

ZEBRA COUPLE

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INT. LOW-ECONOMIC APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Twenty-four-year-old starving artists LUNA KING, black, and ALEX PFEIFFER, white, cuddle on the comforter of a double bed.

The bed sits on the floor of this sparsely and cheaply furnished room, which is lit by a bare overhead bulb.

LUNA
What time's the wedding?

ALEX
Three o'clock. But there's a
thing at my parents' house first.

LUNA
I'll get a pattern and make a
dress.

ALEX
I need dress shoes.

EXT. QUIET, LEAFY SUBURB - DAY

Wearing his new dress shoes and only suit, Alex walks to the bus stop, where he waits.

LATER

As the bus drives off, Alex walks Luna through his childhood neighborhood.

LUNA
When was the last time you
visited?

ALEX
Couple of years. It's a whole
different world here.

LUNA
It's pretty.

LATER

Luna and Alex turn onto a block of identical ranch houses.

In the front yard of the first house, LOUIE VALENTINO, 50, spots them and abruptly stops landscaping.

ALEX
(neighborly)
Hi, Louie!

Louie glares at them hatefully.

Taken aback, Alex continues walking Luna up the block.

ALEX

I forgot what it's like here.
It's good I met you at the bus
stop.

(Luna says nothing)

Don't worry, my parents are cool.

Midway up the block, Alex turns them onto the walkway leading his parents' front door.

EXT. POOR URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Luna and Alex emerge from a new health food store in her neighborhood, which is being gentrified.

They stroll arm in arm.

A TALL BLACK MAN leans his whole torso out the window of a fast-moving car.

TALL BLACK MAN

(rage)

BOY, GET OFF HER ARM!

The car disappears down the avenue. Luna and Alex continue walking, though they've unconsciously separated, no longer arm in arm.

EXT. SUBURBAN STRIP MALL - DAY

Luna and Alex hold hands as they window-shop. Clearly the only black person for miles, Luna wears a beret.

Approaching them is a group of eight white TEENAGERS, three girls and five boys.

BOY 1

Since when do they allow niggers
in these stores!?

One GIRL snatches Luna's beret.

Alex steps toward the Girl, but the Teens are too many, and eager to beat down Luna and Alex.

TEENS

Don't put that hat on, it's got
nigger on it...Let's find a noose
and a tree and string this nigger
bitch up.....

(to Luna)
 ...Go back to fuckin' Zululand...
 (to Alex)
 ...Fuckin' race traitor!...

The Teens inch closer to Luna and Alex.

They're about to pounce--Alex opens the door of the shoe store beside him, shoves Luna inside, follows her.

The Teens press their faces against the store windows, snarling insults and threats at them.

Boy 2 starts to open the door, but stops when he sees the STORE MANAGER dialing 911.

BOY 1
 (indicating Alex, Luna
 and Store Manager)
 We'll be back for all three of
 you!

Having "defended" their neighborhood, the Teens proudly, confidently saunter away.

EXT. POOR URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Luna and Alex are back in her neighborhood. As they walk, she takes his arm.

A black HOMELESS MAN, gray-haired but formidable, walks in the opposite direction.

As he passes them, he bumps Luna's shoulder hard.

Alex angrily turns to the Man. The Man's ready to go, fists up like a boxer, eyes narrowed with hate.

MAN
 Go for it! GO FOR IT!

Alex glares at the Man. Luna tries pulling him away.

MAN
 (moving closer)
C'mon, boy! C'MON!

Luna finally manages to pull Alex away.

MAN
 GET OUT THE MOTHERFUCKIN' HOOD,
 WHITE BOY! AND STOP STEALING OUR
 WOMEN!

Luna checks that the Man's not following.

She and Alex walk on silently, her hand no longer on his arm.

LITTLE LATER

Luna and Alex approach her tenement apartment building.

ALEX

It's bullshit! We can't even walk
down the street without being
fucked with.

LUNA

If you can't handle it, maybe we
shouldn't be together. You only
make it worse by letting it get
to you.

Alex's hurt by her suggestion they should no longer go out.

SLOW FADE OUT.

SLOW FADE IN:

EXT. QUIET, LEAFY SUBURB - PARK - DAY

Alex and his WHITE WIFE--both wearing wedding bands--talk and
laugh with another WHITE COUPLE.

SUPER: A FEW YEARS LATER

Alex spots a middle-age Black Woman, a home health aide or
cleaning woman, beelining to the bus stop. She stares straight
ahead, not looking at anyone, not wanting trouble.

At the bus stop she removes a book from her bag, and begins
reading it, locking her eyes on the page.

After watching her a while, Alex looks back at his White Wife
and the other White Couple.

No longer participating in the conversation, he thinks back to
his and Luna's mutual decision to break up, rather than face the
opposition from members of their respective "races."

Watching the Black Woman alone at the bus stop, afraid to make
eye contact with anyone, he's filled with sadness and remorse.

EXT. URBAN PLAYGROUND - DAY

Luna and her BLACK HUSBAND shoot the shit with another BLACK
COUPLE.

Luna spots a rare WHITE GUY passing through the neighborhood. The White Guy walks fast, looking straight ahead, not engaging anyone, lest he invite trouble.

Luna looks back at her Black Husband and the other Black Couple.

But she's no longer part of the conversation.

Thinking back on Alex, and their mutual decision to end their relationship, she watches the White Guy disappear in the distance.

Her face shows regret and sadness at letting society dictate who she loved.

THE END