

blackish

|blak•ish|, [adj]

Episode 104

"The Nod"

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COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

1 EXT. VALLEY GLEN PREP - MORNING (D1)

1

As JAY Z'S "HARD KNOCK LIFE" BLASTS, we see DRE, ZOEY, and JUNIOR walk through the SEA OF WHITENESS that is the student body. Junior and Dre carry a huge LORD OF THE RINGS DIORAMA. Zoey TEXTS AS SHE WALKS without looking up. Dre looks on, amazed as she almost magically WEAVES IN AND OUT of other non-looking TEXTERS without a collision. It's really quite amazing.

DRE (V.O.)
Funny thing about evolution. Some species flourish in any environment...

DRE
Zoey, how in the hell do you --?

ZOEY
Bye, Dad.
(then, to Junior)
Bye, kid who rides to school with me and who some may think resembles me...
(then, for everyone's benefit)
But is in NO WAY related to me.

As Zoey veers off into a CLOUD of FRIENDSHIP and POPULARITY.

DRE (V.O.)
But some species struggle...

Junior CLUMSILY DROPS HIS SIDE of the HUGE DIORAMA.

ANDRE JR.
Oh no! My Hobbit Shire!

Junior picks his side of the diorama back up.

DRE
Why are we the only ones carrying one of these extra credit projects?

ANDRE JR.
Oh, it's not for extra *credit*, per se. More so, extra acknowledgement.

Dre shoots his son a DEATH GLARE.

DRE

You made me drive all the way out to Azusa to get virgin wheatgrass for an 'acknowledgement' project?
(then)
You're lucky we're in public.

DRE (V.O.)

... But the thing that always helps you through your struggle is having a sense of community.

At that moment, Dre sees a surprising sight: another BLACK DAD and SON. The father is carrying his SON'S FOOTBALL GEAR. Dre and the other Dad make eye contact and exchange 'THE BLACK HEAD NOD,' and then simultaneously notice that NEITHER OF THEIR SONS DO THE SAME, but instead, keep going without acknowledgment of one other.

DRE

Why didn't you give The Nod to that kid?

ANDRE JR.

(confused)

The Nod?

DRE

Yeah, The Nod. To let him know that you've seen him.

ANDRE JR.

But I don't know him.

DRE

What does that matter?

(then, sotto)

You two had 'something' in common.

(then, realizing)

Oh my God, you don't know what you have in common, do you?

Off Junior, Dre, fed up, STOPS and DROPS Junior's diorama, and WALKS OFF.

*

DRE (CONT'D)

Bye, kid who looks like me, but is in NO WAY related to me!

Off this, we,

CUT TO OPENING.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

2 INT. JOHNSON HOME - DINING ROOM - EVENING (N1)

2

Dinner is over. Only Junior still remains at the table with POPS, BOW and Dre, who's ranting.

DRE

You should have seen it, Pops!
Junior just looked at him! No nod!
Like his neck was broken.

POPS

Maybe something is wrong with his
neck. Did you ask him?

(then, to Junior)

Something wrong with your neck, boy?

ANDRE JR.

What? No.

(then, rubbing his neck)

I mean, I don't think so.

RAINBOW

So he didn't do "The Nod" to
somebody. I don't get what the big
deal is.

DRE

Of course you don't. You're not a
dude and you're... beige.

RAINBOW

You weren't complaining about my
half-whiteness when I was co-
signing for this house.

DRE

Look, The Nod is important. It's
the internationally accepted, yet
unspoken sign of acknowledgement
among Black folks!

3 INT. TOWN HALL MEETING - INDIANA - DAY - FANTASY

3

PRESIDENT OBAMA is speaking to a room full of MOSTLY NON-
BLACK CITIZENS in a Town Hall meeting in Indiana.

As Obama speaks, HE CATCHES EYES with the one SPECK OF COLOR
in the room. In the most subtle, but clearly undeniable way,
The President and the speck EXCHANGE THE NOD.

DRE (V.O.)

So no matter who you are or where
you're at, it's your duty to give
The Nod.

4 EXT. PARK - DAY - FANTASY

4

Two MOTHERS, one WHITE the other BLACK, are PUSHING STROLLERS with their respective White and Black BABIES inside. They pass their NEAR DOPPELGANGERS who are also pushing their BABIES in strollers. As the two sets of strollers pass, we see the two Black babies CATCH EACH OTHER'S EYES and EXCHANGE THE NOD.

5 EXT. SKI RUN - DAY - FANTASY

5

A WHITE SNOW-COVERED MOUNTAIN filled with what we can only assume (and rationally so) are WHITE SKIERS, covered top to bottom in the APPROPRIATE SKI ATTIRE.

DRE (V.O.)

Even in the most extreme of
circumstances, we always found a
way to let each other know... 'I
see you, bruh.'

TWO SKIERS spot each other at the bottom of the run, pause for a second, turn their heads to the side curiously, and then knowingly give each other THE NOD.

6 INT. JOHNSON HOME - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS (N1)

6

As they were.

RAINBOW

Dre, will you please not make this
yet another 'thing?' The truth is,
Junior's generation has a different
perspective on the 'struggle' than
you and Pops. Can't you let that
be a good thing?

DRE

No! No, I can't!
(then)

The Nod's on the same primal level
as a baby waving 'hi' or a man
scrunching his face when a woman
with a big butt walks by.

Junior SCRUNCHES HIS FACE in confusion.

DRE (CONT'D)

Oh my God! You don't do that
either?! I. Have. Failed!

ANDRE JR.

Pops?

POPS

Sorry, Grandson. Hate to admit it,
but my idiot son's right this time.
This is pretty basic stuff.

ANDRE JR.

Even the butt thing?

POPS

Especially the butt thing.

Dre looks at his father, a mixture of shock and excitement.

DRE

Wow. Why... thank you, Pops.

POPS

You're welcome, Son. You did hear
me call you an idiot though, right?

DRE

I did not, but... noted.

ANDRE JR.

(checking watch)

I've got a seven-thirty on-line
call for Ghost Recon, so...

Junior exits. Dre turns to Pops, disgusted.

DRE

We fought too hard for them, Pops.
They don't have anything left to
struggle for.

RAINBOW

And can't you let that be a good
thing?

POPS

No!

DRE

No!

7 INT. JOHNSON HOME - FAMILY ROOM - NEXT DAY (D2)

7

Zoey is YAPPING ON HER CELL and JACK and DIANE are earnestly WORKING ON DRAWINGS. Bow crosses in.

RAINBOW

Hey, Zoey.

Zoey looks up from her cell, realizes that her mother's talking to her, and with a smile, politely gives her the "ONE SECOND" FINGER, as she then nonchalantly crosses out of the room. As she exits, we HEAR:

ZOEY (O.S.)

(to her friend on phone)

I know, right? She just looked at me and started talking. That's what I have to deal with.

Bow crosses to the twins and notices Diane, using Jack as a stool.

RAINBOW

Whatcha got going over here?

DIANE

Making posters for Career Day.

JACK

(sing-songy)
Eatin' cookies.

RAINBOW (CONT'D)

Oh wow! Career Day. Awesome!

Bow looks at Jack's drawing. She tries to, but can't tell exactly what it is.

RAINBOW (CONT'D)

What are you drawing, Jack?

JACK

It's me performing at the Rose Bowl in eight years. I wanna be a Teen Sensation.

RAINBOW

Teen Sensation, huh? Is that a job?

JACK

You tell me.

Jack stands up and does a PRECISION SPIN AND DANCE MOVE that ends with HIS HAND OUT, as if asking for money.

RAINBOW

Can't argue with that.

Bow SLAPS HIM FIVE instead of cash. He stares at his hand.

JACK
Is this a joke to you?

As Jack ANGRILY MOONWALKS out, Bow turns and looks at Diane's drawings. As she notices, a smile comes across her face and she nods, warmly and knowingly.

RAINBOW
Dee, those test tubes look great!
(then, proudly)
Like mother, like daughter.

Diane looks up, confused.

B Story

DIANE
Those aren't test tubes. They're energy drinks for an ad campaign aimed at kids who are too young to drink energy drinks.
(then, off Bow's look)
I want to work in advertising.
Like Dad.

RAINBOW
What do you mean? I thought you wanted to be a doctor... like Mommy.

DIANE
(thinking)
Hmm, and wear the same thing to work every day. Tempting. How long do you have to go to school to be a doctor?

RAINBOW
(enthusiastic)
Oh, just four years of college, four years of med school, then three years of --

DIANE
I'm gonna stop you right there. Daddy just went to college. And he's got all three pair of the Yeezys.

RAINBOW
I'm gonna level with you, Diane, you're my only hope. Zoey's obviously going to marry well.

DIANE
Probably several times.

RAINBOW
And I'm hoping we get Junior out of
the house before he's thirty.

DIANE
Optimistic.

RAINBOW
And Jack...

ANGLE ON Jack down the HALLWAY, out of earshot, doing THE ROBOT.

RAINBOW (CONT'D)
Well, you know...
(then, desperate)
Mommy really needs you on this one,
Dee-Dee.

Diane doesn't seem sold. Off Bow, troubled by Diane's lack
of interest in her career, we,

8 **INT. STEVENS & LIDO - RECEPTION - LATER (D2)**

8

With a bothered look, Dre enters for the day.

DRE (V.O.)
So I started to think that maybe I was
making too big a deal of this whole
Nod thing. And then it happened...

Dre passes a WELL-DRESSED BLACK GUY. In **SLO-MO**, as the
unmistakable guitar riff of PRINCE'S "KISS" plays, he passes
Dre, and GIVES THE NOD. DRE RETURNS IT.

DRE
Hey, what's up. Dre --

CHARLIE
Dre Johnson, the big SVP. I know
who you are. Charlie Telphy. I
just got brought on as a New
Accounts manager.

DRE
Welcome, where you coming from?

CHARLIE
Starbucks. HQ in Seattle. Rainy
up there. Wet and sad. This move
saved my life.

DRE
Glad that happened for you.

CHARLIE
Thanks, man. Me too. Bad stuff happens in Seattle.

Dre and Charlie exchange a DAP, and Charlie PULLS DRE IN FOR A HUG.

DRE
See you around.

CHARLIE
Oh, you will. Unless you know something I don't know, like they're about to fire a brother right after I got hired. They wouldn't, right?
(chuckling)
'Cause I do my work.
(then, checking watch)
Oh mother****, I'm late. Alright, man, I'm out.

Dre and Charlie exchange another DAP, and Charlie PULLS DRE IN FOR ANOTHER HUG.

DRE (V.O.)
Nice guy. I mean, he was a bit of a hugger and a double dapper, but who cares? We connected, and that's what I wanted for Junior. I need to get my boy some of this.

9 INT. JOHNSON HOME - FAMILY ROOM - LATER (D2)

9

Dre and Junior are scrolling through PHOTOS in Junior's ELECTRONIC SCHOOL DIRECTORY. It's all WHITE KIDS.

DRE
Wow, so there are really no Black guys your age at your school.
(then, noticing)
What about him?

ANDRE JR.
He's Filipino.

DRE
Hmph, I'm sure that's what his mom tells him. What about this dude?

ANDRE JR.
Sri Lankan.

DRE
Not a real place.
(then, excited)
Ooh, what about him?

ANDRE JR.
He's from Malawi.

DRE
Where's that?

ANDRE JR.
Africa.

DRE
(beat)
Pass.

Zoey walks by.

ANDRE JR.
Why doesn't Zoey have to do this?

ZOEY
(to Junior)
I have Black friends. Because I'm
cool, plus I'm Black, which is
cool, so I win. Twice.

Zoey moves off. Dre still looks at the screen.

DRE
Wow, the Black talent pool at your
school is very shallow.

ANDRE JR.
It is? I hadn't noticed.

DRE (V.O.)
Of course he hadn't. It wasn't
Junior's fault. This one was on
me. I'm the one who put him in
that private school. I had made
him the fly in buttermilk...

SMASH CUT TO:

10 INT. DRE'S CAR (MOVING)/EXT. STREET/BUS STOP - A LITTLE
LATER (D2)

10

Dre is DRIVING.

DRE (V.O.)

So, it was up to me to find him
some other flies. And if you want
to catch flies, you need to whip
out the honey.

Dre SLOWS HIS CAR to a halt, and ROLLS DOWN THE WINDOW. We
see that Dre is about to address a GROUP OF BLACK TEENAGE
BOYS at a BUS STOP.

DRE

(yelling out of window)
Hey, you guys like chips and soda?
(then, off their looks)
You boys are around twelve or
thirteen, right?

From the looks on the boys' faces and the WOMAN sitting next
to them at the bus stop, Dre quickly realizes that this
situation may not look great. He tries to explain.

DRE (CONT'D)

Hey, nothing weird. I was just
looking to bring some young Black
boys back to my house...

The woman at the bus stop TAKES OUT HER CELL PHONE and begins
to dial what we can only ASSUME IS THE POLICE.

DRE (CONT'D)

(to woman)
You know what, Ma'am? Hearing this
back in my head, you are doing
what's right. I'm gonna roll off.

DRE (V.O.)

Stupid child molesters. Can't even
invite kids to your house for
delicious snacks anymore.

Dre drives off. FAST. And we,

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

11 INT. JOHNSON HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT (N2)

11

Dre complains to Bow as he UNPACKS SOME GROCERIES.

DRE

Doritos, Pringles, Takis... what a waste. I'd got all these chips for nothing.

RAINBOW

Dre, you were trolling for boys?!

DRE

I wasn't trolling. I spotted the two best candidates, and made my pitch. Which, by the way, had that lady not been there, would've resulted in two handsome young Black boys at our house. Problem solved.

Just then, Diane crosses in and notices Bow's scrubs.

DIANE

Hmm. Wearing the same thing again.

Bow ignores Diane.

RAINBOW

What we need is a sensible method to find Junior some Black friends that won't result in your prosecution and imprisonment.

(then)

I got it.

Bow RUMMAGES through the nearby drawer, pulls out a BROCHURE, and hands it to Dre.

DRE

(regarding brochure)

The Leimert Social Club? Come on, this is like a bougie club for rich Black kids.

RAINBOW

No, they also have get-togethers,
cultural enrichment, community
outreach --

DRE

Sounds cult-y.

RAINBOW

It's not cult-y, Dre.

Bow holds up the Leimert Social Club BROCHURE. On the cover is a beautiful Black family doing community service.

RAINBOW (CONT'D)

Look at that. It's Black people
planting a tree. How often do you
see that?

DRE

You mean besides our nation's four
hundred years of non-consensual
gardening?

RAINBOW

Dre, it may not be your thing, but
it may be Junior's thing. So why
don't you give it a try?

(then, for Diane's
benefit)

Anyway, I'm going to my cool job
where I save lives. In green
clogs... with toe socks!

She takes her foot out of her clog and wiggles her toes. Bow exits. Dre begins to regard the brochure.

DRE (V.O.)

I'm not one to keep an open mind,
or listen to people, but I was
desperate. So I decided to check
out The Leimert Social Club.

As Dre looks at the BROCHURE, we **ANGLE ON** and **MATCH CUT TO:**

12 **INT. JOHNSON FAMILY HOME - DINING ROOM - NEXT NIGHT (N3)** 12

THE BROCHURE. **PAN UP** to Dre and Pops sitting opposite a slightly stuffy BLACK, MIDDLE-AGED MAN and WOMAN, MR. AND MRS. BOYER.

MR. BOYER

So, we at Leimert Social Club have certain core values of service, leadership and collegiality. Tell us what you're looking to get out of your membership.

DRE

More Black friends for my son.

MR. BOYER

Okay, I'm sure he'll make plenty of friends, but what specific ways would you like him to be enriched?

DRE

Like an overall blackening.

MRS. BOYER

I'm not sure you understand what we do.

DRE

Cotillions, social events, fundraisers, blah blah blah ...

POPS

What we're interested in is the horde of Black children you got.

MRS. BOYER

Well, we don't refer to our children as a 'horde.'

POPS

Fair enough. How about this - what concentration of Black are we talking about?

DRE

Yeah, raw, uncut Biggie Black or low-cal Drake Black?

POPS

Excellent question, son.

Off the look of two people CLEARLY NOT ADMITTING THEM...

13 INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY/OPERATING ROOM - NEXT DAY (D4)

13

Bow and Diane walk down the hallway. Diane has a confused look on her face.

B Story

DRE (V.O.)

So as we came to the mutual agreement that the Leimert Social Club wasn't for us, Bow was attempting a little social engineering of her own.

DIANE

I thought you said that we were taking the day off of school to do fun stuff, like get frozen yogurt?

RAINBOW

We are doing fun stuff. Coming to the hospital's like going to Disneyland, but with Band-Aids. And after I show you some of the cool stuff I do here, I'll take you down to the cafeteria and, because I'm a doctor, we can get free frozen yogurt.

RESET TO:

OPERATING ROOM. Bow and Diane enter as Bow does her best WIDE SMILE to try and sell her work place to Diane, who STARES AT HER BLANKLY.

DIANE

Free or not, hospital yogurt isn't how I saw my day going.

Bow walks over to a HANGING I.V. next to the operating table.

RAINBOW

Oh, look at this, Dee! This is one of my work stations.

(demonstrating)

So, after I put the I.V. into the patient, I monitor their vitals to make sure they stay alive during their procedure. Kind of a big deal.

DIANE

Mom, you know what happened at Dad's job last week? Justin Bieber wrestled Kevin Durant's dog for the rehearsal of a Nike commercial. The rehearsal.

Off Bow's frustrated look, we,

14 INT. STEVENS & LIDO - BATHROOM - DAY (D4)

14

Open on a **WIDE SHOT** of Dre at a urinal. A **CAMERA PUSHES IN** on him as we hear:

DRE (V.O.)
Meanwhile, I still needed to figure
out how to help Junior, so I retreated
to my favorite thinking spot.

CHARLIE (O.C.)
Sup, Dre. Man, executive
washroom's nice. Good thing they
never lock it.

REVEAL CHARLIE IS NOW RIGHT NEXT TO DRE, even though there
are many open urinals. Charlie **NODS** to Dre, Dre gives him a
slow, uncomfortable nod in return.

DRE (V.O.)
Whoa whoa whoa. Let's stop right
here. Does this guy not know
urinal protocol?

15 INT. BATHROOM - FANTASY (FAN D4)

15

We see FIVE EMPTY URINALS.

DRE (V.O.)
You start on the ends...

Dre **POPS** into one end of the urinals, and then **ANOTHER DRE**
POPS INTO the other end of the urinals.

DRE (V.O.)
... Always leaving a buffer.

ANOTHER DRE **POPS** into the **MIDDLE URINAL**.

DRE (V.O.)
See these two right here?

TWO ARROWS point to the **EMPTY URINALS**.

DRE (V.O.)
These are your spacers. They're
just for show. They are never to
be used under any circumstance.

With a **POP**, the unused urinals now **DISAPPEAR**.

DRE (V.O.)
And above all else, never make
direct eye contact. And you never --

16 INT. STEVENS & LIDO - BATHROOM - BACK TO SCENE (D4)

16

We see Charlie GLANCING DOWN at Dre's business.

CHARLIE

I see you representing... holdin'
it di-down.

DRE

Uhh... What's up, Charlie?

CHARLIE

You know, just tryin' to stay two
steps ahead of the man.

(then)

What's up, Dre. You look pensive.

DRE

Probably just my pee face.

CHARLIE

No, I know your pee face. There's
something else going on.

Dre looks at Charlie for a second.

DRE (V.O.)

I don't know if it was because he
knew my pee face or because I was
desperate to change the subject,
but I downloaded him on what was
going on with me and Junior.

Charlie listens as Dre talks under the V.O.

DRE (V.O.)

And believe it or not, Charlie had
a pretty interesting take.

CHARLIE

Your son just needs to understand
"the struggle," man. Take him back
to the hood.

DRE (V.O.)

Charlie may not have known all the
urinal decorum, but he was a'ight.

CHARLIE
Whewww! That third Venti is coming
out hotter than it went in.

17 INT. COMPTON BOYS AND GIRLS CENTER - LATER THAT DAY (D4) 17

Dre and Junior stand at the BASELINE OF A BASKETBALL COURT.
The atmosphere is a BEEHIVE OF AGGRESSION.

DRE
Son, this is the place that made
me. Being here will teach you
everything you need to know about
the struggle.

ANDRE JR.
A kid in the bathroom asked me if I
wanted to buy a tranquilizer gun.

DRE
(proudly)
Ah, the lessons have begun.
(then)
Some of the best lessons you can
learn are right here on the court.
Pick-up game. Definition of
instant camaraderie - five
strangers come together to form one
team. Let's get you on the floor.
Struggle on three:
(then, putting fist in)
One, two, three,

DRE (CONT'D) ANDRE JR.
Struggle! Four!

DRE (V.O.)
Who knew the struggle would be such
a struggle?

Junior looks at the court full of boys who look like they
could literally stick him in their pocket, and is at a loss.

ANDRE JR.
So how do I get in the game?

DRE
You gotta call next.

ANDRE JR.
(calling out, meekly)
Next.

DRE

No, you can't just call 'next,' you have to proclaim it. Let it come up from your gut and out your mouth. No one wants to be on the team with some soft 'next' calling dude.
(then)
Now give it to me one more time.

ANDRE JR.

Next.

DRE

Okay, maybe calling 'next' isn't your thing. It's not for everybody.
(then, calling out loudly)
I GOT NEXT!

Dre looks to a startled Junior and gives him a wink.

18 INT. HOSPITAL - OPERATING ROOM - SAME TIME (D4)

18

Bow and NURSE LARRY show Diane a CABINET.

RAINBOW

And this is our cabinet full of powerful narcotics. There's only one key and I have it.

Bow holds up a TINY KEY she wears around her neck. With one finger, Diane opens the cabinet.

RAINBOW (CONT'D)

Oh god, how long has it been like that?

Larry HOLDS UP A LATEX GLOVE BALLOON.

NURSE LARRY

Look, rubber turkey.

DIANE

I love it, man who has a woman's job.

INTERCOM (V.O.)

Dr. R. Johnson to ICU, stat.

RAINBOW

Just stay here with Nurse Larry and I'll be right back.

B Story

Diane takes the glove from Larry.

DIANE

I have to go to the bathroom.

She doesn't even wait to clear the corner to throw the balloon away. A SCREAMING, BLEEDING MAN is wheeled into the E.R. Intrigued, she follows.

As we begin a **MONTAGE** over PINK'S "GET THE PARTY STARTED," we **INTERCUT** between Diane seeing HORRIBLE HOSPITAL TRAGEDIES and Junior GETTING DESTROYED on the basketball court:

- Diane sees the victim of a COYOTE ATTACK.

- Junior gets the ball FIERCELY RIPPED AWAY from his hands.

- Diane sees METH LAB EXPLOSION VICTIMS. Her EYES GO WIDE.

- Junior gets RIPPED, KNOCKED DOWN and SWATTED.

- Diane peers over Bow's shoulder to see a MAN WITH A HATCHET IN HIS HEAD. Bow has no idea she's watching.

- Junior gets THUNDEROUSLY DUNKED ON and EMBARRASSINGLY HUMPED IN THE FACE by the guy still hanging on the rim. **ANGLE ON** Dre, who feels for his son, but is in glowing admiration of the dunk. **END MONTAGE.**

19 INT. HOSPITAL - E.R. - LATER (D4)

19

Bow turns, pulling off BLOODY GLOVES and sees DIANE STARING AT HER, WIDE-EYED.

RAINBOW

Oh my god, baby, how much did you see?

DIANE

All of it.

20 INT. COMPTON BOYS AND GIRLS CENTER - A LITTLE LATER (D4)

20

After the game, Dre who loved every minute of it, turns to his battered son.

DRE
It was great, right?

ANDRE JR.
Great for who? You threw a guy an
alley-oop... who wasn't on our
team... to dunk on me!

DRE
You're right, son. What was I thinking?
(beat)
Next week we should be on separate teams.

Dre puts his hand up for a HIGH-FIVE but Junior leaves him
hanging and crosses out of the gym. Off Dre's look, we,

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

21 INT. JOHNSON HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT (N4) 21

Bow and Dre, both clearly bothered, are in bed. Bow has her LAPTOP.

DRE
You're yelling at me for letting Junior get tomahawked on? You let Diane see an actual tomahawk in someone's head.

RAINBOW
Oh my god, you're right. I traumatized our daughter.

DRE
Great. Diane's broken and Junior telegraphs every pass.

22 INT. COMPTON BOYS AND GIRLS CENTER - FLASHBACK (FB D4) 22

Mid-game.

ANDRE JR.
Here it comes!

As Junior deliberately passes to Dre, an opponent flashes through frame and steals the ball as soon as it leaves his fingertips.

23 INT. JOHNSON HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - BACK TO SCENE (N4) 23

As they were.

DRE
We're terrible parents.

RAINBOW
And I'm also a terrible doctor. I left the drug cabinet unlocked and blamed it on Nurse Larry.

24 INT. STEVENS & LIDO - KITCHEN - NEXT DAY (D5) 24

Dre enters as Charlie takes SOUP out of the MICROWAVE. He takes a bite.

CHARLIE

Oh my God, heaven on a spoon!
(offering Dre a spoonful)
You've gotta try this.

DRE

Not really a big soup sharer. I'm good.

CHARLIE

No, you're not, and I don't want you to be mad at me for not making you taste this. Open up.

DRE

Hard pass.
(then)
Charlie, I'm gonna need you to pump your brakes a little bit. You're on my bumper kinda tough. First the double dap, and then the urinal, now this soup thing.

CHARLIE

You're right. I'm sorry, man. I'm just trying to fit in. My son and I are new here and we don't know too many people. Especially any other Black folks. You know what I'm saying?

This lands on Dre.

DRE

I do and no worries. Wait, you said you have a son?

CHARLIE

Yeah, about the same age as your boy.

DRE

Oh, wow. We ought to get them together. What's he doing tonight?

CHARLIE

Oh, he's wide open, so I could drop him off, or... I could...

DRE

(hesitant)
Why don't you both come over for dinner?

CHARLIE
Dinner?! That would be great! I
don't want to impose, but what time?

DRE
Seven.

CHARLIE
Great, we'll be there before eight.

25 INT. JOHNSON HOME - KITCHEN - LATER (N5)

25

Bow enters to find Diane doing homework at the counter.

RAINBOW
Oh hey, sweetie, I've been meaning
to talk to you.

B Story

Bow sidles up next to her.

RAINBOW (CONT'D)
I was so excited to bring you to
the hospital, but I'm so sorry you
saw all those terrible things.

DIANE
(dead eyes, far away)
I saw a man with a hatchet in his
head.

RAINBOW
I know, and Mommy's so, so sorry.

DIANE
It was awesome.

RAINBOW
Excuse me?

DIANE
And that guy with coyote bites...
sweet.
(then, growing excited)
And you said sometimes people die,
and it could be the doctor's fault,
but no one can actually say so for
sure, right?

Bow looks at Diane, not sure how to answer.

RAINBOW
Ummm... I guess that's technically
true.

DIANE

I definitely want to be a doctor.
Definitely.

As Diane exits, Bow looks on for a beat, stunned. Then,
after another beat, PUMPS HER FIST, victoriously.

RAINBOW

Yes!

SFX: PRELAP DOORBELL RINGS

26 INT. JOHNSON HOME - FOYER - MOMENTS LATER (N5)

26

Dre, Bow and Junior approach the door.

ANDRE JR.

Dad, do we really have to do this?
I was kind of hoping that my first
blind date would be with a girl.

Dre opens the door, revealing Charlie and his SON.

CHARLIE

Hey, Dre! And you must be Rainbow.
I brought you flowers.

Charlie hands Bow a gift.

RAINBOW

Oh, what a lovely... wrist corsage.

She slips it on, politely.

CHARLIE

This is my son, Eustace. We call
him "Useless."

EUSTACE

You're the only one who calls me
that.

Charlie SWATS Eustace on his head, affectionately.

CHARLIE

That's 'cause I love you. And you
don't do a lot.

Charlie takes a bite of a HALF-EATEN BURGER he's holding.

RAINBOW

Did you eat already?

CHARLIE

What?

(then, noticing)

Nah, it's just burgers, ma'am.

DRE

Junior, why don't you go "kick it"
with your new Black friend.
There's tons of chips left over.

RAINBOW

We're having dinner!

DRE

It's just chips, Bow.

(then)

Come on in. Make yourself
comfortable.

As the boys head upstairs, Bow shows Charlie in.

RAINBOW

So, is there a Mrs. Telphy?

CHARLIE

Actually, we're going through a
pretty nasty divorce.

EUSTACE

(calling back)

You are?!

CHARLIE

(shooing off)

Just go upstairs and play.

DISSOLVE TO:

27 INT. JOHNSON HOME - DINING ROOM - LATER (N5)

27

Bow, Dre, and Charlie sit at the table.

CHARLIE

You know, when your wife cheats on
you, you'd think you'd feel angry,
but I just felt inadequate.
Everything shut down. This stuff
down here hasn't moved for a long
time. Now I know why it's called
"junk." Useless, worthless junk.

ANGLE ON: Dre and Bow, stunned. After a beat, Bow lifts her
wrist corsage and SNIFFS it.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
(upbeat clap, then)
Wow, I think your meatloaf is chasing that burger to the exit. Which bathroom is no one using for the rest of the night?

RAINBOW
(beat)
Whichever one you use.

Charlie gets up and excuses himself, leaving Bow and Dre.

RAINBOW (CONT'D)
Soooo... your friend seems nice.

DRE
Okay, I'll admit, he's not for everybody.

RAINBOW
He's not for anybody! He has no boundaries! He pulled up JPEGs of his rectal polyps.

DRE
Which were benign. Like Charlie. Look, Bow, showing some empathy toward Charlie, it's all part of the struggle.

RAINBOW
(exasperated)
I'm tired of the struggle.

DRE
I feel you. The struggle's exhausting, right?
(then)
Look, Charlie may have a few idiosyncrasies, but if this is what it takes to get Junior a new Black friend, so be it.

Charlie returns, wearing a pair of Dre's Yeezys.

CHARLIE
Dre! Look what I found in your closet! The Yeezys! Feels like you've never even worn them!

DRE
(trance-like)
Please take my shoes off.

CHARLIE
And guess what?!

DRE
(trance-like)
Please take my shoes off.

CHARLIE
No, seriously guess!

DRE
Are you not wearing socks?!

CHARLIE
And... We're the same size!

28 INT. JOHNSON HOME - ANDRE JR.'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER (N5) 28

Dre enters to find the boys have expanded the HOBBIT SHIRE.

DRE
(rapid-fire)
Eustace, it's time to go! Your dad's
leaving! Right now! Immediately!

ANDRE JR.
Hang on, Dad. We were on the verge
of a breakthrough. What were you
gonna say?

EUSTACE
Just we should coat the bridge with
moss to slick it up, that way the
Orcs can't cross into Rivendell.

ANDRE JR.
How did I not think of that?
(bumping fists)
Gimme some.

ANDRE JR. (CONT'D)
Yaas, Gaga, Yaas!

EUSTACE
Yaas, Gaga, Yaas!

Dre takes this moment in.

DRE (V.O.)
And it was at that moment, I
realized that struggle comes in a
lot of different forms.

(MORE)

DRE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But no matter what your fight, you
need your community.

29 EXT. VALLEY GLEN PREP - NEXT DAY (D6)

29

In a mirror of the COLD OPEN, Dre walks with Junior, who's carrying his field hockey equipment. Dre watches him navigate through a sea of kids. In SLO-MO, Junior passes a NERDY ASIAN KID. They both look at each other and give The Nod.

DRE (V.O.)

And you need to let them know, "I see you, bro." And for Junior, nerd is the new Black. Sorry, orange.

30 INT. STEVENS & LIDO - DRE'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY (D7)

30

Dre's at his desk. Charlie pops his head in.

DRE (V.O.)

... And as for me, I was embarking
on a whole new struggle.

CHARLIE

The boys have put a plan
together... I think we're going
camping. Hope you've got a tent,
my wife took mine.

Charlie holds his fist out over Dre's desk, then opens it,
RELEASING TRAIL MIX onto his desk.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Homemade trail mix. Taste it.

He flicks a RAISIN that's stuck on his palm onto the desk.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Taste it. Taste it. Taste it.

DRE

I don't want it.

CHARLIE

You're gonna be mad at me...

Charlie licks the remnants of chocolate off his hand, Dre
watches with disgust, and we,

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

TAG

FADE IN:

31 EXT. PARK BENCH - LATER (D7)

31

Dre, Pops and Junior are sitting on a bench, watching WOMEN go by.

DRE

There you go. Scrunch, son, scrunch. Just do what comes natural.

POPS

Okay, loosen up a little bit.
(off Junior)
You're not scared.

DRE

And you don't want to scare it. Okay, here comes another one. Lock and load.

A HOT GIRL walks by, and they all SCRUNCH. Pops and Dre look to Junior.

POPS

Ooh, that was nice form.

DRE

He's a natural.

ANDRE JR.

Why are we doing this?

DRE

Son, this is setting you up for a whole different type of struggle.

Off Junior's confused face, **JAY Z'S "HARD KNOCK LIFE"** takes us home, as we,

FADE TO **BLACK-ISH.**

END OF SHOW