

"MALCOLM X"

Screenplay by

Arnold Perl, Spike Lee

and

James Baldwin (uncredited)

Based on the book

"The Autobiography of Malcolm X"

by

Malcolm X and Alex Haley

Fourth Draft

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FADE IN:

EXT. ROXBURY STREET - THE WAR YEARS - DAY

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 bops 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 legs and a wide brim hat with a white feather stuck in the hat band.

EXT. STREET - DAY

FOLLOW SHOT. Shorty dodges through the crowd with his packages.

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'S VOICE

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

TOOMER

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

Cholly is annoyed. It's his story.

CHOLLY

Will you let me tell it?

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 downhome 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.

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 (CONTD)

Listen. You pull my coat if it's still stinging when I get through 'cause this shit can burn a hole through cement.

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 (CONTD)

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.

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.

INT. CLOTHING STORE - DAY

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.

EXT. ROXBURY STREET - DAY

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

VOICE OF MALCOLM X

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.

VOICE OF MALCOLM X

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. A pregnant Louise Little on porch.

VOICE OF MALCOLM X

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

ANGLE. The 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

VOICE OF MALCOLM X

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

ANGLE. The terrified Little children look out a broken window at their mother.

ANGLE. AN OLD FRAME HOUSE IN OMAHA

VOICE OF MALCOLM X

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

ANGLE. FRONT PORCH OF THE LITTLE HOUSE - AN EMPTY ROCKER ON IT.

VOICE OF MALCOLM X

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.

VOICE OF MALCOLM X
...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.

VOICE OF MALCOLM X
...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:

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

WIDER ANGLE. WE SEE Earl in front of a podium in church. He is preaching.

VOICE OF MALCOLM X
...three killed by white men and one lynched.

There are nine children in our family.

ANGLE. The nine Little children.

CLOSE - LOUISE LITTLE

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

VOICE OF MALCOLM X
My mother was an attractive woman, an educated woman, a strong woman.

CLOSE - LOUISE AND EARL

A posed wedding picture, serious but sweet.

VOICE OF MALCOLM X

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.

INT. ROSELAND STATE BALLROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE - MALCOLM AND SHORTY

They both were posed for a picture. The music "FLYING HOME" is blaring as LIONEL HAMPTON and his band is killing. The music is WILD, the dancing is frantic, the clothes are OUT, and the crowd is predominately BLACK, although 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 blond hair wigs him. Malcolm is a little open-mouthed.

A VOICE
SHOWTIME, SHOWTIME!

ANGLE - THE BALLROOM - NIGHT

People start moving off the floor, making room for the 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.

INT. THE 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 under way.

ANGLE ON THE 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 THE 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.

FOLLOW 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.

INT. THE 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 THE CROWD

So does the crowd, who loves new stars. There are ad lib remarks: "Go, man, go." "Hey, Red." "Mmmmm 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.

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 (SLO-MO)

Clapping enthusiastically -- in open admiration.

CLOSE SHOT - SHORTY

Waiting to catch them as they come off. 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 - THE 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 ever 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.

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.

EXT. LAURA'S HOUSE - ROXBURY - NIGHT

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 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.

SOPHIA

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

She already knows the answer. He laughs.

MALCOLM

Sheeit, you ain't. I had aplenty.

SOPHIA

...That isn't a whore?

Knowing she's right, Sophia becomes the aggressor.

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

Shhhh! I don't like women that talk.

CLOSE - SOPHIA

She shrugs, then moves to embrace him.

SOPHIA

Who wants to talk?

The couple starts at it again.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - DAY

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

ANGLE - MALCOLM AND SHORTY

Malcolm and Shorty sit, transfixed in their seats.

MALCOLM

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

SHORTY

Eat lead, coppers.

EXT. BOSTON COMMONS - DAY

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, filthy, rotten, stinking copper, only a low-down yellow rat bastard would shoot a man in the back.

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 use to be a big shot.

EXT. THE TROLLEY TRACKS - NIGHT (REMEMBERED TIME)

MATCH CUT

CLOSE EARL LITTLE

Earl Little's face is in the same exact position as Malcolm's from the previous scene. His mouth opens in terror as the moving trolley comes closer and closer to the black man lying on the tracks.

INT. A HEARING ROOM - DAY

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

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

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 complacently goes.

SOPHIA

You evil this morning.

MALCOLM

What's your story, baby?

He doesn't want to hear her; 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!

CLOSE - 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.

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

EXT. A BEACH - BRIGHT SUNLIGHT - DAY

Malcolm and Laura are on a deserted Cape beach. They are dressed but 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 roll 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 into the sand.

CLOSE - MALCOLM AND LAURA

LAURA

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

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.

MALCOLM

Save it, baby. Save it for Mr. Right,
'cause your grandma's smarter than
ya think.

She looks at him.

LAURA

She raised me, my mother died when I
was six.

Is your mother alive?

MALCOLM

Yeah, she's alive.

INT. DRUGSTORE - EVENING

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.

INT. LITTLE KITCHEN - DAY

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'S VOICE

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 goodwill. 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.

LOUISE

As you nice enough to ask, we'll git

you one.

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

MISS DUNNE

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

LOUISE

Murder.

MISS DUNNE

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

LOUISE

These 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.

FREEZE FRAME. It becomes a still.

MALCOLM'S VOICE

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

in charge.

A 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.

A DINING ROOM TABLE. FIVE WHITE BOYS AROUND IT.

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

A CLASSROOM.

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

KIDS PLAYING IN THE SCHOOL YARD.

MALCOLM'S VOICE
I didn't know then that I was a
nigger.

MALCOLM PLAYING BASKETBALL.

MALCOLM SPEAKING BEFORE HIS CLASS.

MALCOLM DOING HOMEWORK.

A HORSE HAVING ITS TEETH EXAMINED.

MRS. SWERLIN
He's bright.

MALCOLM'S VOICE
They talked about me like

MRS. SWERLIN
Good grades. Fine
athlete. President of
his class.

MALCOLM'S VOICE
I wasn't there. Like I was
some kind of pedigreed dog
or a horse. Like I was
invisible.

INT. OSTROWSKI'S CLASSROOM - DAY

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. I'm the class president. I want to be a lawyer.

INT. THE DRUGSTORE - P.M.

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

INT. OSTROWSKI'S CLASSROOM - DAY

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?

Malcolm is silent.

OSTROWSKI

Jesus was a carpenter.

INT. THE DRUGSTORE - P.M.

CLOSE - LAURA

LAURA

It's not the end of the world, Malcolm.

EXT. A SIGN - BLINDING SUNLIGHT - DAY

It reads "KALAMAZOO STATE HOSPITAL FOR THE MENTALLY INSANE"

INT. A ROOM IN THE HOSPITAL - DAY

The room is totally white and Louise sits in a white smock at a window in a rocking chair.

CLOSE LOUISE

As she rocks.

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

cuz' my hair blow in the wind. You want my skin. All right, I'll give it to you. I'll scrape it off. See how you like it.

ANGLE - Louise starts to sing a Negro spiritual.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

He has been standing there in deep pain all along.

THE SOUND OF A SPEEDING TRAIN IS HEARD.

EXT. THE YANKEE CLIPPER - DAY

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-BILLY CONN 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 turns some knobs.

WAITER #3

This Mick is tough.

TULLY

Joe is just playing possum. He's waiting for an opening.

The waiters are acting as if they are at ringside.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

A left jab to the jaw and a right cross, scored by Louis and Conn is hurt, as Louis rips a right to the jaw. Conn is staggering, but he won't

go down. Conn bops a left hook, he's reeling around the ring. Louis hooks a left and a right to the jaw and Conn is down.

The waiters are going crazy.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

He's taking the count, four, five, six, seven, he's on his back, eight, nine, he's getting up, no! The referee says it's over. The bout has stopped.

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.

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

The winner and still champion, Joe Louis, but what a fight Billy Conn gave.

INT. A PASSENGER TRAIN - DAY

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 cheeeese sandwiches. I got coffee, I got cake

and I got ice cream too. Right chere.

ANGLE FAVORING A 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 THE 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.

EXT. THE RAILROAD TRACKS IN HARLEM - P.M.

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

EXT. 125TH STREET STATION - P.M.

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.

ANGLE - CROWD

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.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

He runs after them.

EXT. 125TH AND LENOX AVENUE

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 hand-made 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.

FADE IN:

EXT. SEVENTH AVENUE - NIGHT

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.

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.

EXT. SMALL'S PARADISE - NIGHT

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

INT. SMALL'S PARADISE - NIGHT

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 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 Mama.

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.

MALCOLM

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

ANGLE WITH MALCOLM AND THE BARTENDER

MALCOLM

Gimme a whiskey.

BARTENDER pours him a double.

MALCOLM

I ordered a single, Jack.

BARTENDER

The double's on that gentleman. Jack!

He points.

ARCHIE AT THE TABLE - FROM MALCOLM'S POV

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.

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

He had it coming.

Malcolm sits. There are no introductions. He just nods at SAMMY 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.

SAMMY

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 chere. Heard tell you're a good man to know.

ARCHIE

Heard where?

MALCOLM

Where I come from. Boston.

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.

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?

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 desperately back in.

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, Little. 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...

INT. ARCHIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

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.

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, Little. 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.

ARCHIE

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

MALCOLM

Let 'em come. I'm ready.

INT/EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - SERIES OF CLOSE SHOTS

A FIVE DOLLAR BILL. CAMERA GOES IN for the last three digits.

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 83.

A VOICE

3, 8, 3.

Malcolm scribbles the number onto a piece of paper.

A CASH REGISTER

Ring up an amount: \$2.98.

A VOICE

2, 9, 8.

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

1, 0, 5.

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.

ARCHIE

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

He taps his head.

CLOSE - FACE OF AN ELDERLY WOMAN

ELDERLY WOMAN

I saw it in my dream. 5, 5, 5. And
last week my sister had a dream and
she hit.

CLOSE - FACE OF AN ELDERLY BARBER

BARBER

I got it from Ching Chow. It got to
be 2, 5, 1.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT

CLOSE - MALCOLM

WE ARE TIGHT ON Malcolm's intense face, he is pulling on a fat joint.

We hear BOGART blasting his way out of a police blockade.

A phone rings.

INT. ARCHIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

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 imitation.

ARCHIE

Ain't nuthin' in the world to give you that real deep cool. Like girl. You there?

MALCOLM

I'm there, daddy. Wheww. I'm cool enough to kill.

ARCHIE

Bet you are.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

FREEZE FRAME

SOPHIA'S VOICE

Malcolm, you're so funny.

She continues to laugh.

BACK TO REAL TIME.

MALCOLM

You got any money.

Before Sophia can answer he grabs her pocketbook, dumping all the contents on the floor but the dough.

SOPHIA

Baby, I was gonna give it to you.

MALCOLM

Well, bitch you move too slow.

ARCHIE

Sometimes 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

Daddy, put me down for a combination. Combine 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?

ARCHIE

(angrily taking the money)

I'll take your goddam bet.

Malcolm slides his tongue down Sophia's throat.

EXT. SMALL'S PARADISE - NIGHT

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

INT. THE BAR - NIGHT

Shaking off the rain as Malcolm walks through. He is now a familiar figure to the bar's DENIZENS. He is met with ad lib cries: "Hey, Little," "Have a taste," from the men; and from the women: "Come here, sugar," "Where you been?"

Malcolm acknowledges the greetings, strolls down in 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 polished hustler.

ANGLE - BOOTH

Malcolm sits into the booth and motions for the waitress.

ANGLE - HONEY

A fine copper tan waitress comes to him.

HONEY

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

MALCOLM

I say 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 Lucky's.

Honey stares at him.

MALCOLM

I said now.

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

A FEMALE VOICE

Daniel come in yet, Honey?

Malcolm turns his head sharply at the sound of the voice. It's familiar, a sound from the seemingly distant past. He looks toward the bar and sees the women who asked the question.

LAURA - MALCOLM'S POV

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, gingerbread colored boy who comes over to her quickly. He goes to the corner of the bar and quickly grabs Laura's neck and kisses her hungrily.

DANIEL

Hey, gorgeous, how you been? Waiting

long? Lemme see you. Wow!

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.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

He looks, then belts down his drink.

CLOSER - LAURA AND DANIEL

Daniel motions to her pocketbook and she takes out a five-dollar bill.

He grabs it, and bolts for the door.

WITH MALCOLM AND HONEY

She has been watching Malcolm.

HONEY

You know that gal?

MALCOLM

Mind your own goddamn business...
She comes in a lot?

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.

Malcolm smacks the table in frustration.

HONEY

You stuck on her?

CLOSE - GLASS

Malcolm's glass on the table is trembling.

MALCOLM

Shut up, bitch.

He raises his arm to hit her and it is held back before it can find its mark.

ARCHIE

Don't do that.

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

ARCHIE

Honey, he didn't mean it.

Archie wiggles his fingers and Honey goes, but not before throwing daggers at Malcolm and Sophia. Archie sits down, takes out 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 up tight.

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

MALCOLM

Daddy, where's my money?

ARCHIE

What you talking?

MALCOLM

You owe me six big ones.

Archie looks at him, non-comprehending.

MALCOLM

1, 2, 8 hit, didn't it?

ARCHIE

You din'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.

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 Malcolm and Archie -- their reps are at stake.

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.

MALCOLM

Come on, sweetlips, I got us some g-
i-r-l, girl. Let's you and me fly.

EXT. ONYX CLUB - NIGHT

The well-known 52nd Street nightspot features Billie Holiday.
A stand-up cutout of her is outside.

INT. ONYX CLUB - NIGHT

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?

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.

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

SOPHIA

You had the number.

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.

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

INT. ENTRANCE TO THE TOILET

He races into the men's room.

ANGLE. Archie and Sammy run after him.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

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

EXT. OUTSIDE THE MEN'S ROOM WINDOW - NIGHT FROM ARCHIE'S POV

A tiny alleyway. No one is visible.

ARCHIE

The dirty yellow rat bastard.

INT. MENS ROOM - NIGHT

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.

EXT. THE STREET - NIGHT

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 and into a CLOSEUP.

INT. LITTLE HOUSE - LANSING MICHIGAN - NIGHT (REMEMBERED TIME) - FINAL FLASHBACK

CLOSE - EARL

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

ANGLE - HOUSE

Outside the house are 5 members of THE BLACK LEGION. They are dressed in the style of the KKK, but in black sheets rather than white. WE SEE gasoline cans being passed around.

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.

CLOSE - EARL

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

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

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.

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 MAN!

EXT. STREET - LANSING - NIGHT (REMEMBERED TIME)

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 - A STREETCAR APPROACHES ANGLE - EARL ON TRACKS

He has been beaten to a bloody pulp.

ANGLE - CLOSER SHOT OF STREETCAR APPROACHING

CLOSE - EARL

He opens his one good eye.

CLOSE - STREETCAR MOTORMAN

He sees something ahead in the fog and rain.

ANGLE - MOTORMAN'S POV

CLOSE - HAND REACHES BRAKE LEVER CLOSE - STREETCAR WHEELS
STOPPING, SPARKS FLY

CLOSE - MOTORMAN

Winces and then makes the Sign of the Cross.

ANGLE - LONG SHOT OF PASSENGERS

Jumping out of the streetcar to attend to Earl.

PASSENGER'S VOICE

Somebody get a doctor.

MOTORMAN'S VOICE

No doctor, get him a priest.

VOICE OF MALCOLM

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.

INT. A CAR - NIGHT

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 goddam place in the world for you -- things are too hot and it's not even summer.

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.

VOICE OF MALCOLM X

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 heard in BG.

VOICE OF MALCOLM X

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.

INT. HARVARD SQUARE APARTMENT - DAY

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 woman can't afford it; my homey
ain't got it. How about you baby?
What you got?

Peg smiles, afraid of Malcolm.

SHORTY

Jesus, Red, she's just a kid.

MALCOLM

Jesus ain't got nothin' to do with
this.

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

MALCOLM

Surprise you, baby? Well, that's the
way it is. 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?

MALCOLM

Who's Rudy?

SHORTY

Yeah, Rudy.

JUMP CUT:

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.

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 talcum 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 .38 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.

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?

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.

EXT/INT. A BEACON HILL HOUSE - NIGHT

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.

INT. MANSION - DAY

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

PEG
Beacon Hill survey.

SOPHIA
We're doing a survey for the Athenaeum Society -- 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 -- AN 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. A COURTROOM - DAY

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

VOICE OF MALCOLM X

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.

VOICE OF MALCOLM X

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

JUDGE

Burglary, count one -- 8 to 10 years; count two, 8 to 10 years; count three, 8 to 10 years...

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

VOICE OF MALCOLM X

Fourteen counts of 8 to 10 years.

JUDGE

The sentences to run concurrently.

VOICE OF MALCOLM X

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:

INT. THE CELL CORRIDOR - DAY

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.

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 bust. 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.

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 FG 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. Stenciled 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.

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.

FOURTH PRISONER

A 551613, sir.

JUMP CUT:

INT. A SOLITARY CELL - DAY

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.

And slams the door shut.

INT. SOLITARY - NIGHT

It is almost pitch black. We can almost smell the stench of the room.

Malcolm sits stony-faced, his back against a wall.

TRUSTEE'S VOICE

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, wrenching it off in his fury.

INT. SOLITARY CELL - DAY

TWO-SHOT - A WHITE CHAPLAIN AND MALCOLM

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.

INT. SOLITARY - NIGHT

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.

INT. SOLITARY - LATER

Guard Cone is shaking him into consciousness.

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.

INT. SHOWER ROOM - DAY

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 Bembry 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?

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, toweling himself as the spice hits him. For the first, he smiles; this is the first relief he has tasted in prison. He 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?

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 are such a fool?

Malcolm looks over, piqued.

BEMBRY

Nobody can bust out like Bogart does it, in the movies. Because even if you get out, you are still in prison.

Malcolm is putting the conk into his hair now.

MALCOLM

You ain't lying.

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. Look at you.

These last words are spoken sharply with disgust. Malcolm turns his hands massaging the conk into his hair.

BEMBRY

Putting all that poison in your hair.

MALCOLM

Man, you been locked up too long, everybody conks. All the cats.

BEMBRY

Why? Why does everybody conk?

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

MALCOLM

I ain't said I'm ashamed.

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

Man, you better get off me.

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 another one of them cats strutting 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.

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

MALCOLM

Who are you?

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

BEMBRY

The question is, who are you? You are in the darkness, but it's not your fault. Elijah Muhammad can bring you into the light.

MALCOLM

Elijah who?

BEMBRY

Elijah Muhammad can get you out of prison. Out of the prison of your mind. 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.

INT. PRISON LICENSE SHOP - DAY

PRISONERS are working on a beltline that stamps out and finishes license plates. Bembry is on the stamping machines, 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.

A whistle sounds, ending the work shift. The inmates 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.

BEMBRY

Don't con me.

MALCOLM

What do you do with your time?

BEMBRY

I read. I study. Because the first
thing a black man has to do is respect
himself. Respect his body and his
mind. 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 Mama used to say.

BEMBRY

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

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

happens 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 Elijah, the black man's God. I'm telling you, boy, that God is black.

MALCOLM

What? Everybody knows God is White.

BEMBRY

But everything the white man taught you, you learned. 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 - A 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'S VOICE

You understand them words?

BEMBRY'S VOICE

Read it.

PULLBACK TO SHOW Bemby and Malcolm in a small PRISON LIBRARY.
No one else is in the book-lined room.

MALCOLM

I can't make out that shit.

BEMBRY

Soiled with dirt, foul; sullen,
hostile, forbidding -- as a black
day. Foully 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."

Bemby turns the pages of the dictionary to "w."

BEMBRY

Read it.

CLOSE SHOT - DICTIONARY DEFINITION OF "WHITE"

MALCOLM'S VOICE

White (whit), adj. 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.
Bemby 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 - THE 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?

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 and out what they mean.

MALCOLM

Where am I gonna start?

BEMBRY

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

CLOSE SHOT

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

CLOSE IN ON A PICTURE OF AN AARDVARK WITH ITS DEFINITION

MALCOLM

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

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.

INT. MALCOLM'S CELL - NIGHT

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 - THE 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.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

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

GUARD BARNES'S VOICE

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.

GUARD BARNES

You studying to be the first colored
President of the States?

INT. LICENSE SHOP - DAY

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.

EXT. THE PRISON YARD - DAY

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 along the right field wall. They walk throughout the scene.

ANGLE - The ball is hit over the fence for a home run. There is a big cheer from the black prisoners. Pete, the batter, 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.

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

10 to 1; 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 bout that?

BEMBRY

Sure, white man 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 history. When that blue-eyed devil locked us in chains -- 100,000,000 of us -- broke up our families, tortured us, cut us off from our language, our religion, our history.

SHOTS OF THE FACES OF THE BLACK BALL PLAYERS AND THE CONVICTS

In the stands, cheering and joyous.

BEMBRY

Do they know who they are? Do you know where you came from? We are the

Original People.

Malcolm is listening to him now.

BEMBRY

What's your name, boy?

Malcolm is startled; answers like a boy.

MALCOLM

Little.

BEMBRY

No. That's the name of the slave-master who owned your family. You don't even know who you are. You're nothing. Less than nothing. A zero. Who are you?

CLOSE SHOT - MALCOLM

Wrapped in thought.

ANGLE ON MALCOLM

MALCOLM

I'm not Malcolm Little and I'm not Satan.

BEMBRY

Who are you?

CLOSE - MALCOLM

Malcolm cannot answer because he truly does not know.

A ball is hit. Malcolm watches its flight but his face is fixed somewhere between understanding and anger: it is the face of the future leader.

BEMBRY

I told you we are a nation, the lost Tribe of Shabazz in the wilderness of North America.

INT. ANOTHER PART OF THE PRISON - LATE AFTERNOON

The rays of the sun come through bars that cut across Malcolm and Bembry's face.

BEMBRY

Allah has sent us a prophet, a black man named Elijah Muhammad. For if God is black, Malcolm --

MALCOLM

Then the devil is white.

BEMBRY

I knew you'd hear me. The white man is the devil. All white men are devils.

MALCOLM

I sure met some.

BEMBRY

No. Elijah Muhammad does not say "that white man is a devil." He teaches us that the white man is the devil. All white men.

CLOSE SHOT - MALCOLM

Listening.

BEMBRY

Have you ever known a good white man in all your life? Think back, did you ever meet one who wasn't evil?

A prison whistle is heard.

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

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

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 the light.

Malcolm lifts his head.

MALCOLM

I will do it.

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 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.

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.

INT. MALCOLM'S CELL-NIGHT

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

VOICE OF MALCOLM X

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.

VOICE OF ELIJAH

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.

VOICE OF MALCOLM X

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 in the world is the man with nothing to lose. You do not need ten such men to change the world. One will do. The Earth belongs to us, the Black man and whatever is around it, and on it and in it. Praises are due to him forever for bringing to us again, our self and our property, the UNIVERSE OF SUN, MOON, AND STARS.

VOICE OF MALCOLM X

And suddenly as he came, he was gone.

The hallucination disappears.

VOICE OF MALCOLM X

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 praise to Him who

is all-seeing, all-understanding.

He continues to pray.

VOICE OF MALCOLM X

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

INT. BEMBRY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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.

SIDNEY, aged 20, a perfect specimen of the Fruit of Islam, stands behind his chair, 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'S VOICE

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

He comes to the table, nods and sits. Sidney respectfully sits 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'S VOICE

...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.

INT. PRISON BARBER SHOP - DAY

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'S VOICE

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'S VOICE

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

INT. SMALL'S PARADISE - NIGHT

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

MALCOLM'S VOICE

But I have written everyone else.

ANOTHER PRISON - DAY

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

SHORTY

Look like Homey got himself a brand new hype.

INT. ELIJAH'S OFFICE - DAY

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'S VOICE

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'S VOICE

P.S. I finally worked my way through

the "Z's"...

INT. PRISON CHAPEL - NIGHT

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?

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.

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?

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 - A BLOND, BLUE-EYED JESUS ON THE CROSS

Note: Try to get footage from The Last Temptation of Christ [Willem Dafoe]

MALCOLM'S VOICE

God is black.

INT. ELIJAH'S OFFICE - DAY

Malcolm opens the door, the room is dark and he sees a small, slight man standing against the window, he doesn't move. This is the same man who appeared in Malcolm's cell, this is the Honorable Elijah Muhammad.

Malcolm slowly moves toward him; he is completely humbled in his presence.

CLOSE - ELIJAH

He turns from the window to Malcolm.

ELIJAH

My son, you've been a thief, drug dealer and a pimp and the world is still full of temptation. When God bragged how faithful Job was, the devil argued that only God's protective hedge around him kept him pure, the devil said remove the hedge and he will curse his maker. Malcolm, your hedge has been removed and I believe you will remain faithful.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

He cannot say anything and he drops his head, he is overwhelmed with heartfelt emotion.

INT. BEMBRY'S LIVING ROOM - P.M.

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 3 x 5 file cards; Bembry is recruiting on the telephone.

MALCOLM

How many you turning out?

SIDNEY

500.

MALCOLM

Make it 1000. We got a lot of fishing to do.

SIDNEY

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

Earl moves toward Malcolm and extends his hands. Malcolm shakes it warmly.

MALCOLM

We can always use another good brother.

EARL

I'm a willing servant for Allah.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Sunday service has let out and Malcolm, Earl, and Sidney are "fishing."

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

EXT. STREET CORNER, 125TH AND SEVENTH AVENUE - DAY

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.

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'S VOICE

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 SPEAKER, a few feet away.

WE SEE the street corner is 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 back from the dead.

EXT. OPEN AIR "MAID'S MARKET" - DAY

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'S VOICE

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.

INT. TEMPLE #7 - NIGHT

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. Bemby, Sidney, and Lorraine are in the back of the room,

pleased with the growth.

Malcolm stands at a podium.

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 from 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.

INT. MUSLIM CAFETERIA - NIGHT

Shortly and Malcolm sit at a table. Shortly has a cup of coffee 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 a 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've 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'S VOICE

How about Old Cadillac?

INSERT FLASH - Cadillac is an old junkie, past reclaiming, sitting staring in a MENTAL WARD, twitching, nose running.

SHORTY'S VOICE

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

MALCOLM'S VOICE

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 THE 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.

INT. A DINGY ROOM - DAY

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.

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 a 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 know all the angles except how
to live.

EXT. A STREET IN HARLEM - NIGHT

Malcolm walks thoughtfully down the street; Archie is still
on his mind, as he passes prostitute after prostitute. Once
beautiful women now selling their bodies. He passes Laura,
she has been turned totally out and she looks the part, there
is no way he can recognize her. We do though.

CLOSE - LAURA

She has just gotten a white John and leads him into an alley.

MALCOLM'S VOICE

Women who could be mothers, teachers,
scientists...

ANGLE - ALLEY

Laura kneels down to unzip her John's pants.

MALCOLM'S VOICE

Who is going to raise our children?;
men who might have been astronauts,
composers, engineers; Who is going
to be the head of the households? --

INT. TEMPLE #7 - NIGHT

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 Bembry, 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 - THE AUDIENCE

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

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.

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?

INT. A LARGE ANTEROOM IN TEMPLE #7 - NIGHT

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 women
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.

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.

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

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:

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 sisters 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 --

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 are alarmed at Brother Minister'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'S VOICE
Yes, I understand, Brother Malcolm.
Purely scientific.

INT. MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY - DAY

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 the mole. Here you have
the aardvark and the boar...

CLOSE ON THE SKELETONS

MALCOLM'S VOICE

...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. As they saunter out, passing the huge skeletons of prehistoric 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.

INT. SODA FOUNTAIN - DAY

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.

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.

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'S VOICE

Brother Malcolm.

Betty sees him first.

BETTY

It's Sidney.

ANGLE. As Sidney runs to them at the table:

SIDNEY

Brother Johnson was attacked by the cops.

A MAN'S VOICE

There was a scuffle. The Brother was watching.

EXT. SIDE STREET IN HARLEM - P.M.

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 THE CROWD
(deprecatingly)
He'll rap a little. He's a Muslim.
And make a speech.

ANOTHER VOICE FROM CROWD
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'S VOICE
I demand to see Brother Johnson.

INT. POLICE STATION - LATE P.M.

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

SERGEANT
Who the hell are you?

MALCOLM
I'm from Muslim Temple 7.

COP
Never heard of you.

MALCOLM
Where is he?

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.

EXT. THE STREET OUTSIDE - LATE P.M.

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 among the crowd.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

PLAINCLOTHES

Who the hell are they?

MALCOLM

Brothers of Brother Johnson.

PLAINCLOTHES

Eddie, let's see that blotter.

TWO-SHOT - FAVOR MALCOLM

As the cops examine the police blotter.

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.

INT. A LOCKUP - SAME

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!

EXT. THE STREET - LATER (DARKER)

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.

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.

EXT. LENOX AVENUE - NIGHT

Now the march has taken over the broad avenue. COPS are forced to redirect traffic, holding up crosstown 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.

EXT. HARLEM HOSPITAL - NIGHT

LONG SHOT 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.

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.

EXT. OUTSIDE HARLEM HOSPITAL - NIGHT

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

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.

EXT. OUTSIDE HARLEM HOSPITAL - NIGHT

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.

MEDIUM SHOT - MALCOLM, FRUIT OF ISLAM AND CROWD

It's clear the decision is in one man's hands, Malcolm's.

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.

INT. MUSLIM CAFETERIA - NIGHT

Everyone is in a somber mood over the evening's 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 toward his table.

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.

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.

INT. TEMPLE #1 - DETROIT - DAY

CLOSE - NEWSPAPER HEADLINE (DAILY NEWS)

MALCOLM X WINS \$70,000 JUDGMENT 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.

INT. ELIJAH'S OFFICE - DAY

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.

ELIJAH

Tonight I shall introduce you as my National Representative. It will be a difficult task. Your assignment is to build temples all over this nation. More work than you have ever done in your life and you will be in the public eye. My son, beware of those cameras, they are just as bad as a narcotic.

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, 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 the so-called Negro, especially in the ghettos -- Islam is the only way out from drugs, crime, unemployment, prostitution, alcohol, gambling, fornication and adultery.

Elijah holds up the clear glass.

VOICE OF MALCOLM X

This sweet, gentle man 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 the one has of a gun but the fear one has of the power of the sun, I pledged myself to him, even if it cost me my life.

INT. A HOSPITAL WARD - DAY

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'S VOICE

Sister Betty?

BETTY

Yes.

EXT. A PAY PHONE AT A GAS STATION - DAY

MALCOLM

I'm in Detroit.

BETTY

I know.

MALCOLM

At a gas station.

(a beat)

Will you marry me?

BETTY

Yes.

MALCOLM

Did you hear what I said?

BETTY

Yes I did. Did you hear my answer?

MALCOLM

I think so. Can you catch a plane?

BETTY

Yes. Did you eat?

MALCOLM

I love you.

INT. BEMBRY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Betty and Malcolm sit on the floor in the dimly lit room, very close.

MALCOLM

It won't be easy.

BETTY

Just hold me.

MALCOLM

It will be rough.

BETTY

Hush your mouth.

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?

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'S VOICE

We're waiting on you folks. You trying to starve us?

INT. BEMBRY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Malcolm has just cut the cake and handed a slice to Betty. Amid laughter and great warmth, Sidney unfurls the front page of the Messenger, the Muslim newspaper. Headline reads: "MALCOLM X WEDS BETTY SAUNDERS." Betty kisses her husband and Bembry, Lorraine, Earl, Sidney, Peter and VARIOUS BROTHERS AND SISTERS applaud.

We notice the subtle change in the apartment: it is more comfortable; there is even evidence of some small luxury: a TV set, a new settee, etc.

EXT. RALLY - HARLEM - DAY

Malcolm is speaking to a GOOD SIZED AUDIENCE:

MALCOLM

I must emphasize at the outstart, that the Honorable Elijah Muhammad is not a politician, so I'm not here this afternoon as a Republican, nor a Democrat, not as a Mason nor an Elk, not as a Christian nor a Jew, not as a Catholic nor a Protestant, not as a Baptist nor a Methodist, not even as an American. For if I was an American the problem that confronts our people today would not exist. So I stand here as what I was when I was born: A BLACK MAN!

CROWD REACTIONS

MALCOLM

Before there were any such things as Democrats or Republicans, we were black. Before there were any such things as Masons or Elks, we were black. Before there were any such things as Jews or Christians, we were black people. In fact long before there was ever any such place as America, we were black people... And after America has long passed from the scene there will still be BLACK PEOPLE.

CLOSE - BENJAMIN

He is neatly dressed in white shirt, jacket and tie, a fine

young Muslim.

BENJAMIN 2X

Take your time.

INT. CHICAGO TEMPLE - NIGHT

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad sits on the stage to the right of Malcolm.

This is a larger audience.

MALCOLM

What kind of black people does the Honorable Elijah Muhammad speak for? Black people who are jobless... the black masses who are poor, hungry, and angry, the black masses who are dissatisfied with the slums and ghettos in which we have been forced to live... the black masses who are tired of listening to the promises of white politicians to correct the miserable living conditions that exist in our community... the black masses that are sick of the inhuman acts of bestial brutality practiced by these semi-savage white policemen that patrol our community, like the occupation forces of a conquering enemy army... the black masses who are fed up with the anemic, Uncle Tom leadership set up by the white man to act as a spokesman for our people and to KEEP US SATISFIED AND PACIFIED WITH NOTHING!

CROWD - REACTIONS

CLOSE - MALCOLM

MALCOLM

If the black man cannot go back to his own people and his own land, Elijah Muhammad is asking that a part of the United States be separated and given to the Muslims so they can live separately.

CLOSE - ELIJAH

MALCOLM

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad is the only man the white people can deal with in the solving of problems of the so-called Negro...

CLOSE - MALCOLM

MALCOLM

...as Elijah Muhammad knows his problems.

INT. BETTY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A modest room. She is rocking a cradle with her foot as she writes:

BETTY'S VOICE

Attallah is fine. Our firstborn 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.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Malcolm sits in front of a television screen and watches the evening news. The following speech will be INTERCUT with

A SERIES OF OLD NEWSREEL FOOTAGE - BLACK & WHITE

(newsclips from Birmingham, Selma, Mississippi, and elsewhere):

- POLICE using dogs against DEMONSTRATORS.
- 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.
- Students sitting in at a counter.
- The smoldering ruins of Birmingham's 16th St. Baptist church.

MALCOLM/HIS VOICE

The white people who are guilty of white supremacy try and hide their own guilt by accusing the Honorable Elijah Muhammad of teaching black supremacy when he tries to uplift the mentality, the social, and economic condition of black people in this country. And the Jews, who have been guilty of exploiting the black people economically, civilly, and otherwise, hide their guilt by

accusing the Honorable Elijah Muhammad of being anti-Semitic simply because he teaches our people to go into business for ourselves and trying to take over the economic leadership in our own community. The black people in this country have been the victims of violence at the hands of the white man for 400 years, and following the ignorant Negro preachers, we have thought that it was God-like to turn the other cheek to the brute that was brutalizing us. 100 years ago they use to put on a white sheet and use a bloodhound against Negroes. Today they've taken off sheets and put on police uniforms, they've traded in the bloodhounds for police dogs. And just as Uncle Tom back during slavery used to keep the Negroes from resisting the bloodhounds or resisting the Ku Klux Klan by telling them to love their enemy or pray for those who use them as spitefully today. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad is showing black people that just as the white man and every other person on this earth has God given rights, natural rights, civil rights, and any other kind of rights that you can think of when it comes to defending himself.

INT. TV STUDIO

CLOSE SHOT - MALCOLM'S FACE

With a studio mike around his neck, he's on a panel show.

ANGLE - MODERATOR

MODERATOR

Mr. X, before we start our discussion tonight -- The Black Muslims: Hate Mongers -- would you mind explaining for us the meaning of your name, which is the letter X.

ANGLE - PANEL

Opposing Malcolm is DR. PAYSON, a NAACP-type NEGRO.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

MALCOLM

Yes sir. As you know, during slavery time, the slavemasters named most of the so-called Negroes in America

after themselves. Mr. Elijah Muhammad teaches us once you come into the knowledge of Islam, you replace your slave name with an X. Since we've been disconnected, cut off from our Eastern culture for so long that we don't know the names we originally had, we will use X until we get back to the East.

ANGLE - MODERATOR

MODERATOR

Thank you. Now Dr. Payson.

CLOSE - DR. PAYSON

DR. PAYSON

Mr. X is a demagogue. He has no place to go, so he exaggerates. He's a disservice to every good law-abiding Negro in the country. Can I ask you a question?

CLOSE: - DR. PAYSON

MALCOLM

Please, go ahead.

DR. PAYSON

Mr. Malcolm X, why do you teach black supremacy? Why do you teach hate?

CLOSE - MALCOLM

MALCOLM

For the white man to ask the black man if he hates him is just like the rapist asking the raped, or the wolf asking the sheep, "Do you hate me!" The white man is in no moral position to accuse anyone of hate.

ANGLE - PANEL

MODERATOR

Certainly, Mr. X, you must admit there has been progress.

MALCOLM

I'll talk about "progress" in a minute, but let me finish with my brother.

Malcolm gestures to the Negro panelist. The BLACK MEMBERS of the TV audience are lapping it up. Betty and Earl also sit in the TV studio audience.

MALCOLM

Stop me if I'm wrong. I "polarize the community." I "erroneously appraise the racial picture."

DR. PAYSON

You put it very well.

MALCOLM

You left one phrase out. Another educated Kneegrew said to me and I quote: "Brother Malcolm oversimplifies the dynamic interstices of the Negro subculture." Would you agree?

DR. PAYSON

Entirely.

ANGLE - MALCOLM

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

And 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.

There is applause from the blacks in the audience. Moderator tries to regain control.

INT. ELIJAH'S OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE - THE HONORABLE ELIJAH MUHAMMAD

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, Dr. 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.

BROTHER 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.

INT. ELIJAH'S OFFICE - DAY

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.

BRIEF MONTAGE. THE RISE OF MALCOLM X

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.

-- 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 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 goes off in a corner and very quickly copies the letter, he's so anxious.

-- 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 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.

CUTAWAYS TO THE DESPAIR OF HARLEM - SLUMS, TENEMENTS, GARBAGE, RATS

MALCOLM

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

So it's a very vicious cycle. We've got to break it.

INT. MUSLIM CAFETERIA

Benjamin weakly 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.

BENJAMIN 2X

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 2X

Brother Minister, can I have something to eat?

Everyone laughs.

MALCOLM

Let's get this man some food.

EXT. HARVARD SQUARE - DAY

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?

CLOSE - MALCOLM

He stares at her.

MALCOLM

Nothing!

CLOSE - COED

She is absolutely crushed and runs away in tears.

INT. HARVARD LAW SCHOOL - DAY

Speaking to a packed STUDENT AUDIENCE.

MALCOLM

...My high school was the black ghetto of Roxbury. My college was the streets of Harlem, and I took my masters in prison. If you look out the window --

SHOT MALCOLM'S OLD GANG HANGOUT

MALCOLM'S VOICE

-- 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 - The audience carefully listening.

MALCOLM

Mr. Muhammad is trying to get us on God's side, so God will be on our side to help us fight our battles. When Negroes stop getting drunk, stop being addicted to drugs, stop fornicating and committing adultery. When we get off the welfare, then we'll be MEN. Earn what you need for your family, then your family respects you. They'll be proud to say "That's my father." She's proud to say "That's my husband..." Father means you're taking care of those children. Just 'cause you made them that don't mean you're a father. Anybody can make a baby, but anybody can't take care of them. Anyone can go and get a woman but anybody can't take care of a woman. This is the type of teaching that the honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us so we can build the moral fiber of our people.

SHOT OF REPORTERS IN AUDIENCE

Beginning to scribble furiously.

MALCOLM

I can see the gentlemen of the press,
also the FBI and CIA are with us.
Get it straight 'cuz if I said, "Mary
had a little lamb," they'd write
Malcolm X lampoons poor Mary.

Loud laughter from the audience. But this response is
overwhelmed by the response of ANOTHER, LARGER AUDIENCE.

INT. MONSTER RALLY - NIGHT

Malcolm is talking before an all-black audience. It is the
largest rally yet; the hall is packed to the rafters.

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.

VARIOUS SHOTS OF THE 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/HIS VOICE

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches
us that God is now about to establish
a kingdom on this earth based on
brotherhood and

([...])

against peace, his history on this
earth has proved that. Nowhere in
history has he been brotherly toward
anyone. The only time he has been
brotherly toward you is when he can
use you, when he can exploit you,
when he can oppress you, when you
will submit to him. And since his
own history makes him unqualified to
be an inhabitant or a citizen in a
kingdom of brotherhood, the Honorable
Elijah Muhammad teaches us that God
is about to eliminate that particular
race from this earth. So since they
are due for elimination, we don't
want to be with them.

ANGLE - CROWD

CLOSE - MALCOLM

MALCOLM

If the so-called Negro were American citizens we wouldn't have a race problem. If the Emancipation Proclamation was authentic, you wouldn't have a race problem. If the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the Constitution was authentic, you wouldn't have a race problem. If the Supreme Court desegregation decision was authentic, you wouldn't have a race problem. All of this is hypocrisy. These Negro leaders have been telling the white man everything is all right, everything is under control. And they've been telling the white man that Mr. Muhammad is wrong, don't listen to him. But everything Mr. Muhammad has been saying is going to come to pass is now coming to pass and now the Negro leaders are standing up saying that we are about to have a racial explosion. We're going to have a racial explosion and that's more dangerous than an atomic explosion.

ANGLE - MALCOLM

MALCOLM

It's going to explode because black people are dissatisfied. They're dissatisfied now not only with the white man, but with these Negroes who have been sitting around here posing as leaders and spokesmen for black people. Anytime you put too many sparks around a powder keg, the thing is going to explode and if the thing that explodes is still inside the house, then the house will be destroyed. So the Honorable Elijah Muhammad is telling the white man get this powder keg out of your house, let the black people in this country separate from him while there's still time. And if the black man is allowed to separate and go on onto some land of his own, where he can solve his problems, then there won't be any explosion. COMPLETE SEPARATION IS THE ONLY SOLUTION TO THE BLACK AND WHITE PROBLEM IN THIS COUNTRY!!!

ANGLE - CROWD

A wave of cheers as people explode.

INT. AN ANTEROOM OF THE RALLY - NIGHT

The rally is over. A small room packed with PEOPLE congratulating Malcolm, trying to touch him. He is the hero of the hour. Sidney, Earl, and Benjamin with him, enjoying the accolades and trying to help Malcolm make his way out. Bemby stands apart, removed and silent.

MALCOLM

Thank you, Brother; Sister, how are you?

SIDNEY

Please make way, please --

ANGLE. A 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 Elijah's pimp?

MALCOLM

What?

GREGORY

(scornfully)

"His greatest greatness."

MALCOLM

Say what you're saying.

GREGORY

If you don't know, man, then I feel sorriest for you.

INT. MALCOLM'S HOME - NIGHT

Betty, pregnant 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...

ANGLE - BEDROOM

MALCOLM'S VOICE

Okay, last hug.

As he enters, a smile on his face, but the concern of the evening clearly imprinted. He sits down heavily. Betty watches him carefully.

MALCOLM

Long day. Long night. Long year.
Long ten years.

He smiles. She doesn't.

MALCOLM

Why are you looking at me like that?

BETTY

Because you're in trouble.

MALCOLM

How do you know?

She smiles.

BETTY

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.

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

Talk about what?

BETTY

The talk is everywhere!

MALCOLM

There's always talk, always been talk, and always will be talk. Don't they say how I'm trying to take over the Nation, how I'm getting rich off the Nation?

BETTY

We'll get to that, too, but this isn't just talk any more.

She picks up the newspaper and reads from it:

BETTY

"Los Angeles, UPI: 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 lies. Can't you see they're trying to bring us down, bring down the Messenger.

BETTY

"Both women, in their 20's, charged they had had intimacies with Elijah Muhammad since 1957..."

MALCOLM

I was going to talk to Bemby about it tonight.

BETTY

To Bemby? Is Bemby your friend?

MALCOLM

Woman, have you lost your mind? What's the matter with you?

Betty 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? Bemby is the editor of the newspaper you established. Ask him why your name hasn't been in "Muhammad Speaks" in over a year? Ask him why you rate front page in every paper in the country, but not a single sentence in your own.

MALCOLM

(rationalizing)

I'm not interested in personal publicity. Our people know what I'm doing.

BETTY

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 saved my life.

BETTY

A long time ago. You've repaid them
many times over. Ask them why they
have new cars and houses full of new
furniture.

MALCOLM

Is that what this is about? Material
wealth?

BETTY

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 own life
insurance.

MALCOLM

The Nation will provide for you and
the children if anything happens to
me.

BETTY

Will they? Are you sure? Are you
sure or are you blind?

She touches him very gently.

BETTY

Dear heart, you have to help me. I'm
raising our kids practically by
myself, while you're running all
over the world. You don't know how
many times the girls ask me when is
daddy coming home?

MALCOLM

What do you want me to do? Our people
need me.

BETTY

We need you too!

MALCOLM

What do you want me to do?

BETTY

Open your eyes, you can face death
24 hours a day; but the possibility

of betrayal never enters your mind.
If you won't do that for yourself do
it for us.

DETECTIVE MONTAGE

Malcolm knocks on the door of Evelyn Williams, one of the two secretaries/wives. She opens the door and has child in her arms.

ANGLE - APARTMENT

SISTER EVELYN

Her name is Eva Marie, she's 2 years old. Brother Minister, I did nothing wrong. I did nothing to be put in isolation. I believed in him. I believed in the Honorable Elijah Muhammad.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

He cannot believe what he is hearing, but he must. The truth is before his eyes.

MALCOLM

Sister Evelyn, believe in Allah.

CUT TO:

INT. SISTER LUCILLE'S ROSARY APT. - DAY

ANGLE - MALCOLM

Malcolm is sitting holding both of the children. Sister Lucille who is pregnant with 3rd child waddles across the room to sit down on the sofa with him. She picks up one of the kids from him.

ANGLE - SISTER LUCILLE

SISTER LUCILLE

This is Saudi, she's 3 and you have Lisha, she's 2. Brother Minister the Honorable Elijah Muhammad is the father of my 3 children.

She touches her pregnant stomach.

SISTER LUCILLE

Brother Minister he often talked about you. He loves you, loves you like his own son. Says you are the best, his greatest Minister but that someday you would leave him and turn against him.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

MALCOLM

He told you that?

SISTER LUCILLE

Yes sir.

MALCOLM

Are you sure?

SISTER LUCILLE

Yes, I am, Brother Minister. All I want is support for my children. He should provide for his children. That's all I want.

MALCOLM

Allah will provide.

INT. BEMBRY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE SHOT - MALCOLM

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 -- overpublicized. That's all. Forget it. It's nothing.

Malcolm is listening closely. Bembry puts an arm around him, man-to-man.

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. 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.

SHOT - AMERICAN FLAGS AT HALF-MAST

MALCOLM

Both his Bible and the Holy Koran say: "As you sow, so shall you reap." Both say: "Sow the wind, reap the whirl wind."

SHOT - AMERICAN FLAGS AT HALF-MAST

MALCOLM

In the soil of America the white man planted the seeds of hate. He allowed the weeds that sprang up to choke the life out of thousands of black men.

SHOT - THE KENNEDY FUNERAL CORTEGE

MALCOLM

Now they have strangled one of the gardeners. This is the justice of Allah. Wa-Salaam Alaikum.

SHOT - AUDIENCE

AUDIENCE

Alaikum Wa-Salaam.

SHOT - THE LONE, RIDERLESS HORSE

INT. MALCOLM WITH REPORTERS - DAY

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. Being an old farm boy myself, chickens coming home to roost never did make me sad. It always made me glad.

INT. ELIJAH'S OFFICE - DAY

On his desk is the black headlines: 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.

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:

INT. MALCOLM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sidney is playing on the floor with the kids. Betty scoops them up.

BETTY

C'mon girls, it's bedtime.

The phone rings. Malcolm answers it. From his expression we know it is a threat call. He hangs up. Betty leaves with the kids.

SIDNEY

Another one?

MALCOLM

How long has this been going on?

SIDNEY

All day since you and Betty left. Brother Minister, I have to level with you. They gave me a mission. But I couldn't do it. I love y'all.

MALCOLM

What mission?

SIDNEY

To wire your car so it would explode when you turned the ignition. The Ministers say you are spreading untruths about the Messenger. The Ministers say you are a great hypocrite, Judas, Benedict Arnold. The Ministers say your tongue should be cut out and delivered to the Messenger's doorstep.

MALCOLM

What does Sidney say?

SIDNEY

I'm with you, Brother Minister.

MALCOLM

No. You'll be marked for death.

SIDNEY

Let me die then.

MALCOLM

I won't let myself come between you
and your father. Go home.

SIDNEY

You're my father.

MALCOLM

And don't come back.

Sidney reluctantly leaves, walks out the door, past Betty.
She looks at him, then Malcolm.

INT. HOTEL THERESA - DAY

Malcolm -- backed by Brothers Earl and Benjamin 2X -- faces
a roomful of SUPPORTERS and REPORTERS.

MALCOLM

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, I have called this press conference, this morning in order to clarify my own position in the struggle -- especially in regards to politics and nonviolence. 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. Internal differences within the Nation of Islam forced me out of it. I did not leave of my own free will. But now that it has happened, I intend to make the most of it. Now that I have more independence of action, I intend to use a more flexible approach toward working with others to get a solution to this problem. I do not pretend to be a divine man, but I do believe in divine guidance, divine power, and in the fulfillment of divine prophecy. I am not educated, nor am I an expert in any particular field, but I am sincere, and my sincerity is my credentials. I'm not out to fight other Negro leaders or organizations. We must find a common solution, to a common problem. I am going to organize and head a new mosque in New York City, known as the Muslim Mosque, Inc. This gives us a religious base,

and the spiritual force necessary to rid our people of the vices that destroy the moral fiber of our community. Our political philosophy will be black nationalism. Our economic and social philosophy will be black nationalism. The Muslim Mosque, Inc. will remain wide open for ideas and financial aid from all quarters. Whites can help us, but they can't join us. There can be no black-white unity until there is first some black unity.

A host of questions fired all at once: How many of Elijah's followers will join you? etc, etc, etc.

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.

EXT. JFK AIRPORT - DAY

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.

EXT. VISITORS RAMP - DAY

The plane is out of sight. Betty gathers up her children. As they leave she is subtly surrounded by the protecting BAND OF SUPPORTERS, led by Earl and Benjamin 2X.

MECCA - THE PILGRIMAGE MALCOLM GREETED AS HE DESCENDS FROM THE PLANE IN EGYPT

MALCOLM'S VOICE

My darling Betty. Everywhere I go I am welcomed as the representative of our people.

SHOT OF CIA AGENT

He watches as Malcolm walks between the two pyramids.

MALCOLM'S VOICE

Our fight is known and respected worldwide. Incidentally, there's a little white man who follows me wherever I go.

SHOT OF MALCOLM

On a camel as he rides toward the Sphinx.

MALCOLM'S VOICE

I wonder who he's working for? If I was a betting man, I'd say CIA. What's your guess?

GROUPS OF BURNOOSED SUPPORTERS ON THE STREETS OF JEDDA, SAUDI ARABIA.

BETTY'S VOICE

I arrived in Jedda, Saudi Arabia. I have never witnessed such sincere...

INT. AUDUBON BALLROOM - NIGHT

Betty is reading Malcolm's letter to a LARGE AUDIENCE.

BETTY

...hospitality and true brotherhood as practiced here in the ancient home of Abraham, Mohammad and the great prophets of the Scriptures..."

INT/EXT. MECCA - DAY/NIGHT

-- 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.

-- Malcolm and OTHER PILGRIMS kneeling together on a praying rug.

-- Malcolm and SEVERAL WHITE PILGRIMS eating Muslim-style; breaking a chicken and shaking it.

-- 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'S VOICE

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 Mt. 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.

INT. ELIJAH'S HOME - NIGHT

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 the room.

MALCOLM'S VOICE

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...

INT. MALCOLM'S HOME - NIGHT

Betty is with Brothers Earl, Benjamin 2X, and the children. There are now four including another BABY - GAMILAH

MALCOLM'S VOICE

In the past, I have permitted myself to be used to make sweeping indictments of all white people, and these generalizations have caused injuries to some white folks who did not deserve them. Because of the spiritual rebirth which I was blessed to undergo as a result of my pilgrimage to the Holy City of Mecca, I no longer subscribe to sweeping indictments of one race. I intend to be careful not to sentence anyone who has not been proven guilty. I'm not a racist and do not subscribe to any of the tenets of racism. In all honesty and sincerity it can be stated that I wish nothing but freedom, justice and equality: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all people.

SHOT. Malcolm is bent over in prayer, lone figure in a huge mosque.

MALCOLM'S VOICE

My first concern, of course, is with the group to which I belong, the Afro-Americans, for we, more than any other, are deprived of these inalienable rights.

SHOT. Malcolm on a plane headed home.

MALCOLM'S VOICE

I believe the true practice of Islam
can remove the cancer of racism from
the hearts and souls of white
Americans.

EXT. JFK AIRPORT - DAY

A TIGHT TWO-SHOT of Malcolm and Betty in an embrace. She
breaks from him and whispers: "Go ahead. I can wait now."

INT. JFK AIRPORT - DAY

A large PRESS CONFERENCE: mikes of every network, every
newspaper and wire service present. Malcolm sports a beard.

MALCOLM

Let's begin.

REPORTER #1

Malcolm, you said on your trip abroad
you sensed a feeling of great
brotherhood.

MALCOLM

As I recall, I pointed out that while
I was in Mecca making the pilgrimage,
I spoke about the brotherhood that
existed at all levels among all
people, all colors who had accepted
the religion of Islam. I pointed out
that what it had done, Islam, for
those people despite their complexion
differences, that it would probably
do America well to study the religion
of Islam and perhaps it could drive
some of the racism from this society.
Muslims look upon themselves as human
beings, as part of the human family
and therefore look upon all other
segments of the human family as part
of that same family. Today my friends
are black, brown, red, yellow and
white.

REPORTER #8

Malcolm, are you prepared to go to
the United Nations at this point and
ask that charges be brought against
the United States for its treatment
of the American Negroes?

MALCOLM

Oh yes.

The AUDIENCE applauds.

MALCOLM

The audience will have to be quiet.

Yes, as I pointed out that during my trip that nations, African nations, Asian, Latin nations look very hypocritical when they stand up in the UN condemning South Africa and saying nothing about the racist practices that are manifested everyday against Negroes in this society. I would be not a man if I didn't do so. I wouldn't be a man.

REPORTER #3

Are you prepared to work with some of the leaders of some of the other civil rights organizations?

MALCOLM

Certainly, we will work with any groups, organizations or leaders in any way, as long as it's genuinely designed to get results.

REPORTER #1

Does the new beard have any religious significance?

MALCOLM

No, not particularly. But I do think that you will and black people in America, as they strive to throw off the shackles of mental colonialism, will also probably reflect an effort to throw off the shackles of cultural colonialism. And then they'll begin to reflect desires of their own with standards of their own.

REPORTER #2

One of your more controversial remarks was a call for black people to get rifles and form rifle clubs sometime back. Do you still favor that for self-defense?

MALCOLM

I don't see why that should be controversial. I think that if white people found themselves victim of the same kind of brutality that black people in this country face, and they saw that the government was either unwilling or unable to protect them, that the intelligence on the part of the whites would make them get some rifles and protect themselves.

REPORTER #2

What about the guns, Malcolm?

MALCOLM

Has the white man 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.

REPORTER #3

Then you're still an extremist?

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 HOUSE - NIGHT

Malcolm looks out the living room window, he has a rifle in hand.

(NOTE: This is the same pose as the famous photograph of him.) He doesn't see anyone and closes the curtain. The phone rings.

CLOSE - PHONE

Malcolm picks up the receiver.

VOICE

You're one dead nigger.

ANGLE - BEDROOM

Betty has picked up also and she's listening.

VOICE

You're days on this earth are numbered, brother.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

CLICK!

He hangs up.

ANGLE - BEDROOM

Malcolm enters the room and gets into the bed with Betty, he puts his ear down on his wife's pregnant stomach.

She kisses him.

BETTY

Get some sleep.

MALCOLM

You have to sleep for three.

Malcolm pulls Betty closer to him.

MALCOLM

I'm sorry. I haven't been the best husband or father.

BETTY

Shhh!

MALCOLM

Families shouldn't be separated. I'll never make another long trip without you and the kids. We'll all be together.

BETTY

Dear heart, I love you.

MALCOLM

We had the best organization that black people ever had and niggers ruined it.

EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT

It is a cold winter night. A Molotov cocktail is lit and hurled through the front picture glass window.

INT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT

One of the children screams.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

INT. MALCOLM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

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.

INSERT - FLASHBACK

WE 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 PRESENT

EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT

Neighbors' lights have gone on. There are shouts: "What is it?" "Fire!" "Bring those children in here."

MALCOLM

Call the Fire Department.

EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT (LATER)

A hose is playing on the fire. Police cars have arrived. There are TWO REPORTERS with the COPS. Malcolm faces them furiously.

MALCOLM

And the fire hit the window and it woke up my second oldest baby, but the fire burned on the outside of the house. It could have fallen on six-, four-, or two-year-old girls. And I'm going to tell you, if it had done it, I'd've taken my rifle and gone after anybody in sight.

REPORTER

Are the Muslims behind this?

MALCOLM

It was bombed by the Black Muslim movement upon the orders of Elijah Muhammad.

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."

EXT. MALCOLM'S STREET - NIGHT

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.

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.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

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 CLOSE - .45 AUTOMATIC ANGLE - THOMAS HAYER

He puts a roll of exposed 35mm film into a sock.

ANGLE - TABLE

ASSASSINS

Allah Akbar.

EXT. NY HILTON - DAY - ESTABLISHING SHOT

INT. NY HILTON

ANGLE - LOBBY

Malcolm is checking in when he is approached by a young WHITE 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. He thinks. He speaks.

MALCOLM

Let sincere white individuals find other white people who feel as they do and teach non-violence to those whites who think and act so racist.

CLOSE - COED

COED

I will, Mr. X, I will.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

MALCOLM

Let's all pray without ceasing. May Allah bless you.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

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 haunted man. A doomed man.

ANGLE - MALCOLM

Malcolm dials the phone.

MALCOLM

Brother Earl.

INT. HOTEL THERESA - NIGHT

BROTHER EARL

Malcolm, where are you? We've been calling all over the city.

INTERCUT between Malcolm and Brother Earl.

MALCOLM

I'm gonna try and get some work done tonight.

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 makes people uncomfortable. If I can't be safe among my own kind, where can I be? Allah will protect me.

There is silence on the other end.

CLOSE - BROTHER EARL

INT. AUDUBON BALLROOM - NIGHT

The five assassins are casing ballroom. They check the different entrances, the exits, the bathrooms, staircases while the jam packed crowd continues to dance the night away.

INT. A FRIEND'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Betty is putting her four daughters to sleep when the phone rings. She picks it up.

VOICE

That red nigger of yours is dead and so are your bastard children.

CLICK.

Betty hangs up the phone and it rings again.

BETTY

Stop calling us. Leave us alone. Leave us alone. I'll kill you. I'll kill you.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

MALCOLM

Betty it's me. It's me.

INTERCUT between between Malcolm and Betty.

BETTY

Malcolm, they keep calling, threatening us. I'm going crazy, when is this going to stop?

MALCOLM

Don't answer the phone. It's all right. It's all right. Nothing is gonna happen to anybody.

BETTY

Dear heart, where are you?

MALCOLM

At the Hilton. The girls asleep?

BETTY

I just put them to bed. Can we come to the meeting tomorrow?

MALCOLM

I don't think that's such a good idea.

EXT. ROAD

A blue 1968 Cadillac passes a sign that says Patterson, New Jersey.

ANGLE - CAR

The assassins are on their way to the Audubon Ballroom, Wilbur Kinley is behind the wheel, no one is talking.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Betty is driving to the Audubon Ballroom, her four daughters are in the backseat making a racket.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Malcolm drives to the Audubon Ballroom.

INT. AUDUBON BALLROOM - DAY

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.

EXT. GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE - DAY

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.

EXT. STREET - DAY

CLOSE - BETTY

Betty is trying to quiet down her daughters as she drives.

EXT. STREET - DAY

CLOSE - MALCOLM

Malcolm is in deep thought as he drives.

INT. AUDUBON BALLROOM - DAY

Betty and her four kids walk into the ballroom and move down the center aisle. 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.

INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

BROTHER BENJAMIN 2X

No sign of the minister yet.

BROTHER EARL

He'll be here like clockwork.

EXT. STREET - DAY

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.

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.

INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

Malcolm walks in. Present are Brothers Earl, Benjamin 2X and a secretary SISTER ROBIN.

MALCOLM

Is the program ready?

BENJAMIN 2X

No, Brother Minister.

MALCOLM

Why not? You've had ample time, you

and the sister.

SISTER ROBIN

I apologize Brother Minister, we'll have it next week.

He is pissed.

MALCOLM

Folks are sitting out there today, not next week, expecting to hear our program.

BENJAMIN 2X

Next week, Brother Minister.

MALCOLM

Has the Reverend called? Is he going to show?

BROTHER EARL

Reverend Chickenwing 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 Sister Betty, she didn't tell you?

MALCOLM

Since when do you start telling Sister Betty 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?

Malcolm starts pacing the room, nobody has ever seen him like this before.

MALCOLM

Benjamin, you better go out there and explain why the program isn't ready today.

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

The way I feel, I ought not to go out there today. In fact, I'm going to ease some of this tension by telling the black man not to fight himself -- that's all a part of the white man's big maneuver, to keep us fighting amongst ourselves, against each other. I'm not fighting anyone, that's not what we're here for.

BROTHER EARL

Let's cancel.

MALCOLM

Is my family here yet?

BROTHER EARL

Down front as always.

INT. ANTEROOM - DAY

A lone COP in uniform stands in the shadows with a walkie-talkie.

INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

Malcolm is about to go on stage 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.

INT. AUDUBON BALLROOM - DAY

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 THE 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 toward the podium.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

He starts to rearrange his 3 x 5 index cards in his hands.

MALCOLM

Brothers and Sisters, Wa-Salaam
Alaikum.

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 toward the rear.

CLOSE - MALCOLM

MALCOLM

Hold it, brothers. Don't get excited.
Let's cool it --

ANGLE - WILLIAM

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 toward the stage, and empty their .45's and Luger into the fallen body of Malcolm.

ANGLE - BETTY

She is on the floor covering her children.

ANGLE - AISLE

Hayer and Davis charge up the aisle toward 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 from 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'S VOICE

They killed him. They killed him.

SHOT - BROTHERS EARL AND BENJAMIN 2X SITTING ON STAGE

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.

THE STUNNED FACES OF BLACK PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE AUDUBON
BALLROOM...

--AND IN HARLEM.

OSSIE DAVIS speaking behind the above:

OSSIE DAVIS'S VOICE

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'S VOICE

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. 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. 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 - THE 90'S

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'S VOICE

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'S VOICE

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 THE _REAL_ MALCOLM X

OSSIE DAVIS'S VOICE

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.

FREEZE FRAME - A CLOSE-UP OF THE REAL MALCOLM X SMILING RIGHT
AT US.

CUT TO:

SHOT - INT. CLASSROOM BULLETIN BOARD

A picture collage of Malcolm X. It reads P.S. 153 -- Harlem
honors Malcolm on his birthdate May 19, 1935.

OSSIE DAVIS'S VOICE

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.

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."

THE END