

WONDERFUL IN WATTS

FADE IN

We see ACTUAL news videotape from a scene in Compton, Watts and Lynwood. The videotape is slightly grainy. The normally dry and warm southern Californian community looks like Bedford Falls, a real-life winter wonderland in south-central Los Angeles.

The following text cuts in over the news videotape:

SOUTH-CENTRAL LOS ANGELES  
NOVEMBER 14, 2003

The videotape shows the local television news reporters interviewing the locals about the six inches of hail that fell on the area overnight that turned the community into Santa's Village. The residents, mostly black and some Mexican, are ecstatic and overjoyed by the event. Videotape shows kids making snowballs and snowmen. People being interviewed say they have never seen snow in their lives. The residents being interviewed really CANNOT believe what has happened.

Videotape also shows damaged homes, flooded cars and ruined businesses. Homeowners and business owners interviewed shed tales of financial ruin amid kids and adults frolicking in the background.

CUT TO:

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - UCLA - DAY

The beautiful campus of the University of California, Los Angeles. An amazing racial mix of buzzing college kids walk around campus with books and backpacks in tow and stylish headphones wrapped around their brainy heads.

The following text fades in over the shot:

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES  
SPRING QUARTER, 2004

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - UCLA - DAY

The room is full with young, mostly male, vibrant college students. They sit attentive and listen, with undivided attention, to PROFESSOR DOWERS, 47, who is in the midst of delivering one of his sermons on screenwriting. We see JAKE STEWART, 21, Caucasian, straight-edge and good looking, sitting and listening from his desk near the window.

## PROFESSOR DOWERS

Folks, to get it right, to get it, you've got to explore places in your heart and head where you don't like to go, then put those places plop down on the page, and make scenes out of them. And, then, when you're comfortable with those places, you've got to go exploring again, deeper, and then harness those frightful destinations within, and turn them into images that can be filmed. If you can master this, then my fiends, you are on your way to becoming the screenwriters you all want to be.

Jake looks on with enthused eyes.

## PROFESSOR DOWERS

Keep writing and I will see you all next week.

The young scholars grab their notebooks and begin to exit.

## INT. CAMPUS CORRIDOR - UCLA - DAY

Jake exits the classroom and heads down the hall and enters the mens restroom. ZEPHYR JACKSON, 65, African-American, leaves the restroom with his mop and janitorial supply cart as Jake enters. Jake notices him.

## INT. JAKE'S DORMITORY - UCLA - NIGHT

Jake sits and types at his laptop in his typical-looking college dormitory, save the movie poster of "TITANIC" hanging on the wall. ECU on cursor moving across the screen and words in 12 new courier being typed across the screen. The words read:

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD (COMPTON) DAY. THE '64 IMPALA SCREAMS INTO VIEW FROM AROUND THE CORNER. AS IT DRIVES BY, TWO GUN BARRELS SPRING OUT FROM INSIDE OF THE IMPALA AND BEGIN TO SPRAY THE NEIGHBORHOOD WITH GUNFIRE.

Across the room, PHAM TRAN, 20, Cambodian, lies on his bed and reads an issue of "YAHOO" the magazine, holding it up and out directly above his eyes. On his bed-stand sits a merry porcelain Buddha. It is smoky on his side of the room as METHOD MAN can be heard playing softly in the background.

PHAM

Yo Jake-Man, you still writin'?  
Let's go ball at the gym... it'll  
like help your process or  
something.

JAKE

No. Can't. I'm still working on  
act one of my screenplay. I can  
see this being big though... like  
"Miracle on 34th Street" or "It's a  
Wonderful Life" big.

PHAM

I remember they'd play "It's a  
Wonderful Life" back home in  
Cambodia when I was a kid.  
(in Cambodian as George  
Bailey)  
'Murry Christmas everybody... Murry  
Christmas!'  
(in English)  
We didn't even celebrate Christmas,  
dog.

JAKE

But you still got it didn't you?  
Even though you didn't know  
Christmas from Ramadan.

PHAM

(thinking about it)  
I guess so.

JAKE

See, now there's a good story. It  
transcends.

PHAM

Is your story going to...  
transcend?

JAKE

(wafting the smoke out of  
his face)  
You betcha! I'm basing this off an  
actual event. It snowed, or okay,  
it hailed in south-central L.A.  
last year. The place went nuts.  
Snow in Compton and Watts! Hardly  
anybody there had even seen snow...  
ever, but there it was when they  
woke up...

(MORE)

JAKE (cont'd)  
 six inches of the white stuff. It  
 was like a miracle. I thought...  
 there's a story!

PHAM  
 (sarcastically)  
 Ah, the white man is at it again.  
 Coming into poor socioeconomic  
 minority-ville and robbin' and  
 stealin' what they don't even know  
 they have.

JAKE  
 What?

PHAM  
 I've been taught to renounce  
 exploitation.  
 (to the Buddha)  
 Right B?

JAKE  
 Really roomy? You remember that  
 when you get to the personal injury  
 question on the bar exam.

Pham thinks about this and raises a brow to the Buddha.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
 And besides, I'm telling their  
 story, and will warm the hearts of  
 millions at the same time.

PHAM  
 Millions, huh?

JAKE  
 Yup... millions.

PHAM  
 Delusions of grandeur dog,  
 delusions of grandeur.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD (SOUTH-CENTRAL LA) - DAY

A shiny red convertible jeep with flashy wheels pulls up and stops next to a curb with graffiti on it. DAVE MATTHEW'S BAND'S "CRASH" blares in all directions from the jeep. The nicest car on the block is probably worth \$3,000 and peoples front yards are surrounded by chain link fences like fortresses. Two pit-bulls bark ferociously at Jake from behind a fence as we see Jake, exit his jeep with paper, pencil, tape recorder and newspaper article in hand.

The article has a picture of south-central LA on the day of the snow event. It shows the exact same area Jake is in now, but covered with six inches of fluffy ice. The caption under the photograph has the location as 114th street and Central Avenue, exactly where Jake is.

Three black male youths sit in a front yard across the street from Jake. They see Jake start trying to get his bearings and freeze in the middle of their game of dominos. DARIUS JOHNSON, 23, half black panther, half Coolio, stares hard. MOOKIE JOHNSON, 18, and B.J., 21, drink their forty ounce.

Jake walks around and approaches two black female preteens walking towards him. They have school books in there hands.

FEMALE BLACK YOUTH #1  
You lost or something mister?

FEMALE BLACK YOUTH #2  
Somebody took a wrong turn.

FEMALE BLACK YOUTH #1  
You a cop?

FEMALE BLACK YOUTH #2  
(to FBY #1)  
Too young... but he's still lost.

JAKE  
(cordially)  
Hello there you two. Do either of you happen to live around here?

FEMALE BLACK YOUTH #2  
And cops don't have red jeeps. But, check out these rims.

FEMALE BLACK YOUTH #1  
Aw, they only seventeens...

Female Black Youth #2 moves in close to the jeep, going right past Jake.

JAKE  
Can I ask you some questions about the day it snowed here last year?

FEMALE BLACK YOUTH #1  
... but they'd sure look tight on my brother's car.

From their porch, the three domino players stand and stare in disbelief at the action from a distance.

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