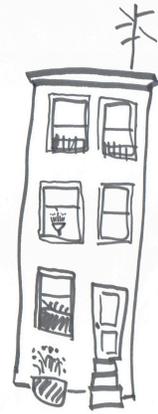




Baltimore in BLACK AND WHITE



a series for television

Jason Odell Williams

BECCA

Mixing is difficult. Blacks and Jews especially.

LORI

“Blacks and Jews especially”?

BECCA

Uhh! You’re turning my words around.

LORI

I’m just repeating them back to you.

BALTIMORE IN BLACK AND WHITE

LOGLINE

A young woman is about to marry an old friend of the family. The only problem: she's white and Jewish; he's black... and not. This laugh-out-loud ensemble comedy looks at how far we've come (and how far we haven't) by exploring two Baltimore family's relationships over the past two decades.

“Terrific characters, sharp dialogue, and bang-on insights.”
- Neil LaBute

SET-UP

A young attractive white woman stops at an outdoor ATM in downtown Baltimore one night. A black man approaches to use the ATM and stands the requisite five feet away. He glances at the woman. Does a double take. Then leans to his left for a closer look. The woman senses this stranger over her shoulder. A casual glance reveals it is a tall black man. She subtly clutches her purse tighter. The man looks again at the woman. A moment of recognition comes across his face and he smiles. Thinks about what to say, clears his throat, opens his mouth, but before he can say anything, the girl speaks: *“I don't have much to give you!”*

She thinks he is a potential mugger. And after she sufficiently puts her foot in her mouth, he reveals that he is her brother's friend from college. They laugh, she apologizes. They flirt, shake hands. Connect. These are our heroes: Lori and Marcus. She's white and Jewish. He's black. And Not.

Over the course of the first season we follow Marcus and Lori during their courtship, engagement, marriage, honeymoon and their first big fight. Season One ends with the question: will they make it?

Along the way we also meet Marcus's younger brother Steve who is on a lacrosse scholarship at the University of Maryland and rushing a “white fraternity,” and Marcus's older sister Tammy who is not pleased that Marcus is dating outside of his race. Lori's brother (also Steve – they call him “White Steve” for clarity) is friends with Marcus and Black Steve and seems cool with Lori and Marcus dating. Lori's mother Heidi, and Lori's best friend Becca however drop some subtle and not-so-subtle hints that maybe Lori should be dating someone “more like us.”

We also flashback to 25 years earlier when Marcus and Lori first meet on a playground. We see Lori's parents (a Jewish woman and a Protestant Man) and Marcus's parents (a black woman and a white Jewish man). As the kids play, the parents go through the awkward dance of meeting new people and trying not to say the wrong thing. But it doesn't always go smoothly.

The series takes an unflinching look at racism in America but is never preachy, never easy, and always told with humor, heart and zero political correctness.

WORLD

Baltimore, MD – 1987 and 2007.

Our heroes are Marcus and Lori but the world includes their friends, family and even relative strangers that pass in and out of their lives. And of course the city of Baltimore.

The majority season one takes place in 2007 (**pre-Barack Obama**) but we also flashback to 1987 to see the parents of our heroes and see that the more things change, the more they stay the same. Future seasons will take us through the 2008 election of Obama and beyond.

The show is a tapestry of life in an American city where race is still an issue. Some people have figured out a way to deal with it (humor and love and acceptance) and others have not. There are the open bigots and the subtle racists and the people who believe mixing is a great thing and maybe one day “we’ll all just be sort of beige.” And everything in between. Because when it comes to race, nothing is black and white.

FEEL

This is a laugh-out-loud dramedy. It’s a bold and fresh new style of television. A genre-breaking half-hour that will make people laugh and think and feel and laugh again and immediately cover their mouths, worried they laughed inappropriately. The “guilty laugh” will be a staple of the series, igniting water-cooler talk across the country.

Because of the frank and unflinching language in the show, “Baltimore in Black and White” is intended for CABLE TV.

STYLE

Shooting in **BLACK & WHITE** for the present day and **MUTED COLORS** for the flashbacks will be the signature look and what sets the show visually apart from others.

The pace of the dialogue is rapid-fire and unflinching. There is no laugh track and the show is not played for laugh beats. These people all think, act, talk and react quickly.

The transitions between scenes will be a trademark of the show, each scene flowing seamlessly into the next.

Though Marcus & Lori are clearly the heart of the story, this is still an ensemble show—a tapestry of life in Baltimore.

RECURRING CHARACTERS

2007

LORI – White. Half Jewish. 24. Pretty without trying. Does not take herself too seriously. Sometimes stumbles with words when she's flustered. But always charming and sweet. Maybe a little directionless.

MARCUS – Mixed race (Black and White). 26. Attractive, very charming, and funny. A solid guy. At times, larger than life and other times very grounded and real. He is the love interest of Lori, and together they are the heart of the show.

TAMMY – Mixed race (Black and White). Marcus's older sister. 30. Tough. Protective. What online listings would call a "BBW."

BLACK STEVE – Mixed race (Black and White). 19. Marcus's younger brother. On a lacrosse scholarship at the University of Maryland. Funny, brash, definitely a younger brother.

WHITE STEVE – White. Half Jewish. 26. Lori's older brother. Friends with Marcus from college. Funny, sarcastic, loud, politically incorrect.

ANDRE – Black. 27. Marcus's friend from the neighborhood. Might be gay, but definitely hides it well. Doesn't know what to make of Lori. Tries flirting with her to no avail then ends up sort of sour on her and putting her down to Marcus.

BECCA – White. Jewish. 25. Lori's best friend and a bit of a snob. Against the whole Marcus thing from the beginning. Tries to be supportive when she can, but also tries to talk Lori out of it.

HARPER – White. 23. Very WASPy. Excited Lori's dating a black guy. Too excited.

STEPH – White. Jewish. 24. Jappy. Gets drunk quickly and loudly. Short and a bit chubby. (Just a bit!)

BLAKE – Black. 48. Marcus, Tammy and Black Steve's Aunt (Lisa's younger sister). Smart, dignified. Pleasant.

WHITNEY – White. 21. Skinny and pretty but hides it under her clothes and make-up. Dresses and talks "black."

LANDON – White. 19. A friend of Black Steve's who is a sophomore at the fraternity and a lacrosse player. He is kind of a "bra" (as in, a surfer from VA Beach).

JAMES – White. 21. Southern frat guy. Your basic jackass.

ALEXIS – Black. 28. Marcus, Tammy and Black Steve's cousin. Tammy's "yes-man."

1987 & 2007

DANIEL – White. Protestant. (32 in the flashbacks, 52 in present day.) Lori and White Steve’s father. A preppie and an optimist.

HEIDI - Lori and White Steve’s mother. (33 in the flashbacks, 53 in present day). Very frank and unaware that she may be saying something offensive. A realist.

ADAM – White. Jewish. (34 in the flashbacks, 54 in present day) Marcus, Tammy and Black Steve’s father. Has a chip on his shoulder about his interracial marriage and family.

LISA – Black. (30 in the flashbacks, 50 in present day). Marcus, Tammy and Black Steve’s mother. Easy-going and real.

THEMES

What can and can’t you say in this day and age about race? Is **humor** the way to deal with it?

Will race ever become a non-issue? Can we ever be truly color-blind?

Is there such a thing as True Love? Are Marcus and Lori kindred spirits meant to be together through thick and thin, or will societal pressures tear them apart?

When it comes to race, nothing is black and white.

“people
don’t
HUG
enough.”

EPISODE ARCS

Episode 1 – PILOT

Lori and Marcus meet-cute at an ATM downtown. Sparks fly and they begin to date. Their friends and family have various reactions to them dating outside their race. Lori's friends are surprised and a little intrigued at first. Marcus's friends are very cool with it. Except Andre, who seems apprehensive but doesn't say anything. Yet. Marcus's older sister, though, has no problems sharing her feelings:

TAMMY: And what are you doing? Throwing your black ass away on that! Might as well be dead all the good you're doing!

MARCUS: Hey, hey! We're just dating. Take it easy.

TAMMY: ...So this ain't serious?

MARCUS: I don't know what it is. It's fun. She's cool, she's different.

TAMMY: Oh she different all right. I'll say.

In a flashback to 1987, Marcus's parents and Lori's parents meet on a playground where Young Marcus and Young Lori are playing together. The kids get along great, but it's strained and awkward for the parents and a few feet are put into mouths.

LISA: Our little boy is over there. With the red shirt.

DANIEL & HEIDI: Oh.

LISA: And his older sister is.... On top of the curly slide. There.

DANIEL & HEIDI: Oh...

ADAM: ...They're very dark. I know.

DANIEL: No - that's not what we--

HEIDI: Not at all.

ADAM: They're both mine. In case you were wondering. The colors don't always mix as evenly as most people think. But it usually fades over time, so they'll look more like me - don't worry.

We end the episode back in 2007 with Marcus looking at a playground, remembering his "first meeting" with Lori as a kid 20 years earlier. His phone rings. It's Lori. He smiles and answers, "Hey, I was just thinking about you." Despite some pushback from friends and family it looks like these two are going to try dating and see where it leads.

Episode 2 – THE LORI-MARCUS THING

Black Steve goes through "rush" at the University of Maryland where he attends on a lacrosse scholarship. He rushes the same fraternity where his older friend, Landon, from high school lacrosse goes, but some of the guys at the fraternity are not so keen on a black guy joining. "Not so much 'cause I give a shit, but those old guys who donate every year – they might give a BIG shit."

Whitney and Blake, strangers, are at a bus stop. Whitney is singing loudly to her iPod (and singing the N-word loudly too). Blake attempts to ignore her and say as little as possible though Whitney makes that difficult.

WHITNEY: Da "B" best front pronto, dough. Shorty gots ta get ta work, gots ta gets paid! Knowhati 'msayin?

BLAKE (mutters): I have no idea what you're saying.

Becca asks White Steve to meet for coffee to talk about "this Lori-Marcus thing." She gets nowhere with him about that issue, but they begin a flirtation.

BECCA: How come we never went out?

WHITE STEVE: Cuz you're my sister's best friend. It's weird.

BECCA: Isn't Marcus one of your best friends? Your sister's dating him.

WHITE STEVE: You're right. We should have sex right here on this table.

Marcus and Lori continue dating more, sleeping over at each other's apartments. One night in bed Marcus confesses:

MARCUS: ... I've never dated a, uh ...

LORI: Sexy Jewess?

MARCUS: That. Or a ... a white girl.

LORI: Ooo. I'm your first Caucasian?

MARCUS (laughs): Yes. You are my first Caucasian.

LORI: Well you know what they say? Once you go white...

MARCUS: ...what?

LORI: I don't know. There's no saying for that. White people are boring.

MARCUS: Except you.

LORI: Except me.

(They kiss.)

FLASHBACK: Daniel and Heidi (Lori's parents) run into Marcus's mom, Lisa, at the playground. Lisa and Daniel make a playdate for Lori and Marcus who are excited. Heidi is skeptical. But Daniel tries to reassure her.

DANIEL: It's one playdate. What's the big deal? It's not like they're gonna get married or something.

Episode 3 – BROTHERHOOD

Black Steve and Tammy are shopping for their mother's 50th birthday. Black Steve is telling her about the frat he's rushing and how cool it is.

TAMMY: What's it called? Kyke?

BLACK STEVE: (looking around hoping no one heard) Deke. D-K-E.

TAMMY: I don't know why you wanted to be in that white fraternity anyway. You should be where Davey Wilson is.

BLACK STEVE (you're serious?) Davey from Church.

TAMMY: Yeah - he's in one of those cool Black Fraternities. They be like...

(Tammy does a couple step moves. Black Steve joins in then suddenly breaks off.)

BLACK STEVE: Davey Wilson's a tool.

TAMMY: Okay, cool guy.

Tammy tries to get Black Steve on her side about the Marcus-Lori thing. "There's thousands of single sistas in this city, he needs to date a white girl?" But he won't get sucked into her argument.

Shabbat dinner at White Steve & Lori's parents house. Heidi is dropping some not-so-subtle hints to Lori about nice Jewish boys she should meet. Lori and White Steve play dumb with their mother.

LORI: I don't understand mom. He's Jewish, and a doctor. Why is that good?

WHITE STEVE: Because he can sympathize with your pain. Well not so much sympathize, but complain about it with you.

HEIDI: He's very successful!

LORI: And you want me to meet him because you think I need a new doctor?

WHITE STEVE: Is he a gynecologist? Cuz I've been looking for a new one.

HEIDI: Very funny. It's like I gave birth to Burns and Allen.

On campus one day, Black Steve runs into Landon who has been avoiding him lately. After a few cordial exchanges Black Steve figures it out.

BLACK STEVE: I'm not getting a bid, am I?

LANDON: ...You wouldn't have been happy there anyway.

BLACK STEVE: That what James told you? (white guy voice) "Tell him to go Phi Psi — they got 5 or 6 'brothas' there already -- and two Asian guys — cool Asian guys."

LANDON: ...He didn't say "cool" Asian guys.

Marcus, White Steve and Andre console Black Steve about the frat, and when the Steves leave, Andre drops the first hint that maybe Marcus dating Lori isn't so cool with him. "Maybe your sis is on to something. I know from experience. Dating a white chick... ain't all it's cracked up to be."

Episode 4 – MORE LIKE US

Becca has an awkward lunch with Lori where Lori confesses she might be “in love” with Marcus, and Becca blurts out:

BECCA: I don't think you should marry a black guy!

LORI: okay.

BECCA: That came out wrong.

LORI: There's a better way to say “don't marry a black guy?”

A bit later Lori brings up the fact that Becca is dating White Steve ...

BECCA: That's different.

LORI: How is it different?

BECCA: Because he's white!

LORI: “Because he's white?”

BECCA: Ugh – that's not what I mean. How do you get me to say such stupid things?

LORI: It's surprisingly easy.

Whitney & Blake see each other at the bus stop again, finally having a few more words. Whitney asks Blake about the book she is reading (“Nigger” by Randall Kennedy).

WHITNEY: (laughing) Why would anyone call a book dat? 'S like callin' a book “Chink,” hoping Chinese muthafuckas'll buy it.

BLAKE: It's a little more sophisticated than that.

WHITNEY: “Sophisticated”, my ass. He call a book “Nigger,” think he sophisticated? Shit.

BLAKE: Perhaps we could just continue waiting for the bus in silence.

WHITNEY: Oh. I see. I's too black for you, dat it?

BLAKE: Too... ‘black’ did you say?

WHITNEY: Fink you know who I am 'cause a my coat, my music, da way I talk. But You Don't.

BLAKE: I see. Well. Thank you for that insight. Now if you'll please excuse me, I'd like to read quietly now.

WHITNEY: Shit: you black on da outside-- but you pasty muthafuckin white on the inside.

BLAKE: Please - stop - talking.

WHITNEY: Da truff hurts, don't it?

Dinner at Lisa's for her 50th birthday celebration. In the kitchen, away from guests, Tammy tries to get mom on her side. Lisa plays it both ways saying there's no right answer, “just because it didn't work out between your father and me doesn't mean it won't with Marcus and Lori.” Tammy starts to protest and Marcus (who overhears this last bit) tells his sister once and for all to stay out of it, it's none of her business.

Episode 5 – THE QUESTION

Marcus and Lori go to a carnival and Lori tries to have “the conversation” about race.

LORI: I mean -- now that I'm staying over at your place like every night -- maybe it's time we ... discuss...

MARCUS: What, the fact that we're...[gestures “having sex”]?

LORI: No! Not that. The fact that we're... [gestures “different.”]

MARCUS: Oh. That you go to Temple... and I... pick cotton. [he picks and eats a bit of cotton candy.]

They dance around the issue some more and Lori accidentally confesses she loves Marcus and he says he loves her too and Lori says:

LORI: So forget I said anything about anything okay.

MARCUS: Said anything about what?

(They kiss.)

Flashback to 20 years earlier and the parents are having that playdate with the kids. With Young Marcus and Lori asleep on the bed and Young White Steve watching a video, the parents are forced to engage in small talk with mixed results.

HEIDI: Are you sure she's okay on your bed? What if Lori has an accident or something?

LISA: Please. Marcus pees on our bed all the time. It's fine.

HEIDI: Okay.... They do look really sweet up there.

LISA: Now Marcus will forever be the first boy Lori slept with.

DANIEL: God, I don't even want to start thinking about that.

(Lisa and Daniel share a laugh.)

ADAM: Why, because Marcus is half-black?

DANIEL: ...No. I meant I don't want to think about Lori all grown up, sleeping with boys.

ADAM: ...I was kidding.

DANIEL: Right. Sorry. I'm a little slow.

LISA (elbowing her husband): We're all slow when it comes to Adam's sense of humor.

Back in 2007, down on one knee with a ring, Marcus proposes to Lori in a breathless 2 minute speech saying he was tired of fighting and explaining to everyone why he was dating her:

MARCUS: Like they couldn't just accept that you were smart and beautiful and funny and so fucking cool to hang out with - like I couldn't just be in love with you, there had to be some other motive, some other thing they weren't grasping and it would explain why I was with you and I was just so tired of fighting and explaining

myself to them that I thought, you know what: Fuck it! I love you! And they can all suck it!

They decide to have the wedding in two months.

Episode 6 – WEDDING TALK

Lori picks out a wedding dress and bridesmaids dresses with her mom, Heidi, and Becca.

LORI: (looking at a bridesmaids dress Becca has tried on) This is nice.

BECCA: I love this color.

HEIDI: Will that be okay for the other girls though?

LORI: Sure, what do you mean?

HEIDI: Well. I don't know... Do black women look good in purple?

LORI: Mom!

HEIDI: What? I don't know these things.

BECCA: Yes, Heidi, African-Americans do tend to look very good in bold colors like purple and red.

HEIDI: (to Lori) See? That's all I was asking.

BECCA: And it's periwinkle

HEIDI: What.

BECCA: The dress. It's periwinkle. Not purple.

HEIDI: Oo, I like that.

BECCA: It's a pretty word, right?

As the afternoon wears on, Heidi still questions the fact that her daughter is rushing into this and did not “play the field” more.

LORI: You mean play our field more.

HEIDI: It's just... a lot easier if you're on the same team.

BECCA: I said the same thing.

HEIDI: I've always liked you, dear.

LORI: Maybe you two can marry each other.

At the bus stop again. Blake arrives, looks around for Whitney, relieved she is not there, she sits. A moment later Whitney comes from the other direction listening to her iPod. Blake audibly groans and they get into it.

WHITNEY: Psh. Never met a sista talk like you.

BLAKE: And I never met a white girl that spoke as ignorantly as you.

WHITNEY: Was wrong wit da way I talk?

BLAKE: Nothing. You sound most intelligent.

WHITNEY: Well I fink you sound stupid.

After a pretty raucous argument, Blake gets in a taxi (“you’re costing me a fortune in cab fare!”) and Whitney gets on the bus... and rides it to school—Johns Hopkins University! She changes her clothes on the bus. In class Whitney is totally different. Still a bit of an attitude, but her voice is like all the other preppie white girls. No trace of “street talk” at all.

FLASHBACK to 1988, when Lisa and Adam are separating. He is packing and moving out of the house. Young Tammy is there, crying and Adam reassures her, *"It's just temporary, sweetie. Mommy & Daddy just need a little break."* Young Tammy nods but seems to know it will be more than temporary.

Back in 2007, Lisa talks to Marcus alone.

LISA: I just worry about you, that's all. I don't want you to make the same mistakes.
MARCUS: I'm gonna make mistakes whether their the same as yours or not. So let me make them.

Episode 7 – COLLATERAL DAMAGE

White Steve and Becca are in bed together and eventually the wedding comes up and they argue about whose side they are on.

WHITE STEVE: I don't think it's our place to tell Lori anything.

BECCA: Even if she's making the biggest mistake of her life?

White Steve sits up and asks Becca to leave. They aren't "breaking up" but things will be strained at the wedding.

FLASHBACK – At another playdate with Lori and Marcus, Heidi sufficiently puts her foot in her mouth.

HEIDI: So, um. Where do your kids go to school? What "zone" are you in here?

ADAM: Uh, I don't know what zone we're in - they go to Calvert.

HEIDI: Ohhhhhh. Wow. We love that school. We tried to get Steven in there but – (whispers) he wasn't accepted. But it makes total sense that yours got in.

ADAM: ...and what does that mean?

HEIDI: Oh, nothing, just-- not a lot of kids like Marcus and Tammy are applying to private schools. It's mostly rich spoiled white kids there, year after year, so they probably pissed themselves with excitement when your beautiful little ochre-colored kids showed up. (Pause.)

DANIEL ...It's a color. Like a darker beige. (pause.) I didn't know what it was either.

ADAM: ...You know - I don't think this is going to work out.

BACK IN 2007 - Andre tells Marcus he won't be able to make it to the wedding, a work thing came up. Marcus tells him there's ways he can just come to the ceremony or just the reception and finally Andre says he can't be a part of something he doesn't believe in. He dated a few white girls and it's fun, yes, but there's just too much shit to go along with it.

ANDRE: Trust me, man. It's not worth the hassle.

MARCUS: Lori's worth it.

Episode 8 – BRIDESMAIDS AND GROOMSMEN

Less than an hour before the wedding we peak in on the Bridesmaids and Groomsmen, cutting back and forth between the rooms, as they get photos taken and wait for the ceremony to begin. The boys are hanging out, laughing, making fun of each other the way they always do.

WHITE STEVE: I can't believe Lori caved and agreed to have the wedding in a church. I mean, shouldn't there at least be a chuppah up front, or a groovy Rabbi holding hands with your feggaluh priest?

MARCUS: Your sister agreed because she's way cooler than you - and she knew a church wedding was important for our mom and grandma.

BLACK STEVE: L'chaim.

WHITE STEVE: Well, as long as the alarms don't go off when all the Jews come in the front door.

BLACK STEVE: That's right - Mel Gibson did say the Jews killed Jesus.

WHITE STEVE: Hey! Jesus was Jewish.

BLACK STEVE: And black!

MARCUS: Black and Jewish. Like our kids will be.

BLACK STEVE: Aww. You can name them all Sammy Davis.

The girls however are far less comfortable; one wrong word from Lori pushes Tammy over the edge and a lot of pent up resentment about the wedding comes out.

LORI: Getting along I hope.

TAMMY: Yeah, oh yeah.

LORI: Good. Because this is my girl, so be nice to her.

(Lori hugs Becca with one arm and they smile.)

TAMMY: Oh. You know you shouldn't call her "your girl."

LORI: Why not, that's what she is -- she's my girl.

ALEXIS: Mm.

TAMMY: Yeah. See. "Girl" is a slavery term and it's not cool, women calling each other that.

LORI: I hear you and Alexis say it all the time.

TAMMY: That's different. We're African-American. We're reclaiming the term.

Becca steps in and things escalate and get heated. Lori tries to calm everyone down and Tammy says:

TAMMY: I'm sorry, Lori. I am. I'm just... a bit taken aback by this whole thing. I mean... (trying to 'ease' the blow) you're not really Marcus's 'type.'

LORI: Well I'm his type a little - we're getting married in less than an hour.

TAMMY (mutters, turning away): See if the marriage lasts that long.

Lori leaves upset to find Marcus and kicks the Steves out so she can have a moment alone with her fiancé before the wedding.

MARCUS: I thought you wanted the whole wedding shabang.

LORI: I did, just... more wedding and less shabang.

MARCUS: Trouble with the bridesmaids?

LORI: No. Not really. Some. A little. Yes.

MARCUS: 'S what you get for putting a sister in a big purple dress.

LORI: Marcus.

MARCUS: I'm just sayin'.

LORI: You're supposed to be on my side.

MARCUS: I am, baby. I am.

LORI: Just... (she hugs him tighter) tell me that everything's going to be okay...

Okay?

MARCUS: Everything's gonna be okay.

LORI:thank you.

MARCUS: ...I like your dress.

Music plays as they hug and the scene magically transforms to them on the dance floor having their "first dance." We flashback to see Young Marcus and Young Lori hugging on the playground as Daniel and Lisa look on. Their wedding song continues to play as we fade on the children sharing their first hug.

Episode 9 – THE HAPPY COUPLE – Part One

At the reception, Lori and Marcus are still having their “first dance” as guests watch with love and admiration. Adam (Marcus’s father) is there, kind of on the fringe. Lisa sees him, Steels herself and goes over to say hello. It’s awkward, a bit stiff, but polite. After a few pleasantries:

ADAM: (gesturing out to Lori & Marcus) Sort of like us, hunh.

LISA: The photo negative image, yeah.

ADAM: (light chuckle) Right.... They look good together.

LISA: They do.

ADAM: You do too. Look good.

LISA: Thanks. You look like hell.

ADAM: (laughs) I know.

They share a smile and look out at the happy couple on the dance floor.

ADAM (CONT'D): Maybe later – you could save a dance for me?

Lisa nods, smiles.

LISA: Maybe.

One of the guests, BLAKE from the bus stop scenes, squeezes through the crowd to Lisa.

BLAKE: Hey, Lis – you wanna drink?

LISA: (caught) Oh – hey. Blake. No, I’m good.

ADAM: Blake. Nice to see you. Been a while.

BLAKE: Hey. Adam. How are you?

ADAM: Enh – been better. Marcus looks good.

BLAKE: Sure does.

She catches Lisa’s eye. Gives her a look, like, “You’re talking to Adam?” Lisa shrugs and half-smiles. Blake smiles then slips over to the bar and orders a drink only to find Whitney (from the many bus stop run-ins) working behind the bar.

BLAKE: Wh-- what are you doing here?

WHITNEY: Workin’ for da man, gettin’ paid, you know-you know. All dat shit, cuz.

(A White Guest approaches.)

WHITE GUEST: Hi. Vodka tonic, please.

WHITNEY (drops speech pattern): Yes, sir. Any particular Vodka? We have Grey Goose, Absolut, Kettle One--

WHITE GUEST: Grey Goose, thank you.

WHITNEY: Certainly, sir.

(Whitney prepares his drink. Blake watches her curiously.)

WHITNEY: (handing him the drink): There we are, sir. Enjoy.

WHITE GUEST: Thanks.

(He drops a couple bills as a tip. When he is gone, Whitney snags the money.)

WHITNEY: Aw, yeah-- check it. Dis be where da real money’s at?

BLAKE: ...It’s an act isn’t it?

WHITNEY: Wow-- you fast, lady.

BLAKE: So why do you talk like that?

WHITNEY: To get tips, yo. You saw whitey drop serious coin just now.

BLAKE: No-- I mean-- like this. Now. Why talk like this if you're--

WHITNEY (very proper): If I'm capable of speaking like this? (back to other speech pattern) Cuz dis be for real, dog. Dis be me. Who I am. Dat other shit just fo' show. Cuz I sho can't be gettin' no job talkin' like dis.

BLAKE: But...

WHITNEY: But what?

BLAKE: ...Nothing, I guess.

Whitney shows Blake that she got a copy of the book "Nigger" by Randall Kennedy.

WHITNEY: Gots me a copy myself. 'Fought I should understand what I's sayin when I says it.

BLAKE: ...That'll make one of us.

Moments later a black friend of the family comes to the bar. He and Blake have not seen each other for years.

RANDY: What's up, girl? You lookin' fine.

BLAKE: Go on. I'm gettin' old.

RANDY: No - you look good. You lost some weight?

BLAKE: Hush yo mouth.

RANDY (laughs): You wanna cut a rug - or you still with that nappy-headed nigga, Thomas?

BLAKE: That nappy-headed nigga Thomas done left me for that heffer from the beauty parlor.

RANDY: Go on.

BLAKE: Mm-hmm.

RANDY: Mm. It takes all kinds, don't it?

BLAKE: Ain't that the truth.

RANDY: Come on then, girl - let's dance.

BLAKE: (smiles) Lemme drop my purse at my table.

RANDY (dancing off): Yeh. Unh. Unh. Yeh, suki-suki.

(Blake giggles then starts off.)

WHITNEY: Guess I check you later den. Cuz!

(Blake looks at Whitney then composes herself and leaves with as much dignity as she can.)

The White Guest returns to the bar for another drink and sees the copy of "Nigger" on the bar. He believes Whitney would appreciate an off-color joke he knows.

WHITE GUEST: Was that book - called what I think it was?

WHITNEY: ...Yes, sir. It's, uh, for school.

WHITE GUEST: Hunh. (beat. Then conspiratorially:) Hey - you wanna hear a good one? Sort of appropriate to the event we're witnessing? "What's so bad about being Black AND Jewish? (pause.) They make you sit in the BACK of the OVEN."
(His face contorts with silent laughter.)

The wedding song climaxes and we spin around Marcus and Lori still dancing. The guests around the dance floor applaud.

Episode 10 – THE HAPPY COUPLE – Part Two

Marcus and Lori smile blissfully on the dance floor finishing their “first dance” as husband and wife. We move in for a close up on their faces. He kisses her and, as we pull back, Marcus and Lori are kissing in their HONEYMOON SUITE, he’s now wearing only boxer shorts; she’s in a sexy, but tasteful negligee. They kiss a bit more as the songs resolves and ends. Lori gestures “wait right here,” and she moves to the bathroom. Marcus smiles and goes to the bed, happily waiting for his bride. Lori brushes her teeth and calls out from the bathroom:

LORI: Did you hear Harper during the photos at the reception?

MARCUS: How could I not? She’s got a voice like cut glass.

LORI: She was hysterical. Kept talking about how beautiful our babies are gonna be.

MARCUS: Uh-hunh.

LORI: You don’t agree?

MARCUS: Oh I agree – we’re gonna have some gorgeous little kids – it just... I don’t know.

LORI: What?

MARCUS: Just pisses me off a little. People always talking about us that way – Our kids will be beautiful because they’ll be “mixed.” It’s stupid. I had plenty of mixed race friends growing up and they were all kinds of ugly. Mixing ain’t no guarantee for beauty.

LORI: (coming back from bathroom with floss on her finger) Yeah but... none of those kids had me and you for parents.

MARCUS: True. (little kiss) I just don’t know what the big deal is.

LORI: Harper was just trying to be funny – make conversation.

MARCUS: But it’s a little weird, right. That’s ALL she talks about around me. The fact that I’m black.

LORI: You intimidate her.

MARCUS: Because I’m black?

LORI: Because you’re my husband and she-- (flirting) Oo. I still can’t get used to that. My husband.

MARCUS: Mm. I like that. Let’s talk about that some more.

LORI: My husband.

MARCUS: Mmm... Yeah.

They kiss again. Longer this time. Just as Marcus starts to get into it, Lori gets up and moves toward the bathroom again.

LORI (flossing again): And anyway, she’s like one of my best friends - she just wants you to like her.

MARCUS: ...Too late.

LORI (OFF): Marcus!

MARCUS: I married you, baby. Not your friends. Now can we please enjoy our honeymoon?

LORI: (comes back in) Okay. Let's do this. Let's talk about it.

MARCUS: What?

LORI: "What." You know. We've never actually talked about it.

MARCUS: Yes, we have.

LORI: Once. Barely. And you blew it off, like you do everything serious.

MARCUS: But that's one of the things that made you fall in love with me, right?

After some cajoling, Lori convinces Marcus to really have "the talk" and to "say all the things we think but don't say out loud because we don't want to hurt the other person's feelings or - maybe it's a little racist." They start slow. She thought all black men would have big penises, he thought all Jews were cheap, she thought he'd be better at sports, he says she can't dance and has a skinny ass. It's all sweet and in good fun, until Lori says:

LORI: Oh, here's one! But you have to promise not to get mad.

MARCUS (still sort of laughing): Uh... No - but go ahead anyway.

LORI: Fine. So. Okay - I think. Well. Some black guys... kind of... smell weird.

MARCUS: Really.

LORI: Not you. I love the way you smell. But... some of your friends.

MARCUS: My friends smell?

LORI: Some of them.

MARCUS: Maybe I should tell them to wear better deodorant.

LORI: No - it's not a deodorant thing. It's only your black friends. It's like a lotion or maybe something in the skin. But not you. You smell amazing. I love your smell.

MARCUS: Okay...

LORI: Really?

MARCUS: Yeah. This is good. So okay - my turn again? Uh, you're kind of a bitch.

LORI: Okay see I knew you couldn't handle this. You're too sensitive.

MARCUS: No, no-- I don't mean you, specifically. Although you can be at times. But white chicks? Y'all some mean bitches.

From there, things get out of hand quickly. It's the first real fight for the couple, but it might be one they can never come back from.

LORI: Maybe this wasn't such a good idea.

MARCUS: Yeah - you already said that.

LORI: No. I mean us.

We hold on Marcus and Lori for a moment. The sound of children on a playground slowly fades up. We push in past the newlyweds to a painting on the wall of a park. The painting cross fades into color and now we are in a real park.

SUMMER 1989. The same playground from earlier. Sound of children playing. Daniel sits on a bench reading a book. Looks up for a moment and watches Young Lori play. Back to book. Lisa enters pushing a baby stroller. She looks at Daniel, trying to catch his attention. Daniel looks up.

LISA: ...I thought that was you.
DANIEL: Wow. Hey. Hi. It's been a while.
LISA: Yeah. Lisa-- Marcus's mom.
DANIEL: No - yeah. I remember. Daniel. (small pause.) And who's this now?
LISA: This is little Steven.
DANIEL: Oh - like ours...
LISA: Oh, yeah - I hadn't even thought of that.
DANIEL: Well - good name.
LISA: It suits him.
DANIEL: How old is he now?
LISA: He'll be 18 months next week.
DANIEL: Wow.
LISA (looks toward playground) Lori's getting so big.
DANIEL: I know. It's crazy. And look at Marcus. Almost ready for the NBA. (slight pause) Or NFL. Or whatever. He could play anything. Or DO anything - run for president - whatever he wants. He just -- he's really growing up fast.
LISA: Right... So how are you guys? How's--?
DANIEL: Heidi. Good. She's good. We're, uh, actually moving in a few days.
LISA: Oh. Where to?
DANIEL: Just a bit - further away from the city. Into the suburbs.
LISA: Oh - well. We'll miss you guys. (Beat.) Not that we saw much of you anyway...
DANIEL (smiling): No. Your husband made it pretty clear the last time we saw you.
LISA: I'm sorry about that. He's an asshole. WAS an asshole.
DANIEL: Oh. Is he--?
LISA: No, no, he's still alive. I didn't mean "was" like that. No, just... We're separated. For the last year or so.
DANIEL: Oh. I'm sorry.
LISA: Whattaya gonna do.
DANIEL: How are your kids handling it?
LISA: Okay, I guess. Our oldest - Tammy - she's probably taking it the worst. Trying to be the big sister AND the other parent. But it's hard on all of them. And me. It's - shitty. That's all. It's just shitty.
DANIEL: Yeah.
LISA: And you? How've you been?
DANIEL: Okay. Yeah. Can't complain. Heidi's good, kids are good. We're good.
LISA: Good.
DANIEL: Yeah.

They look out, watch their kids play.

LISA: I really wish we could have stayed in touch. I thought the kids got along so well.
DANIEL: Well... We're not moving to Mars. I'm sure we'll see each other around.
LISA: Yeah. Sure. Of course. (beat) I should go. I have to meet Adam - his weekend with the kids.
DANIEL: Okay. Nice seeing you again.

LISA You, too. Take care. (to her kids) Okay, you two. Time to go.
DANIEL Say goodbye to Marcus, sweetie.
LISA Oh - you'll see Lori real soon, honey, I promise.

Adult Lori and Adult Marcus – seen in COLOR for the first time – enter from opposite sides of the screen and slowly move to each other. They hug.

DANIEL ...Look at that.
LISA That's so cute. He never hugs anyone!
DANIEL And she usually hates it when other kids touch her.
LISA Hm. (beat. Then to her kids) Okay, grab your jackets. Time to go, come on.

We cut back to the hug and it's **YOUNG Marcus and YOUNG Lori** - they break the hug and Young Marcus leaves with his mother. She holds his little hand and pushes the stroller with her other free hand. **YOUNG TAMMY** catches up, looks back at Young Lori for a second, then takes Young Marcus's other hand and walks out with her family. Daniel watches them go then turns to Young Lori, standing near the sandbox. She looks upset, maybe crying a little.

DANIEL: Oh, it's okay, sweetie. You'll see Marcus again real soon. I promise. Go play. I'll be here if you need me.

Daniel sits. We cut back to Young Lori who quickly climbs to the top of the Jungle Gym to get a better view of Young Marcus leaving. Young Marcus looks back over his shoulder.

Cut to: **ADULT LORI** at the top of the Jungle gym watching him go. **ADULT MARCUS**, forlorn, holding his mom and Young Tammy's hands, looks back at Adult Lori. The sound of children playing gets louder and louder, until it is almost deafening, then abruptly cuts out. Silence. Adult Lori blinks away tears. Black.

END OF SEASON ONE.