

THE TALENTED

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - MORNING

Inside a small bedroom sleeping face down on the bed is JOE YOUNG, 22 year old African American male. The room is sloppy and clothes adorn the floor and bed. Next to the bed is a TABLE with an ELECTRIC CLOCK on it. It turns from 7:59 to 8:00. The alarm clock beeps, and continues beeping, Joe's eye's open but he does not move, finally he gets up and sits on the foot of his bed, the alarm clock continues to beep, Joe turns and looks at the clock as it beeps, he yawns, then reaches over and presses the button to turn it off. The clock stops beeping. Joe sits on his bed with a blank stare on his face. He looks at his ASHTRAY on his table with a small MARIJUANA JOINT in it. He grabs his lighter and begins smoking. We suddenly hear rap music blasting from outside of Joe's room, Joe sighs, puts out the joint, gets up and walks out of his room

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - MORNING

Joe walks in the hallway, the music is coming from the room across the small hall where RALPH, 24 year old African American Male well dressed in business attire has the door wide open as he puts on his jacket and prepares to leave. He is dancing to the music then looks over to see Joe staring at him in the hallway. He walks to the door way dancing and chants on rhythm with the song.

RALPH

Wake up nigga wake-up! Go to school go  
to work wake-up nigga! Work! Love that  
shit!

Joe stares at Ralph shaking his head back and forth. Ralph turns off the music walks out his room and closes the door.

RALPH (CONT' D)

That's what ya gotta do to get motivated  
get psyched, I'm bout to be around white  
people all day gotta get ready!

Ralph leaves the hallway. Joe walks in the bathroom

EXT. WASHINGTON D. C. APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING

Joe walks out from his apartment building. He is wearing a backpack and listening to head phones. As he walks down the city street a HOMELESS MAN approaches him and tries to get his attention, Joe stops and takes off his headphones.

JOE

Yeah.

HOMELESS MAN

Hey man how you doin I don't wanna bother you but I'm really hungry and just want some McDonalds, I almost got enough.

The Homeless Man opens his hand to show a small collection of quarters, dimes, nickels and pennies.

HOMELESS MAN (CONT' D)

I see you on your way and I know you see me all the time.

JOE

Yeah man I know.

Joe reaches in his pocket and gives the man about a dollars worth of change.

HOMELESS MAN

Thanks brother.

JOE

No problem

Joe puts his headphones back in his ears and continues to walk down the street.

CUT TO:

INT. DELI - MORNING

Joe walks inside a Deli where KENNY, an older man who owns the store, stands behind the counter. Joe walks over to the counter and takes off his earphones.

JOE

Hey Kenny can I get a coffee.

KENNY

One coffee.

JOE

Thanks.

Kenny begins making the coffee, Joe turns and looks at the WALL ADORNED WITH PICTURES, there are pictures of BLACK GIRLS POSING, PEOPLE IN TROPICAL ISLANDS, CARNIVAL, BLACK COUPLES, BLACK COUPLES WITH KIDS, and a poster with WOMEN OF AFRICA. Joe turns around to Kenny who just finishes making the coffee.

KENNY

Dollar twenty-five.

Joe gives Kenny two dollars.

CUT TO:

EXT. DELI - MORNING

Joe walks out of the deli turns and almost runs into DARRYL, 21 year old African American Male. Joe quickly jumps back avoiding a collision.

JOE

I'm sorry

Darryl and Joe look at each other.

JOE (CONT' D)

Oh shit Darryl wuz-up!

DARRYL

Joe? What-up Joe! I ain't seen you in years!

Joe and Darryl clap hands. They look then look at each other.

DARRYL (CONT' D)

Damn so what you doin'?

JOE

I'm still in school.

DARRYL

Yeah? That's good.

JOE

It's aight. What you doing?

DARRYL

Working downtown and you know, do some hustling. I was locked up for about six months.

JOE

Damn. What happened?

DARRYL

Judge put me in on some bullshit. But I did that shit and now I'm off parole so I'm good.

JOE

I feel it.

Awkward pause.

JOE (CONT' D)

How's your mom's?

DARRYL

Mom's is cool. I see her every now and then. I ain't live at home in a while.

JOE

Oh.

DARRYL

You remember Duncan?

JOE

(smiling)

Yeah I remember Duncan. He was always with us. Nigga was funny as hell.

DARRYL

He's dead.

JOE

What?!

DARRYL

Yeah. Someone just came up and shot him.

There is a short moment of silence.

JOE

That's fucked up.

DARRYL

Yeah that's fucked up.

JOE  
I hadn't seen him since high school.

DARRYL  
Yeah. I ain't seen you since high school.

JOE  
Yeah.

DARRYL  
I'm back now though, I be around here some time. You stay close?

JOE  
Yeah, right down the street.

DARRYL  
Next time I'm around I'll hit you up. You still smoke?

JOE  
Yeah.

DARRYL  
Yeah, I got some good shit.

Darryl pulls out his cell phone.

DARRYL (CONT' D)  
What's your number?

CUT TO:

INT. COLLEGE BUILDING - LATER

Joe walks inside of a college building. The hallway is filled with STUDENTS going to and from class. Students are in groups talking, leaning on walls waiting to enter class, listening to headphones and some are laughing. Joe walks to a door and leans on the wall with other students waiting to enter the class. Joe looks down the hall and in the hallway full of students he focuses his attention on SHANNON WRIGHT, African American Female walking his way. She sees Joe and smiles. Joe waves then looks at the ground. Shannon makes her way to Joe and leans on the wall next to him. She is full of energy.

SHANNON  
You read?

JOE

Nope.

Shannon shakes her head in disapproval.

JOE (CONT' D)

The test isn't til Monday, I'll read it later.

SHANNON

Then you'll just cram it and you won't appreciate it.

Joe is indifferent.

SHANNON (CONT' D)

And it's good. It's about some crazy white girl who seduces a black man on the train and ends up stabbing him!

Shannon begins to pretend stab Joe.

JOE

You're a crazy white girl.

SHANNON

Whatever.

Shannon sniffs Joe.

SHANNON (CONT' D)

Smoking again? In the morning?

JOE

What?

SHANNON

That's all you do.

JOE

No it isn't.

SHANNON

Joe, you're always smoking.

JOE

And even if so what? I make grades. What, you don't drink?

SHANNON

This isn't about me. Why don't you do something with your life?

JOE  
What do you do?

SHANNON  
United for Change.

JOE  
(sarcastically)  
Oh yeah that's doing something.

SHANNON  
It is. Are you going to the meeting?

JOE  
I would but I got something to do.

Shannon looks at Joe skeptically.

SHANNON  
Sure you do.

Shannon looks down the hallway. Among all the students in the hallway she see GERALD, 22 year old male walking in her direction.

SHANNON (CONT' D)  
(to Joe)  
Here comes your friend.

Gerald joins the two.

GERALD  
(to Joe)  
What-up ni gga?

SHANNON  
I wish you would stop saying that?

GERALD  
What? What-up?

Joe and Gerald are amused by the joke but Shannon is not.

GERALD (CONT' D)  
Do you realize that after Monday we're done with school?

Their mood becomes slightly depressive as they think about their future. Almost simultaneously the doors of class rooms open and students leave class and other students enter.

JOE  
We gotta get jobs. Work all day, maybe  
have some kids.

SHANNON  
That's okay though. I wanna find someone  
and have some kids.

JOE  
I really don't wanna be one of those  
yuppies

SHANNON  
Buppies.

JOE  
Whatever. I don't wanna go to work then  
happy hour with my tie loosened getting  
tipsy because I know I have a family to  
go home to that I don't wanna see.

SHANNON  
That's bleak.

JOE  
That's what's coming. Fuck that, why not  
get high? Why not drink?

Gerald stares at Joe dumbfounded.

GERALD  
I don't know what you're talking about  
I'm about to be paid! Fuck all that  
family shit. Get money, fuck bitches.

SHANNON  
(insulted)  
What did you just say!

GERALD  
What? It's the Biggie song. You don't  
like biggie?

SHANNON  
(reluctantly)  
I like Biggie.

GERALD  
Okay then. I'll have some kids when I'm  
like thirty five and with some like hot  
ass twenty five year old, it's gonna be  
great.

JOE  
(laughing)  
That's not too bad.

SHANNON  
(to Joe)  
That's what you wanna do?

JOE  
I don't know. Doesn't sound bad though.

GERALD  
Fuckin right it don't sound bad.

The TEACHER walks in class carrying a briefcase.

SHANNON  
Niggaz.

Joe, Gerald and Shannon walk in the class

CUT TO:

INT. CAFETERIA - LATER

Joe, Shannon and Gerald are at table having coffee and muffins Gerald has a full breakfast.

GERALD  
That new Lil Wayne tight he holding it down.

SHANNON  
All ya'll talk about is rap.

GERALD  
Cause you're here. We usually talk about women.

SHANNON  
Don't you have a girlfriend? Where is she? I never see her?

GERALD  
She chillin. Damn.

SHANNON  
I should tell her all ya'll talk about is women.

JOE  
There's nothing wrong with talking.

SHANNON

(To Joe)

Gerald cheats on his girl.

GERALD

No I don't! How do you know that?

SHANNON

I could just tell. I can't see how she trusts you.

GERALD

Damn Shannon, okay you win. What you wanna talk about politics? Iraq? Zimbabwe?

Gerald makes a black power fist.

GERALD (CONT'D)

The Revolution!

Joe laughs.

SHANNON

Are you gonna come to the United for Change meeting?

GERALD

Hell no! I got my own problems I ain't in all that black power shit.

SHANNON

It's not black power it's united for change.

GERALD

Whatever. Call me when its United for Dollars I'm bout making money! Ain't nobody paying for me to be here but me. Tell them niggaz get together to pay my tuition.

Everyone at the table is silent. Shannon looks embarrassed, Joe notices and quickly changes the subject.

JOE

When I was on my way here today I saw this old friend of mine from high school. Me and him was real cool we used to hang tough leave school smoke weed. Anyway, in the 11th grade he couldn't do it anymore and dropped out. His grades were always bad and he was getting in trouble.

(MORE)

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