



- HULU
- SONY PICTURES TELEVISION
- OLIVE BRIDGE ENTERTAINMENT
- CLOUD NINE PRODUCTIONS

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SUPER OVER BLACK:

"The most dangerous creation of any society is a man with nothing to lose." - James Baldwin

"There you go, giving a fuck when it ain't your turn to give a fuck." - William "Bunk" Moreland

As the words fade, we HEAR an ALARM CLOCK.

WOKE

ACT ONE

INT. SAN FRANCISCO MUNI BUS/MOVING - NIGHT

The sound of the alarm morphs into PUNK ROCK MUSIC. The Dead Kennedys' "Holiday in Cambodia" to be exact!! MUSIC PLAYING OVER:

CLOSE ON A COMPOSITION BOOK: A skilled hand quickly sketching a cartoon of an anthropomorphic PIECE OF TOAST giving a high-five to an anthropomorphic SLAB OF BUTTER.

KEEF KNIGHT (black-nerd, 30s, the only black dude invited to the white wedding and used to it) inspects his work. Bobbing his head to the music in his HEADPHONES, trying to ignore the WHITE DUDE straining to get a look at what he's drawing.

At the back of the bus, CLOVIS (no filter, 30s, the black dude who crashes the white wedding and everyone's afraid to ask him to leave) types a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN's number into his cell. The bus stops. Clovis whispers something in her ear. She giggles sheepishly before exiting.

Moments later, Clovis slides into the row behind Keef. Calls out, then lifts one side of Keef's headphones.

CLOVIS
Earth to Keef.
(re: music)
Who dis?

KEEF
Dead Kennedys.
(off Clovis' blank look)
Jello Biafra? Classic SF punk?

CLOVIS
Damn. You really are a Huxtable.

KEEF

I didn't grow up in a brownstone in Brooklyn Heights.

CLOVIS

Nah, you grew up in a *white*-stone in fucking *Pleasantville*!

(off Keef's look)

When you used to Farmers Markets and rocking to white boy angst, you a bit of a cloistered brotha. You like that pig thinking he's a dog.

KEEF

The movie *Babe*?

Clovis gestures like Keef just made his point.

CLOVIS

I get the appeal. You know I love me some Pellegrino and almond butter. The only thing my "Ghetto Pass" ever got me was two bootleg *Madea* DVDs and hypertension.

Keef and Clovis share a laugh.

CLOVIS (CONT'D)

Real talk though, not a bad night. You sold some prints, I got some numbers.

KEEF

Was that the barista from the coffee shop? How do you do that?

CLOVIS

Simple. I make them feel like there's nothing I can't fix.

(then)

Plus, she thinks I'm Austin Jackson. The *Giants* outfielder.

KEEF

Pretty sure Austin Jackson doesn't ride the Muni. Also, you look nothing like him.

CLOVIS

He's black. I'm black. If white people can't tell the difference, who am I to rain on my parade?

The White Dude moves to a seat closer to the guys. Clovis grabs a FLYER and TAPE from Keef's messenger bag and tapes the flyer on the bus window. It's an ad for the SF Comic-Con launch of Keef's first *Toast & Butter* cartoon book.

CLOVIS (CONT'D)

So, you ready for the Big Time?

KEEF

I've been ready ever since my 9th grade crush, Colleen Crowley, told me to give up the first time she saw my comics.

CLOVIS

Crowley? What she doing nowadays?

KEEF

Probably still breaking hearts and crushing dreams.

CLOVIS

In an extra-large velour track suit and mismatched house shoes.

(Keef cracks up)

I bet she got badass kids who steal money from her purse and fastball AA batteries at the back of her head when they get hungry.

Keef and Clovis laugh, as the White Dude leans into frame.

WHITE DUDE

Excuse me. I couldn't help but overhear your conversation... You're that guy, right? The guy who draws that comic strip?

The White Dude points to Keef's composition book.

KEEF

Yeah, yeah...

WHITE DUDE

I love the one about the banana just out of prison, and he's bitter about all the rape he experienced. You satirized the prison industrial complex brilliantly!

KEEF

What? Whoa, that's not mine.

Clovis howls with laughter.

CLOVIS

(to the White Dude)

Nah, man. This is Keef Knight. The Wayne Brady of comics. The most radical thing this man ever created was a cartoon about chatty Toast being buttered on both sides.

WHITE DUDE

Wait. You do Toast & Butter? With all the hockey and podiatry references? Wow, never in a million years would I have thought it was done by a...

Awkward beat. Clovis smirks.

CLOVIS

A black man?

KEEF

No!

WHITE DUDE

No!

Clovis side-eyes Keef. Pulls the STOP-REQUESTED CORD.

KEEF

Come on, man. He's just a fan.

The White Dude is shaken by the implication. The bus slows.

WHITE DUDE

Hey, look... I'm not what you think I am... I don't see color.

Clovis laughs sarcastically.

CLOVIS

That's cause "color" got priced out and moved to Oakland.

WHITE DUDE

Wait. That's not...

The bus stops. The back doors swing open.

CLOVIS

(as he exits)

I know! But it is!

Keef shrugs to the White Dude as he follows Clovis off.

EXT. CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

Keef and Clovis walk through their Inner Richmond neighborhood, passing Chinese restaurants and corner markets.

CLOVIS

(re: White Dude)

"Triggered" is never a good look.
That guy was suspect the minute he
mistook you for somebody who "says
something."

KEEF

We can't all be Malcolm X.

CLOVIS

Exactly! Wannabe Malcolm X niggas
end up smoking Kools and rocking a
fucked-up Kufi while working the
phone lines at some community
outreach center in Vallejo.

KEEF

Oddly specific, but okay.

Keef's distracted by something he sees.

CLOVIS

I'm saying, you want that next
level sex-money-magic shit? Keep
fluffing cushions in white people's
comfort zone and it can all be
yours. There's a future there...

Keef picks up a WOMAN'S CLUTCH WALLET off the ground.

KEEF

I bet somebody is missing this.

ON CLUTCH: Keef opens it to reveal a DRIVER'S LICENSE for a
YOUNG WHITE WOMAN. Some plastic inside, no cash.

CLOVIS

The fuck are you doing?

KEEF

What? There's a satellite precinct
on 6th. We can drop it on our way.

CLOVIS

OR... we drop it here and be on our
way. Look, you walk in there with a
purse with no money inside, you're
gonna get questions. Feel me?

(MORE)

CLOVIS (CONT'D)

The "Hey nigga. What's the shortest distance between good samaritan and suspect" kind of questions. Don't pretend there aren't rules to this thing of being us.

KEEF

Dude, I get it. But I refuse to let it keep me from doing the right thing.

CLOVIS

I'll be sure to tell my mama to pray for you. In the meantime...

Suddenly, Clovis snatches the clutch and CHUCKS IT away.

Off Keef's stunned look.

INT. FLAT - NIGHT

A modest, cluttered apartment. Keef's girlfriend, KERSTIN (German, 30s, can't help wearing her heart on her sleeve), in business attire, paces about, mumbling to herself incoherently. The apartment is littered with papers.

Keef enters with Clovis in tow. Kisses Kerstin.

KEEF

(cautiously)

Hey... How's the presentation coming?

KERSTIN

Terrible! I hate public speaking and I can't stand dressing like this. You know why they have me do this stuff, right?

KEEF

Because you're the only one there who isn't an asshole?

KERSTIN

It's because of my work Visa. They know I can't quit, or I'll get sent back to Germany.

CLOVIS

(smirking)

Keef could just marry you.

Keef side-eyes Clovis.

KERSTIN

Anyway... How was the signing? I wish I could have been there.

KEEF

Don't sweat it. Clovis was the perfect date. He even offered to give me a hand-job at the end of the night but I told him I was saving myself for you.

CLOVIS

'Tis true. Your man kept his virtue. Hard nut to crack, that one.

Clovis moves for the fridge. Opens it.

KERSTIN

Ha! Now I know you're lying. The only thing Clovis gives is herpes.

Kerstin giggles at her joke. Clovis pops open a GUINNESS.

CLOVIS

Oh, you got jokes. I bet you real funny down there at Wells Fargo using phantom accounts to siphon off motherfucka's diaper money.

KERSTIN

(defensive)

I told you before that was not my department.

GUNTHER (white, 30s, naive manic energy) bursts out from his bedroom in only a towel, holding an LP cover with lines of white powder on it.

GUNTHER

Guys! Sample this and let me know what you think.

KERSTIN

Whoa. What is that?

GUNTHER

It's an energy drink... *That you snort.* Genius, right?! This is 99.95%, all natural, non-GMO, Peruvian coca-plant extract. In powder form.

CLOVIS
So... it's cocaine?

GUNTHER
No. No. It's got *guarana* in it.
It's organic. Look, just try it.

KERSTIN
First show me your degree in
chemistry or nutrition, or
anything.

GUNTHER
What I lack in formal education, I
more than make up for with YouTube
tutorials. I'm about to
revolutionize energy drinks!

Clovis hops on the couch, powers up an X-Box.

CLOVIS
(to Gunther)
I'm about to revolutionize dat ass,
FIFA-style.

Gunther sets aside the album cover and plops down beside
Clovis, sitting on some of Kerstin's papers.

GUNTHER
(grabbing a controller)
You keep talking. You keep losing.

Kerstin moves to retrieve her papers.

KERSTIN
Hey, don't sit on those!

Keef gently grabs Kerstin's arm. When she turns to face him:

KEEF
Darn! I spilled coffee on my shirt.

Keef's shirt is pristine. Kerstin smiles a knowing smile.

INT. ROOFTOP LAUNDRY SHACK - MOMENTS LATER

A tight space. Kerstin sitting atop the dryer. Keef wedged
between her legs while unbuttoning her shirt. He's wound up;
she's not quite there yet. They talk in hushed tones.

KERSTIN
I've never worked in new accounts.
I tell him that every time.

KEEF

I know. He's just busting your balls.

KERSTIN

I don't have balls.

Keef slides a hand between Kerstin's thighs. She gasps.

KEEF

Nope.

(leaning in)

When this book deal plays out we can finally afford to have the place to ourselves. No roommates.

Kerstin's eyes close. Leaning into the feeling now.

KEEF (CONT'D)

No Gunther. No Clovis.

KERSTIN

You tease me, so.

Kerstin kisses Keef deeply. Passionately.

KERSTIN (CONT'D)

I want a flat right out of Dwell magazine. Clean like a hotel with a semi-monochromatic color palette.

The more Kerstin talks about the flat sans roommates the hotter she gets.

KERSTIN (CONT'D)

(while kissing)

I want to quit my job and get my PhD in Urban Husbandry. A chicken coop with two hens and a ten-by-ten garden on the roof that sits atop a rainwater filtration system that provides clean drinking water with a pH value between 6.5 and 8.5...

KEEF

You've really thought this through.

KERSTIN

And I want a goat. Cute. Soft. And I will slit his throat. Field dress and butcher him right on our living room floor. From yard to plate with just my hands...

Kerstin gets aggressive. Digs into Keef's back.

KEEF

Maybe we should hold off on the goat.

KERSTIN

I'm done holding off. Oh! And we can have real art on the walls and not those terrible silk things.

Now Keef is distracted.

KEEF

You mean Clovis's velvet paintings? In his defense, I'm pretty sure it's a "so bad, it's good" kind of thing. There's not a whole lot of wiggle room when discussing the aesthetic merits of Billy D. Williams as Lando Calrissian smuggling a can of Colt 45.

KERSTIN

What is this? I do not understand. Your friends have shit taste and they hang shit things.

Someone yanks on the locked shack door from the other side, startling Keef and Kerstin. They quickly gather themselves.

KEEF

Hold on!

KERSTIN (CONT'D)

Just a minute!

Keef opens the door. It's ANOTHER COUPLE with the same idea. He and Kerstin shrug about their perpetual lack of privacy.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Keef, with a full messenger bag, staples a FLYER to a pole. Gunther's just standing there, sniffing the air.

KEEF

You helping me out, or what?

GUNTHER

I smell pork.

Keef spots a Bacon-Wrapped Hot Dog cart across the street.

KEEF

Dude, really?

GUNTHER

The swine's siren song echoes in a
man's soul. Resistance is futile.

Gunther heads across the street, passing a POLICE OFFICER
along the way. A voice chirps on the Officer's two-way radio.

RADIO VOICE (O.S.)

Be advised, suspect spotted.

Keef comes to another telephone pole. Pulls out another flyer
from his bag. And then...

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)

Don't move!!

Keef turns to see the Police Officer in a shooting stance,
gun aimed squarely at him! Keef whips back around to find out
who, exactly, the Officer is talking to.

KEEF'S POV: POLICE OFFICERS, weapons drawn, moving in from
all directions! Amped up, barking commands. "Don't move!" --
"Get on the ground!" -- "Freeze you piece of shit!"

SEVERAL POLICE CRUISERS come to a screeching halt -- Cops
piling out like circus clowns. A CHOPPER zooms by overhead!

The first Police Officer moves in on Keef, gun at the ready.

POLICE OFFICER #1

Drop the weapon, now!

Keef drops the flyer and his black stapler.

KEEF

Whoa, dude! Just a stapler.

A second POLICE OFFICER kicks the stapler away like a gun.

KEEF (CONT'D)

What's this about?

POLICE OFFICER #2

There's a mugger loose. You fit the
exact description.

KEEF

What's the description?

POLICE OFFICER #2

Six foot tall black man.

KEEF

That's it?!

Another POLICE OFFICER tackles Keef hard to the ground.

His messenger bag spills out. Flyers, markers, the composition book get trampled as MORE COPS move in on Keef.

POLICE OFFICER #3
Stop resisting!

Keef sees NEIGHBORS looking on with new eyes. Pointing at HIM! Whispering about HIM! THE CRIMINAL!

ACROSS THE STREET: Gunther and the Hot Dog VENDOR notice the commotion. Twenty cops, guns drawn, surrounding a prone and cuffed suspect mostly obscured from view.

GUNTHER
Wow! Overkill much?

The Vendor shakes her head in disgust.

HOT DOG VENDOR
SFPD hassling another black man.

Gunther snaps to attention. Takes a closer look.

GUNTHER
Hey, that's my black man!

Gunther sprints across the street with his hotdog.

ON KEEF: Facedown on the street in extreme emotional distress. THE SOUND DROPS OUT. The only thing HEARD is Keef's BREATHING and HEARTBEAT (Think Tom Hanks on Normandy Beach in Saving Private Ryan). TIME SLOWS as Keef watches Gunther charging toward the cops, like a maniac. The cops, with their guns still drawn, spin around towards him. It's a violent train wreck about to happen. Keef screams out...

KEEF
Guuuunnth-eerrrrr, Nooooooo!

But instead of tackling/tasing/shooting Gunther, the cops raise their hands and patiently try to calm him down as Gunther screams and shoves his finger in their faces.

TIGHT ON KEEF: REALIZATION HITTING HARD. He sees how differently the cops are treating Gunther.

When Keef rolls over to try and catch a breath...

POLICE OFFICER #4
Perp on the move! Perp on the move!

All Twenty Cops train their weapons on a still prone Keef.

Then, Police Officer #1's radio chirps to life once again.

RADIO VOICE (O.S.)
Be advised. Wrong guy.

POLICE OFFICER #1
Copy that.
(to the other cops)
MOVE OUT!!

And just like that, Keef is un-cuffed... the cops pile back into their Police Cruisers... the Chopper zooms by overhead going in the opposite direction... As quickly as they appeared... THE SFPD VANISH! Like a goddamned mist.

Coast clear, Gunther helps a shook Keef to his feet.

GUNTHER
That was messed up, brah! You okay?
We should sue their asses!

Keef is speechless. Gunther moves to lighten the mood.

GUNTHER (CONT'D)
Without mornings like this -- how
could we ever truly appreciate
legal weed?
(chomping his hot dog)
I'm sure there's a strain for this
kind of thing. You coming?

Keef's struggling to keep it together.

KEEF
No, I don't... I'm good, dude. I'll
catch you back at the flat!

And with that, Keef walks off. Gunther looking on as he goes.

EXT. CITY STREETS - LATER

Keef tries to "walk off" what just happened. He can't shake it. And then...

KEEF'S POV: THE FIRST INSTANCES OF KEEF'S ANIMATED "WOKE" VISION. *Not fully coming in yet. Flecks of animated movement and color in the periphery. Almost too quick to notice.*

(NOTE: SEQUENCES WITH ANIMATED OBJECTS WILL APPEAR IN ITALICS. ONLY KEEF SEES THE OBJECTS AS ANIMATED AND TALKING. KEEF, OTHER PEOPLE, AND BACKGROUNDS ARE ALWAYS LIVE-ACTION.)

Senses wonky, Keef ducks into a "mom and pop" type bodega.

INT. MOM & POP BODEGA - DAY

A middle-aged CLERK nods as Keef enters.

KEEF

Water?

The clerk points to the back of the store. As Keef moves down a tiny aisle, we HEAR voices growing louder.

IN THE BEVERAGE COOLER: TWO ANIMATED 40-OUNCE BOTTLES OF OLDE ENGLISH 800 are chatting. When a WHITE CUSTOMER passes, they go silent. Seconds later, a WELL-DRESSED BLACK MAN passes and they go into catcall/carnival barker mode. The bottles sound like DESUS & MERO of Viceland.

ANIMATED OLDE BOTTLE #1
Don't front, my nigga! You
know you want this flavor.
The market research is on my
side. More than twice the
alcohol of them other bitches
because ain't nothing
beautiful about a
muthafuckin' struggle!

ANIMATED OLDE BOTTLE #2
Come get this high! I go
great with menthols and PTSD,
feel me? Jesus saves, but
that nigga will never taste
as good as me. Momentum of
past bad decisions fuckin
with your mental? Bet! I got
solutions, black man.

The Well-Dressed Black Man opens the cooler. Grabs a SIX-PACK OF HEINEKEN and is gone.

ANIMATED OLDE BOTTLE #2 (CONT'D)
Yo, son. Six of those won't do you
like I will.

ANIMATED OLDE BOTTLE #1
Niggas make a little money and
can't wait to get a premium import
on they arm.
(notices Keef)
Hold up! Can he see us?

ANIMATED OLDE BOTTLE #2
(to Olde Bottle #1)
Nah, he just... Oh shit!
(to Keef)
Yo, Urkel! You high as fuck right
now. PCP is a helluva drug.

KEEF
But I'm not on PCP.

ANIMATED OLDE BOTTLE #1
Right. And Malt Liquor makes black
people impervious to bullets.

KEEF

Wait... What?

ANIMATED OLDE BOTTLE #2

How you look right now? In front of
God and everybody debating and
whatnot with a 40-ounce bottle of
Olde E. I'ma call it and say
whatever you took is most
definitely stronger than a Pez.

ANIMATED OLDE BOTTLE #1

Nah, for real tho, you standing
there all slack-jawed is fucking
with our money. How 'bout you find
your way to the Starbucks down the
block. You gonna need a quiet spot
to process this.

As Keef backs away from the beverage cooler in a daze...

ANIMATED OLDE BOTTLE #2

And stay off that sherm, bitch!

Seeing Keef, the Clerk steps into the aisle.

CLERK

Hey, man. You okay?

An ALARM on Keef's phone goes off.

ON PHONE: A calendar reminder for a meeting with Bloom & Hill
Publishing in 15 minutes.

KEEF

Shit!

And with that, Keef runs out of the store. The Clerk
approaches the cooler. THE BOTTLES ARE NO LONGER ANIMATED.
The Clerk opens the door, peers inside.

CLERK

Hello?

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO**INT. BLOOM & HILL PUBLISHING/OFFICE - DAY**

A disheveled Keef stares in silent bewilderment at the COVERS of his first BOOK as concerned publishing executives PHIL (douchey, 40s) and CINDY (Type A, 30s) look on.

CINDY

You sure you're okay?

KEEF

I'm fine. There's just something about these covers I'm not really digging... Has the font changed?

PHIL

No change on the font, my man.

KEEF

What about the layout? The layout has changed, right?

CINDY

Nope. Same layout.

Keef continues to study the book.

KEEF

Does this photo look right?

CLOSE ON BACK COVER: An "Author Photo" of Keef. But wait... it's two shades too light.

KEEF (CONT'D)

Did you guys lighten my author photo? I look like Sammy Sosa here.

Phil and Cindy exchange a look.

KEEF (CONT'D)

What, am I too black for my own comic strip?!

PHIL

(laughing)

Trust me, nobody will ever accuse you of being too black, okay?

Keef does a double-take.

CINDY

What he means to say is it's what
we like about you. Your crossover
index is in the 95th percentile.
Here at B&H, we champion the data.
(beat)
We don't see color.

Phil approaches Keef, puts a hand on his shoulder.

PHIL

Look. I swear that author photo is
the one you approved. But if you
want it changed, we'll change it.

Keef nods. Phil returns to his desk.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Whew. Racial stuff. Uncomfortable.
Am I right?

KEEF LOOKS BACK AT THE AUTHOR PHOTO WHICH SUDDENLY BECOMES
ANIMATED AND LIGHTENS FURTHER, RIGHT BEFORE HIS EYES.

Keef's forehead beads with sweat, he struggles to breathe.

CINDY

Oh my God, are you okay?

The Author Photo lightens until it's just a MIME'S FACE.

Keef throws down the cover and springs out of his chair.

KEEF

I need my therapist!

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Keef hurries down the street and ducks into...

INT. STEWART'S STYLE-O-RAMA A.K.A. BLACK BARBERSHOP - DAY

Keef enters, stops cold. This formerly old school black
barbershop is now populated entirely with WHITE HIPSTERS and
nattily smocked WHITE BARBERS. Everyone turns to Keef.

KEEF

Where's Stew?

WHITE BARBER #1

Stew cashed in. Retired. Moved back
to Mississippi.

WHITE BARBER #2

Cool old dude. In honor of him we kept the name and the soul of the place. The Ebony and Jet magazines.

For Keef, it's a punch to the gut. He looks up at the wall.

KEEF

You raised the prices. A lot.

WHITE BARBER #3

Authenticity costs.

(beat)

Hey man, you want a cut? You're one of Stew's old customers so the first one is 20% off.

It's too much for Keef. He staggers backward out the door...

EXT. STEWART'S STYLE-O-RAMA - CONTINUOUS

Onto the sidewalk. And then... a militant voice. Sounding suspiciously like GIANCARLO ESPOSITO A.K.A. "BUGGIN' OUT".

VOICE (O.S.)

Those man bun, fake ass, co-opting, gentrifying muthafuckas!

Keef searches for the speaker.

VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Down here, my brotha!

KEEF TURNS TO FIND A TRASHCAN THAT HAS COME TO ANIMATED LIFE.

ANIMATED TRASHCAN

This ain't no barbershop! It's the negro section of some bullshit hipster magical kingdom. Black culture as artifice. A gimmick to sell cedar wood beard balm and mustache combs...

Keef's head is spinning.

ANIMATED TRASHCAN (CONT'D)

This shit stops now!! What say you, Keefy K? They gonna find you in the whirlwind or ass up, face down in the sunken place. This your moment!

Keef looks at the barbershop's FRONT PLATE GLASS WINDOW.

KEEF

I can't.

ANIMATED TRASHCAN

Yes you can! You know what to do.

KEEF

(sotto)

The right thing.

Keef picks up the trashcan. Lifts it over his head. Takes a running start at the window.

ANIMATED TRASHCAN

YES! Godspeed, you black emperor!!

Throws the trashcan a la Mookie in Do The Right Thing.

But the trashcan just bounces off the window!!

NO LONGER ANIMATED, the plain steel outdoor trashcan slowly rolls back to Keef's feet, trash spilling out everywhere.

A White Barber peeks out.

WHITE BARBER #1

(re: window)

Polycarbonate plexi-mix.

(beat)

Want some Brie?

He presents an ELABORATE CHEESE PLATTER.

Keef snatches a handful of Brie and bolts down the street.

INT. FLAT - DAY

A dismayed Keef enters. Gunther, wearing a natty, all-white 3-PIECE SUIT, complete with cane, is excited to see him.

GUNTHER

Not too late to seize the day,
brah. Turn that sucker right around
with a little hit of this here POW-
der I'm sellin'. Why don't you join
me?

Keef picks up a plastic baggie with white powder inside.

KEEF

Dude, are you serious? You can't
just go out in the neighborhood
with these baggies.

GUNTHER

I know! That's why I've stocked tiny spoons and straws too. We call it "Snort Support".

KEEF

We?

GUNTHER

Yeah, me and my microfinanciers.

KEEF

...I don't even know what to say.

GUNTHER

(proudly)

You would if you had a bump of this Gunth-Powder. Oh shit! I just made that up! BOOM! And therein lies my superpower.

KEEF

(shaking his head)

There's that. And you're white.

Gunther befuddled, looks down at his suit, not knowing how to take Keef's comment. An unsettlingly awkward beat.

KEEF (CONT'D)

(blurting out)

I see cartoons.

Double befuddlement for Gunther.

GUNTHER

Cartoons? Like *Sponge Bob*?

Kerstin enters the flat, sees Gunther.

KERSTIN

Wow! Looking good, Gunther.

GUNTHER

Feeling good too! I'm offering your man a piece of this action but he's too scared to invest in himself.

(off Keef's head shake)

Alright, your loss brah!

Gunther exits, as Kerstin approaches Keef.

KERSTIN

What happened today?

KEEF

Went to the barbershop. It didn't work out.

Kerstin senses something is off.

CUT TO:

INT. FLAT - A LITTLE LATER

Kerstin, with clippers and comb in hand, fades Keef's hair like a seasoned barber... from the hood.

KERSTIN

Why would you pay for it when you can get this at home for free?

(off Keef's silence)

If it makes you feel better, I totally blew my speech. Apparently, bankers don't appreciate German humor, Jane Austen references, or human compassion. I don't know how you do it. If I could have switched places with you today, I definitely would have.

Keef laughs, thinking *'if you only knew'*.

KEEF

...Something happened today. Something I always knew *could* happen. But never...

(beat)

Anyway, I went to my barbershop because I thought it would help, but it didn't.

KERSTIN

What is this "something" that happened?

KEEF

I'm still processing it.

Kerstin frowns.

KERSTIN

Okay, so how does going to a barbershop help?

KEEF

A *black* barbershop. It's the last safe space for black men.

(MORE)

KEEF (CONT'D)

Where we can speak freely without having to make white people feel comfortable. It's like therapy for black people, if black people did therapy.

KERSTIN

Can white people go?

KEEF

They can. But they shouldn't.

KERSTIN

Isn't that anti-white?

KEEF

No! It's like women-only screenings of *Wonder Woman*.

Kerstin moves in to line the back of Keef's neck.

KERSTIN

Do you think white people feel the same way about white barbershops?

KEEF

Not at all. White people are safe everywhere! White people seek out danger, they're so safe. That's why you see them climbing mountains, or running with the bulls, or... pole vaulting.

Kerstin knicks Keef with the clippers.

KEEF (CONT'D)

Ow! Really?

Kerstin is rattled and it shows.

KERSTIN

I don't know where all this black and white American cowshit is coming from, but as your white girlfriend could you please give notice when you start hating white people.

Kerstin drops the clippers and storms off.

KEEF

(calling after)

I don't hate white people!

(MORE)

KEEF (CONT'D)

I dated one in high school. She was a terrible dancer.

Kerstin disappears into a back room. Slamming the door.

KEEF (CONT'D)

And you're not *white white*. You're German. Close. Very, very close. But different! D'ya hear me?

A long silent beat, and then...

KEEF (CONT'D)

I'm sorry!

INT. FLAT - NIGHT

Keef's on the couch, putting ART FROM HIS COMICS in SLEEVES.

He turns on the television. Channel surfs.

Clovis enters the flat carrying an ORNATE DECANTER with a new woman on his arm, SIMONE (20s).

CLOVIS

Just passing through. Changing my shirt and shoes and we up out this bitch. Keef, Simone. Simone, Keef.

Simone and Keef nod 'hey' to each other.

SIMONE

Bathroom?

Clovis points and Simone disappears down the hall.

CLOVIS

(re: decanter, lowers voice)

Check it out! The manager of this restaurant thought I was DeForest Buckner from the 49ers, and comped a whole fucking bottle of Louis Tres. Shit is like three grand a pop. Anyway, this Simone bird is posted up at the bar. She overhears...

KEEF

Hold up. So, first Austin Jackson and now DeForest Buckner? Really? You couldn't look any less like DeForest Buckner if you tried.

CLOVIS

Enough like him to tap that ass
while I sip on this Tres.

Clovis darts to his room. Keef settles on PBS' *Antiques Roadshow*. Simone returns and sits on the couch next to him.

SIMONE

Ooh, I love *Antiques Roadshow*!

CLOSE ON TV: A NATIVE-AMERICAN WOOD SPOON is on a pedestal between the APPRAISER (white, 40s) and ANNE (white, 60s).

APPRAISER

Extraordinary. Tell me about this.

ANNE

Well, it was given to my great-
great uncle, Colonel John Beasly,
as a gift from the Sioux tribe...

VOICE (O.S.)

Oh, for fuck's sake! It's Yokut.
Not Sioux, Yokut!!

Keef goes still. Turns to see if Simone heard what sounded like WES STUDI. No sign that she did. Then, Keef sees it...

THE NATIVE SPOON IS NOW ANIMATED and it hops through the TV Screen, taking a knee on the living room carpet.

ANIMATED NATIVE SPOON

(to Keef)

Gift, my ass! Beasly and his
regiment slaughtered the people
that made me, took all their shit,
and raped the horses.

KEEF

Raped the horses?!!

Keef turns to find Simone staring at him, horrified. The Native Spoon is now back in the TV, and NO LONGER ANIMATED.

A FEW MINUTES LATER: Clovis exits his bedroom wearing a fresh shirt and dress shoes. He finds Keef, but no Simone.

CLOVIS

Where's cutie?

KEEF

Oh, she split.

CLOVIS
Wait... what?! Split?

KEEF
Yeah, after I explained the white supremacist agenda built into *Antiques Roadshow*.

CLOVIS
White supre... nigga did you fall down and hit your head? Tell me, Huey P Motherfuckin Newton! How, exactly is *Antiques Roadshow* an engine for white supremacy?

KEEF
You ever see any black people on it?

CLOVIS
Black people like new shit. Period. Mystery solved!

Hearing the commotion, Kerstin emerges from the back room.

KERSTIN
What's going on?

CLOVIS
Your man done lost his damn mind.

Kerstin crosses to the kitchen. Keef had hoped to avoid this conversation, at least for the time being. A beat and then...

KEEF
Okay, full disclosure. I was out with Gunther hanging flyers today and we ran into the SFPD who thought I fit the description.

KERSTIN
What description?

KEEF
Six foot tall black man... that's it. They slammed me to the ground. Cuffed me. Pointed guns at my head. It was humiliating and just...

CLOVIS
So where was Gunther?

KEEF

Dude tried to take on the whole
SFPD.

CLOVIS

My nigga.

KEEF

No, seriously, they should have
shot him. If I was a cop, I'd have
shot him. Easy.

(off Clovis and Kerstin's
reaction)

But they didn't. It was like they
protected him, and they *served* me.

Clovis is suspicious. Takes a second look at Keef.

CLOVIS

Houston, we have a problem. This
nigga Woke.

KERSTIN

Woke? I don't understand.

CLOVIS

Keef with his oversized ego,
artistic talent, *Star Wars* savvy,
and *Mother Jones* subscription
worked hard not to be that brotha
and he felt special. But SFPD
showed him how they feel about
special niggas and now we got to
hear about it because all this shit
is new to him.

KEEF

The game is rigged. It's like my
third eye was busted open. And it's
a black eye. I see it all now.

Clovis and Kerstin exchange a look of concern.

CLOVIS

See?

(to Keef)

Walk it off, nigga. Get a juice-box
and find a safe space. Whatever you
got to do to NOT be woke, do it.

KEEF

I can't go back.

CLOVIS

You can. And you will. Do you know what happens to woke niggas? Look at Nick Cannon. One minute he's hosting a hit reality show, the next he's wearing a turban, spoutin' whack poetry on Instagram and living in the crawl space under Mariah's shoe closet. Colin Kaepernick? He played in the Super Bowl!! Now he's a mascot for a Pee Wee football team in Georgia. They got that nigga shuffling and dabbing for beer money in a hot ass peach costume.

KEEF

Pretty sure that's not true.

CLOVIS

Woke rhymes with Broke. I bet you thought that was a coincidence.

(off Keef's look)

Let's keep it real. Your fans? Mostly white people. They show up at Comic-Con every year to see Keef Knight, the Wayne Brady of comics, not some nigga with cop-induced PTSD at the podium dropping "little known facts about white supremacy" then expecting those same white people to buy your book.

KERSTIN

So what is he supposed to do tomorrow?

Suddenly, a panicked Gunther rushes in. His white suit is filthy and torn. He pulls baggies from his pockets and dumps the powder out the window. He immediately closes the blinds, and then casually plops down on the couch next to the gang.

GUNTHER

(to Clovis)

You were saying?

A long beat and then...

CLOVIS

(to Keef)

Maintain-Motherfucker-Maintain.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE**INT. COMIC-CON / PANEL ROOM - MORNING**

The room is packed to capacity with 150 EXCITED FANS, many dressed in costumes. A smiling Keef strides on stage to a cheering crowd. He stops cold. Smile fading.

KEEF'S POV: Amidst the crowd, he spots A MAN IN BLACKFACE.

SWOOSH! Before Keef can even fully process it, GIANT ANIMATED VERSIONS OF KEEF'S TOAST & BUTTER CHARACTERS swoop in on each side of him.

ANIMATED TOAST

(singing)

Swing down sweet chariot, stop and
let me ride.

Keef's eyes go wide, as Toast and Butter float around him.

ANIMATED BUTTER

You're safe now.

Keef's as surprised as we are that Toast & Butter sound just like Kiwis JERMAINE CLEMENT & BRET MCKENZIE.

KEEF

Safe? I was hoping for sane.

ANIMATED TOAST

Where's the fun in that? Look at
them out there.

Keef looks back to the crowd, who are all now FROZEN IN TIME.

ANIMATED TOAST (CONT'D)

We could pull our peckers out right
now and hose down the lot of 'em.
It's not like they don't have it
coming.

ANIMATED BUTTER

How many do you think we could get
through with a tire iron and a
bottle of Cutty Sark?

(off Keef's stunned look)

See, the booze numbs the mind,
steadies the hand. The preferred
state when bludgeoning fans.

KEEF

Whoa! I thought I knew you guys.
Why would you do that?

Toast's eyes well with tears.

ANIMATED TOAST

Because the moment you get too
dark, they'll try to scrape it off
you. And when they can't, they'll
toss you out.

KEEF

Wait... what?

Keef looks back at the crowd who suddenly UN-FREEZE AND
VIOLENTLY LUNGE AT HIM. RIGHT AT IMPACT...

JUMP CUT TO: Keef snaps out of it to find himself now sitting
next to a large SHEET-DRAPED DISPLAY on stage. Cindy
approaches a podium.

CINDY

It's been a long time coming and I
know you all are very excited.

Excited CHEERS. The crowd is lit.

Kerstin, Gunther, and Clovis watch from the back of the room.
Clovis, clad in DARK SHADES and wearing a GOLDEN STATE
WARRIORS BASKETBALL CAP, flags down a FRATTY RENT-A-COP.

CLOVIS

Yo, is there a water fountain here?

The Rent-A-Cop's eyes light up.

RENT-A-COP

Oh, hey! Wow. Yeah, but I've got
Pellegrinos for the VIPs.

He hands Clovis a Pellegrino from his backpack. Clovis smiles
smugly at Kerstin and Gunther as the Rent-A-Cop moves on.

CINDY

We at Bloom & Hill Publishing are
extremely proud to present to you
the first look at the debut book
collection of cartoons from Bay
Area favorite Keef Knight!

Cindy gestures toward the display and the sheet falls...

ON DISPLAY: 6-foot tall versions of the FRONT and BACK COVERS. The same too-light Sammy Sosa-fied Author Photo.

APPLAUSE erupts in the room! Keef is horrified.

PHIL

You hear that, bro? That's for you.

Keef's eyes dart wildly from Phil to the lightened Author Photo to the Man In Blackface.

IN THE AUDIENCE: Kerstin is the first to notice.

KERSTIN

Uh-oh. Something is wrong.

Keef is spiraling. And then...

VOICE (O.S.)

This some bullshit!

(re: Author Photo)

You look like Wesley Snipes in a Kabuki Theatre Production of Raisin in the Sun.

Keef glances down to see that the BLACK SHARPIE in his shirt pocket has come to ANIMATED LIFE. Turnt the fuck up, Sharpie sounds just like CHRIS ROCK.

KEEF

I know...

ANIMATED BLACK SHARPIE

These folks using you! Just like they using me. You ever seen a gallery with markers hanging on the walls? Hells no! The paper gets all the fame and glory. While they use me up and toss me away. But what value does a blank piece of paper have? None. It ain't shit till I get on it. The black marker does the work, the white paper gets all the credit. Sound familiar?! Time to turn up and turn this bitch out.

Keef jumps to his feet. Pushes past Cindy, approaches the podium and grabs the mic. Big fake smile.

KEEF

Another round of applause for Bloom & Hill's very own Phil and Cindy.

The audience responds. Clovis does not like what he's seeing.

CLOVIS
(sotto)
Maintain-motherfucker-maintain.

Keef takes the mic out of the podium stand. Sharpie jumps out of Keef's pocket and starts pacing on the podium.

ANIMATED BLACK SHARPIE
You on one, nigga. Light it up!

KEEF
Let's be different, shall we?
Questions up front. First
question...
(to Phil and Cindy)
How the hell do you people still
have jobs?
(pointing to the book
cover and back)
The Toast is darker than me.

Nervous laughter from the audience. Keef points to a fan.

KEEF (CONT'D)
And what made you think black face
was a good idea?

ANIMATED BLACK SHARPIE
Yeah bitch, this 'aint ASU!

Kerstin brings her hands up to her face. This is going south fast. The fan Keef pointed out is aghast.

BURNT TOAST MAN
Are you insinuating that I am a
racist?!

Audible GASPS from the audience.

BURNT TOAST MAN (CONT'D)
(to audience)
That's right. I dropped the R-word.
But he started it.
(back to Keef)
This is Burnt Toast Brown! I
painted it this way to stay true to
your character when he gets burning
mad. You should know better, Mr.
Knight! This is the Bay Area. We
don't see color here!

TIGHT ON KEEF: As that phrase echoes in his head.

BURN'T TOAST MAN (CONT'D)

We don't care if you're black,
white, blue, purple or green!

Keef's face twitches. He looks into the audience, sees Kerstin and Clovis shaking their heads, "Maintain". A beat, then...

KEEF

(dripping with sarcasm)

No, no, no, no... I have to draw
the line at Blue people. They're
nothing but lazy deadbeats,
freeloaders, and welfare cheats.

Burnt Toast Man is shocked.

KEEF (CONT'D)

But honestly, they don't have
anything on Purple people. Jeezus --
It's been proven in a lab: Purples
simply don't have the same mental
capacity as the rest of us... it's
true! I read it on the internet!
And them Greens...

(rolls eyes)

Don't get me started about the
Green people... They steal our jobs
and refuse to learn the language!

The audience rustles in confusion.

KEEF (CONT'D)

Look, unless Avatar is a
documentary, there are no blue
people, or purple or green.
Reality matters!

(beat)

Believe me, I was just as reluctant
as anybody to see things for what
they are. But I've finally reached
my racial puberty. Better late than
never, and I've got some things to
say! God is a black woman. Michael
Jordan should be the silhouette on
the NBA logo. The Tonight Show
would be better if the Roots
hosted, and Jimmy Fallon clowned
the audience between commercials.
Back in Black is the head-banging
stepchild of Strange Fruit. And
Blazing Saddles isn't as goddamn
funny as you think it is.

ANIMATED BLACK SHARPIE

Up yours, Mel!

KEEF

Telling me I'm articulate is not a compliment. Telling me I'm not really black is just fucking weird.

(beat)

And just cuz my roommate's black and a little taller than you, doesn't make him a pro athlete.

Clovis cringes. Ain't no stopping Keef now.

KEEF (CONT'D)

I have seen behind the curtain, people. I have been to the sausage factory, and I am the sausage!

GUNTHER

(to Clovis)

Is he about to come out?

KEEF

The sausage factory is the systemic oppression directed at people of color here in America.

VOICE (O.S.)

Keef! It's not too late for us.

Keef turns around to find that the massive LIGHTENED AUTHOR PHOTO FROM THE STAGE DISPLAY HAS NOW BECOME ANIMATED. IT SOUNDS LIKE STEVE CARELL IN "THE OFFICE".

ANIMATED AUTHOR PHOTO

Buddy, you just gotta lighten up!

Keef goes red.

KEEF

I'M BLACK AS HELL AND I'M NOT GONNA TAKE IT ANYMORE!!!

He attacks the photo/display, kicking and tearing at it futilely. For all his efforts, he's not doing much damage.

KEEF (CONT'D)

Who's with me?!!

An awkward silence and then the room erupts in BOOS! Keef suddenly realizes that he lost the audience a while ago. People start chucking stuff at Keef and rushing the stage.

Phil and Cindy scurry away, but Keef is quickly surrounded and trapped by angry fans.

KEEF (CONT'D)
No! Wait! Don't you GET it? I AM
THE SAUSAGE!!

That just enflames the crowd further!

Gunther, Clovis and Kerstin watch in stunned silence as a COMIC-CON SECURITY TEAM swarms the room to quell the melee.

Suddenly, the Rent-A-Cop from earlier snatches back the half-empty Pellegrino out of Clovis' hand.

RENT-A-COP
You're not Kevin Durant!!

INT. FLAT - MORNING

Keef wakes to find he's on the couch instead of in his bed with Kerstin. Clovis and Gunther are sitting nearby at the kitchen table eating Count Chocula and sipping Louis Tres.

KEEF
So it wasn't a dream?

CLOVIS
Your girl left early to go to work.
She said you're gonna need the
extra money to make up for all the
work you're losing.

GUNTHER
Said something about a goat too.

Keef frantically grabs his cell.

KEEF
(reading as he scrolls)
"Cartoonist causes chaos at Comic-
Con cursing people of color"
(swipe)
"Keef's got Beef: Threatens to
reveal sausage at family event"
(swipe)
"Publisher and papers drop
cartoonist in wake of Mega-Meltdown
at Moscone"
(swipe)
"Local Man Not Pro-Athlete".

Keef looks up to find Clovis giving him the stink-eye.

CLOVIS

What did I say? Maintain-
Motherfucker-Maintain. You didn't,
and now the gig is up.

GUNTHER

Good for you, brah. Staying true to
yourself is what's important.

CLOVIS

(to Gunther)

Remember that time you said Weird
Al Yankovic was the Jimi Hendrix of
the accordion and if Lawrence Welk
were still alive Weird Al would
hand him his ass and I said that
was the whitest thing you've ever
said?

(off Gunther's nod)

Now it's officially the second
whitest thing you've ever said.

KEEF

But they got it all wrong!

CLOVIS

In the immortal words of Socrates,
'It's a wrap, nigga.' Over and out.
You done, son.

Keef ponders Clovis' words. A beat and then...

KEEF

No. To hell with that. I've worked
too hard. Come too far.

Keef springs off the couch.

INT. BLOOM & HILL PUBLISHING/LOBBY - DAY

Keef runs into the building and slaps his I.D. down in front
of the GUARD at the Security Desk.

KEEF

Keef Knight. Here to see Phil and
Cindy.

GUARD

Not gonna happen.

KEEF

No, you don't understand. I'm a
cartoonist and...

GUARD

Save it. They don't want to see you
again. Ever.

The Guard points to a "Do Not Admit" sheet with photos of
unsavory characters. At the bottom is Keef's Author Photo.
Except now, the original has been DARKENED several shades.

KEEF

Really?

Keef spots Phil and Cindy near the elevators.

KEEF (CONT'D)

Hey! Phil! Cindy!

Without acknowledging Keef, Phil disappears behind closing
elevator doors, leaving Cindy alone. As Keef approaches
Cindy, she offers no visible reaction.

KEEF (CONT'D)

Look, I...

Suddenly, Cindy's face goes FULL DONALD SUTHERLAND from the
end of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*! She points a finger at
Keef and lets out a BLOOD CURDLING SCREAM!!

Keef's eyes go wide, first in surprise, then in terror. Keef
bolts out of the lobby.

Once Keef is out of sight, Cindy stops. Composes herself.
Turns back to the elevators and presses UP.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Keef's walking the streets of San Francisco trying to figure
out his next move. He arrives at a Bus Stop.

VOICE (O.S.)

You know how it go.

Keef turns to find a MUGGER with a GLOCK-17 pointed in his
face. The gunman shoves Keef into a nearby...

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

MUGGER

Let's go, nigga, run them pockets.

Keef is trying not to panic. He hands over his wallet.

KEEF

Dude, I got nothing. I'm a cartoonist.

MUGGER

Cartoonist? What kind of shit you do?

The Mugger is careful to keep his face hidden under his cap, as he rifles through Keef's wallet.

KEEF

A local thing. Toast & Butter.

The Mugger jumps back.

MUGGER

Nigga you bullshittin'!

He unzips his hoody to reveal a TOAST & BUTTER T-SHIRT.

MUGGER (CONT'D)

What you know 'bout that Toast and Butter, fool?

Keef can't believe it.

KEEF

I draw it. At least, I used to.

Then, Keef's face goes slack.

KEEF'S POV: Our first look at the mugger's face. He looks EXACTLY like Keef. The Mugger's eyes go wide too.

MUGGER

Oh shit!

KEEF (CONT'D)

Six foot tall black man!

Keef and his doppelganger stare at each other in amazement. Finally, the Mugger digs out his smartphone.

MUGGER

Let's get this. Ain't nobody gonna believe this shit.

The Mugger takes a selfie of himself and Keef. Hands Keef back his wallet.

MUGGER (CONT'D)

I got the cash and your BART Card, shit is good right?

KEEF

Just loaded it yesterday.

The Mugger grins big. Amicably slaps a dour Keef on the back.

MUGGER

Alright then. Stay safe, Toast and
Butter man!

And with that, the Mugger disappears into the alley.

EXT. CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

Keef emerges from the alley just in time to see his bus leaving. The bus has an ADVERTISEMENT on its side for the hit Wayne Brady movie: "Bryant Gumbel: A Life That's Humble".

Keef stands still for a long beat. Looks around his new "Woke" world. POPS OF ANIMATION scattered throughout.

Suddenly, he pulls out his composition book, flips to a blank page and starts drawing furiously. A man on fire. We can't see what he's drawing but it's clear it's not Toast & Butter. No, this is something new.

SMASH TO BLACK.

MUSIC OVER CLOSING CREDITS: Bad Brains' "I Against I"

END OF PILOT