

Malcom X

Fourth draft (1991)

Screenplay by James Baldwin, Arnold Perl and Spike Lee

Based on The Autobiography of Malcolm X as told to Alex Haley

**FADE IN:**

**1 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.

**2 OMIT**

**3 OMIT**

**4 OMIT**

**5 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.

**6 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.

7        **OMIT**

8        **OMIT**

9        **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.

10       **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.

10A ANGLE. KLAN on horses in front of house.

VOICE OF MALCOLM X (contd)  
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 (contd)  
...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 (contd)  
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 (contd)  
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 (contd)  
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...

**10B CLOSE - EARL LITTLE**

He looks directly into the camera, wearing a Baptist Minister's  
robe.

VOICE OF MALCOLM X (contd)  
...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 . . .

**10C CLOSE - EARL LITTLE**

He wears a Garvey hat, ornate with gold braid.

VOICE OF MALCOLM X (contd)  
...that, therefore, black men should leave  
America and return to the land of their origin.

10D ANGLE. Earl Little, in a wagon with little Malcolm.

**CLOSE - EARL LITTLE:**

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

10E WIDER ANGLE. WE SEE Earl in front of a podium in church. He is  
preaching.

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

**10F CLOSE - LOUISE AND EARL**

A posed wedding picture, serious but sweet.

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

**CLOSE SHOT**

Flash bulb of camera flashes.

**11 OMIT**

12 OMIT

13 OMIT

14 OMIT

15 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.

16 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 (contd)**

You better get out of them shoes, girl.

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

**17 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." "Mmmmmm 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 (contd)**

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

He can only grin.

**18 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 (contd)**

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.

**19 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 (contd)**

Put your black hands on them.

He is paralyzed.

SOPHIA (contd)  
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 (contd)  
Hey, baby.

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

SOPHIA (contd)  
Am I the first white woman you've been with?  
She already knows the answer. He laughs.

**MALCOLM**  
Sheeet, 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.

**19A INT. MOVIE THEATRE - DAY**

On the screen, Bogart and Cagney are blasting away the dirty,  
flat-

Warner footed coppers with machine guns. It's one of those great  
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.

**80 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 (contd)

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.

21 OMIT

22 OMIT

23 OMIT

24 OMIT

25 OMIT

26 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.

27 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.

**28 OMIT**

**29 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 (contd)

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 (contd)

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 (contd)

Take it off.

She takes off the apron.

MALCOLM (contd)

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.

**30 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.

31     **OMIT**

32     **OMIT**

33     **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.

34     **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 (contd)**

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.

**34A 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.

**34B A DINING ROOM TABLE. FIVE WHITE BOYS AROUND IT.**

**MRS. SWERLIN**

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

**34C A CLASSROOM.**

**MALCOLM'S VOICE**

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

**34D KIDS PLAYING IN THE SCHOOL YARD.**

**MALCOLM'S VOICE**

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

**MALCOLM PLAYING BASKETBALL.**

**34E MALCOLM SPEAKING BEFORE HIS CLASS.**

**34F MALCOLM DOING HOMEWORK.**

**34G A HORSE HAVING ITS TEETH EXAMINED.**

**MRS SWERLIN**

He's bright.

**MALCOLM'S VOICE**

They talked about me like

**34G CONTD**

MRS SWERLIN (contd)  
Good grades.  
Fine athlete.  
President of his class.

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

**36 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.

**36 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.

**36A 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 (contd)**

Jesus was a carpenter.

**36B INT. THE DRUGSTORE - P.M.**

**CLOSE - LAURA**

**LAURA**

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

**37 OMIT**

**38 EXT. A SIGN - BLINDING SUNLIGHT - DAY**

It reads "KALAMAZOO STATE HOSPITAL FOR THE MENTALLY INSANE"

**39 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.**

**40 EXT. THE YANKEE CLIPPER - DAY**

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

**41 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.

42     **OMIT**

43     **OMIT**

44     **OMIT**

45     **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.

45A     INSERT - FANTASY PROJECTION. Malcolm picks up a slab of cream pie and pushes it in Blades' face.

**45B     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.

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

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

**47     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.

**48     OMIT**

**49     OMIT**

**50     OMIT**

**51     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.

**50A    CLOSE - MALCOLM**

He runs after them.

**50B 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.**

**51- OMIT**

**56- OMIT**

**FADE IN:**

**57 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.

**58 EXT. SMALL'S PARADISE - NIGHT**

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

**59 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 (contd)**

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-bout 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.

**59A 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 (contd)**

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 (contd)

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...

60     **OMIT**

61     **OMIT**

62     **OMIT**

63     **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 (contd)**

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 (contd)  
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 (contd)  
(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 (contd)  
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.

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

64A STOCK MARKET BOARD at the end of a day's trading. GO IN for the last three numbers.

64B 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.

64C **A CASH REGISTER**

Ringling up an amount: \$2.98.

**A VOICE**

2, 9, 8.

Malcolm's hand writes out the number.

64D **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.

64E **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.

**64F CLOSE - FACE OF AN ELDERLY BARBER**

**BARBER**

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

**65 OMIT**

**66 OMIT**

**67 OMIT**

**68 OMIT**

**68A 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.

**69 OMIT**

**70 OMIT**

**71 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 (contd)**

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.

72 **OMIT**

73 **OMIT**

74 **OMIT**

75 **EXT. SMALL'S PARADISE - NIGHT**

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

76 **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 (contd)**

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 (contd)**

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 (contd)**

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 (contd)**

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 (contd)**

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 (contd)**

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 (contd)**

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

77     **OMIT**

78     **OMIT**

78A    **OMIT**

79     **OMIT**

80     **OMIT**

81     **OMIT**

82     **OMIT**

83     **OMIT**

84     **OMIT**

85     **EXT. ONYX CLUB - NIGHT**

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

86 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 (contd)

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.

**87 INT. ENTRANCE TO THE TOILET**

He races into the men's room.

ANGLE. Archie and Sammy run after him.

**88 INT. MEN'S ROOM - NIGHT**

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

**89 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.

**90 INT. MEN~S 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.

**91 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.**

**91A 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.

**91AA 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 (contd)  
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**

**91C 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 (contd)

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!

**91D 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 X**

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

**92 INT. 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 (contd)

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 (contd)

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.

**93 OMIT**

**94 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.

**95 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 (contd)**

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:**

**95A 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 (contd)**

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 (contd)**

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 (contd)  
Palmed it right in the goddam chamber.

**SHORTY**

Jesus Christ, Homey, you are nuts.

Malcolm starts laughing: a silent, hysterical laugh.

**96 EXT/INT. A BEACON HILL HOUSE - NIGHT**

The robbery, IN QUICK CUTS:

--A door lock is picked by Sophia.

96A --Pencil flashlight passes an upstairs window.

96B --Rudy in the car.

96C --Silver removed from a drawer by Shorty.

96D --Peg walking down the street, as lookout.

96E --Malcolm takes off his shoes.

96F --The sleeping OLD MAN, OLD TALCUM POWDER, as Malcolm takes a watch, a wallet from within inches of his pillow. Then, more boldly, picks up the man's hand and removes a ring from one of his fingers. Shorty watching with bated breath, he's about to have a heart attack.

**97 INT. MANSION - DAY**

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?

**97A OMIT**

**98 OMIT**

**98A OMIT**

**101 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:**

**102 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. Bemby in the FG of the scene.

**BEMBRY**

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

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

**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 (contd)**

Burnham.

**FOURTH PRISONER**

A 551613, sir.

**JUMP CUT:**

**103 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 (contd)**

Little, state your number.

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

**GUARD CONE (contd)**

You just drew two more days.

And slams the door shut.

**104 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.

**105 OMIT**

**106 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.

**107 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.

**108 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 (contd)

State your number.

He is beaten.

**MALCOLM**

**A 859912.**

A shower is heard.

**109 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 (contd)

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 Bemby 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 (contd)**

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 (contd)**

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.

**110 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 (contd)**

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.

**110A 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. Fouly or outrageously wicked, as black cruelty. Indicating disgrace, dishonor or culpability.

**DICTIONARY**

See also blackmail, blackball, blackguard.

**MALCOLM**

Hey, they's some shit, all right.

**BEMBRY**

Now look up "white."

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

**BEMBRY (contd)**

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.  
Bembry takes  
over the reading, giving it ironic emphasis.

**MALCOLM**

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

**SHOT - 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.

**111 OMIT**

**112 OMIT**

**113 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.

**114 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?

**115 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.

**116 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 (contd)**

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 (contd)**

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 (contd)

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 (contd)

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.

**117 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.

119 OMIT

120 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.

**121 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 (contd)**

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.

**122 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 (contd)**

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

**123 INT. PRISON BARBER SHOP - DAY**

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.

**124 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.

**125 ANOTHER PRISON - DAY**

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

**SHORTY**

Look like Homey got himself a brand new hype.

**126 INT. ELIJAH'S OFFICE - DAY**

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"...

**127 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.

**127A 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.

**128 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.

**129 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.

**129A 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.

**130 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 (contd)**

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.

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

A place where black women come to offer themselves for day work. SEVERAL ARE SEEN. A WHITE WOMEN 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 (contd)

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

FACE OF ONE BLACK WOMAN, beginning to shake her head in accord.

**132 INT. TEMPLE #7 - NIGHT**

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

The headquarters itself shows the progress Malcolm has made. It  
is  
better furnished, larger, and the chairs are filled. Bembry,  
Sidney,  
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 (contd)

Shorty!

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

MALCOLM (contd)

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 (contd)

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.

**133 INT. MUSLIM CAFETERIA - NIGHT**

Shortly and Malcolm sit at a table. Shorty 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.

133A    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?

133B    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?

133C    INSERT FLASH - Sophia is a bored housewife, she's in the kitchen cooking while her husband hides behind the Wall Street Journal.

**133D 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.

**134    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 (contd)**

You know all the angles except how to live.

**135 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 (contd)**

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?--

**136 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?

**137 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 (contd)

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 (contd)

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 (contd)

And the Sister suggests he put his actions

where his mouth is.

Malcolm's laughter is heard, in response.

**138 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:**

**138A 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:**

**138B 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 (contd)**

--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 (contd)**

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.

**139 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.

**140 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 (contd)**

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 Bemby 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 (contd)**

But Brother Bemby 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.

**141 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.

**142 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.

**143 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

from  
MAKE  
OUT Benjamin among the crowd.

in military formation: eyes forward, every face burning. People  
the neighborhood have formed a crowd behind and around them. WE

**143A 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.

in,  
Cops eye each other. Plainclothes nods slightly, he has to give  
Malcolm is not playing.

**144 INT. A LOCKUP - SAME**

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 (contd)**

That man belongs in a hospital. Get an ambulance. Now!

**145 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 (contd)**

To the hospital.

The Fruit of Islam fall in behind him, marching slowly. It takes on the start of a march as the neighborhood people fall in behind them. People (especially kids) race with them on the street and on the sidewalk.

**ANGLE - BENJAMIN**

Benjamin fights his way through the crowd trying to walk beside Malcolm, the Brothers in the Fruit stop him and Benjamin drops back.

**146 EXT. LENOX AVENUE - NIGHT**

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.

**147 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.

**148 EXT. OUTSIDE HARLEM HOSPITAL - NIGHT**

Malcolm is standing in front of the Fruit of Islam men, as HIGHRANKING 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.

149     **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.

149A    **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 (contd)**

There is only one thing I like integrated. My coffee.

Benjamin laughs.

**MALCOLM (contd)**

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 (contd)

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 (contd)

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.

**180 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.

**151 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 (contd)

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 (contd)

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 (contd)

--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.

**152 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.

**153 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.

154 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 (contd)

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?

155 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 Bemby, 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.

**156 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 (contd)**

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.

**157 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 (contd)

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 (contd)

...as Elijah Muhammad knows his problems.

**158 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.

**158A 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):

158B --POLICE using dogs against DEMONSTRATORS.

158C --The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King marching.

158D --Cattle prods used against MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN.

158E --The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King singing "We Shall Overcome."

158F --PREGNANT WOMAN knocked down by high-pressure water hoses.

158G --The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King leading a crowd in prayer.

158H --Students sitting in at a counter.

158I --The smoldering ruins of Birmingham's 16th St. Baptist church.

**158J**

**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.

159

**A-C 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 (contd)**

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 (contd)**

And I'm not finished. To understand this man--

He points a sharp finger at the Negro Panelist.

**MALCOLM (contd)**

--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.

**159D 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.

**159E 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.

**159F 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.

**159G 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.

**159H --Malcolm emerges from a doorway to be met by an army of TV REPORTERS**

armed with microphones. He walks; they follow.

**159I --Malcolm walking in Harlem, urging people to lift themselves up, come to the meetings, etc.**

**159J 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.

**159K 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.

**159L CUTAWAY TO MALCOLM AND BENJAMIN**

Malcolm hands him back his letter again. The fast is getting to Benjamin.

MALCOLM (contd)

When you have poor schools you have poor teachers. When you have poor teachers, you get a poor education.

**159M CUTAWAYS TO THE DESPAIR OF HARLEM - SLUMS, TENEMENTS, GARBAGE, RATS**

MALCOLM (contd)

Poor education, you only work on poor paying jobs and that enables you to live again in a poor neighborhood.

**159N CUTAWAY TO BLACK FACES**

MALCOLM (contd)

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

**159O 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.

**160 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

up at  
WHITE  
part for him. Malcolm walks slowly toward the entrance, looking  
the Latin inscription of the building when he is stopped by a  
**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.

**161 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--

**161A 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.

#### **162 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 (contd)

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 (contd)

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.

**163 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. Bembry 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.

**164 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 (contd)

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 (contd)

"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 Bembry about it tonight.

**BETTY**

To Bembry? Is Bembry 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? Bembry 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 (contd)**

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.

**164A 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:**

**164B 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 (contd)**

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.

**165 INT. BEMBRY'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

**CLOSE SHOT - MALCOLM**



He has said everything on his mind and waits for Bemby'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. Bemby puts an arm around him, man-to-man.

**BEMBRY (contd)**

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 Bemby 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)**

166 OMIT

167 OMIT

168 OMIT

168A 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.

**168B 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 (contd)**

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.

**168C SHOT - THE KENNEDY FUNERAL CORTEGE**

**MALCOLM (contd)**

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

**168D SHOT - AUDIENCE**

**AUDIENCE**

Alaikum Wa-Salaam.

**168E SHOT - THE LONE, RIDERLESS HORSE**

**169 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.

**169A 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 (contd)

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 Bemby kneeling before  
Elijah and  
kissing his hand. The door closes, the SCREEN IS BLACK.

**FADE IN:**

170 OMIT

171 OMIT

172 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.

**173 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 (contd)

There is one further preparation I need. It is a return to the source of our great religion. I will make a pilgrimage to Mecca.

**174 EXT. JFK AIRPORT - DAY**

Betty Malcolm, at the window, as his plane takes off. He is watching and the children on the Visitors' Ramp. He sees her become a tiny figure, waving a vivid bandana.

**175 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.

**175A 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.

**175B SHOT OF CIA AGENT**

He watches as Malcolm walks between the two pyramids.

MALCOLM'S VOICE (contd)

Our fight is known and respected worldwide. Incidentally, there's a little white man who

follows me wherever I go.

**175C 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?

**175D 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...

**176 INT. AUDUBON BALLROOM - NIGHT**

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

BETTY (contd)

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

**177 INT/EXT. MECCA - DAY/NIGHT**

--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.

177A --Malcolm and OTHER PILGRIMS kneeling together on a praying rug.

177B --Malcolm and SEVERAL WHITE PILGRIMS eating Muslim-style; breaking a chicken and shaking it.

177C --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.

**178 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...

**179 INT. MALCOLM'S HOME - NIGHT**

Betty is with Brothers Earl, Benjamin 2X, and the children. There are

now four including another BABY - GAMILAH

**MALCOLM'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.

179A 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.

179B 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.

**180 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."

**181 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 (contd)**

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.

**182 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.

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

**184 INT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT**

One of the children screams.

**CLOSE - MALCOLM**

**185 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.

**185A 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**

**186 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.

**186A OMIT**

**187 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.

**187A 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."

**187B 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.

**187C 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.

**187D EXT. NY HILTON - DAY - ESTABLISHING SHOT**

**187E 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.

**187F 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.

**187G 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**

**187K 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.

**188 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.

**189 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.

**190 EXT. STREET - DAY**

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

**190A EXT. STREET - DAY**

Malcolm drives to the Audubon Ballroom.

**191 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.

**192 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.

**193 EXT. STREET - DAY**

**CLOSE - BETTY**

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

**194 EXT. STREET - DAY**

**CLOSE - MALCOLM**

Malcolm is in deep thought as he drives.

**194A 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.

**195 INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY**

**BROTHER BENJAMIN 2X**

No sign of the minister yet.

**BROTHER EARL**

He'll be here like clockwork.

**196 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 (contd)**

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.

**197 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.

**198 INT. ANTEROOM - DAY**

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

**198A 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.

**199 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 (contd)

--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 X**

He stands up from the fourth row with 12-gauge sawed-off shotgun blasting.

**CLOSE - MALCOLM**

Throws up his hands, grabs his chest and is knocked backward.



**SHOTS - PURE PANDEMONIUM**

People hit the floor, knock over chairs, stampede for the exits.

**ANGLE - BACK OF AUDITORIUM**

Wilbur Kinley ignites a smoke bomb.

**ANGLE - FIRST RUN**

Thomas Hayer and Leon Davis stand up, run 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**

him  
One of Malcolm's bodyguards, BROTHER GENE, is over him, giving  
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.

200 SHOT - BROTHERS EARL AND BENJAMIN 2X SITTING ON STAGE

200A 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.

200B 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.

200C 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: (contd)**

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:

**200D 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 (contd)

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?

**200E SHOT - STREET SIGN - MALCOLM X BOULEVARD - HARLEM**

**200F SHOT - YOUNG AFRO-CENTRIC TEENAGERS WITH MALCOLM X T-SHIRTS, HATS, JACKETS, JEWELRY, ETC.**

OSSIE DAVIS'S VOICE (contd)

For if you did, you would know him and if you knew him, you would know why we must honor him.

**200G SHOT - NEWSREEL FOOTAGE OF THE \_REAL\_ MALCOLM X**

OSSIE DAVIS'S VOICE (contd)

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.

**200H FREEZE FRAME - A CLOSE-UP OF THE REAL MALCOLM X SMILING RIGHT AT US.**

**CUT TO:**

**200I 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 (contd)  
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.

**201 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."