE

You better not be. 'Cause if a cat toe you down in this town, you better stand up or make tracks.

SAMTY

Man live by his rep.

ARCHIE

That's a fact. What you do, boy?

MALCOLM

I'm working trains. Selling.

ARCHIE

Bet you like that shit.

MALCOLM

Keeps me out of the Army.

ARCHIE

When they want your ass, won't nothing keep you out.

MALCOLM

Not this boy. I ain't fighting their war. I got my own. Right here. Heard tell you're a good man to know.

ARCHIE

Heard where?

MALCOLM

Where I come from. Boston.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: (3)

Sammy and Cadillac are watching a little skeptically. Archie is flattered.

ARCHIE

Sombitch and I ain't never been to Beantown.

MALCOLM

Man's rep travels.

ARCHIE

How 'bout that?

Then seeing Sammy and Cadillac's dubious visages, Archie adds:

ARCHIE

You ain't bullshitting me, is you, boy?

MALCOLM

My papa taught me one thing: don't never bullshit a West Indian bullshit artist.

Archie laughs. Even Sammy smiles. Cadillac still holds his judgment.

ARCHIE

Is your papa West Indian?

MALCOLM

No, my mama. She's from Grenada.

ARCHIE

I like you, country.

SAMMY

Only where'd you get them goddam vines.

CADILLAC

And them shoes. Oh, my.

ARCHIE

Yeah, got to do something about you.

SAMMY

You putting a hurtin' on my vision.

Sammy covers his eyes. Malcolm plays off the insults.

(CONTINUED)

MALCOLM

Where can I get a hold of you.

ARCHIE

YOU can't. I'll get a hold of you.

MALCOLM

Lemme write it down for you.

Malcolm reaches for a pencil.

ARCHIE

Don't never write nothing down.

File it up here, like I do.

(touching his head)

'Cause if they can't find no paper
they ain't got no proof. Ya dig?

MALCOLM

Yes, sir.

Archie looks at him sharply.

ARCHIE

Boy, look me in the face.

Malcolm does so.

ARCHIE

Did you just now con me?

A pause.

MALCOLM

Yes, sir.

ARCHIE

Why?

MALCOLM

'Cause I want in. And it don't
take a lot to know you there, daddy.

Archie and Sammy laugh at his directness. Cadillac
smiles.

Archie pushes back his chair, about to get up.

ARCHIE

I got me a little run to make.

Malcolm has suddenly been excluded and he wants des-
perately back in.

(CONTINUED)

MALCOLM

Can I run with you, Mr. Archie?

Archie eyes him, weighing him seriously.

ARCHIE

I like your heart and I like your style. You might just do, Red. Lessen you got to git back to that train job.

MALCOLM

I done told the man what he could do with his train.

ARCHIE

When?

MALCOLM

Just now.

The three established hustlers smile at the newcomer in their midst.

ARCHIE

Come on, baby. We going shopping...

EXT. SEVENTH AVENUE - DUSK

The education of Malcolm X as a big-time hustler is underway. There is a father-son thing here, on both sides: Malcolm taking pride in Archie's knowledge and experience; Archie in Malcolm's quickness and intelligence.

EXT. BAR ON AVENUE - LATER

Archie and Malcolm are headed into a bar. Archie lets Malcolm try the door. But it's locked and does not yield.

MALCOLM

It ain't open.

ARCHIE

Oh, it's open. If you the right fold. They don't want just anybody floating in. Ya dig?

MALCOLM

No.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

Archie smiles, raps on the small window of the bar door with a coin: three taps, a pause and a fourth. Clearly a pre-arranged signal. The door CLICKER BUZZES and the two walk in.

62 INT. RIP'S BAR - SAME TIME

It's packed and the men greet Archie as the door closes behind him. It's a loud bar (unlike Small's) and the MUSIC POURS OUT, the greetings are loud and hearty.

SKULLY

How about that seven, seven, seven?

ARCHIE

Yeah, like to bust my back.
Where's Rip at?

SKULLY

He minding the store.

ANGLE - RIP'S BAR

Malcolm and Archie stand before a drawn curtain on one side of the bar. Archie pulls the curtain to one side.

FROM MALCOLM'S POV - RIP AND CLOTHING RACKS

They are looking at racks of clothing; you name it, Rip has it: furs, women's dresses, men's overcoats, shoes, suede jackets, men's suits. RIP, a sweet-faced fence with a nice leathered face, smiles over at Archie.

RIP

Hey, baby, close the flap. You letting in a draft.

Archie does so.

ARCHIE

Gimme some skin.

He and Rip slap hands.

ARCHIE

How you doing? No heat?

RIP

Me? Never happens.

(CONTINUED)

ARCHIE

Rip, this is my main man, Red.
Fit him up.

Now Rip looks Malcolm over, as the outfitter in a fine men's shop might.

RIP

You's a 28 regular. Lemme show
you something.

He selects a dark garment.

RIP

Petrocelli -- mohair. Feel of it.

Archie, a father buying his son some clothes, feels the fabric.

ARCHIE

Nice, you like that, Red?

Malcolm is delighted with the selection; it's the kind of suit Archie is wearing.

RIP

Slip this on, baby. Just for size.

Malcolm starts to remove his own coat.

RIP

How you like the cuff? Just
touching or little short?

ARCHIE

How they wearing 'em this year?

RIP

Little short.

Malcolm has the new jacket on now.

RIP

Mmm, ummm. You can sho' wear
vines. Glass over yonder, baby.

He gestures a mirror.

Malcolm is looking at himself in a mirror in Archie's room. He has on the full outfit now, together with a new white on white shirt and a Sulka tie. Looks great.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARCHIE

Just the middle button, baby.
Just the middle one.

Malcolm buttons the jacket and turns around, demonstrating for Archie's inspection.

ARCHIE

You looking good, Red. Real clean.
Clean as the board of health. But
you missing something.

MALCOLM

What?

ARCHIE

Frisk me, baby. Give me a real
pat-down.

Malcolm doesn't understand, but he senses something --
and becomes excited. Archie has walked over to him.

ARCHIE

Go ahead. Do me.

Malcolm frisks him carefully: pats his sides, his
pockets, under his arms, his legs. Archie is clean to
the touch.

ARCHIE

(triumphantly)

And I'm still carrying.

He smacks the small of his back. Then, reaching under
his coat, he takes a revolver out from the middle of his
back. And hands it to Malcolm.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

Holding the deadly instrument, fascinated by it, hefting
it, feeling its power.

ARCHIE

It's yours, baby. Put it on.

Malcolm slips it carefully into the small of his back,
behind his trouser belt. His first gun: the feeling
shines in his eyes, Bogart has become a black man.

ARCHIE

How's it feel?

MALCOLM

Solid, daddy.

(CONTINUED)

63

CONTINUED: (2)

63

ARCHIE

Okay, baby. Now you outfitted.
You ready to tackle the street?

MALCOLM

Let 'em come. I'm ready.

64

INT./EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - SERIES OF CLOSE SHOTS

64

A five dollar bill. CAMERA GOES IN for the last three digits.

The stock market board at the end of a day's trading. GO IN for the last three numbers.

Preacher in a pulpit, reading from the Bible.

PREACHER

Let us turn to the Gospel according
to St. John. Chapter 3, verse 23.

VOICE (O.S.)

Three, two, three.

Malcolm scribbles the number onto a piece of paper.

CLOSE - CASH REGISTER

RINGING up an amount: \$2.98

VOICE (O.S.)

Two, nine, eight.

Malcolm's hand writes out the number.

CLOSE - TRAIN TERMINAL SIGN

It reads "New York to Chicago." PAN DOWN to show "Train arrives 1:05."

VOICE (O.S.)

One, zero, five.

Archie with Malcolm as the latter writes down "1, 0, 5."

ARCHIE

I told you less paper, less trouble.

MALCOLM

I'm working on it.

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED:

64

ARCHIE

I keep all my numbers in my head.
I've never written any down.

He taps his head.

CLOSE - FACE OF ELDERLY WOMAN

ELDERLY WOMAN

I saw it in my dream. Five, five,
five. And last week my sister had
a dream and she hit.

CLOSE - FACE OF ELDERLY BARBER

BARBER

I got it from Ching Chow. It got
to be two, five, one.

65 OMITTED
thru
68

65
thru
68

68A INT. MOVIE THEATRE - CLOSE - MALCOLM - NIGHT

68A

We are TIGHT ON Malcolm's intense face, he is pulling on
a joint. We hear Bogart BLASTING his way out of a police
blockade.

A PHONE RINGS.

69 INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT (BOSTON) NIGHT

69

In her well-to-do apartment, Sophia passes her husband,
reading the stock reports in the evening paper, as she
goes to answer the phone.

SOPHIA

Hello.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

It's me.

Sophia is excited by his call. She watches her husband
carefully as she speaks.

SOPHIA

Aunt Martha, how are you?

70

INT. BRADDOCK BAR - PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

70

Malcolm is on the phone with the door open. B.g. sounds of MUSIC and LAUGHTER are heard.

MALCOLM

That chump with you?

INTERCUT BETWEEN Sophia and the phone booth:

SOPHIA

Yes, he's here.

(to husband)

Aunt Martha says hello.

Husband bobs his head in acknowledgement.

Malcolm smiles.

MALCOLM

Look, bitch, don't talk. Just listen. You haul white ass and git down here quick. Check into the Braddock Hotel. And bring some real bread. I'll be there when I get there.

71

INT. ARCHIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

71

There is MUSIC PLAYING. Wordlessly, Archie sprinkles a few grains of fine crystal onto a round shaving mirror. He slides it across a table to Malcolm and hands him a short straw. Sophia sits next to Malcolm; she and Archie are already high. Malcolm leans over the mirror, placing the straw in his nostril.

TIGHT CLOSE SHOT - MALCOLM'S FACE

IN THE MIRROR (something satanic about him) -- as he sniffs the cocaine well into his nose.

A beat as he leans back waiting for the drug to take hold, Malcolm looks into dressing mirror.

ARCHIE

It hit?

MALCOLM

Nnnnnnn.

Malcolm with gun in hand does his Bogart gangster imitations.

(CONTINUED)

71

CONTINUED:

71

ARCHIE

Ain't nothing in the world to give you that real deep cool. Like girl. You there?

MALCOLM

I'm there, Daddy. Whewww. I'm cool enough to kill.

ARCHIE

Bet you are.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

FREEZE FRAME.

72
thru
74

OMITTED

72
thru
74

75

EXT. SMALL'S PARADISE - NIGHT

75

A miserable night, RAINING and cold. Malcolm turns into the bar.

76

INT. BAR - NIGHT

76

Shaking off the rain as Malcolm walks through. He is a familiar figure to the bar's denizens. He is met with AD LIB cries:

"Hey, Red," "Have a taste," from the men; and from the women: "Come here, sugar," "Where you been?"

One man stands apart. He is Detective Holmes.

Malcolm acknowledges the greetings, strolls down into the bar. It's immediately clear that a subtle change has come over him. He is no longer the neophyte, but a well-groomed, smooth, fully-possessed hustler.

ANGLE - BOOTH

Malcolm sits into the booth and motions for the waitress.

ANGLE - HONEY

A fine copper tan waitress comes to him.

(CONTINUED)

HONEY

I thought you said we were going to the movies last night.

MALCOLM

I said a lot of things.

HONEY

And like a fool I believe it.

MALCOLM

Do your job, get me a bourbon on the rocks and a pack of cigarettes.

Honey stares at him.

MALCOLM

I said now.

She leaves. He leans his head back against the booth -- thinking.

FEMALE (O.S.)

Daniel come in yet, Honey?

Malcolm turns his head sharply at the sound of the voice. It's familiar. He looks toward the bar and sees the girl who asked the question.

MALCOLM'S POV - LAURA

It's Laura, but not the Laura we last saw.

She is still young, still vulnerable, but she is bolder, more self-assured, more vividly-dressed. She is unaware of Malcolm.

HONEY

Ain't that him now?

ANGLE FAVORING DANIEL

He is a young, cocky, nervous, ginger-bread colored boy who comes over to her quickly. He passes Detective Holmes at the corner of the bar. He quickly grabs Laura's neck and kisses her hungrily.

DANIEL

Hey, gorgeous, how you been?
Waiting long? Lemme see you.
Wow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

It's obvious he's a junkie. And in need of a fix.
Quick.

SHOT - MALCOLM

Honey places his drink and cigarettes before him. He's watching, taking it all in immediately. Laura is clearly crazy about Daniel.

ANGLE - LAURA AND DANIEL

LAURA

How are you, darling?

DANIEL

Fine, copacetic, great. Baby, did you work today?

LAURA

You know what time we wound up last night.

DANIEL

I need a five spot.

LAURA

Baby, I gave you ten this morning.

DANIEL

Gimme the goddam five dollars.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

He looks, then belts down his drink.

CLOSER - LAURA AND DANIEL

Daniel motions to her pocketbook and she takes out a 10-dollar bill. He grabs it, and heads for the door.

WITH MALCOLM AND HONEY

She has been watching Malcolm.

HONEY

You know that chick?

MALCOLM

Mind your own goddam business...
She come in a lot?

(CONTINUED)

HONEY

'Bout every other night, Red.

MALCOLM

With him?

Honey nods.

MALCOLM

She know?

HONEY

If she got eyes she do.

ANGLE - LAURA

Walking toward the door, looking for Daniel. She leaves the bar.

CLOSE - MALCOLM AND HONEY

MALCOLM

Is she hooking?

HONEY

Not yet. But the way things going, that boy gonna turn her out any day now.

Malcolm smacks the table in frustration.

HONEY

You love that girl?

CLOSE - GLASS

The glass on the table is trembling.

ANGLE - MALCOLM AND HONEY

MALCOLM

Shut up, bitch.

He raises his arm to hit her and it is held.

ARCHIE

Don't do that.

Archie is standing above him. Malcolm nods, and Archie lets his arm go; standing next to him is Sophia.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MALCOLM

Honey, he didn't mean it.

Archie wiggles his hand. Honey goes, but not before throwing daggers at Malcolm and Sophia. Archie sits down, takes a cigar. For a good beat there is a coolness between them. Then Malcolm reaches over and lights Archie's cigar. Sophia stares at her man, he then motions for her to sit down beside him.

ARCHIE

Thanks. You got it. Who's beating on you, Red? You looking a little uptight.

The father-son thing is back, but Malcolm will never again be the student.

MALCOLM

I ain't. But I might be tied up a couple of days.

By way of explanation he tosses an envelope in front of Archie. Archie opens it.

ARCHIE

Well, well. Little old draft notice. You might be tied up a coupla years, Red.

MALCOLM

Not this mother.

ARCHIE

Yeah. I been hearing you rap 'bout you ain't gonna fight they war. What you gonna do about it? Mr. Hot Shot.

MALCOLM

Just you watch.

SOPHIA

Be careful, baby.

Archie looks over.

MALCOLM

D'ya see the roller down front?

SHOT - DETECTIVE

Nursing a drink at the bar.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

ARCHIE (O.S.)

Big as life.

WITH MALCOLM AND ARCHIE

MALCOLM

Well, here I go.

He gets up and addresses the bar.

MALCOLM

Hey, y'all. Just got my greetings
from Uncle Sam, the biggest sap
of them all. Well, here I come...

People are watching, amused, puzzled.

MALCOLM

Malcolm Little is the name;
fighting is my game. I'm
volunteering. For the Jap Army.

ARCHIE

You got a big ugly mouth.

MALCOLM

Yeah, and I'm putting my money
where my ugly mouth is. I'm
putting you back in the numbers
right now.

(to Sophia)

Baby, what's today?

Sophia is not sure of this, or anything else.

SOPHIA

August 2nd, I think. Yeah.

She laughs at her achievement. Malcolm goes to open Sophia's purse.

MALCOLM

Okay, put me down for a
combination. Combinate me, daddy:
8,2,1. You got me? 8,1,2;1,8,2...

With each number he throws a bill at Archie.

MALCOLM

1,2,8;2,8,1. I git 'em all?

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED: (6)

76

ARCHIE
 (angrily taking the
 money)
 I'll take your goddam bet.

Malcolm slides his tongue down Sophia's throat, then waves his notice on high; he starts for the door. The detective watches him narrowly. As Malcolm leaves, the detective heads for an open phone, drops a coin in and starts dialing.

77 EXT. INDUCTION CENTER - CLOSE SHOT - RECRUITING POSTER 77
 - DAY

It is torn off. PULLBACK SHOWS Malcolm, zoot-suited and newly conked, has ripped the poster from a stand just outside the Army Induction Center.

78 INT. INDUCTION CENTER - DAY 78

SERGEANT ROCK
 All right, I'm gonna say this
 once. Strip down to your socks
 and shorts. Clothes over there.
 Let's go.

A long, desultory line of inductees, mostly white, some black; but all nervous. All the inductees are stripped down, as instructed. To the side of the line is SERGEANT ROCK, very GI, very tough.

SERGEANT ROCK
 Now form two single lines: white
 to the right, coloreds to the left.
 Hop to it.

The two lines begin to form, the inductees eyeing each other; segregation begins in the U.S. Army at once.

MALCOLM (O.S.)
 Shit, man, this gonna take all
 day...

All the nervous eyes, and especially the Sergeant's, turn back to where the commotion is coming from.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Malcolm, in shorts and socks, at the end of the line of blacks.

(CONTINUED)

MALCOLM

... Where the hell do you go to
git some action?

SERGEANT ROCK

Knock it off, fella.

MALCOLM

Man, looka me. I don't need no
physical. Gimme a gun. I'm gone
kill me a hundred nips. A goddam
thousand.

The Sergeant is standing in front of him, glaring.

SERGEANT ROCK

I told you to knock it off.

MALCOLM

'Fore I'm done I'll make chicken
Colonel.

Rock grabs him by the arm and yanks him out of line.

SERGEANT ROCK

Okay, Colonel, this way.

He pushes Malcolm ahead of him.

78A CLOSE SHOT - SIGN

78A

"PSYCHIATRIC SECTION" and below that: "NO SMOKING, NO
TALKING."

NURSE BROWN

Sit down.

ANOTHER ANGLE

SHOWS Malcolm standing before an empty bench. Two
doctors' cubbyholes are behind. NURSE BROWN, an attrac-
tive, light-skinned black, in starched uniform, is at a
desk between Malcolm and the offices. Malcolm pulls
unlit cigarette from his underwear and motions for a
light.

Someone leaves one of the booths, a sad-eyed black
inductee. He hands a card to the Nurse as he leaves.

NURSE BROWN

Doctor will see you now in one.

She gestures to the left booth.

INT. DOCTOR'S BOOTH - DAY

DOCTOR McCOY is one of those thoughtful psychiatrists, sucking the earpiece of his glasses as he talks.

DOCTOR McCOY
You want to fight, Little?

MALCOLM
You with it, daddy.

Doctor is looking at a 6x8 file card on Malcolm.

DOCTOR McCOY
Can't wait to get into it?

MALCOLM
Solid, man.

DOCTOR McCOY
Why?

MALCOLM
You axe me a question like that?
Where's your patriotism, man?
They done wasted us at Pearl.

DOCTOR McCOY
Pearl Harbor was two years ago.

MALCOLM
I'll be goddamned, nobody told me,
till today. Ain't that a bitch.

The Doctor taps his file card.

DOCTOR McCOY
What's this about joining the
Japanese Army?

MALCOLM
Who said that?

DOCTOR McCOY
You did. Several times.

MALCOLM
They got that on the wire? Damn,
spies everywhere. Wait a second,
daddy.

Malcolm looks around the cubbyhole, pretending caution,
and lowers his voice.

(CONTINUED)

MALCOLM

They might be in here, too. You ain't none, is you?

DOCTOR McCOY

What's that supposed to mean?

He whispers.

MALCOLM

Got to be careful. That Jap talk's camouflage.

DOCTOR McCOY

What?

MALCOLM

Hold it.

Malcolm gets up, goes to the door, falls prone on the floor and peeks under it. The Doctor might say something, but Malcolm presses an urgent finger to his lips. Then he stands up and quickly opens the door -- to see if anyone is listening. There is no one there.

MALCOLM'S POV - NURSE BROWN

Busy at her desk, she frowns at him.

BACK TO SCENE

Malcolm closes the door softly.

MALCOLM

Don't never trust a foreign nigger. That's chick's Haitian.

DOCTOR McCOY

You better sit down and tell me what you're talking about.

It's crowded now and Archie and Malcolm are sitting at their table with Sammy and Sophia. All listening to his account of his interview.

MALCOLM

That's when I let him have it. Both barrels. 'Baby,' I says, 'we both from up north' --

81 INT. DOCTOR'S BOOTH - DAY

81

MALCOLM

-- so I know you'll dig this.
When I put on that brown they
gonna ship me south. And they
gonna give me a gun and teach me
how to use it. And they gonna
teach a lot of cats like me how
to use them. And you know what
we gonna do, man --

82 INT. SMALL'S - NIGHT

82

Archie, Sammy and Sophia hanging on his words.

MALCOLM

We gonna organize. We gonna start
shooting up them redneck crackers...

83 INT. DOCTOR'S BOOTH - DAY

83

MALCOLM

... All them goddam redneck
crackers, we gonna blow they
redneck motherfucking heads off.

The Doctor is simply staring at him.

ARCHIE (V.O.)

Whut he say?

MALCOLM (V.O.)

Nothing. His mouth just flapped
open. Damn Sam, how soon can you
gimme that brown and that little
old M-1?

SOPHIA (V.O.)

What he say then?

The Doctor takes his glasses out of his mouth, looks
over at Malcolm.

DOCTOR McCOY

I'll have to -- make out my report.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

And here it is.

84 INT. SMALL'S (AS BEFORE)

84

Malcolm holding up a draft card.

(CONTINUED)

MALCOLM

4F.

They all laugh.

SAMMY

Hey, honey, bring us a round.

ARCHIE

Here you go, Red.

He hands Malcolm a cigar -- and while Malcolm wets it, bites it and puts it in his mouth, Archie lights a match.

MALCOLM

My only regret, like the feller said, is that I ain't got but the one life to give to my goddam country.

He puffs, pulling on the cigar, lighting it.

ARCHIE

I know ain't nothing you don't know. But don't never sit with you back to no door.

MALCOLM

I never do, daddy-o. Now pay me.

ARCHIE

What you talking about?

MALCOLM

You owe me six big ones.

Archie looks at him, non-comprehending.

MALCOLM

1,2,8 hit didn't it?

ARCHIE

You didn't have no 1,2,8.

MALCOLM

Was you that high? Old man, I threw the slats at you. I said to combinate me.

ARCHIE

You never had it.

(CONTINUED)

MALCOLM

The bitch was there.

Archie doesn't even look at Sophia.

ARCHIE

Shit, what else she gonna say?

MALCOLM

Then skip it, man. But you slipping, baby. You done slipped.

Archie is controlling himself. Everyone in Small's is all ears, a falling out between Red and Archie -- their reps are at stake.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Archie looks at Sammy. Sammy is neutral. Archie digs in his pockets, comes up with a roll. He peels off six \$100 bills and throws them on the table in front of himself, as he gets up.

MALCOLM

Oh, sit down, man. What you tasting? I'm buying.

ARCHIE

I ain't drinking hot piss with you. Come on, Sam.

SAMMY

Be right there.

Archie goes.

SAMMY

Twenty-two years he didn't never forget no number.

MALCOLM

Got to be a first time, daddy-o.

SAMMY

He gonna check the collector he turn into. His rep is on the line, boy, and so's yours. If you lying, one of you is dead.

MALCOLM

Ain't gonna be this mother.

Sammy goes.

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED: (3)

MALCOLM
Come on, sweetlips, I got us some
G-I-R-L, girl. Let's you and me
fly.

He kisses Sophia possessively.

85 EXT. ONYX CLUB - NIGHT

85

The well-known 52nd Street night spot features Billie Holliday. A stand-up cutout of her is outside.

86 INT. ONYX CLUB - NIGHT

86

This is a plush nightclub, with a mixed black and white audience. Some of the hustlers from Small's are in evidence.

CLOSE - BILLIE

LADY DAY starts into "You Don't Know What Love Is."

ANGLE - TABLE

Malcolm and Sophia, high as a kite and on the town.

CLOSE - ARCHIE

He makes his way toward Malcolm's table. There is murder in his eyes.

ANGLE - TABLE

ARCHIE
You're a damn liar.

CLOSE - ARCHIE

ARCHIE
You took me, you bastard, and now
I'm taking you.

ANGLE - TABLE

MALCOLM
It's me or you, ain't it, pops?

(CONTINUED)

ARCHIE

You know it.

MALCOLM

I'll give you back the 600.

ARCHIE

I don't want your money.

MALCOLM

I'm wearing, Archie.

ARCHIE

There's two guns on you.

His eyes gesture. Malcolm looks:

MALCOLM'S POV - SAMMY

At the nearby bar: his hand in his coat pocket.

CLOSE - ARCHIE

His hand is also in his pocket.

MALCOLM

And every cat's watching, ain't they? It's a toe-down.

ARCHIE

That's what it is. Walk on out.

MALCOLM

Let Billie finish.

ARCHIE

Now.

Archie backs away from the table, his gun on Malcolm.

ANOTHER ANGLE

As Sammy moves a step toward Malcolm, Malcolm rises in his seat.

SOPHIA

You had the number.

(CONTINUED)

86

CONTINUED: (2)

86

MALCOLM

Baby, I got to let this old man
win. Keep the faith, and tell
Billie I'll see her later.

CLOSE - BILLIE

She knows what's going on.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Sammy and Archie are walking behind Malcolm, when he
pushes a waitress into their path; with drinks flying
everywhere, Malcolm darts away.

87

INT. ENTRANCE TO THE TOILET

87

He races into the men's room.

ANGLE

Archie and Sammy run after him.

88

INT. MEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

88

There is an open window. Archie is leaning out, looking
both ways.

89

ARCHIE'S POV - OUTSIDE MEN'S ROOM WINDOW - NIGHT

89

A tiny alleyway. No one is visible.

ARCHIE

The dirty, yellow, rat bastard.

90

INT. MEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

90

SAMMY

Don't push it. You way ahead.
You back on top. That boy loves
you, man.

ARCHIE

What you say?

SAMMY

He gave it to you, Archie. He did.

91 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

91

Malcolm comes running out of an alleyway and onto the street. He stops to catch his breath, to regain his composure. He is shook up, frustrated, but mostly saddened. He then runs down the block OUT OF FRAME into Harlem night.

91A INT. LITTLE HOUSE (LANSING, MICHIGAN) - CLOSE - EARL
- NIGHT (REMEMBERED TIME)

91A

Earl is sitting up in bed, he wakes his sleeping wife, Louise; next to her is a baby in a crib; another child sleeps between Earl and her.

ANGLE - HOUSE

Outside the house, five riders of the BLACK LEGION. The Black Legion are dressed in the style of the KKK, but in black sheets rather than white, even their horses sport black cone hats and sheets. We see gasoline cans being passed around.

91B INT. HOUSE - ANGLE - EARL AND LOUISE - NIGHT

91B

EARL

Somebody out there. Wake the children.

Earl starts to put on his overalls and reaches for his gun, which sits on a nearby chair, when an explosion of flames greets the house.

EARL

Everybody out. Out! Out! Get the kids.

ANGLE - CHILDREN'S BEDROOM

FLAMES ROAR through the room and the Little kids are hysterical. Louise rushes in and pushes them past the fire, she has infant in hand covered in a blanket.

91C EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

91C

The entire house is in flames. The Little family stands in front of it, just out of harm's way.

(CONTINUED)

91C

CONTINUED:

91C

ANGLE - BLACK LEGION

They sit on their horses watching the results of their work.

CLOSE - BLACK LEGION LEADER

BLACK LEGION LEADER

Boy, good thing we're good Christians. Nigger, it's time for you to leave this town.

CLOSE - EARL

EARL

This here is 'pose to be a free country.

CLOSE - BLACK LEGION LEADER

BLACK LEGION LEADER

Rev, we warned you 'bout that Garvey preaching, stirring up the good nigras here. Boy, next time you're a dead nigger.

CLOSE - EARL

EARL

I ain't a boy. I'm a man, and a real man don't hide behind no bedsheets.

Earl takes his PISTOL out from behind his back and FIRES above their heads.

EARL

Take these here bullets for dem sheets.

ANGLE - BLACK LEGION

The bullets send the Black Legion flying into the glorious D.W. Griffith moonlit night.

ANGLE - HOUSE

The burning house collapses behind the Little family.

(CONTINUED)

91C CONTINUED: (2)

ANGLE - EARL AND LOUISE

LOUISE

Earl, I know you a better shot
than that. You shoulda killed 'em
all, shot 'em dead.

EARL

Just wanted to scare 'em, they
won't be bothering us no more.

CLOSE - YOUNG MALCOLM

Young Malcolm stares at his father while the house still
burns behind him, no doubt drawing on the great courage
displayed by his father.

EARL

They won't be here no time soon.
I'm a mad.

91D

EXT. STREET (LANSING) - NIGHT (REMEMBERED TIME)

91D

It's raining cats and dogs and it's foggy. We hear a big
THUD, then a GRUNT, and Earl Little falls across the
trolley tracks, the sound of MEN RUNNING away is heard in
the distance.

ANGLE - STREETCAR

Approaches.

ANGLE - EARL

On tracks. He has been beaten to a bloody pulp.

CLOSER SHOT OF STREETCAR

Approaching.

CLOSE - EARL

He opens his one good eye.

CLOSE - STREETCAR MOTORMAN

He sees --

(CONTINUED)

91D

CONTINUED:

MOTORMAN'S POV

of something ahead in the fog and rain.

CLOSE - HAND

reaches brake lever.

CLOSE - STREETCAR WHEELS

STOPPING, SPARKS fly.

CLOSE - MOTORMAN

winces and then makes the sign of the cross.

LONG ANGLE - PASSENGERS

Jumping out of the streetcar to attend to Earl.

PASSENGER (O.S.)

Somebody get a doctor.

MOTORMAN (O.S.)

No doctor, get him a priest.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

My father's skull, on one side was crushed in, and then laid across some tracks, for a streetcar to run him over. His body was cut almost in half. My father, Earl Little, lived two and a half hours in that condition. Negroes were stronger than they are now.

92

INT. CAR - NIGHT

92

Shorty is driving with Sophia in the front seat. Malcolm is in the back. They are in the country -- outside New York.

SHORTY

Man, I'm glad we got you out of there. With West Indian Archie on your ass, your name on the wire -- Boston the best goddamn place in the world for you -- things are too hot and it's not even summer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Malcolm has withdrawn within himself. He takes out a packet of cocaine and sniffs it.

SOPHIA

We'll take it easy. I got a place fixed up on Harvard Square. How's that sound?

SHORTY

Yeah. Cool it and lay dead for a while, homeboy. And don't worry none.

The drug takes hold. Malcolm is out of it.

SHORTY

I'll stake you, baby. I got my band. I'm blowing great sax. Hell, you ain't even heard us --

He and Sophia keep talking it up, trying to bolster Malcolm.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

Stoned, his nose running, Malcolm stares out of the window at the receding landscape. FREEZE FRAME.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

Like every hustler, I was trapped. Cats that hung together trying to find a little security, to find an answer -- found nothing. Cats that might have probed space or cured cancer -- (Hell, Archie might have been a mathematical genius) -- all victims of whitey's social order.

MUSIC of a DANCE COMBO is heard in b.g.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

Three things I was always scared of: a job, a bust and jail. I realized then I wasn't afraid of anything. I didn't care.

Shorty, Sophia and Peg face Malcolm -- stoned in a chair. Peg is 17, Sophia's kid sister and Shorty's date.

SHORTY

You got to eat somethin', Red.

SOPHIA

You want eggs, baby?

MALCOLM

Yeah and get a slave, too, huh, baby?

SHORTY

I ain't doing bad.

MALCOLM

Man, the name musicians ain't got shit. How you gonna have something? I need a stake, a bundle, a grand. My bitch can't afford it; my homey ain't got it. Hey, sis --

(this to Peg)

-- how you like to turn out for ole Red?

Peg smiles, afraid of Malcolm.

SHORTY

Jesus, Red, she's a kid.

MALCOLM

Jesus ain't got nothin' to do with this. She got a pussy, don't she? Don't she?

Shorty eyes him in amazement. The degree of Malcolm's depravity surprises even him.

MALCOLM

Surprise you, baby? Well, that's the way it is. A bitch is to buy and sell. Any bitch. What kind of scratch you got on you? Turn out. Let me have it. All of you --

Glances exchanged among Shorty, Sophia and Peg. Shorty reaches into his pocket.

INT. HARVARD SQUARE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Malcolm with Sophia, Shorty and Peg around him.

MALCOLM

We gone rob this town blind.
Anybody want out, say so.

Nobody answers; they'll go with Malcolm.

MALCOLM

Okay. I got the stake and I got
a fence. I need a driver.

PEG

How about Rudy?

SHORTY

Yeah, Rudy.

MALCOLM

Who's Rudy?

JUMP CUT TO:

SAME LOCATION - LATER

RUDY is with them. He is a good-looking, very light-skinned black, tough as they come.

RUDY

I'm half wop, half nigger and
ain't afraid of no one.

MALCOLM

What can you do?

They are in the process of appraising each other, seeing which one has the bigger penis.

RUDY

You name it, feller.

SHORTY

Rudy does catering. Rich joints
on Beacon Hill.

MALCOLM

That ain't bad.

SHORTY

Tell him about Baldy.

(CONTINUED)

RUDY

Yeah. This rich ofay, like he's
60. I give him a bath on Friday.

Peg and Sophia are listening, a little horrified.

RUDY

Then I put him to bed and pour
talcom powder on him like a baby.
He gets his jollies off.

MALCOLM

So what about him?

RUDY

So? The man got silver, china,
rugs --

MALCOLM

Might be all right.

RUDY

Might be, shit. Man, I know this
town. I got my own fences. Who
the hell are you? Who put you in
charge?

Malcolm smiles easily.

MALCOLM

You want to be the head man?

RUDY

That's right.

MALCOLM

Head nigger in charge?

RUDY

I'm the man.

MALCOLM

Okay, baby. Let's flip for it.
Flip this.

He takes out his gun, a .32 revolver. He dumps the shells
on the table, then reinserts one shell and twirls the
barrel.

MALCOLM

I'll flip first.

He puts the revolver to his own head.

(CONTINUED)

PEG

Don't.

Malcolm squeezes the trigger. It CLICKS. Now he twirls the barrel again and hands the gun to Rudy.

MALCOLM

Your flip, baby.

Rudy is staring at him; so are they all. Malcolm puts the gun to his temple again.

SOPHIA

Red, for God's sake --

He pulls the trigger a second time. CLICK. Now he twirls it again.

SHORTY

Christ, Red, no --

PEG

I can't stand it.

Malcolm puts the gun to Rudy's head.

MALCOLM

Your turn, Rudy. You want me to flip for you?

RUDY

Jesus Christ, no. Okay, okay. You got it, you got it! You're the boss.

A beat.

MALCOLM

Don't never try to cross someone who ain't afraid to die.

SHORTY

You the man!

Nodding accord from Rudy and Shorty. Sophia can hardly stand.

MALCOLM

All right. We'll start with Old Talcum Powder. You draw the house, where everything is. You and Peg go out and buy them tools like I told you. We hit tonight on account of in the daytime some of us got that high visibility. Ya dig?

(CONTINUED)

95

CONTINUED: (3)

95

ANGLE

Rudy is at a table drawing a diagram; the girls have left. Shorty and Malcolm alone at a window.

SHORTY

What did you do, Homey, palm it?

MALCOLM

Yeah.

He breaks open the gun -- the bullet is in the next slot to be fired.

MALCOLM

Palmed it right in the goddam chamber.

SHORTY

Jesus Christ, Homey, you are nuts.

Malcolm starts laughing: a silent, hysterical laugh.

96

EXT/INT. BEACON HILL HOUSE - NIGHT

96

The robbery, in QUICK CUTS:

- A door lock is picked by Sophia.
- Pencil flashlight passes an upstairs window.
- Rudy in the car.
- Silver removed from a drawer by Shorty.
- Peg walking down the street, as lookout.
- Malcolm takes off his shoes.
- The sleeping old man, old talcum powder, as Malcolm takes a watch, a wallet from within inches of his pillow. Then, more boldly, picks up the man's hand and removes a ring from one of his fingers. Shorty watching with bated breath, he's about to have a heart attack.

97

INT. MANSION - DAY

97

A Boston matron, MRS. CRAWFORD, is showing the girls her collection of U.S. silver. In a fine New England home.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PEG
Beacon Hill survey.

SOPHIA
We're doing a survey for the
Atheneum Socceity -- We wondered if
you'd permit us to include your
collection in the catalog of Great
New England Antiques --?

MRS. CRAWFORD
Now these are my prizes. My Paul
Revere silver coffee service.

SHOT - ARRANGEMENT OF MUSEUM-QUALITY PIECES

PEG
Lovely, just lovely.

Sophia is casing the room carefully as the matron
continues.

MRS. CRAWFORD
And my husband's collection of
scrimshaw should be included.

SOPHIA
May we see it?

MRS. CRAWFORD
Won't you step this way?

INT. SPEEDING CAR - NIGHT

Everybody is high. Rudy is driving, Malcolm beside him
in the front seat. Shorty sits between Peg and Sophia
in the back amid a carful of stolen bric-a-brac. We
see candlesticks, lamps, vases, fire dogs, etc.

SOPHIA
If I asked her she'd have given us
the key.

SHORTY
Beats the shit out of blowing gigs.

MALCOLM
Slow down.

RUDY
What?

(CONTINUED)

MALCOLM

Bulls.

THEIR POV

A police car passes them going the other way as Malcolm waves to them.

MALCOLM

Gimme a cap.

SOPHIA

Malcolm, that was close.

SHORTY

We better cool it a little, baby.

RUDY

They got a good look at you.

Malcolm is about to sniff.

MALCOLM

We knocking over that jewelry store.

RUDY

When?

MALCOLM

Right now. Any objections?

And sniffs.

SHORTY

Take it easy, greasy.

INT. HARVARD SQUARE APARTMENT - DAY

In the kitchen, Shorty is conking Malcolm's hair, about to apply the congolene.

SHORTY

You ready, baby.

MALCOLM

Let's go.

Shorty works in the congolene. PAN the ROOM during the process, to reveal considerable loot from previous hauls, not yet disposed of. And the tools of their trade: pick-locks, jimmys, etc.

(CONTINUED)

MALCOLM

When's Rudy due?

SHORTY

'Bout half an hour. It grabbing you?

MALCOLM

Just about. The bitches ought to be finished casing that rug joint. Hey.

SHORTY

Over to the sink, baby.

They move to the sink. Shorty turns on the faucet, but no water comes. He tries the other faucet. Nothing.

MALCOLM

Come on. The damn shit's burning me.

SHORTY

No water.

MALCOLM

What?!

Malcolm jumps up, looks around. Grabs a pitcher, but it's empty. He runs into the bathroom, cursing as he moves.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

He tries both faucets at the sink, then in the tub. There is no water.

MALCOLM

It's killing me. Goddamnit. Get out of my way --

He pushes Shorty aside and sticks his head in the only place he can find water: the toilet bowl.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

His head in the bowl, as he splashes water on his head, trying to find relief. But it's not enough.

MALCOLM

Flush it. Flush the motherfucker!

(CONTINUED)

100

CONTINUED:

100

And bathes his head in the toilet bowl, finally finding relief.

VOICE (V.O.)

Take your head out of the shit bowl, nigger -- and grab that wall.

Malcolm turns sharply, water running down his face; eyes tearing.

HIS POV - TWO COPS WITH DRAWN GUNS

Smiling at his plight.

ANOTHER ANGLE - SHORTY

Shorty looks at Malcolm, his hands are raised, a third cop has his gun sticking into his back.

101

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

101

The prisoners face the bench: Peg, Sophia, Shorty, Rudy and Malcolm.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

The average first offender gets two years for burglary. We were all first offenders. That's what Sophia and Peg drew --

JUDGE

Two years in the Women's Reformatory at Framingham.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

But our crime wasn't burglary. It was balling white girls. They gave us the book.

JUDGE

Burglary, count one -- eight to 10 years; count two, eight to 10 years; count three, eight to 10 years...

He continues giving them 8 to 10 years, behind Malcolm's comment:

MALCOLM (V.O.)

Fourteen counts of eight to 10 years.

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE

The sentences to run concurrently.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

Shorty thought he hit us with 114 years till I explained what concurrently meant. It meant a minimum sentence of 10 years hard labor at the Charlestown State Prison. The date was February, 1946. I wasn't quite 21. I had not yet begun to shave.

CAMERA HAS GONE IN for a TIGHT CLOSE SHOT of Malcolm's face: a hardened hustler, pimp, dope peddler and now jailbird at the ripe old age of 20. FREEZE FRAME.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

102 INT. CELL CORRIDOR - DAY

102

It is the afternoon lockup: about 3:30 P.M.

The line of PRISONERS stands in front of their cells, as two guards, WILKINS and BARNES, one white, one black, slowly walk past the P.M. check.

The procedure is routine, done without emotion, as it is done three times a day: the black guard calls out the prisoner's name, the PRISONER answers with his number, then steps into his cell. Whereupon the white guard slams the door shut and locks it.

GUARD WILKINS

Jackson.

PRISONER

A 231549.

Door is slammed and gate locked.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

Each time a gate is locked his tension increases. His face is a mask hiding his fury, violence and the hunger of an advanced junkie who has not had a fix in over a week.

GUARD WILKINS

Crichlow.

(CONTINUED)

SECOND PRISONER

A 5991301.

Same procedure.

ANGLE SHOOTING PAST MALCOLM

FAVORING two other prisoners. The Guards are approaching Malcolm's cell. Past Malcolm are two experienced prisoners who have been watching Malcolm during the scene. They whisper surreptitiously without moving their bodies, and barely moving their lips. One of the prisoners is PETE, a huge barrel of a man, a lifer -- beaten by the system and a lifetime of incarceration. The other is BEMBRY, a man of no great physicality, but who possesses immediately the gift of leadership. It is clear that Pete and others look up to him with great respect.

PETE

Looka Satan.

BEMBRY

I see him.

Bembry's language is very unhip. He speaks carefully. He respects words and he respects himself, something which sets him apart from all the other prisoners.

PETE

He 'bout to bust.

BEMBRY

No, he's not gonna burst. But he's not gonna fix his face to please them, neither.

ANGLE

The check-in has reached the man next to Malcolm.

GUARD WILKINS

Harrington.

THIRD PRISONER

B 775717.

GUARD BARNES

Yeah. Lucky Seven.

Door slammed and locked.

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED: (2)

102

CLOSE SHOT - MALCOLM

The Guards are now in front of him.

GUARD WILKINS

Little.

Malcolm doesn't move.

GUARD BARNES

State your number.

Malcolm doesn't answer, doesn't blink.

GUARD WILKINS

Little.

ANGLE

Bembry in the f.g. of the scene.

BEMBRY

He's a new fish, Mr. Barnes. Give
him a break.

It's a bold step by Bembry and the prisoners look over
at him with admiration. Barnes accepts the irregularity
and calls over to Bembry.

GUARD BARNES

Okay, I'll give him a break.
Now state your number, Little.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

MALCOLM

I forgot it.

CLOSE SHOT - BEMBRY

Shaking his head in anguish. He knows what's coming.

ANGLE

Barnes makes a small gesture and Wilkins seizes Malcolm,
grabbing his head and uniform at the same time.
Stencilled on the chest of his faded dungarees is
Malcolm's number. The Guard bends Malcolm's head to the
number, shoving the material in Malcolm's face.

(CONTINUED)

GUARD WILKINS

Can you read, boy? Thass your number.

GUARD BARNES

Now say it.

MALCOLM

I'm Malcolm Little, not no goddam number.

GUARD WILKINS

Oh, yes you is, baby; thass all you is.

And slams Malcolm hard. He slumps to the floor.

GUARD BARNES

Two days in the hole. Take him.

Wilkins drags Malcolm off as Barnes resumes the roll call.

GUARD BARNES

Burnham.

PRISONER #4

A 551613, sir.

JUMP CUT TO:

Only the faintest light comes into the hideous room, which consists of a mattress and a slop bucket. If Malcolm were to stretch out his arms, he could touch both walls. He lies half on the stone floor, half on the mattress.

A CLANG as the heavy DOOR is opened.

GUARD CONE

Time's up. Get on your feet.

Malcolm stands.

GUARD CONE

Little, state your number.

A beat as Malcolm stares at the man, refusing to answer.

GUARD CONE

You just drew two more days.

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED:

103

And slams the door shut.

104 INT. SOLITARY - NIGHT

104

It is almost pitch black. We can almost smell the stench of the room. Malcolm sits stony-faced, his back against a wall.

TRUSTEE (O.S.)

Water.

The long spigot of a watering can is pushed through an opening in the cell door. Malcolm, animal-like, leaps at it and bends the spout, almost wrenching it off in his fury.

105 OMITTED

105

106 INT. SOLITARY CELL - TWO SHOT - WHITE CHAPLAIN AND MALCOLM - DAY

106

CHAPLAIN GILL

Do you know what a friend you have in Jesus, son?

MALCOLM

Preacher, take your tin Jesus and the Virgin Mary both, and shove 'em.

DOOR SLAM.

107 INT. SOLITARY - NIGHT

107

Malcolm is alone at the bars: the hope of freedom filling his mind.

Malcolm pulls at the bars, tries to shake them in impotent fury. He pounds the walls. Empty, sick, defeated, his nails scratching the walls, he slides to the floor of the cell.

It is the low point of his life: nowhere to turn, nothing to hope for.

108 INT. SOLITARY - LATER

108

Guard Cone is shaking him into consciousness.

(CONTINUED)

108 : CONTINUED:

GUARD CONE

All right, Little. Get up.

Malcolm just about makes it. The Guard is in half-focus.

GUARD CONE

State your number.

He is beaten.

MALCOLM

A 859912.

A SHOWER is heard.

109

INT. SHOWER ROOM - DAY

109

Malcolm stands with bowed head as the hot water cascades over his broken body. He lets it run and run, but it cannot really touch his problems. On a nearby bench are his clothes, his towel and the makings for a conk: lye, Vaseline, comb, etc.

He turns for a moment as he sees he is being watched by someone. It's Bemby standing nearby. Malcolm turns away, trying to find solace in the water. He wants no part of the world or anyone, just to be left alone.

BEMBRY

I know how you feel. Like you want to lay down and die.

Malcolm shows no flicker of interest or understanding.

BEMBRY

I brought you something.

He puts down a small matchbox on the bench next to Malcolm's things. Malcolm eyes him like a snake -- but the punishment has reduced him to deep insecurity and his belligerence is more cautious than angry.

MALCOLM

Who the hell are you?

BEMBRY

Put it in a cup of water. It's nutmeg.

MALCOLM

Man, what do you want?

(CONTINUED)

BEMBRY

You need something. It's not a reefer, but it'll help some.

MALCOLM

Man, get outa my face. I ain't nobody's punk.

But he steps out of the shower, fills a tin cup with water and empties the contents of the matchbox into it. And drinks it down quickly.

BEMBRY

Sit down or it might knock you down.

Malcolm sits, towelling himself as the spice hits him. For the first time he smiles; this is the first relief he has tasted in prison. He looks at Bembry wonderingly, unable to figure him out.

MALCOLM

If you ain't trying to punk me, what's your hype?

BEMBRY

I can show you how to get out of prison. And it's no hype.

MALCOLM

Talk, daddy, I'm listening. Hey, that ain't bad. You got some more?

BEMBRY

That's the last stuff you'll ever get from me.

MALCOLM

What did you give it to me for then?

BEMBRY

'Cause you needed it. 'Cause you couldn't hear me without it.

This is a new breed of cat; Malcolm has never met anyone like him. He eyes him closely, as he slips into his clothes.

MALCOLM

What in the hell are you talking about?

(CONTINUED)

He begins to conk his hair, but is paying attention to what Bembry is saying.

BEMBRY

I think you got more sense than any cat in this prison. How come you such a fool?

Malcolm looks over, piqued.

BEMBRY

Can't nobody bust out like Humphrey Bogart does it, in the movies. 'Cause even if you get out, you still in prison.

Malcolm is putting lye into his hair now.

MALCOLM

That's the damn truth.

BEMBRY

When you go busting your fists against a stone wall, you're not using your brains. 'Cause that's what the white man wants you to do. Looka you.

This last is spoken sharply with disgust. Malcolm turns, his hands massaging the conk into his hair.

MALCOLM

What's up your ass, man?

BEMBRY

Putting all that poison in your hair.

MALCOLM

Shit, man, everybody do. All the cats.

BEMBRY

Why? Why does everybody do it?

MALCOLM

'Cause I don't want to walk around with my head all nappy, looking like --

BEMBRY

Like what? Looking like me? Like a nigger?!

(CONTINUED)

MALCOLM

Man, you got to be nuts --

BEMBRY

Why don't you want to look like
what you are? What makes you
ashamed of being black?

INSERT FLASH - CLOSE ON JERRI-CURLED MAN AND WOMAN WITH A
WEAVE - 1991 (TIME IS TODAY)

Both are wearing blue/green contacts.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

I ain't said I'm ashamed.

BACK TO SCENE

He turns the water on to wash out the conk -- which has
begun to burn. Bembry restrains him, holding his arm.

MALCOLM

Leggo. I got to wash it out.

BEMBRY

Let it burn. Maybe you'll hear me
then.

But it is burning now.

MALCOLM

Goddam you, lemme go.

He wrenches away from Bembry and puts his head in the
water.

BEMBRY

Sure, burn yourself, pain
yourself, put all that poison into
your hair, into your body --
trying to be white.

MALCOLM

Man, I don't want to hear all that.

BEMBRY

I thought you was smart. But you
just one of them cats bebopping
down the avenue in your clown suit
with all that mess on you. Like a
monkey. And the white man sees
you and he laughs. He laughs
because he knows you ain't white.

(CONTINUED)

Malcolm is drying his hair, finishing his conk. But some of what Bembry has said disturbs him.

MALCOLM

Lemme be. I had enough for one day. You some kind of a loony preacher?

Malcolm is completely humiliated, Bembry sees this and stops the barrage.

BEMBRY

It's not your fault. You were in the darkness. But I've come to bring you into the light. I told you I could get you out of prison. Out of the prison of yourself. Maybe all you want is another fix. I thought you were smart.

And he is gone. Malcolm stands looking after him, a long thoughtful moment. He is pulling the comb through his hair.

Prisoners are working on a beltline that stamps out and finishes license plates. Bembry is on the stamping machine, working as he talks to the other prisoners. Malcolm is painting the plates, a little removed from Bembry, but listening with interest. Barnes, with rifle, idles by a window.

BEMBRY

Don't tell me things are better in the north. I been all over this country. I studied this country. The south begins at the Canadian border.

The men react variously: some proud of Bembry's outspokenness, especially in front of a white man; some are indifferent, having heard it all before. FRANK is one of these.

FRANK

You a bitch with your shit, but this a white man's country. What you fixing to do?

BEMBRY

Make a new one. Ours.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK

Nigger is crazy.

There is more scoffing at this, but Bembry is unperturbed.

A WHISTLE SOUNDS, ending the work shift. The men quickly file out into the yard. Bembry stays. Malcolm is half decided.

GUARD BARNES

You taking the yard?

BEMBRY

I'm staying.

Barnes gestures to Malcolm.

MALCOLM

Me too.

He goes.

BEMBRY

What you sniffing around for? I told you I gave you your last fix.

MALCOLM

I ain't never seen a cat like you. Ain't you scared talking like that in front of an ofay?

BEMBRY

What's he gonna do to me he ain't already done?

MALCOLM

You the only cat don't come on with that 'Whatcha know, daddy' jive; and you don't cuss none.

BEMBRY

I respect myself. A man cuss because he hasn't got the words to say what's on his mind.

MALCOLM

Tell you this: you ain't no fool.

BEMBRY

Don't con me. Don't try...

MALCOLM

Okay, okay.

(CONTINUED)

BEMBRY

Don't con me.

MALCOLM

What do you do with your time?

BEMBRY

I read. I study. 'Cause the first thing a black man got to do is respect himself. Respect his body and his mind. Stay 'way from whores; protect your women. Quit taking the white man's poison into your body: his cigarettes, his dope, his liquor, his white woman, his pork.

MALCOLM

That's what Mamma used to say.

BEMBRY

Your mama had sense because the pig is a filthy beast: part rat, part dog and the rest carrion.

Malcolm has been pondering all this and now grows animated as he thinks he has come to the essence of a hustle.

MALCOLM

Come on, daddy, pull my coat. What happen if you give all that up? You get sick or somethin'? I pulled a hustle once and got out of the draft.

BEMBRY

I'm telling you God's words, not no hustle. I'm talking the words of Allah, the black man's God. I'm telling you, boy, that God is black.

MALCOLM

Oh, baby, I heard all that bullshit on 25th Street and Seventh Avenue.

BEMBRY

You heard nothing that the black man taught. You learned nothing. But everything the white man taught you, you learned.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BEMBRY (CONT'D)

He told you you were a black heathen and you believed him. He told you how he took you out of darkness and brought you to the light. And you believed him. He taught you to worship a blond, blue-eyed God with white skin -- and you believed him. He told you black was a curse, you believed him. Did you ever look up the word black in the dictionary?

MALCOLM

What for?

BEMBRY

Did you ever study anything wasn't part of some con?

MALCOLM

What the hell for, man?

BEMBRY

Go on, fool; the marble shooters are waiting for you.

MALCOLM

Okay, okay. Show me, man.

CLOSE SHOT - DICTIONARY

We can read the fine print of the definition:

DICTIONARY

Black, (blak), adj. Destitute of light, devoid of color, enveloped in darkness. Hence, utterly dismal or gloomy, as "the future looked black."

MALCOLM (O.S.)

You understand them words?

BEMBRY (O.S.)

Read it.

PULL BACK to show Bembry and Malcolm in a small prison library. No one else is in the book-lined room.

MALCOLM

I can't make out that shit.

(CONTINUED)

BEMBRY

Soiled with dirt, foul; sullen, hostile, forbidding -- as a black day. Fouly or outrageously wicked, as black cruelty. Indicating disgrace, dishonor or culpability.

DICTIONARY

See also blackmail, blackball, blackguard.

MALCOLM

Hey, they's some shit, all right.

BEMBRY

Now look up 'white.'

Bembry turns the pages of the dictionary to 'w.'

BEMBRY

Read it.

CLOSE SHOT - DICTIONARY DEFINITION OF "WHITE"

MALCOLM (O.S.)

White (Whit), adjective. Of the color of pure snow; reflecting all the rays of the spectrum. The opposite of black, hence free from spot or blemish; innocent, pure, without evil intent, harmless. Honest, square-dealing, honorable.

Malcolm stumbles through the definition as well as he can. Bembry takes over the reading, giving it ironic emphasis.

MALCOLM

That's bullshit. That's a white man's book. Ain't all these white man's books.

SHOT - SHELVES OF BOOKS

BEMBRY

They sure ain't no black man's books in here.

MALCOLM

Then what you telling me to study in them for?

(CONTINUED)

BEMBRY

You got to learn everything the white man says and use it against him. The truth is laying there if you smart and read behind their words. It's buried there. You got to dig it out.

MALCOLM

Man, how'm I gonna know the ones worth looking at?

Bembry smiles at Malcolm. He is a remarkable man who always takes careful measure of his listener. He never talks down to his audience; he talks to them. (A manner Malcolm later will adopt.) Bembry can talk funky or salty or, as we will see, in the cadence and eloquence of the Bible. Right now he goes into street talk.

BEMBRY

I'll pull your coat, daddy.
'Cause lots of these can't nobody read, be he black or white or a Ph.D. with their suspenders dragging the ground with degrees.

Malcolm laughs. He likes and admires the man. Then caught by a passage he does not understand:

MALCOLM

Man, I'm studying in the man's book. I don't dig half the words.

BEMBRY

Look 'em up and find out what they mean.

MALCOLM

Where am I gonna start?

BEMBRY

Start at the beginning. Page one, the first one. Here --

CLOSE SHOT - BEMBRY'S HAND

as Bembry's hand opens the book to page one.

CLOSE IN ON PICTURE OF AARDVARK WITH ITS DEFINITION

MALCOLM (O.S.)

Aardvark, noun. An earth pig; an ant-eating African mammal. Man, that sounds like the dozens.

(CONTINUED)

110

CONTINUED: (6)

110

ANGLE - TWO-SHOT

BEMBRY

Read it and keep on reading.

Malcolm's finger runs down to the next definition:

DICTIONARY

Abacus, noun. An ancient and primitive Chinese counting device.

BEMBRY

If you take one step toward Allah, He will take two steps toward you.

111
&
112

OMITTED

111
&
112

113

INT. MALCOLM'S CELL - NIGHT

113

He is reading on his bunk as Barnes walks by.

The lights in the cell go out. Malcolm looks up, annoyed at being interrupted. He shifts his position to the floor of the cell so that he can catch the dim light coming from the corridor and goes on with his reading.

CLOSE SHOT - BOOK

Malcolm is studying the dictionary, the last of the "a's": the words azimuth, Azores, Aztec, azure, etc. He reads a word, then holds his hand over the printed definition to test himself, half-mouthing its meaning. Malcolm is also copying the dictionary in a school book word for word.

114

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

114

There are several books on the desk before Malcolm. We see their titles: W.E.B. DuBois' The Soul of Black Folks, Carter G. Woodson's Journal of Negro History, Durant's Story of Philosophy, H.E. Wells' Outline of History, Spinoza, Thoreau, etc.

GUARD BARNES (O.S.)

Closing. Knock it off.

Malcolm is surprised the time has gone so fast. He gathers up his books with care. He cherishes them, putting them back on the shelf carefully.

(CONTINUED)

114 CONTINUED:

114

GUARD BARNES

Hey, you studying to be the first colored President of the United States?

115 INT. LICENSE SHOP - DAY

115

The machines are idle; no one is in the room but Malcolm. He starts to reach inside his jacket when Barnes sticks his head in.

GUARD BARNES

You taking the yard or not?

MALCOLM

I'm staying.

GUARD BARNES

Then give me a butt.

Malcolm takes out a half-filled pack of cigarettes, about to offer one, then pauses. Malcolm hands him the pack of cigarettes.

MALCOLM

Take 'em. I don't smoke no more.

He takes the pack happily and goes. Malcolm reaches into his jacket again, takes out a book. We see its title: Mahatma Gandhi's My Struggle. He sits next to the license press to read.

116 EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY

116

A baseball game is in progress. A black team is playing a white one. Most of the convicts are watching the game; partisanship at every pitch. A base hit gets a big reaction.

ANGLE - MALCOLM AND BEMBRY

They are out in right field, near the wall. They walk throughout the scene.

MALCOLM

How we doing, man?

BEMBRY

You want to talk or watch the game?

(CONTINUED)

116 CONTINUED:

MALCOLM

Let's do both, baby.

His ingratiating manner makes Bembry smile.

BEMBRY

How you coming?

MALCOLM

Man, that history is a bitch. Them British and the good old U.S.A.: grab India, China, Africa, the Philippines; kill the injuns. And what do they call it... 'Manifest Destiny, the Monroe Doctrine, Making the World Safe for Democracy.'

BEMBRY

Oh, yes, the white man is never violent. All his wars crusades. They cry violence only when the black man fights for his rights.

ANGLE - BALL ,

is hit over the fence for a home run. There is a big cheer from the black prisoners. Pete, the hitter, trots proudly around the bases.

MALCOLM

Ole Pete ain't much in the head, but he can lay in there with the wood.

BEMBRY

Lemme tell you about history: black history. You listening?

TWO SHOT

Malcolm still watching the game.

MALCOLM

You pitch, baby; I'll ketch.

BEMBRY

The first men on earth were black. They ruled and there was not one white face anywhere. But they teach us that we lived in caves and swung from trees. Black men were never like that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Malcolm is listening to Bembry's intent statement.

BEMBRY

We were a race of kings when the
white men went around on all fours.

There is a CRACK of the BAT and Malcolm turns, to watch
another base hit, by a black convict, stir the crowd.

MALCOLM

This a helluva game. Somethin's
going on.

He sees a black convict, CHUCK, nearby and calls over:

MALCOLM

Hey, whatsa score?

CHUCK

Ten to one; we murdering them.
Din't you hear?

MALCOLM

What?

CHUCK

The Brooklyn Dodgers brought up
Jackie Robinson and we pounding
the hell out of them, celebrating.

MALCOLM

How about that?

BEMBRY

Sure. They throw us a bone and
that's supposed to make us forget
400 years.

MALCOLM

A black man playing big league
ball is something.

BEMBRY

I told you to go behind the words
and dig out the truth. They let
us sing and dance and smile -- and
now they let one black man in the
majors. That don't cancel out the
greatest crime in the history.
When the white devil locked us in
chains -- 100,000,000 of us --
broke our families, tortured us,
cut us off from our language, our
religion, our past...

(CONTINUED)

117 CONTINUED:
CLOSE SHOT - MALCOLM
listening.

BEMBRY
Have you ever known a good white man in all your life? Think back on all the white folks in your life. Did you ever meet one who wasn't evil?

A prison WHISTLE is HEARD.

118 OMITTED 118
& 119 &
119 119

120 INT. PRISON - NICHE IN WALL - P.M. 120

Malcolm and Bembry standing close together. The feeling is of someone taking communion: with Bembry the minister and Malcolm the communicant. Their voices are little more than whispers.

BEMBRY
You are now Malcolm X.

MALCOLM
What does the X stand for?

BEMBRY
X stands for our true names which we'll never know. We refuse our slave names.

MALCOLM
I accept.

BEMBRY
The body is a holy repository.

MALCOLM
I will not touch the white man's poison: his drugs, his liquor, his carrion, his women.

BEMBRY
A Muslim must be strikingly upright. Outstanding. So those in the darkness can see the power of light.

(CONTINUED)

120 CONTINUED:

Malcolm lifts his head.

MALCOLM

I will do it.

BEMBRY

He dedicates his body in purity to Allah. He practices moral restraint. He defends our women.

MALCOLM

I will do that.

BEMBRY

But the key to Islam is submission. That is why twice daily we turn to Mecca, to the Holy of Holies, to pray. We bend our knees in submission.

Bembry kneels in a praying position. Malcolm stands.

MALCOLM

I can't.

BEMBRY

For evil to bend its knee, admit its guilt, implore His forgiveness, is the hardest thing on earth --

MALCOLM

I want to, Bembry, but I can't.

BEMBRY

-- The hardest and the greatest.

MALCOLM

I don't know what to say to Allah.

BEMBRY

Have you ever bent your knees, Malcolm?

Malcolm laugh-snorts:

MALCOLM

Yeah. When I was picking a lock to rob somebody's house.

BEMBRY

Tell Him that.

MALCOLM

I don't know how.

(CONTINUED)

120 CONTINUED: (2)

BEMBRY

You can grovel and crawl for sin,
but not to save your soul. Pick
the lock, Malcolm, pick it.

MALCOLM

I want to. God knows I want to.

121 INT. MALCOLM'S CELL - NIGHT

121

Malcolm holds a letter in his hand. He reads it carefully. He has read it several times before.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

I received a letter that day from
the Honorable Elijah Muhammad.
The Messenger of Allah wrote me,
a nobody, a junkie, a pimp and a
convict.

ELIJAH (V.O.)

I have come to give you something
which can never be taken from you:
I bring you a sense of your own
worth, the worth of one human
being. The knowledge of self.

The room becomes transformed. It is suddenly suffused with
light. And standing in the cell with Malcolm is ELIJAH
MUHAMMAD. He has materialized, but he can be
seen through. He is Malcolm's hallucination.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

It was like a blinding light and
I became aware that he was in the
room with me. He wore a dark suit
and on his face I saw a pain so old
and deep and black I could scarcely
look at him. I knew I was not
dreaming. He was there.

ELIJAH

I tell you that the most dangerous
creation of any society is the man
with nothing to lose. You do not
need ten such men to change the
world. One will do.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

And suddenly as he came, he was
gone.

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED:

121

The hallucination disappears.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

And then I could do it.

Malcolm goes down on his knees. There are tears in his eyes as he begins praying:

CLOSE - MALCOLM

MALCOLM

Allah Akbar: all praises to Him
who is all-seeing, all-
understanding.

He continues to pray.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

We are told that Saul, on the road
to Damascus, heard the words of
Christ. He was so smitten by the
truth, he fell from his horse. I
do not liken myself to Paul, but
I understand. It happened to me.

122 INT. BEMBRY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

122

A poorly furnished, small, but immaculate room. There are two couches, a table set for eating, and, on the walls, a portrait of Elijah and a Muslim banner. It is dinner time in a Muslim home.

Two boys, SIDNEY, aged 20, and PETER, aged 17, both perfect specimens of the Fruit of Islam, stand behind their chairs, waiting. Their mother, Lorraine, a woman of Bembry's age, is seated, but, she, too, awaits Bembry.

SHOT - BEMBRY

BEMBRY

In the name of Allah, the beneficent
and the merciful to whom all praise
is due.

At the window Bembry saying the evening prayers.

BEMBRY (V.O.)

'Dear Brother Malcolm: I am back
in the bosom of Islam, praise
Allah...'

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED:

He comes to the table, nods and sits. The boys respectfully sit after him. Food is passed. It is simple fare: natural foods, milk, greens. The portions are small. They eat in silence, but there is warmth and love at this table.

BEMBRY (V.O.)

'... We don't have much, but what we have is yours. Lorraine and my two sons join with me in saying that when you come out, which will not be too long, come straight to us.'

123

INT. PRISON BARBER SHOP - DAY

123

Malcolm is reading Bembry's letter as he waits his turn. There is a white convict in the chair, just being finished by a white barber -- SIMMONS. A black barber -- Slim sits by. Both are convicts. (NOTE: Malcolm now wears glasses, all that reading in his badly lit cell has ruined his eyes.

BEMBRY (V.O.)

You write thanking me. Don't thank me. Praise Allah. He did it all.

SIMMONS

Next.

Malcolm starts for the chair. Simmons moves away to light a cigarette as Slim takes over.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

Dear Bembry. Please thank the Honorable Elijah Muhammad for the money and tell him I have not wirtten him because I have not yet proven myself.

124

INT. SMALL'S PARADISE - NIGHT

124

Archie and Cadillac are reading a letter they have received. They look at each other incredulously.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

But I have written everyone else.

125 INT. ANOTHER PRISON - DAY

125

Shorty is waving a letter he has received to his cellmate.

SHORTY

Look like Homey got himself a brand new hype.

126 INT. ELIJAH'S OFFICE - DAY

126

An immaculate room, well-furnished. ELIJAH sits in a chair as Bembry stands reading Malcolm's letter.

BEMBRY

'I wrote the mayor, the governor and the President, but for some reason I haven't heard from them'...

Bembry laughs; Elijah smiles.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

Tell the Messenger of Allah that I have dedicated my life to telling the white devil the truth to his face. I greet you with the ancient words: 'As Salaam Alikum.'

ELIJAH

Wa-Alaikum Salaam.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

P.S. I finally worked my way through the 'Z's'...

127 INT. PRISON CHAPEL - NIGHT

127

TITLE: 6 YEARS LATER

A group of Prisoners, mostly white, but with a goodly smattering of black convicts, are listening to a lecture by CHAPLAIN GILL.

CHAPLAIN GILL

Are there any questions?

ANOTHER ANGLE

Malcolm seated next to a black convict, raises his hand. It's the only hand up. The Chaplain searches for another questioner, but there aren't any.

(CONTINUED)

127 CONTINUED:

Pete, sitting next to Malcolm, whispers.

PETE

Watch out, baby, this cat is heavy on religion.

CHAPLAIN GILL

I see this has become a struggle between good and evil. Satan has a question.

There is laughter from the convicts.

MALCOLM

Yes it is, Chaplain Gill. But I wouldn't want to say which one of us is what.

Laughter, especially from the black convicts.

CHAPLAIN GILL

Why don't you just ask your question.

MALCOLM

You've been talking about the disciples. What color were they?

CHAPLAIN GILL

I don't think we know for certain.

There are reactions from the convicts. Malcolm is sharply challenging a white man about color.

MALCOLM

They were Hebrew, weren't they?

CHAPLAIN GILL

That's right.

MALCOLM

As Jesus was. Jesus was also a Hebrew.

CHAPLAIN GILL

Just what is your question?

MALCOLM

What color were the original Hebrews?

(CONTINUED)

CHAPLAIN GILL

I told you we don't know for certain.

MALCOLM

Then we don't know that God was white.

There is a strong reaction to this.

CHAPLAIN GILL

Now just a moment, just a moment --

MALCOLM

But we do know that the people of that region of Asia Minor, from the Tigris-Euphrates valley to the Mediterranean, are dark-skinned people. I've studied drawings and photographs and seen newsreels. I have never seen a native of that area who was not black.

CHAPLAIN GILL

Just what are you saying?

MALCOLM

I'm not saying anything, preacher. I'm proving to you that God is black.

INSERT - FLASH - BLOND, BLUE-EYED JESUS ON CROSS

(Note: Try to get footage from The Last Temptation of Christ (William Dafoe))

MALCOLM (V.O.)

God is black.

EXT. STREET CORNER (125TH AND SEVENTH AVENUE) - NIGHT

Malcolm is talking to a crowd from a ladder.

MALCOLM

And that the white man is the devil. Yes, God is black and you are made in His image and don't know it. That's how brainwashed you are.

The crowd is listening, caught up in Malcolm's intensity.

(CONTINUED)

MALCOLM

My brothers and sisters, they tell you you will sprout wings when you die and fly to heaven. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad tells you that's pie in the sky.

ANGLE ON SIDNEY

Amid the listeners, watching their response.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

Have you ever seen a black man who wasn't down on his knees begging the Lord to give him in heaven what the white devil enjoys right here on earth?

CLOSE SHOT - SEVERAL LISTENERS

They turn from Malcolm, moving a few steps away, and now are the audience on an adjacent SPEAKER. He is a young firebrand:

SPEAKER

The Harlem Council fights for rat control, for rent control and for community control of our schools.

PAN CONTINUES to take in another ANOTHER SPEAKER, a few feet away. We see the street corner in Harlem's Hyde Park, with half a dozen speakers haranguing the crowd with half a dozen panaceas. That Malcolm is just one among many:

SECOND SPEAKER

If the man behind the counter ain't black, don't go in. Boycott the man. Be black. Think black. Buy black.

ANGLE - MALCOLM

MALCOLM

Come to our Temple and hear the truth. Because, brother and sister, you are dead. Yes, you are, mentally dead, spiritually dead, morally dead. And we are here to resurrect the black man from the dead.

In contrast to the peaceful family scene, the room is a beehive of activity. Sidney is turning out leaflets on a mimeograph machine; Lorraine is busy making up a mailing list, using 3x5 file cards; Pete is talking animatedly to TWO TEENAGERS in a corner; Bembry is busy recruiting on the telephone.

MALCOLM

How many you turning out?

SIDNEY

500.

MALCOLM

Make it 1000. We got a lot of meetings tonight.

SIDNEY

Brother Malcolm, I want you to meet Brother Earl. He just joined the Nation.

Earl moves toward Malcolm and extends his hand. Malcolm shakes it firmly.

MALCOLM

We can always use another good brother.

EARL

I'm a willing servant for Allah.

Sunday service has let out and Malcolm, Earl, Sidney and Peter are "finishing." They're trying to convert the black Christians. Malcolm speaks, while the others hand out leaflets.

MALCOLM

You think you are Christians, and yet you see your so-called white Christian brother hanging black Christians on trees. You say that the white man loves you and yet he has done every evil act against you. He has everything while he is living and tells you to be a good slave and when you die you will have more than he has in Beulah's land. We so-called Negroes are in pitiful shape.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

130 CONTINUED:

130

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

Get off your knees praying to a picture of a white, pale, blonde and blue-eyed Jesus. Come out of the sky. Build heaven on earth. Islam is the black man's true religion.

131 EXT. OPEN AIR "MAIDS" MARKET - DAY

131

A place where black women come to offer themselves for day work. Several are seen. A white woman comes up to one to interview her (bargain with her). Malcolm's voice is heard before he is seen, speaking to the women from a ladder.

MALCOLM (O.S.)

My beautiful sister, for you are beautiful. Beautiful because you are black. Because black is beautiful. You work in the white folks' kitchen so I don't have to tell you that they're devils.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

MALCOLM

And you are putting yourselves on the auction block, letting them examine you like a horse, like a slave. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches that you are black and should be proud...

FACE OF ONE BLACK WOMAN

beginning to shake her head in accord.

132 INT. TEMPLE #7 - NIGHT

132

The same woman, now at a Muslim meeting. The faces of other listeners (from the church and from the maids' market) are scattered in Malcolm's audience.

The headquarters itself shows the progress Malcolm has made. It is better furnished, larger, and the chairs are filled. Bembry, Sidney, Peter and Lorraine are in the back of the room, pleased with the growth. Malcolm stands at a podium.

(CONTINUED)

MALCOLM

We're not American, we're Africans who happen to be in America. We were kidnapped and brought here against our will from Africa. We didn't land on Plymouth Rock, brothers and sister. Plymouth Rock landed on us.

Reactions: laughter, interest. Ad lib "That's the truth."

MALCOLM

Put an end to your begging. No more 'Please, Mr. White man, Lawdy boss, brush me another crumb off your table, kindly, sir.' We are a nation, a great nation and don't need a thing from them.

Malcolm scanning the faces of his audience as they react. He sees someone he knows and blurts out boyishly (and winningly):

MALCOLM

Shorty!

The crowd turns to Shorty, sitting embarrassedly in the audience.

MALCOLM

Come on up here, man, and give us some skin. Here's a man, brothers and sisters, who shot up with me, who robbed with me, and did time in the white devil's jailhouse. Stand up, Shorty, and be counted --

But Shorty is trying to hide from the spotlight. Malcolm comes down from the platform and walks to him.

MALCOLM

Folks, the brother is shy and needs special attention. So would you excuse us, while Brothers Sidney and Earl take up the collection.

He embraces Shorty as the crowd laughs appreciatively and Brothers Sidney and Earl have a chuckle themselves.

Shorty and Malcolm in a booth. Shorty has a drink in front of him.

SHORTY

I got to hand it to you, Homey. That's the best preacher hype I ever did hear.

MALCOLM

It isn't hype, Shorty. And I meant what I said: join us.

SHORTY

Come on, baby. I don't pay that shit no mind.

MALCOLM

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad says you should pay it all your mind. If you got a mind.

SHORTY

Baby, I love you. Take it easy, greasy. How about a snort?

MALCOLM

I been clean for twelve years, Shorty.

SHORTY

You is something, Homeboy. My trouble is -- I ain't had enough stuff yet, I ain't et all the ribs I want and I sure ain't had enough white tail yet.

MALCOLM

How's the rest of the gang? You seen anyone?

SHORTY

Well, Sammy's dead. Yeah, fell over in the bed with a chick twenty years younger than him. Had twenty-five grand in his pocket.

INSERT FLASH - SAMMY

He's dead on top of teenage whore who is screaming, trying to push that dead weight off her.

MALCOLM

How about Old Cadillac?

(CONTINUED)

133

CONTINUED:

133

INSERT FLASH - CADILLAC

is an old junkie, past reclaiming, sitting staring in a mental ward, twitching, nose running.

SHORTY (V.O.)

Hooked on horse. Been in and out of Lexington five times.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

You seen Sophia?

INSERT FLASH - SOPHIA

is a bored housewife, she's in the kitchen cooking while her husband hides behind the Wall Street Journal.

BACK TO BAR

SHORTY

I ain't seen Archie, but the vine tells it he's living somewhere's in the Bronx. If you can call it living.

134

INT. DINGY ROOM - DAY

134

A KNOCK on the door rouses Archie, by now an old and dying man. All the vigor is gone, all the life has ebbed out.

ARCHIE

Git the hell away, you bitch, I'll pay you tomorrow.

Door opens, Malcolm enters.

MALCOLM

Hello, Archie.

Archie sits up from his bed and stares. He tries to bring back some of his old juice, tries to stand up.

ARCHIE

My man, Red. Come on in, man.
(then giving up)
Hey, I can't make it.

Malcolm has to help him lie back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MALCOLM

Take it easy, baby.

ARCHIE

That really you, Red?

The contrast is shocking: Malcolm tall and straight:
Archie ruined.

MALCOLM

You saved my life, Archie.
Running me out of Harlem. When I
think how close we came to gunning
each other down, I have to thank
Allah.

ARCHIE

I wasn't gonna shoot you, baby.
It was just my rep, that's all.
And don't shit me now, but did you
have that number? Tell me.

MALCOLM

I don't know. It doesn't matter.
The thing is we got to get you
back on your feet.

ARCHIE

Yeah. I got a couple of new
angles ain't been figured yet.
All I need's a stake and a
chance --

MALCOLM

Can you use a few bucks? I ain't
got much, but --

ARCHIE

No, man, I'm doing okay. Thanks.

MALCOLM

Take it easy. Lay down and don't
think about it.

ARCHIE

Yeah.

MALCOLM

You could of been something,
Archie, but the devil got to you.

The old man is asleep.

MALCOLM

You knew all the angles except how
to live.

135

EXT. STREET IN HARLEM - NIGHT

135

Malcolm walks thoughtfully down the street; Archie is still on his mind, as he passes prostitute after prostitute. Once beautiful black women now selling their bodies.

MALCOLM (V.O.)
(speaking before an audience)

Women who could be mothers,
teachers, scientists; men who
might have been astronauts,
composers, engineers --

136

INT. TEMPLE #7 - NIGHT

136

Malcolm is addressing a huge audience. His tone is more intense, more personal than before, because of his recent encounters. In the audience, sitting with Bemby, is BETTY, a lovely dark-skinned woman. Her interest in Malcolm (true, also, for most of the other unmarried sisters) is more than religious.

MALCOLM

-- and what has the white devil made of them: dead souls. Oh, my he has no conscience. He should fall on his knees and say, 'My kind commits history's greatest crime against your kind every day of your life.' But does he? No. He scorns you, splits your head with his nightstick and calls you nigger. If you've had it, then stand up and come forward. If not us, then who? If not now, then when?

ANGLE - AUDIENCE

Many stand, some walk toward the podium speaking his name: "I'm with you, Brother Malcolm," "Praise Allah," "Me, Brother Malcolm."

CLOSE - BETTY AND BEMBRY

There is applause; some of the audience get to their feet -- Malcolm acknowledges their approval, trying to quiet them, but caught up in the heady excitement of leadership.

(CONTINUED)

136 CONTINUED:

136

CLOSE - BETTY AND BEMBRY

Both are moved by Malcolm's performances.

BETTY
(whispering)
He ought to try to make it a
little easier, Brother Bembry.

BEMBRY
Why don't you try telling him
that, Sister Betty?

137

INT. A LARGE ANTEROOM IN TEMPLE #7 - NIGHT

137

The Muslim movement has grown enormously. The activity in this anteroom, leading to other rooms off it, shows that. Betty and Bembry stand before a directory announcing activities in the Temple: MONDAY - Fruit of Islam Meeting; TUESDAY - Unity Night; WEDNESDAY - Student Enrollment; THURSDAY - Muslim Girls Training; FRIDAY - General Civilization Class; SATURDAY - Swahili, etc.

A stir of people and activity as Malcolm enters the anteroom. He excuses himself from a group of Muslims, making his way toward Bembry.

MALCOLM
(little out of
breath)
Brother Bembry, can we fix it so
our loudspeaker is heard on the
street?

BEMBRY
I'm sure we can. This is a new
sister, Sister Betty.

Malcolm nods at her; she nods in return.

BEMBRY
The sister lectures our Muslim
girls in hygiene and diet.

Malcolm mutters "very good," but his mind is clearly on a million other details.

BEMBRY
The sister stresses care of
the body and regular eating
habits.

(CONTINUED)

137 CONTINUED:

137

Malcolm is still distracted.

BETTY

The sister wonders if the brother knows what Harriet Tubman did between taking souls to the promised land?

Malcolm is stopped. He looks at Betty.

MALCOLM

What?

BETTY

She ate.

Malcolm laughs.

BETTY

And the sister suggests he put his actions where his mouth is.

Malcolm's laughter is heard, in response.

138 INT. MUSLIM CAFETERIA - TWO SHOT - BETTY AND MALCOLM - 138
NIGHT

MALCOLM

Sure I'll speak to your class.
But I'm a hard man on women. You want to know why?

BETTY

If you want to tell me.

CUT TO:

EXT. ELIJAH'S GARDEN - DAY

Malcolm sits next to the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. The student and the teacher.

MALCOLM

If you want to tell me.

ELIJAH

Women are deceitful. They are untrustworthy flesh. I've seen too many men ruined or tied down or messed up by women.

CUT BACK TO:

(CONTINUED)

BETTY AND MALCOLM

Betty says nothing, she merely pushes the salad plate a little toward him. The food has thus far gone untouched. Malcolm continues.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

MALCOLM

Women talk too much. To tell a woman not to talk is like telling Jesse James not to carry a gun or a hen not to cackle. And Samson, the strongest man that ever lived, was destroyed by the woman who slept in his arms.

BETTY

Shall I tell my girls that we oppose marriage?

CUT TO:

CLOSE - ELIJAH

ELIJAH

No. We are not Catholic priests. We do not practice celibacy. If a woman is the right height for a man, the right complexion, if her age is half the man's plus seven, if she understands that man's essential nature is strong and woman's weak, if she loves children, can cook, sew and stay out of trouble --

CUT TO:

CLOSE - BETTY

BETTY

I think you've made your points, Brother Malcolm.

MALCOLM

What points?

BETTY

That you haven't time for either marriage or eating --

(CONTINUED)

138 CONTINUED: (2)

138

Malcolm chuckles a bit.

BETTY

-- and that women aren't the only ones who talk a lot.

Now he bursts out laughing.

CLOSE - BROTHERS SIDNEY AND EARL

They're alarmed at Malcolm's behavior.

TWO SHOT - BETTY AND MALCOLM

BETTY

If you'll start eating, there is a question I have. Go ahead. Start.

He takes a forkful of the salad.

BETTY

Considering today's standards of animal raising and curing meats, I don't fully understand the restriction on pork.

MALCOLM

Let me explain. No. I'll do better than that. I'll show it to you. Scientifically. But it's demonstration purely in the interest of science, you understand?

BETTY (O.S.)

Yes, I understand, Brother Malcolm. Purely scientific.

139 INT. MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY - DAY

139

Before a comparative evolutionary display showing the skeletons of various animals, Malcolm is holding forth. Betty is dressed in a vivid, becoming, red dress.

MALCOLM

Notice especially the claw, the jaw and the skull formation. This is the rat. This is the mole. Here you have the aardvark and the boar...

(CONTINUED)

CLOSE ON SKELETONS

MALCOLM (O.S.)

... All members of the pig-rodent family.

BETTY

I see your point.

MALCOLM

So it is not a matter of the breeding conditions or preparation of the meat. The meat itself is foul.

ANGLE - MALCOLM AND BETTY

as they saunter out, passing the huge skeletons of pre-historic animals now.

BETTY

Could we sit down someplace?

MALCOLM

I'm sorry. I've had you on your feet for hours.

BETTY

You've been on your feet for days. And didn't even finish your salad.

140 INT. SODA FOUNTAIN - DAY

140

WAITER

You're the strawberry soda and you're the hot fudge sundae.

He plunks down the order before Betty and Malcolm. Malcolm takes a long, long satisfying pull on his straw. Then he sighs:

MALCOLM

That's something I haven't done in fifteen years.

BETTY

What?

MALCOLM

Sat down with a pretty girl and had an ice cream soda.

(CONTINUED)

140 CONTINUED:

BETTY
How do you like it?

MALCOLM
Delicious.

She laughs. He blushes.

MALCOLM
Let's talk about you for a change.

BETTY
There's nothing to talk about.

MALCOLM
Oh, yes, there is. I know a lot
about you. Brother Bembry briefed
me.

BETTY
Oh? Purely scientific interest
I'm sure.

MALCOLM
(a beat)
You're from Detroit, near where I
come from. You majored in education
at Tuskegee. You're studying
nursing and having trouble with
your family.

BETTY
I can handle it.

MALCOLM
They want you to quit the Muslims
or they won't pay your tuition,
isn't that it?

BETTY
You have enough worries of your
own.

MALCOLM
No, good Sisters are rare. We need
every one. Tell me something: how
tall are you?

BETTY
Why do you ask?

MALCOLM
Just an idle question.

(CONTINUED)

BETTY

If it's just idle, I won't answer it.

She takes a bite of her sundae.

BETTY

But Brother Bembry says I'm tall enough for a tall man.

MALCOLM

How old are you, Betty?

BETTY

There's a few things you don't know about women, Brother Malcolm. They're possessive and vain.

MALCOLM

Are you?

BETTY

And dogged when I set my mind to something.

MALCOLM

What have you set your mind to?

BETTY

Being a good Muslim, a good nurse and a good wife.

Malcolm takes a good look at the lovely woman in front of him, then a long sip from his ice cream soda.

SIDNEY (O.S.)

Brother Malcolm.

Betty sees him first.

BETTY

It's Sidney.

ANGLE - SIDNEY

As he runs to them at the table:

SIDNEY

Brother Johnson was attacked by the cops.

MAN (V.O.)

There was a scuffle. The Brother was watching.

141

EXT. SIDE STREET (HARLEM) - P.M.

141

Malcolm listening as several witnesses simultaneously describe the attack. A small angry crowd has gathered. The most animated one is BENJAMIN, a very dark, young black teenager, we will soon meet him later.

BENJAMIN

The cop says, 'Move on.'

MAN

The Brother didn't scatter fast enough for the ofay.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

BENJAMIN

Crack. He bled like a stuck hog.

MAN

Watcha gonna do?

VOICE FROM CROWD

(deprecatingly)

He'll rap a little. He's a Muslim.
And make a speech.

ANOTHER VOICE FROM CROWD (V.O.)

Muslims talk a good game, but they
never do nothing, unless somebody
bothers Muslims.

Malcolm's face goes taut. He nods sharply at Sidney, as Benjamin watches them both.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

I demand to see Brother Johnson.

142

INT. POLICE STATION - LATE P.M.

142

Malcolm facing a DESK SERGEANT, TWO UNIFORMED COPS and a PLAINCLOTHES MAN off to one side.

SERGEANT

Who the hell are you?

MALCOLM

I'm from Muslim Temple Seven.

COP #1

Never heard of you.

MALCOLM

Where is he?

(CONTINUED)

142

CONTINUED:

142

The police respond with a squeeze play intended to intimidate Malcolm:

SERGEANT

Nobody here by that name.

PLAINCLOTHES

What's your name, feller?

He feels the power play and stiffens in resistance.

MALCOLM

I'm Minister Malcolm X. Two witnesses saw him brought in. He was not brought out.

PLAINCLOTHES

You heard the Sergeant. Outside.

Malcolm stands his ground coolly.

MALCOLM

Take a look out that window. I intend to see Brother Johnson.

The Cops eye each other. Plainclothes walks to the window.

143

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE - LATE P.M.

143

Across from the station is a phalanx of some fifty men of the Fruit of Islam. All are dressed in dark suits with white shirts. They stand in military formation: eyes forward, every face burning. People from the neighborhood have formed a crowd behind and around them. We make out Benjamin amongst the crowd.

PLAINCLOTHES

Who the hell are they?

MALCOLM

Brothers of Brother Johnson.

PLAINSCLOTHES

Eddie, let's see that blotter.

TWO SHOT - FAVOR MALCOLM

As the Cops examine the police blotter.

(CONTINUED)

143 CONTINUED:

143

SERGEANT

Yeah. We got a Muslim. The relief
must of put it down.

PLAINCLOTHES

But you can't see him. You ain't
his lawyer.

SERGEANT

No lawyer, no see.

MALCOLM

Until I'm satisfied Brother Johnson
is receiving proper medical
attention, no one will move.

Cops eye each other. Plainclothes nods slightly, he has
to give in, Malcolm is not playing.

144 INT. LOCKUP - SAME TIME

144

The back of Malcolm's head, as he examines Brother
Johnson. As he comes up OUT OF FRAME, we see that
Johnson has been badly beaten.

MALCOLM

(shaking)

Only a pig could do a thing like
that.

PLAINCLOTHES

Watch your tongue, boy.

MALCOLM

Don't you call me boy, you pig.
Letting a man bleed like that.

Sergeant puts a restraining hand on Plainclothes.

MALCOLM

That man belongs in a hospital.
Get an ambulance. Now!

145 EXT. STREET - LATER (DARKER)

145

As Johnson's body, on a stretcher, is hurried into an
ambulance. The crowd has grown in proportions. There
are AD LIBS: "Goddam pigs," "Damn police brutality,"
"Least they got him out of the meat house."

Malcolm with the Sergeant and a LIEUTENANT, as the
ambulance pulls away.

(CONTINUED)

145 CONTINUED:

145

LIEUTENANT

All right, break it up. You got what you wanted.

MALCOLM

I'm not satisfied.

Malcolm starts walking down the center of the street, after the ambulance.

MALCOLM

To the hospital.

The Fruit of Islam fall in behind him, marching slowly. It takes on the start of a march as the neighborhood people fall in behind them. People (especially kids) race with them on the street and on the sidewalk.

ANGLE - BENJAMIN

Benjamin fights his way through the crowd trying to walk beside Malcolm, the Brothers in the Fruit stop him and Benjamin drops back.

146 EXT. LENOX AVENUE - NIGHT

146

Now the march has taken over the broad avenue. Cops are forced to redirect traffic, holding up cross-town cars as the group walks solemnly by. The people walking behind have swelled it to a huge demonstration. Their faces reflect their anger and their satisfaction that, for once, something is being done about what has happened.

147 EXT. HOSPITAL (HARLEM) - LONG SHOT - NIGHT

147

shows the Muslim men in perfect order, calm, with their arms folded across their chests, waiting. Their eyes are on Malcolm as he walks toward the hospital entrance.

SERIES OF SHOTS

-- of the growing crowd.

-- of the nervous cops, including some big brass.

-- of kids watching from a rooftop.

-- of Benjamin trying to emulate the Fruit of Islam.

148

EXT. HOSPITAL (HARLEM) - NIGHT

148

Malcolm is standing in front of the Fruit of Islam men,
as HIGH-RANKING POLICE OFFICER GREEN comes over.

CAPTAIN GREEN

All right, that's enough. I want
these people moved out of here.

MALCOLM

They're all disciplined men. They're
doing nothing except waiting.

SHOT - CROWD

The unruly crowd behind the Fruit of Islam. They are
restive, milling, ugly.

CAPTAIN GREEN

What about them?

MALCOLM

That's your headache, Captain.
And if he dies, I pity you.

149

EXT. HOSPITAL (HARLEM) - NIGHT

149

DOCTOR

He'll live. He's getting the best
care we can give.

MALCOLM

Thank you, Doctor.

DOCTOR

I had to put a plate in his head.

MALCOLM

(to Captain)

You bastards.

CAPTAIN GREEN

All right, okay. Now disperse
this mob.

MED. SHOT - MALCOLM, FRUIT OF ISLAM AND CROWD

It's clear the decision is in one man's hands, Malcolm's.

(CONTINUED)

149 CONTINUED:

149

CLOSE SHOT - MALCOLM

He makes a gesture with his hand, the Fruit of Islam disperse.

ANGLE - PEOPLE

moving away, going home. Only one person remains from the Fruit of Islam and the crowd, it's Benjamin.

CLOSE - CAPTAIN GREEN

CAPTAIN GREEN

That's too much power for one man to have.

149A INT. MUSLIM CAFETERIA

149A

Everyone is in a somber mood over the evening events.

ANGLE - TABLE

Malcolm sits with Brothers Earl and Sidney.

SIDNEY

Brother Minister, we need to strike back.

BROTHER EARL

Put fear into those devils.

MALCOLM

I want to also, but until we are instructed by the Messenger to do so, we will just wait and pray.

BROTHER EARL

I'm tired of praying.

MALCOLM

That's enough, Brother Earl.

ANGLE - ENTRANCE

Benjamin comes into the cafeteria and everyone looks at him. He sees Malcolm sitting and moves towards his table.

(CONTINUED)

149A CONTINUED:

149A

ANGLE - TABLE

Brothers Sidney and Earl get up to intercept him but Malcolm waves him through. Benjamin stands.

MALCOLM

Sit down, son.

Malcolm pours some cream into his cup of black coffee, then also some white sugar.

MALCOLM

There is only one thing I like integrated. My coffee.

Benjamin laughs.

MALCOLM

What can I do for you?

BENJAMIN

Mr. X, I was out there tonight. I saw what you did. I want to be a Muslim. I ain't never seen a Negro stand up to the police like that.

ANGLE - SIDNEY AND EARL

They exchange dubious looks.

MALCOLM

Do you know what it means to be a true Muslim?

Benjamin hesitates.

MALCOLM

Do you?

BENJAMIN

Not exactly, but I want to be one, like you.

MALCOLM

I admire your enthusiasm but you should never join any organization without first checking it out thoroughly.

Benjamin is crushed and he starts to get up.

(CONTINUED)

149A CONTINUED: (2)

149A

MALCOLM

We need more young warriors like yourself, stick around and we shall see if your heart is true.

BENJAMIN

Mr. X, I won't make you out a liar.

150

INT. TEMPLE #1 (DETROIT) - CLOSE ON NEWSPAPER HEADLINE
(DAILY NEWS) 150

MALCOLM X WINS \$70,000 JUDGEMENT
FOR BEATEN NEGRO

An AIDE of Elijah puts down the newspaper and shakes Malcolm's hand.

AIDE

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad would like to see you now.

151

INT. ELIJAH'S OFFICE - DAY 151

Elijah is sweeping the floor with a plain, hand broom. Malcolm enters the room, is surprised and waits at the door. The two are alone together.

ELIJAH

If I surprise you, let me explain.
Menial work teaches us humility.

MALCOLM

Let me do it then.

ELIJAH

No, each of us must relearn that work is the only worthwhile thing. Allah has given you a great gift. Use it wisely, never forgetting that we are nothing, while He is all.

MALCOLM

Allah akbar.

The sweeping done, they stand together near a table at a window.

(CONTINUED)

ELIJAH

Tonight I shall introduce you as my First Minister. It will be a difficult task. Your assignment is to build temples all over the country. More work than you have ever done in your life and you will be in the public eye.

ANGLE - AIDES AND OTHERS

come into the room now. They are listening.

ELIJAH

Yes, the white devil will watch your every step. Even your own Brothers will become jealous, envious and hostile, go slowly. So I offer you a parable -- regarding your work.

Elijah picks up a glass and sets it before Malcolm.

ELIJAH

Here is a glass, dirty and its water foul. If you offer it to the people and they have no choice, they must drink out of it. But if you present them with this glass --

He is holding a clean glass, with clear water in it.

ELIJAH

-- and let them make their decision, they will choose the pure vessel. Islam is the only religion which addresses the needs and problems of our people, especially in the ghettos -- drugs, crime, unemployment, prostitution, alcohol, gambling, fornication and adultery.

Malcolm kneels at his feet.

ELIJAH

You are my most faithful, hard-working minister. I believe you will follow me until you die.

(CONTINUED)

151 CONTINUED: (2)

151

MALCOLM (V.O.)

This sweet, gentle man at whose feet I kneeled, gave me the truth from his own mouth. And I adored him, in the sense of the Latin root of the word. Adorare, to worship and to fear. He was the first man I ever feared -- not fear such as one has of a gun -- -- but the fear one has of the power of the sun, I pledged myself to him, if it cost me my life.

152 INT. HOSPITAL WARD - DAY

152

Betty is administering to a patient, as a PHONE is heard RINGING. It's answered. Another nurse motions Betty to the phone. She finishes with her patient and goes quickly.

BETTY

Hello

MALCOLM (V.O.)

Sister Betty?

BETTY

Yes.

INTERCUT:

153 EXT. GAS STATION - PAY PHONE - DAY

153

MALCOLM

I'm in Detroit.

BETTY

I know.

MALCOLM

At a gas station.

(beat)

Will you marry me?

BETTY

Yes.

MALCOLM

Did you hear what I said?

BETTY

Yes I did. Did you hear my answer?

(CONTINUED)

153 CONTINUED:

153

MALCOLM

I think so. Can you catch a plane?

BETTY

Yes. Did you eat?

MALCOLM

I love you.

154 INT. BEMBRY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

154

A subtle change has come over the apartment: it is more comfortable; there is even evidence of some small luxury: A TV set, a new settee, etc. Preparation for the wedding party is in progress. It is a Muslim party, sedate and reserved, but with an underlying joy. Lorraine is putting the finishing touches on a wedding cake. Bembry, Sidney, Earl, and various brothers and sisters are present. Malcolm and Betty are not in the room.

BEMBRY

Looks gorgeous.

LORRAINE

Just about ready.

BEMBRY

(to Sidney)

You set?

SIDNEY

Yes, sir.

BEMBRY

Well, get the happy couple and we can all dig in.

Sidney is about to go when Lorraine stops him.

LORRAINE

Give them a few more minutes.
There won't be many times like
this.

155 INT. BEMBRY'S HOUSE - ANOTHER ROOM - NIGHT

155

Betty and Malcolm in a dim-lit room, very close.

MALCOLM

It won't be easy.

(CONTINUED)

155 CONTINUED:

BETTY

Just hold me.

MALCOLM

It can get rough.

BETTY

Shh.

MALCOLM

I'll be away a lot.

BETTY

You're with me even when you're
away.

He embraces her. Then Betty laughs.

BETTY

I never told you, but when I first
saw you on the podium, cleaning
your glasses, I felt sorry for you.
Nobody as young as you should be
that serious. But I don't think
that anymore.

MALCOLM

What do you think now?

BETTY

The simplest thing in the world:
I want to have a lot of babies
with you. Dear heart, I love you.

Full embrace.

BEMBRY (O.S.)

We're waiting on you, folks. You
trying to starve us?

MED. SHOT - FESTIVE TABLE

Malcolm has just cut the cake and handed a piece to
Betty. Amid laughter and great warmth, Sidney and Earl
unfurl the front page of the Messenger, the Muslim news-
paper. Headline reads: "MALCOLM X WEDS BETTY SAUNDERS";
there is a photo. It is a moment of great joy -- but it
lasts just a moment:

JUMP CUT TO:

156 INT. MUSLIM AUDITORIUM - DAY

Malcolm is speaking to a good-sized audience:

MALCOLM

I bring you greetings from the Honorable Elijah Muhammed. Mr. Chairman, brothers and sisters, friends and enemies. I can't believe everyone here is a friend and I don't want to leave anyone out.

CROWD - REACTIONS

MALCOLM

So maybe I better add N.B.C., C.B.S., A.B.C., the F.B.I., and let's not forget our friends at the C.I.A.

CLOSE - BENJAMIN

He is neatly dressed in white shirt and tie, clean shaven, a fine young Muslim.

BENJAMIN

Take your time.

MALCOLM

You all read the newspapers, watch the T.V. shows, they call us 'hate mongers.' That's supposed to be us, the Nation of Islam led by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. They say we hate whites; we're anti-white. No. I'm for anybody who's for freedom. I'm for anybody who's for justice. I'm not for anybody who tells me to sit around and wait for mine. I'm not for anybody who tells me to turn the other cheek when some cracker is whooping upside my head. I'm not for anybody who tells black people to be non-violent while nobody is telling white people to be non-violent.

157 INT. ANOTHER MUSLIM TEMPLE (CHICAGO) - NIGHT

157

There is a larger crowd in evidence.

(CONTINUED)

157 CONTINUED:

157

MALCOLM

Something new has happened. And it'll be Molotov cocktails next time there's violence against us. And hand grenades after that and something else after that. It'll be ballots, friends, or it'll be bullets.

The crowd responds, but Malcolm continues overriding:

MALCOLM

It'll be liberty or it'll be death. With this difference it'll be reciprocal. You know what reciprocal means? That's one of whitey's words that I stole. I don't usually deal with those big words 'cause I don't usually deal with big people. Because you can get a whole lot of small people and whip the hell out of a whole lot of big people. 'Cause we have nothing to lose and everything to gain. And, brothers and sisters. F.B.I. and C.I.A., we are waking up. It takes two to tango. When I go, you go.

Strong response by the audience.

158 INT. BETTY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

158

A modest room. She is rocking a cradle with her foot as she writes:

BETTY (V.O.)

Attallah is fine. Our first born is an angel and a beauty. And misses you as I do. But the news that you've dedicated four new temples is almost as good as having you with us.

158A INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

158A

Malcolm sits in front of a television screen and watches the evening news:

(CONTINUED)

158A CONTINUED:

158A

SERIES OF OLD NEWSREEL FOOTAGE (BLACK AND WHITE)

(Newsclips from Birmingham, Selma, Mississippi and elsewhere):

- Police using dogs against people.
- The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Marching.
- Cattle prods used against men, women and children.
- The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King singing "We Shall Overcome."
- Pregnant woman knocked down by high-pressure water hoses.
- The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King leading a crowd in prayer.
- The smouldering ruins of Birmingham's 16th St. Baptist church.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

They say I advocate force and violence. All I ever said is that where the government is unwilling or unable to uphold the law and defend the lives and property of Negroes, it's time for Negroes to defend themselves. Don't go looking for white folks with rifles and form battalions -- though you'd be within your rights if you did -- But it is time to let The Man know. Anytime they bomb a church and murder in cold blood, not some grown-ups, but four little girls, who are praying to the same God the white man taught them to pray to, I say No!...

159 INT. BEMBRY'S - DAY

159

Betty, quite pregnant with her second child, Quibillah, is with Lorraine. Attallah, about a year and a half old, is playing with Sidney.

(CONTINUED)

159 CONTINUED:

159

MALCOLM (V.O.)

(no pause)

... If you never see me again. If I die in the morning, I'll die saying one thing: either the ballot or the bullet. Whitey, make up your mind.

LORRAINE

Then you like the new apartment. Is it big enough?

BETTY

(with humor)

Well, so far it is. There's one thing I haven't told Malcolm. There are twins in my family.

Both women laugh.

159A INT. TV STUDIO - CLOSE SHOT - MALCOLM'S FACE

159A

With a studio mike around his neck, he's on a panel show.

MALCOLM

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us freedom is not something somebody can give you. It's something you take. Nobody can give you equality or justice or anything worth having. If you're a man, take it. If you can't take it, you don't deserve it.

ANGLE - MALCOLM

is opposing several whites and at least one Negro, DR. PAYSON. A MODERATOR (a la Suskind) is trying to maintain decorum, but Malcolm doesn't lend himself to simple "law and order." He says what's on his mind when he wants to.

DR. PAYSON

Brother Malcolm is a demagogue. He has no place to go, so he exaggerates. He's a disservice to the good Negroes in this country. Now he's breaking bread with the communists.

MALCOLM

What communists?

(CONTINUED)

MODERATOR

Please.

MALCOLM

The brother accused me.

DR. PAYSON

You've given several speeches --

INT. ELIJAH'S OFFICE - DAY

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad and Bembry watch Malcolm on television.

CLOSE - TV SCREEN

MALCOLM

(interrupting)

That's not breaking bread. I spoke in London, does that make me pro-British? I spoke in an A.M.E. church. Does that make me a Methodist?

BACK TO STUDIO

MALCOLM

I speak to the public and I speak from any platform I can find. I'm speaking here and I sure ain't breaking bread with you, excuse my broken English.

WHITE PANELIST

Certainly Brother Malcolm must admit there has been progress.

MALCOLM

First I'm not your brother. I'll talk about 'progress' in a minute, but let me finish with my brother --

He gestures to the Negro panelist. The black members of the TV audience are lapping it up. Betty and Earl sit in the TV studio audience.

MALCOLM

Stop me if I'm wrong. I 'polarize the community.' I 'erroneously appraise the racial picture.'

(CONTINUED)

DR. PAYSON

You put it very well.

MALCOLM

You left one phrase out. Another educated Kneegrew said to me and I quote: 'Brother Malcolm over simplifies the dynamic interstices of the Negro subculture.' Would you agree?

DR. PAYSON

Entirely.

MALCOLM

Well, I have this to say. Do you know what a Negro with a B.A., an M.A. and a Ph.D. is called -- by the white man? I'll tell you. He's called a nigger.

There is some blanching and guffawing from the audience. The Moderator is totally embarrassed. Betty roars.

MALCOLM

I'm not finished. To understand this man --

He points a sharp finger at the Negro panelist.

MALCOLM

-- you must know that historically there are two kinds of slaves. House Negroes and field Negroes. The house Negro lived in the big house; he dressed pretty good; he ate pretty good and he loved the master. Yeah, he loved him more than the master loved himself. If the master's house caught fire, he'd be the first to put the blaze out. If the master got sick, he'd say: 'What's a matter, boss; we sick?' We sick! If someone said to him, 'Let's run away and escape. Let's separate.' He'd say, 'Man, are you crazy? What's better than what I got here?' That was the house Negro. In those days he was called the house nigger. Well, that's what we call them today because we still got a lot of house niggers running around.

(CONTINUED)

159A CONTINUED: (3)

159A

There is applause from the blacks in the audience.
Moderator tries to regain control.

INT. ELIJAH'S OFFICE - CLOSE - HONORABLE ELIJAH
MUHAMMAD - DAY

He is enjoying this display by his prize student, the
CAMERA PANS to a CLOSE SHOT of Bembry and the same cannot
be said.

BACK TO STUDIO

MODERATOR

I think, perhaps, Doctor Payson
has something to --

MALCOLM

Don't you want to hear about the
field nigger?

DR. PAYSON

Let him finish.

MALCOLM

Thank you. Now the Negro in the
field caught hell all day long.
He was beaten by the master; he
lived in a shack, wore castoff
clothes and hated his master.
If the house caught fire, he'd
pray for a wind. If the master
got sick, he'd pray that he'd die.
And if you said to him, 'Let's go,
let's separate'; he'd yell, 'Yeah,
man, any place is better than
this.' You've got a lot of field
Negroes in America today. I'm
one.

BENJAMIN

Tell it.

MALCOLM

-- there's another one. The
majority of black Americans today
are field Negroes. They don't
talk about OUR progress, about OUR
government, OUR Navy, OUR
astronauts. Hell, they won't even
let you near the plant.

159B INT. ELIJAH'S OFFICE - DAY

159B

Bembry turns off the TV set and he commences to plant the seeds of "betrayal."

CLOSE - BEMBRY

BEMBRY

Your holy apostle, dear Messenger, I am your true servant and the brothers asked me to tell you Malcolm is getting too much press. The brothers think he thinks he is the Nation of Islam, that he has aspirations to lead the Nation. It was you who made Malcolm the man he is. You lifted him out of the darkness.

CLOSE - ELIJAH

ELIJAH

Go and tell the brothers what Brother Minister is doing, has done has been of great benefit to the Nation.

CLOSER - BEMBRY

BEMBRY

Great benefit for himself.

159C BRIEF MONTAGE - THE RISE OF MALCOLM X

159C

EXT. STREET (HARLEM) DAY

Malcolm is walking the streets of Harlem like he is campaigning for office. He has Brothers Sidney, Earl and Benjamin at his side, a crowd follows him. Malcolm sees a wino.

MALCOLM

Brother man, put that bottle down, take that poison away from your lips. That's what the devil wants you to do, stay high, out of your natural mind. I know, I've been there.

The wino looks at Malcolm and continues to drink his wine.

(CONTINUED)

159C CONTINUED:

- Malcolm emerges from a doorway to be met by an army of TV reporters armed with microphones. He walks; they follow.
- Malcolm walking in Harlem, urging people to lift themselves up, come to the meetings, etc.

INT. TEMPLE #7

Malcolm sits with Benjamin.

MALCOLM

It's time you've received your X.
But first you must copy this
letter, exactly as I give it to
you; down to the dotted 'i's,'
crossed 't's,' everything. And
you must go on a fast, just water
and juices, that's it.

CLOSE - BENJAMIN

He takes the letter from Malcolm and looks at it.

BENJAMIN

I'll have it tomorrow.

MALCOLM

Brother Benjamin, do not rush, it
has to be exact.

-- Benjamin hands Malcolm his letter, Malcolm shakes his
head and hands it back, it's not exact.

EXT. STREET (HARLEM) - DAY

Malcolm is talking to a group of people who are having
a rent strike.

MALCOLM

When you live in a poor
neighborhood, you're living in
an area where you have poor
schools.

CUTAWAY TO:

(CONTINUED)

159C CONTINUED: (2)

159C

MALCOLM AND BENJAMIN

Malcolm hands him back his letter again. The fast is getting to Benjamin.

MALCOLM

When you have poor schools you have poor teachers. When you have poor teachers, you get a poor education.

CUTAWAY TO:

DESPAIR OF HARLEM - SLUMS, TENEMENTS, GARBAGE, RATS

MALCOLM (V.O.)

Poor education, you only work on poor paying jobs and that enables you to live again in a poor neighborhood.

CUTAWAY TO:

BLACK FACES

MALCOLM (V.O.)

So it's a very vicious cycle. We've got to break it, a very vicious cycle that has to be broken.

INT. MUSLIM CAFETERIA

Benjamin meekly walks toward Malcolm and gives him his letter, which he takes. The fast is wearing him out.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

Malcolm is inspecting it.

CLOSE - BENJAMIN

His face is filled with apprehension.

ANGLE - MALCOLM AND BENJAMIN

MALCOLM

You are now Benjamin 2X.

(CONTINUED)

159C CONTINUED: (3)

159C

BENJAMIN

All praises are due to Allah.
Thank you, Brother Minister.

MALCOLM

Come, sit with us.

ANGLE - TABLE

Benjamin 2X sits with Malcolm and Brothers Earl and Sidney.

MALCOLM

We are now sitting with Brother Benjamin 2X.

EARL

Allah Akbar.

SIDNEY

You will be good.

BENJAMIN

Brother Minister, can I have something to eat?

Everyone laughs.

MALCOLM

Let's get this man some food.

160 EXT. HARVARD SQUARE - DAY

160

A crowd of students outside the Law School. The setting is the same as the last time we saw Malcolm and Shorty here, except now the students part for him. Malcolm walks slowly toward the entrance, looking up at the Latin inscription of the building when he is stopped by a WHITE COED.

COED

Mr. X, I've read some of your speeches and I honestly believe a lot of what you say has truth to it. I have a good heart. I'm a good person despite my whiteness. What can the good white people like myself, who are not prejudiced, or racist, what can we do to help the cause?

(CONTINUED)

160

CONTINUED:

CLOSE - MALCOLM

He stares at her.

MALCOLM

Absolutely nothing!

CLOSE - COED

She is absolutely crushed and runs away in tears.

161

INT. HARVARD LAW SCHOOL - DAY

161

Speaking to a packed student audience in the famous auditorium:

MALCOLM

... My high school was the black ghetto of Roxbury. My college was the streets of Harlem and I took my Master's in prison. If you look out that window --

SHOT - MALCOLM'S OLD GANG HANGOUT

MALCOLM (V.O.)

-- you can see my burglary hangout. I lived like an animal. Had it not been for the Honorable Elijah Muhammad I would surely be in an insane asylum or dead.

ANGLE - AUDIENCE

carefully listening.

MALCOLM (O.S.)

The language we have been speaking to this man in the past can never reach him. And you can never get your points across unless you communicate. If a man speaks French, you can't talk Latin to him. You have to know what language he speaks and talk to him in that language.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

161 CONTINUED:

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

(pause)

The white man speaks the language of brutality and violence and some of us are going around speaking this -- chicken pecking, we shall overcome singing, Uncle Tom language and think he's going to hear. I tell you --

INSERTS - SHOTS

- A) Fruit of Islam, standing up to police.
- B) Black Panthers bearing arms.
- C) Students in confrontation.
- D) Black folks rioting in ghettos across the country -- chanting "We want Malcolm X, we want Malcolm X."

MALCOLM (V.O.)

-- If his language is a shotgun, get a shotgun. If he only understands the language of a rifle, get a rifle. If he talks to you with a rope, then get a rope. But don't waste time talking the wrong language.

BACK TO AUDITORIUM

The audience roars.

MALCOLM

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us that we're sick of 'advances'; we're sick of token Negroes; we're through with showpieces. Yeah, some restaurant hires a Negro. Some university enrolls a freshman without bayonets. And white people think we ought to be shouting halleluyah. Let me tell you something: for 400 years he has had a foot-long dagger in the black man's back, and now because he starts to wiggle the knife out maybe an inch, the black man is supposed to be grateful. Why, if he jerked the knife out altogether, it's still gonna leave a scar...

(CONTINUED)

Crowd response. .

MALCOLM

This is a question of human rights, not civil rights. Respect as human beings is what black Americans want. That's the true problem: let me tell you the answer. I've been to Africa. I've studied Africa. Independence came in those areas where they got mad. (They didn't sit around singing and they weren't sad.) They weren't interested in logic or consequences; they just got angry, kicked some ass and took over. Yes, they organized a Mau Mau and that's what we need.

SHOT OF REPORTERS IN AUDIENCE

Beginning to scribble furiously.

MALCOLM (O.S.)

I see the gentlemen of the press are with us and the pencils are beginning to wiggle. Then let me say with great forethought and careful consideration: in Mississippi we need a Mau Mau; in Alabama we need a Mau Mau. Wherever the law is flouted by white racists, we need a Mau Mau and that includes Roxbury and Harlem --

Great cry from the crowd. Malcolm stills them:

CLOSE - MALCOLM

MALCOLM

'I can see tomorrow's headline. Yes. 'Malcolm X Calls for Mau Mau.' I'll tell you something; if I said, 'Mary had a litte lamb,' they'd write 'Malcolm X Attacks Poor Mary -- and her Little White Lamb.'

Loud laughter from the audience. But this response is overwhelmed by the response of ANOTHER, LARGER AUDIENCE.

Malcolm is talking before an all-black audience. It is the largest rally yet; the hall is packed to the rafters.

MALCOLM (O.S.)

You saw the headlines, brothers and sisters, but you also see the results.

People in the audience wave The Daily News headline: "MALCOLM X CALLS FOR HARLEM MAU MAU." Their joy is enormous.

MALCOLM

We have built temples in Boston, in Detroit, in Atlanta, Philadelphia, Washington -- 100 temples in fifty states. From a handful we have grown to scores of thousands. Oh, yes, they know about us.

VARIOUS SHOTS OF RALLY

Hawkers selling the Messenger; faces of Fruit of Islam near the podium; Lorraine, Sidney, Earl, Benjamin, and Bembry. For the first time a new note is seen in Bembry's face: reserve bordering on resentment. When others around him cheer Malcolm, Bembry is cool. Sidney notices this from his father, but makes no comment.

MALCOLM (O.S.)

My beautiful brothers and sisters, I'm not going to spend tonight telling you, as I have so often, of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's greatness. I'm going to tell you his greatest greatness. He is the first leader to identify our enemy. And why is this so great? Because when you know your enemy, you can no longer be divided. He has given us our true identity and pride and this is the greatest binding force in the world. He is the second Moses sent by the Great God Allah. We know who we are and what we want. No sane black man wants integration. No sane black man believes the white man will give him anything but a crumb.

(CONTINUED)

162 CONTINUED:

162

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us that the only solution for the black man is complete and total separation. Ours, our own, no one else's but ours.

A wave, as responses greet this.

CLOSE - BEMBRY

He does not like this.

163 INT. ANTEROOM OF RALLY - NIGHT

163

The rally is over. A small room packed with people congratulating Malcolm, trying to touch him.

He is the hero of the hour. Sidney, Peter, Earl and Benjamin are with him, enjoying the accolades and trying to help Malcolm make his way out. Bembry stands apart, removed and silent.

MALCOLM

Thank you, brother; sister, how are you?

SIDNEY

Please make way, please --

ANGLE - WELL-KNOWN PERSONALITY (DICK GREGORY)

is at the door. He and Malcolm know each other well. Malcolm extends a palm, but GREGORY doesn't slap it.

GREGORY

Can I ask you something?

MALCOLM

Sure, man.

GREGORY

Are you a dupe or a dope?

MALCOLM

What?

GREGORY

(scornfully)

'His greatest greatness.'

(CONTINUED)

163 CONTINUED:

163

MALCOLM
Say what you're saying.

GREGORY
If you don't know, man, then I
feel sorriest for you.

164 INT. MALCOLM'S HOME - NIGHT

164

Betty, large with child, is in a chair -- a newspaper
in her lap. Malcolm is in the other room, putting his
last daughter to sleep. We hear him saying:

MALCOLM (O.S.)
Okay, last hug.

ANGLE

As he enters, a smile on his face, but the concern of the
evening clearly imprinted. He sits heavily. Betty
watches him carefully.

MALCOLM
Long day. Long night. Long
year. Long ten years.
(smiles)
Why are you looking at me like
that?

BETTY
Because you're in trouble.

MALCOLM
How do you know?

BETTY
(smiles)
Dear heart, because I know you.

A pause.

MALCOLM
I don't want to bring my troubles
home. You know that.

BETTY
I'm not made of glass. I won't
break. I'm a black woman. You
helped make me that.

(CONTINUED)

MALCOLM

I just want to sit here and be still.

BETTY

We've never had a fight. Not a real one. But we're going to have one right now if you don't talk about it.

MALCOLM

How did you know?

BETTY

Because the talk is all around.

MALCOLM

There's always talk, always been talk. Don't they say how rich I'm getting off the Nation.

BETTY

We'll get to that, too, but this isn't just talk anymore.

She picks up the newspaper and reads from it:

BETTY

'Los Angeles, U.P.I.: Elijah Muhammad, 67-year-old leader of the Black Muslim movement, today faced paternity suits from two former secretaries who charged he fathered their four children...'

MALCOLM

There are always slanders, always lies. You're reading the devil's newspapers. Can't you see they're trying to bring us down, bring down the Messenger.

BETTY

'Both women, in their 20s, charged they had had intimacies with Elijah Muhammad since 1957...'

MALCOLM

I was going to talk to Bembry about it tonight.

BETTY

To Bembry? Is Bembry your friend?

(CONTINUED)

MALCOLM

Woman, have you lost your mind?
What's the matter with you?

She gets up, goes to him gently.

BETTY

No, what's the matter with you?
Wake up! Are you so dedicated that
you have blinded yourself? Are you
so committed you cannot face the
truth? Bembry is the editor of
the newspaper you established.
Ask him why your name hasn't been
in the Messenger in a year? Ask
him why you rate front page in
every paper in the country, but
not a single paragraph in your
own?

MALCOLM

(rationalizing)

I'm not interested in personal
publicity. Our people know what
I'm doing.

BETTY

But do you know what Bembry is
doing? You're so blind, everyone
can see this but you!!!

MALCOLM

Bembry saved my life. The
Honorable Elijah Muhammad has
saved my life.

BETTY

A long time ago. You've repaid
them many times over. Ask them
why they have new cars and a
house full of new furniture? And
what do we have, Malcolm? A
broken down jalopy and the clothes
on our backs. We don't even own
our own home. What about our
children? What about me? You
don't even have life insurance.

MALCOLM

You know the Nation will provide
for you and the children if
anything happens to me.

(CONTINUED)

164 CONTINUED: (3)

164

BETTY

Will they? Are you sure? Are
you sure or are you blind?

She touches him very gently.

BETTY

Dear heart, you can face death
24 hours a day; but the possibility
of betrayal never enters your mind.

164A DETECTIVE MONTAGE

164A

Malcolm goes to the apartments of the secretaries to question them. These attractive young women are pregnant and/or with children, most complain that they are getting no child support from the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, he has cut them off, even threatened them.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

From their own mouths, I heard their stories of who had fathered their children. And from their own mouths I heard Elijah had told them I was the best, the greatest minister he ever had, but that someday I would leave him, turn against him. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad, while praising me to my face, he was tearing me apart behind my back.

165 INT. BEMBRY'S HOUSE - CLOSE SHOT - MALCOLM - NIGHT

165

He has said everything on his mind and waits for Bembry's answer.

PAN TO Bembry.

BEMBRY

What are you talking about -- 'blackout'? Some of the brothers are a little jealous. Maybe they think you been a little -- over-publicized. That's all. Forget it. It's nothing.

Malcolm is listening closely. Bembry puts an arm around him, man-to-man.

(CONTINUED)

BEMBRY

Now about our coming up in the world a little. You're not naive. You're a man of the world. The movement's grown; we've grown with it. You know folks. They want their leaders to be prosperous. One hand washes the other.

MALCOLM

(quoting Bembry
back to himself)

'I'm telling you God's words,
not to hustle.'

BEMBRY

You want a new car? You want a new house? Is that it? It's the money, right?

Malcolm has to control his rage:

MALCOLM

We tell the world we're moral leaders because we follow the personal example of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad.

BEMBRY

Elijah Muhammad is a human being. So am I. Do you know your Bible?

MALCOLM

I've read the Bible.

BEMBRY

All right. David slept with Bathsheba; but that was less than his slaying Goliath. Lot committed incest, but he saved the people from Sodom and Gomorrah. Noah was a drunk, but God gave him the Ark. A man's deeds outweigh his personal weaknesses.

Malcolm pours out his scorn.

MALCOLM

And one hand washes the other. You're a hustler and he's an adulterer.

(CONTINUED)

165 CONTINUED: (2)

165

BEMBRY

Be careful, Malcolm. I warn you.

MALCOLM

I have to hear it from his own mouth.

166 INT. ELIJAH'S OFFICE - DAY

166

A tableau. Elijah Muhammad at his desk; Malcolm stands. We do not hear the earlier part of their exchange. Periodically Elijah has coughing spasms.

ELIJAH

Son, I'm not surprised. You always have had such a good understanding of prophecy and spiritual things. Yes, I am David who took another's wife. I am Lot who laid with his own daughters. It is only the fulfillment of prophecy. My seed must be planted amongst fertile soil.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

His world is coming apart.

167 SHOT - MALCOLM

167

Malcolm's face is dimly lit. He is kneeling as he prays and the CAMERA MOVES IN SLOWLY INTO an EXTREME CLOSEUP.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

Every second of my twelve years with Mr. Muhammad, I had been ready to lay down my life for him. The thing to me worse than death was betrayal. I could conceive death. I couldn't conceive betrayal -- not of the loyalty which I had given to the Nation of Islam and to Mr. Muhammad. During the previous twelve years, if Mr. Muhammad had committed any crime punishable by death, I would have said and tried to prove that I did it -- to save him -- and I would have gone to the electric chair, as Mr. Muhammad.

FREEZE FRAME ON Malcolm's eye.

INT. MALCOLM'S HOME - NIGHT

Malcolm is working at his desk when Betty enters. He looks up and smiles wanly, she wants to say something but does not.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

Feeling he's being watched. Malcolm puts his papers down and looks at her.

CLOSE - BETTY

BETTY
What did Elijah say? Was I right?

ANGLE - BETTY AND MALCOLM

MALCOLM
It's like someone has told me the earth is flat, up is down, down is up, I'm lost.

BETTY
Dear heart, I'm sorry.

MALCOLM
There is a lot of work to do.

BETTY
How can you work?

MALCOLM
It's hard to make a rooster stop crowing once the sun has risen. The sun is up.

We hear RIFLE SHOTS.

DRUM CADENCE (it will be throughout entire scene).

INT. MANHATTAN CENTER - DAY

Malcolm, a last minute replacement for the ailing Honorable Elijah Muhammad, speaks before a huge crowd.

MALCOLM
And what do I say of this so-called 'national mourning'? I say... the white man's acts are condemned, not only by our beliefs but by his own.

(CONTINUED)

168A CONTINUED:

SHOT - AMERICAN FLAGS AT HALF-MAST

MALCOLM (V.O.)

Both his Bible and the Holy Koran say: 'As you sow, so shall you reap.' Both say: 'Sow the wind, reap the whirlwind.'

ANOTHER SHOT - AMERICAN FLAGS AT HALF-MAST

MALCOLM (V.O.)

In the soil of America the white man planted seeds of hate. He allowed the weeds that sprang up to choke the life out of thousands of black men.

SHOT - KENNEDY FUNERAL CORTEGE

MALCOLM (V.O.)

Now they have strangled one of the gardeners. This is the justice of Allah. Wa-Salaam Alaikum.

SHOT - AUDIENCE

AUDIENCE

Alaikum Wa-Salaam.

SHOT - LONE, RIDERLESS HORSE

169 INT. MANHATTAN CENTER - MALCOLM WITH REPORTERS - DAY

169

REPORTER

Minister X! Don't you have even a little bit of remorse... saddened by President Kennedy's assassination?

CLOSE - MALCOLM

MALCOLM

Assassination might be too good a word, and might I add an Arabic word at that. This was a prime example of the devil's chickens coming home to roost.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

169 CONTINUED:

169

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

Being an old farm boy myself,
chickens coming home to roost
never did make me sad. It always
made me glad.

169A INT. ELIJAH'S OFFICE - NIGHT

169A

On his desk is the black headline: "MALCOLM X CALLS
ASSASSINATION 'CHICKENS COMING HOME TO ROOST.'" Elijah's
health is getting worse, his coughing is frequent.

ELIJAH

Did you see the papers today?

MALCOLM

Yes, sir, I did.

ELIJAH

That was a very bad statement.
The country loved this man, and
you have made it hard in general
for Muslims.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

He knows what is coming.

CLOSE - ELIJAH

ELIJAH

We must dissociate ourselves from
your terrible blunder. I'll have
to silence you for the next ninety
days. You are not allowed to make
any statements to the press nor
are you to speak at any temples.

CLOSER - MALCOLM

He looks at Elijah, his leader, his friend, his father and
speaks with total sincerity.

MALCOLM

I agree with you, sir. I submit
100 percent.

ANGLE - ROOM

Malcolm turns around and leaves the room.

(CONTINUED)

169A CONTINUED:

169A

ANGLE - DOOR

As the door is being closed, we see Bembry kneeling before Elijah and kissing his hand. The door closes, the SCREEN IS BLACK.

FADE IN:

170 INT. MALCOLM'S CAR - NIGHT

170

He is driving the car slowly. Betty is with him. The mood is bitter.

BETTY

What will you do now?

MALCOLM

I don't know. I have to get away from those reporters, keep my mouth shut.

(small smile)

I'm going to get the car fixed. At least that's concrete.

BETTY

What you said was true. And you've said harsher things.

MALCOLM

It was an excuse to lower the boom. I know that. The Assistant Minister told me I was silenced before I told him. Now I'm forbidden in the Temple.

(a laugh-snort)

Did you hear Bembry's statement?

BETTY

No.

MALCOLM

He said I might be reinstated if I submitted.

BETTY

If you submitted? You have already.

MALCOLM

I wasn't a hustler for nothing. I know a set-up when I see one. One brother said if people knew what I'd done, they go out and kill me. This wheel has a lot of play in it.

(CONTINUED)

170 CONTINUED:

170

BETTY
My poor Malcolm.

MALCOLM
My head feel like it's bleeding
inside.

171 EXT. GARAGE - LITTLE LATER

171

It's darker. Their car is on a rack. An ATTENDANT comes
out from under.

ATTENDANT
Lucky you didn't take her out for
a spin.

MALCOLM
That bad?

ATTENDANT
Somebody been tampering with your
drive shaft.

MALCOLM
What?

ATTENDANT
At 50 you might have lost control
completely.

MALCOLM
It has begun.

Betty has a terrible thought:

BETTY .
Oh, dear Lord --

MALCOLM
What?

BETTY
I left the children with --

She can't say the words --

MALCOLM
With who?

BETTY
Sidney.

The room is empty. Betty and Malcolm come bursting in.

BETTY
Attallah, Ouibilah, girls -- !

A pause.

Sidney enters with both girls on his back and the little one, Ilyasah, riding his leg. Betty begins to weep in relief. She takes the children.

The PHONE RINGS. Malcolm answers it. From his expression we know it is a threat call. He hangs up.

SIDNEY
Another one?

MALCOLM
How long has this been going on?

SIDNEY
All day. Malcolm, I have to level with you. They gave me an assignment. But I couldn't do it. I love you, Betty and the kids.

MALCOLM
What was the assignment?

SIDNEY
To wire your car so it would explode when you turned the ignition. The brothers say you are spreading untruths about the Messenger. The brothers say your tongue should be cut out.

MALCOLM
Sidney, you don't believe that?

SIDNEY
No! Whatever you decide to do, I'm with you.

MALCOLM
No, you mustn't. You'll be marked for death.

SIDNEY
Let me die then.

MALCOLM
I won't allow myself to come between you and your father. Go home. I order you.

(CONTINUED)

172 CONTINUED:

Sidney reluctantly leaves.

MALCOLM

And don't come back.

173 INT. HOTEL THERESA - DAY

Malcolm, backed by Brothers Earl and Benjamin 2X, faces a roomful of supporters and reporters.

MALCOLM

In the past I thought the thoughts, spoke the words of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, that day is over. From now on I speak my own words and think my own thoughts. Because 1964 threatens to be a very explosive year on the racial front and because I myself intend to be very active in every phase of the American Negro struggle for human rights, not civil rights, I have called this press conference to clarify my own position in the struggle. The orders have been issued for my death. I am certain my executioner walks these streets. He may be even in this room, but that will not stop me. I've been forced out of the Nation by internal differences, the decision to break with the Honorable Elijah Muhammad was not mine to make, it was made for me. I therefore announce today the formation of the O.A.A.U., Organization of Afro-American Unity. Designated to eliminate the political oppression, the economic exploitation and the social degradation suffered daily by 22 million black Americans. I'm back at the old stand, gentlemen. A little more alone than I was before, but I am back.

A host of questions fired all at once:

REPORTERS

1. Will it be a Muslim organization?
2. Do you have a mosque of your own?
3. How many of Elijah's followers will join you?

(CONTINUED)

173 CONTINUED:

173

Malcolm calms them:

MALCOLM

There is one further preparation I need. It is a return to the source of our great religion. I will make a pilgrimage to Mecca.

174 EXT. IDLEWILD AIRPORT - DAY

174

Malcolm, at the window, as his plane takes off. He is watching Betty and the children on the visitors' ramp. He sees her become a tiny figure, waving a vivid bandana.

175 EXT. VISITORS' RAMP - DAY

175

The plane is out of sight. Betty gathers up her children. As they leave, she is subtly surrounded by a protecting band of supporters, led by Earl and Benjamin 2X.

175A MECCA - PILGRIMAGE

175A

MALCOLM

Greeted as he descends from the plane in Egypt.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

My darling Betty. Everywhere I go I am welcomed as the representative of our people.

GROUPS OF BURNOOSED SUPPORTERS ON STREETS OF JEDDA, SAUDI ARABIA

MALCOLM (V.O.)

Our fight is known and respected worldwide. Incidentally, there's a little white man who follows me wherever I go...

SHOT OF CIA AGENT

He watches as Malcolm walks between the two pyramids.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

... I wonder who he's working for? If I was a betting man I'd say C.I.A. What's your guess?

SHOT OF MALCOLM

On a camel as he rides toward the Sphinx.

176 INT. AUDUBON BALLROOM - NIGHT

176

Betty is reading Malcolm's letter to a large audience.

BETTY

'I arrived in Jedda, Saudi Arabia. I have never witnessed such sincere hospitality and true brotherhood as practiced here in the ancient home of Abraham, Mohammad, and the great prophets of the Scriptures...'

177 INT./EXT. MECCA - DAY/NIGHT

177

- A) Malcolm, wearing the garb of a pilgrim, walks with a vast throng of others, similarly clad, around the Great Temple. He wears two white towels, one over his loins, the other over his neck and shoulder, leaving the right arm and shoulder bare. He wears simple sandals. The other pilgrims are of various colors: from white, to yellow, to darkest black.
- B) Malcolm and other pilgrims kneeling together on a praying rug.
- C) Malcolm and several white pilgrims eating Muslim-style; breaking a chicken and shaking it.
- D) Malcolm and others walking around the Great Kaaba, a black stone set in the middle of the Great Mosque. He falls to his knees. We see what he describes:

MALCOLM (V.O.)

Today, with thousands of others, I proclaimed God's greatness in the Holy City of Mecca. Wearing the Ihram garb I made my seven circuits around the Kaaba; I drank from the well of Zem Zem; I prayed to Allah from Mount Ararat, where the Ark landed. It was the only time in my life that I stood before the Creator of all and felt like a complete human being.

178 INT. ELIJAH'S OFFICE - NIGHT

178

Elijah and a group of Black Muslim leaders. Bembry among them, it looks like he is the number two man now that Malcolm has been jettisoned. The Messenger lies in bed, he is having a coughing fit, this is the worst condition he's been in. A doctor orders everyone out of the room.

(CONTINUED)

17P CONTINUED:

MALCOLM (V.O.)
 You may be shocked by these words,
 but I have eaten from the same plate,
 drunk from the same glass and
 prayed to the same God with fellow
 Muslims whose eyes were blue, whose
 hair was blond and whose skin was
 the whitest of whites. And we are
 brothers, truly; people of all colors
 and races believing in one God
 and one humanity. Once before, in
 prison, the truth came and blinded
 me. It has happened again...

179

179 INT. MALCOLM'S HOME - NIGHT

Betty is with Brothers Earl, Benjamin 2X, and the
 children. There are now four including another baby --
 Gamilah.

MALCOLM (V.O.)
 ... In the past I made sweeping
 indictments of all white people.
 I no longer subscribe to racial
 indictments. I wish nothing but
 freedom, equality and justice
 for all.

SHOT

Malcolm is bent over in prayer, lone figure in a huge
 mosque.

MALCOLM (V.O.)
 My first concern, of course, is
 with the group to which I
 belong, for we, more than any
 other, are deprived of our
 inalienable rights.

SHOT

Malcolm on a plane headed home.

MALCOLM (V.O.)
 I believe the true practice of
 Islam can remove the cancer of
 racism from the hearts and souls
 of white Americans.

180 EXT. IDLEWILD AIRPORT - TIGHT TWO-SHOT OF MALCOLM AND BETTY - DAY 180

In embrace. She breaks from him and whispers:

BETTY

Go ahead. I can wait now.

181 INT. IDLEWILD AIRPORT - DAY 181

A large press conference: mikes of every network, every newspaper and wire service present. Malcolm looks magnificent, tanned and healthy, wearing African garb and his splendid beard; he sits down at a table.

MALCOLM

I met the religious and political leaders of the Middle East and Africa. President Nasser of Egypt; President Nyerere of Tanzania; Dr. Nkrumah; President Sekou Toure; Jomo Kenyatta -- and I met the people and this I learned:

SHOT - REPORTERS

Taking down his words.

MALCOLM (O.S.)

We are not merely 22 million black Americans fighting white racism. We are a billion and a half, two billion people, united; for the black people of the world are victimized by the white people of the world. It is not the individual white man who is our enemy; our enemy is the American political system which feeds and nourishes white racism.

SHOT

The CIA agent (from Egypt) seen in b.g.

MALCOLM

I will tell you the other thing I learned. Wherever I went I was followed. In Egypt they tried to poison me, but I have a strong constitution.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

I do not say this with bravado or without fear -- and my wife and I will have a new child this summer...

SHOT

Betty, calmly listening.

MALCOLM

... But there are ingredients here that make it impossible for me to die of an old age. When I go, you will know who got me.

A long pause; no one moves.

MALCOLM

So every day that I wake up is another borrowed day, but you can be sure I will use the day to the fullness thereof.

He stops. Reporters burst in immediately with questions:

REPORTERS

1. What about rising racism?
2. Do you still advocate guns?
(one overriding question)
3. Do we understand you now do not think all whites are evil?

MALCOLM

Yes, sir. Mecca opened my eyes. The true Islam taught me that it takes all the religious, political, psychological and racial ingredients to make the human family complete. Today my friends are black, brown, red, yellow and white.

REPORTER

What about guns? Should blacks be armed?

MALCOLM

Nothing I saw or learned abroad changes the basic facts about America.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

It is still a racist nation with racist courts, racist schools, racist police, racist jails, a racist Hollywood, a racist T.V., and a racist press. And I shall bring these charges before the U.N. because this country has spit upon the Charter of Human Rights. These United States of America will be brought before the world court.

ANOTHER REPORTER

What about guns, Malcolm?

MALCOLM

Let me ask you a question. Has whitey changed since I went away? Have you put up your guns? The day you stop being violent against my people will be the day I tell folks to put away their guns.

THIRD REPORTER

Then you're still an extremist?

MALCOLM

Yes, I'm still an extremist because black Americans are in extreme conditions. Show me a black man who isn't an extremist and I'll show you someone who either needs psychiatric care, is an Uncle Tom -- or he's dead.

ANGLE - MUSLIM MALE

BENJAMIN THOMAS

Git your hand out of my pocket!

Everyone turns around to the back to see what the commotion is about. The man who yelled out leaves quickly, we will see him later on, very soon.

INT. MALCOLM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Malcolm and Betty are in bed with a tiny night light on. They are closer than they've ever been. He is reading to her from their favorite poetry: The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam.

(CONTINUED)

MALCOLM

'Ah, fill the cup, what boots it
to repeat
How Time is slipping underneath
our feet?
Unborn Tomorrows and dead
Yesterdays;
Why fret about them if Today be
sweet?'

Betty is half-asleep in the crook of his arm. She
mumbles in pleasure.

BETTY

Dear heart, you could read the
phone book to me.

MALCOLM

Mmm. Have you thought about a name?

BETTY

Mmmmm nnn.

MALCOLM

Five girls'll be marvelous.

Betty raises an eyebrow.

BETTY

How do you know it'll be a girl?

MALCOLM

Well --

BETTY

And who says it's just one?

MALCOLM

No!

BETTY

That's what the doctor thinks.

MALCOLM

Well, six is better than five.

She kisses him.

BETTY

Get some sleep.

He switches off the light.

(CONTINUED)

182

CONTINUED: (2)

182

MALCOLM

You're the one who needs it. You got to sleep for three.

BETTY

I'm not sleepy.

MALCOLM

Sister Betty, not including my mother you're the only women I've met I would trust 75 percent.

BETTY

We have to work on that other 25 percent. Dear heart, I love and trust you and I'll always support you, Muslims or no Muslims.

MALCOLM

We had the best organization that black people ever had and niggers ruined it.

183

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

183

It is a cold winter night. A molotov cocktail is lit and hurled through the front picture GLASS WINDOW.

184

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

184

One of the children screams.

185

INT. MALCOLM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

185

Malcolm grabs his pistol and quickly throws a coat over Betty. She is half-asleep, frightened, trembling and disoriented.

MALCOLM

Walk out the back, dear. Hurry.

Betty goes. Malcolm runs back for the children.

ANGLE

He reassuringly leads the four children, in their pajamas, through the smoke-filled house.

MALCOLM

There's nothing to be afraid of. It might be a little cold. Hang on. We'll be fine.

(CONTINUED)

185 CONTINUED:

185

INSERT - FLASHBACK

CUT BACK TO:

EARL LITTLE

getting his family out of the burning house in Lansing, Michigan. It should be the same exact scene we saw before earlier in the film.

EARL

Everybody out. Out! Out! Get the kids.

CUT BACK TO:

186 EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT (PRESENT)

186

Neighbors' lights have gone on. There are shouts:

NEIGHBORS

1. What is it?
2. Fire!
3. Bring those children in here.

MALCOLM

Call the fire department.

186A INT. HOTEL THERESA - NIGHT

186A

Brothers Earl, Benjamin 2X and some of the other brothers are in Malcolm's office.

ANGLE - BROTHER EARL

on phone. He dials, then listens.

BROTHER EARL

Get your coats. Now. And arm yourself, the minister is in trouble.

The brothers run out of the office brandishing rifles and pistols.

187 EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT (LATER)

187

A hose is playing on the fire. Police cars have arrived. There are TWO REPORTERS with the cops. Malcolm faces them furiously.

(CONTINUED)

MALCOLM

I repeatedly asked for police protection. I got none. The alarm was turned in half an hour ago. The firemen just got here. And then they rang the doorbell to get in!

REPORTER

Are the Muslims behind this?

MALCOLM

White racists did this. Maybe they're using the Black Muslims and maybe they're doing their own dirty work. What difference does it make?

SECOND REPORTER

Do you know what Muslim headquarters is saying?

MALCOLM

(with total contempt)

I can imagine. I did it myself. For the publicity.

EXT. TEMPLE #1 (DETROIT) - DAY

Bembry is being interviewed by a reporter.

BEMBRY

We feel this is a publicity stunt on the part of Malcolm X. We hope this isn't a case of 'if he can't keep the house, we won't get it either.'

187A EXT. MALCOLM'S STREET - NIGHT

187A

A CAR comes ROARING down the street with rifles sticking out the windows, and pulls right up in front of Malcolm's house.

ANGLE - HOUSE

Brothers Earl and Benjamin 2X run out of the car up to Malcolm.

(CONTINUED)

187A CONTINUED:

187A

BROTHER EARL

We called your house, operator
said you had requested that your
phone be turned off.

BENJAMIN 2X

Give us the command, Malcolm.

MALCOLM

I don't care about myself, my
wife and four children were
sleeping in their beds, they
have nothing to do with this.

BROTHER EARL

Let's get out of this cold.

Brothers Earl and Benjamin take off their coats and put
it over Malcolm and lead him to a police car.

187B INT. BASEMENT - DAY

187B

Five black men sit around a table. They do not speak.
They are Thomas Hayer, Ben Thomas, Leon Davis, William X,
and Wilbur Kinley. All are Muslims, all are the
assassins.

CLOSE - 12 GAUGE SAWED-OFF SHOTGUN ON TABLE

CLOSE - 9MM GERMAN LUGER ON TABLE

CLOSER - .45 AUTOMATIC

ANGLE - THOMAS HAYER

He puts a roll of exposed 35mm film into a sock.

ANGLE - TABLE

ASSASSINS

Allah Akbar.

187C INT. NY HILTON - ANGLE - LOBBY ESTABLISHING SHOT

187C

Malcolm is checking in when he is approached by a young
white COED.

(CONTINUED)

187C CONTINUED:

187C

CLOSE - COED

COED

Mr. X, I have a good heart. I'm a good person despite my whiteness. What can the good white people like myself who are not prejudiced do to help the cause of the Negro?

CLOSE - MALCOLM

He looks at her.

MALCOLM

Teach your white friends to seek the truth. Teach them not to hate someone because their skin is not white like theirs. Teach them not to believe in white supremacy... That's all I can say.

CLOSE - COED

COED

I will, Mr. X. I will.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

MALCOLM

Let's all pray without ceasing. May Allah bless you.

187D INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

187D

Malcolm lies on his bed, and for the first time we see the strain in his face, it has begun to take its toll, he's a hunted man. A doomed man.

ANGLE - MALCOLM

Malcolm dials the phone.

MALCOLM

Brother Earl.

(CONTINUED)

187D CONTINUED:

187D

INT. HOTEL THERESA - NIGHT

BROTHER EARL

Malcolm, where are you?

INTERCUT BETWEEN Brother Earl and MALCOLM.

MALCOLM

I'm gonna spend the night at the Hilton, try to get some work done.

BROTHER EARL

Let some of us come down there.

MALCOLM

No, that won't be necessary. I'll be all right.

BROTHER EARL

I wish you'd listen to us. What about the meeting tomorrow? We need to frisk people.

MALCOLM

I don't want folks to be searched, it will be over soon.

There is silence on the other end.

MALCOLM

Don't be sad. I have lived with danger all my life. I never expected to die of old age, I know the power structure won't let me. I know I have done the very best I could to help our people.

CLOSE - BROTHER EARL

A tear rolls down his face.

MALCOLM

I never wanted an organization that depended on the life of one man. The organization must be able to survive on its own.

(CONTINUED)

187D CONTINUED: (2)

187D

BROTHER EARL

Believing in Allah is one thing
but I also believe in being armed.
We will protect you. Wa-Salam
Alaikum.

MALCOLM

I don't want black people killing
each other. Alaikum Wa-Salaam.
Good night.

187E INT. AUDUBON BALLROOM - NIGHT

187E

The Harlem Y is having a party and it's packed with
teenagers doing the Monkey, Watusi, Mashed Potato,
etc. to the sounds of MOTOWN.

ANGLE - STAIRCASE

The three assassins come up the stairs, Ben Thomas,
William X and Wilbur Kinley, and start to mingle amongst
the gyrating bodies.

187F INT. HILTON LOBBY - NIGHT

187F

Thomas Hayer and Leon Davis, two of the remaining
assassins, walk into the lobby and go straight to the
check-in counter.

CLOSE - HAYER

HAYER

Do you have a Malcolm X registered
here?

187G INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

187G

Malcolm's resting on the bed.

CLOSE

The PHONE RINGS.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

He picks it up.

(CONTINUED)

187G CONTINUED:

187G

HAYER V.O.)
Wa-Salaam Alaikum. Wake up,
brother.

CLICK.

Malcolm stares at the receiver, then hangs up the phone.

187H INT. AUDUBON BALLROOM - NIGHT

187H

The three assassins are casing the ballroom. They check the different entrances, the exits, the bathrooms, staircases while the jam-packed crowd continues to dance the night away.

188 INT. FRIEND'S HOUSE - NIGHT

188

Betty is putting her four daughters to sleep when the PHONE RINGS. She picks it up.

BETTY

Hello?

CLOSE - MALCOLM

MALCOLM

It's me, good to hear your voice.

INTERCUT BETWEEN Malcolm and Betty.

BETTY

Dear heart, where are you?

MALCOLM

In a hotel. The kids asleep?

BETTY

I just put them to bed. Can we come to the meeting tomorrow?

MALCOLM

I don't think so.

BETTY

We want to be with you.

MALCOLM

It's dangerous.

(CONTINUED)

BETTY

It's been dangerous.

MALCOLM

Sister Betty, I've never told anyone this before, the more I keep thinking about the things that have been happening lately, I'm not at all sure it's solely the Muslims. I know what they can and cannot do, and they can't do some of the stuff that's recently going on.

BETTY

Are you sure?

MALCOLM

I think I'm going to quit saying it's the Muslims, it's not them alone. They're getting help.

BETTY

The children and I miss you.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

MALCOLM

Sister Betty, I trust you 110 per cent.

BETTY

You are with us even when you are away.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

Malcolm doesn't say anything, he's silent as he thinks about how much he loves his wife and kids.

MALCOLM

You can come tomorrow, bring the girls. Everything is gonna be all right.

189 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

189

SUPERIMPOSE: SUNDAY FEBRUARY 21, 1965

A blue 1962 Cadillac passes a sign that says Patterson, New Jersey.

(CONTINUED)

- 189 CONTINUED: 189
- ANGLE - CAR
- The assassins are on their way to the Audubon ballroom, Wilbur Kinley is behind the wheel, no one is talking.
- 190 EXT. STREET - DAY 190
- Betty is driving to the Audubon Ballroom, her four daughters are in the back seat making a racket.
- 190A EXT. STREET - DAY 190A
- Malcolm drives to the Audubon Ballroom.
- 191 INT. AUDUBON BALLROOM - DAY 191
- Brothers Earl and Benjamin 2X along with some others are putting the folding chairs in place for the coming meeting. The audience has not started to come in yet.
- 192 EXT. GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE - DAY 192
- The assassins are driving over the George Washington Bridge.
- ANGLE - CAR
- KINLEY
- Brothers, the time is fast approaching, it's the hour of the knife.
- 193 EXT. STREET - CLOSE - BETTY - DAY 193
- Betty is trying to quiet down her daughters as she drives.
- 194 EXT. STREET - CLOSE - MALCOLM - DAY 194
- Malcolm is in deep thought as he drives.
- 194A INT. AUDUBON BALLROOM - DAY 194A
- Betty and her four kids walk into the ballroom and move down the center aisle.

(CONTINUED)

194A CONTINUED:

194A

One of the girls drops her black doll and a young man picks it up. The young man is Thomas Hayer, he gives it back to her.

BETTY

Say thank you.

GAMILAH

Thank you.

THOMAS

You are welcome.

ANGLE

The rest of the assassins come in and go to their positions along with the rest of the crowd, the place is starting to fill up.

195 INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

195

BROTHER BENJAMIN 2X

No sign of the minister yet.

BROTHER EARL

He'll be here like clockwork.

196 EXT. STREET - DAY

196

Malcolm drives past the Audubon Ballroom, people are going in but no cops are present.

ANGLE - CAR

Malcolm drives by.

ANGLE - STREET

Malcolm parks his car, it's four blocks away. He turns OFF the IGNITION and sits there.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

It's as if he's frozen in his car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGLE - STREET

Malcolm finally gets out of the car, locks the door and walks a couple of steps, then stops.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

Malcolm has stopped in his tracks, like some unseen force has overcome him which prevents him from moving. Malcolm is paralyzed.

CLOSER - MALCOLM'S FACE

His eyes are closed, and the street NOISE BEGINS TO BUILD to a DEAFENING ROAR. Then all of a sudden it stops.

ANGLE - OLD WOMAN

OLD WOMAN

Son, you all right?

Malcolm opens his eyes, she has brought him out of it. He looks at her but doesn't answer.

OLD WOMAN

Are you okay?

Malcolm looks at this Old Woman, who slightly resembles his own mother.

MALCOLM

Ma'am, I'm fine.

OLD WOMAN

Good. We need you. I recognize you, don't pay them folks no never mind, you keep on doing what you doing.

MALCOLM

May Allah bless you.

OLD WOMAN

I'll pray for you, too, son. Jesus will protect you.

She walks away, carrying her two shopping bags full of groceries.

Malcolm walks in. Present are Brothers Earl, Benjamin 2X, and a secretary, SISTER ROBIN.

MALCOLM

Is the charter ready?

BENJAMIN 2X

No.

MALCOLM

Why not? You've had ample time, you and the sister.

SISTER ROBIN

I apologize, Minister, we'll have it next week.

He is pissed.

MALCOLM

Folks are sitting out there today, not next week, expecting to hear our charter.

BENJAMIN 2X

Next week, Minister.

MALCOLM

Has the Reverend called? Is he gonna show?

BROTHER EARL

He called last night and said he wouldn't be able to attend.

MALCOLM

So now we have no opening speaker? Why wasn't I informed last night?

BROTHER EARL

I called Betty, she didn't call you?

MALCOLM

Since when do you start telling her my business? Since when? She has nothing to do with this. You tell me, not her, not anybody else.

BROTHER EARL

I assumed...

MALCOLM

What did I tell you about assuming.

(CONTINUED)

197 CONTINUED:

197

Malcolm starts pacing the room, nobody has ever seen him like this before.

MALCOLM

Benjamin, you better go out there and explain the charter isn't ready.

Benjamin 2X gets up to leave.

MALCOLM

Sister, please go with the brother.

They both exit.

CLOSE - MALCOLM AND EARL

BROTHER EARL

Brother Minister, what is wrong?

MALCOLM

I don't feel right about this meeting, something is not right.

BROTHER EARL

Let's cancel it.

MALCOLM

Is my family here?

BROTHER EARL

Down front.

198 INT. ANTEROOM - DAY

198

A lone cop in uniform stands in the shadows with a walkie-talkie.

198A INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

198A

Malcolm is about to go out onstage when he sees Sister Robin.

MALCOLM

You'll have to forgive me for raising my voice to you.

SISTER ROBIN

Brother Minister, I understand.

MALCOLM

(to himself)

I wonder if anybody understands.

The place is filled. Betty and the girls sit in a boxed-off section near the platform. Malcolm's bodyguards stand on and around the stand. Benjamin 2X is finishing up his speech when Malcolm walks onto the stage and sits down.

MALCOLM

Make it plain.

BENJAMIN 2X

And now, without further remarks,
I present to you one who is willing
to put himself on the line for you --

CLOSE - BETTY AND KIDS

CLOSE - THOMAS HAYER

CLOSE - WILBUR KINLEY

CLOSE - LEON DAVIS

CLOSE - BEN THOMAS

CLOSE - WILLIAM X

CLOSE - MALCOLM X

CLOSE - BENJAMIN 2X

BENJAMIN 2X

-- a man who would give his life
for you. I want you to hear, to
listen, to understand one who is
a trojan for the black man.

ANGLE - STAGE

A roar greets Malcolm's intro. He shakes hands with Benjamin 2X, then steps towards the podium.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

He starts to rearrange his 3x5 index cards in his hands.

MALCOLM

Brothers and sisters, Wa-Salaam
Alaikum.

(CONTINUED)

AUDIENCE

Alaikum Wa-Salaam.

SWIFT JERKY PAN OF CAMERA

There is a commotion in the rear of the audience.

BENJAMIN THOMAS

Git your hand out of my pocket.

The bodyguards move towards the rear.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

MALCOLM

Hold it, brothers. Don't get
excited. Let's cool it --

ANGLE - WILLIAM X

He stands up from the fourth row with 12 gauge sawed-off
SHOTGUN BLASTING.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

Throws up his hands, grabs his chest and is knocked
backward.

SHOTS - PURE PANDEMONIUM

People hit the floor, knock over chairs, stampede for
the exits.

ANGLE - BACK OF AUDITORIUM

Wilbur Kinley ignites a smoke bomb.

ANGLE - FIRST RUN

Thomas Hayer and Leon Davis stand up, run towards the
stage, and EMPTY their 45s and LUGER into the fallen
body of Malcolm.

ANGLE - BETTY

She is on the floor covering her children.

(CONTINUED)

ANGLE - AISLE

Hayer and Davis charge up the aisle towards the rear exit, shooting at the crowd.

ANGLE - BODYGUARD

He stands in Hayer's way, Hayer FIRES, he turns, the bullet misses and the bodyguard gets off a SHOT which hits Hayer in the leg.

ANGLE - HAYER

He stumbles momentarily, then limps on.

ANGLE - STAIRCASE

Hayer is running down the staircase when he is tripped, and goes flying through the air to the bottom of the landing. The crowd starts to beat the shit out of him, kicking him in the head, etc., they're about to tear him apart limb to limb when a patrolman enters with gun drawn. He SHOOTS GUN into air and the crowd backs off and he takes custody of Hayer.

ANGLE - STAGE

One of Malcolm's bodyguards, Brother Gene, is over him, giving him mouth to mouth resuscitation. Brother Gene stops, Betty moves in and hugs her dying husband.

BETTY

Somebody call an ambulance.
Somebody call an ambulance.

ANGLE - ENTRANCE

Thirty cops walk in like it's a spring Sunday stroll in Central Park.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

His eyes are glazed over.

BETTY (O.S.)

They killed him. They killed him.

200 SHOT - BROTHERS EARL AND BENJAMIN 2X SITTING ON STAGE 200

SHOT - MALCOLM

is rushed on a stretcher to hospital next door.

SHOT - HOSPITAL SPOKESPERSON

HOSPITAL SPOKESPERSON

The person you know as Malcolm is
no more.

STUNNED FACES OF BLACK PEOPLE (OUTSIDE AUDUBON BALLROOM)

STUNNED FACES OF BLACK PEOPLE (AND IN HARLEM)

Ossie Davis speaking behind the above:

OSSIE DAVIS (V.O.)

Here at this final hour, in this
quiet place, Harlem has come to bid
farewell to one of its brightest
hopes extinguished now and gone
from us forever.

DOLLY SHOT

of the long line of people outside the funeral parlor,
waiting to see Malcolm's body, where it lies before
burial.

OSSIE DAVIS (V.O.)

For Harlem is where he worked,
and where he struggled and fought.
His home of homes, where his heart
was and where his people are. And
it is therefore most fitting that
we meet once again in Harlem to
share these last moments with him.

FUNERAL ITSELF

OSSIE DAVIS (V.O.)

For Harlem has ever been gracious
to those who loved her, have fought
for her and defended her honor even
to death. It is not in the memory
of man that this beleaguered,
unfortunate but nonetheless proud
community has found a braver, more
gallant young champion than this
Afro-American who lies before us
unconquered still.

(CONTINUED)

INSCRIPTION ON COFFIN

"El Jajj Malick El Shabbazz.
May 15, 1925 - February 21, 1965"

OSSIE DAVIS (V.O.)

Many will ask what Harlem finds
to honor in this stormy,
controversial and bold young
captain and we will smile and
we will answer and say unto
them --

SHOTS - FACES OF HARLEM (PRESENT DAY, '90s)

Ordinary people in ordinary pursuits of life, black
people still struggling to stay afloat in a racist
white America that does not have their best interests
at hand -- 8 years of Reagan and now at least 4 years
of Bush.

OSSIE DAVIS (V.O.)

Did you ever talk to Brother
Malcolm? Did you have him smile
at you? Did you ever listen to
him? Did he ever really do a
mean thing? Was he ever associated
with violence or any public
disturbance?

SHOT - STREET SIGN - MALCOLM X BOULEVARD (HARLEM)

SHOT - YOUNG AFRO-CENTRIC TEENAGERS WITH MALCOLM X
T-SHIRTS, HATS, JACKETS, JEWELRY, ETC.

OSSIE DAVIS (V.O.)

For if you did, you would know
him and if you knew him, you
would know why we must honor him.

SHOT - NEWSREEL FOOTAGE OF REAL MALCOLM X

OSSIE DAVIS (V.O.)

Malcolm was our manhood, our
living black manhood. That was
his meaning to his people and
in honoring him we honor the best
in ourselves.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FREEZE FRAME - A CLOSEUP of the real Malcolm X smiling right at us.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - SHOT - BULLETIN BOARD

A picture collage of Malcolm X. It reads: P.S. 153 -- Harlem honors Malcolm on his birthdate May 19, 1925.

OSSIE DAVIS (V.O.)

And we will know him then for what he was and is. A prince, a black shining prince who didn't hesitate to die because he loved us so.

ANGLE - CLASSROOM

It's a fourth grade class.

CLOSE - STUDENT

1ST STUDENT

I'm Malcolm X.

CLOSE - STUDENT

2ND STUDENT

I'm Malcolm X.

CLOSE - STUDENT

3RD STUDENT

I'm Malcolm X.

CLOSE - STUDENT

4TH FEMALE STUDENT

I'm Malcolm X.

INT. CLASSROOM (SOWETO, SOUTH AFRICA) - DAY

CLOSE - STUDENT

1ST STUDENT

I'm Malcolm X.

(CONTINUED)

201 CONTINUED:

CLOSE - STUDENT

2ND STUDENT

I'm Malcolm X.

CLOSE - STUDENT

3RD STUDENT

I'm Malcolm X.

CLOSE - STUDENT

4TH FEMALE STUDENT

I'm Malcolm X.

CAMERA PANS SLOWLY TO head of class where the teacher stands, it's NELSON MANDELA.

CLOSE - MANDELA

MANDELA

As Brother Malcolm said, 'We declare our right on this earth to be a man, to be a human being, to be respected as a human being, in this society, on this earth, in this day, which we intend to bring into existence by any means necessary.'

EXT. SCHOOL (SOWETO) - DAY

The students are chanting, "We want Malcolm, X, we want Malcolm X, we want Malcolm X."

MALCOLM X (V.O.)

... in this society, on this earth, in this day, which we intend to bring into existence by any means necessary.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END