

ZEBRA COUPLE

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

Twenty-four-year-old starving artists KEISHA KING, black, and JOHN SLAYMAKER, white, cuddle on the comforter of a double bed, which sits on the floor in 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

John and Keisha 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 leads them toward the front door of his parents' house.

EXT. POOR URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

John and Keisha 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. John and Keisha unconsciously disengage. They keep walking, no longer arm in arm.

EXT. SUBURBAN STRIP MALL - DAY

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

A group of eight white teenage BOYS approach.

BOY 1

Since when do they allow niggers
in these stores!?

BOY 2 snatches Keisha's beret.

John steps toward Boy 2. But the Boys are too many, and eager to beat John and Keisha to a pulp.

OTHER BOYS

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 Boys inch closer to John and Keisha.

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

The Boys press against the store windows, shouting insults and threats at them.

Boy 1 starts to open the door, but stops when he sees the STORE MANAGER dialing 911.

Boy 1 gestures to John, Keisha and the Store Manager.

BOY 1
(a promise)
We'll be back for all three of
you.

Having "defended" their neighborhood, The Boys 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

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 the 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.

His White Girlfriend and the Couple laugh at something funny John's said.

John sees a middle-age Black Woman, probably a home health aide or cleaning woman, making a bee line to the bus stop. She stares straight ahead, not looking at anyone.

At the bus stop she removes a book from her bag, focuses on reading it.

After a while, John returns his attention to his White Girlfriend and the Couple, but he's no longer part of the conversation.

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 remorse.

EXT. URBAN PLAYGROUND

Keisha and her new BLACK BOYFRIEND shoot the shit with another Black Couple.

They're talking and laughing about something].

Keisha spots a random White Guy, the only white person in sight, quickly passing the playground. The White Guy stares straight ahead, not engaging anyone, as he walks as fast as he can toward his destination.

Keisha looks back at her Black Boyfriend and the other Black Couple. She's no longer engaged in the conversation.

Full of remorse, Keisha watches the White Guy disappear in the distance.

THE END