

**ZEBRA COUPLE**

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INT. LOW-ECONOMIC APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT/DAY

Twenty-four-year-old starving artists KEISHA KING, black, and JOHN PFEIFFER, white, cuddle on the comforter of a double bed, which sits on the floor of this sparsely and cheaply furnished room.

KEISHA

What time's the wedding?

JOHN

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

KEISHA

I'll get a pattern and make a dress.

JOHN

I need dress shoes.

EXT. QUIET, LEAFY SUBURB - DAY

In dress shoes and his only suit, John walks to the bus stop, where he waits for the bus to arrive.

LATER

As the bus drives off, John walks Keisha through the neighborhood where he grew up.

KEISHA

When was the last time you were here?

JOHN

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

KEISHA

It's pretty.

LATER

Keisha and John 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.

JOHN

(neighborly)

Hi, Louie!

Louie glares at them hatefully.

Taken aback, John continues walking Keisha up the block.

JOHN

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

(Keisha says nothing)

Don't worry, my parents are cool.

Midway up the block, John turns them toward the front door of his parents' house.

EXT. POOR URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Keisha and John emerge from a new health food store in a poor area being gentrified.

They stroll arm in arm.

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

TALL BLACK MAN

(rage)

BOY, GET OFF HER ARM!

The car disappears down the avenue. Keisha and John unconsciously disengage. They keep walking, no longer arm in arm.

EXT. SUBURBAN STRIP MALL - DAY

Holding hands, Keisha and John window-shop. Keisha wears a black beret. She's the only black person for miles.

A group of eight white TEENAGERS approach. There are three girls, and five boys.

BOY 1

Since when do they allow niggers  
in these stores!?

GIRL snatches Keisha's beret.

John steps toward Girl. But the Teens are too many, and eager to beat the shit out of Keisha and John.

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 Keisha)

...Go back to fuckin' Zululand...

(to John)  
...Fuckin' race traitor...

The Teens inch closer to Keisha and John.

They're about to pounce--John opens the door of the shoe store beside him, shoves Keisha 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 backs off when he sees the STORE MANAGER dialing 911.

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

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

EXT. URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD BEING GENTRIFIED - DAY

As Keisha and John walk, Keisha takes his arm.

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

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

John 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!

John glares at the Man. Keisha tries pulling him away.

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

Keisha finally manages to pull John away.

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

Keisha checks that the Man's not following.

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

LITTLE LATER

Keisha and John approach her tenement apartment building.

JOHN

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

KEISHA

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

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

SLOW FADE OUT.

SLOW FADE IN:

EXT. QUIET, LEAFY SUBURB - PARK - DAY

John and his new WHITE GIRLFRIEND hang out with another WHITE  
COUPLE.

John says something funny. His White Girlfriend and the Couple  
laugh.

John spots a middle-age Black Woman, a home health aide or  
cleaning woman, making a bee line for 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, locks her eyes  
on the page she's reading.

After watching her a while, John looks back at his White  
Girlfriend and the Couple.

But he no longer participates in the conversation, and seems  
lost in thought.

He looks back at the Black Woman alone at the bus stop, afraid  
to make eye contact with anyone.

John's expression is one of sadness and remorse at this  
apartheid-like world/the separation of people based on skin  
color.

EXT. URBAN PLAYGROUND

Keisha and her new BLACK BOYFRIEND shoot the shit with another

Black Couple.

They talk and laugh.

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

Keisha looks back at her Black Boyfriend and the other Black Couple.

But she's no longer engaged in the conversation.

Her face full of sadness and remorse, Keisha watches the White Guy disappear in the distance.

THE END