

PERHAPS THE WORLD ENDS HERE

Written by

Michael Adedeji

Based on, If Any

"Perhaps the World Ends Here," from *The Woman Who Fell From the Sky* By Joy Harjo

wrco.777@gmail.com
(404) 450-0756

FADE IN:

INT. AUNT LUCRESHIA'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - DAY

It's Thanksgiving 1976 in Queens, New York.

Three little BABES sit on a richly decorated sofa. Behind a camera, prepped by an elder of the family who looks like Billy Dee Williams, in fashion and stature.

Sitting on the left, is young QUINCY (M), in the middle is young SIDRA (F), and on the far right is COURTNEY (M). Respectively they all make dreadful looks at the camera.

AUNT LUCRESHIA (O.S.)
Fix them faces or I swear to-

EBREAUX (O.S.)
Get it together, now.

IN FRAME we see the three children making delightful faces at the camera.

FLASH.

YOUNG QUINCY
Why you smiling like that?

POW. Courtney starts crying. Their father, EBREAUX VAUGHN, steps in and tugs at his belt in front of Quincy.

EBREAUX
Film is expensive, boy. Hank, take another one for us please.
(to Courtney)
Be a man, boy.

AUNT LUCRESHIA
Now Ebreaux, he's just a baby.

EBREAUX
Hank!

HANK (O.S.)
Got it, dammit.

The children look into the camera and smile. Courtney's eyes are puffy from crying after the hit.

FLASH!

The three children have different faces, Sidra is making a silly face. Quincy has a serious face. Courtney blinks.

INT. COURTNEY VAUGHN'S RESIDENCE. SHELF - DAY (PRESENT)

Present Day. We see the photo that was taken sitting on the top of a the shelf, aged, a bit rough around the edges.

INT. COURTNEY VAUGHN'S RESIDENCE. LIVING ROOM - SAME

A now older COURTNEY (53) is setting the table. With his husband BRENNAN (49) in the kitchen, bringing out the entrees.

COURTNEY

Who is this special guest that we are setting up Thanksgiving Lunch for?

Brenan sets down the food.

BRENNAN

Nice try. I'm not saying anything until he gets here.

COURTNEY

He? A clue?

BRENNAN

Not even in the slightest.

Courtney comes from behind and hugs his husband.

COURTNEY

Tell me and I'll let go.

BRENNAN

Let me go. I got more food to place down.

COURTNEY

"I'll never let go, Jack."

DING-DONG!

BRENNAN

Oh, they're here.

COURTNEY

Back to neutral pronouns, is it more than one guest?

BRENNAN

I'll answer.

COURTNEY

No- I'll answer.

Brenan steps back, a dreary look overcomes him.

Courtney turns back around and smirks.

COURTNEY (CONT'D)

Let me see who you've invited into
our house.

Courtney opens the door and the smirk fades fast.

Reveal, a much older, Quincy (55) standing at the door.

Courtney turns around to Brenan and screams.

EXT. JFK INTERNATIONAL - DAY

We see a woman coming through the doors, dressed in a velvet long coat, a short bob haircut, and sunglasses. It's giving very much Johnny Depp's Willy Wonka.

It's an older SIDRA (50), walking with purse in one arm and her robo-luggage following her.

A LOUD BOOM is heard as she steps outside.

SIDRA

What the holy hell- OKAY GOOGLE.
OKAY GOOGLE.

People are running and screaming around her.

SIDRA (CONT'D)

OKAY, GOGGLE CALL MICHELLE.

GOOGLE

I'm sorry I don't quite understand,
please talk quietly.

SIDRA

Bitch. Okay, Google call Michelle.

A CHIVALROUS MAN runs to Sidra's unwanted aid.

CHIVALROUS MAN

Miss, get down!

Sidra pushes him off.

SIDRA

Unhand me!

CHIVALROUS MAN

Did you really say "unhand me,"
like it's 1884?

He shrugs her off and runs in a another direction.

Taxis and cars pass through. A little red rental Toyota comes swooping in next to Sidra by the curb.

BEEP-BEEP!

SIDRA

Oh, oh, my sweet, dearest Michelle.
Please.

The window rolls down.

MICHELLE

Hey!

SIDRA

Trunk please. We need to get out of
here. There are terrorists.

POP! The trunk opens.

Sidra puts the suitcase in the trunk and slams it.

INT. TOYOTA RENTAL. JFK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - SAME

The passenger door opens.

MICHELLE

Watch it now. It's a rental.

Sidra climbs into the car.

SIDRA

Push it!

MICHELLE

Mom, there are no terrorists. There
was a car backfiring underneath the
bridge. I saw it on my way up.

SIDRA

It was so loud!

MICHELLE

Yeah, backfiring from an old car
will do that.

Sidra gets a text message. She pulls out her phone and it's a message from a "Dr. Lathan." She closes it immediately.

Sidra fans her face. She takes off her sunglasses and looks into her daughter's eyes.

SIDRA
(exhales)
So, how are you?

INT. COURTNEY VAUGHN'S RESIDENCE. TABLE - CONTINUOUS

Quincy sits across from Courtney. Brennan sits next to Courtney and awkwardly they eat in silence.

QUINCY
It's good.

Courtney eats.

Brenan gives Courtney a quick glance.

BRENNAN
Thank you.

QUINCY
Thank you for inviting me.

BRENNAN
I've heard a lot about you. I
thought it was finally time.

Quincy looks at Courtney.

QUINCY
Nothing good, I bet.

BRENNAN
Well...

COURTNEY
Honey, no.

They continue to eat.

QUINCY
Are you coming to Aunt Lucreshia's?

Brenan looks at Courtney

COURTNEY
No.

QUINCY

Is it about the gay thing? We're past that now.

COURTNEY

Are we?

Beat.

BRENAN

Okay, now, come on-

COURTNEY

Stay out of it.

Not now.

QUINCY

Brenan puts his hands up, like don't shoot.

COURTNEY (CONT'D)

I haven't heard from you until now. Talking about, "are you coming to Aunt Lucreshia's?" Love her, but fuck you!

QUINCY

Well, because your-

He looks at Brennan.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Your husb- HE invited me.

COURTNEY

Mhmm, you can't even say HUSBAND. Brennan. Why did you invite?

Brenan looks around.

BRENAN

Looks like I'm back in.

(pause)

Because I want you to be surrounded by family.

Quincy gestures to Brennan.

Brenan gets up and tosses his napkin into the chair. He takes a swig of wine.

BRENAN (CONT'D)

Obviously, there is a lot for you two to talk about. I'll excuse myself to the wine cellar.

Brenan takes his leave to the basement.

Both Quincy and Courtney stare at one another.

INT. TOYOTA RENTAL. HIGHWAY - DAY - SAME

Michelle drives as Sidra looks out the window, staring at herself in the right-side mirror.

SIDRA

New York is so god awful and filthy.

MICHELLE

Just New York City, mom.

SIDRA

God, Cuomo touches one woman, legalizes weed, and the Knicks win and this place is still floating on garbage.

MICHELLE

It wasn't just one woman.

SIDRA

And that COVID got a new variant. Just what the largest metropolitan area in the country needs.

MICHELLE

COVID is here to stay, Mom.

SIDRA

Whatever. How is school?

MICHELLE

NYU is great. I'm excelling. Just wished you call more.

Beat.

SIDRA

I've been busy. Really busy.

MICHELLE

You've always been busy.

SIDRA

Who's all coming to Aunt Lucreshia's?

MICHELLE

You and I are sharing a room.
Whoopie. Aunt Mirabelle and her
family made it into town.

SIDRA

Nice, good for her. She's been
doing well.

MICHELLE

Yup. Uncle Chavez is here. Single
and ready to hit on his nieces
after a few Jose Cuervos. Oh, and
Uncle Davis is coming. The rest
will file in soon.

SIDRA

Is Davis's son, Geno, coming?

MICHELLE

Yes, and apparently Uncle Davis
invited his baby mama. Geno is
bringing his new girlfriend and
they don't know about each other's
invitation.

SIDRA

How did he orchestrate that?

MICHELLE

Don't know, but it deserves all the
awards.

SIDRA

All the accolades.

They share a warm laugh.

SIDRA (CONT'D)

That is so messy. Let me check my
phone storage. I have to record
that.

MICHELLE

Now that is messy.

INT. COURTNEY VAUGHN'S RESIDENCE. WINE CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

Brenan packs a crate of wine. He wraps each one with brown
and orange ribbons.

INT. COURTNEY VAUGHN'S RESIDENCE. TABLE

Quincy is chowing down hard on the Mac and Cheese.

COURTNEY
How's the family?

QUINCY
Now you want to talk?

Quincy obnoxiously eats the Mac and Cheese.

COURTNEY
I know that shit is good, but you
not gonna bother me with all that
chewing loud- ew, ew, ew.

Quincy smirks.

QUINCY
Tell me, how have you been? You
look old.

COURTNEY
You look old. I see you took too
much off the top.

He gestures to his bald head.

QUINCY
Ha-ha, very funny.

COURTNEY
I can't say the last ten years
hasn't been hard.

QUINCY
Spending the holidays unseasoned.

They share a light laugh.

A moment of silence.

QUINCY (CONT'D)
Can you believe Aunt Lucreshia
moved to the family home in Albany?

COURTNEY
She's getting old, Q, she can live
there with all the other elders and
they can take care of one another.

QUINCY
They got it figured out.

COURTNEY

I wish we did. How about Zola and the kids?

QUINCY

In Chicago with her family. We...finalized the divorce.

Courtney sits up.

COURTNEY

I'm sorry. I didn't know.

QUINCY

How could you?

Beat.

COURTNEY

Do you want to talk about it?

QUINCY

No.

COURTNEY

Custody?

QUINCY

She got full custody. I allowed it. I get them periodically.

COURTNEY

Ah. Holidays?

QUINCY

Sometimes. We'll work it out.

COURTNEY

You know, I didn't spend all the holidays unseasoned. I did teach them how to season their food. Brennan and I check every time. They were scared but-

Quincy makes a strange face.

COURTNEY (CONT'D)

Why are you making that face?

QUINCY

What face?

COURTNEY

You seem bothered. Oh wait, because I'm gay? A fag? A pillow biter?

QUINCY

You said it, not me. Pot calling the kettle black.

COURTNEY

You don't understand. I've been harder on myself than you or the family could ever have been. I wake up everyday in tears telling myself I'm not wrong. I'm not corrupted. Brennan has to keep me from beating myself up.

QUINCY

Yeah, "could ever have been." Is that so? I think the hard part is you left. You never even gave us a chance. The family does miss you.

COURTNEY

Why didn't you try to reach out?

QUINCY

(painfully)
You ran away!

Quincy stands.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Life became complicated. I moved. I figured I wasn't going to let your problem consume me. So, I got over it. I wanted to live my life.

COURTNEY

What about living my life? I stressed everyday about being a black gay man from Queen. That followed me all the way here in Syracuse. I looked over my shoulder and wondered with Brennan, is this our last days? Until 2015 then I took a deep breath, but wait, I'm still black, so I inhaled and held.

QUINCY

Negro. You ran. You left. We never got to talk about it. You just felt it was okay to leave and not say a word.

(MORE)

QUINCY (CONT'D)

You didn't grow up around no gay shit. Like that was baffling to us. I mean you hung around Rickey a lot. A lot, a lot. So, it was suspect.

COURTNEY

Rickey and I were having a thing without calling it a thing. I wasn't risking anything back then under Ebreaux.

QUINCY

And then you never spoke to him again. Come to think of it, after you turned 18, you were in and out of out lives.

COURTNEY

Because Ebreaux was gonna kill me. You see he loved you. He took what love he could've given me and split it up between you and Sidra. I got the boot. Or I gave it to myself before he got a chance. He was tough.

QUINCY

You act like he wanted you dead.

COURTNEY

He would have been happier. You don't know what he let me go through.

Quincy places balled fists on the table.

QUINCY

What?

COURTNEY

Most of the family could tell, I was different. Not Uncle Chavez different, but different. But you and Sidra? No. Sidra actually talks to me. She apologized over the time passed, but you? You took Dad's side up until, even after his passing.

QUINCY

What could that man have done to you?

COURTNEY

He got his friend Tony...to touch me. I fought him off and left to Aunt Lucreshia's for a month. You blamed me for leaving then too.

QUINCY

You a liar.

COURTNEY

You're telling me my trauma is a lie?

INT. COURTNEY VAUGHN'S RESIDENCE. WINE CELLAR - DAY

Brenan finishes packing up the wine. He looks at the shelf with books and pictures of various wines and albums.

He moves his ladder over to that shelf.

INT. COURTNEY VAUGHN'S RESIDENCE. SHELF

Brenan climbs up and inspects the dusty shelf. He finds a picture a bit worn lying there still, as if lost in time. It's the same picture as earlier of the young siblings sitting on the couch.

BRENAN

Would you look at that.

INT. COURTNEY VAUGHN'S RESIDENCE. TABLE - DAY

The sky begins to turn. The day is passing like the moments and exchanges at the table where food uneaten sits.

The two brothers sit, heated. Quincy on the verge of tears. Courtney already with the waterworks.

QUINCY

(quietly)

My baby brother...touched?

(to Quincy)

Why didn't you tell me? Gay or not you matter to me. I could have done something?

Courtney wipes his face. He removes himself from the table.

INT. TOYOTA RENTAL. HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

Michelle and Sidra listen to some music on the radio.

Sidra does a bopping motion like the one's mother's do.
Michelle bobs her head and mouths the words.

It's "*To The Floor*" by **Mariah Carey**, or something similar.

Sidra turns the radio.

SIDRA

What are you doing after school?

MICHELLE

Moving to California.

SIDRA

What? Why so far?

MICHELLE

Didn't you just go to Arizona?

SIDRA

That's business.

MICHELLE

Then same. It's my business.

SIDRA

Oop.

Pause.

MICHELLE

Because that's where I'll be starting my next chapter. I got some friends with an extra room. We'll be shooting and working on our dreams.

SIDRA

Wow, okay. I wanted to spend some time with you before you go. You think we can do that?

Michelle turns and pulls into the semi-packed driveway of Aunt Lucreshia's home.

EXT. FAMILY HOME - AFTERNOON

The land is large with a huge tree in front. The lights can be seen in the house, on with movement about. It's a homey home. Cozy.

The grass's color is green and orange like the season change. Multiple cars are lined up on the driveway. It's an old home, with some renovations noticeably added.

INT. TOYOTA RENTAL. DRIVEWAY - AFTERNOON

Michelle turns the car off. She sits back as if she's about to cry.

MICHELLE

You know Mom, I have to say it. It feels funny that you want to spend time with me all of a sudden.

Sidra clutches her purse.

SIDRA

Baby, I have to tell you something. I've been struggling with an illness...for a large part of your life. I have Lupus.

MICHELLE

I know.

Sidra's shocked.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

I've been waiting for you to tell me. But that didn't mean you hiding away from me and never spending time with me. I wanted to be there for you so badly.

SIDRA

When did you know? How?

MICHELLE

After senior year of college. Right before I started my MFA. I saw a document tucked away on the table with results from your physical. You were on the phone with Aunt Carol. I stopped into the house to drop off my diploma as soon as I got it in the mail.

(MORE)

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

I couldn't help but snoop. I left the diploma and left shortly.

SIDRA

That's how that ended up there. I knew you came in, but never knew why you left.

(exhales)

Baby. I wanted to tell you. I did. But I know my daughter. She cares about the world. And so your dumbass would care so hard, you'd come take care of me.

MICHELLE

(chuckles)

At least you should've let this dumbass make that choice for herself. I don't wanna lose you. You know the complications of Lupus? You could die all alone in stinking New Jersey.

Sidra gathers herself.

SIDRA

(laughs)

Okay, first of all- actually I got nothing to say. That would suck.

They laugh.

MICHELLE

Mom, I'm not a little girl. I don't need to lose another parent.

SIDRA

I know baby.

She takes a good look at her. She cradles her chin

SIDRA (CONT'D)

I am sorry for not telling you.

She kisses Michelle on the forehead, the right cheek, and the left cheek.

MICHELLE

The hardest part of this is finishing this motherfucking MFA just to hurry up and get out of here.

SIDRA

You deserve to leave. You stayed at NYU for me, didn't you?

MICHELLE

Just in case I had to get to Jersey fast. Yes. Even if I had to run.

SIDRA

You so wanted to go to USC.

MICHELLE

Yeah, but without reconciling with my mother? That's a blow. Our family needs to communicate better.

SIDRA

Maybe today will be the start. Girl, let's get out of this car. I'm ready to eat.

EXT. FAMILY HOME. DRIVEWAY - AFTERNOON

Michelle steps out and stretches. The trunk pops open.

MICHELLE

They're not even finished yet.

SIDRA

I'm still gonna eat something.

They laugh.

INT. COURTNEY VAUGHN'S RESIDENCE. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Brenan walks up the stairs carefully with the crate of wine. He sees Quincy at the table, wiping his tears.

BRENAN

He told you, didn't he?

QUINCY

Yeah.

BRENAN

It needed to be done. He needs that closure.

QUINCY

You knew?

BRENAN

When you love someone, you confide in them.

QUINCY

I got the worst brother of the decade award. Huh?

BRENAN

I don't know Donald Trump got you beat.

QUINCY

Haha. You are funny.

BRENAN

Get to know me. You'll see why your brother loves me.

QUINCY

I don't have a problem with gays.

BRENAN

Okay...?

QUINCY

I mean, I work with some of them.

Brenan places the crate down on a nearby table.

He steps toward Quincy.

BRENAN

Then just see that two people regardless of who they are can fall in love and be in love. Living this thing called a human experience.

QUINCY

I just have a problem with you bein white.

BRENAN

And I oop-

QUINCY

Just kidding.

BRENAN

Girl, you almost got me. No, but are you serious?

QUINCY
I'm not your "girl." But, I'm just
joking with you.

They laugh.

Courtney walks in on the two laughing and cutting up.

Quincy and Brennan notice his entrance.

QUINCY (CONT'D)
Come on out.

Brennan kisses an approaching Courtney.

COURTNEY
What are we talking about?

BRENNAN
I think we're beginning the healing
process.

QUINCY
Court.

COURTNEY
Quincy.

They embrace one another.

QUINCY
Love you, man.

COURTNEY
I love you, too.

They cry hard. They hold each other and let out whatever it
was that was hurting them.

Quincy's phone rings. It's Quincy Jones' "Soul Bossa Nova."

It's AUNT MIRABELLE.

QUINCY
Oh shit. We need to head out.

COURTNEY
We?

BRENNAN
Got the wine all packed.

QUINCY
My man.

COURTNEY

Uh, what is happening?

QUINCY

You have to come to this
Thanksgiving. You have to.

COURTNEY

Brenan?

BRENAN

I've been wanting to meet your
family. Let's make this year big.

QUINCY

Whoa, you can't come, B.

COURTNEY

Why not?

QUINCY

Because you're not welcome. They
can get with Court being black and
gay, but a white husband. Come C.
Let's try again next year or
something. Baby steps.

Courtney steps in front of Brennan.

COURTNEY

If he not going, then I'm not.

Brenan nods.

BRENAN

Look, just give them the wine as a
gift.

Quincy grabs the wine and puts it on the table.

Quincy starts laughing. Brennan is confused.

QUINCY

I got ya. Come on C, come on B.
Let's go.

They laugh.

Courtney hits Quincy.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

I remember when you used to hit
harder than that.

They pack and head out the door with wine in hand.

INT. FAMILY HOME. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Michelle and Sidra open the door with luggage in hand. Everyone present turns and greets them.

A much older, AUNT LUCRESHIA and OTHER ELDERS come to give their welcomes. She walks with a labored sway and dressed like she's tearing up the kitchen.

AUNT LUCRESHIA
Oh, my babies! Cece and Michelle!

SIDRA
Hey Auntie Lu! I've missed you.

AUNT LUCRESHIA
And I, you. Welcome home, baby.

MICHELLE
Hey Aunt Lucreshia.

AUNT LUCRESHIA
Hey baby, go put your mother's stuff upstairs and then you two come help me in the kitchen.

INT. FAMILY HOME. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Michelle enters the kitchen while Aunt Lucreshia and the other mother's prepare the food.

There's AUNT CAROL who is on tray duty. She is the voice of reason to Aunt Lucreshia's leading and bold nature. She is working on the Mac & Cheese, Stuffing, and Candied Yams.

There's AUNT MIRABELLE, the older of the two aunties, she is quiet, but judgmental when you get a chance. She's filling Deviled Eggs and made the pastries.

Over in the large dining room is COUSIN BRYANNA is at the table setting up the arrangements. COUSIN WENDY sets up the children's table. Other sisters and cousins are cleaning and arranging dishes that have been made ahead of time.

Michelle reaches to grab a roll and her hand is slapped away by Aunt Lucreshia.

AUNT LUCRESHIA
You don't eat until the food is ready.

Aunt Lucreshia throws away a small tray of Mac & Cheese with raisins in it.

Michelle takes note.

MICHELLE

That's bullshit. When is the food ready?

AUNT CAROL

Language lil girl.

AUNT MIRABELLE

It will be ready by 6. Maybe 7. Maybe even 8.

She still rounds of times as we move to Aunt Lucreshia pointing the finger at Michelle.

Sidra sits on the barstools at the counter, stirring her tea.

Michelle pulls out her phone and steps away.

SIDRA

I'm a go make my rounds.

AUNT MIRABELLE

Go do that. You're useless to us anyway.

AUNT CAROL

Bitch.

Aunt Mirabelle scoffs.

AUNT MIRABELLE

I'm just sayin'.

INT. FAMILY HOME. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

UNCLE CHAVEZ sits on the sofa scrolling through the TV channels. UNCLE HOLLIS, Aunt Mirabelle's husband sits down, mouth open, snoring loud and asleep next to him.

Sidra takes a seat across from Chavez.

UNCLE CHAVEZ

Hey, Sidra, how are you?

SIDRA

I'm doing good Uncle C, how about yourself?

UNCLE CHAVEZ

Can't complain. Except about this damn Biden administration. You know if Trump had more time, he actually might have done something about this unemployment issue.

SIDRA

Oh dear...

UNCLE CHAVEZ

No, I'm serious. Biden stopping the unemployment really messed up this idea I had. I was gonna invest my money into them NFTs. You heard about them?

SIDRA

Can't say I have...or care.

UNCLE CHAVEZ

NFTs are Non-fungible tokens and-

We pull away to see the house lively and busy. Music is bumping in the kitchen.

Children run with toys in hand.

Some of the men play cards in a tucked away room with an assortment of chairs and beers.

Sidra tries to find a way out of this situation as Uncle Chavez just rattles on about anything and everything.

UNCLE CHAVEZ (CONT'D)

- you know what's even worse. Biden is just looking for money. They are gonna start taxing NFTs and the black and brown man didn't even have a chance to get off on 100% equity yet.

SIDRA

You don't say?

Aunt Lucreshia sways into the living room.

AUNT LUCRESHIA

Sidra, you're needed.

SIDRA

Would you look at that Uncle C. I got to go.

UNCLE CHAVEZ
You belong in the kitchen.

SIDRA
What?

AUNT LUCRESHIA
Come on.

Michelle intercepts her mom.

SIDRA
What's up baby.

Michelle flashes the Uber Eats app in her face.

MICHELLE
We eating something.

SIDRA
Damn right. Get me a Double Quarter
Pounder with a large Fry and a
large Sprite.

MICHELLE
Got it.

They giggle and part ways.

SIDRA (O.C.)
I may not help, but I'm good for
conversation...just not with
Chavez.

Michelle turns around and is met with COUSIN GENO and his
baby mama.

GENO
You got that stuff?

MICHELLE
Boy, be specific.

GENO
You know what I mean.

MICHELLE
No, I don't.

She knows.

Geno makes a puffing gesture.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
You gonna have to pay me.

GENO
I got you.

MICHELLE
Bet.

HAYZHA
Ahem.

Michelle gives her a look up and down.

GENO
Oh, this is Hayzha.

HAYZHA
Hi, nice to meet you.

MICHELLE
Nice to meet you-

She looks down again and sees a big belly.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
- both. When are you due?

HAYZHA
In 3 months.

She looks well over 6.

MICHELLE
Damn.

Pause.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
God is good!

They praise with her.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Geno.

GENO
Yeah cuz?

MICHELLE
Walk with me.

GENO
Aight, baby come on.

MICHELLE

Actually Hayzha, you relax. She can come on the next walk.

HAYZHA

It's fine babe. I'll go sit and talk with your family.

MICHELLE

Avoid Uncle Chavez.

GENO

Not Uncle Chavez.

Geno and Michelle grab their coats.

EXT. FAMILY HOME. DRIVEWAY - AFTERNOON

Michelle and Geno walk a few feet away from the house. She slaps him on the back of his head.

GENO

Ow, what the fuck?

MICHELLE

Uh, I should be saying that. What the fuck? How is Denise?

GENO

How the fuck would I know. I don't fuck with her anymore. We stopped talking like 7 months ago.

MICHELLE

So, you met her and got her pregnant?

GENO

She the one.

MICHELLE

You said the same about Denise.

GENO

I was young then.

MICHELLE

Nigga, you're 29.

GENO

What about her?

MICHELLE

I liked Denise.

Lies.

GENO
I'm not tripping and you shouldn't
either.

Michelle checks the phone for her food order. It's on the
way.

GENO (CONT'D)
Hey, let's spark.

MICHELLE
Aight.

INT. FAMILY HOME. KITCHEN

The music is bumping. Each woman is in their own groove.
Sidra bops at the counter. Aunt Carol comes her way.

AUNT CAROL
Hey, baby!

SIDRA
Hey, Aunt Carol!

AUNT CAROL
How was Phoenix?

SIDRA
I loved it. But too much sun is bad
for me.

AUNT CAROL
And yet you were there on business.
You can't play like that baby. They
go the Zoomin now. It's better than
Skypes.

SIDRA
I wish I could move out there. You
mean Zoom?

AUNT CAROL
Why move?

SIDRA
Michelle is moving to L.A.

AUNT CAROL
Good for her.

SIDRA
I just wanna be close to her. Try
to make up for lost time.

AUNT CAROL

Nonsense. There is no lost time.
There is only now and then. So much
to gain, sugar.

SIDRA

Right.

AUNT CAROL

And she knows how to fly. She will
come. Just enjoy time now. This is
the first steps in healing.

OFF Sidra stirring her tea. She nods to Aunt Carol.

EXT. INTERSTATE 90 - EVENING

The sides of the road are covered in snow. It's quiet in
nature, but machines rev up and down the highway.

INT. MERCEDES GLE-CLASS (2019). HIGHWAY - EVENING

It's quiet in the car. The seats are heated and Brennan,
Courtney, and Quincy ride together.

COURTNEY

So, the kids are with Zola?

QUINCY

Yeah. They will be with me for
Christmas.

COURTNEY

I'm so sorry. I should have reached
out. That must have been hard.

QUINCY

It's fine. I don't need pity nor
condolences. We ended amicably.

COURTNEY

Well, I can't wait to see the kids
for Christmas.

QUINCY

Come to Chicago. We're doing it
there at a Hotel and then coming to
Aunt Lucreshia's after.

COURTNEY

Ah, Destination Christmas?

QUINCY
Changing it up.

BRENAN
That's nice.

QUINCY
You can come too.

BRENAN
Really?

QUINCY
Yes...

COURTNEY
That's very forward of you, Q.

QUINCY
I'm trying. My kids didn't grow up like us. I can't hide that ga- that reality from them.

Court makes a face.

COURTNEY
They are part of the most diverse and liberal generation.

QUINCY
How long until Aunt Lucreshia's?

COURTNEY
About 20 minutes now.

QUINCY
Damn.

BRENAN
What?

QUINCY
They still gonna be cooking when we get there.

BRENAN
What?

QUINCY
You did him dirty by not bringing him around the family Court.

BRENAN

My family has eaten by now and has had their dessert by now.

COURTNEY

Well, I'm sorry if I didn't want to subject him to passive aggressive homophobic comments all night and all the time.

BRENAN

But baby, you should have let me handle that. I'm a big boy.

Quincy gags.

BRENAN (CONT'D)

(to Quincy)

I knew you would.

Brenan peers into the rearview mirror.

COURTNEY

I should have been open about my queerness, but today that changes.

QUINCY

Yeah, own your shit. You got it now.

COURTNEY

God, what was I thinking?

BRENAN

You were afraid. I know you weren't afraid of me being around them, you were afraid for me. Your father's idea of you bled onto what they could think. Groupthink. So, you played it safe. But where does playing it safe take us?

COURTNEY

Danger is gonna follow no matter what.

Quincy takes a good look at them both.

QUINCY

Y'all got something here. Maybe I could have learned something about your love.

Brenan smiles.

BRENAN

The straights have a lot to learn.

QUINCY

Now hold up partner.

COURTNEY

Uh, let's just enjoy this moment.
Lord know what we are to face at
Aunt Lu's.

They each look ahead.

QUINCY

Almost a 3 hour car ride. Why back
in Albany? She should have moved to
Long Island. Or stayed in Queens

COURTNEY

Why Long Island? That even further.
And it's terrible.

QUINCY

I'm just mouthing off.
Gentrification is a bitch. Besides,
what the hell is even Albany like
it's barely got black people and
it's the unjustified capital of the
state. Like Manhattan would be a
better capital.

COURTNEY

Too much going on. Would be a
disaster.

BRENAN

We're here?

Brenan pulls into the driveway. Where Michell and Geno stand
smoking.

QUINCY

Thanks, White Benson.

BRENAN

(to Courtney)

Is that a nickname?

COURTNEY

Uh...

QUINCY

YES!

EXT. FAMILY HOME. DRIVEWAY - EVENING

Michelle and Geno turn to the source of headlights hitting them from behind.

MICHELLE
Who is that?

Geno passes her the roach.

GENO
No idea. Going inside.

Michelle sees the broken up roach.

MICHELLE
Oh, fuck you.

The car turns off. All passengers depart the vehicle.
Another set of headlights pull up behind the Mercedes.
Michelle gets a notification: YOUR FOOD HAS ARRIVED.

BRENAN
Hello!

MICHELLE
Uh...

QUINCY
Michelle?

COURTNEY
Sidra's Michelle?

MICHELLE
Uncle Quincy? Uncle Courtney?

COURTNEY
Girl, I haven't seen you in so long.

Michelle goes to hug Courtney. Quincy grabs her too.

Brenan grabs the wine.

HONK-HONK.

UBER EATS DELIVERY GUY
Order for Michelle?

QUINCY
What you get?

MICHELLE
(sniffles)
McDonald's.

QUINCY
(to Courtney)
See we should have ordered food.

BRENAN
Or packed some.

INT. FAMILY HOME. LIVING ROOM

Michelle opens the door. The whole room turns their heads.

UNCLE CHAVEZ
You're letting out the heat!

Quincy walks in after her.

ALL
Q/Quincy/Boss Man/ Q-Man.

Quincy takes off his hat.

AUNT LUCRESHIA (O.S.)
Is that my Quincy! Baby-

Courtney steps in after.

Sidra and all the women of the kitchen step into the living room.

SIDRA
Oh my, Courtney!

AUNT LUCRESHIA
My baby!

Aunt Lucreshia pushes Sidra out of the way and hugs Courtney. She breaks into tears.

Brenan comes in and everyone goes silent from their murmurs and cheers.

Uncle Hollis wakes up.

UNCLE HOLLIS
Who dat white man?

Aunt Lucreshia walks up to Brenan and cradles his face.

The room goes even more silent.

AUNT LUCRESHIA
Boy, at least he's a handsome white
man. Go 'head baby.

Courtney goes into hug Aunt Lucreshia again.

COURTNEY
I love you.

AUNT LUCRESHIA
And I, you.

BRENAN
I brought wine!

AUNT LUCRESHIA
Ooh, and he has flavor.

Aunt Lucreshia pulls Brennan into the kitchen. The commotion settles.

Uncle Chavez makes a face.

On the other chair, next to Uncle Hollis, is UNCLE EBREAUX, who is named after his Great Uncle, hangs up the phone. He clasps his hands together and laughs an evil laugh.

UNCLE CHAVEZ
What's up with you?

UNCLE EBREAUX
I'm up to no good.

UNCLE HOLLIS
This family needs to do better.

UNCLE EBREAUX
Says who?

UNCLE HOLLIS
Outsider looking in.

Uncle Ebreaux walks to the front door and peeps outside.

He opens the door and walks outside.

UNCLE CHAVEZ
The heat!

Uncle Ebreaux enters with a very pregnant woman.

Michelle comes from down the stairs into the living room. With the McDonald's in hand. Her eyes widen.

Hayzha on the couch with Geno turn and look as if they've seen a ghost.

EBREAUX
Come on in, baby.

Geno flails.

GENO
Pops, what the hell is this?

Everybody comes around, once again for the commotion.

HAYZHA
Uh, no sir, is that your ex?

UNCLE EBREAUX
She needed a place for dinner. I invited her.

GENO
You mad wrong for this. On some straight goofy shit.

Ebreaux laughs.

UNCLE EBREAUX
Sit down sweet baby.

Denise puts her bag down. She takes off her coat and now everyone can really see the pregnant woman.

HAYZHA
She's pregnant too?

AUNT MIRABELLE
Some boys can't keep nothing in their pants.

AUNT LUCRESHIA
Or nothing sacred.

Hayzha gets up. Actually, she struggles to get up, because she herself is pregnant.

HAYZHA
I'm about to go off.

Denise says nothing and starts taking off her earrings.

DENISE
Try me. I've been doing my calisthenics.

MICHELLE

How about I take you upstairs
Denise?

DENISE

I'm not good with stairs.

GENO

You live in on the 3rd floor!

Aunt Lucreshia steps in between.

AUNT LUCRESHIA

Not in my motherfucking house. We
are going to be cordial. We were
gathered here today by the grace of
God.

(to Ebreaux)

And servants of evil...but
nonetheless, we will engage in
fellowship.

Uncle Chavez steps in.

UNCLE CHAVEZ

Is this who we are?

(to Courtney)

Faggots?

(to Geno)

Baby Mama bullshit?

AUNT LUCRESHIA

Sit your 5 dollar ass down before I
make change.

MICHELLE

He not even worth that.

AUNT LUCRESHIA

That's right. Sitting up her
unhappy and single. Go on, get.

Chavez takes his seat.

Courtney and Sidra giggle.

COURTNEY

Got him all the way together.

SIDRA

That's right.

Michelle takes her mother's order over to her. Sidra grabs it
and turns around.

MICHELLE

The drinks are upstairs.

SIDRA

Go grab them.

QUINCY

Sis, let me have a fry.

Sidra hushes him.

Aunt Lucreshia finishes talking to the baby mamas.

AUNT LUCRESHIA

Michelle, I could smell the reefer
and Mickey D's the moment you
walked in.

Michelle tiptoes away. The family laughs.

INT. FAMILY HOME. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Uncle Ebreaux sits next to Denise, a steaming Geno and on the
other side of him a glaring Hayzha.

DENISE

I wish you would.

HAYZHA

Bitch.

INT. FAMILY HOME. KITCHEN - SAME

The matriarchs are putting the finishing touches together on
the meals.

Aunt Lucreshia puts a dollop of whipped cream on her
signature Sweet Potato Pie.

INT. FAMILY HOME. DINING ROOM - SAME

The cousins, both male and female, come in and place the side
dishes down and finish setting the table.

INT. FAMILY HOME. DINETTE - SAME

The men are finishing up their round of Black Jack. Uncle
Hollis pulls in the cash earnings. The others give looks of
defeat and fold.

INT. FAMILY HOME. BACK PORCH - SAME

The heater in the back is working overtime. Michelle, Sidra, Courtney, Brennan, and Quincy sit at a table eating McDonalds.

MICHELLE

You know what, good for you Uncle Courtney.

SIDRA

I'm surprised you haven't seen them on Facebook.

MICHELLE

Facebook was ruined by your generation.

BRENNAN

You mean Meta?

He laughs.

SIDRA

So...how did this occur? You three pulling up together? Because last time I spoke to you Q, you had choice words about our brother.

COURTNEY

Is that so?

QUINCY

I mean I said enough during lunch.

SIDRA

Lunch?

BRENNAN

To make a long story short, I invited him to a Thanksgiving Lunch, so they could reconcile.

SIDRA

Mhmm. This is noice. Very noice.

MICHELLE

You knew about Brennan?

SIDRA

Of course I did, since they got married. I know things, honey.

COURTNEY

Your mother apologized to me years ago. We have been texting and calling since.

MICHELLE

So you know about?

QUINCY

About what?

COURTNEY

Her lupus? Yes, that is our sister. Of course, we are informed as next of kin.

QUINCY

Oh, yeah, that.

MICHELLE

(to Sidra)

Damn, Mom everybody know except me?

QUINCY

Don't be too harsh on your mother. We all hid things from family.

Courtney looks at Quincy.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

But we seldom understand. We just have to give them that space to figure it out. Sometimes it's for the better. Sometimes it's for worse.

COURTNEY

Humans are complicated.

SIDRA

Ain't that the truth.

BRENAN

Besides, it's character development.

They all laugh.

Michelle grabs the trash and takes it out.

SIDRA

Thank you, baby.

Brenan stands.

BRENAN

The restroom?

COURTNEY

To the left of the dinette.

They both exit. Leaving the three siblings left.

QUINCY

It's been a long time since the three of us were along together.

SIDRA

God, yes.

COURTNEY

Even when I came out I was sparsely here. I was always off...I'm sorry guys.

Sidra grabs his hand.

SIDRA

You did what you thought was best. We can't fault you for that. We can only fault you for involuntarily hurting us.

QUINCY

Yeah...

COURTNEY

We have aged so much.

Courtney looks at Michelle. He turns and looks at Quincy.

QUINCY

We needed each other.

SIDRA

That part.

COURTNEY

Let's make a vow. Something we should have done as kids. You know like them cheesy family reunion movies. Let's promise to check-in and look out for one another.

SIDRA

Agreed.

QUINCY

Took you long enough.

COURTNEY

Well?

QUINCY

Agreed.

Michelle returns.

MICHELLE

Food's ready.

INT. FAMILY HOME. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Everyone gathers around the table. God's creations come together surrounding a bountiful feast made up the elements of nature.

Generations new and old, dressed finely and others more comfortably pull out their chairs and stand.

The children have their little table set adjacent to the Dining Room and the Kitchen, where they prepare for a sizeable, yet appropriate, feast themselves. Innocently watching the adults and mimicking them.

The table is vast and large, outstretching toward the living room with an additional long table draped in a decorative cloth. It looks as if it's been a long time since family has come together.

As the final stragglers come filling in, Aunt Lucreshia, Aunt Carol, and Aunt Mirabelle enter. All appearing heavenly as opposed to the tracksuits and casual clothes they cooked in.

Aunt Lucreshia stands at the head of the table. The other two stand on either side.

Aunt Lucreshia makes a toast.

AUNT LUCRESHIA

To family.

ALL

To family.

AUNT LUCRESHIA

It's been a long two years. Some of us, longer, and others you make it when you can...well, today we give thanks for the family in front of us and the family far, but still in good health, hmm?

They all raise their glasses.

The sweet babes raise their cups full of juice.

ALL
Here, here. Amen.

AUNT LUCRESHIA
Let's eat. Courtney.

COURTNEY
Yes, Auntie?

AUNT LUCRESHIA
Pardon this turkey. It's was your
father's job, but I bestow this
unto you.

COURTNEY
Yes ma'am.

Uncle Chavez groans.

COURTNEY (CONT'D)
Problem Uncle C? Because you seem
to be the loudest here.

QUINCY
Yeah, speak your mind. We're
family.

Uncle Chavez looks behind him, he sees the children watching.
Everyone is watching him.

UNCLE CHAVEZ
I have nothing to say.

AUNT LUCRESHIA
Keep it that way.

Courtney pardons the turkey. He looks across from him and
sees a picture of his father on the array of old photos on
the wall. He smirks.

Everyone claps as the first slice was cut.

QUINCY
Elders first.

Everyone begins passing along the food. Engaging in
conversation.

SIDRA
(to Michelle)
I know you're holding.

MICHELLE
You not tryna go on no walk?

SIDRA
Hell yeah. We used to do it back in
the day.

MICHELLE
You're lying.

SIDRA
Say I am.

Uncle Chavez passes the collards across to Brennan. He pauses
for a moment.

BRENNAN
Thank you.

UNCLE CHAVEZ
Mhmm.

BRENNAN
(to Courtney)
Greens, hun?

COURTNEY
Don't mind if I do.

Aunt Lucreshia sees everyone engaging in the meal prepared by
the strong arms of the family.

AUNT LUCRESHIA
I have more words.

Everyone settles.

AUNT LUCRESHIA (CONT'D)
We as a family, got to do better.

AUNT CAROL
Right. We can't run when things get
hard, though we may understand.

AUNT MIRABELLE
It's time we start communicating
much more effectively. Not just as
family, but as black people.

She looks at Brennan.

AUNT MIRABELLE (CONT'D)
And Brenan.

Everyone laughs. Even Chavez smirks.

AUNT LUCRESHIA
No more hiding things. To the generation under us, you all will inherit this home. A home passed down for generations. We want the walls to talk and ancestors to speak through you when you get to our big ages.

Everyone nods.

AUNT MIRABELLE
We didn't realize it, until this year, but we needed to do that thing-

Aunt Mirabelle snaps her fingers.

AUNT CAROL
Estate planning. We have to leave something behind. We must share the secrets and leave no stone unturned. You're the fruits of our ancestor's labor. Our greatest's life's work.

AUNT LUCRESHIA
God made this happen today.

Everyone nods.

AUNT LUCRESHIA (CONT'D)
Whoever you pray to, made this happen today.
(pause)
That's what I'm thankful for. My late husband Hank, my brother Ebreaux, and all the others who've left this earth. We honor you.

Everyone murmurs names of the deceased.

INT. FAMILY HOME. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Uncle Ebreaux sits and talks with Geno and his baby mamas.

UNCLE EBREAU
Now, you both get nice now. You are
gonna be sister wives.

Hayzha and Denise exchange looks.

INT. FAMILY HOME. DINETTE - NIGHT

Uncle Hollis and Aunt Mirabelle are breaking pockets.

AUNT MIRABELLE
Hit me!

UNCLE HOLLIS
Alright now, baby!

INT. FAMILY HOME. KITCHEN

Aunt Lucreshia and some of the OTHER MOTHERS are packing up
doggie bags.

AUNT LUCRESHIA
I don't eat like I used since my
Gastro, I shrank my stomach. So,
take all you want.

They pack up containers of leftovers, enough to last until
Christmas.

Brenan is helping with the dishes. Aunt Lucreshia walks on
over to him.

AUNT LUCRESHIA (CONT'D)
Tell me what I've missed Mr.
Brenan, over the years.

BRENAN
A lot.

AUNT LUCRESHIA
Scooch on over. I got time. We have
plenty of dishes to clean and a lot
to dish out. Spare no details.

BRENAN
Ooh, you're becoming my favorite
Aunt Lu.

AUNT LUCRESHIA
I know.

They laugh.

EXT. SIDEWALK. ALBANY, NEW YORK - NIGHT

Michelle, Sidra, Quincy, and Courtney take a stroll and puff a scroll.

COURTNEY

When's the last time we shared a dubie?

SIDRA

Ew, don't call it a dubie.

QUINCY

Your age is showing and your black card might get revoked.

COURTNEY

Please.

MICHELLE

Doesn't matter what he calls it, as long as he keeps passing it.

QUINCY

Oop. Okay. Get your girl.

SIDRA

She's alright.

Sidra wraps her arm around Michelle.

QUINCY

To answer your question, damn this shit is good, Chelle, where'd you get this?

MICHELLE

I got a plug.

SIDRA

They really did something legalizing bud in New York.

Michelle totes on the blunt. They stop underneath a street light.

COURTNEY

Oh, Brenan slipped this to me during dinner. I couldn't believe it.

Courtney takes out the photograph of them as children.

SIDRA

Oh my God. How old were we.

QUINCY

Babies. Wow.

Michelle takes a look.

MICHELLE

Look at you three. You were all so cute.

QUINCY

Innocent back then.

COURTNEY

Sidra and I were, you were a monster.

QUINCY

Nah.

MICHELLE

Hey, I got an idea. I have my camera at the house. Wanna recreate this photo?

The three of them look at one another.

COURTNEY

That would be lovely.

INT. FAMILY HOME. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Michelle sets up her tripod.

The three siblings sit on the sofa, with Quincy on the left, Sidra in the middle, and Courtney on the right.

QUINCY

I know Dad is smiling down at us despite all of it.

SIDRA

Down?

COURTNEY

(laughs)
Don't do that.

SIDRA

I know you were thinking it too.

QUINCY

Well, wherever he is, he would be proud.

They nod.

MICHELLE

Ready.

The three position themselves. Courtney balls up a fist.

POW!

QUINCY

Damn.

COURTNEY

Got you.

QUINCY

That was actually a good one.

Sidra sits there waiting.

SIDRA

Hello, let's get this over with.

Quincy balls up his fist.

COURTNEY

No-

MICHELLE (O.S.)

And say cheese!

FLASH!

The photo captures Sidra sitting with a smile, while Quincy's arm flings behind her to Courtney who blocks it with a smile.

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

Let's try again. And please Uncle Quincy and Uncle Courtney be nice.

AUNT LUCRESHIA (O.S.)

Before I make you.

FLASH!

They get it together and take a seemingly normal picture.

Until, Quincy accidentally blinks, Sidra stares ahead with a perfect smile, and Courtney sneezes.

FADE TO BLACK.

END